

**Merchants, 'saints' and sailors: the
social production of Islamic reform in a
port town in western India**

Edward L. Simpson

**London School of Economics and Political Science
University of London**

PhD

UMI Number: U615213

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI U615213

Published by ProQuest LLC 2014. Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.



ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

THESES

F

7919



841438

Abstract

This thesis analyses Islamic reform as a social process interwoven with apprenticeship, work and learning in shipyards in the port of Mandvi in western India. Those owning shipyards and the ships built in them are engaged in active campaigns of Islamic reform and proselytisation in the town that are intimately related to trade routes and their experiences overseas, especially in the ports of the Gulf States. Assuming that religious reform movements are defined by what they oppose as well as by what they represent the thesis presents an analysis of rhetorical, daily and occasionally violent opposition to Hindus and other Muslims in an ethnographic exploration of David Hume's 'flux and reflux' hypothesis. These oppositions it is argued are products of the historically contextualised biographies of those who patronise the reform process, rather than a random expression of religious identity. The thesis contrasts the social organisation and economic engagements of ship owners with Hindus and other Muslims in order to demonstrate the socially meaningful nature of communal antagonism in the process of religious reform. This exercise is conducted through an exploration of varying conceptions of ethnicity, race, social segmentation, migration, nationalism and diaspora. The ethnography of shipbuilding, skill acquisition and hierarchy, in the workplace demonstrates that apprenticeship and the division of labour that surrounds it reproduce a reformed social and religious order. This involves a discussion of issues that relate local Islamic social and ideological practices to wider geographical and doctrinal perspectives. Throughout the thesis runs a concern with the role of charismatic leaders and their constituents which, it is concluded, points to the fact that Islamic reform movements more generally contain within them the potential to reproduce the same social and religious orders they oppose.

*In memory of those who lost lives and loved ones in the earthquake that hit Kachchh
in January of 2001*

Contents

Acknowledgements	8
Notes on abbreviations	9
Figures, maps and plates	10
Orthography and transliteration	11
Glossary of selected terms	12
Introduction	16
Chapter 1. <i>Bhadalas and their ‘others’</i>	
1.1. Kachchh – Mandvi	25
1.2. Migration	29
1.21. Natural disasters	30
1.22. Demography	31
1.23. The 1819 earthquake	32
1.3. Hindu–Muslim relations in the past	33
1.4. Hindus, Kharvas and Muslims	38
1.41. Religious geography of Mandvi	38
1.42. Violence	40
1.43. Social organisations and violence	42
1.44. Assimilation of violence and social form	44
1.45. The discursive realm of violence	45
1.46. Smuggling and material interests	46
1.47. Hindu nationalist discourse	49
1.5. Divine tensions within Islam	52
1.51. ‘The Natural History of Religion’	53
1.52. Islam and charisma	57
1.53. Pilgrimage and travel	60
1.54. The Prophet: charisma and performance	63
1.55. Learning	65
1.56. Tradition: I say unto you ... but it is written	66
1.57. Fundamentalism?	68
1.6. Conclusion	70

Chapter 2. *Royal endogeny and mercantile exogeny: a model of littoral society*

2.1. Tradition in ethnography of peninsular Gujarat	72
2.11. Stereotypes and 'cultural models'	74
2.2. Kings and kingdom	79
2.3. Traders and kingdom	82
2.4. Bhatiyas	87
2.41. Co-residence and urban-rural connections	87
2.42. Case 1. The Durbar and the regulation of slavery	88
2.43. Case 2. Mandvi Customs House	92
2.44. Genealogical origins: is cooling Rajput blood an 'ethnological problem'?	94
2.45. Religious propriety	98
2.46. Maharaja Libel Case	101
2.47. Bhatiya <i>kuldevis</i>	102
2.5. Endogeny and exogeny	104
2.51. Horses	106
2.52. Mercantile patronage of Ravalpir	110
2.6. Merchant-Princes	112

Chapter 3. *Mandvi's Muslim social hierarchy: segmentation and historically contingent migrations*

3.1. Muslim population in Kachchh	117
3.2. Muslim social organisation in India	121
3.3. Social segmentation	123
3.31. <i>Jati</i>	124
3.32. <i>Musalman</i>	124
3.33. <i>Jamat</i>	125
3.34. <i>Atak</i>	126
3.4. Purity and pollution	127
3.41. Transience	127
3.42. Permanence	127
2.43. Substance-code hypothesis	129
3.44. <i>Jamat</i> hierarchy	131
3.45. Pathans	134
3.46. Segmentation	136
3.5. Egalitarianism and hierarchy	138
3.51. Brotherhood of Islam?	146
3.6. Saiyeds and Shias in Sunni society	153
3.7. Conclusion	158

Chapter 4. *Mixed-blood sailors*

4.1. Sailors	162
4.2. Kharvas	164
4.21. Samaj organisation	164
4.22. Narratives of the past	165
4.23. Dariyalal temple	168
4.24. Sailors that don't sail	176
4.25. Attitude towards Muslims, crows among flamingos	179
4.3. Bhadalas	182
4.31. Salaya	183
4.32. Social organisation	185
4.33. Bhadala-Pathans	190
4.34. Education among Bhadalas	193
4.35. Narratives of the past	195
4.4. Comparison	199
4.41. The god that disappeared	199
4.42. Nava Naroj	201
4.5. Conclusion	209

Chapter 5. *Apprenticeship I: shipbuilding*

5.1. Practice theory	225
5.11. An ethnographic practice theory	228
5.2. Shipyards	229
5.21. Assistants	230
5.22. Labourers – sailors	230
5.23. Andhra Pradeshis	233
5.24. Foremen	234
5.25. Captains and navigators	234
5.3. Shipbuilding?	236
5.4. Non-linguistic practices	241
5.5. Life in the sun: the <i>khalaasis</i>	243
5.51. Moving materials	244
5.52. Scaffolding	248
5.53. Planking and caulking	251
5.54. Inter-changing tasks	253
5.6. Life in the shade (cool): <i>seths</i>	257
5.61. Economy	258
5.62. Finance	258
5.63. Labour	260
5.64. <i>Gaidor</i>	260
5.65. Practicalities	261
5.7. Floating a ship	264
5.8. Aspiration within hierarchy	269
5.9. Conclusion	270

Chapter 6. *Apprenticeship II: the biography of a sailor*

6.1. Biography	273
6.11. Knowing others	274
6.12. Social division	277
6.2. Majid	278
6.3. Apprenticeship	280
6.31. Shipyards	280
6.32. Language	284
6.33. Playing with hierarchy	287
6.34. Kinship and sex	288
6.35. Neophyte questions	289
6.36. Jokes about Hindus	290
6.37. Mukhdummi Sha	293
6.4. Life at sea	298
6.41. The off-season	299
6.5. Moharam	301
6.51. Religious propriety	310
6.6. Migrant labour	313
6.7. Conclusion	315

Chapter 7. *Conclusion. Seths, Saiyeds and sailors: the social production of Islamic reform*

7.1. Review	318
7.2. Apprenticeship	321
7.21. <i>Pir–murid</i>	322
7.22. <i>Seth–sailor</i>	325
7.23. The gift ship	328
7.3. Kingship	330
7.31. Big-manship	333
7.32. From <i>nagarseth</i> to <i>dadaseth</i>	333
7.33. Saleem Ali's betrayal	334
7.4. Fences or bridges? The exchange of goods	336
7.41. Gifts	342
7.42. Commoditised gifts	343
7.43. Transactable commodities	344
7.44. Exchange of images and ideas	346
7.5. Islamic reform as a form of biography	352

Bibliography	359
Gujarati bibliography	374
Government Publications	374

Acknowledgments

Since I started this project in 1996 I have benefited from the advice and encouragement of a great many people to whom I am all thankful. This project was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (R00429634237), the London School of Economics and the University of California Santa Barbara. At the LSE I would like to thank my supervisors Christopher Fuller, Jonathan Parry and the late Alfred Gell, as well as Maurice Bloch, Martha Mundy and members of the thesis writing seminar especially Catherine Allerton, Manuela Ciotti, Peggy Froerer, Lucia Michelutti, Roseanna Pollen and Luke Freeman. At SOAS I would like to thank Jagdesh Dave, Pedro Machado and Rachel Dwyer. In Santa Barbara I would like to thank Francesca Bray, Sandy Robertson, Jennifer Tanguay, James Tate and especially Mattison Mines. In India I am grateful for the support of the staff at the Centre for Social Studies in Surat and the staff of the Maharashtra Archives in Bombay. In Gujarat I would like to thank Sukhet Bakali, Nirav Bhimani, Dinesh Katira, Anis Khatri, Majid Khatri, Makhrand Mehta, Vipul Sampat, Saleh Mohammed Pathan, and Devendra Vyas and his family. In Bombay I am grateful to Preeti Chopra, Chayya Goswami, Aparna Kapadia and Sally Warhaft. More generally I would like to thank Roger Ballard, Ed Baxter, Vernon and Tekla Eichhorn, Anne-Marie Giard, Thomas Goodall, Andrew Holding, Tim Ingold, Ian Lacey, Isabella Lepri and Paul Towel, but especially Peter Gow and my family.

Notes on abbreviations

- B.A. The Bombay Almanack (and 'Book of Direction' - various vols).
B.G. The Bombay Gazette.
F. O. Foreign Office (London).
G.B.C.I. Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island.
G.B.P. Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency (various vols).
G.S.G. Gujarat State Gazetteer.
Guj. Gujarati
L.S.I. Linguistic Survey of India (various vols).
M.G.S.A. Maharashtra State Government Archive (Bombay).
P.D. Political Department (of the British Government of the Bombay Presidency).
T.I. The Times of India.
v.s. *Vikram Savant* (also *Vikramaditya Samvat*) from a sovereign of Malwar who defeated Soka, a King of Delhi, and took possession of the chief throne of Hindustan (see B.A.1868). This is the Hindu calendar commonly used in Kachchh runs approximately 56/57 years ahead of Gregorian calendar.

Figures, maps and plates

Figure 1.1. The population of Mandvi by total and sex for the years 1872 – 1911.

Figure 3.1. Muslim social hierarchy in Mandvi.

Figure 5.1. Minimum incomes on land and at sea.

Map 1. The Western Indian Ocean.

Map 2. Western India from Kachchh to Bombay.

Map 3. The littoral regions from where Mandvi's Muslims claim to have originated.

Plate 1. The Rukhmavuti estuary at dawn looking onto Salaya.

Plate 2. The Rukhmavuti estuary at dawn looking onto Mandvi.

Plate 3. Waiting for the tide at the start of the sailing season.

Plate 4. Ravalpir temple complex.

Plate 5. Horses in Ravalpir temple.

Plate 6. Raval's 'tomb'.

Plate 7. Muslim graves adjacent to Dariyalal temple.

Plate 8. Dariyalal temple complex.

Plate 9. Dariyalal.

Plate 10. Jume Mosque - Salaya.

Plate 11. Minara (Minaret) Mosque - Salaya.

Plate 12. Apprentices on shipyard scaffolding.

Plate 13. Apprentices and others swimming with mast.

Plate 14. Refitting a rudder.

Plate 15. Scaffolding around a hull.

Plate 16. Sailing from Zanzibar in the 1950s.

Plate 17. Sailing from Dubai in the 1990s.

Plate 18. The view from Mukhdummi Sha over Mandvi.

Orthography and transliteration

The principal languages in this thesis are Gujarati and Kachchhi. Gujarati is an Indo-Aryan language (L.S.I. Vol. IX. Part II:322–377) spoken by some fifty-five million people worldwide. It has four principal dialects: Pani, Surati, Charotari and Kathiawadi, with a fifth major variant spoken by the Parsis. A standard written form is used in government schools and in literature. In Kachchh the *lingua franca* for the majority is Kachchhi – a distinct language, but classified by the Linguistic Survey of India as a ‘Sindhi dialect’ and part of the ‘North Western’ groups of the Indo-Aryan languages (L.S.I. Vol. VIII. Part I:183–206). Kachchhi has no formal script and where Kachchhi words are used they appear in transliterated Gujarati form. Both of these languages use many loanwords in their spoken forms from Arabic, Swahili, Hindi, Urdu, Sindhi and English. The etymology of such words is ignored in the glossary; these words are transliterated as they popularly appear in Gujarati. Technical words, especially those associated with religion and social organisation, are derived primarily from the classical languages of Arabic and Sanskrit. In such instances the simplest form has been provided in the text, which remains closer to the colloquial use, but is elaborated in the glossary. For example, the apostrophe commonly used in transcribing Arabic as in *jama’at* and *Isma’ili* has been dropped to leave *jamat* and *Ismaili*. Words common to Indological literature, works on Hinduism and Islam, and the names of persons, places, communities and religious movements appear in non-italicised anglicised form. For example, ‘Kachchh’ is consistently used – although this word also appears as Cutch, Kachh, Kutch and Kacchh in quotation. Likewise, when English words exist for indigenous categories and concepts such as Shia, Sunni and Haj the English version has been used. Generally, throughout the text priority has been given to the way words sound rather than to the conventions of Sanskrit orthography. In the glossary a diacritical version of most terms is given. The glossary is primarily intended as an aid to the reader. It includes only those words that appear several times in the text.

Glossary of selected terms

ābrū - honour, reputation, character, dignity.

ādat - (commonly elsewhere *ādāb*) - knowledgeable discrimination, correct order, behaviour, taste, refinement, respect.

aṃgrejī - English.

aql (*akal*) - reason, reasoning, intelligence; mental faculty of the soul that dictates the higher levels of human potential for knowledge and discretion.

atak - lineage.

avtār - incarnation of a deity (especially Vishnu).

bahen - sister.

banāvātī - counterfeit.

barakat (commonly elsewhere *baraka*) - blessing, holiness, spiritual power, abundance of wealth or power; charisma.

bāvā - a colloquial term of respect for Rajputs, Saiyeds, and rulers more generally.

bhāī - literally 'brother'; as a suffix to a proper name it connotes respect; a general term is used to describe men of the same religious or social community.

bhakti - devotion; attitude of loving devotion to a deity; refers to a trend in mainstream Hinduism that emphasises such devotion.

birādārī - lineage.

caṃdra (*vaṃś*) - moon (those descended from the Rajput house of the moon).

dādā - a popular style of political and social power, which evokes images of a masculine, assertive local strongman, acting through a multitude of local, self-made networks of loyalists, and not through institutionalised action and discourse.

darbār - (cf. English 'darbar') an audience - chamber; a reception or levée; a court; the body of officials of a court; a door of admittance.

dargāh - literally 'court'; the seat of spiritual authority represented by the shrines and tombs of Saiyeds.

dariyāchoro - literally 'son of the sea'; a colloquial name for Kharvas.

dariyādīl - literally 'one with a heart as wide as the ocean'; a generous patron.

dariyānī bhāṣā - literally 'the language of the sea'; a dialect peculiar to those merchants and sailors associated with the sea.

darśan - vision, sight of deity or image.

deśī - literally 'of the country or region'; local, rustic.

deśī vahāṇ - literally 'country craft'; a wooden ship; a generic dhow.

dev - god.

devī - goddess.

devīputra - son of a *devī*.

dharma - religious and moral duty; righteousness.

dīvān - revenue official; and sometimes in a derived sense, the head of a shrine.

gādī - throne, dais or seat of authority at the Durbar and at a shrine.

gaṃduṃ - dirty.

gnān (*jñān*) - knowledge.

hadīs - the body of traditions about Mohammed, supplementary to the Koran.
havelī - mansion, heavenly abode; the central place of worship of the Pushti Marga.
hijrā - the flight of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina in AD 622 from which is dated the Muslim era.
himsā - literally 'killing' and hence violence (opposite, *ahimsā*).

imām - the officer who leads the devotions in a mosque; a title for various Muslim potentates, founders, and leaders.

jamāt - literally 'brotherhood'; the dominant form of social organisation found among Muslims referring to population and communal institutions.

jāti - kind, type; 'caste'.

jihād - 'struggle', in the sense of personal struggle with temptation and in terms of promulgation of Islam to non-believers.

jism - body.

kācbo - tortoise.

kām - work.

khalāsī - sailor.

kharāb - bad.

kuldevī, *kuldevtā* - lineage goddess, lineage god.

kulpīr - saintly figure presiding over the interests of a particular lineage or caste. This term conflates what appears in the present as the language of Hindus and Muslims: *kul* (*ku!*) being a term associated with Hindu lineages and the term *pīr* being associated with Muslim 'saints'.

lohī - blood.

mahājan – illustrious man, assembly of leading men, association.

majūr - labour.

masjid - mosque.

mātā - literally 'mother'; the Goddess.

mazār - the tomb of *pīr*.

mistrī - craftsman, carpenter.

muftī - one qualified to give instruction and verdicts in Islamic law.

murīd - aspirant or novice, who undertakes complete obedience to a Saiyed or *pīr* after initiation.

murāśad - spiritual guide who acts as an instructor for his disciples; *pīr*.

musalmān - Muslim.

nafs - the lower or 'base' faculty of the human soul responsible for human interactions with the physical world and for some of his mental and emotional activities.

nāgarśeṭh - the apical formal or informal social position associated with Mahajan and mercantile social organisation.

naklī - counterfeit.

namāz/namāj - the five daily ritual prayers of Muslims; *salat*.

nāpāk - literally 'impure'; referring to moral, social, and ritual qualities of individuals and groups.

nāriyeḷ - coconut.

nīce - literally 'low'; disreputable character.

nīśān - the flag and pole erected in the compound of a *dargāh* which marks the *kutub*.

nukh - cluster of lineages with an putative apical ancestor among whom inter-marriage is forbidden.

pāk - literally 'pure'; referring to social, moral, and ritual qualities of individuals and groups.

pāḷiyo - hero stone

pīr - 'saint'; respectful name given to Saiyeds alive and dead; Saiyed lineage name; 'teacher'.

pūjā - worship, normally consisting of a series of offerings or services.

pūrvaj - apical or common ancestor.

puṣṭi - nourishment, strengthening, divine graces, hence *puṣṭimārga* - the way of grace.

qutb (kutub) - the North Pole, the Pole Star; a centre around which anything revolves; the title given to the chief of an invisible hierarchy of mystics (commonly Saiyeds) of any age.

rāv - king.

rāy - a prefix for lineage names connoting royalty.

śāhedī - testimony, the religious and civil statement of faith of Muslims.

śariyat - Islamic law; the totality of the exoteric revelation of Islam.

śakti - power, energy.

salat - Muslim ritual prayer performed five times daily.

samāj - society, community; collectively, the society's members and institutions.

sambandhī - relationship.

sārum - good; a positive evaluation of the moral qualities of individuals and groups.

śeṭh - a term associated with a successful commercial character; a patron and important respected male figure; one who controls the labour and loyalty of their clients.

sevā - service, charity; a specific term for worship in the Pushti Marga that entails devotion to images of Krishna.

śirk - polytheism.

śiyā - Shia, collective name for the segments of Islamic thought that recognise Ali and his descendants as the true *imāms*.

sūfī - various Muslim orders that aspire to a state of union with God through mystical contemplation; more generally a Muslim mystic.

sunnā - traditional root of Muslim law, based on biographical stories about the Prophet.

sunni - adherents to the *sunnā*, the teachings and beliefs of orthodox Muslims.

sūrya (vaṃś) - sun (those descended from the Rajput house of the sun).

tājiyā - the mock shrines made during Moharam to mark the martyrdom and death of Hussein, Hussan, and Ali.

triśūl/triśūḷ - trident, associated with the iconography of Shiva.

vahāṇ - ship *vahāṇvaṭā* (cf. *vahāṇvaṭī* i.e. sailor) - all those associated with ships - sailors, merchants, and others - who together form a specific kind of social hierarchy.

vamś - line of descent specifically associated with divisions among mythological Rajputs that finds a general use in the present for claims to a particular origin.

varṇa - the four theoretical classes of Hindu society Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra.

vatan - homeland.

videśī - foreigner, outsider.

yātrā - journey, pilgrimage.

zakāt (*jakāt*) - charity, alms giving - as one of the *sunni* 'five pillars of faith'.

zikar (*jikar*) - recollection of God, often through the repetition of specified formulae.

Introduction

On any monsoon day in the Rukhmavuti estuary there are as many as sixty wooden ships beached at precarious angles in the mud. To the west of the estuary lies the walled town of Mandvi. Old and beautiful, the town's narrow streets are lined with once-fine houses built with commercial money during the nineteenth century. Many of them are boarded up, their owners now living overseas. The town's bazaars are busy with people from the countryside, but the days are gone when the merchant fleet brought foreign wealth to Mandvi docks. To the east of the river, behind the shipyards, is the village of Salaya (Plates 1 and 2). Those who live in the village own the ships lying in the estuary and have built the new mosques, minarets and grand houses visible along water's edge with profits recently derived from sea-borne trade.

The first time I ventured along the Salaya riverbank, I was commanded in Bombay English to join a huddle of men overseeing the work that was going on in the mud below them. One man asked me what I was doing. Rather hastily I told him that I was interested in shipbuilding and had come to study its techniques and history. He said something that I did not understand, but which made the other men laugh. Looking up at an even larger man, he asked me if I had a cigarette. I offered him a cigarette and light, but he refused the light and gestured for me to walk to the opposite side of the ship. There, out of the view of his father, we lit up.

I took the opportunity to ask the man, who turned out to be called Rafiq, a few questions about the ship. It had been overhauled and they were trying to get it back into the water before the sailing season started. I asked him what the sailing season was. He told me that for three months the seas and the wind were too strong for the ships so they came back to Kachchh, adding that in a month Salaya would be empty when the men returned to sea (Plate 3). Cigarette finished, we rejoined the white clad 'big men' who were shouting at a man who stood closer to the ship, who in turn relayed instructions to those who were knee deep in mud fastening oil barrels to the underside of the hull to reduce the ship's draft on the next tide.

I was introduced to the Rafiq's father, who offered a disinterested hand with his '*salam aliekhum*'. I perplexed them by asking in Gujarati which language they were speaking, '*dariyani Kachchhi*' (sea Kachchhi) they replied. Rafiq asked, for the benefit of the assembled, a series of questions about what I was doing, where I came from and whom I worked for. I had come to study shipbuilding, I was from England and I was a student, so, in a technical sense, I did not work for anyone. Throughout my interview they continued to wave instructions to those working around the ship. Ominously, I was asked: "Who knows that you are here?" and "Who will come looking for you if you disappear?" I felt threatened and did not imagine that reciting the names of my university professors was going to impress them. Fortuitously, I told them that my father would come and this seemed to please them, but they were clearly suspicious of me.

A few days later, I retraced my steps over the bridge and along the eastern riverbank. This time the ship was skewed at an awkward angle in the mud. It had been caught in the monsoon floodwaters. The labourers were attempting to secure it to prevent it from being washed out to sea in another deluge. In the absence of his father, Rafiq offered me a cigarette. We smoked the same brand. He was twenty-nine, had four brothers, his father had built the mosque we could see in Salaya, and his grandfather had built a second one that we could not see because it was obscured by a ship. That was his house, the big green and white one right on the water's edge. He had been to university in Bombay to study commerce. He was Muslim and prayed five times a day. He was Bhadala. He was Pathan. His father and uncle had been to Mecca. His father owned two ships. He was responsible for the ship by which we stood, but he did not actually go to sea because he managed the business with his father. His older brother was the captain of another ship laying some way off. It was nearly a year later that I learned he was married and had three children.

The afternoon passed. The labourers left for Mandvi as night set in. We climbed a ladder to board the ship. I cautiously pulled myself over the side and onto the

decking. He was talking as he walked with utter ease along the gunnel (significantly less than a foot wide). This ship was small, but the drop to the riverbed was still around five metres. Over the next twenty-three months I became increasingly familiar with moving around ships, but I never felt confident enough to walk the gunnels. The call to prayer came drifting into the estuary from Salaya.

After he had prayed, we sat on the quarterdeck. He whistled shrilly into the dark. Some minutes later a wet and muddy boy came with a pot of black tea and two steel bowls. The boy addressed the man as *seth* and then crouched silently on the floor. He waited until we had finished and disappeared with the empty vessels. Alone again, Rafiq said that I could ask him whatever I wanted about ships and building ships, but there were some questions that I could not ask. He was willing to teach me the language and techniques of shipbuilding when he had time, but I was not to ask about money or business. At that time I wanted to know what '*seths*', 'Bhadas' and 'Pathans' were. I was confused. He seemed to be all three, but the questions turned out not to be tautological. A *seth* is an owner of a ship, an owner of labour, and a patron. He said that he, his father, and brothers were *seths* to the sailors on their ships and to anyone else in Salaya who did not own a ship. He explained to me that the Muslims who live in Salaya are all called Bhadala. The Bhadala used to be sailors, but have 'moved up' to own their own ships. He gestured towards Mandvi and said: "Those Hindu people who live over there used to do this business, but it belongs to us now ..."

He grew distracted and said: "Where is that fucking night-watchman? What do I pay him for? To sit at home and chew his cock?" It was dark and he had to go. He had still not told me what Pathans were. I was nervous in his company, but I asked him again anyway. In the glow of the paraffin lamp illuminating the quarterdeck his face crinkled with pained exasperation. He said: "Pathans are a famous and noble people. Our homelands were in Afghanistan, but we wandered around seeing different places. We ruled India before your people came." I did not see him again for ten months because he spent the year in Bombay managing his family's offices.

When I set off to Kachchh I had a clear picture of what I wanted to research and how I wanted to do it. I was interested in skill, learning and representation of technology in the shipbuilding yards. I was interested in ‘praxis’, ‘embodied knowledge’ and how non-linguistic tradition and bodily techniques were conveyed between men of different levels of experience. Having laboured on and off for ten months in shipyards I have experienced these processes and could describe them, but this is not how men who work in shipyards conceive of what they do. It slowly became apparent that the things I had thought were important for apprentices working in shipyards were, for them, literally immaterial and practically inconsequential. They learned and prioritised another set of ‘things’ that we broadly call social relations, and they specifically call *vahaanvatta* (seafaring), which gives apprentices a particular ‘way of being in the world’. And, although hierarchy within the *vahaanvatta* (sing. *vahaanvatti*) reflects skill and knowledge, the kinds of skills and knowledge given priority are those of a social and religious kind, rather than those of a particularly technical nature. What makes the *vahaanvatta* hierarchy is discussed at length in chapters 5 and 6. For now it is sufficient to say that as a form of sociality it is divisive and hierarchical and that its premises often contradict the prior social knowledge of apprentices. Thus the thesis I have produced, based on fieldwork conducted between August 1997 and May 1999, focuses more on apprenticeships in social relations than it does on how to deftly handle an adze or decipher the life expectancy of a piece of wood from the density of its grain.

The Bhadala build ships for their fleets in the yards along the Salaya riverbank. In business, as in their village, they emphasise the Muslim part of their identity. A central part of becoming and being *vahaanvatti* means adopting the form of Islam advocated by the Bhadala ship owners. Apprenticeship engenders a healthy knowledge of a ship’s constituent parts, however a greater emphasis is placed upon learning social and religious propriety. The young men who go to work in Bhadala shipyards do so to become sailors and not to become shipbuilders. This unusual form of apprenticeship generates constituencies of clients for Bhadala patrons. In this way,

apprentices are encouraged into particular kinds of social antagonism and conceptions of space, hierarchy and morality, all of which are expressed in religious reform.

The argument presented in this thesis is that the content, direction and oppositions inherent in Islamic reform are largely informed by the life experiences of those who patronise it, and as different groups rise to power there is a 'flux and reflux' (Hume 1998) of religious tradition. The ways in which biography and reform are related are examined through the lives of aspiring sailors who are apprenticed into the particular antagonisms of their new employers. Chapter I introduces Kachchh and Mandvi and some historical background to the population diaspora that has profoundly marked the region. It is argued that the diaspora was the dominant process in defining present social relations and antagonisms. A brief introduction to the types of relationships that Bhadals have with other Muslims and Hindus is given against the backdrop of Indian Ocean trade, religious violence and the precedents of Islamic orthodoxy.

Chapter 2 examines the social tensions generated by a tradition of international trade from a Rajput kingdom and provides a history of the present that determines the identity of those to whom the Islamic reformers are opposed. Throughout the previous century the ethnography of peninsular Gujarat (Kachchh and Saurashtra) repeatedly points to a structural social opposition between traditional rulers and traders of the region. This division is underpinned by differentiated patterns of residence, political and economic propriety, transactional preference, lifestyle and history. Through a critical appraisal of this literature, and in light of recent work on the role of ritual and political transaction in the formation of caste relations, this chapter questions the validity of such a distinction. In contrast to the established model the chapter presents the ethnography and ethno-history of a powerful caste of Kachchhi traders, who dominated commerce and the prestigious social life in many of the port towns of peninsular Gujarat throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The social, religious and philanthropic activities of these traders do not fit with the traditional model of dualistic sociality or its various elaborations concerning

conceptions of individuality, ritual exclusivity and constituency building though maximal or minimal transaction. This ethnographic evidence suggests that there is no analytically sustainable division between rulers and traders taking conventional sociological measurements as a benchmark. The alternative model presented divides the population into categories of endogenic and exogenic tendency. The endogenic is exemplified by kingship, the ritual boundary of the kingdom and self-generating power. In contrast, traders and their allies draw on conceptions of power and wealth exogenously (from outside the kingdom). This material begins to point to the significant divisions in Kachchhi society through which religious and communal antagonisms, and travel and wealth are understood.

Following on from this, Chapter 3 examines social organisation among Muslims in Mandvi, from where the majority of the apprentices in Bhadala shipyards are drawn. The argument presented is that Muslims in the town are hierarchically ordered by perceptions of blood purity, which is related to distinct values attributed to various lands of the littoral Indian Ocean. This is explored through an analysis of ideologies of 'origin' and kinship. The material presented describes the social origins of apprentices and the conceptions of hierarchy and social propriety that they have before they cross the river to work in the Bhadala shipyards. Apical figures in this hierarchy are Saiyeds, putative descendants of the Prophet, who are seen as having extra-human powers that allow them to mediate between human and divine realms. The Bhadala, as mixed bloods, are of low rank in the eyes of Mandvi's Muslims. Part of the social apprenticeship described in chapters 5 and 6 is a denial of the hierarchy prevailing in Mandvi and a condemnation of the activities and status ascribed to Saiyeds.

Having contextualised the relationship between Bhadalas and Mandvi's Muslims, Chapter 4 describes Bhadala relations with Hindus. In the past the Bhadala crewed the fleets of Muslim merchants, while Hindu sailors crewed the fleets of Hindu merchants. This commonality has been swept away by differing patterns of migration between Hindu and Muslim merchants and by the different construction of patron-

client relationships between Hindus and Muslims. This context is given as a way of explaining the Bhadala rise to power and the tensions that have emerged from it. The argument presented is that accordingly Hindu sailors and the Bhadala have different conceptions of the past, which is evident in both the rhetoric of Hindu nationalism and in the Bhadalas attempts at religious and social reform.

Chapters 5 and 6 concentrate on the ethnography of apprenticeship in shipyards. Chapter 5 describes and analyses work in the shipyards and the ways in which it is understood within the context of social hierarchy. This involves a discussion and evaluation of skill and the techniques of labour. Chapter 6 follows on from this by looking, through the biography of sailors, at changing notions of religious propriety and social correctness among apprentices over a longer period of time. The lives, opinions and aspirations of experienced sailors are contrasted to neophytes in the shipyards. This chapter again returns to the oppositions inherent in Islamic reform this time from the perspective of work, language and rhetoric in the shipyards.

The concluding chapter looks at the role of commodity exchange and conceptions of learning among sailors and merchants as a way of explaining the success of the local manifestations of Islamic reform. Parallels are drawn between the material presented in previous chapters and the social processes evident in shipyards to point to the fact that although the religious reform movements of the Bhadala are opposed to the dominant social order they are in fact a product of it and have the potential to reproduce it.



Map 1. The Western Indian Ocean.



Map 2. Western India from Kachchh to Bombay.

Chapter 1.

Bhadas and their 'others'

1.1. Kachchh - Mandvi

Kachchh is a barren, archaic and remote land, the shape of which resembles an upturned tortoise. The diverse population includes nomadic herders, retired London shopkeepers and mariners. For centuries the only reliable way in and out of the region was by sea and the seafaring traditions spawned extensive commercial migrations from the region. As a result the population of around one million is at least matched again by the numbers of Kachchhis living in other parts of India and overseas. Before Kachchh became an area of strategic military importance it was isolated by the flat salty expanse of the Rann to the north and east. Today, although roads and rails run into Kachchh, there is no through traffic as it nestles against the closed international border shared with Pakistan.

Mandvi was the principal port for Kachchh throughout the nineteenth century; today it is a dwindling lighterage port, but home to an expanding fleet of *deshi vahaan* (wooden country craft) that plough the seaways of the western Indian Ocean. Some distance inland from Mandvi is the village of Riyan where backfill reveals an ancient quay. Artefacts from distant ports and dynasties are regularly uncovered in the dry soil and revealed here is a tradition in trade that post-dates Indus valley settlements, but precedes the current geomorphology and environmental conditions of Kachchh. This archaeological trace is mentioned because it points to the fact that western India has been cosmopolitan for millennia and that the social, architectural and religious fabric of the region has been constructed out of the exchange of population, trade goods and ideas.

There are over sixty *deshi vahaan* (from now on ships) registered with Mandvi's port offices, the majority of which return to Kachchh for three months at the end of

each season to shelter from the monsoon seas. During these summer months the population swells as the fleet's 900 or so sailors, and many hundreds of labour and commercial migrants, return from abroad. Marriages, fights, football matches and religious congregations take place most intensely during this season. After Nava Naroj (New Year of the sea, falling in August) the population starts to thin out and with every high tide there are fewer ships in the estuary.

The archaeological remnants uncovered by the seasonal winds might tell of an ancient tradition, but the ships built along the river that separates Mandvi from Salaya are new in design and purpose. Built to hold large marine diesel engines, they carry cargoes of onions, bentonite (a clay mineral), cattle fodder, bamboo and an assortment of other items back and forth between India and the Persian Gulf. But the ships do not trade from Mandvi, which is merely home to the ship owners and sailors. Gone are the days when Kachchhi ships brought bullion, dates, cardamoms, ivory, pepper, silks, opium, slaves and currency from Zanzibar, Muscat, Rangoon and Malabar to Mandvi port. Most of the wealth reflected in the temples and *havelis* (mansions and religious buildings) of the past – and in the mosques and houses of today – has been derived from trade between lands other than Kachchh. Those who crew and manage ships are no more 'traditional' than the ships themselves because over the last century those known for conducting sea-borne commerce migrated and were replaced by the Bhadala who, along with a caste of Hindus known as Kharvas, had traditionally crewed Mandvi's mercantile fleet. Over the previous two centuries the human geography of the town developed around the social organisation of shipping. The language and traditions of shipping are to be seen in all areas of social life and the caste iconography of the Hindu merchants and sailors is saturated with images of ships, reflecting their seafaring past, although today shipping is a Muslim business.

Nearly half a century ago, the historian L.F. Rushbrook Williams (1958:42) noted two mosques in Mandvi: the 'Kajivali' (built 1608) and the 'Jami' (built 1603). Despite the fact that there must have been at least six mosques in Mandvi in the

1950s things have changed and in Salaya today brightly painted columns and domes rise from elaborate new mosques. The Bhadala used to live in Mandvi and some of the many derelict houses in an area of the town still called 'Bhadala Pod' remain registered in their names. The Bhadala moved across the river over the course of the last century and they are responsible for the new mosques and for the ships currently being constructed along the Salaya riverbank.

After his visit in the 1950s Rushbrook Williams lamented that Mandvi:

was a mere ghost of its former self. To see almost deserted shipyards, which in the days of Rao Godji (1760–1778) had built and kept in repair a fleet of four hundred vessels, including the famous ship which sailed to England and back (1760) was to wonder whether its ancient glories would ever return (1958:41).

Today, Mandvi's shipyards are producing to their maximum capacity with a ship slowly rising from every possible piece of riverbank. Although ships are built on both sides of the river this thesis focuses on those that are built on the Salaya riverbank, a total of eleven shipyards in all. The Salaya shipyards are managed and financed by Bhadalas, who build ships for their own fleets and, through the production of this technology, also reproduce suitable crews for their ships. Chapters 5–7 focus on the apprentices in these yards, who are not apprenticed to become shipbuilders but sailors. Typically, the first journey made by apprentices in Salaya's shipyards is across the river from their homes in Mandvi, a journey repeated every working day for two or more years. The apprentice is slowly drawn into the patterns of work, hierarchy and status that prevail in shipyards and that differ importantly from his home environment in Mandvi. Only when his *seth* considers him to be suitably moulded is the apprentice allowed to make the longer journeys as a sailor to the ports of the Gulf.

The mobility of this population raises a series of technical problems for framing the ethnography. Although much of this thesis is devoted to describing work, hierarchy and skill in shipyards, a considerable amount of the material is informed by

experienced sailors and ship owners for whom the boundaries of their social interactions are spread much wider. The material presented is rooted in a specific place, the river and the riverbanks, but the subjects of the study are constantly moving in and out of the field. This may involve a nightly absence as men leave work and return to their homes in either Mandvi or Salaya, or much longer absences as in the case of the Bhadala *seth* described in the Introduction. The knowledge, language, social propriety and materials that pass into shipyards are from diverse origins and conditioned by disparate historical processes. To a man who works on a ship, the neighbouring settlement to Mandvi is literally Bombay or Dubai and I think it fair to assume that many more men from both Mandvi and Salaya have been to Dubai than have been to Gujarat's principal city, Ahmedabad.

As with much of littoral western India, the history of Mandvi is characterised by successive invasions of rulers, visitors, religious proselytisers and colonists, as well as by outpourings of population for trade and commercial migration. From the sixteenth century Mandvi was a departure point for Haj pilgrims bound for Mecca; and throughout the nineteenth and early half of the twentieth centuries it was the port of embarkation for migrants destined for Bombay. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries vast numbers of Kachchhis migrated from Mandvi to East Africa, Zanzibar and Oman on the back of the expansion of both British and Omani empires. A significant node within the Indian Ocean and hinterland trade networks, Mandvi had a quay-side slave market and regular Arab trading partners. Its wealth and fame also attracted considerable numbers of migrants from the hinterlands and the resulting population is heterogeneous. Ancestral claims among Muslims variously trace descent from mercenaries, slaves, traders, warriors (including the armies of Alexander the Great), saints and the Prophet Mohammed.

With this in mind it is necessary to give some of the history that lies behind the nineteenth century Kachchh diaspora within the Indian Ocean. The century marked a new wave of migration from the region distinct from previous phases because of the

British presence in the Indian Ocean and because the effects these migrations continue to have on the social organisation of the town.

1.2. Migration

The regions of Kachchh and Saurashtra were the origin points for the well-known pattern of migration to East Africa and later to England, Canada and elsewhere. The multiple connections between ports and populations continue to give Mandvi a somewhat peculiar cosmopolitan yet conservative atmosphere. Kachchhi merchants established satellite communities in many ports in the Indian Ocean, most notably along the East African coast between Madagascar and Zanzibar in the south and Aden and Muscat in the north. Most families who have been involved in commercial migration today have relatives in Tanzania, Kenya (Mangate 1969; and Pocock 1957b), Oman (Allen 1978), United Arab Emirates (UAE), Britain (Tambs-Lyche 1975, 1980a, 1980b) and North America, and Kachchhis are also found in other Indian ports. These migrations did not simply involve leaving the homeland and taking up residence elsewhere for there is a constant flow of people between Kachchh and the satellite communities. There are important differences in these patterns between merchants and sailors and between Hindus and Muslims that are discussed in chapters 2–4. The contingency of these migrations is well illustrated by a small section of the Bhadala population, called Swali (a corruption of Swahili), who returned to Salaya after three generations had been born in Tanzania. But the pattern of migration that has received the greatest attention in the Indian Ocean is the movement from India to East Africa. Data from Mandvi shows that these migrations were far more complicated than has typically been assumed and were (and continue to be) far from a uni-directional movement from the west of India to East Africa and then to Britain or Canada.

1.21. Natural disasters

The migrations of the nineteenth century laid the foundations for the present social organisation of Mandvi. But how are we to account for this vast movement of people? The most obvious reason is the natural disasters that have affected Kachchh, forcing people to leave their lands or face starvation or disease. These factors 'pushed' the population from the land. Locusts and drought visited Kachchh in 1811 and 1812 (Carnac 1819:296–303) and the resulting crop shortage reduced the population of Kachchh by half (G.B.P. Vol. V.:40). In 1813 Kachchh was infested with bubonic plague. In 1819 there was a serious outbreak of cholera (LeGrand 1856:448) and the subsequent famine, pestilence and intestinal broils were cited as the reason why so many Kachchhis were appearing in Bombay (B.G. July 14th 1819). In 1819 a huge earthquake struck Kachchh, killing between 1,500 and 2,000 people (see below), while in 1823 it was reported that further crop failures and rumours of an immanent military invasion from the Sindh further reduced the population (G.B.P. Vol. V.:165). In 1824 there was drought and famine (Masselos 1996:29–32), and throughout the 1840s and 1850s there were yet more crop failures and pestilent visitations. In 1862 excess rain destroyed the harvest, and cholera once again struck in Mandvi in 1866 (G.B.P. Vol. V.:173). There was a widespread famine during 1888–89 (see Masselos 1996:33–37), and epidemic plague between 1896 and 1905. So over the course of the century the series of disasters paved the way for the movement of the population.

Migrants were not only 'pushed', they were also 'pulled' by the rise of colonial Bombay and the potential profits of trade. Many of those who became ocean traders migrated from agricultural lands in northern Kachchh and started to trade in cotton. Kachchhis had long before established trading posts overseas and the existing networks of information and credit, along with the commonality of the Kachchhi language, allowed a rapid expansion of their activities. Kachchhi traders in the satellite communities acted as brokers for the passage, accommodation and employment of neophyte migrants from Kachchh (a nineteenth-century form of

employment broker). From these humble origins the diaspora grew and grew, reaching its peak at the beginning of the twentieth century.

1.22. Demography

In the absence of precise migration data the population's sex ratios and growth rate point to the scale and impact that the culture of migration has had. The ratio of men to women at an all-India level is 1,000:947 (Trivedi 1955), however, in Kachchh, from the mid-nineteenth century and possibly earlier the ratio is significantly weighted in favour of women.

Figure 1.1. The population of Mandvi by total and sex for the years 1872 – 1911 (from G.B.P. Vol. V-13.:9).

Year	1872	1881	1891	1901	1911
Mandvi	35,988	35,980	38,155	21,683	24,235
Men	17,829	17,285	18,407	12,226	11,238
Women	18,159	18,695	19,748	12,457	12,997
Women to 1,000 men	1,018	1,081	1,072	1,018	1,156

From 1872 to 1911 the mean ratio was 1,000:1,069. In the middle of the twentieth century the ratio was given as 1,000:1,079 (Trivedi 1955). In the absence of any other statistical data these figures indicate that there is a shortfall of one tenth in the expected numbers of men compared to the national average, which I would attribute to the high levels of male migration.

The second demographic indicator is the relative stability of the population size during a period when the Indian population has grown rapidly. The size of the town does not seem to have radically altered since the 1820s, when the population was estimated to be around 50,000 (MacMurdo 1820a:217). Between 1872 and 1911 the population of Mandvi declined by a third from 35,988 to 24,235. The present population of Mandvi barely exceeds the level of 1872 (see Figure 1.1.), while since

then the population of India has multiplied six-fold. This incongruence is not a reflection of a lower birth rate but of the huge outpouring of people throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. According to the 1981 census the population of Mandvi was approximately 40,000, around 30% of which were Muslim. Mandvi is a 'kin centre' (Mines 1983) that retains the loyalty and affection of the diasporic populations who return periodically. Thus the rates of migration for temporary and longer-term settlement overseas make the census figure somewhat meaningless because many families who have lived overseas for generations maintain property in the town and the number of people in the world who claim that Mandvi is their hometown is clearly many times higher than the census population.

1.23. The 1819 earthquake

The erratic rains, disease and pestilence that blighted Kachchh throughout the nineteenth century are all but forgotten in the way the region's past is narrated today. These events, and the population flows that stemmed from them, are collapsed into a single event. James MacMurdo, then the political agent of Kachchh, was in Bhuj at 6.45pm on June 16th 1819 when a massive earthquake hit the town. His various writings on this disaster have had a profound effect on the perception of the past in Kachchh. The earthquake destroyed houses, fortifications and temples, and killed upwards of 1,500 people. As MacMurdo wrote at the time: 'There does not seem to exist even a tradition of an earthquake ... the natives therefore were perfect strangers to such a phenomenon and were terrified in proportion to their ignorance' (1820b:104). Fire was seen to burst forth from the land; dry creeks brimmed with water, wells overflowed and in numerous places spots of ground from twelve to twenty feet in diameter threw out red-coloured water to a considerable height, before subsiding into a slough (1820b:103). Popularly, this earthquake is seen as the end of agricultural fertility in Kachchh and the start of the population movements. The seismic disruption is said to have formed the Allah Bundh (Allah's dam) across an eastern arm of the Indus. The various names given to the 'dam' reflect the associations made between the devastation of the earthquake on the land of Kachchh

and the similarly destructive presence of Muslims in the region for the Hindu population. In some accounts the unfortunate effects of the earthquake are seen as a direct result of the Muslim influence in the region. Importantly, the dam is said to have prevented the flow of fresh irrigation water into Kachchh, which turned the once fertile soil saline. MacMurdo's insightful text is the basis for this story, but the account he actually provides is rather different:

This branch of the river Indus, or, as it may now with more properly be termed, inlet of the sea* (* It is many years since the eastern branch of the Indus has been deserted by the waters of the river), has since the earthquake deepened at the ford of Luckput to more than eighteen feet at low water; and on sounding the channel, it has been found to contain from four to twenty feet from the Cutch to the Sind shore, a distance of three or four miles. The Alibund has been damaged; a circumstance that has readmitted a navigation which has been closed for centuries (1820b:104).

This account claims that the waters of the Indus had already stopped running through this channel, and that even if they did they would have mixed with the saline waters of the Rann before reaching Kachchh. Furthermore, the Alibund (not the Allah Bundh) was damaged rather than created. MacMurdo seems to have thought of this as a positive rather than a negative outcome. In short, the earthquake cannot have altered the supply of irrigation water to Kachchh in the way that it is popularly claimed. This does not, however, mean that the earthquake did not drastically alter the depth and distribution of ground water. The fact that the dam held responsible for the desertification of Kachchh is associated with Muslims is indicative of how past events are interpreted. The apocalyptic movements that developed after the earthquake placed blame variously at the feet of others. Today the story is told as a reflection of how damaging Muslims are to the land of Kachchh. This 'history' is taught in schools and often reprinted in local Hindu-owned newspapers and as with many other past events, the history of the earthquake is narrated with an explicitly communal moral.

1.3. Hindu–Muslim relations in the past

It is demonstrated throughout this thesis that Islamic reform in shipyards is characterised by what it opposes as well as by what it represents. The remaining sections of this chapter introduce the underlying principles on which the Bhadals' opposition to Hindus and to other Muslims is based. The theme of communal relations is explored in the following sections before the discussion turns to examine the issues of travel, piety, charisma and behaviour, which variously create social schisms among Muslims.

Hindus commonly associate the earthquake with what they consider to be a further tragedy of Kachchhi history. The king, Rayadhanji (b.1764), converted to Islam in the 1780s under the influence of the Muslim fakir, Mohammed Saiyed. The ruling family in Kachchh were Jadeja Rajputs, worshippers of the Goddess (see Chapter 2), and part of a martial Hindu tradition that runs throughout western India. Rayadhanji's adoption of Islam was a clear break with tradition. He began to roam the streets of Bhuj accompanied by a band of Pathan followers and demanded that everyone he met should profess Islam, regardless of their position or creed. Later he turned his attention towards Mandvi:

He first began by slaughtering animals in large numbers; he then announced his intention of smashing all the images in Rameshvar's temple ... But he had underestimated the temper of the citizens of Mandvi. They collected in large numbers and attacked the Maharao and his Pathans so fiercely with stones, sticks and other improvised weapons that Rayadhan [here Rushbrook Williams drops the customary respectful 'ji' suffix] had to ride for his life, while two of his followers were killed and a number were wounded (Rushbrook Williams 1958:170).

Most Hindus consider that Rayadhanji's adoption of Islam a sign of insanity. How accurate accounts of this period are is difficult to ascertain, but both this event and MacMurdo's account of the earthquake raise questions about the nature of relationships between Hindus and Muslims at the time. It is common to argue that

before British colonialism elite Hindus and Muslims shared political interests and that the 'masses' were united in syncretistic culture. British rule is seen to have divided the interests of the population or, as Gayanendra Pandey suggests, the British looked on India with a communalist gaze, through which they interpreted social and political action (1990).

There are two further arguments to consider on this subject. First, that Muslims started to ask the British for preferential treatment in response to their sense of minoritisation through electoral politics and that this induced Hindus to mobilise for political action (Brass 1979). Secondly, that the development of political identity among Muslims in the late nineteenth century was a response to Hindu revivalism and an effect of the government policies, which were not aimed at setting Hindus against Muslims, but at reconciling them to British rule (Robinson 1997:84–132). Both of these arguments emphasise the divergence of politicised religious identities, which became communalised. However, if communal differences were forged during this period the assumption seems to be that people had different identities before and acquired new ones as a consequence of the conjoined influence of the political elite and the state (van der Veer 1994:30). This discussion is clearly a sensitive one among Indian historians who are keen not to provide material for the Hindu right (see C.A. Bayly 1998:44–45), and has implications for the material presented in this thesis. Today, the events of the past are narrated with explicitly communal attributions, which does not necessarily mean that they were understood as such at the time, but have been reinterpreted through changing religious and political saliences. For the elite communities of Kachchh, Hindu and Muslim, the nineteenth century saw them pass from relatively amorphous social conditions to clearly defined, quasi-legalistic groups opposed to religious 'others' (see Masselos 1978). However, as discussed below, there is some evidence to suggest that religious identities were extremely important at the turn of the nineteenth century, but the importance of such was not distributed evenly throughout the population.

It is commonly held in Kachchh that in the past relations between Hindus and Muslims were peaceful. However, Rayadhanji's conversion and the antipathy he displayed to Brahmans and merchants (Rushbrook Williams 1958:170) suggests there were clear social fault lines through which antipathy could be expressed. But, compare the following three statements from British sources relating to the early nineteenth century. The Gazetteer of 1880 states that: 'At the beginning of the present [nineteenth] century, so progressive was Islâm, that it seemed as if another hundred years would see the last of the Hindu faith' (G.B.P. Vol. V.:39). This observation was made of the same period of which MacMurdo wrote: 'of late the religion of Vishnoo has become so prevalent in Cutch, that some of the Jharejas [*sic*] even have adopted it, with all its peculiarities' (1820a:224). Finally, Mrs Postens, the wife of a colonial official, notes: 'The Rao himself says that out of about two thousand Jharrejas [*sic*], he does not think three of them know what their religion is' (1839a:133). The first two statements imply that religious identities were strong and were actively being proselytised; while the last implies that religion was not an important marker of identity. The validity of these statements may be of dubious worth as historical evidence, but I am not inclined to think that they are wrong. The other writings of MacMurdo are incisive, accurate and demonstrate a profound understanding of Kachchhi society, and Mrs Postens, although given to pomposity on occasion, benefited from reading MacMurdo. Their statements are, however, clearly contradictory. I do not think this is a factual contradiction, but that the statements refer to different sections of the population.

Differing conceptions of space and location clearly had much to do with the perceived importance of religion as a marker of social identity, for example, those who travelled overseas had strong conceptions of religious exclusiveness. In the aftermath of the 1819 earthquake, MacMurdo observed:

The Moosulmans were equally alarmed ... and an abundance of threats of punishments to the wicked were fulminated from the musjeeds; and a paper asserted to have come from Mecca, with the usual seals attached, foretold of the day of judgement (1820b:106).

This response was matched among Hindus by the rise of millenarian movements. The community responses to the event were clearly very different and emerged from distinct patterns of sectarian organisation. None of these observations indicate the nature of religion in the construction of social segmentation, but they do imply that religion was an important and competitive part of social life. The paper arriving from Mecca interrupts the scene and intrudes into the image of India as a syncretic social synthesis, reminding us of the outside world. In Chapter 2 it is argued that the social division of most importance throughout the nineteenth century (and up to the present day) is between those who routinely travelled outside the kingdom and those who did not. In this chapter this division is highlighted in the present discussion because the contradictory statements presented above refer to such a division in the population. Those who travelled the most were the same sections of the population that adopted Islam and the Vaishnava movements. Those who did not travel, or travelled much less, were the rulers and dominant landholders – who Mrs Postens refers to as ‘Jharrejas’, who were vague about their religious associations.

Although earthquakes and royal conversions affected the whole of Kachchh, similar incidents are to be found in the social history of Mandvi’s travelling populations. Throughout the nineteenth century Hindu merchants campaigned to stop Muslims fishing in Mandvi because of the violence and pollution resulting from this activity (Postens 1839a:17). Alexander Burnes also visited Kachchh in the early nineteenth century and noted that Hindu merchants deliberately understated the size of the Muslim population in Mandvi (1879). He also notes that: ‘By their (the ‘Banians’) influence they deprive a large Mussalman population of animal food, and forbid a fish being caught within six miles of the town. To eat an egg is a crime’ (1879:13). Up until the late nineteenth century Muslims in Mandvi were forbidden from riding and owning horses and when the King decreed that this prohibition should be lifted for the benefit of the prosperous Vohra (Shia) merchants the Hindu merchants of Mandvi went on strike (G.B.P. Vol. V.:242). Although these disputes occurred over a century ago, today there are no fishermen living within six miles of

the town and it is still not possible to buy a cooked egg within the city walls. Mandvi's Hindu population continues to play down the size and importance of the Muslim population, and horses are one of the most hotly contested symbols of social legitimacy (see Chapter 2). From the early nineteenth century the strongest sense of religious and social distinctiveness was found among the diasporic populations, but because the diaspora was not rooted in foreign lands, and because vast sections of this population frequently returned home, the pattern is clearly replicated in Mandvi to the present day.

1.4. Hindus, Kharvas and Muslims

In a recent study of democracy and nationalism, primarily focusing on western India, Thomas Blom Hansen identifies three related processes that together produce and perpetuate the construction of 'communal' identities: first, the limited social interaction across religious boundaries; secondly, the narratives, rumours and sometimes experience of riots that establish the other community as the source of absolute evil and brutality; and thirdly, the formation, organisation and dissemination of political identities around the discourses of others (1999:203–214). In this section Hansen's framework is used to show which aspects of Hindu relations with Muslims locally are salient and how. The issues raised in the following section are explored further from a Hindu perspective in chapters 2–4; and from a Muslim perspective in chapters 4–7.

1.41. Religious geography of Mandvi

Mandvi is a town that developed around the social organisation of shipping. Broadly, the town is arranged around the central bazaars and an invisible line drawn from the southeast to northwest. At the base of this line are the areas traditionally inhabited by sailors; at the far end of the line is the area of mercantile houses, temples and social institutions; while the middle areas are predominantly populated by townsfolk who do not traverse the ocean. This is something of a simplification as pockets of other

populations are scattered throughout the town and in a number of places the town walls have been demolished and residential areas have spilled outside their confines. However, it is broadly true that the traditional areas of merchants and sailors are located on opposite sides of the town and this pattern encompasses the less significant divisions made between Hindus and Muslims within both areas.

Hansen argues that the limited interaction across religious boundaries has been historically substantiated by patterns of settlement, differentiated economic engagement and by the limited practices of friendship and the exceptionally rare cases of inter-marriage (1999:203). Additionally, in Mandvi, Hindus and Muslims do not visit each other's religious buildings, participate in each other's festivals, or form mixed teams in sporting tournaments. Limited interaction between religious groups distances the stories that circulate about them from the social realities of 'others'. Within the dominant model of spatial organisation outlined above there are clearly defined Muslim, Hindu, Jain and Dalit areas. There are also mixed neighbourhoods where the boundaries are less rigid. In these areas similar lines of a smaller scale are drawn between housing clusters or at the threshold or perimeter wall of particular houses. At a very general level Muslims are concentrated in the south, east and northwest of the town in areas adjoining the old town walls, while Hindus and Jains dominate the central areas.

The traditional quarters of sailors are clearly demarcated along religious lines, and the invisible lines that separate them continue to have social effects long after the Bhadala left Bhadala Pod. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) dominated council officially renamed the area 'Pith Chowk', a name that Hindus have adopted, while Muslims continue to use 'Bhadala Pod'. This area has witnessed a series of competitive property disputes between Hindus and Muslims. Some Hindus have occupied houses that they claim historically belong to them, despite the fact that the legal owners, most of whom have distinctly Muslim names, are now unknown. Navaratri (festival of nine nights) dances have recently been started in the area's central square, which is bordered on one side by a mosque and on the other by a

Muslim shrine. This area is the site of a non-violent struggle for religious supremacy, and although this trend is by no means restricted to Bhadala Pod – Pith Chowk, the Hindu right has paid special attention to it because of the Bhadala association. As this chapter makes clear in the case of the Bhadala village of Salaya, and Chapter 4 for the Kharva, inviolate territory continues to be an important marker of legal, social and ritual identities. Friendships are rare between Hindus and Muslims in the town and practically unheard of between Bhadalas and Kharvas. The social separation of Hindus and Muslims in Mandvi is matched by their mutual ignorance of one another and reinforced by geographical separation.

1.42. Violence

Hansen's second point is that narratives, rumours and sometimes experience of riots establish the 'other' community as the source of absolute evil and brutality (1999:204–206). The geographical separation of the demonised Bhadala from the town is matched by a gap between beliefs held about them and the facts of their existence. Hindus in Mandvi were incredulous to the point of disbelief when I told them I knew men in Salaya who had university degrees. Yet the same Hindus simultaneously claim to know a lot about the activities, personal habits and politics of the same Bhadala men.

The obloquy 'the gentle crow always has two feet tied' is frequently used in Mandvi to describe the 'purpose' of violence that occurred in 1983 between Kharvas and Bhadalas. The incident left a number of Bhadala dead and several others maimed. What I know of this violence has been assembled from a variety of subjective sources, which sometimes coincide, but more frequently do not. The following two statements reveal some of the issues that are now understood to have been at stake. The first statement is made by a Bhatiya resident of Oman who periodically returns to Mandvi:

"The Bhadala were dangerous, our women could not walk anywhere, now they can because the Kharva made them quiet. They were roaming in the streets at night without

a care or any sense of respect. They were covered in gold, wearing new clothes, and riding new motorbikes. Someone fired a rocket over the river and it destroyed half a mosque in Salaya. There was a lot of competition for space at that time. Wherever we were doing a festival they would be nearby also doing one. Lots of people said very bad things about each other's gods at that time, but now it is quiet for us all because of the Kharva."

A Brahman journalist from Mandvi made the following observations:

"In the early 1980s there was a large trade and market place for 'imported items' in Salaya and people would come here openly to buy them. Today that has subsided and is limited to electrical goods, perfumes and cigarettes. But in those years Salaya was infamous. In a customs raid a large number of hand-grenades were uncovered in Salaya. They also found gold and dollars hidden away in secret compartments. In one house they could find no men to arrest ... The only person there, it seemed, was an old lady. They threatened her and told her that they would shoot her if she did not tell them where the men were hiding. She pointed inside the house, and there the customs men found a secret room in which a man was hiding. He was brought over the river into Mandvi and beaten. A sign was put round his neck on which was written: 'I am the dog of the smugglers'. He was paraded around the bazaar. Later the man died in the police station. Many Bhadala came across the river to protest outside the police station. They were not welcome in the town – Salaya was their place. They were blocking the roads, making loud noises and shouting to the police and at the people of Mandvi. For us this all started when Ghazni sacked the temple in Somnath and cut the lingam of Shiva with his sword. Our Kharva men came to attack the Bhadala. Some time later the police placed the town under curfew."

In these accounts, festivals, various kinds of state intervention, accusations of 'anti-nationalism', public protest and revenge all feature as both causes and justifications. These are typical characterisations of events, but, as Paul Brass argues, it is impossible to construct sequential narratives of violence after the event because the accounts are subjective, the truths partial and the aims of those narrating events have changed given the violence itself (1997:5–20). In narratives such as those given above, the events of a single week in 1983 have become conflated with other contentious issues that happened before and after the violence itself.

So much has been written on ethnic, communal and religious strife, and on rioting, antagonism and violence that an adequate review of the literature is quite impossible in this chapter. In this section my aim is merely to signal a violent incident and highlight the central ways in which this is understood in anticipation of material presented in subsequent chapters. Religious violence is an abnormal activity in Mandvi. Various antipathies, not just those between Hindus and Muslims, are apparent and pervasive in daily social life, but they seldom erupt into violence. Thus, this particular violent outbreak looms large in the construction of social antagonism because there are no other events to rival its rhetorical supremacy. There are four points to be made about this violence. First, the organisational basis of violence stemmed from pre-existent patterns of social organisation and social institutions (see Brass 1997). The second point (related to the first) is that this violence was not divorced from wider social contexts from which conceptions of authority, prestige, duty, devotion and legitimacy are derived (see Freitag 1989). Thirdly, a new realm of social discourse and transaction seems to have appeared which takes the violence as an abstract theme from which the corruption of Hindu or Muslim 'others' is further elaborated (see Tambiah 1996). And finally, that the role of religion in this violence was not merely an ideological smoke screen, behind which the real clash of material interests was hidden (see van der Veer 1994), but at the same time 'religion' was not the primary 'cause'. The following sections address these themes in turn: in each instance the experience of rumours and narratives that surround, legitimise or explain violence have contributed to the creation of the image of antagonistic 'others'.

1.43. Social organisations and violence

The first point to make is that this violence is presently reported to have been an exclusive Kharva–Bhadala incident. However, newspaper reports of the time reveal that there was also a fatality in Mutchi Pith that involved neither Kharva nor Bhadala, which has been erased from contemporary recollections. This observation leads me to the two existing forms of social organisation that played a role in the

ways in which this violence was enacted: the role of specific institutions and a pervasive social division between merchants and sailors. Neither of these two social forms is explicitly associated with communal divisions between Hindus and Muslims.

Paul Brass uses the term 'institutionalized riot systems' to refer to the social and political organisations, riot specialists and information networks that maintain a public level of awareness about potential riotous events (1997:15–18). Brass's analysis of the role of 'agitators' and 'riot specialists' seems to fit the Mandvi case. The violence, although appearing to be spontaneous, was supported by 'outsiders' who were bussed in from Saurashtra by an extension of the Kharva caste organisation (a group described in detail in Chapter 4). Today this organisation serves as the local mobile muscle power for the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). When a cyclone hit Kachchh in 1998 the RSS were the first to organise relief and rescue personnel to be sent from Mandvi. The organisers and financiers were merchants from Mandvi and overseas, while those who did most of the manual search and rescue were Kharvas.

Contentious events that imply potential confrontation have a life of their own in rumour. The most contentious events are those that breach the gap between Hindu and Muslim interests. Inevitably, religious issues are high on the local agendas of the RSS and the BJP in Mandvi and these organisations are usually the first to respond to rumours of anti-Hindu activity. The awareness of potential conflict is not restricted to political activists. Cows dying in suspicious circumstances, Muslim boys flirting with Hindu girls, complaints arising from music interfering with mosque prayers, non-vegetarian foodstuffs appearing in areas of the town dominated by vegetarians, and the forthcoming coincidence of religious festivals are common currency in conversation on the streets. However, although the role of political organisations was clearly instrumental in the way that this violence was executed, their significance has paled in the way in which events of the past are described in the present. As will be shown below, the violence has been routinised through its assimilation into the

dominant social framework of merchants and sailors and, in the process, the narratives have erased the roles of non-sailors and political organisations controlled by merchants.

1.44. Assimilation of violence and social form

The second form of social organisation from which this violence was carried forth is the partially institutionalised division between merchants and sailors. In this sense the violence was a logical extension of the widely recognised notions of authority, prestige, duty, devotion and legitimacy that comprise conventional merchant–sailor relations. Those who silenced the Bhadala were Kharvas. This violence has become routinised by its assimilation into the dominant patterns of power, status and stereotyped group character. Everyone knows (and not so much as a mere stereotype) that sailors are subject to the political demands of high-status merchants and are prone to violence because of their uncultivated natures. Today, the complex of violent actions of the past is typically discussed as the religious violence of Hindus and Muslims even though it occurred between unsuccessful and successful sailors. The same pattern is true for the ‘deeper’ past: earthquakes and insane kings are seen through the same bifurcated gaze. Hindus and Muslims were fighting, but in 1983 they were not fighting because they were Hindus and Muslims, they were fighting because a series of factors came together at once which erupted into violence, not least of which was a general sense of revenge against the Bhadala for having usurped the traditions of shipping from the Kharva.

In the shorter of the two accounts of violence given above it is evident that wealth, women, territory, religious buildings and religious propriety are given as the contexts in which violence took place. But there is more to this account than meets the eye. The man narrating these events was Bhatiya by ‘caste’; as the highest-ranking merchant group in Mandvi, the Bhatiyas act as patrons to the Kharvas. Traditionally, Kharvas crewed Bhatiya ships and fought their battles; today, Kharvas work in Bhatiya businesses in Oman and fight Bhatiya battles. The Kharvas tied the

Bhadas' feet in the interests of the Hindu population at large: this was their role as sailors under the patronage of Hindu merchants. In this sense Kharvas are the strong arm of Hindu society, a position from which they derive pride and a degree of prestige. At a general level the violence has been tamed and attributed to the 'natural' volatility of sailors that emerges as a characteristic of their mixed genealogical heritage. As shown in subsequent chapters, the flows of command and performance (from merchant to sailor) are replicated in other more mundane circumstances. Sailors were traditionally the ones called on for violent interventions, regardless of who was in dispute.

1.45. The discursive realm of violence

One of the effects of this violence has been the creation of a new arena of discourse in which social and religious hostility can be legitimately discussed. So, although I am emphasising the fact that this violence was based on patterns of long standing social relationships it also provided a new set of conceptual resources, metaphors and rhetorical devices through which the social lives of 'others' can be articulated. Tension between these groups has produced distinctive social identities that emphasise religion and homogenise, depersonalise and dehumanise 'others'. This is seen in formal and institutional discourse and in general social attitudes towards 'others'. However, this violence occurred between the two communities that traditionally had the most in common. As sailors they were bonded to merchants, lived by the same rhythms dictated by tides and moon, and in the past both venerated the gods of the sea at the same site. However, today religion is seen to make them qualitatively different kinds of people.

The commonalities that both Kharvas and Bhadas claim to have shared in the past have paled in relation to religious differentiation. Social and geographic separation of the two communities has taken on a greater urgency after the violence of the early 1980s. This is reflected in the competitive building of temples and mosques on opposite banks of the river. At a time when Kharva and Bhadala both

use religious signs and actions to separate themselves and declare their social aspirations to others it is impossible to peel away religious constructions from the array of other factors involved. The final three chapters of this thesis explore how material and religious interests among the Bhadala are inseparable, and how one appears as a manifestation of the other.

1.46. Smuggling and material interests

The forth point made in this section about the violence is that although religious categories have become important in understanding confrontation they were not the sole cause. Today, this incident is vaguely described as a reflection of perennial struggle between Hindus and Muslims. The violence, which occurred fourteen years before I arrived in Mandvi, was partially organised, partially spontaneous, but today appears in discourse as an expression of popular feeling, which relates to descriptions of 'others'. The dust had long settled and a few men killing a few other men had become a sign of Hindu–Muslim antipathy. In some ways it haunts all that is presented in this thesis, or, more accurately, its rhetorical and ritualised elaborations pervade the language, action and behaviour of those living in Mandvi and Salaya. In this sense the history of the region imploded in the events of a single week and from that moment on these events became the defining event in local social organisation. However, from the long-term perspective taken in subsequent chapters, it is clear that this incident was, in Jonathan Spencer's words, 'socially meaningful action' (1992:262). The channels of communication and those involved in the violence, at least with a few years hindsight, have been socialised into widely recognised differentials of power and performance among merchants and sailors. This violence has become routinised both in social and rhetorical statements made about it and through the language and behaviour of antipathy that runs through daily life in the town. Informants did confide their opinions and sometimes their roles in the violence, but on the whole, the events themselves remained obscure and mysterious. As a result, no attempt is made to resurrect the events of that period, but only look at how they have come to be understood.

One of the key issues in the accounts given above is ‘smuggling’. The whys-and-wherefores of smuggling have a long history in Kachchh. In modern times, shipping is controlled by a single community with a particular religious identity that appears homologous with their material interests. As a result, smuggling, piracy and other activities of sailors have led to social antagonism on religious grounds. However, the condemnation of smuggling is selective and self-serving: if a Sony television set finds its way off a Bhadala ship and into a Hindu home in Mandvi accusations of ‘anti-nationalism’ and terrorism are not raised. The kinds of attributes given to the goods that are smuggled are the cause of dispute – not the process itself. The predatory activities of sailors have a long history in Kachchh and a brief review will highlight how the related activities of smuggling and piracy have led to a series of disputes that are not defined by the religious identity of their perpetrators or those attempting to right perceived wrongs. The following examples show that it is materialistic interests and the morality of exchange that tend to be the defining features of such disputes.

The British first expressed an interest in Kachchh because of piracy because Dwarka and Haj pilgrims, and British and Indian merchant ships were being indiscriminately plundered (MacMurdo 1856:441). Sometime between 1801 and 1804 a vessel belonging to a Bombay merchant was attacked and a man and a woman were allegedly flung overboard. News of this incident reached Bombay and armed vessels were sent to Okha to seek redress, but returned without having completed their task (LeGrand 1856:447). There is every reason to suspect that Kachchhi merchants were the patrons of this activity because smuggling and piracy were often part of the same process. In order to land goods discreetly, without going through Mandvi port, goods were unloaded onto smaller vessels and the ‘lost’ goods, for which paper work could be produced, were written off to piratical activity. The strategically placed Chalka islands in the Gulf of Kachchh were a safe haven for ‘pirates’ and Mandvi’s mercantile fleet. The importance of the islands for piracy and ‘illicit’ trade led to dispute between the Kachchh Durbar and that of Jamnagar, which

focused on rights to levy taxes on ships passing through the islands. Throughout the nineteenth century, opium, slaves and gold were smuggled into Kachchh, and the acts of piracy and the high level of smuggling deprived the Durbar and the British of taxation revenue. It was evident, however, that the Durbar did not have the power, or the resources, to police the activities of merchants and seaman effectively – a condition that remained throughout the nineteenth century¹. It is a situation that continues today: in 1997 hashish resin with an international market value of sixty crore Rupees was found on a sandbank in the Gulf of Kachchh.

Disputes between the British and Kachchh, Kachchh and Jamnagar, and merchants and Durbar focused around the question of ‘illegality’. It is clear that this notion ‘illegality’ is an ideological smoke screen generated in an attempt to control trade and accrue profit. Present-day accusations of piracy and smuggling are informed by local rumours that feed from and into the Hindu nationalist discourse, which describes all Muslims as inherently anti-national.

It has been argued that the violence of early 1980s was socialised through the channels of authority that have developed around the shipping industry. Broadly, this means that sailors fight the battles of their merchants. In this case the Kharva came to the rescue of the Mandvi Hindu community at large and by tying the feet of the troublesome crew forced the Bhadala to retreat to their village. The Kharvas claim to have been defeated by Muslim invaders at the Shiva temple at Somnath. Rhetorically, their victory over the Bhadala is cast as a revenge for this defeat, which is explored in the following section through an exploration of the relationship between nationalist discourse and the local Hindu rumour mill in Mandvi.

¹ M. G. S. A., P. D. 1876. Kutch. Vol. X. No. 306. *Kutch. Post Office. Regarding customs duties leviable on Banghy parcels and the detention of mails by the officials of the Durbar.*

1.47. Hindu nationalist discourse

Hansen's third critical dimension for the reproduction of communalised images is the formation, organisation and dissemination of political identities around the discourses of 'others' (1999:207). This section addresses the wider theme of Hindu nationalism and how it impacts on Mandvi. Here, Hansen's argument is that although there are frequently differences between nationalist discourse and its local manifestations there is a clear relationship between the two.

There is a remarkable similarity between the socio-political geography of Mandvi and Salaya and the socio-political geography of the sub-continent of India. The town is partitioned by a river. On one bank lies a fledgling Muslim settlement inhabited by people stressing the fundamentals of the Koran and looking to the Middle East for political allegiances. On the other lies a town of diverse and heterogeneous population rooted more in the political traditions of India as a nation state and living through similar highs and lows to the state itself. On the same riverbank the walled compound of a new Hindu temple rises from amid the gravestones of an ancient Muslim cemetery. Without pushing the analogy any further the grounds for comparison are clear between the geography of the town, the division of the sub-continent, and the location of its contested religious sites.

India's most widely publicised current political drama has revolved around a battle between Hindus and Muslims for the control of contested religious sites. Many of these celebrated places are located in the country's ancient centres of pilgrimage and popular piety. The most important of these battles is the series of agitations that have focused on the sacred Hindu temple town of Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh. Over the last decade large numbers of people have died throughout India in clashes led by self-styled servants of the Hindu god Ram, known as *kar sevaks*, who pledged themselves to reclaim the now-famous site of the Babri Masjid (mosque) in Ayodhya. The leaders of these Hindus publicly declared their desire to reclaim the site, demolish the mosque and construct a new Hindu temple on the spot, because at

some disputed point in the past it is held that Muslim conquerors built the mosque on the birthplace of the royal warrior-god Ram.

Hinduism is the majority 'religion' in India and has often been described as a related assortment of many faiths, doctrines and sects, rather than an integrated religion. This is disputed by the leaders of the new Hindu nationalism who present Hinduism as a unified religion that is naturally fitting to the country (van der Veer 1994:28). The new Hindu political groups, such as the BJP, are attempting to redraw the country's history within the divine landscape of the continent. India has become the Hindu motherland, which was torn asunder by the partition. At the time of partition Pakistan was envisioned as a Muslim homeland, yet more Muslims elected to stay in India than to leave and set up home in either East or West Pakistan. This is ignored in Hindu nationalist rhetoric, which plots onto the land of India sacred connections in the landscape between shrines, pilgrimage destinations, centres of royal Hindu power and mythological events. Rivers, mountains and whole regions are inscribed with the sacred past. Lying behind the gaudy colours of the new cartography are the terrains of battle and defeat at the hands of the 'invading' Muslims. Hindu social grandeur is viewed as having fallen at foreign hands. The most elevated of these evils are the Moguls, who are reputed to have built the mosque in Ayodhya, but the demonisation of the 'other' extends generally to all Muslims. The ruins and archaeological traces in the deserts of Rajasthan, and on the plains of northern India, are being reinvented as contested sites of wrongdoing and injustice. Hindu nationalists are animating the landscape, and in the process they are recreating religious contest and dispute in order to reclaim the past and the land as their own.

Part of the Hindu nationalist myth is that Islam spread into Asia from Arabia through conquest and holy war. It is not widely known, either in India or in the West today, that Islam actually penetrated India largely as the religion of trade and through the activities of mendicants (S. Bayly 1992). In Hindu nationalist discourse, Muslims are seen as a foreign incursion to the natural land of Hinduism. The partition stirred

up feelings of mistrust and made Hindu–Muslim relations much worse, and during the subsequent bad relations between India and Pakistan the Muslims in India are seen as agents deliberately weakening the strength of India’s position (van der Veer 1994:10). Furthermore, Muslims are perceived to form a homogenous community that actively seeks political affiliation and financial support from the Middle East. They are seen as exclusive and expansionist, a view that contributes to their image as violent, intolerant and seeking political dominance (Hansen 1999:150–152). This is the picture drawn by the nationalist rhetoric of the Hindu right, and these kinds of issues find particular social expressions among Hindus in Mandvi. The process of Islamic reform in Salaya engages with the discourse of Hindu nationalism in quite specific ways. But, as the following chapters make clear, in Mandvi this political stereotype is not as abstract as it might appear (see Hansen 1999:211) because in Mandvi, anti-Muslim Hindu rhetoric is graphically represented by the houses rising from the opposite riverbank and by those who live in them. The image is not an abstraction but a reality that not only inhabits political discourse but also lives in the village on the opposite bank of the river.

In the last thirty years the material and religious interests of the Bhadala have coincided. In the years before, this was not the case as their economic interests were bonded to those of Shia Muslims, the sectarian divide separated the religious interests of merchants and sailors. There were traditionally three groups of Shias in Mandvi: Daudi Vohras, Isna Ashari Khojas and Aga Khani Khojas. Although most of them have left the town their past influence continues to be heavily felt. All three groups employed Bhadala sailors on their ships and traditionally, merchants were religiously exclusive. Thus patron-client relations between them were not of a proselytising nature. Now that the Bhadala control capital, and are producing their own constituencies of sailors, their religious (‘Sunni’) and material interests coincide. The resulting pattern of religious polarisation presently corresponds to polarised economic engagement. In Mandvi the Bhadala lived as sailors bonded to the economic and material interests of their patrons, while now, as patrons in Salaya, they have their own space and their own clients bonded to their interests. However,

these interests are not always homologous with the majority of the Mandvi population, and, as shown, this can lead to violence.

1.5. Divine tensions within Islam

Having given the general background, this section lays out the main theoretical issue addressed in the thesis in terms of social and religious divisions found among Muslims, the creation of social ‘others’, and the role of migration and pilgrimage within their tradition.

In a wide variety of contemporary studies of Muslims it is possible to identify a tension between universalist and particularist religious tendencies. This is manifest in contrasts between: ‘Great’ and ‘Little’ traditions or *sharia*-minded Islam and mysticism (Eickelman 1981:202–203), and what Ernest Gellner (1969:7–8) calls ‘type p’ and ‘type c’ (for similar divisions in ethnography see Barth 1965; Lewis 1961; Evans-Pritchard 1954; and van der Veer 1992). The former instance relates to a stress being placed on scripture, literacy, puritanism, monotheism, egalitarianism, sobriety, and the absence of mediators and graven images. The latter is characterised by ‘anthropolatry’ (Gellner 1969:8), personalised relationships with the divine, social and religious hierarchy, ritual elaboration and proliferation of the sacred in the landscape. The apparent universality of this division means that the basis for variation cannot simply be located in specific social contexts. H.A.R. Gibb argues that this division is inherent in the theological construction of Islam in relation to the humanity of its adherents: a tension between a transcendental God and an immanent God. Transcendentalism is the otherness, pervasiveness and absoluteness of God, while immanence is expressed through love, subtlety and saintly charisma (1972:38). In the material that follows, access to the transcendental God does not require the patronage of intermediaries, while, more often than not, the immanent God does, and broadly, this corresponds to a division between Muslims in Salaya and Mandvi.

1.51. 'The Natural History of Religion'

Such ideas have a long history, which can be traced back to the philosopher David Hume (1998). The questions outlined by Hume and subsequently elaborated by Gellner (1969, 1970, 1974, 1981) and Gibb (1972) form the theoretical hypothesis for the ethnographic material presented in this thesis. This being the case an outline of Hume's argument is given below. In 'The Natural History of Religion' (1998), Hume presents two principal arguments concerning the nature of religious development in human society. The main and oft quoted part of this essay (and the 'Discourses' frequently published along with it) describes the historical transition from less rational polytheistic religions to more rational monotheistic religious expressions. The argument runs as follows: polytheism, man's original religion, emerged from the unknown causes of human misfortune being ascribed human characteristics; from this monotheism emerged because particular gods became increasingly important and eventually lost their anthropomorphic qualities. Importantly, in this part of the argument Hume describes the process of particular men becoming powerful in society and associating themselves with particular gods, which in turn become all-powerful:

in an idolatrous nation, that though men admit the existence of several limited deities, yet is there some one God, whom, in a particular manner, they make the object of their worship and adoration ... his votaries will endeavour by every art, to insinuate themselves into his favour; and supposing him to be pleased, like themselves, with praise and flattery, there is no eulogy or exaggeration, which will be spared in their addresses to him ... Thus they proceed; till at last they arrive at infinity itself, beyond which there is no further progress (1998:154–155).

The second part of Hume's argument is more subtle. He argues that as deities emerge as unified and infinite they become too abstract for vulgar human nature that turns once again to intermediaries and lesser gods. So having elevated a particular deity to perfection:

Such refined ideas, being somewhat disproportioned to vulgar comprehension, remain not long in their original purity; but require to be supported by the notion of inferior mediators or subordinate agents, which interpose between mankind and their supreme deity. These demi-gods or middle beings, partaking more of human nature, and being more familiar to us, become the chief objects of devotion, and gradually recal [*sic*] that idolatry, which had been formerly banished by the ardent prayers and panegyrics of timorous and indigent mortals (1998:159).

Yet this process is again reversible, and as polytheism degenerates a shift towards monotheism will be evident:

as these idolatrous religions fall every day into grosser and more vulgar conceptions, they at last destroy themselves, and by the vile representations, which they form of their deities, make the tide turn again towards theism. But so great is the propensity, in this alternate revolution of human sentiments, to return back to idolatry, that the utmost precaution is not able to effectually prevent it (1998:159–160).

Thus Hume argues that there is a ‘flux and reflux’ in the human mind that leads to a tendency to rise from idolatry to theism or from polytheism to monotheism and then for this process to lapse into polytheism (1998:158–159). Clearly, in these sections of the work Hume confuses idolatry with polytheism because monotheism and idolatry are not mutually exclusive categories. However, the more general criticism Gellner aims at Hume is that the two main strands of argument are contradictory or at least the former is a mere historical observation rather than a point of sociological or philosophical note (1970:235). This appears to be the case, but Hume’s attack on the rationality of religious thought, and especially Christian rationality, was veiled in order to protect him from the orthodox establishment. As John Robertson ironically writes in an introduction to a 1889 edition:

The ostensible draft of the treatise ... is to make out that whereas ignorant people cannot rightly conceive the power interpenetrating an infinite universe, more cultured people may; but that is a thesis which for any thoughtful reader serves to refute itself. He, at least, who in these days can suppose that the scanty knowledge possible to the wisest of

mankind will serve to bridge the gulf between finity and infinitude, is already past all misleading (1889:xxiii-xxiv).

These observations, I think, get to the heart of Hume's thesis in which he points towards the 'irrationality' of all belief in terms of the structure and limitations of the human mind. He does this through a presentation of a common sense view of the evolution of religion (from polytheism to monotheism) and then turns this subtly upside down by concluding with 'flux and reflux', where monotheism has the capacity to create polytheistic religious orders.

Gellner regards Hume's theory as too psychologistic, because it locates what Gellner terms the 'pendulum swing' (rather than 'flux and reflux') in the human heart and not in the societies where change is occurring (1981:11). As a result of this criticism, Gellner applies the ideas to historical shifts in Moroccan society. He concludes that the processes Hume describes are evident, but that the ways in which they are structured in Islam differ dramatically from the ways in which they are present in Christianity, because:

in Christianity, the religious tradition characterised by syndrome C [Catholic] is central. It had the greatest continuity over time and the greatest extension territorially and in numbers. It is the religious traditions of syndrome P [Protestant] which are fragmented territorially and in organisation, and which have perhaps a lesser continuity in time, or at any rate those extant at present have a lesser depth in time than has the main tradition (1970:237).

The implication is that, unlike Christianity, in the Islamic tradition 'type p' is central and 'type c' is peripheral. However, it is made clear in following chapters that 'type p' exists as a variable and contextual set of practices, also recognised among those resembling 'type c', as a powerful and authentic religious form. 'Type p' is thus used as an example for reforming those of 'type c' because it already holds significant moral and historical sway. The major difference between the two syndromes is the position of 'saints': variously venerated in the 'type c' tradition and dismissed by those of 'type p' as adjunct polytheistic corruptions. The figures that

occupy these 'saintly' positions for Muslims in western India are not directly comparable to Christian saints (see Brown 1981). As Turner argues for the Christian tradition, we cannot know what counts as a 'saint' independent of the procedures, institutions, and labels given by the centralised authority of the church (1974:60). This contrasts markedly with those considered to be saints in western India because 'sainthood' is a potential given at birth to a select few; the procedures, institutions and terminology that surround the saint are decentralised, heterodox and are primarily determined by the personality and gifts of the 'saint' – as well as by the kind of relationship he maintained with his devotees.

Having identified a pervasive tension among Muslims in a wide variety of contexts, a further problem emerges which is beautifully summarised by Gellner: 'the saints [embodied forms of religious particularism] confer an appearance of Islam for local practices and cults, or, to put it the other way around, express and facilitate reverence for Islam by giving it a local and personal anchorage' (1969:301). The problem in presenting a coherent analysis is a matter of defining a perspective. This thesis addresses Muslim religious reform among the Bhadala of Salaya, who are reforming themselves, but through apprenticeship, are also reforming those who work for them. From this perspective, 'universalistic' Islam is located in Salaya, while 'particularistic' Islam is to be found in Mandvi. This is something of a simplification, but is the way in which the problem can be most clearly expressed. The potential logical and ethnographic circularity in this case is best conveyed by the following anecdote. Frequently, I would sit with a Muslim shopkeeper in Mandvi and listen to him talk about how he profited from Bhadala customers because they were so stupid he could overcharge them. However, in shipyards the Bhadala would say how stupid Muslims in Mandvi were because they had no idea of the value of the goods they traded in, but the Bhadala had no objection to paying higher prices if it meant they could help the poor and the deluded. To avoid a similarly inwardly spiralling argument the problem is presented from the Bhadala's perspective and this necessarily involves characterising the 'particularist' from their own perspective on 'universalism'. In the following chapters, the tensions (as 'flux and reflux') between

immanence and transcendentalism among Muslims in western India are outlined and the relationship between them is explored through the experiences of apprentices who move from the social milieu of one to the working environment of the other. There is an additional tension in this context between Muslims and Hindus (discussed above) and this affects the way in which those with a tendency towards universality construct their opposition towards those they consider to be particularist.

1.52. Islam and charisma

Implicit in Hume's writing is the notion that powerful individuals become associated with particular forms of deity that become transcendental as a result. This idea later finds more concrete expressions in Max Weber's concept of 'authority', especially as 'charisma' and 'elective affinity'. In Weber's view, social force and power are underpinned by the ways in which they are made to appear legitimate, which is in part given by the constituents of the power coming to understand it through ascribing its purpose to their most mundane activities (Eisenstadt 1968:46–65).

Weber identified three types of belief system that legitimise relations of domination: legal (rational), traditional and charismatic (Eisenstadt 1968:46). The material presented in this thesis concentrates primarily on the traditional and the charismatic. Traditional forms of authority rest on habitual attitudes and beliefs in the legitimacy of standardised and sanctified practices. Charismatic domination is characterised by obedience, not to the rules or traditions, but to a person of imputed holiness, heroism or some other extraordinary quality (see Shils 1965). The death of a charismatic individual leads to the devolution of their charisma into 'charisma of office' or 'hereditary charisma'. Charismatic enterprise necessarily involves the creation of new obligations, ideas and social relationships. In this sense charisma challenges the existing order and creates new institutions and social formations, through which charisma (as extraordinary) is made routine and mundane. There are three further important points to make about Weber's characterisation of charisma. First, charisma emerges during periods of social strain or rapid social change,

making it possible for more than one charismatic figure to emerge, prompting competition for clients and disciples. The period of rapid social change from which charismatic figures emerge in Salaya is given by the shifting economic and social relationships structured around the shipping industry. For now it is sufficient to say that traditional Muslim sailors became merchants, while other traditionally high-ranking Muslims have become sailors on Bhadala ships. Secondly, charismatic enterprise crucially depends on disciples adopting the social values of their leader. Here Weber's argument seems to depend on a materialistic explanation for the enchantment of charisma, in the sense that, there is an 'elective affinity' between the 'ideal' features of charisma and the sociologically generated 'material' interests of social classes and status groups. This is clearly expressed by Bryan Turner in his analysis of Weber and Islam:

This 'pure' [ideal] charisma is devotion to the person and not to the benefits of his miracle-working or magic. For the charismatic leader, his authority derives from a special calling, independent of his magical powers and mass following ... the mass of people, according to Weber, will follow charismatic leaders who are capable of supplying 'empirical' evidence of their authority in terms of magic or booty and, without a mass following, it is difficult to speak of a leader being charismatic. Accordingly, there seems to be an inescapable incompatibility between genuine and successful charisma: pure charisma depends on devotion to the person, but successful charisma is based on devotion to his works ... The relationship which emerges, between leader and followers *is not so much a discipleship relation but a patron-client pattern* in which a leader supplies booty in return for adherence (1974:24-25; [my italics]).

In shipyards the technical and biographic processes of apprenticeship (clientship) lead to the neophyte adopting the social values of their patrons through coercion and commodity and other material transactions. In chapters 4-7, Weber's notion of 'charisma' underlies the discussion of contemporary anthropological theory concerned with the exchange relationships of 'big-men' (Mines 1988; and Mines and Gourishankar 1990) and centre-periphery exchange relations (Raheja 1988) in the production and maintenance of status. However, in Chapter 7, it is argued that this

process is not only the product of charismatic leadership, but also reflects widely held assumptions about the nature of learning and social status in Muslim society.

Thirdly, Weber characterises charisma as emerging from traditionally held concepts (as if a reinterpretation of them) rather than a revelatory new phase. In this sense, the language and concepts used in charismatic leadership are those drawn from pre-existing patterns of knowledge and language. Throughout the second half of the thesis the argument is developed that the Bhadals' pre-eminence emerges from a social transformation based on traditional social categories of 'merchant' and 'sailor'. Furthermore, and less obviously, their position is based on a transformation of the power of divine mediators to which their religious reform is seemingly opposed, a process in which Hume's 'flux and reflux' is evident.

The following chapters identify two kinds of charisma: one premised on divine mediation and descent, the second is on commodified mediation between Kachchh and the ports of the Indian Ocean, which correspond to the division between immanent and transcendental divinity outlined above. There is competition between the two, but elements of all of Weber's conditions for the emergence and operation of charisma are self-evident in both. Here the approach taken differs from that of both Hume and Gellner. Hume implicitly located charismatic authority in the moment that particular powerful individuals or groups gained power and became associated a particular deity, who, because of the association, became infinite. Gellner, in keeping with his argument about the opposite relations of power being found in Islam and Christianity, locates charisma in the polytheistic traditions of Moroccan Islam that may or may not have developed out of monotheism. The material presented in the following chapters locates charisma in both transcendental and immanent forms of Islam, but distinguishes them through discussions on the role of migration, descent and conceptions of space and place.

1.53. Pilgrimage and travel

The central argument in this thesis is that Islamic reform is a reflection of the life experiences of those who patronise it, and this finds expression in the conflict between transcendental and immanent forms of deification. Although the focus is on a specific group of men in a specific place, the processes described can be seen in other Muslim societies (see Eickelman 1976; and Roy 1983). Such parallels arise from the centrality of travel and the role of personality in Muslim society. The role of exemplary personality is examined in the following section. This section examines the role of travel as Haj and *hijra*, the latter is of particular note given the structure of apprenticeship described in chapters 5–7.

Pilgrimage and long-distance trading are often related, the Haj being the pre-eminent example. Likewise, the historical population movements, referred to in Chapter 3, were often connected to religious expansion, the spread of ideas and most importantly to the construction of a public sphere outside the homeland in which new forms of national and religious identity were (and are) imagined (van der Veer 1994:108). Although Haj is the most famous form of pilgrimage associated with Muslims there are other forms of travel that ‘suggest an integrated vision among believers of “local” religious practices with those of the “central” rituals such as the pilgrimage’ (Eickelman 1981:222). These include travel to local shrines, which in Kachchh means travel to Haji Pir, and at a regional level means travel to Haji Ali in Bombay, and various forms of pilgrimage of a lesser order that are not conventionally thought of as such, but are considered as pilgrimage among sailors. Haj is a marker of religious and social differentiation between ship owners and sailors, as the significant expenses involved in the Haj place it out of the reach of most sailors. However, the routes sailors voyage during the sailing season (to and from the Gulf States) are constructed as a pilgrimage of a lesser order. This crucial religious sign is discussed further in Chapter 6, in relation to the way the Gulf region is imagined by those who do not travel. From this perspective the sailors are seen as

communing with the sacred populations and atmospheres of the Gulf, which gives them a social prestige out of the reach of most of those who do not sail or travel.

The second form of travel that has a significant tradition among Muslims is *hijra*. The term literally means to 'abandon', 'to break ties with someone' (Masud 1990:30), but it also has connotations relating to migration. Primarily, it refers to the Prophet's flight from Mecca to Medina in AD 622. Those who accompanied the Prophet left behind their property and broke their ties with all Muslims and non-Muslims remaining in Mecca (Masud 1990:31). This migration is seen as an obligation to move from *dar al-kafir* (non-Muslim lands, also *dar al-harb*) to establish *dar al-islam* (Muslim lands or lands of submission). In the ethnographic context elaborated in this thesis the opposition is a reality of life experience and a key metaphor in the social transformation of apprentices in shipyards. Eickelman and Piscatori argue that *hijra* is a spiritual migration, a transition from accommodating state authority to resisting it because of a growing realisation of its illegitimacy, and a transition from poverty through an association with specific Islamic movements (1990:11). The transition from non-Muslim lands to establish a Muslim land is both a metaphor and reality among those living in Salaya. The Bhadals' migration from Mandvi to Salaya over the last century is construed as a spiritual move towards wealth and legitimacy, and as a rejection of the dominant social forms in Mandvi. The biographic construction of *hijra* from Mandvi to Salaya dominates the metaphors of social and religious reform, and is especially potent because the migration is replicated by apprentices who originate in *dar al-kafir* but go to work in *dar al-islam*.

This raises the question of what makes *dar al-islam*. The Bhadala follow the Hanafi legal tradition, although they do not often articulate this association, preferring to simply call themselves 'Sunnis,' and in doing so they deny the doctrinal relativity of orthodoxy. However, the fact that they are associated with the Hanafi tradition has a number of implications for the creation of *dar al-islam* and its relationship to *dar al-kafir*. This tradition stresses the importance of the territory

colonised by *hijras*, and the total severance of property relations between *dar al-kafir* (Mandvi) and *dar al-islam* (Salaya). Thus, territory is vital in Hanafi conceptions of identity and the execution of law. Consequently:

a Muslim who does not migrate *from dar al-harb*, although a Muslim, is to be governed by the rules of *dar al-harb*. This is why Hanafis allow transactions by Muslims in *dar al-harb* that are not allowed in *dar al-islam* (Musud 1990:39).

This relationship is reproduced in relations between ship owners and their sailors, and allows *seths* to enter into usury relationships outside Salaya. By constructing a homeland in this way, they also create space outside of which predatory capitalism and other kinds of activity prohibited within their version of Islam can be conducted. So what differentiates the lands of the unbeliever from that of Islam? In Salaya this is taken to mean that no open restrictions are placed upon the sale and consumption of meat products (stopping short of beef), that Friday and religious holidays are observed, spiritual intermediaries are not patronised, the construction of mosques and religious monuments is not subject to the planning laws of the non-believers, and the call to prayer is not subject to restriction.

Haj and *hijra* are both defining realities and metaphors in the lives, practices and rhetoric of the ship owners. The *hijra* is the central idiom of geographical and social differentiation between the lands that lie to either side of the river estuary, while the Haj and the lesser pilgrimages of the shipping season ensure a circulation of people, goods and information between the satellite communities and the homeland. For many Muslims the Haj is a lifetime ambition, long-distance travel is thus part and parcel of Muslim identity. Central to these migrations, and to the whole Muslim tradition, is the ideal figure of the Prophet Mohammed. The migration from the land of the non-believer to form *dar al-islam* is one that is modelled on the life experiences of the Prophet himself. The Haj and ship routes take the pilgrim on journeys along invisible lines that Muslims create through religious and domestic architecture, prayer, and posture at sleep and burial. As Barbara Metcalf suggests, the Haj allows the pilgrim to 'hone himself to the prophetic model, the person of the

Prophet Muhammad, in whose footsteps on this occasion he can literally walk' (1990:100–101).

1.54. The Prophet: charisma and performance

The ideal example of life offered by the Prophet Mohammed is a highly elevated model for social action among the Muslims of Mandvi and Salaya. This elevation contains within it notions of kingship and patronage as well as behavioural and social sanctions. Before exploring these issues, an outline is provided below of the social characteristics represented by the exemplary figure of the Prophet. Among Muslims, especially those of Salaya, the image of the Prophet is held in infallible esteem as a model of dignity, wisdom, temperance, levity, reputation and fortitude. His character is the basis for ideal human behaviour. His example forms the basis of canonical prayer, personal dignity, absence of hypocrisy, decorum, modesty, wisdom, and personal and social order. In sum, his charisma is of the highest human order.

Throughout this thesis various forms of social hierarchy are described that reflect the organisation of the 'brotherhood' of Islam. The case is made that this metaphor itself implies precisely ordered hierarchical social relationships within the fold. It is argued that all social relationships are expressed through various kinds of dyadic bonds of superiority and inferiority – especially between brothers. The same relationships of the human world are reproduced in relation to God. In Mandvi, those who are seen as being closest to the divine realm are Saiyeds, who claim they are descended from Fatima, the Prophet's daughter. They are also taken as the most elaborated example of corrupt Islam by the Bhadala. As argued in Chapter 3, Saiyeds are seen as being closer to Mohammed, and the divine, because of their blood. The inherent immutable qualities in this descent line are captured in the term *barakat* (commonly *baraka*), which is conventionally taken to mean the blessing, holiness and spiritual power inherent in a saint (Metcalf 1984:373). In this thesis, the term *barakat* is used in a broader social sense, as a quality that is not only reserved for descendants of the Prophet. Gellner argues that '*baraka*' is also manifest in

prosperity and magical powers (1969:xvii), which he further argues is about as close to the sociologist's notion of 'charisma' as one could hope to find (1969:12), albeit routinised through kinship. It is argued that the material facts of prosperity and success are also infused with the quality of *barakat*. Although the 'kind' of charisma to which such ideas are tied varies from Saiyed to *seth* both figures are seen as embodying *barakat*.

A living expression of *barakat* is the degree of congruence between the ideal model of the Prophet and the individual *seth*, Saiyed and some others. The relative status of individuals within the divine hierarchy is, to a large part, determined by their social performance. Public actions and the condition of the soul are seen as having a reciprocal relationship, likewise, social boundaries are based on wealth, status, and the natural facts of blood and substance. Equally important are the less tangible attributes, such as claims to august lineage, the possession of sacred knowledge and a reputation for piety and civility. For the most part, charismatic figures are attributed with positive aspects of all of the above. However, such claims are mutually reinforcing: traders (Bhadalas) acquire a reputation for piety through patronage of religious sites, just as Saiyeds also accrue considerable wealth from attracting large numbers of devotees. Likewise, there is the question of the appropriateness of behaviour. A young shipyard apprentice holding his posture and serenity as if he were a saint would be strongly disapproved of, and besides, he would not be able to labour.

In Mandvi, carefully measured behaviour modelled on the example of the Prophet is described as *adat*, which is frequently conflated with the term *adab*. Metcalf offers a very general definition of *adab* as comprehensively referring to knowledgeable discrimination, correct order, behaviour, taste, refinement and respect (1984:2–4). Although Metcalf never makes explicit the relationship between the image of the Prophet and *adab*, the implication in her work is that one is a reflection of the other. This perspective, that ideal behaviour (as a form of *adat*) is a reflection of the ideal of moral exemplification offered by the Prophet, is also taken here. However, into

this equation the qualities of *barakat*, as signs of prosperity and magical (mediating) abilities, should be introduced. In this sense *adat* and *barakat* are to be considered in the same light as pervasive social qualities and attributes that, although concentrated in certain lineages, are not certainly restricted to those lineages. Charismatic individuals appear closer to the image of the Prophet for the reasons discussed above, which in turn means they have positively evaluated *adat* and *barakat*, but they are never equal to his image. It follows that those who appear next to eminent individuals also benefit from their proximity to the divine, and so on. In Chapter 7, this hierarchy is shown to have a pronounced material expression, evidenced by an analysis of commodity flows. The pervasive sense of social organisation is that if you cannot be a mountain yourself then you should attach yourself to one.

In the ethnographic material presented in following chapters parallels are drawn between the divine figure of the Prophet and other related conceptions of eminence such as kingship, sainthood and ship owning. Both forms of charismatic leadership, of saints and *seths*, are related to the figure of the Prophet Mohammed and both draw upon his image and his model for behaviour. However, the first relies heavily on notions of descent and patrimony, while the latter relies more on legitimising a model of religion among clients in which *seths* appear closer to Allah because of their abundant wealth and their ability to patronise a particular vision of Islamic purity.

1.55. Learning

The relationship between an individual and the divine model is prefaced with the idea that there is a reciprocal relationship between outer actions and the inner condition of the soul. However, the habits and postures of the Prophet exist in the *hadith* literature, which to predominantly illiterate shipyard apprentices remains in the abstract. Therefore, a key relationship is between those who embody exemplary characteristics and their aspirants. This in turn requires a conception of appropriate relations of learning between 'masters' and 'apprentices'. Muslim social life,

relationships and political life have a close relationship to religious law. Therefore, it follows that 'expertise on proper social arrangements, and on matters pertaining to God, are one and the same thing' (Gellner 1981:1). In this thesis three conceptions and styles of learning are addressed. The first is the recent anthropological literature on what has become known as 'practice theory', as exemplified by the work of Jean Lave and Seth Chaiklin (1993) discussed in Chapter 5. The second is an attempt at describing an 'ethnographic practice theory' through an examination of how apprentices in shipyards consider their attention to task and detail (see chapters 5 and 6). The third, discussed primarily in Chapter 7, is the style of learning that has been traditionally dominant in Mandvi. The most common form of religious learning in Muslim society is at the Koran school, and while Koran schools are an important part of Muslim education in Mandvi, the dominant style of education remains the long-term apprenticeship to a spiritual master, also reflected in commercial apprenticeships. In this relationship the student is supposed to behave as if they were a 'dead body in the hands of its cleanser' (Eickelman 1981:225), that is to say malleable in mind, body and wealth before the Saiyed. In Chapter 7, it is argued that this model underlies the basis of shipyard apprenticeship and that the same qualities of *adat* and *barakat* ascribed to the Saiyed also surround the *seth* – although in different forms. The transformation from one system to the other is expressed and experienced in crossing the river, from *dar al-kafir* to *dar al-islam*.

1.56. Tradition: I say unto you ... but it is written

The *kafir-islam* opposition is equated to a traditional-modern dichotomy and marked by the river. 'Tradition' and 'traditional' are words that appear frequently in the following chapters and some word of explanation is needed before moving on to the discussion of fundamentalism below. The terms 'traditional' and 'modern' are not used in this thesis as referents to social evolution that gradually divests society of religious identity, and as such is a departure from Weber's characterisation of modernity and Islam (see Huff and Schluchter 1999). It is common in anthropological writing to deny the legitimacy of the opposition of the traditional and

the modern as false value-laden judgements (see Boyer 1990). However, religious tension is expressed in these terms in shipyards and appears as such within this thesis. This distinction is necessarily asymmetrical: 'rationality' (in a sense) ranks above 'superstition' and 'corruption'. This division also carries with it a model of time that is based upon the biographies of movement of the Bhadala and their perceptions of the distant past when they lived in ignorance as Hindus. It is important to note that the Bhadala deny 'tradition' in their practices, rather, they see what they do as new and as a deliberate rejection of what they construe to be traditional. In this sense, the Bhadala *seths* deviate from Weber's characterisation of charismatic leaders because they do not hark back to an idealised past, which for Weber was a key instrument of charismatic leadership.

It is shown in chapters 4 and 6 that the Bhadala do not hold a cherished version of the past as their model of social perfection. However, in order for the reform process to work they have to invent the traditions of 'others'. These 'others' are Mandvi's Muslims and Hindus, who are variously placed on a social evolutionary trajectory. Hindus are the most primitive life form, of middle rank are Mandvi's Muslims, while the ultimate product of this trajectory are the Bhadala themselves. This language importantly gives a spatial dimension to time, where population movements, such as the Bhadala's *hijra*, plot onto the landscape their own past and their own modernity. This language uses idioms such as *deshi* (that of the country) to refer to the negatively constructed past; while *pak* (pure), *saru* (good), 'proper', and *line uppa chhe* (on the line) refer to the positively evaluated modernity. These terms are pervasive and refer to people, religious practices, life styles and commodities.

The evaluative descriptions of 'others' are drawn from the experiences of Bhadala men with rival populations. In this sense, the invention of the traditions of 'others' is produced from social interaction that involves a specific distribution of roles between people, a specific type of criteria to evaluate their utterances, and specific kinds of representation about social categories, such as that offered by religious texts. One of the roles played by texts is to represent a particular type of legitimacy that is

associated more with the power relations between men than it is to the text itself. As is shown to be the case with MacMurdo's earthquake reports, text is an important marker of legitimacy. However, rather than textual inscription only acting as a source of fixed information (see Boyer 1990:114; and Goody 1968:1-3), the content of the text is often immaterial in relation to the material it is presented as containing. In this case the text is presented as saying that the earthquake of 1819 dammed the source of irrigation water for Kachchh. The fact that the text does not say this is immaterial, rather, legitimacy is drawn from the fact that this interpretation is attached to a text well known to exist. This process is further exacerbated by the power relations involved in conveying this kind of information. Typically, a teacher would inform a class or a journalist would inform the readership of a newspaper that the earthquake associated with Muslims caused the drought conditions that today prevail in Kachchh. In both cases the power relationships are highly skewed in favour of the narrator. Likewise, when a senior sailor says to an apprentice "it says in the Koran that you should not urinate in the direction of the sun because you will get a headache", he is doing the same thing: I say unto you ... but it is written. Such mediation is not fully enchanted in the eyes of the recipient, because when a rich man does not tell the truth people will say that he does, and when a poor man tells the truth people may say he lies. But the examples of shipyard humour discussed in Chapter 6 reinforce this general point.

1.57. Fundamentalism?

The new minarets that tower above Salaya are signs of the Bhadals' new wealth and religious identity, and a reflection of the source of inspiration for their religious activities. The style of architecture is taken from the Gulf States. Mosques are the pre-eminent sign of Islamic piety and devotion in the village. The process of strengthening Islamic identity is variously called extremism, revivalism, fundamentalism or a return to the fundamentals. Throughout this thesis the term 'reform' is used because the process that is occurring in Salaya is just that: a *reforming* of the structure of religious hierarchy and the markers of orthodoxy.

There seem to be two broad positions on the nature of Islamic reform. The first sees it as something of an illusion because it has always been going on. The second sees it as a new phenomenon that is a recent product of nationalist politics and education. This thesis is based on the assumption that it has been going on for at least a thousand years in the region, but that the form it takes in the present is unique because of the particular biographies of its sponsors. The kind of reform movement under consideration is not well organised, does not have offices or officials to speak of, and does not appear as texts, banners or emblems. In this sense it is quite unlike the Wahhabist movement in Arabia in the eighteenth century, the Sanusi movement in Libya that battled with Turks and later with Italians (Evans-Pritchard 1954) or the Mahdist movement of Sudan who were pitched against the Egyptians and the British (Lewis 1961). Neither is it like the Tablighi-Jamat, Deoband or Bareilly schools of *ulema* in India (see Robinson 1997; and van der Veer 1992, 1994). These religious movements and schools are based firmly on texts and to varying degrees attempt to invoke their own vision of purity in religious action and thought. In Salaya the aims are more modest, the scripture less cited, the methods less orthodox, and although it is clearly an elite phenomenon, such elites would scarcely be considered as such outside the context in which they are eminent. However, reform in Salaya has three things in common with these movements: there are identifiable 'others', which in Salaya means Hindus and Mandvi's Muslims, all are part of the 'universal' aspect of dyadic tension inherent in Islam, and all have experienced problems in the containment of charisma.

Despite these similarities there are two important differences between reform among the Bhadala and other reform movements. The first, as has already been mentioned, is the absence of an idealised past; and the second relates to the process of identifying corrupt or foreign practices. A typical characterisation of Islamic reform would run as follows: select fundamental principles are evoked in response to perceived oppression that revolves around a politically expedient re-conceptualisation of the past; and through this process society is purged of foreign

complications, accretions and infiltrations. Both main elements of this process, the reinvention of the past and the location of the 'foreign', are given particular attention throughout this thesis. In the case of 'the past' the findings presented counter the assumption that reform movements are always based on an 'ideal' moment in history, while locating and describing the 'foreign' is shown to be one of the base metaphors of local Muslim society through which people, things and religious practices are understood. The social environment has been formed by historically contingent evaluations of the meanings of movement and migration, which has led to different values being ascribed to different origins. As a result, and as shown in subsequent chapters, defining what belongs and is authentic and what is adjunct and corrupt is a complicated process.

1.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the tensions, conflicts and themes that produce and represent divisions among Muslims have been outlined. Although to understand the context in which religious reform has developed it is vital to emphasise migration and trade, it is also important to examine the 'Indian' context. The events that have conditioned Bhadala relations with local Hindus and the ways in which the language of Hindu nationalism depicts Muslims have also been described. However, Salaya's Muslims are also Indian. Their historical consciousness is very significantly inflected by the fact that they operate from what was, until independence, a Rajput state. In this sense, to use a nautical metaphor, they inhabit the realms between the devil and the deep blue sea, or, to put it another way, between the social realities of India and the Islamic world. Saying that Muslim merchants and sailors of Mandvi inhabit a realm between regions and ethnographic traditions is one thing, but locating them within that lacuna is a different matter. This again leads back to the question of travel and migration. The lives of sailors and merchants are unlike those of landlubbers, for nine months of the year they are at sea or in foreign ports, they know different things, speak different languages and long for their home with passions unknown to those who have never left. They understand ripples and breakers, clouds, seabirds, the moon

and the effects of these things for wooden vessels cradled in the lap of the ocean. They also know prices and fluctuations in different markets and they move between nation states and continents, staking their lives on profit, trade and voyage.

The next chapter explores the profundity of the division between those who sail and travel and those who do not. This discussion primarily focuses on the Hindu tradition that developed in the dual context of Rajput kingdom and diaspora. The focus is on Hindus because despite the enhanced salience of religious identity as a marker of social separation in the present, I believe that Kachchhi Hindus and Muslims have much in common, not least their love of home in relation to the perils of the Indian Ocean. The themes of contest between Kharvas and Bhadals are primarily expressed in religious terms, but throughout the chapters that follow a number of signs and metaphors of social differentiation frequently occur that are not typically associated with religious polarisation. These include birds, horses, ships and colours (other than saffron and green), as well as more abstract associations with insanity, sexuality, immorality, acumen, blood, status and patterns of leadership. The fact that there is such competition to possess, dispossess and purge particular signs in social traditions points to common humanity of the men of Mandvi and Salaya.

Chapter 2.

Royal endogeny and mercantile exogeny: a model of littoral society

2.1. Tradition in ethnography of peninsular Gujarat

This chapter lays the foundations for an argument that runs throughout subsequent chapters, on the domestication of foreign knowledge and how unregulated alien powers are transformed into a source of liberation or prestige. Highlighted is an ethnographic division in the population between ‘boundary maintainers’ and ‘boundary transgressors’. Those in the latter category are the focus of the remaining chapters.

The ethnography of peninsular Gujarat (Kachchh and Saurashtra) repeatedly points to a structural division between religious, political and social ideologies of rulers and traders. In the nineteenth century Mrs Postens observed:

As a race they [Kachchhis] are proud, dishonest, indolent and cunning; sufficiently ingenious as workmen, and by no means indifferent to the possession of money. To explain this seeming inconsistency in the Cutchee character, it will be necessary to remark that, the population consists of two distinct classes: the military class; and those who reside in towns, and follow trade, or other civil occupations. The former devote themselves to luxurious sensuality, whilst the latter are ... grasping and avaricious (1839a:268).

Postens’ observations signal the start of a tradition in the ethnography of peninsular Gujarat in which the two populations are clearly demarcated and their opposition is viewed as constitutive of dominant social processes. In the shadow of James Tod’s monumental ‘Annals and Antiquities’ (1873), the same division is reiterated in various volumes of ‘Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency’ (1884–1901) and in R. Enthoven’s compendium ‘Tribes and castes of Bombay’ (1920). N. Thoothi’s 1935 publication ‘The Vaishnavas of Gujarat’ was the first work based on

‘fieldwork’ to suggest a radical social divide based on forms of religious practice common among rulers and traders. A.M. Shah and R.G. Shroff’s influential article ‘The Vahīvacā Bārots of Gujarat’ mentions a division between Rajputs and traders, in terms of the way that they construct their lineages (1958:270–271). David Pocock published two articles on caste configuration in Gujarat (1957a, 1957c), and an altogether less conclusive article on social differentiation among Gujaratis in East Africa (1957b). Together, these articles later informed ‘Mind, Body and Wealth’, in which Pocock argues that members of the Patidar caste are shifting from *devi* (goddess) devotional ritual practices and beliefs as they attempt to internally homogenise their identity and increase their status within Gujarati society (1973). In other words, Pocock viewed the Patidar as having shifted from identifying with the traditions of rulers to identifying with those of traders. Harold Tambs-Lyche takes up this mantle in his three-volume Ph.D. thesis ‘Power and Devotion, Religion and Society in Saurashtra’ (1992), which rigidly divides society into ‘kings’ and ‘merchants’. In this work, as the title suggests, different religious orientations of dominant groups are seen to reflect a profound sociological schism: rulers evoke *shakti* (power) of feminine goddesses; while traders are associated with *bhakti* (devotion) as Vaishnavas (those following the incarnations of Vishnu). In a subsequent article he argues:

The frameworks for these [ruler – trader] conceptualizations are different. One is firmly based in Rajput tradition, and assimilates Saurashtra to Rajasthan, not to Gujarat. The other centres on trade and an urban view of “civilisation”. Such frames, by reason of their difference, need to be studied and analysed separately (1994:749).

His thesis was substantially revised before its publication as ‘Power, Profit and Poetry’ (1997), and I take the analysis presented in this later publication as the archetypal model for social segmentation in peninsular Gujarat because it is based firmly in the ethnographic tradition outlined above. Here, Tambs-Lyche argues that religion *and* political alliance cement divisions between rulers and traders:

Hinduism in Saurashtra is not a unitary phenomenon. Its constituent elements may be interpreted to form a 'unity in diversity' - a view held particularly by Brahmans in the traditional set-up - but, on the regional level, Hinduism tends to dissolve into several mutually conflicting sub-systems. The chief opposition, here, parallels the structure of power and economic relations; it divides the merchants from most other communities. Thus there is a structural contradiction between rulers and merchants, parties which are nevertheless dependent on each other in forming traditional Saurashtrian society. Behind the rulers stand the rural, agricultural population, in an alliance known as the *ter tansali* or 'thirteen castes'. The opposition between merchants and rulers, then, is more than just a conflict between the elite; it integrates the rulers with 'the people' and isolates the merchants from them (1997:10).

In this view social division is not of equal competitive groups but a force that alienates traders from the political mandate of rulers and vassal. Tambs-Lyche's 'merchant-ruler opposition' (1997:228) is a difference of 'two world views' (1997:224) that encompasses residence, attitude, profession, social status, religious propriety and transactional preference. This division persuasively conforms to social stereotypes held in western India about the character of the traditional rulers and the accompanying 'trading' cohort. Rulers are famously known as 'Rajputs' of the *varna* category of Kshatriya. Traders are infamous as 'Vaniyas' or 'Baniyas' of the *varna* category of Vaishya. Generally, a 'Rajput' is regarded as belonging to one of the legendary ruling 'clans', while a 'Vania' is a trader. The former stereotype emphasises lineage, descent and territory, while the latter synchronically focuses on occupation. In Mandvi, 'Rajput' and 'Vania' are given a slightly different gloss and this, as argued throughout this chapter, reflects the alternative view of social organisation offered by the ethnography of the coastal regions of the peninsular.

2.11. Stereotypes and 'cultural models'

The art of stereotyping is formulaic and contextual: physical and mental characteristics, location, dress, diet, linguistic colloquialisms, and general dispositions are commonly used to portray 'others'. In this light, 'Rajputs' are sturdy, moustached, hot-blooded, mentally slow, turbaned, rural agriculturalists, consumers

of meat and alcohol, Kachchhi speaking, and prone to violence. This is clearly not exactly how Rajputs perceive themselves. They may accept many of these accusations, but as positive traits. Generally speaking, Rajputs themselves use the term as an explicit association with nobility, royalty and courage – derived from *Rajputra* – the son of a king. In Kachchh, the dominant image of ‘Rajputs’ is akin to the image of ruling Jadejas, the highest in the hypergamic order of Rajputs of peninsular Gujarat (Shah and Shroff 1958:265). ‘Rajput’ (derogatorily *bapu*), also describes Hindu Kshatriya agriculturalists and pastoralists. Although in Mandvi, ‘Rajput’ is not used interchangeably with ‘Kshatriya’, as in other parts of northern India. The main reason for this is that the vast majority of the population, both Hindu and Muslim, claim general Kshatriya ancestry. Thus, the salience of a claim to be Kshatriya, is of little import when it barely distinguishes the ancestry of a Hindu claimant from a Muslim neighbour.

Traders, on the other hand, are stereotyped as thin, mealy, clean-shaven, cold-blooded, calculating, mean, cunning, urban, vegetarian, Kachchhi speaking, parsimonious, grasping and avaricious indeed. In Mandvi, ‘Vania’ refers predominantly to Jains, not to Hindu traders, moneylenders or brokers in general terms. Assiduous British Government servants of the nineteenth century were aware of this distinction, classifying Hindu merchants separately from the ‘Vania’ population (see G.B.P. Vol. IX. Part 1:ii).

This chapter offers an alternative perspective, rather than an iconoclastic assault on ethnographic convention. Mandvi is a littoral town on the margins of peninsular Gujarat and data presented here conflicts with the premises on which the model outlined above is based. The view proffered from the shoreline is not obscure because the ports were of utmost importance. In the nineteenth century, rulers of the regional states, comprising modern Gujarat, grew increasingly dependent on the ports and on those who controlled the flow of resources through them. However, most reliant on those controlling the ports was the general population. Migration from Kachchh was undertaken predominantly by ship and, as a result, those with

trading fleets had a monopoly on the distribution of Kachchh's most precious resource: its people (the subjects of royalty).

Who controlled the ports and the flows of goods, wealth and people? The short answer is that it was neither the rulers nor traders stereotyped above. Tambs-Lyche argues that 'Banias' formed the 'core of the traders' and, although 'this category never monopolised trade completely'; they are 'the cultural model of the trader' (1997:246). This is simply not true for littoral Kachchh. The traditional ports of Mandvi, Mundra and Anjar in Kachchh, and arguably Jamnagar, Porbunder and Vereval in Saurashtra (all with significant numbers of Vanias) are economically and socially dominated by Hindu and Muslim traders, who neither describe themselves, nor are described by others, as 'Banias'. And while Tambs-Lyche (1997:245) and Pocock (1973:115) note the anomalous position of such groups, neither illustrates just how far the power and influence of these non-Vania groups extends into local populations or into the Indian Ocean region. These groups are enmeshed in complex networks throughout the Indian Ocean in which they function as merchants, brokers and financiers. They are traders in every sense (and I refer to them as such in this chapter) – but not 'Vanias' in any sense. This chapter focuses on the role of this small, but vitally important, aggregate of castes known as *mahajan*, which literally means 'great man', 'great life', 'magnate' or 'great procession'. Here it refers primarily to a self-administering mercantile guild, its institutions and its members. There are two *mahajans* in Mandvi, Lohana and Bhatiya, and in each case, guild and population are coterminous and exclusive.

Although this chapter does not focus on the role of gifting and constituency building, important ideas throughout the thesis and in terms of *mahajan* organisation, it is relevant to briefly say something on them in relation to the debate outlined above. Following Gloria Rajeha's distinction between the 'right to give' and the 'obligation to receive' (1988), and McKim Marriot's distinction between 'maximal' and 'minimal' transactors (1976), Tambs-Lyche suggests that the transactional aims and motivations of rulers and traders also differ:

The first exploit the transaction to gain rank; the second avoid it to escape being outranked. While the Bania [trader], avoiding contact to escape impurity, is an example of the latter, the king or dominant caste exemplifies the former. Thus an aristocrat, and consequently a Rajput, should appear as a donor in as many situations as possible (1997:103).

In Kachchh, the ruler's propensity to give is based on his religious position as sacrificer and his dominant position within the kingdom. The argument presented here relies on the ritual centrality of the rulers (see Raheja 1988), but, rather than the position of the dominant land-holding caste being grounded in a simple centre-periphery ritual configuration, it is argued, that in Mandvi the ritual centrality of the king is recreated by traders within the encompassing fold of rulers. In other words, traders' ritual and social organisation replicates that of their rulers. Traders have vassals with whom they entertain relationships of transaction and their own sense of kingdoms over which they rule. Certainly the prestations of traders are related to gaining status and appearing as benefactors, but the poison in their gifts is drawn from foreign lands. Status gains are related to what Mattison Mines calls 'institutional big-manship', where the big-man, typically the leader of a *mahajan* or a philanthropic institution that is part of a *mahajan*, attracts a following by the benefits he provides. In return, his followers reward him with prestige and an eminent reputation, attributes that give him influence and discretion among his constituents (Mines 1994:56–58). However, such prestigious gains are limited to social ranks on a par with the big-man and lower, and institutional giving does little to alter position within the social hierarchy – outside of his caste or client group.

For the previous two centuries Mandvi's traders have had vast economic, political and ritual client networks, and successful traders have always become philanthropists with varying degrees of success. There has been no eminent Mandvi trader in the last two centuries without a more or less eminent philanthropic reputation. Thus the ritual and social transactional patterns of both rulers and traders are remarkably similar within their own social fields. Status is gained and maintained by displaying a

propensity to give and by creating recipient client networks. The ruler's desire to maintain the integrity of his kingdom is calculated in making prestations – just as traders' profits are balanced into the equation – and in an ideal world, neither gives away all that they have. Among traders, the apparent paternalism of rulers is replaced with philanthropy, and there is also a considerable overlap between the transactional domains of the two groups.

The assertion that traders are benefactors and philanthropists calls into question the related assumption that traders are isolated and without constituency. Brokers in hinterlands may not entertain constituents (Fox 1969), but the success of Mandvi's traders is based on developing and maintaining large constituencies within the local population. Mandvi's traders have durable relations with shipbuilders and sailors, as well as with those they employed in their firms in Mandvi and overseas. This observation is not an incidental, because the following chapters rely on the empirical fact that traders, as merchants and as ship owners, had sizeable followings, over which they exercised considerable power and influence. The assumption is made that although the communities involved in 'trading' and 'sailing' have changed, the structure of the relationships that organise the various activities retains some degree of continuity over time. For now it is sufficient to say that traders have local power and support, which in part comes from their transactional intentions.

In terms of the stereotypes presented above, the division of society into rulers and traders poses very few problems, however, from the empirical perspective of an urban coastal trading centre, there are a series of difficulties in justifying such a division. These themes are explored in the following sections of the chapter in order to highlight the shortcomings of the dominant social model of peninsular Gujarat and to suggest an alternative.

The ethnography of Mandvi's traders also poses a series of general problems for wider anthropological interpretations of Indian society. The term 'Vania' as a general gloss for Gujarati traders is simply not appropriate. It has no currency in indigenous

understandings of Mandvi's dominant traders, nor do those traders embody the exact sociological qualities against which 'Vaniyas' are stereotyped. Secondly, the separation of traders from rulers and agriculturalists, long thought of as a conceptual problem in understanding Indian society (Fox 1969; Mines 1984; and Tripathi 1984), cannot simply be sustained in terms of land-holding, religious tradition or social heritage. Of course tendencies towards particular religious or political affiliations exist among identifiable populations, however the problem posed in the remaining section of this chapter is to determine how far some of the supposed traits are empirically verifiable and how far they are stereotypical. The evidence presented suggests that there is no analytically sustainable division between rulers and traders taking conventional sociological measurements as a benchmark, but a division (broadly between rulers and traders) exists in terms of rituals and expectations towards the boundary of the land of Kachchh. In short, the alternative presented divides the population into categories of endogenous and exogenous tendency. The endogenous is exemplified by kingship, which is intimately related to the land and soils of Kachchh, while the ethereal realm beyond is outside limits of royal governance. Protection and power within the kingdom are reproduced through the interaction of its own constitutive elements (endogenous). In opposition to this traders draw on similar conceptions of power and lineage, but generate power and wealth exogenously (from outside the kingdom).

2.2. Kings and kingdom

Kachchh was one of around 565 semi-independent kingdoms in India. It was ruled by Jadejas from the sixteenth century until 1948. Within the principal domain were smaller Jadeja fiefdoms, which were 'autonomous' tributaries of the state, while others were provincial towns under direct rule from the centre. Also within these domains there were villages and hamlets with lesser headmen, who together formed a political unit known as the Bhayad (younger brethren and political subordinates of the main Jadeja lineage). Political authority, although having a centre at the royal court assembly (Durbar) in Bhuj, was dispersed throughout the kingdom into

provincial political centres, which formed ritual and political microcosms of the central Jadeja lineage. Throughout this thesis the term 'Durbar' refers to rulers and their representatives, whose interests and activities ideally coincide at a *gadi* ('throne', central seat of power) in Bhuj. The Durbar is thus a broad collection of people, buildings and institutions connected through ritual and ideological elaboration. At the head of the Durbar, presiding over the kingdom, sat the King, a relationship succinctly described by Christopher Fuller:

the king's first responsibility is to protect his kingdom and subjects, by guaranteeing their safety, prosperity, and well-being. But these depend on preserving the order of the kingdom in the widest sense, so that, for example, the king is responsible for maintaining the hierarchical caste system within his realm; he must protect the privileges of Brahmans and the rights of all the different castes, confirm their relative rank, and uphold the authority of caste courts. Order in the kingdom, moreover, is ultimately continuous with order in the universe; the kingdom is correspondingly conceptualized as a micro-cosm of the universe and ideally their boundaries coincide. To put it differently, the order of the kingdom is itself part of the sociocosmic order or *dharma*, and it is ultimately preserved by king and deity together rather than by king alone (1992:106).

Together, Jadeja and the deity Ashapura Mata (hope giving mother) preserve the kingdom of Kachchh. Mataji (respected mother), as she is popularly known, is the Jadeja *kuldevi*. This literally translates as 'lineage goddess', however Mataji is simultaneously a tutelary goddess, a royal deity and a state deity. An integral part of ruling power, Mataji is the source (and representative) of *shakti* (power) in the kingdom, and is commonly linked to the earth as soil and territory (Fuller 1992:44). In this sense, she is identified specifically with the lands of Kachchh and with the rulers, who are literally sons of the soil. Vital in the relationship between deity and king is the royal lineage, which is also derived from and perpetuated by Mataji *shakti*. This relationship is complex and is informed by other symbols of royal power (throne, sword, turban, horse, palace and city walls) and non-Brahman mediators (see below). As the Durbar is to the Bhayad so the Mataji is to *kuldevis* of fief lineages.

Thus, gradations of Goddess and territory are hierarchically ordered, but encompassed by the apical Mataji and Jadeja.

As with other kingdoms, the disintegration (after independence) of Kachchh as a political entity only partially eroded the Mataji's power and the significance of kingship as a socio-religious institution. The importance of the Mataji remains strong (and is growing), replicating traditions of the past in the absence of actual political authority in the post-independence era. During Navaratri (nine nights), the festival most closely associated with kings, tens of thousands make *pag yatra* (pilgrimage on foot) into the barren interior of Kachchh to venerate Mataji in the hamlet of Matana Madh (Mataji's place). The pilgrims' slow progress (from Mandvi it is over 100km) is accompanied by shouts of '*jai Mataji*' (life to the Goddess), a slogan with communal and nostalgic overtones (also Tambs-Lyche 1996). As an evocation of Hindu power within a Hindu kingdom, it has become a rallying cry for Hindu exclusivity. Among the most popular camps providing free food and massage along the route, are those sponsored by Hindu nationalist organisations. The number of pilgrims has grown hugely since the mid-1980s, a reflection of the saffron wave that has swept through western India in recent decades. While taking rest in a roadside camp, I listened to a man encourage weary pilgrims to chant by saying: "If we shout loud enough *they* will hear the power of the Mataji in Pakistan." However, the concern of most of the pilgrims has a more localised focus than the political boundaries of the nation state. The power inherent in the lands of a bounded kingdom is directed specifically towards the unwanted Muslim presence in the territory. The kingdom continues to be a ritualised ordering of gods, people and power, and the land boundary co-terminates with the cosmological construction of the kingdom. However, the relationship between rulers and traders can be defined historically (with traces in the present) through the role of the boundary.

2.3. Traders and kingdom

Historically, Kachchhi traders disrupted the ideal social and ritual ordering of the kingdom, and those who voyaged to Zanzibar and Muscat generated autonomous power from realms over which the Durbar had no moral or physical influence. This is a general tendency in the history of Kachchh, which periodically led to disputes relating to taxation and allegations of corruption (see below). Additionally, the integrity of the kingdom traditionally rested principally at the fixed centre, but throughout the colonial period a greater emphasis was placed on boundaries. The boundary came to express the earthly limits of divine Jadeja sanction, and the activities of traders literally transgressed that boundary. They entered into other kingdoms, realms and hierarchical orders outside the jurisdiction of Jadejas.

Land boundaries are expressions of rival, and perhaps conflicting, claims to power and governance. Throughout the nineteenth century, a significant proportion of British involvement with Princely States in western India was with land disputes. The popularity of British arbitrators reflected the expansionist tendencies of these states. Rulers converted traditional aggression through the sword into aggression through the courts, and 'boundaryism' became a strategic science. The geography of Kachchh creates a naturally bounded territory. The Rann to the east, north and west forms a buffer zone between Kachchh and the neighbouring states of Morvi, Jamnagar, Okha and the territories of the Sindh. Land-locked boundaries formed by natural features proved relatively easy to defend, however, the southern coastline of Kachchh stretches for many hundreds of kilometres. Military strategy did not extend to the protection of the littoral regions, and piracy was the only military tradition in the waters off the coast. Thus, the boundary regularly transgressed by the traders was the coastal one over which rulers had least control.

The traders (not 'Vaniyas') that voyaged from Kachchh were Hindu and Muslim, with the majority of the Hindus being Lohanas and Bhatiyas, while the Muslims were both Shia and Sunni. Shia groups were Vohra (Daudi), Aga Khani Khoja

(followers of the Aga Khan) and Isna Ashari Khoja (followers of Irani Ayatollahs). The Sunnis were Kachchhi Memons. These groups share similar traditions of migration through the western part of the sub-continent. Starting in the Punjab around 1,000 years ago, they migrated south along Indus trade routes before settling variously in northern Kachchh. Once in Kachchh they became agriculturalists, until the beginning of the nineteenth century when they started to move towards the coast to trade. This is the popular version of migration history at the present time. The history and mythological traditions of traders is further inter-related because the Muslim traders are Hindu converts, and both Hindus and Muslims share this vision of the past. Memons claim to be converted Lohanas (Lohanas claim that Memons are converted Lohanas and so on), Khojas claim to be converted Bhatiyas, and Vohras claim to be converted Brahmans. At the time of these 'conversions' (placed variously between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries), the 'identity' of these 'Hindu' origin communities was clearly different from how they appear today.

The 'trading' groups follow exclusive sectarian practices that have been adopted at various times since the seventeenth century (thus only partially overlapping with the period of 'conversion'). Lohanas follow the Saurashtrian saint Jelaram Bapu and have their own non-Brahmanical temple dedicated to the deity Dariyalal (Lord of the Sea), entrance to which is limited to members of the Lohana Mahajan. Bhatiyas follow the Vaishnava Pushti Marga (see below). The three Shia groups have distinct clerical hierarchies and constitutional frameworks (Engineer 1989), while Memons, as Sunnis, patronised particular shrines to the point of exclusivity. Frequently, religious congregation and trade association combined to form an exclusive information network based on trust. Violation of that trust invariably led to excommunication from the network.

These are not Mandvi's only 'trading' communities. There are Jains (of which there are five divisions), Shivite Gosains, Hindu and Muslim Brahmkshttris (the latter being known as Khatris), Hindu Patels (of which there are two major divisions and numerous sub-divisions), and Hindu Sonis and their Muslim counterparts Sonaras.

The Jain population of Kachchh, unlike their ‘brethren’ in Jamnagar (see Banks 1992), seem to have been more reluctant to travel overseas, specialising in coastal routes, and trading agricultural products between mainland India (especially Ratnagiri) and Kachchh. Although very successful, especially in Bombay, the effects of the Kachchhi Jain diaspora are not as clearly marked as among the groups discussed here. The Gosains held an important place in trade networks (Postens 1839a; and Burnes 1836), and it is possible that their Madh in Mandvi was a coastal node in a trade-network that stretched across northern India. The famous trader Sunderji Sodagar (see below) was Brahmkshtri, and others of that caste conducted coastal trade, especially with Bombay. The Patels, particularly those that follow Swami Narayan (Pocock 1973; and Tambs-Lyche 1980a, 1980b), are the dominant rural community in Kachchh. Their emigration from the region occurred later (predominantly at the turn of the twentieth century) than the communities on which I focus, and they now form the single largest diasporic population. Mostly labourers, their migrations were not based on the organisation of mercantile capital in the Indian Ocean. Hindu Sonis largely followed the pattern of Jains. Sonaras were among the earliest modern traders from Kachchh, the majority of them from the fortified (and very beautiful) village of Sandan. Although some miles inland, this fiefdom probably had its own anchorage and had strong connections with ports of the Middle East long before Mandvi became a prominent port. However, the Sonaras’ success exists only in demagogic legend, as practically all that remains of them are derelict houses.

There have been many different migration patterns from Kachchh at different times, and the material presented here is not exhaustive, focusing mainly on interconnected populations based in Mandvi. These communities were sea-traders and seafarers and their organisation is unique because of the necessary division of labour between sea and land. The six traditional ‘trading’ groups have left indelible marks on the social topography of Mandvi. Rest houses, schools and charitable institutions bear individual and community names that attest to the generosity and success of ‘trading’ patrons. Religious buildings, political monuments and street names display

plaques commemorating the character and benevolence of long-dead *dariyadils* (those with hearts as wide as the ocean). Traders continue to dominate the character of the town, where Bhatiyas, Lohanas and Memons continue to live in considerable, if depleted, numbers. Khojas have all but left, while Vohras maintain a significant presence in the town because it is a pilgrimage site in their religious tradition.

The international patterns of population distribution found among these communities vary. For example, Aga Khani Khojas settled in large numbers in Zanzibar and Tanzania before settling in Canada, while Bhatiyas were concentrated mainly in Zanzibar and Oman. Broadly speaking, Hindu communities have maintained a relationship with Mandvi, while for Muslims, especially Khojas, this relationship has dwindled, and all that remains of them are their names, cemeteries and religious institutions. Occasional Khoja visitors temporarily awaken a sense of former grandeur in the homes of their ancestors' former employees (clients). Hindus however, continue to have greater ritual and social obligations to Mandvi than Muslims. There are a number of reasons for this (for reasons why Muslims have left see Chapter 3). Throughout the early nineteenth century there was a strong social and ritual sanction placed on travel overseas by Hindu religious orthodoxy. For returning merchants this violation was, for the most part, compensated for with payments to religious institutions and pilgrimage to the Vaishnava sites of Ujjain, Nathdwara and Mathura. Although this clearly was not enough to prevent traders travelling overseas it does seem to have made them less reluctant to settle permanently abroad. Hindu women were not taken to East Africa until the 1870s, some fifty years after the mercantile expansion began, and vital Hindu ritual associations with Kachchh also necessitated regular return (see below). In summary, from the early nineteenth century the trading communities had clearly defined trade and finance networks, and international and transnational settlement patterns, that were firmly rooted in Kachchh.

In the decades following the 1819 earthquake mercantile social organisation led to group-specific patterns of migration and settlement in the Indian Ocean region.

These groups were the commercial minds of the trade networks, each owning and managing fleets of ships, captains, crews and other labourers. Sailors were seldom traders; rather, they were drawn predominantly from three specialised groups. Hindus of the Kharva Samaj (society, community or caste) and Sunni Muslim Bhadas were Kachchhi, while a third group of 'slave' or 'indentured' labour was recruited from Zanzibar and Oman. The overwhelming tendency was for Hindu traders to employ Kharva sailors, and to a lesser extent slave labour, while Muslim merchants recruited Bhadas and slave labour in roughly equal numbers. Together, six groups of traders and two groups of 'Indian' sailors, form a distinct social group, which is referred to as 'mercantile' in the remaining chapters. The 'mercantile' communities shared similar, if competitive, interests, and they had common experiences of organising credit and trade networks through closed religious and commercial organisations. Furthermore, they shared experiences of travel, movement, the ways and vagaries of the sea, and of settling in foreign lands. During the nineteenth century a Hindu-Muslim division did not dictate interaction between traders. In Zanzibar, the merchants Bhatiya Jairam Shivji and Khoja Taria Topan, both influential figures within their respective communities, frequently protected each other's interests against other non-Kachchhi parties. Indeed, the bitterest disputes occurred between the two groups of Khojas, both in India and in satellite communities overseas, yet both recruited from a common pool of Muslim sailors. The same is true for Lohanas and Bhatiyas, who although in competition, employed Kharva sailors. Ships were common to all groups, as were social and ritual cycles of wind and sea. The dominant social pattern is of dyadic relations between the six 'trading' groups and the two groups of Kachchhi sailors, and not one of parallel 'caste' hierarchies among Hindus and Muslims. In other words, each trading group operated discretely and had its own relations with a group of sailors. On the whole, however, trading communities operated autonomously from one another, seemingly displaying no more loyalty or distrust towards other 'trading' groups regardless of whether they were Hindu or Muslim. Sailors, on the other hand, were clearly split along a religious axis and were employed accordingly.

2.4. Bhatiyas

The following sections take as an example the population shifts and mercantile lifestyle of the Hindu Bhatiya Mahajan. They were the most successful indigenous trading community in western India throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Purandare 1997). Their main centre of population is presently Bombay, with lesser populations in Mandvi, Muscat, East Africa and beyond. The following ethnography is also a commentary on the division between trader and ruler outlined above.

2.41. Co-residence and urban–rural connections

Mandvi was founded as a trading port by Jadeja Khengarji I and Bhatiya Topan Seth in v.s.1636 (Sampat [Guj.] v.s.1990–1:108)². The authority of ruler and enterprise of trader are seen as complementary in creating the town and within the fortified walls ruler and trader lived side-by-side. Jadejas ruled Kachchh from urban centres, principally from Bhuj, but also from over one hundred other fortified settlements. The model of ‘Rajputs’ used by aspiring rural folk (commonly ‘Rajputisation’) was essentially one of urban governance. It is accurate to connect Jadejas with ‘land’, as Tambs-Lyche does, but to see ‘land’ as rural and agricultural is clearly misleading. Jadeja seats of power were the only urban centres, and although Mandvi was for many years independent from Bhuj, it remained under Jadeja governance. Correspondingly, it is also inaccurate to associate traders solely with urban centres because all urban traders were landholders from rural villages with which they maintained important ritual and social connections.

² For descriptions of the development of Mandvi port see: Burnes 1836; M. Postens 1839a, 1839b; T. Postens 1843; Sampat [Guj.] v.s.1990-1; Rushbrook Williams 1958:41-47; and Vaidya 1945. There is an extensive literature mapping the ancient history of trade in and around Kachchh, which is tied in with the literature on the Indus valley civilisations, the journeys of Alexander the Great and other early Greek and Arab accounts.

In the early years of the nineteenth century the age-old relationship between the ports of the Gulf of Kachchh and those of East Africa and The Persian Gulf entered into a new period of growth. The decline of Portuguese influence over western Indian Ocean waters and the expansion of British and the Imam of Muscat's territories provided the necessary conditions for Kachchhi mercantile migration. This coincided with the rise of colonial Bombay as the principal port for the western seaboard. During this period Bhatiyas started to migrate from failing agricultural lands in the north and east of Kachchh. The origins of the formulaic life cycle of mercantile, caste-based apprenticeship, which characterises Bhatiya enterprise to this day, date from this time. By the 1870s it was normal practice amongst Bhatiya men to voyage by ship from Mandvi to Zanzibar, and, once there, serve a period of apprenticeship in an existing Bhatiya firm. In subsequent years the men would either move up the ranks within that firm, typically as an agent working on the credit or start trading on their own terms. After a few more years they would return to Kachchh to marry. Then they would spend the rest of their lives travelling back and forth between Zanzibar and Kachchh, before retiring to an extravagant bungalow in their homeland (often in a rural area). Up until the 1870s Bhatiya men lived in Zanzibar as single men, their affines remaining in Kachchh. These Bhatiya firms already established in Zanzibar employed, financed and managed the smooth arrival of Bhatiya neophytes. These firms, closely related to the organisation of the Bhatiya Mahajan, also organised religiously prescribed diets, provided suitable accommodation and arbitrated disputes (Neygandhi [Guj.] v.s.1993a:368–374).

The activities of the merchants overseas and the power of the Mahajan were at odds with the interests of the Kachchh Durbar. The following section takes two examples of rulers' attempts at controlling the activities of Bhatiyas. The first is the issue of slave trading, the second the sub-contracting of Mandvi's customs house. Broadly, the conflict can be characterised as the rulers' attempts to control the traders' attempts at autonomy.

2.42. Case 1. The Durbar and the regulation of slavery

The first case is the issue of slavery and its regulation. The descendants of slave populations in Kachchh are discussed in subsequent chapters. Therefore, this section also illustrates part of the process through which African 'slaves' were brought to Indian soil.

The social and ritual construction of the kingdom emphasises the king's responsibility for the protection of land and subjects. However, traders settled abroad and in the process they transcended the boundaries of the Jadeja kingdom. Moreover, they did not leave never to return, they left to return. Their commerce was conducted in and between foreign lands, and accordingly, taxation levied on their activities fell mostly into the coffers of other rulers. Consequently, Jadejas of Kachchh had little control over the activities of their own traders. The Durbar found it consistently difficult to extract revenue from their trade unless it came through Kachchh ports. Making extravagant (and threatening) claims to the traders' loyalty to their homeland brought some relief to the Durbar's finances. Until the 1870s, traders were, by and large, able to ignore the Durbar's authority by claiming that they were citizens of other kingdoms. This can be seen in traders' evocation of legalistic conceptions of 'nationality' and 'identity' when they faced prosecution for 'slaving'.

The records of the Bombay Presidency relating to the involvement of Kachchhis in the slave trade in the Indian Ocean were written by British Political Agents stationed in Zanzibar, Muscat, Aden and Kachchh, who were involved in negotiated and diplomatic manumissions. The tone of the archive documents suggests that the Kachchh Durbar was keen to put an end to the trade on grounds of enlightened humanitarianism and a realisation that the moral opposition to slavery on the part of the British was the correct attitude to adopt. However, the Durbar owned significant numbers of slaves and mercenaries of African descent and must have had other reasons for wanting to control the trade. The interpretation offered below suggests that the Durbar was interested in destroying the integrity of the Bhatiya Mahajan in

Kachchh and overseas in order to bring the activities of the merchants closer to its own jurisdiction. The efficiency of the Mahajan, and the co-operative way in which it privileged the interests of Bhatiyas had, by the latter half of the nineteenth century, made it almost impossible for the Durbar to extract any revenue from the activities of Kachchhi Bhatiya traders.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Zanzibar was entrepôt for the East African slave trade and home to thousands of traders from Kachchh (Burton 1872:313–336; and Colomb 1873:47, 97–99, 367 and 379). Their ships ran slaves to the small slave market in Mandvi³, which the Durbar officially closed in 1836. In subsequent decades, however, slaves were still being transported to Mandvi, frequently for service within the Durbar⁴. Kachchhis in Zanzibar financed slaving expeditions, levied taxes on slaves passing through the customs house, and held slaves on their plantations. The Government of British India was engaged in diplomatic and naval efforts to suppress the trade and holding of slaves, and Britain and the Sultan of Oman signed a series of treaties aimed at regulating the activities of Kachchhi traders between 1822 and 1886.

Kachchhi traders variously claimed to be British Indians or subjects of the Sultan while they were in Zanzibar. The British representative treated the Kachchhis as the former, and throughout the 1860s the traders were prosecuted accordingly for violation of anti-slaving laws. Appellate jurisdiction came from Bombay, but if any case made it that far the defendant would claim to be a citizen of Kachchh and therefore not subject to British Indian law. Similarly, Kachchhi traders flew different national flags depending on the destination and cargo of the vessel⁵. Traders also claimed rights of protection and jurisdiction of the Sultan of Oman (the Sultans of

³ F. O. 881/2314. 1860. *Slave-dealing and slave-holding of Kutch in Zanzibar*.

⁴ M. G. S. A., P. D. 1850. Cutch No. 85/2226. No. 1177. *Kutch Slave Trade. A mussulman inhabitant of - purchased a Seedie female at Muskat and then brought her to -*.

⁵ M. G. S. A., P. D. 1864. Zanzibar. Vol. 54. No. 435. *Zanzibar. Vessels belonging to natives of India but who are resident in the dominions of the Sultan of - should fly a distinguishing flag other than the ordinary red Arab flag*; P. D. 1872. Zanzibar. Vol. III. No. 201. No. 1015. *Zanzibar. Notice. All vessels and boats sailing under English colours are cautioned against any attempt to conceal their nationality or papers as rendering them liable to seizure and confiscation*.

Oman and Zanzibar after the territories were annexed), the High Courts of British India, the French in Mauritius, and the Kachchh Durbar. Each 'penal code' carried different restrictions and penalties. Traders switched legal identities while remaining loyal to their own caste protocol and law. This contemptuous attitude towards fledgling international law was compensated for by strict adherence to moral and social codes upheld internationally by the Mahajan. The traders effectively attempted to operate internationally without allegiance to a particular ruler. The Mahajan was the effective legal and moral authority to which they were accountable.

The Durbar made a series of attempts to bring traders in Zanzibar under its jurisdiction. It issued proclamations in 1869 and 1873, encouraging Kachchhis living in Zanzibar to adopt British-Indian citizenship⁶. It was evident to the Durbar that it did not have the power, influence or resources to assert Kachchhi law in Zanzibar, so the next best thing was the law of British India, personified by the Governor of the Bombay Presidency. Consequently, British attempts at regulating slaving were 'welcomed' by the Durbar. However, the application of British law outside the immediate realm of the Bombay Presidency seemed to be a matter of the local Political Agent's personal integrity – with vague reference to statute. In the early part of 1873 Bhatiya Kanji Lalji was deported from Zanzibar to Bombay, having been found guilty by the British Political Agent in Zanzibar of holding slaves⁷. In Bombay he was acquitted on the grounds that he was a resident of Kachchh. If Lalji was not a British citizen (Kachchh was a protectorate and not under direct British rule) then he could not be subject to British Indian law. When he was arrested in Zanzibar, Lalji had claimed to be a citizen of the Sultan and therefore entitled to hold slave labour, but the Political Agent had ignored this plea and tried him regardless.

⁶ The ineffective 1869 treaty ordered Kachchhis to: (i) let the British consul adjudicate in their disputes and (ii) stop bringing slaves to Kachchh (M. G. S. A., P. D. 1869. Zanzibar. Slave Trade. No. 152. No. 121. *Zanzibar, Slave Trade. On the subject of traffic in slaves by Kutchees in-*). The treaty of 1873 again instructed Kachchhis in Zanzibar to stop holding and trading slaves, and to adopt British nationality (M. G. S. A., P. D. 1873. Zanzibar. Vol. IV. No. 232. No. 1906. *Zanzibar proclamations regarding the slave trade*).

⁷ M. G. S. A., P. D. 1874. Zanzibar. Vol. I. No. 277. No. 310. *Zanzibar. Case of Kanjee Laljee of Kutch charged with slave dealing and committed for trial before the High Court of Bombay*.

Later in the same year, the case of ‘Regina versus Haji Omar’, a Khoja, came to the attention of the High Court in Bombay⁸. Omar was convicted on three violations of the Indian Penal code relating to capturing and holding slaves. Between the two cases the Durbar had issued a further proclamation stating that Kachchhis in Zanzibar were prohibited from holding slaves and were to take up British citizenship. This proclamation, unlike earlier ones, was held to be legally binding on the grounds that there was no naturalisation act between Kachchh and Zanzibar. The ambiguity that had for so long been exploited by the traders was now beginning to work against them. When Omar came to court in 1873 the Bombay Court had appellate jurisdiction over Kachchhis, and the Durbar’s actions had undermined the solidarity of the powerful Kachchhi cohort in Zanzibar. By placing them under British law (probably illegally), the authority of Bhatiya Mahajan was undermined. The jurisdiction of the large Bhatiya firms dissolved into the petty consular court. The Durbar had used the moral issue of slaving to gain assistance from the British to destroy the unity of Bhatiya Mahajan in Zanzibar and Oman.

2.43. Case 2. Mandvi Customs House

From their experience overseas, the Bhatiyas introduced a system of sub-contracting revenue collection to Mandvi Customs House, a tradition apparently imported from Muscat. Bhatiyas became the accountants and revenue officers of Mandvi port and the income from this post was the largest single source of revenue for the Durbar⁹. In the 1860s the unscrupulous activities of those holding the post attracted predatory attention from the Durbar, a typical example being that of Liladhar Moraji Bhimani. Bhimani’s family contracted the collection of port revenue in Muscat and Zanzibar in the mid-nineteenth century, and until the 1880s, when the position became democratic, held the hereditary title of *nagarseth* in Mandvi and in the satellite

⁸ M. G. S. A., P. D. 1873. Zanzibar. Vol. II. No. 230. *Zanzibar. Hadjee Omar. Despatches of Political Agent to Government of India and case of - convicted of slave dealing.*

⁹ It can be deduced that in 1829 35% of the Durbar’s revenue came from duties imposed at Mandvi’s port. M. G. S. A., P. D. 1829-30. Mixed Vol. No. 15/339. *Cutch Government for 1829 and Scind for 1829-30. “General statement showing the gross revenues and collections and balances, the gross and actual charges and the net balances remaining due, to, and by, the Kutch State Government”.*

communities. The important institutional position of *nagarseth* was normally held by the principal merchant in the town who acted as an ‘opinion leader of the entire population’ (S. Mehta 1984:175). The *nagarseth* would negotiate between disputing factions, organise philanthropic donations and represent the interests of Mandvi to the Durbar. He and his representatives monopolised control of all the key institutions in Mandvi in the nineteenth century, including the customs post. Bhimani held the post at Mandvi from v.s.1925–1927, during which time he incurred heavy losses. ‘Differences’ arose between Bhimani and the Durbar over unpaid debt (Sampat [Guj.] v.s.1995:131–132) and the Durbar seized far more of Bhimani’s estate in payment than was owed. This turned into a bitter and protracted dispute, with animosity shown towards Bhimani contributing to an ever-widening gap between the Bhatiyas and the Durbar.

In the nineteenth century Rajput States found an increased need for cash, partially to pay tribute, but also to finance the modernisation of their kingdoms. The best source of cash was to appropriate the fortunes of traders. Holding land, although a source of power and prestige, was not flexible, mobile or readily converted into currency. In the traders’ satellite communities regulatory power was securely in the hands of the mercantile *mahajans* and not with the Durbar. This weakened the influence that the Durbar had on its wealthiest and most influential ‘citizens’. Bhatiyas moved outside the kingdom and into realms where they had autonomy, and this disjunction between the interests of rulers and traders begins to point towards how the two groups differ. Traders represented a threat to the kingdom by operating outside it and importing themselves, as wealthy, but polluting individuals, back into it.

The vast population of Bhatiya émigrés has not forgotten Kachchh. To this day there is a constant exchange of people, money and ideas between Muscat and Kachchh. Charitable institutions that have functioned in Mandvi since the late nineteenth century continue to be funded and visited by descendants of their founders. Many Bhatiya families who have been present in Muscat for eight or nine

generations maintain property in Mandvi and visit their ancestral lands regularly. Most of this land is barren and uncultivated but remains important as home to tutelary goddesses (see below).

2.44. Genealogical origins: is cooling Rajput blood an ‘ethnological problem’?

As has been shown, the interests of rulers and traders conflicted. Traders generated transactable commodities, most notably cash, gold and ivory, and they successfully disguised fortunes through the offshore nature of their enterprise and the capital mobility provided by trade networks and paternalistic policies of the Bhatiya Mahajan. The differences between men like Bhimani and the Durbar grew increasingly apparent throughout the nineteenth century as the political climate demanded of rulers’ cash for tribute, territorial expansion and modernisation. However, in the past the social status and social origins of rulers and traders were intertwined. Both mythic and historic accounts show that they frequently worked in complementary partnership (as in the development of Mandvi port), and significantly, claim to share similar ancestral heritage.

Bhatiya origin myths tell that they are descended from Bhatti Rajputs – famous Kshatriya warriors (Sampat [Guj.] v.s.1989:836-840, v.s.1990-1:622-624; and Purandare 1997). The most popular version is based on James Tod’s nineteenth century chronicles of Rajasthan, where Bhatiya genealogy is traced to the Yadav branch of the lunar lineage of Rajputs (*chandra vansh*). Bhatiyas share this claim with Jadejas. The dominant iconographic representation, found hanging in all public Bhatiya buildings, shows Narayan creating Brahma, who creates Atatrimuni, who creates Chandradevta, the primogenitor of *chandra vansh*. The ‘ethnological problem’ that has occupied scholars of western India for the last two centuries (see Aitken 1907:182) is the question of how rulers became traders. The way the question is framed implies a transformation from Kshatriya to Vaishya, or, from hot-blooded warriors to cool vegetarian merchants. The literature cited at the beginning of this chapter also takes as its starting point this way of phrasing the question. The

‘problem’ is premised on the fourfold Vedic *varna* categories of Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. In Mandvi, these terms (with the exception of Brahman) are used only as rather crude characterisations of ‘others’ and not as demographic denominators. As already mentioned, all those in the town not claiming foreign origins, claim instead that they are of ruler (Kshatriya) blood, but contemporary Bhatiyas do not voluntarily describe themselves as belonging to a particular *varna*.

Bhatiyas claim to maintain ritual practice that dates from their ruler heritage. These traditions are considered more fundamental to correct life than more recent additions such as Pushti Marga (path of grace) devotionalism. Bhatiyas also have tales that explain how their blood has ‘cooled’. Understanding the process of transformation, from ‘hot’ to ‘cold’, *appears* to be of primary importance in conceptualising ‘difference’ between kings and traders. However, this only works at the level of stereotype, and as the following analysis shows, although this question is important to Bhatiyas, there are serious shortcomings to such a view. There are two approaches to this question: textual accounts from the 1930s that clearly express this redemptive transformation in terms of a movement from Kshatriya to Vaishya *varna* categories throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; secondly, contemporary ethnography, which locates the transformative moment in the 1930s.

Dungersinh D. Sampat (1880–1967) was a prolific novelist, social commentator, and Bhatiya historian. He wrote a lengthy series of popular articles during the 1930s on many aspects of Bhatiya history, but his work has now slipped into obscurity. He claimed that in the past Bhatiyas were exogamous, meat eating, alcohol-imbibing warriors ([Guj.] v.s.1989:622–624), a view that has clear echoes with Tod, who described Bhatiyas as belonging to the ‘equestrian order’ – an ascription with heavy martial overtones. Sampat draws a sharp distinction between a wild, hot, untamed and non-vegetarian past, and the subsequent redemption found in Pushti Marga precepts (mercantilism, devotionalism and non-violence). Evidence for such claims can be found by tracing the mutability of caste names over time, which reveals that traditional ‘Rajput’ names also belong to traders (also M. Mehta 1991:70–71).

Bhatiya caste iconography, also from Sampat's period, shows a Bhatiya warrior forsaking horse, sword and land in favour of ship, cane and commerce. The representation of horses and ships is a recurrent one in the visual imagery of Kachchh. Such imagery is *so* prevalent that it is tempting to take it as analogous for the division between rulers and traders because this is the way that it is used in caste iconography. However, the images are not opposites because there is continuity in the way these symbols are used to represent people and space. I return to this theme in the final section of the chapter. Sampat further claims that community adoption of Pushti Marga values brought to a close their martial tradition ([Guj.] v.s.1989:836–840). However, the evidence indicates that Bhatiyas were already involved in commerce at the time of their 'conversion', sometime in the early seventeenth century (Purandare 1997). This is corroborated by other sources, which state that recruitment to the movement was predominantly from established merchant castes (Timberg 1978).

The evidence presented in the following sections indicates that the break in the martial tradition and the cooling of Bhatiya blood was not an abrupt rupture with the past but a partial transformation. Although Sampat's commentaries were influential in the formation of 'official' caste history at the time, the few Bhatiyas presently familiar with his stories express waning conviction in their truth. The dominant contemporary version of the past recalls how caste blood 'cooled' in the 1930s, the decade in which their declining wealth and dominance was most acutely felt. Contemporary Bhatiyas cite men such as Sampat as evidence for this claim. Sampat's own wealth stemmed from his ancestors' commerce in the Indian Ocean. He is said to have squandered his inheritance and forsaken Bhatiya traditions by following such unproductive pursuits as writing and scholarship (for an equivalent view of community decline among Parsis see Luhrmann 1996). In the modern view, the trading ancestors of the past were Kshatriyas and literal kings of trade.

The two versions of the big chill rely on the presupposition that Bhatiyas had martial traditions to lose. Sampat's origin stories tell of a glorious Bhatti (Bhatiya)

kingdom in Jaisalmer. In his view Bhatiyas are dispossessed rulers who, after trial and tribulation, turned warrior heritage into commercial acumen through the 'cooling' influence of Pushti Marga principles. The modern account assumes that the potency of their warrior-ancestors brought them success in commerce, the embers of which were finally extinguished in the decadent 1930s.

The vast literature on the ways in which caste is codified in India concentrates mainly on the way this knowledge is used by Indian people to ensure cultural authenticity. Claims to this or that noble origin are a part of all group claims to social status and social legitimacy. However, as shown above, the character of these claims can change over time, rendering them neither immutable nor impervious to scrutiny. Yet to see such claims as falsifiable is to miss the point. By the same score, to view these stories as reflections of what people really think about themselves or to see them simply as socially true because they are socially told is again to miss the point. Origin myths, whether or not they are grafted with historical fact, exist in a state of inscrutability, in the sense that they exist for purposes other than to be merely true.

The many caste origin myths (see Khatri [Guj.] 1996) share four striking similarities. First, they identify a divine origin (predominantly from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata), a royal descent line (from the sun, moon and fire lineages), and typically an anticlockwise arc of travel from northern India, south along the Indus valley. The second similarity lies in the way the exogamous clan reinvents itself as an endogamous unit with exogamous descent lines traceable to specific individuals or places. Thirdly, origin myths show arrival in Kachchh to be at the behest of a god, king or holy man and often combine this with displacement caused by victory or defeat in battle with Muslims. Fourthly, miraculous events display the affinity of the new arrivals to particular villages from which further common ancestors are derived. The structure of these narratives and iconographic representations replicates Rajput bardic tradition (Shah and Shroff 1958:256–257). Constructing an elaborate past in a particular form is a potential way of claiming elevated social status, and these stories weave together the social and ritual practices

of the present through temples, revered figures and particular places in the landscape. Origin myths reveal what kind of claims are important, how authenticity is structured and cadenced in language and time, how the salience of claims changes overtime, and how claims of one group relates to those of other groups. The claims of a particular group do not exist in isolation from received conceptions of history, political expediency or related claims of neighbours and highly regarded patrons.

2.45. Religious propriety

In the previous section it was mentioned that modern Bhatiyas practice ritual that they consider to be more fundamental to a correct life than following Pushti Marga precepts. This section addresses this question and the role of the Pushti Marga in the social organisation of Bhatiyas. The religious traditions of rulers and traders cannot simply be separated out into structural oppositions, either in terms of *shakti* and *bhakti* or in terms of *himsa* (violence) and *ahimsa* (non-violence). Both traditions share much in common, are eclectic and are founded on similar ritual premises that include both sacrifice and devotion. Tambs-Lyche writes of Saurashtra that:

the states of traditional Kathiawar were held together by the exercise of power. It is apt, therefore, that their primary deity [the Goddess] should be the source and incarnation of power herself. As is usual where one value is central to the system, its negation is a constant presence too, in the shape of the non-violence of the merchant groups (Tambs-Lyche 1997:317).

The idea is once again of a structural social opposition, this time in the domains of ritual and lifestyle. In Tambs-Lyche's characterisation traders are alienated from rulers and their subjects. Yet it seems strange that a community divorced from representation and constituency would take it upon themselves to counter the power of rulers in order to create ritual harmony in the kingdom from which they were estranged.

Power (*shakti*) and devotion (*bhakti*) or the human counterparts, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas (as Tambs-Lyche would have it), are not *de facto* opposites. Pocock's analysis of Patidar social organisation also struggles to make sense of seemingly contradictory religious practices. He reaches a similar conclusion to the one subsequently drawn by Tambs-Lyche, that as one tradition grows the other must fall (1973). However, in the daily ritual and social lives of many of Mandvi's Hindu population the two forms exist seamlessly together. Hindu social life is characterised by division and differentiation, but these do not operate solely on the principles of doctrinal purity (A.M. Shah 1982). *Shakti* and *bhakti* are not categories through which others are evaluated.

This can clearly be seen in Bhatiya ritual practices which evoke power, while simultaneously drawing on the devotional principles of the Pushti Marga. The origins of this movement are attributed to Vallabha at the turn of the sixteenth century (see Bennett 1993; Pocock 1973:117-120; and Purandare 1997:55-76). He discovered a *svarup* (form or image) of Krishna (himself born as Kshatriya Prince) as Shri Nathji, which became the order's elevated deity. Pushti Marga *havelis* are the symbolic homes of Nandaraj, Krishna's nurse, and the actual home of the custodians, known as Maharaja or Gosain because they are descendants of Vallabha. Initiates pledge mind, body and wealth to the Maharajas who are regarded as bodily incarnations of Krishna. *Seva* (service) in a *haveli* demands personal love towards Bal Krishna (as a child). Quite literally *sevaks* (servers) play the role of devoted parents caring for a helpless infant and for the Maharaja. The images in the *haveli* are often duplicated in the homes of followers, with the idols being full forms of Krishna and not mere conduits for his power. Thus, the relationship between devotee and *sevak* is a personalised one, which has frequently been understood as opposing the hierarchy inherent in Brahmanical Hinduism and evocations of *shakti*.

Bhakti refers to an attitude (Thoothi 1935; and Pocock 1973:100) of which prayer and adoration are manifestations of the self-surrender of mind, body and wealth to the deity. Ideally, within the Pushti Marga *bhakti* is elevated to the highest order,

over and above sacrifice, renunciation and other ritualised ways to salvation. However, *bhakti* takes varied forms, so it follows that: 'it exists throughout popular religion at all levels and virtually every ritual of worship or sacrifice performed for the deities is or may be an expression of devotion, to a greater or lesser extent' (Fuller 1992:158). It is often assumed that divine equality exists among the Vaishnavas – signalled by individual dedication to an individual deity (see Thoothi 1935). However, the Vaishnava movements are not Hindu forms of Protestantism. Vaishnava movements support institutionalised inequality and do not pose a direct threat to widely held hierarchical values (Fuller 1992:161). The Pushti Marga defined, maintained and strengthened existing social boundaries, with initiation, strict notions of ritual purity and the wealthy reputation of the movement enforcing socially elitist divisions. Pushti Marga was the exclusive domain of Bhatiyas, encouraging internal group solidarity. The effect was to preserve and reinforce claims to exclusive status rather than promoting cross-caste equality. Furthermore, class inequality among Bhatiyas was perhaps exacerbated, as the ability to patronise the movement inevitably led the wealthy individual closer to the abode of the Maharaja.

In Mandvi the rise and fall of the movement can be seen in the growth and decline of the *havelis*. The two remaining in Mandvi, Moti Haveli and Limbalawali Haveli, were built between 200 and 225 years ago. The latter is crumbling, and Vallabha's descendants have departed leaving less respected *gor maharajas* (Pushkarna Brahmans the Bhatiyas' ritual priests) as ritual attendants. Bhatiya power (coincidental with Jain interests) was enormous. In the early eighteenth century fishing was forbidden in the vicinity of the town. Article xii of an inconsequential treaty (1802) between the Durbar and British officials reads: 'Mandvee being a sacred place, and those that live in it abstaining from animal food, the servants of the Company cannot dwell in the town' (Lee-Warner 1910). Whatever the motives of the Durbar for including this article, the fact that such a claim was even plausible indicates the extent of Vaishnava dominance in the town. In the 1850s there were five *havelis* in Mandvi. They became powerful land-owning and political institutions.

From the early nineteenth century the management committees of the *havelis* exhorted a mandatory tax from merchants (Purandare 1997:72). They also policed the activities of Bhatiya merchants abroad. A Maharaja fined a Bhatiya merchant in Zanzibar 20,000 Marie Theresas for conducting trade contrary to the precepts of the movement (Burton 1872:330). Maharaja power encouraged Bhatiya antipathy towards Brahmans' 'false claims' to religious authority (Naygandhi [Guj.] v.s.1993b:436–441). The *havelis* experienced their zenith in the late 1850s and their reputation and following was severely damaged by two court cases in the early 1860s.

2.46. Maharaja Libel Case

Karsandas Mulji was the editor of the outspoken Gujarati journal 'Satyaprakash'. He published a tract against the Pushti Marga in 1861, claiming that the Maharajas had forgotten the original principles of the movement. The Maharaja, Jadunathji, filed a libel suit for damages. Jadunathji's lawyers feared that he would be exposed if he appeared in court and so they turned to the Bhatiya Mahajan in Bombay who passed a resolution stating that those giving evidence against the Maharaja would be excommunicated. Karsandas then filed a counter-suit of conspiracy against the Mahajan. Ultimately, he won the case, but it deeply split the caste, weakened the integrity of the Mahajan and dissipated the community focus on *havelis*. Large-scale migration of Bhatiya men in the nineteenth century had far reaching effects on their population. Many men became wealthy, the average age at marriage increased, and the relationship between the *havelis* and female devotees changed. In the absence of men, women grew more dependent on the cult and immersed in the maternal love of Bal Krishna. In court, the accusation that Jadunathji and his cohort were sexually exploiting dependent Bhatiya women proved most damaging to their reputation. The result was that the enormous power wielded by the Maharajas proved to be their undoing.

Bhatiyas continue to be popularly associated with the Pushti Marga, and are sometimes called *Pushtimargi* or derogatorily, *Haveliwala* and *Maharajwala*. However, from the late nineteenth century, Bhatiya association with Pushti Marga has gradually declined. This in part explains the curtain drawn over Sampat's accounts and the insignificant role of Pushti Marga teachings in modern renditions of Bhatiya heritage.

2.47. Bhatiya *kuldevis*

Bhatiyas' ideas and feelings about the world may have changed but only through an internal process of transformation; new ideas and feelings are manifestly transformational variants of the older ones. The intimate relationship between Bhatiya and Maharaja has become less consequential. Contrary to Purandare's thesis (1997:42–55), Bhatiyas did not come to Pushti Marga from a tradition of Brahmanical Hinduism. Many Bhatiyas worship non-Brahmanical *kuldevis* (lineage goddesses). This is intriguing because, in theory, the Pushti Marga offers a complete ritual view of the world (and beyond) in which *shakti* is degraded. Many Bhatiyas maintain that *kuldevis* were a vital part of proper caste life and that their ancestors had continued to draw on *kulshakti* throughout the period of their intense engagement with Pushti Marga. They spoke as if the bright apparel of Pushti Marga was an adjunct to fundamental ritual practices. Bhatiyas' ritual relation with their *kuldevi* is identical to Jadejas: the *kuldevi* is simultaneously a tutelary goddess, a deity associated with royalty and a 'state' deity (see the final section of this chapter).

Bhatiyas are divided into eighty-four original *nukhs* (clans), which according to their origin myth were determined at a meeting in Multan sometime during the eleventh or twelfth century. Within each *nukh* are *kuls* (segmented patrilineal descent groups). All *kuls* have a *purvaj* (common ancestor) descended from the *purvaj* of the *nukh*. As a result each *nukh* is thought of as 'one blood' and carries the prefix *ray* (royal or kingly). The *nukhs* derive names from Sindhi rulers (*ray* Gajariya), warriors (*ray* Jia), those victorious over 'Muslims' and Turks (*ray* Suraiya), occupational

groups (the shopkeeper *ray* Gokulgandhi), religious activity (*ray* Ved), physical characteristics (*ray* Mochha – moustache) and villages (*ray* Panchal). Twelve of the eighty-four *purvajs* (common ancestors) were warriors killed in battle (from Sampat [Guj.] v.s. 1991:57–68). Thus, the entire Bhatiya tradition is clearly martial, royal and elevates the role of ancestors and their forthcoming lineages. Worship of a particular *kuldevi* is invariably shared by different *kul*. Segments of a *nukh* may also be united in allegiance to a common deity, but separated by the particular shrines they visit. The *kuldevis* stand for a royal martial past. When Bhatiyas were dispossessed of their kingdom at Jaisalmer, being of one clan, they were unable to marry. Before this time Chandradevta was the apical ancestor. The meeting in Multan re-segmented the population and imposed new parameters of *nukh* exogamy. The *purvaj* were reinvented and the caste became endogamous.

Protection is the essence of a *kuldevi*. In exchange for this protection the *kuldevi* demands sacrifice. Forty-three years ago it was reported that animal sacrifice was common fifty years previously (Shah and Shroff 1958:250). Thirty years ago Pocock reported that animal sacrifice to Ashapura Mata at Matana Madh had ceased some fifty years previously. During my own fieldwork I was repeatedly told that such sacrifice had stopped fifty years ago. Either fifty years designates a generic period of time or, with similar meaning, live sacrifices were performed outside living memory. However, the influence of Vaishnava movements and Jainism in Kachchh is profound (for Gujarat generally see Mallison 1992a, 1992b, 1996). Alcohol is illegal, animal sacrifice is rare, and Jadeja and Bhatiya Goddesses are vegetarian, enjoying a diet of fresh coconut and refined sugar.

Bhatiyas were consistently vague about the relationship between the *kuldevi* and their visits to the *haveli*. With the exception of one elderly *vedanta* (one knowledgeable of the Vedas), all Bhatiyas questioned on this subject perceived no contradiction between the two practices. No informant expressed it in these terms, but the relationship appeared complementary, rather than antagonistic. Bhatiya *kuldevis*, although dangerous and potentially angry characters, are not considered

polluting as far as entrance to the *haveli* is concerned. The *kuldevi* is a source of strength, power and fecundity (for her *kul*), which is transformed into successful parental devotion to Bal Krishna. In other words, *shakti* underpins the social performance of *bhakti*. Pushti Marga precepts are supposed to offer a complete and exclusive devotional framework in which there is no room for martial traditions. However, underlying Bhatiya treatments of the tradition are the principles of a Rajput universe: lineage, sacrifice and protection. These patterns are not unique to the Bhatiyas because the majority of Hindu castes, regardless of their occupational specialisation, have elaborate origin myths and combine elements of devotional and sacrificial Hinduism seamlessly in their religious traditions.

2.5. Endogeny and exogeny

Intermingling of traditions is common throughout western India, as is the claim of traders to be descended from Kshatriyas (Babb 1996). However, these basic ethnographic facts are overlooked in broad sociological division. The ethnography of stereotypes is not sufficient to understand the relationship between rulers and traders. Stereotypes may represent them as opposites but, empirically, this division is impossible to sustain using the conventional markers of settlement, religion and genealogy. The remaining section of this chapter reframes the claim that there is a significant division between those who rule the land and those trading from it. This division, from the perspective of a coastal port town, is located in ritual and secular orientation towards the 'bounded' nature of the land.

The waves that roll gently onto the sandy shores of Kachchh belie the sea's nature. It is a realm with no earthly king, and dangerous as an unregulated arena of death, piracy and destruction; it is also the medium through which wealth, religion and people have come to and gone from the land. Change and disruption have been brought and taken away from Kachchh by sea, and this is reflected in the vast numbers of oceanic myths that stress the 'other' and 'outside' nature of the sea in relation to the land. The corpus is countered by an equally large number of myths

where the inverse is the case. To explain this seeming inconsistency it is necessary to remark that the population consists of two distinct classes: the 'ruling' class who maintain the boundaries of the kingdom, and those who conduct trade outside its boundaries. The two groups, engaged in different activities, have alternative versions of the same myths that reflect a disparity in their attitude to the boundary of the kingdom. This opposition can also be seen between different myths within each corpus and between myths common to both.

Common to both is the mythology surrounding the temple complex of Ravalpir. Raval is revered for his ability to perform a particular type of miracle, and the contrasts and structural oppositions evident in the recounting of his miraculous powers emphasise both the creative and destructive aspects of the sea. The complex that houses Raval's personal shrine sits amid sand dunes a few kilometres to the east of Mandvi. The surrounding land is bleak, the soil saline, and the road leading from the nearest village, Gundiya, to the temple, is infrequently travelled. The white domed building is divided in two, a main building which contains a series of orange stone horse statues and a smaller structure containing Raval's 'tomb' (Plates 4, 5 and 6). Next to the temple is a small electric lighthouse, which recently replaced an oil-fired lamp that was maintained by the custodians of the temple. The association between the temple and security of shipping is not coincidental.

The temple is central to the lineage claims and ritual practices of Gadhvis (an honorific title for Charan), who venerate Raval as a *kulpir*, a male equivalent to a *kuldevi*. *Pir* conventionally refers to a Muslim saint and not to Hindu deities. The architecture of the structure also has a distinctively Muslim aspect, and in the past Hindus and Muslims frequented it (Burnes 1879:48), but today there are only Hindu clients. Gadhvis were traditionally pastoralists. They are an integral part of the religious and political systems of 'ruling' Jadejas, serving as their bardic genealogists (Shah and Shroff 1958). They maintain the records of Jadeja and other Rajput lineages, and thus they oversee a system of kingship in which kinship formed the basis of political power. They are storytellers and human vessels in which the

mythology of the kingdom is stored. Their knowledge and power, derived from recitation, is vital in succession and inheritance disputes, and in arranging suitable marriages. Linked by divine kinship with the Goddess, human bards are seen as being either *deviputras* (sons of the Goddess) or as living forms of the Goddess. Although this is an apparently impossible set of relationships for an individual to sustain the majority of goddesses are deified Charan women (Tambs-Lyche 1999:64). Therefore, to be sibling, son (or daughter) or incarnation (given the emphasis on lineage) of a goddess is perfectly possible. Together the human bard and Mata uphold the sanctity and integrity of the royal lineage of kings. In this triad it follows that the Charan is the 'unattainable sister' of the king (Tambs-Lyche 1999:76). Thus, elements of the cosmogonic system collapse into one another. The particular way in which political power is allied with the divine is self-referencing with power coming from within. The myths of Ravalpir are treatments of this relationship. In brief, the myth of Ravalpir runs as follows: Raval was born at the behest of a saint to a woman who had given generous alms while the saint was in meditation. As Raval matured he developed miraculous powers, among which was his ability to create living horses from the elements.

2.51. Horses

The horse is a recurrent image in Kachchh and a recurrent theme in this thesis. The preponderance of artistic and stone depictions of horses is in stark contrast to the number of actual horses in the landscape. As key symbols in the warrior tradition, horses represent war and the sacrifice of life to the Goddess for the kingdom. Horses are an ancient symbol in the Indo-Aryan tradition (see Doniger 1990) and of widespread ritual significance throughout India (see Kramrisch 1964). In classic Vedic horse sacrifice a consecrated white stallion was released to wander for a year before it was returned to its point of origin and killed. Throughout the year the horse was accompanied by a group of soldiers that 'guided' it onto any lands that the sponsoring king had aspiration towards (Doniger 1999:946): the ritual serving the territorial desires of the king. The horse also facilitated aggressive conquest, but

through its own wanderings in search of fresh pasture came to stand as a natural metaphor for territorial expansionism. In a literal way, the number of horses at a kingdom's disposal also marked its martial strength.

The links between Vedic myth and the contemporary treatment of horses is unclear. What is clear is that from ancient times horses have been imported into India. They came as the vehicles of the conquerors and were imported as commodities by Moguls and British. But horses do not fair well in the Indian climate and breeding stock rapidly declines in strength and size (Doniger 1999:948–949). As a result there was a constant demand for imported beasts, which were highly prized and expensive. Thus they were out of the reach of all but the economic and political elite, which strengthened the association of the horse with power.

In many myths about horses the themes of creation and destruction are central, but throughout the mythology there are two clear ambiguities. First, horses attest to power, but also to the power of others and the perennial threat of invasion. Horses are necessarily brought from 'outside', whether or not they arrive bearing aggressors, and in this sense the horse is a powerful metaphor in tales of invasion and domination. Secondly, Hindu horse myths are ambiguous towards Muslims, who stand as living and breathing evidence of ideological 'invasion'. However, horses practically always appear valorous in myths of Muslim defeat at the hands of Hindus. In other myths, 'invaders', who were in all probability Muslim, are stripped of their religious identity. These ambiguities are both evident in a particularly fascinating myth that narrates the arrival of the Jakhs in the thirteenth century. The Jakhs were shipwrecked at Jakhao in the southwest of Kachchh, from where the seventy-one men and a single woman made their way inland on horseback, mounts we are left to presume they saved from the wrecked ship. In other versions of the myth the Jakhs emerged from the waves at Jakhao on horseback – miraculously appearing without ships. They headed inland to save the local population from the depredations of either King Punvro or a 'demon'. Gifted in warfare, and benevolent with their knowledge of medicine, they became popular figures in Kachchh. Speculation as to

the origin of these fair-skinned foreigners attributes them to Anatolia or Syria (Kramrisch 1964:55), or to Greece, Turkey or Central Asia (Rushbrook Williams 1958:84–86); either way, whether Muslims or Zoroastrians, local renditions of the myth do not stress the religious identity of the invaders. The general fear of Muslim invasion is inverted and becomes a story of liberation. Images of the seventy-two riders appear in numerous temples throughout Kachchh. The story of the Jakhs is but one of the mythologies that focuses on the arrival of horses and strangers, and shows how ungoverned foreign knowledge entering Kachchh is domesticated and turned into a source of liberation or prestige.

Previously, it was mentioned that the depiction of horses in caste iconography intimated towards a division between Hindu rulers and traders. To return briefly to this point, the archetypal iconographic representation of the transformation from ruler to trader shows a central character leaving horses and war for ships and commerce. These kinds of representation are found in Bhatiya and Lohana Mahajan publications and in Kharva temples. The trader is pictured looking back from the seashore into a fertile land and into the past. He stands on the sand, the horse, sword and shield have gone. Instead, the merchant is armed with a cane and bag, and lying at anchor in the background is a ship. As narrative this is axiomatic within caste boundaries. However, in a broader sense something else is at stake in the representation of horses. The horse is not a neutral symbol. All Hindu mercantile temples either contain images of horses or are surrounded by myths to which horses are central. Muslim shrines and mosques do not share this equestrian devotion; they do however, contain pictures of ships and ships are also found in Kharva temples. Throughout the nineteenth century it was illegal for Muslim traders to ride horses. In the present, the horse, as symbol and vehicle, is systematically being culled from Muslim social practice with active campaigns waged against the use of horses in marriage processions; and Muslims no longer frequent shrines such as Ravalpir. For Muslims the horse has become a symbol associated with Hindus, Rajputs and their allies, and Hindu oppression of Muslims.

The horse does not rear large in the literature on religious conflict, however horses and ships (the floating counterpart) are on the fault line of religious polarisation in Mandvi, a theme that recurs in subsequent chapters.

Returning to Raval's story: he was employed to tend horses. One day his employer stumbled across him sitting in the jungle. Ready to scold him for his laziness, the employer was taken aback to see Raval fashioning horses from the soil and breathing life into them. The Charans were traditionally horse traders, brokers of the most prestigious symbol of royal power. In this way, their role in protecting the sacredness of the royal lineage also had a very real aspect through transacting both source, and dominant symbol, of power. Gifting horses to those responsible for the vital upkeep of one's genealogy has a striking parallel to the role of the votive terracottas that stand in a line before Raval's tomb, because the Ravalpir temple complex is best known as a source of fertility. The horse statues are consecrated by Ghadvis at the behest of Rajputs and others, in return for the promise of children: a direct ritual inversion of Raval's power. The object of Raval's fame is offered back to him in the hope that his creative powers will be channelled through the reproductive system of the patron. Raval was of course a Gadhvi and in this version of the myth his ability to manufacture power was self-generating: he could create horses (real and symbolic royal power) from the object of royal power (the land of Kachchh). He had no recourse to sources drawn from 'outside' the kingdom. This story epitomises the ideal of the ruler: power and legitimacy for governance came from within the kingdom, marked by the coincidence of land and cosmological boundaries. Although the temple stands at the boundary of the kingdom, it also stands as protection against external danger and is in complementary relation with the temple of the Jadeja Mata. Contained within the ritual complex of the temple (and the kingdom) are all the necessary forces for the autonomous generation of additional power.

2.52. Mercantile patronage of Ravalpir

It is common to assume that Vaishnavas consider the *devi* worship as unclean (Shah and Shroff 1958:250). This has been shown not to be the case in the daily ritual lives of Bhatiyas. Given the importance Bhatiyas invest in *kuldevis* it should come as no surprise that they also seek protection from other deities demanding sacrifice for the evocation of their power, such as Ravalpir. However, the Bhatiya mythology of Ravalpir stands in opposition to that held by the Rajputs and their allies. This is also true of mythology relating to other temples that stand on the shoreline. The principal trader festivals invariably lead down to the sea and culminate with immersion of the deity. The main royal ritual event of the year is the procession to offer sacrifice to Ashapura Mata. Matana Madh, her abode, stands amid barren outcrops in the centre of Kachchh, and the contrast is striking. Of the numerous trader festivals that lead down to the sea, the main one is Nava Naroj (see Chapter 4). During Nava Naroj traders and their constituents venerate the sea, entering the waves to seek wealth and blessing for the forthcoming trading year. The example of Ravalpir is a small part of a general attitude and disposition towards the seashore and the realms that lie fore and aft of it.

Sunderji Sodagar was a highly successful merchant, born in Gundiyali in the eighteenth century. He became a horse trader and famously supplied both factions in the wars between British troops and soldiers of Tipu Sultan, a Muslim King of Mysore. Sodagar rebuilt the temple of Ravalpir as a gift to his birthplace, but by shifting its location, from village to seashore, he bestowed on it a new set of meanings. To Sodagar horses were trade goods and a source of wealth, which in turn generated prestige and indirectly power: a refraction of the idea that horses were symbols of martial power and thus legitimacy. Sodagar thus gave a 'trading' twist to a 'ruling' tradition.

Today, Mandvi's traders and rulers visit the temple for different purposes. Sodagar was a merchant who owned ships and whose trade was subject to the perils

and dangers of the sea, a connection that explains the link between the temple and merchant shipping. In the view derived from Sodagar's patronage, the horse represents mercantile wealth rather than kingly power. Traders petition Raval for protection during voyages to foreign lands and for the procreation of wealth from outside the kingdom. I visited this temple frequently, as it was away from the business and noise of the town. The custodians of the temple, who were often around, commonly told the story of Raval making horses from the earth. They told it to me, and I was often present when they recounted the well-rehearsed lines to other visitors. One day I went with Vipul, a proud Bhatiya and, in the classic Indian sense of the word, of 'wheatish' complexion; Vipul resembles the stereotypical trader. He was a stranger to the temple. The main custodian asked, as she asked all strangers, where Vipul was from and what caste he was. She then proceeded unequivocally to tell him that Raval had summoned (or made) horses from out of the sea, and not, as I had heard many times before, from the earth. This was my introduction to the traders' temple mythology. The basic story is the same: Raval is born blessed and grows up to perform miracles. However, in the traders' version, the climax of Raval's life is his ability to conjure horses out of the waves.

On subsequent visits she told me of misfortunes that had befallen traders in foreign lands who had not taken Raval's blessing prior to their departure. Many of them were reported to have returned home at once to redress their oversight. Such stories stress the protective element of Raval's power. However, they also stress Raval's power to assist traders' success in overseas business ventures. In this tradition of the mythology, Raval's power creatively draws on sources outside the boundary of the kingdom. The most obvious example is the horse, as wealth. In the ruler tradition the horse, as a symbol of power, is manufactured from itself, or, at least from the land. While for traders, wealth and power inherent in the symbol of the horse is drawn into the kingdom from the perilous realm beyond its boundaries or, in other words, beyond the temporal and ethereal power of the king.

2.6. Merchant–Princes

Contemporary social differentiation between Hindu rulers and traders, and a parallel series of Muslim groups, is understood to have emerged from temporal social segmentation. Rulers have become traders and ‘Hindus’ have become ‘Muslims’, but in mythological time they were socially undifferentiated. Claims to share genealogical origins may reflect a general historical tendency to aspire to an association with the rulers of Kachchh through the widespread emphasis placed on the purity of patrilineal descent. But not all claim the lineage of the rulers; Lohanas, for example, and by implication Memons (as putative Lohana converts to Islam), are *suriya vansh* (of the sun). The high-ranking groups display and emphasise the integrity of their lineage, tracing it back to an ultimate point of origin. This is a practice associated with the bardic tradition and the emphasis on power successfully emanating from unbroken lineages. Today, the idea has a wide social appeal that marks prestige and social rank. Pure descendants of each *vansh* have inherited a certain set of attributes, dispositions and tendencies that make them a unique group of people. This pervasive tendency implies infinitesimal segmentation. An obvious example is the specialised origins of each Bhatiya lineage, which are thought to determine the character of those born into the lineage. Just as specific castes have inherited skills and attributes so do specific lineages within them. Thus Jadejas are not radically different from Bhatiyas in mythology and they also share the general inherited characteristics that Bhatiyas invested in commerce rather than rule. Muslims are also integrated into this model. The highest-ranking Muslims, converted ‘Bhatiyas’, are regarded as *chandra vansh* with the same inherent and immutable characteristics as their Hindu counterparts. In Hindu eyes the highest-ranking Muslims groups are Khojas and Vohras. This may be a privilege afforded them because of their large-scale absence from the town or because Shia religion is relatively secretive and discrete and thus less offensive to contemporary Hindu sensibilities. However, Shias traditionally rank highest among Muslims throughout the region and in neighbouring Sindh. In Mandvi, they rank highly because of the pedigree of their genealogy, which corresponds with that of high-ranking Hindus and

renders them good businessmen (an acceptable occupation) and efficient at organising their own trading kingdoms (socially discrete).

Clearly, this is a very different understanding of social organisation than conventionally cited *varna* classifications. In this system, status is specifically derived from a particular prestigious source of pure descent. In Kachchh, as I presume to be the case in much of western India, the *purvaj* (apical ancestor) is closely identified with Rajput tradition. Occupational identity and a particular group's proficiencies have the ability to transform overtime, with rulers, for example, becoming traders. The logical implication of the model is that rulers, the encompassing (foundational) figures in the genealogy, originally embodied practically all skills, attributes and propensities necessary for a successful kingdom. From a concentrated ancestral source these powers are temporally distributed through an increasingly segmented population. Lineage segmentation is thus a reality and a metaphor for social division. Given the emphasis on pure descent, those considered to be of mixed origins are necessarily of low rank (see chapters 3 and 4).

To summarise this part of the argument: exemplary kingship draws on lineage and Goddess, the conceptual 'boundedness' of legitimate kingship and the kingdom, and endogenous production of power; while exemplary 'trading' draws on lineage and Goddess, the elitist Pushti Marga, and the exogenous production of power. Both systems are exclusive but premised on very similar principles.

Traders have not rejected their ruling heritage. They consider themselves to be royal traders, with kingdoms that transgress the boundaries of landed kings. Although 'stateless', the power derived from their lineage allowed Bhatiyas and others to rule over autonomous landless states. Bhatiya accounts of the 1930s tell of an untamed Kshatriya past that was replaced by a cultured mercantile life-style. The redundancy of the schism for contemporary Bhatiyas, in the time frame that Sampat casts it, illustrates a changing salience. The modern explanation is not searching for an explanation of dominance and success, as Sampat was, rather it stands as an

explanation for failure and decline. The sketch provided above is not a 'history' of traders and their relationship to a ruling past, rather, it is a narration of the past from the perspective of the present, with one deviation into textual accounts dating from the 1930s. From the perspective of the present the characteristics that made Bhatiyas rulers also made them good traders. This is clearly at odds with popular stereotypes and academic models that invest too much faith in them. The *seths* of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are seen as having ruled landless kingdoms. Their subjects worked on their fleets, in their godowns and on the docks. Each employee had numerous familial, economic and political clients who also supported the trader and benefited from his patronage. Pocock describes Bhatiyas as 'merchant-princes' (1973:115). This passing reference to one of the great trading communities of western India conveys a clear understanding (albeit unelaborated) of the issues discussed in this chapter. The traditions of rulers and traders are not products of syncretic heritage, but they appear to be based on similar principles with different worldly interests, and exist as tendencies, but not as absolutes. Bhatiyas, like the other trading groups, both Hindu and Muslim, follow traditions that make them impossible to understand from within the tradition of ethnography that has developed in peninsular Gujarat. The material presented in this chapter has suggested an alternative way of viewing this difference.

The model of endogeny and exogeny is not only applicable to modern perceptions of the past. Subsequent chapters demonstrate the potential of the model through contemporary ethnography. Descendants of nineteenth century merchant-princes remaining in Mandvi have guaranteed careers abroad. Many direct descendants of the trader ancestors of Mandvi people are naturalised Omani citizens. They recruit, in order of preference, through the axioms of kin, caste, religion and village of birth or association. Those with relatives, caste brothers or patrons with powerful commercial and administrative positions, in countries like Oman, expect to leave Kachchh to work abroad when they are around twenty years old. This is a perfectly normal part of life for many young men from Mandvi and seems to have been so for at least a century and a half. Temporary migration, as a right of passage, is only prevalent

among the established trader population. Many rulers, or, more precisely, 'agriculturalists' went overseas to labour, but not to trade (van der Veer 1994:111). Their migration was transitory and without capital base or local political investment, which made it more difficult to return and to maintain meaningful social relations with Kachchh. Of the many different migrations from Kachchh the one that continues to affect the vigour and dynamics of the local economic and political landscape are the Omani settlements (see Chapter 4).

Traditional traders, and many of their constituents, remain highly mobile within the Indian Ocean. The 'voyage', as a life stage, and as an annual cycle, is a central social theme for the entire mercantile population. The analysis presented here suggests a further contrast between rulers and traders. The former hold a model of fixed centred kingship, which from the sixteenth century was characterised by boundary maintenance rather than territorial expansion. In opposition to this, traders expect movement and multiple boundary transgressions as necessary life stages.

There is one further problem with Tambis-Lyche's model of dualistic society: there is no accommodation for the large percentage of Muslims in the region. Tambis-Lyche acknowledges this omission (1997:315). Yet, he argues that the picture he has created of traditional society in Saurashtra is a 'reasonable grid for understanding what kinds of things Saurashtrians refer to in speaking of their society and its past' (1997:315). Given the vast impact of Muslim heritage, governance, language and population on the region this cannot simply be the case. Furthermore, his model fails to account for the communal attitude of either Hindu rulers or traders towards Muslims. And it is this factor, more than any other, that has had such a profound impact on the direction and form of modern religious politics (both Hindu and Muslim) in the region.

Muslims, although not sovereign in Kachchh in recent centuries, are both rural agriculturalists and successful traders. Yet, they clearly cannot be comfortably assimilated into a model that takes different forms of Hinduism as the basic premise.

It has been shown that the dominant Muslim trading groups are inculcated in the mythical past constructed by Hindus. These trading groups form a small percentage of the Muslim population of Mandvi. Sunni Muslims are in majority, and they are seen as being of low status both by Hindus and the Shia traders.

The following chapter explores how Sunni Muslims and their high-ranking Shia mercantile patrons can be integrated into the model of 'ruler endogeny' and 'trader exogeny' and outlines the social hierarchy of Mandvi's Muslims from which the Bhadala recruit apprentices while they simultaneously attempt to undermine its legitimacy.

Chapter 3.

Mandvi's Muslim social hierarchy: segmentation and historically contingent migrations

3.1. Muslim population in Kachchh

This chapter examines hierarchy among Muslims in Mandvi. The ethnography presented indicates that the ethno-history of migration and trade combines with a model of corporeal substance and code to form a historically contingent hierarchy that transcends the majority of sectarian divisions in the population.

The argument presented in this chapter explains how Sunni Muslims fit into the endogenous/exogenous model outlined in the previous chapter. Origin claims and the status derived from them illustrate a complex relationship with the lands beyond the boundary of Kachchh. The origin, spread and demands of Islam place those professing the faith in a very different position to their Hindu counterparts. Islamic proselytisers came (and come) from overseas, and pilgrimage to Mecca necessarily involves transgressing boundaries to return to Kachchh improved and with greater piety. In this sense, for Muslims, 'invasion' of the kingdom's boundary has for a millennium been a source of prestige, devoutness and liberation. Social hierarchy and social segmentation in Sunni Muslim society are taken as demonstrative examples that reveal how differential values are accorded to various areas of the littoral Indian Ocean. This discussion provides the context for the social origins of apprentices discussed in subsequent chapters. The hierarchy described here is denied legitimacy in shipyards by Bhadala *seths* yet, as shown in Chapter 7, is usurped in other contexts as a sign and model of Bhadala power.

Exemplary kingship is endogenous, drawing on lineage and the Goddess within a bounded kingdom, while mercantile wealth is exogenously drawn from outside the kingdom. Despite this profound difference, the kingdom (as land) remains the base

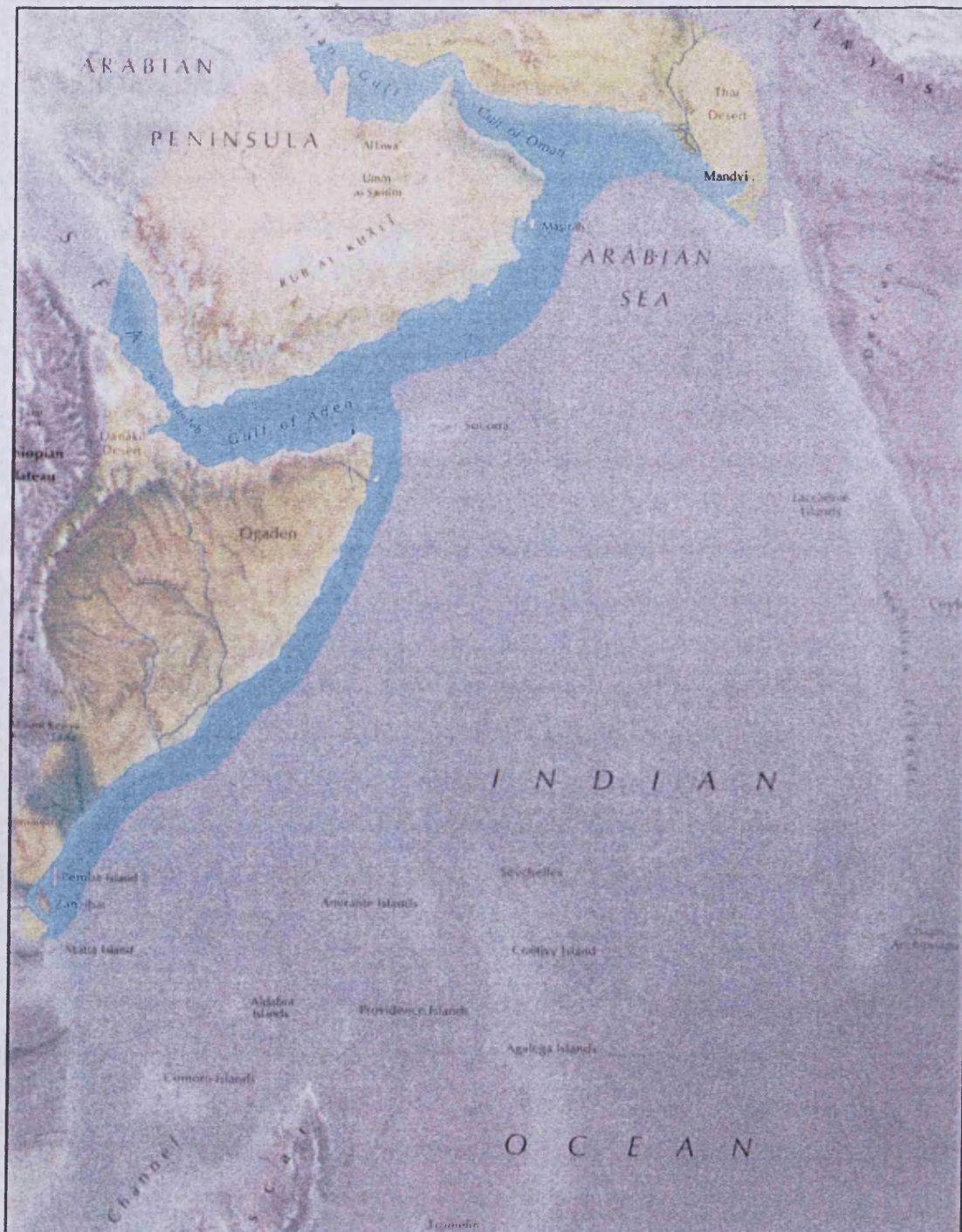
reference point for both communities. The importance of lineage among traders replicates that of the rulers but does not result in the same claims to territorial boundaries. The trading 'kingdoms', or 'empires', are transnational, restricted only by the rules of the *mahajan* and enterprise (or courage) of those within it. Kachchh remains the homeland to which Hindu diasporic communities are intimately related through lineage and *kuldevi*, as well as dress, language and diet. Muslim diasporas have maintained less sentimental attachments with Kachchh than their Hindu counterparts for three reasons. First, Muslims do not have *kuldevis* (or associated lineage structure), and although a few groups are divided into *nukhs*, marriage within them is endogamous. There is thus no necessity to visit tutelage goddesses in Kachchh. Secondly, despite the contemporary preference among Sunni Muslims for endogamous marriage, there is clear evidence that in the nineteenth century many Kachchhi Muslims frequently married exogamously, which integrated them rapidly into the societies where they had settled. This trend was not restricted to the satellite communities. A report from the Political Agent stationed in Kachchh in the 1830s narrates how Muslims purchased African brides in Muscat or Zanzibar and brought them to Kachchh to live as second wives contracted through a left-handed *nika* (the ritual for taking a second wife subordinate to the first). The report goes on to state that the children of this union were accepted as members of the descent group¹⁰. However, the idiom of 'mixed blood', used to categorise men and groups in Mandvi (explored in this chapter) today, relies on a memory of these mixed marriages and the identity of their progeny. The lineages that incorporated significant amounts of slavish blood are of lowly rank precisely because of the 'mixing' of 'blood'. In sum, Muslims were less reluctant to synthesise social life in Kachchh with the vagaries and hazards of life overseas than the majority of Hindus. Rather than maintaining a strict division between the 'inside' and the 'outside' of Kachchh, Muslims were more willing to transcend the boundary of the kingdom, which ultimately led to many of them settling permanently overseas. Thirdly, and as further discussed in Chapter 4, Sunni Muslims, with the exception of Memons (Engineer 1989), were subordinate to

¹⁰ M. G. S. A., P. D. 1869. Cutch No. 85/2226. No. 1177 *Kutch Slave Trade. A mussulman inhabitant of - purchased a Seedie female at Muskat and then brought her to -*.

the interests and movements of Shia patrons, which fragmented and distorted relations between Sunnis.

In the early nineteenth century James MacMurdo estimated that half the population of Kachchh was Muslim (1820a:233). The 1891 census shows that Muslims formed 24% of the population (extrapolated from G.B.P. Vol. IX. Part 1). The first census after partition (1951) indicates that Muslims comprised 18.92% of the population (extrapolated from Trivedi 1955:14). This compares to an average of 11.35% of the population at an all-India level (Assayag 1995:19). The unusual concentration of Muslims in Kachchh is further intensified in Mandvi, which has traditionally had more trade, kinship, kingship and linguistic links with Sindh and the Middle East than with mainland India, a fact presently obscured by post-partition political geography. The majority of Muslims in Mandvi claim to have originated in Sindh, most notably the commercial town of Nagar Thatta. The partition saw many Muslims return, predominantly to Karachi (Ghani 1984:33). In the decades before the partition the percentage of Muslims living in Mandvi, must have been far greater than current numbers, which in the absence of any reliable demographic data, I approximate to be between a quarter and one third of the present population (including Salaya).

As discussed in Chapter 1, the history of Kachchh is defined broadly by the effects of various population movements, which have had a greater effect on evident social diversity among Muslims than among Hindus. None of the Muslims in Mandvi claim to be autochthonous. As Map 3 shows, claims to a particular origin, in a broad geographical sweep, range from mainland Gujarat, Rajasthan, Sindh and Punjab, to Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, 'Arabia' and 'Africa'.



Map 3. The littoral regions from where Mandvi's Muslims claim to have originated.

3.2. Muslim social organisation in India

Scholars writing on Muslims in South Asia have long noted differentiated, loosely ranked and named social groups that display a tendency for 'endogamous' marriage. Such findings inevitably provoked the questions: Do Muslims have hierarchical caste systems? If so, how are they organised? Reading the literature on Muslims in India, social hierarchy seems to be an empirical if variable fact. How such hierarchical ordering is legitimised is a subject of contention. The debates on the relationship between hierarchical Muslim and Hindu social organisation were inspired primarily by Fredrik Barth (1971), Louis Dumont (1970) and, subsequently, by Imtiaz Ahmad (1978, 1983, and 1984). As a result, contributions have been principally inspired by theory, and in the process the ethnography seems to have been drained of its 'local colour' (an apt phrase), becoming mere grist for theoretical mills. There are three broad positions. First, Mines has argued that Muslim social hierarchy in Tamil Nadu is not comparable to the Hindu caste structure because ranking occurs predominantly at the level of the individual (in terms of age, wealth and religiosity) and not at a wider social level (1975). Secondly, that Muslim social order is formed, in part, through interactions with Hindu populations (Jamous 1996), and thirdly, as outlined by Steve Barnett, Ákos Östör and Lina Fruzzetti (Barnett 1976), that Muslims are socially ranked, but that ranking is not based on an overall logic comparable to that underlying Hindu caste (also Barth 1971).

This last model is taken as the antithesis of Muslim social organisation in Mandvi. Barnett argues, in defence of Dumont, that caste does not exist among Muslims because of a lack of 'integrative ideology'. Rejecting 'caste', Barnett argues that instead Muslims have 'fluid systems of stratification' (1976:645), which exist only within the context of Muslim society. Stratification is based upon male occupation, residential locality, occupation of in-marrying women's brothers and fathers, and women's rituals. He argues that such features can be isolated distinctively within the Muslim population for four reasons. First, Muslims lack an ideology of purity and pollution and therefore their system of stratification lacks an integrative ideology that

accounts for differences among men. Secondly, Islam proclaims the equality of all men before one God, admitting neither hereditary privileges nor professional intermediaries between man and God. This equality is practised in joint prayers, inter-marriage among the four so-called 'caste' divisions and commensual relations between groups. Thirdly, Indian Muslims do not separate status from power as Dumont's Hindu *homo hierarchicus* does (also see Dumont 1980:205-209). Barnett argues that among Muslims individual social mobility is possible regardless of their social position at birth. Fourthly, distinctions between Muslim communities are differences of class not caste, in the sense that:

An upper-class Muslim ranks high in the Muslim system as a member of the Islamic community. A lower-class Muslim ranks low in the same system of stratification, yet is equal to the high-class Muslim since both are members of the same community (1976:645-646).

Barnett's model is taken as an example in this chapter because it reflects widely held assumptions about the nature of Muslim society that are commonplace in the abstract, but seemingly impossible to locate in ethnographic contexts. The following sections challenge Barnett's four assertions through an ethnographic presentation of Sunni Muslim hierarchy in Mandvi against the backdrop of comparative literature. The analysis presented below also points to the fact that Muslims don't have 'caste', but they do have social stratification that is based on an overall logic, which while radically different to that found among Hindus does display some similarities.

Literature that deals with Muslim social organisation in India frequently mentions social differentiation based on claims to 'foreign' and 'indigenous' origins (or more-or-less so) and a further division between those who came to India as Muslims and those who converted to Islam *in situ*. In study after study these divisions are carefully described and it is noted that those claiming foreign origins are of high status, those who claim to be from the lands immediately to the west of the Indus are of medium to high status, and those who claim indigenous origins are of middle to low status. These facts are seldom elaborated or are simply ignored in discussions on the

underlying basis of varying Muslim social status (but see McGilvray 1998; and Vatuk 1996). Such divisions, it is argued here, are central to the organisation of social hierarchy in Mandvi. Of course, given the argument of the last two chapters, coastal populations may contain greater diversity than inland ones and particular origins may become more salient in a mobile trading environment. However, there is much historical and comparative literature (albeit predominantly reporting on littoral regions) that emphasises the diversity of origin claims as a way of structuring Muslim hierarchical social organisation (Barth 1983; Marlow 1997; and Misra 1963). This literature and the facts discussed within it are frequently overlooked in the contemporary Indian context.

One notable exception is Imtiaz Ahmed who, while tracing the development of egalitarianism in Islamic thought, observes that among Hanafite Muslims (the majority Mandvi's Muslims) an Arab was superior to a non-Arab; amongst Arabs, all Quraishites were of equal social standing in a class by themselves, and all other Arabs were equal irrespective of their tribes; amongst non-Arabs, a man was by birth the equal of an Arab if both his father and grandfather had been Muslims before him, but only if he was sufficiently wealthy to provide an adequate *mahr* (marriage endowment). Additionally, he notes that Malikites, a great many of whom were negroes, were considered of inferior social status to Arabs (1978:14–15). Although simplistic, this taxonomy illustrates that birth, descent, 'race' and regional origins have precedence in the Muslim world and Mandvi's Muslims are not an exception.

3.3. Social segmentation

Mandvi's Muslims do not have 'caste' like Hindus, although they are grouped into ranked and endogamous units from birth. However, very few Muslims deny that there is a worldly social hierarchy premised on facts, which, although disputed, are at some level recognised by all. Rather than stressing hierarchy in absolutely defined terms, a more complex picture is presented in this chapter of an emergent hierarchical pattern based on pervasive social segmentation. This is primarily caused

by the spatial movement of people against the contemporary benchmarks of preferred patterns of kith and kin organisation. This approach necessitates an examination of how kinship and wider ideas of race, human geography and blood feed into the ranking of Muslims. The following analysis focuses on the majority group of Sunni Muslims who are shown to have a segmentary model of society divided into four primary conceptual strata.

3.31. *Jati*

The broadest of these strata is *jati*, which encompasses, by its generality, the three following strata. *Jati*, widely considered in literature on India, corresponds to the taxonomic metaphor of 'family' or 'kind'. Often translated as 'caste', it is more accurately thought of as 'type' and has a remarkably broad range of applications, from 'black' to 'white', 'Indian' to 'African', 'Muslim' to 'Hindu', and 'Gujarati' to 'Bengali'. It is a highly contextual and flexible form of classification. My own ascribed *jati* varied from simply being *videshi* (foreign), to being *gora* (white), *criste* (Christian), *angrej* (English), or 'European'. On occasion when strangers heard me speaking Gujarati I became a *naqli* (counterfeit) version of all of the above. The commercial idea of 'counterfeit' is highly derogatory, implying that I was either of 'mixed blood' or albino. Either way, it was inferred that I was unlikely to find a marriage partner and would therefore remain something short of a complete human being.

This broad sense of segmentation is reflected in the following specific classificatory orders.

3.32. *Musalman*

The second level of segmentation is *Musalman* (Muslim) and distinguishes Muslims from Hindus. The *Musalman* population is broadly divided into Shias and Sunnis, the latter being further divided into a large number of *jamats*.

3.33. *Jamat*

Etymologically the third level of segmentation, *jamat*, relates to congregation and religious association. In terms of social organisation it retains these meanings by demarcating specific groups of Muslims within a general Muslim population. *Jamat* membership is determined at birth and in life an individual may reflect the identity of his *jamat* through distinctive use of language, dress, diet, ritual spaces and particular kinship terminology. Upon death the body is buried in a *jamat*-specific cemetery or in a *jamat*-specific section of a general Sunni cemetery. At a general level all *jamats* are named, endogamous marriage groups and political units, which are often represented by social institutions (among the more wealthy these include mosques, schools and meeting halls). Although all *jamats* are endogamous, the ideals of endogamy vary considerably between them. A whole *jamat* can function as a marriage circle. However, given the preference for father's brother's daughter marriage, a *jamat* can also be an association of endogamous lineages.

The names of particular *jamats* are drawn from occupations, historical and mythological figures, regional origins, or from the amalgamation of two or more social groups. *Jamats*, which are hierarchically ordered, have only limited commensal prohibitions and no absolute idea of relative ritual pollution or purity given by birth. Members of a *jamat* tend to live in clusters around their communal institutions; high-ranking *jamats* live within the old city walls; low-ranking *jamats* live in less prestigious areas of the town or in the sand dunes outside the walls. This division no longer reflects the relative wealth of a *jamat* as it may have done in the past. *Jamat* is the dominant form of social organisation, but highest and lowest ranking Muslims are not associated with *jamat* organisations, yet they are ranked within the same social hierarchy. Therefore, *jamat* is not the same as 'caste' because there are Muslims who are not associated with any *jamat*, but are encompassed by the dominant social hierarchy. Furthermore, some *jamats* are comprised of groups of diverse social origins, a condition that is seldom seen among Hindu 'castes'. There are two kinds of *jamat* organisation, which I chose to term 'proprietary' and 'non-

proprietary'. Proprietary *jamats* are corporate groups that maintain corporate identities, such as names, place of origin and customs. Non-proprietary *jamats* (the inferior kind) are composed of groups of diverse origins subsumed by a corporate *jamat*. The groups within non-proprietary *jamats* retain different symbolic identities (again names, places of origin and customs).

3.34. *Atak*

The third level of segmentation is *atak* (elsewhere *biraderi*), which is a patrilineal (sometimes referred to as *nasab*) descent group defined by a single apical ancestor. This generalisation can be complicated by pointing out that some *ataks* can trace common descent in Mandvi and among closely related populations in Bombay or overseas, while larger *ataks* may have many distant representatives that share names, and possibly affinity, but are unable to trace common descent ties. In the former case the *atak* is what Jonathan Parry terms a 'maximal lineage' (1979). In the latter case an *atak* forms the basis of a broad inter-settlement marriage pool. However, both maximal and inter-settlement *ataks* are putatively based on common descent even if this can only be traced at a local level. In reality, descent groups are prone to division and amalgamation and therefore are highly fragmented. When *ataks* divide it is normal for a segment to adopt the name of the apical living male figure. However, it is common to hear the explanation: 'although we are called *this* we are really *that*'. The 'that' claim invariably creates an association with an established *atak* to which they belonged before their title was changed.

The diversity of social organisation makes it very difficult to generalise. However, the pattern is broadly that common to northern India (see Parry 1979; and Werbner 1989), with variations according to marriage preferences and practicalities, demography, and geographical distribution. Despite considerable variance between groups and systems of classification it is argued below that there is a more-or-less consistent principle to hierarchical organisation, which is based on the qualitative evaluation of patterns of segmentation in Muslim society.

3.4. Purity and pollution

This section outlines how transient ritual purity and impurity, permanent corporeal purity and impurity, and ambiguous occupational purity and impurity are understood among Muslims.

3.41. Transience

In Mandvi there is broad consensus that Muslim conceptions of ritual purity and pollution are transient and can be removed by purifying acts on the part of the individual (also Barth 1971:139; and Ali 1978:27). The term *pak* describes ‘general purity’, and the opposite, ‘general impurity’, is *napak*. Bodily products originating above the neck are less polluting (if not exactly *pak*); those emanating from below it are considered *napak*. This latter category includes the products of physical processes such as urination and menstruation, and growing pubic hair (which is assiduously shaved), as well as to the visible and metaphysical products of birth and death. These sources of pollution and their antidotes relate to the outside of a person, to the visible and tangible aspects of bodies as well as to digestion and consumption patterns.

3.42. Permanence

In Mandvi the same conceptions of *pak* and *napak*, used to describe these forms of transient ritual cleanliness, also describe qualities of blood (*lohi*). *Pak* stands for ‘pure’ or ‘unmixed blood’ (*nirbhal*) and consequently ‘high rank’. *Napak* refers to ‘impure’ or ‘mixed blood’ (*bisser*) and low-ranking *jamats*. Additionally, *jamats* of low rank are frequently referred to as being of *gandu* (dirty) and *kharab* (bad) blood. In other words, purity and impurity (if not to say pollution) determine the gradation of perceived blood purity and the emergent corporeal characteristics of individuals.

Such metaphors are used interchangeably, which demonstrates the ways *jamat*, *atak* and men equate: individual bodily characteristics describe social characteristics, with social characteristics to a lesser extent also standing as a metaphor for individual bodily characteristics. However, metaphors for living bodies form, in a broad sense, social rank. In this sense, the body is not merely a collection of cells, chemicals and organs that form a torso and appendages, rather, the body has character as a collection of attributes and dispositions that stem from ascribed features conveyed through lineage.

These themes occur elsewhere in literature on Indian Muslims. In Calcutta Muslims emphasise purity of descent. This is evident in the use of terms such as *sudh* (pure) and *birre* (impure, mixed descent) in relation to men and groups, with those considered *sudh* ranking higher than those considered *birre* (Siddiqui 1978:258). Therefore, it seems safe to assume that prioritising purity of descent presupposes that a violation of the governing lineage principles is impure. Similarly, Muslims in Ranchi are reported to hold that inter-ethnic marriages result in impurity (Ali 1978:26). From this example we can further assume that mixing 'ethnic' identity in marriage results in the degradation of the progeny's blood. Additionally, Muslims of Old Delhi are organised into *biraderis* ('one body') and are socially governed by principles of purity of blood and bone in terms of descent, which in turn determines *adat* (behaviour, custom) as occupation and character (Goodfriend 1983:121–122). In this example purity of blood descent is viewed as the basis for particular kinds of behaviour. A final example from Tamil Nadu indicates that more general traits and dispositions are also transmitted through blood. Tamil Nawwayats desire to marry among themselves in order to 'maintain the blood' and to 'preserve the pedigree'. Blood transmits 'qualities': morality, ability and physical traits, which can be lost or diluted through admixture (Vatuk 1996:245). These examples show that blood is the central idiom of descent; the ascribed qualities of various kinds of blood are reflected in social status; blood transmits qualities and dispositions. Such ideas receive scant elaboration in the literature yet seem to be central to the social organisation of Muslims. Although the quality of blood can be partially affected by diet and lifestyle,

blood impurity cannot be removed through acts of purification on the part of the individual: such impurity is permanent. Together, these examples show how pure-blood and mixed-blood populations are ranked, understandings of which are of central importance for Muslim society.

3.43. Substance-code hypothesis

Clearly, Indian Muslims emphasise the composition of 'blood', as a measure of social differentiation. It is surprising that Muslim kinship has not been married with the biogenetic 'substance and code' hypothesis (of Inden and Nicholas 1977; Marriott 1976; and Marriott and Inden 1977). Despite the wealth of criticisms against this model (see Raheja 1988; and Mines 1994) it seems that the way in which the theory sets out the relationship between blood, substance and social rank is remarkably similar to how Muslims in Mandvi articulate social hierarchy.

In this model all actions (such as profession and speech) and intangible influences (such as perception, desires and posture) embody and convey essential qualities, as 'code-substances' or 'substance-codes', which forever act against each other (McGilvray 1982). At a transcendental level all combinations make up continuous and graded-ranked beings ranging from the divine through the human to the immoral and the inanimate (Inden 1976). In this view, emphasis is placed upon the ways in which 'reproduction' (as a physiology) and morality (as part of the physiological condition) conjoin in particular 'bio-moral' combinations. A 'caste' from this perspective shares unique biological and moral substances, potentially intensified through the orthodox social transactions of occupation and ritual exchange. This model stresses the continuity of substance through 'endogamy' but, as discussed in the opening section of this chapter, Mandvi's Muslims have not always stressed endogamy as they do now, and at one time 'blood admixture' seems to have been commonplace. If substances can be intensified, they can also be weakened and diluted, and it is the process of dilution (or mixing) through inter-ethnic and racial marriages that creates low-ranking and mixed-blood social categories. The previous

section pointed to comparative ethnography to highlight the importance of pure blood as a feature of descent. In this section the substance-code hypothesis has been outlined. If 'substance' is blood and its corporeal correlates then what could be taken as 'code'?

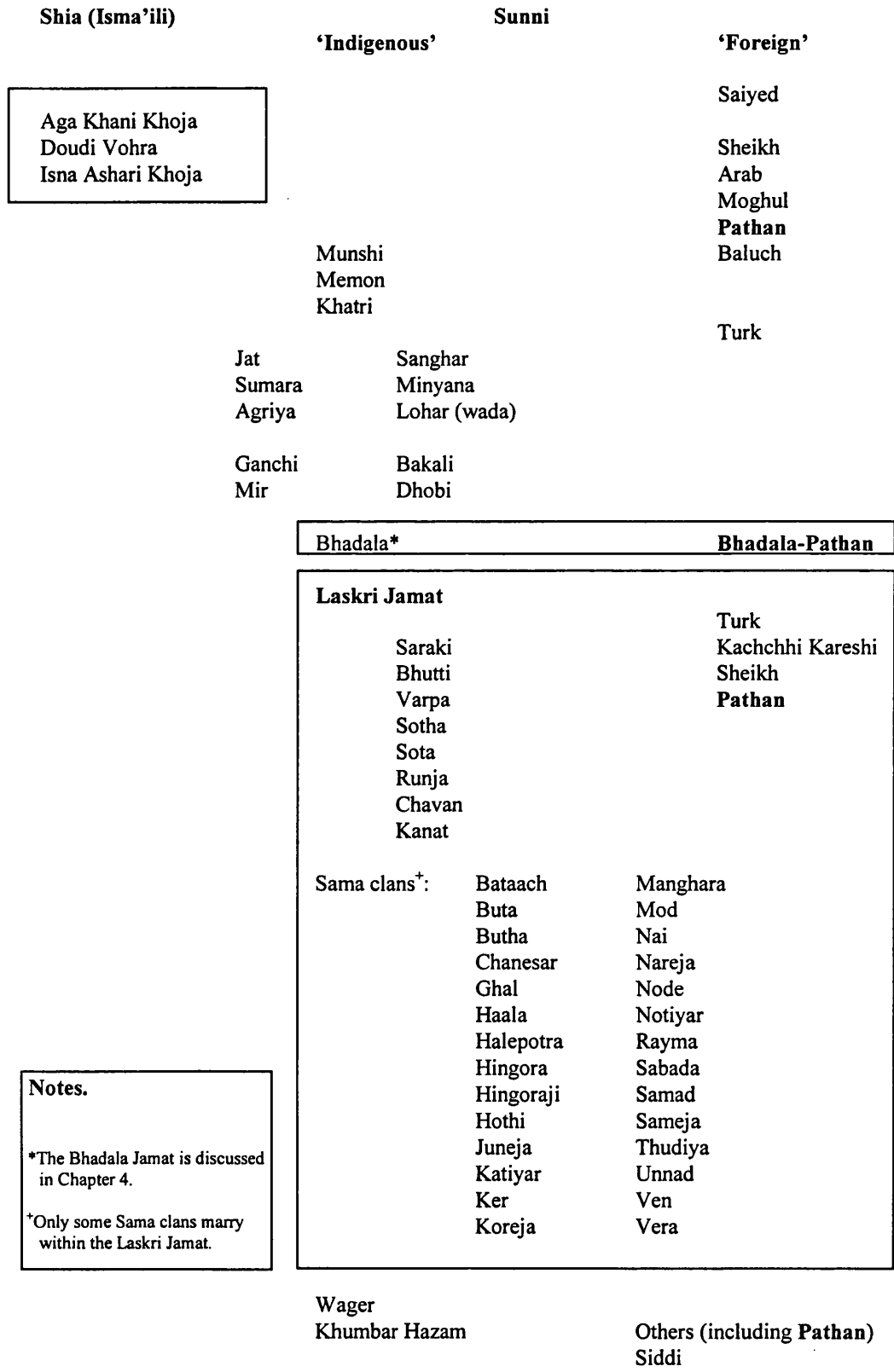
Some senior informants related how they considered people to be constituted as *jism* (body) conjoined at the heart with *ruh* (soul). The *ruh* is comprised of two hierarchically ordered elements. The lower level is called *nafs*, which dictates an individual's desires, potential for violence and other base instincts. The higher level, *aql*, relates to intellectual, spiritual and moral faculties. Together, these two 'codes' act against each other to form human mind and body actions in the world (*adat*). The distribution of these facets is seen to vary between individuals and more importantly between *jamats*. Broadly, high-ranking Muslims are seen as having a greater proportion of *aql* and the resulting propensity toward discrimination, discernment, commerce and the Prophetic ideal, which finds ultimate expression in *barakat* (spiritual efficacy and abundance) of Saiyeds. Conversely, those who are *nafs* heavy, as it were, are consequently seen as having a propensity toward base appetites and personal indulgence. Miscegenation, as a violation of segmentary principles, is seen as enhancing base aspects over the higher order of intellect. Furthermore, as shown later in this chapter, not all kinds of miscegenation are considered to be equally corrupting. Those with the highest concentrations of *nafs* are considered to be 'hot', while, those laden with *aql* are considered to be 'cool'. Simply, the various combinations produce (through the transmission of blood as substance) people who are body heavy and others who are mind heavy.

3.44. *Jamat* hierarchy

There are approximately twenty-one *jamats* of varying size, organisation and social integrity (shown in Figure 3.1.), and nine other clearly identifiable non-*jamat* divisions. Of the twenty-one *jamats* the nine highest ranked are uncontested proprietary *jamats*; ten middle-ranking *jamats* claim to be proprietary – although this is contested; two are non-proprietary *jamats*, to which the majority of contemporary ship owners and sailors belong. Men in Mandvi can and importantly do rank all *jamats* with consistency. The ranking given in Figure 3.1. is somewhat impressionistic because the distance between ranks is not given, yet this general hierarchical order is remarkably consensual. My data collection was qualitative and descriptive, but ‘statistical ranking’ (Jain 1978) and ‘sociological ranking’ (Siddiqui 1978) produce similar results in northern India. The area of greatest ambiguity appears among mid-ranked *jamats* (Jat to Lohar), and as a result these *jamats* have been amalgamated into one rank of approximate equivalence. In Mandvi there is little resistance to the idea that Muslims are socially ranked. Occasionally, in response to my questioning on the subject, men would say things like: ‘We do not really have social hierarchy because we are Muslims, but ...’. The same men would also commonly use terms such as *niche* (low), *gundu* (dirty) and *kharab* (bad) to refer to men and *jamats* implying evaluative and qualitative ordering.

A number of further observations on this social ranking are of note. First, *ataks* in all *jamats* are also hierarchically ordered, as are sub-*ataks* within them. However, within the Laskri *Jamat* (itself an amalgamation of previously amalgamated *jamats*) there are significant differences in rank between the subsumed groups. This ranking is obviously more self-serving than general *jamat* ranking and for simplicity is excluded here. Secondly, knowledge of the social composition of the different Muslim communities is not evenly distributed throughout the population. General knowledge of the high-ranking *jamats* is widespread, however there was often uncertainty as to whether a particular named group formed an *atak* or a *jamat*.

Figure 3.1. *Jamat* hierarchy



Notes.

*The Bhadala Jamat is discussed in Chapter 4.

†Only some Sama clans marry within the Laskri Jamat.

In condensed form what this figure shows is a hierarchy of professions: priests, merchants, agriculturalists, labourers, and those involved in 'polluting' professions. Highest are Saiyeds, who claim to be descendants of the Prophet's daughter, Fatima. However, Saiyeds do not have *jamat* and neither are they lineage endogamous. Second in rank are Shia merchants. Arabs and 'conquerors' of foreign and indigenous origin follow. For example, Pathan, Baluch and Turk *jamats* are associated with having origins in Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Turkey. Next are artisans and agriculturists, for example Luhar refers to blacksmiths: such names are either derived from a particular craft or have become synonymous with it. Clearly, transient forms of occupational pollution play some part in the construction of this hierarchy, but the inherent qualities of blood are seen to determine such tendencies and dispositions. The traditionally low-ranking 'professions' of Wagers (fishermen), Khumbars (potters and mule caravaneers), Hazams (barber) and Siddis (ex-slaves of African descent) are firmly in the lowest orders of the hierarchy. However, 'profession' is not the logic that produces a ranking of such subtle distinctions.

What prevailing logic exists that allows men to make consistent evaluations of the relative rank of 'others' in the face of such diverse social organisation? The answer, as previously implied, is an individual's embodiment of the principles of relative *atak* cohesion and strength, premised on the perceived purity of blood from 'correct' marriage alliances. 'Blood' is the measure of rank through which the coded propensities of the soul are transmitted. The prestigious form of *jamat* organisation keeps 'blood' within the *jamat* and, more prestigiously, within specific *ataks* and sub-*ataks*. Pure descent is the elevated marker of social status, so the more complex and diverse the social organisation of a particular *jamat*, the more mixed its blood, and the lower it ranks. Synchronic and diachronic marriage patterns are the primary determinant of this ranking. The greater emphasis a particular *jamat* places on notional endogamy (of various kinds), the higher it is ranked. Diachronic considerations include past 'mixing of blood' and the degree to which slavish blood has been incorporated into particular *jamats*. The non-proprietary *jamats* are of low rank because marriage, even if endogamous within the *jamat*, is considered

exogamous in terms of blood (and can be seen as mixed blood marrying mixed blood) if marriage takes place between the encompassed social units.

The ranking presented in Figure 3.1. is dominant and transcends other contextual expressions of social aspiration. Such trends might include language (the adoption of Urdu by an individual or a *jamat* mosque), *pardah* (the increased seclusion of women in architecture and clothing) and high levels of *mahr* (payments given to incoming wives at marriage). These inflationary trends generally reflect levels of wealth and education, but do not alter *jamat* positions within the hierarchy in the short term. Prestation, a major theme of Chapter 7, is a common way of gaining status through displays of wealth and generosity. Given the structure of Muslim social hierarchy (its bias towards profession and purity), the possibility of a situation arising where a low-ranking man is able to benefit a high-ranking man (outside the sphere of ritual transaction) through gifts or philanthropy is extremely unlikely. Legitimate donations can be made to a *jamat's* communal institutions and to lower-order clients. Even a highly prestigious donation such as a mosque or the renovation of a shrine will only be received by members of the donor's *jamat*, as all mosques are specific to a *jamat* or a group of *jamats* and shrines also tend to be identified with clients from particular *jamats*. Therefore, in this social order, status obtained through giving is at the level of the *jamat* or at the expense of lower-ranking clients. When this social order is disrupted a whole series of opportunities 'to give' arise, as is shown in subsequent chapters; but, in Mandvi, philanthropic gifting does not affect status in terms of the overall hierarchy.

3.45. Pathans

To illustrate how hierarchy is understood in practical terms, the example of the Pathans is presented below (relative rankings given in bold in Figure 3.1.). Pathans comprise four groups: the high-ranking proprietary Pathan *Jamat*; two high-ranking *ataks* in non-proprietary *jamats*; and a fourth lowly group that belong to no *jamat*. As Pathans, they are linked by shared ideas of a common past that saw them migrate

from the northwest of the sub-continent into Kachchh as warriors and traders. Despite the similarities between them, they are hierarchically ordered such that economic circumstances and position within the social hierarchy do not equate. The internal organisation of a *jamat* determines relative status. Within the proprietary *jamats*, such as the Pathan *Jamat*, there are a series of endogamous *ataks* that at the highest level of segmentation claim a common ancestor and place of origin, and origin myths. Within the low-ranking non-proprietary *jamats*, such as the Laskri *Jamat* and the Bhadala *Jamat* (see Chapter 4), there are varying endogamous and exogamous *ataks* sharing no common ancestry. Within these *jamats* there are *ataks* claiming diverse ethnic and regional backgrounds, accompanied by origin myths, dress and ritual customs. Lowest in rank are the Pathan *ataks* that do not belong to any formal *jamat* and who marry according to their own preference, situation and circumstance. The Pathan *Jamat* ranks highest because blood within it is seen as closest to the 'original', and therefore, the form of endogamy its members practice is seen as perpetuating pure descent. The blood of each *atak* remains at best within the same *atak* or at worst within the social parameters of the *Jamat*. This reflects the ideal that the boundaries of the *Jamat* are ideally inviolate. Moving progressively down the hierarchy, other *jamats* marry in ways that increasingly deviate from this ideal model (or did in the past). All groups, however, see their own marriage patterns as being endogamous despite variance in degree and organisation. What 'endogamy' means thus varies considerably, but variation is marked against elite considerations of *atak* and *jamat*.

In terms of blood, the scale ranges from 'pure blood' of the Pathan *Jamat*, through 'mixed blood' of middle-ranking *jamats* to the 'dirty blood' of those not belonging to a *jamat*. I heard no dissension towards the idea that these four groups were 'actually' Pathan. Clearly, if all are accepted as being Pathan, that is as having had an essentialised 'substance code' in the past, their relative rank reflects how concentrate or how dilute that essence is within their *ataks* today. There are no connections between the four groups, no uniting sense of 'Pathan' identity or any attempt to explore similarly held genealogical connections or origin myths. Thus the ancient

identity of Pathan has paled in relation to the historically contingent relationships of both *atak* and *jamat*.

Furthermore, not all mixed unions are thought to be equally corrupting. Broadly inter-*atak* marriage within a proprietary *jamat*, where at the highest level of segmentation there is a common ancestor, is held to be less corrupting than inter-*atak* marriage in non-proprietary *jamat* where *ataks* share no common ancestors. The rare marriages between *jamats* are thought to be similarly corrupting to those that take place outside the *jamat* framework. Proprietary *jamats* are 'genus', in a metaphorical sense, and to some extent *ataks* within them are thought of as 'species' of that 'genus'. Literally, the blood of the common ancestor *jamats* is seen as being qualitatively different from that of others. This is reflected in the use of *jamat* names, which denote corporate and individual qualities emerging from 'blood'. Thus the term 'Bhadala', simultaneously a noun and a descriptive adjective, refers not just to a specific group of men, occupation and residential locale, but also to numerous moral and qualitative judgements and a relative position within social hierarchy. In addition to having rank relative to one another, Pathans are ranked against the other *jamats* by the same principles. The ideal is that members of different *jamats* do not inter-marry. The greater ideal is that members of different *ataks* do not inter-marry. Meeting both requirements within historical memory coincides with a high status.

3.46. Segmentation

Society broadly based on lineage structure has, depending on the type and strength of lineage organisation, a built in metaphor to describe segmentation. As Jonathan Parry puts it:

Kangra people conceptualize their society in terms of a segmentary model and that neither in language nor in behaviour do they signal any radical distinction between the nature of the groups of different orders of inclusiveness. The boundaries which mark divisions within caste, divisions between castes, between 'clean' and 'untouchable'

castes and often between men and gods are different only in the degree of emphasis and elaboration they receive (1979:3).

Likewise, Muslims in Mandvi see the world as segmentary, although the different boundaries of social inclusiveness are seen as qualitatively different. Those marking distinctions between *ataks*, *jamats* and counterfeit Europeans or Christians are qualitatively different. This can be seen in the variable negative connotations that are attributed to the violation of these principles, which in an ideal world, should remain inviolate. In a broad sense, *jati* can be equated with 'race', which is another form of segmentary ideology. Peter Robb describes 'race' in the South Asian context as referring to stereotypical skin colour and concomitant inherent, heritable, persistent or predictive characteristics of individuals (1995:1). Thus it follows that 'miscegenation', a violation of segmentary principles, is also discussed using idioms of 'blood', and the resulting gradation of men feeds into the ranking of *jamats*. Such classification crudely runs: pale men putatively from the 'Middle East' rank highly; brown men from 'India' are middle ranking; black men from 'Africa' are of low rank. Race, in the sense of *jati*, is conceived as a broad taxonomic classificatory system, and pure *jamats*, and *ataks* within them, are of the same categorical order. The darker the body the more dominant the base instincts of the soul.

The lowest ranking Muslims are the descendants of slaves who were brought to Kachchh from Zanzibar and Muscat in the nineteenth century (and possibly earlier). The *jamats* said to have incorporated slavish African blood into their lineages are also of lowly rank. Mandvi's Muslims see miscegenation, which mixes the substance of different *ataks*, *jamats* and *jatis*, as unpredictable and potentially dangerous. *Jamats*, such as the Laskri Jamat, are attempts at disguising corrupting forms of marriage, but other groups have long memories and admixture cannot easily be glossed over with the creation of social institutions – even when modelled on the dominant *jamat* form.

Stereotyped skin colour and 'pure' blood are also seen as determining the character of the 'mind'. Thus 'pure' Saiyed blood and substance stand for ideal *barakat* (charisma), divinity and piety. The pure blood of endogamous traders produces cool, controlled and calculating business minds. 'Mixed blood', on the other hand, is bad, rough and volatile. Blood purity has precedence in Islamic scripture and heritage, and in Mandvi is epitomised by the social status of Saiyeds (discussed below). They are hierarchically apical, their *barakat* most potent and their behaviour the most 'naturally' exemplary. At the lowest station of social hierarchy, opposed to Saiyeds, are slaves, or in this case ex-African slaves. All other men fall somewhere between these two extremes. Clearly, this ordering also reflects Ahmad's outline of Hanafite social ordering discussed in Section 3.2. Such corporeal division is also entirely compatible with the model of transient purity and impurity that distinguishes between bodily substances from above and below the neck (outlined above), in the sense that those who work with the mind (Saiyeds and merchants) are regarded as purer than those who work with their bodies (slaves and sailors).

3.5. Egalitarianism and hierarchy

The relationship between social egalitarianism and hierarchy among Indian Muslims has received considerable attention from scholars and Indian Muslims themselves. This section reviews a number of elements within this debate that are of relevance for the discussion in later chapters through looking at Barnett's contention that Muslims do not have caste because they lack an encompassing social framework in which to couch hierarchy. It should be clear by now that it is not being argued that Muslims have 'caste', but that Muslim social hierarchy is underpinned by a consistent logic concerning blood purity and the individual qualities that emerge from it. Barnett describes three features of Muslim social organisation to support his claims: Muslims emphasise the equality of all men before one God; inter-marriage between different groups of Muslims is common; among Muslims there is an absence of worldly – divine intermediaries. The assumption behind each of these assertions is the universal equality of Muslims. But the data from Mandvi does not

point to such universal equality (and scarcely in rhetoric) and thus contradicts each of Barnett's statements. However, in Salaya considerable rhetorical emphasis is placed upon equality, not in terms of an individual's condition at birth (because that remains very similar to the picture given for Mandvi), but in terms of the possibility of individual transformation within one's lifetime.

The Islamicist Louise Marlow comments:

Islam is probably the most uncompromising of the world's religions in its insistence on the equality of all believers before God. In God's eyes, differences of rank and affluence are irrelevant, and all Muslims, regardless of their positions in this world, are equally capable of salvation in the next (1997:xi).

In theory this egalitarianism is extended in the large part to the social plane as well. However, in ethnographic terms there is clear evidence that lines are frequently drawn between social and religious equality (H. Basu 1993; Eickelman 1976, 1981; and Geertz 1968). In an Islamicist vein this is commonly expressed as: 'women and slaves are regarded as religious but not the social equals to free male believers' (Marlow 1997:1). In Mandvi, the category of 'free male believers' is comprised of hierarchically ordered groups differentiated along the lines of blood, employment and knowledge, which relate to the 'codes' described earlier and to the criteria of behaviour, *barakat* and the Prophetic ideal described in Chapter 1.

The influence of scholars who have written about India in hierarchical terms, especially Louis Dumont who conceptualised 'hierarchy' as graded religious stations (1980:65–66), is evident in the literature on Indian Muslims. However, egalitarian values have their own social domains within hierarchical Hindu society (see Parry 1974, 1979). Therefore, it is possible to argue that in Muslim 'egalitarian' society 'hierarchical' values exist, while in Hindu 'hierarchical' society, 'egalitarian' values exist. For example: 'the dialectic between the values of caste and hierarchy is arguably an inversion of a parallel dialectic within the Hindu caste system itself' (Werbner 1989:288). However, this formulation seems dangerous and false. To

oppose the principles of social organisation among Hindus and Muslims seems divisive in orientation, is not borne out by evidence, and assumes that all sections of Muslim society treat contrasting values in the same ways. Note the caution expressed by Veena Das: 'In Indian society one finds controversies of anthropological theory not only mirrored in the ideological conflicts of modern Indian society but also as having provided new spaces for these conflicts to be articulated' (1995:25). It strikes me that to oppose hierarchy and egalitarianism is to postulate an absolute and irreconcilable difference between the social worlds of Indian Hindus and Muslims. I am not disposed to see Mandvi's Muslims as being 'syncretic', however there are many similarities between the two forms of social organisation that obfuscate the underpinnings of the 'hierarchy-egalitarianism, egalitarianism-hierarchy' opposition. Hierarchical social organisation among Muslims contradicts the basic tenets of Islam – everyone knows that! The double ordering of hierarchy and egalitarianism implies contradiction, hypocrisy and a parochial disposition. However, it no longer seems expedient to dismiss 'Muslims' in Gujarat as ignorant of the basic tenets of their faith (as in Pocock 1972:44), when they define themselves as Muslims and importantly are defined by Hindus as such.

An alternative approach is to isolate hierarchical values and egalitarian ideology in Muslim society, treat them as different and contextual systems of thought, and examine the tension that emerges in society from holding seemingly contradictory perspectives. For example, Raymond Jamous writes:

It is as if we had to show that the Meo [of Rajasthan] were a Rajput caste and false Muslims or, on the contrary, that they were Muslims and not a real caste. In fact, the Meo case is not so simple: they are both a Rajput caste and a Muslim community (Jamous 1996:180).

In this example the Meo are caught between caste (hierarchy), religion (egalitarianism) and the conflicting interests of both. Frank Fanselow expresses a similar sentiment: 'It is rather a matter of two competing interpretations and strategies for behaviour, which are employed to make sense of changing economic

and political realities' (1996:223). From this perspective it can be seen how the relationship between the social values can vary given different social contexts. This approach makes it possible to explain how among 'universalist' Muslims there is a greater stress placed on egalitarian ideology and values, while among 'particularist' Muslims hierarchical values may not be stressed but remain sociologically evident.

In Mandvi, Muslim society as a whole is clearly hierarchical and this is consistent with the way that all inter-personal relationships are conceived and in this sense hierarchy is both a value and an ideology. In contrast, hierarchy in Salaya is of a different form but no less evident, but a greater stress is placed upon egalitarian ideology and values. The different tensions that emerge from the relationship produce alternative social patterns. Importantly, the Mandvi hierarchy encompasses Salaya's Muslims, but this is denied in Salaya through the stress placed on egalitarian values among 'proper' Muslims. This relationship is further elaborated in subsequent chapters, but raises an important point of relevance for the present discussion.

One of the most contentious debates on the social organisation of Indian Muslims is to be found in the journal *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (Das 1984; Lindholm 1986; Minault 1984; Robinson 1983, 1986; and Werbner 1989). These debates are concerned with the representation and characterisation of change and continuity in Muslim society. Broadly, the dominant perspective emphasises the diversity and plurality of religious views and social forms (especially Das 1984) and opposes Francis Robinson's idea that Muslims of the sub-continent are gradually moving towards a model of Islamic perfection (especially 1983).

Despite differences in methodology and findings, all the scholars involved in the debate follow Robinson's suggestion that social scientists study Muslim society '*as it is, not as it should be*' (1983:155). In its simplest expression, this involves looking at practices and social forms as they appear in ethnographic or historical contexts. But, in Mandvi as elsewhere, there is a tension between Islam *as it is* and *as it should be*

among the same people and within individual lives. This involves experiencing the contradiction between local ways and means of doing things and the abstract ideal of Islam. As discussed in later chapters everyone has a picture of what proper Islam is like and, although this picture varies considerably, it is broadly similar to the 'universalist' perspective outlined in Chapter 1. Yet despite this fact, merely changing religious practices is not enough to move within or to transcend the *jamat* hierarchy outlined in previous sections of this chapter.

However, other well-known models of textual orthodoxy and ritual orthopraxy in India shed further light on the problem. It is not merely a matter of defining the nature of the conflict between actual practices and ideal practices, but it is also a matter of defining the number of levels at which this occurs in any given situation. Gibb's (1949) classic formulation of 'degrees' of Islam, when applied to the Indian context, might read as follows: (i) *Traditional orthodoxy* as the acceptance of a whole legal tradition, such as the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-Hind; (ii) *Revivalist fundamentalism* as the return to the original, purified principles of Islam, such as the Jamat-i-Islami; (iii) *Religious modernism* as the reformulation of Islamic doctrine in terms of modern thought, such as Sir Saiyyid Ahmad Khan's Aligarh Movement; (iv) *Humanist secularism* as the maintenance of cultural values and the rejection of Islamic theology, such as the Marxist inspired social (naxalite) movements in the Bihar and West Bengal.

It has already been mentioned that theological discussion in Mandvi is seldom elaborated in terms of doctrinal differences between schools of thought. The exceptions are distinctions made between Shias and Sunnis locally and between Sunnis and Wahhabis for those who regularly visit Bombay. A second, less-taxonomic measure, orders hierarchically: (i) textual Islam, (ii) parochial practices and (iii) popular heterodox practices (Ahmad 1984:12–13). This formula better describes the pattern of religious practice in Mandvi, but these categories are also to be found at various levels of social segmentation: at the level of Muslim society, of *jamat* and *atak*, and at the individual level. In the following section a further

discussion of social organisation shows that of these different levels *atak* is the dominant form of social organisation in terms of religious practice and reform. The result is that local textual orthodoxy is as diverse as local orthopraxy and is a potential cause of sectarian division. God may have given the Koran, but its words are open to dispute and are taken as props for legitimising or dismissing social practice. Semi-literate men might not understand 'text' for what it contains, and literate men frequently disagree. However, texts are important signs through which social difference is mediated and interpreted.

Throughout the Muslim world the *sunnas* (the body of Islamic custom and practice based on Mohammed's words and deeds) vary in priority and in terms of traditions of jurisprudence. *Sunna* are *wajib* (obligatory) and *mustahabb* (encouraged). The emphasis placed on *sunna* varies traditionally and regionally. *Hadiths* (sometimes classified as part of the *sunna*) are graded variously by authenticity, with each *hadith* divided into two sections *isnad* (the chain of reporters, ideally concluding with the Prophet) and *matn* (the saying). The potential for radically different interpretation, contest and refutation is clear given the inevitable ambiguity in genealogy, authenticity and meaning of both *isnad* and *matn*. Dispute extends to the ways in which *hadiths* are classified, as different schools impose different classificatory criteria on authenticity. With comparable sources of contest in jurisprudence and theological matters, the complexity and sophistication of textual interpretation within Islamic traditions makes it difficult to sustain a broad division between the ideal picture of textual orthodoxy and practice. Rather than the central relationship being between texts and practices it is perhaps better conceived of as one between 'practising texts' and 'textual practices'. The former relating to social life as partially (but variably) derivative of text and the latter to particular contextual activities that focus on texts. In both instances authoritative intermediaries are vital in defining the nature of the relationship between text and adherent, and, as pointed out in Chapter 1, this can be more to do with power relations among men than with literacy, illiteracy or the content of texts.

Texts are important, but this varying importance is typically given by *jamat*-specific congregations in mosques and *jamat*-specific client groups at the shrines of Saiyeds – both of which tend to be patronised by wealthy *ataks* within the *jamat*. All high-ranking *jamats* have their own mosques, communal halls and cemeteries, and prayer, *majlis* (congregations) and *khutba* (sermons) are specific to particular *jamats*. Thus ideas about proper prayer, ritual and life cycle rites vary between *jamats*. It is unlikely a man would be refused entrance to a mosque, and even less likely to a shrine, of a community that is not his own. However, if the man is local, he is extremely unlikely to visit the religious buildings of other *jamats*. This differentiation is acknowledged and is an uncontested part of life in Mandvi. There is no mosque in Mandvi that serves as a general meeting place for Friday prayers. The only time at which the town's Muslims collectively congregate is during Eid at the *eid garh* (a stone wall, the focal point of which draws the congregation's gaze towards Mecca). The *eid garh* is to the northwest of Mandvi. Conspicuously, the *eid garh* stands outside the regular confines of the town, away from the site of daily religious and social segregation. Prayer at this time is consciously constructed as the occasion in the year that the boundaries of *atak*, *jamat* and residence collapse into communal prayer.

This discussion raises an important point because on one hand it is possible, as argued in Chapter 1, to say that in Mandvi Islam is 'particularist' (i.e. as Das describes) and in Salaya it is tending towards 'universality' (i.e. as Robinson describes). This is certainly true, but the apprentices described in chapters 5 – 7 move from one system to the other and find themselves becoming more 'universalist' accordingly. However, they find themselves in this situation because they become the material clients of charismatic Bhadala ship owners. For Muslims living in Mandvi who do not work on Bhadala ships the situation is different and nicely illustrates the profundity of the hierarchy outlined above and the conflict between egalitarianism and hierarchy, or to put it another way between Islam and *jamat* structure in a broad sense, the latter again being largely determined by the patronage of wealthy *ataks*.

The problem can be expressed in the following way: social hierarchy orders and ranks men according to codes and substance – those who are ‘mind heavy’ such as Saiyeds and merchants are of the highest rank – but, there is also a widely held model of proper Islam, which partially, but not entirely, contradicts the premises of social hierarchy. The problem is that those who are clearly living and practising a form religious life closest to this model are the low-ranking Bhadala of Salaya. In the eyes of Mandvi’s Muslims this does very little to affect Bhadala status within the hierarchy because at a fundamental level they are physically corrupt and ‘body heavy’. This is not restricted to Bhadals’ social mobility because within the hierarchy of *jamats* in Mandvi there is only a limited scope for social mobility within the middle sections (thus the ambiguity among the middle ranks) and between lower and middle sections. Such mobility can only be generated in terms of the hierarchy itself and the higher sections are out of reach, even for the most adroit climbers. Effective policing by high-status groups within a bounded geographical area means that status ambiguity (and thus potential social mobility) is hard to generate. In Mandvi, salient high-status claims are made to one of the *sahaba* (‘companions’ of the Prophet and the four Caliphs) or a notable *tabiun* (successor). However, the success of such claims is limited and variable. Those who, at some unknown point in the past, adopted the name ‘Kureshi’ (commonly ‘Quraishi’ – a powerful claim given Ahmad’s outline of Hanafite social order) in an attempt at status mobility are today known as ‘Kachchhi Kureshi’. They claim that they are descended from the Quraishi tribe of Mecca who provided meat for the *jihadis* (religious warriors) during the lifetime of the Prophet. Other Muslims reject this genealogical claim, and derogatorily refer to them as ‘Kachchhi’, thus associating them with the local region and a syncretic past. This labelling checks the status they gain from being associated, albeit by name alone, with an honoured profession and valiant history that has roots in ‘Arabia’. Mandvi’s social hierarchy is fairly static. The established order of merchants, priests and foreigners reigns over other *jamats*, and fictitious claims are rejected by an order that itself may well be based on similar claims.

Likewise, for the Bhadala the methods and intentions of their mosque building and proselytisation are thus denied legitimacy because they have emerged from the hopelessly corrupted physical and mental characteristics of mixed bloods. As subsequent chapters show, the Bhadala are aware of the impervious nature of Mandvi's social hierarchy to their reform. Consequently, a number of conscious and unconscious strategies have emerged among the Bhadala that aim to undermine the legitimacy of the hierarchy rather than attempting the much harder task of rising within it. So although Mandvi's Muslims have a model of what perfect Islam is like it is of secondary importance to the local and historically contingent hierarchy that orders religious and social life.

The example of Kachchhi Kureshis is an interesting one because it also reveals that salient claims for higher-status are made by an association with the land and people of the Gulf and not in terms of religious practice. The base metaphors of code and substance are more powerful than changes in religious practice. In other words, claims to high status are made against conceptions of code and substance and not towards the more 'superficial' markers of religious practice. Given that the majority of religious congregations in Mandvi are *jamat*-specific, religious practice and donations to religious buildings and rituals also tend to be *jamat*-specific, and thus limits the possibilities for general social mobility within the wider community.

3.51. Brotherhood of Islam?

The ideal of a *jamat* is that it forms a 'brotherhood'. In the following section, segmentary ideology, as a way of expressing hierarchy in Muslim society, is explored first at a macro level and then in terms of kinship from where it is argued the metaphor draws on hierarchical ideas of kin within the broader egalitarian realm of *jamat*, which is crucially mediated by the *atak*.

In Mandvi, hierarchy is pervasive in all social situations. There is little rhetorical pretence that Muslim society is made of social equals. They deny 'caste' and express

a restricted social parity through idioms of *jamat*. Respect and deference (and likewise patronage and political representation) are ordered around perceptions of social rank, lineage and age. Categorically, equals exist, for example members of the same *jamat* are all roughly equal when others are making aggregated claims about their status. However, in familial contexts men are ranked in terms of age and senior men within a *jamat* are ranked in terms of the power they wield and the social and religious accolades they have collected throughout their lives. It is not uncommon for Mandvi's Muslims to say that they are all equal 'as if brothers' (*dharam bhai* – brothers of the same religion), and the term *jamat* also evokes a sense of 'brotherhood'. It is commonly assumed that this metaphor implies equality or egalitarianism. However, this assumption, despite the prevalence of the metaphor in diverse Muslim settings, ignores hierarchy inherent in conceptions of 'brotherhood'. The actual form of relation conjured by the analogy is a common identity in which men are hierarchically ranked and socially segmented, literally as if they were brothers.

Relationships between brothers are among the most central, yet most delicate, in social organisation (Inden and Nicholas 1977:100). Typically, during the lifetime of their father, and while they themselves are unmarried, brothers will not normally enter into serious feuds. The eldest brother is a respected source of advice, governance and protection, who frequently acts as the public representative of his younger brothers. His siblings normally do not smoke before him and often will remain silent in his presence unless specifically addressed. He continues the most prestigious sub-*atak* in the descent line of his father. It is the eldest brother's prerogative to marry first and to be subject of the most prestigious marriage contract that his parents can negotiate. Brothers, although having a common genitor, are socially and morally ordered which also relates to a gradation of 'substance-code'. However, upon the death of the father figure, brothers and their offspring typically segment. Here *atak* is an encompassing form of social segmentation that has an uneasy relationship with political and economic organisation. The following section explores these relationships in respect to conceptions of 'brotherhood'.

When I first started to think about the organisation of Sunni Muslim kinship, I was tempted to describe it, as R. Patai describes kinship in the Middle East, as 'patrilineal, patriarchal, [commonly] extended, occasionally polygynous and emphatically endogamous' (1955:371). While these terms capture the essence of public social organisation they exclude the role of 'mother' in mixing blood. Additionally, these terms gloss over the importance maternal ties in kin reciprocity and affiliation. Relations with paternal kin and, especially, relationships between brothers are the most crucial to prestigious endogamy and descent. However, the prestige of this association has limitations. The preceding discussion of *jamat* hierarchy illustrates the central problem with describing Muslim kinship as patrilineal. Although the social organisation of names runs through the male line, perceptions of 'good' and 'bad' descent rely heavily on the attributes of maternal blood. Marriage is patri-local, yet the ordering of social rank relies on the premise that admixture compromises blood purity.

The external connections of descent groups expressed in the web of marital exchange relations transcends in importance their 'substantive and definitional qualities' (Murphey and Kasdan 1967:1). When the Sunnis describe who they are and how they identify with others, they place much less emphasis on the links that are created through marriage than connections traced through the father. Consanguineous aggregation takes precedent over affinal division in general social discourse. However, whatever the genealogical relationship of a husband and wife each has distinct kin relations. Ego's mother's siblings are not the siblings of her husband. Such matrilateral ties are important and are often called upon for favours, employment and political and economic affiliations. The desired pattern is to marry women of the same blood, but given the propensity for minute social segmentation at the outset this would seem to pose significant problems. Actual marriage patterns reveal a counter-intuitive strategy for overcoming this problem, which points to the fact that kinship organisation and economic and political organisation are seldom homologous orders.

All Sunni *jamats* have a preference for 'close' endogamous marriage. Explicit marriage prohibitions are placed on lineals, first order laterals and those nursed from the same breast. The composition of legitimate endogamous unions varies slightly between *jamats*, but, typically, the father's brother's daughter (hereafter FBD) is the preferred (but not prescribed) form. The dominant FBD marriage preference is not an isolated trait and must be viewed in conjunction with other patterns of marriage, social strategy and social division. Sunni Muslims in Mandvi are quite clear that there is no Koranic compulsion, or legitimate sanction in *hadith* literature, towards patrilineal first-cousin marriage (but see Aggarwal 1969:547–551).

Patrilineal descent has significant implications in the structure of *jamat* and *atak* in terms of public social organisation of names. Unilineal descent, traced through the male line in a stable or expanding population, constitutes a ramifying system where succeeding generations in many lines tend to be larger and more inclusive than the preceding (Barth 1954:164). The nature of this expansion leads to lineage fragmentation. This is a central feature of Muslim social organisation, which is partially counter-acted through FBD marriage. The largest actual or notional patrilineal kinship unit is a proprietary *jamat* – when members claim a common ancestor – however, in practice, *atak* (as maximal lineage and as inter-settlement organisation) is the common unit of kinship organisation and economic and political mobility. *Ataks* are thus divided into segments according to the fortunes and personal relations of its members.

Eldest sons are highly valued as blood-rich progeny and are predominantly contracted into FBD marriage. The literature assumes that this form of marriage keeps property within the family because of the girl's right to inheritance (Murphey and Kasdan 1959:17). Taken as a single event (as non-reciprocal) FBD marriage can ensure sustained control over capital, but only if laws of inheritance are adhered to, and only if the exchanging brother's economic and property interests are homologous. However, property is commonly divided between brothers after the

death of a patriarch and inheritance laws relating to women are frequently (although not always) ignored. In practice, FBD marriage is ideally reciprocal, keeping blood within descent lines, but it does not keep property within 'families' given the propensity for segmentary fission.

Mandvi data shows that FBD marriage does not control the direction of outward flows of inheritance, but rather maintains property within a sub-lineage. Viewed in the long term, brothers establish mutually balanced levels of inheritance between women marrying 'in' and marrying 'out'. Exchange is roughly of units of equivalence (although eldest brother's daughters are hypothetically at a premium) through which the need for property loss is negated. In other words, through the exchange of women brothers mutually deny inheritance rights to their daughters. Superficially, it may seem that links through marriage are a form of alliance. However, the effect is to further the economic and interests of a particular lineage divisions among brothers, which by its very nature denies alliance through shared property or business interests. The result is a tension between the property and lineage interests of the patriline and the network of relations formed by affinal kin (who are also consanguines).

Ataks are subject to a constant pressure towards division and a 'potentiality for atomistic fission' (Murphey and Kasdan 1959:24). Both united and divided sibling sets are common. However, it is evident that kinship and political, economic and social relationships between sub-*ataks* are not always constitutive of one another. Brothers separate in business may well form political alliances, while brothers divided on political matters may well share business interests, thus the impetus for division does not only stem from disputes over capital and inheritance among brothers. For example, Bolim, who is in his forties, forcibly removed his daughter from a marriage with his elder brother's son. News had reached the girl that her husband was in 'love' with a Russian prostitute in Dubai. She doused herself in kerosene and lit a match. She survived severe burns to her face, neck and chest. A year into her recovery her husband started to beat her, at which time Bolim

intervened and removed the girl from his brother's house. Bolim's father was alive, sided with his eldest son, and stopped talking to Bolim because of the disrespect he had shown the affairs of his eldest brother (not the affairs of his eldest brother's offspring). The compound in which they all lived prior to this incident was then divided. The patriarch, his three other sons and their offspring continued to inhabit their own houses within the sub-*atak* compound. Bolim bricked up the door of his house that opened towards a communal courtyard and made a new door that opened directly onto a public road. He and his brothers remained living side-by-side, but without shared space. Bolim also dropped his father's name. Bolim's dismissal of his eldest brother's authority in favour of the interests of his daughter points to the fact that there are many other concerns in the organisation of kinship than mechanistic regulations and formal precedents.

In FBD marriage there is clearly a tension between two ideals. Carrol Pastner has argued that on the one hand consanguines make the best affines, while on the other, the lack of sibling solidarity is a prime constraint on first cousin marriage (1979). Analysis of the Mandvi data shows that frequently (but not always) consanguines make the best affines precisely because such marriages are compatible with the perpetuation of divided interests of siblings. FBD is the preferred choice for senior sons but not, nor can be, a possibility for all siblings. In reality, I estimate that such marriages constitute one in five Sunni marriages. The most common, perhaps two in every five, form of marriage is between members of the same *atak* or sub-*atak* who share a putative patrilineal primogenitor (these forms of marriage are less prestigious because of the dilution of blood). The statistical possibility of such a marriage being possible is far greater than it is for FBD marriage. Other marriages are typically 'exogamous' between members of different *ataks* within a *jamat*. But, given the variability of marriage patterns the ideal of keeping blood pure is inevitably compromised across generations. Although my own data on such marriage is based on a limited sample population (given that the Sunni Muslim population of Mandvi is around 10,000) it seems that FBD marriage is more common among those brothers who have divided their father's estate and live separately. Therefore, FBD marriage

is not a 'cure-all' for social rupture but rather a means of achieving a balance between the contradictory influences of schism and lineage, and is remarkably compatible with wider interests within segmentary society.

The metaphor of 'brotherhood' is a particularly apt one for describing segmentary and hierarchically ordered Muslim society, as well as one for describing a group of men with similar purpose. No social relationship, including those between brothers or between men within a *jamat*, is equal. Differences in rank as a 'summation of multiple part statuses' (Barth 1971) are constantly evaluated upon meeting and parting according to behaviour in group contexts. This is seen in who greets whom, who offers the first hand or embrace, and the style of words and titles that accompany the gesture. 'Brotherhood' gives an individual equality with others in terms of the relationship of the individual with God, and to a lesser degree in terms of ultimate reckoning at the time of death. The individual at prayer in a mosque has a unique relationship with God, which is of a similar quality to all other men at prayer, however, the worldly relationship with the men prostrated to his left and right shoulders is not one of equality.

To summarise the argument of this chapter thus far: segmentary *ataks* form proprietary and non-proprietary *jamats*, which are loosely ranked by a pervasive ideology of blood purity; hierarchy is more evident than equality; idioms presumed to evoke equality, such as 'brotherhood', refer to segmentary hierarchy, which is also seen in preferential kin patterns. Furthermore, marriage patterns between actual kin are similar among all *jamats*, with the exception of the Saiyeds whose blood purity is such that it 'dominates' when mixed with other blood. Among the majority of *jamats* the preferred form of marriage is with a male ego's father's brother's daughter and is ideally reciprocal across generations (another expression of segmentation). Yet *jamats* are hierarchically ranked on the basis of kinship and blood. This ranking is determined by the historical memory of exogamous unions in the past as well as the mixing of blood in the present, which determines the substance code configurations

broadly in terms of individuals within *ataks*, *ataks* within *jamats* and *jamats* within society.

Within this hierarchy of *jamats* there are two important anomalies that are addressed in the following section. Two groups, divine Saiyed intermediaries and Shia merchants, maintain dominant positions within the traditional hierarchy, and their presence is important for two reasons. First, the Saiyed is the apical figure in terms of religious status and power in Sunni Muslim society. His embodiment of supreme human qualities is given by his putative religious-geographic origins from the Gulf. Secondly, however, the presence of high-ranking Shia merchants within a predominantly Sunni hierarchy has a number of important implications for the traditional configuration of merchant–sailor relationships. Together these factors contribute to an understanding of how and why the pattern of patron–client relationships among Muslim merchants and sailors proved less durable than those among their Hindu counterparts (see Chapter 4). Furthermore, this also helps to explain the novelty and success of the Bhadals’ modern constituency building among sailors who are also Sunnis.

3.6. Saiyeds and Shias in Sunni society

As demonstrated in Chapter 2, merchants are typically of high status and endowed with copious political power in clearly defined constituencies. Shah and Shroff go as far as to argue that among Hindus ‘Baniyas [traders] rank next to Brahmans in a ritual context’ (1958:269). In Mandvi ‘rulers’ are divest of popular power, and priests, unless cloaked in enchanting sectarian exclusivity, are, from the perspective of ‘traders’, marginal figures. Mercantile groups (Hindu and Muslim) have their own elitist networks of priests and closed ritual codes and spaces. Traditional traders, both Hindu and Muslim, maintain highly restricted social and religious organisations, and, as a result, are frequently, rhetorically and practically, opposed to ‘priests’ (Brahmans and Saiyeds) of a rank and file order.

However, consider the Bhatiya example in the previous chapter. Although clearly powerful and influential figures they are ritually dependent on the figure of the Maharaja (essentially an elevated and specific form of Brahman), while for power Bhatiyas are dependent on a model of kingship (albeit without territory). Bhatiyas effectively reproduce, with some distortion, kingly power *and* Brahmanical status within an elitist fold. Hindu castes of high rank also employ the ritual services of 'general purpose' Brahmans for household, life cycle and calendar rites. In these transactions prestige is derived from the exclusivity of the relationship. Bhatiyas transact solely with Pushkarna Brahmans, while mixed-blood Hindu sailors, it is commonly said, will transact with any Brahman.

Bhatiya Mahajan dominance clearly corresponds with their sectarian affiliation to the Pushti Marga. However, exclusivity is premised on pervasive axioms of purity and pollution. Bhatiyas are integrated into generalised Hindu hierarchy through an intensification of dominant principles of purity, which are recognised by all. Furthermore, they maintain ritual relations with Brahmans that are firmly integrated into Hindu society. Dumont famously made the case for the distinction of 'status' and 'power' (1980:73–75). In his view the reality of Hindu caste society was premised on the ancient division between total ritual status (Brahmans) and contingent secular power (kings), and the opposition between the pure and the impure. The material presented in the previous chapter, although largely leaving to one side the question of Brahmanical status, points to the fact that the dichotomisation of royal power and mercantile preoccupation with purity is alien to the ritual lives of Bhatiyas and others. Furthermore, it was demonstrated that absolute divisions between religious, economic and political spheres cannot comfortably be sustained among Hindu populations. Trading castes are not simply socially isolated because they avoid conducting broader social and ritual transactions out of a fear of impurity. The dominant Hindu traders of Kachchh are merchant-princes with large exchange constituencies who sit uncomfortably within existing models of Indian society. Importantly however, Bhatiya Mahajan exclusivity is premised on a concentration of the wider principles of ritual purity and pollution

within Hindu society. In this sense their high-status position is broadly supported by the principles of social organisation that simultaneously renders their clients of low rank. The case for high-ranking Muslim traders is rather different.

Mandvi's Sunni Muslim social hierarchy is focused upon the prestige accorded to such divine mediators (Saiyeds) and the model of divine blood purity, behaviour and auspiciousness that their ancestry provides. Saiyeds claim to originate, as descendants of the Prophet, from what is present day Saudi Arabia. The many shrines scattered throughout Kachchh are burial places of the Saiyeds that embody the charisma of their deceased. Their sanctity seeps into the human world, to be harnessed and transferred into objects and people by the residing Saiyed to cure or to enhance the life of the client. Devotees do not consider the *pir* (saint), and often the living Saiyed, as a normal human being. Rather, they are viewed as inhabiting a realm closer to the divine from where – privileged by inherited bodily substances, blood and saliva – they have power to work positive miracles that transcend the boundaries between the living and the dead, this world and the next. They offer the potential for fulfilment of individual desire, and issue charms as antidotes to the perilous realms of spirits, witchcraft, bad health and infertility. The Saiyed is regarded as extra-human; his divine powers of mediation are not premised on the universal equality of Muslims. On the contrary, his position is privileged by his genealogical inheritance and 'God-given hierarchy' (Gardener 1993b:231). The Saiyed's *barakat* is transmitted through blood, and is presented to the worldly order for curing and blessing through saliva (as a curing substance). Additionally, his personal charisma, which is elevated over that of normal men, allows him to mediate between the profane and the divine. Saiyeds are not apical because they mediate, rather they are sanctioned as mediators because they are apical in terms of prestigious bodily code and substance.

In Salaya, Saiyeds are derogatorily described as being akin to Hindu Brahmans because they serve as general intermediaries for the majority of the Sunni population between profane and divine realms. However, the traditional mercantile patrons of

the Bhadals and of other Sunni Muslim *jamats* were the Shia traders. Although Shias might respect the various claims of Saiyeds they are not implicated in their shrines or personality cults. Shia traders occupied a social realm with no connections to Saiyeds other than through having exchange relations with Sunni sailors who had ritual exchange relations with Saiyeds. From the perspective of Shias their own power and status went hand in hand, while the status (in Dumont's sense) of the Saiyed was naturally inferior. Likewise, for sailors, the elevated economic and social status of Shia patrons was unrelated to the ritual and apical social status of Saiyeds. Given this situation the following section turns to the question of how the traditional Shia mercantile *jamats* fit into the broader social hierarchy.

Vohras and Khojas are in their own eyes, and in the view of the majority of Hindus, apical in the Muslim social hierarchy. In the eyes of Sunnis, Vohras and Khojas are of lower rank than Saiyeds and on a par with other Sunni 'Arabian' communities, but rank above the majority of the Sunni population. The anomalies in ascribed grades of rank point to the fact that the Shia mercantile *jamats* are isolated from the majority Sunni population. Each Shia community has its own institutions, constitution, ritual language, and residential area and is strictly endogamous. In the following section the example of Daudi Vohras is taken.

The Fatimid Vohra hierarchy is headed by the *dai mutlaq* from the al-Dawah al-Hadiyah (central administrative institution) in Bombay. An *ahil* (usually a graduate of the order's institute of higher learning) is stationed in each town with a sizeable population of Vohras and leads the local congregation in religious, social and communal affairs. In Mandvi there is an exclusive mosque and an adjoining *jamatkhana* (for marriages and other social functions) where socio-religious functions are held. The local organisations that manage these properties and administer the social and religious activities of the local Vohras report directly to the central administration of the *dai*. At puberty, every Vohra pronounces an oath of allegiance that requires the initiate to adhere to the *shariah* and accept the leadership of the *imam* and the *dai*. The penalties for not obeying the edicts of the *dai* and his

representatives usually result in excommunication. Through this organisational structure Vohras have a strong leadership to which they are accountable. This reduces their involvement with other communities and politics of a general nature because the platform to which they adhere is laid out by the central authority of the *dai*. Sectarian exclusivity is reflected in the rigid social boundaries of the Jamat, which controls access to Vohra religious buildings and traditions. The effect is that those outside the Jamat or those who have been excommunicated cannot participate in mainstream Vohra religious practices.

Vohra social organisation sets them apart from other Muslims, which is further elaborated by jurisprudence, religious tenets, ritual practice, time and dress. Vohras follow the Fatimid school of jurisprudence and seven 'pillars' of Islam (unlike the Sunnis' five and the locally dominant Hanafite legal tradition). The most important tenet is *walayah* (love and devotion) for Allah, the Prophets, the *imam* and the *dai*. The others are *taharah* (purity and cleanliness), *salah* (prayers), *zakat* (purifying religious dues), *sawm* (fasting), Haj (pilgrimage) and *jihad* (promulgation of faith). This religious organisation clearly sets them apart from the majority Sunni population. Further, Vohras are distinguished from other Muslims (and other Shias) by the use of an Arabic laden form of Gujarati (most of Mandvi's Muslims speak Kachchhi) known as *lisan al-dawah*, the Fatimid lunar calendar (key days differ from Sunnis), and distinctive white gold-rimmed cap and facial barb. Historical connections with Egypt, Yemen and perhaps with Moguls, contribute to the high status of the Vohras. They trace their spiritual ancestry to schisms in the Egyptian Shia *dawah* (mission) in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. From this time the Indian Vohras regard themselves to have been allied with the Fatimi Tayyibi *dawah* of Yemen. By the late sixteenth century the *dai* had transferred the mission's quarters to India.

The elevated social status Vohras command is not integrated exactly into dominant Sunni Muslim social hierarchy (see Engineer 1989), yet they maintain positions of influence within it. Sunnis and Shias frequently clash over matters of

religious practice, the most well known example being the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, commemorated during the month of Moharam. However, Vohras and Khojas were traditionally patrons of Bhadals and African 'slaves'. These relationships placed them firmly within 'Muslim' social hierarchy and within enduring relations with Sunnis. Such relationships between merchants and sailors form a powerful and pervasive division in society that cuts across Hindu social hierarchy and the more fragmented picture of Muslim social organisation portrayed here.

Vohras (and Khojas) do not share religious or social relations with Sunni Bhadala clients. By way of contrast, Bhatiyas share common ritual dates, cycles, temples, practices and priests with client Kharvas. The 'merchant-sailor' dyad runs through Hindu and Muslim society, but in the Muslim case this relationship is not integrated into wider social arena to the same extent that it is among Hindus. Within the Hindu fold, conjoint practices provide cohesion and commonality to Bhatiya relations with Kharvas. In comparison, 'Muslims' (in the sense of the Sunni/Shia division) in Mandvi are not united by what they have in common, but by having Hindu neighbours and traditional relationships as merchants with seamen that transcended the Shia/Sunni division. The differences in the way that these relationships are constructed, sustained and maintained are explored from sailors' perspectives in the following chapter. The different forms of social and religious organisation clearly have different implications for the structural distribution of status and power, and for the formation of specific patterns of social antagonism.

3.7. Conclusion

Barnett's final point is that despite being divided by 'class', all Muslims are equal as members of the Islamic community (1976:645-646). Traditionally, in Mandvi, Shias and Sunni Muslims are ritually separate in terms of doctrine, kinship and *jamat* organisation, but economically related through commerce. Among Sunnis, there are significant divisions in terms of status that cannot be reduced to 'class', in

the sense of wealth or as an attitude towards education, religion and social protocol. In Mandvi, significant social boundaries are given by putative origins, which are difficult to invent and even harder to convince others of their authenticity in the short term. The literature on Indian Muslims makes surprisingly little comparative analysis. This might be because of the historical formation from colonial times of the myth of a bounded continent socially and culturally isolated from the lands around it: a Hindu kingdom on a grand scale governed by the principles of boundary maintenance discussed in the previous chapter. However, the historical contingency of social hierarchy in Mandvi forces us to look beyond India for explanation and understanding because the diverse origins claimed by Mandvi's Muslims largely determine their social ranking. In Mandvi, this process clearly has a very long and influential history and is perhaps the defining process that links the many diverse groups together.

A recent trend in the literature on Indian Muslims is to examine the role of overseas migration and trade on religious practice and social organisation among the origin communities (Gardener 1993a, 1993b; and Osella & Osella 1999, 2000). This literature rightly stresses the value placed on 'outside' (what is not 'Indian') experiences of consumption and religious practice, which are imported (in original or transformed forms) into India. However, in Mandvi, the value placed on the 'outside', in terms of the Muslim world and the ramifications of such ideas for local social organisation, is not homogenous. The origin of pure concentrated biogenetic substance is the principal means of evaluating relative positions within Sunni social hierarchy. An alternative expression of which is to stress the origins of 'spiritual', if not biogenetic, ancestry. The claims from which the greatest prestige is derived locate pure substance in the 'Gulf' and 'Arabia'. Of second rank are those claiming genealogical origins from contemporary Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan; followed by those from India. Finally are those from 'Africa', who are hierarchically ordered through origin claims to 'Abyssinia', modern Tanzania and Mozambique (H. Basu 1993). Although the Shia communities are of a different social order they too claim close relationships with places outside Kachchh: Vohras claim Yemen and Egypt as

their places of spiritual origin, Aga Khani Khojas link themselves to many places throughout the Indian Ocean region, while Isna Asharis associate themselves with Iran. Despite the variance, all elevate Mecca and the role of Haj in religious life. Social and corporeal value draws on hierarchical representations of place and time from around the Indian Ocean. Pilgrimage, migration and trade have resulted in historically contingent exchanges of people and ideas, ideas that are fluid and disputed. The Gulf States and those who claim to originate from them, are held in high esteem' while 'Africa' and 'Africans' rank lowest in the local population. It has been shown that in order to understand hierarchy among Mandvi's Muslims the perspective taken must reach far beyond the political and geographical boundaries of land to an examination of the historically contingent movements and interactions of populations well beyond the sub-continent of India. Hierarchy, in local terms, is constructed through historical memories of place and segmentary social principles, which feeds into the encompassing base metaphors of substance and code.

The 'modern' sources of population diversity are the nineteenth and early twentieth century mercantile trade networks (Chapter 2). Traders and sailors are divided by their occupational specialisation within a very particular commercial structure. Simply put, merchants traded from their offices in ports; merchants employed a captain and crew, on whose loyalty they relied; sailors conveyed goods and occasionally merchants between ports. The simple division of labour was cemented through patron–client type relationships, which tied individual seamen over time to a particular merchant. Generations of merchants employed generations of seamen. Traders thus had considerable power over the dependent sailors they employed. Traditional 'trader – sailor' relations were also cemented on unequal terms through the exclusivity of traders' high status religious activities, as opposed to the popular practices among Kharvas and Bhadalas. This chapter has started to show how these key commercial and social relationships were formulated differently among Hindus and Muslims. The admixture and dilution of such diverse origins through inter-marriage has produced 'mixed-blood' populations. Regardless of the actual biogenetic components of the general population, some sections are explicitly

identified as being of mixed blood. In the traditional scheme of things, traders are pure blooded of royal descent, while ignoble sailors are of mixed substance and unpredictable code.

The ethnographic data presented in this chapter resembles Muslim social organisation in other parts of India. However, unlike other commentators, I have attempted to show how claims and ascription to particular origins are understood in local hierarchical terms. At another level Muslim social organisation is premised on transgressions made of the boundary of the land of Kachchh. Islam is the example *par excellence* of workings of the exogenous processes. Broadly, all of Mandvi's Muslims can be discussed using this exogenous paradigm, in which 'wealth' and prestige is drawn from sources outside the land of Kachchh. This state is heightened among the traders and sailors who regularly transgress the boundary and set to sea. The following chapter describes two groups of sailors, members of the Hindu Kharva Samaj and Muslim Bhadala Jamat. The analysis shows how sailors are socially positioned as boundary transgressors and as low-ranking 'mixed bloods' in head-to-head communal confrontation.

Chapter 4.

Mixed-blood sailors

4.1. Sailors

To the south of Mandvi the compound walls of a new Hindu temple rise from the earth at the edge of an ancient Muslim cemetery. The graves lying in the shadow of the walls are well maintained and kept clear of encroaching sand. The identities of the entombed are not certain, yet they have recently been resurrected and attributed with the miraculous powers of saints. The spent shells of coconuts litter the ground and each grave is shrouded in Muslim green cloth (Plate 7). On the other side of the wall is a temple dedicated to the Kharva deity Dariyalal, the Lord of the Sea (Plates 8 and 9). In this location competition between Hindus and Muslims is clear and intense. In the past this location was the main ritual site for the town's sailors, both Hindu and Muslim. The many cyclical rituals of the moon and tide were performed and celebrated in these sand dunes. The site is contested and plays a central role in the narration of social differentiation and violence among mixed-blood sailing communities. The nature of the contest is somewhat peculiar, because Dariyapir (The Saint of the Sea), the deity sailors flocked to venerate in the past, has subsequently disappeared. His image and repetition of his name are strikingly absent from the social lives of sailors.

In this chapter it is argued that Kharvas and Bhadals narrate histories of different qualities and densities. Collective representations of the past, seen in the Kharva Dariyalal Temple and the narratives that surround it, are thick, detailed and stretch uninterrupted far back in time. By way of contrast, Bhadala conceptions and knowledge of the past are weak and incomplete. This divergence can be explained through the social consequences of different forms of kinship organisation. However, and perhaps of more import, contingencies of the past among sailors are related to

the fortunes of merchant patrons and to the consequences for migration patterns of merchant's kinship organisation. For the previous two hundred years Kharvas have entertained seemingly uninterrupted relations with Bhatiya and Lohana patrons, while Bhadala relations with their patrons have disappeared. The differences between these patterns are used in this chapter to explain the Bhadalas pre-eminence within contemporary shipping.

Previous chapters have contrasted two components of the diasporas of Hindu and Muslim merchants. First, it has been noted that Hindu merchants have maintained much stronger connections with Kachchh than their Muslim counterparts. Secondly, it has been argued that the Hindu merchants have more ritual and social connections with their client sailors than comparable groups of Muslims. The consequences of these observations are further explored in this chapter.

Ask practically anyone in southern Kachchh which communities in Mandvi are sailing communities and they will say 'Kharva and Bhadala'. This answer, as discussed below, is not without ambiguity. At the risk of anticipating the argument that follows, at this point it is sufficient to say that there is much more to being known as a sailor than going to sea on a ship. Being a sailor relates to a social position, particular kinds of social relations and to a particular disposition towards the sea and the land. The sailors discussed in this chapter have an exogenic relationship to the boundary of Kachchh, and are importantly considered to be of mixed blood. The Kharva Samaj and the Bhadala Jamat populations inhabit Mandvi and Salaya respectively. Their houses and communal institutions face each other across the river. This opposition is a powerful metaphor for communal antagonism and for the related social processes of Islamisation and apprenticeship discussed in later chapters.

4.2. Kharvas

The word Kharva perhaps comes from the Sanskrit *kh* from *kharash* (salty) and *war* from *vat* (road or way). The Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency attributes the etymology as follows: 'Khar'rvas... [are] Ksháraváhas – salt carriers' (Vol. IX. Part I.:520). Colloquially, Kharvas are called *malam* (from the verb 'to know', in this case navigation) and *dariya chhoru* (sons of the sea). They form Mandvi's largest *samaj*, constituting as much as a twelfth of the town's 40,000 census population, and live on the southern edge of the town in an area that previously would have been within the safety of the town walls but close to the port. They are stereotyped as troublesome, dangerous and unruly, and their history and traditions are those of the sea, as are their names, gods and festivals.

The previous chapter laid out the ordering of Muslim social hierarchy in terms of putative blood qualities. Among mercantile Hindus a similar emphasis on purity of descent is evident. However, in the Hindu case perceived blood purity is not related to the qualities of foreign lands. Kharvas claim Rajput descent, evidence for which, they say, can be found in the *shakha* (principal lineages), which carry high-status Rajput names such as Solanki, Zala, Jethva, Rathod and Jadeja. This claim is supported by a number of non-caste publications (see Khatri [Guj.]1996). However, unlike Bhatiyas and Lohanas who claim a single mythical descent line, Kharvas claim descent from the Rajput lines of *suriya* (sun), the related *ragu* (fire) segment and *chandra* (moon). Kharva volatility is said to stem from this corrupt descent and their social character, which together with their mixed blood, determines their low social position.

4.21. Samaj organisation

The Kharva population in Mandvi is not an isolated one; they are to be found in most of the principal port towns between Mandvi and Diu. During the troubles of 1983 the Kharva Samaj were able to draw support from Saurashtra because the Mandvi Samaj

is part of the Porbunder centred 'Bar Gam Samaj' (Society of Twelve Villages)¹¹. This powerful pan-peninsular organisation has an elaborate legal code and autonomous court, which has sat regularly since the 1860s. The elected *vanot* (president) and *mukadam* (assistant) head the *dayara* (a meeting, typically of Rajputs and allies) in Porebunder and these positions are annually renewed on Nava Naroj. The *mukadam* administers justice and works to maintain relations between the geographically dispersed affiliate groups. The power of jurisdiction is derived from the *madhi* (seat of power within the temple). Each Kharva settlement in the Bar Gam Samaj is headed by a *chovatiya* (leader) who is appointed by the local Kharva constituency. In Mandvi the *madhi* sits in the temple of Murli Manohar (a temple dedicated to a form of Krishna playing a beautiful flute). The whole organisation is clearly modelled on the structure of Royal power, with court power being sanctioned by a deity.

4.22. Narratives of the past

Kharvas claim to have migrated south from Rajasthan into Saurashtra to fight the Muslim Ala-ud-din Khilji (or his representatives) in defence of the Shiva temple of Somnath in 1297. Somnath is an important site in the landscape of religious conflict in India today. The Kharva claim to have come to Kachchh *via* Somnath is a politically and religiously loaded one. In 1992 a *rath yatra* (chariot pilgrimage) organised primarily by the BJP, set out from Somnath to the northern city of Ayodhya, where Hindu activists claimed a mosque, the Babri Masjid, stood on the site of the birthplace of the god Ram. The choice of Somnath as a starting point for the *yatra* was no accident because the temple at Somnath had been rebuilt in 1950, as a symbol of Indian nationhood and Hindu dominance in western India.

Prior to its reconstruction in the mid-twentieth century the site had received considerable attention from successive Muslim rulers. Mohammed of Ghazni, one of

¹¹ The 'twelve' (sixteen) villages are Porbunder, Veraval, Mangrol, Vanakbara, Mandvi, Mundra, Salaya, Jamnagar, Dwarka, Jam Salaya, Okha, Positara, Aarambhada, Goriyari, Varvala and Goghla.

the first 'Turkish' conquerors of western India, destroyed the temple's idol in 1026. The second struggle between Hinduism and Islam took place at Somnath in 1297 when the 'Turkish' Sultan Ala-ud-din Khilji sent Afsal Khan to destroy the temple, which had been rebuilt after Mohammed's return to Ghazni. In 1701 the Mogul Aurangzeb sent Mohammed Azam, the Governor of Gujarat, to destroy the temple once again. Victorious, Azam constructed a mosque on its foundation (Krishnaswamy 1966:81). The same idol, in the same place, had prompted three major battles over the course of eight hundred years. Each time the Muslims had been victorious and each time they had destroyed the image in the temple.

To many Hindus Somnath has become an elevated representation of their religious tradition and simultaneously a reminder of the threat posed by Islam. To many Muslims the site symbolises the victory of Islamic monotheism and rationality over Hindu idolatry. Sometime during the nineteenth century it seems that the mosque was destroyed and the temple again rebuilt. Somnath became an important site in the rhetoric of the Vishwa Hindu Parisad (VHP) as the temple was a striking reminder of Hindu-Muslim antipathy in India because the then leader of the BJP, Lal Kishan Advani, had characterised the rebuilding of the temple at Somnath as the first stage of a campaign to reinstate the ancient symbols of unity and amity in India – the liberation of Ram's birth place in Ayodhya was to be the second (see A. Basu 1996:74–76; Das 1995:41–50; Kakar 1996:49–51; and Hansen 1999:172–199). In western India the sites of Somnath and Ayodhya are seen as being related by history and connected by the route famously etched into the landscape by the *yatra*. Both places have become elevated symbols of the struggle between Hindus and Muslims. The eventual destruction of the Babri Masjid played a role in the fractious relations between Hindus and Muslims in Mandvi as several local BJP and VHP activists went to participate in the demolition. However, of more significance here is the Kharva claim to have been involved in the original battle for Somnath. Naran, a retired Kharva sailor, told the story of Somnath in the following way:

“Somnath was the most beautiful and powerful temple in India. Hundreds of Brahmans performed rituals to the huge lingam in the temple. There was singing and dancing. The temple had a vast wealth and was good to the people. Ala-ud-din Khilji came from the north to destroy the temple and to confiscate its fantastic wealth. Our people were living in Rajasthan as kings and warriors. We were a noble and courageous race. When we heard that Khilji was coming to Somnath we left our lands to fight him. We journeyed down through Rajasthan and into Saurashtra and met with the kings there. They greeted us and gave us their best horses. Some people believed that Shiva had invited Khilji [sometimes Kharvas also claim to have fought Mohammed of Ghazni at the temple] to Somnath to revenge him. Many thousands of us died in the battle to save the temple. In the end it was destroyed and the lingam was ruined. After the battle we were left weak and starving and fled to hide along the coast.”

Kharva discussions of violence with Muslims in Mandvi revolve around the theme of revenge for Somnath. In 1983 Kharva protagonists went to fight Bhadadas armed with swords, just as they claim to have gone to defend Somnath against Muslims many centuries before. Listening to stories of killing and death I was struck by how detached and almost surreal they seemed. The last half-century has been a time of great change for Kharvas, during which time they have reinvented their traditions, and part of this process has been to provide explanations for the events of the early 1980s. I am not suggesting that they were calculating the terms of their revenge as they cut flesh and watched blood pour from severed limbs into the sand on the road that runs down to the port. However, in the years after 1983 sense has been made out of the violence. Logical and justifying, this sense is couched in terms of revenge and retribution measured against ancient events. Kharvas first remember themselves defeated in battle, so revenging the losses of their ancestors at Somnath they equal an old score. While it is possible to place Kharva narratives of the past in a nationalist framework, in this instance they are better viewed at a micro level. Key sites, like Somnath and Ayodhya (a previous Solar Kingdom), are important symbols within nationalist rhetoric, but Kharvas are implicated in the actual events of such rhetoric. They situate themselves at the heart of the story, claiming their social and geographic displacement was a result of the battle for Somnath. From the perspective of such *ex post facto* rationalisation, rather than recapitulating somewhat abstract

nationalist discourse, they are rewriting and revenging their own displacement. In this sense nationalist history is very personal, and Kharvas express personal animosity towards the generalised Muslim 'other' who appear in their narration as responsible for atrocities against Hindu tradition and, more importantly, as responsible for their transformation from kings and warriors to humble sailors.

Kharvas claim to have been sailors for at least the last 500 years. After defeat at Somnath they took shelter along the coast and started to learn the ways of the sea, gradually moving into Kachchh. In the nineteenth century, and possibly long before, Kharvas were famous as sailors skilful in navigation and pilotage, working on ships owned predominantly by Bhatiya merchants. In this phase of their past they adopted their present form of social organisation and became associated with the sea and its traditions. In the aftermath of the violence of the early 1980s the Kharvas constructed a new temple, which involved collecting and assembling artefacts and signs that were salient to their seafaring ancestors, to renew their relationship with these ancestors and the traditions of the sea.

4.23. Dariyalal Temple

Of the mythology surrounding the many temples associated with the sea much is concerned with Hindu power over Muslims. Ravalpir (Chapter 2), for example, is not only reputed to have protected Hindus from predatory Muslim missionaries, he is also held to have been ritually superior to Muslims. Ravalpir's custodian explained that:

"In Ravi's time Muslims were making blood sacrifices to the sea so it would safely carry them. Ravi taught them that they did not need to kill a man to do this, cutting a finger and letting a drop of blood fall into the sea was adequate. The Muslims did not believe him and continued to sacrifice human life to the sea. A Muslim challenged Ravi to see whose sacrificial acts were the most powerful. After making the necessary sacrifices Ravi and the Muslim went out to sea. Ravi returned alone."

The Muslim, we are left to suppose, drowned. Themes like this are recurrent in the mythology of the coastal temples and deities.

The temple wall in the Muslim graveyard, described at the beginning of this chapter, encloses the Kharva Samaj's Dariyalal temple. Around fifteen years ago they chose to build this temple on the site where in times past Kharvas and Bhadals had jointly celebrated Nava Naroj. The site is a 'contested' one, but it is now legally owned by the Kharva Samaj. In the compound, aside from the temple structure, are a small office block, a row of *paliyos* (hero stones) and a stone tortoise. The temple structure is small, square and domed, resembling the building that houses Ravalpir. Inside is an icon of Dariyalal, bearded and sitting resplendent on a fish. He is brightly lit and surrounded by silver windmills¹². At his feet stands a series of orange horse statues.

The dedication of this temple to Dariyalal is an expression of social aspiration. It replaces anterior representations of the 'syncretic' figure of Dariyapir, but is also an appropriation of the mythology of the high-ranking Lohana Mahajan. Dariyalal is the Lohana's central deity (*ishtdevta*). The story migrated from the Sindh with the Lohanas. Originally, Dariyalal was associated with the Indus. In Kachchh, unlike the common reference to water in many northern Indian languages, *dariya* refers to the sea. Dariyalal is also referred to as *samudrastit* or *samudradev*, 'Lord of the Ocean'.

Dariyalal was a miraculous infant who transformed himself into an armed horseman and emerged from the Indus to rebuke a persecuting Muslim (Aitken 1907:165–166). Born to devotees of Varun (a water god), the boy was blessed with the protection and generosity of the deity, and from an early age displayed miraculous powers. The boy took to hawking dahl to people congregating along the water's edge. While he was working Varun would appear and take the child deep

¹² Mandvi's beach is the site of a wind farm, which is one of the main tourist attractions in Kachchh. Windmills have become synonymous with Mandvi. Those in the temple draw on this association and create a connection between the monsoon winds that facilitate trade and the power inherent in the wind to destroy fragile ships and seamen's lives.

into the sea, always returning him to shore with twice the amount of dahl. The 'illegitimate' King of nearby Nagar Thatta was a voracious Muslim named Marakhshah, whose court published an edict ordering people to convert to Islam or face death. The terrified Hindus went down to the 'coast' to ask Varun to appear to Marakhshah to prove the legitimacy of the Hindu religion. The King's minister had been watching the hapless Hindus when Dariyalal appeared to him on horseback out of the waves and told the minister to cease his persecution. On hearing this, the King ordered the deity to be brought to him, but Dariyalal could not be found. Later Dariyalal resurfaced in the Indus River, from where he produced armed warriors from the water who so terrorised the King that he stopped his campaign of forced religious conversion.

This myth surrounds the temple complex of the Lohana Mahajan and has been appropriated by the Kharva Samaj. The parallels to the mythology of Ravalpir are obvious: creative power is exogenously drawn from the water, in this instance to stave off the predatory advances of a Muslim king towards a Hindu population. A printed version of the myth contains an additional elaboration, which further emphasises key elements at work in the story. A merchant devotee of Dariyalal came to Bakhar (an island in the Indus) by ship with his family. When the King saw the merchant's daughter he wanted to take her as his wife but the merchant refused the King's request. Subsequent threats by the King so troubled the merchant's family that they fasted and prayed to Dariyalal for help. Dariyalal appeared in a dream to the merchant's daughter and said that he would protect them by sending an earthquake to destroy the kingdom. In the destruction that followed the kingdom was left barren. The merchant and his family were unharmed and set sail to sea in order to pray and offer their thanks to Dariyalal (Maharaj and Dwivedi [Guj.] 1949:88–105).

In this story the devotion of the merchant's family overcomes the temporal and corporeal power of the Muslim king. Fragments of this tale are evident in other myths and loosely reflect historical events and actual places. Claude Lévi Strauss has famously argued that myths can either appear as disconnected elements, the result of

thematic deterioration and disorganisation, or as simply disconnected in original form (1978:34–5). The recurrence of particular themes in the myths surrounding temples of deities related to the sea make it clear that diverse fragments can also be assembled and presented to tell stories other than the one with which the fragment was previously associated. Some fragments are more powerful than others: the theme of the kingdom's water drying up has many mythological expressions and has obvious parallels with the consequences of the 1819 earthquake. As discussed in Chapter 1, the monsoon rains in Kachchh frequently fail to replenish the ground water, and as a result deep-seated anxiety about failing rains runs throughout myth, song and ritual in Kachchh. However, of the myth of Dariyalal, it is important to stress the mythological representation of the struggle between Hindu and Muslim ritual and corporeal power, wrapped in the theme of forced conversion campaigns. The central foundation myth of the Lohana Mahajan, as with many Bhatiya Mahajan *ataks*, has roots in Hindu victories over proselytising Muslims. This is strangely at odds with the Kharva myth of origin, which describes their modern social form emerging from a defeat at the hands of Muslims at Somnath. Of the three Hindu mercantile origin myths, the Bhatiyas and Lohanas claim victory over Muslims, while the Kharva Samaj attributes its current lowly social position to defeat by Muslims. It seems sailors are subordinate to merchants even in claims to prestigious origins.

The myth of Dariyalal shows how oceanic power can be harnessed to generate wealth (trade goods such as dahl) and to overpower Muslims. However, the recurrence of such fragments not only attests to their social and historical salience in collective representations of the past. The structural forces inherent in the myth (land and sea, land holding and commerce, and Hindus and Muslims) are made contemporaneous both in their retelling in the present and as metaphors that simultaneously reflect and create contemporary social division. Such myths may be archaic, and may or may not coincide with evidence from the archaeological record, but they are not primarily told as sequential narratives with a logical conclusion, rather they stand for a set of structural power relations that are salient in the present.

Likewise, the appropriation of myths and deities also reflects and creates social division in the present. The point was made in Chapter 2 that the analysis of origin myths attributed to particular temple complexes can reveal (i) what kind of claims are important, (ii) how authenticity is structured and cadenced in language and time, (iii) how particular kinds of claim can change over time, and (iv) how the claims of one group relate to those of another group. How the Kharva Samaj temple relates to these observations is explored below.

The Dariyalal temple is the flagship of reinvented Kharva tradition. Older Shivite temples, such as the one dedicated to Ratnakar Sagar (the sea as a mine of jewels), are neglected and crumbling. The Kharvas' marriage hall contains a temple dedicated to Ram, and their court is combined with a temple dedicated to Krishna. The marriage hall is located in the centre of the Kharva residential area and is presided over by kingly Ram, while the court is situated in a mercantile dominated commercial area just outside the perimeter of the Kharvas' housing area. The Dariyalal temple lies away towards the sea. Together the temples of Krishna, Ram and Dariyalal and associated institutions of law, kinship and modern Samaj identity mark out the boundaries of Kharva dominance on the southern edge of Mandvi.

The Dariyalal temple serves as a museum for Kharva tradition and fame. The appropriation of the Lohana Mahajan's deity is an aspirational claim, but simultaneously confirms to high-status merchants that Kharvas have neither integrity nor any legitimate claims to social status based on ritual exclusivity. From the elevated social position of the *mahajans*, appropriation and theft are the kinds of ignorant activities that can be expected of mixed bloods. However, the Kharva adoption of Dariyalal is also a way of distancing themselves from an association with Muslims. It is clear from oral accounts and gazetteer publications that in the past Dariyapir was venerated by Kharvas and Bhadals but has now vanished and is neither represented nor venerated by either Hindus or Muslims (see below).

On the internal walls of the temple are newspaper cuttings and other ephemera that detail the glorious history of Kharva seafaring. The horses standing before Dariyalal are said to have come miraculously from the sea, and are associated with the warriors that Dariyalal was able to conjure from the waters to defeat the Muslim predator. Before this temple was constructed the artefacts now contained within it had been lost and forgotten in the sand dunes. The horses and other images were uncovered and catalogued by an archaeologist from Bombay. The Samaj leaders arranged for the collection and incorporation of these artefacts in the construction of the new temple complex. On one level this appears like an extreme form of 'inventing tradition' (Hobsbawm 2000), where forsaken images are couched in terms of a legitimate and established mythology. However, the traditions seen in and around the temple are clearly transformations of ancient themes, which have been given a renewed rigour through the construction of the temple. A particularly fascinating set of items in the assemblage is the row of *paliyos* (hero stones) that commemorate ancestors who died auspiciously in battle or sacrificially. Such stones are ubiquitous in Kachchh and stand as sources of protection for particular castes and villages. They are typically adorned with one of two symbols: stones commemorating women show a raised hand; those commemorating men show a warrior on horseback. The stones in the Dariyalal temple are extremely unusual because carved in relief are images of ships at sea, the stones commemorating ancestors who sacrificed their lives courageously at sea.

The construction of the temple and the activities and myths that surround it reveal the atavism that is central to contemporary Kharva Samaj identity. The stories of the lives of illustrious ancestors parallel the narration of contemporary biographies. Typical biographic forms isolate traits in the lives of ancestors, such as courage, skill and deep knowledge of winds, tides and currents, in order to integrate them into the biographies of modern Kharvas. The figures venerated through the *paliyos* were courageous and exceptional sailors. In their modern form *paliyos* commemorate the twenty, or so, Kharvas that lost their lives to Japanese submarines during the Second World War, and an array of personalities attributed with extreme knowledge and

daring. Of this latter group there are two of particular note. The first, Kano Malum, is said to have guided Vasco de Gama from Africa to Calicut in 1498. His knowledge of navigation is held as superior to the Europeans of the time. The irony is that he brought a colonising power to India. The Kharva Samaj have glossed over this and have reinvented him as a ‘freedom fighter’, who upon realising his mistake campaigned tirelessly for the freedom of India. The second is Ramsinh Malum, who seems to have been a Wager from Okha, rather than a Kachchhi Kharva. Shipwrecked, he was rescued by a passing Dutch ship, and so impressed the crew with his courage in repelling the attacks of pirates that he was taken to Holland. There he learned a bewildering array of craft techniques that he brought with him on his return to Kachchh (Postens 1839a:14–15; and Rushbrook Williams 1958:43, 137–42, 148). He is commemorated in the song:

*You kept the memory of your ancestors burning.
Like your ancestors you also ploughed the sea, son of the sea.
The clouds of death brought rain and pushed your boat.
Playing in the lap of the sea your boat sunk.
You are the son of the adventurous Kharva – ploughers of seaways.*

The memory of ancestors mentioned in the song refers to reliving the essence of being a Kharva through the replication of ancestral actions and attributes. The song itself is another way of re-enacting and re-telling the ancestral heritage. The past is remembered and reinvigorated in other ways as well. Among the Kharva there are model makers, amateur historians and linguists, journalists, short-story writers, biographers and artists who depict small boats in big seas. They all share a similar preoccupation with ships, shipping and the grandeur of Kharva ancestors, and they catalogue and paint the past in nostalgic colours. Their outpourings appear in local newspapers, galleries and on the walls of the Dariyalal temple.

Adjacent to the *paliyos*, nestling in the shade of a tree, is a stone tortoise. According to Kharva topographers, Kachchh resembles an upturned tortoise (*kachbo*). Rapar and Bhachau form the lowered head; Anjar, Mundra, Mandvi and Abhrasa form the spine of the tortoise’s shell; Nakhtrana and Lakhpat form the

bottom of the shell; Bhuj and the northern regions give the impression of a leg. This is a significant metaphor as Vishnu appeared to the world as a tortoise.

Vishnu has been incarnated in various forms in different texts and ages where either *adharma* (anti-religion) is present or where *dharma* (religion) is threatened. In modern form such threats stem overwhelmingly from Muslims. Vishnu is popularly held to have ten incarnations, which pass in a lineal sequence from lower forms of evolution to divinities that appear in the guise of men. Vishnu first appeared in the form of Matsya (a fish), which saved the Vedas from being consumed by the *asuras* (demons), and the fish on which Dariyalal sits is Matsya, giving him power to ride the waves. Vishnu's second (or third) *avatar* was Kurma (a tortoise). After the flood (which first prompted Vishnu to appear as Matsya) the gods were weak and their power was lost in the ocean. To help them, Vishnu sprinkled the ocean with a variety of medicinal herbs, and advised them to churn the milky ocean for the elixir that would restore their strength. They attempted to use Mount Mandara to stir the waters but were not strong enough, and so they called on the help of demons. But even their united strength could not stop the mountain from sinking into the ocean bed. Vishnu came to their rescue in the form of a giant tortoise. He bore the weight of the mountain upon his hard-shelled back and stirred the ocean until the treasures arose from the depths. The tortoise in the temple compound makes an explicit connection between the land of Kachchh and Vishnu as the defender of Hindus, and the land of Kachchh itself being an *avatar* of Vishnu. A number of Kharvas told me that the mythology represents the fact that the land and those of it have the power to fight any threats to the Hindu religion.

The collection of artefacts in the temple makes explicit the core values of Kharva Samaj identity, which claims an association with the Vaishnava tradition of Kachchh and the traditions and heritage of seafaring. Central to these claims are ancestors, who epitomise the warrior-sailor tradition. The moral weight of dead ancestors, their ethereal powers, and the ideal model of Kharva life they represent are embodied and venerated in the *paliyos* and in the ephemera contained within the temple. The

examples given of ancestral lives are clearly exogenic in their disposition but in all cases they are in some way integrated into traditions of courage and war. The Kharvas, like the Bhatiyas, attribute their success to their Rajput heritage: they are warrior-sailors.

4.24. Sailors that don't sail

Having described the Kharvas Samaj, its origins myths and new temple complex the discussion moves to the question of Kharva livelihood. They are referred to as sailors. They refer to themselves as sailors. They build and worship in temples dedicated to the ritual cycles of the tides and moon. The internal social organisation of the Samaj reflects past degrees of seniority on ships. Old men are accorded status by the length and quality of their career at sea. Kharva social architecture, language and ritual are derived from the traditions of the sea, voyage and migration, but the cores of such signs are hollow because Kharvas no longer sail.

Kharvas may not sail anymore, but they lead the lives of sailors. They do everything that their ancestors did, but without recourse to ships. In the midst of changing employment patterns and shifting social boundaries, Kharvas have reinvented and concentrated the traditions of their ancestors. It has already been mentioned that there was some ambiguity in the naming of sailing communities. The fact that Kharvas continue to be known as sailors points to the fact that there is much more to being a sailor than going to sea on ships. Being a sailor means having a particular exogenic disposition towards the boundary of the kingdom, living in certain parts of a town that developed as a port, following the ritual cycles of the sea and being enmeshed in client relationships with a mercantile *mahajan*. This explanation is offered, rather than the other possibility that the language of social ascription has not changed as rapidly as employment patterns.

Kharvas are the service *samaj* of the Bhatiya Mahajan. In the past, Kharva men crewed Bhatiya ships and Kharvanis (Kharva women) served in the houses of their

kin's patrons. Such relationships have been in existence for generations and continue in the same form in the present. In some cases Kharvas can trace a relationship to a particular Bhatiya *atak* through seven named generations (of both client Kharvas and patron Bhatiyas) to the latter half of the nineteenth century. These genealogies also trace the success and failure of particular business enterprises in East Africa, macro population movements throughout the Indian Ocean, and identify men with particular ships that appeared at the nexus of patron–client relationships. Kharvas unify in speech (we, our) their own activities with those of their patrons. So the success of particular Bhatiya patrons in Zanzibar or Oman is a source of pride and status for Kharva clients. The strength of these relationships and the material benefits (loans, houses, weddings and political representation) derived from them are a source of *abru* (reputation, honour) among Kharvas. The generosity of the patron and the duration of the relationship are markers of prestige.

Kharvas do not inter-marry with *mahajan* populations. There is no legitimate common substance shared between them, although there are many stories of Kharva children fathered by Bhatiya patrons. Commonality is derived from the sea and from the social and ritual organisation of shipping. Bhatiya and Kharva are bonded through generations of patron–client relationships. Today, women continue to work as domestic servants in Mandvi, while men work as drivers, machine operators and labours for Bhatiya firms in Oman. The logic of these relationships originates from ancestors who established reciprocal exchanges of service, protection and patronage. Kharva women are very poorly paid for their work. The benefit of domestic service does not lie in financial remuneration but in past and future rewards for her male kin. To break the relationship would be to dishonour the agreement and patronage shown by previous generations of Bhatiyas towards Kharva ancestors. Seasonal Kharva labour migration to Oman follows the traditional pattern of nine months at 'sea' and three months at home during the monsoon. As emblematic sailors Kharvas have remained enmeshed within *samaj* – *mahajan* relationships. They are working towards the unattainable goal of paying off the moral interest on the relations of reciprocity and social economy established by their ancestors. In summary, the

Kharva Samaj, the largest single population in Mandvi, forms the constituency of the *mahajans*. Consequently, the economic and social position of the traders is supported by a large number of dependent Kharvas.

The term *laskhar* (lascar) means sailor, longshoreman, army servant or artilleryman and is also used to refer to Kharvas. The concomitance of these meanings points to the Kharva role within the political domain of the *mahajans*. Kharvas are the foot soldiers of the merchants, fighting their street battles and aiding in disputes when more than honed negotiating skills are required. This is not to say that Kharvas are the unquestioning recipients of *mahajan* orders because they also act autonomously in protecting their own interests. However, the general pattern of political and economic ties means that Kharvas are responsive to the demands and interests of their patrons. These days they are not called upon to protect and crew the merchant fleets, but their social position includes defending the generalised interests of Hindus from Muslim predation.

The eminence of the *mahajans* is broadly enhanced in wider Hindu society by their influence over the lascars. People from other castes can approach influential traders if they have particular problems. If the trader is sympathetic to the request he can call upon his dependent Kharvas (and their dependants) to rectify the problem. Today, the majority of such disputes relate to problems with Muslims. The Kharvas thus appear as the front-line men in the perennial battle with Muslims, albeit predominantly at the instruction of a patron. The Kharvas' role as defenders of their Hindu patron's interests is clearly seen in the violence of the early 1980s. However, they are frequently called into action to resolve disputes of a more familiar nature. For example, a Muslim man took a shine to the daughter of a Hindu goldsmith. The man would loiter without much discretion in the bazaar attempting to catch her eye as she made the daily walk home from her private tuition. The man's persistent activities came to the attention of a number of shopkeepers who informed the girl's father. He decided to wait a week to see if the Muslim lost interest. He did not. The goldsmith approached a Lohana trader with the problem. Three days later the

Muslim, who did not have a reputation as a troublemaker, was beaten unconscious by five Kharva men armed with sticks. The series of events related in this anecdote were repeated many times during my stay in Mandvi. The majority of such incidents involved Muslims being beaten by Kharvas. This reflects the general hostility towards Muslims in the town, which is further intensified among Kharvas.

The following section describes how Kharvas see Muslims, and especially the Bhadala. The description is necessarily general and as presented is totally negative. Although simplified, I am not aware of any Kharva–Bhadala friendships or any Kharva–Bhadala social or economic co-operation that would compromise my representation.

4.25. Attitude towards Muslims, crows among flamingos

In the latter decades of the twentieth century the Kharva stopped sailing, although the decline started long before then. In their eyes they lost their *dharma* and betrayed their ancestral heritage. To add insult to injury, Muslims, the cause of their original displacement, defeat and humiliation, usurped their pre-eminence as sailors. In Mandvi in the early 1980s Kharvas could look over the river estuary and see the fine new houses of the Bhadala *seths* rising above the water, new elaborate minarets being erected and new ships being constructed along the water's edge. They would also see young Bhadala men, well dressed and on new motorbikes, coming into the bazaars at night to taunt Hindu women. Kharvas heard stories, some true, some fictions, of smuggling and piracy being carried out by the Bhadala, who were rumoured to be involved in smuggling arms into Pakistan and other insurgent activities. The innovation and courage (roughly equating with smuggling and piracy) of Kachchhi sailors plays a central role in the aggrandisement of the Kharva seafaring tradition. However, when these stories were given an anti-Hindu tinge, the morality, nobility and legitimacy of smuggling changed and began to interfere with notions of political propriety.

While sitting with Kharva men on the river's edge and looking onto Salaya I frequently heard the lament that Bhadala did not know how to 'plough the sea'. Kharvas resented the facts that Bhadala ships were powered by engines and had sophisticated navigation equipment, and they dismissed Bhadala shipbuilding as shoddy and as de-skilled. It was not only the technology that Kharvas detested, they also disliked the methods and strategies the Bhadala used in business. As 'crows among flamingos' the Bhadala were opportunistic, their profits derived solely from illegality. This flighty metaphor was one that an elderly wizened Kharva named Ramji would frequently draw upon to describe the Bhadala. Looking out onto the estuary at certain times of the year flamingos and crows could be seen feeding together. The metaphor relies on contrasting statures, colours, demeanours and feeding habits of the birds. When I pointed out to him that Kharvas and Bhatiyas traded in slaves and opium, which were illegal in British India (and Kachchh), he would explain to me that this was of a very different order:

"In those days we were peaceful, we did nothing to harm our own kind – even the Muslims. There was competition between us of course but that competition was about honour and proving to them [the Muslims] that we were the best sailors, and the same was true for our merchants. When we went to Africa [in the nineteenth century] those black men were running around naked, they had no kings and the land was lawless, what could they do other than work for us? That trade was illegal in the eyes of the British, not ours. We brought slaves for our kings and for our merchants; at that time slavery was normal."

The 'we' in this extract of conversation with Ramji refers to both Kharva sailors and to Bhatiya merchants. Ramji continued:

"Our trade did not harm the Kachchhi people. The Bhadala are hurting Kachchh. They are terrorists, and their loyalties are not with Kachchh but with Muslims. They are harming our land and our people with the things that they do. They are not loyal and they are not *really* Indian."

The suspicion that the Bhadala are not loyal to the Indian State is informed by a number of sources. First, the facts of Muslim social hierarchy (Chapter 3) elevate and privilege foreign origins. Thus the stress or invention of Arab, Persian, or Turkish ancestry (rather than resting content with Indian origins) is seen as pointing to general Muslim antipathy towards India. Related to this, many Kharva make the claim that Muslims, and Bhadalas in particular, do not accept the current Indian State as a legitimate political and geographical organisation (also see Kakar 1996:128). Instead, Muslims are seen as being loyal to the interests of Pakistan and in times of crisis Muslims are united in their religion rather than in their ethnic, linguistic or regional origins. Empirically, and as shown in subsequent chapters, these accusations are far from true, yet they retain particular and powerful currency among Kharvas.

Ramji's negative characterisation of 'modern' shipping is not simply the grumbling opinion of an old man who is unable, or unwilling, to accept and accommodate change. It is true that the technology, language and skills with which he matured have been transformed through innovation, but not beyond recognition. However, the resentment and frustration evident among many men similar to Ramji, old and young, is an expression of much more than nostalgia: it is an expression of Kharva failure, combined with bitter contempt for the men on the other side of the river that have become successful at shipping. This failure is in turn much more than the loss of individual or even *samaj dharma*, it is a betrayal of ancestors and everything that ancestors stand for. Ramji is a Kharva, who are sailors who don't sail. The Bhadala sail very successfully, but are viewed by Kharvas as barely human, as a result, resentment among Kharvas fostered by the apparent injustice of the situation is clearly evident.

Kharvas, such as Ramji, refer to themselves as Hindus only when they talk of Muslims (the Bhadala), otherwise the conversation is of named *samaj* and *mahajan* populations. It seems that a Hindu is born when a Muslim enters the room or the conversation. Kharvas do not talk about themselves as Hindus without a simultaneous awareness of the Muslim presence. The image of the animalistic

Bhadala is constructed out of their perceived ferocity, rampant sexuality, immorality and dirtiness. The accusation of 'dirtiness' relates to what in Kharva eyes are incestuous marriage practices. Cousin marriages are not only outlawed for Hindus, they are also thought to have dire consequences for the moral and social constitution of resulting offspring. The inner pollution of Bhadals is compounded by their consumption of tabooed foods, such as meat, and excessive consumption of 'hot' foods, such as chillies and onions. The voracious sexual appetites of Muslims are further reflected in the size of Bhadala families. Kharvas allege, as is common in India, that Muslims produce large families as part of a generalised conspiracy to eventually out-number the Hindu population, which is a sentiment frequently shared by Muslims themselves. The rampant sexuality of Muslims is also seen as an immediate threat to Hindu women, who are seen as somewhat feckless and susceptible to the allure of Muslim wealth, which religious conversion through marriage would bring. Muslim men are attributed with rather different intentions towards Hindu women. They are seen to desire the pollution and depopulation of the Hindu community through religious conversion. The negative characterisation of Muslims by Kharvas centres on the Bhadala and the particular view they have of them from across the river. The following section describes Salaya, social organisation, kinship patterns and views of the past from the Bhadals' perspective.

4.3. Bhadals

The Bhadala claim that the graves in the shadow of the Dariyalal temple are those of their dead. The tombstones date from the days when they came to the site to venerate Dariyapir, and when they lived in the area of Mandvi that retains the name Bhadala Pod. This was before they started to settle on the opposite bank of the river in the village of Salaya. As previously mentioned, the entombed have been claimed by those living nearby as saints in order to counter the encroachment of the temple onto the cemetery. The Bhadala cannot identify the dead and view the elevated status of the dead with some amusement because only two categories of Muslims (Saiyeds and Siddis) can become legitimate saints (see below).

4.31. Salaya

Giving an overall impression of the village requires looking at it from two different standpoints. From Mandvi, looking beyond the river and through the tangle of scaffolding in the shipyards, stand the grand waterfront houses of the Bhadala *seths*. From this standpoint the view is dominated by the wealth evident in the construction of the houses. The colours, shapes, and features of these structures make it clear that Muslims built them. Behind the houses, the skyline is punctuated with the brightly painted minarets of the village's mosques, including the Jume Masjid (hereafter Friday Mosque). Lying to the north is a large Muslim cemetery, which extends well to the east, to flank a Parsi graveyard. Out of view, further to the east of Salaya, there are also Christian and Harijan burial grounds. Consequently, many in Mandvi regard the eastern riverbank as inauspicious, polluted and a suitable place for the Bhadala to live. This is the view that Kharvas have as they gather in the evenings to sit in the cool breeze that blows from the sea.

In contrast, is the view from within the village. Entering the village by road from the north one passes a recently reconstructed mosque, minaret and *durgah* (shrine). The entombed saint, Mukhdummi Sha, came to Salaya by ship from the Sindh, and the myth surrounding his arrival is commonly told by those visiting the shrine in the following way. When Mukhdummi Sha arrived on the shore he found the Hindu farmers tilling the land unresponsive to his religious message. He persevered and successfully foretold rains and drought. He gradually attracted such a large following that the Hindus were forced from their land and ever since it has belonged to Muslims. This mosque-shrine, as will become clear in subsequent chapters, is an important location for religious change and vision among Salaya's Muslims. Moving into the village through the recently walled graveyards, the first open public space one reaches is bordered by the prestigious Friday Mosque (Plate 10), the Kachchi Shipping Association and a Koran school. Moving still further into the village one reaches a second, larger public space, which is bordered on one side by the Bhadals' *jamatkhana*, and on the other by the Minara (Minaret) Mosque (Plate 11). The

separation of space and function between these two areas reflects the central social cleavage and the distribution of power among the Bhadala (see below). The public areas away from the main thoroughfare are mostly narrow, litter-strewn alleyways, formed between the high walls of clean private courtyards. In these areas only the houses of the poor have windows at street level. For the most part, heavy gates and solid doors veil the private world from the public. What lay behind the high walls initially surprised me: the bedroom with a pervasive nautical theme, glass-fronted cabinets displaying hundreds of unopened packages of imported soap, mirrored ceilings, sunken baths and subterranean video halls. These features may have been concealed behind high walls but everyone in the village and in Mandvi knew that they were there. The role of such commodities and consumption patterns among seafarers is returned to in Chapter 7.

The two perspectives given of the village are clearly contrasting, yet from both standpoints Salaya owes everything (mosques, houses and infrastructure) to the fortunes made from owning ships. Everyone living in the village is connected with ships. In houses there are paintings, models and photographs of ships. Relationships with ships determine marriages, business partnerships and social hierarchy, and the coming and going of ships lays out the ritual cycle of the year. From the Kharva side of the river the view is dominated by the ostentatious displays of wealth (the *seths'* houses) that shield the courtyards and serene mosque gardens from view, yet the minarets are a visible reminder of their presence. While in the village, the public spaces formed between social institutions and mosques are dominant, and private wealth is concealed behind high walls.

The village was settled over the last century as the Bhadala gradually moved across the river. Fifty years ago, as half the village's population left for Karachi at partition, all that stood on the site was 'a collection of huts' (G.S.G. 1971:138). Discontinuities and displacements of population (such as the partition) are known, but are not stressed, when Bhadala men narrate the past. The local past of Bhadalas is flattened, shallow and obscure. Hanging in the balance of individual life cycles and

long-term shifts in population is an illusion of social stasis, one that contrasts sharply to the reality of population movement and social disorder. After the Second World War, as the villagers became wealthy, they began to construct *dar al-islam* by renovating old mosques and building new ones. In the 1980s they again rebuilt and renovated the mosques – in this latter wave of building they also constructed Koran schools and a hospital. The Bhadala, like the Kharvas, are widely regarded sailors – unlike the Kharva many of them continue to sail. However, rather than crewing the ships of high-status mercantile patrons, today they crew for senior members of their own *jamat*. Until the middle part of the last century Bhadals were bonded sailor clients of Shia merchants. After World War Two the terms of trade changed in the Indian Ocean, and Kachchhi shipping fell into decline. The Shia merchants (Chapter 3) had left Mandvi behind. The Bhadala, who had always owned small ships, continued to trade on a small scale in water pots and foodstuffs with Gujaratis resident in East Africa. In the late 1960s and early 1970s the terms of trade changed again and the Bhadala rapidly became wealthy by trading out of the newly established duty free port of Dubai. Many of them passed from being bonded crew on merchant ships to owning their own fleets within a lifetime.

4.32. Social organisation

Bhadals form a non-proprietary mixed-blood *jamat*. Numbering around 2,000, they are the dominant group in Salaya. The Bhadala *Jamat*, reputed to have its origins in the nineteenth century, is unified through a continuing tradition of commercial seafaring. The *Jamat* is comprised of forty *ataks* of various ethnic and regional origins¹³, and divided horizontally by a series of pervasive social categories that reflect the division of labour on ships. *Seths* and their sons and representatives are of

¹³ Given the segmentary nature of social organisation the number and form of *ataks* is liable to change with social fission and fusion. The *ataks* with putative Sindhi origins are Thaim, Juneja, Jsnani, Karani, Gohel, Say, Fatvani, Sodha, Bholim, Jumani, Koreja, Katheja, Siru, Kundiya, Sameja, Chauhani, Rumi, Pali, Panjra, Rukani, Bavar, Sangani, Chana, Sanyani, Sindhi and Maniyar. From particular ports in Saurashtra are Jafrabadi, Jafrani and Madavani *ataks*. Jadeja, Bhatti and Rathod *ataks* claim to have originated in Rajasthan but to have come to Kachchh *via* the Sindh. From foreign

highest rank as ship owners. Moving downwards through the hierarchy rank captains, navigators, foremen and sailors, this last category form around half of the Jamat's population. These social categories, which tend to correspond to particular *ataks*, are discussed in a broader context in the following chapter.

The Jamat is endogamous. In practice this is highly restricted and the dominant pattern is towards endogamous sub-groups within the endogamous Jamat. This tendency reflects the major vertical social schism in the Jamat between Pathan and Thaim *ataks*. Each *atak* has a single apical figure who is the public representative of their respective *atak*. These two *ataks* control all the major public institutions in Salaya. These figures are institutional big-men.

The concept of the institutional big-man in India has been developed in a series of publications by Mines (1988, 1994; and Mines and Gourishankar 1990). The 'institutional' qualifier signifies the galactic polity of the kinds of institutions (temples, rest houses, educational facilities and the like) through which the big-man attracts followers. Sudhir Kakar notes of Indian institutions that:

individuals who head them are believed to be the sole repository of the virtues and vices of the institutions; as human beings, such individuals in authority are thought to be accessible to appeal, open to the impulse of mercy and capable of actions unconstrained by the rule of the 'system' (1981:40-1).

Likewise, for Mines and Gourishankar the big-man is eminent within a constituency, the parameters of which are defined by his redistribution of benefits and prestige. From within the circle of followers the big-man is also seen as an able political and legal broker (Mines 1994:35). Mines and Gourishankar note two interesting parallels to their model. The first is Gloria Raheja's analysis of the dominant caste in a northern Indian village around which service castes cluster, in what she calls the 'central-peripheral configurations' (1988). The second parallel is

lands are Pathan and Turk *ataks*. Finally, two *ataks* whose Sindhi origins are conflated with particular professional specialisation are Nakarani (captains) and Khediya (farmers).

to models of kingship found in South India. This latter point is taken up again having been previously discussed in Chapter 2. Kings, like Mines' big-men, represented the redistributive potential of the Durbar in terms of worship and symbolic gifts. Kings also apportioned lands, titles, honours and rights (Dirks 1987), but Mines and Gourishankar caution the comparison by pointing out that there is a key difference between big-man and king because: 'a big-man stands out as an individual, known for his deeds in the minds of his public' (1990:764). Kings in this model are not characterised by their individuality, they are: 'the state anthropomorphized' (1990:764).

Mines' reluctance to push further the similarities between the caricatured big-man and the figure of the king may be a result of the Tamil Nadu ethnography, or a reflection of his own long-term interest in individuality in South Asia (1975; 1978, 1988, 1994). In Chapter 2, it was argued that the dominant model of social organisation in Kachchh was the one famously associated with Rajput kings. It seems that dominant big-men in Kachchh draw upon the royal model of power, patronage and distribution, and that big-manship and kingship are based on the same principles. Mines perhaps over emphasises the individuality of the big-man because he is essentially arguing that the big-man is the institution anthropomorphised, which is not so very different from his characterisation of a king. Or to argue the point from the opposite direction: the individuality of the king is underestimated in Mines' comparison because the ex-kings of Kachchh are replete with extravagant personalities, recorded and eulogised by the Durbar's bards and captured in portraiture that emphasises their personal characteristics. The big-man may be individually personified, but his kin and his constituents are socially classified along with him, which is a very 'un-individual' state of affairs. As such institutions tend to be associated with particular castes, the constituency of the big-man will, in all likelihood, be homologous with the social boundaries of the caste and thus part of the tendency towards social conglomeration in India against which Mines is writing. Furthermore, all big-men, unless they are the biggest big-man, are part of the constituencies of other big-men.

Despite these criticisms, Mines' model is of tremendous value in thinking through the social organisation of Muslim merchants and sailors in Mandvi. These points are elaborated in Chapter 7, but briefly, every sailor and *seth* associated with shipping is a big-man to a degree. Each man is the pinnacle of his own transactional pyramid, while simultaneously being in the lower orders of others. However, until Chapter 6, the term 'big-men' (in Mines' institutional sense), is used with the proviso that ships are institutions of sorts and all ship owners are big-men. In other words the big-man of the institutional big-man model equates to being a *seth*. These transactional pyramids are presided over by big-men who maintain client relationships, which are not so much discipleship relations but patron-client patterns in which a leader supplies booty in return for adherence (enchanted by *barakat* and power).

Thaims are regarded as the authentic Bhadala who migrated from the north into Sindh, from where they ran commercial ferry services to Kachchh before gradually moving into long distance commercial shipping. They are the principal patrons of the Bhadala Jamat's communal institutions. Pathans have a similar putative migration history, are the main donors to all the new mosques, minarets and Koran schools in Salaya, and they also manage and preside over the affairs of the Kachchhi Shipping Association. The dominant *ataks* are largest in terms of numbers and the capital resources they control. Between them Thaim and Pathan *ataks* control around half of the sixty ships registered in Mandvi port. The majority of the others are owned by Bhadala *seths* of lesser standing, who politically cluster around the two dominant *ataks*. The contrasting styles of business and philanthropic patronage of the dominant *ataks* are expressions of divergent social trends. The Pathans and their allies are focusing on strengthening Muslim identity and are purging social practices and institutions that they consider to be corrupt. This places them in competitive opposition to the popularist Thaim coalition who continue to sponsor social and religious institutions, especially *durgahs* (shrines), which in many ways are deemed to be redundant by Pathans and their allies. Thaims and Pathans own commercial

property in Bombay and Dubai, trade internationally, build ships in the Rukhmavuti estuary, and employ large numbers of non-Bhadala Muslims from Mandvi. Despite these parallels, the two groups are not in direct commercial competition. Thaims tend to plough routes in Gulf waters, and from there to Somalia. Pathans in comparison, trade predominantly between India and Dubai. Thus the two networks of offices, communications and business contacts do not frequently overlap. The Pathan *atak* is the more prosperous of the two. While the Thaim owned ships tend to operate on seasonal contract or on contract tonnage, the Pathan ships often carry their own speculative cargoes, which they trade from godowns in Bombay and Dubai. The senior segment of the Pathan *atak* has resources invested in each part of the supply chain moving onions from Gujarat to Dubai. They own the agricultural lands in the east of Gujarat and the haulage company that transports the crop to the port. Once in the port, the onions are loaded onto Pathan-owned ships, before they are wholesaled from Pathan godowns in Dubai.

Thaim and Pathan businesses are also differentiated through varying degrees of kin involvement. Of the 230 or so men afloat on Thaim ships, almost half of them are consanguinal or affinal kin. In contrast, the Pathan fleet has a comparable number of crew, yet only around twenty men are kin, of which only a single man is a consanguinal relation of the apical figure. The ratios revealed by these statistics also roughly apply to Thaim and Pathan controlled shipyards. Consequently, the Pathan *atak* has over 400 non-Bhadala sailors and shipbuilders bonded to it in various forms of client relationship. The majority of these men are from Mandvi and have their own economic and political dependants. The result is that the political base commanded by Pathans is far broader than that commanded by Thaims. Furthermore, Pathans have invested heavily in education, while the Thaims have invested very little. Such a difference results in a greater prestige for the Pathans, and literacy and knowledge of commercial law has allowed them to expand their business in ways that up until now have been out of the reach of Thaims.

Thus far the two groups have been portrayed as roughly equivalent in terms of social influence within Salaya. However, Pathans are not clients of the social institutions patronised by Thaims. Thaims are, however, dependent on the services of the Kachchhi Shipping Association (which is controlled by Pathans) for literate legal and political representation. Pathans dominate the competitive political environment, not through their numerical strength, but through their monopolisation of critical social, religious and intellectual resources, and through their broad client base.

4.33. Bhadala-Pathans

The remaining chapters of this thesis focus on the Bhadala-Pathans and those who are dependent on them. The following section describes the social biography of segmentation among Bhadala-Pathans, which also serves as an example for the way in which FBD marriage operates to keep property interests within segmented *ataks* (continued from Chapter 3).

Haji Haroon (deceased) was the eldest brother of Haji Hussen (the apical figure of the *atak*). Together they started their working lives on the ships of a Vohra merchant. When Kachchh joined the Indian Customs Union shortly after Independence, the lenient (if elaborate) taxation system in operation at Mandvi port was subsumed into a national standard. This put a stop to most trade from the port and made it prohibitively expensive to construct new ships because of the taxes levied on raw materials. In the ensuing industry decline the brothers were able to buy their own small vessel at a low price. For the next twenty years or so they traded foodstuffs and earthenware with Gujaratis resident in East Africa. By the late 1970s they were wealthy from trading from the newly opened duty-free port of Dubai. In the early 1980s the brothers divided their property because of a dispute over inheritance and business strategy. Among Haji Haroon's sons it is clear that economic, political and kinship organisations are not necessarily homologous with maternal and paternal kin patterns and that these divergent trends are predominantly based on the recent concern with school education.

Haji Haroon's two sons, Haji Daud and Haji Ibrahim also quarrelled over inheritance and business strategy when their father died in the 1980s. Like their father, the brothers established separate residences and businesses. For a few years in the late 1980s they did not speak to one another. Haji Ibrahim started to complain of crippling stomach pains, but was unable to find a medical cure. Visits to shrines known for their healing powers also did nothing to alleviate the symptoms, but a visiting fakir, who claimed to control a number of powerful jinn, eventually brought an end to the pain. The family's suspicion that some form of hostile magic was to blame for the illness was confirmed by the fakir, who told them that in all likelihood, a chain had been buried in the ground, and its weight had been magically transferred to Haji Ibrahim's sizeable gut.

A few months later, Haji Ibrahim started to rebuild his house. His grand plans included a huge first floor meeting hall for marriage parties and other socio-religious occasions. In common with other Pathan segments, Haji Ibrahim's family no longer used the facilities of the Bhadala Jamat. That they took such stringent action in the wake of the bewitching is interesting because the family is now among the most prominent voices in the reform of local Muslim practice. They vehemently oppose, what were described in Chapter 3, as 'popular heterodox practices' and have elective dispositions towards 'parochial practices' (1984:12-13). Just what these practices are, and how and why they are opposed, will become clear below and in later chapters. For the present it is sufficient to say that they emphasise the Koran and Mosque, but are not without highly personal interpretations of Muslim religious practice. Haji Ibrahim's family was victim to the popular heterodox practices (magic) that they now dismiss as improper. The power evoked by the buried chain is a vital part of Bhadala-Pathan Islamisation. Their dismissal of heterodoxy and parochialism does not undermine the efficacy of such practices, but focuses attention on the legitimacy of such practices and their rightfully low position within the hierarchy of religious practice. This theme is recurrent in the following chapters, but in short, Bhadala-Pathan Islamisation is premised on a social model of time, place and

population that casts the past, locality and Hindu population in the same negative light. Magic, ghosts and religious intermediaries are placed within the same categorical order as the Hindu population. In counter-distinction to this is the Bhadala interpretation of modernity, valorisation of Gulf lands (but for different reasons to those discussed in Chapter 2) and the potential for salvation Islam offers.

Haji Ibrahim's journey, from victim to denouncer of 'magic', was a reaction to his pain and the socially destructive potential of the evil eye and jealousy within the village. His genuine response to the situation was to say that the Bhadala Jamat was in enough trouble in the 1980s without internal divisions being further exacerbated. However, a more complete explanation can be found in the differences between the biographies of Haji Ibrahim's generation compared to those of his sons. Haji Ibrahim has five sons, three of whom are married. The youngest, presently in his early teens, is pledged to the daughter of Haji Ibrahim's father's brother's son's son. The fourth son is unlikely to be found a suitable marriage partner because his brain is diseased. The eldest (blood-rich) son was contracted to the daughter of his father's only brother – despite their business interests being separate. Reciprocally, Haji Ibrahim's eldest daughter married Haji Daud's eldest son. Haji Ibrahim's second son was contracted, before his birth, to his matrilineal cross cousin in a lower ranking *atak*, men from which are captains on Pathan ships. This marriage was part of reciprocal arrangement that stemmed from twenty-five years before, when Haji Haroon had married a daughter to the captain of one of his vessels. The captain of the smaller of Haji Ibrahim's two ships came from the *atak* of the wife of his second born son. He reciprocated by marrying his second born daughter back into that *atak*. Haji Ibrahim's brother also married his second son to a daughter from the same captaining *atak*. From these exchanges it is clear that despite economic segmentation Haji Daud and Haji Ibrahim go to considerable lengths to maintain *atak* blood purity through first-born FBD marriage, and extend a web of allegiance (that also denies inheritance rights) with captains of their ships.

Haji Ibrahim and other *seths* strategically make marriages of different qualities that entail different economic and political strategies. The preferred marriages for *seth*'s offspring is for the eldest son to be contracted to FBD (and that the eldest daughter is married with her father's brother's son). Likewise, reciprocal cross-cousin marriages with those who captain the ships are common among most *ataks* that control ships. Such reciprocity is considered after the first-born son has been married. In Bhadala marriage the patrilineage remains the pre-eminent concern, which coincides with mutually negated inheritance rights through reciprocal marriage contracts. This is most obviously the case with FBD marriages, but is also true of matrilineal cross-cousin marriages with captains and their offspring.

4.34. Education among Bhadalas

There was no tradition of formal school education among the Bhadala until the 1970s. Professional education in the ways of shipbuilding, sailing and navigation was through informal childhood apprenticeship. The generation of Bhadala-Pathan born after 1970 were mostly sent to expensive English medium schools in Maharashtra. In the school holidays they would return to the tense atmosphere that prevailed in Mandvi at the time. They heard rumours that their fathers were 'insurgents', and in the Christian boarding schools popular with wealthy Maharatis they experienced anti-Muslim sentiment and were taunted about the illegal activities of their fathers. Despite obvious differences among Bhadala-Pathans, the sons of Haji Daud and Haji Ibrahim, and Haji Hussen's son's sons found themselves to be classmates. Recently, as this generation of men have taken over a greater portion of their ageing father's business interests, the once divided economic position of the segments has become less apparent. The firms nominally headed by Haji Ibrahim, Haji Daud and Haji Hussen now share offices in Bombay and Dubai and when bidding for less prestigious contract-shipping they are unified under the name of a single company that also offers tender on behalf of other Bhadala *seths*.

Yet despite the weakening of economic boundaries, the core and prestigious parts of the business (those concerned with speculative cargo) remain firmly organised along the lines of segmented *ataks*. The technology of education has had significant effects on social organisation and has created new possibilities for allegiance. However, neither Haji Ibrahim nor Haji Daud sent their eldest sons to school. This points to the ambiguous role of elite education. Although valued as a consumption good in the organisation of shipping, its effect has been to elaborate the division of labour within business operations. Eldest brothers tend to operate and manage ships at sea and in the construction yards as their fathers did in the past. Their younger siblings, those with elite education, are more involved in the administrative, bureaucratic and legal aspects of the business. The 'uneducated' sons unquestionably remain of the highest status because of the prestigious resources they control. The education of younger brothers reinforces sibling hierarchy, and simultaneously broadens their control of key resources. However, the allegiances between those who shared long train journeys to Maharashtra, dormitories, algebra and religious discrimination in schools have formed other kinds of allegiance outside the economy of running ships. The educated Bhadala-Pathan, although clearly sometimes at sea with conversation in shipyards, are the ones who most stress their ethnic and linguistic identities as Pathans, Bhadalas and Muslims. They are the most respectful of age propriety in the shipyards and they speak the purest and crudest Kachchhi (in addition to being literate in Maharati, Gujarati, Hindi and English). They constitute the section of the Bhadala Jamat most dedicated to the promulgation of a particular religious vision.

However, despite the variations of allegiance presented above, the segmentary model retains an important position in Bhadala social organisation. Political and religious allegiances are clearly much more fluid than kin allegiances, which in turn are more fluid than the core of economic organisation. Despite variation, segmentation remains an actual fact. Economic and political fission and fusion among Bhadala-Pathan appears to involve a high degree of independence from any preferred, let alone prescribed, rules of behaviour, and although this is also partially

true for allegiances in terms of blood and descent there is far less flexibility. The underlying importance of segmentation is clear in patterns of commensuality and where the dead are placed. At marriage dinners, segments of particular *ataks* will eat from dedicated communal plates; at death bodies are entombed in segmentary clusters, either in open or walled sections of a general Sunni graveyard. In both these revealing situations division is maintained over and above allegiance.

The success of the traditional merchants stemmed from the homology of *jamat* organisation and commercial association through which the flow of business information and credit was restricted. In the Bhadala case *jamat* and commercial organisations are separate and socially competitive for popular support. The Bhadala Jamat encompasses a highly stratified society based upon capital ownership, age and graded labour hierarchy, which is also vertically segmented. Divisions within *ataks* are never so severe that Pathans have formed allegiances with Thaims or with non-Bhadas. In order of segmentary priority the following categories variously become salient when threatened from the outside *peta-atak*, *atak*, related *atak*, *jamat*, Sunni Muslims and Muslims. The boundaries between these segmentary categories of social differentiation are the fault lines along which resistance to outside threats are variously organised. Segmentation thus emerges as the fundamental principle of social organisation among the Bhadala and this has clear effects for the ways in which the past is remembered and conceived and for the ways in which patronage of Islamic reform operates as a social process.

4.35. Narratives of the past

The historical narratives of the Bhadala run only a little way into the past. Befitting of sailors, who traditionally spent at least nine months a year away from home, all of the events that constitute meaningful history happen outside Kachhh. Individual and community biographies are structured by particular phases of migration, the Second World War, the development of African nationalism, the oil crisis of the early 1970s, and the development of Dubai port.

Among the older *seths* ancestral memory stretches back around a century. Among younger men the past is expressed with clarity from the start of the working lives of the generation of men represented by Haji Ibrahim (from the 1940s) and to a lesser extent by Haji Hussien, the sole survivor of the previous generation. Unlike the relative homogeneity of Kharva narratives those recounted by Bhadals are diffuse. Each *atak* has its own set of claims to the past, which reflects the non-proprietary nature of the Bhadala Jamat, and there is no continuity between ancient claims (to have come from Turkey or Afghanistan) and biographical histories from the twentieth century.

The discontinuity of past events can be explained through the interaction of four social processes. First, the recent prosperity of the Bhadala has led them into styles of life that were not shared with their ancestors. The big-men among them have predominantly become land-based merchants, while their ancestors were sailors on Shia ships or on their own small ships, which they sailed on contract to a big merchant. Bhadals 'know' the technology of shipbuilding and the conditions under which ships operate, but the majority of their elite no longer traverses the waves. Thus the traditions of seafaring, navigation and courage that the ancestors possessed cannot be channelled directly into the activities they pursue today. In this light the ancestral past is one of impoverished, if heroic, sailors. Secondly, ancestral 'traditions' are deliberately ignored. The Bhadala have abandoned Dariyapir and the numerous shrines that flank the Mandvi coastline as both are demonised within their religious rhetoric. However, these traces from their past are not without value in locating 'others' in the landscape because accusations of corrupt and superstitious Muslim practice are primarily levelled at those living in Mandvi. Having left the town, and the affectations associated with Dariyapir, behind, the ancestral past is discordant with their present project. In this sense the ancestral past is literally in another land that lies over the river. Thirdly, an unknown number of Bhadala migrated to Africa throughout the nineteenth century as lascars. The extent and destinations of their migration is unknown because they were not socially organised or self-publicising merchants.

Occasionally, twice migrants (to East Africa and onwards) from London arrive in Salaya to see the land of their forefathers, but they seldom have known relatives in the village. As mentioned previously, Muslim kinship practice in the nineteenth century proved ideally suited to movements of population, as it has done for centuries before. In the nineteenth century however the movement was from east to west, the opposite direction to the historical flow of Muslims in the Indian Ocean region. Whether Kachchhi Muslims really integrated into satellite communities is less important than the idea of acceptance found in the shared language and customs of the Muslims scattered around the Indian Ocean (see Chaudhuri 1985). As a result, Muslim migrants did not return to Kachchh in search of suitable marriage partners or for tutelage rites. All of these trends have left gaps in the genealogical and historical memory of Bhadalas. Fourthly, the Bhadala owned more of their own small boats than the Kharva (Burnes 1836), which gave them considerable autonomy, despite the presence of many of their number on the ships of Vohras, Khojas and Memons. Furthermore, there was no legal or moral prohibition on overseas travel, as there was for Hindus, and travels outside India, at least on pilgrimage, were part and parcel of being Muslim. Thus the Bhadalas' shallow past is related to the organisational imperatives of their ancestors and their previous mercantile patrons. When the merchants left Kachchh forever the reciprocal relationships that made history, and provided narrative continuity, lapsed.

The fact that within the Jamat there are two clearly dominant *ataks* whose apical figures were born in the 1920s reflects the Bhadalas' conception of the depth of the past and their place in it. The pasts of other *ataks* also coincide with the lives of these famous patriarchs. Men from subordinate *ataks* use the careers of the apical big-men as reference points in their own rendition of autobiography. The Bhadalas' view of who they are in history seems to accord well with their view of kin. Segmentary descent groups transmit essential and immutable qualities, given by a distant past, that transformed into the courage of the sailors of the nineteenth century. More specifically (and recently), the known biographies

of Bhadala big-men mark both a break with a little known amorphous past, and a significant change in the lifestyle. In occupational terms, the Bhadals moved from being sailors towards being merchants, while the traditional separation between Shias and Sunnis, which reflected the central social division between merchants and sailors, ceased to be important in the organisation of shipping. Bhadala Sunnis started to employ other Sunnis to crew their ships, with widespread consequences for the traditional social hierarchy and the dominant religious practices, themes explored in chapters 5 – 7. The client relationships formed with Shia merchants throughout the nineteenth century collapsed as Shias went into other businesses and left the Bhadala adrift. The past from the present is then given a new lease of life and continuity as Bhadala ship owners themselves took on their own long-term client sailors, which provides narratives with a consistency, stability and continuity. Kinship and history are related, and are given meaningful content through a further set of non-consanguineous relationships formed with particular merchant patrons. But in the absence of continued relations with merchants the past is sparse.

The previous discussion of marriage practices among the Bhadala *seths* made it clear that the reproduction of society and the reproduction of technology were intimately related. In the era of traditional Kachchhi shipping, when Kharvas and Bhadals were sailors, recruitment and crew composition were based on kin connections and relative age hierarchy. Kin hierarchy and propriety ashore was reproduced on ships, allowing for the development of cohesive and cogent relationships to be maintained at sea and on land. Thus, men present biographies of themselves, and of others, in terms of the ships they crewed or owned, the friends they made, the ports they sailed to, and the dominance of particular *ataks* among the crews of particular merchants. This picture, further elaborated in the following chapters, has been transformed by the Bhadala who do not recruit on the basis of land based social hierarchy. This practice prevents coalitions of sailors developing, generates conflict between sailors and their landlubber relatives, and

disrupts patterns of land-based *jamat* hierarchy. Consequently, the Bhadala recruitment practices are a powerful tool in their attempts at religious change.

The argument thus far is that Kharvas and Bhadalas situate themselves in relation to the past in differing ways. For both groups history really refers to seafaring, commercial migration and the formation of meaningful relationships with merchants. For the Kharva, the recent past extends back through many generations of remembered ancestors whose traditions presently appear in reinvented forms. In contrast, Bhadalas have conspicuously little knowledge of the past because their social life is segmentary, and relationships with their mercantile patrons have collapsed – perhaps never having been as elaborate as the Hindu equivalents.

4.4. Comparison

This section addresses other forms of social and historical divergence between the groups. Dariyapir, the traditional deity of sailors, has disappeared from Muslim ritual and language and Kharvas today venerate Dariyalal, who is importantly *not* Dariyapir. It is described how and why this process is so central to social differentiation of Kharvas and Bhadalas, followed by an analysis of Nava Naroj, before the discussion returns to the issue of how sailors conceptualise the past.

4.41. The god that disappeared

Dariyapir, as the name implies, is today regarded as a low status amalgamation of superstitions derived from Hindu and Muslim sailors. There is little doubt that Kharvas and Bhadalas lived, worked and worshipped in greater proximity, and with greater commonality, in the past than they do today. Dariyapir was the deity that came to stand most prominently for these associations. As Hindu-Kharva and Sunni Muslim-Bhadala identities have become increasingly salient the syncretic deity Dariyapir has disappeared. Mentioned by Postens (1838a) and in the Gazetteers (G.B.P. Vol. IX. Part 1), Dariyapir seems to have been powerful throughout the

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the majority of the population of Mandvi continue to hold that sailors are devotees of Dariyapir. Sailors, however, have sacrificed this syncretic figure to the processes of social and religious division, and his image does not appear and his name cannot be heard among sailors.

Bhadas have turned away from such ritual associations because personified elemental deities sit uncomfortably in their modernist Islamic vision, which is itself partially an attempt to deny commonality with Hindus. Kharvas on the other hand have purged the deity of any association with Muslims. They have dropped the suffix *pir* (commonly used to denote Muslim saints) and added suffix *lal* (a high status Sanskritised term of respect). However, the change from Dariyapir to Dariyalal involves more than a change of name because it is accompanied by the appropriation of a fitting mythology for the Sanskritised Dariyalal. Through this transformation Dariyalal has become a figure renowned for protecting Hindus from predatory Muslim advances. Throughout western India it is relatively common for Hindus and Muslims to participate in each other's festivals, and even for local saints to be jointly honoured (see Khan 1997). In other parts of Gujarat, Hindus participate in Muslim shrine festivals (van der Veer 1992). However, in Mandvi, Hindu and Muslim festivals, temples and shrines are not jointly patronised. I never witnessed a Hindu in a mosque or in a Muslim shrine or a Muslim in a Hindu temple or shrine. In the light of the Dariyapir's transformation it is worth noting that the name of the buildings dedicated to Raval have not been changed to remove traces of Muslim association. Those who venerate Raval are not on the front lines of battle between Hindus and Muslims, and the desire to delete associations with Muslims is not an important part of the identity of the temple or of those who patronise it. The deities associated with the sea and with sailors are subject to such sanction because the seafaring communities are the ones inculcated in religious violence. Dariyapir is a reminder of the past when Hindus and Muslims are held to have shared festivals, most obviously the celebration of Nava Naroj.

4.42 Nava Naroj

Nava Naroj is the only festival that continues to be marked by mercantile Hindus and Muslims and especially by Kharvas and Bhadas. As a result, the claims made, and ritual practices advocated, during this festival are central to understanding the present relationship between the Kharvas and the Bhadas.

In every house and office in Mandvi hangs a calendar with tear-off pages displaying daily words of wisdom or a popular saying. Each page is printed with the following systems of reckoning: Hindu (*vikram savant*), Gregorian, Sunni Muslim (*ano hijra*), the Vohra (Fatimid) and a system commonly called Nava Naroj. The mercantile population favour the Nava Naroj calendar for the organisation of their business. It divides the year into around 365 sequentially numbered days with the first day of the year, which falls in August, being Nava Naroj. Other names for the festival include: *Dariyanu Nava Varas* (New Year of the sea), *Kachchhnu Nava Varas* (Kachchhi New Year) and *Nariyel Purnam* (Coconut Moon), and those groups characterised as mercantile and exogenic all observe it to varying degrees. On this day the monsoon season is considered to be at an end. Traditionally a coconut was offered up to Dariyapir to gain favour for those who had to trust themselves to the vagaries of the sea for the forthcoming sailing season. The sacrificial coconut is of course a key element in most Hindu worship. The use of coconuts in Muslim ritual has ceased among the Bhadala who see coconuts as an outward and visible sign of inwardly corrupt meaning. Prayers at most Muslim shrines in Mandvi, such as the ones around the perimeter of the Dariyalal Temple, typically involve the splitting of a coconut. In Salaya this is not the case, here coconuts have powerful negative associations with Hindus and with ignorant Muslims.

The Nava Naroj calendar structures work, the marriage season and the traditional system of accounting. At one time the accounting year, commencing with Nava Naroj, was also used in Zanzibar and Muscat, where Bhatiya merchants were present in large numbers. Nava Naroj falls at about the time when the monsoon has travelled

into the interior of the sub-continent and the waters of the Indian Ocean quieten. However, at around the end of October there are frequent squalls and unsettled weather as the monsoon recedes from the interior. The sailing season is reckoned to run for around 301 days (Vaidya 1945:53), an arbitrary number as it is rare for ships to leave harbour before the squalls have subsided. In 1998 the majority of the ships left port on, or around, the sixtieth day of the Nava Naroj calendar. The remaining sixty-four days of the year are counted as the 'off-season' and it is during this time that marriages take place. Despite the technological modernisation of shipping, and the present dominance of Muslim ship owners, the meteorological patterns that swing backwards and forwards over the Indian Ocean continue to structure the sailing season and ritual cycle of the year.

The following section compares and contrasts the ways in which Kharvas and Bhadals celebrate Nava Naroj today. Kharva celebrations of Nava Naroj are focused around the Dariyalal Temple described in previous sections of this chapter. It is a day of abandonment that marks the time when the sons of the sea start to make the preparations for the forthcoming sailing season (or for labour migration). The rituals performed pay homage to Dariyalal, but more importantly Nava Naroj (and the preceding day *gofol*) is reserved for venerating Kharva ancestors. Vegetarian sacrifices are offered before the *paliyos*, and the stories and songs that accompany such offerings elevate ancestral personalities and accomplishments. The day culminates with a wild and drunken musical procession from the Dariyalal temple into the Kharva neighbourhood. The Dariyalal temple has become the Samaj-wide focus for Nava Naroj celebrations despite its relatively recent construction. The collection of artefacts contained within it is especially significant on this day, as the performance of Nava Naroj emphasises the fact that the Sanskritised deity Dariyalal, known for defeating Muslims, presides over the ancestral traditions in a space socially and ritually reclaimed from Muslim influence.

In comparison, in Salaya senior Bhadala *seths* and selected members of their crews congregated outside the Friday Mosque after lunch-time prayers and wandered

down to the sea – on the opposite side of the estuary to where the Kharvas' Dariyalal temple stands. The men sat in two groups in the sand, one composed of ship owners and the other of men who worked as crew, and were mostly Bhadala-Pathan and their supporters. The *moulana* (prayer leader) of the Friday Mosque led the recitation of the *zikra* (remembering): *subhanallah, al hamdu lillaa, allahu akbar* ('glory be to Allah, all praise is due to Allah, Allah is greater', repeated 33 times), *laa ilaha illallah* ('there is no God but Allah', spoken once). It was a hot day and the breeze that was blowing off the sea could not disguise the sweat seeping through clothes and skullcaps. Gulls tumbled and squawked over the breakers that were rhythmically pounding the beach. From the opposite riverbank the sound of drumming and an occasional shrill cry of delight could be heard. After the recitation had finished, there were a few moments of silence before the men stood. Some offered private prayers in the direction of Mecca (which somewhat ironically involves facing the opposite riverbank), but most wandered slowly back into the village and home. Having reminded themselves that there was no God but Allah the view onto the opposite side of the river, and the walk back to the village, were stark contrasts to this assertion.

On our return to the village we passed a shrine. The dry foliage had been cut back from around it and the low walls that surrounded it had been freshly painted. There was no actual tomb, only a flat concrete platform surrounded by the wall onto which had been daubed in thick white paint 'Apu Pir'. Around the shrine, ice cream and sherbet vendors had gathered, along with a few small hand-operated fairground rides. Here some of the Thaims and their followers had gathered to offer coconuts. Sometime later a Thaim man told me that Apu Pir offered protection against the perils of the sea. As the congregation of men who had been down to the seashore to 'pray' passed the only comments they made were disparaging ones about those 'playing' around the shrine (also van der Veer 1992).

In Mandvi, only Muslims of the highest (Saiyeds) and lowest (Siddis) social-divine ranks can become saints¹⁴. Likewise, they are the only ones who can act as legitimate intermediaries between the human realm and the divine (Chapter 3). While not all Muslims in Mandvi are devotees of particular saints the majority are. The Bhadala-Pathans are of low rank within the sanguine – divine hierarchy headed by Saiyeds, and accordingly, they seek to undermine the legitimacy of this hierarchy. Bhadala-Pathan are not opposed to all Saiyeds and all shrines, rather they offer a reappraisal of the hierarchy and of the status accorded to various shrines. But they vehemently reject the idea that living Saiyeds, who often preside over shrines, have powers of intervention between human and divine realms. Francis Robinson makes the important distinction between the worship of a saint and the worship of God in a saint’s presence (1983:188). Those who claim, or are ascribed, intermediary powers, and claim elevated social status as a result, are the perennial focus of reformers in many religious traditions. The Bhadala campaigns are no exception, singling out Saiyeds as particular vestiges of religious corruption. However, in this case Robinson’s distinction is not comprehensive enough to isolate the negative traits that Bhadalas ascribe Saiyeds. Broadly, there are five kinds of intermediary roles performed by Saiyeds, shared between living Saiyeds and dead Saiyeds: (i) the worship of a deity without human form (such as Dariyapir) through the agency of a living Saiyed; (ii) the worship and attribution of miraculous powers to a living Saiyed; (iii) the worship and attribution of miraculous powers to a dead Saiyed through a living Saiyed descendant; (iv) the direct worship and attribution of miraculous powers to a dead Saiyed; and (v) the worship of God in the presence of either a living Saiyed or a dead Saiyed of fame. The first three categories are singled out by Bhadala-Pathans as corrupt forms. Thus the veneration of entombed figures such as Apu Pir, the graves of their own anonymous ancestors, or the amorphous

¹⁴ The role of the Siddi (the lowest ranking Muslims) as a religious figure was outside the scope of my research. However, Helene Basu writes: ‘The role of Siddi fakirs is defined in opposition to the religious discipline of Sayyid *pir*-s at the top of the hierarchy and reflects principles governing relations between superior and subordinate in the political sphere as well as in the worship of Sufi saints’ (1993:290). This opposition is couched in terms of mental and physical heat, as people with hot minds the Siddis behaviour is unpredictable and not assessable by norms valid for honourable people. This characterisation sits comfortably within the model of substance and code presented in the previous chapter.

(non-human) figure of Dariyapir have become overt signs of corrupt Muslim practice. The fourth category is treated ambiguously by Bhadala-Pathans. They reject most claims to power made for the majority of shrines, while continuing to hold some others, such as Haji Pir in the northwest of Kachchh, in particular reverence and as sources of auspicious blessings. The final category is respected by Bhadala-Pathans with the proviso that the dead, as with living Saiyeds, are judged on merit and evidence rather than their condition at birth.

However, the Bhadala Jamat is not united in a particular vision of the role of Saiyeds in the construction of good Muslim practices. Broadly, there is a division between Pathans and Thaims (and their respective followers). The former profess what they term as 'modern practice', associated with mosques, the Koran and personal and ritual modesty. They are against idolatry, songs to worship by, religious intermediaries (of categories i–iii) and any signs associated with Hindus and used by some Muslims (such as the coconut). In comparison, Thaims and their allies are not so concerned with proselytising or with reforming local religious practice. As a result, many of the institutions and activities they sponsor (see discussion of Moharam in Chapter 6) place them in tacit opposition to Pathans. These observations begin to point to the conflicting status of competition within and between groups in the process of Islamisation.

As descendants of the Prophet, Saiyeds are described by their devotees as vessels of uncorrupted religious and moral knowledge (*aql*). Herein lies something of a contradiction, because as many Bhadala-Pathans are aware, knowledge of religious law and the execution of judicial wisdom (functions Saiyeds perform for clients) require learning and study, and are not automatically given by descent. Educated Bhadala-Pathans are thus inclined to see the majority of Saiyeds as fraudulent and as corrupt, passing off ignorant advice to those so blinded by their devotion that they cannot see the falsehoods they are being fed.

The Bhadala-Pathan attitude towards Mandvi's Saiyeds raises a further issue related to descent. In Mandvi, accusations of corrupt descent against Saiyeds are rare and exist at the level of speculation among friends. In Salaya, at regular meetings held at the mosque-shrine of Mukhdummi Sha, particular Saiyeds are denounced and their elevated social status is alleged to be based on false claims. The most severe accusation levelled at a Saiyed is that he is a complete fraud and is perhaps the descendant of an oil presser from Uttar Pradesh, whose father moved to Gujarat and claimed to have holy blood. Furthermore, it has been shown that for Muslims the purest line of descent emerges from combining maternal and paternal blood of the same *atak*. Bhadala-Pathans claim that many ritually active Saiyeds have descent lines that rely solely on maternal blood ties to the Prophet and that the dominant male blood is derived from non-Saiyed sources. Such characters are seen as having denied their paternity in order to claim elevated Saiyed status in the world. The denial of legitimate paternity is seen by the Bhadala-Pathan as one half of the moral evil of Saiyeds; the other half inevitably leads to the accusation that most Saiyeds are of mixed blood. The cult of Saiyed blood thus emerges as an illusion generated by the false Saiyed claim that their blood is not weakened by admixture. The Bhadala-Pathan counter to this is that Saiyed blood is just like the blood of all men. This does not mean that Bhadala-Pathans dismiss the possible eminence of pure Saiyed blood, rather it is just that most Saiyed blood in Mandvi is bad blood – rather like their own.

Nava Naroj is observed in different ways on opposite banks of the river and is a powerful metaphor in communal rhetoric. Neither Kharva nor Bhadala enactment of Nava Naroj contains any explicit ritual or linguistic symbolism relating to Dariyapir. Yet Nava Naroj is a contested day that the Kharvas celebrate on a contested site, which has been deliberately abandoned by the Bhadala. The Muslims living around the temple, many of whom work on Bhadala-Pathan ships, are aware that the site was once in their ownership and that the perimeter boundaries of the temple are gradually encroaching on the neighbouring Muslim cemetery. I sat with some of them in the evening of Nava Naroj outside their houses to watch the crowds making their way to the Dariyalal temple. They were dismissive of the Kharvas as Hindus and as the

protagonists in the silent battle for control over the temple site, but they enjoyed meeting the eyes of passing groups of women. The conversation swung around to the Bhadala celebration of Nava Naroj. Very few of the sailors had been invited to attend despite the fact that many of them worked on Bhadala-Pathan ships. They were impressed that I had been invited and wanted to know what happened at the event. Sitting some distance away were some other Muslims of high rank within the town. Overhearing our conversation they suggested that the Bhadala were ignorant and had spent the day praying to the sea. One man characterised what he thought they had been doing with a sarcastic hand clapping and a swaying of the body accompanied by the chant of 'O Dariyapir, Dariyapir'.

In Mandvi, it is commonly assumed that both seafaring classes venerate Dariyapir, but this is more an affirmation of the low status of sailors than it is assumed to be an empirical fact. Dariyapir has become a sign through which the integrity of others can be conveniently degraded. It is somewhat surprising that the Bhadala celebrate this day at all. It is not a recognised Islamic festival and is associated with the Hindu and syncretic traditions to which they are (all to varying degrees) opposed. In Salaya there were expressions of uncertainty about the validity of coming down to the water's edge to pray for safety and profit in the forthcoming trading season. But they were clear that their prayer was to remember Allah and not other deities, which was affirmed in the recitation of *zikra*. The majority of the Bhadala do not regard their regional origins, customs and time frames of their local environment as things that should be disguised or hidden. Therefore, the commemoration of Nava Naroj is seen as legitimate so long as its observance falls within the parameters of what the dominant Bhadala-Pathans construe as the universal aspects of Islam, which are suited to any occasion and to any cause because they are the basic tenets of the faith and cannot be corrupted. Permitted aspects include a strict interpretation of the five pillars, but more important, it seems, are the things to be excluded, such as iconographic representation, polytheism and spiritual intermediaries. It is evident from this list of priorities that religious reform is as much about the things it opposes, as it is about the things it represents. Nava Naroj, in the

Bhadas' terms, is not a commemoration of ancestors or a veneration of the dead and the method and the location of its practice are new. The event is a redefinition of what the Bhadala represent and what the shipping season entails. In general terms, both the form and the content of the commemoration have changed within the broader structure of the annual cycle of the sea and the monsoon. Nava Naroj is described and enacted as a Muslim event that uses Arabic language of prayer and bodily posturing to reinforce monotheism and pure Islam.

Returning to the question of knowledge and truth and descent, Saiyeds claim a right, given by their bloodlines, to be the bastions of specialised religious knowledge. However, experiences of education and the rapidly shifting fortunes of the Bhadala-Pathan have taught them to question the idea that individual propensity and potential is given solely by birth, because such notions are discordant with their own lives. The Bhadala performance of *zikra* on Nava Naroj is not an affirmation of their ancestral heritage because their society has transformed within a generation. Ancestral tradition and the ideas that prevail in Mandvi of professions and individual attributes being given by genealogical inheritance have been transformed in Salaya. They have questioned the validity of worshipping like sailors, when they require the luck and blessings required to make them successful merchants. Their 'new' way of seeing this potential is to be good merchants and good Muslims. Importantly, the successful Bhadala merchant has the power and influence to determine what constitutes being a good Muslim. Anything that does not quite fit the ideal can be dismissed as inferior. Thus the Bhadala-Pathan see themselves as living up to their potential and tend to dismiss Thaims, Mandvi's Muslims, Kharvas and Mandvi's broader Hindu population as increasingly deviating from God-given greatness. The consequences of this model are further explored in Chapters 6–8. On one level the performance of *zikra* is an explicit device of social separation and a counter-enactment to the observances of Thaims and Kharvas. On another level it appears as a counter-enactment of Bhadala-Pathans' own past. Simply, they have a new, appropriate and religiously authentic way of commemorating the event that distinguishes them from their forefathers and others. Legitimacy for this performance

is drawn from their move away from Mandvi, their abandonment of Dariyapir, and their social rise from sailors to traders. The landscape of *shirk* (polytheism) that lies over the river is contrasted to the pure land of correct religious practice in Salaya, and this loosely reflects the division made between *dar al-kafir* and *dar al-islam* in Chapter 1.

4.5. Conclusion

For the Bhadala, the recent past is shallow and, in most cases, is typically either two or three generations deep (from the living). Kharva and Bhadala have similar stories of ancient history through which they relate claims to a particular origin or ethnic identity. However, among Kharvas there is considerably more continuity between the mythical past and the present than there is in the case of Bhadalas. This is directly related to ongoing relationships with Bhatiya patrons, which can often be traced back to the nineteenth century. Individual kinship and recollections of the past are intertwined. Kharva kinship is broadly lineage exogamous and although Kharvas do not employ bards, the various ritual Brahmans they employ maintain records that often convincingly, stretch back over two hundred years or more. Thus, fragmentation and segmentation of descent lines is not such a pronounced trend as it is among the Bhadala. This difference provides both groups with a very different understanding and consequent narration of the actual violent conflict of the early 1980s, the post-event justification for it and the resulting community polarisation. For the Kharva the past is cogent and recollected, and the betrayal of the traditions of their ancestors remains an important issue for them. The violence is described as a settling of 'old scores' against the destruction of the temple at Somnath by a generalised Muslim 'other', and against their marginalisation from shipping by the Bhadala in the latter half of the twentieth century. The past is used as a form of justification and as an explanation for the present. For the Bhadala the past is immaterial, not etherealised, and to a surprising degree it is forgotten. The violence, and their 'defeat', rather than marking their fall from grace, marks the start of a new era of prosperity and Islamic development in their village, autonomous from the

'traditional' mercantile social organisation in Mandvi. They do not look into the past for their inspiration; the Bhadala and their apprenticed recruits look to their own futures as a source of potential.

The intensity or paucity of the past in collective representations is not only related to the internal kinship organisation of groups, but also more importantly, the contingencies of the past are related to the internal kinship and ritual organisations of mercantile patrons, and in this case to the merchants on whose ships the Kharva and Bhadala were employed as sailors. The collapse, in the case of the Bhadala and Shia merchants, and the continuation, in the case of Kharvas and Bhatiyas, of patron-client relations modelled around the contingencies of shipping, continue to be instrumental in how the past and future are conceived and in the development of communal hostility between groups of sailors.

Opposition of Kharva and Bhadala is given by the river and religion, but also by the different methods they have deployed to make Dariyapir disappear. The Kharvas turned towards a known past and embellished it with the ritual and mythological complexes that now surround their new temple, and they drew upon signs from prestigious sources within the town. The reinvention of tradition concentrated aspects of the past, such as ancestral veneration, which they claim had become dilute in the years of their 'cultural poverty' after the Second World War. The stable residence patterns of Kharvas and their enduring relationships with Bhatiyas provide a continuous basic infrastructure onto which elaborated tradition has been grafted. In contrast, the Bhadalas have taken a radically different approach. They have rejected the past and past associations with Hindus and shared deities in order to reinvent themselves. They have drawn on the pervasive exogenic ideology of pure Islam that differentiates them from Hindus, their past and from other Muslims. This power has not been drawn from existing or prestigious sources in Mandvi, but is modelled on their experiences in Gulf ports.

The following chapter examines the mechanisms through which apprenticeship conveys communal antagonism in the production of technology, in anticipation of this a brief review is given below of the social context into which neophytes are apprenticed. The seafaring tradition of Mandvi is dialectical, constructed through the homogenisation of ritual, economic and political authority, as well as through kinship networks within the social categories of 'merchant' and 'sailor'. These two groups, into which all other subsidiary categories (shipbuilders, craftsmen and dock labourers) are collapsed, are defined by the historical contingencies of shipping. This dialectic has profound consequences for wider social organisation. 'Traditional' merchants appear as apical figures in Kachchhi society, ranking higher than landowners and the ruling classes. This is reinforced by the way in which their work is conceptualised, the 'properness' of their diet, marriage patterns and behaviour, and by the fact that they paradigmatically appear closer to God through their ability to patronise religion. Sailors on the other hand, despite sharing the exogenic tendency with merchants, are of mixed-blood, low rank and firmly associated with the physical work of the lascar. Contemporary political authority does not rank as highly as mercantile power in Mandvi and although it is true that for traditional Sunni and Shia Muslims spiritual intermediaries rank higher than both merchants and rulers, rulers come a poor second to the mercantile elite in local hierarchy. In short, real power comes from mercantile activity taking place outside the kingdom and this power, in its modern form (Bhadala-Pathan), not only has the influence to usurp the influence of local rulers it also has the ability to usurp the traditional source of status in Muslim society. Thus, the influence and social position of the Saiyeds is under direct attack from modern mercantile capital, which has an agenda very different to that held by 'traditional' Muslim society. In this sense, the negation of the past places social currents evident among the Bhadala in a very different light from what is typically thought of as 'fundamentalism' because they have no fitting past to call their own to resurrect in the name of religious or social perfection.

Within the general context of Hindu nationalism, and the Muslim response in India and beyond, there are a series of social and material conditions that dictate the

direction, depth and content of the Bhadala-Pathan's vision of Islamisation. First, the communal hostility of the 1980s provides a necessary 'other' for their religious vision. Predominantly, these 'others' are Kharvas who, as shown, represent the Hindu population of Mandvi in a general sense. Secondly, the Bhadals' low-ranking (mixed blood) position in Mandvi's encompassing social hierarchy cannot be transcended from within the conditions of that hierarchy, so their religious message counters the principles on which such hierarchy is based and in the process creates a further 'other' that is Muslim. Thirdly, their exogenic relationship to the boundary of Kachchh gives the goods and trends they import an elevated status in their religious practices and social interactions. Fourthly, the powerful high-status patrons of the past have emigrated to the point of local extinction, leaving a power vacuum in Muslim society into which the Bhadala have been drawn. Furthermore, their dominance of the shipping industry has developed a trans-Indian Ocean web of Muslim connections through which they create political and ideological allegiances. Fifthly, they have large amounts of disposable wealth with which to build and patronise salient institutions and religiously learned personalities. Related to this is their dominant position in the recently settled village of Salaya where they have uncontested space in which to build mosques. Sixthly, their control of a large dependent constituency of sailors (mostly from Mandvi) gives them audience, brawn and a wider influence across the river. Finally, the education of a portion of the Bhadala Jamat (including sections of other *ataks* aside from Pathans) has created a set of allegiances that periodically transcend the otherwise segmentary nature of the Bhadala Jamat, which Bhadala-Pathans successfully channel into their religious program. The brotherhood-type equality found among the educated section is also evident in a community-wide football tournament (held during the off-season), at Friday prayers and through the Bhadala-Pathans' choice of a public school. However, these are but illusions of equality: on the football field pre-existent hierarchy does not disappear into the rules of the game, while prayer in the mosque evokes an equal relationship of all men before God there is no pretence of earthly social differentiation collapsing into joint prayer. Thus, there is the temptation to argue that Islamisation among Bhadala-Pathans promotes universal equality of all

men (seen in their dismissal of Saiyeds elevated blood), but this ultimately falters because social hierarchy based upon the contingencies of shipping equates broadly with religious hierarchy in the village.

In the final section of this chapter I have deliberately conflated Bhadala-Pathan conflicts with Hindus and with Mandvi's Muslims. This is the way in which the conflict appears on the ground. The enemy is Hindu, but in the long term the only way in which Bhadala-Pathans can attain a dominant position is through attacking both the Muslim society that subjugates them and the principles, on which that society is based, that place them in structural opposition to Kharvas as the lascars of the struggle between religious traditions. Old men in Mandvi recall that in their youth while Kharva and Bhadala seafarers were in competition with each other this did not extend to actual violence. The powerful and pervasive social division was between merchants and sailors crosscut a range of seldom intersecting patron-client type relationships, such that Lohana and Bhatiya merchants employed Kharva sailors and Vohra, Khoja and Memon merchants employed Bhadala sailors. From the perspective of the present, men collapse fifty years into a few events in order to explain the Kharvas' current inability to control shipping and the Bhadalas' rise to fortune, culminating in the violent acts of the early 1980s. From that time on things have been different and the social map of Mandvi has changed. The Bhadala, communal enemies of the Kharva, have started to recruit new groups of men to sail for them. This workforce is susceptible to, and influenced by, the Bhadalas' ideological and political positioning in the world. Apprenticeship in shipyards has become a matter of learning the basics of a new sociality and bodily practice through the redefinition of the 'traditional' merchant-seamen type relationship. The relationship continues to rest on the experience of travel (of home and away), the ritual cycle of the sea (culminating with Nava Naroj), and on the contingencies of crewing a ship. However, the ideological content of the relationship has changed to one that focuses more on an individual's potential within his life cycle, rather than on propensity given by birth. This is a direct reflection of changes that have occurred in the fortunes of the Bhadala within a single generation. However, as shown in Chapter

5, the *seths* may tell their apprentices that, if they work hard, one day they will also own ships. But this 'gift' is, for the most part, an illusory one.



Plate 1. The Rukhmavuti estuary at dawn looking onto Salaya.



Plate 2. The Rukhmavuti estuary at dawn looking onto Mandvi.

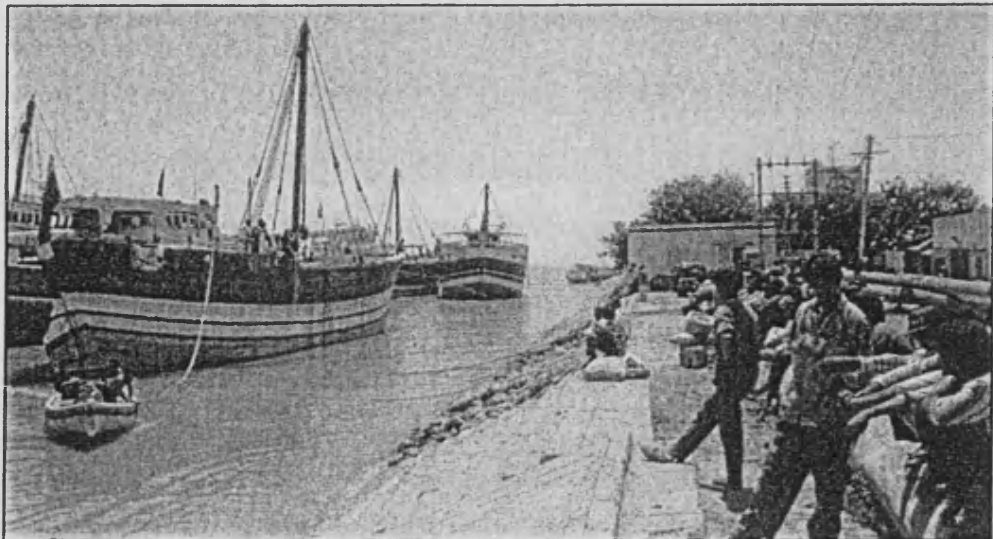


Plate 3. Waiting for the tide at the start of the sailing season.



Plate 4. Ravalpir temple complex.



Plate 5. Horses in Ravalpir temple.



Plate 6. Raval's 'tomb'.



Plate 7. Muslim graves adjacent to Dariyalal temple walls.

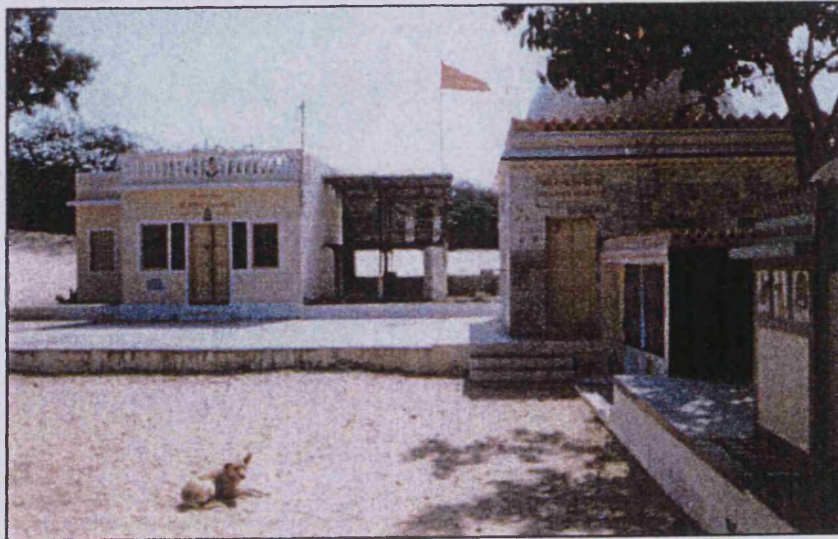


Plate 8. Dariyalal temple complex.



Plate 9. Dariyalal.



Plate 10. Jume Mosque – Salaya.

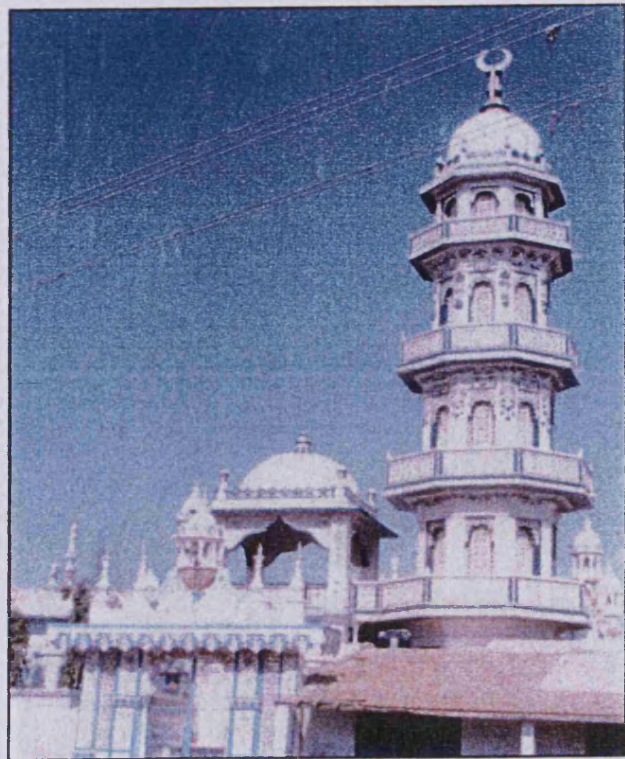


Plate 11. Minara (Minaret) Mosque – Salaya.

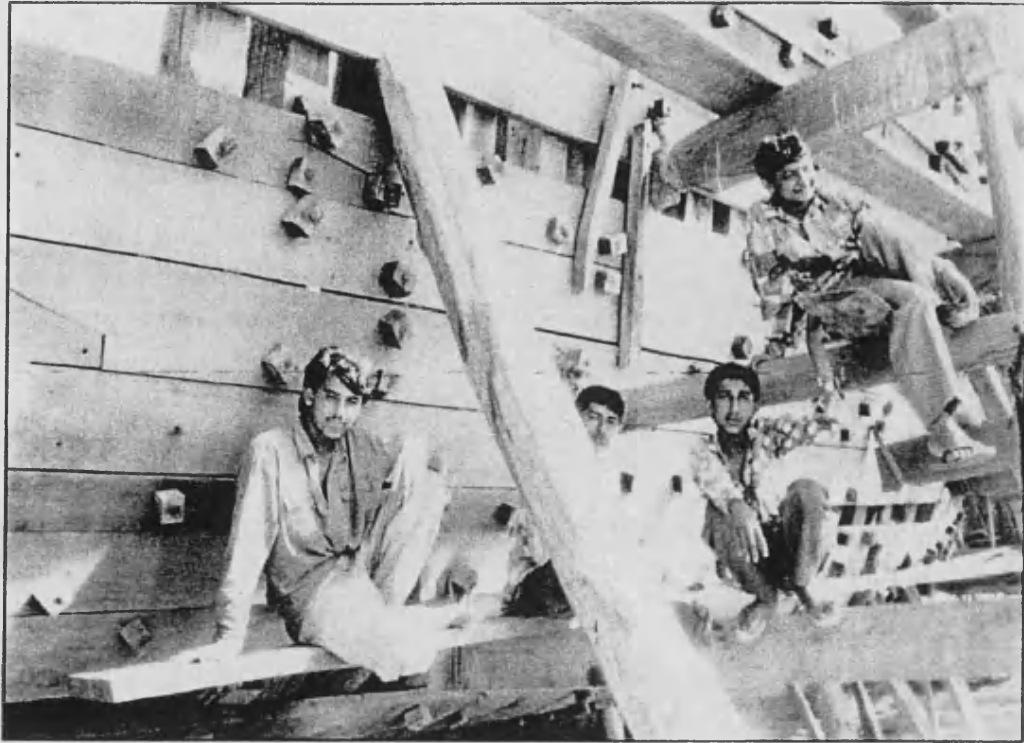


Plate 12. Apprentices on shipyard scaffolding.

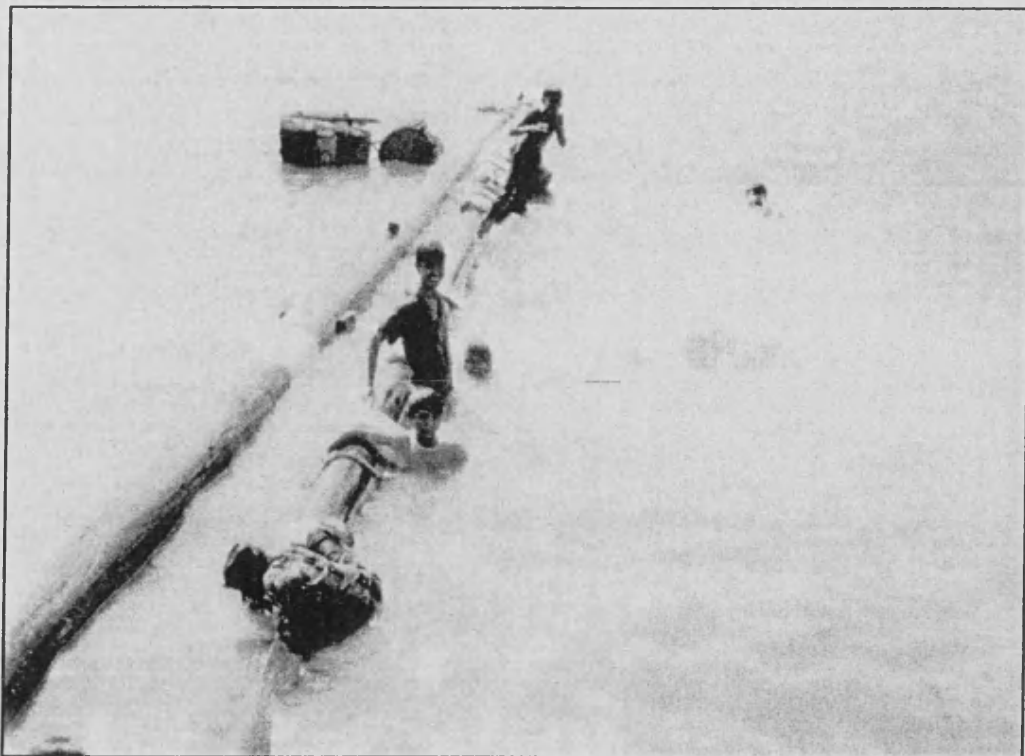


Plate 13. Apprentices and others swimming with mast.



Plate 14. Refitting a rudder.



Plate 15. Scaffolding around a hull.

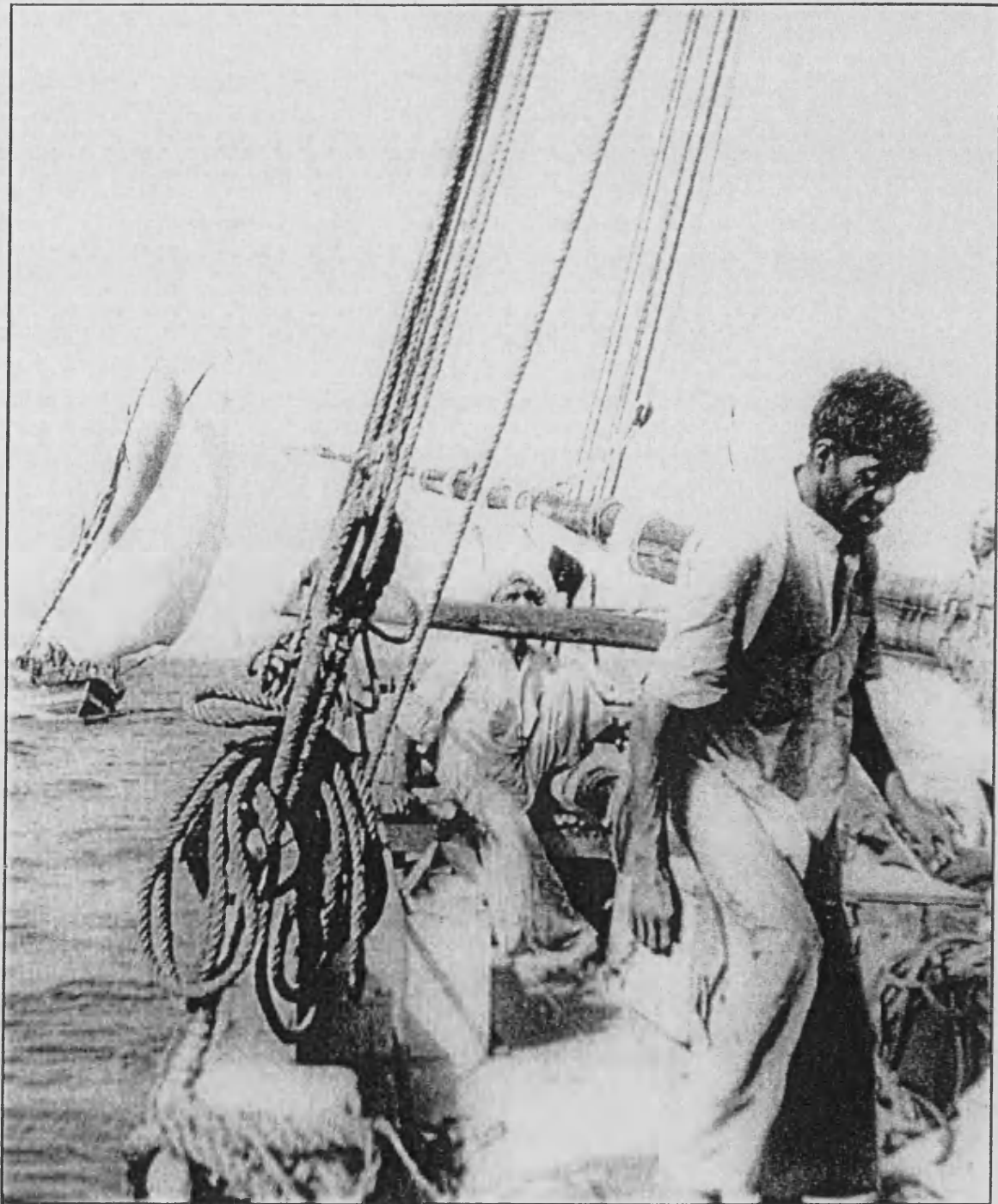


Plate 16. Sailing from Zanzibar in the 1950s (photograph courtesy of Naran Damji Kharva).

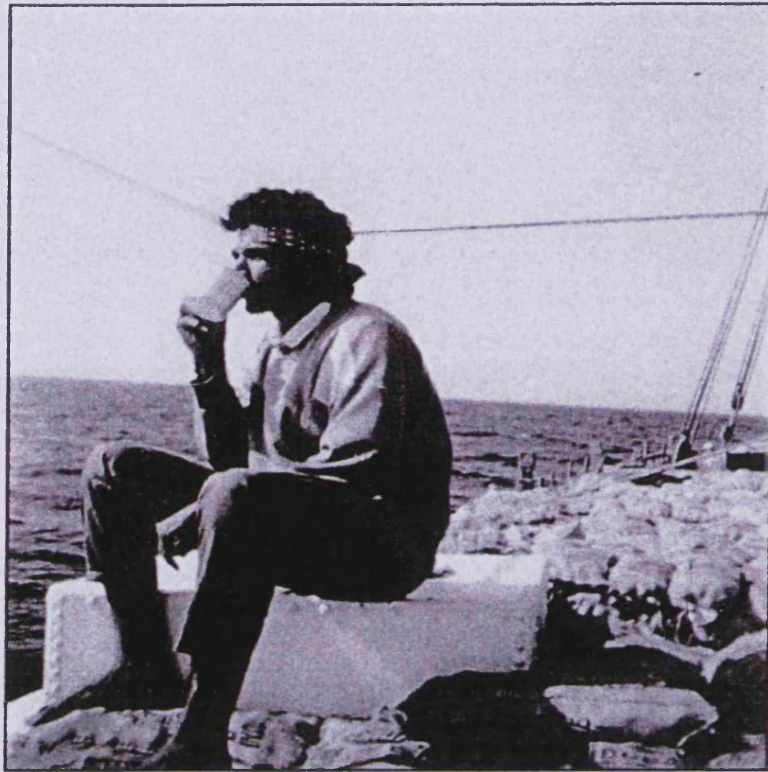


Plate 17. Sailing from Dubai in the 1990's (courtesy of Anis Khatri).

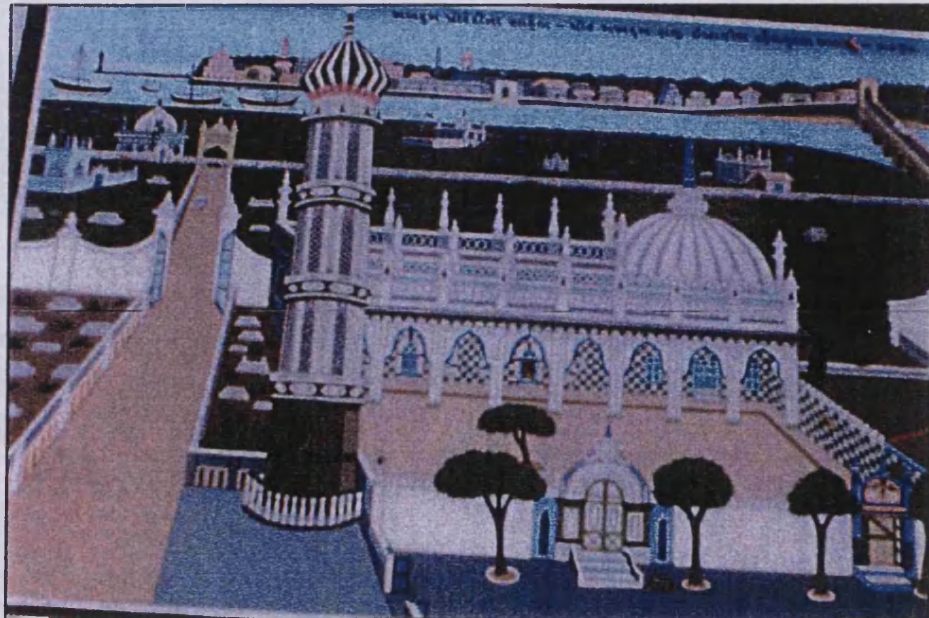


Plate 18. The view from Mukhdummi Sha over Mandvi.

Chapter 5.

Apprenticeship I: shipbuilding

5.1 Practice theory

This chapter presents an analysis of social reproduction through apprenticeship within the context of the production of technology in shipyards. Through this process the *seth*'s capital is converted into social status through the reproduction of a workforce. In the presentation of this argument the analysis focuses on how apprentices value their learning within the hierarchical context of shipyards. However, the ethnography leads to a different conclusion about the nature of learning to 'practice theory' models current among anthropologists. The initial sections of this chapter review anthropological literature on the acquisition of skill and suggests what practice theory in the context of shipyards in Kachchh might look like. Subsequent sections of the chapter examine the kinds of physical and social techniques that apprentices learn to think and act with as they engage with the materials, tools and hierarchy of shipbuilding. The question posed is: Why are the bodily techniques and the organisation of space and time ignored in describing the process of assembling components?

In answering this question two descriptions of shipbuilding are presented. The first is a sequential description, the second concentrates on the particular aspects of the process. The discussion then turns to describe the evaluations and decisions a ship owner engages with before, during and after a ship's construction, and to the ambiguous position of the master craftsman in the shipyard. It demonstrates that far from lazing around doing nothing, the work of the ship owner requires that he plans the flow of finance and materials, develops organisational strategies to divide and unite the labour force, and that he negotiates contracts and pricing with timber merchants, accountants and government officials. The final section of the chapter brings together the activities of all those engaged in shipyards who continue to work

on the ship once it has left the dry dock through describing how a ship is floated off the riverbank and into deep water; showing the bodily techniques of the labourers, the mental strategies of the ship owner and the hierarchical command structure operating in unison.

Paul Connerton has argued that the past is preserved by representing it in words, images and actions, of which commemorative events are a pre-eminent instance (1995:72). In this chapter it is argued that it is not only through commemorative 'events', such as ritual and festivity that are re-enactments of the past, but that the past is recollected, and the present created, in the body's ability to perform certain skilled actions. Connerton distinguishes between *incorporating* and *inscribing* practices (1995:72-3). The former relates to movement of the body, which he further subdivides into ceremonies, properties and techniques. *Inscribing* practice relates to the technologies of storing and retrieving information. This section is concerned with *incorporated* practice, which is eventually *inscribed* in the identity cards given to sailors. Work in shipyards is habitual. Habits are more than technical abilities: in a Weberian sense they are affective dispositions that develop from an elective affinity between the interests of apprentices and their masters. As in prayer and mnemonic learning, repetition is an influential process in generating elective affinity. Again, in Connerton's words: 'Habit is a knowledge and a remembering in the hands and in the body; and in the cultivation of habit it is our body which 'understands'' (1995:95). Over this and the following chapter this 'understanding' is shown as a transformation of the colours of the soul, as apprentices move from, what is in the Bhadas' eyes, *dar al-kafir* to *dar al-islam*.

'Habitual' work practices and 'learning' skills are not abstract signs, they carry with them moral and political sway. It is argued that the minutiae of shipyard work are bodily ceremonies, properties and techniques that carry with them particular ways of being in the world. The skills and procedures of shipbuilding provide apprentices with a certain set of bodily postures and deportment that separates them from others. These skills and procedures provide apprentices with experience of hierarchy and

command structure within shipyards, thus shipyard interactions are not only linguistic they are also conducted through the body. This experience of hierarchy and command provides apprentices with a certain way of seeing the past, landscape and communal relations. The hierarchy, materials of construction and the aspirations of apprentices, create the 'context' in which new ways of seeing the world are acquired as he performs the minutiae of his labour.

Underlying the presentation of ethnography in this chapter runs a criticism of the many variants of 'practice theory', in order to show that learning is regarded in very specific ways in shipyards. Theories of situated everyday practice (for shorthand called 'practice theory') insist that persons acting and the world of activity cannot be separated (Lave 1993:5). What can be known in any given context is in a constant state of change. Production processes and the production of social relations are historically contingent and socially specific. In the sense that those involved:

improvise struggles in situated ways with each other over the value of particular definitions of the situation, in both immediate and comprehensive terms, and for whom the production of failure is as much a part of routine collective activity as the production of average, ordinary knowledgeability (Lave 1993:17).

The 'context' of practical everyday activity is prioritised and is given through conceptions of action, interaction and activity. Thus practice theory and its theoretical variants are situated against the tradition that knowledge and learning are abstract 'things' situated in the mind of the learner (Ingold 1992; and Pálsson 1994). Any notion that ratifies the dichotomy between 'mind' and 'body', or 'learning' and 'not learning', is an obstacle in the way of a theory that 'encompasses mind and lived-in world' (Lave 1993:7).

5.11. An ethnographic practice theory

Despite the claims of the practice theorists to incorporate the conceptions of those engaged in production and the acquisition of skill, what people think and say about what they do remains subordinate to the theory. When the men who labour in the shipyards use distinctions that the latter decades of the twentieth century and my training in British Social Anthropology have taught me to find irksome, they do so with intent, sincerity and meaning that not only contradicts the spirit of 'practice theory' but force a reconsideration of the premises on which the intellectual project is based. Practice theory seems to impose our own theoretical anxieties onto the ethnography of others. This is not to deny the merit of the anthropological theory, but if those who work in shipyards present details of their lives and work that fly in the face of our contemporary urge to collapse dichotomies where does that leave the project and the analytical conclusions of practice theory?

The many dichotomies that permeate this thesis (Hindu and Muslim, mind and body, traditional and modern, and good and bad) are not of my own invention, or even my analytical inference. However, rather than arguing that the tendency to produce ecological or social dichotomies is 'natural' it is argued that they are socially and historically contingent. Dichotomous thought is a product of social organisation and its reproduction, and of various forms of social transaction, which may well be emergent manifestations of the architecture of the human mind, but are based in the particular realities of the time, the space and the technology to which they refer. When the divisions that some anthropologists wish to deconstruct appear in the language of those who inform this thesis, it is those divisions that are used for the analysis of ethnography. 'What the natives think' about minds, bodies and wealth is given priority within this chapter. So although the bodily techniques of labourers are impressive feats of co-ordination, involving mind and body, labourers do not consider them so. They denigrate their own bodily mastery of techniques to the mental work of the merchant. In other words, the work of the merchant's mind is prioritised over the 'easy knowledge' of an apprentice's physical labour. The

ordering of this hierarchy obviously reflects the patterns of social differentiation described in previous chapters.

5.2. Shipyards (Plates 12–15)

At first shipyards appear as noisy, smelly, chaotic places. The air is full with the sounds of hammers on iron and wood, and with the mixed odours of mud, sawdust and chemicals boiling over open fires. Men clamber over and around ships in ways inconceivable and incomprehensible to anyone arriving for work in the shipyard for the first time. In time these sensations cease to be salient, as the neophyte (or the anthropologist) becomes familiar with the techniques, technology and processes of the production process.

It has been shown in previous chapters that the shipping industry is based on a structural social division between merchants and sailors, and in the Kharva case there is much more to being a sailor than going to sea on a ship. The ethnography presented here examines another aspect of being a sailor: apprenticeship in shipyards. This form of apprenticeship is unusual because neophytes are training to become sailors not shipbuilders, yet the first stage of apprenticeship takes place in shipyards, during which time the apprentice is known as '*khalaasi*' (sailor). The division of labour within the shipyards is the same as when the ships are working at sea, but the land-based hierarchy is not directly transposable onto ships because the expectations and qualifications needed to fill each position vary slightly from land to sea.

Men work in shipyards from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., with Fridays and Sundays off. Shipbuilding is labour intensive, and the forty to fifty men who work over two years to build a ship use few power tools. The workforce is divided into five horizontal ranked grades, split vertically between labourers and carpenters. The following section describes these divisions, the kind of work each category of man undertakes, and the ways in which the divisions are related; these graded ranks are

the dominant terms of social description on ships and overshadow the social ranking of *jamats* described in Chapter 4.

5.21. Assistants

Lowest in rank is the *petoriya* (labourer's assistant, tea boy, or general assistant). Each shipyard has one or two *petoriya* responsible for maintaining a fire, serving bitter black tea every few hours and running errands. Onboard ship they assist the cook.

5.22. Labourers – sailors

The *khalaasi* (labourers and sailors) are responsible for the hard manual labour in shipyards. They form more than half the workforce. They are the group on which most of this chapter focuses because some of them will eventually crew the ship they are building¹⁵. They lift, drag and stack wood before it is needed for a particular part of the ship, and become expert in moving raw materials with pulleys, ropes and scaffolding. They also learn how to bend and manipulate materials with heat and force, and how to secure materials through the processes of drilling, bolting and caulking. The initial years of such labour, the start of a potentially long relationship with the ship, are spent learning elementary principles of construction. Apprentices take this work because they expect eventually to become crew. In order for this to happen they learn the ship's constituent parts and stages of construction and begin to appreciate the overall integrity of the vessel. In addition to which they have to grasp and respect the channels of authority that operate around a ship. Being obedient, deferential and affable are qualities that *seths* value when recruiting sailors, because work on ships is characterised by co-operation and interdependence. A successful crew is one that works within the rigid command structure to which they are initially exposed in shipyard apprenticeship.

¹⁵ The word *khalaasi* is reported to come from the tradition of paying sailors in grain and a lump sum known as '*khalás*' for the season's work (G.B.P. Vol. VIII.:232). Thus the one paid '*khalás*' is known as *khalaasi*.

A successful apprenticeship is eventually ascribed in the form of a government issued identity card that allows men to legally go to sea. It affords fewer privileges than a passport, but is easier to obtain. To procure a card involves a tangle with bureaucracy, application and discretionary payments, and obtaining entry into the port offices, which are restricted areas. These offices, the required literacy and necessary social influence, are outside the social orbit of most sailors. The ship owners mystify the process, the effect of which is to further bond sailors to their own interests. *Seths* are the sole decision-makers when it comes to employing crew, and are the only source of 'identity cards', power that allows them to keep unusually productive workers in their shipyards rather than sending them off to sea. The *seth* plays short-term gain off against long-term loss. If the apprentice feels that he is not being given the rewards to which he aspires, or there is a hint of transparency in the promises of the ship's owner, then the apprentice can leave for work in another yard and another set of promises, or join the crew of another *seth*. Such an outcome is not in the interests of a *seth* because employment is based on trust and proven responsibility grounded in shipyard apprenticeship. If a labourer then leaves, the *seth* loses his investment of time and energy spent in cultivating a fitting sailor and will have to start afresh with another recruit. The result is a balancing game between the immediate returns of labour and potential long-term relations developing between a *seth* and a member of the crew on one of his ships. The *seth* is training men who can easily leave his employment to work in other yards. This is possible because there is a general shortage of suitable labour, but apprentices know that it is possibly in their own 'self-interest' to keep working for the same *seth* until an identity card is produced. The awe that this piece of government bureaucracy generates amongst a group of predominantly illiterate men also binds them to their labour. Obtaining an identity card is having proved suitable for the job and to be trustworthy in the eyes of a *seth*.

Once reciprocal relations have been established between an individual and a *seth*, this paves the way for more of the labourer's kin to work for the same *seth*. Older

men from a certain lineage or *jamat* police the younger ones to make sure that they too work in the interests of the *seth*. However, the kin relations that are found amongst the labourers are of secondary importance to the hierarchy that is engendered within the shipyards. The labourers also find that despite the occasional brutality of senior men the hierarchy also acts paternally towards them, advancing money ahead of payday, making gifts towards wedding expenses, and using their influence to intervene in local disputes affecting the labourer. The *seth* literally becomes a patron of the *khalaasi*. His demands structure time, economy, consumption patterns and expectations of the families of their crew. Although the hours that labourers work are limited in shipyards, when working as crew, hours are unrestricted and dictated by tides, contracts and seasons. Sailors are away from home for around nine months of the year, literally giving most of their time to the *seth* and ship. The household economies of sailors are dependent on the *seth* and often a sailor's wages will be paid directly into his household and not to the individual – this also takes the form of bonds paid to the apprentice's father in return for labour; and advances for house improvement, business ventures and rites of passage. Such advances commonly take the form of loans, but sometimes they are given without expectation of return. The sum of a sailor's wage, including his own small scale personal trading, will support many people. Those households with two or more men working for the same *seth* are usually entirely dependent on him for their income; non-sailing siblings frequently do not work locally for low wages, relying instead on the sailor's income.

While it is not unknown for sailors to be in the employ of a particular *seth* for their entire working life, most men eventually jump ship and find work either in the Gulf or on international ships. Employment by a *seth* and being granted an identity card is the first rung on a potentially fruitful journey to employment overseas and wages in dollars. While many labourers are Bhadala a greater number come from other *jamats*. However, the majority of the navigators, captains and owners are Bhadala. As ships are being built, the vertical division of labour is between carpenters (*suthar*) and labours (*mahjor*). The result is two parallel hierarchies

respectively overseen by the master-craftsman (*gaidor* or *mistri*) and the foreman (*sarang*). The carpenters are predominantly Hindu migrant labourers from Andhra Pradesh, while the labourers are all Kachchhi Sunni Muslims. It is the hierarchy of labourers that is the most important in the long-term production of technology as they form future crews.

5.23. Andhra Pradeshis

There are around 200 Andhra Pradeshis recruited through labour agents, working for continuous periods of around six months in Mandvi's shipyards. Some of them are provided with basic accommodation and food, others work, sleep and eat in the shipyards. There is little interaction between the labourers and the Andhra Pradeshis either in or out of the workplace, and they seldom work together on the same section of the ship. In effect, in most yards, there are two working hierarchies separated by language and labour specialisation. Some migrants who have done many seasons of carpentry speak some Kachchhi and are conversant with the language of ships and shipbuilding. However, the majority of the interaction between carpenters and labourers is in stilted Hindi. Further, the Andhra Pradeshis do not work with the expectation that they will one day go to sea as sailors and are not employed as sailors.

Carpenters are paid more than labourers because their work is skilled and specialised. However, the labourers dismiss them as 'black monkeys' or as 'Telugus'. The labourers express an inherent superiority towards them because the Andhra Pradeshis are Hindu, speak a strange ('monkey') language, supposedly have darker skin, live in all-male households and eat strange food. It is rumoured that Telugus come from a coastal town where they prostitute their daughters from home, displaying them on balconies at dusk for the perusal of visiting sailor clients. Once the client has made his selection and a price has been set he is invited into the house and treated like a son-in-law for the night. Around forty Bhadala men work for international tanker companies, and some claim to have called in at this port and to

have enjoyed its women and whiskey. Kachchhi labourers make frequent reference to the supposed immorality of their Telugu colleagues and take particular pleasure in suggesting that Bhadala sailors are clients of the Telugus' sisters. The Kachchhis thus claim moral superiority over their Telugu work-fellows, who are regarded as immoral, low status and as 'black' Hindus, who pimp their own daughters and sisters.

The Telugus are a small group of Hindus working in a Sunni environment, the only Hindus to do so. They are expressly forbidden to post images or build shrines within the workplace, and the only sign that there are Hindus working in shipyards are small *trishuls* (tridents) painted around the doorways of their huts. Although Hindu, they are not part of the wider Hindu community of Mandvi, and are considered low-rank outsiders, who are further ridiculed because of their strange customs and the rumours that surround their lives in Andhra Pradesh. They hold an ambiguous position within local society because they work for Muslims, and Muslims can publicly denigrate them without fear of reprisal from other Hindus.

5.24. Foremen

The *sarang* (foreman) manages the labourers, mediating between them and those more senior. *Sarangs* motivate, discipline and negotiate conflicts among *khalaasis*. Typically the *sarang* is experienced in shipyards and has some seasons of sailing experience. The *sarang* is always well known and trusted by the *seth*. He is also responsible for the elementary informal instruction of apprentices in ship design and the technologies of production.

5.25. Captains and navigators

The highest ranks at sea are *nakhivas* (captains) and *malams* (navigators). Both are recruited to a particular vessel long before it is afloat. The Kachchh traditions of navigation are famous and elaborate (see Burnes 1836:25–26), however, in the age of

the global positioning satellites, a knowledge of the stars and use of a sexton and compass and has become somewhat obsolete. Navigators command respect and, although they labour with the crew in port, have more connection with the captain and the prestigious domain of the cabin than they do with the crews and the decking. This position requires that the man be literate in order to complete the logbook and port bureaucracy.

On some smaller ships the position of navigator has been merged with that of the captain, but most ships still put to sea with a specialised navigator onboard. However, there are further considerations other than the size of the ship in the division of elite labour. Import and export procedures require literacy, and when a ship is in a port where the firm has offices a literate man need not be on the ship because representatives of the *seth* conduct the paperwork. When a cargo demands that a ship visit ports where no literate representatives of the firm are present the work has to be undertaken by someone on the ship. Most commonly this falls to the navigator of the vessel, and the most common arrangement is that captains are the sons of *seths* and navigators are drawn from *ataks* within the Bhadala Jamat that do not own ships. Again, as in Chapter 4, this situation illustrates a further instance where education is ultimately subordinate to the control of the prestigious ship capital.

Captain and navigator adopt supervisory roles in shipyards, intimating something of the nature of the relationship between them and the ship. They participate in its construction and get to know the materials and order of its construction. The captain will accompany the ship owners to negotiate for the price of wood and manage the labour force, and *seths* and captains are frequently consanguines, affines or both. For a new ship the captain will participate in various stages of its construction, using his experience of previous work in shipyards and at sea to assist in the overall design. Whether consanguine or affine to a *seth*, the captain knows from an early age that one day he will be master of a ship. If he is working on another of the *seth*'s ships

when a new keel is ritually laid, he is called ashore to supervise the ship's construction.

The hierarchy among the crew is broadly structured by age, captaincy is predominantly only held by Bhadala men, and the remaining stations are sharply differentiated by income (see Figure. 5.1.).

Figure. 5.1. Minimum incomes on land and at sea.

Rank	Monthly amount in Rupees	
	Land	Sea
<i>petoriya</i>	390	500
<i>khalaasi</i>	1040–1560	2000*
<i>sarang</i>	2080–3000	3000–3500
<i>malam</i>	3000	4000
<i>nakhuva</i>	4000	5000

* This amount is the industry standard as given in the statutes of the Kachchhi Shipping Association.

This hierarchy is inflexible. As the ship is built so are the channels of communication and patterns of power and subordination among the future crew.

5.3. Shipbuilding

The kind of question asked frames the kind of response given. When I asked, out of context, men who worked in shipyards what they did in them they would reply with their rank as *khalaasi* or *sarang*. These labels hover between descriptive adjectives and nouns, connoting the kinds of work that men do in shipyards. A more accurate picture of what a labourer does can be gained by assessing his age and by asking how long he has worked in a shipyard. Generally, the longer he has worked and the older he is the more responsible tasks he will perform. When I asked men how to build a ship they would provide a technical description of how the parts of the ship were sized, shaped and assembled. The account provided below is a bricolage of the descriptions provided by informants.

The following process takes on average two years. To build a ship that will carry 450 tonnes of cargo, the keel (the part of a ship that extends from stem to stern) is made from three pieces of straight-grained hardwood with a square cross-section of about 45cm. The sections are joined by hooked scarfs (joints between pieces placed end to end that are cut to overlap) and through-bolted to form a keel of around 20m. The ship is built around the keel; the length and dimensions of which determine the size and proportions of the rest of the vessel. The stem (the timber that forms the prow of a ship) and sternpost (the timber that forms the hind part of a ship) are the same kinds of wood and are of similar length – around half the length of the keel. They are stepped into the keel and are bolted into place; the internal angles formed with the horizontal are 90° and around 120° respectively. The top two edges of the keel and the inner edges of the stern and stem are bevelled to form a groove into which the frames sit on the keel, and the planks fit into on the stem and the stern. The garboard planks (in this case the first four or five sharply twisted planks next to the keel), between the horizontal keel and vertical stem and stern, are nailed into place and are bracketed together across the breadth of the keel. Planking timber is around 5cm thick and 25cm broad, however narrower sections are used for the first planks. A mortise (a square hole) is cut for each pair of frames (ribs) at intervals of 35cm, or less, along the length of the keel. From the keel to the gunwales (the upper edge of a ship's sides) frames are made of three or more scarfed and bolted sections with the butts staggered to avoid creating a weak spot in the hull.

The lower sections of frames are made from heavy gnarl and crook timbers, the natural shapes of which are honed to form the curve at the turn of the bilge (the lowest internal part of a ship's hull) and the initial curve from the keel. Starting at the stern the frames are fitted in pairs angled close to vertical from the keel. They fan out to almost horizontal angles from the keel in the middle sections of the ship before inclining steeply again towards the stem. The ends are cut to tenons (a projection at the end of a piece of wood) and a tongue (a ridge of wood that fits into a groove in another piece of wood) is carved to project from the raw face of the rib to correspond

to the groove on the keel. The angles and dimensions of the mortised timbers vary – the angles and dimensions of the joints do not – all are around 7cm and are square with the keel timber. Around half of the fifty-five pairs of bilge frames are fitted into the topside of the keel timbers before any further planking starts.

As construction progresses up the flanks, frames and planking are done together with only a few frames initially fitted as a guide to the overall height and sheer of the hull. One section in the centre of the ship, at turn of the bilge, is not planked or framed so as to provide easy access to the inside – it is filled when all the heavy timbers are in place. Holes of 2cm diameter are cut through the frames close to their base on either side of the keel for drainage. As more frames are added the space between them shrinks to only a few centimetres, so at this point frames are predrilled before they are fitted. A further drainage hole is cut into the stern planking, which allows water to drain out of the bilge while the ship is being built and later when it is in dry dock. This hole is plugged before the ship is launched. Two heavy beams (around 45cm by 30cm) that run two thirds of the length of the ship from the stern are notched into the frames as engine mounts to distribute the weight of the engine over the length of the ship. Heavy brackets are bolted into the internal angles between the keel, stern and stem post and a hole for the propeller shaft is drilled through the sternpost. Further horizontal brackets are bolted into place between the sternpost and the nearest two pairs of frames. Once the bilge frames are in place they are roughly planked. Much of the planking is fitted before the later frames are cut. A set of handheld portable moulds is used to get the curves of the hull symmetrical and consistent. Chalk and plumb lines are used to mark where wood is to be cut.

Unseasoned planks are cut from the log as needed and bent and twisted into shape by oiling and heating over small fires and by sustained pressure from a system of clamps and ropes embedded in the riverbank. Each plank is joined to the next with a tapered scarf with square ends, which extends over the equivalent of three frames. The planking is roughly trimmed and temporarily fastened with a nail driven through a small wooden block for easy removal. A gap of less than a plank's width before

and after the turn of the bilge is left for the shrinking and subsequent repositioning of the planks. Once this point is reached, some upper frames are fixed and left to protrude at random lengths above the bulwarks (the side of a ship projecting above the deck). Further frames are added as the planking progresses. Stringers (an interior horizontal plank supporting the beam ends of a ship) are laid all the way from the keel up to the deck level and further strengthening timbers and transoms (cross-beams) are positioned half-way up the flanks of the hull to allow for secondary decking to be added or removed once the ship is complete.

The system of temporary fastenings is used to allow for plank shrinkage as the unseasoned timbers dry during construction. By the time the planking is complete, the lower planks have dried out and are unfastened one by one and eased down towards the garboard. A seasoned plank is then inserted in the now enlarged space left before the turn of the bilge. Any irregularities in the hull planking are removed and other pieces of timber are scarfed in to fit the remaining space. The topside section of planking is unfastened and moved down so that all the planking fits snugly. To prevent the wood splitting, the nail-holes are predrilled. The nails themselves are caulked (seams and gaps rendered watertight), with a length of raw caulking cotton wound around the head before they are countersunk into the wood.

Heavy deck beams are run the breadth of the ship, notched to hook over the larger stringers. Lighter beams are positioned to form three hatch coamings (raised framework around the hatch). Hatch cover planks sit directly in the hatch coamings; a diagonal pattern is painted over them so each always plank sits in the same place. When they are removed the pattern is reproduced when the hatch planks are re-laid in the correct order. This ensures that the holds remain watertight.

The main deck planks are cut to follow the line of the ship and are laid lengthways. The bilges are only roughly planked. A heavy step is built for the mast, which when stepped is raked slightly to the fore. A square section is cut out of the top of the mast into which a block is fitted. The boom runs the length of the main

deck and is tied to the mast and the sails tied beneath it. The hull and decks are caulked twice with lengths of cotton soaked in vegetable oil. Fish oil is applied to the topsides and insides to preserve and seal the wood. Seams and nail heads are sealed and a mixture of mutton fat and lime is smeared over the hull following the line of sheer rather than the waterline. The fo'c'sle deck (short raised deck at the front of a ship) is built between the elevation of the main deck and the cap rail and is linked to the main deck by steps either on the port or starboard side of the ship. Beneath it storage areas are built with access from the main deck and foundations for a capstan are bolted into the decking. The capstan (a form of winding gear) sits in the centre of the fo'c'sle deck. Two mounting boards are run down the length of the stern to which the rudder is hinged. The frame ends are sawn off and a cap rail and bulwarks are built around the main deck. Huge strakes, or wales (lines of protective planking running the length of the hull), are fitted at deck level and at the cap rail. The poop deck (the high deck at the stern) is built above the level of the cap rail and is linked to the main deck with staircases on both sides of the ship. Carved balusters are placed around the embellished wheelhouse and two box toilets are roped to the stern. Drainage holes are cut around the deck. This is as far as shipbuilding goes in Mandvi because once they reach this stage they are floated and fitted in Dubai.

For posterity, that is how ships were built in Mandvi's shipyards at the end of the twentieth century. This is a standard and quite detailed description by the yardstick of informants' descriptions of how to build a standard and quite detailed ship. But what do descriptions such as this one tell us about how to build a ship? In this respect there are two striking observations to be made. First, there are no men performing the tasks and the description does not remotely reflect an individual's experience of constructing a ship. Secondly it is impossible that a ship would get built if you merely followed the instructions given above, because there is so much missing from, or at best implicit in, the description. In other words, a ship is a product of more than the assemblage of its constituent parts; it is through the *actual* processes involved in shipbuilding that knowledge and skill are acquired. Missing from the description is labour and skill, both of which are denigrated by apprentices

as 'easy knowledge'. The following sections attempt to place men within this abstract description by looking at what they *do* while building a ship

5.4. Non-linguistic practices

Much knowledge of shipbuilding is non-linguistic, only under certain circumstances can this non-linguistic knowledge be rendered into language and in doing so becomes an explicit form of discourse, but changes its character in the process (as in Bloch 1991:186). There is no doubt that apprentices have a pretty clear idea of what they are building because representations of ships are common in the homes of all those who work in the yards, completed ships lie at anchor in the river and both riverbanks are strewn with prototypical ships in various stages of completion. Shipyard workers can see what it is that they are building, a fact that is reflected in chalk sketches made on hull timbers during idle periods in the yards.

A great deal has been written in recent years about the skill and complexity of learning in apprenticeship (Bloch 1991; Hutchins 1993; Keller and Keller 1993; Lave 1984, 1988a, 1988b, 1993; and Lave and Wenger 1991). These studies attempt to show that great feats of computational imagination and ingenuity exist outside the privileged sphere of formal education. Practice theory focuses on everyday activity and its constitution in relations between social system and individual experience (Lave 1988b:14-15). Knowledge-in-practice escapes the ritual either/or choice between objectivism and subjectivism by investigating the mode of production and the functioning of practical mastery, which makes possible both an objectively intelligible practice and also an objectively enchanted experience of that practice (Bourdieu 1977:4). Implied in this aim is a unifying approach to the relationship between 'mind' and 'body'. At a first glance shipbuilding would seem to be a first class example of this kind of knowledge and process. Ocean going ships of considerable weight are built from thousands of constituent pieces without the use of plans, technical drawings or sophisticated machinery. Men learn the sequencing, proportioning and techniques of shipbuilding over many years of non-formal

instruction. The magnitude and scale of the ships is impressive. Wooden ships are built accurately and with sufficient strength that they can be fitted out with powerful marine diesel engines. Apprentices are drawn into the workforce and learn, through 'participant observation', the techniques of shipbuilding. However, the work environment oscillates between brutality and joviality. The unpredictability of the atmosphere, dictated largely by the moods of those in charge, adds to the precarious position of the apprentice. What is known and is familiar can rapidly become overturned, subverted and dangerous.

The remaining sections of this chapter are written from the perspective of practices in shipyards. The conclusions drawn are that the 'work of the mind' is superior, and more sophisticated, than the 'work of the body'. This reflects the broad distinction made in previous chapters between merchants and sailors. All men in shipyards have working minds and working bodies, but they describe the two in a hierarchical relationship where work associated with the mind is more prestigious, evidently more lucrative and conducted from the shade of a terrace, rather than under a hot sun. The nobility of labour comes a poor second to mercantile capitalism, a reflection of the bodily constitution of *nafs* and *aql* and the social division between merchants and sailors.

The following section of this chapter presents the apprentice's experience of shipbuilding and points to some bodily nuances involved in the many tasks they are expected to perform. The majority of work in shipyards is routine, repetitive and quite frankly somewhat tedious. For apprentices, building a ship is to learn many skills for the first time and then relearn them – to the point of habitude – through repetition. The differences between novices and men with expertise place them in hierarchical relationships. Those with more experience and skill in the techniques of shipbuilding are accorded more prestige than the novices. However, those who are seen to be able to do the 'work of the mind' ultimately overshadow all grades of manual labour, however skilled they are. The privileged 'work of the mind' over the 'work of the body' is a further way in which hierarchical relations are legitimised

and understood. The 'work of the mind' is not conceived of in terms of education, although an increasing number of ship owners do have university degrees, but is valorised by accountancy, bookkeeping, business strategy and calculation. When practised efficiently, these skills bring wealth and an ability to consume and patronise prestige.

5.5. Life in the sun: the *khalaasi*

The technical description opening this chapter conveys three kinds of information each based on an assumption about the task of building a ship: management, replication and sequencing. Through a comparison with labour in shipyards, each of these issues is addressed below.

Sukhet had worked in a shipyard for two months before work was abandoned because the ship owner could not raise any further capital. The hull of the ship was sold to another ship owner who did not re-employ Sukhet once work resumed. Sukhet had heard that a Thaim was planning to start work on a ship called the *Al Ibrahim*, and his older brother, who had previously worked for the Thaim, went to his yard and asked him to employ Sukhet. He agreed, and one month later when Sukhet crossed the river, from Mandvi to Salaya, the keel and the garboard planks were in place and a team of twenty Kachchhi men and nine Andhra Pradeshi carpenters had already been assembled.

Descriptions that focus on the assembly of materials neglect the role of human activity. It is men who build ships, not abstract narrators who transcend the division of labour. The organisation of space and time and the very human activity of social relationships are necessary to construct a ship. Men involved in building a ship enter into a sophisticated series of inter-related tasks and relationships. The technical version given above is not one of human experience – it is one of informants' abstractions filtered through my writing. No man working in a shipyard has this kind of experience while building a ship. For different men building a ship means and

involves different things. The level of planning and foresight of men at different levels of the hierarchy varies, as does the intensity of labour, the degree of physical exertion and the way in which the overall representation of the finished ship is conceived. Below the example of Sukhet's labour is taken.

For Sukhet, and the many like him, building a ship involves a range of skills, tasks and organisational strategies under the instruction and authority of men above him in the hierarchy. At first he was told what, when and how to do things, and he was given little responsibility or autonomy. Instructions were given to him primarily from more experienced labourers who had been instructed primarily by the labourer's foreman and to a lesser extent the craftsman, captain and ship owner to carry out a particular task. This did not exclude the possibility that he would be asked directly by anyone ranking above him to do something. As the construction of the ship progressed so did Sukhet's ability to predict what, when and how things should be done. When instructions were given to him they became increasingly less specific and only implicitly incorporated the what, when and how of the task.

5.51. Moving materials

In the first months that Sukhet worked in the yard he moved materials. He removed wood from waist high handcarts and placed it on the ground. Later he lifted the same wood and moved it the fifty metres from the road-head into the yard, in the process negotiating the tight corner formed by the rear of the yard's supply shed. He stacked wood into different piles depending on the type, destination and the time that it would be required. He lifted wood into the hull through the hole left in its flank. He hoisted wood into position inside the ship while the shape was marked out by the foreman with chalk. He also held wood in place while joints were secured with bolts.

Lifting and moving wood is heavy work that requires organisation, technique and skill. Brute strength is not enough. The handcart drivers that bring the wood from Mandvi over the river into Salaya are experts in handling wood, some of them have

missing fingers or toes attesting to the fact they have painfully learned how to do so. The skill is to let the wood do as much of the work as is possible. Handcart drivers get angry if their carts are not unloaded with due care. A handcart is a wooden platform around 2m by 1m, with slightly raised edges, which is supported by a simple iron framework and four reinforced bicycle wheels. They are designed to carry loads that weigh vertically down onto them. If the wood is not removed from the cart correctly it can tip and the cart's frame and wheels will bend. Angry handcart drivers encourage correct lifting. The techniques of lifting and moving wood vary for different sizes, shapes and weights. Below, the bodily techniques are described of the men who move a cross-member from a handcart, carry it through the yard and into the ship. Moving heavy objects through confined space requires an understanding of space, movements of the other men, destination and practices that make the task easier.

A cross-member is a structural element of a ship that is hoisted into place once the main hull of a ship has been roughly completed. It supports the decking and cross-ties the two flanks of the hull, it is around 7m by 45cm by 30cm and is very heavy. When it arrives on the handcart, as many labourers as are available are sent, or go, from the yard to collect it. They position two large pieces of wood on the ground around 1m from either end of the cross-member. They stand either side of the 1.5m that overhangs the ends of the handcart and grip the underside of it with their fingers. On the instruction of either the handcart owner or an experienced labourer it is lifted a little way off the surface of the handcart. On the next instruction it is moved over to the edge of the handcart, half the lifters shuffling backwards, the other half forwards. On the final instruction the cross-member, is allowed to fall but supported by the hands of the labourers onto the blocks on the ground. Experienced lifters make this look very simple. Fingers are used rather than palms because as the wood falls palms are bent by the action of the falling wood onto the flank of the cross-member which gives it stability and reduces the risk of it rolling from the supporting blocks. For the cross-member to fall evenly and not get damaged the pressure exerted by the lifters against its fall has to be equal. The co-ordination and homogeneity of the movement

is something that men learn through the repetition of the task: it becomes 'easy work'. The blocks positioned on the ground not only remove the possibility of damaged digits, they also mean that it is easier to lift the timber again as there is still space underneath it to grip. The cross-member is then turned on its narrower face because this is the only way that it will fit around the corner behind the yard's hut. Because the yard is difficult to access by road, during high tides such timbers are strapped to old oil drums and floated across the river into the yard. When there are no tides and the timbers are urgently required they are brought by handcart.

In order to lift the cross-member the labourers drive heavy nails into its sides and position battens underneath it. One man stands at each end of the timber and the others in pairs along each side. The handcart driver leaves and a labourer assumes charge of the commands and the direction of the timber's travel. Two further labourers are responsible for moving the supporting batten further along the path once the timber is lifted. On the command to lift the labourers shout in unison '*lombi!*' (equivalent of 'heave!') and lift the timber to slightly below waist height. Curses and exclamations fill the air. On the next command they shuffle forward towards the repositioned battens. They repeat this process five times until they reach the tight bend between the yard's hut and the wall of a house. Here there is not adequate room for the timber to be lifted by men standing either side of it. Once they have carried the log as far as they can, they position it on the battens and shuffle it around the corner. This requires that the leading labourer makes it known to less experienced labourers how far and in what direction they are lifting. To experienced labourers there is no need to give explicit verbal instruction because they know that it takes eight or nine shuffles and small lifts of equal duration in order for them to get round the corner.

Once around the corner the path turns downhill and they repeat the process of lifting the timber and repositioning the battens until they reach the yard. On the journey down they have to be careful that the cross-member does not slide forward off the battens. There are as many as twenty pieces of timber of this size used to

make a ship, and many more that are slightly smaller. This is a process that they repeat many times. Once in the yard, if the timber is not going to be stacked, it has to be moved through the access hole left in the hull of the ship. This hole is at about chest height and too high for the timber to be lifted into because there is not enough space at the end of the cross-member to allow enough labourers to get a grip. The timber is placed on battens perpendicular to the access hole. Typically, the foreman will take charge of moving the timber now because of the risk of damage to the flanks of the ship around the entrance hole. A geared pulley is set up on the superstructure of the ship just above the access hole. The pulley's chain dangles down through the hole and is wrapped around the end of the cross-member to prevent it slipping. A plank is placed on the ground under the other end of the cross-member to prevent it from sinking into the mud and getting dirty. Two labourers heave on the chains of the pulley and others steady the timber. They hoist the end of the timber until it is pointing into the ship and above the bottom of the access hole. For this to happen the cross-member had to begin its journey from the ground at just the right distance from the ship. Had it been too close it would have hit the bilge planking; if it had been too distant it would have hit the planking of the flank above the access hole.

Two further labourers then position a heavy piece of timber across the lower lip of the access hole; this timber takes the weight of the cross-member and prevents any of the planking being damaged. Other labourers are called outside the ship to push the cross-member into the hole. But because the pulley chain is holding the cross-member tightly in place to simply push would be to push against the pulley and the superstructure of the ship. In a moment of tight co-ordination and control the foreman instructs the labourers gathered outside the ship to push the cross-member as the pulley operators release its chain, one link at a time, until the cross-member is resting on the timber at the lip of the access hole. The pulley chain is removed from around the cross-member. A further geared pulley is then strung up from the opposite side of the inside of the hull, but some metres away from being directly opposite the access hole. The pulley chain is brought across the ship and nailed around the end of

the cross-member that is poking into the ship. Heavy nails give the labourers something to push against, which if they have not already been hammered into the cross-member are at this stage too. The second pulley drags the cross-member into the ship while the labourers simultaneously push. It slides in, one end resting on the protective timber at the lip of the access hole, the other suspended in mid-air. At the instruction of the foreman the pulley chain is slowly released until the cross-member comes to rest against the frames of the bilge, which now serve as battens. The cross-member is now in the ship, but still has to be hoisted into a space as wide as the cross-member is long. Lifting the timber to such a height involves a further set of techniques and practices.

From this description it is clear that there is more to moving timber from handcarts to ships than simply carrying it down the hill. The process involves co-ordination of techniques that make the process easier and prevent damage to the timber, the ship or to the men moving the material. Sukhet spent the first few months of his time building the *Al Ibrahim*, experiencing such techniques.

5.52. Scaffolding

The ship that was built at the beginning of this chapter was built without scaffolding. This is an impossible feat. The abstract ship was also built on the assumption that some processes are identical and replicable and need only to be described once. This applies to the construction of a ship as a whole, in the sense that other ships have been built like this in the past so the pattern can be repeated. It also applies to procedures at a specific level. For example, fitting a frame's tenon into a mortise on the keel is a process described once rather the 110 times that this actually happens. In fact, each time this procedure is carried out it is done differently, under different circumstances. The task is never physically or technically the same. The angles from which the frames leave the keel differ and have to be aligned with different sets of templates depending on their position within the hull. The performance of the task is influenced by: the quality and ease of shaping the wood, which varies with its grain

and age; the tightness of the space available to work in; and the sharpness and quality of the marking out and of the cutting implement. For those performing the task the environment in which it occurs is never the same. The quality of light, the temperature of the air, the temperament of colleagues and the amount of time available for the completion of the task make it a different process for those involved every time this procedure is undertaken. It is also possible that a particular procedure is abandoned due to the irregularities in the wood or the tenon was over-zealously cut or a knothole appeared in the frame at the point of contact with a garboard plank. Likewise, a joint could have broken out while the measurements were being taken. Extend these example variables to all the other tens of thousands of procedures involved in building a ship and the process ceases to be one of mechanical replication. The performance of the task becomes, with experience, a matter of contextual improvisation within a framework of the similar but different tasks that have been completed.

Each task within a ship varies, as does each ship. Ships develop ascribed characters, personalities and temperaments as they are being assembled. An asymmetrical hull, round fat sterns or straight sleek flanks all give ships a different feel. No two ships are the same. Ships float differently, handle differently in varying conditions at sea, and age and warp differently. Building a ship is also an interaction with materials and environmental conditions. To say that there is a mechanical replication of tasks, which the opening description implies, is to simplify and to ignore these kinds of interactions.

Scaffolding rises with the sides of a ship. The first scaffolding is erected to support the stem and the sternpost. This scaffolding determines the height and orientation of the remaining scaffolding, and was in place before Sukhet started his work in the yard. After a few months Sukhet was told to assist a more experienced labourer in repositioning and extending a section of scaffolding that ran around the outside of the ship. Scaffolding is not permanent because the walkways have to be constantly adjusted as different layers of planking are measured, positioned, nailed,

and then removed and repositioned. Scaffolding is made from wood that is variously splintered, cracked, old or warped, and it is secured with rope. There is no homogeneity in the materials, yet there has to be homogeneity in the result; platforms have to be level and stable. Falling from scaffolding is the most common form of serious injury in shipyards so it has to be secure. The uprights are positioned around a metre from the hull, which allows space for men to work and for drills and saws to be used without impediment. Cross-members are tied to the uprights and rest in gaps in the hull of the ship, or are wedged in place by a further support from the ground or a lower platform. Planks further support these wedges on the ground, preventing them from sinking into the mud. The gaps in the hull are irregular and have to be worked around because they offer the securest method of fastening the cross-member. This requires a great deal of skill and improvisations because both the materials and the spaces they must traverse are irregular.

Making good scaffolding is a complex task. It requires an appreciation of the space that has to be scaffolded, and an anticipation of how work on the ship will progress and the amount of room that men will need to work on the outside of the hull. It also involves a grasp of the strength and tolerance of the materials. For example, scaffolding is stronger and more secure if a plank used for a cross-member is positioned vertically rather than horizontally. Scaffolding requires a sense of time and foresight. Experienced scaffolders can assess the rate of work on planking on the outside of the hull and predict at what level the platforms will be positioned for the next stage in the work. The positioning of platforms also requires that evaluations be made about the highest and lowest points on the hull a man can work on from a platform of a given height. This allows the platform to be aligned for the work that is to be undertaken next. The scaffolding is constantly shifting so rather than nailing a cross-member into an upright (a common beginner's mistake) the nail will be placed below it to support the cross-member while allowing it to be removed easily. Securing cross-members to uprights also involves the use of knots and binding that can be undone easily but not accidentally if snagged. Scaffolding also requires a feel for the kinds of gaps to leave between levels to allow them to be easily traversed. A

gap too great or small means that the scaffold is difficult to climb and movement around it is cumbersome and time consuming.

Knowledge of gaps, spaces and reach comes from the experience of climbing around on scaffolding. It does not come from measuring the average span and reach of the arms and legs of men who work in the yard nor can it come from formal instruction. It is one thing to be told to position the rungs of a ladder 45cm apart when the rungs are regular and fit between two parallel rails, but producing even scaffolding from random materials in random spaces that curve with the line of the ship requires a feel for materials, and for what it is like to move on such scaffolding.

5.53. Planking and caulking

The longer men work in shipyards the more responsibility they are given. A year or so into the construction of the *Al Ibrahim*, Sukhet was called upon to drill holes in planks to temporarily secure them to the frames. The foreman demonstrated to Sukhet how a work a drill, and also marked each hole that he wanted Sukhet to drill, making sure that they were positioned so that when the nail was inserted it would pass through the central point of both the plank and the frame. The drills used on the *Al Ibrahim* were hand-operated. The central shaft was 60cm long with a fixed bit at one end and a chest rest at the other. In the centre of the shaft is a wooden cylinder with a groove spiralling around its circumference. String is wrapped tightly into the grooves around the cylinder and the ends are tied to a bow. Moving the bow at right angles to the main shaft of the drill makes it rotate. The drill bit is screwed so that it cuts into timber when the bow is pushed from right to left and when the bow is moved from left to right sawdust is ejected from the hole.

To operate such a drill is not simple and the conditions in which it is used may add to the complexity of the task. The string has to be wrapped tightly around the cylinder or it will slip once the drill bit bites. Varying densities of wood require that varying amounts of pressure be applied to the chest plate. If the hole is below waist

height then this pressure may be exerted by a leg or pelvis. The knack is to get the pressure on the plate adequate to cut into the wood but not so severe that the string slips around the central cylinder. Sukhet practised on waste wood before he started on the planking. Literally thousands of such holes have to be drilled and the work is painstaking and laborious. After two days the foreman no longer marked the holes for Sukhet, who was now able to drill through the plank and a few centimetres into the frame without supervision. He notched the bit with a chisel so he would know when he had reached the right depth and instructed those working on the scaffolding when and how the platforms would have to be positioned for the next section of the hull. Sometimes the plank would not sit firmly on the frame; the foreman showed him how to loop ropes around the both, insert a wooden batten into the centre of the loop and to rotate it, tightening the rope and pulling the plank against the frame so it can be drilled. A nail hammered into the frame holds the batten in place and prevents it from unwinding until after the hole has been drilled and nailed.

These descriptions do not exhaust the range of Sukhet's tasks. He removed the temporary fastenings that held the planks in place and helped reposition them further down the hull, before finally caulking and countersinking a securing nail. He also worked for around a month with a caulking iron as a member of a team that filled the space between the planks on the hull with strands of raw cotton treated with lime. The skills and bodily techniques involved in these activities are as complicated and as subtle as they are for the other tasks that have been described.

5.54. Inter-changing tasks

When Sukhet first started to work in the yard he was given clear and constant instruction. If he was stacking wood and a handcart arrived he would be told to stop stacking wood and instead help unload the handcart then bring the wood on it down into the yard and place it in the pile of timber waiting to be stacked. Only then was he told to resume stacking. Gradually, such specific instruction desisted. If he had not seen that a handcart had arrived and its driver was irritated at waiting for

someone to help him unload it; Sukhet would be told to go to the handcart driver. As he became accustomed to looking out for the arrival of the handcart driver he went without instruction to fetch the timber. The same kind of relationship also applies to other kinds of work, but the inter-change of task is not based on the premise that all tasks are equal because some have to be performed with more urgency than others. The example of the handcart shows that not keeping the handcart driver waiting is more important than stacking wood; stacking wood is a low priority task and can be performed at any time.

Sentential representation necessarily compresses non-linguistic activities into a linguistic form. The gap between this form of representation and actually conveying how to build a ship clearly highlights the gap between linguistic knowledge and the other forms of knowledge. The ‘what goes without saying’ (Bloch 1998) in a description of how to build a ship is what people who labour in shipyards call *sahelu kam* (easy work) or *sahelu gnan* (easy knowledge). This is a form of knowledge that they see no need to include in a description of how to build a ship. In shipyards such knowledge is communicated in many ways that sometimes includes linguistic instruction. ‘Easy knowledge’ includes qualities like skill, technique and experience as well as propriety with the forms of hierarchy and respect. Scaffolding, moving materials, drilling and nailing are all forms of ‘easy knowledge’, mastered by participation in the activity of shipbuilding through repetition, observation, practice and humiliation, framed within the hierarchy of the crew and idioms of respect and patronage. It is the ‘easy knowledge’ that is missing from the initial description above, and it is a lack of ‘easy knowledge’, which unless you are a marine architect or have experience of Indian shipbuilding techniques, stops you being able to build a ship by following the opening description.

Relations between different kinds of work can become complicated. Sukhet gradually learned how to evaluate the priority of a particular task. Priority is not simply distributed through different types of task. Stacking wood is of low priority; scaffolding is of higher priority (especially if work cannot progress on a certain part

of the ship because the scaffolding is incorrectly positioned); planking work is of a medium priority; and holding and positioning frames is of high priority because of their structural importance to the integrity of the ship and the large amount of preparation work involved in getting them into place. Sukhet learned that priority is ultimately given by what other men are doing in the yard at the time he was performing a certain task. So that, if he was scaffolding and another man was stacking wood when a handcart arrived, he would not leave the scaffolding because scaffolding is a higher priority task. However, if the handcart arrived with a large timber, or with a timber that the craftsman needed in order for work to progress any further, then he would leave the scaffolding in order to go and assist moving it. These kinds of evaluations are made all the time in shipyards. Clearly hierarchy also plays a role in the way that priority is determined. The higher up the hierarchy then the less a man is expected, or expects, to have to go and receive the handcart driver. So if Sukhet was stacking wood with a more experienced labourer and the handcart driver arrived with a few small pieces of wood, Sukhet and his companion would know that it was Sukhet's task to go and collect it. Broadly, a similar series of evaluations is also made by the foreman on behalf of the labourers, the less so the more experienced the labourer. In turn the craftsman makes similar evaluations for the foreman and so on.

What is the logic and positioning of the narrative voice in the description at the start of this chapter? This kind of description is an abstraction, a peculiar form of knowledge that says nothing of the actual bodily techniques involved in building a ship or of the ways in which a ship is built. It further assumes that there is space and time in which the ship can be built; that the materials and finance for them exist and are available; that the work will be undertaken and the skill is available to construct accurate and effective mortise and tenon joints; and that the knowledge of a timber's grain, density and malleability is pre-existent and given.

If the work of labourers is 'easy knowledge' then what forms of work take precedence? The short answer to this question is 'the work of the mind', which in a

reduced form means business. Throughout the two or so years it takes to build a ship the owner will be around the yard inspecting the progress and quality of the work. He will pass the time sitting in the shade on the terrace of the yard's shed conducting the 'work of the mind'. The 'work of the body', which shipbuilders describe as 'easy knowledge', is a matter of learning bodily techniques that allow them to solve problems and perform tasks. Bodies also physically change. Hands, feet and knees become hard and callused from contact with splinters, ropes, wood and tools. Skin darkens in the sun and muscles strengthen through repetitive heavy work. Men learn to move around ships, how to climb carrying heavy loads, and possible pathways from one section of the ship to another. Those selected to work as sailors once the ship is floated will have conducted a range of different tasks, giving them a broad understanding of how a ship is built and the relationships between the constituent sections of the vessel.

The context in which learning takes place determines what is learned (after Lave 1988b). The environmental context is increasingly given by the emerging structure of the ship, while the social context is overwhelmingly hierarchical, Muslim and masculine. Apprenticeship is a means of imparting specialised knowledge to a new generation of practitioners (as in Coy 1989:xi-xxi), a process that transforms novices into men with expertise in the techniques, materials and sequences of shipbuilding through repetition of tasks, humiliation, instruction, observation, imitation and experience. Ships and sailors are the two products of shipyards. In the short-term, apprenticeship reproduces a workforce of sailors and in the long-term skilled shipbuilders. The apprentice does not have a single master from whom he learns the ropes, rather all of those who rank above him legitimately instruct him. The 'easy knowledge' that apprentices acquire does not exist independently from either the human hierarchy in the yard or the materials and design of the production process, but is structured around the logic of the production process. The low priority tasks and basic skills, such as handling wood, scaffolding and planking are learned first. Skills are cumulative and the basics of moving materials are mastered before more specific skills are attempted.

‘Work of the body’ in shipyards is wage labour, which is sometimes violent, humiliating, sexually predatory and exploitative. The ‘work of the mind’ is opportunistic, calculating and derives profits. All relationships in the yard are hierarchical, and hierarchy is organised, in principle, by the amount of experience and ‘easy knowledge’ a man has of a ship. This is true among ‘sailors’ (labourers and sailors) but among the higher orders of the hierarchy different forms of knowledge take precedence. ‘Navigators knowledge’, ‘captains knowledge’, literacy and linguistic abilities are viewed by those who do not possess them as mysterious sources of power. In these intermediary positions the boundary between the ‘work of the mind’ and the ‘work of the body’ is blurred and somewhat ambiguous. Ship owners, as merchants, are the most elevated of men and are engaged in the ‘work of the mind’. This gradation treats bodily skills and techniques as a form of accumulative property that commands respect within a hierarchy, albeit with certain limits. The limits are given by ultimately subordinating ‘work of the body’ to ‘work of the mind’.

This division, between ‘mindly’ and ‘bodily’ forms of work, broadly dissects all those – Hindu and Muslim – who are, and have been, associated with the sea. However, in the past, vocation was ascribed by birth into a particular group. The Bhadala were the sailors who did the ‘work of the body’ for the high-ranking Shia mercantile *jamats*, and for many in Mandvi the Bhadala are still regarded as such. Their wealth and power have not come from ‘pure’ mindful business technique or calculation, but from illegality, violence and volatile strength, and they remain of ‘mixed blood’.

The Bhadala ship owners do not see themselves in this light, nor could they, in order to command the respect that they do from their workforce. The Bhadala have transformed the model among those who labour on their ships and use their own lives are exemplars of how sailors can become merchants. The ‘work of the mind’ is not given by birth and can come with age and experience. Rather than such qualities

being ascribed at birth by the kind of blood flowing through descent groups, the Bhadala ship owners characterise transformation as a potential within individual life cycles. This enchanted portrait of potential opportunities is presented to the apprentices in shipyards. It contributes to the allure of a life at sea and the perceived romance of a sailor's life. All *seths* can genuinely say to aspiring apprentices that: 'I laboured like you when I was young and look at me today.'

The idea that if a man works hard he can become rich is one that is given to shipyard apprentices while they labour. Aspiration ceases to centre solely on going to sea and bringing back consumer goods, and becomes directed towards the hierarchy. The years that men labour in shipyards are only part of a much longer apprenticeship, during which they learn how to crew, navigate and pilot a ship. Returning to work in the yards each year (during the off-season), they gradually master the complexities of ship production. These initial years, and perhaps their childhood years before that, give them grounding in the social organisation of shipping. They learn that despite becoming sailors they are at the bottom of a long, steep but potentially fruitful hierarchy, which becomes an ideal life-projection. For apprentices in shipyards going to sea comes to mean life within a notionally transcendable hierarchy, and not being bound by a position given at birth.

5.6. Life in the shade (cool): *seths*

While Sukhet, and the hundreds of other men like him, laboured in the sun, what was the owner of the ship doing while he was sitting in the shade working with his mind? All of Salaya's ship owners had organised for ships to be built before I arrived in Mandvi. They all had experience of the process and their own unique criteria for doing it; they are involved in a series of other procedures, evaluations and decisions that, although less tangible than joining sections of timber together, are equally necessary in the construction of a ship. Leaving aside the events in the ship owner's life, and the lives of his forefathers, that placed him to be in a position both to want and to be able to build a ship, his work still starts long before the keel is laid and

involves four kinds of inter-related decision making involving economy, finance, labour and other practicalities; each of these is explored below.

5.61. Economy

In 1998 the price of onions in India rose sharply because underproduction and poor weather conditions resulted in an irregular supply¹⁶. During the worst months of the 'onion crisis' the price per kilo rose to around Rs. 60 from the norm of around Rs. 10. Onions are a staple food in India and the price rise became a major political issue, culminating in the government imposing an export embargo. Onions were the major export commodity of the Kachchhi ships and the crisis affected the trade, with at least one ship not being built that year as the ship owner waited to see what happened to the exports. This kind of evaluation is at best speculative because a ship takes around two years to build by which time economic circumstances may have changed again.

The Indian Rupee has weakened considerably in the last few years making exports cheaper and thus more competitive in the ports of the Gulf. Conversely imports into India have become more expensive. Fluctuating exchange rates have marked effects on the demand for low value bulk commodities, such as onions and cattle fodder. Simply, if they are too expensive they cannot be sold and a hold full of rotting onions in Dubai creek is a common and expensive story.

5.62. Finance

The success or failure of trade determines the cash flow of the ship owner. Building a ship is expensive, and although it is possible to arrange credit with timber suppliers and haulage contractors, labourers and others have to be paid regularly with cash. Planning, arranging and determining credit and cash flows plays a defining role in how the pace of a ship's construction progresses. It is also an easy way to dispose of

¹⁶ T.I. 'If apples could do for onions'. October 5th 1998.

money that is incongruous with the demands of tax inspectors. But it is not only the conditions of trade that are vulnerable to fluctuating exchange rates – the cost of building a ship also varies. Around 80% of the timber used in constructing a ship is imported from Malaysia. Thus, monitoring the price of raw timber and choosing a time to buy when the price is low can greatly reduce the cost overall of the ship. Timber has to be brought 110km from the wood yards at the container port of Kandala in the east of Kachchh. It is selected in advance and brought by truck to Mandvi where it has to be stored. For most ship-owners this means taking the timber to a sawmill in Mandvi where it remains until it is needed for the ship. The large timbers are prepared by the sawmills on a contractual basis and have to be transported by road, by handcart, to Salaya.

Ships vary in size and cost, and decisions have to be made about both. A large ship, perhaps up to 700 tonnes, requires a great investment of time and money, and is likely to be beset with technical problems, while ships under 250 tonnes are today deemed uneconomical because of the price of fuel, port costs (flat rate duties) and other running costs in relation to the amount of profit that can be gained from such a small cargo capacity. Most ships are built to carry around 450 tonnes and to be powered by a single engine.

The design of the ship also has to be decided before construction commences. The major design variant, size apart, is in the stern. A hull with an even taper to the sternpost is cheap and strong, but makes the ship slower, less fuel efficient and more difficult to manoeuvre. Sterns that overhang the sternpost and rise from the keel horizontally before bulging out are more expensive, potentially weaker, more vulnerable to the corrosive powers of saline water, and take longer to build. But they make for a faster, more efficient and more responsive ship. The question is whether the cheaper and simpler hull design is offset by the increased running costs once the ship is operational. The decision is a difficult one and both designs are equally common, but as with the size of the ship finance is often the determining factor.

5.63. Labour

Before construction of a ship commences, it is named and the future captain is selected. The captain works alongside the *seth* in making decisions over the construction of the ship. In the initial stages of a ship's construction – laying the keel and fixing the garboards – only a small, skilled, workforce is required. In the past the ship owners built ships themselves. They no longer do so but do have an intimate knowledge of the techniques of construction and can evaluate the quality and competence of those who now work as specialised shipbuilders. There are a dozen or so families that specialise in shipbuilding from a variety of *jamats*, and they are known as *gaidor* or *mistri* (craftsmen). Selecting a shipbuilder is not a simple decision as some families of ship builders have long-term relationships with families of ship owners and will only work for them, and others will be already engaged in building a ship. Some shipbuilding families oversee the work of more than one ship at a time. The ship builders are wage labourers who are paid daily – they make no formal contractual agreement with the ship owners about the duration or management of shipbuilding. The shipbuilder will bring with him to a job a number of his own workers, who are typically kin or relatives from another lineage within his *jamat*.

5.64. *Gaidor*

The master craftsman does not command as much respect in a shipyard as might be assumed. He is firmly associated with the 'work of the body' (albeit in a supervisory and consultational role), life on the land and with the fact that he has not been successful enough to become a ship's captain. The *gaidor* is paid at about the same rate as navigators on ships (around Rs. 4,000 per month), but does not receive the same opportunities to generate other income. Craftsmen's salaries are three times as much as those of labourers, but are less than the income generated from a responsible position working at sea. Furthermore, the craftsman is not associated with the prestige accorded to life outside Kachchh and the ability to procure prestigious

consumer goods. Some families hereditarily specialise in shipbuilding, but most master craftsmen have risen through the ranks of the hierarchy surrounding ships.

Carpentry and the bodily practices associated with saws and adzes are not skills Kachchhi apprentices learn in shipyards. Carpentry is well paid but it is not socially valued by the *seths* or their crews. For them it is the social and material prowess that a life-style at sea commands that is valued. Likewise, for the ship owners, shipbuilding is not an end in itself. The objectives are trade and the production of sailors for this end. Carpentry is peripheral to the key relationships that are being constructed along with the ship. These evaluations and strategies may take many months or years to organise and involve long-term decision-making and forecasting that are of a different order from cutting and shaping wood, but once the decision has been made to build a ship there are still further considerations before the keel can be laid.

5.65. Practicalities

Suitable estuarine ground on which to build a ship is scarce and the Port Authority leaseholds for such land are in the hands of those families that already own ships. The land has to be level, below the mark of the highest tides, close to a road-head and, ideally, adjacent to the house of the owner of the future ship. Once such land is available it is cleared and levelled, and low pillars of sandbags supported by huge wooden blocks are built to form the foundations for the keel. The sand has to be brought from the beach, which is some distance from the shipyards, and a Khumbar (traditionally a potter) is contracted with his team of mules to fetch and bag the sand. Before any wood is brought to the site these pillars are submerged by at least one high tide see if they are stable and that they do not collapse or shift. If land preparation involves moving a large amount of earth, such as terracing the riverbank or filling a channel into which a previous ship was floated, gangs of piece rate agricultural labours will be called through a gang leader from nearby villages.

The yards that are continually used will have a hut, a tool shed, tools and a night-watchman. If the yard does not have these things they will also be built, collected and hired before the materials for the ship are brought to the yard. The hut, a rough wooden shed or concrete office, is the place where the ship owner and his associates will gather and from where work in the yard will be controlled, managed and planned. They are also important social places where ship owners will come to read newspapers, meet their friends and pass the time when the yards are not working. A number of them are also equipped with ship-to-shore radios so that ship owners can manage the passages and hear the progress of ships at sea, and relatives and friends of those at sea, can come and say 'hello' and request that things be brought back from Dubai.

The ship owner's work involves managing and negotiating accounts, rates and delivery times with sawmills, blacksmiths, tool manufacturers and accountants. He pays the workforce on Thursdays and logs absenteeism and lateness. He sacks bad and irregular workers, cajoles lazy employees to work more and recruits more labour when it is required. He arranges the strategic arrival of timber, equipment and to some extent the distribution of work and time in the yard. For the ship owner the problem is how to organise the activities of many different men so they can do what is necessary without spending too many idle hours in the shipyard, while at the same time creating potential sailors. Hierarchy is structured in more-or-less the same way in all the shipyards. The division of labour within the hierarchy restricts the potentially infinite number of possible combinations for distributing human effort across the many tasks in shipbuilding. The design of the hierarchy spreads the workload across members of the workforce and avoids overloading any particular individual, while at the same time creating potential sailors with knowledge of ship construction. The structure of work incorporates a sense of task, which removes the possibility of one man undoing another's work or working at cross-purposes, and distributes tasks throughout the workforce so that men are not competing for the same set of tools or space on the scaffolding. The most obvious divisions are the parallel work of carpenters and labourers within the hierarchical pyramid and the

ways in which the subtle nuances of seniority amongst labourers inter-relates with the priority of a particular task.

Throughout the construction of the ship decisions are taken about the quality of the materials, design and the pace at which the work should progress. Few of these decisions ship owners make alone, most being made jointly or in consultation with the craftsman, other ship owners or the owner's family. Once the ship is nearing completion decisions have to be taken about the quality of the finish of the ship, its decoration and colours.

The image of the fat capitalist sitting in the shade reading the newspaper or picking his teeth is a popular one in studies of labour and work relations in India. It is an image that only has power when contrasted with the physical labour and sweat of those who work for him. The work of the ship owner is not mentioned in the technical description of how to build a ship that opened this chapter. This begs the question: is the work of the ship owner 'easy knowledge'? Are forecast evaluations made about the price of onions very different to evaluations made about the qualities and relationships between different pieces of wood? It has been shown that, although the fat capitalist is sitting in the cool of the shade while his ship is built before his eyes, he is not idle and that he too is engaged in a series of tasks and evaluations that require similar kinds of representation and strategy to those involved in manipulating pieces of wood. But this is not the same conclusion as my informants express. For them knowledge and work are hierarchically structured. Labourers (as potential seamen) are engaged in the 'work of the body' and ship owners (as merchants) in the 'work of the mind'. The evidence is there before apprentice eyes: while they sweat for Rs. 50 a day the ship owner sits in the shade supposedly amassing a fortune.

It must not be forgotten that the primary objective of the ship owner is not to build a ship, but to make a profit through trade. The completion of the ship is not the end of the affair because a ship standing on a riverbank represents a large investment of time, money and organisation. The longer it stands idle during the sailing season

the lower the potential return on the investment for the year. The process of getting an object afloat that weighs many tonnes from a position where only the bottom few inches of its keel may be submerged at the highest tide is painstaking, ingenious and perilous. Moving the ship out of the water places a tremendous strain on its superstructure, one for which it was not designed, and thus the ship owner will wait for the highest tides of the month to approach. For the captain this involves making a decision, depending on the time of the year, as to when the ship should be launched. Depending on the tide, work continues around the clock. Once the ship is afloat it is surveyed by officials from the port, registered and its taxes paid. This involves negotiation both with bureaucrats in the port and with a private agent who arranges the survey. The survey determines the carrying capacity of the ship and the level of the Plimsoll line, after which the owner can organise the materials and labour for the ship to be painted.

5.7. Floating a ship

All three descriptions of how to build a ship (abstract, sailors and *seths*) have left it high and dry on the riverbank. In this section it is shown how the long-term organisational strategies of the mind frame the bodily techniques of labour via the command structure surrounding ships, through a description of how a ship is moved from the riverbank and into the water. Ships are built through the interaction and mediation of human abstraction, the minutiae of the ‘work of the body’, the minutiae of the ‘workings of the mind’, and through both bodily technique and linguistic exchanges. Knowledge and access to the different levels of decision-making and instruction are unevenly distributed throughout the hierarchy, which is encompassing. Of the many men who work on ships the focus in this chapter has been on the Kachchhi labourers who come to work in shipyards in order to become sailors. Months before the ship is ready to be floated the carpenters, and many of the labourers, leave the yard to find other work: floating a ship is the work of its future crew. The topology of the riverbed and the distribution of mud banks, and channels within it, determine the exact ways in which a ship is floated. Some yards are much

closer to navigable water than others and the slopes of the riverbed vary from yard to yard, which contributes to making the task different each time. The description that follows is of the launch of a ship from the northern end of the riverbank in the spring of 1998.

Floating a ship is an impressive and ingenious task. It is delicate, but involves the use of considerable force. Floating a ship is framed by a series of decisions made by the ship's owner and captain. Among the decisions is the selection of five or six of apprentice labourers as junior crew. The remainder of the crew is drawn from an existing pool that works, or has worked, on other ships. There is a considerable amount of juggling to be done to maintain an even balance of inexperience and expertise on more than one ship. Strangers are rarely employed and whatever their experience they are put to work in the shipyards before they are permitted to become crew. The ideal is that the fifteen or so crew that are selected all have knowledge of shipbuilding, moving materials, improvising scaffolds, and fixing and securing planks. This knowledge helps keep the ship afloat and well maintained. Sailors know what it is they are sailing on, they know what went into its construction and they know how the component parts of the ship are assembled and related. They have learned how this hierarchy is structured, and the ways in which commands are prioritised and communicated.

Apprenticeship in shipyards also equips men for the kinds of work they will do when they are at sea. Labouring at sea involves improvising within the structure of command in order to perform certain tasks with clear objectives. Most strikingly, labouring at sea involves maintaining the ship, moving and stacking materials, and using the scaffolding of blocks and pulleys that hang from the mast to load and unload the ship. Work at sea involves a transformation of the skills and tasks that apprentices spend years learning in shipbuilding. The parallels between working in a shipyard and working at sea on a ship are what make the organisation of shipping so effective. Apprenticeship contributes to the production of technology while socially reproducing the social agents of that technology (sailors).

Launching a ship is not just a matter of the new crew carrying it down the hill. It is a task with a specific objective that requires the co-ordination of the crew, captain and ship owner. The only channel of the creek that carries enough water for a ship to float in runs to the west of the estuary, on the Mandvi side. Floating the ship is the first task that the crew of a new ship will perform together. However, it is not just a matter of co-ordinating labour. It is a matter of co-ordinating labour within a longer-term series of decisions and plans made by the *seth* within the framework of prevailing environmental conditions. Floating a ship is framed by the time of year, the tides, interaction with the bureaucracy of the port office and the progress of preparations in Dubai for a dry dock, an engine and tackle, and for the final fitting out of the ship. When these processes coincide to produce the correct conditions, allowing an interval of a couple of months for the timbers to swell, the ship is floated. The work of the ship owner frames the work of the labourers, which are mediated by the captain and the foreman in turn.

At this stage the ship is sitting on blocks above the ground and, as with moving a cross-member, it is critical that this height is maintained. If the ship touches the ground it is very difficult to lift and practically impossible to move. Floating a ship starts a week-or-so before a spring tide. Once the scaffolding is removed the ship is secured with ropes from both sides of the hull to stop it toppling. Three or four large oiled logs of a slightly smaller diameter than the gap between the keel and the ground are placed perpendicularly under the hull. The wood and sandbag supports that have supported the keel for the previous two years are dug away and the remaining holes are levelled. Additional props are placed around the lower sections of the hull to give it further stability. The pace and timing of the work is now largely dictated by the tide, and work can only continue when the tide is neap or is out completely. This often means working at night under floodlights and in shallow water. The captain, who is now in charge of the work, instructs the foreman where to dig a hole in the creek to lay the foundations for a huge capstan (usually around 30m distant from the end of the ship). Sand is scattered thickly around the base of the capstan to prevent

the tread path around it from becoming slippery. The captain and the owners of the ship survey the potential path that the ship will take down into the estuary, which must avoid sharp undulations and deep mud that could hinder the progress of the ship.

The aim is that either the prow or stern – but ideally the prow – of the ship is turned towards the direction of its future travel without tilting or getting stuck. Once the capstan is in place in the middle of the creek a rope is run from it to the end of the keel, and a further one to a corresponding position along the hull. The captain and ship owner stay with the ship, while the foreman and labourers position themselves at the capstan. Other labourers tie secondary ropes to the ship with a small amount of slack to allow the ship to move. They remove the props holding the ship in place before taking positions by the ropes that are now holding the ship in place. To attempt to drag the ship with the capstan at this point would be to drag against the ropes that are preventing the ship from falling. The captain instructs labourers to release a very small amount rope and signals to the foreman to start turning the capstan. Slowly (millimetre by millimetre) the ship starts to slide over the logs on which it is supported. The captain co-ordinates the work of both sets of labourers, while paying attention to the progress of the ship, the lay of the land and the tightness of the supporting ropes. After each movement all of the ropes are re-tied and the captain and ship owner inspect the hull for potential cracks and timber movement.

The role of both captain and foreman at this stage is a matter of co-ordination, because all the crew already know how to tie knots, judge the tension on ropes and lay supports for props in the mud – they do not need instruction. The ship owner is in constant conversation with the captain as the vessel is being moved, but he does not shout instructions across the riverbed to the foreman, that remains the captain's task. The two-way communication between the ship and the capstan is only between the foreman and the captain. The captain and the ship owner share the responsibility of organising the labourers who are around the ship. At the capstan the foreman stands a small distance away supervising its rotation. Experienced labourers lead the cries of

'lombi!', which increase and decrease in rapidity depending on the amount of pressure required. The same labourers provide a commentary to the foreman on the tension on the capstan wheel and instruct other labourers how to guide the rope around the central axle and when to lock the capstan wheel when the pressure becomes too great for the labourers to hold. When this work is carried out at night the ship is illuminated, but the labourers at the capstan work in semi-darkness and the organisation of commands has to be tighter as the visual clues of potential accidents are less obvious.

The process of tightening the ropes, propping, inspecting slackening the ropes and dragging the keel with the capstan is repeated many times until the ship points at the desired angle from the riverbank. The logs under the keel do not roll with the ship because the ship is too heavy and the ground too soft, rather the ship slides gradually over them. Even if additional planks have been laid under the logs, when they are no longer supporting the keel they will have to be dug out of the mud and repositioned at the front of the ship. Once the ship is away from the riverbank it becomes more difficult to secure it with ropes. Temporary tie points will be dug in the mud, which are moved with the progress of the ship. The topology of the riverbed determines how far a ship has to be moved and what organisational strategies are deployed to move it. Once the ship is at a point in the riverbed where the depth of water is sufficient to provide buoyancy it can either be towed by another ship or winched with a capstan. Old oil barrels are tied to the undersides of the hull to reduce the draft by giving the hull extra buoyancy. Once the ship is in the main channel of the estuary it will float freely on a spring tide, which again, remembering that the ship has no source of power, involves a further set of organisational strategies and skills to prevent it from turning, listing or getting carried by the current into a mud bank.

5.8. Aspiration within hierarchy

All the Bhadala built ships are launched in this manner, allowing the slope of the riverbank to carry the weight of the ship into the main creek. Floating a ship, as with most other tasks, is framed within the long-term organisational strategies of the ship's owner. These objectives are moved forwards by relaying instructions through the chain of mediators, eventually finding expression in the bodily techniques of labour and the assembly of constituent parts, which in turn have a reciprocal relationship with the objectives of the ship owner. From the perspective of a shipyard labourer, building a ship is a matter of wage labour for the subsistence of his family and a longer-term plan in which he will go to sea to bring back wealth.

Roles are specifically distributed amongst men both horizontally and vertically. The vertical distribution of labour is divided into different categories of work, so that all those within the category of labourer are also ranked in relation to one another. Vertically too there are hierarchically ordered command structures, with labourers prioritised over carpenters. The horizontal axis intersects the vertical within the various levels of labour and carpentry, and parallel tasks are allotted to different groups of men within either category. This social framework is built along with the ship: through the production of technology the social form of that technology is also created.

The various components of this social system are brought together through the complementary flows of order and action; the upward flows of respect and aspiration correspond, more-or-less, with the downward flows of command, expectation and instruction. The aspiration of the apprentice is directed towards the ship owner, especially towards his power to consume and his social prowess. In moving towards this aspiration the various stages of the hierarchy are open to him at the discretion of the ship owner and the captain. In order to earn the merit to gain such a promotion the apprentice has to meet various criteria, which obviously includes the 'easy knowledge' of moving materials and knowing ships. Thus, through adequate

‘incorporated practice’ the apprentice is rewarded with a certificate: the government identity card. This is a form of ‘inscribed practice’ (Connerton 1995:72–73). The identity card states that a man is legally entitled to go to sea, but it also symbolically attests to his proficiency in technical, social and religious matters.

Previously in this chapter a *seth* was quoted as telling an apprentice how he laboured when he was young and had become wealthy and socially powerful. When statements such as this are compared with the material presented in Chapter 3, a contrast is evident between ways of presenting individual skills and capabilities. Apprentices come from an environment in which they know that propensities are given at birth into an environment where they are told they can work their way up and out of the hierarchy. In this way the Bhadala use their own life histories as examples of what is possible given good fortune and hard work, which contributes to further enchanting ship work in apprentice eyes and raises doubts about the legitimacy of particular claims made about propensities being given at birth.

5.9. Conclusion

The practice theorist Jean Lave suggests that theories of situated everyday practice insist that persons acting, and the world of activity, cannot be separated (1993:5). Lave also says that what can be known in any given context is in a constant state of change, and that actors improvise struggles in situated ways with each other over the value of particular definitions of the situation, in both immediate and comprehensive terms. The production of failure for them is as much a part of routine collective activity as the production of average, ordinary knowledgeability (1993:17). However, production processes and the production of social relations are historically contingent and socially specific. Thus, in this chapter, the actual context of practical everyday activity has been given priority in combination with individual conceptions of action, interaction and activity.

Despite the claims of practice theorists to incorporate the conceptions of those engaged in production and the acquisition of skill, what people think and say about what they do remains subordinate to the aims of the theory. The distinctions in this chapter between ‘merchants’ and ‘seamen’, and ‘mind’ and body’ are not classifications used by Muslim shipbuilders who are too lazy to refine their categorical world. They are potent categories into which the world is divided, which in turn inform the world in which they live. There is no evidence presented in this chapter to point to the fact that such dual conceptualisations of the social world are ‘natural’. Rather, this chapter, and the ones preceding it, have shown the historical conditions of trade, migration and communal hostility that have given rise to the use of dual conceptualisations through the practice of shipbuilding and sailing as both ‘context’ and determining environment.

Such divisions are not only linguistic constructs because they find expression in social, religious and philosophical matters that reflect the linguistic nature of such utterances. They are socially and symbolically rooted, socially and historically contingent, and are products of social organisation, reproduction and transaction. Furthermore, such dualisms are based in the particular realities of time and space (environment), and the technology to which they refer. The elaboration of shipping technology is finite, as are the ways in which the sociality of it can be organised. What has been presented in this chapter is an unusual construction of labour in relation to technology, but only to the extent that apprentices learn about ships and the social organisation of ships before they set sail. There are a limited number of ways in which effective trade can be organised – and this one of them. But given the communal atmosphere within the town, and the village beyond, it seems to be the most effective way to improve the status and local power of the *seths*, in terms of their standing in local Muslim society and in terms of their moral and political positioning of hostile Hindus. Both relationships are primarily given legitimacy by their ability to draw upon powerful ideas from outside Kachchh, which are mobilised through the constituencies of *seths*. Different configurations of ‘mind’ and ‘body’ and to some extent ‘wealth’ order mercantile society on both sides of the river. These

are the base concepts through which all other aspects of sociality are ordered and explained, and are inseparable from the encompassing metaphors of 'religion'. Any attempt made on the lives of these dualistic metaphors would impair the extent to which we could understand the ways in which social difference and the logic of religious reform are understood given that they are elaborated metaphors of trade, capital and social structure.

Kachchhi shipbuilders are mind – body dualists. Some men have more mind than body, while for others the reverse is the case. The lascar thus becomes the physical expression of the *seth*'s mental activity. To put this from their point of view: the soul is of two parts, one (*nafs*) is related more intimately to the body (*jism*) and the other to the higher levels of intellectual and moral faculties (*aql*). The result is a closely related triad of mind, body and dialectical soul. As I have shown in chapters 1 and 3, the intellectual faculties are ranked higher than those of labour. The relationships between the constituent parts of men are not fixed, and although in shipyards the relationships between these elements continue to have some connection to status at birth, the emphasis is overwhelmingly placed on the transformation of the soul over the course of a lifetime. The idea is that one's actions in the world transform the constituent parts of one's soul. The following chapter examines the transformation of individual action and attitude over the course of a long-term apprenticeship; while the final chapter looks at the technical composition of this transformation.

Chapter 6.

Apprenticeship II: the biography of a sailor

6.1. Biography

In this chapter it is argued that Bhadala-Pathans nominate select Islamic practices as 'pure' and give them authenticity by attributing their origin to the 'Gulf'. However, as mentioned in previous chapters, their reform is motivated by what it opposes in at least equal measure to what it represents. Central to this opposition are the practices associated with Mandvi's Saiyeds and the social hierarchy over which they preside. Further, it is argued that despite their opposition to this social order, after a fashion they recreate such a hierarchy within the structure of the *vahaanvatta*.

Apprenticeship under Bhadala-Pathans thus transforms sailors' conceptions of hierarchy from one premised on divine mediation (Chapter 3) to one premised on the *seths'* commodified mediation of wealth and religious purity. This chapter is a direct continuation of the previous one and focuses on the other aspects of apprenticeship that are appreciated while the neophyte is learning how to move and stack wood. The attention to task and action of the previous chapter has a direct reciprocal relationship with the material of social and religious apprenticeship described in this chapter.

Apprentices, who are also migrants and initiates, leave Mandvi for Salaya, where things are different. A few years later they make their first voyage to sea and to the ports of the Gulf. As long as they remain sailors during each year that follows they will spend nine months aboard ship away from Kachchh. During these rites of passage they are transformed. Those who remain in Mandvi, but who send their sons to the Bhadals' shipyards, see and know little of what men learn on ships. They do see that sailors 'puff up', 'change colour' and return with consumer goods and hostile ideas about their home. This chapter is loosely based around the biography of a sailor. It stresses his changing attitude towards religious practice and social

propriety within his home environment through descriptions of the time he spent in shipyards and at sea.

The ways in which sailors narrate their biographies suggest two important themes. The first is the importance of particular kinds of social relations, the role of reputation and the significance of certain forms of transaction in constructing social relationships. Secondly, it is apparent from the biographical narration of conflict that apprenticeship in shipyards, and later at sea, forces sailors to change their religious behaviour in relation to the practices of Hindus and other Muslims. In the following two sections these themes are elaborated before introducing the biography of a sailor.

6.11. Knowing others

Knowing the names, occupation, *jamat*, *atak*, kin allegiances, and the moral and immoral activities of large numbers of people is important social capital. However, knowing, and being able to make claims on the support and following of a wide range of people is a greater form of social capital. Men invest a lot of time in updating and exchanging information about others. Mines suggests that such networks are integral to forming meaningful social relationships as well as an informal means of social control in what he calls 'trust based society' (1994:35). In the case of employment in shipyards this is certainly true and, as shown in this chapter, networks of information determine the moral and religious *abru* (reputation, honour) of individuals. However, gossip networks are not only a means of informal social control because gossip can also enhance social reputation, or is inconsequential to it depending on the status of the individuals concerned.

In situations where the illicit activities of others are being described there is often a sense of condemnation. But, depending on circumstances and audience, equally often immoral activities are described with a sense of envy. Counter-factual solutions are actively suggested that would have prevented the person in question from being exposed. In this sense, gossip frequently addresses the motivations and wisdom of

the protagonist and is not merely an idle defamation of character. Typically, given the strictures provided by the age and status of the audience, the narrator attempts to appear as the bastion of wisdom and perfect moral judgement. This typically involves: a narration of the circumstances that led to a known outcome and a reappraisal of the circumstances to show what the subject should have done given those circumstances. This type of counter-factual argument is intended to demonstrate the superior deductive and analytical skills of the narrator. For example: when a man is caught making eyes at a woman in the bazaar the counter-factual argument will suggest alternative sites from where he could have caught her gaze without being exposed.

An individual's knowledge of an inter-related collection of others is unique. However, all such individual knowledge coincides with that of others when it comes to particularly influential characters. Among Muslims this commonality includes politicians and Bhadala *seths*, who as prominent and wealthy figures are subject to intense scrutiny. Furthermore, the large client-base of big-men allows their names and reputations to travel widely. Among sailors, gossip, as a mechanism of informal social control, has little effect on the status of the *seth*. In Mandvi everyone knows that politicians are corrupted and that mixed-blood Bhadals are of low rank and questionable integrity. But in face-to-face social situations who would deny a minister of the government, or the owner of a ship, his due status?

These observations have three further consequences. The first is that the collections of facts about others that sailors know best are those that relate to other sailors. A sailor with a few years experience can recall the names of the captains, navigators, foremen and many of the crew on most of the sixty ships that sail from Mandvi. However, because sailors spend nine months of the year at sea they have a relatively small knowledge of the reputations of those in their *jamat*, or in the town in a broader sense. The result is that the salient (friendly) 'others' of sailors are predominantly sailors. Secondly, to become successful, a sailor must develop a trustworthy reputation within the biographic records of those who employ and vouch

for him. The content and parameters of trust are obviously contextual, and codes of honour and moral behaviour are defined within the particular activities of the *vahaanvatta*. The kinds of behaviour that generate trusting relationships between sailors and *seths* are often in contradiction to the morality of the landlubbers. A propensity towards discretion and the ability to conceal goods and knowledge in the interests of a *seth* are attributes that contribute to trust relationships, but obviously mask activities that are immoral in the eyes of others. As demonstrated in previous chapters, what constitutes a rewarding relationship with a *seth* is in part reputation. But this stems from a collection of personal attributes unique to life aboard ships. These attributes include deference within strict hierarchy, religious propriety and the adoption of values that are often in contradiction to the sailor's home environment. Thirdly, the activities and proclamations of the ship owners are subjected to scrutiny. How they perform and what they do is therefore central to the conversations of sailors and others alike. However, the aspiration fostered by apprenticeship, and the power imbalance between *seth* and sailors, makes the *seth* a focus of imitation for sailors.

The sailor's narration of biography conforms to the idea that to know (and to be known) is a marker of reputation. Sailors present their lives through making explicit associations with the widely known names of *seths* and ships, and they gain prestige from an association with eminent social big-men. Gossip also forms a direct part of biography, and sailors implicate themselves in the successful heroism and illegality of others. A central idea of this chapter is that transactions between men generate a stronger sense of relatedness in the receiver than in giver, and it is this that builds successful constituencies among ship owners. This is discussed at length in Chapter 7, but is evident in the material presented here. In biographic accounts it is evident that social connections and loyalties among sailors are created by what they receive from their patrons.

6.12. Social division

In sailors' biographies three areas of conflict are consistently outlined. The first relates to their initial period of work in the shipyards. The second and third conflicts occur some years later with Muslims in Mandvi (including their families) and with Kharvas. These conflicts stem from the dual hierarchy of religious practice and occupational status that operates on ships. This chapter seeks to explain where the impetus for Islamic religious reform is generated, a theme continued in the following chapter where it is shown to directly relate to the power differentials generated by the processes of giving and receiving. In the literature on Indian Muslims there are two starkly contrasting solutions to this question (and many others that fall between the two camps). First, J. Benson argues that among the Muslims of the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh the growing intensity of Islamic 'identity' is a consequence of the loss of Muslim power and social status in a wider system (1983:42–3). In this example relations with neighbouring Hindus are seen as the primary motivation that leads to an extra stress being placed on Muslim religious values and practice. In contrast, Mines argues that among Muslims in Tamil Nadu 'ethnicity' and Islamisation have developed in response to needs internal to the Muslim community. In this example the increased emphasis on religious identity is a result of status competition between Muslims and the struggle to define legitimate orthopraxis (1975:404). Importantly, Mines sees Islamisation as a process that is not a response to Hindu antipathy or a vehicle for economic gain (1975:410–11). The former position stresses the significance of the relationship between the dominant Hindu community and the minority Muslim one; while the latter emphasises autonomous needs internal to the Muslim community that produce elaborate ethnic and religious identities.

In Chapter 1, Bhadala relations with Hindus and Muslims were presented as being simultaneously an inspiration and trope of religious reform. These relationships were further contextualised in chapters 3 and 4. This chapter looks at the ways in which these conflicts are presented in the biography of sailors. However, it is argued that

this conflict is not based on primordial religious differences, but on the contingencies of the pervasive social division between merchants and sailors.

6.2. Majid

The biography of Khadir Abdul Majid Timbhai Khatri, commonly Majid, resembles that of hundreds of other sailors, exhibiting the connections between sailing, migration, transnationalism and the formation of big-man status. Majid's biography, around which the rest of this chapter is loosely structured, contains many themes familiar in anthropology: apprentices (see Keller and Keller 1993), migrants (see Gardener 1993a, 1993b) or initiates (see Bloch 1992) leave the familiar for another place where things are different, only to return to the original place transformed. Central to Majid's burgeoning status are the kinds and qualities of relationships in which he is involved. Social, economic, ritual and political relationships with kin, non-kin, strangers, friends and enemies run throughout Majid's story. Central to the maintenance and quality of such relationships is the reputation of the parties involved. To all those living in Mandvi, Majid's name reveals three things. First, he is a Sunni Muslim. Second, he is part of the Khatri Jamat, traditionally manufacturers and brokers of tie-die cloth, and thus one of the most prestigious classes of Sunni Muslims in the town. Third, his *atak*, Timbhai, is one of the most prestigious within the Khatri Jamat.

Born in 1970, Majid left school at the age of ten after completing fifth standard in Gujarati medium. At the time we became friends he could speak Kachchhi and passable Arabic, and read, write and speak quite fluent Gujarati, Hindi and English. He was born in a small one-roomed house, which was owned by a local *durgah* (shrine), and Majid, his mother, father and three younger brothers had lived together in the house, which had no running water or power. When I knew him he lived in a house with five rooms, each with an electric fan. On the ground floor there was an ornamental dining-room table and chairs, beds and a whole host of electrical gadgets, including a sophisticated Sony television. The transformation of the living conditions

and financial position of Majid's family, from poverty to relative affluence within the last fifteen years, is common to many of Mandvi's Sunni Muslims who send their sons to sea. Majid, like many other young men who make their way over the river to the Bhadala shipyards, was the first in his family to do so.

Upon leaving school Majid went to hawk sugared water to passengers in the local bus station where his father was employed as a porter. He was the eldest son and felt pressure and duty to earn money for his family and younger brothers. A year later, an acquaintance of his father offered him a job in a shop owned by a Kachchhi merchant in Andhra Pradesh. Majid left Mandvi to make the journey across India at the age of eleven. He returned all of his Rs. 250 monthly salary to his family. Working, eating and sleeping in the shop he contracted severe amoebic dysentery and had to return to Mandvi. In 1982, at the ripe old age of twelve, he was offered another job in a provision store in a red-light district of downtown Bombay. At the end of three years service in the store he was earning Rs. 750, of which he sent home Rs. 700.

On Sundays the provision store closed. On his free day Majid started to pass the time in Dongri Channel, an area of the city associated with criminality, smuggling and most importantly with Muslims. There he initially met other Khatri from Mandvi who knew his father and brought news of events in Kachchh. As his face became increasingly familiar, his web of contacts expanded to include those outside the Khatri Jamat. Now, as then, the area remains a popular meeting place for Kachchhi sailors whose ships are visiting Bombay port. Majid listened to the stories of foreign ports, exotic experiences and employment opportunities in the foreign countries. The sailors were evidently wealthier than Majid was ever going to be if he stayed working in the store and he admired their life-style and the sense of fraternity that prevailed among them.

6.3. Apprenticeship

Inspired, Majid returned to Mandvi. Through a senior member of the Khatri Jamat he approached one of Salaya's ship owners. Very few of Mandvi's Muslims had contact with the ship owners at this time, but their fleets were expanding and they were recruiting more and more labour from Mandvi. They were considered to be rough, vulgar and dangerous. They were mixed-bloods who had married inter-racially, which it was said, weakened their minds and strengthened their bodies. Majid's family spent a long time trying to dissuade him from going to work at sea because it was a dirty and dangerous job. His prospective employers were not the kind of men that a young man like Majid should associate with because, although poor, he was from a traditionally high-ranking community. Majid knew that going to sea and becoming wealthy was a long way off. He had learned much from his Sunday conversations in Dongri Channel and knew that he would have to apprentice himself into a shipyard before any of that was possible. The fact that Majid learned of ships and sailors in Bombay attests to the social separation of Mandvi and Salaya.

6.31. Shipyards

Majid, in common with hundreds of other apprentices, started work in the shipyards by making tea, carrying timber and learning the ropes. As a neophyte he found most social interaction in the shipyard to be brutal and humiliating. In the *vahaanvatta* social hierarchy is given by the gradation of *seths*, captains, foremen and crews. The greater control a man has over a ship then the higher his status. These categories order life at sea and on land. Majid worked for three months and received no wages. Only later did a representative of the *seth* start to give Majid irregular payments of between Rs. 25 and Rs. 50 per week, much less than he had been earning in the grocery store in Bombay. Years later, Majid found out that his father had taken Rs. 5,000 from the *seth* as a bond for six months of Majid's labour – his family say they were desperate for money and had no choice. At that time Majid's new job was a source of both anxiety and hope for all his family.

Anxiety because of the low status of the work and those who own the ships, the danger, and of what happens to sailors in the long run: sailors ‘puff up’, grow strong and proud, no longer respect the customs and ways of their parents, and significantly they ‘change colour’. High-status Muslims traditionally occupied the area of the town where Majid’s parents were living. However, in recent years many families had sent their sons to Bhadala ships, and the consequences of this trend were just beginning to be felt and Majid’s parents could see this all around them. They were also hopeful because Majid’s chance to go to sea represented an opportunity to earn higher wages than he could in Kachchh, and would potentially lead to him finding work that paid in dollars in the Gulf.

His first days in a Bhadala-Pathan shipyard were nervous and awkward. The other men in the yard were largely indifferent to him, and he could not understand much of what was being said. For the first few days he stoked the fire and made tea. In the second week he passed hammers, nails and chalk to the foreman. One afternoon the two of them worked through the tea break, not pausing to join the other labourers who were chatting and smoking in the bilge. They were fitting planks high on a platform in the stern. The foreman turned to Majid and asked him for a *chappal*, which is the standard Kachchhi word for slipper, or flip-flop. In the bilge conversations tailed off, heads turned and faint smiles were exchanged. Not knowing what to make of this unusual request Majid did nothing, assuming that he had misheard the foreman. But when the foreman again shouted at him to pass him the *chappal*, Majid, who was barefooted, bent down and attempted to remove the foreman’s flip-flop. The foreman kicked out at him, knocking him off the scaffold into the bilge. The other labourers, who had been trying hard to contain their mirth, burst into raucous laughter. The foreman went down to join the others for tea and a discussion of how perfectly the humiliation of Majid had been staged.

Majid, like apprentices on building sites in England, had been asked to fetch the proverbial left-handed hammer. *Chappal*, in shipyard language is a small wooden wedge, which is hammered into crevices to position planks – not a slipper or flip-

flop. This incident, and the many others that resemble it, display in a condensed form much of what is revealed through apprenticeship other than the bodily techniques of moving materials, erecting scaffolding and hammering nails. The violence inherent in the act is common in shipyards. Fights break out occasionally between individuals, but daily violence occurs within the parameters of the hierarchy. The kind of violence Majid was exposed to is the most common form of all, where senior men are aggressive towards junior ones. There is also a threat of sexual violence from senior men in the yard towards the younger ones, which in day-to-day situations is discussed in a veiled language of predation. The one 'giving' is superior to the one 'taking'. Boys are seen as fair game by older men for actual sexual predation, which is revealed in the constant insinuations made about 'taking'. The strongest form of abuse is to call someone '*guikator*' (the one who takes). In these ways, insults, violence and insinuation primarily flow downward through the hierarchy.

Such violence is painful humiliation for neophytes such as Majid. In Mandvi respect and patronage are ordered around perceptions of social rank, lineage, age and occupation. The aggregation of status implied in the use of *jamat* and *atak* names as collective nouns is not a reflection of relationships within these social categories. Like brotherhood, social relations within *jamats* and *ataks* are inherently unequal. In Mandvi Majid is contextually superior to the son of his father's younger brother because of his age. Conversely, despite Majid being younger than the yard's foreman, Majid is from a much higher-ranking *jamat* and would never be expected to acknowledge him as a superior. This way of conceiving hierarchy is pervasive, broadly cutting across gender, kin and social rank. In contrast, in the shipyards hierarchy is ordered around ships. Thus in the shipyard Majid's father's brother's son is an experienced labourer and ranks higher than Majid. The foreman, despite what Majid and his parents may have thought about him, is of much higher rank than Majid. Hierarchy in shipyards thus contradicts Mandvi's social and kinship hierarchies, and is a source of conflict and tension in the lives of apprentices. From Majid's Mandvi perspective he was humiliated by a low-status man, the foreman, which provoked the ridiculing laughter of the other labourers, including his younger

cousin. Humiliation, and the gradual reconceptualisation of hierarchy it prompts, is part of the initiation into the world of ships. In return for respect Majid was given a hierarchical lesson, where he started to learn that hierarchical propriety in Mandvi was subordinate to the hierarchy inherent in the *vahaanvatta*.

There is, however, more to this incident. Footwear is regarded as dirty and polluting. It is removed upon entering private realms such as houses, ship cabins and places of religious denomination. Touching footwear is demeaning and indicative of subservience. As Majid touched the feet of the foreman he was welcomed to the lowest position within the hierarchy. In a performance of his own marginality from the language, religion and technology of shipbuilding he became part of the hierarchy that surrounds ships. However, in normal circumstances Muslims do not touch one another's feet. Touching feet is a Hindu practice, which displays inherent inferiority. More commonly, Muslims stoop to touch their eyes and mouth to the hand that is held out before them when they meet a Saiyed in a shrine, or a *seth* when they start work on his ship – but seldom do they touch another's feet. The humiliation in Majid being tricked into touching the foreman's feet implies that Majid is not a good Muslim and is part of the ignorance and stupidity that the Bhadala consider to constitute the Hindu world – he was, after all, from the town frequently referred to by the Bhadala as *dar al-kafir*. Apprentices experience their own marginality from the world of shipping in their dress, limited knowledge of the Koran, the fact that they do not pray with the regularity of the ship owners, and through poverty. They also hear it and see it in other ways. They are told that they belong to Mandvi's 'syncretic' past when Muslims were Hindus. Much Hinduism, unlike the form of Islam that predominates in Salaya, postulates no absolute distinction between human and divine beings. Stooping to touch the feet of a superior reflects the inherent human hierarchy in Hindu society, which continues seamlessly into the divine realms of the deities. Therefore, of this incident it can be concluded that humiliation reveals linguistic incompetence, the legitimate channels for the devolution of knowledge and skill, and a particular form of parody, which belongs to a larger set of parodies that Muslim shipbuilders use to denigrate themselves and

others. The parody posits a hierarchy of religious practices into which the apprentice is drawn.

This incident is but one of many that characterises the life of the apprentice. The biographic approach adopted in this chapter relies on the assumption that it is the cumulative effects of small events that leads to individual transformation through apprenticeship. In other words, the *chappal* incident and the lessons of hierarchy involved in moving a cross-member influence the ways in which apprentices view religious and social practice. When these effects are amalgamated in the biographies of hundreds of apprentice sailors then large-scale social and religious change is easy to understand.

Two months later, when another apprentice started work, Majid laughed with the others as the recruit attempted to pass the foreman his own flip-flop.

6.32. Language

The discussion now turns to other apprentice lessons and experiences to which the neophyte is exposed as he learns to handle and manipulate the technologies of production. It has been shown in the previous chapter that a large component of 'easy knowledge' is non-linguistic. However, language plays an important role as a medium of instruction, a form of identification, a manner in which friendship and camaraderie are communicated, and as a way of passing the time while the body is working. This section examines the uses of language in shipyards and the effects that particular linguistic processes have upon apprentices.

Throughout Kachchh there are considerable differences in the pronunciation of the language, and while it is difficult for a Gujarati speaker to follow Kachchhi, the variant of Kachchhi spoken by Mandvi's Muslim seafarers is widely understood along the western seaboard of India and beyond. This way of speaking is variably called *dariyani bhasha* (language of the sea) and *vahaanvattani bhasha* (language of

sailors). Kharvas speak a Gujarati laden version and the Bhadalas emphasise the Kachchhi element with heavy borrowing from Arabic. This is a language spoken between men that has developed to convey specialised technical information about ships, places, people and trade. The technologies of shipbuilding, as in other languages, are articulated with a large and precise vocabulary. The grammar is identical to Kachchhi, but pronunciation and meaning vary considerably. As has been shown, in Kachchhi a *chappal* is a slipper, while in the speech style of the shipyards it is a 'wedge'. There are many equivalent examples, and distinct technical words, for example, for the first fifteen planks of a hull, and an array of different terms for rope, for wood grain, meteorological and wave patterns, commerce and navigation.

Among the Bhadala this language draws on religious idioms, seen in ship names such as *Al Barakat* (wealth and abundance), *Azadi* (freedom), *Mahmudi* (goodness), *Naseri* (help) and *Salamati* (safety). The language of greeting and departure is also explicitly Muslim in style. *Salam aleikum* (peace be with you) starts, and *kudha hafiz* (God's faith) ends, most formal conversations as people pass by the shipyards. Likewise, in ship-to-shore and ship-to-ship radio communications the international standards of 'do you read me' and 'out' have been replaced by *salam aleikum* and *kudha hafiz*. However, in the daily grind of shipyard work hierarchy dictates how such greetings are conferred. In work situations this broadly means that younger labourers can greet their seniors in this fashion but the reverse rarely occurs. If the hierarchical distance between men is too great then casual greetings are not exchanged, for example labourers do not greet the owner of the ship, unless it is unavoidable, or they have something specific to request. The formal language of welcoming high-status business contacts and friends into the yards is in a stark contrast to the coarse and colourful language used among those building ships. But in the yard's office and in the ship's hull men are constantly evaluating when it is appropriate to use certain kinds of language and behaviour, and when it is not. For example, a Bhadala-Pathan may loudly ask for a cigarette from a European anthropologist but then disappears out of sight to smoke it. As ships take around two

years to build the degrees of appropriateness are established quickly and transform as men gain experience and elevation within the hierarchy.

In the description above, Kachchhi is the standard from which shipyard language deviates. The relationship between Kachchhi language and the speech community at sea has been described in this way because it is how apprentices in shipyards understand it. Kachchhi, in one form or another is typically the language of the home, and starting to work in shipyards necessitates having to learn the vocabulary and style of the shipyard language. The longer men work in shipyards the greater the difference there is between talking at work and talking at home. This difference is not only one of vocabulary it is also one characterised by differing evaluations of hierarchy and respect. The language of shipping and perceptions of hierarchy unites the *vahaanvatta*. Others, not familiar with the language, are restricted to the degree to which they can understand and participate in *vahaanvatta* conversations. The language thus provides degrees of secrecy and commonality, which allows those who are not associated with the sea to identify those who are by the way that they speak. However, the extent to which individuals have power over language and forms of address is dictated by their position in the *vahaanvatta* hierarchy.

This can be seen in joking, which is a significant part of linguistic exchange in shipyards. For jokes and parodies to provoke laughter, amusement and shame, the social principles on which they are based have, to some degree, to be shared by the joker and the listener. Here 'joking' refers to linguistic constructs that subvert or distort knowledge of the social world. Jokes in shipyards degrade, humiliate and question the intelligence and moral character of 'others'. Who tells jokes in shipyards and how they are received is largely dictated by the hierarchical context. As with greetings, not every man has the same right to speech or to an audience. Joking in shipyards broadly covers three themes: hierarchy, kinship and sex and religion.

6.33. Playing with hierarchy

Jokes that parody hierarchy are the most common method of provoking laughter. Among the Kachchhi labourers the common targets of ridicule are the Hindu Andhra Pradeshis who work alongside them as carpenters. However, there are subtler forms. A labourer's foreman sprained his ankle between two frames and could not return to work for a week. In his absence this incident provoked much comment and laughter: "How stupid that foreman is to have made such an elementary mistake"; "He should have known better – perhaps the sister fucker is stupid"; and "He has no more sense than a labourer so why is he the foreman?" The foreman's temporary absence disrupted work so the *seth* brevetted a labourer to fill the role. The foreman's accident provoked laughter among the labourers, but the labourer's promotion produced mild hysteria. The labourer was younger than many of the others, but more experienced. He was not properly qualified to do foreman's work because he had never been to sea, nor had his apprenticeship taken him through all the stages of ship construction. The other labourers mocked him constantly when the ship owner was out of earshot. They started to call him *sarang* (foreman), parodied his instructions and commands, and made comments on the quality of his work. Despite the fact that the labourers did as the temporary foreman instructed them, he was uneasy with his sudden, albeit temporary, elevation. He knew that he did not know how to be a foreman and was relieved when the real foreman came back to work. This is an unusual example, because in most circumstances jokes allude to men being of a lower status than they actually are. The most common form is for experienced labourers to call other labourers '*petoriya*' (cook's assistant), implying that they were not adequate labourers. Similarly, older men derogatorily call younger men 'boy' and boys call other boys 'boy'. In the case of the temporary foreman the humour was justified, as it was not insulting someone who was actually of higher status than those making the jokes. The fact that such a seemingly innocuous and temporary change of status could provide so much fun points to the importance of hierarchy and the qualities embodied by those at the various stations within the *vahaanvatta*.

6.34. Kinship and sex

By far the most common forms of address in shipyards are *ma yudder* (mother fucker) and *bahen chod* (sister fucker). Mothers and sisters are the two central incest prohibitions for Mandvi's Muslims. At first it is strange listening to brothers calling each other 'mother fuckers', but like most expletives the terms are seldom used with their original meanings in place and can almost become terms of endearment. Joking about the moral status of other men and their associates is common. This falls short of actual commentary on the mothers and sisters of those who work in the yard, but does extend to women who live in the same areas of Mandvi as the shipyard workers.

The shipyards are good surveillance posts. From the gantry outside shipyard huts, or from the scaffolding surrounding the hull of a ship, the whole of the estuary can be seen. The comings and goings of people provide a constant source of amusement for men working in the yards. As men and women cross the river throughout the day, stories will be told, real and fictive, about where individuals are going, whom they are going to secretly liaise with, and how long the affair has been going on. These are sometimes creative fictions that involve a cast of characters that make regular journeys. Those who make regular crossings, and the creative stories that surround them, become markers of time. Girls and women who return from the market or from school at a fixed-time are particularly popular timekeepers. When such-and-such took his comb from his back pocket and straightened his hair everyone in that yard knew that it must be five past three, and that shortly, such-and-such a girl would be crossing the river with her friends, a journey that she made every weekday.

Broadly, hierarchy in shipyards also corresponds to marital status and experience of sex. Most of the labourers are unmarried, have seldom been outside Kachchh and have no experience of sex. The majority of men who work in shipyards eventually lose their virginity in brothels in Bombay and Dubai. Apprentices are told about brothels: how much they cost, where good ones are, and how to get the most from such a visit. Knowledge plays with ignorance as older men tease younger men about

what sex is and how sex is done. All within the hierarchy are united in their mockery of the Andhra Pradeshi men who live communally together without women.

6.35. Neophyte questions

Experienced men devoted a considerable amount of time to telling tales about foreign ports, of brothels, bars and scams. Apprentices, rather than risking having things thrown at them for their stupidity, asked about behaviours on ships and whether they would be allowed to take shore leave. In answer they would be told of cleaning, maintenance duties and the tedium of weeks spent in port waiting for cargo, customs clearance or the resolution of immigration technicalities. Apprentices also asked if they could watch videos in the cabin at night and talk on the radio to their family. The answer to these questions was usually an abrupt 'no', occasionally followed by a list of exceptions. Apprentices also asked: "Where will we sleep when the sea is rough?" and "What happens if someone falls overboard from the toilet?" For these kinds of questions it is more difficult to be specific about the response, for the types of knowledge drawn on are specific to a ship's protocol, which people would be less willing to divulge, perhaps because they did not know how they knew the answers to such questions themselves. Moving around ships at sea is thought of as another form of 'easy knowledge', the type of thing men get to know through experience and verbal questions and answers revealed very little. Those new to sailing are given no formal instruction about the regulations and safety procedures aboard ship. When I asked sailors about their first time at sea they would recall the excitement and trepidation, which turned to a mild form of fear as soon as they left the safety of the estuary and the sea started to roll. For most, when they returned home from their first season at sea, they had become *vahaanvatti* and were proud.

These exchanges are more candid than in the apprentice's home environment, where social pressure and patterns of respect and deference tend to filter out much of the more colourful material. When sitting at home with one's sisters and mother, the price of a Russian prostitute in Dubai is not a legitimate topic of conversation. But in

shipyards such conversations only serve to enhance the enthusiasm of the potential sailors. This period of time introduces them to: the delights of foreign ports; the dream of escaping the pressures of local social restrictions, and the many ways in which it is possible to subsidise their wages. When they come to the yards they know that a certain amount of small-scale personal trade is permitted while they are working at sea. Their families might be recipients of goods from such activity. Most of this trade is illegal because it relies on avoiding payment of import duties, and as a result such trade remains something of a taboo subject. This is not the case in the shipyards where young recruits, eager to learn the secrets and the best sources of such goods, let more experienced workers brag about their own exploits. These examples show that apprenticeship gradually alters the parameters of legitimate conversation in parallel with a changing horizon of expectations.

6.36. Jokes about Hindus

In shipyards jokes about Hindus are frequently and repetitively told. A typical example, which circulated for a few months in mid-1998, is a joke about Hindu religious integrity. It went like this: a Hindu man wants to find out what is 'truth', in order to complete his quest he decides to consult *saddhus* (renouncers). He journeys to visit a series of them, each more powerful and located further from the man's home than the last, and importantly, each is wearing less clothing than the last. The *saddhus* offer the man their own versions of 'truth', but the man is unsatisfied with all the answers until he finds holiest *saddhu* of all – who is totally naked. The joke ends there and evidently needs some explanation! Jokes, like this, are told in a Muslim environment: the shipyards. They are not recounted in public places where Hindus (Telugus don't count) may overhear. The joke degrades the Hindu 'truth' in three ways. First, the man has to go to visit other men (*saddhus*) in order to find out what the 'truth' is. For the shipyard workers the truth increasingly belongs in the Koran and with Allah. Secondly, each *saddhu* has a different version of 'truth'. For shipyard workers this implies the chaos and illusions of Hinduism, in which 'truth' is something that men can control and dictate. Thirdly, the ultimate 'truth' is relayed to

the man by another man who is totally naked. Even men labouring under a hot sun in shipyards dress modestly in *shirtpant* (typically, tailored nylon trousers and shirts), nakedness is immodest and improper. More importantly nakedness is the most powerful sign of insanity, thus, the joke tells that the Hindu version of truth comes from the insane. The insane do not know how to behave; they are asocial beings that live by their own rules; and they are dirty. It is told from a perspective where Islamic practice is the antidote to the perilous realm of Hinduism. Of course not all those who work in the shipyards react to the joke in the same way because they have different understandings of both Hinduism and Islam, but I heard this joke frequently and *always* told by ship owners to those labouring on their ships.

Jokes about Hindus are also derived from the commentary ship owners provide on the constant stream of Hindus and Jains (who to Muslims form one social category), who come down to the river to pray and feed dogs, gulls and crows. The ship owners inform the labourers what the Hindus on the water's edge are doing. One particular Bhadala-Pathan *seth* was a master at this kind of humour. The following five examples all come from his repertoire, but less masterful commentaries could also be heard in all the other shipyards. His commentaries show a clear understanding of Hindu religious thought and an implicit antidote to be found in Muslim religious practice. It is also interesting to note that the themes of crows, respect for money, dirtiness, and particular deities have already appeared in previous chapters as metaphors and accusations that attested to the low status of Muslims.

Hindus come to the river as *sevaks* for animals, to dispose of dangerous offerings made to angry gods and goddesses, and to perform *puja* to deities associated with the sea. The spoils of these offerings attract the attention of birds. As commentary, the *seth* might say: "You see that woman? She thinks that her dead husband is a crow, but she cannot recognise him and feeds them all." The implication is that in death the woman's husband has been miraculously reincarnated as a crow, but the woman is of such a moral character that she does not recognise him so feeds all the crows and in the process she promiscuously gives herself to them all. Or he might have said: "That

man loves dogs. He feeds them well so we can throw sticks at them. They think that dogs are gods – what kind of people are they that see their gods running around in packs?” Dogs, because they are considered dirty, have a notoriously hard time in Muslim society. The packs of scavenging dogs that roam around the estuary are not welcome in the shipyards. It is common to see dogs with open wounds full of live maggots, they are often killed as a form of sport by projectile throwing shipyard workers. Apprentices learn to watch out for dogs and to scare them away before they are bitten. Part of the *puja* offered to sea deities, in keeping with the model presented in Chapter 2, is money (mostly in the form of obsolete coinage) given up to the sea in the hope of greater returns. Such regular offerings prompted the comment: “These people come down to the river everyday to throw their money into the water. They have no respect for money and recklessly throw it away. You [apprentices] can pick it out of the mud on your way home when the tide is low.” Related to this is the fate of the other ritual *puja* items (rice, incense and flowers) that wash into the shipyards. This debris is collected and incinerated by apprentices along with the rest of the flotsam. He said of this: “They come over here and throw rubbish in our place showing that they have no respect for us.” He also had a series of comments to make about the deities to which the offerings were made, the one repeated most frequently was: “They believe that god rides a horse under the sea, which is why they come down to our place to demand things from him.”

These litanies are constant and create a derisory picture of what Hindus do and the superstition on which Hindu action is based. The commentaries are mocking and sentient. They are enmeshed in a more powerful linguistic commentary on Islamic practice and reform. One validates the other. Through linguistic commentaries on the actions of people in the landscape, ship owners and others well positioned within the hierarchy, present a model of the world that is both amusing and persuasive to apprentices. This model is not based on abstract speculation, but on what can be seen and heard while men are labouring to build ships.

When I first met Majid he was twenty-seven and had been learning this language for more than ten years. He clearly recalled going to the shipyards for the first time and not being able to understand much of what was being said, because the words and the approach to conversation were alien to his previous experiences. Apprenticeship in shipyards involves learning this language and the specialised vocabulary of ship parts and procedures. There is no manual to help them do this, they learn the vocabulary and pronunciation through hearing words and idioms repeatedly. But the linguistic transformation from novice to master is more than mere vocabulary. The way in which the language is used is symptomatic of attitudes towards hierarchy, masculinity and religion. Majid, as with other apprentices, was presented with linguistic commands and commentaries, which, in order to carry out his work, he had to react and respond to. Hierarchy is represented in the objects of production through task performance, command structure, the right to ridicule and the mastery of appropriate linguistic commentary. It is shown later that wealth (like the examples of humiliation, commands and sexual predation discussed above) also flows downward through the hierarchy and eventually lands at the feet of the hapless apprentice.

6.38. Mukhdummi Sha

There are other forms of language used to convey meaning in apprenticeship in addition to the language of praxis in shipyards. These other forms include the religious discourses sponsored primarily by the Bhadala-Pathan at the mosque-shrine of Mukhdummi Sha. Mandvi's main shrines contain modest mosques. In contrast, the new mosques of Salaya stand in isolation from shrines. The exception to this rule is the tomb of Mukhdummi Sha, the saint whose mausoleum stands at the entrance to Salaya. Rebuilt with money donated by Bhadala-Pathans in the mid-1980s, it is managed by a non-Saiyed committee. It serves as a model for religion without intermediary Saiyeds, and is the site of a formal weekly meeting addressed by prominent religious figures, which apprentices are encouraged to attend. The meetings offer Koranic interpretations in Kachchhi and Urdu, and outlines of ideal

models for Muslim weddings and prayer that the congregation is encouraged to adhere to. Emphasis is placed on the role of the Friday Mosque in Muslim religious life. As mentioned in previous chapters there is no Friday Mosque in Mandvi, where mosques are *jamat*-specific. In Salaya, the Friday Mosque is portrayed as the correct focus of Muslim religious practices.

In the language of these meetings Saiyeds are portrayed as ‘magic men’, ‘Muslim Brahmans’ and as relics of former times. Contact with splashes of cow urine on the way to the mosque is described as the worst pollutant for Muslim ritual purity. This example obviously takes the animal most sacred to Hindus as a key symbol. The selection of this example is clearly politically expedient and became a frequently cited maxim among sailors. Cows, common on the streets of Mandvi but totally absent from Salaya, are to be avoided on the way to the mosque because splashes of urine render the man impure. This contrasts with the purity ascribed to bovine urine by many Hindus. Drumming and other forms of music are also dismissed as improper for Muslim ritual practice. Interestingly, given the discussion in Chapter 2, the horse is also singled out as an unfitting sign for Muslims. Horses carry the groom in most Hindu marriage processions and in the marriages of wealthier Muslims in Mandvi. However, in the model of correct marriage practice presented to apprentices at the Mukhdummi Sha meetings the horse is not portrayed as a sign of status but as a sign of ignorance – a sign of Hinduism, and, as shown below, a sign of being a ‘traditional’ Muslim. The meetings start and end with thanks to the benevolence and piety of such-and-such a ship owner who made the congregation possible.

In the mosque complex, above the heads of the congregation, there is large painting (Plate 18 for a poor reproduction). It depicts the view from above the tomb of the saint overlooking the river and Mandvi town. In the estuary are ships flying Muslim-green flags. The perspective taken does not look out onto a wondrous landscape. The obverse is the case: the standpoint is the divine source of power. The further the viewer’s gaze is transported into the landscape the further from sanctity and piety they are taken. This picture is a representation of religious propriety in the

landscape. At these meetings much of what apprentices hear takes as a negative example the practices of their own *jamats* and neighbourhoods. They hear of what makes 'good practice', which is significantly wrapped in a particular way of conceiving time and space. The terms 'traditional', 'modern' and 'syncretic', as problematic as they are in anthropological discussion, are words that shipyard workers hear at these meetings describing social transformation and the Islamic vision of Salaya's ship owners. 'Tradition', sometimes glossed with the phrase 'the teeth of a donkey', refers to the order of hierarchy and religious practice that they perceive as characterising the social life of Mandvi. It is opposed by the 'modern', metaphorically described as 'the teeth of a comb', which is the social ordering of Salaya, ships, commodities and what are construed as new forms of Islam. The irregularity and heterogeneity of one half of the metaphor is contrasted sharply with the uniformity and homogeneity of the latter. In other words, the hierarchy principled on blood purity and *jamat* separation, over which Saiyeds preside, is contrasted with the employment hierarchy of the *vahaanvatta*, which is focused around the Friday mosque. While 'syncretic', translated loosely from the Kachchhi word *ugulumbugulum*, meaning 'all mixed up', refers to a distant past before the Bhadala became Muslim and lived as Hindus.

Crossing the river, as Majid did to start work as an apprentice, means crossing the border between 'traditional' and 'modern', and from *dar al-kafir* to *dar al-islam*. Thus modernisation is at the centre of the Bhadals' attempt to reform local Muslim society, and in some ways also stands as a source of legitimisation. In the language of the Mukhdummi Sha meetings the 'impure' are described as such not because of miscegenation or 'mixed blood', but because they are afflicted with Hinduism (another form of miscegenation). It is only 'impure' people who are troubled by ghosts, fall victim to the 'evil eye' and patronise intermediaries that provide them with access to Allah. These things are associated with Mandvi and the 'syncretic' past. The 'pure' Islam of the reformers invokes the mosque and the Koran. This invocation not only details correct action before Allah, but also describes the way in which apprentices can escape the perilous and precarious accretions of Hinduism.

The reformers acknowledge the existence of Hindu cosmology in order to posit it as antithetical to the Islam that they promote. Hinduism and Islam are presented to neophytes in an hierarchical relationship: Hinduism is corrupt, polytheistic, idolatrous and impure, and is paralleled among Mandvi's Muslims by a hierarchy premised on the axiomatic blood of the Saiyed; while Islam of the mosque is monotheistic and pure in its brotherhood. Muslims in Mandvi and the lower orders of the shipping fraternity are associated with corrupt forms of Islam, which lean dangerously towards the kind of cosmological model that reformers attribute to Hinduism.

In this sense, Hinduism and 'traditional' Islam are seen as engaging with very real human and metaphysical realities. They are not seen as being based on hollow illusory principles. Ashapura Mata, Ravalpir, Dariyapir, Dariyalal, Kurma, Krishna, Ram, Vishnu, fakirs and Saiyeds are all seen as real, and as engaging with forces and channels of power that exist in worldly and non-worldly forms. However, they are not gods in the sense of Allah, the god elevated as transcendental through the Bhadals' patronage. The kinds of Islamic practice advocated by the Bhadala-Pathans offer something of a fragile path through the perilous realms of corrupt and demoniac beliefs. For example, one of the Mukhdummi Sha meetings was held on the subject of ghosts, magic and jinn. At this meeting the congregation learned that it was only the impure who saw ghosts and who could be afflicted with negative magic forces. Those most prone to being haunted were of course Hindus, followed by 'traditional' Muslims. The message was that ghosts, benign and malicious, were out there, but they could be avoided through maintaining pure ritual practices. This is what was meant in Chapter 4 when the Islam advocated by the Bhadala-Pathans is described as offering the potential for salvation. The examples given at this meeting concerned purifying ablutions after contact with defiling substances, such as urine and the products of sexual intercourse. Unless these substances are removed correctly they attract ghosts and other negative forces. At another level the practice of regular prayer and reading from the Koran was presented as a routine that prevents

individuals from improper speculation and from wandering into the realms of false gods and demons.

Non-Bhadala apprentices from Mandvi find their conceptions of what constitutes 'being Muslim' and 'being in a hierarchy' at variance with that posited by their new employers. They are encouraged to renounce their lackadaisical approach to prayer, their relationships with supernatural intermediaries and the use of ritualistic paraphernalia and music. In effect they grow into the Islamic model posited by the men who own the ships on which they work. The idioms that grade Mandvi's *jamat* hierarchy (*pak* and *napak*) have been taken by the Bhadala and transformed into a hierarchy in which Muslims are to Hindus as the Bhadala are to their crews.

Hindus and Mandvi's Muslims are bound together in a model of time – where 'original' is definitely not best. From the Bhadalas' perspective the content of their reforms are not solely a product of a divide between Muslims and Hindus, rather they are a result of divisions among Muslims based on archaic and corrupt principles that deny them the status they feel that they are due. The Bhadala do not see the violence of 1983 as a result of their volatile blood, but as the result of an earlier betrayal by Mandvi's Muslims from which they eventually and fortuitously prospered when Dubai opened as a free port in the 1970s. The highest ranking of Mandvi's mercantile *jamats*, for whom the Bhadala were bonded sailors, deserted them, migrating to East Africa in large numbers and giving up shipping. This, the Bhadala say, left them unemployed and starving until they unwittingly fell into the power vacuum that was left. Religious reform, as a form of social opposition, is on one level directed against Hindus, but it is also directed at Muslims who deny the Bhadalas' claim to high 'mercantile' status because of their 'mixed blood'. The Bhadala see their best chance of escaping the violent relations with Hindu lascars as a sustained attack on the Muslim social order, rather than through the accumulation and elaboration of random signs of Islam. Through these processes the apprentice labour force also takes home hostility towards their *jamat* organisation and their Hindu neighbours with whom they grew up.

6.4. Life at sea (see Plates 16 and 17)

After four months of working in the shipyard the *seth* informed Majid that he had applied for an 'identity card' on his behalf. A few months later Majid set to sea on a decrepit old ship. After eighteen days of making little headway the ship's crankshaft broke and the crew had to use the auxiliary sail. One man fell overboard and was lost as the monsoon winds whipped up the sea. Majid helped with the cooking, handled ropes and attempted to collect rainwater. The rotten sail quickly tore in the gusty winds, and after many days drifting they ran out of drinking water. The crew was afraid because the Pakistani navy regularly impounds ships with Indian flags and imprisons the crews indefinitely. This time the crew was lucky and the ship was towed to Mandvi by a fishing boat. Majid received no payment for the voyage. Indeed, his second experience at sea was no more lucrative or enjoyable than the first, and he began to doubt the wisdom of his decision to make a career at sea. Back once again in Mandvi, Majid started to look for a position on another ship, but the captain of the ill-fated voyages refused to release Majid's identity card. Majid worked for a further three months on the ship in dry dock before his identity card was returned. By this time he had worked for around seven months for hardly any personal remuneration.

Disheartened, in 1987, now seventeen, Majid returned to work in the provision store in Bombay. From there he joined the *Al Karimi*, a ship that had a contract to haul a regular cargo of melons from Bombay to Dubai. Majid received no salary, but because the cargo was regular he received cash for loading and unloading. Again he grew disillusioned after he was cheated by other members of the crew who took a larger share of the profits than Majid thought was fair on some clothes and watches they had brought from Dubai. Becoming a sailor has a powerful allure for young men in Mandvi, stemming from the fixed wages (higher than they could locally earn) supplemented through this personal trade. The allure also comes from expanding webs of influence, the attraction of foreign ports, access to prestigious goods and American Dollars, and the possibility of being recruited to work in the Gulf States.

Although the focus of this chapter is primarily concerned with the biographies of sailors, their life-style is intimately connected with labour and commercial migration. Many sailors jump ship to find work in the Gulf where as their language skills and technological competence increases so do the prestige and rewards derived from their employment. Many sailors later find work on supply ships servicing offshore oilrigs, and as manual labourers onshore. In addition to cargo, the ships seasonally carry men to and from work between Kachchh and the Gulf. The routes ploughed by the ships have become cultural corridors for the flow of goods, men and ideas. Majid found other work on other ships, and gradually, as he gained further experience at sea, he was able to earn increasingly large and regular salaries, until he was earning as much as he had been in Bombay three years before. He lost his virginity in a Russian owned brothel in Dubai, tasted whiskey and learned how to transport goods from Dubai to India without paying import tax.

6.41. The off-season

Each year, when his contracts allow, Majid returns to Mandvi for three months, preferably during the off-season. During this time, Majid, as with many young men from Mandvi, has spare time and disposable income. His dress, swagger, speech, consumption patterns and clothing became increasingly ostentatious. In the initial years of his apprenticeship he wore religion on his shirtsleeves, changing counterfeit sports clothes for a freshly laundered *salwar kamis* for prayer on Fridays. Among the generation of sailors after Majid the rather fitting fashion, given their lifestyle, was a shell-suit embroidered with the slogan 'Just do it International'. On Fridays, Majid also removed his heavy gold jewellery (otherwise considered *haram*), and sprinkled rose water on his wrists and around his neck, rather than the counterfeit after-shave he wore throughout the week. Fridays are devoted to Allah and to displaying imported religious garb and knowledge. Majid and his like play at being *seths*, oiling their hair, and wearing white robes and leather slippers. Their posturing becomes more dignified. They lose the sailors swagger for the day and imitate the posturing and demeanour of the *seths*. In their local mosques, the time and effort they have put

into dressing and smelling, makes them stand out from their poorer (non-sailor) brethren. For Mandvi's younger sailors, going to the mosque is a performance of their wealth and new-found awareness of consumption and Islam. However, as men mature (as they marry and gain promotion) this pomposity recedes, the counterfeit clothing is handed down and the *salwar kamis* is worn all of the time.

Many of Mandvi's younger sailors have little work during the off-season. They spend much time parading around the town and congregating in teashops. They roister, pose and show off their counterfeit finery, all of which frequently leads to fighting. The majority of these fights occur with Kharva men (who are also home for the season) over disputes typically between sailors and non-Kharvas. Illicit 'love affairs' between sailors and women they see in the bazaar or with whom they were at school can continue for many seasons. Typically, Muslim sailors are attracted to Hindu girls because they are given more freedom to move around than their Muslim counter-parts and are viewed as more fitting subjects for lustful thoughts than fellow Muslims (they are also seen as 'easier').

The Bhadala's reform process is persuasive, and the degree to which it influences the sailors is evident on the streets of Mandvi during the off-season. Bhadala sailors are encouraged to pray and take part in a daily football tournament that runs throughout the off-season. Football matches sponsored by the Bhadala Jamat take place in Salaya before dusk. The timing is not an accident because it keeps young men from straying into Mandvi's bazaar, and after the game the teams and spectators go to *magrib namaz* (fourth prayers of the day). In this sense, the *seths* are keen to keep young Bhadala men away from Mandvi. However, non-Bhadala sailors are given more autonomy and this frequently brings them into conflict with Kharva men in Mandvi. Many Muslim sailors are of the opinion that Kharva women are willing game, derived from a rumour in shipyards which states that one of the rules of the Kharva Samaj is that if a Kharva does not return to his wife within a year of going to sea (or taking a plane to Oman) then she is allowed to turn to other sources for sexual gratification. In his life Majid had a series of fights with Kharvas and in 1998 he

courted further trouble by pursuing a Kharva woman whose husband was a migrant labourer in Oman.

Modern shipping produces sailors for whom both Hindus and the Muslim *jamat* society are necessarily inferior. Bhadala reform informs and is informed by religious violence and subjugation to merchants and Saiyeds alike. These processes are altering the relationships between Muslims of the 'modern', and Muslims of the 'traditional' social orders, as well as differentiating Mandvi's Muslims from their Hindu neighbours by creating ambiguity and uncertainty about the nature of Muslim society. As the Bhadala continue to expand their fleet they draw more of Mandvi's Muslims into the spell of a life at sea. Through these mechanisms the hierarchy that revolves around the Bhadalas' religious practice, wealth and internationalism, expands. This process is gradually deflecting hostility away from them and towards the new generation of sailors. How some of these relationships are played out can be seen in the various ways in which the Muslim festival of Moharam is commemorated.

6.5. Moharam

When Majid was young he lived in the northwest of Mandvi in an area known as Mutchi Pith. He recalls participating in the organisation and festivities of Moharam at the shrine that owned his house, but gradually, as the years, passed he has participated less and less in the festival. During Moharam in 1998 Majid went to the mosque at lunchtime and stayed in his house for the rest of the day. In the light of the process of religious and social transformation that is evident among sailors this section looks at the contrasting celebrations of Moharam and examines further sources of legitimacy drawn upon by the Bhadala-Pathans in their quest for social and religious perfection.

Outside India Moharam is a Shia event marking the martyrdom of Hussein, the third apostolic Imam. In India the event is widely observed by Sunnis. Generally,

among elite Sunni communities throughout western India there is hostility towards Moharam, which also sometimes finds expression in conflict between Shias and Sunnis. The differences between Sunni Muslims that are evident in the ways of marking the festival were concisely expressed by a senior sailor on a Bhadala-Pathan ship: "During Moharam we should pray at the mosque and be sad in remembering the martyrdom of Hussein. It is not a time to flirt and dance in the street." This is the typical attitude of those who 'pray' towards those who 'play'. The 'players' commit a series of acts that defile the orthopraxy defined by the 'praying' Bhadala. Playing involves: exaggerated public exhibitions of 'pseudo grief' (for the martyrs), the performance and amplification of music, the fabrication of replica shrines, which become conduits of individual desire, and the inter-mingling of men and women in spaces where they are not architecturally or morally segregated.

Despite the prominence of those who oppose Moharam, it remains the most popular of Muslim festivals. Thousands of people come from the surrounding villages to watch the musical processions and follow the dancers through the streets. The first days of the lunar month of Moharam are reserved for mourning the death of the Imam Hussein on the battlefields of Kabala (see Sharif 1921:157). The days that are thought to have special significance during this period vary considerably, with each mosque in Mandvi having a slightly different set of observances distinguishing it from other mosques. It will be recalled from previous chapters that mosques in Mandvi are *jamat*-specific, or the congregations are formed by a majority from one or a number of related *jamats*. Therefore the details of the different days set aside for fasting and prayer are expressions of *jamat* distinctiveness. However, regardless of whether the first twelve or thirteen days of the month are reserved for austerities, the Muslims who participate in the festival come together on the tenth day on the Mandvi bank of the estuary.

During the first few days of the month the buildings (*imambaras*) that house the *tazias* (the mock shrines of the martyrs) are opened and decorated. In the following days *tazias* are competitively decorated with bright paper, plastic ornamentation,

electric lights and loudspeakers. Replicas of the horse on which Mohammed is said to have ascended to heaven lead the processions. Here again the horse is an important symbol, singled out by the Bhadala as a false image that reflects the ignorance of the 'traditional' Muslims.

The three main *imambaras* are located in Mutchi Pith, Bhadala Pod and Salaya. Together they represent the martyr Ali and his sons Hussan and Hussein. On the tenth day of Moharam the *tazias* are paraded round the town, surrounded by flagellants who perform a slow rhythmical dance to the accompaniment of drums and to cries of '*ya Ali, ya Ali, Shah Hussan, Shah Hussein*' (friend Ali, friend Ali, King Hussan, King Hussein). Towards dusk, amid large crowds, the different processions congregate at the river. Before each *tazia* there is a flurry of activity as men and women jostle for the chance to break a coconut and to offer a wish or a prayer. The *tazias* are carried into the centre of the estuary as the tide turns, where they are swiftly rotated alternately clockwise and anti-clockwise three times. In the minutes before, the crowds fell silent, only to let forth a huge cry as the rotations commenced. The number of rotations again signifies the number of martyrs, while the coincidence with the changing tide is thought to be a custom that remains from the days when the Bhadala were the main participants in the event.

The *seths* gathered along the Salaya side of the estuary. Their visibility was an expression of their absence from the celebrations. They watched the events from a distance, but their white-clad figures were clearly visible against the dull colours of mud and ship timber. For the Bhadala-Pathans the public performance of Moharam is a vulgar expression of the ignorance of Mandvi's Muslims, who show their true nature in public, Hindu-style behaviour. The Bhadala-Pathan watch Muslims pray to false shrines, sing, dance and flirt without modesty. On another level the Bhadala-Pathan regard Moharam as an explicitly anti-Muslim practice. At a meeting at Mukhdummi Sha, a few days before Moharam started, the speaker told how the assassins of Ali's sons marched triumphantly back to their city, mockingly shouting the names of the martyrs whose heads they had mounted on poles. The Moharam

processions had turned tragedy, and the display of Muslim defeat, into a celebration. The standards (baring hands and other symbols of the martyrdom) carried before the *tazias* are seen as paradoxically commemorating the victory of the enemy – not the sadness of martyrdom. This is a heterodox interpretation of events, but it left a lasting impression on the congregation. Additionally, the Moharam processions are described as having been ‘borrowed’ from Hinduism and it is argued that they should be abandoned as a sign of Muslim progress and modernity. Whatever the historical contingency of the event, the *seths* deliberately portray the festival as having roots in the ritual tradition of Hindus. The sermon that presented these two critical perspectives on Moharam among Mandvi’s Muslims conflated the two issues. Many of those present left having made the association between the historical tragedies of the Muslim tradition and the presence of Hinduism in their lives. These forms of religious discourse do not invest any store in unpeeling historical contingencies and mutual influences of Hinduism and Islam. More generally, as seen in the portrayal of Moharam, they present Hinduism as archaic and corrupt, and Islam as modern and pure.

Although many of the Muslims of Mandvi and Salaya are linked in their observance of prayer and fasting during Moharam, the Bhadala-Pathan tend to overlook this commonality. They see no continuity between the way in which they commemorate the festival and the way in which it is celebrated by Muslims on the opposite bank of the river. Moharam in Salaya is regarded as a new phenomenon that is practised in new mosques under a new Islamic ethos. Here, as with Nava Naroj, the presence of the past is consciously evaluated as departing from the ancestral way of doing things. Thus, for the Bhadala, ‘ancestors’ take on a peculiar and displaced relationship in the present, especially when it comes to the festivities of Moharam. The continuity in historical memory that could have been given by patrilineal genealogy and the observance of ‘traditional’ festivals has been deliberately overshadowed by the effects of a series of migrations. The most significant migration was crossing the river, from *dar al-kafir* to create *dar al-islam*. In doing so they left behind the seasons of labour bonded to mercantile capital. Later came the seasonal

migrations (lesser pilgrimages) to the ports of the Gulf States, which generated the potential for social migration from 'sailor' to 'merchant'. The result of these migrations, as I discussed in Chapter 4, is that the ancestors' way of doing things is construed as negative. In the mythical past the majority of the ancestors were Hindu. The first rupture with the past came when they converted to Islam, the second with the migration from Mandvi to Salaya. Events and time anterior to each rupture have thus become increasingly obscured by the resulting social and geographical transformations. When the Bhadala *seths* evaluate the way in which they commemorate Moharam, they are able to look back (as if through time), onto the opposite bank of the river, and see how their ancestors did things. What they look upon is not the politically neutral landscape of their own pasts re-enacted in the present, but a landscape to which they are hostile. Again, as with Nava Naroj, Moharam is a sign of being Indian as well as being Muslim. Thus the reform of Moharam allows for a degree of regional distinctiveness. In other words, local customs and celebrations are acceptable if they fall, or can be designed to fall, within certain pan-Islamic criteria. There is nothing wrong with being Muslim and Indian but being an 'Indian Muslim' is a label from which they wish to distance themselves. 'Indian Muslim' is a term used by Muslims in other parts of the Indian Ocean as a derogatory form of address. Indian Muslims are generally looked down upon because of their adherence to practices and customs – such as *tazia* processions during Moharam – that do not sit comfortably with dominant ideals held in the power centres of Islam in the Indian Ocean.

Islam is treated as an import good by the Bhadala and by those who work on their ships. Pilgrimage to Mecca, which for centuries Mandvi was a departure port, involves travelling outside Kachchh in order to return improved, transformed and with greater piety. The *seths*, all Hajis, frequently go on pilgrimage to Mecca. They recount the experience as a powerful influence upon their own attempts at religious reform and patronage. The Haj is a central metaphor in the transformation of sailors. Very few sailors actually perform Haj in their lifetimes, as the costs are too high. However, the repetitive voyaging to and from the Gulf region is considered an

equivalent to a pilgrimage albeit one of a lesser order. Sailors visit the prestigious Gulf realm and commune with the land and people. Despite the status the Haj brings the Bhadala, and the considerable costs involved, whilst on pilgrimage *seths* often experience hostility and blatant denigration from other pilgrims because of their Indian origins. The experience of feeling inferior and being a victim of hostility on Haj, or on the docks in Dubai, is not conveyed to those who remain at home. The connotations of the 'outside' remain positive when *seths* and sailors are at home. The 'outside' is used as a powerful image of Islamic power and wealth that, regardless of actual experiences is used to capture the imagination of others, whether through the sanctity, prestige or privilege of Haj, or via bundles of cosmetics brought from Dubai.

Here the Bhadala play on the difference between comparison and analogy. A comparison is an examination to establish similarities and dissimilarities. In analogy there is the inference that if two or more things agree in some respects, they will probably agree in others. The Bhadala and their sailors are in a position to make a comparison between Kachchh and the Gulf States. The majority of the residents of Mandvi and apprentices in shipyards are not, and process the comparison made by the Bhadala analogously. In other words, non-sailors compare what they think they know of the Gulf and not the reality of it as experienced by Bhadalas. Bhadala ships mainly call in to the ports of the UAE, especially Dubai, where the majority of Mandvi's Muslim labour migrants also work. In Mandvi the whole region (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Iran, Oman, Bahrain, Iraq and Qatar) is glossed as 'Gulf', as in 'my brother works in the Gulf'. Depending somewhat on the context, this reflects the way in which the region is imagined by those who have never seen it – a generality in which sailors are complicit when they are at home. Employment conditions and the freedom granted to sailors without passports vary considerably between the states of the region. Saudi Arabia places the most restrictive conditions on entry, while the UAE is relatively accessible. Thus the magical (quasi-religious) qualities of consumer goods are also seen as emanating from the 'Gulf', which typically are only drawn from Dubai.

Chapter 4 discussed the influence of historical migrations from the Persian Gulf to Kachchh. The South Asian population of UAE is generally reckoned to be around 50% of the total population. As a result Dubai is something of a home from home for sailors. In the Gulf region Dubai is regarded as a place of low religious values and practices. However, it is in Dubai that Kachchhi sailors spend the greater portion of their time. Thus the highly valued religious artefacts and practices brought from the Gulf come from the city that within the Gulf is least associated with them. In Kachchh, the whole Gulf region is held to be the cradle of Islam, as the location of the glorious life of Mohammed and his successors. The area emanates sacred power and holds the marks of religious triumph and defeat. Experienced sailors tend to homogenise the region in conversations in Mandvi. Thus the differences of orthodoxy, sect and reputation of the different states are collapsed into the term 'Gulf'. Sailors know that Dubai is a commodities mecca and not of the same religious standing as Mecca, but they do not import this difference into Kachchh. Most sailors, regardless of how orthodox they appear at home, find that in the Gulf (including Dubai) they do not measure up to widely held religious standards. In the Gulf, Kachchhi *seths* and sailors are low-status Muslims. There is no shrine worship around Dubai Creek (where the wharves and loading bays are located) and religious intermediaries appear to be demonised. This is the feature of Muslim practice and social organisation that the Bhadala have imported to Kachchh with the greatest fervour and is discussed further in Chapter 7.

The discussion now returns to Moharam, the overall effect is that a Sunni event, such as Moharam, which is perhaps unique to the sub-continent, is quite acceptable as long as it is observed within what are considered to be universal facets of 'proper' Islam. Such include *salat*, the Koran, modesty and decorum, and absolute faith in the transcendence of Allah. Antithetical to these propositions are: spiritual intermediaries, whether people or objects; prayer offered to, or through, deities other than Allah; ostentatious public performances; and immodesty. In short, everything that can be witnessed during the *tazia* processions. Moharam and Nava Naroj

exemplify the relationship between the Bhadala-Pathan's desire to be seen to transact with unequivocal signs of pure Islam and their enthusiasm for their regional distinctiveness.

As mentioned previously, the *seths*, as the sponsors of reform and architectural regeneration of Islam, employ a model that resembles standard scholarly models in their interpretation of what 'being Muslim' means. They distinguish three levels (also, Ahmad 1984:12–13). The superior form, the one that they promote and that others identify them with, revolves around mosques, prayer and dress. Which, during Moharam, means just that, going to the mosque, mourning and praying. The intermediate level contains those practices that are glossed as Islamic, such as the role of mendicants, shrines and magical Saiyed patrons. This intermediate stage is the category into which the Bhadala place the majority of the younger sailors on their ships. Finally are those popular practices that are embedded in the pluralistic historic and social locale. This latter category refers to what they consider to be the accretions of Hinduism. This model is used as an explanation of the hierarchical gradation of faith and the perceptions of relative purity amongst those who work on ships.

On the whole, the longer a sailor serves a particular *seth*, the greater the coincidence between the kinds of religious observances patronised by the *seth* and the sailor. Thus *vahaanvatta* hierarchy is dualistic in its composition, relating grades of labour hierarchy to grades of religious practice. The model current among apprentices is that the cumulative experiences of life gradually encourage a greater respect for Allah, and for the precise ways of worshipping him given in the Koran and other texts. Furthermore, elderly men are seen to have the time and resources to devote to religious practice. But the concurrence of senior positions on ships and meticulous religious observances are not only a function of individual maturity. Importantly, this hierarchy is a product of selective recruitment practices, where men gain promotion based on both their adroitness with ships and the rigour with which they adopt the 'pan-Islamic' criteria dictated by their employers. Religious reformers

and reform are not simply split between the higher and lower orders of the shipping, but find a very vivid reflection in the more complex gradation of *vahaanvatta* hierarchy.

Ship owners paradigmatically appear at the apex of this hierarchy in their capacity as the sponsors of reform. Within this hierarchy labourers are paradigmatically inferior because they work with their bodies. Navigators, foremen and senior labourers typically fall somewhere between. In this sense pure Islam is by invitation only, in terms of prayer at the mosque, during commemorations and through the process of promotion on ships. The first time the captain of a ship asks a labourer to accompany him to prayers is very significant. It shows that the labourer has been accepted, is trusted, and that the owner will publicly associate himself with his worker – albeit mostly through the agency of the captain. The network of gossip and information that facilitates knowledge of others plays a vital role in this process. The word on the street has to be positive about an apprentice, or a younger sailor, before he is invited by a ship owner to participate in particular forms of religious practice, and by participating in particular events with his *seth* his public reputation is further enhanced.

Despite this persuasive model the majority of Mandvi's Muslims participate in Moharam, although very few of the men who work on the ships or in the shipyards participate in the festivities. The exceptions are those who bring the third *tazia* over the river from Salaya. This *tazia* is sponsored by Thaims and is carried by members of the *atak* and by their client sailors. The rhetoric of the Bhadala-Pathan thus bears a direct relation to reality as they construe it. The majority of Muslims who live in Mandvi are like Hindus and have little sense of propriety. Thaims are little better, despite running ships and being Bhadala. The evidence is further given that the Thaims cross the river into Mandvi, a hostile environment, to participate in the festivities with Mandvi's Muslims. For the Thaims, patronising the construction of a *tazia* is a sign of communal unity between them and their less fortunate 'brothers' who live on the opposite bank of the river.

6.51. Religious propriety

During Moharam the differences in religious practices between the *vahaanvatta* and Mandvi's other Muslims are most apparent. Majid's father, brothers and many of his neighbours contribute towards the construction of *tazias*. Majid's own level of participation gradually declined as his career developed. When he decided to stop building *tazias* he continued to contribute money towards the cost of materials and would watch the processions in the street. Later he stopped participating and observing altogether, and in subsequent years his *seth* invited him over to Salaya to pray on the tenth day of the month. This process generated a complex set of tensions within his family. As Majid's parents had predicted, their son had stopped participating in customs and celebrations that were dear to them. However, they respect Majid's decisions, recognising that they are based on logic of what is construed to be 'pure' and 'authentic' Islam. Herein lies something of a paradox commonly seen in Muslim societies: those accused of religious corruption often respect the legitimacy of the accusation, because all have an abstract notion of what 'pure' Islam is like. In this sense the hierarchy of practices outlined in previous chapters is also acknowledged by Majid's parents, only they are not apical within this hierarchy. The Bhadala, denigrated because of their mixed blood and 'race', remain so corrupted in the eyes of the majority of Mandvi's Muslims, but at another level their attempts at purifying religious practice are not contested. This falls short of respect because of the methods the Bhadala are rumoured to have employed in acquiring their wealth. In an abstract way the majority of Muslims know what 'proper' Islamic practice is and how it is constituted, and as a result those who are accused of being corrupt respect those who accuse them because of the logic of the accusation.

In this widely held model, perfection and truth are given in the Koran, regular prayer and respect for the ideal figure of the Prophet. The extent to which the pattern of perfection is realised is always changing because it depends on leadership within wider social, economic and political contexts. The fact that everybody thinks they

know what proper Islam is again reflects the distinction made previously between comparison and analogy. T.N. Madan (as many others) writes that the following features are true of Muslim communities everywhere:

Belief in the unity of God, in his angels and prophets, and in the revealed book, and submission to his final judgement form the core of orthodoxy. These are supplemented by daily prayers, the month of fasting, charity, and if possible pilgrimage to Mecca (1997:145).

This thesis has taken the ‘truth’ of the Bhadala as an ethnographic and comparative benchmark. It is obvious that their ‘truth’ is highly selective and is based on their own historically contingent social and economic struggles with Hindus and Mandvi’s Muslims. They would not disagree with Madan’s position, but mosques (and the wealth with which to build them) are their pre-eminent signs of being Muslim. They rank mosques only behind the Koran as signs of ‘pure’ religion. On these criteria, constructing what makes ‘good’ Islam is an elite phenomenon because those with the ability to patronise the most prestigious worldly symbol are ship-owners. Furthermore, in typical descriptions of the tenets of Islam there is no leeway to account for the other pre-eminent features of ‘pure’ Islam, in the ways that they are construed in shipyards. These features include: that Muslims don’t ride horses on their way to be married; don’t patronise all intermediaries; don’t feed the living-dead in the form of crows; do not cast money into the waves in hope of auspicious blessings; and don’t wander the streets singing and flirting while shouldering the replica of the tomb of a key figure of Muslim history. The larger percentile of what is good Islam is to be seen in characterisations of what it is not. Clearly these characterisations are socially contingent definitions of religious categories.

The key human symbols of corruption in Bhadala campaigns are the Saiyeds. Bhadala-Pathans reject what they construe as Saiyeds’ false claims to divine power based on super-human qualities inherent in their blood. However, it appears that although the Bhadala rhetorically reject this model as an archaic corruption, they

have appropriated it in other contexts to support their big-man patron positions. Comparative ethnography of Muslim social order in Gujarat describes patterns of transaction between high and low order shrines, and between individual saints and their devotees. The flows of such transactions are premised on hierarchy, which displays an inherent capacity to integrate other shrines and individuals. This hierarchy is ordered around perceptions of proximity or distance from the sacred (H. Basu 1998:117–118; and Gaborieau 1986:128–129). Here hierarchy is structured by an individual's literal distance from the source of the sacred, which receives further symbolic elaboration through patterns of respect and ritual exchange. For example, a Saiyed presiding over a particular shrine acts as a mediator between Allah and devotees through the extra-human charisma that he embodies. Saiyeds supervise and administer the downward flow of wealth, power and protection from the divine to the mundane. The more powerful the reputation of a shrine and those that preside over it then the higher it appears in the chains of transaction. The relative position of men in these relationships is structured by the principles of proximity and distance in relation to Allah, which in turn defines how elevated or how low an individual's status is within the divine hierarchy. Those impoverished of proximity to Allah, and thus from power and wealth, appear as the paradigmatic recipients of the 'things' flowing downwards through the hierarchy. Amid the vast network of shrines in Gujarat is a complex layering of order premised on the distribution of power and status between various shrines, within which are equally complex hierarchies formed between devotees, disciples and living and dead Saiyeds.

Like Saiyeds within this hierarchy, the Bhadala also appear to be closer to Allah in terms of the social hierarchy that surrounds ships. However, as traders they have a commercialised model of hierarchy that structures relationships in terms of proximate distance to the divine (the mosque) and wealth (ship capital). All the ship-owners appear before recruits as the intermediaries between Kachchh, poverty and corruption on one hand, and the Gulf, wealth and purity on the other. Thus there is a remarkably close correlation between the model they reject and how they appear in the hierarchy over which they preside. In this apical role the *seths* appear closer to

Allah. As with clients of shrines, sailors appear as paradigmatic recipients of patronage, legitimised by the same hierarchy that subordinates them. The *seth* appears as the gateway to wealth and access to prestigious forms of religious practice. Therefore, despite the avowed intentions of the Bhadala-Pathans, traditional religious hierarchy is removed from the shrine and restructured around the ship. The charisma of *seths* is derived from their constituents and, although not considered intermediaries between the crews and Allah in an explicitly spiritual sense, they do appear as intermediaries between the crew and wealth. They appear through Allah's grace to have fortune intimately tied to their piety, which is in part derived from their patronage. As with divine blessings in shrines, the ship-owner's wealth trickles down through the grades of hierarchy to the crews. So far from replacing the traditional blood-based hierarchy from across the river, they create a simulacrum, with the power to channel wealth replacing the power to channel divinity. Appearing at the apex thus becomes a matter of capital and motivation rather than a matter of birth and genealogy.

6.6. Migrant labour

Majid was by now regularly voyaging between India, Iran, Iraq, UAE and Somalia. His wages increased to Rs. 1,000 per month on a bigger, faster and safer ship. He was given responsibility over a number of other crew and his negotiating position for profits on luxury goods brought from the Gulf to Kachchh improved. As the seasons passed Majid has become wealthy – his status increasing exponentially with each return to Mandvi. Eventually a relative came to the port in Dubai to meet him and to offer him a job. Majid had no passport – he still sailed on his now tattered identity card – so he returned to India and applied for a passport through an agent. This process took nearly a year. Meanwhile he took a job on a ship registered in Dubai for a salary of Rs. 3,500 per month. Majid's family was starting to feel the benefit, and his father and youngest brother had both given up their poorly paid work and lived on his remittances.

In 1991 Majid signed a contract to work in the Bombay High oil fields, for a salary of \$250 per month on a supply vessel belonging to a distant relative of his mother. In 1993 the same company issued Majid with an 'able seamen certificate'. This remains one of Majid's most cherished possessions. It is a professional certificate recognised worldwide. Later that year Majid rejoined a vessel sailing from Mandvi, and on reaching Dubai jumped ship and found work on a supply vessel with a company employing workers without proper documentation. Since 1994 Majid has worked for another company in the Gulf and his salary increased to \$450.

Throughout this time Majid's religious practice and knowledge of the world has become increasingly at variance with that of his family, a fact reflected in his more assiduous observation of regular prayers, his clothes, his veneration of the Koran, and his disavowal of public displays of what he called '*naqli dukhi*' (counterfeit-mourning) during the local 'celebrations' of Moharam. However, the most notable difference between Majid and his brothers and father is to be seen in their relationship with Saiyeds and their shrines. Majid's relatives are regular clients of a shrine that owned the house in which Majid was born in the northeast of Mandvi. Majid refuses to visit this shrine, or have any dealings with the Saiyeds that preside over it. Majid's brothers and father visit the shrine every Thursday (the day of the saints) and before they start any new project. Meanwhile, as Majid's remittances increased, his mother started to send daily parcels of food to the Saiyeds. The constant tension between Majid and his family on this issue provoked some remarkable exchanges. Majid's mother would frequently accuse him of 'forgetting where he came from' and of 'ignoring those he owed'. I admired Majid's patience in the face of these accusations: he did not answer his mother back, at least not when his father was in the house. However, on a number of occasions Majid's father was not at home, and Majid would accuse his mother of giving her (his, their) money to people who were little more than 'beggars'. He would go on to say that she regarded Saiyeds as divine figures to whom she could never give enough. Both of these expressions were appropriated from the wider 'anti-Saiyed' rhetoric that prevails in shipyards and in the weekly meetings held at Mukhdummi Sha, and this form of

confrontation is common among families who have sent their sons to sea. However, as discussed previously, the tension is somewhat lopsided because Majid's mother, among others, respects Majid's 'new' religious ideas because they carry the seal of Gulf authenticity. Although Majid no longer works on the ships that sail from Mandvi port, whenever he is invited for prayer at the Friday Mosque or at the mosque-shrine of Mukhdummi Sha, upon meeting those on whose ships he used to work he will stoop before them and touch his eyes and mouth against the hand that is offered to him.

6.7. Conclusion

Majid's biography and the generalisations that emerge from it are typical of social transformation among sailors. The passage from traditional to modern is not abrupt or absolute; rather, it is faltering and partial. It is given continuity by the underlying principles of respect, patronage and work and discontinuity by kin relations and friendships in Mandvi. The large numbers of sailors who return home to Mandvi once a year, or every night, are having a profound effect on the religious dynamics within the town. They are creating wider awareness of difference between Muslims and Hindus through their antagonism and hostility.

Apprenticeship is where technological production (shipbuilding) and social reproduction (crews) engage, which rather than making novices masters, only partially demystifies the process of production and simultaneously contributes to the enchantment of hierarchy. The possible paths of progression through the hierarchy become the objects of the apprentice's dreams. When they set to sea the world outside Kachchh – Masjid Bunder and Dongri Channel in Bombay and the ports of the Gulf States – is predominantly Muslim. The kinds of Muslims they meet are different from those at home. They are frequently Wahhabi or Sunnis who appear ultra-orthodox in comparison to what young sailors know. These experiences are analogously given to apprentices in shipyards. The journey across the river into apprenticeship transforms men through competition for economic, symbolic and

social capital. As men build ships they also build social relations, which often contradict those they were enmeshed in during the earlier parts of their lives. The mechanisms through which social apprenticeship is transmitted are similar to those discussed in Chapter 5. The minutiae of action and task, through which spatial appreciation and skills are learned, is similarly reproduced as social relations are learned. Hierarchical social relations are real and tangible bodily techniques. In part, deference, respect and patronage are physical actions that men learn as they learn how to 'be' in shipyards. The religious hierarchy (in relation to both Hindus and Mandvi's Muslims) headed by the Bhadala *seths* creates similar potential corridors for violence. Legitimate violence flows downwards. The social groups below the Bhadala (at least from within the *vahaanvatta*) are sailors and labourers, Mandvi's Muslims and finally Hindus, who are all legitimate targets for physical and symbolic violence. However, violence between elite groups (merchants), now and in the past, is mediated by respective groups of sailors. The 'workers of the body' act in the interests of the 'workers of the mind'. Apprenticeship thus produces a new form of peculiarly coloured lascar.

Sailors do not turn green with seasickness, but with religion (the colour commonly associated with Islam in India). When Mandvi people say derogatorily that sailors 'puff-up' and 'change colour' they are alluding to the sailors' swagger and servile position in relation to low-ranking mixed bloods. This is a parody of the conflicting organisation of hierarchy on ships and at home, and is perhaps sometimes couched in jealousy. Sailors take on the dangerous religious and political colours of their mixed-blood patrons, who, within the last twenty years, have inverted the traditional merchant-sailor dyad with power that comes exogenously into Kachchh. Colour matters. In Salaya mixed-blood sailors have become powerful big-man patrons, while many apprentices drawn from the pure-blooded merchant *jamats* are becoming 'sailors'. The genealogical metaphors of blood and descent have some difficulty accounting for the transformation. Mandvi people dismiss sailors as 'black', not only because they spend time labouring in the sun, but also because they are 'taking' from the Bhadala. The outline of social hierarchy presented in Chapter 3

relates to stereotyped skin colour and associated mental and physical faculties. To call men 'black', or to call them 'crows', both common insults, equals the same accusation: that the accused is of low rank and shares the mentality of the Siddis who could so easily be taken into slavery because they lived an inhuman existence in Africa without proper kings.

Chapter 7. Conclusion.

Seths, Saiyeds and sailors: the social production of Islamic reform

7.1. Review

Throughout this thesis very little has said very little about what the Bhadala think of themselves. Obviously, not all Bhadalas are interested in exactly the same issues or have the same life experiences. The most blatant differences are between those who work on international tankers and those who work on the local ships. However, there are some themes that frequently recur in Bhadalas' self-presentation within their own village, and it is these presentations that concern me now. Chapters 4–6 discussed their interest in particular forms of religious architecture, social organisation and occupation, and how they construct their religious disposition in relation to others. The Bhadala see themselves as religiously and socially orthodox, and as furthering the Islamic cause through their active campaigns against lesser and false gods and polytheists. They see themselves as sexually voracious and potent, and view their large families as providing them with security and strategic options and as a direct reflection of their wealth. They construe themselves to be modern in commercial and religious senses, and as locally pre-eminent in their experience of the cosmopolitan world. They are aware and proud of their regional origins, their language, and their village. But they do not dream of Kachchh becoming part of a Muslim state. The partition divided their residential patterns between Salaya and Karachi. As a result they have close ties to Pakistan and visit Karachi frequently. But they are often intimidated by the city, which, they say, is violent, full of guns and controlled by religion. Relatives from Pakistan frequently (illegally) come to visit Salaya. They have 'underworld' contacts in Bombay and Dubai, some of which are so influential that they know Bollywood film stars. With me, with each other, and with apprentices in their shipyards they would also claim to have power and influence within the

criminal organisations headed by the infamous figures of Daud Ibrahim and ‘Tiger’ Mushtaq Memon. These characters are associated with the bomb blasts in Bombay in 1993 and with kidnapping, extortion, the bankrolling of Bollywood film productions and smuggling.

Peter Mayer has argued that the dominant academic image of Muslims in India is that they are poor and uneducated and suffer from political, cultural and linguistic oppression (1981). His study shows that while Muslims do not see themselves in this light conventional indicators, such as formal education attendance and levels of declared income point to the marginalisation of Muslims from the dominant national agendas (Hansen 1999:151). By these measurements the Bhadala are not stereotypical Muslims. However, they do conform to the other stereotypes held in western India that derive from BJP and RSS political rhetoric and from related patterns of local rumour. From this viewpoint, Muslims, such as the Bhadala, are seen as expansionist, bigoted, aggressive and secretive and concerned with territorial and ideological dominance. Undoubtedly some of the half-known truths from which the stereotypes have been assembled do not quite capture the full picture, but plastic explosives, Kalashnikovs, hashish and persons without formal identification are discovered along the coast with more frequency than statistical probability would suppose. Additionally, a surprising number of the sailors are imprisoned in India, Pakistan and Dubai, while others are in the custody of the United Nations for having been found in Iraqi waters. Others still have court cases pending and warrants outstanding for their arrest.

Such stereotypes run hand in hand with another set in which Muslims are cast as poor, backward, uneducated and ignorant. Muslims, as shown in previous chapters, have their own equally elaborate images of Hindus, and together these sets of images have contributed to a social polarisation between all sections of the Muslim and Hindu populations in Kachchh. In Mandvi, at no social level do Hindus and Muslims mutually participate in festivals or other devotional activities. The ‘conservative

radicalism' of the Bhadala is a reflection of this trend, which also draws upon the wider political climate in the Indian Ocean region.

As shown in chapters 3 and 4 the traditional pattern of commerce among Mandvi's Muslims was one of Sunni sailors being employed by Shia merchants. In this system the dynamics and effects of apprenticeship were very different from those relationships between Bhadalas and sailors described in chapters 5 and 6. The main reason for this difference was that Shia merchants had little interest in the religious practices of their sailors – the fact that sailors were putatively Muslim seemed to have been enough. The patterns of capital ownership and the division of commercial labour during this period kept sailors and merchants ritually, economically and socially segregated. Now that the capital is in the hands of the Bhadala, the rigidly defined boundaries, which in the past were provided by sectarian affiliation, have disappeared. With changing economic conditions Bhadalas have reached a position from where they can extend their webs of influence into the social lives of their sailing constituents. This trend represents something of a radical transformation because in the past, high-status merchants employed low-status Bhadalas; today low-status Bhadalas employ high-status 'merchants' (although not the Shias who were their previous patrons) from proprietary *jamats*.

The process of strengthening religious identity has been shown to be a way of distinguishing *seths* and sailors from Kharvas and Mandvi's Muslims. In turn this dual process has created an identifiable collectivity discernible from language, occupation, expectations, bodily postures and by the selective observance of some religious practices and the condemnation of others. This process is recognised by a large number of Mandvi's Muslims who describe the Bhadala and sailors as the *vahaanvatta jamat*. This does not refer to marriage patterns, but to a religious congregation. Although this congregation is clearly concentrated in Salaya, every Sunni *jamat* (as well as among those with no formal *jamat* organisation) in Mandvi contains men who belong to the informal *vahaanvatta jamat*. The broad client base of the *seths* is indentured in various forms to the interests of the Bhadalas. The

sailors, like Majid, are often bonded by their fathers to a *seth*. They are also indentured, in an informal sense, by their aspiration and the potential wealth that can be generated through such a relationship.

7.2. Apprenticeship

While producing this thesis I have frequently considered the possibility that the Bhadala had consciously used all of the social strategies available to them to improve their own position. Could it really be that a group of them came to an understanding about how they were going to run their shipyards? Did they decide that by stripping apprentices of their prior senses of social propriety that they would create loyal constituents? Have they really thought of opposing the dominant Muslim social order through the respected process of Islamic reform? Or that the particular emphasis they place on an infinite god could improve their social position within Muslim society and deflect communal antipathies away from themselves and towards their lascars? It is highly improbable that they have made conscious evaluative decisions towards these ends. The task of identifying and thinking these things through has been mine. The social resources were at their disposal and they have used them accordingly, leading to a patronage of the idea of monotheism, which corresponds to the ideal of religious perfection also widely held among those whose polytheism is decried by the Bhadala. But, there is more to it than that, and the aim of this final chapter is to show that none of the social processes that have been described are without precedent. They are part of the life experiences of the Bhadala themselves, and they are now in positions of power that enable them to transpose their biographies onto the political and religious landscape of the town. This transposition extends to experiences of violence, domination and oppression, but also relies on a form of apprenticeship that has deep roots in Muslim society.

7.21. *Pir–murid*

The archetypal and elevated model of apprenticeship in Kachchhi Muslim society is between the Saiyed and his devotees. Derived from Sufi traditions, this relationship is commonly known as *murashad–murid* (spiritual guide–aspirant or novice). In Mandvi, the Sufi heritage of the master–apprentice relationship is not articulated because even among Mandvi’s Muslims there is a pervasive trend to arabicise architecture and prayer in an attempt to distance themselves from negative associations with Sufis. To what extent this trend is a product of the Bhadals’ influence it is impossible to say, but most Saiyeds are keen to present their practices as timeless and as unchanging, even if they changed all the signs in their shrines from Gujarati to Arabic only a few weeks previously. During my stay in Mandvi the husband of a scholar who has done substantial research on shrines in Yemen came to visit. He asked me what I knew about the history of the abundant Sufi shrines in Mandvi and Salaya. By this time I had been in the town for over a year and was slightly worried that I might have missed something important, so we went to see the shrines he was talking about. The shrines he took me to are not regarded as Sufi shrines by Mandvi people – they are shrines of Saiyeds within the Sunni tradition. This misunderstanding raises an important issue, for if a shrine is clearly steeped in the Sufi tradition of India, but those who now preside over it deny this fact, then how is the shrine to be treated? As a Sufi shrine? As a shrine within the Sunni tradition? Or as a syncretic blend of formal traditions? My resolution of this problem, as has been evident in previous chapters, is not to trace the history of the shrine but to ask why is it important that the shrine is seen as a Sunni shrine and not a Sufi one, while remaining aware that the shrine, as with most Muslim religious practices in Kachchh, has roots different from their present attributions.

This problem is at the heart of studies of Indian Islam and highlights the central problem of the provincial ethnography of men who are part of a politicised world religion, and who are clearly enmeshed in transnational networks that bypass the town in which they live and where fieldwork was conducted. Most ethnographers are

not in a position to make comparison (exceptions see Geertz 1968; and Juergensmeyer 2000) and have to rely on analogy. However, the analogy is largely made against textual orthodoxy and ends up being based on the ‘core versus periphery’ model of Islam or as a comparison between an ethnographic ‘type c’ and a rather abstract ‘type p’. Thus the basis for variation is in practice taken from an abstract and highly rarefied model of Islam – roughly equivalent to the universalist position outlined in Chapter 1 – and not exactly from Sunnis, Shias, or any of the other segmentary lineages of thought and practice. While I do not think I have entirely got around this problem, never having spent the long time in Dubai that would allow me to make comparison, I do think that my task was made somewhat easier by having observable processes of comparison and analogy in the field that informed religious reform as it is propagated in Salaya.

Muslims in Mandvi and Salaya claim they are Sunni. However, many of their practices, religious relationships and recitations can only be found in what are more conventionally referred to as Sufi texts. For example, Sufi literature describes an elaborate relationship between individual actions and the resulting state of the soul. Richard Kurin, in a discussion of conceptions of paradise held among Muslims in Pakistan, observes that the internal condition of the body is closely related to external habits and activities (1984). In this sense, the relationship between Saiyed (*pir*) and *murid* in Mandvi is structured around particular conceptions of learning in which the internal self is transformed through external actions. This observation is vital for understanding spiritual apprenticeships under a Saiyed, and *vahaanvatta* apprenticeships under a *seth*, because both forms develop particular practices, actions and tasks that are seen as transforming the inner-self.

The esoteric knowledge of the *pirzade* (lineage of saints) attracts corresponding lineages of disciples. Peter van der Veer describes this as: ‘a social hierarchy of high-status patrons and low-status clients’ (1994:41, also see Gaborieau 1986). The types of learning or apprenticeship this entails presupposes a subtle relationship between the activities themselves and the inner-self: ‘The central metaphor for personal

development is that of habit or *malaka* through which outer actions transform the colors of the soul' (Metcalf 1984:10). In this model, actions are seen as a reflection of true knowledge while simultaneously creating truth. This reflects the widely held disdain in Muslim society for those considered to possess the potential for knowledge who do not nurture it (Bloch 1996). 'Whether one is learning a craft, or poetry and language, or music, or moral and spiritual qualities, the process of outer practice, the creation of habit, and finally a realisation of that process in one's being is precisely the same' (Metcalf 1984:11). In spiritual apprenticeship the *murid* internalises the image of perfection represented by the Saiyed. Through recitation, practice, prayer and study the *murid* passes through a series of reciprocal transformations between the image they have of the Saiyed and the image of themselves. However, the *murid* can never become a Saiyed. The *murid* knows that regardless of how much time, energy and personality he sacrifices to the Saiyed's teaching he will always remain inferior because of his birth.

The first step of a *murid*'s training with a Saiyed is *baia* (pledge of loyalty). From this stage the *murid* enters a dual process of scrutinising his faults (and attempting to remove them) and his virtues (and attempting to improve on them). The many Sufi orders have different, and sometimes very complex, ways of regulating and furthering this relationship (see Ajmal 1984). In Mandvi there are five *durgahs* with residing Saiyed families in attendance and numerous other less developed sites. The son of the last *pir* to sit on the *gadi* (throne, seat of power) at the Dhayapir in Mandvi frequently stressed to me the importance of the rules that his father's clients and *murids* had to follow to maintain the *pir*'s countenance. First and foremost, they had to show all forms of respect to their master. This meant addressing him respectfully – accompanied by the appropriate gestures. They were not to cast a shadow on the *pir*'s body or on his prayer mat, use his utensils or his place of ablution, attend or speak to others in the presence of the *pir*, leave the *pir*'s audience without permission or raise their voice or contradict the *pir*. Further, the *murid* was supposed to give the *pir* the utmost attention and never doubt his words or actions.

These specific rules regulated the interaction of the *murid* with the *pir*. There were, however, two other more general principles to which the *murid* was supposed to abide. First, the *murid* was to realise that the *pir* was omnipotent and that by calling upon other Saiyeds or sources of divine authority the *murid* was compromising his receipt of his master's *bakarat* (ritual efficacy, power). Secondly, the *murid* was to abandon any prayers or rituals practised prior to initiation, and observe only prayers that the *pir* outlined. As mentioned in Chapter 1, in this relationship the Saiyed is all-powerful and the *murid* is like a dead body in the hands of its cleanser.

7.22. Seth–sailor

This model of learning and the associated forms of respect and obedience have clear parallels to the way in which apprenticeship in shipyards operates as a process of individual transformation. In the shipyards, attention to task and the performance of skills and postures have a direct relationship to the spiritual transformation of apprentices. The appropriate kinds of behaviour for *pir–murid* relationships (outlined above) exemplify the behaviour within ideal *seth–sailor* relationships. In the previous chapter it was argued that at a fundamental level apprenticeship was a transformation of a neophyte's hierarchical conceptions from one based around the axiomatic blood of Saiyeds to a commodified model of mediation based on access to prestigious lands and goods. However, apprenticeship in both systems is premised on the process of internal transformation and takes the figure of the Prophet as the model of human perfection.

Learning in shipyards also follows a model of inner transformation in response to external activities in the world and this is clearly principled on the same kinds of respect and deference. But who is the teacher? As shown in chapters 5 and 6 there is not a single individual responsible for the flow of knowledge and skill from the experienced to the neophytes. The master craftsman is not particularly valued as a figure in relation to the more prestigious hierarchies of sailors. The foreman is

responsible for some of the elementary instruction in shipyard techniques, but the dominant source of apprentices' knowledge is devolved through the collective actions of the *vahaanvatta* hierarchy itself. The model of human perfection that presides over this regime is of course the *seth*: the source of wealth and the model of religious virtue. The apprentices are not learning to explicitly become craftsmen, marine architects or engineers, rather they are learning to become sailors.

It is tempting to make a direct comparison between the *pir–murid* relationship and the *seth*–sailor relationship, but there are, however, two important differences between the systems. First, among *seths* and sailors the relationship is more complex than between the *pir–murid* because the hierarchy in shipyards is comprised of multiple occupational-religious stations. Secondly, while the *murid* knows that he will never become a Saiyed, or even saintly, the apprentice in the shipyard knows that it is possible for him to become a *seth*. As discussed in Chapter 5, *seths* tell neophytes that if they work hard they can also become ship owners. Despite these differences, the patterns of hierarchy, and respect and deference described as constituting a fitting *pir–murid* relationship strongly resemble the patterns of hierarchy and bodily performance in shipyards. Therefore, the ideal pattern of apprenticeship in shipyards is loosely based on the *pir–murid* relationship – or at least its form. This being the case then the final two preconditions (discussed above) for spiritual apprenticeship with a *pir* are worthy of special attention in relation to apprenticeship in shipyards.

As shown, the first rule states that neophytes should not turn to other masters because this compromises the patronage of their own master. The second is the idea that apprentices should only follow the ritual practices dictated by their master and should abandon any practices they had before they were initiated. From the material presented in chapters 5 and 6 it is clear that both of these ideas are clearly reflected in the organisation of shipyard work. The relationship between a sailor and a *seth* is cumulative one that, vitally, depends on the disparities between the religious observances of the *seth* and the sailor decreasing over time. In terms of work this

means that sailors labour in the interests of their patron unless they are instructed by him to work for another ship owner. Additionally, sailors are careful not to be seen to compromise their loyalty to the *seth*, because, as discussed in Chapter 6, the reputation of a sailor is vital in the maintenance of his relationship with the *seth*.

The second precept of particular note is that labourers should give up their previous religious and ritual attachments. In this light, it is expected in master–apprentice relationships that neophytes should forsake previous religious practices in favour of those given by their new masters. Chapters 5 and 6 have presented *seths* as manipulating the activities and thoughts of their sailors. Within this framework the aspirations of the apprentice also contribute towards creating symmetry between downward flows of expectation and upward (aspirational) forms of behaviour among apprentices. In other words, the relationships that construct the *vahaanvatta* may be structured by the agendas of those that control the capital, but they are also reinforced by the long-term ambitions of the apprentice. The transformation of apprentices therefore, stems not only from competition among sailors for scarce positions within the crew, but it is part and parcel of the expectations apprentices have before they arrive in shipyards. When Majid was young he had regularly gone to the shrine that owned his house to serve the presiding Saiyeds, and before going to the shipyards, had seen many *murid* relationships develop within the confines of the shrine.

This is the dominant model of apprenticeship in local Muslim society and it operates on the same principles among *pirs* and *murids* as it does among *seths* and sailors. Apprentices in shipyards learn how to move cross-members, erect scaffolding, pass *chappals* and laugh at jokes told about crows. Through these external activities and their gradual accommodation of the skills, techniques and technologies of shipbuilding, the apprentice is transformed internally. Becoming a sailor involves a transformation from novice to habitué as habit becomes habitude. This is a process of technical and social action in the world transforming the dispositions, aspirations and understandings of the internal self. However, the

parallels between the *pir–murid* relationship and the *seth*–sailor relationship are not that simple. The following section describes how apprenticeship in shipyards, and the model of internal transformation through external actions, coincides with the distinction outlined in Chapter 5 between ‘work of the body’ and ‘work of the mind’.

The traditional regimen of merchants and sailors is principled on the qualities of descent, most commonly expressed through idioms of blood. This has been shown to be a cause, and partially an effect, of diet, sexual appetite, temperament, disposition towards violent actions, and the ability or inability to ratiocinate. This last quality is expressed in idioms of ‘minds’ and ‘bodies’, which have a direct relationship to the division of labour and the distribution of capital between merchants and sailors. It has been shown that apprentices in shipyards, and sailors on ships, dismiss their work as ‘easy knowledge’. However, when this statement is considered in conjunction with the outline (above) of external actions transforming the colour of the soul a further set of conclusions can be drawn.

7.23. The gift ship

In an environment that is simultaneously brutal and rewarding where does the sense of certainty in the aspirations of the apprentices come from? Later in this chapter the discussion turns to the ways in which working on ships allows sailors access to certain kinds of prestige through shipping. However, within the last ten years there had been two gifts given in Salaya that were not overtly religious, nor had they been purchased from Dubai. Both Thaims and Pathans had gifted ships to men who had served them long and dutifully. These gifts elevated two men from the rank of captain to that of *seth*, and while the established ship owners did not gift modern or efficient ships, they had gifted ships. The obvious effect of these gifts was to entrench more deeply the lives of the recipients into the constituency of the givers. However, the exemplary nature of these gifts has a profound effect on the aspirations of apprentices. The amount of capital required to build and run a ship is large. The segmentary nature of inheritance and capital management tends to keep the control

of ships within very specific groups of men. Thus, entrance into the shipping business is highly restricted and depends largely on individuals exploiting exceptional economic circumstances. The Bhadala may use their own lives as examples of what it is possible to achieve, but by gifting ships to loyal members of their crews they had set a precedent. Men who had come to the shipyards as apprentices, now owned their own ships and were addressed as '*seth*'. This was further evidence for the apprentices that it was possible to achieve great things through serving a particular *seth*. Loyalty and obedience are part of becoming a sailor, but in the example set by the two honorary *seths* so is spending time in prison and taking great personal risks on behalf of the patron.

Apprentices aspire within the hierarchy over which the *seth* presides. They know that when the *seth* was young he worked as a wage-labour apprentice. They also know that he is now a wealthy man of considerable influence. From labouring and gradually appreciating the skills, tasks and technologies of shipbuilding and sailing, the *seth* is seen as having transformed internally. Through cumulative acts of refinement the *seth*'s mental acumen has developed and his corporeal disposition has become weighted in favour of his mind.

This leads back to the discussion in Chapter 3 of the relationship of the body and soul where it was argued that the soul was comprised of two elements: *nafs*, dictating base instincts, and *aql*, the higher order of the intellect and moral faculties. *Seths* are seen to have transformed the inner condition of their souls – that is to say they have developed *aql* – through outer activities in the world. Gradually mastering each stage of the practice of technology, the *seth* was able to start carrying out the kind of work traditionally carried out by merchants. Over time, mastery of the bodily techniques of the *vahaanvatta* has an effect on the internal dispositions of the body in favour of the mind, refinement and prestigious comportment. The *seth*'s condition is related to the inter-connected factors of business acumen, wealth, religious observances and power. The external activities in the world that the *seth* is capable of performing are a reflection of the cumulative process through which neophytes can become masters

of themselves. The *seth* is seen as having mastered the bodily techniques of shipping and shipbuilding, which gradually has led to the refinement of his mind. In chapters 4 and 5 it was argued that the Bhadals' view of themselves did not coincide with the dominant idea in Mandvi that the propensities for, and dispositions towards, certain kinds of tasks and actions are firmly given in the blood. This is also seen in the gift ships that allowed sailors to become *seths*. It was also pointed out that in Mandvi it was held that the Bhadala had not really become merchants, but had used the violence and immorality of their corrupt mixed-blood natures to become wealthy. In shipyards the view is rather different. The *seth* is all-powerful and this power is a reflection of his success as a trader and merchant. The closer neophytes get to *seths* the harder it is to ignore their physical and social statures.

7.3. Kingship

In Chapter 2, it was argued that the pervasive model of social organisation among Hindus in Kachchh was derived from Rajput polity, which revolved around apical social figures and their webs of influence. In this section a few similarities between the organisation of Muslim shrines and the organisation of kingship are described. Richard Eaton has noted similar parallels between the organisation of Muslim sainthood in the Punjab, in terms of the highly elaborated codes of etiquette and pageantry, and the centrality of the royal turban in the construction of power relations and in determining paths of legitimate succession (1984:355). It is also apparent in Kachchh that Muslim (and for that matter Hindu) sainthood is constructed from elements of royal polity and corresponding forms of social organisation.

In Mandvi Saiyeds are addressed as *bava*, and less commonly as *bapu*. Both terms are also used to describe the kings and Hindu holy-men of Kachchh, the latter is additionally used to describe the land-owning Rajputs more generally. Devotees of a particular *bava* come to the *chhilasthan* (place of retreat and seclusion) of the *pir* (saint). Specifically, clients come to the dead Saiyed's *bacchanu* (resting-place) and

to the *gadi* (seat or throne) of the living Saiyed from where the devotee receives an audience. As discussed in previous chapters, from the shrine the *pir* mediates on behalf of clients between mundane and divine realms to cure sickness, grant wishes and convey auspiciousness. Within the *durgah sharif* (shrine, noble court and seat of spiritual authority), aside from the *mazar* (tomb) of the dead *pir*, the other most important structure is the *nissan* or *nishin* (the pole from which the standard flies). The *nissan* indicates the presence of a noble successor and forms part of the divine *qutb* (axis) that runs through all legitimate saintly *bakarat* (spiritual efficacy or power).

In the organisation of the shrines there are clearly many terminological references to forms of traditional kingship and leadership from the Middle East and Iran. However, there are also many connections between the organisation of the Durbar and the organisation of *durgahs*. This is not particularly surprising as traditionally the Durbar granted *wilaya* (lands and administrative positions) to Saiyeds with large followings. The Rajput Durbar was comprised of a set of institutions, including courts, palaces and administration buildings. At the centre of this cluster of institutions was the *gadi* from where worldly power over the kingdom emanated. In Kachchh however, in common with the Bhatiya material presented in Chapter 2, the organisation of Saiyeds and shrines is one that reflects the dominant mode of social and ritual organisation as represented by Rajput polity. Clearly there are differences in these organisations, but the apparent similarities refer to more than merely metaphors of place and power. For example, Metcalf outlines a series of connections between the hereditary and institutional positions of sainthood and kingship:

Despite the division of function between the religious and the political leader, however, the ruler was often expected also to manifest Islamic qualities in himself. A bad king is a bad Muslim. A good king is ascribed saintly qualities. The relation is closer than metaphor, for the ideal is that of the Prophet himself, leader in all aspects of life (1984:7).

Likewise, a king is described as a saint, and the saint in turn is described as a king, or at least *shah* (prince). Islamic societies are permeated by the importance of moral exemplification, which includes discipline, training, refinement, respect, discrimination and personal order. In Indian Islam, as elsewhere, Allah is the ultimate authority men derive worldly authority from (see Masud 1984). Authority in this sense is God-given. Underlying the pronouncements of *seths* and Saiyeds is the conviction that Islamic practice defines the higher levels of human potential. Men who meet the accepted standards of religious behaviour are the most fully human. Thus for the Saiyed, his birth and his blood give him a tremendous advantage in this quest: he is born with a disposition to become fully human.

What links Muslim kings and Saiyeds, but excludes the Rajput Durbar, is the ideal figure of the Prophet as a model for behaviour. The Prophet is seen as personifying ideal human qualities, which are accessible to other men through the Koran and *sunna* (Robinson 1983:201). It also seems reasonable to argue (albeit from a different perspective) that the ideal Rajput king also personifies ideal human qualities. Normal men can aspire to the perfection of these figures. In the terms of the Bhadas' religious discourse, in which they model themselves on the ideal figure of the Prophet, the quest for human perfection means treading the thin line of purity in ritual and action discussed in the previous chapter. By treading this path the individual can avoid the perilous realms of low deities and demons. However, Saiyeds are in a rather different position because they are seen by their devotees as closer than normal men to the Prophet and to divine realms. The Saiyed patron is a source of *ilm* (knowledge) and a model of comportment, demeanour and temperament for the *murid* (apprentice). But, neither *seth* nor Saiyed is actually of an equivalent status to the apical figure of the Prophet, they are merely seen as the highest form of men locally.

7.31. Big-manship

A number of chapters have referred to the idea of big-manship in terms of charisma, giving, reputation, patronage and the distribution of knowledge. The model of kingship that seems to permeate caste, *jamat*, occupation and political life in Mandvi is obviously a reflection of this idea. The language of social organisation in Kachchh is replete with idioms alluding to the power and greatness of men. These words and titles are often tied to positions within institutions, such as the *mahajan*, *samaj* and *jamat*. The big-man's galactic polity emanates from centralised positions within institutions from where he redistributes power and prestige, and brokers political and economic transactions. Although, as shown in Chapter 4, Mines is keen to distance his model of a big-man from the role of kingship in South India, in contrast, big-men in Kachchh draw upon the royal model of power and patronage. It was pointed out that all big-men, except the biggest big-man, are part of the constituencies of other big-men. Thus, Haji Thaim is certainly an institutional big-man, but is dependent on the services of Haji Bhadala-Pathan who appears as a bigger big-man. However, it seems to me that Mines' model has further potential that he only alludes to. Rather than being a model that is applicable to those perched at the top of the hierarchy, the model actually refers to all levels of the hierarchy. In other words, wishing to appear as a benefactor and patron are facets that characterise all levels of *vahaanvatta* hierarchy. Among the *vahaanvatta*, every sailor and *seth* is a big-man to a degree. Each is the pinnacle of his own transactional pyramid in terms of giving, while simultaneously being in a lowly recipient position in other men's transactional arenas. The following sections explore a number of aspects of this idea.

7.32. From *nagarseth* to *dadaseth*

Chapter 2 discussed the now redundant role of the *nagarseth*, the apical non-royal big-man in mercantile society. This position was occupied by the most powerful Hindu mercantile families of the times. In contrast, the dominant mode of big-manship in western India today is the *dada*. Hansen describes the *dada* as:

a style of political and social power and protection which evokes images of a masculine, virile, assertive – and violent – local strongman (who himself is ‘popular’), acting through a multitude of local, self-made networks of loyalists, and not through institutionalised action and discourse (1996:158).

The *dada* is an elder-brother figure. Although Hansen associates this type of social figure specifically with the rise of the Shiv Sena in Bombay the *dada* also plays an important role among Muslims. While all ship owners and their sons are *seths*, among the Bhadala there is only one *dadaseth*: the eldest son of the apical Bhadala Pathan. He is taciturn and serious and plays the role with utmost dedication, and is everything that Hansen describes. He is un-institutional and is the political rival to the eldest son of the apical figure of the Thaim *atak*, who is the *patel* (headman) of the Bhadala Jamat. In Salaya the *dadaseth* is the apical big-man (although subservient to his father). Below them in the hierarchy are the ranks of Pathans, Thaims, other *seths*, captains, navigators, foremen, sailors and those employed from Mandvi. Within these stations every man is concerned with playing the big-man game, and some of the ways in which they go about this are explored in the following section.

7.33. Saleem Ali’s betrayal

Saleem Ali is a sailor and a contemporary of Majid’s. As Saleem Ali narrated his transition from apprentice to habitué he highlighted the importance of trust and the role of big-manship within the *vahaanvatta*. In the two hours he took to recount his biography a third of the time was taken up with an explanation of a particular incident of betrayal that had happened seven years before our conversation. He was preoccupied with this incident as it was continuing to influence his reputation. The significance he attached to being betrayed is indicative of the centrality of trust and reputation and the role of patronage. The story of his betrayal is simple. At the time he had worked for the same *seth* for seven years and was a senior sailor on a ship that ran regularly between Bombay and Dubai. Saleem Ali clearly had an excellent

relationship with his *seth*, was anticipating promotion and had borrowed two large sums of money from him: one to build a house for his family and a second to buy a taxi for his brother. In 1991, two of Saleem Ali's 'friends' returned from Dubai after their temporary labouring contracts had expired. They had both been apprenticed on the ships of another *seth*, but had jumped ship in Dubai without informing him of their intentions. This had resulted in bad faith between them and the *seth*, who refused to re-employ them. They approached Saleem Ali to ask if he could vouch for them and get them employed on his *seth*'s ships. Saleem Ali had known both men since childhood and had exchange relations with them of the type described in following sections of this chapter. He was obliged to help them and to use his position of influence to find work for them. The *seth* agreed and employed them both as junior sailors on another of his ships. Saleem Ali had proved himself capable of managing the distribution of patronage and protection of the *seth* to those to whom he himself appeared as a source of patronage and protection.

As he continued to tell me the story he was clearly angry. After a few months at sea the two sailors were arrested in Dubai. At first it was assumed that this was a mistake, but, as the story unfolded, Saleem Ali was horrified to learn that the men had been arrested for stealing marine engine spares from Dubai docks. In practical terms the arrest was an inconvenience and expense for the *seth* who was legally responsible for the sailors while they were in port. It also left him short of two competent crewmembers. However, the consequences of this action rebounded in three ways for Saleem Ali, who at the time was in Somalia and clearly not involved in the theft. First, it called to question Saleem Ali's ability to vouch for the trustworthiness of others. This is more complicated than it seems because it jeopardised his trust relationship with the *seth* and called into question Saleem Ali's ability to make loyal constituents for himself. Secondly, the black mark this left against his name was further compounded when it was disclosed that the men had stolen the engine parts on behalf of a rival *seth* from the port of Jam Salaya. The men had negotiated and transacted autonomously with a *seth* who was not their own. This, as discussed above, is a highly disreputable form of action, which is heavily

sanctioned. In this case, the blame fell at Saleem Ali's feet. The men had not been employed because the *seth* knew them, but because Saleem Ali knew them. In effect, he had become responsible for their integrity and skill from the moment he publicly vouched for them. From Saleem Ali's perspective he had betrayed the *seth* himself. Thirdly, to compound Saleem Ali's shame, the men had openly joked about the incident in Mandvi after they had been released from prison. They also made no attempt to provide recompense for their actions, which damaged Saleem Ali's reputation within the *vahaanvatta* as well as among his own constituents in Mandvi.

This story illustrates the salutary perils and risks involved in constituency construction and the fallibility of trust-based relationships. Saleem Ali trusted the two men and was under the impression that he held their respect. This tale also illustrates something of the morality of exchanging trust for patronage. In a perfect world, Saleem Ali's reputation would have ensured that his constituents acted in the interests of the *seth*'s constituency of which Saleem Ali was a prominent member. That they did not, and that Saleem Ali's honour was compromised, points to the fact that the morality of others is in part the responsibility of their patrons. Through his actions Saleem Ali was attempting to be a little big-man. This form of action, pre-eminently personified by the *dadaseth*, permeates all levels of the *vahaanvatta*. A few months after the incident Saleem Ali found work on another vessel vouched for by a sailor from whom Saleem Ali had received goods and occasional favours, of which this was one. With this story in mind the following section considers the question of constituency building at all levels of the *vahaanvatta* hierarchy.

7.4. Fences or bridges? The exchange of goods

The social lives given to goods can be used to build 'fences and bridges' (Douglas and Isherwood 1996:xv). Among the *vahaanvatta* the role of particular kinds of transaction reveal how big-man status is formed at all levels of the hierarchy. This section examines some of the connections between these different forms of exchange among *seths*, sailors and their kin. Continuing the biographical approach from the

previous chapter this section relates it to commodity transactions (Kopytoff 2000; and Appadurai 2000). The previous chapter outlined a typical biography of migration and travel from within the long-term perspective of putative population exchange (as discussed in Chapter 3). The goods presented by sailors to those remaining at home appear 'out of the blue' from markets unknown to the recipient. The biography of the good is verifiable through the more familiar biography of the 'individual' sailor. What follows is an examination of the exchange of goods, as gifts and commodities, and the conceptions of power inherent in 'foreign' goods, as various methods available to men for gaining status and constituency. This leads into a discussion of how imported religious items and notions are treated as various kinds of goods. The argument is that the ways in which the effects of long-term historical migrations (voluntary and forced) have ordered social hierarchy are given a modern logic (attached to commodities and religion), which is deployed in an attempt to overturn 'traditional' social ordering at a general level. Sailors also use this logic to create their own constituencies. Consequently, the discussion focuses on the relationship between the acquisitive domain of the individual (who also acquires through giving) and the cycle of long-term exchanges concerned with the reproduction of the social and cosmic order (Parry and Bloch 1989:2). However, in this instance, the social and cosmic orders are being reproduced in a subverted form – that is to say, as a transformation of the traditional logic described in Chapter 3.

To return to the issue developed in the previous two chapters, of the commodified mediation of people and things, crucially, and in common with the material presented in Chapter 3, commodified mediation is also based upon the traditional model of status and prestige being unevenly distributed throughout the Indian Ocean. This trend is a reflection of a transforming dialectic between the short-term exchange of people and things and the long-term exchanges concerned with the reproduction of social order. The principal difference between the way goods and religious ideas are circulated is the restricted domain allowed for the latter. While goods are commodified through the activities of extraordinary brokers, religious concepts and items are passed within highly confined realms that deliberately rule out the

possibility of brokerage. In this discussion the enchantment of the *seth*'s charisma stems from the exceptional elective affinity between the religious features of charisma and the sociologically generated material interests of the sailors. The commodity pyramids described in the following sections make *seths*, and to a lesser degree senior constituents, appear as having embodied *barakat* (with a special emphasis on the quality of abundance).

In Gregory's (1982) division of gifts and commodities the first is based on an exchange of *inalienable* objects between *interdependent* transactors; the second an exchange of *alienable* objects between *independent* transactors (see Parry and Bloch 1989:8). In this formulation, gifts and commodities and their transactors are composed of different qualities and thus are separate. This division is also reputed to be found in the separation of precapitalist economies from capitalist economies:

the fetishism that is found in the economics of precapitalist societies arises from the sense of organic unity between persons and their products, and this stands in stark contrast to the fetishism of commodities in capitalist societies, which results from the split between persons and the things that they produce and exchange. The result is a subordination of men to the things they produce, which appear to be independent and self-empowered (Taussig 1980:37).

As Jonathan Parry and Maurice Bloch have illustrated both these divisions are erroneous, and are clouded with *our* perceptions of economy and the morality of exchange. They argue that:

The radical opposition which so many anthropologists have discovered between the principles on which gift and commodity exchange are founded derives in part, we believe, from the fact that *our* ideology of the gift has been constructed in the antithesis of market exchange (1989:9).

In this sense, gifts are transubstantiated in a kind of reverse fetishism of commodities. James Carrier argues of 'our' notion of gifts that:

They become disembodied - they lose their past as commodities and even as material things, instead becoming subordinated to the individual emotions of the giver. In doing so, they are seen to entail no taint of obligation or interest on the part of either the giver or the recipient (1995:166).

In contrast, the 'gifts' described here are valued for two reasons, other than those described above. First, they have a biography and a social life, albeit moving from the unknown bazaar into familiar relationships. Secondly, they entail obligation and interest. Therefore, 'gifts' given by sailors appear to be the opposite of how Carrier conceptualises our notion of the 'gift'. For goods brought by ship from Dubai it is only when items come to resemble commodities that their biographies become de-personalised, removing the sense of obligation and the stamp of personalised authenticity.

In the ethnography presented in this section what appear as 'Western commodities' (examples of 'fetishised' commodities in the extreme) are exchanged in transaction for currency while simultaneously embodying the qualities of a 'gift'. The categorisation of the two, gifts and commodities, becomes blurred. Furthermore, when such commodities become transactional (i.e. they are exchanged for cash to an independent broker), they do so in order that the procurer of the good can avoid the qualities inherent in them that make them good gifts. Thus turning goods into transactable commodities is the final resort for the agent.

Ships return to Mandvi before the seas grow rough between July and the end of September. This marks the return of loved ones and the season of new goods, fashions and consumption potential. The sizeable hoards of goods that accompany returning sailors range from the mundane and cosmetic to the weird and the wonderful. The more extravagant items have included an ambulance, a sun bed and a French language typewriter. Typically, however, sailors return with soaps, perfumes, clothing, electrical items, cassettes, watches and cameras. The Bhadala also import foreign goods from Dubai on their ships, but are more ostentatious in their consumption than their sailors. The video hall and the sunken bath mentioned in

Chapter 5 are technologies from the Gulf. The most famous import during my fieldwork was a Honda racing motorcycle from Dubai, the import duty on which would have purchased two Indian-made models. The allure of this kind of consumption fuels the aspirations of those the Bhadala recruit to their ships. The opportunities to ride a racing Honda, with slick tyres, narrow mudguard clearances, and taut suspension, are limited in a village where the roads are not metalled and for much of the year are covered in sand. But to see commodities purely in terms of their utilitarian value is to miss the point of possessing them. Similarly, Jock Stirrat argues that the point of similar consumption patterns among fishermen on the northwest coast of Sri Lanka is simply to own such objects. But, Stirrat further argues that: 'the aim was to arouse jealousy in others. Through owning such objects social standing could be claimed over those who did *not* own them' (1989:107). Jealousy is a dangerous emotion in Salaya, the root of much suspicion and misunderstanding and not something to be evoked lightly, and such products were not imported to arouse jealousy deliberately. However, such goods are explicitly about claiming standing over others who do not have the resources to possess, and more importantly, to procure such goods. Broadly, this works in two ways. First, it displays the wealth of the *seth* especially to those who labour for him. Secondly, it shows the *seth*'s power to procure such goods from a world economic system that they see themselves integrated into. Explicitly, they have the power to extract goods from this system and import them into Kachchh. The 'worth' is not the monetary value of the 'commodity', but the qualities inherent in these goods that reveal the individual's power to procure them.

The preceding discussion has pointed to the fact that the attribution of worth and value to such goods is somewhat anomalous. For example, a highly prized Sony television bought without tax or duty surcharges in Dubai can be obtained in exchange for the same amount of currency as an Indian made television with similar features from a local dealership. Additionally, with the increasing liberalisation of the Indian economy and the reduction of once prohibitive import duties on foreign goods, Sony televisions are now available from specialist import shops in Bombay.

However, the same model from Bombay is less valued than one from Dubai. Those in possession of a Sony may well make reference to the quality of the parts and workmanship, and the longer service guarantee offered by the (conveniently located) agent in Dubai. But to see such preferences as rational processes based on a perfect flow of consumer information and an assessment of opportunity cost is again to miss the point. Nobody would exchange a twelve-month-old Sony television for an Indian made one with a bigger tube, super-woofers and split-screen viewing. Neither is it simply that Sony made televisions are harder to come by, although that is certainly a part of it.

Every Muslim I met in Mandvi has at least one personal connection living or working overseas. Those distant figures are inundated with requests for foreign goods and services. Whatever the connection between the émigré and the individual in Mandvi, very few such requests are honoured because of the time, expense and bureaucracy involved for the migrant. Those who work on ships have the time and the resources to secure, transport and personally oversee the execution of such demands. Thus men of low status on ships embody an enviable degree of power in the eyes of those who do not travel. Ships may be kept waiting in port for many weeks, giving sailors time to secure goods knowing that they can accompany their purchases all the way home, minimising the possibility that they will be vandalised, stolen or damaged.

Frankly, I was somewhat puzzled by the way that people would constantly ascribe quantitative amounts to items such as Sony televisions. Figures would commonly be given in Rupees, but also in Rials, and yet more prestigiously in American Dollars. This kind of counting could represent a form of aggregated value, a marker of prestige depending on the amount of currency involved, or as a form of analogy standing for substitutability (Strathern 1992:117). However, the example of Sony and Videotron television sets implies that something other than monetary value gives the good its worth. Two apparently similar goods cost the same, but are evidently not worth the same because they are not substitutable. What provides worth is the sense

of the unquantifiable exogenous power in the 'thing'. It could be argued that the value in the Sony television set over the Videotron one was that the former was simply more difficult to procure. However, the value of the good cannot be given in strict monetary terms, nor in terms of its accessibility, because the value is given by access and control over such goods, which are quantifiable through various degrees of *sabandhi* (relationships between people). The power inherent in a good, such as an imported television set, is translated into a variety of different forms of *sabandhi*, which reveal what makes big-men, how men relate with each other, what are worthwhile objects, and the role that worthwhile objects play in constructing men and their relationships. The goods that sailors return home with are purchased overseas with a variety of destinations in mind. Goods brought on ships are destined for personal use and display, for 'gifts' to relatives, friends and neighbours, and for sale to individuals and to independent wholesalers. Leaving aside the personal use and accumulation of these goods, the following section examines the types of transaction involved in exchanging goods, which become respectively 'gifts', 'commoditised gifts' or 'transactable commodities'.

7.41. Gifts

The returning sailors and migrant labourers bring with them a series of things to 'gift' to relatives, friends, allies and potential allies. These goods actualise and modify social relations. From the sailor's perspective giving away consumer items is a way of acquiring status among his kin group and within a wider social network, but also a way of maintaining control over the goods and the people to whom they have been entrusted. The presentation of gifts beholds the receiver to the giver. Receiving creates a greater sense of relatedness to the donor than giving creates relatedness to the receiver. These prestations are not reciprocal in material terms, rather they are reciprocal in terms of respect and status given to the donor. For the sailor, such donation entails an element of calculation because they do not have access to an unlimited supply of gifts. Presenting a watch to another man creates a permanent tie between the giver and the receiver. However, the efficacy of this relationship can

dwindle if it is not refreshed with similar gifts in subsequent seasons. Thus, most gifts represent long-term investments in the loyalty of particular constituents. In short, the more the sailor gives the more status he attracts. By doing this he is directly emulating the patronage of his *seth*, who in turn is conforming to pervasive rules of status and constituency building. As donors, sailors are playing at being little big-men. Through 'gifts' a sailor maintains prestige within this kin group – important in view of his prolonged absence from local social relations throughout the shipping season.

7.42. Commoditised gifts

Sailors not only meet the demands of relatives and friends for goods, they also buy things in order to resell them. Typically smaller items, these goods are occasionally openly sold in the bazaar, but more commonly clients are sought through kin and friend networks and through the shipping fraternity itself. The sailor acts as a guarantor of the commodity, standing as a symbol of a verifiable and prestigious origin. Regardless of whether money is exchanged in the transaction, the new owners of the good will describe it in terms of the procuring sailor because this attests to its power. Tracing the migration routes of commodities through the biographies of sailors affirms their authenticity. Without such a biography the qualities imbued in the transaction are diminished. This form of exchange is a partial attempt to create equality between the giver and the recipient. However, the good is not a disembodied commodity because part of its identity remains dependent on its biography (Kopytoff 2000:66–68) and on the figure who guarantees its authenticity. In other words, even through cash transactions the qualities of the procurer remain inherent in the commodity. Having access to these forms of commodity is reflective of the receiver's ability to procure goods – even if money is exchanged. In this form of transaction the sailor acts as a patron, and the receiver is beholding to the giver. Through such transactions sailors gradually become big-men, their status increases with their ability to procure foreign goods to donate as gifts or to sell as commodified gifts.

7.43. Transactable commodities

Some sailors sell their personal cargo directly to a 'wholesaler' rather than relying on word of mouth and their networks of personal influence. The two 'wholesalers' I was acquainted with are wonderful, strange and highly unusual people. There is a good reason for the concurrence of their personal idiosyncrasy and their occupations. What is striking about these brokers of prestigious foreign goods is that they are women. In Mandvi to see the Muslim women related to sailors on the streets at all was unusual, to see them freely engaging men in conversation in public was highly unusual because, to varying degrees, all other women connected to sailors and *seths* live in seclusion.

The women trading in foreign commodities were Muslim, their brothers, male affines and some consanguines worked on ships. Aware of the women's occupation, these men (and others) supply many of the goods women transact. Both the women I know were shrewd and cunning negotiators. Coming into the bazaar in the evenings, they would improbably remove cartons of cigarettes or bottles of perfume from their clothing before prospective clients. Widely thought of as prostitutes, they were feared by men in the bazaar. They were in the business of commercially transacting commodities better known as gifts. They seldom handle large or expensive items, restricting themselves to soaps, perfumes, batteries, cigarettes, watches, compact discs, branded clothes and electronic toys. Procuring goods through such agents gives the good a higher value than if it had been purchased in Bombay. However, goods purchased from a specialised broker have a lesser value than those either gifted or transacted by a relative or friend. These women mediate between social realms – between sailors and townsfolk, between sea and land – buying commodities in bulk from sailors and reselling them in the town. They are unconventional merchants. Regarded as sinful women, their business is not based on enticing displays or on rehearsed sales banter because the immutable quality is evident in the object itself. The improbable figure of the mediator denies the formation of *sabandhi*

between the sailor and the consumer of the good; the inversion of the conventional mercantile gender and style ensures that the biography of the good is ruptured and depersonalised.

By disposing of goods in this way sailors make money in a single rapid transaction, but in doing so they make considerably less than they would if they had disposed of the goods individually. Although part of the rationale of this transaction is to realise a profit, sailors willingly incur a 'loss', in order to avoid developing a cumbersome network of clients too large for them to maintain. Individual bottles of perfume and bars of soap could be sold in individual transactions, but as commodified gifts such transactions would necessitate further transactions in the future. Goods transacted by these women carry with them a depersonalised biography. Their authenticity is given by an association being made with the ships of a particular *seth* (e.g. from Haji Thaim's ships), rather than with an individual sailor. For landlubbers the desirability of goods given in all three kinds of transaction is twofold. First, they are imbued with wondrous and unquantifiable power of the 'outside'. Secondly, they reflect the social standing of the owner – owning the good is not in itself sufficient to reflect high standing, but within the item it is implied that the owner had the social influence (others were somehow beholden to him) to extract goods from others. In other words, the exchange of a good that provides the sailor status, also allows the recipient to claim elevated status in the social realm outside the confines of the transaction itself. Thus, constituency building is not simply a matter of unwitting clients receiving from powerful patrons, the clients also benefit from their association with the patron in realms outside the particular transaction. In these ways it is not so much the goods themselves that are used to create social bridges or fences but the kinds of exchange through which foreign goods are integrated into the local economy.

7.44. Exchange of images and ideas

The preceding discussion has outlined the logic applied to foreign commodities as values of exchange in Mandvi. Typically, however, these goods are not consumed in a conventional sense. They are displayed and paraded on special occasions, but are not actually used as daily or routine items. The discussion now turns to look at the ways in which images and ideas of Islam are imported and commoditised through the models of local exchange outlined above. The argument presented below runs as follows: Islam is treated as if it were a transactable object, in terms of the power complex that accompanies imported versions. Religious values and paraphernalia are categorised as 'gifts' and as 'commoditised gifts', but always fall short of becoming 'transactable commodities'. This deliberate selection of particular paths of transaction reflects the political and social interests of those driving the reform process. The status of the Bhadala *seth* is dependent on the ability to appear as patron and as giver of religious gifts. Thus access to prestigious mosques, ritual events and certain kinds of ritual paraphernalia is assiduously controlled by *seths* and is not allowed to enter realms in which religious value becomes freely transactable. Rather than making a universal attempt at Islamicising all Muslims, the imported values inherent in the message are used by a relatively small group of men to enhance their own social status and, in the process, reform social and religious precedence.

The *seth* does not of course have a monopoly on procuring symbols of high religious standing. The Koran, clothing and prestigious ways of performing rituals can be imported by any number of sailors. However, the status of the individual whose biography attests to the authenticity of the good also plays a role in the value attached to it. Simply, goods imported by men of high standing are imbued with a greater value than those brought by sailors. In this sense, the inherent power of foreign goods reinforces the existing hierarchy of the *vahaanvatta*. With a consumer item a sailor has to decide whether to present it to A, B or C. It is a limited good and competition for his largesse is zero sum. If A becomes the recipient then B and C loose. It is possible to argue that the opposite is true of prayers and rituals because A,

B and C can all attend and benefit from a sailor's patronage without entering the *seth's* orbit of influence. However, because of the hierarchy of patronage the sailor can only entice his inferiors into participating in such prestigious events. Through this he gains further support, but does not gain extra status in terms of the *vahaanvatta* hierarchy. The most powerful forms of status gain can only be conferred by the *seth*. Rituals and prayers sponsored by the *seth* remain the most prestigious and most efficacious in terms of status elevation. Invitations to attend prayers during Moharam or Nava Naroj are not limited goods in the strict fashion, but they are severely restricted. So it follows that prestigious ritual and prayer are limited in similar ways to consumer goods. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that power and quasi-magic qualities ascribed to foreign lands and the things that are brought from them are not entirely divorced from the social relations and position of those who import them.

Previous chapters contrasted two seemingly ubiquitous forms of Islam. It follows from these discussions that in India, as elsewhere, the perennial targets for religious reformers are intermediaries who claim powers that enable them to mediate between the human world and the divine. In Mandvi, intermediaries claim to be descendants of the Prophet and claim prestigious origin from Arabia. Simply put, reform against the role of intermediaries led by the ship owners, serves, in the long term, to better the Bhadals' social position by denying the legitimacy of social hierarchy based principally on genealogical origin and the purity of blood. However, there is perhaps a more important reason why they deny intermediaries and that is because they wish to control what socially makes men, prestige and status. Islamic patronage, which works in a remarkably similar way to the exchange of goods, is a similar method of social elevation as 'gift' and 'commodified gift' exchanges. As discussed in Chapter 6, everyone knows that authentic Islamic practices come from the Gulf, and the religious ideas and commodities transacted by *seths* are seen as coming directly from there. Importantly, the distribution of prestigious religious practices is not farmed out to intermediaries because the personal biography and agency of the individual *seth* or sailor is vital for him to claim elevated social status. The authenticity of particular

practices is derived from the Gulf – this is verifiable through the biography of the individual. Thus in the prestigious arena of distributing religious practices and goods the individual retains the power inherent in the good for himself within his constituency. He does not release this power into the wider world of intermediary exchange. Religious things and practices contain within them more persuasive power than consumer goods. The worth inherent in religious artefacts is political, efficacious, and is the ultimate sign of authenticity.

Importing Islam refers to tangible religious objects such as the Koran, clothes, foodstuffs and architectural styles and techniques. Alongside these objects come religious practices, language and propriety. These things, perhaps surprisingly, are also imported from Dubai the commodity mecca, rather than Saudi Arabia, the nation state in which Mecca stands. The signs and ideals of orthodoxy and orthopraxy of an illusory model of Islam have become central to the ways in which the Bhadala organise social life. The social project of the Bhadala is carried out in their own terms, influenced by their experiences in the Gulf, but independently from other Kachchhi Muslims (aside from their constituents).

Gifts made to the community by the *seth* carry with them the same powers as commodities discussed previously. Architectural style, form and proportion are taken directly from Dubai. Two of the three most prestigious mosques in Salaya are constructed with single imposing minarets, in counter-distinction to the traditional style where a small minaret was built at each corner of the structure. ‘Gifts’, such as the building or endowing of mosques and Arabic or Urdu medium Koran schools, are the most striking examples of a *seth*’s status. While most men working at sea have the opportunity to present kin with consumer goods, only the very wealthy can afford to import religion in tangible commodified forms.

Commodified gifts of a lesser order are provided to the clients of *seths*. These things include robes, slippers, and invitations for Friday prayers, Nava Naroj and Moharam commemorations. The prayers at the Friday Mosque are a striking example

of the way in which apprenticeship transforms the individual. After some time in the service of a *seth* a neophyte will be invited over the river to join the Friday congregation. In order to attend, the young sailor has to forsake his traditional *jamat* mosque in which his family and neighbours pray. Clothing imbued with specific religious overtones is made by the *seth*'s tailor in Dubai and imported into Kachchh. These items are then purchased by young sailors, who benefit from the prestige of clothes that come from both the 'Gulf' and the same hand as those worn by the *seth*.

The Bhadals' denial of the legitimacy of Saiyed intermediaries in religious orthopraxy means that control of Islamic practice remains in the hands of those who have the power to patronise a particular vision. Skullcaps, robes, slippers, religious prints and rose water imported by the *seths* are never sold to a commodity agent. Rather, these items are sold, or sometimes given to young sailors. Commercial and spiritual intermediaries are denied legitimacy in the promulgation of the 'faith'. Such figures mitigate transactions that actualise *sabandhi* ties and depersonalise the migration biographies of things, thus by releasing a commodity into a realm where the individual status inherent in a transaction is negated there is no gain for the *seth*. Therefore, religious reform is persuasive because the flows of commodities and the status that emerges from these transactions is tightly controlled and restricted to the prestigious realms of ship owners.

The status of the two intermediaries, the feminine broker and the divine Saiyed, can be seen as parallel when it comes to the integration of exogenous commodities into local exchange relations. The Saiyed is himself a putative exogenous figure, who is also seen as a religious mediator by virtue of his birth. In the Bhadals' rhetoric he is also a corrupt and liminal figure who transcends the boundaries between the divine and the mundane. The Saiyed is a broker of lesser order truths and powers. The feminine broker, in comparison, personifies an inversion of the normal attributes of brokerage and transaction. She de-personifies the biography of the gift in speech ('it came from Haji Thaim's ships') she diffuses the actual worth of the commodity (its potential to generate *sabandhi* ties through its elevated exogenous power) by

appearing as an abomination of all the characteristics of a conventional patron. After men have purchased cigarettes from her they do not want to sit around smoking and chatting with her about their mutual interests. They want her to go away. As a consequence, Saiyeds (at least in Bhadala rhetoric) and female commodity brokers alike, transcend the boundaries of normal human actions.

In summary, religious commodities are not farmed out for three reasons. First, the power in the commodity, both its authentic religious worth and its inherent potential to generate *sabandhi* relations, would be negated through the de-personified biography of the procurer. In this manner the circulation of religious commodities is highly restricted and status gains derived from religious items are tightly controlled. Secondly, both figures are necessarily seen as transgressing boundaries through mediation, which casts some categorical uncertainty on their status. It has already pointed out that the Bhadala counter their ascription as mixed bloods by accusing Saiyeds of also being of mixed blood. There is an additional element to this accusation because the Bhadala also accuse Saiyeds of horrifically denying their paternity by claiming prestigious descent through female bloodlines, thus they rhetorically feminise Saiyeds. Both the women's brokering of commodities and Saiyeds' brokering of the divine is construed as liminal, of questionable integrity and as the source of social and moral corruption. It is only a small leap of imagination to see why Saiyeds are sometimes referred to as prostitutes to the desires of their clients. Thirdly, as previously shown for Saiyed–*murid* relationships and the corresponding *seth*–sailor relationships, the apprentice cannot turn to other brokers without compromising the patronage and integrity of his own master. This puts the apprentice sailor in a position of only being able legitimately to receive items of religious value from his *seth*. Receiving such goods from others is equivalent to following their potentially divergent religious path. To the *murid* the Saiyed appears of highest human rank under the ideal image of the Prophet. Likewise, the *seth* is the apical human figure within the *vahaanvatta* and also appears closest to the ideal model of the Prophet. By distributing goods of religious worth through

intermediaries the *seth* would compromise his position as an ideal figure – akin to a lesser image of prophetic perfection – in the eyes of his apprentices.

The latter two reasons really explain the potency of the first because the biography of the ‘gift’ or ‘commodified gift’ is what gives it worth, and maintaining the categorical integrity of the transaction simultaneously enhances this sense of worth. In this case, there is clearly a complex relationship between ‘short-term’ exchanges and the longer-term reproduction of the social and cosmic order. The short-term (single) transactions are themselves clearly part of longer-term relationships, through which various levels of constituency are actualised and maintained. Within the *vahaanvatta* gifts and commodified gifts perpetuate and reproduce the kinds of relationships that are necessary to produce categorical lascars and suitable crews for Bhadala owned ships. However, through short-term (immediate) transactions the longer-term social order is being reformed and power and status relationships are being reconfigured.

General local hierarchy orders commerce and town over agriculture and village: urban merchants above rural landowners. This is elaborated by Muslim conceptions of the inside and outside of Kachchh. ‘Good’ things, brand names, wealth and Islam come from overseas. The opposite of the power inherent in things foreign is derogatorily known as *deshi* (of the country, local). Things that are *deshi* are predominantly bad and of the land and the past. But men, practices and Islam can also be *deshi*. As discussed previously, at the Mukhdummi Sha meetings Saiyeds are described in a negative light, and among the accusations levelled at them is that they are *deshi*. In the eyes of the Bhadala the formula is simple: why practice *deshi* Islam that subordinates you when you can have brand-name Islam from the Gulf?

The logic of *pir–murid* and *seth–sailor* relationships within both hierarchical models is premised on evaluations of the relative status of goods and people from particular parts of the littoral western Indian Ocean. What makes men men in the first hierarchy are the facts of migration and bodily code and substance. The Bhadala

have transformed this ranking into one premised on the ability to present 'gifts' and 'commoditised gifts'. Rather than status being derived from the historical past, which in their eyes is something of a politically expedient fabrication, status emerges from an ability to convince others that a particular vision of the world is the correct one. For Bhadala *seths* what makes big-men is their ability to consume and reproduce a loyal workforce based on contact with the 'Gulf' and the prestigious secular and religious commodities that are available from its bazaars.

7.5. Islamic reform as a form of biography

Chapter 1 summarised the main ways in which social and religious change has been understood among Muslims. As a result of this review I declared that my intention in this thesis was to present the context in which the process commonly known as 'Islamisation' was occurring in Salaya against Hume's 'flux and reflux' thesis. The apparent simplicity and universality of Muslim religious institutions, monotheistic belief, social egalitarianism and the perspicuous role of texts and legal traditions have been explored in a very specific context with very specific findings.

Throughout this thesis the many aspects of the variable and contextual nature of Muslim ritual and rhetorical practices have been presented. In conclusion, the discussion turns to two related broader themes to emerge from the preceding discussions. The first is the contribution of biography to the saliences of religious reform. The second is the inherent potential within Muslim religious fundamentalism to reproduce the precise things to which the fundamentalism was opposed.

The social context of Islamic reform described in the preceding chapters takes its shape from the details of the social contingencies and political needs of a small group of men who preside over large and dependent constituencies. It has been demonstrated that the important factors are those that relate to perceptions of the kingdom, the past and hierarchy. Furthermore, the kind and quality of relationships maintained with hostile and friendly others influences the content of the process of

religious reform. It has also been shown that social and religious change is effected through the production of constituencies that transgress the traditional boundaries of historical and religious social hierarchy. All these trends and processes are connected to the lives of those who patronise and devolve religious knowledge. In other words, the local content and meaning attributed to the universal signs of mosques, prayers, dress and postures are intertwined with the biographies of senior Bhadala men, and their conceptions of religion and orthodoxy are tied into macro-political changes within the Indian Ocean region. However, the direction and pace of the creation of particular forms of religious salience are specific to the time, place and lives of those involved. There is a direct correlation between the biographies of the *seths*, the content of their religious message, and the conceptions of space and time on which this message is premised.

The Bhadals' own local migration from Mandvi, over the river, provides a clear image of their own past from which they are at pains to distance themselves. The environmental divisions in landscape stand as contemporary markers of temporal and spatial social division. The view from Salaya, across the river, is a real reminder of the past activities of the Bhadala. The history of the local environment is inscribed in contemporary residence patterns and in social differentiation. Salaya stands as a sign of modernity and as the consequence of a past migration. The majority of non-Bhadala apprentices in shipyards also re-enact this journey – itself a re-enactment of the Bhadals' re-enactment of *hijra*. As a result it is the central symbol in the rhetoric of religious reform. Demons, Hindus and mistaken Muslims live on the opposite bank of the river – literally in the Bhadals' past. Although Hindus and *deshi* Muslims are contemporaneous with Salaya's architecture and population, their ways of being and thinking are considered to be archaic. Hinduism was the land of illusion from which the Bhadala started to emerge upon their conversion to Islam. Gradually, as generations came and went, the purity of their religious practice increased until eventually they stopped being *deshi*. The evolutionary typology inherent in this model places the Bhadala as the ultimate product of the chain. This state was achieved partially by accident, as their relationships with mercantile patrons

collapsed, and partially through their migration over the river and into a space in which they could redefine themselves in particular ways with their new wealth. These transformations allowed them to escape structural inequalities with merchants and religious hierarchy. The processes of incorporating and excluding 'others' in history and in, and from, the meaningful present are a direct expression of their own life experiences. The formal and informal rhetoric and language of their reform is an elaborate rendition of their own biography.

The major thrust of the Bhadals' reform process is against the role of Saiyed intermediaries between man and God. It has been shown that despite the Bhadals' opposition to Saiyeds they remodel this kind of hierarchy in the *vahaanvatta*. This is a process in the history of religious schism, reform and renewal that frequently appears. It has also been shown that the Bhadals have specific groups of 'others' against which their reform is directed. In this analysis, rather than pointing to irreconcilable division between Hindus and Muslims, religious antagonism has been described as developing as a result of changing relationships between merchants and sailors. Furthermore, by directing their reformist zeal towards Mandvi's Muslims the Bhadals directly shift the focus of communal antagonism away from themselves and onto others. The principal mechanism through which this process operates is the creation of lascars in apprenticeship. Through this process the most successful Bhadals have created large political constituencies. However, this still does not explain where the content of the reform process came from.

Many of the Bhadala *seths* were born into poor sailing families in an area of Mandvi known as Bhadala Pod. Those born in Salaya also know that their fathers were born in Mandvi. From a young age they were apprenticed by their fathers and other male relatives on ships either owned or contracted to Shia merchants. After dedicating around twenty years of their lives to sailing back and forth across the Indian Ocean the merchants sold their ships, dishonouring their long-standing relationships with their Bhadala sailors. A few Bhadals retained small vessels and a few others were able to buy small ships. Having lost their patrons and their source of

political protection to the migration process, they started to conduct their own small-scale trade with East Africa. In the 1970s they started to trade from the newly opened duty-free port of Dubai, from where they rapidly became wealthy. There they started to transact commercially with Muslims from the Gulf States and became part of new commercial and political networks that were developing in the Indian Ocean. The prominent Bhadals became successful traders and started to expand their fleets. At first they recruited from within the Bhadala Jamat and later from over the river. For around a decade their activities largely went unchecked until in the early 1980s the Indian State started to crack down. This culminated in a customs raid on Salaya and subsequent violent confrontation on the streets of Mandvi with their old rivals the Kharvas.

In the years following the confrontation religious identity, as a vehicle of social differentiation, became dominant. They built new mosques and houses that stressed the connections with the Gulf States, and deliberately isolated their village from the comings and goings of the town. As traditional sailors they had experienced the Indian Ocean region in terms other than those of the littoral nation states. As their businesses expanded many of them stopped going to sea and spent months of each year in the ports of Bombay and Dubai, becoming transnational residents and migrants who operated between the territory and jurisdiction of different states – much like their illustrious predecessors of the nineteenth century. In this sense they continue to have only marginal interest in nation state politics and loyalties.

Although not pro-Pakistan they are not particularly pro-India either. Their interest is in their ‘home’ (variously *desh* or *vatan*), conceived of as their houses, village and the architectural signs of their wealth. As predatory capitalists they maintain a fluid web of loyalties and inter-dependencies that allow them to trade and move through diverse social and economic spaces. The patterns, direction and routes of their migration and commercial enterprise have provided the Bhadals with a framework through which to present and invigorate their religious reform. Very specific antagonisms with Hindus and other Muslims have been addressed through a

standardised, if highly personal, rhetoric of Islamic reform drawn largely from the Gulf States.

There is a paradox in many studies of Indian Muslims that reflects the problem of ideal and actual religious practices or of universalist and particularist version of the religious tradition. The majority of Muslims (including the Bhadala) in India are seen as being converts from Hinduism. The paradox emerges in scholarly conceptualisations of this conversion and in situating the present social and religious conditions of Muslims in relation to it. On one hand the Muslim conversion is held to have been 'incomplete', while on the other, historical social processes are seen as having gradually eroded the original and ideal faith of Muslims, rendering them degenerated and syncretic. Clearly the two processes cannot simultaneously influence the practices of the same people. The Bhadala are firmly of the opinion that their ancestors partially converted, and retained the names, customs and social organisation of Hindus before they passed to a more syncretic stage. The material presented in previous chapters may be taken to support the work of both Francis Robinson and Asim Roy. Robinson argues that there is a slow movement towards ideal patterns of religious perfection in South Asian Islam (1983, 1986)¹⁷. Similarly, Roy argues that Muslims in Bengal have passed from being converts in a social sense, through a syncretic phase, to a period of 'Islamisation' in the exogenous sense (1983). Although the Bhadalas' version of change and continuity over time corresponds with this model it does seem presumptuous to suppose that the present is the actual pinnacle of all past actions and social processes. Furthermore, in these models there is no room to accommodate the effects of segmentation, reversal or schism within ideology over time. Muslim segmentary society is necessarily hierarchical and competitive. It therefore seems perfectly natural that shifts of capital, allegiance and constituency should also produce changing patterns of what constitutes good Islam and what is deified to the point of infinitude.

¹⁷ This is the most frequently cited of Robinson's statements, but twelve lines above, in the same article, he also reminds us of movements *away* from this pattern of perfection.

Returning to the paradox outlined above, it is possible to reach an entirely different conclusion from the data presented in this thesis. Both the elements of the paradox rely on a concept of what proper Islamic practice is. This seems unavoidable given the beauty, simplicity and memorability of the precepts and practices. But, it has been shown how the logic of the Bhadalas' hierarchy is a reinvention of the one presided over by Saiyeds. If we step further away from the rhetoric of the Bhadalas' reform then it is evident that they are apical, mediate between realms and are idealised figures with initiated clients. Furthermore, it is also evident that within their social hierarchy there is the potential to absolutely recreate the social order they appear to be opposed to.

The people of Kachchh have produced some rather unlikely saints. For example, James MacMurdo, leader of the first colonial war against piracy in the waters off Kachchh and witness to the 1819 earthquake, is entombed in a shrine famous for its powers of fertility in the east of the district. In shipyards it was common to speculate about the death of the living apical figure of the Bhadala-Pathan *atak*. Most of the religious and social monuments in the village are largely the result of his patronage and philanthropy. He is revered and highly respected for his piety, wisdom and vision. An elderly, retiring man he spends much of his time in seclusion. The dominant opinion in the shipyards is that he will be entombed as a saint in an elaborate public mausoleum, and his devotees could come to seek his protection, to request auspicious blessings and his intervention in their difficulties. This was also the earnest opinion of a number of highly respectable Muslims in Mandvi. The figure on the verge of sainthood may or may not become a saint in death. However, the graves in the shadow of the Kharva Dariyalal temple are widely held to contain Bhadala bodies. They are venerated and maintained by the families of a few of those that sail on Bhadala-Pathan ships. Sainthood is already a possibility for Bhadala-Pathans.

The dominant orthodoxy in Mandvi is that only Saiyeds, both living and dead, have the necessary charisma to become saints. Clearly, if a Bhadala-Pathan is

entombed as a saint this will signal a radical break with tradition. Within a broader historical context, the Muslim social and religious movements described in this thesis are not uni-directional or stubbornly resistant to change. Rather, they are unorthodox in their orthodoxy and are firmly rooted in the life experiences of their proponents. In the situation described therefore, the processes of conservative orthodoxy or fundamentalism contain within them the potential to produce the very same traditions that they oppose; as wealthy figures patronise deities to the point of infinitude they too become increasingly efficacious as intermediaries to the deity they have created.

Bibliography

- Aggarwal, P.C. 1969. Changing religious practices: their relationship to secular power in a Rajasthan village. In *Economic and Political Weekly*. 4.12.
- Ahmad, I. (ed.) 1978 [1973]. *Caste and social stratification among Muslims in India*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- (ed.) 1983. *Modernization and social change among Muslims in India*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- (ed.) 1984 [1981]. *Ritual and religion among Muslims in India*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Aitken, E.H. 1907. *Gazetteer of the province of Sind*. Karachi: The "Mercantile" Steam Press.
- Ajmal, M. 1984. A note on *Adab* in the *murshid-murid* relationship. In B.D. Metcalf (ed.) *Moral conduct and authority. The place of adab in South Asian Islam*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Ali, H. 1978 [1973]. Elements of caste among the Muslims in a district in Southern Bihar. In I. Ahmad (ed.) *Caste and social stratification among Muslims in India*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Allen, C.H. 1978. *Sayyids, Shets and Sultans: politics and trade in Masqat under the Al Bu Said, 1785-1915*. University of Washington: Unpublished Ph.D.
- Appadurai, A. 2000 [1986]. Introduction: commodities and the politics of value. In A. Appadurai (ed.) *The social life of things. Commodities in perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Assayag, J. 1995. *Au confluent de deux rivières. Musulmans et hindous dans le sud de l'Inde*. Paris: Presses de l'école française d'extrême-orient.
- Babb, L.A. 1996. *Absent Lord: ascetics and kings in a Jain ritual culture*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.
- Bader, Z. 1991. The contradictions of merchant capital. In A. Sheriff and E. Ferguson (eds) *Zanzibar Under Colonial Rule*. London: James Currey.
- Banks, M. 1992. *Organizing Jainism in India and England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Barnett, S., L. Fruzzetti, and Á. Östör. 1976. Hierarchy purified: notes on Dumont and his critics. In *Journal of Asian Studies*. 35.4.
- Barth, F. 1954. Father's brother's daughter marriage in Kurdistan. In *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*. 10.2.
- 1965 [1959]. *Political leadership among Swat Pathans*. London: The Athlone Press.
- 1971 [1960]. The system of social stratification in Swat, North Pakistan. In E.R. Leach (ed.) *Aspects of caste in South India, Ceylon and North Western Pakistan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
1983. *Sohar. Culture and society in an Omani town*. London: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Basu, A. 1996. 'Mass movement or elite conspiracy'. In D. Ludden (ed.) *Contesting the nation. Religion, continuity, and the politics of democracy in India*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Basu, H. 1993. The Siddi and the cult of Bava Gor in Gujarat. In *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society* 28.3.
1998. Hierarchy and emotion. Love, joy and sorrow in a cult of black saints in Gujarat, India. In P. Werbner and H. Basu (eds) *Embodying charisma: modernity, locality and the performance of emotion in Sufi cults*. London: Routledge.
- Bayly, C.A. 1998. *Origins of nationality in South Asia. Patriotism and ethical government in the making of modern India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Bayly, S. 1992. Hijacking history: fundamentalism in the third world today. In A.W. Van den Hoek, D.H.A. Kolff and M.S. Oort (eds) *Ritual, state and history in South Asia*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Bennett, P. 1993. *The path of grace: social organisation and temple worship in a Vaishnava sect*. Delhi: Hindustan Publishing Corporation.
- Benson, J.E. 1983. Politics and Muslim ethnicity in South India. In *Journal of Anthropological Research*. 39.1.
- Bloch, M. 1991. Language, anthropology and cognitive science. *Man*. (n.s.) 26.1.
1992. *Prey into hunter. The politics of religious experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1996. Internal and external memory: different ways of being in history. In P. Antze and M. Lambek. (eds) *Tense past. Cultural essays in trauma and memory*. London: Routledge.
1998. *How we think they think. Anthropological approaches to cognition, memory and literacy*. Oxford: Westview Press.
- Bourdieu, P. 1977. *Outline of a theory of practice*. (trans. R. Nice) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Boyer, P. 1990. *Tradition as truth and communication. A cognitive description of traditional discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brass, P. 1979. Elite groups, symbol manipulation and ethnic identity among the Muslims of South Asia. In D. Taylor and M. Yapp (eds) *Political identity in South Asia*. London: Curzon Press.
1997. *Theft of an idol. Text and context in the representation of collective violence*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Brown, P. 1981. *The cult of the saints. Its rise and function in Latin Christianity*. London: SCM Press.
- Burnes, A. 1836. On the maritime communications of India, as carried on by the natives, particularly from Kutch, at the mouth of the Indus. *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*. 6.
1879. Appendix No. IV. Five papers on Kachh antiquities. In *Selections from the Bombay records*. No. CLII. New Series. Bombay: Government Central Press.
- Burton, R.F. 1872. *Zanzibar; city, island, and coast*. Vols I & II. London: Tinsley Brothers.
- Carnac, J.R. 1819. Some account of the famine in Gujerat in the years 1812 and 1813. In *Transactions of the Bombay Literary Society*. Vol. I. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown (and John Murray).
- Carrier, J.G. 1995. *Gifts and commodities. Exchange and Western Capitalism since 1700*. London: Routledge.
- Chaudhuri, K.N. 1985. *Trade and civilisation in the Indian Ocean: an economic history from the rise of Islam to 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Colomb, R.N. 1873. *Slave-catching in the Indian Ocean. A record of naval experiences*. London: Longmans, Green and Co.
- Connerton, P. 1995 [1989]. *How societies remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Coy, M.W. (ed.)1989. *Apprenticeship: from theory to method and back again*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press.
- Das, V. 1984. For a folk-theology and theological anthropology of Islam. In *Contributions to Indian Sociology*. (n.s.) 18.2.
1995. *Critical Events. An Anthropological perspective on contemporary India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Desai, N. 1978. *Social change in Gujarat. A study of nineteenth century Gujarati society*. Bombay: Vohra and Co. Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
- Dirks, N. 1987. *The hollow crown: ethnohistory of an Indian kingdom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Doniger, W. 1990. The tale of Indo-European horse sacrifice. In *Incognita*. 1.
1999. Presidential address: "I have Scinde": flogging a dead (white male orientalist) horse. In *The Journal of Asian Studies*. 58.4.
- Douglas, M. and B. Isherwood. 1996 [1979]. *The world of goods. Towards an anthropology of consumption*. London: Routledge.
- Dumont, L. 1970 [1966]. *Homo hierarchicus. The caste system and its implications*. London: Weindenfeld and Nicolson.
- 1980 [1966]. *Homo hierarchicus. The caste system and its implications* [revised edition]. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Eaton, R.M. 1984. The political and religious authority of the shrine of Bābā Farīd. In B.D. Metcalf (ed.) *Moral conduct and authority. The place of adab in South Asian Islam*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Eickelman, D.F. 1976. *Moroccan Islam: tradition and society in a pilgrimage center*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
1981. *The Middle East. An anthropological approach*. New Jersey: Prentice - Hall inc.

- Eickelman, D.F. and J.Piscatori. 1990. Social theory in the study of Muslim societies. In D.F.Eickelman and J.Piscatori (eds) *Muslim travellers. Pilgrimage, migration, and the religious imagination*. London: Routledge.
- Eisenstadt, S.N. (ed.) 1968. *Max Weber on Charisma and institution building. Selected papers*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Engineer, A.A. 1989. *The Muslim communities of Gujarat. An exploratory study of Bohras, Khojas and Memons*. Delhi: Ajanta Publications.
- Enthoven, R.E. 1920. *Tribes and castes of Bombay Vols I-III*. New Delhi: Cosmo.
- Evans-Pritchard, E.E. 1954 [1949]. *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Faneslow, F.S. 1996. The disinvention of caste among Tamil Muslims. In C.J. Fuller (ed.) *Caste today*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Fox, R.G. 1969. *From zaminder to ballot box: community change in a north Indian market town*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.
- Frietag, S.B. 1989. *Collective action and community: public arenas and the emergence of communalism in North India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Fuller, C.J. 1992. *The camphor flame: popular Hinduism and society in India*. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press.
- Gaborieau, M. 1986. Les ordres mystiques dans le sous-continent indien. In A. Popovic and G. Vensten (eds) *Les ordres mystiques dans l'Islam*. Paris: Éditions de l'école des hautes études en sciences sociales.
- Gardener, K. 1993a. Desh-Bidesh: Sylheti images of home and away. In *Man*. (n.s.) 28.1.
- 1993b. Mullahs, migrants, and miracles: travel and transformation in Sylhet. In *Contributions to Indian Sociology*. 27.2.
- Geertz, C. 1968. *Islam observed: religious development in Morocco and Indonesia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gellner, E. 1969. *Saints of the Atlas*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
1970. A pendulum swing theory of Islam. In *Philosophical Forum*. 2.2.
1974. *Legitimation of belief*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1981. *Muslim society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ghani, A. 1984. The Memons. In *Sind Quarterly*. 12.2.
- Gibb, H.A.R. 1949. *Mohammedanism: an historical survey*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 1972 [1947]. *Modern trends in Islam*. New York: Octagon Books.
- Goodfriend, D.E. 1983. Changing concepts of caste and status among Old Delhi Muslims. In I. Ahmad (ed.) *Modernization and social change among Muslims in India*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Goody, J. (ed.) 1968. *Literacy in traditional societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gregory, C.A. 1982. *Gifts and commodities*. London: Academic Press.
- Hansen, T.B. 1996. Recuperating masculinity. Hindu nationalism, violence and the exorcism of the Muslim 'other'. In *Critique of Anthropology*. 16.2.
1999. *The saffron wave. Democracy and Hindu nationalism in modern India*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Hobsbawm, E. 2000 [1983]. Introduction: inventing traditions. In E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds) *The invention of tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Huff, T.E. and W. Schluchter (eds) 1999. *Max Weber & Islam*. New Brunswick (USA) and London: Transaction Publishers.
- Hume, D. 1998 [1757-1779]. *Dialogues and natural history of religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hutchins, E. 1993. Learning to navigate. In S. Chaiklin and J. Lave (eds) *Understanding practice. Perspectives in activity and context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
1996. *Cognition in the wild*. London: The MIT Press.
- Inden, R.B. 1976. *Marriage and rank in Bengali culture: a history of caste and clan in middle period Bengal*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Inden, R.B. and R.W. Nicholas. 1977. *Kinship in Bengali culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Ingold, T. 1992. Culture and perception of the environment. In E. Croll and D. Parkin (eds) *Bush base forest farm: culture, environment and development*. London: Routledge.
- Jain, S.P. 1978 [1973]. Caste stratification among Muslims in a township in Western Uttar Pradesh. In I. Ahmad (ed.) *Caste and social stratification among Muslims in India*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Jamous, R. 1996. The Meo as a Rajput caste and a Muslim community. In C.J. Fuller (ed.) *Caste today*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Juergensmeyer, M. 2000. *Terror in the mind of God: the global rise of religious violence*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kakar, S. 1981. *The inner world: a psycho-analytic study of childhood and society in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
1996. *The colors of violence. Cultural identities, religion and conflict*. London: University of Chicago Press.
- Keller, C. and J.D. Keller, 1993. Thinking and acting in iron. In S. Chaiklin and J. Lave (eds) *Understanding practice. Perspectives in activity and context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Khan, D. 1997. *Conversions and shifting identities. Ramdev Pir and the Ismailis in Rajasthan*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Kopytoff, I. 2000 [1986]. The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process. In A. Appadurai (ed.) *The social life of things. Commodities in cultural perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kramrisch, S. 1964. *Unknown India: ritual art in tribe and village*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art.
- Krishnaswamy, S. 1966. *A riot in Bombay, August 11, 1893: a study in Hindu-Muslim relations in Western India during the late nineteenth century*. University of Chicago: Unpublished Ph.D.
- Kurin, R. 1984. Morality, personhood, and the exemplary life: popular conceptions of Muslims in paradise. In B.D. Metcalf (ed.) *Moral conduct and authority. The place of adab in South Asian Islam*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

- Lave, J. 1984. Introduction: thinking and learning in a social context. In B. Rogoff and J. Lave (eds) *Everyday cognition: its development in social context*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- 1988a. *The culture of acquisition and the practice of understanding*. Palo Alto, CA: Institute for Research on Learning.
- 1988b. *Cognition in practice. Mind, mathematics and culture in everyday life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
1993. Introduction: the practice of learning. In S. Chaiklin and J. Lave (eds) *Understanding practice. Perspectives in activity and context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lave, J. and E. Wenger, 1991. *Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lee-Warner, W. 1910. *The native states of India*. London: Macmillan
- LeGrand, G. 1856 [1841]. Historical, geographical, and statistical memoirs of the Province of Kattywar. In *Selections from the records of the Bombay Government*. No. XXXVII. New Series. Bombay: Bombay Educational Society's Press.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. 1978. *Myth and meaning*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Lewis, I.M. 1961. *A pastoral democracy. A study of pastoralism and politics among the Northern Somali of the Horn of Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lindholm, C. 1986. Caste in Islam and the problem of deviant systems: a critique of recent theory. In *Contributions to Indian Sociology*. (n.s.) 20.1.
- Luhmann, T.M. 1996. *The good Parsi: the fate of a colonial elite in a postcolonial society*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- MacMurdo, J. 1820a. An account of the province of Cutch, and of the countries lying between Guzerat and the river Indus: with cursory remarks on the inhabitants, their history, manners, and state of society. In *Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay*. Vol. II. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown (and John Murray).
- 1820b. Papers relating to the earthquake which occurred in India in 1819. In *Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay*. Vol. III. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown (and John Murray).

- 1856 [1812]. Memoir on the Province of Kattywar: with remarks on the Runn of Kutch and the District of Okhamundal. In *Selections from the records of the Bombay Government*. No. XXXVII. New Series. Bombay: Bombay Educational Society's Press.
- Madan, T.N. 1997. *Modern myths, locked minds: secularism and fundamentalism in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Mallison, F. 1992a. Muslim devotional literature in Gujarāti: Islam and Bhakti. In R.S.McGregor (ed.) *Devotional Literature in South Asia. Current Research, 1985-1988*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 1992b. La secte ismaïlienne des Nizārī ou Satpanthī en Inde: hétérodoxie hindoue ou musulmane? In S.Bouez (ed.) *Ascèse et renoncement en Inde, ou la solitude bien ordonnée*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
1996. Hymnologie Vishnuite, Jaina, Parsi, Tantrique et Islamique en Gujarati. Mode de transmission et thèmes convergents. In C. Champion (ed.) *Traditions orales dans le monde indien*. Paris: Éditions de l'école des hautes études en sciences sociales.
- Mangate, J.S. 1969. *The history of Asians in East Africa c.1886-1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Marlow, L. 1997. *Hierarchy and egalitarianism in Islamic thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marriott, McK. 1976. Hindu transactions: diversity without dualism. In B. Kapferer (ed.) *Transactions and meaning directions in the anthropology of exchange and symbolic behaviour*. ASA Essays in Social Anthropology 1. Philadelphia: ISHI.
- Marriott, McK. and R.B. Inden 1977. Toward and ethnosociology of South Asian caste systems. In K. David (ed.) *The new wind: changing identities in South Asia*. The Hague and Paris: Mouton.
- Masselos, J.C. 1978 [1973]. The Khojas of Bombay: the defining of formal membership criteria during the nineteenth century. In I. Ahmad (ed.) *Caste and social stratification among Muslims in India*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- 1996 [1995]. Migration and urban identity: Bombay's famine refugees in the nineteenth century. In S. Patel and A. Thorner (eds) *Bombay. Mosaic of modern culture*. Bombay: Oxford University Press.
- Masud, M.K. 1984. *Ādāb al-Muftī*. The Muslim understanding of values, characteristics, and the role of the *Muftī*. In B.D. Metcalf (ed.) *Moral conduct*

- and authority. The place of adab in South Asian Islam.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
1990. The obligation to migrate: the doctrine of *hijra* in Islamic law. In D.F.Eickelman and J.Piscatori (eds) *Muslim travellers. Pilgrimage, migration, and the religious imagination.* London: Routledge.
- Mayer, P.B. 1981. Tombs and dark houses: ideology, intellectuals, and proletarians in the study of contemporary Indian Islam. In *Journal of Asian Studies.* 40.3.
- McGilvray, D.B. 1982. Mukkuvar vannimai: Tamil caste and matriclan ideology in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka. In D.B. McGilvray (ed.) *Caste ideology and interaction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
1998. Arabs, Moors and Muslims: Shri Lankan Muslim ethnicity in regional perspective. In *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (n.s.) 32.2.
- Mehta, M. 1991. *Indian merchants and entrepreneurs in historical perspective: with special reference to the shroffs of Gujarat, 17th to 19th centuries.* Delhi: Academic Foundation
- Mehta, S. 1984. The *Mahajans* and the business communities of Ahmedabad. In D. Tripathi (ed.) *Business communities of India.* New Delhi: Manohar.
- Metcalf, B.D. (ed.) 1984. *Moral conduct and authority. The place of adab in South Asian Islam.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
1990. The pilgrimage remembered: South Asian accounts of the *hajj*. In D.F.Eickelman and J.Piscatori (eds) *Muslim travellers. Pilgrimage, migration, and the religious imagination.* London: Routledge.
- Minault, G. 1984. Some reflections on Islamic revivalism vs. assimilation among Muslims in India. In *Contributions to Indian Sociology.* (n.s.) 18.2.
- Mines, M. 1975. Islamisation and Muslim ethnicity in South India. In *Man.* (n.s.) 10.3.
1978. Social stratification among Muslim Tamils in Tamil-nadu, South India. In I. Ahmad (ed.) *Caste and social stratification among Muslims in India.* New Delhi: Manohar.
1983. Kin centres and ethnicity among Muslim Tamilians. In I.Ahmad (ed.) *Modernization and social change among Muslims in India.* New Delhi: Manohar.

1984. *The warrior merchants: textiles, trade and territory in south India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
1988. Conceptualizing the person: hierarchical society and individual autonomy in India. In *American Anthropologist*. 71.6.
1994. *Public faces, private lives. Community and individuality in South India*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Mines, M. and V. Gourishankar. 1990. Leadership and individuality in South Asia: The case of the South Indian big-man. In *Journal of Asian Studies*. 49.4.
- Misra, S.C. 1963. *The rise of Muslim power in Gujarat. A history of Gujarat from 1298-1442*. New York: Asia Publishing House.
1964. *Muslim communities in Gujarat. Preliminary studies in their history and social organisation*. London: Asia Publishing House.
- Murphey, R.F. and L. Kasdan. 1959. The structure of parallel cousin marriage. In *American Anthropologist*. 61.1.
1967. Agnation and endogamy: some further considerations. In *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*. 23.1.
- Osella, P and C. Osella. 1999. From transience to immanence: consumption, life-cycle and social mobility in Kerela, South India. In *Modern Asian Studies*. 33.4.
2000. Migration, money and masculinity in Kerela. In *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. 6.1.
- Pálsson, G. 1994. Enskillment at sea. In *Man* (n.s.) 29.4.
- Pandey, G. 1990. *The construction of communalism in colonial north India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Parry, J.P. 1974. Egalitarian values in a hierarchical society. In *South Asian Review*. 7.2.
1979. *Caste and kinship in Kangra*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Parry, J.P. and M. Bloch. (eds) 1989. *Money and the morality of exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pastner, C.McC. 1979. Cousin marriage among the Zikri Baluch of coastal Pakistan. In *Ethnology*. 18.1.

- Patai, R. 1955. Cousin - right in Middle Eastern marriage. In *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*. 11.4.
- Pocock, D.F. 1957a. Inclusion and exclusion: a process in the caste system of Gujarat. In *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*. 13.1.
- 1957b. 'Difference' in East Africa: a study of caste and religion in modern Indian society. In *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*. 13.4.
- 1957c. The bases of faction in Gujarat. In *The British Journal of Sociology*. 8.
1973. *Mind, body and wealth. A study of belief and practice in an Indian village*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Postens, Mrs. 1839a. *Cutch; or, random sketches, taken during a residence in one of the northern provinces of Western India; interspersed with legends and traditions*. London: Smith, Elder and Co. Cornhill.
- 1839b. *Western India in 1838*. Vol. I. London: Saunders and Otley.
- Postens, T. 1843. *Personal observations on Sindh; the manners and customs of its inhabitants; and its productive capabilities: with a sketch of its history, a narrative of recent events, and an account of the connection of the British Government with that country to the present period*. London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans.
- Purandare, M.B. 1997. *A case study of the Bhatia community (a history)*. University of Mumbai: unpublished Ph.D.
- Raheja, G.G. 1988. *The poison in the gift: ritual, prestation, and the dominant caste in a North Indian village*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Raval, R.L. 1987. *Socio-religious reform movements in Gujarat during the nineteenth century*. New Delhi: Ess Ess Publications.
- Robb, P. 1995. Introduction: South Asia and the concept of race. In P. Robb (ed.) *The concept of race in South Asia*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Robertson, J. 1889. Introduction. In D.Hume 1889 [1757]. *The natural history of religion*. London: Fleethought Publishing Company.
- Robinson, F. 1983. Islam and Muslim society in South Asia. In *Contributions to Indian Sociology*. (n.s.) 17.2.

1986. Islam and Muslim society in South Asia a reply to Das and Minault. In *Contributions to Indian Sociology*. (n.s.) 20.1.
- 1997 [1993]. *Separatism among Indian Muslims. The politics of the United Provinces' Muslims 1860-1923*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Rogoff, B. 1990. *Apprenticeship in thinking. Cognitive development in social context*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Roy, A. 1983. *The Islamic syncretistic tradition in Bengal*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Rushbrook Williams, L.F. 1958. *The black hills. Kutch in history and legend: a study in Indian local loyalties*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Siddiqui, M.K.A. 1978 [1973]. Caste amongst the Muslims of Calcutta. In I. Ahmad (ed.) *Caste and social stratification among Muslims in India*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Shah, A.M. 1982. Division and hierarchy: an overview of caste in Gujarat. In *Contributions to Indian Sociology*. (n.s.) 16.1.
- Shah, A.M. and R.G. Shroff, 1958. The Vahīvacā Bārots of Gujarat: a caste of genealogists. In *Journal of American Folklore*. 71. No. 281.
- Sharif, J. 1921. *Islam in India or the Qunun-I-Islam. The customs of the Musalmans of India*. (trans. G.A. Herkolots) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shils, E. 1965. Charisma, order, and status. In *American Sociological Review*. 30.2.
- Spencer, J. 1992. Problems in the analysis of communal violence. In *Contributions to Indian Sociology*. (n.s.) 26.2.
- Stirrat, J. 1989. Money, men and women. In J. Parry and M. Bloch (eds) *Money and the morality of exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Strathern, M. 1992. Qualified value: the perspective of gift exchange. In C. Humphrey and S. Hugh-Jones (eds) *Barter, exchange and value. An anthropological approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tambiah, S.J. 1996. *Leveling crowds. Ethnonationalist conflicts and collective violence in South Asia*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Tambs-Lyche, H. 1975. A comparison of Gujarati communities in London and the Midlands. In *New Community*. 4.3.

- 1980a. *London Patidars. A case study in urban ethnicity*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- 1980b. Gujarati communities in Norway and Britain compared: some comparative notes. In *New Community*. 8.3.
1992. *Power and devotion, religion and society in Saurashtra, Vols I-III*. University of Bergen: Unpublished Ph.D.
1996. Une tradition orale face au post-modernisme. L'exemple des bardes du saurashtra. In C. Champion (ed.) *Traditions orales dans le monde Indienne*. Paris: Éditions de l'école des hautes études en sciences sociales.
1997. *Power, profit and poetry. Traditional society in Kathiwar, Western India*. New Delhi: Manohar.
1999. Marriage and affinity among virgin goddesses. In H. Tambs-Lyche (ed.) *The Feminine sacred in South Asia - Le sacré au féminin en Asie du Sud*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Taussig, M.T. 1980. *The devil and commodity fetishism in South America*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Thoothi, N.A. 1935. *The Vaishnavas of Gujarat being a study in methods of investigating social phenomena*. Calcutta: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd.
- Timberg, T.A. 1978. *The Marwaris. From traders to industrialists*. New Delhi: Vikas.
- Tod, J. 1873. *Annals and antiquities of Rajast'han of the central and western Rajpoot States of India*. Vols I & II. Madras: Higginbotham and Co.
- Tripathi, D. 1984. (ed.) *Business communities of India*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Trivedi, J.B. 1955. *Social life in Kutch State (1951 census)*. Bhuj: Department of Agriculture.
- Turner, B.S. 1974. *Weber and Islam. A critical study*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Vaidya, K.B. 1945. *The sailing vessel traffic on the West Coast of India and its future*. Bombay: The Popular Book Depot.
- van der Veer, P. 1992. Playing or praying: a Sufi Saint's day in Surat. In *The Journal of Asian Studies*. 51.3.

1994. *Religious nationalism. Hindus and Muslims in India*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.
- Varela, J., E. Thompson and E. Rosch. 1997 [1993]. *The embodied mind. Cognitive science and human experience*. London: MIT Press.
- Vatuk, S. 1996. Identity and difference or equality and inequality in South Asian Muslim society. In C.J. Fuller (ed.) *Caste Today*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Werbner, P. 1989. The ranking of brotherhoods: the dialectics of Muslim caste amongst overseas Pakistanis. In *Contributions to Indian Sociology*. (n.s.) 23.2.
- Werbner, P. and H. Bassu, (eds) 1998. *Embodying charisma: modernity, locality and the performance of emotion in Sufi cults*. London: Routledge.

Gujarati bibliography

Khatri, K.J. (ed.) 1996. *Kachchh tari asmita*. Bhuj: Kachchh Mitra.

Maharaj, H. and V.P. Dwivedi v.s.2003. *Shri Uderaalaal aakyaan*. Mumbai: Vichaarshil Prakaashan.

Neygandhi, J.J. v.s.1993a. Seth Dharamsinh Vallabdas. In *Bhatiya Yuvak Chaitra*.

v.s.1993b. Ek adars purush. Seth Dharamsinh Vallabdas. In *Bhatiya Yuvak*. Vaishakh.

Sampat, D.D. v.s.1989. Bhatiyaona sasthanono itihās. Kshatriomathi Vaishya. In *Bhatiya Yuvak*. Kartak.

v.s. 1990-91. Bhatiyaona sasthanono itihās. Bhatiaona Ritritvajo. In *Bhatiya Yuvak*. Aso-Kartak.

v.s.1992. Bhatiyaona sasthanono itihās. Bhujna Bhatiyao. In *Bhatiya Yuvak*. Ashash.

1995. Seth Liladhar Morrarji Bhimani. *Bhatiya Yuvak*. Divali.

Government publications

The gazetteer of Bombay city and island. 1977 [1909]. *Pune*. Vol. 1. Bombay: The Government Photozinco Press

Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency. 1880. *Cutch, Pâlanpur, and Mahi Kântha*. Vol. V. Bombay: Government Central Press.

1884. *Katiawar*. Vol. VIII. Bombay: Government Central Press.

1896. *History of Gujarat*. Vol. 1. Part 1. Bombay: Government Central Press.

1901. *Gujarât population. Hindus*. Vol. IX. Part I. Bombay: Government Central Press.

1899. *Musalmans and Parsis*. Vol. IX. Part II. Bombay: Government Central Press.

1914. *Cutch, Palanpur, Mahi Kantha*. Vol. V-13. Bombay: Government Central Press.

Gujarat State Gazetteers. 1971. *Kutch District*. Ahmedabad: Government of Gujarat.

The Imperial Gazetteer of India. Vol. XI. *Coondapoor to Edwardesābād*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Linguistic Survey of India. 1908. *Indo-Aryan family. Central group. Specimens of the Rajasthani and Gujarati*. Vol. IX. Part II. Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, India.

1919. *Indo-Aryan family. North-Western group. Specimens of Sindhi and Lahnda*. Vol. VIII. Part I. Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, India.