Durga Bhabhi

Celebrating a Revolutionary Woman: The Legend of Smt. Durgavati Devi



everything for the nation's remember a woman courage rivaled that of the greatest

gotten in history books. Her name was Smt Durgavati Devi, affectionately known as Durga Bhabhi, a freedom fighter, sharpshooter and fearless conspirator who stood shoulder to shoulder with Bhagat Singh and his

revolutionaries, yet whose

name remains too often for

A Revolutionary Spirit

Durgavati Devi's early life gave little hint of the fierce revolutionary she would become. She was married young to Bhagwati Charan Vohra, himself a member of the Hindustan Socialist Association (HSRA), an underground organization that sought to end British rule through armed resistance.

It was through this association that Durgavati Devi came into contact with the leading revolutionaries of her time - Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Rajguru, Chandrashekhar Azad, and others. But unlike most women of her era, she did not remain a passive observer; she took up arms and became an active participant in their struggle.

The Woman Who Defied an Empire

Durgavati Devi's most daring act came in 1928, following the assassination of British officer J.P. Saunders, a retaliation for the killing of Indian nationalist Lala Lajpat Rai. With the British police on a massive manhunt for Bhagat Singh and Rajguru, it was Durga Bhabhi who helped them escape Lahore.

Disguised as a respectable married couple with a child, Durgavati posed as Bhagat Singh's wife, carrying her own infant son in her arms to avoid suspicion. Together. they boarded a train to Howrah and evaded capture, a feat of extraordinary bravery



then Governor of Punjab, in protest of the hanging of revolutionaries, though the This act cemented her reputation as one of the very few women in India's freedom struggle who took direct part in armed rebellion.

Beyond the Battlefield

After India achieved inde pendence, Durgavati Devi led a quiet life, choosing not to seek fame or recognition for her revolutionary past. She worked as a teacher, dedicating herself to the education of voung minds, the same ideals of enlightenment and empowerment that had driven her to fight for freedom

Despite her immense contributions. Durga Bhabhi lived much of her later life in anonymity, passing away in 1999. Yet, her legacy endures among those who remember that India's freedom was won not only by men on the front lines, but by fearless women who defied convention and

Remembering Durga Bhabhi Today

As we celebrate India's birthday month, we celebrate more than a date on a calendar, we celebrate the spirit of resistance, sacrifice, and unvielding hope that built a free

And in that spirit, we honour Smt. Durgavati Devi, the path for generations o Indian women and whose life reminds us that freedom was, and is, everyone's fight. Her story is not just histo

ry: it's a living legend that continues to inspire every Indian who dares to believe in the power of conviction.



A mandrake root from the Tractatus de Herbis (circa1440)

he potion was of such a nature that any man and woman who drank it together could by no means leave each other for four years. However much they might want to refrain, they had to love each other with their whole being as

long as they lived. - 'Tristrant' by Eilhart von Oberge, 12th century. In the strictly gendered world of Medieval Europe, love magic, real or imagined, was an obsession. When sorcerous scandals erupted at the highest levels of society, love magic was often involved and it was women who bore the brunt of the blame for calling on charms or potions to win the heart of a disin-

lore, herbals and legal records. Rather than being the exclusive domain of crones in lonely shepterested beau, inflame or diminish herding huts, these folk rituals and



Duke of True Love and his companions entertaining ladies, from the Book of the Queen, c. 1410-1414.

the libido, or ease along the politi-

Part of this is undeniably rooted

misogyny or envy, flashing its

daggers at women who were seen as

having unnatural influence over

their husband (see the frustrating

fates of Isabella of Angouleme or

Elizabeth Woodville, the White

Queen), or left a powerful man

humiliated and looking for someone

to blame (such as Blanche II of

Navarre, who was held responsible

moral panic and threatened mas

culinity, love potions were a fact of

life and their use, or perceived use,

is reflected in romantic epics, folk-

But while a source of imagined

for her husband's impotence).

Mandrake & **Menstrual Blood And 10 Medieval Love Potions**

Rather than being the exclusive domain of crones in lonely shepherding huts, these folk rituals and folk remedies were more likely passed along by mothers to their children to cure broken hearts or revive floundering marriages. As likely to be rooted in the trial and error of early medicine as they were rural superstition, many of the herbal ingredients could also be found lacing the aphrodisiacs discreetly prescribed by court physicians to their listless masters, not that a learned interest in the healing power of herbs was a surefire defence against accusations of witchcraft.

#CHARMED

her to cast evil spells,' linen soaked

with the first menstrual blood of

her daughter, to be drunk by the

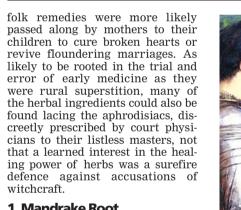
cause delirium and death.

highly prized in the medieval world,

making it a much sought after

4. Consecrated Host

daughter's husband to seal his affec-



aphrodisiac as far back as Biblical times, mandrake (or mandragora) remained a popular ingredient in love magic throughout the middle ages and is still used for that purpose in some areas of the world today. Said to resemble the human form, with both male and female plants, there was one drawback, the plant was said to shriek when pulled up, causing madness or death to the seeker unless proper precautions were taken and the rituals for safe handling varied from place to place. As well as ingested in accordance with myriad recipes, it could also be worn as a fertility amulet.

2. Human Remains

Powdered bone, pubic hair and menstrual blood were just some of the gruesome ingredients a love-seeker could be required to provide in order to ensure their spell was a success, and it was especially potent if something from both the seeker and the object of desire was included. One known spell required rather specifically both the bone marrow and spleen of a murdered boy! Menstrual blood, of course, reflects the gendered nature of love magic, and in 1320, the Cathar noblewoman Béatrice de Planisoles was hauled before a bishop to face charges of witchcraft. In her possession were, amongst other 'objects, strongly suggestive of having been used by Difficult to procure, many inventive ways were devised to source a piece, with some resorting to keeping i under their tongue after it had been administered in church. Relevant vords and incantations could then be written upon it, depending on

One of the sweeter and more palat able ingredients, honey or mead were often included in love spells, the sweetness, it was expected, to nfluence the object of the seekers desire favourably towards them and also to sweeten the relationship to follow. It had the added benefit of making the concoction easier to swallow

6. Worms

Another gruesome ingredient when mixed with powdered periwinkle and certain herbs, worms were believed to ensure love between a couple. The suggestion that it be taken with their meat may well have been due to the less than encouraging taste! Seemingly a strange choice, worms, due to their obvious link with the earth, were also a potent sign of fertility; a much desired outcome in many love

With a sinister reputation, both for 7. Animal Remains use by witches and also to deprive

Much like human remains, one of her powers, this herb was also thought to attract love when demands for the bits and byproducts worn and had narcotic properties of animals proved seemingly arbiwhen ingested, making it a fixture trary, with potions, powders and in various Medieval medicines. It charms from Spain to the Balkans could be used to bind a couple calling for the likes of sparrow together in love, and to ensure that heads, deer heart (hopefully a gruethe love would last. This ingredient some pun), the droppings of a stork. should be used with great caution. fat of a snake, brain of a sparrow however, as it was also known to testicles of an ass, bones from a left side of a toad, which has been devoured by ants, blood and heart of a pigeon, and in Bavaria, the rela-The power of this vital element of tively appetizing tipple of bat's the Holy Communion service was

A perennial in folk magic and reguingredient for a variety of magical purposes including love spells. lar feature in sleeping draughts

was slipped into love potions and powders. Interestingly, it could also used for opposite ends and slipped into a man's drink was said to render him impotent for six days. A remedy rumoured to have circulated the court of the Roman

Emperor Augustus and described by Latin chroniclers, the wings of the Blister Beetle, or Spanish Fly, long held potency as an aphrodisiac potions. As side-effects go, it was a killer. A powerful irritant, a potion laced with mashed Spanish Fly may well have caused the codpiece to bulge through swelling, but as little as 32 milligrams could force the kidney to shut down, and legend has it that this gruesome tinc-

from antiquity, verbena (or ver-

vian), the Herb of Enchantment,



A witch casting spells over a steaming cauldron. Engraving by H.S. Thomassir

ture caused the death of Ferdinan

Its connotations are obvious, be

they pure and romantic, or seduc-

tive and dangerous, and the rose had little use in Medieval magic out-

side of the love potion. From the

symbolic to the pragmatic, rose

water was often used to flavour per

fume less palatable medicines

Arguably, as a perfume, it could be

of a series of remarkable early texts

on female hygiene, a powder of rose

petals is recommended for freshen-

ing up the lady garden while rose

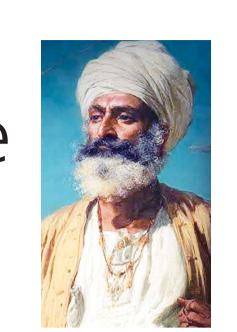
raieshsharma 1049@amail.com

water sweetens the hands and face.

Courtiers in a Rose Garden from the mid-15th century, Rogers Fund, 1909.

#INFLUENCE

He Rose To Prominence And Influence



Jairam Shivji: The Indian Merchant who influenced Cow Slaughter Practices in Zanzibar



Zanzibar was a thriving hub of trade, culture, and politics. Among the influential figures of this era was Jairam Shivji, a merchant from

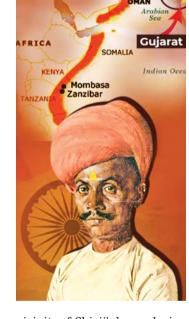
Mundra in Kutch, India. His rise to prominence in Zanzibar's economic and political spheres is a testament to the significant role played by Indian traders in East Africa during this period.

Early Life and Ascendancy in Zanzibar

Born around 1792, Jairam Shivji hailed from a Bhatia family in Mundra, a coastal town in Kutch known for its maritime activities. He was part of a broader network of Gujarati traders who established themselves along the East African coast, particularly in Zanzibar, Mombasa, and Lindi. Shivji's family was involved in trade and customs contracting in the Persian Gulf and East Africa, notably under the Sultanate of Oman. Building upon this legacy, Shivji became a leading customs contractor in Zanzibai overseeing significant trade and financial operations.

The Cow Slaughter Restriction

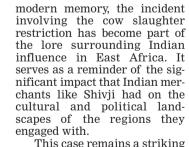
One of the most notable aspects of Shivji's legacy is the restriction on cow slaughter near his residence during the Islamic festival of Eid al-Fitr. According to historical accounts, Sultan Savvid Said of Oman, who ruled over Zanzibar at the time, forbade the killing of cows in the



vicinity of Shivii's house during Eid to respect his Hindu religious beliefs. This act was a reflection of Shivji's significant status and the respect he commanded from the ruling Sultan. **Legacy and Influence**

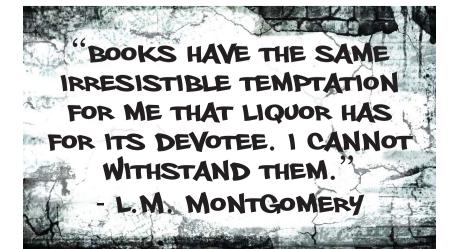
Jairam Shivji passed away on

August 25, 1866. His legacy endures in the history of the Indian diaspora in East Africa. oarticularly in Zanzibar, where his contributions to trade, finance, and cultural integration are still remembered. His story highlights the intersections of commerce, religion and governance in a colonial context, illustrating how individual influence can shape societal practices and policies. In



example of how individual stature could shape even the customs and practices of a society governed under foreign or semi-autonomous rule. Shivji's story continues to be a testament to the enduring legacy of Indian traders in East Africa and their role in bridging cul-

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



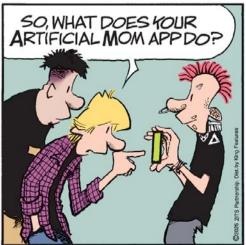
I was deleting nostril photos 3 FROM MY PHONE, WHEN I SAW A BIG JELLY SMEAR ON MY SLEEVE, \$ AND HAD TO WAIT FOR A TURN IN



SOMETIMES I Y WAIT-WHY AM FORGET JUST WHAT A MOM YOU ARE.



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott







By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman