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THE MAIN CURRENTS OF MARATHA HISTORY

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LECTURE 1

MAHARASTRA DHARMA, THE IDEAL OF THE MARATHAS

1. *Muslim influence did not penetrate into the south.*

The one subject of great historical importance on which many eminent scholars in Maharastra have concentrated their attention in their research, has reference to the prime aim of the Marathas, I mean, the conception of their Swarajya, their object in striving for it, the principles for which they stood, the main unifying force which heartened them in times of trouble and adversity, and enabled them to work for national uplift for some two hundred years. The subject is obviously vast and intricate, and ranges over a large extent of literature, tradition, and line of succession of very many saints, teachers and leaders of the Maratha people. It would be very instructive to examine it from old writings and records, and from the mass of literature produced by many recent scholars, who have thought and written on the subject. I cannot, therefore, do better than take it up for discussion, at the beginning of my task, by way of clearing the ground of Maratha history in general, and present to you a few facts and views and some of the important results of study and research

in Maharastra on this basic subject. It was that great scholar and thinker M. G. Ranade who, in his brilliant work *The Rise of the Maratha Power*, first described the process of nation-building in the Deccan, and set down *Maharastra Dharma*, the duty of Maharastra, to be its guiding principle. The original and full meaning of this phrase requires a searching examination, so as to furnish for us the clue, by which we can understand, why of all nationalities of India, the Marathas alone found it possible to establish an independent power for a pretty long time.

India south of the Nerbudda was never completely subjugated by the Muhammadans, in the sense in which northern India was. The Hindu princes in the north, from the time of Jaipal and Prithviraj, to that of Rana Sanga, had struggled hard but in vain to roll back the onrushing tide of Muslim conquest. The Rajput princes were entirely crushed; they became servants of the Emperors, contracted marriage alliances with them, and submitted to them in all matters of religion and discipline. The sacred places of the Hindus were violated, their temples were pulled down, their religious practices were interfered with: in other places, wholesale populations were converted to the Muslim faith. One has only to visit any important city in northern India, in order to realise the havoc caused to Hindu temples, images, palaces and to old Sanskrit inscriptions, as, for instances, at Dhar and

Mandugad, in fact, all that every nation cherishes as sacred and inspiring. An old *bakhar* of Mahikavati (Mahim near Bombay), finished in 1578 by one Bhagawan Nanda Dutta, with many portions written centuries before that time, has been discovered and printed. It contains the following description of the terribly depressing condition of north Konkon, after it fell into the hands of the Muhammadans in 1348. Says the author: "All religion was destroyed; ties of friendship and relationship vanished; the Kshatriyas lost all sense of duty towards the country. They gave up their arms and took up the plough instead. Some took up the profession of mere clerks and the rest were reduced to the humiliating position of slaves and Shudras, while a host of others were wiped out of existence. Most of the people lost their self-respect and the Maharastra Dharma was totally destroyed." But, while the Hindu mind in the north had helplessly submitted to violence and force, the onward march of Muslim conquest received a strong check in the south, where the invasions of Alauddin Khilji and Malik Kafur, had but made a transitory impression. The fierce hand of Muhammad Tughlak could not win the Deccan for Delhi, and although the rebellious Husain Bahmani established an independent dynasty at Gulbarga, that kingdom, for all practical purposes, was a Hindu rule with only a nominal mixture of the Muslim element.

For two hundred years preceding the birth of Shivaji, forces were at work in the Deccan, facilitating Hindu independence at different centres of more or less magnitude or influence. Shivaji only supplied the adhesive element, uniting the scattered units, and shrewdly worked upon the religious sentiment, which so strongly appealed to the popular imagination. Rajwade aptly differentiates this spirit of Maharastra from that of the other provinces of India, by calling the former *jayishnu* or "conquering", and the latter *sahishnu* or "passively suffering." This genius or spirit of Maharastra runs unmistakably through the utterances of her saints and preachers, and through the actions of her warriors and diplomats. The expression *Maharastra Dharma* is known to have been used for the first time by the author of a popular Marathi work *Guru-charitra* or 'the life of the great Guru Dattatreya,' composed somewhere about the middle of the 15th century, although the Maratha saints had preached and spoken of Maharastra Dharma long before. The late Prof. Limaye, a great authority on history, says, "what the saints of Maharastra did was to create the moral force that would exalt and ennoble the political ideal of the Marathas. There were two main factors making up this national movement, the one representing the political power wielded by the more or less independent Jagirdars or Deshmukhs, (of whom I am

going to speak in a later discourse,) who opposed Shivaji in his early career, and the other represented the moral force, which the people derived from the preaching of Ramdas and other great saints. Shivaji stands forth for the synthesis of the two. Himself the son of a great Maratha nobleman and as such possessed of power and influence, he was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the teachings of the saints. Inspired by their high ideals, he strove to realise them in his life and in doing so, he was prepared to risk both his power and position. That is the significance of Shivaji's life-work, and it is that which entitles him to rank by the side of the greatest of the world's heroes".

2. *The two traditions of Devgiri and Vijayanagar blended in Shivaji.*

At the outset we must remember that Shivaji did not start his national work all of a sudden. His three predecessors in the family were all clever men, imbued with the national spirit common to all Marathas, in an increasing degree in succession. They all seem to have been clearly inspired by the traditions coming down to them in two distinct currents, the one starting from the Yadavs of Devgiri of the 13th century on the northern border of Maharastra, and the other from the *Rays* of Vijayanagar of the 16th century on the southern; the first coming from Shivaji's mother Jijabai, who was descended

directly from the Yadavs, and the other from his father Shahaji, whose life-work was cast in the historic regions of Vijayanagar. The grand titles assumed by the Yadav Kings such as Pratap-chakravarti, Samasta-bhuvanashraya, Samrat, Shri-Prithvi-vallabha, and their national banner bearing the golden image of an eagle,* were vivid emblems fresh in the Maratha memory, directly inspiring them with ancient glory, liberty and independence. Similarly as regards the *Rays* of Vijayanagar, the famous Deva-Ray concentrated his attention on improving horsemanship as the principal arm of warfare, which later on Shivaji so cleverly developed and so successfully utilised in attaining his life's purpose. An old paper records a dialogue between Rama Raya, the victim of Talikot, and his mother, when, on the eve of the famous battle (January 1565), he went to ask her blessings for his success. Says Rama Raya,—"This our country has been a favourite resort of our Gods, Brahmans, religion, and charities. Five Muhammadan kings have combined and conspired to destroy it. In order to prevent such a catastrophe, let me, mother, go with all my forces and conquer them. Do you confer your blessings on me." This conversation describes the attitude of the Hindu mind and shows, how the spirit of religion had inspired it to rise against Muhammadan oppression in the south long before

* सुवर्णगरुडध्वज।

Shivaji, who simply took up the cue later with the same object, as the Bakhars and other records go to prove. The influence of the teachings of the saints and particularly of Ramdas, I will have occasion to explain later, and need not repeat it here.

The famous verse adopted by Shivaji and ever since continued by his successors as the legend on their State seal, is another strong evidence of the same spirit. It runs thus:— "Ever-growing like the crescent of the first moon, and commanding obedience from the world, this seal of Shivaji, the son of Shahaji, shines forth for the good of the world."* It is said that this verse was formerly used by the Moreys of Javli on their seal; Shivaji borrowed it from them with a few suitable modifications of his own.

3. *How Maharastra Dharma or the Maratha spirit actuated the Marathas up to the last.*

This vein of Maharastra Dharma not only sustained the nation through their most terrible trials during their long struggle with Aurangzeb, but was faithfully kept up through the subsequent transformations and later expansion of the Maratha empire. The first four Peshvas have left ample evidence of their having ever kept this ideal of Maharastra Dharma before their eyes. In all their under-

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* प्रातिपद्चंद्ररेखेव वर्धिष्णु र्विश्ववंदिता। शाहसूनोः शिवस्यैषामुद्रा भद्राय राजते॥

takings in the north, and their dealings with the Rajputs and other races, they steadily strove, not so much for empire or power, as for the release of the famous holy places of the Hindus from the Muhammadan hands, viz., Prayag, Benares, Mathura, Hardwar, Kurukshetra, Pushkar, Gadamukteshvar and others; in the end they succeeded in taking possession of nearly all, except Prayag and Benares, which never came back into Hindu possession. In a memorable letter which Shahu addressed to his cousin Sambhaji, when the latter leagued with the Nizam, Shahu says:—"this kingdom belongs to Gods and Brahmans: the blessings of God Shankara and goddess Bhavani, enabled our great and revered ancestor Shivaji to rescue it from the hands of the Muhammadans. What a pity it is, then, that you should have given up our Maharastra Dharma and sought shelter with the enemies of it. Our family boasts of descent from Ramdevrao Yadav; it does not therefore behove you to go contrary to our grain". Shahu's greatest Peshva Balaji Bajirao was so fully imbued with this spirit of religious liberty for the Hindus, that, in a letter of 1752 he asks his agent residing at the Court of the Nizam to remind him (the Nizam) that, "we Maratha *ganims* are the disciples of the great Shivaji Maharaj", conveying thereby a hint as to how they were actuated in their dealings with the various potentates of India. Even as late as the early nineties of the 18th

century, the famous Maratha diplomat Govindrao Kale, who long resided at the Court of Hyderabad, thus writes to Nana Fadnis, and congratulates the Maratha Government on the signal achievements of Mahadji Scindia in regulating the affairs of the Emperor at Delhi, and fulfilling the objects of the Maratha policy. The letters and despatches of this Govindrao Kale have been printed in several volumes, and show him to be a man of high principles and great capacity, fully breathing the *Maratha atmosphere of those days.* I will quote the letter in full, in order to give you a correct idea of what the Marathas of those days, felt and talked :—"If I were to adequately express all that I have felt, upon reading your most inspiring letter, giving an account of the crowning glories achieved by Mahadji at Delhi, I should have to write volumes; still I cannot repress my enthusiasm, and I make myself so bold as to transgress the ordinary limit, and write some of the uppermost thoughts of my mind. Each single item gives occasion for a separate congratulation. India extends from the Indus to the southern ocean; beyond the Indus comes Turkistan; these limits of India have been under Hindu control since the days of the Mahabharat. But some of the later Hindu kings lost their old vigour, and yielded to the Yavanas who thereafter became powerful. Delhi was captured by the Chagtais; the culminating point came in the reign of the great Emperor Alamgir. Every

sacred thread received an imposition of Rs. 3/8 for payment of Jazia : *pucca* or cooked food was offered for sale in shops, and people were compelled to buy it. This oppression brought on a reaction. The epoch-making Shivaji rose in a small corner to protect the Hindu religion. Thereupon came such luminaries as Peshva Balajirao and Bhau-Saheb who gave fresh light and hope to the whole of India. This spirit later on possessed Mahadji Scinde so much, that he was able to fulfil the ancestral purpose. If we had *tawarikh*-writers like the Muhammadans, they would have written volumes on Mahadji's victories, for they know how to magnify small things up to the skies. We Hindus are of a reverse temperament. We do not speak out even signal doings. Impossibilities have indeed been achieved. The Patil-bova (Mahadji) broke the heads of those who tried to raise them. All wished him ill-luck, but he did accomplish his object dauntlessly. This victory will surely bear the desired fruit on the model of the great Shivaji. Let no evil eye soil this glorious result. Not only have territories and kingdoms been acquired by this victory, but the protection of the Vedas and the Shastras, the foundation of religion and unmolested worship, the preservation of Brahmans and cows : in fact, this suzerain regal power of the Marathas, this fame and glory, all have now been achieved and proclaimed in the loudest accents to the world. To preserve this

grandeur will be the glory of Patilbova and yourself. You must not be remiss in this task. All doubts about our supremacy over India have been set at rest. Grand Maratha armies must now be stationed on the plains of Lahore, for there exist countless evil-doers, who rejoice at our reverses and try to compass our downfall." Poor Govindrao did not conceive of a new danger from the west through the sea!

I have purposely quoted this long letter which is dated 2nd July 1792, that is, exactly ten years before the transfer of the sovereign power from the Maratha hands into the British. The letter shows clearly, not only how the great ideals were constantly surging in Maratha minds right up to the last, but how high their spirits were, even when their fall was imminent, as we know it now.

4. *Meaning of Maharastra Dharma.*

I am not here discussing how far this ideal of Maharastra Dharma was right, or whether it was wrong, and whether it did good or evil to India. This point I shall have to discuss later. I only wish to emphasise here once more, how the main point of Maratha history has been missed by very many writers, owing to their inability to grasp and trace this Maratha ideal through the character and actions of the race as well as their literature and history, like the ancient Hellenic culture actuating the Greeks in their national expansion. The best minds in Maharastra have

devoted their energies to this topic ever since the day of Ranade, and have, time and again, proved by fresh evidence the existence of this grand purpose, of which I have not been able to present here more than a bare outline. Materials discovered in Maharastra have been read and discussed so frequently and so exhaustively, that I could not very well omit this pervading topic in my talks on Maratha history. *Radha - Madhava - vilasa - Champu*, *Mahikavati-bakhar*, *Shiva-bharat*, *Parnala-parvata - grahan - akhyan*, *Talikot - bakhar*, the *Shakavalis*, the *Rajniti* of Ramchandra Amatya, and letters and papers of Shahaji and his ancestors, and the utterances of older bards and saints, as also inscriptions and documents about gifts to temples and Brahmans during Maratha and pre-Maratha times, all these are growing in volume and importance every day, and testify to the existence of this religious spirit of Maharastra Dharma in the minds of the people for a long time. Shahaji was the patron of poets and literature; two of his proteges, Jayram and Paramanand, wrote several works, which have recently been discovered and printed and deserve careful study. Says Rajwade,—"Those born in Maharastra are called Mahárástrás = Márástra, corrupted into Maráthá. The country inhabited by the Maharastrikas came to be called Mahárástra. All the Hindu castes from the Brahmans to the Antyajas residing in that country, obtained the comprehensive name

Márástra or Maráthá. The religion of all these Marathas came to be called by a comprehensive title Maharastra-Dharma. It includes four elements *viz.*, (1) practices towards Gods and injunctions of the Shastras (*Deva-Shastrachar*), (2) local practices (*Deshachar*), (3) family practices (*Kulachar*) and (4) caste practices (*Jatyachar*). The inhabitants of Maharastra were bound to follow all these." Says Justice Ranade,—"The only motive power which is strong enough to move the masses in this country is an appeal to their religious faith. During the last 300 years the whole of India had been visibly moved by the new contact with the Muhammadan militant creed, and there had been action and reaction of a very marked kind, particularly in Maharastra." I cannot enter into full details of this problem here, which requires patient and original study, and which is difficult to grasp merely from translations. But to understand Maratha history properly, all the sources must be read in the original and considered in their proper light.

5. *Evil effects of this Maratha ideal.*

Let me say frankly that however useful this ideal of Maharastra-Dharma might have been in securing national interests in the beginning, to me it appears as not an altogether healthy one. Its main draw-back was that it made the Maratha mind entirely inert and unprogressive. Dominion means progress,

and unless there is provision for making changes to suit the changing requirements of succeeding times, no power can last long. This spiritual ideal of the Marathas was often impracticable, giving rise to a rule in practice, amounting to "we must not change the old, must not take up the new." Shahu acted on this principle for 40 years and made it the condition of his transfer of power into the hands of the Peshvas at the time of his death. Even now we painfully realise how tenaciously the Indian mind sticks to old impracticable Shastras and their injunctions, even though they had been proved unsuitable to our present situation. In all practical matters of the Hindus, every item of life is based on religion. We are proud of quoting, in season and out of season, the Smritis and the Shastras in support of what we may happen to be doing. This conservative turn of mind prevented the Marathas from acquiring new education and new ideas, from travelling to western countries, or training their own men in western science and western warfare, so as to introduce new methods and processes of work into their constitution. How this affected the Maratha power I shall relate later on. For the present it is enough for me to point out, how the failure to detect this underlying and unifying principle of Maharastra Dharma, has led many a writer to describe Maratha rule as mere outbursts of an inborn tendency for ravaging, pillaging, destroying, doing good to nobody.

This wrong notion has much vitiated the character of Maratha history which requires correction.

6. *Visible marks of Maratha influence along the sacred rivers.*

It is interesting to trace the results of the Maratha rule to this ideal of Maharastra Dharma and examine them from the general character of the people. We cannot look for a Taj-Mahal or a Kutb-Minar in the works left behind by the Marathas. We know, of course, they never had the leisure, the peace and the money that are necessary for such works. But even if they had these, they never in my opinion possessed the requisite inclination. The Maratha race, as their soil and history have made them, are a rugged, strong and sturdy people, intelligent, self-assertive and practical, having in their mental cast the urge towards life and action, patient, industrious and penetrating in learning and study, hardy, frugal and calculating in their temperament, but not emotional or showy idealists. They always had an eye for practical utility and the conveniences of life, in all that they planned and accomplished. Whatever one could expect from such a character and from their religious turn of mind already alluded to, has doubtless been profusely in evidence in the Deccan and elsewhere, wherever Maratha influence penetrated. They built temples, bathing ghats on rivers, tanks

and wells, walls and forts, residential palaces contrived for protection and convenience, serais and hill-passes. The temples and their vicinities were usually the places for schools where the Vedas and the Shastras were taught, their cost being defrayed from assignments of land or cash, styled *anna-chhatras*. The Maratha edifices are by no means pretentious. They are ingenious in conception and exquisite in execution, when minutely examined. Big black stones were specially brought to the Deccan from the river Gandaki for working them into images, some of which are indeed remarkable for their skill and art. Most of these temples and images are to be found in out of the way places, away from the railway, and have hardly attracted the notice of the present day advertising travellers. About 30 years ago a certain touring Maratha Revenue official had occasion to visit nearly every village in the Poona and the Colaba Districts of the Bombay Presidency, and being fond of observation, kept a record in the form of a diary, in which he wrote down every peculiar thing that met his eye. Extracts from these diaries, which have recently been published, yield a most valuable and interesting account of the relics of old Maratha rule and conclusively prove that, after all, that rule was not so barren of results as is generally supposed. Water-works, temples, tanks, images, palaces and forts, are to be found nearly everywhere built by the various

Sardars who served in distant parts of India, but who had a sort of a home capital in the Deccan. Jambgaum of the Scindias, Wafgaum and Chandwad of the Holkars, Davdi and Nimbgaum of the Gaikwads, are only a few among plentiful existing types of the past Maratha constructions. The old Peshvas' palace at Nasik, now occupied by the District Judicial Courts, is indeed a monument worth being recorded as a work of art. The tank at the shrine of Jejuri on the top of a hill is large and beautiful, having been constructed by Baji Rao II. The paths of the ghats and the temples there, are all very well executed and exhibit care and skill of construction. The temple of Bhuleswar in the same vicinity is also a fine building. The Katraj tank which then supplied water to the city of Poona, was executed by Peshva Baji Rao. The temples and images at Pandharpur, Theur, Chinchwad, Alandi and Gangpur are indeed excellent specimens of the works which the Peshvas executed. The skill and proportion of the stone images will indeed beggar description. The Ghat on the Bhima at Pimpalner, the small but beautiful tomb of Mastani at Pabal, the temple of Someswar at Chas, the temple and tank at Karanjgaum, the temple of Lakshmi-Nrisinha at Narsingpur, built by Vithal Shivdev, the temple and travellers' houses at Morgaum, the Vishnu Mandir at Uran, constructed by the Bivalkars, —these and various others of this type, will,

if properly brought to public notice, certainly prove that the Marathas were not entirely devoid of artistic skill, or a sense of beauty; nor was their rule so barren of results as many in ignorance have supposed. But mere grandeur, waste and lavishness, were not in their grain: temples, rivers, conveniences of water and residence, hill-paths and ghats, spacious and convenient dwellings, designed more for use and protection than show, have received every attention from the Maratha rulers, who cannot therefore be charged with the neglect of works of real public utility. This tendency of the Marathas is also amply visible in northern India, wherever the Maratha influence penetrated. It requires examination and study. The fact is, that under the general impression that the Marathas were merely vandals and free-booters, few have cared to investigate and bring to light those unpretentious, but impressive relics executed by the Marathas. The cursory exploration of only two districts mentioned above, ought to be extended to the other districts and distant corners of Maharastra, and all available papers, objects and traces of historical interest brought to light for the use of students and scholars. I can say from personal experience, that heaps of papers and material of great utility are still to be found in all important centres of Maratha activity, awaiting the search and sympathetic handling of earnest workers and well-to-do publishers,

who care for our historical past. The Rastes of Wai, the Patwardhans of Miraj and Sangli, the Pratinidhis of Oundh and Karad, the Surveys of Shringarpur, the Shirkes, the Jadhavs, the Moreys, the Jedhes, the Nimbalkars and Ghorpades have all had their centres of work and influence, small capitals, so to say, of these historical families, wherein they concentrated all their attention and labours for over 200 years. The grand and rich valleys of the two sacred rivers, the Godavari and the Krishna, with their numerous tributaries offer a most fruitful field, not only for search and collection, but for the publication of useful, illustrated guides or albums, based on a national historical conception. The Godavari starts from Trimbak, a place in mountain fastnesses to which the Peshvas and the leading families paid frequent visits of pilgrimage; a few miles below are two places hallowed by the residence of the two historical female figures, Anandvalli, the residence of Anandi-Bai, wife of the famous Raghoba, and Gangapur the residence of Gopika-Bai, wife of Peshva Balajirao and mother of three brilliant but unfortunate sons of historical fame: Viswas Rao the eldest lost his life at Panipat, his younger brother Madho Rao died a premature death from consumption at the age of 28, after a splendid rule of 11 years, full of grand achievements; and the third and youngest Narayan Rao, was murdered at the instigation of his uncle Raghoba. Their

mother Gopika-Bai is said to have been so overcome by grief at this last bereavement, that she left her palatial residence at Gangapur in agony, and lived in a hut at Panchavati opposite Nasik, living on alms which she begged from door to door. Down the river stand Nasik and Panchavati, already too well-known to need special mention. Sangvi, Kopergaum and Kacheswar, still lower down, are all places abounding in relics of the later day Peshvas. Puntambe, Nawase, Paithan, Shevgaum, Kaygaum and Tonke, Rakshasbhuvan, Shahgad, Pathri, Nanded, Brahmeshvar and very many other places down this great river, will, I am sure, repay a thorough inspection and publication of illustrated historical guides. As a race we lack that spirit of travel and observation which is to be found in the west, and which has yielded there such abundant results and topics of national interest. The river Krishna, rising at Mahabaleswar, offers a still more fruitful field for research and active interest. Dhom, Menavali, Wai, Mahuli, Karad, Sangli, Miraj, Kurundwad, Wadi and other places lower down, all deserve to be commemorated by means of an active campaign. I have not time here to refer to smaller streams like the Bhima, the Nira and others, nor to the larger and more extensive valleys of the Tapti, the Nerbudda and the Chambal. The genius of the Maratha race has worked along river streams and among mountain fastnesses,

which deserve to be thoroughly ransacked, if we wish to build up our historical past on proper foundations. A similar research is also required outside Maharastra in northern India, particularly where the Maratha influence penetrated. Dhar, Devas, Indore, Ujjain, Jhansi, Saugor, Gwalior, Banda, Mathura, Bithur, Benares and various other places, all bear plentiful signs of the influence and culture imparted by the Marathas, which will repay the labours of a special study. I have dilated on this point, specially to draw the attention of students to the various directions in which research can and has to be made.

In Maharastra such a campaign of research was started first by Rajwade and continued by a band of poor but devoted workers, whose tours and experiences have been printed in the annals of B. I. S. Mandal of Poona, containing detailed descriptions of places, old monuments, folklore, village songs, and other relics of past history. In the midst of our every day busy life, our students hardly command the leisure and the patience which such a careful study requires. Even the printed volumes of the Mandal and those published in the *Itihas-Sangraha* of Parasnis, have hardly been carefully studied or analysed. They contain an amount of useful information which has yet to be sifted and utilised, not to mention bundles of old manuscript papers stored in the Government archives at Poona

and at various centres such as the B. I. S. Mandal, the Parasnis Museum of Satara, at Dhulia and other places. The work of the Poona Mandal has been much diffused and has not attracted the notice of scholars that it deserves.

7. *Influence of this political ideal on Marathi literature and society.*

So far at any rate as present research goes in Maharastra, the Marathas can rightly boast of possessing in a printed form, *Bakhars* or chronicles, personal and public letters, accounts, Government documents, sanads and decisions, treaties, genealogies, local diaries and various other forms of historical material, which probably no other people of India has, in the same proportion or of the same variety. They are also different in nature from those of the other parts of India. Of all these papers, the letters are by far the most important in a historical sense, since, plentiful as they are, we can form a connected account of all important events from them, and, nearly always, from different points of view. Since language is only the outward expression of the actual life and occupation of a people, Marathi literature increased with the spread of their activities, since Shivaji raised it to the status of the language of the Court, in the place of Persian. Important affairs of the army, navy, forts justice, accounts and other subjects, were all written down from his time in Marathi, and

this change in a short time enriched the language to an enormous extent. With the increase of work, many individuals and families coming from out of the way places, received fresh inspiration and encouragement. There was hardly any prose worth the name in Marathi before the days of Shivaji, when all the best literature used to be in poetry and that too of a devotional and religious character. But when Shivaji and his father started their new work, battles, campaigns, treaties, engagements and letters became the order of the day, and these required to be committed to writing. The adventures and achievements of Shivaji and his followers, his victory over Afzal Khan, for instance, or his visit to the Court of Aurangzeb, or the thrilling capture of Sinhagad by Tanaji Malusre, soon captivated the people's imagination, and Shivaji's mother Jijabai herself took the lead in getting them immortalised in bardic poetry for popular recitation all over the country. Samples of such songs, or *powadas* as they are popularly known, have been translated into English verse by Acworth, and will give to non-Marathi readers some idea of the activities of those days. Shivaji employed learned Pandits to coin an official vocabulary by translating technical terms from Persian into Sanskrit and prepared what is called the Raj-vyavahar-kosh, *i.e.*, a dictionary of technical names for the use of the Court. The Persian element soon began to give place to Sanskrit, which

came to be drawn upon for all kinds of high-flown writing, so that in a hundred years' time the character of the language was entirely changed. While Eknath, the greatest Marathi writer of the 16th century, uses nearly 75% Persian words and expressions in his works, Moropant's Marathi of the 18th century is nearly all Sankrit with hardly 5% mixture of Persian.

There is a prevalent notion that modern Indian prose is a creation of the 19th century of the post-British days, started in imitation of the great prose writers of the west. So far as Marathi is concerned, this notion is not quite accurate. A particular kind of prose writing of a very high order did come into existence during the 150 years of Maratha activity. Language, like industries and other national concerns, needs official patronage for its growth and prosperity, and when Marathi received the required patronage, it shone all the brighter, as we can see for ourselves from the published papers. It is necessary for all of us to realise, in how many different ways Swaraja improves the status of a nation, and why all the world is striving for it. If a nation's soul is reflected in its literature, we can clearly read it in the prose chronicles of the Marathas, some of which, such for instance, as the Sabhasad, the Chitnis and the Shiva-Digvijaya *bakhars*, will take a high rank among prose writings. The *Bakhar* of Bhau Saheb, the *Kaifiyat* of the Holkars and

the two *Bakhars* of the Peshvas, are all compositions of a high class and correctly reflect the doings of the Marathas, their hopes and aspirations, their joys and sorrows, their capacities and short-comings. But it is the letters which would appeal to the reader most. They are written by experts with the particular object of impressing the writer's views upon men in power, who were in charge of the executive government. More than a hundred volumes of such letters exist at present, which show how the writers (*Chitnises*) and translators (*Parasnises*), came to be in great demand all over the country. Every Maratha leader had to employ expert writers in his camp, in order to despatch news and explain the situation to the central authorities, and obtain definite orders on important and delicate affairs of State.

The members of the Chitnis family were all consummate writers, whose accumulated heaps of written matter, strike the imagination wonderfully. When news-letters were received from distant places and read at Satara or Poona, some of the writers were at once noticed for their excellent style and cleverness, and were picked out for higher posts. Thus, as the empire extended, the art of writing received a great impetus. Some of the letters and productions of those days which we now read, are indeed of a very high order and show, how highly the Marathi language was cultivated. I have now and

then given by way of samples English translations of some such papers in these discourses. If a comparative estimate of these Maratha writings is made, I think some of them will indeed take a very high rank and compare favourably with some of the best specimens of the diplomatic despatches of the west. I trust, the other nationalities in India have similar papers of historical value in their possession, and if they have not, they must try and make sure that they are not lying in oblivion. Amatya Ramchandra Nilkantha, Khando Ballal and his son Govind Khando, Chimaji Appa and his son Sadasiv Rao, Peshwas Balaji Bajirao and Madhav Rao, Brahmendra Swami, Shr'pat Rao Pratinidhi, Govind Hari Patwardhan, Nana Fadnis, his agent Sadashiv Dinkar, Krishna Rao and Govind Rao Kale, these and various others were all capable and skilful writers, who have fully depicted in their productions the Maratha spirit of those days, making us feel, as if we were living in those stirring times.

Along with military leaders, traders, merchants, bankers, engineers, and other craftsmen, had in great numbers to accompany Maratha expeditions, for supplying the needs of war and showed great efficiency in executing their tasks; there were, besides, newswriters to convey information of the military operations at every stage, from one corner of the country to another. Revenue Collectors and Accountants kept records, and brought

in tributes and other dues. Builders and Engineers erected forts and battlements, and built roads, ghats and temples on the river banks. Judicial and police arrangements followed in the course of time, as soon as conquest was complete, thus starting regular peaceful life for all workers in the country. Scholars, Pandits, priests and saints soon followed in the wake of conquest, and, by means of personal character and devotion to duty, so moulded the life of the outside people as to make Maratha influence distinctly affect society and religion. They built temples, opened schools and free kitchens, and subtly and unobtrusively introduced for a time Maratha culture into the north, the inhabitants of which for a long time afterwards found this Maratha penetration healthy and beneficial. People in those days could perform their pilgrimages and return home, full of enthusiasm for the re-establishment of the Hindu rule. They looked upon the Maratha leaders as the liberators and defenders of their faith. The records of the Patankars at Benares, of the Hingnes at Delhi, of the Khers at Saugor, of the Kolhatkars in Nagpur and west Bengal, and of persons of lesser note at Lucknow, Mathura and Prayag, bear ample testimony to these side-activities of the Marathas. No jarring note is to be detected in these peaceful efforts: on the contrary, the northerners appreciated them whole-heartedly. Any one who takes the trouble of studying minutely

the contemporary accounts narrated in the old papers, and compares them in detail with the earlier Muhammadan invasions, during the Pathan period particularly, can easily realise the contrast between the two, and see how penetration of the former was mild and congenial, and the latter destructive.

8. *Legitimate Maratha pride in past achievements.*

The Marathas alone of all the various nationalities of India, put forth the strongest organised opposition to the growing Mogul power, and ultimately crushed it. In the course of this process, they evinced such capacity, tenacity, patience, and judgment, that they can be very well proud of it. They worked, in their own way and according to the standards of those times, for the welfare of the country, as much as was then possible for any Indian power to do. And if they had not been unexpectedly called upon to face an organised Western power, they would in all probability have created a Hindu empire in India. If, on the contrary, the Peshwas had not taken the supreme charge of the Maratha Government after the death of Shahu, the situation in the Deccan would at once have paved the way for British intervention in western India, simultaneously with Plassey and Wandewash, which gave the British their supremacy in Bengal and Madras respectively. The least credit, therefore, that must go to

the Marathas, is that they put off the onrush of British arms into western India by at least half a century. Otherwise, the Plassey of 1757 would have simultaneously seen its counterpart in the Deccan, resulting in a similar fate for Western India. A people that put down the Muslim power, that for long resisted the British advance in all parts of India, that conquered and civilised the Gonds, and other tribes in the distant north and the south, that have left plentiful permanent marks of their influence in a triangular tract, of which the three corners may roughly be put down as Nagpur, Kolhapur and Tanjore, that ever stood for progress, order, peace and culture, and finally that saved the soul of India and enthused it with a new hope, are, in my opinion, entitled to a legitimate pride in their past history.

LECTURE 2.

HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN MAHARASTRA

1. *Extent, scope and limitation of historical research.*

A study of history means search for truth; and truth is never onesided. It would not be possible for the Marathas to write a complete history from their own Marathi papers only. At most they will show only one side of the picture. The other sides are embedded in various other languages; and since Maratha history is but a part of the history of all India, however much it may appeal to Maratha sentiment, it must be completed from sources outside Marathi. A purely historical mind should be as impartial and analytical as a chemist's is in treating a piece of charcoal or diamond. A historian ought to possess the same impartial and critical attitude of mind in judging complicated human affairs, in order to sift truth from untruth, if his history is to prove serviceable. When, for instance, we have to treat of an event, say, the battle of Panipat, it would not do for us to rest satisfied with Maratha records only. We must look for all possible light from whatever channel it may be available. In the first place, we have not got together even all the letters and accounts that the various Maratha

Sardars and writers must have despatched from that momentous campaign. But they had, besides, dealings with the Rajputs, the Jats, the Emperor, his ministers, the various Rohilla Chiefs, the Nawab Wazir of Oudh, the Sikh leaders and generals, besides the foreign traders, (British, French and Portuguese). Their accounts and papers are to be found in their respective languages. In order, therefore, that we may secure a complete picture of Panipat, we must try and secure all the foreign sources and then compose an account from them. Even then the picture may not be perfect, for the human mind is always liable to err. If we see a fracas in the street happening before our own eyes, and if we have to give evidence about it in a Court of Law, we know how often each one has a different version to give, for each one observes only a part and that too from his own point of view. In this respect the human mind is like a piece of coloured glass ; as a ray passing through the colour, gets a tinge of it, so does the human mind get a tinge of the communicating medium. You can, therefore, realise how very difficult this process of forming historical judgments and conclusions is. They are at first tentative : we put forth a certain version or a proposition as a working hypothesis, on the basis of the evidence we have obtained. Further search may either corroborate or disprove it. All human history is more or less of this type; that is why we find great men like Shivaji or

Napolean variously treated and cari-catured in history, exalted by some historians or denounced by others. Are we then to suppose all history false? No; certainly not. Treat it in the spirit of a science and you will find it serviceable at every stage. Herein also lies the real value of history. If there be no difference in views, no variations in the estimates of men and events as set down by different writers, history will contain only stereotyped sets or bundles of facts unchanged and unchangeable. They would cease to be human or progressive, would give no exercise to the thinking powers of the students, and prove more or less like scriptures to be taken on authority never to be questioned. There would in that case be no fresh currents of thought or idea, which, with the rolling years, would better the lot of humanity and would lead to expansion, development and progress. History deals with the civilisation of man all round, which is ever changing and which at every moment affects the destiny of man. History must exercise the thinking power of students, if they would treat the subject scientifically. If they do not take the trouble to arrange, sift and classify facts on their own initiative, do not wait to find out for themselves, how far their own reason would be prepared to accept or dispute the correctness of those facts, it would no longer be a science. In history we must accept nothing on credence or authority, however eminent the authors may be. That is why history has been put down as

a subject in the university for exercising the mind of the students, on a par with literature, science, or mathematics.

2. *Indian History has yet to be constructed by a synthesis of materials from all sources.*

We can thus see how reasearch is to be undertaken and what its limitations are. So far as Indian history is concerned, we are yet practically at the initial stage. European history, say that of England, France or ancient Rome and Greece, has long passed through these stages at the hands of many master-minds, who have sifted the materials and given them a shape, which now can be accepted as more or less settled. A new fact may even now come to light here and there, and may change a little detail of this or that incident. But the main subject has been exhaustively treated. Besides, the free nations of Europe are creating history every day: in India, we have been hardly making any history at all, since the middle of the 19th century. We are passive onlookers, struggling to obtain or create conditions and surroundings, which would enable us to make our own history. That is why the History of India since after our fall before the conquering power of Britain, ceases to interest us, ceases to fire our imagination, sentiment or pride. For instance, routed though the Marathas were on the field of Panipat, they yet take such a lively interest in all the incidents, persons or features of that

memorable event, that their poets, research-scholars, bards, actors, novelists are every day exercising their powers in writing about it ardently. The Shivaji-Afzal Khan incident or the murder of Peshwa Narayan Rav, equally fascinates and engages the Maratha mind. It is but human, that the doings of our ancestors or of the sages and heroes of our religion, should appeal to our imagination.

History, however, has to take account of all these, not from a sectarian point of view, but with a view synthetically to mould one single complete national history of India, out of all those elements, that may have a concern with the period with which we are dealing. And since we have to build up such a united national history of India, we need more and more materials for our study, as we reach our own more complicated times. In the earlier centuries we used to live a more isolated, exclusive and perhaps quieter life, but in later times, with the increasing struggle for conquest and power, Indian affairs, whether political or social, became increasingly intermixed : particularly is this the case with the history of the 18th century, when, with the decline of the Mogul rule, the scramble for power and supremacy, become more acute and involved more competitors. We can thus easily conclude what various sources of material we must look for, and in what directions we have to search for fresh material, before we can arrive at a fairly acceptable estimate of any given event.

We have only recently been awakened to this part of our duty, and only a few efforts in this portion of national work are being made here and there in the country. Steady and serious work, however, always brings in a rich harvest. You can easily imagine how the life-story of Shivaji, for instance, would have remained always incomplete and one-sided, had not, Prof. Jadunath Sarkar brought to bear upon it his great powers of scholarship and investigation, when fortuitously he undertook the study of Aurangzeb, who had spent more than half of his long and active life in the midst of the Marathas. Sarkar's contribution to Maratha history is indeed invaluable, particularly as regards the materials available not only in Persian but in several European languages, which he has been able to secure after tremendous labours, expense, and patience, and which he has ably shown how to utilise for constructing a synthetic history of India as a whole.

Just as Indian politics of the future can no longer remain isolated or confined to each communal unit, so the history of the Indian nation of the future is going to be a united whole, in which all individual units will merge themselves. Such a history has to take note of the strong and weak points, of the services and disservices, of every separate community, creed or caste, and has to mould them into a solid unity, in which all can take pride and which will supply to all, inspiration and useful lessons derived from past experience. To this

common task each community ought to give the best that it can show. The days are gone long past, for any community to emphasise its own individual doings; we have now to think, as I have said, of India as a whole; we have all to look upon her as a common mother, for whose honour we have to labour with equal zeal. Those who do not think in this strain of united India, have no room in the Indian nation of the future. I am stressing this point purposely to show the severe needs of historical research all round. This is not a task for one individual only, nor even for one community or language. All the languages and communities of India, must add their own quota to make this whole; it is like the whole body which all limbs must equally serve to build, preserve and defend; if one limb fails, the whole body will suffer along with it. This aspect of history does not seem to have been clearly grasped by us all. We are apt to belittle what others have done and make too much of our own doings. But each one's own past, whether glorious or gloomy, is ultimately essential only in so far as it serves this main purpose of a united national history. There is hardly any country or nation on the face of the earth, which has not jarring sects or divisions in it; but they have all united for a common purpose and have achieved grand objects in mutual co-operation. The substantial unity of the Indian mind is often lost sight of, in the heat of emphasising differences and

divisions. In this world there is always difference in the unity and unity in the differences; and it is this unity which secures progress and onward march. Not only have the Hindus of India a common heritage to boast of, but even the Muhammadans, Parsees and Christians living in India, have, under the stress of science and life, such a closely intermixed communal life to lead, that, for all practical purposes, they all do now form a united whole. Only we must accustom ourselves to thinking in this vein, and that is what history is meant to achieve for us all. Most of us have to perform the major portion of our life's work on the same kind of platform, in speaking, eating, reading, working, helping; whether in a college or in the university, in a factory or in a firm; differences have now been practically annihilated. In this common life of a United India, our history has to play its part, and that is why I have stressed this point.

3. *Fortunate lead given by two eminent scholars of two distinct types, Sarkar and Rajwade.*

But the needs of historical research and its possible services in this common task of nation—building, do not seem to have been clearly understood or generally recognised. Some 50 years ago, Elliot and Dowson translated into English only a few portions of a number of Persian chronicles, upon which the Muhammadan period of Indian history has mainly

been based. During this half a century there have been various attempts in all provinces to collect old historical materials, letters, documents, chronicles, coins, seals, pictures, epigraphs, inscriptions and other sources, that could illucidate past events. So far as modern India is concerned, two indefatiguable workers, more than any others, have shown the right method of research, each in his own way,—Prof. Jadunath Sarkar in the north, and Mr. V. K. Rajwade in the south, although both of them have been more or less misrepresented or misunderstood. Those who closely follow their writings, their methods, and their treatment, have realised the immense advance in historical criticism and spirit, which these two eminent scholars have made in the subject. It was a fortunate coincidence for the history of India, that these two brilliant workers could be found to tackle the subject, not only from two different view-points but also from the two main linguistic sources,—Sarkar studying the Persian materials and presenting the Muslim side, and Rajwade finding the Marathi materials and presenting the Hindu side. Their previous equipment for the task was also fortunately entirely different. Sarkar, after a brilliant University career, acquired the experience of training students in colleges and Universities: Rajwade imbued with an innate fire of the heart, which his University career served rather to kindle than to damp, devoted himself, after graduation, entirely to

the service of national history. He taught himself the various subjects essential for historical research, such as the ancient and modern history of Europe and the World, comparative grammar, philology and epigraphy. Although working in different directions, they fortunately happened to concentrate their effort on the common ground of Maratha history. Prof. Sarkar having taken Aurangzeb for his special study, was required to explore the period of Shivaji and work it from original Marathi sources, which I am glad to say, he has mastered with great zeal and profit. This coincidance we must certainly bless with all our heart.

It was the casual finding of a chronicle (*Bakhar*) of Shivaji's life in the early seventies of the last century, which led to a criticism of Grant Duff's monumental work at the hands of the late Justice Ranade and his colleagues. It was then discovered that many useful *Bakhars* and papers of historical interest, existed in different places, which, if published, would not only correct the mistakes of Grant Duff, but would make a substantial addition to his history. Along with the historical papers many original manuscripts of poems and compositions of old Maratha authors were also discovered. A band of young workers, mostly teachers in High Schools, undertook to edit and publish them in a monthly magazine devoted to poetry and history. Thus the *Kavyetihas-*

sangraha was born. The last of those enthusiastic workers happily survives to this day, Rao Bahadur Kashinath Narayan Sane, now aged 75, whose scholarship and devotion to the cause of Maratha history are too well-known in my part of the country. This magazine continued for 12 years and published some thirty volumes of historical materials, mostly chronicles, and one or two containing original letters and documents of rare value.

4. *Rajwade.*

This publication however did not rouse keen interest in history in the public mind; it died for want of support. The credit of creating such an interest belongs most certainly to Vishwanath Kashinath Rajwade, now aged about sixty, who is still carrying on his work, not in the modern but in the ancient period of India. With no means or money in his pocket, he, after leaving college, started a personal house to house search for old papers, not only in big historic cities like Poona, Satara, Nasik and Wai, but went on foot from village to village, tracing old Maratha families of Sardars, clerks and priests, and examining the stock of their papers, on which he pored with a concentration and devotion hardly to be met with in ordinary life. Without heeding hunger or thirst, feeding on charity and accepting from kindly people money and expenses just enough to satisfy

the bare needs of his travel, he roamed about for years, throughout Maharastra and through many parts outside, with heavy loads of old manuscript papers on his back, which he has now stored in different centres with friends and pupils, whom he collected round himself. His selfless devotion was so catching, that bands of intelligent and earnest workers soon gathered round him and helped to collect, store, read, sift, copy, print and publish the papers which came into their hands. Indeed, Rajwade is a fine example of a recluse, Bramhachari and Sanyasi, showing what one man can do, if he but determinedly applies himself to a self-imposed task, regardless of difficulties and undaunted by want of funds. Rajwade not only collected heaps of useful papers in unsuspected quarters, but showed what precious materials existed in private papers and account-books, in sanads and documents of charities, in judicial decisions and personal diaries, which till then used to be considered as practically useless. The size, and quality of any old paper, its make, the source from which it came, the kind of writing that it contained, and various other features of a like character, yielded most unsuspected results, when handled with the trained skill of Rajwade. On his own initiative he has printed and published till now 22 volumes, each of about 350 pages of original papers, with learned introductions which, although not necessarily related to the subject of the

printed papers, discussed various outstanding problems of history in general, and of Maratha history in particular, and imparted valuable guidance on the science, meaning and interpretention of human history, and origin of thought and language.

Rajwade has brought out not only useful old papers, but reconstructed from them Maratha history of all periods, and in its various branches. His dissertations on the origin of human thought and progress, his discoveries of the origin of scripts and of the Marathi language, his scholarly contributions to the development of social and political life in the various periods of Indian history, such as the Aryan colonization of Maharastra, will ever prove valuable guides to all students of the subject, although further study may disprove some of his theories. He directs his keen eyes without fear, from the Vedas down to the Peshvas. You read his voluminous writings, and you are wonderfully impressed by his massive intellect in attacking intricate problems. With the aid of old papers, copperplates, inscriptions, and derivation, he handles the subject of historical research with a thoroughness peculiar to himself. His penetrating genius, his single-minded devotion, his tremendous sacrifice of worldly comforts and honours, entitle him to ever-lasting gratitude from his countrymen. An austere scholar by temperament and choice, and with no other interest in life, Rajwade is nothing

if not strong, strong in his mind, strong in his body, strong in his convictions and strong even in his prejudices, of which he has many. Had he been as accurate a guide as he is a brilliant interpreter, he would verily have been the supreme leader of historical scholarship in India.

Rajwade's miscellaneous writings and investigations amount to some ten volumes more. On a rough calculation I can say, that he has brought out some 15,000 printed pages, without burdening any single person, all on his own initiative and resource. His writings are, however, heavy and uncouth, and never take account of the convenience or capacity of his readers. He would not cater to the taste of any one. His long prefaces and discussions come in any where, in any volume, which the ordinary student will often find it very difficult to follow. But when they are carefully studied, they will certainly repay the labour bestowed upon them. They evince not only high scholarship, but also slashing criticism.

5. *Parasnis.*

Rajwade's example soon attracted other workers in the field. The late Rao Bahadur D. B. Parasnis of Satara has rendered service to this cause, which ranks second only to Rajwade's, and which perhaps proves of greater immediate service to the student in studying past events. Not boasting of a high

or university education, but gifted with a brilliant memory and untiring energy, Parasnis did his work, also entirely on his own resources, and collected papers, rare books, pictures, and other materials, which go to form what is popularly known as the Parasnis Museum of Satara, now handed over to Government as a trust for public use. While Rajwade did his work independently of Government, Parasnis utilised Governmental help and co-operation to the utmost extent. He too has printed some 40 vols. of materials in the monthly magazines named *Bharat-varsa* and *Itihas-sangraha*, which would amount, I think, on a rough calculation to some 15,000 pages, the main portion of which consists of the *Daftar* or records of the famous Maratha politician Nana Fadnis, who had located them in his own house at Menavli at the foot of the Mahabaleswar hills.

6. *Khare.*

Another scholar of a different type and preparation, but equally devoted to study and work, the late Vasudev Vaman Shastri Khare, employed as a Sanskrit teacher at the Miraj High School, found useful papers with the Patwardhan sardar family of Miraj (in Southern Maharastra), dealing with the latter half of the 18th century. He made a wise selection of them and annotated and published them with well arranged and suggestive introductions. He has up to now 14 Vols. of

600 pages each to his credit. Khare's genius, not taking high flights like Rajwade's, proves immediately more useful to the average student.

These individual attempts could not long be ignored even by Government, who had in their possession heaps of old Marathi records, located in the Bombay Secretariat and the Land-Records office at Poona. The last contains what they call the *Peshwas' daftar*, from which selections have been made, and nine good volumes of correspondence and other papers, printed with suitable brief notices in English at the bottom of each page. These are known as the *Peshwas' Diaries*. It is hoped that the Government would continue this work of further selection. The Indian Historical Records Commission appointed by the Government of India and holding its sittings at different centres, is also the outcome of the keen interest that Government are taking in this national subject.

7. *B. I. S. Mandal of Poona.*

But mere individual efforts were not sufficient to create the proper historical spirit in the public mind. Rajwade, therefore, long ago suggested that we should have small bodies of scholars and workers, established in every principal town of Maharastra and outside, with a view to make a thorough search of historical materials in the neighbourhood, and to collect, discuss and publish them at

convenience. Such a net-work of Historical Societies would certainly have been most fruitful, but the suggestion was not widely taken up, except in a few places like Poona, Satara, Dhulia, Baroda, Indore and a few others. The Bharata-Itihasa-Sanshodhaka Mandal of Poona, has however earned a great reputation among them all. It has to its credit over a thousand paying members of various grades, a large fireproof building, and over 30 volumes of printed material, with a large store of old papers and critical essays. The scope of the Mandal is very wide as its proud name shows. It has devoted its labours not only to history, but to linguistic studies as well, by attending to the collection of old poetry, folklore and country-ballads, which occupy more than half its printed pages. But the most conspicuous service of the Mandal consists not so much in bringing out fresh materials, as in discussing at its fortnightly and yearly meetings, and threshing out innumerable knotty questions and problems, ascertaining their minute details, determining dates and incidents, by sifting the available evidence, and thus settling a good many controversies. The careers of Shivaji, his mother, father and grand-father and their various affairs, have been closely scrutinised and an amount of useful information has been brought out bearing on those dim earlier times. The fortuitous find by the late Lokamanya Tilak, of that rare document

known as the *Jedhe Shakavali*, has given a more definite shape to the life and chronology of Shivaji and his surroundings. The Mandal lacks popular support, particularly of the monied classes: many poor research-workers in the Deccan are struggling against want of funds, and if sufficient money were forthcoming, there would be a rapid and valuable addition to the stock of the Mandal's publications. It has also suffered in publicity, owing to its work being carried on only in Marathi, which cannot reach those who do not know that language. The Dhulia school of workers have directed their energies mostly to the literature of the Ramdasi sect, which only partially helps the main historic current of the Marathas, although very intensive in character.

All these publications and those of other individual workers, will, I think, amount to altogether some 200 printed volumes or about one lac of pages in Marathi, and nearly a quarter as much may be existing in a printed form in Persian, English and other languages, mostly concerned with Maratha history. With the help of a few friends, I once counted some 300 printed books all told on the subject. This appears a tremendously huge bulk; but what its real nature is, and what kind of service it has done, are questions on which I think I must say a few words. The history of the Shivaji period, which I may roughly date from 1600 to 1700, has undergone almost

a new construction. The careers of Shivaji and his ancestors, must now be entirely rewritten with full and authentic details, since we are now on a much firmer foundation of fact than about 30 years ago. The credit of this goes mainly to Prof. Sarkar outside Maharastra, since, without him, the Persian sources and the European records would not have been brought into use; but the credit equally goes to a devoted band of village to village workers, belonging to the Bharata-Itihasa-Mandal of Poona, of whom Rajwade was the pioneer.

The next period of Maratha history from 1707 to 1800, which can be roughly called the Peshva period, is being worked at. The first half, that is, up to the battle of Panipat, in 1761, has yet but scanty materials. Rajwade's first seven volumes have made it possible to rearrange this period, for which Irvine's *Later Moguls*, Vols. 1 and 2, is also partially useful. The post-Panipat period has already profuse original materials, and there selection becomes a difficult task, just as the scantiness of the papers in the earlier half of the century, obstructs the historian. The ten years' period from the murder of Peshwa Narayan Rao to the Treaty of Salbye, 1773-83, is replete with original papers, which, to my surprise, amounted to over 6,000 printed pages, Marathi and English, when I counted them. It is quite natural, time has made a havoc with older records; while as we approach our own times,

there is bound to be a larger mass available. The problem facing us in Maharastra in the immediate future, is not so much that of looking out for fresh materials for collection, but of selecting, printing and publishing those we have already secured, and utilising them for constructing a reliable story from them. There are bound to be some gaps here and there, but they can be filled up as time goes on. So if we have already printed some 200 volumes in Marathi, at least as many more can be easily and usefully brought out, out of the heaps yet lying unsorted with the Mandal at Poona, in the Peshwas' daftar in the custody of the Government, and in the Parasnis collection at Satara, not to mention various other individual possessions.

8. *Sardesai.*

Of all the printed volumes those of Mr. Khare only have been carefully arranged and annotated, while those of Rajwade and Parasnis having been published in a scrappy haphazard manner, so that to read, classify, index, and arrange them in chronological order and according to subjects, is a task which I undertook and which I have by now brought out, from the beginning up to the year 1774. I am at present working on the declining period of Maratha history, *i.e.*, the reign of Peshwa Madhav Rao II. I have so far done all my work in Marathi, and I could not help it as the original papers exist mostly

in Marathi. Some of Rajwade's most important papers appear in his volumes 1, 3, 6 and 8,—which are unfortunately now out of print. I had to read and arrange nearly all these papers, make a list of places, persons and incidents, find out the correct dates of them from such references or clues as may be existing in the contents of the papers; and when they were arranged in this way, they began to relate a story of their own. I therefore did not concern myself so much with hunting out fresh papers, as with arranging those that had already been printed. This gave me the chance of studying the whole course of Maratha history, disclosed by original sources. While Rajwade, Parasnis, Khare and other scholars, were doing immense labour in finding out and publishing new papers, they could not have a connected picture of the whole Maratha history before their eyes. They were too much pre-occupied with particular incidents or periods to spare attention for the whole. In fact, their energies were taken up, in the first place, in reading the old Marathi manuscripts, which is not at all easy. They are invariably in the old Modi hand, which changed from time to time. Rajwade is about the only expert in reading Modi of the earlier days. One has to read a paper of that age more than a dozen times, sometimes to show it to various others to see if they could decipher some of the difficult words or letters correctly. The letters usually bear no date,

sometimes only the day and the month. It is only the official *sanads* and formal State papers, which bear the date in three eras, the Muslim, the Marathi Shaka, and the era introduced by Shivaji at his coronation, 1674. But the usual class of private newsletters, concerning a thousand happenings all over the country, are as a rule without date, often the addressee and the writer are not at all mentioned, often also the top and the bottom have perished, and some are found mutilated. Heaps of such mutilated papers have been printed by Rajwade, which to an ordinary reader would not be clear, but as I had from the beginning made indexes of persons, dates, events, places and other references, I found I was able to decipher most of the mutilated papers from their contents or from their tenor, and I could fix nearly all the dates accurately, or at any rate, approximately. The *Patren Yadi* volume of the *Kavyetihas-sangraha* is indeed the most important, and my copy of it now contains all the corrected dates and other necessary references. In fact my copies of most of these books have all been marked, and if I were to print all the verified dates and other corrections, they would, I am sure, immensely benefit future students, but I cannot spare time for this useful work just now. With the greatest difficulty I have been able to prepare and publish a sort of working index of the two great printed collections, I

mean, those of Parasnis and of the B. I. Mandal of Poona, together with a complete list of all printed books, dealing with Maratha history, with the necessary details about them that a research student is likely to require. I am mentioning all this, in order to convey to you an idea as to the kind of work we have been doing in Maharastra. The process requires a lot of correspondence, and one has also to be watching carefully for outside lectures, discussions or articles of historical interest, that are published in the various magazines and news-papers all over the country. With all my labour I cannot claim to be exhaustive or complete. I must have lost sight of many useful points. My studies have grown on me, and even the indexes to my own notes are daily increasing, beyond the working powers of one man. Nor can I utilise the help of others in this task, because all the papers must, after all, pass through one brain, in order to secure uniformity of method and interpretation. There is unfortunately no division of labour possible under Indian conditions. The toils of writers are not here shared by the publishers, as is done in Europe. I have to be my own clerk, copyist, record-keeper, often my own printer and publisher and often also the financier. My only consolation is, that many brother-students are struggling like me at this time through similar difficulties, and this is the way in which we can all help one another. I draw your attention to all this,

in order that we may secure as much co-ordination as possible between the scattered efforts and agencies, that are engaged in this national task all over the country.

Another difficulty is due to the fact that India is a continent containing several languages, which all have more or less old historical materials. We at present need representative scholars of each nationality, working in its own language and publishing their results through a common medium, which, for higher thought and interchange of ideas, is bound to be English for a pretty long time. I am very anxious to render all my present Marathi volumes into English, so as to make them available to readers not knowing Marathi. I usually give out for public criticism my rough sketch in the form of articles in magazines or public lectures, specifically pointing out the places and the topics in which I feel I am not on a sure ground. There are often traditions, anecdotes, gossips, reports, poems, or bardic songs, from which one has to cull whatever they can yield, always keeping an eye on truth and the human probabilities of events. I also often publish for public criticism the rough character-sketches which I am able to compose, after reading the available materials. Sometimes I get a response, some have criticised my views, several have sent me additional information, and pointed out my errors. That is the way we can all help.

9. *The spirit actuating a national history,—the task before the nation.*

I should like to explain, while on this subject, the spirit in which I think a national history should be viewed. Foreign writers are often carried away by unjustifiable prejudices. Even the impartiality of a historian has its limits. He must remember that he is writing for his own people. He desires their edification, prosperity, well-being. He knows that he must point out national faults gently to correct them, and not severely and unsympathetically, so as to depress them for ever. He must suggest to them their good points, not to make them vain or boastful, but to encourage them to greater and nobler efforts. A historian is in fact to a nation what a father is to his children. Both in reward and punishment, the father has always the good of his children at heart. That is why national histories in all countries, have been written by one of the people. We must, of course, know what others have to say of us; but the sympathetic spirit must run in the vein throughout. For there is none in this world so perfect and faultless, nor none so useless as to be entirely condemned. All national heroes can be presented to the rising generation in whichever colour one likes to paint them. That is why histories written by foreigners and often unquestionably taken as authority by some of our own scholars, are

not found to possess the right spirit. There are, of course, exceptions and noble exceptions too. I am tempted to give here an instance of how history is often misread. Western writers of the early 19th century, have spoken of the Maratha Jagirdars as forming a confederacy of States. But a confederacy means an alliance of independent and equal partners formed for a particular purpose. The Confederacy of Delos is an instance in Greek history, and the *Entente Cordiale* in the last great war is another. Such a confederacy never existed in the Maratha State. There were doubtless Jagirdars, exercising influence and authority in various parts of India. But they were all subject to the central power, first, of the Chhatrapatis and afterwards, of the Peshwas; and if they disobeyed the Central Government frequently or occasionally, like the Barons of Feudal England, it was because the latter could not enforce obedience. The famous Ahalya Bai Holkar of Indore used to render yearly accounts of receipts or disbursements to the Peshwas right up to her death in 1795. An open defiance of the central authority took place only after the accession of Baji Rao II to power. Even Mahadji Scinde never avowedly disobeyed the Peshwa or his agent Nana Fadnis. So, the word confederacy has been used by writers for the Jagirdars of this Baji Rao II's period. The British then had begun to form independent dealings with them, such as with the Bhosles

of Nagpur or the Scindia or the Gaekwad, with the avowed object of detaching them from their allegiance to the Peshwa. The Gaekwad was the first to accept the British approaches and to throw off the authority of the Peshwa.

Indian history suffers from other causes also. India has several nationalities, and the want of co-ordination or sympathy between the writers of the various provinces, harms the main purpose. A Maratha or a Sikh or a Rajput is very often apt to make too much of his own race, and thereby give umbrage to others. This has resulted, as we look around us, in tension and disunion. I think, however, that if we always keep in view the ideal of building up an Indian nationality, out of all the elements that we have about us, we can all benefit ourselves by emphasising the good points that each Indian nationality can put forth on its behalf, from its own past records. We should all ungrudgingly welcome whatever others can say for themselves, provided it is supported by authentic evidence. Indeed, the two main races of India, the Hindu and the Muslim, being in the same boat, have been complements of each other, all through their historical past, and are practically indistinguishable from each other except in name. If the idealism of the Hindu and the practical spirit of the Muslim, could join for the service of humanity, for which the whole eastern world is crying, the cure

and safety of Asia would be permanently assured.

I have so far explained to you, how we in the south and the west, are occupied: we now need the help of the north and the east. I am told there are heaps of Persian papers all over northern India, scattered through many important towns, institutions, and individual families; and many more could be found if a search were made from place to place, by a band of workers like those of Maharastra. If these Persian papers are arranged and published, they will supply a fresh life-story of the northern races and their doings, and supplement or correct what the sources in Marathi, English and other languages have already yielded. In fact, we should get representative workers in each language and trust them to construct their own story from available sources. In this way, we can get together in the best first-hand manner, all the historical past of each community, as presented by their own students. Such separate contributions will ultimately go to form a comprehensive, united and authentic history of India, all from original sources. This is what we have got to do.

There are heaps of British records also, which we Indians ought to study from our own point of view. The East India Company's records have been printed in numerous volumes and are indeed valuable; but they do not supply the kind of information that we

need for our own history. The Imperial Records at Calcutta and the Records of the several provincial Secretariats, await research from Indian scholars. These with the Persian and Marathi records, will, when carefully worked, give out an acceptable story.

What we just now need most, is records of the type of the printed volumes of the *Calendar of Persian Correspondence* (Imperial Records Office, Calcutta), for the whole Peshwa period, particularly from 1707 to 1761, in which the Maratha influence attained its greatest expansion. It is a great boon that these Persian Calendars have been made available in English. I know it will be an equal boon to non-Maratha students, if some of the most important Marathi papers were to be published in English, in order that there may be a real interchange of research, between the two main currents of thought and language in India. But the task of rendering Marathi papers into English is well nigh hopeless, as there are already some 200 volumes available in print, of which I have spoken before. It is only recently that some of the Universities have taken up Indian history for post-graduate studies; if they had started it long ago, the results would certainly have been by now more encouraging. You will thus see what great need there is for an interchange of thought and discussion, if our national history has to be constructed on sure and scientific foundations.

But such a national history to be full and all-sided, must contain information on all topics, of which politics is only one, although doubtless an important portion. The Marathi papers contain an enormous amount of useful matter about social, religious, literary, military, industrial, judicial and other topics; but unless the main currents of political activities, have been determined from beginning to end, these other topics cannot be satisfactorily dealt with. A great deal of discussion has already taken place in Maharastra; and some published books, particularly those of the B. I. Mandal of Poona, contain much information of an all-India character, which will certainly bear translation into English, in order that the other parts of the Indian Continent, might be enabled to add to or improve upon, what Maharastra has tried to supply. A gentleman of Dhulia has carefully studied the old judicial papers and decisions and published from them a few useful articles upon the legal administration of the Marathas. Dr. S. N. Sen's *Administrative System of the Marathas*, published under the auspices of the Calcutta University, is an attempt in another direction, although the subject dealt therein, is yet in a crude stage, and requires being developed in many essentials, upon which fresh investigation is daily throwing new light.

History in its main object treats of the doings of those great warriors and statesmen,

who have cut a conspicuous figure in the past, but no national work of the kind could have been accomplished without the willing services and sacrifices of hundreds and thousands of minor persons, possessing more or less ability, and contributing their quota to the main current. Grant Duff and a few other writers of the early 19th century, made only a passing reference to the persons and families figuring in Maratha history; but when I began to scrutinise the heaps of papers now available, I found there were very many great and good names whose deeds history must take note of. I have been thus able to present to the readers a fresh account of over a hundred families, of all castes, with their genealogies, dates and other details, so that when these names occur in any paper we can identify them at once. I have, besides, tried to bring together all personal and social details of those families and their members, who had played any part in Maratha history, in order that we may be able to draw some instructive conclusions, as regards the life of society and its working in the days when Maharastra was practically enjoying Swaraj. If all these hundred families and their genealogies were to be carefully examined, one would deduce much useful information from them,— for instance, what the average working life of men of those days was, how far the conditions were favourable to the increase or decrease of population, what kind of education was in vogue,

and how it affected the moral and physical well-being of the nation. In this way can our national history be slowly constructed.

I have thus explained to you the kind of research we have been able to accomplish in my part of the country for some half a century now. You can easily imagine how very educative and intensive the work has been all round. The work particularly of the B. I. Mandal, involves serious travel, observation and discussion, in which many spirits young and old, have taken an active part. So I can say, without fear of contradiction, that the atmosphere of Poona and its surroundings, is surcharged with this inquisitive spirit and has educated the public mind to an extent, which deserves to be widely imitated in other parts of India. In my next lectures I will proceed to discuss some of the main points established by recent research, in order to bring home to you an idea of the vast extent of the work we have yet to get over.

LECTURE 3.

SHIVAJI'S CONCEPTION OF A HINDU EMPIRE

1. *Influence of Ramdas and other saints.*

As it is necessary for us to understand what the Maratha policy was and how it changed from time to time, we must go back and ascertain from documentary evidence the original aim of Shivaji, when he undertook the task of establishing an independent Maratha kingdom. Whether Shivaji contemplated the establishment of a Hindu empire for all the various peoples of India, or whether he confined his attention only to a small kingdom of his own in Maharastra, is a point on which opinions have differed rather sharply. I should, therefore, like to put down what view I have been able to come to, on this question, after taking into account the available evidence. From a small Jagir of his father confined almost to some two taluks of the present day, *i.e.*, from Junnar to Supa, Shivaji, before his death in 1680, extended his Raj, as I have said, roughly from the west-sea to the river Bhima on the east, and from the Godavari to the Kaveri in the south. I have already shown that Shivaji based his work on religion: it was to protect his religion that he started his campaigns, in

antagonism to Muslim aggression. In ascertaining the aim of Shivaji, we must take particular note of the surrounding atmosphere in which he was born and bred, and which has been amply reproduced in the contemporary works of the Indian saints, who spoke politics in terms of religion. These saints had realised that all north India was levelled to the ground under Muhammadan yoke; and the work of regeneration was undertaken by Shivaji in the south, calling himself a champion of Hinduism. Most of these saints had travelled far and wide throughout India, and freely mixed with the peoples of different places, had seen and observed the sufferings of the Hindus, the destruction of the temples and other holy places, and, in their own way, freely discussed what measures could possibly be taken to remedy this state of things and defend their religion. Ramdas, born 20 years before Shivaji and surviving two years after him, started his own campaign of religious regeneration, by establishing Ramdasi *Maths* or convents in various places, and helping the efforts of political leaders as much as possible. It is said that Ramdas established in all about 800 *Maths*, of which some 72 have been known as more important. His teachings had great influence right up to the southern-most point of India. In the province of Tanjore in the far south, the teachings of Ramdas had a great following, and for 200 years after him,

there was a considerable addition to the Marathi literature from this Tanjore section of Ramdas's followers. A number of poems, dictionaries, grammars, dramas, ballads and chronicles, came to be written in Marathi in the province of Tanjore, whose kings themselves were patrons of learning and took a large personal share in the productions. The results are deposited in the Saraswati Mandir at that town. Ananda-tanaya and Raghunath Pandit are famous among the Marathi poets of Tanjore, and are known as the followers of Ramdas's teachings. There, on the stone walls of the temple of Brahadishwar, was carved, in the early 19th century, a Marathi inscription, in bold, beautiful Devnagri characters, giving the whole history of the Maratha kingdom of Tanjore, which covers some 130 pages of a book in small print. Such a large historical inscription is nowhere else to be found in the whole world. At the time of Shivaji's death there were in Maharastra about 1200 followers of the Ramdasi cult. This large number of one particular type, working for the uplift of the country, strikes one as a grand creation of Ramdas, influencing the popular mind in shaping the political destiny of Maharastra. Ramdas's own writings deal both with religion and politics; they are acute and penetrating and breathe an intense national spirit in every expression. Styling himself *samarth* or powerful, Ramdas stood for an all-round

national regeneration and the conservation of the physical and moral resources of the people. They began to assemble in the *Maths* where they were profoundly impressed by the teachings of Ramdas as expounded in his great work, the *Dasa-bodha*, which led people to help the national work of Shivaji. They soon imbibed the underlying principles of Shivaji's moves, as they began to be crowned with success. What particular work was entrusted to these *Maths* from the point of view of political propaganda is not definitely on record. Each *Math* had a temple of Ram and Hanuman, with, we presume, several gymnasiums or *akhadas* attached to them, so that the main work of these *Maths* must have been, to increase the physical and moral strength of the people. As the *Dasa-bodha* grew up from day to day, it began to be read and studied in these *Maths*, having far reaching effects upon society in general. Ramdas urged that institutions small and big should be formed in all quarters, in order to increase the strength of the nation in every possible way. Large congregations used to assemble at the *Maths* to hear the sermons, and we know that most of the prominent associates of Shivaji, accepted the Ramdasi cult and followed his teachings. Thus, in the movement for Swaraj, Shivaji represented the physical and Ramdas the moral force of the nation. Shivaji had traditionally appropriated the diplomacy,

poetry, philosophy, and arts of old Vijayanagar into his own fresh ideal, and Ramdas with his experience and travel adopted for the acceptance of his nation the important tenets of the teachings of Nanak, Kabir, Chaitanaya and Tukaram, the great saints of India. The only difference between the two was that Ramdas was intensely practical, straightforward, outspoken and comprehensive. There is burning fire and force in every word of his. Shivaji from the beginning mixed very freely with all classes of people, and felt particular reverence for Ramdas and other saints and learned men, who had gained experience of the world. Shivaji's father and mother were already chafing under Muslim subjection, and constantly thought of measures for defending their religion and their country.

2. *The coronation ceremony and its purpose.*

Secondly, Shivaji's wars and campaigns, his plans and movements, and his words and arrangements, throughout his brilliant career of some forty years, when minutely examined, do not in the least show that he had restricted his vision to the Maharastra or Deccan only. He did not know that his life was going to be cut short by an untimely death; it could easily have been lengthened by at least another twenty years, even if we could not vouchsafe him the ripe old age which his opponent Aurangzeb reached. Shivaji's foundations were broad enough to sustain an

all-India fabric, to which his measures unmistakably pointed. The coronation ceremony, which he deliberately carried out with unequalled magnificence, under the direction of a scion of the celebrated Bhatta family of Benares, was of the truly ancient Kshatriya type of the Ashwamedha days, imitating the rites and splendour of an Ashoka, a Samudragupta, or a Harsha-vardhana. Shivaji had his ancient pedigree established through the Kshatriya family of Chitor, who claimed their descent from Shri Ramchandra. The titles which Shivaji assumed, *viz.*, *Kshatriya—Kulavatansa*, *Sinhasanadhishwara*, *Sri-Shiva Chhatrapati*, his avowed profession of the protection of cows and Brahmans as his goal, the motto on his official seal so thoughtfully composed, his acceptance of Marathi as the court language and his translation into practice, of the old shastric injunctions about the eight ministers and their duties, as also his avowed acceptance of the system of the four castes in which he claimed for himself the position of a Kshatriya, all these clearly point to a pan-Hindu ideal which would have been out of place for a small Maratha kingdom in the Deccan.

Thirdly, Shivaji's method of establishing and widening an independent kingdom, gives in itself a clue to his future aims, *viz.*, his introduction of the two claims of the *Sardeshmukhi* and the *Chowthai*, of which I am going to speak a little later. The former he

claimed from the Emperor Shahjahan as early as 1648, as hereditary *Watan* due to his position among the Maratha nation: while the latter he revived about the year 1660 when he conquered the north Konkan, where the Kings of Ramnagar used to exact it. From the beginning, he skilfully forged these two convenient weapons as a serviceable means to enable his nation, in the long run, to establish an all-Hindu empire.

3. *Befriending Hindu Princes.*

Fourthly, whenever the Emperor or other Muhammadan Kings were at war with Shivaji, he took care to differentiate between his various opponents. He never fought, as a rule, Hindu generals of the Emperor. He tried to be friendly to Jashawant Singh and openly won over Jay Singh, both Rajputs of high descent, to whom Shivaji showed great regard. A letter in Hindi verse, supposed to have been written by Shivaji to Jay Singh has been published by Babu Jagannath Das in the *Nagari-Pracharini Patrika.* It purports to mention Shivaji's objects in clear and emphatic terms. Even if the authenticity of the letter be questioned, it gives us a faithful idea of what the general impression of the society of the time was, as regards the move undertaken by Shivaji. It also reflects the actual state of things at the time. "O Great King," says Shivaji in the letter, "though you are a great Kshatriya, you have been using

your strength to increase the power of the dynasty of Babar. You are shedding blood of the Hindus, in order to make the red-faced Muslims victorious. Do you not realise that you are thereby blackening your reputation before the whole world? If you have come to conquer me, I am ready to lay down my head in your path; but since you come as the Deputy of the Emperor, I am utterly at a loss to decide how I should behave towards you. If you fight on behalf of the Hindu religion, I am ready to join and help you. You are brave and valiant, it behoves you as a powerful Hindu prince, to take the lead against the Emperor. Let us go and conquer Delhi itself. Let us shed our costly blood to preserve our ancient religion and give satisfaction to our thirsty ancestors. If two hearts can combine, they will break down any amount of hard resistance. I bear no enmity to you and do not wish to fight with you. I am ready to come and meet you alone. I will then show you the secret letter which I have snatched out of the pocket of Shayista Khan. If you do not accept my terms, my sword is ready." I have no time to quote many such letters here: one written by Shivaji to Emperor Aurangzeb on the subject of the Jazia is very eloquent, and can be read in translation in Prof. Sarkar's *Shivaji*. Shivaji's letters to his brother and his letter to Maloji Ghorpade are all convincing and set forth his objects clearly. They contain sentiments

which fully establish Shivaji's object of the Hindu-pad-Padshahi. His brother Vyankoji held himself to be a subordinate and Jagirdar of the Adilshah of Bijapur, which Shivaji would not tolerate. He would not allow Vyankoji to be either independent or subordinate to Bijapur, as his scheme of a Hindu empire would not brook an independent rival. That is why Shivaji had to lead an expedition against Vyankoji, and humble him into obedience. He offered Vyankoji a Jagir in the Deccan. Writes he to his brother: "God out of His grace has assigned me a mission. He has entrusted to me an all-India empire (*Sarva-bhauma-rajya.*) He has given me the strength to crush the Muslims, whose shelter you have sought. How can you succeed against me, and how can you save the Muslims? If you follow my advice, well and good; if not, you will surely have to repent." In his letter to Maloji Ghorpade Shivaji says;—"I have formed a league of all Maratha chiefs with the object of preserving their estates, in order that we should be masters in our own home: that we should preserve or destroy Muslim Kingdoms at our pleasure. All this effort is directed towards bringing all the Marathas together and making them strong. Why are you so much in love with the foreign Bijapur Kingdom? It is already reduced to dust. What can the Bijapur King give you, and why do you parade your loyalty to a Muslim king? That Pathan is not going

to benefit you in any way. We Marathas have already swallowed them up. You must remember that you are a Maratha, and that my object is to unite and raise you all into a strong nation."

It is doubtless clear that Shivaji had in his vision the Kshatriya races and their achievements in northern India. The Bundela king Chhatrasal was his friend, and came to the Deccan to seek his advice. Northern bards and poets specially came to Shivaji's Court and received his patronage.

4. *All-India travel and experience.*

Fifthly, Shivaji himself visited northern India, when he went to meet the Emperor at Agra. He purposely undertook this visit and had no compulsion for it from the Emperor. He utilised the occasion in learning the situation in the far north. Before starting, he coolly weighed the pros and cons of the undertaking with Jay Singh. In his interview with that prince, Shivaji had come to form certain plans which his movements thereafter confirm. Shivaji did strongly wish to see for himself what the Emperor and his Court were like, wherein their strength lay, and how he should thereafter behave towards them. To realise this fully, he made up his mind to proceed to the Emperor's Court. His marvellous escape from the imperial custody, is too well-known to be repeated here. On his return journey from Agra he visited

Mathura, Brindavan, Hardwar, Ayodhya, Prayag, Benares, Jagannath and other holy places. Returning home after a year's absence, he had utilised the interval in seeing the whole country, talking to all kinds of people, and gaining valuable experience, of which he made full use afterwards. This shows that Shivaji's plan included an all-India movement. This does not, of course, mean that he wished at once to have himself crowned as the Emperor of Delhi: that was impossible then. But his idea was ultimately to establish a Hindu empire of suzerain power for all India, gradually expanding it from its original base in the Deccan. Had he lived long enough, one feels sure, he would have achieved his object.

5. *Measures for uniting Maratha elements.*

There are many other points of minor importance, and papers of those times, which confirm the view I have taken. His trip to Golconda, his conquest of the Carnatic, and his expedition to Tanjore against his brother,—are simply links in the grand unifying chain of imperial aims, which become clear when the links are properly arranged. Shivaji always took care to win over his own Deccani Marathas with affectionate sympathy and goodwill, such as the Jedhes and the Bandals. He married eight wives with a set purpose, and not out of mere whim or pleasure. In those days of social inequali-

ties, he contracted these marriage connections in order to link together by matrimonial alliances, many Kshatriya families of the Deccan, as the Bhosles were by no means considered at the time high in the estimation of others. Bajaji Nimbalkar, who had been compelled to accept the Muslim faith by the Adilshah, was readmitted to Hinduism by Shivaji, who then gave his own daughter in marriage to Bajaji's son. Of all Maratha families, the Moreys were the only ones whom he handled rather severely, otherwise, he fought with no Hindu general but made friends with Hindu statesmen at foreign courts, such as Madanna and Akanna of Golconda. It must, however, be clearly understood, that although Shivaji's highest aim was to uphold the Hindu religion, he had no ill-feeling towards the Muhammadans as a community or towards Muhammadan kingdoms, if they would accept his suzerainty. He considered himself a protector of all faiths and sects, and treated all of them equally. He, as we know, gave *Inam* lands and annuities to Muslim shrines and institutions. He had faithful Muhammadans in his own service, occupying high posts of trust and honour. When he was a captive of the Emperor at Agra, his life was saved by a Muhammadan *Faras* named Madari Mehtar. His principal naval officer was a Musalman. He took the help of all and had places for all, in his service.

6. *Aurangzeb's correct estimate of danger.*

And lastly, the best evidence of Shivaji's aims is supplied by Emperor Aurangzeb himself. Why did such a shrewd and wise Emperor spend the best part of his life and all his imperial resources in the conquest of the Deccan? One cannot say that he was acting thoughtlessly or in a chimerical fashion. Aurangzeb clearly saw the danger to his empire. He well knew Shivaji's aims. He was convinced that Shivaji aimed a blow at the empire itself. That is the reason why, as soon as he learnt that Shivaji was dead, he came down to finish the matter once for all. That it proved futile is another question. But the wise Emperor's policy clearly proves the aims which Shivaji had formed, and which his successors persistently tried to accomplish.

7. *How Shivaji's example inspired.*

Piecing together all such evidence, we can now easily conceive, that at a time of intense depression, the Marathas were able to fire the imagination of all the martial races of India, to whom the example of Shivaji and his followers, imparted not only the Maratha spirit and enthusiasm, but also their hope and patriotism, and a practical lesson in warfare and independence, which soon became so catching, that they fired the hearts of the Sikhs, the Jats and the Rajputs who all seized the opportunity for a national rising after the death of Aurangzeb. I will now try to explain

how the original conception of Shivaji came to be changed.

We know how from small beginnings Shivaji laid the foundation of the Maratha Kingdom, the exact constitution of which has been variously interpreted. Some liken his constitution of the eight ministers to present day cabinets; but these eight ministers had no independent powers, and Shiviji cannot be said to have made an arrangement involving on his part the surrender of any bit of his authority in favour of any of his ministers. Shivaji was an autocrat, a benevolent despot, however wisely he may have ruled his kingdom. His whim was law, although he directed it to the best interests of his nation. As a rule, we eastern peoples are swayed, in all our concerns, political, social or any other, by entirely individual influences. We have never been amenable to the discipline required for the healthy conduct of constitutional bodies. Even the word 'constitution' is foreign to us. Particularly has this been the case with the Marathas. If we are fortunate enough to have a wise chief to direct our destinies, our affairs look bright and prosperous: if we happen to get a bad ruler or a nonentity at the head, we decline. "If good, so much the better; if evil, tyrannical and oppressive, they must needs submit and wait until the tyranny was overpassed." So long as Shivaji was living, the whole nation supported and obeyed him: the moment he

was gone and affairs fell into the hands of his degenerate son, the whole nation was at his mercy for weal or woe. His second son Raja Ram, in later days, allowed full scope to his ministers and generals, whose exceptional capacity enabled the nation to wage a successful war with the greatest of the Mogul Emperors. Things took an altogether different turn at the return of Shahu after Aurangzeb's death, and constituted, what we can call a complete transformation in Maratha policy from its original form, and it is my purpose now to explain it.

8. *Chowthai, its origin and purpose.*

One very useful instrument of a political character, which Shivaji wisely forged and himself brought into practice, was his system of levying impositions on an enemy country known as *Chowthai* and *Sardeshmukhi*, the former being of the nature of a tribute exacted from hostile or conquered territories, and the latter a kind of revenue ownership, that is, *Watan* as they called it, which the leaders of the Maratha bands claimed as their own in the old Bahmani days, and which they never ceased to exact in later times. The practice of exacting Chowth, *i.e.*, one-fourth of the estimated revenue, is supposed, on fresh evidence recently published, to have existed in the Western parts of India long before the days of Shivaji. Prof. Pissurlencar of Goa, after examining the Portuguese archives

there, has published papers dating 1595, 1604—1606, and 1634, showing that the Raja of Ramnagar in north known, exacted this Chowth from the Portuguese possession of Daman, on the ground that those territories used to pay the Chowth to the kings of Ramnagar, before they passed into the hands of the Portuguese. The practice was quickly taken up by Shivaji and was applied by him to the territories and principalities, which he overran or subjugated, guaranteeing, in return for the payment, immunity from any more exactions on his own part, and security from molestation by any other conqueror. This practice of levying Chowth on foreign territories either fully or partially conquered, or often merely overrun, proved a ready instrument in the hands of Shivaji's successors and enabled them to expand their power to the various distant quarters of India. During the critical and confused times that followed the capture of Sambhaji by Aurangzeb, this practice of levying Chowth proved a useful measure to the various leaders of roving Maratha bands, and enabled them to resist the Emperor successfully. It is in this measure, coupled with the system of guerilla tactics, that we can trace the subtle influence of Maratha power, which began slowly to eat into the vitals of the Mogul Empire. It will be worth our while to go a little more deeply into the subject, and fully grasp the various factors existing in the situation of Maharastra,

in order to understand the changes that took place later on, that is, during the latter days of Aurangzeb's invasion and at the time of his death.

9. *Love of the Maratha Deshmukhs for their patrimony.*

The Marathas have been described as by nature very jealous of their *Watans* or lands inherited from ancestors, for which they had often paid dearly even with their lives. When during the Bahmani rule or perhaps even earlier, the country of Maharastra was settled and brought under cultivation, the inducement offered to the various Maratha families was the grant of *Watan* lands in perpetuity. The hilly sloping country of the Western Ghats, known in history as the Mavals, or the land of the setting sun, was first cleared of forests and wild animals, and made habitable by several immigrant Kshatriyas now known by the common appellation of the Mavalas, whom later Shivaji subdued and turned into helpmates, mainly by stratagem and occasionally by the sword, but who in the beginning acted as independent rulers of the tracts which they owned as Deshmukhs, meaning heads of the *Desh*, or feudal landlords, as we can style them now. The Moreys, the Shirkes, the Dalvis, the Jedhes, the Jadhavs, the Nimbalkars, the Khopdes and others, who all figure so prominently in the early activities of Shivaji, were hereditary Deshmukhs or

Watandars, whose duty it was to settle and inhabit the country, so as to make it yield revenue to Government. The process was long and troublesome, involved a tremendous cost of life, labour and money, and naturally created intense love and interest in the owners' mind for the land which they served and improved. The Government of the country granted these Maratha adventurers periodical leases and immunity from taxation. When the lands came to be finally improved and became capable of yielding an annual revenue, the work of collection was entrusted to these same Deshmukhs, who were asked to pay 90% of the estimated revenue to Government, keeping for themselves the remaining 10% as a reward for their labours. This share of 10% came to be called Sardeshmukhi, and was in essence and origin, a source of hereditary income, which all Maratha Sardars from the Chhatrapati down to the smallest holder claimed as their ancestral patrimony, which they most jealously guarded and preserved, even at the risk of life. Readers of Maratha history may remember how Chhatrapati Shahu strictly and rigidly reserved for himself this 10% charge of the Sardeshmukhi dues, when his Peshwa Balaji Vishvanath obtained from the Sayyads, imperial sanads of Chowth and Sardeshmukhi in the year 1718, and how he distributed the proceeds of the latter among his various favourites and the persons who had helped him in his difficul-

ties. The Bhosles themselves were originally Sardeshmukhs on a par with the Jadhavs and Moreys, although they succeeded in establishing an independent kingdom later on. This nature of Sardeshmukhi deserves to be clearly noted as distinct from that of the Chowth, a different item altogether, which was mainly designed for subjugating foreign territory, and which had the nature of a tribute.

The Maratha Deshmukhs had thus vested interests in the lands of the Deccan for centuries before the rise of Shivaji, and were practically independent of the ruling authorities, who could chastise them only if they failed to pay the Government revenue. The precarious and adventurous life which for a long time they led in the Maval lands, has been reflected in the plentiful old papers, which have been lately discovered and published, mainly by Mr. Rajwade in his volumes 15 to 20, which deal with the Shivaji period. Disputes about rights and possession, about heirs and succession, about thefts and robberies, murder and molestations of various kinds, which were so numerous and acute for about a century before the rise of Shivaji and which have been fully described in those papers, supply a clear idea about the state of the country at the time and the manner in which Shivaji utilised them to his own advantage. Shivaji, shrewd as he was in estimating the inherent capacity of these Mavalas, found in them ready material for

his nation-building activities. The strength and energy of these Maval Deshmukhs, were till then being entirely wasted in internecine disputes and family feuds, making murder, arson, waylaying and other crimes matters of common occurrence, which the distant rulers of Bijapur and Ahmadnagar could hardly check or stop, owing to the difficult and impassable nature of the country and the turbulent spirit of the people. In fact, Shivaji's father Shahaji had already enlisted the sympathies of some of these Mavala Deshmukhs, in his wars against the onrushing Moguls, leaving the completion of his task to his astute son Shivaji. The Jedhes and the Bandals who were in Shahaji's employ, continued to help his son Shivaji when he started his national work in Maharastra, and after his father had transferred his own field of activity to the distant South. Of the Mavala Deshmukhs the Moreys happened to be by far the most powerful and influential in the service of Bijapur, and having resisted the early activities of Shivaji, came into direct conflict with him and brought upon themselves severe chastisement at his hands. In accounting for the rapid and phenomenal success of Shivaji, we must take note of this turbulent spirit of Mavala Deshmukhs and their intense love for their original patrimony. In the latter days of Maratha rule, we often notice how the Scindias of Gwalior, the Powars of Dhar, or the Gaekwads of Baroda, jealously

guarded their small hereditary Deshmukhis in the Deccan, even when they had created extensive kingdoms for themselves outside in Malwa and Gujarat. The *Saranjami* system of the Peshwas, it will be seen later, is based on this love of the Marathas for their hereditary lands in the Deccan.

10. *Origin of Sardeshmukhi and Saranjami.*

To understand the real nature of Sardeshmukhi, we must study the structure and practices of the village Government obtaining in Maharastra from the profuse materials which have been published in the form of the legal decisions of the disputes of those times. The *Watan* claims have been of various kinds. The Patel is the head-man of the village, looking after all its concerns and the *Kulkarny* is his writer who keeps the village records. The Patel and the Kulkarny used to have land assignments for their services, *i.e.*, also *Watans* in a certain sense. Patwaris and Pandes, Goudas and Nadgoudas are merely provincial synonyms of the Patel and the Kulkarny, the first two being used in the Central Provinces, and the last two in the Canarese country in the South. *Desai* is the corruption of the Sanskrit term *Desha-swami*, also termed Desh-mukh. The *Sardeshmukh* stands above several Desais or Deshmukhs, *i.e.*, looking after a group of several villages. *Saranjami* in later times came to mean land assignment given for military service: the

word *Saranjam*, which means provision, occurs in papers of Shivaji's time. When a title or a mark of honour, such as a horse, an elephant, or a palanquin was bestowed by the King upon his deserving servants or subjects, it was supposed to carry with it a provision for its maintenance, *viz.*, the *Saranjam*. In later times, however, this word came to mean provision for military service only; for employing and maintaining troops to fight the battles of Government: those holding landed Saranjams of this nature are styled Saranjamdars, who date their rise particularly from the times of Shivaji's son Raja Ram and who were chiefly instrumental in the expansion of Maratha power during the Peshwas' times. In popular language the words Saranjam and Jagir mean nearly the same thing. The present Rajas and Maharajas such as those of Gwalior, Indore, Baroda, Dhar, Dewas in Central India, or of Miraj, Sangli, Jamkhindi or Ramdoorg in the South, were all Saranjamdars of a certain type, with definite rules and regulations about their service, which we find amply illustrated in the *Peshwas' Diaries* printed from the Poona Daftar (Vols. of Madhav Rao I). As this system of Saranjamdars has come to be known as the particular creation of the Peshwas and has often been held more or less responsible for the fall of the Marathas, it is necessary to understand its exact origin and nature in the constitution of the Maratha kingdom.

Shivaji was deadly against assigning lands for any purpose whatsoever, and stopped the old practice with a firm hand, often confiscating all lands and Jagirs which had been made over to generals during preceding regimes, and substituting cash payment for them. Rajwade's volumes 15-18 and 20 are full of papers which show, how Shivaji laid his hand on all lands which had been given away. He clearly realised the disadvantages of the system of creating feudal lords. In those days of unrest and confusion, it was difficult, particularly on account of the absence of good roads and means of communication, to exercise strict control over military leaders enjoying feudal Jagirs. They often rebelled against authority, openly joined the enemy, invariably neglected to keep efficient troops for service, and tried to accumulate money and power at the expense of the State. Although of course the allurement of landed Jagirs succeeded for a time in securing conspicuous service and daring from soldiers and their leaders, their successors were not necessarily as brave, willing and faithful, in their service and claimed to enjoy their patrimony without giving an adequate return to the State. One who acquired the Jagirs for the first time, must have been a fit person deserving the reward for the service and sacrifice which he had rendered to the State; but his successors usually proved quite unfit; if they were dispossessed of their holdings, they be-

came disaffected and troublesome to the State in a hundred ways. Shivaji very early in his career fully realised the disadvantages of the system, and paid all kinds of service in ready cash, with which he was ever careful to keep himself well supplied. He even confiscated lands given to various religious institutions or charities, and substituted cash payment for them.

But this wise policy had to be discontinued after Shivaji's death, owing to a combination of adverse circumstances to which I must now refer. The powerful Emperor Aurangzeb descended upon Maharastra in 1683, with a huge and well-equipped army, determined to complete the task of subjugating the Deccan, begun by his three illustrious predecessors, and put into the field the vast resources of his imperial rule to attain his object. The very names of the generals who served under him, would have struck terror into any people he proposed to conquer. In a short time he annexed the two kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda, captured and killed the Maratha King Sambhaji, taking into captivity his wife and son, and nearly accomplishing his grand purpose with one stroke. It was in the midst of such a depressing situation, that Shivaji's second son Raja Ram started his work of saving his nation, by catching at any and every means that came ready to his hands, working also the system of Chowthai for extending the Maratha power. How he

obtained adherence to his cause, can be well understood from the following typical letter written by Raja Ram in July 1696 to Sadashiv Naik, the Ruler of Sunda, a small State to the south-east of Goa. The letter was written from Jinji, when the Emperor was threatening to conquer not only the Marathas, but also other more or less independent States and territories throughout South India. Thus runs the letter. "We are glad to have received your letter and the messages which you sent with your two trusted agents Konherpant and Rayaji Rukmangad, who have communicated and explained to us, all the details of the negotiation in connection with your offer of mutual help and perpetual friendship in our present situation. We have considered the proposal fully in conference with our Ministers Shankaraji Pandit Sumant and Nilo-krishna, and are glad, as requested by you, to commit this agreement to writing, and send it on to you with our solemn oath for its observance on our part, and trust you will do the same on yours.

"Your proposal was that the territory of the Panch-Mahals with all its forts and places, should be assigned to you and your successors in perpetuity, in return for a yearly tribute of 22,200 Hons (=Rs. 78,000), an amount which you are at present paying to Muhammadan rulers. We accept this proposal, undertake to vanquish the Muhammadans and protect you from them or from any other

enemies that will molest you. When your enemies will be so vanquished, you must regularly pay the amount of tribute to us from year to year. Moreover, you must also carry on an aggressive war with the Muhammadans, and we vouchsafe to you the fresh territory you will be able to conquer from the enemy, on payment by you to us, of the customary tributes assigned to those territories, in token of our suzerain power. When you would be threatened or molested by any outsider, our forces shall at once run to your help, and win peace and safety for you. Thus shall we continue ever to remain friendly with your State, and in token of our solemn promise to that effect, we send you separately *bilva* leaves and flower garlands of Mahadev and bread. We trust you will accept these and continue to increase the solemn friendship ever hereafter—." (D. V. Apte's *Itihas-manjari*, p. 131).

When Raja Ram fled from Maharastra to Jinji there was no money in his treasury. Raygad the capital of the Maratha kingdom was in the hands of the Emperor. There were no Maratha army and no government. It
>nly the undaunted brains of a few clever
>rters of Raja Ram, warriors and states-
that rose to the occasion and invented
ıs and appliances in order to save the
tion as best they could. The Emperor,
ıe other hand, kept a full watch over the
ıures and activities of his opponents and

did his best to seduce the Maratha fighters, by offering them all possible inducements to join his army, and fight the fugitive Chhatrapati. He granted Inams and Jagirs to those Maratha leaders who had been persecuted by Sambhaji and thereby managed to weaken the Maratha cause fearfully. In these adverse circumstances Raja Ram and his advisers were compelled to offer, on their part also, the same inducements to their helpers, in order to retain their services and allegiance. I might here give a sample of what Raja Ram wrote to the Maratha leaders: "We note with pleasure that you have preserved the country and served the King loyally. You are highly brave and serviceable. We know that you hold Inam lands from the Emperor, but that you are now ready to forsake him and fight for us and suffer hardships for us and our nation. The Emperor has created a havoc in the land. He has converted Hindus wholesale to his creed. Therefore, you should cautiously conduct measures of safety and retaliation and keep us duly informed of your services. If you do not swerve from loyalty and if you help the State in its present sore extremity, we solemnly bind ourselves to continue your hereditary holdings to you and your heirs and successors." In this letters and sanads for Inams and Jagirs b to flow from the Maratha Court in an broken current. The main purport of t was, that the Maratha bands should r

anywhere and everywhere, plunder the imperial treasure and territory, and harass the enemy in all possible ways. These sanads were nothing but mere promises of future reward, *i.e.*, the military leaders would be considered owners of the territory they would subjugate in any quarter of India. This game became profitable for a time to the roving Maratha bands; they borrowed money, raised troops and carried on expeditions to distant parts. Let me quote only one instance. Ramchandra Pant, the great Amatya of Raja Ram, recommends to his master the services of one Patankar in a letter which runs thus: "These Patankars own hereditary *Watans*. They have undertaken to raise 5,000 troops and will be styled Pancha-sahasri. This kingdom belongs to Gods, Marathas and Brahmans; the Patankars have undergone terrible hardships in crushing the armies of the enemy. In this task they not only spent all they had, but contracted huge debts. Therefore, their sacrifices deserve to be adequately rewarded and so we shall allow them the following 12 villages in perpetual *Inam*." Requests for similar *Inams* and rewards began to pour in thousands before the Maratha administrators of the day. They particularly bring their five-fold service to the notice of the Chhatrapati. They say (1) "we have not joined the Moguls; (2) we have managed to carry on cultivation; (3) we pay revenue to Government; (4) we have employed large

forces to protect the country from robbers and raiders, and, in addition (5) we fight the battles of the Chhatrapati at the risk of our lives." This is not all. They also repeat the inducements that the Emperor had offered them, and demand something better from their own kings, saying to the Chhatrapati, "We, your own kith and kin, should not at least fare worse than strangers who come and obtain handsome rewards from the Emperor." We thus clearly see how the system of Jagirs and military Saranjams, so sternly put down by Shivaji, came to be revived once more, and how it took deep root during the long and confused period of the Emperor's campaigns in the Deccan. In fact the confusion about these grants of *Inams* was so great, that Raja Ram on his return from Jinji to Satara, had to appoint a special Court of enquiry to adjust all land *Watans* and revoke or confirm them on certain fixed principles, but Raja Ram soon after died in 1700, and his queen Tara Bai managed the Government for the next few years, trying her best to stop the practice of granting new Saranjams, and even to cancel some of those that had already been given. She and her advisers were fully aware how the departure from the healthy regulations of Shivaji, was leading the kingdom towards ultimate ruin, but were unable, under the stress of circumstances and for self-protection, to stop the practice which by prescription had become confirmed for years.

11. *Perversion of the original object.*

It soon became very difficult for the central Government to keep these Jagirdars in proper check and exact discipline and service from them. They even gave Inam lands within their sphere, to whomsoever they pleased. I give a sample here of the sanads issued by the Chhatrapati in answer to the clamorous petitions that poured constantly for *Inams;* they run thus :—

"At such and such a place you came to His Highness the Chhatrapati with a request that your ancestors had been serving the State in succession for a long time. That you yourself also wish to serve loyally and faithfully ever hereafter; that you have a large family, and that His Highness should out of kindness provide for its maintenance. Taking this request of yours into kind consideration, High Highness has been pleased to grant such and such a village as *Inam* in perpetuity to you, your heirs and successors. We enjoin on all our successors, on oath, that this *Inam* should not be taken back." Such requests evidently mean that what was granted first for hazardous and faithful service, was claimed by the successors for mere maintenance and enjoyment of a large family of idlers, who rendered no service to Government and claimed gratuitous payment. This habit of enjoying land assignments without giving any labour in return, sapped the very founda-

tions of public service and even the morals of the society itself. The Brahmans continued to extract any sum from one rupee to a lac and more, from Government who had assumed the pleasing role of protecting Brahmans and cows, for no other visible service than the questionable merit of performing religious rites and showering blessings upon the King and the State. It was a beggary of the very worst type, giving prominence to birth, heredity and prescriptive rights, leaving no room to Government for the recognition of fresh merit and individual sacrifice. Those who served and sacrificed themselves, and those who did not, came to be put on the same level. This was the greatest defect of the Saranjami system.

It is also interesting to trace how all these defects came to be perpetuated under the conditions that then prevailed. During the confusion and weakness that overtook the Mogul empire after Aurangzeb's death, many proud and ambitious Maratha leaders roamed about the country, and took possession of whatever territories they could lay their hands on : but this conquest was by no means homogeneous like the Raj of Shivaji, which he had conquered by means of armies paid by himself and directly controlled by him. The various Maratha leaders of the later days, were not subject to the control of one single power and were scattered units having no cohesion. The astute Amatya Ramchandra

Pant tried to control them to some extent, but they often proved recalcitrant, looking to their own selfish interests and being ever ready to join the enemy, if better prospects were offered them. If Ramchandra Pant had tried to enforce stricter discipline on them, they would in all probability have openly accepted the Mogul service. Owing to these difficulties the Marathas could not gradually build up a solid constitution by degrees, as did the British in their own country. Besides, such a comparison is often pointless, as we have not before us all the facts of the situation. Many problems of history can be rightly solved, if we have a proper conception of the surroundings and circumstances affecting them. We can know very well, why the Government founded by Shivaji did not last long after him and how the system built up by the Peshwas differed entirely from Shivaji's original conception. So, no hard and fast constitution could in those days be thought of, when there were many disturbing elements facing the workers all round.

One reason why the system of creating Jagirs or military commands at different places all over the country, became absolutely necessary during the Peshwas' days, was that there were no military roads for rapid communication and movement of armies, from the seat of Government to any threatened point. During Shivaji's days the central Mogul Government was powerful and he

dared not cross the Narbudda for any ambitious project beyond; he remained satisfied with whatever he could achieve in Maharastra proper and in the farthest south. But after Aurangzeb's death, there was a general scramble for conquest and power, in which even the western nations began to take part. If the Peshwas had confined their efforts to the south only, the Rajputs and provincial Governors and local chiefs of the north would in all probability have established independent rulerships, which it would have cost the Peshwas more effort and expense to conquer. So, having realised that the time was opportune for carrying out Shivaji's ideal of Hindu-pad-padshahi, the leaders assembled and took counsel together at the Court of Shahu, and with his permission, formed plans of conquest, divided the spheres of work between the various workers and despatched them on their mission. The idea was to choose a centre for military control, and establish there permanent Maratha settlements, with strong family interests, a method by which the country soon became dotted with small Maratha capitals, each with a wall or fort and having a sufficient establishment for military and revenue purposes. In its original conception and plan, the system had no inherent defects; and had there been provision for sufficient check from the central Government and no tendency for insubordination on the part of the leaders, it would have

worked well; in fact it did work satisfactorily as long as the controlling authority in the Deccan was strong, and there was also no interference from European Powers of superior organisation and armament. Thus, the Saranjami system supplied the want of good military roads from Satara and Poona to the various centres outside, which it was not possible for the Peshwas to build in a short time, and with the scanty resources which they possessed. Even before the leaders started on an expedition, they tried to obtain *sanads* for Jagirs for the territories which they proposed to invade. The advent of Shahu did not improve matters. The Peshwas did try to reduce to obedience the older ministers and leaders of Shivaji's days; but in order to accomplish this, they had to create new Sardars of their own, like the Scindias and the Holkers, who later imitated their predecessors and in their own turn resented control from the Peshwas. If the Peshwas had attempted to enforce stricter discipline, they would not have succeeded in accomplishing even what they did. In fact, the India of the 18th century, with the weakening of the central Government, afforded a particularly favourable field to very many ambitious and roving spirits. The provincial Governors of the Emperors, such as Safdar Jang, Alivardi Khan, Nizamulmulq, the various Bundela princes and Sikh generals, Jat and Rohilla Chiefs in the north, the Nawabs

of Savanur, Kadappa, Karnool, Arcot, and the more or less powerful rulers of Mysore, Sunda, Bednor and other places in the south,—all these tried, each in his own way, to obtain independent power and submitted to superior strength only for the time when they were compelled. The Maratha armies often reduced them to obedience, but the moment the armies left their frontiers, they at once resumed their previous independence. Year after year, the Peshwa had to send military expeditions all over India to collect tributes: the Hindu-pad-Padshahi which the Peshwas attempted to establish, was more in name only than an actully accomplished fact.

LECTURE 4

SHAHU AND THE MARATHA EXPANSION

1. *Early life of Shahu,—situation at Aurangzeb's death.*

Having taken a review of the conditions under which the Maratha kingdom had its start, and of the development of the Saranjami system, we shall now turn our attention to the next phase of Maratha polity, which has reference to the changes that took place in the situation of Maharastra in consequence of the death of Aurangzeb. This situation contains some salient features which do not seem to have been properly grasped by students of Maratha history, and which alone will enable us to form a proper estimate of the policy and achievements of the Peshwas. The first and foremost point that deserves to be noted in this connection is, the nature and character of Shahu's personality, which not only influenced and controlled Maratha politics during his active life of nearly half a century, but gave a definite shape to the future life of the Maratha kingdom. Next to the great founder Shivaji, Shahu has played the most important part in the development of the Maratha State. Shahu, born in May 1682, roamed about as a child with his circumspect mother Yesubai and his dashing father Sambhaji, undergoing exceptional privations and troubles, which came to an end when he was

captured at the age of seven by Aurangzeb at the fall of Raygad, and kept in secure custody in the moving imperial camp, where all personal comforts were provided for him, by the kindly attentions of Aurangzeb's daughter Zinat-un-ŋisa Begam. Aurangzeb himself, feeling more pity than hatred for this son of his dead enemy, brought him up in his own camp, with a view to use him as a pawn in his object of destroying the Maratha power as circumstances would require. Having spent in captivity 18 long years, that is the best part of his youth or the period for learning and study, and having been brought up in the Imperial Zenana, Shahu attained an altogether soft and effeminate character, although he never lost his innate love and warmth of heart towards his own people; he also possessed common sense, practical wisdom in judging men and matters, and above all an intensely obliging nature. He was always afraid of committing sin or doing wrong. His great and only drawback was his want of taste for active military life, and aversion to leading soldiers on a battle-field. He thus remained always ignorant of even the geography of the various places, where his ministers and commanders were executing his plans and orders. At the age of 25 he was released and sent into the Deccan, with the clear purpose of creating divisions in the Maratha ranks. He had to dispute the Maratha throne with his cousin Shivaji and

his astute aunt Tara Bai. Shahu's mother and cousins were taken to Delhi as hostages, lest he would throw away his allegiance to the Emperor and declare his independence. In fact, it was upon his stipulating always to remain a loyal vassal to Delhi and obey the orders of the Emperor, that he was released and allowed to go back to his country from beyond the Narbudda. Possessing a God-fearing and pious nature, he faithfully observed his promise, and ever after strongly resisted all temptations or solicitations to declare open hostility against the imperial authority. His grandfather Shivaji started his life's work in declared opposition to the Muslim regime, by the suppression of which he hoped to establish an independent kingdom of his own. Shahu, on the other hand, altogether renounced this avowed principle, even forgot the terrible war which his father and uncle had waged with the Emperor for a quarter of a century, and ordered his generals and ministers to carve out new spheres of influence and activity, without damaging the central Mogul authority. This impossible task was thrown on the shoulders of Shahu's Peshwas, who did their best, on the one hand, to keep Shahu at ease, and on the other, to carry out the work of the Hindu-pad-Padshahi, as best they could, clearly keeping in view the ideal of Shivaji, as much as possible, in the altered conditions of their position. In fact, the very first campaign of Peshwa Balaji Vishvanath

against Delhi in 1718, was undertaken at the express desire of Shahu to help the Emperor Farrukhsiyar out of his wretched situation. This dubious position of the Peshwa must always be kept in view, in order to understand the oft-repeated anomaly, why the Nizam was allowed to be a constant and dangerous neighbour, and why he was not finally conquered or crushed by the Peshwas in the south.

2. *Division of the Maratha Kingdom,—why Peshwas looked to the north.*

How skilfully Shahu managed to put a stop to the civil war, which, by his release, the Emperor expected to start in the Deccan, in order thereby to crush the rising Marathas indirectly, may be gathered from the way in which, Shahu, immediately after his coronation in January 1708, offered his cousin Shivaji a half share of the kingdom as it then existed, although Tara Bai claimed the whole of it. The situation of Shahu in the Deccan for the first four or five years after his release, was quite precarious. Tara Bai declared him an imposter, alleging that the kingdom which the great Shivaji had founded, had been lost by his son Sambhaji, that Raja Ram, her husband, had created it entirely anew, that therefore it legally belonged to her son only, and that Shahu had no claim to it. Shahu, however, showed phenomenal activity in his first struggle with his aunt and cousin, which

lasted some four years, at the end of which she and her son were taken prisoners by Sambhaji, the second son of Raja Ram, with whom Shahu later on entered into a treaty of peace. He made two divisions of the kingdom, that to the south of the river Krishna he made over to Sambhaji, taking for himself the one to the north of that river. Already the whole Maratha kingdom at the time hardly extended beyond the two modern districts of Satara and Poona, and although having divided it into two halves Shahu came to possess quite an insignificant area, he secured, by the above mentioned arrangement, liberty to acquire a fresh field for extension in the north, as the south was closed to him. This point must be clearly borne in mind by those, who are disposed to find fault with Shahu for having undertaken costly distant expeditions in the north, before setting in order his own house in the Deccan. The famous controversy between Shahu's Pratinidhi and his Peshwa Baji Rao I, which has been graphically described by Grant Duff and others, centres round this division of the Maratha kingdom, and shows how Shahu had no choice in the matter. He had either to remain quiet, without hope of ever extending his dominion, or forcibly to create a new kingdom in the north. When the division was effected, it was understood that both Sambhaji and Shahu were to work zealously in their respective spheres; but Sambhaji wasted away his resources and

opportunity, his time and energy, in useless family squabbles, while Shahu employed in his service, such active and vigorous men as Peshwa Baji Rao, Senapati Dabhade, Scinde, Udaji Power, Kanhoji and Raghuji Bhosle, Malharrao Holkar and many others, and gave free scope to their valour and statesmanship. An empire, like a personal estate, goes on gradually expanding at the hands of shrewd managers; if the overgrown Maratha empire fell at last, it was not owing to the fault of Shahu in having built and expanded it: and no amount of care in setting the house in order at the beginning, could have averted its ultimate fate, as we know it how.

3. *Services of Balaji Vishvanath.*

A *third* feature of the situation in the Deccan deserves to be mentioned now. As I said before, when Shahu came back from the Emperor's camp and reached Satara towards the end of 1707, his fortune was at the lowest ebb. Most of the powerful Maratha leaders had espoused the cause of Tara Bai, who stoutly opposed the claim of Shahu. Senapati Dhanaji Jadhav alone went over to Shahu, but his death soon after, weakened Shahu's cause again so hopelessly and Dhanaji's son Chandra Sen acted towards Shahu so treacherously, that, but for the timely and loyal help of Balaji Visvanath, Shahu would not have been able to maintain his position. He, therefore, rewarded Balaji's services with the

Peshwaship to which he was appointed in the year 1713. Balaji's first concern was threefold : viz., to strengthen the cause of Shahu by bringing over to his side, as many powerful Sardars and sympathisers of Sambhaji as possible, to create order and peace in the few territories which Shahu then owned, and to give useful employment to the various turbulent Maratha bands, who, being flushed with their recent victory over the imperial forces, would simply have ruined the nation for want of suitable occupation, by taking sides in the civil war which had not yet ended. The services and achievements of this first Peshwa have not yet received proper recognition in history, since they are matters of only recent research. Shahu in one of his letters styles him *Atula-parakrami-sevak*, *i.e.*, "a servant of incomparable capacity," showing thereby that Shahu did not bestow his Peshwaship on a mere clerk in the employ of the Senapati, but on a worthy person of proved merit, after a full trial of 5 years. In fact although full details of this first Peshwa's work have not yet been discovered, we have sufficient material to assert that he possessed a singular grasp of the circumstances and the situation, in which Shahu and the whole Maratha nation were placed, and a rare foresight and statesmanship in utilising them towards completing the task of a Hindu empire, which the great Shivaji had set before himself, and which had long been impeded during the troubles of the

two preceding reigns. Balaji had to look to the north, as his path to the south was permanently closed by the independent existence of Tara Bai's kingdom. Balaji found plenty of fighting material scattered all over the country. Several leaders of Maratha bands had made incursions into such distant parts as Malwa, Gujarat and Berar. They had ambition and capacity and only needed a field for their activities. To check their ambitious spirit was out of the question. The central authority wielded by Shahu was itself weaker than any of these Maratha leaders,—as for instance, Kanhoji Angre of Colaba, Kanhoji Bhosle, Khanderao Debhade or Chandrasen Jadhav, were each singly more than a match for the weak Shahu. The only remedy was to utilise them for a common purpose and give them a coherent shape, *i.e.*, to create a field in which all could work out their own destiny, in extending Maratha power and influence according to the means and capacity which each possessed. When therefore an offer came to Shahu for help from the Sayyad ministers of Farruksiyar, Balaji at once grasped it and created a diversion which, although but slightly realised at the time even by the persons who took part in it, created a singular opportunity for the expansion of Maratha power to the various distant quarters of India. Balaji's sons, Baji Rao and Chimaji, were always associated with him not only in his views and undertakings, but also in his hard-

ships and trials, which this bold and singular plan involved. In order to grasp this point fully we must first know some more features of the situation.

4. *The Rajput pact of non-co-operation with the emperor; Shankaraji Malhar.*

Students of Indian history are already aware how the death of Aurangzeb precipitated a dismemberment of the great Mogul Empire. We must carefully note what old and new powers were ready at the time to take advantage of the situation as it then was. For instance, the Sikhs were just coming into prominence. Their persecution by Aurangzeb under Guru Govind Singh gave their activities a military aspect and henceforth throughout the 18th century, the destiny of the frontier province of the Punjab was more or less bound with the doings of these great people, the Sikhs. Nor have I time to detail the ambitious designs of some of the provincial Governors, the Nizam, for instance, in the South or the Nawabs of Bengal and Oudh. The Jats and the Rohillas were also going to show restless ambition. Of all these disintegrating elements the one most prominent seems to have escaped the attention of writers on the period, I mean the attitude adopted by the various Rajput princes towards the suzerain Mogul power. Tod has described the situation in detail, although for want of proper records available in his day, or for

want of the proper historical spirit which was unknown in his time, the subject has not been fully worked out. Aurangzeb had done everything he could to alienate the sympathies of the Rajput princes who had once been the pillars of the Mogul State, and who remained quiet waiting for an opportunity to wreak their vengeance, as soon as the old Emperor had passed away. In the year 1710 they met in a solemn assemblage on the borders of the Pushkar lake near Ajmere, and, in deliberate concert, openly threw off their allegiance to the Mogul Emperor, solemnly vowed to stop the practice of giving their daughters in marriage to the Mogul Royal House and determined to wage open war against the Emperor, in case the latter would force any one of them to break the agreement which they then formed after full and long deliberation. Although this move on the part of the Rajput princes was throughout the 18th century the direct cause of endless trouble, vexation and ruin to themselves, from which they were ultimately rescued only through the intervention of British arms in the early part of the 19th century, it nevertheless marks, so far as our immediate purpose is concerned, the proper trend of events in the early part of the 18th century.

Shahu had occasion to gauge the depth of this Rajput feeling during his captivity in the Emperor's camp where many Rajput princes were present in the imperial service. He had

gained the sympathies of some of them, was given a cordial send off by them on his release in Malwa, and very probably they had deliberated together upon measures of concerted action on the part of Shahu in the Deccan and on that of the Rajputs in the north. Savai Jaysingh, the Raja of Jaypur, appears to have taken the lead in this new movement, as he all along continued friendly to Maratha overtures even up to the time of his death in 1743. Events doubtless took place later on, which brought about a complete estrangement between the Marathas and the Rajputs; but we must particularly bear in mind that during Shahu's life-time, there was an entire agreement between the two, and both were moved by the same national and religious aspiration. When therefore the first Peshwa Balaji, and after him his soldier son Baji Rao I., began their work of building up the Hindu empire of India, their efforts, it must be borne in mind, were fully supported by the prominent Rajput Princes, and Baji Rao was hailed by them as a saviour of their national interests which had so long suffered terrible oppression. At any rate, it is enough for our immediate purpose to note the mutual cordiality that existed between the Marathas and the Rajputs, when Shahu and his first Peshwa began to shape the future destinies of the rising Maratha power. It is hoped that with increasing research in Indian history, fresh materials from Rajput records will come to

light in order to corroborate what Maratha and other records have lately brought out.

A singular personality is seen acting behind the scene at this time. One Shankraji Malhar, once in the employ of Raja Ram, working as his *sachiv* or finance minister at Jinji, had, owing to some disagreement which has not been authentically recorded, turned an ascetic and migrated to Benares where he lived for a pretty long time. Shrewd and clever as he was, he obtained a clear grasp of the situation, both in the south and in the north; he was conversant with the men and events in the camp of Aurangzeb as well as with the surroundings of Shahu; and even when he lived at Benares, he fully utilised his eyes and ears, felt a strong mission which called him to a different scene of action, got an employment as adviser to the Sayyads and again entered the Deccan about the year 1716 in the camp of Sayyad Husain Ali, when the latter was appointed the Subahdar of the Deccan. It was through Shankraji Malhar that Husain Ali made overtures of peace to Shahu. Shankraji came to Satara on deputation, formed in consultation with Shahu's ministers, plans of future action, and brought about an agreement through his master, the Sayyad, for an alliance between the Marathas and the Emperor, thereby bringing about the eventual grant of the three great sanads of Swaraj, Chowthai and Sardeshmukhi to the Marathas. These grants were obtained by

the Peshwa from the Emperor Farruksiyar at Delhi in the year 1719. If we thus collect together the various threads of events which were occurring in different parts of India, it will facilitate our task of estimating the under-currents which governed the action of Shahu and his first Peshwa. It will also give us a correct idea of the Maratha Government which the Peshwas created. It can be readily gathered from this explanation that the Maratha constitution as it worked out, was not of a brand new type, first theoretically conceived and then put into execution, nor has it been without plan or premeditation, a mere casual drift or occurrence as has been frequently asserted. No human creation is possible without a preconceived plan. Maratha rule cannot be an altogether accidental creation of a moment's will. They built up their policy on old foundations out of existing materials, which were utilised in the new fabric as much as possible; and fresh supports and extensions, wherever necessary, convenient and possible, were introduced in course of time, with the result that we are familiar with. Such is usually the case in politics nearly everywhere.

It is said that the Marathas had always their faces to the north. The principal gate of the Peshwas's palace at Poona is called the Delhi Gate and faces the north; indeed all capitals of the various Maratha sardars had their main gates invariably in this direction,

a significant fact which all students of Maratha history must carefully note.

5. *The process of Maratha expansion, interchange between north and south.*

I have already detailed the circumstances at the time of Aurangzeb's death, which brought about a great change in the politics of the Marathas. Although Shahu had not much chance of success in the beginning, he soon proved a ruler suited to the requirements of the time and was able to extend his dominion much beyond the expectation either of himself or of any one else. He succeeded because he had no capable rival in the family. His aunt Tara Bai had a fair amount of sagacity and strength, but being a lady she had necessarily to depend upon subordinates, who often proved faithless. Her son Shivaji was an idiot and her step-son Sambhaji was not much better. Moreover, Shahu gave a free hand, an ample field for action to any and every person that approached him for patronage. Most of the historical families which figure so largely in Maratha history, rose to prominence under the direct encouragement of Shahu, who never entertained any selfish motive in his measures and freely promoted all who showed capacity. As Shivaji did not give grants of land for military service, we have hardly any family of his time now existing and enjoying *Inam*. But under the Saranjami system of the succeed-

ing period, the nature of which I have already fully described, there was plenty of scope for lucrative military service all over the country. The exaction of Chowth supplied the plausible excuse for Maratha bands to undertake distant expeditions. Requests for help could be easily secured in those days of trouble and insecurity. For fresh recruits going out from Maharastra, not much education or equipment was needed. Reading, writing, and arithmetic of a practical nature, were all that was needed and could be easily acquired. The cheap Deccani ponies made riding a profession and a pastime for all from the highest to the lowest, not excluding the female sex, for in those days nearly every woman also had to be able to ride and ride well, as a necessary equipment for life and security in case of danger. The Memoirs of an English lady named Fanny Park who was invited by Baijabai Scinde (wife of Daulat Rao) in the year 1835, vividly describe the excellent riding and other sports in which Maratha ladies were so highly skilled in those days. Youths of 12 or 14, who in our days hardly finish their school career, flocked to the standard of one or other of the Maratha Sardars and soon found plenty of opportunity to prove their merit if they possessed any. A daring deed of courage and heroism was immediately noticed and reported, and received handsome recognition. In fact practical experience in every day affairs was all that was needed and

proved an immense advantage to all in those days. In the accounts of the various historical families that I have prepared, one notices that the founders are known invariably to have started their roving life at the age of 12 or so, and lived and worked often to a good old age of 70 or more. The open door adventurous life which their profession supplied, conduced both to their health and prosperity. Marathas of all castes, Brahmans including Saraswats, and Prabhus (*i.e.*, Kayasthas) all figure prominently in this period of expansion which embraced Shahu's regime. As a rule, the Prabhus with a few exceptions kept to their ancestral profession of writing. The Saraswats were experts in account-keeping and management of household concerns. The Deccani and other Brahmans, whose original profession before Shivaji's days had been priestcraft and scriptural studies, soon adapted themselves to military work, in which they received easy patronage during the Brahman rule of the later Peshwas. In this connection it is interesting to note the change from priestcraft to military profession in the case of the Brahmans, from the manner in which the style of their names changed. The first Peshwa Balaji has been usually known by his familiar name Balajipant Nana, the adjunct *Pant* is a diminutive of *Pandit*, expressing that the person at start was a mere Pandit versed in Sanskrit studies; but the second Peshwa began to be called Baji *Rao* and not Baji *Pant*,

expressing a Kshatriya or military profession. The third Peshwa also named Balaji, has been called Balaji *Rao* and not Balaji *Pant*. This significant change in title has affected nearly all the Brahmans, and implies a change of profession.

Shahu's regime supplied real Swaraj to all kinds of people. In the wake of military conquest, Maratha life expanded in various directions. Writers, accountants, artisans, builders, painters, priests, bards, servants of all kinds, came into requisition, and Maratha settlements quickly rose in all important towns in the north. Maratha life in the Deccan itself received a fresh character and influence by contact with the north. Many articles of use and luxury, clothes, household furniture, military accoutrements, paintings, articles of dietary, music, dancing, court etiquette, the pomp and manners of the northern nobility, were quickly introduced and greedily imitated all over the Deccan, as the papers of the time show. Numerous letters have been published containing demands made by residents of the Deccan for various kinds of articles and supplies, not excluding even dancing girls from the north, who came to be in great requisition at the Courts of the Peshwa and his Sardars. In my opinion, this interchange between the north and the south has been altogether healthy and beneficial, and tended to enrich the life of both, although it must be said that the frequent Maratha

exactions of tributes and taxes must have drained the north to some extent at the initial stages of the Maratha conquest; but even here, it must be remembered, that the money remained in the country, did not go out of it and ultimately benefited the rayats in one way or the other. The Peshwas were never spendthrifts, and did not waste money over useless shows or costly living. Later on, when the Maratha leaders established more or less permanent capitals in the north and the west, the Maratha exactions lost their former unpleasant character and assumed the aspect of the usual taxes which all people have to pay to their Government everywhere. One insistent demand, be it noted, from the Deccan on the north, was for manuscripts of old Sanskrit works of various kinds, of poetry, literature, scriptures, purans, etc. Revenue accounts, land measurements and various governmental functions of a purely Deccani type, were freely introduced into the north. But fresh and widely extended research is yet needed to form an exact estimate of this interchange and its effects on the life of the people.

6. *Shahu's Personality and Character.*

King Shahu's memory is still considered as blessed. He could ever boast of being one who never did a wrong to anybody. Thousands of people had cause to remember him as their benefactor and blessed him in all sincerity. Although there was not much love

lost between him and his cousin Sambhaji of Kolhapur, Shahu never allowed his Peshwa or any other official to molest Sambhaji for any fault or dereliction of his. It is said that Sambhaji once hired assassins and employed them to murder Shahu, but when they came into his presence, they dropped their arms at his very sight and did not dare to raise their hands against him. Upon learning their intention, Shahu rewarded them and sent them back to Sambhaji with a message, that they were brave men and could be employed on a better mission. The founders of the house of Nagpur, of Akalkot, of Dhar, Indore, Ujjain, Baroda and other places, were all young boys whose capacity and valour were first recognised and rewarded by Shahu. Vithal Shivdev of Vinchur and Naro Shanker of Malegaum, who later figured in history, were brought into prominence at the instance of Shahu. The ancestor of the great family of the Hingnes, who were long the Peshwas' agents at the Court of Delhi and carried on banking business in addition, was one Mahadev Bhat, the family priest of the Peshwas at Nasik, who travelled to Delhi in the company of the first Peshwa and was posted there by him to look after the Maratha interests, a task which he long carried out with phenomenal success. If I have to compare Shahu with any modern rulers whom we know, I would liken him to Queen Victoria, who could detect the best merit in her ministers and requisition it for

the service of the nation, who could be at once strong, simple and benevolent, who could tactfully check, when occasion required, the rebellious spirit in her servants and whose memory has been blessed for the unbroken success and prosperity which attended her rule.

Shahu treated all people equally well, and had no tinge of caste prejudice in his nature or policy. Any merit or capacity was at once recognised. Although he did not personally lead distant expeditions, he kept a close and strict watch over the various happenings and the actions of his sardars, to whom he had allotted separate spheres of influence. He called them to account for any wrong or misdeed that they committed, reprimanded them, punished them, rewarded them, composed their mutual quarrels and adjusted their disputes by calling them to his presence at Satara for personal explanation and settlement. One typical instance will suffice. In 1731 Shahu's Senapati Trimbak-rao Dabhade joined the Nizam with a view to put down the ambitious Peshwa Baji Rao, of whose growing influence and personal valour the Senapati had got extremely jealous. He openly flouted Shahu's orders to support Baji Rao in his forward policy; and when it became necessary to call him to account for openly joining the enemy's cause, Shahu asked Baji Rao to lead an expedition against him, and bring him a captive to his presence

at Satara. Now, this Dabhade was also of an equally spirited temperament and would not give up the game lightly. An open fight took place between these two highest officials of Shahu,—his Prime Minister and his Commander-in-Chief,—at Dabhoi near Baroda in the month of April 1731, in which, at an evil moment, as the two armies came almost into a death-grip, a random shot now known to have been fired by a traitor's hand in the Senapati's own camp, killed him instantaneously, giving on that account a complete victory to the Peshwa. The moral effect of this incident was indeed serious and convulsed the whole nation; it was a grievous sight that these two brave men, serving the same master and equally bound to guard his interests, engaged themselves in a deadly fight in which the Senapati was killed. His mother, Umabai, was a proud lady for whom Shahu entertained great personal reverence. She at once visited him at Satara and demanded vengeance upon the Peshwa. Shahu immediately called Baji Rao to his presence and composed the feud in his own peculiar way. The Senapatis had their hereditary seat at Talegaum near Poona, where the whole party including Shahu and his Court repaired. A throne was constructed out of a heap of silver rupees and was occupied by Shahu, who called Umabai and Baji Rao into his presence, gave a sword to the lady and asked her to cut off Baji Rao's head as he knelt before her,

with her own hand in return for her son's. The sight was impressive. Baji Rao was pardoned by the lady. The two feasted each other and exchanged cordial greetings. Terms of settlement were drawn up. Umabai's second son Yashvant Rao was made Senapati and the incident closed. Unfortunnately, Yashvant Rao was given to drink and proved utterly incapable of holding his position, so that the Peshwa scored in the game for all practical purposes. Incidents like this are not rare in Shahu's time and show the peculiarly parental manner in which he behaved to his people, an example to all of plain living and high thinking. But his ignorance of the political issues before the nation inevitably led to the concentration of all power of initiative and action in the hands of his capable Peshwa; in fact, Shahu had a pleasing superstitious faith in the success of whatever these Peshwas undertook and wholehertedly supported them, so that the concerns of an expanding empire might not sit heavily on himself. The Peshwas on their part served him with equal devotion and loyalty.

Shahu's first Peshwa Balaji Vishvanath died unexpectedly in 1720, leading the completion of his half-finished work to his son Baji Rao, then hardly 22 years of age, whose capacity had not been tried before or recognised in any quarter, but Shahu, acting on intuition rather than reason, conferred the Peshwaship on him in preference to older and

tried veterans who claimed the post. Shahu put them all aside and made a choice which was more than justified by later events. There is always a difference of opinion as to the wisdom of making public offices hereditary in a family, and I am not prepared to justify the practice. One caution should, however, be borne in mind in this connection, *viz.*, that we must not judge matters of those days by our present day standards. Baji Rao died an early death in 1740 after 20 years' arduous service. His son, named Balaji, commonly called Nana-Saheb, was only 18 when he was appointed to the Peshwaship; with the declining age and impaired health of Shahu, the master and the servant showed a marked contrast both in age and capacity, in the management of the growing concerns of a nation, that was fast attaining first rate importance among all the Powers of India including the Emperor. All the four Peshwas carried on a continuous policy which had been laid down in the beginning, and risked all they had in accomplishing the great object of building up a Hindu empire, which Shivaji first formulated for adoption by the nation,—so that the 60 years' period from 1713 to 1773 forms one unbroken chain of events, measures, and schemes, all calculated to secure that one single aim, and can be said to be the brightest period of Maratha power, in which the nation and its leaders put forth the very best ability they possessed and in

which peace, prosperity, and orderly government were attained by the peoples of India as has been verified and asserted even by the critical western writers. This period exemplifies merely the working out of the three *sanads* obtained from the Emperor by the first Peshwa and was not interrupted, so far as the current of political events goes, by the death of Shahu which occurred in December 1749. Although the policy of the Maratha Raj was not affected by this event, some critics ignorant of the situation which can now be studied correctly from the original papers, have detected in it sinister motives on the part of the third Peshwa, whom they charge with usurping the power of the Chhatrapatis. But this charge is the creation of a biased mind and is not supported by evidence. The situation at the death of Shahu, though in some respects as critical as at the time of Aurangzeb's death, did not affect or interrupt the forward policy adopted by the Peshwas and requires a close examination.

7. *Shahu's last days, the question of succession and how the Peshwa handled the situation.*

In the year 1743 when the Peshwa Balaji Bajirao was engaged in the north in wresting Malwa from the Emperor and bringing Bengal under his influence, a sudden illness of Shahu called him back abruptly to the Deccan to

handle a situation complicated by the usual palace intrigues of a court, where no constitution save the will of a powerful king, had reigned supreme for over a generation. Shahu had two queens but no issue from either; the future was dark; the usual infirmities caused by age and worry, had unnerved his otherwise strong constitution. For five long years he lay dying, a period which the Peshwa had to waste at the headquarters and which he would have profitably utilised in completing his task in northern India, so as possibly to avert the future complications in the north, created by the appearance of Ahmad Shah Abdali on the scene. At the age of 25, this young Peshwa was called upon to deal with a severe crisis, involving the fate of the future Maratha policy, and, for a time endangering its very existence. The two queens of Shahu and his aunt Tara Bai, who was a prisoner in the Fort of Satara, started intrigues about the succession and the future arrangement of the State, when they felt that Shahu was going to pass away. He had about him more than a dozen or two competent and experienced advisers, Sardars and Generals, whom he freely and repeatedly consulted and with whom he long discussed as to who should succeed him. The Peshwa's own idea was to bring Sambhaji from Kolhapur and entrust the Satara Raj to him, thus bringing about a desirable union, like that of England and Scotland in 1707, and removing one cause of

constant friction in Maratha politics. But Shahu was entirely opposed to having for his successor a cousin whom he had hated all his life. When other competent youths were being looked for in the Bhosle family for adoption, Tara Bai suggested the name of a grand-son of hers named Ram Raja, born of her imbecile son Shivaji who had died in 1726. She alleged that she had concealed this Ram Raja since his childhood, for fear of his life, in an out-of-the-way village, far away from home, and impressed upon Shahu the wisdom of selecting this nearest heir for his successor, as he was born in a direct line from the great Shivaji. In the unsafe circumstances of plots and complications then prevailing at Satara, it was not thought advisable to bring Ram Raja there at once from his concealed refuge; and Shahu after due consideration wrote two small notes, now termed his wills, in his own hand, providing for Ram Raja being raised to the throne after his death, and enjoining the Peshwa to conduct the affairs of the State as before. The two wills have now been printed in facsimile and shown to be in Shahu's own hand, so that they can conclusively prove that the Peshwa played no trick in the execution of the wills, as used to be alleged some time ago. In fact the contents of these wills and the commands laid down in them by Shahu, were in no way conducive to any selfish object of the Peshwa. He carried out his duty to the best of his powers and in a

spirit of filial obligation. The preeminence of the Peshwas both in arms and diplomacy has been universally acknowledged, and, as they actually asserted more than once, they could easily have carved out for themselves an independent field of work like most of the other Sardars, Maratha or Brahman, of those days. They would fain have remained aloof, as did Raghuji Bhosle of Nagpur, from interfering with the affairs of the central government, a task in which they stood to gain little, but only to court blame and displeasure from the various parties after Shahu's demise. With all the liberality and softness of Shahu's heart, he never realised that a State and its Government, like other human affairs, are progressive, that they must change as times and circumstances change. He laid down an impossible condition: "Do not give up an old practice, do not start a new one." This particularly referred to the *Watans* which the various Sardars were enjoying. When the Peshwa came to manage the affairs after Shahu's death, he found that most of the Watandars would not supply efficient troops for State service, but would squander away their incomes on matters of personal enjoyment. If the Peshwa took severe steps against them, they showed a rebellious spirit and would not serve him faithfully. Unfortunately Ram Raja, who became Chhatrapati in pursuance of Shahu's last wishes, proved incapable and was later on openly declared

by Tara Bai herself to be an imposter and not her grandson at all. She had played this game in order to secure power into her own hands, which the Peshwa was too shrewd to allow. They severely disagreed and after wasting three precious years in useless wrangling, the Peshwa kept both in check and started on his proper work in spite of them. Of course, this involved a waste of time and energy in guarding against a domestic trouble, which would have burst out any time on the part of many rebellious spirits. It has also been urged against the Peshwa that he purposely brought on the throne an incompetent Chhatrapati; but as we have shown, it was all the working of Tara bai and the Peshwa had no hand in it. Looking at the matter impartially at this distance of time, one can easily realise that, if the Peshwa had an able Chhatrapati at least of the type of Raja Ram or Shahu, to order and guide him from above, as well as to share his troubles and responsibility, the Peshwa would have been able to achieve far greater results in his foreign policy than he was actually able to do.

8. *Change in Maratha Govt., the Peshwa's mistakes.*

There is, however, no doubt that the death of Shahu brought about a great change in the Maratha administration. Satara lost its regal importance and Poona became the

seat of the Maratha Government. Henceforth the Chhatrapati became a nonentity. Ram Raja was discovered to be illegitimate after he had occupied the throne for several years, during which time, marriage alliances and social amenities with him had freely taken place, which could not be revoked. When he died in 1777, the Maratha State was fast declining, being involved in a death-grip with the British power, and no one had time or leisure to restore the Chhatrapati to power and influence. But of this I shall have occasion to speak later. It is enough for our immediate purpose to remember that the Peshwa inherited only a heavy responsibility from Shahu, but none of the royal influence and prestige, which were more or less personal and inseparable from the position of the Chhatrapati. For instance, the eight hereditary ministers of Shivaji and some of the older Sardars enjoyed their former positions even at this time and held *Watans*, but did not readily submit to the orders of the Peshwa whom they looked upon as their equal, if not subordinate; while unity of command and strict discipline are always most essential in the execution of any State affair. In this respect this Peshwa and his successors always found it most difficult to exact obedience to their orders: while the Raja of Kolhapur and some older Jagirdars ever proved a thorn in their side, whenever foreign dangers assumed a threatening aspect. The normal

Maratha character has all along been rebellious, probably it is so even today: its greatest weakness perhaps is an impatience of control and defiance of authority. Shivaji himself had often quietly to put up with this unpleasant spirit, as when he found that there were some old Maratha Sardars who would not render obedience to the Bhosles or occupy a seat lower than the throne, which Shivaji had raised for himself. In fact, half the energy of the Maratha rulers had ever been spent in checking and punishing this centrifugal tendency, which was also, as we know, responsible to a great extent for bringing about their downfall. Shahu could not control his revolting Senapati, Chandrasen Jadav and Rao Rambha Nimbalkar who joined the standard of the Nizam under whom they still hold Jagirs of their own. The story of the revolt of Shahu's next Senapati Dabhade has been already alluded to. Raghuji Bhosle and Peshwa Balajirao fought open battles in Central India and Bengal. Immediately on the death of Shahu the Peshwa had to face a strong rebellion of the combined armies of Yashavantrao Dabhade and Damaji Gaekwad. Malharrao Holkar was reported to have been instrumental in bringing about the great disaster of Panipat by openly supporting the intriguing Najib Khan Rohilla. Peshwa Madhav Rao I had to waste three precious years of his life in putting down first the defection of his own

uncle Raghunath Rao and then a combination of the Bhosle of Nagpur, the Pratinidhi, and Patwardhan Gopalrao. Raghunath Rao's flight from the Peshwaship and his open acceptance of British help led to the great First Maratha War which nearly destroyed the independence of the Marathas. And lastly, it is well known, how Lord Wellesley and his brother dexterously divided the Maratha potentates one against the other and subjugated each separately. This duty of the cental authority in bringing to book rebellious Sardars, is unpleasant at all times and everywhere, but it became doubly so, when, for practical purposes, the Peshwa took the Chhatrapati's position as the head of the Maratha Government, without possessing his prestige. This point became still more delicate, when, upon the murder of Peshwa Narayan Rao, all power devolved upon Nana Fadnis who, however shrewd and wise in statecraft, was after all a mere Fadnis or head-accountant of the Peshwa's office. This was the inner motive of Mahadji Scindia in often refusing obedience to Nana,—which difference led to a rupture which the good sense of the two alone ultimately managed to close. This dwindling of Government's power and prestige at each crisis in the Maratha fortunes, deserves to be carefully noted, as it is largely responsible, apart from other and extraneous causes, for the fact that the Maratha power

ultimately succumbed so easily. The Peshwas came to possess regal power, because they were capable, as in all human affairs, it is capacity that ultimately rules and not mere forms or ceremonials. We should therefore be cautious in bringing the charge of usurpation against the Peshwas.

But the policy of the shrewd Peshwa Balajirao was found wanting when he came face to face with the British power. In fact in comparing the Maratha politicians with the British, we shall find the former far lower in the scale. The period 1750-61 is doubtless most eventful and revolutionary in the history of India, for in this period the British finally put down in the famous Seven Years' War their rivals the French, conquered two large provinces, Bengal and Madras, and nearly completed erecting the net of their supremacy round the east coast and as far up as Allahabad in the north. At this time the Peshwa made two grand mistakes. He took British help to crush the Maratha navy headed by the Angria, his own naval commander, and secondly, he utterly neglected to support the Bhosle's claims in Bengal, when Sirajuddowla was being hard pressed by the British, before the battle of Plassey. Bengal had long ago been conquered by Raghuji and subjected to an annual payment of the Chowth in return for which the Marathas were bound to help its Subahdar. When the British turned their arms against Siraj-

ud-dowla, it was the duty of the Peshwa to send immediate help to him. In 1756 the Peshwa's hands were practically free; his position was secure, and he was at the time the most powerful potentate in India. A move on his part then against the British, both in the Carnatic and in Bengal, would have at once checked their advance. But instead, the Peshwa paid undue attention to the politics of Delhi and contracted unnecessary enmity with the Abdali, bringing upon himself the disaster of Panipat. He had no business to go beyond the Sutlej into the Punjab for conquest so recklessly. But Panipat decided the fate of India. The Marathas and the Muhammadans weakened each other in that deadly conflict, facilitating the aims of the British for Indian supremacy. It seems to have been quite within the power of the Peshwa to have powerfully interfered in the contest both of Plassey and the Carnatic, and thus prevented the future course of our country's history. But he did not go personally into the north, entrusted important developments of policy to incompetent subordinates and hardly understood the real nature of the British game, so that he was found wanting in sagacity and length of vision at a crucial moment. If he had understood all-India politics, he would have acted otherwise.

LECTURE 5

MAHADJI SCINDIA AND NANA FADNIS

1. *Three periods of Maratha History.*

Two men escaped with their lives, under providential guidance, from the fateful field of Panipat, and having soon after risen to exceptional prominence by dint of personal ability and character, became the saviours of the Maratha kingdom almost up to the time of its downfall by the treaty of Bassein. The Maratha kingdom formally ended in the year 1818: but virtually its independence was gone with the treaty of Bassein, by which Baji Rao II, as the head of the Maratha State, accepted British supremacy and might perhaps have retained his subordinate position at the capital of Poona, on a par with the present Maharajas of Gwalior, Indore or Baroda, had he possessed the necessary wisdom to steer clear of the difficulties that afterwards arose and to submit willingly and cheerfully to the British overlordship as the others did. We must therefore put down the end of the Maratha kingdom on the last day of the Christian year 1802, and work our subject accordingly. If I may calculate Shivaji's beginning of Maratha Swaraj somewhere from the middle of the 17th century, say 1653, the period of the first sixty years up to 1713

when the Peshwas' regime started, has on it a clear stamp of Shivaji's personality and has already been shown to be distinct in character from the next sixty years, 1713 to 1773, when the principal extension of Maratha power took place under the first four Peshwas and when the Saranjami system of feudal military service, had its full force. Thereafter comes the period of decline dating from the murder of Peshwa Narayan Rao in 1773 and ending, as I have said, with the treaty of Bassein in 1802, thus making a total existence of 150 years of Maratha dominion in India. This last period of 30 years bears a distinct stamp of the two personalities, Balaji Janardan *alias* Nana Fadnis and Mahadji Scindia, of whom we are now going to speak.

There exists a great deal of misconception about the intentions and achievements of these two contemporary characters, not only outside Maharastra but within it, as the subject, I am afraid, has not hitherto been treated in a proper historical spirit after taking stock of all available papers and information. I think it would not be out of place here to give my estimate of them and their work, and with it also an account of the declining stage of Maratha politics, leading logically to my next discourse on the causes of the Maratha downfall. In this way, taking into consideration the division into the three periods mentioned above, I shall have

cursorily explained the main characteristics of them all from the beginning. Nana and Mahadji, the one a Brahman and pure statesman, the other a Maratha and soldier-statesman, were often helpmates, occasionally rivals for power, but both always intensely watchful about the national interests. To start with, I must mention that the culminating point of Maratha ascendency in India was not the reverse sustained at Panipat in 1761, as is popularly supposed, but the death of their greatest Peshwa Madhav Rao I, in the year 1772, who had successfully carried out the aims and objects of the Maratha policy as laid down by the first Peshwa, notwithstanding the disaster of Panipat, which, awful and destructive of life though it was, did not put an end to the rising ambition or effort for supremacy, which the Marathas had long cherished and striven for. Even Grant Duff has admitted that the plains of Panipat were not more fatal to the Maratha empire than the early end of this excellent Peshwa.

2. *Early careers of Mahadji and Nana.*

Mahadji was born about the year 1733 and was therefore 61 years of age at his death in 1794. Nana was 8 years younger, having been born in 1741. Both had full opportunity to closely observe and study the development of Maratha concerns under Peshwa Balajirao, and both received their training under

Madhav Rao, to whom they entirely owed their rise and future careers. From the beginning they were opposed to the policy and ways of Raghoba who would have sacked them both at any time, if he had the power to do it. It is well known that when the question of succession to Scindia's estate came up for consideration after the disaster of Panipat, where three valiant representatives of that family had lost their lives, Raghoba set aside the claim of Mahadji and appointed one Manaji Scinde known as *Fadke*, a distant relation. But Madhav Rao felt the injustice of this measure, since Mahadji was the only surviving member of Ranoji's family and fully deserved to succeed to the estate as the direct heir, even though he was an illegitimate son of his father. After Manaji had enjoyed the position for two years, Mahadji was reinstated by Madhav Rao and naturally felt ever after a great aversion for Raghoba, whom he considered utterly incompetent. Similarly, was Nana Fadnis a confidant of Peshwa Madhav Rao who employed him specially to watch and superintend the wily Raghoba, when he was put in confinement after the battle of Dhodap in 1768. Nana had, therefore, to incur the highest displeasure of Raghoba from the beginning. This tension grew into an open rupture after the murder of Narayan Rao, when Nana and Sakharam Bapu formed the famous "Bar-bhai council" to set aside

Raghoba and conduct the administration, first in the name of Narayan Rao's widow Ganga Bai, and afterwards in the name of her newly born son known as Savai Madhav Rao. In fact for the twenty years from 1774 to 94 there was a minority administration, which gave Nana and Mahadji the opportunity to prove their ability. They discharged their duty, as we know, with conspicuous success.

The careers of Nana and Mahadji are divided into two main periods by events, the first from 1774-83 known as the first Maratha War, and the second 1784-94 when Mahadji, openly giving up the old guerilla tactics, raised a new army on the European model under the direction of De Boigne, conquered the Rajput princes, captured Delhi, and took the Emperor under his protection. Thus Mahadji attained a high importance and an eminent position in the whole of India, when he returned to Poona with pomp and honours lying heavy upon his head, but unfortunately, only to die in his native land shortly after. Nana and Mahadji are the two personalities who preserved the Maratha power after the murder of Narayan Rao, when Raghoba took the help of the British, who were then trying their utmost to encompass India by completing their net round the west coast. Those who have studied the contemporary European history, can at once realise how this first Maratha War, synchronising with the War of American Independence, was affected by

foreign politics, since the French Navy for a time regained its lost influence and caused serious anxiety to the British in their world-wide complication. As we know, British ambition began to bid for world power in 1756 in the Seven Years' War, at the end of which they established their naval supremacy by the Treaty of Paris in 1763. The next ten years was a period of arrested ambition for them, which was rekindled by the murder of the Peshwa at Poona, of which they took full advantage by their wanton aggression in capturing the fort of Thana from the Peshwa's possession at the end of 1774. Next year Nelson visited Bombay, although he was then quite an unknown personality, looking for naval expansion in eastern waters. But during the War of American Independence British ambition received a set back in all quarters of the globe. The French fleet had become superior to the British for a short time. They therefore wisely curbed their ambition, which became aggressive once more only after the French revolution.

3. *How the two leaders won the First Maratha War.*

In the year 1773, of which we are now speaking, the Regulating Act brought all the British Presidencies of India under one united control at Calcutta. Warren Hastings was appointed the Governor-General with a

council of four members to help him. There occurred open disagreement between them which not a little affected the fortunes of the Marathas. On that account the course of events during the period has become so confused and complicated, that it requires careful study from original materials, to make it fruitful in the province of Indian History. Had not Nana and Mahadji acted in concert and brought all their resources to bear on this war with the British, there would have been an end of the Maratha power at this juncture. The British had not even a plausible excuse at the time to give shelter to Raghoba and start a wanton war, when an heir was born to the murdered Peshwa. The British should have treated Raghoba as a fugitive and murderer, and given him no shelter. They, however, sustained a set back in America by the loss of the colonies, and had their prestige lowered in their dealings with France. Hastings on account of his ambition and aggression, estranged the minds of very many chiefs and potentates in the various parts of India. The Emperor would not trust himself to the British ; the Nawab of Oudh and the Raja of Benares had no better opinion of their veracity. The Nizam in the east and Hyder in the south, the Marathas in the west and the Bhosles of Nagpur in the centre, signed a treaty for a joint war against the British. French proposals of naval and military help were openly

entertained at Poona, so that Nana's sagacity and foresight made matters so adverse to the British interests, that orders came from Europe for Warren Hastings to stop all wars and restore peaceful relations with the various powers in India. The Treaty of Salbye, started in the autumn of 1781 and ultimately finished in February 1783, restored peace to India, and freed Maratha arms for completing their previous commitments. This combination of Indian interests against the British power, has been set down as the greatest achievement of Nana Fadnis, at whose death in 1800, all moderation and wisdom vanished from Maratha politics, leaving the field free for the foundation of British supremacy in India. Similarly Mahadji's greatest achievement has been put down to be his conquest of the Rajputs and his settlement of the Emperor's affairs, by the creation of armaments on the western scientific method. I shall discuss later, why, with all this glowing expansion and success of Maratha arms in all the quarters of India, that power crumbled so easily in the early years of the 19th century. But the seeds of that ultimate decay, were in my opinion more or less sown in the midst of this apparent glory and during the regime of this last politician Nana Fadnis. It is a matter of common knowledge that there ever existed a kind of irritation and rivalry between Nana and Mahadji, the origin and nature of which we must carefully note.

4. *Physical and temperamental differences between the two.*

The two differed from each other as much in their physical features as in their mental cast. Nana a Brahman, tall and thin, brownish in complexion with a long oval face, marked with large piercing eyes and a long nose: the other a Kshatriya, of middle stature, dark, thick-set, stout and athletic, a typical Maratha soldier of his time. While Nana was by nature strict and serious, regular and hardworking, abstemious in words and action, difficult of approach and never given to sport, mirth or company, hardly ever seen to laugh and of an extremely delicate and thin constitution, Mahadji was, on the other hand, jovial, ever surrounded by crowds of people, talking, joking, laughing and enjoying company, taking counsel with all, but always so cautious as never to let others fathom his real intentions or plans; in fact, an exact antithesis of Nana. Mahadji is described as sitting in a large tent in the midst of clerks and servants, helpmates and ambassadors, questioning all openly, hearing and despatching correspondence and issuing orders simultaneously. Nana has often taken Mahadji to task for not keeping his counsels secret and for discussing important State matters in an open assembly. People, including even his near relatives and immediate servants, were afraid of approaching Nana.

He was exacting and strict in his punishments, would see and talk to only one person at a time, except when there was an open discussion or conference previously arranged. Even Haripant Fadke, Nana's best friend, would consult Nana's whim before he approached him with any proposal or suggestion. In one particular point of common occurrence, the contrast between Nana and Mahadji was most vivid. Under the greatest of disasters, Mahadji was cool and composed, never showing his innermost trepidation to anybody. When the news of severe reverses or decimation of large forces reached him, he could be seen laughing and joking as usual, as if nothing had happened. This intrepid nature and cool decision carried him successfully through trials and embarrassments which would break the spirit of any ordinary man. Nana was timid and excitable, often unable to conceal his confusion when difficult problems demanded immediate solution. First Sakharam Bapoo, and later Haripant Fadke always helped to compose Nana's disturbed temperament and extricate him from troublesome situations. But, unlike Mahadji, Nana was usually reasonable and fair in dealing, afraid of treachery or wrong, strict in carrying out his word, not overinclined to liberality and as a rule impatient of results. He did not possess the self-calculation of Mahadji, but took counsel with all separately and acted according to a considered judgment

of his own. Mahadji on the other hand was patient and courageous, splendid under reverses, shifting and calculating, often irascible in temper, ever inclined to pick up the weaknesses of others and making the best use of them, as we know from his dealings with Nana, Raghoba, Sakharam Bapoo, or Tukoji and Ahalya Bai Holkar. He showed a friendly spirit to all, but would not be overscrupulous in keeping his word or doing a wrong act if it suited his purpose.

He can be called a great statesman, in whom even the enemies could put their faith. Lacking the generous heart of Balajirao or Madhav Rao, Nana Fadnis was not at all loved like them. Being a stern task-master, he could hardly expect love from others; nay, he was often in danger of assassination and has himself mentioned some twenty occasions on which he had a miraculous escape from attempts on his life, which never was the case with any of the Peshwas before. Nana's rigorous system of spying often made it impossible for him to distinguish between friends and foes, so that his own trusted servants like Ghasi-Ram Kotwal or Balvant Rao Nagnath proved false to him. Indeed the atmosphere of Poona for 8 or 10 years after Narayan Rao's murder, remained intensely surcharged with uncertainty and suspicion in a degree quite unbearable even to those who had no concern with State affairs.

Nana lacked military leadership, while

Mahadji lacked the aptitude for desk-work and accounts and attention to details, matters in which Nana was a master hand. In fact, the records of Nana Fadnis were said to be so typically arranged in his days that they showed his inexhaustible capacity for labour. A long mutilated paper extant in Nana's own hand has been printed in the *K. S. Patreyadi*, which contains half-finished directions and arrangements, relating to the grand ceremony of the young Peshwa's marriage in February 1783, and shows how careful Nana was to the minutest details, as he mentions, for instance, numerous courses and articles of food that were to be got ready for each day and for different occasions. Mahadji was not so exact, and was often cheated by unscrupulous subordinates and employees whom he then visited with relentless vengeance. These differences although only temperamental in the beginning, became accentuated later on and for a time affected Maratha politics throughout India. Nana was strong in statesmanship and Mahadji in military matters: when they acted in mutual confidence and concert, they produced the greatest effect; but they often felt jealous of each other and did things which certainly affected the Maratha fortunes adversely. Nana confined his attention mostly to the south, Mahadji to the north. They did not meet for over 10 years and had no personal exchange of views. They corresponded frequently but after all,

written correspondence, which often evoked acrimonious, wordy and endless explanations, could not settle all the growing concerns of a vast State, and resulted in irritation and trouble to all the workers. Hundreds of letters and papers have been printed, out of the correspondence that passed between various persons and parties during the 20 years in which these two men, as the principal actors on the stage, conducted the Maratha administration; they clearly show the contrast to which I have alluded above.

5. *Drawbacks of Nana's policy.*

The personal equation having thus been made clear, I shall now try and point out what I consider to be the drawbacks of Nana's policy. Those who have hitherto written about these two persons, and particularly about Nana, have not, I think, studied all the available papers. Mr. Khare for instance, admirable as his edition of the Patwardhan records is, has only the Deccan and southern India in his mind, and fails, in my opinion, in presenting a whole and connected view of all India. He does not show an equally intimate acquaintance with northern affairs. In my opinion, therefore, Khare in his life of Nana does not do full justice to Mahadji at whose expense I believe he shows a bias in favour of Nana. But in my estimate of those times which I am now studying, I have just now no desire to go into details and will

content myself with mentioning only a few points for general consideration. I am necessarily explaining the short-comings of Nana's policy, and should not thereby be understood to belittle the great services he has rendered to the nation, and to which I have already made a passing reference.

(a) Thought himself indispensable.

It was a mere grievous accident, I mean the murder of Narayan Rao, which brought Nana to the front. He was quite aware of his great weakness, *viz.*, that he was not a general and never could lead armies on a battlefield. For this he had to depend upon others, such as Mahadji Scindia, Tukoji Holkar, Haripant Fadke, or Parshuram Bhau Patwardhan. The weakness of such a position particularly in those days can very well be imagined. Of these Nana found Mahadji alone intractable, so that whenever Mahadji did not readily fall in with Nana's views or policy, there naturally arose a friction, often resulting in strong factions involving prominent persons, so as to injure the interests of the State. In such circumstances Mahadji was not the man who would scruple to make the best use of it to suit his policy or interest. This sort of factious spirit prevailed throughout the period of 20 years and unconsciously damaged Maratha power and prestige, a result which, in my opinion would have been averted, if Nana had in some cases put his

own personality in the back ground. It is a mistake very common to powerful statesmen, who have already rendered useful services, that they come to think themselves indispensable for the conduct of national affairs, and try to stick to their office, when perhaps their withdrawal might be more advantageous to the public interest. This is particularly the case in eastern politics, where there are no constitutional safeguards as in the British parliamentary system. We can vividly realise this point to-day, if we remember how quietly and easily Prime Ministers of England like Asquith, Lloyd George or Macdonald laid down their office the moment they found that they had not the nation's support behind them. Nana Fadnis does not seem to have realised his own limitations of age or power. Particularly is this the case after the unfortunate and untimely death of the young Peshwa in 1795, when Nana, covetous of power, submitted to the crafty Peshwa Baji Rao II, his hereditary enemy, and accepted office under him. If Nana had then quietly withdrawn from politics and watched the situation from a distance, he would possibly have rendered greater service, at least saved himself from humiliation at the hands of worthless intriguers. Nana should have known very well that he was not immortal, that however capable he might have been, his end must come when the nation would have to do without him.

(*b*) *Did not realize British pressure in the north.*

Nana was much irritated at the prominence which Mahadji attained in the conduct of the Treaty of Salbye. He could not understand why Mahadji withdrew to the north and established himself in Malwa far away from Deccan politics. Not conversant with military affairs, Nana could not realise that the centre of gravity of Indian politics, was fast shifting from the Deccan to the north. Clever as Nana was, in acquiring through his agents and spies, the minutest information and details of movements and events that happened hundreds of miles away, he could not realise the pressure which the rising British power was bringing to bear upon the future of India, from the east and the north, where they slowly consolidated their position so as to make a further move when a suitable opportunity would arise. Mahadji understood this pressure from personal and practical experience on the spot. Nana was ever insistent in calling Mahadji to the south in order to fight the national enemies in the Deccan. Mahadji had closely watched the celebrated victorious march of General Goddard from the river Jumna to Burhanpur and on to Surat, splitting the whole of north India as it were into halves like a piece of bamboo. The havoc which the British guns had made during the campaign of Talegaum

and the ease with which the British were quietly strengthening their position on the west coast by the capture of Bassein and Thana, were factors which impressed Mahadji immensely. To effect a counterpoise, he withdrew himself entirely from the south, knowing that he could get the best terms in his treaty with the British, if he could deal with them in the north rather than at the Court of Poona, where the pressure from the Bombay Government was irresistible. If he had moved to the south with his forces, I feel pretty sure, from the correspondence that I have studied on the subject, that the British would have captured Central India by one stroke, taken possession of the Emperor and dictated terms to the Marathas. This position of Mahadji in the north was inexplicable to Nana, who ever after suspected treason on his part against the Central Government in everything that Mahadji did or suggested, and gave open directions to his agents to be always very cautious in dealing with Mahadji. Mahadji followed a conciliatory policy towards Warren Hastings, and did his best to oppose the English intrigues in Bengal, Oudh, Central India and Delhi, for which he had to station himself for a long time between Mathura and Gwalior, in order to exercise an immediate check. In fact, I feel, that Nana did not understand the northern politics and would have done well to go there personally

and have a discussion on the spot with Mahadji. But suspicious by nature, Nana was always afraid of his life, and would never have ventured into Mahadji's camp.

Maratha politics at that time would have attained immense strength if Nana had gone to the north, and putting his own personality in the back ground, allowed a free hand to Mahadji. But both remained suspicious of each other to the end with the disastrous result that we know now. With all the wisdom of Nana one fails to see what measures he had taken to ensure the future well-being of the Maratha Raj, to save it from falling into the hands of greedy aggressors. He tried his utmost to bring up the young Peshwa most carefully and staked all, even the constitution, upon that one individual, but did not remember that with all one's efforts it is not humanly possible to make a soldier or a statesman out of a young boy at one's will. How could Nana believe that a youth of 20 could be so trained or trusted as to look after the concerns of an empire which he knew were beyond his own capacity? As a matter of fact the young Peshwa, as we know from the plentiful printed records, would have proved altogether worthless and incapable, certainly no better than Baji Rao II, perhaps even worse. Many writers have lamented the untimely death of this young lad, in whom all the nation's hopes were centred, and whom the people had all

along hailed as the saviour of the nation. They wrongly attribute to his untimely death the eventual fall of the Maratha power. If this youth had lived long, there would perhaps have been more complications resulting in an earlier end of the Raj. Whatever it may be, the fact that Nana did not provide protective military measures against many of these problems as he could have done, detracts much from the sagacity and foresight with which he is usually credited.

Another point which in my opinion Nana does not seem to have realised, is his failure to understand why most of the old Sardars and Ministers hesitated to render obedience to him and to execute his orders. Nana was in his original position a mere head-accountant of the State, much lower in the scale of service than the Sardars themselves. He was doubtless acting in the name of the Peshwa who was a child. The Sardars had a natural sympathy for the old and experienced Raghoba more than for the little baby in whose name Nana acted. Nana had occasion to understand what a difference there was in the prestige of the Chhatrapati and that of the Peshwa after the death of Shahu. Far less then was his own prestige, when, after the murder of Narayan Rao, power came into his hands. Some might of course urge that prestige is a nebulous quality having no practical value. But we know prestige, after all, stirs the hearts of men in practical life,

that is why even the strong British Government to-day is very careful about it. In this lies the explanation of the factious and defiant spirit which Nana had to encounter in most of his measures, from his own compatriots.

(c) *Set aside the Council and assumed power himself.*

Nana started his work as a member of the Ministerial Cabinet called the Council of the *Bar-bhais* or 'twelve Brothers,' of which at the beginning the veteran Sakharam Bapoo was the sole moving spirit. Nana's cousin Moroba, Trimbakrao Pethe, Haripant Fadke, Mahadji Scinde, Tukoji Holkar and several others were supposed to be members of this council, which would have been strong and capable of lasting results, had it continued on the lines on which it was started. Nana should have foreseen that instead of his personal rule, the nation would have more readily submitted to the rule of a strong and wise cabinet. It was indeed a singular opportunity for working out a constitutional system of Government in the place of the personal rule of a dictator. Nana shows full knowledge of the working of Hastings' Council at Calcutta and of Hornby's Council at Bombay, where matters were decided on the principle of the majority of votes. His experience and foresight should have convinced Nana of the wisdom of establishing a permanent council for the Maratha adminis-

tration. Instead of taking this line, he gradually ousted all the members, one by one, concentrating all power in to his own hand. Sakharam Bapoo and Moroba Fadnis, two of his best colleagues, were removed and imprisoned on a charge of treason. Of a conciliatory nature, Sakharam was often in the habit of dilly-dallying with all parties, with even enemies during war-time, *e.g.* with the Nizam, Hyder and the British. Nana looked upon this as double-dealing or treason, and got him imprisoned. If it was necessary to remove them both, he should at least have introduced new members to take their places, but after a couple of years, even the name of the Bar-bhais is not seen to exist. Treason in those days had a peculiar meaning. Narayan Rao was murdered, certainly at the instigation of Raghoba who was however the only surviving member of the Peshwas' family, and for whom, with all his faults, very many people had a sort of reverence. Except a few implacable spirits like Nana Fadnis, who were determined to punish the late Peshwa's murderers, there was a large body of the public in Maharastra who looked at the event more leniently and advocated a conciliatory policy, and who were indifferent whether Raghoba or the new born baby ruled their destinies, but who certainly wished that Raghoba should be provided with decent comfort commensurate with his position. Sakharam Bapoo tried his best to save the situation

by conciliating the two conflicting domestic forces. Mahadji Scinde and others and even Sakharam Bapoo did not view with favour the infliction of punishment on Raghoba. These men therefore appeared to Nana as traitors deserving punishment. In the case of Mahadji, Nana was helpless, otherwise, if he had the means, he would have punished him in the same way as he did Sakharam Bapoo. I consider this a mistake of statesmanship on the part of Nana. Forgiveness in such cases forms a more practical wisdom. But Nana was inexorable in his methods of punishment. When a son was born to Narayan Rao, Raghoba lost his pretensions and should have been allowed to run away as a fugitive. He was, however, tenaciously pursued and unwillingly driven into the arms of the British, which brought about the war, all but shattering the prestige of the Marathas. Parallel instances from the British policy irresistibly come to our minds: Mir Kasim, Appa Saheb Bhosle of Nagpur, the Pindari leaders and even the last Nana Saheb of the Mutiny fame, were allowed by the British authorites to roam about freely and not pursued to the bitter end. It was enough to take the wind out of their sails as the Queen's Proclamation did in the case of the mutineers of 1857. If the Bar-bhais had issued a proclamation asking people to come back to their avocations and warning them against their sympathies with the

fugitive Raghoba, matters would have settled down quietly and Raghoba would have obtained no support anywhere. Nana on the other hand got full details of each and every follower of Raghoba, confiscated their property and houses, and punished their families and relations which terribly exasperated the people for many years, in which all functions of a normal administration were almost brought to a standstill.

(*d*) *Increased private purse at the expense of the State.*

These are some of the points which have occurred to me as I read the papers and correspondence of those days and tried to find out for myself the ultimate causes of the decline and the workings of the minds of some of the men in authority at the time. There is another charge which some writers have urged against Nana, *viz.*, that of inflating his private purse at the expense of the State. This sort of corruption in public matters was so common in those days, that we need not single out one particular person for blame; but it is said that Nana's private property amounted to some crores, quite beyond his own needs as it would seem. It passes our comprehension how a great financier like him could think his property secure, when his opponents would come to power, as he himself had dealt most harshly with Sakharam Bapoo and others, whose

property he had relentlessly confiscated. In fact Nana suffered the same fate after his master's death at the hands of Baji Rao II. Nana is credited with having taken measures for preserving the independence of the Maratha State, but it is difficult to understand how his concentration of all power in his own hands or his large private fortune was going to achieve this result after his death. Why should we assume that Nana was more solicitous about the welfare of the State than Mahadji, who could have easily taken that credit for himself. We often unsuspectingly assume that Nana was the State and that he alone could save it. Let us learn to discard unwarranted assumptions. Nana does not seem to have taken stock of the situation or profited by experience. Mahadji, on the other hand, had let down the British ambitions and would have done greater service if he had lived long enough. So I think Nana would have acquired a much higher place in history, had he subordinated his love of power and monetary interest to the service of the nation.

(*e*) *What could have been done for future safety?*

We as a race often seem to lack vision and foresight, which is seen associated with the Anglo-Saxon race. Indeed, we marvel at the steady but slow progress of the British nation in the work of empire-building in

India. Every step they take is sure, though sometimes slow: if an ambitious spirit like a Wellesley or a Dalhousie follows a vigorous policy, a successor is deliberately selected to soften its rigour and slowly to consolidate the former gains, without having recourse to a retrograde step. But they never do a single thing without full consultation, discussion and deliberation, in which personalities do not count, and which point only to the ulterior aim. With us, on the other hand, it is the personalities that count. We neglect to take a long vision and to provide for ultimate objects. We only look to our own immediate concerns of the present moment. "When I am gone, the world is nothing to me," is an Indian proverb which aptly illustrates our attitude of mind. When, therefore, we examine the career of Nana Fadnis and join in the chorus of his praise, we do not stop to think what steps he should have taken but did not take for preserving the Maratha Power after him. The year 1792-93 provided a fit occasion for some such measures being taken. Mahadji had returned from the north to Poona in June 1792, laden with honours and riches. A grand ceremony was held at Poona with the titles conferred upon him by the Emperor. A campaign against Tipu had given the Marathas a grand success, which had increased their prestige. For nearly two years all the important statesmen and commanders were in Poona under the auspices of

a young and rising Peshwa, with high aspirations, and there were rejoicings for the success in war and diplomacy throughout India, as has been graphically described by Govindrao Kale. The *holi* ceremony of March 1793 was performed in Poona with unsurpassed gaity which hardly have yet died out of the Maratha memory, when, it is said the roads of the city for five miles between the Peshwa's palace and the Scindia's camp at Wanodi, were covered with knee-deep coloured dust called *gulal*. These happenings ought to have awakened thoughts of the future in the mind of every sane person. In fact, many in and out of office knew very well that all was not well inside ; that the Chhatrapati was sorely discontented and entertained hatred for the Peshwas; that the Rajputs had been entirely disaffected by the measures of Mahadji; that the two great figures of the day, Nana and Mahadji, were in open rivalry for power and mastery over the young Peshwa; that this lad had already shown enough signs of incapacity and unfitness to manage the State. All observant persons, friends and foes, had sent enough warnings of the coming danger. If all the wise persons had sat and conferred together on measures of future safety, Nana and Mahadji could have restored the Chhatrapati to power and under his presidency a sort of a new Maratha cabinet or council of management, could have been formed. If they had

thus acted in a concerted manner, some of the future dangers could have been avoided. From the military point of view the armies of the Scindia, the Holkar and the Bhosles of Nagpur, all trained under European command, would have been a match for the British had they been organised and united. But nothing of the kind was done. Such a step was quite possible for Nana, Mahadji and the rest to take, but the attention of these wise-acres does not seem to have been drawn to the necessity of it. During the next few years death played a havoc in the Maratha State, which doubtless contributed to hasten its ultimate fall. If some urgent measures for future safety had been taken in time, it was possible to save the situation to some extent. Much of the blame for this neglect ought naturally to go to Nana Fadnis, the last of the Maratha statesmen and head of the Maratha State, having handled its affairs for 40 years.

6. *Confused affairs of Mahadji.*

In criticising Nana Fadnis' administration let me not create a wrong impression about the inherent ability of Mahadji Scindia either. For, as I have more than once remarked, he too was not free from blame for mismanagement and irregularities which seem to be ingrained in the nature of the Marathas. Here is a typical instance corroborated by contemporary evidence, showing

how Mahadji's affairs were in great disorder and confusion. One Sadashiv Dinkar, an agent of Nana Fadnis, makes the following interesting report to him at Poona, from the camp of Mahadji Scindia near Mathura about the year 1788 :—

"A regular income, a fixed expenditure and moderation are the three essentials of any sound undertaking. Mahadji has just obtained ten lacs, but you will be surprised to learn how the money has been spent. As for his army expenditure, the Maratha forces from the Deccan have been suffering appalling miseries which I am unable to describe in words. They are not able to pay off their debts even by selling their horses. A trooper hardly gets Rs. 10/- a month; how can he live on this? Mahadji has spent tremendously on his new regiments of infantry, but his eminent Maratha assistants, who laid down their lives in capturing Gohad and Gwalior, have suffered terrible destitution. Mahadji never enquires if all the men put down on paper in the roll of the infantry regiments are really present or not. There is no inspection, no roll-call; and the vast amounts spent on them do not reach the hands of the men to whom they are due, but the money is pocketed by unscrupulous middlemen. There is enormous confusion and misappropriation. The artillery also is entirely mismanaged. All the employees from the Deccan have left and returned home. Money has been poured

into useless channels. I have already said how scanty the income of Mahadji is. Then come the huge debts borrowed from the bankers who are demanding payment. Abaji Naik demands thirty lacs. There are any number of other money-lenders, Deccani, Hindu, Gujrati, Rangde, whose demands for repayment are pressing, and who have been worrying Mahadji severely. He has already spent the prospective income of the next two years. He has exhausted all his private purse also, which was reported to contain some twenty-five lacs. Excessive rains during the last four years have reduced the country to a condition of famine. One of Mahadji's revenue collectors had to resort to inhuman measures in order to force out money. He tied rags to the bodies of the rich and the poor alike and pouring oil on them set them on fire. You can easily imagine the state of the country under such hardships. Lands have been deserted, cultivation has stopped; what little was produced was taken away by the old claimants, predecessors of Mahadji. Owing to famine some villages have become depopulated; one house has been found to contain twenty dead bodies with no one alive to dispose of them: such is the case of the country between the Chambal and Kashmir. Crowded rows of men are seen streaming from one place to another in search of food. Famine and robbery have enhanced their agony, and a third evil *viz.* Mahadji's tax-

collectors, has now been added to the first two, for these collectors are by no means less exacting; but with all their efforts they could hardly collect any cash. As regards tribute from the various States, Jaipur agreed on paper to pay twenty-one lacs: a large amount it looks, but only two lacs were paid in cash and two more in jewellery by slow degrees; the remainder was directed to be collected out and out from the ryots of the State, and for that purpose 2000 troops have been despatched into Jaipur territory. This is the condition of one State only. There are others who do not come to terms at all. Mahadji has to defray all the expenses of the Emperor and his armies, out of his own pocket. He has borrowed as much as he could get, and has already spent all that he had saved. He alone knows if he has any more cash now in his possession; he farms out the revenue to the highest bidder; no Deccani is willing to undertake this farming. Mahadji is in search of a banker who would undertake to pay the Emperor every month out of the collections farmed out to him. The present bankers being all helpless, refuse to undertake this impracticable job. I know what I am writing; it is the naked truth. A healthy administration is that in which the master is never in want, in which the army is contented, and the ryots are happy. If these three conditions do not exist, God alone can take care of them. His will, will prevail.

If this is the account of the finances of one of our best and the most famous chiefs in his palmy days, we can easily imagine what Maratha rule was like in its declining period. As I have said things were different during the 60 years regime of the first four Peshwas. The above description only shows that the end was to come soon.

As regards the charge that Mahadji was trying to gain independence to serve his own ends, so as to injure the interests of the Maratha State, I have not been able to form a definite opinion. A lot of fresh material is just coming into my hands, which, I am sure, will go a great way to settle the point. One thing however is quite clear. Mahadji has again and again expressed his unbounded confidence in the devotion and sagacity of Nana, whose agent, Sadashiv Dinkar, gives the following account of his interview with Mahadji in September 1788. "It gives me supreme pleasure to inform you, that just as a drowning man recovers courage upon learning that some one is coming to his rescue, so did Mahadji feel immense relief from his critical position in the midst of enemies, when timely help of money and forces came under Ali Bahadur from the Deccan. Mahadji frankly confesses, to the shame of his numerous dependents, that in his sore need, no one ran to his help as did his noble brother Nana. Great are those who do great things."

LECTURE 6

THE DOWNFALL OF THE MARATHAS:—CAUSES

During my previous discourses I have now and then explained what the strong and weak points of the Maratha character are, from which one can easily conclude, why they failed to build up a permanent national Government in India.

1. *Neglect of Science*:

In my opinion the first and foremost cause of the downfall of the Maratha Raj was their utter neglect of the study of science and of military training and organisation. Those who conducted the State, failed to take note of what the European foreigners,—the Portuguese, the French and the British,—were doing in India, and how they maintained their influence. Baji Rao I, and his brother Chimaji conquered Bassein from the Portuguese after a heroic fight, of which the nation ever after talked proudly, but failed to take the logical step that their experience of fighting should have suggested, *viz.* the foundation of a naval arsenal and ship-building yards, as measures of self-defence. The Portuguese had docks, foundries for making guns, and experts to work them. These should have been continued under Indian

management at Bassein. The Peshwas had numerous occasions to apply to those western nations for a supply of shot, powder and cannon, and often lost their campaigns for want of these materials. The necessary education and equipment could have been easily acquired and Indian experts trained. Contemporary papers make frequent mention of how statues, pictures, swords, English iron and lead, guns, telescopes, files, medicines, clocks, articles of cutlery and crockery, paper and numerous other articles of daily use, used to be constantly obtained, by way of present or purchase, from Europe: and yet it did not occur to any of us to enquire how these articles were manufactured and why they could not be produced here. Printing presses and newspapers were known to exist in Bombay, Goa and Pondicherry. Western surgery was often resorted to by very many Indians of position and means. Peshwa Madhav Rao I. himself had in his employ a European physician to treat him. There is mention of even gum-plaster being obtained from the British at Bombay, but intelligent and keen as these Peshwas and their advisers had been, one certainly fails to understand why they utterly neglected the education and development of science, so essentially needed for the preservation of their independence. We talk glibly of the selflessness and self-sacrifice which, we claim, our religion enjoins on us. But can we show any sacrifice of ours which can distantly

compare with the tremendous sacrifice of life and money, which the western nations have made for centuries past, in the pursuit of science and exploration, in their admirable perseverance, for instance, in developing the aeroplane or exploring the polar regions or reaching the heights of the Himalayas? It is certainly this spirit of science and enquiry, this perseverance and enterprise, this readiness to undergo hardship and privation in an abstract cause, so generally lacking in the east, which is responsible for our downfall. Until we achieve this spirit, all talk of independence or Swaraj seems hopeless. How to create this spirit must be the first concern of those who are striving to regenerate India.

2. *Artillery.*

Babar conquered India by means of guns and established the Mogul empire in 1526. He borrowed the art of gunnery from the Turks, who had captured Constantinople 75 years before him with the same weapon. The Europeans developed this arm very greatly and with its help rapidly expanded their trade, power and influence throughout the world, by means of their navies. But the Marathas never made this art their own. They got a few men trained by Bussy, mostly Muslims and Christians, to cope with the artillery of Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1760. The Peshwa employed Ibrahim Khan Gardi, and later on Mahadji Scindia employed De Boigne

in 1784 and Perron a few years later. But why Maratha administrators of the type of Mahadji and Nana Fadnis, did not train their own men in this essential branch of warfare, passes comprehension, except on the supposition that it would make them lose religion and caste. To handle machines and engines requires hard, constant labour, neglecting ease and laying aside caste. They tried to preserve religion at the sacrifice of science. They had therefore to depend upon foreigners for a most vital means of self-protection, and since the old Maratha system of guerilla warfare could not stand against organised artillery and infantry, it went out of use and there was nothing else to take its place. Shivaji used both systems according to his need. Guerilla warfare came into vogue particularly during the war with Aurangzeb. Santaji Ghorpade, Dhanaji Jadhav, Khanderao Dabhade in the earlier days, and the Scindias, the Holkars, and others in later days, being the eminent leaders in that mode of fighting; but when the Carnatic Wars between the French and the English exemplified the use of long-range guns with regiments of infantry to cover them, the Maratha tactics underwent a rapid change. The Peshwas did establish an artillery department at Poona and other places, under a Brahman Sardar named Panse, but the attempt was crude in the absence of proper scientific knowledge; and in addition, they never could get together sufficient

Maratha infantry or the necessary training and organisation required to bring it into operation at the proper moment. The first open abandonment of the guerilla system took place at Panipat where the Marathas had the greatest confidence in the artillery corps of Ibrahim Khan Gardi. Their failure at Panipat was not due so much to the change of tactics as to other causes into which it is not necessary to go here. But generally after Panipat the old tactics fell practically into disuse. Mahadji Scindia noticed plainly and carefully the havoc which the British guns and their organised infantry regiments made at the campaign of Talegaum; he was surprised to see the British Regiments standing firm like solid walls. He had also the same experience in Gujarat next year. No Maratha leader had the courage to face the British guns however few they might be. Mahadji therefore determined to organise his army on the European model as soon as he was free from the war with the British. He employed French officers who unfortunately could not be depended upon in critical times, and who proved too much for Daulatrao, the weak successor of Mahadji. Had the Marathas the necessary foresight and perseverance to organise their fighting and controlling machine, it appears plain, they would have been able to resist the British advance successfully. But this presupposes an organised

system of government of which I shall now speak.

3. *Lack of Organisation:*

Another potent cause of our downfall has been our utter lack of organisation in anything that we undertake, whether a government office or a department, or a campaign against an enemy. There is as a rule no unity of command, no distribution of work and power, no clear-cut assignment of duties, no method, no system, no rule. This has particularly been the case with the Marathas who by nature are not amenable to discipline or agreeable to any concerted action, each one pulling independently. This has been a national weakness which was only controlled for a time by outstanding personalities like Shivaji, Baji-Rao I or Madhav Rao I. Want of precise attention to details and prearrangement has been the constant drawbacks of all Indians. If we examine minutely why the Rajputs failed again and again against, say, Mahmud of Ghazni or Muhammad Ghori, or why Alauddin Khilji or Babar or Akbar scattered large Hindu armies at a stroke, we shall notice this prominent defect throughout, that is, there never was a perfect unity of command or a clear division and co-ordination of work on the side of the Hindus. Several Rajput Princes assembled to fight the common enemy, each one coveting the honour, but not the risk, of taking the supreme command.

Ahmad Shah Abdali's circumspection at Panipat deserves to be remembered in this connection. Whenever there were proposals for negotiating peace with the Marathas or interference with the fighting arrangements, Ahmad Shah always reminded his allies, as Kashiray puts it lucidly, "I am not a diplomat, I am only a soldier. So, leave the business of fighting entirely to me and you may carry on your business of negotiation as you please." Whenever the Marathas have lost, it will invariably be found that the failure was due to want of proper organisation and to a divided command. The Maratha system of Government and their division of spheres between the various Jagirdars were mainly responsible for this cardinal defect, *viz.*, their centrifugal tendency, of which I have spoken before. Unity of command presupposes pre-eminent qualities in a commander. He must be able to enforce rigid discipline upon all whom he has to lead. The Maratha Jagirdars became entirely disorganised when power fell into the incompetent hands of Baji Rao II. Every one saw the necessity of uniting for a common purpose, but tried to save his own skin at the sacrifice of others, so that when in the second Maratha war, the Scindia and the Bhosle called upon Yashvant Rao Holkar to come and join them against the British, Yashvant Rao remained studiously aloof, waiting for the outcome of the other two fighting the game, and when the British, after smash-

ing the power of the Scindia and the Bhosle, directed their arms against Yashvant Rao, his eyes were at last opened and he piteously wrote letters to all Marathas to come and join him. The letter that he wrote is typical and will bear reproduction here:—"We have all heretofore united to defend our Hindu empire; but recently, owing to family dissensions, our empire and our religion have both been declining. Their final ruin cannot be prevented unless we all unite and work together. I am doing all I can to achieve this object and am sworn to pursue it to the end of my life. I call upon God to help me. But it is no use doing this single-handed, and all of you remaining mere idle spectators, each one looking to one's personal interest. It behoves you all to combine for the defence of our empire and religion." But this appeal came too late and could not mend matters.

4. *The Maratha and the British personnel,—a contrast:*

Although history has not to take account of factors which are usually beyond the power of the human reason to comprehend, I cannot pass over what is usually called a fortuitous circumstance in the affairs of the Maratha kingdom. At any rate since the downfall of the Marathas is synchronous with the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries, the contrast in the relative

position of the Marathas and the British becomes all the more striking. While we admit that the Marathas were much inferior to the British in point of organisation, and proficiency in science and arms, we must also remember that the Marathas were by no means inferior, but much superior, to any other Indian power or State of that time. The element of chance lies only in this, that before the Marathas had time to improve the scattered position of the Jagirdars and consolidate their strength under a clever administrator, they were called upon to oppose the formidable British power, strong in science, constitution, unity, and naval supremacy. Between 1794 and 1800 most of the experienced and able persons in the Maratha kingdom were removed by the cruel hand of death. The old Ramshastri had already passed away on 11th November, 1789. Mahadji Scindia died on 12th February, 1794, being followed by Haripant Fadke four months later, (on 19th June, 1794) and by Ahalyabai Holkar a year later (on 13th August, 1795). The young Peshwa Madhav Rao, who since his birth had been the joy and the hope of the nation, lost his life on 27th October 1795, by an accidental fall from the balcony of his palace. The subsequent deaths of Tukoji Holkar on 15th August, 1797 and of Parshuram Bhau Patwardhan on 18th September, 1799 and last of all, that of Nana Fadnis on 13th March, 1800, closed the final

chapter of the Maratha Swaraj founded by Shivaji.

Just at the time that death played this havoc, the supreme power fell into the hands of an incapable and unscrupulous Peshwa Baji Rao II, who was quite unequal to the task which he was called upon to perform. His advisers were worthless menials, and selfish priests, or intriguing upstarts like Sarjerao Ghatge, of whose misdeeds the less said the better. How could these men of small minds and poor character, hold their own against a phalanx of eminent personalities, on the side of the British, the masters of their age? Lord Wellesley the Governor General and his two brothers Arthur and Henry Wellesley, were men of extraordinary capacity and talent. Arthur Wellesley (afterwards Duke of Wellington) was destined to be the conqueror of Napoleon. Mountstuart Elphinstone, Sir John Malcolm, Sir Barry Close, Col. Collins, Jonathan Duncan, and a little later, Sir Thomas Munro, have all left behind them unequalled reputation, even if we do not mention Jenkins, Lake and many others, second only to these. The nation which possesses such able personalities for its agents is bound to win success at any time. Why the junction of the two centuries should be marked by such a terrible contrast in the politics of India, no body can explain, except by attributing it to chance which our great philosophy of the *Bhagwad-gita* emphatically

admits as the fifth cause! The Marathas had tided over several severe crises in their career. The great Shivaji was followed by an incompetent son who nearly lost the kingdom: the death of Aurangzeb brought on another crisis, that of a civil war. Tara Bai's foolish ambition unnecessarily added to the troubles brought on by the death of Shahu. Even the battle of Panipat was not devoid of this element of chance. The untimely death of Peshwa Madhav Rao I, created the last great crisis which nearly disjointed the whole Maratha fabric. The long history of England also is not without its elements of chance, producing crises at different periods of its existence. After all history is a justification of providence.

5. *False notion of religion:*

But why we failed to keep pace with scientific progress so essential for the existence of a nation anywhere and at any time, is also an interesting point for us to investigate. We Hindus have great achievements to our credit in the past. Art and science did exist and progress in India up to a certain time, as the architecture of the Hindu and the Muslim periods, our finest textiles, our arts and literatures, our advance in mathematics and astronomy, our ancient sea-borne trade, and various other achievements of a like nature, were not possibly without the proper spirit of study and enquiry. When and how

we lost this spirit is a point worth considering. I think towards the end of the 13th century, *viz.*, about the days of Ramdeorao Yadav and his great minister Hemadri, the attention of our society in general was for the first time, diverted to a false notion of religious merit, *i.e.*, to pursuits of a superstitious nature, making caste restrictions rigid, enjoining upon us various religious practices as the only means of happiness and salvation, and introducing thousands of minute rules and practices entirely antagonistic to the material interests of a progressive community. Alauddin Khilji was the first Muhammadan who crossed the Narbudda into the south and put an end to the independence of the Yadavs of Devgiri at the beginning of the 14th century, which I take to be a great landmark in Indian history, when the old order of society and politics markedly changed, making room for innovations of an undesirable character. Hemadri, the great minister of the Yadav kings, was a learned Pandit and patron of Sanskrit learning, and used his great influence, learning and energy, in bringing about what I may call an entire revolution in society and religion. He employed a large number of Pandits for several years and compiled out of old *Shastras* and existing practices his great work called *Chatur-varga-chintamani*, a comprehensive compilation in four parts, *viz.*, 1st *Vrata-khanda* (religious vows to different deities), 2nd *Dana-khanda*

(charities to Brahman priests), 3rd *Tirtha-khanda* (pilgrimage to holy places) and 4th *Moksha-khanda* (the attainment of salvation). These practically covered the whole life of a Hindu. Being an intensely practical man, Hemadri revolutionised very many arts of life also. He is the author of a style of building houses and temples, which till recently was universal in Maharastra, and of a style of fast writing in a running modified style the Devnagari characters now known as *Modi*. If we examine this great compilation of Hemadri, we shall find that he has prescribed in all some 2,000 practices or vows, repetitions, incantations for driving away evil spirits, rites and ceremonies, penances and punishments, prayers and cures, charities and offerings of various kinds, which it is needless to mention here. So that, if every member of the society were to practise them all, he would have to do at least five or seven of them each day throughout the year. The various deities are mentioned giving details as to how they should be propitiated, what articles of diet were liked by each, how Brahmans should be fed at the worship of each deity, all purporting to occupy men's time and energy for the attainment of religious merit and the salvation of the soul, leaving no room for the ordinary concerns of life and making the people perfectly oblivious of the fact that they had any secular duties to perform. During some 300 years after

Hemadri the influence of this compilation continued to divert men's minds from study and progress; indeed, the traces of that system are to be found even in our own day. Since the 14th century two main ideals of life have influenced men's minds in India,—the one that of the religious practices just mentioned, which I have termed the School of Hemadri, although many other authors of great learning and note in other provinces also worked in the same direction, such as Shulapani Upadhyaya and Raghunandan Bhattacharya, as also the great lawyers of the Bhatta family of Benares, *viz.*, Narayan Bhatta, Kamalakar Bhatta and Nilkanth. All these laid down, as I said, one ideal of life, which was picked up mostly by the upper classes of the priestly persuasion. The other ideal which was mainly accepted by the lower class or the ignorant masses, was represented by saints like Kabir, Nanak, Eknath and Chaitanya, whose theme was the spread of the *Bhagavata-dharma* or the *Bhakti* cult, *i.e.*, devotion and prayers. Their object was to translate all religious thought from Sanskrit into the vernaculars and create equality and universal brotherhood among all classes of the people, enjoining upon them humble and sincere devotion to God as the only means of salvation. Both the ideals turned men's thoughts away from any original study of the physical sciences. In my opinion, our dark ages com-

menced just about the time when they ended in Europe.

Ranade has described a movement for religious revival in Europe also, at the same time as in India, but there it was a thorough change from the old to the new, as we know from the lives of men like Luther and Bacon. In Europe, the religious reform followed the Renaissance and did not prevent attention to science and progress. A hundred years before Shivaji, Sir Thomas More laid down fresh lines of progress and education in England. A few years before More, Columbus and others, with the help of mathematics and geography, had made many new discoveries and undertaken voyages throughout the world. The art of printing had commenced to diffuse knowledge and enfranchise men's minds from superstition. The average education in Europe was then far superior to and of a more practical nature than that imparted in India. A list of Shastris and Pandits of Shivaji's days has been published in one of the volumes printed by the Bharat-Itihas-Mandal of Poona, but it contains no name which can compare in intensity of knowledge and practical utility, with Bacon or any other European scholar of those days. The list has doubtless many eminent names: but they are all of the old scholastic type, hardly going beyond wordy grammar and logic of the *Ghata-pata* kind. Education in Europe liberalised thought and life, made

people bold, active and venturesome, while in India, under the two ideals mentioned above, people remained steeped in ignorance and superstition, self-contented and resigned, seeking salvation in the world beyond, without caring to improve the one they were living in.

6. *Superior British Politics.*

The inquisitive nature of the British people and their superior diplomacy added immensely to their strength as compared with the Marathas. During the first Maratha War the British had full and detailed information in their possession as regards the Maratha Raj, its armies, the comparative worth of the various Jagirdars, their mutual relations and their family disputes. The British knew very well who were likely to succumb to outside influences and who were entirely loyal to the Peshwas. When they commenced the war, they were prepared for any eventuality. Apart from Hornby, Hastings, Mostyn, Anderson, Upton, Mallet, Goddard and a few others who were helping directly in the war, there were many other accredited British agents, touring in the country for purposes of trade, and simultaneously obtaining all kind of information, say, about the Maratha forts and their positions, the paths leading to them, the condition of the people, local disputes and political happenings. This shows how inquisitive the British people are and

how carefully they study and collect all useful information and immediately despatch it to the proper authorities. Mostyn was present in Poona at the time of Peshwa Narayan Rao's death, and for seven years supplied useful information to Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in his despatches. In fact, Mostyn may be said to have been the prime agent who provoked that aggressive war. On the other hand, the Maratha party had hardly any information about the doings of the British people. They knew nothing about England, about the British Government, about their settlements and factories in India and outside, their character and inclinations, their arms and armaments: perhaps even Nana Fadnis did not at all possess such details, so that, while the British were well-posted in all matters, the Marathas were woefully ignorant. There is no example of a Hindu having learnt English during the Maratha regime so as to talk and correspond freely in that language and obtain correct information of the British plans, their intentions and movements, while there was a large number of Englishmen who learnt Indian languages and freely spoke them. An English officer in Wellesley's days delivered an extempore speech in Marathi at Calcutta, which shows the inherent inferiority of the Marathas and accounts for much of their failure as rulers. Even Nana Fadnis was ignorant not only of the geography of the outside world, but even

of India. The maps which he used in those days are extant and are fantastic, inaccurate and useless. The art of printing had long been introduced in India by the Missionaries. The first English newspaper was started at Calcutta in the early eighties of the 18th century; and the earliest Indian vernacular types and printed books were those of the Christian Missions in the late 18th century. As regards travel, the only mention we find of Indians having gone to Europe in the 18th century is that of the agents of Raghoba,—Maniar Parsee and a Hindu named Hanumant Rao, who were sent by him about the year 1780 to England in order to obtain British help against the ministerial party of Poona. A letter exists written by Edmund Burke to Raghoba in the year 1782, in which the Hindu Hanumant Rao is mentioned as almost dying owing to the severe hardships which his religion subjected him to, in the most inclement weather of Britain. Raja Ram Mohan Ray was perhaps the first Hindu of note to visit Europe from India, which he did in 1830 when steamships had come into use; while the British had been roaming over the whole world for 300 years before Ram Mohan Ray's time. Indeed, if we take into consideration the tremendous sacrifice of life and money that the British people have made for three centuries during a time when travelling by sea was most dangerous, the prize of world supremacy which they have obtained, appears

not at all undeserved. The Marathas failed grievously in this point also.

7. *How far is caste responsible for our downfall? Peculiar position of the British.*

Many writers Indian and foreign have put down caste jealousies and social prejudices as a direct cause of the Maratha downfall. Their reasoning is so vague that it cannot be convincing to every reader, as it is not supported by definite facts and figures. India has doubtless been a caste-ridden country and certainly suffered in various ways owing to this evil, as I have amply shown above. But beyond that religious factor, I have not been able to understand, how caste has directly affected the Marathas. Whatever might be the disadvantages of caste in general, I am of opinion that in this respect we are apt to judge of those times from our experience of present-day conditions. Whatever might be the disadvantages of caste in general, I am sure it did not disable the Marathas from building up a powerful and independent kingdom and hold it by force of arms and policy, for nearly 150 years. Indeed wise and eminent personalities like Shivaji or Madhav Rao never allowed caste to interfere with their justice and fair play. The Peshwas were doubtless fully alive to the harm that comes to a nation by acting on the principle of caste. In one of his letters, Peshwa Balajirao wrote to the Chhatrapati in the

following terms: "Your Highness' Court has all kinds of people, small and great, good and bad: but there should be no distinction made on account of their caste. All are equal children of your Highness; he who serves the State well, should be promoted; all should be treated with equal attention and kindness. Those who harm the State should be punished, regardless of whatever caste they may be. Then and then only will the administration go on without disturbance. We, as your Highness' Ministers, know only this, that all castes, whether Deshasthas, Kokanasthas, Karhadas, Prabhus, Senvis or Marathas, all belong equally to your Highness and all have an equal claim on your Highness as their father. Their service alone should be a measure of their worth and not their caste."

On the whole I am not prepared to accuse the Peshwas of showing any undue predilection for the Brahmans. If we make a correct computation, we shall find that during the rule of the Peshwas, 75% of the families that attained prominence then, were not Brahmans and most of the great Jagirdars were certainly non-Brahmans. It is doubtless true that Brahman families rose to prominence during the Peshwas' regime, just as many Maratha families rose to distinction in States presided over by Maratha Jagirdars. But this is merely human nature. If I have power in hand and have to employ a person for the execution of a certain job, I would naturally

select one whom I know personally and in whom I can trust. Therefore the mere employment of a certain caste should not form a ground of condemnation. I have no instances to quote of the Peshwas having deliberately put down persons of other castes in order to promote their own. Shivaji sternly put down some great Maratha families, Moreys, Mohites, and Ghorpades, and raised Prabhus and Brahmans to power and influence. He paid the highest respect to Ramdas and other worthy Brahmans. Can we detect any caste prejudice in this? It is worth noting that out of the 49 persons found guilty in the murder of Narayan Rao, 24 were Deccani Brahmans of the murdered Peshwa's caste, 2 Saraswats, 3 Prabhus, 6 Marathas, 1 Maratha maid-servant, 5 Musalmans and 8 northern Hindus. This analysis will show that caste did not play, so far as the administration went, any significant part. It is well known how faithfully Ibrahim Khan Gardi served Bhau Saheb on the field of Panipat, against his co-religionist Ahmad Shah Abdali. Muhammad Yusuf, a Gardi leader, who murdered Narayan Rao, was captured for the Peshwas by one Taj Khan Rohilla. How Shivaji's life was saved at Agra by a Musalman *Faras* I have mentioned elsewhere. If some Maratha families of Shivaji's time lost their importance during succeeding days, it was not due to the Peshwas harming them. Many Brahman families of Shivaji's time also

suffered equally,—the Pingles, the Hanumantes, the Amatyas, the Sachivs, and a host of others, all more or less lagged behind as soon as the successors of those families ceased to possess personal worth, in fact, the Maratha regime was particularly welcome as affording plenty of field for all and every person in the land, to show one's worth, whatever caste or status in society one might have belonged to. This was the great practical benefit all people received from their Swaraj in those days. People got equal opportunity for service and distinction, as the accounts of over 100 families which I have given with all available minute details will easily prove. Personal jealousies and mutual bickerings there always were, and will ever remain: but they were not based on the principle of caste. The Scindias and the Holkars have always in history been hostile to each other from generation to generation, which cannot be attributed to caste at all. It is said that during Madhav Rao and Narayan Rao's regime, the Deshasthas and the Kokanasthas were at logger-heads, but this is not true at all. I can show members of both the castes ranging themselves strongly on opposite sides. For three generations the Peshwas and the families of the Prabhu Chitnises were on the best and most intimate terms. So much so that to a great extent it is the Prabhu Chitnises who helped materially the rise of

the Peshwas to eminence. The greatest strength of the Raj at the time of Shivaji and later, lay in this happy co-operation of castes. When Damaji Gaekwad invaded Poona and Satara in the absence of the Peshwa far away in the east, it was a Maratha and a Prabhu General who saved the position for the Peshwa. If Tara Bai disliked Peshwa Balajirao, she had many Brahmans in her confidence and she disliked many Marathas also. If Sakharam Hari, a Prabhu, was a stanch supporter of the Kokanastha Raghoba, Abaji Mahadev Sohoni, a Kokanastha and Manaji Fadke a Maratha were also his strong supporters. During the first Maratha war nearly all the Maratha and other Generals supported the Maratha cause with great devotion and loyalty to the young Peshwa. Again and again on the battlefields of the Carnatic and the north, at Panipat, at Talegaum, before the forts of Gwalior and Dohad, at Lalsot and Kharda, all castes fought with equal courage and valour under the common banner of the Peshwas and often led by a Brahman general. Malharrao Holkar was a shepherd by caste but never showed disrespect to Baji Rao I. or his sons, on the ground of their being Brahmans. It was customary to hold a dinner at Poona on the anniversary of the death of Baji Rao I., when the Scindia, the Holkar and other intimate associates of Baji Rao used to be invited, and the principal lady of the Peshwa's house had

to serve all the guests at the same time. Once it happened that Malharrao Holkar had his dogs with him when he came to the dinner. Gopikabai the lady serving the guests, asked Malharrao not to bring the dogs into the dining hall. He replied, he would not eat without his dogs sharing his dinner with him, and would rather dine in the outer verandah with his dogs, than come inside near the Brahmans and pollute them. He did not feel at all offended for thus being kept outside. People in Maratha days observed caste distinctions in matters of religious concern only, without letting their working life to be affected by them. The objection to intercaste dinners and the fear of pollution by touch, have been recently accentuated when one caste is said to be above another and unwarranted annoyance is caused thereby. The superiority and inferiority of caste affected in those days purely religious functions, and not the common affairs of life. That is how I look at the question.

But this argument of caste and social barriers, requires to be examined from another point of view. Domestic quarrels and caste differences have become stock arguments with very many writers, but there is hardly a fallen nation on the earth, whose history is available, in whose case the same causes could not be said to have operated, for human nature being the same all the world over, man's selfishness always tries to profit at the sacri-

fice of others. In the case of India, at any rate, we have been hearing these same causes repeated again and again since the defeat of Porus by Alexander the Great, right up to the fall of the Peshwas or even up to the present moment. These stock arguments are easy to produce but difficult to refute. Human activity always needs some field of action for profitable enterprise, and so long as the custodians of a nation's interests are able to supply an aim for life or opportunities for work to its members, their restless activities will occupy themselves outside and not have occasion to encroach on domestic fields. The greatness of a national leader can therefore be measured by the prospective enterprises which he can place before his followers. Much of a nation's success or failure, depends, in my opinion, upon the constructive genius and far-sighted stewardship on the part of its leaders. On close examination Shivaji would be found to have temporarily changed the whole genius of the Maratha nation. The system of the British constitution has been successful for centuries, because it ensures a succession of capable leaders, who serve the best interests of the nation.

A close study of the plentiful papers printed by Forrest and in the volumes of the *Persian Calendars*, shows, how cautiously and insidiously the British were slowly undermining the edifice not only of the Maratha State, but those of the various other Indian

potentates as well. Professional traders as the British were, and alien both in religion and nationality, with always a strong basic support from England, they could easily afford to pose as disinterested arbitrators in the numerous internal disputes that necessarily cropped up, upon the dissolution of the central Mogul power. If they succeeded in any hazardous enterprise, as in the case of Plassey, well and good; if they failed they stood to lose almost nothing; they could quietly wait for a better opportunity for aggrandisement, as actually happened in the first Maratha War. The several Maratha leaders had even then a common aim and a common field for their ambition and enterprise, which were exemplified on the memorable battlefields of Panipat and Kharda, where all castes and people joined without any social jealousy. I am therefore at a loss to understand how caste has been instrumental in bringing down the Maratha power. It is the fashion of the victors to saddle a fallen nation with all conceivable blemishes, but we, as belonging to it, must not swallow all that we are told or taught, unless our reason is prepared to accept it on evidence.

8 *Prominent Maratha personalities.*

Students must observe the Maratha character as revealed in the various types which they meet in the course of their reading. The Marathas produced rulers and statesmen, soldiers and generals, judges and financiers,

poets and writers, among whom not a few women also have distinguished themselves. They fought and conquered, and often suffered terrible reverses which they bore coolly and patiently. Their careers have not been stained by black deeds of cruelty or treachery. They treated opponents like true warriors with consideration and respect. Chanda Saheb, the Nawab of Arcot, was treated with dignity during his eight years' confinement at Satara. Two Englishmen who remained as hostages with Mahadji Scindia, spoke highly of that nobleman's treatment of them. Mushir-ul-mulk, the Nizam's minister, was likewise honourably treated when he was a prisoner at Poona. Indeed, some of their troubles arose owing to misplaced clemency, as in the case of Raghunath Rao and Manaji Fadke; the British in such cases would have done short work of them, as they dealt with Hari Bhide in 1775 whom they blew from the mouth of a cannon, for an unproved act of treason, while four months later Ganesh Vithal Waghmare was merely confined for a similar offence by Haripant Fadke. To understand the deeds of Maratha valour and sacrifice, a mere glance at the genealogies of some of the historical families will be enough, *e.g.* the Scindias or the Patwardhans. The long and revered Kayastha family of the Chitnis of Satara produced able writers and diplomats for seven consecutive generations, a unique fact in history, and have acquired

imperishable name in their voluminous *bakhars* and writings. Even if we exclude Shivaji and his *guru* Ramdas, we can find in Maratha history such brilliant names in various professions as Santaji Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav, Ramchandra Nilkanta Amatya and Parashuram Trimbak, Raghuji Bhosle and Trimbakrao Dabhade, Baji Rao and Madhav Rao, Damaji Gaekwad and Sadasiv Rao Bhau, Ramchandra Baba and Khando Ballal, Mahadji Scindia and Nana Fadnis, Sakharam Bapoo and Ram Shastri, Jija Bai, Ahalya Bai and Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, and very many others, who have illumined Maratha history with unforgettable achievements and cleverly handled all the varied concerns of a nation in power. For the most part they dealt moderately with outsiders and gave India inspiration and hope, driving away the gloom which had overcome all, by supplying, as it were, a practical lesson that even mighty kings could with success be resisted in their evil actions. Thus, the example of the great Shivaji, if it cannot supply us with an ideal, should at least set us a limit, behind which we must not go, but beyond which we may certainly try to aspire.

9. *Concluding remarks.*

Let us clearly grasp the task before us. Some eminent scholars in Madras have been assiduously tapping the Sanskrit and Tamil sources; what the people of Maharastra are

doing I have already mentioned. I must say with regret that the field of work before northern India is yet comparatively unexplored. Huge masses of Persian materials, as my friend Prof. Sarkar has frequently assured me, lie scattered all over this country; they still await patient and selfless labour from many scholars. In the latter half of the 18th century we meet with very many personalities in northern India, whom our accepted history condemns. Our own reason must prove or disprove this condemnation. The Emperor Shah Alam II and his various officers like Mirza Najaf Khan, Mir Jafar, Mir Kasim, Aliwardi Khan, Muhammad Reza Khan, the younger Ghaziuddin, (for a time the King-maker of Delhi,) the Rohilla Najib Khan and his son Zabeta Khan, Shujauddula and his successors, Raja Chait Singh of Benares, besides the various Jat and Sikh leaders,—all these and a host of others, Hindu and Muhammadan, seem to have proved powerless to save the liberty of India. How is it that all wisdom seems suddenly to have departed from this country to the west? May we not suspect that their careers have not yet been examined from our own records and from the Indian point of view? If we search for fresh materials we might perhaps be able to get from them at least some redeeming features, even in the mistakes and failures of these men. Shall we judge and condemn them without going into all the evidence? Even the lowest

criminal is given a chance to defend himself. May not some kindred spirits rise to clear them of the stigma? I appeal for workers and trust they will not be found wanting.
