



CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ... LEGEND FOR A MODERN SOCIETY



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ABSTRACT:-

Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was the founder of the Maratha Empire. Shivaji implemented a competent and progressive administration with the help of a disciplined military and well-established administrative set-up. To create his Swarajya, a bold mission, inspired by the highest ideals imbibed by him from his mother and the saints of Maharashtra. There is a special selective process that History makes use of while commemorating its characters. Filtering across several centuries and regions, there are some moments, personalities and objects that stand out as the heroes of history writing. Wonderous mystic,

adventurous and intrepid, fortunate, roving prince, with lovely and magnetic eyes, pleasing countenance, winsome and polite, magnanimous to fallen foe like Alexander, keen and a sharp intellect, quick in decision, ambitious conqueror, given to action, resolute and strict disciplinarian, expert strategist, far-sighted and constructive statesman, brilliant organizer who sagaciously countered his political rivals, Shivaji fought the Bijapuris and carved out a grand Empire. He was not only the maker of Maratha nation, but also the greatest constructive genius of medieval India. States fall, empires break up, dynasties become extinct, but the memory of a true 'hero as King' like Shivaji, remains an imperishable historical legacy for the entire human race.

KEYWORDS : *Wonderous mystic, adventurous and intrepid, fortunate, roving prince.*

Indira Gandhi :

"Shivaji ranks among the greatest men of the world". Since we were a slave country, our great men (whatever their standing) have been somewhat played down in world history. Had the same person been born in a European country, he would have been praised to the skies and known everywhere. It would have been said that the he had illumined the world".

Shivaji Bhonsle (Marathi 1627/1630 – 3 April 1680), also known as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, was an Indian warrior king. Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was the founder of the Maratha Empire in western India. He is considered to be one of the greatest warriors of his time and even today, stories of his exploits are narrated as a part of the folklore. With his valor and great administrative skills, Shivaji carved out an enclave from the declining Adilshahi sultanate of Bijapur. It eventually became the genesis of the Maratha Empire. After establishing his rule, Shivaji implemented a competent and progressive administration with the help of a disciplined military and well-established administrative set-up. Shivaji is well-known for his innovative military tactics that centered around non-conventional methods leveraging strategic factors like geography, speed, and surprise to defeat his more powerful enemies. Shivaji turned out to be a born

leader from a very young age. An active outdoorsman, he explored the Sahayadri Mountains surrounding the Shivneri forts and came to know the area like the back of his hands. By the time he was 15, he had accumulated a band of faithful soldiers from the Maval region who later aided in his early conquests. Shivaji, who was endowed with talents of the highest order and a clear vision, was the only one who stood-up to the injustice. He had also an inspiring and endearing personality which spontaneously commanded respect, loyalty and the highest sacrifices from his devoted soldiery and peasants. To create his *Swarajya*, a bold mission, inspired by the highest ideals imbibed by him from his mother and the saints of Maharashtra, he had to rouse the sleeping conscience of the Hindus, and show them that it was possible to successfully defy the Mughal power, cast off foreign domination and win freedom from the rule of the Muslim powers. There is a special selective process that History makes use of while commemorating its characters. Filtering across several centuries and regions, there are some moments, personalities and objects that stand out as the heroes of history writing. One of the best examples of this process of historical filtering is that offered by the image of Chhatrapati Shivaji. Hailed as an icon of not just nationalist aspirations, but also as the voice of the non-Brahmin movement in India, as the face of a valiant Hindu past and as an ideal representation of social reform in the country. Shivaji is all of this and a lot more. To the average Indian, Shivaji has over the years come to represent everything that is glorious and fearless about his past. He established an independent kingdom of his own stretching from Salher and Ahiwant in the West Khandesh to Tanjore on the Kaveri, with unchallenged supremacy, erecting for its defence hundreds of forts and several sea bases with extensive market places. Shivaji had narrated to the people that how the foreign Muslim rules were imposed on them and made their motherland slave. He used to arise the feelings of them bringing forth the reality as "We are Hindus; this whole country is ours, and yet it is ruled by others. Muslims are breaking our faith, demolishing our temples, robbing our wealth and erasing our heritage. Most of the worst, they are forcefully converting our people in their religion, killing cows openly. How can not we be stood against these sufferings." He was successful in his mission of uprooting the Mughal power. The most important role Shivaji had played in Indian history that is the preservation of the culture and spirituality from the enemies who wanted to uproot it forever from its own land. The favouritism offered to Shivaji has several reasonings. The popularisation of the Maratha icon started off in late 19th and early 20th century, at a time when the nationalist uprising against British authority had started consolidating. The establishment of the Maratha empire in opposition to foreign Mughal rule was seen as the perfect historical moment to be upheld in front of the British as representing the traditions of an ideal India. Located much further away in the past than the more recent Peshwa rule that had been broken apart by the British, Shivaji served as the ideal representation of Indian and often Hindu pride. The non-Brahmin identity of Shivaji was also something that was seen as a perfect attribute by those involved in movements against upper caste domination of the time.

The late 19th century in British India was as much a time of social reform as that of nationalist awakening. Jyoti Rao Phule, the reputed social activist in Western India at this time was aggressively involved in movements for the uplift of non-Brahmins and lower castes. Phule upheld the image of Shivaji in a way that would induce self respect among the non-Brahmins. The means he used for popularising Shivaji was the *povada* (a traditional Marathi ballad), written in simple, non-Sanskritised Marathi for the non-Brahmins to understand. The *povada* on Shivaji begins by saying that it would be useful for the Kunbis, Malis, Mahars and ruined Kshatriyas.

Phule diminished the role of the Brahmanical elements in Shivaji's life and credited his own personal values of valour and strength as the reasons behind his success. On the contrary, Phule blamed the Brahmin forces as responsible for the martial race of Maharashtra. Phule's work on Shivaji went on to inspire several other leaders of the non-Brahmin movement in India.

Swami Vivekanand

"Is there a greater hero, a greater saint, a greater *bhakta* and a greater King than Shivaji? Shivaji was the very embodiment of a born ruler of men as typified in our great epics. He was the type of the real son of India representing the true consciousness of the nation. It was he who showed what the future of India is going to be sooner or later"

Wonderous mystic, adventurous and intrepid, fortunate, roving prince, with lovely and magnetic eyes, pleasing countenance, winsome and polite, magnanimous to fallen foe like Alexander, keen and a sharp intellect, quick in decision, ambitious conqueror like Julius Caesar, given to action, resolute and strict disciplinarian, expert strategist, far-sighted and constructive statesman, brilliant organizer who sagaciously countered his political rivals and antagonists like the Mughals, Turks of Bijapur, the Portuguese, the English, the Dutch, and the French, undaunted by the mighty Mughals, the greatest power in Asia, Shivaji fought the Bijapuris and carved out a grand Empire. Shivaji's political ideals were such that we might accept them even today without any change. He aimed at giving his subjects peace, universal toleration, equal opportunities for all castes and creeds, a beneficent, active and pure system of administration, a navy for promoting trade and a trained militia for guarding the homelandAll this national expansion proceeded from the initial energy of one man. Shivaji was the central power-house of the new MaharashtraHe was not only the maker of Maratha nation, but also the greatest constructive genius of medieval India. States fall, empires break up, dynasties become extinct, but the memory of a true 'hero as King' like Shivaji, remains an imperishable historical legacy for the entire human race..Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is a founding father of Indian national navy (in Marathi: Aarmaar).Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is a great warrior and only soul of the great Maratha empire on all over India (from 1700 to 1818). Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was a first dictator in world given importance to democratic, liberal values in dynasty and empowering women rights.

Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was a first secular king in Indian history. (E.g. During attack on Surat, Shivaji Maharaj found copies of Bible from home of Cambodian French father Ambrose. He returned those copies and saved all Churches and mosques from raid. Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj encouraged construction of several forts and water conservation systems. Shivaji Maharaj had given importance to environment preservation. They created forests to conserve animal and plant species in danger. In a book, 'Muntakhab-ul-Lubab' Mughal historian Khafi Khan wrote "Shivaji had always striven to maintain the honor of the people in his territories and was careful to maintain the honor of women and children of Mohammedans when they fell into the hands of his army. His injunctions upon this point were very strict." However many historians have grossly distorted history to create Hindu-Muslim divide. During British era, some British historians and their Indian agents wrote fake history to instigate communal tensions. They created and fabricated Hindu-Muslim rivalries through the imaginary history & tried to portray wars of Hindu-Muslim rulers as wars of Hinduism and Islam. For this purpose, Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's wars against Mughals was grossly misused and distorted. Post-Independence, history was misused by communal politicians and communal parties for vote bank politics.

Thus, some historians are trying to present real facts of history in public. There were many Hindus fighting for Mughal Kings while there were many Muslims, fighting against Mughals as Chatrapati Shivaji's loyal fighters. Thus history must not be misused for vote bank politics to maintain communal harmony in the country.

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