Shivaji and Savarkar

Hi, Everyone! Anyone who has read Savarkar's biography, even in a cursory manner, is conscious of the immense admiration and respect Savarkar had for Shivaji—from the earliest childhood. Savarkar's chapter on Shivaji in his book Hindu Padpadshahi (find an e-book @ www.savarkarsmarak.com) gives a very good idea of this too. Time and again Savarkar has hailed Shivaji as the heroic king who wrested back large portions of India from the Mughals and actively chased a "Hindavi Swaraj."

It seems utterly preposterous and ridiculous to me that anyone should point accusing fingers at Savarkar saying he disrespected Shivaji. It is inconceivable!

Yet we live in an imperfect world—when mud is slung at anyone it tends to stick, particularly when it is accompanied by a sensationalized, wanton act of vandalism like burning copies of (Savarkar's) books. And so, much though it goes against the grain to give even an appearance of credibility to such fallacy by mentioning it or offering vindication for Savarkar, I have decided to do it.

Here are some examples which illuminate just what place Shivaji held in Savarkar's heart and soul.

- In 1902, Savarkar composed an *aarti*, a song of worship, in honor of Shivaji. Every Friday as a part of the Ferguson club activity, this aarti was sung before a picture of Shivaji.
- In 1903, Savarkar composed the poem Shivaveer (Shivaji: the Hero) in honor of Shivaji.
- He has also composed another poem, *Hindunrusimha*, praising Shivaji.

(I have given all the three poems at the end of this post.)

- The very first function organized by Savarkar's Mitra Mela was a celebration of Shivaji Jayanti (birth anniversary.) This is a practice he continued to follow down the road.
- In 1905, his group popularized his ballads on Sinhagad and Baji Prabhu. Both ballads extolled the heroics of Shivaji with Tanaji and Baji Prabhu. Using these incidents of guerilla warfare, Savarkar subtlely promoted the idea of freedom. The people in Maharashtra just loved the ballads.

- Sometime after this a Shivaji festival was celebrated at Raigad. These ballads were sung there. The audience was enthralled by them, but Daji Khare, who was presiding over the event, became nervous by their inflammatory words. So fiery were the words that when the audience joined in the singing, Khare, a friend of Tilak, told him to close the show down as he did not want to be party to any unconstitutional activity!
- Babarao published this ballads in 1906 and three years later the Government proscribed them.

Unfortunately, I have not translated these ballads yet.

- In the women's organization, parallel to Savarkar's Mitra Mela, each member was required to take this pledge: "In the name of the Motherland, Shivaji Raja who won freedom through war, and Bhavani Mata who gives strength, I hereby give witness before Shivaji and Bhavani Durga Devi that I shall use swadeshi goods only, love my country more than my life, strive for my country's freedom and help those who are doing so."

- In 1906, in the patriotic song, *Priyakar Hindustan* (*O Beloved Hindustan*,) which Savarkar specially composed for the occasion commemorating the death anniversary of Guru Govind Singh, organized in a grand manner at Caxton Hall, London on December 29, 1908, he most certainly included Shivaji as one of the virtues of Hindustan.

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Here too was born of Jijabai, Chatrapati Shivaji,

And maidens who embraced the pyre for their honor.

Bricked to death here were the Sons of the Guru,

So staunch were they in their loyal fervor!

- Again in 1908, when he composed another patriotic song, *Hind Sundara Ti* (*Hind, the Beautiful One*,) he makes a mention of Shivaji.

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To Rana Pratap, Shivaji, Banda Bairagi, lo

And Guru Gobind Singhji too

She gave birth, beginning, n' inspiration so!

- Savarkar followed Shivaji's precept of manipulating a powerful enemy any which way, especially from a position of great weakness. He also advocated others to do so too. To give an example, he quoted instances from life of Shivaji to convince the political prisoners in Andman who had received amnesty to sign the pledges. I am giving here the incident as I have written it in my novel *Burning for Freedom*:

"Soon enough, general amnesty was granted to several of them here but not unconditionally. They had to sign a pledge refraining from any political activity for a specified time. This offended most of them. It was an infringement upon their rights! A slur upon their patriotism! Sign a pledge? Never! Savarkar was very heartened to see that despite all their sufferings, they were still such staunch patriots. Such Sons of India should definitely be free to fight for their country!

'Brothers, there is nothing wrong in signing this pledge. Sign it and be free—free to work for the freedom of our motherland.'

'Tatyarao, with the signing of this pledge our hands are tied! It forbids us to do just that very thing.'

'Ah, but do you have to follow its dictate?' asked Savarkar passionately. 'No! A pledge imposed upon us by a foreign enemy power is worth only the paper it is written on. There is no reason to stay committed to it! It is merely a means to an end—only an avenue to break the locks of this jail.'

'But that would be deceitful, Tatyarao!'

'Deceitful to whom?' exclaimed Savarkar. 'When we have no constitutional rights and are crushed into subjugation by arbitrary laws of an enemy power, honesty as you mean it is not a luxury we can indulge in!'—he raised the palms of his hands—'the only honesty and truth for us is reinstating the honor of our beloved Hindustan. We follow any path that circumstances force us to take. If the British rule us by unlawful means, we go against this law of theirs to gain freedom. When under duress we make petitions and even sign pledges!'

'Yes, Tatyarao, there is much in what you say. But it still seems cowardly to sign such papers. The blood of heroes like Shivaji flows in our veins! What, shall we supplicate before the enemy? History will label us as cowards and hypocrites!'

‘We cannot swerve from our path by fear of adverse public opinion! Shivaji was very brave indeed. Yet when needed, he took a conciliatory position with Aurangzeb. At one time, Shivaji suffered many losses from the mighty Mughal forces led by Mirza Raja Jaisingh and Dilerkhan. He made a small capitulation and signed the Treaty of Purandar. He was forced to hand over to Aurangzeb many forts and go to Agra. Here he was treacherously imprisoned by Aurangzeb. Shivaji sent petition after petition professing loyalty to him, all the while planning his escape! It was his strategic move to lull the enemy. Can Shivaji be accused of cowardice? Change of heart? Never! We must also admire the forethought with which he killed the mighty Afzal Khan by ripping open his stomach with the tiger claws. If he had not broken his promise of being unarmed in that meeting, Afzal Khan’s plot to crush him to death would have been successful!’

‘Tatyarao, indeed, we did not see it in this light.’”

- Time and again Savarkar had said India needs a Shivaji. Keer writes in his biography of Savarkar that in 1952, in one of his lectures he said that “if God were to ask him to beg for a boon, he would pray him to bless India with a Chandragupta or a Shivaji to wipe out the despondency prevailing in the minds of the younger generation and make the nation valorous and great. He said he preferred a rule of a benevolent great leader like Shivaji to an ignorant, weak-kneed democracy.”

- In 1953, when addressing a big meeting at the Jackson Garden in Nasik, he declared that the name of the garden should be changed to Shivaji Garden. He also stated that Indian Statesmen should follow the tactics and policy of Shivaji, who was a real statesman.

After reading this (and the poems below) there should be no doubt in anyone’s mind in just how high an esteem Savarkar held Shivaji.

- Anurupa

Hindunrusimha

Click here for PDF

Savarkar Poem: Hindunrusimha

हे हिंदुशक्ति- संभूत-दीप्ततम-तेजा
हे हिंदुतपस्या-पूत ईश्वरी ओजा
हे हिंदुश्री-सौभाग्य-भूतिच्या साजा
हे हिंदु नृसिंहा प्रभो शिवाजीराजा
करि हिंदुराष्ट्र हें तूतें । वंदना
करि अंतःकरणज तुज अभि-नंदना
तव चरणिं भक्तिच्या चर्चा चंदना
गूढाशा पुर्वी त्या न कथूं शकतो ज्या
हे हिंदुनृसिंहा प्रभो शिवाजीराजा ।

हा भग्न तट असे गडागडचा आजी
हा भग्न आज जयदुर्ग आंसवांमाजी
हि भवानिची हत्या पुन्हा गंजली धारा
तीं म्हणुनि भवानी दे न कुणा आधारा
गड कोट जंजिरे सारे । भंगले
जाहलीं राजधान्यांचीं । जंगलें
परदास्य-पराभविं शरीं । भंगलें
या जगतिं जगूं ही आज गमतसे लज्जा
हे हिंदुनृसिंहा प्रभो शिवाजीराजा

जी शुद्धि हृदयाची रामदासशिर डुलवी
जी बुद्धि पांच शाहींस शत्रूच्या झुलवी
जी युक्ति कूटनैतींत खलांसी बुडवी
जी शक्ति बलोन्मत्तास पदतलीं तुडवी

तीं शुद्धि हेतुची कमीं । राहु दे
तीं बुद्धि आमुच्या जीवां । लाहुं दे
तीं शक्ति शोणितामाजी । वाहुं दे
दे पुन्हा मंत्र तो दिलें समर्थ तुज ज्या
हे हिंदुनृसिंहा प्रभो शिवाजीराजा ।

Hail, You of Glowing Splendour, Might of Hindus O,
Divine brilliance blessed by Hindu penance so!
You prosperous Hindu destiny nonpareil,
O Godlike Shivajiraja, Hindu-Nrusimha incarnate, hail!

This Hindu nation bows to you O
Heart and soul we applaud you, so
With chandan we anoint you, lo!
Ye who fulfilled our unspoken yearnings,
O God-like Shivajiraja, Hindu-Nrusimha incarnate, hail!

Every fort rampart is in ruins frayed,
Jayadurga is with tears sprayed.
Rusted once more is the Bhavani blade,
What wonder then, she withdraws her aid.

Every fort and coastal stronghold, wrecked!
Every capital city, wilderness unchecked!
Enslaved fortune in foreign coil, necked!

Living in these ignominious times, oh shame!
O God-like Shivajiraja, Hindu-Nrusimha incarnate, hail!

Acclaimed by Ramdas: purity of heart yours,
Routed the five Shahi enemy: intellect yours,
Your strategy that so many villains razed
Your strength that vanquished a tyrant crazed

May that purity of purpose sustain!
May our simple souls that intellect obtain!
May such strength in our blood reign,

Grant us the mantra that Ramdas gave, do
O God-like Shivajiraja, Hindu-Nrusimha incarnate, hail!

[1] Nrusimha (नृसिंह; Nrsimha): known primarily as the 'Great Protector' who specifically defends and protects his devotees in times of need.
Also known as Narasimha (Sanskrit: नरसिंह; Narasimha,) Narasingh, Narsingh and Narasingha; he is an avatar of the Hindu god Vishnu and one of Hinduism's most popular deities, as evidenced in early epics, iconography, and temple and festival worship for over a millennium. Narasimha is often visualized as half-man/half-lion, having a human-like torso and lower body, with a lion-like face and claws.

Translation by, Anurupa Cinar

Shivaveer

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Savarkar Poem: Shivaveer

Shivaji: The Hero

यवनांचा झाला, अवनीला भार
सुंदर मंदीरें भंगीलीं पार ॥

वेद-शास्त्रें नष्टांनी भ्रष्टविलीं सारी
गोमाता देखतां हरहर मारी ॥

ब्राह्मण मत्तांनी लत्तांनी हाणिला
प्रभुवर भूवर शिववीर आला ॥

अधर्मांसी नाशोनी देशोद्धाराला
प्रभुवर भूवर शिववीर झाला ॥ १ ॥

हिंदूंच्या देशाचे बघुनीयां हाल
जगताची जननी ती जाहली लाल ॥

यवनांना क्रोधानें वधण्यासी आई
शिवनेरी शिवबासी जननासी देई ॥

सुरवरां किन्नरां आनंद झाला
प्रभुवर भूवर शिववीर आला ॥ २ ॥

रामा कौसल्या कीं कृष्णा यशोदा
शिवराजा जिजाई साजे जन्मदा ॥

श्रीरामें राक्षस-हननासी केलें
यवनांना नशीन तैसें मी बोले ॥

सुकलांनीं शशीसम तो वृद्धिंगत झाला
प्रभुवर भूवर शिववीर आला ॥ ३ ॥

जयजयजी रघुवीरा, गर्जना झाली
श्रीरामदासांची मूर्ती उदेली ॥

शिवभूपें पायीं दृढ भालाला केलें
स्वामीनीं मस्तकीं हस्ता ठेवियलें ॥

Oh the invaders have weighed Mother Earth down,
Beautiful temples they have razed to the ground!

Oh the wicked ones kill the sacred cow on sight!
Vedas-Shastras: so tainted is their plight!

The Brahmins with kicks of Arrogants were flayed,
So the Almighty as valiant Shivaji was incarnate!

For deliverance and that the wicked shall be slayed,
The Almighty as valiant Shivaji was incarnate ॥ 1 ॥

Beholding the persecution of the Hindu Land,
Mother Earth became red and so very hot!

In rage, to annihilate the assailants,
The Mother at Shivaneri Shivba begot!

Gods, Demi-gods, heavenly singers celebrate
The Almighty as valiant Shivaji was incarnate! ॥2॥

To Rama-Kaushalya, Krishna-Yashoda is, lo
Well-matched the mother-son Shivaba-Jija duo

How Sri Rama the Demons did vanquish,
Just so the invaders Shivaba will banish!

With talents just like the waxing moon burgeoning,
The Almighty as valiant Shivaji was incarnate ॥ 3 ॥

"Victory to Shri Rama" everywhere was heard,
The great Saint Ramdas before Shivaji appeared.

Shivaraya his forehead on Swami's feet placed,
Swami then Shivaba with blessing graced,

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Translation by, Anurupa Cinar

Savarkar Poem: Shivaveer

देश धर्मा तारी, उपदेश दीला
प्रभुवर भूवर शिववीर आला ॥ ४ ॥

मातला अफझुल्ला यवनांत भारी
तुळजापुरी भंगी भवानी सारी ॥

करकर चावोनी अधरांला धावे
शिवरायावेरि, परि दुःखाला पावे ॥

उदरा वीदारोनी नीचाला वधिला
प्रभुवर भूवर शिववीर आला ॥ ५ ॥

स्वातंत्र्यदेवीचा गौंधळ केला
यजमानस्थानी श्रीशिवराय आला ॥

सांवळ्या रंगाचे शूर मावळे
प्रेमानें अभिमानें गौंधळी झाले ॥

पारतंत्र्याचा मग बोकड चिरिला
प्रभुवर भूवर शिववीर आला ॥ ६ ॥

धर्माला तारियलें अरिवर मारियले
स्वातंत्र्य संपादुनि देश शोभविलें ॥

अवतार कृत्याला पूर्णत्वा नेलें
छत्रपती शिव नृप मग निजधामीं गेलें ॥

सविनायक कविनायक गाती कवनाला
प्रभुवर भूवर शिववीर आला ॥ ७ ॥

"Save the Country and Dharma" advice he tendered!
The Almighty as valiant Shivaji was incarnate ॥ 4 ॥

The enemy, Afzal is the one to most dread,
Tuljapur Idol of Bhavani he shred,

He rushed at Shivaba with intent to kill
Lo, instead Shivaba his blood did spill!

The Evil One, stomach ripped open, was sent to his fate!
The Almighty as valiant Shivaji was incarnate ॥ 5 ॥

The Goddess of Freedom was ritually hailed,
As the Guest of Honor, Shivaraya prevailed,

The dark-skinned and brave Mavala
With love, with pride in the ritual revel,

Together the Foreign Yoke they did subjugate!
The Almighty as valiant Shivaji was incarnate ॥ 6 ॥

Dharma he saved, enemies were slain
Radiant was the country by freedom attained

Only fulfilling his incarnation's duty's worth
Did Chhatrapati Shivaji depart this Earth

Now Ganesha and the best of the poets sing,
The Almighty as valiant Shivaji was incarnate ॥ 7 ॥

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Translation by, Anurupa Cinar

Aarti on Shivaji composed by Savarkar

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