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MONOGRAPH

ON

MIRABAI

THE SAINT OF MEWAD

BY

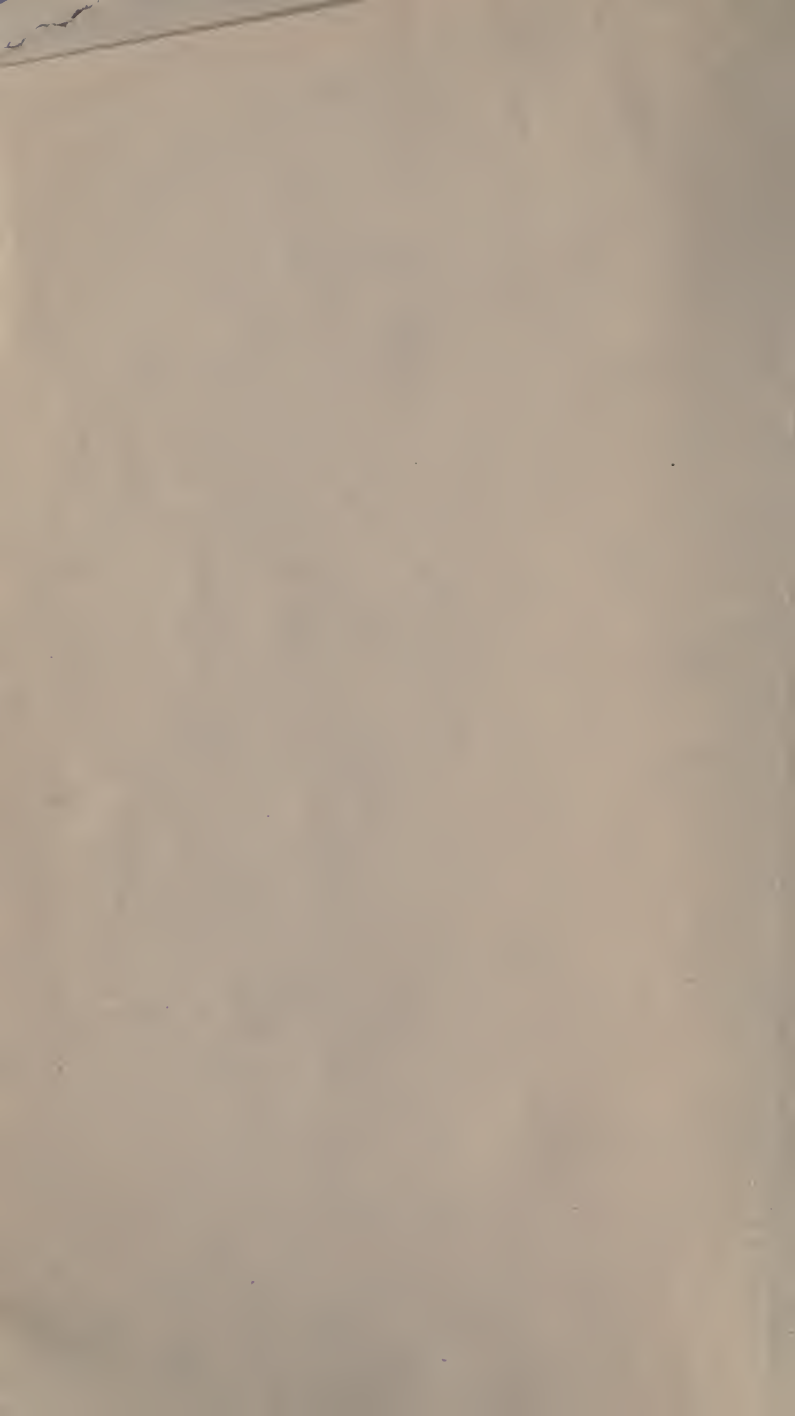
S. S. MEHTA, B. A.

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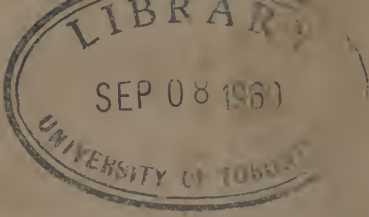
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THE SAINT OF MEWAD

BY

S. S. MEHT, A B. A.





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Born
18-9-1890.

S. J. Sankaravula

Died
20-1-1919.

TO
THE BELOVED MEMORY OF
D. J. S.

“Still seems it so impossible a thing
That thou art gone,—
That not in all my life I evermore.
With pleased ear,
Thy quick light feet advancing to my door
Again shall hear,—
That thou not ever with inquiring looks
Or subtle talk,—
Shalt bring to me sweet hindrance 'mid my books
Or studious walk,—
That whatsoever else of good for me
In store remain,
This lieth out of hope my child, to see
Thy face again.”

By His Distressed parents
J. & J. E. S.

“ Those we call the dead
Are breathers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends

(Tennyson, In Mem.)

PREFACE.

True Life is only Love and Love is only Bliss.

Our human life is but a preparation and probation for a higher and nobler one—a blessed eternal existence. In the race of enjoying a higher life, the mode of running differs with each entity. Truth lies at the bottom of the well—the striking parallel to this is supplied by the Indian adage—“*Dharmasya tattvam nihitam Guhayám*”—signifying that the essence of religion lies concealed in a mysterious cave. And this is illustrated by what Cardinal Newman calls the mystical view of the Universe *i.e.* the religious insight which sees in the visible Universe only outward signs of the spiritual realities within it and especially in human beauty a type of the Divine perfection. This alone constitutes duty, truth and beauty—for every one is going in search of it—yet none has traced and found it except those chosen by God. Truth is, therefore, perhaps enjoined to be traced from cypher, since it arises from anti-truth or untruth. It is “*sat*”—real existence of the Eastern philosopher; for, it is the only Reality; and the manliness of man lies in pursuing Truth for its own sake, and exhibiting the results of a persistent and persevering investigation before the world for the enlightenment and future guidance of all.

Man created on the surface of this globe has to trace out the Truth—"sat"—the real essence of existence here below, and to feel sure or recognise in his heart of hearts the mutual usefulness predominant over all things that are capable of attracting him for transitory enjoyment of worldly objects. Times out of mind the Eastern ideal has continued to exist and to avow that worldly objects of happiness are all evanescent and divine bliss lies in extending to the widest range possible the doctrine of "Bhutadaya" *i.e.*, sympathy for all existing objects, as practically as possible. It is a patent fact that the first and final craving, again, for all is for happiness—irrespective of the means of achievement; for in regard to those means, differences and dissimilarities arise.

There is in nature a variety of combining forces which brings about a variety of forms and figures, names and designations all over, from the minutest insect to Brahma or from the infinitesimal being to the enormous or gigantic shape available. Nature teaches a sound unfailling lesson of harmony to all in a fairly equal and equitable manner. Every conflict signifies ultimate creation, even after dissolution—for it is dissolution and combination; or destruction and construction; or in other words still, Involution and Evolution.

This small manual does not need any long word of introduction, in as much as the philosophy contained in Mira's poetry was the philosophy, more or less, of the Puranas, and especially, the Bhagavata; so that it

cannot lay any claim to the higher truths propounded by Sankara, Ramanuja or Madhva. However, the most popular form that scriptural expositions made by the writers of the middle ages took, was to a small extent manifest, in the songs that made Mira's name immortal in certain quarters. Mira's home after marriage proved for her a life-long source of grief and distress. She never liked to be gay or cheerful except in the grave adoration of her celestial husband.* Sri Krishna who was her everlasting solace, and whose devotion alone was capable of saving her from physical sin and secular grief and misery. It was this love which opened her eyes to spiritual beauty and heavenly mysteries. It is very difficult to judge whether she decided upon the sure and smooth line of action for her life in a spirit of cynicism or stoicism. To her, such terms could have signified nothing, to the critical analyser, it may be easy to pronounce a definite opinion, but the present effort is not meant to analyse her mind in such a subtle and penetrating manner, only by basing the process on vague folklores and traditions as well as a few verses, that are available. Besides, I always am prone to harbour scruples and misgivings perhaps more than reasonable with regard to hastening the process of analysis and examination of facts, and jumping to a definite conclusion, so that that task and all other subtler matters are left to the discretion of abler and more critical treatments of wiser and more comprehensive intellects that can command more materials search draw I know, I have my own defects and drawbacks, flaws,

* Cf. The Lives of St. Clare, St. Agnes, St. Rose of Lima and others.

faults and foibles and " what is writ is writ "—more than that or better than that, I cannot do.

Moreover, it may be added that there was no joy or cause of cheerfulness in worldly joys and she eschewed them like evil. She pursued her prayer with perseverance and remained devoutly and absolutely absorbed in her loving worship of Sri Krishna, disregarding the jibes and taunts of all concerned. Perhaps, she was alive to the sense contained in the pregnant words of of Bhartrihari that :—पीत्वा मोहभर्यां प्रमादमदिश मुन्मत्तभूतं जगत् the world has been dreadfully infatuated after drinking the wine of Vanity and Egotism. This immortal line is true throughout all times and all climes.

And now in closing I crave for the leniency of the indulgent reader for any faults of omission or commission. This preface will be brought to an end by the following Sanskrit Stanza :—

पीतोऽगस्त्येन तातश्चरण तल हतोवल्लभोऽन्ये नरोषाद्
 आब्राल्याद्धि प्रवर्यैः स्ववदन विवरे धारिता वैरिणीमे ॥
 गेहंमे छेदयति प्रतिदिवसमुमा कांत पूजानिमित्तं
 तस्मारिवना सदाऽहं द्विजकुलसदनं नाथ नित्य त्यजामि ॥

MIRABAI—AND VAISHNAVISM IN GUJARAT.

CHAPTER—I.

“Disguise our bondage as we will
Tis woman, woman rules us still.”

Born in the land of Mewad, carrying at the back the fame of history and connected in worldly bonds with a dynasty of valorous deeds, Mirabai claims the attention of Gujarat no less than that of Mewad and Marwar. She belonged to that high and noble womanhood that has made a mark in the Upanishads—the type of which is represented by Gargi Vachaknavi who asked in the assembly of learned Brahmans a set of intricate questions of Yajnyavalkya and said:—“I have risen to fight thee with two questions”; and by Maitreyi who said to her lord: “Why, my lord, if this whole earth full of wealth belonged to me, tell me, should I be immortal by it”?

To this type of womanhood Mirabai belonged. Her career in life enriched her surroundings and she played the role in much better parts and *in intenso*, of Ambapâli who invited the holy Gautama Buddha to her house, much in the same way that Aspasia received Socrates—and even more; for Mirabai spread her religious propaganda far and wide with immaculate series of devout deeds and rapturous songs of spiritual development.

The pride of Mewar and Marwar, Mira's fame spread through out Gujarat only by virtue of her immortal Muse that continued to shower praise of God's glory at all times, without any artificiality about her. Nrisimha Mehta was the Chaucer of Gujarati poetry; but Mirabai was the first Gujarati poetess. Her name and fame claim our careful attention for more reasons than one. The blood of the martyr is the seed of the church. This adage bears its fruits in Mirabai, and the greater became her affliction owing to the infliction of undeserving penalty upon her, the more immaculate proved her character and the more fervent reverence and devotion does she deserve from posterity.

History has proved the existence of race animosity during the 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries in India, and with no baited breath, can the sex animosity be placed side by side. Both these factors will have to be put under a close examination in the sequel with regard to details but in the meantime, it will be worth while to note that Vaishnavism was posed against S'aivism during the age in which Mirabai lived.

Talking of Gujarat it can be asserted that unlike the conditions of revolutionary Europe, when religious calm evidently fled away from the atmosphere, poetry was not frightened away by the storm, and polemical writings began to redouble their force and assert their ground. During the time of Nrisimha Mehta the so-called *Pâkhand Mata i.e.*, sham and hypocrisy in religious belief had not gained its ground, and asserted its class

or spread its mischief so much as it did in later days of Akho and others. True literary history, to start with, then opens with the dawn of Nrisimha Mehta's genius in the 15th century. Gujarat at the time was distracted greatly by strifes and internicine quarrels; as a consequence of which there was a good deal of disorder if not anarchy and the sweets of peaceful life had fled and could not be enjoyed. It was the time when the Taghlakh and Lodi dynasties ruled and paved the way smooth by their Civil Wars for the advent and victorious rule of Babar and his descendants. Faith in old gods was flickering or forced in some places; chance or carprice on the one side, and power or predominance on the other, perverted or subverted the flow of faith in religion. In fact religion torn asunder was trying to grow hydra-headed. The long continued quarrel between *Dnyana* and *Karma* became resolved into Bhakti, a more popular form and a proper resultant of the two forces. The Brahmanic class close confined to the former and especially to the doctrines of the Vedanta came to be launched into a period of religious transition by the vigorously devoted preachings of Nrisimha Mehta.

CHAPTER II.

The Earlier History of Gujrat.

It will not be amiss at this stage to advert to the history of Gujarat *en passant*. From Jayshekhar to Karan Vaghela and his conqueror Alla-ud-din, the pages of history, purely as such, provide a proper narration of facts, social, political and religious. But the earlier part, if at all deserving attention can be summarised by a bare mention of the rise of the Chalukyas who subjugated the Maduras of the Konkan, and during the regime of Pulakesin II, in the second decade of the 7th century, even the Lats of Southern Gujarat, Gurjara or Northern Gujarat and Rajputana as well as Mâlwa were all conquered. In fine, these were all the dark days of Gujarat, 610-620, A.D.

The word Gujarat has been traced to many etymologies by the father of modern poetry—Narmada Shankar who cites the authority of Dr. Bhau Daji, and observes that previous to the 7th century of the Christian era, the word had no existence at all, and that the race that founded the Kingdom of Gujarat upon the ruins of Vallabhipur was known by the name, Choras or Gujars. The boundaries, geographically speaking, as fixed by the well known Pandit Vrijlal have been laid down with some

certainty—based upon ancient writings. 'Garavi-Gujarat' then stands bounded by Arbuda chains in the North, the desert of Kachcha in the West, the river Mahi in the south and Dungarpura—Vansavâdâ districts in the East. With these, it will not be difficult to compare the modern limits of Gujarat under the British Sovereignty ; so that the work can be left to the care of the reader.

It will not be out of place at this stage to trace the Vaishnava form of worship in the land. Avantivarmâ was the first Vaishnava king about whom we have an occasion to read something in history proper. His successor Sankaravarmâ extended his conquests to Gujarat. He, it was who exasperated the Brahmanas by trusting to his Kayâstha financiers. And it was he on whose funeral pyre, perished his three queens as Sati in 902 A. D.

From 980 to 1003, A. D., many scenes disgraced the court of Kashmir. This was the time when Mahmud of Gazni was nigh and had already commenced his invasions. This was, again, the time when as remarked by Dr. Wilson in his work on the religious sects of the Hindus, that nineteen classes of Vaishnavism and eleven classes of Saivism and four classes of Saktas, besides other miscellaneous sects existed in India. The chief apology, be it observed in passing, for tracing briefly the origin of the religious quarrel in the shape of Saivism and Vaishnavism is no other than that of giving a connected

idea of the serious aspect it assumed during the ages of Nrisimha Mehta, Mirabai and Dayaram, especially in view of the fact that Mirabai was a Martyr to her faith and has as a consequence a just claim to the immortality of her fame.

To give the reader some definite idea about the leading doctrines of the Vaishnavite faith, it is but fit to remark that it may appear in many forms to be a survival of the Buddhistic faith. For there is the same theoretical equality of all men and all castes and the same prohibition against the destruction of animal life. There is one personal God, Vishnu, in whom they believe; and he is adored, by the common people as Krishna. The amours of Sri Krishna with the milk maids of Vrindavan are the conceptions of writers in the Puranic period of Hindu civilization in India ranging from A.D., 500 to A. D. 1000

As proved by Bankim Chandra, one of the greatest of the modern age, the Mahabharata makes no mention of these amorous stories. In fact, if the retrospect were extended still farther in its range, it would be easy to see that the worship of images in temples was unknown to the Hindus before the age of Buddhistic revolution. Priests gradually became the custodians of the temple; and pompous celebrations began to arrest the imagination of all classes, superstition increased; art and poetry, music and sculpture all lent their aid. Pilgrimages came into being, and were organized on a very large scale.

Gods and temples gradually began to multiply ; and the forms of devotion, too, began to be manifest in diverse ways.

“ The World, O my Brother is constant to none,
Trust then the World's maker and all is well done,
Lean not on her Kingdoms thy back or thy head,
For many, thy peers, she has nourished and sped,
When the pure soul desires from her prison to fly
It is the same on a throne, or a dust heap to die.”

Saâdi.

CHAPTER III.

Early History Continued, Replacing Sanskrit by Prakrit.

This was the early history of the whole country, when Rama and Krishna, on the one hand and Siva on the other, divided the hearts and enlisted the sympathies of the different classes of Gujarat. Each individual was no doubt, inspired within himself or herself, with the consciousness of the Supreme Power, but the attributes being different in certain cases, the out-ward forms and rituals of devotion, began to differ. Ramanandi doctrine was spread with due ardour and enthusiasm in some parts of India. Nanak-propaganda was unfurling its banner in the North of India ; and Kabir was trying to

make the thorny paths smoother for treading by means of his preachings of toleration and unity of men through God. Nrisimh Mehta was extolling the glory of the Vaishnavite doctrine, while trying to identify himself with Krishna, the subject of his song, the object of his heart, and the Sole Pervader of the Cosmos. And so followed suit the first poetess of literary Gujarat, Mirabai.

The Purânic era as a whole with its Sanskrit form of preaching had come to a close ; and vedântic doctrines had taken a different and perhaps a more personal as well as prosaic turn in the hands of Râmânujâ, the great Reformer and Religionist of the 12th century—The coming of this great Luminary of Vaishnavism was foretold to Harita Rishi—"In thy line, Harita will be born Sesa himself-My own-for world's salvation." Bhutapuri Mahatmya III (1045), Madhva and others who made it a practically temporal form of worship more than the highly metaphysical and therefore abstruse type of Shankarachârya's teaching between the 11th and 14th centuries, when Sanskrit which had already ceased to be a spoken popular language, lost much of its favour with leading writers also. And although Jagannath, of Rasa Gangâdhar fame, Jayadeva the immortal author of Gitâ-govind and a few others manifested their sincere devotion to the classical mother-language, still their works were not sufficient to awaken the same spirit of devotion in others owing to a great change of time and place and circumstances. The centuries

between A. D. 1000 and A. D. 1400 bear the stamp of literary dark ages of Gujarat. Quibbles, Wranglings and hairsplittings, in arguments as a consequence of attempting to root out Buddhism, filled the pages of books that may not deserve to be called literary.

Literary endeavours were made with Prakrit or Apabhramsa, that is to say corrupted Sanskrit as the vehicle of thought, and yet no prose or poetic composition, neither history nor philosophy came to be published. The learned Shastri Vrijlal informs us that Apabhramsa, which ought to have been more carefully and extensively cultivated was as well consigned to oblivion; and some few tolerably fair attempts made by a handful of bards remind us of the Bardic attempts during the Pre-chaucerean times which can equally bear the name of linguistic transition period. In the first and second quarters of the 12th century, moreover, Prâkrit found favour with the people; and it became their spoken language—the medium of oral intercourse. In fine, Apabhramsa and Prâkrit dug the grave of their divine Mother Sanskrit, and yet the Sanskrit Muse did not vacate the throne, for the Prâkrit Muse-Hemachandra, a famous Jain writer on grammar husbanded the resources of Prâkrit, and put forth its grammatical crop, early in the 12th century.

Note:—For some glimpse of the spread of Visnavism in Bengal and the advent of poets like Chandidas and Vidyapati followed by the rise of that celebrated Saint of Nadia--Lord Gauranga—Chaitanya. (vide J. Sarkar's Chaitanya and his pilgrimage—and D. N. Sen's Hist. of Bengali Language and Literature).

Such was the condition of literary Gujarat when the first rays were shot out by the Sun of Nrisimha Mehta's faith. The Chaucer of Gujarat met with many difficulties—including the one of expression owing to the change of the popular language. The last brightness of Prâkritic efforts melted imperceptibly into the redness of the dawning of Gujarati literature, and the brilliant genius of Nrisimha Mehta's devotion first peeped out from beyond the darkened clouds of our horizon. In his close wake did Mirabai follow. Her works brought out *with* faith and *through* faith, and bequeathed as a lasting legacy to posterity, are apt to enlighten the heart of every reader, even in the present civilized times, in the midst of which they still continue to reflect a child like innocence mingled with a tenacious fervour. They indicate a deep and firmly rooted belief in a Holy Mission, and a heavy obligation to fulfil it. The lives of Mehtâ and Mira were faith, and faith was their individual life; and theirs was no idle contest consisting of words alone. The religious element in the works of both alike tries to take an all embracing view of life; it tries to universalize and unite. With 'Tulsi' rosaries on their necks, upright 'Tilak' mark, a distinguishing badge of true Vaishnava faith, put on their foreheads; with marks also of Krishna's holy feet impressed on their arms, Mehta and Mira in their own respective ages, moving in an ecstasy of holy faith in a circular dance with pious devotees, and singing praises and prayers to Sri Krishna day after day hour after hour without caring for sensuous pain or

coveting for wordly pleasures can be pictured to the mind's eye by any student of Gujarati literature after reading their sweet naturally flowing force of easy musical language in their works even today.

CHAPTER IV

There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind,
Omniscient. His most holy name is Love.

“How long we live, not years but actions tell. That man lives twice who lives the first life well.” The literature of Gujarat consists mainly of poetry. Literature as such is either. *Drasya* an object of sight or *Sravya* an object of hearing or perhaps of both. Dramatic writings which are only a numbered few are not attempted by many authors, and Premanand stands out preeminent above the rest. The 15th and 16th centuries A. D. claim the first invoking and awakening of the Gujarati Muse. After Mehta several writers flourished among whom are counted Vishnudas of Stanbatirtha—Cambay, Bhima of Siddhapura; Bhâlana of Patana, Tulsi of Kuntalapura, Devidas of Sojitrâ, and Sivadas, a Nagar Brahman of Cambay. This galaxy of poets is closed by Akhâ Bhakta—who is a connecting link between the first period and the second period; the latter being closed by Dayaram, who can be regarded as the poet of the

transitional period which ushered in the 3rd age of the literary history of Gujarat—this third age being closed by the poet-laureate of modern times—kavi Narmadas-hankar after whom poetry is lying in a moribund condition. So much for this. The remarkable feature of the evolution of poetry in Gujarat is that it has been graced by a female poet, whose name has remained up to now a household word with the God-loving people of Gujarat who have a leaning towards the song of Love-Devotion. She is no other than Mirābai of Mewad-Marwar, at once poetess, martyr and saint. A saint is essentially and necessarily a man or a woman of penance not always of external and outward penance but always and everywhere a victim. Self denial must of necessity be the precursor of a life of intimate union with God and the more close the union, the stern must be the self denial. Now a days, men will not understand that self must abdicate, if God is to reign; consequently, saints are few as Virgil has sung “Rare nantes in gurgit vasto” (swimming, one here and another there, in the vast deep.) The sweet music of this devout first Gujarati poetess falls softly on the ready ear of every woman and enters into the heart to dwell there. It is known to bring sweet nectar from the blissful regions of Krishna’s sporting ground of Vrindāvana. It was her sweetly cherished dream; and as she thought if perfection dwelt any where in the fleeting world, it did so in her dream and vision which proved the sole source of solace in her life. Her heart ever seemed to express “My sole possession is Thy love; In Earth beneath, or Heaven above, I have no other store;

And though with fervent suit I pray, and importune
 Thee night and day, I ask Thee nothing more." Her love
 for God of which she was fully conscious from the very
 beginning, gathered colour especially when her husband
 and his kinsmen began to interfere with spiritual love.
 And what sort of effect did the constraint produce?
 It was at this stage she experienced this change of
 heart which filled her with joy and peace in the life
 of faith and the mysteries of "inner life" and the
 happiness of the state of "recollection in God." The
 fervent devotional songs in which she describes this
 crisis in her life are truly inspiring and point to the
 early attainment towards a state of quietism and to
 have cried "Ever joined to Thee at all times, services all,
 I must render Thee, O, Krishna." The fervency of her
 love for Krishna became so great and over powering that
 it allowed no intermission. It was a state of mind where-
 in the taste of God was so great, so pure, unblended and
 uninterrupted that it drew and absorbed the powers of
 the soul into a profound recollection, a state of confiding
 and affectionate rest in Krishna. During such ecstatic
 state she had no sight but for her beloved Giridhara and
 repeatedly renewed her spiritual marriage with her Re-
 deemer Krishna. She excluded everything, every
 thought of worldly existence in order to love, with
 greater purity and energy, her spiritual lover Krishna.
 Not unlike madame Guyon her poetic outpourings
 similar to the "Spiritual Torrents" of pure love and
 "fixed state" which consist in the complete identifica-
 tion of the human will with the will of God, were

bourgeoning themselves within her and at last found expression in her devotional songs which are a heritage of Divine Love and true Devotion left behind her to the people of Gujarat.

Like the Princess of Tennyson she broke out within herself, addressing her words to the Omnipresent Image of Shri Krishna: "I wed with Thee! I bound by pre-contract your bride, your bonds slave." And she "Surrenders, without guile or art, to God, an undivided heart." One spiritual and not carnal-love did she form; and clung to it steadfast through life. Fixing all her love on God alone, worldly ties she snapped off entirely, and thence forth in the living world her spirit closed with Krishna at the heart, "Dead to self and worldly things" And as *amor vincit omnia*, she conquered, with a love rapture for God, all her transitory pain and misery, passing all her time in the enjoyment of that crowning and all surpassing happiness that beggars all description. With a fiery glow on her face, and spotless blood flowing in the deep recesses of her youthful heart, Mirabai sang songs celestial in praise of Shri Krishna; the highly vibrating and genuine accents of which are familiar even to this day to all males and females of Marwar and Gujarat. The refrain and burden of her devotion was like the rapturous outpouring of heart of Madam Guyon:—

" Ah! return. and love me still;
See me subject to Thy will!
Frown with wrath, or smile with grace,
Only let me see Thy face!

Evil I have none to fear,
 All is good; if Thou art near.
 Be not angry! I resign,
 Henceforth, all my will to Thine;
 I consent that Thou depart
 Though thy absence breaks my heart;
 Go then, and for ever too;
 All is right that Thou wilt do."

Her poetry like that of Mehta's will be found ever teeming with *Prema-Bhakti* or *Prema Lakshna—Bhakti* (Love-Devotion)—as opposed to *Dnyana Bhakti* (Knowledge-Devotion); but it is less deep rooted in the hearts of Gujrati ladies than the poetry of Nrisimha Mehta

It would be meet to quote here St. Rose's (of Lima) Message to the Infant Saviour, for comparison with Mira's general trend of thought and emotion in her songs. (p. 155. Life of St. Rose of Lima).

' Fly, O Swift Messenger,
 Fly to our Lord!
 Oh! haste to our Master adored!
 Ask why he delays and remains
 Far from our side.

' Tell Him I cannot live
 Parted from Him;
 My life then no happiness knows;
 In Him only my heart can repose,
 Or pleasure can find.

' Fly, noble messenger, fly!
 Tell Him when he is not here,
 I languish alone.
 Tell Him his Rose must her Sorrow bemoan
 Till the moment when He shall return'.

CHAPTER V.

It is necessary to observe that the first period of Gujarati literature extends over the dynasties of Taghlakh, Lodi and Mogul Rulers. It was decidedly a period of political unrest. Religion was greatly out of joint ; and association which is the essential feature of Society disappeared. Priestcraft perished in a sense ; or it came to be discredited in many cases. The political atmosphere of the time, materialized the living as far as selfish pursuits were concerned ; and it spiritualized them in some cases in so far as resort could be had to desperation. Morality and religion trembled in the scales of Society, and the human intellect no longer spent precious time in recouping fresh vigour, especially since there was no proper association. Unity was a matter of the past ; and there was hardly any concentrated effort to examine the pros and cons of many religious problems ; and to eliminate the unstable factor was to arrive at a safe conclusion of the Oneness of the Soul, that cancels all differences minor as well as major. Moreover, more things are wrought by prayer than this world knows of—and accordingly Mehtâ and Mirâ in their own respective ages worked with a more potent spell. In the galaxy of Gujarati poets, these two stand preëminent, as astonished, nay ravished by a flow of pious feelings that continued for a long time to pour out the crystal water for drinking purposes in the phenomenal world.

The subject matter of highly elevated poetry turned to the singing of God's glory as the poets became inspired by the more sacred and more ancient Sanskrit writings in the past. The Ramayana, the Mahabharat and other Purânic writings supplied the theme; and as Max Muller would have it, they were all bent on the Search for spiritual truth; and the people sought and honoured spiritual knowledge and spiritual wisdom.

Mirâbai, born of a noble line of the Râthod Rajputs of Marwar and united by the tie of wedlock with the Sissodia Rajput Chiefs of Mewad, can trace her origin to the main stock of Lunar and Solar Dynasties. A staunch devotee by birth Mirâ can legitimately lay claim to be called the first Gujarati poetess—since poetry was devotion to a great extent. Gujarat boasts but of a few women poets and the leading ones can be two—Mirâbâi in the North of India; and Radhâbai in Baroda or West of India—or as compared to the place of birth of Mirâbai in the South.

Mirabai has her life sketched by many a learned pen, and yet the difference of opinion depends much upon conclusions drawn after making due researches in the line of critical literary study. In the meantime, the tradition that survives is rampant in the atmosphere with many forms and faces; and the reader before whom it happens to be related is at a serious loss to make out subtle distinctions for the purpose of recognizing the truth. It is, more or less a tangled growth of stories woven round her name, and it is hard to be free from that

growth- She has been portrayed before the reader as Kumbhâ-Rânâ's wife; and the picture has been so firmly and indelibly impressed, that all endeavours emanating howsoever much they may be, from the source of truth will be considered futile or ill-placed. At the same time, it is not less true that an unending controversy will rage round an attempt of denying the Epithet the Queen of Kumbha-Rânâ to her. However, the well known correspondence which revealed the latest known fact about her was carried on very recently with the authorities of Udeypur, Jodhpur and such other Rajasthans with which her name is connected and it has been published. There are at present a few reviews on the life and literary history of Mirâbai—and Colonel Tod, Kavi Dayaram and Narmadashankar; the author of the Brihat Kavyadohan and Govardhanram; the Bhaktamâla of Nabhaji, the Indian Antiquary issue containing an account of Mirâbai and the Encyclopediæ of Religion and Ethics, are some of the conspicuous writings preserving her memory in the world of religious devotion.

As this stage it will not be amiss to tackle the question whether or not the title of poetess could be adequately applied to Mirabai. It should be cleared at the outset that devotion does take the form of verse and yet devotional verses need not be designated as poetry. Devotion pays hardly any regard to poetry and the well established canons of Rhetorics. Vedic Poetry based on miracles and mysteries of Nature is high soaring and the flights of fancy are higher and more elevated than what could

be managed by average fancy, Setting alone the divine Vedic Songs, it will be proper to advert to classical poetry such as that of Kalidas, Bhavabhûti and others whose works have poetic elements preponderating over devotional, although the subject matter is Rama and his ancestry or Krishna and his amorous sports. Coming still lower down chronologically, Jayadeva is the famous poet whose poetry is as charming as the divine lute on which Shri Krishna himself plays. There is a matchless grace and beauty in the poetry of devotion composed by him and yet devotion is only subordinated to poetic charm. It will not be out of place to cite one extract with a view to point out the contrast between poetry standing out in *alto rilievo* above devotion—Jayadeva Sings and describes Krishna's amours with other nymphs and describes also the gratification of the five senses :—

“ One with star blossomed wreathes woos him to rest his head,
 On the dark pillow of her breast so tenderly out spread,
 And o'er his brow with roses blown she fans a fragrance rare,
 That falls on the enchanted sense like rain in thirsty air,
 While the company of Damsels wave many an odorous spray.
 And Krishna laughing loving sighs the soft springs away.
 Sweetest of all that temptress who dances for him now
 With subtle feet which part and meet in the Râs measure slow,
 To the chime of silver bangles, and the beat of rose leaf hands,
 And pipe and flute and cymbal played by the woodland bands
 So that wholly passion laden-eye, ear, sense soul overcome
 Krishna is theirs in the forest, his heart forgets.

The Râmâyana and the Mahâbharâta are poetical and devotional ; for poetry does not disappear, nor is devotion slackened in any part of the two celebrated works of the Mythical times of India. It is, moreover, neither safe nor sound reasoning to allege that every devotion is poetry or *vice versa*, but it is appropriate to argue that some devotees are good poets, and some devotional songs are true poetry. Nrisimha Mehta, Kabir and Mira were devout poets, and their songs adoring Krishna's amours reflect good and sometimes charming poetry to a greater or smaller extent, poetical elements pervade through the songs of devotion sung by them ; and Dayaram has them in greater excess.

With regard to Mirabai, on the strength of a *few songs* that have come down to us as a priceless heritage we can safely assert that from birth to death she was a devotee ; but she cannot be said to be a poetess from the cradle to the grave. At greater and more satisfactory length, her songs will be examined in the sequel ; meantime, it will suffice to add that her poetry is full of sentiment—'Rasa' which is one of the true definitions of poetry as adopted by Pandit Jagannath in his 'Rasagangâdhar'—'Rasâtmakam'—'Vâkyam Kâvyam'. She has scattered Rasa—sentiment loose, and it is concentrated upon the praise and adoration of Shri Krishna ; of this, her poetry gives a sweet and relishable taste to the reader. However, to conclude the matter in a very brief manner, it must be admitted that there is no thrill of poetry but a fervour of devotion, highly expressive of her 'sad lucidity of soul.'

CHAPTER VI.

We revert to the subject of ancient Gujarat and try to know briefly the situation of the soil, once more. Mr. Vincent Smith has remarked that the Gurjaras can be traced to the Hunas; and that they are at present a tribe widely distributed in N.W. India. "The early Gurjaras seem to have been foreign immigrants, closely associated with, and possibly allied in blood to the White Huns. They founded a considerable portion in Rajputâna, the capital of which is Bhinmal or Srimal about 50 miles to the N. W. of Mount Abu. In course of time, the Gurjara Pratihara kings of Bhinmal conquered Kanauj and became the paramount power in Northern India. The minor Gurjara kingdom of Bharoch (Broach) was an offshoot of the Bhinmal monarchy."

It will not be out of place to pause and ponder over the citation for a short-time. It appears from this that the early settlers of Gujarat were the same that went as far as Kanauj, spread over Rajaputtana, and descended to Broach. It is, therefore, not strange if the Marwari Gujarati is not fundamentally different from but on the other hand, it is closely allied to the Gujarati language of Kathiawad and Gujarat proper, in Modern times, albeit the distinction is due to distance of dwelling places—which fact confirms the very proverb in Gujarati *bara gau boli badle*—which signifies that at a dis-

tance of every twelve miles, it is natural that there are some distinctions to be noticed in the same language as it is spoken—this is provincialism—and the distinctions are not of the root but of the offshoots—so do distinctions appear in trees, not in the roots but in the offshoots. It is no use pursuing the question any farther; suffice it to say that Mirabai's birth place and Mirabai's place of death differ in regard to the language and yet her poetry can be adequately characterised as Gujarati poetry.

At this stage it is but necessary to explain in clear terms that the object of the present attempt is to be availed of the existing materials that are brought out as a result of research and base the fabric on rationally sound ground work. The materials are semi-historical; that is to say, tradition is inseparably mixed up with history and tradition has clung steadfastly round the name of Mirabai. A well known author has observed that "India suffers today in the estimation of the world more through that world's ignorance of the achievements of the heroes of Indian history than through the absence or insignificance of such achievements."

Of course, it should be admitted that the ideal expressed by Goethe is very difficult to follow in the case of the biography of Mirabai; and yet the present attempt is meant to approach the ideal approximately. Goethe says :—"The historian's duty is to separate the true from the false, the certain from the uncertain and the doubtful from that which cannot be accepted.

Every investigator must before all things look upon himself as one who is summoned to serve on a jury. He has only to consider how far the statement of the case is complete, and clearly set forth the evidence. Then he draws his conclusion and gives his vote whether it be that his opinion coincides with that of the foreman or not." Tradition is sometimes more valuable than history and yet it is not history. Many folk tales have clustered round the devout Rajput poetess, and they are so full of miraculous and mysterious occurrences that they cannot bear the search light of a critical examination. Fortunately for the historian, however, these traditional materials refer to the time of history, in so far as historical records and some few inscriptions bear upon the time during which the events that took place can be made the subject of a rational analysis; and thus the inference so drawn will not be resting on very unfirm ground. This is a vantage ground plain and distinct.

So let us go to the origin of Gujarati as a language. Prof. A. A. Macdonell of Oxford has remarked in his well known History of Sanskrit literature that:—"Between the beginning of our Era and about 1000 A. D., Medieval Prakrit which is still Synthetic in character is divided into four chief dialects. In the West, we find Apabhramsa (decadent) in the valleys of the Indus, and Sauraseni in the Doab, with Mathura as its centre. Sub-Divisions of the latter were Gaurjari (Gujarati) Avanti, Western Rajputani and Maharastri (Eastern Rajputani)." Prakrit is itself divided according to the celebrated Gram-

marian Vararuchi, into four dialects *viz.*, Mâgadhî, Mahârâshtri, Paisâchi and Sauraseni. Any how the flow of the Gujarati language must have been fed by all sources named above situated in different places such as Mathura the shores of the Indus, Marwar and Gujarat; hence can resemblance be easily traced between Gujarati, Sindhi, Marwari and even Panjabi.—This inference will agree with the conclusions drawn by one of the living Gujarati scholars—Mr. Keshavlal Harshadray Dhruva—who says:—

“From the 10th or 11th century A. D. to the 14th this might be called the Apabhramsa or old Gujarati period; from the 15th to the 17th century, this might be called the middle Gujarati period; from the 17th century onwards—modern or new Gujarati period.”

CHAPTER VII.

Apabhramsa has preserved some of the Râsâs composed by bards—Bhâts and Charanas as they are called in olden times, who can be aptly and appropriately compared to the Troubadors of pre-Chaucerean Era. They came into existence during the 10th century for the first time, subsequently also, they began to grow in number and strength. *They* were composed in praise of Rajput kings and most of them are written in a language

that can be fairly regarded at this distant date as a mixture of Marwari, Vraj and other dialects of the time. If these Râsâs that ushered in the era of Gujarati literature purely as such, composed as they were during the 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th centuries by bards were written in a language that can be legitimately stamped as the old or original Gujarati language, it will not be unsafe to argue that the four topographical distances noticed above made no linguistic difference; but on the other hand, this original Gujarati must have been a spoken language in all those places, or that Gujarati as we find it in the celebrated songs of Nrisimha Mehtâ and Mirâbâi, must have been put into a melting pot during the middle ages and then the final shape it took is the one we read in the songs of the two authors of the first period of Gujarati literature. Vrij and Hindi and all such sister languages must have been born and nurtured as Gujarati. Consequently Mirâbâi has a legitimate claim over Gujarat and her works unfold a language which is quite akin to Gujrati, if not pure Gujrati itself.

It is but proper to note here the literary condition of Gujarat, since it has a close bearing on the question of Mirabai's career. The late Govardhanram Tripathi, of revered memory has remarked that :—"With the fall of Anhilwad,—and the consequent uncertainty of the security of person and property due to the advent of the Mahomedans,—Brahmans, Baniyas and other well-to-do classes, who alone could be thought in any way inter-

ested in letters were taken up with the anxiety of finding out places of security and settling in them. They entered, therefore on an era of wandering and scattered themselves over all parts of Northern India as far as Benares and Mathura. This state of mind was not in the least calculated to foster a spirit of reading, writing or studying. On the other hand, the Jain Sadhus had got the protecting arm of their Gachchhas over them and were thus able to live quietly and peacefully, and carry on undisturbed their studies in religion and literature. They were further able to preserve the purity of their languages, because being ascetics, they were more or less removed from contact with those who were following worldly avocations: while Brahmans, Banias, and others daily came in contact with their Mahomedan rulers on the one hand, and Bhils, Kolis & other aborigines on the other, with the result that the purity of their language was affected. Owing to such a combination of circumstances, the influence of Sanskrit and other learned languages and literature began to wane, and the birth of a new language, a mixture of Desi (the language spoken by the masses), Prakrit, Hindi and cognate tongues and its development, arrest our attention. The seeds of early Gujarati literature were sown in the beginning of the 15th century. Southern India was as yet free from the inroads of the iconoclastic followers of Islam, and was able to pursue peacefully its great religious campaign, which culminated in the advent of such renowned Achâryas, Madhvâcharya and Râmânûja about the twelfth century. The echoes of their preach-

sings and teachings penetrated into Gujarat too about this time and influenced its people."

The words giving a birds-eye-view of the middle ages in so far as the social and literary history of Gujarat have been quoted from the learned treatise of Mr. K. M. Jhaveri. The words put forth a sound theory and represent the situation correctly. And the words that have been uttered and regarded as authoritative by the learned author of "Milestones in Gujarati literature" belong to a highly learned scholar and avowedly profound thinker Govardhanrambhai, and have been borrowed here perhaps at a tiresome length. But confirmation of the statement made here by an authoritative theory is the best apology.

"Bardic Songs, moreover, be it remarked in passing came into being as precursors of real regularly composed poetry in many climes but almost all at the same time. This generatization can be deduced from two instances of the East and one instance of the West. The other instance is that of Pawâdas or historic ballads in the Mahârâshtra which followed and were to a very small extent synchronous with Bardic songs. These Pawâdâs resemble them in many respects, besides: The true Pawâda is not a written poem at all; so is a Bardic song. Mr. Acworth in his "Ballads of the Marathas" says:—"It is the song or ballad of the wandering bard of the Maharashtra called the Gondhali which has been handed down by memory from one generation to another. The name of the original author is generally given at the

end of each ballad, but it is often impossible to identify him. These Pawadas are, in fact, unwritten bardic poetry

.....The ballads of the Gondhalis are the only class of poetry which has universal currency among the Marathi peasantry, but in spite of the interest which they excite, modern circumstances are obviously growingly unfavourable to the popularity of the minstrels, and the advantages of civilization will, nodoubt, before many years are over, be too much for these products of a time when the steam-engine and the high School were not."

The latter part of the quotation is an indulgence sought for ventilating the opinion of the learned scholar of the West through the medium of this sketch; and if it be deemed consistent with the topic here it is not intended to enter into the discussion and examine the weight of the observation. All the same, it is very important to note that there were Bardic songs in Hindi-Rajputana, in Marathi—southern India, and in Gujarati—Western India. They were itinerant bards who went from the court of one king to that of another and sang in praise of each whose glory was described even to a remote pedigree. But the Râsâs were not exactly the same as Bardic songs, and as such, these two need not be confounded with one another. Râsâs were composed by Jain Sadhus*, and detailed some story with a very high and noble moral lesson in it. They aimed at—not the

*Cf. *Sadhu Hymns by Rev. Ahmed Shah.

glorifying of a ruler but—representing the evils of sin or vice and the bright side of virtue by hanging a tale thereunto. The Jain Sâdhus—popularly called Sûris—indulged in composing Râsâs during their peaceful hours of undisturbed leisure in their monasteries, from where they preached their sermons. This was a substantial part of their national education.

People were instructed in religion by means of drawing out moral lessons from tales, that were narrated in verse. Some of the Sadhus composed real poetry; and they have preserved the social history of the people of Gujarat. The political history as such is not preserved but materials can be gleaned out of these tales that may be regarded as shedding a side light on the political condition that obviously gave a push back to a certain extent to the literary and philosophical development among the people. But then, these Râsâs came into existence only after the bardic songs were scattered broad cast in the atmosphere. These Bardic songs and Râsâs may fitly be considered the fore runners of Garbas and Garbis as have been sung by Mirâbâi and other authors.

The Rasas are the immediate forerunners chronologically of poetical literature *per se* in Gujarat; and their language can be noticed in the following quotation:—

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Jim sa hakare koyal ta huke— | જમ સહકારે કોયલ ટહુકે |
| Jim kusum vane parimal mahake— | જમ કુસુમ વને પરિમલ મહકે |
| Jim chandana sugandha nidhi— | જમ ચંદન સુગંધ નિધિ |
| Jim Gangâjala lahare laheke— | જમ ગંગાજલ લહરે લહેકે |

Jim kayanâchala teje jhalake—	જીમ કયણા તેજ ઝલકે
Tim Goyama Saibhagya nidhi—	તેમ ગોયમ સૌભાગ્ય નિધિ
Jim Manasarovara nivase hamsa—	જીમ માન સરોવર નિવસે હંસ
Jimsuravarasirin kayane vatansa—	જીમ સુરવરસિરી કયણે વનંસા
Jim mahuyar rajipadani—	જીમ મહુયર રાજ પદની
Jim rayanâyar rayane vilase—	જીમ રયણાયર રયણે વિલસે
Jim ambar tarâgana vikase—	જીમ અંબર તારાગણ વિકસે
Tim goyam guna kelivani—	તિમ ગોયમ ગુણ કેલિવની

From these lines it will be evident that they present a beautiful poetical picture and that the language is not quite dissimilar to the modern Gujarati. In fact, this was the type of poetry written in the 14th and the opening part of the 15th centuries ; and it was this language from which the modern Gujarati is derived. This language was a heritage of Gujarat and Kathiawad commonly with Rajputana ; and so Mirabai's poetry when it is written in the Gujarati as it is used in Gujarat reflects still the original traces that are sufficient to lead the reader to an inference of a common stock from which distance of localities made differences in dialects merely in subsequent times.

The late Sâstri Vrajlal, a leading learned scholar has written an " Essay on Gujarati language," in which he has noted the following is an instance of poetry in Apabhramsa language :—

Aththotar su buddhadi—	અટોતર સુ બુદ્ધી
Râvana tanai kapâli—	રાવણ તણુજ કપાલિ
Ek buddhi na sampadi—	એક બુદ્ધિ ન સાંપડી
Lankâ bhanjana kali—	લંકા ભાંજણ કાલિ

There were 7800 sorts of intelligence in the head of Râvana ; (but) not even one could be availed of when Lankâ was smashed down.

The same learned authority has transcribed some instances of prose writings during the 14th and the 15th centuries ; some of them are as under :—

Lagbu bâlaka danta vinâ marai—	बधु आणक दंत विना मरक
Tihnu sûtaka dina 1—	तिहुनुं सूतक दिन १
Kshora karma kariun hui	क्षोर कर्म करीउं हुष
tihnu sûtaka din 3—	तिहुनु सूतक दिन ३

If a young child below the age of teething were to die the effect of segregation extends to one day ; and if his tonsure (of forelocks) were done, the same lasts till three days.

So much for this subject.

CHAPTER VIII

RELIGIOUS SITUATION OF GUJARAT AND OTHER PLACES.

“ The classical poets of Gujarat and their influence on Society and Morals ” is a masterpiece and is frequently quoted from one part or another by writers on any one of the topics relating thereto. The author, the late Govardhanram Tripathi of revered memory has, remarked that.—“ The soul and spirit of this new religion was *Bhakti*, a word with its numerous associations has no English word for it. Worship prayer and even devotion are words which fall short of the full connotation of *Bhakti*. It means standing in the presence of God, serving Him, loving Him, being loved by Him, talking to Him, seeing Him, hearing Him and in fact, enjoying the Deity.” Now, with Mirâbai’s *Bhakti* or *Prema-Bhakti-Love-Devotion*, we are not, concerned at present ; for it will be treated of, at the proper time and in its proper place. In the meantime let us examine the bent of religious mind of Gujarat.

Jain and Buddha doctrines came into vogue in the Rationalistic period of Indian civilization and continued to be developed even in the Puranic age. The *Upâsanâ* was worship with due forms and ceremonies that occupied the mind of the devotee externally ; and the phenomenal world was the only object in which the attention was absorbed. These were a set-off against

the more abstruse teaching of the Upanishads. When the Brahmans asserted their superiority over the Buddhistic preachings, they introduced a multiplicity of rituals and ceremonials while worshipping their deity, and the Purânas began to supply two prominent forms of Godhood—Siva and Vishnu. It is not worth while to quote at length for the sake of mere comparison the Upâsakadasâ of the Jains, detailed as they stand in Hœrules translation, and place the same side by side with the Upâsakadasâ of the Hindus; but even a hasty perusal of the translation will amply prove repaying. It is consistent to add here that Siva-Rudra and other names were given to a deity in the Epic period of sacrificial performances to one who was beneficent and the nourisher of animals. Mahâdev, as he was laterly designated finds its place as a minor deity in the Kanshitaki Brahamana, so also with Vishnu. He is noticed as conveying that part of the world which the gods obtained from the Asuras by conquest, and Krishna the son of Devake was not a Deity at all in the Epic age of Upanishads.

Although the term Bhakti is applicable equally in connection with the adoration of Siva and Vishnu, it is no use pursuing the inquiry of its origin in the case of Siva, for the present purpose; for Mirâbâi was a devotee of Vishnu. She had intentionally apprehended the higher form of reality. Beneath this reality was found only one desire which can only be described or connoted in the language of the mystics as divine desire or cosmic consciousness. She had come to feel and experience what is

named a cosmic need towards Puranic life which is so beautifully expressed by Whitter:--“So some times comes to soul and sense the feeling that is evidence that very near about us lie the realm of spiritual mysteries. The sphere of the supermost powers impinges on this world of ours.” It is however, clear to see that the Vedic religion was a religion of the Elements of Nature; and the Puranic religion classed the same as deities. Even the idea of a Trinity of Godhood was an invention to work as a set-off against the Trinity of Buddhistic doctrine. Vishnu was a name of the Sungod originally in Vedic times and he was the cherisher of all living beings and hence the Preserver too.

Descending to a later age, the poet Sankarachârya period, it will be found that Chandragupta Vikramâditya of Pataliputra and of the Gupta Dynasty, was tolerant of Jainism and Buddhism, but himself was specially devoted to the cult of Vishnu. A little further later on, we find that there was sectarian animosity all over India; and as a consequence one instance might be quoted to show that each man and woman was free to select a particular deity Siva, the Sun, Vishnu or another for special adoration according to personal liking; but at times these various religious sects lived amicably together. Harsha in the North was a tolerant king; but the kingdoms of the South unfolded another aspect. The earliest Pallava King who flourished in the 5th Century was a worshipper of Buddha. Hastivarama and other princes followed Vishnu; and Mahendravarma first persecuted

the followers of Siva being born a Jain—but was subsequently a convert to Saivism. This was the condition of religious India as a whole Gujerat and Kathiawad were, therefore, no exception to the rule.

The doctrines of the Bhagwadgita mainly based upon action preceded by right knowledge—Dnyâna—Karma Samuchchaya—came subsequently to be split up into Karma and Bhakti. These are but extraneous equipments. Jayadeva was the poet of still later ages who developed the tale of amorus of Krishna and Radhâ as related in the Bhâgwat—a work of a very late age as compared with the rise of surgical flows of Saivism and Vaishnavism at the original source. Be this as it may; we are interested more in the Bhakti of Mirâbai, and it is but prudent to re-echo once more the opinion of the late learned G. M. Tripathi :—

“ The flame of Bhakti began to burn in the bosoms of Mirâbai and Nrisimha Mehta, of its own accord, *i.e.*, they were both uninfluenced by the preachings or teachings of any out sider. One point about Mirâbai of special interest and which distinguish her from other mystics and seers is that in her, not unlike Narsimh Mehta the culminating mystical experience took the form of melody, rhythm, harmony and burning spiritual rhapsodies. Vallabhâchârya the great founder of the Krishna worship cult on the Western side of India came later (he was born in 1479 A. D.) Chaitanya, who spread Vaishnavism in Bengal, was born a few years after (1485). Surdas who wrote on Râdhâ and Krishna in

Hindi also flourished later, so that he is of opinion that these two poets struck out a path for themselves independently of any teachings from outside Gujarat a circumstance not very likely."

(This is quoted from Mr. K. M. Jhaveri's book.)

Again, the learned authority as cited by Mr. Jhaveri, has stated that :—

“ It seems the missionaries of the new religion of Bhakti were roaming about the whole of Gujarat this time (the times of Nrishmha and Mirâ); and charming the people with a religion, which, while it allowed people like Mirâ to pass an ascetic life peopled their brains with the fairyland visions of Krishna.” The basic fact of mysticism, as in the case of Mirabai, in its widest sense may be described in an altitude of mind founded upon an intention or experienced conviction of unity, of oneness, of likeness in all things Krishna in Bhagavat Gita (BK. 18) sings :

“ There is true knowledge. Learn it is this
To see one changeless Life in all the Lives,
And in the separate, one Inseparable.”

CHAPTER. IX.

This leads us to the tracing of the rise and growth of Vaishnavism in India and particularly in Gujarat. Vaishnavism has its origin in Vedantism but the Vedanta school has three main divisions and they are known to be under Sankaracharya, Ramanuja and Madhva. All the three schools equally follow the teachings of the Upanishads and acknowledge their authority, since they preached the Oneness of God—though not Onness *with* God which marks the characteristic difference between the three. The two schools of Ramanuja and Madhva presented in their practical form a sort of sectarian aspect; and hence they were nearer allied to the Bhagavata School. The Sûtras of Vyasa Badarayana, the Bhagavadgîta, and the Pancha Ratra Tantras are expositions of Vedanta and they came to be expounded in different ways by different preachers and preceptors who gave their names to the schools.

The Vaishnavite literature is abundant in the South of India, and the Tamil works of the Alwars have preserved it—the Alwars were known as the earliest Brahman missionaries to the South. In the North, it is generally understood that the propagation of Vaishnava faith by Ramanuja gave rise to and spread the same in the North—where it was a sort of revival. Any how, this cult flourished in the South under the strong impetus given

by the Bhakti—devotional songs of the Alwars, and their Krishna worship which was unflinching—since they lay great emphasis on the Avatars of Vishnu and admire Krishna as a full-fledged incarnation of the Lord of Preservation. It has been shown conclusively that in these expository songs of Krishna worship, Brahman priesthood is greatly extolled and Jain as well as Buddhist forms were as greatly denounced—which argues that the Alwars were the “Northern Bhagavatas or Vaishnavas.”

Buddhistic doctrines had gained ground in earlier ages; but the Vaishnava faith was called into existence to put them down and also to adjust higher doctrines to popular forms and inferior intellects. For, instance, the doctrine of Prapatti or Surrender suited requirements of the master in those times—and it was inculcated by Ramanuja who never allowed any privilege of Vedic study to Sûdras and women, and again never permitted women to mix with men in devotion or Bhakti, so that for Nrisimha Mehtâ and Mirabai, his doctrines given without any solvent or soothing balm, would have been a bitter pill to swallow; but how and when the soothing solven came to be administered will be examined in the sequel. At present, however, the topic concerns itself with the 12th and the two succeeding centuries. Of course, it may be remarked in passing that there was no caste restriction, but general equality was asserted as a permanent feature of Vaishnavism only from the 15th century downward. This gave rise to many fanciful

theories :—*“ Some asserted that divine grace acted like the monkey *i.e.*, the souls must exert themselves to get saved, as the young of the monkey actively seizes its mother during the latter’s evolutions from tree to tree. Others more indolent or more hopeful—asserted that God’s grace was like the cat, which safeguarded its young, unaided by any efforts of the latter. Hence, the maxim fatal to many Hindu sects, as Barth points out that the acts of the true devotee, of the Bhakta are indifferent, and that the man who has once experienced the effect of Grace, whatever he may do, can sin no longer. Such doctrines, carried to their logical conclusions dangerously minimise responsibility and beget a familiarity with sin and an audacious disregard of purity in life.”

The North was characterised during and prior to Ramanuja’s time by doctrines that brought Vaishnavism to a degenerate state whereas in the South, there was no levelling of the prevailing castes and the holy scriptural writing ruled over all alike. Again, deification of the preceptor or Guru Worship proved fatal to further progress, and on the contrary, it encouraged superstition as well as veneration for persons who may have lost all claim for respect. It has been proved indisputably that in the North, Vaishnavism first affected the lower strata of Society and then proceeded upwards. “ In Bengal Sak’taism had taken deep root among the Brahmans who practised their horrible mystic rites in secret, and excluded the lower castes.”

* *Vide* Critical Sketches of the Lives and Writings of Vaishnavite Reformers in India by T. Raja Gopalachariar M.A., B.L., p. 149.

It is essential to note here that the land of the North was the land of Krishna's birth and devotion to and worship of the God was deeply rooted there ; but Ramanuja's preachings spread from the South to the North produced a sort of Vaishnavite Renaissance in the North.

CHAPTER IX (*Continued*)

Northern India had put forth three Schools of Vaishnava worship, *viz.*, the one of Ramananda, that of Vallabhacharya and the last of Chaitanya. Ramanand, it is believed, founded his fold of worship—Matha—in Benaras, and gathered many followers together, preaching Bhakti, asserted the efficacy of the “ Rama ” mantra and did sway with caste barriers. His name is immortalized by Nâbhâji, the author of the well known Bhaktamâla, the lives of saints and also by Tulsidas, the famous bard who recited and composed the Ramayana in Hindi and about whom it is said by Dr. Grierson that he “ one of the was greatest reformers and one of the greatest poets that India has produced.” Kabir too was his disciple ; and he was a Mussalman weaver, but he founded a system of worship for uniting Hindus and Mahommedans. The fourth stalwart supporter of Ramanandism was Nanak, who as well tried by means of his preachings to reconcile the two races.

Moreover, the faith of Vallabha and Chaitanya was based on Krishna worship. Vallabha again, draws more upon the Bhâgavata, for the amorous dalliance of Krishna with the Gopis which was not treated with a veneration due from spiritual devotion as it was by Nrisimh and

Mirâ, who dealt with the same with religious fervour and adored it with the sentiment of the highest Divine Grace. In fact in the hands of Vallabha's followers, the faith degenerated till it assumed the form of a suit in the High Court of Judicature in 1862 in Bombay.

The last but not the least of the three sects was the one promulgated by Chaitanya who adopted Radha-Krishna for his object of worship; and, consequently, with his doctrines Mira's and Nrisimh's song had many things in common. It was reserved for Chaitanya to put in bold relief the position of the beloved to her lover as that of the Soul to God. This was divine love; and had no concern with connubial love which was earthly. Chaitanya propagated the worship of this divine love during the opening part of the 16th century, and yet the same existed at the beginning of the Christian era. It was the soul's longing for God—the craving of the individual soul for being united with or absorbed into God—the Universal Soul—this it was that Chaitanya tried to sing and preach as amours of Krishna which were thus spiritualised.

It has been observed that “sages and poets who cannot be suspected of favouring moral lapses have agreed to regard the Krishna Idylls as symbolic of the highest spiritual devotion that is possible to man. Many of the Nammalvar's hymns and those of other saints in the Tamil land typify this phase of devotion, and other religions have adopted the ideal of female love as typical of adoration due to the Most High. However this may

be, the chief popularity of the Radha cult arose, of course, from the full play it gave to the amorous side of human nature. In the earlier stages and in the case of those adherents who were morally strong. There is no doubt it led to no excess or abuse. But human nature of the yielding type which it generally is, can hardly resist long the insinuations to moral fall which such excessive hankerings are bound to produce, and it is therefore no wonder that the Radha-Krishna devotion, and the promiscuous mingling of the sexes which it permitted, have degraded to a pitiful degree vast crowds of Chaitanya Vaishnavites, whose ignorance and superstition give them no chance of reformation. Many of the Chaitanya sects adopted the reprehensible practices of the Tantrics or Sâktas, and hence fell into those very sins which moved the moral wrath of Chaitanya and prompted his attempts at reform."

Now, Chaitanya was born in the early eighties of the 15th century Anno Domini in Nuddea or Navadweep, the central place of Nyaya philosophy. His life was also full of mysteries and a crowd of traditions hangs round it, as well as it does round that of Mirâ and Nrisimha. It is easy to see that the early period Vaishnava literature in Bengal begins from the time that Jayadeva composed his lays and when Mithila was the centre of learning after the fall of the last Hindu King of Gaur. We find that "the divine lyrics of Radha-Krishna love in the unparalleled melody of Jayadevas' Sanskrit were echoed a century and a half later in Vidyã

pati's mellifluous Maithil verse." In fact, Vaishnavite doctrines were reflected in the verses of poets in Bengal during the first half of the 11th century. The Maithila Court encouraged to a great extent the so called Radha-Krishna Songs, as far down as the 15th century, and Nandipati, Jayânanda, Chaturbhuj, Kavisékar and some more were well known poets of the period in the Vernacular dialect. Of others that followed them during the ensuing generations, we may omit even a bare mention. The early literature of the Bengali Vaishnavas commences with Umâpati who is identified with Umapati Dhara by some critics.

With regard to the importance of Vrindavana as a centre of Vaishnavite lore, it can be said that the literature of the Chaitanya cult was monopolized by that place. Of course, the great masters of the new faith, *viz.*, Chaitanya, Nityânanda and Advaita were followed by six Goswamis of whom Jivâ Goswami—connected with one of the traditions of Mirâbai—is conspicuously one, and they all lived in Vrindâvana during the 16th Century. The Goswamis gave expositions of Vaishnava doctrines in their Sanskrit works in a more or less sectarian manner. In fine, ideas of that faith became stereotyped; and it is but fair to quote here the words of Mr. Anderson at some length:—"The theism of Bengal has for the most part found its inspiration in the mystic theme of the desire of the human soul to commune with the divine essence, personified in the divine hero Krishna regarded as an incarnation of

Vishnu. It was thought that the creature might crave for union with the Creator in such fashion as Rádhá the favourite of Krishna's joyous youth craved for her lord lover. Vaishnava mysticism adopted romantic songs of the loves of the deified pair as the expression of the pain and rapture of the soul separated from God and yet ever conscious of and yearning his infinite perfection and love. So early as the 12th Century, a Bengali, the famous Jayadeva composed the Gita Govinda, the song of the Divine Cowherd. To the devout Vaishnava, the whole poem unique for its soft and languorous style in Sanskrit literature is an allegory of the Soul striving to escape from the distraction and allurements of the senses to find peace and rest in mystical union with God. It is in the 12th Century that the Indian mind developed a doctrine of passionate personal devotion, *i.e.*, Bhakti or faith towards an incarnate deity. It was apparently an evolution from the earlier system of Yoga—the study of means for the absorption of the soul into the Divine Essence, a system which was itself a popular modification of philosophical Pantheism. It was a doctrine which in so many ways resembles the passionate personal love of the Christian for his Redeemer that it has been suggested that it was an adoption to Indian conditions of life, and thought of Christian teaching."

"The mystical imagery of love poems of the most passionate and romantic type were interpreted too literally" adds the same learned critic of the West, "there were those who strove to rid themselves of the impor-

tunacy of the senses by indulging them to the pitch of satiety or persuaded themselves that the example set by scriptures ostensibly erotic might be followed without blame. It was a curious coincidence that just when romantic depravity among other causes produced the reformation of Martin Luther there was born in Nadyâ in Bengal the Vaishnava Reformer, Chaitanya."

Mirâ flourished in about the same generation in Rajputana and Gujarat. Spiritual development brought in the priest moral character equally in both; but greater resemblance can be traced between Chaitnya and Nrisimha. Chaitnya and Nisimha as well as their later day followers hold that morality is only a necessary result of Bhakti. "The old passionate desire for union with God is still expressed in verses that do not indeed mention the name of Krishna and Râdhâ but employ the old imagery, sensuous in form but mystical in meaning." Another critic, Mr. R. W. Frazer has observed:—"Five hundred years have passed away since Chaitanya spread a faith in the saving grace of Krishna throughout the land."

Krishna-Worship had, no doubt, taken a firm hold of the whole of India during the later centuries as time rolled on. A modern writer Brahmanand Swami has remarked: "India is the ideal land in the whole creation, and Krishna worship is its ideal religion. If ordinary mortals like Məhmud Gazni or Aurungzeb thought that they by their zeal could efface the ideal religion from the face of the Earth, they could not have more

mistaken," Sir Edward Sullivan says:—" He (Shah Jehan) unsheathed the sword of religious persecution against them (the Hindus) and gave orders for breaking the graven images and destroying their temples with fire; but as ever has been the case in India, persecution merely augmented the evil it was intended to destroy; fanaticism took the place of credulity; and thousands who had hitherto sought relief in the harmless adoration of stocks and stones, sprang to arms, and died in defence of their outraged gods." However, in Mirâ's time, Krishna worship was still beginning to assert its ground; although Mathura and Vrindavana have a history of their own, enabling us to trace their origin to Rajata ringini, and their antiquity in the writings of Ptolemy, Arrian and Megasthenes, Radha's birth gave rise to the fame of Vrindavana which was enhanced by sanctifying it as the central place of "Rasa-Lila" Mystical dance of devoted lovers of Godhood. At present, it is a city of temples 4,000 in numbers—in fact, every house there is a temple and has lovely bowers—Kunja—which form the scenes of Krishna's Lila.

CHAPTER X.

India, no doubt is the home and nursery of religion and religious songs. Sanskrit poets cannot be traced beyond the fifteenth century. In the 11th century we find thrilling martial rhapsodies of the immortal Bard—Chand Bâroth. “Of the great war poets of the world.” says a critic, “who gave by their fiery poetry inspired great kings and warriors to wage great battles and thus moulded the destinies of millions of men, and upreared new and dismantled old sovereignties, Chand Bardai occupies the foremost place. His poetry has led to the most momentous events in the history of India and has once been the arbiter of its fate. He is the moulder of the War tomahawk of Mediæval India.” His language, too, is not pure Hindi—it being a strong admixture of Sanskrit, Persian, Magadhi, Saurseni, Qundhi, Kanuji, Panjabi and Rajput dialects; and Mirâbâi’s language is also one that bears similarity with Gujarati, and many Rajput dialects. Hindi poetry, however, shone in the 15th century in holy and genuinely devotional outpouring of Kabir, Nanak, Nabhadas, and Mirâbâi who were immersed, as it were, in love divine; Kavi Gang, Tulsidas, Behari and Keshav wrote in refined and exquisite Hindi about the transcendental glories of God, in the 16th century; and it once more soared high in the hands of Surdas, Haridas and others who wrote divine rhapsodies to sing of spiritual love.

Like Kabir and Nanak, Mirâ was only a devout worshipper but unlike them, she could not found a religious sect; nor was she an avowed propagandist of the faith with which was fervidly burning, as it were. Lala Kannoomal in his small tract has a small paragraph devoted to Mira which can be almost wholly cited here:—"Though a poetess Mirâbai—1498-1563—occupies a high place in the domain of Hindi poetic literature. She is a princess of the Rathore* royal family, and was married to Kumbha Karsa, the ruler of Chittor. She was one of the most beautiful princesses and an excellent poetess who in the plenitude of her heart's true devotion made the offerings of her poetic effusions to the idol of Lord Krishna in her temple in the fort of Chittor. The tradition hath it that the Murti of Lord Krishna was so pleased with her devotion that he came down from the seat and expressed his appreciation, hearing which she was so full of ecstasy and joy that she gave up her mortal coil and her soul merged into the supreme perennial bliss

.....Mirabai's Rag Govind is a poetic work of high merit. Her verses steeped as it were, in the fervor of her heart's devotion, are frequently quoted with great delight." So much for this, and the reader is equipped with materials, at this stage sufficient for the purpose of weighing the evidence, and drawing out his own conclusions.

* In all quotation, it is a rule to stick faithfully to the original spelling which has been duly followed out.

It was allotted, as have been shown above, that the great Bengali masters should revive the glories of Vrindâvana, and should awaken a keen sense of devotion to the worship of Vishnu in the form of Krishna; to this Mirâbai contributed her mite, which was not so conspicuous as that of Nrisimha, in some respects, but was genuine and deep seated, as it was in the heart of the holy saint of Junagadh, in Kathiawad. Mr. Growse the Historian of Mathura states:—"The community of the Bengali Vaishnavas had a more marked influence over Vrindâvana than that of the others (sects of Vaishnavas) since it was Chaitanya, the founder of the sect, whose immediate disciples were its first temple builders." Mathura and Vrindâvana are very near to each other and many a sojourner of a different faith has enjoyed with delight the exquisite beauty of the holy places, during the modern civilized ages when yet the love of nature is not extinct. Col. Tod has observed:—"Though the groves of Vrindâ, in which Krishna disported with the Gópies, no longer, resound to the echoes of his flute; though the waters of the Jumna are daily polluted with the blood of the sacred kine, still it is the holy land of the pilgrim, the sacred Jordan of his fancy on whose banks he may sit and weep as did the banished Israelite of old, for the glories of Mathura, his Jerusalem." Albeit Puri was the most important centre of Vaishnava faith during the days of Chaitanya, still Vrindâvana had not abated a jot out of its sanctified worship. The present purpose is not concerned with following Bengali poets or Gospel preachers, at any greater length.

CHAPTER. XI.

MIRABAI'S CAREER AND TRADITIONS.

Nabhaji is a well known Vaishnava Devotee who distinguished himself as the author of "Bhaktamala." It is believed to have been written in the year 1612 A.D., and another writer named Priyadâsa has written a running commentary on it. He has sung of Mirabai in the following way :

Sadrisha Gopina prema pragata kalijugahi dikhâyo
Nirankusa ati nidara rasika jasarasana gâyo
Dushtana dosha bichârî mrityuko udyama kiyo
Bara na bâuko bhayo garala amrita jyonpiyo
Bhakti nisâna bajâyake kahu ten nahin laji
Loka lâja kula srinkhalâ taji Mirâ Girdhara bhaji.

सदश गोपिन प्रेम प्रगट कलिजुगहि दिखायो
निरकुंश अति निदर रसिक जस रचना गायो
दुष्टन दोष बिचारी मृत्युको उद्यम कीयो
बार न बांको भयो गरल अमृत ज्यो पीयो
भक्ति निसान बजायके काहु ते नही लजी
लोक लान कुल श्रृंखला तर्ज मीरां गिरधर भजी ॥

Further on, Nâbhaji has pronounced Meratâ as the birth place of Mira, but has failed to assign any date or year to her birth. Next was the turn for Colonel Tod to

make certain statements in connection with the great devotee—but they have undergone a modification on account of mere modern researches. In his Rajasthan while writing about Mirabai, Col. Tod has introduced her in one place as the daughter of Dudâji, and the Queen of Kumbhâ Ráná; whereas, in another place, he has called her the daughter of Ratnasinh and the Queen of Kumbhâ Ráná. This itself bespeaks an error of judgment. Then came the distinguished Poet Dayaram who wrote that:—

Jemala Râthod ni Dikari re, suno medatâ enun
nâma,

Rupa Guna Samovada nahin, rudun dharyun
Mirabai Nâma.

जेमल राठोडनी दी करीरे, सुणो मेडता एनुं नाम ;

रुप गुण समोवड नहिं, रुडुं धर्युं मरिावाई नाम.

Dayaram too has failed to assign any date of birth to her. Writers and critics ever since have followed the dictum of the last two authorities and have characterised her as the daughter of Jayamal and the queen of Ráná Kumbâ. In a recent publication of Mirabai's Biographical sketch, it has been pointed out that the author of "Mahajana Mandala" Mr. Maganlal has placed Mira's birth in Neretâ, in the year 1424 A. D., so also has the author of "Satî Mandala" placed it in the year 1524 A. D.

The legally accurate and otherwise sublime thinking of the late learned Govardhanram has marked her

time of worldly career as lying between 1403 and 1470 A.D., but no trace is found of her date of birth. Another writer guessed it to be 1419 A.D., and the indefatigable worker in the field of Gujarati literature the late scholar Ichharram Desai, in his *Kavya Dohana Part II*, has stated that in A. D. 1403, Mirâ was born in the House of Medatâ in Marwad, and was the queen of Kumbhâ Rânâ of Udaipur; and that she went the way of all flesh in Dwarikâ in A. D. 1470. Other critics have followed the dictum of one or another of the two learned scholars. Mr. Jaysukhlal Joshipura, a close student of Gujarati literature has considered Mira to have been born in 1403 A. D. but has at the same time regarded as synchronous with Nrisimh Mehtâ; and has placed her date of departure from the physical world in 1470. In fact, many competent scholars and well recognized authorities such as Kavi Narmadashankar, Professor Anandshankar Dhruva, Rao Bahdur Ramanbhai Nilkanth and others of less eminence have regarded Mirâ as the wife of Kumbhâ.

In the meantime it will be worth while to turn our attention to the critics of upper India, who can be looked upon as situated on the vantage ground of fresh researches, can be here summarised briefly in so far as the net results of their views are concerned :—

*Babu Kartikprasad has assigned 1419 A. D. to Mirâ's birth; and Munshi Devi Prasad a resident of Marwar, as well as the author of Mirâbâi's career (मीराबाईकी शब्दावलि और जीवन चरित्र) and also Pandit

* I am indebted to the author of Mirabai's Biographical sketch recently published in Gujrati under the direction of the Educational Dept. Baroda state.

Gaorishankar and Mrs. A. Besant, have all cried ditto to the dictum of Munshi Devi Prasad; in the same way Mr. M. Macoliffe, a writer in the pages of the Indian Antiquary followed suit, and all have in the same breath placed her birth between A. D. 1499 and 1504.

In the midst of the tangled growth of traditions moreover woven by time round Mira's life and of the conflicting opinions of learned critics, it is a hard task to toil through them, and trace the right year to the proper place and proper time of her birth as well as death. It was destined, as if it were for Mr. Tansukhram Tripathi, the worthy son of his wortheir father to sift the existing evidence and bring out a provisional but pronounced conclusion in his Introduction to Kāvya Dohan Part VII and the whole of it deserves a careful perusal. So also does the Epitome alluded to above which is published by the Educational Department of Baroda, although its range is not too high or all embracing.

CHAPTER XII.

While pouring out from the depth of her heart some priceless words of sermon addressed to Rânâji, who has been represented by traditon to have persecuted Mirâ, she has sung the following as the closing portion of her hymn :—

Rânâji re dudâjini bai Mirâ boliyân re ;
Santono amarâpura vâsa, bijâ narakni khâhn re.

राणाजीरे दुदाजीनी बाई मीरां बोलियारे ;
संतोनो अमरापुर वास, बीजा नरकनी खाणरे.

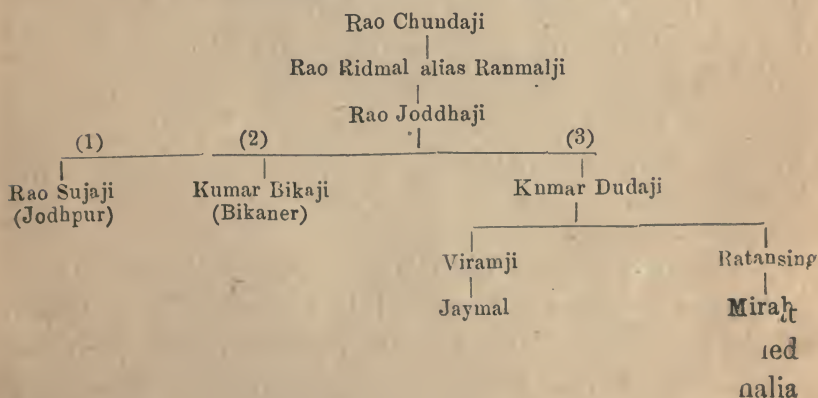
It was and is a custom prevalent among the Hindus to be designated and recognized by a patronymic and Dudaji was the grand father of Mirâ, as will be evident in the sequel. The materials at the disposal of a research are scanty, beyond traditions that still linger on; but the historical records of Marwar, as well as other historical writings of Indian and European fame, and thirdly some Bardic writings extant that preserve the memcry of the valiant Rajput races in their rhapsodies have been valuable sources of throwing fresh light on the life and career of Mirâ.

Mandar or Mandovar was the capital of the Rao of Jodhpur; and the Moslem ruler subjugated it. Rao Chundâji alias Rao Chândâ re-conquered it in 1396 A. D. ;

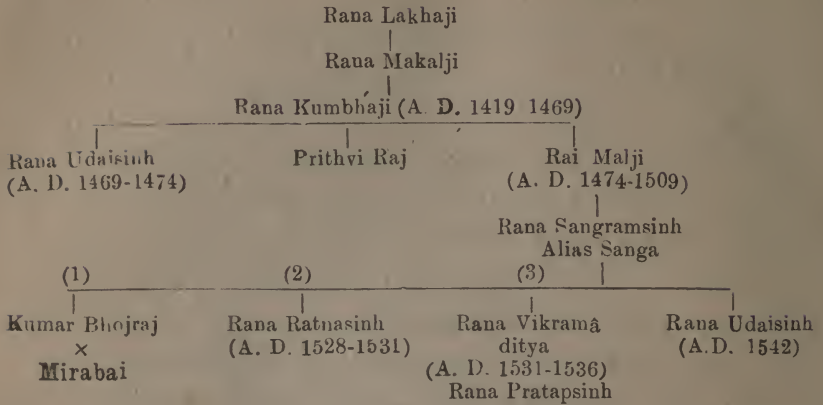
and established the Rathod kingdom there. His only princess Hansâ was married to Lâkhâji, the Rânâ of Mewâd ; and this Lâkhâ Rânâ was the grandfather of Kumbhâ Rânâ. Chundâji, again, did not bequeath his Kingdom to the eldest born, the heir-apparent to the Gâdi—Prince Ridmalji alias Ranmal—but to the second born, prince Kânâji, the heir presumptive. Ranmal, there upon felt his pride wounded to the utmost, and fled away in a self mortified mood to Mewad, so that there he was equipped with all resources of a fight by his nephew, the Rânâ of Chittore, Raol Mokalji. This came about so late in time that Kânâji was not alive, but Sattâji was on the throne of Mandore. He was defeated by Ranmal, who recovered his own rightful dominion.

In the meantime, the following geneological tables will point out the father's and father in law's houses of Mirâ connecting her with both the kingdoms of Mewar and Marwar :—

JODHPUR RAJAS OF MARWAR.



HOUSE OF CHITOD RANAS OF MEWAD.



Mira has sung about herself:—महियर मारुं मेढतुरे, ने सासरियुं
चितोड Mahiyar Mârun Medataure, ne Sâsaryun Chitod.
This is alright, but even in the line it is not quite clear to whom she was married and hence a difference of views. The old school of critics unite her name as married to Rânâ Kumbhâji, and the new school leads us to believe that she was tied in wedlock with Kumar Bhoja Raj, the grandson of the same Kumbhâ Rana. Of course, it need not be said with any great emphasis that the royal lines of Mewad and Marwad were closely interwoven with each other, and the history of the one leads us to solve successfully the knotty problems arising out of the history and tradition mixed together in the other.

It is said that Rao Chundaji sent round the cocanut—a well known symbol of Betrothal, in fact a symbol of future Jocklegroomship—on behalf of his only daughter, Princess Chundâ, for Prince Chanda, the heir apparent to the Gâdi

of Lakhâ Rânâ. The latter out of joke remarked that being too old for the offer of betrothal, he could not accept it, but that he would resign in favour of his Prince Chândâ. This was sufficient for provoking the anger of Chândâ, who not only did not go in for his own betrothal, but went even to the length of resigning his claim to the gâdi in favour of the issue begotten by his father in Hansâ, after the celebration of marriage. He plighted his troth in this way; and Lâkhâ Rana did marry her. Makalji was the issue so that he ascended the Gâdi, and Chandâ conducted the reins of administration during his minority, so ably and dispassionately that even till this date, the lineage of this very Chandâ at present denominated as Salumbrâji are real administrators of the kingdom of Udaipur, so far so that papers and documents devoid of the seal and signatures of the present representative of his line signify no official authentication or recognition.

On the other side,- Rao Ridmalji deprived Rao Sataji of his paternal Gâdi to which he was rightfully entitled. In the meantime, owing to internecine bickerings Rana Makalji was killed by his Khawâs—his orderly, and confidant. Ridmal hastened his course to Chittod, captured the Khawâs, put him to death summarily, and seated his son Kumbhâji on the throne, in A. D. 1419. Kumbhâ Rânâ was yet a minor, and the Dowager-Rani, the mother of the minor prince, prevailed upon Ridmal to administer the kingdom of Chittod. It is clear at this stage to note that Ridmal was the Rathod Râja of Mandovar, and was entitled to the honour of a Royal Umbrella and other paraphernalia peculiar to independent kingship.

At this juncture, intrigues began to be hatched in Chittore. The low class Khawas attendants of the royal family could not brook the unending superiority of Ridmalji alias Ranmalji, who shared the throne and sat on the same Gâdi as the minor. Salumbraji evacuated Chittod -- but their departure ever since the advent of Ranmal was made much of ; and Mewad was full of Marwar rulers. So on the next Dasera day, while the annual procession was parading through the streets in full pomp, the Rathods under the Ranmal were humbled down and defeated, who when he, the valiant leader was killed as a result of a long woven plot. Jodhâ, the young son of Ranmal, saw his brave father fall under the blows of plotters and he fled away from the field for life. The flowers of Chandâvat encompassed the defeat and he himself pursued Jodha and his attendants but their trace could not be recovered. Eventually however, Chandavat reached Mandor and subjugated it, put to route the brave warriors of Jodha with the minor prince who all wandered in different places for twelve long years, and thus relieved Mewad from the paws of Marwad, in 1444 A. D.

CHAPTER XIII.

It is already known to the average reader of literary and historical records of Gujarat and Rajputana that Maharana Khumba was at once a sovereign, a soldier and a scholar. A distinguished writer, of more modern date, Mr. Hara Vilas Sarada has placed at the disposal of the interested public the result of his laborious researches in the form of Monographs on Kumbhâ and Sangâ Rânâs, which deserve careful perusal. He has made certain improvements on the monumental work of Col. Tod, which, no doubt, claims our attention as a "wonderful work," since if not unfailing source, it is all the same the chief source of enlightenment. Subsequently, epigraphic finds discovery of manuscripts and other sources of antiquarian researches have thrown profuse light on what remained concealed upto now behind the veil of darkness or obscurity. And yet, with no degree of certainty can the student of history pronounce the present sources of information as exhaustive or final in any way.

The reason too, of this statement is not far to seek. The knowledge about the history of Rajputana and the then known politics of Gujarat lies—not confined to any works or Manuscripts but—scattered in journals, pamphlets, Manuscripts, books and coin collections. The researcher and the scholar has to wade through the intricate mazes and try his utmost to pave out a smooth path ; but that is

capable of being accomplished not by the labour of a few years but extending over a whole life.

The author of *Kumbha Rânâ*, Mr. H. B. Sarda has remarked :—

“ In writing this book, I have made full use of all the inscriptions of the time of Maharana Kumbha and his father Mokal—many of them unpublished—the Kumbhalgarh, the Chittorgarh (Tower of Victory), the Ranpur, the Eklingji Temple and the Mount Abu inscriptions, as well as of the celebrated work, *Eklinga Mahatmya* the only known Manuscript copy of which is in the possession of Rai Bahadur P. Gaurishankar Oza.”

Following this authority, it will be worth while to trace the history of *Kumbhâ Rana*, so as to connect *Mirâ* with the illustrious heroes of Mewar, who were famous as the protectors and defenders of “Dharma”—Religious duty or duty towards God. They claim descent from the Sun, and it is a patent fact in history that for about 1400 years Guhilot or Gehlot family of the Solar Dynasty or “*Surya Vamsa*” ruled over Mewar without a break, Mr. H. B. Sarda has observed :—Their immortal deeds, their chivalrous character, their high ideals, their elevated and noble patriotism have placed them at the head of the Hindu nation and earned for them the richly deserved title of “the Sun of the Hindus.” It is acknowledged on all hands that the fame of *Jaitra Sinhâ*, *Hamir*, *Kumbhâ*, *Sânga Pratap* and *Râja Sinh* has outlined history and survived the shocks and wrecks of time.

The rule of Kumbha extend from the year A. D. 1433 to A. D. 1468; and Col. Tod in a very pithy and terse manner observes that:—" all that was wanting to augment Mewar's resources against the storms which were collecting on the brows of Caucasus and the shores of Oxus, and were destined to burst on the head of his grandson, Sângâ, was effected by Kumbhâ, who with Hamir's energy, Lâkhâ's taste for arts, and a genius comprehensive as either and more fortunate, succeeded in all his undertakings, and once more raised the crimson banner of Mewar upon the banks of the Caggar, the scene of Samarsi's defeat."

The story about Lakha's sally of wit has been eloquently and impressively recited by Mr. H. B. Sarada, and it will not be amiss to cite his words at some length here:—

"Lakha was advanced in years, and his sons established in suitable domains when the cocoanut came from the Rao of Mandawar (Mandor) to affiancé his daughter, Ran Mal's sister to the heir of Mewar. When the embassy was announced Chândâ, the heir of Mewar was absent, and the old chief was seated in his chair of state surrounded by his Court. The messenger of Hymen was courteously received by Lakha who observed that Chândâ would soon return and take the gage; for added he, drawing his fingers over his moustachios: I don't suppose you send such play things to an old grey beard like me. This little sally was applauded and repeated. Chândâ offended at delicacy being sacrificed to wit, declined to accept the symbol which

his father had even in jest supposed might be intended for himself. ”

It was this Chândâ whose unexampled conduct of true and well tried fidelity gave him undisputed precedence for ever in the Council; and that is still maintained in all the Grants of the Rana of Mewar. Mokal too ascending the throne in 1397 A. D. defeated Mahomed Taghlakh in the field of Raipur and performed many other exploits to preserve the paternal tradition.

In the meantime, let us for a while pause and ponder over the Moslem sway in India. The invasion of Taimur and the flight of Mahomed Taghlakh in 1398 A. D. destroyed the power of the Taghlakh rulers. At this time, Gujrat along with Malwa and other places declared their respectvie independence. Gujarat it is with which we are not the less concerned in the present treatment of the subject. The Vaghelas belonging to the Chalukya dynasty ruled over the land of Gujrat till in 1297 A. D. Sultan Alladin Khilji conquered it. The Chârâs who had founded Anhilwad were succeeded by Chalukyias; and the Siddaraj Jaisinh and Kumar Pal carried Gujerat to the zenith of the power and glory when Malwa, Chittor and Ajmer were all conquered, during the 11th and 12th Centuries. But then came the irony of fate so that from 1297 A. D. to 1407 A. D. Gujarat was a tributary of Delhi. Kumbhâ Rânâ defeated the viceroy of Gujarat in A. D. 1454.

The Kingdom of Malwa too, continued to exist till in 1571 A.D. Akbar made it a province of his empire.

Mahommed Khilji was imprisoned for six months in Chittor, and then the Maharana magnanimously set him free without a ransom.

Rao Jodha with many feats of extraordinary prowess recovered his patrimony, Mewar. He started with the raid of Mandor; and eventually Maharana Kumbhâ lost Mandor after seven years of occupation, and Jodha won it back by the sword.

In A. D. 1442 The Maharana of Mewar left Chittor and went to invade Hârâvati; but his own territories were exposed to the danger caused by Sultan Mahommed Khilji. The Mâhârânâ was one too many for the Sultan and he defeated the latter. Kumbhâ Rânâ defeated the Sultan of Nagor.

The Eklinga Mâhâtmya composed during Kumbhâ's life time states:—"He defeated the King of the Shakas (Mussalmans) put to flight Mashiti (Mujahid?), slew the heroes of Nagpur (Nagor) destroyed the fort, filled up the moat round the fort, captured elephants, imprisoned Shaka women and punished countless Mussalmans. He gained a victory over the King of Gujarat, burnt the city (Nagor) with all the Mosques therein, liberated twelve lakhs of cows from the Moslems, made the land a pasture for cows and gave Nagor for a time to Brahmans."

This Kumbhâ was murdered by his son Udai Sinh, who is otherwise known as "Udo Hatiâro." Thus, says Mr. H. B. Sarada, "after a reign of 35 years—a reign full of glory and splendour—Kumbhâ departed from this world, leaving

behind him a name which is honoured in History and remembered to this day as that of one of the greatest sovereigns who ever ruled in India.”

About Sângâ Forbe's Râsa Mâlâ has the following to describe :—“The array of Islam was broken by the fury of Rajputs, several officers of distinction were killed ; Mubariz-ul-mulk himself was severely wounded ; his elephants were taken, and the whole force was driven in confusion towards Ahmedabad. Sângâ Rânâ now plundered the surrounding country at his leizure ; he spared the Brahmans of Vadnagar, but finding Visalnagar defended against him, he took it by assault, slaying the Mahommedan Governor. Having thus revenged himself for the insult which had been offered to him, he returned unopposed to Chittore.”
(p. 295.)

Mewar at that time was at the zenith of glory, power and prosperity. Malwa was conquered and incorporated with Mewar, Ajmere taken and Abu was reduced to submission, along with Gwalior and many other places. Gujarat had been plundered and then relinquished. The Maharana Yasha Prakasa states :—

Ibrâhim pûrava disha na ulatai ;
Pachham Mudafor na de payâna ;
Dakhani Mahamad Shah na daude ;
Sango daman trahûn Suratana ;

इब्राहीम पूरव दिशा न उलतै
पछम मुदाफर न दे पयाण
दखणी महमद शाह न दौडे
सांगो दामण त्रहूं सुरताण ॥

On the East of Mewar Ibrahim Lodi cannot advance ;
 Mazaffar of Gujarat cannot come towards the West ;
 Mahmeed Shah Khilji cannot move towards the South ;
 in this way Maharana Sanga has bound the feet of the
 three Sultans.

This Sângâji had 28 queens, seven sons and four daughters. The eldest son Bhoja Raj was married to the celebrated Mirâbai, daughter of Ratnasingh, younger brother of Viramdeva of Merta. Bhoja Raj was in his principedom, and while yet his father was alive, he died.

The error in the judgment of Col. Tod has been pointed out above at the proper place, when he considered Mira to be Kumbha Rânâs queen. For Kumbha was killed in A. D. 1467, while Mira's grandfather, Duda, became Raja of Merta after that year. Mirâ's father, Ratna Singh was killed in the battle of Khanua 59 years after Kumbha's death, and her cousin Jaymal at Chittor during Akbar's attack, 99 years after Kumbha's death. Now, Mirâ was married to prince Bhoja Raj in A. D. 1516—She being born in 1498 A. D., and died in 1546-7 A. D. at Dwarka situated in Kathiawad. So far is the historical data furnished by Vira-Vinoda, Chaturkula Charitra and Maharânâ Sânga's life.

CHAPTER XIV.

HISTORY AND TRADITION INSEPARABLY BLENDED.

Mirabai the daughter of Ratna Sinh was born in a village called Kudki, and she lost her mother during infancy. She was brought up by Dudaji in A. D. 1517 and when she came of age, she was married with the oldest born son of Rânâ Sângâ, by name Bhoja Raj, and was sent to Chittod, where it was her parents' ambition to see her crowned as the Queen of Mewad after the death of Sângâ ; but by a strange irony of fate, she lost her young husband in the prime of life and was rendered a widow. Now the date of the death of Prince Bhoja Raj cannot be correctly traced, but it can be inferred with some degree of precision that it must have been somewhere between the years 1527 and 1530 A. D.

Although bereaved of the youthful consort of life and yet not being of an age when real sense of discrimination between right and wrong sets in, Mirabai was fully alive to the pangs to which other ordinary widows are preys, and she avowed and announced to the inmates of her husband's family by words and also by deeds that she was made up of a higher mettle. She became firmly attached, ever since the death of her mundane lord, to the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna—and her love was transformed into Love-devotion or Divine Love. Her father and the whole lineage to the fourth degree remote from herself

observed, it is related on authority, pure Vaishnava form and faith of religion. Dudaji had his own well-known temple of worship, and Sri Krishna is adored with fervour by all Medatia Rathods ; and Sri Krishna's name graces the turban on the crest of each one of the line.

Mirabai took with her when she left her parent's home to go into the fold of her husband's family, her own tubary deity to whom she owed all genuine love : and worshipped Him with all the solemnity of customary rites, which were all enhanced in force and grace after her Widowhood. It was the form of Shri Krishna that is popularly styled Girdharilalji whom Mirâ adored and worshipped ; and this form is generally represented in a picture as standing with the head slightly bent, the left hand balancing the well known mountain Govardhan, and the right hand playing Divine notes of celestial symphony on the favourite flute.

The widowhood of Mirabai was a harbinger of adversity in Chittod ; and the ill-omen brought many unhappy events in its train—the principal among them being the signal defeat of sustained by Rana Sanga at the hands of Babar in 1526-7 A. D. Her father and uncle did yeomen services in helping the Rana—coming as they did under the Jodhpur forces. The next year the Rana died on his way to the battlefield in the desperate attempt of defeating Babar after arraying a vast host of picked warriors. Subsequently, Akbar, during his own time, conquered and subjugated Chittod.

The three younger brothers of her husband Ratnasinh, Vikramâjit and Udeysinh were not so brave in exploits

as other representatives of the line were ; and they fell unhappy victims to internecine quarrels, Vikramajit, while he was yet under twenty years of age, was seated on the throne, but his childish and peevish nature exasperated the nobles and other chiefs. It was he who put Mirâbai to affliction and repeated harassments, only because she used to be in the constant company of saints, and anchorites, her youth notwithstanding, and because the practice was censured all round so much so that it was converted into a standing scandal on the royal line. Strict vigilance was kept over her to ward off and prevent the scandalised company, and a standing sentinel was kept for providing against vice and safeguarding her virtuous actions. This displeasure is manifest from some of the songs of the martyred poetess.

Mereto Giradhai Gopal dūsara nâ koi. ;
 Dūsara na koi ho natha dusara nâ koi.
 Sâdhana sanga baith baitha loka lâja khoi ;
 Yahato bâta futa gai jânata saba koi.
 Ansuana jala sincha sincha prema vela boi ;
 Yahato bela faila gai imrita fala hoi ;
 Aithî men bhakta jâna jagta dekha roi ;
 Loga kutama bhai banda sanga nahin koi.

मेरे तो गिरधर गोपाल दुमरा न कोईः
 दूसरा न कोई हो नाथ दुमरा न कोई.
 साधन संग बैठ बैठ लोक लाज खोई ;
 यहतो बात फूट गई जानत सब कोई.
 अंसु अन जल सींच सींच प्रेम बेल बोई ;
 येहतो बेल फैल गई इमृत फल होई.

आईथी मैं भगत जान जग देख गई
लोग कुटम भाई बंद सग नहीं कोई.

My sole faith and repose of heart is in no other than the Shepherd-God who poised the mountain on the tip of the last finger. None else, forsooth, none else, Oh Lord. Keeping constant company with saints and sadhus, I have shaken off the false sense of worldly modesty ; and the matter being noised abroad, all know about it. The grief-laden heart shed frequent tears that were sprinkled fruitfully and the love-creeper throve; which was fructified into nectareous flow. Born with an inspiration of Love-Devotion I shed bitter tears on seeing this miserable worldly life.

This was the pligt that bespeaks not sackcloth and ashes, but of firm faith and devotion. The Rana-Vikramajit was keen in his hatred of Vaishnavite form of worship, and sent baskets of flowers with snakes and scorpions concealed in them. Saved by Eternal Grace from the mortal bites of these venomous insects, Mira had yet to fall a prey to the cup of bitter poison which was sent to her through the leading Shroffs of the place by the Rana—her brother-in-law, under the false pretext of the grace-water of the divine ablution of Sri Krishna—Charânāmrita—चरणामृत. The nectar of Krishna's feet after ablution. On this incident, the tradition goes in the form of the verse that runs thus:—

Rânâji bikha mokalyo dijo medatainke hâtha.

Charanamrita kara pigayî, tuma jâno Raghunatha.

The Rana sent poison, which was to be handed over to the descendant of Medatâ Rathod. She swallowed it down her throat with a firm faith of its being nectareous ablution-water—the miracle is known to you God, the Lord of the Raghu dynasty.

There is another spurious verse which does not appear to belong to Mirâ, and yet some saints attribute it to her :—

अपने कुलको परदाशरव्यो मैं अवला बेरानी ॥
 राणाजी परघान पठायो सुनजी जीथे राणी ॥
 जो साधनको संग निवारो करूं तूम्हें पटराणी ॥
 कोड भूष साधनपै वारूं जिनकी मैं दासी कहानी ॥
 हथ लु वो राणाजी संग जुडियो गिरघरघर पटराणी ॥
 मीरांको पति एक रामैयो चरण कमल लिपयानी ॥

This verse regarded as spurious by many—chiefly in as much as her brother-in-law could not under any circumstances reinstate her as his queen that sort of levitude being disallowed among the Kshatriyas, and being regarded as a positive breach of religious injunctions.

Moreover, tradition is hydra headed. Another version says that Mira died under the effect of poison, and while she was breathing her last and giving up her ghost, she uttered a curse upon the guardian Shroff of the Rana who ventured to hold and hand over the cup to her—that in the whole line of dynasty, there will be dearth of wealth or issues or both.

That heartfelt imprecation has, they say, told effectively on the “Bija Vargi Bania”—community; and it is said these Bantias themselves avow so much as traditional truth

applied to them—and which the following couplet corroborates :—

Bijavargi bânio, dujo gûjara gauda.
Tijo mile jo dâhamo, kare taparo chawda.

बीजा वरमी बानियो, दूजो मुजर गौड ।
तीजो मिले जो दाहमो करे टापरो चौड

If Bijavargi Bania, Gujara ganda and Dâhamâ Brahmana—if these three were to join together, the home is ruined.

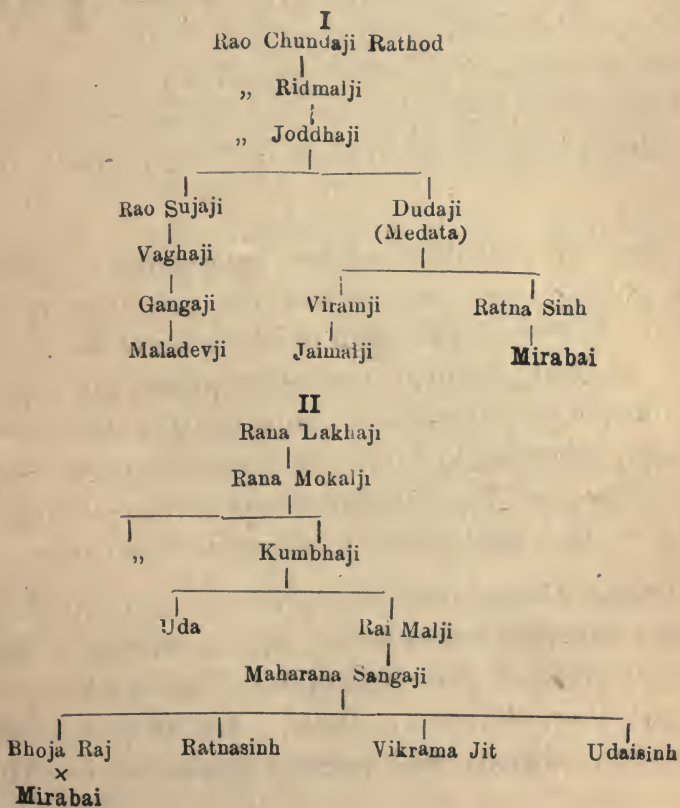
In fact, when Mirâbâi went to Medata leaving Chittod to its lot, there followed all sorts of disaster. Another tradition, moreover, runs that the poison sent to her by the Rana had no effect on her, and that it became converted, by an inexplicable miracle, into a thick and glowing halo of light in the throat of the image of Ranchhodji in Dwârkâ; and Mirâ repaired forthwith to Medatâ under her uncle's protection. Her exit from Chittod, on all accounts, foreboded dire calamity befalling the famous Fort. In 1532 A. D. the ruler of Gujarat—Sultan Bahdur prepared a large army and heavy ammunition trained under the lead of a European general for two years, and invaded the place. Bundi, Jodhpur, Medatâ, and such other places joined together, and performed many valorous deeds, so far so that their swords alone achieved success for a time while the guns and cannons of the Moslem enemy under European discipline paled fire. At that juncture the Dawager—Queen Mother of Vikramajit—Hâdiji Karametiji—whose name has been recorded

with reverence to be Padmavati by the Mogal Emperor, Babar in his well known work "Tajuka Bâbari—तजुक बाबरी" saw that her son was under age and not yet quite worthy of the steel of the enemy, so that she hurried up the course of a short truce by paying a heavy ransom. Udeysinh was also captured and carried away, but by a strange device he was recovered and taken back to his own place. This exasperated the Sultan, who, with a redoubled force, once more invaded the Fort of Chittod. At this time, Queen Karmeti sought the help of Humayu's army, but by a strange irony of fate Humayu was dissuaded from the purpose by his counsellors and other followers, so that the Queen stood totally disheartened at the time of that emergency. However, her sprit being undaunted and she, not losing her presence of mind, sent away her two sons Vikamajit and Udeysinh—The younger brothers-in-law of Mirâbai to Bundi, and she herself became fully equipped with armour and fighting missiles and set out for the defence. And yet she was doomed to sustain defeat. The Fort of Chittod, impregnable as it was, was won; and it is said that 13,000 women became self-immolated, and no less than 30,000 brave Rajput warriors fought with the result that they all were killed. The enemy plundered away precious booties and polluted many holy temples.

When a few days had elapsed, Humayun went to Mausor, defeated Sultan Bahadur Khan, and once more entrusted the reins of Government to Vikramajit. Still intrigues of a bad type prevailed, and a low class man turned traitor, killed the heir and took possession of the throne of Chittod in 1542 A. D.

CHAPTER XIV.--(Continued.)

It is quite clear at this stage to notice that Mirābai, a pitiable martyr to her own faith that was opposed to the faith of her husband's kinsmen, became a household name in Mewar and Marwar, though not quite so effectively in Gujarat. Her name was a shibboleth for meek and mild fealty and steadfast devotion to the divine Krishna with whom her heart and soul became inseparably wedded. The following geneological tree is repeated here in as much as it is borrowed from a Hindi booklet called : " Mirābai kâ Jivan Charitra " :—



CHPTAER XV.

Now let us trace Mira's retirement to Medatâ. Viramdeva and prince Jayamal took great pains to entertain her under their roof with careful hospitality. All the same scandal was attached to her name for her strange mode of behaviour in forming congregations and religious conclaves with saints anchorites and mendicants. She must be presumed to have suffered from mental and physical torture, as a consequence ; so that her troubled breast is believed to have pronounced imprecations on Medatâ too ; and the place of her birth was not saved from the calamity that visited Chittod—the place of her husband's birth.

The Jodhpur rulers saw the independence of Medatâ with jealousy and rancour and the place was a regular eye-sore to them. The cause of the quarrel was no other than inherent disunion prevailing among the Rajputs of the time, but the immediate cause of fight arose from an elephant belonging to Ajmere and captured by the Rathods of Medata ; and the ultimate result of this disunion came to be no other than death and distruction of power.

Prince Jaymal was Mira's pet and his name shines as written in golden letters in the religious history of Rajputana, as well as in the Bhakta-Mâla, the celebrated work on well known devotees of India. His heart was softened with firm religious zeal perhaps generated by Mira in

whose company he was trained up from childhood. It is said she blessed him in the following terms :—

Bahut badhe tero parivâra,
Nahin hoya Kajiyâ men hâra.

बहुत बधे तेरो परिवार, नहिं होय कजियामे हार

Your line of dynasty will greatly multiply and you will never have a defeat in the battle.

But the time of her death was fast approaching. Leaving Medatâ, the tradition narrates, she went to Dwarika—where she absorbed herself into the Image of Ranchhodji after a short time. It is believed that while being absorbed, she sang the same famous verse that can be cited here below :—

Mirâke prabhu Giradhara Nâgar, mila bichhudan
nahin kije.

मीरांके प्रभु गिरधर नागर मिळ बिछूडन नहिं किजे ॥

It is also believed that the same Image has been transferred to the temple of Dakore in Gujarat, where in the armpit of the Image lies the holy silken upper garment of Mira that is at times exhibited to the view of devotees at the present time. In the Hindi booklet, it is said that a bard named Bhûradân, a resident of Lunvâ, under Maroth Paraganâ, and under Marwad District, stated as one who had preserved the chronology of many celebrated persons, that she died in 1547 A. D.

She had performed many pilgrimages during her life time—Mathura, Vrindâvana and other places were

visited by her. An amusing incident is preserved by tradition as having taken place during her pilgrimage. An abstemious anchorite, advanced in spiritual lore and observing the vow of life-long celibacy happened to have met her in a common place of holy resort ; but he refused to grant an interview to a female devotee since he would not see the face of a female, Mirâbai only remonstrated with him by a queer but sound argument. She argued :—
 “ Well, how shall we interpret the well-known line of Bhâgwat that runs thus :—वासुदेवः पुमानेकः स्त्रीमय भितर ज्जगत् ॥
 Vasudevah pumanekah, strî mayamitaraj jagat—In Vrija-*i.e.*, the Universe, Vâsudeva alone is the male, and the rest of the world is made up of females *i.e.*, they are all qualified by Love devotion as the Gopis, and thns maintaining that male and female are but apparent distinctions and signify nothing to a genuine faithful devotee of the Almighty Lord. The Brahmchâri was pleased and then did not decline to hear her songs of devout Love for God.

Again, on another occasion, it so happened that a learned man wrote a verse that had some ellipses to be filled up which the Rana Sângâ to whom it was addressed was not able to do even with the help of his statesmen and other learned Pandits. It is believed that Mira' duly supplied the ellipses and in one place “ Sâ ” was interpreted as signifying the sense of “ Lalasâ,” desire to get or obtain something or meet only, and in other places, too, she is said to have brought out the sense harmoniously.

HER SONGS.

The verse and songs of Mirabai have some interpolations, and some are attributed to her that do not belong to her, but are composed by other minor alms begging Sadhus and itinerant anchorites. Pandit Gaurishankar writes that she had composed a work called "Râga Govind" and many stray verses that reflect the Love-Devotion of Jayadeva's Gita Govind.

Some Specimens of her verses can be cited with advantage here, below :—

Darad na jane koi eri meto darada divâni merâ,
 Ghâyalki gati ghâyâl jâne, aur na jâne koy ;
 Sûli ûpar seja hamâri, podhana kisa vidha hoy.
 Sukha sampati me saba koi âvai,
 Dukh vipatâ nahin koy.

Mirâ kahe prabhu Girdhar Nâgar, bed sâvariyo hoy.

दरद न जाने कोई अरी मेतो दरद दिवानी मेरा
 घायलकी गति घायल जाने, और न जाने कोय;
 सूली ऊपर सेज हमारी, पोढ़न किस बिध होय
 सुख संपतिमें सब कोई आवै, दुख विपता नहीं कोय
 भैरां कहे प्रभु गिरधर नागर, वेद सावरियो होय.

Of course, the mere insertion of the oft-repeated phrase "Mirâ kahe &c.—" need not mislead us to believe that the verse was Mirâ's, since rhythm, harmony and the sense of devotion of a purely devotional character, above other things, have to be properly examined before deciding any way with due certainty. The

present chapter is not however, concerned with this matter, so that it will be sufficient to dismiss it with so much of suggestion. Or, it may turn out to be her first attempt at devotional songs; or, it may result in some other conclusion not warranted by the data in hand; hence it is better to discuss the subject in its proper place. Again, the following one seems to be her girlish attempt and so its citation will not be out of place :—

Liyo hai sâmvariyene mol mâi men to liyohe,
 Koi kahe sungo, koi kahe mungo,
 Maito liyo hai hirâ sun tol;
 Koi kahe halko koi kahe bhari,
 Maito liyo hai tâkadiye tol,
 Koi kahe chhâne koi kahe chode,
 Maito liyo hai bâgte dhol ;
 Koi kahe ghatato koi kahe badhto
 Maito liyo hai barabara tol ;
 Koi kahe kâlo koi kahe goro
 Maito dekhyo he ghunghata patakhol ;
 Mira kahe prabhu Giradhara Nâgara
 Mhare pûrva janama rohe kol ;
 Mâi maito sapnamen parani Gopal;
 Hathi bhi lâyo ghodabhi lâyo
 Aur lâyo sukha pâla; etc.

लियो है सांवरियेने मोल माई में तो लियो हे ।

कोई कहे सुंगो कोई कहे मूंगो, मैं तो लियो हे हिरासूं तोल

कोई कहे हलको कोई कहे भारी मैं तो लियो है ताकडिये तोल ।।

कोई कहे छाने कोई कहे चोडे, मैं तो लियो है बाजते डोल

कोई कहे षटतो कोई कहे बढतो, मैतो लियो है बराबरा तोल
 कोई कहे कालो कोई कहे गोरो, मै तो देख यों है घूंगट पट खोल
 मीरां कहे प्रभु गिरधर नागर, म्हारे पूरव जनम रोहे कोल
 माई मै तो सपनामें परनी गोपाल
 हाथीभां लाय¹ घोडाभी लायो
 और लायो सुखपाल ॥ इत्यादि ॥

CHAPTER XVI.

RECAPITULATION—*TOPOGRAPHICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL.*

We have already seen that the paternal home of Mirābai—Medatā—is nearly 35 kos, on the line of Ajmere, on the East of Jodhpur. It belongs to Marwad, under Jodhpur and curtains, cups-saucers, soaps, carpets, clay toys and such other things are produced there. In ancient inscriptions it is said to have been designated as Medantaka—the pure Sanskrit form, and to have been founded by King Māndhâtâ of Parmar Dynasty; so far so that originally it was named Mandhatripura, which is believed to have been corrupted into Medatâ.

In Mewad moreover there is a mountain called Chitrakûta at the bottom of which is the village Chittod and above it *i. e.* at the top is the celebrated Fort of Chittod. During Mirâ's time, Udeypur had not come into existence. It was the butt of all onslaughts at various times and Akbar finally conquered the fort in A. D. 1568, after which it was abandoned as the capital of Mewad.

Having examined certain details relating to the places of Mira's birth, marriage and death, it will be but proper to see how she was circumstanced with regard to other details. It is alleged that Rohidas was Mira's guru or spiritual guide—so have certain songs attributed to her sung

in crying ditto to what Jivana Bhakta has expressed in the couplet:

Jhanz pakhaj venu vâjiyan jhalara no jhanakar;
Kashi nagarnâ chokman mane gurn malyâ Rohidas.

जज पपाज वेखुं वाञ्छ्यां जलरनो जणुकार,
कशी नगरना चोडमां मने गुर मल्या रोहीदास.

But this Pada having a reflection of Kabira's sentiment, it is quite possible that some one anonymous might have thrust the couplet in, with an object of adding so much to the glory of Kabira.

Whatever that may be, this much is certain that as narrated above, Rânâ Sanga was defeated by Babar in A.D. 1517-1527 and in the same battle Ratnasingh, her father, and Ray Malji her uncle were both killed, as fighting under the leadership of Sanga in 1528, Rana Ratnasingh occupied Sanga's throne, but Vikramâditya obtained Ranthambhor by right. Again internal feuds arose. In the meantime, it was Vikramâditya that harassed Mirabai for her faith owing to his boyish boastful nature. In the beginning she was removed from the palace and made to reside in a lonely place with a meagre retinue at her disposal. Champâ and Chameli—as the names of her only handmaids go—were under her and also were asked to watch as sentinels over her; but they began to be tinged with her devout sentiment of unshaken faith in Vishnu, and served her as handmaids to worship. Sadhus and mendicants too flocked to her door and holy songs and pious prayers were poured out in company. Scandal began to dog her at her heels and Vikramajit sent the notorious cup

of poison as well as venomous snakes and scorpions to put a sudden end to her life. Nothing daunted, but redoubled in force on the contrary, her heart felt keen yearnings for a devout faith in Sri Krishna and she has preserved the infamous incidents in her songs such as : Rânâji-jahar diyo ham jani—राजाजि जहर दीये हम जनी—and others.

Jayamala alone espoused Mirâ's cause and proved a sort of solace to her as an oasis in a desert. When Medatâ and Chittod all lost their former glory and splendour, Jayamala was asked or allowed to secure shelter in Chittod. Subsequently in A. D. 1568 when Akbar the Great Mogul besieged the celebrated Fort, Jayamal lost his life by a bullet suddenly shot by Akbar. The next day on his funeral pyre the self-immolation of many Rajput ladies took place, in order to commemorate the sad event of his death. It was a hard contested battle and the exploits of heroic Rajputs beggar all description ; so far so that even Akbar kept the memory fresh of the hero Jayamala and Falta Sisodiyâ by erecting their statues in front of the Fort of Agra. It is also said and believed that there is a temple in the village named Bhât Grâm or Bhakta Grâm under Nepal, where on the steps of the stairs leading to the temple are two images that represent the same two heroes. They were said, more over, to be equal each to ten average warriors in physical strength; and Jayamal is known by the current phrase :—chittodke joddhâr aur Akbârke gârva gâlanhâr— (चित्तोडके जोधवार और अकबर के गर्व गालनहार) the hero of Chittod, and the humiliator of Akbar's pride. So much for the object and recipient of Mirâ's favour.

With regard to traditions hanging round Mira's name, some have been cited in brief ; and the one relating to her fanciful interview with Prince Akbar calls for a separate remark. It is believed that hearing much in praise of Mira's good name, Akbar called at her place in the company of Tansen the celebrated musician—both incognito. The great Mogul, during the interview, represented to have discussed with her the subject of philosophy, and his favourite musician, that of Music. The discussion and subsequent conversation greatly delighted them, so far so that she appeared to them in the form of Sri Krishna when especially she sang out Mâyri-main sâmvarya jânyo Nâth (मायरी मैं सावरियां जान्यो नाथ इत्यादी.) However, it need not be repeated that this is all a fib and fiction of the fertile fancy of her favourites and followers.

The tradition has it that being greatly pleased Akbar presented her with a Diamond Necklace he being himself disguised in the dress of a Sanyâsi—Recluse. Mirâ inquired softly but pertly of him as to how he with strict self-abnegation as his avowed principle, got at the valuable necklace; to which he rejoined by saying that while engrossed in meditation after performing his holy ablution in the Yamunâ, he got it, but no body knew wherefrom; and hence, mayhap as a divine present, the necklace must go to decorate the staunch devotee, Mirâ. Now Akbar was born in 1543 A. D. and Mirâ departed from this world of woes in 1547 A. D. which fact alone is sufficient to render the tradition impossible ; and it is but meet to dismiss it at this stage.

About Tulsidas too, there is an incredible tradition which can be as well relegated to anachronism. It is said that when Rana Vikramâjit began to torment her unceasingly, she consulted him as her spiritual guide, by addressing a letter to him, which is known to have opened thus :—

स्वस्ति श्री तुलसी गुण् दूषण् हरण् गुंसाध
(पाठांतर) सुभ निधान गुण् हरण्. धत्यादि.

to which the following was the reply of Tulsidas :—

Jinke priya na Rama Vaidehi
Tin tyagiye koti bairi sama yadyapi parama sanehi,
Pita tyajyo Prahlada bibhishana bandhu Bharata
Matahâri,

Bali guru tyajiyo kânta brijabanitana bhe jaga mangal
kâri etc.,

जिनके प्रिय न राम बैदेही तिन त्यागिये कोटि
चैरि मम यद्यपि परम सनेही

पिता त्यज्यो प्रल्हाद, बिभीषन बंधु भरत महतारी
बलि त्यज्यो गुरु, कांत बृज बनितन भेजग मंगलकारी.

He or she whom the deity.—Alimghty Power—in the form of Rama—is not dear, must be abandoned, howsoever closest in relation he or she may be ; for, Pralhâda left off the tie of filial love to his father ; Bibhishana that of fraternal love ; Bharata that of maternal love ; and Bali preceptorial love ; etc.

Again, Tulsidas added by arguing that :—

सोजननी प्रियासोभाई, सोभामिनी सोसुत सोहितु मेरो. इत्यादि

To all this Mirâ's heart was entirely agreed ; hence, she

is said to have relinquished all her claims to worldliness and left her husband's as well as father's homes—and in fact this worldly life of petty broils and turmoils. Now in 1575 A.D. Tulsidas commenced his great work—*Ramayana*, and died in 1624 A. D. This fact shows conclusively that the correspondence is a fabrication of a later age.

Next it is belived in many quarters that after marriage, when Mira repaired to her father-in-law's house, the old matrons of the family asked her to adore the doorway—the gate before entrance was effected and then soon after she was made to worship *Durgâdevî*—the female Power—the presiding Deity of the family. She could not be persuaded to do so, since, she added—no other god, minor or major, was recognized by her than *Girdhara*. When it was argued that her married life would be long and happy, she rejoined by a repartee that there existed many widows in the same town and that they were not blessed by the tutelary deity to enjoy married life till they ceased to live. Eventually, when she did not turn round, other queens of the harem, complained about her impertinence to the Rana ; so that he was greatly irritated, and he lodged her in a separate place—known as *Bhûta-Mahâlâya*—the Residence of ghosts and hobgoblins, in fact the Rana is said to have married another Princess. This incident is explained by a well known scholar—*Mr. T. M. Tripathi*—by arguing that even according to the *Vaishnavâ* faith, the *Gopis* had worshipped *Kâtyayanî*, and *Rukhmini* herself had worshipped with full faith the tutelary Female Deity—in fact, *Krishna* himself is believed as having incarnated as *Devî*.

There is another amusing legend relating to Mirâ which deserves a brief mention here. Some low class attendants of Rana Vikram poisoned his ears by alleging that depravity of character in Mirâ could be detected and traced at once, for, she was known, they added, to be talking with some person with closed doors. It may be that she was pouring out fully the sentiments of her whole heart before the favourite God Girdhar addressing all her bewildered mind based on firm faith to Him with half mute inarticulate but half audible speech. The Rana hastened in person to go to the spot when his chamberlain brought him the news, with unsheathed sword in hand; and inquired, after reaching there, who it was that Mirâ used to talk with. Mira retorted by saying:— Look inside; he is all devoid of fear and shame. But when the Rânâ searched all nooks and corners and found nobody, he was crest fallen; and with a brazen face, asked his own sister to persuade Mirâ to give up low class company so as to shake off all scandal. Another version makes the Rânâ go and rip open the doors but to his utter dismay he found no male, but many more Mirâs, so that his unscabarded sword could not be aimed at the right person. He was confused and was at his wits' end, so far that he had to return to his own palace.

A strange version of another tradition states that Mirâ who used to sing and dance before the divine idol of Girdhar in a small temple near the Kumbha Syâna temple of Chittod, pleased her God who descended from his established seat, and took Mira in his lap—so as to let her be

absorbed in Him, entirely and absolutely. Of course, Mira saw her God eye-to-eye many a time, and she has sung about the same in the following verses :—

Aj ham dekhyo Girdhâri etc.

आज हम देख्यो गिरधारी छयादी.

To-day I witnessed Girdhari—my God.

Tabten mohi nanda nandana drishti padyo mâyi etc.

तब तें मोही नंद नंदन दृष्टि पद्यो माई—इत्यादि.

Since I have caught sight of the Rejoicer of the Nanda family—Sri Krishna, I have been infatuated by His Divine Love.

To these legends might be added another funny and amusing story. Once a Sâdhu with a sinful heart wanted to court Mirâ in solitude. She with a cool heart welcomed him with warm food, and then prepared a bed which was placed in the midst of the assembly of other Sâdhus, and when the sinful sojourner took his seat thereon, she inquired of him if there was any lonely place in the Universe, with no sun, no moon and none of the well sung eight witnesses to evidence sinful as well as meritorious deeds. The face of the Sadhu lost all colour and pallor was spread over it, and he fell prostrate at the feet of Mirâ, with penitential breath.

There is a childish story that narrates an incident by the offer of many valuables made by the Rânâ, her brother-in-law, as an earnest for his marriage with her. Mirâ declined to accept either, but preserved the incident in the song that runs thus :—

Amo abalâ ne moti miraht Bai Syâmlo Gharenun
mare sâchun re!

अभो अयज्ञाने भीरान्त याध, श्यामलो धरेणुं भारे सायुं रे.

After her exit from Mewad and Marwad and her advent to the holy land of Vrindâvana, her devotional songs became highly popular and her name became a household word for all, sadhus and saints, sinners and spoilers alike. This fact aroused the anger of the Rana but was soon converted into admiration and adoration of her name, so that he went after her to Vrindavan to meet and worship her. He was disguised as a Sadhu, and begged alms of her—but Mira offered to him nothing but the bare name and fame—song in adoration of her God. After a good deal of remonstrance as the tradition has it, she was persuaded to repair to Chittod and she did so and passed her life with the Rânâ—This is the version of “Bhakti—Prakâsa.”

CHAPTER XVII.

OTHER MISLEADING NARRATIONS.

The delusion in previous writers and critics starts from the story by which Mira is imagined to be the wife of Kumbhâ Rânâ. In this connection it is believed that he was deadly against the Vaishnava faith; but strange to say he has been pointed out as a commentator on Gita-Govinda. Chronologically too it is a mere delusion to consider her to be wedded to Kumbha for, he lived from A. D. 1419 to A. D. 1469. It was first removed by the author of a work named 'Chittor and the Mewad Family, Dr. Straiton.'

Shivasinh Saroj is another work in which the delusion is kept up, and it is believed that the small temple in Chittod referred to above, as well built the temple of Eka Lingji Mahadeo in Udeypnr were both built by Mirabai. These conjectures are now dismissed as unreliable.

There is another noteworthy point that invites attention. "Mirake Prabhu" instead of this correct closing line of almost all of Mirâ's songs, there are two alternative one viz, "Mirâ kahe Prabhu etc," and "Mira kahe Prabhu Giridhara nâ guna" instead of "Giridhara nâgara." Proceeding with the first part it is easy to note that "Mirâ ke Prabhu" must be a correct form, on the analogy of: "Dhirajke Prabhu," "Sevakake Prabhu," "Suradaske Prabhu" and such other poets who have closed their lines

similarly. Taking the second part, it is but meet to interpret the sense in a rational way :—

The Deity is the object of Worship. The subject-ego identifies itself, or rather tries to identify itself with the object of adoration. The mind, in the meantime, with full intelligence gives utterance to words, mutters prayears, recites Mantras, performs certain rites withal and the idoltries to manifest itself before the mind's eyes of the adorer and the audience alike, by the sheer force of the sense attached to the words so uttered, in strict conformity with the attitude of the individual mind. This is a well known prominent Vedântic doctrine amenable to reason so nicely and exquisitely that it is true all over the East as well as the West. The One form Absolute of the Omnipresent God, even in the Dualism of Vaishnava faith, represents itself innumerable aspects according to the countless glories in which he is tried to be pictured by the adorer in consonance with their description sung by holy writings. The active but ever fickle mind is supported by the form best suited to its requirements for reaching the *summum bonum* of Life—the Highest Goal—the absolute absorption in Bhagwân.

This is symbolic Idolatry as some say : but it is the sole secret, the true essence of Idolatry hence the poetry of Mirâ had its birth in her devotion ; and hence have the lake poets of the West been known to worship Nature and Eternal Laws, Mira has accordingly, the burden of her song “ Prabhu Giridhar Nâgara ” Lord God of the Highest Refinement who poised the Mountain on the tip of his little finger. Giridhar Nagar does not or rather cannot signify a

man of the Nâgar community named Giridhar and "Mirâke Prabhu" cannot, as a consequence, be construed as meaning the Lord or husband of Mirâ. It is, no doubt, a ridiculous sense and yet arguments are advanced by saying that in Chittod there were many Chitrodâ Nagars inhabiting there. In support of this interpretation many funny arguments are put forth, but the theory if adopted for a moment would upset the whole ground work that is based on sound historical truths as detailed above. So, it is worth while to barely note it here.

The pet idol of Mirâ was given to her while yet she was a mere child at her father's house. A Bâvâ—wandering mendicant—happened to reach her father's roof and begged alms. The predominant ways of Hindu charity and every day hospitality made it incumbent on the *pater familias* to revere and adore the saint while he himself was engaged in worshipping his own pet Deity—which caught the eye and fascinated the vision of childlike Mirâ. She made a pressing demand and the Bâvâ-Saint—complied with it after some hesitation. This is how the story of the Deity *viz.* the Idol of Giridhar—can be traced to its root; and Mirâ carried her wherever she went up to the end of her life—so far so that the auspicious turning round the holy sacrificial fire during the marriage ceremony was done with this very Idol in right front. After her death, how the idol was treated is what is not easy to determine in the midst of incoherent evidences. One version places it in Amer, after Chittod was conquered by Mânsinh of Jaypur in 1577 A. D. ; another belief is that it is situated in Siva Râjapur, under Fattehpur District.

Mira, rightly speaking, seems to have abandoned the sordid pursuit of the fleeting world only with a view to drown the pangs of widowhood even while yet she was a mere child. Her excessive delight in company of God brought on her the ecstatic devotion and she disregarded the jibes and taunts, slurs and scandals that came to be heaped upon her by worldly wise people of her own generation while all along keeping her vow of chastity laudably immaculate. Holy devotion was a hereditary virtue of which she was legitimately proud ; and the impressions of past lives asserted themselves with redoubled force, when she became absorbed in the various rites with which the worship of the God was ever celebrated without a break and even at the neglect of meal as well as sleep.

If what is gathered already from legends and traditions lurking behind Mira's name be true, and if the opinion that Rana Vikram gave unduly greater importance to popular scandal be his own defence then, too, the hard and rigorous ordeals through which she was made to pass brought out the genuine gold as untarnished, unvarnished and ungarnished. Her stiffness and obduracy in not bowing her head in reverence to the female family Deity after marriage is compared by the critical devotees of Mira with the same frankness that characterised the want of reverent piety of Tulsidas, in a later age when he too refused to bend his head to the Idol of Krishna, in so far as he regarded Rama as his favourite God—and he is represented to have uttered the following couplet to substantiate the truth of his principle :—

Mora mukuta kara bansri bhale bane ho Natha
Tulsi mastak tab name dhanusheya bâna lyo hatha.

भोर मुकुट कर बांसरी बने अने हो नाथ.
तुलसी भस्तक तब नमे धनुष्य आणु ल्यो हाथ.

It is said that owing to the force of fervent piety a strange miracle occurred and the Idol of Krishna appeared as Rama.

However, this sense of distinction without a difference must be attributed to the unnecessary dote of compliment paid to great persons possessed of Spiritual Power by their followers. It is based on a weak reasoning, and breaks down under a child's touch. To a really advanced Initiate, whose development has reached an extraordinary high pitch, there can be no distinction of God and God, when at every stage, spirituality comes to be gaining strength with the identification of the subject and the object, or humanity and divinity at least, till finally the celestial quality of life is set like an aureole about her head and felt within herself

“ The deep, enthusiastic joy,
The rapture of the hallelujah sent
From all that breathes and is.”

But this is by the way ; for the present purpose is not much concerned with the higher land mark of philosophical truths.

Mira considered “*all this*”—meaning to say the world—“*Sarvamidam*”—*सर्वमिदम्*—as nothing more nor less than her own God ; and like the heavenly bodies, in the words of

M. Arnold, she behaved in a very dispassionate manner :—

“Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things without them,
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.
Bounded by themselves, and unobservant,
In what state God’s other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring
These attain the mighty life they see.”

Of course, as every reader will admit that in Mira’s case, “the Vale discovered the Hill,” and she carried out truth of the observation made by Aubrey de Vere :—

“Grief should be like joy majestic equable, sedate,
Confirming, cleansing, raising, making free,
Strong to consume small troubles, to commend
Great thoughts, grave thoughts, lasting to the end.”

Mira’s grief made her majestic, equable and sedate and gave her great and grave thoughts about her God to last to the end of her life ; in as much as :

“So Providence for us High Infinite
Makes our necessities its watchful task,
Hearkens to all our prayers, helps all our wants.”

A devotee to the core of her heart, Mirâ felt a sort of pious thrill and the effusions of songs are as good poetry as it could be. Reared up in true piety, her heart grew callous to the ephemeral joys of worldly life, and she loved her God till she virtually lived in Him, by Him and for Him.

And—"just as a mother with sweet pious face,
 Yearns towards her little children from her seat,
 Gives one a kiss, another an embrace
 Takes this upon her knees, that on her feet,
 And while from actions, looks, complaints, pretences,
 She learns their feelings, and their various will
 To this a look to that a word, dispenses, and whether
 Stern or smiling, loves them still,
 So Providence helps all our wants."

This was her **Motto** of life, as it were; and she closely lived up to it. Her song was, as a consequence, more delightful, and supremely sonorous. If her poetry is argued as not a literary masterpiece in the modern refined sense of the term, the only argument to dislodge the arguer from his ground would be that, as Shelley would have it, her poetry is a "fountain for ever overflowing with the waters of wisdom and delight"; and she, "like a poet hidden in the light of thought, singing hymns unbidden till the world is wrought," spontaneously burst out into songs of adoration and worship, and cried with Blake—the great English poet of mysticism, "Holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty."

CHAPTER XVIII.

MYSTICISM OR MIRACLES.

“All the world is secretly maddened by the mystery of love and continually seeks its Evolution everywhere but where it is to be found”—*Coventry Patmore*.

“Mysticism has been the ferment of the faiths, the forerunner of Spiritual liberty, the inaccessible refuge of nobler heretics; the inspirer, through poetry, of countless youths who know no metaphysics; the teacher through devotional books, of the despairing; the comforter of those who are weary of finitude”—*Josiah Royce*.

“Love is the goal of World’s history—the cement of the Universe”.—*Novalis*.

In describing the mysticism of human life, it has been observed that :—

“Made of chance and all a labouring strife,
We go charged with a strong flame
For as a language Love hath seized on life
His burning heart to story”—

St. Augustine has said: “Interrogate thyself, O man, and make of thyself a step to the things that be above thee”—it is a direct invitation to approach theological problems along psychological lines.

Mirabai's life can as well be studied and her religious attitude correctly determined along psychological lines; and the life and religious experience of Mdm. Guyon might be pointed out as deserving of some comparison with the same of Mirabai—of course, Guyon was born in 1648 and there were certain phases of life that are quite dissimilar to those in the life of our Indian type and standard of comparison.

The world round both, moreover, was equally severe in exacting its own claims in the case of both. About Guyon, the biographer has said in one place:—"Under a form that was outwardly beautiful and veiled by manners that had received the most correct and advantageous culture it was not easy for man to perceive the elements and workings of a heart which harboured moral and religious rebellion. In the eye of the world therefore, which is but imperfectly capable of penetrating beyond the exterior and which delights in elegance of form and perfection of manners, there was but little to blame, and much to praise; but which sees and estimates the inmost motive, it was not possible, for outward deformity Estimating her by the world's standard, she had her good qualities, as well as those of an opposite characters her excellences as well as defects. Nevertheless, there was that wanting which constitutes the Soul's true light, without which all other beauty fades and all other excellence is but excellence in name—the love of God in the heart."

Mirabai's case was different from Guyon's; there is, however, a striking similarity between the two in this

respect first that none was happy in and by her marriage. The treatment that Guyon experienced at her husband's house was very harsh, and the mother-in-law was unkind and rudely cruel to her—as it was the case with Mirabai. The trials of Guyon resulted in a renewed disposition to seek God, and Mirâ's trials redoubled the force of her divine faith. Mirâ unlike Guyon had no children and was a child widow, and passed her life in quiet religious pursuits. The experience of both, again, was characterised by the subjection of the will; and the ultimate union of the human with the divine will, by an immersion of the soul into God and contemplation of all things in Him, and prayed that "Thou, O Lord, Shalt reign within my heart" In brief, howsoever many would be the points of resemblance between the two, the chief point worth noticing as producing a wide gulf between the two, is that Guyon's faith was flickering, whereas Mira's was as firm as a rock.

Mirabai's devotion was holy even at the sacrifice of physical life—and one is inevitably led to agree with the critic who calls it *Parâ-Bhakti*—Highest devotion—or devotion par excellence—God being understood to be the favourite God of the heart. It was superior to all ordinary forms of devotion, and only a few steps lower than and remote from the highest rung of the ladder on which the true Vedântist stands. The sole object of Love-Devotion was Krishna—no doubt with only a few anthropomorphic attributes and with most divine ones including His infallible Grace. It was in fact, *Bhakti-Yoga*—union with the God through unflinchingly firm Devotion that Mira sought and

secured the emancipation of the Soul. She exclaimed, like Tukaram,

“Now bring I thee a faith complete
And lay my life before thy feet.

Do thou, O God, what seemeth best
In thee, in thee alone is rest.”

As remarked above in its proper place Chaitanya doctrines were propagated in their full force in Bengal ; and the chief centre of Vallabha doctrines was situated in Mewad from where it was but a few steps for the propaganda to reach and become spread all over, Gujarat. The main part of the Vallabha faith lies in taking Bhâgavata as the sole source of enlightenment in which Krishna is enjoined as the only Idol of Worship ; so that He is adored as God, with various ceremonies. The form or Idol of Krishna is one ; but the rites of worship are many and the modes of adoration are regarded, nay enjoined, to be nine--Navadha-Bhakti—nine fold manifestations of Devotion. The real light in Mira's heart was kindled by the torches of Jayadeva and Râmânand; but she was not a religious preacher, nor was her faith capable of being strictly classified or categorised. For, she does not seem to have advanced higher in the study of original Sanskrit texts; her religion was of the heart, singly and singularly. Besides, she was more than an average religious enthusiast, and became a martyr to her own creed; at the same time, be it noted that her creed consisted in a staunch and fearless devotion to Krishna, the manifestations of whose amorous sports are well described in the Bhâgavata.

Radha is an entity laterly brought out but she never had even a corner assigned to her in the well known scriptural authority of the Vaishnavas *viz.* Bhâgavata—although the name occurs in the Brahma Vaivarta Purâna, so Mira's creed was greatly indebted to the highly musical songs of Jayadeva. Of course, Mr. T. M. Tripathi has traced Radha's amorous sports with Sri Krishna as far back as 78 A. D. *i. e.*, the very first century of the Christian Era, since, they are noticed at some length in the Gâthâ-Saptasati of King Sâlivâhana; but all the same even the bare name of Radha is not mentioned in this connection in the Bhâgavata. Mr. Tripathi's verses can be cited with advantage :—

मुख मारु तेन त्वं कृष्ण गोजो राधिकायाः अपनयन्
एतासांबल्ल वीनां अन्यासामरि गौरव हरसि.

This means that:—O! Krishna, you who are removing the dust from Radha's body, by means of the wind of your mouth—*i. e.*, by blowing it off with your mouth—are as well snatching away the greatness of these other Gopis—cowherdresses.

Again, in the well-known work—"Gandavaho"—which is regarded to have flourished in 719 A. D. it is stated that:—

नख रेखा राधाकरणाः करुण हरंतुवः सरमाः ।
वक्षः स्थले कौस्तुभ किरणायमानाः कृष्णस्य ॥

May the marks of scratches made by the nails of Radha on the chest of Krishna which shine like the rays issuing out of the Kaustubha-Diamond, remove your sorrow. And thirdly,

तेषां गोप वधू विलास सुदृढा राधारहः साक्षिणाम् ।
क्षेमं भद्रकलिंद शैल तनयातीरे कृता वेश्मनां ॥

Now, it has been observed in its own place in one of the foregoing pages that during the 12th century of the Christian era, Jayadeva in his immortal musical ditties celebrated the lovely and loving play of Râdhâ and Krishnâ; and that Rânâ Kumbha wrote an elucidating commentary on it, in 1440 A. D. This conclusively proves that prior to Mirâ's time, all this subject matter of her devoted song had its existence in the very hart of Mewad. It is, moreover, foreign to the present purpose to enter into any controversial matter in regard to Mira's devotion ; but it will be deemed consistent with the main treatment to say a few words on her Bhakti as it is found in her works. In doing so, it is needless to say that Prof. A. B. Dhruva and Mr. T. M. Tripathi have put forth certain conclusions, which will do grace to any treatment if they are borrowed, by themselves.

Love of money is the root of all evil—this popular proverb starts the greedy activity of mundane life. On the contrary, excessive love of God ending in devotional ecstasy is the root of dissolution of worldly ties and lead eventually to emancipation of life—that is to say, to eternal absolution. Love rests by ending in devotion for without love there is no possibility of devotion and the consequence of unflinching devotion is the recognition of self and at the same time, it leads to self sacrifice. The recognition connotes oneness and absolute absorbtion or identification. It is this sort of

sacrifice of her soul that Mira had made and not the union by means of Yogic practice—which means the union with the Highest self as the last result of mental development. And it was by her internal piety and self-abnegation that Mira worked her salvation of singing the glory of God and worshipping Him.

CHAPTER. XIX

Nearly ten writers of verses among women have been noted by earlier critics, and all these may not deserve the name of poetess., but pre-eminent among them stands the name of Mirabai, There are many verses assigned to her; among which the following have been noticed here as well as elsewhere by other reviewers of Mira's works:--

- 1 "Nrisimhji kâ Mâyârâ ("Nrisimh Mehta's Mamerun" which is sung in different musical metres—in the midst of which it is said by her:--Nrisimh ko Mahero mangal Gâve Mirâ Dâsi"—showing how she looked upon him as her Spiritual guide and preceptor.)
- 2 Commentary on "Gîta-Govind"—which is rightly fatherd upon Kumbhâ Ranâ, and with which she had nothing to do.
- 3 "Rama Govinda"—This work Pandit Gaori-Sankar declares to be full of verses; but it is not extant.
- 4 Stray songs of devotion—These have properly collated by some learned Pandit in Jodhpur state. These are sung by itinerant mendicant and religious saints; and are traced in many manuscript forms; some of these can also be found printed in work like Bhajana Sâgara and others. The songs of Mira are traced, moreover, in the collections of Kabîra and Nânaka.

There are, again, some songs which have been attributed to her, but these cannot do credit to her name, nor do

they possess those characteristics that go to qualify genuine songs of this pious singer of the glory of God. These seem evidently to have been laterly interpolated by sadhus who indulged in attributing to Mira what naturally leads to belittle her in the estimate of the reader. This matter was once mooted in one of the royal assemblies in Jodhpur State, where it was clearly pointed by a poet astrologer of the court named Shambhu Dattaji that these interpolations put her name to shame and that later Sadhus have done so much injustice to her.

The original work of Mira in which under authentication her genuine songs are collected is found, in a least mistaken form in Pandit Ishwarprasad's work published in 1906 A. D. Such interpollations are, in fact, not a novel feature in India, so that Kabir, Nanak, Nrisimh Bhâlana and such other poets of note have suffered a similar fate at the hands of later-day-interpollators. In Kabir's songs, in one place, Mirâ's song has been thrust—which must be regarded as an unjust manipulation.

Mira's poetry is easy and smooth, soft and delicate, rhythmical and highly symphonious. It is full of sentiment, but measured by the criterion of earlier Sanskrit poetry, Mira's verses would pale fire. Lover craze and the excessive zeal of devotion arising from religious fervour are the leading characteristics of her songs, some of which can be quoted here by way suggestion and easy reference :—

“Kyâ Karun main ban men gai ghar hoti to Syâmakun
manâi leti” &c—

इया इइं में अन में गछ घर होती तो श्यामकुं मनाछ लेती—छत्यादि.

“Âja anâri legayo sâri baitho kadam ki dâri dâri
he mây” &c—

आज अनारी ले गयो सारी बैठो इदमडी डारी डारी हे माय—छत्यादि.

“ Âvat mori galian men Giridhâri main to chhupi hun
laj ki mâri ” &c—

આવન મોરી ગલિયનમેં ગિરધારી મેં તો છુપી હું લાજકી મારી-છત્યાદિ.

“ Jo tum todo piyâ men nahin todun tori prita todi
Krishna kona sang jodun-&c.—

જો તુમ તોડો પીયા મેં નહિં તોડું તોરી પ્રીત તોડી કૃષ્ણ કોણ
સંગ જોડું-છત્યાદિ.

“ Bansi fera bajâvore mahivâle ho ” &c—

બાંસી ફેર બાજવોરે મહીવલે હો-છત્યાદિ.

“ Bhahi ho bâvari sunake bansari ” &c—

બાહ હો બાવરી સુનકે બાંસરી-છત્યાદિ.

“ Sûraja Swâmi paniya bharan kese jaun meri mendi-
yoko rang uda jâye ” &c—

સુરજ સ્વામી પાનિયા ભરન કેસે જાઉં મેરી મેદિયોકો રંગ ઉડ જાએ-છત્યાદિ.

“ Eri main to darda divâni merâ darda na jâne koi ” &c.
એરી મેં તો દર્દ દિવાની મેરા દર્દ જાને કોઈ-છત્યાદિ.

Critics of Hindi poetry regard Mira to be on the same high level with Sûradâs, among all the poets and songsters of the 16th century; and in a similar manner, Mira's poetry in Gujarati takes a high rank. Not of the highest or superfine type, her poetry in Gujarati can rank next to Nrisimha Mehta's, talking, of course, of poets who flourished in the first age of Gujarati literature. As hinted above, it would be totally ridiculous to compare her songs with the highly fanciful and gloriously elevated poetry of Jayadeva. It cannot be, in the meantime, denied that her verses have an easy, soft, tender, sweet and musical form of language and sense; and it is a natural flow of her whole heart, so that there is pathos of a peculiar type that pleases the heart and at the same time elevates it to the portals of

divinity. Her birth being in Marwad, her husband having his birth place in Mewad, her residence for the later part of her life being in Vrindāvana, and lastly, her last resorting place being Dwarka, she composed songs in all the four dialects :—Marwadi, Mewadi, Vrija and Gujarati, separately as well as in a mixture of all the four; but her Marwari dialect being a peculiar mixture of Hindi and Gujarati, the same four can be conveniently regarded to be classified into two only *viz.*, Hindi and Gujarati.

She was verily educated and well cultured—perhaps better than ladies of her time; and if interpolations have deluded some critics to take an uncharitable view of her character from her writings, it should be only deemed as no fault of hers. It is a patent fact, again, that the running and predominant sentiment of her verses is Devotion—nay love-devotion; and hence it is *Sânta*—*Rasa* or the sentiment of loving Peace or rather Peaceful Love. Her whole heart inundated with God's adoration; and her mind repelled from the sordid pursuits of worldly life and it was concentrated upon nothing but the sole worship of the Almighty Power as she recognized Him. Her style was, as a consequence clear and transparent, but at the same time, sharp and penetrating. The songs composed by her, as a whole, follow the close make of Jayadeva's immortal song in Sanskrit, of Thakkur Vidyapati in Bengali, and of Nrisimh Mehta in Gujarati. Her songs came into existence not for the attainment of higher post or dignity or emolument, nor for fame or any other ephemeral object or attribute of worldly gain and honour; but her heart was full of the thrill of God's love and God's adoration, and of that her

songs were but a natural consequence. The speech in fact translated the heart ; and the heart slept over the tongue to sing the glory of God. Mirâ's songs can be classified into Love-Devotion to a large extent ; and Knowledge-Devotion in a very small measure. The spiritual, nay, divine love of Râdhâ and Krishna represents symbolically that devotion of the heart, that inborn *habitus* of her soul, which leads eventually to Final Absolution—it is, therefore, a higher religious Ideal, Vaishnavism in its full-fledged form is reflected in it when it is understood to convey to the mind the sure impression arising from the firm faith that the love which a Parakîyâ—the heroine wedded to another than the Beloved Person—bears to the Beloved hero, must be the love to be shown to the Divine Object of Worship ; this the Vaishnavites consider as Love-Devotion and this it is that constitutes the tasting of the nectareous flow of Love. Every individual ought to bear the same sort of high and holy love towards his own wedded wife It is needless to enter here into the pros and cons of this argument ; but it will be sufficient for this purpose if it is observed that a Parakîyâ generally willingly exposes herself to trials and unbearable ordeals of misery and distress only with a view to have a flying glance of her lover—so that all these ultimately lead to absorption—and it is on that account far more dignifying in the spiritual advancement than mere divine service, divine association and others (दास्य, सम्पत्ता इत्यादि).

CHAPTER. XX

“Perfect her notes in the perfect harmonies ;
With tears wiped away, no conscience of sin.
Loss forgotten and sorrowful memories ;
Align with Cherubim, a fire with Seraphim,
Lily for pureness, rose for charities,
With joy won, and with joy evermore to win,
The King’s Daughter is.”

Christiana Rossetti.

It is necessary at this stage to review Mirabhai’s song in due details. They are remarkable for their combination of soft natural sentiment and lofty spiritual adoration. In her poetry we seem to hear the voices of Lady Julian and Blessed Angela de Foligno. As we read them we feel that we are in touch with a wonderful devotee of God who loses in the course of her estatic ascents holy to God, hold on the actualities of human life. Sometimes she allows the reader to trace her in the regions of Vrindavana where her heart has strayed away from the choking and suffocating pangs of actual worldly life, till at last the pulse of nature beats womanward. It may be that the miseries to which human flesh is heir being heaped upon her, her followers might have given great importance to that fact, and the succeeding generations might have woven a web of traditions round her name; or her miseries might have been real as well as unexaggerated; but we have at present no safe data to go upon, and decide anything in the matter.

With regard to her marriage, worldly and divine or mundane and supramundane the reader can be delighted by a short comparison with a book entitled "The adornment of the Spiritual Marriage" edited by the learned pen of Evelyn Underhill. In it the author John Van Ruysbroeck traces "the gradual development of the Soul "through the active life of Christian virtue, the interior life of Contemplation, and the Supersensual life of Union with God." Christianity too was, in earlier times, bold enough to deal with the highest and most mysterious experiences of the human spirit. It was in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries of the Christian Europe that there came into existence some false mystics and heretical sects who have been duly condemned in the book named above; but a closer similarity can be drawn between the contents of the same book and Mirabai's songs when it is borne in mind that both the authors have traced the experiences of the early stages of the mysterious growth of the Soul—"the hard self-discipline, the enlightenment, raptures and derelictions " of the really active interior life.

About the Christian devotee it has been remarked that "a beautiful tradition tells us that he would go out alone into the woods when he felt that the inspiration of God was upon him; and there, sitting under his favourite tree would write as the Holy Ghost dictated. The brethren used to declare that once having been absent many hours from the priory, he was at last found in this place, rapt in ecstasy and surrounded

by a brilliant *aura* of divine light—a legend which closely resembles similar stories in the lives of the Saints.”

At any rate, the main point of striking resemblance between Ruysbroeck and Mirabai lies in the fact that they were equally happy in walking in the way of Love; for, it is said:—

“Those who follow the way of Love
Are the richest of all men living;
They are bold, frank and fearless,
They have neither travail nor care. &c.—”

Both had the Image of God before their eyes and both saw equally Unity in Diversity, in a sense. To them both, the ultimate Truth was the Godhead which is the Divine Unity of Religion. Both equally so fully represented what ordinary mortal eyes fail to notice—the world of spiritual reality which is beyond all attributes and conditions—the Absolute wherein all ways and modes of life are swallowed up, and all our finite perceptions die into ignorance and darkness:—

The splendour of that which is in no wise is as
a fair mirror

Wherein shines the everlasting light of God :

It has no attributes

And in it all the activities of reason fail.

It is not God, but it is the light whereby we see Him

Those who walk in the divine light thereof
Discover in themselves the Unwalled ”*

The Christian idea has a telling effect upon the mind, and it is necessary to cite the words of the able Editor who says:—

“ Seen from the synthetic and spiritual point of view this supernal world of experience is the essential unity wherein the richness of Eternal Life consists, and where the surrendered soul enjoys the peaceful fruition of God. But seen from the analytic and intellectual point of view it is essential Nudity, the Nought or Divine Dark of Dionysius the Areopagite : for it has been stripped of every character of which we can think. Here the mystic feels himself, as regards his essential being to be poured out into God, melted and merged in Him as a river in the sea ; and, as regards his own separate consciousness, apprehends Him in one simple act of absorbed attention; seeing and staring with wide open eyes. It is in this one act, sometimes felt by us as a

*With this, the beautiful idea splendidly described in the following Sanskrit verse might be compared :—

विश्वं दर्पण दृश्यमान नगरो तुल्यं निजांतगतं
पश्यन्नात्मनि प्रायया बहिरिवोद् भूतं यथानिद्रया ॥
यःसाक्षी कुरुते प्रबोध समये स्वात्मा नमे वाद्वयं
तस्मै श्रीगुरु मूर्तयेनम इदं श्री दक्षिणा मूर्तये ॥

इत्यादि.

Vishvam darpana drisyamana nagari tulyam nijantargatam
Pasyannatmani mâyayâ bahirivod bhutam yathâ nidrayâ.
Yah Sakshi kurute prabodha samaye swâtâmâ name vadvayam.
Tasmai Sri Guru Mûrtaye nama edam Sri Dakshina Murtaye, etc.

passing beyond ourselves, sometimes as a fixed ecstatic vision, beholding that which we are and becoming that which we behold, that the self at last knows itself to be one life and one spirit with God."

The final state of the Christian mystic squares in exactly with the same as described so delicately by the Vaishnava Mira of Hindusthan. It is, in fact, annihilation in the Absolute, which is to be understood as a condition in which we wholly dwell in God, one life and truth with Him, yet still, feel God *in* ourselves, as the lover feels his beloved, in a perfect union, which depends for its joy on an invincible otherness.

The Christian critic named above has observed:—
 "The soul transfused and transfigured by the Divine Love as molten iron by the fire, becomes, it is true, one simple blessedness with God, yet ever retains its individuality; one with God beyond itself, yet other than God within itself. The deified man is fully human still, but spiritualised through and through; not by the destruction of his personality, but by the taking up of his manhood into God. There he finds not a static beatitude, but a height, a depth, a breadth of which he is made part, yet to which he can never attain: for the creature even at its highest, remains finite, and is conscious that infinity perpetually eludes its grasp and leads it on. So heaven itself is discovered to be no mere passive fulfilment, but rather a forward-moving life, an ever new loving and lasting, new exploring and enjoying of the Infinite Fulness of God, that inexhaustible object

of our knowledge and delight. It is the eternal voyage of the adventurous soul on the vast and stormy sea of the Divine."

It would be no doubt, a highly interesting matter into which the mind of the reader could be beguiled only if the effort were not construed as an uncalled for digression. Suffice it, therefore, to note that the Christian doctrine stands on the vantage ground of a very happy comparison in certain points of striking resemblance, with the Vaishnava doctrine as propounded in her songs by Mirabai. At the same time, it is worth while to throw a mere cursory glance at another valuable work called; "Vision and Vesture—A study of William Blake in Modern Thought" by Charles Gardner—which too, suggests how religion and art are passionately fused in the soul that sings holy songs—be they of Christian or of Vaishnavite faith.

CHAPTER XXI.

MIRA'S POETRY CRITICISED

“ To think well is to serve,
God in the interior court”

Traherne.

The verses that can be cited as containing a figurative sense will be a few only; but in some verses, on the other hand, plain and simple, self-evident sense is grasped—and the following is an instance in point:—

मुभजानी माया लागी रे, मोहन तारा मुभजानी माया लागी रे.

मुभकुं में जेधुं ताई, आ जगतकुं थयुं प्पारं

मन भाई रेखुं न्याई रे—मोहन तारा०

संसारितुं सुभ ज्येवुं, अंजवाना नीर जेवुं

तेने तुअ करी प्रीअ रे—मोहन तारा०

संसारितुं सुभ कायुं—परणीने रंडावुं पाछुं,

तेने धेर शिद जघअ—मोहन०

परखुं तो प्रीतम प्यारो, अअंड सौआज्य भारो.

रंडवानो जे टाणयो रे—मोहन०

भीरांआअ अविहारी, आशा मने अेक तारी.

हवे हुं तो अउ लागी रे—मोहन०

It is not a part of the present purpose to create any controversy, but all the same it may not be deemed amiss to point out that the drift of the stanza is contained in the fact that marriage in a worldly sense is short lived, but the tie of divine marriage or wedding eternally with God Krishna is abiding

for ever, so as to ward off all inauspicious bereavements and the consequent pangs of widowhood. In a simple enunciation of a merely sound proposition, it is strange that critics may have jumped to the conclusion that Mirabai was rendered a widow soon after her marriage, as confirmed by the traditional story to the same effect. In fact, if this be the only stanza to go upon as affording any data to demonstrate her widowhood, can it not be asked with impunity, whether the tradition was based upon it or the stanza was interpolated as derived from the tradition. Any how it is not a natural or necessary conclusion as derived from this one single stanza to believe that Mira was a girl-widow. Again, there is another line to show something in the same *misleading* direction *viz* :—

झुठो न जखे मारी प्रीत, आछ अमे आण कुंवारां रे—

This is Vaishnava phraseology; and not to be applied to Mira's case *Verbatim et literatim*.

Next can be taken up the dialogue between Mira and her husband's sister, as pointing out the soundness of Mira's avowal of her Vaishnavite creed; this took place almost at the threshold of her marriage:—The sister's name was Udâ-

ऊदा-भाभी मीरां कुलने लगाईगाल, इडर गढका आयाजी ओलंवा ।

मीरां-बाई ऊदाथारे म्हारे नातो नहिं, वासोवरयांका आयाजी ओलंवा ।

ऊदा-भाभी मीरां साधांका संगनिवार, सारो सहर थांरी निदा करै ।

मीरां-बाई ऊदा करे तो पञ्चाक्षमारी, मन लागो रमता रामसुँ ।

ऊदा—भाभी मीरा पहेरोनी मोत्यांको हार गणहो पहेरो रत्न जडावको ।

मीरां—बाई ऊदा छोडयो मै मोत्याको हार, गहणो पहेर्यो शील संतोषको ।

ऊदा—भाभी मीरां औरांके आवेजी आछिसूदिजान थांरे आवे छै

हरिजन पावणा

मीरां—बाई ऊदा चढ चौबाराँ झाँक साधाँकी मंडळी लागे सुहावणी ।

ऊदा—भाभी मीरां लाजे गढ चित्तौड, रांणोजी लाजे गढरा राजवी ।

मीरां—बाई ऊदा तार्या तार्यो गढ चित्तौड राणानी तार्यो गढका राजवी ।

ऊदा—भाभी मीरां लाजे काजे थाराँ मायन बाप पीहर लाजेजी थारो मेढतो ।

मीरां—बाई ऊदा तार्यो मै तो मायन बाप पीहर तार्योजी मेढतो ।

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ऊदा—भाभी मीरां राणाजीरो वचन न लोप ऊन सुढयाँ भीडी कोउ नहिं

मीरां—बाई ऊदा रमा पति आवे म्हारी भीड अरज करूँ छुं तासूं बीनति ॥

Of course, the long dialogue is sufficient to shew that Mira was a staunch Vaishnava, stepping on the threshold of a strictly jealous conservative Shaiva—the father-in-law and his family; so that, howsoever exaggerated the account in every case may happen to be yet the main factor is constant; and the daily routine of her life eventually made a martyr of her. The Vaishnavite propoganda had not yet become quite popular among higher classes particularly who regarded it as an eye sore; and consequently, they tried to cry it down as violently as they could. The main part of the Vaishnavā faith is concerned with the love dalliance of Sri Krishna during the century—rather, the generation—in which Mira lived and moved and had her being.

The following stanza, for instance, sings about her praise of the spiritual part of the Divine-Lute:—

એક દિન મોરલી અગ્રહ, કનૈયા એક દિન મોરલી અગ્રહ
મોરલીના નાદે મેરે: મન હરલીના, ઝામ્ કી સુરતા ઉઠાઇ; કનૈયા૦
ગૌઝા તો ધાસ ના ખાયે—કનૈયા૦
સર્વ રીતો વળી સ્તંબ બધ હે, ચંદ્ર ગયો છુપાઇ—કનૈયા૦

* * *

It is sufficient to indicate that the celestial symphony astounded all, and the very rapturous delight spread the Universe over, so far so that worldly activities could not exist for the time being, and there was Eternal Bliss pervading all parts of the visible world. This sort of ecstatic delight could not be generated by ordinary worldly music; so, it is the spiritual force of the celestial music transcends all mundane happiness and approaches the Eternal Bliss of "Om."—The Holy mystical monosyllable of the Hindu spirituality.

Let us follow the next verse cited here in the same strain:—

ઝટ ઘો મેરો ચીર મોરારી મોરારી રે ઘો મેરો ચીર
લે મેરો ચીર કદમ ચઢ જ્યેઠો, મેં જલ ખીચ ઉઘાડી, હારે લાલા, મેં જલ
ખીચ ઉઘાડી.

ઉભી રાધા અરજ કરત હે હો ચીર દીઝા ગિરધારી,
પ્રભુ તોરે પાય પડંગી—ઝટ ઘો.

ઇત્યાદિ.

Only a part is cited here and so much will suffice for the present purpose. What Mira means to point out

here is the extreme point of Devotion—the top of spirituality which Godhood is always to be supposed to be gracing, and which can be attained by discarding as well as snapping as under the bonds of worldly intercourse. In the midst of water of the holy Jumna, stands Radha with other Gopies, exposed to worldly evils and torments, but the eyes of all are equally upturned to Kadamba Tree with devout prayer, praying to Lord Krishna, to cover up transitorily worldly shame. It is not, however, shame or ignominy of any kind, but it is only after casting into oblivion and training the mind to be dispassionate that the soul can endeavour to approach God's Grace. Hence were they urged upon to go out of water—in the midst of which there are storms and tumults of all sorts, as a natural accompaniment of births.

Even the verse No. III as marked in Kavya Dohana Part VII, quoted below indicates not only dotage but ecstasy in love-devotion:—

इनैआ अल गढिं अम नहिं असुरै गोकुल मे—इनैया०

काणी ह्येडे कामणी रे, काणा ह्येरे कलान, अंदापनडी कुंज—

गलनमें जेलत गोपी तज मानरे—इनैया०

धेर आध गोवालन, धेर आये गोवाण, हरि हजु नहिं आयो रे

मेरो भहन गोपाण—इनैया०

धत्यादि.

This shows that the spiritual devotion has reached its climax. It is the internal burning, ardent appetite to be united, not carnally, but psychically, with the

presiding God of the heart-setting at naught the false sense of modesty or even the sense of shame arising out of conventional bounds of decency and decorum. Herein we see that for sheer splendour of spiritual passion and austerity Mira's poetry stands unrivalled in the history of Gujrati literature and it can be well described in words of a modern critic that her poems form "a transcendental treatise in Divine desire seen through the veil of human desire." The same is confirmed by the following stanza:—

अब नहिँ मानूँ राणा थारी, मैं वर पायो गिरिधारी—टेक.
 मनि कपूरकी एक गति है, कोई कहो हजारी ।
 कंकर कंचन एक गति है, गुंज मिरच इकसारी ।
 अनड धर्णिको सरणो लीनो हाथ सुमिरनी धारी ।
 जोग लियो जब क्या दिलगीगी, गुरु पायोनिच भारी
 साधु संगत मँहँ दिल राजी, रई कुटुंबसुं न्यारी ।
 क्रोड बार समझावो मोकूं, चालुंगी बुध्य हमारी ॥

* * *

लाज सरम सबही मैं डारीयौ तन चरण अधारी ।
 मीरांके प्रमु गिरिधरनागर झकमारो संसारी ॥

Of course, many more verses can be cited here ; but it will be deemed sufficient for the present purpose to be content with a few only. There is one point, however that deserves special attention:—The words and expressions used for the purpose of conveying spiritual devotion of the best and the highest order, are and probably cannot be different from or dissimilar to the same that

can be perhaps used for conveying physical passion ; and as a consequence misconstruction is likley to ensue ; so as ultimately to do injustice to Mira's career but deeper and more careful study of her verse will not fail to acquaint the critical reader with the correct interpretation. It is, therefore, deemed essential to treat of this subject in a brief but terse manner, so as to discriminate good from evil, in all possible ways. For instance, verses headed by the following burdens will be open to such meanings and yet superficial sense is surely misleading here:—

॥ आली सांवराकी दृष्टि मानो प्रेमका कयारी हैं ॥

again, श्याम तेरी आरत लागी हो ॥

and, मैं हरि विन क्यौं जिऊंरी माय ॥

also, "निदलडी नहि आवै सारी रात, किस बिभ्र होई परभात"

and such others.



CHAPTER XXII

THE TEACHINGS OF THE VAISHNAVITE FAITH.

With regard to Bhaktas or life-long devotees it is a peculiar pleasure to hear or read their saintly career well described ; but Nrisimh Mehta in Kathiawad, Pagal Harnath in Bengal have pre-eminently left their names to be recited by posterity with the sense of holiness in the earliest part of the era of cultivation of vernaculars in the respective provinces. Chaitanya and Dayaram are also names belonging to the same category ; but Mira was a martyr to her own faith, and that has given her great celebrity, more than anything else.

Vaishnavism can rationally trace its historical origin to the heart of the Vedanta of Vyasa Bâdarâyana and Sri Sankarâcharya through the Purânas and Tantras and not directly as does Saivism in its abstruse metaphysical aspect. It is a peculiar conception of Krishna formed by the Vaishnavite creed that combines the Purusha and the Prikriti—the female energy—in Him and calls him the juggler of all jugglers. He is the only creative Power and the rest of the Universe including other divine and human beings are powerless and as a consequence they can be regarded as female forces, wedded to Krishna. It is, however, not proposed

to enter at any length into the details of the system. In the priceless instructions of Thakur Sri Harnath Bandopadhyaya, it is remarked that "great are the Prakritis; great are their might and power of infatuation; they are the supreme ruler of the Universe; with the single exception of Krishna every one is engaged in their service". Nilakantha sings:—"O mother of the Universe, remove the cover once from my eyes so that I may, by your grace, cross this vast ocean of worldliness." According to Hindu Scriptures when Vyâsa having been turned out of Kâsi by Siva, wanted to make a second Kâsi, and had therefore to propitiate Ganga in order that she might wend round it with her holy waters, Ganga appeared before him and said, "Vyâsa, you have fallen into an error. Incurring Parvati's displeasure you are appealing to me against her. You should know that not only there is no difference between Parvati and myself but that all females in the Universe irrespective of the forms in which they may manifest themselves, are identical with me."

It has been observed by some leading Bengali poet preachers of Vaishnavite faith that: if you wish to be rich in the love of Krishna, you must seek the shelter of females, whether as wives, daughters, mothers or sisters. It is they who are the dispensers of Krishna's love. No one, again, is capable of understanding the Prakritis. If anybody is, it is Sri Krishna. The only active or male agent Krishna, is incessantly at play with Prakriti in some way or other. Even Brahmâ

and Siva have foundered in the ocean of thoughts, in order to solve the secret of this play. The real object of this bewildering game is known only to Sri Krishna and to Râdhika. To any other it is a sealed book.

About marriage, moreover, the prevailing doctrine of Vaishnava faith can be laid down in the words of Bengali writers who are agreed in noting that matrimonial alliance is not intended for self gratification in this world. It is argued as follows:—* “You were single before; now you are a pair; hope not to multiply further. You two weld into one and carried by your strong devotion go up to Brajadhama. Unless you two lose your individvality and merge into one you cannot go there; and even if you go, you will find no happiness. Of the different sorts of devotion *viz.* Sânta, Dâsya, Sakhya, Vâsalya and Madhur, the last is really the sweet and charming one. Try and wish therefore to have a taste of that one. The cocoanut and betelnut trees are ever towering higher up towards the sky, even their leaves point upward. Can you say why? It is because they have no branches. Similarly, if we be childless, our heart and soul will ever run upward and the lotus like feet of Krishna will be our sole aim.” † Again “Your husband should be regarded as the best of your gods. His parents are

* Vide page 30 Upadesâmrita of Pagan Haranatha

† In the face of this doctrine, it is indeed strange at first sight to note that the doctrine has not been duly defended as applied to Mlra's case; but where is the need of any defence? She had renounced all claims to worldly relations and secular superiority; what she cared and craved for was ever lasting spiritual welfare.

your parents. The mother who bore you in her womb, and the father who begot you have given you away in marriage. They have no further right or claim upon you, having given you away. ”

Mirabai, in fact, never forgot the highest bliss the *Summum bonum* of life—for all times and all climes. She was never led or allured away by the false glare and fascinating influence of worldly pleasures. To her, Krishna was for ever a fast friend, the husband, the spiritual ruler of her heart, and the presiding God of her whole life. He was her only Kinsman, her life of lives and the essence of all worldly alliance or unions. It is a truism of Vaishnāvite creed that if love as bestowed upon any one else than Krishna, pain alternated with pleasure is the lot ; whereas in loving Krishna alone and absolutely, there is no pain accruing from the pursuit of undone pleasure, but there is sure to arise spiritual rise and bliss and ultimate emancipation of the Soul.

Pagal Harnatha has observed :—“ To-day the harrowing idea of the expected loss of a dear one is throwing me into utter despair ; losing him to-morrow, I am transferring my affections to some other object equally transitory and forgetting all my pains ! O Lord, great indeed is your sport.”

Of course, when Krishna is the Saviour, no sin need be dreaded for it is believed that sin dreads to approach those who have taken Sri Krishna's name ; “ when Krishna's name is only once taken, the discus of Vishnu guards him on all sides, and Krishna himself

keeps him from harm." (Vide Pagal Haranatha's Sermons Page 57). Again, it is remarked that:— "Krishna's name is dearer by far to distressed sinners than Krishna himself. Krishna himself could not have been able to do anything for the great sinner, Ajamila, but by unconsciously uttering his name, he became most holy and was saved from all sorts of fears. Regardless of heaven and hell, be merged in Hari-Premalove for Sri Krishna, and you will have no fear. The drunkard is devoid of both weal and woe."

The Vaishnava believes that the name of Krishna is all in all, greater than the Vedas and the essence of all the Vedas the monosyllabic mystical *Om* (A,u,m) ॥ॐ॥ for it is argued that the Pranava loses its force from the lips of a Sûdra, but the name Krishna sanctifies even a chândala. In fact, all mantras, charms, incantations mysteries, miracles—in fact everything is included in the very name of Krishna. Hence his worship devoted love for and adoration of Krishna alone can save the soul.

The predominant idea about a true Vaishnava deserves a brief notice here. It is laid down as an injunction that "forbearance" is the whole unbroken import of the Vaishnava religion. A man it is held, loses his caste when he becomes a Vaishnava; since he is selfless. His pride, fear, shame, desire, malice and such other feelings and emotions are supposed to be suppressed and controlled properly before the aspirant is a true Vaishnava. Hence did Mirabai adorn and did

grace to the very faith she avowed for her life. Who knows if she did not follow the leading doctrines of her faith in a devoted manner while leaving no gap in taking and uttering incessantly the sanctifying name of Krishna and while not allowing as it were that name or the bearer of it—Sri Krishna—to escape through that gap? For, it is maintained that:—“Take the name on and on (and repeatedly), till you turn hoary? this is what I pray for.”

Prema-Bhakti or love devotion is regarded by leading devotees to be the only sure and quick way of getting the Lord's Favour. It is held by Bengali authors also that: The tears of the Gopis, of mother Jasoda—of the Bhaktas, are but the knots that make the Love so sweet and strong. The Bhakta asks of the Lord tears and nothing else; for tears are the knots in the string of Love and they are therefore sweeter. Tears are to Prema what borax is to gold. May it be our lot, with Krishna's grace, ever to take his name with tearful eyes! Tears are the eddies in the current of prema, therefore, they are so much deeper.”

It is enjoined moreover that the heart and the entire soul should be surrendered to Krishna; and by loving Krishna, the Universe is loved. The distressed and sinners of the world are dear to Krishna, so no contempt for the fallen should be entertained. Recites the Bhagavata:—“The Kaliyuga (Iron age) though an ocean of faults has one great merit, viz, the recitation of Krishna's name, by which final liberation is attained.”

It is also propounded that if you have really acquired Krishna's Love-prema, you can keep it exposed to public view. "Just as a lover though busy in diverse household affairs cannot cast out of his mind his dear one's thoughts, so do we never forget beloved Krishna's name in the bustle of the world."

Again, there is no distinction of caste of Brahmanas and Sûdras—with Krishna; so it is actually an injunction among Vaishnavas to mingle with those that love Him, without pride, or vanity in the heart. His Bhaktas, in fine, should be the true and only source of excessive delight. It is not gross or carnal and worldly love—it is deep and refined spiritual love that Mirabai and other devotees are singing of; hence caste distinctions are all cast out from the region of spiritual elevation. It has been remarked by one of the Bengali writers that:—"In order to taste this Prema, Krishnā, the Soul of the Universe, in the form of Gaurāṅga, wandered from door to door in town after town with tears in His eyes. Prema makes Krishna dance, and his votaries too; it dances itself, all three combined in one spot."*

*This idea of the Vaishnavas is grand enough and it appears to have been probably borrowed from earlier metaphysical writings. It may be out of place perhaps to shew this at any elaborate length, but the following citations will suffice for the satisfaction of the Sanskrit reader:—

प्रचलितकरि कृत्ति पर्यंत चंचनरवाघाताभे

नन्दुनिस्यं दमानामृत श्रोतजीव त्कपालावलि

मुक्त चंडाट हासत्रसद् भूरि भूत प्रवृत्त स्मृतिः

इत्यादि.

the well known longest verse of Malati Mādhava—a drama of Bhana-
bhuti—the longest verse in the Sanskrit Literature again,

It has been sung by many poets that love evinced by the Gopis of Vraja is the only pattern pure, holy and spiritual love-absolutely devoid of self interest; since they sold their lives for promoting one another's happiness. Krishna is all Prema, his kingdom is all Prema; and his sports of Prema; so Prema is food drink and dress; it adorns the body. There is, moreover, no necessity of prayer or other mystical ceremonies-love alone is all devotion. If you run mad for Krishna, he will also go mad for you.

The exposition contained in this chapter can best be wound up by quoting from Bengali Vaishnava writer :— The name is the sum total of every scriptural injunction “No sacrifice, no austerity, no sort of asceticism is higher than this; take the Name ever and anon-awake or asleep. Name is the light in darkness. Chant the Name with a heart pure and holy. Let your tongue ever proclaim the Great Name—no matter in what state or place you may be.”

मही पादा घाताद् व्रजनि सहस्रासंशयपदं
पदं विष्णो भ्राम्यिद् लुज परिघरुण ग्रहगणं ॥

इत्यादि.

these and other eight following lines of the well known Stotra of Pushpadanta if interpreted in a highly metaphysical spirit will be found to satisfy the observation made above.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“ Sir, I oppose not rational to spiritual, for spiritual is most rational ” *Whichcote.*

The reader is about to reach the end of his journey. He has been, to all intents and purposes usefully made to wade through intricate mazes and labyrinths at times in order to save a smoother path eventually to be trodden over by him. It is now necessary to brush the fringe of Mira's literary side and expatiate at some length on her songs—the so called Padas.

In the very first Pada, as given in *Kavya Dohan Part. VII*, it is sung by her that the sordid objects of the world are all disgusting and the only delicious object of enjoyment here during human lifetime is nothing but spiritual food—before which else is trash and trifle so far so that the poison in the form of worldly calamity is turned into a nectareous flow, and that worldly objects are converted into spiritual forces, which bring immortality on the staunch and devout worshipper. The Pada, if properly interpreted, is apt to unfold a double *entendre*, one simple sense being meant to be applicable to the Rana his brother-in-law, and the other figurative being intended to be a natural outcome of the homilies addressed to the Rânâ. The Pada runs as follows :—

प्रीत पूरवनीने शुं कइं, ओ राणाछ, मारी प्रीत पूरवनीने शुं कइं
हो भेवाडा राणा, मनहुं दोआछुं, तेने शुं कइं—ओ राणाछ० रेक

रामञ्च ललुं तो माइं हेयुं ढंडुं थाय,
 भोजनीयां न लावे, नयने निदलडी न आय,—ओ राणाञ्च.
 इंठे माला घेवडी, भारे शीण वरत राणागार,
 डेम डरी विसइ रामने भारा लवलवने लरथार—ओ राणाञ्च.
 पेठया आसइ भेज्या ने दीया मीरांने हाथ
 हार गलामां नांभियो ने महेल लयो उग्नस—ओ राणाञ्च.
 विपना ध्याला भेज्या ने दो मीरांने हाथ;
 डरी अरणाभृत पी गयां, भारा रामतणो विश्वास—ओ राणाञ्च.
 विपना ध्याला पी गयां ने लजन डरे राहोड
 तारी भारी नहिं भइं, मने राणलुवालो आर—ओ राणाञ्च.
 राहोडनी दीडरीने सीसादांने साथ
 लघ वनती वैडुंठे, भारी प्रथम न मानी आत—ओ राणाञ्च.
 मीरां दासी रामडीने राम गरीअ निवाज
 मीरांकी लन्या राभजे, भारी आंहे प्रह्वानी राज—ओ राणाञ्च.

It is easy to see in the verse that there is a tendency naturally begotten on the reading of the verse to interpret her poetry in a metaphysical sense ; but it is open to the reader to call it strained and far fetched or to follow the sense faithfully to the smooth end of all such stanzas. In the meantime, the temptation of citing another verse cannot be resisted for confirming the statement that a second figurative sense always lies beneath the surface when her verses are exalting the reader to the dignity of Godhood, and that the same is not lying far near the bottom to seek and trace. Another verse will not tire the reader out of his patience if it be quoted here :—

भारा प्राणु पातणिया वहेला आवो रे, तभरे विना,
 इं तो जनम जेगणु छुं—रेड.

નાભિ કમગથી સુરતા રે. ચાત્રી, જઈને તપ્તપર રાસ રચીલા રે; હું તો
 સુખમના નાડી એની સેજ યિજાવે, તે દી રંગ બીના છે રાસ ધારી
 તમરે વિનાતું માઈ અંતર અંધાઈ રે, મારા જગના જીવન વહેલા આવો—હું તો
 સાયું ધરેણું મારે તું છે રે શામળિયા રે, અવર ધરેણું મારે હાથ નહિ આવે રે.
 કુંવરબાઇનાં જે દી મામેરાં પૂયાં, તે દી જાળ ભરીને વહેલા આવો રે—
 હું તો જનમ.

સાવરે સોનાના હરિના વાધા શીવડાવું રે, પ્રીતમજીને પ્રણામ કરીને
 વિઠ્ઠલ રાય જે દી વરવાને આવ્યા, તે દીના વિંટાણા છે વરમાળરે—
 વહેલા આવો રે.

કાગળિયાનો જે દી કટકો નહોતો રે, મસરે મોંઘી રે જે દી લેખણુ નહોતી રે,
 વહાણા વિદુર તે જઈને એટલું કહેજો રે, તમે એકવાર મળવાને
 વહેલા આવો રે—હું.

મંદુર નાદની મોરલી રે વાગે રે, સુરતીયામાં રાધાજી જાગે રે
 મીરાંનો સ્વામી જે દી ગિરધર મળશે, તે દી દાસીનાં દુઃખાં ભાંગે રે
 વહેલા આવો રે—હું.

The foregoing verse conclusively denotes that it is absolute absorption that connotes Eternal Life in God, by means of intense devotion and total denial of worldly enjoyments. This is the predominant note of her verses; and the following also confirms it with due emphasis :—

મને મલિયા મિત્ર ગોપાળ, નહિ આઈં સાસરીએ
 સંસાર માઈ હો સાસઈં ને વૈકુંઠ મારો વાસ રે
 લક્ષ ચોરાસી હો મારો સુડલો રે, હાં રે મેં તો વર્યાં ગોપાળ લાલ નાથ—
 નહિ જાઈં.

સાસુ હમારી સુપુમ્ણારે, સસરો પ્રેમ સંતોષ રે—
 જેઠ જુગો જુગ જીવજે રે, હાં રે પેલો નાવલિયો નિર્દોષ—નહિં.
 એહુ તો નવરંગ સુંદરી રે, નહિં એહુ કાંચળ લગાર રે.
 એહુ પ્રેમરસ સુંદરી રે, હારે મારાં પાપ નિવારણુ કરનાર— નહિં જાઈં.
 દીએરને દોતું છે દીકરીરે, દોતું રાજ કુમાર રે

એકને સસયુગ મોહી રહ્યો રાણા, દુલ્લ રહી અલયાર-નહિ જાઉં.
 એકનો ગુરુ ગોવિંદજી હો રે, દુલ્લકો હે સંસાર રે
 રાગ છોડો ચિત્ર કુટને રે, હારે વા'લા ગાલડાં સોલ હનર-નહિ જાઉં.
 આપના પિયુકુ જાનને કહેજે, ધણા દહાડાનો ધર વાસ રે,
 બેઉ કર જોડી હો વિનવે રે, હારે ગુણુ ગાય મીરાંબાઇ દાસ-નહિ જાઉં.

This is sufficient to show that external relations of the world united by ties of human affection are but ephemeral, and the real long abiding relations are those that are connected with the individual Soul and God. The individual Soul has to adore and worship God who alone is Real and True—કામ નહિ આવે તારે કામ નહિ આવે પ્રભુ વિના તારે કામ નહિ આવે—is another stanza that nourishes the same main argument in Mira's song. God alone is gracious and His grace is essential in emancipating the individual Soul from the meshes of the practical world which are all evanescent. This is, in fact, the burden of the song of Mira's, commonly with many other Gujarati poets and poetesses—as if it was but a common heritage derived from the very atmosphere surcharged with holy religious sentiment as it stood—common—to almost all the singers of holy Gujarati songs and poetry in the highest sense of the term.

In Plato's words: "Music is a moral Law"—and in Mira, "it gave a soul to the Universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, a charm to sadness, gaiety and life to everything."

It is said very aptly that Poetry lives in the spirit man; and Mira's holy songs made her live in the spirit

of God—if the idea were allowed to be stretched to that length, with impunity. Her very “image of life is expressed in its eternal truth.” The words of Milton are also applicable to her songs who recites in his poetry while appostrophising:—

“Divine Philosophy!

Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose
But musical as is Apollo’s lute, feast of nectared
sweets.

Where no crude surfeit reigns.”

Mira has best represented God, the Infinite Power, in her poems.

FINIS.

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Mehta, S. S.
A monograph on Mirabai



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