

## CHAPTER - IV

CLAN AND LINEAGE

Bhils are organised into a number of patrilineal exogamous descent groups or clans (atak). Each clan has a distinctive name which is used as an identification name by all the people who belong to it, whether by birth or <sup>o</sup>adoption. These names are of varying significance. Some of them are clearly eponymous, i.e., commemorating an incident in the life of a real or mythical ancestor of the clan, or of an incident in the early history of its development.

According to a widely current tradition, the Dangi who are today a large and widely distributed group, are said to have had their origin from the Katara clan. A long time ago a young man of this clan went out seeking a bride. He was carrying with him a large sum of money towards the bride price. In order to escape from the attentions of the robbers and thieves who infested the forests even in those days, he hollowed out his long cudgel (dang) and hid the money there. When he found a girl to his liking and wanted to negotiate the match, the girl's kinsmen looked at this langotia bhil who had seemingly come with empty hands to seek a bride and scoffed at him. Unruffled at their amused chaffing, the young man took his cudgel, upended it and stamped it on the ground. Gold coins streamed out.

Scoffers were startled at first, and then cried out in admiration that he was indeed a true dangi (one who weilds the cudgel). The name stuck to him and to his descendents ever since, as a term of identification. In course of time even the <sup>ear</sup>~~the~~ Katara affiliations were forgotten. Today they are regarded, in most areas, as having an independent clan status.

The same holds true for the Vakhlas of Pipergota. Namla, the founder of this clan, was an orphan who was adopted by Juhu, the then headman of Alindra. The boy was very friendly with an eagle (Vakhla) and was therefore referred to as Namla Vakhla only. Nobody today seems to know his original clan affiliations. But the term Vakhla has stuck to his descendents as a clan name.

Some other atak (clan) names are obviously derived from place names. There are clan names such as Ganadi, Khadedia, Kiradia, etc. These probably refer to the places from where the founding ancestors of the clan migrated. In Kotumbi for instance, there are two segments of Paramars, having nothing in common except membership of the same clan. One was founded by a people who came from Garas, a place somewhere in Panchmahals and hence referred to as the Garasia<sup>\*</sup> Paramars, as distinct from the other segments. Often the suffix Paramar tends to be overlooked and they are referred to simply as Garasias. In quite a few cases, the Garasia themselves seem to be unaware of their Paramar affiliations.

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\* not to be confused with the Garasias of Kathiawad who are and order of petty landholders.

More often however, place names have a reference to a territorial division of a larger body. Pipria Paramars for instance, are Paramars concentrated in and around Pipero (a village in Limkheda). Similarly Ganadia Dindods were the Dindods of Ganadia. Today such groups tend to be known merely as Pipria, Ganadia and so on. Often their Paramar or Dindod affiliations are overlooked by others.

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Venketachar suggests<sup>1</sup> a totemic significance to clan names. He has listed the names of 122 clans found in the Central Indian Agency area, and against each he indicates the traditional tales of origin and special ritual relation of the members of each clan with the respective natural object or animal if any. The name Katja, we learn, has a reference to the short sword and further that the members of this clan are required to worship a short sword or dagger just before the first bana<sup>2</sup> ceremony. Further the bridegroom is expected to hold on to it for the entire duration of the marriage ceremony. Similarly, the name Rawat is said to be derived from the term rawai (lit. a churning staff). The tale runs that once the ancestor of this clan was in danger of being beaten to death with a rawai by some irate female relatives when he was saved by his bitch. To this day, the members of this clan are said to worship a bitch just before marriage. The term Dindod is likewise derived from dindu (a harmless water snake), which is worshipped and is generally immune from the members of the Dindod clan even today.

I have no data disputing Shri Venketachar's hypothesis. But I feel that the data he has presented though admirable, is too meagre and inconclusive. Practices such as the worship of the dagger and carrying of it by the bridegroom, probably have more a reference to the martial traditions of a people, and are found among many non-tribal people as well.

We need not enter into a full discussion of the question of totemistic implications of Bhil clan names here. More relevant for us is the fact that the clan name is borne by all the persons who belong to that clan. It is a principle of identification for two important purposes. The bearing of a clan name is a sure indication that such a person is agnatically related to all the others who bear that name, through a common ancestor, however far removed from each other. Secondly, it is a simple way of enforcing the exogamous injunction. No Dindod may marry a Dindod. Though no genealogical evidence of kinship is available, the very name is enough evidence for this purpose. Thus a person introduces himself not merely as X the son of Y, but as of the clan D.

The clan name is not generally used among the members of the same clan inter-alia. It is often used by people when talking of their friends or neighbours. But it is significant that one must refer to an affine by his/her clan name only. Under no circumstances may a person address his <sup>daughter's</sup> ~~sister's~~ husband by his personal name. It is regarded as an insult unless the two persons were familiar with each other before marriage.

There are numerous clans among the Bhils of the Aravalli-Malva region. I have personally come across people of sixty-seven different clans. P.G. Vaniker<sup>3</sup> gives a list of sixty-four clans found in the Dohad and Jhalod talukas, about a dozen of which are not found in my list. Venkatachar mentions one hundred and twenty two names, quite a few of which are not found in either of the above lists.<sup>4</sup> Further, it is not clear as to actually how many are fully/independent exogamous clans, and how many are only sub-clans with a separate identity but forming a part of a larger exogamous unit.

Further, there does not seem to be any ordering of the different clans in a definite system of rank or seniority. Such an ordering of the different exogamous units would impart a sense of unity and a corporate character to the tribe. Among the Nuer for instance, the tribe is cut up into a regular pattern of major and minor segments, maximal and minimal lineages and so on, each narrower unit finding its particular place of rank and seniority among other units of the same order within a broader whole. This system in its turn is correlated with an elaborate political system of intergrading units. As a result, though fission is constantly at work, it is not allowed to run riot, and the segments that emerge, fit<sup>5</sup> into their logically predetermined places in the system.

Bhils offer a contrast to the Nuer. The tribe is cut up into numerous exogamous clans, which do not form units in any well defined system of rank or seniority. Traditions

point to the Damor and the Warkrya as the two original clans from which all the other Bhil clans originated. Most of the ancestral spirits holding a high rank in the Bhil pantheon<sup>6</sup> are believed to have been members of these two clans. But today the members of these two clans as the direct descendents in the original line, do not seem to have any special status in relation to the other Bhils as one would normally expect. On the contrary, Bhils of Poshina concede a high status to the members of the Pargi and Paramar clans, on some purely local and as yet undiscovered grounds.<sup>7</sup> This special status is extended even to the daughters of these two clans, and whosoever marries them is expected to fly a white banner on his homestead (a privilege usually associated with the shrine of a mother goddess). Except for similar cases of particular clans or segments being locally honoured, all clans are regarded as of equal status. Any clan is free to contract marital alliances with any other clan, subject of course to the normal kinship usages governing the choice of a mate.

Further, as constituting a kinship group, the members of a clan may be expected to be bound by certain bonds of participation and by mutual obligations and rights towards each other. Ideally the clan is a corporate entity. It has residual rights over the property of its several individual members. It has complete authority to regulate and control the behaviour of the group, along certain socially accepted modes. It is also a ritual entity, the several members of the group being expected to come together for participation

and collaboration atleast on certain important occasions. Unity of the clan is expressed through well-defined concepts of ancestral spirits, and by the sharing of the bonds of pollution or of ritual impurity caused by a death or birth in the clan, or by the incidence of pestilence or similar misfortune affecting the entire community. The corporate nature of such a group may be expressed in terms of a well-defined system of intergrading segments, a machinery to adjudicate disputes and to absorb feuds and fission in the community, and a sound backing of the mores and conventions of the community by a well-defined system of social and ritual sanctions.

An effective systematic realisation of these ends would imply that the descent group is territorially integrated and the several members of the group are consequently in a position to maintain and/or renew frequently, the several ties whether of collaboration and participation, or of feuds that bind them to each other and to the members of the other segments. However clanship among the Bhils is vitiated by a continual process of fission, and an uncontrolled and interdigital dispersal of the several segments. Even today, individuals and groups are frequently breaking away from the parental group (nal or a lineage), to far distant places. The Bhil clans do not seem to have had any rights over a definite area, as is the case with the Nuer clans of Trans-Sudan. As a result, the segments which were forced to break away from the parental group could

settle only where suitable conditions existed, not necessarily in the vicinity of the parental group. Perhaps, it might not have been possible for the new segments, to find sufficient land suitable for cultivation in the neighbourhood, due to the available land being already occupied by people of other clans or segments. Further, individuals and groups were often forced to migrate to other villages, in response to certain kinship considerations. A man often went over to assist his widowed sister in looking after her children and their lands and cattle, till such time, as the children were of an age to manage for themselves. Frequently a woman who was a widow or was divorced for alleged misbehaviour returned to her natal home, often with her young children and claimed a share of the family lands from her brothers. Sometimes, a man without any male issue, would invite a man to be his ghar-jamai (a man who on marriage becomes a member of his wife's family, unlike the normal marriage in which the girl becomes a member of her husband's family), and inherit his lands after the former's death. In each of these situations, a family with a different clan affiliation is settled in the neighbourhood. Where the settlement is permanent, a family grows to be a lineage in course of time.

At any rate today, the several clans are just loose clusters of numerous segments or lineages, which are dispersed interdigitally over a very wide area. In the Bhil country today, numerous lineages bearing numerous clan



names are found, interspersed among themselves. In most large villages of this area, segments of as many as ten to twelve clans may be found. While some of them such as the Baria occur very frequently showing a wide and equitable distribution, some others like Tokria are found in just a few villages. The Vakhla for instance, are found only in a few villages around the Ratanmal hills.

Large concentrations do occur of certain clans, indicating territorial affiliations to a considerable extent. In the Jhalod and Dohad talukas of Panchamahals District, clan segments are large, often running into thousands and forming the entire population of more than one village. For instance, the entire population of Bajarwada and the two neighbouring villages consist only of the Sangada clan, all claiming descent from the same nal or branch of the clan. In the same neighbourhood, two of the larger villages, Kadaval and Titodi contain only the Nisartha. In Kathiwada, the entire population of three villages near Kotharmahudi, is said to be of the clan Mahania.

When the clan concentration is more and the size of the segment is considerably larger, clanship takes on a greater significance for the several members. It is found that a considerable area of social and ritual relationships covering the entire group are established. These relations often extend across the intervening segments of other clans to cover the segments of the same clan in a different village.

Usually however, the segments are small and isolated. The hilly and forested terrain discourages the maintenance of regular and frequent contacts with the parental group or with the other segments scattered in far off places. Contacts wherever maintained are not sufficiently extensive and over long periods interdependence and inter-action between such segments tend to be weakened. Such isolated segments tend to establish more and more significant social and ritual relations with the other lineage groups in the same neighbourhood even though they might belong to different clans. Vicinage relations gradually acquire greater emphasis over clanship as such.

In other words, the clan being only a loose cluster of numerous and widely-scattered segments, the inter-relationships between the several segments are not likely to be very frequent or significant. Local affiliations with segments of other clans in the neighbourhood tend to develop and cut across clan loyalties. Ritual collaboration may be maintained between several segments if they are not far removed from each other, and the representatives of the several clans are enabled to come together at least on certain occasions. But the corporate unity of the clan can not be maintained, as the local ties predominate over clan ties ~~and~~ especially when fission is uncontrolled, as it is among the Bhils. Among the Nuers, it was pointed out earlier, the tribe is so ordered, that whenever fission occurs and a new segment emerges, it occupies a definite

place in the general set up of feuds and collaborations, with a <sup>defined</sup> seniority among the other segments of its order. But among the Bhils, when a segment breaks away, it becomes a lineage having no defined status and relation to the other segments or lineages. In course of time when the cleavage is pronounced and takes a particular shape, it even assumes an independent clan status, equal in all respects to the other clans.<sup>8</sup>

What I am trying to point out is that corporation implies a certain authority vested with the entire group and exercised through some sort of a hierarchy<sup>~</sup>order. In the clan, with its loose structure, such an authority may not be exercised as there is no central agency to administer it, which would be acceptable to all the segments which are under no ritual or political necessity to accept its mandates.

Even ritual collaboration and social participation, depend to a considerable extent upon the segments being spatially as compact as possible. Farther removed the several segments are in space and time, the more limited is the scope for collaboration and participation among them. Clan identity in such a case, may be maintained only in a very broad sense and expressed only in terms of the sharing of a clan name, and exogamy. But the mere fact of sharing a clan name does not involve any further obligations towards or entail rights against each other. Thus, clanship has a structural significance to the Bhil, only for purposes of reckoning descent and as indicating the limits of exogamy.

## II

An atak then consists of a number of dispersed segments, interspersed spacially with similar segments of many other clan. Such a segment or a lineage is referred to locally as a nal (lit., a branch). A nal might be a large one extending over many generations or it might have a depth of just two or three generations.

A cursory examination of the genealogies of several lineages reveal two important features. Invariably a nal is found to be a kinship group where the several members are in a position to trace their relations to each other through a common patrilineal ancestor, with reference to a definite genealogy. No person is regarded as a member of a lineage group, merely on the evidence of a clan name, unless sufficient evidence is also available of his having descended from the same line of descent as the other members of the group. In Kotumbi, there are two lineages of the Paramars. But they regard themselves as two unrelated groups. The bigger group of an earlier migration distinguishes itself from the other of a later settlement by the qualifying term moti (lit. big) attached to its name.

This insistence upon definite genealogical evidence primarily results in the reduction of the depth and extension of a lineage. The Ehils for the most part are illiterate and they have no hereditary bhats or recorders of genealogies, as do certain tribes of Saurestra. In tracing their genealogical connections, they have to depend solely upon memory. With an increase in the depth by each generation, the number of

collateral lines of descent would increase considerably and the extension of the lineage group<sup>9</sup> would almost be doubled. Any person, however old would be hard put to keep track of all the descendants from an ancestor removed by a number of generations even if he could remember his name. It is a practical difficulty that necessitates placing such a limit upon the depth and extension of a lineage.

Normally the depth of a lineage varies from six to seven generations. An old man with a good memory can easily remember and trace all the collateral lines of descent from his ancestors in the third ascending generation. He would also be in a position generally, to know his descendants of the second, and occasionally the third generation. This means that we get a lineage six to seven generations deep. Very rarely, it extends upto eight generations.

We find very few Bhils living to a ripe age of seventy or eighty. A man is withered and shrunken normally when he is fifty. Decay begins to set in rapidly soon after this age. The normal expectation of life for a Bhil would appear to be about 55-60. It may be noted here that this is deduced from my own limited observation. There are no records available on this point. In all the three villages of Ratanmal with a population of about 150 adults only two persons Royala of Alindra and ~~the~~ Nathia of Kubera, appeared to be more than sixty years of age. In the twenty or thirty villages round about Ratanmal there were barely half a dozen of more than 50 years of age. The paucity of very old men has an effect of shrinking their genealogies.

Another factor limiting the size of a lineage group is the excessive incidence of infantile mortality among the Bhils. An examination of the genealogical charts relating to the three villages of this area would give a fair indication of the situation. Among the Vakhlas of Pipergota, it may be seen that of the 37 children born in this generation, only 18 lived long enough to marry. Among the Bhurias of Alindra also, facts tell the same story. Thus inspite of a number of children being born into the lineage at each generation, only a few survive and continue the lineage. Even though a particular lineage might be several generations deep, the heavy toll of infant mortality from various causes limit the size of the group to a small number. In some cases, the toll might be so heavy as to threaten the very existence of a particular lineage. For instance, the Barias of Kubera were so harassed by pestilence and by frequent raids of the robber Bhil bands from across the borders of Kathiwada, that a number of them fled to different parts of the country abandoning their fields and homes. Even the head of lineage who was also the headman, was forced to migrate to Pipergota. There the lineage is represented only by the old tadavi and his wife, a son and a lone grand son.

Frequent fission within the lineage, also results in keeping down the size of the lineage group. Internal dissensions, insufficiency of arable lands in the area and certain kinship obligations are all factors which force the members of a lineage to migrate to different and often distant places. A fair idea of the factors leading to and ~~the~~ of the frequency of migrations in any generation, may be had from an

~~which however could not be~~

examination of the<sup>iv</sup> genealogical tables appended to this chapter.

When an individual or a group of individuals migrate to other regions they often cease to be effective members of a lineage and as time passes, tend to forget their links with the parental group. This weakening of the links might occur even when the members of a segment are yet in a position to trace their relationship genealogically with the members of the parental group.

However, the mere ability to trace genealogical relationship with the others of the group is no criterion for the membership of a lineage group. Another important feature of a lineage is its essentially vicinage character. It is a neighbourhood group. All the members of a group normally inhabit the same territory and are in frequent personal contacts with each other through participation and collaboration in the several activities.

The fact that the members of a lineage are able to trace their relationship to each other would imply that each person in the group stands and is known by others to stand in a definite relation of kinship to the other members of the group. For instance, he is the son of A, father's brother's son's son of B and the elder brother of C and D. Each type of relationship would imply a set of pattern of behaviour towards the persons concerned involving certain obligations and rights. For instance, if Devla is aware that Jokhla is his father's brother's son, he owes to Jokhla the respect due to the men of his father's generation. Devla may not sit on

a cot in his presence, use obscene words or smoke a pipe without offering it to him first. Jokhla may reprimand or reproach Devla for his misdeeds. This relationship would also imply that when Devla is in difficulties, he may call upon Jokhla for aid, to represent him or to mediate for him in disputes and so on. Devla's behaviour with a younger brother on the other hand would be quite different. They belong to the same generation and so a greater informality marks their behaviour towards each other. While the younger men might be advised, direct reprimand might be resented and the young man might even set his elder brother's advice at naught. In the case of a sister, real or classificatory, the behaviour pattern is again different. Courtesy and affection characterise their relation. Joking is permitted, though not to the same extent as with an elder brother's wife. A sister might always call upon him for aid, to the extent, that a helpless widow might call upon her brother to leave his village, help her in bringing up her minor children and look after her lands.

### III

Apart from these considerations an entirely different pattern of neighbourhood ties tend to develop and bind the several members together. The members of a lineage though belonging to different families, come into daily contact with each other in various contexts, in the field, during sowing and harvesting, while grazing cattle, or when they are out together on their frequent communal hunts. They tend to develop in such situations intensely personal relationships of



friendliness, rivalry and jealousy and association of co-operation and competition. It is this net-work of personal relationships apart from the purely kinship relations, that gives the members of a lineage group a sense of belonging-of a unity.

Such of those individuals and groups who are forced to migrate to distant places soon find themselves isolated unless they regularly renew personal contacts with the main body of their nal. When this isolation is more pronounced, they might still be able to trace genealogical relationships with most people in the lineage, but they gradually cease to be effective members of the group and lose their position in the lineage activities.

Conversely, lineages of an unusual depth and extension where quite a few genealogical links are lost but which still maintain their unity may also be seen. In Jhalod taluka, large lineage groups numbering more than a thousand may be found, where genealogical links are not traceable in all cases. But there is a strong tradition of genealogical descent from a common ancestor among all the members of the group, who are also knit together in a network of social and ritual ties. In the sphere of economic activities, co-operation is not very extensive. But the group has still a unity and a corporate character. In one such village, the entire group rose like one on the signal of an elder, to attack the avaricious Jaminder, who sought to dispossess them of the lands they had held from his family for many generations and forced him to seek a compromise through mediators, even though the law was entirely in his favour.<sup>10</sup>

## IV

These two essential features of a nal make possible the realisation of certain other functions which are implied in the clan as well, but which could not be realised there because of excessive segmentation and dispersal.

The nal has a corporate unity. Structurally it consists of two or more joint families or sub-lineages with a depth of three to four generations and is headed by the senior living ancestor. Each one of these joint families contains two or more elementary families, which are the commensal and residential units. But the joint family is the most significant unit of all social, ritual and economic relations among the Bhils. The joint family is essentially a close kinship group, where all the relations are of an intimate personal character.<sup>11</sup>

Co-operation and collaboration in the several fields of activity are realised to the maximum extent in the family and authority is also most explicitly expressed here. The lineage is but an integration of several families and expresses itself best through them.

A clearly discernable authority is vested in the lineage group as a whole. It is expressed through the senior adult of all the lineages who may be termed as the head of the lineage. But the headmanship of the nal is a mere formality as he only voices the opinion of all the others. But the authority of the lineage to control and regulate the behaviour of its several members along certain socially approved patterns is exercised by the several elders of the

lineage, jointly or in council. By elders, <sup>we</sup> ~~one~~ refer not merely to their age as such though most of them are old and are heads of the several families. Any adult member of the lineage may sit on the council and speak out his views, and every member has the right to be consulted and heard. But the decisions arrived at by the elders and their rulings are generally acceptable to the members of the lineage.

Lineage authority has quite an extensive scope. It can be exercised in any situation which might affect the lineage directly or indirectly. Authority in the lineage is related to certain other functional roles that the lineage plays.

nal has collective ownership rights over the property controlled and enjoyed by the members. These rights are of a residuary nature and extended to cover both movable and immovable property such as land and cattle. This concept may be seen in its working. When a man dies without direct heirs, the property may go to his daughter or to his brother's sons. A daughter may have his land during her life time only, and even then only if she settles in the natal village itself. But she may not alienate the land unless permitted by common consensus. Property rights are conceded to her heirs, and the land returns to the natal lineage after her death to be redistributed among the other members. Further when a man decides to migrate to another village for any reason, he is allowed to retain control over his land in the natal village and to continue enjoying the fruits thereof. But under no circumstances may he alienate the land except to

another member of the lineage and even then with the express approval of the lineage group as a whole. Today when the Government wishes to settle a family on a piece of fallow land, approval of such settlement is generally obtained from the village community in general and of the lineage group in the immediate neighbourhood, in particular.

Gifts of land to persons not of the lineage are permitted, when such persons are affines of the lineage or children of one of the daughters of the lineage. Normally land is inherited only by the male descendants and in equal shares. In lieu of direct heirs, the land passes on to the nearest collaterals such as a man's brother's children, a man's father's brother's children, etc. upto the second or third degree. In the event of such collaterals not being available, it is a very rare occurrence, land reverts to the lineage and the several elders of the lineage meet together and decide how this land should be re-distributed among the members. Even today such a procedure is followed and it is countenanced by the Government.

Further, if for any particular reason, a person decides to disinherit one or more of his heirs as he is empowered to by Bhil law and tradition, such an action is subject to scrutiny and possibly reversal by the lineage group as a whole. The several lineage elders may call upon him to explain the grounds of such drastic action, and where it is regarded too drastic a punishment under the circumstances, they might even bring pressure to bear upon him to reverse

or temper his decision. Conversely, the lineage elders might also ask any one of its members to leave the neighbourhood - if by his actions he is proved to be an undesirable element and force him to migrate. This right to dispossess a member is not recognised in law. But where the decisions of the lineage have the support of the other lineages in the village, the headman might eject such a person from the village. The Government normally upholds the action of the headman in such cases.

However the authority vested in a lineage, when it forms a part of multi-lineage group is limited and shared by the local community. The local community in most Bhil villages is very small with a wide network of inter-personal relations binding the several members of the community together in bonds of participation and collaboration in the several activities of their daily life. Any event in the village is of interest, not only to the parties directly concerned or to their lineage, but to the entire community. Disequilibrium in any part of the community has its repercussions in the other sections of the community. A quarrel between the father and son, resulting in the latter being banished from the village by the lineage would mean a cleavage in the rest of the village - between those who feel the father was right and those that feel that the punishment was beyond the merits of the case. An alliance is contemplated by one lineage. This would result in the establishment of affinal ties with a lineage from elsewhere and frequent social and ritual obligations established with

them. These affinal responsibilities rest not only on the lineage that is directly a party to the alliance, but upon the entire local community. So<sup>in</sup> all affairs that might have the least repercussion on the local community, the real decision is taken by the village elders only. The lineage in such a case would be more in the nature of a sponsor. This aspect of the situation will be discussed in greater detail at a later stage in this essay.

## V

The lineage forms a distinct unity. The various members are keenly aware of their belonging to the nal or lineage. Their prestige and status derive from their membership of the lineage. Any insult to the nal, implied or explicit is hotly resented. The solidarity of the lineage may be expressed in many ways. The more evident expressions of such solidarity may be seen on occasions of considerable social or ritual importance, where a large number of people gather. On such occasions the several lineage relatives of a person cooperate with him by helping him in many ways. Contributions in money and grain are made towards the expenses of the function. Some people aid him in organising the several resources to ensure success to the function. Some supervise the cooking and the distribution of food to the guests and so on. Even those who do not actively help him in supervising the arrangements passively participate in the ritual or social function. This lineage solidarity is expressed emphatically on occasions of crises in the affairs of the

group or of an individual member. In a dispute for instance between a lineage relative and a stranger, the entire lineage takes a keen interest in resolving the dispute and while it does not actually force an issue in his favour, tries to safeguard his interests to the utmost. When there is death or sickness in the family of any person, pollution extends to the entire lineage. No person of that lineage may observe a feast, or engage or even sponsor in any ritual.

The several members of a lineage are bound by close ties of kinship, and are governed in their personal relations by considerations of sex, age and generation. But in addition to these ties, there are others which foster a sense of unity and bind them closer to each other. They come into frequent and often sustained contact with each other, while performing the numerous jobs of their normal daily routine. While grazing their herds in the jungle, while gathering various forest produce in different seasons, while helping each other in the sowing or reaping operations. Further, during the festival season, young men and women come together practically every evening in the dancing and singing meets. Out of these contacts, develop intensely personal relations of friendship and co-operation, of rivalries and friendship extending across the age and generation groups. There is a sense of comradeship and deeper understanding of each other on one hand and a keen competition and rivalry among the young people; for instance, as they seek to excel in song or dance or to score over one another in courting the pretty girls

from the neighbouring villages they meet in the weekly fairs.

There are numerous other occasions when the collaboration of the entire lineage group is required and to an extent of the entire local community itself. Marriage is one such situation, which brings together - not merely the two young people to be wed, but two lineage groups into affinal relations with each other. Every member of the lineage is expected to extend the courtesy and hospitality due to an affine, to any member of the lineage group with which an alliance has been concluded. He expects the members of that lineage to behave likewise with him.

For this reason, when an alliance is proposed, consideration is given not merely to the merits of the boy or the girl or of their families, but the reputation of the entire agnatic kin group. The Bhils, like any other people the world over, prefer alliances with a kin group known for their material and moral soundness. They look to the qualities such as hospitality, honesty and thriftiness. They avoid such lineages, the members of which are known for their poverty, shiftlessness and miserliness, or who are known to be robbers, or quarrelsome people. To be discourteous to an affine, however unpleasant his manner might be, while he is a guest in one's house, is one of the unpardonable crimes of Bhil public life. Such a person would be mocked at, publicly by the others as a bad hagavala, from whom a guest might not hope to get some water even on a summer afternoon. There is a village situated on the verge



of the border that formerly demarcated the states of Bariya and Bombay, which I shall refer to as X, for certain reasons. This village was so notorious for its numerous robberies committed across the border, for numerous ambushes and murders of unwary travellers in the nearby lonely jungles, that <sup>a</sup>no decent Bhil would either take a girl of X in marriage for his son, nor give his daughter in marriage to a youth of that village. While studying the genealogies of the villages in the neighbourhood, I came to know that the bulk of the alliances contracted with families of X were such where the parents were forced to give their consent, after the deed was done. The bulk of them were cases of elopement, and there are also numerous cases of abductions of girls by the young-men of X. In either case, the irate but helpless parents were forced to agree to give their sanction to such unions, post facto. However these are exceptions to the normal rule.

Occasionally alliances have been broken off at the last moment, on the allegation of one of the lineage members against the integrity of the group with which alliance was proposed. Such allegations are generally required to be proved to the satisfaction of the rest of the group. But it is tacitly accepted that any proposed alliance is subject to the approval or rejection by the entire lineage group. We shall see that as a result of certain other considerations, even the local community has a voice in such matters.

Similarly, when a person without a male issue, decides to take a ghar jamai, promising to give him

(daughter's husband) a share of the lands, prior approval of the lineage is essential. Since the lineage has residual rights over the property of any member, the approval of the entire group is necessary for any alienation of the land, even when it is to an affine. He has to be approved as a prospective neighbour, and by implication, promised the cooperation without which, he can not be an effective member of the community. In the event of a marriage or a major ritual undertaking such as a Ind <sup>12</sup> vow, the entire lineage collaborates with the person who is directly concerned. Since guests are invited from all the neighbouring villages, prestige of the lineage itself is involved in the success or failure of the undertaking. Contributions of cash or grain (chandla) are made by the several kinsmen and affines. In case of a marriage, when the parent of the boy finds himself short of the required amount of bride price, it is the lineage-group which goes to his rescue. In Ind again, the kinsmen regard it as their responsibility to see that any shortage in money or in foods is made good. Further, the several kinsmen distribute among themselves and jointly undertake the responsibility of seeing to the numerous details incidental to any major ritual or ceremony that involves the feeding of numerous guests. The host is left free to attend solely to the performance of the ritual itself.

## VI

Such collaboration is forthcoming unstintingly from the lineage group, even when the persons concerned are not

very popular with the other members of the lineage. When Samla, the then tadavi of Pipergota died two years ago, his eldest son Surpal was brought over from Samlakund, where he was living with his maternal uncle for some years past, due to some long standing disagreement with his father. So long as Samla was alive, Surpal visited his village only at long intervals, even then more as a casual visitor. Even at the annual Madarjo mela (fair) on Ratanmal, he would rather move about in the company of his maternal kin or with his affines from Kanjeta. When Samla was ailing for some months prior to his death, it was Khuman, his father's brother's son, who looked after the day-to-day duties of the headman. But on Samla's death, the Vakhlas felt that since Surpal was the eldest son of the deceased tadavi, he should succeed him, whatever be his shortcomings. Surpal accepted the offer, but with such an air of indifference and condescension and his behaviour with the other people of the village was such, that he was much disliked by one and all. Notwithstanding however, Vakhlas gave him the maximum support and help in discharging the several administrative and other duties of headmanship. Whenever there was a clash between him and Khuman, who was still bearing the major burden of headmanship they placated Khuman saying that Surpal is a boy after all and one should be patient with him.

A couple of years later, Surpal openly began to speak of his desire to go back to Kanjeta or to Samlekund, where he felt, most of his interests lay. Only then the Vakhlas became exasperated and began to talk of transferring the

tadavii (headmanship) to Khuman, who was already for several years the de facto tadavi.

Unity of the lineage may be seen at best on certain critical situations in the affairs of the lineage. Such crises might be economic, such as a total failure of crops in the area and loans may have to be raised from a rich money-lender, the death of an adult member, a heavy incidence of pestilence or the birth of an infant in the lineage group, most of which involve spending of considerable amounts of money.

Where the crisis situation is largely economic, the several members of a lineage cooperate with each other, there is a sharing of the grains that any one of the homesteads might be having. The grain that is distributed under such circumstances - it may be noted, is always returned. But they are not regarded as loans either by the giver or by the one who receives. It is just an expression of the good will which everybody is expected to have towards the others. Further when it becomes necessary to borrow from the Sahukar (money-lender), the entire lineage gets together and decides just how much money is needed to meet all their requirements, mainly for buying grains, for subsistence and seeds for the next agricultural season. Then the money is borrowed from the ever-obliging local money-lender at an interest, by the senior member on his personal responsibility and in his name. The money lenders realise that the money is borrowed for the entire lineage group who are really collectively responsible for returning the loan with interest. But he enters in his

books the name of only one individual. In the lineage group, however, the several members are keenly sensitive <sup>to</sup> of their responsibility, and it is only rarely that a person fails to pay up his share when the time comes for returning the loan. In one case, one of the members <sup>who</sup> had utilised a part of the money, had migrated to distant Gujarat (Kaira District) without settling his account. But the deficit was made up <sup>by</sup> of contributions from the other members of the lineage.

Presence of epidemics in the village, the death of an adult member, or the birth of a new infant in a family are situations which considerably disturb the normal tempo of community life. A number of adjustments become necessary on the part of the several members in their relations with each other, in view of the emergence of a new member or to fill the void due to the exit of another. In such a situation, there is an intensification of social and ritual relations between the several members of the community. A greater awareness of the unity of the lineage group results from the sharing of the bonds of pollution or ritual impurity that arises from the occurrence of death, sickness or birth in the group.

This pollution attaches not merely to the people, directly concerned in the incident, but to all the members of the lineage group and often extends to the entire community as a bond of sympathy. So long as pollution continues, no ritual whether sacred or domestic may be undertaken. Pollution continues for about ten to eleven days in case of birth or death, and is co-extensive in the case

of an epidemic. After it has ceased to operate, the group of persons concerned, undergo a purification ceremony which consists mainly of bathing in the flowing water of a river or stream wherever available, or in a well, washing of all the clothes, cleaning the entire homestead including the cattle shed and putting a fresh coating of cowdung mixture to the floor. Then they are said to be in a normal ritual status. But whenever a ritual sacrifice is to be performed in the village, these people have to go through the same process again in order to attain ritual purity, and only subsequently commence preparing for the ritual. An incident which occurred recently in Pipergota reveals how obligatory it is for the members of a lineage to share the pollution as a mark of solidarity. All the people of this village with the exception of a lone family of Nathia Bariya, are members of a single Vakhla lineage. One of them, Malya was living with his affines in a distant village for a number of years now. Just a couple of days before the annual sacrifice to Babadev (the tutelary deity of the village) news arrived that a baby girl was borne to Malya, and the Vakhlas were under birth pollution till the tenth day. During this period no ritual undertaking was permissible to them, i.e., the sacrifice had to be postponed till after the expiry of the pollution eight days later. The fact that Malya had practically ceased to be an effective member of the lineage for some years past and that the event itself took place in a far distant place, did in no way affect the position of the lineage members, or even shorten the duration of

pollution. Normally Bhils do not have any fixed dates as such for their local ritual, so postponement would not have been normally a problem. But here the situation was complicated by the fact that just a week later the Hadarjo mela was to be celebrated on the Ratanmal. The headman of Pipergota was the hereditary chief worshipper (pujara) of the deity. But he could not offer worship at the mela, unless the sacrifice to Babadev had been offered first at Pipergota in a ritual lasting over two days. Then he was required to go through the purificatory process again to achieve a state of ritual purity required for this mela. For two days he would be fasting, drinking only water and avoiding all physical contact with people who were not ritually pure (cora) like himself. All contact with women, sexual or otherwise was strictly forbidden to him during this period. On the second evening, he went up the table land where the shrines of Baba Ratanmal (Ratneswar Mahadev) and Hadarjo were situated, escorted by a number of young unmarried boys and girls in a state of ritual purity, bearing the several ritual objects. The major sacrifice in the ritual i.e. the one to Baba Ratanmal, had to be offered during a particular confluence of lunar asterisms (nakshatra), which occurred only once a year. As the proper performance of this ritual was supposed to have great influence on the success of the coming agricultural season in the surrounding region, this ritual was attended by Bhils from far distant villages and so it could neither be postponed nor missed altogether.<sup>13</sup> Hence the people of

Pipergota were very much worried. In the end, after much worrying and consultations with the elderly Tadavi Royale of Alindra and the priests Dalhing and Babar, regarded by all as three of the wisest elders of the region, they decided to reduce the period of pollution to three days only. Having recourse to a myth that was conveniently remembered then, they forced the young infant and the mother to undergo the ritual of purification on the very third day after its birth instead of on the eleventh day. The same day, every man, woman and child in the village went through the process of purification twice over and became cora. The crisis was thus resolved and the Babadev ritual and the Hadarjo ritual went off without any hitch and as per schedule.

This bond of pollution furnishes an observer with a fairly reliable criterion to understand the extension of any lineage. Especially so, in a region where large groups of people might be found bearing the same clan name, but with no sufficient genealogical evidence to support their claims to be a lineage. Sharing of the bonds of pollution is one of the strongest bonds that hold a kinship group together and give it a sense of unity.

Another point needs to be noted here: pollution emerging from birth, death or ~~the~~ outbreak of a major pestilence is primarily the concern of the lineage, but in a small community where inter-lineage relations tend to be frequent and intimate, where everyone tends to have personal or face-to-face relations with most others in the community,



individual misfortunes or even the birth of an infant tend to have repercussions across lineage boundaries. Further, ~~the outbreak of~~ an epidemic disease, <sup>would</sup> sooner or later ~~would~~ extend to the others in the community. Again, there seems to be a strong belief that the incidence of an epidemic pollutes the very atmosphere in ~~all~~ the <sup>neighbourhood</sup> ~~surrounding area~~. So all the people in a neighbourhood are in turn affected by the polluted atmosphere irrespective of whether or not they belong to the same kinship group. ~~or not~~.

Pollution arising from certain situations, i.e. death of a child, a fatal accident to one of the members and the death, under any circumstances of a woman, seem to have a reference largely to the lineage. ~~The~~ Rest of the community is not affected. In such situations, only the particular lineage has to observe the several taboos and injunctions of pollution. These points need to be kept in mind, while using the sharing of pollution as a criterion to understand the extension of a lineage group.

## VII

Ritual collaboration in the lineage is linked up closely with the Bhil beliefs about the ancestral spirits. They believe that when a person dies only his corporeal existence ceases, but his soul (sul) continues to exist as a spirit. When I once questioned a man in this regard, he said "Jher, mankha mare, inu sul kai marha? imarudada padhe, etru kharu. Sul, te deo bani jay 'ne amar rai jay." (When we say that a man dies, does his soul die? The body fails that

is true. But the soul assumes divinity (deo - lit. a deity often meaning the spirits too) and becomes immortal.) Depending upon the life of the person when alive, and the circumstances of his death, his spirit becomes benevolent or melovolent in its attitude towards the survivors. A person who lived a life of normal satisfaction and died under normal circumstances, is likely to be benevolent towards his survivors in the lineage and their neighbours. If on the other hand, they had led a frustrated life, if they were anti-social or evil in their disposition and if their death was violent and due to abnormal courses such as pestilence, murder or a fatal accident, they are said to nurse feelings of jealousy, frustration and melovolence towards their kin and neighbours, even after their death. Such spirits continue to be a menace to the security of the lineage and the local community.<sup>14</sup> Free from the limitations of a corporate existence, they have greater nobility and scope for activity. They could venture into regions and circumstances, where no mortals might venture. Most of them come into contact with supernatural beings, such as deities and witches and other evil spirits and so are in a better position to influence their decisions affecting human beings. Madarjo, the chief of the guardian spirits, is believed to be the chief attendant of Matneswar Mahadev (Baba Ratanmal). The Guardian spirits generally try to safeguard the interests of their descendants against the ravages of the fierce melovolent spirits like the Khavi

and Manata, witches (dakan) and sorcerors, who are always on the outlook for opportunities to harass the human beings. Often the spirits and other evil human agencies like the witch and the sorcerer, join forces in their attacks on the humans and their cattle. There are also some punitive spirits such as the Baliya mata, who ruthlessly punish the offenders against Bhil canons of moral and ritual behaviour. Actually more than two thirds of the rituals undertaken by the Bhils in any year are either propitiatory or seek the intercession of the guardian spirits to ensure a good harvest and prosperity in the village.

Rituals which aim at the propitiation of malevolent spirits, particularly the Vishen (spirit of a woman who died barren, or in child-bed), are of a special significance to the lineage. Every year a general sacrifice to all the ancestral spirits of the village is offered in the name of Bobadev. Bobadev as was mentioned earlier is the principal tutelary spirit of the region. In the territory dominated by Ratammal, Haderjo is the Bobadev. In Kathiwar and in Bhabra, it is the Pithora and Vaghoja in Chota Udepur. Sacrifice is offered in his name but it is specifically mentioned that it is to be shared with all the spirits who reside in the ancestral grove of the village, whether Manata, Khavi or a Vishen,<sup>15</sup> and regardless of their clan or lineage affiliations when alive. Yet, it is primarily a bhaibeta (the founding lineage) concern. The other (Karnan) lineages are only passive participants.

This ritual is of a special significance to our analysis for the emphasis it lays on lineage solidarity. Even a member of the Bhaibeta lineage who has settled in another distant village, makes it a point to come over intine to participate in this sacrificial ritual. This affords him an opportunity to renew his ties with his lineage at least once a year. It is believed that ancestral spirits of a man become annoyed when he fails to go for this ritual, and they remind him of his lapse by causing illness among his children. This belief is an added inducement for a man to visit the ancestral village atleast once a year and renew contacts with his lineage relatives there. Often when sickness and infant mortality occur frequently in such a family, it is generally ~~dis~~regarded as an act of displeasure on the part of the ancestors, at their breaking away from their lineage group. In such cases, the person concerned goes over to the village of his forbears to erect a memorial in the sacred grove, in honour of the angry spirit, and offers annual sacrifices to the spirits concerned.<sup>15</sup> Sometimes he may even return to the very lands his forbears had discarded as inadequate. Thus so long as a man believes that his ancestral spirits are resident in the sacred grove of a particular village, his ties with the members of the lineage group are never completely sundered. I have come across many such occasions. When Royala's sister's husband who was a tadavi of Bornaver died, Royala induced his sister to come away with her two sons to settle down in Alindra. Twenty years passed and the elder

son Guman was now married and had a child. One day his child died from an undiagnosed (i.e. in terms of witches, vishen or sulved etc.) cause. Soon after, his wife was also taken ill. Guman consulted a deviner. He was informed that the spirit of his deceased father was displeased with him for leaving Bornavor. Guman had to go back soon after, much against the wishes of his mother and uncle. Even Bhullya, younger brother who preferred to stay behind, goes <sup>ann</sup>actually to Bornavor, a distance of 20 miles and across two ranges of hills, to attend the Babadev ritual, spends a fortnight there and comes back.

Raising, a Bangi of Alindra came down to Pipergota to get the permission of the headman to erect a memorial stone for the spirit of his father's father, who was angry with Raising's father and his children for leaving Pipergota, and settling in Alindra. For some years past, there were frequent deaths in Raising's family till he and his younger brother were the only males left in the family. On consulting a deviner, it transpired that Raising's grandfather wanted atleast one of the brothers to settle in Pipergota. Raising told me that his younger brother would be resettled in Pipergota.

It will be noticed that in all these cases, it was a segment of a lineage that was persuaded to go back to or atleast renew and maintain frequent friendly relations with the parental lineage, or (where a number of generations had elapsed since fission) the collateral group. The main

incentive in all these cases seem to be a set of beliefs in ancestral spirits showing a deep concern in the continuation of the lineage in the place with which it is associated, and further in maintaining the unity of the lineage. This belief is associated with a fear that whosoever goes against the wishes of these spirits, is liable to dire punishment. Thus the lineage solidarity finds expression in the field of religion as well.

### VIII

The members of a lineage group are bound by bonds of social and ritual collaboration, kinship and by a corporate authority with collective rights over property. Yet forces of fission and segmentation have been continually at work within the Bhil community, as ~~is~~ clearly demonstrated by the numerous clans which <sup>are</sup> again ~~are~~ loose clusters of numerous dispersed segments or lineages. A study of the genealogical data in respect of a number of lineage-groups and an inquiry into the circumstances of their migration to the village they inhabit at present, revealed a few significant facts.

A number of cases of fission seem to be due to predominantly economic factors. Further the fact of segmentation does not ordinarily imply a complete severance of social and ritual relations between the two groups. Often an elementary family migrated from the village for some purely economic reason but for all social and ritual purposes, it is continued as a part of the original lineage.

The most important single factor that induced a segment

to migrate was the inadequacy of the arable land available in any region, with reference to the size of the kinship group subsistent upon it. In an earlier section, it was explained how the Bhils were till recently shifting cultivators, and practiced the slash and burn method. Even about 50 years ago, this method was fully operative in the Ratanmal region. Since the forests were thick and extensive, and the Bhils were not many, the several state governments paid no heed to this wastage involved in this method. Any kinship group could clear as much land as they liked in the forests, they could shift to new clearings when they liked. Only a nominal payment and some free service were expected of them. But the land in most parts of the region is very undulating. ~~Fairly~~ Fairly level land suitable for cultivation may be found only in small patches. Under such circumstances, it would be difficult for any large group to keep together in shifting from area to area, in a compact group. A certain dispersal of the group was inevitable and ~~often~~ as the group became unweildy, small segments would often prefer either to remain behind or to break out in another direction. Such segmentation, I am informed by Royala, Tadavi of Alindra, was quite a normal occurrence with the Bhil lineages engaged in shifting cultivation. As often as not, they did not involve any bitter feelings, nor were they due to a sense of rivalry or feud, though sometimes the latter feelings between groups also resulted in fission. Since there were no territorial reserves as such of <sup>any</sup> kingroup, a segment could move out where it willed, though as a rule the segments of a lineage tended to move within the same wide region.

In recent times however, policy of the state governments towards shifting cultivation began to change.<sup>17</sup> Gradually, Bhils in these forests were compelled to settle down permanently within certain territorial bounds and fresh excessive clearing of forest land was discouraged. Policy of the government in this regard was vague and execution depended largely upon the vagaries of the rural officials. In general however, the Bhils were allowed to clear only as much of forest land as they could actually cultivate, and only in such villages where the headman was very influential larger clearings were permitted.

As the restrictions on fresh clearings grew and the people normally had to be content with the land already available to them, an increasing need for more land was felt. Much of the land under cultivation was excessively dry yielding much less to the bigha ( $\frac{2}{5}$  of an acre) than irrigated land. Soil was generally poor, placing a definite limit upon the number of people that could subsist upon a given number of vighas. Bhils till very recently seemed to have had no efficient system of manuring and the ground would often lose its productivity after a certain number of harvests. In other words, after a number of years, a certain acreage of the cleared land was useless to a crude cultivator like the Bhils, and<sup>so</sup> it was allowed to lie fallow for many years.

Differential fertility and infant mortality have contributed considerably to a variation in the growth of different agnatic kingroups. It may be visualised that over



a long period, while in one area, the arable land available in relation to the size of the kingroup subsisting upon it remains satisfactory, in certain other areas, a great shortage of land is felt. It is very difficult for them to obtain permission to make fresh clearings in the forest. The easier course of action would be for a segment to detach itself from the main body wherever a great difficulty is experienced in subsisting upon the land at its disposal, and to move over a village where land is available. A <sup>an</sup> longer proportion of the migrations, so far as could be ascertained from the available Bhil genealogies seemed to have been due to this reason. In some cases, a man buys some land in a nearby village and settles a brother or son on it, to relieve the pressure on the land at his disposal. Khuman of Pipergota found that if he were to divide the land at his disposal among his five sons, none of them would be able to live comfortably upon their portion. So he went from a forest guard to a Range Officer and met even the District Forest Officer in Baria and secured permission to clear four acres on the slopes of Sasalyamal. He gave this land to his eldest son Kanji. Then he heard of some land available in Phanpur on a tenancy basis and secured it on a ten years' lease, for his third son Phulya. The latter is now living on that land, and Khuman hopes to buy it over completely.

More frequently, migrations take place as a result of invitations from affines, or from maternal kinsmen living in villages where land is available in plenty. The Barias

came to Alindra this way. Royala had a sister married to Jhiria, a Baria of Lilavanta. Some years later he came to know that rains had failed for some years past in Lilavanta causing great hardship to the people in the region. And he also knew that Jhiria had only a few bighas ( $1\frac{2}{3}$  bigha equal to 1 acre) of land, and the yield was not sufficient to maintain him and his family even during years of good harvest. Royala was very much upset and he practically forced Jhiria to migrate to Alindra, where plenty of good land was available. Ramsing, a Vakhla of Pipergota was invited by Jhumla, the then tadavi of Alindra and was settled on a portion of his land at a time when Ramsing and his brother had only 3 vighas between them. Again, when Nathia Baria of Kubero was forced to abandon Kubero because of the constant threat of robbers and pestilence, he and his family were invited to settle on a portion of the land of Samla, the then headman of Pipergota.

There are two explanations for these migrations to villages inhabited by one's affines. For one thing, land is not easily given away to a stranger. A person who wants to settle in any village may do so only with the permission of the lineage on whose land he desires to settle, and of the entire local community whose neighbour he will be. If a person seeks land in a village where he is not known, or where he has no kin or affines, he is not likely to be entertained by the community. But in a village where he has either affines or maternal kin living, he has a right to be courteously received. As an affine of one of the lineages in

the village, he has affinal status with the entire village; or as a son of a daughter of that village, he has a definite right to demand some land for his subsistence. Thus it was found, migrations to villages where there have been no affines or maternal kin have rarely occurred.

Coming back to our argument, it has been found that sometimes migrations are also due to other local factors such as pestilence or extreme isolation, exposing the homesteads to raids from robbers. Mathia Baria's (Tedavi of Kubero) case was discussed earlier. The chot Paramars of Kotumbi were driven <sup>to move</sup> away from Khaltu, because they were being harassed frequently by tigers and panthers. Even in such cases, the movement has been towards affine villages only.

In most cases of the migration mentioned till now, segmentation has been due to necessity and has left no bitterness. The two groups, where they are in a position to do so, maintain cordial social and ritual relations with each other.

Sometimes, internal dissensions and feuds result in a cleavage within a lineage. Attempts are generally made to resolve the differences between the two parties and in most cases they are resolved. But when the cleavages are very pronounced, and factional fights have a tendency to occur frequently, the weaker section often leaves the village in a huff. Late Narasingh Dangi of Bhindol was a very quarrelsome fellow. As the eldest son of his father, he had the control over some rich gram fields in Pipergota. When his

father died, he laid claim also to a share in the other fields that were given to his younger brothers. The latter feeling the claim to be an unjust one appealed to the Panch who ruled that Narasingh had no further claims on his father's lands. But when he continued to make troubles for his brothers, he was thrown out of Bhindol. Narasingh then wanted to go over to Pipergota. But the tadavi there would not receive him. So Narasingh persuaded Jhumla the then tadavi of Alindra (Narasingh's wife is Jhumla's sister's daughter) to give him some land and settle there.

Sometimes, cleavage arises between two groups in a lineage, or between a minor lineage and the rest of the local community. In Khaltu, there are three wards, each under a ward-headman with police jurisdiction only, while the overall control <sup>is</sup> ~~lay~~ with the tadavi. During the annual festival of Holi, it was the prerogative of the tadavi to worship and light the bonfire in honour of the goddess of Holi. Recently the old tadavi died and was succeeded by a young man. When Holi came round that year the senior among the police <sup>padel</sup> (ward headman with police jurisdiction only), who belongs to the same lineage as the tadavi, but to a junior section, claimed it as his prerogative to light the bonfire. Some people from his ward supported him while the rest of the village supported the right of the tadavi. After much argument, the dispute was settled in favour of the tadavi. But bitterness between the fractions in the lineage remained. The cleavage has grown wider from year to year, till it has now reached a point where the members

belonging to the opposite factions do not even talk with each other, except indirectly and generally with an intent to taunt the other.

Often, within a family also cleavages arise. The position of the father within the family is very strong. He has complete control over the landed and other property. He may even disinherit any of his sons. Though a Bani father is rarely authoritarian, yet frictions between father and son does occur, generally over the supervision of the daily affairs of the family members. A son might often feel that a father is unduly interfering in his affairs. It might be that the father refuses to allow him to marry a particular girl deeming her as an undesirable alliance from a family and lineage view point. He might take the initiative in the matter and face the father with an elopement. His father would be bound to accept her as his daughter-in-law. But this does not put an end to the ill-feeling. Sometimes, the son may go away to a maternal uncle's village and stay with him only. Surpal for instance, could never get on with his father Samla or with the other Vakhlas of Pipergota. So he lived with his maternal uncle in Samlakund, married a girl there without even a reference to his father. He was brought back to be the tadavi after Samla's death. But obviously he still cannot get on with the other members of the Vakhla lineage group. He was talking of giving up his tadaviship and going back to Siladbia. Samlakund.

More often however, friction is inter-fraternal. Mutual rivalries and jealousies often flare out in the open.

The grounds of such jealousy are often related to the land they receive from the parents. A man with six or seven children would resent it, if he is given only as much land as his brother with a much smaller family. A man has to be very careful in apportioning his land between his several heirs, to ensure that each of them will get his rightful share of his land ~~both~~ each of them will receive share in the extent and inequality. So the procedure he adopts would be, to cut up his several fields into bits and give to each one of his sons, bits in different areas so as to distribute his good lands as well as the inferior grade of land amongst them. In this way he can reasonably ensure that his several heirs will be content with the division.

Yet, it often happens that a man is partial to a particular son and gives him an extra piece of land or he might give some extra portion to a son with many children. Further, when a man sometimes gives a portion of his land to a sister's son, children might resent it. But they dare not openly challenge his giving away his land to a sister's son, who is in a way, considered <sup>as</sup> his moral heir. All these circumstances cause a friction within the family. Where it develops into a pronounced cleavage, migration of the aggrieved party often occurs.

However, fission arising from intra-family or intra-lineage friction is not frequent. Most of the disputes are arbitrated upon and the friction is dissolved. It is only in extreme cases, that it leads to fission and segmentation as such.

## IX

However, a large number of ~~cases~~ of migrations leading to segmentation of lineages have occurred incidentally while discharging certain kinship and affinal obligations. I might here discuss a typical case which has been discussed in a couple of my earlier papers. The village Bedia, near Kheda-Brahma (Dist. Sabarkantha) is inhabited almost solely by the Pargis. But there was a single Lahur lineage settled about <sup>three</sup> generations ago. Mona Lahur's sister Kalu had married Manji Raja of Bedia. But after some years Manji died leaving behind a number of small children and a sickly widow Kalu. At that time in Bedia, an epidemic had taken a heavy toll and the survivors were very weak and poor and not <sup>at</sup> all capable of taking on additional burden. So how could they look after Manji's wife and small children? Who could till their lands for them and watch over their interests? The people of the lineage discussed the problem and advised Kalu to send for her brother to help her. He could come with his wife and children, work on her land and look after their interests, receiving in return, a share of a portion of the surplus land available in the village for his own subsistence. Mona Lahur came over with his wife and children and lived in Bedia for twelve years. His land ~~was~~ meanwhile ~~was~~ being looked after by his kinsmen in Kelia, against the time when he might need it again. But when his sister's children came of an age to look after themselves, and the time <sup>came</sup> for him to go back ~~was~~, he found the prospect not very pleasant. He had grown very popular in Bedia and had a good

number of friends among the Pargis, while he had lost touch with his own people at Kelia, and would have to re-establish himself there with a stranger and younger generation. So when the people of Bedia requested him to remain with them on the land that was given to him, he allowed himself to be persuaded. Now the Lahurs are quite a large group in Bedia. Incidentally Lahurs are found only in Bedia and nowhere else in the neighbourhood.

In the same village, I found Jetho of Lilavanta with his wife Reshmi (sister of Natha Bhura) and her children. Some years ago, Bhura died after a long illness, leaving four motherless children, the eldest of whom was only seven years old. Just before he died, he appealed to Reshmi, then on a visit to her natal home, to persuade her husband Jetho to come with her to Bedia, where they could bring up children and manage his fields and cattle for him till such time as the eldest son came of an age. Reshmi and her husband had to agree, since <sup>it</sup> ~~it~~ was clearly her duty to look after her dead brother's children. The kinsmen of Jetho raised no objection to his leaving Lilavanta for some years, but agreed to manage his fields for him against his return. Reshmi and Jetho shifted to Bedia with their children and a few heads of cattle, and were given some lands for their subsistence. They had spent seven years in Bedia till 1952, when Reshmi told me, that her duty being now over, she and her husband expected to leave for Lilavanta soon. But I also came to know that Keshabhai, the headman and some other people of Bedia were pressing them to settle



permanently in Bedia. Perhaps they might have succeeded in their attempt.

The above cases sufficiently illustrate the strength of the relations between a man and his sister which continue even after the marriage of <sup>the woman</sup> his ~~daughter~~. It is actually said that the only friend of a woman is her brother. Whenever either of them are in difficulties, they can always rely on the other for assistance. A man rarely ever refuses to respond to calls for aid from a sister. He has similar claims on her, which often extend to her affines also. The same obligations work in certain other ways too, with more or less similar results.

Khatiya Mangaliya, a Baria of Alindra had only one surviving sister, and she was ailing. Unwilling to be separated from her, he persuaded her husband, Bhagudo Gamar to come and live in Alindra. He gave him some land.

Ninemas came to be settled in Alindra in a similar way. Thavri was an only child of Badhya Galla, the then headman. He was looking for a bridegroom for her, who would be prepared to take the position of a son of the house and look after the lands and the cattle for him and then inherit all his property (ghar-jamai). Dityo Ninema accepted to marry Thavri under these conditions, prompted by an acute shortage of land among the Ninemas of Samlakund.

Occasionally when a woman is widowed or divorced, she goes back to her natal home to live with one of her brothers. Should she decide to remarry, her very young children are often left to be brought up by their maternal uncle. Later

when they are grown up, the sons may go over to their lineage group if they so desire. If not, they continue to stay with their maternal uncle and later inherit share in his land. When Ragji of Bhuvara died, his wife went back to her brother's place in Bhindol, where she married another person. Children were left with her brother. Later, when they grew up, Kaliyo decided to remain with his uncle only, while the two girls returned to Bhuvara to their lineage group. The case of Bhulya, son of Apsing, a priest (badawa) of Bornaavar, also illustrates the same point. While Guman decided to go back to Bornaavar, Bhude<sup>lya</sup> preferred to stay with Royala in Alindra only.

The several factors discussed till now contribute substantially to the segmentation in the lineage and to the dispersal of the several segments. But it is not implied that segmentation does ~~not~~ generally involve a break in the social and ritual relations between the segments and the parental group. Considerable amount of social and ritual collaboration and participation continue to inculcate a sense of belonging between the members of the several segments and the parental group. Of course, where the cleavage was due to certain unpleasant causes and/or where the segments themselves are specially far removed from each other and from the parental group, and find it difficult to maintain frequent and extensive contacts with the others, the sense of belonging is not sustained for long. Otherwise, it is only after a long time, when the lineage increases in depth and extension and establishes links and affinities with

the other groups in the vicinity, that it gradually looses its relations with the parental lineage-groups. This is a slow and gradual process.

At the same time, I might mention here another trend that is often noticeable along with this process of fission. Sometimes, a particular segment or group of segments acquire a special identity and is distinguished from the others by a prefix to its clan name. Earlier in this chapter, it was discussed how a particular section of the Katara came to be known as Dangi Katara and also how as time went on by and the Dangi Kataras scattered far and wide, their Katara affinities were gradually forgotten. Only the Dangis remained. But it is presumable that even at this stage, the Dangis were aware of their being only a part of a wider exogamous unity. I have been given to understand that even today Dangis in many places, regard the entire Katara group as outside the marriage group.

Similarly, among the Paramars we have four large groups each dispersed over a very wide area. They are the Dharavyas, Pipria, Devodia and the other Paramars who do not have any such qualifying term attached to them. Though it is fairly obvious that the above nomenclature have largely a regional significance. They are Paramars formerly concentrated in Dhar, Pipero (Limkheda taluka), Dohed (often referred to by the Bhils as 'Devod') and so on. The segments in each group are obviously more closely related inter-alia, than with those in other groups. But the several larger groups are still aware of their primary affiliations to the Paramar clan and hence they all form parts of a large

exogamous unit.

There are a large number of such groups which have only partially gained an independent clan identity, while still forming a part of another exogamous unit. Such groups are referred to as peta ataks (<sup>dit.</sup> that emerging from the stomach of an atak). We may refer to it as a sub-clan, or as a group of lineages which have a separate identity, but still form part of a clan. They are yet in a process of attaining the status of a clan. The Dangis we know have the status of a full clan everywhere except in a few places. The Masania descendants of a Tokria who was once forced to cook his food on fire from a burning pyre in a cremation ground, have today the status of a full clan, though still associated with the Tokria. We further learn that the Kodria (a clan found mostly in the Central India) ~~we further learn that~~ they are associated with the Bhuria, the Meda and the Nisartha with the Pargis and the Jhodia with the Mahida. There are a large number of other similar instances. Proper explanation is not forthcoming in all the cases. But there is enough evidence to offer a plausible hypothesis to explain the numerous clans that are found among the hills of Central India.

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## NOTES AND REFERENCES

## (Chapter - IV)

1. Venkatachar C.S., Ethnographic Notes, p.251.
2. bana are a series of ceremonial visits by the bridal couple separately, at the residences of his/her near kinsmen, just before the marriage. These calls made with much of pomp and fanfare are actually the Bhil way of announcing the approaching nuptials.
3. Vanikar, P.G., Panchamahalna Bheel (Gujarati), p.25.
4. Venkatachar, pp. 254-5.
5. Evans-Pritchard, E.E., The Nuer, Oxford, 1940.
6. Nath, Y.V.S., "A Note on the Witchcraft and Religion among the Bhils"; J. M.S.U. III, 1; 105-138.
7. Nath, Y.V.S., "Some Preliminary observations upon the Social life of the Bhils", J.M.S.U., II, 1; 93-110.
8. Details of this process will be discussed later on.
9. Lineage is used inclusively as comprising the dead, the living and the future members of group, while by a lineage group, reference is only to the members living at any given time.
10. Face-to-face relationship of Murdock, G.P., Social Structure (1954)
11. For a full explanation of Ind and other rites see, Nath, Note on Religion and Witchcraft, pp.116-118.
- 12.)
- 13.) Loc.Cit.
- 14.)
15. This transition was brought about by the different

States in Rewakentha, by devious ways. In Baria, Ratanmahal and Kathiwara estates, the only mechanism that was employed to enforce this change from shifting cultivation comprised of the occasional directives of the rulers as translated to the local people by the local petty officials.