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REGIONAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES
(MAINLY INDIAN)

EDITED BY

N. A. THOOTHI, D.PHIL. (OXON.)

THE VAISHṆAVAS OF GUJARAT

THE

VAISHṆAVAS OF GUJARAT

BEING A STUDY IN
METHODS OF INVESTIGATION
OF SOCIAL PHENOMENA

by
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GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

THIS series of monographs embodies the results of researches conducted by students working under my direction in the Bombay University School of Economics and Sociology, and by myself. The studies bear upon problems of human life in its various aspects—regional, economic, institutional, cultural and philosophical—with a view to advance constructive suggestions concerning the complicated problems that confront us at the present day.

Such an undertaking necessitates the treatment of facts and ideas in a scientific spirit and manner. Only patient investigation can yield results that prove valuable for the guidance of life. Every problem has its practical bearings. Hence, to understand a problem we must study it with reference to its past as well as its present, in order that we may be enabled to estimate its future. Vague and unscientific endeavours and conclusions are worse than useless; for they not merely vitiate human effort but frustrate purpose and aspiration, and paralyse our hope to shape the future.

And, in our own days, there is an urgent need for the kind of inquiries that the present series proposes to undertake and pursue. We are in the midst of an 'omnipresent anarchy of values'; consequently, we are in a drift which bids fair to sweep the world to disaster. If equilibrium has to be regained and

maintained, there must be a clear and adequate understanding of the fundamental facts, purposes, values and difficulties of human life. The humble aim of this series is to study and understand the various aspects of the human problem, and discover and formulate, or may be, rediscover and reformulate, a scheme of values that may become the basis of a more equitable and stable human order. One of our objects is to prevent loose thinking which is at the root of so much disharmony in the world of human relationship. It is the hope of Science that a disinterested pursuit of truth will rally human beings round the banner of its eternal values; humanity might thus be brought together by recognising the common affinities and life-values underneath the seeming differences arising from regional and historical causes.

The problems of human life being various, the methods of approach are also many: philosophical, scientific and practical. In the series herewith presented, all these methods have been employed. There is a common purpose running through the labours of individual writers, however divided they may be on specific issues and details, however varied and even contradictory may be their conclusions. That purpose is to present the human problem in all its aspects carefully analysed and discussed.

Our ambition is to build up a body of systematic knowledge, at once scientific and of practical utility, which might help in the reconstruction of the future, and to organise a School of thought with an 'ethos'

and a 'quest' uniquely its own. However partially the ambition and hope may be realised, we feel sure that what we are doing is worth doing, and that it is high time it should be undertaken by some of us in India.

The great dream of the Editor's teacher, Sir Patrick Geddes, was to build the City Beautiful, the New Jerusalem, as he called it. He is no more amongst us to dream, to survey, to build and to rebuild. But it is our hope and purpose that the master's wishes should be fulfilled, however fragmentarily and inadequately, by these humble efforts of those who have inherited a little the light of his spirit, and felt the urge of his indomitable will to strive, to labour, to plan and to achieve.

N. A. THOOTHI.

School of Economics & Sociology,
University of Bombay,
March, 1935.

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

with

LOVE, RESPECT AND GRATITUDE

to

MY TEACHERS:

SIR PATRICK GEDDES.

DR. R. R. MARETT.

REV. DR. J. MCKENZIE.

PROFESSOR J. L. MYRES.

KÁVASJI N. SABĀVĀLĀ, ESQ.

DR. F. C. S. SCHILLER.

REV. DR. R. SCOTT.

SIR J. ARTHUR THOMSON.

PROFESSOR P. A. WADIA.

PREFACE

This work was originally prepared for the Doctorate of Philosophy of the University of Oxford and was accepted for that Degree in November, 1924. Ten years have elapsed between its writing and its publication, and a word of explanation may be deemed necessary. It was possible for me to publish the work in 1928, and arrangements had been entered into with publishers at the time. But in order to bring the Thesis up-to-date it was deemed necessary to wait for the Reports of the Census of 1931, since vital statistics are one of the bases on which sociological investigation proceeds and sociological interpretation depends. Unfortunately, owing to the circumstances (especially in Gujarat) under which that Census was proceeded with, the results could not but have been defective ; and therefore it has not been found possible to place much reliance, for the purposes of the present study, on the Reports of that Census.

There was also a lacuna in the original Thesis in as much as Vaishnavite Art had not been adequately discussed. No work of the kind that this one attempts to be can be complete without a fairly comprehensive section on Art. As explained in the book, art plays the same rôle in Vaishnavism as the flower to the tree : it not only adds grace to life, but without that grace life cannot continue. Art is not only a vital part of Dharma, but springs of necessity from Dharma, nourishes it and is nourished by it. I had not enough material ready for use in 1924. I had to set to work, with the help of a friend who wishes to remain anonymous, collecting the material and digesting it, there being little information available in India either from books or

from museums and collections. With regard to Vaishnavite music and dance there is an extensive tradition and folklore; but it has to be gathered and sifted. The fields of Hindu Art and Iconography and the theories of Hindu æsthetics present vast problems. The problem of Art cannot be isolated and studied by itself at least not so far as Vaishnavism or Vaishnavite art is concerned. For, art is vitally related to Dharma in all its myriad aspects. Art gives form to Vaishnavite religion and science, ethics, economics and politics, devotion, wisdom and prayer, ritual and magic, labour and industry, life and death. During the ten years, what leisure remained to me from my duties at the University of Bombay has been devoted to the problems of Hindu Art generally, and Vaishnavite art in particular. The field, nevertheless, has not been fully explored; nor has a detailed technical discussion of iconography, music and dance been found possible for the present study. But, what has been presented here will, I believe, give a sufficiently clear idea of Vaishnavite art and æsthetics. I very much regret that suitable materials not being available it has not been possible to include illustrations, so necessary in the discussion of art. Opportunity has also been taken to revise the work and to retouch it in minor details. In accordance with the advice of Dr. R. R. Marett, one of my examiners at Oxford, certain parts of the original Thesis have been amplified for the purposes of publication. But the work remains substantially—in method, treatment and conclusion—the same as it was originally written, except the now added chapter on Art [1].

The present study is primarily an attempt at applying and testing the Geddesian theory and

[1] Part of this chapter was read as a Paper on The *Rasotsava* and its Survivals, at the Anthropological Society of Bombay.

method of the investigation and interpretation of social phenomena. The subject-matter of the study, also, is of peculiar importance; for the Vaishnavas of Gujarat seem to me to be a typical example of communities having thoroughly adapted themselves to a definite mode of life, and being then called upon, or forced, to readjust radically their habits and ideas to meet new conditions and circumstances arising from contact with strange peoples and strange civilizations and cultures. The Vaishnavas resisted this cultural invasion for a long time, and fought hard to preserve, and to continue to live in their ancient ways; but their resistance has got feebler and feebler, and signs are multiplying that revolutionary changes in their attitude towards, and outlook on, life are at hand. It seemed valuable, therefore, to make a sociological record of the transition period before it passed away and was forgotten, especially as no attempt at such a record had yet been made. Difficult as such a task must always be, it was rendered still more so for lack of predecessors in the field, and absence of documents of social, political and civic interest which could be used as original authorities. The volumes of the Bombay Gazetteer (Campbell Series), the Government Census Reports, and similar publications are valuable in themselves; and so are authorities like Manu, Yājnavalkya, Shoḍaś-granthas, etc., and studies like those of Dr. Bhandarkar and Mr. Durgāśankar Śāstri. But these latter are rather compilations dealing with religious beliefs and practices. Dr. Ketkar's stimulating works on caste are written from a secular standpoint, and deserve due consideration; but it must be remembered that he studies the general problem of caste in India with special reference to Mahārāshtra. So far as I am aware no full-length, scientific study of the Vaishnavite society of Gujarāt as a result of direct

observation has yet appeared. Consequently I have had to rely more than I could have wished on my own observation and investigation of the region, the folk and their mode of life. During my investigation I visited important cities and villages, and lived with all kinds of folks, Vaishnavite and others, in order to observe closely the threads that weave the fabric of their life.

It would have hardly been possible to carry on an inquiry and study of this nature single-handed. I have received valuable help from many, many friends. But I should like to make special mention of the following: Mr. Tricumdas Premji's deep knowledge of Vallabhite religious organization and art has saved me from many an error. Mr. Thakore Choksi has given untiring and enthusiastic help in regard to the domestic and fine arts of Gujarāt, and Vallabhite religious life and literature. I am indebted to Diwan Bahadur K. H. Dhruva and Professor J. H. Dave for going through the chapter on Literature in proof. My friends Mr. C. C. Mehta and Mr. M. R. Majumdār have been good enough to do the same. I am very thankful also to my friend Dr. K. B. Bharucha for help in preparing the manuscript. Mr. G. D. E. Bunyan has helped in the preparation of the Index; and so has Mr. C. L. Gheewālā, who moreover looked through the proofs. Most of all, Mr. P. R. Bharucha has all along assisted me with valuable help and advice in the writing, revision and correction of the manuscript and the proofs.

I gratefully remember here those friends who made it possible for me, year after year, to go and live in their midst and help me lay the material foundation of this study. Professor C. N. Vakil, Mr. C. N. Bhat of Rander, Mr. M. K. Saraya, Mr. S. M. Dalal, Mr. M. D. Sankalia, Mr. T. K. Gajjar and the late Mr. V. C. Mehta deserve special mention for the

many kind ways in which they helped me in my field-work, and extended to me the most generous of hospitality and assistance. Nor must I forget the help which the late Diwan Bahadur Ranchhodbhai Udayram's lively talks on Gujarāti drama gave me. And for the invaluable material help and encouragement received from my uncles Mr. Hiraji R. Kapadia, Mr. Manchershah R. Kapadia and from my friend Mr. D. K. Petigara I shall ever remain grateful to them.

I acknowledge with deep gratitude the courtesy and friendly interest of the authorities of New College, Oxford, for extending to me every facility both during the time I worked and studied under its sacred portals and thereafter. I am deeply grateful to the Trustees of the N. M. Wadia Trust for their generous grant of a scholarship loan which made it possible for me to pursue my studies in Europe and write this Thesis. I cannot thank them too much for their kindness. The University of Bombay also has extended both moral and material support to my present undertaking by granting a sum of Rs. 2,500 towards its publication, and by patiently bearing with the long delay in the appearance of this book. Without the generous help of the University a large part of this work would have remained unpublished for a long time. And to Messrs. Longmans Green & Co., Ltd., the publishers of this book, I am sincerely thankful for the courtesy, help and advice they have ever readily extended to me.

What I owe in gratitude to my teachers, the late Professor Sir Patrick Geddes, Professor J. L. Myres, Dr. F. C. S. Schiller, Dr. R. R. Marett and the late Professor Sir J. Arthur Thomson for their ever-ready help, guidance and encouragement I cannot adequately express. I have derived the fundamental viewpoint from which this study was undertaken and pursued from my *guru* Patrick

Geddes; but I am indebted to him for far more than it is possible for me to say here. Dr. Marett guided me in anthropology; those who have heard his lectures at Oxford are not likely easily to forget them; they were an inspiration to me as to many a generation of Oxford students. Professor Myres' weekly discussions with me on the geographical, ethnological and anthropological sides of sociology cleared many an obstacle, as regards principles and details, from my path; in our talks on Hindu culture he always took care to point out wherein it resembled and wherein differed from the culture of ancient Greece, and thus threw novel and interesting light on both; his almost paternal interest and solicitude, his friendliness and intellectual generosity I shall always remember. And Dr. Schiller, the supervisor of my studies at Oxford, has more than one claim on my remembrance and gratitude: not only for his illuminating lectures and discussions on Scientific Method, not only for his kindly zeal and brotherly care in guiding a novice in a difficult task, but also for his friendship.

N. A. THOOTHI.

Note.—The bibliography on the literature, both of Vaishnavism and the principles and methods of sociology, given at the end of this work has been made exhaustive and up-to-date so as to represent all shades of opinion, and to make it useful for research workers in this field.

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ERRATUM

Page 123, line 23, *omit* last two words "in Junagadh".

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

This work is an attempt at studying, with reference to a definite region, (1) how far man's life is moulded by his habitat, and how far he moulds it, and (2) the extent to which man's life and his environment are affected by cultural factors, both native and alien.

It is the belief of the writer that such an enquiry helps immensely to investigate into and explain social phenomena—both higher and lower. But he is quite aware of the limitations of the influence of his environment on man. For after all man is not merely a creature of circumstances; climate, relief and rocks are not all that combine to determine the ideals, both individual and social, of our lives. But that they do much to condition human action may be granted without giving up a belief in the fount of idealism which lies at the roots of human personality. We therefore object to a categorical explanation of man as a creature of the circumstances of his physical environment. We shall have therefore to take time into consideration, and look upon the world as a field of expression, especially of the cumulative expression, of the human spirit. We may study interaction between man and his circumstances; but we study it with the conviction that man is an active agent, who, in the course of centuries of history and contact, has moulded his environment for good or for ill.

The Vaishṇavas of Gujarat happen to be the dominant people of the region we call Gujarat. They are a group of peoples of all ranks and professions, of all castes and sects, in spite of being designated under a common appellation. Here we can see the communities living as economic units

and working out the possibilities both of the region and of their physical, mental and other powers in response to their social, economic and religious needs.

The Vaishṇavas are divided into a number of *gnyaties*; the constitution of these *gnyaties* renders social intercourse far more difficult than in European communities. Nevertheless, though they may not dine together at the same table, or use the same utensil for drinking purposes between them, they contrive to mingle as much as, or more perhaps than, the people in Europe do in certain other respects. Thus, for instance, members of different *gnyaties* can band themselves together in trade guilds; and difficulties arising from a redundancy of women in one class and a deficiency in another, may be met by arranging for a fusion of what were previously several distinct *gnyaties*.[1]

Besides, they differ in history and traditions, in ways of living, in matters regarding the law. For instance, some of them are polygamous, and others strictly monogamous in practice. Some are allowed to drink alcoholic liquors, others are forbidden to do so. Some worship idols, others do not. Some allow widow-remarriage, others do not. Some have abolished child-marriages,[2] others have not. Some respect the religious books and the Brahmin priests, others do not. Some repeat their prayers yet in Sanskrit, others in their own mother-tongue, Gujarati, or even in their dialects.

And yet they fight the same fight, and win or lose the same battle. They have to struggle against a degenerate priesthood, a fossilized religion, a corrupt tradition, a complex, unprogressive social system,—all of them heavy burdens on the spiritual life of the

[1] See infra chapter on *Gnyaties*.

[2] This was written in 1924. The Sarda Act has become the law since then.

people. It is the same fetters of religious and social struggle that they share, and work and die, for or against. The history of the religious sects and their growth in Gujarat is a living testimony to the existence of this social struggle, as will be shown later on.

Again, they live in a vast region, yet more or less uniform in structure and contours, in climate, and in quality and products of the land; and this region has been considered a unit by the people's historians ever since the seventh century A.D.

And lastly, they live under the same political institutions. The land tenure is uniform, the village government is more or less still in the hands of the *Patels*, and the roots of this autonomy goes back to a very remote date.

As regards the influence and consequent changes by contact with other peoples, the Vaishṇavas have been influenced by all India during recent years; but more definitely, their contact with the Moslems has influenced their art and religion; their contact with the Parsis has considerably affected them in general education and commercial enterprise; and the influence of the European is seen all through their life in cities, most especially in regard to religious reform and social regeneration.

To summarize, therefore: The following is a study of communities living in a definite region in Western India, called Gujarata, illustrating:

(1) The action of environment on man, and the reaction of man on his environment.

(2) The action of history, of tradition and of religious struggles on man in this given environment.

(3) The action of contacts with other peoples, cultures and civilizations.

(4) The action of economic forces on the life of the people and of the region.

PART I.

On the Vaishnavas of Gujarat.

Division I.

Chapter I. The Region.

CHAPTER I

THE REGION AS A BATTLE-FIELD OF HUMAN LIFE.

Gujarat is the country lying approximately between 20° 9′ and 24° 43′ N., and 71° 20′ and 74° 40′.[1] It has an area of about 35,000 square miles, with over 60 large and small towns, and about 12,000 villages.[2] It is bounded on the north by the desert of Marwar and by the sparsely cultivated region of Rajputana; on the east by the spurs of the wooded Vindhyās, the Satpurās and the Western Ghats. On its south lie the more or less cultivated districts of Thana, and on the west, the dry and sandy plains of Cutch, Kathiawar and the Arabian Sea.

Gujarat forms mainly a region of alluvial soil; it is a plain with no irregular contours, and with a sufficient supply of water in normal years. It is surrounded on the north by a small strip of grass-land ending in steppes and desert-lands; on the north-east it is connected with the grass-lands of the Rajputana Agency; on the east by forests in the Tapti valley; and by grass-lands and forest on the south of the Tapti. Thus, the districts surrounding Gujarat are poor in agricultural wealth. Therefore people from all quarters round about the region naturally gravitate to this land of plenty, and settle there. The Gujarat region consists mostly of an agricultural area; and people have therefore to live mainly on products of the land. But besides

[1] The term Gujarat is also used for a larger region which includes Kathiawar and Cutch. Though I am aware of the cultural relation between Gujarat and Kathiawar, I am concerned with the main land of Gujarat which forms a geographical region by itself and which has characteristics of its own not shared by Kathiawar or Cutch.

[2] Cf. Census of India, 1921, Vol. VIII, pt. 2, Tables, pp. 2-3; Imperial Gazetteer of India, Baroda, p. 19.

agriculture, during recent years the valleys of the Sabarmati, Narmadā and Tapti are busy especially with cotton-mill industry, started mostly by local enterprise and money, mostly Vaishnava. And being a flat country, the region affords easy corridors of communication through it between the north and the south. This is brought about by roads and railway lines which run through the whole region from south to north connecting Bombay and Ahmedabad, and Ahmedabad and Delhi. Moreover, the valleys of the Narbada and the Tapti afford valuable corridors for trade between the western high-lands and the sea. But because the rivers are not navigable throughout their course, and because large ships cannot go through them where they are navigable, roads and railway lines are also constructed to connect regions on the other side of each of the valleys with the main region, and commerce is carried on along these.

We have already said that the Arabian Sea lies on the west of Gujarat. A cursory glance at the map will show a deeply indented shore broken by many creeks and bays. At the mouth of rivers lie Daman, Billimora, Surat,[1] Broach[2] and Cambay,[3] some of which were the principal harbours of Western India only a 100 years ago; and but for the sudden rise of Bombay, and the large size of modern ships, these river-ports would have still been working as of old. Broach and Surat yet have a small commerce with Kathiawar and East Africa in bricks, tobacco and such other home products.

The north-easterly part of Gujarat, known as the Panchmahals, lies among the Satpurās, and consists of hills composed of granite and gneiss, with deep and shallow soils in the valley according to configuration.

[1] Cf. Bom. Gaz., Vol. II, pp. 71, 73, 79, 82, 90; Vol. VI, p. 195.
[2] Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 422-25.
[3] Ibid., Vol. XIII, pp. 429, 465, 486.

Primitive and metamorphic rocks, usually level and deep, form the soils of Ahmedabad and Kaira, varying from drift-sand in some parts of Ahmedabad, to a splendid loam in Kaira. The soil is rich and productive only if sufficient water is available. And some lands are much too porous, like sponge, to retain water.[1] "Monsoon crops are the mainstay, therefore, of the people; but the more 'retentive' lands grow non-monsoon crops, especially wheat. The land admirably lends itself to irrigation; and much of the best well-irrigation in Western India is in these parts."[2] The soil of Surat and Broach is essentially alluvial, mostly made out of trap rock. It is deep, black, and very porous. Rich cotton crops are raised on this soil.[3] But as it cracks deeply in the dry parts of the year in river valleys, irrigation is difficult. On the other hand, in the *Bhatha* or riverine lands, and in the *Gorat* (or former riverine lands) these cracks do not appear; irrigation is therefore possible when rains are absent; and large quantities of garden crops are grown there all the year round. During the monsoon jowar, cotton and rice are plentifully grown in the southern parts, while in the northern parts jowar and wheat find a place in rotation with cotton during the winter.[4]

As has already been pointed out, Gujarat is a country of plains; but small ranges of hills lie on its northern boundaries. Thus the Ārāvallis are situated in the north; nearly towards the north-east lie the Arasur Hills; then near Chāmpāner are the Pāvāgadh Hills with the temple of Kalka on its summit; the Pārnerā Hills are situated in Bulsar district; and the Hills of Rajpipla once formed the

[1] Cf. Patil, P. C.: Crops of the Bombay Presidency, pp. 9-10.
[2] Cf. Ibid., p. 10.
[3] Cf. Chisholm: Handbook of Commercial Geography (1922), p. 164.
[4] Cf. Patil, P. C.: Crops of the Bombay Presidency, p. 11.

route of communication between Gujarat and Khāndesh.

As Gujarat is an agricultural country the problem of water supply is of very great importance, especially in view of the fact that with the failure of the monsoon famine usually supervenes. The monsoon season begins in the middle of June and ends in October. The busiest time of the year coincides with this, and continues till January. The average rainfall ranges from 25 inches in the northern, to 75 inches in the southern parts (cf. Rainfall Map). This means that there is insufficient rain in the north, even during normal times. Therefore the region needs artificial irrigation.

The region is irrigated by five large rivers and their tributaries: the Banas[1] rises from the Dheber lake in the hills of Udaipur outside Gujarat, and passing through Deesa, runs westwards, its two mouths flowing into the Rann of Cutch. During summer the southern end of the river dries up; but near Deesa and round about it the river does not dry up even in summer. Two small tributaries meet the Banas: the Sipu[2] rising from the Nimaj Hills and passing through Bharat and Chhota Ranpur; and Balaram,[3] rising from the north-east boundaries, meets the Banas near Karja. The water of Banas and its tributaries was not used for irrigation purposes for a long time, though during recent years irrigation canals have been constructed.

The Sabarmati[4] rises from the south-west end of the Ārāvallis and flows southward through Mahi-Kantha and Ahmedabad, and meets the Gulf of Cambay. It runs a course of two hundred miles. It does not flow very rapidly and is shallow in several

[1] Bom. Gaz., Vol. V, p. 315.
[2] Ibid., Vol. V, p. 283.
[3] Ibid., Vol. V, p. 283.
[4] Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 5; Vol. VI, p. 181.

places. Near Vaghpur the river-bank is 300 yards wide, while 50 miles from the mouth of the river the distance between the two banks is about 500 yards, though during the hot season this is reduced to 375 feet. Due to the level ground through which it passes the river repeatedly changes its course leaving a residue which supplies rich manure for sugar crops. Hathmati, Khari, Majam, Meshvo, Vātrak and Shedhy[1] meet the Sabarmati, and are very helpful for irrigation purposes. The waters of the Khari are used for the irrigation of more than 3,000 acres of land by canals, 16 miles in length.

The Mahi[2] rises from the western end of the Vindhyās, which meets the Ārāvallis. Absorbing in its flow the water of several rivulets flowing from the east, the river runs between banks about 100 feet high and winds its way towards the north up to the Vagad Hills. From thence it flows westward for 20 miles and takes a south-westerly course, ultimately emptying itself into the Gulf of Cambay. Thus in its course the Mahi passes through the Mahi-Kantha, Reva-Kantha, Kaira, the Panchmahals and the northern boundary of Broach. The banks of this river happen to be so high and rugged that field-irrigation from it is impossible; also it runs so deep that it draws away the waters of wells or ponds lying near its banks.

The Narmadā[3] rises from Amarkantak Hills in the Central Provinces; after finishing its course for 660 miles, enters Gujarat and for 100 miles flows before meeting the Gulf of Cambay. The breadth of the river as it enters Broach is half a mile, and at Broach it reaches the breadth of one mile. The waters of the river cannot be used for irriga-

[1] Ibid., Vol. IV, pp. 5-6.
[2] Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 3; Vol. III, pp. 2, 192.
[3] Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 343-48.

tion purposes because after the tidal limit the banks are too high. The course of the river through Gujarat is navigable for small ships, though as we go westwards only small river traffic is possible.

The Tapti[1] rises from the western bend of the Satpurās, and after running through a course of 380 miles enters the forest of Dang and flows through Gujarat for about 70 miles. At the point where Surat stands on the Tapti the breadth of the river is six hundred yards. The tides of the Arabian Sea rush into the river for 32 miles. The river is navigable for minor transport purposes, but during the monsoons navigation is dangerous and is therefore not allowed. The Tapti is flooded during the monsoons almost every fourth year, with the result that heavy losses occur both to the life and property of the people. Surat has had three large floods in the 18th century, twelve in the 19th, and during the present century there were four floods which caused great damage to the city.

The waters of the Tapti are not used so much for irrigation purposes as those of the Sabarmati, though Government have constructed a few canals near Kakdapar, Purna and Vaghechha. The main reason why irrigation works are not carried on in the Tapti region is that there is a larger amount of rainfall as compared to the Sabarmati region.

The Hāthmatī, Vātrak, Meshvo, Shedhi, Viśwāmitri, Karjan, Dhādhur, Kīm, Mindholā, Pūrnā, Ambikā, Aurangā, Par and Damangangā are the small rivers of Gujarat which feed its land with water for most of the year, thus contributing considerably towards the agricultural welfare of the district.

Besides the rivers, irrigation is helped by natural

[1] Bom. Gaz., Vol. II, pp. 6–24 ; Vol. VII, pp. 576–80.

lakes and artificial ponds and wells throughout the region, particularly in the northern parts. About 37 miles south-west of Ahmedabad city, there is a large lake called Nal,[1] covering an area of 49 square miles. Its water, at all times brackish, grows more saline as the dry season advances. There are many small islands in the bed of the lake; these are used as grazing grounds during the hot season. Near the town of Parantij there are two lakes: the larger, with an area of 160 acres, has sweet water 30 feet deep; the other with an area of 30 acres, though 8 feet deep during the rainy and cold seasons, dries up before the close of the hot season.

The district of Ahmedabad[2] contains artificial ponds and wells which cover an area of about 13,950 acres; in Kheda[3] about 5,000 artificial wells cover an area of about 15,000 acres; while in Surat[4] about 11,000 acres are occupied by such artificial wells. In the rest of the region, due to the brackishness of the water as also to the great depth at which only water is available, irrigation by wells is difficult and unprofitable. This defect reacts upon the people very severely during famine years.

The existence of many rivers in Gujarat and the levelness of its contours, though blessings in themselves, on the whole, for human welfare, have sometimes proved rather dangerous both for man and for the crops and cattle which he rears in the region. This is especially acute because the main human activity of the region is agriculture. The many rivers of Gujarat rise in floods with excessive rainfall in the region, the whole or a part of it, with the result that crops and animals are destroyed,

[1] Bom. Gaz., Vol. IV, p. 16.
[2] Ibid., Vol. IV, pp. 50-51.
[3] Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 43-44.
[4] Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 59-68.

human habitations are ravaged, and man finds himself a victim to the wrath of the elements that otherwise supply him with the necessaries of his life. The southern portion of the region is more apt to have excessive rainfall, and the valley of the Tapti usually finds itself in danger during the monsoon. The region to the north of the Narmadā is less affected by floods due to scanty rainfall in the region, but that does not mean that the rivers in this region do not rise in floods now and again. In fact during the period of the last three decades the whole of Gujarat has suffered thrice from disastrous floods due to excessive rainfall and the rise of rivers.[1]

The famines are due to one of the following causes: (1) Failure of the monsoon, (2) Over-abundant rains resulting in the rising of rivers, and (3) Locust and rat plagues. So far as the southern parts of the region are concerned rains are usually plentiful, and therefore famines rarely occur for want of rains. But we must not forget that the whole region has suffered more than six times during the last thirty years from famines due to the failure of the monsoons; and the northern parts had such famines eight times during the same period.

On the other hand, it may be safely asserted that the famines of Gujarat are generally due to floods on account of excessive rainfall and the rising of the rivers. Thus Surat has had its share of a famine year once in every decade during the last thirteen decades; Broach has had its seven floods during the last fifty years; Kaira has suffered from seven floods during the period of a century; Ahmedabad has had its six floods between 1868 and 1898; and the whole of Gujarat has been heavily flooded thrice during the last fifty years.[2]

[1] Cf. Statistical Atlas of Bombay Presidency, 1925, pp. 38-39.
[2] Cf. Ibid., pp. 33-35.

Besides floods and failure of the monsoon, locust and rat plagues damage the crops in whole or in part. The crops of the northern regions of Gujarat used to be frequently destroyed before 1917. Since then these plagues have been brought under control by the efforts of the Revenue and Agriculture Departments.[1]

Besides ravages to human life and property, floods destroy crops and cattle; and when famines are due to failure of the monsoon a general scarcity of fodder reduces the means of the preservation of cattle.

On the whole, the climate of Gujarat is very agreeable during winter. But the summer is very oppressive, though the proximity of the sea helps to keep it milder than it would otherwise be. And because the heat is dry in the northern parts of the region,—especially in Ahmedabad and Kaira (though the temperature is between 105° and 120° in mid-summer),—the inhabitants do not suffer bad health. The summer temperature of the southern region—viz., of Surat, the Panchmahals and Mahi-Kantha—is between 80° and 99°. During the cold months from October to March, the thermometer falls below freezing-point at night, and the days are agreeably fresh. Further north towards Broach, Ahmedabad, etc., the climate is pleasanter and more bracing.

Out of a total population of about 7,546,000, 6,652,000 are Hindoos.[2] The rest are Parsis, Mahomedans and Animists. Of this dominant Hindoo population most follow one or the other of the Vaishnavite sects.

Of this total population of 7,546,000, 66% are occupied in agriculture, 12½% in industry and

[1] Op. cit., pp. 33–35.

[2] Cf. Census of India (1921), Vol. VIII, Part 2, Tables on pp. 2-3, 30–33, 50–53.

manufacture, 8% in trade, 3½% in the higher professions, 1% in transport, and 9% in other occupations.[1]

Let us now consider the agricultural products of the country. Jowar, bajri, rice and wheat grow abundantly throughout the region. Surat and Ahmedabad grow an abundance of rice; Ahmedabad is rich in jowar and rice, and grows bajri and wheat plentifully. The bajri of Kaira is well known throughout the land, while its rice is of a rich variety. Broach grows jowar and wheat throughout its limits; and rice of good quality is cultivated in its southern parts. The Surat district, with its abundant rains, grows large quantities of rice; in its north large quantities of jowar are raised. Besides these, cereals of poorer quality like nāgli, wāri and kodrā are grown throughout the country. Gram, udid, tūr, mug and maize are also grown plentifully in the whole region.

Sugar-cane is grown abundantly throughout the region, though the Surat district takes the lead due to its rich water supply; but the northern parts of Ahmedabad yield a large supply of good sugar-cane raised with the help of irrigation. Equal quantities of molasses are made out of sugar-cane throughout the whole region.

Ahmedabad, Kaira, the Panchmahals and Broach grow very large quantities of oil-seeds. Groundnuts are grown in the Panchmahals and parts of Broach district.

Besides these, tobacco is grown in the region: Kaira leads, and Broach is a good second.

Of fruits, mangoes, bananas and guavas of Surat district are famous. Broach is known for its guavas, and Ahmedabad for its pomegranates, oranges and lemons. Coconut is absent; but the

[1] Op. cit., Table on pp. 174–187, 212–221.

date-palm, which is abundant in the southern parts of the region, is used for tapping toddy.

In an agricultural country cattle should naturally form part of its wealth. Oxen are mostly used for ploughing and draught purposes. The cattle of the southern parts are usually of a good variety, mostly akin to the Sindh breed; but Kaira owns the best cattle of Gujarat. Taking the area under cultivation with reference to a pair of cattle per acre of land as the ideal, Ahmedabad is the poorest, while Surat and Broach may be said to be satisfactory.

For purposes of dairy produce the buffalo is preferred to the cow for the rich fat contents of its milk. In olden times the cow used to be venerated and worshipped; but the poverty of its milk has displaced it from its old position. However, the ox is preferred to the he-buffalo so far as draught purposes are concerned, because it is easier and more economical to keep the ox.

The historical sketch which follows is designed to give due emphasis to the events which conspired to place the folk of the region in a certain, namely, definitely defensive, position during several centuries. This state of affairs reacted very sternly on the life of the people; for they lived perpetually under the menace of violence. Therefore, their society, like the snail, drew itself up into its shell, and lived thus for a long time. In such circumstances a society, if it is to preserve itself, demands unquestioning obedience from its members, the powers of its 'elders' increases without limits, and its structure becomes so unhealthily conservative that even the slightest necessary change is looked upon with intense suspicion and misgiving, much less contemplated. Evils crop up and multiply; lotions and patches may be freely resorted to—but no one dare suggest an operation to eradicate the cause of the rot. Thus it happened in Gujarat. Its history has

been like the history of all regions similarly situated. For, the clue to its vicissitudes may be found in the fact that it is a fertile region set amidst more or less barren surroundings. The dominant historical note, consequently, is political instability.

We are not concerned here with the very early history of the region. Its present appellation is derived from the name of the tribe of Gurjars which settled here about the 6th century A.D.; for 'Gujarat' is a corruption of Gurjara-Rāshtra, the country of the Gurjaras.[1] Hiuen Tsiang, the Chinese pilgrim (640 A.D.), knew of the kingdom of Broach, and a Gurjar kingdom farther north which he calls Kiu-che-lo,[2] having its capital at Pi-lo-mo-lo,[2] which is possibly identical with Bhilmal or Bhinmal (better known as Shrimāl) in the Jodhpur State.

In the ninth century, Gujarat comprised the country north of Ajmere and the Sambhar Lake; from the 10th to the 13th centuries 'Gujarat' meant the Solanki kingdom of Anhilwāda; whilst during the Musulman period (1297–1760) the name was applied to the province that was governed first from Anhilwāda and then from Ahmedabad.

Now, for our purposes, the history of Gujarat may be divided into two periods: the pre-Mahomedan and the post-Mahomedan. Of the condition of Gujarat in the first period we know comparatively little. But it always seems to have been a province much coveted and fought for by various peoples; indeed, within the period B.C. 319 to A.D. 1300, Gujarat was won and ruled and lost by thirteen dynasties; while again, between 1300 and 1819 it changed hands four times. The country was in disorder when the Musulmans took possession of it in 1297.[3] "There was much

[1] Bom. Gaz., Vol. I, pt. I, p. 85.
[2] Ibid., p. 3.
[3] Ibid., p. 217.

confusion throughout the province, and little in the way of government beyond the exercise of military force."[1]

The "Ahmedabad Kings" ruled from 1403–1573. This period was, on the whole, a time of strong government and growing power and prosperity. The country was well cultivated; trade and manufactures flourished; and the amount of territorial revenue to the royal treasury is said, in prosperous times, to have been about £5,840,000.[2] But about 1530 came the Moghuls; and from that time till 1573 when the Emperor Akbar annexed the province, disorder and misrule prevailed. But such was the structure of society in Gujarat that, in spite of these forty years of disorder, the province retained enough of its former prosperity to be able to boast that it was still "the finest country in Hindustan"—a boast the truth of which was shortly afterwards (in 1590) borne out by Abul Fazl in the *Ain-e-Akbari*.[3]

The Moghul rule, which lasted from 1573–1760, may also be divided into two distinct periods. The Moghuls realizing the value of their newest prize, ruled well under the guidance of wise sovereigns. This good fortune for Gujarat lasted from 1573 to about 1700.[4] The area of the province was considerably curtailed, and the remaining districts were administered directly by imperial officers.[5] It should also be noted that Akbar correspondingly reduced the state-demand of revenue from the province.[6] The revenue during prosperous times averaged two crores of rupees annually. Tax on land was assessed and gathered in a fair manner;

[1] Op. cit., Vol. I, pt. I, p. 217.
[2] Ibid., pp. 218-19.
[3] Ibid., p. 221.
[4] Ibid., p. 221.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

for "in surveyed districts the amount paid was determined by the area and character of the land under cultivation".[1] A large amount of foreign trade was carried on from the ports of Surat, Broach and Cambay. "The benefit of this trade overflowed upon the country, which became a garden and enriched the treasury of the prince. The noble mosques and colleges, and palaces and tombs, the remains of which still adorn the capital city and other cities, now in ruins, prove both the wealth and the taste of the founders."[2] In fact, during almost the whole of the 17th century, except for the sacking of Ahmedabad, Cambay and Surat between 1573 and 1609,[3] the province was prosperous and contented; and "its cities were the wonder of European travellers".[4]

But unhappily for Gujarat, the tide of fortune soon turned. Maratha raids had begun as early as 1609, and later on Shivaji had proved troublesome enough. From 1711 these invasions became annual, and the Marathas established themselves successively at Songadh (1719), Champaner (1723) and Baroda (1734). The beginning of the end came during the governorship of Sarbulandkhan (1723–30), who farmed out the revenues and admitted the Maratha claims to the *Chauth* and *Sardeshmukhi* imposts. The Delhi Court continued to support its Viceroys till 1748; but absolute anarchy prevailed in the province, now ravaged by the hostile leaders of the Peshwa's and the Gaikwar's armies, now by the Rajas of Jodhpur and the agents of Nizam-ul-Mulk. Besides, local Moslem chiefs established themselves in certain areas of the province, mostly in order to enrich themselves quickly. To complete the

[1] Op. cit., p. 223.
[2] Cf. Erskine: History of India, Vol. I, p. 21.
[3] Cf. Bom. Gaz., Vol. I, pt. 1, p. 224.
[4] Ibid., p. 225.

misery, famines blighted the province in the years 1719, 1732 and 1747. The fair land was thus once more in the throes of disintegration; it was being dismembered and its limbs were being torn and bargained for, to serve the greed of the less fortunate and more needy barbarians from outside.

The Maratha ascendancy lasted from 1760 to 1819. Their rule differed essentially from previous governments. For, while even the Mahomedans made the country their own in more senses than one—giving it good government and peace, for however short a time—"from first to last the Maratha interests in Gujarat were, except at one or two special junctures, simply pecuniary ones".[1] For, "in comparison with other countries within reach of Maratha arms, Gujarat has always had a very large proportion of inhabitants engaged in commerce and manufacturing industries".[2] And so Gujarat was parcelled out among a number of local chiefs who carried on ceaseless wars, which the Marathas had no wish to suppress so long as their share of the plunder was secured. Clearly, therefore, (as far as we know), the Maratha governors who had divided Gujarat amongst themselves, never had the foresight and statesmanship to combine together as shareholders in a promising joint-concern "into a cohesion and unity that they might have made politically useful against the Poona influence".[3] And such a state of affairs went on till the Gaekwar was detached from the inter-quarrelling Maratha confederacy by his acceptance of British protection in 1782, and "the establishment of a powerful and independent Court at Baroda".[4] There was very little improvement in the government during this

1 Bom. Gaz., Vol. I, pt. I, p. 429.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 430.
4 Ibid., p. 432.

period, though a semblance of order was preserved by the British from 1782–1799, when the Gaekwar took Ahmedabad and imprisoned the Peshwa's agent.

The territorial arrangements of Gujarat settled down to their present form in 1819 after the overthrow of the Peshwa, when "the whole of his rights in Gujarat passed in sovereignty to the British".[1] The country is now divided between (1) the British Districts of Ahmedabad, Broach, Kaira, the Panchmahals and Surat; (2) the State of Baroda; and (3) a number of small Native States. Needless to say, since 1819 Gujarat has settled down into a calm and peaceful security; this has been seldom broken, except during the fearful famine years 1857–59,[2] and again during 1899–1902 when devastating famines descended upon it. The severity of the first famine may be gauged from the fact that not even a long period of prosperity was sufficient to make the people and the officials prepared to stand the calamities that followed.

It will be seen now, from this brief review, that the history of this rich province is a record of oscillations, varying in rapidity and violence according to the nature of its conquerors and conquest. And the sharpness of its fortunes is to be particularly marked, because it was this that bred in the people a perpetual sense of insecurity. Instability seems to be the dominant factor in the situation. No sooner had one conqueror settled down to his acquisition than another was sure to make a bid for the prize. For Gujarat was verily a rich prize, from all accounts. And the conquest was always made easier by the fact that the population seems never to have been militarily efficient. "The fertility of the soil and the facilities the country

[1] Op. cit., p. 428.
[2] Ibid., pp. 433-48.

afforded for commerce and manufactures, both tended to make it unlikely to become a field for military recruitment. The inhabitants of the towns had fixed lucrative occupations; the cultivators, mostly of a class which on account of the fertility of their land, neither Mahomedan nor Maratha had been able to impoverish."[1] And "the warlike tribes of Gujarat were too proud by birth and position to engage themselves to fight for any but their own race and interest".[2] This made the way all the more clear for outside interference. But, as usual, the people suffered, and very few opportunities indeed were allowed them to work their own and the country's potentialities to their full. "The frequent passages of hostile armies and other causes had left much culturable land a desert."[3] And this reaction of events is one of the important factors the effect of which on a civilized folk is to be studied in the following pages.

We have now come to a point when we may take a general survey of Gujarat. It is a rich and fertile tract of land blessed with river courses and a variety of soils which bring forth plenty for man. But just as its riches are blessings, the poverty of its surrounding areas has always been a curse. Foreign hordes have poured into this region from times immemorial, whether for war, for colonization, or for shelter. In consequence, Gujarat has become the home of many peoples with various cultures and different traditions. It is therefore a cauldron wherein many castes and folks are brought together; it has thus been facing problems of the conflict and assimilation of the various cultures that have poured into it throughout history.

[1] Op. cit., p. 430.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid., p. 431.

One who comes face to face with the social problems of Gujarat, finds himself surrounded by peoples ranging from desert and mountain cultures with their peculiar modes of living, to forest, plain and riverside cultures of the homeland of Gujarat. A spirit of adventure is always present in this atmosphere. It is this spirit which brought peoples of lands, far and near, into the country; it is this very spirit that has enabled the people of Gujarat to wander far and near, to colonize in distant Africa, and to divert the region's commercial activities to a place like Bombay. The Gujarati represents the spirit of modern India in many ways, a spirit of adventure of a peaceful, realistic and practical nature.

The migration of the people of Gujarat to the south is the direct result of the rise of British commerce in the east. Within and without Gujarat, industrialism has been established considerably due to their exertions. Though seemingly orthodox, the Gujarati has availed himself of the quick means of transport and the great human activities brought forth by it. Therefore the boundaries of Gujarat have expanded to the south up to the limits of Bombay, just as in a cultural sense they embrace the shores of Dwarka.

Division II.

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION.

Introductory.
Ch. II. Dharma.
Ch. III. Mata.
Ch. IV. Mārga.
Ch. V. Sampradāya.

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION.

INTRODUCTORY.[1]

A description of the religious life and organization of the people of any region must necessarily take a review, not only of the doctrinal part of the sects and the beliefs that arise out of the same, but also of the actual, positive facts of their life. For, in fact, these may not have any necessary connection with the modes of living and thinking of the people at any particular period of their history. This represents one of the chief difficulties for students of the religious and social life of a people who claim that the spirit of the culture of all their forefathers is actually present in all the departments of their life, religious and social, individual and group. If one tries to pursue the matter with assiduity, he finds to his surprise that most of the people who put forward such claims, know little or nothing about the culture they claim as their own; nor can they explain, except fragmentarily, to what extent it persists in their life. We therefore only superficially learn from them of the actual historical meaning of the cultural content which the tenor of their life and beliefs represents.

The Hindu claims that his present religion and culture are in a direct line of continuity with the Vedas. When the modernity of his life and belief, the remoteness, and even contradictions between them and those taught in the Vedas, are demonstrated to him, he is apt to resent it, especially when confronted with the actual sorrowful plight in which

[1] NOTE.—I am much indebted to several classics on Hinduism and on Hindu Literature for this Introductory note. I must specially mention Principal A. B. Dhruva's Hinduism amongst these.

Hindu society finds itself. He usually dislikes the idea that all he says and thinks, is not essentially related to the history and beliefs of his forefathers. So much so, that even the beliefs and convictions that have been growing into him obviously due to the Western contact, are sought to be related by him to some element or another from the hoary past of India; and he often tries to seek justification for his traditional beliefs in terms of the logic of Western science. All this reveals the inherent feelings and tendencies of the Hindu mind which tries to relate everything it believes to the past, near and remote, which it calls its very own. Orthodox Hindu sects always appeal to the past; only, the meaning of 'the past' changes with each of them according as it serves to justify the doctrines that happen to be in vogue with them. Even advanced sects, like the Arya Samaj, appeal to the Vedas as the best of human heritage; their criticism of the historical changes and developments, as manifest in the doctrines of the sects that ally themselves to the Vedas, and their insistence on re-establishing the religion of the Vedas, are no less characteristic of this very mentality.

It will thus be clear that a study of the deeper springs of the life and culture of the Vaishnavas of Gujarat presupposes a general understanding of the historical influences out of which they arise. We must, therefore, envisage the panorama of facts and study the progress of Indian Hindu culture as a whole in order to set in right proportions the rôle the whole plays in the making of each one of the parts now before us. Each of these aspects tries to portray an image of the whole with reference to a definite point of view which it assumes as legitimately arising out of the fountain-head of the Vedas.

Let us, therefore, take a brief survey of the course

of the Vedic religion and culture, in order to link up its historical relation with the religious life of the Vaishnavas of Gujarat.

In the Vedas, human life is depicted as an attempt to understand and determine the place of the forces of nature with a view to the management and direction of human affairs. In this sense, and to this extent, human life is conceived as a life of action. As nature reveals its powers and attitudes (in terms of change, order and development), man comes to realize their importance in his life, and declares the glory of their strength and resourcefulness in prayers, and praise. If we analyze these prayers with their theories and rituals, they give us composite outlines of the science and philosophy of nature, of man, and of the ultimate, as the seers of the Vedas taught and practised.

During the Vedic times, man finds himself surrounded with the myriad ways in which nature displays itself. He found out that nature was like a double-edged sword: on the one hand it revealed a kingdom of order and benignity; and it was a reign of storm and destruction on the other. He vaguely saw in nature certain, unbending, inalienable and necessary elements that ruled the events and course of his life. Realizing that he had to deal with such powerful forces, he chose the line of least resistance in adjusting his relations with them; in praising their boons and in propitiating their wrath he found out the way to victory in the course of action in his life. So, along lines of co-operation he tried to define the rôle of each of these in the active life of man. Pleasing them, praising them, behaving according to what he considered were their laws and their order, asking for their blessings, offering them the very best he possessed, man found out the way of stabilizing human existence.

So he felt called upon to deify the several forms

of nature in his prayers and hymns of praise. These deities came to be worshipped at *Yajñas* wherein, along with the repetition of prayers and the singing of hymns, man offered the best he possessed (e.g., milk, butter, corn, fruits, cattle and other good things of life) as dedication to the gods whose laws he yearned to understand and obey, whose blessings he sought, whose mercy he prayed for, and whom he thanked for the boons they were bestowing upon him. These offerings of the very best of his possessions, and his prayers of supplication and thanksgiving, are indicative of a spirit of action modified by a prayerful self-surrender, and consequent reliance on the good will of the gods to worship whom he undertook to perform the *Yajña*. Therefore all work, all the affairs of human life—personal, social, occupational, economic—began with some dedicatory rites which invoked the aid, good will and blessings of the gods. In fact, the success or failure of any human undertaking depended not upon human will, expectations, or hopes, but upon the will of the gods. Agni, the god of fire, was the keeper of the home; Agni interpreted to man the will of the gods. And Agni carried the prayers of the devotee to the gods. Fire was therefore kept burning day and night in the home; it was worshipped daily; and, for all practical purposes, life at home was ruled by the sanctity and reverence that gathered round the fire-place. In this sense, human life and the things thereof were regarded as dedications to the service of the gods; and the *Yajña*, its rituals and its hymns are symbolic of a life of action—of work and deeds—on the part of man in a spirit of dedication and self-surrender, thus revealing the realization by man of his natural and active rôle for the further unfolding of the divine scheme of the Universe. And so, ravages to man's life by nature's violence were usually connected with the wrath of

the gods due to man's waywardness, wrongdoing and sin, by his not conducting himself according to the will of the gods.

In this process of deifying the powers of nature, and wisely adjusting the tenor of his life in their midst, uniformities and other secrets of nature were revealed to man in terms of *Rita*, *Vritta* and *Dharma*, the very essence and embodiment of whose nature was declared as manifest in the *Brahman*, " the one and only truth which the wise describe in many ways ".

This natural and simple life of action and devotion round *Yajñas*, as portrayed in the Rig Veda, develops into a kind of philosophical attitude as manifest in the Yajurveda. The process continues further in the Brahamanas, where the character and nature of the several forms of sacrifices now begin to be discussed; a rationalization of the religion of *Yajñas*, as described in the Samhitas, is sought to be made; thus a classification of the *Yajñas*, their nature, their significance in human life, their relations with the gods, their worship of the one God as *Prajapati*, are now shaped into a system in the Brahamanas.

Then comes a period, called Āranyakas, during which man retires from the ordinary pursuits of life into the forests, tries to direct the course of his life according to the teachings of the Samhitas and the Brahamanas, and seeks to reflect deeply in order to understand the why and wherefore of human existence, and the ultimate justification and nature of the same. *Yajña* still persists as the fundamental centre around which his life revolves; but the major tenor of this life of *Yajña* now directs itself to a systematic consideration of things in the midst of rituals and prayers.

This tendency to philosophize, to arrive at an understanding of truth and reality, and to seek the meaning of life, completes its purpose in the

Upanishads. In the Samhitas, the Ṛishis prayed for their daily bread, for brave sons, for the protection of their person and property, and for the satisfaction of such other human needs. But the writers of the Upanishads proclaim, "Wealth can never satisfy the real longings of the human heart; even if the whole world was filled with gold, that could never secure immortality for man". Thus, beginning with the Samhitas, man's silent longing to understand the depths of human life and to direct it in the light of that understanding, ultimately blossoms forth, through several stages and in a variety of ways, in the Upanishads.

The Upanishads deal with four fundamental problems, each related to the others. Some Upanishads deal with the problem of *jñana* (knowledge); others discuss the problem of *yoga*; some try to unveil the weird mysteries of *vairagya*; while others seek to proclaim the nature of the gods, their incarnations, and the glory of man's devoted prayers and offerings to them. Out of all these discussions emerge for the first time a definite philosophy asserting (1) that the *jñana-mārga* is the religion of proper *yajña*, rather than the ritualistic sacrifices practised by the Vedic seers; (2) that rebirths are definitely the main outcome of a life of action; and (3) that therefore *jñana* which gives unto man the true knowledge of the ultimate, is the way that brings the final death whereby the unending process of rebirths ceases to operate. *Yajñas* must have become so degenerated into mere ritualistic observances that man proclaims his disgust of the same by saying: "These boats of Yajña are so fragile; think not over the many words of the scriptures, for they will bring you fatigue. What shall I do with these? for they cannot secure immortality for me. Grant me, O Lord, that Knowledge which has secured immortality for Thee."

Besides the Brahamanas, Āraṇyakas and Upanishads, we have the sciences grouped under the Vedangas and the Upavedas which are concerned with the theory and practice of the active—ritualistic, social and public, as against the contemplative—side of human life. There are six Vedangas, the first four of which, viz., phonetics, metre, grammar and etymology, were "meant to serve as aids to the correct understanding of the sacred texts".[1] The other two, viz., *Kalpa* and *Jyotish*, "deal with the religious rites or duties, and their proper seasons".[2] Besides, there are the four Upavedas, each one of which is attached to one of the four Vedas. Thus the Ayurveda (science of medicine), the Dhanurveda (military science), the Gandharvaveda (science of music), and the Sthapatyaveda (mechanics), are said to arise out of the Rig Veda, the Yajurveda, the Samveda and the Atharvaveda respectively. It will be clear that all these ten sub-sciences have their own importance in the proper organization and management of life itself, which is conceived as a *Yajña*. Of these, the Kalpa refers to the actual performance of the duties of man in terms of his personal and public behaviour, and of the rituals appropriate thereto. The Kalpasutras develop into three interdependent branches: (1) the Śroutasutras concern themselves with acts connected with *Yajñas* of a public nature; (2) the Grihasutras prescribe the personal and domestic life of householders; and (3) the Dharmasutras give an account of the life of man with reference to his duties as a member of the community.

Later on, the Grihasutras and Dharmasutras got co-ordinated into a tradition upon which the Hindu society now rests; and out of this co-ordination

[1] Macdonell, A. A.: History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 264.
[2] Ibid., p. 264.

several famous schools of thought, concerned with human conduct, have arisen from time to time. The most important of these are the Manusmriti; the Yajñavalkyasmriti and the Parasharsmriti.[1]

The third aspect of the Vedic religion, viz., Bhakti, has not yet been referred to by us with reference to its historical evolution. Essentially, Bhakti is not the theory of a doctrine; nor is it the statement of a theory of life which need necessarily be stated in terms of a philosophy. Bhakti refers essentially to an attitude—a spiritual attitude. The formulation of a theory of this attitude would prove an absurd undertaking, at least in the early history of man; for, in the main, it is decided by the inner springs of the deepest and the subtlest of man's being. The Vedic seers, each in his own way, declared the glory of prayer and the peace which it yields. Like the flavour of the flower, it reveals the very inmost heart of man's self-surrender in the *Yajñas* of the Vedic ancestors. The philosophy behind the *Yajñas*, and the rituals of *Yajñas*, were the heritage of but a few; but the devotional element in the Vedas and the Vedic scriptures has been all the time known, understood, experienced and lived by all, men and women alike. Therefore, naturally, what was not understood and had yet to be observed was thought over and systematized; but what formed the very nature of man's being as a whole, that needed no statement in terms of a theory that must stand the test of verification or proof. It was stated; it was lived in actual life; it was so individual, yet so universal, that it needed no support to prove its existence, or justify it; nor was there felt a need regarding the definiteness of its form or character. A heart full of devotion pours its life in prayers to God; and in answer to such pourings

[1] Cf. Dhruva, A. B.: Hindu Dharma, p. 94.

God in His mercy speaks, and teaches His way unto man, and gives him the peace that harmonizes the conflicting interests of his life,—a peace that passeth understanding.

So in terms of hymns, prayers, and parables which tell the story of man's forgetting himself, giving himself up, and even dying for the sake of the ideals which are revealed to him in the silence of his heart, Bhakti has been going its glorious march through Indian religious history. Perhaps a systematic discussion of the theory and practice of *Bhakti* was left out in the Vedic traditions because *Bhakti* is concerned with the very basic elements of the life of the natural man. The Sudras, and perhaps the *Vaiśyas*, who were but little thought of as seeking the way for salvation so far as their linking themselves with the Ultimate was concerned, had, besides this life of *Bhakti*, perhaps to live mainly in order to serve the Brahmins; this was considered enough for them to seek to accomplish in life; and so far as relations between human beings and the things of the world were concerned, they were settled by the laws made by the Brahmins, which slowly but surely came to be defined in the Dharmashastras.

Therefore *Bhakti* was only illustrated and mentioned without any doctrinal paraphernalia in the early scriptures. Later, the Ramayan illustrates it in terms of family, social and domestic affections. In the Mahabharata, the Gītā declares, for the first time in the history of Hinduism, that *Bhakti* is the highest form of the religious attitude. And the *Bhakti* tradition, supposed to be handed down orally through generations of saintly men and women, is said to be ultimately recorded in the Puranas as a popular philosophy of the highest and the best that men and women should live for, and strive to serve.

We have already alluded to the *Bhakti* religion as the popular side of the history of Hindu religion which fed the hungry springs of the life of common men and women of the non-privileged classes. It presupposes a condition of life, intellectual, social and religious, which needed a revolt on the part of those whose very thoughts were suppressed; and it needed a purging, a self-chastisement and purification on the part of those who thus mismanaged the direction of human life by means of tyrannies which the gods only dared perpetrate in the *Rig Veda*. The Brahmins had kept to themselves the right to think and direct; the rest of Hindu humanity had not to think or to question why, but to do and live as ordained by the Brahmins. So arose two big movements, headed by two Kshatriyas to punish, to destroy and even to supplant Brahmanism. Truth, reality and goodness, life itself, demanded a new consideration, not built on the old structures of the Vedas and Vedic lore, but independently of them, directly by meditation, self-searching, by self-finding in accordance with reason and equity. These were the signs of the times when these two movements started giving their theories of the meaning, destiny, direction and management of human life and relations, and the universe which surrounds it. For a thousand years this restating, this rehabilitating of the rights and privileges of the common man went on, not without difficulties, not without strife, not without mistakes. Naturally during the early stages of this revolution, the purity of the solutions of their problems, and the sincerity with which they were handled by the leaders are manifest. But the dross of the old—perhaps, historical, social and geographical—tradition gathered round these, spoiled them, and both these movements assumed the formalistic, dogmatic, ritualistic character of the old Brahmanical religion and culture.

During this period of a thousand years, lying low, the caretakers of the Vedic laws and learning sought to purge their old culture of the many deficiencies and blemishes that were pointed out by Buddhism and Jainism; and they sought to absorb the best of Buddhist and Jain doctrines. Thus when the time came, as it did come, Brahamanism came out with a new statement of the religion of the Vedas. A thousand years had elapsed between the old and new; so this Neo-Brahmanism had to restate, re-establish, re-interpret the whole of the ancient law in order that it may become adequate to serve the new demands of life, and organize it accordingly.

In this new movement Yajña is reinterpreted; *Jñyāna, Karma* and *Bhakti* are reinstated. A justification of each is sought to be given in a philosophy in terms of doctrines or *Mata.* Statements of the conduct of human life and behaviour—personal, social and public—get crystallized in the *Smritis.* And *Bhakti* is given its due position within each of these *Matas.*

In accordance with each of these *Matas* the several pathways or *Margas* are settled. Each of these points to a major key that settles the general tenor and tone of the rhythm of life—personal, social, religious—of those that follow the *Mata.* Now, both the pathway and the doctrine gather round the personality of a teacher who gives a synthesis of the two into a well-modulated theory and practice of organized life. This synthesis is called a *Sampradaya.* Now with reference to the need of a *Sampradaya,* Dharma has to consider man's life in all its bearings, and give general and specific directions regarding human behaviour—personal, social and public.

In the chapters that follow we shall consider each one of these four factors, these four facets of

a composite whole, interdependent and inseparable, yet analyzable in terms of different correlations. We shall start with the most general and vital of these, viz., *Dharma*. *Dharma* enunciates essentially the fundamental reasons, the general basis, and the main necessities that the very existence of life itself connotes. *Mata* and *Marga*, taking these for granted as true, seek to formulate doctrines, theories and pathways in accordance with this general structure of *Dharma*. The *Sampradāyas* seek to establish one or the other of the possible alternative syntheses; thereby the *Sampradāya* modifies not only the general statement of the doctrine and the pathway, but also the general and specific meaning of *Dharma* itself.

CHAPTER II.

DHARMA.

It is difficult to give the exact meaning of Dharma; for, the expression has been used throughout the history of Hinduism with a change in its meaning from time to time. Indian and European writers have used the word in a variety of senses. Some translate it as duty, some as law, some as virtue, and some as religion; others say that it means 'the law of being', and that a man's Dharma is his ideal. Now none of these by itself completely embraces the connotation that the word Dharma conveys.[1]

In the Rig Veda several expressions occur to denote law and order. These are *Ṛita*, *Dharman* and *Vrata*. *Ṛita* is concerned with the order of the cosmic and moral worlds; it forbids and commands positive action; and generally it directs the order of things as it ought to be.[2] Now 'law' is expressed by both *Vrata* and *Dharman*. *Dharman* denotes "that which supports and that which is supported; it applies, like *Ṛita*, to all aspects of the world, to the sequence of events in nature, to sacrifice and to man's life; 'the gods by the sacrifice offered the sacrifice; these were the first ordinances', says the *Puruṣa* hymn; it is according to *Dharman* that the sacrificial flame is enkindled, that the pious man duly propagates offspring".[3] *Vrata* "in any case often denotes the command or law of a deity; thus on *Varuna* the laws rest firmly as on a rock, and the gods make the abiding laws;

[1] McKenzie, J.: Hindu Ethics, p. 38.
[2] Keith, A. B.: Religion and Philosophy, etc., pp. 248-49.
[3] Ibid., p. 249.

under the law of *Indra* are *Varuna* and the Sun, the streams obey his laws; before *Parjanya's* law the earth bows; the pious man lives righteously according to the law. The term could be applied more widely: under the law of the king the rich man prospers; the bridegroom brings the heart of the bride under his command. A further development gives the term a sense of the rule of life or of ritual conduct which men observe, as commanded originally; thus, we hear of the *Vrata* of the carpenter, doctor, priest or smith, or of the Brahmans who keep their year-long *Vrata.*" [1]

In the Mahabharata there are three main places where Dharma is discussed. In the Karnaparva, it is made definite that "that which holds together the peoples is Dharma".[2] In the Shantiparva, the scope of Dharma is defined as concerned with the duties of kings and subjects, of the four orders, and of the four modes of life; besides, Dharma is supposed to ordain the duties of man as man; and duties suited to every stage of evolution are discussed with reference to their mutual relations, and the distinctions between them are also laid down. In the Gītā, Dharma is discussed in different places, where its meaning is decided with reference to the perfection that each man is enjoined upon to reach by the performance of the *Karmas* (actions) which are the concrete embodiment of the existing nature of the qualities inherent in each one of us.[3] Thus, *Karma* and Dharma are seen as two interdependent forces which guide the destinies of human existence, and settle the meaning of life for man; Dharma reveals certain conditions of the inner nature within each one of us in accordance with which the individual is called upon to evolve towards perfection in terms

[1] Keith, A. B.: Religion and Philosophy, etc., p. 249.
[2] LXIX. 59.
[3] Gītā, XVIII.

of action and behaviour that mould his relations with the outside world. Dharma is thus not concerned with the outside order of things; it is concerned with the very inmost nature, condition and law of our being. The Lord Krishna advises Arjuna, "Perform thou the deeds of action allotted to thee; these are superior to inaction"[1]; and "actions other than those by way of *Yajñas* would bind men; therefore, O! son of Kunti, do thy work, free from all thoughts of self, in the spirit of *Yajña*".[2] In the end the Lord Krishna asks Arjuna: "Rest thy mind on Me; become My devotee; worship Me; and prostrate thyself before Me".[3] "Leaving all Dharmas come unto Me alone as thy refuge; and grieve not, I will absolve thee from all sin."[4] "I declare unto thee that thou shalt come unto Me; for thou art so dear unto Me."[5]

We have already mentioned in the *Introduction* how the *Kulpasutras* develop the *Śraotasutras*, Grihasutras and Dharmasutras, which deal with the actual performance of a man's public and private duties, and his conduct with reference thereto. As we have already said, in later times a co-ordination of these three is brought about in comprehensive codes that prescribe the duties of man. And technically one or more of these are now looked upon as authorities on Dharma.

Thus the laws of *Karma* and Dharma here restate the laws of *Yajña* as taught in the Vedas, the correct flavour of which is revealed, as we have seen, by Dharma and *Vrata*.

The above preliminary discussion will make it clear that every individual, according to Hinduism, is born owing to the *Karmas* of his former births by the due performance of the Dharmas through which,

[1] Gita, III. 8.
[2] Ibid., III. 9.
[3] Ibid., XVIII. 65.
[4] Ibid., XVIII. 66.
[5] Ibid., XVIII. 65.

the scriptures preach, he or she should seek salvation, that is freedom from rebirths, or freedom of the types taught in the scriptures. Every individual person is therefore supposed to be directing his or her existence along the right lines in terms of the four *Purushārthas*; that is to say, he has to find out how to adjust the course of his life in the midst of the four elemental factors that govern his existence.

The Dharmaṣāstras have analyzed the various fundamental directions in terms of which man's life expresses itself. This analysis has indicated four possible forces, the four *Purushārthas*, in the midst of which man has to find out and direct the actual course of his life.

These four *Purushārthas* are *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Moksha*. Dharma here refers to the injunction of the scriptures to man to do certain acts in life, and to avoid doing certain other acts. For instance, when it refers to *Varna* and *Āshrama*, Dharma means the rules of conduct laid down for persons belonging to the four Varnas and the four Āshramas. These rules of conduct are supposed to uphold the equilibrium of the social life of man, as also his personal evolution towards perfection. The second *Purushārtha*, viz., *Artha*, refers to wealth and all the material means of enjoying life and the happiness of this world. These means of happiness are supposed to be not always antagonistic to spiritual growth; in fact, it is directed that they are meant for the promotion and welfare of Dharma; in this sense wealth is considered one of the most powerful means of serving the ends of Dharma. *Kāma* means desire, and refers to the desire for personal happiness in life as made available by the satisfaction of the senses and sex, and all that it brings in its train. In fact without this urge to satisfy such personal wishes, inclinations and instincts, man would care little for the gathering and

use of wealth and the things of the world. Moksha means freedom—freedom from ignorance, from sin, from pain, which are due to the ties of worldliness (*samsara*). It is therefore the best of the *Purushārthas*; and it is urged that if man could only follow the *Varna* and *Ashrama* Dharmas, he would be free from the ignorance and pain of *samsara* and would attain Moksha.

Now *Moksha* is of four types: *Sālokya*, which brings membership of the heavenly abode; *Sārupya*, in which, by attaining the qualities and strength of the Ultimate *Moksha* is attained; *Sāyujya*, which is characterized by the merging of the individual soul into God; and *Kaivalya*, wherein freeing himself from the ties of worldliness, the individual dedicates his entire being for the service of the living God for its own sake. These four *Purushārthas* are depicted in their proper setting and their varied forms in the *Mahābhārata*, in the *Purānas*, and in the local folklores all over India.

Hinduism teaches that each one of us is born to achieve *Moksha*, that is salvation. Life is therefore the struggle of Dharma in terms of *Artha* and *Kāma*, to achieve this end. Dharma therefore seeks to co-operate with *Artha* and *Kāma* to achieve the final end of existence, viz., *Moksha*.

Now *Artha* and *Kāma* are born of the very nature of man, abundantly given by the very birth and what it brings in its train of the material, social and bodily heritage. And Dharma is also born simultaneously; but in a lesser measure, perhaps as natural instinct. It is to be discerned in the cultural heritage of the people as manifest in their personal character, beliefs and their way of life, for they are supposed to use these Dharmas as the motive and guiding power of their life of *Artha* and *Kāma*, helping them to achieve the great end of their existence, that is to say, *Moksha*.

According to the Vallabha traditions, *Moksha* means a state of complete self-surrender and unselfish love for God; and in this sense *Dharma, Artha* and *Kāma* are just instruments to serve this very end. *Moksha* may thus be said to be a means to an end, rather than an end in itself.

Now a person may follow one or the other of the *Purushārthas* at any given time. But generally he is supposed to divide himself equitably among all the four. He rarely follows only one of them for its own sake; though he usually persuades himself to believe that when he follows any one of them he does not necessarily neglect the rest; but when he does so, he thereby seeks to avoid dividing his energies simultaneously among the four. Each of the four, he persuades himself to believe, should have its own proper time through the several stages of his life during which he should deal with each in its turn concentratedly. Really speaking, these four principles that govern man's life are not so mutually exclusive; they are interdependent factors that work together whether man will it or not; and they should co-operate in order that the individual may be enabled to bring forth the fullness of his powers at any stage of his development, if man only gives to each its due place and expression in his life. If this is done, the equilibrium and harmony of his personal evolution will be secured, and if, along with and in virtue of these, man observes the laws of *Varna*, the equilibrium of social life must also follow.

If we look at the *Purushārthas* and try to find out their meaning and significance as *Yajñas*, we shall see how all the *Purushārthas* converge towards the one end, viz., of *Moksha* in any of its forms, each of which is a *Yajña* or merging on the part of the individual with the Ultimate.

Thus Dharma refers to the *Karmas*, that is to say,

the right mode of behaviour of the individual with reference to himself, to his family, to his caste, to his Varna, to humanity, and to the rest of the world in general; and it gives general directions for the functions and organization of each of these with reference to the others for the well-being of the entire universe. Let us now take, one by one, each of these aspects of Dharma and see how the doctrine of Dharma is in a variety of ways the all-pervading issue in the life of Hindus of all sects, races and provinces.

To begin with, let us consider the individual with reference to the duties he owes to himself. And firstly, these duties are with reference to the proper maintenance of his own physical and mental well-being. The body requires cleaning, the breath requires a proper rhythm, the body-energy requires to be recuperated from time to time with nutriment, the several limbs of the body need training, and so on. All these are detailed in the *Āhniks*. Detailed instructions for the individual as to how and what to do in regard to the usual occurrences of daily life are given in these.

The Dharmas of the individual as an individual are different, and fundamentally so, for the male and the female. So we speak of *Purusha Dharma* and *Stree Dharma*. The *Purusha Dharmas* are usually discussed more fully; the duties of women, on the other hand, are supposed to be within the cognizance of man, and man-made laws and customs.

The Dharma of an individual is also dependent upon his or her civil status and position in life. The Dharma of a king is different from that of a subject. The Dharma of a master is different from that of a servant. The Dharma of a woman also differs according to her status in the family, and with reference to her rôle in life, viz., maidenhood, wife-

hood, motherhood, widowhood, or as an elder of the family.

The most general conception of Dharma is considered binding on all men and women as members of the species homo. Throughout the Hindu scriptures it has been retained in a variety of ways. The Mahabharata gives two lists of Dharmas; the Bhagvata gives another list; Vashistha Dharmashastra, the Yajñavalkya Smriti and Manu Smriti also give lists of the same; and throughout Hindu thought any number of pithy sayings describe the Dharma for all human beings. Scanning these lists carefully, we may say that, in theory at least, every human being is called upon to follow, in preference to his other duties, his Dharma as a Man, that is to say, as a member of the human race. This consists of non-violence to all living things, truthfulness, abstention from unlawfully appropriating the goods of others, purity and control of the senses and sex, forgiveness, self-control, sharing of food with others, looking after one's dependents, humility, kindness to all animals, self-control, gentility, sympathy with another's misfortunes, and contentment; these may be summed up in sentences like, "What you would not like to be done to yourself that should you not do to others"; or "Righteousness consists in good will towards others".

Then there are the *Pancha Maha Yajñas*, or the five daily sacrifices which form part of the daily life of the individual. These are the *Deva Yajña*, the *Pitri Yajña*, the *Bhūt Yajña*, the *Brahma Yajña* and the *Manushya Yajña*. The *Deva Yajña* consists of pouring ghee (clarified butter) and such substances into the fire as offerings to the gods; the *Bhūt Yajña* refers to the offering of food to animals; the offering of water to the memory of the ancestors is called *Pitri Yajña*; the offering of hospitality to guests is *Manushya Yajña*; and

the teaching and learning of the scriptures and keeping the mind and soul thus alive to them is called *Brahma Yajña.* "The *Rishis*, the *Pitris*, the *Devas*, the *Bhūtas*, and the guest expect attention from the householder; hence he who knows should give them their dues. Let him worship according to the rule: the *Rishi* with study of the Vedas, the *Devas* with *Homa*, the *Pitri* with *Srāddha*, Man with food, and the *Bhūta* with *Bali.*"[1] We can see the reaction on the life of the individual of these daily offerings. From day to day he learns to regard himself related to these five factors. The sacrifice to the *Devas* secures him relations with the supernatural; the sacrifice to *Pitris* relates him to his dead parents and ancestors, whose idealizations of family tradition are now a trust in the hands of the householder who offers the sacrifice; the *Bhūta Yajña* reminds him of the inter-relation and inter-dependence between man and the rest of the animal kingdom; the *Brahma Yajña* connects him with the cultural and spiritual laws of his forefathers; and the *Manushya Yajña*, by making it incumbent upon man to give food to the 'homeless and the student',[2] develops in him the love of human kind and the ideal of the brotherhood of man. The sentiment of *Manushya Yajña* is strong from very early times in India, and it is ordained that one should partake of whatever remains of the food after the 'atithi' or guest is satisfied.[3]

The *Samskāras* are in their nature rites of passage from one phase or stage of the individual's growth to another. Each of the *Samskāras* concerns itself with one or another of the critical stages in which the individual enters, from the very conception in

[1] Manu Smriti, p. 380.
[2] Ibid., p. 392.
[3] Āpa. Dharmasutra, quoted by Dhruva, A. B. Hindu Veda Dharma, p. 103.

the mother's womb, to death and after. The *Samskāras* therefore may be generally designated as the sanctification of the developmental stages of the individual's growth. According to the Hindu scriptures, members of the first three *Varnas* must observe them. The most important of these are twelve.[1] They are: (1) The *Garbhādhān*, the fœtus-laying rite, which is performed at the consummation of marriage. (2) *Punsavan*, male-making, performed three months after conception for vitalizing the fœtus in order that a male may be born. (3) *Simantonayana*, hair parting, performed to mark the separation of the expectant mother from the husband so far as their sex relations are concerned. (4) *Jātakarana*, birth taking, performed before severing the umbilical cord. (5) *Nāmakarana*, name taking, performed on the tenth, eleventh or the twelfth day after birth. (6) *Annaprāśana*, food giving, performed when the child is about eight months old. (7) *Chudākarana*, tonsure of the hair, which takes place when the child is three years of age. (8) *Upanayana*, initiation, when the boy is invested with the sacred thread any time between the ages of eleven and fourteen. (9) *Māhānāmya*, the great name repeating initiation, in which the initiate is taught to recite the *Gāyatri*, hymn to the Sun-God. (10) *Samāvartan*, returning, which is performed to mark the return of the boy home after finishing his course of studies under a teacher. (11) *Vivāha*, the marriage rite; and (12) *Antyesthi*, funeral obsequies, performed at the death of a person.[2]

The number and kind of *Samskāras* differ with reference to the different *Sutras* which are followed by a social or religious group; they also differ with reference to the traditions of place, family and other

[1] The number varies according to different authorities: the Rig Veda gives sixteen; some Sutras relate forty; Manu gives twelve.
[2] All these are detailed in Vaishnava-Āhnik (Hindi), pp. 69-70.

social factors. Anyhow, in modern times, three of these twelve *Samskāras* are considered of very vital importance by most Hindus, so far as males of the first three *Varnas* are concerned. They are the *Upanayana, Vivāha* and *Antyesthi Samskāras.* Women used once upon a time to be invested with the sacred thread; but this has disappeared due to a variety of historical reasons. *Vivāha* has thereafter been considered the same as *Upanayana* so far as women are concerned.

According to the old Brahmanical doctrine everyone is born a *Śudra,*[1] and members of the first three classes (*Varnas*) can become free from this disability by going through the *Samskāra* rites, and especially the *Upanayana Samskāra,* which is supposed to give a second birth by purifying the individual from the defects of his associations with blood, etc., during the period he remains in his mother's womb.[2] If a male member of the first three classes does not go through the *Upanayana Samskāra,* he of necessity becomes an outcaste.[3] Of course woman is placed alongside the *Śudra,* in that she, like the *Śudra,* has no right to go through the *Upanayana Samskāra.* Even then the *Śudras,* who are denied every other Brahmanical rite and sacrament, are expected to go through all, except the *Upanayana Samskāra*; but with this difference, that Puranic *mantras* are substituted for the holy Vedic *mantras* when the *Samskāras* are performed in the case of the *Śudras.*[4]

In the observance of these rites, the Vaishnava communities usually divide them into several groups, somewhat as follows: (i) those performed before the birth of the child, (ii) those performed till the child is three years of age, (iii) the *Upanayana,* the

[1] Goswami Purshottamji: Upadeshavishaya-Shankaniraswada, Ahmedabad, 1911, p. 8.
[2] Jiwanācharyaji Māhārāja: Vaishnava-Āhnik (Hindi), p. 69.
[3] Gangā Lahari, verse 37.
[4] Jiwanācharyaji Māhārāja: Vaishnava-Āhnik (Guj.), p. 22.

Māhānāmya and the *Samāvartan* rites performed one after the other on one single occasion, (iv) marriage rites, and (v) death rites. This change, it is obvious, is perhaps due to the modern tendencies of saving time and expense. For the performance of each of the rites on different occasions has its social concomitant in terms of caste-dinners, etc. It may also be observed, that this new grouping is not at all disagreeable to the Brahmin priests who in any case get their cash dues for the performance of each of the rites; and as to their dues in terms of food, as the quantity would rather be far too much for a single feed, so quantities of uncooked rice, grains, ghee, etc., are given to them instead. Of course, moves to do away with these caste-dinners on some minor occasions have been going on. But such suggestions never seemed to be agreeable to the elders of the community.

Now according to the strict teachings of the Bhāgavata and Bhagavad Gītā, as propounded by the Vallabha School,[1] the *Samskāras* should have no place in the life of a Vaishnava, whether he is one of the *Dwijas* or not. But in recent years, Goswāmi Purshottumji Māhārāj, Goswāmi Jiwanlālji Māhārāj, and other authorities, have started supporting *Samskāra Dharmas* taught by old Brahmanism. But whether the Vaishnava goes through the Brahmanical Samskāras or not, both men and women of all classes and castes are invested with the *kanthi* (necklace) which obviously stands in place of the sacred thread, and are given *Brahma-sambandha*, which is really a substitute for the *Māhānāmya Samskāra*.

The Dharmaśāstras have taught the theory of *Āśramas*, that is to say, the stages of the life of an individual, in order that thereby every man may

[1] This problem is discussed in the chapter on Sampradāya.

be enabled to understand the very best for himself in the short span of life given to him, and to accomplish it. They make for the orderly management of the life of the individual, which, in the ultimate, may react on the community and the race. The *Āśrama* scheme thus enables the individual to develop the many sides of his life, and gives to each period of his life its due programme of work and discipline towards the attainment of the goal of human life, viz., of *Mukti*.

The *Āśramas* are four in number, one following another. They are *Brahmacharya*, *Grihastha*, *Vānaprastha* and *Sanyasta*. From the birth of a male child to the age when the child is invested with the sacred thread, every child is supposed to be out of the grip of Dharma discipline, except under the kindly care of the parents and elders in atmosphere of the home. The *Upanayana* ceremony marks the spiritual and second birth of the individual. In olden times the *Brahmachari* stayed at the home of a Vedic teacher up to the age of twenty-four, in an atmosphere of learning and service. He learnt the science and art of life by living a life of purity, simplicity and austerity. He laboured in the home of his master, and by and by he learnt, by actual doing, the right attitudes and duties of a householder. In olden times the scriptures insisted on everyone, young and old, rich and poor, that the discipline of this *Āśrama* was absolutely necessary for the development of right thought, word and deed.

When the student returns home after his years of discipline with his *Guru*, he enters the *Grihasthāśrama*, during which he has to practise the life of a householder, according to the teachings he received in the *Guru's* home. Now the life of a householder is not pictured as one of predatoriness, somehow managing the demands of life; nor is it meant for

the satisfaction of merely the nutritive and reproductive needs of life. Living in the midst of society, enjoying the joys of his home life, doing the duties of a householder by giving and spending, doing what good he can to others from the wealth in his trust; thus living in the midst of *Samsara*, the householder has always to remind himself that he is but an instrument of the gods, and that all that he does, says and thinks should always be in tune with their divine purposes. The presiding deity of the home is God's representative Agni which is kept burning day and night as a symbol of the divine rule and blessings that guide the destinies of the home. So the householder is supposed to do all these things on behalf of, for the sake of, and in the very presence, of the gods.

When the householder grows grey with age, when he becomes a grandfather, his life of action must give way to a life of peaceful devotion and meditation in the retirement of the *Vānaprasthāśrama* in the woods. Offering of Sacrifices is the chief duty of a *Vānaprasthi*. Besides, he studies the scriptures that discuss the ultimate problems of the universe. And he has to serve guests as best as he can, and love all animals with care and sympathy.

After a life of retirement in the woods for some time, the individual is called upon to give up all *Karmas*. He has no more to offer Sacrifices. He eats what comes in his way; having no fixed abode he goes about from place to place and meditates over Brahma. Thus in this final stage of life the individual is called upon to renounce all actions and all relations.

This description of the *Āśramas* will reveal how the scheme is meant for perfecting the individual through a regular, disciplined course of life. The *Brahmacharya* and *Grihastha Āśramas* train him to serve the highest ends—social and individual;

and the *Vānaprastha* and *Sanyasta* are devised to give the individual full opportunities to seek and realize the final end of his existence. It is recognized throughout the Hindu scriptures that society depends upon the efforts of the householder. He tends the sick, the dependents, women, children, the guest and the gods; and all this is done in the spirit of service. It is therefore sometimes preached, and this mostly among the Vaishnavas, that *Sanyasta* is not necessary for the salvation of the individual, if, during the *Grihastha* stage, the individual lives in the world for the performance of his duties towards others, indifferent to the consequences and the fruits thereof, leaving worldliness and the world to the gods that guide their destinies.

Just as the individual is bound down by Dharma or duties with reference to the several points of contact he has with the realities of life—social, economic, religious and so on—each of the social groupings is also conceived with reference to certain fundamental laws and duties in accordance with which they have to conduct themselves. Each of these groups is conceived as a living unit, with its rights and responsibilities towards the individuals of which it is composed, and towards the other units. So arise the Dharmas of the family, the clan, the caste, the class, etc., as interacting living units which gather their forces in building up and maintaining the vast organ that pours forth the slow, silent and august music of human endeavour, as the Hindu seers have variously conceived it.

We shall begin with the simplest and most natural of human associations, the family, or *Kula*. The *Kula* Dharma refers to the traditions which have gathered round the history of the family. It refers to the moral, economic, social, tone and timbre of the family. Its actual content refers to the social traditions of the family, the character and forms of

religious worship, the use, inheritance and distribution of property, and the social status of the family within the group of families to which it belongs, and within the caste to which it owes allegiance. Every individual member of the family is supposed to be in charge of the *Kula* Dharma; and he or she is expected to do the best for its upkeep. In cases of conflict the individual has to yield. But usually compromises are resorted to; and out of such compromises arise new traditions which somehow become hallowed with time, and gather binding force on future generations.

The second group Dharma is *Gotra* Dharma. The Gotra consists of a number of families which trace their descent to one common ancestor or teacher. The fundamental issues that the *Gotra* Dharma deals with are exogamy, property rights, adoption and *Sutaka*.

Larger than the *Gotra* group is the group called *Gnyāti*, which may be translated as Caste. Generally speaking, the *Gnyāti* has in its charge the most difficult problem of life, viz., the organization of marriage. Every *Gnyāti* is an endogamous group, by definition. Besides this, another important function is vested with some *Gnyātis*. The *Gnyāti* generally enforces the tradition of the group on the families. Sometimes these traditions are of a quasi-religious and socio-economic character.[1]

The classification of a society into four fundamental groups called *Varnas* may now be considered. In ancient Hindu society the mass of the people was organized by the Brahmins in terms of four fundamental types of interdependent groups, in order that the well-being of the whole may be served thereby and each group and the members thereof may get an adequate chance of self-expression

[1] These will be discussed later.

and salvation in terms of definite *Karmas*, according to the Dharmas assigned to each class (*Varna*).[1]

This classification is conceived not for the benefit of the Hindus alone. It is meant for universal application, and is supposed to hold good for the well-being of any human group which wants to organize itself on a scientific basis.

The above-mentioned aspects of Dharma, with reference to the several aspects of human behaviour, are sometimes classified into three groups called *Āchāra* Dharma, which refers to personal ceremonial conduct, *Vyavhāra* Dharma, which concerns itself with ordinary civil laws, and *Prāyaśchit* Dharma, which describes the rules regarding penance.

The above description of Dharma will naturally make one who is used to European ways and outlook think that the individual is too much fettered to be able to exercise his right of intelligent choice. He may therefore feel called upon to say that "even the most casual reader must be impressed by the way in which the individual's course of life is mapped out for him. It may be doubted whether any other religious system has ever provided instructions for the conduct of life that have been so full and so detailed. The task that was set the individual may not unjustly be likened to that of the child who is given line pictures which he may colour for himself. He may vary the colouring according to his fancy, but the outline is provided. Perhaps this figure errs on the side of exaggerating the extent to which the individual is free. For, on all sides and at every point the individual finds prescriptions of which he is the subject or the object." [2]

There is much force in such a criticism of Dharma. The decay and deterioration of Dharma is part of the theory of Dharma; and the Bhagavad Gītā

[1] This will be discussed later.
[2] McKenzie, J.: Hindu Ethics, p. 41.

gives a message of hope that whenever Dharma fails God proclaims it through a holy person.[1] This presupposes that Dharma is not fully known or understood by man. It is regarded as infinite, eternal and not knowable in totality. And this is not regarded as a grievance, for " it is exceedingly difficult to fathom the meaning of Dharma. No one can ever know it. Therefore know that to be Dharma which most people follow; and that which most people shun, know it to be Adharma for certain." [2] Thus every man is expected to follow Dharma to the extent to which he understands it. And Prāyaschit Dharma gives him an opportunity of rectifying his mistakes and shortcomings. Moreover, Dharma is from time to time newly proclaimed. This gives Dharma a living elasticity and adaptiveness that seems to be absent on its surface.

Besides, in the world of practical affairs these gross difficulties that seem to be present in the Dharma doctrine in the eyes of a European will appear to be considerably minimized if we realize that a person is supposed to be deriving his Dharma or Dharmas, not merely from the fountain-head of the Vedas as preached by Manu, but from many other sources. The Vedas are known to only a few. In a sense the Mahābhārata gives graphic illustrations of Dharma and Adharma in the lives of the heroes. And Hindus feel that their deepest spiritual enquiries are finally answered in the Bhagavad Gītā—Krishna's great discourse with Arjuna, on the field of Kurukshetra. Another historical source of Dharma is the Rāmāyana which has proved a veritable storehouse of the knowledge of Dharma. To many devout Vaishnavites it stands in the same intimate and vital relation, as the Mahābhārata—and especially the Bhagavad Gītā. And the Bhāgavata

[1] Bhagwad-gitā, IV. 7-8.
[2] Śukra-niti, V. 35.

Purāna is another unfailing source of Dharma law and teaching to which a third set of seekers after Truth turn for inspiration and guidance. It must be noted, however, that to most of the Vaishnavites of Gujarat, the knowledge even from the Mahābhārata, or the Rāmāyana, or the Bhāgavata Purāna comes secondhand—in the sense, that these sacred scriptures have to be read out to them by the Brahmin priests, their preceptors, because of widespread illiteracy.

These, however, do not exhaust the sources of Dharma. The ideals behind the personal behaviour of those who are learned in the *Śastras* are also indicative of Dharma. In olden days (even about fifty years ago) generally only the Brahmins could read and write; therefore in the main they were considered the teachers of Dharma. But from time to time persons belonging to the other Varnas have taught Dharma and have been accepted as teachers of Dharma. In actual practice this depends much upon the stage of development which the individual or the *Gnyāti* has reached. During our own times Mahatma Gandhi, a Vaishya (Bania), is looked up to even by the Brahmins, more than any Brahmin priest or high-priest, as a preceptor *par excellence* of Dharma. Nevertheless, let us not forget that the one big cause of the failure of his social and political programmes is his scathing attack on the social system of the Hindus. He has endeavoured to bring peoples of different *Gnyātis* and *Varnas* into a single etho-polity based on mutual love and respect: for instance, he has been teaching that the touch of the 'untouchables' cannot pollute the castes, high and low, and that therefore children of all *Gnyātis* and *Varnas* should be allowed at least to learn together in the same school. To this and such other suggestions most of the Vaishnavas would have agreed only if the hereditary Brahmin

high-priests who have been maintaining these distinctions had blessed these injunctions of Mahatma Gandhi. But in fact these latter would not agree; and that is the main reason why Mahatma Gandhi's hold on the Hindus, and especially the Vaishnavas, has been rather weak.

But besides, and in spite of the scriptural and preceptorial guidance, the living, effective source from which a person normally derives his Dharma notions are the customs of his caste and the ideas of right and wrong that prevail therein. For instance, amongst the Baniās as a whole widow remarriage is considered to be against Dharma; but amongst some of them this very practice is considered quite in conformity with their Dharma. Or, to take another instance, the Māchhis (fishermen) or the Rajputs are allowed to indulge in intoxicating drinks, while the Baniās and Brahmins are not. Again, the Rajputs are allowed meat diet, while the Baniās are not. The *Gnyāti*, on the other hand, follows its own traditions; in case of doubt or difficulty as to the proper course, it consults the Brahmin high-priests and learned men. In practice, however, the results of these consultations mainly depend upon whom we approach and how. For, one can obtain the approval of these authorities in respect of new measures by dint of tact, and sometimes perhaps, material inducements.

But the knowledge of Dharma from the above sources is not considered final. Dharma, as already stated, is infinite and eternal, and therefore cannot be fully known. So every person is expected to take example from the Winged Ones, who, though they do not know where the firmament ends, penetrate it as far as they can.

The difficulties about the mechanistic view of Dharma that have been pointed out above have been felt all along in the history of Hinduism; and perhaps

the best protest and solution has been effectually rendered, for whatever it was worth, in the Bhāgavata Purāna where, in ten verses, Krishna epitomizes all Dharmas—personal, social and religious—and recommends the Gopis to attend to them if they would. But the Gopis refuse to return to these Dharmas, pointedly declaring that these Dharmas without Krishna had no meaning for them. At this Krishna gives them what their devotion deserved, joy and bliss that contact with the Spirit brings. And as soon as in the midst of this bliss the personal and social reappears in terms of pride and vanity in the Gopis, the bliss escapes them; their Krishna is found no more in their midst. Having tasted the very kernel of the gifts of His spirit the disinherited ones go mad, wailing and tormented at this separation. Then, cleansing themselves of the last specks of dirt that gather round noble hearts, the Gopis deserve the final beatitude. The Lord reappears in His perfection, makes them perfect, and in the heart of each He enthrones himself. And then go the Gopis to their respective tasks of life, the Lord Krishna enshrined in their hearts; for, when once the best of the gifts of God is given to them, the rest shall be added unto it. And so in their daily pursuits of life thereafter, the world, worldliness and its Dharmas get ideally modelled in the behaviour of these saintly women who partook of the very nature of their Lord. For some Vaishnavites, therefore, the task and programmes of life of the Gopis, their little acts and thoughts while they were on the way to the final beatitude, are the Dharmas that men and women ought to follow; they are free to practise other Dharmas as well; but not at the cost of the fundamental Dharmas that gather round the life of Krishna and his devotees, and provide the very flavour, beauty and splendour of their existence.

The echo of these teachings resounds in the passages from the Gītā we have already quoted.

We have now come to a stage when Dharma may be defined as the distinct qualities that are inherent in things, animate and inanimate, at the original creation.[1] "That which can be adopted is Dharma; that which supports all life is Dharma. Everything that exists is what it is because of Dharma; without it, its very existence becomes doubtful."[2]

Thus Dharma is that which makes things what they are. Therefore Dharma means the nature of things. Thus in India, as in Greece, the attempt is made to turn the natural into the ideal. This works on the assumption that the ideal or normal is deducible from the actual. And it implies that man has a stable nature, and that it is teleological and capable of indicating the course he *ought* to follow.

In a larger sense, then, the theory of Dharma endeavours to relate everything in the universe in terms of a principle. In the narrower sense, Dharma refers to a system of ideal relations of man with the rest of the universe (seen and unseen), and to man's individual and social conduct in life. Thus the search for the harmony of the inner with the outer, and of the outer with the inner of human conduct is the theme of Dharma.

To summarize, then: Dharma seeks to give a programme of life for the individual, for the social, religious, and other groups, in relation to each other, such as would make the best possible manifestation of life probable and even real. Out of the variety in which life may and can express itself, rather than letting man live somehow in any direction that may lead anywhere, Dharma sets the direction which the best in our midst, in ages past and now, have

[1] Ketkar, S. V.: Essay on Hinduism, p. 8.
[2] Kothāri, M. N.: Bhakti-mārga-nu-Rahasya, p. 13.

taught man to follow, and seek thus the way towards perfection. Thus Dharma becomes the instrument for the fulfilment of life in terms of an inner peace, and an outer order, in terms of social, religious and economic organization and control. In terms like these Dharma records the traditional sanctions of a socio-religious nature, wherein the material and cultural heritage from experience, history, tradition and usage, are gathered into one focus. In yet another sense, Dharma may be said to be a search for the solution of the problem of human relations in terms of human freedom, or of the problem of human freedom in terms of social relations with reference to the ideals of life. If Dharma concerns itself with the loyalties of personal, social, economic and spiritual relations that bind man to each of them, and to all of them as a related whole, Dharma concerns itself with the theory and practice of the right and the just in human affairs.

We hope these attempts at defining Dharma sufficiently justify our attitude that Dharma is a search, however elusive, to shape the Natural in terms of the Ideal, and to deduce the Ideal from the Natural. Thus, in infinite series of such adjustments through ages of human endeavour, man hopes to be enabled ultimately to find out the laws of the harmony between the actual and the ideal that may bring forth that perfection of human existence which is prayed for by prophets and sages in terms like, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven".

CHAPTER III

MATA

In the last chapter we have dealt with *Dharma* which is generally concerned with the fundamental principles that govern life. Since the restatement of Hinduism after the overthrow of Buddhism and Jainism, the Hindu scriptures have been explicitly expressed in terms of *Mārga*, i.e., the way, of *Mata*, i.e., the doctrine that justifies the way, and *Sampradāya*, which combines a way and its doctrines in terms of a sect or following, usually of a teacher of great personal piety and learning.

We need not discuss origins and try to investigate whether *Mata* or *Mārga* is the earlier of the two. Each implies the other; and with a greater definition of the one the other is bound to be clearly defined. Thus perhaps in their search for realizing the fundamental laws of life, *Dharma*, *Mata* and *Mārga* have to go through a number of changes till both become distinctly established and thus get co-ordinated more and more towards perfection. If *Mārga* is the way of *Dharma* and *Mata* the philosophy of *Dharma*, man seeks to realize the perfection of *Dharma*, its renewal and re-establishment through infinite mutual adjustments of *Mata* and *Mārga*. When *Dharma* is thus realized, renewed, re-established by a teacher, its statement called Sampradāya (a following) is also established.

Let us now discuss *Mata* (literally, opinion), which refers to the doctrine regarding the nature of God or of the Ultimate Reality. Naturally it prescribes its pathway (*Mārga*) which the individual or the group accepting the *Mata* has to follow in order to attain the goal. We may safely translate *Mata*

as metaphysics or philosophy. But let us not forget that *Mata* can be easily confused with *Dharma*. We must therefore remember that while *Mata* refers to the doctrinal aspect, *Dharma* refers to the general principles which seek to assimilate the doctrinal and the practical into one unified whole.

Three *Matas* are mainly recognized in Hinduism: *Vishnu Mata*, or the doctrine according to which Vishnu is the highest God of devotion; *Śiva Mata*, or the doctrine according to which Śiva is the highest God; and *Śakti Mata*, according to which the worship of the personifications of 'energies' is taught.

Most of the aboriginal tribes of Gujarat, knowingly and unknowingly, follow *Śakti Mata*; but in recent times many of them have adopted *Vishnu Mata*. Of course those aboriginal tribes, and the Kshatriya communities which once followed *Śakti Mata*, even now worship the old images of the *Śakti* goddesses and gods which their forefathers worshipped, besides worshipping the other images of their newly adopted faith. But these *Śākta* gods and demi-gods are worshipped by them at home only, and not in the temples. This means that though the people have changed the *Mata*, the old family god or goddess continues to demand their reverence and attention. And this is as true of some Christian and Moslem converts from the early tribes as of converts to the higher forms of Hinduism.

There was a time when Śaktism in its various forms was in vogue all over the country; in recent times, however, it is fast disappearing. And whatever of it prevails is practised more or less in secret. It is therefore not necessary for our purposes to dwell on the differences between Vaishnavism and Śaktism. But traditionally, at least so far as Gujarat is concerned, Śaivism and Vaishnavism are considered opposed to each other. This is

not necessarily true, and is, in fact, due to a confusion of thought. But we must remember that every *Mata* tries to define the meaning, place and relation of the highest God which it calls upon its followers to worship. In the main, both Śaivism and Vaishnavism try to relate the highest being with the things of the world and with human behaviour; each of them gives different solutions of these problems; some of these solutions are very similar to each other, except that while Śiva is asked to be worshipped by the one, Vishnu is recommended as the highest God for worship by the other. There is a third set of *Matas* where the doctrine gives freedom to the believer to choose for himself or herself the highest God for worship out of a set of five Deities. In this case the worship of *Panch Devatās* (five Deities), including Śiva and Vishnu, is enjoined; any one of the five, it is taught, must be chosen as the principal God of worship.

As we have already said, Śaivism and Vaishnavism are always taken by the Vaishnavas of Gujarat as opposed to each other. In fact the real opposition is between the doctrines of Śankarāchārya on the one hand, and of Rāmānujāchārya, Vallabhāchārya and others on the other. The doctrines promulgated by Śankarāchārya are designated, rightly or wrongly, as Śaivite, though in fact Śankarāchārya has not insisted on the worship of either Śiva or Vishnu as the highest God. This is due to the general tone and direction of Śankarāchārya's teachings, his attitude towards the world (*jagat*), and the way of reaching the *summum bonum* of life, viz., the *Jñāna* and *Vairāgya Mārgas*. In this essay, therefore, whenever the word Śaivism is used it refers to the doctrines, the way and the *Dharma* promulgated by and developed after the teachings of Śankarāchārya.

Let us now find out the essential difference between

Śaivism and Vaishnavism. In the first place, let us acknowledge that both are Brahamanical, in the sense that both link themselves up with the tradition of the *Vedas* and of the *Dharmaśastras*. In fact Vaishnavism, as it is now understood, has come into existence and has grown out of the struggle to supplant Śaivism. We may also trace this struggle throughout the early scriptures, as manifest in the *Bhāgavata Dharma* which started expressing itself openly from about the third century before Christ.

Now, according to Vaishnavism there is a personal God who is the maker and sustainer of all life, and who is therefore worth man's worship and adoration; but Śaivism regards an Impersonal Absolute, something called *Brahman*, as the only Real and the Ultimate. Thus Vaishnavism declares the world of things as real, and therefore helpful to man's endeavour to reach the goal of his existence; but Śaivism denounces the things of the world as something in the way of the progress of man, thus taking him away from the attainment of the ultimate goal. Vaishnavism considers human life and its pursuits as real, while Śaivism regards these as unreal and therefore mere appearance. Therefore while the Vaishnavite aims at life more abundant and the fruits thereof, the Śaivite seeks after the death thereof, the discontinuance of rebirths, as he puts it; for death that leads not to rebirths is the goal of the Śaivite's existence. Such salvation is for the Vaishnavite spiritual death[1]; he, on the contrary, courts rebirths; for, these will bring him better and ampler opportunities to enjoy life and to serve God. In his best mood the Vaishnavite declares: 'Deliverance is not for me in renunciation'.[2] The way of life for the

[1] Cf. Dayāram: Rasika-Vallabha, stanza 53.
[2] Tagore: Gitanjali, LXXIII.

Vaishnavite is therefore one of action and devotion in the main; the way of the Śaivite, on the other hand, is one of contemplation, of the knowledge (*jñyāna*) of the *Brahman* (Absolute).

These essential characteristics, though exaggerated to some extent, are true in the main. Therefore Śaivism and Vaishnavism may be said to be opposite and antagonistic to each other, regarding the doctrine, the pathway, the *Purushārthas* and the *Dharma*.

These differences are of great sociological value. For they explain why most of the people of Gujarat accept the Vaishnavite creed in preference to the Śaivite. In a region full of opportunities to live and to live well, the Śaivite ideal of self-realization by self-destruction could neither answer the social and religious needs of the people, nor appeal to their imagination. Nor could the theory of self-renunciation and self-destruction, as taught by Buddhism and Jainism, find a place in the hearts of a people round whom life throbbed with all its energy, might and plenty, with its attendant pleasures and joys. A justification of their way of living, a theory of life and a pathway suited and helpful to the living of a life engrossed in work and duty as man, husband, father, citizen and so on, a hope that such a mode of life as they live is acceptable to the highest Deity—the Gujaratis naturally sought for all these. For centuries Buddhism had its opportunity; but it failed. The Brahmanical creeds of the *Upanishads* and the *Vedas* were found inadequate and unsatisfactory for the masses before the coming of Buddha. To a certain extent Buddha himself had reason to rise in revolt against the exclusive rights of the Brahmins. But that alone did not enable him to replace the Brahmanical ideal of life. As a consequence, the peoples in the rich and fertile regions of the river-valleys of India

could not be persuaded to live satisfactorily by believing that death—deliverance from rebirths, and the annihilation of the individual spirit—was to be their ideal of life. Besides, Buddha established monasteries and created an order of monkhood. This became as degenerate as the Brahmin clergy had become, within a period of seven hundred years after him. About that time Buddhism as practised had degenerated into: (1) idol worship, especially the worship of Buddha himself, (2) the rise of a class of hypocritical and superstitious monks who became a positive danger to progress—social, religious, and political, and (3) a general respect for a life of inaction, with its consequent exaltation of the life of parasitic mendicancy. Not what Buddha taught but what Buddhism came to be through centuries after Buddha, ruined the cause of Buddhism in India.[1] Thus though Buddhism existed in India for a thousand years it went on playing a losing game.

But we must not forget that in its failure to supplant Brahmanism, Buddhism succeeded in breaking the rigidity and power of the Brahmanical social and religious creeds and organizations. Through this period of a thousand years the glaring defects of the social system and the *Dharma* that upheld it were shown up to the masses in their true colours. So in many ways they were emancipated from the inferiority-complex inherited from Brahmanism; and the Brahmin's claims to superiority over the rest of humanity had to yield to the power of this new consciousness. The new Brahmanism that proposed to establish itself had therefore clearly to reckon with a severely critical attitude on the part of the masses; it had to be prepared to make concessions to popular demands if it was at

[1] Cf. Hopkins: Religions of India, pp. 342-3.

all bent on reinstating itself. Fetters of caste had to be loosened; a greater amount of freedom had to be conceded to some groups which may otherwise revolt; those castes and classes which could potentially help to revive the influence of Brahmanism had therefore to be conceded the position of co-workers with the Brahmins. Śankarāchārya (*circa* 800 A.D.) cleared the jungle of growths which had developed its mighty fabric out of the old Brahmanism as well as out of Buddhism. Thus was initiated a movement which may be called Neo-Hinduism. Out of the old Brahmanical scriptures Śankarāchārya selected three representative masterpieces, viz., the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and the *Vedānta-Sutras* of Bādrāyana Vyās; and round these he tried to restate, re-form and reorganize the old Brahmanical traditions. As we have already pointed out, Śankarāchārya was indifferent regarding the question of the highest Deity that man should worship; worship of this sort was only a means to an end, according to him; and the end was to merge in the *Brahman* with the help of *jñyāna*.

The formation of *Vishnu Mata* as such was thus started by Rāmānujāchārya, born in 1016-17 A.D.[1] But on account of the many causes, which we shall discuss in another place, this new Brahmanical creed could not satisfy the teeming millions who hungered for their rights of worship and of fellowship with man and with God. *Vishnu Mata* had therefore to modify itself from time to time in answer to newer demands made on it. This process resulted in the formation from time to time of several *Sampradāyas* (sects) within the *Mata*. We shall discuss these in another chapter.

In the process of the growth and evolution of

[1] Bhandarkar: Vaishnavism and Śaivism, p. 51.

Vishnu Mata the part played and the influence exerted by other creeds and religions with which Hinduism came into contact must not be overlooked. The Moslems who ruled Gujarat from the 13th to the 18th centuries contributed indirectly to its formation by forcing Hinduism to answer the attacks Islam made on its social and religious theories. The Parsees had their share to contribute; though, let us not forget that, Zoroastrianism and the life of the Parsees as a whole have been much affected by Hindu thought and practice. Christianity and Christian propaganda has indirectly stimulated modern Vaishnavite religion and life. By teachings and by the test of life actually led by these sister communities, the Hindus were considerably helped to realize that a *Mata* which represents death and annihilation as the ideal of life is better disowned and abandoned; for it is disheartening and demoralizing to men and women busy with the affairs of the world, which, according to Śankarāchārya, is an illusion, taking man away from the path of perfection. People have therefore been struggling through several centuries for a *Dharma* wherein the path and the creed reconcile and harmonize things of the world with things of the spirit. Salvation to them must not mean death, but life more abundant. And so the Gopi sings: "Vraja is so dear to me; I have no desire to go to Paradise; for how shall I find there the son of Nanda (i.e., Krishna)." [1]

This exaltation of the duties of man's daily life and the worldly life of action as a pathway to reality is emphasized more and more, the more advanced a sect of Vaishnavism is.

Let us now note that, broadly speaking, the Vaishnavites believe in one of the *avatāras* of

[1] Dayāram: Kāvyamani Mālā, Gopi Vachan.

Vishnu (as Rāma or as Krishna), as the personal God in the same sense as the Christians believe in Christ as the object of devotion, reverence and praise, as the personal God. Through Him and His service salvation can be secured.[1]

Most of the Vaishnavite sects of Gujarat worship Krishna in a variety of forms as depicted in the *Bhāgavata Purāna* and the *Bhagavad Gītā*. The *Bhāgavata Purāna* is for some the most sacred of the Hindu scriptures; others adore the *Bhagavad Gītā* as their book of life. Both these are translated into the vernaculars; but they are still repeated in Sanskrit with a certain amount of understanding of the Argument. Most people consider it a high spiritual attainment to commit the whole of the *Gītā* to memory; and most men over forty years of age make it a point to repeat at least a chapter of the book every day. These two source books of Vaishnavite inspiration are further supplemented by a mass of hymns written by poets from the 14th century to the present day. These will be discussed in the chapter on Literature. For obvious reasons, Krishna worship as preached in the *Bhāgavata* must fail to satisfy those who are ethically minded. They are apt to recoil from Krishna as the Lord of Gopis, and would be reluctant to accept such an One as the highest object of their devotion. To such devotees the true Krishna is the one revealed in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, as the teacher of Arjuna. Tradition, however, supplies another hero who lived during the times of the epics and who rises up to the highest standards of moral life. His name is Rāma. Just as the people of Gujarat and Bengal have mainly chosen Krishna as the object of their devotion, the people of the United Provinces have chosen Rāma for this purpose. The

[1] Hopkins: Religions of India, pp. 449 ff.

Rāmāyana, the Sanskrit epic in which the wanderings of Rāma are described, is not the main source of inspiration, however; instead, the Rāmāyana of Tulsidas is read, sung and adored by the people. This poem is full of overflowing devotion, praise and adoration for Rāma; it is full of pure thoughts, sentiments and ideas; its characterizations of Hanuman, Luxman and Sita are exceedingly human and realistic, full of self-surrender and service for Rāma. And this pure gold in the language of the common folk has naturally made the Rāmāyana of Tulsidas practically the book of life and inspiration for millions of men and women in India.

It is not difficult to understand why the Hindu devotee feels the need of linking up his object of worship to something as definite, historical and objective as the heroes immortalized in the great epics of India, when we remember that respect for traditions and for the past is very great in the people of India. Such an object of worship provides the devotee with something real and tangible to hold on to; therefore, even when pure theistic worship is advocated, as among the Rāmasnehis,[1] a mental worship of the hero is obligatory as a religious duty, and is the only means to salvation. To take another instance: amongst the Pranāmis,[2] though it is forbidden to worship any idol or image, ornaments are so arranged in the temple that they look like decking the image of Krishna.

There are many other forms of Vishnu worship. But not being germane to our present purpose they need not be discussed here. During recent times purely theistic worship of a personal God, without any image, is coming into its own. These tendencies will be discussed in another chapter.

[1] Cf. N. L. Kavi: Gujerat Sarva Sangraha, p. 136. Also Bom. Gaz., IX, pt. 1 (1901), pp. 534-35.
[2] Ibid., p. 135; also Bom. Gaz. (as above), p. 554.

The history of Vaishnavism thus shows a tendency gradually to give up the worship of the Krishna of the *Bhāgavata* for that of the Krishna of the *Gītā* or that of Rāma. And the worship of these epic heroes, who are considered incarnations of Vishnu, is being fast displaced by pure theistic worship. This tendency is traceable, as we have said elsewhere, to the missionary attacks of Islam and of Christianity on orthodox Hinduism. Not that this evolution of Hinduism is not also greatly due to the powers of self-purification, of self-modification, of self-renewal that are always latent within it. But the trend of events in the development of Vaishnavism tends to suggest that the history of religious movements and sects in India during the last two hundred years is more or less concerned with the silent pressure that Islam and Christianity—Christianity more than Islam—have exerted on Hinduism, and the resultant quickening of Hindu conscience.

CHAPTER IV

MĀRGA

Mārga (literally, 'path') is one of the three devices of Neo-Hinduism to help man to achieve the final goal of life, i.e., *Moksha* or salvation. While *Mata* emphasizes the doctrinal side of *Dharma*, *Mārga* shows the practical method of working out the doctrines in everyday life.

Three *Mārgas* are usually mentioned: (i) *Jñyāna Mārga*, i.e., the path of knowledge, (ii) *Karma Mārga*, i.e., the path of action, and (iii) *Bhakti Mārga*, i.e., the path of devotion. It must be pointed out that, unless otherwise stated, none of these three necessarily excludes the other two. The three are usually supposed to be co-existing; with the proviso, however, that the one or the other is chosen as the dominant path in accordance with a given doctrine; in that case the rest serve to promote the ends of the dominant one.

With these introductory remarks, let us say that the Śaivites are recommended the path of knowledge, of contemplation; for the other *Mārgas* are conceived as incapable of helping in the attainment of the Śaivite ideal. The Vaishnavites, on the other hand, believe in *Bhakti Mārga*, and therefore to a certain extent in *Karma Mārga* also.

Our main problem, therefore, is to describe what is *Bhakti*, and to see what the path of *Bhakti* means according to Vaishnavism. The Hindu scriptures are full of references to *Bhakti*. *Bhakti* means prayer, devotion, worship, adoration. It presupposes complete self-surrender, surrender of the mind, body and spirit of the devotee to the object of his worship, viz., God. It refers to the longings of the throbbing

human heart which strives to be in tune with the love and will of God. In a variety of moods the devotee seeks the presence of the object of his adoration by serving Him, by seeking His guidance, His love, His goodwill, nay, even longing to play with Him.[1] "It is a personal faith in a personal God, love for Him as for a human being, dedication of everything for his service, and the attainment of *Moksa* by this means, rather than by knowledge or sacrifice, or by works."[2] And salvation is promised to any one who becomes a true devotee, no matter how sinful he has been, whatsoever sins he has committed.[3] Besides, the devotee need not be only from the higher classes and castes; for even a Śudra—a person in the lowest social position—can obtain salvation by *Bhakti*.[4] And strangely enough, this implies a complete surrender of caste-distinctions—though, of course, in matters of worship only.

In order to be a *Bhakta* or devotee, two conditions are essential: (1) willingness on the part of the devotee to surrender himself to the object of his worship, and (2) the goodwill of God to accept his devotion. This second condition is considered the more important of the two by most of the schools of *Bhakti* thought. Without this divine Grace man's struggles to reach the feet of God have but little hope. In the *Bhagavad Gītā* the attitude of the person who becomes worthy of discipleship is described as one which desires 'not victory, nor kingdom, nor pleasure, nor even life'.[5] His 'heart is

[1] Narsinha Mehtā: Kāvya Sangraha, pada 42, p. 486.
[2] Sedgwick: Journal of the B.B.R.A.S., Vol. XXXIII, No. 65, quoted in Jhaveri, K. M., Milestones in Gujarati Literature, p. 26.
[3] Jivanāchāryaji, Māhārāj: Vaishnava-Āhnika, p. 29, Bombay, 1910. Also Bhagavad Gītā, XVIII, 66.
[4] Cf. Jivanāchāryaji Māhārāj: Vaishnava-Sanskshipta Āhnik, pp. 22, 26, Bombay, 1910.
[5] Gītā, I, 32.

weighed down'; 'his mind is confused as to duty'; and he asks of God which may be the better; accepting Him thus, suppliant to Him, the devotee prays to be taught.[1] Here is another passage which describes the devotee who is dear to God:

"He who beareth no ill-will to any being,
Friendly and compassionate.
Without attachment and egoism,
Balanced in pleasure and pain,
Forgiving,"[2]
"Ever-content,
Harmonious,
With the self controlled,
Resolute,
With mind and reason dedicated to Me,
He, my devotee, is dear to Me."[3]

"He by whom the world is not perturbed,
And who, not perturbed by the world,
Is free from anxiety of joy, anger and fear,
Is dear to Me."[4]

"He who wants nothing,
Is pure, expert, passionless and untroubled,
Renouncing every undertaking,
He, my devotee, is dear to Me."[5]

"He who neither loveth nor hateth,
Nor grieveth, nor desireth,
Renouncing good and evil,
Full of devotion,
He is dear to Me."[6]

"Alike to foe and friend,
Alike in fame and ignominy,
Alike in cold and heat,
Alike in pleasure and pain,
Destitute of attachment,[7]
Taking praise and reproach equally,

[1] Op. cit., II, 7.
[2] Ibid., XII, 13.
[3] Ibid., XII, 13.
[4] Ibid., XII, 15.
[5] Ibid., XII, 16.
[6] Ibid., XII, 17.
[7] Ibid., XII, 18.

Silent,
Wholly content with what cometh,
Homeless,
Firm in mind,
Full of devotion,
That man is dear to Me." [1]

Earlier in this very *Adhyāya*,[2] the Lord Krishna describes the variety of ways in which the devotee can reach Him. After promising deliverance and perfection to all other kinds of *Bhakta*, the Lord seeks to reach the weakest and the least of us thus:

" But if even to do this thou hast no strength,
Taking refuge in Me,
Renounce all fruit of action,
With self-control." [3]

This freedom of choice and promise of deliverance is described in clear terms in the earlier part of the Book when the Lord Krishna says:

" Not by the study of the Vedas, nor by austerities,
Nor by alms, nor by offerings,[4]
But by devotion to Me alone
May I thus be perceived, Arjuna,
And known and seen in essence,
And even entered, O, Parantapa." [5]

" He who doeth actions for Me,
Whose supreme good I am,
Who is my devotee,
Free from attachment,
Without hatred of any being,
He, O Pāndava, cometh unto Me." [6]

" A leaf, a flower, a fruit, water,
Whatever thou offerest to Me with devotion,
That I accept from thy striving self,
Offered as it is with devotion." [7]

[1] Op. cit., XII, 19.
[2] Ibid., XII, 3–10.
[3] Ibid., XII, 10.
[4] Ibid., XI, 53.
[5] Ibid., XI, 54.
[6] Ibid., XI, 55.
[7] Ibid., IX, 26.

And the way to godliness, to that reunion with God the devotee so ardently longs for, 'the greatest secret of all', is shown to those who are beloved of Him, and steadfast of heart, for their benefit thus:

"Whatever thou doest,
Whatever thou eatest,
Whatever thou offereth,
Whatever thou giveth,
Whatever thou undertaketh of austerity,
That, O, Kaunteya, do thou
As an offering to Me."[1]

"Merge thy mind in Me,
Be My devotee,
Sacrifice to Me,
Prostrate thyself before Me,
And thou shalt even come unto Me.
I pledge thee My troth,
Thou art so dear to Me."[2]

"Abandoning all duties,
Come unto Me alone for refuge;
Sorrow not,
I will deliver thee from sins."[3]
"The Lord dwelleth in the hearts of all beings, O, Arjuna."[4]

"Flee unto Him for shelter
With all thy being, O, Bharata;
And by His grace
Thou shalt obtain supreme peace,
The everlasting dwelling-place."[5]

"Thus hath Wisdom,
More secret than secrecy itself,
Been declared unto thee by Me;
Having reflected on it fully
Act thou as thou listeth."[6]

The doctrine of *Bhakti* propounded in the *Bhāgavat* amplifies the meaning and value of *Bhakti*

[1] Op. cit., IX, 27.
[2] Ibid., XVIII, 64.
[3] Ibid., XVIII, 66.
[4] Ibid., XVIII, 61.
[5] Ibid., XVIII, 62.
[6] Ibid., XVIII, 63.

as propounded in the *Gītā*. Those who follow the *Bhāgavat* traditions almost scoff at the doctrines of the *Gītā*. They say that Arjuna cannot be said to be an ideal *Bhakta*; in no way therefore could the *Gītā* be said to be giving a good enough picture of a *Bhakta*, an ideal that men may feel called upon to follow. And the Lord Krishna Himself as depicted in the *Gītā* does not satisfy these men; for though it is the very same Krishna who reveals Himself to the *Gopāngnās* (the married women of Vraja), the portrait of Krishna both as a teacher throughout the Holy Discourse, and as in the *Virāta Swarupa* as revealed in the eleventh chapter of the *Gītā*, falls short, according to these critics, in the completeness of the majesty of His love, and therefore gives but a partial unfolding of His nature. In fact, in the *Bhāgavat* itself this kind of partial revelation of His nature is illustrated in several places. For instance, some elderly women of Vraja could not get more than a partial view of Krishna's divinity; or the unmarried girls of Vraja also lost their chance of His grace in its entirety. It is only the married women who surrendered their all to Him, who loved Him for love's sake, who kept nothing back, who worshipped no other than Him, who loved Him not as son, husband, father, brother, but more than all these, and even more as the Lord of their entire selves, who questioned not whither He was leading them nor how, who simply gave themselves to Him in His care because they loved Him,—it is these women alone who serve as the best examples of the most perfect devotion for God. So also, the divine grace, the revelation, and the love that they received from God is said to be the completest description of the perfection of God's grace and love. Such is the view of the devotees of the *Bhāgavat* Krishna.

If we set ourselves to analyze these opinions, we

find that the love for God as preached in the *Bhāgavat* does not arise out of fear or respect; it smacks of no motive or motives for personal, social, civic, mental, aesthetic, moral or spiritual gain, advancement or fruits; it is not an expression of prayer, reverence, praise; it has no hankering after wealth, power, rank, or honour; it knows of no result or fruit of *Bhakti*. Such is devotion for devotion's sake. We must serve God because we are His servants, born only to serve Him and His creation. It is all that man can give to Him; such self-surrender is the birthright and the privilege of the devotee. Death and birth, reincarnation, *Karmas*, *Dharmas*, become meaningless without Him. So also desire for life in Paradise, for merging in Him, for becoming one with Him, melt into thin air before the prospects of His acceptance of our loving devotion and service, and His allowing us to serve Him thus for ever as his chambermaids. He and you, you and He, you for Him and Him alone, here and everywhere, now and for evermore, as from eternity and from henceforward ever and ever to eternity. Thus the Lord becomes the Truth and the Way and the Life; and he who follows Him is promised eternal life.

There are four stages that the devotee goes through in order to attain the object of devotion. To start with, love for God such as makes the devotee careless of the things of the world, is said to be the beginning of a life of devotion. This love turns the devotee's whole being to serve God for love's sake, by hearing of the greatness of God, by repeating scriptures like the *Bhāgavat* or the *Gītā*, and by contemplating on the attributes of God. In this manner, by and by, the devotee is supposed to become careless about the normal routine of his life at home and as a citizen. At this stage, he enters the third phase where love for God becomes the dominant passion

and issue of his life; the devotee now humbles himself to the dust by serving God in a variety of ways; for instance, he sweeps the floor of the temple, he washes the clothes meant for the use of the idol of the God of his worship, he dusts the furniture of the temple; and he fills his mind with adoration for Him by singing His praise. In this way, by serving God with his body and belongings, the Bhakta surrenders his mind for reunion with God. If God so wills it, for 'He loveth the burden', the devotee is able to build up the bridge of his devoted love across the gulf of separation from God, gradually, through thousands of births. When the devotee's mind, body, and all flow in one single stream towards God for the sake of his love for God, the devotee needs actual acceptance by God as His chosen disciple; the devotee actually lives only as the servant of God; the food he takes is only from the offerings to God; and he seeks the favour of God's friendship by actually offering personal service, things of the world, and love of heart, for love's sake. In the end comes the stage when the body, the senses, life, wealth, children, wife and home are dedicated to God for His comforts, for His service. Then does love in all its forms flow in one continuous stream of service, which alone is considered true love. Service that asks for no return, even in terms of love, service, that seeks no end other than itself, service that love for God demands, pours forth from out of the innermost being of the devotee; it is the best that man can give to God, and the best that God may at the most expect of frail human beings.[1]

Of course, this does not mean that such service as is offered by the devotee reaches the perfection of love in all cases. Therefore a classification of

[1] I am obliged for this section to Vasantrām Śāstri in Pushti Bhakti Sudhā, III, 5, 43 ff. Also, II, 12, 35.

these attitudes with reference to its results is given. God is supposed to reward the devotion of the *Bhakta* in proportion to his fitness to receive His grace. There is the Bhakta who is busy with the affairs of life, who has not yet given up the 'I' and the 'Mine', yet who sings of God, worships Him, and seeks to do all he can to live a life that deserves divine grace. Such a person is called *Pravāhyukta Bhakta.* Then there is the second type of devotee, who, realizing that worldliness is but an encumbrance, feels called upon to give it up for the sake of God in order to be one with Him. Such a person is said to be able to receive the divine grace of the second order, called Maryāda. Then comes the type of devotee who knows not of the world and of worldliness; nothing else but God has any meaning or value for him; he longs for reunion with God in order to serve Him. Such a person becomes the recipient of the highest grace of God, called Pushti. Herein at best the Lord God is compelled by the devotee to become, as if, his very own.[1]

Though it is unnecessary for us to go into the origin and other details about this Krishna of the *Bhāgawat* lore and of the *Gītā*, we might note in passing that suggestions that several curious and contradictory personalities are combined into one personality called Krishna,[2] though of value for the investigator, will have nothing but disapproval,[3] as Diwan Bahadur Jhaveri says, from the believers and followers of Krishna. Also, the attempt of scholars like Dr. Ramkrishna Bhandarkar to trace relations between the worship of the child Krishna

[1] For this section I am indebted to Maganlāl Śāstri in Pushti Bhakti Sudhā, II, 1, 5 ff.

[2] Sedgwick, L. D.: J.B.B.R.A.S., Vol. XXXIII, 65, referred to by Jhaveri, K. M.: Milestones, p. 27.

[3] Jhaveri, K. M.: Milestones, pp. 27-28.

and the divine child of Christianity has little or no attraction for the devotee.[1] So also, any speculation as to when actually the cult of *Bhakti* came to be established in India or in Gujarat, has little or no value for our work. *Bhakti* is as old as the history of man; the *Bhakti* cult was prevalent when the *Mahābhārata* was written; it was permeating the life of the masses through centuries of human effort. The *Bhāgwat Purāna* gives sufficient data to judge from. But the *Bhakti* creed as a distinct *Mārga* started definitely with Rāmānujāchārya.[2] In Gujarat, we have the cult of *Bhakti* (derived from whatever sources) really in the life of the masses with whom Narsinha Mehta (1414–1481) associated himself in devotion by the singing of hymns, and dancing with them in religious fervour.[3] And Mirabai, another great devotee, born a few years before Narsinha, also represents the same depth of devotion in the life of the masses. In fact, the story of the lives of these two great masters of *Bhakti*, and the signs of the times in which they live, make us conclude that during the time in which they flourished Gujarat was in the throes of a spiritual struggle in which Śaivism and Vaishnavism were engaged as protagonists. Vallabhāchārya gave his famous teachings towards the end of the fifteenth century. And it is even suggested by scholars like Mr. Telivala that Narsinha was a forerunner of Vallabhāchārya.[4] There is a remarkable similarity of views and sentiments between Narsinha and Vallabhāchārya.[5] Of course, it is suggested that Narsinha may have been influenced by the cult of *Bhakti*, called the *Radha Vallabhi*.

[1] Bhandarkar, R.: Vaishnavism and Śaivism, p. 38.
[2] Ibid., pp. 51, 57.
[3] Jhaveri, K. M.: Milestones, p. 38.
[4] Telivala, M.: Narsinha Mehtā in Pushti Bhakti Sudhā, Vol. IV, 11, 256 ff.
[5] Ibid., Vol. IV, 11, 256 ff.

But there is no evidence that may enable us to decide on this issue.

Now our description of *Bhakti* as taught in the *Bhāgvat* will make it very plain that neither caste nor morality has any real and intrinsic value in the teachings of the *Bhāgvat*. Caste is a mere social appendage; and morality, though good in itself, is no more than a social institution. Anyhow both these have their limitations in the life of the *Bhakta*; and it may even be permissible for the *Bhakta* to disregard the controlling influence of these, in his attempt to attain the final goal.[1] Even the sinner is given promise of redemption from sin if he surrenders himself completely to God. The Light of life is the direct word of the Lord Krishna, for it breathes the highest morality for body and for soul.[2] "To God, *Bhakti* alone is dear; *Bhakti* alone is the religion of this corrupt *Kaliyuga*."[3] Thus 'men and women, people of all castes, people of all moralities, are united to join in one chorus of *Bhakti*'[4]; and the Lord is believed to be standing in flesh and blood to receive them in His presence, ready even to emancipate them.[5] With Krishna thus enshrined in his heart, the devotee—man or woman—makes love with Him, as he or she would with his wife or her husband, and talks over the little scenes of life without reserve, and with the faith and hope that all this is listened to by the One who takes a real and genuine interest in his or her personal little ways of living.[6] One who has seen devotees busy with their worship in this way,

[1] I am indebted for this section to Govardhanrām Tripāthi's Classical Poets of Gujarat, pp. 10–13.
[2] Parekh, R. P.: Krishna Lilamrita, p. 129. Also, Shastri, B. J.: Purushottam-sahasranām-stottram, pp. 8 ff. Also, Letters of Harnath Pagal, pp. 17 ff.
[3] Vallabhāchārya: Tatvartha-dipa-nibandha, II, 222.
[4] Tripāthi, G. M.: Classical Poets, p. 12.
[5] Ibid., p. 12.
[6] Ibid., p. 12.

is naturally reminded of the similarity between the faith of the devotee and of the child that sees life and all in the toys with which it is engaged in playing.

Now such a doctrine of life, and of the means for the attainment of the final beatitude, must naturally react on the general tone of the moral life of the people as a whole. And this may be the more so when, instead of Krishna, the Maharajas are worshipped as living Krishnas, to whom the devotee offers his body, mind and wealth as an indication of the complete self-surrender which he is prepared to render for the sake of his love for Krishna. In practice, therefore, such extreme theories did great harm to the morality of some folks during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. And in the middle of the nineteenth century a case in the High Court of Bombay gave us a clue to the extent to which demoralization can come about owing to such beliefs.[1]

Right or wrong, such was the religion which fascinated the masses, and which drove away the last vestiges of Buddhism from among the lower strata of Hindu society. Already, Buddhism and Jainism had brought the Banias to the front rank in the political arena; some of them were ministers of the kings of Gujarat. Naturally, therefore, the new religion of the Brahmins had to take them into its fold. This meant consultation of their tastes and temper, not only in settling the general design, but even in matters of detail. But more. This new religion appealed also to the instincts of womankind, and no less inspired poets with incidents and theories; these two powerful forces when in action were bound to revolutionize the faith of the region of Gujarat.[2]

[1] Cf. The Maharaja Libel Case, 1862.

[2] Tripāthi, G. M.: Classical Poets, p. 15. This is a summary of the whole paragraph.

We have already said that the *Bhakti Mārga* is not necessarily opposed to the *Karma Mārga*, as it is to the *Jñyāna Mārga*. In fact, let us note that the *Karma Mārga* is the handmaid of the *Bhakti Mārga*; but for it, the *Bhakti Mārga* would not have survived. A compromise has to be made; and any action of a worldly nature, whether the cooking of food, or the keeping of a shop, when done in the spirit of true service, is both act (*Karma*) and *Bhakti*. On the other hand, mere *Karma Mārga* might end in materialism and self-seeking; it may not bring solace to those who seek for a justification from within, and a reconciliation with the things of the spirit. *Karma* without *Bhakti* is thus held unnatural and unworthy. In the same sense, mere *Bhakti* is not held, by most devotees, as something worth striving after by itself. As they say, *Bhakti* must have its place and no more; for after all, if all men and women engaged themselves in Bhakti all the time, who would look after the practical management of human affairs? In fact, such all-time *Bhakti* may prove as bad as mere *Jñyāna*; for, it also does not justify our life of action. The *Bhakti Mārga* that the Vaishnavas of Gujarat have chosen to follow is, therefore, more or less the pathway of action and devotion as preached in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. At least, that is the outlook of modern Gujarat now led by Mahatma Gandhi.

The issue is clear. The most powerful classes in Gujarat, businessmen, merchants, farmers and labourers, follow the *Vishnu Mata*; and they have naturally chosen the golden mean, and settled a *Mārga* wherein *Karma* and *Bhakti* are fused into one single path of service.

Let us now consider how *Karma* and *Bhakti* shape each other in the several *Sampradāyas* (sects) of *Vishnu Mata*.

CHAPTER V

SAMPRADĀYA

Literally, *Sampradāya* means 'that which is given', i.e., a tradition, an established doctrine, along with its path and *Dharma*, transmitted from a teacher to his disciples. In the traditional sense, when a religious 'following' once established is kept up from teacher to teacher continuously for twenty-one generations it is said to be a *Sampradāya.*[1] The word *Pantha* is used by the learned to denote any type of religious following. I have, however, used the word in a general sense. Every *Mata* expresses itself in terms of several *Sampradāyas*, each of which emphasizes one or another of the aspects of the *Mata.* Each of the *Sampradāyas* marks more or less the several stages of interpretation and change of view-point, mainly doctrinal, usually with reference to the respective authority and relation of the priests with the laity, and the question of admittance to the creed of one or the other of the lower *Varnas.* Sometimes, on the other hand, as will be shown in the following pages, new *Sampradāyas* come into being to meet the growing necessities for social or religious reform. For instance, Swami Dayanand Saraswati vehemently preached against the Vallabhi doctrine of *Bhakti* and the social evils said to be prevalent amongst the Vallabhites. Others establish new sects against idolatry. Kabir, for instance, though a great worshipper of Rama and Krishna, denounced idol-worship. A study of the sects reveals to us to what extent the Moslem and Christian ideas of

[1] Mehta, N. B.: Śakta Sampradaya, Bombay, 1932, p. v.

man, society, God, and worship have contributed to the making of the history of the progress and evolution of Hinduism.

Let us now run through the history of the Vaishnavite *Sampradāyas* of Gujarat, and see how they came into existence and how they affected both the society and the individual. We may thus discern the sociological factors that have contributed to the formation and success or failure of each of the *Sampradāyas*. This will enable us to see what relation each of these *Sampradāyas* has had with the social, economic and spiritual struggle of the people. The *Sampradāyas* that we refer to are living *Sampradāyas*, actually followed by the people. The following may be large or small; the castes that follow may be many or few; and members may belong to any of the four Varnas.

After the death-blow given by Śankarāchārya to Buddhism (788–850 A.D.), Brahmanism tried to re-establish its power over the people of Gujarat. For various reasons which we have already stated elsewhere, this form of Brahmanism seems not to have satisfied the people of the plains of India, viz., Bengal, United Provinces and Gujarat. The result was that throughout the centuries that followed the Moslem conquest (from the beginning of the eleventh century), sect after sect arose to establish a new order of things in the various departments of life—individual, communal, social and religious. The definite problem that they were faced with from time to time was one of reconciling the existing *Dharma* and *Gnyāti* laws with the changing needs of life at the time. So far, then, as the sociological currents that generated this flood of sects is concerned, the history of Vaishnavism is the record of such attempts at reconciliation and their partial results in terms of progressive achievements.

In the middle of the 12th century Rāmānuja, a Brahmin of Ayodhya, laid the foundation of modern Vaishnavism. All castes were permitted to enter the sect, which he established, but with the provision that the adherents must respect traditional caste distinctions. He established Narayana (i.e., Vishnu) worship, and created a monastic priesthood of the Vaishnavite order, much like the Buddhistic, which the Śaivites also had retained.[1] As a pioneer Vaishnavite leader, Rāmānuja laid great stress on the philosophical and doctrinal rather than on the moral and social side, with the result that people found the doctrines of his sect too abstract to follow. The other cause why Rāmānuja did not succeed is his insistence on the retaining of caste distinctions, which naturally tend to help the *Dharma* and the *Gnyāti* to perpetuate their hold upon the individual and the family. All those, therefore, that form Rāmānuja's following to-day, are a few Audich Brahmins,[2] Vanias,[3] Lohanas,[4] Kayasthas[5] and Bhats.[6]

Ramananda, who came just after Rāmānuja, shifted the stress from the philosophical and doctrinal to the moral and social aspects of life. He founded a sect, called after his name, which preaches the gospel of mercy, charity and the good life, and enjoins the worship of the ideal man Rāma, the epical incarnation of Vishnu. Besides this, Rama's wife Sita, and his brother Lakshman are held up as ideals of noble chastity and unswerving fidelity, and as such, worthy of human worship. His sect was open to all castes, with the result that Kabir, a weaver, Rohidas, a currier, Pipa, a Rajput, Dhana,

[1] Cf. N. Macnicol: Indian Theism (1915), pp. 105 et seq.
[2] Bom. Gaz., Vol. IX, Part I, p. 534.
[3] Ibid., p. 534.
[4] Ibid., p. 122.
[5] Ibid., p. 64.
[6] Ibid., p. 213.

a Jat, and Sena, a barber, became his disciples, and later became leaders of Vaishnavism.[1] The Garoda Brahmins of Gujarat, who are priests of the *dhedas* (sweepers) have been following this sect for centuries; and many *ghānchis* (oilmen), *sathwaras* (field-labourers) and *kadiās* (masons) have also embraced this sect during recent years. But the continuation of the monastic order and the system of severe penances, austerities and bodily pain and torture, which Ramananda advocated for securing the perfection of the soul, could not be popular in a region like Gujarat.

And this explains the success of the teachings of Kabir (end of the 15th and beginning of the 16th centuries), who was a disciple of Ramananda, and who founded a new sect called after his own name. He was a Moslem by birth; but his broader outlook, and the moral grandeur of his teachings, enabled him to initiate a universal creed for all castes and classes and conditions of people; and this without any initiation ceremony and without sect-marks, both characteristic of the older forms. A life of devotion, he taught, could elevate the inner man; not offerings of any kind, not sacrifices, nor torture of the body, but faith in the one God alone can secure the highest bliss for the devotee. "Men in general", he complains, "pollute the path of *Bhakti* by washing pebbles and stones and images".[2] But while he condemned idolatry, he did not hesitate to hold Rāma, Krishna and other popular heroes in great veneration, and called them holy. Unlike the older sects, his did not insist on every follower taking *Sanyasta* (life of retirement in old age), though he recommended it to those who were inclined towards it. But his voice was too feeble

[1] Ibid., p. 534. Also J. A. Grierson in J.R.A.S., April, 1907, pp. 318 et seq. Also, Bhandarkar: Śaivism and Vaishnavism, p. 66.
[2] Kabir: Sakhi, 260.

and far away from Gujarat to be heard there. Therefore, though his songs were sung throughout this period, his sect was not securely established, until in 1800 Nihal Daji, a tailor of Jambusar, brought this new gospel to Gujarat.[1] Since then, over two hundred thousand people of the lowest *Gnyātis* follow this sect.[2] These belong to the *Luhār* (blacksmith), *Kanbi* (agriculturist), *Soni* (goldsmith), *Sutār* (carpenter), *Kumbhār* (potter), *Darji* (tailor), *Khatri* (dyer), *Ghānchi* (oilman), *Hajām* (barber), *Dhobi* (washerman), *Kadiā* (mason), *Golā* (rice-pounder), *Khārwā* (seamen), *Māli* (gardener) and such other artisan and labouring *Gnyātis*. But Kabir belongs to all. Even the Śaivites sing his songs; "and the sage is highly venerated by all Vaishnavas, of whatever caste or class".[3]

Contemporaneously with Kabir, Vallabhāchārya (1478–1521), preaching in Gujarat, made many converts to his faith.[4] He insisted on the enjoyment of life, and decried all hardship, bodily pain and self-torture of any sort. According to him, privation is no part of sanctity. The things of life are made for us; and not "no use" but the "best use" is our duty, he preached. He therefore made it a duty of teachers and devotees to worship Krishna by clothing him with rich garments, and offering him the best of clothes.[5] Therefore, Krishna of the *Bhāgavata* and of the *Mahābhārata* is held up as the best example of the life man should lead. This naturally attracted the well-to-do from among the merchant and farmer population of Bhātias, Vāniās, Lohānās and Kanbis; and over

[1] Bom. Gaz., Vol. IX, Pt. 1, p. 541.
[2] Bom. Gaz., Vol. IX, Pt. 1 (1901), p. 539. Latest figures not available.
[3] Cf. Bhandarkar: Śaivism and Vaishnavism, p. 73.
[4] Ibid., p. 77.
[5] Ibid., pp. 80-81.

seven hundred thousand men and women have come over to this sect.

Devotion to Krishna, and love for him, in the same manner as a wife loves her husband is, according to Vallabhāchārya, sufficient to bring salvation to the individual soul. Not in redemption from births, but in rebirths, which would give greater opportunities of serving the Lord, lies the goal of life. And the Lord Krishna has to be worshipped in terms of *Sevā* (service) alone. This service includes the giving up of the body, mind and worldly belongings of the devotee. The Lord Krishna is supposed to be a living God who longs for the devotee's love. So the devotee who thirsts after serving the Lord for love's sake—for service only—considers the stone or metal image of Krishna as real, living and human as anything living could ever be. So, whatever the image of Krishna might be, Krishna is worshipped with a rare pomp, splendour and devotion. He is talked of as the darling of the family; he is respected as the keeper of the conscience of the household; he is considered so sacred, he is made so much of that one sometimes really wonders how at all it can be possible for wise, aged and balanced men and women to join in the games of the Divine Babe Krishna and take a genuine living interest in the many comforts he desires of them and the many discomforts he wants them to remove. Of course the image is not supposed to have been made by human hands and ingenuity; it is self-born. It may actually be of any shape and make up. But the devotee pours out his adoring soul in song, chant and supplication, in dance and rhythmic motion, conceived in all the beauty and majesty and splendour which his yearning soul, aroused to poetry and artistry for the nonce, can suggest, invent and execute. The strange ecstatic imagination of the devotee weaves

an atmosphere of concreteness and reality around the object of worship out of elements—his overwhelming love and self-surrender—which to the outsider may seem insubstantial, illusory and unworthy of consideration.

Due to several reasons the Vallabhites have no public temples for worship. The descendants of Vallabhāchārya worship one image or another in their homes. And the followers are allowed to a certain extent, to join in any of the eight services performed daily. These eight services engage the devotee in a variety of ways to attend to the image of the Lord Krishna, as if the image is actually a living human being. He is to be awakened from sleep and to be sent to sleep to the accompaniment of vocal and instrumental music; He is to be bathed and dressed from time to time during the day; fairy-tales have to be told to Him; His food, dress and ornaments have to be changed from time to time according to the demands of the season, according to the needs of the occasion.

Besides this, the devotee may have his private worship in the home. Here the image of Balkrishna (the Child Krishna) is generally worshipped. He is the darling of the home; He is at the same time the most sacred centre (for how can He be the possession of any one!) of the personal and social life of each member of the family and of the whole household. Any difficulty, any question, any issue involving difficulty of solution, is referred to Him. In extreme cases the question of marriage between two parties is, for instance, referred to His final disposal if the astrologer's decision is against the match desired by the devotee; in this case the horoscopes of both the parties are put before the Lord, and He is requested to undo the evil effects of the planetary opposition which, the astrologer foretells, must occur if the match takes place. Or,to give another

instance, on the night of the anniversary of the birth of Krishna, all the members of the family—young and old, the wise and the unsophisticated—are engaged, literally, as a personal concern, to greet the Divine Babe when He is born, to lull Him to sleep, to play with Him, to sing lullabies to Him; each vies with the other in serving Him through the night, and so naturally each has his or her share of pleasure and joy of serving the Lord.

In order that a person may become a member of the sect he has to be initiated; and this is necessary in the case both of those who are born in the sect and of outsiders. The initiation of a novice takes place in childhood when the novice is taken to the Mahārāja who chants "*Śri Krishna Śaranam mama*" (God Krishna is my refuge) in the ear of the child. A rosary of Tulsi beads is passed round his neck by the *Mahārāja* after the child is made to repeat this initiation prayer. But a more important initiation takes place when the child is about twelve. At this time the votary is made to declare that he consecrates his body, mind and worldly belongings (*Tan*, *Man* and *Dhan*) to the highest Deity Krishna. This ceremony is called the *Brahma Śambandha* (connection with the Supreme Being [1]), by which the initiate is brought into contact with the Holy Ghost from Whom the initiate is supposed to have got separated; and unless this reunion is secured it is believed that a person cannot get admission into the Holy Tabernacle of God.

Unlike Śankarāchārya, Vallabhāchārya kept the pontificate of his church in his own family. He had two sons, one of whom ultimately followed him as the head of the church. This latter had seven

[1] Cf. Pranshankar Shastri: Brahma-Sambandha-Kavya (i.e., poem on Brahma-Sambandha), Ahmedabad, 1915, pp. 48 et seq. Also, Maharaja Libel Case of 1862, p. 75.

sons who in their turn established themselves as the *Gurus* or preceptors of the creed. The descendants of all these are called *Mahārājās* or *Āchāryas* (preceptors), or *Goswāmis* or *Gosāins* (lords of cows).[1] As we have already pointed out, each one of the Mahārājās has a temple of his own in which his followers go for worship. It is these Mahārājās who perform the preliminary and final initiation ceremonies, and bring about the union of the communicant with the highest Deity. Popularly, men and women, but mostly women, consider these Mahārājās as incarnations of Vishnu, and worship them as such. In the Mahārāja Libel Case some of the witnesses alleged that the Mahārājās were gods and that there was no God higher than them.[2] Anyhow, theoretically, the *Brahma-Sambandha* ceremony which purports to lay all the belongings of the communicant at the feet of the Master, may tend to make him a creature of the *Guru* for the rest of his life. The social consequences of these doctrines and practices have been very serious, as will be evident from the strange practices[3] said to be prevalent amongst the followers and leaders of a sect that should otherwise have been the dominant sect of Gujarat.

We should not lose sight of the fact, however, that neither of the contending parties in that Case, nor the witnesses on both sides had studied the doctrines of the sect. The witnesses on either side were either simple-minded devotees of the Mahārājās or zealous enthusiasts on behalf of social and religious reform, both of whom thought that they were right in their personal beliefs and contentions; so some of the practices prevalent amongst them were considered by both parties as of necessity connected

[1] Cf. Bhandarkar: Śaivism and Vaishnavism, p. 80.
[2] Cf. The Mahārāja Libel Case, pp. 41, 136.
[3] Detailed by B. M. Malabari: Gujarat and the Gujaratis (1889), pp. 122 f. Also, cf. Mahārāja Libel Case, pp. 42, 133 et seq.

with the teachings of the *Sampradāya*, though most of the practices are not sanctioned anywhere in its scriptures. We must add the fact that the defendant in that case Mr. Karsandas Mulji, had friends and supporters among people who wanted to promote their own causes, whether of Christianity or Swami Narayanism, or Prathana Samajism or social reform. And it might be well to note that some of the social reformers represented the new class of well-meaning intellectuals just rising up, fresh from the study of Spencer, Darwin and Huxley, and voluble in ill-considered denunciations of their own scriptures, traditions and history, of which they knew practically nothing and cared to know less. In fact Karsandas started only with the intention of introducing reforms from within and, it is said, he found to his dismay that he had wrecked more than he had constructed. It is now suggested also on the side of the Mahārājās that apart from the fact that the details revealed in the case were greatly exaggerated by unscrupulous men who were anti-religious, the facts relied on could be proved to be grossly misrepresenting the case of the *Sampradāya*, its leaders, and its followers. And this becomes more evident when we study the works of a number of Vallabhāite scholars during the last fifty years, and impartially examine the materials now available. This makes it evident what pure gold was hidden underneath the dross dragged out into the light and displayed in that Case which is not yet forgotten by so-called reformers who, in season and out of season, without a study of the *Sampradāya* as it now prevails or its doctrines, flog a horse which died some seventy years ago.

The above remarks should not prevent us from rightly denouncing any excess in theory and practice which may exist at present among the Vallabhāites. Only let us remember, that the case against them

is over-stated, exaggerated, and in some instances even fabricated.

It may be mentioned, also, that the evils within the Vallabhi fold loom especially large before the public eye only because of the publicity given to them in the Maharaja Libel Case. On examination, the other *Sampradāyas* would not escape censure.

No wonder, therefore, that due to such deplorable practices, the first and the most important reform urged and carried out by Swaminarayan was that males and females were not allowed to enter for worship in one another's room in a temple. In fact members of each of the sexes have to enter the temples through entrances which lead to different apartments specially reserved for the two sexes.[1] From within the sect, reformers refused to obey the practices going on in the temples, with the result that the Mahārājās prohibited them from entering their temples for worship. The effect of this prohibition could be practically nullified by the establishment of household worship or *seva* in place of public worship or *darśana*. This shows to what extent Brahmin supremacy has been losing its hitherto unchallenged position in an environment of trade, commerce, industry and increasing education. Thus some of the rich Bhatias and Vanias have proved themselves a remarkably efficient social force to deal with the evils in their 'church'.

About the time when Vallabhācharya preached, a Persian Moslem of the name of Imāmśāh tried to establish a sect in Ahmedabad, about the year 1449. For all practical purposes, he enjoined worship of the God of Islam whom he described as "the one eternal formless One". It is not surprising that he got a following amongst the Hindus, when we remember

[1] Maśruwala, K. G.: Sahjanand Swami, Ahmedabad, 1923, pp. 30 ff.

that at the time when he preached, a Moslem (Mahommad II of Ahmedabad) was ruling Gujarat; besides, it is said that Imāmśāh performed a miracle by bringing down rain at a time when famine was threatening the district. He also compromised with Hinduism by insisting that his followers should obey their *Gnyāti Dharma*, although the sect was open to persons of all castes. Moreover, he established a monastic order of celibates. We refer to the appearance of this non-Vaishnavite, half-Moslem sect in order to show to what extent the people wanted release from the Śaivite yoke. The following of this sect at present consists of a few Brāhmins, Vāniās, Kāchiās and Kanbis.

Yet another attempt was made in 1582 to establish a theistic sect by Prannāth from Bundelkhand. He directed that no idol or image should be worshipped. Yet in practice ornaments are so arranged in some temples that from a distance they look like decorations around the images of Krishna and his consort Rādhā. Caste-laws had to be obeyed, for the time had not yet come when an overhauling of the social organization was either necessary from the social or the economic point of view.

Dadu, a cotton-cleaner of Ahmedabad, established the worship of Bāl Mukund (the Child Krishna) about the year 1600. The great respect for animal life which he enjoins on his followers shows the definite reaction against the Mahomedan cruelties of the time to cattle. Though he allowed members of all castes to be members of his sect, he did not definitely advise his followers to break caste-laws.

During the 18th century a great religious upheaval was brought about by Sadhu Śāntidās of Jodhpur, who established the Ramasnehi *Sampradāya*. He abolished image-worship of any sort and enjoined on his followers the mental worship of Rāma. He

laid great stress on the purity of personal morals, thus trying to capture those of the Vallabhites who were dissatisfied with Krishna worship, as well as with the strange practices in the temples of the Vallabhi Mahārājās. This led him to re-establish Rāma-worship, which naturally attracted to the sect some Brahmins, Sonis, Vāniās and Rajputs. And during recent years the Ghanchies (oilmen) are being converted in good numbers to this sect. But, unfortunately, in his great zeal against his adversaries, Shantidas lost sight of the beautiful aspect of the Vallabhite doctrine, namely, the full enjoyment of the good things of life, and established a monastic order.

In the first quarter of the 19th century a *Pātidār* (a Kanbi farmer) of Nadiad, named Mādhavgar, established a sect called after his name, which has a small following amongst the Brahmins, *Pātidārs*, *Hajāms* (barbers) and *Sanghadiās*.[1] He revolted against the *Sampradāyas* of his time because they allowed idolatry, nature worship and the worship of *Gurus* and Mahārājās; besides, the worst state of affairs prevailed in regard to the so-called untouchables. He, therefore, denounced idol and nature worship, and preached a life of devotion to *Parameshwar* (God), who is the Disposer of all things. A follower of this sect does not need any *Āchārya* or *Guru* in order that he may be initiated by a religious rite into the fold. Madhavgar did away with all caste distinctions and untouchability; even a woman during her periods is not considered polluted. A sect such as this, one may naturally think, should have appealed to the masses and captured a large following. But India is a strange land. Even in spite of the inner revolt the people are not agreeable to a complete sweeping away of past customs and

[1] A caste of wood-turners in Gujarat. Bom. Gaz., Vol. VIII, p. 152.

traditions for the establishment of a new order. They want change, not a new order; and the change should go along the grain of past traditions. Besides, Madhavgar was not a Brahmin like Vallabhacharya or Śankaracharya; nor, even, was he a Kshatriya like Buddha. He was a mere farmer, and his trumpet-blasts therefore proved too feeble for the ears of a priest-ridden people. Moreover, his over-zealousness in the removal of untouchability and social distinctions earned him the disapproval and opposition of the upper classes, even as in modern times in the case of Mahatma Gandhi. And in Madhavgar's time Gujarat had neither railways nor newspapers. But the greatest factor that doomed this sect to failure was the absence of a church organization. Anyhow, Madhavgar's sect seems to have been a precursor of a similar sect, the Prarthna Samaj, now flourishing and followed by some of the most educated and earnest members of the Vaishnavite community.

About the time when Madhavgar taught, the existing sects seem to have needed a thorough overhauling. We have seen how he failed to solve the religious problems of his time by roundly denouncing all the existing sects and practices. But Sahjānand Swāmi of Ayodhya, who established the Swaminarayan sect in 1830, tried to re-establish the worship of *Nara Narayana* (i.e., Vishnu), thus retaining a historical connection with the older *Purānic* gods. At the same time he insisted on the purity of personal life as the essential factor that goes to make a life of devotion. One can see why this was demanded: the Vallabhi Mahārājās were at the height of their power; and many people were quite disappointed with what was going on in the temples. We have already referred to the practical reforms he introduced in places of worship where the female devotees had separate

apartments in which only they could enter and in which no male was ever allowed. Besides, he established a monastic order of women preachers to work solely amongst the women.[1] Sahjanand Swami, therefore, naturally got a large following from the Brahmin, *Vāniā*, *Soni* (goldsmith), *Kanbi* (agriculturist), *Suthār* (carpenter), Rajput, *Luhār* (blacksmith), *Māli* (gardener), *Salāt* (stone worker), *Ghānchi* (oilmen), *Golā* (rice-pounder), besides primitive tribes like the *Kāthis* and *Kolis* and others. At present over 300,000 persons follow this *Sampradāya*. In modern times, however, the Swāminārayan sect does not attract reformers, because caste distinctions are scrupulously observed by the adherents, and perhaps because of the existence of a monastic order within this *Sampradāya*. And though these are defects in themselves from the point of view of the extreme section of religious reformers in Gujarat, the *Sampradāya* would be expected to attract many Vallabhites because of its teachings on the purity of personal life.

In the beginning of the 19th century, a very serious movement was started in Bengal by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the founder of the Brahmo Samaja.[2] The English Hymnary was translated into the Indian vernaculars; congregational forms of worship were introduced; music forms part of the divine service. The religious and social reforms that he initiated have a very dim reflex in the life of the masses, though the most educated and enlightened members of the community have been drawn steadily into it. In the absence of any other Hindu weapon, the Gujaratis naturally adopt anything they can lay their hands on in order that the curse of caste and untouchability may be removed, and

[1] Maśruwala, K. G.: Sahjanand Swami, pp. 38 ff.
[2] Cf. J. N. Farquhar: Modern Religious Movements in India, pp. 22, 33-34, 47.

the dead weight of a misfunctioning religion may be lightened. And so in 1867 the Prarthna Samaj was established in Gujarat.[1] We have the reaction against these tendencies in the Arya Samaja which was founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati. He tried to restate the Hindu religion—the Truth, the Way and the Life—in its pristine simplicity and grandeur. The Vedas are its only authority; mere traditions are militantly fought. Socially it recognizes the four classes (*Varnas*) in which any people may naturally organize themselves. It opposes *Gnyāti* distinctions and untouchability; and it also refuses to accept the static nature of *Varna* traditions. Besides, it has actively started accepting Moslems and Christians into the Hindu fold. All these facts are having far-reaching effects on the life of the Hindus. And it may be that in time to come the theism of the Vedas may get firmly re-established, without the supremacy of a Brahmanical oligarchy.

In the foregoing account of the Vaishnavite sects we have avoided direct references to movements from without the Hindu fold. But it will be obvious that Mahomedanism and Christianity have influenced the evolution of the Vaishnavite sects. The influence of the Mahomedans is very obvious in the teaching of Kabir, Pirān, Mādhavgar and Pranāmi; while the Prarthna Samaja is the result of the Christian challenge to the Hindu ways of solving the problem of life. We have also spoken of the Arya Samaja as a reaction against these influences. But the indirect influences of Christianity and European ideals of life are very obvious in the devotional literature of the people, which is part and parcel of the life of the members of every sect.[2] Thus Hinduism,

[1] Op. cit., p. 109.
[2] Cf. Lyall: Asiatic Studies, 2nd Series, pp. 23, 39.

including Vaishnavism, has to fight Christianity and Mahomedanism on pure theistic ground.

And here one is reminded of the substitution of the vernacular for Sanskrit in religious ceremonials as a sure sign that the lower castes have been coming into their own. Not only the vernaculars, but also dialects are respected; those creeds that do not do so are in danger of going to the wall. The priests' homage to the language or dialect of the people is a necessary factor of success in gaining adherents to the cults which they represent. The vernacular devotional literature is not necessarily composed by the Brahmins: any one composes the hymns and songs, and as expressions of divine love, fervour and longing, they are accepted by all leaders, priests and laymen. Set formulæ on certain occasions are allowed on sufferance; but they have begun to be repeated in the vernacular as well. I saw a Brahmin priest [1] performing the greater part of the marriage ceremony in the vernacular; and the whole company greatly appreciated this change from the usual repetition of unintelligible Sanskrit formulæ.

One may ask a question: "Why talk of the removal of untouchability and other evils, why talk of social regeneration, in terms of religious reform and revival?" It might seem rather ridiculous to a Western mind that social progress can take place in the case of a people only through religion; but that is so amongst the Hindus. One has only to point out the thousands of Dhedās and Bhangiās and Kolis and Kāthis yet awaiting conversion, like some of their contemporaries, like the Ghanchis. What has happened to them since their conversion to the Kabir Panth and latterly even to the Arya Samaja? They have somehow risen in the social

[1] In 1919.

scale; a people once polygamous, using filthy language, illiterate, addicted to drink and prostitution, now educate their children, give up drink, polygamy and other vices of their forefathers. Not that they have reached the height of human perfection, but change has come about, and that in the right direction. On the other hand repeated attempts at mere social reform amongst the poor and the lowly have not yet succeeded, because the people need religious conversion before they are socially reformed. And here I give an actual incident that occurred during my visit with some friends to a village in the Surat district in 1917.

The good village Brahmin persuaded one of us, Mr. A., that some members of a Kadia family should be invested with the sacred necklace, with injunctions that they should thereafter give up the habit of drinking. The person designated to perform the conversion ceremony had to rise to the occasion. The night before they were converted the Kadias got drunk, and were heard thrashing their wives and children cruelly in the middle of the night. Mr. A. prepared to interfere. Overcome by the fact that such a pious man (for he was called a Mahārāja, a name reserved in villages for Brahmins) had entered their house, the drunkards collapsed, and promised to do such things no more. The next morning they came to him with their women and children to apologize. As already arranged with the village Brahmin, Mr. A. would not grant them pardon unless they swore solemn oaths never to drink again. But they said they could not resist the temptation, and that many a resolution in the past had been broken. So they were told that if they would honestly resolve once more they would be invested with the sacred necklace which would give them power to carry out their resolution for ever. This they agreed to. They were ordered to go eight

miles away to take a bath in a river "to wash off" the dirt and sin of the body. The family brought back a sample of the water to prove the bona-fides of their action.[1] Thereupon they were invested with the sacred necklace. When I visited the place once more later on,[2] these 'converts' had, up to that time, maintained themselves against temptations, and the womenfolk blessed Mr. A.

In conclusion, it is necessary to summarize the foregoing historical outline of the different *Sampradāyas*, and to give an essence of what a *Sampradāya* really is. Society has naturally a structure, and organizes itself into interrelated classes in the interest of common economic and other human ends. In India this natural organization has taken the form of the *Gnyāti* (caste) system; it is complicated by its (largely mythical) past, and the theories based on it. Even then, a large part of it is actually functioning, as will be described in our chapter on *Gnyāti*. A society which is supposed to be divided by the Maker into watertight compartments of over 300 *Gnyātis* is bound to keep its people disunited. But amid all this variety the *Sampradāya* aspect of the religious organization has proved rather a means of uniting and bringing together various castes within the Aryan and other tribal groups, in the same sense and manner as religion has tended to do with peoples of diverse history and culture in Moslem and Christian countries. For, after all, while a *Gnyāti* gathers together several individuals and families into one fold, it is but the result of a common

[1] All this was done at the instance of the Brahmin priest, so that the men might realize the seriousness and difficulty of gaining the right to put on the sacred necklace. "They must be made to realize that they cannot get it for nothing," said the shrewd Brahmin.

[2] In May, 1919.

Dharma, a common past and a common prejudice; the *Sampradāya* on the other hand, brings men and women of several such groups together of their own free choice; sometimes, indeed, against the age-long sanctions of *Dharma*, in the interests of common ideas and ideals—material and spiritual. Therefore, while the one is a passive, unprogressive, and merely conventional grouping, the other is an active and a real one. Not that convention does not rule, for, as we have seen, *Gnyāti* fetters in several instances yet continue to cling on their bodies, but at least the spirit is helped to march its way toward the freedom that brings the hope of social and personal freedom in its train.

Thus *Sampradāya* is that aspect of religious organization among the Hindus which saves Hindu society, and especially the Vaishnavite society of Gujarat (for Gujarat is the manufacturing centre of *Gnyātis*) from a spiritual death. Therefore we cannot persuade ourselves to agree with Dr. Ketkar, who holds that the *Sampradāya* is a disintegrating factor, and therefore should be discouraged, and even destroyed, in the interests of a national social structure.[1] For *Dharma* and its integral social counterpart, the *Gnyātis* and the *Varnas*, have been existing from far earlier times than the institution of *Sampradāyas*. True it is that many of the *Sampradāyas*, both Śaivite and Vaishnavite, have been encouraging caste-rules and observances. But they do not set themselves the task of manufacturing or creating them. And where that happens it is not because of the *Sampradāyas*, but because of the already existing traditions and practices amongst the castes that the *Sampradāyas* have to handle. For, look at most of the

[1] Cf. Ketkar: Hinduism, its Formation and Future, London, 1911, pp. 18, 154 ff.

Sampradāyas: it comes into existence against caste-rules, against *Dharma*-rules, against, i.e., *Dharma* and caste disabilities; and its interests lie in raising the social status of a varied number of castes, not merely of a homogeneous *Varna*, but also of different *Varnas*. The *Sampradāyas* seem to us therefore to be the thin edge of theism that projects itself into the very heart of Hindu life—social and individual—thus rousing individuals and communities from a synnomic existence caused by a spiritual stupor from the worship of a dead and misfunctioning tradition which has led them both to sure ruin.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Introductory.

Chap. VI. Varna.

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Chap. VIII. Gotra and Kula.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Introductory

Having noticed the religious aspects of the problem under review, we pass on to observe the human setting in which it unfolds itself, that is to say, to study the social structure which that religion fills and animates. This structure rests on the fundamental groupings of society in terms of *Varna, Gnyāti, Gotra* and *Kula.* Each of these are traditionally understood as schools of life for the natural unfolding of the individual during a part of the period of transmigrations from birth to birth towards the achievement of the final goal. So these social institutions and groupings are supposed by the devout to be instruments for and means towards the solution of the problems of life. Of course one is attached to a *Varna*, a *Gnyāti*, a *Gotra* and *Kula* from his very birth; so he or she must abide by the traditions, practices and laws prevalent therein. And this is not at all considered objectionable by the devout. For, *this* birth is but a series of such happenings, according to the law of *Karma*, which is the fundamental principle that governs Hindu thinking. And the wonder yet remains that though the founder of one *Sampradāya* or another assures his flock that they are freed from all bonds of *Karma* and that their acceptance of the way, the truth and the life taught by his *Sampradāya* is sufficient in one single span of human life for the achievement of the final beatitude, his successors and their followers persist, with or without reason, in and out of season, in asserting their faith in the infallibility of the hereditary character of these social institutions. So, it seems, the Hindus cannot give up their fundamental notions (how can they be called prejudices?);

if you feed them in accordance with the way of the orthodox as handed down to them by practice, tradition and history, you feel compelled to acknowledge that you are helping the perpetuation of a system which can have no moral basis, which, in fact, is positively anti-moral, as some of the best Hindus have asserted; and if you want to do away with them by using any kind of means, direct and indirect, you simply aggravate the position by creating reaction, you help its growth in spite of your determination to the contrary. So there may be a third way of dealing with the situation, a way of compromise used, consciously or unconsciously, by the Arya Samajists, viz., by saying: "We accept these institutions as fundamental, real and obligatory; only let us understand that they have been interpreted wrongly during the Middle Ages due to our ignorance of the original injunctions of the Vedas; so let us go to the Vedas and follow what they ordain regarding the management and organization of our social life and institutions". This method has a certain appeal for the orthodox and the devout. But the struggle between the old and new must rage; to what end it will impel Hindu social structure, who can tell in these days when the world is in the throes of revolutionary changes affecting every aspect of individual, social and political life and structure? From a social and political and economic order that has outlived its utility, and, by its efforts to persist, is engendering opposition, strife, bitterness and revolt, the world is marching—tentatively, gropingly, but with faith and hope—to a state, the vision of which has caught its imagination by answering its prayers—a state in which, it believes, he who works honestly will have the right to live happily, in which every individual will get the opportunity to develop to his fullest capacity, in which, consequently, there will be no high

and low, poor and rich, caste and outcaste, no white and black, no east and west. That is the goal, the paradise. We are at present traversing purgatory; we are at the beginning of the middle state, when the forces of change and of reaction, after some preliminary encounters, are organizing themselves for the final struggle. This is the time when the revolutionary outlook of the intellectuals of a generation or two ago is filtering through and infecting the masses. We are at present witnessing mass arousal and awakening all over the world. The common people are becoming conscious of their misery and their disabilities, and of their rights as human beings. India, so long inert, unresponsive, has not escaped the infection. Political and social unrest are the keynotes of the situation to-day in this country. Agrarian unrest has already assumed formidable proportions. Industrial unrest is taking serious form. Mahatma Gandhi has touched but the fringe of the problem of untouchability, and it is rocking Hindu India to its foundations. Capitalism, urban civilization and outlook, together with all that it implies, scientific scepticism and materialism, class consciousness, dynamic endeavours for regeneration, emancipation of women, consciousness of a larger and essentially interdependent world, and of the desirability of a comprehensively international outlook—all these factors and the many others that are noticed in the changing western world, are present in India to-day (on a smaller scale, of course), and are producing their inevitable effects. That these factors have influenced, and are every day influencing the development and evolution of the whole Hindu structure is only too obvious. Whether, and how far, *traditional Hinduism*, caste system and all, can and will withstand these shocks from all sides may not be a matter for fruitful conjecture for the present.

CHAPTER VI

VARNA

Varna is the name assigned to any of the four main hereditary and endogamous groups in which Hindu society is believed to have been cast by the Creator.[1] The four *Varnas* are: the Brahmins (priests), the Kshatriyas (warriors), the Vaiśyas (traders and agriculturists), and the Śudras (menials). Sometimes the word *Varna* is used in another sense, at least in Gujarat. We refer to the *Ujli Varna* (fair-coloured) and the *Kāli Paraj* (the dusky race)[2]; it is apparent that colour is the main factor that governs this classification. There is a third sense in which the word *Varna* is used when the whole of mankind is referred to as the Eighteen *Varnas*.

Each of the four *Varnas* is supposed to have its pre-ordained *Dharmas*. The Brahmin has to pursue and impart knowledge, and to follow *Dharma* in its extreme fineness and intricacies; living a life of purity, gentleness, and self-less devotion to *Dharma* he is called upon to be the refuge of all, even as God Almighty is. The Kshatriya is enjoined to look after the safety of the person and property of the people, to chastise wrongdoers and to fight in behalf of *Dharma* even unto death. The Vaiśya is asked to help the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas to keep the affairs of the world going by paying taxes out of the wealth he is asked to gather by tilling God's earth or by engaging himself in trade. And the Śudra is ordered to labour with his body and help the Vaiśya in his toils to produce the

[1] Manava-dharma-shastra, X, 4; I, 31, 37; X, 45.
[2] Bom. Gaz., Vol. II, pp. 192–201.

wealth so much needed for the upkeep and welfare of the human polity. At its best, this presupposes the necessity of an intimate interdependence and harmonious relations between the four classes; the law-givers may have realized that not one of these classes can subsist without the others. And so it may also be that members of each of the four classes were thus called upon to shoulder their respective burdens in the community life for securing the well-being of the whole polity. In this sense these four classes may even be conceived as arising out of the fundamental needs of the inner nature of man. But the real difficulty of the problem is in regard to the categorical way in which the birth of a person is said to determine his or her social position, occupation in life, and advantages or disabilities, once and for all time. Of course exceptions are cited by the protagonists of the *Varna* scheme. But these only prove the rule. And for all practical purposes one may be correct when one asserts that the operation of the *Varna* scheme as it now exists is certainly a hindrance and an obstacle in the way of the growth of social relations and solidarity. Of course, so far as the individual is concerned the *Varna* scheme (with the help of its counterpart the *Gnyāti* scheme) has proved a burden on the personal liberties of the individual in the social, political, economic and all the other important aspects of human affairs. Fortunately, as will be shown later, the theoretical rigidity that governs the *Varna* scheme is not always able to fight against facts and circumstances which higher and more potent laws of nature bring to bear upon the course of human history.

Let us now consider the second classification in terms of *Ujli Varna* and *Kāli Paraj*. The *Ujli Varna* includes Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas; and the *Kāli Paraj* embraces the class known as

Śudras. This dividing line in terms of colour must have originated in the general Brahmanical effort to set aside that section of the Aryans who followed occupations that were considered menial; but it may also have been due to the efforts of the Brahmins to reconcile some of the non-Aryan tribes who were willing to adopt Hinduism and live at peace with the colonizers in their region. From history and from present-day observation we learn that this process is always at work. Almost every year many Bhils and Ahirs make peace with the people on the plains, and more or less adopt the ways of living and thinking which are prevalent amongst them.[1] Besides, since *Purānic* times the Kshatriyas have considerably mixed with the Bhils; so much so, indeed, that many of the Rajput tribes may be safely called half-Bhils. Of course they are not considered Bhils for the simple reason that according to Hindu Law the son takes the *Varna* of the father; if the father's *Varna* is lower than the mother's he has to adopt the lower *Varna*; but if higher, then he takes the higher one. Therefore, traditionally and in actual practice the Bhils, Ahirs, Kolis and the Dublas, though all of non-Aryan descent and belonging to early aboriginal tribes, are usually classed as Śudras, and enjoy the rights, whatever they are, of the Aryan Śudras. This means that these new converts to the Hindu fold have of necessity to accept some of the Brahmanical rites, e.g., marriage-rites and the like, even in some modified form,[2] and to accept members of some Brahmin caste as officiating priests[3] who keep (or concoct?) the genealogies of the families, and the records of the social group, and who perform such

[1] Risley: Census of India (1901), Vol. I, pt. i, pp. 519-20.
[2] Jivanāchāryaji Māhārāj: Vaishnav-Āhnik (Gujarati), pp. 26-7.
[3] Of course the Brahmin group that accepts such a position loses its social status within the *Varna*.

Brahmanical rites as are enjoined in the *Sampradāya* to which they belong. In this very manner some of the early tribes of Gujarat have been enabled to become members even of some of the *Ujli Varnas*. For instance, the Kanbis, now agriculturists, and already acknowledged as members of the Vaiśya *Varna*, were originally members of an aboriginal tribe (or, perhaps, tribes) allied to Kolis. Physically they are much darker and more virile and active than the rest of the Vaiśya class. The factors that operate in helping this rise from the lower to the higher *Varna* are: the agricultural pursuits which the Kanbis follow, and the actual adoption of the ways of living of the Aryan cultivator. The mixture of ethnic element, is now so great that nearly all the agriculturists of Gujarat go by the name of Kanbis. We shall, in another place,[1] try to show how the several *Gnyātis* solve this problem of the mixture of non-Aryans with Aryans. Just as the Kanbis have risen to a higher *Varna*, so also have the Gujjars, whose forefathers, Scythian in origin,[2] invaded Gujarat and ruled its peoples for many centuries before the Moslem invasion from the north. There are Brahmin Gujjars[3] and Vaiśya Gujjars.[4] This change may have been forced upon the Brahmanical subjects by their conquerors, with the result that at present the Gujjar Brahmins have all the privileges enjoyed by the Brahmin class as a whole, except that the Gujjar Brahmin group has a lower status with reference to some Brahmin groups, as also a higher status with reference to other groups among the Brahmins. But this inclusion of the Gujjars within the Brahmanical hierarchy of *Varnas*, may have been due to a voluntary and far-seeing step taken

[1] Vide Chapter on *Gnyāti*.
[2] Bom. Gaz., IX, pt. i, pp. 269 ff.
[3] Enthoven: Tribes and Castes of Bombay, Vol. I, pp. 217, 220.
[4] Ibid., Vol. III, p. 427.

by the Aryan natives themselves, in order to save themselves from the social complications which were otherwise bound to arise with a powerful, semi-civilized host in their midst; for they must have realized that it would be to the general advantage if they made peace with their invaders and rulers. And the best way to do so, was to offer them the social status of any of the *Varnas*. But, on the other hand, this inclusion may also have come about due to pressure from the Gujjars, who seem to have been conscious of their own inferiority, and who consequently wanted to rise to a social status at least equal to that of their subjects.

But the fact that these foreigners, the Gujjars, rose in social status by being classed in the Brahmanical system of *Varnas*, does not, and cannot, by itself mean that the Aryans and Gujjars intermingled either in marriage, or at the dinner-table. It simply implies that the Gujjars also were lured to form *Gnyātis* (their own *Gnyātis*) within the Brahmanical *Varnas*, and nothing more. For, although there are usually several *Gnyātis* within a *Varna*, they do not necessarily intermarry. Such an inclusion does not disturb the social equilibrium of a *Varna*; because the *Gnyātis* in a *Varna* are just groups, each one of which regulates its own domestic affairs independently of other *Gnyātis*: e.g., they may or may not establish marriage and other intimate relations with other *Gnyātis*. Therefore, it comes to this: that the admission of the foreign Gujjars into the *Varnas* was really an act of self-protection on the part of the Aryan natives of Gujarat.

And as people belonging to the lower *Varna* may rise to a higher one, so also those that belong to a higher one, may go down the social scale to one lower than their own, or still lower. For instance, the modern *Dhedās* (sweepers) and *Bhangiās* (bamboo-breakers and menial workers) reveal their Rajput

(i.e., Kshatriya) descent[1] (1) by their Kshatriya clan-names like Rāthod, Chowhān, Solanki, etc.; as also (2) by the vestigial remains of certain Kshatriya ceremonials on marriage occasions; and (3) not least in the strong build of their men and the fair colour and beauty of their women. This shows that the nature of occupation of a person, rather than his actual descent, ultimately goes a long way towards determining his social position. And this influence of occupation on the rise and fall of the social position of a group will be made clearer when we discuss *Gnyātis* in the formation of which the professional or occupational factor plays a really important part.

But change of social position within the *Varna* may also result from change of diet, arising from a change of outlook on animal life as a whole. This is doubtless a reflex of the Buddhist and Jain ideal of respect for life, now so much insisted upon by almost all the Vaishnavite sects. The Bhātiās, for instance, once considered Śudras, have thus risen to a higher status and are now reckoned co-equal with the best of Vaiśyas, namely, the Vāniās.

But the most important and specific Gujarati phase of *Varna* is the lower or higher position to which a *Varna* itself may lapse or rise. They talk of Vāniā-Brahmin or Brahmin-Vāniā, putting the Vāniās equal with the Brahmins; and they talk of Rajputs as belonging to a *Varna* lower than that of Vāniā; this plainly means that the Kshatriya *Varna* yields place to the one below it, viz., the Vaiśya. The reason of this is quite obvious. Non-vegetarian diet, idle ways of living, habits of drinking, polygamy, to which the Rajputs were addicted, have brought them down thus in the social scale; and greater observance of the rites

[1] Cf. Bombay Gazetteer, Vol. IX, Part I, pp. 334, 338.

and ceremonies, vegetarian diet, industriousness, self-imposed monogamy, education, and, above all, the wit and money of the Vāniā have raised his *Varna* higher than that of the Kshatriya, even almost on a level with the highest. The fear is, as the history of Vaishnavite *Sampradāyas* shows, that if the Brahmins do not change their ways, they too will sink in the social scale; and the Vaiśyas and the Śudras will one day create a priesthood that is not a spiritually dead mass of fossil-tradition. For instance, Nihāl Dāji, a Vāniā, revolted against the existing sects in 1790 and introduced the Kabir sect (*sampradāya*) into Gujarat; Mādhavgar, a Pātidār (agriculturist-Kanbi) of Nadiad, established another in 1824; Kuber, a Koli (an aboriginal tribesman), did the same in 1850. In 1724, Ranchhod, a Vāniā, established a sect called after his name, as a protest against Brahmanism. All these are signs and symptoms of the coming revolution—the enormous changes that Hindu social organization is bound to undergo.

As we have already seen, the *Varna* scheme is considered by Hindu orthodoxy as something imposed by Nature. One is supposed to be born in a *Varna*, and even in one of the many groups of it called a *Gnyāti*, to receive definite training and lessons in this life, and to live in accordance with such training. It is said that the *Varna* classification is but the expression of a law of Nature fundamentally connected with the orderly management of a social polity; but some also suggest that the *Varna* scheme is more concerned with the personal evolution of the individual spirit. With all this a few may agree. It may, however, be reasonable to urge that as social life becomes more complex and intricate, its organization demands that some kind of classification of the mass of the people in terms social, economic, and political, should be made, in

order that the traditional and historical equilibrium of their *mores* may be securely maintained. If, therefore, the *Varna* grouping (and other social groupings) was adopted by the Hindu seers in order to organize the humanity under their purview in terms of the four fundamental types of inter-dependent groups that may serve each other's well-being, and thereby, the welfare of the whole, if this classification was devised in order to give to each group and the individual members thereof a chance of self-expression and salvation in terms of the definite actions according to the *Dharmas* of each group, it may be sustained that this classification is conceived not for the benefit of Hindus alone. It may then be said to be meant for being universally utilized, by every regional and national group, in the interests of group economy and national order. And the scheme may even supply an effective social device for international mutualism, order and peace that may rally the peoples and the nations of the world around an enlightened and mutually beneficent etho-polity.

The issues are plain. The *Varna* system has failed. The hereditary element in it is anti-social. Its pretensions to divine origins and infallibility are proved hollow and worthless. But if we must build on the old, if man must locate his future designs on the fabrics of the past, if the *Varna* system wants really to advance the ends which it has been proclaiming to subserve, it may survive only if, and to the extent to which, it serves the ends of social, economic and moral justice, even to the least of us and to the least of the groups within its purview. If *Varna* wants to continue its existence it must uplift, not humiliate and bind down, it must open up horizons to human endeavour, and not seek to create and maintain water-tight compartments within our society.

CHAPTER VII

GNYĀTI

A *Gnyāti* is any one of the hereditary and endogamous small units within each of the four *Varnas* (classes). Writers usually fail to distinguish this word from *Varna* by translating them both as 'caste'. This leads to endless confusion between the actually functional castes, which in the main determine Hindu social organization, and the age-long traditional groupings of the four *Varnas* (classes) which have otherwise more or less now lost their original occupational meaning. The " over three thousand different castes" that Europeans refer to are the *Gnyātis* or *Jātis*, the several clearly defined compartments into which Hindu society is organized. Throughout this essay the word *Gnyāti* is translated as 'caste'. It will be clear from this that there are: (1) Brahmin *Gnyātis*, i.e., *Gnyātis* or castes which are hereditary and endogamous subdivisions under the class Brahmin; (2) Kshatriya *Gnyātis*, i.e., *Gnyātis* or castes which are hereditary and endogamous subdivisions of the Kshatriya *Varna* or class; and similarly (3) Vaiśya *Gnyātis*; and (4) Śudra *Gnyātis*. All these four are found in Gujarat.

The factors that go to determine the formation of *Gnyātis* are many; but the foremost of them are: (1) occupation; (2) the geographical region from which the caste originally comes; (3) the locality in which it has now settled; (4) the degree (i) of purity or mixture of blood, (ii) of pollution by taking food with lower castes; and (5) tribal or other aboriginal descent.

Let us first start with the occupational factor. Almost all castes of Gujarat have an occupational name or appellation. There are the ghanchis (oilmen); kanbis (agriculturists); luhars (blacksmiths); mālis (gardeners); salāts (stone-workers); golas (rice-pounders); suthārs (carpenters); vanias (merchants); sonis (goldsmiths); darjis (tailors); and so on. These names have been chosen at random to show that occupation is one of the determinant factors in the making of a caste. But this is not all. Several of these occupational groups are made up of several smaller hereditary and endogamous groups or sub-castes. For instance, the Vāniās (merchants) have many different castes within the main division.[1] These are formed with reference to the geographical region from which each section originally came. Thus, e.g., the Jhālorās come from Jhālor in Mārwār; the Sorathiās from Sorath; the Chitrodas from Chitod in Rajputānā; the Narsinghpurās from Narsinghpur in Pālanpur; the Lāds from Lāt-deś; the Śrimālis from Śrimāl in Mārwār; the Porwāds from Porwād, a suburb of Śrimāl; the Nāgars from Vadnagar in Junagadh; the Modhs from Modhera; the Nandodrās from Nandod; the Didus from Dindvānā in Mārwār; and so on. In the same manner there are Brahmin castes of the same name, whose members officiate normally as priests to the Vāniā castes of that name; and though one cannot affirm that there are always as many Brahmin castes, it is generally true that the Vāniā castes that have migrated into Gujarat have generally taken care to see that they take their own priests along with them to their new home.

But more. Within the same section of such an

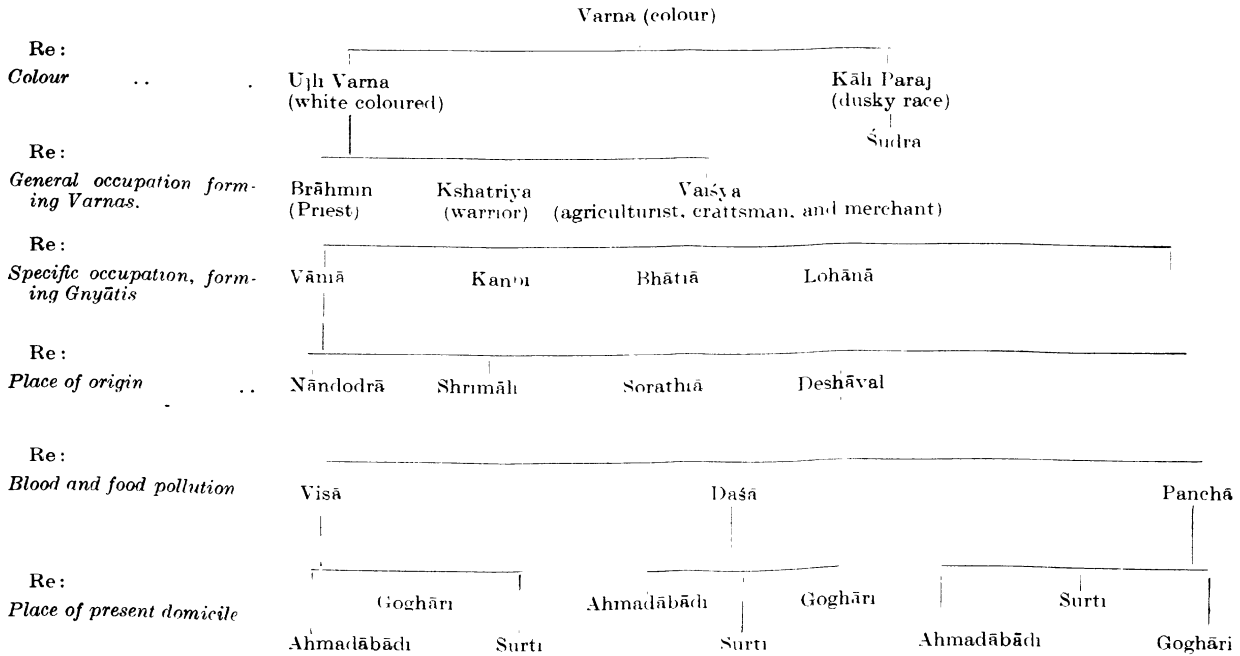
[1] Cf. Enthoven: Tribes and Castes of Bombay (1922), Vol. III, pp. 416 et seq., for a list of these.

individual group, sub-castes are formed. This fission takes place in the main with reference to (i) the amount of purity or mixture of blood; or, (ii) the pollution by eating with members of a lower caste; or, (iii) by taking up an occupation considered mean by the caste. For instance, the Desawāls group themselves into Visā-Desawāls, Daśā-Desawāls and Panchā-Desawāls.[1] The Visās are considered the pure and unpolluted section of the original caste. But either mixture of blood with a lower caste or partaking of food with them or taking up a 'mean' occupation degrades those that do so, and they form the Daśā section of the caste. And similarly, for the same reasons, the Panchās arise out of the Daśās. But some groups, on the other hand, like the Śrimālis are as yet divided into two sections only, Daśā and Visā.

When such fissions take place, does there exist any social relation between the Daśās, Visās and Panchās? one may ask. The answer is: There may or may not exist any relation between them. For, social relations are considered by the people in terms of marriage relations and those of dining together. When a new caste is formed, in all cases, the food taboo comes into operation at once, and is supposed to continue for ever. In regard to marriage relations, the Visās may take the daughters of the Daśās in marriage, but refuse to give their own. Thus the marriage relations, if and when any, are hypergamous—the higher castes taking the daughters of the lower, but not reciprocating in that respect with the lower.

But yet new subdivisions into smaller castes take place. This is determined by a new factor that arises, viz., the new place of domicile. The Desawāls, who originally come from Deeśa, divide

[1] Cf. op. cit., p. 426.



Note —The above table is not exhaustive as regards all the castes and sub-castes which have a Vaishnavite following; but it is designed to illustrate how and with reference to what factors castes and sub-castes are formed.

themselves into Goghāris, Ahmedābādis and Surtis, i.e., belonging to or settled in Goghā, Ahmedābād and Surat. The accompanying table will make the above remarks clear. The table is not exhaustive as regards all the castes and sub-castes which have a Vaishnavite following; it is designed only to illustrate fully how, and with reference to what factors, castes and sub-castes are formed. Thus, if we refer to the table we shall find that Mr. X. belongs to Surti Visā Desawāl Vāniā caste (*gnyāti*) and as such belongs to the Vaiśya class of the *Ujli Varna*. In other words, Mr. X. is a member of the unpolluted section of the Vāniās who migrated from Deeśa and are now resident in Surat. As such they belong to the Vaiśya class (*Varna*) which is the third of the *Ujli Varnas*.

It must not be supposed, however, that all *Gnyātis* are subdivided like the Vāniās. For instance, the Bhatias divide themselves into Hālāis and Kachchhis on the basis of the place of origin.[1] After that they only subdivide into Visās and Daśās. Thus the Bhatias have not created a fission in their parent-caste with reference to the places of their present domicile. This perhaps may be due to the fact that the Bhatias still look upon the place from which they have migrated as their home, while the Vāniās have more or less adopted their place of domicile as their home.[2] Or, to take yet another example, the Gujjars divide themselves only into Visās and Daśās,[3] and do not divide with reference to their original home, though it is

[1] Bom. Gaz., Vol. IX, pt. i, p. 117.

[2] And I know some Śrimāli Vāniās, who have migrated from Mārwār and have settled in Bulsar, unwillingly admit that they come from Mārwār. But those who have settled themselves for a long time in Gujarat refuse to believe or admit that they come from Mārwār, even though they call themselves Porwāds or Śrimālis. This is perhaps because they do not want to be associated with Mārwāris. "We are no longer Mārwāris", they say; "it happened such a long time ago".

[3] Enthoven: Tribes and Castes of Bombay, Vol. III, p. 427.

within the writer's own observation that some of the Gujjars of Surat have migrated from Barhanpur. There is an explanation for this, perhaps. The Gujjars claim that Gujarat is their own native land, and that they were driven out of it during the Mahomedan times towards the east; therefore, now when they return to their original home they need not refer to the place of refuge to which they betook themselves out of necessity.

The question may naturally arise how semi-castes (Daśās) and demi-semi-castes (Panchās) are formed. This is a very intricate question and its understanding will depend upon our understanding of how the *Gnyāti* rules its members. We have noticed that some Visās dine with Daśās but do not intermarry; some Visās of one domicile dine together and intermarry with the Visās of another domicile, both being of the same original stock; whilst there are others, similarly situated, who do not either dine together or intermarry. This shows that people attach very great importance to the question of dining and marriage; and it is with reference to these two factors that many castes rule their members. For, in some matters, e.g., in matters of private life, the individual cannot be controlled by the caste quite efficiently. In fact, the individual can and often does things that are forbidden by the caste; but this is done either only on the sly or with the connivance of the elders who rule the caste.

In matters of marriage, the caste forbids any of its members to marry members of another caste without the express sanction of the castes concerned. This other caste may be of the same (social) status or of a lower status. If it is a girl from a higher caste, the boy and his family may or may not be outcasted by the boy's caste. Normally, if the girl belongs to a higher *Varna*, then the boy's family

gets, in fact, a higher social position within its own caste. But if a man marries a woman from a lower *Varna* he is either outcasted, or he loses his social status and goes down perhaps to the social status of the caste to which the girl belongs. In actual practice it is easier to create marriage connections between *Gnyātis* of the same degree of purity or the same domicile, from one original stock, than between *Gnyātis* of different origins (i.e., places of migration), though of the same social status.

The *Gnyāti* also rules the individual of both sexes in regard to divorce and remarriage. All *Gnyātis* allow remarriage to men. The higher *Gnyātis* usually disallow widow remarriage; the lower ones allow it. No divorce is allowed amongst the higher *Varnas*; the lower *Varnas* allow divorce. Polygamy, though sanctioned by *Dharma*, is not practised amongst the higher castes; but it is practised very extensively amongst the lower ones, though this depends much on the supply of girls. Rich old men whose wife or wives are barren or have no male issue pay large sums of money to marry girls of seven to ten years of age.

In modern times caste conferences are held all over the country by members of many *Gnyātis* to consider mutual difficulties regarding intermarriage and interdining. Generally nothing further is done beyond the recognition of these difficulties, and of the need of their possible solution by a fusion of the *Gnyātis*. In recent years the Visā-Gujjars have had to fuse with Daśā-Gujjars owing to shortage of females among the Visās.[1]

The second concern of the *Gnyāti* in its rule over the *Kula* and the individual members of the *Kula* is in regard to food. The Vaishnavites seem to be very fanatical regarding food matters; non-

[1] Op. cit., Vol. III, p. 427.

vegetarian diet is regarded with contempt; and the person who partakes of it even once is taken very serious notice of by his *Gnyāti*. This means he has to go through a certain amount of penance which includes fasting, shaving of the head, chin and moustache in the presence of the whole *Gnyāti*, eating a bit of cowdung, drinking cow-urine, and asking public pardon of the *Gnyāti*. Sometimes fines are imposed upon the recalcitrant. At other times the man may be excommunicated. By that is meant that no member of the caste or family of the recalcitrant shall deal with the man socially. Sometimes he is considered as bad, foul and damned as a low-caste man. This does not always mean that he cannot live with those of his own caste, or eat the food prepared by them either in a private house or in caste festivals. Generally it simply means that the man cannot sit side by side with the rest of the members of the caste in a row or on the same table; i.e., he is entertained at a separate table in the same manner as a guest of another caste is treated. If the man touches vessels of clay or glass, the vessels are considered defiled for ever. If the vessels are made of copper or brass a thorough cleansing seven times over with water and mud restores purity to them; if they are silver vessels, they need three washings; and if of gold, only one.

Just as vessels get polluted by touch, so also do food and water when touched by some Śudras, or by women in periods, or by an excommunicate. Even a well gets polluted if a person of the forbidden caste draws water from it. Instances have occurred in Ahmedabad where good wells have ceased to be used by members of a village simply because of being touched by a member of the low caste, and new wells have been dug instead. If it happens that by mistake the water of such a well is used by some member of a caste (of course 'high')

he has either to go through some prescribed penance, or he will be excommunicated; if his family gets 'polluted' by him, the family is excommunicated; and if the caste is polluted, the caste or the polluted section of it goes down in status. Many a time the Daśā section of a *Gnyāti* is formed, because of this reason, out of the Visa section, and a Panchā *Gnyāti* arises similarly out of the Daśā *Gnyāti*.

Some *Gnyātis* rise in social status because they give up non-vegetarian diet and alcoholic drinks. The Bhatias, for instance, who are said to have been fish-eating once upon a time, have, by taking to strict vegetarian diet,[1] risen to a social status as high as the Vāniās of the highest caste. The Levā and the Kadvā Kanbis have by giving up non-vegetarian diet,[2] come to be respected more than the rest of the Kanbi *Gnyātis*.

Sometimes, of course, when the breaking of a particular law becomes necessary for the health of the caste, the question is brought before the council of the caste and is decided by a majority. But in such cases if *Dharma* rules have to be broken the caste proceeds in a more subtle manner. A few individuals who want to bring up a reform begin to move the Brahmin priests and high-priests of the community and get his sanction and approval. This is not always likely to be easy to obtain, though usually money performs miracles. But the surer and better way which some educated reformers resort to is that of first approaching some men learned in the *Śāstras*, and finding out the chapter and verse from the scriptures that might support the new reform. Some years ago [3] one of the Vāniā castes in Broach District had to face a very difficult problem. The caste custom required

[1] Bom. Gaz., Vol. IX, pt. i, p. 117.
[2] Enthoven: Tribes and Castes of Bombay, Vol. II, p. 144.
[3] About 1917.

that no marriages should take place between cousins related up to the seventh degree on the father's side and up to the fifth degree on the mother's side.[1] Almost all the boys and girls of marriageable age and the few widowers in the community happened to be so mutually related that they could not marry each other according to the law prevalent in the caste. The *Gnyāti* had therefore some alternatives out of which they had to choose one. There were sub-sections in Surat District with whom they could make arrangements for intermarriage. This they would not do for reasons into which we need not enter. Historically there had been such connections; but these, it is alleged, brought in their trail much woe and misery for the brides. This expedient was therefore rejected by the younger men of the caste. So, while the elders were wondering as to what other way could be found out, the young men secured the testimony of a professor and two *pandits* to the effect that during the past marriages were allowed within the prohibited degrees (i.e., the seventh on the father's and the fifth on the mother's side), amongst Vaiśyas of the status of the *Gnyāti* in question. These findings of the learned men were supplied to a father of many daughters, who gratefully accepted the gift, and presented the documents to the high-priest along with a goodly gift; of course, the permission was granted. And the first marriage after this took place between cousins only three degrees apart on the mother's side.

The Aryan communities of Gujarat had a two-fold difficulty in regard to the non-Aryan population of the region. The Gujjars, who are foreigners of Scythian origin and who were once rulers of Gujarat, and the Kolis, Kanbis, Bhils, Ahirs and the other

[1] Vide Chapter on *Gotra*.

aboriginal tribes, have both been living for centuries in the midst of the Aryan communities. Both these groups have been more or less converted to Brahmanical ways of living. According to the *Dharmaśāstra* they should belong to the fourth or Śudra Varna,[1] and as such have no Brahmanical rights, even though they are part of the larger Hindu whole. For instance, the aborigines have no right to put on the sacred thread, or to wear the sacred necklace (*Kanthi*), both of which are signs of certain rights and privileges. While the first three *Varnas* are ruled by the *Dharmaśāstra*, the fourth is ordained to be ruled by custom; therefore the rich and long-drawn-out rites and ceremonies of the higher *Varnas* are denied to them. In order, therefore, that a Śudra community may rise in social estimation and social status in the midst of other *Gnyātis* within the *Varna*, or rise even as high as *Gnyātis* of a higher *Varna*, the non-Aryan tribes have to fulfil one or more of the four following conditions:—

(*a*) The group has to accept and carry out rigidly—rather, more rigidly than the privileged castes—the authority of the Brahmanical law, the *Dharmaśāstra*, which determines man's life as it ought to be led as a member of a family, a clan, a community and human society as a whole. Acceptance of this law, as we have already discussed in the chapter on *Dharma* and elsewhere, imposes different obligations for the different *Varnas*: the higher the *Varna* the greater the restrictions in matters of marriage, food and occupation. So that the most that is desirable for and desired by the

[1] Cf. Jivanāchāryaji Māhārāj: Vaishnav-Āhnik (Gujarati), p. 22.

Śudras is their conversion to the Vaiśya status. The Kanbis, for instance, have risen to it.

(*b*) The second condition is that they should have their family or clan records kept by Brahmin priests, and that they should observe strictly the marriage taboos regarding exogamy and endogamy prescribed in the scriptures for the *Varna* to which they wish to rise.

(*c*) Another way is by observing ceremonials in daily life, such as are prescribed in the *Dharma* books; even without acknowledging the *Dharma* books the position of the community rises in status.

(*d*) But the most important and easiest way which these groups may take is that of embracing a new *Sampradāya* and actually following it.

Thus, in solving the problem of the reception of non-Aryan foreigners into the Brahmanical fold, the Aryans have adopted the very ingenious method of saving themselves (as far as possible) from mixing with the non-Aryans, and at the same time giving the non-Aryans all the privileges of the higher *Varnas*. Thus, as we have already pointed out, the Gujjars, the descendants of the Scythian foreigners who ruled Gujarat in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D., have Brahmin *Gnyātis*[1] and Vaiśya *Gnyātis*[2] among them, and enjoy the rights of putting on the sacred thread or the sacred necklace according to the custom amongst the Aryan *Gnyātis* of the same status. Of course the Gujjars have to abide by their *Dharma*; and it is because they do abide by it that

[1] Enthoven: Tribes and Castes of Bombay, Vol. I, p. 217.
[2] Ibid., Vol. III, p. 427.

they have retained their position in the hierarchy of gnyatis. The Gujjars are almost all followers of the Vallabhi *Sampradāya*, and are scrupulously religious in the Hindu sense of the word.

Most castes of Gujarat which have an occupational basis also function as Trades Unions (*Panchāyets* or *Mahājans*).[1] The heads of the families within the castes govern them; such castes function both as Trades Unions and as units of social organization. Every member has a right to vote, and what the majority passes is binding on all the members of the caste. It is very difficult to say how much this trade guild aspect of the *Gnyāti* system has contributed to the further subdividing of the community. For instance, in Ahmedabad the potters, the makers of bricks, of tiles and of earthen jars who were once within the same group have become now distinct *Gnyātis* which function both as units of social organization and as trade guilds. Weavers, once a single community, have split themselves up into silk-weavers and cotton-weavers. Thus new trades create new *Gnyātis*, and new branches of a trade create still more. Thus one of the latest *Gnyātis* that is in process of formation in Gujarat among the Surti Dhedās is the section calling itself 'butlers'; another of 'chauffeurs', rising from the *Gnyāti* of coachmen; and yet another of 'saloon-barbers' rising from the Hajām *Gnyāti* (i.e., caste of barbers); sometimes these fissions in terms of 'high' and 'low' are accompanied even by food taboos, only to be followed one day by marriage taboos. Of course, the higher and cleaner and more remunerative the occupation, the higher the caste becomes with reference to the other members of the parent stem. Needless to say, in the earlier stages the custom of hypergamy inevitably tends to be

[1] Cf. Risley: Census of India (1901), Vol. I, pt. i, pp. 521-22.

established as a result of the splitting up of a *Gnyāti* into such 'higher' and 'lower' sections.

The object of these guilds primarily seems to be the regulation of competition amongst members of the same industry. It usually takes the form of the prescribing of days and hours during which work should not be done. The guilds enforce their decisions by fines; and if the offender refuses to pay up, he is put out of the caste.

But there are many trade guilds which are not castes.[1] Here the difficulty of bringing social pressure on the offender is overcome by the guilds' influence with other guilds of the same trade, which is exerted to prevent the offending member from getting work. Besides the amount received from fines, the guilds draw an income by levying fees on any person beginning to practise his craft. But this levy is made only by guilds of the cloth and other higher class industries. Potters, carpenters, blacksmiths and such other artisans have not to pay any levy. When a son succeeds his father nothing has to be paid. The revenue derived from these levies and fines is spent on feasts and in charity. Several trade guilds maintain *Sadāvratas*, or charitable institutions where the poor are fed daily.[2]

How does a caste rule its members? As we have said it is extremely difficult for a caste to rule a member in his private life. But in some matters the caste can have absolute control over the individual; the individual has to obey the caste regulations, or be condemned and outcasted. For instance, the question of marriage within the group can be settled only according to caste-laws. We have said in the beginning of this chapter that each of the castes is an endogamous group. May we qualify

[1] Bom. Gaz., Vol. IV, p. 112. Also Bom. Gaz., Vol. II, p. 442.
[2] Bom. Gaz., Vol. IV, pp. 114-15. Also Bom. Gaz., Vol. II, p. 443.

that statement here by saying that some sub-*Gnyātis* do take or give daughters in marriage to each other. For instance, the Visa-Desawals of Ahmedabad exchange daughters with Surtis, but not with Gogharis. The Surti Gujjars take daughters from Bulsar and Ahmedabad, but without reciprocation. But normally the higher *Gnyāti* has to pay a fine as penalty. It has sometimes also happened that a Modh Vania girl was wedded to a Lād Vāniā boy, and the Lād Vāniā boy was not excommunicated, nor his family.[1] But these are all exceptions to the rule, and show whither the wind bloweth. The leaders of Daśa, Visā and Panchā sections of the same parent *Gnyāti* meet in conference to consider common problems; and, at least theoretically, they are finding out that there should not be any distinction between them. But a further step is taken when leaders of several Vania castes like Kapol, Gujjar, Porwād and Śrimāli associate in private conferences to consider common dangers, and find ways and means by which they can come to an agreement and create one single Vania caste. But this has not yet gone beyond the discussion stage.[2]

The second factor in regard to which a *Gnyāti* rules the individual and his family is marriage within the group. No marriage is allowed between persons related to each other within the prohibited degrees: (i) A man cannot marry a girl of the same *gotra* (clan); in other words, in practice, he cannot marry a girl if his father and the girl's father are both descendants of a common ancestor in the male line. And (ii) he cannot marry one who is his *sapinda*, i.e., he cannot marry a girl if their common paternal ancestor is not beyond the seventh

[1] The Lāds are considered higher than the Modhs.
[2] This sentence was written in 1924.

degree, and if their common maternal ancestor is not beyond the fifth degree, in ascent from them.[1] This works very well on paper. But marriages have occurred within the writer's knowledge amongst Śrimālis, Lāds, Gujjars, Nāgars and Porwāds, where the caste-law was broken by creating evidence out of the scriptures, and thus getting the consent of the high-priests or the Māhārājās, who are the spiritual heads of the communities. Moreover, marriages between members of different *Varnas* have been recently celebrated.

We have hitherto spoken of what a *Gnyāti* is, and what it does; and it seems as if it is an all-powerful organization. Nevertheless, a *Gnyāti*, like the individuals and the families whom it rules so despotically, is subject to changes of fortune, of a rise in status, or of degradation, in the orbit of its own and other *Varnas*. A *Gnyāti* loses its status in two senses:—

(i) It may lose it as one amongst many *Gnyātis*. For instance, some Vāniās have lost their status as Vāniās and are now considered Ghānchis; this means that they have gone down in social status within the same *Varna*. Again, Brahmins who dine 'at the same table' with their patrons (*yajmāns*) of other *Varnas* lose thereby the status of their caste within the Varna. Thus the Pokarnā Brahmins who are accused of eating cooked food from the Bhātiās, and the Rāval Brahmins who are said to be actually eating their food with the Bhils, have lost in status amongst the Brahmin castes.

(ii) But a *Gnyāti* may also lose its status by

[1] The common ancestor and the person in question are each to be counted as one degree.

losing the *Varna* itself. The Dhedas (sweepers) as we have already seen, by taking to menial work and unclean food (especially eating carrion) have lost even their *Varna*, and now are considered as Śudras.[1] Or, to take another instance, the Gārodā Brahmins who officiate as priests of the Dhedās have lost their social position within their *Varna*, so that other Brahmins and even Vaiśyas consider them as good (or as bad!) as the Śudras. Yet another example is that of the Bhatias, who were originally Kshatriyas, but got so degraded during their compulsory exile in Sindh during the Mahomedan invasion and conquest that they were considered as low as Śudras. And even now the Kacchi and Hālāi Bhātiās who have risen to the Vaiśya *Varna* refuse to have anything to do with Sindhi Bhātiās who are yet classed very low in the Vaiśya *Varna*.[2]

Just as a *Gnyāti* loses its status, it may also rise in status, both with reference to other cognate *Gnyātis* or other *Varnas*. This happens by discarding an unclean calling for a cleaner one. For instance, the Chitārās (painters) and Chāndlāgars (spangle-maker), who are the offshoots of the Mochi (shoe-maker) *Gnyāti*, have risen in status and are considered to be higher than the mother *Gnyāti* with which now they have no social relations.[3] And the most recent instance of a *Gnyāti* in the making is that of the 'chauffeur' section of the Ghodāwālā (coachman) *Gnyāti* where those who

[1] Bom. Gaz., Vol. IX, pt. i, pp. 338-39.
[2] Ibid., Vol. IX, pt. i, pp. 116-17.
[3] Enthoven: Tribes and Castes of Bombay, Vol. III, p. 57.

are chauffeurs demand larger dowries for marriage from the brides' fathers; thus clearly asserting themselves superior to the non-chauffeur members of the *Gnyāti*. This shows that the kind of work performed and the amount of earnings the work brings, rather than the history of the worker's family, largely determines the position of his *Gnyāti*.

The social status of a *Gnyāti* may also rise by giving up non-vegetarian diet. For instance, the Leva and the Kadva Kanbis, originally Gujjars, and till recent times considered the lowest of the Vaiśyas, gave up animal diet and alcohol, and now have risen to a higher status than that of Kanbis in the Deccan.

Let us not blunder into the position that the *Gnyāti* is necessarily a smaller group within a larger group called *Varna*. There are *Gnyātis* (called *Jātis*) which do not come at all under the *Varna* system; most of the masses of unorganized Hinduism are divided into several *Jatis* or tribes. It is when the processes of Aryanization bring them within the Hindu fold that part or whole of a *Jāti* organizes itself within the meaning of Hindu social life in terms of *Gnyātis*. And it is after this process of acceptance by choice or by force that *Jātis* may be said to be of the smaller units that make up a whole *Varna*.

The foregoing account of the fundamental characteristics and functions of *Varna* and *Gnyāti* will make it obvious to the reader that the *Gnyāti* is the more functioning and active of the two. In fact the chief position that the orthodox hold with reference to the binding elements of the *Varna* system is set into actual operation by the *Gnyātis*. Without the co-operation of the *Gnyāti* units the hereditary character of the *Varna* system could be easily set at naught. In fact, as will be shown in another chapter, the *Gnyāti* is also considerably

dependent for the operations of its sanctions on the co-operation of the family and *gotra* groups. If these give up their loyalty to the larger units historically connected with the evolution of the social, economic and religious organization of India, it may be that that life of freedom which the modern youth of India want to enjoy, may prove a practical proposition. As we have noticed, seeds of discontent have been present throughout the history of social life in India; and the solutions of such problems as have arisen have always been found within the meaning of the *Varna* and *Gnyāti* system. It remains to be seen how far the system can react to the assault made on it in modern times. If it has not lost its elasticity, it may be that it may prove equal to the task of restoring the social, economic and political equilibrium which Hindu society has lost since such a long time.

CHAPTER VIII.

GOTRA AND KULA.

Perhaps the most complicated region of this part of our present study, and certainly one which requires very thorough and sympathetic understanding, is the subject of *gotra* and *kula*. For these, and especially *kula*, are, so to speak, the nuclear factors on the integrity and proper functioning of which turn the whole structure, balance and well-being of Hindu society. Because, here at last, we come in contact with the home, the innermost sanctuary of all societies, the nursery of all civilizations, from which all good things of life emanate and to which all good things return; and to guard the sanctity of the home our complex social, economic, political, national and international structures are built up and perpetuated, for good or for ill.

The word *gotra* occurs in Hindu scriptures from very early times. It is mentioned several times in the Rig-Vedic account of the exploits of Indra.[1] Roth translates it as 'cowstall'; and Geldner thinks it refers to 'herd'.[2] The latter meaning fits the later use of the term when it denotes the 'house' or the 'clan'.[3] On the other hand, the word *kula* does not appear before the period of the *Brahmanas*.[4] Here it denotes the 'home' or the 'house of the family'. And by metonymy it means 'the family' itself, as connected with the home.[5] *Kula* thus suggests the existence of a system of individual families, each consisting of several numbers under the headship of the father or the eldest brother whose *kula* the dwelling is.[6]

[1] Vedic Index, I, p. 235. [2] Ibid., p. 235. [3] Ibid., p. 235.
[4] Ibid., p. 171. [5] Ibid., p. 171. [6] Ibid., p. 171.

So, as distinguished from *gotra*, *kula* seems to mean 'the family' in the narrower sense of a group of members who live in one house, 'the undivided family'.[1]

We are not concerned here with the complicated issues connected with the origin and history of the two problems. Suffice it to say that due to some reason or other, almost every Vaishnava *Gnyāti* of any *Varna*, is composed of a number of exogamous groups called *gotras*, each of which is named after a Rishi, or an animal, or a plant, or a place. Each of the Rishis is sometimes considered the first forefather of the group called after his name; but more generally he is claimed as the first spiritual preceptor of the group. This may be due to the deep-seated traditional belief amongst the Hindus regarding *guruparamparā* which insists on the necessity of a continuous, unbroken chain of discipleship from initiate to initiate, beginning with the adept who learnt the sacred lore of *Brahmavidyā* from Agni. Now this can be true only of the Brahmins, one may object. And what exactly may be the cause and origin of *gotras*, called after the names of Rishis amongst *Varnas* other than the Brahmin, is a question of deep researches into the socio-religious lore of the Hindus. We may suggest, however, that the same reverence and devotion for *guruparamparā* which actuates the Brahmin to hold on to the name of the first spiritual preceptor of the family, may have moved the Brahmin to impart what he considers the most valuable for himself, unto the family or clan which he finds himself called upon to serve, and this with or without the knowledge or consent of the members of the clan. For we must remember that the Brahmin has been playing the rôle of historian, conscience-keeper and spiritual guide of the clan. Of course,

[1] Op. cit., p. 171.

there is the possibility of the other factor, viz., that with the acceptance of a new *Sampradāya* the whole *Gnyāti* has to adopt a few *gotras*, if the *Gnyāti* has already no system of exogamous sections within itself. And sometimes some groups actually adopt the *gotra* system out of a sheer attempt at being called cultured.

Of the other types of *gotras* the explanation may be easier. *Gotras* called after animals and plants may be either due to totemic origins or to nicknames; while those called after places may be due to the historical or cultural importance of the places after which *gotras* are named.

Now, a *Gnyāti* consists of several exogamous clans or 'houses', the number of which varies from two to several hundreds; each of these is called a *gotra*. And, as we have said, in practice a *gotra* may be said to be made of several *kulas* or families all of which trace their origin to a common male ancestor or to a saint as the founder of the house. The difficulty regarding the difference between *kula* and *gotra* increases when sometimes a third element enters, viz., that of *nukha*.[1] A gotra is sometimes found to be consisting of several exogamous groups called *nukhas*; but marriage between members of *nukhas* of the same *gotra* is allowed and in fact practised. Thus in this case marriage within the *gotra* is allowed. But this should not puzzle us in any way. For if we carefully compare the names of the *nukhas* amongst the Bhātiās, Lohānās and Pokarnās with the names of the *gotras* of other *Gnyātis* we shall find out that the words used for naming both these are the same. It may be that the *kulas* within each of the *gotras* came to be called '*nukhas*', when marriage between '*kulas*' within the same *gotra*

[1] It may mean 'nose'.

came to be allowed; and it may be that this middle process may have taken place before several surnames or family-names or *nukhas* came to be regarded as *gotras*. Therefore when the practice of marriage between members of *nukhas* under the same *gotra* is criticized as disreputable, a counter-charge is made that the so-called *gotras* amongst the criticizing communities are but the *nukhas* or family-names or *kulas* within the *gotras* of olden times intentionally raised to the position and dignity of *gotras* in order to mislead the public or to satisfy the conscience of the community. In fact, some communities which allow marriage between members of the different *nukhas* of the same *gotra*, will not publicly admit the existence of this practice among them. All this leads us to the surmise that *nukhas* are vestigial remains of a practice which secured an escape from the rigours of the *gotra* law; perhaps this is how so many *kulas* have come to be recognized as *gotras*, with the result that marriage between some members of the same *gotra* has become possible.

Leaving these complicated issues of origins to the specialist, let us return to the discussion of the *gotra* as we find it amongst the people we are studying. The founder of a *gotra* may have lived in immemorial times, in which case the steps to be taken to arrive at him would be *ad infinitum*; and this would not solve present difficulties, e.g., in regard to inheritance or to marriage. Hence the law of inheritance requires that one should be able to trace one's ancestry up to the thirteenth common ancestor; and the law of marriage lays down the 'prohibited degree' of proximity as the seventh in the male line.[1]

We have seen that in practice *gotra* is a

[1] Cf. Chapter on *Gnyāti*.

larger or generic term, whilst *kula* is smaller and specific. Popularly, however, and even sometimes with the Brahmins, these terms are used interchangeably; but even then, certain terminological differences are universally observed; for instance, no one ever speaks of a *gotra-devtā* or *gotra-devi*,[1] it is always *kula-devtā* or *devi*.[2] And therein is expressed most definitely the real difference between *gotra* and *kula*. For, *kula* is the intimate home-circle, the family which lives together as one household, having practically everything in common, sharing each other's gains and losses, weal and woe, and expressing its closeness and unity by worshipping the same god or goddess—the *kula-devtā* or *kula-devi*. Of course, it is possible that a whole *gotra* may live like this undivided; then of course it is also the *kula*. And the writer knows at least one *gotra* of about three hundred souls living in one household (*kula*) at Surat. This point will be noticed further when we come to discuss the joint-family system. It is sufficient to note here that on the death of the head of a *kula*, when sometimes the family is broken up and the several male members set up separate *kulas*, the *kula-devtā* or *devi* goes, by right, under the protection of the 'eldest' member of the family, whilst the others have to 'establish', if they so choose, new idols of the family-god or goddess according to the usage of their *gotra*. In case the 'eldest' member relinquishes his right to be in possession of the idol or image of the forefather's *kula-dev*, anyone of the other members of the family takes charge of the same. Anyhow, in accordance with the traditional practice, the family-god or goddess remains the indivisible property of all, and a member of any

[1] For sometimes the *Kula-devi* is given the exalted name of 'gotraja'.

[2] *Devtā* means 'god'; *devi* means 'goddess'.

branch of the *gotra* has the moral right of worshipping the idol either at the house of the member in possession of the same, or even in his own home, in which case the idol is actually lent to the party.

Now, the family (*kula*) amongst the Vaishnavites of Gujarat is based on the joint-family system, as with the rest of the Hindu communities of India. In order to show its effects on the economic, religious and social life of Gujarat we shall have to summarize in brief the main factors that go to make a joint-family. Each family consists of all the descendants of a common male ancestor after whom the family is normally called. The joint-family consists of all the male persons lineally descended from such a common ancestor, their wives and their unmarried daughters. And as said above, this may be a whole *gotra* living as a *kula*, or simply a section of a *gotra*.

We have said that the normal Vaishnavite family is a joint-family.[1] In what is it joint, one may ask ? In a single sentence, it is joint in worship, in food and in estate. Severance in worship and food does not dissolve the partnership; but when members divide the estate, the family ceases to be joint. It follows, therefore, from this, that the joint family is essentially based on the partnership of the estate. Let us take each one of these three aspects and consider them briefly.

(1) Partnership in worship; every household has an idol of its family god, the *kula-devtā*, which the members inherit from their ancestors and which is taken great care of and respected by all of them, especially by the women. This god need have no connection whatsoever with the *Sampradāya* (sect) to which the family or the individual members of

[1] I have followed Mr. Mulla's Principles of Hindu Law in the discussion of the intricate legal issues involved with reference to the Hindu joint-family.

the family belong. It may even be an 'enemy God'. For instance, the writer knows a Bhatia lady worshipping on the same family-altar idols of Śiva, Chandi and Krishna. She did not know what it amounted to, and never understood the contradictoriness of her worship; nor could she be made to believe or understand that her connection with a particular Vaishnavite *Sampradāya* forbade her to worship the Chandi and Śiva idols along with that of Krishna. For she saw no reason why she should not worship her *kula-devtā* and *devi*, her family-god and goddess. Such instances generally confront one who goes about amongst primitive tribes like Bhils, Kathis and Ahirs, who have newly embraced one or another of the Vaishnavite *Sampradāyas*. This is equally true of the Hindu converts to Islam or Christianity. One comes across instances where Moslems actually worship idols—idols that the families worshipped and owned when the family followed some form of Hinduism; and the Christians' worship of the fetishes and idols of their forefathers is too well known to be mentioned.

Most Vaishnavas who are idolators have a small chamber (or an enclosure of some sort) where they have an altar on which the idol is erected. The main idol is sometimes accompanied with one or more other idols. All sorts of ceremonies are performed by the pious devotees according to the requirements of their *Dharma*. In rich homes the followers of the Vallabhi *Sampradāya* perform ceremonies prolonged day after day, requiring attention for a number of hours each day. The idol is dressed in morning, afternoon and sleeping attires during different parts of the day. The image of the God is decked with costly jewellery. Rich and expensive food is offered at his feet, which of course, the idol is supposed sometimes to cast its divine glance at, sometimes to have a little taste of, and sometimes voraciously

to devour. While all this is going on, *Mantras* are chanted, and some of the highly poetic hymns are sung by the women. And one even notices amongst these beautiful hymns translations of Christian hymns which have been incorporated by the folk into their religious lore. A translation of Cardinal Newman's *Lead Kindly Light* set to the most exquisite music is a great favourite with the cultured few. This shows how the Vaishnavites are imperceptibly absorbing the better elements of Christianity.

But it is not essential for all the members of a joint family to be joint in worship. For instance, one member of a joint family of Surat may be in Bombay, another in Ahmedabad, and a third somewhere else; usually each of these has an idol set up in his own home. But that does not make any difference to the integrity of their joint family.

(2) The next factor that goes to make the joint family, is the family hearth where food is cooked. All the members of the family are said to be joint in food in the sense that all expenses incurred for the feeding of all is to be met out of the family income. By 'food' is not meant mere food, in the strict sense. It means all the necessaries of life, including clothing, education of children, fuel, and all that goes towards promoting the well-being of all the members of the family. It also includes expenses of death, marriage and such other feasts, which are always given in the name of and by the family. It further includes such expenses as are incurred in treating guests of the family whether they be Brahmin-priests, or guests of their own caste or of other castes, lower or higher than their own.

As in the matter of worship, so in the matter of food. Brothers and cousins living far away from the family estate have of necessity to have separate

hearths, without, however, breaking up the joint family, as it would be broken up if the members of a family ceased to have joint interest in the family property.

(3) All the *male* members of the family own and have a right to the family property. As soon as a boy is born he shares *equally* with his father, his paternal uncles, his male cousins on the paternal side, his grandfather and even his great-grandfather, if he is living, in the family property. This partnership of the ancestral property involves joint possession and enjoyment of the property and a share of the income that accrues from it. There is a community of interest and unity of possession amongst all the male members of a family, which means that no coparcener is entitled to any special interest in the property, nor to the exclusive possession of any part of it. The system is based on the fundamental principle of the ties of blood-relationship; without it, a joint Hindu family cannot be formed.[1] A male Hindu may acquire and possess private property which he can use in any way he chooses. This can be done by his own exertions and talents and without any help from the ancestral property. But if out of the joint-family funds he is given special education that would fit him for a profession which the ordinary member of that family does not normally expect, his earnings are considered part of the income of the joint family. For instance, if a joint family of moderate means gives one of its promising youths, say Mr. X., a University education, sends him to Europe and trains him for one of the higher professions, living frugally the while and even going to the extent of borrowing money, then Mr. X. is expected afterwards to contribute the whole of his income to the general family coffer. On the

[1] Mulla's Principles of Hindu Law, p. 193.

other hand, supposing Mr. X.'s family is in very comfortable circumstances, and he receives all his training as a matter of course, then Mr. X. is free to decide whether his income should go into the family-pool or be retained for personal disposal. Generally, however, even in wealthy families all the earnings go to the common pool. Such is the hold of family-ties and traditions on the individual.

Usually, therefore, private property belonging to a single person is unusual except in cases of self-earned property or gifts.

An individual member's interest may sometimes conflict with that of other members of the family. For instance, one of the brothers may have no children or few, say, two only. While the others may each have a number of them. These children, both male and female, are to be maintained from the whole income of the family property. This means that the brother with no or few children has to give his share to maintain, educate, marry and set up in life the many children of the other brothers. This sometimes puts a severe strain on the cohesion of the joint family.

The eldest member of the joint family generally manages the property, and as such has full control over the income and expenditure, and is the custodian of the surplus, if any. So long as he spends within the limits of the income he is not obliged to economize or save, as a paid agent or trustee is expected to do. All the members of a joint family, whether they live at home or live abroad, are understood to be, and by mutual implicit consent usually are, under the guardianship of the 'elder', who manages the estate for the family. Those living abroad are expected to send home (and they generally do) all that they earn, in return for which all the cost of their living is defrayed from home. Thus while they are abroad they cease to be joint in worship or in food

(temporarily or perhaps for ever); but the joint family is kept up as long as they send their earnings to the head of the family and draw their expenses from the common pool.

A joint family may be broken up if all the members of the coparcenary break property connection; this can be done either by mutual consent or by applying to a court of law. As already pointed out, the several branches of the family may live separately and worship separate idols and yet belong to the same joint family. It is property alone, which, when separated, dissolves the joint family; though, of course, we must remember that this division of property generally takes place only when the relations amongst the coparceners grow remote.

We have all the while avoided any reference to the female members of a Hindu joint-family. Let us now consider these. No female member of the joint family, whether married or unmarried, is a coparcener of the family property. However, she has a right of maintenance, by her parents while she is unmarried, and by her husband's family after her marriage and also during widowhood. As soon as a girl marries she becomes completely joint with her husband in worship and food. In order to establish this, soon after the marriage ceremony is over the bride is taken by the bridegroom to the family altar and is introduced, as it were, to the family-god or goddess.

How then can a Hindu woman ever possess private property? In this way: Soon after a girl is born a number of presents are given to her by her relatives in the form of ornaments, clothes and money, all of which are carefully stored and actually listed on her name by the father of the family, who also manages her money, invests it for her and lays aside the income in her name, keeping a written account

of everything. These mark the beginnings of her private property which goes on increasing on birth-days and such other special occasions. All the gifts she receives at the time of her marriage from her father's family, from her husband's family, from her husband himself and from friends, remain her private property. All gifts made by her husband or her parents after marriage go on increasing her personal wealth. When her mother dies she inherits along with other sisters an equal share of the private property left by the deceased. The private property so amassed is called *Stri-Dhana* (woman's wealth). She can do what she likes with it,—she may give it to her husband, her sons, her daughters, or to strangers, in fact, to anybody. It is considered sacred, and untouchable by any other than the owner of it; and for any man ever to think of his wife's or his mother's or his sister's property covetously is considered both cowardly and sinful. Thus she has *absolute* possession of her property, even though it comes in great part from the family-store. May we say, in passing, that this wealth is often wasted in feeding cows with '*ladoos*' (sweet-meats) in a country where many human beings have not even enough food to live on[1]; and also on the Mahārājās (High-priests), who are given gifts in gold and silver and jewels. For, the cows are dear to the prince of the cow-herds, Krishna; and a cow only will lead the spirits of the dead by its tail through the river, Vaitarni, (a sort of purgatory) on their way to Golok (the land of cows); and as to the Mahārājās, they represent in their very beings the holy and loving Krishna.

The *Stri-Dhana* system seems to have been devised as a succour to a woman in her widowhood;

[1] This is one of the slogans coined by reformers to rouse the apathetic to action.

for generally, as will be discussed elsewhere, a widow is ill-treated by all her relatives-in-law. In fact, in some high castes the bridegroom is required to make a provision for such contingencies before the marriage takes place. Amongst some communities no man marries without giving solid gold worth about six hundred rupees and solid silver worth the same amount to his bride, as a marriage present, and not as the bride's price.

One sees, as he moves about and lives with the people, the important function of family-savings which the system of *Stri-Dhana* accomplishes. In hours of need the mother of the family comes out with a ready hand to help the elders out of a difficulty with gifts of solid gold and silver (for, that is the form in which they usually hoard their wealth), with silk cloth and jewellery. For instance, funerals and weddings are heavy drains on the family income; for the whole caste has to be feasted, not with one but with several feasts on such occasions. Then the poor and uneconomical resort to the Mārwāri (money-lender) and the Vāniā, and incur debts. Those, on the other hand, who economize in this particular manner find it very helpful in avoiding indebtedness.

This right of a Hindu woman to possess private property on which even her husband, her family or their creditors have no right, affords an unjust protection to those husbands who want to defraud their creditors of their dues.

Finally, let us consider the economic and moral reactions of the joint-family system. Its greatest evil effect is said to be the encouragement of idleness among a large part of the property-holders. The family property is generally worked by two or three energetic male members, and as this work is enough to enable the family to live in abundance all the year round, the rest live in idleness with an

easy conscience. They seem to believe in the minimum amount of work, and the least inclination on the part of the working members to put more work into the land or to introduce innovations whereby the produce may be increased, is severely deprecated as unnecessary and 'materialistic' by the do-nothings, and even by the elders who do work on the land. This must mean that all the human energy that could be turned to useful service, either runs to waste or is misused, to the detriment of the whole community. And the rich land, which yields so much for the mere scraping, is hardly developed or used as God undoubtedly intended it to be used. The other evil effect is the suppression of the individual's personality. The individual, already oppressed by his caste with a system of fixed and stereotyped occupation, is still more repressed and his spirit gets still more blasted by a family organization which requires him to give away the share of profits gained by his own personal talents and exertions, often in order to maintain idlers. This necessity is said to discourage any stimulus to initiative, already so deficient, and for the individual to develop and give a free play to his natural talents and aptitudes.

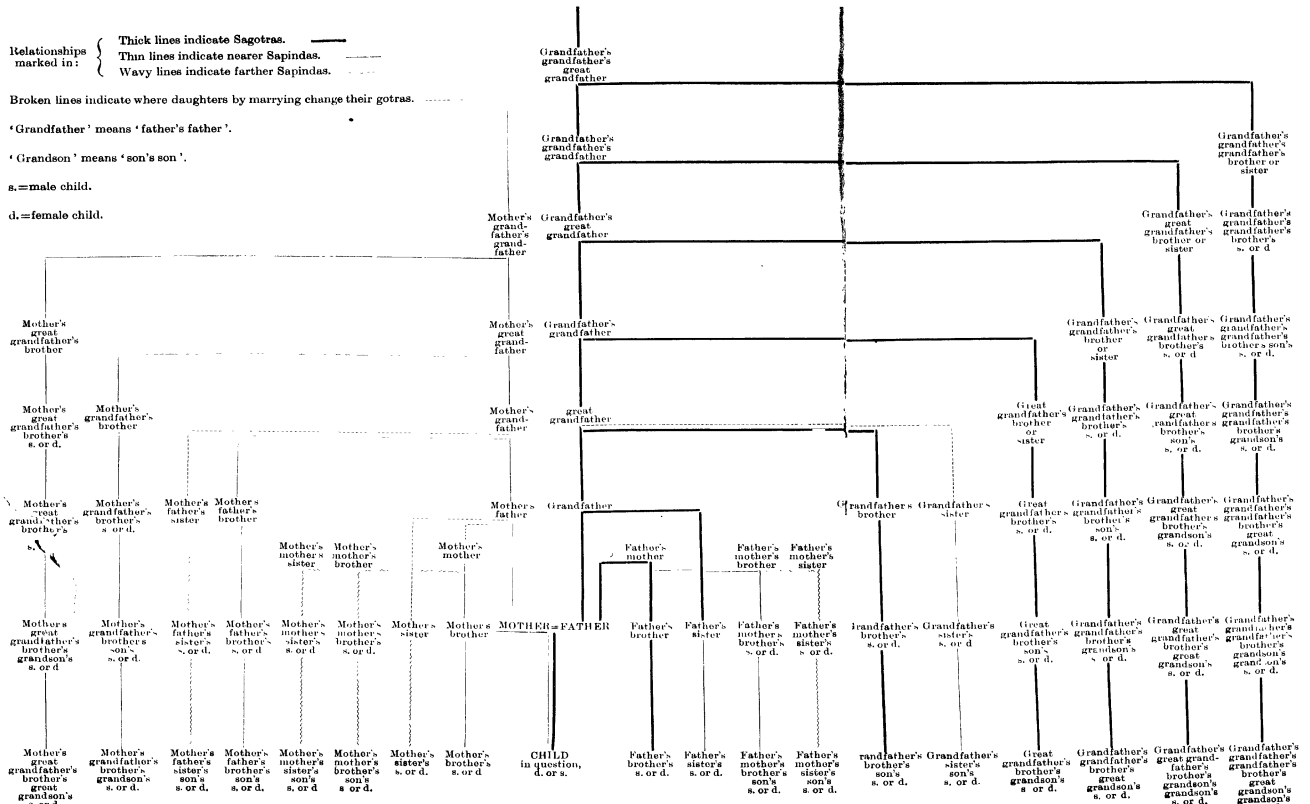
We said in the beginning that a *gotra* is made up of several exogamous families, and we proceeded to discuss the central aspect of Hindu social life, viz., the joint-family system. We now turn to observe the central aspect of Hindu family-life, viz., exogamy. Normally, the family and caste traditions require the parents to marry off their children *within the caste* before the age of puberty.[1] This age-long custom comes in the way of the 'marriage of love' and of personal choice. Early

[1] Cf. Manava-dharma-shastra, IX, 4, 88, 90–4. Also Bom. Gaz., IX, pt. i, 89-90, 160–2.

marriages are justified by parents in the following way. No man or woman should ever direct his or her affections towards any one other than his or her, wife or husband. Such purity of affection is necessary not only after the marriage but even before it. For, then only can they live up to the perfection of chastity. In order to enable the person to achieve such an ideal, from the time the child begins thinking it is helped and guided by being made conscious of the person to whom his or her affections should be devoted. Thus the child is sought to be saved from what is considered to be sin.

Generally all these exogamous inter-marrying *gotras* have the same social status in the *Gnyāti*. This is borne out by the fact that daughters of exceedingly rich Vanias are very often married to the sons of the poorest, because no better or other bridegroom can be found elsewhere for the bride from within the *Gnyāti*. When such a thing happens, even from his childhood days the boy is taken great care of, educated, and afterwards settled in life by the girl's father. Amongst the Modh Vanias there is a scarcity of boys, and the writer has come across several instances in this *Gnyāti* where the father-in-law has settled his son-in-law in life. Amongst the Gujjars of Gujarat there is a dearth of males in the city-families, with the result that sons of poor village families have to be trained and settled in life by their rich fathers-in-law.

The central fact about these families remains to be noticed, viz., that they are exogamous. No marriage is allowed (unless otherwise permitted implicitly or explicitly by the caste) between persons related to each other within what are known as 'prohibited degrees'. Now, according to the old laws all *sagotras* (i.e., persons descended


Relationships marked in:
Thick lines indicate Sagotras.
Thin lines indicate nearer Sapindas.
Wavy lines indicate farther Sapindas.
Broken lines indicate where daughters by marrying change their gotras.
'Grandfather' means 'father's father'.
'Grandson' means 'son's son'.
s.=male child.
d.=female child.
Grandfather's grandfather's great grandfather
Grandfather's grandfather's grandfather
Grandfather's grandfather's grandfather's brother or sister
Grandfather's grandfather's grandfather's brother's s. or d
Mother's great-grandfather's great-grandfather
Grandfather's great grandfather
Grandfather's great grandfather's brother or sister
Grandfather's great grandfather's brother's s. or d
Grandfather's grandfather's grandfather's brother's son's s. or d.
Mother's great grandfather's brother
Mother's great-grandfather
Grandfather's grandfather
Grandfather's grandfather's brother or sister
Grandfather's great grandfather's brother's s. or d
Grandfather's grandfather's grandfather's brother's grandson's s. or d.
Mother's great grandfather's brother's s. or d.
Mother's grandfather's brother
Great grandfather
Great grandfather's brother or sister
Grandfather's grandfather's brother's s. or d.
Grandfather's great grandfather's brother's son's s. or d.
Grandfather's great grandfather's brother's grandson's s. or d.
Mother's great grandfather's brother
Mother's grandfather's brother's s. or d.
Mother's father's sister
Mother's father's brother
Mother's father
Grandfather
Grandfather's brother
Grandfather's sister
Great grandfather's brother's s. or d.
Grandfather's grandfather's brother's son's s. or d.
Grandfather's great grandfather's brother's grandson's s. or d.
Grandfather's great grandfather's brother's great grandson's s. or d.
Mother's mother's sister
Mother's mother's brother
Mother's mother
Father's mother
Father's mother's brother
Father's mother's sister
Mother's great grandfather's brother's grandson's s. or d
Mother's grandfather's brother's son's s. or d.
Mother's father's sister's s. or d.
Mother's father's brother's s. or d
Mother's mother's sister's s. or d
Mother's mother's brother's s. or d.
Mother's sister
Mother's brother
MOTHER = FATHER
Father's brother
Father's sister
Father's mother's brother's s. or d.
Father's mother's sister's s. or d.
Grandfather's brother's s. or d.
Grandfather's sister's s. or d
Great grandfather's brother's s. or d.
Grandfather's grandfather's brother's son's s. or d.
Grandfather's great grandfather's brother's great grandson's s. or d.
Grandfather's grandfather's grandfather's brother's great grandson's s. or d.
Mother's great grandfather's brother's great grandson's s. or d.
Mother's grandfather's brother's son's grandson's s. or d.
Mother's father's sister's son's s. or d.
Mother's father's brother's son's s. or d.
Mother's mother's sister's son's s. or d
Mother's mother's brother's son's s. or d.
Mother's sister's s. or d.
Mother's brother's s. or d
CHILD in question, d. or s.
Father's brother's s. or d.
Father's sister's s. or d.
Father's mother's brother's son's s. or d.
Father's mother's sister's son's s. or d.
Grandfather's brother's son's s. or d.
Grandfather's sister's son's s. or d.
Great grandfather's brother's grandson's s or d.
Grandfather's grandfather's brother's great grandson's s. or d.
Grandfather's great grandfather's brother's great grandson's s. or d.
Grandfather's grandfather's grandfather's brother's great grandson's s. or d.

from a common male ancestor), and all *sapindas* (i.e., blood-relations) come within the prohibited degrees, and are therefore forbidden to marry. The accompanying table will show the exact meaning of the terms *sagotra* and *sapinda* so far as the present general law regarding marriages is concerned. It will be noticed that the father's sister, as soon as she is married, ceases to be one's *sagotra*, because she adopts the *gotra* of her husband; therefore her children and herself are one's *sapindas* but not *sagotras*. It will also be noticed that although all *sagotras* are necessarily also sapindas, it cannot be *vice versa*. But owing, perhaps, to exigencies which must have arisen in the communities as castes and sub-castes kept on multiplying, this old law seems to have been found impracticable. Therefore the general rule to-day is that a man and a woman who are so related to each other that either (1) their common paternal ancestor is not beyond the seventh degree in ascent from them, or (2) their common maternal ancestor is not beyond the fifth degree in ascent from them, cannot marry each other.

The prohibited degrees above referred to, so far as the blood-relations are concerned, vary with the lower castes. And the Vaiśyas and the Śudras normally marry a girl even if she is within the degrees mentioned above, provided she is at least three degrees removed. This shows that marriage-laws between agnates are more strict than those between cognates.

It is, however, within the writer's knowledge that in *Gnyātis* where these laws should operate, they are broken, and even first cousins have married. Some instances have already been cited in the chapter on *Gnyāti*. Suffice it to say here that in some 'advanced' *Gnyātis* amongst the Vāniās even first cousins have married without they or their families being outcasted.

Besides this, there is another way in which the law of marriage within the caste is broken. Some families have boldly stepped out to marry their sons and daughters to children of families which were once members of the group, but caste connections with whom was broken. Amongst a section of the Vāniās of Surat some members of the caste dined with people of another caste at a common table in defiance to the laws of the caste. Their families were put out of the caste; so they joined what is called the Aryan Brotherhood. Though the families were outcasted, some influential families within the caste have taken and given their daughters in marriage to these excommunicated families. And no step has been taken against any of these. But the hold of the caste on the family has been more weakened during recent years by marriages of girls belonging to families of a higher *Varna* than that of the boys. During the 17th century such marriages as enacted in the Romances of Śāmal were considered quite imaginary. But the recent marriage of a Brahmin lady with a man of the Vaiśya *Varna* has not shocked even the *Gnyātis* concerned.

And it is within the writer's knowledge that some prominent members of various Vāniā *Gnyātis* are endeavouring to bring about a union of all the Vāniā *Gnyātis* so that the balance between the supply of males and females may be secured.

All this leads us to generalize, that in matters of exogamy, the individual member of the family has been trying to throw off the family yoke and to act according to the dictates of his own will. Secondly, the family tends to break the yoke of the caste by violating the rules of endogamy by marrying their children with those of excommunicated families, or families of different *Gnyāti* and Varnas. And the violation of *Gnyāti-dharma*

and *kula-dharma* is no less due to the effect of education and the spread of Western ideas and ideals on the leaders of castes, in matters of social and economic life; and this tendency is naturally accentuated by the education of the young who are so full of love and romance, and among whom a discontent with the existing order is spreading more and more.

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION.

Introductory.
Ch. IX. The Village Community.
Ch. X. Trade-guilds.
Ch. XI. Towns and Cities.

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION.

Introductory.

Gujarat, like the rest of India, is a region of village communities, each of which may be said to be almost completely self-sufficing and therefore, in a sense, isolated from and independent of other villages. Of course, owing to the development of railways and the new industrialization, this isolation has naturally been breaking down during the last sixty years; and due also to the recent development of motor transport much of this isolation and self-sufficiency have been further disturbed; in fact, this recent factor has in a sense so knit the relations between village and village, and villages and towns (especially market-centres) that we may say that an era of interdependence has been inaugurated in terms of selling and buying in several markets, in terms of the coming together of different peoples and different regions for the sake of exchange of commodities, which must by and by result in exchange of ideas and ideals, in mutual understanding of—and sympathy for—each other, and in a united effort by all for the solution of the fundamental problems of life common to all of them. Thus the physiognomy of our region has altered, and will doubtless go on altering in the days to come. Nevertheless Gujarat will remain essentially a land of villages.

The old village economy has thus been considerably disturbed, internally and externally. During the Great War the agriculturist worked on a money basis and in terms of a money economy. This tendency is persisting even to-day. In a sense therefore, the sense of honour and honesty of olden

days is much impaired; debts of honour are now no more respected as of old. Perhaps this is also due to the presence of excessive economic depression.

Anyhow, the village banker and the Brahmin persist, as before, in encouraging superstitions and harmful habits and beliefs of the people, with profit—at least, immediate—to themselves. This, perhaps more than any other single cause, has brought about the economic ruin of the peasant. Efforts to help the peasants out of their economic difficulties by means of Co-operative Societies have to fight on two flanks—the village banker on the one hand, and the superstitious traditions of the farmer on the other. The Co-operative Societies do not, for instance, lend money for marriage feasts or for such other purposes which have always been launching the peasant on a sea of perpetual troubles. The village banker and the Brahmin are, on the other hand, always willing to encourage the farmer in his extravagant habits. It need not be added that the farmer has to spend the money so borrowed at the shop of the money-lender who, as stated elsewhere, also happens to be the general merchant; some of it, and the things bought with it, naturally go to the Brahmin. Thus we may say without fear of contradiction that almost every family is burdened with a banker and a Brahmin who are parasites living on the vitals of the community.

Then there is the other problem, far more serious—the problem of the *Kāli Paraj*. The *Ujli Varnas* have deprived them of their lands and of their independence; they thrive as parasites on the labours of the *Kāli Paraj*; they have kept the *Kāli Paraj* in poverty, drink, ignorance, away from schools, away from civilization. It may be granted that most of these things are not due to spite or ill-will on the part of the *Ujli Varnas*; it is more due to the synnomic level of their culture which tends to

cling to the age-long traditions and customs of the forefathers. There is evidence that things are changing. And it may be that the problem of the Indian village for a century to come will be the problem of the *Kāli Paraj*.

Of towns and cities—large and small, industrial and historic—there are a few in Gujarat. They have always exercised a considerable influence over the village economy, though during recent years, due to the fact that cities are fast becoming centres of the modern industrialization, this influence is increasing in intensity and extent. And it would be safe to assert that the fortunes of the city were never before so intimately connected with those of the country as to react (for good or ill) on the latter. By this we do not in any way attempt to minimize the fact that, during the past, town and village had an equal value and share in the economy of older cultures. In fact, the ideal of the City Beautiful has always been part of the idealizations of the village outlook all through history. And Cities have always been looked up to with concern, devotion, and even reverence through ages of man's endeavour to raise a place and a home built by the best in, and of, and through man, fit enough, good enough, majestic enough to receive the Lord, and fit even to entertain and house Him, fit even so that the Lord may make it his hallowed dwelling-place on earth.

The land of Gujarat is rich in a variety of ways, as we have already pointed out in the first chapter. It yields sufficient crops for the mere scraping; it abounds in mineral wealth. Its crops include rice, wheat, bajri, jowar, and most of all, cotton. There are some large forests which yield good timber, teak and mahogany. Mangoes, guavas, custard-apples, and tamarind are grown in abundance. There is a great deal of iron, lead, manganese,

mica, sandstone and granite in the Panchmahals.[1] Veined agate, limestone, moss-stone, quartz, building-stone, iron-stone and cornelian are to be found in various parts. And cows, bullocks, buffaloes, ponies, goats, sheep, donkeys, camels and elephants are the chief domesticated animals.

But, as we have said, neither its good soil, nor its rich water resources, nor its forest products, nor its natural and safe river-ports are used and organized by man in the interests of a greater mastery over life than mere living brings. Its mineral wealth has yet remained unexploited. As its agricultural holdings are fast becoming uneconomic, its cattle are deteriorating; little attempt is made to breed the cattle scientifically, which are good even as they are, at least in some parts of the region. Thus the region is certainly very rich in its natural resources; but it awaits the effort of man, the ideation which shall bring forth the synergy that may one day enable man to see the visions and dreams of his imagination realized in the achievement of an etho-polity born of the best and the noblest sentiments and emotions of the human spirit.

[1] Bom. Gaz., III, pp. 197-198.

CHAPTER IX.

THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY.

In order to start on our economic survey perhaps it will be best to start with the central unit of the wealth and welfare of Gujarat, viz., its village community.

A Gujarat village community usually consists of: (1) agriculturists, land-owning and landless, (2) artisans like carpenters, blacksmiths and others, (3) barbers, scavengers and other necessary workmen, (4) the Brahmin who acts as the priest, teacher and astrologer, and (5) a few policemen to look after law and order.[1] In fact, according to the old traditions, in "the typical village, the community proper consists exclusively of husbandmen. All other residents, from the shopkeeper to the sweeper, are strangers within the gates, not regarded even by themselves as having any inherent right to a voice in the management of communal affairs."[2] And this was said to be "especially true of the artisan. He is distinctively known as the settler, *vasvāyā*, the man who has 'come to live' in the place for the convenience of the original inhabitants."[3] All this must have been the case fifty years ago. The agriculturist is going on in his old way even to-day; but he has now lost his influence and position of olden days. The other groups in the village are more organized; the Government have to a certain extent been following a policy of not giving the special attention the farmers enjoyed, and even claimed, in times gone

[1] Bom. Gaz., Vol. IV, pp. 47ff; Vol. II, pp. 56, 381–386.
[2] Bom. Gaz., Vol. IV, p. 106.
[3] Ibid., p. 106.

by. So, in a sense, the modern tendency seems to be inclined towards the expansion of the privileges of the classes of villagers other than the agriculturist.

An important fact to be observed about the village inhabitants is that usually they are historically connected with the village. A family asserts its connection with its village for hundreds of years. And moreover, this continuity of tradition is observed also in regard to occupation, place of work, and in case of service, to the families in which it is rendered. A farm labourer, for instance, continues to work for the family whom his forefathers served; and, what is more, he renders his services at a rate of wages and under condition of service fixed when the original contract between the landlord and the labourer was concluded—which may have been ages ago. The same holds good in the case of the other artisans. But this will not sound so very unfair when we come to consider the system of payment, which is mostly in kind. During our own days, however, tendencies towards money economy are fast appearing; and often to-day wages are actually demanded and paid in cash, for piece-work and occasional jobs.

Coming to the classes, the first in order of importance is the agriculturist. Agriculturists are of three kinds: those who own the land and work it themselves; those who own it and employ labourers; and those who have no land of their own, and work for others. Of these, the first class are the most numerous. The area of their holdings usually measures about five acres. But, of course, some own many more acres, whilst others eke out their living on a few only. They cultivate their land with the rude instruments they still employ, and are quite content if the few needs they have, are supplied regularly all the year round. They pay a fixed rent to the Government,

according to the quality of land; the rent is assessed every thirty years.

The big landlords either lease out their lands to one or several persons at fixed rentals in terms of money or kind or both; or they hire labourers to cultivate their lands, paying them wages. Of course, the non-farmers and absentee landlords have to resort to the first method. And the resident landlords would naturally prefer the second; for besides the help of hired labourers, the free services of the *Hāris*[1] of the family is available to them. Even then, most resident farmers lease out at least a part of their lands.

The landless class of men generally consists of the farmers who get into the clutches of the money-lender, mortgage their lands, and ultimately lose them to him. They are then generally set to work on their own land by the mortgagees, and paid fixed wages in money or kind or both. The tyranny of the money-lenders has been great during the past, but the small farmer-owners are now more and more protected by the law.[2]

The village headman called *patel* (whose office is usually hereditary), the most important person in the village, is generally one of the big landowners. He used to be the man with whom former governments dealt in all affairs of the village. He was the spokesman of the village, or rather the master of a company of servants (for he behaved like that), who always spoke more or less on his own behalf. Nowadays, the headman is practically a government servant. His powers are large, his duties many. Besides taking the chief part on all ceremonial occasions, initiating proposals, and raising subscriptions for public works such as wells, temples,

[1] The *Hāris* are, more or less, permanent life-long serfs of the family.

[2] Imperial Gaz. Provincial Series, Bombay, Vol. I, p. 101.

etc., he is expected to protect the village boundaries, to be answerable for criminals who may be hiding in the village, to provide carts and other conveniences for the public service, to be responsible for the maintenance of peace and order, and to look after the general well-being of the community.[1] He has to see that crops are properly stored up, and that the State receives its proper share of them; also that neighbouring farmers respect each other's boundaries. All local disputes are referred to him, and his decision is generally respected. In return for all this the *patel* sometimes holds a certain quantity of land free of rent; but he is nowadays almost always remunerated by a small cash payment, which is equivalent to a percentage on the collections.

The hereditary revenue *patel* holds the office of police *patel* also, which is a new creation.[2] He has under him the *havaldar* who performs all the duties of a village constable. In return for his services the *havaldar* gets rent-free land and a share from the general grain produce. The village guard or police that the *patel* commands, are also given subsistence lands on service tenure.

The *patel* is the most important man of affairs in the village. But of all the settlers, the man whom the villagers consider truly indispensable, who is looked up to, and who earns the general reverence, regard and love, is the village Brahmin, wherever such a Brahmin exists. In fact, the villagers hardly even think of him as a *vasvāyā*; he is their father; to him are entrusted family complications and family secrets; to him all go for consolation and for guidance. He welcomes the birth and celebrates the marriage of their

[1] Bom. Gaz., Vol. II, pp. 381-382; also Vol. VII, pp. 74-75.
[2] Cf. Imperial Gaz. Provincial Series, Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, p. 120.

children; and when they die he it is who intercedes for them before God, and helps them to attain *swarga*. He is the keeper of their hearts, for he is the keeper of their *dharma*.

The village Brahmin does duty as a priest, a teacher and a physician. He acts as family-priest to all *varnas*, except the Śudras who may have their own Brahmins. According to the *Śāstras*, a Brahmin cannot possess property, nor can he work for a living; for, if the teachers and guides of the people are continually left to face the question of keeping their body and soul together, they cannot be wholly devoted to their supreme mission, nor can they then be expected to keep up the moral tone of society. On the other hand, the flock under a Brahmin's care is charged with the solemn duty of maintaining him. He must, on no account, be left in want. Therefore, the village Brahmin receives plenty of grain yearly, uncooked food at caste-dinners, and fixed sums of money and other gifts at each performance of marriage and other ceremonies.

If the Brahmin is a spiritual helper, the village carpenter (*sutār*) and blacksmith (*luhār*) are two important material helpers. For, without their constant attention the ploughs and other agricultural instruments would soon become useless. They also help to build and repair houses and carts. For the making and mending of agricultural tools they are allowed to keep their allotment of land on payment of a quit-rent of one-fourth of the ordinary rental. And they also receive a fixed amount of grain from the villagers. But for extraordinary work, e.g., building houses, making or repairing carts, they have to be paid in cash.

Another very important man in the village is the *hajām* (barber), who is not only a tonsorial artist, but also the village surgeon, bleeder and

bone-setter.[1] It follows almost as a matter of course, therefore, that his wife is the village mid-wife. Some of the extraordinary duties of the *hajām* include torch-bearing at night to show the way to strangers, or to the *patel* on the track of thieves, acting as drummer in the marriage season, and providing amusements on happy occasions. For all these services he receives grain, occasional presents of various kinds, and has been continued in possession of his land for one-fourth of the ordinary rental.

The village potter (*kumbhār*) is not only the earthen-ware maker, but, if need be, he acts as a water-man. He is paid in grain, and pays only one-fourth of the ordinary rental. For extraordinary duties, on festive occasions, the potter and his family give their services for which they receive additional remuneration.[2]

To the *Dhed* (sweeper) and the *Bhangi* (scavenger) the village naturally owes its health and vitality. They are two of the most important public servants, yet they are among the ' untouchables '. Those who cleanse are themselves defiled! The *Bhangi* removes dirt of every description, including night-soil. He also carries oral messages, and acts as road-guide to travellers.[3] The *Dhed*, on the other hand, does road-sweeping only; he touches no other dirt.[4] On festive occasions both of them turn musicians—of a sort. In consideration of their usefulness, they receive grain from the villagers, and enjoy their land rent-free.

It is worth noting here that the *hajāms* and *dheds* manage to accumulate some wealth by sending some of their sons out to large towns, where

[1] Cf. Enthoven: Tribes and Castes of Bombay, Vol. III, pp. 128-129.
[2] Cf. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 276.
[3] Cf. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 327-328.
[4] Cf. Ibid., pp. 109-110.

they may earn more. They must, as members of joint families, send these earnings home. Thus do the members of the artisan and labouring classes like, the cobblers, barbers, sweepers and scavengers, some of whom are 'untouchables', try to make up in material comfort what they are deprived of in social status and amenities.

Among the lesser lights of the village may be mentioned the cobbler (*mochi*), the tanner (*chamār*), the tailor (*darji*), the washerman (*dhobi*), and the watchman (*rakhevāl*). The *mochi* and *chamār* enjoy their land at a quit-rent of one-half the ordinary rental; the latter also receives skins of animals that die in the village. Few villages have however, their tailors or washermen. Usually people wash their clothes at home. So, oftentimes, one tailor and one washerman is sufficient to serve several villages. Their services are naturally not required very often. They are paid in grain, and own land at a quit-rent of one-half the ordinary rental.

Every village has some watchmen to give warning, and to guard it in case of attacks from robbers. In the northern parts of the district they are, for the most part Kolis, but south of the Narbada they are chiefly Bhils. They carry bows and arrows, but have no firearms. They have generally proved very faithful and reliable public servants. They are paid by the State in cash and by grants of rent-free land.

The village may also have occasion to employ the services of a *kosiā* (water-drawer), a *soni* (goldsmith), a *bhāt* (singer and genealogist), a *joshi* (astronomer and astrologer), *bhavāyās* (strolling players), *gosāins* or *vairāgis* (ascetics); the latter are much venerated by the people, though they do nothing in particular.

Finally, we must notice perhaps the most undesir-

able figure in the community, viz., the village Vania or Bania. He is the grocer, general merchant, and money-lender; he also happens to be a very intelligent, acute, shrewd and well-informed man, as he is generally one of the few literate persons besides the Brahmin. Altogether he is a sinister figure in the village economy. He lends money and corn at exorbitant rates, and on substantial securities (generally of gold and land). These securities can hardly ever be redeemed by their owners. In this way the Bania becomes one of the largest land-holders in the village. He also acts as the scribe and a sort of walking-gazette, whilst villagers gather of an evening at his house and sit there chatting till bed-time.

On an average, there are in a village, two families of Brahmins, two of carpenters, two of blacksmiths, two of potters, one or two of shoe-makers, two of barbers, eight or ten of sweepers, three or four of *vāniās*, and eight or ten of watchmen. All these, as we have said, reside in the village and function there, on definite terms settled with the chief or *patel*, one of whose claims is to demand *veth*, or unpaid service from most of them.

It is very important to remember here that all occupations are hereditary—they descend from the father to his son or sons. If a man is a carpenter all his sons become, have to become, carpenters. This rule is rigid and is sternly enforced; in fact, it is supposed to be strictly according to the *Śāstras*, and thus inviolable. Intellectually, it is defended on the ground that if an art or craft is practised continuously in one family for generations, it is bound to reach greater and greater efficiency and perfection. But, as a matter of fact, the rule has been thoughtlessly enforced; consequently, the very opposite of the desired result has been obtained. When, say, a farmer's son has strong leanings

towards the legal profession, and in spite of all supplications and entreaties he is not allowed to pursue the same, and forced to remain for ever into the humdrum life of the village, agriculture is hardly likely to gain thereby. And so with every other pursuit of life. The net result has been that the perfection that most of the arts and crafts have to show to-day is that of two, three, four, or five hundred years ago. No advance has been made since then. The craftsmen and artisans have been more or less imitating the designs and technique of their forefathers, devoid of any present urge, any idea of living beauty or worth. Besides, by confining a craft in certain families that stimulus to better workmanship given by healthy rivalry is also likely to be taken away. Thus the industries become excessively protected, in fact become hot-house industries. This can hardly be a healthy state of affairs; and it certainly has not proved so for Indian arts and crafts. Thus, at every turn and corner in our investigation we come face to face with a chronic and unhealthy conservatism which kills the soul of man. The atmosphere is close, stifling, sickly. If fresh air is not to be admitted easily, the windows will have to be broken open; for the state of the victim is surely alarming. And it would be no exaggerated alarm to apprehend that the issue might, at any stage now, become one between the preservation and the extinction either of conservatism or of a people.

It might be well now to turn our gaze on to a typical village, and to see what it looks like, how it lives and works.

The Gujarat village occupies an area of from 300 to 400 to many thousand acres. The village proper, i.e., the dwelling quarter of the agriculturists, is generally about a couple of miles away from the fields, and if possible, situated on a higher level.

The chief features are the main street flanked on both sides by small, one or two-storeyed, detached houses, with their facades often covered with amateurish figure designs in bright yellow, blue and red; a *chakla* or square, where fairs, markets and public functions are held; and the village well in the neighbourhood, for the use of the three higher *varnas*. The whole place is very dusty, and the main street generally shows two deep ruts caused by the passing and repassing of the heavy bullock carts. This is the core of the village. Along the outskirts of the village are to be found the *vasvāyās*, the settler-artisans' dwellings. They are generally poorer in appearance than the agriculturists' dwellings. Still meaner are the abodes of the poor 'untouchables', the *dheds*, the *bhangis*, who have to live outside the village. Usually a mud wall runs round the village, which was formerly meant to be a barrier against thieves or robbers, and now serves more as a pointer to the old insecure times.

Now, just as the village community is self-contained so it is also self-governed, as far, at least, as internal peace, order and management are concerned. The executive authority of the community rests in its headman or *patel* and his assistants, the *havaldars* or constables, and the watchmen. Local disputes are settled by the *patel* with the help of a *panch*, a sort of a jury of any five adult men. Their decision is hardly ever questioned, and the proverb goes "What the *panch* says, is God-said". It is worth noting, *en passant*, that the village community is generally very orderly and law-abiding; indeed, law and order is maintained without the assistance or coercion of the police, who are there chiefly to protect the village from robbers. In fact, there are whole areas in Gujarat in the villages of

which no crime has been committed for many a year.[1]

The agriculturists' houses are generally roomy, and are made of mud or bricks, according to the circumstances of the owner. Every one, rich or poor, owns a house. "A woman can get on without a husband; no man can get on without a house", goes the proverb. The furniture consists of a couple of strong wooden boxes to hold jewelry and clothes; some wooden bedsteads and coverlets, and copper and earthen cooking pots: the whole being worth about 200 or 300 rupees. The poorest labourer has nothing except a mattress and a few earthen cooking-pots, all worth a few rupees. The one really objectionable and harmful feature of these dwellings is the inclusion of the cow-stall in the building. There is no separate stable or shed outside the house for cow or goat. They are stabled in a back (or sometimes front) room of the house; and the bucolic atmosphere is emphasized by the fact that men and cattle use the same entrance! Another serious defect is the lack of proper ventilation. There are few windows; wherever they are, they are rarely fitted with panes of glass, because the villagers cannot afford to have glass. The result is that, especially during the rainy season, the atmosphere inside a house becomes very unhealthy, and it is then that it affects the dwellers most; happily, during the rest of the year they sleep out on the verandahs as much as possible.

Such is the dusty, humdrum, yet picturesque village in which the village folk hold "the even tenor of their way". The busy season among the agricultural population begins in May and lasts till

[1] Bom. Gaz., Vol. II, pp. 233, 507; Vol. III, pp. 120, 273; Vol. IV, p. 196.

December. Everyone rises early with the dawn. Cattle are given fodder; labourers are allotted their tasks. After taking a light breakfast of bajri or juwar cake, and milk or curds, the cultivators set out for their fields, carrying agricultural tools and driving their bullocks. Here they work till after sunset, with an interval of a couple of hours at midday, when they generally have a meal of bread and butter-milk. After sunset they return home, take a meal of rice and split-peas (*dāl-bhāt*) and some vegetables, sit a-chatting at the Vania's shop, or gather together and sing hymns led by the village-priest. From February to May, on the other hand, there is not much work to be done. The greater part of the day is spent idly in gossiping and gambling. Special occasions are not uncommon when a visiting Brahmin gives readings of the Epics or the *Purānas*. Women rise earlier in the morning than men, attend to the cattle, milk the cows and buffaloes, prepare butter, and during the busy season, bake bread for the early breakfast. The whole morning is spent in tidying up the house and preparing the midday meal. When that is ready it has to be taken to the fields to their husbands; when they come back they have to grind grain, and attend to other domestic work. Only women of the poorer classes work in the fields, removing weeds and picking cotton. Wives and daughters of field labourers and the poorer cultivators have, besides, to take their dairy produce to the nearest market for sale, once a week.

And so life goes its steady round for the villagers. They live, as has already been said, in joint families. Man here has become so sociable, so entirely a creature of society, that he has developed the faculty of give-and-take to a surprising extent; indeed to an extent positively harmful to his personality. Everything is well-understood: no one

ever questions the wisdom of the family-head; all give up their earnings to fill the family-treasury; bickerings and petty quarrels are almost always avoided by never ventilating small personal grievances. The whole atmosphere is more or less peaceful. Of course, it may not be a healthy peace; it may be the peace of the hospital, of disease and decay, not of life and vitality. But there it is, and it is seldom broken except during the great religious festivals, or the marriage season. These are the really lively times of the year. And it may be a very significant fact that the village folk perform all ceremonies very lavishly and extravagantly, and all in the name of *dharma*. Such extravagance is even enforced by the *gnyātis*.

The various ways in which the *gnyāti* laws operate on the families of the agricultural and labouring classes in regard to weddings, funerals and such other occasions, make it impossible for the villagers to live within their means, especially when they are already loaded with debts incurred by them or their forefathers. The usual way in which the Vania keeps a hold on his debtor is by taking the lands in mortgage in consideration of the loan. And this loan ever remains unpaid while the compound interest (very often not less than one anna per rupee per month, i.e. 75% per annum) goes on increasing. In most cases, however, the interest is paid from time to time, though the capital generally remains unpaid. And the debt goes on increasing, for the ever-ready Vania helps the family out when another marriage takes place. Of course, the villager buys everything he wants from the Vania with this money, and so the Vania soon takes back what he gives. But such debts repeatedly incurred by the villager from generation to generation, ultimately make the Vania the owner of the village lands. He transfers the owner-

ship of the land to himself, but allows his debtors to continue to cultivate the land and live on their ancestral property. In consideration of this the farmer gives him either a share of his produce or a fixed sum of money every year. The Vania banker (who passes under the name of Desai) thus by and by becomes the owner of the land.

The Vāniā has no interest at all (nor knowledge, of course) in the development and welfare of the land and the cultivator. He visits his lands once or twice a year, when he collects payments of rents, interests, etc. This want of interest in the welfare of the agricultural classes, and his desire for paying the least amount of land tax to the Government has very serious consequences on the development of the land. And as a new assessment is made every thirty years,[1] he sometimes wilfully allows the land to deteriorate for want of manure, etc., in order that the minimum assessment may be made.

The only one way out for the village family—both of the higher and lower *gnyātis*—is to let some of the younger members of the family migrate to cities, and even to go out of India, in order that their earnings may pay off the family debts, and thus relieve their family property from the grip of the banker. And this is the main cause why the villagers gravitate towards the city and flood it mostly with superfluous and unskilled labour, with the economic result that the city man has to compete against heavy odds. In a large town like Bombay, five or six or even more of such immigrants club together and hire a small room in which they keep their belongings, and most of the year they sleep in the open on the road, balcony, or any open space in the house. In smaller cities like Surat and Ahmedabad, these

[1] Cf. Baden-Powell: Land-systems of British India, Vol. III, p. 75.

men live in houses which can be rented very cheaply.

But the Pātidārs of Ahmedabad and Kaira emigrate to Africa in order that they may save their families from financial disaster. And they have shown great success in their ventures. In fact a number of the leading members of the commercial community of South Africa come from the Pātidār community.

A word must now be said about the place of woman in the Gujarati social scheme. The women are masters of the situation inside the house. They rule their husbands effectively, but are rarely aggressive. And the men, except perhaps among the lowest classes, respect their women-folk, and seek their advice in every important matter. But very few of the men realize the great part woman has been playing in all the phases of Hindu life, culture and civilization. It has been of paramount importance, although it has been obscured by the seclusion into which the Hindu woman has been thrust for the last few hundred years of insecurity. Still, neither her charm nor her power seem to have lost their potency. This has been amply proved again recently[1]; for most of the strength and numbers of his followers in Gujarat, Mahātmā Gandhi has to thank his women supporters who undertook, at a moment's notice, to preach his doctrines and convert the men. We can only guess at the vast possibilities that still lie hidden within her, waiting to be called forth by the magic of leadership and good education. Education is the really crying need, especially of women. Women should be educated first; the education of the men will follow as a matter of course. For, the Hindu mother is her children's first and greatest teacher; they learn the countless

[1] Of course, later events have all along been proving my contentions.

songs, the stories of gods and heroes, and the vast folk-lore at their mother's knee.

Generally, there is a primary school, between three or four neighbouring villages, where the rudiments of the Three 'R's' are taught in the vernacular. But, unfortunately, it is by no means the case that all parents send their children to school. And as far as the Śudras and 'untouchables' are concerned, they could not educate their children even if they would.[1]

But although the Indian villager is illiterate, he is not therefore uneducated. He is educated in a sense. He has a tremendous memory in which he carries a vast amount of folk-lore. Women have the choicest out of the classical poets of Gujarat by heart. In the early morning, as they perform their domestic duties and attend to the cows, they sing songs of the early life of Krishna, his games, his mother's troubles, and so on. Some of these songs are highly philosophical.

A sketch of the domestic life of a Gujarati village can never be complete without a notice of the villagers' usual attitude towards *dharma*, of whatever of intellectual life he has, and of his tolerant nature. *Dharma* is a matter of tradition for the villager. The daily domestic duties are considered a matter of *dharma*. Between sunrise and sunset the worship of the cow, the worship of the family-god and such other deities, the feeding of the Brahmin, come under the daily *dharma*. In matters of *dharma* women take the initiative; the village Brahmin deals with difficulties in his own way, advises his hosts from time to time in regard to their *dharma*, and keeps them on the true path. For instance, the villagers are advised to propitiate one deity or another in times of

[1] We must remember that this sentence was written in 1924.

drought, or when a person of the community is polluted by the touch of an 'untouchable'. He does this according to his own lights. As nobody likes, or dares, to break traditional custom, which is for all practical purposes the *dharma*, there is very little disturbance in the *dharma* aspect of a villager's life. Bal Krishna is normally worshipped; and one not infrequently finds a photograph of Queen Victoria, and nowadays of Mahātmā Gandhi, in the midst of idols.

Where part of the community is Śaivite, public discussions between Brahmin visitors take place. Sometimes, leaders of various *Sampradāyas* visit villages to convert the people. Many methods are adopted: the most usual of them being the giving of the Sacred Thread, or *Tulsi Mālā*, to those who desire it and to whom it has been denied. The community, in return, promises to act according to the *dharma* of the new *Sampradāya*. For instance, a *Sampradāya* may forbid the worship of idols. In accepting that *Sampradāya* the recruit accepts it as his *dharma* not to worship idols; he acts up to it in most cases, for some time at least. The writer has noticed people giving up drinking habits after their investment with the sacred *Kanthi*.

As regards God or gods, the more of them the merrier. The villager has no heart to disbelieve in or disrespect a god simply because that god does not happen to be his. He thinks it is not his business to judge. His respect for other people's beliefs and attitudes, though not always necessarily the result of intellectual apprehension or philosophical conviction, is embedded in the belief that he should not interfere with or question other people's *dharma*. Even for the religion of the Moslem, the villagers have great respect and reverence, though they do not believe in anything that is Mahomedan.

The hymns they sing are of a cosmopolitan character. They may have been written by anybody —low caste or high caste, by a Hindu, a Mahomedan or a Christian. Sometimes they sing hymns and songs which are opposed to their beliefs, with great zeal and ecstasy. For instance, a great number of the hymns that they sing with zeal, condemn idolatry and other practices actually prevalent amongst them. Now, reverence for all these, forms part of their belief and *dharma*, and of the essential tenets of some *Sampradāyas*. Nevertheless these hymns are sung; not that they do not understand them, nor that they do not think *with* the poet when they sing. Think one may, but one cannot change ('overthrow'), dare not change, one's dharma. Thought does not always rule their action; for it is borrowed, not their own. So, till it ripens and becomes their own, they will not leave their *Sampradāya* and *dharma* that bind them. This self-contradiction is not unusual in the religious life of any people. Only that the Hindus are perhaps more reluctant to change their traditional ways than other groups.

But in matters of *Sampradāya*, the change is more frequent than in matters of *dharma*. Continuity of *dharma* bondage often ruins the cause of a *Sampradāya*. And though people have eyes they refuse to see, and refuse to think though they have brains,—refuse to think adversely in regard to any evil custom that imposes on them. "But that is our *dharma*. How can we break it? Of course, we cannot," is the usual explanation.

But nowadays the breaking of *dharma* is easy when its sanctions affect economically in an adverse manner the life of the community as a whole. For instance, marriage dowry and feasts, which for so long, were considered part of *gnyāti-dharma*, are in many cases now abandoned since 1914 because

of the high prices of food-stuffs. In some cases, instead of four feasts, two are given, in others only one; or only a payment of one hundred rupees to the *gnyāti* fund is made.

Another evil social custom which is considered *dharma* in some *gnyātis* is the buying of a bride by old men who happen to have no male issue. Amongst the Bhātiās, where the females are less in number than males (Males: 14,800; Females: 13,500), and where widow-remarriage is not allowed, many young men have to live unmarried for want of sufficient funds to pay the bridesprice.[1] Hence this urgent question of excessive bridesprice was brought up in their caste-council, where the system was condemned in scathing terms by the young men, who also urged immediate reforms. Thus when that which passes as *dharma* becomes economically hurtful, it opens the folk's eyes to its real significance. Therefore social reformers might well try to bring about the much needed changes in this custom-and-caste-ridden society by demonstrating the essentially faulty and bad economy of the system under which they are at present labouring.

And finally, a word must be said about sanitation and health. It is said that a very great proportion of sickness and disease never receives medical attention in India.[2] An Indian village possesses no skilled physician or surgeon. But not only is much loss of life avoidable; almost all sickness is preventable. It is regrettably true that village sanitation is in a very rude stage yet. The privies of primitive design and construction are generally filthy places, and are naturally infected with mosquitos, flies and other insects. The method of disposing of night-soil is also very unsatisfactory.

[1] Cf. Enthoven: Tribes and Castes of Bombay, Vol. i, p. 139.
[2] Holderness: Peoples and Problems of India, p. 144.

Another source of danger is the wells and ponds from which the village draws its water-supply. These are hardly ever dredged or cleared; so, instead of being the cleanest places they are allowed to become breeding haunts of mosquitos and other pests. No wonder then that the vitality of the average villager is low, and that the general health is bad. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that about ninety-nine per cent. of the villagers are permanently infected with malaria. It is not surprising, therefore, that they should die off like flies on the outbreak of an epidemic. And perhaps this poisoned system of theirs may also explain the generally prevalent lethargy and lassitude, melancholic and fatalistic temperament. Therefore a thorough examination of the village water-supply question would seem to be the first step towards rural reorganization. To begin with, the wells and ponds should be thoroughly dredged, and fish put into them; for fish would speedily and effectively put an end to mosquito-eggs and other elements in water which may be injurious to the human system. The drainage problem should also be tackled immediately. For the general improvement in health must be the first step, as it is bound to facilitate the solution of many other urgent problems.

We come now to consider the important question of the village agricultural land and its management. The Gujarat village is, what is generally known as, a *ryotwari* village.[1] Here the *Zamindār* or big land-owner, who owns all the land of the village, is an exception. The land, like all other land, belongs to the *Sarkār* or Government, and it is the villager with whom the *Sarkār* (through its servant, the *Patel*) makes the settlement, and it is the villager who is individually responsible for his

[1] Cf. B. H. Baden-Powell: Land-systems of British India, pp. 269 ff.

land-revenue. The village common- and grass-lands are for the use of all the villagers, and all cattle are allowed to graze there.

A typical holding of agricultural land consists of small strips which lie sometimes miles away from each other. The separate holdings are marked off by hedges. Land has been thus most uneconomically cut up into separate pieces, owing to the divisions of family-property which take place from time to time when coparceners decide to break up their joint family. And according to Hindu law all family-property must be equally divided among the rightful coparceners. Thus has village land been endlessly chopped up into very small pieces. Comessation of land, as in Europe and Japan, does in a sense take place, when the lands of several farmers lapse to one Vania money-lender. But unfortunately this comessation does not take place as a matter of agricultural policy; and moreover, the strip system is continued even then, and the land is worked just as wastefully as before.

A farmer usually divides his holding into six equal parts, and allows one of these by turns to lie fallow for a year. That part is used during the year as grazing-ground and cattle-pen in daytime.

The system of cultivation is still very rude and unscientific. The agricultural implements are primitive, made by the village blacksmith, and the plough, which is drawn by a couple of bullocks, cannot dig deeper than six inches. Intensive methods of agriculture are quite unknown; although not quite ignorant of the value of cow-dung as manure, the main use that the villagers make of it is to burn it as fuel in the shape of dried cakes. This waste of good land and good manure due to thoughtlessness and ignorance is enormous and appalling.

Another, and a permanent, drawback is the

uncertain and faulty water-supply for cultivation. The monsoon is capricious in Gujarat, and a regular and plentiful supply of rain-water can never be relied upon. Gujarat has by now become only too well acquainted with both dry and wet famines. Therefore a complete system of irrigation is urgently needed to surmount at least one great difficulty. For, without some such arrangement the ever-threatening risk of famines will never be averted. The accounts of former famines are harrowing; and their overwhelming severity—the wholesale destruction of men and cattle—may be gauged from the fact that the scourges of four hundred years ago are familiarly recalled even to-day by the villagers.[1] That situation did not begin to be controlled, in spite of all efforts, till the introduction of railways and the construction of canals and other irrigation works. But even now the problem is far from being completely solved. The improvements need to be greatly extended.

The defects of the agricultural organization above described must be pretty obvious. The scattered-strips system involves an incalculable waste of valuable time and energy, whilst it makes the use of modern machinery impossible. It gives neither opportunity nor stimulus to an enterprising farmer to improve his land, with the result that land decreases in value year by year with a consequent loss to Government revenue, and the emigration of the rural population to the horrible slumdom of large towns, ultimately to swell the ranks of the unemployed there. This depopulation of the rural areas is becoming a danger in certain parts of the country. Agriculture is, and must always remain,

[3] Thus the famine of 1559 is recalled as Jagdushah Dukāl after the name of the Vania merchant who gave relief; that of 1631-32 is called Satyasiyo; 1718 one is called Panchotra; 1731-32, second Satyasiyo; and so on. Cf. Gujarat Sarva Sangraha, pp. 232 to 237.

the primary occupation of India; hence the attention of the people must be kept fixed on the land, and the maldistribution of labour must be prevented, preventing thus the waste of good land, and the loss of opportunity to build up a peaceful and progressive Indian polity based on agriculture. Immediate reforms, then, are needed in regard to methods of agriculture, irrigation, transport service, land-redistribution and work for the agricultural population during the idle months. But over and above all, the farmer needs to be educated. It must be admitted that Mahātmā Gandhi's efforts to popularize the spinning-wheel among the villagers is certainly a step in the direction of village reconstruction and reform.

CHAPTER X.

TRADE-GUILDS.

From our account of the religious and social organizations of the Vaishnavites of Gujarat, it must have become apparent that these communities have erred on the side of over-organization. And they have been further encouraged in this course because most of the non-Vaishnavas are following the same course either independently of, or in co-operation with the Vaishnavas. There are fixed rules of conduct for every occasion and every contingency. And the *gnyāti* or the family not only enforces, but claims to interpret, the rules for the individuals. The individual is thus hemmed in on every side ; and he must either obey or quit. True, there are avenues and means of bringing about change ; but these are exceedingly difficult to operate ; and there are ways of escape, but they are rough and full of danger. No wonder then that the victims take the line of least resistance and choose to trudge on in the beaten paths.

And, perhaps nowhere is this stranglehold of group authority on the life of a people more completely illustrated than in the economic organization in Gujarat which has allowed the life of villages and towns to be dominated by the trade-guilds known as *panchāyets* or *mahājans* which have spread their tentacles on well nigh all the departments of human affairs. There is a tendency towards considerable relief from the interference of the guilds nowadays, owing to the new economic forces at work. We shall discuss these later.

These *mahājans* or associations of agriculturists, artisans, craftsmen or traders, for the regulation of

their affairs and the protection of their interests, are of three kinds: there are the guilds (1) of village workers, and (2) of town workers, each craft or profession having its own guild or *panchāyet* or *mahājan*; but (3) in a large town there is usually one big *mahājan* composed of the representatives of all the lesser *mahājans*. Thus the third kind of *mahājan* is a guild of trade-guilds, a super-trade-guild.

There are very few artisans in an average village, and they are supposed to settle in it on the understanding that they are there for the sake, and in the interests, of the agricultural population.[1] The artisan population has naturally no guild or guilds of its own. They must consent to be ruled by the *gām-panchāyet* or the general council of the village. In this *panchāyet* they have no vote, although they may make themselves heard there; and thus in almost every department of life the decree of the *panchāyet* has to be accepted by these 'settler' artisans. The village *panchāyet* settles their wages or remuneration; it may change the existing usage in regard to them; in short, it can lay down the whole economic policy of the village. And all the inhabitants of the village, whether represented in it or not, have to accept its decisions. This is unfair to the *vasvāyās*,[2] because in all their disputes with the village, one of the parties is also the judge. The result has been that the village artisans have always been treated as outsiders, and have never been admitted to the full rights of village membership.

One point to be noticed about the village *panchāyets* is that the same council regulates both the socio-religious and economic affairs, although

[1] Bom. Gaz., Vol. IV, p. 106.

[2] Lit. settlers. This is how the artisans, tradesmen and other non-agriculturist inhabitants in the village are called.

theoretically, the *panchāyet* is merely the custodian of the social and religious life of the people. And there it differs from the town *panchāyets*[1]; although we must remember that it helps the continuity and stability of the agricultural population which forms over nine-tenths of the village folk. Those artisans who find the conditions too oppressive and who see no prospects of improved conditions, are free to migrate to another village, and settle there, if that village allows it. More often than not, however, they would be refused any work, or left to their own devices. Therefore, when a discontented artisan leaves a village he generally prefers to go to a town in search of better work, freer conditions and larger remuneration. Nowadays such a thing happens pretty frequently because of the building of railways, of big cotton mills and other factories, and the consequent development and growth of towns and cities. This growth of industrialism has again considerably reacted on the supply and demand of village labourers and artisans, with the result that a village *panchāyet* cannot so arbitrarily force its terms on the 'settlers' as it used to do formerly.

Now in a large town each class of artisans—carpenters, tailors, barbers, sweepers, scavengers, etc.—forms a pretty numerous group.[2] This naturally leads to competition. Therefore, in the interests of social stability and common safety and welfare, each of these groups forms itself into a *panchāyet* or *mahājan*, i.e., a trade-guild (although, say, all the carpenters in a guild do not necessarily belong to the same *gnyāti*). Thus we have the weavers' union, the barbers' union, blacksmiths' union, mill-workers' union, sweepers' union and so on, each

[1] But this is not a radical difference; for in a town a trade-*panchāyet* may be conterminous with a *gnyāti-panchāyet*, or may not. The point here is that in the villages it is always so.

[2] Cf. Bom. Gaz., Vol. II, p. 442; Vol. IV, p. 107.

protecting the interests of its members, regulating competition between them, fixing rates of wages, hours of work, holidays, and settling trade-disputes. These may be large or small according to the size of the city or the kind of trade the union represents.

In the towns, then, the *mahājans* do not necessarily coincide with *gnyāti-panchāyets*; although it sometimes happens that there are some *gnyātis* which function as trade-unions.[1] Thus in Bombay, for instance, there are two barber *gnyātis*, both functioning as trade-unions; one of them calls itself Ahmedabadi Hajams, the other represents the Nhavis or barbers from the Deccan. Members of each of these have more or less settled which castes they would cater for; in this way they do not come into conflict with each other, though it oftentimes means hard fight between members of both the unions when new parts of the city are developed. And it will not be long before we have a new *gnyāti* (also functioning as a trade-union) of saloon-barbers, now already respected by their caste-men and expecting larger dowries than their other kinsmen are given. Besides, it does not infrequently happen that new trade-guilds arise out of a larger guild, due to specialization of processes and of work. And often these new trade-guilds ultimately become distinct *gnyātis*. The Mochis (shoe-makers) of Surat have thus differentiated into eleven *gnyātis*. Creation of new caste groups is therefore one of the effects of the trade-guild organization.

On the other hand, several *gnyātis* whose members follow the same trade may form one single *panchāyet* or *mahājan* to protect their economic interests.[2] Thus in Ahmedabad there are four Sutār (carpenter) *gnyātis* and therefore four *gnyāti-panchāyets*; but

[1] Cf. Bom. Gaz., Vol. III, p. 251.
[2] Cf. Bom. Gaz., Vol. VIII, p. 265; also Gujarat Sarva Sangraha, p. 281.

they have combined into one trade-union, viz., the Sutār *Mahājan* of the city. Or, to take another instance, the weaving community of Ahmedabad belong to two distinct *gnyātis*, viz., Kanbi and Vāniā, but they have only one *mahājan* of weavers.

The qualification necessary for guild-membership to-day is simple: one must be engaged in the trade or craft whose guild he wants to join. Thus among mill-workers, all sorts of people from many *gnyātis* and from many parts of the country, in fact, anybody who is a mill-worker can become a member of the Mill-workers' Association. But before the advent of railways (and consequent immobility of labour) those only were eligible who (1) were born of members of the guild, and (2) had served the prescribed apprenticeship.[1] And even to-day this rule obtains in some trades, e.g., amongst the Sutārs (carpenters) and Luhārs (blacksmiths).

The function of these smaller guilds is the proper distribution of work by avoiding unregulated competition; it settles what is to be the minimum wage and the maximum production, thus keeping prices and demand steady. And the guild enforces its decisions very strictly. It can even impose fines and other penalties.[2] But the question of its functions and jurisdiction brings us at once to the third, the largest, most comprehensive, and the most powerful class of trade-guilds, viz., the city-*mahājan*. There is usually one such *mahājan* in every large town. It is, as we have said, a super-trade-guild. It is supposed to look after all the economic interests of the city; it rules the city-trades and regulates the economic life of all the craftsmen and tradesmen

[1] This could not have been so hard as it looks when we remember that a son was forced to take up his father's trade, and therefore was generally apprenticed to his father, or some near relative. Cf. Gujarat Sarva Sangraha, p. 282.

[2] Cf. Gujarat Sarva Sangraha, p. 284.

and workers.[1] And through the city it rules the village and the rest of the country. In theory, the city-*mahājan* is a general legislative and executive council on which each of the smaller *mahājans* has a representative.[2] In actual practice, however, this seemingly democratic organization is dominated and carried on by a few powerful and prominent commercial interests. And both this inner clique and the whole body are really ruled by two or three eminent Vania bankers of the city. The lower occupations are not even represented on the city-*mahājan*, nor are their interests necessarily considered or studied; so just as the village-*panchāyets* treat the village artisans—arbitrarily—the big *mahajan* treats the lesser interests. To what extent the financier dominates the situation may be gauged by the following fact: that although the whole of this general-trade-council may meet together for the discussion of important questions, only the chiefs or aldermen vote decision on a matter. Thus the city-*mahājans* have proved to be, in fact, only rich men's combines to rule the destinies of local tradesmen; they are the agencies by means of which brotherhoods of commercial magnates exercise and perpetuate their control over the individual and the community. And since all their decisions are supposed to be taken in the interests of the public, all the guilds are expected to obey them and to adjust their own affairs in accordance with them. Suffice it to say that the general interest is never properly studied; the interests of a small group always come first.

"The authority of the guild is chiefly exercised in fixing trade-holidays and enforcing their observance; in collecting and applying the common

[1] Cf. Bom. Gaz., Vol. II, pp. 321, 442; Vol. IV, p. 109; Vol. VII, p. 161.
[2] Cf. op. cit., Vol. III, p. 251; Vol. IV, p. 107.

funds; and generally in taking cognizance of any matter which concerns the members as a craft, such as the prohibition or sanction of an improvement, the rate of wages, or the hours of working." [1] These city-*mahājans* also have the power to fix the rate of wages, the price of articles and the rate of production. This has its advantages and disadvantages. Among the advantages are the avoidance of unhealthy competition, the proper distribution of work, especially in times of trade-slump, and the prevention of some individuals getting rich at the expense of the rest of the community. But the regulations are usually very strict and are enforced even during normal times. The result is that all workers are classed together—the good, indifferent and bad—and receive the same remuneration. Individual initiative and enterprise are at a discount, so much so that improvements either in the instruments of production or in the quality of the goods are often sternly disapproved of and put down by the *mahājans*. The rich guilds encourage or discourage progress according as it serves their purpose. But the general tendency has been to keep everything and everyone on a level. This helps to produce that deplorable state of " universal twilight in which all cows seem black and all donkeys loom alike ".

There is, however, one very useful function which the *mahājan* performs,—that of arbitrating in trade disputes.[2] And it is generally successful in bringing about amicable settlements. Still, of course, they have no sovereign power by which they can enforce their decisions in such disputes. But as arbitration before the guild-council comes much cheaper than going to a Court of law, the contending parties

[1] Bom. Gaz., Vol. IV, p. 109.
[2] Cf. Bom. Gaz., Vol. IV, p. 110.

generally choose the less expensive method. This consideration, together with the fact that refusal to approach the *mahājan* to settle disputes and accept its decision involve very grave social and economic risks, gives the city-*mahājans* almost unlimited coercive power and authority.

We must not here forget to mention that non-Hindu members of a craft or profession have perforce to be members of the trade-unions and the city-*mahājans*.[1] They have to abide by the decisions of the *mahājan*-council in all matters concerning their trade or craft without the right to vote, though with a right to petition. Thus, the carpenters' union rules the Parsi cabinet-makers of Surat, and the oil-dealers' union of Baroda and Ahmedabad has under it the Mahomedan members of that trade. In the Bombay cloth market the non-Hindu merchants have to pay trade-levies ranging from about Rs. 75 to Rs. 300 a year (according to their means) to the Vallabhi Maharajas, besides levies of the traders' *mahajan* of Bombay which are enforced on all those engaged in the cloth trade and having their shops in the big cloth marts. Similarly, besides closing their shops on days declared as holidays by the *mahājan*, all the non-Vaishnavite shop-keepers have to close their shops in the event of the birth or death of a Vallabhi Maharaja.[2] No non-Hindu merchant dare object to the *mahājan's* orders, rulings or decisions for fear of having to wind up his business in case of a quarrel with the *mahājan*. The usual way in which the Parsi or Mahomedan merchant makes his voice heard in the big *mahajan* is by going into partnership with a Bhatia or a Vania.

We have said that all the smaller trade-guilds

[1] Cf. Bom. Gaz., Vol. II, p. 321; Vol. VII, p. 160.

[2] This is so because the Bombay cloth market happens to be dominated by Bhatias and Vanias who are all Vaishnavites.

are expected to submit to the big *mahajan's* rulings. If, supposing, any one of these panchayets or an individual member thereof refuses to do so, the city-*mahājan* declares a general boycott against the recalcitrant. And this is mostly bound to end in a victory for the powerful, rich and highly organized body. For instance, during the American Civil War the Kumbhars' (or potters') guild at Dhandhuka raised the prices of their wares owing to the increased cost of living. The rest of the community objected to this, and a little later the city-*mahājan* took up the cudgels against the Kumbhārs, and issued a decree forbidding any one to deal with the potters. When it came to a pinch the *mahājan* even sanctioned the use of metal pots and pans in marriage ceremonies,[1] and began to import earthenware from outside with the help of its large funds. But the potters held out. Shortly after, on the occasion of the yearly auction sale for the right to dig clay in the village, the agents of the city-*mahājan* were sent "to outbid the potters at any cost, and so deprive them of their raw material"; this last move forced the potters to yield, and to this day the price of earthenware remains unchanged.[2] Similar difficulties arose in Ahmedabad with the barbers' and carpenters' unions. The city-*mahājan* in this case also tried to get workmen from other villages; but these were not so easily forthcoming; therefore the big *mahājan* had to yield to the demands of the Hajāms (barbers) and Sutārs (carpenters).

We mentioned above that refusal to obey the city-*mahājan's* decision involves grave social and economic risks. This is important and needs to be elaborated. It must be emphasized that in the

[1] This not in accordance with *dharma*.
[2] Bom. Gaz., Vol. IV, p. 109.

case of India one cannot talk of economic organization without reference to the religious or the social or the family organizations. All these aspects are closely interwoven in the texture of Indian life. And *dharma* pervades everything. Every act is either according to *dharma* or against it. And the city-*mahajans*, such is their authority and influence, have the power to declare an act *adharmi*, i.e., irreligious, and thus bring down upon its perpetrator the displeasure of the whole community. Ordinarily, as soon as the city-*mahājan* expels an offender, he is outcasted by his *gnyāti*. This may mean disgrace and ruin; but society remains inexorable and will have the offender back only on its own terms. Moreover, if a person breaks a caste-law and is outcasted, his own trade-guild and the big *mahājan* will expel him. There is the case of a Visa-Śrimāli Vania who married a widow against the wishes of his caste-*panchāyet*. He was outcasted by his *gnyāti*, and consequently by his trade-guild, and finally had to close his shop and leave the town.[1] This may give us a slight idea of the way in which the individual is repressed on every side, of how the notion of *dharma*, that sense of sacredness for everything that concerns and emanates from human affairs and organizations, unwittingly confirms and supports the authority of caste and trade-guild, the two already baptized children of the force of the mighty in pelf.

But no one can for certain assert that the trade-guild aspect of the *gnyāti*, or the institution of trade-guild itself, was ever Brahmanical in origin. Brahmins do not have such guilds; nor do Kshatriyas. It is the Vaiśya and the Śudra *Varnas* who have them. Be that as it may, however,

[1] Cf. Gujarat Sarva Sangraha, p. 281, note.

Brahmanism seems always to have blessed them through history; and the *mahājans* have always been (very judiciously) kind to the Brahmin Mahārājas and the Brahmanical institutions. The one has always been as ready to please as the other has been to oblige. Considering the way in which the *Śethiās* (chiefs) of the city-*mahājans* use their power, it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that their works of charity may be so many sops thrown to official religion, to the church, in order to pacify the powerful Brahmin *Varna.*

Arising out of the above reference to the *mahājan's* charities, one might mention that the city-*mahājans* are generally very rich. They have a regular income from fines, land and other investments, from percentages on bills of exchange, and on deals in certain specified goods. Much of this income is devoted to feeding the poor, maintaining *sadāvarts* or charitable institutions, and *pānjrāpoles* or animal homes.[1] It is also spent in numerous 'religious' charities especially giving large doles to the Mahārājas.[2] The small trade-guilds have very small funds, and they are generally spent partly in feasting and partly in charity.

Now to sum up: the trade-guild organization in Gujarat, originally devised for the stability, smooth-working and general benefit of the community, has become a menace. The large powers of the *mahājans* have not been, and are not being exercised in the general interests and to the general advantage. On the contrary, they seem to have been used to perpetuate the *mahājan's* own authority and to impede progressive development. And this has been and is being done in the name of religion, that is to say, by an appeal to the most

[1] Cf. Bom. Gaz., Vol. II, p. 321; Vol. III, p. 162.
[2] Cf. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 321.

sensitive and susceptible side of the Indian individual.

But a hopeful word can be said. The unchallenged ascendency of the *mahājans* is wellnigh over. The absence of war and political strife in the last hundred years has induced a sense of security in the people of Gujarat. This has loosened the herd-instinct (which had been in play throughout the insecure times) and has tended to liberate the individual's spirit. The region has been playing its silent part in shaping its own history, by minimizing the effects of the onslaughts of invaders in the history of the people; and its specific contribution to the part that the people are now beginning (since they have once more the opportunity) to take in the development of their region and the fulfilment of the higher demands of life, can never be overrated.

Happily, the vicious circle has at last been broken, and the individual, freeing himself more and more from a hateful yoke, is once again beginning to play his rightful part in working out his own salvation; the region, freed from problems of keeping enemies at a distance, now full of hopes for the free activities of the emancipated human spirit, may begin to give forth its best and to supply the means and mechanism of human development and happiness.

CHAPTER XI.

TOWNS AND CITIES.

Although primarily and characteristically a country of villages, Gujarat has always been noted for its wealthy and magnificent towns and cities. There are not many of them, the chief being Ahmedabad, Baroda, Broach, Kapadvanj and Surat. Ahmedabad was once a very great manufacturing and distributing centre of gold ornaments, and silk and cotton goods.[1] Much has been written in praise of its greatness by former travellers. And even to-day, it is one of the chief centres of the Gujarat mill-industry. Broach is one of the oldest seaports of India.[2] It used to be the chief seat, eighteen hundred years ago, of the commerce then carried on between India and the ports of Western Asia; while in the XVIIth century it sent ships eastward to Java and Sumatra.[3] It still carries on a coasting trade to the south and the north, exporting grain, cotton-seed, tiles, firewood, wheat and cotton, and importing molasses, rice, timber, coal, iron and cocoanuts. There is at present a flourishing cotton spinning and weaving industry there. Surat had, in former times, a very great name; it was a great sea-port, and its trade was enormous. As late as 1801 that trade amounted to over a crore and a half rupees.[4] It used to export cotton to China. Its imports exceed its exports now; and the latter are chiefly agricultural produce and cotton. But due to the new railway lines in the Tapti Valley its land-borne trade is

[1] Bom. Gaz., Vol. IV, pp. 249 ff.
[2] Ibid., Vol. II, p. 422.
[3] Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 551 ff.
[4] Ibid., pp. 69 ff.

increasing.[1] All these three cities are, as may well be expected, centres of trade-guild activity. The part that the *mahājans* have played in helping or hindering the natural and healthy development of these three great centres of trade and industry would make an extremely interesting and valuable chapter in the history of social phenomena.

The cities of Gujarat have not been less known for their arts and crafts. Everybody knew and eagerly asked for the gold and silver-work of Ahmedabad; also its silks, and copper and brass-ware, wood work and blankets. Khaira was famous for calico-printing,[2] and Broach for its fine muslins.[3] And Surat is even to-day supreme in gold and silver brocade-work,[4] although her ship-building industry (started by the Parsis)—once her pride—has long been dead.[5]

Only a few years ago it seemed that the day of these once-great cities was gone, and that they would sink into oblivion, having done their work. But even out of the seeming heap of ashes and dust, they have been arising again like the Phœnix. For, to-day they have become centres of the new industrialism that is slowly spreading over Gujarat. And in this new movement, which was started in Bombay by Parsi enterprise, the Vaishnavites are playing the chief part. Out of the total of over eighty-six cotton-mills in Gujarat, a considerable number are owned by Vanias. The paid-up capital that finances these concerns amounts to over fifty million rupees in Gujarat only.[6]

[1] Cf. Imperial Gaz. of India, Provincial Series. Bombay, Vol. I, p. 349.
[2] Bom Gaz., Vol. III, p. 75.
[3] Imperial Gaz., Provincial Series. Bombay Pres., Vol. I, p. 321.
[4] Bom. Gaz., Vol. II, p. 179.
[5] Ibid., p. 146, 180.
[6] Cf. Report of Bombay Mill-owners' Association, 1923. It may also be noted that of the eighty-one mills in Bombay twenty-two belong to Vaishnavites.

It is important to note that these new industrial ventures were undertaken against the wishes and in defiance of the big city-*mahājans* of Gujarat. They have always sided against innovations which they always feared would encroach upon their power and authority. And the advent of the mill-industry has justified their worst fears. In the first place, trade-unions of mill-workers began to be formed immediately, having for their object the protection of their own interests and the enforcement of their own rights as against the omnipotent grasp of the mill-owners. And after this example, several trade-unions in other trades have been formed. This means that the rich merchants, traders and financiers who had always dominated the *mahājans*, who had always been at the top, are now beginning to be called to account by the representatives of working-men in the city-*mahājans*. One can hardly expect them to welcome such a change—an overthrowing of their sovereignty. And although they are fighting hard, it is a losing battle for them. The new economic forces, mill-industry, railways, telegraphs, quick communications, are too powerful to be resisted long.

The city of Ahmedabad has attracted most of the agricultural labour from the area round about it, with the result that it has created depopulation in the agricultural area. So also has it happened in Broach, Surat, Baroda and other places where there are cotton-mills. Most of the labourers are drawn from the agricultural and craftsman classes. Descendants of the old weaving population (Vankars) have all been absorbed, besides the Bhavsars, Chhipās and Khatris. Even many Sutārs, Pateliās and Kanbis of Kaira have been drawn into it, and are proving efficient weavers in the cotton-mills of Ahmedabad.

The new system of wages, as against the old

system of payment in kind, has proved a very valuable inducement both towards drawing the labourer into this new field, as also of saving him from *gnyāti* customs. For, a man's occupation is fixed from his birth according to *dharma*, and as such is enforced by the *gnyāti*. Any one not following the hereditary profession was at least looked down upon, if not punished by being excommunicated. But now this can be done with impunity, for though the *dharma* injunctions are broken on the one hand, the people find the money earned by the young men very handy for relieving themselves and their families from the grip of the money-lender who is often also their mortgagee. And there is another and very acceptable argument advanced in favour of this change of occupation. The new occupation is better in the sense that it is considered higher than that of his forefathers'; and the effect of this is that these *dharma* breakers, rather than being punished, are perhaps more respected by their elders than those who have yet remained on the land. Besides, the new occupation affords the labourer greater opportunities than before of displaying his skill and thus raising his standard of life by earning more and more as he does more and more skilled work. All this tends to disintegrate the fixed and uncompromising customs and laws that govern the family and the community.

It may be asked why the particular cities and areas round about these are industrialized. The distribution of the cotton-mill industry is not equal throughout the region. The causes are many. All these industrial areas have a strong historical and commercial tradition from the past. Most of them are at the mouths of rivers and are in the heart of the most fertile regions. They, therefore, facilitate transport, and have been from early times, and especially since the introduction of railways, the

natural nerve centres of trade within the region and outside it on all sides. It is, therefore, natural that these should initiate a sort of industrial reform in the region.[1] Our only complaint is that such an uneven distribution of industrialism does great economic harm in a country where, though there is plenty of unemployed and misemployed labour on the whole, it is difficult to manage a redistribution of the agricultural labourer in order to provide for the gaps produced by the emigration of agricultural labourers from areas immediately round about industrial towns.

Just as in the mill-industry, so also in commerce and trade, the Parsis were the pioneers. They began the piece-goods trade with Manchester and carried it on very successfully, though about the same time some Bhatia adventurers from Cutch and Kathiawar came southwards and made small beginnings in the same trade. But as time advanced, and as the Parsi pioneers met with greater success, the Vanias and Bhatias, ever willing to finance, by and by took the whole business into their own hands. All the Hindu firms are owned by Vaishnavites, and they have practically monopolized the piece-goods trade.

Similarly the Vaishnavites have more or less a monopoly of the cotton-trade. One adventurous and thoughtful Vaishnavite family of Surat owns large tracts of land in Uganda where they grow cotton, besides working one of the largest firms in the Bombay cotton-market. And there are many other leading Vaishnava merchants in this trade. So also some of the biggest rice-merchants are Vaishnavites. Such is the case also in the trade in iron and steel. Some of the largest merchants in the presidency are Vaishnavites. Moreover, as

[1] Cf. railway map.

financiers and bankers, the Vaishnavites had a reputation much before the British came to India. This reputation has, on the whole, been kept up by them. The definite manner in which the Vanias affect the agricultural communities has been discussed elsewhere. These and several other activities of the Vaishnavites in and outside Gujarat show what great measure of success the contact with the West has achieved. But more than this has been achieved unconsciously by the fact that trade and industry have affected the social structure of the people engaged in it. And if social customs and family authority do not seem to have changed, at least they are being silently pushed into the remote background as outworn institutions of an old order, with no strength or flexibility to adapt themselves to the impending social revolution.

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After this bird's-eye view of the economic situation we might pause, take stock of the whole and tentatively offer a few suggestions.

It is a rich region we have surveyed, perhaps one of the richest in the world, one that without great difficulty could be turned literally into a "land flowing with milk and honey". Good land, the first requisite for successful agriculture, is already there. But it must be redistributed scientifically before anything else is attempted. A better system of irrigation and modern agricultural machinery must be introduced. And transport facilities must be increased. The great mineral wealth of the district might be very profitably exploited. And in this might be found a safe outlet for the over-population of the agricultural areas. New industries might spring up and thus increase the usefulness and prosperity of Gujarat. There is also room, and

good need, for the revival of the old artistic industries such as wood-carving, gold and silver-work, and the making of fine silks and muslins. They would surely revive the good name of Gujarat and increase it greatly.

According to the *Śāstras* one of the most sacred duties of a Hindu is to protect the cow.[1] It is a scientific maxim. For, the part that the cow plays in the domestic economy of India is truly great. No wonder that in India the cow has become the most sacred animal; no wonder also that a great deal of the poverty and economic confusion and misery rampant in Indian village life is due to the neglect of the cow. The warning of the Rishis has come true. India, therefore, must take heed and make haste to introduce scientific breeding and scientific management of cattle. That the word of the *Śāstras* may be fulfilled, the Hindus must make amends for their past blunders, and nurse back to health and a new life the *gao-mātā* (cow-mother) they have neglected so long and so cruelly. Their own regeneration is sure to follow.

[1] Manava-dharma-shastra, IV, 38, 45, 58-9, 72, etc.

LITERARY AND ARTISTIC REACTIONS

Introductory.
Chap. XII. Literature.
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INTELLECTUAL AND ARTISTIC REACTIONS

Introductory

Thus far it is the sociologist who has been trying to thread the mazes of the Vaishnavite society, employing the method of analysis, studying first one phase, then another. But the sections so far examined are, so to speak, the outer crust; we have seen where the Vaishnavites live, how they live, what they believe, what and how they dream, and how they are organized. We have, so far, been the observers, and the people the observed. Let us now see the people turning their own gaze on themselves. We shall thus be able to see what kind of intellectual reaction and artistic struggle have been set up by the facts, events, beliefs, ideas and ideals narrated in the foregoing chapters. For, in spite of all the vicissitudes and their attendant social and economic evils, in spite of the paralysing grip of caste-laws on the individual, in spite of general illiteracy, this society has not lacked in men and women to tell her, very often in the most exquisite manner, of the evils which have threatened her well-being. Art is born, in a sense, out of the struggle of the better, i.e., the more highly developed, the more highly conscious and sensitive, elements of a society to fight and remove the evils within itself, and thus to save the majority that is led astray into degradation and ruin. Thus, at least to some extent, art owes its existence to evil; such, at least, has been the case in Gujarat. The artistic urge has been expressing itself in literary and artistic endeavours ever since the beginning of the eleventh century in Gujarat, so far as we know. Nor have

the common folk of Gujarat been living an entirely synnomic existence; for they know the best and choicest of their classical poets by heart, they come in close contact with the finest and the most enduring of their artistic heritage during pilgrimages, in fairs, and on such hundred occasions of a socio-religious nature. To this extent, then, they have been living a life of conscious direction, they have been guided by the light thrust upon them.

In order, however, to secure a correct perspective of the intellectual endeavours and achievements of the people as a whole, let us take stock of, if not actually measure, the several considerations, mostly historical in origin, that are inextricably related with the life of the people.

In the first place, let us recall the fact that through centuries Gujarat has been inundated by colonisers from all directions: from the regions north of the Vindhyas; from Kathiawar and Cutch on the west; in a lesser degree through the valleys of the Tāpti, the Narmadā and the Sābarmati from beyond the eastern limits of Gujarat; and the long open sea-coast has not the less attracted colonisers from beyond the seas. Now each of these hordes brought with it, its own language, arts and crafts, poetry, thought-forms, social practices, historical tradition, religious life, and philosophy; and underneath these lay also the hopes, aspirations and ideals they carried within their hearts.

Then consider the overpowering, almost menacing, pressure of an all-India religious tradition and lore, with their language, literature and art in frozen, classical forms, available for use only to a few, with their steel-frames of social organization and control, all for the benefit and upkeep of Brahmanism, if not entirely of the Brahmins. Language and Art had become servile, formalistic instruments to serve the dictates of a stereotyped official religion; their

fundamental functions of criticism, idealization and creation were thus unnecessarily subdued.

Also consider the elements of various cultures assimilated or adopted by the original occupants of Gujarat through commerce by land and by sea. Egypt, Arabia, Africa, Persia, China and other countries beyond the seas have been playing their role in this process through centuries of culture contacts; so also, parts of India to the north, east and south of Gujarat are playing their respective roles in this medley of culture-assimilation.

Add to all this the varied nature of the occupational folk-element native to Gujarat itself. It embraces many occupational traits and their idealizations; the hunter is represented by the Bhil and other tribes now driven into the forests, east and north-east; though the shepherd is found wherever there are grasslands on the upper parts of the river-valleys in the east and north-east of the region, a whole tradition of shepherd culture is transplanted on its soil from Gokul and Mathura on the one hand, and the Kathi culture on the other; peasant culture, at its best and worst, is native to the soil—as native as the hunting traditions used to be, since the clearing of the forests near the coast; and the sea-coast and the river-sides have been rearing races of seamen, fishermen and merchants from times immemorial. The arts and crafts associated with the wonderfully variegated design of occupational activities that each of these cultures, native and foreign, have been developing in history, have also their own excellences and lessons to impart, and react on the intellectual life of the people as a whole.

Then look at the course of political history. We have given sufficient data in the first chapter. They will give an idea of the political confusion and anarchy in the region for centuries; of the efforts of the Gujaratis to live in peace, not only with the

neighbours, but also with foreigners, to the limit of compromise with, and assimilation of, even the baser elements of alien cultures.

This cursory review of the various factors of life in Gujarat will make it abundantly clear what strange meshes of interwoven structures and purposes, occupations and cultures, races and communities, philosophies and religions, have to be unravelled in order to appreciate the underlying tendencies of the intellectual and artistic reactions of the folk of this region.

The progress on the path of intellectual and artistic adventure was slow and difficult at first. In a society hide-bound by tradition, conservative to the marrow, fearing and hating change though conscious of discomfort, there is little scope or encouragement for reformist zeal to be openly manifested or vigorously expressed, and little chance of a radical outcry being received with approval or patience. Up to a certain stage, then, mild protest and shrewd compromise were the only practical means of progressive propaganda. For, after all, in all matters concerning the higher life—literature, art, philosophical speculation, and *Dharma* which permeated and enveloped them all—the power of the Brahmin oligarchy was supreme, unquestioned and practically unquestionable.

But, for the last four centuries, slowly and surely, by self-questioning, self-criticism and self-purification, by external attacks and by other forces that human intercourse must generate, the traditional, the historical and the social barriers are being dissolved, and are thus opening up greater and greater vistas of freedom in thought and action, never dreamt of before. The language of the people's heart is thus fast coming to its own. The native idiom and sentiments are bursting through, especially in modern times, the time-worn, stereo-

typed, classical traditions; the classical forms, language and technique are giving way to newer, apter, more virile forms, in conformity with the insistent demands of the spirit, and the needs of the times.

In this struggle for the freedom of literary and artistic self-expression Vaishnavism has played an important part. Buddhism, Śaivism, Jainism and Vaishnavism are the main currents that have been flowing through centuries of human effort in Gujarat. We have seen how the first three have been giving way to the fourth, with its many sects and varied forms of worship. For various reasons we have detailed elsewhere, Vaishnavism has proved to be the most acceptable, and, in this sense, the most 'workable' of the faiths that have offered themselves to the Gujaratis. So, naturally, each of the Vaishnava sects has been contributing its quota, directly and indirectly, towards the artistic and literary activities, religious and secular, of the people.

Let us now take a review, firstly of the literary, and then of the artistic, contribution of Vaishnava life, labour and thought in Gujarat.

CHAPTER XII

LITERATURE.

In view of the handicaps described in the Introductory part, it will be evident that the matter and form of the early literary activities of Gujarat were but borrowed from those prevalent in the classical Sanskrit literature. The practical forms current in Sanskrit literature were more or less copied. Most of the subjects treated had their roots either in the religious scriptures of Hinduism or in the mythological lore round which the folk-life of the Hindus had been gathering. Thus, for all practical purposes, the early language and literature of Gujarat served to illustrate, explain, strengthen and further the ends of Brahmanical (or Jain) teachings and practices, with a view perhaps to localize them, to adapt them to the genius of the region and its peoples.

As we go through the large mass of Gujarati literature, we notice a continuous struggle by writers belonging to all *Varnas* and *Gnyātis*, to get rid of the octopus of spurious Brahmanism, and establish in its place, a more natural *mata* and *mārga*. This is also true, up to a point, regarding Jainism. Thus the unnaturalness and unsuitability of religious doctrines and practices, and the consequent discord between religion and life is shown up by one writer or another from time to time. Any number of blows are aimed at breaking the fetters of the caste system upheld by *Dharma*. And in a variety of ways the reformation of the church, the freedom of social intercourse, and the emancipation of the individual spirit to choose and follow its own *dharma*, are hinted at, taught, and

portrayed. These are the three fundamental chords that bring forth the music of the heart-throbs of the Gujaratis in living words and sentiments, now personal, now social, now religious. Therefore, though Gujarati literature has generally served to further the cause of Brahmanism, it has, from time to time, given apt and timely warnings to man to halt and to resurvey, even to vitalize and rejuvenate forms, beliefs and ideas, practices, theories and institutions, social, religious and personal, that tended towards fossilization. In this sense, Gujarati literature has come to be a real Criticism of Life. It has served as a critique of the official religion, and the social system that upheld it; it has been holding the beacon-light of criticism to the masses of the people to enable them to hold their own against the social wrongs and religious oppressions that have been, from time to time, threatening their existence as members of a society of free men and women.

In this rôle, through its evergrowing, intricate masses and mazes of facts and sentiments, Gujarati literature has all along been giving vivid pictures of living thoughts, customs and *mores* of the people of Gujarat.

Now, though this self-expression asserts itself regarding the materials of the literature of Gujarat, the Gujaratis have not developed and would not, perhaps, could not, develop independent forms of expression through centuries of literary endeavour. It is only during comparatively recent times that the language and literature of Gujarat have become a vehicle of the living human spirit, real, sincere, earnest and free; since then it is bodying forth the longings of the living spirit of freedom, personal, social and religious; perhaps it supplies the spirit to the body that will build up the life and labour of future Gujarat.

Let us now say, at the outset, that little is known of the language and literature of Gujarat before the eleventh century A.D. It may be safely presumed that up to the eleventh century most writing was done in Sanskrit, the language of the learned. From the sixth to the tenth century the spoken languages of Gujarat were mainly *Apabhramśa* in its different forms, which developed considerably during the sixth and seventh centuries in the region in which the *Brajbhāshā* prevails now; and though it may also be that some of the other *Prakrits* may also have been spoken in Gujarat, these have left no trace on the Gujarati language that developed thereafter.[1] Early in the twelfth century the Jain scholar Hemchandra wrote in Sanskrit as well as in *Apabhramśa*.[2] And between the twelfth and the fifteenth century, one single widely extensive language, called 'the latest *Apabhramśa*'[3] by Mr. Divetia, and 'Old Gujarati' or '*Apabhramśa*' by Diwan Bahadur K. H. Dhruva, was used all over modern Gujarat and Rajputana. Thereafter the process of regional differentiations gradually split this language up into Gujarati, Marwari and other language groups. Thus the language now called Gujarati is of a later origin. It has been shaping itself into a dynamic medium of descriptive, reflective and æsthetic life-expressions of the people of Gujarat since the time of Narsinha Mehta, Mirānbai and Bhālan. We may note in passing that the influence of the languages of the several peoples who came in contact with Gujarat through the centuries that follow has considerably influenced the Gujarati language. But that has in no way affected the genius of the language, beyond giving

1 Divetiā, N.B.: Gujarāti Language and Literature, Vol. I. p. 40
2 Ibid., p. 32.
3 Ibid., p. 40.

it its opportunity of absorbing foreign elements to its own general advantage.

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries witnessed a great spiritual awakening all over India. The story of Rāma was restated and revalued by Tulsidāsji for this new epoch; Chaitanya and Vallabhāchārya started their missions of *Bhakti* and service; and the new enlightenment brought in its train the birth of many Vaishnavite *Sampradāyas*. Rāmānanda's school had its poet in Tulsidāsji and others; Chaitanya's teachings were sung by poets like Lalitkishore, Kundanlāl and others; and Vallabhāchārya's teachings were sung by the galaxy of eight poets, Surdās, Kumbhandās and six others. Tulsidās sang in his Khadi dialect; and the eight wrote their poetry in the *Brajabhāshā*.

These poems are called *Kirtans*; they are mostly songs of praise. Tulsidās has written *Kirtans* in praise of Rāma; Surdās and others have sung in praise of Krishna. In the Vallabhi church these hymns of praise are sung everyday by the devotees, at each of the eight daily services. During the morning service when the God is awakened, songs describing the freshness of the morning, the characteristic features of the seasons, songs displaying the loving care of Mother Jasodā, the fulness of the love of the *Swāminijees*, the desperate haste of Krishna's companions to go out with the cows to the fields, the cows' impatient lowings to leave their pen and go out to the fields in company with Krishna—all these form the subject-matter of the hymns sung during the earlier part of this service. When offerings are made, the *Swāminijees* sing of the various delicacies offered, and of their sweetness in all its varieties, in rare music couched in expressions of the most intimate and loving character.[1]

[1] Pushtimārgiya-pada-samgraha, part III, pp. 17, 36, 39.

In the second service, Mother Jasodā and others present sing songs of joy and hope, while bathing their little One, while clothing Him, while adorning Him, while garlanding Him, while putting the mark on His forehead. And when the Boy is fully dressed, Mother Jasodā and her companions sing most beautiful hymns regarding His wonderful looks, and the fineries which deck Him, while holding a mirror before the little One, as if to prove their domestic accomplishments, as if to take His approval and consent that everything was done according to the best canons of taste. The shepherd-boy is now entrusted with His flute by Jasodā, with a song of departure.[1]

The Boy now goes to the cow-stall with His companions. Here they milk the cows, eat the cream and live in the joys of the labours of which shepherds sing. Each one of these incidents is related in a number of pastoral songs.[2]

The party now starts for the pastures. And, to the tunes of Krishna's flute the gay company reach their destination. Here they spread out in different groups, each following its herd of cows. And as the strains of the music are wafted through the pastures on the noonday breezes of the forest, these scattered groups of cowherds pick up the tune and sing in unison and harmony, till the whole area resounds with melodies led by the flute of Krishna.

At home, soon after His departure, Mother Jasodā and others in the village who love Him, yet cannot join Him in the fields, engage themselves in preparing little delicacies for His noonday meal. So these women sing merrily as they go about their tasks, anxiously reminding themselves of His likes and dislikes, recollecting His comments on the

[1] Op. cit., pp. 30, 36.
[2] Ibid., pp. 94-95.

taste of this course or that sweetness,—all, in order to do their very best, in order that He may be pleased, in order to receive His acceptance of their devoted love.

And so, before midday, with these treasures of their labour carefully wrapped and covered, some of them leave home for the fields in search of their little One. And they go along their way in the midst of the hum of the idylls that recount sweet memories of the banks, the bower and hiding places where He once misled them, the narrow paths with the broad vistas that opened out to them, and the strange fruits and berries which once He picked and ate as He went along. With such loads of food and jungle berries they approach the Lord Krishna and with hearts full of the joy of giving, they spread out all these things before Him, with, as if, their body, mind and wealth hidden within them, with the beats of their hearts hovering over them, even as mothers do all over the world. For He was waiting, anxiously waiting for them, for these. Entertained by music and song, by joyful jest and quick repartee, Krishna distributes the food to his companions who eat like little children, whatsoever they like, without restraint. And Krishna chooses what His fancy takes.

On holidays and anniversaries, and during winter, on the other hand, Krishna and His companions are persuaded to stay at home, at least within the limits of the village. He goes out to play with His companions and the cows. And at midday Nandarāiji calls Him home for His meal from the midst of his companions in the vicinity. Jasodāji serves the various courses of food to the little One singing of the taste of each, and persuading the little One to help Himself,[1] thus somehow trying

[1] Pushtimārgiya-pada-samgraha, pt. III, pp. 106, 114, 126.

to divert His mind from His herds. His mouth is washed, He is served with dessert of *pān-bidi* (betel-leaf, etc.); he is now garlanded and persuaded to stay away from the heat of the sunny fields; suitable toys and games are, therefore, offered to Him; a bed is prepared for Him; He is thus humoured with the offer of the *murli* (flute), and the shepherd's staff, with the object of keeping him at home from the sun. And while playing, while being duped into the hundred strategies that those present can invent, the divine cow-boy goes to sleep like little children all over the world. At each of these stages are sung songs with great ardour and devotion.

The Lord now leaves the fields (or the home) in the afternoon for the foot of the *Girirāj* mountain. Here he meets his dear companions, the Bhil girls called *Pulindijis*; they offer Him fruits and berries, sing to Him songs of their love for Him,[1] of His callous disregard of them only the day before, of their hesitation to trust Him for the future, and of the burning hopes, of their hearts' desire never to be away from Him. He, in His turn, explains away the several complaints with a joke, with a look, with a loving smile, with a kindly pat, with a hopeful word, with a counter query, with a seeming lie, —all so sweet, so convincing, so hope-giving, so divine. The clouds of the dark past are thus scattered by his loving word; and the harmony of their reunion reigns supreme. The most intimate and personal relations, the love-making and the love-embrace, are sung by devotees with great ardour and fervour.

Now comes the evening service, with its offerings of jungle berries and sweetmeats, accompanied by songs and dance of the *Gopis*, spending the sunset hours of rest and play, after the day's toil, in

[1] Pushtimārgiya-pada-samgraha, pt. III, p. 142.

fun and frolic. And as the Boy reaches the village Jasodā performs an *ārti* before He enters the portals of the home. Soon after He is served with cream.

The boy must now prepare for His evening meal and night's rest; so He is undressed; His night suit is put on. He takes his supper now: Mother Jasodā prepares the food; the *Gopikas* serve the several courses in plates of gold. Mother Jasodāji persuades the little Darling to choose what He may; milk is now offered and the mother says, "Drink this milk, my heart, and make thy mother happy".[1] *Pān-bidi* is now offered; the flute is once more in His hands; an *ārti* is offered to Him while Jasodā sings of His lotus countenance, of His o'erflowing kindness to His *bhaktas*, and complains that, instead of His whole being and divinity He should merely give a glimpse of His face.[2] Their Lord now retires to rest; the *Gopis* sing songs of fear and hope: fear, for the dread of separation through the dark hours of the lonesome night; hope, for perchance, He may slip out of His bed in order to cheer up His devotees by revealing His whole being and divinity to them. In the midst of such mixed emotions they comfort their breaking hearts with the hope at least of the return of the morn when all will be as it was, once more.[3]

Now all these incidents and sentiments are literally dramatised. The whole day is set up, as if, with the acts and scenes of a living drama, or an opera, or a miracle play, wherein the daily doings of Krishna and his companions are rehearsed with a sense of reality and faith that cannot but be compared to the reality and faith we attached to our toys and playthings in the nursery, when we were little children.

[1] Op. cit., pp. 175–179, 189, 193–195.
[2] Ibid., pp. 195.
[3] Ibid., pp. 215–223.

But these daily services do not exhaust the subject-matter and sentiments of the *Kirtans*. There are *Kirtans* sung on festive occasions also, all through the year. And there are seasonal songs.[1] All these are connected with one or the other achievements of the Lord. These songs are sometimes of an esoteric character. The birthdays of the four chief incarnations of Vishnu, viz., *Janmāshtami*, *Nrisimha-chaturdaśi*, *Rāmanavmi*, and *Vāman-dwādaśi* are celebrated in songs and ceremonies.[2] And the birthdays of the founder of the *Sampradāya* and his descendants also provide occasions for song and festivity.[3]

Let us remember that most *Kirtans* are songs of joy, not of sorrow, repentance, or pain. The latter type of songs are called *Bhajans*, and are never sung in temples in the presence of the God.[4] For, it is believed that the presence of the God purifies the devotee and brings Him face to face with divine bliss. *Viraha* (separation from the Lord) is indicative only of the frailty of man; in this state of desperation the devotee thinks so much of himself; but as soon as the reunion (*Sānnidhya*) is restored the joy everlasting for which he thirsts, dispels all inhibition, all fear, all misery. Therefore, all wails of grief, separation and pain are sung away from His presence, when God does not reveal His kindly tender-hearted care to the devotee.

Let us now turn to Gujarati literature, properly so called. A general remark may first be made. A birds-eye view of this literature will easily lead one to recognize that though the *Rāmāyana*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purānas* have been providing material

[1] Cf. Desai, L.: Kirtan Samgraha, pp. 266–69, 272–304, 483–93, 557–653.
[2] Ibid., pp. 1–82, 554–56, 495–500.
[3] Ibid., pp. 428–84, 505–50.
[4] Cf. Pushti-mārgiya Pada Samgraha, III, pp. 224–44.

for the poets of Gujarat for centuries, the *Bhāgvat Purāna* in particular has been most consistently drawn upon as the treasure-house of stories, incidents and sentiments which supply the fundamental material for the workmanship of poets and artists. For all practical purposes, it may be said, that if we remove all the literary work inspired by the *Bhāgvat Purāna*, little will remain which may be worth the name of literature at all. Next to the *Bhāgvat*, at whatever distance, comes the *Rāmāyana*. But of these two currents of the old traditions that have been influencing the life and literature of Gujarat, the *Rāmāyana* is of lesser importance, so far as influence on literary production is concerned.

It must also be noted that the greater part of Gujarati literature, whether history, legend, story, religion or philosophy is what might be called *Bhakti* (i.e. devotional) literature.

The sources of this *Bhakti* literature of Gujarat can be traced to three fundamental currents: (1) the folk-religion of India as recorded in the *Purānas*, especially in the *Bhāgvat Purāna*, (2) the enormous *Bhakti* lore inherited from Saints all over India, and (3) the teachings of *Sampradāyas*, and other *Dharma* teachings.

The first of these currents must have begun very early in history, during the times of the decline of Buddhism. The second current is the logical consequence of the first, in terms of the effort of individual teachers throughout India to keep the torch of *Dharma* alive in the midst of the human groups under their influence. And the third, started by Kumārilla Bhatt and Śankarāchārya, is but an indication of attempts at standardizing *Dharma* and life, by gathering the two dynamic elements into one focus, and thus restating the old Brahmanism in terms of *Sampradāyas*.

Before Narsinha Mehtā was born in 1414, a number of historical works like *Visaldeva-ras*, *Jagdhuśānāpad*, Rajśekhar's *Vastupāl-rās*, and Śridhar's *Ramanamall Chanda*, folk-tales and stories like *Mayanrekhārās* of Hursevak, and legendary and historical works like Śridhar's *Darśana*, were part of the literary treasures of Gujarat, in addition to the Jain treasures with which we are not concerned.

The purely literary tradition in Gujarat, as we understand it in modern times, started with Narsinha Mehta 1414–1481,[1] Mirābai 1403–1470,[2] and Bhālana 1439–1539.[3] Narsinha Mehtā was a Nagar Brahmin of Junagadh. In early life, due to several reasons, he worshipped Śiva. He has written his own biography in which he relates how he asked Śiva to grant him the very thing Śiva held dear to himself.[4] And Śiva is said to have initiated the *Bhakta* poet into the mysteries of the *Rāslīlā* of Krishna with the sixteen thousand *Gopis*. This was the point of his conversion to the worship of Krishna. As a devotee of Krishna, who is traditionally known to accept the devotion and love of any human being readily, Narsinha broke the *Dharmas* of his own *Gnyati*, which is considered the highest of Brahmin castes in Gujarat; thus he joined the untouchables in singing and dancing in praise of his beloved Krishna. In justification of this he said "where such (caste) distinctions exist there is no God; for He looks equally upon all, and all are equal in His eyes ".[5] Such conduct of Narsinha Mehta provoked the members of his caste considerably; they therefore decided not to allow Narsinha to dine with them. And it is said that in a

[1] Narsinha Mehtā Krit Kāvya Sangraha, ed. by I. S. Desai, introduction, pp. 24–44.
[2] Milestones, p. 28.
[3] Milestones, p. 43.
[4] Narsinha Mehtā Krit Kāvya Sangraha, p. 74.
[5] Ibid., p. 417.

caste dinner his fellow-caste men and women were horrified to find 'untouchables' sitting in their midst. This illusion, it was supposed, was due to their prohibiting Narsinha to join the dinner; so, as soon as he was invited to join them, the illusion disappeared.[1] Another story is told of the poet: the Śaivite ruler of Junāgadh, Rā Mandlik, accused the poet of hypocrisy, and cheating, and required him to furnish evidence of the reality of his God Krishna. It is said that the helpless Narsinha prayed for Krishna's succour; and Krishna is said to have presented Himself corporeally to garland His devotee. Other incidents like these are sung about this *Bhakta* poet by Premānanda, where Krishna comes to the rescue of the *Bhakta* at the time of his children's marriage,[2] by accepting a bill of exchange written by Narsinha to Śāmalśa, that is to say, Krishna. Narsinha Mehtā has sung the praises of Krishna in his description of the mysteries of *Rāslīlā*. Thus his *Śrangārmālā*, *Vasantvilās* and *Hindola*, *Rāsa-sahasrapadī*, *Chāturī-chhatrīsī*, *Bāl-līlā*, and *Dāna-līlā* are replete with vivid descriptions and subtle interpretations of the Lord's divine play. In these, His delicate gait, His charming manners, the pastoral aspects of His life, His pranks on the banks of the Jamnā, and many other incidents connected with the *Gopis* and the cows are given as living testimonies of the realities of the poet's spiritual journeys amongst the *Go-lok*.

In his *Bāl-līlā*, the child Krishna is described in relation with His mother and the *Gopis*. Descriptions of the obstinacy of the child wanting his mother to bring down the moon, of the joyous dances before Jasodā, of the dialogue between Jasodā and the *Gopis* regarding their complaint against

[1] Op. cit., p. 44.

[2] Ibid., p. 57.

Krishna's mischief, are couched in verses of great beauty and comeliness. His *Rāsa-sahasrapadī*, *Shoḍaśī Chāturi*, *Suratsangrām* contain *kirtans* that glorify the deeds of Krishna. Now and again Narsinha describes Krishna as speaking through him, inspiring him, and directing every moment of his life, in songs of great religious depth and fervour. In this way the poet reveals himself as completely surrendered to the will of Krishna. Sometimes, however, he seeks to solve philosophical problems dealing with the mysteries of life. Thus in his morning songs (*Prabhātiyān*), Narsinha sees the Universe dancing with the universe of one's soul[1]; or he sees the Lord in the tree as seed and in the seed as tree[2]; in these ways the poet proclaims: "Until thou hast searched and found out the essence in thyself, all efforts at mastery are but vain".[3] In other moods the poet is indifferent to happiness and misery,[4] and at his best he proclaims that there is no difference between the Creator and His creation.[5]

One may then say that Narsinha Mehtā's writings reveal the attitude and doctrines propounded in the *Daśamaskhanda* of the *Bhāgvat Puran*. And in his *Sudāmācharitra*, one may even see the *Bhakta* Narsinha as he himself sought to become in his heart-rending description of the labours and devotion of *Bhakta* Sudāmā. In most tender verses Narsinha sings of the Truth, the Way, and the Life as revealed to him in the *Rāslīlā*, which is detailed in the *Daśamaskhanda*. No wonder that Dayārām called him the precursor of Vallabhachārya.[6] His poetry is part of the best treasures of the people of Gujarat for all times. The poet is the darling of young and old, rich and

[1] Op. cit., p. 486.
[2] Ibid., p. 485.
[3] Ibid., p. 486.
[4] Ibid., p. 494.
[5] Ibid., p. 495.
[6] Dayārām krit Kāvya Maṇimālā, II, p. 85.

poor, the wise and the simple. Mahātmā Gāndhī, another great Vaishnava force of all time, has been quickened to thought and action by the poetry of Narsinha Mehtā.

It is surprising therefore why Narsinha's poetry has not become part of the Divine Services of Vaishnava sects, especially of the Vallabhi sect. In fact only one *bhajan* of Narsinha Mehtā finds a place in Vaishnavite worship; it is sung on a certain occasion, once a year, at the Vallabhite temple of Surat.

Let us now consider Mīrabai, another great force of the *Bhakti* literature of Gujarat. More than Narsinha Mehtā, she has been an all-India figure for centuries. She was a Rajput princess; and her parents are said to have been Vaishnavas. While yet young she is said to have thought that she was married to Giridharlāl (a form of Krishna). And much against her will, it is said that she was married to a Śaivite king named Bhojrāj of Mewar.[1] This led to unhappiness in married life; she became a widow when yet twenty; so she left her home and her all to join the band of Krishna devotees. She has sung in praise of her Lord Krishna in poems of immense lyrical value, human tenderness and love. Her life may be said to be a spiritual romance. All this upset her brother-in-law, the Rāṇā, who is said to have sent her a cup of poison which she drank in the name of her Lord. And, she says, nothing happened to her. In fact, as we have already stated, she considered herself to be the bride of Krishna himself, and therefore thought that she could not be married to another.[2] So she requested the Rāṇā to abdicate his throne and join her

[1] I am obliged to Mr. M. R. Majumdar for this material.

[2] Hun to parṇi Śāmaliā varni sāthéré, in Vyāsji nī Vato by Raichura, p. 3.

and her fellow devotees in their worship of Krishna.[1] And on another occasion, when the Rānā made attempts to gain her confidence by offering her jewels and gorgeous raiment, she spurned these offers and said, "I would rather die in a hut unadorned and devoid of earthly treasures; for my crown of glory is borne on the brow of Him in whose hands my heart rests, my Krishna, the Lord of my heart".[2] Let us not misunderstand this attitude of Mirābai as indicative of the *jārbhāv* of the *Gopis* as *Sakhis*; Mirābai's attitude was that of the married wife and life-companion of Krishna. In poems like

Govindo prāṇ amāro ré,[3]
and *Kahañ gayo re pélo morli-wālo ré*,[4]
and *Hañ ré mārā Śam kāle maljo ré*,[5]
and *Mukhadā ni māyā lāgi ré*,[6]
and *Araja karé chhé Mirā rañkdi*,[7]
and *Bolmā, bolmā, bolmā ré*,[8]
and *Prém ni, prém ni, prém ni ré*,[9]

she gives songs of heart-felt love for Krishna which have gained an immortal place in the literature of India. Three hundred years have passed since Mirā's day, and we may safely say that no poet, male or female, of Gujarat has achieved the glory of such verse as hers.

Many a time, Mirābai has sung as the mother of Krishna, as in her "*Gopāl pyāre māgat mākhan roti*"; or she sometimes plays the role of a *dāsi* as in "*Mane chāker rākho ji*".[10] Mirābai

1 I. S. Desai: Brihat Kavya Dohan, p. 84.
2 Brihat Kavya Dohan, p. 884. The same story has been sung by Narsinha Mehtā cf. his Kavya Sangraha, p. 72.
3 Brihat Kavya Dohan by Desai I. C., Vol. I, p. 884.
4 " " p. 882.
5 " " Vol. II, p. 842.
6-7 Brihat Kavya Dohan, Vol. II, p. 842.
8-9 Brihat Kavya Dohan, Vol. I, p. 883.
10 Gujarat, Vol. 14, No. 1, article on Mirābai nu Pad by Majmumdar, Manjulal, p. 55.

may have been affected by the teachings of Madhavāchārya.[1] She was a great traveller, and she may have been affected even by the teachings of Chaitanya.

As in the case of Narsinha Mehtā, Mirābai's poems are not sung in temples. But they have found a permanant place in the homes of Gujarat. Early every morning women chant Mirā's verses, which sacred treasure is securely handed down from generation to generation of the womanhood of Gujarat. Perhaps the verses which describe the poet's struggle to assert her longing in religious life as against the subtle shackles of family, caste and *Dharma* answer the folk's most ardent aspirations.

Another contemporary of Narsinha Mehtā was Bhālana (1439–1539). It is well-nigh certain that he was a Modh Brahmin of Patan. His early works suggest that he may have been a devotee of Śiva and Rāma. This seems rather puzzling. But let us not forget that though, as a Brahmin, Bhālana may have worshipped Śiva, he was bound to worship Rāma as the *Ishta-deva* of the Modh Community. Anyhow his later works are definitely in favour of Rāma-worship, as revealed in his "Raghunāth (i.e., Rāma) is Bhālana's God," which refrain he repeatedly uses in his poems.

His works reveal what an uphill task the poet took upon himself to perform with the help of his literary talents. For he had to fight his way on behalf of a Puranic revival, so natural to the genius of the region and its people, against the prevailing teachings and practices of Jainism and Śaivism which were oppressing the soul of man in Gujarat. As a Purāni (reciter of the Scriptures) he used to pour the living music of his verse and teachings in the hearts of men and women who gathered together to

[1] Pushti Bhaktisudha, Vol. V, p. 169, Moolchand Teliwala.

drink deep from the recitals of his *Kādambari* and *Nalākhyān*, his *Rāma-bālacharitra* and *Krishna-vishti*, his *Jālandharākhyān* and *Dhruvakhyān*, his *Rāma-vivāha* and other works.

As one dives deep into the heart of Bhālana's poems, one finds that his art, sentiments and love of God are born of the breath and flavour that rule the spirit of the *Bhagvat*, mainly perhaps of the *Daśama-skandha*. For instance, in his dialogue between Śiva and Bhildi, or in his narration of the childhood of Rāma, the poet makes supreme efforts to make us believe (perhaps to persuade himself to believe) that the richest and the most beautiful we can predicate of Krishna and the *Gopis* would be just as true of Śiva, Bhildi and Rāma. In fact the fullness of his heart bursts best into the songs regarding Krishna,[1] wherein the directness of the visions of the *Bhagvat* is not hidden behind the art of the poet and seer.

We may now take note of Padmanābh, a poet of no mean merit, who wrote his *Kahānada De Prabhandha* in 1456.[2] The heroic exploits of a Vaishnava King named Kahanada De form the subject-matter of this poem. This choice of subject is a departure from the accepted traditions which tend, as we have already said, to make literature subservient to religion and religious lore. Anyhow in verses of great force and vigour Padmanābh portrays the glories of the Rajput life and traditions of the fifteenth century.

Then consider Bhima (1484),[3] a Modh Brahmin, perhaps of Prabhās Pātān,[4] who is known for his

[1] For instances cf. Jāvo Nanda nā gowāliā, tun śenun māgé ḍán
or, Chhabilā Nanda nā re, tāri chālno chatko jo.
or, Bāi ó Kānudo, amrut pé ati miṭho re.

[2] Jhaveri, K.M. : Milestones, p. 48.

[3] Jhaveri, K.M. : Milestones, p. 46.

[4] Munshi, K.M. : Gujarati Sāhitya, pt. V, p. 320 ; also Jani, A. B. : Introduction to Hari-līlā, p. 5.

two works called *Hari-lílā-shoḍaś-kalā* and *Prabodha-prakāś*. His *Harī-lílā* delineates the story of the *Bhagwat* from the Sanskrit version of Bop-dev, as the poet acknowledges.[1] The poem is also composed in a variety of melodies (*rāgas*); this shows that Bhima was also a musician. His *Prabodha-prakāś* is a *Prakrit* version of Krishnamiśra's *Prabodha-chandrodaya*, which was a favourite drama repeatedly performed in the Vaishnava temple at Dwārkā during the poet's life-time. From both these poems it is evident that the poet was not only a Vaishnava, but that he worked for the Vaishnavite cause, in that he wrote his *Prakrit* versions, as he says, for the edification and culture of the Śudra and womankind,[2] both of whom are denied the right to learn the scriptures by the School of Śankarāchārya. And though his praise of Śankar and Pārvati in the *Prabodha-prakāś*[3] may raise doubts about his religious following, his repeated references to his visits to the Vaishnavite shrine of Dwārkā,[4] and his declared love and devotion for Govinda,[5] along with the other evidence already given by us, leave little room for doubt regarding his Vaishnavite following.

With these facts in favour of the poet, one is naturally surprised why he has not become a favourite of the people. And it is suggested that this is mainly due to the absence in his poems of that humility, sense of separation and real heart-rhythms of the true *Bhakta*, which are so apparent in the verses of *Bhakta* poets like Narsinha and Dayārām.

Another poet, Nākar (1504–84),[6] was a Deesāwāl Vāniā of Baroda, who dedicated his life to the

[1] Kāvya Dohan, Vol. IV, p. 152.
[2] Harilīlā, Introduction, by A. B. Jani, p. 120.
[3] Ibid., p. 114.
[4] Kāvya Dohan, Vol. IV, p. 43.
[5] Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 43.
[6] Brihat Kāvya Dohan, Vol. VIII, Introduction, p. 36.

singing and praising of Hari, as he says in his *Dhruvākhyān*.[1] His writings like *Hariśchandrākhyān*, and *Śiva-vivāh* reveal his great intimacy with the *Puranic* lore. Like all *Ākhyān* writers, Nākar vividly portrays the social life and manners of his times in the language of the people; and though an humble, gentle, cultured Vāniā, the poet criticises the evils of his times like bigamy, polygamy, tyranny over widows, and ill-treatment of the womankind.[2] Nākar wrote not for material profits or for fame; his poems were dedications to the Lord Krishna, in whose name, like a true Vaishnava, he wrote for the edification of the Śudra and womankind, whom, as we have said, the Śaivites denied the knowledge and study of the scriptures.

In the middle of the sixteenth century flourished a Vaishnavite poet called Māndan,[3] a Bandhārā of Śirohi. He wrote *Prabodhabatrisi*, which consists of twenty *Chhappās* on thirty-two subjects, social and religious. His writings reveal that he is a critic of his times. As a master of proverbs, weaving them in his verses with great skill and naturalness, he is the chief representative of a line of poets who have used the proverbial philosophy of Gujarat not only to represent and justify, but also to castigate and improve, the social and religious beliefs and practices of their times; Akhā follows him, and Śamal makes a successful use of this device in his *Angad-vishti*. Though he was a devoted Vaishnava, he did not spare the weaknesses of his sect, as is evident from many a passage in his poem.[4] As was the practice of his

[1] Op. cit., p. 32.
[2] Ibid., p. 51.
[3] I am indebted to Mr. S. C. Raval, the editor of *Prabodha-batrisi*, for the material used in this section. Cf. Vyās, M. B., and Raval, S. C.: *Prabodha-batrisi*, Bombay, 1930.
[4] E.g., cf. Ibid., p. 5, 11, 30, and 76.

time, Māndan is said to have roamed about from place to place, singing his *Chhappas* and other *Bhajans.*

We may also make a passing reference to Vachharāj of Jambusar (1544),[1] who was a follower of the *Kabir-panth.* He wrote tales of love and affection in his *Ras-manjari.* This poem gives realistic pictures of the innate tendencies of the fair sex to resort to subtle devices that serve to fulfil the attainment of their sweet designs. Naturally, though secular in their vein, these tales became very popular with the agricultural and labouring classes for whom they were written. And, as Diwan Bahadur Jhaveri suggests, the poem "foreshadows the line which Śāmal Bhat was to follow so brilliantly later".[2]

Gopāldās (1570–75) of Rupāl, in Ahmedabad District, devoted all his life to the service and propagation of the *Vallabhi Sampradāya.* It is said that he was born mute, and that Vithalnāthji, the then head of the *Vallabhi* sect at Gokul, not only cured him of his disability by a miracle, but also blessed him with the vision divine (*Darśan*) of the *Rāsa-līlā* of Krishna. And out of gratefulness Gopāldās dedicated his all to Vithalnāthji, and to the cause of the *Sampradāya.*[3]

Gopāldās has written two poems called *Bhakti-piyusha* and *Vallabhākhyān.* In the former, which yet remains unpublished, the poet narrates his vision of the *Rāsa-līlā* of Krishna. In the *Vallabhākhyān*[4] he sings, with a believer's heart, of the glory of Vallabhāchārya and his family, especially of his patron and Guru Vithalnāthji. A considerable part of this poem is devoted to the description and appreciation of the system of Divine Service

[1] Kāvya Dohan, Vol. IV, p. 199.
[2] Milestones, p. 53.
[3] This material is taken from Baso-bāvana Vaishnava ni vārtā.
[4] Brihat Kāvya Dohan, Vol. VIII.

introduced by Vithalnāthji. The whole poem is adapted to suitable musical melodies, in which it is sung by Vaishnavites while they perform the *sevā* (service), not only in Gujarat, but all over India. But it is not yet introduced as part of the Service before the shrines in the temples of the *Mahārājās*. Besides, the poet gives able expositions of the fundaments of the beliefs and practices of Vallabhism, with great ease and lucidity. His sentiments and language have the softness and delicacy of the flower; the sweet and intricate melody of his verse reveals the throbs of the woman's heart that winds through descriptions, experiences and principles, rising to flights of imagination and fancy equal to any of the high-fliers in the world of poets. But he has neither the richness, strength and self-possession of a master-seer like Narsinha, nor the sublime moods, masculine vigour, and piercing analysis of a poet-philosopher like Akhā. He is an ardent devotee of his *Sampradāya*,—a mouth-piece of his Master, an humble follower and poet of his sect. His language, as his sentiment, is peculiarly his own, unlike any other poet of Gujarat; he follows none in form, style or sentiment; and none has followed him either.

Due to the *Sāmpradāyic* affinities, Gopāldās was intimately influenced by the beliefs, thought, language, and sentiments of the *Vraja* culture. And yet we can hardly discern any trace of these in the poet's writing so far as the use of words from the *Vraja-bhāshā* is concerned; on the contrary, due perhaps to his study of the Subodhiniji and this cultural contact, in his use of Sanskrit words in Gujarati the poet imparts them the crisp and easy flow of the *Vraja-bhāshā*.

As we have already said, due to his position in the *Sampradāya*, the poet is a favourite all over India where Vallabhism flourishes. We have now

only to add that this has necessitated commentaries on his works in several languages. This is, perhaps, a unique honour, not enjoyed by any other poet of Gujarat. In Gujarat, on the contrary, Gopāldās is known to a few outside the *Vallabhi* sect, perhaps because a prophet is rarely welcome in his own homeland.

Vasto (1597), a Levā Kanbi of Borsad, lived and died in Barhānpur. He wrote *Subhadrā-harana*, *Śukadevākhyān* and *Sādhu-chritra*. He is said to have wandered all over India with ascetics. Anyhow, his works are replete with tendencies towards asceticism and apathy for the material and social joys of human life. His *Subhadrā-harana*, for instance, reveals his positive dislike of and contempt, if not mockery and hatred, for the normal human being's concern with worldliness and the things of the world. His *Śukadevākhyān* is written in a vein of renunciation after the style of Narsinha.

Then consider Bhima's son Vishnudās (1613), a Nagar Brahmin of Cambay, who wrote *Ākhyāns* along the traditions started by Bhālana. Incidents from the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* are used by the poet, like other writers of *Ākhyāns*; he also wrote a life of Narsinha Mehtā. Throughout his poems the poet blends contemporary material out of the life and manners of the people, in the portraiture of the persons and events in his poems.[1] But Vishnudās reveals a poet's heart in the lullaby wherein Mother Jasodā sings to her darling of the story of Rāma[2]; this lullaby reminds us of the sweet music and joy of Surdas' lullabies and nativity songs.

We now come to the poets of the seventeenth century. The wars of the sixteenth century, which ended in the Mogul supremacy, are now over; and

[1] E.g., when he describes Krishna with the Parekh's turban on, while He accepts Narsinha's bill of exchange.

[2] Sayāji Sāhityamālā, Vol. 45, p. 58.

for all practical purposes the country becomes free from political and dynastic troubles, at least till after the times of Shāh Jehān. Therefore, man could naturally afford to turn his gaze upon his own doings, and look backwards and forwards for new opportunities of living, a thing he could not do during times of wars and political upheavals. This opportunity to remove the dross that had gathered for about a century, and to reinstate the pure gold once more in its legitimate position, in order that the human material of Gujarat may be lifted up from the synnomic level to which man and his work had gone down, up to a level of syntelic endeavour and yearning, even perhaps achievement. So, although the poets and philosophers of this age build on the foundations of the old, they build structures out of their very life-blood, structures that serve to foster and nourish the sentiments, aspirations, ideas and ideals of the impatient humanity that longed to live its own life of free choice and self-direction. So also during this period arise three great voices in Gujarat: Akhā, Premānanda and Sāmal. The first cleared the jungle of superstitions and religious practices, and enunciated a philosophy of criticism much needed for the vital necessities of a spiritual revival; the second, picking up whatever of the strange, scattered and disrupted tunes of the melody of the religious life, folklore and sentiments that the age inherits, weaves them into weird patterns of composite structures which our hero plays with lofty notes of classical purity, dignity and values, thus fulfilling his dreams of giving birth to a literature that any rising nation will be only too proud to own as its very best treasure; and the third, at whatever distance from the other two, saw visions and dreamt dreams in his romances and fairy-tales of a new world which, in those old times, unfolded strange

Śāstras and stranger social relations, and which are even now struggling their way, in spite of the zealous efforts of Social Reformers for more than half a century.

The first of the triad, then, Akhā. Born sometime about the end of the sixteenth century, in the simple home of a goldsmith (Soni) of Jetalpur, Akhā migrates to Ahmedabad, perhaps, when yet in his teens. Soon he becomes popular; gaining confidence of the then Governor (*Subā*) of the Province, Akhā becomes the head of the Imperial Mint of Ahmedabad. Thereafter he marries a woman of disagreeable temperament. She dies some time after marriage; his only sister follows her. So in the midst of plenty and popularity, Akhā finds himself rather unhappy in his domestic life. A neighbour woman gave her sympathies to Akhā in his bereavement and promised to be his sister. This gave Akhā both comfort and peace.

But wealth, prestige and friendship next abandoned him. Somebody wrongly accused the head of the Moghul mint of foul behaviour of which, later, he was cleared honourably; his neighbour-sister whom he served nobly and well, also hurt his much-injured heart by distrust. This was sufficient to upset Akhā; his injured eyes could see nothing else but hypocrisy, selfishness and ugly inhumanity round about him.

So Akhā gives up his all, and leaves home in search of a *guru* who may enable him to secure the true, real and enduring bliss that belongs to God. He joins the company of travelling *bhajan-mandalies*, goes about with them as far as Kaśi, visiting every holy shrine he meets on his way.

In all probability, during his early life Akhā struggled much to satisfy, by any method and through any source, his inmost cravings for Hari.[1]

[1] Kahe Akho hun ghanun e ratyo, Harine kajo man āvatyo.

And he may have sought to practice the well-known external rituals and practices [1] of the *Vallabhi* school, which are the preliminaries devised to help the individual who seeks an ascent into realms of the higher life. And he complains that these did not pacify the turmoil of his mind.[2] Then he declares that he studied the Darśanas and sought wisdom of ascetics of various Orders,[3] till at last he went to Gokul for *Brahma-sambandha* from the then well-known *Vallabhi Mahārāj*, Gokulnāthji.[4] As the *Brahma-sambandha* did not immediately secure him the object his heart was longing to realize (how could it ?), Akhā naturally got dissatisfied with himself,[5] and said unto himself: "O Akhā, what after all hast thou realized (out of this initiation), when the Eternal Friend (i.e., Hari or Krishna) is yet behind the veil".[6] Continuing, he narrates: "For a long time I used to weep (in view of my separation [7] from the Lord); and, suddenly, of Himself Hari came and revealed Himself unto me".[8] And, in his thanksgivings after this experience, Akhā recognizes his debt for it to three great persons,[9] and the fourth, viz. the Lord Himself, all of whom, Akhā says, even the Vedas cannot overthrow.[10]

1 Ghanan kritya karyan mēn bahya or Tilak kartān trepan gayān.

2 Toye na bhāgi man-ni lāhya.

3 Darśan vesh joi bahu rahyo.

4 Guru Karvāne Gokul gayo; Guru kidhā mēn Gokulnāth, guru e mujne ghāli nāth.

5 Man manāvi saguro thayo, paṇa vichār nagurāno naguro rahyo. We may note, however, that there is another version of this; it lays the blame on Gokulnāthji. But the version is not documented and is therefore now altogether discredited.

6 Vichār kahe pāmyo sūn Akhā, janma janmano kyān chhe sakhā.

7 I.e., Viraha, which is a stage towards the attainment of the divine beatitude, according to the Vallabhite School.

8 Bahu kāl hūn roto rahyo, āvé achānak Hari pragaṭ thayo.

9 These three great persons may be the first three gurus of the *Vallabhi* sect; if that is so, Akhā is only doing his obvious duty, as the Hindus understand it, by declaring the glory of his *guru-paramparā* at a time when his heart is full of thanksgiving.

10 Traṇ maha-purusha ne chotho āp, jeno na thāyé Védé uthāp.

There is a tradition, we do not know on what authority it is based, which says that after the alleged dissatisfaction with Gokulnathji, Akhā went to Kāśi where he was accepted by a *guru* named Brahmānanda who was a follower of the *Vedānta* of Śankarāchārya. Akhā is said to have learnt the Secret Knowledge from this *guru* for several years, and ultimately to have become a *Brahma-gnyāni*. It is true that Akhā sings of the *mahimā* (greatness) of his *guru*; it is also true that he most joyfully relates the incident of his *guru's* gift, at least in one place,[1] of the much desired initiation into the divine mysteries, when Akhā witnessed the Vision Divine in which the Lord God in His grace accepted Akhā at His holy feet.[2]

But there are some weak links in this tale: we have no evidence that the initiation ever took place at Kāśi. And though the word Brahmānanda occurs in several places, it is extremely dangerous to infer, without supplementary evidence that may corroborate the same, that the word is used as a proper noun to denote the name of a person. In fact, it is suggested that the poet plays a pun on that word; of course this is possible; and doubtless, if other evidence was forthcoming we would have considered the claims of such a hypothesis; for the present, however, this interpretation leaves a considerable amount of doubt in our mind, especially in view of the fact that, in one place, Akhā definitely says that Hari revealed Himself to him of His own accord,[3] and, in another place Akhā advises his audience that one should become his own *guru*: "thy best *guru* is thine own self."[4] Akhā

[1] Ānanda vadhyo ne rang ulatyo re, Pragatyā chhe kaīn purana Brahma re; Sadguru ne charanó āvtān re. *Or*, Jé māgyan té guru e āpiyun re.

[2] Akhā ni upar dayā upni re, rākhyo Hari e charaṇ ni pas re.

[3] Āvi achānak Hari pragaṭ thayo.

[4] Guru thā tāro tuñja.

is so erratic a writer that one finds it extremely unsafe to generalize anything about him without fear of contradiction. Of course, suggestions have come forth that this Brahmānanda *guru* is traceable.[1] But the evidence is vague and unauthentic, therefore, at least for the while, unreliable.

On the other hand, an examination, at least of his *Akhegitā*, the authenticity of which is unquestionable, leads us reasonably to assume, not however without some difficulties which may be traceable to the mixed personality of Akhā, that the whole book gives an exposition of, and depends, more or less entirely on, the scriptures of the *Vallabhi* school. On the whole, the poem is a rosary of pure pearls of Vaishnavite excellence, with the permissible sprinkling of a few stray stones which may be traced to the *Vedanta* of Śankarāchārya, which Akhā must have come across in that age when all was in a flux in the world of thought, after a century of wars. And this could be the more so with a person like Akhā who hungered after the Truth, no matter from whatever source and in whatever manner he may gather it unto himself. Anyhow, let us examine the *Akhegitā* and the other chief poems of Akhā, in some detail.

To begin with, let us remind ourselves that the crucial point of disagreement between *Śānkar-vedānta* and the *Vedānta* of Vallabhāchārya (owing to which, as we have already said elsewhere, other differences must arise between them) revolves round their solutions of the vital problem regarding the reality of the phenomenal universe (*jagat*). For Śankarāchārya *Brahman* alone is the real; and, though *Brahman* is the cause of *jagat*, *jagat* is but a delusion and, therefore, unreal. On the other hand, Vallabhāchārya stoutly contends that *Brahman* is

[1] Mehta, N. D.: Akhā krit Kāvyo, Introduction, p. 16.

not only real and eternal, but also the material and the spiritual; so the phenomenal world (*jagat*) is *Brahman*; therefore *jagat* is real.

Now, if we examine the various works of Akhā on the question of the nature and function of *jagat*, on the whole, we are led to the inevitable conclusion that for Akhā *jagat* is but *Brahman*, real and eternal.[1] But more. Akhā believes in a personal God[2] to learn about whom Akhā surveys and resurveys the systems of philosophy,[3] studies the beliefs and practices of his times,[4] and at the end of almost every chapter of his Akhé-gitā, he pours out his inmost conviction that the 'service' (not 'worship') of Hari shall bring forth the *summum bonum* of existence.[5] And in several places Akhā actually asserts that Krishna is *Brahman*.[6] Now all this is opposed to the Absolutist doctrine of Śankarāchārya; on the contrary, it is not only in tune with the Vallabhite theory, but is also in accordance with it.

If we proceed further in our investigation we find that the Vallabhite doctrines regarding the uselessness and unreality of worldliness (*sāmsār*) is also present.[7] This is supplemented by the solemn advice to all to give up their reliance on *sāmsār*, and seek the refuge of Hari before whom *Māyā* waits on bended knees.[8]

[1] Akhé-gitā, XXI, 8-9; XXXVII, 1-4; XXXVIII, 4. Panchikaraṇa, 48, 98. Akhānā Chhappā, 17, 206. The idea pervades all through Akhā's works. Also, for his notion of Brahman, see Akhé-gitā, XVIII, 7-9, and Pada X of the same. Anubhava-bindu, 1.

[2] Akhé-gitā, X, XI, XII.

[3] Ibid., XXIX, XXX.

[4] Akhānā Chhappā, 9, 12, 15, 31, 116, 152, 193, 201, 210, 361, 450, 558-60, etc.

[5] To sévo Hari, Guru, Sant né.

[6] Akhānā Chhappā, 101, 1.

[7] Akhé-gitā, XII, 2; XXXVI, 3; Guru-śiṣhya sāmvād, II, 47-48; Akhānā Chhappā, 208, 569.

[8] Akhé-gitā, VIII, 2; Guru-śiṣhya sāmvād, II, 37-38; Akhānā Chhappā, 244, 527.

Then, regarding Akhā's teachings on the technique of escaping from the grip of *Māyā*: following the Vallabhite teachings he advocates that the seeker after God must come in intimate contact with saintly persons (*sant*), and a Master (*guru*) who may, by instruction and example, be pleased to help the devotee to be rid of the deep-seated attachment for worldliness within himself.[1] Akhā thus believes in what the Vallabhites call *Vaishṇavo ni āḍi* and *Āchārya ni āḍi*, that is to say, the intercession of *sants* and the *Guru*. Besides, Akhā uses Vallabhite expressions like *Bhagawadiya*[2] and *Mahānubhāva*[3] to indicate the devotee. But more. Following the Vallabhite technique and theory, Akhā contends that this close contact with *sant* and *Guru* shall (1) impart the knowledge of the *swarupa* (personality) of God to the devotee,[4] (2) put him into the state of *viraha* (separation),[5] (3) create within him *vairāgya* (indifference) towards sāmsār,[6] (4) purge him of the *ahamtā* (egotism) and *mamatā* (selfishness) within himself,[7] (5) produce in him the inner call for *nishkām-bhakti* (selfless devotion),[8] (6) secure unto him the *sānnidhya* (union)[9] by which the *dāsa* of Hari (i.e., the devotee) wins a dwelling-place in the *nijadhām* (permanent abode)[10] or the Vaikunṭha (the abode of Vishnu).[11]

Thus Akhā was a follower of the Vallabha School,

[1] Akhé-gitā, I, 5, 7; II, 2, and end of almost every chapter; Guru-śiṣhya sāmvād, III, 68; Anubhava-bindu, 4; Akhānā Chhappā, 82, 107.
[2] Akhānā Chhappā, 699.
[3] Akhé-gitā, XIV, 4.
[4] Akhé-gitā, X, XI, XII, 37, 38.
[5] Akhé-gitā, IX; Akhānā Chhappā, 703–10.
[6] Akhé-gitā, IX; Akhānā Chhappā, 24–36.
[7] Akhé-gitā, XX, 8-9; Akhānā Chhappā, 669-70; Anubhava-bindu 13-14.
[8] Akhé-gitā, X, XI, XII, XXXV, XXXVII, XXXVIII; Akhānā Chhappa, 719–727; Guru-śiṣhya sāmvād, III, 108.
[9] Akhé-gitā, XII, pada X; Akhānā Chhappā, 737–39.
[10] Akhé-gitā, III, 11; Guru-śiṣhya sāmvād, III, 38-40, IV, 76–82.
[11] Panchi-Karaṇa, 85.

and not of the *vedānta* of Śankarāchārya as it is usually held by the commentators of his works.[1]

The next prominent literary figure of the age was a Chovisā Brahmin of Baroda, of the name of Premānanda (1636–1734). He became an orphan while yet a child. Perhaps this led to his association with religious ascetics, some of whom were both learned and pious men. Premānanda served them with all his heart. And it is said that one of these holy men was so pleased with the young man that while parting he blessed the boy and foretold that Premānanda would become a great *Prākrit* poet. With such blessings Premānanda started the active journey of his life.

After deciding upon his vocation of life, looking round about him, Premānanda saw that it meant that he had to compose *Ākhyāns* from the *Purānik* lore and repeat the same to audiences of men and women, like the bards of those times. He made an humble beginning by writing Hindi versions of some *Purānik* tales. It is said that his *guru* disapproved of his writing in Hindi, and ordered him to write in his mother tongue instead. Anyhow, our poet not only wrote in Gujarati for the rest of his long life, but also took a vow not to put on his turban till he had created a national literature of Gujarat, worthy of his fatherland and his people, and of their culture. He wrote a large number of poems; of these he gave stirring recitals in his noble voice to vast audiences of men and women throughout Gujarat. His fame as a bard and poet rose very high; and his success was so great that very soon he became a rich man.

As we have already pointed out in another

[1] Of course, if the material now put before the public in *Aprasiddha Akshaya-vāṇi* (1932) is proved authentic, in spite of the contradictory interpretation in the Introduction of the book, our contention that Akhā was a Vallabhite could be proved without the shadow of a doubt.

connection, during his time no independent *Sampradāya* was yet firmly established in Gujarat. The *Dharma* traditions of those times were going along the old undefined way of *Purānik Bhakti*, through *Ākhyāns*; *Bhakti* was thus vaguely taught to the people through the pleasurable arts of poetic recitals, verse-writing and miracle-dramas, performed by men who were not necessarily qualified or efficient to be equal to the task of teaching *Dharma*. So the religious atmosphere of the times was unsystematic and even self-contradictory, as depicted in the lore that gathered round poets, saints and seers,—a medley of systems and practices, not yet disentangled in terms of logical wholes of life-outlooks called *Sampradāyas*. Therefore, on the whole, the religion which Premānanda believed, sang and taught, though rich with the *upāsnā* lore of the *Purānik* traditions, was vague and undefined. Anyhow Premānanda reveals a definite inclination, in the midst of this medley, for Vaishnavism. For instance, at the end of every one of his poems (*Ākhyāns*) he calls upon his audience to remember Hari and to repeat His name, since it was due to His goodwill and mercy that the writing of the *Ākhyāns* and their recital was made possible.[1] Besides, he sings most joyfully of the Vaishnava life and its art, as depicted in the lives of two great Vaishnavas, Narsinha Mehtā and Sudāmāji. It is suggested by some that Premānanda was a follower of the Rāmānuja Sampradāya.[2] In support of this statement it is assumed that as Premānanda praises Rāma throughout his Dásamaskandha he must be a Rāmānuji. Now this assumption is incorrect, in that if he was a Rāmānuji he would have given

[1] Cf. Brihat Kāvya Dohan, Vol. I, pp. 105, 241, 218, 261; Vol. III, pp. 103, 149, 173; IV, pp. 353, 418, 660; V, p. 369; VIII, p. 660.
[2] Jani, A. B.: Subhadra Harana, Introduction, p. 8.

preference to Nārāyana worship and the worship of the *vyuha* (body) of Nārāyana as manifest in Anirudhha, Vāsudeva, Pradyumna and Śankershaṇ. Besides, the *Rāmānujis* follow the *Nārada-pancharātra* traditions in which Rāmapujā (Rāma worship) has little place. In Premānanda's works there is no reference to *Nārada-pancharātra*; and, in fact, Premānanda eulogises the *Bhāgvat* about which the *Rāmānujis* are silent. More, Premānanda actually uses the expression *Maryādā-Purshottam* to indicate Rāma; and this is the technical appelation by which *Rāma-avatār* is designated by the Vallabhites. All this makes us believe that the Bhakti tendencies in Premānanda may have been due, in all probability, to the still small voice of the Vallabhite *Bhakti Sampradāya* which was soon after going to resound from end to end of the country; this is evident, for instance, in his rich praises and hymns of Hari.

Besides, his rich verses in the *Bār-māsno-viraha* which mark the depths of his Vaishnavite heart, and his other poems connected with the Krishna lore, must have so enchanted the Vaishnavites and non-Vaishnavites of his times, that these poems became part of the daily worship of the people of those days. For instance, his *Daśma-skandha* is sung during the rainy season; throughout the months of *Chaitra* and *Vaiśākha*, his *Okhā-haran* is recited; every Saturday evening his *Sudāmā-charitra* is read out; every Sunday has its recitals of his *Narsinha-mehta-ni-hundi*; during the *Śrāddha-pakśa*, his *Narsinha-mehta nā bāp nu śrāddha* is repeated; during times of personal or family calamity his *Sudhanvā Ākhyān* is sung.[1] All this will show to what extent Premānanda was a Vaishnava soul, and to what extent he cleared the jungle of religious

[1] Cf. Jani, A. B.: Introduction to *Subhadra-haraṇ*, pp. 47-48.

growths for the incoming and establishment of the Vaishnavite sects that soon flooded the country. Premānanda did not found a *Sampradāya*; but he gathered the Vaishnavite forces and currents of his times into a river of Krishna lore from which men and women of devotion eagerly quenched their thirst.

Premānanda's zeal for nursing and fostering the language of his native land gathered round him a circle of devoted students who pursued the path chalked out for them by their master. We shall discuss these later on.

Premānanda lived to a great age, and may be said to have considerably fulfilled his vow of lifting the language and literature of his country up to classical heights. He has proved himself the greatest master of the poet's art and sentiments in Gujarati. The tender pathos of his *Nalākhyān*, *Madalsā-ākhyān* and *Harischandrākhyān*, the stirring heroic vigour of the *Raṇa-yajña*, *Abhimanyu-ākhyān*, *Sudhanvā-ākhyān*, *Māndhātā-ākhyān*, *Devi-charitra* and *Draupadi-haraṇa*, the sweet tranquillity of the *Sudāmā-charitra*, the weird wonder in the *Vāmanā-khyān* and *Mārkandeya-Purāna*, the subtle mirth throughout his poems on Narsinha Mehtā, the amorous loves and spiritual longings of Rādhā, penetrating yet balanced so well and in such good taste, in his *Māsa-kāvya*, and the anxious ardour of parental affection and care which he depicts in his *Daśma-skandha*—all these sentiments, powers and gifts of the master artist, poet and seer, claim immortality for Premānanda in the annals of Gujarat.

We have said that Premānanda was a Vaishnava soul. He could not reach the devotional heights of a *bhakta* like Narsinha; nor could he vie with the spirit of worship (*upāsnā*) that Bhālaṇa displays. But with his mastery of the poetic art, and the vast

knowledge of human life and purposes that he had gathered, as a representative man of his times, he combined enough *bhakti* and *upāsnā*, whatever be the shortcomings as to their depth and fineness, not only for pacifying the inner call of his soul, but also to serve his fellow-men with the best he could offer to them.

Then let us acquaint ourselves with the third of the trio, Sāmal (1694–1775), a Śri-gaud Mālvi Brahmin of Gomtipur, a suburb of Ahmedabad.[1] Of the literary heritage of his native land three fields were open to him. Akhā had already secured his position as a philosopher and mystic; Premānanda had also successfully utilized the religious lore of the *Bhāgvat* and other *Purāṇik* treasures. Sāmal did not handle the first, except very indirectly; and he actually started his career in the second field, only to find himself out as but a bad second in comparison with Premānanda. So he turned his shrewd gaze on the romances that were shaping themselves in Gujarat and elsewhere through centuries of efforts of Jain and other writers who strove to teach morals, religion, and the deepest truths and mysteries of human life through this pleasant medium, during perhaps the darkest period of Indian cultural history.[2]

These romances of love and adventure, of horror and magic, of spirits and ghosts, of character and idealism, of folklore and history, run round, through and across areas with towns and villages, with their environs of bewildering woods and forests, endless rivers and seas, vast fields and mountains, under the suzerainty of equally mythical personalities of kings and heroes, representatives, perhaps, of several cultural cycles of regional and cultural history.

[1] Jani, A. B.: Introduction to Sinhāsan Batrisi.

[2] We may refer the reader here to the *rāsas*, *kathās* and *charitras* on Vikram and others, beginning from Madhusudan Vyās (1550) to Paramsagar and Abhayasoma (1618), and the *vārtā* lore beginning with Siddhasuri (1560) to Ballāl Pandit's *Bhoja-prabandha*.

The actual and the ideal, the real and the fanciful are inextricably woven into these romances. They generate worlds of new visions; they give a dynamic spell and charm to human values and affairs; they create the means and media of escape from social tyranny and religious bigotry; they make men and women soar like birds and live like angels and fairies; they handle the safety-valves in traditional thought and practice, with a rare advantage in favour of new in-looks and their corresponding out-looks. Thus perhaps they were gathering, knowingly or unknowingly, the powder-magazine of a human revolt—individual, social and religious—which was in making all the time; only singly, without a united effort, it was all the time being baffled and choked up by the deadweight of a traditional religion, the social organization that fostered it, and the national anarchy that seemed almost to perpetuate them both.

The above account shows that these romances were gathering vital materials for an epic of grand simplicity and noble design, if a Vyās or Vālmiki or Firdausi was born to kindle them with the light of the serenity, foresight and self-possession of the Master. But perhaps, the jungle of strange material and weird vistas of human longings and outlooks dazzled Sāmal's eyes; perhaps, the thought of weaving the various threads into a single pattern for a vast fabric may have bewildered his imagination; and so, in despair, his losing heart may have failed him in deciding upon such an undertaking. So, like a modest bard Sāmal sings like his predecessors, if only to continue their heroic line and heritage, and water their cherished plants (now, alas! in the wilderness), if not to gather their blossoms and plant them together into a garden of epic design and lofty purpose.

And, in addition to his deep knowledge of the material, and his sympathy for the point of view

of the old masters, Sāmal knew his audiences well and could deal with them with great tact and ingenuity; he knew the art of sugar-coating the bitter truths of revolt and reform for his hearers, which would otherwise never secure the sanction (even moral sanction) from the powers that be of his times. But as he had seen through the game, he caught hold of the vital rhythms of their hearts, and in like measures played to them the enchanting tunes of ancient loves and fancies which must appeal to the natural man, at least in the world of imagination, leading them ultimately through dreamlands of happiness enjoyed "once upon a time", though now impossible, because the present cannot be like the past.

Thus, for instance, his *Vidyā Vilāsini*, or *Madan Mohanā*, or *Barās Kasturi ni Vārtā*, each with its tales within tales supporting the fundamental notes of the poet's outlook, designed for the progressive and deeper realization of the same, repeated even to a fault as may seem to us of to-day, in order that the poet's universes of fancy may gather more and more of reality-material for the dreaming audiences he addressed, thus fusing the seemingly impossible with the possible, the fanciful with the real, the *unśastric* with the *śastric*, the imaginary with the actual.

In the Gujarati versions of a great number of the *Purāṇik* stories which Sāmal used to recite before large audiences, mostly of agriculturists, amongst whom he worked, he subtly wove pictures of social life and human freedom, showing conditions better than were actually provided or tolerated by the society of his times. Thus the portrayals of his female characters with their adventures and loves, their wit and cunning, their sweet devices and enchanting learning, belong more to the land of the poets than to Gujarat. Even then, these pictures

are so concrete and sensuous, so vivid and realistic that the poet carried his readers to the dreamlands of his creation. He marries his heroes and heroines who belong to different Varnas and Jātis ; some of his characters are mated even though they belong to different social strata. And against all scriptural and local traditions, he develops the results of such marriages, personal, social and communal, not merely in terms of happiness, but also in terms of bliss that belongs to things divine.

Though there were several local and Indian versions of the tales he chose to narrate, Sāmal took his material from the original Sanskrit, wherever possible. Thus, he took the *Bhoj-prabandha* as the basis for his *Batris Putli ni Vārtā.* This poem consists of a number of tales of love and adventure, of magic and superstition, of travel and intrigues ; of these there are fifty main stories ; and all of them are linked up with the heroic exploits of the mythical King Vikram.

Besides, he wrote independent tales of a similar nature like *Padmāvati ni Vārtā, Bodāṇo,* and *Barās Kasturi ni Vārtā.* These social romances are mostly made out of the materials in the local folklore. But he also drew upon the old historical traditions in order to give a historical setting to the ideals of manhood and womanhood which he advocates in his own inimitable way. Thus he was considerably successful in his use of fiction as a tool in the services of social reform. But his *Chhappās* wherein Sāmal directly discusses questions which interest the man in the street, are so clear-cut, crisp and direct that Sāmal is more known to the ordinary educated man of to-day through these than through any of his longer tales and romances.

Thus Sāmal is perceived by the ordinary observer as a narrative poet, interesting and even charming, with no sectarian bias, and not in any sense

religious. At most, one may say, he was a critic of the social and religious beliefs and practices of his times, especially in his social romances. Now, it is true that these stories are more or less independent of the sects and religious organizations of his times. But in the narration of the tales and romances Sāmal generally weaves around his material the fragrance of the *mahimā* of all the important gods of the Hindu Pantheon, without any preference, of course, of a sectarian nature.

Therefore, even though he starts his poems usually with the praise of Gaṇapati and Śārdā,[1] and ends them with the lesson to worship Śri Raṇchhod [2] like Premānanda, it is difficult to trace his specifically personal religious opinion. He glorified no sect, no theory, no religion ; but like the *Akhyānkārs* of old, Sāmal wrote and sang in the interests of promoting *Dharma.*[3] If at all, Sāmal was a Śakti worshipper, as is evident from his declared affinities in several of his poems.[4]

These qualities of aloofness from sectarianism which enabled him to dream dreams of a better world, and see visions of human freedom and love, have endeared Sāmal to a critic and prophet like Govardhanrām. For Sāmal looked through the past and scanned the present, mainly in order to create a future. His audiences, like those of the prophets, lived in the past, in the golden age which once was. But like the prophet, Sāmal forged out of his poems that golden age that was yet to come in the future.

Let us now briefly take a review of the minor poets of this period. To begin with, we have

[1] Cf. Angad-vishṭi, Rāvan-mandodri samvād.
[2] Cf. Madan Mohanā, Nanda Batrisi, Bhadrā Bhāmini, Śiva-puraṇa, and Vaitāl-pachisi.
[3] Tripāthi, G. M. : Classical Poets of Gujarat.
[4] Bṛihat Kāvya Dohan, Vol. I, pp. 339, 385; Vol. III, pp. 395 ff.; Vol. VIII, pp. 11 ff.

Mukund (*circa* 1635–80),[1] a Gugli Brahmin of Dwārkā, who wrote the famous lives of the saints of India, Hindu and Moslem, called the *Bhakta-māla*. Then we have the disciples of Premānanda, viz., Vallabha (*circa* 1737–1810),[2] Ratneśwar, Dwārkādās (*circa* 1680–1780)[3] and Haridās. Vallabha, the son of Premānanda, was perhaps the foremost of this group. It is opined that he would have been more known and read, but for the fact that he flourished at a time when great masters like Premānanda and Sāmal flourished. His *Ākhyāns* on various incidents in the *Mahābhārata*[4] and the *Rāmāyana*[5] display great skill and vigour; and it is opined that he is particularly successful in endowing his Gujarati version with the spirit of rich fluency and high tone which are so characteristic of the Hindi language. He also wrote a biography of his father.

Ratneśwar, a Mewādā Brahmin of Dabhoi, was a devotee of Rādhā-Krishna. With the help of his great learning of the ancient Hindu lore, he gave majestic versions of the *Bhāgvat* and parts of the *Mahābhārata*, in Gujarati. Besides, he wrote touching verses on the loves of Krishna and Rādhā, in various metres and tunes. And his poems of separation called *Bār-más* reveal a strange pathos and brilliance, easily comparable with classics of the type. His deep devotion and service to the Krishna-lore, and his repeated exhortation to his fellow-men to seek the refuge of Krishna secured him public recognition from one of the Vallabhite Mahārājās of the time who called him the Vyāsa of the Kali-yuga.

[1] Milestones, p. 115.
[2] Pandya, G. L.: Prémānanda-suta Vallabha, pp. 16–19.
[3] Kāntāwālā, H. D.: Prāchin-kāvya-māļā, Vol. IX, p. 145.
[4] viz., Kunti-prasanna Ākhyān, Duhśāsan-rudhirpān Ākhyān, Yudhdhishthir-Vrikodar Samvād, etc.
[5] viz., Sitā-vilāp, Sitā-vilās, Tārā-vilāp.

The third of the group, Dwārkādās, now. He could not have been a Rādhā-Vallabhite as suggested by Diwan Bahadur K. H. Dhruva[1] and asserted by Mr. A. B. Jani.[2] A comparison of his *padas* with those of Hita Rāma Rāi, Hita Hari Vamśa and other poets of the Rādhā-Vallabhi sect show little similarity in thought and sentiments; besides, unlike the Rādhā-Vallabhites, Dwārkādās approaches Krishna directly, and not through Rādhā as the Rādhā-Vallabhites do. And lastly, a searching examination of the *padas* of Dwārkādās strangely enough reveals that most of them, if not all, are faithful Gujarati versions of the *padas* of the *Ashta-sakhā*, who are poets of the Vallabhi church.

The last of this group, Haridās, was a Visā Lād Vāniā of Baroda. He was a devotee of Krishna and followed the Vallabhite creed. His verses on the life of Rama during the period of his separation from Sitā are well known in Gujarat. And he selected two incidents from the life of Narsinha Mehtā (viz., his son's marriage and the death ceremonies of his father) to illustrate and glorify the immensity and depth of the love of Krishna for his devotees.

Then let us take another group of Premānanda's contemporaries who were definite votaries of Śakti-worship. Three names are prominent: Vallabha Bhatt (1640–1751 *circa*), Nāth Bhawān (1681–1800 *circa*) and Mithu Bhagat (1738–1791). Vallabha was a Mewādā Brahmin. He lived in Ahmedabad. It may be that he was a follower of the Vallabhi *Sampradāya* in his early life. But, it is said, due to an unfortunate incident in the Vallabhi temple

[1] Cf. Gurjar Sakshar Jayanti, p. 191.

[2] Cf. Jani, A. B.: Introduction of Subhadrā Haraṇa, p. 88. We must note, however, that the view expressed by these gentlemen is based on two statements of the poet in his Rādhā-vilās, which, on an external examination, naturally lend colour to this view.

of Śrināthji, Vallabha took to Śakti-worship. He wrote a number of *garbās* (songs of praise) in praise of Śakties; these are sung even to-day by the women of Gujarat, even Vaishnavite, during the Navarātri festivals. In these *garbās* the poet imparts to Śakti-worship the qualities of humility, tenderness and self-surrender that belong to the devotee of Krishna.

Then consider Nāth Bhawān, a Nagar Brahmin of Junāgadh, a Śākta by birth. He was very learned in the Śakti lore, and has given us Gujarati renderings of *Śridhari Gitā* and *Brahma Gitā*. His writings tend to be more along lines of Śākta teachings, inclined more towards ritual and meditation than towards devotion and service.

And lastly, we have Mithu Bhagat, a Modh Brahmin of Mahisā on the Mahi. Most of his writings remain yet unpublished. But it is evident that he played a great part in his lifetime by work and preaching and writing on behalf of Śakti-ism. He introduced, like Vallabha Mewādā, the elements of devotion and service, so characteristic of the Vaishnava *Sampradāyas* of Gujarat.

Before we discuss the greatest Vallabhite poet of Gujarat, Dayārām, let us say a few words about the group of Vaishnavite poets like Pritamdās (1727–99), Tricumdās (1734–99), Narbherām (1768–1852), Govindrām (1781–1824), Rewāśankar, and Giridhar (1787–1852). Pritamdās was a Bhāt from Nadiād. Due to an unhappy married life, he was inclined towards asceticism, and came in contact with an ascetic. Due to his contact with this man, and to his frequent visits to the Vaishnavite shrine at Dākor, Pritam developed a great love and devotion for Krishna, which he poured forth in his wonderful songs of praise. His well-known poems like *Hari no māraga chhé śurā no*, and *Jagat nun sukha jhākal nun chhe pāṇi ré*, reveal a rare pathos and dignity

born out of a heroic life. His *Sāras-gitā, Ékādaś-skandha* and *Guru-mahimā* are good examples of the signs and characteristics of his times, and the Bhakti outlook towards them. And in his *padas* of *Dāṇalilā, Krishna-janma-vadhāi* and other incidents of Krishna's life, there pervail a tenderness of devotion and deep religious fervour rather than the realistic and passionately human, even erotic, sentiments which usually abound in such songs.

So also did Pritamdās' contemporary Narbhérām, a Modh Brahmin of Pihij in Petlād, spend his life in singing praises of Raṇchhodrāi of Dākor. Like Narsinha Mehtā who immortalized the devotee *par excellence* of Kathiāwād, viz., Bhakta Sudāmāji, Narbherām has immortalized Bodāṇā whose love and devotion for Raṇchhodrāi of Dākor was immensely deep, in his *Bodāṇā ni muchho nā pado.*

Another poet of this group, Tricumdās, a Nāgar Brahmin of Junagadh, was a close relation of Narsinha Mehtā. He was a Vallabhite by birth and conviction. And he was also particularly devoted to Raṇchhodrāiji of Dākor. In his *Rukmiṇi-haraṇa* he fuses elements of the Hindi and Persian languages. Besides, he has written many *padas* of devotion and praise in the Vraja-bhāshā. Like his illustrious ancestor Narsinha Mehtā whose hymns he sang with great ardour and zeal, he sought refuge in Krishna, beseeching and longing to serve Him through births without end.

His son Rewāśankar was a devout Vaishnavite like his father. Besides writing a biography of his father, he has sung daintily of the *Lilā* of Krishna in Vraja. At its best, his poetry rises to flights of imagination to which Narsinha himself soared; and in his descriptions of love one perceives the subtle flavour of Jayadeva.

Then, Govindrām, an Audich Brahmin of Amod. He was a devoted follower of the Vallabhi sect. He was a great observer of the beliefs and practices of his times. His famous satires on the evils, debasement and immoralities amongst all the *Varnas* of his day, in spite of the exaggeration that is bound to be present in them, show the struggle of those who *would* speak out against the evils of the times, both in social and in religious life. His claim as a Vallabhite poet rests mainly on a small poem in which he praises the founder of the Vallabhi church, with reference to his success in converting a Moslem named Alikhān to the Hindu faith.

And let us consider, last but therefore not the least, Girdhar, a Daśā Lād Vāniā of Māsar near Baroda. He was also a member of the Vallabhi church. Inspired by the *Bhāgvat*, *Gargasamhitā* and *Nārdiya Purāṇas*, he has written delightful accounts of the childhood and boyhood of Krishna, in his Gokul-lilā and Mathurā-lilā. His *Gokul-lilā* reveals the poet's indebtedness to the *Subodhiniji* of *Vallabhāchārya*; in fact, the poet refers to the *Āchārya* in an affectionate and respectful manner. But Girdhar is known more by his version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* than by these mainly sectarian writings. For his simple interpretation of Rama's life and wanderings, Sita's sufferings and courage, and Luxman's devotion and loyalty, has a clarity, freshness and directness that make these characters live and struggle like simple fellow-beings in distress, who have lost the bearings of their life only to find out and learn that "the just shall live by faith", even through suffering and failure, for, "whom He loveth he also chasteneth".

We must now acquaint ourselves with Dayārām (1767–1852), one of the immortal poets of Gujarat. He was a Sāthodrā Brahmin of Chanod on the banks of the Narmada. His parents were followers

of the Vallabhi *Sampradāya.* They died when he was yet a boy; his early life, therefore, was spent in self-indulgence and in indiscipline. However, during this very period he came in contact with a learned Vallabhi pandit called Ichhārām Bhattji, who taught him, as the poet says in his *Guru-śishya-samvād,* the philosophy and the esoteric doctrines of the Vallabhi *Sampradāya.* Due also to this *pandit's* persuasions, Dayārām went on a pilgrimage to Vraja where he received *Brahma-sambandha* at the hands of a Goswāmi named Vallabhlālji. It seems that thereafter Dayārām settled for himself the modest career of a devotee and poet. Later he thrice went all over India on pilgrimage. During these pilgrimages he learnt of nature, of man and of God, besides acquiring several languages and dialects of India.

Dayārām can be said to be the Gujarati poet *par excellence* of the Vallabhi *Sampradāya.* His *Rasik Vallabha, Pushti-path-Rahasya* and *Bhakti Poshaṇa* are brilliant expositions of the philosophical basis of Vallabhism; in his *Guru-śishya-samvād* and *Praśnottar-mālikā* he further unravels some of the biggest issues of metaphysics and religion, of the higher and deeper problems of life; he praises and glorifies Hari in narratives (*ākhyāns*) from *purānik* lore, like Premānanda, in his poems like *Ajāmil-ākhyān, Rukmini-vivāha, Satyabhāmā-vivāha*; in his *Premarasa-lilā, Dāṇ-chāturi, Rāsa-panchādhyāyi,* as also in his famous *Garbis* he vividly portrays with great depth of feeling, rich pictures and idylls connected with the early life of Krishna as depicted in the *Bhāgvat* lore; and he wrote many *Kirtans* (hymns) of great lyrical value, rich in depth of thought and emotion, attuned to the self-surrender and the dedication of the devotee, which he used to sing before the holy shrine of Krishna in his home, and during his pilgrimages in the *havélis* of the

Maharajas. Of course they are no longer sung in these temples, but they have been stirring the very heart-strings of Vaishnava men and women who recite them with ardour and devotion before their domestic altars.

Moreover, Dayārām was a master musician, he had a rich voice, and he could play efficiently on musical instruments. This enabled him to enhance the use and popularity of his poems considerably.

Dayārām's works bear testimony to the great influence the *Ashta-sakhā* had on his thought and sentiment. Though Narmadāśankar says that Dayārām believed himself to be an incarnation of Narsinha Mehtā, we have the testimony of Dayārām himself that he believed himself to be the incarnation of one of the *Ashta-sakhā* called Nandadāsji. And there are ample proofs in his poems to justify this latter contention of Dayārām.[1] His descriptions of love and courtships are so live, sparkling and realistic; yet they are considerably restrained and subtle when we compare them with those of Narsinha Mehtā. Even then they seem strong and unbecoming to some sensitive persons of our own times, due essentially to erotic suggestion and imagery. A few examples may clear the point for us. Here they are :—

Do come over to my house, Prince Darling,
Do come over to my house !
Come, come there to drink
And make me drink
The cup of love ;
Then shall ride the steed of your youth.
At nightfall come, Oh ! dear ! dear !!
For none shall find out *then.*[2]

[1] Dayārām Krit Kāvya-maṇi-mālā, part IV, Anubhava-manjari.
[2] Dayārām Krit Kāvya-samgraha, Edited by Narmadāśankar, p. 187.

Here's another Gopi musing to herself :—

His lovely eyes did glance at me, at *me*,
And, He went away, leaving me, lonely and alone,
The night, to-night, then,
When we together the joy shall live.
Darling, my love,
Do come to my house,
To-night, the night.

Your mother tell, "A cow has strayed'
And go out in search of it;
A good excuse for absence
Far from home.

My own apartments ! Yes, there,
For far away shall we be there then,
From my husband, relatives.
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
And I will light a lamp
To tell you, "I am waiting" ;
And lo, when you shall come, shall come,
Live we shall, we will, together,
To our hearts' content.[1]

Here is a dialogue between Krishna and a Gopi :—

Touch me not, O ! touch me not,
Darling, dear, dear.

Swear first, truly, solemnly,
"Not an embrace, embrace never" ;
Then shall I let the nectar
Pour, now resting on my lips ;

[1] Ibid., p. 197.

The nectar of my lips
Shall thine be then,
Shall but be thine;
But no embrace, O! Kahān.
For thou art dark,
And I am fair;
How fair and dark,
And dark and fair
By touch become, I muse.
If fair and dark one become,
If dark embrace the fair,
Methinks then fair will dark become,
Dark, ye dark, shall I be then!
Embrace me not,
Nay, touch me not, I prithee,
For dark shall I be then.

To this Krishna replies as under :—

Absurd, absurd, such foolish talk!
Yet if you touch me,
I touch thee,
Why then should dark not fair become
Than fair should turn out dark?

If one embrace shall dark make fair,
Another yet, and I
Shall dark become,
And Thou as ever fair!

So dark and fair,
And fair and dark,
Shall have not one embrace, but two;
For one shall turn the dark one white,
And two shall keep us dark and white.

So love-embrace!
Do now embrace
Not one but two;

In twos and twos
Shall we embrace,
And pour in floods
To live into eternity.
Ye Fair be fair,
For the Dark is always fair.[1]

In another place Krishna addresses a Gopi thus:—

Yours, yay, yours am I;
Why question that,
Why question thus, beloved mine?

I have not erred,
Nor have I strayed,
Yet, well, I say,
For say I must, beloved mine,
That I have erred,
That I was 'lost'.

So, if you will,
Do punish me,
Here and now,
At your will.

Why ropes to find?
These two hands mine,
With thine hands bind,
Thy two hands fine.

Deserve I more
Of wrath and ire?
Then arrows sharp
From bows so sweet
Do thou send me—
From darling eyes.

[1] Dayārām Krit Kāvya-samgraha, p. 235.

If thou hadst fear
Of my escape,
Then hoist me on
The castle sweet,
The castle strong
Of thine own heart.

Need you, yet,
Yet complain,
That I shall lapse,
And go again ?

Where never did I lapse or go,
Where did I err ? I ask again.
Yet not in vain, no, not in vain,
Have I surrendered now to Thee.

My heart is like the crystal clear,
My word is sure divine,
Myself do swear,
With hands on Śiva,
With heart in thee,
That I am only thine.[1]

I have given these adaptations (for these are not translations) at some length in order to make out particular points. The Vaishnavas claim that these lyrics have a religious meaning. The subject of the devotee's yearning, it is suggested, is not a woman in flesh and blood, but a Deity ; therefore the only manner in which the devotee feels called upon to express his intense emotions, must be in terms of the deepest and subtlest of human, even sensual (because it is human), love.[2]

And in actual life, we can see how Vaishnavite men and women sing these songs with the most

[1] Ibid., p. 222.
[2] Tripāthi, G. M.: Dayārām no Akshar-Deha.

devoted religious ardour, honestly believing that these love embraces and such other incidents have a divine significance. In fact, as a devotee of Krishna, the Vaishnavite is expected to feel, and works himself up to feel and behave, like the Gopis yearning for the love of Krishna. Most of the old people, men and women of whom I have enquired, never took any objection to their children and grand-children singing these songs. In fact when the investigator joins these people in such songs he gains their confidence and affection all the more; for his such conduct leads them to conclude that he is a person on the way to be a Krishna-bhakta, if not actually such. Of course, this attitude of the mind and of the whole being of man is not new or strange in the orient. Persian poetry is full of it. And when Dayārām's poetry is compared with Hāfiz,[1] the comparison should not be between them as mere poets, but between the sampradāyas, matas, margas and dharmas they believed and pursued. For just as Sufiism has coloured the thought and sentiments of the life of Hafiz, the Vallabhi Sampradāya permeates the entire being and works of Dayārām.

From the above discussion of Dayārām's life and works it will be clear that his love for Krishna is profound and infinite in its self-surrender; he sings to Krishna even as one of the Gopis of Vraja, surrendering himself and his sex, with the perfect faith that the Gopis alone could command; and thus like Mirā he declares :—

I am mated with the One
The Chosen One indeed;
My husband none other than He,
Nor master any but He,
Now and ever for me.

[1] Jhaveri, K. M.: Dayārām ané Hāfez.

Or, like Premānanda Swāmi, Dayārām proclaims himself as Dayā-sakhi, that is to say the freundine of Krishna of the name of Dayā. So, in spite of the fact that his pithy sayings have the weight, wisdom and grandeur of those of a seer and prophet, we feel compelled to say that in the galaxy of poets and devotees of Krishna, from Gujarat and all over India, Dayārām is one of the most, if not the most, humble, resigning and self-effacing soul.

Dayārām could thus not be a mere member of the Vallabhi church. His religious experiences and spiritual depth could see through and beyond sectarian barriers; and he had vision and light that clearly saw that Hari and Hara must be, and are, but one. So, although he was a great admirer of the Vallabhi theory of life, he spared none of his co-religionists—lay or priest—whenever he found them in the wrong. Incidents are on record when he insulted Vallabhi Maharajas, and that even when some of them sought his friendship and goodwill. In one instance he actually tore off his necklace of Tulsi beads and threw it at the face of the Vallabhi Maharaja at Dabhoi, saying: "Here's your necklace, worth not even a half penny". In fact Dayārām wanted to reinstate the course of Vaishnava life as it was designed and elaborated in the texts of Vallabhāchārya and his illustrious descendants, on the excellence of which Dayārām's works bear eloquent testimony.

Dayārām was a man who understood life and its intricacies and problems through the knowledge and experience of the men and manners of his time, which he gathered in the three extensive pilgrimages he undertook; through Ichhārām Bhattji he gathered unto himself the spiritual depths and truths in the Vallabhi theory of life; and the actual practices and devices as prevalent in the daily divine services, in the festivities and in the other spiritual lore of

the Vallabhi church gave him faith in these fundamental practical instruments of the good life. So, through memories of loose gaiety in early life, and through a long period of deep personal suffering, this master-servant of Krishna kept on his faith to the last breath of his life. 'Lofty designs must end in like effects.'

Dayārām is the last of the line of poets in Gujarat who believed that poetry and art and life itself cannot reach the summits of their activity unless they arise from and are made to serve God and His creation.

During the period Dayārām flourished there lived a great personality named Bhojā Bhagat (1776–1850) an illiterate yet wise Kaṇbi of Kathiawar. He was perhaps the greatest critic and observer of the evils of his times, especially in the field of religion. He is said to have had a large following, and as he recited his 'whips' (*Chābkhās*) to his eager audiences, enthusiasts among them took these down as rare treasures that needed storing up for the guidance of frail humanity. Of the positive teachings of Bhojā little is known, though his descendants are yet enjoying the guruship rights over some people, which were enjoyed by Bhojā. But he founded no Sampradāya. From the internal evidence in his *Horis* and particularly in his *Selaiyā Ākhyān*, one may safely infer his Vaishnavite leanings.

Let us now take a general review of another group of poets who worked for the Swāminārāyaṇa Sampradāya just as the Vallabhite poets, official and non-official, served their own church. The most important of these are: Brahmānanda (1762–1849),[1] Muktānanda (1761–1824),[2] Nishkulānanda (alive in 1821),[3] Manjukeśānanda, Devānanda, Premānanda Swāmi (1779–1845),[4] and Dalpatrām

[1] Milestones, p. 202.
[2] Ibid., p. 203.
[3] Ibid., p. 205.
[4] Ibid., p. 181.

(1820–1898).[1] We shall deal with Dalpatrām separately, because he is not necessarily a sectarian poet like the rest of this group.

Brahmānanda, a Bārot, met Sahjānanda Swāmi at Gadhadā and became his disciple at once. He is the stern and dignified preacher *par excellence* of the Swāminārāyaṇa sect. His poems reveal a heroic and masculine struggle to uplift the ethical and moral life, with the help of simple examples from contemporary life and illustrations from the cultural history of India. His works seek to please the mind, quicken the conscience, and secure peace and happiness to his readers. In many of his poems Brahmānanda is at close grips with the social and religious issues of his times. And in these we have pictures of the weaknesses and failings of the prevalent Sampradāyas. As we have already said elsewhere, Vairāgya is a very important and essential part of Swāminārāyaṇa's teachings. Brahmānanda had deeply absorbed this part of his master's gifts. So when he sings of Krishna and His doings during his boyhood, the poet shows a great restraint which Narsinha and even Dayārām lack. Even then, like a true devotee, Brahmānanda sometimes lapses into a feminine tone like Mirā and calls himself the bride of Krishna. This perhaps removes the stern shield off the breast of a struggling warrior who was pledged to lay down his life in a crusade against the social perversities and moral decay of his times.

Muktānanda now. He was a resident of Dhrāngandhrā. In early life he sought and secured the goodwill and discipleship of Ramānanda Swāmi. Later when Sahjānanda succeeded Ramānanda as the Head of the sect, Muktānanda became deeply attached to him. He is said to be a great thinker; and he is supposed to be the principal systematizer

[1] Kavi, N. D.: Kaviśwar Dalpatrām, p. 8.

and moralist of his sect. But his faith and devotion to his guru's person and teachings were more deep than his own philosophy. He therefore worked heart and soul to help the laying of a sure and solid foundation for the Sampradāya. Thus in his *Sati-gitā* he works out the ideals of womanhood in great detail, as conceived by his *guru*, in simple, straight-forward, yet stern language of the law-giver. So also in his *Udhdhava-gitā* he gives his guru's interpretations of *Vairāgya* and *Bhakti*; every book of the poem declares the glory of Krishna and His devotees, in the true spirit of the *Bhāg-vat* narrative. But, like Brahmānanda, there is another side of Muktānanda which unfolds the deep-seated treasures of his inmost being. At times he 'lapses' and declares himself a helpless forlorn 'bride' of Krishna, longing to be one with Him.

Another stalwart of the sect, perhaps greater even than Muktānanda, was Nishkulānanda. He was entrusted by his *guru* the task, so pleasant to him, of formulating the statement of the theory of ultimate reality on which the superstructure of the sect rests. He works up a synthesis between the *Vairāgya* and *Bhakti* ideals of the sect and the *Vedānta* of Rāmānujāchārya. Here he seeks to portray the beauty and grandeur of asceticism as against the vulgarity and baseness of worldliness. In his *Bhakti-nidhi*, *Vachana-nidhi* and *Dhirajākhyān* we perceive the volume and intensity of the resignation to the Will of God that works untiringly behind his stern and selfless and steadfast *bhakti* resolves, and unshaking faith in the service of his fellowmen. Perhaps no poet of Gujarat has strived more for the uplift and good-name of his church than Nishkulānanda.

Manjukeśānanda is another member of the group. His writings, except a few, yet remain unpublished.

They are said to contain attacks on false *gurus*, their vices and sins. From some of his published writings we may say that he has considerably succeeded in the dialogue form; his language is measured, direct and telling, when he makes his onslaughts on the hypocrisy and showiness of his contemporary teachers, people and practices; the main theme of his poems is, of course, the glorification of the ideal of asceticism, mellowed and quickened by the warmth of *Bhakti*, self-surrender and service.

Devānanda is perhaps the most popular and the least sectarian poet of this bunch. The language of the simple agricultural folk of Gujarat, the sweet, spicy, yet direct, appeal and illustrativeness of his themes, and the sincerity of his message have made his *garbis* famous throughout Gujarat. Most of his poems are set to simple native tunes. And travelling minstrels and medicants sing his warnings against worldliness, his praise of *Vairāgya* and *Bhakti*, and his message of hope that have quickened the conscience of so many. Devānanda was the *guru* of Dalpatrām of whom we shall talk later.

For the while, then, let us have a look at Premānanda Swāmi (1779–1845), popularly known as Prem-sakhi. As belonging to the Gāndharva (minstrel) caste, he could sing or play with charm and efficiency. His highly emotional temperament is moved by the Krishna-lore, especially as depicted in the *Daśma-skandha*. He behaves without restraint like the Gopis of Vraja. In his heart-stirring verses on the *Bār-más* and *Virahavilās*, he worships his *guru* as Krishna incarnate whose bride he portrays himself to be. He is directly affected by the Vallabhite lore of *Ashta-sakhā*, especially by Surdās and Krishnadās. Of his self-surrender and love of the beauty of Krishna, who can tell? It is so complete, sincere and tender. He is therefore easily the

foremost among the Swāminārāyaṇi group as a poet of love, beauty, resignation and sacrifice.

In several places throughout the discussion of this group I have pointedly drawn the attention of the reader to the presence of elements of love and amours which are antagonistic to the spirit and teachings of Swāminārāyaṇism. Why this should be so is a question of importance for us. The-dry-as-dust, uninteresting and stern puritanism (is that not another name, perhaps milder, for asceticism ?) of the Swāmiṇārāyaṇa faith was born out of the necessities of the times. Life had gone too far in the affairs of the world, had become worldly, and had even got enveloped by its dirt and filth. And it may be that in order to arrive at the mean, the Swāmi, a man of understanding and worldly wisdom, saw no way but to preach the gospel of renunciation which he toned down with the saving grace of love and bhakti in terms of service of fellowmen, compulsory for both ascetics and the people, for both men and women, as an alternative to worldliness and its debasements.

We now come to Dalpatrām (1820–1898), a Śrimāli Brahmin of Wadhvāṇ born of parents who were highly devoted to the old traditions of Vedic worship. His maternal uncle happened to be a devout Swāminārāyaṇi. Thus in his early life Dalpatrām must have been swayed between two different, if not antithetical, atmospheres of religion and devotion. Anyhow, due to several causes he received his initiation into the Swāminārāyaṇa fold.

He started his life as a poet of the Sampradāya at the age of twenty-one, and he wrote a poem in Vraja-bhāsā, wherein he attempts to sing of and glorify the personal characteristic of Sahjānanda Swāmi in the manner in which the *Lilās* of Śyāmsunder are written. Soon after he won fame and distinction as a poet in some of the States in

Kathiawar. And in 1848 he came in contact with his patron and friend Alexander Kinloch Forbes; soon after this he settled in Ahmedabad.

In spite of the conservative atmosphere in which he was reared he kept an open mind and gave anxious thoughts to the criticism of the West on the social, ethical, economic and political pathology of his times and his people. This led him on the one hand to become a soldier in the war against superstitions, dead customs, illiteracy and self-satisfaction of orthodoxy, and on the other hand to preach for the education of his people, for an economic realism and political stability, with gentle strength and dynamic zeal. Thus in his *Vencharitra* he cuts asunder the evils of social customs, delineates the stupidity and unwisdom in them, and suggests programmes of life which may be adequate and useful and yet so tempered with wisdom that they may become acceptable even in the citadels of orthodoxy. Or, in his *Hunnarkhānni-chadhāi* he exhorts his countrymen to be industrious, to labour, to learn new arts of life and thus serve the national economy of the country. Or, in the educational field he did a great service to Gujarat by editing and writing the Gujarati school manuals which continued to be taught in the schools of Gujarat till 1910. Also in the field of historical research Dalpatrām rendered considerable service by gathering historical material from wandering bards and other sources, which pioneer work only enabled Forbes to write his *Rāsmālā*.

Even though Dalpatrām ventured for reform and welcomed the many criticisms of the West, in his own humble way he gave his share to lead a revolt against the same, with great caution, meticulous care and crystal sincerity. But that did not mean that he was against reform; he believed in change only if it was found necessary after

great deliberation, and even then the speed and volume of change, according to him, should be measured carefully.

His works are mainly dialectic. They are written in the simple language of the masses. The subtle vein of his grim humour compels attention in his *Daivajnya-darpaṇa.* And throughout his poetry, the sure stamp and zeal of Swāminārāyaṇi *Bhakti* and *Vairāgya* leaven up the poet's efforts for peace and goodwill and justify his claim as a poet of the Swāminārāyaṇa Sampradāya even as the poet's works justify the Sampradāya's claims on Gujarat.

With an account of another great personality, Narmadāśankar, and his works in the social and literary activities of Gujarat, after the Crown took up the responsibility of the Government of India (1857), we shall stop making a detailed survey of individual workers in the main. For Narmadāśankar is the last link between the old and the new; he is perhaps the earliest and yet one of the foremost of the new era. And during his time and soon after his career, the intellectual activity of Gujarat let itself loose and went out of the control and domination of religion and religious sects.

Narmadāśankar (1833–1886) was a Vadnagrā Nāgar of Surat. The traditional religion of his family was Śaivism. He was educated in an English school and college. During his early life he was always up to something, and his zeal for learning and knowledge was fundamentally directed towards preparing himself for the active life of a religious and social reformer, and for a literary career. He gave up Government service and in the face of dire poverty thus deprived himself of a regular income by pledging to serve learning, like Premānanda. On the whole he was a man of strong will; he loved truth and was always willing to admit his fault, error or wrong-doing, not only in matters intellec-

tual, but also in practical issues, personal and public, without regard to consequences. For a social reformer of his days it meant courting difficulties; and as a Nāgar Brahmin it meant a great deal more than for others. Anyhow he spent a busy life in the service of the economic, religious and social well-being of his people. And this was but a continuous war with many other battles within it. And Narmadāśankar proved himself to be a warrior indeed.

Besides a writer of verse, Narmadāśankar is the founder of Gujarati prose. His histories of the nations of the world, old and new, his biographies of the great men of all times, and his essays on social and religious reforms are monuments of great industry, learning and zeal. Besides, he wrote the first dictionary of the Gujarati language; and he edited a weekly called Dāndio (1866 ff) through which he informed Gujāratis of all castes and creeds about the social and religious disabilities of the weak and of the outcastes.

His insistence on the urgent need of educating women gave a practical lead in social reform. In one of his oft-quoted lines he says that 'in order to bring prosperity to the country the mother must be educated first and foremost'. In the early part of his career Narmadāśankar was against widow-remarriage, along with the orthodox opinion; but as soon as he changed his opinion, he not only advocated widow-remarriage but also took a widow as his second wife in order to set an example, even though his first wife was yet alive.

Though he was a Śaivite by birth, Narmad spent most of his life in studying and fighting Vaishnavite evils. In fact his life is a continuous virile struggle to achieve life-mastery through the tender media of *Préma*, *Śaurya* and Service as preached by one or another of the Vaishnava Teachers. Sometimes

he revealed a heart suffering at the thought of its separation from the living God. And his nature lyrics, which, by the way, were mainly inspired by English poetry, seek to praise in characteristic Vaishnavite manner, the mercy with which God pours Himself in Nature. All this may show that he had a great respect for Vaishnavite tenets and ideals, in spite of the war he waged against the current Vaishnavite beliefs and practices of his times.

In many departments of his active life the spell of Vaishnavite teachings and principles pervades. Thus his *Nirāśrit Pratyé Śrimant nā Dharma* can be said to be entirely, though perhaps unconsciously, a piece of Vaishnavite workmanship; or his *Mandli Malvāthi Thatā Lābh* is strongly reminiscent of the *Bhagvad-vārtā Mandalis* and other similar institutions among the Vaishnavites; so also his homage to love and heroism as depicted in his coat-of-arms, and his *Dāspaṇun Kahañ Sudhi Karvun* are favourably comparable to the purely Vaishnavite *pada* which begins with *Hari no māraya chhé śurāno*; and like Vaishnavite poets Narmadāśankar wrote his famous *vinanti-pada* which begins with *Nava karaśo koi śoka, rasikdañ.*

All these facts and inferences, besides the general tenor of his life, beliefs and sentiments, lead us inevitably to conclude that every inch of Narmadāśankar's being was instinct with Vaishnavite thoughts, beliefs and ideals. So if the priests and laymen of his times had only paused and thought over the matter carefully, without an attitude of false alarm and prejudice at his seeming Western leanings and exterior, and the revolt these threatened to raise in the Vaishnava camp, it may be that Vaishnavism and the Vaishnavites, especially of the Vallabhi school, both teachers and laymen, would have secured the eager services and spiritual strength

of a heroic soul which faltered, yet saw truth and tried to live by it in the midst of human frailties. True, Narmadāśankar was not a church-going, regular, member of a religious denomination; perhaps that would but mark a limitation which has now been wisely considered an exterior sign of little value, even false value. On the other hand, there have been few in the history of Gujarat, even of the wide world, who have like Narmad spent themselves away in the service of their fellow-beings, their country and its literature, and Truth as he saw it. Perhaps it is therefore that Narmadāśankar is universally acknowledged as a *Yugapurusha* by his countrymen. Let us only add that in our own times, to a vaster degree and in vaster dimensions, Mahātmā Gandhi is fighting the very war waged by Narmadāśankar.

In our discussions of some of the poets of the Vallabhi and Swāminārāyaṇi groups we have assumed that we are in the nineteenth century with its learning and its critical attitude, and the new problem of readjustments in all departments of life, mainly religious and social, that was forced on the calm seas of usage and tradition by the culture and outlook of the European nation which assumed political control and government of the country. In response to this culture-contact Dalpatrām and Narmadāśankar laid a solid and stable foundation in literature, and through it, in the life within and without of the people of the land. This heritage has since then assumed newer and more secular forms and outlooks which seek to combat social, moral and political evils with the help of secular organizations, methods and tools, outside, in fact, away from, and generally even avoiding rather than seeking help or guidance or anything else from any of the religious denominations. In this sense, then, the intellectual life and activities of Gujarat start at a time that has, knowingly and unknowingly, been

working for the emergence of the individual spirit and of the society of Gujarat—at least some part of it —towards some relief and release from the grip and control of religion and of religious creeds.

Thus intellectual activities are more and more seeking to serve secular ends and worldly motives, and conserving, uplifting and carrying forward the spiritual ends of Dharma. If anything, Dharma is seen as an instrument for the service of secular ends; in the old order, on the other hand, the problem of life consisted, in the main, in adjusting the general design and details of secular life and ends, personal, social, economic and political, in terms of, for the sake of, and according to, Dharma. There are few stalwarts, if any, now, who write in order to serve the Dharma of their Sampradāyas.

This need not be interpreted as a signal for alarm. For, after all, as we have seen, there was an overdoing of serving Dharma and the institutions that it upheld; for all practical purposes, this service had become mechanical and purely formalistic; it had lost its way into the wilderness of dogma and drear repetition. Therefore, perhaps, a reaction in terms of an antithesis was inevitable and even necessary. It asserted that human beings could never have been meant to be mere instruments of a purely ritualistic Dharma and religion, and that, therefore, the call of the manifold springs of human desire and emotion, action and motives, pursuits and designs, should rather be the view point from which life should be directed,—the attitude that seeks to fulfil the spirit of man, not to dominate and strangle it. Thus secular ends and motives have come to be regarded as the more permanent, the more important, the more vital, and the more *sanātan* than 'Dharma'.

At all events, if during this period Gujarat has secured external peace, some freedom of mind, and

economic independence and prosperity, it has not been due to the blessings of Dharma and its upholders. So also, the intellectual output of the people, the springing up of educational institutions and forces and other progressive factors are not referable to, and have derived no inspiration from, Dharma, or religious life and organizations. In fact, the swing of victorious revolt has gone to the extreme of merciless attacks, justifiable and unjustifiable, on Dharma and its institutions, and all that the intolerable Juggernaut of formalism can represent to the spirit of man in the throes of emancipation. The violence of this reaction may well arouse misgivings, but there it is.

Thus many have been thrown into mental and moral confusion due to maladjustments of life-values; they tend to be disinclined to face facts and to attempt to find and formulate solutions which may secure for them a co-ordination between the several life-values that the conditions of modern life present to them in any or no ordered synthesis. Art or art's sake, or intellectual pursuit for its own satisfaction, has not the less tended to create an atmosphere of indiscipline, false security, vulgarity, and spiritual emptiness.

It is not necessary, for our present purpose, to say more about persons, institutions, movements and organizations which have been serving the intellectual life of Gujarat, after Dalpatrām and Narmadāśankar. The situation may be summarised by saying that, during this period, literature and intellectual life neither seek to glorify Dharma, nor to uphold, interpret, reform and re-form, and thus serve the ancestral religion. We start, in fact, on a new journey of intellectual life which may be called rich in itself and important, even in terms of spiritual values. But generally it has no concern, direct or indirect, with a church, a creed, a sect, a *mata*, a

mārga which interpret the purpose and ends of human life, viz., *Dharma*, which is the main point of view from which this thesis attempts to take a review of the intellectual life and literature of Gujarat.

A few more personalities, however, who have toiled not in vain toward this direction must be considered summarily. Thus we have amongst the few dissenters, Bholānāth Sārābhāi, a man of God, who sought to serve God with his all, and made, within the limits of his powers, the supremest effort by the purity and self-surrender of his personal life. And the power and efforts he used to build up an institutional organization for the success of his fellow-workers in the service of God, may be considered not unlike Hindu attempts to adjust facts of life in terms of Dharma, at least for the sake of Dharma. Then, we have a group of silent workers who with the help of their wide learning, large sympathies, and simple faith, have given us works that explain and interpret Dharma, that seek to adjust problems of modern life to the eternal call of Dharma; amongst these the endeavours of Govardhanrām, Ānandaśankar and Diwan Bahadur Dhruva must be mentioned as belonging to a high order; and perhaps in a lesser degree have Gattulālāji, Botādkar, Tribhuvan Vyās and Lalitji been struggling to achieve the same end. But there remain two outstanding personalities of our times, who may yet be said to be striving for the cause of Hindu religion and culture in Gujarat. The more literary of the two is Nānālāl, the worthy son of Dalpatrām. Through years of patient study and rich sympathies, Nānālāl has been giving a new orientation to the ancient and medieval heritage, Hindu and Moslem, of India, for rousing a correct understanding and serious appreciation of old values that may serve the New India. His bias for Préma-bhakti, his renderings of ancient and modern scriptures, his rich and original in-

terpretations of life in his poems and dramas, his wonderful songs and hymns are one and all dedications to God, in the service of Dharma, for Dharma's sake, for the joy, guidance and well-being of his fellowmen, for the sake and because of the Swāminārāyaṇa Sampradāya. He has sympathies and points of contact with all the religions of the world. But he is essentially a Swāminārāyaṇi. This is the fundamental fact of his inner life which guides him along his way towards understanding, serving and realizing Dharma, and through it, God.

The other personality is Mahātmā Gandhi. He is the more dynamic of the two. From this frail man of God emanate all-pervading movements and endeavours, personal, institutional, social, artistic, religious, moral, cultural and philosophical. He has gathered round his magnetic personality, men and women of all classes, castes and grades, who help him to do God's work on earth, to re-establish the reign of Dharma as the supremest force in human life. Amongst these, Ānandaśankar (who may also be considered independently of Mahātmā Gandhi), Kākā Kālelkar, Maśruwālā and others have given their quota of learning, experience, service and life for the promotion and re-interpretation of Dharma. Without such human help and sympathies Mahātmā Gandhi would have been like the angel beating his wings in the void, to find himself only a helpless servant of God. Anyhow, the literary and intellectual output of Mahātmā Gandhi which touches all the vital problems of life in the interests of the re-interpretation of the will of God called Dharma, may be said to be the most dynamic and living in the annals of Gujarat, of India, nay, perhaps, of the modern world.

The intellectual struggle of Gandhism has to be waged on two flanks. There is the established orthodoxy on the one hand, and the effects of modern

industrialism, machine and conquest of nature all of which result in materialism, on the other. Gandhi's life and work, whether in social, philosophical, religious, or political matters, is the result of a subtle fusion of the East and the West arising out of personal reflexion, experiments and experience. Anyhow, the sum total of all his teachings consists in the new values he gives to all human institutions and organizations in terms of service of the community, and to the individual as a living spiritual unit, unique by himself. In spite of his considerable indebtedness to Western thought and method Mahātmā Gandhi is perhaps most influenced in his inmost being by the teachings of orthodox Hinduism in general, and by the teachings and activities of the Swāminārāyaṇa Sampradāya above all. It is true that he was born a Vallabhite, and he just escaped conversion to Christianity, but he is not a member of any Sampradāya as such, even within the Hindu fold. The contact of his early life with the Vallabhi Sampradāya has left its effects on him, yet most of his thought, activities and even methods, most of the institutions which he has been building up and serving, have the flavour of Swāminārāyaṇism, more than that of any other sect of Hinduism.

For Mahātmā Gandhi the Gitā is the book of life, and Krishna the Teacher *par excellence* of life. He believes life to be a *Yajna*, which means that *Sarvārpaṇa*, complete self-surrender, is a necessity in the struggle for the perfection of human existence. This leads him further to preach *Karmafalatyāga*, that is to say, renunciation of the fruits of action, and *Ārambhatyāga*, that is to say the giving up of making human designs and undertaking them. He asks us to do whatever lies nearest to us of *Āchār dharma*, *Vyavahār dharma*, and other dharmas, to serve in whatsoever position, and to do whatsoever tasks face us, as our share of service

ordained by the will of God. In terms of orthodoxy, Mahātmā Gandhi has repeatedly declared himself willing to accept and serve a *guru* who will help him in his struggle to arrive at a final spiritual adjustment in terms of an ultimate principle which may enable him to be blessed with the vision divine for which he yearns night and day. But, he says, till such a *guru* is obtained by him, he must strive with all his might and being to serve God as best as he can according to his own vision, and to live a dedicated life.

And here our survey must end for the present. I have not tried to be exhaustive either in choosing the authors or choosing the quotations. But I trust this summary will show to what extent writers and poets have performed their duties in analyzing the signs of their times, and helping their fellow-beings upward and onwards. Perhaps it would be well now to note once more the undercurrents of the great literary ocean. In the first place, the literary outburst was an expression of revolt, tempered by an inner respect for the peace and order that belonged to the old and the past. It was both an insurrection and appreciation, an appeal, one long prayer to the powers that be to acknowledge and realize that the personality of a human being is something holy and sacred, not to be trifled with, but respected. It was an appalling experience to sensitive artists and thinking men to see human energy being wasted, human souls, spirits, being crushed and annihilated. They were like men "walking through hell, pitying"; and it may not be too much to say that out of that flame of pity, Gujarati literature was born.

So, although it was an expression of revolt, it was neither revolutionary nor violent. It did not flow in "lava torrents of fever frenzy"; it never incited men to vengeance nor stirred them to the subversion of order; in the midst of high passion restraint

prevailed. Respect for a hoary past, glorious yet not hopelessly dreamy, which ever gave hopes of salvation, somehow sustained and directed the intellectual life of the people.

Nevertheless, we are struck by one or two weaknesses which may be counted as serious faults. It is a great pity, for instance, that most of the poets, writers and singers do not seem to have attempted to understand and firmly grasp the situation confronting them; they also seem to have fallen easy victims, due to an age-long tradition, of the "material versus spiritual" delusion. They therefore failed to grasp fully that these are but two aspects of a single problem of life. With the exception of a very few, the Gujarati poets and thinkers believed on the whole that material amelioration must proceed and is very helpful to the spiritual. And even those that exhorted their followers to greater efforts at material improvement, for instance in their system of agriculture, of farming and transport, etc., did not do much. The rest, however, occupied themselves solely with religious and social reform. And in their search for solutions they did not deign to sweep the ground. Would not that be unpardonably materialistic? For is not the ground 'of the earth earthy'? And so they stood on the earth below and worshipped the Heavens above, praying for guidance and inspiration with the same old lyrics and in the same old doleful tunes. Need we wonder, then, that those who sought to uplift still grew old in the same old rut of custom and dharma?

Such is the unfortunate heritage of medieval India—an uncontrolled bias towards the speculative and the lyrical. So, although most of their scriptural injunctions can be proved to have been based on scientific observation and conclusions, unhappily it has not been science that has been guiding their lives for a long, long time. Yet it is undeniable that

Gujarat is now awake, and has shaken off much of its stupor. It is to be hoped that Gujarat, whose literature has ever been the only balm to its burdened spirit, will now be roused to her fullest health and beauty by the nectar spirit of a greater literature.

CHAPTER XIII

DRAMA AND FINE ARTS

Let us now consider the drama and the fine arts. To begin with, we now raise the curtains of the Gujarati drama and stage, and briefly survey their antecedents, history, development and characteristics, and see how Vaishnavite influence pervades in these.

I

In the preceding chapter we have advocated the view that Gujarati literature consists mainly of poetry, and that in the development of this branch of the intellectual life of Gujarat, it is mainly classical, both in form and matter. Thus poetry supplied the humanity of Gujarat with the higher stuff of life and became a servant and handmaid of religion. It has thus been intimately touching and renovating the vitals of human life and its problems, personal and social, economic and religious. It has actually served the masses and classes of the people by gathering them together in large and small audiences round a platform (*pitha*) to inform and educate them, to please and give them recreation, to help and instruct them to cleanse themselves of their faults, lapses and sins, to reshape and refashion their life towards an even and stable tenor of soul, and to make and mould their character for the acquisition of the final beatitude as envisaged by Dharma. From Narsinha Mehta onwards, the *Bhajan Mandli* has been serving these varied and arduous tasks and functions with considerable success ; thus till we reach Premānanda's time, we see bands of *sādhus*, *bhagats* and their like tramping

up and down the country through its towns and villages, along its river-banks and sea-shores, and singing out the very best of their poetic lore to groups of men and women, small or large. With Premānanda starts the institution of the *Māṇa-bhatt.* Here the poet himself plays the rôle of the supreme actor; in him converge the poet, the musician, the humorist, the critic, the philosopher, and their like, into a single focus of vital activity. His biographer has recorded that once an audience of ten thousand men and women sat spell-bound at the feet of this supreme artist,—certainly the biggest audience one could have in an open-air theatre during those times, almost anywhere in the world.

So far as drama proper is concerned, in the old literature of Gujarat there is no definite proof of the presence of a regular public theatre. Akhā sometimes makes mention of some *naṭa-putli* episodes which are very much like Punch and Judy shows. This suggests that such shows were popular organs of public entertainment, recreation, and instruction. And, Premānanda is also supposed to have written some plays. Scholars are yet divided over the issue whether these plays were written by Premānanda. Anyhow such considerations, one way or the other, will serve no useful purpose for us, for the simple reason that they were neither written to be staged, nor is there any evidence that they were ever staged on a regular theatre. On the contrary, from internal evidence they seem to have been written more for pleasurable reading than for dramatic performance. So also Dalpatṛām wrote a play called *Mithyābhimān*; but that was never staged. Narmadāśankar wrote his *Krishna-Kumāri, Draupadi-darśan, Bālkrishna-vijaya, Rāma-Jānaki-Darśan,* for public performance; all these relate incidents from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*; and he was very keen for

the construction of a national theatre ; but he failed in both these : his plays were acted, but only indifferently ; and his dreams of the theatre he wanted to construct remained dreams till his death. Thereafter Navalrām wrote his *Ānanda Chandā or Bhatnūn Bhopālun*,[1] a play inimitable in its humour and adapted to the gay life of Surat ; this piece is performed in parts, by amateurs only, especially in view of the fact that in spite of its dignity and balance, the characters of the drama belong to the lower strata of society.

Now of translations. There are several translations of the *Śākuntalā* of Kālidās ; but all of them are meant rather to be read. Then we have Nārāyana Hemachandra's translation of a Bengali play called *Aśrumati* ; this also was never staged. During recent years Diwan Bāhādur Dhruva has given us his classic adaptations of some of the well-known Sanskrit dramas ; but these also are hardly stageable with the stage facilities, whatever they are, of our own times in Gujarat.

Thus it is obvious that originally dramas were mainly written in Gujarat from a literary point of view and without considerations of their suitability for the stage, and that even in our own times these tendencies, consciously or unconsciously, persist. Does this mean therefore that dramatic art, at whatever stage of development and of whatever value, was absent in Gujarat ? Really speaking, bands of travelling actors belonging to a not particularly respectable caste, played broad farces, skits and satires, much as it used to be in mediæval Europe. This particular caste, called Targālās, is a degenerated Brahmin group from north Gujarat, speaking a mixture of Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu and Mārwāri tongues. They are devotees of the Śakti

[1] An adaption of Fielding's translation of Molière's *Mock Doctor*.

Goddesses of Gujarat, like Bahucharāji and Ambāji. They use foul language and intolerably vulgar gestures not only in private life, but also in their public performances. Therefore it is supposed that the origin of their occupation must be traced, and in fact it is traceable, to the baser elements in *Śakti-mata*, otherwise so absent, at least in public life, so far as Gujarat is concerned. We must note, however, that during recent times education and stern discipline have enabled the Targālās to give up their old, unbecoming ways and behave as decent human beings. Even then, it is alleged, they need, not merely the guidance, but also the stern control of Directors ; or else, by themselves they are yet so weak-kneed that they cannot conduct themselves within the limits of decorum. In this way, some of them, always male, have been enabled to acquit themselves as first class actors. Now, within this caste there is a sub-section, called Nāik, which has supplied the very best elements of dramatic genius to the Gujarati stage. Thus, for instance, Mr. Jayaśankar has been doing yeoman services to the Gujarati stage ; his abilities of playing the female part in all its intricacies, tenderness and charm of presence, movements, emotions, are said to remain, even to this day in his old age, unsurpassed. This has considerably reacted on the Vaishnavite woman, especially of the rich upper strata, in a variety of directions into the details of which we need not enter here.

Then we have the Rāsa-lilā and the Rāma-lilā. The Rāsa-lilā we shall discuss later, as its performances are more related to dancing than to drama. The Rāma-lilā, on the other hand, dramatizes the story of the Rāmāyaṇa. It is performed in metrical dialogues, monologues, songs and music. The musicians, led by the 'reciter' of the Rāmāyaṇa, enter the stage, salute the audience, and squat

down on the left side of the platform. A few minutes after, the ringing of a gong heralds the arrival of the chief actors; conch-shells are blown to greet them as they seat themselves on a bench—Rāma in the centre, Sitā on his left, and Lakshamaṇa on his right. The gong is once more played to announce the approach of the rest of the actors. The Director of the play, the 'reciter,' now garlands the three, and performs an *ārti* by waving a tray with burning camphor, *kumkum*, cocoanut and flowers on it, in front of each of these three persons. The cocoanut is next broken and distributed amongst the actors, and the Director loudly shouts out the victory (*jaya*) of Sitā and Rāma. The audience joins him with great gusto and delight. The tray is now waved before the copy of the Rāmāyaṇa (usually of Tulsidāsji), meant for the recital of the story. Thereafter the *ārti* is passed on to the members of the audience each of whom is supposed to place at least a copper coin in the tray. And while the tray is thus going round, the actors leave the stage and retire behind the scenes. The musician now plays a tune to keep the audience in good humour. After this is over the reciter coughs, which means that the play will now begin. He bows to the book, sprinkles flowers on it, camphor is kept burning, and the gong is struck once more. The chanting of the verses from the Rāmāyaṇa now begins. At the end of each verse, the reciter explains the meaning of the same in his own words. If it could be dramatized the actors troop in, and play their part. Sometimes sets of verses are recited and explained without any acting in order that there may be no break in the narrative. A great peculiarity of these performances is that along with the main characters of the play, a number of other characters having nothing to do with the narrative as it is recited, are introduced. These do a good deal of foolish ex-

tempore speechifying, jesting and talking with each other, in which everything under the sun is subjected to their arbitration; and sometimes they pass silly remarks, appreciative or deprecatory, on the main incident as it is being enacted.

The incidents of the story are very long; and it requires continual effort on the part of the performers and audiences, from night to night, for a period of eighteen days beginning from the twenty-fifth of the month of Bhādarvā to the twelfth of the month of Āso. The happenings in the drama are taken so seriously and realistically that every day a sort of auction bid is called for, and the highest bidder gets the privilege of garlanding Rāma, Sitā, Lakshamaṇa and Haṇumān, and performing *ārtis* before them on the stage; many of the audience actually give marriage presents (which are announced as they are given) when the scene of Rāma's wedlock with Sitā is enacted amidst all the solemnities of an actual marriage. Valuable ornaments are lent by the well-to-do members of the village or city in order to add to the reality of the scenes enacted; and every one willingly offers what of help, skill and material he can for the successful management of the shows.

The *Rāma-lilā* is performed in cities, large and small, as also in villages all over India. Even in a place like Mathura which is the home *par-excellence* of *Krishṇa-lilā*, the *Rāma-lilā* is a great favourite of the people. And the Vrajavāsīs and the Chobās of Mathurā enjoy the Rāma-lilā as much as they love the Rāsa-lilā.

The Rāma-lilā is not performed in a regular theatre. Fixed places like the temple or the maidan or any other suitable part of the city or village are used for the purpose. And in the arrangement of stage the village worker, artisan and artist offer their contribution with hearts full of devotion

and faith. Thus the Rāma-lilā is the people's drama in which all the folks belonging to a place meet, take part and enjoy themselves, setting aside, for the time being at least, all the distinctions of caste, creed and position which rule their behaviour away in the world of affairs. Thus the Rāma-lilās work considerably for the cause of Vaishnavism, in that they popularize not merely the story-element, but also the sentiments and theory of life that pervade in the Rāmāyaṇa.

There is another source of influence that helped the growth of the Gujarati stage. Some dramatic companies of the Deccan went about in Gujarat, giving the sort of performances they could possibly manage, especially because of the actors' want of knowledge of the Gujarati language. Anyhow, it is said that these dramatic companies were usually popular, for want of anything better; and they actually took away large earnings down into their rocky southern home. In order to avoid difficulties regarding the language problem, they took recourse to the following method: there was the *Sutradhāra* who, sitting in one corner of the stage throughout the course of the play, repeated in a sing-song monotonous tone, in Hindi, whole dialogues and monologues on behalf of the hero, heroine and other characters who did justice only to the musical part of the programme. In fact, people went to these plays more for the music than for the dramatics, if any, in them. Anyhow, let it be said that these performances never went down to the level of the *Bhavāis*. And though accidentally introduced, Hindi has even now remained a distinct feature in some of the Gujarati dramatic companies, started during comparatively recent times.

Let us now discuss the Gujarati drama, properly so called. The beginnings were made in Bombay, where wealthy and industrious Gujaratis migrated

for trade and commerce which became the main activities of their life. The Parsis were perhaps the earliest Gujaratis who came to Bombay. They came from many different localities and regions, towns and villages; so they were really so many different groups, each with traditions and *mores* of its original home. Therefore when they came to Bombay they settled themselves into distinct groups, (of course, interconnected for common welfare under a Panchāyet) and strove to live, more or less, according to the good old ways and outlook which they cherished as a sacred heritage from the history of their forefathers. As part of this heritage, they brought with them to Bombay the local institution of lyrical dramas and operas on episodes from the Shah-nameh, as also on the achievements of local heroes, and on incidents from the local history of the community. These were usually written by local geniuses, and were performed, in their home town or village, also by young men with dramatic talents in the community. Usually they were performed on sacred and festive occasions. So, when these Parsi groups settled in Bombay they continued these dramatic activities as part of the general programme for the enjoyment of life. Later, they started, in amateur fashion, dramatic activities in the city which sought to cater for larger audiences, not merely with a view to please, but also with the hope to gain and profit. These grew into organized institutions, *mandalis* and clubs, with their dramatic activities and theatres. Here, besides the time-worn material from the Shah-nameh like the story of Sohrab and Rustom, or Bézan and Manijéh, dramas of English writers, particularly Shakespeare's, were rendered into the plain, homely Gujarati of the Parsis, and were successfully staged. Usually, the Shah-nameh metre was adopted whenever verse renderings were found necessary. Besides, during

later times social dramas came to be written and staged with great success ; in this connection special mention must be made of the labours of the late Mr. Kaikhusro Kābrāji who used his talents as a dramatist in the service of social and religious reform amongst the Parsis.

But these Parsi enthusiasts also strove to serve their Hindu brethren from Gujarat. In order to do this, the Paurānik lore was explored, and adapted in terms of operas, wherein in most of the action singing predominated. And, in order to suit the taste of the Hindus, all these dramas and operas were written in the Hindi tongue. Large audiences of devout Hindu men and women of Gujarat attended these operas, usually on the no-moon day of every month.

But there was a fundamental difficulty with these dramas. They were written in Hindi not because the Hindus desired Hindi versions, but mainly because Parsi writers and actors were unable, so to say, to bring out satisfactory Gujarati versions and stage them, such that they might attract Hindu audiences. There was, however, a sufficient number of intellectuals amongst the Hindus to venture upon an undertaking designed to serve the cause of the Gujarati language and culture, as well as provide entertainment and instruction to their fellow-men. Most of those who were willing to act were school-masters (*Mehtājees*). They started a dramatic club for the encouragement of purely Gujarati dramas. There were two difficulties in their way : tho Parsi companies did not like these *Mehtājees* whose efforts, they saw clearly, would deprive them of their monopolist position ; and these *Mehtājees* had neither knowledge of dramatics, nor any drama simple enough for their capacities, nor any person to guide them in their efforts. The Parsis knew but little of stage-craft ; but the Hindus knew less, or rather, none at all. And the Parsis were naturally unwilling to

give away the secrets of their craft. Besides, the Parsis were owners of theatres which they were unwilling to rent out unless they were paid exorbitantly. So these *Mehtājees* started in confusion and rather tactlessly. But to their good fortune they found a friend in the sweet personality of Diwan Bahādur Ranchhodbhāi Udayarām who must be acclaimed as the father of the modern Gujarati drama and its stage. Straightaway he wrote his *Hariśchandra* for the stage; it illustrates the Puranic story of an ancient Hindu king and his queen, which easily appealed to the religious propensities of the Hindu mind, because of the eternal principles of unending marriage partnership and of strict adherence to truth which the story of the drama unfolds. He also wrote two social dramas called *Jayakumāri-vijaya* and *Lalitā-dukha-darśak* in which he vividly illustrated the evil consequences of child-marriages, the prohibition of widow-re-marriages and other evil customs in the Hindu life of Gujarat. His *Lalitā-dukha-darśak* marks some distinct and welcome departures from the conventions of the Sanskrit drama. Besides, his *Nala-Damayanti*, *Bāṇāsur-mada-mardana*, *Madālasā* and other plays, inspired by incidents from the Purānās, also deserve mention.

Let us also mention that Ranchhodbhāi gave his untiring attention to the training of the *Mehtājees* for acting their various parts, for a few years in the beginning. Thus Ranchhodbhāi was very successful in his attempts to help the cultivation of higher taste among the classes and masses of the Gujarati public of Bombay, not only by writing dramas, but also by actually helping to stage them, by no means a simple task in those days. And, he gave a definite death-blow to the vulgar elements and organizations of olden times which prevailed in Gujarat during and before his times.

All these efforts of Ranchhodbhāi ultimately

brought forth a Gujarati theatre and stage that has since then nursed the hopes and aspirations of the drama of Gujarati life. Thus the Mumbāi Gujarati Nāṭak Mandali was formed ; and well-known dramatic artists, musicians and directors have continued to work and carry forward the tasks set to them and their predecessors by Ranchhodbhāi.

The new era thus inaugurated by Ranchhodbhāi was later happily followed up successfully by Dahyābhāi Dholsāji, Nathurām Kavi and others. Dahyābhāi, a Jain Vāniā, wrote his famous dramas with a prolific speed ; and he started a dramatic company called the Deśi Nāṭak Samāj which performed his dramas, and has been doing its quiet work upto our own times. He chose his material mostly from the Puranas ; witness, for instance, his *Sati-Draupadi, Umādevdi, Sati Lilāvati, Sati Devayāni, Aśrumati* and such other plays. These invariably depict the struggles of the life within and without, of men and women who sacrifice everything for the sake of their devotion to God ; no play in this group is without its problems on earth here below to compel gods like Vishnu, Indra, Krishna and others to journey down in the midst of humanity in order to give succour to their votaries and devotees, and thus give proofs of a divine government that shapes human ends ; thus these dramas sought to preach eternal lessons regarding the ultimate power and potency, justification and dispensation, splendour and majesty of the life of a godly man (or woman) lived in the face of difficulties and disappointments, trials and woes, lived essentially for the sake of and according to Dharma.

But Dāhyābhāi introduced some relieving features in his dramas which would have otherwise proved rather heavy for modern audiences. Dāhyābhāi wisely worked up thin sub-plots in his dramas ; they are free from the vulgar elements of the *Bhavāis* ;

they are well-balanced and even dignified, and they usually depict the main issues of some current problems vitally connected with the social life of the Gujaratis. These sub-plots are usually mild satires on the undesirable social customs especially amongst the Brahmins and the Vāṇiās, with a view to educate public opinion against these.

If ever the Gujarati people was relieved of its usual stifling atmosphere, over-burdened with the weight of religion, the credit must go to Kavi Nathurām for his bold step in writing *Saubhāgya-sundri*, a really fine, light, love-play—a social drama. It is true that his *Yoga-kanyā* and his *Bilva-mangala*, in themselves very popular and noble plays, are written in a religious strain and under the influence of religion. But these by themselves cannot possibly secure for the Kavi the sure place of an immortal dramatist. That credit must go to his *Saubhāgya-Sundri*. Gujarati audiences in the city of Bombay and throughout the Presidency north of the city right up to Karachi, wherever the Mumbāi Gujarati Nāṭak Mandali visited, went mad over this wonderful production. Not that the religious, even sectarian, elements are absent in his piece; in fact, parts of the drama are instinct with a supernatural atmosphere; the song which begins with *Mahné sahayya karśé Morāri ré* is distinctly reminiscent of the devotional tone and attitude of the *Bhakta* poets. But the avenue has changed; as in literature so in drama, the delineations of the immediate problems, personal and social, of the representative living human types in contemporary life, form the main theme; and elements of the divine and the supernatural take a subordinate place from which they cater to serve, not to rule, the main theme and situation of the drama.

Let us also make at least a passing reference to the Rāval brothers who started the Vānkānér Dramatic

Company. Thereafter the Morbi Dramatic Company and other companies have started on their useful careers. In this connection younger Rāval deserves special mention for his supreme rôles of Narsinha Mehta and other characters on the Gujarati stage.

After Nathurām, Mr. Vibhākar has tried to impart a political colouring to the Gujarati drama. He has written several plays of which *Madhu Bansari* is perhaps the most representative of this type of drama. And Mr. Mulāni, another modern enthusiast, has been trying to show up the excesses of modernism in his dramas. In a sense, perhaps, he represents a reaction against evils like drink and gambling now prevalent amongst the Gujarati upper classes of our own days.

In spite of these modern movements in the history of Gujarati drama, there seems to be something lacking, something like a void, after the passing away of Dāhyābhāi Dholsāji. And Gujarat and the Gujaratis still await the coming of a dynamic personality to lift up the Gujarati drama and stage which really needs improvements, readjustments and reorientation of a vital character.

At this stage it may be advisable to mention some of the special features of the Gujarati drama. To begin with, even to-day most of the dramatic compositions are written in the poetic form ; even what little of prose we get is invariably in the *duhā* form of rhyming couplets. During recent times, due to contact with the West, new playwrights have been attempting to throw off the old conventions, and write entirely in prose ; but experience has been teaching them not altogether to do away with the verse-form. And it is urged by many that whether it is the stage (professional or amateur), or social or domestic functions, however small, the natural medium of expression for the

inner life and spirit of the people tends to be the poetic form.

There is another trait of the Gujarati drama which we must now mention. We have already referred to Premānanda who gave his Bhajan recitals to large audiences. And during the centuries that have followed, there has been hardly a drama which has not its *Bhajan Mandali* of some sort. So also there is no Gujarati drama without its full musical programme, just as no function in the social and religious life of the Gujaratis is complete without music, vocal and instrumental.

Then, let us remember that the Gujarati drama has availed itself freely of the various folklores of the many castes, communities, cultures and peoples within the cultural boundaries of Gujarat, with their varied marriage-songs, lullabies, dirges, odes and bardic lore. And if the stage is but a reflection of the life of social groups, it must depict the same in terms of local emotions and patterns, surrounded by the colour, rhythm and idealism that emanate from them, and feed and enrich the very sources of their existence. The subject is vast, and its intricacies require a special study of the problem.

And lastly, we have what is loosely called the '*garbā*'-dance or the '*garbā-rāsa*', a rhythmic dance performed by a company of persons, male and female, to the accompaniment of music and song. It is perhaps the most valued and picturesque part of every drama even to-day. Due to the music and dance elements which are brought out in their fullness by the colour and variety of costumes, the scenery and lighting effects which modern stage-craft has enabled us to manage, the occasion and sentiments of the dance are so vividly delineated in all their reality and splendour that this dance can be said to be the most important and interesting

part of the modern Gujarati stage. We shall speak more about the dances of Gujarat later on in this chapter.

After the above short sketch of the drama and stage of Gujarat, if we examine the nature of all the dramas we may be compelled to the inevitable conclusion that three-fourths of them are related predominantly to problems raised by Vaishnavite thought and activities. Religion has disallowed, except during very recent years, the drama and the stage their legitimate freedom which could enable the genius and master-builder to raise monuments of dramatic art. As has been Gujarati life, so have been its drama and stage. And even though the screen industry is growing apace in our midst, income returns make it amply evident that, in the main, films on religious subjects have been proving more successful even in a city like Bombay. With this proviso, let us add that modern Gujarati drama and stage bear a direct and living influence on the social and cultural life of the people of Gujarat; and even as the Ākhyāns of Premānanda are yet orally recited by so many women of Gujarat, some of the appeals, prayers and hymns to Hari by a Draupadi or a Sūrdās of the Gujarati stage are enshrined in the hearts of the people. Social dramas are not lacking, however; and though few, they are having comparatively great influence in the formation of reformed opinion. Modern Gujarati life and its problems and readjustments are varied, complex, and subtle; and they are shaping themselves rather fast. In this reshaping we have, though few, solitary and thin in content and depth, some new plays which seek to grapple with the various aspects and issues of human freedom and the government of man's estate. Non-professional play-wrights, though few, yet deeply sagacious and warmly in earnest, have more or less

failed to reach the public effectively, as there is no regular amateur theatre. The latter-day drama tends to deal mainly with two topics: (1) social life, especially social disabilities of the labouring classes and of womankind, and (2) political enthusiasm. This serves to attract the youth to the wider world of social service, thus wrenching them away from the paralyzing touch of caste and family bonds. And the development of the drama must prove a most welcome event for us; because in a land where over ninety per cent. of the people are illiterate, the drama and its stage could become the most direct and powerful media of education and stimulus to a new awakening.

II

Having generally discussed the drama let us now undertake the consideration of the dances. In their pure forms, Gujarat may be said to have two fundamental dances, each arising out of distinct traditions of its own. These are (1) the *garbā* dance, (2) the *rāsa* dance. There is a third variety which may be called the *garbi* dance.

Now, the *garbā* dance is traceable to the folklore and the *Śākta* traditions and practices prevalent in ancient and mediæval Gujarat; and the *rāsa* dance belongs to the *Bhāgvat* traditions, and finds its completest expression in the *rāsa* of Krishna as described in the *Daśmaskandha.*

1

The *garbā* dance then. We have already suggested that the *garbā* belongs to the folk-traditions and practices of Gujarat. And as already mentioned in the chapter on Literature the folklore of early Gujarat is intimately connected with the *Śākta* lore and practices of the region. Thus the *garbā* dance

is essentially related in its origins to *Śakti* worship. Now this view is supported by a number of surviving factors, and beliefs connected therewith, as revealed in the *garbā* dances even of our own days. Thus for instance, tender seedlings of rice or *jowār* are sown a few days previous to the day of the dance in a small basket containing wet clay; this basket is placed in a wooden construction called *māndvi*. After certain ceremonies are performed such a *māndvi* is supposed to possess the presence of the Devi within it, and the seedlings are actually called the *Mātā*, that is to say, the Mother. Such a *māndvi* forms the centre around which the dancers of the *garbā* arrange themselves in a circle. Sometimes, instead of such a basket of seedlings a picture of the Mātā or Her image is placed in such a *māndvi*. Thus a *māndvi* is somewhat similar to the small tabernacle, with a pyx containing the consecrated wafer called Host within it, which is placed on the altar of a Roman Catholic Church.

Then there is a third variety of the apparatus which forms the centre of the dance circle. One or more small earthen-pots perforated with numerous holes, each with an oil-lamp burning within it, are placed in the centre of the dance-circle, instead of the *māndvi*. In fact such a many-holed *chatty* is called a *garbā*. This suggests that the dance may have derived its name from this central object around which it was meant to be performed. Whether such a *garbā* is of an earlier origin than the *māndvi* with its basket of jowar seedlings is a matter which we may consider at a later stage.

Anyhow, such a *chatty* or a *māndvi* is used in a variety of ways. There is a variety wherein each of the dancers going round the circle carries a *māndvi* or a *garbā* over his or her head, in which case the central object of the dancing circle is done away with. So also two persons can dance in a pair with

garbās or *māndvis* over their heads. And even a single person can dance a *garbā* with such an earthen-pot or a *māndvi* over his or her head.

Before we describe the technique of the *garbā*, it will be better if we dispose of the consideration of the song and music elements which accompany the dance. We have traditional poems specially devised or written for the *garbā* dance. It is a long poem describing the exploits of a *Śakti* deity and singing her praise or *Mahimā-gāna*. The poem is, therefore, more of a narrative, rather longish, with the material in it quite diffused, and not necessarily going round a central point like a lyric. It aims at pacifying the needs, appeasing the anger, and pleasing the Devi with a view to receive boons and favours from her. In this sense the poem is part of the apparatus of devotion, along with music and dance, for worshipping the goddess by removing her displeasure and asking mercies and favours of her. Vallabh Dholā (1640–1751),[1] Nātha Bhavana (1681–1800)[2] and Mithu Bhagat (1738–1791)[3] are the *Śākta* poets who have woven vivid pictures of the mysteries and miracles of their *sāmpradāyic* history into *garbās* which are sung even today.

The *garbā* song is sung in a special tune (a *dhāla*, lit., slope, way, manner) with its own rise and fall in a scale of musical notes not acknowledged by the classical music of India, but coming out of the folk-music of Gujarat.

Now is the time for us to look into the technique of the *garbā* dance. The dance can be played by a single person or a pair of persons or groups of men and women. Mixed dancing is not allowed, though with one exception, viz., when on certain festive occasion, the head of a family and his wife, with a

[1] Mehtā, N. D.: Śakta Sampradāya, p. 115.
[2] Ibid., p. 112.
[3] Ibid., p. 120.

māndvi or a *garbā* over the head of each, dance together in the centre of a circle of women dancers, instead of the sacred object; none of the dancers in the circle can carry the sacred object over their head. The number of persons in the *garbā* dance is unlimited. Any of the variety of sacred object of the dance must be present either in the centre of the dance circle or over the heads of the dancers. There must be one leader of the dance who leads the company in the *dhāla* of the *garbā*. All the dancers must face the sacred object when it is in the centre, and never turn their backs towards it. If the sacred object is over the heads of the dancers they are expected to dance face to face, back to back, side to side; in no case should the back or side of any be turned to the front of another dancer. This is due to the belief that the sacred object represents the corpus of the *Devi*, and should therefore be treated with due respect and care by everyone who takes part in the dance.

The *garbā* dance can be played at any time of the day or night, during any season throughout the year, and on any occasion when it is felt that the *Mātā* should be pleased. But it is considered incumbent that the *garbā* dance must be played during dark nights of the *navarātra* festivals which are specially set apart for the worship of the *Mātā*. So also should the *garbā* dance be part of the marriage festivities and of the festivities on the occasion of the *simantonnayana samskāra*; and, it is on both or any of these occasions that sometimes the head of the family dances with his wife in the centre of a circle of women dancers.

There is a belief that the *garbā* dance was meant to be performed by women only; and according to the traditions connected with King Pattin Rāval of Chāmpāner men took to the dancing of *garbā* from his time. Anyhow, owing to the Sāmpradāyic for-

vour which has gathered round it through traditions, the *garbā* is now sung and danced by members of both the sexes. Therefore, for all practical purposes, the dance, the music, and the theme of the song, have become necessary limbs of the technique of the *upāsanā* lore of not only the *Śākta's* but also of the folk-traditions of Gujarat. During recent times, however, there is a tendency to deprecate *garbā* dancing by males, because of its effeminate character; and, in fact, a new dance called *Hanumān-thekdā* is coming into fashion, in its place. In this new dance the performers have to leap about in a vigorous, masculine manner, with freedom of bodily movements which are disallowed in the *garbā* dance.

We need not say that time has had its effect on the character of the *garbā* dance and song. On the whole, the fundamental elements in the dance tend to remain constant; the song element, on the other hand, especially regarding its matter, is undergoing vast changes; it is fast losing its theme of the Mātā's *mahimā gāna*; and national and patriotic themes are now creeping into the *garbā* song. May it not be that the failure of the *garbā* dance in its struggle to express the heroic character of these new themes, is responsible for the preference now given to the *Hanumān-thekdā* dance?

The evidence collected leads us to conclude that the *garbā* dance is essentially related to the Śākta lore of Gujarat. It may be described as the *ārādhanā-nritya* (religious dance) undertaken to worship the Mātā. The *garbā* is thus a sacrament of worship expected of the devotee by the Deity, which if not fulfilled with perfect adherence to ceremonial details, may result in the displeasure and even the wrath of the Mātā. Therefore, negatively, the *garbā* is more to keep away the wrath of the goddess than to be in tune with her personality.

So, a sense of distance and respect always exists between the devotee and the Deity ; and fear usually accompanies the performance of the whole ceremonial. This means that the joy that lurks during the whole ceremony is the expectant companion of this fear, hoping to seek its fulfilment only at the end of the proper dispensation of the ceremony. In this way the *garbā* dance must be considered part of the *mārga* and the *mata* of the *Śāktas*, and is perhaps common to all the *Sampradāyas* within the *Śākta-mata*.

Before we conclude our observations on the *garbā*, let us consider the comparative value of the two types of the central object of worship in the *garbā* dance. It is a common practice amongst the forest tribes of Gujarat and Rajputana to place an oil-lamp covered by a many-holed *chatty* in the middle of an open glade, to attract game, specially hares, who gather and gambol round about this *chatty*. Such *chatties*, one or more, also form the central object of the dance of the Bhils who are animists and devotees of the Mātā. And, if we remind ourselves that the plains of Gujarat were once covered over with forests in ancient times, may it not be that the *garbā* is just a survival of magical and cultural practices connected with the hunter's occupation and the forest-lore born of it, now driven eastwards and south-eastwards beyond the plains. If this suggestion has any value, it may also be that the basket with the *jowār* or rice seedlings within it (which forms an alternative to the *chatty*) similarly belongs to the lore of the peasant, who, as he cleared the forests and cultivated the seeding plants, came to learn the value and importance of the seedling process as the most vital for the successful growth and abundance of his crops—as vital as the *chatty* with the lamp under it had proved itself to be for the hunter in his forest

home. If it be so, then certainly the *garbā* must be accepted as earlier than the *māndvi* with the seedling within it.

Having discussed the dances of the hunter and the peasant, we must now turn our eyes to the *rāsa* dances which can be traced back to the traditions of the shepherds and the cowherds who dwelt in the woodlands of the Vraja territory. The presence of the flute, the dresses the people put on, and the sentiments they display in the dance, give a strong indication of the shepherd-cowherd lore; the scenery and atmosphere of the dance belong definitely to woodland pastures and their river-banks; and the supernatural elements that pervade the whole literature connected with these dances belong to a rich peasant-shepherd culture.

The *rāsa* dances are described fully in the Bhāgvat. They form the main theme of a superb drama of love and mating, in five acts. Besides several dialogues, songs, music and discourses, there are nine different dances in all, each with its own place and technique for the proper delineation of the purpose, meaning, and value of the drama of *rāsa* as a whole. Perhaps because the ultimate purpose of the drama is to prepare the way for, and ultimately to enact, the *Rāsotsava* in terms of five dances called the *Mahā-rāsa*, as also perhaps because the major action in the drama is in terms of dances, the *rāsa* is traditionally known as a dance and not as a drama.

The *rāsa* drama consists of several stages, each contributing to the making of the *Mahā-rāsa* with which the drama ends. There are six main dances in which Krishna dances with the gopīs, in different formations: a dance called *Laghu-rāsa*, in the beginning, and five others during the *Mahā-rāsa* at the end of the drama; and all these dances progressively fulfil the requirements of true love and mating that know no end, and abide for ever. Then

there are three other dances between the *Laghu-rāsa* and the *Mahā-rāsa*, enacted by the gopīs alone in the absence of Krishna, as devices to undo the effects of their separation from Him, and thus to recall Him; these three dances play the rôle of cleansing the gopīs of the last specks of dirt from their minds and preparing them for the final beatitude in the *Mahā-rāsa*. The dances are accompanied by music and songs. The music is played by the Ghāndharvas and their wives; in harmony with this, the anklets (*nūpur*), *kinkini* (the bells in the waist-band), and the armlets and bracelets (*valaya*) which adorn the gopīs, bring forth their raging, tumultuous clangs as the gopīs dance to and fro; the *vēṇu-nāda* is played for the call of the dance; and amidst the tumultuous beats of the drum (*dundubhi*) begins the *Mahā-rāsa*. So also, all the dances have their songs of the gopīs; the Ghandharvas play their part; and the wasps add a droning bass; in the middle of the *Laghu-rāsa* and in the beginning of the *Madhya-nritya* the gopīs sing and dance their best; so much so, that in the latter case when the Lord Krishna bursts into "a music of the spheres," out of sheer inability to accompanying Him the gopīs resort to keep themselves in tune with His music by merely singing the bass. Let us also remember that as the song and music are considered essential during the dances, so also are they considered before and between them: witness, for instance, the great song of wail, self-surrender and recall of Krishna by the gopīs; it proves to be the last instrument of the gopīs to secure the return of Krishna, and the continuation of the dance eternal that follows His return. So also do dramatics play their rôle of bringing the gopīs nearer to the *Mahā-rāsa* for which they were yearning; and discourses on serious subjects, like Dharma and Love, form necessary pre-

ludes to the dances; these discourses are linked up with conversations and dialogues; then there is a side-plot and a tableau in between two tense situations, serving as links to keep up the harmony of the whole.

Before we go into the details of these dances it would be proper for us to take note of the type of natural surroundings, the time and the season which form the background of the dances. The *rāsas* are autumn dances played throughout the full-moon night, under a cloudless starry heaven. The scenes of the dances change from woodland-glades to river-banks, onwards into the waters of the river, and from thence back into the thick of the forest; flowers of every shape and colour, bedecked with honeyed pearls of dew, send out aromas of infinite and maddening varieties over the soft breezes that oscillate between the river and the woods, in the midst of the constant hum of the wasps that hover over them.

Let us see the dances proper now. As we have already hinted elsewhere, in some of the dances the gopīs dance in the company of Krishna, and in some they have to dance without Him. In the *Laghu-rāsa*, the dance is performed by all the gopīs, with the Lord Krishna in their midst. In the *Mahā-rāsa*, however, during the *Gādha-nritya* and the *Madhya-nritya*, the whole of the dancing party divides itself into groups of twenty-four persons—sixteen gopīs plus eight personations of Krishna; within each such dancing circle the women arrange themselves into eight pairs; and each such pair has a Krishna with it to cheer and lead it in dance and song. In the third stage of the *Mahā-rāsa* dance, the dance formation is definitely one Krishna to each of the gopīs, i.e. as many personations of Krishna as the number of gopīs, each of whom had to be satisfied by Krishna according to her individual wish which she expressed while taking the

Kātyáyani vow. In the last two scenes of the *Mahā-rāsa*, viz. the water-dance and the dance of flower-gathering, we have only a single Krishna in the midst of the gopīs and the gopāngnās, as in the *Laghu-rāsa*. There are other formations which are said to be described in the Bhāgvat. There is the suggestion, for instance, that between any pair of gopīs there is a Mādhava (i.e. Krishna); but, by calculation, that would make it a circle of thirty-two dancers, sixteen gopīs and as many personations of Krishna. Another suggestion is that in the centre of each such circle of twenty-four dancers, Krishna with two gopīs by His side should play on His flute. This is, no doubt, how a number of exquisite paintings represent the circle of *rāsa* dancers. And, as we shall describe later, the Rāsadharis have also such dance formations. But the Bhāgvat speaks of no such formation. Let us remind ourselves also that the *véṇu-nāda* has no place in the dance as such, according to the Bhāgvat. Reminiscent of a joy lived long, long ago, but now no more, the notes of the flute call the gopīs back to that pristine harmony into the woodlands from whence the call came; such appeals generate a complete disregard of their normal duties and surroundings, and awaken in the hearts of the gopīs pangs due to separation from their Lord; and so they follow the call of the flute to wait on Him and surrender themselves body and soul to His care. Thus, after piping the gopīs away to the woodlands, the function of the *véṇu* ends. The dance is led by Krishna without the help of His flute; the gopīs can no longer remain content with the music of His flute; they can now be satisfied with nothing less than living with the musician Himself. There are many other dance formations suggested; but they, likewise, are not mentioned in the Bhāgvat.

Throughout the dances the senses, intelligence and emotions of the dancers play their fullest part along with the movements of the limbs of their bodies. We shall now take up some of these as they are described in the Bhāgvat. Various uses and manipulations of the limbs of the body, and the ornaments and other paraphernalia on the person of the dancers have each and all to play their part and fulfil the purpose of the dance.[1] Thus foot-movements—toes, heels and all—and leg-movements first start their journey to explore rhythmic expressions in measured steps, long and short, in quick and slow pace, accomplished in single, double and treble timings; the legs actively participate with the foot-movements, forward and backward, in slides, leaps and jerks. These rhythms of the feet and legs are accompanied by the sensual articulations of the hand, arm, wrist and fingers, with a fickle turn now, and a trembling stir again, in agitating, palpitating, throbbing, fleeting, flying, rolling movements, somehow struggling to link themselves up with the harmony and rhythm of the steps. Realizing the insufficiency of the hands and feet and legs to generate and work out the fullness of the harmony, the dancers scheme up soft, low and gentle movements of sportive humour accompanied with subtle smiles, articulating with the wanton, amorous affectations of their eyebrows, now by a frown bent up like the bow, or again by a graceful sentimental droop suggestive of a faith within that prays for the ultimate success of the dance.

In close connection with this trilogy of movement to body forth the harmony of the dance, another fraternity of three limbs launch their corporate cooperation to extend the meaning and rhythm of the dance. Thus the waist, hips and loins, evasively

[1] In the discussion that follows I have taken considerable help from Śrimad Vallabhāchārya's commentary called Subodhiniji.

swaying in ambiguous rhythms, curl up in tortuous, spiral curves, and swirl up agitatingly, as if to capture the weird waywardness of the rhythm just escaping; up above the waistlands, the heaving breasts shake and quiver, tremble and flow about under the rich raiment that holds them from the fall the flow engenders; and the cheeks drip, and pearly drops slide from under the dangling ear-rings as if narrating, one by one, the tale of an inner struggle and scrutiny to collocate and set in order the yet unfulfilled harmonies of the dance.

To accompany, and yet to belie the findings of the cheeks, the flowery braid over the head elegantly lets itself loose with wanton, coquettish affectation, in order to lift up the dance in its splendour; and, in the last resort, the waist, unable any more to bear the limitations of the girdle, lets it move out of its position on an uneven and dangerous path, in gestures of amorous sentiments and joyous exhilarations, not merely to rescue the eluding rhythm but even to contribute lusciousness and life to the ever-increasing harmony of the dance. In this manner do the hair and waist let the juices of the heart flow out freely to enter every atom of the body, as if to make the body as light and fine and bodiless as the soul that pours its spirit into music, dance and song.

And, as all these play their respective rôles in their own way, each and all, towards the fulfilment of the final goal of the dance, from the throats of the gopīs pours out music in praise of their Lord, in charming, pithy, strong melodies. Thus dancing—screwing, waving, trembling, flowing, singing in unison—do the gopīs flit to and fro round Krishna from end to end, like the spontaneous, sparkling, splendrous sparks of lightning generated round a ring of clouds.[1]

[1] Daśma-skandha, XXXIII, 8.

In this way the Divine Comedy is enacted by Krishna and the gopīs to escape and even to transcend the fetters of time and space, make each moment eternal, and expand the space under their tiny footfalls into unending universes of eternity. In fact, it is suggested that each of the dances is devised to progressively vibrate and tune up every atom of the body, mind and soul of the gopīs in harmony with the *rasa* (i.e. the sentiment) of the dance, so that the dancers may become equal to the dance of the god of *rasa* (i.e. Krishna), satisfy Him by at least holding the harmony of the dance aloft, and pour *rasa* on Him even as He does on them.

Such a dance must have an audience not of mortal human beings, but of the gods of heaven with their consorts[1]; and the minstrels of the gods and their wives come down to sing of the dalliance of Krishna and to praise the purity of His love.[2] The gods praise the dance and shower flowers on the dancers.[3] And the wasps of the forests[4] as keepers of the forest bounds, follow the dancers and music intuitively, as if to recognize the fact that the assemblage of humanity gathered in the woods were but the rarest heavenly flowers that bloomed at their best on that moonlit night just to spread the fragrance of their hearts over the woodlands, the sands and the holy Kālindi.

What is the aim and purpose of the *rāsa*? The writer of the Bhāgvat is clear at several places in defining this. Thus before He plays the *vēṇu-nāda*, the Lord Krishna feels the desire to play the *rāsa*.[5] This statement naturally reminds us of the first two *sutras* of the Bādrāyaṇa-*sutras* which narrate the desire of the *Brahman* to become many. And when the last dance is over, the Lord, though Lord and Master of the gopīs, is said to have

[1] Daśma-skandha, XXXIII, 4. [2] Ibid., 16.
[3] Ibid., 5. [4] Ibid., 16, 25. [5] Ibid., XXIX, 1.

established His own *virya* (semen) into Himself by *Yoga* [1] ; also, He is said to have fulfilled the purpose and function of the autumn full-moon night by playing the *rāsa* which revealed and interpreted the fullness of the *rasa* of His love.[2] There is a tradition which suggests that the *rāsa* was devised by the Lord Krishna for the pleasure and edification of the gopīs whose ardour for an inner harmony between themselves and their Lord could be satisfied only by Him. In this sense, the *rāsa* is symbolic of a ride together, not merely the last but also eternal, with Krishna, forced out of Him by His devotees, as the final reward, the last fruit, and the only justification of their complete, self-surrendering *bhakti* which persists merely to remove the agonies of separation from the Lord by serving Him with their all. Thus the dances are to be understood as so many rituals or supernatural feats of Krishna, with the help of which He enables the gopīs to love Himself as He loves them. The whole of the *rāsa*, then, can be seen as a series of ceremonies and rituals of self-expansion and mutual appreciation between the gopīs and their Lord, such that ultimately the gopīs may join the Lord and the Lord may meet them as rivers meet the sea. Or, the *rāsa* dances can be seen as prescribing the ways in which many fractional entities join hands and dance back to the unity which they once enjoyed, but which they are denied as fractions now. In short, the *rāsa* is symbolic of the reaching down of God's grace to mortals here below, in response to their longings and struggles to accomplish His will and to seek His Kingdom.

As we have already said before, throughout the dances the senses and imagination, the intelligence and ideation, and the feelings and emotions of the

[1] Ibid., XXXIII, 25. [2] Ibid., 26.

dancers have to play their fullest part in tune with the movements of the limbs of their bodies ; and the moral and spiritual issues involved in love and mating are delineated in their right setting between and during the dances ; the expression, ardour and sublimation of sex seems to be the burden of the drama ; and its main problem seems to be, from one point of view, the formation of a technique for the treatment of disintegrated personality ; and it may be that if the problem of the Gita is to remove the *vishāda* of Arjuna by *Yoga*, the problem of the *rāsa* dances is to remedy by *Yoga* the *vishāda* in the hearts of the gopīs due to a perpetual sense of *viraha* from Krishna, of losing Krishna. This *Yoga* is effected through a series of dances at the end of which, like Arjuna, the gopīs are perpetually cured of the sickness of their hearts. We need not go into the details of the subtle analysis of the gopīs in terms of nineteen different types, each with its own characteristic ailments and definite line of treatment. An analysis of the two dance-dramas and of the song of self-surrender and recall, between the *Laghu-rāsa* and the *Mahā-rāsa* will unravel the maladies of the psyche of the gopīs ; and the whole of the *Mahā-rāsa* can be proved to be containing the technique of the synthetic treatment which successfully cured the gopīs of their sense of *viraha* from Krishna and restored them to a state of perpetual reunion.

Let us now say a word about the elements of magic in the *rāsa*. Just as the *garbo* or the *māndvi* is present in the *garbā* dance, is there no sacred object round which the *rāsa* dances are played ? Our answer is that Krishna is such a sacred magic object round which all the dances are enacted. In fact, in this case, the sacred object is actively co-operating and leading the dance ; and it is such *help and lead* of Krishna that enables the

dancers to keep up courage and save themselves from exhaustion and fatigue, from stage to stage up to the very end of the drama. Then, between the *Laghu-rāsa* and the *Mahā-rāsa*, through a succession of scenes, when Krishna is absent, He becomes the subject and object of the inquiry and the pursuit, the lost jewel in search of which the gopīs go from end to end of the forest, and ultimately seek His refuge in a song of self-surrender on the banks of the river. Like a wise physician, when the actual reunion takes place, Krishna suggests that He was never absent or away from the gopīs in these tragic scenes of *viraha*, self-mortification and toil through which the gopīs have just passed. May it not be that these scenes form the main part of His analysis of the malady they suffered from, and point the direction in which the treatment starts with His discourse on Love ?

Thus through conversations, discourses, dialogues, dramatics, music and song, do the *rāsa* dances function as removers of psychological, sexual and moral ailments of the women of Vraja, married and unmarried. The object of love magically possesses them ; it is, in its very nature, completely self-possessed ; but the gopīs cannot possess it, however much they endeavour, with the help of their own resources. The object of their desire, the magic totem round which their psyche hovers, viz. Krishna, so bewitches and captivates the gopīs, sick at heart, that each of them in her own way resorts to subtle devices, wails and sings, calls and taunts Krishna, somehow to attract Him and be in union with Him ; they even personate Him, mimic Him, and act in dual and multiple personalities in the course of choosing and seeing the path for themselves when pride ruled their will ; till amid the encircling gloom, far from home, in that night too dark to find Him, they prayed to Him to forget the past, and sought

the kindly light to keep their feet and lead them on, if not to the distant scene, at least one step more which would prove enough for them.

After having discussed the *rāsa* dances in their details as depicted in the Bhāgvat and interpreted in the commentary on the same by Vallabhāchārya and others, let us now turn our attention to the elements of these dances as they survive in our own days. These survivals may be considered under three main headings: (1) As performed in the *rasa-mandalīs* (meetings of esoteric circles) of the Vaishnavas, (2) as enacted by the Rāsadhāris, and (3) as affecting the dances of Gujarat generally.

Of the dance elements in the *rasa-mandalīs* little or nothing of a definite, authentic character is known to us. Whatever the characteristics of these dances may be, there is no doubt that these dances have an esoteric value. The members of *rasa-mandalīs*, male and female, gather together of a night, and after listening to a reading of what is known as *Bhagwada-vārtā* by an adept called a *Prāchin-Vaishnava*, the members set about playing the rôles of Krishna and the gopīs, forgetting that they are dwellers on earth; some of the performers are said to be going actually into a state of forgetfulness or trance. It is very difficult to decide what exact parts of the dance-drama of *rāsa* are rehearsed in these *rasa-mandalīs*. But from the information at first hand that I have been able to secure, whatever its value, we may say that the party of dancers are very vague as to what they have actually to do; the knowledge of the leader is handed down by oral traditions which have assumed a synnomic character. Anyhow, it is very clear that the scenes that are reproduced in the *rasa-mandalīs* seems to be the parts between the *Laghu-rāsa* and the *Mahā-rāsa*, wherein, in two dance-dramas, Krishna's

personal mannerisms are imitated and His magical supernatural feats and achievements (*līlās*) are reproduced by the gopīs during their efforts to find out the magic object; perhaps the search in the forest is also rehearsed. It seems therefore evident that, if at all, of the dances as such, the *Laghu-rāsa* is enacted, perhaps with the leader and two gopīs in the centre of the circle of dancers whose number probably varies according to the membership of the *mandalī*; also, in all probability, there are as many women as men; where the number is not equal males may act as gopīs, and females may play the rôle of Krishna. How the transactions of the meetings of these *rasa-mandalīs* end is for us too much to say. But it is alleged by reformers that scenes of unrestrained orgies characterize the close of these meetings.

Then of the Rāsadhāris and their performances. It is extremely difficult to locate the exact date when this institution was started. Rāmānujāchārya (1017 A.D.) makes no reference whatever to Krishna-līlā. Nimbārkāchārya (died in 1164 A.D.) taught the worship of Krishna with Rādhā, lived in Vrindāvana, and actually built a temple of worship in that region. Inspired by Nimbārka and the Bhāgvat, Jayadeva (1178–1206) wrote the Gīta-Govinda in which he glorifies the love of the divine pair of Rādhā and Mādhava (i.e. Krishna). Madhvāchārya (born in 1199) brings about a happy combination of the teachings of Nimbārka regarding the worship of Krishna and Rādhā with the Krishna-līlā of the Bhāgvat, in his Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa. Thus from the middle of the twelfth century onwards religious teachers and poets have spread popular versions of the sweet tales connected with the *rāsa-līlā*, and expanded the influence of their lore far and wide. This resulted not merely in the acceptance of the Rādhā-Mādhava cult by the people as

representing the ideal couple of their hearts, but also of the holy places connected with them.

Anyhow, later on, leaders of some of the *sampradāyas* devised dramatic shows which enacted, in flesh and blood, the course and beauty of the life of Krishna and Rādhā as the supremest manifestations of life, human and divine. And these dramatic shows quickened new activities of life in the several *līlā-sthalas* (holy places) which had or would have lost their significance and importance. Thus some of these leaders of religious thought who gave importance to the Krishna-līlā, not only emphasized the sacred character of the places where the *līlās* occurred, but also preached the necessity of going to pilgrimage there, and even of encouraging the performances of the *līlās*, each at the place where it originally took place.

So we have, in our own times, what is called the *vana-yātrā*, the pilgrimage to the holy land of Vraja. This pilgrimage has come to stay, and has a history of not less than three hundred years. It covers a circle of eighty-four *kos*, that is to say, about one hundred and twenty-six miles. The pilgrimage was first performed by Goswāmi Vitthalnāthji, and is now performed by his descendants during the monsoon season, beginning from the 12th *vada* of the month of *Bhādarvā* to the 11th *sud* of the month of *Kārtik*. Any of the descendants of Vallabhāchārya can lead a group of pilgrims, men and women; such a group is called a *sangha*, and the leader of the group is called *Sanghapati*. Several such *sanghas*, each with its own *Sanghapati* go for the *parikramaṇā* (pilgrimage of going round) every year. During the pilgrimage there are forty-four stages, each with its definite place of celebration; while most of these are fixed according to traditions, some are settled in accordance with the Bhāgvat narrative.

Now, along with the pilgrims, groups of Rāsadhāris go the whole way, enacting incidents from the early life of Krishna as they occurred at every place of halt, from stage to stage. The *līlās* celebrated at each of these places are mostly in accordance with the Bhāgvat; but they are not performed in the chronological order in which they took place, as recorded in the Bhāgvat. In these performances the Rāsadhāris vividly delineate the doings of Krishna and His companions in dance, drama, music and song. At one stage of the pilgrimage the party reaches a place called *rāsa-sthaḷi*. Tradition has it that the Lord Krishna played His *rāsa* dances with the gopīs at this place. Of the dances performed by the Rāsadhāris there are several types. But none of these has any relation, except distant and fragmentary, with the traditions of the Bhāgvat.

To begin with, let us make it clear that all the members of the dancing party are males only. A number of them who are young and of delicate and oftentimes effeminate build and looks, dress up as gopīs and play their rôle. The rest act as Krishna. In the dance the dancers clap their own or each other's palms or use sticks instead, according to the requirements of the rhythm. The party of dancers varies in number; so naturally there are different dance-formations, each in accordance with the facilities that the number of dancers provides. It is said that there are many varieties of such formations. We shall, however, remain content with descriptions of the four most important types amongst these, as under :—

There is, for instance, the dance of twenty-five Rāsadhāris, wherein there is one Krishna, facing east, in the centre of a circle of twelve pairs of dancers, each with a gopī and a Krishna. In the beginning the central Krishna plays on the flute; and round

him move, face to face, the twelve pairs to the tune of the music, keeping time by the beating of the sticks with one another or the clapping of the palms of each other's hands. As the music changes its time the twelve gopīs gravitate towards the central Krishna so as to approach, or nearly approach, the reach of his hands or the sticks in his hands, and form themselves into a circle; and the gopīs are pursued by the twelve Krishnas, each towards his companion, who form another circle concentric with the circle of gopīs. And, as soon as this new arrangement is set up, the dance grows apace, and each gopī responds not only to the call of the twelve Krishnas for beats of the sticks, one by one, as these move southwards, but also to the attentions of the central Krishna, who, facing each, moves north and south along a line; while thus serving each side with the beats of their sticks, the gopīs move northwards in a circle. Once more, with a new call of the flute, the gopīs and Krishnas recede from the central Krishna away into a single circle round which they move in pairs of a Krishna and a gopī; gripping each other's hands crosswise they whirl round the common axis formed by the new juxtaposition of their bodies; and, at the same time, each pair revolves round the central Krishna. Once more the music changes; and the whole party resumes the position with which the dance started; by and by, led by the sinking music of the flute, the dance comes to an end.

Another formation of thirty-six dancers now. Here also we have the central Krishna; but he has two gopīs with him, one on his right and another on his left. Round these central figures forms the dancing circle of twenty-two gopīs and eleven Krishnas. The gopīs arrange themselves into eleven pairs; and each pair has a Krishna to itself. All the dancers in the circle have their faces towards the

central objects which face the cast. As soon as the music starts, each pair of gopīs, without moving out of their fixed positions, form an arch of their arms, the left of the one supporting the right of the other ; and the eleven Krishnas between the pairs, move along in wavy lines inside and outside the circle of gopīs, passing under each such arch, and clapping the palms of their hands with those of the gopīs, as they pass by each of them. A new call of the music brings about a change of positions. The eight Krishnas now keep themselves in fixed positions on the circle instead of the gopīs, who in pairs holding each other's hands crosswise, whirl round and round and circumambulate each of the Krishnas or a Krishna with a pair of gopīs (who, in the meanwhile perform a pantomime dance) as they tread along the circle describing a path of ever-shifting spirals. After some time, with change of music, in slow degrees, the dance comes to an end.

In another formation of sixty-four dancers, round a Krishna and a gopī as the central objects, thirty-one pairs, each of a gopī and a Krishna, dance along much in the manner of the dance of thirty-six rāsadhāris described above. But the central Krishna and gopī do not merely dance in this formation ; they also display gestures of a great variety and act as if they are performing a pantomime.

But the party of dancers may be as large as one hundred and thirty-six Rāsadhāris. In such a dance, the dance formation consists of five groups, four of twenty-five persons each, and one of thirty-six only. The party of thirty-six forms the centre ; and the four of twenty-five each array themselves in an orbit round the circle of thirty-six dancers. Each pair of dancers rotates as well as revolves on the circumference of the dancing circle, besides revolving on the orbit of the circle of thirty-six

dancers (who rotate and revolve on the circumference of the circle only, during the initial and final stages), along with the course of the circles round the same. The details of other movements in all the five groups are much the same as described in the other dances of the Rāsadhāris.

Now the dance of a hundred and thirty-six relates an interesting tale in a most consummately moving manner. Having already given the general details of the dance, I shall now describe the dance and unfold the lively account it bewitchingly narrates. In the party of thirty-six, out of sheer mischief and merriment, an array of sixteen pairs of dancers, each of a gopī and a Krishna, entrap four simple-minded lovelorn gopīs within a circle. In the same manner, in each of the four parties of twenty-five, a lonely Krishna longing for his mate, finds himself blockaded by a playful mischievous crew of twelve pairs of dancers, each of a gopi and a Krishna, bent upon preventing their captive from escaping. With this arrangement all the five parties start the dance. As we have already said, each pair rotates round and round, and revolves along the paths described by the circles of the dance; but the four parties of twenty-five revolve also on the orbit round the central circle of thirty-six. Now, while the sentinels on the circumferences of the five circles are gaily going their rounds of watch and blockade, the central Krishnas and gopīs agitatingly scheme, contrive and rush here and there for escape, not merely to relieve themselves from the cruel fun and frolic of their companions, but mainly to take their places with their mates. The singlehanded combat of each of the four Krishnas with his twenty-four cruel companions proves rather too hard and futile; alone, He has to fight the villainous craftiness and vigilance of twenty-four rogues determined to hold Him to the very end. But the four gopīs

prove too many for the sixteen pairs that hold them captive ; deciding to force their way through the circle, each gopī makes a sudden, desperate rush towards a part of the circle ; and before the dumbfoundered sentinels can gather themselves up to repel the unexpected assault, they veritably break the circle into four quadrants. Each gopī rushes, pursued by four pairs of Krishnas and gopīs, towards the circle of twenty-four cowards who mock at her mate, take them by surprise, and break their cordon with her retinue to join her resourceless beloved in the centre of that circle of enchantment. In the heart of two concentric circles, the reunited lovers spin about, clasping each other's hands crosswise, till, as the dance grows apace, the feet of the one meet those of the other in the whirl. Once the lovers meet, the four pairs that form the retinue of each of the gopīs, dispairing of their vain pursuit, give up their mad chase ; and to their dismay they find themselves encased by the party of twenty-four ; so they seek refuge in dancing round the victorious pair, in a north to south direction ; and the crest-fallen party of twelve pairs, recovering from the shock of the sudden assault, quietly continue their dance, south to north, in vain, partly to hide the shame of the defeat of their frivolous designs, but also, in part, to celebrate the mating, thus making the best of a bad bargain. So round the four victorious pairs, each of a gopī and a Krishna, dance, half out of shame, half out of glee, two concentric circles of defeated dancers to celebrate the victory of their erstwhile prisoners. Captives no more, once and for ever mated, the pairs now decide to let things be as they were, of their free-will ; so after bidding adieu to her lover, each gopī dances back with her retinue of eight attendants dancing their best to the tune of their mistress, to make the circle of thirty-six, not

the one she broke because it wrongly held her captive, but a new one born of the débris of the old, a circle of freedom to dance fresh and afresh, new and anew. Thus, dancing the reunion, the five groups end as they began.

What elements of the *rāsa* dances survive in the folk dances of modern Gujarat ? one may ask. The greater freedom of movements which the *rāsa* dances offer in comparison with the *garbā* dances, is having its full effect. Thus, for instance, there is no central object like the *garbo* or *māndvi* or any other thing ; nor is any sacred object present anywhere or on the person of any of the dancers. This naturally removes the shackles on the free movements of the dancers with which the presence of the sacred object binds the dancers. Thus the party of dancers has the choice to move in any direction, and even in whirling circles ; the hands and feet have also unrestrained liberty of expression ; the use of sticks, unknown to the *garbā* traditions, is reminiscent of the innovation introduced by the Rāsadhāris. So also, in accordance with the *rāsa* traditions, a greater variety of song and music is present in the folk dances of Gujarat. We shall discuss later in this chapter how the *rāsa-gita* and *rāsa* dances reappear in the native garb of Gujarat in the *garbis* and the dances accompanying them.

This naturally takes us to the *rāsa-gitas*, the songs that accompanied the whole of the *rāsa* drama. Now let us remind ourselves that the songs sung during the *rāsa* are of two kinds : (1) those sung during the *Laghu-rāsa* and the *Mahā-rāsa*, and (2) those sung between these. Of the earlier type the Bhāgvat gives no actual texts ; of course, it is clear that both the gopīs and Krishna sang songs when the dances took place ; about their subject-matter we gather that they were concerned with the *yaśa* or glory of Krishna, in the main. On

the other hand, the Bhāgvat gives either full texts or summaries of the subject-matter of the songs which the gopīs sang in the scenes that lie between the *Laghu-rāsa* and the *Mahā-rāsa*; these are mostly songs of separation, repentance, self-chastisement, self-cleansing, praise and recall; some of them dreamily recall sweet memories of past scenes, which serve as solacing balm to their broken hearts; but all these are full of expectations and hope of a reunion with their Lord. Now there is a clue in the last verse at the end of the *Mahā-rāsa*, which refers to the authority of the *Kāvya-kathās* which narrate the enjoyment of *rasa*; in his commentary on this verse, Vallabhāchārya makes this statement plain by referring the reader to the Gita-Govinda of Jayadeva as a typical poem describing the enjoyment of *rasa*. Lest we may mix up the issues, let us remind ourselves that while the Gita-Govinda describes the enjoyment of *rasa* as it manifests itself during the spring, the Bhāgvat narrates it as it happens in the autumn. In fact, in the second *sarga* of the Gita-Govinda, Jayadeva reminds us of some of the incidents of the *rāsa* played on the full-moon night in autumn. In the Gita-Govinda there are three scenes of Krishna's dalliance: one with a group of gopīs, another with a single gopī, and a third with Rādha. The last scene has four stages—of apologies, appeals, pursuasion and declaration of the genuineness of His love by an attendant of Rādha's as also by Krishna Himself,—before the final mating takes place. But there is no song in these scenes which can be adjudged as a *rāsa-gita*, if by that expression we mean the songs sung by Krishna or the gopīs or any of the gopīs in the mating scenes. Thus we are left where we were in our search for the *rāsa-gita*, if *rāsa-gita* means songs sung during the time and along with the *Laghu-rāsa* and the *Mahā-rāsa*.

Coming to the purely Gujarati contribution of the *rāsa-gita* we have, to begin with, Narsinha Mehtā's *Rāsa Sahasra-padi*, in different rāgas, in which the poet gives descriptions of the *rāsa* dance as he saw it in trance. Mirābāi also wrote living descriptions of the *rāsa* dance, in various tunes. Bhālaṇa has given us similar descriptions of the *rāsa*. And Kéśavarām, the Kāyastha Kavi of Pātaṇa, gives vivid pen-pictures of the *Rāsa*. So, no poet of Gujarat including Dayārām whose *garbis* will be considered later, has given us the *rāsa-gita*.

Why should there be no example of *rāsa-gita* throughout our literature, sacred and profane? The question is difficult to answer. We have already pointed out that examples of certain kinds of songs sung between the *Laghu-rāsa* and the *Mahā-rāsa* are available in the Bhāgvat and in the other poetic lore of India generally, and of Gujarat in particular. Why then should poets and writers not have attempted to compose songs that may characterize and bring forth the phases, external and internal, of the inner life of the dancers as they made it manifest during the *Laghu-rāsa* and the *Mahā-rāsa*? In fact, due to the absence of this fundamental material, the *rāsa* dance has remained comparatively a mystery for us. Why should that be the case? Is it because there is a theory that no frail mortal can ever hope to dance in the presence of the Lord,[1] much less to dance with Him? Only devotees like the gopīs, whose perfect love for God passeth understanding, can enjoy that privilege, nay, even the right, to dance; but that even, as we have already said, can be possible, in extent and intensity, only as the Lord decrees. So

[1] There is an exception allowed during the *Holi* festivals. But during these festivals the devotee is supposed to be almost off his senses and is therefore allowed great latitude of behaviour and familiarity in the presence of the Lord.

even the writer of the Bhāgvat could not have known, even by his power of *yoga*, what these songs were like; much less, then, could he have given what he knew so little about. So our search for the *rāsa-gita* sung by Krishna and the gopīs during the dance will yield us no result.

On the other hand, any devotee of God may long for and strive to attain the privilege, some day, of dancing in the presence and even along with God; but he must keep in mind how far far away he is from that eternal bliss, when out of sheer pity, mercy, tenderhearted bounty and grace the Lord may grant the fulfilment of the devotee's longings, even as He was pleased to do with Narsinha Mehtā, beloved of Hari. Till then the devotee has to exert his utmost to see that by his service (*sévā*) he provides the Lord with all the facilities, requirements and requisites for the playing of His *rāsa*, even if by playing the rôle of the sweeper that prepares the floor clean and fine and worthy of the dance of the Lord. That alone, it is asserted, should form the pinnacle of his immediate attainments and worthiness, the goal of his joy and the fruit of his *sévā*. He may sing songs—even, at most, and when he is so fitted, songs of *viraha*. But usually he has the privilege of singing the songs of praise that describe the *līlās* of the Lord, i.e. such songs as were sung by the gopīs during the period of *viraha* between the *Laghu-rāsa* and the *Mahā-rāsa*.

We now come to the consideration of the *garbi* in order to find out what elements of the *rāsa* lore, if any, are present in Gujarati Literature.

In all probability the *garbi* was originally merely a folk song of Gujarat; it flourished in certain parts of Gujarat. It is now sung in four different *dhālas* each of which is illustrated by the four classical *garbis* as under :—

1. *Odhavaji, sandéśo kahéjo Śyāma né.*
2. *Śyāma ranga samipé na jāvun.*
3. *Ānkha bharo mā alabeladā ré.*
4. *Śikha sāsuji dé chhé ré.*

What is the subject-matter of the *garbi* ? This is a very difficult question. Historically speaking, from Narsinha Mehtā onwards the *garbi* lore has vital relations with the singing of *Krishna-yaśa.* Narsinha Mehtā, for instance, gives descriptions of his visions of the *rāsa* of Krishna, which he experienced in a state of ecstasy. Pritamdās wrote *garbis* on the *daṇa-līlā* of Krishna. Dhiro Bhagat wrote his *garbis* on *Krishna-yāśa.* And Dwārkādās, pupil of Premānanda, wrote the first *garbis* for the Vallabhi church. All these come under the first group. Then we have another type of *garbi* which contains messages from the gopīs (one or more) to Krishna, wherein the sufferings of the gopīs due to separation from Krishna are described, and Krishna is entreated to return to the gopīs. This class of songs is illustrated by Raghunāthdās' narration of the gopīs' message to Krishna, which has moved the hearts of the women of Gujarat through centuries. We have a third variety of *garbi* which are also songs in praise of Krishna ; but along with the wail of separation the poets base their hope in *vairagya* (asceticism) for escape from the pangs of separation. Poets of the Swāminārāyaṇa *sampradāya,* like Brahmānanda Swāmi, Muktānanda Swāmi and Prémānanda Swāmi, have written their *garbis* in this strain. And lastly, we come to the *garbis* of the greatest Vallabhite *garbi* writer, Dayārām. He is the last link in the chain of the *garbi* writers of Gujarat. His plaintive *garbis* have considerably contributed towards enriching Gujarati life with gaiety and enthusiasm for things human, and the joys and beauties thereof. Thus his *garbis* have

secured an immortal place in the hearts and imagination of Gujarati women of all classes and creeds. Therefore it will be our duty to give the characteristics of Dayārām's *garbis* in some detail.

To begin with, his *garbis* delineate scenes from the *bāla-līlā* of Krishna and of the *rāsa-kéli* (loves) of Krishna during His boyhood as depicted in the Daśmaskandha of the Bhāgvat. Sometimes the jar of *rasa* (*gorasa*) forms part of the picture and the story. These descriptions are always the background for the songs of the *yaśa* and *kirti* (praise) of Krishna; in fact, in order to sing these the *bāla-līlā* and the *rāsa-kéli* of Krishna are narrated. Then, his *garbis* are written in the dialogue form, wherein Rādhā and Krishna, or Krishna and Rādhā's maid, or Rādhā and her maid, or the gopīs and the flute of Krishna are the parties. There is also another type of Dayārām's *garbis* in which the gopīs sing of Krishna's *yaśa* or of His flute; or Krishna sings the *yaśa* of Rādhā (or the gopīs) in order to persuade her (or them) away from her (or their) displeasure and sulks.

The above description of the several types of Dayārām's *garbis* amply suggests the effects of both the Bhāgvat and Jayadeva's Gita-Govinda. The fundamental purpose of these *garbis* is to delineate the events that take place between the *Laghu-rāsa* and the *Mahā-rāsa*; there are fragmentary attempts at touching the *Laghu-rāsa*; of the *Mahā-rāsa* there is no trace; the scenes of love-making, of separation, and re-union are more reminiscent of the Gita-Govinda than of the Bhāgvat.

But before we proceed to the dances connected with *garbis* we must consider, in brief, the matter and size of the *garbis*. In the matter of its make-up the *garbi* usually narrates a small personal incident or the sentiments of loving hearts, full of strength and weakness, in varied moods of zeal,

disappointment and hope. Laden with such substances of joys and sorrows, the *garbi* is a spontaneous, lyrical gem of burning, living, doleful or delightful, crystal picture of love, its failings, its sincerity. In some, the parties to the dialogue exchange confidences ; in others, each takes solace from the other by relating personal weals and woes ; they make common resolves and formulate common designs ; they collate each other's experiences of love, and, disagreeing, take sides on an issue about Krishna ; they declare each other's faith or lack of faith for Krishna ; they praise Him, and vie with each other in doing so. When the *garbi* is sung by a single person, it is an outburst of joy, or disappointment or hope or expectations ; or the *garbi* is a picture of sweet memories, broken pledges, or heartrending failures. The *garbi* is thus a powerful vehicle of the beauty, strength and frailties of human heart-pourings for the love of the Highest Deity. During recent times, however, the *garbi* form is adapted to national, historic and local problems, and to incidents of personal love-affairs.

As to the size of the *garbi* : it is small, tiny and frail like a bubble or a flower or a singing bird. It has the length and the breadth and the weight of a sigh or a delight. Thus it is usually a knot of from four to six lines which carry within them the subtlest workings of the vital depths of human life ; in tender whispers about tiny incidents it records the sweetness and bitterness of human love and romance. Thus, for instance, Dayārām's *garbis* have usually from four to eight lines, though he seldom makes them as heavy as fifteen to eighteen lines. So also Brahmānanda Swāmi and Prémānanda Swāmi give us, with a few exceptions, *garbis* of not more than four lines. And Raghunāthdās never wrote *garbis* of more than ten lines. Thus, like the lyric songs of other folks, the

garbi is usually small. No wonder, then, it is wrought only in four tunes and measures which are as airy and light as they are soothing and inspiring.

So, in body and soul, the *garbi* has in it the possibilities of the dance element. The references to the jar of *gorasa* helps to introduce an element of variety. Its tiny body has the strength of the source of a river; and it stands the swerves of the dance along its course with the murmuring strains of its music. In fact, dance joins music as if to give substance to the ethereal body—the tale or the story—as if to lift up the load of the soul-music which becomes too heavy for the tiny body which might otherwise collapse into nothingness. Somehow, it would seem, the body of the minstrel who sings a *garbi*, out of sheer appreciation and devotion and sympathy for the tale of love, as if unable to do anything else, impelled by the yearning to do its best, sets forth with the movements of its limbs, called 'dance'—as if to satisfy itself that it also rode, could ride—the ride of the tale's joys and woes, even if the last, together with the rhythms of the soul, called music (which silently, patiently, valiantly bears and carries the burdens of human life and love), eager even to play the second tune, if not allowed as a companion and mate, grateful to be the least attendant and servant of music.

Thus has the *garbi*, originally a song pure and simple, captivated men and women to dance along with the song in order to carry its tale more securely into human hearts. The *garbis* are sung by women, young and old. A number of them form themselves into a circle or in two concentric circles, one within the other. Whether in one circle or two, usually the players divide themselves equally in two camps, each with a leader of its own. And, normally, at least in the beginning, members of the two camps

array themselves alternately with each other, form a circle, and go in rounds, either in the same direction or in opposite directions. They gyrate their bodies in circles and semi-circles, following the rhythm of the music and the sentiment of the song, with the movements of one or more limbs (in part or whole) of their bodies.

The *garbi* usually starts with a slow pace and a mild arousal. These gather strength and go into a middle pace rousing the players and spectators to depths and movements of emotion undreamt of in the beginning of the dance. They now grow loud and heated and boisterous; but the rich, playfulness and balance of the same old tune, tale and rhythm do not lose themselves in this heat; in fact, the burden of the tale and song are more pointedly, vigorously, eloquently delineated; in the quickness of the dance, the heat of the music and the fullness of the tale receive due hearing and even justice. Thus when the tale, music and dance become one piece, heart and soul, they seek repose gradually, till, in the end, they sink into the perfection of silence and peace whose serenity is oftentimes disturbed with the applause of modern audiences.

It will be seen from the above description that the *garbi* dances, like the *rāsa* dances, yield possibilities of a greater variety of movements than are afforded by the *garbā* dances. The body can be waved in any direction according to the needs of the dancers' sentiments. An occasional use of a pot or pots of water over the head of the gopī and/or on the waist, adds charm and variety to the dance. Besides, the use of sticks is allowed along with or as an alternative to the clappings of the palms. Also, the clapping is not limited, like the *garbā* dance, to each dancer by herself; the striking of palms and sticks not merely between members of the

same party, but also between the two parties is not only permissible, but also necessary in order to keep time with the increasing intensity of the tale and the music and the dance. And a free and judicious use of face and back movements, side movements and positions, forward movements towards the centre and receding movements away from the centre, in a variety of formations into groups—all these positions and movements of individual dancers and of the group as a whole, are practised with rare skill and ingenuity to meet the demands of the music and the tale. The course of each party as it moves along with or opposite to another, is sometimes traced into intersecting waves round the course of the circle which they form at the beginning of the dance. Thus the dancers have freedom to weave all sorts of patterns moving in zig-zag courses, as if to elongate the bounds of the circumference of a given circle.

The above description of the *garbis* and the dances connected with them will make it amply plain that the feelings of the individual dancers and the thrills of the groups play an important part, not merely by the softness and quickness of the music, nor even merely by the lightness of the steps, but also by the expressions of the movements of the face and of all the limbs of the body, all of which seek to measure and delineate the delicacy of the variety of personal emotions in terms of which the dance becomes the embodiment of the song.

If the *garbi* was originally a song only, why should it have been adapted to the dance later on? A little thought over the religious history of Gujarat may help us to answer this problem. Let us take for granted that when the people of Gujarat followed either Śakti-worship or animism, the *garbā*, in two forms, was the dance of the people. Later on Vaishnavism comes to be preached in Gujarat; and

its missionaries did not and could not eradicate root and branch, all the Śākta and animistic beliefs and practices which the converts to Vaishnavism carried in the depths of their hearts, as the most persistent heritage from their forefathers. So, as we have narrated elsewhere, all sorts of compromises and survivals are traceable even to-day in Vaishnavite life and institutions. And the *gārba*, connected essentially with Śākta worship, has continued to be played more or less in its original form, as manifest at least during the *Navarātra* festivals and on special occasions of vital importance to the family. So most of the converts to Vaishnavism have been carrying within them that inner urge for dance and song, which bursts forth year after year during the *Navarātra* holidays. Now, the Vallabhite church with its rich heritage of the dance traditions of the Bhāgvat, has all the while sought to supplant the *garbā* by the *rāsa* dance; and it has obtained fullest success so far as the celebrations of Vaishnavite festivities are concerned; in fact, these celebrations play an invaluable part in glorifying of Krishna, His worship, and the lore connected with Him. The *rāsa* festival has its own charm and attractions; but the languages of the songs that celebrate it have no soul-relation with the people of Gujarat. So the genius of Gujarat is having its full expression through generations of singers and *garbi* writers who give a native charm and personality to the lore connected with Krishna of the Bhāgvat. Even then, much of the *garbā* yet persists in the *garbis*. In fact, the Gujarati poet and singer cannot quite see the specific distance and dissimilarities between the *garbā* and the *garbi*, and has been employing his wits, knowingly and unknowingly, to fuse the two by imparting *rāsa characteristics to the garbā*, and *garbā* elements to the *garbi* which is really a Gujarati daughter of

the *rāsa*. And, in actual dancing, little girls, perhaps because of their tiny bodies and large souls, somehow carry the fiery load of the *garbā* (many-holed chatty) over their heads, instead of the rich heartloads that belong to the adept devotee, along with the airy, free rhythms of the *rāsa* or *garbi* music, song and dance, without the least intention to disregard the strict injunctions of the *garbā* dance, and never realizing that in their happy rhythmic way they are displacing the original jar of the cowherd full of *gorasa* for the ugly many-holed earthenpot which holds the burning flame with which the Deity of her forefathers scared away many a disturbance, disease and devil. But the rigidity of the *garbā* is fast losing its hold on us; and through several stages of adaptation the *garbis* and the dances connected with them have been supplanting the *garbā* dance and music, following the measures, materials and traditions of the *rāsa* drama. The *garbi* is born on the soil of Gujarat, and is cent per cent Gujarati in origin, sentiment and execution. So the *garbi* and the dances connected with it, are essentially a Vaishnavite contribution to Gujarati literature, dance and art.

As in literature so in dance, we have avoided going into the details of contemporary tendencies. Nānālāl holds the key-position amongst the writers of modern lyric and song. Though these lyrics are rich in material, sentiment and enthusiasm, their delineation in dance and song rather lacks the realism, dynamics and personality of the *rāsa* and *gārbi* lore. And though these lyrics give vivid pictures of the living Gujarat, their writers seem to disregard, consciously or unconsciously, the separate traditions to which the *garbā*, the *rāsa* and the *garbi* belong. As in song, so in dance: our modern dances called *garbā*, *garbā-dance*, *garbā-rāsa*, *rāsa* and *rāsadā* are queer adulterations of several tradi-

tions of Gujarat, Kathiawar and other parts of India, for the benefit and consumption of modern city-audiences. Even then one likes to wait and see. These are the facts that we must face in the near future. And we are not without the hope that out of this seeming confusion and medley may be born a new dance and song that may make the people of Gujarat healthy, happy and proud.

III

The problems, history and characteristics of the fine arts connected with Vaishnavite life and religion is far too vast a subject to be discussed in detail in an essay like the present one. Therefore, leaving such a task for a future occasion, we must be content with only a general sketch of the domestic and fine arts amongst the Vaishnavites of Gujarat.

In the preceding parts of this chapter we have seen how intimately the drama and dances of the people of Gujarat are related to the religious beliefs and practices prevalent amongst them; in the chapter on Literature we have seen how poetry is used for the daily worship and for the celebration of festive occasions, especially in the Vallabhi church; and throughout this essay we have made it clear that all the activities of life—personal and social, public and private, intellectual and emotional—have to minister to the pleasure and goodwill of the highest Deity, be it either Krishna or Rama or any other. This attitude is fully and clearly expressed in an exquisite couplet of Narsinha Mehtā, which may be rendered thus:—

> Oh, men of God,
> What, what is the problem of our life?
> Not salvation, to be sure;
> Not freedom from birth, either;
> Let those that pant for these,
> Have them;

Let freedom in death, and salvation,
Be with them.

Ours is a long long prayer
For births without end,
To serve Him
In His daily joys of life,[1]
And in festivities that celebrate His works,[2]
And in singing His praise [3] without end.

Thus alone, thus
Shall ye witness
The holy presence of the Lord,
And see His blessed face,
Now and for evermore,
With eyes, yea, human eyes,
Yours and mine,
Here and now,
From birth to birth,
For ever and for ever.

So according to Narsinha Mehtā engaging one's self in *sévā*, *ochchhava*, and *kirtan* involves the use and service of the finest things that human beings can devise in order to please Him, in order that the devotee may be able to make himself presentable in His eyes. Now, *sévā* means worship plus that personal self-surrender of which the *sévā* is symbolic. There are the sixteen well-known ways by which the *Nārda-panchrātra* advises the Vaishnavas to worship Krishna. After invoking the pleasure of the Lord's presence, He is offered a seat, and His feet are washed with water; honey and some fruits are offered to Him, after which the God is given a bath; the sacred thread is now put on, and the auspicious mark of sandal-wood paste is made on His forehead; over this rice or barley grains are stuck as additional symbols of good luck; in order to increase the happiness of His heart flowers are now strewn before Him; incense is burnt, and a

[1] i.e. *sévā*. [2] i.e. *ochchhava*. [3] i.e. *kirtan*.

lamp is lit to please Him ; He is now served with a meal ; after the meal He is served with water to rinse His mouth ; dessert of *tambūl* is now served ; an offering is made which is followed by an *ārti* to indicate the satisfaction of the devotee that trouble, pain and misery have no quarter in His gracious presence.

Now this form of worship is not present amongst all the Vaishnava *sampradāyas*. The Rāmānujis, a few in Gujarat, have no *sévā* amongst them ; they follow Vedic rites and use Vedic *mantras*. The Rāmānandis have *sévā* of a sort. The Praṇāmis accept no image-worship ; they worship the wooden sandals and throne of the founder of the *sampradāya* by offering cooked food in a large tray, singing *kirtans* in praise of the Lord. The Kabirpanthis and the Dādupanthis also worship the throne and sandals of the celebrated *Mahants* (teachers) of the *sampradāya*, and sing *kirtans* like the Praṇāmis. The Vallabhites have eight divine services during which the Lord gives a glimpse (*darśana*) of His holy grace to His devotees. We have described these eight services in some detail elsewhere, from which it must become evident that the God of the Vallabhites is concerned intimately with all the worldly and material activities and programmes of His followers.

Amongst the Vallabhites, when the *ārti* is over, a wreath of flowers is offered to the Lord ; and hymns of praise are sung by the devotees as they circumambulate round the Lord, from left to right. In all this worship pervade the gentility, simplicity and sweetness of a reputed house of cowherd-shepherd traditions, dwelling in a forest. Now these practices, traditions and course of worship were not formulated by Śri Vallabhāchārya ; they were first practised by his son Gosãinji ; and they were elaborately interpreted by his illustrious grandson Gokulnāthji.

The causes of the introduction of the *sévā* as it obtains to-day are many. Let us say, for our present purposes, that due to several reasons which it is unnecessary to enumerate, the pomp, variety and joys of the Imperial Courts of the Moghuls and the Rajputs, and the simplicity, directness and charm of the rural life of Vraja are subtly fused into a formidable programme of divine service. Thus, for instance, milk-jars of gold and drinking cups of sapphire and emerald are used on some occasions ; and simple earthen-ware is employed on others.

Let us first take a brief note of the domestic arts meant for the personal comforts and adornment of the Lord. The most important of the domestic arts is that which attends to the feeding of the Lord. The proverb goes : The Vaishnavas spend their all in the fire-place, and the Jains in mortar.[1] And so it is. The Jains have raised most gorgeous and luxurious temples for the abode of their Tirthankars ; and the Vaishnavas have been doing all they can to see that by serving their Lord with the most delicate courses from day to day, they may be able to persuade their Lord to dwell in this earthly residence, away from His heavenly abode where even the gods cannot serve Him with the delicacies offered by mortals here below. Thus varied menus of any number of select courses of vegetables, fruits, sweets, etc. are arranged with great delicacy of taste willingly borrowed from Brahmin, Rajput, Persian, Vraja and other sources. The best fruits and vegetables of the season are always served. And the most delicious and dainty sweetmeats are prepared for Him with due regard to the seasonal need. Saffron, musk, ambergris, cardamom and other spices are liberally used to flavour the dainties.

[1] Vaishṇavo nūn chulā mān, né Jaino nūn chunā mān.

So also excellent *sharbets*, fruit-juice, and other hot and cold drinks are always kept in readiness to quench His thirst. In no season of the year is He ever served with anything undesirable like chillies, for instance. In fact, feeding the Lord is the most important and urgent part of the divine service from the point of view of the devotee also; for he cannot possibly take even a morsel without first offering everything to the Lord; he can eat only from the leavings of the Lord's meal.

As with food so with clothing.[1] The comfort of the Lord has to be attended to, first and foremost. Like human beings His needs during the different seasons of the year have to be looked into. Thus, for instance, silk garments are made for the cold season; fine cotton garments are prepared for summer wear; and silk-brocade dresses are designed for the monsoon. Wool is never used; and Vaishnavites are particularly keen on not burdening the delicate person of Thākorji with heavy clothes of velvet embroidered in gold and silver.

A great variety of head-dresses, each for its special occasions, are used. The *kiriṭa-mukuṭa* and the *more-mukuṭa* are traditional Aryan head-dresses as narrated in the Bhāgvat; the *dumālo*, *gwālapago*, *gotipago*, *pāgh* and *fēnto* are head-dresses of the populace; the *kulhé*, indicative of royal pomp, found in old Moghul paintings, and the *śehro*, a veil of flowers used amongst the Persians by the bridegroom as he proceeds to the bride's home for marriage, can be traced back as Moghul survivals. The underwear is made of very fine cloth; a double-breasted vest called *gadaḍa* is made of silk or cotton; and we have the *chākdār-vāgho* and the *ghérdār-vāgho*, two types of robes or gowns. The trousers

[1] We must note, however, that like everything else Vallabhāchārya offered simple *pāgh*, *dhoti* and *uparṇūn* which he made out of a long piece of cloth.

are of many varieties, called *chorni*, *suthan* and *payajāmā*; and there are the *kāchhni*, *mallakāchha* and *dhoti*, besides. Across the shoulder we have the scarf called *uparṇo*, and the *ādabandha* which is wrapped round the waist. The waistband is called *patko*. Besides, there are gloves and stockings (*mojañ*) for the winter.

The above description of the wearing apparel for the Lord and its variety naturally suggest development of skill in cutting, sewing, knitting and embroidery. Now, the colour of the garment is a very important factor; thus, for instance, white, light rose, pearl, light blue, light green and sandalwood coloured garments are made for the summer; so also deep red, bottle-green, saffron, purple, *lériā* (a five colour design) and bringal colours are used for monsoon clothing; and gold, dark blue, yellow, dark green and blood-red colours are preferred for winter-wear. Similarly, regarding the lightness or heaviness of the cloth-material; these points have to be settled in the interests of the Lord's comfort and requirements from season to season and from festivity to festivity.

Then the person of the Lord must be decorated. This is a very complex problem. The ornaments used now can be traced to diverse traditions; and the question of seasonal comforts and festive requirements has to be put and answered here also. Thus, the following are the ornaments for decorating the head: below either the *pāgh* or the *goti-pagā* we have the *alakāvali* and *moti ni laḍa* (string of pearls), *sisful*, *choti-kalgi*, *śirpéch* and *gokarṇa*; the *kalgi* belongs to Moghul traditions, and the *śir-péch* is a Hindu ornament. Over the *pāgh*, *fĕntā*, *dumālā*, *gwālapagā*, etc. we have the *kalgi* and *śirpéch*; and over the *śehrā*, *tipārā*, *pāgh* and *fĕntā* are put a *chandrikā* of gold-thread (*bādlā*) or a *katrā-chhod* of either *jari* or *jadāoo* designs. During winter silken *katrā*

or *chhod* is used ; during spring the *katrā, chandrikā* and *ghér* are made of peacock feathers ; in summer these are made of the feathers of a white peacock. Then the ornaments of the ear : we have the *kundalas* of *makara* (crocodile) or *matsaya* (fish) or *mayūra* (peacock), or *kalaśākrita* (pot and fish or peacock feather) designs, all four pointing to the traditions of the Aryans ; the *kaḍaka* resembling a *vāḷi* of three pearls is a Rajput ornament ; the *chhélakadi* of three pearls is worn in the upper part of the concha by the man in the street all over North India. The above ornaments are worn at the lower end of the ear. The *karṇa-fūl* decorates the middle part of the concha. Now, the nose of the Lord is decorated with a *nakvésar* ; and His chin is adorned with a valuable diamond (*chibuk*). Round the neck and upper parts of His body are worn the following ornaments : the *kaṇṭhābharaṇa*, the *dugdūgi*, the *hānsa*, and the *hamél* fit closely on the neck ; the *navagrahi*, the *chandanahāra*, the *mohanmālā*, the *magamālā*, the *tilaka-hāra*, the *chakti*, the *pāna* to serve the purpose of *kaustubha-maṇi*, the *kaṇṭhā* set with diamonds, pearls, rubies and emeralds, and the *kaṇṭhā* with the વાઘનખ as magical charm to safeguard even the Lord from the evil eye ; over all these are worn the *trivaḷa*, *ādabandha* or *choki*. Then we have the waistbands called *kati-mekhalā, kinkini* and *kshudra-ghantika*. Now the ornaments of the hand : the *bāju-bandha* (armlet), *jode* (for the fore-arm), *sānkḷā* (tight-fitting wristlets), *poñchi* (loose wristlets), *kaḍā, hasta-ful*, and *mudrikās* (rings) for the ten fingers ; the ornaments of the feet are the *nupūr* (anklet), the *jhévar*, the *toḍā*, the *pagapān, anavat-bichhia*, and the ten *anguṭhā-veḍha* which adorn the toes.

In the matter of painting and the pictorial arts, what are known as the Moghul and Rajput schools of painting have been patronised by the Vallabhite

Mahārājās from Vithālnathji onwards up to our own day. Of the Rajput school, the Kangra or Pahādi art seems to be more favoured by the Vaishnavites. And the Moghul *Kalam* is more in vogue in the portraits of the Vallabhi Mahārājās which were painted not merely for the Mahārājās themselves, but also for their followers who wanted the likeness of their *guru* and his children for daily worship. These portraits had to be approved by the *guru*; and the devotees usually paid very high prices for such *chitrāvalis* (portraits) or *gutakās* (book of pictures). The particular nature of Moghul influence, apart from the use of Moghul technique in portrait-painting, is with reference to the pattern and colour of the dress, the ornamentation, the pose, and the aura around the face of the subject. Also, in imitation of Moghul subjects, scenes of horsemanship and elephant-contests (*sāṭhamāri*) were painted; and exquisite copies of these paintings yet survive in some of the havélis of Rajputana.

The Rajput painters have even to-day a predilection for painting frescoes. And remains of such old wall-paintings survive in our own times in the *havélis* of the Mahārājās, especially in Mewar and Marwar.

The art of painting has been serving nearly all the Vaishnavite Sampradāyas with reference to the painting of the backgrounds behind the idols (*pichhawāi*). These backgrounds are painted in a variety of colours, with a variety of materials, illustrating the *līlās* connected with the life of Krishna. Thus the *Janmāshṭami-līlā*, *Daṇa-lilā*, *Govardhana-līlā*, *Rāsa-lilā*, and *Pavitrā-agiāras* have been repeatedly making calls on the genius of painters for the last four hundred years.

There are other types of *pichhavāis* which are painted in special colour material, illustrating

particular scenes. Thus the '*līlās*' of the *hori-khél* are daily drawn in *keśar* (saffron) and *gulal* (red powder), because they take place in spring time; in the same way, during autumn, sandal, saffron, ambergris, musk, etc. are used for painting, a variety of floral ornamentations on *pichhavāis* of thin muslin.

Then again many-coloured drawings of the *mahimā* of every festival are worked up in trays. While celebrating the marriage of Tulsi with God, a *mandap* of nine *chokis* of square designs is drawn. During the *Śrāddha-paksha* in the month of *Bhādrapad* dry paintings called *sanjhi* are worked out with fingers in powdered colours; the designs recall the various scenes of the *vanayātrā*, referred to in the earlier part of this chapter; besides, a great variety of floral designs are painted.

Thus the flavour of the folk-life of Vraja, and the pomp of Moghul and Rajput courts are always present in the pictorial arts of Gujarat, as in music, with the result that Vaishnavite art could hardly be called purely Gujarati. This is not to say that Gujarat was or is devoid of good local talent in the pictorial and other fine arts. Such is far from being the case; for even to-day there are hereditary painters and musicians from Gujarat, flourishing in the Nathadwārā temple.

The pictorial arts have been encouraged by other Sampradāyas: Sahajānanda Swāmi was a great patron in his own time, though after him these arts have not met with the same encouragement from his successors. Even then, in the homes of the rich Patidārs of Gujarat one meets with delightful portraits of Sahajānanda Swāmi and of the Lord Krishna, which are particularly good specimens of the pure Gujarati art of painting.

Then of the Vallabhite house (*havéli*) in which the Lord Krishna lives and rests—the house of God: Excepting the Śrinathji temple at Nātha-

dwārā, in external appearance the *havéli* does not look either like the palace of a King or like the domed edifice of a usual Hindu temple. But all comforts and luxuries that the King of Kings may desire and can command are made available inside the simple-looking mansion called *havéli*. As Gosãinji installed the image of *Yaśodotsangalālit Nanda-nandan Śri Navanitapriyāji* in the Nāthdwārā temple, he had to organize the *sévā* and management of the temple in accordance with the requirements of a Nandālaya. Now, Nandarāiji enjoyed the privileges of a King; so all the pomp, dignity, power, prestige and charity of a royal household were introduced in the temple. In fact, Gosãiñji, a great diplomat of his times, adopted a number of Persian designs and practices mainly in order to remove all semblance of external opposition to the despotic power and sentiments of the Moghul court.

The ground floor of such a *havéli* is completely furnished with every comfort and service considered necessary for the Deity installed within the premises. It consists of the cow-stall, the store-houses for milk, corn, cooked food-offerings, fruits and vegetables, the room where garlands are prepared, the room for ornaments and rich clothes, the room where betel-leaves are folded into *bidās*; then there are the kitchen, the dining-room, the water-room (where also drinking water is stored), the drawing-room and the bedroom. There are three spacious verandahs, and two courtyards. And over the two store-rooms (for storing *hindolā* and *pārṇā*) on the right and the left (for storing fuel) one or more storeys may be built; a terrace open to the sky is sometimes constructed over them. Over the rest of the rooms, there may be terraces which are either open to the sky, or covered with a low roof. In a separate wing, on any of the sides of the main building, are built structures for the personal use of the Vallabhi Mahā-

rājā. Servants' quarters are situated either on the south of the milk-room or by the side of some other room on the ground floor.

In building such a House of God, engineers, masons, goldsmiths and other craftsmen have always co-operated with the best of their skill and devotion and fervour like the builders of Chartres or Amiens or Seville, through centuries of building traditions. In Vraja and Mathura, Mughal influence is predominant; Rajput influence characterizes the *havélis* of Marwar; and the Gujarat *havélis* reveal an influence of mixed traditions, Mughal and Rajput, though sometimes we meet with instances of an independent architecture which belongs to Gujarat.

As to the making of images, the tradition is that no image was ever carved by human hands, and all the images are supposed to be self-wrought. There are many types of images, all depicting one or another aspect of the Lord Krishna during His childhood and early boyhood; He is generally shown in company with his associates, like Rādhā, Jaśodā, Nandarāiji, Balaram and the gopīs.

Well-laid out gardens with fountains of various shapes, designs, sizes and materials are considered necessary for the summer. And, in fact, fountains of rose-water, *abil*, *gulāl* (red powder), késar (saffron), and such other substances play till late in the evening. Hand-fans are worked day and night throughout the summer; the Lord enjoys the coolness of the garden or the courtyard under bowers of flowers (*fula-mandaḷi*) on summer evenings; during summer afternoons Thakorji is offered soft (*chandan-vāghā*) clothing besmeared with musk, saffron and sandal-wood paste, His bedroom is kept continuously cool by constant sprinkling of cold water and rose-water, fountains go on playing, *khas-tattis* (curtains of *khas* grass) are hung on the doorways; at eventide when Thakorji returns home,

He is led on the roadside by the torch-bearer (*Maśālchi*), a sign of royalty. During the monsoon, *Hindolās* (swings) are brought out in the garden or the courtyard for the Lord's pleasure; they are sometimes made of silver, set with gems, worked with *kasabkinkhāb* (gold and silver filigree work), and adorned with flowers in all sorts of patterns reminiscent of Moghul traditions; and *ful-mandalis* (flower-houses) of two, four, eight, sixteen or twenty-four floors, with *mehrāb* (arches), *zarukhā* (balcony), *chhata* (ceilings), and *siḍis* (ladders); and gopīs, adorned with flowers, are stationed all round in readiness to serve the Lord in His floral residence; His seat, rest-cushions, and all other pieces of furniture are adorned with flowers. During the Diwali festivals a many-storied and terraced toy-palace of gold, embedded with gems and glass in variegated designs, is made in the Moghul fashion; it is furnished with carpets, cushions, pillows, *pichhawāis*, fans, etc. of *kinkhāb* wrought in floral designs, with hanging-lamps and chandeliers of cut-glass. The Lord's arrival is heralded by a torch-bearer who raises the herald-cry (*néki*) of the Lord. Clothed and crowned as only the King of Kings amongst mankind could be, the Lord occupies His high seat, with the majesty of a *Śhāhanshāh*; waiters wave the *chāmar* and *morchhal* (two varieties of fly-scares); minstrels sing songs called *hatu-pada*, to the accompaniment of the incredibly melodious *bin*, *sūr-mandaḷa* and *mridanga*; then mother Jaśodā waves a tray set with pearls, containing a small burning lamp of ghee and an *arti* of four flames; also, salt and mustard-seeds, after having been waved in front of Him to remove effects of the evil eye, are scattered on the floor.

Do all these pictures of royal ceremonials not point to the pomp, power, wealth, joy and glory that were part of the life of the Mogul Kings or of the Hindu Kings of old?

And as to the music: as said elsewhere songs of various kinds are sung. Pastorals, carols, lullabies and nativity songs form the bulk of the songs, besides, of course, hymns of praise. The Vaishnavites, especially the Vallabhites, have no prayers except those that recall His mercies, glory and tender-hearted love; there are no prayers of thanksgiving for plenty, health, public peace, and the like; and above all, there is no boon-begging in prayer, except for the pacification of *viraha* (separation) from God. Mass worship is in great vogue especially amongst the Swāmi-nārāyanis, with their choirs (*Kirtan-mandals*). Vithalnāthji settled the musical programme of the eight divine services from out of the songs of the Ashta-sakhā. He was himself a poet and musician, and composed several songs suitable for the various services. And he has included in his programme songs made by singers of the other *sampradāyas*, like Jayadev, Tulsidāsji, Tānsén and others.

A variety of musical instruments, each in its proper season and occasion, are played either in accompaniment of song or otherwise. Thus we have the string instruments like *vinā*, *sārangi*, *sūra-mandal*, *sitār*, *amrit-kundala* and *bīna*; then we have the *jala-taranga*, metal cups filled with water, producing harmonic notes like musical glasses; also, we have the *changa* (cymbals) and *kartāla* which produce brass music; and a variety of drums, especially what is known as *mridanga*, always accompany the other musical instruments.

The Lord's taste in music is fastidious; the orthodox Indian music is the only kind in which He takes delight; and modern innovations in matter or form are abhorrent to Him.

Hereditary musicians, painters, scribes and learned men have always been patronized by the priests and the laity, especially in the Vallabhi

church. This has, in a sense, tended to make the temples not merely schools of art and manners, but also of public taste. The *sévā* procedures make a demand on the traditional sixty-four *kalās* (arts) and fourteen *vidyās* (sciences); so also are the arts pursued and practised as instruments of life to understand and fathom, manipulate and mould, heighten and incorporate, in short to make one's very own the *rasa* (joy) underlying this life and the *rasa* of the life beyond. The enjoyment of all the *rasas* therefore,—the six that emanate from food and drink, and the nine that well up from the depths of our inner life—have to be fostered and enjoyed soberly and without excess, in order to develop that equipoise of body, mind and soul that is needed for *séva*. And no one *rasa* has to be indulged in solely and exclusively, or at the cost of any other or others.

Hence, though the Vallabhi *sampradāya* is based on the enjoyment of *rasa* and therefore enjoins the worship of the God of *rasa* (Raséśa), and though the *rasas* of the world within and the world without are considered the main facts of life to deal with, manage, rear, foster, contemplate, idealize, image forth and thus to be concerned about, the *sampradāya* is independent of extremes in art, in fact in anything. A suitable, harmonious, balanced mixture, fusion, combination and association of all is the ideal to be attained. Therefore Vaishnavite art is always in search of all the *rasas* in every type of thing, event, circumstance, principle, philosophy and life, for the admiration and praise, delineation and satisfaction of the Way, the Truth and the Life man seeks to understand, realize and live. Thus art is conceived as the best expression, instrument and helpmate of love, service, devotion, faith, hope and life itself. Art is thus the breath of the Vaishnavite's life, ideally considered. For thus the Best can be served with the best.

The aforesaid tendencies of equipoise and judgment and practical wisdom are present in all the arts, worship and life activities of the Vaishnavites in particular, and of the Gujaratis in general. Thus in dress, food, ornamentation and architecture extremes must be avoided : cold and heat, heaviness and lightness, simplicity and splendour, gladness and gloom, light and darkness, urban order and rural chaos, has each its own value, and demands consideration with reference to the weather, and moods and disposition of the Lord. So also in music and dance and song : moderation is the rule. So also in sentiments : there is no sadness without its silver lining, no joy without its expectation of sorrow, no separation without its hope of reunion, no union except without fears of its snapping. The union though momentary now, in this birth, must be eternal, if not now, at least somewhere in the hereafter. And the Lord is pleased with all the *rāgas* and *rāginis* ; He favours some but detests none. Similarly, in dancing there is no beginning and no end ; and the *rāsa*-dances were devised to give this eternal lesson to the gopīs, that there is no beginning and no end. Then, if we examine the nature of Vaishnavite worship, we find out that the pangs of separation may for a while almost unhinge the devotee's personality, but will not and should not ever bring him death. In fact, when his sufferings reach the breaking point, the Lord comes down to calm His servant's spirit, even like a companion and a servant. Also, nothing in the world is too mean and polluted, nothing too great and unapproachable for the devotee ; all these things, great and small, are real because they are God's, because they emanate from Him, because He created them for His *ramaṇa* (pleasure). Likewise, there is no friend and no enemy amongst men ; no woman is perfect, nor man ; perfection belongs

to Krishna; and the most imperfect, helpless and forlorn is the more dear to Him, more than the less imperfect. So far as *sarvārpaṇa* (self-surrender) is concerned, even that knows no extreme. It is not like the abandoning of life and human relationships of the *Sanyāsi*; it accepts that the Lord is the Master of all and that the devotee must use and manage, profit by and lose, for His sake, for and on His behalf, for His love's sake, for his love for Him and His creation. And as to the relationship between man and God, there is no great gulf between them; man is so much like the gods; God is so much like man; man is so concerned with God; and God is no less, in fact more, concerned about him. The relations of the devotee (at whatever level) with God are not those of servant and master, but of companion, of deep concern in terms of love for each other, for love's own sake; not in terms of obligations and rights, but in terms of a natural mutualism; occasional hesitations and disagreements amidst the ever-present yearnings of both to be one with each other,—even these add salt to the joys of life. Therefore the final beatitude to be with Him, along with Him, by His side, about Him, at the most as His *sakhā* (friend), at the least as His attendant, from birth to birth endlessly, not beyond births, not in heaven, but here down below, is the long and ever present prayer and yearning of the Vaishnava.

The middle course in the theory and practice of art and life which is so characteristic of the Vaishnavites can be easily traced to the necessities of life in the regions where they have been reared. As in all departments of life, so in arts and crafts, the *sampradāyas* and their *dharmas* rule supreme. And just as *dharma* bodies forth the ideal from the actual, so does art. So also like *dharma* and the tendencies of the life it directs, the superficial as

well as the deepest chords of arts and crafts are intimately born of the region and its history. All work and thought, act and feeling and word, have to be a dedication to the living God, not for economic gains or for personal exploitation, but for the enjoyment of life, for worship, for service, and for the concrete expression of the highest in man.

CHAPTER XIV.

Conclusion : the Society and the Individual.

After the foregoing analytical discussion of the several aspects of the Vaishnavas of Gujarat, let us view the structure of their society as a whole, and sum up the whole situation.

Gujarat is mostly populated by Hindus. Out of a total population of 7,456,000 souls, 6,652,000, i.e., over 89% are Hindus. Of the dominant Hindu population most are followers of one or another of the Vaishnavite sects. No recent figures are available in their details; but one may safely assert that the above statement is more true now than it was in 1891.[1] For, the Śaivites, Jains and Animists are being converted to Vaishnavism now more than ever. A majority of Brahmins continues to be Śaivite, while only a few Vanias yet adhere to Jainism. And these latter have migrated into Gujarat from Marwar and Rajputana on the north and north-east, and from Kathiawar on the west. The nature of the Vaishnavite revolt is indicated by the fact that the bulk of the Vaishnavites are Vaiśyas and Śudras, whilst most of the Brahmins and the few Kshatriyas are Śaivites. In other words, the new *mata* came to emancipate the folk of the region (and especially the lower Varnas) not only from the Brahmanical yoke, but also from an unnatural faith which received no inward response; the

[1] In the census of that year the Hindus numbered over 90% of the total population. Of this 2% were Jains, 8% were Shaivites, mostly Brahmins, 15% were animists, and the rest were Vaishnavites. Cf. *Gujarat Sarva Sangraha*, pp. 43–46. Also, *Bom. Gaz.*, Vol. IX, Pt. I, pp. 1–3.

spirit of the Śaivite faith was not rooted in the soil. In fact, the history of Vaishnavism is a record of a gradual throwing off of the Śaivite yoke. The change to a more natural religion of course reacted on the people's outlook on life and on their social structure. In the more or less beneficent sunshine of Vaishnavism their spirits revived, and from pessimism burst forth into greater and greater optimism. Better recognition of the individual (although only very recently) and of the lower Varnas followed. This latter step was hastened by the advent of Islam; for the Vaiśyas and Śudras saw that by taking up Islam people could rise to a higher social status, and that therefore neither their station in life nor their occupations were necessarily determined by their birth, as the Brahmins taught them to believe. Latterly also, the lowest classes and the untouchables have begun to be converted to Christianity, and have been given opportunities and power to take up higher occupations and to achieve a higher social status. Simultaneously, the conscientious ones from among the Brahmins and Kshatriyas have awakened to their proper duties, that of protecting the weak and helping them towards a better life, and have fought with their own class in the interests of their down-trodden protégés. Partly as a direct result of this split in the higher Varnas, and partly due to the influx from surrounding districts, *gnyātis* began to multiply and the fortunes of the existing castes began to change. As the new faith grew from strength to strength, the low became, in a sense, exalted, and the exalted tended to be cast down.

Nevertheless all this happened step by step. There was nothing sudden or violent. In fact, Vaishnavism in Gujarat is a natural outcome, even in its origin, of Śaivism. It might be said that Śaivism revolted against Buddhism and

Jainism. But, except here and there in its history, Vaishnavism was not fully a revolt. For the later Śaivism of Gujarat was not quite the old Brahmanism. It was Brahmanism, chastened, sobered and made wise by experience and vicissitude; fully alive to the new circumstances, it had in some ways to accede to the rightful demands of the lower *Varnas* for a larger and freer existence than the old Brahmanism had allowed them to lead. The old Brahmanism was now openly rejected; and one cannot say if it was ever acceptable to the people of Gujarat. For, the fact that it was followed does not imply or prove that it was accepted willingly. On the contrary, all the evidence points the other way. The great God Śiva, through His instruments, the Brahmins, imposed Himself on the people. We may naturally compare the relation of the old Brahmanism to Vaishnavism with that of Judaism to Christianity. The old God of Might and Terror was transformed into "our Father in Heaven" by Christ; and though not quite so definitely, is not Krishna, or Rāma, or Vishnu after all such a Father, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, yet benign and loving and ever tender with a great sympathy; one can hardly discern in these incarnations of the Life-force any touch of the absoluteness, overwhelmingness, fearfulness of the uncontrolled omnipuissance of Śiva, the God of wrath and destruction.

We have therefore to note that the clear-cut way in which one may differentiate between Śaivism and Vaishnavism does not necessarily indicate that the differences in the outlook and the ways of life of the Vaishnavites and the Śaivites are just as sharp. As a matter of fact, as it must always be where people of two *matas* live in such close contact, it happens that some Vaishnavas are Śaivitic, whilst some Śaivites are Vaishnavitic.

This is inevitable: the conversion of Gujarat to Vaishnavism has been a matter of time, a gradual process. A long preparation has preceded any definite break or change from the Śaivite tradition, and before a leader could effectively throw a challenge and make some people leave the old camp and cast their lot with him into a new.

Vaishnavism, then, is a child—a rebellious child, may be—of Śaivism. As such it is the inheritor of Śaivite traditions; and in the course of the preceding chapters we have tried to indicate what direct or indirect heritage has been, and is still being, carried by the Vaishnavites. We shall consider briefly that heritage in its several aspects, what part it has played in the past in the life of the people, what new forms it has assumed, how far it has changed, what it tends to be now, and why.

But before we do that, a word or two must be said about the common heritage of both the Śaivites and Vaishnavites of Gujarat, in order the better to understand the significance of the Śaivite legacy and the Vaishnavite reaction to it. This common heritage is twofold: that of environment or 'milieu', and that of history.

Gujarat is and has been a rich region: rich in soil, in minerals, in geographical position, with a climate and temperature favourable to rich harvests. Not all the wars, nor all the barbarous raids, nor all the exorbitant taxes could impoverish it to the point of utter want. True, it has not yet been well or adequately developed. But the course of its history (for which again the richness of the region is largely responsible) explains it. The oldest history of Gujarat reveals that foreigners came from time to time and ruled the destinies of the agriculturists. Being a people living on fertile plains, and consequently apt to be meek and docile, they had

neither the strength of body nor of heart to resist their invaders with arms or great force. Their resistance, let us say in passing, took other forms: (1) economic, as displayed in the village organization; (2) religious and social, as expressed in the joint-family system, and the compactness of the *gnyāti*; these two being encased in the almost impenetrable armour of *dharma*, and latterly of *sampradāya* and of *mata*. This, what may be called, passive resistance was so effective that even their conquerors had to yield to it, and became in fact victims of it.

This, however, is not the full story. If the people could, in whatever manner, preserve their culture, their civilization, that did not prevent the destruction of their homes and fields, which was the inevitable consequence of constant wars and troubles. Not that those times were impossible to live in, that there was no commerce, no wealth, no peace altogether. For a study of Ras Mala and of Rajasthān reveals to us how glorious were those days—full of chivalry, in which a high code of public and private morality was rigidly observed. But that is the bright side of the picture. The glory, and the pomp and circumstance were of the royal courts. The tiller of the soil had to pay for all that in India, as everywhere else in the world. But there are no records to tell us how much burden he had to bear in the pre-Mahomedan times. We know very well that the Afghan and the Moghul drank a full and overflowing cup of glory. But they were after a double crown of victory: political and religious. In fact they came mainly in the interests and for the establishment of the church-militant of Islam. They were fanatics and believed it a sacred duty to convert people, by the only method known to them,—the sword. One may judge what effect this was likely to have on a civilized and tolerant folk, and to what extent

the error of over-organization among them can be explained in terms of resistance, in the interests of self-protection, to these aggressive forces.

Let us now turn to the Śaivite legacy to the Vaishnavites. It was threefold: social, economic and religious. With a few changes here and there, at least one part of the social heritage remains still unaltered, and forms the basis on which the other aspects rest secure. This is the family organization, the Kula and Gotra. The family hold on the individual is many-sided and complete. The family rules the individual's social and economic life, and on its integrity depends the entire fabric of Hindu life. The ancestor's occupation has normally to be followed. The heads of the village families determine the place and function of practically all who dwell in the village: and they must be unhesitatingly obeyed. All this has to be done because it is what they must do as Men, because it is Mānava-dharma, or the dharma of and for Man.

The next, and in many cases less powerful than the family tradition, is the heritage of the *gnyāti*-system. Early history shows a revolt against it; not against *gnyātis*, but against the difference and distance between *gnyātis* and the respective rights and privileges, or disabilities arising out of such differences. Why was it then that in spite of this, during what we may call the Middle Ages of Gujarat, it was the most powerful organization of its kind, as history reveals; so much so that under its auspices *gnyātis* kept on multiplying. The *gnyāti*-sense was all-pervading. He who was not with his *gnyāti* in every respect was against it; without claiming final certainty on this point, can we not say that under an ever-threatening danger of violation and destruction by fanatical foreign rulers, perhaps the rigidity of the *gnyāti*-system was the only way to save the situation? And as to the folk

that immigrated and settled in Gujarat from the surrounding areas, and the early Gurjar invaders, was it not a happy trick of the organizing machinery (of Brahmanical origin) to avoid, so far as possible, the social danger of fusing with alien peoples by bestowing, as if, on the conquering host the *gnyāti* and *Varna* organizations *for their own use*? It will not be difficult to understand, then, that under the pressure from various sides and of varying degrees, the *gnyāti* control had to be absolute, in order that the family and the dharma may be saved, and through them the individual.[1] And in spite of all the efforts of the Mahomedans, we find that so strong was the Hindu heritage and tradition that even the few who yielded to the Mahomedan pressure and were converted to Islam are yet Hindus in their ways of living, except that in some cases they have lost the fundamental characteristics of joint-family system.

And the Śaivites gave their *Varna* system to the Vaishnavites. But the system which the Vaishnavites inherited was riddled and torn, in parts broken, and generally weakened by the Buddhist and Jain criticism and attacks. That institution has always been regarded with hostility by the Vaishnavites; and it seems that Vaishnavism has treated this heritage as an heir would treat an evil name—try to break it, unmake it, and destroy its evil influence. In fact, as Vaishnavism grows the *Varnas* decline. We have noticed, for example, how the Vāniās have reached a social status as high as that of the Brahmins themselves. This upsetting of the balance of *Varnas* has been greatly due to economic causes. The merchant and the financier and the capitalist have,

[1] What this attempt at conserving the most sacred and the most cherished of possessions may result in is very well to be seen in the case of the Zoroastrian Persians of modern Persia. Like the people of Gujarat they tried to defend their culture against the crude and fanatical attack of Islam, with the result that they now live at a synnomic level.

by sheer force of wealth and power, for the while become dictators over all, even over the priestly class.

So far as the Śaivite and Jain traditions of economic organization is concerned, our discussion of Mahājans or trade-guilds will fully show what the Vaishnavites have been making of it through the centuries. We have seen how in the village the agriculturists rule over the settler-artisans, how in the cities the individual trade-guilds manage their own immediate affairs in regulating competition, and supply and demand of wares, and how all these are under the complete control of the city-Mahājans who initiate and control the financial policy of the cities, powerful enough now, so powerful once that they dared bully even kings and invaders. For a time the economic fortunes of Gujarat depended on the Jains ; but that has passed away. The Vaishnavites have been making use of this strange economic organization, all classes in their own way. But it is the use of this heritage by the moneyed class that has contributed to the supremacy of the Vaiśya Varna. In origin, perhaps, these guilds were intended to be for the good of their small commonwealths. But the system was worked and carried to a dangerous point, as part of the *gnyāti* organization, and even got a religious colouring owing to the *dharma*-doctrine of hereditary occupations. The result was that the good, bad and indifferent were all put on the same level and made to fetch the same price in an artificially closed market. We have seen what the effect of this on arts and crafts has been.

We now come to the largest, and perhaps the most important heritage from the Śaivites, viz., the *dharma* or religious heritage. It has been both a great help and a serious hindrance. But Vaishnavism cannot get rid of it all at once. It will have to pass through this purgatory before its

final triumph is assured. It is in this region that the Śaivite influences are most felt and least resisted. For, all departments of life, nay, all life itself, have to depend upon and to be guided in the veriest detail, by the ever-present, ever-watchful, *dharma*-sanctions. They may be ritualistic, now degenerated into routine; they may be real or imaginery or concocted; but there they surely are, alive and active to an alarming degree. And they are, have always been, resented by a few individuals. All their menace, all their hatefulness, all the net result of their functioning may be summed up by saying that they have oppressed and suppressed the individual's personality. For what, in effect, has been the place of the individual in the Vaishnavite community? The question is important, and we shall consider it for a moment.

Let us begin by reminding ourselves that practically the whole life-course of a person is mapped out at the very birth by the parents in accordance with their own ideas which are guided by tradition, custom and *dharma* Shortly after a child is born the Joshi or astrologer is summoned; and within ten days after its birth the horoscope is drawn up and completed. The child's future is known to all, fixed by Parameśwar and revealed by His mouthpiece the Joshi.

Let us consider the man first and then the woman. The birth of a boy is always a great event in the family. No Hindu, so it is believed, can attain *Swarga* (heaven) who does not leave a son and heir behind to perform his Śrādhdha (death ceremonies). A sonless couple is truly accursed—perhaps paying for the sins of a former existence. The parents, greatly influenced by the *dharma*-doctrine of hereditary occupations, generally decide in regard to the son's future life-work, the boy's inclinations being hardly ever taken into account.

Of course the question of marriage comes up before the parents as soon as a child is born. They are always on the look-out for a suitable match, and marriage is celebrated almost immediately one is found. Early marriage is a normal factor in the life of most of the village communities, and has been the greatest physiological cause of the avoidable and premature death of mothers and children. And in 1914 His Highness the Gaikwar took the exceedingly bold and courageous step of making early marriage a penal offence involving heavy fines on both the boy's and the girl's parents.[1]

Again, as we have seen, *gnyāti*-laws fix issues like whom a person should marry and whom not. Normally, neither man nor woman gets an opportunity of choosing his or her mate. But when they do get a chance and use it against the wishes of the *gnyāti*, they and their families are in danger of excommunication. An extreme case which actually happened in 1912 in a Vaishnavite family will illustrate this. An educated young man persuaded his orthodox parents to postpone his marriage till he had graduated at the University. This was granted. At twenty-two the time came when he should marry and this young man, instead of obeying the wishes of his parents, or the caste-laws against widow-remarriage, married a widow of nineteen who had never lived with the man to whom she was married in childhood. According to the caste-laws he was excommunicated and his family had the choice between excommunication and dis-

[1] Fortunately, however, in the more advanced communities, e.g. Vanias, Lohanas, Gajjars, Brahmins and Kshatriyas, who live in cities and educate their children, have the good sense to postpone the marriage of their children till their education is finished, and I know dozens of families where the girls have been married at eighteen or even after—a thing unheard of, and looked upon with abhorrence among the orthodox. Young men and women are even allowed to choose their partners. This is the result of greater security of person and property during recent times.

owning the son. They chose the latter course. So much so that six years later when the young man died no one of his family either visited the young man before his death or even attended his funeral. I knew the family very well and on learning the sad news paid a visit of condolence to his father, and the following conversation ensued :—

"I am very sorry to hear of *K*'s death yesterday. Did you meet him before he died ? He always yearned to see you."

"Who is this fellow you are talking about ! " exclaimed the father.

I said, "I mean your son."

"But he went to—six years ago," the father returned in anger.

I could not say anything more. I saw the mother weeping in silence in a corner of the room. The father tried to hold his head up; but one could notice it was all against his inmost feelings.

Both the father and the son were two of the kindest and best men I have ever known ; and yet that loving father would not even look at or visit his dying son who called for him and his mother ; for he was dead to the caste, and therefore to his family.[1]

Now suppose a man becomes a widower. He cannot choose between living single and remarrying. He must remarry ; and, horrible to relate, offers of

[1] The social effect was notable and must be recorded. There was an immediate split in the caste, many of the families expressing strong approval of the late *K*'s action, while others remained orthodox. Till then no one knew the consensus of opinion in the *gnyāti* ; but *K* having taken the first bold step, a leader having been found, there was soon a large and enthusiastic following. And it was this consequence of his son's action that enraged and embittered the father for ever against him—such is the hold of the *gnyāti* over the individual. And the orthodox party is losing young men and their families year by year. An individual therefore may break *gnyāti* fetters if he is prepared to lose all that he has held dearest for the sake of his convictions. And this is happening more and more nowadays.

a fresh match may not be wanting even while the wife is on her death-bed. And very often, even while the dead wife is being cremated, a fresh marriage is arranged. This revolting custom does not seem cruel to the villagers, though all educated people hate it and are doing their utmost to put a stop to it.

Although the birth of a girl does not make her parents unhappy—far from it—yet they are set anxiously thinking on her account. Would they find a suitable match for her? Would the husband turn out to be good? Would she be treated well at her husband's? A boy can more or less look after himself and fight his way through; but a girl in India is helpless, so entirely is she dependent for her well-being on man. Ordinarily the girl is never even instructed in the rudiments of learning. At an early age she is married off and sent to her father-in-law's. Her position in her husband's family before she is a mother is that of a mere girl, and she is not treated with any special respect. But an expectant mother is looked after very well and tenderly. Every care is lavished on her. Once a mother, her position in the household improves greatly. This shows to what extent the position of woman is measured in terms of her function as bearer of children.

We saw how a widower is forced to remarry. The widow, on the other hand, must, by *gnyāti*-law, remain a widow the rest of her life. A young widow is considered ill-omened (her evil stars having caused the death of her husband!) and consequently ill-treated and not allowed to take any part in festivities.[1] A young widow, not allowed to remarry, easily becomes a victim to a highly un-

[1] But when she grows older her position changes entirely. She becomes the matron of the house and is much respected, and her counsel and advice are sought and followed on every occasion.

desirable and irregular life. Much of the vice practised in temples is due to this. But this unfortunate custom exists only, strange to relate, among the higher *gnyātis* like the Vania, Brahmin and Gujjar. Amongst the lower ones, e.g. Golās and Ghānchis, remarriage is allowed and practised, and women are permitted to live a natural life.

The above comparison sufficiently shows the dangers and disadvantages of unduly restricting the freedom of the individual by *gnyāti-dharma*. How the educated people to-day (who mostly belong to the higher castes) look at this problem is best summarized by their poet Nanalal when he says: "For the body-married widow no salvation like remarriage; for the love-married widow no sin like remarriage."

Of course the woman has no voice at all in the conduct of the *gnyāti*. She has to accept what is bestowed upon her by man, her lord. But this is not the whole truth. For we have noticed in another place that, although rather indirectly, she exercises great influence on her husband, and through him on the *gnyāti*. And although she is practically the absolute mistress of her home, she dare not assert her authority openly. Thus her personality is continually repressed in other directions.

The only matter in which the individual—man and woman—is really free to do as he (or she) wills is in religious worship. This has been for centuries the only outlet for his personality, the only way in which he has been asserting himself in his struggle to be free from the grip of Dharma, of family and of *gnyāti*. A man or woman may worship a deity and visit a temple other than that of his or her family and *gnyāti*. No one objects to that, although he has to put up with casual quips from his family and *gnyāti*. On the

contrary, I have frequently noticed the general admiration in which individuals or families abandoning the beaten path are held. A woman has of necessity to worship and take care of the images of the *kula-devtā* or *devi*. But she is not therefore prevented from worshipping deities of her own choice, and praying in temples of sects other than her husband's or father's.[1] But the freedom and the latitude end there. 'You may think and believe and worship what you like,' says the *gnyāti*;

[1] The origin of this attitude is traceable to the general spirit of Hinduism all over India, which may be stated thus: Truth is one; but it may be seen from different points of view. It may be sought from different motives in answer to definite issues; it may be pursued by persons or communities possessing different temperaments, sentiments and susceptibilities; and it may also be apprehended with reference to previous experience, understanding, and cultural level and needs. The one Truth may thus be seen as projected from a variety of facets, portrayed in varied hues, heard in different harmonies and tunes, and spoken through many tongues. But though this is recognized by all peoples and races in abstract philosophical propositions, there is only one religion whose teachers and followers have not merely avowed and declared but also behaved in this spirit. Historically, Hinduism has developed an attitude of supreme charity towards cultures and creeds outside its folds, rather than a fanatical faith in an inflexible sectarianism; within itself also, Hinduism has displayed that same catholic attitude of generosity towards all the sects, opinions and cultures that come under it. Therefore, heresy and heresy-hunting find no place in Hinduism. On the other hand, in positive terms, Hinduism has all along accepted, even to a fault and uncritically, the million gods of the aborigines and has given justification for all these as necessary intermediate expressions of the human experience, beliefs, and spiritual struggles towards the final end. The worshippers of different gods and followers of varied opinions, contrary and contradictory, have all along been accepted by leaders of Hindu culture and teachers of Dharma as their kith and kin. Thus, for instance, does the Lord Krishna accept the oppressed, the womankind and the Śudras as His own; but even those of the *pāpayoni*, like the Kirats and the Himas, are adopted by Him as His very own; and it is in this self-same spirit of generous tolerance and deeper loyalty to the human spirit that He sides with both the parties that seek His refuge in their bid for power in the Mahābhārata. In the spirit of this very tradition did Aśoka declare that reverence to one's own Dharma demands that the Dharma of others shall not be reviled, shall even be respected; for, said he, one only injures his own religion while he seeks to wrong another's. It is this spirit of tolerance and reverence for another's opinions and sentiments that has given shelter, safety and hospitality to strangers in India. Consciously and unconsciously, the Hindu attitude towards everything in the higher life tends to refer generally to choice and free-will; and, in particular to the Hindu mind nothing seems more inhuman and mad than religious intolerance or persecution.

'but you shall not act as you choose. Your convictions may be different from ours; still you shall act according to the dictates of the *gnyāti*-law.' True, individuals and families have always been able to emancipate themselves from *gnyāti* control by going over to suitable Sampradāyas; but the risks have always been great, the sacrifices involved have always demanded very stout hearts. Therefore the individual has patiently, though always under protest, submitted to tyrannical dictation and prescription. But the dark days of insecurity are over, and the need or excuse, we repeat, for such external and internal repression of the Vaishnava's personality no longer exists. The folk are now enabled to lead a peaceful life. Also, the influence of educated young men and of Western ideas have struck powerful blows to hasten the downfall of the tyranny of custom and tradition. And so the individual is slowly but surely coming into his own again. When we remember how through centuries he has been suppressed, repressed, baffled, foiled and harassed, it is amazing to see that he is still alive. And indeed, it is not what he has not done but what he *has* done against great odds of the last eight hundred years that is significant. He has already opened his eyes and is looking about him. In the liveness of the individual, undoubtedly, lies the greatest hope of Gujarat, as of any other country. A society may by turns run through the whole gamut of fortune—from the lowest pitch to the highest, back to the lowest and so forth; but it will not do permanent injury to itself, its culture or civilization, if its individuals are alive enough as personalities, and have vitality enough to put up a struggle. And such, fortunately, seems to be the case of Gujarat.

It will be apparent, then, from the foregoing account of the difficulties of Vaishnavite society

and of the individual's place in it, that the Śaivite heritage of the people, especially in regard to *gnyāti* and *dharma*, goes against the grain of their Vaishnavite soul. Hence one can hardly expect to find intellectual consistency in their lives. Life is full of contradictions, and the Vaishnavite's life has much more than its share of them. This is but natural amongst a people who shun violent change and patiently spend their lives in finding compromises with a faith which, though older, is yet thoroughly alien to their inmost promptings. Their abhorrence of revolutionary changes may perhaps be accounted a credit to them and a justification for the slowness of their progress. Anyhow, it has been an old experience in this society that men who have sought to achieve anything too suddenly, who have tried to force the pace of the people towards reforms, have been looked upon with annoyance and suspicion, and have failed to do anything. A sudden change, a complete break with the past, is not at all to the taste of the people as far as *dharma*, above all, is concerned. In this may be found much of the explanation of Mr. Gandhi's thin success; he did not proceed cautiously enough, and in a spirit of evolution from the state of a dark past to that of a bright future.

Then again, contacts have played their part—an important one. Other points of view have affected the situation: new industries have told a great deal upon it; Western education has been at work opening men's eyes to the situation; railways seem to whistle through it in mockery. But *dharma* rules supreme yet in the life of the folk. And it is only during very recent years—a time of safety of life and of property, of security for one's beliefs—that the problem has begun to be faced by the people. It will be solved only when the elasticity of *dharma* will once more operate and cleanse the society of

adharma, when the cycle of recurrence brings the appointed hierophants who will proclaim and establish the reign of a regenerate *dharma*.

But, such is the instinctive adaptability of human society, that it manages to preserve itself even in a poisonous atmosphere by means of certain safety-valves. The ways of escape were provided in the direction of *mata* and its repeatedly new interpretations in the *sampradāyas*. These have been the channels through which progress (whatever it be) has been made; internal re-organization has taken place; and these promise to serve in future even the same useful purposes. For by a change of faith, of *sampradāya*, an individual or a family or a whole *gnyāti* have opportunities, and acquire the power, to live up to their convictions, even to develop new tendencies, to work out their own salvation in a way their old faith denied them. In fact, the *sampradāya* aspect, providing a much-needed safety-valve, has proved the greatest support and stabiliser, of Vaishnavite society in the past. It happens sometimes that only one individual deserts his fold and has his own way without any response from others. But this rarely occurs. In most cases of breaking away the pioneer soon becomes the leader of a faithful band of followers. The following may be large or small, of his own kinsmen, from his own *gnyāti* or even from other *gnyātis*. But a leader is in almost all cases essential. Spontaneous action by the masses, however discontented, is unknown.

What we have said does not reflect much credit on the *dharma* organization; on the contrary it seems to be a menace to the society. But such is not the opinion of the Vaishnavite. For him no act of thought or word, no act of life should be without the bounds of *dharma*-sanctions. Not that he reasons so, but he has been thinking along these

lines for ages, and he cannot think otherwise. Even his occasional revolts against the existing *dharma*-sanctions are undertaken in the name of *dharma*. *Dharma* is the breath of life ; the universe exists because of *dharma* ; without it the world would be no world, it would be chaos. Such is the unshakable belief (held unquestioningly, mechanically, instinctively, or in a few cases due to intellectual perception) which animates the entire life of a Hindu. May it not be a lesson to those whose life is led thoughtlessly, without purpose, whose every-day acts have no telic fragrance, no purposive urge even from an all-too-powerful *dharma*-grip ? For a telic existence is necessary to all progressive societies. Such telesis may of course be supplied by a misfunctioning *dharma*, as has, unfortunately, been the case with the Hindus. But this aspect (which is being gradually and surely eliminated) apart, is it not a highly commendable ideal that all our thoughts and acts be inspired and directed by a spiritual guiding force which only, in our opinion, can create a unity and completeness in human life, and enable us to make of human society a nursery for the development of the best in human personality ? Purposive existence is the first step to a higher life ; for not merely telic, but syntelic, should be the nature of human freedom. And this leads us to a final reflection.

The scriptures and history of the Vaishnavites of Gujarat reveal to us a society which must have reached a high pitch of civilization once. Organized collective effort and analytic apprehension of the factors that go to make civilized human society possible, are reflected on almost every page of Hindu history, and force themselves upon the attention of the most desultory reader. Yet how strange and melancholy to reflect that the present inheritors of such a culture do not know or understand the value

of it, do not consciously follow it, but do so by force of habit and custom, because it has to be obeyed, because "so it is ordained by the Śastras". This fact puts a very different complexion on the matter. How has this come about? What is the cause of such stupor, such unhealthy docility and meekness? The reason is two-fold. In the first place, the meaning of law, of custom, of civilization and all that we may call culture was not taught by the Brahmins to the other *Varnas*. They jealously, and unwisely, guarded their knowledge and their wisdom, and guarded it too well. It was handed down from Brahmin father to Brahmin son; no others were admitted to a share of it. It may be, as some wise and orthodox men yet affirm, that it is due to specialization in every department, and especially in cultural pursuits, that Hindu society attained the height it did. And yet what is the *net* result of it all? Great traditions have lost their proper significance for the people, even for the Brahmin inheritors of the law: in short, a completely synnomic existence. If those great traditions and that great culture had been made the common property of all, high and low, surely it would have become greater for the testing and the wear and tear, and thus would have been much better preserved. Still, the Brahmins were not entirely to blame. Perhaps when they thought that the people had become fit to come into their great heritage, and when they meant to bestow it on them, theirs was not the power to do so. For, it must be remembered that the Brahmins in Gujarat came to lose their power for many centuries—during the reign of Buddhism, and the times of political upheavals caused by foreign conquerors. Life and culture cannot soar and expand on a rapidly shifting and dangerous stage; they only curl up and become cautious to the point of inaction, and finally be-

come a memory and a name. It is a great and tragic theme, and as such yields a social truth which we may well take to heart. And it is this : that a society cannot always move forward, that even a highly organized and syntelic society is liable to serious relapses and may become completely synnomic.

But in spite of all the shortcomings we have noted, that the cultural heritage of the Vaishnavites is genuine cannot be doubted. For, given favourable conditions, it begins to flourish at once. This shows that it is living, not moribund. Owing to the political stability of the last hundred years, safety of home and fields, and the enlivening contact with a people dependent on commerce for their prosperity and therefore naturally ethical in outlook, peaceful in dealings, and tolerant in regard to religion, as also bringing with them a rich heritage, Vaishnavite institutions are already beginning to function properly, and their telic nature is beginning to re-appear. Also, the individual is becoming more free, and therefore more alive and active. Here and there we even find him outrunning the bounds of prudence and safety, losing a sense of moderation. But the mass of the enfranchised have preserved their sense of evolution and cannot be relied upon to countenance revolutionary changes. For *dharma* has asserted itself here also, now again as during the past. *Natura non facit per saltum.* Family and *gnyāti* ties are yet strong, and the *dharma*-sense animates all. One is therefore led to generalize, that the growth of this society will tend to be gradual, evolutionary, as it has been during the last few decades, and that therefore there is no fear of a social disaster. And one is the more encouraged and emboldened to make such an assertion since the Vaishnavite woman has begun once more to come out in the open and to take her

proper part in solving social questions. For instance, they form associations and clubs, finance and manage these, do work of public utility through these, and popularize education. About the year 1900 they established a Women's Home in Bombay and gathered together Vaishnavite women of all classes and castes to do educational and social work in the districts. In 1923, a Lohana lady of 22 years of age (unmarried) was elected a member of the Municipal Corporation of a city. Another lady, a Kapol Vania by caste, has been appointed an Honorary Magistrate, in which capacity she has to sit with a man on the bench to decide upon cases that come for their consideration. Another, also a Vania widow, has been taking the part of her mill-hands against her own brother. She was elected by these men to represent their cause and sit on an Arbitration Board founded to settle disputes between the employers and the employees. Mr. Gandhi's wife chose to be a comrade of her husband in jail, from time to time, for about seven years in all. Where woman comes into her own, gives man her help, where her life and activities become the proper complement of those of man, there cannot but be ordered progress. For if it is the delight of woman to bring forth, her holiest passion is to build up, to conserve and to perpetuate.

Thus the individual is becoming freer, emancipating himself from the undue yoke of *dharma*, *gnyāti* and family. And we have seen how far he is helping his society to live a conscious life. His own efforts, however well-directed, can achieve little or nothing without other help; whilst synergy or co-operative effort must end in triumphant achievement. Individual freedom is valuable in so far as it helps the forces of social synergy; and the highest function of civilized society is to give greater and greater opportunities to the individual to develop

and express the best in his personality. Out of the action and reaction of these two forces a truly syntelic society is born. Is a society syntelic ? It is our plea that that is the final test. The value of a society as the nursery and culture-ground for an ever-ascending race of men depends on how far it lives a conscious life, strives ever thus to surmount its actual state, and while believing in the necessity of a social existence and co-operative effort, allows the individual his proper rôle in the whole scheme.

PART II.

Method.

Introductory.

Chapter XV. Beginning and Pursuit of the Inquiry.

Chapter XVI. Outlook and Scope of the Social Inquiry.

Chapter XVII. The Scientific Approach in Human Investigation.

Chapter XVIII. The Biological and Regional Approach.

Chapter XIX. Fundamental Forms of Society.

"All the sciences are connected; they lend each other material aid as parts of one great whole, each doing its own work, not for itself alone, but for the other parts; none can attain its proper result separately, since all are parts of one and the same wisdom."

—Roger Bacon.

ON METHOD.

Introductory.

In this part we shall try to enunciate both the method of gathering facts and the outlook from which the material has been used for sociological purposes. For, it is hoped that the study will be found as useful for the outlook and method as for the facts it contains. Such a method and outlook are greatly needed, and have not yet been satisfactorily enunciated by workers in this special field. And when they are given they are generally one-sided. Thus in Leplay, Demolin and Ratzel the treatment is only geographical; in Haddon and Rivers mainly ethnological; in McDougall, psychological, and in Freud, psycho-analytical. In his *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, Dr. Malinovsky gives a detailed outline of the various ways in which one may profitably gather materials, and find out the native's outlook in primitive society; this is worthy of attention and perusal by all field-workers.

But, all these methods have been applied, and are meant to be applied, more or less exclusively to the study of primitive people only. But social phenomena form a greater whole in which the primitive plays but one part, and illustrates but one phase, of the drama. The primitive and primarily biological facts do, indeed, form an important part of the life of civilized man; only, the primitive in him is concentrated into the first few years of his life. Therefore, there is no sharp line of demarcation to be drawn between the primitive and the civilized man; there is probably as much of the potential civilized nature in the primitive man as there is of the savage in the civilized man.

We have, therefore, rather to consider human society in all its phases when we attempt to discover the laws that govern it, and the method by which these laws may be determined and applied, and thus tested. For, all sociological investigation is in the main an expression of the social effort to discover laws which may help us to learn from the past and the present, and obtain weapons to improve our ways of living, and to avoid serious social troubles which may lead to social collapse. The sociologist has not only to diagnose social health and disease but to find the right way to arrive at this diagnosis ; his primary function in the years to come will be to remedy this by co-operation with the medical man, the chemist, the physicist, the biologist, the psychologist, the statistician, the economist, the historian, the anthropologist, the geographer, the lawyer and the priest, and thus to help the better organization of the home and the village and the city,—the nurseries of the individual and the race.

CHAPTER XV.

The Beginning and Pursuit of the Inquiry.

I.

Thirty-seven years ago I was a scholar—one among about 150—in a municipal school in Bombay. The teachers and the students were Gujarati Hindus. There were only two Parsis, my brother and myself.

The school had a 'water-mahārāj' who was in charge of the water-room. In this room there were many cups, and the Mahārāj told us which particular cup each one of us had to use when drinking; and my cup had to remain outside the room. The Mahārāj would not let any of us take the water from the water-pot by ourselves. He himself poured it out for us. And after having used the cup we had to wash it, the Mahārāj once more pouring out the washing water for us, and then leave the cup in its proper place. Every one of the boys seemed to be understanding all this, except myself and my brother. I asked my grandfather about it, and he explained: 'Oh, they are Hindus, it is in their *Dharam*'. This did not satisfy the child-inquirer. So I asked some of my schoolmates about it, and they explained: 'Oh, our *gnyātis* are different, and so we can't drink from each other's cups'. On asking them why they were not allowed to touch the water-pot and why only the Mahārāj could touch it, they said: 'But the Mahārāj is a Brahmin, and none of us can touch it because we are not Brahmins'. I could not understand this at the time, but often mused to myself, 'Perhaps I shall some day know why this is so'. And no wonder this curiosity caught hold of my child-mind; for there were over

thirty cups in the water-room of a school attended by about a hundred and fifty boys.

And when they talked of their different *gnyātis* I always got into the habit of asking them what it was, what the difference was between one *gnyāti* and another, and so on. I yet remember one calling himself Lohār, another calling himself Soni, a third calling himself Daśa-Lad, and so on. The head-master and two of the assistant teachers were Anāvils, they said; while Maganlāl and Ishwarlāl masters were Vāniās of some caste. What the difference between the one and the other was and why, no one could tell me. All we knew was that it was there.

All this did not quite satisfy me. I thought a world of these complications and wrapped them up in an amount of mystery, the material for which was amply provided by some of my friends, who talked to me of the *mahātmaya* (greatness) of Ambāji and Bahucharāji, of Śrināthji and Mahādevji, and such others. And the mystery deepened as all those friends took me to their homes, showed me their gods and goddesses, gave me part of the delicious *prasād* (food offering) for the gods to eat, and showed me the then wild-looking pictures of these gods and goddesses. In our games this mysterious element, and this sense of difference were always present in the midst of our school-boy unity. The boys offered me food, but only on a plantain leaf plate; they gave me water, but willingly poured it out in my palms for me to drink. And they never seemed to feel doing something extraordinary. I always felt it and explained it away by saying: 'Oh, that is their "Dharam". I am not of their *gnyāti*. It does not matter.'

I left the school and very soon forgot all about my early schoolmates, for they did not continue their education, and went to work. I joined a

High School, where the same old thing was repeated so far as the water-room was concerned. Only, there were some more cups, the room was large, and the pots were many more. And I could not use the Hindu-room. A separate room was provided for the Parsis ; and in one of its corners there was a separate pot and a couple of cups for the Mahomedans only. A Parsi water-man attended to the management of this room ; but unlike the Hindus, we helped ourselves to the water.

Then I joined a college. Here there was no special water-room and there were no special cups ; we all used the same cup, taking care that it was clean. Most of the Hindu students talked of their *gnyātis,* but surprised me by calling it all 'humbug' ; they talked of their *Dharma,* but with an amount of ridicule that disturbed my early impressions. But for all my asking, nobody could explain to me what the whole social organization was or what it meant. I found some people extolling it, others indifferent to it, and still others chafing under it. But it seemed to me that they were doing this to something intangible—they did not quite know what. And my purpose in giving the above autobiographical sketch has been to portray the way in which the spirit of an average Indian—educated or uneducated—gropes for the solution of an elusive problem, viz. that of understanding the difference between man and man.

I was, therefore, naturally led to find out what it all meant. This resolve was made about the year 1913, and since then, year after year, I have continued my enquiry both in Bombay during term-time, and in Gujarat during the holidays. It happened that my vacation time coincided with the marriage season, between March and June, when all are at home, life is at its best, and there is so much to see and know.

I searched for books in order to learn as much as I could. They had much to give, but not in a satisfactory way. I was told to read Griha-Sutras, Purānas, Mahābhārata, Rāmāyana, Manu-Smriti, and so on. I read these and prepared myself for the examination of existing conditions in regard to the life of those who belonged to these *gnyātis*, and followed these *Dharmas*.

II.

I happen to belong to a community, that has a certain feeling of regard for the Gujarati Hindus. For, though the Parsis almost dislike the Mahomedans and have no regard for many of their ways of life, they have a great respect for the Hindus' purity of life, tender-heartedness, and regard for others' religious beliefs. This does not necessarily mean that the Parsis care for things that concern the Hindus' spiritual life.

And being born of Parsi parents I had begun my babblings in the Gujarati language; and due both to further study and association with the people I learnt the history, language and literature of Gujarat, so that when I lived with them it was not difficult for me to understand their ways and to live like them. For, if a sociologist wants to do any good to himself and to his inquiry, he should avoid embarrassing the people as far as he can help it; for these people get easily embarrassed by one's living in ways strange to theirs. In some particulars, therefore, I had to be exceedingly careful. One of these was regarding my dress, and another my food. I did not give up my native dress but avoided all semblance of Western influence in cut and form, so that the whole appearance showed me to be orthodox. Simple dress, as the native understands it, does not oppress the simple-minded villagers,

with the result that by and by they become so accustomed to you that they consider you as one of their own people.

But more important than dress is the question of food. In regard to the latter the Gujarati Vaishnavite is exceedingly touchy. It revolts his whole being to think of anyone taking non-vegetarian diet; such a person cannot be one of them, and cannot concern himself in their affairs and well-being. But I was used to vegetarian diet, and therefore found it easier to live among the people. Thus I had no trouble whatsoever in gaining the confidence of the men and women of the families and *gnyātis* amongst whom I lived. In case these two conditions are fulfilled one is welcome almost everywhere amongst the higher and the lower *gnyātis*, amongst the rich and the poor. A social enquirer must, if he wants to study Hindu society, live *with* the people and live *like* them.

But if one wants to learn their inner life and their deeper motives, he should learn to feel like them, or at least to develop an understanding sympathy. This is simple to do, so far as the Vaishnavites are concerned. For instance, Brahmin or Vaiśya or Śudra, they all like you to join in their devotional songs. Instruct them by reading stories from the *Purānas* and other simple books of lore, sing to them, and with them, the hundreds of poems they all carry in their memory, and they feel that you are one of them. These methods of living like them and feeling like them do not only help us to gain the confidence of the people, but also enable us to understand all that happens around us from the view-point of the native himself. Any thoughtless remarks like, 'Oh, don't talk nonsense', 'That cannot be', 'This is your imagination', 'Your *Dharma* is bunkum', 'Such *gnyāti* laws must be destroyed', are dangerous, and are apt to alienate

them from you. To do this to one individual is quite sufficient to incur the disfavour of the whole *gnyāti*.

How to secure introduction to the villages, is the next question. I was very fortunately situated in this matter also, in that I had contracted many friendships with men of different castes coming from different parts of Gujarat. They were only half aware of what I was about. Only in a few cases did I let them know of my purpose, viz., studying the life of the people. The only way in which we could introduce any topic of discussion to the elders of a family was through religion; and if one talks with due respect and courtesy to these elders, they do not mind healthy criticism of their beliefs and customs. In fact, in many of our conversations they themselves criticized these, and impatiently asked for advice to overcome their difficulties. But these difficulties are mostly in regard to matters that touch the purse more than anything else. For instance, both men and women who are about to be adversely affected by the *gnyāti* law in regard to the feasting of the *gnyāti*, talk with condemnation of the 'wicked old custom,' and seek advice and guidance as to the way in which they can escape it. Or, when a very young daughter becomes widowed, the mother whispers her own views in regard to the cruelties and oppression of society. Kindly, sympathetic talk, and a behaviour that shows personal concern in the difficulties of the family or of the individual is quite appreciated, and enables the sociologist to see the native generalize, favourably or unfavourably, for himself. Besides, such occasions, enabling him to talk and think in the language of the native, raise a fresh point to enquire about and know the sentiment of the rest of the *gnyāti*. For, the *gnyāti* laws are based on customs, and are obeyed because they are

gnyāti laws. And, though some of them oppress the family or the individual, the opinion of the whole *gnyāti* as such may not be against them; but if properly tackled, the *gnyāti* as a whole may be persuaded to end an oppressive custom (*āchāra*). So that, in order to learn whether a particular *Dharma*-law or *gnyāti*-law is oppressive to the majority of the members of the *gnyāti* or only to a few families, or to a single family, or to a few individuals, the best way is to go about asking as many people as possible, especially women, who, in my opinion, are, indirectly, as instrumental in overthrowing an oppressive custom as they are in conserving it.

This need for gaining the confidence of women cannot be overemphasized. The many ways in which I achieved it were simple, straightforward and effective. A natural love for children, flavoured with sweets and lemon-drops, works wonders in this direction. Making them sing sacred verses, taking interest in whatever the little ones say and do, naturally endears us to them, and goes a good way to gain the confidence of their mothers.

But just as the best gift is that which is given unasked, so the most interesting facts that the sociologist gathers about a society or a people are those which are revealed when two or more housewives gather together of an afternoon and try to unburden their souls by telling each other their difficulties, their personal joys and sorrows. I had the good fortune to be present at many such siesta-hour conversations, giving me insight into the real problems and difficulties of Vaishnavite life.

But, the most important person to know and to be introduced to, is the village Brahmin. He is generally a good fellow, ready to help you in every way he can, putting at your disposal all his knowledge about the various families under his care, as also the difficulties and life of one or other of the

families and of the whole *gnyāti*. The best way to be introduced to him is through a Brahmin friend of his who describes you as a learned man, full of knowledge about *Dharma*, well-versed in *Bhakti* poetry, and a vegetarian. Such an introduction gives the village Brahmin, and through him the villagers, the notion that the newcomer perhaps knows everything worth knowing about them, and does not come in their midst to find out anything fresh; this puts them at ease and enables them to behave in their most natural and most normal manner.

Some of my Brahmin students made this very easy for me. Their parents introduced me to the Brahmin and everybody else as their children's *Guru*; and, in fact, people rarely felt that a non-Hindu was present in their midst to find out their ways of life. I was also very fortunate in knowing good Brahmin gentlemen who actually joined me in my many visits to the various parts of Gujarat; and we often lived as guests of the village Brahmin.

Now the way in which I was introduced—as a man who knew the *Śāstras* well,—forced me to assume the airs of a native Brahmin who understood all that was going on when social and religious affairs were discussed. Such a rôle is bound to land one sometimes in an awkward position. But one may come out successfully from such situations with a little tact and foresight.

And let us in passing emphasize that the village Brahmin's position with regard to the educated men of the community is none too enviable. They generally curse him in secret, and chafe and fume at his restraining hand. Nevertheless the ordinary villager respects the Brahmin's word more than that of any one, and a riotous young man, untouched by 'civilization', who will not obey his parents, oftentimes improves his ways due to the persuasions of the Brahmin.

III.

Having considered in the last section how one should go about, let us now find out what one should enquire about and know, so that he does not only gather his material and see it in its actual setting in the life of the people, but verifies such observations as he has come across in books or heard reported from the people. Let me explain. In dealing with village communities like the ones with which we have been concerned, one has always to remember that the present state of their society is the result of a historical evolution dimly known to the people themselves; that their religious organization, social organization, habits of life, methods of cultivation, marriage laws, working hours, etc., have a definite relation with a culture and a tradition that is past and gone. So that the enquirer must be prepared to expect what he may come across and what he may not. To do this he has to go through a vast amount of literature,—historical, poetical, religious, and social—in order that he may be able to see to what extent these traditions yet persist among the people. To take one instance: I was fully aware of the marriage laws and customs of the Vāniā *gnyātis* which were under my observation. As a book-man who believed in what books say, I should never have cared to inquire about the definite relations between the families of the bride and the bride-groom. But one must always take care to verify directly or indirectly, the statements made in books like the Manu-smriti and others, or the dogmatic enunciation of the law by the ordinary Brahmin priest. This sceptical attitude must always be present: 'Let us see if this contradicts what we already know'. And the success with which this method was used in finding out the actual marriage customs which in many cases definitely break and

go against the already known and customary beliefs and laws, as reported in the first part of this dissertation, I leave to the reader to judge.

By this I do not mean that one should always be in search of exceptions and please one self by finding that the rule is broken For, as soon as a rule is found to have been broken, one has not to rest content with knowing it. Why was it broken ? Was it really broken ? Is it the beginning of a new custom ? Has it the approval of the opinion of the *gnyāti*, and to what extent ? Or, is this breaking of the custom a deliberate attempt of a family or of an individual to overthrow and rule out the power of the *gnyāti* over them ? All these questions will place the whole problem in its right setting and perspective, so that we shall know where we are. And this is really essential and indispensable, because times and manners change so quickly nowadays, and so inexplicably (apparently), that one cannot hope to find out or understand the significance of events without minute inquiry.

IV.

The next important thing that one should bear in mind is the rough classification of the facts and attitudes of his life, and their relation to each other, as the native understands it, and supplies it ready-made. A certain set of facts and behaviour is called by the villager his *Dharma*; others he justifies, approves of, defends and tolerates in the name of the *gnyāti*; others yet, he refers to his family tradition, which he either stands by or rejects. Thus the native broadly divides the facts of his life into *Dharma*-facts, *Gnyāti*-facts, and Family-facts.[1] Ordinarily, no thought, word, or deed is ever talked of with

[1] But as we have already seen, the whole tenor of the Vaishnavite's life is permeated and dominated by *Dharma*.

reference to the individual by these people, as far as my observation goes. But one finds persons in the cities with a lack of respect for these three sets of facts, which their elders respect and adhere to at any cost. And sometimes when an individual breaks this tradition of respect to the religious, communal, and family organization, he is considered an exception, a recalcitrant breaker of the law. I have already given one instance where such a recalcitrant son was considered dead both by his family and his community. Of course, we must remember that youth always displays itself in these Vaishnavite Communities as elsewhere, with an inclination on the part of the individual to resent coercion, and even to attempt to break the law. The parents do not mind it; for, by and by the impetuosity of youth calms down and the boy gets accustomed to the domineering influences of family traditions and thus of the social and religious customs.

Thus the sociologist is supplied with a threefold classification of the facts of life by the native himself. As to the fourth, viz., the individual, as the sociologist knows more and more of the people and the organizations that govern them, he is obliged to deal with it in the later stages of his enquiry.

V.

Having found out the structure of the pigeonholes in the native's mind, the sociologist has to endeavour to see how these aspects are interrelated with each other, and the order of importance in which these facts are seen and acted upon both by the individual and the community. This naturally leads him to arrange these in a sort of hierarchy, from the most effective and most functioning to the least effective and the least functioning. The inter-

dependence that one notices, of caste organization and *Dharma* organization, is the first to attract the notice of the student. We generally find abundant evidence forthcoming in terms of a tradition moulded by ingenious and subtle devices in the name of religion, morality, duty, law,—all expressed by the one word, '*dharma*'. This tradition clings like a leech to the larger groups we call *gnyātis*, which (as has already been shown) are more than mere aggregates of all the families which come under them. *Dharma* could not function by itself. It is the *gnyāti*, sanctioned by the *Dharma*, of course, which puts its sanctions into operation, multiplies it, changes it, conserves it, overthrows it. So that during the first year or two of investigation and study, the family appears to be quite intact, self-sufficient, self-dependent, so to say. One is thus led to conclude that the family is the ultimate unit of social organization. It is only some time later that one realizes the strength of the sanction of the *gnyāti* laws which the family looks up to, in order that all that the members of the family think and do what might be the proper and the right thing to do. And it is when a family decides against the doings of one of its members, and in favour of the caste laws, that one perceives that the real functioning units are both *gnyāti* and *Dharma*.

Who breaks a law, then, both social and religious ? For, with these communities the mystic halo that hovers round everything, brings everything under *Dharma* ; and every duty, seemingly purely religious or purely social, has a socio-religious significance and motive behind it. That these socio-religious sanctions are sometimes broken, and that these are broken by individuals, sometimes with the approval, but oftentimes with the disapproval of the family, makes one conclude that all such changes as do come, come from individual breakers of law, if one might

be allowed to use that expression to describe them. The individual sometimes carries his own family with him; sometimes a few more families of the caste, thus forming a new caste. And sometimes whole castes are converted to the view of the individual.

The fact that strikes one forcibly, and the point to be specially noticed here, is the really synnomic character of this society. Nothing is possible (at least it was so till a few years ago) without individual lead. Discontent there is, and pretty widespread; but mass action is unknown; and changes come about almost by accident, as when a young man with some experience of the world outside his little village or town takes it into his head to disobey a *gnyāti* sanction, to break a *dharma*-rule, and strike out on his own. Then come forth many to join him. But unfortunately they follow like sheep. Even in their revolt they are meekly obedient. All this tends to show to what extent custom does not necessarily represent the will of the people, and its acceptance by them and their approval of it.

VI.

But the social enquirer must always be alert and watchful on all sides, lest he fall into an error like every other scientist.

For in all scientific investigation there lurks the danger of over-emphasizing certain aspects of a subject, and a tendency to minimise the importance of the rest. This is especially true of the sciences which study and have a direct bearing on human society, e.g. anthropology and psychology. But in order that one may be able to understand even a single aspect of the human drama thoroughly, one must view it in its proper setting, never losing sight of the many-sidedness and complexity of

human organizations. Nothing in nature need be presupposed as abnormal; and everything may be explicable, however strange it may appear to us on the face of it. For example, we have noticed the seemingly absurd custom of early marriages amongst the Vaishnavites, and we have explained, in the light of regional, historical and psychological phenomena, the necessity and the rationale of it. We have similarly noticed and explained the position of woman, and the all-pervadingness and the grip of *dharma*. The tyranny of *dharma* and *gnyāti* sanctions; and its contact with Islam and Christianity have helped us to realize the inevitableness of the phenomena of *sampradāyas*. And in the light of all these inextricably interdependent facts, we have been able to understand the how and the why of the Vaishnavite individual's plight.

But in spite of all its chequered aspect, all its complexity, a society may be controlled by a central governing attitude—held consciously or unconsciously—which determines its behaviour, and to which all its beliefs, superstitions, idiosyncrasies, may be referred. It may be called the prevailing 'humour' of the body-social. It is an important part of the sociologist's task to find this out, because, changes which a society stands in need of may only be brought about to the extent to which its controlling factor can be touched and influenced. Thus 'magic' forms the substratum of, and explains so much of the 'savage'. And we have seen that *Dharma* plays the same part in the life of the Vaishnavite. To him *Dharma* is the touchstone of life. This is the key which opens up many a dark place for us and explains many an obscurity; and we repeat, it is by exploring and exploiting this key-position that we may hope to infuse new life into the Vaishnavite society, nay even into Hindu society as a whole.

CHAPTER XVI.

Outlook and Scope of the Social Inquiry.

I.

What does the sociologist want to understand ? What is he about to investigate ? What does he aim at, and attempt ? Answers to questions like these could take a variety of forms. Perhaps the most direct and general may be that the sociologist is after understanding human life in all its details and intricacies with a view to arrive at, and possibly enunciate, a complete synthesis of human studies, not merely to learn but also to direct and even improve human life, its purposes and points of view. All that concerns the human comes within the purview of the sociologist.

The construction of such a complex synthesis necessarily involves the huge and difficult task of generally acquainting one's self with aspects of human life in all their varied relations and contacts, now singly or in group, now concretely or in the abstract, each in its due order and proportion, in order to lay bare the qualities that lie behind each one of them, and the points of contact between them, so that the ultimate aim and purpose of fathoming the structure and meaning of the whole, and reconstructing it, may be adequately served.

The labours of all the scientists, all the artists, and philosophers will therefore provide the sociologist with the raw-materials for his studies. These may work, each in his laboratory, studio or cell, remote from one another, ingrossed in their special tasks concerning one aspect or another of human life. Thus the mathematician, the physicist, the chemist

and the biologist, provide, each in his own sphere, materials, theories and laws regarding the abstract material factors in the external life of man ; or, the logician, æsthetician, psychologist and moralist, each with his independent analysis, theoretical though, of the inner life of human beings ; or if we consider the statistician, technician and the bio-technician, each has been giving his own concrete details regarding the practical and applied aspects for the management and direction of phases of the external life of man ; and, the jurist and the lawyer, the artist and the psycho-technician, may each yield us his rich crop of material regarding the practical organization, management and discipline of the inner life and purposes of man. It is very evident that each of these groups of workers, theorists and technicians, scientists, artists and craftsmen, gives its own invaluable quota in the making up of our knowledge about the concrete phenomena of the world of nature, of human life and its purposes, and the relations of these sets of facts with one another. They help the sociologist and the socio-technician enormously by supplying them with data from their own fields of work which have a distinctly human significance and value. But it will also be clear that the scientist in his laboratory or field, and the artist in his studio, study only aspects of the human phenomena, though important and vitally necessary, yet without any definite reference to the whole of human life.

Therefore, the sociologist takes all the details that each of these workers, thinkers and artists brings out, to his vast hall, seeks to co-ordinate their results into a synthesis, and demonstrates that they are all working in the same direction, serving the same cause, and inspired by the same purpose. In this synthesis the sociologist surveys and re-surveys all fields of life-knowledge, ever going

from details towards generalizations, and, in the light of the latter, understanding, illuminating and explaining better and more fully the former. This shows that the sociologist has to be always alive to everything that happens in the worlds of science and art, relevant for the construction of a completer, more co-ordinated and surer synthesis. In this sense, sociology is like the positive sciences, ever ready to correct and to improve, to give up a part or whole of a cherished theory in the light of new facts revealed to him by discoveries in science. Thus the synthesis of a sociologist is but a hypothesis; and, within certain limits, he has the right of the scientist to entertain rival hypotheses in order to test their relative validity, rather than dogmatically cling to a single hypothesis in terms absolute and unbending, like the philosopher. In short, the sociologist is after the ever-eluding search of a deeper and more and more complete synthesis of life-processes and forms which fresh, renewed and retested co-ordinations of all the branches of our knowledge and activities are bound to yield, and strives towards that vision of perfection wherein knowledge should coincide with truth and reality. For it is of the very necessity of any life-theory that it must ever endeavour, not merely to observe and classify whatever life has been evolving, but also to interpret and explain the same.

The sociologist, then, must of necessity have a working knowledge of all the sciences and arts, such that he may be able to absorb all the material he is in need of. Such versatility, however, is but the lesser half of his equipment. For he must be possessed of the complemental aptitudes and disciplines of the scientist and the philosopher, of the field-worker and the 'student', in order that he may be enabled to realize and fulfil the infinite aim and dream of science towards discovering

standards and laws of an abiding nature. Thus, for an adequate and correct measure of success, the sociologist has to achieve a considerable degree of high efficiency, both in the field of versatility and in ability to think out and formulate correct and adequate hypotheses.

The first and foremost quality in such an enquirer is therefore a sense of active, creative wonder. Like the child he must be moved by what is going on round about him; he must keep wandering and wondering, with an open and sympathetic mind to which every new fact and sentiment found is but a key to a greater and vaster hall of dreams. Thus did Newton, Darwin and Aristotle tirelessly search into every possible nook and corner and recess, eagerly puzzled themselves with questions, and hopefully sought for their meanings and bearings, with the help of their observations and experiments; even then, while observation and experiment have their great value, it may also be that these need the help of the most increasing of the powers of life, viz., that of reflection, of reasoning interpretation, of objective, suggestive and purposive explanation. Thus the preliminary and simpler attitude and interests of the scientist need to be complemented by the maturer and more reflective considerations and examination of the philosopher. For, let us not forget, that these are but two complementary perspectives, in which the respective preponderance of observation and experiment, and the reasoned and interpretative enquiry of reflection, differ only in degree; active sensibility arouses observation and intelligence at the earlier and preliminary stages of all scientific enquiry; but this, during the later stages of its pursuits, subjects itself to the control of reason and reflection. Only, that in this process, most of us lose much of the touch of live objectivity which forms the vital rhythm of the earlier and most

necessary phases of the scientist for all time and under all circumstances. And it is Reason's direct touch and living contact with objectivity at all stages of scientific enquiry, even in its most abstract makes and moods, that gives to the Western, and especially the British, way of thinking so much of the fragrance of life and human interest. Thus the scientific and the philosophic points of view, usually considered of an opposite and contradictory nature, converge towards the self-same point wherein both coalesce into a new synthesis which may not merely help us to understand, form a hypothesis, and test its validity with the help of observation and experiment, but also to interpret and explain the hypothesis in terms of reflection. It is perhaps this that entitles the sociologist to reshape, remodel, and even to change his environment, and therefrom man's outlooks and inlooks and dominant occupations in life, by carrying out huge experiments in planning such as we have been witnessing in our own days.

The sociologist, then, becomes the rightful inheritor of the fruits of other's labours. Rightful, because he knows how to use this wealth to the general advantage. To change the figure, he gathers the threads and weaves them together ; he reconstructs the human fabric with his general apprehension of its life-design. In other words, he is the conductor of the orchestra, the harmonizer of varied tunes and scales. He is the master-synthesizer of human values. It is this, its fundamental notion,—a definite generalization of the several exact sciences—that makes sociology as concrete and useful as the rest of them. That is the general aim of sociology.

II.

Having raised the fundamental issues regarding the problem, scope and meaning of sociology, let us

now turn our attention, for a while, to the question of the Classification of the Sciences and Arts which is the central problem of Sociology, according to Comte.

Life expresses itself in two ways. The one is the natural, wherein it is enacted as a matter of course, somehow, anyhow, without reference to any understanding, purpose or direction ; the other, which may be called the cultural, wherein meanings are increasingly understood, purposes and ideals are sought to be framed and fulfilled, work and thought get more and more co-ordinated into a system, and life forges its way through agencies and institutions of organization, management, order and law. The simple life of trees, birds and animals furnishes illustrations of the natural phase wherein the course of events depends, rather more than less, on trial and error, wherein work or activity does not come forth as a result necessarily of mental endeavour, no question or problem of life is sought to be solved with a view to betterment, life as a whole is not understood, the problem of nutrition is solved piecemeal without reference to life as a whole—individual and group—and the food-search is merely an expression of life-effort towards answering a practical issue in terms of a more or less psycho-physiological function with the help of muscles, rather than by the use and efforts of any higher mental activities. Somehow, in this manner the solutions of the lower forms of life are elementary ; mental activity is stirred merely to serve the practical and natural ends of existence, like protection of the young, for instance. Thus birds indulgently busy themselves to build up nests which involve the working of mental energy of a certain sort and quality. But this is no mental activity that works itself towards any new way of development. Anyhow, life involves action and work and service of

the mind; these grow increasingly, and the more intimately and closely form part of life itself in all its vital issues, the more life demands of the organism to solve the problems within and without itself. So, in the higher orders, life-activity is not merely, or mainly, in terms of psycho-physical reactions, but in terms of mental effort.

But can we say therefore that such animals, including man, possess knowledge ? It is true that man displays more of such mental effort than the rest of the higher animals. But can they be said to have knowledge ? In this way, perhaps, man could be distinguished from the rest of the animal kingdom. Man has come to have not merely mental activities, not merely a mind, but an organized mind which can not only think out, but also co-ordinate past happenings and experiences, within and without, which can be brought to bear upon the present and even the future, not merely to see but even to foresee. Thus, if human life fundamentally demands work in order to maintain and direct life, human mind at a certain stage of its evolutions must develop itself into an organized mechanism and a centre for the service and direction of life itself. The accumulated product of all this, through generations of endeavours and their records, may be called knowledge and culture in the most general sense of the words.

Now, most of us may believe that when we become considerably conscious of life and its happenings, at a certain stage we must call it knowledge ; and this knowledge is acquired by us empirically. But this does not suffice man. A further effort, at the organization of this knowledge in terms of the sciences is made incessantly, with the help of finer and finer mental discernment, devices and outlooks. Thus the self-same structure called *mind* reveals itself in its several phases of life-expressions in the service of greater and higher calls of life.

And, finally, in order to solve the problem of life itself, we have not only to develop the sciences, but also to determine and frame a system of the sciences in terms of relations and interactions, points of contact and of opposition, if any. And the more organized, correlated, harmonious, and co-operative this system of sciences is, the more and the better will human effort respond to the calls of life, from crafts to arts, from work to synergy, from folk-life to polity. Thus life has many problems to solve; and the more of them we solve, the more appear that were hidden, as if, in the womb of these solutions; so that problems and aspects, ever new and subtler, have to be faced by man in an unending series of human issues and subtleties, before man may at all be able, in any sense, to fully understand and live life to the nicety of perfection.

Yet, not till we probe deeper and deeper into the mysteries of the behaviour of a single aspect of reality, and thus develop and systematize our knowledge of the same, can we ever fathom and reach the deeper and more vital connections among the several aspects in their basic relations. Thus the building up of a knowledge, i.e. a science, nowadays reveals that in order to understand the phenomena that lie directly within its purview, we have to know them as related to the rest of reality, starting with the more related and intimate, till ultimately the remote and more remote are all seen in terms of a system of relations. This means that while it is true that we should develop specialisms in our scientific pursuit, we must remember that in the interests of greater and greater victory in any specialism we need also to know, if not actually to master, other branches of knowledge, especially with reference to their vital points of contact.

But we have also to develop a science which does not merely solve a single aspect or problem of

life, but many more besides for the purpose of the conquest of life. By solving each individually, we cannot understand or manage life as a whole. If life as a whole must be organized, if its meaning and direction must be determined and definitized, that is to say, if the sciences must interpret and serve human problems, if human life at its best must necessarily be a reaction of the activities of the sciences, we must see the sciences in terms of interrelated wholes, and give a definite meaning to such an interrelation in terms of a whole. Such a system of relations between the sciences may be called the Classification of the Sciences. It recognizes the value of each single scientific discipline ; it also seeks to see them related in a certain order and manner for mutual benefit and help ; it seeks to correlate the theoretical disciplines with the practical pursuits and problems of life ; it sees the subjective and objective sciences as interrelated disciplines going the same way in terms of a certain correspondence between them ; thus, it knits all human endeavour, inner and outer, theoretical and practical, material and mental, into a design wherein each is given its proper place and assigned its function in the scheme of things. This perhaps enables the man of science to study and understand life as a whole.

Thus a Classification of the Sciences increasingly helps man towards the proper learning, management and organization of the arts of life. Arts and crafts then increasingly become applied sciences. Design, forethought and will display their rôle as characteristic central-points of such a life. Arts and crafts are more the results of mental endeavour than of mere responses to the call and physical necessities of life. This means that the higher organized life is equal to work plus ideal, so that no activity of life is superior or inferior, in that both together

strive to reach a goal which neither, by itself, can approach ; work and ideal are thus complementary, each increasing the power of the other towards the perfection not only of themselves, but also of life.

Thus will the sciences gather, comprehend, co-ordinate and systematize, and the arts learn to use the findings of the sciences for the use, benefit, advancement and glory of life. So, as knowledge increases life expands in its self-expression; learning thus ceases to be a static process; the evidence of intimacy of relation between knowing and doing makes learning a becoming, and life increasingly more so. Thus knowledge becomes more and more an instrument of understanding and interpreting, and thus guiding the problems of life for those that foster it. Thus will science help us towards the conscious management of human relations in all their details and general design. If human life must be organized, knowledge and organization of knowledge must precede its organization, direction and control.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Scientific Approach in Human Investigation.

The insatiable urge in man to use and, therefore, to know his surroundings has carried him on the way of progress through the thousand corridors of time. The wonder with which he gazes at this universe, and the urge within him to know and to find out impells him onward on this path, because he realizes that each discovery is only a stepping stone to another; and as each stone is set in its proper place, he is able to master and control his surroundings more and more for his use, enjoyment, and betterment. This march forward leads him to a more and more definite outlook and way of life. Of course, each single phenomenon under consideration has its own bearings, and its understanding depends upon the attitude and outlook in respect of the whole. Thus, through ages of such efforts, experience culminates in terms of more and more definite and accurate measurements of the phenomena observed, with methods of devising and using instruments of measurement for the ultimate purpose of determining standards of value or norms. In order to regulate the tasks of his life, humble or great, man has realized that he must measure, directly and indirectly, all the facts connected with them in terms of standard measurements or norms; for, ultimately, this alone can impart an exactness, a regularity and a controlling power to human existence. In the social universe we find conflicts of ideals and purposes; they are already there for us to deal with as the normal facts of our lives; and, from time to time, most of us find our-

selves as misfits with reference to these, so that life seems to be mostly a struggle against such conditions of disharmony. It is here that the sociologist steps in and promises to rectify these conditions, and retransmute them into instruments of functional harmony. His task lies in the correlation of these disharmonies, rather than in dissolving them ; so he takes them for granted as the necessary concomitants of human existence, and strives to understand and reset them in terms of a system or science. In fact, it may be said that the chief business of the sociologist is to show how these differences and antagonisms may be regarded as necessary parts and aspects of an organic whole, towards the making of which they all converge, and how in this very process of convergence disappear the seeming contradictoriness which parts and aspects display when considered singly, without reference to the whole.

This urge to know is expressed, initially, in the form of a vague indefinite 'why' which lies at the root of all human endeavour to know and to do. In life we are called upon to deal with practical issues that face us incessantly; and, in the necessity of their solution this initial 'why' is a pervading, dominating factor. The necessity to give a response, an adequate answer to this 'why', is at the root of all inquiry—pseudo-scientific, scientific, and philosophical.

Now let us remind ourselves that every definite, practical issue demands its point of view in the enquiry ; and therefore a point of view fundamentally directs the nature of an inquiry. And when the various outlooks manifest themselves and present their various solutions we have next to explain the variety of, and the divergence between, these solutions in terms of inter-dependence, inter-connection, of relevancy, and thus to attempt to justify the truth and validity of these. Thus a problem

may be viewed from different points of view, each point of view giving birth to different activities called forth by the enquiry; and though these activities and views are different, their relation, their connection, lie in the fact that they are trying to answer the 'why' from different points of view. Some of them may solve, or attempt to solve, the practical, some the theoretical, and some the speculative issues raised by this 'why'.

The urge for solution of any problem is based on some practical need or necessity of life. In order to work out a solution efficiently we classify relevant facts in terms of similars and dissimilars; this eventually leads us to formulate the theories and laws governing the behaviour of facts from the point of view of the enquiry. Thus we measure each individual issue to find out the laws that govern it. Then, there may arise the question regarding the meaning of the whole in which each part or aspect functions subordinately to the whole, the problem of seeing, that is to say, the parts and aspects as but functioning and vital units from which the whole derives its organized nature. The parts or aspects are thus seen as necessary for, and inseparable from, the meaning and purpose of the whole. Thus once more we find that the practical, the theoretical, and the speculative solve the self-same 'why' from different points of view.

In general, the practical is solved in our crafts and arts, the theoretical disciplines generally come under the general designation of the sciences, and speculative activity is the special preserve of the philosophers. We have taken the view that these three concern themselves with the measurement of the same phenomena and their manipulations; all of them are concerned with the desire to know the nature of, and to deal with, the problems we have to face in human life. That is why art, philosophy,

and science are so intimately related to one another ; and unless man concerns himself in vital relations with all the three he cannot be said to have attained the fulfilment of his being. So, let us not forget that even when we are strictly practical, our practice is imbued with theory and speculation, both patent and latent ; so also when we theorize, we must to a certain degree speculate and deal with the practical ; and when we speculate, we have considerably to draw upon the theoretical, and solve problems to satisfy the commonsense or the practical. In the growth of knowledge, in his dealings with the life within and the life without, man has thus before him all these points of view, inseparable and, for all practical purposes, real. So, when we use the word 'philosophical' to describe our attitude towards things, events, and ideas, we but emphasize the speculative ; similarly, when we are scientists we are incessantly attempting to measure these in terms of quantities and qualities of a theoretical nature ; and, in a like manner, one is an artist or a craftsman when he deals with the same phenomena in a practical manner, i.e., sets about the concrete realization thereof. In this way, for the sake of analysis and in the interests of clarity, we have to emphasize any one of the three ; but the separation of the three altogether, and for all times and circumstances, will make for a confusion of life-values, and will altogether vitiate our estimate, perspective, and management, not only of these problems, but also of life itself. Thus art, science and philosophy are so intimately related to each other that only a synthesis of all the three can make the organization of life complete.

We measure any phenomenon in terms of qualities or quantities or both. The man in the street, the craftsman or the artist, concern themselves vaguely with qualities and quantities, in the main ; but, for

them, these are not distinct from each other; nor do they like to allow this separation between the quantitative and the qualitative. The artist, for instance, will say that though he likes to measure, yet that alone cannot satisfy him; for he does not want merely to measure; he wants to deal with a given situation to serve his own want or purpose; and if in order to achieve this, measurement becomes part of the very necessity of attaining his purpose, he most willingly submits himself to the discipline of accurate measurement. In this way have painters been studying human and animal anatomy, and the laws of perspective drawing, thus educating themselves in order to satisfy the scientific needs of their task; therefore anatomy is looked upon as a necessary servant and helpmate of their art. As in painting and sculpture, so in music: the European scientist has created devices and instruments which measure sound to such niceties and minute details that the musician has but to seek the scientist's help and guidance in the making of musical instruments; and the physicist's analysis of sound enables him to present to the musician better instruments such as may more and more adequately reproduce and body forth the subtle workings of the inner life and finer emotion of the musician, and thus to perpetuate the impassioned experiences and moments of eternity that a few indeed of the human race enjoy, live and generate. But these units of measurement of the physicist, so useful and helpful for the study of sound to the musician, will and can never of themselves create original music or a musician. Then, take the systems of musical notation, Oriental and European: they record musical experiences with an accuracy which even mathematics cannot command; for they give measures, exact and accurate, not only of the qualities but also of the quantities of the emotion

which symbolizes itself in terms of sound values. Yet, given the knowledge of all these notations and records of a musical piece by, say, Beethoven or Mozart, with the help of these few musicians of the world will dare say that they can interpret the piece so as to interpret the personality of these masters. And, in a like manner, do the artist and the practical man seek their refuge and justification in terms of a philosophy of the beautiful, even in terms of a philosophical view-point which may relate their work, ideas and ideals to an ultimate ideal of reality, of which these may be just aspects and details.

And now a word about philosophy, which lies at the other extreme. The philosopher admits that a thing can be understood with reference to many values and the standpoints arising out of them; and, no doubt, one can fathom its meaning, to an extent, in terms of each of these values; but, says he, the task of studying Reality partially, from a definite yet narrow view-point, is meant for the practical man and the scientist. On the other hand, the philosopher claims it his business to relate any given fact, idea or phenomenon to the universe as a whole, to define it, that is to say, in terms, of the ultimate understanding and nature of Reality. Thus, the philosopher's business is to interpret finite experiences in terms of final values which are beyond the finite valuations of the scientist and the practical man. It will be seen that the philosopher seeks to solve an ultimate issue in terms which are also of an ultimate character; for him any finite piece of experience is but a reflex of and from the ultimate; therefore finite things and experiences must be placed in their legitimate position and viewed in their proper perspective; thus they are appraised in terms of, and as viewed from, the angle of the infinite. In this sense, the philosopher pursues the widest

possible enquiry, in which the findings of the experiences and explanations, so far as they go, of the practical man and the scientist, are not only taken for granted but are also interpreted and co-ordinated towards the final explanation which the demand of an ever deepening quest leads him to formulate. We can thus see that in building up his Theory of Reality, the philosopher has to give an interpretation of the Categories of Nature in terms of the harmonies of his theory; but even in this attempt he only *evaluates*, but does not describe, and certainly never measures quantitatively. Thus, it will appear that the philosopher assumes that everything in the universe is within his purview; the whole of the universe is for him the problem for his investigation, though not as such, finite, in contrast with other finite facts, but with reference to the general design, purpose and meaning of the universe as a whole. May we not therefore say that philosophy is concerned in the main with the qualitative?

Midway between the practical and the philosophical inquiries lie the scientific outlook and method, in that science is concerned with the measurement of (1) quantities or structures with reference to relevant qualities or functions, and (2) qualities or functions with reference to specific quantities or structures. Thus science seeks to find out the greatest common factor, or the least common multiple or the common denominator between qualities and quantities or quantities and qualities that make up and govern the phenomena under investigation.

In order to construct his system on a sound foundation, the scientist must, first and foremost, define, as far as possible, the scope of his inquiry. Not all things, nor all happenings could possibly give him any definite result. He has therefore to accept and reject facts and sequences from the

masses of evidence that face him, as relevancy demands ; the subsequent classification of the selected facts and sequences has to be made also in response to the exigencies of relevancy ; and even this classification has to be correlated in terms of a system called science, once more in answer to the call of relevancy. Thus relevancy defines a science, creates it and builds it up, by measuring structures in terms of functions, and functions in terms of structures.

Like the practical man and the philosopher, the scientist also starts with a 'why', a questioning attitude. And after defining for himself the scope and purpose of the 'why', i.e., the point of view or the perspective, he sets to himself the arduous task of measuring the phenomena under his purview.

Now, this measuring is not done in a rough-and-ready, haphazard manner and by guess-work. It needs standards or norms of measurement which the scientist either devises for himself or inherits from the make-shifts, devices and plans of the practical worker, craftsman and the artist on the one hand, and the speculations, ponderings and wisdom of the philosopher, on the other. Anyhow, the scientist has to measure the phenomena he reviews, wherever possible, with instruments of measurement, exact and uniform. And these instruments need not necessarily be material—i.e., of an observational and experimental nature. For, pure mathematical relations, series and formulæ are the non-material and ideal instruments of measurements, exact and uniform, in terms numerical, or functional, or both. Thus, for instance, in geometry, the mathematician gives us ideal relations in terms of points, lines, triangles, circles, etc. ; or, as in algebra and the calculus, he gives us ideal equations, formulæ, series and summations of series in terms of quantities of positive or negative numbers, or functions, or both.

This does not mean that the scientist has to rest content for all time with the available instruments which enable him to measure his material for the time being. Part of his duty as a scientist lies in correcting old instruments and finding out new ones, not only to eliminate mal-observation, error and irrelevancy, but also to be able to probe further and deeper into the nature of his material, in order that thereby he may arrive at new correlations, more exact and definite, between structures and functions, such even that the fundamental laws or uniformities that govern them may be laid bare and made available to the scientist. It is in the incessant consciousness of these duties and responsibilities of the scientist that the progress and hope of the sciences rest, viz., that man is increasingly enabled to find more and more exact units of measurement in response to the standing challenge of the 'whys' of nature and life which produce structures and functions that defy the scrutiny of the human mind.

In regard to scientific procedure, the investigator is fundamentally occupied with the measurement and correlations of the 'whats' (or the structures) and the 'hows' (or the functions) of the phenomena under investigation. At the starting point, each individual structure is handled separately and by itself, in regard to all its details, in terms of exact measurements. This is followed by mechanical adjustments of each structure with its immediately neighbouring structure or structures, in terms of mechanical functions, yet therefore not necessarily of lesser importance. This leads on to the discovery of the manifestations of some functions, in terms of local structures as instruments of functions. A few structures which now offer themselves for analysis, get defined in a single system of associated functions. New functions come forward demanding interpretation; these are explained in the operations of

interacting structures called systems. We have now to face stranger structures yet; these are revealed as functional inter-relations between systems. A few functions that still demand unravelling are seen as organized by structures of the central management that controls inter-relations between the systems. And the few structures that then immediately challenge interpretation are traced as instruments of synthetic functions operating fundamentally in the interests of the economy of the life of the organism as a whole.

The above analytical procedure completes the utmost limit of analysis and synthesis of the 'whats' and the 'hows' in terms of each other, in ascending stages, magnitudes and relations of organic systematizations. But so many 'hows' yet remain unsolved in terms of 'whats'; and an equally threatening troop of 'whats' remain unreduced in terms of actual 'hows'. The scientist has therefore to seek for new avenues, and seek recourse in the questions, causes and relations to which these mysterious 'whats' and 'hows' can be assigned.

Clues to these mysteries are afforded by the associations of 'whats' and 'hows' with (1) the environment in which they play their parts, and (2) the present history which conditions the life of the organism and of the species to which it belongs. Thus viewed, not a few of the challenging 'whats' become explainable in terms of 'where-functions'; so also, a few of the otherwise irreducible 'hows' can be solved in terms of 'when-structures'. But so many 'whats' and 'hows' yet challenge the inquirer; these 'whats' are revealed as survivals of 'wherefrom-functions'; and the 'hows' likewise are traced back as remainders of 'whence-structures'.

The above rather terse and complicated review

can be made simpler by illustrations from Anatomy, Physiology, Taxonomy, Ecology, Palæontology and Embryology. Thus, for example, the osteologist measures, in the first instance, the details of the material, size, shape and other characteristics of every single bone of the whole skeleton in all its complicated parts, without seeking for meanings or values. When this is done, he carefully proceeds to relate each bone in terms of local contact or contacts with the immediately neighbouring bone or bones. A correlation in terms of functions can now be extended between remoter bones. Each bone is thereafter traced back, in terms of higher functions, to wholes called systems comprising the bony skeleton like the exo-skeleton and the endo-skeleton. This leads on to a correlation of each of the bony systems in terms of the whole functioning unit, the skeleton. The skeleton can now be set up into its proper structural and functional relations with the rest of the systems of the body like the muscular system, the nervous system, and so on. Thereafter, in his most general analysis and synthesis of the 'whats' and the 'hows' in terms of each other, along with an appreciation of the other systems, the osteologist settles the specific contribution of the bony skeleton towards the management and economy of the living body as a whole.

It will be seen from the above illustration that the significance of structures as structures and of functions as functions is analyzable into new correlations and interpretations; and this analysis may in the end yield the broadest meaning and orientation with regard to both of them. Though the scientist is thus enabled to obtain more real and true measurements and perspectives of structures and functions, many of the problems connected with them remain mysteries that await solutions. Thus there are some structures which cannot be located in terms of actual

functions; and a number of functions cannot be definitely related to exact structures. Realizing that these early correlations of 'whats' and 'hows', though important, are only of an immediate and relative value, the scientist is urged to seek out new avenues of correlations. After a series of comparings and contrastings of the details and the general design of the skeletal structures and functions of various species and genera, the osteologist sees them intimately located in relation to definite types of environment like water, air or land, and to specific stages of historical development. The 'where-functions' explain some structures as specific 'whats' with reference to the special requirements of life in a particular habitat; and the 'when-structures' are resolvable into some functions devolving upon the species arising out of the struggle for existence. Thus, for instance, the developments of the pelvic-bone, the knee-joint, the palm and the thumb of the human skeleton, as compared with those of other animals, are illustrations of structures that respond to 'where-functions'; and the receding character of the nasal bone and the jaws of man, in comparison with those of other animals, points to functions related with the present life-history (in a biological sense) of man, that is to say, in terms of 'when-structures'. Similarly, the coccyx bone in man is traceable as a rudimentary survival of the tail, that is to say, a 'whence-structure'; and the embryologist's findings of traces and assimilation of the visceral arch, so essential for fishes in their watery home, into the jaws, etc. of the human skeleton, point towards survivals of 'where-from' functions, now no longer necessary.

To summarize then. After having completed the initial inquiry of classifying the relevant facts and sequences in terms of 'whats' and 'hows', and correlating the 'whats' and 'hows' in terms of a

system, the scientist proceeds further in his analysis wherein the 'whats' and 'hows' are related to place and time. The different variations between the 'whats' and 'hows' are thus understood in more and more dynamic terms: *by itself* the organism is thus shown as non-existent; it is, on the other hand, set in its proper perspective—in a habitat and as historically evolving. The qualitative and quantitative values of the various factors of the habitat in terms of reactions on the structures and functions of organisms, are thus investigated far and deep; and the 'when' and 'whence' functions yield deeper and more dynamic explanations which reveal various structures and functions as embodying, defining and illustrating an evolutionary process. Directing his gaze backward and forward in place and time, the scientist is enabled not merely to formulate and enunciate the final 'why' in terms of the laws that operate on structures and functions, and work changes in them in a series of happenings in space and time, but also to peer into the future in terms of 'whither' structures and functions. Thus his prognostications are matters not of mere conjecture or idle dreaming, but are based on science; and the deeper and the more accurate the correlations of structures and functions in space and time from out of which the 'why' is obtained, the more accurate will be our analysis of the shape of things to come. These journeys into the realms of the future thus test the accuracy of the 'why'—the law or the uniformity—which the scientist has found out.

And here the scientist and the philosopher work in the same direction, in the same field; for they are inspired by the self-same desire to define life in general and the universe as a whole. But there is a fundamental difference in their method of attacking the problem: the scientist cheerfully

plods along a long and weary way, with various halts and searchings, from point to point, marking every detail and its location, inductively arriving at his hypothesis and explanations ; the philosopher, leaving details to themselves, deductively comprehends their place in the scheme of the universe which they enunciate. For the scientist, the world of plurality is, and must be, real ; for the philosopher, it may even be an appearance and a delusion.

Let us now try to gauge how far and in what manner the scientific point of view and procedure outlined above can be made applicable in the field of Social studies.

The sociologist begins by recognizing clearly the fact that the scope of his work includes not only a study of the society or the community, but of the individual as well. About individuals as individuals, as physical entities with definite structures and functions, the social anthropologist need not necessarily concern himself, though such study may be beneficial, and supply invaluable material for a completer interpretation. But social anthropology concerns itself more with individuals as social entities. And while many such individuals go to make a community or a human group, this human group is not merely an aggregate of the individuals that make it. It is much more than that ; and so also is the individual much more than a mere isolated, self-sufficient unit. We must therefore study both the individual and the society, and each in all its aspects. And this must be done of each of the aspects singly as well as in its setting in the whole drama.

What questions, under these circumstances, has the social investigator to ask himself in regard to one and all of these topics under his observation ? What are, in other words, the relevant questions, answers to which may supply the sociologist's

material ? Without claiming finality, and with a due sense of their limitations, we may say that they are the 'what ?', 'how ?', 'where ?', 'when ?', 'wherefrom ?', 'whence ?', 'why ?' and 'whither ?' of the matter under observation. Such a systematic questionnaire will enable one to arrive at a composite understanding of the manifold phenomena of human life and society, as exemplified in the communities he studies. Thus the 'what ?' refers to the morphology of both the individual and the community ; and the 'how ?' to their physiological counterpart. The 'where ?' settles the place, the cosmic environment which forms the background of their functioning; the 'when ?' naturally refers to the historical element; the 'whence ?', and the 'wherefrom ?' give us clues as to the extent to which the present is a continuation of, and a reaction from, the past ; a synthetic co-ordination of all these correlations may yield the 'why' or the law which may explain the phenomena as a whole ; and the 'whither', prying into the future to perceive what might be from the experience of what has been, tests the correctness of that law.

Thus, although the main enquiry is the 'what ?' and the 'how ?' of social phenomena, the answers to these two only cannot satisfy the aim and purpose of the sociologist ; for, stopping there, he may be able to *see* a society, but cannot *understand* it. The 'what ?' and the 'how ?' show us puppets, somehow agitated, somehow functioning ; but as soon as their 'where ?', 'when ?' and 'whence ?' are fixed the full drama is enacted on the stage, the wires which pull them about are discerned ; and having understood the main direction in which the wire-pullers pull, we are compelled to ask, and even to foretell, the 'whither ?'.

Now such a questionnaire as this, therefore, will carry us very far ; but not far enough when we know that, unlike other animals, both man and his

society have an extra-biological nature. Hence his life has phases and aspects, changes and leaps, which cannot all be explained and correlated in terms, and in the light, of a professedly biological attitude which such a questionnaire presupposes. What, then, shall we do in order that this aspect of the situation may be correlated with the results which the biological questionnaire may yield ? This problem leads us, first, into at least an enunciation of the factors that go to make man an extra-biological animal. Man's pursuit of art and science, the complex economic structure which he creates, and his religion which dimly bodies forth his inmost yearnings, are all expressed in a heritage which may be termed ' social memory '. This enables man to be a progressive animal. Add to this a greater, more powerful, and specifically human factor, that of contact with other social groups, and the processes of learning and teaching that necessarily follow out of it. This is only vaguely present in the rest of the animal kingdom.

In what manner, then, shall we accommodate our method to this specifically human factor ? Let us see. After all, what is contact with other peoples, friendly or otherwise, but an ' extension ', an influence that creates mutual vibrations between the ' whats ' and the ' hows ' of these different societies ? We have seen, for instance, how the ' what ' and the ' how ', the ' when ' and the ' whence ' and ' whither ' of one folk (at one time Moslem, at another time Parsi, a third time European, and so on), have affected the Vaishnavite society ; and within the Hindu group we have observed the Śaivite ' what ', ' how ', etc., affecting those of the Vaishnavite group. It is only thus—in terms of vibrations, actions and reactions, produced when two or more human groups come into contact with each other—that we are able to see the definite importance, relation, and contribution of contact in sociological

studies. Hence, after his biological inquiry the sociologist further asks: Were this people conquered, and by whom? Did they conquer, and whom? How far afield did they roam, and where? What trade and commerce and adventure did they engage in? The complexity and the protean quality of Greek or Roman or modern European civilization can only be explained in the light of their contactual history.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Biological and Regional Approach.

I.

In Part I of this essay I have tried to trace, at several places, the definite causes why changes take place in the seemingly fixed and static religious and social organizations amongst the Vaishnavites of Gujarat. We have seen how the elasticity of the *Dharma*-notion from time to time allows it to be changed, and how an old *Dharma*-sanction is revoked and a new one is established. In matters of religion it has been shown that it is such forces at work which bring a new *mata* into existence; and even new changes within the same *mata* have been found in the history of the *sampradāyas*. In our consideration of the *gnyāti* organization we have shown how, due to the exigencies of new circumstances, *gnyāti* laws have been abandoned or modified. What were those forces that brought about such a change? We may trace these in greater or lesser detail by calling them biological, geographical or regional, economic, and contactual.

It is now our duty to discuss these forces, and show their value in the interpretation of facts. What we are about to do forms part of a method that not merely proposes to describe, but also to correlate and interpret social phenomena. Let us, then, begin with the biological forces at work that tend to disintegrate social and religious forces. This method of sifting evidence and finding out the forces at work should not be resented by those of us who are religiously minded; for, a biological method of attack in science does not necessarily

negate religion or the inner life of man, which makes him a personality. For scientific purposes, when we consider man as one of the living animals, we are able to see more of Man as a whole. For, since Darwin we have developed the biological sciences so much, that help from that quarter might prove very fruitful. Let us, therefore, enunciate the principal assumptions of the biologist, and see to what extent they are applicable and useful in the explanation and interpretation of human society, both with reference to the individual and to the race.

The biologist starts on the assumptions that—

I. Organic life goes on, and expresses itself in, the struggle for (1) nutrition, and (2) reproduction. Nutrition involves food-search and is primarily for the preservation of the individual; reproduction, on the other hand, primarily subserves the interests of the species.

II. This struggle for nutrition and reproduction creates relations of competition and co-operation between the members of the same species.

III. This struggle is a struggle in space and time.

IV. As living in space, the organism (1) has some habitat either on land or in water or in the air or in several of these; (2) comes into contact with other kinds; and (3) is affected by this contact both as a competitor and a co-operator in its food-search.

V. As living in time it (1) has a history—individual, family, and racial; (2) reacts to the phenomena of (*a*) day and night, (*b*) the seasonal cycle; (3) grows old; and (4) dies.

VI. In the interests of reproduction and nutrition, animals (both as individuals and in groups), like man, (1) use devices for attack and defence, (2) make provision for future needs, and (3) exhibit self-sacrifice and care (or the reverse) of the male for the female, and of both or one of the parents for their offspring.

VII. We infer, therefore, that they are not mere automata, but that they lead a sort of mental existence with the senses, feelings, etc.

Now, all this indicates how biology may assist sociology in regard to method ; for, all these factors continue to concern the human group. Man has his struggle to preserve himself and his race ; this struggle takes place in a definite region and in a definite period of time, which go to make what we call his own history (individual and racial), and also that of his contacts with other people and other regions ; and lastly, men use intelligence to devise some means of defence and attack against dangers—physical, animal, social. Thus it is obvious that the rôle of environment should form an important consideration in the understanding of the making of the life and history of human groups.

Now sociologists like Leplay, Demolin, and Ratzel, and historians like Buckle, emphasize that his environment affects man, and that the place where a people live largely moulds their life. And to a certain extent they are right, as has been shown amply in our study of the Vaishnavites of Gujarat. It has been shown, for instance, that the people of the region of Gujarat have been seeking from time to time for a faith that might enable them to justify their daily work and their social outlook, in preference to a philosophy of life and religion that

exhorts people to think beyond space and time, and to an existence, non-biological rather than extra-biological.

Or, to take another instance, the geographical influences on the formation of *gnyātis* and sub-*gnyātis*, are considerable; those who migrate to the land of plenty form themselves into new castes called after the definite geographical region from which they emigrated. After settling for a while they once more split up into smaller sections, each calling itself after its last place of domicile, yet retaining the old designation with reference to its former domicile.

These are instances that refer to the influences that geographical conditions tend to produce on the social organization of the region. But the possibilities of the place must influence the nature of the daily work of the people, that is to say, their various occupations. This is amply shown to be the case by the fact that most people live on agriculture, because the soil is fertile; that because Gujarat has a fertile soil, while the regions round about it to the north, east and west, are poor, both in soil and in water-supply, people from these poor regions immigrate to Gujarat to find work and a more secure economic existence. Thus the natural wealth and possibilities of the region attract human masses round about it, while the surrounding areas become less populated, due once more to geographical forces. Gujarat once boasted of a sea-borne trade with Africa, and has yet a good coastal commerce; this also is due to its large sea-front and many harbours, and the opportunities they provided in the days of small vessels. And, lastly, the more or less level plains that the country is blessed with, as compared with the region round about it, makes it the corridor of trade-routes that radiate towards the south, the east and the north.

Thus Ratzel and Leplay are to this extent right. For, after all man has to live on the earth, and geographical conditions limit the biological possibilities of his life; and to that extent he is controlled by his habitat. He depends on the air to breathe, on the sun's efficiency and energy to grow food, on water and food to nourish himself; and he is controlled by the nature of the region: deserts, plains, mountains, rivers, temperature, rainfall—all these go to control man's efforts in finding food and in settling in a region. The seasonal phenomena, direction of winds, rainfall, etc. settle the working season in the several areas. And the natural distributing centres of the region become market places. It can further be shown that in the case of both the primitive and the civilized alike, most of the occupations are direct results of the possibilities of the region; with this difference, that the civilized man takes a greater advantage of these possibilities than his primitive brother.

One more point: in order to make use of the possibilities of the region and *live*, man needs tools; either the tools to till the soil, or the bow and the arrow, the spear and the staff to fight the enemy, the net to catch fish, the lasso to capture animals for milking and domestication, for furs and skins and flesh. And naturally all these opportunities are conditioned and limited by the nature and extent of the soil and of the flora and fauna of the region.

III.

Let us now see to what extent this geographical outlook can be used in field-work, and with what success. This idea was suggested to me by my contact with Professor Geddes in 1919. Till then I was only dimly aware of the extent to which the

geographical environment moulded the life of the people.

After this I always tried to find out the economic possibilities of the region and the extent to which these were used or misused by the people, and why. In the opening chapter of Part I, I have tried to give a geographical account relevant to the present study. And in the succeeding chapters I have tried to show to what extent these geographical facilities are used or abused, or left unused, and the difficulties surmounted, owing to the nature of their social and religious organizations, by the people of the region.

Such a method adopted by the field-worker is all the more justified because in doing so he will avoid the unnatural attitude of studying merely individuals, or merely religion, or merely social organization, or merely economic organization. Such isolated phenomena exist only in the mind of the specialist who abstracts one or the other aspect from a concrete picture and makes a detailed inquiry into the same. The sociologist sees man and society as related to a definite region, and he sees the extent to which the region helps or hinders them; for, after all, it is in finding out to what extent man's physical and social surroundings help him to express his inner personality that the broadest problem of sociology lies.

This will make it very obvious that the geographical method alone does not and cannot tell the full story. All the gifts of nature are of use to those people only who know how to use them. The American Indian, for instance, did not develop his country, but lived in it precariously, as a primitive hunter, in spite of abundant natural resources about him. But after the Europeans went there, we know how they have created the America of to-day. The physical environment controlled the Indian, but the control was not beneficial. Potentially the land was wealthy, that is to say, it could be made to

support a much larger population; but no one had found out how to develop its value.

Or, there is yet another direction in which man has overcome the dictates of regional disabilities. Better means of transport have broken the sense and effect of distance, with the result that people regard a hundred miles to-day as they did a few during the past. And, in its turn, this new factor has done much to break up the village community as a mere village community, and made it alive to and concerned in a larger whole, say a district. And these in their turn are affected by similar larger wholes of which they acknowledge membership, and with which they carry on commerce. In fact, the introduction of railways has contributed much to the rise of nationalism in India. For, railways not only carry men of different castes from one place to another, or concern them with reference to their economic interests, but also carry ideas from place to place with important effects in a country where newspapers are little known, illiteracy abounds and custom rules. 'Hindustān' has become a term of larger significance than in the old days.

All this shows that the character of human life depends very much upon human knowledge, and the use of the environmental factors depends upon the extent to which our sense of curiosity urges us to work upon our environment and makes us seriously consider in what new ways it can be manipulated, handled, and treated, in order that it may bring new help, new power, not only to serve biological needs, but even cultural advancement.

IV.

The above discussion leads one naturally to an important consideration in regard to the inequality of social growth and development. For, as we

survey the history of the world, and of the various peoples inhabiting it, we are struck by the fact that of several lands similarly (or nearly so) situated, only some are developed whilst others are not, some are developed in one way, some in another. One may, then, legitimately ask: Why do some folk develop the possibilities of their habitat more or less than, or in a way different from, others? Why do some yield to the dictates of their cosmic environment, whilst others dominate them? The answer must be manifold.

The first and geographical approach to the answer lies in considering that although two regions may be equally rich in possibilities, one of them may be so situated as to be subject to frequent attacks and consequent insecure existence, whilst the other may be in a comparatively safer position. Secondly, the nature of the climate, with its physiological reactions, and the psychological counterparts of such reactions, determine the activities of a folk. Thus the climate of the tropics and the luxuriance of its produce enable the folk of those regions to live with little labour or exertion; and this gradually deprives them ultimately of any inclination to 'live better'. The energies of the Eskimos are almost entirely spent in their dire struggle to exist, which leaves them no time for self-upliftment. On the other hand, the inhabitants of Great Britain are so happily situated that though their struggle against nature does not become too difficult, they are always kept alert and alive, hopeful and cheerful and always striving for 'better conditions'. Thus a combination of the above two causes may produce a socio-religious system which may either help towards the freedom and advancement of the individual and society, or one such as we have described in the first part of this essay, preventing man, both as individual and as member of a group,

from utilizing his opportunities to the full, as also from rousing himself to fight scourges like famine and disease, which periodically ravage his country and disable him. Of course, these disabling circumstances can be eliminated, as is being slowly done in the case of Gujarat.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Fundamental Forms of Society.

I.

We now come to the consideration of the two fundamental ways in which human groups form themselves. There is the more or less primitive phase of the group organization on the one hand, and the more or less civilized phase on the other. Professor Geddes calls the first of these, the 'psycho-biological' phase; for, it expresses essentially a biological rather than a cultural existence. Psychic life is at its lowest level in this phase; and whatever it contributes, it does so as a servant, and not as a master of the struggle for the necessities of life. Or, to use another and a more telling expression, and this time from Dr. Marett, this lower phase is 'synnomic': for customs are shared as a result of the sub-conscious urge to live. The civilized phase, on the other hand, called 'bio-psychological' phase by Professor Geddes and 'syntelic' by Dr. Marett, is one in which the life of individuals in a community and of the community itself, is regulated by ends or ideals resulting from a conscious selection of principles and standards of life.

Perhaps the most significant characteristic of the synnomic type is that the social organization of the folk admits of little opportunity to the individual to ponder on his environment and find out new ways. For, 'new ways' are tabooed in such a society. This is the greatest defect of the Vaishnavite *gnyātis*, in which the individual is not only forced to consider customs, social and religious, as laws and duties, but in breaking them, he runs the risk of incurring

severe penalties like those described in the earlier chapters. What the fore-fathers did, the living elders do ; and the sons in their turn are invariably expected (and forced) to act similarly. Does not this indicate, therefore, a sort of gregariousness, so that as soon as a man loses or gives up his place he feels himself lost like a lost sheep ? ' Gregariousness is not association.' Such close, continuous and forced contact with others hinders the development of personality and independence of character, which are the primary factors that characterize members of a syntelic society. This point is amply borne out in our discussion of the Vaishnavites of Gujarat, where it has been shown how the individual, in spite of possibilities of self-development, does not grow due to his fixed position in respect of *Dharma*, *gnyāti*, and family bonds. The changes that take place do so in spite of these handicaps, and are due to the revolt of the individual who brings new ideas from contact with other people.

From the moral point of view, members of synnomic societies are handicapped for want of the power of self-determination and self-expression in regard to conduct and character. Thus, moral sanctions are external rather than internal ; the individual has to submit to them willy-nilly. So that, this society almost assumes the character of a herd. It forms an opinion or assumes an attitude as in a crowd—inexplicably. Their opinions are neither personal nor balanced ; for they do not ' proceed from a truly judging, i.e., critical self '. The individual looks outward, ' taking his cue from his neighbours in the mass,' or from the slightly more self-determined head of the caste. For, driving a number of sheep through a gap in the hedge, there will always be one sheep first through the gap ; and this one normally takes its cue from customary morals as expressed in *Dharma*.

Thus customs at the synnomic level are the aggregate of forces whereby social habit rules the individual members of the group, as a flock of sheep controls the behaviour of each of its members. On the other hand, the customs at the syntelic level are the several useful formulæ derived from past experience for the guidance of the individual, in order that he may be spared the trouble of finding them out for himself, afresh each time, and thus saving his energy from dissipation. To the extent to which they savour of force on the individual person or group, and fall short of keeping up with new changes and developments, they are injurious.

II.

Now if a people continue to exist at a synnomic level, their struggle for mere existence is not likely to transcend itself first into a struggle to live well, then a determination to live better, and lastly an aspiration to live a higher life. Among the Vaishnavites of Gujarat, for instance, the consciousness that they had a great past and that their present is somehow unworthy of their past is always alive. This, together with the other circumstances we have mentioned (e.g., contact, education, etc.), has saved them from an ignominious and perpetual relapse to the synnomic level.

But when a folk cease to be a mere folk and become members of a polity, it is because they begin to live a more conscious life and are animated by a purpose to reach an ideal. Not that, at this higher stage, the folk and the polity cease to attend to the mundane necessities of existence ; but that now the search, the struggle for food, becomes a means to an end, and ministrant to a higher purpose. Work and labour, in this phase, are not determined merely by the bare nature and possibilities of the

place ; it is actuated by a selection of means adjusted to certain spiritual ends, and is undertaken and completed by a consciously co-operative effort. This may well be termed ' synergy ', for results are attained and ends are furthered by the co-operative efforts of scientific dreamers and other intellectual workers on the one hand, and of master-craftsmen on the other. Occupations then become vocations, and work takes on the character of cultural activity. In the hands of such a society a region is lifted above itself and transformed into a London or a Venice or a Paris.

Paris, London, or New York (in spite of their slums, etc.) are supreme examples of man's conquest of nature, of his overcoming the handicap of space and the rush of time. When the surface of his town and city can hold no more, when his streets are not broad enough to hold his traffic, the Londoner and his brothers the Parisian and the New Yorker have dug underground and created artificial space. Or does the Seine divide Paris into two parts ? The Frenchman promptly throws innumerable bridges across the watery-course, thus reducing what would have been a dividing factor and a hindrance, to the most negligible minimum. And still man is not satisfied. He wants to save up his energies more and more ; he has at present no clear notion for what. But the more he frees himself the more he feels his physical environments as fetters—on his body ? on his soul ? He does not know. But he knows this : that they are fetters and must be cast off. And so have emerged the telegraph and telephone and ' wireless ' from his feverish brain.

Such conquest of nature, of earth, water, air, of space and time, is thus no mere ' materialistic ' conquest as Easterners are apt to think; for they minister unto the higher needs of man. In fact, the coming

super-man will be such to the extent to which he effectively attends to his biological needs by co-operative effort, in order that the whole community, and not merely specialized individuals called thinkers and philosophers, may have more time and leisure to attend to the higher tasks of life. Not in shunning to recognize, not in going away from our nutritive and reproductive needs, but in attending to them more fully and adequately, shall we be able to rise more and more in the spiritual scale.

III.

I have said that the society we have been discussing is synnomic. I have arrived at this conclusion after sifting of evidence. I have also affirmed that this was due mainly to the fact that the individual was crushed and his personality suppressed. And finally I have expressed an opinion that in order to locate communities on the scale of civilization one must try to see how the individual is related to his society, how the latter affects the former's activities, and to find out to what extent being a member of society helps or hinders the self-expression and self-expansion of the individual's personality.

This is not a plea for Individualism. It is simply part of the argument for a theory of society which may be briefly stated thus :—

Man is essentially a social animal. The higher he evolves, the more civilized he becomes, the more does he realize and feel the need of living in society. For, as he becomes more 'tamed' he loses the vigour and ferocity of the lower animals to fight danger and contend against adverse circumstances. He becomes more and more a user of instruments, devised and made by himself. But the making and using of them requires many men, requires in short living together in a community.

Gradually, therefore, he realizes that the highest that humanity is capable of must be achieved in, through, and for society. This is doubtless regarding society ideally. And indeed, it is conceived here as essentially the seeding and training ground for the higher man.

Now, human society is not a mere association of individuals. It ought to make mutual help possible in all human activities, and towards the furtherance of human aspirations. This means that the social individual must curb his ego-centric tendencies and try more and more to be etho-centric. Nor does society merely exist for itself; if it is to do any good to itself or to other societies, if it is to be progressive, it must look beyond itself, consider itself a unit of the human family.

Again, it must be borne in mind, that society is made up of individuals, and exists for the benefit of the individual and the advancement of the species Homo. Now every person is an 'individual', is unique. Life, and all that evolves out of it, has a myriad facets. Therefore every person has always something of value to contribute towards the fullness of life. This he can do if his personality, that is to say the quality or qualities that make him an 'individual', is sufficiently developed. Therefore he must be allowed full latitude, consistent with the welfare of the group. It is essential; for nothing can grow or develop in darkness, in insufficient space or air. A free and fresh atmosphere; plenty of sun—in such conditions only can Life glow and flourish in joy and hope. And if the constituent parts are healthy, the whole must be healthy. This is our case for individual freedom, and the whole argument may be summed up in the words of Goethe:

Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille,
Sich ein Charakter in dem Strom der Welt.

In the history of India and of the East examples of personalities facing the storm of the world, most stormy, are not lacking. Thus did Buddha live. He gave up his home, parents, wife, children, power and wealth, not because he could not manage these, nor because this world was too much for him, nor because he was tired of the world, nor because he did not want to shoulder the responsibilities of the natural consequences of his acts and deeds. His giving up was not a device to abandon life and its problems, but in obedience to a call to prepare himself to learn how to face them, a call actually to go out in the wide wide world and face them. His burdens were not burdens merely of his little self, but of the world of humanity. He carried these night and day, within and about him, through a life crowded with selfless beneficence, love and service ; his life is a long, long episode of learning and teaching how to conquer life; he sought the deliverance of his fellow-men—and therefore his own—so that man may master pain and pleasure, poverty and disease, unhappiness and misery, sin and death, and thus live everlasting life, here and now, and hereafter. So also did Christ demand of His disciples to give up the things of the world, and seek first the Kingdom of God. He does not thereby ask us to abandon our posts, losing courage, refusing to face facts. He preaches to us to go headlong in the midst of the storm ; He wants us to reach its very centre ; He yearns that we seek out evil in its lair and fight it, conquer it, and enslave it with the power and peace of God that passeth understanding, even as He did when He walked on earth. He lays the burden on us to transform the world and the things thereof, according to the pattern of His Kingdom, by seeking it first. Rama as he acquits himself, even to a fault, in his several rôles—those of son, brother, warrior,

husband and king—we must admit that his life is a succession of vicissitudes and trials, of living and giving up his best for duty's sake in the storm of the world, and bequeathing to us an everlasting picture of gentlemanliness, heroism and the Life Beautiful. The *Sampradayas* that deify Rama and hold him up as the Shining One, an example of the highest and best, do not do so in vain when we consider how ideally, and like a god amongst men, Rama faced and suffered through the storms of the world and worldliness for the sake of and in answer to the demands of *Pitri-bhakti*, *Griha-dharma* and *Raja-dharma*. And Bhishma Pitamaha lived the life of selfless devotion to duty, gave up infinite opportunities of rightful enjoyment of life and the things thereof, even standing by the wrong side for duty's sake; and with his dying breath taught the lesson of Duty which still rules the Hindu conscience. Then Krishna, the most misunderstood of world Teachers: from birth to death he faced the storms of the world in the service of his fellow-beings for love's sake. He never lived for himself; his life was lived for the sake of others. He took birth only in order to redeem the world. *Parmartha*, selfless service of others, is the touchstone of Krishna's life whether in childhood, in boyhood, in the bloom of youth and in the maturity of age, and in His life as a man of action and as a teacher. The example of such a life, lived and practised and thought out, yields the final word on the practical conduct of life, viz., to do the duty allocated to each of us without any idea or hope of reward, as a matter of dedication to God, for His sake, a dedication, a self-surrender made and accomplished in the ever-active willingness, not only to put aside but to cast away and abandon one's personal hopes, ambitions, wishes, desires, predilections, interests, in His service, in His *śarana*, for the advancement of His Will and Purpose.

He was born and he lived for the sake of resuscitating *dharma*. He showed how out of the dark side of man's domestic life, and how out of the strange mixtures of vice and virtue in the human personality, can be wrought out the hope of man and the coming of His Kingdom. And of Mahatma Gandhi, also a Vaishnavite, the latest of His devotees, the last of His *avatars* or reincarnations according to the belief of millions, what more need be said? Living in the world, though not of it, having torn the Veil, having realized for himself the Reality obscured by the myriad *māyās* of existence and of worldliness, having realized for Himself the utter, degrading, disastrous futility of seeking after things of the earth, earthly, he yet does not abandon his fellowmen to their fate, to wallow in the mire of *māyā*; but, like Krishna, Buddha, Rama, Christ, filled with a great compassion, takes upon his own frail shoulders their burden, lives with them, among them, like them, lends a helping hand to the least of them, tries to lead them to the Fount of Lovingkindness, and teaches by *practical* example the path of Duty through Love and Service which has already taken our world a stage further in civilization.

Thus only may man, facing the world, struggle ever onward and upward with a greater courage and a greater hope.

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