

#MASHRU

The Fabric That United Silk and Cotton

One school of thought traces it to the Arabic word "Masmuh," meaning "permitted," another believes it may have evolved from the Sanskrit word "Mishran," meaning "mixed"



Few fabrics carry as much cultural significance as Mashru. It is a textile where faith, craftsmanship, and ingenious weaving come together to create a fabric that is as meaningful as it is beautiful.

Even the origin of the word *Mashru* reflects its unique identity. One school of thought traces it to the Arabic word "Masmuh" (or Mashru), meaning "permitted" or "allowed." Another group of scholars believes it may have evolved from the Sanskrit word "Mishran," meaning "mixed." Interestingly, both interpretations perfectly describe the fabric. Mashru was considered permitted for Muslim men to wear because of its unique construction, and it is also a mixed fabric, combining silk and cotton in a single weave.

To appreciate Mashru, one must first understand the fundamentals of weaving.

Every woven fabric is defined by two essential factors. The first is the base yarn, which may be cotton, silk, wool, polyester, or a blend of different fibres. The second is the weaving technique, which determines how the yarns interlace and ultimately decides the fabric's appearance, texture, lustre, and drape.

Most woven fabrics are created using one of three basic weave structures: plain weave, twill weave, and satin weave.

In a plain weave, every yarn alternately passes over one yarn and under one yarn. This is the simplest and most common weaving structure, producing fabrics that are balanced, durable, and matte in appearance.

A twill weave follows a different rhythm. Here, the yarn typically passes over two yarns and under two yarns, creating the characteristic diagonal lines seen in fabrics such as denim and gabardine.

Twill fabrics are generally stronger, softer, and more flexible than plain weaves.

Satin weave, however, is entirely different. Instead of frequent interlacements, the yarn floats over several threads before interlacing again. This creates long, uninterrupted floats that reflect light, giving satin its distinctive smoothness and luxurious sheen.

Mashru is woven using this satin weave, and this is what makes it extraordinary.

Mashru is a SICO fabric, a combination of silk and cotton. In its classic construction, the weave is arranged so that four silk yarns interlace with one cotton yarn on the face of the fabric. This 4:1 ratio allows the silk floats to dominate the surface, creating a rich, glossy finish that resembles pure silk.

On the reverse side, however, the relationship is effectively reversed. The cotton becomes more prominent, making the underside softer, cooler, and more comfortable against the skin.

This ingenious construction gives Mashru two completely different personalities within the same cloth. The upper surface gleams with the luxurious brilliance of silk, while the back remains predominantly cotton, matte, breathable, and comfortable.

It is precisely this dual nature that made Mashru so distinctive. It offered the visual elegance of silk while retaining the comfort and practicality of cotton.

Whether its name came from the Arabic word meaning "permitted" or the Sanskrit word meaning "mixed," the fabric lives up to both meanings.

Mashru is more than a textile. It is an elegant solution achieved through weaving rather than ornamentation, a reminder that the true beauty of a fabric often lies not in what is added to it, but in the intelligence of how its threads are brought together.

FLIGHT XXX TO VADODARA

Once the plane was steady in its flight, air breakfast was served. For me, 6.30 a.m. was not breakfast time. A cup of hot tea could have been better but the tray was having a bottle of coke and few biscuits with a packet of stale sandwich packed on the previous evening. My co-passenger was gobbling all laid before her, until the tray was cleaned.

● Dr. Lalit Mehta

On Tuesday afternoon, my younger sister from Vadodara informed me that she is going to be operated next day for some suspected Uterus tumor and wanted me to be present during her surgery. The surgeon was known to me and was my past student. I immediately booked flight for me for Vadodara.

It was 6 a.m. flight and reporting time was 3 hour earlier as usual. I reached airport around 3 a.m. At the entry to airport, I was asked to show my ticket and PAN card. The security man looked at me and then on the photo on PAN card which has no resemblance with my face as the PAN card was issued 7 years back. He allowed me to enter after reconstructing my 7 years back face in his mind. Inside airport, it was freezing cool. I was wearing only trouser and T-shirt and started shivering. The girl at the ticket counter asked me if I need a wheelchair which I said no. I was having cabin baggage only as it was only one day trip.

Boarding pass was issued and I

started looking for a cozy corner to sit and pass time till call for boarding is announced.

The mobile charging board with multiple points was little away. I used one of the points to charge my hearing aid using its adapter which I always carry with me. Frequent rumors were made from my seat to charging board to check its safety. I passed time roaming in shopping area also. By this time, it was around 5.15 a.m. and most of the passengers were looking at flight schedule board. In one corner, a newlywed couple was sleeping arms in arms and shoulder to shoulder supporting each other. After few minutes, airline staff took positions at gate number 3 and passengers immediately made Q with boarding pass in hand. Few minutes passed, but the Q was not moving. As the boarding gate was changed from gate 3 to gate 2, passengers rushed to make a new Q at gate 2. Entry into plane was through a mobile staircase. A passenger behind me took my cabin baggage in his hand. An air hostess at the entry to plane welcomed me with folded hands and a mechanical smile. I requested for a blanket as I was shivering, for

which she said blankets are not provided on this flight.

Another hostess standing by her side told me to go to my seat and she will try to do needful. After few minutes, she came with a glass of hot

water for me to give some relief. Many more hands were raised for hot water from her. I saw 8-9 young boys standing from their seats and talking loudly with each other. They were not having even cabin baggage, may be

returning by evening flight after attending a match or a marriage ceremony. Another man was talking loudly on his mobile so that everybody could listen to his business deals. I saw another passenger stand-

ing on his seat for few minutes and then sitting and again standing and sitting. May be, he was suffering from piles or fistula.

Many passengers were waving their hands in air itself above their seats, to get rid of mosquitoes which had entered the plane uninvited. My co-passenger was a middle-aged lady, appeared to be a frequent flier as she was wearing a long coat over her sari, a muffler around neck and looking out of window. I tried to pull out some magazine from the hanging pocket from the back of the seat in front of me. While doing so, the whole pocket came out from its attachment and fell on the floor. Another passenger was checking his hand baggage kept in overhead shelf every few minutes.

May be, some valuables were in it. Exactly at 6 a.m., plane started moving on the tarmac and soon became airborne.

Once the plane was steady in its flight, air breakfast was served. For me, 6.30 a.m. was not breakfast time. A cup of hot tea could have been better but the tray was having a bottle of coke and few biscuits with a packet of stale sandwich packed on the previous evening. My co-passenger



was gobbling all laid before her, until the tray was cleaned. She got up for wash room and returned after some time, apparently giving due time to makeup on a wrinkled face. After sometime, mosquitoes thankfully disappeared and went to their hiding place, wherever it was.

Flight landed at Vadodara airport on scheduled time. I came out of airport with my hand baggage. My nephew was waiting to receive me. We went to hospital directly. I could meet my sister in her room where she was getting ready for shifting to Operation Theater. I could talk to surgeon also. Surgery was completed successfully in 50 minutes and required specimen was collected for histopathology. I could meet her in recovery room. My return journey to Mumbai in evening was uneventful. I came out from airport immediately as I was having cabin baggage only. My driver was waiting at exit gate and could not connect with me. I kept on waiting at the passenger pick up point for taxi but most of the taxis were prebooked.

After waiting for more than 15 minutes, I saw one car driver looking for passenger. I jumped to enter in the car and asked the driver to take me to Andheri West. At the exit gate from the pick up point, driver asked me to pay 100 rupees to the security guard secretly. On way home, he informed me that this is the routine for un-booked taxi to enter in pick up bay. No complaints as passengers are tired and want to reach home without any fuss.

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#SYMBOL OF HOPE

The Song That Rose Above the Silence of Robben Island

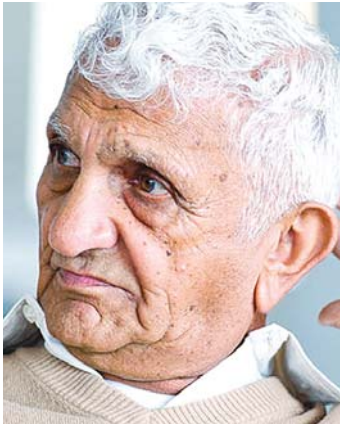
The song was "Pinjare Ke Panchhi Re, Tera Dard Na Jaane Koi," written and sung by the celebrated poet and lyricist Kavi Pradeep



Nelson Mandela.



Kavi Pradeep.



Laloo 'Isu' Chiba.

Inside one of the most notorious prisons of the twentieth century, while walls can restrict movement, they cannot completely control hope.

Isolation, hard labour and psychological pressure, a Hindi song carried something the prison authorities could never completely control: hope.

It was the 1960s. South Africa was under the apartheid regime, a system that enforced racial segregation and denied the country's Black majority and other non-white communities fundamental rights. On the isolated Robben Island, political prisoners were imprisoned for resisting this system. Among them was Nelson Mandela.

But this is not only a story about Mandela. It is also the story of Laloo Chiba, an Indian South African freedom fighter who was imprisoned on Robben Island and who would sing a Hindi song that became a source of emotional strength for prisoners. The song was "Pinjare Ke Panchhi Re, Tera Dard Na Jaane Koi," from the Hindi film *Naag Mani*, written and sung by the celebrated poet and lyricist Kavi Pradeep. Its central image was that of a bird trapped inside a cage. On Robben Island, that metaphor became painfully real.

There were prison walls. There were locked cells. There were men whose freedom had been taken away because they had challenged an unjust political system.

The song suddenly spoke directly to their reality.

When Music Crossed Language

The emotional power of the song did not depend entirely on understanding Hindi. Many prisoners who heard it may not have understood every word, but they could understand the emotion carried by the voice.

This is the extraordinary ability of music: it can communicate beyond language. For Indian South African activists, the song could evoke memories of their cultural roots, families and homeland. It became a small connection to a world outside the prison. For others, the image of the caged bird was universal. A person does not need to understand every lyric to understand what it means to

feel trapped. The song therefore crossed boundaries of language, culture and community.

Culture as a Form of Survival

Political resistance does not always look like a protest march. Sometimes, it is a poem remembered in a cell.

Sometimes, it is a language spoken far from home.

Sometimes, it is a story passed from one prisoner to another. And sometimes, it is a song. For people living under extreme repression, cultural memory can become a form of survival. Songs preserve identities. They remind people who they were before the state reduced them to prisoners and political numbers. On Robben Island, music helped create moments of humanity inside an environment designed to strip humanity away.

From Prison to Memory

Years later, Robben Island would become one of the most powerful symbols of the struggle against apartheid. The prison that had once been used to silence political opponents became a site where the history of that struggle could be remembered. But its history should not be told only through its most famous political figures. It should also be remembered through the small human acts that sustained prisoners through years of confinement.

A voice sung in a cell. A voice heard through prison walls. A memory of home. A few minutes in which a prisoner could forget the bars around him. These moments may appear insignificant when compared with major political events, but they are part of what allowed people to endure those events. Freedom does not always begin when the prison door opens. Sometimes, it begins when the human spirit refuses to accept that the cage is all there is.



National Wildlife Day - Celebrating Nature's Rich Heritage

Observed on September 4, National Wildlife Day is a reminder of the planet's incredible biodiversity and the urgent need to protect it. The day honours conservationists and organisations working to safeguard endangered species, preserve habitats, and restore ecological balance. It also encourages individuals to reconnect with nature, whether by visiting sanctuaries, supporting wildlife charities, or learning about species at risk. In a world facing deforestation, climate change, and habitat loss, National Wildlife Day is both a celebration and a call to action. By valuing and protecting wildlife, we ensure that future generations inherit a planet as rich, diverse, and alive as the one we enjoy today.



#AIR BORNE



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people to one another. She created connections between ambitious politicians and influential figures. She used friendships, invitations and social relationships to build networks that could influence political careers. Her influence sometimes reached further than that of people who held official political positions.

Among those who admired her social abilities was the future King Edward VII. Jennie moved comfortably among the most powerful people in Britain, and her connections would eventually become valuable to her son. Winston Churchill adored his mother. Yet, their relationship was complicated. Jennie

was not a conventional Victorian mother. She spent much of her time attending parties, dinners and social events. Winston often felt neglected during his childhood and longed for more of her attention.

But even from a distance, she remained a powerful presence in his imagination. And the world she created around herself would help shape his future. Through Jennie's connections, Winston was introduced to people and circles that might otherwise have been difficult for a young politician to enter. Her social network became an invisible asset in his rise. She was not the woman standing at a podium deliver-



ering speeches. She was the woman in the room where the introductions happened. When Lord Randolph Churchill died in 1895, Jennie refused to disappear into the quiet life expected of a respectable widow.

Instead, she continued living on her own terms. She married again, not once, but twice. Her second husband, George Cornwallis-West, was considerably younger than her, and the marriage itself attracted attention. Later, she married Montagu Phippen Porch, who was even younger. By then, Jennie's life had become almost a challenge to the conventions of her age. She had crossed the Atlantic, entered

Britain's aristocracy, survived scandal and gossip, built political connections and continued to reinvent herself long after society expected women to settle into conventional roles. In 1921, Jennie developed an infection following a minor accident involving a fall. The infection became serious, and she died at the age of 67. She left behind a remarkable legacy. History remembers Winston Churchill as one of Britain's greatest wartime leaders. But behind the statesman was a mother who, despite her shortcomings and the emotional distance between them, helped shape the world into which he entered.

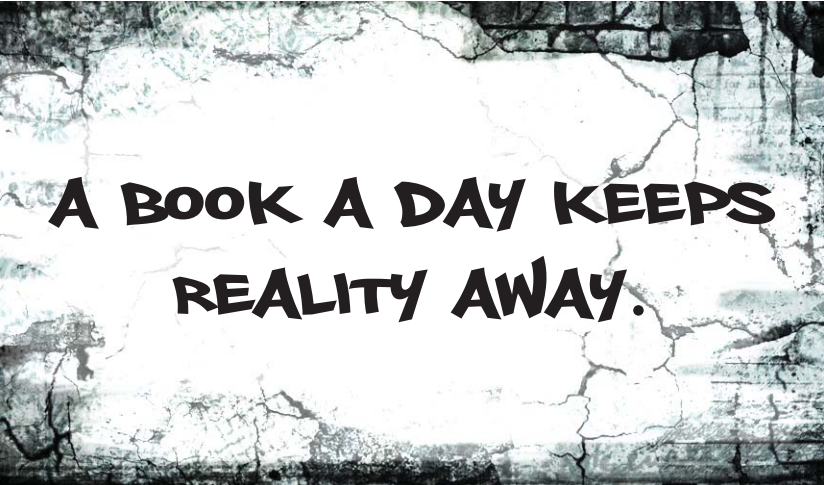
#JENNIE JEROME

The Woman Behind Winston Churchill

She was not the woman standing at a podium delivering speeches. She was the woman in the room where the introductions happened



THE WALL

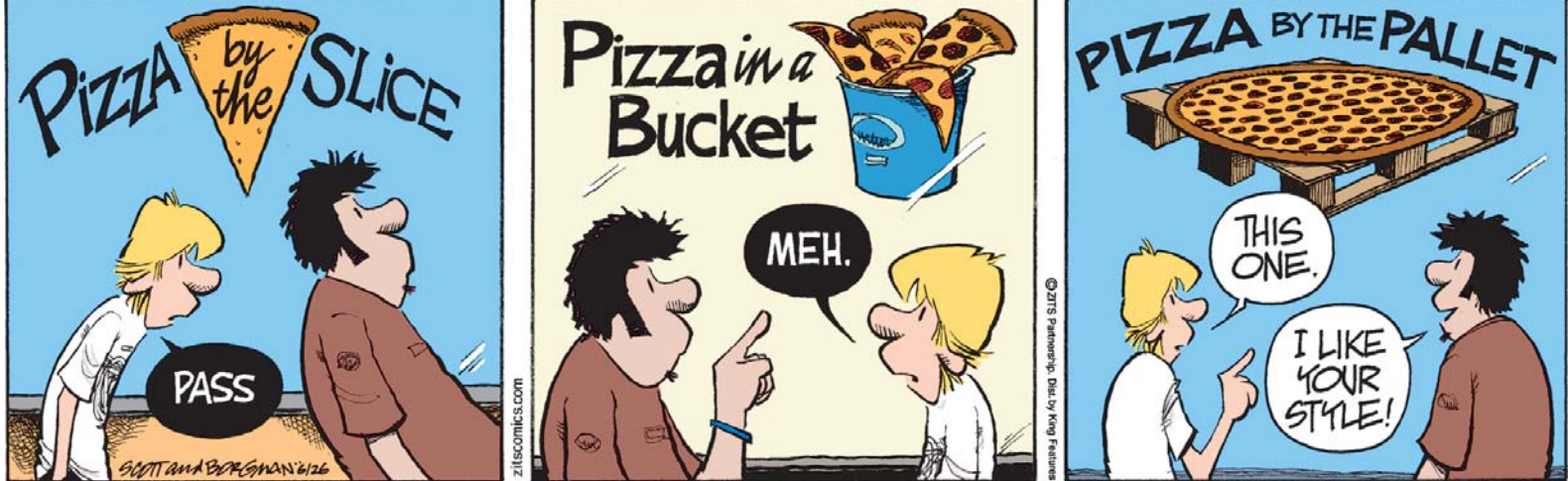


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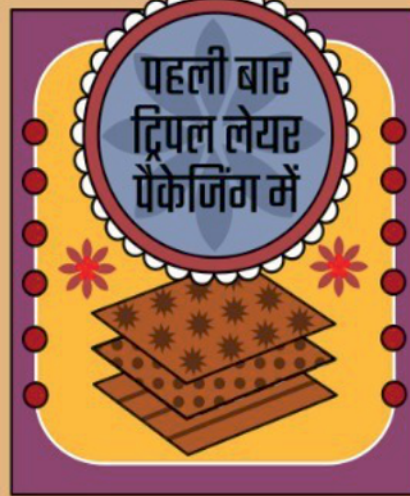


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