



MUNSHI  
HIS ART AND WORK  
Volume IV  
CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

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CELEBRATIONS COMMITTEE

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# MUNSHI

## His Art and Work

Volume IV

CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

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SHRI MUNSHI SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY  
CITIZENS' CELEBRATIONS COMMITTEE



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## P R E F A C E

This is the fourth book in the series *Munshi: His Art and Work*, planned on the occasion of Munshi's Seventieth birthday in 1956. This Volume is published on the occasion of his 76th birthday. The first volume dealt with his early life and his career as a lawyer; the second gave an account of his political activities during fifty years which ended with 1956 and the third volume was devoted to a description of his literary work. The present volume deals mainly with Munshi's constructive work and his contribution to the preservation and enrichment of the many facets of India's ancient culture. These activities which stemmed from his innate adoration of the country's heritage and intense zeal to revitalise it in the context of the present were undertaken by him both in his official and non-official capacities. The many faces of his complex yet co-ordinated personality were manifest in the several movements that he started and in the institutions that arose by his inspiration and under his guidance. Long after Munshi's early life and steep climb to affluence, his political work and perhaps even his literary works are forgotten, his constructive work in the service of his motherland and in the cause of the eternal values of Truth, Goodness and Beauty will remain indelibly carved in the nation's memory. In this aspect of life one sees Munshi in the line of the distinguished architects of India like Dayanand Saraswati, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Madan Mohan Malaviya and Rabindranath Tagore. The only difference between them and Munshi is that they were each one-pointed in their programme and achievement, but Munshi turned his hand to diverse forms of constructive

work all of which he accomplished with a phenomenal measure of success. Vana Mahotsav, Land Transformation, Home for Destitute Children, Reconstruction of Somanath, Sanskrit Vishva Parishad, and above all the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan with its numerous institutions, to mention but a few, any one of them by itself would be a life-time achievement for any person

In the pages that follow, all the items of Munshi's Constructive Work are detailed as they were conceived in his versatile mind and executed with the dynamism so characteristic of his nature. The book is offered to Munshi on his 76th birthday with reverential admiration of a noble and purposeful life of lasting benefit to his countrymen. The book is also offered to the public with the earnest hope and trust that the institutions that he has so assiduously built up and reared with supreme parental care will grow from strength to strength in the hands of a grateful posterity to whom he bequeaths them to be their enduring possessions from generation to generation.

EDITORS

## CONSTRUCTIVE WORK



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

The foremost litterateur in Gujarati, Munshi's works have ever been oriented to Indian renaissance in its several aspects. His purpose has been to resuscitate the glory that has been India in the hearts and minds and in the accordant conduct of the people. In this, he has never been a mere revivalist. He has borne in mind the context of modern times and the need to adjust our heritage to the changes that have come with the passage of years and the new and widening contacts which have to be reckoned with.

A gifted man is not content with merely dwelling in his noble ideas and deriving mental satisfaction in their contemplation. Thought must issue out and fulfil itself in action under the dynamism of an emotional fervour which permits no rest except after its translation into an objective reality. Munshi belongs to the band of men who combine an intellectual idealism with an active realism, thereby striving to lift the real to the region of the ideal and chastening it in the process.

Munshi is not a starry-eyed idealist day-dreaming about things that should be done. With the zeal of a missionary, he has been striving to implement the ideals and ideas that have taken possession of his heart in the framework of the life of the people. The result has been the variety of movements that he has started and the institutions that he has built up. These constitute Munshi's constructive work, an expression coined and popularised by Gandhiji as a superior complement to the passive-combative role



which politicians played in the struggle for the country's freedom.

To Gandhiji, rural India in its myriad villages was the theatre of the constructive work that he envisaged and outlined. Founded on the spinning wheel and intended to resuscitate village arts and crafts, it had an economic and social purpose. To Munshi, it turns on the cultural and is directed to restore Indian culture in the widest sense of that expression.

It is not as though Munshi has been indifferent to the economic and social aspects of the Indian renaissance. He was free India's first Minister for Food and Agriculture and he was successful in averting a repetition of the Bengal famine of 1943. But long before he became Minister for Agriculture, he was keenly interested in the subject, and he was mainly instrumental in establishing the Institute of Agriculture at Anand which has become almost a Church of Land Transformation

During his tenure as Minister for Agriculture, Munshi was ceaselessly propagating the Gospel of the Dirty Hand. His imaginative approach led him to institute the festival of tree plantation which has come to be known as Vana Mahotsav. At the root of the idea is undoubtedly Munshi's love of beauty and humanity.

Social injustice has ever roused him to action. As a young man, he defied social conventions, broke caste restrictions, fought for women's rights and was actively associated with the Social Reform movement. As Home Minister of Bombay, he tackled the problem of delinquent children at its roots and devised means not merely to rescue them from a career of crime but also to rehabilitate them as acceptable members of society.

It was due to his instinct for the sacred and his national fervour that the shrine of Somanath rose again from its

ruins and the shame of centuries was wiped out. To Munshi, Somanath was the Shrine Eternal, the symbol of Sacred India. With single-minded devotion, he mobilised man-power and monetary resources from the public to rebuild the temple. Many were the difficulties which confronted him and the rebuilding was mainly due to his initiative, energy and crusading zeal.

Sanskrit has ever been his love and it was but meet that he should have utilised the consecration of the new temple at Somanath to inaugurate the Sanskrit Vishva Parishad. He has been the moving spirit behind the Parishad which has remarkable achievements to its credit. The Sanskrit Commission appointed by the Union Government was the result of his indefatigable labours.

Munshi has enriched his mother-tongue with works of great charm and rare beauty. His stewardship of the Sahitya Parishad was characterised by dynamic activity. Apart from enriching Gujarati literature, Munshi was the first to emphasise the idea of Gujarat as a cultural unit. He coined the phrase Gujarat-ni-asmita (Gujarat consciousness) to underline the essential oneness of all Gujarati-speaking people. But when linguism reared its ugly head after the publication of the States Reorganization Committee's Report, Munshi raised his strident voice of protest against the new danger. Therein lies Munshi's strength, he is not afraid to speak out his mind even when his opinions are opposed to the popular current.

This singular courage of his convictions explains his championship of English, though he has been a protagonist of Hindi all his life. The fact that the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is starting a Public School where the medium of instruction would be English proves that Munshi practises what he preaches.

His services to the cause of higher education have been

manifold. He was a member of the Senate of the Bombay University and he played a notable role in the legislature as the representative of the University. He was a member of the University Commission appointed by the late Gaekwar of Baroda. In fact, he was the moving force behind the establishment of the Baroda and Gujarat universities. He also drew up the blue-print for the Vikram University at Udaipur. As Governor of Uttar Pradesh, he was the Chancellor of five universities.

But it is as the founder of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan that Munshi will go down in history. Aptly has H. V. Divatia written: "The Bhavan may be likened to an ancient mango tree which being well-watered, well-manured and well-nourished, has each of its branches laden with luscious fruits. Each constituent activity of the Bhavan is just like such a mango fruit, which ripens by the common sap rising up from its spreading roots deep down in the soil of India."

These institutions built and fostered by Munshi are not intended to be mere edifices of brick and mortar but to function as a movement, a mission, a cause for the revival of Indian culture at its best and integration of it with the fresh needs of the changing times. That is why the constructive activities of Munshi have an abiding value.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY FLIGHTS

When the Indian National Congress was formed in 1885, there was a divergence of opinion about its objectives. Allan Octavian Hume, one of its founders, was of the opinion that the new organisation must confine its activities to social reform; while Lord Dufferin, the Governor-General, was definite that it must be a political organisation. Even educated Indians were divided in their views. There were those like Dadabhoy Naoroji and Womesh Chandra Bannerji who felt that India was ripe for a measure of political reform. But there were others influenced by Western education like Mahadev Govind Ranade who said that social reform must precede political reform.

They considered Hindu society to be in a fossilised state and Hindu institutions to be anachronistic. Outmoded rites and rituals used to be performed mechanically without an understanding of their significance. A rigid caste hierarchy held society in thrall and young Indians imbued with the rationalistic ideas of the nineteenth century Europe went all out for social reform. Munshi too passed through this phase, though it was short-lived.

During his younger days, Munshi defied social conventions, broke caste restrictions, fought for women's rights and was actively associated with the Social Reform movement. However, soon the inner man in Munshi asserted himself against the negative creed of the social reform of those days. He thereafter tried to fathom the undying tradition of India and its ageless culture and to discover its very roots in fundamental values. Yet, a study of

Munshi's early essays at social reform is interesting as it throws light on a phase through which he like many of his contemporaries passed.

Munshi mentions in his autobiography that in his very first year at the Baroda College, he became an ardent devotee of Ranade's ideas of Social Reform. Perhaps he was drawn to it by the influence of his friend, P. K. Desai. He gave up the daily Brahmanical *sandhya* to which he adhered till then and took to the Prarthana Samaj form of prayer. In 1903, he shocked his community by doing away with his *shikha* or tuft of hair considered to be a hall-mark of Brahmans. He also began to sit for his meals dressed in an ordinary *dhoti* instead of in the prescribed silk. He soon gained many converts; he even induced some of them to teach the three R's to their wives and sisters. Munshi was an ardent champion of the education of women and had come to believe that, if only they were educated, half the ills of the country would disappear.

As early as 1905, Munshi had drawn up a programme of social reform which may look less than modest today, but, in the first decade of the century it was revolutionary and was even considered iconoclastic. The programme to which he pledged himself was as follows:

- 1) The fusion of sub-castes.
- 2) Women—equality of education, abolition of infant marriage: minimum age for girls 14, for boys 18, the introduction of widow re-marriage (at least for infant widows)
- 3) Abolition of the joint family system
- 4) Religious liberty.
- 5) Remedy of some minor defects such as the purdah system and caste evils

*Political Programme*

- 1) The formation of the Indian nation.
- a) The brotherhood of Indians.
- b) A common language: English for the elite and Hindustani for the masses.
- c) A common literature.
- 2) Freedom of speech and writing.
- 3) No taxation without representation.
- 4) Universal free education.
- 5) All services, political, civil and military open to merit without distinction of race or religion
- 6) At last "Independence."

He organised a small band of friends for implementing this programme. Little wonder he was considered a corrupter of youth!

In 1909, Munshi started a crusade against caste-dinners. The present generation can have no idea of what these dinners meant. They were ruinous affairs and people were sometimes forced to sell their property to provide one to maintain prestige in the caste.

Even earlier, he had come under the influence of Aurobindo Ghosh who was Professor of English in the Baroda College. During the days of the Partition of Bengal he became a devout reader of *Bandemataram*, edited by Aurobindo who had left service in Baroda and joined the movement. Along with some friends, he organised in his native town a free library where they could subscribe for the *Bandemataram*. It was the first institution which he organised. He was able to get round Seth Gordhandas Sukhadwala, a charitable gentleman in Bombay, to donate Rs. 10,000 to it, and the Dadabhoy Naoroji Free Library of Broach came into existence. The Library was to have been inaugurated by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, but the

great moderate could not find the time and it was eventually opened by Sir Gokuldas Parekh. This library became the meeting place of young patriots who used to exchange ideas and dreams of winning the freedom of their motherland.

When Munshi came to Bombay in 1910, he threw himself heart and soul into the work of the Gurjar Sabha, a body of budding Gujarati writers, many of whom ultimately rose high in different walks of life. Munshi's quivering passion for whatever he takes up and his burning sincerity soon produced a profound impression and he was elected the Secretary of the Sabha. The Gurjar Sabha was reorganised and the scope of its work was enlarged. It may be mentioned here that when the Home Rule Movement was initiated in 1915, most of the members of the Gurjar Sabha joined it and became the pioneers of political propaganda in Gujarat. Some of them, including Munshi, were the first to use Gujarati as a vehicle of platform oratory.

Munshi founded an educational fund for his caste and formed an Association of which he was made general secretary to bring about a fusion of the Bhargava Brahmans of Surat, Broach and Mandvi who till then interdined, but would not intermarry between themselves. He organised and edited a quarterly magazine for his caste, his first journalistic venture. He also assisted in the formation of a conference of the editors of various caste magazines. This conference started an Annual in which the progress achieved by different sub-castes in Gujarat was reviewed.

The leaders of the Bombay Social Reform Association were impressed by the enthusiasm and fervour which young Munshi showed in the cause of social reform, as well as by his erudition and eloquence. He was soon drawn

into the Social Reform Association. In 1912, he won the Motiwala Prize for his essay on the "Theory and Practice of Social Service." At this time, Justice Sir Narayan Chandavarkar used to preside over the meetings of the Social Reform Association. At one such meeting Munshi (even from those days a doughty champion of widow re-marriage) made a forceful speech on the plight of Hindu widows and evoked warm praise from Sir Narayan. He worked with Sir Narayan Chandavarkar for some years and was elected one of the General Secretaries of the All India Social Reform Conference. He also helped G. K. Devadhar in his Social Service League.

Munshi worked hard and tried to understand the creed of Social Reform as represented by the Conference; but to a man of his intense creative energy, imbued with the idea of a resurgent India, the creed as represented by the Social Reform Conference could make little appeal. By 1917, Munshi revolted against the ideas of social reform based on mere rationalism. In a letter which he wrote to one of his intimate friends, P. K. Desai, who had initiated him into that creed, he said:

"I have seen and felt strongly—and mind you, I have actually worked with a so-called great Reformer—that the preachers of the gospel we call Social Reform are seekers after convenience rather than students of our social structure; that the Reformer's point of view as regards our caste system lacks historic basis, and is more founded either on fantastic idealism or love of Western life, that a sudden change to what we call 'reformed' notions of life destroys stamina, stuns national dignity and self-confidence and introduces a puerile mimicry of the West which poisons our very existence. When we were boys at College we were idealists, and, thanks to our ridiculous University education, induced



in ourselves a belief that the world began—even for us—when the Bastille fell or John Mill penned *Liberty*. We knew nothing of our race as it lived and lives. We cared nothing for the ideals of those whose blood no amount of University education can prevent running in our veins. You have possibly stuck to the old views, as in the mofussil you are surrounded by the actual miseries of reactionary Hindu social life. I have resiled from those views. I have found that those thoughts which we attributed to the West had never a real place in the West itself. I also see the great havoc which these views have worked in some of our finest men and women. Orthodoxy has some stamina, however narrow: 'Reformism' as we have here, has none or very little. Orthodoxy, if leavened, makes for study, patriotism and proud national consciousness; 'Reformism' hangs by a peg which does not exist even in the West, and leads to dilettantism, to the gospel of satisfying the senses at all cost. I have travelled, I have seen various parts of the country where orthodoxy has developed liberal notions on its own lines, and I have seen this wretched class of Indians imbued with Western thought and life abandoning themselves to what is called progress, but which really is nothing more than a race for the man's chance at any cost. If it came to a choice, I think, better by far that the caste system should remain, better by far that orthodoxy should continue, than that by a magic wand we should be metamorphosed into denationalised apes of Western viewpoints and modes of life. I wish, and I am sure, the caste system will broaden out and will be destroyed in the end—but not before we have thoroughly preserved the splendid heritage which has survived the shocks of time and merciless history."

Though Munshi left the Social Reform Conference, he did

not become a social reactionary. It only meant that, thereafter, he refused to support or sponsor any movement which did not bring out the best in Indian culture. He continued to press for the removal of the excrescences which had gathered round Hindu society. He continued to work for women's uplift and fight decadent social institutions and outmoded social customs. But there was a difference. He had come to believe passionately in India's glorious heritage and wanted it to be reintegrated in the light of modern knowledge and to suit present-day needs.

In his own personal life, he has never hesitated to put into practice the social reforms he had advocated as a young man. When his first wife died, he married a widow and with courage faced social ostracism. Throughout his life he has stood for equality between the sexes. He has given to his sons and daughters alike the benefit of a liberal education and given them equal shares in his property. This was long before the Hindu Code Bill was ever thought of.

He has never failed to appreciate some of the wise institutions which our ancestors established and the Shastras enjoin. At the same time he has kept alive the Hindu tradition of mutual affection and respect in the family and has enriched domestic life by a rare passion and devotion. He holds that the concept of the unity of man and wife, not only in law, but for all purposes sacramental and other is one of the basic concepts of Indian culture. It is round that pivot that the family turns. Based on a respect for the parents devoted to each other, it is, according to Munshi, the very foundation of stable society and the basic school of moral and spiritual training without which society would disintegrate. Thus Munshi's writings bear testimony to his transformation from a mere intellectual wedded to the arid creed of social reform into a

dynamic leader of our renaissance, in which social and political institutions should express the fundamental values created by the 'Central Idea' which, according to him, has made Indian culture the vital spiritual force through the ages.

## CHAPTER III

### AS A JOURNALIST

Journalism, which has been piquantly characterised as the Pauline among professions, was used as a forum for mobilising public opinion in the freedom fight. National leaders from Surendranath Banerjee to Lokamanya Tilak, from Aurobindo Ghosh to Mahatma Gandhi were journalists at a time when the profession was alike visionary and missionary.

Surendranath thundered in the columns of the *Bengali* and Aurobindo preached his gospel through *Bandemataram*. Lokamanya Tilak had his *Kesari* and *Mahratta*. Lala Lajpat Rai had his *People* and Dr. Annie Besant galvanised a dormant nation through her writings in the *Commonweal* and *New India*.

Gandhiji used the *Young India* and *Navjivan* as vehicles for propagating his revolutionary ideas; and Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das used the *Forward* to advocate the Swarajist policy of obstruction within the legislatures.

It is not surprising therefore that Munshi should have been attracted to journalism almost from his school days. In fact when he was invited to inaugurate the fifth annual session of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists at Lucknow in November 1956, he confessed that he felt completely at home in that "tribal" gathering, "for, though you have invited the Governor, uninvited the lifelong journalist has come in your midst."

At the same conference, Munshi described with mordant humour his entry into the profession. "From the age of ten, I do not remember any period of my life when I was not, somehow or the other, connected with journalism.

At the age of ten, I was associated with a manuscript daily—as its editor, reporter, copyist, circulation manager and, if you please, as its sole reader. I am sorry to confess that the paper closed after a few days.”

When Munshi joined the Baroda College after matriculation, he came under the influence of Professor Jagjivan Shah and Professor Aurobindo Ghosh. Their influence widened his horizons of thought and he started writing for the college magazine. His first article was appropriately enough on Dayanand Saraswati. He continued to write for the college magazine and earned a reputation as a facile penman.

In 1907 Munshi came to Bombay for his law studies. His resources were slender and he had to augment them. Through the efforts of his friend Dalpatram, he secured the post of an *ad hoc* proof-reader in the *Induprakash*, a daily newspaper. He was paid at the rate of six annas per column for correcting the proofs; this extra income was absolutely necessary. Every evening, he would collect the proofs on his way home. After dinner, he could correct them, walk to the office of the paper, deliver them and return home.

Shortly thereafter, Munshi started contributing articles to such well-known periodicals like the *Hindustan Review* (edited by Sacchidanand Sinha), the *Indian Ladies Magazine* and the *East and West*.

Munshi's efforts in the cause of social reform also led him to the Street of Adventure. When he was elected as the joint Secretary of the association of Bhargava Brahmans, the organisation started a magazine called *Bhargava Quarterly* with Munshi as the editor. This may be said to be his first journalistic venture. With the help of his friend Dalpatram, he enthusiastically set about purchasing paper, collecting articles, seeing them through the press

and despatching the journal. He gave up the editorship only when his professional work as a lawyer would not leave him much time.

His first novel *Verni Vasulat* was serialised in a Gujarati weekly. Much of the book was a narrative of the world of imagination in which he had lived. This accounts for the vividness of the book and also for its taking Gujarat by storm.

When the first world war broke out, Munshi and Indulal Yagnik planned to bring out a weekly in Gujarati to be called *Satya*. But ultimately it appeared as *Navajivan ane Satya* under the editorship of Yagnik.

The Home Rule movement started by Dr. Annie Besant found in Munshi a staunch adherent. It brought him into contact with Jamnadas Dwarkadas. At this time, Dr. Besant had started the weekly *Commonweal* and the daily *New India*. The Home Rulers in Bombay felt handicapped for want of an English newspaper to broadcast the cause.

Munshi, Jamnadas, Shankarlal Banker and Yagnik decided to bring out an English weekly. It was agreed that Munshi and Jamnadas should be the joint Editors and on November 27, 1915 *Young India* saw the light of day with the blessings of the Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri and under the guidance of Dr. Besant. Thus Munshi was the first editor of the paper which was later to be edited by Gandhiji himself

*Young India* was a strident exponent of the Home Rule movement. Munshi wrote articles not only for *Young India* but also for *Navajivan ane Satya*.

Soon there was a rift between Munshi and Shankarlal Banker who was financing the paper. It was ultimately decided that Munshi should retire from the editorship of *Young India* after the Bombay session of the Congress in

December 1915 over which Sir Satyendra Prasanna (later Lord) Sinha was to preside.

After severing his connection with *Young India*, Munshi had little time to spare for journalism as he was busy negotiating the steep climb — the name which he has given to the second volume of his autobiography. By 1922, he had become a front-rank lawyer, his annual income reaching the hundred thousand mark. He was also the foremost novelist in Gujarati. It was then that he founded the Sahitya Sansad. Associated with it was the Sahitya Prakashak Company formed with the object of setting up a printing press and publishing a literary magazine.

The first number of the monthly *Gujarat* edited by Munshi appeared in March 1922. Within a short time, the magazine became very popular and it was read avidly. It was the organ of the Romantic School of literature of which Munshi was the leader.

For eight long years, the Munshis poured forth their best literary efforts in *Gujarat* month after month in a stream of novels, dramas, essays and short stories, making it the single effective force for moulding the new literature of Gujarat. But in 1930, the lure of politics gripped them and they joined the mass civil disobedience movement; and both husband and wife were sent to prison. Bereft of their powerful pens, *Gujarat* lost its popularity; and it was converted into a quarterly. Political activities absorbed the energies of the Munshis during the next few years; and ultimately *Gujarat* ceased publication.

Munshi returned to English journalism a quarter of a century after he had started *Young India*. He founded the *Social Welfare*, an English weekly, the first issue of which came out on September 9, 1940. Associated with Munshi as joint editor was the late Dr. P. Subbaroyan.

Within an incredibly short time, the *Social Welfare*

attained an importance out of all proportion to its circulation or readership. That was due to Munshi's position in public life. He was known to enjoy Gandhiji's confidence and he was the trusted lieutenant of Sardar Patel. As Home Minister, he had come in contact with Sir Roger Lumley, the Governor, who had a high opinion of Munshi. Thus his writings in the *Social Welfare* were closely scanned and widely quoted.

Professor K. R. Srinivasa Aiyangar states that the lives of the *Social Welfare* and its successor the *New Democrat* spanned across the war and the years of national reconstruction and "they enjoyed a status and exerted an influence comparable somewhat to that of the *New Statesman* in Britain."

But hardly had the paper run for 12 weeks when Munshi was selected among others by Gandhiji to take part in the Individual Civil Disobedience movement. On the 4th December he was arrested and taken away for detention under Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules. Owing to serious deterioration in his health, however, he was released in the middle of March 1941.

On his release, Munshi reassumed editorship of *Social Welfare*. The paper consistently fought the Pakistan idea of the Muslim League. When Sir Stafford Cripps came to India in 1942 with the Cripps' Proposals, the paper carried on a tearing campaign against their acceptance. Later when Prof. Coupland formulated his idea of a loose federation limited only to the three subjects of Defence, External Affairs and Communications, the weekly went into action and played an important role in mobilising public opinion against the proposal. Munshi edited the *Social Welfare* for over six years and gave it up in 1947 only when he had to take control of a more ambitious journalistic venture.



Throughout the War years, the Congress in Bombay was handicapped for want of an English daily to present the Congress case. After his release from detention, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was keen on having a group of papers pledged to support the Congress and determined to fight the separatist tendency of the Muslim League and the unwillingness of the Imperialists to part with power. It is not strange that he should have requested Munshi to head the new venture.

Ultimately, the Akhil Bharat Printers Ltd. was floated with Munshi as Chairman of the Board of Directors. The Company brought out three dailies — *Bharat* in English, *Hindustan* in Gujarati and *Navbharat* in Marathi.

By the time the papers got into their stride, Munshi was more than usually busy with his assignment in Hyderabad and his work in the Constituent Assembly. He could not devote much time to the affairs of the Akhil Bharat and the concern experienced heavy weather. When he found that his advice on several important matters was not being followed, Munshi relinquished his chairmanship.

Thereafter the Company got into financial difficulties and ultimately it had to go into liquidation. It was reminiscent of the career of the *Swarajya* founded by T. Prakasam and the *Forward* founded by C. R. Das.

At the age of 65, Munshi was again drawn into journalism. In 1952 he had decided not to seek re-election to Parliament and he was looking forward to participating in the activities of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan of which he is the Kulapati or the President. But he was offered the Governorship of Uttar Pradesh, the biggest State in India, and he accepted. Munshi knew that for the next five years, he would have few opportunities of frequent participation in the activities of the Bhavan. So he started writing a fortnightly letter which was intended as a home-chat for

the members, staff and students of the Bhavan and its allied institutions. Even in the very inaugural letter, he made it clear that he was writing these letters for the young, for, in his own words 'none who feels old will have any interest in what I have to say and none who feels young need call himself old simply because the calendar tells him so.'

A number of newspapers syndicated this feature which began to enjoy an enviable coverage being relayed throughout the country. The letters became immensely popular due to transparent sincerity and brilliant exposition. They indicated a new path, they offered a goal to strive for, they encouraged man's faith in his aspirations.

In response to public request, the letters were printed in pamphlet form and distributed throughout the country. The demand was so encouraging that Munshi decided to start an English fortnightly, *The Book University Journal*, in which the Kulapati letter would be the main feature.

The first issue of the magazine, which later changed its name to *Bhavan's Journal*, came out on August 15, 1954; and it became popular within a short time. Munshi's contribution to the magazine increased in volume. Apart from the Kulapati letter, he was serialising some of his books like *Bhagawan Parashurama* and *Krishnavatara*, besides answering questions. Since the national emergency, the tone of Kulapati's letters has undergone a great sea-change. It is no longer a fireside chat to the members of the Bhavan. It has become a stirring call to the nation to build up the will to resistance against a perfidious aggressor. They are almost in the nature of Philipics to rouse the nation to an awareness of the danger that threatens the country.

Thus Munshi uses journalism very much in the same manner as Gandhiji used it, not as a career but as a vehicle for the propagation of his ideas. Whether preaching Home Rule through the columns of *Young India* or

popularising cultural swaraj through the *Bhavan's Journal*, he has always scrupulously avoided *suggestio falsi* and *suppressio veri* and lived up to the highest traditions of the profession. The Fourth Estate has been in his hands a beacon, a pillar of flame.

## CHAPTER IV

### UNIFICATION OF GUJARAT

It is but natural that Gujarat should have been Munshi's first love. Gandhiji, Sardar and Munshi constitute the triumphant trinity of leadership who brought about the resurgence of Gujarat, but it was Munshi who pioneered the idea of Gujarat as a cultural unit. It was he who emphasised for the first time the essential oneness of all Gujarati-speaking people.

Through his literary works and through organisations founded or controlled by him, he made this Gujarat-consciousness a living force. He enriched Gujarati literature by works of imagination and by his historical works he gave it a background of glory. His work, *Gujarat and its Literature*, gave its literary heritage an organic form. By his *Glory that was Gurjara Desa*, he emphasised its historical continuity through the ages. By his contribution to the rebuilding of the Somanath shrine, he has given Gujarat a symbol by which its past lives in the present and projects into the future. Munshi may thus be said to have made the greatest single contribution towards unifying Gujarat.

The Herculean nature of the task that Munshi had to accomplish cannot be properly understood without a picture of the fragmented sovereignty presented by Gujarat in the time of British rule. Gujarat was split up into the British Indian districts in the north of the Bombay Presidency, the Baroda State, the Gujarat States, the Kathiawar States and Kutch. The Gujarat States numbered 17 salute states and 127 semi-jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional units. Kathiawar consisted of 14 salute states,

17 non-salute states and 191 small states enjoying varying degrees of jurisdiction. Kutch was another princely state ruled by the Maharao. As if this fragmentation was not enough, several States with preponderating Gujarati population like Palanpur, Sirohi, Danta, Idar and Vijaynagar were included in the Rajputana States Agency. Thus Gujarat was a veritable crazy quilt.

Any idea of consolidating these scattered units would have been dismissed with disdain as chimerical. Even as late as 1935, in his *Gujarat and Its Literature*, Munshi confessed: "Political consolidation of the Gujarati-speaking people under a single government is, and will remain, a dream. British Gujarat is not sufficiently large to make a separate autonomous province nor would separation from Bombay be anything but a disaster for it. But, on the other hand, if it continues to be part of the Presidency as now, there is the danger of the Gujarati States in Kathiawad, Rajputana and Central India Agencies drifting further apart. Neither British nor State policy as at present favours any closer political inter-relation, however desirable, between these dismembered parts of Gujarat. In such a matter, one can only look to the Gujaratis themselves, to its statesmen, its princes; its public men; particularly its educationists and literary men who are working for its literary and cultural unity."

Rightly did Munshi stress the importance of the efforts of the literary men working for the cultural unity of Gujarat. He was the foremost of that band who resurrected a cultural concept of Gujarat. Even when studying in the Baroda College, he had read with avid interest Forbes' *Rasamala* and Briggs' *Cities of Gujarat*. Inspired by these works, he had shed tears over the vanished glories of Gujarat through the very first article he wrote for the College magazine entitled *Gujarat, the Grave of Vanished*

*Empires*. In 1909, he wrote for the *East and West* magazine a historical account of the destruction of Somnath by Mahmud Ghazni, an episode which never failed to evoke his indignation and to retrieve which he has done so much.

In 1915, emboldened by his success as a writer in Gujarati, Munshi's imagination was on fire to recreate the past glories of Gujarat and his first historical novel *Patan-ni-Prabhuta* reflected his sub-conscious urge to see Gujarat "great and undivided." The publication of this book in 1916 marked a milestone in Munshi's literary career and a landmark in Gujarati literature. It is the first of a trilogy dealing with the most glorious period of Hindu Gujarat. It made an irresistible appeal to Gujaratis who, till then, lacked consciousness of their heroic heritage. The characters caught the popular imagination. *Patan-ni-Prabhuta* and its two successive novels exercised the same spell over Gujarat as did the *Waverly* novels of Sir Walter Scott over Britain.

Munshi, however, was not content with recreating the glorious past of Gujarat. He was concerned with the living present and he was looking about for a cultural organisation to knit the Gujaratis into one. With this idea in mind, he attended the fourth session of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad (Literary Conference) at Surat in 1917. The Parishad had been founded in 1905 by Ranjitram Vavabhai. Its plenary sessions held every two or three years provided a platform for eminent Gujarati scholars to deliver thought-provoking discourses or contribute learned papers on Gujarati language and literature.

The Secretary of the Parishad, Manoharram Mehta, was a great friend of Munshi's. Mehta suggested that he should go ahead and organise an association for the propagation of Gujarati literature. But Munshi was not

sure of himself at this time and he declined; he only tried to induce the Parishad to hold its next session at Broach. The proposal was bitterly opposed by those who were controlling the Parishad at the time, notably Balwantrai Thakore, a leading Gujarati poet. Munshi's invitation was not accepted, but he was elected a member of the reorganising committee of the Parishad.

In the same year was published Munshi's *Gujarat-no-Nath* the second of the trilogy dealing with Chalukyan Gujarat considered by some critics as his greatest historical romance. Significantly enough, he dedicated the book to the sacred memory of his friend Ranjitram Vavabhai who "dreamt of a strong and progressive Gujarat being knit into a unit, one and indivisible, the achievement of which was his one great aim in life and towards the attainment of which he directed his literary labours." It was from Ranjitram, who had then been working on the sources of Gujarat's history, that Munshi acquired his love for Chalukyan Gujarat. Munshi's imagination fastened on the meagre dry bones of history collected by Ranjitram to create living romances of old Gujarat. The trilogy was completed by Munshi in 1922 with the publication of *Rajadhiraja*.

It is not surprising that the people of Gujarat should have taken this trilogy to their bosom. Gujarat was awakening to a new life and it badly needed a historical background of which it could be proud and Munshi through this trilogy and other historical romances supplied the need. Dr. Krishnalal Shridharani wrote later: "Mahatma Gandhi made Gujarat proud in its present tense by creating heroes out of clay. Munshi made Gujarat proud in its past tense by revealing heroes from under archaeological dust."

With rare frankness and objectivity, Munshi writes in

one of *Kulapati's Letters*: "Shakespeare's plays revived the memories of England's kings and gave shape and life to the heroic Henry V; in modern India, the glories of ancient Hindu kings supplied the inspiration. Bankim revived the memory of the heroism of the Sanyasi rebellion. Both he and Dwijendralal Roy resurrected Rajput heroism. Not that such authors intentionally set out to foster national or regional pride. They became the spontaneous voices of the coming Spring. The same perhaps was the case with me."

It was during these years that Munshi coined the word *Gujarat-ni-asmita* to emphasise the essential unity of all Gujarati-speaking people and propagated it as the goal of his mission. *Asmita* is a term in *Yogasutra* to indicate one's "I"-consciousness. It must, however, be stressed that Munshi's efforts to rouse Gujarat-consciousness did not stem from linguistic chauvinism or regional Irredentism. Repeatedly did he stress that Gujarat was part and parcel of India, that the foundation of Gujarat-consciousness was Indian nationalism; and forthrightly did he assert that Gujarat could have no meaning and no future except as an expression of Indian culture. Verily did he need the centre of Gujarat to encompass the perimeter of Indian nationalism.

By the beginning of the third decade of the present century, Munshi had gained prominence at the Bar, he was also recognised as the leading Gujarati writer. It was at this time that he discussed with some friends the idea of starting a literary association and a magazine to propagate Gujarati language and culture. It was then suggested that Munshi should accept the editorship of *Samalochak*, a paper founded by Govardhanram, the great Gujarati novelist. Munshi agreed, provided a joint-stock company was started with himself and a few of his friends as



directors. Ramaniyaram, the son of Govardhanram, who owned the paper at the time, disapproved of the scheme though it had the support of several leading personalities.

Frustrated in these attempts to persuade existing organisations to campaign for Gujarat-consciousness, Munshi founded the Sahitya Sansad in 1922. Associated with it was the Sahitya Prakashak Company formed with the object of setting up a printing press and publishing a literary magazine. The scheme had the blessings of Narsinhrao Divetia, poet, philologist and foremost critic of Gujarat.

The Sahitya Sansad, or the Literary Academy, began to publish *Gujarat*, a monthly magazine, with Munshi as the editor. This monthly was the hot gosseller of the idea of Gujarat-consciousness. It soon became the foremost literary journal in Gujarat and the organ of the Romantic School which began to make itself felt in Gujarati literature and of which Munshi had by then become the leader.

The Sahitya Sansad was not merely a literary academy. It was a new movement in letters and several of the present well-known authors in Gujarati rode with Munshi on the crest of this movement. Among the young aspiring authors who joined him were Batubhai Umarvadia, the brilliant dramatist; Vijayrai Kalyanrai, now one of the leading critics; and Lilavati Sheth (now Smt. Munshi) whose thumb-nail sketches and short stories had blazed a new trail in style and technique. Every year, the Sansad held an annual session at which Munshi delivered an inaugural address. His address at the very first annual gathering of the Sansad was entitled *Gujarat—Eka Sanskarika Vyakti* (Gujarat—a cultural unit). It was a clarion call which echoed in the heart of Gujarat and gave articulate expression to the dormant aspirations of the people.

Every one of Munshi's addresses became the subject of controversies for months after it was delivered, for they

contained revolutionary views on life and literature. Some of the titles of these addresses—*Cultural Unity in Gujarat*, *Defiance of Conventionalism*, *Joy of Life*, *The Dominant Note of Modern Literature*,—reflect the new outlook which he brought to Gujarat. He claimed for every artist the right to create Beauty as he saw it. He lashed out at the exponents of other-worldliness and eloquently advocated the need for looking upon life as a joyous adventure. A new prophet of joy and strength had arisen in Gujarat and young and ardent souls rallied round him.

The Gujarat Sahitya Parishad (Literary Conference) was carrying on its listless, if not moribund, existence during these years that the Sansad was forging ahead. When the Parishad met at Bhavnagar in 1925, the delegates were divided amongst themselves about its future. Some of the leading members were far from satisfied with the manner in which its affairs were being conducted; and they requested Munshi to go over to Bhavnagar and help in re-organising it into a dynamic body. He found it impossible to go to Bhavnagar, but he agreed to invite the Parishad to Bombay.

In 1925, on the initiative of Munshi, the Sahitya Sansad adopted a resolution inviting the Parishad to hold its next session at Bombay. There was quite a furore in some dovecotes at what was considered to be impudence on the part of a comparatively new organisation like the Sansad in inviting the Parishad. Moreover, Munshi had, in the columns of *Gujarat*, criticised the presidential address delivered at the Bhavnagar session of the Parishad.

It was then that Munshi's opponents came out with the idea of nominating Gandhiji for the presidentship of the next session of the Parishad. Munshi felt that if Gandhiji was elected the President of the Parishad, it would become

the handmaid of the Congress, and would thus lose its real import and value as a literary body. There was also the fear that Gandhiji's name might be exploited by certain elements in the Parishad to prevent Munshi from reorganising it.

Summoning up courage, Munshi went and had a frank discussion with Gandhiji. He told the Mahatma that if he became the president of the Parishad, it would lose its exclusive character as a literary and cultural organisation. He acquainted Gandhiji with the deplorable condition of the affairs of the Parishad, told him about his idea of reorganising and developing the organisation and how his efforts were attempted to be thwarted. Gandhiji gave him a patient hearing, admitted that he had no interest in the Parishad and would not interfere with Munshi's effort to reorganise it. He therefore asked Munshi to write to him and promised to send a written reply stating that he would not accept the presidentship of the Parishad if offered.

Gandhiji asked Munshi to go ahead with the reorganisation of the Parishad. Munshi gladly undertook the work but it was an uphill task. The finances of the Parishad were in a woeful state; proper accounts had not been kept. One of the leading literary figures of Gujarat, Balwantrai Thakore, and his followers were relentless in thwarting all the efforts at reorganisation but Munshi would not be Munshi if he succumbed to the difficulties. He considers every obstacle as a personal challenge and goes forth gladly to meet it. Ultimately, he drafted the Constitution of the Parishad and got it registered as a Society.

In November 1925 a meeting was held under the presidentship of Sir Lallubhai Samaldas to make arrangements for the next session of the Parishad. Munshi moved a number of resolutions for reorganising the Parishad and

for publishing books of merit. In the course of his speech, Munshi said: "Gujarat needs a centre of literature and culture. It is necessary to have a powerful organisation to preach the gospel of Gujarat-consciousness. The Parishad should build up the centre and preach the doctrine." Ramaniyaram, the son of the novelist, Govardhanram, took the lead in opposing Munshi but without success.

A few weeks later, a meeting of the Reception Committee was held to elect the president of the forthcoming session. Munshi proposed the name of Sir Ramanbhai Nilkant. The opposition proposed the name of Gandhiji. Feelings and tempers ran high. At the last minute, Munshi sprang a surprise by producing Gandhiji's letter to him refusing to accept the presidentship. The opposition collapsed and Sir Ramanbhai was unanimously elected president.

The session at Bombay was a milestone in the history of the Parishad. Munshi was elected its Vice President. Since that time, he was intimately associated with it till 1959, thrice as President, and as Vice-President for all but a few years.

After this reorganisation, the Sahitya Parishad ceased to be a mere literary association. It became more broad-based. In fact, it was for the next two decades the only platform on which leading Gujaratis from what was British Indian Gujarat and the princely States of Gujarat and Kathiawar could meet and discuss subjects of common interest. Its object was enlarged from mere literary advancement to the development and spread of Gujarat-consciousness. For this momentous change, Munshi was primarily responsible.

In 1925, Munshi stood for election to the Senate of the Bombay University. During his election campaign, he had advocated a University for Gujarat and it was one of the

planks in his election manifesto. He was duly elected and soon after, in association with Dr. K. G. Naik, he founded the Gujarat University Society. The very next year, he was elected to the Bombay Legislative Council as a representative of the Bombay University constituency.

It was during this time that Munshi had some discussions with Maharajah Sir Sayajirao Gaekwar of Baroda and his Dewan Sir Manubhai Mehta. Sayajirao, who had looked upon Munshi as a brilliant product of the Baroda College, had a soft corner for him. He appointed a Commission to explore the possibilities of establishing a University at Baroda. Munshi was a member of the Commission and for several months he worked hard in close collaboration with Anandshankar Dhruva and Dr. K. G. Naik. By the time the report was published, Sir Manubhai had left the State service and the report was shelved.

In 1928, Munshi took a leading part in the negotiations leading to the settlement in connection with the Bardoli Satyagraha. This was a landmark in Munshi's political career. It brought him into close and intimate touch with Gandhiji and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel which continued till the assassination of the former in 1948 and the death of the latter in 1950.

When Gandhiji started the Salt Satyagraha in 1930, Munshi had been transformed from a constitutionalist to a crusading Satyagrahi. It is interesting that while he was thinking out the pros and cons of joining the movement, he should have thought of Gujarat. In describing the conflict that was going on within him, he avowed: "When Gujarat was rising like one man, why was I, who always talked of its greatness, staying away from the fight?" The significant part played by Munshi in the first two phases of the freedom struggle has already been set out and need not be repeated here.

It was while he was in jail that he wrote a connected history of Gujarati language and literature from the earliest times. It was the first of its kind in India and it created a sensation when published. Gandhiji wrote the introduction to the book.

In 1938, the plenary session of the Gujarat Sahitya Parishad was held at Karachi and Munshi was elected the President of the Session. It was the first time a session of the Parishad was held outside the confines of Gujarat. In the course of the presidential address, Munshi used the word "Maha Gujarat" as indicative of all Gujarati-speaking people irrespective of where they resided. This session passed a resolution congratulating Munshi on attaining his fiftieth year and thanking him for his services in rousing Gujarat-consciousness. A special Committee was appointed to collect and publish Munshi's writings stressing the cultural unity of Gujarat. The result was the publication of *Gujarat-ni-asmita*.

In the same year, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan was founded by Munshi. He thereafter framed the project of a history of Gujarat, the several volumes to be published by the Bhavan under the general title of *The Glory that was Gurjaradesa*. But only two volumes were published in the series, *Pre-historic Gujarat* and the *Imperial Gurjaras*. The latter written by Munshi himself covered the period from the fall of the Valabhi kingdom in the 7th century to the fall of Chalukyan Gujarat in 1299. After Campbell's *History of Gujarat* published in 1885, this was the first attempt to write a comprehensive history of the golden age of Gujarat. The project had to be given up for want of contributors and the *Imperial Gurjaras* was thoroughly revised and later published in two volumes under the title: *The Glory that was Gurjaradesa*.

The scene shifts to 1944. World War II was coming to

a close and it was felt that it was only a question of months before Hitlerite Germany would succumb. The "Quit India" Movement had petered out under the violence of Governmental repression and there was intensive frustration in the country. The political deadlock continued. Jinnah and the Muslim League continued to be intransigent in their demand for a sovereign, separate state of Pakistan. Irredentist elements had reared their heads. There was the general unrest unleashed by the war. Organisations and individuals were manoeuvring for position on the post-war reorganisation of the country.

It looked as though the country would become a prey to anarchy and communal strife. Munshi wanted to build up a bulwark of strength and a buffer State which would receive the impact of the fissiparous elements and contain them. He began to think in terms of a union of Gujarat and Rajasthan. Luckily for him, he enjoyed the friendship and confidence of a number of Indian princes. As a lawyer, he had been consulted by them in the past. Among them were the late Maharana of Udaipur, and the Maharajahs of Kotah, Panna and Dungarpur.

It was in 1946 that Maharana Bhupal Singh of Udaipur invited Munshi to be his honorary Constitutional Adviser. As the Adviser, he drew up a Constitution for Mewar—the first democratic Constitution to be introduced in this country.

Munshi now began to work for the consolidation of Gujarat and Rajasthan. Such a State would be culturally and linguistically homogeneous as the people of both regions had close affinity. The State would also have a seaboard and a large hinterland, not to speak of considerable resources. It was at this time that the Sahitya Parishad held its session at Rajkot. The session adopted Munshi's

resolution urging the formation of a unit of the Indian Union comprising Gujarat, Malwa and Rajasthan.

With the active help of Maharana Bhupal Singh, Munshi finalised the plan for a central University at Chitor and even the site was selected. After protracted negotiations and long-drawn-out conferences held at Udaipur, in which Munshi took the leading part, the Union of Rajasthan was established, which comprised several Gujarat and Rajasthan States, but excluding Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Alwar and Bharatpur.

It may be mentioned here that in 1946 Munshi had already drawn up a constitution for a Union of Deccan States\* at the invitation of some of the rulers of those States.

Events, however, were racing ahead and the Union of Gujarat and Rajasthan States could not come into being. The Mountbatten Plan for the demission of Power was accepted by the major parties in the country. The partition that followed seemed to eliminate the danger of a nation-wide communal strife that seemed so imminent only a year ago. Sardar took up the portfolio of States; and Munshi, who was closely associated with him, at any rate knew that Sardar was bent on integrating the States. The first step was the accession of States on the three central subjects of Defence, External Affairs and Communications, without any other commitments financial or otherwise. Munshi used his great influence with many Indian princes, particularly those of Gujarat and Rajasthan in persuading

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\* It is interesting to note that when the integration of States was being implemented by Sardar Patel, Munshi's constitution of the Deccan States served as a model. This fact has been acknowledged by V. P. Menon in his *Story of the Integration of Indian States*. Some of the terms used by Munshi like Rajapramukha and Upraj-pramukha were bodily incorporated by the States Ministry in the covenants.



them to accede to the Indian Union. Before the transfer of power took place on August 15, 1947, all the Indian princes with but three exceptions had acceded to the Indian Union.

The exceptions were Junagadh, Hyderabad, and Jammu and Kashmir. While the last two were playing for time, the dog-loving Nawab of Junagadh acceded to Pakistan. It was a blow to the unity of Gujarat. A provisional Government of Junagadh was organised under Munshi's advice and he drafted its proclamation and manifesto. The popular upsurge in Junagadh began. Munshi drew up its 'Manifesto' claiming the people's right to self-determination in ringing terms:

#### DECLARATION BY THE SUBJECTS OF JUNAGADH STATE. FORMATION OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Whereas the Nawab of Junagadh has, against the declared wishes of an overwhelming majority of his subjects and under the influence of the agents of the Dominion of Pakistan, executed on 15th September 1947 an Instrument of Accession whereby the State is declared to have acceded to the Dominion of Pakistan,

And Whereas the Dominion of Pakistan has accepted the said Instrument of Accession in disregard of such declared wishes and in defiance of all natural ties which bind the people of Junagadh (82% of whom are non-Muslims) to the people of Kathiawar and to the Dominion of India and in breach of the understanding on the basis of which certain parts of India were allowed to secede and form into a separate State of Pakistan, namely, that only contiguous areas predominantly inhabited by Muslims were to be included into the Dominion of Pakistan with the free and willing consent of the people inhabiting those areas,

And Whereas by his said act of executing the Instrument of Accession, the Nawab has purported to transfer the allegiance of the subjects of the State against their will to the Dominion of Pakistan so as to compel them to be nationals of Pakistan which is a state foreign to them and formed with the object of providing a national home for Muslims,

And Whereas before and after the said purported Accession, the authorities of the State under the guidance of Pakistan, and in the name of the Nawab armed a section of the Muslims of the State with a view to terrorise the subjects of the State and to prevent them from claiming self-determination and voicing their antagonism to the Accession with the result that more than a hundred thousand of the subjects have already left and many more are leaving the State every day and the State authorities are infiltrating the State territories with Muslim refugees;

We The Subjects of Junagadh State Hereby Declare that by transferring the allegiance of his subjects against their will to Pakistan and preparing for a reign of terror to coerce them to acquiesce in such transfer, the Nawab has forfeited his claim to the allegiance of his subjects;

We Hereby Further Declare that the Dominion of Pakistan in accepting the said Instrument of Accession of the Nawab has violated the principle of self-determination as also the aforesated understanding on which Pakistan was agreed to be formed and that therefore the said Instrument of Accession is null and void and not binding on the subjects of the State or the territories thereof;

We Further Declare in exercise of our inherent right of self-determination our decision to accede to the Dominion of India and to join the territories of Junagadh State with the contiguous territories of the Dominion of India;

We Further Declare our firm and solemn resolve to adopt all such means and to take all such steps as may be necessary or incidental to the State of Junagadh formally acceding to the Dominion of India and forming and remaining an integral part thereof;

In furtherance of our said solemn declaration and resolve we hereby appoint a Provisional Government consisting of:

- 1 Samaldas Laxmidas Gandhi, (President)
- 2 Durlabhji Keshavji Khetani,
- 3 Bhavanishanker A. Oza,
- 4 Suragbhai Kalubhai Varu,
- 5 Manilal Sunderji Doshi,
- 6 Narendra Pragnji Nathwani,

with all power, authority and jurisdiction heretofore vested in and exercised by the Nawab of Junagadh prior to 15th September 1947, over/and in relation to the said State of Junagadh and all territories thereof and WE HEREBY AUTHORISE our said Provincial Govern-

ment to take immediate steps for implementing and carrying out our said declaration and resolve and to exercise all power, authority and jurisdiction hereby conferred upon them.

And We Hereby Solemnly pledge our allegiance to the said Provisional Government and through it to the Dominion of India, and call upon all the subjects of Junagadh State wherever resident to carry out loyally the orders and directions of the said Provisional Government.

In a few days the Nawab fled from the country and took refuge in Karachi, carrying away all the available cash in the treasury. Junagadh, by a free and unfettered plebiscite, acceded to India.

While these momentous changes were taking place, Munshi's advice was sought by Maharajah Pratap Singh Gaekwar of Baroda, whom he was trying to help in coming to some satisfactory terms with the States Ministry. During this time, however, he induced Maharajah Pratap Singh to revive the idea of establishing a university at Baroda and got a Commission appointed, of which he was invited to be the chairman. The present University of Baroda was the outcome.

About the same time, the Government of Bombay appointed a committee headed by G. V. Mavlankar to report on the possibilities of a University at Ahmedabad. Munshi was a member of the committee. So after the Committee submitted its report, the University of Gujarat at Ahmedabad came into existence.

It was about this time that a Maha Gujarat Parishad was organised in Bombay. Munshi was unanimously elected the President. In the course of his presidential address, Munshi advocated the bringing together of all Gujarati-speaking people in the Bombay Presidency, as the State was then called. A resolution on the same lines framed by him was unanimously accepted by the Parishad.

By the end of 1947, Munshi came to know that Sardar

was keen on integrating all the Rajasthan States including Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner into one union. The *raison-d'être* of a Gujarat-Malwa-Rajasthan Union had disappeared. Therefore, in his capacity as a member of the Constituent Assembly, Munshi wrote to Sardar Patel, Minister of States, suggesting that the princely states of Sirohi, Palanpur, Danta, Idar, Vijayanagar, Dungarpur, Banswara and Jhabua be transferred from the Rajputana States Agency to the Gujarat and Western India States Agency. He contended that these states were contiguous to Gujarat, that the majority of the people of these states spoke Gujarati and that they had ethnic and economic affinity to Gujarat.

There was considerable behind-the-scene activity in this connection and ultimately the States Ministry ordered on February 1, 1948, that Palanpur, Danta, Idar and Vijayanagar be transferred to the Gujarat and Western India States Agency. Sirohi was also transferred a little later. But Dungarpur, Banswara and Jhabua were considered to be part of Mewar and offshoots of the Udaipur State. They were therefore retained with Rajasthan.

This timely transfer of the States was a most statesman-like decision which would not have taken place but for Munshi's foresight and timely action. One has only to recall the trouble about the Seraikela and Kharsawan States in Orissa-Bihar border and the agitation about the hill station of Mount Abu in the erstwhile Sirohi State to realise what Gujarat achieved by Munshi's action.\*

When the Dhar Committee was appointed to report on

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\* It may be mentioned here that after the integration of Saurashtra and the merger of Baroda in Bombay, Munshi tried his hardest to have Saurashtra merged in Bombay State. It is well known that Sardar was not opposed to the idea, but it had to be abandoned owing mainly to the opposition of B. G. Kher, then Chief Minister of Bombay.

linguistic States, Munshi was chosen as an associate member representing Bombay city. He championed national unity and solidarity and was opposed to the disruptive force of linguism. There was a demand for the formation of a Maharashtra State with Bombay city included. Munshi was opposed to this demand. He contended that if Bombay State was to be split up on linguistic lines, the city of Bombay should be constituted into a separate state. His memorandum to the committee later published in book form under the title *Linguistic States and Future of Bombay* has become a classic on the subject.

The Dhar Committee accepted Munshi's thesis and recommended a separate status for Bombay city if the State was to be divided. This view was later endorsed by a Committee of the Congress High Command consisting of Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya (Congress President) in their report commonly known as the JVP Report.

Far back in 1948, Munshi raised his voice against linguism, a word of his coinage, which he rightly considered as the enemy of nationalism. He said:

"The elevation of a language as a basis for group-sentiment, seeking expression in terms of power-politics, may, for brevity, be termed linguism. It identifies language with culture and equates cultural with political frontiers of a province. This in essence is a form of modern parochial nationalism, for culture never has its boundaries confined to any single language group or areas and has no correlation to political ends. The protagonists of redistribution claim that their demand is not parochial, it will not weaken national strength nor will it retard the progress of the country.

In India, as in Europe, as Macartney says: 'The purely cultural movement was, however seldom, more than a

first stage Almost everywhere it was accompanied by a political ambition. By the very logic of its formative principle, it has all the characteristics of an intolerant nationalism. All other linguistic groups within the particular language area are to be treated as aliens.' Such nationalism, in the words of Professor Schuman, implies friendship with the members of the 'in-group' and hostility towards members of all 'out-groups.' The 'in-group' is the focus of all social life... 'Stranger' is usually enemy and foreign cultures are strange and hostile.

'The political ambition of a linguistic group can only be satisfied by the exclusion of and discrimination against other linguistic groups within the area. No safeguards and no fundamental rights can save them from the subtle psychological exclusion which linguism implies.

'In such a case', in Macartney's words, 'the rule of the majority, exercised, most often, under the title of democracy, is a true tyranny'

'It is incorrect to say that linguism will not become a rival to nationalism. 'The idea of linguistic redistribution', writes Professor Beni Prasad, 'awakens separatist tendencies in very small groups on the basis of dialects. It can be followed up only at the risk of atomising the country. It weakens the will to reciprocal adjustments among groups who do not differ radically from one another and who can easily learn to live in amity, for ever a century and more, that are sought to be divided.'"

The prophecy he had made came true much sooner than he expected. When the States Reorganization Committee was appointed, it was no secret that Munshi was opposed to the *status quo* being disturbed. He realised

that India had undergone a major political upheaval as a result of the partition and the integration of States. Frequent political changes tended to unsettle the people. Moreover, he had, as a confidante of Sardar, seen enough of linguistic jealousies and wranglings in the course of the merger of the States with provinces. He argued that if Britain could manage with eleven Governor's provinces, a number of Chief Commissioner's provinces and over 550 Indian States, there was no reason why free India could not carry on with 9 Part A States, 8 Part B States and 10 Part C States at least for a couple of decades.

But linguism was on the march and would not be denied its pound of flesh. When the SRC proposals were being considered by the Government of India, Munshi threw his weight in favour of dividing Bombay, if at all, into three States. He had a hand in preparing the representations made by the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee and the Bombay Citizens' Committee. The three-State formula was almost about to be accepted by Parliament when the Government of India, for some inexplicable reason, plumped for a composite State of Bombay.

But militant linguism fought a rearguard action and Bombay had to be bifurcated. When Gujarat was constituted as a separate State, Munshi sent a message which had a ring of sadness about it: "As the regional languages began to develop, regional consciousness became more articulate. The influence of Sanskrit and English began to wane. Particularly after 1950, linguism became powerful at the cost of nationalism. As in other regions, linguism strengthened Gujarat-consciousness and made it aggressive. It has now the support of an autonomous government. And the cultural consciousness of Gujarat, now become pronounced, has begun to be intolerant. The dislike of the Gujaratis for English and Hindi proves this fact, if proof

were necessary. In the beginning, Gujarat was conceived as one of the cultural units in the collective life of India. In the days of Gandhiji, the principal element in Gujarati individuality was nationalism. But the way in which Gujarat has become a separate State and Gujaratis are developing separtist tendencies, it is clear that nationalism is now a subordinate group sentiment with them. Many people would not like what I say but it is the truth for Gujarat as well as for other regions."

The warnings of Munshi remained unheeded and militant linguism is recognised today as completely disruptive of nationalism which is taken for granted in words but in deeds denied.

A word must now be said about the Sahitya Sansad. After Munshi reorganised the Sahitya Parishad, the Sansad restricted its activities to Bombay city. It confined itself to drama, dance and music. Under the auspices of the Sansad, Munshi did pioneering work in the field of Gujarati drama. He was the first Gujarati playwright who produced in Bombay one of his plays *Kaka-ni-shashi* with society men and women taking roles. Munshi directed the play and shaped raw young men and women into actors under his personal supervision. The first performance was a tremendous success. In the second one, however, some roles were taken by Parsi girls, a hue and cry was raised by orthodox obscurantists, some persons broke into the Royal Opera House and the production of the play had to be postponed.

Munshi also gave a fillip to dancing under the aegis of the Sansad. The great Manipuri teacher, Guru Naba Kumar, an associate of Rabindranath Tagore, was engaged by him to teach dancing to his own children. Slowly but steadily, he introduced dancing in the homes of several of his friends,



In course of time, Munshi, on behalf of the Sansad, produced under his direction the first dance-drama, *Bhakta Narasaiyo*. It was immediately acclaimed as an artistic achievement. Soon after, another dance-drama, *Jaya Somnath*, was also staged. It was entirely a new form of art and immediately became a roaring success. It was successfully staged in Bombay several times. Nataraja Vashi, then a well known Gujarati artist, states in 1960:

“To be able to pursue all the activities connected with literature and theatrical art, Munshiji got together people interested in such activities and formed the Gujarati Sahitya Sansad. This institution, like all great institutions, has grown from stage to stage under the able guidance of Munshiji.

Munshiji did not stop at staging or producing of Gujarati plays, and bringing the impenetrable domain of the theatre within the reach of every common man and woman, whosoever has any gift or talent for it. But he also brought the tinkling and jingling music of the dance girls into the Gujarati home. It will not be difficult to understand the utter contempt with which this art was looked upon by our socialites. Dance was considered a sin. And in those days those who tried to dance, most certainly broke their legs!

It is remarkable to note how ingeniously the cultural renaissance was brought about in Gujarat by Munshiji. As in Gujarati, in the stage production also, there is a Munshi touch. The death sequence of Chaula, the heroine of *Jai Somnath* bore one of those Munshi touches.

Today on the artistic map of India, Gujarat has secured an enviable position—thanks to the untiring efforts of Munshiji.”

In those days, there was a craze in Gujarat for Bengali

songs which were sung with a distorted accent. Munshi insisted on Gujarati songs, particularly if the theme of the drama was a Gujarati one. Thus he made Gujarati music take its legitimate place in the Gujarati stage.

Soon after Junagadh was integrated, Samaldas Gandhi who had led the popular movement and who was then the chief minister in the State invited the Sahitya Parishad to Junagadh. He insisted that Munshi should preside over the session and Munshi's presidential address was widely appreciated. The Junagadh session had an importance of its own in view of the decision to rebuild the great shrine of Somanath. Munshi's part in the reconstruction of Somanath is narrated elsewhere. Aptly has an Indian statesman characterised it as an act of historic justice.

In 1955, the Sahitya Parishad session was held at Nadiad. This session was epoch-making in more senses than one. It was the golden jubilee of the Parishad. Nadiad was the home of the great Gujarati novelist, Govardhanram, and it was his centenary year. Munshi was appropriately chosen the President of the session.

Munshi must have felt like a Bhishma Pitamaha at the session. Many of his old colleagues in the Parishad were dead. A new generation of literary men had grown up. He had borne the brunt of the burden of running the Parishad all these years as a trust and as a duty. When some of the younger enthusiasts showed a desire to run the Parishad, Munshi gladly anticipated their wishes by handing over the Parishad to them. The constitution drafted by them was accepted and Munshi blessed the new office-bearers.

With reference to his giving up the direction of the institution which he had served for well-nigh 30 years, Munshi said:

"... 'Gujarat Consciousness' had meant to me only a

local aspect of all-India consciousness. In the minds and hearts of some of the younger authors, it was an exclusive group sentiment. . . .

"I had served the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad to keep 'Gujarat Consciousness' moored to the all-India linguistic harmony; 'Gujarat Consciousness' as it was developing was all too anxious to cut off the moorings. I saw in Gujarat's close association with the City of Bombay, a principal source of strength, Gujarat's window on the world. The new generation felt that it was a drag on the development of Gujarat. . . .

"In view of the differing points of view I realised my incapacity, consistently with the faith of my life, to reflect 'Gujarat Consciousness' as it was then understood by the younger literary men. I could not serve the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and the Parishad both without doing injustice to one or the other. The difficulty, however, was that there was no one to take over the Parishad from our older group. Such a group came forward at the Golden Jubilee Session of the Parishad in 1955, at which I was called upon to preside. The younger men more qualified to represent the current mood of 'Gujarat Consciousness' took charge of the Parishad. . . .

"Whatever happens I must continue to work for 'Gujarat Consciousness' as I understand it. Its foundations were laid in the 12th Century by Hemachandracharya, who, while investing the Chalukyan Kings with the classic dignity of Raghu's immortal race, worked through Sanskrit and Prakrit to dominate learning in the whole of India. The 'Consciousness' was at its best during the period between 1915 to 1955 when the Gujaratis thought of themselves as Indians first and suffered so that India might be free; when Gujarat assumed the leadership of the integrating forces in the country—the sweeping political movements; the inte-

gration of the country; the growing harmony of the cultural life through common language, art and culture; the resistance offered to disintegrating forces like linguism; when Gujarat with great practical sense tried to translate the values of Aryan culture in terms of modern life."

The political integration of all Gujarati-speaking people as one unit which seemed to Munshi a dream in 1935 was now a *fait-accompli*. But political achievements have ever an ephemeral ring about them. Bismarck consolidated Germany though there was the complaint that he made Germany great and the Germans small. Munshi's contribution to the political unification of Gujarat, significant though it has been, is the lesser among his claims to the homage of Gujaratis. At the threshold of his political life, he found the Gujaratis dispirited and disunited with no awareness of their past, slender confidence in their present and with little hope about their future. Appearing on the political scene like an angel radiant with ardour divine, he recreated the glorious past of Chalukyan Gujarat, preached a-philosophy of action and joy and held out the inviting prospect of a united and prosperous Gujarat as an integral part of free and great India. This has been his greatest achievement.

## CHAPTER V

### MOULDER OF UNIVERSITIES

It is significant that many of the topmost leaders of India should have taken a keen interest in university education. Men like Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar, S. Srinivasa Aiyengar and S. Satyamurti in Madras, Rashbehari Ghosh and Surendranath Bannerji in Bengal and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Sir Chimanlal Setalvad in Bombay considered the Senates of their respective Universities as equally important as the Legislative Councils for national service. Munshi belongs to this noble band of pioneer educationists.

It was in 1925 that Munshi decided to contest one of the two vacancies in the Senate of Bombay University. By that time he had become one of the front-rank lawyers of the Province. He had made a mark as the foremost novelist in Gujarati. Through the Sahitya Sansad, he had been campaigning for *Gujarati Asmita*, or Gujarat consciousness. The Sansad felt that without a University of its own, Gujarat could not be developed educationally or even culturally. It was, therefore, imperative that Munshi should be in the Senate to fight for it.

It was during this year that the University Reforms Committee, presided over by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, Vice-Chancellor, had completed its labours. Its report had been published. The academic world was busy discussing the recommendations of the Committee, particularly its suggestions for a separate University for Maharashtra. The public mind was also agitated over the question whether the Royal Institute of Science should be affiliated to the University.

In the first week of January 1926, Munshi was elected to

the Senate. Sir Chimanlal Setalvad had been the Vice-Chancellor for many years. He was ably assisted by Prof. Fardoonji Dastur, the Registrar, a man of high principles who ran the administrative machine with the utmost smoothness.

Sir Chimanlal, known to friends as Chimanbhai, looked upon the University with the solicitude of a fond parent. He had built up its prestige and financial position. He would neglect his law cases, but never the University papers. He never missed a meeting connected with the University and he always came thoroughly prepared. He commanded universal confidence for his knowledge, impartiality and experience. For most of the Members in the Senate, his word was law.

When Munshi was elected to the Senate, Chimanbhai took him to his bosom and asked him to take earnestly to University affairs. The first meeting of the Senate, after Munshi was elected to it, was held on the 8th January 1926, when the report of the University Reforms Committee was under discussion.

In those days, it was not the custom for newly elected Members to speak in the Senate till after some years. But Munshi blazed a new trail by speaking at the very first meeting supporting a proposal for the establishment of a University at Poona. This led to a sort of partnership between Dr. K. G. Naik and himself in regard to the affairs of the University.

The very next day, Dr Naik moved and Munshi seconded a resolution for establishing a separate University at Ahmedabad. The resolution was accepted by the Senate. A Committee was set up to consider and frame a scheme with Sir Chimanlal Setalvad as the Chairman, Dr. Naik and Munshi as Secretaries and Justice Sir Lallubhai Shah,

Sir Ibrahim Rahimatullah and Sir Lallubhai Samaldas and others as members.

At this time, there was little of internal politics in the University excepting the mutual rivalry between two groups, headed respectively by Dr. N.A.F. Moos and Dr. Ramia. It is a measure of the infectious enthusiasm which he brought to the University that both the rival groups took kindly to Munshi and he was elected to several Committees.

But, though there was absence of politics, there was a sharp controversy in the Senate on one point. It was in regard to the School of Economics. One view was that the University should develop its teaching side, which only consisted of the School of Economics founded by Prof. Geddes in 1924. The other side represented by the Principals of the affiliated Colleges, held that the University need not develop the teaching side, but should distribute its funds between the Colleges.

Sir Chimanlal Setalvad was not very happy with the School of Economics, as it was in a bad way. Prof. K. T. Shah, the Senior Professor, was admired for his vast learning, but his extreme views and ferocious pugnacity had made him quite unpopular. A Committee was appointed by the University to look into the affairs of the School and it came out with a trenchant criticism of "the idiosyncrasies of the personnel of the school."

It was at this time that the question of the extension of the contract of Prof. Shah came before the Senate. Munshi fought for him and carried the day, much to the annoyance of Sir Chimanlal, who told him: "Munshi, you have done a great harm to the University."

In August 1926, Munshi was elected to the Syndicate of the University by a thumping majority. He was the recipient of warm congratulations from friends, but critics were not

wanting, who carped that he was "a young man in a hurry." Justice Sir Lallubhai Shah, known for his innocent straightforwardness, told him: "Munshi, I am your friend, but it is not good for the University that a newcomer like you should be elected in preference to Dr. Mann, Director of Agriculture, an old member of the Syndicate."

It is appropriate to refer to one of the most acute controversies of the period; whether Gujarati and Marathi could only be studied as subjects for the M.A. examination. Some of the members led by Munshi felt that the future of Indian languages depended upon a regular and sustained course of studies. When this matter was debated in the Senate, the controversy took an entirely new turn. The Professors of Science thundered against classics and the classicists on their part decried Indian languages. Munshi who wanted the grounding in the classics as well as the study of the mother-tongue found himself between two fires. In the end, he won his case, but had to pay a heavy price. The classics began to recede on the Arts Course and the process of their elimination from the Science Course was well on its way.

It was at this time that Munshi waited upon Maharaja Sir Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda on behalf of the Gujarat University Samiti. In fact during his election tour, the previous year, he had met Sir Manubhai Mehta, the Dewan, and had succeeded in getting him interested in the idea of a University for Baroda. Sir Manubhai introduced Munshi to Sayaji Rao who also liked the idea. Having been a student of the Baroda College, Munshi was keenly interested in its being developed into a University. The Maharaja appointed a Commission to report on the feasibility of a University at Baroda.

The Commission consisted of Prof. Widgery as Chairman,



Prof. Anand Shankar Dhruv, Prof. K. G. Naik, S. Y. Mukherjee and Munshi.

In October 1926, the Commission met at Baroda to examine witnesses. Except for a few University experts, most of them were from local gentry. They were almost unanimous in their outlook on University education. Difficult subjects should not be prescribed. Grace marks should be generously given. The general plea put forward was that if a student failed at the examination, the fault lay with the course, the questions or the examiner.

By the time the Commission had examined a few witnesses, a feeling began to creep in the mind of Munshi, that Baroda has scarcely the right atmosphere for a University. The University in a town which had no enlightened public opinion and not sufficient number of colleges with outstanding professors tended to dwarf standards. Munshi realised that he was trying to anticipate events by a whole generation.

The Baroda University Commission became infructuous. After some time Prof. Wiggery was discharged from the Baroda Service. Before he departed, he prepared a sort of report without consulting any of his colleagues and presented it to the Government. Munshi protested, and prepared another report which with other members of the Committee he presented, but by then, Sir Manubhai Mehta had left the state Service, and had been succeeded by Sir V. T. Krishnamachari as Dewan. Sir Krishnamachari quietly shelved the report; but that was not to be the end of Munshi's efforts for a University in Gujarat.

In 1927, Munshi made a suggestion that the Government of Bombay should make a token grant to stimulate the University of Bombay to enlarge its teaching activities. He moved a resolution in the Senate, which was accepted, that a grant of Rs. 50,000 per year should be given for the

purpose. Dewan Bahadur Harilal Desai was then the Education Minister to the Government of Bombay. He suggested that Munshi should see the Governor, Sir Leslie Wilson, on this point.

When Munshi was leaving the Governor's room, the latter called Sir Chimanlal Setalvad back and told him that Dr. R. P. Paranjpe, who was representing the University in the Legislative Council, was being appointed to the Council of the Secretary of State and that there would be a bye-election. Sir Chimanlal asked Munshi to get ready for the bye-election.

Munshi got busy with his election campaign running up and down the Province, with his programme. His programme consisted of a new University Act, a representative Senate, a Department of Technology and the establishment of separate Universities for Maharashtra and Gujarat. Some idea of the fervour which he brought to bear on the problems of the University could be gathered from the following excerpts from one of his election speeches:

"But more important than this constitutional reform is the development of the University as a teaching body.

"Modelled on the original London University, it has continued more or less to be an examining body. It lays down courses; examines students, confers degrees, and having done this to justify its existence, sleeps the sleep of the just. In this respect most other Universities in India have outstripped us and have developed into teaching institutions with programmes of post-graduate research and extension work. . . .

"The other function of the University is to create the atmosphere. This atmosphere is created by its professors, its traditions, its learning, by an esprit de corps among its students, teachers and professors; by consciousness of cultural unity as represented by the University; and by a

high ideal of knowledge pursued 'not merely for the sake of the information required but for its own extension and always with reference to the attainment of truth'.

"Many subjects of great moment also await decision. Elective system of students: a proper place of classics and vernaculars in a modern scheme of liberal education; the imperative claims of technology and applied science; research in art and science; university extension; higher training in commerce and agriculture; physical culture; moral discipline and culture; the study of Art and its practical application to life; investigation of forces which have created and are creating the present life of the nation; the means of making the study of literature and science tell on the formation of character and the refinement of home life; cultivation of citizenship, a sound and genuine patriotism and a sense of public duty and the creation of nationalism — modern in spirit and progressive in its outlook.

"All these subjects must be taken up by the University at an early stage. The University must, while preserving the national type of manhood, be improving and elevating it and at the same time giving to the students opportunities for the development of literary tastes or intellectual aptitudes which will be the characteristics of our national life. A University must be, to quote a high authority, 'the highest expression of the national life on its intellectual side'."

No sooner was Munshi elected than he took up the question of the University Bill with Dewan Bahadur Harilal Desai, Education Minister to the Government of Bombay, who was friendly with Munshi. But Desai was not familiar with University affairs, and therefore left the preparation of the Bill to Sir Balakram, I.C.S. and to Munshi. Munshi soon discovered that Balakram's idea of a University was rather medieval, Munshi on his part was pledged

to develop the University into a democratic organisation. This led to constant friction between them.

Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah was then the Chief Minister of Bombay and he was the undoubted leader of the Muslim and non-Brahmin blocs in the Legislative Council. He wanted to ensure that there should be communal representation in the Senate and Syndicate, and other University Bodies, and even threatened to oppose the bill if it was not conceded.

At this stage Sir Chimanlal Setalvad came to Poona and began actively to canvas against the visitorial powers given to the Governor by the Bill. The Government led by Sir Leslie Wilson was firm, and declared that if there were no visitorial powers, there was going to be no Bill, and when Munshi defended visitorial powers, he was held up as an official stooge.

Munshi was then a member of the Coalition Nationalist Party in the Legislative Council. The party wanted that the Vice-Chancellor should be elected by the Senate. Munshi realised that the suggestion would convert the Senate into a hot-bed of intrigues, and he had to struggle hard to keep the Party from supporting that move.

When Munshi defended the appointment of the Governor as the Chancellor instead of one elected by the Fellows of the University under the then prevailing circumstances, ultra-democrats chided him. One local paper went to the extent of writing a leading article under the title 'What is Mr. Munshi's Vocation?' and an obliging critic sent a cutting of it as a prize for Munshi's alleged 'somersaults'. Evidently it was assumed by most men that in order to be a good democrat one had only to oppose the Government, whether right or wrong.

On the question of making the Governor of the province the Chancellor instead of one elected by the Senate, which

was hastily supposed by his critics as a very undemocratic step, Munshi showed that his contention was based on a thorough knowledge of procedure in the best universities of the world, and that his opponents suffered from a confusion about nomenclature. In England, for example, he explained, the King retained the visitorial powers, while the elected Chancellor of a University there corresponded to the elected Vice-Chancellor here and consequently vesting of such powers in the Governor's office, far from being anti-democratic, was in the best traditions of British democracy.

Reporting Munshi's speech opposing Shri Pradhan's amendment for an elected Chancellor, *The Times of India* wrote on July 27, 1927.

"On the heels of this self-appointed representative of the University (Mr. K. F. Nariman) came the actual representative Mr. Munshi, who in unhesitating terms referred to 'the abysmal ignorance' of those champions of democracy who knew nothing about the details of University education. He urged with eloquence that the essence of democracy was that the power of the Executive must not be interfered with, and those who clamoured for the elective right in such a case as this did not understand the very elements of a democratic constitution. For brevity, clarity and cogency the speech of Mr. Munshi was an excellent one and he certainly replied to all the arguments put forward by the opposition. He stood there for a principle and cared nothing for any man, in strange contrast to the unusual attitude of Mr. Nariman who seemed specially desirous of not getting into the bad books of His Excellency the Governor."

It was during one such defence of the Bill's provisions that Munshi was twitted for his eloquent support to the University Bill which almost made it look as if he were

himself its author. The interlude is interesting enough to bear reproduction here

Noor Mahomed: Is it relevant for the Honourable Member (Mr. Munshi) on this side, who is not a member of the Government, to describe what the policy of the Government is? I understand the Hon. Member representing the University. . is describing the policy of the Government as an authority on the subject I want to know whether he is qualified to do so

S K. Bole: Sir, he is trying to say what he would have said if he had been occupying the Government benches (laughter).

K M. Munshi. I may tell my Hon friend that what he has been doing all these years for any measure whatsoever, we are prepared to do in connection with this beneficial measure . Not only in this measure, but in any measure where Government is prepared to fall in line with popular wishes. We are sent here not for the purpose of jeopardising the interest of our constituencies, not for the purpose of making Government impossible, not for the purpose of playing into the hands of those who are here for their own jobs We are here, Sir, to speak in the name of the progressive people of this Presidency, and it is our right to say to the Government "we agree with you" In spite of the taunts and jibes which we hear, it is our privilege to give — if Government has justified its existence by bringing forward beneficial measures — the assistance of the public side

On another occasion during the discussion on the University Bill, when B V Jadhav came forward with an amendment seeking to incorporate the principle of communal representation in the Senate, Munshi's ability to destroy his opponent's case by ridicule quickly asserted itself "If a Eurasian engine driver bring us to Poona today" said

Munshi, "tomorrow it must be the turn of the non-Brahmin and the day after the turn of the Mahomedan!" Again, replying to the plea of those who would let the University be degraded from a shrine of learning to a bazar for communal bargaining, and to the complaints of the communalists that the University is serving the selfish interests of a certain class of people, Munshi agreed, only to retort: "That class is the class of scholars, the class of educationists, irrespective of race or creed or colour or religion."

During the hotly debated course of the Bill in the Council, and later in life as one actively connected with the University, Munshi, as its chief pilot, has fought for the principle recognized by all liberal educationists all over the world, that, to quote his own words, "the acquisition, spread and pursuit of knowledge is the only concern of the University", and that its controlling council should be a place for the best academicians only

It was a tough situation. Dewan Bahadur Harilal Desai was seriously perturbed since he was sandwiched between official pressure on one side and the attitude of the communal groups on the other. At one time it looked as though Munshi would have to break with him, because the Coalition Nationalist Party threatened to throw out the Act. Sir Chunilal Metha who was then Member of the Executive Council saved the situation and ultimately the Bill was passed and became the Bombay University Act IV of 1928.

No sooner was the Bill passed than the Vice-Chancellor set up a small Committee to redraft the statutes, instructions, rules and regulations. In every one of the Committees Munshi was a member and it kept him busy for a number of months

The system of election to the Senate on the other University Bodies was by proportional representation by

a single transferable vote. Munshi had been attracted to the application of the system. The Nehru Report had also recommended it and Munshi accepted it as the last word in democratic wisdom. He was later to find how the system could bring in the pressure of caste, community and religion. Groups began to be organised in the University.

These activities drew Munshi and some of the leading educationists like Principal Hamill of the Elphinstone College, and Principal Kanitkar of the Fergusson College to organise themselves into one Party on the basis of a definite programme. It was ironic that Munshi's group should have been conveniently abused as official stooges, while the opposite party assumed the role of the Patriots' Party. Anyway Munshi's group captured the majority in most of the Committees. It was a new University with men having a new outlook and most of Committees were humming with activity.

Immediately on the reconstitution of the University, Munshi approached the Government for handing over the Royal Institute of Science to the University. His proposal was that the resources of the Institute and those of the University should be pooled together to set up a Post-Graduate Course for Pure and Applied Science to be run by the University. The scheme was considered to be much too ambitious by the Government which declined to accede to the request. But a Committee consisting of the Vice-Chancellor, the Director of Public Instruction, the Principal of the Royal Institute of Science and Munshi was appointed to consider the feasibility of housing a University Department of Technology in the unoccupied wing of the Royal Institute.

It was at this time that Sir Chimanolal Setalvad and Munshi appeared on opposite sides in two charity suits filed by the Advocate General. With the help of the Advo-



cate General he tried to divert two sums, one of eight lakhs and another of two lakhs to the University specially earmarking them for the Department of Technology. It is significant that the Trust from which they expected Rupees eight lakhs should have given birth to the Hansraj Morarji Public School at Andheri. The other amount of Rs. 2,70,000 was handed over to the University and became the nucleus of a technological fund. Munshi continued to represent the Trust in the Senate for almost a quarter of a century.

By the beginning of 1930, the new University Act was functioning and many of the reforms for which Munshi had fought had come to pass. The Academic Council and the Board of Post-Graduate Studies had come to existence. The Boards of Studies in Indian Languages were powerful and he was the Chairman of the Gujarati Board. Bifurcation between Arts and Sciences was on its way to being accepted. The Department of Technology was a certainty. The Indian Languages had come to their own. The University Sports had been started.

It was at this time Gandhiji started on his historic march to Dandi culminating in the Salt Satyagraha and Munshi was caught in the maelstrom. Soon the Senator was in jail after having resigned his seat in the Legislative Council as Representative of the University.

The next few years were years of storm and stress, with the two mass civil disobedience campaigns. Munshi found himself in jail in both the movements. Then came the parliamentary programme, and at long last, in 1937 the Congress came to power in several of the provinces. It was a foregone conclusion that Munshi would be one of the ministers in Bombay and the *Times of India* had forecast that he would take over the education portfolio. But it was not to be, for Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was keen that he should be in charge of Home Affairs.

But Munshi had again the opportunity of serving the cause of University education when he was appointed by Maharajah Bhupal Singh of Udaipur as his Honorary Constitutional Adviser. In that capacity, he drew up a constitution for Udaipur which for the first time contained provisions regarding fundamental rights for the citizens. Elsewhere is described his attempts to bring about a union of Rajasthan States.

But the educationist in him was not overshadowed by the statesman. He saw the potentialities of a university at Chitor named after the immortal Maharana Pratap Singh, and he threw himself with his wonted zeal into the task. He drew up a scheme and submitted to the Maharajah who evinced great interest in it. A few excerpts from Munshi's lengthy note are worthy of being quoted as they give an idea of his views on universities.

"For a considerable time now, my long and intimate connection with the founding and conducting of educational institutions and in particular the University of Bombay, and the proposals for the establishment of Universities at Baroda and Ahmedabad has led me to the following conclusions:

(A) In India, education is being centralised in large commercial and industrial towns.

(B) As a result

- (1) education while producing business efficiency is coming to be understood as only an instrument of making money,
- (2) the pursuit of higher learning and the evolution of the true scientific spirit, and higher thought and literary tradition, have been vulgarised,
- (3) culture, instead of taking its sustenance from the real life and tradition of India, is being shaped by

an imitative Westernism thereby losing its genuineness and vitality,

- (4) the predominance of English in our academic life introduces a kind of parasitism in the mental outlook of University students, and thwarts the progress of Indian languages.

(C) In the interests of the nation as a whole, it is highly essential that a University town, in the midst of genuine Indian surrounding and away from the lure of Westernistic centres of commerce and industry should be founded.

"I had played with the idea of Chitor or Ujjain being an ideal place for such an educational centre. But when I came to Udaipur to preside over the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, the idea of Chitor being a centre appeared to me to be a feasible one for several reasons —

- (1) Chitor is the centre of several growing railway systems; other lines for instance to Kotah have been planned to be taken up as Post-war schemes; and the main road passes through it. It is, therefore, going to be centrally situated.
- (2) The agricultural lands surrounding it, I understand, are capable of development and the water resources of the two rivers are ample enough for future development.
- (3) It is a very cheap place, the cost of feeding a student in the Gurukul is about Rs 12/- per month. The highest fee for boarding, lodging and tuition charged is Rs. 30/- per month.
- (4) It is a small town such as could easily be impressed with a new educational tradition.
- (5) It is looked upon in India as a national centre of heroism, and therefore, in spite of its being situated in a State, is capable of attracting all India support.
- (6) It is the only place in India which has living

monuments associated with great figures and movements in Indian History, tradition and literature; of heroes like Chitrangad Maurya of Madhyamika; of the great Paramara Bhoja of Malwa; of the royal saint Kumarapala of Gujarat; of Rana Kumbha, of Mira the greatest poetess in India, and her Guru Raidas, of the sons of Bappa Raval who have played a magnificent role in the history of this country. It was closely associated with the name of Rana Pratap whose flaming heroism is an inspiration to millions in this country. The historical and sentimental associations are such as to provide a great background to an educational centre.

"One of the reasons of my having accepted the Presidency of the Sammelan was to explore the idea in consultation with my friend Sir Vijayaraghavacharya the Prime Minister. He however left for Canada and I was denied the privilege of a preliminary discussion with him.

"When I came to Udaipur I came to know that in 1944 the Rajasthan Kshatriya Mahasabha had appointed a Committee to organise a Pratap University at Chitor. Justice Jawansinghji and Thakore Lalsinghji of Ajmer also contacted me and we had a discussion on the ways and means necessary to study the idea. On a discussion with several friends I found that there was a general but vague sort of enthusiasm for the idea.

"On November 24, 25, 26 and 27 Justice Jawansinghji and myself met H.H. the Maharaja Saheb of Panna, the Chairman of the Committee and had a detailed discussion as to the implications of the idea and the practical steps necessary before the idea can become a definite scheme. We came to the conclusion that the idea can only be translated into action, if H H.'s Government were pleased to come to the conclusions —

- (a) that such an educational centre was in the interest of the State,
- (b) that its financial implications were within their means; and
- (c) that, therefore, they should identify themselves with the idea

No outside support or enthusiasm was possible without such complete identification.

“Such an educational centre at Chitor would bring several benefits to the State:

- (a) It will raise the educational level of the Udaipur State and Southern Rajputana,
- (b) Its technical departments, agricultural and academic, will enable the State as well as Rajasthan as a whole to exploit their resources
- (c) It will develop Chitor as a City and in course of time increase its population resulting in the economic developments of the State.
- (d) It will attract some wealth from outside as also tourists traffic from all parts of the country
- (e) It will enable the Udaipur State to establish a centre for Indological Studies, particularly as regards Sanskrit, Ayurveda, Hindi and Rajasthan and thus preserve the unexplored wealth of learning still lying buried in Rajasthan.
- (f) It will give to the Udaipur State the same leadership in Rajasthan in matters cultural which it enjoys in historical tradition.

“A big all India educational centre, apart from the more ambitious scheme for a University, is not possible in any State without outside support. Such support can only be forthcoming if the Centre is located at Chitor, for the following among other reasons:

- (a) Hindu Princes all look to Chitor and Rana Pratap

with pride and some of them are willing to take the lead in the matter by handsome donations,

- (b) Rajasthan merchants have made fabulous wealth during this war and if properly approached are likely to give financial support.
- (c) There is a strong feeling in the country that there should be a University in the Country which has Hindi as the Medium. If this object is kept in view it will evoke great enthusiasm.
- (d) The State subjects do not get admission in British Indian Universities and there is a feeling in all States to put up technical and medical colleges where states subjects can be educated

“The pre-condition of an all-India educational centre, however, must not be lost sight of. Its products must be equal to the products of British India Universities so as to make them eligible for employment all over India. This, in the present condition involves three things:

- (a) The Education must be brought up to a common level of modernity with the rest of India.
- (b) While emphasising the study of Indian languages and cultures, the importance of English and of a modern international outlook must not be lost sight of.
- (c) Some British Indian Educationists and philanthropists must be effectually associated with the carrying out of the Scheme so as to make it in reality, not in name, an all India Centre

‘It is easy to plan a University but it is very costly and very difficult to establish a really good university which will take its place with other leading Universities.

“No University in these days will be worth the name, unless it has the faculty of Arts, Science, Agriculture, Medicine and Engineering. These faculties involve a large

non-recurring expenditure as also a heavy recurring expenditure. A large part of the income of a University comes from examination fees, and unless the area of its affiliated institutions is large, the fees will not be large enough. This is the reason why purely residential universities like Mysore have very little scope for expansion, unless State grants were forthcoming. On a comparative study, a university without at least properties worth 50 lakhs, an annual income of about Rs. 2,50,000 and a scope for expansion for its affiliative activities will find it difficult to maintain progress.

“Another difficulty in the way of progress which must be considered is the difficulty of obtaining the requisite standard of academic efficiency in a place like Chitor. This standard depends upon —

- (a) large number of eminent professors actively working in a set of institutions,
- (b) administrative control of the centre to be in the hands of an Academic person of standing.

So long as these conditions are not fulfilled a large Academic centre never becomes a success.”

Maharana Bhupal Singh of Udaipur took great interest in the idea of a University at Chitor. Several other ruling princes and educationists of Rajasthan welcomed the idea. Even the site was selected; but Munshi was more keen at the time in bringing about a union of Gujarat and Rajasthan States to act as a buffer state which would receive the impact of the centrifugal elements and contain them. As such, the patriot in him triumphed over the educationist.

But history was taking a flying leap in the country. The Cabinet Mission had come and gone. The Constituent Assembly set up under the Cabinet Mission Plan had been elected; Munshi was one of the members. An interim government headed by Jawaharlal Nehru

had taken over the administration. India stood in the vestibule of freedom. But that freedom came with its dark patches of regret and red blotches of anxiety. And in the throes of the rebirth of the Indian nation, the idea of the Chitor university was put into cold storage.

If Munshi's idea of a university to be named after the immortal Maharana Pratap did not fructify, he had the satisfaction of having helped to bring two other universities into being. Shortly after the Transfer of Power, Munshi persuaded Maharajah Pratap Singh Gaekwar of Baroda to revive his grandfather's idea of establishing a university at Baroda. Maharajah Pratap Singh readily agreed and invited Munshi to become the Chairman of the Commission appointed for the purpose. For months, Munshi worked hard, despite his various other preoccupations. The outcome was the present University of Baroda.

About the same time, the Government of Bombay appointed a Committee to explore the possibilities of establishing a university at Ahmedabad. G. V. Mavlankar was the Chairman of the Committee, and Munshi was of course a member of the Committee. After the Committee submitted its report, the University of Gujarat at Ahmedabad came into existence. Thus did Munshi help in the establishment of two universities in Gujarat.

When in 1952 Munshi accepted the Governorship of Uttar Pradesh, he became the Chancellor of the five universities of Agra, Aligarh, Allahabad, Banaras and Lucknow. He made it crystal clear that the Chancellor was the real head of the universities and not merely a figure-head. His work as Chancellor for five years has already been described in an earlier volume, but two of his innovations deserve to be mentioned.

He organised periodical conferences of Vice-Chancellors and Deans of all the universities in the State. These con-



ferences brought the heads of the universities together to discuss common problems; to compare notes on the progress made, to consider ways and means of preventing reduplication of costly specialised studies; and to develop an awareness of the problems relating to academic standards and the welfare of teachers and students.

Munshi also organised the Chancellor's Camp where students and teachers spent a few weeks as guests in the Government House. The students and teachers alike felt that they were in the atmosphere of an ashram. Munshi set before the camp as its main objectives that the universities should be national temples of learning and culture; that they should be laboratories for reintegrating national values to suit modern needs, and that they should be ashrams with a soul and collective will leading to a dedicated life. Among other points stressed at the Camp were the pursuit of higher knowledge, the study of different aspects of national life as also of the traditions and achievements and the study of the values and patterns of life in foreign countries to enable us to fit into a world community. Importance was attached to the need for collective endeavour by teachers and students to transform material, moral and spiritual life

During his tenure of office as Chancellor, two more universities came into existence in Uttar Pradesh. The first was the Roorkee University which under the able stewardship of A. N. Khosla has already become the best engineering university in Asia. A university was also set up at Gorakhpur.

It would be appropriate to close this chapter with Munshi's views on the autonomy of a university. In the field of learning, men should be free to pursue their own line of thought or express their opinions so long as they are on an academic level. But Munshi made it clear that

the autonomy of a university did not mean the dictatorship of party bosses in the colleges; it did not mean the control of certain groups who have patronage in their hands.

Throughout Munshi's tenure of office, autonomy of a university meant freedom from governmental control, freedom to pursue learning in all its aspects, freedom to express opinions academically on every subject and freedom to regulate academic life through agencies in which people who have only the interests of the university at heart have a place. According to Munshi, the autonomy of a university is the autonomy of all teachers and non-teachers who have devoted themselves to higher learning or who have a reverential attitude to university life untainted by self interest.

## CHAPTER VI

### RECLAMATION OF JUVENILE DELINQUENTS

It is a measure of the many-sided activities of Munshi that he would have taken interest in the problem of delinquent and destitute children, and planned and carried out a scheme for their social reclamation. He was the moving spirit behind a series of conferences which he convened for improving and enlarging the scope of children's aid work in Bombay City. Under his inspiration, the then Government of Bombay, when he was its Home Minister, made generous grants of land and money to the Bombay Children's Aid Society in the working of which he took a deep and practical interest.

On his assumption of office as Minister in charge of Law and Order in July 1937, under the provisions of the constitution of the Children's Aid Society, as it existed then, Munshi became the Vice-President of the Society, the first Indian to occupy that position in the Society since its inception in 1927.

Within a very short time, he realised the magnitude of the problem of destitute and delinquent children. These children fell an easy prey to unscrupulous men who were no less than "beggar farmers" "Salesmen" picked up these children or bought them for a trifle and taught them to beg, making piteous appeals under faked physical deformities. Their earnings had to be surrendered to the "salesman" to whom they were indentured. These waifs slowly drifted to crime. The case was worse in regard to destitute girls whose bodies were their only capital. Belonging to nobody, they were decoyed into houses of ill fame to serve as minions of prostitutes and to be ultimately initi-

ated into the oldest profession. These destitute children constituted a social menace and evil of enormous magnitude. And Munshi felt that something should be done in the matter.

In August 1938 Munshi invited all social workers in the City of Bombay who were interested in delinquent and destitute children to a conference at the Secretariat to consider how best to tackle the problem. At the conference, after an exhaustive survey of the problem, Munshi made an appeal to all those present to co-operate with Government and posed the following questions:

(a) Whether our City Institutions should serve only as exchanges for collecting and distributing destitute children and as specialised institutions for such of them as have been selected as intellectually and normally fit for city life,

(b) Whether it would be better to keep these children under village conditions round about Bombay rather than put them within the narrow stone walls of our City institutions.

(c) Whether it would not be better to evolve a system of village homes in the Province where children could be trained to be village workers;

(d) Whether it would be possible to give these children some kind of social background by giving them uniform cultural training of some kind

Munshi drew a graphic but harrowing picture of the depredations of these "salesmen" in beggary into the moral life of the City. He spoke about the wayward, truculent and nomadic juveniles and youths who flock to Bombay from every part of the country and together with the City-born become "every one's children but nobody's in particular!" He also pointed out how misdirected and misused was the generosity of the tender-hearted

Praiseworthy as were the efforts of the existing institutions like the David Sassoon Industrial School, the Willingdon Boys' House, the Society for the Protection of Children and the Children's Aid Society for the reclamation of destitute children and criminal juveniles, they were not adequate to provide a lasting and rational solution of this problem. The one great desideratum was that the children coming out of these institutions were not accepted by society and absorbed in it. People saw in their countenance the brand of depravity which was a bar to their integration as good and useful citizens. The result was that life in this reclamational institutions was of little benefit to the inmates who left it and, rejected by society, lapsed back into their previous habits and became a permanent social sore to their own detriment and undermining the atmosphere of honest and useful living.

Munshi recommended a different kind of psychological approach to this problem. He felt that destitute children coming from rural areas should be brought up in that atmosphere and should not be accustomed to the allurements of urban life. They should be trained in the suburbs of Bombay under village conditions and then sent to work in farm colonies where they would be trained as village workers. A system of village homes should be evolved and there these children should be brought up in a congenial social background. A training of two or three years in basic crafts and elementary agriculture should be given to them and then they should be sent to Farm Colonies all over the province. Munshi made an earnest plea for starting institutions of this kind and appealed for men to work the scheme and money to put into execution.

In his speeches, Munshi emphasised the imperative need for a new approach to the problem, as the following excerpt will show —

"Most of the destitute boys are from the villages. If they had their natural family ties unimpaired, they would have grown up as agriculturists. Are we justified in housing and feeding them on a city scale and creating round them a city atmosphere? The ultimate aim of all our efforts must be to rehabilitate these children in ordinary life when they grow up. That means — must mean — village life. Do your efforts tend in that direction? Would a boy or a girl trained in any of your institutes conceivably be reabsorbed in the village life? The answer is an emphatic no.

"The case of girls is peculiarly difficult. You pick up a stray and destitute girl, house her in your institutions, give her a training under city conditions. She has no family, no caste; she does not belong to anybody except herself; and she has got city tastes and equipments. Where will she go? When she emerges out of your Homes, she will live in the City, her wits and her body her only capital. It is, therefore, necessary that you must have a colony of grown-up men and women who are prepared to accept these children as their own, if you want really to serve them.

"I have, therefore, come to the conclusion that all our efforts will not bear fruit unless the destitute children that are collected in Bombay are placed under village conditions round about Bombay, are trained to a rigorous village life; and are then sent out in different parts of the province to work in colonies where they will be trained as village workers. Then they will have a profession to follow; they will then, with the advantages with which you have invested them, contribute to the rebuilding of social and economic life."

He convened a series of conferences for the purpose of enlarging the scope of Children's work in Bombay and in his capacity as Home Minister arranged for grants of money and land for furthering this humanitarian work of

the highest importance for the economic well-being of the children, for rescuing them from a career of crime and vice and for keeping the moral hygiene of the city free from infection.

In the short span of a year, Munshi persuaded the Government of Bombay to make a building grant of Rs. 2,00,000. The Bombay Municipal Corporation donated Rs. 1,00,000; and this was mainly due to the efforts of Mrs. Lilavati Munshi who was then a prominent member of the Corporation. The citizens of Bombay contributed another Rs. 75,000. Before September 1st of the year, the 'huts' at Chembur, a suburb of Bombay, were ready for occupation by the boys; and a programme for their care, control and training in a suitable vocation, was in blue print. The 'boys village' boomed forth actually on the 16th September.

The Chembur Children's Home was an 'open' colony, unlike other Reformatory Schools which were walled. In both lay-out and routine, the Home was designed to minimise the dangers and drawbacks of institutionalism. The 'huts' in units of two constituted a 'hut family', the members of which were the group of 40 or odd boys, the matron and the Housemaster, who all lived and shared the common roof, the joys and sorrows of the hut family. There were Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Parsee lads, messing in common, playing and praying in real community spirit and learning a common vocation. The Home was fitted to impart basic agricultural training together with training in subsidiary agricultural vocations. The Chembur Children's Home was an experimental community school, a centre of education for living.

The boys themselves enjoyed their life in the Home and, in course of time, they fitted perfectly well into the 'farm colonies' to which they were sent after their period of

training in it. It was a remarkable insight into the cause of beggary and the consequences of destitution which traced both of them to absence of work. Satan's following is composed of idle hands. That is why Munshi sought to solve the problem of destitute beggar children by conceiving of an organisation which would train them for a profession, wean them away from their nefarious associations and settle them in an environment where they would be accepted, with opportunities for gainful employment.

Munshi made a human approach born of understanding and sympathy to the eradication of this festering sore in the social life of the city. The success which so largely attended his efforts and evoked appreciation was due to the attitude of a loving but anxious parent which he brought to bear on the lives and fortunes of what other people would call the dregs and drags of society. His faith in the innate innocence and goodness of human nature and the mouldability of human character told him that the evil, be it in the adult or in the child — and especially in the child more than in the adult — is due to adverse environmental conditions which seduce them into suicidal habits and anti-social activities. Reclamation of such hapless, helpless children must begin with transplanting them in a prophylactic atmosphere which would first cleanse them of all evil and then implant in them healthy moral tendencies and an aptitude for honest work.

Munshi took care to see that the scheme was worked as it was intended to be. The agricultural section of the Home was planned by Munshi and its progress and the training it imparted to the children of the Home was minutely supervised by him. At his instance, Government also transferred the management of the allied institution, the David Sasson Industrial School, to the Children's Aid Society in November, 1939



The Annual Report of the Bombay Children's Aid Society for the year 1940-41 avowed: "The scheme provides for placing a carefully selected batch of 20 beggar boys on a seven acre plot of land for farming and related occupations. . . . . The colony boys live together. They cook their food and do their washing. A few of them are whole-timers on the colony farm. Others have to learn either spinning and handloom weaving or wood and cane work on the farm. . . The batch of 20 boys constituting the Colony will farm for a period of three or five years. At the end of that period they will be assisted to migrate, with the active co-operation of the Children's Aid Society and the Government of Bombay, to the Districts where cultivable land is available."

The lads at the Chembur Children's Home breathed a rural air and, unlike their brethren in the older and maximum-security-aiming Reformatory Schools, they lived a freer life. Physical barriers to free and easy contact were conspicuous by their absence in their Home. Routine there was but it was a routine of the community home, not of a correctional institution. Life in the Chembur Home was planned to make it largely rural, typical of the life in rural India but shorn of the depressing restrictions over ways of thinking and doing.

The Congress Ministry resigned in November 1939 and Munshi ceased to be the Vice-President of the Society. In recognition of his services to the Society, however, the Managing Committee at its meeting held in November 1939 elected him the first Honorary Member of the Society. Munshi continued his interest in the Society and at the invitation of the Managing Committee accepted the Chairmanship of the Organising Committee which mainly looked after the day-to-day working and organisation of the Children's Home at Chembur,

The Special Children's Day was celebrated on December 3, 1939, under the presidentship of Sir Roger Lumley, the President of the Society. Sir Roger in his speech on the occasion, while referring to Munshi's service to the Society, stated:

"I have had frequent opportunities of learning of the very keen interest taken by my late Home Minister in the problems of destitute and delinquent children and of the tremendous drive he applied to the preparation and financing of this scheme. No trouble was too great to be taken and no detail too small for attention.

"Not less important, he succeeded in collecting the necessary money by mobilising the resources of Government, the Municipality and the public. We all of us owe Mr. Munshi a very great debt of gratitude for what he has succeeded in doing and I cannot help thinking that, for him, the settling of 800 children in pleasant rural surroundings under good supervision is a satisfactory result and all the reward he would wish for.

"But this is not the end. More money will be required for this colony, and institutions are necessary for mentally defective children. The problem facing the Society remains considerable and it must be a great source of satisfaction to every member, as it is to me, that although you have lost your Vice-President you have acquired in Mr. Munshi, a Chairman of a Committee to organise the Society's work. I have no doubt that co-operation which has been extended in the past will continue and I look forward to a further period of development and growth so that within a measurable period, this great and vital problem may be satisfactorily solved."

After amendment of the constitution providing for nomination of the Vice-President by Government, Munshi was nominated as Vice-President for 1940 and 1941.

In his message to the 13th Annual Ordinary General Meeting of the Society, Sir Roger Lumley again referred to the great work of Munshi during the preceding few years in the cause of the unfortunate children of the City and Province and expressed confidence in the future of the Society and its institutions.

With Munshi as a lawyer few in this country are unacquainted. But it is probable that many there are who do not know him as a keen student of Criminology and Penology. He combines in him the attitude of a scientist and the zeal of a reformer with the caution and conservatism in social thinking that a lawyer is generally credited with. Munshi accepts the fundamental thesis of all criminal law reform, that criminal justice must concern the individual criminal just as much as it concerns crime; not only with how crime is committed but why it is committed. The problem of dealing with crime and criminals is, in the last analysis, unitary, as indeed any attempt to handle them in compartments is not likely to be successful.

Munshi's approach to the reform of penal law and prison practices is practical. His sensitivity to what is generally called 'public opinion' or the general sense of the community has largely to do with his thoughts and impulses about any problem or aspect of social reform. He believes, and rightly does, that the country is definitely not prepared to accept any revolutionary change either in law relating to crime or in the methods of punishing the deliberate law breaker. Spread of education and dissemination of knowledge of the scientific methods and results of dealing with criminals have yet to make headway in liberalising the outlook of the people and in enabling them to subject their prejudices and predetermined attitudes about crime and criminals to the test of reason. Unless this adverse environmental situation in which the law breaker still finds him-

self is removed he will continue to be shunned by the community.

The sponsors of the First All-India Penal Reform Conference which was held in 1940 were fortunate to have Munshi as the President of the Conference, and later the President of the Indian Penal Reform League. The convener of the Conference, Gopinath Srivastava, observed in his address to the Conference, that "having known the work of the Bombay Ministry in the matter of Penal Administration, particularly in regard to juveniles, we naturally thought that Munshiji was the person most suited to be the first President of the League." Munshi's Presidential address dealt with practically every aspect of the reform of criminal and penal laws and of police and prison practices in India. He dealt elaborately with the problem of individualisation of justice as regards child delinquents, a field of service in which his contribution has been outstanding.

The chief merits of Munshi's contributions, whether in the spheres of social reclamation of the children born into adverse environment or in the treatment of criminals and practice of criminal justice, lie in the passionate plea he makes for raising the status of the work to rank equally with all essential social services. The dominant motive must be social, not just legal or merely humanitarian.

## CHAPTER VII

### LAND TRANSFORMATION

When Munshi was appointed Minister for Food and Agriculture in the first National Cabinet after the declaration of the republic on January 26, 1950, critics were not wanting who said that it was a mistake to allot this important portfolio to one who knew more about culture than agriculture.

No doubt Munshi has ever been associated with culture. But that was no excuse for the cheap jibes of ill-informed critics. Little did they know that long before he took over the Food and Agriculture portfolio, he had taken keen interest in agriculture and had built up what was later to become almost a Church of Land Transformation.

As Minister for Food and Agriculture, he not only falsified the prognostications of the Cassandras but developed his philosophy of Land Transformation by crusading for intensive development of irrigated land, Vanamahotsav, Gosamvardhan, the gospel of the dirty hand and the creation of a land army

Even after leaving the Union cabinet, Munshi has continued to evince interest in agriculture. As Governor of Uttar Pradesh, he was responsible for organising the Land School at Sarojininagar. Thus his roots have ever been in the Indian soil and his love for the rural life and the rustic agriculturist has never waxed or waned with the seasons.

Today the Institute of Agriculture at Anand is one of the most important agricultural institutions in the country and can stand comparison with the folk schools in Denmark giving practical training to young sons of the soil. How this institution was built up is a romantic story.

In one of his *Kulapati's Letters*, Munshi recalls how Seth Munglal Goenka entrusted him with eight lakhs of rupees to be utilised in any charity he chose and how out of this donation rupees six lakhs were used for the institute of Animal Husbandry, now named after the donor. Let Munshi tell the story in his own words:

"In 1937, my cultural activities were at a standstill. It was a breathing spell in a hectic period in which going to jail and fighting elections had been my principal pre-occupations.

One day, Munglal came, as had been the wont of Shamalshah Sheth whenever Narasinha Mehta, our great sixteenth century Gujarati saint, prayed to Sri Krishna for help. Many years before I had fought one of Munglal's suits to success. I had never met him since. Hesitant and nervous, he told me in indistinct, halting words which had an archaic Marwadi accent difficult to follow, why he had come: 'Again and again, I have made money and lost it. Now I have made six lakhs. So far I have never given anything in charity; now I want to give away the whole of this sum and as early as possible. I cannot resist the lure of speculation and I might lose the money before I can give it away. Please help me. People have given me all sorts of advice as to what to do. But at one time you were my advocate. What shall I do with my money?'

When a man asks me what to do with his extra money, I never can resist my impulse to hug him. In this case I did not have to do it. Munglal simply did not look as though he had six lakhs. But for his dead earnestness, I should have thought his visit was a practical joke.

I did some quick thinking. Since 1932, when I read the Linlithgow Report on Agriculture in the Bijapur jail, I had been dreaming of building up a new race of bulls

and cows — sturdy Nandis and generous Kamadhenus. Not that I knew anything of animal husbandry nor did I know much of the Mother Cow except through the milk which I had been drinking from birth. But impelled by dreams, I had helped the parties in a couple of suits to convert old-fashioned goshalas into cattle-breeding centres.

I asked: 'What about doing something for the cows?' Munglal looked exactly like a devout worshipper of Mother Cow. 'Of course,' he said, 'I will give the money for the cows. I will see you again.' And he left.

I very nearly forgot all about our conversation. Good fairies had not developed the habit of coming my way with money bags till then — and none so far had worn a Marwadi turban. Now I know better; no one can beat the Marwadi when it comes to spontaneous generosity.

Though I did not expect to see Munglal again, he was back within a fortnight — hesitant, nervous, halting in speech as before. 'Sir,' he said, 'there is some difficulty. The Tata Deferreds have risen since I saw you last. Six lakhs have now become eight lakhs. What shall we do with the extra two?'

I said to myself: 'This man is certainly pulling my leg.' But why discourage a noble thought, even if it be a joke at my expense? 'What about Sanskrit? We could start a school for the study of Sanskrit,' I said. 'Sanskrit! Yes, that's quite right'. And as he went away, Munglal's face was all smiles.

The eight lakhs, I felt sure, existed only in Munglal's imagination. But after a few days he returned again, this time early in the morning. 'Today,' he said, 'is somvati-amavasaya, the dark night of the month and a Monday; anyone who gives one rupee in charity on this day gets a reward of ten thousand rupees in heaven. I have

asked an astrologer. After twelve noon, it will be too late. Take these eight lakhs — six for the cows and two for Sanskrit.'

Surviving this sudden attack on my sanity, I asked him where the money was. Mungalal replied, 'With my share-broker. We have only to ask him to sell the shares in the open market. Then you take the sale proceeds.'

I was in no mood to let the planets cheat me of my eight lakhs. Mungalal took the telephone, rang up the broker and instructed him to sell the shares. I took the receiver from him and told the broker to hold six lakhs in certain names as trustees including Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and two lakhs in certain other names; Mungalal and I were to be trustees in both the Trusts. When I informed Sardar about this on the phone, he just laughed.

Mungalal instructed the broker to see that the receipts in those names were handed over to me before twelve noon; and when they came, I snapped my fingers at the planets.

And curiously enough that was all that Mungalal had on that day."

Munshi makes it appear as though it was an accident that Sheth Mungalal gave the donation which enabled Sardar Patel and Munshi to start the Anand Institute. In fact, both had been planning to do something for improving the cattle wealth of the country. Ever since the Congress decided to contest the elections to the provincial legislatures and accept office under the Government of India Act of 1935, Sardar and Munshi had been devoting their attention to how best Gandhiji's constructive philosophy could be applied to agriculture.

Munshi felt that the primary need was a centre of agriculture, and particularly with advanced animal husbandry, giving the country a new technique. This new technique



would be the application of science to the problems of village life. Such a process entailed three stages: first, research; second, confirming the results of research at experimental stations; and the third and most important, the extension of the proven results of research to the agriculturist thus bridging the gulf between research and actual agriculture. Munshi had no doubt that the pivotal position which cattle occupied in India's essentially rural economy demanded that the resources of science and of technical skill should be devoted to examining the improvement of animal nutrition, genetics and breeding.

These discussions of Sardar and Munshi were not academic. They were already trustees of the estates of Sheth Mansukhlal Chhaganlal. Just before his death, Mansukhlal had willed away a considerable portion of his vast property to be used in charity, the exact nature of which was left to the discretion of Sardar, Munshi and his widow and Mangaldas Mehta, Solicitor. They wanted to do something permanent to perpetuate the memory of that philanthropist.

When Sheth Munglal Goenka made the donation of rupees six lakhs for cows, Munshi's way was clear. Sardar and Munshi offered to the Government of Bombay a total sum of Rs. 15 lakhs — nine from the Mansukhlal Chhaganlal Trust and six from the Munglal Goenka Trust — to establish an Institute of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Agriculture named after Mansukhlal Chhaganlal and an Institute of Animal Genetics and Nutrition named after Munglal Goenka, both the Institutes to be located at Anand. These two Institutes were to:

(a) impart education and training in animal husbandry and dairying, animal genetics, animal nutrition, science and practice of agriculture, rural hygiene and development of village industries;

(b) develop and maintain pedigree herds of the best milch cows and draft cattle and to provide for the multiplication and distribution thereof;

(c) to carry on research in animal husbandry, dairying, animal breeding and nutrition and agriculture with a view to raising the standard of rural economy with special reference to the most effective use of land, cattle and the production and processing of milk and milk products in Bombay province and

(d) popularise improved methods of agriculture and animal husbandry.

The Government was requested to give an annual grant towards the proposed Institute and to hand over the Chharodi Cattle Farm with its select herd of Kankrej cows. Anand, the best milk-yielding area of Bombay, was chosen as the site. Munshi visited the place to select the site of the Institutes. Once Munshi takes up a work, he throws himself heart and soul into it. Half-hearted measures and methods are alien to him. Soon he was enthusiastically studying animal genetics.

This offer to the Government of Bombay was made in 1938. The time was propitious. A Congress Ministry in which Munshi himself was Home Minister was ruling Bombay and there was even the hope that if the federal part of the Government of India Act of 1935 was put into force, the Congress might wield the sceptre at the centre as well. The Governor, Sir Roger Lumley, was a personal friend of Munshi's and had a high opinion of his Home Minister's organising ability. No wonder the scheme drafted by Munshi was adopted by the Government of Bombay which sanctioned an annual recurring grant of Rs. 60,000. Munshi having defined the Aims and Objects of the Institute began organising the work. At first

he modelled the proposed Institute on the lines of the Folk Schools of Denmark.

But dangerous shoals lay ahead. In November 1939, the Congress Ministry of Bombay resigned in obedience to the directive of the Working Committee. The administration was hereafter in the hands of the I.C.S. hierarchy for the duration of the war. The top-ranking I.C.S. officers did not like to hand over the Chharodi Farm to Sardar who was considered to be the arch-enemy of the British Government. Sardar was the President and Munshi the Vice-Chairman of the Governing body of the Institute.

Munshi had several discussions with Sir Roger Lumley, the Governor. Sir Roger made no secret of the fact that his officials were suspicious of the Institute and they felt that Sardar would convert it into a breeding ground of Congress agitators. Munshi, in his capacity as Vice-Chairman, assured the Governor that so long as he was associated with it, the Institute would remain purely an educational one. Sir Roger Lumley, who had confidence in Munshi, issued orders that the Chharodi Farm and the lands be delivered to the Institute.

Accordingly, the Government of Bombay acquired and handed over to the Institute 800 acres of land at Anand and they also transferred the 2200 acres Cattle Farm at Chharodi along with 500 heads of pure-bred Kankrej cattle and the 50 acres Farm at Surat. The two Institutes thus came into existence in April 1940. The Munglal Goenka Institute had three sections: (a) animal genetics, animal nutrition and dairy science at Anand, (b) animal breeding farm at Chharodi and (c) animal breeding farm at Surat.

With the inauguration of the two Institutes, Munshi's trials and tribulations did not come to an end. Endless correspondence had to be carried on and innumerable individuals had to be contacted. The progress was indeed slow,

Towards the end of 1940, the situation was desperate. The Congress had already decided on the individual Civil Disobedience movement and Sardar and Munshi expected to be once again "guests" of His Majesty's Government. Trivedi, the Secretary of the Governing Council, was keeping indifferent health and Munshi got a retired officer of the Agricultural Department from a neighbouring province to act as Technical Adviser and Organiser of the Institute.

On December 4, 1940, Munshi was arrested and detained under Rule 26 of the Defence of India Act. The I.C.S. hierarchy which had never looked kindly on the Anand Institute now had a field-day. But unfortunately for them, Munshi was released in the middle of March 1941 owing to serious illness. The position of the Institute that confronted Munshi was indeed alarming. Trivedi's health had gone from bad to worse and he had left for Wardha. The agricultural expert from the neighbouring province had changed his loyalties. As Munshi piquantly put it, "he knew the difference between Sir H. F. Knight, a white Adviser to the Government and Munshi, an ex-prisoner and had made his choice."

The Institute was almost in ruins and the Government was even planning to take it over. But the agreement so meticulously drawn up by a lawyer of Munshi's acumen and eminence was hard to circumvent and moreover Munshi was no longer in jail.

One of the first things that Munshi did was to get rid of the agricultural expert. Nadkarni, Secretary of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, was temporarily appointed to take charge of the Institute. Dr. M. D. Patel, the animal geneticist, was promoted as temporary Director of the Institute. It was indeed an uphill task and Munshi, who welcomes difficulties and faces them as a challenge, had a hard time.

When Sardar Patel came out of jail, Dr. Patel was confirmed as Secretary and Director of the Institute. But within a few months the "Quit India" movement began, Sardar was "buried alive" in the Ahmednagar fort and the Government unleashed a policy of "leonine violence" on Indian nationalism. The I.C.S. hierarchy was now determined either to take over the Anand Institute or to kill it.

1943 was indeed a dismal year for the Institute. The crops failed and the Institute faced a heavy deficit. The Government refused to extend any help unless Munshi was prepared to surrender control of the Institute. Munshi would not do this under any circumstance. Efforts were also made to deprive the Governing Body of the powers vested in it. Undeterred by all this hostility, Munshi set his teeth and succeeded in tiding over the difficulties.

In April 1944, Munshi succeeded in securing a donation to establish an agricultural college at Anand. He went to the then Governor, Sir John Colville, and invited him to visit the Institute. The Governor was delighted by the phenomenal progress made by the Institute but he was helpless in view of the adamant attitude of senior I.C.S. officials. The latter were determined that there was going to be no college of agriculture in Gujarat and, even if there was to be one, it would not be at Anand.

But the official hierarchy did not reckon with the changes which the whirligig of time brings about. The Second World War came to an end and the Congress staged a triumphant come-back from the wilderness. In 1946, the elections to the provincial legislatures were held and the Congress romped home a winner in eight out of the eleven provinces. In Bombay, a Congress Ministry was back in the saddle.

In September 1946, Sheth Amritlal Hargovindas, a philanthropic millowner of Ahmedabad, offered a donation of Rs. 5 lakhs for starting a College of Agriculture at

Anand. The Government of Bombay accepted the offer and agreed to make a grant of Rs. 15 lakhs towards capital expenditure and a recurring annual grant of Rs. 2,40,000. On April 6, 1947, Sardar Patel laid the foundation of the Bansilal Amritlal College of Agriculture and the college started functioning from May of that year. The college was affiliated to the University of Bombay. Sardar however did not live to see the college building completed. It was left to Munshi to perform the opening ceremony of the magnificent college building in January 1952.

Since 1946, the Anand Institute has taken giant strides. In the Mansukhlal Chhaganlal school of Agriculture, students are trained for a two years' diploma course and successful candidates are awarded the diploma of "Krishivid". Certificate courses in animal husbandry and dairying, horticulture, vegetable production and kitchen gardening are also conducted. The school also trains village primary teachers in agriculture. The outstanding feature of the school is that it is practically self-supporting. From an area of 150 acres assigned to the school, the total expenditure including the pay of the staff, scholarship and other expenses are met from farm receipts. Since 1947, an Agriculture School on behalf of the Government of Bombay is also conducted.

Several of the ideas regarding agricultural development which Munshi sponsored as free India's first Minister for Food and Agriculture were at first tried with great success at the Anand Institute. It is not necessary to go at length into these schemes as they have been dealt with *in extenso* in an earlier volume. But mention must certainly be made of Van Mahotsava, the Gospel of the Dirty Hand, the Land Army, Integrated Production and Land Transformation.

The Anand Institute is inspired by high ideals. The staff

has a sense of mission; the students, enthusiastic and well-disciplined, are soil-minded. An atmosphere of mutual goodwill and devotion prevails in the whole campus. It helps all the surrounding villages, and its influence is felt in the whole district. The Institute does not merely impart education; it is a Church of Land Transformation.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SOMNATH RISES AGAIN

The restoration of the hoary temple of Somnath which contains the first of the twelve *vyotirlingas* was an act of historic justice that warmed the heart of the nation. And it was because of Munshi's indefatigable efforts that the shrine of Somnath rose again like the phoenix from its ashes.

The sack of Somnath by Mahmud Ghazni had left a deep wound in the nation's soul and it hung like a stalactite in the cave of Indian memory. It was but natural that a sensitive person like Munshi should have felt the wound deeply. He has confessed that when he first read Brigg's *Cities of Gujarat*, the wound bled profusely and he gave expression to his distress in an article entitled *Gujarat, the Grave of Vanished Empires* which was published in the Baroda College magazine.

Later when he came to Bombay, Munshi studied all the available material about the sack of Somnath and wrote two articles on the subject which were published in the *East and West*, then a leading monthly of Bombay. Between 1915 and 1922, Munshi wrote his famous historical trilogy in Gujarati in which he resurrected the glories of Chalukyan Gujarat. He felt that a nation which did not take pride in its past could have no future and it was his aim, through his novels, to recapture the glory and the grandeur that was Gujarat.

It was only in December 1922 that Munshi could visit Somnath for the first time. He has put down his impressions of his visit. "Desecrated, burnt and battered, it still stood firm — a monument to our humiliation and ingrati-



tude. I can scarcely describe the burning shame which I felt on that early morning as I walked the broken floor of the once-hallowed *sabhamantap* littered with broken pillars and scattered stones. Lizards slipped in and out of their holes at the sound of my unfamiliar steps, and — Oh! the shame of it — an inspector's horse, tied there, neighed at my approach with sacrilegious impertinence."

The dreamer in Munshi saw the temple as it was in 1024, its spire rising to the sky, mighty *acharyas* and kings laying their heads in humility at the door-step of the sanctum. He heard the jungling anklets of the temple dancers as they sang to the joyous rhythm of drum beats. He saw vast crowds anxious to have *darshan* of the deity, hope in their hearts and humility in their souls. And he also saw the invader, his sword gory with the blood of innocent worshippers, break the image into three parts. It was out of this dream that came his most famous novel *Jay Somnath*, most of which was written in Pahalgam in Kashmir with the Shishnag dancing from stone to stone with endless exuberance in front of him.

The reconstruction of Somnath was then only a nebulous dream of a visionary. But events were moving fast and in 1947 the Britishers decided to quit the country which however had to be partitioned before they left. Apart from partition, the Indian States were freed from the bonds of paramountcy. It looked as though India was to be Balkanised. But the collective will of the people was bent on consolidating the country and this will had its potent expression and mighty instrument in Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

The Muslim rulers of Indian States had their own dreams. Irrespective of what their people thought, their eyes were turned to Pakistan. One of them was the dog-loving Nawab of Junagadh, in whose State was situated

the thrice-sacred shrine of Somnath. The State had no contiguity with Pakistan by land. Over 80 per cent of the people were Hindus. Junagadh was an economic and administrative unit embedded in and deriving its sustenance from Kathiawar. Junagadh had been the home of Ra Khengar and his queen Ranak Devi — symbols of heroism enshrined in song and story in Western India.

On the eve of the transfer of power, the people of India were shocked to learn that the Nawab of Junagadh had acceded to Pakistan. A mighty wave of indignation surged not only over the people of Junagadh, but of the whole of India. The Kathiawar Political Conference took up the challenge. The people of Junagadh took the historical step of establishing a parallel Government. The *Arzi Hukumat* or the Provincial Government of Free Junagadh, with Samaldas Gandhi at the head, was announced at a public meeting in Bombay. Munshi was in close touch with the situation and his advice was eagerly sought by the leaders of Junagadh. He drafted the Proclamation explaining how the Nawab had forfeited his claim to the allegiance of his subjects and announced the Constitution of a Provisional Government. Lord Mountbatten, the Governor-General, and his advisers considered it an "ably written" document.

The Provincial Government of Junagadh moved to Saurashtra and took possession of the Junagadh House at Rajkot. Young men from all over Saurashtra flocked to its banner of freedom. Money flowed in, volunteers were armed and trained. On the Dussehra Day, the 'Day of Victory' — October 24, 1947 — the volunteers of the Provisional Government began their operations. People rose against the Nawab's rule.

Several parts of the State fell into the hands of Provisional Government. When the Nawab heard of it, he fled to Pakistan with his jewels, many of his wives and his dogs,

leaving Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, his Dewan, a resident of Pakistan, to run the Government as best as he could. The volunteer army of freedom advanced rapidly and was welcomed everywhere with enthusiasm.

It was indeed a difficult and delicate task that confronted Munshi. Lord Mountbatten, the Governor-General, was for following a cautious policy with regard to Junagadh. The people of the country in general and of Gujarat and Kathiawar in particular, were excited. In fact, the situation in Kathiawar was highly explosive and none of the leaders were in a position to hold the people in leash for long. Munshi enjoyed the confidence of Sardar who was the Minister for States. The full story of the strenuous efforts he made in regard to the Junagadh affair has not yet been told.

With the flight of the Nawab, conditions in Junagadh went from bad to worse. Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto knew that he could not carry on the administration and wrote a letter to the Regional Commissioner of the Government of India at Rajkot asking him to take over the administration of the State.

In fact, Munshi was sitting with the Sardar at his house in New Delhi at night when a telephone message was received from the Regional Commissioner that Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto had invited the Indian Army into Junagadh. When Sardar conveyed the news to Munshi, he gave expression to his joy with the words "*So it is Jay Somnath*".

The Indian army entered Junagadh and took over the administration on the 9th November, 1947. Four days later, Sardar Patel visited Junagadh. From Junagadh he went to Prabhas Patan and visited the temple. He was visibly moved at the sight of the famous temple which was the glory of India, looking so dilapidated, neglected and forlorn. N. V. Gadgil, who accompanied Sardar, suggested

that the Government of India should rebuild the temple. Sardar asked him to go ahead. The Jam Saheb of Nawanagar announced a donation of one lakh of rupees and Samaldas Gandhi on behalf of *Arzi Hukumat* donated Rs. 51,000. The proposal as well as the donations were clearly spontaneous. At a huge public meeting held at the Ahalya Bai Temple, Sardar announced: "On this auspicious day of the New Year, we have decided that Somnath should be reconstructed. You, people of Saurashtra, should do your best. This is a holy task in which all should participate."

Munshi was associated with the reconstruction scheme from the very beginning. In fact Sardar relied on him to translate the idea into reality. But he had to meet with opposition from unexpected quarters.

In the beginning, some persons, more fond of dead stones than live values, pressed the point of view that the ruins of the old temple should be maintained as an ancient monument. Munshi was, however, firm in his opinion, that the temple of Somnath was not just an ancient monument; it lived in the sentiments of the whole nation and its reconstruction was a national pledge. Its preservation was not a mere matter of historical curiosity.

Some of his scholar friends had hard things to say about Munshi for his 'vandalism'. They forgot that while he is fond of history, he is fonder still of creative values.

When the question was pressed by the Archaeological Department, Sardar expressed his views as follows: "The Hindu sentiment in regard to this temple is both strong and widespread. In the present conditions, it is unlikely that that sentiment will be satisfied by mere restoration of the temple or by prolonging its life. The restoration of the idol would be a point of honour and sentiment with the Hindu Public."

At that stage it was considered that the re-installation

of the idol would not interfere with the maintenance of the old temple. The specialists, on scrutiny, found that the ruins were salt-eaten and irreparable, nor could they stand a spire. Religious injunctions also stood in the way of installing the deity in ruins which could not be renovated as prescribed. It was, therefore, finally decided to rebuild the temple.

On December 13, 1947, the Standing Committee of the Ministry of Works, Mines and Power of the Government of India approved of the idea and Gadgil instructed his Consulting Architect to visit Prabhas Patan. Though the Government of India sponsored the scheme, Sardar under the advise of Gandhi decided that the Government should not make any contribution in the form of money for the reconstruction of the temple.

On December 25, 1947, the States Ministry decided to request the Junagadh authorities to lease a sufficiently large area around the temple for development on these lines

On January 23, 1949, a conference was held at Jamnagar attended by Sardar and Gadgil with the Jam Saheb of Nawanganar, U. N. Dhebar, Chief Minister of Saurashtra, and Samaldas Gandhi, Administrator of Junagadh. The trust, it was then decided, was to consist of two representatives of donors; two eminent public men, two representatives of the Government of India, and two representatives of the Government of Saurashtra (of whom one would be from Junagadh)

The Board of Trustees were to be assisted by an Advisory Committee, the composition of which was to be settled by the Government of India. The objects of the Trust were to include 'not only the rebuilding and the maintenance of the Somnath Temple itself and its auxiliary institutions, the renovation of Dehotsarga where Lord Shri Krishna

cast off His mortal coils, but also the general improvement of the neighbourhood so as to restore its atmosphere of sanctity.' Munshi was requested to prepare the Trust Deed.

Munshi's view was that a temple by itself would not be enough in these days of cultural resurgence, nor did the authoritative tradition of a great temple permit its dissociation from a centre of learning. If the temple was to be a real centre of attraction for the country, it should have close association with an All-India Sanskrit University and should also have a suburb where people could come either for health, study or for rest, and a *Goshala*

Munshi elaborated these ideas in an exhaustive note which he submitted to Sardar. The note in which he made a fervent plea for an All-India Sanskrit University is reproduced elsewhere in this volume. Sardar approved of Munshi's ideas and they were duly incorporated in the Trust Deed.

On February 15, 1949, the States Ministry issued a directive that it was no longer necessary for the Temple or any land in Prabhas Patan to vest in the Government of India. The Temple and the land which were then in the jurisdiction of the Saurashtra Government, Junagadh having merged in the meantime, and such property rights as were considered necessary for the proper fulfilment of the Trust, would later vest in the Trustees.

The draft Trust Deed was sent to Munshi for finalisation. Munshi found that the draft needed considerable revision. He enlarged the objects of the Trust as not merely to restore and reconstruct the Temple and the idol, but to improve the surroundings and set up such institutions as may restore the sanctity of Prabhas Patan and its surroundings. This was to include the construction of rest-houses for the pilgrims and setting up of educational institutions for Sanskrit. The Trust was also to attend to the

restoration of places like Dehotsarga — the place where Shri Krishna cast off His body. Munshi finalised the Trust Deed and it was accepted.

The Advisory Committee appointed by the Government of India consisted of C. M. Master, Architect; J. C. Ghosh; Prabhashankar O. Sompura, one of the hereditary architects of Somnath; U. J. Bhatt, Chief Engineer of Saurashtra Government; B. S. Vyas; G. B. Deolalikar, Consulting Architect of the Central P.W.D.; S. K. Joglekar, Town Planning Officer of the C.P.W.D.; with Munshi as Chairman and N. P. Chakravarti, then Director-General of Archaeology, as Convener. The Committee started working on July 30, 1949. Under the Committee's instructions, Prabhashankar Sompura, with his wide knowledge of the ancient art of temple building, prepared a plan of the new Temple on the style of the old one.

On October 18, 1949, Sardar nominated the first Trustees. The Jam Saheb of Nawanagar and Samaldas Gandhi were to represent Saurashtra Government. Gadgil, Minister for Works, Mines and Power, and D. V. Rege, Regional Commissioner of Saurashtra at Rajkot, were selected as nominees of the Government of India. Brijmohan Birla and Munshi were named as representatives of the general public. Two vacancies were kept for future donors.

Sardar's message to the Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, which was conveyed in a D.O. letter, dated November 22, 1949, from V. P. Menon, then Secretary, States Ministry, was as follows:

"Your Highness will recollect that you handed over to me a cheque for Rs. 1,00,000 (one lakh) some time ago which I returned to you. I am now writing to suggest that this amount may be paid as a donation to the Somnath Fund. Somnath is an ancient heritage of ours, and we have to take every care to see that the temple

and its environments are maintained in a manner worthy of their ancient traditions. For this purpose, we propose to constitute a Trust. Your Highness will remember that Sardar made an appeal for funds for the Somnath Trust some time ago. The object, therefore, is one which deserves full support from all patriotic Indians and that is why I am making this suggestion. I shall be grateful for a line in reply."

By the end of 1949, about Rs. 25 lakhs were collected. The Trust Deed was finally approved by the Government of India and Saurashtra Government and was executed on March 15, 1950. The objects of the Trust were thus fully defined:

"(a) to restore and reconstruct the said Temple of Somnath in such manner as may be determined in consultation with an 'Advisory Committee' to be constituted as hereinafter provided and to incur the necessary expenses in connection therewith;

(b) to instal or cause to be installed in the Temple of Somnath one or more idols of Shiva and other deities as are objects of worship by the Hindu community,

(c) to hold rituals, ceremonies and celebrations, necessary for or connected with or incidental to the shrine of the deity referred to in clauses (a) and (b),

(d) to allow all members of the Hindu community without distinction of caste, creed or sect to use the said Temple of Somnath as a place of worship and for offering prayers and performing rites and ceremonies in accordance with the regulations that may be made in that behalf and for such other religious or charitable purposes as the Trustees may, from time to time, sanction but subject always to any provisions contained in such regulations as the Trustees may consider necessary to secure the safety and protection of the building;



(e) to construct and maintain rest-houses and dharma-shalas for the pilgrims visiting the said Temple of Somnath,

(f) to set up one or more institutions, including a University, which has for its objects the imparting of education, the essential features of which are.

- (i) the religious education of Hindus,
- (ii) the imparting of knowledge of Sanskrit,
- (iii) the study of or research in Sanskritic learning, Indology or any branch of knowledge of which such knowledge or Indology forms part, and
- (iv) the spread of Sanskrit or Sanskritic learning or to popularise Hindu scriptures or to get prepared or publish works which have for their object the spread of Sanskrit, Sanskritic learning or Indology or which would impart such education to the general public,

(g) to renovate, reconstruct and maintain Dehotsarga, the sacred place where Lord Sri Krishna departed from the world and to construct a shrine and a suitable memorial thereon;

(h) to allow non-Hindu visitors to visit the Somnath Temple and have darshana of the deities in accordance with the rules and regulations that may, from time to time, be framed by the Trustees provided that no such visitor shall be allowed personally to perform worship in the said Temple of Somnath,

(i) to improve, beautify, and maintain the land, premises and area leading to or in the neighbourhood of the said Temple of Somnath and to do such things as may add beauty, solemnity and sanctity to the aforesaid Trust properties;

(j) to take over, maintain and conduct the temples,

shrines and sacred places situated on the Somnath Estate or any other place,

(k) to manage and develop the Somnath Estate or any part thereof in such manner as the Trustees may deem fit including setting up buildings or agricultural farms or other schemes not repugnant to the principal objects contained in clauses (a) to (h) hereof;

(l) to maintain and develop goshalas for developing good breed of cows and other cattle and a farm or farms for the same;

(m) to take over, maintain, conduct and manage, other public Trusts of a religious or charitable nature which have as their objects the maintenance, upkeep or conduct of any Hindu temple, shrine or sacred place, of the setting up, maintenance or conduct of any institution, one of the features of which is the object specified in clauses (f) and (k) hereof,

(n) to do all things necessary, germane or incidental to the aforesaid objects ”

Before the temple could be rebuilt, Sardar Patel passed away on the 15th December 1950. So long as the Iron Man with the bronze complexion was alive, nobody dared to whisper a word against the reconstruction of Somnath, which was rightly considered as an act of historic justice. But with his death, a whispering campaign was set afoot that the whole project was no more than an exhibition of Hindu revivalism.

A canard was set afloat that the Saurashtra Government intended to spend a huge amount of money on the reconstruction and though it was denied by the Chief Minister of the State, it was played up in certain sections of the press. The association of the Jam Saheb of Nawanagar as the President of the Somnath Committee gave rise to much criticism.

It was at this time that the Jam Saheb wrote a letter to Indian diplomats to send a pinch of soil, a few drops of water and twigs as were required for the prescribed ritual or installing a *Jyotirlinga*, from the respective countries to which they were accredited, so that the reinstallation might symbolise the unity of the world and the brotherhood of man. At least one of the diplomats felt that his secularism was in danger of being misunderstood and complained about it to the Prime Minister

Munshi was rightly regarded as the linchpin of the reconstruction of Somnath, and the Prime Minister talked to him and even wrote to him about the new twist that was being given to the restoration of Somnath. The subject was raised even at meetings of the Cabinet. On the 24th April 1951, Munshi wrote a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, giving the various stages of the association of the administration of Junagadh, the Saurashtra Government and the Government of India with the reconstruction of Somnath. The letter is a historic document and no apologies are needed for quoting material parts from it:

"After the Indian Army was invited into Junagadh by the Dewan of the ex-Nawab, Sardar, Jamsaheb and Gadgil went to Junagadh. Next day, on November 13, 1947, they went to Prabhas to see the ruins of the Somnath Temple. There they decided upon the reconstruction of the Somnath Temple. It was publicly announced by the Sardar 'that the Government of India had decided to rebuild the temple and instal the shrine.' Jam Saheb and the Junagadh Administration both gave a donation each on the spot. Junagadh Administration agreed to develop the town of Prabhas and to place at the disposal of the Somnath temple about 5,000 acres of land for its development.

"The States Ministry of the Government of India thereafter took steps to implement this decision.

"On December 13, 1947, the Standing Committee of the W. M. P. Ministry accepted Gadgil's proposal that the Government of India should reconstruct the temple in the original form and develop roughly one square mile of the surrounding area. I understand that this decision was included in the Weekly Note to the Cabinet. As I learn from Gadgil, it was also mentioned to the Cabinet. At the time, the policy of the Government was that the W. M. P. Ministry should reconstruct the old shrines and they were so doing in the case of certain Muslim shrines and mosques.

"The Government of India thereafter deputed Government architects to visit Prabhas and prepared a report for the reconstruction of the temple

"When the whole scheme was discussed by Sardar with Bapu, he stated that it was alright except that the funds necessary for reconstructing the temple should come from the public. Gadgil also saw Bapu and Bapu gave him the same advice. Thereafter, the idea that the Government of India should finance the reconstruction of the temple was given up.

"On December 25, 1947, the States Ministry requested the Junagadh authorities to lease out a sufficiently large area surrounding the temple for development on the lines decided upon. The lines included the development of the town of Prabhas, which had fallen into neglect, into an attractive sea-side resort; the leasing out to the temple the areas necessary for developing it, the raising of the monument at Dehotsarga — the place where Sri Krishna had left His body, setting up a seat of learning which may develop into a University and a model agricultural and cattle farm on the lines of our Institute of Agriculture, Anand.

"The Junagadh authorities thereafter took steps to earmark the area that was to be given for the temple. The

matters were discussed at considerable length between the Administration of Junagadh and myself who was asked by Sardar to look into the matter. Ultimately, Sardar approved of the area that was to be given to the temple.

"On January 23, 1949, a Conference was held at Jamnagar attended by Sardar, Jam Saheb, Gadgil, Dhebar, the Chief Minister of Saurashtra, Samaldas Gandhi, Administrator of Junagadh, and the Regional Commissioner. The States Ministry by then had decided to transfer the temple properties to a Somnath Trust to be created for the purpose. At that conference the scheme was finalised. It was decided that the Trust should be executed by the Saurashtra Government; and that the Government of India and the Saurashtra Government should each have two representatives on the Board of Trustees.

"I was thereafter asked by the States Ministry to prepare a Trust Deed for the purpose, which I did.

"Junagadh thereafter merged with Saurashtra to form the Saurashtra Union and the Union took over the undertaking of the Junagadh administration with regard to the Temple with the approval of the States Ministry. The Union thereafter took steps to carry out the said undertaking.

"As a result of the consultations between the States and the W. M. P. Ministries, the Government of India set up an Advisory Committee for implementing the decisions as regards Somnath. Several Government servants, including Dr. J. C. Ghosh, Chemist, and the Town Planning Expert of the Government of India were members of the Committee. The Director-General of Archaeology was appointed the Convener, and in view of my fairly intimate knowledge of ancient history of Gujarat, and particularly of Somnath, I was appointed the Chairman of the Committee. As a Chairman, I took up the implementation of the scheme in closest co-operation with the States Ministry.

"Later, I was asked to prepare a scheme for the University of Sanskrit to be located at Prabhas, and the same was accepted by the States Ministry as one of the objects of the Trust.

"On October 18, 1949, Sardar approved of this Trust. Government of India appointed Gadgil and Rege, Regional Commissioner of Saurashtra, as their representatives on the Board of Trustees; it also nominated Shri B. M. Birla and myself as public men; Saurashtra Government nominated Jam Sheb and Samaldas Gandhi as their nominees. In inviting Gadgil to be a Trustee it was specifically mentioned that in view of the fact that he was the head of the Ministry of W. M. P., it was appropriate that he should be one of the Trustees.

"On 22nd November 1949, the States Ministry wrote to Jam Saheb as follows:—

'Somnath is an ancient heritage of ours, and we have to take every care to see that the temple and its environments are maintained in a manner worthy of their ancient traditions. For this purpose we propose to constitute a Trust. Your Highness will remember that Sardar made an appeal for funds for the Somnath Trust some time ago. The object, therefore, is one which deserves full support from all patriotic Indians and that is why I am making this suggestion.'

"Some time before the Constitution came into force, Saurashtra Government executed the Trust, and it has been since carrying out the undertaking accepted by it when the merger of Junagadh was effected.

"The objects of the Trust Deed make it clear that the temple is not only to be open to all classes of Hindu community, but, according to the tradition of the old temple of Somnath, also to non-Hindu visitors, that the area should be developed as a model town, that educational institu-

tions including a University and agricultural farm should be established. The intention to throw open the temple to Harijans has evoked some criticism from the orthodox section of the community.

"Funds collected for the temple and other properties were transferred to the Trustees who have since been in possession of them.

"Sardar himself was to have not only attended the inaugural ceremony, but actually to perform the ceremony. Unfortunately, the temple could not be completed, and he died in the meantime. Apart from any other sentiment, we all feel that we should help in the redemption of Sardar's pledge to the best of our ability

"In one of your earlier letters, you had written to me about the expenses of the temple. In fact, at present, we are only building a small part of the temple, and the cost of it is not going to be more than Rs. 3 lakhs. For the celebrations we are cutting out all rationed foodgrains. For the sacrifices, throwing in of grains in the sacrificial fire have been eschewed

"The Somnath Trust Funds and public subscriptions are going to meet the expenses of the installation ceremony. Your attention seems to have been drawn to a press note that the Saurashtra Government is spending Rs. 5 lakhs for the ceremony but not to the contradiction issued by it. It is spending money only for repairing and lighting roads of Prabhas, and for providing medical aid and water for the pilgrims. These expenses are borne by all governments within whose territory a large concourse gathers. This has been done even in the case of Congress gatherings, and certainly when huge Melas gather at Hardwar, Prayag, Rameshwar, Nasik and Ajmer.

"As you will see, the Government of India not only took the initial decision to reconstruct the temple, but formu-

lated and set going the scheme, and created the agency for its further implementation. This will clearly indicate to you the extent of the Government of India's association with the scheme.

"You pointedly referred to me in the Cabinet as connected with Somnath. I am glad you did so; for I do not want to keep back any part of my views or activities, particularly from you who have placed such abundant confidence in me all these months. I have helped in building up several institutions, for instance, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Public School at Andheri, the Chembur Home for Destitute Children and the Institute of Agriculture at Anand. If similarly, I am now helping to build up Somnath as a centre of religion and culture, a University and a farm, it is only as a humble task to which I have been called. The fact that when so helping, I have been a lawyer or a public man or a Minister is only an accident. You know well that my historical novels have brought the ancient history of Gujarat vividly before modern India, and my novel *Jaya Somnath* has had a great appeal in the country. I can assure you that the 'Collective Sub-conscious' of India today is happier with the scheme of reconstruction of Somnath sponsored by Government of India than with many other things that we have done and are doing.

"Yesterday you referred to 'Hindu Revivalism'. I know your views on the subject; I have always done justice to them; I hope you will equally do justice to mine. Many have been the customs which I have defied in personal life from my boyhood. I have laboured in my humble way through literary and social work to shape or reintegrate some aspects of Hinduism, in the conviction that that alone will make India an advanced and vigorous nation under modern conditions,



“With regard to Jam Saheb’s letter, a pinch of soil, a few drops of water and twigs from all over the world are ceremonial requirements for the installation. They are symbolical of the unity of the world and brotherhood of men. We never thought that a request to our Foreign Diplomats would perturb you so much. Some months back, the External Affairs Ministry was apprised by Jam Saheb of the letter he sent out. Replies were also sent by him to the E. A. Ministry. Newspapers, for the last some weeks, have been referring to these arrivals. Whenever a foreign representative has found it difficult or unwise to send things, he has said so. Mr. Panikkar evidently made some complaints to you; he also wrote to Jam Saheb that he would send some of these things; perhaps, if he had only written a personal letter to Jam Saheb confessing his inability, nobody would have pressed him to do anything.

“We are having a Sanskrit Conference there. I had discussions about it with foreign scholars last year. Though in my view, visit of persons interested in the cultural heritage of India from all parts of the world would be of great international value to India, out of deference to your wishes, I did not invite foreign scholars, some of whom, I am sure, would have come. You wrote to me that you had no objection to my inviting the foreigners, but in view of this Panikkar affair, I did not want to annoy you further by asking whether I should withhold invitations from our Foreign Diplomats. Inviting, as I do, several of them often and at the same time withholding an invitation from them on this occasion would certainly create an impression that in matters of religious ceremony, we are so exclusive as not even to invite them. No one, I am sure, will come even if invited. We cannot shut out the Foreign Correspondents if they come. I should like to seek your guidance in this matter.

"One word more. It is my faith in our past which has given me the strength to work in the present and to look forward to our future. I cannot value freedom if it deprives us of the *Bhagavad Gita* or uproots our millions from the faith with which they look upon our temples and thereby destroys the texture of our lives. I have been given the privilege of seeing my incessant dream of Somnath reconstruction come true. That makes me feel — makes me almost sure — that this shrine once restored to a place of importance in our life will give to our people purer conception of religion and a more vivid consciousness of our strength, so vital in these days of freedom and its trails."

It may be mentioned here that when the letter of Munshi was seen by V. P. Menon, who was then Adviser to the States Ministry, he wrote the following letter to Munshi:—

"I have seen your master-piece. I for one would be prepared to live and, if necessary, die by the views you have expressed in your letter."

It must be said to the credit of the Prime Minister that, after receiving Munshi's forthright letter, he came to assess the carping critics of the Somnath restoration at their true worth. The fact that the President of the Republic, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, was to instal the new deity must have influenced the Prime Minister to no small extent.

The installation ceremony of the *linga* was fixed for the 11th November 1951. At this time Munshi was the Union Minister for Food and Agriculture, and he had to make a dash to Burma in order to negotiate a rice deal. It was at this time he wrote in great hurry the book *Somnath—The Shrine Eternal*. It is a compendium of information about the temple which has been the eternal symbol of Hindu faith and the destruction of which by Mohamed Ghazni had been burned into the collective subconscious of the race, as an unforgettable national disaster.

The installation of the new deity by Dr. Rajendra Prasad took place in the presence of a huge concourse of people, who had come from every part of India, and nobody would have been happier on that occasion than Munshi, who saw his incessant dream of Somnath reconstruction come true on that day.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE SANSKRIT VISHVA PARISHAD

By far the most important among the various forms of constructive work initiated by Munshi is the Sanskrit Vishva Parishad. Inheriting a passion for Sanskrit, bred up by a mother who used to sing to him tales of long ago from the Sanskrit classics, he came to realise early in his life that the renaissance of Indian culture was bound up with the revival of Sanskrit studies. A devoted student of the *Gita* and the *Yoga Sutras*, he was intimate with the thoughts and expressions which constitute the unique glory of that language. Vyasa, Valmiki and Patanjali exerted a deep and abiding influence on his mind and filled it with a desire to recapture what they stood for and give it a new life in the context of modern times.

Munshi was firmly convinced that to make the language of any region come to its own as a living force in the lives of the people who speak it, the inspiration and the power should be derived from Sanskrit, the common ancestor of almost all these languages. This was borne in upon him even at the commencement of his activities for the revival of Gujarati language and literature, giving it a new direction and a new purpose. He boldly avowed: "I am not indifferent to the study of modern Indian languages. I cannot be. For 35 years now, I have given of my best to Gujarati. My faith in Hindi as the national language of India is unshaken. I have admired the piquancy and raciness of Marathi and the grace of Bengali. But as a truly formative and inspiring influence, nothing compares with the study of Sanskrit."

It was this burning enthusiasm for the revival of Sanskrit

learning that made him induce Seth Munglal Goenka to donate two lakhs of rupees for the promotion of Sanskrit learning. How this donation was utilised to build up the Munglal Goenka Shamshodhan Mandir is described elsewhere in the book. And among the very first activities of the Bhavan was the Sanskrit department.

But Munshi was not satisfied with these efforts, commendable as they were. What he wanted was a nationwide revival of Sanskrit studies. And he bided his time. The opportunity came when Junagadh was integrated with India by the overwhelming vote of the people of the State. One of the acts of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel after visiting Junagadh was his announcement to rebuild the great temple of Somanath which enshrined one of the twelve *gyotirlingas* in the country.

It was inevitable that Munshi should be intimately connected with the proposal to rebuild the Somnath shrine. As the hot gospeller of Gujarat consciousness and as one who wrote about the fall of Somanath at the hands of Mahmud Ghazni, he was the fittest to be associated with the task. Sardar asked Munshi for his ideas on the reconstruction of the temple. In a lengthy note, Munshi emphasised that if the temple was to be a real centre of attraction for the country, it should have close association with an All-India Sanskrit University.

Munshi's view was that a temple by itself would not be enough in these days of cultural resurgence nor did the authoritative tradition of a great temple permit its dissociation from a centre of learning. If the temple was to be a real source of national inspiration, it should have close association with an All-India Sanskrit University and should also have a suburb where people could come for health, study or rest, and a *goshala*. He submitted a lengthy note to Sardar regarding a scheme for an All-India Sanskrit

University. The following excerpts show how Munshi could almost anticipate the future:

“There are no less than ten thousand *Pathashalas* in India in which Sanskrit education is imparted according to the old Indian style. These institutions are generally supported by public charity and apart from training students in rituals and other branches of ancient Indian learning, keep alive Sanskrit as a living force in the country.

“There are a few centres in India holding examinations for the title of *Shastri* and *Acharya*, which are recognised all over India. The principal among them in North India are the Queen’s College, Banaras, and the Sanskrit College, Calcutta. In Western India, as far as I know, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is the only institution which confers such academic titles. In the South, there are more than one such institution, Tirupathi being the most prominent. Some of the Universities also confer titles.

“Roughly speaking, Sanskrit education in India today follows two methods

- (i) the critical and historical method following modern methods of research, which is being adopted by the Universities;
- (ii) the scholastic method now being followed by the *Pathashalas*.

“It is the latter method which makes Sanskrit not a dead classical language like Greek or Latin, but a living language spoken by thousands.

“Several attempts have been made to establish an All-India Sanskrit University which would co-ordinate the methods of Sanskrit education in the country. Some enthusiasts, four years ago, made an attempt at Agra which, however, did not succeed. Babu Sampurnananda

is recently trying to convert the Banaras Sanskrit College into a sort of University.

“Nothing tangible, however, so far seems to have been achieved. It is of the highest importance to the country that there should be an All-India institution which, while preserving the best in the old methods followed by the *Pathashalas*, will re-orientate the out-of-date courses and keep alive the inspiration of Sanskrit and all it stands for in the life and learning of the country. It must not be forgotten that if these institutions are allowed to die, it would not only be a serious and irreparable loss to learning and culture, but will tend to lower the standard of morals and outlook in the whole country. We would, besides, have allowed one strong bulwark against the devastating progress of materialism to crumble. It is, therefore, suggested that there should be an All-India Sanskrit University conducted by the Centre.

“It is suggested that such a University should be at Prabhasa Patan in Saurashtra. Prabhasa, where the temple of Somnatha stands, rose into all-India reputation, as a sacred place, contemporaneously with, if not earlier than, Kashi. In the cultural history of India, the place is doubly sacred. The temple of Somnatha is situated there and a new temple is going to replace the the relics of the old one. It is also the place where Lord Shri Krishna left His body wounded by the arrow of a hunter. Once there is a University of Somanath, its ancient associations will be revived. The shore on which Prabhasa stands is one of the most picturesque places in India. The association of a Sanskrit University with Prabhasa, therefore, will create for India a new cultural centre.

“It must not be forgotten that up to the 13th century,

Somnatha was worshipped throughout India as a deity of equal importance with Kashi Vishvanatha. From the 4th or 5th century, it was one of the greatest seats of learning, presided over by the great teachers of the Pashupata cult of Shaivism, which exercised its influence in the whole of India. During the Mughal period, even Muslim merchants going by the port of Prabhasa used to make offerings at the shrine. It is only a few miles from the port of Veraval and from the Keshod airport. Quite a large number of foreigners are now coming out to India with a view to study its culture. A place where Sanskrit learning is co-ordinated with modern learning will attract attention all over the world.

"The Indian Princes of Saurashtra and Rajasthan have continued to lavish their patronage to the *Pathashalas* in these areas. Almost every little place of importance has a *Pathashala*. In Jaipur, there is a very good Sanskrit College Jalore. Shrimal and Siddhpur, once seats of learning, have also some remnants of Sanskrit learning. In Gujarat, *Pathashalas* are being slowly eliminated but in Maharashtra there are quite a large number of them. I have no doubt that these *Pathashalas* will come to be affiliated to the University.

"For an All-India Sanskrit University, to start with, we must have fifty lakhs of rupees for non-recurring expenditure and four to five lakhs of rupees per annum for recurring expenditure. The Government of India and the Governments of Saurashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Bharat and Bombay may be approached to contribute substantially. A mere parochial institution confined to Western India is of no value; to be a world asset, it must be an All-India University. If properly approached, I have no doubt that even other Provincial and State Governments in India will make a substantial grant for



this purpose. The Saurashtra Government has already promised to acquire for the Somanatha Temple a very large tract of land and it will not be difficult to house the University in that area."

Sardar approved of Munshi's ideas and they were duly incorporated in the Trust Deed. Among the objects of the Trust are:

To set up one or more institutions, including a University, which has for its objects the imparting of education, the essential features of which are—

- (1) the religious education of Hindus,
- (2) the imparting of knowledge of Sanskrit,
- (3) the study of or research in Sanskrit learning, Indology or any branch of knowledge of which such knowledge or Indology forms part, and
- (4) the spread of Sanskrit or Sanskrit learning or to popularise Hindu scriptures or to get prepared or publish works which have for their object the spread of Sanskrit, Sanskrit learning or Indology or which would impart such education to the general public.

Accordingly the trustees of the Somanath Trust convened on the historic day of the installation ceremony of the new shrine, on 11th May 1951, a Sanskrit Parishad. Delegates were deputed by 19 Indian universities and most of the leading oriental institutes. Many reputed Sanskrit scholars from all parts of India attended the Parishad.

The Parishad was inaugurated by Purshottamdas Tandon, then President of the Indian National Congress. Tandon appealed to the people in general and scholars and learned men in particular to understand and appreciate the richness of Sanskrit language and restore it to its proper place. Maharajah Sir Balarama Varma of Travancore who presided said that Sanskrit symbolised the underlying unity and homogeneity in apparent diversity in India and that

the establishment of a world academy of Sanskrit would alone contribute to the revival of the heritage indispensable to India of tomorrow if culture has to play an effective role in the world. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of India, also welcomed the idea of promoting a world academy of Sanskrit.

Accordingly, the delegates adopted the following resolution moved by Munshi and seconded by Justice N. H. Bhagwati:

“We the delegates of the Akhil Bharatiya Sanskrit Parishad now assembled at Prabhas, declare in all solemnity and faith:

- (a) That Sanskrit is the language of India's culture and inspiration; that it is the world's classical language and the key to a true understanding of India's cultural and spiritual greatness; and that through Sanskrit and its allied languages, particularly Pali and Prakrit, the world can realise the life of the spirit enshrined in them;
- (b) That India's immediate and paramount need is to promote the study of Sanskrit so that this treasure-house of her past and the source and inspiration of her modern languages should become an intimate part of the life of the people; that research in Indology and other allied subjects keep pace with the advance of knowledge and thus the varied and manifold wealth of our heritage be made more readily available to the entire world;
- (c) That to achieve these purposes, a Sanskrit Vishva Parishad be established which would work in association with the Somnath Trust and all other agencies throughout the world that have similar aims and work in the same field.

We further declare that it will be our steadfast resolve and endeavour to realise these aims."

In order to accomplish the objectives, the delegates assembled at Prabhas Patan constituted themselves into the Sanskrit Vishva Parishad. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected the life President of the Parishad. Thus was born on a supremely holy day of great national significance and under the most distinguished auspices an institution which was to give shape to a life passion which was burning in Munshi's heart, the revival of Sanskrit as the language of India's immemorial and eternal culture.

No sooner was the Parishad founded than it became almost the exclusive baby of Munshi. He had been the moving spirit behind the conference; and he was the obvious choice as the chairman of the Parishad. Under his inspiration, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan agreed to house the offices of the Parishad.

Munshi threw himself with his wonted energy into making the Vishva Parishad a real world academy. He is not one of those who are prone to believe that all that is needed to advocate a cause is to hold a conference. His dynamism would not rest till it expressed itself in a series of continuous activities in pursuit of the objectives envisaged.

Munshi addressed letters to lovers of Sanskrit in India and abroad. He analysed with clarity the difficulties confronting a renaissance of Sanskrit learning. He wrote:

"First, the highly placed persons in this country, who have studied Sanskrit and believe in it as an integral element of our national life are unorganised in their efforts to maintain Sanskrit in its present position.

"Secondly, in our Universities, and in the higher educational systems, there is a growing outlook borrowed largely from the West, that the study of a classical language is a

superfluity, an outlook based on ignorance, for to India Sanskrit is not a classical language which serves but to add to the accomplishment of an educated man; it is a vital link in the nation's evolution.

"Thirdly, the emergence of a class of influential men who often ignore Sanskrit by elevating their lack of cultural background to the pedestal of 'progressive' outlook.

"Fourthly, the elimination of the princely order which in spite of its many faults gave generous patronage to the Pathashalas, the centres of traditional Sanskrit learning, and the decay of religious belief which denies to their products the means of livelihood; and

"Lastly, the outlook fashionable in some Westernized sections of the people that a faith in Sanskrit as a vitalising force in the modern world, is a sign of revivalism. Their children no longer learn the Epics which have made and preserved India, from the mothers' lips. Nothing could be more saddening for us than the fact that over sixty per cent of candidates for the I.A.S., the prospective rulers of India, did not know either of Kunti, the noble mother or of Karna, the soul of honour and generosity."

Munshi had a clear idea of the task confronting them. He chalked out a three-point programme: firstly, to harness the energies of our universities and educational systems; secondly, to modify by a nation-wide effort the traditional Sanskrit education by providing it with economic support and career possibilities; and thirdly, to cement the bond of brotherhood between lovers of Sanskrit all over the world.

The primary objective was to set up the Vishva Parishad with a proper constitution. Ten *kendras* or centres of Sanskrit learning should be started all over the country. At the same time, he set on foot study groups relating to conditions of Sanskrit education from the following points of view;

- i. the place occupied by Sanskrit in our Universities and higher education systems;
- ii. the assistance given by Central and State Governments to Sanskritic studies;
- iii. the recognition of Shastric titles as qualifying for University degrees;
- iv. the position of Pathshalas, their economic condition and the way of providing economic assistance to them and career possibilities to their students;
- v. the position of Sanskritic research;
- vi. the desirability of having easy examination programmes for those anxious to study Sanskrit privately ;
- vii. the desirability of holding conferences of those interested in Sanskrit;
- viii. the ways and means to make Sanskrit literature and particularly the Epics an element in mass education.

The second session of the Vishva Parishad was held at Banaras in November 1952, under the presidentship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad; and Dr. Sampurnanand was the chairman of the Reception Committee. In this as in the inaugural and subsequent sessions, Munshi was the soul of the proceedings. Among the resolutions passed under his initiative was one which recommended the introduction of certain modern subjects to make the holders of Shastric titles eligible for employment in Government and private service on the same salary and other terms as graduates of the universities. By another resolution, the idea of an All-India Sanskrit University in order to co-ordinate and stimulate Sanskrit studies throughout the country was adumbrated.

A very significant development in the work of the Parishad was the formation of a link in the chain of its activities across the seas. A centre of the Parishad was established in the United States The American Academy of

Asian Studies under the direction of L. P. Gainsborough undertook the responsibility of carrying on the Parishad's work in the New World.

The third session of the Parishad was held at Nagpur in April 1954 and the last session was held in Bombay in 1961. It is needless to add that in all these conferences, Munshi has been the moving spirit infusing enthusiasm and energy among the Sanskritists who gathered every time from distant parts of India.

At the fourth session held at Tirupati which was attended by about 1,500 delegates, a Committee was appointed to urge upon the Government of India the importance of Sanskrit with a view to securing governmental aid and support for the promotion of its study. Accordingly, in February 1956, the Committee interviewed the top-ranking authorities and submitted a memorandum setting forth certain concrete proposals which, as resolved by the Parishad, should be considered and implemented by the Government.

Among the proposals "(1) the Government should appoint an All-India Board of Sanskrit Studies for co-ordinating, standardising and promoting Sanskrit studies all over India by both modern and traditional methods, and (2) the Government should establish a Central Institute to promote higher study and learning and research in Sanskrit."

As a first step towards the fulfilment of this demand, the Government of India appointed in October 1956 a Sanskrit Commission to investigate into the present state of Sanskrit education in India and to make recommendations for its promotion. J. H. Dave, an Honorary Director of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, was a member of the Commission which toured the country, examined witnesses and

secured written memoranda from different institutions and individuals.

The Commission recommended, *inter alia*, the establishment of a Central Sanskrit Board and a centrally administered Sanskrit University for higher studies and research in Sanskrit. In pursuance of these recommendations, the Government of India constituted a Central Sanskrit Board in 1958 and also established the Kendriya Sanskrit Vidya-peetha at Tirupati in 1961. The establishment of these two centrally-sponsored institutions constitute important landmarks in the progress of Sanskrit learning. And both can be traced to Munshi's ceaseless efforts.

Since Munshi was aiming at a national revival of Sanskrit, he threw himself whole-heartedly into the organisation of branches. At present, the Parishad has 26 regional branches, 200 local branches, 252 *mandals* and 257 *kendras*. It has branches in the United States of America, in Ceylon, in Germany and Japan.

Through the ceaseless efforts of the Parishad, several universities have given increasing prominence to Sanskrit in their curricula. The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan has taken on hand the job of publishing a Who's Who of eminent Sanskritists, and information about a thousand scholars has already been collected. The Parishad and the Bhavan have been celebrating the *jayantis* of Vyasa, Valmiki and Kalidasa and it is hoped that, in course of time, they will develop into national festivals.

The Tirupati University and the Kurukshetra Sanskrit University were the direct result of the campaigning done by the Parishad under the leadership of Munshi. The inauguration of the Varanasi Sanskrit University was hailed with delight as it is situated in a city held in veneration for high learning and religious sanctity throughout the ages. The Bihar government is sponsoring a bill for

establishing a Sanskrit university at Darbhanga. Efforts are being made to establish a university at Mithila.

The Central Council of Sanskrit Education in Hyderabad is conducting 28 *pathashalas* and one central Sanskrit college; it is making efforts to establish a Sanskrit university in Andhra. The Sahitya Academy sponsored by the Parishad is compiling and publishing important Sanskrit books including the works of Kalidasa, it is also bringing out a Sanskrit journal.

The All India Radio has continued to broadcast talks, recitations and plays in Sanskrit, it has also undertaken the recording of vedic mantras with due regard to appropriate accents, thus preserving for posterity one of the rare heritages of the country. The International Academy of Indian Culture is now housed at Delhi, and it has made energetic efforts to throw light on what may be called the East Asian aspect of Indian culture about which little has been known so far.

Reference is made in another chapter to the Sanskrit examinations conducted by the Bhavan. It will be sufficient to state here that over 38,000 students appeared for these examinations during the current year.

Not only has the Vishva Parishad received warm approval and support from ministers, Vice-Chancellors, leading scholars and public men in the country, it has also evoked appreciation from savants from abroad. Among them might be mentioned D. G. James of the Southampton University, Watson Kirk Connell of the Acadia University of Wolfville, L. D. Barnett, Vice-Chancellor of the British Museum, N. Tsuji, Professor of Sanskrit of the Tokyo University and Dr. Frederic Spiegelberg of the Stanford University of California.

Thus the Sanskrit Vishva Parishad has become a mighty national organisation, developing the great language as a



living medium for modern use. As Munshi aveired in the course of his presidential address at the Puri session of the Parishad: "We want Sanskrit to remain an integral part of our educational curriculum because it is a great mental discipline; it is a language of culture; it is the storehouse of higher values essential to counteract the influence of materialistic outlook which has come to dominate the world"

Among the many things Munshi has achieved which entitle him to the loving homage of a grateful posterity, the organisation of the Sanskrit Vishva Parishad ranks among the highest. In fact every item of his constructive work owes its inspiration to his passionate love for Sanskrit and draws its sustenance and vitalising power from the same source. Sanskrit to him is the heart-beat of India, and he will ever be remembered as a crusader for Sanskrit.

## CHAPTER X

### BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan epitomises the philosophy of life of Munshi and his message to the contemporary world. Proud of his descent from the Sage Bhṛigu, he had been dreaming of the great Rishis of India from his school-days and he had recreated them in his works of fiction. But he was no pilgrim back to primitive faith. He realised quite early that the good and the lasting in India's past heritage should be attuned to the needs of the present.

Munshi was among the earliest to realise that political freedom was only a means to an end, the end being the kindling of new faith, hope and life in the Indian people. If this was to be achieved, Indian culture had to be revitalised, and this involved three conditions: the other-worldliness preached in the era of resistance has to be replaced by a sense of joy in life as it is lived, traditions which stifled creative vitality have to be broken through, and the fundamental values which have given ageless inspiration to Indian culture have to be captured afresh.

This idea took deep root in the mind of Munshi and his wife and became articulate as a sense of mission. They felt that even in the act of their being brought together, they had been called upon to be the instruments for the re-integration of Indian culture in the context of modern conditions and restore to life dharma the essence of which is truth, joy and beauty. In his autobiographical prose poem, *Sishu ane Sakhi*, Munshi has described vividly the vision that he had of the great Sage Vyasa. The memory of the vision pursued him in actual life and it began un-

consciously to shape his constructive work to a well-defined pattern

As early as 1923 when he was organising the Gujarat Sahitya Sansad, Munshi had conceived of the idea of a colony for the Sansad where literary men and women could live and pursue their vocation in a congenial atmosphere. But owing to a variety of reasons, this idea could not be implemented and ultimately, the activities of the Sansad had to be restricted. Moreover, the next few years were years of storm and stress; the boycott of the Simon Commission, Bardoli satyagraha, the salt satyagraha and the second civil disobedience campaign engrossed the attention of the country. Munshi's part in these stirring events has already been narrated.

By 1938, the hectic political life, involving frequent trips to jail, was over. The Congress had accepted office and Munshi was Home Minister in the Government of Bombay. Munshi felt that the time was propitious for the implementation of his long-cherished dream of a colony of Culture. Accordingly, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan was founded on the 7th November 1938. Speaking on the occasion, Munshi said. "For many years, it has been the dream of the Sahitya Sansad to crystallise its work by creating a centre in which the ancient learning and modern intellectual aspirations of this land could combine to create a new literature, a new history and a new culture. The Bhavan will be a new association which will organise active centres where ancient Aryan learning can be studied and where modern Indian culture will be provided with a historical background."

Chesterton once said that looking backward is a good design for living forward. A balance-sheet of progress enables an institution to assess its successes and realise its errors and see how far achievement has been commensurate

with aims and endeavours. The Bhavan which recently completed its silver jubilee with which Dr. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Rajaji were associated, can look back with legitimate pride on the manner in which it has been able to implement its ideals.

It is easy enough to start an association with lofty ideals, but to build it up into an effective instrument is quite a different matter. The Bhavan when it was started had no other assets except the unbounded and infectious enthusiasm of its founder and the donation of Rs. 2 lakhs which Seth Munglal Goenka had given to Munshi for the promotion of Sanskrit. How this donation was made has been picturesquely narrated in Munshi's own words elsewhere.

But Munshi is not the person to be daunted by difficulties or depressed by failures. He has faith in his ideals and faith in God, and that is why he constantly says that the Bhavan is God's work. Even God's work has to be executed by mere mortals, and Munshi threw himself into the organisation of the Bhavan with his characteristic zeal and zest.

The earliest departments to be started by the Bhavan were those of Sanskrit, Comparative Philology, Prakrit languages, Gujarati, Hindi, Indian History and Bhagavata-Dharma. These departments were established within a short time of the inauguration. The donation of Munglal Goenka was utilised to establish in 1939 the *Munglal Goenka Institute for Higher Sanskrit Studies* which was later developed into the *Munglal Goenka Shamshodhan Mandir* (Post-graduate and Research Institute) affiliated to the University of Bombay.

The Bhavan started its activities in the premises of the Fellowship School on June 1, 1939. Subsequently it moved to rented premises in Andheri. Soon after this the depart-

ment of Jain studies was started. With the co-operation of the Gujarat Sahitya Parishad, *Sri Narmad Gujarati Shikshapith* was established. On September 1, 1939, the *Mumbadevi Sanskrit Pathashala* was opened as part of the Bhavan with the help of the Mumbadevi Trust. In 1940 the *Sri Nagardas Raghunathdas Jyotish Shikshapith* was founded and the beginnings were made of a library.

In the same year, land measuring about eleven acres was purchased at Andheri on the outskirts of Bombay proper from the Government, and the generosity of several friends supplementing his own liberal contributions enabled Munshi to proceed with the building of the first home for the Bhavan. On September 14, 1940, Munshi laid the foundation stone of the building which, when completed in 1941, was opened by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.

But from July 1, 1942, the Government of India requisitioned the premises of the Bhavan at Andheri and, in consequence, the Bhavan had to be housed in rented premises in Worli and Harvey Road. Though handicapped for want of suitable accommodation, there was considerable expansion of the Bhavan's activities during the next five years. Munshi was able to enlist the active association of Babu Shri Bahadur Singhji Singhji, one of the founder members of the Bhavan. His munificent donations enabled the Bhavan to publish the famous *Singhi Series of Jain Literature* and to purchase the *Nahr Library of Indology*, one of the best collections of research works in the country.

In 1943, Munshi prepared a scheme for producing a History of India in ten volumes written by Indian historians from the Indian point of view. With his usual energy which the late Dewan Bahadur K. M. Jhaveri once described as "all-devouring", he turned the scheme into a practical reality. In association with G. D. Birla who has been a lifelong friend of his, he founded the *Bharatiya*

*Itihasa Samiti* as a branch of the Bhavan, procured funds from the Krishnarpan Trust; engaged Dr. R. C. Majumdar, the eminent Indian historian as its General Editor; and got together a number of historians from all over India to contribute to the volumes.

In 1944, in addition to giving large donations in money and collections of their books, Munshi and Lilavati Munshi presented the copyright in all their works in Gujarati and English to the Bhavan. The Lilavati Munshi Chair in Gujarati was founded from the income from the royalties.

In the same year was started the *Gita Vidyalyaya*; and no other department gave such unmixed joy to Munshi as this. In inaugurating it, he said. "During the last five years, the Bhavan has opened many departments. But the fact that the Bhavan is able to open the Gita Vidyalyaya today fills me with great pleasure. Our other departments are static, this one is dynamic. The others deal with knowledge alone, this will deal with knowledge transmuted into inspiration and action which is essence of Bhagavad Gita."

In 1944 Munshi decided to commemorate his great friend and associate in cultural work, Seth Meghji Mathradas, by founding a College of Arts as part of the Bhavan. In June 1946, the *Meghji Mathradas Arts College* and the *Narrondas Manordas Institute of Science* were opened by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and in close association with the Hansraj Morarji Public School they form the educational centre at Andheri.

These years saw the development of the Mumbadevi Sanskrit Pathashala into the *Mahavidyalaya* and the starting of the *Munshi Saraswati Mandir* including the Library and Museum in 1947.

Munshi's great ambition was to establish a shrine of Indian culture in *urbs prima in Indis*. With this object, the rented premises of the Bhavan in Harvey Road to-

gether with adjoining properties were purchased by the Bhavan in 1947. Two of the old buildings were demolished and the foundation stone of the Bhavan's central home was laid by Munshi on February 23, 1947.

The new building was completed in 1949. Constructed on a large scale, keeping in view the growing needs of the Bhavan's activities, the building took over two years and three months to complete and cost over Rs. 18 lakhs. This achievement was made possible mainly because of the organising genius, indefatigable zeal and untiring efforts of Lilavati Munshi.

The structure is of cement concrete, reinforced with guniting, yet the Bhubaneshwar *amalaka* crowns its 120-foot spire and design motives from the Ajanta caves dominate the lower portion. The building thus symbolises the spirit of the Bhavan which stands for equipping ourselves "with every kind of scientific and technical training without sacrificing an ancient form or attitude to an unreasonable passion for change."

The central Home of the Bhavan was declared open by C. Rajagopalachari, then Governor-General of India. The Home has proved to be the hub of cultural activities in Bombay.

The next seven years, Munshi had to be away from Bombay. When the new Constitution came into force, he joined republican India's first Cabinet as Minister for Food and Agriculture, and after the first general election in 1952, he was appointed as Governor of Uttar Pradesh. Though away from Bombay, his heart was ever with the Bhavan which had become the warp and woof of his life. As a distinguished administrator once quipped: "Munshi thinks and works for the Bhavan by day and dreams of it and plans for it by night."

A few salient facts in the progress of the Bhavan since

the inauguration of the central home may be recapitulated. In 1951, the Bhavan's *Book University* was organised. In the same year, the *Sanskrit Vishva Parishad* was sponsored by the Bhavan. The next year, President Rajendra Prasad laid the foundation stone of the Bhavan's Delhi Home. In 1954, the Bhavan's College of Arts was shifted from Andheri to Chowpatty. The *Bhavan's Journal*, an English fortnightly devoted to Life, Literature and Culture was started. The Dance classes conducted by the Bhavan were reorganised and put on an institutional basis under the name of *Bharatiya Nartan Shikshapith*. In 1956 was started the Hindi journal, *Bharati*

In the same year, Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab, Governor of Bombay laid the foundation stone of the temple of Lord Chandrasekhara in the Bhavan's campus at Andheri. In 1957 Munshi laid the foundation of the Bhavan's Kanpur home. The new building of the M. C. Arts College at Chowpatty was declared open the same year. And Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated the Delhi home of the Bhavan constructed at a cost of over Rs. 5 lakhs. The Bhavan also completely took over the Associated Printers and Publishers Ltd., one of the best-equipped printing presses in Bombay

In 1958, the Madras centre of the Bhavan was inaugurated by Shri Bishnuram Medhi, Governor of Madras. A centre at Calcutta was also started. Two of the releases of the Book University, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* of Rajaji, have crossed the mark of 100,000 and 50,000 copies respectively.

1959 saw the starting of *Samarpan*, a fortnightly in Gujarati, the opening of the Bangalore Kendra and the Bhavan taking over the *Munglal Goenka Sanskrit Trust*. In 1961 was started the *Bhavan's College of Journalism, Advertising and Printing*. The Gujarat centre was inaugu-



lated and the foundation stone of the *Bhavan's College of Arts and Science* at Dakor was laid by Nawab Mehdi Nawaz Jung, Governor of Gujarat.

The foundation stone of the Rs. 70 lakhs *Sardar Patel Engineering College* at Andheri was laid by Chief Minister Y. B. Chavan and the College was inaugurated by the Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru. And only a few days back, President Radhakrishnan laid the foundation stone of the *Bhavan's Public School* at Baroda.

This brief chronological catalogue can only give some idea of the manner in which the Bhavan has expanded its activities, but *to know how the Bhavan has become an inextricable part of the cultural progress of the country*, it is necessary to have some idea of its multifarious activities. Then only can it be understood how it functions as the instrument of *dharmasamsthapana*.

The Bhavan was registered on April 20, 1939 under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860. Since then, some changes have been made in its constitution to meet the requirements of its growing activities. In 1952, the Bhavan was registered under the newly enacted Bombay Public Trusts Act.

The Madhyastha Sabha (Council), the Prabandha Samiti (Committee of Office-bearers) and the Vishvasta Mandal (Board of Trustees) constitute the Governing Body of the Bhavan. K. M. Munshi and Sir H. V. Diveṭia have continued as President and Vice-President right from the inception. In 1948, the office of second Vice-President was created and Lilavati Munshi was unanimously elected to that office which she continues to hold.

Standing for the re-integration of Indian culture, it is inevitable that the Bhavan should make persistent efforts to popularise the study of Sanskrit, the fountain source of almost all Indian languages. This is done through the

Mumbadevi Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, the Sanskrit Vishva Parishad, the Saral Sanskrit Pariksha Vibhag and Uchchatar Sanskrit Pariksha Vibhag. The Mahavidyalaya is an oriental college fast developing into a University of Sanskrit and Shastric studies. Convocations are held every year and diplomas awarded. Many scholars and orientalists have delivered the convocation addresses. The Mahavidyalaya has four departments. Mumbadevi Sanskrit Pathashala for Higher Shastric studies; Nagardas Rughnathdas Jyotish Shikshapith for study of Indian astrology and astronomy; Purushottam Thakkar Vedashala for Vedic studies, and Devidas Lallubhai Pathashala for preliminary Shastric studies. Examinations are conducted by the Bhavan for the diplomas of Vachaspati in Sahitya, Vedanta, Vyakarana and Jyotish. Acharya and Shastri in the same subjects and Jyotir Visharad and Jyotir Vid. These diplomas are recognised by the Governments of Maharashtra and Gujarat, the Punjab University and the Board of Indian System of Medicine. The courses of study are on the same lines as those of the Banaras Sanskrit University. Apart from extra-mural lectures, fortnightly debates in Sanskrit are held. An inter-collegiate and Pathashala Sanskrit elocution competition is held annually and handsome cash prizes awarded besides a rolling silver trophy.

The Sanskrit Vishva Parishad was sponsored by the Bhavan and its offices have been housed in the Bhavan's Home. But as the activities of the Parishad are dealt with *in extenso* elsewhere, they are not referred to here at length except to mention that the Bhavan's sponsorship of the Parishad has been one of the main causes of its success.

In 1956, the Parishad appointed a six-man committee under the chairmanship of Munshi to prepare the syllabus and scheme for conducting courses in elementary courses in Sanskrit. The result was the establishment of the Saral

Sanskrit Pariksha Vibhag. Examinations are conducted for the diplomas of Prarambh, Pravesha, Parichaya and Kovid. Text books for the examinations have been prepared in Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Sindhi, Tamil, Kannada and English. The examinations are held in 372 centres and about 35,000 students appear for them every year.

Encouraged by the response to the Saral Sanskrit examinations and with a view to making a similar effort at a higher level, the Uchchatar Sanskrit Pariksha Vibhag was organised in 1958. The courses consist of *Praveshika*, *Purva Madhyama*, *Uttara Madhyama*, *Sastri* and *Acharya*. The Shastric courses have been revised as per the recommendations of the Sanskrit Commission. About 200 students appear for these examinations every year. The *Sastri* and *Acharya* examinations have been recognised as equivalent to B.A., and M.A., degrees for purposes of appointments in schools.

No effort at popularising Sanskrit can be said to be complete unless attention is focussed on the Bhagavad Gita, the Song Celestial. The Gita Vidyalaya of the Bhavan is intended to fulfil that purpose. Regular Gita classes are held in 12 *kendras* and periodic lectures on the subject organised. The Vidyalaya also holds annual examinations for its *Gita Vid* and *Gita Visharad* diplomas and awards scholarships, medals and prizes to successful candidates. The Tapibehn Munshi Gold Medal (in commemoration of Munshi's mother) is awarded to the best essay on *Bhagavad Gita and Modern Life*. On an average, about 500 students appear for the Gita examinations every year.

Apart from the dissemination of Sanskrit and encouragement of the study of Gita, the Bhavan has been doing yeoman work in Indological research. This is done through the Munglal Goenka Shamshodhan Mandir, an institute of post-graduate studies and Indological research recog-

nised by the University of Bombay. This Mandir has five constituent units: Sanskrit Shikshapith and Post-graduate department, Dharma Shastra and Gordhandas Soonderdas Bhagavad Dharma Shikshapith; Prachin Bharatiya Samskriti Shikshapith; Narmad Gujarati Shikshapith; the Singhi Jain Sahitya Shikshapith and Shikshan Sastra Shikshapith.

Post-graduate research is being done in Sanskrit, Ardhamagadhi, Gujarati, comparative philology and ancient Indian culture. Students are also guided for the Ph.D in these subjects. Nineteen volumes have so far been published in the Bharatiya Vidya series and eighteen volumes of the research journal have come out.

A fourteenth century digest of Hindu law entitled *Vyavashara Prakasha* of Prithvichandra has been fully edited, of which Part I has already been published while Parts II and III are in Press. Considerable progress has been made in editing and publishing the Jain literature of Western India, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Malwa. The volumes so far published include books on philosophy, legend, historical narrative, folk tale, rituals, monastic discipline, topography, grammar and *kavyas*. An old commentary on Kautilya's *Arthashastra* by Yoggham has been recovered and printed in Nagari script.

The Munshi Saraswati Mandir is an Institute of Culture consisting of a library and museum. This Mandir could be organised because of the munificence of Munshi in gifting away his library and the memorial fund collected by the Munshi Diamond Jubilee celebrations committee in 1947. The library contains over 65,000 printed volumes. The Indological and Art section in particular contain many rare and valuable books. The Sanskrit, English and Gujarati sections are fairly comprehensive and efforts are now being made to build up the Hindi, Marathi and Bengali sections. The English section is arranged according to the Dewey

Decimal classification while the Indian languages sections follow the Baroda scheme of classification.

In the Museum, there is a unique collection of manuscripts on paper and palm leaf, some of which date back to the tenth and eleventh centuries. Some of these manuscripts are notable for their fine calligraphy, the gold and silver inks in which they are written and beautiful illustrations. Many of these manuscripts have been critically edited and published by the Bhavan. There is also a good collection of ancient coins, paintings, bronzes, copper plate engravings and other works of artistic and historical value.

From the popularisation of Sanskrit and Indological research it may be a far cry to dance, drama and music, but the Bhavan takes them all in its stride. It is a measure of the synthesis of the past and the present that it has achieved under the inspiration of Munshi. Bharatiya Kala Kendra is an Institute of Dance and Dramaturgy aiming at the development of dance, drama and music. Lilavati Munshi has been the Chairman of this Kala Kendra since its inception, and with her characteristic drive and determination, she has made it an instrument of renaissance of this aspect of Indian culture.

The Kendra produces dramas and dance ballets in Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi and English and encourages amateur talent. The air-conditioned theatre of the Bhavan, *The Kanji Khetsi Sabhagriha*, provides accommodation for 850 spectators. During recent years, the Kendra has produced 21 dance ballets, 39 full length dramas and 29 one act plays. With a view to encouraging dramatic talent among the younger generation, the Kendra has been holding an inter-collegiate dramatic competition every year. All the colleges in Greater Bombay participate in this competition which has almost become an annual festival.

The Bharatiya Sangit Shikshapith was organised in 1946

as one of the departments of the Bhavan and it is affiliated to the Bhatkhande Sangit Vidyapith, Lucknow, which is recognised by the Union Government for courses leading to the Bachelor of Music degree. Western staff notations adapted to suit Indian music has been introduced in the Shikshapith.

The Bharatiya Nartan Sikshapith is a school of dancing run by the Kala Kendra and imparts instruction in Bharata Natyam, Manipuri, Kathakali, Kathak and Garba.

Reference has already been made to the ten-volume History and Culture of the Indian People sponsored by Munshi under the aegis of the Bhavan. Six volumes of this history have already been published and the manuscripts of the remaining four are almost complete. Over 70 top-ranking scholars of the country have contributed to this monumental work.

The Bhavan's Book University was started in 1951 to provide books of uniform get-up and size at cheap prices. Though books covering the best literature of the world have been included in the series, particular emphasis is being laid on books which reveal the deeper impulses of India. Over a hundred books have so far been published and their sale exceeds a million copies. Worthy of particular mention is the *Mahabharata* retold by Rajani which has sold over a hundred thousand copies. The Bhavan intends to publish such books in eight Indian languages, namely Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam and a beginning has already been made in some of these languages.

With a view to keeping its large circle of sympathisers in touch with the activities of the Bhavan and giving an authentic direction to the Indian renaissance, the Bhavan started an English fortnightly in August 1954 entitled the *Bhavan's Journal* devoted to Life, Literature and Culture.

The journal has made its mark and has a sale of nearly fifty thousand copies.

*Bharati* is a monthly in Hindi started in August 1956. During the last six years, *Bharati* has come to be acknowledged as one of the foremost magazines in the *rashtra bhasha*. In November 1959 was started *Samarpan*, a Gujarati monthly.

The Bhavan and its illustrious founder do not live in the past. They know fully well that all their activities must be directed to the trends of today with an eye to the needs of tomorrow. It was with this idea in mind that the M.M. College of Arts and the N.M. Institute of Science were started in 1946 with no less a person than the indomitable Sardar of Bardoli inaugurating the two colleges. These colleges are affiliated to the Bombay University for courses leading to the B.A., B.Sc., M.A., M.Sc., and Ph.D degree courses. The N.M. Institute of Science is located at Andheri in ideal surroundings. It has a wide area of about a hundred acres with residential accommodation for students and staff and open space for parks, gardens and playgrounds.

The M.M. College of Arts was shifted in 1954 to Chowpatty to a new building adjacent to the Bhavan's Central Home. Reference has already been made to the Sardar Patel Engineering College, constructed at a cost of Rs. 70 lakhs, the Arts and Science College at Dakor and the Public School at Baroda to be constructed at a cost of over Rs. 20 lakhs. Rightly did Ananthasayanam Aiyangar avow that 'the Bhavan bids fair to become a super university of the country.'

As a first step towards establishing an Academy of Printing, the Bhavan purchased the major portion of the shares of the *Associated Advertisers and Printers Ltd.* in 1950; and took over the press completely in 1957. The silver jubilee

of the press was celebrated in December 1960 with its founder S. K. Patil as the chief guest.

Later it was realised that an Academy of Printing would only serve a limited purpose. Accordingly a College of Journalism, Advertising, Sales Promotion and Public Relations and Printing was inaugurated in July 1961. The College provides for three separate courses of study: journalism, advertising, sales promotion and public relations; and printing. Some of the top-ranking editors of the country are associated with the college as advisers.

The Bhavan has several centres outside Bombay. The Delhi centre was inaugurated in November 1950 with Sri Prakasa as chairman. An acre of land in the heart of the nation's capital opposite to the Constitution Club in Cuizon Road was purchased two years later and an imposing building *Mehta Sadan* has been put up by the munificent donation of the Shri Ballabhram Shaligram Trust. The foundation stone of the building was laid by President Rajendra Prasad and it was inaugurated by Prime Minister Nehru. The Delhi Kendra has a Public School, coaching students for the overseas certificates examinations of the Cambridge University. An Academy of Languages has also been started and evening classes are conducted in Sanskrit, French, German, Russian and Spanish.

The Madras centre was inaugurated in November 1958 by Governor Bishnuram Medini. Dr. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar is the chairman of the *kendra* which is now housed in a rented building with ample grounds. The Bangalore *kendra* has a regular, well-equipped office in Residency Road, and R. R. Diwakar is directing its activities.

The Kanpur branch was started in 1956. A centrally located plot of land was allotted by the Uttar Pradesh Government and the foundation stone of the building was



laid by Munshi is January 1957. The Allahabad *kendra* was started in 1952, and it is running a Music School.

The Gujarat *kendra* is located at the famous pilgrim centre Dakor, where the Bhavan has started a College of Arts and Science. Two more centres at Baroda and Ahmedabad are shortly to be established.

The phenomenal progress of the Bhavan can be gauged from the fact that from eleven employees drawing a salary of Rs. 9,324, it has now gone up to 807 workers drawing Rs. 18,07,440. The annual budget has risen from Rs. 13,000 in 1939 to Rs. 1,10,29,000 in 1962. The number of students in Sanskrit and Gita examinations has gone up from 194 in 1951 to 38,740 in 1962. The number of students in Bhavan's educational institutions has gone up to over 4,000.

But mere statistics cannot give any idea of the hold the Bhavan has secured on the cultural life of the country. Aptly has it been said that it has ceased to be a mere institution, but has become *a movement, a mission, a cause*. What has been the secret of this unique success?

Apart from the infectious enthusiasm of Kulapati Munshi and his talented and devoted wife and their utter sense of dedication to the interests of the Bhavan, Munshi has been singularly fortunate in having built up a corps of colleagues who look upon the Bhavan almost as a temple of cultural swaraj. The delegation of authority is one of the gifts of real leadership and Munshi has it in abundance. He selects his colleagues with care; but once he has selected them, he places implicit trust in them. This trust begets trust, and the staff of the Bhavan work heart and soul as members of the Bhavan family. Every trustee looks upon the affairs of the Bhavan as if they are his own personal matters.

Aptly did President Radhakrishnan avow at the silver jubilee celebrations of the Bhavan that spectacular as have

been Munshi's achievements in other fields, as a lawyer, politician, administrator and man of letters, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan will keep his name enshrined in the Indian mind for many decades to come. Like a giant banyan tree, it has struck roots in many places in the country and even abroad; a truly national institution raised by non-official co-operative endeavour, it will ever remain as an embodiment of Munshi's philosophy of life and his message and as a monument to his nationalist fervour and his apostolate of the fundamental values of the Indian Culture, Truth, Love and Beauty.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE FOSTERING SPIRIT

*Verni Vasulat* has often been described as the emotional autobiography of Munshi. Tanman, the heroine, had been the dream girl of the author when he was a college student; he had sought relief from frustration and despair in this "Devi" of his imagination. And he created her in his first novel for she was haunting him.

Speaking about the book nearly 35 years after the publication Munshi avowed: "Tanman took Gujarat by storm. Boys tried to find her in life and sighed; girls cursed me for having killed so lovely a creature when so young .. A young lady in Ahmedabad read the young heroine's tale and developed a desire to meet the author. It was a dangerous pastime. She met the author seven years later — with what disastrous results, you all know. She had to change her name for mine."

When Lilavati entered Munshi's life, he had already negotiated the Steep Climb, the name which he has given to the second volume of his autobiography. He was already one of the leaders of the Bombay bar. He was the foremost novelist in Gujarati and the leader of the Romantic school in that language. He had already founded the Sahitya Sansad and the *Gujarat* magazine. But it was no neophyte that came to him, Lilavati had also earned a reputation as a powerful writer of short stories, engaging travelogues and vivid thumb-nail sketches.

Lilavati was born in 1899 of a well-to-do Jain family, the only surviving child of her parents. Her mother died when she was only four. Her father married again; but he too passed away six years later. She was brought up by her

maternal grand-parents in Bombay. Virchand Dipchand, her grandfather, a pioneer industrialist, left her a small legacy which came in useful later on for her travels and education.

Protracted illness interfered with her education and she had to leave school after studying up to the fourth standard. She attended a Sanskrit Pathashala and acquired a fair knowledge of that language. Her studies were cut short on her being married much against her will to a rich widower. From the beginning, the marriage was a failure and Lilavati had to find relief in literary pursuits. She started writing poems which appeared in various journals between 1916 and 1920.

The poetic element expressed itself also as an urge for travelling, largely as an escape from a conventional and miserable existence. In 1920, she visited Kashmir and the next she took a long trip to South India and also visited Ceylon. These travels made her socially conspicuous for, at that time, few ladies in Gujarat or elsewhere went on such long trips alone.

The literary partnership between Munshi and Lilavati started when she began to write for the *Gujarat* magazine. One of the first articles was a thumb-nail sketch of Munshi himself. These sketches were characterised by mordant sarcasm; and were later collected together under the title *Rekha Chitro*. These sketches emphasised the personal angularities of well-known people like Vallabhbhai and Vithalbhai.

In his *Bhagavad Gita and Modern Life*, Munshi mentions that, during this period, both of them felt that they had one soul which was shared between them and goes on to say: "This intensive in-dwelling of the Undivided Soul in two persons brought about a gigantic wave of creativeness

in us. We escaped sordidness, waste and satiety. Our creative art blossomed into a spring-time of richness."

Apart from thumb-nail sketches, Lilavati wrote a number of short stories which were later collected together under the title *Jivanmanthi Jadeli* or *Found in Life*. In these stories, she has handled a variety of themes and emotions with considerable verve and given a mordant interpretation of the social inequities in Hindu society.

In her play *Kumaradevi*, Lilavati portrays the famous Gupta empress as a woman of outstanding character, as the dominant partner in the life of Chandragupta II. Kumaradevi described herself not only as the queen of Chandragupta but also as the daughter of the proud and famous Lichchhavi clan. From the play emerges a great character — powerful, dynamic, ruthless and yet feminine.

N. C. Mehta, I.C.S. has written that Munshi has been like the hero in a melodrama, singularly fortunate in having won his heart's desire and found a woman of his dreams to share his home and happiness. But he bewails that Lilavati Munshi — a distinguished stylist and a writer of powerful prose with an unusual eye for character sketches and a pen dipped in biting sarcasm — had to immolate herself in respect of her literary career after she became installed as the presiding deity of the Munshi household "Two streams of literary activity, which had been significant and separate, became merged together and the only entity left, in matters literary, was Kanaiyalal Munshi himself"

No doubt, Lilavati's literary work suffered a setback after her marriage to Munshi; but she continued to be the moving spirit behind the Sahitya Sansad. Her energies were diverted to political and social causes, and with her tact, commonsense and organisational skill, she moved in every phase of the busy life of Bombay with ease and

confidence. She assisted her husband in his election campaign when he stood for election to the Bombay Legislative Council.

Lilavati had come under the spell of Gandhiji very early; and she had at one time toyed with the idea of entering the Sabarmati Ashram. Her open sympathy must have influenced Munshi to no small extent in the bold stand that he took on the Bardoli issue. One of the photographs widely published in the Indian newspapers showed Munshi and his wife travelling in a truck along with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel touring the taluka.

The Bardoli satyagraha was the curtain raiser to the mass civil disobedience campaigns that rocked the country in the thirties. And when Gandhiji started on his famous march to Dandi to break the Salt Law, Lilavati's mind had already been made up. She was determined to join the freedom fight; but she wanted to carry her husband along with her. And it was as much due to Lilavati's persuasion as to Munshi's innate patriotism that he gave up his lucrative practice and joined the Salt satyagraha. She had converted the erstwhile constitutionalist into a political agitator.

Lilavati threw herself whole-heartedly into the satyagraha campaign and was busy addressing meetings, organising *Prabhat Pheris*, leading processions and of course manufacturing salt in defiance of government orders. She was made the President of the "War Council" of the B.P.C.C. Her real reward came when she was arrested and sentenced to three months imprisonment. Her husband had already been sentenced to six months and was in jail.

On her release from jail, she organised the Swadeshi Bazar and was later elected its President. Gandhiji complimented her on the good work she was doing in furthering the cause of swadeshi. With the conclusion of the

Gandhi-Irwin truce, Lilavati was elected a member of the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee and also of the All India Congress Committee. Munshi was elected to the A.I.C.C. from Bombay and thus both husband and wife attended the A.I.C.C. session at Karachi over which Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel presided

The partnership in literary and cultural spheres had extended to the political field as well.

When Gandhiji returned with an empty hand from the second Round Table Conference, the new Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, was keen on a showdown with the Congress; and soon the second civil disobedience campaign was in full swing. Lilavati was among the earliest to be arrested and she was awarded one year's imprisonment. Munshi was sentenced to two year's rigorous imprisonment.

Jail life in 1932 was far different from what it was in 1930. The Government made no secret of its avowed intention to crush the Congress and jail officials went out of the way to harass political prisoners. As a result Lilavati's health suffered very much; but she bore her trials and tribulations with courage and fortitude till she was released on the expiry of her term.

The political situation in the country had undergone a great sea-change. The ordinance *raj* had brought political activities to a standstill. There was intense frustration in the country. More, the domestic affairs of the Munshi household were in a chaotic state. The lawyer who used to earn a six-figure amount annually had been behind bars for more than a year. The children's education had to be attended to. For a few months after her release Lilavati's entire attention was engrossed in putting her home in order.

In 1934, Munshi was released; and he decided to go back to the bar. Both husband and wife went to Madras and saw Gandhiji who was then immersed in Harijan uplift

work. It was in Madras that Munshi drew up along with the late A. Rangaswami Aiyangar a blueprint for the formation of a Swaraj Party within the Congress to fight the elections to the central legislature.

How the Swaraj Party was merged within the Congress at the Ranchi session of the Congress and how the Congress decided officially to enter on a parliamentary programme are matters of history. Lilavati too was converted to the parliamentary creed; and when Munshi was asked by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to stand for election on the Central Assembly from Bombay City, Lilavati became the organiser of his election campaign. Munshi lost the election by a narrow margin and it was this election and the part he played therein that were responsible for the political eclipse of K. F. Nariman later on.

When the Congress decided to contest the election to the Bombay Municipal Corporation, Lilavati was chosen as a candidate and she romped home a winner with effortless ease. The Bombay Corporation had long been under the tutelage of the Progressive Party which had succeeded in defeating the redoubtable Vithalbhai Patel when he stood for the Presidentship of the Corporation about a decade previously. The organised and disciplined Congress Party soon made its presence felt in the civic body, and thereafter the control of the Corporation passed into its hands.

As a Corporator, Lilavati soon made a mark and was elected to several of its committees. She represented the Corporation in several organisations like the Children's Aid Society. She continued as a member of the Corporation for over 11 years, from 1935 to 1946. She was the Chief Whip of the Congress Municipal Party and later its Deputy Leader and Chairman of the Standing Committee. If she



had sought re-election in 1946, she might well have become the first Lady Mayor of *Urbs Prima in Indis*.

It was after entering the Corporation that Lilavati turned her attention to business. She became a director of the Bombay Life Insurance Company and also of the Swadeshi Provident Fund Insurance Company. She was later connected with several other commercial concerns as a director. It might be mentioned here that she was one of the first women to be elected as a member of the Committee of the Indian Merchants' Chamber.

Preoccupation with politics and business did not in any way interfere with her cultural activities. She was a member of the Senate of the Bombay University from 1937 to 1946, and she was also on the Board of Studies in Gujarati.

In 1937, the Congress decided to contest the election to the provincial legislatures under the Government of India Act of 1935. It was a foregone conclusion that Munshi would be one of the Congress candidates. But Lilavati was also chosen for the Bombay Legislative Assembly and both husband and wife won the election without difficulty. It was the first time in the history of India that a husband and wife sat together in the same legislature.

The Congress accepted office, and Munshi was made the Home Minister. In all the undertakings of Munshi as Home Minister, Lilavati stood by him and lent her powerful support. When he was thinking of providing a Home for delinquent children, Lilavati persuaded the Bombay Corporation, of which she was a member, to contribute Rs 100,000.

Lilavati was not content to be a mere shadow of her husband, and her record as a legislator is truly impressive. She participated in debates and made a mark as a fluent and forceful speaker. She moved a number of bills and resolutions. She fought hard for the prevention of bigamous

and unequal marriages. She strove for the introduction of adult franchise for the Bombay Municipal Corporation and her efforts were crowned with success. She demanded that students should be conscripted as teachers. She was a member of various Committees appointed by the State Government.

But the period of joint collaboration in the legislature was all too short. The Second World War broke out in September 1939 and within a few weeks the Congress ministries resigned. This was precisely what the British Government wanted; and once again the Congress was in the wilderness. Lilavati had of course her civic and cultural work. She continued in the Corporation as also in the Bombay University Senate.

In 1940, Gandhiji inaugurated the individual civil disobedience campaign and the Munshis were arrested and detained under Rule 26 of the Defence of India Act. Lilavati was released after a detention of about four months.

During the next few years, Lilavati proved herself as an organiser *non-pareil* of exhibitions. The Health, Home and Social Welfare Exhibition she organised in 1943 was considered to be the best of its kind. She organised a number of Vegetable, Fruit and Flower Shows year after year. The climax was the Free India Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition in 1947 which provided the additional funds necessary for the building of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan which the Munshis had founded a decade earlier.

Freedom came to India on August 15, 1947, but it came with its dark patches of regret and red blotches of anxiety. The Munshis were engaged in those days of storm and stress, anxiety and apprehension, in tending the wounds of the partition holocaust by organising refugee rehabilitation. The husband was busy in the Constituent Assembly and

its expert committees hammering out a constitution for India.

It was then that Sardar Patel called upon him to become the Agent General of the Government of India in Hyderabad. Munshi's role in the epic drama of Hyderabad integration is too well known to be recounted here. But it is an undisputable fact that he could not have borne the burden but for the support and encouragement of Lilavati. She was all the time moving round in Delhi, meeting not only the ministers and the leaders but preparing the ground for the police action which alone brought the Nizam to his senses.

By the end of 1949, the country had been integrated and the task of constitution-making had been completed. The constitution was to come into force on the 26th January 1950. It was then that the husband and wife left on a tour of Great Britain and the United States. It was while they were in the United States that Sri Jawaharlal Nehru offered Munshi a ministership in the first cabinet of republican India. He was assigned the portfolio of Food and Agriculture. Cutting short then tour, the Munshis hastened back to India and Munshi was sworn in as Union Minister.

The food situation in the country was alarming and Munshi threw himself into his job with characteristic energy. Half-hearted methods and half-hearted measures are alien to his nature. Even in this Herculean task, Lilavati was a great support to her husband. She organised a Subsidiary Food Exhibition in Bombay and a Supplementary Food Exhibition in Delhi. She set up a chain of Annapoorna cafeterias all over the country where cereal-less food was served. She organised the School of Nutrition and Catering in Bombay which is now flourishing.

When the first general elections were held in 1952,

Lilavati was elected to the Rajya Sabha and she continued as a member till 1958. She was a member of several joint committees. It is not possible to give a full account of her work as a parliamentarian; but she fought hard for the sterilisation of persons suffering from incurable diseases and for banning harmful motion pictures. She was a member of the Film Advisory Board and the Central Board of Film Censors. -

Munshi however declined to contest the election in 1952 and accepted the Governorship of Uttar Pradesh, the biggest State in the Indian Union. In this new field of activity as well, Lilavati proved a great source of strength to her husband. Thanks to her, the Raj Bhavan at Lucknow became a symbol of the new urges and aspirations animating the people. The husband and wife almost converted the Government House into a cultural centre.

Since she ceased to be a member of the Rajya Sabha, Lilavati has been concentrating on the cultural activities of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. She has been the Chairman of the Sangita Shikshapith, Nartan Shikshapith and the Kala Kendra.

Though she started her literary career as an ardent exponent of the feminist cause, Lilavati has never forsaken her essential femininity and has shown that it is much better to be the partner of the male than be a domineering feminist. It has indeed been the unique good fortune of Munshi that he found a wife who has supported him with understanding and fervour in all his manifold activities.

Their partnership has been exceptionally happy. When Munshi thinks of *Gujarat-ni-asmita*, Lilavati is there to spread the gospel through the *Gujarat* magazine and the Sahitya Sansad both of which the husband had organised. When he girds up his loins to join the freedom struggle, his wife had already marched ahead of him. When he

enters the Bombay Legislative Assembly, she is there in the same house to encourage him and co-operate with him.

Munshi's burden as Food Minister is lightened by the co-operation of his wife who ropes in the various women's organisations in a campaign to use less cereals. He talks of Vana Mahotsava and she organises the Friends of the Trees. As far as the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is concerned, it has been their joint handiwork; it is almost impossible to separate their respective spheres. If one might hazard a guess, Munshi does the planning and Lilavati does the execution. If Munshi is the burning flame, Lilavati is the unseen but sustaining oil.

Aptly therefore has N. C. Mehta said that Lilavati has been the fostering spirit and guardian angel for Munshi's varied pursuits as a writer, lawyer, politician, statesman and builder of institutions.

## CHAPTER XII

### IN QUEST OF THE SPIRIT

‘Hast any philosophy in thee, shepherd?’ queried Touchstone of Corin in Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*. Everyman’s life bespeaks a philosophy that he has consciously or unconsciously adopted for himself. If he is an intellectual of more than ordinary calibre, he reflects on the processes and problems of life and cultivates an attitude informed by the answers that he develops for those problems. This is true of Munshi as well.

When one speaks of Munshi’s philosophy, it is not as if it is of the academic or professional type bringing him into line with the great Masters of speculative thought. Munshi does not claim to have originated a new philosophy or to have discovered a new path. The following ideas gathered from his *Bhagavad Gita and Modern Life* and *Foundations of Indian Culture* represent his interpretations of the thoughts that he has inherited with the culture of India.

Through the years, Munshi has never been accustomed to take life as a matter of course; he has been eager to subject to disciplines so that his life may be purposeful for the attainment of goals that have appeared to him worthwhile. Convinced that man is midway between the animal and God, he has engaged himself to understand the processes which would halt him from lapsing into the animal and would help him to become the God that he is potentially.

The pattern of Munshi’s philosophy of life, in the special sense indicated above, has been woven out of the strands of his deep study of the classics, his mature reflection, his wide travels and varied experience. The *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Yogasutras* are the source-books of his philosophy.

Through the years he has been chewing the cud of these great classics till they have become a part of all that he is. Among the modern Masters of the Art of Life, the one who has exercised the strongest influence on Munshi was Shri Aurobindo.

Munshi is neither a rank materialist nor an uncompromising *mayavadin*. His is a philosophy which springs from Matter, but culminates in the Spirit. *Isavasyamidam sarvam* says the Upanishad. Life, therefore, is one continuous existence from Matter to Spirit. The whole universe is instinct with God. In fact, the Spirit is not exotic to matter nor antagonistic to it. It sleeps in the stone, wakes in the plant, perceives in the animal and becomes self-conscious in man in order that man may become more than man.

Munshi differs from the materialist as he holds that matter does not exhaust life. The world is significant not as the stage for the pursuit of animal drives, but as the vale of soul-making. Unlike the pseudo-*mayavadin*, he believes that life is real and is to be lived in all earnestness for being transformed into something better and higher. There is nothing so material that it does not have a spark of the spiritual. The Spirit itself is a transformation of Matter through Life and Mind. Life is next of kin to Matter, as the Spirit is to Mind.

Inertness, sentience and consciousness are the stages on the road which leads to the goal of self-consciousness and self-realisation. In this process, every higher state is, not a negation of the lower one, but its fulfilment by transformation and transfusion.

The universe is held in position and directed on its course by an ineluctable law which operates in the entire cosmos. *Rita* is the Cosmic Order which upholds the whole creation in its entire sweep. Being one and indivisible, it operates in all planes, material, social, moral and spiritual.

Everything that is created evolves according to its laws. There is no opposition, however, between the Natural Order and the Divine Order. Nature is orderly by the order of the Divine. The immanence of God in the cosmos is revealed in *Rita* which is the Law of the Cosmic Order. *Rita* has a dual aspect, the natural and the normative. It implies both *svabhava* and *svadharma*. In the world of Nature the two coincide.

It is only in the human level that the natural and the normative diverge causing aberrations and conflicts. Man is midway between Matter and Spirit, and has it in him to lapse back into mere Matter or to grow into the Supreme Spirit. The latter process is a duty that is laid on him; for, man is God though he does not know it. Regaining that consciousness, he must become that God again. He must re-create himself into the image of God. Transcending his materialistic and animal *svabhava*, adopting the rules of his *svadharma*, he must re-establish in himself the supremacy of the Spirit.

In this process of evolutionary transformation, man employs the instrument of his mind in its several stages. He starts with the *animal mind*. It is governed by reactions of attachment, fear and anger (*raga*, *bhaya* and *dvesha*). These are the basic animal urges. They are absent in inanimate objects and vaguely visible in the vegetable and in the amoeba. In the emergence of the human from the animal, the first stage is the *lower mind*, in which the intellect comes to the aid of the instinct in its satisfaction. *Blind* processes become *purposive* actions. The brute force of the tiger is replaced by the cunning of the jackal. But it is the inferior or lower intellect that functions to devise means for the satisfaction of the primitive urges. At this stage, man is still selfish, because he is self-centred.

Thus man's real nature is clouded by his ego which



drives his animal urges to covet, to hate and to fear. These urges create cravings in the senses as also the illusion that their satisfaction is the only reality. They are the causes of the ego-driven life of hatred, strife and misery. These cravings and illusions chain man to bondage and leave him weak, imperfect and unhappy. If he can control his foundational animal urges and transmute them into fundamental spiritual aspirations, he will realise himself.

Man cannot afford to remain ego-centric for long save at great peril to his present humanity and potential divinity. These very instincts of attachment, fear and anger draw him to his fellowmen. Escape-mechanisms are devised and begin to operate. The nomad who has turned into a cave-man begins to build a house. He becomes conscious of his creative power. The sense of attachment draws him into the beginnings of marriage. He tries to liquidate *bhaya* by living in a community of his fellows and the resulting social life restrains the extravagances of his *krodha*.

This sense for collective living which is innate in man is strengthened by the compulsion of an environment which he is anxious to befriend to satisfy his purposes. The *Creative Mind* forces itself into the *Collective Mind* and leads to the formation of social institutions and gradually of political and economic arrangements. The Collective Mind corrects ego-centric tendencies and provides the first lessons in selfless living. Other-regarding virtues appear and the seeds of the law of moral causation are implanted. From 'any man to any woman' the transition is effected to 'my wife' and the resulting responsibility to 'my child.'

Then the Higher Mind is born and grows parallel to the development of the Collective Mind. Animal reactions are sought to be first suppressed and then conquered, and that provides the basis of moral causation. The Higher Mind which is the thinking Mind, in its moral aspect, takes the

form of conscience. The scientific discoveries and the technical triumphs of this thinking mind have to be yoked to this moral mentor which stands for the sense of right and wrong. Else, it will continue to remain in the grip of the Lower Mind, and debased by attachment, fear and wrath, it will become *asuric* and the product will be a Chengis Khan or a Hitler or a Mao tse-Tung.

With the censorship of conscience, an ethico-spiritual ether is developed. The lower ego is metamorphosed into the higher self. The exclusiveness of the former gives place to the inclusiveness of the latter. The *raga*, *bhaya* and *moha* by which the mind is cribbed and confined, chained to its animal antecedents, are transformed into *anuraga*, *abhaya* and *maitri*. At this stage, the Spirit begins to seize control of the mind. The instinctive and egoistic reactions become adjusted to a homogeneous pattern of experience. Then life is no more a vegetative or animal process; it becomes a purpose oriented to the Spirit. Life becomes a vehicle which carries man to the Spirit.

Upon this emerges the consciousness of the Moral Law. The outgoing mind is turned inward. A process of self-examination ensues and the moral code is conceived. 'Man can transmute his animal instincts only if he obeys the Law of Moral Causation.' This law supports the spiritual order of the Universe. It is ineluctable, like the law of gravitation. If the apple falls from the tree, it is drawn to the earth, not away from it. So it is with this Law.

'If anyone achieves Truth, his worth shall bear fruit.

'If anyone achieves Non-stealing, wealth shall come to him.

'If anyone achieves Non-waste, he shall obtain vigour that does not fade.

'If anyone achieves Non-violence, men shall come to him, shedding their hostility.

'If anyone achieves Non-possession, he shall know the end and meaning of his life.

'When this Law is followed, however little, attachment, fear and wrath begin to give way to Truth, Beauty and Love.'

A life of abandon to animal instincts and urges is a life of subjection to what is alien to one's true nature; and it ends in misery true to the saying: *sarvam paravasam-duhkham*. By obeying the Law of Moral Causation, man releases himself from the stranglehold of the animal; he becomes human and is on the road to affirmation of the divine in him. 'The Law of Moral Causation is the law of freedom. This freedom can be ours only if we realise that the mind is the cause of freedom and bondage. If it subdues the animal urges, it will know no slavery; for, greed, fear and anger will no longer be there and the illusion of a pseudo-reality will no longer hold us in bondage.'

The conquest of the animal in him makes man lord of himself. Subjecting his lower being to his higher self, he perceives the truth: *sarvam atmavasam sukham*. 'When this freedom is attained, however little, the Spirit which is involved in the mind will radiate steadily the fundamental aspirations such as Love, Truth, Beauty, Power, Calmness, Light and Freedom. These aspirations distinguish a man from an animal. The man who has no such aspirations, we call a demon.'

This transition from the animal to the divine through the human takes place in a dual manner by a process of transmutation which, effecting a release from the dominance of the animal, orients the mind to the Spirit. This process is marked by the transmutation of the self-regarding impulses to other-regarding virtues.

This process has an individual and a social aspect. Individually, they tame and transform the animal in man;

socially, they make for accordant collective life by the emergence of the collective consciousness of a larger group which is the individual writ large. This collective consciousness makes for a higher individuality which is not a breakaway from the lower, but is its fulfilment under the Law of Moral Causation. Thus Spiritual evolution is the result of the Moral Law penetrating into the Cosmic Order and transforming it. *Satya* interpenetrates *Rita*.

Describing the process, Munshi says:

'To emancipate the mind from the animal urges and the ego which drives them, we have first to concentrate on the Spirit or God, under whatever name, whose nature is Truth, Love, and Beauty. Then we have to conquer the distractions slowly and steadily till the aspirations are fully established and the animal urges become quiet. When so fixed on God, the mind remains undisturbed like an unwavering flame; all acts are disconnected from the desire for fruits and become offerings to Him. Then the light of supra-conscious intuition overcomes the processes of the mind and leads it to God. Travelling along the path by slow and laborious steps, we will come to abide in Him. We will see Him in all and all in Him whose attributes are absolute Truth, Love and Beauty.'

Thus the Creative Mind functioning as the operative instrument of the higher mind develops in the ethico-spiritual ether of *Satya*, *Tapas* and *Yajna*; Truth, Dedication and Self-mastery. These three are fundamentally one. *Satya* establishes one in Truth. *Tapas* creates a climate of Beauty. *Yajna* is a process of self-noughting and self-discovery in Truth by dedication. The basic dharma is *Satya*. Hence, the dictum: *Satyaannaasti parodharma*.

With each achievement of the Creative Mind, man's self becomes wider in concentric circles tending to enclose the

entire universe. A sense of the all-pervading unity of life emerges. As God is seen to be all and all is seen as God, the love of all becomes synonymous with Love of God. Such love is given various names as *bhakti*, *agape*, *amor intellectu dei*.

Love opens the floodgates of the Spirit. The Spirit in Man and the Spirit of the Cosmos work in unison and become articulate in the collective life of *lokasangraha*.

The transformation of the lower mind into the higher mind is effected not by suppression or elimination, but by sublimation. The impact of the collective mind on the individual *svabhava* converts it into *svadharma*. That is what is referred to by the term *Culture* which is the projection of the three values of *Satyam*, *Sivam* and *Sundaram* into the collective life of the community. Cultural values are shaped by *Dharma* which is the spiritual order of the Universe. They derive their very being and their sanction from *Dharma*. 'Dharma takes its stand on the fact that man is neither the creature nor the victim of forces either physical or super-physical. He is certainly not the creature of environments, as held by some modern social philosophers. He is the meeting point of hereditary and environmental forces, as well as of moral and spiritual forces operating through a series of lives.'

'By pursuing *Dharma*, therefore, man can operate the Cosmic Order, and by so doing, outgrow his limitations as well as the course of his present and future lives, as also change the shape of his social and material environments. If a ruler, for instance, followed it, his people would be virtuous and the seasons would be propitious; if he did not, the people would take to sin, and the seasons would fail! In short, life takes a changing shape in the context of *Dharma*, an eternal Cosmic Order according to laws. The primary function of *Dharma* is to lead to the

Highest Good, to Self-realisation or *Samsiddhi*. For this purpose, earthly life is the best, as here alone one can attain the Highest Good through righteous actions.'

'Our Soul is immortal and unsullied. Its journey from one life to another, however, is conditioned by the chain of cause and effect which our actions forge at different stages. But the chain can be broken and the Highest Good can be attained in this life if appropriate discipline is adopted to conform to *Dharma*.'

The progress of the individual towards the Highest Good requires constant pressure of social opinion before his greeds, hates and fears are transmuted and the conditions which foster egotism are eliminated. That is Munshi's paraphrase of the dictum that the pursuit of *artha* and *kama* must be subordinated to the rules of *dharma*. For, 'if *artha* preponderates as social aim, social life will be dominated by violence and universal corruption, as we see in modern times. People in search of possessions will be inevitably driven to military conquests or to economic advancement at any cost as the highest good, and end in producing war-mongers or tycoons. If *kama* is the predominant aim of life, it will lead to a social system based on pleasure. People will be addicted to the joys of the flesh and luxurious living. Moral decay and social disintegration would follow. In either case, moral vacuum will follow and people would have little chance to pursue the path of the Highest Good. The Cosmic Order will be defiled and chaos would follow.'

To enable ordinary people to live under conditions which would help the attainment of the Highest Good, Munshi is convinced that society must have at its head leaders devoted to *dharma* who alone, by precept and by example, could create public opinion which would keep *artha* and *kama* aims under control. Such a class of people he calls the

dominant minority—by their nature they cannot be many—who preserve the collective unconscious of the community and orient it to the fundamental aspirations of man. If a society has to work for the Highest Good, there must be in it at least a few people who have attained mastery over untruth, egotism and self-indulgence, through intelligent training and discipline.

The cultural crisis of a people is to be traced either to the absence or to the decay of such a dominant minority. Then the collective mind lapses back into the lower and the animal mind, either due to its own inertia or due to the imperfection of a power-intoxicated mind which embodies anti-culture. Then comes into the world a Mind of superlative creativity in which *Satya*, *Tapas* and *Yajna* have attained perfection or, a fairly large measure of excellence. The impact of that mind on the Collective Mind makes for the salvaging of culture as contained in Sri Krishna's promise that He incarnates to restore the reign of virtue in the moral governance of the world.

Munshi holds that the predicament of modern life is basically founded on the triple primeval urges of attachment, fear and wrath. The nuclear weapons are symbols of the fear that has gripped the world. Manufactured out of fear, they cause fear in the minds of their intended victims. So long as fear fills the heart, love cannot spring in it. It is only he who has nothing to fear and of whom none needs to be afraid that can feel the promptings of love.

We do not love one another enough, says Munshi, or at all because we have no love of God. The only object which can be loved abundantly and without reservation is God. All other love is selfish love, love to obtain a benefit or to ward off an evil. True love comes, not from awareness of difference, but only from a sense of identity with the object loved. One should feel oneness with God, live in

the universal consciousness of God. The self indwells in God as God dwells in the self. In the fullness which characterises this state, there is no desire; there is nothing lacking. The whole is the full. It is only unfulfilled and thwarted desire that leads to *krodha* and *bhaya*.

But man has to go through a determined discipline before this consummation is achieved. Munshi marks definite milestones in this pilgrimage to the supreme goal of life. Apprehension and acceptance of the fundamental aspirations, a resolute will to strive for them, emergence from the encasements of the ego and the acquisition of a calm in contrast to the previous condition of disquietude and tension, a climate of God-mindedness in which *vishaya kama* is transformed into *Bhagavat-kama*—these are the stages which have to be passed through before the final beatitude of oneness with God and, through Him, of oneness with Man and Nature is attained. The test of success in each stage, says Munshi, is whether egotism, impurity and ignorance progressively lose their hold on the aspirant. The mind will then encompass a large scope of vision. There would be ever-increasing humility and peace. Individual energy will cease to be personal and separate. It will form part of the functioning of God's Will. When a man's being is thus oriented in thought and will to the Supreme in its triple aspects of Truth, Goodness and Beauty, the Spirit in him begins to flower. When the flower of the Spirit has blossomed, can the fruit that is God be far behind?





