

A COMPARISON OF TWO DEVOTIONAL SECTS OF SOUTHWESTERN INDIA:
THE VĪRASAIVAS OF KARNĀTAK AND THE VĀRAKARĪES OF MAHĀRĀṢṬRA

by

LEELA LAXMAN MULLATTI

M.A., Karnātak University, Dharwar, India, 1959

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Department of Anthropology and Sociology

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

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ABSTRACT

This thesis has attempted to explore certain aspects of the complex interrelations of ideology, social organisation and social change in modern India. To elucidate this relationship, I have chosen to compare two devotional sects of Southwestern India: the Vīrasaivas of Karnāṭak and the Vāraṅkarīes of Māharāṣṭra.

The Vīrasaivas and the Vāraṅkarīes represent distinct cultural, linguistic groups. The ideologies of the leaders of these two sects, Basavā and Tukārām, are uniquely suited for comparison and contrast. This comparative study of the ideologies throws light on the rigid and the flexible tendencies of their respective social organisations to social changes, with special reference to their religious communities and caste structures. Various aspects of the complex interrelationship of ideology, social organisation and social change have been discussed.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.M.:	Armando Menezes
A.S.T.:	A. Sunderaraj Theodore
Bhan. V. & S.:	Bhandarkar, Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Other Minor Cults
Encl. of R. & E.:	Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics
I.E.:	Induprakash Edition
K.C.:	K. Chandrashekhariah
M.M.:	Mate Mahadevi
N. & F.:	Nelson and Frazer
N.M.:	N. Macnicol
O.A.:	Olice Abhanga
S.M.A.	S.M. Angadi

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INTRODUCTION

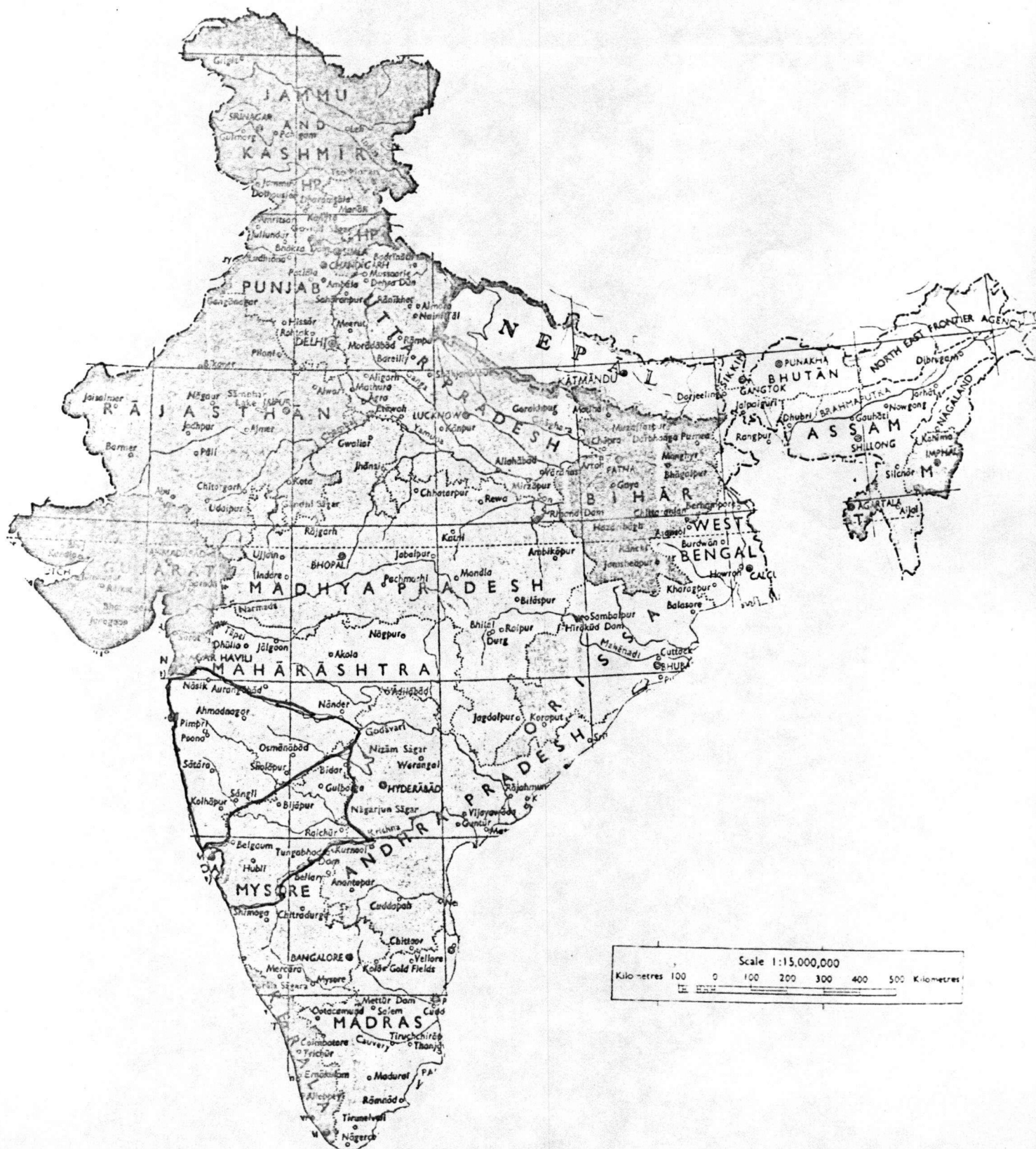
The linguistic and cultural diversity of India is well known. This diversity has recently been described by André Béteille¹ with reference to the distinctive characteristics of social organisation in North and in South India. According to him, the North (Bengal for instance) and the far South (Madras for instance) provide two poles of a continuum; the social organisation of the North being relatively flexible by comparison with the more rigid social organisation of the South. In order to further the understanding of differences between Northern and Southern social organisation in India, I have chosen to make a study of 'an area' called the Southwest,² where these two geographic and cultural regions meet.

All the languages of India come under two main linguistic groups. Most of the Northern languages can be classified as Indo-European, while most of the Southern languages are members of a separate family known as Dravidian. Marāṭhi, the language of Mahārāṣṭra, belongs to the Indic group; while Kannaḍa, the language of the Karnāṭak, belongs to the Dravidian group.

The areas of Mahārāṣṭra and Karnāṭak do display certain distinctive characteristics of social organisation. These differences in social organisation, and the ideologies which have helped to shape them will be the topic of this enquiry. In addition to linguistic, social and

¹ André Béteille, Castes: Old and new; essays in social structure and stratification. (Bombay: Asia publishing house, 1969), p. 74

² Please refer to the accompanying map.



A MAP OF INDIA
(with its linguistic states)

The study area of Southwestern part of India is outlined in red. It consists of the Northern part of the present Mysore state and the Southern part of the present Maharashtra state.

ideological differences, furthermore, these neighbouring areas display a variety of geographic conditions. To be precise, most of Mahārāṣṭra has a relatively hot and dry climate and limited rainfall. Here there are huge areas of barren land. Most of Karnāṭak by contrast, is cool and moist. Here there are huge forests and rich paddy lands.

The 12th century Bhakti movement of India was a religious movement prescribing devotion as the only kind of worship which enabled a person to attain salvation. For the first time, the Bhakti movement made various religious texts originally written in Sanskrit available to the populace in the vernacular languages. The leaders of this new movement asserted the religious equality of all their followers. This Bhakti movement first started in the South around the 10th century. Soon two rival sects developed: one called Vaiṣṇavism, made Viṣṇu the central god, while the second, called Saivism, made Śiva the focal deity of worship. From the 12th century onwards, Bhakti became a mass movement. Each linguistic group, though roughly classified as belonging to one of these larger sects, had its own leader and developed its own Bhakti ideology. Thus the Bhakti movement gave a great impetus to the development of localised religious sects among regionally, and linguistically distinct groups.

The Vārakārī panth of Mahārāṣṭra was a Vaiṣṇavite sect, established in the 12th century by a founder named Znaneswara. This sect gradually built until a huge following was formed about five centuries later by a leader called Tukārām. The name of the sect was derived from its tradition of "group pilgrimage", called 'Vārī. Literally, Vārakārī panth meant "a sect of pilgrims". Sect members considered themselves to be the

strongest and most spiritually-oriented Vaiṣṇavite group of the time.

The Vīraśaiva movement in Karnāṭak by contrast, was founded by a leader named Basavā and associated with a Śaivite ideology. Its members considered themselves as the most brave or excellent of the śaivite sects on account of the radical socio-religious reforms which they advocated. Vīraśaivism literally meant "most brave or excellent śaivism". Thus even by definition, the Vārakārī movement in Mahārāṣṭra and the Vīraśaiva movement in Karnāṭak represented distinctive religious ideologies. Each expressed its individuality through its particular name and its own recognised sect leaders.

A contrastive study of these two Bhakti sects, as developed in the following pages, is made in an attempt to illuminate their ideological differences. These differences, in turn, will help us to understand variations in social organisation in these areas. This does not mean, however, that a uni-dimensional causal relationship between a particular sect leader, sect ideology and sect social organisation can be posited. Instead, it will be argued that sect ideology and sect organisation are intimately interwoven. Each will tend to reinforce differences in the other. The result is the creation of an interesting cultural border, which has the overall effect of cutting this area of Southwestern India in two.

CHAPTER I

Ideologies and Social Organisation

Ideologies are not constituted merely by a set of abstract ideas, but by a patterned set of values and ethical precepts relating to action. They are created by leaders to provide a framework for an improved social organisation or to rationalise the existing social organisation. Whether political or religious, they provide a justification for rebuilding or for maintaining what currently exists: for example, the political ideology of democracy stresses universal suffrage as the means of attaining the ideal of equality.

This thesis will discuss two ideologies and their relations to social organisations of the present day: the Vīraśaivā and the Vāraṅkarī versions of Bhakti ideology in South-West India.

Background

New ideologies arise in a society when the existing ones are felt to be outdated, harmful or undermined by foreign ideas. The 'Hip' ideology of North America is said to have risen to counter the harmful effects of advanced industrialisation. It holds that industrial capitalism is building material prosperity at the cost of a pure environment. It contends that our present leaders are petty bureaucrats, that our society is over-automated, and that corruption, isolation and purely materialistic values are rampant. The Bhakti ideology of India arose to counter the growing superiority of Brāhmins and the growing importance of mechanistic rituals in Hindu worship: it rejects the authority of the Vedās, and the performance of sin-cleansing rituals for liberation

(Mokṣa) as unnecessary. Instead, it stresses 'Bhakti', meaning 'intense love of God', as the only form of worship that will lead to liberation. It makes 'Bhakti' the religion of the masses. It also introduces a large scheme for eradicating the socio-religious evils of inequality and exploitation of the masses by Brāhmin priests.

Bhakti ideology did not build a central organisation, as was also not the case with Hinduism. But the spirit behind the Bhakti movement became the central force, finding its individual manifestations from region to region, expressing Bhakti ideology in the vernacular languages of the masses until it became a religion of the masses and for the masses. The ideas of religious equality, kindness and love of God of Bhakti are very often compared with Christianity in the West. The different Bhakti sects were not always necessarily rivals. They were mainly variant cultural expressions of a single theme, trying to fulfill the need of each region. Some sects were formed by amalgamating rival religious beliefs and practices. For instance, Sikhism in Punjab was an amalgamation of rival Hinduism and Islam. While Vīraśaivism and Vāraṅkarī panth -- the two Bhakti ideologies of the Southwest of India -- belonged to two distinctive linguistic groups: Kannada, Dravidian and Marathi, Indic groups of languages. Thus Vīraśaivism, considered to be the purest form of Śaivism and Vāraṅkarī panth, considered to be the purest form of Vaisṇavism, seem to satisfy and glorify their cultural distinctiveness, though being neighbourhood groups. To sum up, the different Bhakti sects are a unique feature of the ideology arising from and expressing the cultural diversity of India. They are not necessarily rival, and do not lead to divisive forces in Bhakti ideology.

Contrasts: Moderate versus Radical Ideologies

The Vīraśaiva and Vārakarī ideologies seem to fit into a basic classification of 'radical' and 'moderate', using these terms not as universal categories, but relative to the particular culture in question. My usage of the terms 'radical' and 'moderate' is not in any way related to their frequent usage for political ideologies of the extreme 'left' and the extreme 'right', otherwise called communistic and capitalistic ideologies. On the other hand, my usage of the terms radical and moderate refers mainly to 'the degree of changes' each ideology aspires to attain. If an ideology aspires to complete change or total transformation from the existing ideology, I call that ideology a 'culturally radical one'. On the other hand, an ideology that aspires to only partial changes, I call 'a moderate one'. In spirit, a radical ideology argues that a new society must be founded by entirely 'cutting itself off' from the existing one. It tries to provide an alternative scheme of beliefs and an alternative social system so as to prepare its following for an entirely new way of life.

The first expression of a radical ideology is to be found in a changed life style. For example, in the North American 'Hip' ideology of today, the external radicalism of 'Hippies' is very obvious; while the 'straight' strives to have short haircut and neat, smart dress, the Hippies strive to have long loose hair and patched shabby clothes. But one does not find an obvious difference in their basic values or aims of life. Along with 'straights', 'Hippies' also believe in individual freedom, and thus seem to stick to basic, traditional North American theme of individualism. Thus radical changes in life style can serve to mask deeper ideological continuities. It is in this specific meaning of 'cultural radicalism' that Vīraśaivism falls in the category of radical Bhakti ideology.

Basavā, a leader of Vīraśaiva ideology, criticised and rejected almost everything that belonged to Hinduism: its scriptures, its

mythology, its sages, its rituals, and the Brāhmanical order of society associated with them. He further proclaimed the establishment of a new religion of brave Śaivas, (Vīrasaivas). His radical ideology found expression in deviant external expression. For example, Basavā prescribed the wearing of Linga (a symbolic image of God Śiva) instead of an 'initiation thread' of Hinduism, and he provided a new 'Śiva mantra', (religious words of Śiva) to replace Hindu scriptures.

But it is obvious that Basavā did not totally cut off from basic Hindu religious ideology, as was done by Buddha and Mahāvira. This can be seen in Basavā's acceptance of Śiva as the only almighty (Śiva is generally viewed as one of the Hindu Trinity). Basavā, furthermore, followed the general path of Bhakti which was during his time also followed by most of the other Hindu religious sect leaders. Basavā accepted the Hindu idea of soul and the Hindu final aim of life as Mokṣa (liberation from the cycles of birth and rebirth). Interestingly, enough, however, he rejects the Hindu beliefs about 'pollution' while maintaining the associated beliefs concerning 'purity'. This stress on purity has become a very distinctive characteristic of his sect. Curiously, this distinctive emphasis on 'purity' seems to link in a dynamic way Basavā's sect with Hinduism more than to separate it.

Thus, one could assert that the content of a radical ideology is never universal, but is always specific to a particular culture. Radicalism makes a show of a significant ideological departure from existing thought, but this appearance of 'cutting off' is not always real.

On the other hand, a 'moderate ideology' never thinks of cutting off from the original ideology. It expresses a definite need for change in the existing ideology through selective, mild, specific criticism of some aspects of the existing ideology, while accepting what remains. Thus the changes desired by the moderate ideology seem to be 'slight departures' from the content of the existing ideology.

The Vārakārī panth, organised by Tukārām, seems to fit in the category of moderate ideology in contrast to radical ideology in terms of both the personality of Tukārām and of the historical situation in Mahārāṣṭra. Tukārām was humble by nature and he belonged to a Śudra caste that has the lowest ranking in the Hindu caste system. Mahārāṣṭra, where Tukārām's sect got a large following, had a very high tradition of Brāhmanical intellectual and cultural attainments.¹

Neither the leadership of Tukārām, nor the historical situation of Mahārāṣṭra provided an impetus for a radical ideology. Tukārām followed the 'Znāneśwari' (the Marāṭhi translation of the Gīta) almost as a bible for his 'kīrtanas' or religious story telling. He advocated a synthesis of all gods (including Śiva) into the ideals of Viṭhobā of Pandharpur (near Poona). He stressed the fact that all his followers should make 'a group pilgrimage', called 'Vārī, to Viṭhobā twice a year, instead of to individual holy places all over India. He said that uttering the name of Viṭhobā with all love and dedication and the nine-fold related form of worship would be enough for a devotee to reach salvation.

The region of Karnātak, where Vīraśaivā had the most of its following seemed to be ripe for the radical ideology due to the combined effects of the dynamic personality of Basavā and to the socio-physical conditions in the area generally. Most of the Karnātak is relatively fertile and the businessmen and the farmers there are quite rich. On the

¹ J.N. Frazer and J.F. Edwards, The Life and Teaching of Tukārām. (Madras: The Christian literature society for India, 1922), p. 12.

other hand, Brāhmins who enjoyed a superior social status merely because they were Brāhmins could be challenged. Their intellectual and cultural attainments seemed to be very meagre.² This situation helped an intellectual Brāhmin, Basavā, to criticise them mercilessly. It is because of this merciless criticism of Brāhmins by Basavā that Bhandarkar accused Basavā of being "a renegade Brāhmin hater".

Basavā's sayings, through which he expressed his radical ideology, grew out of his highly critical study of all Hindu Sanskrit scriptures. He seems to have witnessed the priestly Brāhmin's excessive claims of superiority and the resulting exploitation. One could easily predict that Basavā's revolutionary call to reject all Hindu scriptures and Brāhmanical superiority was welcome to the rich businessmen and farmers of Karnātak.

Certain radical effects of Basavā's ideology however, were to follow. Devotees not only had to 'cut themselves off' from all Hindu scriptures, mythologies and gods, but also from all Hindu ties on the basis of blood, marriage, caste, occupation and region. This is truly a radical step for the Vīrasaiva initiate, especially in Indian society where one's family and caste group are all important. These caste 'in-groups' provide a great sense of economic security and a solid bond of brotherhood. Many sociologists claim that this feeling of security and brotherhood as found in such groups is a major factor for the continued

²Kannada (Dravidian) being the first language of these Brāhmins, their attainments in Sanskrit could be limited. Frazer and Edwards refer to Karnātak and Telangana Brāhmins being called as a 'mere caste of cooks' by Māhārāṣṭrian Brāhmins, in their book L & T of Tukārām, p. 12.

existence of this system in India nearly for 3000 years.³ The radical implications of severing parental and social ties for the earlier followers, also substantiates the categorisation of Basavā's ideology as radical and provides further explanation for its limited following.⁴

In contrast, the moderate nature of Tukārām's ideology can be substantiated by observing the limited changes demanded in the life style of his followers. To become a member of the Vārakarī panth, Tukārām insisted on only a few personal decisions. For instance, a Vārakarī had neither to give up his Hindu traditions nor scriptures, nor his family or caste memberships. As a matter of fact, a Vārakarī entered only into a voluntary personal obligation to join twice-a-year pilgrimages to Viṭhobā of Pandharpūr. During these pilgrimages, Vārakarīs would be obliged to live a simple life which generally included eating only simple vegetarian food, disciplining such personal passions as love, anger, etc., and joining in group-walking, group-singing, and group-living for days together. Thus without any personal or social losses, a Vārakarī could derive the benefits of being periodically in the company of saints, and experiencing intense devotion to God. Both Basavā and Tukārām insist that a devotee has to be humble, calm and serene both in his religious and social life.⁵

Further evidence of contrast is provided by the radical (for that time) social reforms of Basavā. He not only denounced unacceptable socio

³Hutton, J.H. Caste in India, its nature, function and origins. (4th ed.; Bombay, Indian Branch, Oxford University Press, 1963) p. 2.

⁴There are only three million Vīraśaivās in contrast to fifteen million Vārakarīs according to the 1911 census of Government of India.

⁵Please refer to 'poem-sayings' of both Basavā and Tukārām in Chapter II, section 6.

religious customs in strong terms, but introduced positive customs to counteract them. He denounced Hindu caste hierarchy and its related customs concerning pollution. He further maintains that all Vīraśaivas are equal and that no pollutions touch them because they wore the Linga (a symbol which is believed to burn all impurities). To reinforce this idea in practice, he introduced a system of common dining in religious establishments for all Vīraśaivas. He preached equality of the sexes by granting Vīraśaiva women the right to worship their personal Linga and the right to remarry while being a widow.

The moderateness of Tukārām's ideology is seen in his contrary handling of social problems of the time. He made general criticisms of greedy priests, but did not reject the Brāhmanical ritual proceedings. He criticised mechanical study of the Vedās and the handling of rituals, but prescribed the nine-fold form of worship with love, and both the telling and listening of God's stories with devotion. Behind all this seems to be Tukārām's firm faith that God assumes incarnations to improve the entire socio-religious organisation and that his responsibility is only to carry the message of God through his Kīrtanas to his followers. Tukārām spread his Bhakti ideology through these popular Kīrtanās and his own simple poems (called Abhangās) in Marāṭhī.

In this connection, Dr. Chandrashekhariah's conclusion about the lack of an untouchable and low caste following for Vīraśaivas is questionable. He maintains in his 'Sociological analysis of Vīraśaivism' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Frankfurt, 1955, p. 82) that many low castes do not join Vīraśaivism mainly because it prohibits meat eating. This is probably because Chandrashekhariah does not view Vīraśaivism as a part of the Bhakti movement, wherein almost all the Bhakti sects,

including that of Kabir, (a Muslim saint), prohibit not only meat eating but also prohibit eating of strong spices and foods such as onions and garlic. The main Indian conception behind these prohibitions is that meat eating and strong foods give rise to a volatîle, passionate and violent temperament, unsuitable to a devotee.

Many lower caste groups probably did not join the Vīrasaiva movement, because they could not appreciate the intellectual appeal of Basavā sufficiently to justify cutting off strong in-group family and caste relations. The Hindu lower castes -- menial workers and outcastes -- sweepers and shoemakers for example, were not given access to education or allowed to change occupation for many centuries. Their association with Hindu religion was mainly through certain rituals and gods they worshipped more often in their own groups. Since their in-group feelings were very strong, their lower status did not much bother them. Their lack of access to educational and intellectual ventures prohibited the development of a critical attitude towards the Hindu religion and its social organisation.⁶

In contrast, the Vāraṅkarī movement has had a huge following of lower caste peasants as well as of political leaders of the time such as Shivāji. Currently the group is popular among 20th century intellectuals such as Pratharnā Samājists of Bombay. These latter do not join the pilgrimages, but hold Tukārām and his poetry in great veneration.⁷

⁶W.M. Theodore de Bary, editor, Sources of Indian Tradition, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 700-701.

⁷Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings, Vol. XII (1922), pp. 466-69.

Results of Basic Ideological Differences

Now that I have explained the radical nature of Basavā's Vīra-saivism and the moderate nature of Tukārām's Vāraakarī panth, I may examine the practical effects of these basic differences on their respective social organisations at the present day. In discussing social organisation, I propose to use a basic classification into 'rigid' and 'flexible'.

A 'rigid social organisation' is one which is not very responsive to changing needs and conditions. This limited responsiveness to change can be further attributed to certain factors that work to "resist change". For instance, if a social organisation is centralised, leading to a centralisation both of authority and of decisions, then the needs to change of different local centres may not be well known, may be neglected, or may be suppressed depending on the nature of that centralised authority. I see the centralisation of any organisation as working in general as a 'resistant to change'. Furthermore, hierarchical relations between groups and individuals, such as exist between castes and within a bureaucratic organisation would work as an added factor of 'resistance to change' in that particular social organisation or society. Similarly, a stress on hierarchy within a family makes that family unit resistant to change. In any hierarchical structure, the lower ranking members are not empowered to initiate debate or to decide important issues and thus to bring about general change. It is also always in the interest of high ranking members of a hierarchical organisation to maintain stability by 'resisting change'. Thus centralisation, hierarchy and lack of mobility in a social organisation all contribute to lowering the rate of internal change.

This is what I refer to in the following as the "rigidity" of a social organisation.

In contrast, a 'flexible' social organisation is achieved by a structure which maximises an organisation's responsiveness to changing conditions and needs. Such responsiveness to change in a social organisation is made possible when there is a decentralisation of authority, an emphasis on the equality of members and when their relative mobility in economic and geographical terms is high. In such instances, where people are encouraged to make decisions for themselves, they will be sensitive to the many immediate factors around them. Thus decentralisation, equalitarian relations and maximum mobility, all serve to "increase the rate of change". In my terms these factors open the doors of a social organisation to flexibility. If it cannot be said that such social organisations are certain to be flexible, they will at least have fewer factors serving to build up resistance to such change.

At the outset, Basavā's radical ideology seemed to envision a social organisation with no castes, no family and religious authority and many social reforms. But contrary to Basavā's intentions, his ideology led to a paradoxically rigid organisation amongst his followers. In the case of the moderate social ideology of Tukārām, however, which did not challenge most customs of his time, ironically lead to a very flexible social organisation amongst his followers.

The first rigidifying effect of Vīraśaivism seems to have resulted from the radical spirit of "cutting off" from the existing social organisation of the time. This was carried out by Vīraśaivā followers in order to express their radical ideology and distinct character. But the

'cut off' led immediately to segregation -- physically and socially from the majority community and to the formation of a defensive minority.

Such a minority group formation is bound to have cumulative effects on the other aspects of social life, such as kinship, family structure and occupational mobility, especially in a caste and kin oriented society like India. For instance, a limited kinship circle can lead to inbred marital practices and heavy demands of mutual obligations and rights. The peculiar but widespread practice among Vīrasaivas of marrying within tightly closed circles substantiates the practice of inbreeding.⁸ Furthermore, a minority community cannot draw economic and emotional security from a wider community basis. So to compensate, the rigidity of patriarchal and authoritarian family structure within the community is increased. Similarly in the occupational field, more economic security is possible if one sticks to hereditary occupations rather than entering new risky ventures.⁹

Tukārām's followers neither had to 'cut off' nor segregate themselves from their wider kinship and caste structure for religious and social reasons. On the contrary, their system of 'group pilgrimage' (in Marāthi called "Vārī") gave them an added opportunity for geographical mobility and for meeting people from other sub-castes and other places. Furthermore, walking, singing religious songs, eating and

⁸D.A. Chekki, "Mate selection, age at marriage and propinquity among the Lingāyats of India." (Journal of Marriage and Family, No. 30), pp. 707-11.

⁹A.K. Iyer, The Mysore Castes and Tribes, Vol. IV, (1931) "Lingāyats took hardly any job in army or police", p. 120.

living together, brought about a distinctive emotional unity and brotherhood amongst all Vārakarīes.¹⁰ Though Tukārām did nothing directly to eradicate social evils and existing rigidities of the Hindu social organisation, his popular group pilgrimage system seems to have effectively introduced flexibility in the traditional Hindu social order.¹¹

Paradoxically enough, much of Basavā's sect organisation seems to revolve around the concept of rank and status (which are central to Hindu notions of social organisation). We have already seen that, on the one hand, Basavā rejects all caste distinctions and pollution restrictions for Vīraśaivas insisting that equality of all Vīraśaivas is mainly due to their being in a permanent state of 'purity' as Linga wearers. This insistence on the purity of Vīraśaivas further implies that non-Vīraśaivas are impure, and are consequently low in status. These Hindu ideas of pollution and purity relating to status and rank seem to link Vīraśaivas with non-Vīraśaivas -- mostly Hindus -- in an interesting way. It meant the development of a kind of rivalry between Vīraśaivas and Hindus, each claiming superior status. Mr. Chekki's recent study on this topic testifies to such a claim made by Vīraśaivas in relation to Brāhmins of Karnatak.

This insistence on the purity of Vīraśaivas can be interpreted as an effort by Basavā to improve the status of Vīraśaivas by these means.

¹⁰G.A. Deleury, The Cult of Vithoba, (Poona: Poona University, 1960), pp. 77-78.

¹¹Ibid. Pp. 4-5.

This process of giving up certain customs associated with lower castes such as meat eating and trying to follow certain customs of the higher castes is described by M.N. Srinivās as 'Sanskritisation'. Srinivās explains that this process has been in regular use in India, for bringing about the caste status improvement.¹²

As a matter of fact, however, other Hindus have never accorded Vīrasaivās high rank. To others they appeared to observe very few pollution rules, such as birth and death restrictions, which were strictly followed even by Śūdras, the fourth ranking of the caste groups. Furthermore Vīrasaivās worshipped Śivā, one of the Hindu Trinity, and seem to wear Linga almost as a talisman. Occupationally, Vīrasaivās were mainly businessmen or farmers, traditional majority occupations, which ranked third after those of priest and warrior/ruler. Hence they were treated by most of the Hindus as a third ranking caste group, partly because of their occupational following.¹³ On the other hand, Vīrasaivās followed a pure vegetarian diet -- an important criteria of increased purity -- which bolstered their self-confidence and claims to high rank. A low ranking by Vīrasaivās, especially in Karnātak where they are in the majority.¹⁴ Thus there seems to be an everpresent caste status consciousness in radical Vīrasaivās, leading to caste rivalries, prejudice

¹² M.N. Srinivās, Caste in Modern India and other essays, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962, pp. 42-70.

¹³ I remember that in my childhood, Hindus, especially Brāhmins used to refer to me as 'a Vaisya or grocer's Leela', though I belonged to a Jangama or priestly caste of Vīrasaivās.

¹⁴ Chekki, "Modernisation and kin network in a developing society: India." (World Congress of Sociology, I.S.A., 1970), p. 10.

and segregation; Vīrasaivas, who are infrequently in the academic and military services, have very little hope of improving their status vis-à-vis the majority Hindu community. This has led to further defensive and separatist tendencies producing further peculiar rigidities in the social organisation of the Vīrasaiva sect.

Historians have explained the rigidities of Hindu social organisation during the Muslim and the British regimes.¹⁵ The proud Hindus -- though politically subordinate -- felt themselves as most pure, and thus superior to both Muslims and Britishers. Hindus never accepted any interference by these in religious matters, and kept themselves apart; and by thus defending themselves from these powerful groups, developed customs leading to further restrictive rules and rigidities in their groups. Extreme or almost perverted adherence to pollution and purity rules, the custom of child marriage, the custom of Sati, etc., are some obvious examples of this process.

Vīrasaivism is said to have developed a similar caste structure within its community, based almost on the same criteria as those in the Hindu community. Ethnographers have pointed out some clear example of such rigidities within Vīrasaiva social organisation.¹⁶ The Gurus, spiritual teachers of Vīrasaivism, seem to enjoy extensive resources of the religious establishment and the highest social status. The Gurus are bachelors, an additional criteria of purity. Married Jangamas, by contrast, carry priestly duties and get second place. Along the lines of

¹⁵ K.M. Panikkar, The foundations of New India, (Bombay, Asia, 1964), p. 42.

¹⁶ Ayer, The Mysore C. & T., (Vol. IV, 1933), pp. 81-124.

Hindu Brāhmins, Jangamas prohibit widow remarriage, and strictly observe caste endogamy and exogamy rules. In Karnātak (where they are in the majority), Jangamas may take a daughter from another Vīraśaiva caste, but are not supposed to give their daughter in marriage to a non-Jangama. The examples of sub-castes within Vīraśaivas, such as 'black' and 'white' weavers is a further example of internal sub-division.¹⁷ All these attitudes reflect a stress on codification and rank rather than on equality of status as the ideology stipulates.

For the moderate Vāraṅkarīes, there is little possibility of centralisation, hierarchy, or authority in their social organisation. In their regular group pilgrimage each group of village Vāraṅkarīes carries a palanquin, placing in it a symbolic image of God. All these devotees are considered saints by non-pilgrims, who worship the God and venerate the Vāraṅkarīes, giving them offerings of money and fruits. Many hundreds of such groups of Vāraṅkarīes meet at Pandharpūr on particular auspicious days. Even at Pandharpūr, no one group of Vāraṅkarīes is considered as superior to another. All Vāraṅkarīes joining the pilgrimage sing the religious songs (called Bhajanās) and a talented story teller amongst them tells stories of God (called Kīrtanās), at these huge gatherings. Tukārām was such a popular Kīrtankāra or singer long before he was accepted as a sect leader.¹⁸ This unique system of pilgrimage has helped to reduce the importance of purity and pollution,

¹⁷ K. Ishwaran, Tradition and Change in an Indian Village, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 20.

¹⁸ Please refer to Chapter II, section IV.

class and caste consciousness, and to have encouraged group activities in other areas of social life. This, in turn, has led to flexibility and to changes over time in the social organisation of this group.

It is mainly on the basis of my study of the sect ideology of Basavā and of Tukārām, and on the basis of their interpretations that I would like to sum up as follows: it is the radical nature of Basavā's ideology and its peculiar interaction on the basis of class, caste consciousness with Hindus which paradoxically gives rise to rigidities in the Vīraśaiva social organisation. In contrast, it is the moderate ideology of Tukārām with its unique system of pilgrimage which seems to bring direct flexibilities in the Vārakarī panth and indirectly in Mahārāṣṭra as a whole.¹⁹

Some examples of this flexibility of social organisation in Mahārāṣṭra can be seen in the widespread implementation of 20th century reform movements as women's education, greater occupational mobility, more equality of men and women, eradication of untouchable movements by the first untouchable leader, Dr. Ambedkar. There has also been a greater success of cooperative movement in Mahārāṣṭra than in other provinces of India.²⁰

¹⁹This development of categorisation of ideologies and social organisation of two Bhakti sects is not meant to describe social conditions of today, but is meant to open up a possible line of enquiry for fieldwork.

²⁰"The workings of cooperative movement in India," a report published by the Government of India, 1964.

CHAPTER II

Basavā and Tukārām

(Their Ideologies as Seen in Their "Poem-Sayings")

In Chapter I, a theoretical framework was developed to show a general relation of ideology to social organisation as well as to point out the specific relations of two types of ideologies, which have resulted in two types of sect organisation in Southwest India.

In this chapter, I propose to illustrate these two types of ideologies with specific examples. While comparing these ideologies, I will also examine their total framework of ideas and at the same time explicate and substantiate with "poem-sayings" attributed to their leaders the basic categorisation that I have used above. Only those poem-sayings of the sect leaders¹ that are available today in printed form have been selected. These poem-sayings are written in the simple vernacular and are largely self-explanatory. Therefore, my explanations and interpretations will be rather brief.

Before proceeding to the comparison of the poem-sayings of Basavā and of Tukārām, a short sketch of their life and backgrounds may be illuminating. The Basavā Purāna² gives the following life story of Basavā. He was a son of a Śaiva Brāhmin and was born around the 12th century. Worshipping 'Śiva' as one of the major Hindu deities was a tradition

¹There are many other persons who have also contributed to their sect ideologies in lesser proportion.

²Basavā Purāna, a life story of Basavā, a Kannada book, is published at Poona, in 1905.



BASAVĀ

The three horizontal ash marks on his forehead are Śaivite sectarian marks. Of the three necklaces he wears, the top one is of Siva-linga box-tied with thick Siva threads; the middle one is of rudrakṣa, Siva beads and the bottom one is the pearl necklace. This pearl necklace and his crown seem to be occupational status symbols. (He was a prime minister.) Basavā with his fine features and royal dress looks very much like an intellectual Brāhmin leader.

in his family. But Basavā wanted to be a devotee of no other God except Śiva. This strong and extreme stand of Basavā is said to have been expressed by him at his 'initiation' or 'thread ceremony' as a Brāhmin boy of 12. He is said to have refused to undergo this ceremony because he had to say a prayer to the Sun God. For this reason he is said to have left his house along with his sister to pursue their own independent religious life. Later his high intellect and capability is said to have gained him a position as a prime minister of the king, Bijjala (District: Bijapur, Karnātak). Further, we are told that Basavā used his highly critical religious Bhakti ideology and high political position to spread his Vīrśaiva sect (meaning a sect of pure or brave Śaivas).

Tukārām was, by contrast, a son of a Śudra (4th or the lowest ranking caste of the Hindu caste system). He was born around the 17th century. His family had a tradition of being a devotee of Viṭhobā of Paṇḍharpūr for seven generations. So Tukārām was a worshipper of Viṭhoba by family tradition; even long before he became a leader, a preacher and a composer of 'abhangās' (one type of Marāṭhi religious poetry) of the Vārakarī panth. His leadership and related activities of the panth are said to have started rather late in his life, and were due to a series of personal miseries which culminated in the death of his wife in a famine.

The intellectual founder and the father of the Vārakarī sect is said to be Znāneśwar, a 12th century celibate Brāhmin, and a translator of the Gīta into Marāṭhi, called 'Znāneśwari'. But the Vārakarī sect is said to have spread only under Tukārām's leadership. Tukārām used



तुकाराम तुकाराम । नाम धेतां कापे यम ॥ धन्य तुकोबा समर्थ । जेणें केला पुरुषार्थ ॥
जर्ली दगडासहित वखा । तारिल्या जैशा लाखा ॥ म्हणे रामेश्वरभट्ट द्विजा । तुका-विष्णु नाही द्वा ॥

TUKĀRĀM

The scented wood paste on his forehead in a vertical fashion is a Vaiṣṇavite sectarian mark. Tukārām wears a Tulasi bead necklace of Vaiṣṇavites and holds the tal and the tambora, both musical instruments used in his bhajanas and Kīrtanas. In this picture his serene simple face and farmerlike attire reveals him as a typical Bhakti saint of the people. The poetry below the picture of Tukārām was written by a Brāhmin disciple. It talks of Tukārām as an incarnation of Viṣṇu.

'Znaneswari' to tell stories about his God. While telling these stories, he used to intermix or disperse his own abhangas. It was on Tukārām's own initiative that he popularised the system of 'group pilgrimage' (Vārī), and his own Kīrtanas that are said to have attracted the crowds to the Vārakārī sect. Thus Tukārām's poem-songs and his Vārakārī sect ideology were built in this process of story-telling. His poem-sayings are said to have been inspired by his own personal love of God and by direct inspiration from the interested masses who would flock to Pandharpūr just to listen to Tukārām's Kīrtanas.

Even an arbitrary selection of the 'poem-sayings' of Basavā and of Tukārām show them to be the torch-bearers of the Bhakti movement of India. They are called the great drum-beaters of Bhakti. One selection from the main writings of each will serve as an example of what these men said about the path of Bhakti.¹

BASAVA

"Bhakti has made Śiva speak and shiver;
Bhakti has made Śiva eat and wear;
Bhakti has made Śiva sing and dance;
Without Bhakti there is no renunciation and no knowledge.
Bhakti is therefore liberation's mother."

(62, 69, S.M.A.)

TUKĀRĀM

"This Thy nature is beyond the grasp of mind or of words;
And therefore I have made 'Bhakti' 'a measure'.
I measure the endless by the measure of Bhakti; He is not to be truly measured by any other means. Thou art not to be found by 'Yoga', sacrificial rites; practices of austerities and any bodily exertions, nor by knowledge.
Oh! Keshava, accept the service which we render to Thee in the simplicity of our hearts."

(7, 810, I.E.)

¹For additional flavour and support, please refer to the 'poem-sayings' in Appendix 1.

According to both Basavā and Tukārām, 'Bhakti' is not mere 'faith' in some scriptures or in the magical powers of some words like 'mantras' or in actions like Yoga or sacrifices, but it is rather 'an intense and pure love of a devotee towards God, with total surrender of his self-hood'. Thus in Bhakti, a personal relationship between a devotee and the God has been established by each one of the devotees. In addition to this, it is a devotee's own 'experience' or 'feeling' of true devotion which alone leads him to the attainment of his final aim in life, called liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth, or his union with or grade of God.

The Gīta gives 'Bhakti' as one of the ways of salvation, along with 'Jnana' and 'karma' in the 3rd century B.C. But since the beginning of the Bhakti movement, i.e., after the 10th century, 'Bhakti' has been given the predominant place as the only way to salvation by all Bhakti leaders, and more especially by Basavā and Tukārām.

I. Open Membership

The greatest attraction of 'Bhakti' for the masses to begin with was that the doors of liberation were opened to everyone: individuals of all castes and classes and of both the sexes. Neither one's previous life actions, nor one's present caste and sex nor a lack of education and riches, nor ignorance of scriptures and meditations were a barrier for one becoming a follower of the Bhakti movement. Thus entry into such a movement even for the low caste, downtrodden masses, and for women was as good as an entry into heaven. This opportunity could be fully appreciated only by those Indian masses who were previously denied even the opportunity to worship Hindu gods and who were given no hope

of liberation for lives to come.

BASAVĀ

"Whether one is born as a son of a slave or a prostitute, Once he is initiated into the sect of Śiva, it is proper to treat him equal to Śiva. We must salute him, worship him and accept his food and 'feet-water'.

Those who make him sad, would have committed five great sins and thus will be sent to hell by Lord Kudala Sangama".

(61, 214, M.M.)

TUKARĀM

"The fullness of salvation has come for all
It's market is free
Come one, come all!
Partake of it with rejoicing
Here there is no distinction of
③ caste, high or low
Man or woman, Brāhmin or Sudra!"
(27, XX, N & F)

Here Tukārām's 'saying' makes it all clear, that everyone is welcome in his sect. Basavā's additional assurance that each of his initiates will be well treated, seems to be highly reassuring to his followers, but even at this introductory stage, one can easily perceive Basavā's clear intentions of building a solid sect, wherein wrong-doers will get maximum punishment from his God.

Conditions for Membership

Even though both Basavā and Tukārām opened the doors of Bhakti to all to begin with, they did place subtle limitations on entry to improve the nature of Bhakti and its devotees.

BASAVĀ

"In thy life's walk, even as peasant in the field, or what-ever calling thy living yield
Let thy exertion ever, the spirit of work's full impress bear.
Vain would I behold, the devotee's feet, whose great alms-giving comes not of a tainted hoard.

The Jangama whose homilies he hears then will his abode enter

TUKARĀM

"A man who is overwhelmed in his 'sansara' cannot keep his mind anywhere.
Bhakti belongs to such a category where you have to give up everything. Those who try to follow a Vārakartī's life and the lustful business life; they mix things like a donkey does!"

(28, 902, I.E.)

deeming it kailas; and the
 Linga adore as the holiest on
 earth.
 To such I bow and belief bestow,
 Lord Kudala Sangama."
 (55, 83, A.S.T.)

According to Basavā, each devotee must remain in wordly life and have an occupation. Even a Guru and 'Sarana', saints have to take up an occupation. Thus, he rejects the Hindu notion of ascetism to attain liberation nor does he welcome lazy priestly-class people as devotees. The greater part of the devotees' duty is to work with devotion and to contribute whatever his little might be for the building of the sect or for the service of the sect followers. To Basavā, 'work is worship'; he believes in the dignity of labour. It is in this context that he defends being a prime minister and a devotee at the same time (refer to Appendix I, Section I, Basavā 72, 188, S.M.A.). Thus Basavā insists that one must keep on working, consuming and donating to the sect rather than hoarding and putting aside for wife and children. Here Basavā seems to be almost against the institution of private property. On the other hand, one could interpret this condition as contributing to Basavā's intention to build a solid wordly sect of his followers. But for a religious leader of the 12th century, this sounds like an extremely radical position!

On the contrary, according to Tukārām, to be a devotee, one has to give up all wordly attachments and occupations. Though Tukārām talks against the traditional requirements of austerities and forest dwellings, his incessant cry to give up children, wife, money, business, to be a true devotee does not seem to be taking away a devotee from

the traditional standpoint. At times he says that one may perform wordly duties but in a balanced and detached way (Refer Appendix I, section I, Tukārām 12, 97, Bhan. V & S). One could interpret Tukārām's insistence on indifference to wordly duties as due to his main emphasis of sect building for spiritual satisfactions. Thus right at the beginning, we see two different approaches exemplified by these Bhakti leaders in the formation of their sects.

II. Inadequacies of the Then-Existing Hinduism

In advocating Bhakti as the only means to salvation, both leaders had to explain to their followers why they criticised or rejected other Hindu scriptures and practices. Throughout the Bhakti movement, one sees constant criticisms of the inadequacies of the Vedās and other Hindu methods of liberation by all Bhakti sect leaders. The three aspects of Hinduism that are criticised vehemently are mainly:

1. the study of the Vedās
2. superiority of Brāhmins
3. Sin-cleansing Hindu rituals

BASAVĀ

"Do I say Sastra is great? It only exalts Karma!
Do I say Veda is great? It tells of animal sacrifice!
Do I say Smirti is great? It seeks the present sign!
As He is in none of these, Lord Kudala Sangama can be nowhere except in triple dedication."
(79, 292, S.M.A.)

TUKĀRĀM

"Talking of Illusion and Realty the religious cunning ones have made everybody to suffer, along with themselves.
Those who are attached to passions, teach wrong knowledge.
...This is like deceiving a child, by first offering jaggery, while giving medicine. Thus 'they' say for salvation study Vedās! These are all barren words.
Those who protect their 'pinda' Narayana will not meet them."
(25, 98, I.E.)

Basava not only criticises the Vedās, Smrities and all Hindu Śāstras, but he totally rejects them as useless and unacceptable. His criticism of all these scriptures and even the life of rishis and gods as fearful (in his poem 13, 55, A.M.) shows his radical attitude towards Hinduism as a whole.

Compared to Basavā, Tukārām's criticism of the Vedās is quite mild in the sense that Tukārām does not consider the study of the Vedās as necessary for salvation. For Tukārām, the Vedās are studied by Brāhmins in a mechanical way without any feeling which makes the whole study barren. Thus, in one of the poems Tukārām says: "We alone can know Vedās". This quotation infers that we devotees, who study or read anything with feeling and love of God, alone can understand the Vedās. Thus, his criticism of the Vedās is mainly due to the Brāhmanical mechanical and deceitful approach of it and is not so much against the Vedās themselves.

While criticising the Vedās for the above reasons, Tukārām accepts the Gīta (its Marāṭhi translation) one of the Hindu scriptures almost as a Bible. His main desire is to serve God by becoming a preacher, i.e., by telling Kīrtanas, God-Krishna's stories. His pleasure as a preacher was to tell Krishna's adventurous stories, intermingled with his own beautiful poem-songs, the outpourings of his love for God. It is these Kīrtanas that attracted the masses to him and to his sect in large numbers. This could be because the masses felt that here they were getting real spiritual food for the first time.

Thus Tukārām, though he criticises the Vedās for some specific reasons, accepts the Gīta and many traditional practices of Hinduism which makes him as a typical 'traditional' Hindu religious leader in

contrast to 'radical' Basavā who rejects all Hindu scriptures and systems.

All Bhakti leaders have been critical of the Brāhmin's behaviour and claim to superior status because of their claim of knowing the Vedās. Basavā's criticism of Brāhmins and of their superior status-claims is one of the most vehement.

BASAVĀ

"Indulging in love, eating one's food. Is that ever done by a deputy?
Oneself one ought to do, all Linga's rites and ceremonies;
It's never done by deputy --
O Kudala Sangama,
How can they know Thee, Lord,
doing it for mere formality?"
(16, 69, A.M.)

TUKĀRĀM

"A man who gets angry because he is touched by a Chāṇḍālā is not a true Brāhmin. If a Chāṇḍālā is not kind, his internal is polluted. What caste a person is born depends on the 'purity of his mind'."
(24, 55, I.E.)

According to Basavā, a Brāhmin in his role of a priest is like a deputy who worships God and administers all rituals for you as a mere 'formality'. In Bhakti religion, you yourself have to worship God with love. Thus he criticises Brāhmins for their behaviour and their claim for superior status (Appendix I, II, Basavā, 74, 198, S.M.A.); he does not grant them 'any place' in his sect. According to Basavā, Brāhmins claim that they read the Vedās, so that they know God is humbug.

Basavā's criticism of the Brāhmin's role and status is so vehement that R.G. Bhandarkar almost accuses Basavā of being a renegade Brāhmin-hater and a scheming politician.

Tukārām, on the other hand, talks in general as to how a Brāhmin should be a man of balanced and calm mind and says that it is one's 'internal purity' which is more loved by God than his caste either as a Brāhmin or as an untouchable. Thus Tukārām's occasional criticisms

of some Brāhmins as being greedy and of some who worship God without feeling for Him seem to be in accord with the general feeling of the time of the Bhakti movement and not similar to that of a radical type like Basavā.

The third important factor of Hinduism that received maximum criticism from Bhakti leaders is 'Brāhmanical ritualism' in general and the place of rituals for liberation in particular.

BASAVA

"Cry, cry O Goat, because you are
slain for words about words!
Cry, cry, before them, that read
the Vedās!
Cry, cry, before them, that hear
the shastrās!
Lord Kudala Sangama, will take
a fit toll for what you rewep!"
(42, 130, A.M.)

TUKĀRĀM

"We lived in the Vaikuntha and
have come for this very reason,
viz. for bringing into practice
truly what the Rishis taught.
The world is overgrown with
weeds; we will sweep clean the
paths trodden by the righteous
and accept what has remained.
The old truths have disappeared.
Mere verbal knowledge has brought
about destruction. The mind is
eager for wordly enjoyment and
the way to God has been wholly
obliterated. We will beat the
drum of Bhakti which carried
fervor to this sinful age; Tukā
says, proclaim victory with joy!"
(14, 520, I.E.)

Basavā criticises and rejects the entire Brāhmanical ritualism for his sect and provides alternative minimum simple rituals. These are initiations, marriages, and funerals, to be performed by the Guru of the sect in a very simple manner, i.e., without any fire or any sacred mantras except 'Om Namas Sivaya'. Of all the Brāhmanical rituals, Basavā criticised the most, the practice of animal sacrifice in Hinduism. He asks elsewhere: "Can there be a religion without compassion?" Thus, according to Basavā's extremely critical eye, Hinduism is full of cruel, barren, and useless ritualisms.

As for Tukārām, the increase in ritualism signifies a fallen state of religion, a religion full of weeds. And Tukārām thinks that it is his role to clean out these weeds. Thus he criticises 'sin cleaning rituals' given by Brāhmins as mere external formalities which do not clean one's internal mind. Otherwise, according to Tukārām, many other Hindu rituals, such as image worship, meditation, Kīrtanas, pilgrimage to Viṭhobā (referred to in his nine-fold forms of worship) etc., carried out with 'deep feeling' (Bhāva) by the devotee are considered as the necessary essentials for Bhakti. Thus Tukārām reserves a high place for worship and prayer in his sect which shows his close relation to Hinduism, in contrast to the radical and separatist approach of Basavā. In other words, Tukārām's ideology is of a 'moderate type' in comparison to the radical ideology of Basavā.

III. The Nature of God and his Relation with Devotees

Having criticised Vedic gods and rituals, Basavā and Tukārām explain to their followers in simple language the nature of their gods and of their relations with Him including the final aim of their life. The explanations of both these leaders on such difficult philosophical issues seem to be so easy to understand and so appealing that their followers could easily develop great faith in them.

BASAVA

"Compassionate one, effacer of my births;
Compassionate one, destroyer of my births; when my life's bondage ceased to be,
Lord, I believed you are indeed Śiva -- my ground and goal.
Because you burnt my eightfold pride,
I found your gracious feet with

TUKARAM

"Even talking of different gods is inauspicious.
Visnu is the only God of this earth 'religion'. You devotees of Bhāgavata, listen, whatever you do, let it be helpful and truthful.
Let us not have jealousy of anybody. Worshiping all gods in One is the real essence. Tukā says, the hurt and enjoyment to different

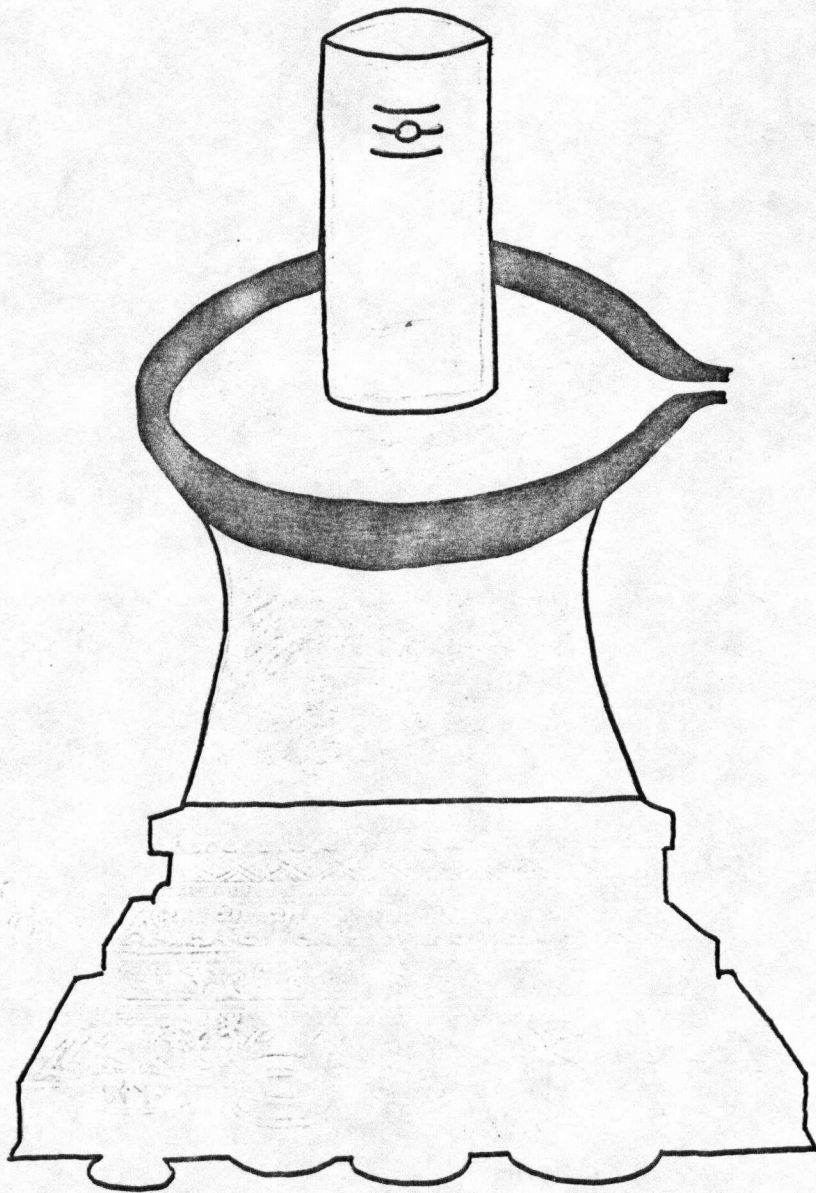
confidence. parts of the body is taken by
 Lord of creation, I believe in you; life (soul) only."
 have mercy upon me, Kudala Sangama (21, 46, I.E.)
 Lord!"

(36, 119, A.M.)

To Basavā, Śiva is the only God, while to Tukārām, Viṣṇu is the only God.² Thus both are monotheistic. But the great contrast comes when they speak of what constitutes these summations of divine character. According to Basavā, Śiva is the only God who is a self-rapt reality. Thus Basavā rejects the existence of all other Hindu gods. In contrast, to Tukārām, Viṣṇu represents a synthesis of all gods in One. Tukārām in his invocations, calls God by many names such as HariHarā, Govindā, Viṭṭhala, etc. In one saying he states clearly that the difference between 'Hari' and 'Hara', i.e., Viṣṇu and Śiva is as negligible as between different letters 'a' and 'i'. At times, he refers even to the 33 Crores of gods living in one. This reference does not refer to Tukārām's blind belief in the Gīta. He explains that all these different names represent different incarnations of God, undertaken to improve religion for man.

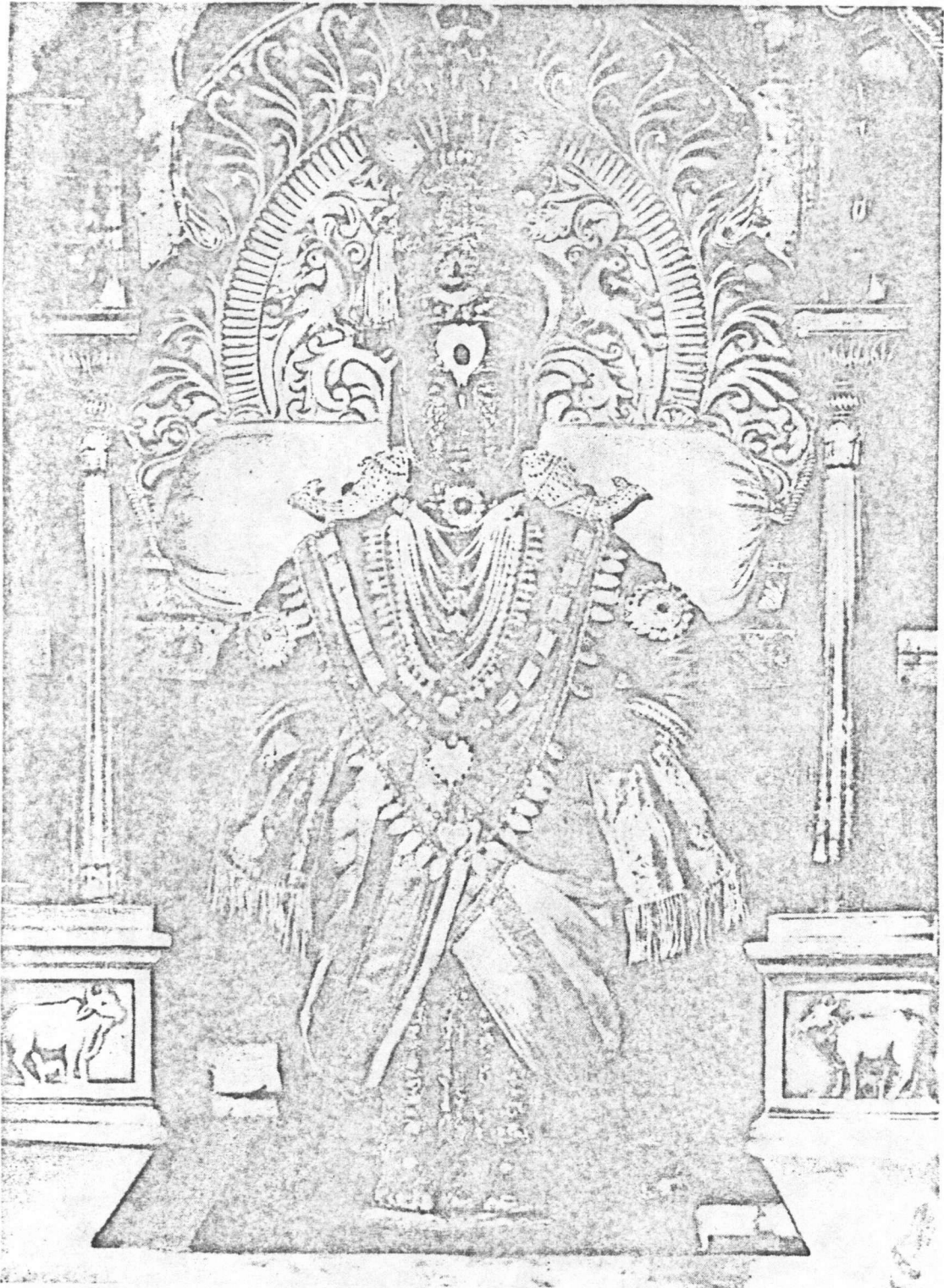
One notices that whatever the divine character, both Basavā and Tukārām believe and proclaim that God stands only as a benevolent and protective spirit. Thus they both reject the worship of all evil and ghostly spirits as bogus and useless (refer Appendix). According to both Basavā and Tukārām, this benevolent God is a real mother who is sure to yield to our Bhakti -- our intense love.

²Please refer to introduction: Basavā and Tukārām follow two rival sects of Bhakti of the South.



ŚIVA-LINGA

The Śiva-Linga as seen in temples. There is no image worship of Śiva. This linga is considered as a symbolic form of Śiva. It is generally not decorated to depict Śiva's fondness for simplicity, except for the sectarian mark of Vibhūti.



माझी विठ्ठल माउली । प्रेमपान्हा पान्हायेली ॥ कुवळिनि लावीं स्तनीं । न वजे दुरी जवळुनि ॥
केली पुरवी आळी । नव्हे निष्ठुर कोंवळी ॥ तुका म्हणे घांस । मुखी घाली न्दरस ॥

VITHOBĀ

One of the images of Viṣṇu which is worshipped mostly in the Southwestern part of India. This image is well dressed and well decorated. It is the central God of the Vārakārī sect of Mahārāstra.

Though Basavā and Tukārām are monotheistic and believe in the benevolent power of God, they differ totally regarding the relation of God to man after liberation. According to Basavā, a devotee merges in God, while according to Tukārām a devotee does not merge in God, but receives the grace of God and thus is redeemed from all miseries and enters into a permanent state of bliss.

BASAVĀ

"As long as worship is, I sing
of Linga.
As long as action is, I sing of
prasāda.
As long as there is tongue, I
sing of prasāda.
Since these three ceased to be,
myself I sing, mark you
O Lord Kudala Sangama Lord!"
.

(70, 88, S.M.A.)

TUKĀRĀM

"Advaita' became 'dvaita' because
Narāyana became fond of Bhakti.
A formless one took the form of
four handed one, the original
purpose is the same and not diffe-
rent. Leaving the voidness, he has
stood on the brink. Without any
doubt, we should take his name
happily."

Tukā says: with all happiness, I am
singing his name without ever
seeing Him."

(37, 49, I.E.)

Philosophically, Basavā is said to belong to 'advaita' philosophy. But his explanation of 'advaita' seems to be unique. Along with other Bhakti movement leaders, he agrees that when a man is initiated as a devotee, his relation is still of 'dvaita' type, i.e., he is away or different from God. According to Basavā that is because a devotee, to begin with, is ignorant ('avidya') of God's real nature. But later, through stages of discipline called the 'six-fold mystic path'³ a

³ Six-fold mystic ways -- refer to Chap. XI from S.C. Nandimath Handbook of Virsaivism, 1942, Dhawar, India. These ways are considered as stages in the devotee's walk of life towards union. These stages are:

1. Becoming a bhakta by his faith.
2. Becoming a 'Maheswara' by steadfastness in that faith.
3. A 'prasadi' by vigilance in that steadfastness.
4. A 'pranalingi' by self-experience in that vigilance.
5. A 'sarana' by awareness in self-experience: the mystery abiding in a state of will-lessness.
6. When that awareness has been merged into Truth, i.e., 'Aikya stala', meaning a stage of union.

devotee merges into God. This unique philosophy of Basavā is called 'dvaitadvaita'. Basavā's departure from the traditional concept of 'dvaita' philosophy is due to his own outlook. Basavā does not accept this world as an illusion, but to him, this is the real world which helps a devotee to merge with God and thus leads to liberation.

But for Tukārām, a devotee is equal in status to God yet is different from God and stays so even after being liberated. Being liberated, a devotee receives the grace of God. Tukārām explains his position by asking a question: "If God and a devotee are one and the same, whom can you love?" He further explains in the above saying that it is God himself getting very fond of Bhakti who established this 'dvaita' relationship. According to Tukārām, after liberation, we reach a permanent state of bliss, because we forget the littleness of 'me' and 'mine'. Though Tukārām is not a learned man, his thinking and explanation seem to be quite organised and clear, even on such a difficult philosophical issue.

IV. Structural Organisation of Their Sects

In this section we shall see more clearly the great contrasts of the two leaders in organising their sects and in expressing their leadership.

BASAVĀ

" 'Om namas Śivaya!' short of this spell, the Vedā stays!
 'Om namas Śivaya!' Short of this spell the Sāstra stays!
 'Om namas Śivaya!' short of this spell the Tarkā stays!
 All charms and talismans are held, aghast and amazed!
 Ignorant of Śiva's essence, the world is troubled with thought.

TUKĀRĀM

"His name and stories are the easiest means that will burn all sins of many previous lives!
 One does not have to go to forests, Nārayanā Himself comes home happily. Wherever you are, concentrate on Him and invoke Him with love!
 'Ramakrishna, Hāre, Viṭṭhala, Kashava' is the mantrā that must be said all the time.

Since Lord Kudala Sangama up-
raised, a sweeper, they can make
no more distinctions between
caste and caste!"

(5, 32, A.M.)

If there are many other 'means'
than these, I can swear by Viṭhoba
Tukā says: this is the easiest of
all; He is the wise master who
accepts it." (37, 2458, I.E.)

Basavā having rejected all the ancient texts and rituals seems to
have been strangely bent on building a new sect of brave 'saivites'
called 'Vīr'saivās'. In place of the Vedās, shastrās and magical mantrās,
Basavā says that Śiva himself has given the most powerful simple mantra,
i.e., 'Om Namas Śivaya'. This simple mantra, according to Basavā, has
a great magical power to kill or burn all evils, especially the evil of
caste distinctions. Thus according to Basavā, all Śiva-bhaktās are
equal.

While Tukārām does not reject overtly all Hindu scriptures, but
says that for a devotee to show his love to God, no 'mantra' or sacred
formula is necessary, except 'His name'. Tukārām says to take the name
of "Hari" continually and meditate on Him, with all love and total sur-
render of one's self. Thus repeatedly Tukārām says that in Bhakti, God
has shown us the easiest way to reach Him.

Both Basavā and Tukārām simplify the need for sacred texts and
formulas to their logical extremes, but they differ in the organisations
of the lives of the devotees in their socio-religious life.

BASAVĀ

"In making a pot, the clay comes
first; in making an ornament, the
gold comes first;
In knowing Siva's path, the
Guru's path comes first;
In knowing Kudala Sangama, the
fellowship of Saranas comes first!"

TUKĀRAM

"Do you know how Viṭṭhala's
love is?
He is God, but also becomes a Guru.
He fulfills all our desires, to
take us to Him. He stands around
us protecting from any strokes of
difficulty."

"Without the Guru's word, Linga
it cannot be;
Without the Guru's word, External
it cannot be;
Without the Guru's word, observ-
ance it cannot be;
Will our Lord, Kudala Sangama
approve the doubly fouled who crown
a headless trunk?"

(68, 82, S.M.A.)

Knowing Him is very difficult,
but He shows the 'way' (to go to
Him) by holding our hands, If
you don't believe me, consult
'puranas'.

(33, 873, I.E.)

"Linga is not a stone symbol. The
Guru draws out the conscience force,
inherent in the disciple, and cap-
tures it in the Linga and installs
it on his person. The disciple, in
a sense worships his own self. When
he worships it realizing his own self,
he rises to the height of Siva --
Istalinga."

(68, 82, S.M.A.)

Though Basavā speaks of the only, simple powerful mantra, he
thinks that 'a siva-bhakta' has to go through six highly disciplined
mystic stages of life (pl. refer to footnote no. 3, P.B.). Thus, it is
absolutely essential to begin with that the sect has a Guru of high
spiritual and intellectual capacity who initiates every Śivabhakta and
teaches not only the simple magical mantra, but the ways and stages of
devotion, to be concentrated on the worship of Linga.⁵ Along with a
Guru, Basavā establishes another class of ideal devotees called
Jangama. Jangama is a moving, unattached preacher, who preaches the
Śiva-path and keeps the spiritual life of the sect alive. Basavā held
Guru and Jangama equal in status with Linga, i.e., God Himself.

⁵ Linga is a small soft-stone image of 'Śiva Linga' which is given by
a Guru, by putting his spiritual power in it. Every Śivā-bhakta is
supposed to wear it on him and worship it daily. Further also, refer
to p. 82, S.M.A.



SRĪMAN MAHARAJA NĪRANJANA JAGATGURU
JAYADEVA MURUGHARAJENDRA MAHASWAMI
CHITALDRUG, MYSORE STATE.



BĀBURAO HARI DEVAḌIKĀR OF PANDHARPŪR A BLIND
'HARIDĀS' (PREACHER) AND 'WĀRKARĪ' WHO KNOWS
TUKĀRĀM'S THOUSANDS OF *abhaṅgs* BY HEART

a) A Vīrasaīva Guru

In front of his seat are his wooden slippers which are considered to be most pure. The sectarian marks of Vibhūti are on his forehead and Rudraksa necklace around his neck. He looks like a person with authority.

b) A Blind Vārakarī Preacher

He is in a farmer's dress. He wears a necklace of Tulasi beads around his neck and a Vaisnavite sectarian mark on his forehead. He possesses neither authority, nor special status as a preacher. He is one of the millions of Vārakarīes.

After having organised the roles of Guru and Jangama for initiation and preaching in his sect, Basavā also gives his own method of performing three compulsory rituals for every Śiva-bhakta. The rituals are 'initiation', 'marriage', and 'funeral'. In these rituals, Basavā rejects both the need of Brāhmin priests and the need of 'God fire' as a purifier. Instead, it is the Guru and the eight aids of a Śivabhakta⁶ which need to be present while the Guru performs the rituals.

Such a systematic organisation of the socio-religious lives of Śiva-bhakta by Basavā points clearly to the fact that it was not only a spiritual urge that forced Basavā to form a new sect. Basavā seems to have rebelled against the entire Hindu social structure of the time. He provided a neat and simple alternative scheme of day-to-day life for his sect followers. This shows his high calibre as a leader and his great capacity to build a solid sect.

Basavā established an 'assembly of enlightened saints', to encourage free debates, requesting Prabhudeva, his Guru, to lead the discussion.⁷ This unique sect organisation had deep roots in the socio-religious organisation of the sect rather than in purely religious and spiritual life.

Tukārām's sect organisation on the other hand is centered more

⁶Guru, Jangama, Linga, Prasada (God's offering), padodaka (God's feet water), Vibhūti (a square cake of white ashes), rudraksa (Śiva beads), and mantra are the eight aids of a Śiva-bhaktā.

⁷This assembly called 'Anubhava Mantapa' is said to have attracted saints from Kashmir; many enlightened women saints and untouchable saints were the main participants in this assembly.

entirely on the spiritual life of the devotee. Tukā says: "In addition to the name of Hari, what we need in our spiritual path of a Bhaktā, is to listen to the stories of Krisna (through Kīrtanās) and to observe 'nine-fold form' of worship' as prescribed in the Gita.⁸" Thus there does not seem to be a special need for a Guru to initiate and to transmit his spiritual power, etc., in Tukārām's sect. Tukārām says that God Himself becomes a Guru and which affirms the above conclusion.

Although Tukārām does not see the need of a Guru and any other formal rituals for his sect, he finds the need for a 'company of saints' absolutely essential for every Vaiṣṇavite to learn to be a true devotee. He says: "Wherever there is a company of saints, gods come running, being fond of Bhakti".

In order to bring together such 'a company of saints' regularly at one place, he reorganises and reinforces twice annually a pilgrimage to Vithobā at Pandharpūr on the 11th day of Ashādhī and Kārtikī (July-August, October-November). Actually, today's name of his sect, called 'Vāraṅkarī panth' (a sect of pilgrims), comes from this tradition of regular group pilgrimage.⁹

TUKĀRĀM

"There is a city on the banks of Bhimā, called Pandharpūr. There lives a watchman who has four hands and 16 thousand wives. We will go

⁸ Remembering of Him, utterance of His name and glory, salutation, resorting to His feet, constant worship of Him with devotion, surrender of the whole self to Him, hearing his praise, servitude and companionship are the nine forms of worship.

⁹ Deleury, pp. IX-X, 16.

dancing to His city. We will get the happiness of play and rest. Those who went ahead of us got liberated and they talk of His great strength. He killed the cobra and protected the people -- saints have set up shops. Whatever each one wants, is there! Both food and liberation are free there!...

We got plenty of pilgrims - Those who have seen Pandharī, is like being in a heaven. I had that desire for a long time, Today it became possible easily Tukā says: it is your blessings that I have been able to meet."

(46, 194, I.E.)

For those joining this pilgrimage, Tukā insists on one thing, that a Vārakarī should spend all the time thinking of God alone. The participants in these pilgrimages seem to go through a unique socio-religious experience of brotherhood and joint love for God. No distinctions of castes and riches and knowledge are observed. Some of the disciplines prescribed for: everyone has to be a simple vegetarian, to wear simple dress and to have simple living habits. This pilgrimage generally includes walking and singing together while carrying one's own local messages of Gods and people. On the way to pilgrimage (around 80 to 100 miles), thousands of non-participants worship the gods and venerate the Vārakarīes as Vithobā's messengers. When Vārakarīes reach Pandharī, their worship is offered on behalf of the group. Thus this group of Vārakarīes bathe together in a river, worship together, fast together, sing together and listen together (generally at night) to the stories of God Krishna.

Thus Vārakarīes, though they have no central organisation, attain

through these regular pilgrimages a strong bond of brotherhood and spiritual satisfactions, of the highest kind. For Vārakarīes, this pilgrimage is a training centre to be a true devotee. Thus Tukārām's rejuvenation of this tradition of 'group pilgrimage' (that continues to this date) seems to be a unique and dynamic type of sect organisation amongst all the Bhakti sects.

After this outline of Basavā's and Tukārām's sect organisations, it is necessary to have a glimpse of their feelings concerning their roles as leaders of their sects.

BASAVA

"You have come to do the work,
that I have come to do;
I have come to do the work, that
you have come to do;
Allama Prabhudevā has come to do
the work that you and I have come
to do...and so, in a few days,
Kalyana was a lamp, I was the oil,
second-in-command the wick,
Prabhudevā was the light of it.
However the lamp is broken, the
oil is dry, the light extinct!"

(48, 160, A.M.)

TUKARAM

"I am requesting everyone by keeping
my head on their feet.
Oh, listeners and speakers, all of you,
accept only what is good!
I have broken the treasury,
but it's my Master's property.
I am your servant, the carrier of
that treasury!
Tukā says: "the goods" found worthy
after testing are accepted by all
the countries."

(45, 696, I.E.)

Basavā, as a devotee, even while invoking God, clearly points out his great urge to lead and to build a sect of Śivabhaktās. He believed that he and his band of saints had to make incessant efforts to build a sound society of Śivabhaktās. While doing so, he neither spared any criticism of Hindu texts and priests, nor spared his efforts and the use of his occupation as a prime minister to build a brave society of Śiva-bhaktās. So the encyclopedia of religion and ethics (ed. Hastings) describes Basavā being shockingly radical even to Śaivites.

Tukārām was a leader of a different category: he loved to do

kīrtanas. Tukārām had the greatest facility for making poems. Tukārām, being Śūdra, was denied this opportunity in the beginning by Brāhmins.

But later, being convinced of his genius as a poet-saint, everyone including Brāhmins of his time, flocked to Pandhārī to listen to his

kīrtanas.¹⁰ While doing Kīrtanas, Tukārām used to take a humble role of 'a carrier' of God's treasury. Because of his humility, he is described in the encyclopedia as a mere 'sage', in comparison with Basavā, a religious 'leader'. No doubt to be humble is part and parcel of Tukārām's personality. But his inner urge to lead his sect followers does not seem to be less strong. (Refer appendix I, IV, 54, 987, I.E.) Some intellectuals, finding Tukārām's role as a leader inadequate, have directed these criticisms at him; they say that Tukārām neither thinks of building a better social structure, nor of removing existing social evils and ritualism; instead he became an idol worshipper at Pandhārī and does not talk of any occupation of the saints, etc.

However, it seems to me that Tukārām's shortcomings are due either to his personal background or to his insistence on indifference to worldly life. To a very great extent, it also could be due to his basic philosophy that as a leader it is his duty to complain to God about existing evils and then God will incarnate Himself to build a better ethical and religious society for his sect. Thus, he always considers himself as a servant of God. As a matter of fact, Tukārām represents the most humble leader of Deccan peasants directly and of intellectuals.

¹⁰ Ency. of R. & E. Vol. 12 (1922), pp. 466-69.

indirectly.¹²

V. The Definition and Place of Saints

Saints have a unique place of respect and authority in the entire Bhakti movement. Thus we see Basavā talking of 'Śaranas' for saints and Tukārām of 'Santas' for saints as the true devotees on earth who give us training to be a devotee without any fees and without force.

"Such are saints like the gems of Bhakti" according to both leaders.

BASAVĀ

"Look at their hearts, they are poor!
Look at their hearts, they are rich!
Look at their wealth, they are poor!
But they are rightly endowed with great heart!
Kudala Sanga's Śaranas, all heroes, above all sentiment!
Whom could I compare them to?
(73, 193, S.M.A.)

TUKĀRĀM

"...The valuable diamond is only that which does not burn in fire. Tukā says: he alone is a 'saint' who can put up with all the strokes of the world."

(22, 50, I.E.)

According to Basavā, Śaranas are the living ideals of the devotees. They may be poor materially, but they have the most rich and the most kind hearts. For them service of men is service of God. They have total control over their passions. They are so holy, according to Basavā, that the very ground they walk on is holy, and whatever they speak is 'a Śiva doctrine'. They are the living authorities on Vīrśaivism. Thus according to Basavā even if they rebuke and strike, it is always for our good.

While talking of saints and their unique place in his sect,

¹¹ Prathana Samaja, an intellectual social reformist group of Mahārāṣṭra have included Tukārām's 350 songs in their prayer while others read him at home and in temples in their home towns regularly.

Basavā utters a warning to his followers. He says one should not 'follow' a person who merely calls himself a 'Śarana'. One must select them with 'open eyes' (refer Appendix I, Section 4, 12, 54, A.M.). And once you do that, you are in the hands of safe persons. Thus Basavā rules out for his sect followers anything to do with blind and total faith. Basavā's stand certainly seems to be quite radical in the field of religion in general and more so in the specific context of India.

Tukārām also gives a central place to saints in his sect.

According to Tukārām, they are the kindest, the purest, and the toughest ones. His entire Vārakarī sect organisation is around the saints. But in contrast to Basavā, Tukā says, "don't question about the good and the bad qualities of saints; that is the greatest sin". Thus in a way Tukā prescribes blind and total faith in saints; which seems to go with his religious tradition of being a moderate one.

Having described the qualities and role of saints, Tukā and Basavā have shown through hundreds of their invocations, how they have gone through a long path of struggle before they attained the status of ideal devotee or saint.

BASAVĀ

"Him, the golden-sandled one, Him
of the tresses reaching down to
heel,
Him smeared all over with sacred
ash, Him who holds in his hand the
skull,
Him who became half-woman, Him who
watched at Bana's door;
Him who played bawd to Nambi, for
Cola poured a shower of gold;
Him, the captor of my heart, who
lives in the heart of all the
'devotees';
Him who swells in worship done;
Him who is called Kudala Sanga;
Find Him and Bring Him, Mother
mine!"

TUKĀRĀM

"How beautiful is the image of God,
Standing on a brick, His hands on
his hips.
I shall always love this image,
a garland of Tulsi-beads round its
neck, and a silk 'doti' round
its loins.

On its ears the fish-shaped
pendant shines on its breasts the
jewel Kaustubha!
Tukā says: All my joy is in this
image, I am gazing with love at its
beautiful face."

(6, 2, I.E.)

BASAVĀ

"Do not defile the undefiled,
chasing me with this dog, the
world.
My mind is all one thought of
Thee; nothing I know save Thee;
I wed Thee in my maidenhood, and
was conjoined with Thee.
Pray heed me, O Great Linga: Thy
wife am I, and Thou my Lord.
Even as the master guards his
house, Thou art the guardian of
my heart.
Should my heart that has known Thy
love stray somewhere,
It is Thy honour that is lost,
O Kudala Sangama Lord!"

(39, 126, A.M.)

"With praise on praise, mine own
from sheer love set me up
Upon a gallows of gold! This
praise of me enfolds me round and
round!
Lord, Your regard, alas! has
smitten me like whetted sword!
Oh! Oh I am hurt, I cannot bear
it any more!
O Kudala Sangama Lord, if You do
love me, come between and bar
this praise, O merciful!"

(32, 108, A.M.)

TUKĀRĀM

"Let people outcaste me and call me
a prostitute, but this gardener does
not believe (them).
I have given up the interests in
this world and have become indif-
ferent.
I have neither fear, nor desire
for this life.
People say that Tuka has become
the beloved of Hari, I don't pay
any attention to it."

(48, 8, I.E.)

"What shall I do with fame and
wordly honour and greatness? Do
show me Thy feet. Do not bring
about this, that Thy servant should
go for nothing. If I become great
and bear the burden of ostentatious
knowledge, I shall go away from Thy
feet farther and farther. What pos-
sibility is there of people knowing
the internal condition? A man is
judged by his external appearances.
Even adversity will be sweet to me,
if it leads me to Thy feet."

(8, 1133, I.E.)

When both Basavā and Tukārām, while invoking their gods, praise
with pride their beauty, ornaments, etc., one cannot regard them as
examples of 'idol worshippers'; one has to see them as examples of
devotees being in a state of offering their intense love to their
Gods when they forget all ideological philosophies for a while¹²

¹² For example, Basavā is against temple worship, but his invocations
are offered to Kudala Sangama who is decorated in image form,
and he talks of all Śiva roles as given in Hindu mythologies; while
Tukārām, unattached to all possessions, gazes at the gold ornaments
that beautify his God.

and concentrate on their images of gods with all their possible capacity to love. One of the personal relations usually spoken of between a devotee and a God is that of a child and the mother, and at times also that between a wife and the husband. Bhakti is a unique religion, wherein, on the one hand, a devotee gives up all wordly attachments and passions, instead builds up a personal relation with God and feels the same human emotions of love, enchantment, anger, pangs of separation, the bliss of union in a conjugal relation with God (on a sublime level). While invoking God as a mother, both Basavā and Tukārām, insist that it is His obligation to protect and love them. A second important idea about the relationship between the God and a devotee is the idea that God is like a husband or a Lord and a devotee like a wife. Their union is the total bliss. And their separation is unbearable to a devotee-wife. In this relation also one sees that a devotee is pleading to his God to accept him by putting additional responsibility of obeying her husband-Lord.

Both Basavā and Tukārām have a great facility for making beautiful poems that show their deepest, sublimest emotions in the simplest possible language, with analogies of day-to-day life. Thus both are great poet devotees of the highest calibre. The main difference one notices is that Basavā looks at God as a guide who would discipline his emotions and make him a balanced and serene devotee, while Tukārām's invocations sound like that of a helpless child. The latter talks loudly and repeatedly of the countless sins he has committed, his total inability to control his passions, his inability to break all his attachments. Thus in short, he sounds like a miserable soul, who is invoking God in

hundreds of ways, to excuse him for all the sins, to help him control his weak human passions of love and anger, etc., and to show His grace to redeem him from this permanent misery. At one time, Tukārām pleads God to give him 'darshana', and at other times, Tukārām scolds Him as a thief¹³ who has taken away everything from him and still is testing him and making joke of him, etc. In I.E. edition, out of a total of 4607, about 1000 sayings are all of his repeated cries of helplessness, of being a sinner and of being caught in these cruel worldly duties. Tukārām is very popular and sounds very human due to these invocations. When Vārakarīs sing these abhangas of Tukārām, they feel that those are the outpourings of their own hearts. Thus Tukā is considered as one of the greatest devotee or saint in the Bhakti movement.

In the last two invocations of the above section, we see the acceptance of Basavā and Tukārām by the followers as their leaders and a vivid but similar description of their reactions to it. At first, both feel proud of such praise, but suddenly they make themselves aware of the fact that it is not pride, but humility which is the real characteristic of a devotee and they request God to bestow that on them. This similarity of experiences shows them both how they reached the stage of true devotees, at the same time when they were accepting the leadership of their sects.

VI. The Specific Routes to Becoming a Devotee

The entire Bhakti movement stresses the need to improve the moral system that will purify the mind of the individual, in contrast to the

¹³ Krishna's mythological role of a thief is repeated by Tukārām.

existing predominance of performing some rituals as sin cleansers;
both Basavā and Tukārām give the necessary moral ways of behaviour;
their devotee followers have to follow through the following sayings:

BASAVĀ

"Thou shall not steal nor kill;
nor speak a lie;
Be angry with no one, nor scorn
another man;
Nor glory in thyself, nor others
hold to blame....
This is your inward purity; this
is your outward purity;
This is the way to win our Lord,
Kudala Sangama."

(21, 83, A.M.)

"Let not, O Lord, my body, mind,
and wealth
Slacken in service of thy 'saranas!
Make Thou my body thrill to
service; make my mind be charmed
by it;
And for it, make my wealth to
waste.
Make me to sing and dance, to
gaze and love."

(34, 115, A.M.)

"Does not a crow, on seeing a
crumb, call to its flock?
Does not a hen, on finding a drop,
call, clacking to her brood?
If, being a Bhakta, a man lacks
loyalty to his own faith,
He is worse than hen or crow,
O Kudala Sangama Lord!"

(33, 111, A.M.)

TUKĀRĀM

"Those who desire other's wealth
and wife are 'polluted' and those
away from both are 'pure'."

(44, 989, I.E.)

"God do you want me to fill my
stomach by calling myself a
devotee?"

(44, 977, I.E.)

"A person who is kind to all,
even saints will salute him with all
devotion
If you get proud of learnt know-
ledge, you will go to hell.
There may be distinctions between
diamond, gold and stone, but saints
don't distinguish people like that.
A man who thinks of the river
Ganges as a stream in comparison to a
sea, is the sinner...."

(40, 1456, I.E.)

"If we are embraced by them (saints),
that will lead us to salvation.
That is why saints are well known.
By their meeting, all the auspicious
times and pilgrimages, come to our
feet. Tukā says: "God, let me have
a chance to serve them."

(13, 51, I.E.)

According to both Basavā and Tukārām, a devotee must start first
by cleaning one's own body and mind. For cleaning one's inner self,
rituals are useless. So Tukā says: "If one's body is not clean, what
can soap do...?" i.e., thus, not rituals but proper physical and mental
disciplines are essential for internal cleansing. According to both,

some additional disciplines are: eating simple vegetarian food (believed to give a serene temperament), not lusting for another's property, wife or life. These are some of the ways that are believed to bring internal purity. Further, both leaders insist that the signs of internal purity must be seen in the external purity of a devotee also; such as a devotee must be humble, kind, helpful, hospitable, graceful and content. Thus for a devotee, the attainment of such internal and external purity has to be the backbone of his life and the basis of his sect organisation.

'SAINTS AS TEMPLES'

How can a devotee attain these internal purities? Both Basavā and Tukārām insist that these cannot be attained as soon as one is initiated, nor by visiting temples, nor by pilgrimages. The real temples of Bhakti sects are 'saints' themselves. So both insist that devotees must spend as much time as possible 'in the company' and 'in the service' of the saints.¹⁴ Service of the saints, according to Tukārām and Basavā, is like service to God and society. Though Basavā says that "In making pot clay comes first, so in initiating a devotee, a Guru comes first"; but Basavā insists that a devotee can become a true devotee only in the company and service of saints. Basavā says in poem (34, 115, A.M.) and at other places: "Make my body as sleepers of Śaram's feet". In some other sayings, Basavā clearly says to give

¹⁴ Encyclopedia of R. & E. (ed. Hastings), Vol. II, pp. 539-551 comments that the Bhakti movement gives the highest place to the Gurus. This seems questionable to me because it is the saints and not the Gurus who seem to guide the Bhakti sects. Both Basavā and Tukārām are called saints.

one's wealth to a Śarana and not to a Guru or Jangama, so-called officials of the sect. Thus in both these sects, it is saints who are the real "temples".

VII. Eradication of Social Evils

Historians have interpreted the rise of Bhakti movement as the result of a decadent moral state of society.¹⁵ Many claims are made by different Bhakti sect scholars as to their leaders being mainly social reformers. Nandimath insists that the outstanding feature of "revived Vīraśaivism (of Basavā)" is its zeal for social reform.¹⁶

Last but not least in importance is to look at the viewpoints of Basavā and Tukārām regarding the problems of eradicating social evils and to improve the living conditions of their followers.¹⁷

BASAVĀ

"What merit claim as devotee, if
fear of jeopardy in sanctity,
Their life is taboo-ridden, and
look e'en in meat and raiment
For that which is forbidden?
How regard them Thine, when they
in matrimonial matching to group
and clan exclusive incline? Like
a woman in period-pollution finds
no cleansing,
pure tho' water be in ablution:
So avail their devotion, Lord
Kudala Sangama!"

(56, 87, A.S.T.)

TUKĀRĀM

"These are not my words: I am a
hired servant of Viṭhoba. Earnest
and sincere teachers are badly needed,
for there are imposters who eat and
drink and who do even worse; their
desires are set on shawls, money
and pots; matted hair and ashes are
a scandal when the mind has no
patience and forbearance. Such
people sink themselves and destroy
the ship of salvation, but a true
preacher rescues others by the
sweet perfume of his words."

(Encl. of R. & E. Vol. XII, pp. 466-69)

¹⁵ V.D. Mahajan, Muslim Rule in India, (Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1962), pp. 70-74.

¹⁶ S.C. Nandimath, A Handbook of Vīraśaivism, (Dharwar: L.E. Association, 1942), p. 15.

¹⁷ Most of them being non-Brahmins.

BASAVĀ

"They make me bear the brunt,
 O Lord, of being born in a superior
 caste.
 Behold Kakayya, will not offer me,
 his cast-off food;
 Lō! Dasayya will not pour for me
 his buttermilk,
 The reverend Chennayya will not
 look at me!
 O Kudala Sangama Lord, Exalted
 glory, alack, alack for me!"

(62, 75, S.M.A.)

TUKĀRĀM

"Saints ate, and there are some
 leftovers. Let us finish all of
 it. I am all away from pollution -
 purity. I am fond of eating
 together. No one should have any
 doubt about it. Tukā has been
 corrupted by this feast.
 But this puzzle has been solved
 for me by Narāyana."

(19, 39, I.E.)

On this issue of removing the social evils we see striking differences between the approaches taken by two leaders. Along with building his sect, Basavā tries to criticize and eradicate the social evils of his time by choosing alternative ways of behaviour. Basavā, though himself a Brāhmin, questioned and attacked the Brāhmin's claim for superiority by birth and by occupation. So he calls himself the low born, and the untouchable saints as kakayya, etc. as the most superior ones even to himself. Thus in one reference he says "I begged of Kakayya...they have filled my bowl of bhakti." Thus he says that they are his guide and superiors. He shows his pain at a time when the saints would not treat him with equality, but as a superior one.

Secondly, having attacked the superiority of Brāhmins, he establishes equality amongst all śivabhaktas by putting a logical question. If you make distinction between śivabhaktas, that means you make a distinction between one Linga from another -- (both are going to merge in one Linga-God). So such a distinction between Sivabhaktas is stupid and unacceptable.

Thirdly, his formation of Anubhava mantapa, an assembly of saints of all castes and sects, for the purpose of free religious discussions

points out almost to a revolutionary activity in the religious life in general and Indian traditions in particular.

Fourthly, Basavā attacked against five pollutions, (pañc sutakas). He argued that for Śiva-bhaktas, the Linga keeps them always in a state of purity, so no pollutions stay with them. Thus Basavā attacked against caste pollutions, death pollutions, women's menstrual pollution, etc. Basavā not only attacks all these evils, but also introduces positive measures to fight against these evils. The practice of eating together in a maṭh (was like accepting a 'prasada', God's food), was introduced by Basavā mainly to abolish the idea of caste pollutions amongst Sivabhaktas. While an introduction of the practice of widow remarriage was to remove widow's stigma as an inauspicious person and her being in a state of pollution, woman was allowed to worship her Linga not only on normal occasions, which was denied by Hindu practices, but even when she would be in her monthly periods which shows his positive steps to eradicate all these pollutions for Vīraśaivas.

All these radical reforms of the 12th century leader Basavā can be compared to some extent only with the slum cleaning drive of Gandhiji of the 20th century. These radical reforms (many to have been followed to this date) seem to have significant social implications for the followers of his sect.

In contrast, Tukārām criticised only sporadically the Brāhmins superior status, their claim of knowing Vedās, evil spirit worshippers, false saints (Gosāvīs), caste pollutions, etc. But he himself led a very indifferent (vīrakta) life in relation to the day-to-day activities of his followers. His only contact with and concentration on his

followers was through Kīrtanas and bhajanas (story-telling and dancing in a group with religious songs).

Thus Tukārām prescribes a simple sect, but calls it the most powerful one. He gathered a very large following for his sect and taught spiritual bhakti as the only aim of his sect. That is why he is called "a sage" and his sect, as the bhakti sect of the highest calibre amongst the entire bhakti movement.¹⁸

Tukārām does not seem to have introduced any drastic social changes except popularising pilgrimages to Viṭhobā, Kīrtanas, vegetarianism and extreme attachment to God, which continue even to this day.¹⁹

Thus one could summarise the roles of Basavā and Tukārām on the basis of their 'poem-sayings': Basavā as a socially-radical bhakti leader, Tukārām as a spiritual bhakti leader of a moderate type. They left their influence on their followers for centuries to come which demonstrates the dynamism of their leadership in the Southwest region of India.

¹⁸Encl. of R. & E. (ed. Hastings, Vol. XII), pp. 466-69.

¹⁹Ibid., 15 million visit Pandharpur every year.

CHAPTER III

The Logical Implications of Sect Ideology for Sect Organisation

In Chapter I, I examined the nature of the relationship of ideologies to social organisation, mentioning that ideologies arise to provide for alternative systems of social organisation. I feel that ideologies are as directly related to social organisations as theory is to practice.

Various facets of this relationship have been examined in comparing two Bhakti ideologies of Vīrasaivas and Vāraṅkarīs. I found a theoretical framework to contain and to compare these two sects ideologies and social organisations. Vīrasaiva and Vāraṅkarī ideologies are seen to fit into a categorisation of ideologies: 'radical' and 'moderate'. I concluded that the radical nature of Vīrasaiva ideology which is provided to build 'flexible' social organisation, paradoxically gives rise to 'rigid' social organisation for Vīrasaivas. On the contrary the 'moderate nature' of Vāraṅkarī ideology, which is provided mainly to build a strong spiritually-oriented religious sect, and which does not emphasise on attacking the 'rigid' Hindu social organisation, opens the doors of 'flexibility' for Vāraṅkarīs in particular, and for Mahārāṣṭrians in general. These contrasting theoretical frameworks and their potential practical consequences can now serve as background in helping us to predict much that is still unknown about presentday Vīrasaivas and Vāraṅkarīs.

In Chapter II, I selected a number of 'poem-sayings' of Basavā and of Tukārām for comparison, assuming them to be presentday Vīrasaiva

and Vārakarī ideologies. The publications I chose emphasise not only the recognition of these two men as sect leaders, but illustrate how their poem-sayings have been used to form the basis of ideologies. These works also illustrate the extent of feelings of honour and respect which sect members feel for the leaders for their ideologies.¹

As a matter of fact, while selecting these sayings for comparison of ideologies and social organisation, I found that an unproportionally large number of the "sayings" of both Basavā and of Tukārām were 'personal invocations' to their respective gods. In a way, this was necessary for Basavā and for Tukārām to build up 'such a unique personal Bhakti religion' for the masses on the basis of a pre-eminently Bhakti ideology.

Recruitment

I propose to start analysing and describing those aspects of Vīraśaiva and Vārakarī social organisations that are discussed by the leaders in the order of priority the leaders themselves indicated. The first and foremost consideration by both the leaders was given to the problem of 'recruitment'. Both Basavā and Tukārām proclaim an open "initial entry" for all men and women of all castes and classes. Thus Tukārām says: "Come one, come all!" But Basavā starts to outline sect organisation immediately after making this proclamation. A first condition Basavā thinks essential is that only "devout" persons should be accepted in his sect. Because he believes that if the basic "material" does not have its own intrinsic worth, then its "final

¹ Tukārām's I.E. edition begins its introduction "we are proud to publish these Abhangas that are held as sacred as Vedās in Marāthi". P. 1.

product", Śiva-bhakta, cannot be a "real devotee" who will be able to attain liberation. Basavā explains his thought with an analogy: "Wash the mud doll ten times, it turns into mud", i.e., (to its basic nature). Thus by this condition he seems to imply that some basic criteria of "selection" must operate in the formation of a Vīraśaiva community. This may be expected to lead to a smaller number of members in the Vīraśaiva community than in the Vārakarī community, where no criteria of selections or conditions for selection are suggested.

The second step in completing the recruitment in the Vīraśaiva sect according to Basavā is the 'initiation' ceremony, which has to be conducted by "a spiritual person" like a Guru. Then there comes a description of the special "office" of the Guru, who is the only person (because Basavā does not want to establish any official organisation) who decides both on the criteria and personnel to be selected. This in turn leads to the idea of authority residing in the hands of a Guru or Gurus as a group. There enters the first element of rigidity in the Vīraśaiva social organisation where an individual or individuals get the authority to make decisions about sect recruitment instead of making the decision to join open to the free will of the sect members in general.

By contrast, Tukārām neither thinks that any 'initiation' is necessary, nor that any initial spiritual person as a Guru is required for recruitment to the Vārakarī sect. According to him, it is God Himself who becomes a Guru, who attracts man, guides him and makes him love the divine. So Tukārām makes recruitment of his sect a simple and an informal matter. One could add that joining the pilgrimage itself is

an informal practice of 'initiation' into the Vāraṅkarī sect. By this, one could conclude that this basic informality of the Vāraṅkarī sect in recruitment is an indicator of their flexible social organisation, in comparison to the entry of a person in Hindu structure mainly by birth (by a large number of purificatory ceremonies).

A further element of 'rigidity' enters into a Vīraśaiva sect recruitment for members of later generations. For example, it is possible that the recruitment was initially made voluntary. But the radical nature of the ideology demanded that the members 'cut off' from the 'traditional Hindu' religion and structure and join the Vīraśaiva sect which then came to engulf their entire way of life. That meant that future generations of Vīraśaivas were no longer necessarily recruited by choice, but rather more commonly by birth. This point has been substantiated by Dr. Nandimath's book on Vīraśaivism. Nandimath emphasises that for Vīraśaivas, the real and the only 'initiation' ceremony (or Dikṣa), called 'Linga-Dharane', is performed immediately after the birth of the child.² He further adds that the second 'initiation' done at the 8th year of age, as for adults or for new converts is in imitation of Brāhmanical and other traditional priestly practices. Thus from Nandimath's discussion of 'initiation' two additional indications of rigidity seem to have crept into Vīraśaiva recruitment: one is recruitment by birth rather than by choice and the second, the increasing number of rituals required (despite the fact that Basava was trying hard to minimise the number of rituals).

In contrast, in Vāraṅkarī panth, recruitment has always been a

²Nandimath, A Handbook of Vīraśaivism, p. 67.

matter of choice. A Vārakarī devotee is always referred to as an individual, without reference either to his family or to his caste. Thus recruitment continues to be voluntary, and it affects only single individuals who are not "cut off" for any reason (either ideological or social) from the larger Hindu community, where membership is determined by birth. Actually, by joining a Vārakarī sect, a person physically and spiritually moves away, at least temporarily, from 'rigid groups', i.e., by birth family membership Hindu groups, to a voluntary individual membership Vārakarī group. Thus this Vārakarī recruitment practice leads directly to flexibility in the Vārakarī religious community, which may lead indirectly to effects of flexibility on his regular rigid Hindu groups.

Sect Organisation

Next to 'sect recruitment', Basavā laid down definite guidelines for sect religious organisation. The key to his ideas on sect organisation is his extreme emphasis on the place of "work" for sect members. To Basavā, "Work is worship". Basavā further insists that every Vīraśaiva, including their Guru and Jangama priest-leaders must take up an occupation for a living. They must do this work with devotion. In fact, Basavā considers "work" as the sole means of attaining the highest level of "devotion" which finally leads to liberation or heaven. The saying "Kayakawe Kailasa" meaning work is heaven, is an example of this.

Basavā's great emphasis on work is associated with each member's capacity to "consume and to donate the rest to Śaranas (saints)" who will utilise 'it' for the service of the other more needy Vīraśaivas

and for strengthening the sect in general. Thus Basavā says: "you fool, 'consume and donate, don't hoard, nor leave for your wife, because she will marry somebody as soon as you die".

The third associated condition of sect organisation established by Basavā is "fidelity to the sect". I call these conditions associated mainly because "work", "donation" and "sect fidelity" are in a sense interdependent. Basavā, who dreamed of a radical, independent sect, "cut off" from Hindu society at large, had to think of its solid "material" foundations. For the same reason he advocated a formal organisation of donation collection and simultaneously suggested punishment for those who failed to donate.

One must remember here that Basavā is against all such formal organisation and its consequent authority. So it may be for this reason that he says: "Donate to Śaranas" -- and not to Gurus and Jangamas who are religious personnel. Thus, Basavā seems to want particularly to avoid placing any economic authority in the hands of Gurus and Jangamas, who were in charge of definite religious duties. But from a practical point of view, one is tempted to ask: who and where are the Śaranas (saints)? It is possible that during Basavā's time, there was a large band of selfless, devout saints such as Kakayya, Ambayya, etc., about whom he talks with high respect in his poems. But it is not probable that such selfless saints would continue indefinitely to arise, in whom the public would develop confidence and to whom they would willingly donate.

One of the possibilities, which one could visualise, is that this function of collecting money as donations would be taken on by

married Jangamas, men who conduct the regular life cycle rituals for Vīraśaivas. So it is probable to assume that given such guidelines, the Jangamas would eventually obtain both ritual and economic authority in Vīraśaiva sect organisation leading to another element of 'rigidity' in the sect organisation. The importance of this authoritarian ruling can be understood if we remember that a 'separated' or 'segregated' Vīraśaiva member would certainly need at least 'recognition for himself by his sect fellow members', so he would try hard to 'buy' the title of being faithful to his sect at any cost.

An altogether different picture of sect organisation can be seen in Tukārām's Vārakarī sect. Tukārām insists that Vārakarīs should join the regular pilgrimage and he insists that they should live in the society but be 'indifferent' to their families and to economic activities. According to Tukārām, these conditions are essential for a Vārakarī who should be able to "devote" himself to Viṭhobā by total surrender of himself and thus, attain this "grace" of final liberation. One might speculate that such a sect ideology would lead to "economic lethargy" on the part of the sect members directly and hence in Mahārāṣṭrian society generally.³

But probing the question more deeply one comes to realise that the opposite effect is more probable. One can hardly imagine such a huge crowd of Vārakarīs becoming religious mendicants (in addition to already existing Brāhmins, Gosāvies and disabled Hindu mendicants). As a matter of fact, Tukārām insistently criticises "Gosāvies"

³ Encl. of R. & E. 1922 puts a figure of 15 million Deccan peasants visiting Pandharpūr regularly.

(religious mendicants) as "bogus" devotees. So the only alternative left for the Vārakarīes, if they are interested in joining the regular group pilgrimage, called "Vārī", is to work very hard on their lands and in their crafts during the rest of the year. This is also because most of their Vārakarīes come from Deccan⁴ and regular Vārī (pilgrimage) means one or two months away, (depending on the distance of one's place from Pandharpur). Most of the Vārakarīes have to earn their living for the "off Vārī" time and for the "Vārī" time, when they have to carry their own "survival kit" (like food, clothing, etc.). Thus, one could conclude that this ideology instead of leading to economic lethargy, on the contrary may lead to economic dynamism for Vārakarīes directly and for Mahārāṣṭra indirectly. Thus Vārakarīes have neither religious nor economic authoritarian formal structure, but have an informal, dynamic voluntary organisation which itself is an indication of flexibility in their social organisation.

Caste Membership

Next to religious community membership, for an Indian comes caste membership. But Basavā was against the entire caste system, for its hierarchy and its emphasis on pollution. Instead he spoke of abolishing any connection of Vīraśaivas with the Indian caste system at large. One could ask here as to whether Basavā in his life time and his followers later succeeded in attaining this 'impossible' feat, of not being members of Indian society. Before answering this specific question, I would like to refer to Dr. J.H. Hutton's general remarks regarding the

⁴Deccan is a mountain-surrounded, barren part of Mahārāṣṭra.

nature and existence of caste system on the Indian sub-continent, in his introduction to Caste in India, 1961. According to Hutton, caste is a unique, indigeneous, quasi-organic type of Indian institution, which has emerged to integrate varied racial, linguistic, religious groups into Indian society. He further adds as an example that the Muslims, who have come and settled in India and who do not accept and recognise the existence of caste in their religious community, generally live according to caste rules and regulations in their day-to-day life. According to this hypothesis, we could assume that Vīraśaivas would also maintain their ties to caste.

But let us see if we can find any clue in Basavā's "sayings" themselves for a possibility of the rise of caste in Vīraśaivas. On the one hand, Basavā says that our God does not recognise "caste distinctions"; on the other hand, he claims "Śiva-Bhaktas are well born" because they are "ever pure" or "more pure" as wearers of Linga, than are other Hindus. For a radical Basavā this could mean that non-Vīraśaivas were not so pure -- and hence, were lower in status. Anyway, whether this statement of Basavā's was meant merely to "cut off" his sect from the rest of the Hindu caste-dominated community, or was actually an attempt by Basavā to improve the status of Vīraśaivas (the majority of whom were 3rd-ranking businessmen and farmers) is hard to say.

At this point Dr. D.A. Chekki's⁵ conclusions, based on actual field work, are very helpful. He concludes from research carried out in Dharwar

⁵Dr. D.A. Chekki, "Modernisation and kin network in a developing society: India". (A paper presented at I.S.A. September, 1970, Varna: Bulgaria), p. 10.

(a major city in Karnātak where Vīraśaivas are in majority), during 1962-63 that the Brāhmins occupy the topmost positions in the caste hierarchy. The Lingāyats claim equality with Brāhmins. The Lingāyats and Brāhmins have different sects of ritual norms. The relations between these two castes are governed among other things, by the norms of purity and pollution and maximum commensality occurs within each caste but not across these groupings. The Lingāyats and Brāhmins have nuances in their dress and diet, customs and manners, fasts and festivals, language and "values", which serve to distinguish them easily for those familiar with the culture.

These fieldwork conclusions of Dr. Chekki answer the questions that we put in the previous paragraph. As Chekki mentions that caste relations between Brāhmins and Lingāyats are governed, in other things, by the considerations of pollution and purity. So Basavā was attempting to improve the status of Vīraśaivas in relation to Brāhmins and that attempt itself makes Vīraśaivas members of the Hindu caste system. It is very interesting to note that without going into further analysis, Chekki says: Brāhmins occupy topmost position; while Lingāyats claim equality with Brāhmins. The word 'claim' points to a one-sided effect by Vīraśaivas, and not necessary acceptance of such a superior status 'claim' by the rest. And, as we know, the system of status and role need to be mutually recognised to be practically effective.

Castes or Varnas are broad hierarchical groups, covering a broad category of occupations like priest, warrior, traders, etc. This caste hierarchy is supposed to be based on the level of purity and pollution attached to each of these categories of occupations. For instance,

priestly and intellectual occupations are considered as the most pure in relation to the service occupation of washermen, etc., as the least pure.

According to this caste hierarchy system, Vīraśaivas who are mainly traders and farmers would rank third in the traditional Hindu caste system. But Basavā contended that Vīraśaivas, as Linga wearers, are the purest of the people to whom occupational or any other pollutions do not attack. So they should have the highest status (or equal to Brāhmin's status) in the caste hierarchy. But the system of status and roles based mainly on occupations does not function by one-sided demands or claims only, but needs to be accepted not only by Brāhmins, but by the majority of Hindus. So, as Dr. Chekki's field report and the analysis of the Bombay caste and tribes of Brāhmin Lingāyat relations⁶ point out, Lingāyats have never accepted the third ranking of social status, which may be the automatic ranking or equal ranking with Brāhmins. Now to make and maintain such a claim, Lingāyat sect leaders, Gurus may have to impose additional rules of purity to be observed by their sect members. Thus these additional purity rules for Lingāyats and their associated authoritarian controls would result in more rigidities in the Lingāyat sect.

In contrast, Tukārām spoke against caste pollution rules but said little about the abolition of the caste system itself. And to some extent Tukārām succeeded in bringing into practice the nullification of caste pollutions and caste distinctions for his group pilgrimage system

⁶ Enthoven, Bombay Castes and Tribes, (Govt. of Bombay publication, 1920-22) p. 347.

in which all caste Hindu men and women joined as equals.⁷ Further, again by his own effort, Tukārām attained the right to do Kīrtanas for himself (traditionally reserved for Brāhmin men only) and passed on the same for a Vārakārī of any caste and sex.

Now Vārakārīs who are also the members of the traditional third-ranking caste by birth, being traders and farmers, do not observe any of these caste hierarchies, distinctions and pollutions during their pilgrimages, so the growing popularity and importance of these pilgrimages and of the Vārakārī movement could definitely affect traditional Hindu caste rigidities as far as hierarchies, distinctions and pollutions are concerned. Thus the Vārakārī movement could bring equalitarian relations not only in its own sect, but could break down rigidities of the Indian caste system, generally introducing a more 'flexible' and mobile social system.

The real peculiarity of the Hindu caste system is its necessary development into a large number of sub-castes for each of these broader Varna groups. Sub-castes are localised, endogamous, hierarchical groups wherein one finds daily friends, an occupation, marriage partners, and a socio-political neighbourhood. Membership in these groups is generally assigned by birth.

Now let us see how Vīraśaivas, who were originally so much against the caste system could develop sub-castes amongst themselves. This is a very intriguing issue mainly because Basavā repeatedly insisted that

⁷ Deleury, The Cult of Viṭhobā, pp. 4-5.

"all Śiva-Bhaktas are equal".⁸ Ideologically, neither differences in occupations, nor differences in income, nor in lineage, could give rise to sub-castes amongst Vīraśaivas, because Basavā rejected all these ideas vehemently. To break down such distinctions amongst Vīraśaivas, Basavā introduced a practice of "common dining" in mathas, religious establishments, which are continued to this day. If one equates this practice with the open pilgrimage system among Vārakarīs, then one cannot expect the existence of sub-castes amongst Vīraśaiva devotees.

Dr. Chekki's fieldwork description, however, points out the existence of sub-castes among Vīraśaivas; "the Lingāyats are farmers and traders in the main, though each sub-caste among the Lingāyats is further associated with an occupation of its own. For instance, there are sub-castes of washermen, weavers, oil pressers and so on."⁹

Further, A.K. Iyer, in his description of Mysore castes and tribes, points out that in the beginning "Basavā succeeded in forming a homogeneous community composed of all grades and castes; but after his death, the community has been gradually drifting into a caste with its endogamous and hypergamous groups because of the obsession of social distinctions."¹⁰ So the rise of a large number of sub-castes (totalling 71 according to the 1901 census) within the Lingāyat community is a definite sign of rigidities developing in their social organisations,

⁸ Because of this ideological contradiction, many research scholars like Dr. Nandimath, 1940; Dr. Chandrasekhariah, 1955; and Dr. Hunchal, 1959, totally deny the existence of castes amongst Vīraśaivas in their Ph.D. theses.

⁹ Chekki, "Modernisation and kin network in a developing society: India," p. 10.

¹⁰ Iyer, Mysore Castes and Tribes, (Vol. IV), p. 87.

giving rise to occupational and social immobilities within a group.

In contrast, the Vārakarīes who belong to a large number of Hindu sub-castes by birth and who have to be loyal to their sub-caste occupations, endogamy and other socio-political decisions do come out of the control and influence of these narrow groups during their pilgrimage time. These pilgrimages are described as unique occasions without distinctions of caste, sex and money, where there develop strong emotional bonds of brotherhood.¹¹ So one could expect that it is easier for Vārakarīes to break away from 'narrow' sub-caste loyalties, and relate to modern co-operatives' and to 'linguistic states' because of their already being the members of both sub-castes and Vārakarī group at the same time.

Family Groups

Indian families are 'all inclusive' to an individual at the personal level, as are sub-castes at the community level. Basavā seems to have been quite keen on breaking away from the traditional patriarchal Hindu family, where a woman or a wife had no independent "right to worship", thus no possibility of spiritual experience and finally liberation. Basavā, through his sect practice of Linga worship, honours women with a right to worship their "own Linga", thus they could gain some spiritual experience and attainments, and finally liberation. In addition to this right to worship Linga, Basavā removed certain pollution taboos of women like taboos of menstrual periods, childbirth,

¹¹ a) Nelson and Fraser, The Life and Teaching of Tukārām, 1922.
 b) DeLeury, S.J. The Cult of Viṭhobā, 1960, Poona University.

and widowhood pollutions.¹²

But if one views Vīraśaiva women's life at home and outside in the field of marital, economic or parental rights and obligations, we do not get a very bright picture even from Basavā. For instance in one of his sayings (19, 76, A.M.)¹³, Basavā says that a wife who does not serve her mate and lord (husband) proper food, at the proper time or who is not a faithful one is a degraded one! This does not show of any different stand of Basavā towards women from the view of the traditional patriarchal Hindu family structure.

Basavā does not refer to any "other" occupation for a woman except that of a 'housewife'. But Basavā definitely believes that a wife will be always supported by this or another husband. (18, 72, A.M.) saying of Basavā). Thus even according to Basavā, Vīraśaiva women do not enjoy either marital or economic equality or independence, which have more practical bearing on the status of women than mere religious rights. On the contrary, either as a defensive community or status-conscious community, more 'purity' taboos would be imposed on Vīraśaiva women than on Vīraśaiva men. Some examples of these taboos on women are the restriction on widow remarriage for the Jangama women, the custom of covering women's head with a saree pally as a sign of their respect, etc. Thus Vīraśaiva family life seems authoritarian, male-dominated, having inbreeding practices and even territorially close-knit groups -- all indications of rigidity in their family organisation.

¹² All these radical reforms for women are greatly upheld by all research scholars, pointing out to Basavā's main zeal as "social reformer"; Nandimath, Dr. Hanchal, Chandrashekhariah.

¹³ Please refer to Appendix I.

For instance, I know of a subcaste of Jangamas where all the families are related to each other either by blood or by marriage and Chekki writes in the same 1962-63 fieldwork analysis thus: "Kalyan is mainly a cluster of twelve patrilineage, several households of the same lineage for a neighbourhood. In this suburb, practically everybody is related to everybody else. Kinship is a basis of a territorial group."¹⁴

While in the case of Vārakarīes, Tukārām's religious rights for women included joining the pilgrimage -- which meant regular freedom from household responsibilities -- economic independence at the pilgrimage and equalitarian relations with all Vārakarīes. Generally any elderly woman (a woman who has passed 45) could join the pilgrimage. For younger housewives, there was household freedom and responsibility during the weeks when mother-in-laws and husbands join these pilgrimages. Thus this group pilgrimage system could possibly bring less authoritarian, and more equalitarian marital and economic relations in Vārakarī families in particular and in Mahārāṣṭra in general.

Thus we could analyse four interrelated groups of the Vīraśaivā and Vārakarī sects with reference to the existence of rigid or flexible elements in them, religious community, caste, sub-caste and family. In Vīraśaivism, we see a consistent tendency towards rigidity in all their groups of social organisation, while we see a consistent tendency to flexibility in all of the social groups of the Vārakarīes.

The rigidity of Vīraśaiva social organisation seems to have developed partly due to the "radical" nature of Basavā's ideology.

¹⁴ Chekki, "Modernisation and kin network in a developing society: India," 1970, p. 11.

which on the one hand expected Vīraśaivas to "cut off" totally from Hindu religion and society, and on the other hand, to compete with that Hindu society for improved status and rights.

As a "cut off" group, Vīraśaivas form "a minority" in relation to the Hindu majority. And Vīraśaivas, being by occupation traders and farmers, might have to play a subordinate role to traditionally, politically and intellectually ruling-dominated Hindu majority. Both these social conditions may lead to "defensive positions" for proud Vīraśaivas, who would impose rigidities on themselves to preserve unity amongst themselves and to maintain the distinctiveness of their sect life. In contrast, for the Vārakarī sect social organisation, the elements of flexibility were introduced by the "moderate nature of Tukārām's ideology. Tukārām certainly felt a great need for improvement in the socio-religious life of Hindu society, but he did this not by rejecting either Hindu religion totally, or its caste-ridden social organisation. He picked up the "Bhakti" from Hindu forms of worship, and all the mythology that went with it, criticised external cleansing rituals, and caste hierarchies as unessential and emphasised the need of internal purity and moral disciplines as basic to his "Bhakti" ideology. He was able to attain most of his "improved" changes through his unique system of regular pilgrimage for his followers. Thus Vārakarī social organisation remaining as a part of Hindu religion and social organisation, could bring about religious equality, spiritual purity and moral simplicity, leading directly to flexibility in its social organisation and indirectly to flexibility in the Hindu social organisation of Mahārāṣṭra.

CHAPTER IV

Available Data and Further Desirable Research

In the previous three chapters, I have tried to develop a theoretical framework that analyses the relation of ideology to social organisation with special reference to Vīraśaiva and Vāraṅkari Bhakti ideologies and social organisations.

My next attempt will be "to use" this framework to generate further questions to be answered by fieldwork research on these two groups. There I will look at "existing data" on Vīraśaiva and Vāraṅkari social organisation and point out what further research needs to be done "to test" my theory and the predictions to be made from it.

My major sources of data are:

1. Enthoven, Bombay Castes and Tribes, 1920-22.
2. A.K. Iyer, Mysore Castes and Tribes, 1933.
3. D.A. Chekki, Fieldwork research at Dharwar with reference to changes in a developing society, 1962-63.
4. Ishwaran, Tradition and Change in an Indian Village, 1968.
5. Nelson and Fraser, The Life and Teaching of Tukārām. 1922.
6. G.A. Deleury. The Cult of Viṭhobā, 1960.

Some of these data may not be relevant to today's Vīraśaiva and Vāraṅkari social organisations, while some may not be relevant for my theoretical framework. But my selective use of sources and repeated reference to my theoretical framework will help to clarify some of the problems for future research.

Territorial Organisation

It was pointed out before that Vīraśaivas and Vāraṅkarīs are regional neighbourhood groups in the Southwest of India. But the

data on their physical organisation or spatial composition indicate that they have totally different physical organisations based possibly on the different "territorial definition of the sacred."

While writing on the Vīrasaiva socio-territorial organisation, A.K. Iyer in his book "The Mysore Castes and Tribes"¹ points out that the entire Vīrasaiva community is directly organised and controlled by the 5 main Vīrasaiva religious establishments called "Sinhasanās" (thrones). Of the five establishments, Jangamawadi and Himawat Kedar are in United provinces, while the rest of the three are all concentrated in South Mysore. These establishments, called Maṭhas, are said to have been established by the five Vīrasaiva Gurus (or teachers). Each of these five maṭhas have their own sub-maṭhas in important places. Further, each of these sub-maṭhas have their own Grihasta-maṭhas, headed by married Jangamas, wherever there is a community of Lingayats living.

If one locates these five main maṭhas on a map, one is intrigued as to why all of these maṭhas are outside Karnātak or north Mysore, where the majority of Lingayat community resides. For instance, the 1911 census points out that in the four districts of Karnātak alone there reside 3.5 million of Lingayats, in comparison with only 70,000 residing in the rest of south Mysore.

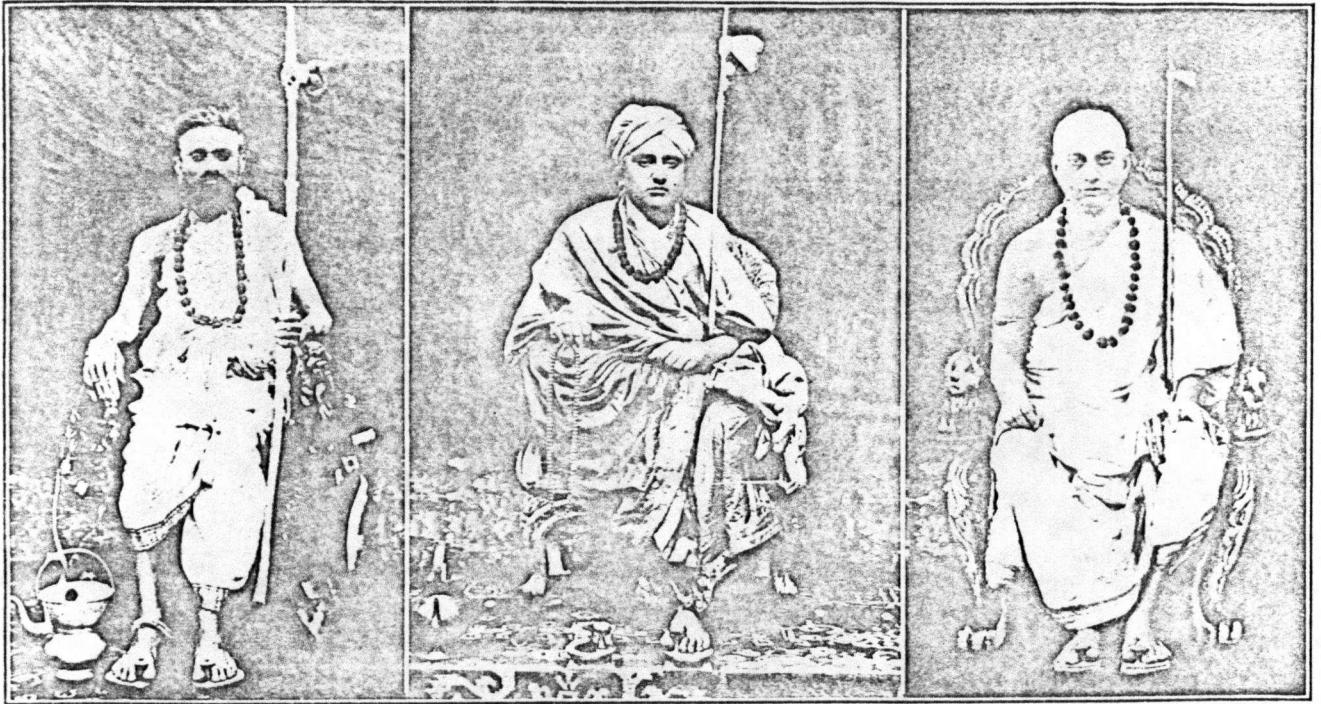
On the other hand, two out of the three main Vīrakta maṭhas are in the Dharwar district. According to A.K. Iyer, Vīrakta swamis are neither supposed to preside over ceremonial occasions, nor can they receive more alms than they require for a day. They should devote their

¹A.K. Ayer, The Mysore Castes and Tribes, (Vol. IV, Bangalore: Mysore Government Press, 1933, p. 114.)



A MAP OF INDIA

The area outlined in red is the study area of Maharashtra and Karnataka and the five round circles in red depict the places where five main Virasaiva religious mathas are established.



THE PRESENT JAGATGURU
SRI SIDDHALINGA SIVACHARYA
MAHASWAMI OF THE UJJAINI MATHA.

SRI JAGATGURU SHIVANANDA RAJENDRA
SIVACHARYA MAHASWAMI RAMBHAPURI
VIRASIMHASANA BALEHONNUR MATHA,
KADUR DISTRICT, MYSORE.

SRI JAGATGURU SIVALINGA
SIVACHARYA MAHASWAMI
JANGAMVADI MATHA, BENARES.



SRI JAGATGURU NILAKANTALINGA SIVACHARYA
MAHASWAMI RAVAL SAHEB OF KEDAR MATHA,
OKHI MATHA, GARWAL DISTRICT, HIMALAYAS.



SRI JAGATGURU NAGALUJI BHIKSHAVRUI
SIVACHARYA DESIKENDRA MAHASWAMI
SRISAILA SIMHASAN MATHA, GUNTAKAL.

Virasaiva gurus of the five main mathas. (Pictures taken from The Mysore
Castes and Tribes, 1933)

time to disseminating spiritual knowledge and meditation.² This data of Shri Iyer is in total contradiction with my personal knowledge about the conditions and activities of both Hubli and Dharwar Vīrakta maṭhas.

Hubli Murasavira maṭha, which is described by Iyer as a 'Vīrakta' maṭha seems to have huge monetary establishments that can be seen in their newly built set of huge maṭha and other buildings. It maintains two elephants that it uses on ceremonial occasions and it runs a couple of high schools and colleges directly under its finances and authority. Dharwar "Muragi Maṭha" is highly known for its free lodging and boarding facilities for Lingayat students and also for its large number of religious activities.

Thus the existing data leaves us to explore the following questions on the physical organisation of the sect:

1. Why are the main five maṭhas outside the area where the majority of their community resides?
2. What is the exact nature of their physical organisation; are the active Vīrakta maṭhas of Dharwar, Hubli and so on taken into account?
3. Were the five main centers built to spread Vīraśaiva faith or to serve or control the life of the Vīraśaiva community?

Until these questions are explored, I don't see how in any meaningful way I could relate the "available" Vīraśaiva physical organisation to my theoretical framework.

² Ayer, The Mysore Castes and Tribes, p. 115.

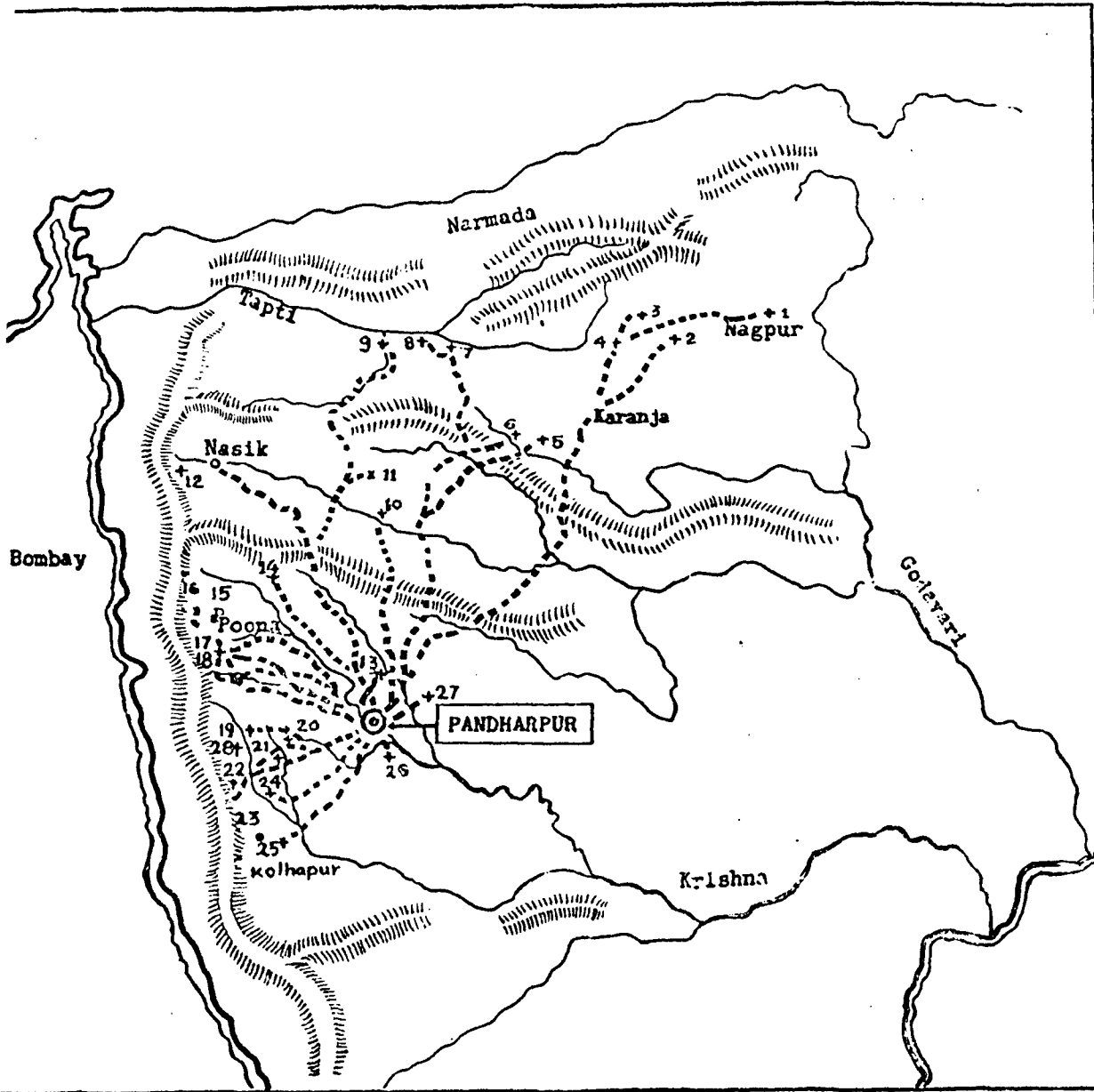
In contrast, we get a totally different picture of Vārakārī physical organisation. Deleury in his book, The Cult of Viṭhobā, points out that for Vārakārī panth, there are neither places of religious establishments nor any personnel with authority to control Vārakarīes, but they do have a "central place" to meet regularly for twice a year. This place is at Pandharpūr (near Poona), around the temple of Viṭhobā. There are about 28 groups of Vārakarīes; each of them comes from a definite place and has its own 'palanquin'; they meet at Pandharpūr, walking and singing all the way. They meet regularly twice a year on the 11th day of Ashādhī (July-August) and on the 11th day of Kārtiki (Oct.-Nov.) respectively. All of these 28 groups, when reaching Pandharpūr, form one group of Vārakarīes and offer their worship to God, Viṭhobā, as one group. Thus all the Vārakarīes have 'a central place' to meet and 'a central God' to worship. This physical organisation of the Vārakārī sect around a central place and a God may enrich their community life. And its voluntary nature and its required physical mobility may lead to "flexibility" in their social organisation.

This data does not refer to the number of Vārakarīes who come from each of the centres. One may assume that from centres closer to Pandharpūr, there could be greater numbers of Vārakarīes joining their group, while smaller number of Vārakarīes may come from distant places. This may give us an idea as to how evenly widespread is the Vārakari community. If a large number joins the pilgrimage from the places nearer Pandharpūr, then the nature of their physical organisation would not be an even distribution, but concentration in the narrower, closer circle, which may result in different effects on their social life.

No.	Name	Starting point.
1.	Śrī Bhūteśvar	Nāgpūr (Nāgpūr dt.)
2.	Rukmiṇī	Koṇḍanpūr (Umarāvatti dt.)
3.	Śaṅkara Mahārāj	Māhuli (Umarāvatti dt.)
4.	śeṣanārāyaṇa	Umarāvatti (Umarāvatti dt.)
5.	Svarupānanda	Dhāṇegāon (Buldhana dt.)
6.	Nṛsimhasarasvatī	Mahekar (Buldhana dt.)
7.	Muktābāī	Edalābād (East Khāndesh dt.)
8.	Muktābāī	Mehun (East Khāndesh dt.)
9.	Muktābāī	Jalgāon (East Khāndesh dt.)
10.	Eknāth	Paithān (Aurangābād dt.)
11.	Janārdanaswāmī	Daulatābād (Aurangābād dt.)
12.	Nivṛttināth	Trimbak (Nāśik dt.)
13.	Bālbhima Mahārāj	Saḍe (Solāpūr dt.)
14.	Limbarāj Mahārāj	Dahīthan (Ahmednagar dt.)
15.	Jñāneśvar	Aḷandi (Poona dt.)
16.	Tukārām	Dehū (Poona dt.)
17.	Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa	Sāswaḍ (Poona dt.)
18.	Sopāndev	Sāswaḍ (Poona dt.)
19.	Tukārām Mahārāj	Trepute (Sātārā dt.)
20.	Sekujibovā	Śirasvāḍī (Sātārā dt.)
21.	Jayarāmswāmī	Vaḍgāon (Sātārā dt.)
22.	Ghāḍgebovā	Kaḷe (Sātārā dt.)
23.	Gorakṣnāth	Śirāḷe (Sātārā dt.)
24.	Macchindranāth	Macchindranāth (Sātārā dt.)
25.	Purṇānanda Mahārāj	Bhognul (Belgāon dt.)
26.	Dāmāji Mahārāj	Maṅgalveḍhe (Solāpūr dt.)
27.	Jñānobā Mahārāj	Tuljāpūr (Usmānābād dt.)
28.	Rāmdās	Sajjadgaḍ (Sātārā dt.)

1+ --- Serial number of the Palkhi

A map depicting a centralized physical organisation of Vārakarī sect around Paṇḍharpūr -- circled in red.

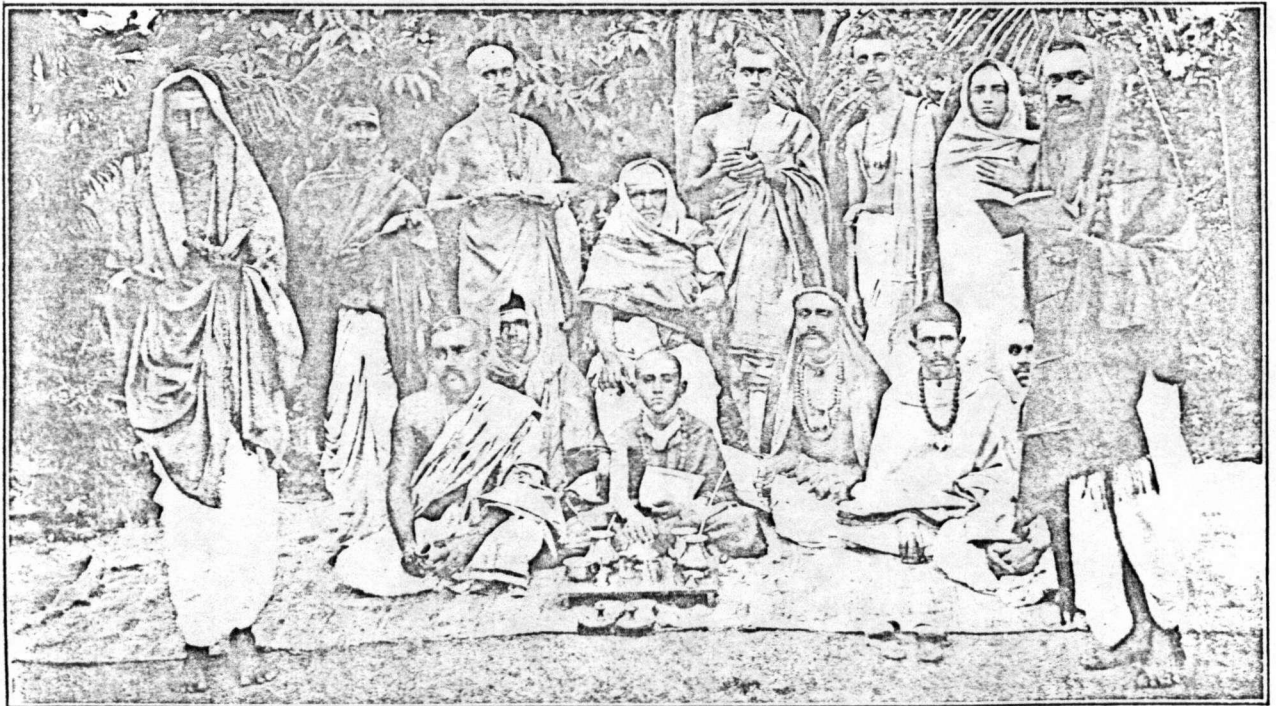


The typical distinct characteristics of Vīraśaivas have a non-voluntary physical organisation related to their religious establishments, maṭhas and to heads of these maṭhas, while for Vāraṅkarīes physical organisation is voluntary and revolves around a central place of pilgrimage and a central place of worship. Thus non-voluntary and authority-directed physical organisation of Vīraśaivas may lead to rigidities in their social organisation. In contrast, voluntary, non-authoritarian, but spatially organised Vāraṅkari physical organisation may form a basis of "flexible" social organisation. This may also indicate another distinct characteristic of both groups and that is their different territorial definition of "sacred". Amongst Vīraśaivas, these religious heads, or Gurus and Jangamas are worshipped along with "Linga" their God, whilst amongst Vāraṅkarīes, it is only God who is worshipped by all the Vāraṅkarīes. So it is natural that Vīraśaivas physical organisation revolves around religious establishments where their main Gurus reside, while Vāraṅkari physical organisation revolves around their pilgrimage centre. Of course, one needs to enquire as to whether these factors are considered important by both the sects in their physical organisation.

Social Organisation (sect recruitment)

The major amount of "data" on the social organisations of both of these sects is available on their "sect recruitment" or initiation practices, on their sect organisation through ritual, and on other authoritarian controls with persons or places, and on caste hierarchies and relations of the members of both the sects.

Very interesting information on Vīraśaiva recruitment, initiation, is available in Dr. Nandimath's book, A Handbook of Vīraśaivism, and in



A GROUP OF VIRASAIVAS.

A picture of Aitan, the second Vīrasaiva initiation ceremony. An old person sitting in the centre on the chair is a Guru or a Jangam, an initiator. The boy sitting in the centre is undergoing initiation. The man sitting beside the boy must be his father or father surrogate. And the rest usually are relatives.

A.K. Iyer's book, The Mysore Castes and Tribes. Both these books point out that Vīraśaivas have more than one initiation rite. But according to Dr. Nandimath³, "Linga Dharane", i.e., the 1st initiation of putting a Linga to a newborn child of Vīraśaiva parents, is the only real Vīraśaiva initiation rite and the rest are in imitation of Brāhmanical rites.

To note down different Vīraśaiva initiation rites as given by Iyer⁴ is quite useful. The first initiation, i.e., 'Linga Dharane' begins with a bath of a new-born and the mother. In the first instance, the Jangama and mainly his feet, are worshipped by the "Yajamana", the family headman. In this rite, the water that is used to wash the Guru's or Jangama's feet is later used as a "Thirtha". This means it is sipped both by the mother and the new-born as purifying water and the rest of this water is sprinkled all over the house to purify it. Later, the Guru purifies, Linga, Vibhūti ...etc., Astāvarnas, eight aids of Vīraśaiva faith, and gives them to the child. The Guru whispers "Śiva-mantra" in the child's ear. After this, the child is believed to have entered into the Vīraśaiva religious order or community. The ceremony ends after the Jangama is fed and offered presents by the Yajamana. The Guru or Jangama pooja (worship) is present in every Vīraśaiva ritual.

The main features of the second initiation ceremony called 'Aitan' are as follows: this ceremony is performed on celibate Jangama boys only, any time between 8 to 16 years of age. Only after this ceremony do Jangama boys become eligible to be accepted as heads of "five main religious establishments". At the end of the ceremony, the Guru gives

³Dr. Nandimath, A Handbook of Vīraśaivism, p. 77.

⁴Iyer, Mysore Castes and Tribes, Vol. IV, pp. 101-105.

the initiated boy "a zoli" (a square piece of cloth that is turned into "a begging bag") and he is asked to go begging.

The third initiation ceremony, called Dikṣa, is a cleansing ritual and is performed on all Vīraśaiva men and women who have "Astāvārṇa" rights (barbers, farmers, and such low caste Vīraśaivas are said not to have any astāvārṇa rights) to "upgrade" themselves. The same rite is used for new adult converts to Vīraśaivism.

I know of one more type of initiation recently going on in which some non-Jangamas proclaim themselves as Gurus (Jangamas) after Dikṣa. They vow to remain celibate, go to live in a religious establishment and to build a following for themselves from Vīraśaivas for whom they preside over all the religious ceremonies.

All these Vīraśaiva "initiations" nullify Basavā's tenet regarding "simplifying" and "minimising" the rituals for Vīraśaivas. Especially, the purificatory aspect of all these rituals and "Dikṣa" as an 'upgrading' ritual are further contradictions to Basavā's main contention which insisted that all Vīraśaivas as wearers of Linga are ever pure and equal. This increasing number of rituals demonstrates among other things the increasing sphere of control of priestly classes over lay Vīraśaivās, and indicates rigidity in Vīraśaiva social organisation.

In contrast to this large number of "initiations" amongst Vīraśaivās, Deleury says: "Vārakarīes have no "initiation" ceremony as such, even to be its members".⁵ He further clarifies: "nevertheless for those wishing to enter the Vārakari" panth, there does exist a very simple

⁵ Deleury, The Cult of Viṭhobā, pp. 4-5

ceremony, akin to the taking of a monastic vow. In this, the candidate presents himself with a Vārakari friend (who will vouch for him) before one of the Vārakari groups informally considered Gurus and expresses his desire to join the panth. He must bring a rosary of "Tulasi" beads which the Guru tells him to put on the book of "Znāneśwarī" (Marāthi version of the Gīta). The candidate then pledges himself to go regularly to Pandharpūr on "Vāries", at fixed time pilgrimages and to be a 'vegetarian' and to never be without 'Tulasi' beads.

It is very interesting to enquire why such a popular sect and its pilgrimage centre places so few demands on its followers. This stands as a contrast to other pilgrimage centres of India where one has 'to pay' even to have God's darshana (just seeing his face), and there are gradations of fees that are charged for different types of ceremonies which the priests would conduct. The Hindu Vishweswar temple at Banares and Tirupati temple in the south are quite well known for such practices.

Sect Organisation and Authority

While writing on the functions and authorities of Vīraśaiva religious establishments, Iyer says that the Gurus who are the heads of maṭhas, have not only religious authority, but also direct economic and political control over their followers. He further states that 'of the three sub-divisions of these Gurus, Pattachikaries and Charumurthies move about to manage the affairs of the maṭhas and to collect the dues and presents from lay Vīraśaivas. They have assistants called 'Maries', young boys (who stay and can continue to stay even after their marriage, with their families in these establishments) who help them in maṭha

Temple worship and do all little jobs for them. These Gurus preside over all religious functions and settle all disputes and exercise general control over all matters affecting the religious interests of the community at large.⁶

This data strengthens our hypothesis that Vīraśaiva sect organisation is highly hierarchical and authoritarian and thus it leads to rigidities in their social organisation. Fresh data on today's Guru's functions and economic and political controls over their laymen would explain the nature of Vīraśaiva sect organisation and authority; Iyer's data is rather old and confusing. In one place he says: the Gurus live in great pomp and do Linga-dharane, Aitan, pre-funeral ceremony and in other places he says that Grihasta, i.e., married Jangamas preside over all birth, marriage and funeral ceremonies. That means either there is no clearcut distinctions of functions between Gurus, celibate Jangamas and married Jangamas, though there seems some distinctions in their authorities. Gurus seem to enjoy not only more ritual, but more economic authority than do Jangamas. In any case, fresh enquiry in this field would explain not only their functional roles, but their centralisation or decentralisation of authority, and their actual or possible control of them over the masses.

Another field of enquiry regarding Gurus and Jangamas as pointed out by Iyer is "their occupation". Neither of them, says Iyer, are engaged in any "occupation" for a "living" as was clearly said to be essential by Basavā. So Basavā's great emphasis on organising the sect around the theory of "work is worship" does not seem to have materialised

⁶Iyer, The Mysore Castes and Tribes, p. 89.

amongst leading Vīraśaivas of today. Iyer further describes that Gurus live in great pomp and perform twice or thrice worship of their Linga; while Jangama lives on "begging" and by acting as a priest.⁷

Recently, I know that many capable city Jangamas have given up both "religious begging" and priestly works and have successfully entered into business as grocers, "Middlemen", cloth and jewellery merchants and into administrative and teaching jobs. By doing this, they seem to have incurred the jealousies of Banajigas, traditional Lingayat traders who consider Jangamas as their rivals in their field of endeavour. This situation points to the possibility of a lack of occupational mobility and competition amongst Lingayats. This needs to be studied as an indication of their rigid social organisation.

In contrast, Deleury describes the extremely simple and flexible sect organisation and authority amongst Vāraṅkarīes. He says, Vāraṅkari panth has no centralised organisation, no hierarchy, no general council, no credo, and no sacraments.⁸ He further says that, now as before, the Vāraṅkarīes come mostly from the countryside, being farmers, of Marāṭhā-Kunabi caste, Brāhmin landlords, petty officers, craftsmen and traders. They believe in Znaneśwar and Tukārām as their spiritual leaders whose joint name -- "Znānaba-Tukārām -- they keep on uttering all along their pilgrimage road, along with the name of their God (with His spouse), "Viṭṭhala-Rakhumai". The Vāraṅkari sect thus seems more a "spatially organised"

⁷Iyer, The Mysore Castes and Tribes, p. 120.

⁸Deleury, The Cult of Viṭhobā, p. 4.

community of groups of spiritually interested persons. Because the Vāraṅkarīes' interest in pilgrimages is described as unfailing, Vāraṅkarīes are said to be not on pilgrimage only when they are dying or dead.

Now it is essential to enquire as to how these Vāraṅkarīes who live continuously according to authoritarian family and caste groups of Hindu society and follow most of the Hindu rituals rigidly, could have developed and maintained such an informal and effective system of social organisation as Vāraṅkarīes.

Caste Competition

The most central points or organisations of Indian communities are their caste organisations.⁹ And this is true for the "no-caste religious community" of Vīraśaivās as well as for the "spiritually-oriented" Vāraṅkarīes.

The peculiar caste-relations of Lingayats with Brāhmins are described by Enthoven in his "Bombay Castes and Tribes" as one of rivalry and competition. He says "among the educated members of the Lingayat community, there is a strong spirit of rivalry with the Brāhmins whose intellect and capacity have secured them preponderant government appointments and powers in municipal affairs...the rivalry between these groups may be said to dominate the whole socio-political life of Bombay-Karnātak."¹⁰

Recent census and field reports describe Lingayats as a "mere caste" of Hindus without reference to its sect identity and original opposition to the Hindu caste system. For instance, Dr. Chekki analysing the social structure of Dharwar remarks as follows: "Of the several

⁹Hutton, The Caste in India, p. 1.

¹⁰Enthoven, The Bombay Castes and Tribes, p. 343.

castes in the city, the two prominent castes, namely Brāhmins and Lingayats hold the key positions in educational, political, economic and cultural activities...Brāhmins occupy the topmost positions in the caste hierarchy. The Lingayats claim equality with the Brāhmins.¹¹ Similarly, Dr. Ishwaran while analysing the social organisation of a village, Shivapur in the Dharwar district, points out: "though in the classic caste model the Brāhmin is supposed to be the highest caste, in our observation, this is not true of Shivapur. Here it is the Lingayats who are the highest groups....This may be due to the fact that Brāhmins have suffered economic degradation and also taken up non-traditional occupation of cultivation."¹²

All this data of different times and from different persons points out one factor very clearly which is that Brāhmins and Lingayats have very keen competitive relations and claims in the Hindu caste hierarchy. But this does not explain either the source of competition or the nature of the competition. Is this competition governed by the rules of pollution and purity? Dr. Chekki, on the one hand, says "the relations between these two castes are governed by, among other things, the norms of purity and pollution," and maintains on the other hand that "the Lingayats and Brāhmins have different sets of ritual norms."¹³ So one could see how there could be a competition with different sets of rules, if different sets of ritual norms are being followed by the two groups. Dr. Ishwaran's analysis

¹¹ D.A. Chekki, "Modernisation and kin network in a developing society: India", p. 10.

¹² K. Ishwaran, Tradition and Economy in village India (a case study), Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966, p. 17.

¹³ Chekki, "Modernisation and kin network in a developing society: India", p. 10.

is equally confusing. For instance, he says: "Although in the classic caste model the Brāhmin is supposed to be the highest caste...his lower position may be attributed to one factor -- economic degradation."¹⁴ Because Dr. Ishwaran's analysis does not take into account the fact that the "classic Varna model" was based not on economic standards but on the standards of ritual purity, it seems relevant therefore to study the exact nature of Brāhmin-Lingayat caste relations and the basis of its rivalry to understand its effects on Lingayat social organisation.

In contrast, instead of caste distinctions and competitions, both Nelson and Frazer and Deleury speak highly of Vārakarī panth pilgrimages playing a great democratising role in their social organisations. They further assert that all caste Hindus participate in these pilgrimages and all caste Hindus are actually involved in the ceremonial worship of Viṭhobā during the auspicious times and at other times as well. So Vārakarīes neither have caste hierarchies nor have competitions in their social organisation.

Accepting this description of Vārakarī social organisation to be true, one could further enquire as to how far this democratising effect of pilgrimages remains when Vārakarīes return to their homes, while arranging their family marriages or allowing occupational mobility for their children, etc. This would help us to measure or weigh the effectiveness of Vārakarī ideology not only amongst themselves, but on the rigid Hindu caste structure of Mahārāṣṭra.

¹⁴ Ishwaran, Tradition and Economy in village India, p. 17.

Sub-Castes

Sub-castes are endogamous, localised, and hierarchical groups with their hereditary occupations. These are very effective and powerful 'we-groups' of people to whom membership comes generally by birth. The real immobilities and fragmentations of these groups indicate directly the rigidities of social organisation. Even sketchy data on this issue illuminates many aspects of social organisation. Thus Enthoven says regarding Viraṣaiva sub-castes that "it's a conger of sub-castes" holding a common religion".¹⁵ Further, the 1911 census reports the existence of as many as seventy-one sub-castes within a small community of Lingayats. At that time, it is reported that 9.2% of Lingayats did not return sub-caste designations. So in the 1921 census, sub-castes were not enumerated. This census broadly classified Lingayat sub-castes into three categories in descending order.

1. Sub-castes with "Astāvāna rites" such as Jangamas, Banajigas and Panchamasalies.
2. Non-panchamasalis with "Astāvāna rites" -- oil pressers, washermen, etc.
3. Non-panchamasalis with no "Astāvāna rites -- barbers, tanners, etc."¹⁶

K. Ishwaran enumerates the existence of 21 sub-castes or Lingayats in 187 households of Shivapur, in contrast to only 4 amongst 129 Marāthā households of Shivapur. The Lingayat sub-castes are given in descending order.

¹⁵ Enthoven. The Bombay Castes and Tribes, p. 371.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 346.

LINGAYAT SUBCASTES

MARATHA SUBCASTES

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Hiremath | (amongst 129 households of Shivapur) |
| 2. Chikamath | Buruki |
| 3. Ganachari | Jande Rawut |
| 4. Mathapati | Kulavadi |
| 5. Hugar | Nadakattu |
| 6. Pujar | |
| 7. Banajiga: | |
| a) Adi-Banjiga | |
| b) Sheelavanta Banjiga | |
| 8. Panchamasali | |
| 9. Panchamasali Totaga | |
| 10. Sadar | |
| 11. Jadar | |
| a) Bile-Jadar | |
| b) Kare-Jadar | |
| 12. Ganiga | |
| a) Bile-Ganiga | |
| b) Kare-Ganiga | |
| 13. Hadapad | |

Such a large number of sub-castes with endogamy and hereditary occupations underlines the fragmented and immobile or rigid social organisation of Lingayats in Shivapur compared to those of Marāthas in Shivapur. In addition to this, the following example given by Enthoven regarding Lingayat washermen in Karnātak points to their lack of mobility both in social and economic matters. Enthoven says: "Hindu washermen in Karnātak wash clothes of all caste Hindus, of muslims and

christians, but Lingayat washermen wash clothes only of Lingayats.

Thus a detailed study of Lingayat sub-castes with reference to their endogamy, occupational mobility, purity and pollution rules, etc. would throw direct light on the "rigidities" of Lingayat social organisation.

There is no information available on the Vārakari sub-caste organisation. That does not mean that none exists. To study the "degree of flexibility" of their social organisation, one has to study their sect sub-caste composition, hierarchies, occupational and local mobilities both during and after pilgrimages. Sub-castes are realities of the entire Indian society and Vārakarīs cannot be an exception to that.

Family-Life

Family organisation of both groups has received little attention from research scholars. Of the relevant data, Dr. Chekki's conclusion that Vīraśaiva kinship organisation has a territorial basis indicates its geographical immobility and its family rigidities. Detailed studies on Vīraśaiva kinship organisation, with reference to territorial or social mobilities, and child-rearing practices with reference to occupational choices, roles for girls and boys, may explain general occupational mobility and hierarchies on the basis of sex in their social organisation.

Similarly, we do not have any data on the family life of Vārakarīs who are mere individual participants in the sect. It is essential to know how their sect participation affects the religious, economic and social life of their families. Whether their sect ideology of equality or geographical mobility has affected their family kinship and occupational structure would highlight the role of their families in introducing

"flexibility" in Mahārāṣṭra.

The "existing data" on both Vīraśaiva and Vārakari groups -- for physical organisation, sect recruitment, sect authority, caste relations, sub-castes, etc. -- substantiates our framework and allows us to predict that Vīraśaivas have a 'rigid' social organisation in contrast to Vārakarīs who have 'flexible' social organisation. At the same time, it helps us to generate questions in the research areas where there are "big gaps" yet to be filled. For instance, the research questions on family organisation and sub-caste organisations, that form the real basis of sect organisations from the point of view of social, occupational and geographic mobility and dynamism, hopefully would uncover other dimensions of Vīraśaiva and Vārakari social organisation than the two dimensional theoretical framework presented in this thesis.

CONCLUSION

A comparison of the Vāraṅkarī and the Vīraśaiva movements, two Bakti sects of Southwestern India, has been undertaken in the previous pages. In each chapter an attempt has been made to understand some aspects of these groups' ideological and social differences. A study of their ideologies as expressed in the poem-sayings of their leaders, Basavā and Tukārām, has shown that these two groups are indeed quite distinct. Vīraśaiva ideology is culturally radical in contrast to Vāraṅkarī ideology, which is culturally moderate in relation to traditional Hinduism.

Let us summarise these ideologies in the following table.

Traditional Hinduism		Bhakti Sects	
RELIGIOUS		BASAVĀ	TUKĀRĀM
	polytheism	monotheism (rejection of other gods)	monotheism (as synthesis of polytheism)
	knowledge of Vedās essential for salvation	no Hindu texts; only Śiva mantra for salvation	not knowledge but devotion to all Hindu texts for salvation
SOCIAL	Hindu purificatory rituals	no Hindu rituals; only Vīraśaiva life cycle rituals	criticises sin cleansing rituals and accepts all the rest of Hindu rituals
	membership limited to pure castes	open membership but only sect members are pure	open membership; all devotees are pure
	authority to Brāhmins as the purest caste members	occupational and religious equality of only sect members	only religious equality and accepts castes inequality
	hereditary hierarchical socio-economic structure	centralised organisation around religious personnel	voluntary decentralised organisation around pilgrimage place

The first column shows the socio-religious beliefs and practices of traditional Hinduism that were criticised by the Bhakti leaders -- Basavā and Tukārām. The second column shows the points of difference between Basavā and traditional Hinduism and the third identifies the position of Tukārām's sect on the same issues. The comparison makes it clear the total rejection by Basavā of the traditional Hindu practices. At each point his ideology radically opposes and contradicts that of traditional Hinduism. Therefore, it has been described here as a 'radical' ideology. Tukārām's ideology on the other hand, quite clearly represents a blending of the two and occupies thus an intermediate position. For this reason we have referred to it as 'moderate'.

The ideology of Basavā's sect recommends a flexible egalitarian social organisation by contrast to the rigid hierarchical structure of traditional Hinduism. The sect was in theory committed to at least religious equality between men and women and to equality among different occupations. But the position of radical opposition to Hinduism taken up by this sect necessitated, I have argued, adopting a highly centralised hierarchically structured hereditary leadership and thus, to the development of a rigid rather than flexible social organisation. Over time, these tendencies become consolidated in the self-isolation of the sect, in opposition to the traditional Hinduism which 'surrounded' it. It developed a centralised authoritarian organisation, with an economic and occupational structure representing its detachment from the political and economic leadership. Thus its ideological radicalism has led to the development of a rigid social organisation instead of the open egalitarian structure that was its original ideal.

In contrast, Tukārām does not reject the reading of scriptures or the performance of rituals as a means to 'salvation'. Accordingly, also it accepts the traditional organisation of castes, and thus the authority of the Brāhmin caste as teachers and spiritual leaders. In principle, therefore, the ideology commits the sect to the rigid, hierarchical social organisation of traditional Hinduism. But because his ideology was moderate, it did not require the development of a centralised authority structure. Moreover, the unique practice of group pilgrimage coupled with voluntary membership and a decentralised organisation has kept the social organisation of the sect loose and flexible. It had no need to develop a rigid hierarchically structured leadership to fight against the rigid Hindu caste structure.

The traditional caste structure of Hinduism is in various ways incompatible with the development of a labour market organisation required by modern industrial development. The caste and family organisation severely restrict the kind of mobility and freedom to move among different types of occupational roles that it requires. In its ideology Basavā's sect represents a form of social organisation which does not suffer from these deficiencies. But this ideological flexibility relative to the possibilities of industrial development in India is contradicted by the social and economic organisation developed around its radical opposition to Hinduism. Thus Basavā's sect has proved less open to changes in Indian society than the more moderate one of Tukārām. The area of research in which this thesis is directed towards involves a fuller examination and development of the implications of what I have analysed and described here for the social and economic

organisation of the two sects in relation to the political and economic changes that are being brought about in India today.

To understand the presentday rigidities and flexibilities of Vīrasaiva and Vāraṅkarī social organisation, we have found it necessary to explore in detail the hierarchical structure and occupational mobility of family and sub-caste groups, units that are basic to day-to-day activity within these two religious communities. It is hoped that this research has thrown a certain light on the multi-dimensional character of these two sects which differ so strikingly, both in social organisation and in basic ideology.

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APPENDIX I

Selected 'Poem Sayings' of Basavā and Tukārām

Section I

BASAVĀ

"If rising at dawn and rubbing my eyes, I worry for my belly, for my goods, for wife and children, then my mind be witness to my mind! Then, Basavannā reads the text which says:

He who sits, sleeps and walks, and interdines with them shall go for endless time to terrific hell; But sitting below the throne of worlding like Bijjalā, serves him. So say the pioneers. To them I answer, "for I can if going into the lowest Pariah's house, I do the lowest service well."

My one concern is but Thy Majesty; But if I worry for my belly's sake, let my head pay for it. O Kudala Sangama Lord!"

(72, 188, S.M.A.)

"Whenever You strike, the stroke's in the hand; Whenever You curse, the curse's in the hand; Let be whatever past life was: today's enjoyment is in the hand! O Kudala Sangama Lord, the fruit of your worship is in the hand!

(29, 100, A.M.)

"You put an iron ring around a pumpkin, it must rot: would it grow fresh? You take a creature, mean of mind, and give him śiva initiation--well does he turn holy? -- same as ever was. O Kudala Sangama Lord, it would be like setting a wretch apart, to be a dedicated soul."

(81, 306, S.M.A.)

TUKĀRĀM

"He has no form nor any name, nor place of abode.

But wherever you go there He is, Viṭṭhla, our mother and sister. He has neither form nor transformation, He fills all things that move or not.

He is neither Nirguna, nor Saguna, who can know Him?

Tukā says: He will never turn towards those who have no faith in their heart."

(3, 2935, I.E.)

"Let us touch respectfully the dust of their feet and eat leftouts. That will burn our previous Karmas and will help us collect unlimited capital; Even Viṭṭhla is penniless.

All will be benefited by meditating and by listening the stories of Govinda. We will get rid of cycles of birth and rebirth. This will be the most easy and available sect to all. Some have gone ahead searching this way, let us follow them. Tukā says: Let us crack our earthly life and go to our mother's home."

(18, 38, I.E.)

"A man who has sacrificed everything is always pure.

He is like a fire to whom pollution cannot touch.

Tukā says: A man who propounds truth and is detached from worldly things is like a lotus from the water."

(29, 1025, I.E.)

BASAVĀ

"Worship an idol made of dung, with a champaka flower: For all the show the stink remains. You wash and wash a doll of clay, day after day it turns to mud: its nature remains. You give initiation to a man of worldly mind: how can devotion grow in an evil man, O Lord Kudala Sangama?"

(82, 306, S.M.A.)

Section II

"Of what avail the vast reading? What boots too much learning? What an intensive study of four Vedās?

Unless the deed obeys the word Kudal Sanga loves not.

I call not the apostles of Veda and Sastras great, nor those who are shrouded in errors of illusion."

(74, 198, S.M.A.)

"Vyasa is a fisherwoman's son, Markandeya, of an outcaste born, Mandodari, the daughter of a frog. O, look not for caste: in caste, what were in the past? Indeed, Agastya was a fowler, Durvasa, a maker of shoes, Kashyapa, a blacksmith; The sage Kaundanya by name, was, as the three worlds know, a barber....Mark Ye all, the words of our Kudala Sangama run. What matters one is lowly born? Only a Sivabhakta is well-born!"

(43, 131, A.M.)

"Devotion severed from Experience escapes our reach; Linga unrealised in experience, escapes the joy of consubstantial union; Prasāda without Experience confers no peace; ay nothing can be known without experience. So could you say what

TUKĀRĀM

"Do not give up food; do not betake yourself to a forest dwelling; in all sufferings and enjoyments think of Narayana. A child sitting on the shoulders of its mother feels no trouble. Put an end to all thoughts different from this. Do not get entangled in worldly enjoyments nor abandon them; dedicate everything you do to God, and have done with it; Tukā says: Do not ask me again and again; nothing else is to be taught but this."

(12, 97, BHAN. V. & S.)

"I don't agree with many opinions. People may have different opinions, discussing with them, I don't want to waste my time.

That is the root cause of being a laughing stock of oneself.

Tukā says: those who want to have 'Ghata and Pata' debate, Please don't come in my way."

(16, 28, I.E.)

"They participate in all debates by cramming or learning some words. They can't distinguish between the experiences. These learned ones while telling stories do not enjoy them. But they do it just to earn some money. Tukā says: they just give witness for corruption. They really don't know the meaning."

(55, 293, I.E.)

"Thy greatness none can comprehend; all dumb the Vedās are. For spent the powers of mortal mind; they cannot climb so far. How can I compass Him whose light illumines both sun and stars?"

(63, 67, N.M.)

BASAVĀTUKĀRĀM

need has one of 'Siva'sarana' if one has lodgement in oneself? O Kudala Sangama Lord, could it be said that your experience is no more than word clashing with word, O Prabhu?"

(78, 270, S.M.A.)

"They toil in vain, who toil not with aim, for the end rewardth nought. Tho' they give away, their substance in alms, the end availth nought. Vain is your labour and your giving gainless, without the indwelling of my Lord Kudala Sangama."

(50, 44, A.S.T.)

"They say that Śiva is fond of nāda, but He is not.

They say that Śiva is fond of the Vedā, but He is not.

Ravana, who was the author of nāda, lost half his life.

Gone was the head of Brahma, who read the Vedā....

Our Lord Kudal Sangama, loves neither nāda nor Vedā:

It's Bhakti He loves!"

(15, 68, A.M.)

"Behold, my brothers, how fearful is the path the ancients trod!

Behold, my brothers, how fearful is when He made made sport with Ballal's wife!

Behold, my brothers, how fearful is when He made demand of Siriyala's son!

Behold, my brothers, how fearful is the path the Kudal Sanga's Sarana's trod - they who make

The impossible possible, whose ways are strange and wonderful!"

(13, 55, A.M.)

"Brothers, you strut upon an elephant or prean yourself upon a horse, or flaunt in saffron and in musk: And yet alas. As you go around, you are ignorant of the Truth. You have forgotten to sow and grow the fruit of virtue!

BASAVĀTUKĀRĀM

Mounted upon the crazy elephant of
 your gigantic pride, you are riding
 straight into the snare of Doom!
 Not knowing our lord, Kudala
 Sangama, you only qualify for hell!"
 (45, 139, A.M.)

"Seeing a snake of stone, they say:
 'Pour milk, Do!'
 Seeing a real snake, they say: 'Kill
 it!'
 If a Jangama who can eat arrives,
 they say: 'Away!'
 And serve their dainties to a Linga
 that cannot eat!
 If you make little of our Kudal
 Sanga's Saranas,
 You shall be a lump of earth,
 dashing against a stone."
 (17, 71, A.M.)

"One hates to see the face and hear
 the words of those who say they keep
 roods of land, a wasting dairy fare,
 an everburning lamp. Say, who has
 given a destiny, to creatures born
 of egg, of sweat, of womb and seed.
 He who repeats: 'This is come through
 me, this is gone through me' -- as
 if breaking a cake to serve his lord -
 Lord Kudala Sangama must sure cast
 dust into his mouth as He stamps his
 foot!"

(20, 78, A.M.)

Section III

"How shall I, Sir, compare Him to
 the waxfilled gods that melt and
 shrink at the sight of fire?
 How shall I, Sir, compare Him to
 the gods you sell in an emergency?
 How shall I, Sir, compare Him to the
 gods you bury in the ground when
 fear assaults?
 Lord Kudala Sangama, who is one
 with the Self-rapt Reality? Alone
 is God!"

(75, 201, S.M.A.)

"Here is no Jakhai or Jotihi,
 no Mayarani or Mesabai.
 Powerful is my king of Pandhari,
 the God of all gods.
 Randi, Candi, Sakti, who devour
 flesh and drink alcohol.
 Bahirao, Khandirao, who are gods
 only for the sake of bread and
 meat.
 The monstrous Ganoba, greedy for
 Ladus and sweets.

Munjya and Mhaisasura, who could

BASAVĀ

"All those who make their home in the solitary hills, on the hamlet roads, in the tanks and wells, in the flowering shrubs and trees, at the heart of villages, wherever four roads meet, in ancient banyan-trees: possessing milch buffaloes babies or pregnant wives, or mothers brought to bed, maidens and lads or living off their prey, or begging for their food those who are called Marayya, Birrayya, Sylph, Goblin or ghou, Kalayya, Malayya, Dulayya, Ketayya; All these one hundred pots, it is just enough to shatter at one stroke, saying, 'I bow to Thee, O Kudala Sangama Lord!'"

(41, 129, A.M.)

"I was greater than the greatest that there is, in the grand Absolute, sublimely great. How can I tell the way the word that I am within the Lofty light of Lord Kudala Sangama was turned to silentness! Look at the being that remains when all the murky darkness is dispelled! While light on light has been enthroned, Lord Kudala Sangama alone knows the union that ensues when light is wedded unto Light!"

(71, 91, S.M.A.)

"Of no avail thy reading of God is one or two in being, unless thy heart to Saranas moves as to wax to fire in melting proves. Nought wilt thou receive, unless thou believe the Linga and Jangama are one and never twain, empty are thy words, if they weave e'en a garland of praise, Lord Kudala Sangama!"

(54, 80, A.S.T.)

"What you call world of gods, what you call mortal world, Are they some other place? Why, in this very world, are infinite worlds besides!"

TUKĀRĀM

esteem these gluttons?

Vetala and Phetala, Let their dark face be burned.

Tukā says: Rest your mind on the Husband of Rukamani."

(5, 627, O.A.)

"The serpent of a thousand tongues cannot tell all Thy praise; Then how, poor I? Thy children we, Mother of loving ways! within the shadow of Thy grace, Ah, hide me, Tukā says."

(64, 68, N.M.)

"Viṭṭhala is our life, and the place where the scriptures dwell In Viṭṭhala all spiritual powers are, on Viṭṭhala our meditation rests.

Viṭṭhala is my family God, Viṭṭhala is my fortune, my caste and my mind.

Viṭṭhala is my merit and my goal, I love the splendour of Viṭṭhala. Viṭṭhala pervades all beings, He fills the seven subterranean worlds.

Viṭṭhala is spread over the three worlds, Viṭṭhala dwells in the hearts of the saints.

Viṭṭhala is the very essence of our life, Viṭṭhala became to give us His Grace.

Viṭṭhala assumed a form for our love, Viṭṭhala puts the world in motion. Tukā says: Viṭṭhala is our father, mother, and uncle, Viṭṭhala is our brother and sister, we have no affection for our family apart from Him, now there is no one else."

(4, 2541, O.A.)

"Wherever I look, there I see God. Give me such faith as this.

One whose God is of a stone will reap fruits like his faith; Preserve your faith; you will prove the sweetness of it, though hindrances arise to part you from it; God is secured by faith!"

(31, 2598, F.M.)

BASAVĀ

Where godlike works are done, there
is the siva-world;
The place where a bhakta is that
is the world of gods;
The bhakta's courtyard is Vārānasi;
This is a fact, O Lord Kudala
Sangama!"

(11, 35, A.M.)

"Lord, when the supreme light of
Consciousness, that's seated in Thy
heart was joined in me,
By the contact of the hand and head,
Behold! you kindled a great light,
Lord by bringing the great light,
which was united with my hand;
Behold! you placed it in my will;
Lord, bringing the light united with
my will, You placed it in my mind;
Lord, bringing the great light united
with my mind, you placed it in my
eyes! Lord, bringing the great
light united with my eyes, you placed
it in my palms! Lord, when the inte-
gral light that glows and shines
dazzling within my palm, made mani-
fest the vision of Iṣṭalinga, you
made assurance in my ears! Lord,
dwelling in the spell made in my ear,
you hid the magnitude. Lord, this
way did you make me see your being
in myself, O Kudala Sangama, My
Venerable Lord!"

(76, 204, S.M.A.)

TUKĀRĀM

"For God incarnation, and for a
devotee the life on this earth are
meant for one purpose only.
All the enjoyments of a devotee are
from the 'image' of God.
God is enjoying happiness with them.
Devotees have given a form and an
image to God.

Tukā says: A devotee is God and a
God is devotee. There is no distinction."

(41, 1038, I.E.)

"I saw my death with my own eyes.
Incomparably glorious was the occa-
sion. The whole universe was filled
with joy. I became everything and
enjoyed everything. I had hitherto
clung to one place, being spent up in
egoism (in this body). By my deliverance
from it, I am enjoying a harvest of
bliss. Death and birth are now no
more. I am free from the littleness
of 'Me' and 'Mine'. Tukā says: God
has given me a place to live and I
am proclaiming Him to the whole world."

(2, 2669, I.E.)

"If Nārāyaṇa is not powerful, do
you think 'Purāṇas' will sing
loudly of His valour? Without
His fame I am not drumming for
His 'Name'.... Though He is so great
He has no pride. God has neither
jealousy nor narrowmindedness, so
Tukā says: Be in His service."

(43, 1035, I.E.)

"One should not debate on the differ-
ences between 'Hari' and 'Hara'.
They are very close as if in each
other's heart.

Only the last letter of the words
differ.

Both are like right left sides of
the one and same body."

(26, 124, I.E.)

Section IV

"There is one earth to hold, God's
temple and the Pariah's colony;
One water for the closet and the bath;
one sect for those who know themselves;
One meed for those who are released by

"A man who utters the name of 'Rāma'
at every mouthful, he alone has taken
full food, though he may be fasting.
Such a body is blessed, and great and
it is a permanent home of all

BASAṬĀ

means of the six-fold mystic way;
One height for those who know Thee,
Lord Kudala Sangama." (47, 146, A.M.)

"Is there harshness in Linga? Is
there a caste in Jangama?
My brother, you who gaze into the
mirror, look at the Jangama,
for in him Linga dwells. Kudala
Sangama's words say,
The immovable and the movable are
one." (69, 85, S.M.A.)

When tanks and streams and wells
themselves bare, you see pebbles
and weeds and oyster shells;
But when ocean-bed lies bare, it
is gems you see.
When Kudala Sangama's Śaranas lay
bare their hearts and speak, it
is Linga you see." (82, 321, S.M.A.)

"I shall till the land to serve the
Guru. I shall pursue the trade to
serve the Linga. I shall serve
others in order to serve Jangama.
I know that whatever I work, it is
You who reward the work. O Lord
Kudala Sangama, I shall always
strive through my work, to repay the
wealth that you have bestowed on me!"
(60, 77, K.C.)

"The lotus lends the water grace,
and bellows to the sea;
A woman's virtue is her grace,
the sky's the moon;
The ashmark on the brow, lends
grace to a Śarana of our Lord
Kudala Sangama." (4, 30, A.M.)

"Upon the soil of Piety sprouted
the seed, and Linga, the leaf was
born; then Thought came from the
flower, and deed for tender fruit,
and knowledge for the ripened one;
And when the fruit of knowledge
broke loose from the stalk and
fall, Look, Kudala Sangama, wanting
it Himself, gathered it up."
(40, 127, A.M.)

TUKĀRĀM

pilgrimages and vows. Those who utter
Rāma while doing their work, contentment
is always for him. If one says Rāma
while walking the road, it's like perform-
ing sacrifice at every step. If he says
Rāma while enjoying or sacrificing, the
Karma does not touch him. Tukā says: If
one utters Rāma always, he gets liberated."
(30, 1096, I.E.)

"Hold His name, for whom four Vedās
were made.

There is no need of any other means, why
are you unnecessarily putting to trouble?
Even eighteen Purāṇas do not have stories,
except His name. This Mother who is
standing on the brick has advised Gīta.
Tukā says: A man who utters the name
of Hari has hold over all means."

(36, 2456, I.E.)

"My sexual desire could not be completely
satisfied, so I am committing adultery.
I want (Him) with me all the time.
Even a moment without (Him) makes me uneasy.
My talk, my companionship is all with my
Infinite."

(15, 8, I.E.)

"All Vaiṣṇavās are playing with 'Tāl
and Tiparī at Paṇḍhri
Such a happiness is not available even
in the three worlds
There are debates of joy and conversa-
tions of happiness.
They are dancing and singing loudly the
name of Viṭhobā. All gods and pilgrimages
are there. Everybody is looking with
wonder the whole Amarāvati is empty.
People talk great of heaven, but it is not
like Paṇḍhari. Tukā says: You all men
and women, don't be lazy." (47, 195, I.E.)

"We hold Krishna as a diamond around our
neck, and thus enlighten all the followers.
Let us distribute Krishna's food amongst
us and let us, Vaiṣṇavites have no doubts.
Let us bow to all the gods and show the
best of all.

(49, 179, I.E.)

BASAVĀ

"O Basavā, come tell me" queried I myself. Are there true devotees on earth?
 "No, none, none is there" myself replied.
 "I, the only one, in that category who still remains."
 "And all others have made the Jangama or Linga grade or one with Lord Sangamesh hailed."

(59, 107, A.S.T.)

Section V

"Strong is the elephant: but could you say less strong the goad? Nay, nay, not so!
 Strong is the mountain: but could you say the thunderbolt less strong? Nay, nay, not so!
 Strong is the darkness: but could you say less strong the Light? Nay, nay, not so!
 Oblivion's strong; but could say your love less strong? Nay, nay, not so, O Kudala Sangama!"

(2, 2, A.M.)

"Should I say that the sea is great? The earth holds it.
 Should I say that the earth is great? The jewel in the Snake-god's hood holds that!
 Should I say that the Snake-god's great? He is contained within the signet ring on the small finger of Parvati!
 Is then Parvati great? She is Paramesvara's better half!
 Is this Paramesvara great, then? He's contained within the point of points of our Kudala Sanga's Saranas' minds!"

(46, 145, A.M.)

"Like pouring of blood, your oblation shall be, if thy mind wrathful be -
 Same as a flower a sinner shall offer, or like probed wound be.
 None find I on level in love, with Madara Chennayya;
 None a peer for boundless love to Dohara Kakkayya,
 Save Madival Machayya whose love with

TUKĀRĀM

"To keep the Holy order pure, this ever is my purpose sure.
 The Vedic statues I proclaim; to imitate the saints my aim.
 For no firm resolve within, to quit the world is worldly sin.
 Vile he who does so, Tukā says: Evil the worship that he pays."

(65, 85, N.M.)

"They (saints) wear out their bodies in serving others;
 Forebearing love is in the happiness of others."
 (59, 2375, F.M.)

"My friends are all good people, innocent and loving followers of Hari. They dance, clap and with love salute God by putting themselves on the ground. They are neither ashamed of anyone, nor care for anyone.
 Tukā says: When I see them, my throat chokes and eyes fill with tears with sheer joy!"

(53, 787, I.E.)

"God, You stand for 'religion'! Blessing and sins are in Your hand. The Generous One, redeem me of this difficult past deeds. When You accept me, I don't have anything to carry.
 Tukā says: Narāyanā, you are the life of all lives!"

(20, 43, I.E.)

"How sinful my body was, O God. But by meditation, by self-inception and repentant prayer, my sin is cleansed and now my mind is full of love."

(58, 2064, F.M.)

"I will be pure by the sight of this kind image by uttering His name. My knowledge is incomplete and I have no blessing in store. I will embrace Your feet and see You by my eyes.

BASAVA

them in measure meet and e'ever
ready for immolation for proof, if
need be, of his sole dedication to
Lord Kudala Sangama!"

(53, 65, A.S.T.)

"Yours are my weal and woe; my loss
and gain are Yours;
Yours too my honour and shame, O
Lord Kudala Sangama.
How can the creeper feel the weight
of its own fruit?"

(63, 73, S.M.A.)

"The Cakora waits intent, the moon-
light's silver dawn;
The lotus' heart is bent, upon the
splendid morn;
The bee's, on the flower's scent,
Even thus, for Thee, even thus my
heart is tremulous, O Kudala
Sangama Lord!"

(31, 106, A.M.)

"Make me, O Father, a crippled man,
who will not wander here and there.
Make me, O Father, a sightless man
whose glance will not rove astray.
Make me, O Father, hard to hear,
less I should hear of aught but
Thee.

O Lord Kudala Sangama, keep me from
all enticements free, but what will
draw to Thy Śarana's feet!"

(3, 7, A.M.)

"My father Thou, my mother too;
Thou also all my kin and kith...
save Thou, no kindred is to me: O
Kudala Sangama Lord, do with me as
Thou please."

(35, 118, A.M.)

"One still can stand where burnt
the hearth" But could one stand
where burnt the earth? When the
bank, thirsty, drinks the streams,
and the fence turns to graze, the
wife at home to thievish ways, and

TUKĀRĀM

I will embrace Your feet and see
You by my eyes.

I will sing the songs with the help
of the wise ones, and carry on, my
rest of my life with Your thought.
Tukā says: I will keep your name
Narāyanā, in my heart all the time."
(56, 1649, I.E.)

"As the fish is restless for life,
that's how is my life.
A child is suffering from the separa-
tion from his mother, You know that
suffering, God. In how many ways,
should I tell You? I am being burnt
from within with this worry I don't
know, why You have forgotten me?
Tukā says: You know all this. Please
be blissful at least now."
(42, 1031, I.E.)

"I long to see Thy face, But ah, in
me hath holiness no place.
By Thy strength succor me, so only,
only I Thy feet may see.
Though Sadhu's robes I've worn,
within I am all unshaven and unshorn.
Lost, lost, O God, am I, unless Thou
help me, Tukā, me who cry!"
(62, 88, N.M.)

"The endless is beyond, and between
Him and me there are the lofty
mountains of desire and anger. I am
not able to ascent them, nor do I
find any pass. Insurmountable is
the ascent of my enemies. What pos-
sibility is there of my attaining
Narāyanā, my friend? Panduranga
is lost to me; says Tukā: It is
now plain that this valuable life
of mine has gone for nothing."
(9, 4421, I.E.)

BASAVĀTUKĀRĀM

mother's milk to poisonous cream -
and all seems part of crazy dream -
to whom should I complain, O Lord?"

(28, 99, A.M.)

"I've bathed in turmeric, and decked
myself in gold;

But I am like a woman lost to the
love of her Lord!

I've smeared the sacred ash and put
on Rudrakshi, yet I am without Your
love, O Śiva, my Lord!

There is none in my clan, who sur-
vives having fallen.

Pray save me, O Kudala Sangama Lord,
as You love me."

(67, 80, S.M.A.)

"My legs tire not with dancing, my
eyes tire not with gazing

My tongue tires not with singing:
What else, what else?

My heart tires not with worshipping
Thee with full hands

What else, what else? Hark unto me,
Kudala Sangama Lord,

What I'd love most do, is burst Thy
belly and enter it."

(37, 121, A.M.)

"Look you, the Śarana's sleep is
telling of beads;

It's Śivaratri, when he wakes and
sits;

Wherever he treads is holy ground;
and Śiva-doctrine whatever he
speakes;

The body of Kudala Sanga's Sarana
is very heaven!"

(77, 243, S.M.A.)

"They be my patrons, who strike me.
They that revile me, I regard my own.
They be my parents, who rebuke me.
They, my masters all who despite-
fully use me;

And they my brethren, all who mock
and deride me.

And they that flatter with fulsome
praise, be they that impale me on
a golden stake-Lord Kudala Sangama."

(58, 99, A.S.T.)

Section VIBASAVĀ

"Rather than be the golden pot, a
crow will soil, make me
O Lord, the leather shoes my master
wears.

Make me, O Lord, the leathern shoes
for Thy Śarana's feet.

Some rest on works; on knowledge
some; we rest on Śiva Piety.

O Kudala Sangama Lord, I spread my
mantle to beseech,

O, bless me with this single gift:
to rest on leathern shoes."

(30, 105, A.M.)

"If, seeing Śivabhakta just in
front, you bow to Him with open
eyes; the sins of seven births will
be in flight.

If, prostrate before Him, you touch
His feet, it is as if your body was
offered all to Him, as if transmuted
by the almechic stone.

The fellowship of Śaranas of Kudala
Sangama, the Maker of this world,
will never let you wear the garlands
of rebirth again."

(12, 54, A.M.)

"Like the affection of a wife, who
does not give his food, to her lord
coming, hungry home and yet laments
he is loosing weight his coming
home is nought to her, she does not
serve him what there is. It is like
an actor's griefless grief, O
Kudala Sangama Lord."

(19, 76, A.M.)

"Cling to the robe of saints.
Let me keep the company of saints
in any guise;
Let me lie at their door like a
dog.

It's a blessed season when you have
met the saints and embraced their
feet, the knot of doubt unravelled;
there is calm within the heart.

(60, 930, F. & M.)

TUKĀRĀM

"I head not ascetics and preachers
of Hari, their views are many and
diverse; I may salute them out of
courtesy, says Tukā, but what I
delight in is purity of heart."

(61, 2632, F. & M.)

"Blessed are the pious, for their
heart is pure; the saints worship
the visible God, they testify that
they have faith therein.

They know nothing of rules and
prohibitions; their hearts are
filled with devoted love."

(57, 894, F. & M.)

"If one's life is not clean, what
can soap do? If one's mind is not
clean, what can advice do? If a
tree can't bear fruits and flowers,
what can spring do? If a barren
woman can't get children, what can
a husband do? If a man is impo-
tent, what can a wife do? When
life has left the body, what can
knowledge do? Tukā says: Unless
you sow, nothing can grow."

(52, 765, I.E.)

"Fortunate, indeed, are those
persons in whose heart dwells for-
giveness and to whom, when there
is occasion, courage and strength
do not fail; who do not criticise
other people by calling them good
or bad and who think nothing of
wordly greatness or superiority;
who internally and externally are
alike pure like Ganga and whose
heart is tender; Tukā says: I
will wave my body round them and
place my head on their feet."

(11, 97, BHAND. V. & S.)

BASAVĀ

"If you should speak, your words should be pearls that are strung upon a thread.

If you should speak, your words should be like luster by the ruby shed.

If you should speak, your words should be a crystal's flash that cleaves the blue.

If you should speak, great God must say, ay ay, that's very true. But if your deed betrays your word, can Kudala Sangama care for you?"

(1,1, A.M.)

"If I say I trust Thee, love Thee, I have sold myself to Thee, You put my body to test, You put my mind to test, You put my money to test, If I fear not all these, you yield to Bhakti, O Kudala Sangama."

(66, 77, S.M.A.)

"These I fear not -- The creeping snake, the leaping flame, the swishing sword, Save one -- Covet another's wife or my neighbour's wealth, high prized these lures tho' by the world be. Consider Ravana's lot. Tho' dauntless of fear was he. Thee, fear I ever -- My Lord Kudala Sangama."

(49, 40, A.S.T.)

"Does it make you ugly if you say, 'come right in, how do you do? Does your floor cave in when you say 'Do sit down please,'

Or dose your head or belly, burst if you only speak to one?

If you have nothing to give, not even a grace, Lord Kudala Sangama, be sure, will pull you down and chop your nose!"

(22, 86, A.M.)

TUKĀRĀM

"The true image of God is His faithful people: In holy places we find water and an image of stone, but in the society of good men, we have the actual presence of God. Through love to men He dances and sings in the person of the saints."

(32, 926, 287, F. & M.)

"Those who even think of good and bad qualities of saints, crush all the good actions. It is like crushing flowers to take its fragrance.... Tukā says: A man who thinks that Ganga pollutes fire, is a low born and will suffer for it."

(50, 245, I.E.)

"What has thou done by going to holy river? Thou hast only outwardly washed thy skin, in what way has the interior been purified? By this thou hast only added a feather to thy cap. Even if the bitter fruit is coated with sugar, the settled quality of the interior is no way lessened. If peace, forgiveness and sympathy do not come in, why should you take any trouble?"

(1, 95, BHAND. V. & S.)

"Those who are careful of their 'good', their parents are blessed.

In whose family children are serene, God feels about them.

Those who listen Gīta Bhāgawat and meditate on Vithobā all the time;

Tukā says: He must get to serve them, otherwise his fate is not going to be redeemed."

(17, 34, I.E.)

"No one has such a strength as to break all attachments by oneself. One may give up wife, children and family, but can't control his tongue and mind.

BASAVĀ

"What sort of religion can it be,
without compassion?
Compassion need must be towards all
living things;
Compassion is the root of all reli-
gious faith:
Lord Kudala Sangama does not care for
what is not like this."

(24, 89, A.M.)

"What does lust mean for one who loves
Linga?
What anger, for one possessed by Sarana?
What greed, for one who seeks Bhakti
as a prize?
What infatuation, for one possessed by
Prasada?
How can that heart be pure which har-
bours pride and jealousy?
Our Lord Kudala Sangama abides in
those that rest content."

(8, 43, A.M.)

"Question you may one bitten by a
snake; question you may, one ghost
possessed:
You cannot question one possessed by
the ghost of wealth....But if the
Escorcist called poverty draw near,
he speakes at once, O Kudala Sangama
Lord!"

(10, 50, A.M.)

"Why should you try to mend the
failings of the world?
Assuage your bodies first, each one
of you! assuage your minds, each one!
Lord Kudala Sangama does not approve
those who bemoan the neighbour's
grief!"

(9, 46, A.M.)

"True devotee to his brother bows;
with soft words let your prayer be;
for penance, upon kind words draw;
they are ever supreme in Grace's
scale. Hence none pleases, where
these virtues fail, Lord Kudala
Sangama!"

(52, 53, A.S.T.)

TUKĀRĀM

...Such a man may say that he
is unattached, but Tukā says:
He is tied with unhappiness."
(38. 2462, I.E.)

BASAVĀTUKĀRĀM

"If like a jujube leaf you are one thing within, and another thing without, does He approve? He shall make you come to births that never should have been. Does He approve? He'll make you taste the horrors of hell: Does he approve? If like the iguana's tongue you are two things in one, Does Lord Kudala Sangama approve?"

(6, 36, A.M.)

"People who neither know nor think of God -- does not the dung, Sir, breed a thousand worms? The village creatures live together, Lord: Do not the creatures of the forest too? Look you my brothers! A village or a region which has none, of our Kudala Sanga's Saranas, is even as living in a wood, a range inhabited by savage men."

(14,57, A.M.)

"For the indulgence of the flesh they swallow meat and spirituous drinks, For the indulgence of the eye commit adultery -- what profits it to wear Linga and other trappings too? If those who go astray from the Linga path, incur reproach from the Jangama's lips, they will not escape going the market way of sale and purchase, Lord Kudala Sangama!"

(7, 38, A.M.)

"Say I'm a hero: what need then to play with a stick?
Say I'm a servant: what need then to cling to life?
Say I'm a bhakta: what need then to cling to body, mind and wealth?
Should I but question both Your commands and threats; it is my servanthood that takes a blow.

O Kudala Sangama Lord!

(80, 293, S.M.A.)

BASAVĀTUKĀRĀM

"Hear all ye!

Who of valour boast, honour and piety,

Bravery ever the enemy's esteem earn; honour ever the lady's love evokes; and piety, the Jangama's praise shall meet.

When these in thy life manifest issue, shall acknowledgement due, from Lord Kudala Sangama."

(51, 48, A.S.T.)

"I am a poor wretch undevout, O Lord; I have begged for alms at Kakayya's house; I have begged for them at Chennayya's house; I have begged for alms at Dasayya's too. O Kudala Sangama Lord, because the saints together all have given me alms, my bowl is full!"

(65, 75, S.M.A.)

"He is a devotee who greets with folded hands, each devotee he meets" your genteel speech is worth all counting of beads; Your genteel speech is worth all penances; true modesty is worth Sadasiva's grace. Lord Kudala Sangama spurns those who are not like this."

(23, 87, A.M.)

"Melt my mind and purge its saints, test it and in fire refine. Hammer, so the hammer pains, to pure gold this heart of mine. Beat from me, great craftsman, beat anklets for Thy devotees feet, save me, Lord Kudala Sangama."

(25, 91, A.M.)

Section VII

"Teach me, Kudala Sangama Lord, that I should never beg of others with faint heart; that I should never praise others too foolishly; That I should not covet in my heart another's wife to lust; that I should never mix with such as turn their

BASAVĀ

backs upon the Śiva path;
That I should never seek, the
friendship of such men as boast
another caste!"

(26, 92, A.M.)

"As though you would live forever
and not die, you hoard your wealth.
But should life end and death come,
there would be none to enjoy your
wealth.

So do not hoard wealth, burrowing
the earth, when the earth swallows,
does it spit out again? content
to look at it with eyes, storing
it underground, do not you uncon-
suming go.

You think you leave it to your
wife; may be your wife has other
plans:

The moment that your body drops,
surely she weds another man.

Do not give it for other's use
and prove a big silly sheep.

It should be spent and spent at
once, for Kudala Sanga's
Saranas."

(18, 72, A.M.)

"They say they break their vows,
in eating and in wearing cloth;
They look for caste, whenever
they arrange a match.
How can you call them devotees?
How can you call them adepts too?
Hearken to me, Kudala Sangala Lord,
it's like a low-born wife bathing
in water that is pure."

(44, 136, A.M.)

"You persons without Vedās, listen,
the things that I am referring to
in front of saints are the crux
of the matter.

Four classes were formed out of One
body. It is really good and bad
activities that divide the world.
This is the sect we got right at
the first step, that does not
distinguish between higher, middle
and lower.

Mango, berry and Changana trees
are different in quality,
but the fire they produce is one
and the same."

(34, 1472, I.E.)

APPENDIX II

Technical Concepts Central to Bhakti Dharma

'Dharma' refers not only to a system of spiritual beliefs and rituals, but also to a system of social laws that organises and upholds the society. This general system of laws of the society is translated into each individual's 'systems of duties' at home and outside in his different roles at different stages of life. For instance, 'Mātru Dharma' meaning 'mothers' duties' and 'Varna Dharma' meaning 'caste duties' and so on.

Manu, one of the Hindu religious thinkers, prescribes five possible sources of Dharma. They are: Vedā, Śruti, Smṛiti, codes of conduct given by the virtuous saints of the time and above all that which is acceptable to one's own conscience. Dharma is sacred because it is holy and respectable. But it is changeable from time to time, place to place and situation to situation.

In 'Bhakti Dharma', one of the added factors is the establishment of a definite personal relationship between God and Bhakta, devotee. Here God is referred to as a father, and mother, or a lord, husband, etc. This special relationship of all devotees explains the fact that all Bhaktas, as God's children, are equal and God is equally accessible to all.

In Bhakti, there is an extreme emphasis on 'a burning desire' of a devotee to love his God. This explains the predominance of emotions over knowledge and rituals in Bhakti religion. The experience of emotions or feelings ('Bhava'), though partly mystic, can be experienced

by each and everyone by proper disciplining of body and mind.

The saints (Santa in Marāthi, and Sarana in Kannada) are the individuals who have been able to control their passions of lust and anger, who are thus able to purify their minds and are able to be kind and generous to others. They live in the midst of people and thus provide the living ideals of Bhakti religion. So they are called temples of Bhakti where not only devotees should go, but where "Gods come running" says Tukārām. "The ground they walk on is holy and whatever they talk about is Śiva doctrine", says Basavā.

Thus 'saint' is not a 'title' given by a religious organisation for one's miraculous activities, but is a title given by the people and respected by the people for the kindness and generosity and religiousity they have shown to people. Thus, many saints together can start a sect, or one can by himself, depending on his leadership capabilities.

'Panth' meaning 'sect' is a necessary corollary of 'Bhakti religion'. But Panth does not necessarily refer to rival or divisive groups in an organisation -- it merely refers to a following of one line of beliefs and thinking. Though Bhakti religion in its first phase did have two rival sects: Vaiṣṇavism, worshippers of Viṣṇu, and Śaivism, worshippers of Śiva. But all later Bhakti sects were a kind of regional-linguistic 'religious communities', amalgamating the beliefs and needs of an area. Thus the two sects, Vīraśaivism and Vāraṅkarī panth, that I compare in this thesis are two sects, satisfying the needs of two distinct linguistic groups, living side by side.

'Advaita' and 'Dvaita' are two philosophical concepts in Hindu religion that explain the nature of types of relationships between

man to God. Advaitism believes that man is a part and parcel of God, and is away from Him as long as he is living on this earth. And eventually (after his death), the individual spirit merges into universal spirit (liberation or Mokṣa).

By contrast, Dvaitism believes that man is always separate from God both in this world and thereafter. According to them, liberation is a stage of "permanent bliss, and grace" of God's on an individual.

'Punya' and 'Papa' could be translated as 'good' and 'bad' activities respectively. These concepts refer to the general moral code of conduct, prevalent in every society. That is, not to kill others, nor to steal from others, etc. are good and the opposites are bad activities.

But the additional criteria of these activities in the Hindu religion is its resultant effects on individuals. These resultant effects are explained by two other related concepts "purity" and "pollution". The person who does a good activity remains in a 'state of purity' and when he does bad activities, he remains in a 'state of pollution' until he undergoes purificatory rituals, punishments or penances.

Further, the terms 'purity' and pollution' do not refer mainly to 'one's physical state as being dirty or clean, but refer more to one's mental or spiritual well being. For instance, Tukārām says: "A Brāhmin, when angry, becomes polluted, while when an outcaste thinks ill of others he becomes equally polluted".

Thus these concepts of 'punya and papa', and 'purity and pollution' refer to the ethical and spiritual activities of the individual

in a society. And the punishments are believed to be given, not by the external authority as police, but by the highest spiritual authority of the world, God.