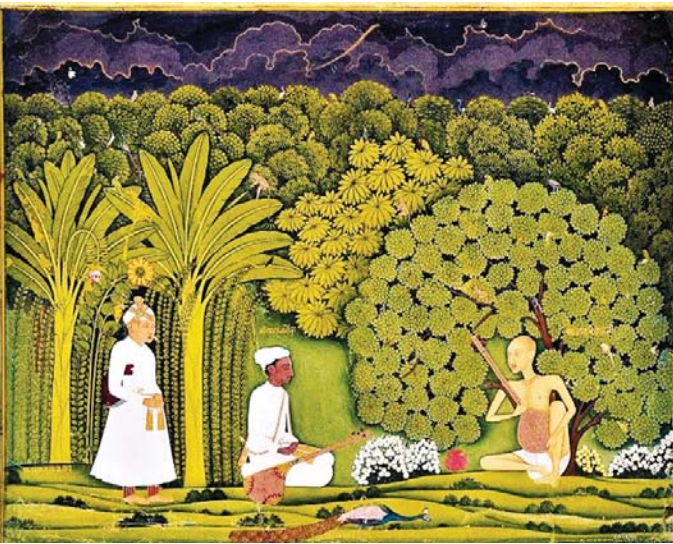


#ART

A Raga Born of Grief,
Forged in Legend

“Jhootho Naina Bole” sung by
Asha Bhosle in *Bilaskhani Todi*



In the rich, melodic world of Indian classical music, some ragas are composed with mathematical precision, and some are born

The Passing of a Master

The legend begins with the death of Tansen, one of the greatest musicians India has ever known, and a revered figure in Emperor Akbar's court. Tansen was not just a court musician, he was a spiritual and artistic force, credited with shaping the very fabric of Hindustani classical music. His passing marked the end of an era. As his family and disciples gathered to mourn, Bilas Khan, Tansen's

son, found himself in the grip of overwhelming grief. In the hours following his father's death, Bilas Khan sat beside the lifeless body, desperate to offer a final tribute. But in his shaken emotional state, the raga he intended to sing, Todi, came out fragmented, altered, infused with unfamiliar phrases. His sorrow blurred the lines of classical structure, giving birth to something entirely new.

The Sound of Sorrow

What emerged that day was a raga now known as Bilaskhani Todi, a fusion of the grave dignity of Raga Todi and the emotional warmth of Raga Bhairavi. The raga retains the scale of Todi but weaves in Bhairavi-like movements, creating a space where anguish and reverence coexist. It is often

performed in the late morning hours, when the light is bright but not yet harsh, a fitting metaphor for grief itself: fully present, yet not overwhelming. The raga's signature phrases descend and dip, often lingering painfully on certain notes, giving it a meditative, mournful quality.

From Dhrupad to the Silver Screen

Centuries after its legendary origin, Bilaskhani Todi found its way into Hindi cinema through the delicate hands of Pandit Hridaynath Mangeshkar, who composed the ethereal song 'Jhootho Naina Bole' for the 1990 film

Lekin.... Sung with haunting beauty by Asha Bhosle, the composition preserves the raga's emotional core while introducing it to a new generation of listeners. The song, much like the raga itself, feels like a prayer, a whisper from another world.

To Listen Is to Remember

Like many tales in Indian classical music, the story of Bilaskhani Todi's origin straddles the line between history and legend. There is no definitive written account of its creation, and scholars differ on the details. Some even question whether the raga was composed by Bilas Khan at all. But that ambiguity is part of

what makes this tradition so deeply resonant: truth is often felt more than proven. These oral traditions, passed down through gharanas, classrooms, and concert green rooms, are not just about accuracy; they're about meaning. They help us connect the technical brilliance of a raga to the human emotions that inspired it.

A Story Between Truth and Myth

Whether the legend is fact or fable, Bilaskhani Todi continues to echo through time as a raga that speaks to the soul's quiet ache. It reminds us that sometimes, music is not created in joy or precision, but in the tremble of a voice, the cracking of a heart, the silent

space where grief becomes sound. Next time you hear it, in a concert, a classroom, or the soft strains of Lekin.... pause. You're listening to a son mourning a father, a melody shaped by memory, and the immortal legacy of a raga born from loss.



Persakhe, a fried bread that Sanandaj Jews make for Shavuot. It is distinctive to Kurdish region of Iran.



Zoroastrian Customs.



Cropped Bhonu.

●Touraj Daryae

Bees are a noxious creature in the Zoroastrian animal classification system and the problem of honey for consumption in the Iranian world. The mention of honey as the production of evil being not only appears in Zoroastrian literature, but also in early Persian histories where primordial king Tahmuras is handed this beneficial product for use. The name of the demons in this Persian text associated with honey suggests a long tradition of association of honey with the daivas or fallen gods of the ancient Iranian world. Eventually, in the early Islamic period, honey was allowed for use, but with certain restrictions.

It is fascinating that throughout Zoroastrian writings and the ancient Iranian mythological tradition, the bee and honey are seen to belong to the realm of the demonic. The use of honey was prohibited in the Zoroastrian tradition. This demonic nature of the animal and its byproduct can be recognized from the medieval Persian text, Zain-ul-Akbar of Gardizi. The first part of the book deals with the Persians and the arts, skills and actions of the primordial kings are listed. For Tahmuras, we come across a very interesting tradition which is not found in most other sources. The king is said to have fought demons (dewan) and kept them from harming people and caught them and killed many. The demons came before him and asked till when they will have such misfortune at the king's hands. Tahmuras provides a very interesting response. He states that till that time when the dry wood and dry string come to speak and till the tree brings forth kingly dress and till he holds the

wind in my fists and when he eats food well, which has not been made from harming the cow and not cooked with fire. Then, the demons bring forth the tanbur, the silk-worm. The bees made honey and they said: "Now, there will be good food which is made without harming the cow and not cooked with fire." The demons are also named in the text: Haštom, Adadra and Vantu. I would hazard a guess that the second demon may be Indra, whose Middle Persian for Andar ('ndr), may have been miswritten due to orthographical mistakes between the Aramaic and the Perso-Arabic script. It is still difficult to match these three names with the fallen gods (Daivas), from the time of the Indo-Iranian tradition, namely Saurva, Indra and Nānhaioya, but there seems to be some connections here, which may be a residual of a long tradition.

In the Zoroastrian animal classification, there is a clear quality which matches the world-view of this religious tradition, where they either belong to the realm of Ohrmazd or Ahriman. In the classification of xrafstars or noxious creatures, the Bundahishn divides them into three categories: hanag xrafstaran se ewenag hend abig ud zamigud ud parragid. All the noxious creatures are of three sorts: aquatic, earthly and winged. The honey bee magas i anguben belongs to the category of winged xrafstars or noxious creatures, but there is a twist here where the commentators of the text state that Ohrmazd, through its infinite wisdom, turned some of the xrafstars to bring benefit, including magas ke anguben kunud ud kirm ke abresom. (The fly which makes honey and the worm which makes silk.) This passage is most curious and suggests the uneasiness with which the Zoroastrians saw the benefits of bees and honey. This

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#HONEY



At the family dinner in the 80's at the author's grandfather's home.

Zoroastrian world-view in late antiquity becomes more manifest when looking at cooking and food preparation. In the only surviving Middle Persian text, Xusro ud Redag (Khusrō and the Page), which can be dated to the 6th century CE, we have a wonderful list of the meats, deserts and wines and their method of preparations. The king's table in this text exhibits the power and economic reach of the Sasanian world in late antiquity. Chinese and Indian fruits and goods to Roman and Near Eastern wines and delicacies are all mentioned. What is striking in this text is the absence of the use of honey for any purpose, as if the Iranians were unfamiliar with it. If we take into consideration the demonic nature of the producer of this food, however, much the Bundahishn emphasizes Ohrmazd's work in turning its nature, we can understand the absence of honey in the Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts. There is only one other Middle Persian text where there is a men-



late Sasanian text and its association with the nobility in the Draxti i Asurig? The reason for the inclusion of honey here may exhibit the ancient Mesopotamian tradition of this text. Furthermore, the Draxti i Asurig was composed in the Parthian period which predates the codification of animal classification in the Sasanian period and in its nature is a secular text devoid of late antique religiosity. Hence, its inclusion is possible because it predates the Zoroastrian didactics in late antiquity. It is curious that from the Parthian period, Strabo makes an observation where honey is again used, this time by the Magi in making sacrifice to the waters. Strabo states (XVIII.14): They sacrifice to water by going to a lake, river, or fountains; having dug a pit, / they slaughter the victim over it, taking care that none of the pure water near be / sprinkled with blood, and thus be polluted. They then lay the flesh in order upon / myrtle or laurel branches; the Magi touch it with slender twigs and make incan-

tations, pouring oil mixed with milk and honey, not into the fire, nor into the water, but / upon the earth. They continue their incantations for a long time, holding in the / hand a bundle of slender myrtle rods. I should finally touch upon another 'demonic' association between honey and Zoroastrianism. In the Zoroastrian tradition, the three important or arch-demons are mentioned: Indra (Ved. Indra / MP Andar), Sauruua (Ved. Sarva / MP Sawul), and Nānhaioia (Ved. Nasatya). Their survival appears to be significant and important and the reasoning for their appearance in the Widadwad is unclear. Herrenschildt & Kellens states that it is remarkable that the authors of the Widadwad have a memory of these Indo-Iranian gods and to have demonized them later. The Nasatya are identified with the Ašvins who in the Vedic tradition are benevolent and who are invoked in the Vedic tradition more than any other gods, with the exception of Indra, Agni and Soma. The Ašvins have one characteristic which concerns us here and that is their connection with honey (mādhū). They are filled with honey, but more importantly, are the ones who gave honey to the bees. One cannot state that the reason for which the Ašvins became the fallen gods in Zoroastrianism is due to their association with primarily honey, but as the Widadwad shows, there was still a memory of them. The honey association with Nānhaioia is yet another nail in the coffin of our Indo-Iranian fallen gods whose reasoning for demotion in the Zoroastrian world is unclear. In the Zoroastrian tradition, Nānhaioia stood in a symmetric opposition to Armatii and by the end of late antiquity was still remembered as an arch-daiva. It should be mentioned that with the coming of Islam and its positive view of honey, the Zoroastrians were

to have a rethinking of the use of honey. In the medieval theological discussions, honey became a subject of interest as Jews, Christians and Muslims all used it for food and medicinal purposes and Zoroastrians were exposed. The Zoroastrians in the medieval period had accepted the fact that honey could and should be consumed, but ruling was that it could not be gotten from a non-Zoroastrian, but rather should be purchased from the Wehden. The story of Zoroastrians landing in India in the 10th century and their meeting with the local king Jadhav Rana is interesting for many reasons. One note related to it is the question and answer session between Jadhav Rana and the four Zoroastrian priests. The Indian king asks what will the Zoroastrians do for his country in return to being allowed to stay? The Zoroastrian priests answered by taking the following action: The old priest asked for a brass bowl to be filled with milk and brought to / the assembly. He then stirred a spoonful of sugar in the bowl and holding it / up in his trembling hands asked: "Does any see the sugar in the bowl / of milk?" All shook their heads. "Sire, said the priest, we shall try to be like / this insignificant amount of sugar in the milk of your human kindness." The Zoroastrians had finally arrived at a safe land, a sort of promised land. However, this promised land was not the land of 'milk and honey' as honey was not a heavenly food, rather a demonic food from a demonic creature. So, while those following the Abrahamic tradition took to honey and specifically in Judaism, the land of 'milk and honey' Canaan became an important metaphor, in Zoroastrianism. It was 'milk and sugar' that had to give birth to the narrative of the Parsi migration to India. | | | | |

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#LIPID PROFILE

The Town and Its
Trouble Makers

Understanding
Your Lipid
Profile: A Simple
Story for Better
Heart Health



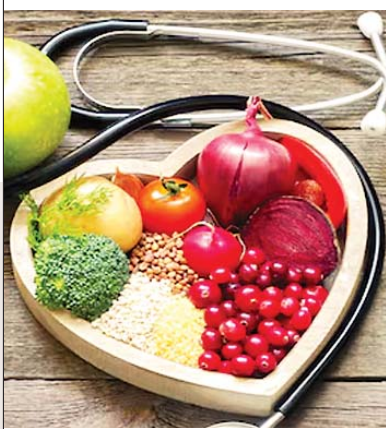
A well-known doctor once shared a memorable and easy-to-understand story to explain the lipid profile and why it matters for your heart health. Let's imagine your body as a small town, and discover who the key players are.

Trouble Makers

In this little town, the biggest troublemaker is Cholesterol. He doesn't act alone, his main partner in crime is Triglyceride. These two roam the streets, causing chaos and blocking the roads.

At the heart of the town is the city center, your heart. All roads lead here, and when these troublemakers multiply, they start blocking the city center's roads, threatening its smooth functioning.

Tips for a Heart-Healthy Lifestyle



Foods to Reduce:

1. Salt
2. Sugar
3. Bleached refined flour
4. Dairy products
5. Processed foods

Foods to Eat Daily:

1. Vegetables
2. Pulses
3. Beans
4. Nuts
5. Cold-pressed oils
6. Fruits

Three Things to Let Go Of

1. Your age
2. Your past
3. Your grievances

Four Things to Embrace

1. Your family
2. Your friends
3. Positive thinking
4. A clean and welcoming home

Three Simple Habits to Practice

1. Always smile
2. Do regular physical activity at your own pace
3. Monitor and maintain a healthy weight

Six Essential Lifestyle Habits

1. Don't wait till you're thirsty to drink water.
2. Don't wait till you're tired to rest.
3. Don't wait till you're sick for medical checkups.
4. Don't wait for miracles, trust in God.
5. Never lose faith in yourself.
6. Stay positive and hope for a better tomorrow.



The Police Force: Good Cops vs. Bad Cops

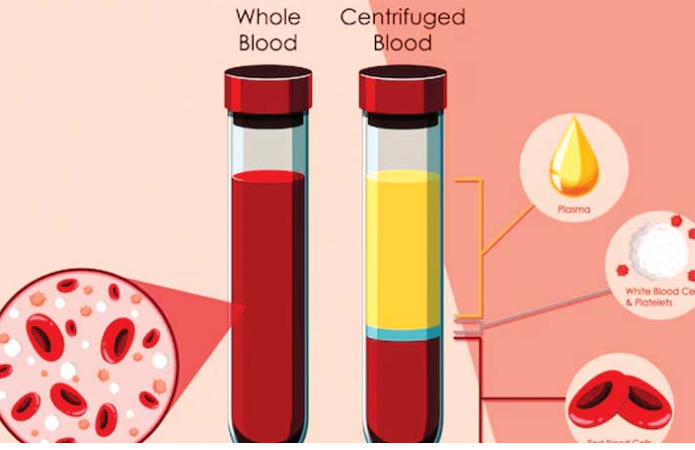
Fortunately, the town has a police force. The good policeman, HDL (High-Density Lipoprotein), captures these troublemakers and locks them up in jail, the liver, from where they are removed safely through the body's drainage system. But there's also a bad cop,

LDL (Low-Density Lipoprotein), hungry for power. LDL frees the troublemakers from jail and lets them back on the streets, worsening the chaos. When the good cop HDL is low, the town falls into disarray. Nobody would want to live in such a troubled place!

How to Protect Your Town (Your Body)

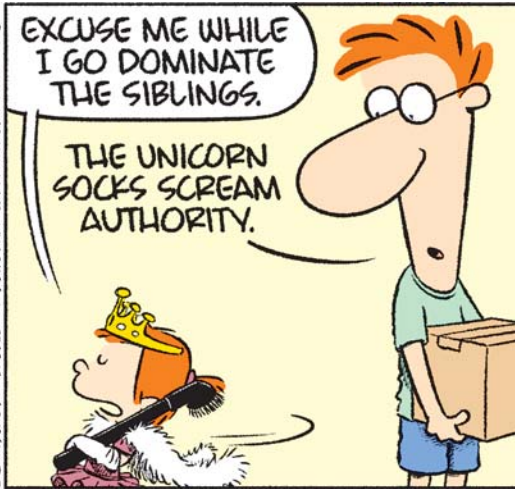
Want to reduce these miscreants and boost the good policemen? The answer is simple: Start walking! With every step you take, HDL (the good cop) increases, while Cholesterol,

Triglyceride, and LDL (the miscreants) decrease. Your body-town revives, your heart-city center remains safe from blockages, and you feel healthier. So, whenever you get a chance, keep moving!



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

BABY BLUES



ZITS

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

