



Research Paper

Chhatrapati the lionhearted: Makeover of Maharashtra under Shivaji

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Abstract

A prominent place in the Maharashtrian ethos is held by Shivaji Maharaj, who was the foundation of the Maratha kingdom in the 17th century. It doesn't matter whether it's in traditional folklore, popular imagination, or the modern politics of the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti and the Shiv Sena, stories of Shivaji's military ability and heroism have continued to be a powerful emotive force for the people of Maharashtra. Shivaji's pre-eminence in Maharashtrian history has never been challenged or surpassed by any other individual in the state's history. With its long history of serving as a symbol of history, culture, and identity formation, the image of Shivaji arouses interest in its past and evolution. As such, a study of the changes in the image over time, and of the factors that might have contributed to these changes, becomes a crucial component in the history of modern western India. It is my intention to examine the growth of Shivaji's image in this research, beginning with his birth and progressing through his lineage to the present day. The period is notable because it coincided with the creation of nationalism in western India, which in turn resulted in the introduction of a number of new forces of change into the region's governance, society, and economy, all of which were significant at the time. These forces, it is hoped, contributed to and informed the shaping of Shivaji's image to suit specific social, cultural, and political developments, which will be the subject of this paper.

Key Words: Shivaji, Maharashtra, Nationalism, Hindu, Chhatrapati, Ramdas, Tukaram.

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Chhatrapati the lionhearted: Makeover of Maharashtra under Shivaji

Chhatrapati Shivaji, one of India's most courageous and enlightened rulers in history, is regarded as a legend for all time. In the annals of this country, his astonishing accomplishments have earned him a special position in its history. The exploits he was able to demonstrate to the world in terms of military, administration, and nation building were incredible, and few people could match them. With his ideal of a big and expansive nation, Chhatrapati Shivaji also dreamed of a nation that would declare tolerance and comradeship from the highest heights. A ruler's ability to demonstrate tolerance and responsibility towards his subjects is emphasized by Shivaji in this line of the chapter. Once, a stone thrown by an old woman at a tree in order to pick a mango accidentally struck Shivaji, who forgave her and awarded her with the money that would enable her to live well for the rest of her life; saying, "If a tree, which is not a highly elevated living entity, can be so tolerant and merciful to give sweet mangoes even when hit by anyone; being a king, should I not be more merciful and tolerant than the tree?" When we hear the name Shivaji, we are reminded of his fearless attitude, which remained unshaken even in the face of adversity and difficulty. When faced with difficulties, Shivaji rose to the occasion and persevered in the face of adversity with determination. He always said, "Never bend your head always hold it high." In life, mere weapons will not suffice to accomplish anything. One must develop the strength of will and the guts to move forward in order to attain success in life. Shivaji was a warrior and administrator who forged his own way in the world. He moulded himself to be a person who achieves great things in life. He strongly believed, "Even if there were a sword in the hands of everyone, it is a willpower that establishes a government."

Shivaji was a staunch supporter of individual liberty. He relished the freedom he had in both spirit and practise. Suppression and tyranny were something he could never stand. His life was a mission in which he sought to bring freedom to everybody and everyone he came into contact with through warfare and administration. To him, "Freedom is a boon, which everyone has the right to receive." Shivaji was not only a remarkable orator, but he also lived by his words. He was the most ardent supporter of willpower and bravery, qualities that became the very icons of this great warrior's life and times. He said, "When you are enthusiastic, the mountain also looks like a clay pile." The stories from the epics and the history of this country that his

mother Jijibai told him as a child played an important role in shaping him. As Shivaji points out, it is critical to learn from history and to be inspired by the lives and accomplishments of our forebears. In his opinion, "we must know the history of the location where we are currently living as well as the history of our ancestors." Rather than the might of his weapons or the sheer bulk of his army, Shivaji's accomplishments can be attributed to his strategic and deft manoeuvres. He instilled fear in the hearts and minds of his adversaries by using lesser forces. The importance of acquiring education and knowledge that can adequately support everyone's vision and mission is emphasized in his belief system, which according to him, "Each person should get an education, because during a war, the thing that cannot be achieved by strength, but can be achieved by knowledge and tricks, which comes from education."

A significant deal of social and political change took place in Maharashtra during the ShivaSahi period, often known as the seventeenth century. The removal of ignorance and inferiority complexes, followed by the ability to influence the minds of the general public, was the order of the day. Shivaji predicted and repaired the situation with the goal of instilling the true national spirit in them. He educated the masses in the proper spirit of religion and helped to elevate them up on a social level. In this way, Maharashtra experienced a period of social and religious renaissance, and we can find enough evidence of this movement in the writings of Pandits such as Keshava and the many judgements or Niwadadas issued by the Court of Sivaji in the course of religious disputes. When the 'Hindavi Swarajya'¹ national government was established in Maharashtra, the inevitable outcome of these efforts was obvious in the overwhelming support given to Sivaji and his successors by the general public during the foundation of the government. This part of Sivaji's life has not been completely explored in various records. In the absence of a more in-depth debate on the matter, I preferred to provide a brief assessment of Sivaji's life, paying particular attention to the study of this area of his life.

Shivaji cautions us against being overconfident and neglectful in our assessment of the adversary without exercising proper caution by saying, "Do not think of the enemy as weak, then do not be too scared to feel too strong." While doing so, we must have the confidence in our abilities and the guts to stand up for what we believe. Shivaji was a master of guerilla warfare, and he defeated vast and powerful armies with only a few hundred warriors on many occasions. When Shivaji says, "there is no need to learn from my own mistakes. We may learn a great deal from the mistakes of others." he is reminding us that life is a rich trove of opportunities to learn and grow. We must be willing to learn from the mistakes of others in order to avoid making the same mistakes in our own lives. In order to grow and learn, we must make errors in our own lives and learn from them. Our lifetime will not be enough to accomplish our objectives if we proceed in this manner.

Shivaji was a good son, a capable administrator, a dependable friend, a deserving adversary, and a competent motivator, to name a few qualities. To the best of his ability, he carried out his responsibilities towards others, whether they be those owed to his family or those owed to society. At the same time, we must be treated differently when it comes to keeping our promises. Thieves and oppressors are never deserving of our time and effort to keep our promises to them. He told his courtiers, "You should promise to each person who needs your help, in order to achieve your goal. But fulfill only those promises that you have given to saints and holy people, not those given to thieves."

Shivaji tells us that life is a treasure trove of opportunities to learn and grow when he says, "No need to be learned from my own fault. We can learn a lot from others' mistakes." We must be willing to learn from the mistakes of others in order to avoid making the same mistakes in our own lives. In order to grow and learn, we must make errors in our own lives and learn from them. Our lifetime will not be enough to accomplish our objectives if we proceed in this manner.

According to the authentic national history, the seventeenth century will be remembered as the most significant age of immense social and political turmoil in Maharashtra's history. It is the activities of the state's officers that represent the policy of the state, and the data that has been collected so far by Kesavabhata in reference to the life and deeds of Shivaji provide adequate contemporaneous proof to demonstrate how this upheaval was brought about. There's no doubt that a look at the 'state of the people of his time will prove to be both informative and thought-provoking. As demonstrated by Sivaji's performance of Indryabhiseka^{2,3}, the idea with which he elevated the masses to a higher level of society and worked up the construction of Hindavi Swarajya in the Deccan is clearly discernible from his other works.

¹In the Maratha Empire, Shivaji was credited with the concept of Hindavi Swarajya, which means "Hindavi Sovereignty." Following Shivaji's death, the term Swarajya became widely used, however it was no longer linked with "Hindavi" but rather with "Maratha."

²With the loss of political power to the Turushka Islamic hordes, and collapse of tradition, Indryabhiseka ceremony was relegated to the background. The Yadavas and Chauhans were the last dynasties to perform a coronation ritual, but whether they performed Indryabhiseka ceremony is not clear. Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha empire, revived the Indryabhiseka tradition. Pandit Gaga Bhatt, who presided over his coronation ceremony, wrote a detailed book on the procedure. A thread ceremony, Upanayana, of Shivaji took place on May 29, 1674, and then a Vratya Stoma ceremony was performed.

³Criminal Jurisprudence (XVII th century) "by V. S. Bendrey, B. I. S. Manual Sweeya Series, No. 59, 1943.

At first, Shivaji consolidated his influence in Maval country, then moved on to a more difficult portion of the Konkan, where he was able to secure his independence. In the course of time, it spread into the western and southern regions of what is now Bombay Province. There were a few minor towns on the land, but there was no significant centre of trade or scholarship, nor was there much religious significance. The villages were quite small and spread out across a large area. Communication was difficult, and nature was relied on for the majority of the time for convenience. In a nutshell, this area of the country was more or less abandoned, and it was possibly the most neglected tract of the Deccan at that time. The Deshmukh⁴ or Sar Deshmukh was the only link that connected the peasants with the Deccani Sultanates, and he enjoyed unrestrained and uncontrolled independence in his position. As a result, the people who lived in these tracts had no direct interaction with the more advanced civic life of the capital cities, nor did they have any influence over the centres of prosperity and learning. The land that Shivaji acquired in the early part of his life was backward politically, physically tough, and economically impoverished, though it was self-sufficient for the bare necessities of survival. The power and reign of the Sultans were never felt by the people of this region.

The Nizamshahi Kingdom fell apart in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. Malik Ambar was possibly the Deccani Sultanats' last astute politician. He saw the danger in the Sultans' destructive policies at the time, and he strove to instill dread and reverence in Muslim rule in the Deccan. No Muslim officer, on the other hand, was able to follow him and carry out his policies and activities. On the contrary, the Muslim neighbors' narrow vision drove him to promote Hindus to positions of power and authority. Hindus were able to assert their balancing power as a result of this. They were staunch supporters of Nizamshahi cause, and despite their failures, they were undeterred in their quest for power. They fought and used the force of balance to their advantage. They were well aware of the foreign rule's inherent flaws. Murar Jagdevrao, Lukhji Jadhav Rao, and Shahaji pushed the Sultans to recognize their importance and authority by defying one Sultan or another, or, to put it another way, by pitting Muslim powers against one another. The masses blindly followed and trusted their own leaders. Playing in the hands of their Hindu helpers, the isolated Muslim officers progressively loosened their grip on the population. The Muslim kings had only ever entertained the Muslim executive. A shift in perspective was unavoidable. To some extent, this move lessened hostility and averted imminent danger for the Sultans, but it also shattered the steel frame of Muslim control in the Deccan.

The worst impacts of the catastrophic famine of 1630-33, known as "Durgadevicha Duikaja," exacerbated the situation even more. The Muslim authorities withdrew to the major cities, handing over their responsibilities to helpers. As a result, Muslim contact with the general public was lost. It was impossible for the Deshmukhs or Sardeshmukhs to meet their annual duties to the Sultans. The country was ravaged by massive casualties and the abandonment of settlements by people in search of food and safety. As a result, hundreds of lawsuits over property title arose in the decade following the famine. In short, the second part of the seventeenth century was a time of unrest and loose state control. The Sultans' loyalty was severely weakened, and no foreign control could ever be secure without it. As a result, Shivaji had an opportunity to strengthen his own power and strength by exploiting the very flaws and desires that had resulted in the rupture of the bonds between the ruler and the ruled.

Shivaji began his career life by leading a fight against the Deshmukhi system, which he succeeded in replacing with a very sound and secure land tenure settlement for village agriculturists. This helped him gain popularity among the general public. It is true that the loss of the Deshmukhi rights was not a pleasant sacrifice, but the Deshmukhs were not the less eager to be relieved of their commitments to the Sultans as a result of this loss. Shivaji, on the other hand, had no personal animosity toward the Deshmukhs and had no desire to exact personal revenge upon them. He appointed them to positions under him in accordance with their heroism and talent, and he supplied them with better opportunities and prospects in return. A large number of them were drawn by this and became followers of the Hindavi Swarajya, also known as Maharashtra-Dharma⁵ in social terms at the time. In addition to concessions and help, Shivaji undertook a robust strategy of rehabilitation of the destroyed districts with concessions and aid. But it was a long and arduous process of persuasion and endurance that was required.

The Sultanats could afford to ignore these tracts totally, but failing to see the risk of the power gathering enough strength to threaten the Sultans' own existence would have been devastating and catastrophic. Shivaji, on the other hand, gave his particular attention and care to the building up of the internal defence and the organisation of a loyal and faithful military in order to ensure the security of the people and the production. The defence, on the other hand, was able to absorb all of the wealth amassed as a result of the daring assaults into the

⁴Deshmukh was a historical title given to a person who was granted a territory of land, in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Desh means land or country in Sanskrit, and mukh means head or chief; as a result, Deshmukh refers to "the head" of a district in English. See J. G. Duff, A history of Mahratta Vol 1, p. 39.

⁵Religion in Maharashtra is distinguished by the wide range of religious ideas and rituals that are practised. Maharashtra is home to six of the world's major religions, including Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, and Sikhism, all of which are practised in the state.

prosperous neighbouring trade centres and villages. If the Mahajars published at the time are eloquent enough in describing the ruins and desertion of the people as a result of the famine, the Vibheeta of the time explain fairly clearly how the defence involved a large expenditure on repairs and rebuilding of the forts and walls in order to save the country from the enemy's wrath. The civil administration urged that both the tone and the procedure be changed as soon as possible, and they were granted their wish. It was almost always in localized Persian, with either Modi⁶ or Persian script being used for the convenience and ease of the Muslim authorities in writing their official communication. It is necessary to replace it with the regional language, but reintroducing and giving value to the relevant Marathi phrases, which had been forgotten for centuries due to their disuse, was no easy task.

True, Muslims did not interfere with the country's law and order administration in terms of form or manner. However, the treatment of Muslims and the mixed customs that existed at the period had little impact on the practical administration of civil and criminal law. Disparities in the application of the Common Law arose from the peculiarities of the two main groups, and these divisions frequently hampered the administration of the people's Common Law. Sivaji's attempts to discover a workable way to systematize the court process and standardize the sentencing were largely unsuccessful. The traditional technique of producing such codes, at least in terms of criminal justice, confined their scope to moral precepts and the recording of ancient maxims. The models in Muslim Fatwahs⁷ and European "sets of rules"⁸ to strengthen the practical utility of the codes or adapt them to match the then present views on crime and punishment did not sway the Hindu writers of Niti-Dharma.

The third decade of the seventeenth century was a time of action and reform. It demonstrated the Mawals and Konkan's neglected and isolated masses' extraordinary cultural advancement. Their exposure to life outside the hills inspired them to act and gave them confidence in their accomplishments. It was vital to maintain this confidence by allowing no confederacies to emerge or gains to be staked solely on the basis of reputation and honour. This quarter's final year was possibly the most crucial. It put an end to his "personal conquests" and transformed them into a "public institution" that was completed and sanctified by religious sanction and popular backing. The coronation forced the people and aspiring leaders to put any thoughts of alternative claims to superiority or leadership out of their heads.

Sivaji took great care in choosing and maintaining the appropriate apparatus for his administration. Service was based only on merit. Some later writers claim that Sivaji recognized inherited rights to higher ranks, although this is not supported by contemporary data. His prudence and ability were crucial in keeping rivalries at bay among his officers. There was no special treatment or status given to any department or office solely on the basis of utility or profit. The sustained equity of treatment had the beneficial effect of insuring expert and undivided attention to the State's tasks; yet, keeping such an expert and capable machinery under one's thumb necessitates a firm hand and firm discretion. Sivaji and Sambhaji were able to efficiently use this check, but Rajaram's weak individual could not. As a result, throughout the last decade of the century, the tone of the government deteriorated. The Maharashtra Raj as a state thus surrendered temporarily, albeit it continued to exist as a mere government of a few people who were inadvertently placed in command.

Shivaji was a man so colorful emitting an aura of exuberance and confidence, his name so loud, when we revisit the pages of history one tends to get curious about this glorious man from the bygone times. He is an enigma wrapped up in a puzzle that has major pieces that were lost with time, very little is known about Shivaji hence that makes him a riddle, several prominent Europeans met with Shivaji for interviews, but they were too preoccupied with their immediate worries. Despite the fact that they had numerous opportunities to speak with Shivaji and closely observe him, they left no thorough account of his personality. Stephen Ustick⁹ went as an ambassador of the English from Bombay, in 1672, Thomas Nicolls¹⁰ in 1673, II. Oxenden¹¹ in 1674, Samuel

⁶Modi is a script for writing Marathi, which is the predominant language spoken in the Indian state of Maharashtra. There are several hypotheses about how it came to be.

⁷ A fatwa is a nonbinding legal opinion made by a qualified jurist in response to a question posed by a private citizen, judge, or government on an issue of Islamic law. A mufti is a jurist who issues fatwas, and the act of issuing fatwas is known as ifta.

⁸ Rule set definitions are a collection of data rule definitions. ... Rule sets provide the capability to achieve this broader, more holistic, view of a data source and its records by executing and evaluating multiple rules together against individual records.

⁹ Shivaji dispatched his men to Bombay in October 1670 to bother the English, who had refused to supply him war materiel, so his forces prevented English woodcutting crews from leaving the city. Shivaji dispatched an emissary to Bombay in September 1671, this time requesting materiel for the struggle against Danda-Rajpuri. The English were wary of the benefits Shivaji would reap from the conquest, but they also didn't want to forfeit any possibility of collecting recompense for the factories he ransacked at Rajapur. The English dispatched Lieutenant Stephen Ustick to negotiate with Shivaji, but negotiations on the Rajapur indemnity fell through. Over the next few years, there were numerous envoy exchanges, with some compromise on the armaments concerns in 1674, but Shivaji never paid the Rajapur indemnity before his death, and the factory there closed at the end of 1682. Extract from English Factory Records on Shivaji.

¹⁰Mr. Thomas Nicolls in his Diary (Endorsed) May and June 1673, of his Journey to Sevagee (Shivaji). 'Having received orders and instructions from the Honble. Gerald Aungier, Governor of Bombay and President of India, &co. to treat with

Austin¹², R. Jones and Edw. Austen in 1675, Lieut. Adames and Mr. Mauleverer in 1676, and John Child in 1678. Each of these envoys met with the Raja for an interview. In July 1677, the chief of the Dutch Factory at Teganapatam led a lavish parade carrying valuable gifts to Shivaji and securing an interview with him. In the same month, the French envoy Sieur Germain from Pondichery paid a visit to the Raja on the banks of the Coleroon River. It's a tragedy that these envoys do not even have a sketch of his face.

Escalot describes Shivaji as being of medium stature and superb proportion, based on the testimony of people who had seen him. He was physically active, had quick, piercing eyes, and was whiter than any of his peers. When he spoke, he looked to smile.¹³ At the age of 44, he was a modest weight of 140 Ibs English or at best 160 Ibs Dutch when he was coronated in June 1674.¹⁴

Shivaji had a short stature and a tawny skin, according to Thevenot, who says, "His eyes are very sharp and fiery, showing a great deal of intelligence. He usually takes one meal a day, and is quite healthy. He is described by Father P. J. d'Orleans as, 'a little lively, restless man, but with all his impatience he wanted neither decision nor manly bearing.' (Bal Krishna) Cosmo Da Guarda has confirmed all of the above statements. To him, "He was not only quick in action but lively in carriage also, for with a clear and fair face, nature had given him the greatest perfections, specially the dark big eyes were so lively that they seemed to dart rays of fire. To these was added a quick, clear and acute intelligence."¹⁵

From the various paintings published in these volumes, we can establish our own opinions about Shivaji's physique and personality. In Raja Jaisingh's camp, Manucci¹⁶ had ample opportunity to observe Shivaji and speak with him. Pir Muhammad's portrait of Shivaji, made for him about 1688, should be the most reliable. The one in the Jaipur collection could be modern and was probably drawn on Raja Jaisingh's direction. It resembles the artwork in the Prince of Wales Museum in Bombay in terms of dress and characteristics, but the latter has a dark-colored "face," which contradicts all of the evidence presented in the preceding section. Shivaji is depicted in court attire in this image, but he is depicted in a more relaxed setting in the Jaipur image. Possibly, the British Museum portrait, as well as its reproduction in Orme's Fragments, are both contemporary and correct.

Bernier's Travels includes a copy of Valentyn's Oud-en Nieuvo Cost-Indian Portrait (1724 A. D.). The latter was won in 1712 at the Mogul court. They all have a black beard and moustache, long hair on the sides, a flowery chin, toga with white background, a purple silk scarf with gold embroidery flung across the left shoulder, a nicely crafted sash, a Muslim pajama, and a stylish pair of embroidered shoes. Shivaji is known for his gold pagri or turban with a jewelled aigrette, black plume, and white pearls. The form of his headwear makes him instantly identifiable. He is wielding a long straight sword in his left hand, most likely the well-known Bhavani, and a patta or rapier in his right. Then a dagger protrudes from the waist on the left side. Sharp eyes, a long aquiline nose, a neat and trimly groomed beard, and little moustaches covering his upper lip are immediately distinguishable. His features are fair, firm, and impressive.

"We could descry ability and cunning, and the hardihood and daring of a conspirator against the rights of man one not easily cowed or alarmed, with a strong faith in himself, and a gift to measure his own capacities, and those of the men who were to be his helpers in his career of aggrandizement. Well worth looking at this man among men; sash across his breast, himself a Star of India, baleful enough, kingly cowl with its

and demand satisfaction of Sevagee for plundering the Honble. Companys Faotory of Hubely, as also the old business of Rajapore... May the 19 th Being Whitsun Munday I departed from Bombay with Samgee, a Banyan and his servant and two servants of my owne and two Peons and six Banderiens and four and twenty Coolies, in all 37 persons, to go to Rajery [Raya;i] hill where Sevagee ordinarily resides'.... (Instructions for Mr. Thomas Niccolls to be observed in his Treaty with Sevagee Dated 17 May 1673 (Copy) No, 14 [per] Caesar 1673). Extract from English Factory Records on Shivaji.

¹¹English Factory Records on Shivaji - 1659 to 1682 See a letter dated 9th May 1674 to the " Siddee Sambole," the Mughal's Admiral, regarding his wish to "winter in the Island of Bombay, and a letter dated Bombay, 11th May 1674, to Mr. Henry Oxenden giving him instructions as to the treaty to be made with " Sivaji."

¹²We have thought good to send Mr. Samuell Austin up to Sevagee to demand satisfaction, for what his army plundered and burn at Dungom belonging to the honourable Company and their factors there who will set forward from hence toward Rairy about two days hence. (Orme Mss. Vol. 114, Sect. 4, p. 100J). Mr. Samuell Austin hath again earnestly entreated us to remind you of his concerne with Sevajee. Wee desire that you would youse your endeavour for the procureing him speedy satisfaction, being he is fearefull should Sevajee be dead, as it is reported, he would never recover a farthing for his loss. Extract from English Factory Records on Shivaji.

¹³ One Dutch envoy Abraham Lefeper visited Sh. at Rairi in 1672, 'Shivaji The Great Vol I'.

¹⁴English Records, Vol. II, p. 334.

¹⁵Sr N. Sen, Foreign Biographies of Shivaji, pp. 2,3. Also see Cosme da Guarda's. 'Life of the Celebrated Sevagy'.

¹⁶Niccolao Manucci (19 April 1638–1717) was a Venetian writer, doctor, and adventurer who chronicled the Mughal Empire firsthand. Henry Bard, 1st Viscount Bellemont, envoy from Charles II of England to Abbas II of Persia and Shah Jahan, recruited him as a servant and guide in 1653. Manucci remained in India for the rest of his life when Bard died at Hodal on June 20, 1656, and is one of the few first-hand European sources for Shah Jahan, Aurangzeb, Shivaji, Dara Shikoh, Shah Alam I, Jai Singh I, and Kirat Singh.

tassel of pearls and feathers. No need of a tiara of the diamonds of Golconda for this man, for his eagle eye (on which all contemporaries are as much agreed as on the eye of Burns) outshines them all."¹⁷

The most striking element of Shivaji's life, according to Dongbias, was Spartan simplicity. He gladly endured adversity by living with his warriors in an unobtrusive manner. His beliefs were adamant to the point of inflexibility. Rapidity of movement was attained by having no equipage and commissariat department in all flying operations where some town was to be surprised. Shivaji is found sitting under a tree without a tent during the 1664 Surat expedition. We are reported that there were two tents in the Carnatic expedition, one for himself and one for his ministers. He was quite abstinent in both his clothing and his meals. He just ate once a day. As a result, he avoided all Epicurean lifestyles that enslaved many princes over the globe.

He lived a life that was severe, stern, and serious. He was a firm believer in abstaining from alcoholic beverages and other intoxicants. Hard drinking was a problem for historical conquerors like Alexander and Caesar, and Napoleon was no exception. From Baber through Shah Jahan, the Mogul monarchs were addicted to alcohol and opiates. But here was a man who stood head and shoulders above the best generals of the ancient and modern worlds in this regard. He lived the life of a saint, and he despised wasting his energy on sensual pleasures. "Impartial assessors accept that Shivaji possessed attributes that, in an unenlightened Hindoo, may be described as admirable," Montgomery Martin wrote. Peril could not deter him, nor could victory intoxicate him, for he was prepared for every eventuality. He continued to walk freely among the people, inspiring them with his own attitude of determined opposition to the Mahomedans, despite being frugal to the point of parsimony in his habits, courteous and lovable in manner, albeit passionate in nature. He practiced deceitful wiles in order to follow every turn and winding of Aurangzeb's snake-like policy, but the use of these unworthy weapons did not deter him from his personal courage. The fact that the men in the Deccan battles had seen him charge was a favourite brag, and his famed sword was maintained and treated with idolatrous reverence.¹⁸

Shivaji was shaped and nourished by his mother, Jijibai, who instilled in him a love of mythology through stories from the epics. Shivaji grew up admiring his mother, and it was only inevitable that he would have a deep respect for women. Men who erred against women were punished, whereas women captured during war were safeguarded and venerated, despite the fact that they belonged to an adversary nation. To him, "Of all the rights of women, the greatest is to be a mother."

Other Mogul Emperors, such as Akbar Jahangir and Shah Jahan, were notorious for their sexual excesses and love of Mina Bazars, while Shivaji was noted for his temperance. Despite married numerous spouses for political reasons, he had an immaculate and dignified family life. He had always refused to take Kalyan's imprisoned beauty's hand, even as a child. He barred women from visiting his military camps, and he even reprimanded his own son, Sambhaji, for transgressing moral norms. He created a high standard of sexual morality in front of his commanders, generals, troops, and the general public. The weaker sex was always treated with respect. If women were taken as prisoners of war, they were not to be killed. Whenever they fell into his army's grasp, they were treated with decency and held in honorable custody until their families were able to pay for their ransom. People took advantage of the rule against catching women by fleeing in female costume during the Karanja pillage.¹⁹ A Mogul lady general named Rai Bagin fought Shivaji like a tigress, but was eventually defeated and captured. Regardless of her rank, she was dismissed with full honor.²⁰ When the Desain of Belavadi was ill-treated by one of his officers after submission during the Carnatic campaign, Shivaji had the latter blinded and imprisoned.²¹ As a result, he was much ahead of his time when it came to thinking about women of various sects and religions.

Religious austerity would be impossible for a thief and a monster. His deep devotional mentality, superstitious awe of gods, sincere respect for saints, and deep trust in the majesty of the classical epics are all evidenced by countless documents. His mother was in charge of instilling religious values in her son's mind, as well as cultivating an appreciation for Hindu classics and saintly lectures.

We are told stories of him risking his life to attend Tukaram's sermons, of renunciation of the world after hearing a Tukaram²² discourse, of self-hypnosis that turned him into his own oracle, of dedicating his life to the service of the god at Shri Shaila, and of his determination to commit suicide there.

One of Shivaji's most treasured possessions was the deepest insight of the oneness of religions. He was a proponent of religious tolerance. His Maratha army had a significant number of Muslim soldiers. He regarded

¹⁷J. Dongbias. *The Book of Bombay*. P 424-25.

¹⁸Robert Montgomery Martin. 'The Indian Empire: History, Topography, Geology, Climate, Population, Chief Cities and Provinces; Tributary and Protected States; Military Power and ... Government, Finance, and Commerce'. Palala Press. 2016.

¹⁹Bal Krishna. 'Shivaji The Great Vol I'. Palala Press. 2016.p. 283.

²⁰Ibid. 333.

²¹Ibid. vol II. P. 264.

²²Saint Tukaram Maharaj, also known as Tuka, Tukobaraya, and Tukoba in Maharashtra, was a Marathi poet and Hindu saint who lived in the seventeenth century. He was a Saint of the Varkari sampradaya in the Indian state of Maharashtra. He belonged to the egalitarian and individualized Varkari devotionalism tradition, which he practised.

mosques as highly as he did temples. He solely despised Mughal authority, and he never disliked or ridiculed Islam in any other way. He believed, "Verily, Islam and Hinduism are terms of contrast. They are used by the true Divine Painter for blending the colors and filling in the outlines. If it is a mosque, the call to prayer is chanted in remembrance of Him. If it is a temple, the bells are rung in yearning for Him alone." He built new temples, rebuilt old temples, established new gods and goddesses in them, donated great sums to cover their costs, visited famous shrines, and respected holy persons of all religions—Hindu, Muslim, and Christian. He made a point of visiting Gokurn throughout his journey to Barcelore.²³ Many old shrines and sacred locations were visited by him during the Karnatic expedition²⁴. Even though his life was in jeopardy and he was being chased by Aurangzeb's soldiers and spies, he took use of the chance to visit Hindu holy sites from Muttra to Jagannathpuri. He is claimed to have gone on a pilgrimage to Chiplun and Pratapgarh before his coronation, and to have spent several days worshipping the gods and doing other devotional rituals.

His chanties²⁵ to the Bhawani of Pratapgarh, Ramdas' big Math at Chafal, Mauni Baba's Math at Patgaon, Shri Shaila's most hallowed shrine, Keshav Swami of Hyderabad²⁶, and the Konheri Math²⁷ are only a few examples of the enormous donations he made for the restoration and spread of Hinduism. As a result, he was granted the well-deserved title of "Protector of Cows and Brahmans."

For the preservation and growth of religion, he formed a new department under the guidance of a new minister named Panditrao, and he sought the services of great intellectuals such as Balam Bhat to supervise his family. Minister Panditrao Moreswar²⁸ issued an order to the Deshmukh on February 19, 1677, to provide maintenance allowance to all Brahmans of the districts of Phonda, Dicholi, Mandangad, and Bhagvad, whether they belonged to Desha or Karad, Chitpawans, Padye Brahmans, and Jyotishis, after holding an examination to test their learning. Vishveshvara Bhatta, also known as Gaga Bhatt²⁹, was a Brahmin scholar from Varanasi who is best remembered for presiding over Shivaji's coronation. At the time of his coronation in Raigad, 20,000 Brahmans were there. They were fed for several days before being given gifts. He was given the title of "Brahman Protector" as a result of this. He will later demonstrate his devotion to saints and seers. It will suffice to remark that he was responsible for the revival and reform of the Hindu faith and society.

Whatever appears to be a contradiction, Shiva was a great mystic. He is said to have made the decision to renounce the world in his early career after hearing Saint Tukaram's sermon on renunciation. His mother and friends were unable to persuade him to abandon his plans to become arecluse. However, the saint's advice and the mother's entreaties persuaded the young man to abandon his resolve. On the march to Madras at the end of his career, he visited the magnificent Shri Shaila temple. He was ready to immolate himself on the altar of the god in a fit of devotion and ecstasy (Bal Krishna. 'Shivaji The Great', Vol. II, p. 233). According to the Bakhars, he used to have hypnotic fits in which he sought the advice of his guardian goddess Bhawani. Balaji Avaji, his

²³ Basruror Basroor is a village in Kundapur taluk in Udupi district of Karnataka. Historically Basrur was also called as Barcelor, Barcalor, Basnur, Bares, Abu-Sarur and Barsellor.

²⁴One of the most famous sagas in Maratha and Medieval Indian history is Shivaji's Carnatic Expedition. After his coronation in 1674, Shivaji planned this expedition with great care and intelligence. He wanted a huge domain to obtain the title of 'Chhatrapati.' He needed additional space for in-depth strategic defence. If the need arose, he sought a safe haven where he could transfer his second son Rajaram away from the wrathful Sambhaji if the necessity arose.

²⁵ a song with alternating solo and chorus, of a kind originally sung by sailors while performing physical labour together.

²⁶Chhatrapati Shivaji's Raj purohit (Religious Chief) was Keshav Swami Purohit (died 1690), also known as Keshav Pandit or Keshav Bhat Pandit, a Sanskrit scholar and poet. He was also the Danadhyaksha of Rajaram and the Raj purohit of Sambhaji and Rajaram. He was in charge of Sambhaji's education. Balaji Awji, Shivaji's secretary, travelled with Keshav Pandit through Uttar Pradesh and Udaipur to collect Shivaji's family history, which was needed for the coronation ceremony. In Sanskrit, Keshav Pandit has written poetical biographies of all the Chhatrapati's with whom he has collaborated. Rajaram's secret voyage from Panhala fort to Gingee fort via the Mughal army-held provinces is described in his 1690 book "Rajaram Charitam." It is regarded to be the most authentic source because Keshav Pandit was one of the participants in Rajaram's escape. The original book is kept at the royal library of Tanjavur. Shortly after finishing this novel, Keshav Pandit died at Gingee at the age of 60. His descendants with the surname 'Purohit' live in the Ratnagiri district villages near Devrukh. Ratnagiri, Thane, and Pune are currently home to the majority of the population.

²⁷Kaner Muth is located little away from Kolhapur and spread over a large area, The Muth is built around a Lord Shiva Temple and is formally known as Siddhagiri Muth.

²⁸To ensure the smooth management of the affairs of the Swaraj and to ensure people's welfare, Shivaji Maharaj established the Council of Eight Ministers. The administration was divided into eight departments. With Moreswar Panditrao Looking after religious matters.

²⁹Gaga Bhatt's first mention appears in 1640, when he is mentioned as a member of the assembly of Pandits in Kashi deciding on the rights of a Shende Golak family, according to Visvesvaraya Bhatta's book, "Coronation of Shivaji the Great." Gaga Bhatt first saw Shivaji Maharaj in the year 1674, more than a decade before his coronation. He arrived in the Deccan around 1663. Shivaji Maharaj of Maharashtra summoned him to preside over a meeting of 15 Pandits in Rajapur, Maharashtra, to decide on the rights of the Shenvi people and their varna status, i.e. Whether they were Brahmans or Gowdas, it didn't matter. Gaga Bhatt's praise or Prashasthi for Shahaji and Shivaji Maharaj is prefaced by this assembly's resolution in April 1664.

private secretary, scribbled down the words he uttered during these ecstatic fits. In times of crisis, he would heed this advice. Shivaji went into trances on numerous occasions, including the invasions of Afzal Khan, Shaista Khan, and Jaisingh, and even during his imprisonment at Agra, to find the solution to his problems through these intuitions. Shivaji could have been dissimulating to impress his colleagues and subjects into believing that he was in communion with God, whose will he was being carried out through his instrumentality. The people came to believe that he was God's chosen medium, His powerful tool for annihilating the Mlechhas. The general impression of his devotions and trances, that he was a favorite medium of God if not His incarnation, earned him the respect of all his officers and subjects. They began to regard him as a superman, a favorite of fate, a man of destiny born to avenge and restore Hinduism.

According to Maratha legends, his frequent references to God demonstrate that he is a fatalist. He blindly followed the advice he received while in trance. For example, he surrendered himself and his forts to Jaisingh at the command of the so-called divine Bhavani. He travelled to Agra after this protective goddess assured him in an ecstatic fit. It is said that his intellect was clouded and he was depressed during his imprisonment at Agra, but the goddess came to his rescue once more. Thus, the writers of the Marathi chronicles have shown him to be under the spell of a supernatural power. In this version, he is subject to the authority of a controlling power outside of himself. A great conqueror, such as Shiva, was a master, not a slave to fate. There is no mention of him consulting astrologers on what he should and should not do in these Bhakars³⁰. On the other hand, there is European evidence that he was always careful to keep his plans hidden. Jonathan Scott's³¹ unbiased testimony is provided below. "He carefully planned his schemes and carried them out with vigour. He sought advice from a variety of sources, but ultimately followed the advice that he felt was most applicable to his designs. No one was ever made aware of his decisions except by the success with which they were carried out."

From the pen of historian Scott Waring comes a surprising confirmation: "His military prowess elevates him above the East's heroes. His ideas contemplated the possibility of several successes; nor did the fulfilment of his goal reveal the extent of its advantage until it was further developed through later purchases. His personal activity was astounding; nonetheless, no path had been avoided by his unwavering patience. His warriors, led by him down the most direct and covert routes, had no idea what they were up against until they saw the adversary they were to fight or the city they were to pillage. His passions were under his control, and he never revealed the inner workings of his mind by words or gestures. No emergency, no matter how urgent, left him helpless; no danger, no matter how imminent, surprised a mind used to the most trying circumstances." A mastermind like him could never be a slave to fate or destiny. He was, without a doubt, destiny's favorite kid, upon whom she unfailingly bestowed success in all of his exploits.

His diplomacy shone brightly when, at the age of eighteen, he succeeded in winning his father's rescue from the living coffin erected by the Bijapur monarch to smother him, thanks to Mogul intervention. Shiva and his men managed to outsmart the Mores and capture Javli. He made the most of the death of Bijapur's ruler and Aurangzeb's departure from the Deccan by allying himself with the Moguls against Bijapur and thus winning their goodwill. This action resulted in the invasion of Afzal Khan,³² who was beaten by Shivaji in diplomacy and treachery. This 'mountain rat' was able to surprise the giant-like Shaista Khan³³ in his bed, sear the beard of wily Aurangzeb in his own capital by making a miraculous escape from Agra, tear the Mogul Empire's veil of invincibility, and finally eat away its vitals to the point where it was left a hollow carcass thanks to his brilliant genius.

His diplomacy achieves a pinnacle when he comes to terms with the Hindu Raja Jaisingh, whom he hoped to convert to his cause, and when he exacts vengeance on Bijapur for invading the Konkon and stabbing

³⁰Bakhar is a type of historical narrative written in Marathi prose. Bakhars are one of the earliest genres of mediaeval Marathi literature. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, more than 200 Bakhars were written, the most important of which chronicled the deeds of the Maratha ruler Shivaji.

³¹Scott published his first work in 1794 by a Translation of Ferishita's History of the Dekkan from the first Mahummedan Conquests, with a continuation from other native writers, to the reduction of its last Monarchs by the Emperor Alungeer Arungebe.

³² Afzal Khan was dispatched by the Bijapur kingdom in 1659 to conquer Shivaji, a former subject who had begun acting independently. ... His army was defeated at the Battle of Pratapgad, and he was killed during a truce negotiation meeting with Shivaji.

³³ On the evening of April 5, 1663, a wedding procession had been granted special permission. Shivaji and his nearly 400 men disguised as bridegrooms entered Pune. Others came in small groups dressed as Maratha generals' labourers and soldiers. They raided the Nawab's compound after midnight, then entered the palace to kill him. Shaista Khan was caught off guard. The Marathas slayed the palace guards in the palace courtyard. The Nawab lost three fingers in a fight with Shivaji, and his son was killed by the Marathas in the palace courtyard. Many of his wives died. Despite the Mughal forces' widespread camping, the Marathas escaped the palace and Pune. Afraid of the sudden and bold attack in the city, Aurangzeb angrily transferred Shaista Khan to Bengal, refusing to give him audience. See: Sardesai 1946, G.S. (1946). New Maratha History, Vol. I: Shivaji and his line (1600-1701). 142-144.

Shivaji in the back. He did not, however, aid the Moguls to the point where Bijapur was seriously weakened and therefore became a morsel for the Moguls. He presented the ruler of Bijapur with his armoured fist in a silken glove and formed a covert alliance with him against the invaders.

Following his escape from Agra, he quickly solidified his kingdom and rebuilt his soldiers, allowing him to recapture all of the forts he had been forced to surrender to the Moguls. He maintained a successful war against the world's mightiest empire, and he barely suffered a defeat from the Mogul army's top generals, thanks to his unrivalled diplomacy.

The Mughal army was defeated by Shivaji's army in 1672, with considerable losses on the Mughal side. Aurangzeb, on the other hand, was adamant about not surrendering. In order to combat Shivaji, he appointed Bahadur Khan as Viceroy. The Marathas, however, continued to rule despite a demoralized Mughal force. Bahadur Khan simply sank as a result of the battle. The above said Battle of Salher took place in February 1672 CE between the Maratha Empire and the Mughal Empire. The battle took place near the fort of Salher in the Nashik area. The Maratha Empire was able to win by a large margin. This battle is significant because it is the first time the Mughal Empire has been beaten in a pitched battle by the Marathas. Most of Shivaji's victories had come through guerilla warfare up until this battle, but the Maratha's use of light cavalry against Mughal forces on the Salher battlefield proved victorious. Following this momentous victory, the saint Ramdas wrote Shivaji his famous letter (Kincaid, Dennis. *The Grand Rebel*. Prabhat Prakashan. p. 172), in which he refers to him as Gajpati (Lord of Elephants), Haypati (Lord of Cavalry), Gadpati (Lord of Forts), and Jalpati (Master of the High Seas). A few years later, Shivaji Maharaj was prearranged Emperor (or Chhatrapati) of his domain, though not as a direct result of this war. In 1675, Shivaji persuaded Bahadur Khan to sign a truce, but after a few months, when his goal of liberating parts of the Konkan from the Bijapuris had been accomplished, he insulted the Mogul commander and the Emperor by rejecting the treaty's provisions.

Soon after, he made another truce with the Moguls and formed an alliance with Kutub Shah to conquer Karnataka. His victory in annexing the defunct Vijayanagar empire up to Rameswaram to his kingdom and liberating his younger brother from Bijapur's suzerainty reflects well on his statesmanship. At the end of his career, he was attempting to take Bijapur itself and prevent the Moguls from absorbing it. His unrivalled statesmanship remained constantly alert in the face of the Moguls' takeover of the kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda. He was able to get financial assistance from these powers as a result of his diplomacy in his campaigns against the Mogul army. We must remember that he maintained amicable relations with all four European countries with which he came into contact. Despite this, he protected his shipping, trade, port towns, and people against their attacks. Shivaji treated the Portuguese, the English, the Dutch, and the French as well as he could. He also attempted to preserve a power balance among them. He did not, for example, assist the Dutch in taking Bombay or Goa.

His capacity to organise was evident from the beginning, as orderly administration went hand in hand with expansion. On his Karnatic campaign, he took 20,000 Brahmans with him to organise and consolidate the newly captured territories. The great expertise displayed by Shivaji in adopting superior administrative systems in the south has been attested to by contemporary European writers. Because of the hiring of ignorant, mercenary, and foreign adventurers as officers, the Moslem administration was harsh. All foreigners and unskilled people were expelled, and only educated men were selected as officers. He made successful measures to combat speculation and corruption, raising the standard of administration to the point where his subjects were happy, peaceful, and prosperous.

Whenever a fort or area fell into Shivaji's hands, it was rapidly fortified and organised to the point where his opponents could rarely recover it. Only a few examples of fort reconquest by Mogul or Adilshahi soldiers may be cited. This fact alone demonstrates his organizational skills, diligent management, and people's unwavering loyalty.

Shivaji is at the top of the list of the world's finest commanders. There was no leader Hindu or Muslim of the Bijapur kingdom or the most powerful and rich Empire of the Moguls who did not succumb to Shivaji during his 35-year political career from 1645 to 1680. Royal princes, Persians, premiers, Pathans, and Rajput kings like Jaswant Singh Rathor were all powerless in the face of the Maratha commander's riches. Shivaji is best known as a solo fighter, as well as an organizer and commander of military forces. He exemplifies the best military traits of chivalrous courage, vigilance, and ingenuity. He made the most of his successes by striking devastating strikes in the most unexpected places. He was usually quick to take advantage of the enemy's indecisiveness and to surprise him. He was a dummy when it came to diplomacy. In this domain, no politician, statesman, or general of his time can compare to him.

He never shied away from attempting extreme measures with maximum zeal and daring. In a combat with Afzal Khan, in his astonishing feat against Shaista Khan, in visiting Surat and Prince Muazzam in disguise, and especially in throwing himself in the cunning clutches of Aurangzeb, he put his life on the line.

Alexander and Frederick were fortunate enough to inherit armies trained by their fathers, and the majority of their illustrious generals had already served in the army. Here was an intrepid explorer tasked with

assembling an army and training leaders in the quickest period feasible. Scholars, clerks, peasants, rustics, wild tribes, and individuals from all walks of life were drafted into the army. The development of an army that defeated the Muslim warriors of the Deccan, the veteran armies of the Moguls, and the steadfast knights of the Rajput Princes is a marvel to behold. His claim to fame is that he trained hundreds of leaders and instilled an invincible military spirit in the people, enabling them to wage a successful independence struggle against the world's largest power at the time. They were all filled with religious zeal, courage, patriotism, discipline, self-confidence, and the promise of triumph that this great leader of men had instilled in them. He was compared to Alexander, Hannibal³⁴, and Caesar by modern Englishmen. The Portuguese agreed with this assessment. He was compared to Hindu gods such as Parashuram, Rama, Krishna, Bhima, Balaram, and others.

Shivaji has all the skills of a commander, according to renowned historian Orme.³⁵ He went to great lengths to collect intelligence about his rivals' every move and intention, down to the smallest details. He outperformed all other generals in terms of personal accomplishments. At the head of armies, no general had ever covered as much ground as he had. With immediate perception and unwavering tenacity, he confronted every perilous circumstance, no matter how abrupt or intense. The most capable of his commanders acquiesced to his genius's impending superiority, and the soldier's boast was to have seen Shivaji rushing, sword in hand." General Sullivan's statements demand attention.

He possessed every quality required for success in the turbulent age in which he lived: he was cautious and wily in council, but fierce and daring in action; he possessed an endurance that distinguished him even among his hardy subjects, and an energy and determination that would have elevated him to distinctions in any age. His own people depicted him on a white horse galloping at full speed, flinging grains of rice into his mouth, implying that his speed prevented him from stopping to eat. He was the Hindu ruler who compelled the powerful Mogul to submit. His power and vigour in fight were the glory and admiration of his race; cavalry to fly before the charge of the native horse of India.

J. Scott's praise is well worth reading "As a soldier, Sewajee was unrivalled, a master of the art of government, and a friend to those of morality and faith. He meticulously planned his plots and carried them out. He sought advice from a variety of sources on every issue, but acted on the advice that he felt was most appropriate to his designs after considering the pros and disadvantages in his own mind. No one knew about his decisions except for the fact that they were carried out successfully."

A notable element of his genius was his incredible resourcefulness. His entire life is a testament to his extraordinary adaptability in times of crisis. His enemies' ruses, deceptions, secret intentions, and perfidy never put him at a disadvantage. Instead, he was primarily successful in catching them in his net. In the face of danger, his creativity shone brightly, as he devised novel ways to save himself or defeat his foes. The rescue of Shahji, the murder of Mores, Afzal Khan's killing, his escape from Panhala, his ploy near Vishalgad, the assault of Surat, his escape from Agra, and his flight through the Mogul Empire are all deeds that look to be romances. These beautifully demonstrate his -unique genius's adaptability.

Douglas has put it succinctly: "Like all hunted animals (as he, Shivaji, had been), he was watchful and anxious to a degree, yet he was fearless in devising strategies to deal with unexpected problems. He possessed more science in his little finger than Aurangzeb had in his entire body, and he was a light sleeper with one eye always open. We had Orme's evidence, which he may have obtained from a living spokesman, that it was the brag of troops to have been with Shivaji as he rushed sword in hand into the thick of the enemy."

Swami Ramdas has accurately portrayed Shivaji's persona. His admiration for the young king's merits was a mirror of common opinion. As a result, it encapsulates the Hindu modern viewpoint. "He has the determination of a lofty mountain. He has a lot of people behind him. He is unwavering in his beliefs. He has a lot of asceticism in him. His flood of wonderful actions never stops flowing. How can the magnitude of his merits be measured against others? He is a king who is glorious, victorious, brave, ethical, compassionate, diplomatic, and wise. Virtue, rationality, generosity, and religion are all important to him. Even though he is omniscient, he is modest. He is firm, liberal, courageous, and always prepared to act. This most illustrious of kings has exceeded himself in terms of inventiveness. He is the gods', religion's, cows', and Brahmans' guardian. God has placed Himself in his heart to inspire him. He supports scholars, Sadhus, poets, Brahmans who practise

³⁴During the Second Punic War, Hannibal was an Ancient Carthaginian general and statesman who led the Carthaginian armies against the Roman Republic. During the First Punic War, Hamilcar Barca, Hannibal's father, was a powerful Carthaginian general.

³⁵ Robert Orme (December 25, 1728 – January 13, 1801) was a British Indian historian. In 1743, he joined the British East India Company in Bengal as the son of a British East India Company physician and surgeon. He was recognized as an expert on the subject of India. Between 1754 to 1758, he was a member of the Council at Fort St. George in Madras. In that position, he played a key role in the dispatch of a young Robert Clive as the head of a punitive expedition. From 1745 (1763–78), Orme penned A History of the British Nation's Military Transactions in Indostan. From the year 1659, he also produced Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire, the Morattoes, and English Concerns in Indostan (1782).

sacrifices, and philosophers. In our world, no one compares to him as a religious defender. It is because of him that Maharashtra's religion is still partly alive today."

The Lion of Maharashtra, such was the saintly king, who was mockingly dubbed a Mountain Rat and an unscrupulous monster by his adversaries. He was unmistakably a mountain man. His admirers refer to him as the Maharashtra Lion. He turned lambs into lions without a doubt. His magnetic touch and inspiring charisma roused the poor, downtrodden, meek, fatalistic masses of Maharashtra into superhuman activity. They were transformed into the finest soldiers, brilliant generals, and constructive politicians, equal to the powerful Moguls, heroes of a hundred battles. Such was the robber's magical change from illiterate to sophisticated to loathed.' Shivaji was a true wizard, a superhuman whose deeds will live on in Indian history for all time.

While comparing two contemporary military masterminds of the same time frame we come across Napoleon and Shivaji both one of a kind historic persona in their own way. Napoleon was a military genius, a one-of-a-kind general and administrator. But we must not forget that he abandoned one army in Egypt and fled with his life by abandoning an even larger number on the Russian snows. At Waterloo, he finally saw the remnants of his great army routed. This great conqueror of the universe eventually fell into the hands of his terrible enemies and spent the rest of his life as a prisoner on an isolated island. In his lifetime, his empire disintegrated, his code was broken up, and his son was disinherited. Napoleon's terrible death and the dismal disintegration of his empire dull the luster of his conquests and grandeur. Shivaji was unconcerned with humiliating setbacks and heartbreaking tragedies. His empire's foundations were dug so deep, and it was so tightly welded together, that it could effectively weather the worst crises after his death. With the passage of time, it got larger and stronger, and his descendants are still ruling at Kolhapur after more than 250 years.

Concluding Remarks: Bhonsalas were Rajaputs, according to legend. The hereditary Purohit of Bhonsalas was the Upadhye family, subsequently known as the Panditarao Rajopadhe dynasty.³⁶ If fresh historical evidence is revealed, it will determine how far back this link can stretch. However, no one from this family worked for Mudhoj's Bhonsalia branch. Before the middle of the fourteenth century, ancestors of the Bhonsala family arrived in the Deccan.³⁷ As a result, the seven direct generations anterior to Raghunath Panditanao listed in the Panditarao genealogy³⁸ as spanning a period of almost 300 years are a stretch. It's also improbable that the Bhonsala family's hereditary family priests would ever allow such a radical alteration in the family's religious practises as to reduce the Bhonsalas to a lesser rank than they had as Rajaputs in Udepur.³⁹ As a result, no weight can be placed on this family's effect over Bhonsalta behaviour and proclivities before to 1600 AD. To the Arvi branch of the family, Babaji Bhonsala awarded an acre and a quarter of a chavara of land. As Sargurhos or Mokaams of the land, his sons Maloji and Vithoji confirmed it. However, this does not prove that these two families are related! Every succeeding Muslim or Hindu officer had to continue the grant, indicating that it was not personal but official in nature. Before 1630 A.D., there is no record of the family being known as the Upadhye or Rajopadhye. This branch of the family sent⁴⁰ Prabhakarabhata to Bangalore to serve Sahaji, and it's safe to assume that Sahaji's name and fame drew him in. However, the later relationship between these two families had a significant and lasting impact on the Maratha Kings' religious and social policies.

After the well-known Ahmednagar personalities Pirs Saha and Sarifa, Maloji named his two kids after them. That his thoughts are influenced by religion is evident from this. However, the fact that he built a tank and repaired an old and renowned Siva temple at Sikhara-Singanapur⁴¹ after discovering the treasure-trove may indicate that his devotion to Siva is either emotional or traditional. Nonetheless, the significance of the hint for the valuable discovery, which came from Goddess Bhavani, is not diminished. The brothers and their father were in reality Mokadams or Sargurhos of the surrounding land, and Vithoji is even described as the Mokadam of Sikhara-Singanapur itself, according to historical records. Vithoji and his kids, despite the fact that they shared Maloji's discovery, showed little enthusiasm for Siva worship.

Sahaji, on the other hand, had developed a strong and complete devotion to Siva. Maloji's later activities and conduct may have led him to it, but his association with Murar Jagdevrao, a famous Siva devotee, must have had a profound effect on his mind, leading him to a higher type of Hindu worship and a refined way

³⁶ 'Visvaguinadarachatppu'. by Vyankatadhwari edited by B. G. Yogi, Bombay. 1899.

³⁷ Farmans of 4th November 1352 and 22nd October 1471 pp. 1 and 16, Appendix, pp. 25 and 84, Introduction,

"Mudhola Sarpsthanachya Ghorapate Gharanyacha Itihasa" edited by Mr. D. V. Apte, Poona, 1934.

³⁸ See Appendix I, p. 70, "Dandant tiprakaraigam" by Mr. V. S. Bendrey. [note 1].

³⁹ Raje Jayasing in his letter of January 1666 to Jafar Khan writes: " regardless of praise or blame by other people, that if the Emperor sanctions it, I shall set on foot a proposal for a match with his family and settle the marriage of my son with his daughter, though the pedigree and caste of Shiva are notoriously low and men like me do not eat food touched by his hand (not to speak of entering into a matrimonial connection with him)," f. 139a, Haft Anjuman; p. 306, "R. G. Bhandarkar Commemoration Volume", B. O.R. Institute, Poona, 1917.

⁴⁰ Sahaji's grant is dated 24th December 1597. This and subsequent letters have been published in " Rajawade Khanda 15" under "Papers of Rajopadhye Family."

⁴¹ It is one of the most important temples in Shikhar Shinganapur, Satara. The Shikhar Shinganapur Mahadev Mandir is located in Shikhar Shinganapur, Satara.

of life. His contacts with scholarly Pandits in the Nizamshahi capital and in the south were extensive and varied, so it's no surprise that Sahaji and his wife Jijibai came to understand and believe the genuine meaning of Hinduism as understood and believed by learned Brahmins. His succession to the Nayakas in Karnataka provided him with the best opportunity to inherit Hindu court procedure and traditions, which were undoubtedly adopted to suit a higher type of worship and social behaviour. Sahaji's declaration in his letter of 1656 A.D.⁴² that he belonged to the Rajput clan alludes to the inferiority complex that was plaguing his mind, as well as his concerns about the decline in the social and political conduct of his own kinsmen. In any case, the Bhonsala family's Tanjore line had a greater interest in religious studies and literature. All of Sahaji's court culture and practises were passed down to Jijabai's son Sivaji. The officers who accompanied Sivaji to Poona, on the other hand, did not have the same feelings as Sahaji.

Many of Sivaji's social and religious ideas, as well as his prejudices, were passed down to him by his parents. Amba and Sambha were among the people to whom he had expressed his feelings of affection in several of his writings. His love to Goddess Bhavani or Amba, on the other hand, was complete and unwavering. His implicit trust in Her guidance throughout all of his early travels was unshakeable. This counsel came to him immediately from within his own self. Possessing the spirit of the Goddess is an honour. It is true that Rayaresvar⁴³ was chosen as the location for oaths of devotion to Hindavi Swarajya, but this was owing more to the reverence for the idol among the people from the surrounding country than anything else.⁴⁴

His early operations revealed an aggressive spirit toward the Muslim faith, as seen by the destruction of specific mosques in Kalyana and Bhiwandi, as well as the imprisonment of Mullas in those locations.⁴⁵ It should be noted that this was not triggered by any damaging aspect in his programme, but rather as punishment for bringing his father's reputation into disrepute through lies and imprisonment. He soon realized, however, that employing such a destructive factor in his battle against his adversary was a waste of time.

By being positioned in a certain geographical location inside the country and having natural defence, the Sirkes and Dajvis of Sringeripur, Sangamesvar, and Rajapur were able to enjoy ultimate freedom. In those steep territories, many Brahmin households were able to preserve their Brahminic culture. These locations were taken by Sivaji between 1660 and 1661. His interactions with the erudite Brahmins become more frequent as a result of this. Raghunathabhata enlisted in his military service immediately following this. Gaga-bhata, who had arrived in Maharashtra in 1663-4, left a lasting influence on him and he remembered him fondly. Paramananda, Anantadev, and others were also in attendance, and they all met Sivaji during their visit. All of these contacts had a progressive and logical religious outlook, which was the logical conclusion of their interactions. Restoration of the ancient Hindu faith as well as the improvement of the social standing of all communities were his first and foremost objectives. It was necessary to achieve these goals in order to (a) reintroduce ancient practises, (b) encourage temples and saintly figures, (c) restore the Jai or priestly institution, and (d) appoint a learned Pandit who would command respect and awe and guide the Hindu community as a whole towards progressive culture and refinement.

It was via Sivaji that Devarukhe⁴⁶ and other Brahmins were able to overcome the hurdles in their path and restore their historic rights and privileges of Soda samskaras to all the other Dvija castes⁴⁷, including the Sheinavis, Chandraseniya Kayasths⁴⁸, Marathas, and so on. It was unavoidable to make mention of the Benares Brahmins during this process. There could be no sweeping reformation without the support of the best brains in the country and without the exercise of effective and direct supervision over the executive by the state or the king. It was not possible for Shankaracharya to exercise jurisdiction in Maharashtra, and Sivaji's own person was not qualified to exercise jurisdiction over the entire Hindu community in the kingdom. In Raghunathapandita, on

⁴² Letter dated 1666 July, p. 209, " Shri Sampradayachi Kagadpatre ", Vividha Visaya, Lekhanka No. 34, Ramdas aniRamadasi.

⁴³ Raireshwar is a hill fort of historical importance that is located towards the south west of Pune near Bhor. ... Located at a scenic place called Bhor. Bhor is just 80-90 kms from Pune and is known for its mountains and surrounding greenery.

⁴⁴ Jedhes of Kari had their adherents sworn similarly in 1618 A.D Lekhana 336, Letter of Malik Aipbar of 25th November 1618."Sivacharitra (Sahitya Kharwja, 2" B.I.S. Sviyamala, Poona.

⁴⁵ Adhyaya 18, "Sivabharata" by Paramananda, edited by Messrs. D. V. Apte and S. M. Divekar, B. I. S. Mandal, Poona.

⁴⁶ Devrukhe Brahmins are one of the five sub-castes of Maharashtrian Brahmins that live in the state of Maharashtra. When compared to other Maharashtrian Brahmin communities such as the Deshastha Brahmin, the Konkanastha Brahmin, and the Karhade Brahmin, this community is modest in size.

⁴⁷ A Dvija (Sanskrit for "twice-born") is a term used in the Hindu social system to refer to members of the three upper varnas, which are social classes that include the Brahmins (priests and teachers), the Kshatriyas (warriors), and the Vaishyas (merchants), who are considered to have received a second or spiritual birth after receiving the sacrament of initiation.

⁴⁸ The Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhu (CKP) caste is an ethno-religious caste of South Asia that is descended from the Chandraseniya family. Upanayana (thread ceremony) has traditionally been performed for the CKPs, and they have been awarded the rights of Brahmins in the study of the Vedas and performance of Vedic rituals alongside them. The caste may be considered socially proximal to the Maharashtrian Brahmin community because of its extremely high ritual ranking. They have traditionally been an elite and literary community, but they are a small one in terms of population.

the other hand, he was able to secure a very strong, firm, and knowledgeable Brahmin to carry out his orders. In 1665 A.D., he elevated him to the rank of Panditarao.⁴⁹ When it came to implementing Sivaji's religious and social policies, Raghunathapandita was the most successful, in his own opinion. Despite the efforts of a small group of Brahmin officers and bhiksukas in the capital, the resistance had little effect on the general public. Sivaji, on the other hand, was not permitted to exercise any regal prerogatives. He was able to recruit the best intellect as well as a willing executive to his cause. With these two weapons, he not only defeated the enemy, but also forced it to submit and serve under his authority. No one could take on a person of such eminent and recognized authority as Gagabhata or Ananta deva in a debate of this magnitude. In the same way, it was hard to prevent Josis from carrying out Sivaji's desire, preferring to forfeit their vritti privileges, which were then on the verge of being returned to them. Sivaji respected all saints, temples, and creeds equally, and accorded them the honour and respect they deserved. They were all enthusiastic in their support for him.

By being crowned, Sivaji not only preserved his own claim to Dvijatwa and the scepter of the kingdom, but he also gained the authority and legitimacy to wield the jurisdiction of a Hindu monarch in religious and social concerns over people of all castes and creeds. Sivaji began issuing directives under his own seal and in his own name shortly after.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, another unanticipated influence was brought about by the coronation. No harm could be done by omission or commission in any performance, according to the pure vedic prayers. While the tantric religion introduced all kinds of threats of divine punishment for whatever faults were made in the vidhis, the vedic religion introduced all kinds of threats of divine infliction. For such and other failures, counter-performances were invented in order to appease the heavenly wrath. It was believed that any misfortune that occurred soon following the performance was due to a divine punishment for some sin on the part of either the devotee or the priest's part. Because of "their lack of faith in the perfect conduct of the performance," God-fearing people frequently displayed greater Weakness by their suspicion or anticipation of some difficulty. When the person enters the vidhi, he or she is made aware of their omissions at each stage by the priest, who is pleading for mercy on their behalf at each stage. Chanting tantric rituals had a profound impact on the Hindu religion as a whole. Possibly the most prominent proponent of this cult was Shankaracharya. The cult grew in prominence during the seventeenth century, and by the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century, Shankaracharya had published the most comprehensive work on the subject to date. It is at this point that the tantric cult ends.

Using all of the sacred and Vedokta mantras⁵¹, Gagabhata completed the coronation ceremony and, according to his convictions and views, the ritual was flawless. Unfortunately, natural disasters occurred both before and after the coronation. According to the tantricists, they were caused by omissions and actions in the Rajyabhiseka vidhi (Royal Court of Justice). When suddenly confronted with a slew of terrible and numerous tragedies, Sivaji surrendered and allowed himself to be healed in the face of divine wrath. In order to remove Gag's Satric influence, the japakas took advantage of the situation. They performed a second coronation, and arrangements were made for it almost quickly. The japakas, in doing so, undone everything that had been accomplished during the previous ceremony; even the simhasana, which had been ceremoniously and publicly constructed, was destroyed and replaced by another of their design and construction.⁵² This led to the conclusion that the solely vedic vision of the dharma was unable to meet the needs of his aspirations and accomplishments. Actually, the japakas were the ones who introduced Sivaji to the tantric rites and mystic mantras that were characteristic of their faith. The people followed in the footsteps of the monarchy. As a result, the Devi cult rose to popularity once more. In just a few days, Sivaji had advanced to the ultimate stage of the tapas, and he was moved to offer his head in sacrifice to Sivasakti (Srisaila Mallikarjuna), in order to obtain rebirth and the incredible power that only that offering can bestow on the devotee. He was, however, persuaded to abandon his risky endeavour.

Possibly with even greater fervour and vigour than his father, Sambhaji followed in his father's footsteps. His reign was marked by a great deal of turmoil and strife. The situation necessitated the use of extraordinary strength and willpower. The huge adversary had arrived at his doorsteps and had virtually surrounded his Rajya. It's no surprise that he enjoyed participating in all of the Goddess's rituals in order to gain protection from the divine or "sakti" power of the universe. The religious policy, on the other hand, remained unchanged, and Moresvar Panditarao and his colleagues continued to carry out their duties as previously.

⁴⁹Panditrao is the High Priest in charge of overseeing internal religious affairs. The Panditrao's responsibilities included the promotion of learning, and in the Ashta Pradhan, also known as Senapat or Sarnobat, he was responsible for watching out for the interests of his officers. Raghunath Panditrao has been appointed to the position of Panditrao.

⁵⁰Vide letter of 28th January 1677 reproduced on pp. 154-55, "Gramancycha Sadyanta Itihasa" by K. S. Thackeray, Bombay, 1919, etc.

⁵¹" Rajabhiseka-prayoga " by Gagabhata a ms. in the Bikaner Mss. Library.

⁵² " Sri-Sivarajyabhiseka-Kalpataru " by Nischalapurl.

Rajaram was likewise under the sway of the japakas. The Satara line of Sivaji, on the other hand, was untouched by this impact. It is not possible to reconcile this japakas worship with the Sakta Marga, or cult, which afterwards swept throughout the land.

Sivaji bestowed honours and positions to men of distinction and achievement. In this period, distinctions such as the usage of seals, Palkhi, and Chamars were established. As a result, the social standing of the people was elevated. The use of appropriate differentiation based on merits aided the society in its pursuit of aspiration and action.

Tukaram's teachings were giving a good impetus to the lower classes of society to lift themselves to a higher level of self-purification and social status side by side with his teachings. Ramadas attempted to correct the flaws in the warkar sampradaya by preparing men for action and service to the community at large, but he was unsuccessful in gaining widespread acceptance for his sect. It grew as a result of the limited field of influence of the higher castes. This constraint contributed to the species' early extinction. Sivaji encouraged the worship of Maruti or Hanuman in Ramadas and diverted a big portion of the populace away from its attraction to the grama-devatas are a form of grama. In any case, Ramadas's followers were unable to convey to the general public the importance of the lessons contained in the "Dasabodha."

The policy of reconversion was heavily emphasized during Sivaji's reign, and it was emphasized even more so during Sambhaji's reign. The need was particularly acute in order to battle the negative consequences of the victims' inability to reclaim their social status within their own family and friends, as well as the advantages gained by other bigots as a result of their rejection by Hindu society in general. Later, however, this approach was seen as a political* need, and reconversions were ordered to the communities in question rather than being left up to the will of either the Brahmins to purify or the communities to accept restoration.

Sivaji, as well as Sambhaji, were extremely conscientious in their efforts to persuade the European powers to treat Hindu orphans with dignity and to agree not to allow their Missionaries to convert them. As a result, Sivaji ruled conversion a crime, but reconversion a moral obligation on the part of the king. The Missionaries, on the other hand, maintained their sacred influence and religious reverence among the populace within their own region. Sambhaji returned against them for all of the insults they had levelled against him, and he used his revenge to despoil all of the respect they had earned during his campaign against the Portuguese. His conversion of \$f churches into Devi temples, as well as the burning of nunneries and monasteries, effectively removed any traces of the Missionaries' influence and awe from the minds of the people in the coastal regions of the Konkan.

Rajaram's deeds were more cloaked in generosity and devotion than in political or religious zeal, which was a welcome change. People's presents and offerings to him from Jinji, which they obtained at a low cost, frequently interfered with the actual administration of Mahratta kingdom under Ramachandrapanta and Sarikaraji Narayana, who were in charge of the country at the time. It was impossible to put all of these royal decrees and royal commands into action on a practical level.

The religious and social literature had a significant increase in popularity. The Hindu study centres of Paithana and Karada were re-established, and religious issues were referred to them for resolution. In order to assist Josis and Jyotishis in their daily calculations, the "Karanakaustubha" was written down. A number of works, including "Govind Bhatti" by Govinda bhata Khedkar, "Syenavijatinimaya", "Kayasthadharmapradipa", "Kayasthadharmapradipa", and others by Gagabhata, "Smrtikaustubha" by Anantadeva, "Sudrakamalakara", "Jativivekasindhu", The procedures and performances of the coronation ceremony are determined by the texts "Rajabhiseka-prayoga", "Samayanaya", "Tuladanaprayoga", and others by Gagabhata, and "Sri rajyabhisekalkalpataru" by Nischalpur, as well as "Sri rajyabhisekalkalpataru" by Nischalapur. Gagabhata's "vyavaharanimaya", "Vratodyota", "Sivarkodaya", "Pindapitruyajnyaprayoga", "Prayogasara", and other works, as well as Kesavapandita's "Dharmakalpalata", "Budhabhusana", and other works, govern the social and religious conduct of life. The personal lives of the Maratha Kings are depicted in works such as "Sivabhusana" by Bhusanakavi, "Srisambhupratapa" by Harikavi, "Rajaramacharitam" by Kesavapandita, and other similar works. Many additional Sanskrit works on a variety of subjects, such as Raghunatha Navahasta's "Bhojanakutuhala," were compiled under the Maratha's patronage, including "Bhojanakutuhala" by Raghunatha Navahasta. The Marathi literature that was written during the Sivasahi period is considered to be among the best of its time. 15 With their exquisite yet simple style and depth of thought, Tukaram, Ramadas, and other saints and poets left an indelible mark on Marathi literature that has endured to the present day. It is possible that the seventeenth century was a period of stabilization and refinement for the English language.

Shortly put, Sivaji established a kingdom in a short period of twenty-five years, which his grandson Sahu oversaw as it grew to become a vast empire under his leadership. Sivaji educated the populace in the arts of administration and warfare, among other things. With the awakening of the masses to their rights and privileges⁵³, Sivaji established an unstoppable force that shielded them against foreign attack and stopped the

⁵³Pp. 44-73 Maharatnyanche Kavyaparlkhaigatha Mahastriyache Varigmayabhiruchichya Itihasantilla eka prakarana, Vibhaga pahila, Brittea-satte-purvicha Kala by Dr.Sridhar Vyankatesa Ketkar, Poona, 1928.

annihilation of their culture and religion. Accordingly, Shivaji was regarded as a great reformer or rather as a liberator of the masses from the bonds of the orthodox and shortsighted Brahmin hierarchy, whose disastrous folly was causing the Hindu religion, as well as its true culture and philosophy, to be thrown into ruin and disgrace in his country and people. It is true that the poor soil did not allow for significant advancement in the fine arts and grandeur; however, Shivaji's example instilled in the Mahratta people a national spirit that contributed significantly to the advancement of their social and religious culture, as well as to the rapid and sound progress in their learning and literature during his lifetime. The noble name of Shivaji continues to have the power to inflame patriotism among the people and to awaken them to their constitutional right to a Swarajya National Government, even now.

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