

Navalram (1836-1888), poet, dramatist, translator, editor, etymologist, biographer and social reformer is considered to be a unique phenomenon in Gujarati literature. The first humourist in modern Gujarat, the first historical dramatist, the first book-reviewed and the most remarkable scholar of his age, Navalram was the first to herald the new generation of writers like Manilal, Govardhanram and Narsimh Rao.

Navalram's writings cover a wide area of interest: philosophy, patriotism, reformation, education, journalism, grammar and literature.

His poems deal with a variety of topics and situations and are marked by his concern for the social and political problems of his time. The classical style of presentation and his mastery over the language and metre have carved for him a permanent niche among the writers of Gujarat. A few of his poems and his play **Bhatnun Bhopalun**, are some of the finest examples of satirical writing in Gujarati.

Criticism is another field where Navalram excelled. As editor of **Gujarat Shala Patra** he earned the distinction of a torchbearer in the sphere of objective journalism. Chief among the works of Navalram are: **Bhatnun Bhopalun** (play), **Veermati** (historical play), **Bal lagna Batrishi** (poems), **Meghdut** (translation) and **Kavijnan** (biography).

Ramesh M. Shukla (b. 1929), is an literary critic. A keen student of the period of Renaissance, to which I Shukla has edited several old and m of Bhalan, Premanand and Akha Bhaga...

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Navalram

The sculpture reproduced on the endpaper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From Nagarjunakonda. 2nd century A.D.

Courtesy : National Museum, New Delhi.

Makers of Indian Literature

Navalram

Ramesh M. Shukla

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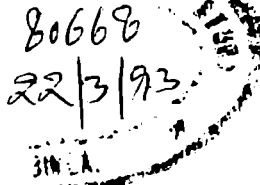
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CONTENTS

Backdrop	7
Life	10
Works	17
Thought and Communication	33
Literary Criticism	47
<i>Appendix</i>	67
<i>Bibliography</i>	69

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BACKDROP

SURAT has contributed to Gujarat and India three N's: Narmadashanker, Nandshanker and Navalram, pioneers in their own fields, marking the beginning of the renaissance period. Narmad was the pioneer of modern Gujarati prose, a new school of poetry, and every other genre of literature except fiction. He was also one of the greatest reformers and thinkers of his time. Nandshanker was a pioneer in historical novels in the Gujarati language. Navalram was an eminent educationist, pioneer in literary criticism in Gujarati, a leading dramatist, a humourist and a social reformer.

An intimate friend of Narmad, Navalram received inspiration from him in many respects. But his approach and method of thinking and working were quite different from those of his friend. Whereas Narmad was dynamic, energetic, and rash enough to even abandon his own religion and culture to embrace it again. Navalram was quiet, sincere and wise enough not to rush to any conclusion or action. He was influenced by the same forces that had influenced Narmad, but his inner essence was different from that of Narmad. Hence he could carve out his own individual personality in his own time and for times to come.

It was the age of transition, the beginning of Renaissance. For years the people of Gujarat had been under constant duress owing to the hostile religio-political atmosphere prevailing then. As was the case with the Indian people as a whole, the people of Gujarat too had become introverted in order to preserve their faith, religion and culture.

This introversion was responsible for various social vices like child marriages, old age marriages, negation of widow-marriages, widow-burning (Sati), female infanticide, prohibition of sea-voyages, rigid caste system, etc. Superstition, ignorance, blind faith and bad social customs were widely prevalent. Any ray of knowledge or sciences was shunned upon. Political awareness of the people was blunted nor was there any social, cultural or religious awareness among them. It was at this time, in the nineteenth century, that something of a far reaching influence occurred—it was the introduction of the British system of education in India. It definitely benefitted the Indian people. Prior to it Indians had no clear concept of nationhood. Enlightened Indians seized the opportunity to learn the English language and literature, history, sciences, etc. History of the English people taught them the true concept of Nationality.

The newly attained national consciousness made the Indian people conscious of their political, social and economic rights and a new kind of revolution started in all these fields. People did resent the fact that a handful of foreigners were ruling the millions of Indians; at the same time, they were grateful also, because the rule had established order and peace in place of anarchy. The new order broadened the perspective of these neo-educated class. They arose to abolish evil social customs, blind faith, and superstitions. They vowed and strived to make the society receive the fruits of beneficial knowledge and reforms in all fields—religious, social, political and economic.

In western India, Bombay was the main centre of this movement. Ranchhodbhai Girdhardas, Dalpatram, Durgaram, Atmaram Pandurang, Mahipatram Neelkanth, Bholanath Divetiya, Karsandas Mulji, Behramji Malbari, Justice Ranade and Justice Telang were the front rank leaders of this movement and were guided by Narmadashanker.

Along with this movement, university-educated young, zealous and dedicated people, equipped with new ideas and learning of various subjects, including western literature,

ventured in the literary arena to supplement and aid the process of religious rethinking and social reforms. It also went far to cultivate the regional languages for communication of new thoughts and knowledge. Creative literature appealed to the people and hence was a spontaneous and handy tool in the hands of reformers. Apart from that, it also flourished as a pure form of Art.

During this period the printing machine was introduced and enlightened entrepreneurs ventured in the field of journalism, which covered social, economic, religious and literary topics over and above current topics.

It was in this environment, that Navalram flourished and contributed his best to cultivate new values in the fields of social reforms, education and literary criticism.

LIFE

NAVALRAM, the only child of his parents Nandkor and Lakshmiram Pandya, was born on the sixth day of the second fortnight of Phalgun v.s. 1892 (9th March, A.D. 1836). Physically weak as a child he did not take much interest in games and was an introvert by nature. But he was brilliant in studies and at the age of eleven he passed the final vernacular examination with flying colours, and got admission in an English school as a free merit scholar. At the age of seventeen he got through the matriculation examination, and came for further studies to Bombay. Here also he shone. It is said of him that when even British engineers failed to give the correct dimensions of the pillars that could hold the Golden Bridge across the mighty Narmada, it was Navalram who gave the correct dimensions.

However, owing to poor economic condition and adverse circumstances Navalram had to give up studies and take up a job as a teacher at a school at Surat, in 1854. In 1861, he was appointed as the Principal of the Anglo-Vernacular school at Deesa. In 1867, he was appointed Headmaster at the training school at Surat. However in 1870, this school was closed down and he was transferred to Ahmedabad as the Vice-Principal at the Training College there.

At that time Mahipatram Neelkanth was the Principal of the institute and also editor of **Gujarat Shala Patra**, a Government periodical. But owing to a complaint against him from the Chief Minister of a princely State of Saurashtra the editorship was taken away from him and entrusted to Navalram. At the same time, Navalram was also the secretary of Bal-lagna Nishedhak Mandli; an association against child

marriage. In 1867, he was appointed as the Principal of the Training College at Rajkot. **Gujarat Shala Patra** was also transferred to Rajkot along with him.

As he was feeling weary during his stay at Rajkot, he was thinking either of retiring or getting a transfer to Ahmedabad. But neither of these was destined to be. He contracted dropsy while on a two months stay at Surat, his native place, in August 1888. Physicians tried their best to save his life but failed.

Navalram had assimilated two principles in his life: "Fatalism is the spirit of the Aryans" and "Human being is free from bondages". His faith in fatalism and in the concepts of virtues and sin is very clear in his essay on "Fatalism". He believed that they are manifestations of incomprehensible illusions created by God. But in spite of it, he did not retire from active life till his last breath. In a short span of fifty-two years, whatever he read, thought, practised and expressed in language is manifold and abundant and has earned him everlasting fame. The literature which his emotional and contemplative nature created is a permanent landmark in the academic and literary fields of Gujarat.

Introverted persons either suffer from melancholy or cultivate contemplativeness. Navalram overcame whims and emotions and cultivated a fine sense of judgement, which itself is a manifestation of his willpower. Narmad was a man of emotions, Navalram transformed himself as a man of fine discrimination. Narmad was an extrovert and hence a man of the mass. Introverted Navalram was a man of class. But before this transformation, he had to pass through several emotional crisis.

Some rich reformists declared a prize of Rs. 250/- for the best poem on the Maharaj Libel Case of 1862. Navalram, one of the competitors, aspired to win the prize and dedicate the poem to Narmad. But Narmad discouraged him from doing so till the results were announced. Unfortunately the judges found his poem worthy of only half the prize money.

A crestfallen but conscious of self-respect Navalram rejected the award and the same person who had expressed his ambition to come forward to herald the rise of the 'new school' of Narmad and predict the decline of the 'old school' of Dalpatram began having reservations about his formerly "My Dear Narmadashanker", and now greeted him simply as "Mr. Narmadashanker". Dalpatram, he treated with warmth and declared him the best poet of Gujarat whom till now he used to refer contemptuously as "the Ahmedabad fellow of the old school." Now he implored exponents of both schools to evaluate his poetry. This was his emotional outburst resulting from the disappointment. He then planned to publish the poem himself, but later retracted from doing so. His sense of fine judgement ultimately prevailed. He himself found his poem imperfect. After this he cultivated friendship with Narmad.

In later period also, their relations temporarily turned sour owing to this temperamental weakness. When Navalram's historical drama *Veermati Natak* first came out Narmad appreciated the verses in it, particularly those in the 'Shikharini' metre (**Bharelo sankoche ...**) and personally went to his residence to congratulate him. Encouraged Navalram started to appreciate his other verses, especially the pathetic ones in that drama. But when Narmad opined that there was no humour worth the name in his another drama **Bhatnun Bhopalun** but was only full of improbabilities, he got annoyed and retorted back, "Kavi, you do not know the principles of humour." Though this was an emotional outburst, it resulted in a studied paper on 'Humour'. He asserted that humour is derived from improbabilities and not from reality. It is true that Navalram was of a serious and contemplative nature but he was not devoid of a sense of humour. Even in his serious essays he evinces a fine sense of humour, wit and satire. His personal notes and letters to his friends too are extremely witty.

Although married at an early age, and having a trouble-free married life, the sex instinct in Navalram became strong only after the age of thirty. That he became involved in

extra-marital relationships is evident from several of his love poems. He notes "How strange I am. I have turned an epicurean so late. Most persons are epicurean in their juvenile days, and stoic or at least prudent in manhood. I was a perfect stoic at twenty." There was often in his mind a duality between morality and passion. He writes in one of his poems :

How sad!
Cupid, the sinner
Is the worshipper
At the temple of Goddess Love!

Here, he seems to prefer love devoid of sex. We may see in this idea, a prelude for the later master-writers like Govardhanram Tripathi and Nanalal Kavi to elaborate the same on a wider and higher level. He notes with reference to this poem, that when a person of high thinking indulges in love, it is not for lust, but for pure love. He realised that there is a sharp difference between love and lust. So he resolved, as he has said in his another poem:

Lofty, noble and resolute Naval,
Would never stoop low.
.....
Burnt in summer,
A mango tree would give
Fresh juice,
But never would turn
Into a tamarind tree.

This resolve is a victory of a man of fine judgement over a morbid one.

When Navalram was transferred to Ahmedabad, initially he was highly prejudiced against the city and its citizens. But after actual contact with the elite and educated citizens, he changed his opinion. He found Mahipatram Neelkanth and others to be very affectionate and amicable. But his very first meeting with Dalpatram strengthened his pre-

vious opinion about the poet. He found him to be a person devoid of lively imagination or deep reflection, and quite the converse of poet Narmad. Comparing both the eminent poets of his time, he writes: "No wonder they cannot agree. One is a type of cold formalism, while the other personates the dancing egotism of a youth." Later in life he befriended Dalpatram and while evaluating the poetry of Narmad, he praised objectively the poetry of Dalpatram, comparing it with that of Narmad.

While at Rajkot, Navalram, once became the victim of political intrigue. When Queen Victoria assumed the title of 'Kaisar-E-Hind', it was ordained that a song in praise of the royalty be composed in each of the vernacular languages. The song in Gujarati was written by a Parsi gentleman, Kekhusro Kabraji, the proprietor of a periodical **Rast Gofar**. However the Parsi-Gujarati language of this composition became a subject of much controversy. Navalram also criticised it and praised a nationalistic publication **Hind ane Britania**, written by Mirza Muradali Beg, an Englishman converted to Islam. **Rast Gofar** described this book as seditious and later it was banned by the Government. This reveals the nationalistic spirit and fearlessness of Navalram. However he had a hard time explaining himself. On another occasion, at the annual function of a High School at Rajkot, students sang a lyric of national sentiment composed by Navalram, who was then the Principal of the Training College there, resulting in the allegation of sedition against him and Mr. Gimi, the Headmaster of the school. But his loyalty was unquestionable and he came through unblemished.

He deals in severe self-evaluation also and confesses that his solitary nature was responsible for his being less social and pleasant. But a remark by one of his relatives that how one so dumb a person as him could write such a humorous piece as **Bhutnun Bhopalun** acted as an eye-opener for him. After it, he decided to be social and pleasant and take interest in others also.

An aspiration to write creative literature and to be a

literary critic of merit, simultaneously grew in him from the moment he wrote a poem of 250 pages on the Libel Case referred to earlier. Undaunted by the failure to get the first prize for that composition, he continued his efforts and in 1967, he published his landmark farce **Bhutnun Bhopalun**, essay on **Karanghelo**, the first historical novel in Gujarat, by his friend Nandshanker Mehta, in **Gujaratmitra**, a weekly from Surat.

During this period he studied hard to attain the academic trappings needed to be a literateur. He studied logic and grammar, Sanskrit and Persian languages. He also wrote lyrics on the emotional turmoil going on inside him. Two essays which he wrote in this period were the "Present Situation of Hindustan" and "Writer's Profession". In the latter essay he put forward the idea that didactic and creative writing is not an inferior profession, but is an independent and important one. He also wrote essays on social reforms and published them in **Gujaratmitra**, with which he was connected.

During 1862 to 1866, he wrote an essay in English on "Comparison of Past and Present Situation of India", which contains his thoughts on subjects like religion, administration, business, family life, etc. He also wrote a comparative criticism of the poetical works of Premchand and Narmad.

The period between 1868 and 1870, till he went to Ahmedabad, was quite a productive one. He prepared research notes on metres, rhyme and rhythm, studied Sanskrit and Prakrit comparatively, and published his first historical drama **Veermati** and a philosophical monograph in English on 'Fatalism'.

After being posted at Ahmedabad in 1870, he got a wider field, new perspective and unique tool in the form of **Shala Patra** to project himself on a wider horizon. His competitive spirit got a new incentive with and against Mahi-

16 NAVALRAM

patram Neelkanth and his study got an added purpose and dimension. **Shala Patra** made it imperative for him to read and write regularly on varied subjects and occasions. Most of his critical and contemplative essays were written for this periodical and his prestige as a critic, a thinker and educationist rests mainly on these writings. He also tried his utmost to raise the standard of this periodical. Thus Navalram and **Shala Patra** were complementary to each other and together they were instrumental in the growth and development of education and literature in Gujarat. No other writer of this age has written on subjects as varied, creative, as well as contemplative, as Navalram.

After his death, Govardhanram Tripathi, edited a collection of all his writings in Gujarati, under the title **Naval Granthavali**.

WORKS

Bhatnun Bhopalun (1867)

HUMOUR and sarcasm are the two most powerful instruments in the hands of writers and speakers wedded to social and political reforms. Navalram was the first to exploit this tool in his play **Bhatnun Bhopalun** —the targets of his humour being old age marriage, selling daughters in marriages, superstitions, blind faith, bad social customs, etc. Eminent scholar, linguist and critic Narsimahrao Divetia evaluated the play as “the first composition of real humour in Gujarati”.

Bhatnun Bhopalun is an adaptation of **Mock Doctor** by Moliere. Navalram adopted the central idea only from the original play, but recast the entire plot, characters, atmosphere, etc. to suit the contemporary Gujarati setting. Bhola Bhatt or Shivkor Bhatani are not imitations of Dr. Gregory or Mrs. Dorcas of the original play. Bhola Bhatt is more like a quack of the time. Eighty-year old Naththusha scheming to marry for the fourth time, the greedy father Jhumakhasha, young Chanda and Anand intensely in love with each other but at a fix as to how to escape from the intrigue of the former duo, have not been transplanted into this soil from France. All the characters (with their thinking, action and dialogues) have roots deep in the contemporary society. The original play is purely a pleasure-oriented one, the Gujarati adaptation has a clear motive of social reform.

Humour arising out of situations and characters is uninterrupted throughout the play of three acts and twelve scenes. Chanda, pretending to be dumb when her father shows her to an old man of eighty, the eagerness of Naththu-

sha, an old man, to marry Chanda and his readiness to be fooled by his attendants, the greed of a father to sell his daughter at a high discount, confusion created by the attendants befooling their master and yet obeying his orders, verbal and vulgar quarrels between Bhola Bhatt and Shivkor Gorani, Bhola Bhatt accepting to be a physician after being beaten up—all contribute to instant laughter. Naththusha and Bhola Bhatt are the central characters. Naththusha all the while becomes ridiculous whereas Bhola Bhatt pretends to be a fool but at the end he makes all others a fool.

The employment of Charotari and Surati dialects adds to the effects of situational and actional humour. Gujarati plays of this period are not altogether devoid of the obscenity of Bhavai—a form of folk drama—neither is **Bhatnun Bhopalun**. Bhola Bhatt and Shivkor are refined Ranglo and Rangli respectively—the comic characters of Bhavai.

Govardhanram considered this type of humour to be the outcome of the peculiar nature of the people of Surat. Even Dalpatram's play **Mithyabhiman** contains such vulgar humour at places. The author himself has described his play as a Bhavai devoid of Bhungal—a kind of trumpet. Ranchhodbhai Udayram, Dalpatram and other pioneer dramatists of this period, aimed at freeing Gujarati drama from the low taste of Bhavai. But as in the case of habits, tastes too die hard.

Veermati (1869)

Navalram began writing this play 1864 and it was completed even before **Bhatnun Bhopalun**. But its publication was deliberately delayed till 1869, otherwise it would not have had to share the honour of being the first historical play in Gujarati along with **Krishnakumari** of Narmad.

Veermati contains a traditional romantic story. It is the story of the heroism of Jagdev Parmar, a prince of Malawa. Navalram selected the story from **Rasmala** and after making suitable changes cast it into a heroine-oriented drama. Jag-

dev, tired of the oppressions of his stepmother, accepts self-exile and proceeds to Patan in search of service in the army of Siddharaj, the king of Gujarat. On his way, he saves Veermati, a princess of Siddhpur, from the clutches of a ferocious tiger Kalia. The princess, who has given a promise to marry Lalraj, the son of the commander-in-chief of Siddhpur, marries this valourous Rajput instead.

Now it is also revealed that Lalraj is a low-born, the son of a servant of the harem. Lalraj tries to get hold of her treacherously, but Veermati bravely confronts and stabs him. The newly married couple, Veermati and Jagdev sacrifice their lives to propitiate Goddess Ambika to prolong the life of king Siddharaj, their master, which was coming to an end very soon, as predicted by evil spirits. Siddharaj moved by their devotion sacrifices his own life, so that the Goddess may revive them to life. Goddess Ambika satiated by their devotion and sacrifice, eliminates the evil spirits, revives them and blesses them with a long and prosperous life.

Navalram has deviated a great deal from the original story. In the original story, Veermati, in order to protect her honour, resorts to deception. But Navalram finds this to be unfeminine. Instead he makes her fight Lalraj and his stooges bravely. Another major deviation is the conflict he has shown between Vedic and Jain religions. During the period to which the story belongs, the conflict had reached its climax and each tried to gain supremacy over the other by influencing the king and converting the people to its own faith. To highlight this, Navalram introduced a new character in Jnanvijya—a Jain monk. Navalram was fortunate that he did not have to face opposition from the Jain community by showing that the evil spirits were motivated by this monk to take the lives of the trio—Jagdev, Veermati and Siddharaj. At a later period notable historical novelist Kanaiyalal Munshi had a hard time facing the wrath of the Jain community, when in his very first historical novel he depicted a Jain monk, Anandsuri, initiating political intrigue and murders. The publication of **Veermati** was delayed by the author because of two reasons, first, he

feared that he may have to encounter the wrath of the Jain community and secondly, in spite of his progressive thinking he had depicted things like evil spirits and the miracles of Goddess Ambika.

The drama is character-oriented. Its central character is Veermati, the heroine, and not the hero, Jagdev or Siddharaj, the King. The villain is Lalraj. The author shows that even Siddharaj was afraid of the tiger Kalia, which was later killed by Jagdev. This change highlights the gallantry of the hero, but projects Siddharaj as a coward. Hero and heroine, both are noble and brave as in Sanskrit dramas. Jamoti and Subhaga highlight the wickedness of Lalraj. The character of Jnanvijaya, his pseudo-philosophic discussions with Hemachandra—another Jain monk, Lalraj and Siddharaj make this drama dilatory and loose in construction. Soliloquy of Lalraj and Hemachandra in the third scene of the first act are also obstructions in the flow of the drama, whereas exchange of verses between Lalraj and Veermati, by its potentiality of vocal and gestural historionics is enjoyable.

Some of the poetic passages are expressive of the psychological personalities of the characters. Verses by Subhaga reveal her anger and anguish. Sorthas, in traditional bardic style, by Veermati, at the time of her encounter with Lalraj are full of heroic sentiments and are good substitute for chorus in English drama narrating the events simultaneously.

Some critics have opined that the drama belongs to the classical Sanskrit tradition because it follows the principles of **Natyashastra** as laid down by Bharata. But the Sanskrit tradition and **Bharatnatyashastra** never thought of a heroine oriented drama. Moreover it does not have the traditional benedictory verse at the beginning and a valedictory verse at the end. This drama which completely follows the pattern of English drama is an important departure from the traditional Indian drama in Gujarati.

Akbarshah and Birbal Nimittee Hindi Kavya-Tarang (1879-80)

Akbarshah and Birbal is another important work of Navalram. It first appeared in **Shala Patra** as a story in nine parts and forty verses. In it he has experimented with a new technique—that of employing humour to discuss poetics. There is hardly any scope for emotional expression in this work. Serious thinking is also out of place. The central sentiment behind this work is humour and the aim is to teach some principles of poetics. The humour here does not rise above the level of wit, but it is higher than that of traditional stories current about this duo and it convinces us that the author has a good lucid style of story telling.

The scheme behind this story-series is brilliantly conceived. Akbar would recite three lines of a verse to his nine courtiers or nine jewels, who would be called upon to complete it by adding the fourth one. One by one each of the courtiers except Birbal racks his mind and provide the fourth line, whose construction is discussed and finally judged as irrelevant and ridiculous. Finally, Birbal gives his version which would be adjudged as the best. While monitoring the discussions Panditraja Jagannatha, the great exponent of Sanskrit poetics, would examine the merits and demerits of each of the versions with reference to Sanskrit poetics. Virtually, Navalram has contrived this scheme to initiate indifferent students to the study of poetics. It has brought out the creative talent and genius of Navalram.

Poetry

The creative genius of Navalram was objective. This made him write essay-type didactic poetry in a style similar to that of Samal and Dalpatram. Aspiring to welcome new poetry, Navalram could write only traditional poetry. For a short period he experienced internal turmoil of passion and renunciation at a mature age and expressed it in a few poems, which are devoid of pure poetic element as they are more or less self-reproaching.

When the wife of one of his relatives expired, he was grieved and wrote some verses of personal anguish, internal conflict and self-introspection. These poems reveal his emotions of pure love and carnal passion and are outpourings of an internal conflict resulting from his personal involvement.

The poems also express the feeling of the helplessness against strong pulling of passion. In one of such poems he says:

Mind acts as its nature, what am I to do!
 Love blossoms seeing loveable, what am I to do!
 Green will always be green, what am I to do!
 Smart and romantic beloved attracts, what am I to do!

When a young woman in his neighbourhood died, Navalram realised the momentary nature of passion. He was distressed and vowed pure love to his wife, to whom he was till now indifferent. He says:

Life is momentary like lighting.
 Why worry?
 It is always like that.
 Do not trust the future,
 Past is past.
 True happiness is in the present.
 Live in the present!
 Enjoy, enjoy, o' romantic one!
 Enjoy whatever is handy and easy,
 Horrid Death would never relent!

This epicurean attitude is the result of his pleasure-prone nature, overpowering his stoicity, His stoicism always struggled against this carnal desire and hankered for the pure love. This conflict is allegorized in these words:

How sad!
Cupid, the sinner,
 Is the worshipper

At the temple of love!
 He, obstructing
 By never ending war,
 Would allow me in?
 Oh, God!
 How this anarchy,
 Darker than darkness,
 In your domain!

Navalram seems to be in search of platonic love though seemingly involved in extramarital love, and is experiencing heart-scratching conflict between pure love and carnal desire. He is tossed in all the corners of the triangle of morality, love and passion. This three-way conflict is expressed in the following lines:

Naval, the romantic,
 Naval, the philosopher,
 Naval, the lover,
 Naval, lovelorn and perplexed,
 Naval, gloomy and dejected,
 In multiple names and forms,
 Experienced varied lives in one life!
 Defeated and unnerved,
 I, Naval,
 Yearn to be one with the original Self.

With this he resolves:

Lofty, noble and resolute Naval,
 Would not stoop low.

 Oh, the enemy of lord Shiva,
 Torture me,
 Do the worst in your power,
 Burnt in summer,
 A mango tree would give
 Fresh juice only,
 But never would turn
 A tamarind tree.

At one stage Navalram considered Vedant philosophy to be a poisonous creeper. But finally, he resorted to it for consolation and mental peace. He realised the world to be false and illusionary. Under this mental state he wrote some poems with a philosophical touch. He has described Maya (illusion) as a dancing girl, and said, whole the universe is dancing with it. This imagination, though based on Sankhaya philosophy, is a good piece of poetic expression, comparable in parts with Narsimh Mehta—a pioneer philosopher-poet of medieval Gujarati literature. In one such piece he sings:

It is a wonderful spectacle!
 The whole audience dances!
 The audience dances and dances the stage!
 Dances the spiritual joy itself!
 No one to perceive,
 No one to bear,
 No one to hear,
 The whole universe dances!
 Philosophy, meditation,
 Religion and penance,
 Are nothing but this dance,
 O' Sage

Some read Vedant and others read Bhakti in these lines. But where is the incongruity between the two? Sankaracharya, the great exponent of Vedant wrote devotional songs and Narsimha Mehta, a great devotee of Lord Krishna, sang Vedant in his poems! For them, and for Navalram also, this was the state of realisation, and means or ways were then less important. Navalram seems to have imbibed Vedant and Bhakti very well in life, as is evident in his composed state of mind at the time of his death. His soul departed with full detachment and devotion, with the name of God in his heart and on his lips, towards the abode of Sat, Chit and Anand.

Navalram was the secretary of **Bal-lagna Nishedhak Mandal** an association to fight social evil of child-marriages. To promote the ideal and to cultivate the opinion, Navalram

wrote some satirical poems. which were published in two collections, **Bal-lagna Batrishi** (a collection of 32 poems on child marriage) and **Bal-Garabavali** (a collection of dance-lyrics for girls). Naturally, these compositions are motivated for reformist activity. Tragedy of child-marriages is the central theme of these poems. To magnify the evils of this bad customs, Navalram resorted to satires. Behind the sarcasm and ridicule, there is deep pathos. Here humour is not for the sake of humour; it is an instrument to arouse sympathy towards the victims of child-marriages and hatred towards the persistent supporters of the custom, by making them a laughing stock. Here is an illustration:

My husband dozes in a cradle,
Sing a lullaby!
My husband goes to the school,
May you escort him!
My husband plays happily,
With pebbles he plays!
.....
My husband wears a big turban,
on a small head!
My husband wears shoes of high heels,
Walks pretending courage!

On the surface of it, it is a joke about a child-husband, by a young wife, underneath flows heartrending anguish and uninterrupted tears. Her anguish and anger reach a climax in these words:

I am burning in a flame of youth!
.....
Hell to my parents, the sinners!
.....
Chaste? I am, till now;
I know not why!
Shall I be chaste?
Knows only God!

Poems in **Bal-Iagna Batrishi** are satirical, whereas in **Bal-Garabavali** they are educative to girls as to how to be an ideal woman, in the midst of adversity. Beauty is not only in body, but in mind, speech, affection and action also. He presents this idea before budding young girls in these words:

Beautiful is the face of a woman!
 Beautiful is the body of a woman!
 Beautiful is the speech of a woman!
 Beautiful is the heart of a woman!
 Beautiful is her service,
 Beautiful is her love,
 It is such woman,
 That makes life
 Beautiful!

Then the poet describes duties of an ideal woman, whom he calls a beautiful woman:

By her sweet, consoling words,
 She removes agony of mind,
 And fatigue of the body;
 In adversity, she, patient and cool,
 Inspires perseverance in her man.

.....
 Woman, beautiful by heart,
 May, like a rose, dry or wither,
 Or spoiled without care,
 Never loses her fragrance.

Thus advising women to make life and world beautiful, fragrant and heavenly, the poet implores them to stay away from selfish and carnal enjoyments.

Navalram's most famous poem is a satirical one entitled "Jānavarni Jan" (A bridegroom procession of animals) denouncing child-marriage as an animal act, a nonsense act.

“Meghadoota” and “Meghachhanda” (1879)

Navalram was well-versed in Sanskrit literature. He had reviewed several translations of Sanskrit poetry, such as, **Malti-Madhava**, **Ratnavali**, **Kadambari**, **Mrichhikatika**, and **Raghuvamsha**. Reviewing **Raghuvamsha**, he has laid down certain principles for an ideal translation. He says that a translator should never be a competitor of the original poet but should be his admirer and an earnest friend. A translation should contain the virtues, defects, style and grace of the original. The test of a perfect translation is that, it should read like an original as if written by the original writer, in the language of the translation. He is of the opinion that a translator should retain the expressed as well as the suggested meaning, the style as well as the spirit of the original.

He has attempted to apply this standard in his translation of **Meghdoota** of Kalidasa, the first of its kind in present Gujarati literature. Translating a poem like **Meghdoota** in a parallel verse itself is a task, especially from a polysynthetic inflective language like Sanskrit into a partly agglutinating and partly inflective language like Gujarati, retaining the original structure intact. At places, Navalram has not succeeded in retaining meanings in original shades, has digressed a little here or there, has dropped a word or two at places, in spite of his best efforts to follow his own standard. One of the reasons for this was that Gujarati language was not yet fully cultivated for such purposes. The original work was in Mandakranta metre, the grace of which is unquestionable. It is most appropriate for pathos. But during this period, poets were not much conversant with syllabic metres. It was Narmad who introduced syllabic metres in present Gujarati poetry. Before that, in the medieval period, stress-tuned rhythmic metres or Deshis, submodes of classical music, were mostly used. Navalram himself believed that syllabic metres were not suitable to Gujarati, as its pronunciations were different from that of Sanskrit. He did try his pen in syllabic metres in **Veermati**, but here he found it difficult to express the entire meaning of a verse in only four lines of Mandakranta

metre. So he chose a loose mode of a popular Garbi from folk songs. Naming that mode as "Meghachhand", he claimed that when sung it sounds like deep sonority of a cloud, hence is the most appropriate medium for the translation of a poem about a cloud-messenger. In spite of the lofty claim this mode does not contain the grace and grandeur of Mandakranta, which is most essential for the expression of pathos of a lovelorn hero.

Hence the translation is not a standard one as he had conceived to be. **Meghachhanda** has only a historical value, as an experiment in search of an equivalent of the blank verse or the free verse.

Kavi-jeevan (1887)

Before Navalram wrote **Kavi-jeevan**, a biography of poet Narmad, he had reviewed two biographies—**Karsandas Mulji Charitra** (1878) and **Mehtaji Durgaram Manchharamnun Charitra** (1879), both written by Mahipatram Neelkanth.

He stressed the importance of writing biography of great persons and discussed the norms of a standard biography. He agrees that the biography of a great person inspires a common man to follow their high ideals and noble acts, but insists that biography should not deify them. They should be presented as a 'human being' only. Biographers should be natural and realistic. Great persons described as supernatural are beyond the imagination of a common man and are worshipped only, not followed. He rightly says that research, truth, discretion and power of narration are most essential for a good biography. Evaluating the biography of Karsandas Mulji, he finds that only the benevolent deeds of Karsandas have been depicted, Karsandas as a human being is not introduced. Karsandas without the turban of a reformist has completely disappeared.

An intimate friend of poet Narmad, Navalram, for some time, was awestruck by the scholarship and poetry of the poet, and described him as a great poet, even greater than

Premanand. But after his posting at Ahmedabad and then to Rajkot, distance and maturity earned him an opportunity for a balanced and objective critical evaluation. During his stay at Ahmedabad, he adjudged Premanand as an unparalleled poet. After going to Rajkot, he found Narmad having only superfluous knowledge. The second and third observations of his are diagonally opposed to the first. After the death of the poet, when he embarked upon writing the biography of the poet, he is again all praises for him. Of course his evaluation in the biography is not subjective and his praise is not out of proportion, but he narrates virtues only and his weaknesses are either unmentioned or explained away cleverly. Hence the image of Narmad, in this biography, is not that of a human being, but of a perfect and ideal man, as seen in his widely published photograph or in the reflective pose of his statue in the public garden at Surat, his native town. Navalram has compromised in this, with the standard for an ideal biography as conceived by him early and protected the big circular turban on the head of the poet. The biography was written immediately after the death of the poet, for its inclusion in the third and enlarged edition of **Narmakavita**. He found a good excuse in that. He says that in an obsequial oblation to a scholar and a poet of high merit, only glorifying tribute is appropriate.

In writing the biography, Navalram has utilised **Mari Hakikat**, an auto-biography written and printed by the poet, only for his own personal perusal and not for public circulation. He has also used personal notes of the poet in the form of a sketchy diary over and above his personal information about the poet. In order to understand and explain the inspiring forces that enables the poet to earn the spectacular achievement as an author, Navalram's efforts are those of a research scholar.

Narmad was interested only in scholarly discussions and not in 'talk of the town' type tales. Along with the aspiration to promote knowledge and uplift of the country, the young, impatient and patriotic poet had an attractive and inspiring personality. This aspect has been ably brought out by

the biographer. He divides sixteen years of hectic activities, after the age of seventeen, of the poet, in three phases : (1) 1850-55 : period of internal struggle; (2) 1855-58 : period of hectic efforts; (3) 1858-59-65, 66 : period of complete glory. He does not fail to show that, even after these phases, the period of last twenty years of his life was also decisive in the life of the poet and had a great impact in the social, cultural and literary fields of Gujarat. The biographer forcefully denies the charge that the last twenty years were an anti-climax in the life and thought of the poet. He brings out the fact that change in the thinking and the activities of the poet was a natural consequence and was an evidence of his healthy, and not stagnant, mental faculty.

In narrating the first phase, Navalram, at the outset, deals with the ambition of the poet to be famous, his passion for women, his first unsuccessful marriage, animation for love and heroism, diligence in establishing associations for social, religious and literary deliberations, and then proceeds to give detailed account of his efforts in self-study and his attempts to be an author of outstanding merits in the second phase. The important and decisive event in the life of the poet, abandoning all activities for livelihood, seeking resort with pen only, taking a pledge to earn by writing only, has been described by the biographer with compassion and respect to the poet. In the last phase, he narrates the poet's rivalry in poetry with Dalpatram, and its positive and negative effects; uninterrupted publications of his poems and the impact of his poetry on society and literature; his scholarship, evident in essays on literary, social, historical, economical and other subjects; his laying down the foundation of modern Gujarati prose by his unique style; his daring journalism in **Dandio** and his satirical and scathing articles; and his single-handed compilation of the first magnificent dictionary in Gujarati, providing the infrastructure for subsequent others and similar other facts of his individual as well as scholarly activities in context with the renaissance.

While evaluating all these aspects in the right perspective, Navalram pays glowing tribute to the poet, and says,

whatever Narmad did, he did it primarily for social good and personal fame, and never thought of any other wordly reward.

While discussing his personal life, knowing fully well about his extra-marital affairs he gives a clean chit to the poet, saying, that after settling at Surat, he had never looked towards any woman. Navalram, infact defended him when he took a second wife, a widow. He considered it more dignified than those who carry on their affairs secretly. His wife Dahigauri, was mentally tortured and compelled to give her consent to this 'dignified' act by the poet. Navalram keeps mum on this episode. He maintains a discreet silence on another event also, in which, the poet had given shelter to still another widow, Savitagauri and that too without marriage. As Nandshanker Mehta has observed, this he did just to save the widow from the devils.

When Narmad turned into a revivalist, reformists were shocked. Navalram however reviewed the transformation in the thinking of the poet with sympathetic understanding. When he reviewed this change at the request of the editor of **Gujarati** his observations were objective.' Narmad was a Brahmosamajist during 1860-61. Then he became material pantheist for some time. In that, as Navalram observed, it was only the supremacy of activism in public affairs; and during 1865-66, spiritualism penetrated into his thinking process. The study of world history for writing **Rajyaranga**, the first history of the world in Gujarati, convinced the poet of the power of Destiny, hence he realigned with traditional Aryan approach and thinking. Navalram analysed that this was not the result of decadence in the intellectual faculty of the poet. His new approach was motivated by a high sense of tolerance and well-being of the country. This was the period of transition and such rapid and frequent change in thought and action was natural and inevitable. Navalram, on the contrary, congratulates the poet for being honest and bold in declaring his own conviction. He has analysed the psychology of the poet and says that it was not in the nature of the enthusiastic poet to resort to a golden path. The tran-

sition in his thinking was not a sudden affair, but well contemplated and phase by phase. So in the last phase, he preferred mysticism to rationalism. Discussing this translation, the biographer notes with praise, the change in the language and style of **Dharmavichar**, a collection of essays written by the poet after this change, and describes it as unique.

Despite some weak points, this biography is more or less objective. Though sympathetic and respectful towards the hero, he has maintained a balanced attitude in narration and grandeur in style.

THOUGHT AND COMMUNICATION

NAVALRAM is more known for his contemplative and critical writing than his creative and semi-creative works. He reflected and wrote on varied subjects like philosophy, patriotic themes, social reforms, education, journalism, grammar, philology and literature. These writings are noteworthy for their objectiveness, logical approach, contemporary context and witty but graceful style. They not only earned him respect among the intellectuals of the time, but also hastened the thinking process of that age.

Philosophy

The first fruit the reflective faculty of Navalram delivered, is a monograph of more than hundred pages, written in English, on "Fatalism". Navalram firmly believed that fatalism is the life spirit of Aryans. He emphatically states:

It is not a passing belief or a result of inferential logic unrecognised (by heart) but a living principle with the inhabitants of India. They are not more certain of their own existence than of the mysterious agency of fate in all the incidents of human life. Everything that happens is invariably referred to it.

Comparing Indian thought with that of the west, he analyses as follows:

In western thought man is asserted to be the sole architect of his own fortune. There is nothing to control the happiness or misery of man but the laws of physical world and himself. Our belief in God does not

rest on the principle of causation simply, but on the design that is so conspicuous in everything..... If there is design in creation, everything that occurs must ultimately be the result of that design and not a fortuitous combination of circumstances which was never contemplated or intended by him who determined these.

He elaborates that if there is a design and creation in universe, then action of man is also not devoid of the same. History stands a witness to it:

When we examine the results of human actions on a large scale perfected by ages and reflected in the mirror of history we find them all verging to a focus. In the moral world, the Providence of God is manifested in the peculiarity divine aspect of drawing good out of evil, the worst passions of human beings forced against their nature to be conducive to general good.

Giving examples from history Navalram asserts that there is no exception to this rule. He adds:

The belief of those who will see it [design] in one of his parts only is inconsistent with itself for the moral and physical words are so acted upon and modified by each other, that they must both form separate parts of the same government, or they must both be acknowledged be in a state of anarchy.

He does not agree that fatalism has ruined India and has harmed initiative and industriousness in the Indian people. According to him the principles of causality and bonds of virtue and sin are not contradictory to fatalism, not incongruent even with rationality. Vedant philosophy has strengthened his faith. He explains his belief in the following passage:

... The idea of infinity is no delusion. It is as certain as our incapacity to comprehend it, and what is more it is necessary. In the same light, the idea of cause and accountability must be viewed by an impartial observer of facts. It is a common aphorism of the Vedantees that the soul is not essentially responsible but as long as it retains the sense of ego (**ahankar**), it

is liable to rewards and punishments. For a long time I have looked upon it as a mystifying sophistry introduced by a wily priestcraft to conceal the naked immortality of their system of philosophy; but now when I am forced to study predestination in all its bearings, I discover that the idea though expressed in the bold dogmatical terminology peculiar to the term, is pregnant with important truths and is in fact, if I mistake not, a cool and impartial statement of psychological facts. As the soul ever retains the sense of ego, the aphorism can be easily construed to mean that the idea of responsibility may seem incompatible with a particular system of philosophy or theology, but its truth as revealed by consciousness cannot be questioned.

The principle of causation and the concept of accountability of virtue and sin, are interrelated and are parts of design and creation. This itself is an evidence of God's reality. Navalram concludes that this conjunction in itself is an illustration of God's mysterious illustration. Human intellect, along with it, is a God-given entity. Mystery of God, in this respect, is unfathomable.

Patriotism

Patriotism was an important inspiring, motivating and decisive force in Navalram's contemplation about social reforms, education system, language, etc. His disgust about the British rule and despair out of dependence was never concealed. He has expressed it in several of his writings. He had the courage to present one such poem in the presence of the political agent of Rajkot:

Brittania rules,
And India repressed I
Who will erase
The blemish of dependence
Since thousand years?

Navalram, belonged to that group, who believed that the British rule was beneficial to the country in some respects. He expressed gratitude to the Britishers for introducing the new system of education and laying the infrastructure for

industries. In his essay on one language in India—"Hindustanani Ek Bhasha"—he pays tribute to the British rule for the political unity of the country. He considered the educational system introduced by the Britishers, to be poisonous but having medicinal value and had its utility for the uplift of the Indian people. He described electricity and railways as God-send messengers, powerful enough to unite even the whole world. In this context he prays to God and calls upon his fellow countrymen to rise and progress:

Oh God!
 I praise thine mystery.
 I beseech you, oh India!
 Arise,
 Accept the grace,
 The compassionate God
 Bestows upon you,
 To reanimate you.

Navalram did note that the religious, moral and behavioral unity of this continent was destroyed after the political and administrative unity under the British hegemony. For maintaining the cultural unity, he recommends a unitary language for the whole country. He was in no doubt that English can never be alllingual-franca of this country. He suggested a form of a common language, as is French to Europe, a combination of Vraj Hindi and Urdu, which may be called 'Hindustani', the formula and nomenclature later accepted by Mahatma Gandhi. Moreover he proposed a common script, Devnagari, for all the regional language of the country.

His concept of patriotism is not limited to Hindus or Hinduism only as is evident from his suggestion to assimilate Urdu in the lingua-franca of the country. In his opinion, the concept that, ours is a sacred land and people belonging to another land are barbarians, is a very narrow one. Such a pride is false and illusionary before the artistry and bravery of the foreigners. He considered such pseudo-patriots as traitors. According to him a true patriot would never boast about his country; on the contrary, he would find out the

drawbacks and try to correct them. Motivated by this broad-minded and liberal patriotism he urged that instead of denouncing relations with England, we should study and acquire the resources by which they progressed and flourished. He proposed that encouragement to indigenous craftsmanship should be given a top priority. In connection to this he suggested a two-point programme:

1. Learn and introduce industries from Europe .
2. Boycott foreign goods.

To promote indigenous craftsmanship and production he suggested to call meetings in villages. Thus Navalram, along with Narmad, was a forerunner of Mahatma Gandhi in the 'Swadeshi movement'.

Though Navalram wanted the country to reap the benefits of western education and industries, he was well aware of its ill effects, like denationalization out of an overdose. To counter this he recommends national education, so that the newly educated may not become Anglicised. In national education he would include such a curriculum which would inspire respect to previous generations. He considered the study of Sanskrit to be most essential.

He treated British power and western education as two different entities. Though he considered western education as an initiating and favourite Goddess of power, he wanted the British administration to be kept off from the religious and reformist fields, as he has clearly stated in his review of an essay on child-marriage and forced widowhood "Bal-lagna ane Balatharnun Vaidhavya". This approach was promoted by his insistence to protect freedom of the people, which he considered as a first step towards independence. He very logically states that, if we would allow the government to meddle in our personal affairs, then we may be considered incapable of running institutions like even municipalities.

His thoughts and writings, immediately after the revolu-

tion of 1857 and five years before the formation of the Indian National Congress, went a long way in strengthening the spirit of nationhood.

Social Reforms

Navalram began his career as a writer with his long poem on a subject of social reform—the “Maharaj Libel Case”. With regard to social reforms his approach was not radical like that of Narmad and not too liberal like that of Dalpatram, but oscillating between radicalism and conservatism. He states: “My mind is a strange mixture of two civilizations. I think this may be the future civilization of the world. I am conservative and therefore have the very kind of Buddhi that is required to lead a civilization that is preceded by a radical civilization.” Sharp change in the approach and thinking in this field, by the poet Narmad is well known. Conciliatory approach in the writings of Manilal Nabhubhai and Govardhanram Tripathi was an outcome of this antiradicalism or relatively conservative one. In this context, we realise that the evaluation of his own time and people by Navalram was correct and objective. He is not ambiguous about reforms. He was first a teacher, then a reformist. His essays on reforms were written by him as an editor of **Shala Patra**, an educational periodical. He had set an ideal before him, which he explicitly laid down in his review of a publication by a teacher, **Vidhavano Vakil**. In this he advised the teacher not to write on such subjects in bitter language. It was his firm belief that people will be convinced for reforms by sweet and sympathetic persuasion and not by bitter and scathing onslaught on the system. If teachers themselves indulge in such activities, people will lose confidence in schools, and the work for which the teacher is paid, will suffer. Because of this sincere conviction, he pleaded against child marriage, but not in favour of widow remarriage. The evil of child marriages is more serious and it was the duty of the teacher to take care of the well-being of his pupil. That was the reason, why he came forward to support the efforts of Behramji Malbari in cultivating countrywide opinion against this bad custom. When no

newspaper in Gujarat wrote in support of the recommendation by Justice Ranade for an act regulating the minimum marriagable age, Navalram deplored the omission but at the same time implored the leaders not to involve the government, directly or indirectly in social affairs, as it may amount to sacrificing people's freedom in exchange of social welfare.

His analysis of the progress of social reforms in his incomplete essay "Sudharanun Itihasroop Vivechan" is very balanced and objective. When the great reformist of the time, Narmad, discarded radical reforms for revivalism with the zeal of an orthodox, Navalram at the request of the editor of **Gujarati**, proposed to evaluate the forces for and against the reformist activity. In this essay, he admired the courage and conviction of the poet in declaring the change in his thinking. Navalram sees depth and comprehensiveness, and not decadence in the newly found truth and its expression by the poet. He does not agree with the poet, that the British Government, associations patronised by the Government, and the neo-educated class were responsible for the reforms. He is very firm in his conviction, that it is the policy of the government not to get involved in the religio-social problems of the local people and social reforms can only be initiated by the people concerned. He believed that social reforms are not dependent on individuals. Karsandas expired, the poet turned his back, but reforms persist. Government, associations and individuals are only sub-powers. The main source of power for generating, and sustaining of social reform is western education. Where the common man of the country was indifferent to geography, astronomy and other material sciences and people of one village considered the people of another, to be foreigners, western education inspired in them rational and independent thinking, motivated them towards the material world, and cultivated in them a sense of self-respect and national pride. It made them conscious of the plight of women in society. The radicals amongst the reformists failed because they abused religion and indulged in drinking, considering it to be a reform. According to Navalram social reforms and religious rethinking are two overlapping subjects. This analysis, though incomplete, is a very impor-

tant stock-taking in the historical outline of reforms in Gujarat.

Education

Navalram was the foremost educationist and author in Gujarat to write on the principles of education. Having read books by western educationists like Fowler and Davidson, he contemplated on the subject in context of local situation and requirements, interpreted it in the interest of the intellectual uplift of the new generation and published them in **Shala Patra** for perusal of the society. He believed that an ideal teacher should be faithful only to teaching and nothing else. His duty towards education should be the first, absolute and unadulterated. To him the profession of a teacher was the best and most holy, because, it is the teacher who mends the future generation. In his essay on the profession of a teacher "Mehtajino Dhandho"—preaching the duties of the teacher, he states:

Oh, my teacher friend, remember, whether the next generation would be a learned or a fool, rich or poor, virtuous or sinner, courageous or timid would depend on you only.

He had faith that a teacher who is engrossed in his duty with a sense of benevolence and patriotism, with joy and zeal, and devotion to God only deserves the grace of God and praise of people.

In his essays "Shiksanashastrani Jaroor" (Necessity of the Science of Teaching) and "Nishalno Vakhat" (Timings in School)—Navalram considers the science of education to be as important as the art of education, laying great stress on the well-preparedness of a teacher, because like other sciences it does not deal with inanimate objects but with living beings. Discussing the age for initiation in study and school-timings, he lays emphasis on physical education first and suggest fixing such an age for admission in the primary study, that the

physique and mind of the student may not get hampered and he may not miss the age-limit for the civil service examinations. As a remedy, he puts across the idea of starting 'infant schools' with selected teachers.

He divides the educational system into two parts: theory and method. In theory, he puts emphasis on the image, knowledge of child-psychology and authority of the teacher. He divides method into two parts: suggestion method and lecture method. He considers the suggestion method useful in teaching children and the lecture method useful for older students. He also discusses the merits and demerits of the direct method.

In an essay on the elucidation on school method—"Shalapaddhatini Samjuti"—he enumerates eight natural instincts in children: curiosity, delight in doing something, satisfaction on surpassing obstacles, pleasure of doing something good, aspiration to be equal to others, aspiration to be praised, preparation in advance so that he may get comfort later, and the desire to be corrected. He implores teachers to encourage these instincts in children. One gets from this his understanding of child-psychology—a totally new concept these days. Discussing the authority of a teacher, he states that of the two kinds of punishments, punitive and curative, the latter should be preferred. In the same essay he lays down a five-point programme for an ideal teacher:

1. Knowledge of teaching method.
2. Capacity to understand students' mind.
3. Experience-earned knowledge of the best method of teaching.
4. The art of attracting the attention of students.
5. Preparation of everyday lessons.

In an essay on the various methods of teaching—"Shiksanni Prathak Paddhati"—he discusses the merits and demerits of the different teaching methods—individual teaching, group teaching method, mutual teaching method and class teaching. He recommends a synthesis of all these methods.

Navalram laid great emphasis on cultivating the power of concentration in children. To cultivate absorption, absoluteness and independence, the three aspects of power of concentration, the teacher himself should cultivate interest and well-preparedness in the subject. He recommends the exhibition method in teaching the reading, writing and arithmetic, so that the power of observation of the world around the child is not hampered but encouraged to develop. In this context he found the Kindergarten Method by the German educationist Froebel and the Infant School method to be more beneficial. Here we find that Navalram was not an orthodox or traditionist in education but was open-minded and receptive to the new education system, which got a firm base in the later period.

Navalram has written informative and guidance essays on various aspects of teaching subjects like grammar, geography, poetry, etc. In connection with physical training, he was insistent to introduce craftsmanship in the curriculum and thus he laid a primary foundation for the basic training course at a later period, according to the Gandhian ideology.

Navalram has expressed his well thought views on teaching of languages and medium of instruction at the higher education. In the beginning, regional languages were one of the subjects at the University level also. Afterwards classical languages like Sanskrit and Latin were introduced in place of them.

The Gujarat Vernacular Society had protested against this decision and had represented to reintroduce Gujarati as a subject. Navalram had expressed his views very clearly on this subject in his essay on the importance of the study of the mother-tongue—"Swabhashana Abhyasnun Agatya". He accepted the importance of the study of English, but indicated that a graduate after the study through a foreign language, himself becomes a foreigner in respect to usage, grammar, spellings, script and classical works in his own mother-tongue. He was not opposed to the study of classical language like Sanskrit; he accepted its relevance with regards to scholarship and writings, but he maintained that it should

not be done at the cost of Gujarati. One gets proficiency in communication in English by that medium, but that does not help in understanding the subject, and in obtaining the mastery in writing books on that subject in the regional language or teaching that subject to local people in their language. So Navalram believed that expenditure incurred by the government and the society to train the scholars for these purposes is wasted. He cites examples of Oxford and other universities and states that only regional languages should be recognised as a medium of instruction. Accepting the importance of classical languages like Sanskrit and foreign languages like English he recommends a three language formula.

His writings on these subjects of educational reveal his foresight as a teacher, his insight as an educationist, his persistence for high academic standards and love for his mother-tongue.

Language and Grammar

The contribution of Navalram to Gujarati grammar and philology—"Bhashashastra" while differentiating it with grammar, and giving an outline of the study of this subject in Europe, he describes the research done by western, particularly, German scholars. In his essay on groups of languages—"Bhashana Vargo"—he gives the general characteristics of the different groups of world languages, with special reference to the languages of the Aryan group, on the basis of a comparative study done by western scholars.

In an essay on the growth of syllabic script—"Aksarni Utpatti", he explains in brief, with the help illustrations, the development of object-pictorial script, word-pictorial script word-script, and syllabic-script in a chronological order. He contradicts the opinion of western philologists, that the Devanagari script derived from Phoenician alphabets and that Sanskrit had no syllabic script in the period of grammarian Panini. He logically states that, without a script, principles of grammar of a language cannot be thought of. So it is pru-

dent to infer that script was introduced in the Indian sub-continent sometime before the age of grammar. These essays are of an introductory nature, but they reveal the scientific aptitude of the writer.

The most important contribution in this field by Navalram, is a paper on etymology—"Vyutpatti Path", in three parts prepared for the use of teachers and students. It supplemented the scientific work already done by a notable philologist Vrajlal Shastri. While reviewing a dictionary of original roots of Gujarati words—**Gujarati Shabdamooldarshak Kosh**—by Chhotalal Sevakram, he put emphasis on two rules for standard etymology, viz.: (i) while giving etymology, rules governing the change should invariably be stated. (ii) Etymology should never be imagined simply on the similarity of a Gujarati word with a Sanskrit one. Objective etymology should be derived by examining all shades of meaning and its occurrence at each stage, i.e., original word, intermediate form and present usage. Thus, Navalram contributed in laying down the foundation of comparative and historical study of the Gujarati language, along with Vrajlal Shastri and Narmadshanker, on which in the later period, the great philologist Narsimhrao Divetia worked in details and on a wider scale.

There was wide irregularity in spellings in Gujarati during this period. So rules were framed for correct spellings in government text books. But there were discrepancies and ambiguities in the rules too, hence confusion prevailed. So Dr. Buhler, the then head of the education department, entrusted Navalram with the work of framing an addendum and corrigendum for homogeneity in rules for spellings. Navalram did this work so perfectly that he earned compliments of none other than Dalpatram and Mr. Taylor, an accomplished British grammarian who wrote the first Gujarati grammar.

Journalism

Navalram's medium of communication was **Shala Patra**, an educational bulletin of the government, edited by him.

When its previous editor Mahipatram Neelkanth created bad blood with Gaurishanker Oza, the then Chief Minister of Bhavnagar State on a matter of social reforms, the British Agency transferred the editorship of **Shala Patra** to Navalram, which he accepted as a challenge. He adopted an objective, balanced and purely academic approach so as not to offend radicals as well as conservatives. He put the magazine on a strictly educational programme and intellectual level. In the first instant, he reduced the number of pages to sixteen only, thereby reducing the expenditure and also saving the magazine from the burden of non-academic subjects.

His ideal on journalism was higher than that of his contemporaries. He was connected with the editorial section of **Gujaratmitra**, a daily from Surat. Owing to some difference of opinion with proprietor-editor Dinshaw, he severed his connections with the daily. At this time **Gujaratmitra**, **Dandio**, **Chandrodaya** and other journals were indulging in mudslinging. When Navalram accepted the editorship of **Shala Patra** he became the target of their attack, especially of **Chandrodaya**. At this juncture, Madhuvachram Balvachram, the editor of **Vidyavilas** wanted to give a rejoinder, but Navalram restrained him. He wrote to him:

Chandrodaya is not worthy of notice . . . Do not involve my name under any circumstance. I consider it an insult to defend myself against Chandrodaya...

Then he wrote a 'general instruction' to Madhuvachram, which in itself is an index of his noble ideal as an objective journalist. He advised:

Before you put an idea, give enough thought to it; be cautious before writing on current topics like social reforms, book reviews, etc.; do not sacrifice truth even in ignorance, out of impulse or being taken in by others; do not allow the good name of **Vidyavilas** to be smeared by blemish as had happened to **Dandio**.

To uplift the standard of **Shala Patra** Navalram himself studied and wrote on varied subjects. He inspired and en-

couraged others also to write. Articles published under his editorship were on educational and allied subjects like geography, history, astronomy, political science, economics, poetics, grammar, etc.

Navalram himself wrote many book-reviews for his magazine, but he was of the view that **Shala Patra** with its limited scope, was not a suitable platform for literary pursuits. So when the epoch-making novel **Saraswatichandra** by Govardhanram Tripathi, first came out he simply took note of it, saying that **Shala Patra** was not competent to review such a landmark novel. For such reviews a tri-monthly like **Review** is needed. He had prepared a blueprint for such a magazine in 1873, in which he proposed to publish articles on economics, law, social reforms, education, trade, industry, local self-government, administration, language, literature, history, philosophy, religion, etc. He had also prepared a list of experts to write on these subjects. However he could not implement this scheme. **Shala Patra** earned him prestige as a torch-bearer of ideal, industrious, scholastic and objective journalism in Gujarat.

LITERARY CRITICISM

NAVALRAM is credited with the reputation of being a pioneer critic of modern Gujarati literature, though poet Narmad preceded him. Narmad was the first critic to write on the various aspects of poetry and some principles of literary criticism. One of his papers on the subject was published as early as 1858. Navalram published his first book review on the first Gujarati novel **Karan ghelo** in 1867. But Narmad never tried his pen on book review. Hence the credit of being the first literary critic is earned by poet Narmad, while Navalram earned the first place as the book-reviewer.

Navalram, at the very start of his career as a writer, aimed to be known as the first critic to herald the rise of the new school of Gujarati poetry and to predict the decline of the old school. His aspiration was fulfilled, as, prior to him, nobody ventured to evaluate the poetry of Narmad in its entirety.

His literary criticism is threefold:

1. Principles of literature
2. Evaluation of poets
3. Book reviews.

He did not attempt to write on principles of literature exclusively, except in one essay—'Kavya Shastrasambandhi Vicharo'—thoughts on Poetics, and some jotting under the heading of 'Manna Vicharo'—mental reflections. But he discussed some relevant principles while reviewing books.

Though contextual, it is of prime importance in the absence of theoretical and exclusive treatise on the subject.

To start with, he makes a statement, while reviewing **Karanghelo**, a novel by Nandshanker Mehta:

An interesting (Rasik) book has three aspects: sentiments (Rasa), behaviour (Ritbhat), and a good idea (Suvichar). ...

Here he differentiates literature of power from literature of knowledge. Elaborating the statement he emphasises on sentiments (Rasa) in creative literature in these words:

Poetry, drama, and story try to give a picture according to their capabilities, of internal and external nature—'Kudrat'. Excellence of each of these depends on the truthfulness (Sachai) of the picture. The truthful description of varied transformations (Vikar) in the mind of a person, on varied occasions are called sentiments (Rasas). Out of these, the common change which occur at different times and places can be described as behaviour. To find out causal relation in behaviour of man evolve a principle out of that is called a good thought. Sentiments (Rasas) in poetry or drama should be more immense and intense than other aspects. So that it can be described as an embodiment of sentiments. Where description of behaviour is prominent, it may be called a story or a novel. Good thought is always an auxiliary aspect.

In this explanation Navalram differentiates between three entities of literature, viz. poetry, drama and story or novel, on the basis of dominance or subordination of sentiments. In poetry or drama, sentiment is in the centre, whereas in a novel emphasis is on behaviour, i.e., on characters and plot. At this juncture, terminology of literature was not clear in Gujarati. Navalram as also Narmad, expressed in a clumsy manner their concepts of literature in Gujarati. Western concepts of literature were not familiar and Gujarati was not equipped or cultivated for that. This clumsiness itself is a manifestation of the intermediate struggle of attaining communicability in language. So both these pioneer critics adopt-

ed Sanskrit terminology wherever possible, and failing that they adopted near-meaning words from colloquial usages. Navalram was not well-versed with Sanskrit poetics. He adopted 'Rasa' term from Sanskrit, but his discussion about 'Rasa' is according to the western concept. His book-reviews betray good knowledge of western poetics.

While discussing a Sanskrit drama he applies the Aristotelean standard of triple unity. His discussion about sentiments and poetic elements is only elementary, casual and contextual, but its importance should not be undervalued, as it was the pioneer work in criticism in Gujarati.

He describes sentiments (Rasas) as mental instincts (Manobhava) arising in the mind of a person in varied situations. By varied situation he means supporting cause (Alamban Vibhava) and exciting cause (Uddipan Vaibhava). In that context permanent instincts (Sthaibhavas) reveal themselves in various forms, and that itself is sentiment (Rasa). He means that permanent instinct itself is transformed into sentiment. The transformation when described in place of mental instinct of character, is called behaviour. He seems to refer here the eternal manifestation (Anubhava) and transient instinct (Sancharibhava) of a character. He has referred to sentiment (Rasa) elsewhere as delineation of passions. In creative literature he considers a picture of internal and external nature as inevitable. By internal nature he means passions, mental instincts, feelings, emotions, etc. By external nature he means objective environment, behaviour, interaction between characters, etc. He puts emphasis on truthfulness of this description of this two-fold nature. By truthfulness he means authentic or real or real-like. While reviewing **Karanghelo** he observes that, it is not truthful depiction of nature, when Roopsundari, abducted by Karan, wails for one and a half page. Here, he seems to mean that in creative literature nature pertaining to plot and nature (Internal and external, both) of characters should not be depicted devoid of or independent of reality. Rama should behave as Rama only, and not like Krishna.

Navalram deploys the word 'Kudrat' for Nature, in a suggested meaning. He gives the definition of poetry in his essay "Kavyashastra Sambandhi Vicharo" (1867) as under:

Poetry is a real picture of 'Maya' or 'Kudrat'.

In another essay, entitled "Kavi Narmadshankerni Kavita" (1867) he gives the same definition with a few qualifying and superlative adjectives:

Perfect and truthful picture of 'Kudrat' or Maya is the best poetry.

Navalram has tried to explain poetry by assimilating two distinct terms, 'Maya' and 'Kudrat'. Here 'Maya' means illusion. He adopted the term not from Vedant, but from Plato. Plato described the visible world as a mere illusion. Aristotle improved upon this concept, saying that art is not the original, but its imitation; it is not real but real-like; it is illusionary but would not seem to be an illusion. In this context, Navalram considers 'Maya' and 'Kudrat' to be synonyms. In the term 'Kudrat' he reads more meaning than in 'Nature'. In Persian the word 'Kudrat' means 'arrangement', 'ingenuity', 'craft', 'scheme', etc. In that context he terms, the scheme of providence for continuity of the Creation as Kudrat. As the law of Nature is immutable, Kudrat is also not above the rule of cause and effect, hence in poetry also, correlation of cause and effect cannot be ignored. Thus, relating the concept of Kudrat, governed by the law of causation, with the concept of illusionary form of Maya, Navalram proposes to establish that poetry is something more than an imitation. This concept is not unacceptable to Aristotle, as it is inherent in his concept of triple unity.

Navalram speaks Aristotelean only when he says that a person, who draws a picture of the nature, is a poet; in this sense a painter or a musician is also a poet. He employs the term 'Nature' in the sense meant by Aristotle and not by Plato. Elucidating on the concept, he states that the meaning of 'Picture' is simply to make others understand the form of

nature. It is clear that he refers to the process of communication. Narmad could not give an equivalent of 'Imagination' in Gujarati, hence he explained it in a phrase, as the power to draw a picture.

The word 'image' is suggestive of form and imitation both. So when Navalram refers to a 'Picture of nature' he means 'Imagination'. This is again because of the lack of proper terminology in a developing language. When he explains his understanding of poetry, he has a definition of poetry by Hazlitt, which says:

Poetry then is an imitation of nature, but the imagination and passions are a part of man's nature.

Thus, Navalram takes his Rasa-theory from Sanskrit poetics and to theory of imitation from Greek poetics, and tries to derive a conciliatory principle by their assimilation. Even in explaining the principle of Humour and other sentiments, he has considered the principle of imitation as decisive. He states:

Humour does not arise out of the picture of nature. We do not laugh on seeing or reading the description of a beautiful landscape. In all other sentiments there is an imitation of nature, in humour the imitation is distorted.

Here also he has followed Aristotle.

Discussing the characteristics of the best poetry, while evaluating the poetry of Narmad, he lays emphasis on the semantic part of the poetry as against striking and high sounding words; he puts stress on the aestheticity of the poetry as against its moral aspect; he prefers sentiments in a tranquil state of mind to impulses in the morbid state.

His understanding of poetry is crystal-clear in his essay "Kavi Narmadashankarni Kavita" (Poetry of Poet Narmada Shanker)). In one of its passages he says:

Some believe that even a composition in verse or tune, on medical science, is also a poetry; and a versification with a few swift, bursting, bustling, heavy sounding alliterated words is also a poetry to them, and they consider themselves to be the best appreciators of poetry. To them a sound of a word is everything in poetry and meaning does not mean anything. They do not even think that had an arbitrary arrangement of sounds of words like brickbats been a poetry, then Kalidas would not have been praised in Europe. Kalidas, Homer, Shakespeare and other poets are praised all over the world, only for semantic excellence in their works. Some consider purity, lucidity and sweetness of language to be the standard of good poetry; some think that only purpose of poetry is to amuse; and some otherwise persons says that poetry should give lectures on morality; ..some ignorant of poetics consider morbid compositions to be the best poetry. Then, immemorable "Paradise Lost" by Milton should be revaluated as devoid of sentiments, because there is no pathetic description in that serious poetry....if impulses are criteria, then amorous poetry should be placed over heroic poetry...

The passage reflects the writer's disapproval of pseudo-poetry of bardic style and also those of Samal and Dalpatram, which were very popular then. He puts more emphasis on semantic part of poetry, than on words. He states:

Sound of a word is a tune only, not a poetry. Poetry is in the meaning. The meaning which draws a picture in our mind and influences our sensibilities is a poetry. Success of poetry depends on truthfulness and perfectness of that picture.

Navalram here indicates that poetic meaning should have the capability to initiate imagination in readers. Here he differentiates between the meaning of social interaction and meaning of poetical aesthetics. He does not, of course, devalue the importance of words in poetry. He says that there should be a perfect tuning between word and meaning, bet-

ween power of suggestion in the word and its uniqueness in the sense that no other substitute would convey the intended meaning. In the last but one passage he makes this idea perfectly clear:

We do not have such meaningful and suggestive poetry in our language, in which every word has a place and purpose of its own, removal or replacement of which may distort the picture of the meaning; a change in its sequence may harm its aestheticity; figures of speech come only as an inseparable part of the whole; devoid of unnecessary elaboration, but giving only a hint to an intelligent reader; brief, but a well-versed in poetry may not be tempted to add even a word to it; and with no laxity in rules of prosody. Such an excellence is found only in Sanskrit and English poetry. Such systematic poetry is now introduced in our language by Narmadashanker.

While heralding the new poetry, Navalram has focussed on its characteristic of organic unity. The poetry of Narmad was unique in this respect and Navalram has given him due credit for that.

Navalram, in the beginning followed the poetics of Aristotle. After a decade, he revised his approach and thought of assimilating the ideas of Francis Bacon and others along with Aristotle's. He has not written a regular paper on the subject, but has jotted down his reflections under the heading "Manana Vicharo" (1878).

He had an ambition to propound his own doctrine on aesthetics — "**Rasashastra**", which may have a conciliation between classicism and romanticism. He uses the term 'Radicalism' in place of 'romanticism', because he wants to correlate social aspect with poetry, as it was the custom of the time and under the influence of western philosophers like Bacon, Mill, etc. He examines the difference between periodical poetry and universal poetry and considers the latter to be the best. He notes that each period has its own poetry. But the poetry which has permanent value acceptable to all

ages, is universal poetry. Poetry written on social reforms has only periodical value. Navairam has described Samal and Narmad as radicals of their times; Premanand and Navalram himself were conservatives of their times. According to him radicals are action-minded and conservatives are of a contemplative nature.

In this context, he describes Samal as 'Nagar'—(romantic) and Premanand as 'Shastri'—(classical). The poetry of premanand is an uninterrupted billow, hence is an organic unit, whereas that of Samal is constituted in parts, hence to lacks in organic unity. In spite of that, Navalram observes romantic poets are more read by mass in general; classical poets are appreciated by a class of people only. Navalram expects a poet to imbibe the good elements of both the genres. He imagines a sage poet, a seer poet like that of Vedas. He contemplates new aesthetics, which may be abstract like the Vedas. Thus imposing on himself such a lofty responsibility, he writes a preamble for his proposed doctrine on aesthetics in the following words:

... I should introduce a new principle, a new standard of aesthetics in my doctrine. Bacon's principle of improvement on nature and Aristotle's principle of imitation, both should be assimilated. Aryan thought is similar to that of Bacon's, and it is very suitable to a conservative like me. What a coincidence! With reference to my thinking and that of Bacon's also, the high priest of utility shows a way to improve upon aesthetics. India devoid of pragmatic approach should devise a new aesthetics, with a pragmatic approach, for the new generation. Bacon realized this truth, because of his radical approach only. He realized that there is no poetry in nature as conceived by his pragmatic thinking. Aristotle and others did not recognize nature devoid of poetry. That was the conservatism in them. The aim of new aesthetics will be to show that there is poetry in true nature. For that, scope of nature will have to be expanded. Nature will have to be looked upon with more keenness, Higher philosophy than his 'Novum Organum' is needed for that. He contradicted logic. Similarly he will

have to be contradicted. This contradiction can be done by such aesthetics only. This aesthetics should be based on such philosophy, which can give an answer to Aristotle—a theorist of the first reform, and Bacon—a theorist of the second reform, and silence them.

According to Aristotle poetry is an imitation of nature, i.e., the perceptible world. Bacon improved upon this principle and going one step forward, said, that nature is not perfect, but deficient. An artist overcomes that deficiency and completes the picture.

Referring to this view of Bacon, Navalram goes one step ahead, and approaches 'the high priest of utility' James Stuart Mill. The impact of his philosophy, based on pragmatism, was as profound as that of Bacon. Navalram wanted to strike a compromise between the three ideologies, viz. Aristotle's principle of imitation, Bacon's principle of reason and Mill's principles of pragmatic intellectualism. Bacon never reconciled with Aristotle's philosophy and decried it to be 'Childish delusion' which 'produced no fruit but only a jungle of dry and useless branches'. He considered man to be more than conservative. To balance his conservatism, Navalram wanted a servant and interpreter of nature. In that sense he was a to import radical intellectualism into his new concept of aesthetics. Mill transformed his utilitarianism into an active doctrine which had a great impact on philosophical radicalism of that age.

Navalram prefers purity to popularity. He says that and tries to explain it with the help of characters of Indian mythology. In his essay on aesthetics—"Kavyashastra Sambandhi Vicharo", he describes the serene and pure image of Goddess Parvati as Beautiful and the form between beautiful Parvati and horrifying Mahakali as Sublime. This is the technique to assimilate and explain western and Indian ideology.

Navalram welcomes Bacon's idea of sublimity in poetry, purity is twofold—classical and advanced. He prefers advanced

ced purity to classical. He expects both progressiveness in thoughts as well as sublimity of emotions. He refused to take note of "Klānt Kavi" of Balashanker, because he considered the amorous descriptions in the poem to be crossing the limits of decency. But his puritanism is not that of an extremist moralist, but of an aesthetic moralist. Reviewing "Natakshala and Gopichand" (1884), he clearly states:

I do not say that drama should be didactic. ... In my opinion, a dramatist or a poet should forget that he has to give a massage. One who forgets that he has to be faithful to the aesthetic part of the poetry, betrays his duty as an artist. Good moral may be a natural message. He considers direct preaching, either in the form of a

He considers direct preaching, either in the form of a dialogue or a discourse, a flaw in the aesthetic beauty of poetry. He is not averse to the innate message in a drama or a poetry. He is first an aesthetician, and then a moralist. He is very clear that poetry should not be anti-moral, but it can be amoral. If it is moralist, then the message should be only indirect, simply as a suggestion.

Reviewing *Kanta*, a drama by Manilal Nabhubhai, Navalram considers poetic genius to be innate. Because of this innate genius, even uneducated persons have become good poets. To be a good poet, one requires to cultivate pure taste. To develop pure taste, one should have an intimate study of aesthetics. He says that poetic genius is of two kinds—subjective and objective. Lyric blooms from the former and drama, story, etc. grow from the latter. He considers objective poetry to be of higher virtue, because it requires more intimate study of the outer world and inner life. He is regretful that in Gujarati, most of the poets have written subjective literature. He recognizes premanand only as a supreme objective poet of Gujarati, till that time. He observes that generally most of the poets write subjective literature in the earlier phase of their career and in the later period, they resort to writing objective literature. In this context he compliments Manilal for his mature genius in writing a drama in the

very earlier stages of his literary career. Manilal had written good lyrics and had given good account of his subjective genius also. Navalram does not consider subjective and objective talents to be incongruent. He says that they are complementary to each other and cites the example of Manilal to prove his point.

Navalram describes lyric, a subjective poetry, as a musical poem. Reviewing **Subodhchintamani** he defines its characteristics as under:

An impulse ('jusso'), a true impulse from within powerful and overflowing, immersed in its own self, indifferent to other's opinion, self-luminating and earnest, is the essence of poetry, particularly of a musical poetry....

Navalram has, as Narmad also did, adopted the first half of Hazlitt's definition—"it is the language of passion and imagination"—and accepted the later half of Wordsworth's definition—"spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings"—forgetting the former half—"emotions recollected in tranquillity".

Navalram considers music an important and successful medium of communication, accepts complementary roles of poetry and music, values contribution and of rhythm and tune in musical poetry. In his jottings in 'Manana Vicharo' he has noted the capability of music in expressing sentiments like heroism, love, etc. In lyrical poetry he puts word next to musical tone of its diction. He says that in pure musical poetry, thought should be simple and diction should be easy.

In his review of **Subodhchintamani** (1882-83), while differentiating verse from prose, he puts emphasis on the formation of diction and tone pleasing to the ears. In prose, sequence of words is according to grammatical rules and semantic context. In verse more stress is put on tune and rhythm. Melody is the first condition of verse. But he does not mix up poetry with music. He observes that the dividing line between music and poetry is very thin and sometimes

music hinders the poetry to express distinct sensibilities. Music is capable of expressing only one sensibility at a time, whereas poetry is capable of communicating multiple sensibilities. Thereby he puts poetry above music. When he refers to music as an important factor in verse, he does not mean intricacies and elaborations of musical notes, but expects only tonal value for homogeneous dictional expressions. He is in know of a new concept, that poetry is not to be sung, but to be read. He mentions that in English and in Vrajbhasha verses are not sung, but spoken, maintaining rhythms but discarding their tunes. He seems to favour this practice.

Navalram does not appreciate monotony of a metre or a Deshī in a long poetry. He prefers different metres or Deshis varying according to meanings, moods and emotions. To support this view he cites *Gitaḡvīnd* of Jayādeva as an example.

He is in favour of employing stress-tuned rhythmic metres or Deshis and disapproves syllabic metres. He notes that most of the Gujarati poetry upto Dalpatram and Narmad is written in Deshis. He predicts that in future also, most of the lyrical poetry will be written in Deshis. He opines that in long poetry also, syllabic metre can hardly be used successfully. Giving a brief account of the development of syllabic metres from Vedic period to Sanskrit times, describing the influence of books on prosody by Dalpatram and Narmad in favour of these metres and noting that writing in syllabic metres has come to be regarded as prestigious and Deshis have come to be despised upon, he is confident that ultimately Deshis would prevail upon as the only successive medium. To support his analysis, he gives a brief history of experiments in metres right from Greek and Latin poetry to contemporary English literature.

For not endorsing the use of syllabic metres, Navalram has two reasons, of which the first is practical and the second technical. It is a known fact that it was very difficult to get a book or a teacher to learn syllabic prosody in this period. It was found in manuscripts of Sanskrit prosodies like *Shruta-*

bodha and available in oral traditional panegyrists. Another hurdle was linguistical. Even Greek and Latin had syllabic metres. But the speech pattern of languages developed out of these two, undergoing phonetic as well as structural changes in the process. Hence English poetry accepted metres based on stress or accent suitable to the then current speech pattern. Similarly, though Gujarati has the same set of vowels and consonants as of the mother language Sanskrit, its speech pattern has gone through a sea change, owing to phonetic and structural changes.

Syllabic metres were composed on the phonetic pattern of Sanskrit articulation. If Gujarati words are set to suit the value of each syllable, the phonetic pattern then derived would be unnatural as a foreign language. To overcome these hurdles, Navalram prescribed to use stress-tuned rhythmic metres (Matramel Chhand) or Deshis, as they are set in the current speech pattern. Time has proved this diagnosis as correct. Though in post-Narmad period, syllabic metres were the rule of the time; in post-independence period, poets of the new generation have almost discarded these metres and resorted to stress-tuned rhythmic metres like Dohro, Chopai, Katav, Jhulana and Deshis.

Reviewing **Subodhchintamani**, Navalram discusses style in general also. In the very beginning of his career as a critic he had differentiated between the old and new schools of poetry, mainly on their styles. But he does not follow either of them. He wants to initiate his own school of style with the good elements of both. He names the old school as 'Dalpatshala', and the new one as 'Narmadshala' and wants his school to be known as 'Navalshala'. He observes that Dalpatshala aims at word, Narmadshala emphasises on meaning, whereas in Navalshala meaning would be important with equal stress on diction as well. This style would be brief and concise; its composition would be semantic and compact; every word and rhyme of it would be meaningful, congruent and specific, with no unnecessary repetition or elaboration. He does not devalue the diffused style in Narmad's poetry.

But he prefers the former and compares it with a tiny bottle of perfume which contains nothing but essence.

He has nothing but contempt for the verbose style and is all praise for the semantic style. He values elegance, sweetness, grace, lucidity, maturity and brevity of diction.

Navalram despised Sanskritized Gujarati. He has discussed the vocabulary of Gujarati in his essay "Sanskritmaya Gujarati". Not that he was averse to Sanskrit words or had a soft corner for bazaar-language or feminine dialect as well. Some writers, at that time, were insistent on introducing more and more Sanskrit words to counter the tendency to insert more Persian words. This fad was later ridiculed by Ramanbhai Neelkanth in his satiric novel **Bhadrambhadrā**. Navalram despised only the artificial thrust of Sanskrit vocabulary. He did not agree with the view that Gujarati was uncultivated for communicating new thoughts. That difficulty is experienced by every language at one stage or the other. At this time, Gujarati sentences were constructed on the pattern of English language and Sanskrit words were selected as synonymous for English words. Hence Gujarati became artificial. Navalram ridiculed this construction as "Angreji-Sanskrit-Gujarati". His test for proper word was its usage in classical books in similar context. He is not insistent on a simpler language, like that of Dalpatram, but he believed that the language should be followed by those, for whom it was meant. He wants to eliminate translationprone and imaginary words and sentences.

Similarly he had disgust for colloquial and vulgar dialect also. He had ridiculed the proposition of Hargovinddas Kantavala for using colloquial and regional words to increase the vocabulary of Gujarati, in his review on the story of the latter, entitled **Andheri Nagarino Gardhavsan**. He had no objection to dialectalization in drama and had himself adopted that method in **Bhatnun Bhopalun**. But in other forms of writings, the main condition for using such a word is its inevitability.

While reviewing dramas like *Kanta*, *Maltimadhava*, *Ratnavali*, *Gopichand*, etc., Navalram discussed the scope and form of drama. He considered drama as a sign of social awareness and a mirror of the knowledge, thinking and tendencies of people. His observation was that people of the country whose dramas are neat, pleasant and subtle are neat, pleasant and subtle themselves. He described drama as the best teacher, because it influences the people, where even schools, colleges and libraries fail. He holds debased dramas responsible for the debased mind of the society, hence he appeals to wise and intelligent people to criticize and discourage such dramas. As noted earlier, he is not insistent about didactic drama, but at the same time despises debased drama without hesitation. He says that even pleasure-prone drama should not lower itself down from the unadulterated aesthetic excellence.

He classified drama into stage-drama and drama for reading only. He considered visual drama more artistic and more effective. He does not reject audio-drama or drama for reading only, because some of the dramas written by literary authors, including himself were not successful on stage, but were popular with readers. Such dramas may not have any flaw in technique, but it may be less entertaining, and its standard may be higher than the average level of the audience.

Dramas staged during this period were of poor quality. Most of the professional companies staged improved dramas, with no regular script and the actors speaking extempore dialogues. This was because of the influence of the traditional Marathi stage of the time. Navalram suggests several remedies to improve Gujarati stage. His concept of drama was enriched by western dramatics and not by Sanskrit dramatics. Distinguishing the two, he states that Sanskrit dramatist gave more weight to sentiments than action. This itself is responsible for the flaw in sentiments. He correctly says that action is inevitable for stageability. A series of verses full of sentimental poetic elements may raise the drama to a poetic height but will deprive it of the stageability. Its visual dimension

never takes shape. Evaluating **Ratnavali** he states that it is perfect in action, whereas **Maltimadhava** is excellent in sentiments. When drama is not staged then its element of action is suspended and sentiments takes prominence. He describes Sanskrit drama as auditional only, with **Ratnavali** as an exception. It has all the unities including the unity of action, which make it an aesthetic and stageable organic unit. Navalram has thus exhibited a very fine sense of dramaturgy.

Reviewing **Buddhi ane Riddhini Katha**, Navalram has discussed the form of allegory in Gujarati. He has before him allegories like **Prabodhchandrodaya** in Sanskrit, **Tribhivandeepakprabandh** and **Vivekvanzaro** in medieval Gujarati, and **Pilgrims Progress** in English. Here he distinguishes between metaphor and allegory. He observes that comparison in metaphor is incidental, occasional, and partial, whereas in allegory it encompasses the whole composition, in all respects and far enough to depict the inner being of human nature in all contexts—behavioural, mental, social and philosophical.

Navalram, thus, has discussed all the forms of literature in general, with reviews as illustrations, and deriving principles out of them. His reviews are not merely introductory, elementary or sketchy. Though occasionally they tend to be theoretic also. We may classify them as applied criticism.

Navalram has evaluated three authors: Premanand, Narmad and Dalpatram. In the beginning of his career as a critic, he was sentimental, emotional, subjective and under the great influence of Narmad. At that time, he placed Narmad at the top of the list of poets. But considerable study of literature, experience of the world, passage of time and distance of place made him mature, balanced, thoughtful and beyond personal allegiance to Narmad. The graph of his developing critical faculty is very interesting to study.

Evaluating the poetry of Narmad, in his essay "Kavi Narmadashankerni Kavita", as early as 1867, he made an exaggerated statement that Narmad is unrivalled among poets, even better than Narsimh and Dayaram and stated that only

Premanand can claim to be at par with him. His criteria seems to be sentiment of love in poetry. Narsimh excels in devotion but sentiment of love is secondary to Bhakti. Similar is the case with Dayaram. Navalram has no doubt found love-pangs in poetry of both, but their expression is hazy, whereas in Narmad's poetry it is illuminating and penetrating. He has found the love sentiment in Dayaram's poetry to be extramarital, but Navalram has wishfully ignored the fact that inspiration of love-poetry of Narmad also, rested with his several extramarital love episodes. His expression of love is more bold, loud and straight than that of the other two. It seems that Navalram is awestruck by his poet-friend.

He observes that Samal excels not in sentiments, but in fancy. He compares Samal to the writer of **Arabian Nights**. He prefers to refer to him as a novelist rather than a poet. He is a preacher-poet, but in that respect also Narmad surpasses him.

He recognizes Premanand as a poet of pure and mature love, and a strong contender of first place amongst poets. Navalram observes that Marathi poets like Moro Pant, and Hindi poets like Keshavdas, Biharidas excel in grandeur of meaning and sentiments like love, but in pathos Premanand supersedes all. Comparing his poetry with Narmad, Navalram states that in Premanand's poems narration of love forms a part of a long poetry and is not exclusive in itself; Narmad's love poems are subjective and totally exclusive. His observation that Narmad was the first Gujarati poet, after the Sanskrit period, to give exclusive love poems as also nature-poetry, is irrefutable. In that respect he was the land-mark poet of modern Gujarati language.

Navalram, however, does not endorse everything Narmad said and did. Narmad had opined that the language of Premanand is inferior to Dayaram. Navalram has disputed this statement and discussed the differences in the language of prose and language of poetry of Narmad. It was the general opinion of scholars of that period that Narmad's prose was

pleasant, flawless, lucid, elegant but his poetry was not sweet, pure or graceful. Navalram defended the poet and said that nectar remains nectar, may it be in a golden pot or in an earthen one.

Half a decade later, when he edited **Mamerun**, a biographical poetry on Narsimha, he described Premanand's poetic genius as unparalleled, best in narration and unimitable in depiction of sentiments. He praised his knowledge of human nature, graceful language and compact construction.

After two decades, when he wrote an introduction to **Narmakavita**, a posthumous publication of collected poems of Narmad, we realize that his critical faculty is at its best, matured, balanced and devoid of likes and dislikes. He now evaluates the poet most objectively. He now equates him with Dalpatram. He highlights respective excellence in both. Dalpatram was an extrovert poet, well-composed, never surrendering to impulses, with contrived humour, sweet-tongued, and with a sole aim to train and entertain. Narmadshanker was an introvert poet, self-centred, impulsive, serious, scholar, outspoken and energetic, unmindful of entertainment of readers. Navalram, later accepted the relevance of both schools and gave both the poets equal tributes.

Navalram however, was at his best as a critic and contributed enormously in raising the intellectual level of the society.

His most important contribution was the introduction of standard norms of criticism and book-review for the first time in Gujarati. He put before him, and future generations of critics, an ideal to welcome the best books and discard the unworthy. Impartiality and sympathy were the chief characteristics of his criticism. He always encouraged promising young writers, but discouraged worthless fameseekers. Wit, humour and satire were permanent tools of his style, even in his criticisms and book-reviews. He could bring out the good points in a book, point out its drawbacks and suggest ways to rectify

them. He would bluntly tell talentless writers to leave the field with pinching sarcasm. He was ruthless in that respect. He even ridiculed old guards like Dalpatram for his weak poetry in *Shravanakhyan*. He had written a fitting satirical article under the pseudonym 'Vaidya Nirdambhker Ananddhar' on the obsession for becoming an author—'Othario Hadakva' and ridiculed people crazy to become writers. He would show contempt to pseudo-poetry, as he did in the case of 'Dharmapuravarnana' which he recommended to be thrown into the dustbin.

He has laid down a methodology for book-reviewing and states that a critic should first examine the design and execution of the book under review. Purpose, technique and subject matter form the design. When all these three are assimilated into an organic unit, it is termed as an execution. A book may be creative, didactic or research-oriented, these aspects are to be examined separately and in its totality. This method of criticism is relevant in all times. In that respect Navalram was a pioneer.

The terminology he used or coined, where no proper word was handy, is still current. When he could not find a suitable synonym, he unhesitatingly used the original English term. That way, he has contributed to the infrastructure of the communicability of Gujarati for scientific and technical subjects.

Navalram was the first humourist and satirist of modern Gujarati, one of the first historical dramatist, the first book-reviewer, last scholar of his age but the first to herald the new generation of scholars like Manilal, Govardhanram and Narsimhrao. His contribution to Gujarati prose is not inferior to that of Narmadashanker, a pioneer of modern Gujarati prose. He is equal an associate of poet Narmadashanker in nursing the fine aesthetic taste in Gujarat.

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APPENDIX

NAVALRAM'S WORKS

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| 1. | Bhatnun Bhopalun (Drama) | 1867 |
| 2. | Vecrmati (Drama) | 1869 |
| 3. | Meghadoota (Translation) | 1870 |
| 4. | Premanand-rachit Kunvarbainun—
Mamerun (Ed.) | 1871 |
| 5. | Vyutpatti-Path | 1873 |
| 6. | Bal-lagna-Batrishi | 1876 |
| 7. | Bal-garbavali | 1877 |
| 8. | Akbar-Birbal Nimittec Hindi Kavya-tarang
(Pub. : <i>Guj. Shala Patra</i>) | 1879-80 |
| 9. | Nibandhariti | 1880 |
| 10. | Ingrej Lokono Sanksipta Itihas
(Pub. : <i>Guj. Shala Patra</i>) | 1880-87 |
| 11. | Kavi-jeevan | 1887 |
| 12. | Navalgranthavali, | |
| | (i) Parts 1 to 4 edited by Govardhanram
Tripathi | 1891 |
| | (ii) School edition in two parts, edited by
Hiralal Shroff | 1911 |
| | (iii) Selected essays, edited by Narhari Parikh | 1937 |

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