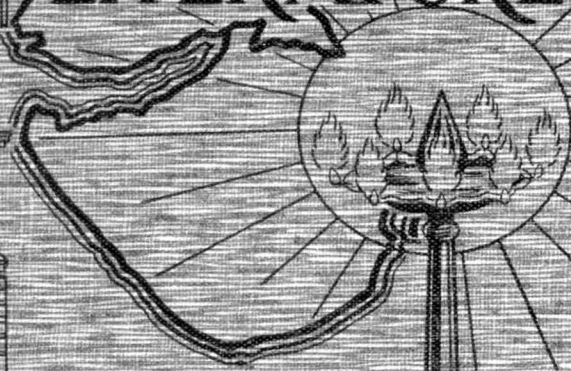




GUJARĀTA & ITS LITERATURE



MUNSHI

*with a
Foreword by*

MAHATAMA
GANDHI



MIRANBAI

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DEDICATED
TO .
MAHĀTMĀ GANDHI

*.....Like unto the Prophet of Israel,
you have led your people out of bondage.*

FOREWORD

The only reason for inviting me to write a foreword to a literary work such as Shri Munshi's can be that I am called 'Mahatma'. I can make no literary pretensions. My acquaintance with Gujarati and for that matter any literature, is, for no fault of mine, next to nothing. Having led a life of intense action since early youth I have had no opportunity of reading except in prisons whether in South Africa or in India. Shri Munshi's survey of Gujarati literature has made fascinating reading for me. His miniature pen-portraits of writers give one a fair introduction to their writings.

Shri Munshi's estimate of our literary achievement appears to me to be very faithful. The survey naturally confines itself to the language understood and spoken by the middle class. Commercially-minded and self satisfied, their language has naturally been 'effeminate and sensuous'. Of the language of the people we know next to nothing. We hardly understand their speech. The gulf between them and us the middle class, is so great that we do not know them and they know still less of what we think and speak.

The dignified persistence of Shri Devendra Satyarthi, a writer whom I do not remember to have ever met, has made me peep into his remarkable collection of folk songs of the provinces he has been travelling in. They are the literature of the people. The middle classes of the provinces to which the songs belong are untouched by them, even as we of Gujarat are untouched by the songs of folk, i. e. the language of the masses of Gujarat. Meghani of the Saurashtra school has done folklore research in Kathiawar. His researches show the gulf that exists between the language of the people and ours.

But the folklore belongs to an order of things that is passing away, if it has not already done so. There is an awakening among the masses. They have begun not with

thought but with action, as I suppose they always do. Their language has yet to take definite shape. It is to be found somewhat, but only somewhat, in the newspapers; not in books. Shri Munshi's work therefore may be said to have only commenced with the volume before me. It was necessary. But he has to continue the work so well-begun. He has the requisite passion for his work. If he has health, he will now go direct to the people and find out what they are thinking, and he will give expression to their thoughts. The unquestionable poverty of Gujarati is a token of the poverty of the people. But no language is really poor. We have hardly had time to speak since we have begun to act. Gujarat like the rest of India is brooding. The language is shaping itself. There is enough work awaiting writers like our author.

Munshi has alluded to Parsi-Gujarati. So there is. It is unfortunate that there is Parsi-Gujarati. It is confined to novels and stories of the shilling shocker style. They are meant merely for passing the idle hour. The language is tortured out of shape. And just as there is Parsi-Gujarati there is also Muslim-Gujarati though on a much humbler scale. It is impossible to ignore these two streams. They are not wells of Gujarati undefiled. But no reviewer of Gujarati literature can afford to ignore the existence of works which hundreds, if not thousands of Parsis and Muslims read and by which, may be, even shape part of their conduct.

M. K. GANDHI

PREFACE

This book fulfils a desire, cherished for many years, to place a connected story of Gujarāta and its literature before the English-reading public. The invitation which the Chairman of the Post Graduate Studies in the Calcutta University extended to me about the end of 1929 to deliver a series of lectures on Gujarātī Literature provided the necessary opportunity. The invitation remained unavailed of as I joined the Civil Disobedience movement in April 1930; but gaol life, which immediately supervened, provided the necessary leisure to translate the desire into effort.

A systematic history of the Gujarātī literature cannot yet be written. With the materials at our disposal it is well-nigh impossible to reconstruct the past life of Gujarāta, or to read its inner meaning accurately, and in this work, therefore, I have attempted only to describe, in a connected form, its historical and literary currents. This book was written mainly during the two and half years between 1930-1934 which I spent in gaol. During this period, as I sat writing in my prison cell, Gujarāta passed through a fiery ordeal. When I came out in December 1933 the book was already in the press and I found it impossible to introduce any new impressions, but from what little I could see I remained convinced that my analysis of the currents in modern Gujarāta did not require a revision. The immediate after effects of an ordeal are always deceptive; they may appear to, but do not, alter habits and tendencies which belong to one's nature.

I confess to finding great difficulty in assessing the value of contemporary works. The difficulty has been much greater as no such review was possible without a reference to the work of my wife and myself. The choice before me was either to bring the book up-to-date, or to close it with the year 1913 and leave untouched a glorious historical and literary age of Gujarāta. This age claims the best works of Narsinhrao, Khabardar and Nanālal.

It has given birth to promising creative tendencies in modern literature. It also includes amongst its achievements the literary output of Mahātmā Gandhi, and the emergence of Gujarāta on the stage of world politics and literature. What to do with myself, while writing about this period, was the most trying problem of all, and I am indebted to my friend Dr. I. J. S. Taraporevala for coming to my rescue with a chapter, which, perhaps, does me more justice than I deserve.

In the book itself I have restricted myself to a descriptive and critical sketch of the literature of every period on the background of its historical setting, but modern Gujarātī literature or its future possibility cannot be properly understood without realising the great change which is daily coming over the life of the province or appraising the forces which are bringing it about.

The history of Gujarāta records the interplay of two factors: (a) the individuality of the Gujarātīs expressed through a consciously directed group life; (b) the influence of the culture which, originating with the early Āryans, has maintained the homogeneity of Indian life and the continuity of its traditions for the last three thousand years. To the first, Gujarāta owes its outlook on life, its social forms, its language and literature, and the urge to remain a single social organism. The second has created forces which stimulate and unify its collective impulses impelling it to find a greater self-fulfilment in the corporate life of India.

These forces, in the ultimate analysis, can be traced to the geographical determinants of Gujarāta: its natural frontiers and its soil. Protected by the sea on the west, by the sands of Kaccha and Rajputāna on the north, the Aravalli, the plateau of Mālva, the Vindhyaś, the Sātapuḍās and the Sahya Ghāts on the east and south, its rich alluvial soil has reared a race of men and women, soft and luxury-loving and yet possessing qualities which maritime activi-

ties generally foster and stimulate, namely, a spirit of enterprize, practical wisdom, catholicity of taste and social flexibility. The sea was their natural field of enterprize. The plateau of Mālvā (between 1000 to 2000 feet above the sea level) made it easily accessible to the resident of Madhyadeśa for colonization, and cultural and political conquest. The little gateway formed by the Sātapuḍās and the Ghāts, roughly between Damana and Nāsika made Gujarāta a corridor between North and South India letting in influences from the Deccan.

The physical conditions of Gujarāta have practically remained the same, though their exploitation by men have increased both in scope and intensity. But a noteworthy change has come over its socio-physical conditions. The opening of the Suez Canal, which turned Bombay into the gateway of the East, rendered possible the development of Okha, Bedi, Bhavnagar, and Porabandar as modern ports, and will soon turn Karachi into an entrepôt. The railway lines converging at Bombay has made it a great clearing house of trade as well as culture. The Rujputana Malva Railway and numerous other small railways have opened up inaccessible tracts, and the projected Sindha-Bombay Railway through Cutch will reduce the barrier of the desert. Thus trade routes have been altered. Contact with the world is easier and closer than before. Fresh fields have been opened for the commercial enterprize of the Gujarātis both in India and abroad. And a greater spirit of enterprize and organization, a deeper catholicity, a more living flexibility will inevitably come to characterise the people without destroying their individuality. The best minds of Gujarāta have always been 'de localised' by a continuous inter-change of trade and ideas with other provinces and countries. They have lacked the fierce attachment which, for instance, the Bengālī or the Mahārāshtri feels for his province. But this delocalisation, to quote Prof. De Lisle Burns, " would not imply an uprooting of the mind from its native soil. To be delocalised is not to be *de racine*. The contact between nations is the best means for developing what is best in each".

Change in
Trade Routes

Bombay, which with its suburbs has over 3,00,000 Gujarātis, is a unique factor in the life of Gujarāta. This meeting-ground for currents from all over India will always remain national, carrying Gujarāta with it. Again, it links Gujarāta with Mahārāshtra where Saṁskṛtic and Brahmanical influences abound. In its University, which created the Saṁskritic Revival in literature, the predominance of the classics is yet unchallenged, and from it, influences, enriched by a study of Āryan culture, go out moulding thought and expression. And Gujarāta will continue to receive their inspiration from Bombay more steadily and effectively than at any time since the fall of Pāṭaṇa in A. C. 1297.

Bombay and
its Influence

Gujarāta, then, can look forward to a steady development of the forces which underlie its history. But their nature and direction have undergone a change, and their influences will be relatively different.

The racial factor will also become important in the future development of the Gujarātis. Out of a crore and odd Gujarātis, about 20% live in town, the rest in villages; 89% of them are Hindus, and about 9% Musalmans. They are distributed unevenly over the province. The average density of population per mile in the Presidency is 160; in Gujarāta 290; in the Baroda State 299; in Kāthiāvāḍa 150. In Junāgadhā it is as low as 163, in Surat District 410, and in its Gandevi Taluka as high as 865.

Racial factor

The Hindus and even the Mussalmans are divided into numerous castes. The Hindu castes are characterized by a tendency to split into narrowing social groups within which one can marry. In 1901 there were no less than 315 castes in Gujarāta which did not inter-dine or inter-marry. Many of these connubial groups, some of them consisting of a few families, are on the verge of extinction. Again, among Gujarātis, males show a tendency to be in excess of females. For instance, the caste of Leva Kunbis, one of the largest and most vigorous of the village stocks, has only 772 females (including widows) to a 1000 males, as against 930 in the Presidency and 950 in India. In some castes a wife is a prohibitive luxury, purchasable only at a price requiring a

toil of ten to fifteen of the best years of a man's life. The two tendencies react on each other accelerating the pace of each. Among many castes female infants are got rid of at birth to save the family the almost insoluble difficulty of finding husbands. If allowed to live, they are termed "stones" and treated as such. They are married early, and premature motherhood and savage midwifery complete their physical ruin, if widowhood does not relegate them to a dreary and unproductive life.

Whereas, in old days, the Gujarātis were divided into higher and lower castes, modern conditions divide them into the town stock and the village stock. The fastidiousness and refinement which has been creeping into our town life comes in the way of the town replenishing its vitality from the village by free inter-marriage as before. In towns the connubial groups are growing smaller ; infant marriage and premature sex life are yet common ; widow re-marriage remains prohibited. The results are that small castes are dying out, women are unhealthy and short-lived, and the stock as a whole has been degenerating. But there is a more cheerful side of the picture. Recently formed sub-castes, in a few cases, tend to fuse; inter-caste marriages take place, though they are by no means common; the age for marriage has risen. Common system of education, unified intellectual life, urge towards social reform and political power have been creating uniform standards of life. Schools and colleges, clubs and professions, political, social and other public work and life in gaols as political prisoners provide powerful crucibles for melting diversity of habits. Restriction on inter-dining is all but gone. The physical welfare of women, at many places, is almost assuming the form of a first charge on the social conscience. Enthusiasm for physical culture has also captivated young men in towns during the last ten years ; and in hundreds of akhādās, they seek to re-acquire the racial fitness which their fathers had lost.

The village stock of Gujarāta—for instance, that of the Audicyas, the Khedāwals, the Anāvils, the Rajputs, the Patidars, the Kunbis—is study and virile. Infant marriage prevails in the villages but in name. Premature sex life is

unknown. Except among the higher castes, widow re-marriage is freely allowed. But with every generation a foolish sense of social superiority expresses itself by narrowing the group within which inter-marriage can take place, and social customs decrease the number as well as the vitality of the woman. Here, as elsewhere, pride goeth before destruction. Progress in the villages is comparative-

Village Stock ly slow, particularly as men living in towns show a tendency to sever their relations with the members of their caste living in the villages. However, the ancient process of raising the status of castes has been revitalised. Some members of a caste receive education, or, by change of occupation, acquire better economic advantages, or are taken by some preacher of Ārya Samāja into its progressive fold and a whole caste adopts more refined habits and purer religious forms, claiming a higher status. In living memory instances are available where potters have by this process been accepted as masons, ironsmiths and sweepers as Kshatriyas, bards as Brāhmaṇas. And at each remove, the caste attains a higher grade of social well-being. Of late, the influence of Mahātmā Gandhi is also being felt, indirectly but none the less vigorously. A party of young ardent Gandhi-ites has come into existence in many backward castes. It strives to ameliorate the social and economic conditions of their fellow castemen. They introduce the charkha, fight the curse of drink, and resist social evils. Their work is made easier than that of the social reformers of an earlier generation; for, in the villages of Gujarāta, the name of the Mahātmā opens all hearts and disarms all opposition.

The same problems, more or less, affect the Mussalmans in the villages, whose ways of life are not far removed from their Hindu neighbours. But the recent tension between the two communities has a pronounced tendency to make them drift apart in matters social and cultural. Under the existing conditions of India, racial intermixture between them on an appreciable scale is inconceivable. The Parsis form a small community mostly living in towns, vigorous and wealthy. Their race problem will, therefore, scarcely influence the problem of Gujarātis as a whole,

This complex problem, so far as it is likely to affect the culture of the Gujarātis, may be shortly stated. The basic racial stock of Gujarāta is powerful and tenacious, and has shown an extraordinary range of adaptability in the light of modern conditions. The foreign settlements can absorb a large number of Gujarātis, but, apart from them, the undeveloped tracts in the province, if opened up, can easily maintain a fairly large increase in population. The more serious problem, however, is to break up the connubial groups, to stimulate a speedier inter-mixture of castes, to encourage an increase in the number of healthy women, and to change the customs which would deny them the privilege of motherhood. Particularly, progress must be speeded up in towns by a co-ordinated, purposive effort towards the consolidation and strengthening of advanced castes before the disintegrating forces destroy the finest elements of the race. "Endogamy is played out" says Prof. Hobhouse rightly. By inter-marriages on an extensive scale alone can the Gujarātis attain the race vigour which fore-runs great creative impulses. To be great, Gujarāta must be racially homogeneous and fit.

The next aspects to be considered are (a) the social and cultural problems which confronted Gujarāta in the past and the agencies which solved them, and, (b) the changes made by modern conditions in these problems and the new agencies now at work.

The problems which faced Gujarāta in the past were :
 Socio-cultural Problems How to resist the agencies working for disruption, and how to absorb the alien influences which from time to time threatened its culture?

This rich and fertile province was always a tempting prize for conquerors. In the later half of the reign of Siddharāja and the earlier half of that of Kumārapāla, Gujarāta was politically one; and so was it in the reign of Sultan Bahadur Shah; and, again, for a short while under the Imperial Moguls. But, except during these short periods, Gujarāta has been denied political unity. This

challenge of history has been met by Gujarāta by the development of an irresistible individuality, by uniformity of social customs and institutions, by deliberately organised movements of thought and action, and by literary and cultural unity.

Political consolidation of the Gujarātī speaking people under a single government is, and will remain, a dream. British Gujarāta is not sufficiently large to make a separate autonomous province, nor would separation from Bombay be anything but a disaster for it. But, on the other hand, if it continues to be a part of the Presidency as now, there is the danger of Gujarātī states in Kāthiāvāḍa, Rajputana and Central India Agencies drifting further apart. Neither British nor state policy as at present favours any closer political inter-relation, however desirable, between these dismembered parts of Gujarāta. In such a matter one can only look to the Gujarātīs themselves, to its statesmen, its princes, its public men; particularly, to its educationists and literary men who are working for its literary and cultural unity. Under pressure of the idea of a united Gujarāta the genius of the people, under modern conditions, will, perhaps, develop a more efficient harmony than in the past, either by co-ordinating the political, social, and economic activities, or by segregating political influences into the narrowest possible confines. If a universal popular aspiration carries within it the germ of a future reality, the dream may one day come true and a uniform and harmonious political life may undo the wrong of centuries.

The British domination, though the most insidious of all the conquests which brought foreign cultures with them, has produced far-reaching results. In the name of peace, it disarmed the people of India, and under the guise of liberating the intellect, tried to uproot the foundations of society and indigenous culture for a time. And the Āryan culture had to assume varied forms to meet the emergency created by it. Theosophy, Ārya Samāj and enlightened orthodoxy, Samskr̥tic revival and the resulting literary renaissance, and wave on wave of surging religion-tinted nationalism absorbed the energy of the advanc-

ing tide of foreign culture while rejecting its deleterious elements. And in the comprehensive impulse which Mahātmā Gandhi generated, in Satyāgraha, in the re-assertion of Ahimsā and Satya as absolute values in life, Gujarāta emerged as the embodiment, the voice, the spirit of triumphant Āryan culture as expressed through modern conditions. Periods, dominated by ideals and heroic action have often been known to alter fundamentally the outlook of races. And it is not unnatural to expect that post-Gandhian Gujarāta will continue to represent some great aspects of Āryan culture at their best.

Further, this impact of India with the West has proved creative, altered conditions, and reshaped Āryan culture itself. In the past the conditions were generally unsettled; social habits and forms were held together by the unity of unreflective influences; and the idealogy was mainly drawn from Samskr̥tic sources. During the last century, however, the straight waistcoat of enforced peace has brought its compensation in the shape of commercial and cultural advancement and of a burning desire for reorganisation. Contact with the great living currents of European culture has brought forth a sturdy renaissance. The unreflective processes have been replaced by deliberate, collective action and purposive efforts towards a fuller life. And the vast resources of modern civilization have brought an intensity and speed unknown to human endeavour before.

The most powerful of the unconscious processes of the past, in Gujarāta as elsewhere in India, was caste-consciousness. It included consciousness of one's own caste as the fixed orbit in which the life was predestined to move, belief in catura-varṇya as the divinely appointed harmony of functional groups, and loyalty to the guidance of the Brāhmaṇas. But, now, it has undergone an important change in Gujarāta. Agressive individualism declines to treat men only as means to any social purpose, however divinely ordained. Cāturavarṇya as an eternal structure attracts the faith of only a diminishing minority. The Brāhmaṇa priest is looked upon more as a monopolist to be jealous of, or a dependent

to be grudgingly patronised. The caste has lost its plenary authority. As it is to-day, with its funds and conferences, its journal and perhaps its tiny volunteer corps, it is looked upon by its member as one's own little party to be fiercely proud of and to be used against the snobbery of other castes; as an instrument of power and influence; as a first object of generosity and patronage. Feeble attempts at fusion of sub-castes into the four major castes have proved unavailing. In the place of the old harmonious confederation of castes, we have a multitude of conflicting social groups. Emptied of the idea of inter-dependence, Caturavarnya has lost its *raison d'être*; without a faith in custom, its divine origin and Brahmanical guidance it can never possess the vitality to re-organise society.

Behind this blatant individualism lies the respect for human personality, originally a Greek idea popularised by Christianity; but it has been curiously blended with the spirit of toleration and *Ahiṁsā* as understood in Gujarāta in the nineteenth century. And Truth, as defined by the Mahātmā, has added aggressiveness to it. *Satya*, as finally determined by one's personal conscience is, with thousands who follow him, an inviolable little kingdom. Castes dare not invade it. Young men offer *Satyāgraha* by picketing, fast, and non-co-operation against infant marriages, caste dinners, marriage processions and ancient bridegrooms, reducing the fiats of the caste to harmless thunderbolts. Luckily, so far the process is found workable only by the young and progressive, and non-violence and willingness to suffer take the sting out of its coerciveness.

Caste-consciousness is not likely to disappear, nor are castes likely to cease to be social units for a very long time to come; but both are being altered to suit new and potent group ideas. Clubs, associations and professions, as also political and other public activities, provide social contact outside rather than inside the caste and render the ties of caste subsidiary. Among the new group sentiments in Gujarāta the most powerful are Gujarāta-consciousness and nationalism.

New group ideas:
Gujarata-consciousness and Nationalism.

Narmad, in the sixties, was the first to dream of the former. He passionately sang of 'Glorious Gujarāta'; so sang Nanalal of 'Blessed Gujarāta', and with similar passion sang Khabardar in one of his best poems written from his life-long exile in Madras. "Where lives a single Gujarāti there is Gujarāta for ever. Where Gujarāti is 'spoken, there is Gujarāta for ever and for ever."

"A society is an organism" says Fouille in his *La Science Sociale Contemporaine* "because it has been thought and willed; it is an organism born of an idea." The truth of this proposition can be seen in the process by which the idea expressed by Narmad has attracted to itself the volume of sentiment which belonged to caste-consciousness. Conscious efforts are made to-day by Gujarātis wherever they live to unite themselves under the determining influence of this conception. And a new Gujarāta is coming into existence.

Nationalism, the most powerful sentiment inspiring Gujarāta since 1930, has also been wonderfully blended with Gujarāta-consciousness. Gujarātis in every part of India have tried to participate in the national struggle, because, as Gujarātis, they have thought it both a duty and an honour to do so. In a country so vast as India nationalism can only flourish on the strength of such a hierarchy of group sentiments, provided, of course, the minor is included in the major.

An equally great change has come over the family idea which, with all its incidents, formed the basis of the Āryan social life. Joint family is going from Gujarāta; at places it has gone. Not even Govardhanram's fulsome praise could restore its vitality. Of the many causes which wrought this change, the noteworthy are the individual traits of the Gujarāti and the influence of women. The Gujarātis have been comparatively less subservient to hardening custom and narrow prejudice. Family life has rarely been so inflexible as in other parts of India. Culture has never come to be monopolised by aristocrats, intellectual, social, or military.

Gujarāti women, again, have been comparatively free. And with the increase of the influence of the new woman,

the walls of the joint family have been, stone by stone, falling. Polygamy went out of fashion in the higher castes, imperceptibly, without an effort. The old-world, one-sided bhakti of the wife for the divine lord and master is a thing of the past. Love has come, seen and conquered. Wedded life is being invested with romance. Co-education in elementary schools was common in the past, and Gujarātī opinion in modern times has set its face against segregated education in schools and colleges.

The active participation of women in all walks of life has not been unknown in the past, and is an ordinary feature of modern life. Minaḷadevi who ruled Gujarāta during Sidharāja's infancy, Anupumādevī who assisted her husband Tejahpāla, and Mirānbāi, the poetess, were not creatures of fiction or freaks. Widows and mothers have frequently carried on the family business. And in modern times a period of less than a generation has seen them taking their legitimate place in many walks of life. Some have been in the forefront of the Satyāgraha movement, risking all; many have braved lathi charges or risked picketing in areas full of strife and bloodshed. The illiterate peasant women of Bardoli in 1928, and again in 1930, exhibited fortitude, courage and determination to suffer in the cause of their country, which have few parallels in history. The women of the cities have not been slow in the race. For instance, one can be seen dominating the public life of a large city; another controlling labour in a great industrial centre; a third organising a big semi-commercial concern on patriotic lines; a fourth guiding a political organisation of women; and many working and organising in their respective spheres of public activity. The women of Gujarāta have thus won a status in public life equal to men before the world knew how it was done. The old ideals also have not lost their vitality. Freedom has neither affected their gentleness, nor their devotion to domestic life. Most of the patriotic women who worked or suffered for politics during the last four years continued to remain obedient wives, affectionate mothers and ungrudg-

Position of
women.

ing housewives ever ready to serve. Smt. Kasturba Gandhi, the foremost woman of Gujarāta, is a piece of heroic anti-quity at its best. Before her sublime surrender to her husband's fiery will to suffer, the Puranic satis look inane and lifeless.

The traditions on which the Purānic view of life was based have not yet lost their hold, but a new meaning and content is being given to them. The Brāhmaṇa priest has passed his sceptre to the teacher, the literary man and the patriot. The Sāṃskṛtic revival has swept away Purānic superstitions and sectarian beliefs only to restore direct contact with the best in Sāṃskṛtā. Premānanda's *Dhruvākhyāna* has been forgotten, but poems, dramas and novels based on Purānic subjects never fail in their appeal. *Sarasvatīchandra*, disregarded as a romance, lives as an anthology of Āryan literature and thought. Stotras strung with the names of gods no longer affords solace as does the study of the *Bhagavadgītā*. Vedānta has lost its charm, and so have rituals; religious emphasis is being transferred from belief and worship to service and experience. Bhakti has no passionate adherents; they seek life as joy, or heroism, or stern tapas. The tradition of continuity maintained by the Purāṇas does not satisfy the Gujarāti mind to-day, but it seeks to revive and interpret the race memory by building up a new tradition to suit modern needs. Deeds done and ordeals undergone by heroic Indians, who in the past stood for the ideals which now fascinate the mind, are celebrated in song and legend.

Ethical, religious and spiritual ideals have always been modified in Gujarāta to suit its temperament. High spirituality and learning have been always neglected in favour of a practical application of moral principles. Gujarāta has been the home of magnificent temples and charitable and philanthropic institutions. In old times, the Jain sādhu, the humble purāṇika and the village bhakta brought solace and help to the poor and the distressed. To-day, many young men and women have given up careers to organise and uplift the masses. Ahimsā has, at all times, leavened corporate life,

For ages there has been scarcely a town or a large village without its sadāvratā to feed the poor, its panjrapol to house maimed cattle. Kumārapāla and Hemcandra made of it a political doctrine. The wealthy to-day have given expression to it in hospitals, orphanages and sanatoria. It has been harnessed to political energy in the interest of India's freedom, and of the peace of humanity. Ahinsā, forgetting its morbid solicitude for the ant and the sparrow, has grown into an active creed of service, a cult of resistance to evil by non-violent means through sacrifice and suffering. But Gujarāta prefers the joy of life to ascetic rigour. The high-browed Brāhmaṇa and the stern sādhu have come and gone. Akho taught all the horrors of this fleeting world. Mahātmā Gandhi's gospel of renunciation may hold its soul in temporary subjugation. But Gujarāta will make money and spend it on the arts of life; her sons and daughters will live and laugh, and love and sing joyfully.

Joy of Life

I am deeply obliged to Mahātmā Gandhi for his kindness in contributing a foreword to this work and to Dr. A. B. Keith and Ācārya Dhruva for their appreciation of it. My cordial thanks are also due to several friends for their encouragement and assistance in making the completion of this book possible. I am also grateful to the Government of Bombay and the officials of different jails in which I happened to be for their unflinching courtesy in giving me the necessary facilities for writing the book, and to Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., for the promptitude with which they undertook to publish it.

K. M. MUNSHI

26, Ridge Road,
Bombay, 5th March, 1935.

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By a curious oversight the words 'in blank verse' are left to stand at p. 283, l. 25 where they should have been 'in rhymed verse'—K, M.

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OPINION

Dr. A. Berriedale Keith, D. C. L., D. Litt. of the University of Edinburgh writes:—

Gujarāta has of late attained world renown as the home of Mahātmā Gandhi, the incarnation of the highest ideals of Hindu Dharma, the teacher of a living faith in work for humanity which appeals to all that is finest in the spirit of India, and has won for his motherland a measure of respect far greater than could ever be achieved by material means. It is fitting therefore that it is a devoted adherent of the Master, who has proved by sacrifice and hardship his belief in his ideals, who has essayed to sketch the literary history of his country in close relation to its political and cultural vicissitudes. It is not merely pioneer work, but the field is vast, and the languages used range from Sanskrit through Prakrit and Apabhraṃśa, to Old and Modern Gujarātī, demanding an erudition remarkable in one who has given so much time to public service and who himself is an outstanding author, whose creative art (in the words of Dr. Taraporewala) has brought life and beauty to Gujarātī fiction and drama, and whose philosophy of life has given to Gujarāta both joy and strength.

It is indeed the outstanding merit of Mr. Munshi's work that it is written by one who has studied deeply both the great masters of European literature and the theory of their art, and who can thus put true values on the work of the long series of writers of Gujarāta. Where it is possible for me to test his judgment, it appears singularly happy and accomplished, and Gujarāta should be deeply grateful to him for his work of love, which recognises her accomplishment in letters, but with admirable candour does not seek to conceal her shortcomings. But the author in his love for his own land is fully conscious that Gujarāta can have no meaning and no future except as an expression of Indian culture, and we must all share his hope that, under the stimulus of modern civilisation and nationalism, we may see, within a decade or so, the development of a national language and a commonwealth of literatures, to which each province of Bhāratavarsha will have contributed of its best and noblest.

The thanks of all are due to the author for giving in original and translation some of the finest passages of the works he criticises, and for the useful discussion of the progress of language and of metrical forms.

“Gujarat and its Literature” is a remarkable work, full of light and life, an expression of the author’s personality. His intense love of Gujarat and his power of imagination which vivifies whatever it touches are unmistakably there. What might surprise most people—it does not surprise me, who knows the author well—is the indomitable industry which he has brought to bear on his survey, and that, too, inside prison walls and in spite of indifferent health.

The characteristic feature of the work, however, is his attempt to study the literature of Gujarat in the light of its history and the history of India. This he has done abundantly and done it very well. At the same time, one is glad to find that in his work the literary critic is not lost in the historian: he has paid equal attention to the historical background and the literary figures. Estimation of literary worth is, after all, the main function of a reviewer of literature, and in the discharge of this duty he has been both just and sympathetic, and at times even generous, especially towards his contemporaries. This is, as it should be.

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