CHAPTER X

PARAG: STIGMA OF KILLING
Concept of Sin: The Scriptural Backdrop

Theology and ethics are almost inseparably blended in Hindu society. It is because of this inextricable blending of the two that it becomes difficult to draw a sharp dividing line between the domains of theology and ethics. For instance, the killing of a sacred animal, such as a cow, is an act which is condemned by both Hindu theology and ethics: the former advances religious and mythological sanctions against such killing; the latter invokes aesthetic and moral sanctions against it. Human actions are, thus, defined as good or bad, meritorious or otherwise in terms of their theological and ethical contexts and semantics.

Connotations of Sin:

The concept of sin (pāpa or pātaka) is one such idea which falls within both the domains of Hindu theology and ethics. Hindu theology emphasizes how the concept of sin, in its metaphysical sense, is invariably linked with other kin concepts — i.e., the concept of karma (action) and the concept of punarjanma (transmigration of souls). Kane has very succinctly put this theme as follows:
"The fundamental proposition of the doctrine of *karma* is that cause and effect are inseparably linked in the moral sphere as assumed in the physical sphere by science. A good action has its reward and a bad act leads to retribution. If the bad actions do not yield their consequences at once or in this life, the soul begins another existence and in the new environment undergoes suffering for its past bad deeds. The theory of *karma* and the theory of transmigration of souls (of pre-existence and post-existence) are inextricably mixed up in Indian thought from at least the ancient times of the Upanishads. The general rule is that *karma*, whether good or evil, cannot be got rid of, except by enjoying or undergoing its consequences (Kane, 1953, 36-9).

The idea of sin has been variously conceptualized by the different authors. Kane, for instance, puts it thus:

"In a general way it may be said that it [i.e., sin] is an act which is regarded as a wilful rebellion against or disobedience of some law supposed to be laid down by God or Revelation; it is opposition to the will of God manifested in an authoritative work or at least failure to abide by the regulations contained therein" (Kane, op. cit., 1).

And to a scholar of ethics, the concept of sin signifies "a wrong overt action... an evil deed. It is wilful violation or neglect of duties. It is either commission of wrong deeds or omission of right deeds" (Sinha, 1947, 320).

That the idea of sin is Vedic-old in its antiquity has been nearly established by eminent Indologists. Kane has summed it up as follows:
"The sages of the Ṛgveda were acutely conscious of sin or guilt and pray to the gods, particularly to Varuna and the Adityas, for forgiveness and for being freed from the consequences of sin. In this connection they employ numerous words such as āgas, eṇas, agha, durita, duṣkṛta, drugdha, māhas.

... The most frequent words are āgas and eṇas, both of which appear to import sin in its deepest and most ethical sense" (Kane, op. cit., 5).

Hierarchy of Sins:

The Hindu scriptures, right from the Ṛgveda down to the Saṃhitās, show a grave concern about what constitutes a sin and about the various categories of sins. Note Kane's observation on this point:

"The enumeration of sinful acts and the classifications of sins into several degrees or grades has gone on from very ancient times" (Kane, op. cit., 10).

And it is equally interesting to note how there is great divergence of opinion regarding the classification of sins and the enumeration of sins in each class. For instance, the Āpastamba Dharmasūtra categorizes sins into two broad divisions: patanīya pātaka (sins that cause loss of caste) and asucikara pātaka (sins that cause impurity, though no loss of caste is caused), and enumerates the various sins that fall in each of these categories (Kane, op. cit., 12-3). The Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra presents a
threefold classification of sins: pataniya pātaka, upapātaka (minor sins) and asucikara pātaka (Kane, op. cit., 13) whereas the Vaisu Dharmasutra makes the classification still more elaborate in that it lists nine classes of sins: atipātaka (the highest sins than which there is nothing worse), mahapātaka (mortal sins), anupātaka (heinous crimes), upapātaka (minor sins), jatibhramasakara (sins effecting loss of caste), sankarikarana (sins rendering one as degraded as a man of a mixed caste), apatrikarana (sins rendering the perpetrator unworthy of receiving a gift), malavaha (sins causing defilement) and prakirnaka (miscellaneous sins).

Contagion of Sin:

The five mahapātakas (mortal sins) as enumerated in the Chandogya Upanisad are: a. murder of a Brahmana (brahmahatya) as also the killing of a foetus (bhurunahatya); b. drinking of spirituous liquor; c. theiving of gold (especially that of a Brahmana); d. sexual intercourse with the wife of a guru or spiritual preceptor (known as gurutapagamana); and 3. association with the perpetrators of any of these four sins for a year (mahapātaki-samsarga). Quoting from various scriptural sources, Kane summarizes as to what constitutes mahapātaki-samsarga:
"...one who closely associates or dwells with any one of the four grave sinners for one year himself incur me mahapataka. ...when a man occupies the same conveyance or same seat (as the sinner) or dines in the same row (with the sinner)... if a person enters into spiritual relationship (such as that of teaching the Vedas to the sinner or learning it from him or of officiating as a priest for him or allowing him to officiate as a priest for himself) or into a sexual or matrimonial alliance with him (i.e., a man who cohabits with a woman that is a grave sinner or if a woman cohabits with a male that is a great sinner or if a man marries the daughter of a patika or if a woman marries a bridegroom that is patika) that person becomes guilty of mahapataka at once" (Kane, op. cit., 25).

**Modes of Expiation:**

After dwelling at length on the various classifications of sins and their enumerations in each category, Kane closes the chapter on "Sins, expiations and the Residual Consequences of Sins" by mentioning some of the modes of expiation:

*The Gautama Samhita, the Vasistha Samhita and the Baudhayana Dharmasutra state that reciting the Vedas inaudibly (japa), austerities (tapas), a sacrifice (homa), fasting (upavasa) and giving gifts (danam) are the means of expiating a blamable act. The Vasistha Samhita further lays down that a sinner is freed from sin by tormenting his body, by austerities, by reciting the Veda and also by making gifts to those who are constantly engaged in pranayamas (suppression and regulation of breath), reciting purificatory texts.*

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giving gifts, offering sacrifices, muttering sacred texts will undoubtedly be freed from sins. Manu observes that by confession, by repentance (anutapa), by austerity, by reciting Vedic texts (sacred Gayatri or other texts), a sinner is freed from guilt. . ." (Kane, op. cit., 40).

Kane also mentions tirthayatra (pilgrimage) as a means to end the taint of sin. He writes: "It was believed that going on a pilgrimage and bathing in such holy rivers as the Ganges freed a man from sins" (Kane, op. cit., 55). And quoting the authority of Devala, he adds:

". . .a man removes the consequences of such grave sins as the murder of a Brahmana that he may have committed unintentionally by the performance of great sacrifices or by going on a pilgrimage. . .

A man becomes freed from sin by approaching holy places and shrines, Brahmanas that practise austerities, that all rivers that fall into the ocean, all great mountains, all shrines and all forests are holy" (Kane, op. cit., 55).

Kane further discusses the Hindu notion of prayascitta, deriving the etymology of this compound word from praya (meaning tapas or austerities) and citta (meaning resolve or firm belief), and goes on to opine:

". . .prayascittas are so called because of their association with or emergence from a resolve to undergo tapas or because of the firm belief that it will be a means of the removal of sin" (Kane, op. cit., 59).
And he quotes the authority of the Yajnavalkya Smrti (III 220) in this context:

"...a man guilty of patakas should perform prayascitta for his own purification (here and in the next world); in this way (i.e., if he performs penance) his inner soul recovers its composure and the people also become satisfied" (Kane, op. cit., 63).

This couplet from Yajnavalkya epitomizes the threefold function of prayascitta: a. purging of sin or purification; b. the satisfaction of the sinner's mind; and c. the sinner's admission to intercourse with all people. For, as most of the Smritis hold, "the potentialities and consequences of sins are twofold, viz., those leading to Hell and the others preventing intercourse with members of the society to which the sinner belongs" (Kane, op. cit., 65).
Concept of Sin: The Empirical Context

Paraq is the term used in the Bundelkhand region to denote the sin of deliberate or even accidental killing of human beings and certain animals, such as cow, calf, bullock. The word Paraq is from Bundeli dialect, and it appears to owe its origin to its Sanskrit parallel, Pragha (meaning 'to kill') whence proceeds the word Praghata (act of killing). As there is a great degree of phonetic and semantic similarity between Pragha and Paraq, one is led to believe that the latter is perhaps a corrupt form of the former and that Paraq is a parochialized version in the Little Local Tradition as a result of a process of downward devolution from the Great Tradition where its sophisticated version is Pragha and other derivatives.

According to Hindu scriptures and sacred texts, the killing of certain animals is strictly prohibited, and it is considered as Pataka (in local usage, the word papa is employed) or sin (Kane, *op. cit.*, 107-9). If somebody kills animals which are considered sacred and whose killing is strictly prohibited, such a person is known as Pataki or sinner. As Paraq is the greatest sin, it is considered as the most abominable offence, social demerit and spiritual stigma. In rural India, such a Pataki or killer with his
Kutumbis (lineage members) is immediately excommunicated from the caste and the local community. This customary social law is immediately applied on his Kutumbis and the killer has to stay outside the village till the decision of the caste Panchayat, and until some purificatory rites have been performed, such as his taking a purificatory bath in the sacred river (the Ganges or the Narmada) and the performance by the Maha Brahmana (known as Kattaya Baman) of the symbolic marriage ritual of Lord Vishnu with the Tulsi (basil plant).

Forms of Parag:

The Hindu socio-cultural view of life does not permit killing of human beings and of such sacred animals as cow, calf and bullock. If a person kills any of these deliberately or strikes them knowing that it may lead to death, he is guilty of killing. Such killing is considered as sin and stigma, and the killing is counted among the higher forms of Parag.

Accidental killing of such animals, too, is included in the higher forms of Parag. By accidental killing it is meant that the human beings or animals may be hit but the striker may be unaware of the fact that the hit may cause death. Sometimes, when somebody chases an animal, he hits
it with a wooden rod or in trying to escape, it is injured by a fall which costs its life. In this situation, the person is responsible for the death of the animal. Sometimes, either due to darkness or due to uncontrollable bullocks of the cart, a male or female calf may come under the wheel of the cart and the poor animal, consequently, lose its life. In this situation, too, the cart driver is responsible for its death. Sometimes when the bullocks do not drag the plough or the cow or the calf cause some damage, the master gets angry and beats them, resulting in their death. Sometimes, people put ammunition in flour-cakes to kill wild beasts like the boar, but some cows or bullocks come and gulp it down. This may cause their death, and the person is held responsible. Sometimes due to a cruel beating by the husband, a wife jumps down into the well or hangs herself and thus commits suicide. But the man is held responsible. In the same way, sometimes a man beats his father, son or brother, who dies due to injury. In such a situation, the person is considered responsible for the death.

Such other forms of killing as infanticide and foeticide, whether deliberate or accidental, fall in the category of sins, and necessitate the elaborate purificatory rituals for atonement.
Identification of Pārag:

The man who is guilty of Pārag either himself informs his family members or the information spreads throughout the whole village. When a man commits such a sin, he weeps and confesses and repents it. He sits on the ground, putting his head upon his palms. Gradually, the news is spread throughout the village and its adjoining villages. After becoming aware of the case, the Mākhia of the Kudariya ascertains the facts of the case.

As soon as the persons of higher castes know it, they boycott such a family from the local community and the caste fellows declare him an outcaste. First of all, they are prohibited from using the public well. So the killer's family members are to go for drinking water to some distant well, stream, or river, which is generally not used by the villagers.

The persons of higher castes send the message to the accused through his family members that he should leave the village and live outside the village. He should live in his farm under the tree or in thatched cottage (tepariya), but not besides the main road generally used by people. The sinner should keep himself out of sight of the villagers: for seeing a person under the stigma of Pārag in the morning
or the evening is considered inauspicious (asubh). So he is asked to stay out of sight until he has undergone the entire purification rites.

In a case of serious beating:

When a person beats cruelly any animal which is considered sacred, and the victim is injured seriously without hope of survival, the members of the higher castes and the caste fellows of the person of the same village and the members of the higher castes of the adjoining villages are to be invited by him, or he gathers caste fellows and persons of higher castes of some twelve villages, who think over the case. The assembled persons examine the injured animal, to decide whether it can live or not. If they find any hope of the animal's life, the animal is entrusted to the person who is fully responsible to look after it and save its life any way. The persons of the higher castes and the caste fellows decide on a period of time — generally one to three months. If the animal dies within this period, the guilt will come to the person responsible. If in that limited period, the animal does not die, then the man is not considered guilty. He is neither excommunicated from the caste nor from the local community, even if the animal dies after the fixed period. Other castes, too, do not suspend their reciprocal service
relations with him. But if the animal dies within the fixed period, the man is thought guilty and excommunicated from the caste and the Kameens stop serving him. In this situation, too, the man is forced to live outside the village and to perform the same rituals before being readmitted into the caste and the local community. Even in the case of affluent and well-to-do persons of higher castes who do not have the Kudariya, have to live outside the village and go through all the rituals (see Case 3: Chapter IV). Sometimes the Panchas favour the guilty person and decide on a short period of examination, and thus save him from much trouble.

If somebody beats any human being and the latter dies, the police take cognizance of the case and the person is entrusted to the court of law by the police. In the event where the court decrees imprisonment of the culprit, the persons of higher castes and the caste fellows declare his family members as outcastes and the Kameens stop serving. The killer’s family members cannot be readmitted into the caste and the local community until the bhandara feast has been given to the entire Kudariya and to the Kameens.

Role of the Caste Fellows:

The caste community boycott such a person along with
his *Kutumbis* (lineage members), and do not allow them to participate in the socio-ritual ceremonies of the community. The caste fellows do not accept *chilam* (clay pipe) and water from his family members, and even the affinal kin suspend their social intercourse with him. If a newly married girl goes to her father's home or natal home which is so effected by *Farag*, then she will stay there for the period of purificatory rites and feast. If the marriage of a boy or girl is fixed during this period, the wedding ceremony will have to be postponed till the purification rites are completed.

**Role of the Accused Family:**

As soon as a person becomes guilty of *Farag*, his family members try to perform the purification rites as early as possible. During the period of excommunication, they do not supply him cooked food and do not allow him to use their utensils. They give him only wheat flour, salt, vegetable, etc. and he is to cook the meal in earthen pots. He is to use only earthen pots as his utensils. These earthen pots are given to him by his family members. He uses leaf cups and plates (*dona-pattal*) to eat food. The family members of the accused soon arrange to send him to Allahabad or Barman for sacred bath, and for this, they give him money. Generally, this is all done within a week. On the bank of
the sacred river, the person has his head shaved off completely. After return, he lives at the same place as before, till the decision of the caste Kudariya.

Role of Kin and Villagers:

The family members, the Kutumbis and the affinal relatives, affected by the Parag, press the matter so that such a man should get readmission into the caste, and they themselves may get their previous socio-ritual status. The near kin are concerned because, due to Parag, they cannot visit their other kinsmen. They cannot send their daughter to her husband's home nor proceed towards the marriage of their son or daughter. The affinal relatives and his Kutumbis help him financially and make every effort for the removal of the sin and for bringing him back into his caste and let him get confirmation from other castes.

All the Kameens stop serving them, and neither the family members of the guilty person nor his Kutumbis can force them to pay their traditional services. The Nai stops his services and stops supplying leaf plates and leaf cups and refuses to visit their kinsmen. The Dhobi does not wash their clothes. The Basoran (mid-wife) does not give her help at the time of delivery. The Luhar and the Badhai refuse their services. The Brahmana does not even go to
his house to perform any rituals. In the same way, the Chamars refuse to lift the dead cattle and the Parjapat, too, refuses to supply earthen pots. Due to these difficult circumstances, the kinsmen and his Kutumbis are greatly interested in bringing the accused back in the caste. As the accused returns from the sacred bath, the family members soon visit the chief of the Kudariya and request him to let the person regain his socio-cultural status in the caste.

**Activating the Kudariya:**

The chief of the caste Kudariya gets active in restoring the accused to his caste, only when the family members and the Kutumbis request him for this. The Mukhia fixes the date of meeting and orders them to bring the Maha Brahmana (known as Katty Baman) on the same day to perform the symbolic marriage ritual of Lord Vishnu with the Tulsi. He asks them to invite the Mukhias of three or four Kudariyas of their caste, and gather the Panchas of the entire Kudariya. He asks them to call the affinal relatives one day earlier to join the feast on the fixed date. The family members of the accused inform all these persons accordingly.

**Marriage Ritual of Lord Vishnu:**

One day before the fixed date, the Mukhia with his
Sangatis or Badkurs, as the case may be, reaches the killer’s village. The Panches, the Maha Brahmana and the relatives, all reach there. Then, all the hosts and the Mukhiyas of other Kudariyas reach the spot, where the guilty person is spending his time. When he sees them, he touches the feet of all of them. First of all, the marriage ritual of Lord Vishnu with the Tulei plant is performed by the Kattya Brahmana (see Glossary). Everybody attends the function as a witness.

The Kattya Brahmana then proceeds to cook food for himself. When the food gets ready, he eats up the first morsel, and while so doing, he pretends as if it were hard for him to gulp the first morsel down his throat. This first morsel of food is known as *hatya ka kaur* (morsel of killing). He then puts off all the clothes of the accused, and leaves the village at night.

For his priestly role, the Kattya Brahmana generally demands a heavy renumeration of Rs. 500/- but after several requests from the side of the accused, the haggling comes to an end and he often agrees to a sum of Rs. 100/- as his customary fee.

**Mechanism of Judgment:**

After the marriage ritual of Lord Vishnu, the Mukhia
of the Kudariya decides the matter with the consent of the guest Mukhias and the Panchas:

a. at what place the purificatory bath should be taken;
b. how much donation to the temple should be given;
c. whether a cow and calf should be given to the priest as gift;
d. whether all the persons from the entire Kudariya or only some selected persons of the caste are to be invited for the caste feast;
e. how much money is to be given to the chief of the Kudariya.

The entire issue is decided at night at the spot where the sinner resides, and then people stay there with him that night.

_Purification Rites and Feast:_

One day before the caste feast or on the same day, the place, where cooking is to be done and the place where the accused should come and stay, are cleaned and washed with cowdung and with white clay (chulée). The earthen pots are thrown away from the house. The family members of the guilty person wash their own clothes. Cow urine and the Gangajal are sprinkled in every part of the house. On the same day
before the caste feast, the relatives of the accused take him to some stream or river and make him purify himself through water, the Gangajal, and the Panchagavya (cow-milk, cow-curd, cow-butter, cow-urine and cow-dung) and the man then wears a new dhoti (loin cloth).

On the same day or the next, the programme of the caste feast begins. The Panchas of the caste start the preparation of cooking. The family members of the accused are not allowed to cook the meals or serve the food. But kaccha and pakka feasts are cooked under the direction of the Mukhia and the Badkurs. Before the caste feast, the Mukhia, the Panchas, and the relatives go to fetch the sinner who comes back to the village house, holding the tail of a cow or a female calf. On the way, cow-urine is sprinkled on him. He stays at some distance from the cooking room and the place, too, is washed with cow-dung, and cow-urine and the Gangajal are sprinkled here again. The cow holding whose tail the accused comes to the house, is donated to the priest.

The Mukhia of the Kudariya decides with the consent of the man’s family members, whether every member of the entire Kudariya should be invited or only some selected members of his caste. The persons of other castes have nothing to do with the caste feast. But the guest Mukhias
of other Kudariyas of his caste should be invited. This is so done because the kinship ties of a caste also extend to other villages falling under the jurisdiction of other Kudariyas.

Before the caste feast, the donation of a sum of Rs. 100/- (or according to the man's financial position) has to be given to the village temple. After this, the feast starts, which is called milong ki pangat (feast for readmission into caste). In the feast, the guilty person and his family members neither participate in cooking nor serve the food. But he joins the feast with all the caste fellows, and his Kutumbis are only allowed to supply water, leaf-cups and leaf-plates. When the feast function ends, teeka is given to all Mukhias of Rs. 5/- each and a new turban is presented to each Mukhia. The teeka of the caste Panchas is given with some less money but not more than one rupee.

Inter-caste Involvement and Bhandara Feast:

After the decision of the Kudariya, the feast is given to the caste community but the guilty person with his Kutumbis gets confirmation only in his caste and he still remains excommunicated for other castes. The Kameens do not resume their services, and he and his Kutumbis are not
allowed to participate in functions with the members of other castes. He and his family members cannot even fetch water from the public well. Nobody shares chilam (clay pipe) or water with them.

Ultimately, the family members of the accused approach the members of higher castes. On their ceaseless request, the members of higher castes fix a date for the bhandara feast. Till that date he and his Kutumbis are banned from other castes. The Panches of higher castes examine the whole facts again, and order him to arrange a bhandara feast. Generally the bhandara feast is to be given in the month of Asadh (June-July) after the rain falls, if the Parag had happened in the summer or winter season. It depends upon the attitude of higher caste persons whether the rule is strictly observed or not.

On the fixed date, the bhandara feast is held in the person's house under the guidance of the persons of higher castes. The pakka meals are cooked by the Brahmanas and served by them. One member from each family of the village and some persons of higher castes from the adjoining villages are to be invited to the feast. All the Kameens, too, are invited to the feast. At the time of the bhandara feast, the ritual recitation of the sacred text of Lord Satyanarayan, too, is arranged by the affected family and
the Prasad is distributed among persons of all castes. After this, the person and his family members get acceptance from other castes, and all the restrictions cease to exist from that time automatically. Until the time of bhandara feast and the recitation of the sacred text, the guilty man and his Kutumbis cannot be confirmed in the local community.
CASE STUDIES

Krishna Chadar :: Baroda

Krishna Athya Chadar, aged 25 years, is a permanent resident of Baroda. In the first week of May 1972, Krishna was driving a bullock cart. Suddenly, he shouted and beat the bullocks with a wooden rod (danda). One bullock ran from the cart and slipped into a ditch, where its four legs were broken, and after a fortnight the bullock died due to the injury. In the circumstances, Krishna who was responsible for its death, was excommunicated from his own caste along with his Kutumbia. He had to stay outside the village in his farm till the decision of the caste Kudariya.

In the first week of June 1972, he went for the holy bath in the Narmada where he got his hair cut, but after return from the holy bath, he remained outside the village for a period of two months. On August 3, 1972, his father invited four Mukhias of four different Kudariyas of his own caste, and requested them for the readmission of his son.
The following Mukhias were present on the occasion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mukhia's Name</th>
<th>Centre of Kudariya</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gulab Athya</td>
<td>Kanera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chotelal Athya</td>
<td>Mudari</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kishori Lal Athya</td>
<td>Naryawali</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jhandu Athya</td>
<td>Khajuriya</td>
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The caste Panchas from the entire jurisdiction of Athya Chadar Kudariya too were invited and the Maha Brahmana was called from Sagar. Before the caste panchas and the Mukhias, the Maha Brahmana performed the marriage ritual of Lord Vishnu with goddess Tulsi at the place where the guilty man was staying, and took his lane (customary fee), a sum of Rs. 100/- and some new and old clothes of the guilty person.

After this ceremony, the Mukhias gave their decision as follows:

a. that Krishna or his father must donate Rs. 50/- to the village temple;

b. that the family members of the accused should arrange a kaccha and pakka feast;

c. that he must pay Rs. 25/- to the Mukhia of his own Kudariya;

d. that the accused with his family members should hear the sacred text of Lord Satya Narayan from the priest.
Next day, after the decision, the caste feast was given to the entire Kudariya of Athya Chadar and other lower caste persons such as the Basor and the Chamar were invited too. Other higher caste people did not come because they do not take meals and water from the hands of lower castes. After the caste feast, the teeka of each Mukhia was given with Rs.5/- and new turbans were presented to all Mukhias. The teeka of his caste Panchas was given with one rupee each.

After a couple of days (i.e., August 11, 1972), the sacred text of Lord Satya Narayan was arranged to be read in the courtyard of Krishna's house, and the Prasad was distributed by the village priest among members of all castes who were present at that time. After this function, Krishna and his family members were allowed to move within the caste and other caste people also gave him confirmation in the village community.

Ishri Kurmi :: Baroda

Ramanath Kurmi, aged 40 years, the elder brother of Ishri Kurmi, is an inhabitant of village Baroda. During summer (Baisakh) 1970, his younger brother Ishri, aged about 35 years, killed his wife because he suspected her character. Due to this, Ishri was sentenced to imprisonment for 20 years by the court of law, and now-a-days he is in Raipur Jail.
Being the elder brother of the guilty person, Ramnath was declared an outcaste and other occupational castes stopped their services to his family. During the period of full one year (1970-71) Ramnath remained an outcaste and was avoided by other castes, and he was not even allowed to use the public well or to enter the temple. The Kameens stopped their services. After one year, in the month of Baisakh (April-May) 1971, Ramnath invited the caste chiefs from the following five different Kudariyas of his caste: Baroda Kudariya; Girvar Kudariya; Mohli Kudariya; Bisanpurl Kudariya and Mohase Kudariya.

The Panchas of Kurmi caste from 20 villages were assembled near the temple in Baroda. The Mukhias of his caste decided the case with the consent of the Panchas:

a. that Ramnath, as the real brother of Ishri, should go for holy bath to Berman;
b. that he should donate Rs. 50/- to the village temple;
c. that he should pay Rs. 50/- to the Mukhia of Kurmi Kudariya for distribution of Prasad among the persons of the entire Kudariya;
d. that he should call the Kattaya Brahmana for performing the marriage rites of Lord Vishnu with the Tulsi plant; and
e. that he should give a bhandara feast to all the castes and listen to ritual recitation of sacred text (Bhagwat Katha).

After one month, in Jaistha (May-June) 1971, he went to Barman for the sacred bath. When he returned from the Narmada, he called the Kattaya Brahmana from Sagar. The Kattaya Brahmana performed the marriage ritual of Lord Vishnu with the Tulsi, and took his customary fee of Rs. 100/- and some clothes. Then, after a week, Ramanath arranged a function of reading of the sacred text, and donated Rs. 50/- to the village temple and arranged a bhandara feast in which people of all castes (one person from each family) of the village were invited. The Mukhias of the above mentioned five different Kudariyas and the Panchas from 56 villages, too, were invited. Teaka of each Mukhia was given at Rs. 5/- each and a new turban was also presented to each Mukhia. After this ceremony, Ramanath Kurmi was readmitted to his caste, and got socio-ritual confirmation in other castes. This information was given to the researcher by Ramanath Kurmi himself and other Kurmis of the same village.

Dwarka Nai :: Baroda

Dwarka Nai, age about 22 years, was living in Baroda with his maternal grandfather, Ghazi, age 60 years. Dwarka's
wife, age 18 years, lived with them. Dwarika came to know that his wife had some immoral relations with some person of the same village. Due to this, one night, Dwarika killed his wife with an axe. The information spread throughout the village and the villagers came there and caught him redhanded. Next day, the police came and arrested Dwarika. He was sentenced to imprisonment for 20 years by the court of law. This incident took place in the last week of May 1973, and after this incident, Ghasi, the grandfather of the accused, was turned out from his caste and other castes.

Ultimately, after six months, in the month of November 1973, he approached the Mukhia of his Kudariya — Sunder Nai of Jaisinagar, and invited 10 Badkurs from the entire Kudariya. He gathered the Panchas of his caste from 20 villages. The Mukhia decided the case with the consent of the Badkurs and the Panchas:

a. that being the grandfather of the accused, Ghasi should go for a sacred bath;

b. that he should invite a Kattaya Brahmana who will perform the marriage of Lord Vishnu;

c. that he should donate Rs. 25/- to the village temple and also pay Rs. 25/- to the Mukhia; and

d. that he and his family members should arrange a bhandara feast in which all them caste people should be invited.
On the second day after the judgment, Ghasi went for the holy bath in the Narmada. On his return, he invited the Maha Brahmana from Sagar, who performed the marriage rite of Lord Vishnu with the Tulei plant, and according to his lane too Rs. 100/- and some clothes from Ghasi. He arranged a bhandara feast in which all the castes of the same village (one person from each caste) and the Panchas of his caste from 50 villages (one person from each village) were invited. The Mukhia and the ten Badkurs, too, were invited. A sum of Rs. 25/- was donated to the village temple and the teeka of the Mukhia was made with Rs. 5/- and a new turban was presented to him. Teeka of each Badkur was made with Rs. 2/- each. Later, he arranged and heard the sacred Ketra of Lord Satya Narayan and the Prasad was distributed among all those who were present there. After this performance, Ghasi was readmitted to his caste and confirmed by the other castes.

Punni Kachhi :: Badbadi

Punni Kachhi, age about 35 years, an inhabitant of Badbadi, is the younger brother of Tulei, age about 55 years. By chance, in the second week of May 1972, a female calf was killed under Punni's bullock-cart. One night, Punni was driving the bullock-cart very fast and the cart suddenly
passed over a female calf which was lying on the cart track in the dark.

The elder brother of Punni, Tulsi, gave the information to the villagers and to caste fellows of the village that his brother Punni had fallen a prey to Parag. In the very next day, he sent his brother (Punni) to Allahabad for the sacred bath in the Ganges from where he returned after eight days. Punni lived under a tree in his farm outside the village till the decision of the caste Kudariya. During this period, Tulsi supplied food to Punni in the farm. Punni and his Kutumbia, too, were immediately excommunicated from the caste.

On June 17, 1972, i.e. after one month, Tulsi gathered the Panchas of his entire Kudariya and the Mukhia, Faggu Kachhi, from Ghughar. On the request of the Mukhia, Tulsi invited the Mukhiyas of three other Kudariyas of his caste. They were from the following Kudariyas: Mukhia from the Eshurwara Kudariya; Mukhia from the Killai Kudariya; and the Mukhia from the Paloei Kudariya.

On the same day, the Maha Brahmana, too, was called from Sagar. According to tradition, he took a sum of Rs. 100/- and performed the marriage rite of Lord Vishnu, and took off all the clothes from the body of the guilty man.
Later on, the Mukhias of the four Kudariyas decided the matter:

a. that Tulsi should donate Rs. 25/- to the village temple and pay Rs. 25/- to the Mukhia;
b. that the family members of the accused should arrange a caste feast to the entire Kudariya;
c. that after the caste feast, the accused family should give a bhandara feast to all the castes.

Next day, i.e. June 18, 1972, the family members of the accused arranged a caste feast in which the members of the entire Kudariya were invited. The caste fellows and the kinsmen of the village were invited with their families. Teeka of the Mukhia was made with Rs. 5/- and he was presented with a new turban. The teeka of the Panchas was made with a smaller sum. After this feast, the accused and his Kutumbis were readmitted into their caste.

On July 25, 1972, the elder brother of Punni gathered the persons of higher castes and arranged a bhandara feast to the Satkhol (all castes) with the help of the priest and other Brahmanas, and listened to the sacred text of Lord Satya Narayan. After this, Punni and his Kutumbis got back their socio-ritual position in the caste and the local community.
Pussu Kachhi (ii) Hinnod

Pussu Kachhi, age about 45 years, is an inhabitant of Hinnod. He killed a female calf three years ago in the summer 1970. He himself informed the caste fellows; and his family members were declared outcaste and other castes stopped their services. After eight days, he went to the Narmada for sacred bath. He himself lived outside the village till the decision of the Kudariya.

In the month of Asadh (June-July) 1970, the brother of Pussu requested the Mukhia, Faggu Kachhi, who called the Mukhiyas from three Kudariyas: Mukhia from the Eaurware Kudariya; Mukhia from the Killai Kudariya; and the Mukhia from the Paloei Kudariya. On the same day, the Maha Brahma was called from Sagar, and also all the Panchas of the entire Kudariya. First of all, the Kattaya Brahma performed the marriage rite of Lord Vishnu and took Rs. 100/- as his customary fee and took off all the clothes from the body of the guilty person. Later on, the chief of the caste Kudariya decided the matter with the consent of the Panchas:

a. that the accused or his family members should donate Rs. 25/- to the village temple and give Rs. 25/- to the caste Mukhia;
b. that the accused and his family members should arrange a caste feast and a Satkom feast.

Next day after the decision, the family members of the guilty person arranged a caste feast to which one person from each family of the entire Kudariya was invited. Teeka of the Mukhia was made with Rs. 5/- and a new turban was presented to him; and the teeka of other Panches of the caste was made with smaller amounts.

After two months, i.e. in the month of Bhadrapad (August-September) 1970, the father and the younger brother of Pussu requested the Panches of higher castes of the same village and arranged a bhandara feast, to which one person from each family of all the castes of the village was invited. He heard the sacred text of Lord Satya Narayan from the priest and the Prasad was distributed among all the persons who were presented there. After this performance, Pussu and his Kutumbis were confirmed in his caste and by other castes.

Dhanu Chamara :: Salaiya

Dhanu Chamara, aged 24 years, was an inhabitant of village Salaiya. He had killed his wife in the second week of November 1972. He had thrown the body of his wife in the
outer well of the village, but he was seen by some of the people (Hariram Kurmi, age 32 years and others) of the village while so doing. The police was called from Jaisinagar, and they arrested Dhanu and his father, Budhu (age 55 years) who was acquitted by the law court after six months but Dhanu was punished by the court with an imprisonment of 20 years.

When his father, Budhu, came back to the village, he was declared an outcaste with his family, and he was treated as excommunicated from other castes. So the other castes stopped rendering their services. He was not allowed even to take water from any public well of the village. For about a year and a half, Budhu and his family remained outcastes and lived in their farm, which is outside the village.

Ultimately, in the month of Baisakh (April and May) 1973, Budhu approached the Mukhia of his Kudariya, and with the consent of the Mukhia, the date of the caste Panchayat was fixed, that the meeting of the Kudariya would be held after seven days in village Salaiya. The information was sent to the caste fellows of the entire Kudariya (17 villages) and to the Kattaya Brahmana by the younger brother of Dhanu.

On the fixed date the Maha Brahmana was called from
Sagar. He performed the marriage of Lord Vishnu with Tulsi and took Rs. 100/- as his customary fee. On the same date, Budhu invited the Mukhia of his Kudariya and the Mukhia of Sagar Kudariya and the Panchas of 17 villages were assembled at his farm where he was spending his time.

The Chamars of 17 villages were assembled and decided the case:

a. that being the father of the accused, Budhu with his wife should go for holy bath in the Narmada;
b. that he should donate Rs. 50/- to the village temple;
c. that he should pay Rs. 50/- to the Mukhia for distribution of gur (jaggery) among the caste fellows of the entire Kudariya; and
d. that he should arrange a caste feast-cum-Satkom feast.

At the end of Baisakh (April-May) 1973, Budhu with his wife went for the holy bath in the Narmada. After his return, he arranged a caste feast as well as a Satkom feast in which the caste fellows of the entire Kudariya (one person from each family), Mukhia Lal Singh from Baroda and Mukhia Mulu Chamar from Sagar were invited. From the other castes only the Basors had come and joined the feast because the
Basors are lower than the Chamaras. As per decision, Budhu donated Rs. 50/- to the village temple and gave Rs. 50/- to Mukhia Lal Singh of his Kudariya. The teeka of the Mukhias was made with Rs. 5/- each and a new turban. After this feast, Budhu and his family were automatically readmitted into his caste and got confirmation from the other castes.

Rama Panbesuriya Chadar :: Chakeri

Rama Panbesuriya Chadar, age 24 years, was an inhabitant of village Chakeri. In November 1973, there was a hot discussion between the two brothers, Garibe (aged 35 years) and Rama, on some money matter. During the quarrel, Rama struck his brother Garibe with a thick stick and Garibe died on the spot. Rama was arrested by the police and the case went up to the court and Rama was sentenced to imprisonment for 12 years. Ultimately, the villagers decided the social position of Rama's father, Halku, age 53 years. He was declared an outcaste. He was not allowed to live in the village till the period of purification rite had been performed. Halku remained an outcaste for the period of eight months and during this period, the Kameena did not serve him.

In the last week of June 1974, he called the
Panbesuriya Chadar from 25 villages and the Mukhia, Raghwar Panbesuriya, from the Ghughar Chontre. He called the Maha Brahmana from Sagar for performing the Tulsi Vivah. In the presence of all the Panbesuriya Chadar, the Maha Brahmana performed the Tulsi Vivah and took Rs. 100/- according to custom. Later on, the Mukhia decided the case with the consent of the caste fellows:

a. that being a father of Rama and Garibe, Halku with his wife should go for a sacred bath in the Narmada;

b. that he should pay Rs. 25/- to the village temple, and Rs. 25/- to the Mukhia of the Kudariya; and

c. that he should arrange a feast to the caste fellows of the entire Kudariya, and give a feast to the Kamsens.

The next day after the decision, Halku with his wife went to Barman for the sacred bath in the Narmada. On his return, his family members arranged a caste feast as well as the Gangajali, in which one person from each family of the Chadars of all the 25 villages of the entire Kudariya was invited. From the other castes, the Basors and the Chamars came and joined the feast, because the Chamars and the Basor castes are of lower status than the Chadars. Teeka of the Mukhia — Raghwar Chadar — was made with
Rs. 2/- and a new turban presented to him. The teeka of the other Panchas was made with smaller amounts. As per decision of the Kudariya, he had to pay Rs. 25/- to the temple and Rs. 25/- to the Mukhia. Ultimately, Halku got readmission in his caste and was confirmed by the other castes too.

Panchu Kachhi : Barkhera

Panchu Kachhi, age about 40 years, is an inhabitant of village Barkhera-Mahant. During summer 1970, he had beaten a female calf. Due to severe beating, the female calf died. This information spread throughout the village and he himself informed his family members. Due to this incident, Panchu and his family members were declared outcastes, and excommunicated from other castes. He lived outside the village till the Kudariya decision.

In the month of Ashad (June-July) 1970, he went to Berman to take a holy bath in the Narmada. On his return, his father and his younger brother invited the Mukhia of his Kudariya from Ghughar and assembled the Panchas of 12 villages. The Mukhias of three other Kudariyas (Paloei, Killai and Ñurwara) of his caste, too, were invited. The Maha Brahmana, too, was invited from Sagar, and he performed the Tulsî Vivah and took Rs. 100/- as his customary
fee. He also took off all the clothes from the guilty man's body. Then the Mukhias of four Kudariyas gave their verdict:

a. that the father of Panchu will have to pay Rs. 25/- to the village temple;
b. that his family members should arrange a caste feast and pay Rs. 25/- to the Mukhia of his caste; and
c. that after the caste feast, the family should arrange for reading of the sacred text of Lord Satya Narayan and give a bhandara feast to all castes.

On the very next day after the decision, the parents of Panchu arranged a caste feast in which persons of their own caste from 12 villages were invited as shown below:
all Kachhis from Barkheda-Mahant; five Kachhis from Barkhua-Mahant; thirty-eight Kachhis from Badbadi; eighteen Kachhis from Baroda; ten Kachhis each from Birpura and Sothiya; twenty Kachhis each from Hinnod and Ghughar; fifteen Kachhis from Chakeri, Jamuniya and Pipariya (five from each village); and one Kachhi from Salia. At the time of the caste feast, the father of Panchu gave Rs. 25/- to the village temple and Rs. 25/- to the Mukhia. The teeka of all the Mukhias was made with Rs. 5/- each and a new
turban was presented to everyone of them. The *teeka* of the Panchas was made with smaller amounts. After this function, Panchu and his family members were readmitted into his caste.

Two months after the caste feast, i.e. in Bhadrapad (August-September) 1970, the *bhandara* feast was given to all castes of the village. The *Kameena*, too, were invited to this feast from the village and from the adjoining villages. In this *bhandara* feast, one person from each family of all the castes was invited. A ritual recitation of the sacred legend of Lord Satya Narayan was performed by the priest of Berkhuwa, and the *Prasad* was distributed among all persons who attended the *Katha*. Ultimately, Panchu's parents and their *Kutumbis* got acceptance in the community.

**Raghunath Kachhi :: Sagar**

Raghunath Kachhi, age about 35 years, originally an inhabitant of village Badbadi, is now residing at Sagar in his father-in-law's house. Three years earlier in summer, 1970, he became guilty of the death of a female calf in Sagar. Raghunath went straight to Berman for the sacred bath and he returned from Berman to his original place, Badbadi. He told everything to the villagers, the
caste fellows and also his brother who were living in the village. He stayed outside the village till the decision of the Kudariya.

After a month, his brother gathered the Mukhias of four Kudariyas: Ghughar Kudariya; Paloie Kudariya; Eaurwara Kudariya; and Killai Kudariya. In addition to this, he gathered the Panchas of his entire Kudariya in the meeting. The Maha Brahmana, too, was invited from Sagar. First the Kattaya Brahmana performed the Tulsi Vivah and received Rs. 100/-, and took off all the clothes of the guilty person. Then the Mukhias of the four Kudariyas gave their verdict:

a. that being an original member of this Kudariya, Raghunath would have to pay Rs. 50/- to the village temple, and Rs. 25/- to the Mukhia; and
b. that his Kutumbia should arrange a caste feast and after that he would have to give a bhandara feast to all castes.

On the next day of the decision, the caste feast was arranged at the house of Raghunath's brother, in which all the Kachhis of the same village and five Kachhis from each village of the entire Kudariya were invited. Later on, the bhandara feast was given to all castes in which persons of
higher castes of the adjoining villages were also invited. The sacred text of Lord Satya Narayan was arranged and Prasad was distributed to all persons who were present at that time. After this, he got readmission in his caste and accepted by other castes. Then, he returned to Sagar with his wife and he is still living there.

Raghunath Kachhi is personally known to the author. When he was asked why he had gone to Badbadi, when the death of the calf had taken place in Sagar, he said that his Kudariya Chontra is in Ghughar and that he is a member of that Kudariya. So only the Mukhias of that Kudariya could allow him readmission to his caste. That is why he had gone to his village.

Ganesh Kachhi :: Badbadi

Ganesh Kachhi, age 35 years, is a permanent resident of village Badbadi. During May 1971, Ganesh struck his ox in the field, and it died. Ganesh himself reported this killing to the villagers and left for holy bath to Allahabad. In his return, he stayed at his vegetable farm which is outside the village, till the decision of the Kudariya.

After one month, his father and elder brother invited the Mukhias of four Kudariyas (Ghughar Kudariya, Esurwara
Kudariya, Paloie Kudariya and Killai Kudariya). In addition to this, they gathered the Kachhis of 10 villages. The Maha Brahmana was summoned from Sagar, who performed the Tulsi Vivah and received Rs. 100/- and took off all the clothes of the guilty person. Later on, with the consent of caste fellows, the Mukhias gave their verdict:

a. that the parents of the man would have to pay Rs. 25/- to the village temple, and Rs. 25/- to the Mukhia;

b. that the family should arrange a caste feast in which the Panchas of the entire Kudariya and the relatives should be invited; and

c. that the family should arrange a bhandara feast.

Next day after the judgment, Ganesh's parents performed all the functions one by one and arranged a caste feast in which the Kutumbis, the Panchas of 10 villages, the relatives, and the members of the caste from their own village were invited. Teeka of the Mukhias was made with Rs. 5/- each and a new turban was presented to each Mukhia. After a couple of days, the bhandara feast was arranged by the accused family in which persons of all castes of the village and the adjoining villages, too, were invited. After this, Ganesh Kachhi and his Kutumbis got back their socio-ritual status and were accepted in the village community.