

RNI NO : 47090/88 Regd. No. MH / MR / South - 309 / 2010-12

Posted at Mumbai Patrika Channel Sorting Office
Mumbai 400001. Licensed to post on 1st or 2nd of
every month.



Connecting Amil Community Worldwide

Amil Samachar

(Bi-Lingual Monthly Paper)

VOL. 23

No. 08

2nd November 2011

Price : Re. 1

An organ of The Khudabadi Amil Panchayat of Bombay

1-A, Sindhu House, Nanabhai Lane, Hutatma Chowk, Mumbai - 400 001.

Ph. 22041655 Email : amilpanchayat@gmail.com

EDITOR : RAMESH T. MANSUKHANI

E-mail : amilsamachar@gmail.com

Website : www.amilsindhic.com

Dear Readers,

Khudabadi Amil Panchayat released a book – **Amazing Amils in the year 2009**. In our September issue we mentioned that every month we would carry some extracts from the book which we did in our september issue for the benefit of our readers. We continue here with the second part of this ongoing series. The book which is authored by Ms Shernaaz Engineer can also be collected at a special discount of Rs. 250 from the Panchayats' office.

Editor

AMAZING AMILS

Lessons from the lives of Sindhi Achievers

Khudabadi Amil Panchayat

The history of the Khudabadi Amil Panchayat is inextricably linked with the history of the Amils, as revealed by the writings of Doulat T. Punwaney, the last surviving member of the group that founded The Khudabadi Amil Panchayat of Bombay, in the aftermath of the Partition.

Amil Origins

It is more than half-a-century that the Hindus migrated on a large scale from Sind. Naturally, it would be of great interest to the new generation of Amils to be aware of the origin of the community's premier institution, The Khudabadi Amil Panchayat of Bombay (KAP), the main objective of which is to keep the community alive, vibrant and to work towards its progress for all time to come.

The origin of the Amil community, and therefore of its Panchayat, is not well established or authentic - and as such not clear, stresses Punwaney. It is generally believed that due to the hardships inflicted by Aurangzeb, many Hindus fled Punjab and came to Sind. Some Hindus came from Jaisalmer and Jodhpur in Rajputana, due to the unrest there. Others came to Sind from Kutch, due to the famine.

During Kalharo's rule, Hindus from many other places came and settled in Sind. Among these Hindus, many were followers of Sikh Gurus. Some others were Devi disciples, Day a pujaris and followers of other faiths. Thus, many different castes, cultures and faiths settled in Sind.

Capital Shift

Khudabad was the capital where several migrants settled and began to work as government servants and businessmen. It was Khudabad, ruled by Mian Yar Mohammed Kalharo, where

Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant. - Robert Louis Stevenson

migrant Hindus of all castes and faiths from different parts of the country came to and settled down and became one community of educated people.

They called themselves Amils. They were engaged in all types of government and other jobs.

It is believed that after the death of Mian Nur Mohammed some Khosla tribesmen plundered Khudabad and set it on fire in 1759 AD. The damage was so extensive that Khudabad could not be reconstructed as the capital city - and the capital was shifted to Hyderabad. There, Amils and Bhaibunds (the not very well educated but adept business class) lived in separate but adjacent areas.

Lanes in the Amil and Bhaibund areas, respectively, were named after the then prominent persons of the two sects. Thus, on the Amil side, there was an Advani Lane, Kripalani Lane, Mirchandani Lane, Shivdasani Lane etc. It was in the midst of this complex area inhabited by Amils that a Panchayat was established known as the Khudabadi Amil Panchayat.

It continued to function even at the time of the creation of Pakistan. This Panchayat had no written Constitution - but had its canons and customs meant for its members. Later on, when the community grew in numbers, a new colony was built beyond the old city boundary. Even with this wider physical area, the Panchayat's writ on members continued.

Karachi Calling

Hyderabad flourished while it remained the capital city of the Muslim rulers. Economic conditions, however, worsened after the Muslim rules were replaced by the British, who made the port town of Karachi the capital of Sind. Soon thereafter, several prominent, educated Amils, including professionals like advocates, doctors and engineers, shifted from Hyderabad to Karachi.

With Karachi getting more and more Amils from Hyderabad, a Panchayat - also without a written Constitution - was established there and named the Hyderabad Amil Panchayat.

This Panchayat had no formal link with the Khudabadi Amil Panchayat in Hyderabad. However, the rules were similar. Elections were held every year and a new President elected. It had its headquarters in Gaadi Khata in Karachi, where most of the Amils resided.

During World War II, the Panchayat in Karachi had a ration shop catering to its members. It also had arrangements with Brahmins for performing requisite ceremonies for members when needed, at prescribed rates.

Besides these services, it undertook normal social responsibilities like holding marka ceremonies in respect of all deaths, enforcing social customs, sanctions and penalties for wrong doings and so on.

Torn Asunder

Then came Partition in 1947. The mass migration of the type and scale witnessed in Sind immediately after the Partition was unexpected and unprecedented. Hindus just fled from their hearths and homes, not knowing where they were heading to in India.

The dispersal was so rapid, so widespread and so extensive that within families, even the nearest and dearest, between themselves, did not know whether they would meet or see each other again. The migrating community broke up such that there appeared little hope of its reunification.

Although Mumbai was the immediate destination of all those who left Pakistan via Karachi, it did not provide the hope that families would find accommodation easily. Even if accommodation was found, it did not mean that familiar faces would be seen nearby.

"A community like ours, already relatively dispersed in Karachi (as against its erstwhile compactness in Hyderabad), had broken up even further in Mumbai - so much so that it was considered well nigh impossible to bring even a few families within the fold of an organised unit, leave aside a Panchayat," notes Punwaney.

He continues, "With this backdrop, what happened in Mumbai in 1948 itself was a God sent gift for the future Panchayat. The late Pahlajsing B. Advani, the last President of the Karachi Panchayat, Wadhmal H. Alimchandani, the last Secretary of the Karachi Panchayat and at least two other

A man in debt is so far a slave - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Managing Committee members, namely Tarasing H. Advani and myself, came to be residing in Colaba, less than half a mile from each other.

"Pahlajsing was worried as to how a Panchayat as powerful and influential (as it was in Karachi) could be created (in Mumbai), which alone could keep the community intact and alive. As a first step in this direction, he convened a meeting of influential and prominent Amils, to discuss the problem. Among those who attended the meeting were Diwanimal H. Hiranandani, Ranjitsing Ramchandani and Jethi Sipahimalani."

Getting Started

After considerable discussions, extending over a few meetings, it was generally agreed that a Panchayat for all Amils, whether from Karachi or Hyderabad or elsewhere, be established as a registered body. The main objectives of the Panchayat were, as far as possible, to be the same as those of the Panchayats in Karachi and Hyderabad - viz. to have the mandate to preserve, advance, and ameliorate; frame rules of conduct and establish usages in keeping with changing times; and guard the cultural heritage of the community.

In the meantime, Punwaney personally launched a campaign to collect the addresses of as many Amils as possible who met him on the road and elsewhere. Requests were made to them to convey the addresses of other Amils known to them. That is how a couple of hundred addresses were collected in a short time, before a general meeting could be convened under the new Constitution. Hence, after Partition, both previous Amil Panchayats earlier established at Hyderabad and Karachi, had to be wound up and a new Panchayat named The Khudabadi Amil Panchayat of Bombay (KAP) was registered in Mumbai in 1952, with a provision to set up local branches or subsidiary Panchayats in different places.

The first Managing Committee of the KAP in 1952 comprised:

Fatechand Assudmal Jhangiani (President)

Jagatrai Issardas Shivdasani (Vice-President)

Wadhupal Hukumatrai Alimchandani (Honorary Secretary)

Tahilram Assudmal Gurbaxani (Joint Secretary)

Hassasingh H. Advani Gobindram B. Vaswani Jhamrai Gidupal Advani Naraindas N. Gidwani
Doulat T. Punwaney Tarasing H. Advani

Recalls Punwaney: "After the Panchayat was formed, but before it was registered under the Societies Registration Act, Pahlajsing Bijasing Advani and Wadhupal Hukumatrai Alimchandani were the President and Honorary Secretary respectively. Wadhupal was conducting the Panchayat work from his residence.

"When the first Annual General Body Meeting was held, we had very few fee-paying members on our rolls. It was decided to invite all Amils in Mumbai, irrespective of whether or not they were fee-paying members. For this purpose, an advertisement was inserted in the Times of India announcing the A.G.M. The meeting was held at Cama Hall near the Lion Gate Museum. Of course, the attendance was good.

"At the meeting, Wadhupal took out a handwritten sheet of paper and read out the report on the working of the Panchayat during the year. In the course of discussions, he was asked why the report could not be printed or cyclostyled and distributed to the members present. Wadhupal expressed want of funds for such a luxury!

"In the next A.G.M., however, it was found that a newspaper-sized sheet of paper was produced by Wadhupal on which the report had been printed, and the paper was folded book-size. A few available copies were distributed to members. At these early A.G.M.'s, I found a lot of enthusiasm among those who were present. Among them, most non-members, at our request, enrolled themselves as members."

Making Headway

The Panchayat, in its initial period of 30 years, constructed about 1000 houses for needy members

A man in debt is so far a slave - Ralph Waldo Emerson

of the community. On a regular basis, it began sending monthly financial aid to less fortunate members, and also started providing necessary educational/medical aid to those members of the community who could benefit from such assistance.

It became a policy of the Managing Committee to have social gatherings and meetings at different locations as frequently as possible with the help and co-operation of those Amils living in the respective localities.

In addition, it was also decided to combine social gatherings with annual general body meetings in different localities. In pursuance of this policy, the localities in which gatherings were held were Bandra, Sion, Churchgate, Warden Road etc. Lunch at these gatherings was prepared by voluntary workers themselves - among them, a prominent volunteer was the late Mangharam B. Punwani.

An extremely important function of any Panchayat is to mediate and bring about settlement in social and family disputes and misunderstandings. This is indisputably a far better alternative for aggrieved parties than to approach the courts of law and expose their disputes in public. Amils in Karachi took full advantage of this provision and many cases were handled by the Panchayat there. However, in Mumbai, this function of the Panchayat is perhaps not as pre-eminent as it once was, rues Punwaney.

However, several other functions socio-economic functions are being successfully fulfilled. The Khudabadi Amil Panchayat of Bombay (KAP) is registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860 and also under the Public Trust Act 1950.

It is also registered with the Income Tax Department and donations to the Panchayat are exempt under section 80G of the Income Tax Act 1961. The Panchayat continues to publish a monthly newsletter, Amil Samachar.

Punwaney chronicles in his jottings on the KAP: "The Panchayat functioned in a manner to reach all members in Mumbai living in far flung localities periodically by holding meetings in different places. Panchayat representatives even kept visiting distant places to contact members in a show of brotherhood.

"It held seminars, discussions on Amil brotherhood and customs. Social gatherings, meetings, seminars and debates were excellent means of communicating ideas about the role of the Panchayat to a new generation of Amils. But these too had their limitations. At no time could the entire community be taken to Lonavla or Sun-n-sand Hotel to participate in seminars!, It was therefore considered that a periodical journal in Sindhi and English be published and mailed to all members to serve the purpose of keeping the community informed about the activities and seek their participation in absentia.

"So the Panchayat started a bilingual monthly journal to keep members informed of happenings and events in the community. Late Gopal Gurbaxani took upon himself the responsibility of editing the newspaper, Saraswati. Gopal and his wife, Savitri, kept the journal running for many years." Subsequently, the Amil Samachar was started.

In December 2007, the KAP was branded with a sleek and contemporary logo, a vibrant website, and a motto: Connecting Amil Community Worldwide.

Panchayat Presidents

Several stalwarts have served the KAP as President over the years. They include:

Pahlajsing B. Advani, 1948 - 1952

Fatechand Assudmal Jhangiani, 1952 - 1971

Kishinchand T. Shahani, 1971 - 1984

Vishni Malkani, 1984 - 1992

Kamla Hiranand, 1992 - 2001

Mangharam Thadani, 2001 - 2004

Mohan Mirchandani, 2004 - 2008

Dr. Indu Shahani, 2008 (Present President)

A man in debt is so far a slave - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Life-time Achievement Award for our fellow-Amil

Early this month, Dr. Shanti Shahani was honored by the 'Sindhi Medicos Club' with a 'Life-time achievement Award' in memory of late Dr. L. U. Kirpalani.

After receiving her M.D. (Bom.), Dr. Shanti became a Postgraduate Fellow of the 'Columbia Medical Center', New York and subsequently Professor of Endocrinology at the T. N. Medical College & Nair Hospital, Bombay.

She was the recipient of Large Research Grants from International and National Agencies like the Ford Foundation, W.H.O., Population Council, ICMR, Dept. of Bio-technology, etc.

With these Funds she was able to develop necessary infrastructure such as manpower, Laboratory Equipment and Research at Nair Hospital and she brought recognition to the field of Endocrinology as a Super-Specialty in an academic Institution and is now recognized as a Pioneer in this field.

Shanti is a Founder member - and Past President - of the 'Endocrine Society of India'.

She has traveled widely and was invited as a Faculty Member at conferences in many parts of the World.

She has a large number of Papers in National and International Journals to her credit.

She has been practicing as Hon. Consulting Endocrinologist to Bombay Hospital and Harkisandas Hospital in Bombay for last 15-20 years.

She is married to Mohan Shahani, who is an engineer and a Management consultant. He is a Past President of Rotary Club and also of The Institute of management Consultants and had received the award of Fellow of the Institute of Management Consultants.

Dr. Shanti and Mohan are thus glowing examples for our young Amils aspiring to earn laurels in their chosen Professions in future.



GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS OF BHAINJI MANDIR

Guru Nanik Seva Mandir Charitable Trust founded by Pujya Bhainji Maharaj completes 50 years of selfless service to the community on 17 Nov 2011.

On this occasion the devotees and satsangees have arranged a Bhog ceremony of Saptah Path of Shri Guru Granth Sahib and Kirtan by Pushpa Kishin Mirchandani and Smt Jyoti Bharwani and party from 5 pm on Thursday 17 Nov 2011.

Pujya Bhainji Maharaj always used to say "NAAM JAPO, SEVAKARO".

I have realized by doing this we get mental, spiritual and physical satisfaction.

We reach the stage where we are "SUKHI". Hence I say "NAAM JAPO, SEVAKARO AUR SUKHI RAHO".

Even though the Mandir has a modest premises at Linking Road, Khar (W), Mumbai, the devotees everyday conduct selfless services to satsangees and community by way of Kirtan, Bhajans and HATH PRASADI in the morning and evening for mental satisfaction.

For spiritual uplift, the Satsangees come to Mandir for NAAM SIMRAN in front of Pujya Bhainji Maharaj Samadhi in the Mandir.

For physical comfort, the Mandir conducts Yoga classes for ladies, has physiotherapy clinic, skin specialist consultant and homeopathic dispensary.

All the important Hindu festivals like Maha Shivratri, Holi, Navrataras, Diwali, KrishnaJanamashtami and varsi of great saints are celebrated for uplift of spiritual level of satsangees.

One of Pujya Bhainji Maharaj's anmol vachan is "DHARMIC JEEVAN MANAV KO PAAP SE BACHATA HAI AUR KARAM KARNE KI PRERNA DETA HAI".

The lamp lit by Pujya Bhainji Maharaj, Founder Managing Trustee to show how to lead the human life in righteous way. The same was carried forward by Dadi Sundri Malani after Bhainji Maharaj left for her heavenly on 3rd June 1984. The same is now carried on by Didi Neelam Advani after Dadi Sundri Malani left for her heavenly abode 25th April 2007.

Yours in service of Almighty Lord

For GURU NANIK SEVA MANDIR

DIDI NEELAM

Character is a stranger blending of flinty strength and pliable warmth - Robert Shaffer

PRIDE OF OUR COMMUNITY & OUR NATION

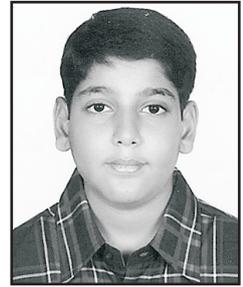
Photographs of students missed in the earlier issue.



Jatish Advani
HSC - 92.60%
Son of
Manoj & Priya



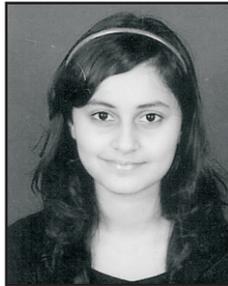
Ruchita Sitlani
HSC - 85.30%
Daughter of
Raju & Divya



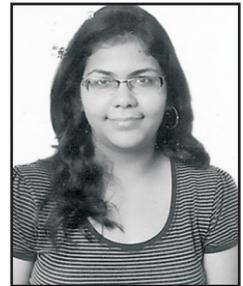
Tahil Thadani
ICSE - 94.00%
Son of
Suresh & Lavina



Gaurav Bhawnani
SSC - 93.27%
Son of
Haresh & Jai



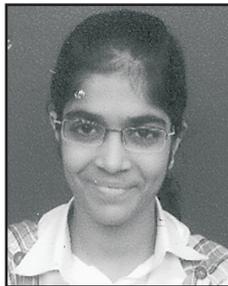
Monisha Shivdasani
SSC - 88.91%
Daughter of
Vikram & Malini



Vinti Shahani
CBSE - 82.40%
Daughter of
Arun & Maya



Yogita Makhijani
CDSE - 84.70%
Son of
Manu & Supriya



Reeva Sitlani
SSC - 93.00%
Daughter of
Raju & Divya



Monish Chandiramani
CBSE - 82.00%
Son of
Praveen & Neha

Character is a stranger blending of flinty strength and pliable warmth - Robert Shaffer