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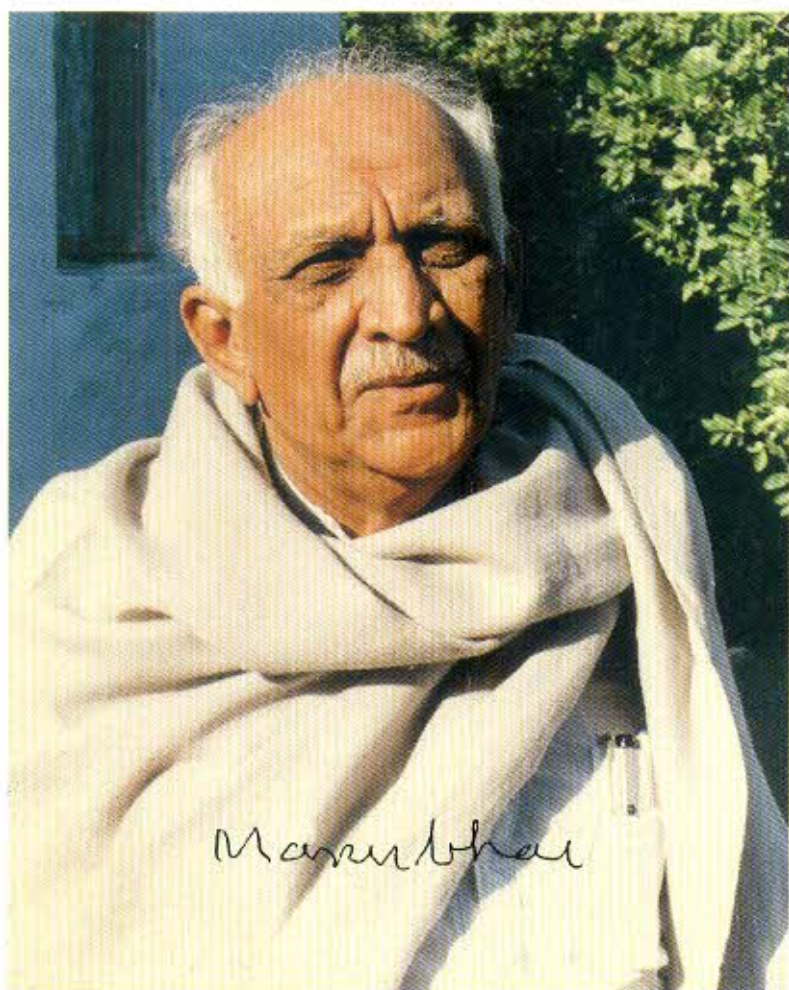


Gujarati Sahitya Parishad

invite you to

# meet the author

Manubhai Pancholi 'Darshak'





with his wife vijayaben

**Manubhai Pancholi 'Darshak'** was born on 15-10-1914 at Panchashia in the state of Vankaner. His father, Rajaram Pancholi was a village teacher. Manubhai was a student in the 9th Std, in 1930 when Gandhiji started the Salt Satyagrah and Manubhai could not resist joining the movement. He was sent to prison at that early age. He married Vijayaben Patel of Bardoli in 1939. It was Gandhiji who performed the ritual of 'Kanyadan' in this intercaste marriage. Manubhai has a son, Ramchandra (M.A.) and a daughter Sumedha (Ph.D.).

Manubhai is a social worker with a constructive programme, an educationist and a man of letters. Manubhai is loved by the people of Gujarat and is known to the people of West India, especially as a man of letters. He has chosen the pseudonym 'Darshak', because he does not consider himself a 'creator' but only a 'seer', since God alone is the 'Creator' for him.

His literary career started with the plays *1857* and *Jalianwalla*, both proscribed by the British Government. It was *Bandhan Ane Mukti* that brought him to the forefront. It has for its slogan Hugo's statement 'Amnesty is the most beautiful word in human language'. It is a tender love-story woven around the 1857 Revolution. He came to greater prominence with the publication of his novel *DeepNirvan*. Ganarajyas - old Indian Republics like Malav, Kath and Brahmanak were sandwiched between Greek tyrant

Mainendra on the one hand and the imperialist Magadh on the other before the beginning of the Christian Era. This novel depicting their fight for freedom is an important landmark in Gujarati historical novel. *Zer To Pidhan Chhe Jani Jani* brought him immense fame. It is set against and played on the stage of the world between the two great wars. Rohini and Satyakam enchanted the lovers of Gujarati Literature for about one and a half decades.

While shouldering the responsibility of LokBharti and some other public endeavours, 'Darshak' also continued to write essays, plays, novels, biographies etc. *TriveniTirth* presents such biographies, in which Manubhai explains clearly the historical contribution and importance of Socrates, Ramkrishna Paramhansa and Gandhiji. From his vast reading, he has chosen a few touching novels and having given their appreciative evaluation, beaten a new track in the field of criticism. Among these critical studies are included the interesting analyses of *War and Peace*, *Sybil*, *Crime and Punishment*, *Gora*, *Ghare-Bahire* and *Aranyak*. Two series of lectures *Mahabharatno Marm* and *Ramayanano Marm* delivered by him, reveal his profound grasp of these two epics. In connection with this, one is reminded also of the play *Paritran*. Shri Krishna in the centre, the pivot, round which the whole drama revolves. Shri Krishna, the representative of the good and the true, confronts Shakuni, the representative of deceit and force.

Very recently 'Darshak' has published three more plays *Sodo*, *Antim Adhyaya* and *Helen*. These plays have brought a new dimension to Gujarati Theatre, as all of them deal with the dark atmosphere of the Second World War (especially its final years), the growth of Nazism and the Jewish problems. *Antim Adhyaya* depicts the inner conflict going on in the mind of Albert Spear, Hitler's close companion : whether to remain

loyal to Hitler or to think of Germany's welfare. The vastness and power of 'Darshak's intellectual activities are evident in these two plays. *Paritran* and *Antim Adhyaya*, present themes totally distinct from each other, one being from the *Mahabharat* and the other from *In the Third Reich*.

'Darshak' is one of the chief protagonists of Gandhian thinking and ideology. Moreover he is a thorough student of Socialism, hence his insightful essays *Shantina Paya*, *Sarvodaya Ane Shikshan*, and *Lokshahi*. But the pinnacle of all his creative writing is his novel *Socrates*. It was honoured by the Sahitya Akademi Award. This novel, depicting the bygone ages of some distant alien land, is a jewel of Gujarati Literature. Speaking about *Socrates*, Umashankar Joshi says, 'Only a person like Darshak, who has claimed the domicile of Old Greece can create such a work.'

'Darshak' believes that only thirty percent of his life is related to literature. He is a social worker for the remaining seventy percent. It is impossible to imagine 'Darshak' as an author without considering his contribution as a social worker.

He considers creative writing as a manifestation of fulfillment. Of course, he can do without this manifestation also. The literary part of his life is based on the time spent on social service.

One can talk to 'Darshak' about weather and villages, Delhi and the whole country. He says: "I believe that education would never improve as long as politics is

corrupt." Manubhai believes that the study of history should give you the strength to create a new history. He dares to tell his friends in the government that they have no hold over administration. Administration is under the control of corruption. Immediately after the imposition of emergency in the country, he expressed his strong protest by writing a letter to the governor of Gujarat, on July 24. He returned the copper-plate earlier presented to him as a symbol of honour to the freedom fighters.

He never accepted the pension given to the freedom fighters.

During the controversy between Maharashtra and Gujarat regarding Mumbai, he said that Mumbai belongs to Maharashtra. It is true that Gujarati businessmen invested their wisdom, skill and money to create assets, but the contribution made by the Ghatis and clerks from Konkan cannot be neglected. He asked Dhebarbhai: "And who are closer to us? These rich businessmen or the ordinary people of Maharashtra?" Throughout his life 'Darshak' has worked for rural development through education. He has spent many years to reduce autocracy and the tyranny of zamindars in the villages of Saurashtra. Sharatchandra is Manubhai's favourite author. But Ravindranath, who tasted freedom in spite of many bonds, is his Gurudev.

Manubhai's experience of love is strong, but his conduct towards his



with Dr. Umashankar Joshi



*with Chandu Matani and Raghuvver Chaudhari*

beloved is that of a 'sannyasi'. The question whether this feeling called love is controlled by some higher value or not, is of great importance to him. Intense and profound love can be pure. It does not end in the relationship between husband and wife. The love which leads to affection and compassion alone is comprehensive according to him.

Manubhai possesses the power to endure man's inevitable loneliness. Abraham Lincoln once wrote to Drinkwater: "Lonely is the man who understands!" In this context one may remember an incident related to the village Manar. At that time Manar was caught in a dangerous whirlwind. As soon as Manubhai got this news, he started in a motor-car to reach Manar. But he had to abandon the car at the distance of two miles from Manar. Barefooted, walking in mud and rain, he reached Manar. The workers residing there asked him: "Why did you take this trouble?"

Manubhai replied: "How can I rest there when you all are in danger here?"

Though not a poet, Manubhai is a

great fan of poetry. He loves Umashankar's poetry and taught it with great enthusiasm.

The greenness which we find in Manubhai's writing has also been created by him in his life. He chose to get work experience alongwith education. Nanabhai chose the occupation of agriculture to make Manubhai self-reliant. Manubhai became an expert farmer after his training. The land which he selected for his institutes was uneven and infertile. He developed it and made it fertile. Remembering things past, Manubhai says: 'We had never done farming before. Our hands were useless when it came to this work. But to some extent we were impressed by Gandhiji's ideas of nation-wide creative training and basic education. Besides, active and aware Nanabhai was our guide.' 'Darshak' always prepares himself thoroughly before writing or giving a lecture. He likes to read for pleasure during travel. He always maintains a balance between action and contemplation. As a writer he belongs to the specifically Indian tradition of faith and high morals.

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## A Chronology

1914 October 15, Born at Panchashia  
in the State of Vankaner

1930 Got involved into Satyagrah  
and served sentence period in  
Sabarmati, Nasik, Visapur  
Jails.

1938 Joined Nanabhai to start a vil-  
lage school at Ambala

1939 Married to Vijyaben Patel, Bar-  
doli.

1942 In Quit India movement, im-  
prisoned for eleven months.

1948 Became Minister of Education  
in ministry of Bhavnagar State.

1953 Visited Denmark as a member  
of delegation of Govt. of India.

1961 Became Director of Lokbharati  
and Editor of 'Kodiyun'.

1964 Received 'Ranjitram  
Suvarnachandraka'.

1967 Became MLA of Gujarat State  
-71 Assembly.

1970 Became Minister of Education  
in the Govt. of Gujarat. Visited  
Israel.

1975 Received Sahitya Akademi  
award for his Novel 'Socrates'.  
Returned the Copper-plate to  
State Government protesting  
imposition of emergency.

1976 Visited Europe.

1978 Established Lokvidyalaya at  
Matrudhara (Palitana).

1979 Awarded G.D. Parikh  
Memorial Puraskar.

1981- Became President of Gujarat  
83 Sahitya Parishad. Visited  
England and U.S.A.

1983 Became President of  
'Saurashtra Rachanatmak  
Samiti'.

1987 Received Moortidevi Puraskar

1988 Visited U.S.A. to deliver lec-  
tures under Sardar Val-  
labhbhai and K.M. Munshi  
Lecture Series.

1992 Became President of Gujarati  
Sahitya Academy.

