



THE LIFE OF SHIVAJI MAHARAJ FOUNDER OF THE MARATHA EMPIRE

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Chapter 32

Character

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1. Introduction

While tracing the record of this eventful career, which we have endeavoured to present, to the best of our ability, by a lucid exposition of the chronicle histories and other material bearing on the subject, the thoughtful reader can ponder in his own mind upon the talents and virtues that claim his tribute of praise, and pronounce an impartial judgment upon those faults and shortcomings which hostile critics have sought to discover in the character and career of our hero. We cannot however altogether refuse to take upon ourselves the burden of a comparative estimate and a critical examination of the conduct and character of Shivaji, and to summarize briefly the result of the inquiry. Further, in taking the reader over the mazy episodes of this narrative, the author has had to refrain from criticism and comment, for fear of diverting attention from the story. As a set-off to the restraint observed on those occasions, we deem it both a duty and the exercise of a right, now that we have arrived at the end of the narrative, to make a few general observations on the great character and career revealed in these pages, and to set forth our views on the legacy of thought and action, of wisdom and inspiration, that this noble career has left behind as a common heritage to the people of Maharashtra and perhaps of all India. It is hoped that the estimate now presented to the reader will be accepted in a kindly spirit and any errors that may have inadvertently crept into the account will be generously ignored.

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Nil ex omni parte beatum. This ancient earth of ours has yet to produce a perfect man. Perfection cannot be expected of the children of men. No hero, however great or virtuous, can be an exception to this law. From this point of view, our hero may have had his faults and deficiencies, which but proclaim a human origin and human frailty and enlist sympathy and forgiveness. With an expanding circle of duties and responsibilities and a widening intercourse with persons whose interests are in perpetual conflict, conflict of duties must often arise and culminate in actions which at first sight may appear censurable. But until a proper scrutiny of such actions is made by an austere and unbiased judge, the author of them can never attain his true place in the estimate and opinion of men. Those who have benefited by his actions will continue to praise him at all times, those who have lost by them will never cease to revile his memory. And both these parties in doing as they do seem but to follow the common instincts of human nature. It is only when a neutral and strictly judicial mind comes to examine the two sides of the question and calmly establishes the true character of the person concerned, that the latter obtains his real place in history. Shivaji has not yet had the good fortune to have his actions studied and scrutinized by a rigidly dispassionate but competent historian¹. The present writer cannot claim such a position. He does not aspire to formulate a final verdict. He frankly professes himself to be a Maharashtran at core, and he would make no secret that he is too enthusiastic an admirer of Shivaji, to pose as an independent critic. But he feels himself constrained to state here at some length what the voice of Maharashtra has generally to say about Shivaji, and what answer she has to make, and has been making, to the strictures passed by Mahomedan historians and blindly followed by British imitators².

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1. Mr. O. A. Kincaid in his "History of the Maratha People" Vol. I has vindicated Shivaji from the attacks of his foreign critics and traducers, especially as regards his conduct in the Chandrarao More and Afzulkhan tragedies. He displays a more genuine sympathy for the Marathas and the great Maratha leader, than is done by Prof. Sarkar, who under a guise of analytical criticism traces almost all the actions of Shivaji to the love of plunder and belittles his institutions, though the same analytical examination would go to show that a good many things he has said in the earlier part of his biography are unsaid by him in the last two chapters, especially in the last ten pages. Compare for instance Sarkar's remarks at page 114 and in the foot-note at pp. 366-67 with the confession at page 493, and the imputations of cowardice at pages 223 and 225 with the remarks at pages 490 and 492. On the whole the impression produced while perusing Sarkar's book is not that he is writing a *Life of Shivaji* but that he is following the movements of the Mogul armies or interpreting the ill-informed opinions of the European factors at Surat, Rajapur, Bombay or Madras.
 2. The following remarks of Mr. Kincaid, (History of the Maratha People, Vol. I page 271) bear out our contention: "Shivaji has by a curious fate suffered more at the hands of historians than any other character in History. They have one and all accepted as final the

2. The Charge of Rebellion

The first charge is ingratitude and treason towards the Adil Shahi State of Bijapur. This, according to the hostile critics of Shivaji, places him in the same category as the lawless and rebellious *polygars*, or the refractory barons, of the time. These critics dwell upon Shivaji's ingratitude towards a power that had taken his fugitive father under its protection at a critical juncture in his life, his baseness in abjuring the authority of such a power, his insolent and unprovoked defiance. What then? Was the sense of family obligation to press upon him like a dead weight and crush out of existence all finer sense of manliness and independence? And was it to be imputed to him as a fault if he refused to endure the yoke of a life-long servitude, under the scourge of an alien tyranny, while the rayats were oppressed, while the faith of his fathers was trodden under foot? Was it dignified for one, who was animated by a spirit of true devotion to his country, by a feeling of common interest with the rest of his compatriots, and an enthusiastic fervour for the national religion, to wear the mask of peaceful sloth or dedicate himself to a life of passive and listless pleasure, depending on the capricious bounties of an alien dynasty towards his house? Or was it rather the case that this time-serving indulgence was a passing phase, an uncertain and slippery advantage, which he might be called upon to relinquish at any moment? And with such feelings dominating his breast, was he still to address himself to the venal arts of a court parasite or glib-tongued loyalist? Or was he not rather more true to the better side of his nature, when, feeling the power within himself and spurred by its compelling force, he devoted himself entirely to the meditation of plans and labours for the emancipation of his countrymen? The history of the world clearly demonstrates that founders of great dynasties are rarely free from the stain of rebellion. But the blot on their escutcheons is more than compensated for by the splendour of their triumphs. The stain is forgotten, the glory only remembered. So ought it to be with Shivaji. That he extricated his country from the mortal grip of an alien despotism and gave his countrymen their first cordial draught of liberty after centuries of misrule, is of itself no small service to the people of India. It is a permanent debt, nor can we ever hope to repay it. That this independence did not endure upto our generation is in no

opinion of Grant Duff, which again was based on that of Khafikhan... And while judging Shivaji with the utmost harshness, they have been singularly indulgent to his enemies. The thousand basenesses of Aurangzeb, the appalling villainies of the Bijapur and Ahmednagar nobles have been passed over with a tolerant smile. The cruel trick by which Ghorpade betrayed Shahaji has provoked no comment. Shivaji, however, is depicted as the incarnation of successful perfidy, a Caesar Borgia..... etc.”

sense a fault of Shivaji. The fault, if any, must be laid, as students of history know, at the doors of those who succeeded him in the sacred duty of conserving the liberty he had won at such a heavy sacrifice. Had Shivaji failed in his heroic enterprise of laying broad and deep the foundations of an indigenous and independent power, towards which the revolt from the Adil Shahi state was to be a stepping-stone, our hostile critics would not have remained satisfied with pouring out the vials of their virtuous rage upon his “rebellion”, but would have exhausted upon him every weapon from the armoury of calumnious reproach. But his success having saved him from such an open attack, they still fling against him the reproach of rebellion, content if they can succeed, be it ever so little, in tarnishing his glory. A charge of this kind would appear more graceful and even pardonable from the pen of a Mahomedan historian; but when European historians, who know or ought to know no other allegiance than that which is paid to the ideal of liberty, make themselves parties to the reproduction of the same language of calumny, their conduct cannot but appear ridiculous. It would have been according to the fitness of things for these historians to have given an impartial verdict upon one who so dauntlessly and triumphantly asserted the liberties of his country. But it is difficult to preserve the balance of impartiality in all things and at all times, and it is evident that had we continued to possess that independence for which Shivaji bled and toiled, these historians would have hesitated to pronounce such a sweeping indictment.

3. The Charge of Treachery

The second charge brought against Shivaji is his alleged treachery and cruelty. To a superficial observer of Shivaji's record, and in particular to a Mahomedan observer, it would seem that there was much to lend countenance to such a view³. But when we survey the vastness of his enterprise and the

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3. The Romans found consolation for the defeats inflicted upon them by Hannibal by charging him with treachery and cruelty. But what modern historian does now seriously believe in the “*Perfidia plus quam Punica*” with which Livy charges him? As to the charge of cruelty, who now thinks it sustainable, having regard to the conditions of ancient warfare? And yet in this case an Aryan nation accused a Semitic commander of cruelty. In the case of Shivaji historians of a Semitic bias have flung the charge of cruelty against an Aryan enemy. It needs no answer. It is at least satisfactory to note that not even the worst of his hostile critics have found a weak spot in his character so as to level against him the other accusations which Roman prejudice rightly or wrongly fastened upon Hannibal: “*Nihil veri, nihil sancti, nullus deum metus, nullum ius iurandum, nulla religio*” (no truth, nothing sacred, no fear of the gods, no regard for oaths, no religious scruples). Verily Shivaji has not fared much better at the hands of his Mahomedan critics than Hannibal did at the hands of his Roman historians. And yet the modern world gladly acknowledges Hannibal's greatness! So must it be with Shivaji.

limited resources at his disposal, we of Maharashtra cannot but vindicate the expediency, the opportuneness and the ripe wisdom of his plans and stratagems. For a mere jahgirdar to take up arms against the triple powers of the Bijapur, the Golconda and the Mogul States was at no stage a light matter, and to the contemporaries of the youthful Shivaji its rashness presented itself in its most disheartening form. The very guardian of Shivaji, Dadoji Kondadev, shuddered to think of the probable consequences of the wild and quixotic adventures of his patron's son, and the reader knows how this anxiety exhausted the strength of this loyal veteran and brought him to death's door. It was, therefore, a foregone conclusion that stratagem and policy were indispensable tools for the pioneer labours of deliverance. Without an appreciable measure of these qualities, and certainly in the total absence of them, Shivaji could never have succeeded in accomplishing even the least of the amazing exploits of his wonderful career. Much less could he have given to his Maharashtra countrymen, if only for a temporary period, the joyful experience of liberty. With the Bijapur government past the zenith of its power, with the Mogul emperor making tremendous strides towards paramountcy over all India and pouring out his mighty armies and unlimited resources to accomplish the destruction of Shivaji, his armoury of stratagem proved equal to every occasion, furnished the means of ready defence, and enabled him by a process of ceaseless corrosion to dissolve and wear out their authority. But this must not delude us into the belief that he knew no arts save those of stratagem or that he practised them against all persons and on all occasions. Those that lent a willing ear or made offer of loyal and manly service for the promotion of his noble enterprise, experienced nothing but frank and honourable treatment at his hands. To meet Afzul or Shaista Khan on a fair field of battle, with the overwhelming hosts that marched under their command, was beyond the scope of any practicable method of defence on the part of a general like Shivaji operating as he had to do with forces quite out of proportion to those of his antagonists. There were but two alternatives to choose from, either to lead his scanty army to certain death and massacre at the hands of a relentless invader, to relinquish forever the higher aims and purposes of his life and to court infamy and ridicule in the eyes of all people, or by a bold and skilful use of strategy and guile to cut the ground from under his opponents' feet, entrap their forces and annihilate their power. And if he chose the latter of these alternatives, we at any rate, the people of Maharashtra, cannot afford to be censorious. Treachery of a deeper dye has disgraced the records of other conquerors, treachery the whole purpose of which was the violation of the liberties of innocent nations and the lust for foreign territory. Shivaji's conquests were redeemed from this stain by the nobler purposes by which they were inspired, the sacred cause of the redemption of his people's liberty, their deliverance from a foreign yoke. His

stratagems were bound to wear the complexion of treason and treachery in the jaundiced eye of the Mahomedan sovereignties, who were compelled most reluctantly to acknowledge the sovereign independence of the people of Maharashtra. Had Shivaji stickled for the point of honour, when horror upon horror menaced the tranquillity of his people, the fury of Islam would have ridden triumphant over all, and the name of Maratha would never have been blazoned broad in the world's history. With the invader thundering at the city-gate and breathing revenge and destruction, while meek morality is quivering helplessly amid a scene of blank desolation and dismay, there is no choosing between the furies and engines of war. The political wisdom of the world and the standards of practical morality have recognized the necessity, under such circumstances, of repelling the enemy by every means at one's command. Besides where defeat is sure to carry down into irretrievable disaster and destruction not only one's own self but thousands of dependents and followers, the crisis requires the commander inexorably to put aside the ordinary ethical standards for the time, and ensure the safety of the lives and liberties of his people, even at the sacrifice of the ordinary rules of human conduct. Add to this a state of society in which for centuries together there had been no peace, in which the standards of political morality were not the refined standards of modern times. Consider how Afzul Khan would have gloried, if he had succeeded in his treacherous plots to murder or imprison Shivaji. Consider to what depths of iniquity Shaista Khan would have descended, in order to arrest or otherwise get rid of the elusive Maratha warrior. It will then be seen that the killing of Afzul Khan or the raid upon Shaista Khan, far from redounding to Shivaji's discredit, claim, by the boldness and brilliancy of the plans employed, no small tribute of praise and admiration. It is but natural that those, who smart under a sense of loss by reason of the sensational escapades and stratagems of Shivaji, should, in season and out of season, revile his memory. But there is no excuse for European historians to follow blindly in their lead⁴.

4. Without prejudice to the defence of Shivaji in his dealings with More and Afzulkhan (vide pp. 141-143 and pp. 152-172) we may say that similar instances of stratagem and treachery are to be found in plentiful abundance in the history of the time on the side of the Moguls and the Deccan sultanates. We may instance the unsuccessful attempt of the Adil Shahi chief, Baji Shamraj, with the aid of the Mores of Javli, to entrap Shivaji on his return from Mahad; the successful trick of Baji Ghorpade against Shahaji; the proposal of the Raja Jaysingh to arrest or murder Shivaji, after his escape from Agra (Vide Sarkar's Shivaji pp. 197- 198). The most atrocious instance is Aurangzeb's plot to capture Golconda in 1657 by sending Sultan Mahomed with an army, which was admitted by the unsuspecting Golconda chief as a marriage escort to company the Mogul prince to Bengal. Nothing could exceed the meanness of the fraud employed by Aurangzeb on that occasion or the ruthless rapacity of the Mogul army. As to treachery between the British and Shivaji, we have the

4. The Charge of Cruelty

Let us now consider the charge of cruelty and vindictiveness. Even a superficial survey of the career of Shivaji will suffice to convince us that this charge is absolutely unfounded. It was a settled principle with Shivaji never to cause wanton bloodshed. The prisoners of war taken by Shivaji were never cruelly treated⁵. On the contrary they were often entertained in a manner befitting their rank, furnished with articles of apparel, horses and travelling expenses, and permitted to return home. In fact Shivaji's generosity towards prisoners of war was such as to put to blush the vaunted civilization of modern nations. The Mahomedan rulers of the time used to practise the vilest barbarities upon their victims, forcing them to embrace the faith of Islam, detaining them in prison and even selling them into slavery⁶. No instance of such barbarity can be urged against Shivaji. Towards the foe who surrendered his arms and gave himself up unreservedly to his mercy, Shivaji showed such an absolute courtesy and generosity that the erstwhile foeman blushed at his enmity and gladly took service under such a leader. And it has already been seen in the preceding narrative how such foemen when turned into devoted servants spared neither their fortunes nor their blood in their loyal association with the great cause. It would, therefore, appear that the charge of cruelty cannot be maintained. This unfounded opinion about Shivaji's cruelty might have arisen in consequence of the vengeance wreaked upon Bajji Ghorpade, and some are prepared to admit the savageness of the revenge taken upon him. They admit that Bajji Ghorpade deserved punishment, but they hold it as an unwarrantable cruelty that for one man's guilt, the male adults of his family, his relatives and dependents, should have all been put to the sword. But the

treacherous aid the Rajapur factors gave to Bijapur when Shivaji was personally besieged at Panhala in 1660, while all the time the factors professed neutrality and the worse instance of the abuse of the rules of naval warfare by Keigwin and Minchin in the battle round Khanderi Island. Mr. Kincaid draws attention to the slaughter of the Macdonalds of Glencoe, in the comparatively refined times of William III.

5. *Vide* reference to Grant Duff's remarks in the foot-note to pages 324 and 330 and the testimony of Khafikhan himself in the foot-note at p. 335.
6. Compare the campaigns of the Sidi, the initial campaign of Shaistakhan, and the last campaign of Dilerkhan, 1678 to 1680. Dilerkhan's cruelties (*Vide* Sarkar p. 419) caused even the most cruel of the Maratha kings, Prince Sambhaji, to protest against them. How many Mogul campaigns against Shivaji and Bijapur were stained with enslavement of helpless women and children? As against this, what has Khafikhan to say as regards Shivaji's conduct towards women and children? (*Vide* Sarkar's Shivaji pp. 62-63 for a sample of Aurangzeb's orders for a campaign of wholesale cruelty against Shivaji's people).

heinousness of Baji Ghorpade's guilt must likewise be considered. For the aggrandisement of his family and to win favour in the eyes of his Mahomedan sovereign, he had undertaken and carried out the most nefarious betrayal of a Maratha compatriot, and that too of one who was of the noblest rank among his countrymen. To what dire results the treachery was likely to lead is already known to the reader. As a loyal and affectionate son, Shivaji would have been obliged entirely to give up his plans of liberty and independence. As it was, for nearly four years, till Shahaji was at complete liberty, he had almost to sit down in an attitude of passive silence. When these things are borne in mind, the fearful revenge taken upon Ghorpade, under the overbearing impulse of two dominant passions, an intense fervour of filial affection and a devouring love of independence⁷, may find some mitigation, if not excuse.

5. The Charge of Free-booting

The third head of accusation against Shivaji is an inordinate greed of money, which it is alleged, led him to a perpetual campaign of plunder and devastation against the peaceful subjects of the Mahomedan powers. And it is further contended that this rapacity of plunder led to manifold disturbances and to insecurity of property. Some Maharashtra writers have themselves admitted that there is a partial truth in this allegation. But knowledge of the real character of Shivaji's actions will exonerate him from that degree of culpability with which these objectors have been wont to charge him. In the first place we must give him this credit that from first to last in his deep-laid schemes of independence, the free-booting campaigns he pursued were inspired by higher motives than the mere accumulation of private wealth. He had to face simultaneously the concerted fronts of three hostile monarchies, and what sacrifices in men and money were involved, in the continual and unyielding struggle with their immense armies can be better imagined than described. How but with the hope of pecuniary reward was he to maintain the loyalty and devotion of his soldiers, if he expected them unstintingly to co-operate with him in the realization of his ideals, holding their lives cheap and seeking a deathless martyrdom in the deadly struggle with the powers of Islam? Then again, Shivaji could not but increase the strength and efficiency of his armies to the best of his resources. How was he to meet the vast army charges which the maintenance of such a large force was bound to entail? How was he to maintain at the height of military efficiency those hundreds of

7. It is clear from the Shivdigvijay that Shivaji raided Mudhol at his father's express order. Vide Shivaji's letter in Kincaid, Appendix p.178.

forts upon which the security and expansion of his independent power depended? How was he to increase the number of these forts, when his defensive programme made the erection of them in their tens and their hundreds a matter of imperative necessity? How was he to maintain these equipments on the slender revenues of his own sterile dominions? And if that was not possible, what then? Should he not levy contributions on the dominions of his enemies by what in every form and feature must have appeared as plundering campaigns? It was inevitable. The avenues of public credit which are available to modern nations were not open to our leaders in the mediaeval times of Indian history. Great wars may now be embarked upon with the help of public credit, depressing the subjects in perpetuity under the yoke of the national debt and the exhausting burden of increasing taxation⁸. The appalling statistics of the national debt among the leading nations of the modern world cannot be contemplated without a gasp and an ominous presentiment that either these nations must be over-whelmed by a general bankruptcy or their helpless multitudes ground down for ages under the crushing mill-stones of a monstrous taxation. And yet can it be maintained for a moment that the giant wars of these nations are all entered upon for the purposes of defending their integrity from aggression or wresting their independence from the thralldom of a tyrant? What is the cause of these international feuds, but the folly, ingratitude, and perfidy of some tyrant prince or lustful minister, for whose wicked sport or ambition thousands and hundreds of thousands of innocent subjects perish and for whose saturnalian carnivals millions of groaning, tax-ridden bondsmen have to pay the price, from generation to generation? It is but fair to Shivaji to contrast his plundering but regulated methods of replenishing his war treasury in the prosecution of his patriotic war of independence, intended for the benefit of unborn generations of his countrymen, with the unjust and unlimited spoliation of unborn generations, for the purpose of supplying the sinews of unjustifiable wars, which modern finance has made easy to the modern tyrant, for the wanton violation of the liberties of other people. He did not fetter his poor subjects in perpetuity by the imposition of an impossible burden of taxation in order to vindicate their liberty. He chose rather to fulfil the just and unerring law of nemesis, forcing the alien spoliators of his people's fortunes and liberties to pay the price of their spoliation in direct proportion to the cost

8. The reader should clearly understand that this opinion was expressed in Mr. Keluskar's original Marathi edition of 1907. This observation applies to the whole paragraph. The author was scarcely aware when he wrote this in 1907 that Germany was shortly afterwards going to furnish a concrete illustration of the truth of his strictures.

of redemption, and in that repayment those of his Hindu compatriots had to join as contributories who had risen to the height of their affluence under an alien patronage.

And if these exactions and benevolences were expended upon the sacred cause of independence and became the principal feeders of his war exchequer, we, the people of Maharashtra, again can scarcely call him to a strict account or tax him with immorality. To expatiate on the immorality of procuring money by the tactics of plundering campaigns is, under the circumstances, tantamount to saying in so many categorical terms that he ought not any case to have devoted himself to the task of redeeming the liberties of his countrymen and conferring on them the blessing of an independent sovereign state. If we consider how heavy must have been the annual expenditure for the maintenance of a hundred thousand cavalry and infantry in a state of effective readiness and to keep all contented, from the meanest foot-soldier to the highest commander, by a system of prompt and punctual cash payments, and how small a proportion of that outlay could at that period have been safely met by taxation from the territories under Shivaji's permanent occupation, we can readily conclude that nothing short of an importunate necessity drove him to this system of predatory war. Add to this the consideration that a storm of invasion had been brewing for a long time and was bound to burst with unmitigated fury when Aurangzeb found himself free to let loose the avalanche of his northern armies upon the fruitful valleys of the south and whelm every landmark in the general deluge. A wise king like Shivaji had to make a decent provision against that upheaval. And if this were called avarice, it would be an abuse of words. In short, who would place Shivaji in the category of those sovereigns that wallowed in sordid avarice like Mahmud of Gazni, with his seventeen invasions of India and his hoarded heaps of countless wealth, and the sorrowful tears he shed at having to part, at the hour of death, with those untold treasures?

6. The Campaign Regulations

Whether these plundering campaigns were carried on in a blind and unregulated style, or were subject to a system of regulated discipline, is a subject that now claims our attention. In a foregoing chapter⁹ we have seen the campaigning regulations of Shivaji. We have noticed the strict regulations for protecting the peasant and cultivator from harm, the permanent injunction against the arrest or abduction or violation of the modesty of women and children, the studied observance of respect for mosques and temples, saints and fakirs, imposed upon the soldiery. No small measure of wholesome

9. *Vide* Chapter XXIV, pp. 388-391.

restraint was exercised upon the campaigning hosts by the severe regulation that all booty obtained in the course of the campaign had to be accounted for to the state treasury. In consequence, as neither soldier nor officer had an opportunity of appropriating to him the spoils of the campaign, he had so much the less temptation to lay violent hands on anything and everything that came in his way. It was impossible for them to seek to enrich themselves by robbing the helpless inhabitants of their possessions. The evil hordes that disgraced the Peshwas' campaigns at a later epoch of history, those vampire hosts of Pindaris and plunderers that followed in the wake of the regular army and spread havoc and desolation wherever they went, venturing not seldom to cut off the food and fodder supplies of the regular expeditionary forces themselves, this class of free-booters could never thrive under Shivaji. Moreover, it is pertinent to observe that those chiefs and merchant princes of the enemy country, who quietly paid the contributions levied upon them in proportion to their fortunes and made no attempts to evade their burden by hiding their treasures, never came in for any sort of rough treatment at the hands of Shivaji's followers. Then again those burghers, who voluntarily subscribed among themselves the tribute demanded by the invaders and paid it at the city gates were never disturbed by the invading forces, who as a rule withdrew straightway from the walls, the moment their demand was satisfied. Those ruling chiefs and princes, who had bound themselves to pay an annual tribute, purchased a permanent immunity for their territories from the hardships attending upon these campaigns. At a later stage of his career, when the Bijapur and the 'Golconda kingdoms undertook to pay a fixed annual tribute, there was a cessation of these hostilities against their territories. When again these same states broke their treaties and desisted from the payment of the stipulated tributes, these campaigns were renewed, to the great loss of the wealthier part of their population. Nor could it be said that Shivaji's followers carried fire and sword wherever they went. The naked sword, the flaring fire-brand were never used against the houses of the poor. Such wanton cruelty was never practised by his troops. The scouts brought faithful reports as to the possessors of hoarded wealth, and only such men, as a rule, experienced the fury of his soldiers' onslaughts, to escape scatheless in their turn, on surrendering their wealth. Judging by these facts, we must conclude that to denounce Shivaji as a cruel and rapacious marauder is to cast an unmerited slur upon his character.

7. The Underlying Purpose of this Policy

Another circumstance which serves to explain the employment of this policy is its effectiveness for the purpose intended, a fact not often appreciated at its true worth by Shivaji' critics. The continual incursions and exactions of tribute and plunder, with the resulting diminution in the revenues of the

Mahomedan powers, sapped their strength by a slow process of attenuation, and compelled them to seek a friendly reconciliation with an enemy possessed of such powers of punishment, if they wished to be left unmolested in their government. The treaties with Bijapur and Golconda, by which these kingdoms agreed to pay fixed tributes, were, as we have seen, the immediate consequences of this policy. In addition to these tributes Shivaji, in consequence of the arrangement made with the Mogul government, exercised the claims of chauth and sirdeshmukhi upon the territories under Bijapur¹⁰. He intended to make similar levies upon Golconda, but had to postpone his plans for a time on account of the campaign in the Karnatic. Further than that, he was continually endeavouring to get similar claims acknowledged over the Mogul provinces in the Deccan, and had he lived longer, there seems little reason to doubt that he would have succeeded in getting those claims allowed. That this policy of crippling the revenues of the Mahomedan powers by the demands of chauth etc. was sure to lead to their decay and deprive them of their very teeth and claws, while Shivaji's own state waxed proportionately in strength and resources, is so evident, that we must give him the credit of having intended it as a means to a higher end. And the policy was justified by its fruits.

But was it not wantons wickedness, while attempting to cripple the Mahomedan powers, to harass their poor and innocent subjects? The answer to this question is that the subjects of these powers were never indiscriminately harassed. Shivaji's vengeance fell on the rich, a part of whose wealth he sought to transfer to the sacred cause of liberty and independence. It was the wealthy Mahomedans who generally suffered, and the few Hindus who had enriched themselves under their tyranny. They were forcibly required to pay their contributions. No amount of persuasion would have induced the subjects of the Mahomedan powers to part voluntarily with a portion of their superfluous wealth. If then a few Hindus were required to make a sacrifice under compulsion for the permanent benefit of all, this cannot be pronounced wicked. We must always have a regard for the ultimate

10. As Mahomedan historians have made the charge of plundering (European critics following suit), it is pertinent to observe that a Mahomedan emperor not merely sanctioned but encouraged Shivaji's plundering, as long as it was directed against the enemies of the empire. There was done under the solemn sanction of treaties; witness the treaties with Jay Singh, Jaswant Singh and Muazim. In theory at least it was not plunder, but contributions exacted under the names of chauth and sirdeshmukhi. The Emperor did not like the exactions when the same were levied from his territories.

object of Shivaji, and in the light of it no stain of dishonour can be seen in these actions.

8. Imperial Greed

But then it is objected that sordid love of empire was the motive cause, and that for the excesses of political greed no excuse or extenuation is possible. This is a sweeping charge and calls for a restatement of the true character of the life-work of Shivaji. One original motive for the foundation of an independent power was no doubt to win his personal independence from the Mahomedan monarchies, and it may be freely admitted that when Shivaji started upon his Herculean labours he had this object before him. But to say that this was the sole aim of all his labours and that the higher purpose of accomplishing the emancipation of his Hindu brethren from the long nightmare of the Mahomedan thralldom never came within the range of his thoughts and political vision is to make too large a demand upon our credulity. The men whose sympathies and services he first enlisted for the realization of an almost chimerical enterprise, would never have permitted themselves to be harnessed to his cause regardless of self or personal fortunes, had he not instilled into their hearts the love of liberty and kindled an enthusiasm for independence. When we contemplate the secret of Shivaji's success in winning over the Brahman envoy of Afzul Khan and the Rajput princes, Jay Singh and Jaswant Singh, we cannot but conclude that in every case it depended on his skill in impressing upon these persons the nobility of his mission to overthrow the power of the Mahomedan monarchs and in stirring up their latent patriotism. These persons were not so utterly lost to a sense of honour, as to have otherwise, however strong the temptation, connived at and shown sympathy with Shivaji's enterprise. Those who accuse Shivaji of an inordinate love of power, must needs be reminded how on three or four different occasions, even at the height of his glory, he was laid hold of by tremendous spiritual transports, that alienated him for the time being from affairs of state and diverted his mind exclusively to meditation on spiritual things. And let them think too of the difficulties of the perplexed ministers, who on the occasions of these spiritual transports found it a very difficult task to bring him round to a just appreciation of his temporal duties. To compare him with Alexander, Tamerlane, Babar, Aurangzeb, and other ambitious conquerors is to misjudge the man. The fields they piled with slaughter, in their career of blind ambition and aggrandizement, at the expense and sacrifice of the liberties and fortunes of independent nations, arouse universal horror and can never obtain our forgiveness. Shivaji's ambition was redeemed from this taint. It was natural to hold that Hindustan was for the Hindus and that the Hindus only had the right to rule in Hindustan. It was natural to consider it a grave sin against nature that the stranger and the alien should

enter and dominate over the land and persecute the children of the soil. To expel such unjust and oppressive tyrants from the motherland and vow to make it again the scene of a free and prosperous indigenous sovereignty, was in itself a blessed and righteous undertaking. And what wonder is it, if he, who voluntarily embarked upon this enterprise, has laid all India under a permanent debt of gratitude? Not personal ambition itself can detract from the merit of such an achievement. Apart from the motives with which a person sets out to accomplish an object, the accomplishment itself, if it conduces to the good of society, has an inherent title to obtain our gratitude and admiration. On this hypothesis, granting for the moment, that personal ambition and aggrandizement were the springs of conduct that inspired Shivaji, we cannot see that even such a view of his life's work detracts from the merits of the actual accomplishment. The few foreigners that suffered eclipse from the higher grandeur and glory of his deeds might vent their spleen upon him and fling at him every term of reproach and ridicule. It is all ineffectual bluster. The founders and champions of liberty, in all the world's history, have always received their meed of praise at the hands of impartial and disinterested historians. They have earned the historians' ungrudging applause for building their nation's happiness on the firm basis of liberty. Among such patriots Shivaji has every right to take a prominent place. And he will keep it.

9. The Charge of Selfish Ambition

He has been accused of an inordinate thirst for power; he has been charged with self-seeking and self-love. Self-love never made a man think of the weal or woe of another. Self-love consults nothing but self-interest at all times and places. What particular aspect of selfishness is seen in Shivaji, and in what part of his career can it be discovered? Had his end been merely to attain an empire for no higher gratification than the instinct of selfish pomp and pleasure, why should he have carried forward even to the darkening shadows of death the laborious prosecution of an ephemeral enterprise? Why rather should he not have given himself up to the voluptuous enjoyment of the wealth that he had got together by years of toil? With all the means of sensual gratification at his command, why did not the epicurean philosophy of life commend itself to his attention even for a moment¹¹? When we survey the daily routine of his life, we are impressed with his austere regard for duty,

11. Mr. Kincaid speaking of the period when Shivaji made his youthful decision to take upon himself the task of liberating his country, aptly contrasts him with the Trojan Paris on Mount Ida, caring not for the promise of Hera or the smiles of Aphrodite, but without a single backward glance, placing the golden fruit in the hands of Pallas Athene (page 132).

which scarcely left a moment unclaimed to be turned to the service of pleasure. His duties towards the public, the administration and good government of his state, the defence and expansion of his kingdom engrossed all his physical and intellectual faculties. As can be seen from a close scrutiny of his career, he scarcely ever took a holiday to recoup the continual strain upon his mind and body. Against one who showed this stern resolve to deny himself all rest and relaxation, until he had accomplished the liberation of his country from the tyranny of Islam, this imputation of motives of self-seeking and self-exaltation, appears peculiarly extravagant. His overflowing wealth and resources were scarcely employed, if at all, for purposes of personal pomp and splendour. His dress was of a severely simple style, nor had he a weakness for jewellery. That style of magnificence in his state processions and durbars, which was indispensable to maintain his position in the eyes of foreigners and of subjects alike, was all that was observed. Nor can the selfishness of avarice be urged as a charge against one who was most munificent in rewarding merit. The disposition to practise false economy by doling out inadequate remuneration to the officials in the service, without regard to the positions they occupied in the state, never occurred to his mind. There was no failure to please those by whose labours he had purchased his fortunes. But above all the paramount feeling in his breast with regard to his material gains was that they were to be invested for the defence and expansion of an independent power, for the welfare and advantage of his people, and for the vindication, if possible, of the liberties of the land of the Bharatas from the tyranny of Islam. It is no exaggeration to affirm that he was thoroughly imbued with the idea that he held his wealth in trust for his countrymen, to guard and augment it, not to fritter it away in personal enjoyment. When such were the guiding principles of his career, principles held to firmly from first to last, the charge of selfishness must certainly fall to the ground.

Ambition is no ambition unless wedded to selfishness. The ambitious monarch is he who is actuated by an uncontrollable desire to achieve greatness, to extend his sway over multitudes of vassal princes, and to spread the fame of his name to all the quarters of the globe. And at first sight, it would seem excusable to argue that Shivaji became a victim to this infirmity of noble minds. Were it so, however, the moment this absorbing passion was itself absorbed into the wider scheme of the restoration of Hindu autonomy, the passion was transfused into patriotism and ambition purged of its baser dross. However a correct estimate of the sum total of Shivaji's achievements cannot but lead us to the belief that almost from the moment of the inauguration of his noble enterprise, he was animated by a conscious purpose and governed by an irresistible impulse bidding him, as it were, go forth into the world and turn the night into day, till the restoration of liberty and

independence should be accomplished. And it would be no exaggeration to affirm that he believed this was the mission of his life and the measure of his success in achieving this object was also the measure of his fulfillment of life's duties. And from that fervent faith sprang those deeds of heroism and valour which the world will never cease to admire.

The charge of ambition is sometimes based upon the fact that at the time Shivaji set out upon his campaign of freedom, he had to overthrow the power of many a Hindu baron who had set up an uncertain independence on his own account. And it is asked, if Shivaji's object was to establish his independence, why should he have drawn the sword against Hindu brother chiefs labouring in the same direction? Does not this circumstance in itself prove his selfish determination to have independence for himself and deny it to others? And do not these instances conspire together to brand the unrighteousness of his ambition? These objections are again based upon a misconception of the real inwardness of Shivaji's labours. If the deliverance of his countrymen from an alien yoke was the true objective of the hero's enterprise, the dismemberment of the country to be delivered into innumerable groups of independent principalities, waging endless wars with one another or leading their brigand forces into the territories of the alien rulers they had seceded from, would have been a fatal caricature of his plans. The tenure of power by such lawless barons is at best of uncertain duration, and the government they have revolted from is sure to find an occasion to overthrow them, one after another, and so to vanquish all. If then Shivaji thought it necessary to win over to his cause the unruly strength of these lawless chiefs and revolted barons, or, failing that, to attack and annihilate their strongholds so as to clear the path for the expansion of his own advancing power, in either case the result was its own justification. The same can be said of Shivaji's attitude towards those towering figures of the Maratha nobility that owed their allegiance to the Adilshahi dynasty. Their opposition had to be disarmed either by the methods of persuasion and peace, or by means of war and devastation. If the labours of Cavour and his compatriots for the restoration of a united and independent Italy from the anarchy and the conflicting claims of the European powers, or if the successful organization of the German empire on the basis of national unity by the Kaiser William I, - if these achievements have elicited the approbation of all right-minded and impartial historians, the labours of Shivaji, upon which such criticisms are made, are certainly entitled to the same respect. It is not at all fair to seek to belittle his work by harping upon his ambition or his selfishness. Without these occasional acts of apparent injustice on his part, the people of Maharashtra could never have drunk deep at the fountain of liberty. For the

greater and more lasting happiness of the greater number, if a few had to undergo temporary hardships, such actions cannot be altogether condemned.

10.The Charge of Cowardice

And when the objector comes to the end of his arguments, he flings the reproach of cowardice against Shivaji. This charge of cowardice is made against him, by a train of syllogisms somewhat as follows: - Had it not been for his cowardice, he would not have resorted to artifice and stratagem. The truly valiant man fights and wins his victories by challenging his foe face to face and never resorts to snares and wiles and hidden ambuscades. Shivaji followed the baser tactics of this sort. *Ergo* he cannot be ranked as a brave warrior. A perusal of the preceding narrative will clearly prove that this sort of reasoning is a ludicrous travesty the facts. This argument presents in the form of a caricature what is undoubtedly true of Shivaji's generalship, viz. that a great part of his victories he earned by his strategy rather than by his valour. He was always cautious and circumspect in all he did. Rashness and blind daring had no place in his science of war. On every occasion he made a calm calculation of his strength and of that of his enemy. What could be easily accomplished, without shedding the blood of his people, he usually contrived to accomplish by right manoeuvring and stratagem. It was his invariable principle to avoid bloodshed as much as possible. And had he not possessed a fertile mind quick to devise and invent what the varying needs of the hour demanded, there would have been no occasion to-day to chronicle the events of his life or to write a history of the Maratha people. Before the masses of his enemies, his scanty troops would certainly have melted away in no time. The labours he had begun would have ended in failure. His very name would have been numbered among the numerous tribes of outlawed rebels and irregular polygars. In short, instead of the unanimous praises, echoed from lip to lip, rendered to him as the founder and architect of Hindu liberty and independence, his name would have passed current as a bye-word for failure and reproach. Need we dwell any longer on the historical purblindness that would confound strategy with cowardice, and discover in it an imaginary cause for censure? The folly itself we can never censure too much.

11.Another School

Let us now turn to another school of critics, and this time the critics are themselves Maharashtrians. Some of their pet hypotheses are calculated to lower, in however modest a measure, the greatness of the life-work of Shivaji. We propose, therefore, to review at some length some of the leading theories formulated by this school of historians.

12. The Bhagwat Dharma and National Independence

The first of these hypotheses may be restated briefly as follows. The spread of the Bhagwat Dharma (the Bhagwat religion, i. e. religion as expounded in the Bhagwat), in all parts of Maharashtra obliterated in a great measure the distinction of high and low, tended to a fusion of castes and consequent unity. With a deepening conviction that all mankind are the children of a common father, and that but one road to salvation lay open to all, the feeling was more largely spread among the thinkers of the time, that as in spiritual, so like-wise in temporal matters, it was proper for them to exert their united endeavours for the advancement of any cause that represented the common good of all the people. It is further alleged that the name Bhagwat Dharma came to be changed into Maharashtra Dharma (i. e. the Maharashtra religion) by the saint Ramdas Swami, who constantly inculcated the fostering protection and expansion of the faith upon Shivaji and other leaders of Maharashtra. Therefore, was it, according to this theory, that Shivaji and his followers were able to accomplish the arduous task of resuscitating the liberty and independence of their country?

The first point to be considered is whether in the time of Shivaji or in the period immediately antecedent to his career, the ethical creed of the Bhagwat Dharma had generally spread throughout the length and breadth of Maharashtra. For all over Maharashtra were to be found the pharisaical representatives of the orthodox Sanatan Dharma engaged in a campaign of bitter persecution against the exponents of the Bhagwat faith of Love, as described in the biographies of the poet Mahipati. The again the devotion of the saints of the Bhagwat school clustered round the shrine of the god of Pandharpur, which they magnified as an earthly Elysium above all holy places, but it can never be said that all Maharashtrians at the time acknowledged such a belief or joined in such an estimate. It will be extremely rash to maintain that the god Vithoba of Pandharpur, who was the object of the single-hearted devotion and allegiance of these Bhagwat saints - saints who co-ordinated a firm belief in the abstract principles of Vedantism with devotion to a concrete image of the Deity - was in an equal degree an object of worship and devotion to all the people of Maharashtra. For contemporaneously with the faith of the Bhagwat saints there flourished other cults in Maharashtra. Secondly, the religion of faith and love associated with the Bhagwat saints was not in all respects antagonistic to the orthodox Sanatan Dharma dogmas. It could not, therefore, be said that the Bhagwat Dharma was in any form revolutionary. What could be truly said about it is that it was widely propagated by the saints of the Maharashtra school beginning with the times of Dnyandev. Nor is it in any sense a historical fact that the labours of these saints extinguished the differences of caste and that

such an extinction of caste differences kindled the flame of a strong feeling of Maharashtrian unity. For a hypothesis of this kind there is absolutely no warrant in the actual state of Maharashtra society in those times. If the saints and other votaries of Vithoba, when engaged in the spiritual duties at the holy shrine itself, showed a slight disregard for the strict observance of caste obligations, still who would solemnly affirm that on returning to their homes and villages they persevered in their indifference to caste rules and continued the heterodox usages in their ordinary social life? Like the orthodox people around them, in the matter of food and drink and in the settlement of marriage alliances, they observed the distinctions of high and low, sanctioned by the precepts of orthodox Hinduism. It would, therefore, follow that the liberal principles of the Bhagwat school professed by the saints of Maharashtra had not materially altered the condition of Hindu society at the time. How could it be maintained that if this creed had never come into existence, those that supported Shivaji would never have been inspired to support him? Could it be said that any of his great co-adjutors was a votary of that type who annually made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Pandharpur or otherwise an active supporter of the Bhagwat creed? No historical evidence to this effect is extant. The Maratha chronicles themselves have nothing to say on this point. As to Shivaji himself and his fore-fathers, the worship of Shiva and Shiva's consort, Bhavani, under various names, seems to have been hereditary in the family, and on the most critical occasions Shivaji was in the habit of consulting the oracular decrees or utterances of that tutelary goddess. From this it could be seen that his faith was not anchored firmly or exclusively in the Bhagwat creed, but that to his death he was likewise a votary of the goddess Bhavani. In the latter part of his career, indeed, by reason of contact with Ramdas Swami and the effects of his spiritual precepts and society, it may be concluded that some change might have been wrought in his sentiments of devotional allegiance. Even Ramdas himself had specially enjoined upon him to cultivate his usual devotions to Shiva and to make and worship in honour of that god a crore of votive images of sand and so to merit the special grace of that deity. And as a faithful disciple he must be credited to have fulfilled the mandate of his preceptor. From this it must be inferred that Shivaji was originally a staunch follower of the Shaiva creed - the worship of Shiva - and that latterly by communion with Ramdas his allegiance to the god Shiva was divided with other objects of worship. As, however, Shivaji died not long after the spiritual intimacy between the disciple and the preceptor had sprung up, it is very difficult to speculate with certainty as to what would have been its ultimate effects, had it lasted longer. As Shivaji himself was a Shaiva with a pronounced bias for the worship of the goddess Devi (or Bhavani), so were his followers from the Maval country, from the Ghaut uplands, from the Konkan lowlands - whether they were Maratha shiledars, bargirs, or hetkaris -

mostly of the Shaiva bias, with their special tutelary deities, the god Khandoba of Jejuri and the goddess Bhavani of Tuljapur. The images of these deities under various names are to be found consecrated in various parts of Maharashtra, and in praying for their propitious grace and favour, the people thought, lay their chief duty in this life, as could be seen from their religious rites and ceremonies and social usages. To take an example, with what eclat and enthusiasm the Marathas observe the feast-day of Dasara is known to all¹². It follows, therefore, that the theory that the people of Maharashtra flocked to Shivaji's standard, on account of the general leaven of liberal ideas caused by the Bhagwat school in the social conscience of Maharashtra, is fundamentally erroneous. Can it even be said that the great leaders of the Brahman and Prabhu castes, who so enthusiastically co-operated with Shivaji in the great cause of freedom, did so or were able to do so, either because they were Vaishnavas and followers of the Bhagwat school or because of any effects the Bhagwat school might have wrought upon their minds?

13. The Bhagwat Dharma and its Natural Fruit

We must therefore conclude that the multitudes that thronged to Shivaji's banners and the national work upon which he directed their labours were inspired, not by the teachings or the propagation of the Bhagwat faith, but by the personal magnetism and enterprising spirit of the hero himself. To ascribe even a part of the merit of the great achievement to the Bhagwat faith and its propagators is - and with a heavy heart we have to say it - to misrepresent the actual circumstances of the case. The truth is that the self-denying spirit inculcated by the saints of Maharashtra had for well-nigh three centuries crushed out of existence the spirit of self-assertion. The sages who identified Ram and Rahim, the saints in whom a holy calm and a self-less spirit predominated over all impulses of the human heart, the zealous enthusiasts whose minds were estranged from the glamour of this world and dedicated to the service of the Most High and the quest of salvation, - these were not the men to think of the bubble glory of this world, but only of delivering themselves from the world's trammels. To them temporal joys and sorrows were alike; this was the burden of all their exhortation to mankind. Such gentle spirits were not the men to exhort their followers to take up arms against Islam. If we exclude the work of Ramdas Swami, this sort of advice can nowhere be found in the writings of the saints of Maharashtra. To them, that regarded the world as a mere bubble, with all its panorama of earthly

12. The Dasara is the auspicious day following upon the Devi Puja festival of nine days and nights, (*Navaratra*).

things, how could the mundane thought of a political revolt suggest itself? This ascetic and self-denying habit of mind had been so deeply ingrained in our people that for three centuries together, with the accumulating horrors of the Mahomedan misrule, no doughty Maratha with his valiant arms, nor sagacious Brahman with his ripe statesmanship, came forth for deliverance. What little morsel in the way of emolument or advancement the Mahomedan princes flung to them they were content humbly to accept. All the while the trumpet voice of the Bhagwat faith was ringing in the air, but if they did prick up their ears and listen, it was not to be inspired to start upon an impetuous race for the goal of freedom and independence, but to be the more confirmed in their slavish indolence and self-satisfied vassalage. Nay, when the cry of freedom was taken up in earnest and the standard of independence unfurled by Shivaji, we know how many were the nobles and statesmen, both Maratha and Brahman, who tried to damp his enthusiasm. Can the advocates of this hypothesis point to a single instance of a great warrior or statesman who was inspired to join the standard of Shivaji, under the impulse of the, awakened feeling of national unity born of the Bhagwat faith?

Had the impulse of such a national consciousness been in existence from before Shivaji's times, the great leader would have been spared the harsh measures, which at the commencement he had to take against certain contumacious Brahman and Maratha sardars, - measures which in the opinion of rigid moralists cannot square with the abstract standard of moral rectitude. The Brahman statesmen of the order of Moropant Pingle, Abaji Sondev and Dattajii Pant; Prabhu veterans of the calibre of Balaji Avji, Baji Prabhu Deshpande, and Murar Bajji; Maratha commanders of the chivalrous gallantry of Tanaji Malusare, Prataprao Guzar, and Hambirrao Mohite, - this great muster-roll of glorious names, - were each and all attracted to Shivaji's standards, spontaneously by the ambition to carve out a fortune and a name for themselves, and gradually, as the lotus blossoms and displays itself in sympathy with the rising orb of the sun, were the more generous passions and enthusiasm of their heart kindled and set aglow by the supreme influence of their leader's noble spirit and character. To trace the causes of the national triumph to the lives and teachings of those saints and ascetics who turned their backs upon all social intercourse is unwittingly to deprive the author and vindicator of our national liberties of a portion of that glory to which he is fully entitled.

14. Shivaji - A Defender of the National Religion

And here a question may be raised: Was there, or was there not, at the basis of Shivaji's stern resolve to free his country from the oppression of that Mahomedan misrule under which it lay gasping, a faith born of a patriotic

enthusiasm for his own and his people's religion? The answer to this question is an emphatic "Yes". From his earliest infancy, the love of the national religion had been, implanted in the tender mind of Shivaji: to the hour of his death, the buoyant religious enthusiasm of his early years continued to sway and dominate his mind. Nor would it be too much to affirm that it was precisely owing to this dominant feeling that the anti-Mahomedan sentiments of the starting-point of his career were first excited in his breast. But side by side with the love of religion, arose the love of political independence and it ever grew stronger and stronger, as the years passed on. The kindled flame of the twin-patriotism, love of country and love of the country's gods, inflamed his soul, and with an iron will and quickened enthusiasm he applied himself to the accomplishment of his great exploits. But it will never do to forget that mere religious enthusiasm without the quickened stimulus of national liberty, could not, of itself, have accomplished much: the kindred enthusiasms, the passion for religious freedom and for political freedom, even blended into one, could not have accomplished much, unless they had been accompanied, as they were accompanied in the case of Shivaji, by the important asset of an unrivalled creative spirit and an enterprising and organizing faculty. The effective combination in the same person of these three forces, - enthusiasm, patriotism and a creative faculty, - has given us as the resultant of their joint operation a glorious record which is an inspiration and a legacy to the world. But it cannot be said that Shivaji's enthusiastic love of religion was engendered in him only on account of the propagation of the Bhagwat faith. For the lives of the Bhagwat saints were full of gentleness and love. Theirs was a catholic generosity and toleration. In their hearts was no room for pride or hatred. A religion that consistently identified Ram with Rahim could admit of no parochial or even national patriotism in religion. Nor is there any evidence to show that Shivaji himself was an active propagator of this Vaishnav cult. His faith was deeply rooted in the Sanatan Dharma, with the result that, to the moment of his death, his simple piety and faith in the goddess Bhavani never faltered or forsook him. If he did instill in his followers and supporters a passionate love of religion along with the worship of liberty, it was not by any means with any material aid of the Vaishnav or Bhagwat Dharma. The religious love and pride he inculcated in them was the love of the orthodox or Sanatan Dharma, with its belief in the sanctity of kine and Brahmans, its injunctions for the observance of caste distinctions, its recognition and encouragement of idol worship, and its exhortation urging the value and necessity of all ceremonial usages. And it cannot be disputed that the conduct of Shivaji himself personally and that of most of his followers

was in full accord with the precepts of the orthodox religion, in as much as in none of the extant bakhars is there the least evidence to the contrary¹³.

It may, of course, be objected that in those districts which were chiefly the scenes of Shivaji's great activities, there was a goodly number of Vaishnav or Bhagwat saints like Tukaram that the noble events of the peaceful lives of some of them, at any rate, were daily coming before his eyes, and that as to Tukaram himself he was held in the highest esteem and reverence by Shivaji. If such was the case, the objector proceeds, could it be held that the Bhagwat faith of spiritual love wrought no effect upon the mind of Shivaji? The answer to this objection is that the saints including Tukaram were, on account of the stainless purity and sanctity of their lives, objects of reverence and veneration to Shivaji, who lost no opportunity to listen to their eloquent discourses or to enjoy the privilege of social or spiritual intercourse with them. But the idea that these holy men had anything to teach or impress that exceeded the scope, or was in any way incompatible with the teachings of the Sanatan Dharma, or that their manners were in any regard subversive of the accepted traditions of the orthodox faith, never once occurred to his mind; neither did these saints themselves believe there was anything new or startling in the doctrines they propounded¹⁴. The differentiation of their doctrines from

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13. The first effect of the freedom and revival of religion was in the direction of orthodoxy. This is clearly shown by the opposition of the Shastris to the coronation of Shivaji, their bigoted attitude in calling him a Shudra, and their refusal to allow the Kayastha Prabhus the rites of Kshatriyas until Gaga Bhatt taught them their folly. Prof. Sarkar finds in these caste differences the root cause of the Maratha failure and thinks the seeds of that disunion were noticeable enough already under Shivaji and that the "cohesion of the peoples in the Maratha state was not organic but artificial, accidental and precarious, dependent on the ruler's extraordinary personality," and that it "disappeared when the country ceased to produce supermen." Prof. Sarkar fails to find in Shivaji's rule an organized attempt at communal improvement, the spread of education or the unification of the people. But surely it is too much to expect Shivaji to have set himself up as a social and religious reformer. Is it possible to believe that Babar could have combined in himself the functions of Akbar, Chandragupta of Ashoka, Guru Govind of Guru Nanak, George Washington of Abraham Lincoln, or Cromwell of Calvin?
 14. The late Justice Ranade lent the weight to his great scholarship to the support of the theory that the teachings of the Maharashtra saints and the revolution in religious thought which they brought about by their teachings were a determining factor and a powerful operative cause of the political revolution brought about by Shivaji. The idea underlying this theory is that just as in Europe and particularly in England the reformation in religion was followed by political reform or revolution a similar event took place in Maharashtra in the time of Shivaji. As regards the theory of a revolutionary change in religion attempted by the Maharashtra saints, it is interesting to notice that Mr. Rajwade (who attributes Shivaji's work to the inspiration of Ramdas) observes that "The kind of religious reform referred to by Mr. Remade can nowhere be seen in the writings of the saints. These saints did not mean to turn their backs upon gods and temples, and differences in caste, religion and language. Mr. Ranade's dissertation about the saints is without any foundation and does discredit to

the traditional modes of thought belongs to the modern critic. The charge of a conscious participation in the active process of revolutionizing the traditional modes of religious thought can in no sense be laid at the door of the simple, pious and unassuming generations of those times. Why speak of the past? Even in our own days, though the Vaishnav modes of thought are still current, though in nearly every Maharashtra village, the votaries of the Pandharpur god are yet to be found, though at seasons of the annual pilgrimages hundreds of thousands of pious pilgrims repair to the holy shrine, none ever thinks there is anything particular about it, - none has ever observed that the practice of the pilgrim rites has in the least conduced to liberalize the minds of the devotees or to wean them from the trammels of caste or caste-pride.

15. Ramdas Swami not an Inspirer of Shivaji

To say, therefore, that on account of the liberal ideas propagated by the Bhagwat School, and on that account only, either Shivaji himself, or the counsellors and warriors who supported him were inspired to undertake the cause of independence, is to say more than can be borne out by the actual circumstances of the times¹⁵. Further than this, we have to examine the claims made in the latter part of the above hypothesis that the credit of the whole achievement belongs fundamentally to Ramdas Swami. For, says the hypothesis, the Bhagwat Dharma was described by the Swami as the Dharma of Maharashtra and Shivaji was exhorted by him to his dying day to protect and foster it, with the result - impossible otherwise even to dream of - that the great hero applied himself to the great cause of liberty and successfully carried it through. That this claim is impossible to maintain we have conclusively proved towards the end of Chapter XXIX. We cannot retrace the whole ground again. Our modern critics have based this claim upon the

his historical research. He does not seem to have grasped the true meaning of the phrase "Maharashtra Dharma." He has fathered upon the saints ideas which they never even dreamt of. Mr. Ranade credits them falsely with advocacy of the ideals of abolition of castes, abolition of idol worship, interdining between Brahmans and Mahars etc." Though we do not agree with Mr. Rajwade over the Ramdas question, we agree with him in repudiating this doctrine of a revolution in religious thought brought about by the saints of Maharashtra.

15. From this disquisition it should not be assumed that in our opinion the Bhagwat Dharma is not superior to the Sanatan Dharma. It is beyond doubt that those who follow it and consistently act up to the principles they profess are likely to be a hundred times more liberal in thought and action and feel more keenly the equality of man and man than the followers of the orthodox system. The object of the present disquisition is only to ascertain how far the claim, made by the modern partisans of the Bhagwat School, that the creed in question contributed vitally to the revival of the political independence of Maharashtra is justifiable.

current belief that Shivaji entered into bonds of spiritual vassalage to Ramdas Swami as early as the year 1649, - a belief propagated by the fantastic biographical narratives about the Swami and confirmed, on the blind authority of those narratives, by the chronicler Chitnis and the author of the *Shivdigvijaya*. But the traditional date of the first meeting of Shivaji with Ramdas, and, in consequence, of the solemn enrolment of Shivaji among the circle of the Swami's disciples, has been proved to be false and unfounded, and the most authentic and convincing evidence has now been brought before the people of Maharashtra, which brings down the date of the first interview with Ramdas Swami, and the consequent discipleship, to twenty-three or twenty-four years later. The whole fabric based upon the assumed traditional date must, therefore, topple down and, great as the other merits of Ramdas Swami may be, not the least particle of Shivaji's glory can be rightfully transferred to his account. Granting, however, that the authentic evidence now forthcoming was not accessible and we had still to go upon the orthodox tradition, even upon this basis it does not appear the right sort of thing to award such a large share of the glory of the great achievement to Ramdas Swami. For it is clear that even prior to the year 1649, at least some five or six years before that date, Shivaji had decided upon his noble project and commenced his pioneer labours. However the eulogistic character of the first epistle of the Swami to Shivaji clearly shows that the latter could not have, as early as 1649 or even for fifteen or twenty years thereafter, merited those praises which are there recited about him. Further, the towns or villages of Wai, Karhad, Satara, Parali, etc., which are mentioned in the traditional accounts as the scenes where the first meeting between the preceptor and the disciple and the initiation ceremony took place, were not conquered by Shivaji till the year 1672-73. The *Das-Bodh*, the *magnum opus* of the Swami, the contents of which have supplied such a strong support to the hypothesis, does not seem to have been analytically examined by its advocates. That with all these difficulties, and improbabilities serious historians should have given the credit of Shivaji's restoration of the religious and political independence of his countrymen to the exhortation or inspiration of Ramdas Swami seems passing strange to us¹⁶. If, as it has now been proved, the first meeting

16. The last of these historians are Prof. H. G. Rowlinson in his "life of Shivaji" and Mr. Kincaid in his "History of the Maratha People" Vol. I. It is strange that these historians accept the date 1649 as the year of Shivaji's meeting with Ramdas. The latter reproduces some of the miracle stories about the saint and follows for all purposes the bakhar or chronicle of Hanmant, called the *Ramdas Charitra*, with all its farrago of truth and fiction. Prof. G. C. Bhate in his Marathi work, "Sajjangad and Samarth Ramdas" has thoroughly exposed the unreliable character of this bakhar. (See especially pages 91 to 105 of this work.) Prof. Sarkar dismisses the whole controversy with the remark that the evidence produced by the Ramdas coterie is neither adequate nor free from suspicion.

between the *guru* and the disciple took place in 1672, it follows that Shivaji had already come very near his goal, before he was able to avail himself of the Swami's advice. It may, of course, be alleged that supposing Shivaji had not personally met the Swami, he might have heard of him and received instructions from one or the other of the Swami's disciples. But this position again is quite untenable. For the orthodox bakhar of the Swami itself says that Shivaji had heard about him only once or twice and that the little he had heard he had forgotten before the first meeting. Therefore, it follows that the imaginary endeavours for a "political regeneration" ascribed¹⁷ to Ramdas Swami had till this date, viz. 1672, not yet been inaugurated, nor can it be seen, judging from the biographies of Ramdas Swami or the bakhars of Shivaji, how far further they were prosecuted after this date. Of course, one is at liberty to close his eyes to the facts of history, to give a free play to the creations of his fancy, and even to give publicity to his wild speculations. But

17. In the first number of the sixth volume of the Marathi Magazine "*Shri Saraswati Mandir*" (viz. the number for *Chaitra*, Shaka 1828) Mr. V. K. Rajwade states as follows: - "In Shaka 1600 (i. e. 1678 A. D.), all over Maharashtra, there were 1200 followers of Ramdas Swami, propounding his ideas and prosecuting the campaign of his work; that when one reflects on the fact that in Shaka 1600, one thousand and two hundred men were actively engaged in the propagation of one creed and the fulfilment of one cause, it can be conceived what an engine for the political regeneration of the country had been created by the Swami; and that the conclusion is irrepressibly forced upon us that in Shaka 1600, the entire Maharashtra was completely permeated with the ideas and the work of the Swami" (page 33 *ibidem*). To what conclusion this statement is intended to lead us, the acute reader can see at a glance. In effect, it means that the whole credit of the political regeneration of the country is to be assigned to Ramdas Swami, that Shivaji was a mere tool and puppet, who did not actually contribute much to the achievement. We are, therefore, called upon to believe that till this engine of the Swami was in motion, all that Shivaji had toiled for up to 1672-73 A. D. was merely labour lost; till then Shivaji's followers had no zeal for liberty, till then Shivaji's labours had not inspired his liegemen to sacrifice their lives for the attainment of that noble object! In short, here we have a curious specimen of a biased historian drifting away from the truth. Upon the authority of this statement, another admirer of Ramdas Swami has been induced, in an article published in the issue of the Marathi weekly, "*Shri Sayaji Vijaya*" of the 24th November 1906, under the title "*Ramdasi Sampradaya*" or the Ramdas School, to indulge in further travesty of the subject. It would seem that the frenzied adulation of the Swami votaries has now reached its boiling point, and the pity of it only is that the distinguishing symptom of the fever should be a desire to distort the truth and to be little Shivaji. It may be here remarked with reference to the above extract from Mr. Rajwade that the latter proceeds to state that the Ramdas conventicles were to be found throughout Shivaji's kingdom, even at Tanjore. It should, therefore, rather be inferred that the spread of Shivaji's power encouraged the propagation of the Ramdas School. This seems in fact a more credible view to maintain than the opposite view that the Ramdas School propagated the expansion of Shivaji's dominions. Mr. Sardesai in his '*Marathi Riyasat*' (1915 edition) page 111 makes the emphatic statement that "it was Shivaji's enterprise that inspired the political thoughts in the Das-Bodh and to say that it was the Das-Bodh that inspired Shivaji's labours for Swarajya is to misrepresent cause and effect."

when the attempt is made to give currency to such fanciful theories under the guise of historical research, we can only deplore the credulity of our people.

16. The Maharashtra Dharma

A collateral part of this hypothesis is that the Swami gave the designation of the Maharashtra Dharma to the Bhagwat faith, and that the Swami having himself propagated the faith by his teaching and exhortation, the embers of patriotism were re-kindled in all hearts throughout Maharashtra. But in the first place, it is a debatable question, whether the Vaishnav or Bhagwat cult of the votaries of the Pandharpur god was in all respects congruent with the creed of Ramdas Swami, or acceptable to him. An analytical examination of the Das-Bodh reveals the fact that the creed of him who composed that work was in some respects different from the cult of the Vaishnavas. Moreover from this time forth when the cult of Ramdas began to spread in Maharashtra, it was with certain specific differences from the Vaishnav cult. The followers of the Ramdas cult, as a rule, were not sworn devotees of the Pandharpur god, and made no annual pilgrimages to that shrine. Nay the story is well known, to those at least who have read the orthodox biographies of Ramdas Swami, of the miracle that took place, when he was once taken under pressure to Pandharpur¹⁸. It follows, therefore, that the easy creed of the guileless Vaishnav saints of Maharashtra was to some extent different from the school founded by Ramdas, though to all practical purposes based upon the orthodox or Sanatan religion. But surely it also follows that the designation "Maharashtra Dharma" could not have been used by the Swami with special reference to the "Vaishnav" creed as forming a distinct system of religion by itself. It is impossible to understand the words "Maharashtra Dharma" as meaning the "Duty" of "Maharashtra" as if there were some well-defined and exclusive system of Maharashtra Duty. It is strange that our critics should follow a wrong scent, leaving out of sight the plain and straightforward meaning of the expression. The present writer takes the Marathi compound, "Maharashtra Dharma" to mean the Dharma of the Maharashtra people. This compound expression, used by the Swami, first in his eulogistic epistle to Shivaji, and later, in his exhortative epistle to Sambhaji, cannot bear any other meaning. At the time when the first epistle was composed, Shivaji had conquered a great part of Maharashtra and as the result of the overthrow of Mahomedan dominion, the people of those parts, as in many other matters so also in religion, had become independent of Mahomedan interference. It is

18. The miracle referred to here is the story chronicled by Mahipati and others that the God Vithoba transformed himself into the God Ramchandra in order to please Ramdas.

with reference to this desirable order of things in Maharashtra that the Swami praises Shivaji, in his epistle to him; while in the one addressed to Sambhaji, he exhorts him to foster and promote this liberty of religion. Had Shivaji been a native of the Karnatic, and being so, had he found an independent kingdom in that province and fostered the liberty of religion among the people of that soil, the Swami would assuredly in that case have testified to the fact that the *Karnatic Dharma* had, in some measure, survived owing to Shivaji, in the same manner as he did actually affirm in the epistle under consideration, that the Maharashtra Dharma had survived in some measure on his account. Moreover, there is the interesting circumstance to be considered, that the compound form “Maharashtra Dharma” does not occur in any other poems of Ramdas Swami. It was, therefore, used by the Swami, only in these contexts, while expressing his appreciation of the work of Shivaji. With such a flimsy basis, to say that the term “Maharashtra Dharma” was purposely brought into vogue by the Swami for the express purpose of stirring the depths of Maharashtra patriotism seems to us an unwarrantable presumption. As to the epistle to Sambhaji, the words, “Muster together all the Marathas you may, extend the Maharashtra Dharma etc.”¹⁹ seem to have been the Swami’s first and last address to the young king on the subject. For the Swami died soon after in the same year in which this epistle was addressed to Sambhaji²⁰, and there is no record that after his demise his disciples any further prosecuted the enterprise suggested in this epistle. The admirers of the Swami must not forget that mere speculation is out of court in the investigation of such a historical question. To conclude, the contention that the sentiments of patriotism, love of religion, of independence, of liberty, - the contention that these passionate feelings were, for a long time to come, kept alive in the hearts of the Maharashtra people by the precepts of a recluse like Ramdas Swami, has a smaller share of probability and credibility about it than the claim made for Shivaji, that it was principally on account of his solid achievements and the trails of glory he left behind, that these noble virtues

19. The words here quoted “Muster together all the Marathas you may, extend the Maharashtra Dharma” do not occur in Ramdas Swami’s epistle to Sambhaji, as it has been published in the edition of an old bakhar of Ramdas Swami, printed and published by the Jagadishwar Press. These words do not also occur in the epistle, as it has been published, in the printed and published edition of Mr. Chaulbal’s Life of Ramdas Swami. It is difficult to imagine why such an important passage should have been omitted or eliminated, unless indeed it was thought to be an interpolation in the authentic text of the poem, subsequently introduced by some over-zealous admirer of Ramdas Swami.

20. The epistle in question was composed in *Shaka* 1603 (i. e. end of 1681 A. D. or commencement of 1682) in the month of Paush (December-January). Ramdas died in the month of *Magh* (January-February) in the same *Shaka*.

sprouted and thrived in the hearts of the Maharashtra people. On the capture and execution of Sambhaji, when Aurangzeb conquered and almost crushed the fair provinces of Shivaji's kingdom, the indomitable heroes who for nineteen weary years continued the ceaseless war of independence, with such spirit and pertinacity, and who in the end by their forays brought the exhausted invader to his knees, - these dauntless heroes could surely not have owed much guidance or inspiration to the conventicles of the followers of Ramdas Swami, especially when the beacon-light of Shivaji's example burned steadily before their eyes, to direct and inspire: when the warriors and statesmen trained in Shivaji's stern discipline stood amongst them, to counsel and execute. His alone the glory! A heedless spoliation to assign a particle of it to any magic verses of Ramdas Swami!

17. The old Maratha Aristocracy

There is yet another hypothesis on the subject of Shivaji's achievements. It may be stated as follows: - In the various provinces of the Brahamani kingdom, many Brahman civilians and Maratha warriors had risen to eminence with a new sense of power throbbing in their hearts. When these men saw in Shivaji a leader of promise, gifted with the talents and the wisdom for the foundation of an independent state, they gradually came over to his side, with the result, that, by their active cooperation, Shivaji was enabled to lay the foundations of an independent monarchy.

It cannot be said that a close scrutiny of Shivaji's whole career reveals any grounds for such an assumption. Not one among the great circle of his counsellors could have claimed an apprenticeship in the Mahomedan service or boasted of a father or grand-father who had gained his laurels in the Mahomedan monarchies. Not one of his great generals had ever held a substantial jahgir under the Mahomedan sovereigns²¹. There is no authority to assert that Netaji Palkar, Prataprao Guzar, Hambirrao Mohite, Santaji Ghorpade, Khanderao Dabhade, Dhanaji Jadhav, and the other great warriors who surrounded Shivaji had ever held any hereditary jahgir fiefs before rallying to his flag. Most of them must have been petty deshmukhs or mokasdars, many of them must have rallied to Shivaji's flag, when the revenue rights of deshmukhs and mokasdars were gradually abolished in the Swarajya territory, and by dint of their valour and service under the flag, they must have slowly paved their way to rank and honours. The great

21. Except that in his temporary secession from Shivaji, Netaji Palkar held a mansab of five thousand in the Mogul army, but, as Prof. Sarkar observes, was still supposed to be attached to the army of Shivaji.

representatives of the ancient Maratha chivalry of Shivaji's time were the Nimbalkars of Phaltan, the Ghorpades of Mudhol, the Manes of Mhaswad, the Savants of Wadi, the Surves of Shringarpur, the Mores of Javli, the Shirkes and the Dalvis. These remained to the end loyal vassals of Bijapur; these constantly fought for Bijapur against Shivaji, the first three families especially; and none of the rest would ever have cared to join Shivaji, had not the latter forced them at the point of the sword. It is thus not true to say that Shivaji got the cheap assistance and the unbought experience of the great jahgirdars for the prosecution of his plans. The nobles and counsellors who supported his throne had deliberately elected to serve him from the ambition to improve their fortunes. At the time when they rallied round his standard, they were not moved merely by the impulse of patriotism, the altruistic impulse to throw the weight of what little power they possessed on the side of one who had embarked upon a national cause for the common good of them all. Such an estimate of the movement is not supported by the sources of information that are available to us. These impulses of patriotism were gradually excited in them, the more they came in contact with their great leader. He impressed them with his faith; he inoculated them with his ideas; he charged them with his hopes, his surging passion, his buoyant enthusiasm for liberty and independence. This is, therefore, one of those theories which attempt vainly to diminish the glory of Shivaji's achievements.²²

18. "Swarajya" not Conterminous with Maharashtra

And yet another assumption before we have done with this part of the subject. This last hypothesis is that Shivaji's endeavours for freedom and the foundation of a free state were predetermined by the great king to be restricted to Maharashtra. This again is not true. It is clear that Shivaji was inspired with the high desire of emancipating all India from Mahomedan thraldom and had vowed the restoration of liberty of religion for the Hindus and a Hindu paramountcy over all India²³. Had his ambition been restricted to Maharashtra, it is difficult to see why he should have conducted an eighteen months' campaign into the heart of the Karnatic, and brought those conquests by means of forts and out-posts under a permanent occupation²⁴. Again in

22. Of course, Shivaji had many officers who had gained experience under Shahaji.

23. Mr. Sardesai in his *Marathi Riyasat* (1915 edition), pp. 381-382, expresses the opinion that Shivaji seems unquestionably to have intended to establish his Swarajya even beyond the confines of Maharashtra.

24. Prof. Sarkar affirms that Shivaji's object was only to get plunder, and the quarrel with Venkoji was a mere excuse for a plundering campaign. Surely his would be a feeble motive for an enterprise of such pith and moment. Nor does the ascription of such a motive accord with Sarkar's estimate at pages 492-93.

1679-80, when he made the important treaty with Masaoood Khan, the Prime Minister of Bijapur, why should he have stipulated for a declaration of the independence of his father's jahgir and taken it into his possession? The present author is inclined to believe that the statement of certain bakhar writers that Shivaji had determined to carry his victorious arms down to the promontory of Rameshwar and keep the conquests under his permanent occupation has more credibility about it; and it is more than probable that had he been allowed a longer lease of life he would have realized his object. It is clear that an important motive for the prosecution of the Karnatic campaign was to bring about a delimitation of the southern boundaries of the Bijapur state, in the manner that by his earlier campaigns he had delimited its narrowed frontiers on the west and the north. And in this there was the ulterior design of crippling its power for good and preparing it for a final extinction, when the proper opportunity should present itself. Another object which the campaign was designed to secure was to checkmate the authority of Golconda from the south. Even when Shivaji retired from the Karnatic, the generals left behind in that province were charged with instructions to extend their conquests eastward to the Madras coast and reduce the country under the Maratha flag. Thus he seems to have deliberately chosen a policy of extinguishing both the Deccan sultanates by a process of continued abrasion of their southern as well as their northern frontiers. For the complete domination of the western coast, he had equipped a strong naval force, and he was always casting about for plans to make it stronger and surer from day to day. What but the desire of undisputed domination over the western sea could be the significance of those endless wars with the Sidi, those desperate struggles for the extermination of the Abyssinian power? Shivaji's flags were floating in Guzerat; up to Daman and Surat he had advanced his military stations. Between 1670 to 1680 scarcely a year elapsed without the tramp of Shivaji's light horse being heard in the valleys of Guzerat. The Mogul reigned over those valleys, still intoxicated with a sense of power, and Shivaji knew a single false move on his part would imperil his whole position in that province. With his usual policy of a cautious advance and his consistent refusal to tempt fortune, where he knew the odds were against him, he refrained from attacking the central head-quarters of the Moguls at Aurangabad, though many a time he had led his victorious squadrons, scouring and plundering the country, right up to the gates of that city. But from this it would be wrong to infer that the overthrow of the Moguls was beyond the scope of his ambition. Consider how he conducted himself towards Jay Singh, when the latter came down upon him for the conquest of

the Deccan. No stratagem or intrigue was employed against Jay Singh, as against his predecessor, Shaistakhan. The one was conciliated, the other entrapped. The difference between the methods pursued in the two cases is surely an eloquent testimony to the difference in the policy intended. For how did the situation stand? There was Diler Khan battering the walls of Purandhar fort. He had battered the fort a long while, without solid success. That one fort had kept a large division of the Mogul army in play, not without inflicting some punishment upon it. There was Jay Singh who had shot his last bolt and had failed to take Sinhagad. Shivaji was not yet driven to desperation. He could still have afforded, had he been so minded to play fort against fort, army against army. And with all this he personally visits Jay Singh's camp, plays a studiously humble part with the proud Diler Khan, sues for a treaty, and accedes to the request of Jay Singh to visit Agra. Surely there must have been some policy in all this. And he knew Aurangzeb, - knew him to be a perfidious man, a crafty ruler, a relentless enemy. When with all this knowledge, he deliberately ran the risk of putting himself in the power of such a formidable man, knowing his hostile feelings towards himself; we must need presume he did so out of some deeper design. To the present writer the whole event appears as a part of a profound and far reaching policy. This policy was to win over to his cause a powerful Rajput prince like Jay Singh, cultivate friendship with other Rajput nobles and through the intercession of Jay Singh win their sympathy with a view to the further prosecution of his enterprise, to obtain a proper insight into the political situation in the north, and procure the sanction of the Mogul power for a complete subjugation of Bijapur and Golconda. The story of his career reveals to us that more or less successfully he accomplished all his objects. As the Maratha jahgirdars of the Deccan had passed completely under the suzerainty of the Mahomedan and never thought uniting together for the common object of setting up a free and independent government, so also had the Rajput princes of the north dwindled into feudal vassals under the Mogul throne, looking no farther than to their individual interests²⁵. Shivaji doubtless desired to bring before the eyes of these indolent princes the ideal of independence he was endeavouring to

25. It is interesting to observe that these views of the author are corroborated in almost every particular by Mr. Sardesai in his 'Marathi Riyasat' (1915 edition, pages 382-384). Among the Rajput princes who caught the inspiration of Shivaji's struggle for independence was the Raja Chhatrasal of Bundelkhand who moulded his career upon that of Shivaji. Chhatrasal visited Shivaji's court in the winter of 1670-71 and offered to serve him against the emperor. The Maratha king asked him to start a campaign of independence in his own country. (*Vide Chhatraprakash*, Canto 11, which deals with Chhatrasal's visit to Shivaji, also Prof. Sarkar, *Shivaji*, pp. 236-237).

realize in the south and to inspire them with a determination to follow in the north the example of his brilliant accomplishments, with his full support and co-operation. In the light of such a purpose we can well understand those last expressions of regret and disappointment, which according to the bakhar writers, as described in chapter XXX, he gave vent to, while the shadows of death were fast closing around him. Nor could it be said that the laudatory description of Shivaji's objects and achievements, which the Raja Shahaji, on returning to the Karnatic from his valiant son, gave to Venkoji by way of exhortation, was all mere rhetoric and hyperbole. Small matters these, but they serve to throw much light on the breadth of his political purposes and outlook. That he did not live long enough to accomplish his ulterior object is no reason for narrowing the bounds of his vision and aspiration.

Thus far we have considered the criticisms made upon Shivaji and his work by critics of two divergent schools: first the alien scholar who would fain discover many a blemish in his character and accomplishment, and secondly the Indian scholar, often betrayed into sweeping generalizations that tend to impair Shivaji's greatness. We have endeavoured at some length to show the falsity or superficiality of the estimates of both these schools of criticism.

19. Traits of Character

It only remains to review, in a final estimate, some of the leading traits of the character of this great leader. Some aspects of that glorious character have already been touched upon in the fore-going part. For a lucid treatment of this part of the subject, we propose to estimate his conduct, from four different points of view, viz.: his conduct in politics, his conduct in private life, his family affections, and his religious sensibilities.

20. Conciliation and Magnanimity

In politics, it will be difficult to exaggerate the boldness and enterprise, the valour and strategy which he displayed in carrying through the arduous task of opposing three Mahomedan powers and up-building in their place an independent power of his own creation. Illustrations of these high virtues are to be found so abundantly on every page of his glorious record, that we may save ourselves the trouble of dilating separately upon them²⁶. But for the

26. The testimony of Aurangzeb, the inveterate enemy of Shivaji, would suffice to prove his greatness: - Aurangzeb exclaimed on hearing the news of Shivaji's death: - "He was a great captain, and the only one who has had the magnanimity to raise a new kingdom, while I have been endeavouring to destroy the ancient sovereignties of India; armies have been employed against him for nineteen years, and nevertheless his state has been always

successful foundation of an enduring empire, other virtues are needed, besides those mentioned. For one who proposed to himself the accomplishment of an enterprise that bore at first view such a visionary and impracticable aspect, the faculty of the highest importance was the art of enlisting popular sympathy and conciliation. This was possessed by Shivaji in a degree scarcely equalled by any leader of men in the world's history. His gentle and persuasive discourse had in the earliest prime of his youth captivated the hearts of the lesser gentry of, the Maval country and of other neighbours and secured their cordial participation from the commencement of his whole enterprise. This sort of fascination Shivaji was able to exercise upon all persons who once came in contact with him, instilling in them feelings of love and respect towards himself and rousing them to a sense of appreciation of the great cause he had taken in hand and a patriotic resolve to help it forward, to the best of their endeavour. With this personal magnetism Shivaji never failed to find either loyalty or integrity among friends and supporters. This quality was strengthened by another, which plays no small part in the friendships of political leaders, especially in retaining them. This was liberality. Few rulers could have equalled Shivaji in his open-handed liberality towards his followers. Rewards and presents were scattered with a bountiful profusion according to the respective deserts of officers and men distinguishing themselves. Their stipends were regularly paid. On great occasions in their families they received extraordinary allowances and gifts of his royal bounty. Shivaji was always careful to make adequate provision for the families of those who laid down their lives in his wars. The nearest heir of the deceased, - son or brother, - if found fit, was admitted to the service of the state, according to his position and capacity. This feeling of security about their families and dependents was an added spur to his soldiers to give of their best in the service of their master, even at the sacrifice of their lives.

21.Impartiality and Appreciativeness

Another quality; that goes a long way in securing the will and enthralling the hearts of the enthusiastic multitude is the faculty of discerning and appreciating merit. This again was possessed by Shivaji in an eminent degree. With an instinctive precision he assessed the true worth of his servants and officers and entrusted them with duties according to their level. In proportion as their rising valour and virtue displayed themselves, they earned their titles and promotions, without fear of partiality. The reservation of places of high honour or emolument for personal friends or relations was not known in his

increasing.” And this estimate of Shivaji was made by a man who had formerly called him “a mountain rat!”

system. The claims of merit were in all cases duly weighed; there was no fear of unfair supersession. Thus the even chance of promotion was a present stimulus to every loyal heart. Another high principle regulating the relations between this leader and the multitudes he led was his unrivalled capacity of rousing and developing the feelings of probity and loyalty among his followers. When he charged a man with a duty, however arduous or important it might be, he depended upon him to execute it, with a sense of security and confidence. In choosing the man for the duty, he had measured his aptitude and trustworthiness. Upon entrusting the duty to the man there was no ground for distrust or misgiving. Personal envy or malice could harm no loyal servant in the opinion of such a master. Such men had no access to Shivaji's ear. When the public character of an officer of state was such as to give some cause for suspicion, his practice was first to institute a private investigation through the machinery of his secret service, and upon the result of this information to order a public inquiry and a just scrutiny of the evidence produced. This feeling of trust in the honour and integrity of his veterans inspired high and low with a serene confidence that a loyal perseverance in the diligent discharge of their duties was a sufficient guarantee of their continuance in their respective offices. With the growing sense of security, the virtues of loyalty, integrity and devotion took root and blossomed in all their glory.

22.Friendliness as Candour

His chosen advisers shared his secrets and participated in all his plans and projects. He courted their criticism of every measure, he appreciated the suggestions they deemed it proper to make. Their opinions were not merely followed but were eagerly sought after. Against his friends and ministers, he practised no mask or disguise. His aims and purposes stood transparent before them. The insolence of power never misled him into any act derogatory to the self-respect of his counsellors. In him his ministerial circle never found a conceited dictator, but a sincere and affectionate friend. Thus was loyalty reconciled with the spirit of self-respect, and the sense of personal prestige thus preserved, flowed back into a general stream of loving pride and loyal reverence for the throne.

23.Personal Industry

The trust and confidence he frankly reposed in his men was never abused. The friendly attitude involved no forfeiture of authority. The cultivation of the spirit of self-respect among his servants and courtiers did not lead him to connive at abuse of power or proved negligence. Retribution in proportion to the fault descended irrevocably upon the offending minister, however high his office. The strictness of his justice made him dreaded as his courtesy made

him loved. It ensured a continuity of loyal but efficient service. It rendered effective the control and domination exercised upon such a numerous body officers and made them amenable to any service that might be demanded of them. His personal example was a source of perennial inspiration to his officers. Inured to habits of industry and patience from his earliest years, he had developed in himself every virtue and faculty, both for the acquisition and the administration of a kingdom²⁷. On the field of battle, it never was his wont, as is the case with many princes and generals, to place himself as an idle spectator in a position of security and watch his squadrons hurling themselves upon the enemy. Sword in hand he took the first place in the field and put forth before his admiring hosts the most dazzling examples of bravery, of courage, and of art. No commander in all his army could have the vanity to boast of a better display of military qualities. He was not a king who sent forth his armies on distant and perilous campaigns and contented himself with lolling upon his couch in slothful ease enjoying the fruits of his generals' triumphs. Hence no general, flushed with triumphs under his auspices, could create a faction at Shivaji's court and dictate terms to his liege lord and sovereign. Such a thing was impossible with Shivaji. The campaigning season saw him always engaged in active arms in one or the other theatre of his wars. He was never given to idling away a moment of his life. The glory of his greatest generals paled before his, their vaunted valour was dimmed in the splendour of his exploits. The same was true of the character of his leadership in civil affairs. In the administration of forts, in the organization of the land revenue, in the tact and finesse of diplomacy, he was never excelled by any of the distinguished men who served under him. This perfect balance of virtues, this aggregation in the same person of such diverse and opposite elements of strength, this unique versatility of faculty set him far above the most towering personalities of his court. It was this that the sage Ramdas Swami meant to express, when, in his epistle, he addressed Shivaji as "*Sarvadnya*", or lord of all science.

24. Personal Magnetism

This versatility is, therefore, the secret of that extraordinary personal magnetism he exercised upon his servants. This is the key to that rivalry of good deeds and loyal service he inspired among his people. This is why to the Maratha soldier praise from his lips became the greatest palm of victory and the sacrifice of blood and life too cheap a price for the honour. In presence of that unique personality, they were right willing to be his thralls, for therein, they fancied, lay the consummation of their lives. And as gradually the

27. This aspect of the character of the hero-king will remind the reader of the wonderful character-sketch of Hannibal as portrayed by Livy (Livy, XXI, 4).

loftiness of his views and the sacredness of his patriotic purpose dawned upon their vision, a sense of religious piety diffused itself in their conception of loyalty and honour, which held disloyalty a sin, and treason, pollution. Penetrated with these feelings of loyalty and patriotism, never a shadow of disaffection or treachery crossed their minds²⁸. During the captivity at Agra, when for eight months the light of Shivaji's presence was cut off from his Swarajya domains, during the events and vicissitudes of the Karnatic campaign which for eighteen months detained him on a distant soil, no commander or counsellor in the home country ever thought of defection. The full significance of this circumstance can be appreciated by us only if we pause to consider what troublous times those were and how contagious of anarchy. But this mystery is easily resolved when we consider and only when we consider the iron grip by which Shivaji held men's hearts and affections, by the splendour of his personality and heart-ravishing virtues.

25. Originality

Originality, as in every great leader of men, played no unimportant part in moulding his great career. The idea of the foundation of an independent Hindu power, in the times in which it was conceived, required the exercise of a noble faculty of imagination. Under the auspices of the Mahomedan powers such a number of Maratha warriors had risen to high command and become the founders of so many jahgir seigniories, and yet none had ever conceived the thought of an independent Hindu monarchy. Could it be said that the love of country, the boast of national religion and the horror of Islam were in all cases alien to their thoughts and feelings? It is clear that the cause of that sluggish contentment which made them willing to hug the bonds of their servitude was want of imagination. It was eminently the possession of this faculty that led Shivaji to conceive his proud ideal and devise plan after plan to achieve that noble end. That imagination he had developed from his youthful years. That imagination is the index of his intellectual calibre. His mind was quick to grasp and inquisitive to observe. As there were no limits to his observation, his knowledge of a practical subject was always up-to-date. He own observation and experience of things was being constantly supplemented by the experience and observation of others; and the impressions that checked, confirmed and enriched his original ideas were ineffaceably registered in his mind. Nor was it a mere retentive faculty in

28. The defection of Netaji Palkar described by Khafi Khan was a temporary affair and he again served under Shivaji, and it was because he was such an able servant of Shivaji that the Moguls at Aurangabad had him arrested on the flight of Shivaji from Agra. A doubtful case is that of Sambhaji Kavji in the war with Shaista Khan.

which he excelled: his reason was equally acute and penetrating. It was this combination of intellectual faculties that enabled him to direct his knowledge and experience of things upon the successful prosecution of his noble enterprise. It was this that made him a master of resources, an audacious wielder of giant plans and projects. It was the secret of his patience, the basis of his perseverance, the soul of his enterprise. That imagination flowed from a copious stream and failed not of ready response in times of greatest exhaustion. It enlisted for him even as an inexperienced tyro the sympathy and co-operation of men grown hoary with experience and knowledge. They rallied to the cause of the young warrior so wise for his years. They lent themselves whole-heartedly to turn his plans into deeds, his dreams into reality. This profound faculty again and again came to his rescue in every crisis of his career. It was the driving force in all his character, its essence, its vital principle.

26. Love of Independence

Another important element of his character was independence of spirit. This has been the characteristic of exalted genius in all ages. Such spirits cannot thrive in an atmosphere of dependence. Their regard for self-respect is so fine and exquisite quality that it instantly revolts from any cause that would bring it under an eclipse. Theirs is the philosophy of a crust of bread with liberty. The golden trappings of servility are distasteful to their restive spirits. Shivaji envied not his father he disdained his liveried pride, his purple servitude. Thus though he knew that in his efforts for independence there was a certain risk of failure, he prosecuted them with the utmost vigor from his constitutional abhorrence of a life of gilded dependence. And this though an elder of the authority and experience of Dadaji Kondadev was constantly dinning into his ears, the advantages of a golden mediocrity and the dangers of his high-soaring pursuits. But he adhered to his purpose. Even when soon afterwards, the life of his father, dearer to him than his own life, stood in danger, by reason of his steadfast adherence to his high resolve, he refused to disavow that purpose, relying on his masterly resourcefulness to deliver himself from his immediate difficulties. The episode of the captivity at Agra is a vivid illustration of this trait in his character. In the presence of the emperor, in full view of the assembled court, in the emperor's own capital, he gave vent to his feelings of injured dignity at the mean treatment accorded to him. It was a quality of a heroic magnitude, for it does honour to every here, and a total absence of that virtue reduces man to a nonentity. Shivaji guarded against insult, against injury, against insolence. Hence that roll of glorious deeds elevated above the level of common mediocrity, hence that triumphant illustration of the glory of an exalted spirit translated into the exaltation of an entire nation. Into this focus of a splendid independence, converged together

his valour, his chivalry, his enterprise, his equity, his temperance; in short, every single ray of his virtue, both public and private. It is a characteristic of such an exalted virtue keep up a ceaseless endeavour for the promotion of all those qualities that add to its brilliance and the elimination of those faults and blemishes that however partially eclipse its grandeur. Further than that, such a noble spirit learns, by personal experience, that the true seat of supreme felicities lies in the happiness of the multitude, and the consummation of his brilliant career, in the growing prosperity of the people committed to his charge. It is for the reader to judge how brilliantly the career of Shivaji stands this supreme test of a magnificent character. That magnanimity of spirit gave us for a while the superlative gift of national independence and its exquisite glory, transcending and surviving our fall, still stands before the world to bear eloquent testimony to the national spirit and grandeur of the Maharashtra people.

27. As an Administrator

As a civil administrator he presents himself as the friend of the people. It is unnecessary to recapitulate in this place the administrative reforms already described in a previous chapter. He was at all times studiously anxious for the happiness and prosperity of the cultivator, the artisan and the tradesman. He laboured hard to deliver them from the harpies of extortion and misrule; he was solicitous to give them the facilities of an easy and efficacious, and at the same time, expeditious system of judicature. To promote the smooth and regular working of the wheels of administration, avoiding every possibility of friction or overlapping jurisdiction, he had devised, as a preventive against every form of anarchy, the system of the *Ashta Pradhan* cabinet, a constitution that had suggested itself to no Indian king before him. The differentiation of the various labours of administration and assignment of each specific head of duty to a separate minister, the joint supervision of the entire cabinet, with his personal vigilance superimposed upon all, seemed to his mind the most absolute guarantee of a just and salutary administration for the equal benefit of all classes of his subjects²⁹. With this view he divided his own

29. Prof. Rawlinson in his "Life of Shivaji" criticizes the council as a bureaucratic system of administration. Supposing it was so, it gave a better guarantee of deliberation in those exciting times and certainly a better and more orderly form of government. But the supervising presence of a responsible king made all the difference. The king bore a large measure of responsibility himself. This prevented the constitution from sinking into a bureaucratic machine, while the existence of the council prevented the kingship from sinking into an irresponsible despotism. Prof. Sarkar points out that Shivaji's council was in no sense a cabinet and that it lacked the solidarity of the British Cabinet. Naturally so, because there was no parliamentary institution. A "British Cabinet without a Parliament" would be a most monstrous form of bureaucracy that could be imagined.

jurisdiction and allotted shares of co-ordinate authority to his great ministers of state, spreading the fame of their names and their proven merit and chivalry, along with his own, to all the corners of his kingdom. However high-placed an executive officer in his service might be, he never failed to receive condign punishment, upon being convicted of oppressing the people. While the affairs of the administration of each local chief were subject to the supervision of the cabinet minister in charge of the department, his conduct as an administrator was also watched and reported upon by a staff of confidential agents in the secret service of the sovereign. These were always on the move, each in his appointed circle in the Swarajya territory, watching, detecting, and reporting the conduct of officials in public life. The government officials thus lived in the constant dread that their sovereign would not fail to have due information and exact the prescribed penalties should they oppress the people or exceed their authority in any way. This check upon the official reacted to the advantage and security of the multitude. We have moreover seen in chapter XXIV the various regulations of Shivaji's government for the encouragement of agriculture population.

28.A Benevolent Ruler

An outstanding feature of Shivaji's administrative system was the equality and impartiality of his government towards all subjects; and it will be no exaggeration to assert that scarcely has any sovereign equalled him in the practice of this virtue. Of course his subjects were divided into castes but employment in the state service was open to all castes and each according to his competence was eligible for the fulfilment of offices in the state. Thus all castes were gratified and contented with his rule. He never showed any undue partiality towards men of his own caste. Even in the case of Mahomedan subjects there was no caste prejudice as regards state service. Those who were loyal amongst them and capable of carrying out their duties were appointed to positions of trust and honor³⁰. It was largely owing to this impartiality as regards caste, that there were no mutinies or treason in his government. To subjects of all castes he was an object of equal veneration.

29.In Private Life

As regards his private life, it must be stated that the chronicle writers, for the most part occupied with a recital of political changes, have scarcely left any

30. It will be noticed that Shivaji's admiral in the naval war with the Bombay Government in 1678 was a Mahomedan (*Vide* Chapter XXVIII).

record of Shivaji's private life. In consequence, very little can be said upon this subject. But it may be affirmed that he led a pure life. He was simple in his dress and habits. Free from any vice, he did not even indulge in any sort of levity or jests. His great passion was to listen to the recitals of the poets, the kirtans, and the readings of the puranas. For other forms of entertainment he had neither the inclination nor the leisure. Men of special talents, attainments and learning were handsomely entertained and remunerated. The services of such men were permanently engaged about the court, when their talents were found to be of utility. Shivaji was likewise careful in extending hospitality to friends and relations, nobles and princes, according to the degree of their position and status. The insolence of pomp and power did not estrange him from the duties and relations of private life, nor did the giddiness of success betray him into any form of excess or iniquity.

30. Family Affections

Turning to Shivaji's family life, we must again complain of the scanty record left by the bakhar-writers. We have seen in many parts of the preceding narrative the proofs and the extent of his filial affections towards both his parents and his fraternal solicitude, after his father's death, for his only surviving brother. Though the successful architect of his own fortune and the founder of a noble state, neither vanity nor conceit ever betrayed him into any act of disrespect or inattention towards his parents or of insult or violence against his brother. And this at a time when Aurangzeb reigned at Delhi, when the excesses of filial revolt and fratricide had passed into a gospel of political necessity. It is unfortunate that we have no record of Shivaji's relations with his wives. But in the absence of any indication to the contrary, we may positively affirm that he was not uxorious, and never led himself into any improper acts upon their advice³¹. It was his firm belief that women should not interfere in politics. Even his mother was not permitted to do so, much less his wives. From this, however, it cannot be inferred that he had no affection or respect for them. As to his senior queen, Sayibai, the bakhar-writers tell us he loved her to adoration. For womanhood in general he had a

31. The picture which Prof. Sarkar (pp. 427-28) draws of intrigues within Shivaji's harem, in the closing years of his life, is drawn largely from imagination and for the rest depends on the partisan vapourings of the Shivadigvijaya. This chronicle displays a peculiar bias against Soyarabai and what is stated in it as her wicked plots against Sambhaji, and even against Shivaji, must be taken with caution. All that can be said with certainty is that Shivaji's last days were saddened by Sambhaji's revolt and wayward manners and that Soyarabai tried adroitly to use the prejudice against Sambhaji to advance the prospects of her own son Rajaram.

chivalrous regard and veneration. Hence the standing regulation of his army not to molest any woman on any account, with the result that violation of female modesty or any outrage against them has never been charged against his soldiers. Shivaji's own example in this matter, from his early youth, was an abiding inspiration to his soldiers. The case of the daughter-in-law of Mullana, the governor of Kalyan, cannot have been forgotten by the reader. If such was his general attitude toward the weaker sex, it may be surmised that he could not have been disrespectful or indifferent to the feelings of his wives. For his sons he had naturally a strong feeling of affection, and he had taken care to give them a proper education and train them for the duty of governing the state he had created for them. With all this when his elder son began to sow his wild oats and turn to all manner of wickedness, even to the extent of outraging female chastity, he would not permit to his son a license he denied to others and straightway ordered the scape-grace prince to imprisonment. In short, the brief survey we can afford to make of Shivaji's family relations sets him forth before us as a good son, a good husband, a good father, and a good brother.

31. Religious Enthusiasm

With a brief notice of Shivaji's religious attitude, we may conclude this sketch of his character. At different stages of his biography, and especially in chapter XXIX, we have made observations on his religious temperament. Without repeating those observations, we need only state here that the impulses of religious pride and enthusiasm implanted in his tender mind from his earliest years went on expanding apace as he grew older. How absorbing the religious passion of Shivaji was can be best ascertained from the three or four recorded crises of his religious experience, when he prepared to turn his back upon his labours of independence and dedicate himself for the rest of his life to spiritual pursuits. The reader will doubtless remember the convulsive spasms of spiritual agony which shook his whole being at the shrine of Mallikarjun, on his way to the Karnatic, upon his southern campaign, and how, at the height of that paroxysm, he resolved to lay down his life as an offering to the deity. We have also seen how eager he was to pay proper respect to sages and saints, to supply the needs of the learned and the pious, to spend his treasures upon shrines and temples, upon Brahmans and the expounders of the sacred books. And to his intimate counsellors it was always a standing menace that this religious enthusiasm might at any time get the better of all his secular aspirations and dominates his mind to such an extent as to withdraw him altogether from temporal cares. But the tradition of the vision seen by Maloji - when the tutelary Bhavani appeared to him in a dream and assured him that it was ordained that an illustrious conqueror would be born of the Bhonsle name to inaugurate a new era of independence and to deliver the children of the soil

from the oppression of Islam, - this tradition was always before his mind and that of his mother, and the feeling gradually arose within him that his people were destined to see the fulfilment of that prophecy in himself, that his genius stood above the ordinary level of human beings, that his life was a mission for the gratification of the intense longings of the Aryan land and its crown of glory was to persevere till death in the vindication of the liberties of the Aryan people from the yoke of Moslem despotism, by the foundation of an independent empire. The conviction that the tutelary Bhavani spurred him on towards this goal incited him at every crisis of his career, to present his fervid vows before her throne. This devotion was rendered from a heart filled with a fiery faith and zeal, with the effect, as it seemed to him, that he was always near her and delivered himself, under her oracular inspiration, of prophecies of deliverance and victory. From this his unsympathetic critics have rushed to the conclusion that this was a piece of hypocrisy and simulation, practised on purpose to gull the multitude and play upon their superstitious credulity, so as to win them over to his side. In short it is alleged that personally Shivaji did not believe in this sort of foolery and used it as a tool to delude the masses. As regards this, we have only to observe that Shivaji did not seek deliberately to practise imposture upon the people. He was himself quite as sincere a believer in the divine communications as any of his people. In his time it was a universal practice throughout Maharashtra to conjure up the spirit of one's tutelary deity and consult the person who was supposed to be the medium of her spiritual presence, for an oracular expression of opinion or advice in any difficulty, and traces of this practice still survive in many parts of the country. It cannot be said that this "spiritual mediumship" is in all cases found on conscious hypocrisy. The depths of this "psychopathia spiritualis" have yet to be sounded. From this point of view it would appear that the exciting cause of these oracles was something deeper than simulation: it was excess of piety, it was credulity, but sincere and earnest. In the throes of a great dilemma which taxed the wits of his counsellors, when the intellect became overcast and saw no way towards safety, the great leader had recourse to prayer, under the stress of his excitement; and in that state of abstraction, thought mingled with devotion, until he seemed to glow under an unearthly influence and finally uttered, in that exalted condition of mind, his trenchant decisions, amidst a world of travail. These utterances were taken down by the attendants, and both the leader himself and his followers regarded them as an oracle of the tutelary goddess. Such was their confidence in what they assumed as her mandate that they set about the most audacious project or enterprise, without the least misgiving about the ultimate victory. When their operations were, in such cases, repeatedly crowned with success, experience confirmed the pious multitude in the belief that their hero was under the special favour of the goddess Bhavani, and produced in them the fullest confidence in his victory.

In short, it is scarcely just to apply the cold standard of modern rationalism in speaking of an extravagance of religious faith and experience that characterized the social psychology of those times, or to attribute it to conscious hypocrisy or fraud.

We have so far essayed to estimate the character of Shivaji and examine the various criticisms passed upon it. It may be admitted that to some of our readers this estimate may appear biassed, but it seems to us to be our duty to set forth in all sincerity the Maharashtra view of the worth and greatness of the hero of this biography, and we cannot pause to consider, whether or not, this view of our hero's character may square with the arbitrary standards and prejudices of others. It is an undisputed fact that the venerable name of Shivaji is the most beloved name and the most treasured possession in the hearts of all the Maharashtra people, if not of all India. The question by what force of character and endearing virtues he has thus enthroned himself in our hearts has not yet engaged that share of attention which it deserves. In consequence of this neglect, many a prejudice has gathered round his name, and a good deal of ungenerous prudery and divergent criticisms has been paraded against him. If the present work may contribute to however small an extent to clear away these trivialities and superficialities of prejudice, to bring home to people's mind the full image of his real greatness and to perpetuate on a firmer and clearer basis our sentiments of pride and gratitude towards him, that will be taken by us as an ample return for our labor.

And here we pause. The object of this sketch is in the first place to confirm that awakened enthusiasm for the great name of Shivaji, which has taken possession of all Maharashtra and almost the whole of the Indian continent, and secondly to give the reader a more vivid insight into his constructive genius than has hitherto been possible. Such a complete insight is impossible of attainment without concentrating our mind and bringing it into focus upon the whole of that career as a constituted unity. Two centuries and a third have rolled since his demise. During this long period his name has been celebrated by diverse writers, both in prose and verse. No small number of Mahomedan and European historians has written about him, according to their lights. He still lives in his fame. But no systematic attempt has yet been made to bring his actions and glory into one focus, to examine their synthetical effects, and then to estimate the character of those maculae or dark spots that are said to stain the luster of his career and to eclipse his glory. This attempt the present author has made according to his lights and ability. It is for the reader and the Indian reader in particular, to appreciate it.
