

Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
The Family of MEGHRAJ HAZARI (photo taken between 1927-1930, possibly in Lahore)	3
HAZARI HISTORY By Rajinder Nath Hazari (1900 -1980).....	4
DOWN MEMORY LANE IN LAHORE - March 2006 By Vinod Mubayi	7
AVTAR KISHAN KAUL (1907-1988)	10
Nilofer Kaul on her grandfather	10
PROF. RAJ KUMAR KAUL (1927-2003)	11
Varun Kaul on his father	11
Nilofer Kaul on her father	11
Anil Razdan.....	12
BRIGADIER BRIJ KUMAR KAUL (1929 - 1973).....	13
SUNEEL KAUL (1957-1986).....	14
Lt. Gen. (R) KANWAL KISHEN HAZARI (1929-2021).....	15
Nonita Hazari (post marriage Chand) on her father	15
Lt. Gen. (R) Narayan Chatterjee on Lt. Gen. (R) K K Hazari	17
Tenure in 22 Mountain Regiment (July 1964-July 1966) by Brig. (R) Darshan Khullar	18
RABINDRA KISHEN HAZARI (1932 – 1986)	20
Ravi Hazari: A Remembrance by K.S. Krishnaswamy	22
Remembering Napoleon and Dad by Rabindra Kishen Hazari Jr.	28
SOMINDRA KISHEN HAZARI (1961-2021).....	31
Speech by Mr. Somi Hazari at the 104th Birth Anniversary of Mr. K. Kuruvila Jacob.....	31
Remembering Somi by Rabindra Kishen Hazari Jr.	37
Papa, My Hero By Somindra Kishen Hazari Jr.	46
Good Bye My Brother, Sona by Hemindra Kishen Hazari	48
SAROJINI RAO (1929 -, Post marriage Sarojini Rabindra Hazari)	59
The Case of the Mesmerising Mother by Rabindra Kishen Hazari Jr.	59
GROUP CAPTAIN (R) AJIT GURTU (1947-)	64

In this document women are identified with their maiden name and their post married name are in brackets

INTRODUCTION

This document is on family histories of two Kashmiri Pandit families, the descendants of GULAB RAI HAZARI (died 1890) and HARIRAM RAZDAN. From known records, these 2 families were intertwined by marriage when Sushila Rani Razdan (post marriage Durga Hazari) married Karta Kishan Hazari (1888-1954) and when Vidya Razdan (1904-1993, post marriage Chandermohini Hazari) married Autar Kishen Hazari (1893-1966), the younger brother of Karta Kishan Hazari. Sushila Rani Razdan's father, Lachmandas Razdan was the brother of Hariram Razdan while Vidya Razdan's father, Rooplal Razdan (1878-1927) was the son of Hariram Razdan.

The HAZARI family as [documented](#) by Rajinder Nath Hazari (1900-1980) migrated from Kashmir to present day Pakistan Punjab during the time of Nidanji (died 1847), the father of Gulab Rai Hazari and settled in Qilladar (near Gujrat, Pakistan Punjab) and eventually in Lahore prior to Partition. Post Partition, the Hazaris were primarily based in Delhi with Opinder Kishen Hazari and his younger brother, Rabindra Kishen Hazari (sons of Autar Kishen Hazari) were based in Bombay.

Neetu Raina (post marriage Neetu Mubayi, married to Ashok Mubayi [1939-2015) said of the Hazaris

The Hazaris I have known as such a close knit, loving family. A vast array of distinguished personalities, so loyal to the clan. Impeccable in behaviour and loyalty knew no bounds. Wish more families had these traits.

Rooplal Razdan (1878-1927), the son of Hariram Razdan came from Lahore to Patiala and was the Superintendent of the Palaces under Raja Daya Kishen Kaul, prime minister to Maharaja of Patiala, Bhupinder Singh.

The purpose of this exercise is to document oral family history which tends to get lost after the second or third generation. These are a collection of memories, anecdotes and events of individuals of both families which flesh out their characters and personalities for future generations to appreciate.

The Family of MEGHRAJ HAZARI (photo taken between 1927-1930, possibly in Lahore)



Women are identified by their maiden name.

Sitting Cross Legged

L-R: ROOPKUMARI RAZDAN (daughter of Jeoshuri Hazari), **MANMOHAN NATH RAZDAN** (1916-2010, son of Jeoshuri Hazari), **KUNWAR RANI RAZDAN** (1911-2011, daughter of Jeoshuri Hazari), **RAJDULARI HAZARI** (1919-1999, daughter of Karta Hazari), **CHAND KISHAN HAZARI** (1921-2012, son of Karta Hazari) and Saroj Hazari (daughter of Karta Hazari)

Sitting on Chairs

L-R: JEOSHURI HAZARI (daughter of Meghraj Hazari), **VIDYA RAZDAN** (wife of Autar Kishen Hazari, post marriage Chandermohini Hazari 1904-1993,), in her lap **OPINDER KISHEN HAZARI** (1927-1996, son of Autar Hazari), **SUSHILA RANI RAZDAN** (wife of Karta Hazari, post marriage Durga Hazari), **'POSHI'** (wife of Meghraj Hazari), **MEGHRAJ HAZARI** (1848-1930), **KRISHNA MOHINI RAINA** (wife of Sri Kishan Hazari), **LADLEEPRASAD KAUL** (wife of Suraj Hazari), **KAMLAPATHI HAZARI** (daughter of Meghraj Hazari) and in her lap **RAJKUMAR KAUL** (1927-2003)

Standing

L-R: MANOHAR NATH RAZDAN (husband of Jeoshuri Hazari), **PRADUMAN KISHAN HAZARI** (1925-1975, son of Autar Hazari), **AUTAR KISHEN HAZARI** (1893-1966, son of Meghraj Hazari), **KARTA KISHAN HAZARI** (1888-1954, son of Meghraj Hazari), **RAJINDER NATH KISHAN HAZARI** (1900-1980, son of Meghraj Hazari), **SRI KISHAN HAZARI** (1891-1977, son of Meghraj Hazari), **SURAJ KISHAN HAZARI** (son of Meghraj Hazari), **AVTAR KISHAN KAUL** (1907-1988, husband of Kamlapathi Hazari).

HAZARI HISTORY By Rajinder Nath Hazari (1900 -1980)

Parentage

Our stock hails from Kashmir and a pedigree table of my ancestors as far as known is given below:

Shiv Ram

Kewal Ram

Nidhanji (died 1847)

Gulab Rai (died 1890)

Megh Raj (1848 - 1930)

Karta Kishan (1888 - 1954), Sri Kishan (1981 - 1977), Jeoshuri, Autar Kishen (1893 - 1966), Suraj Kishan, Rajinder Nath (1900 - 1980) & Kamlavati

Owing to Muslim persecution of Kashmiri Brahmans the writer's great grandfather Nidhanji migrated to the Punjab. It was a rather hazardous adventure in those days of political turmoil and poor communications but evidently he was forced to flee along with some others of his caste for the preservation of the faith of his ancestors and the safety and honour of his woman folk. The party found a haven of safety in a small tumble down village on the bank of the river Chanab 5 miles southwest of the town of Gujrat known as [Qilladar](#) [in present day Pakistan]. Obviously the migrating party followed the same bridle-track which the Mughal Kings did during their travel to the valley of Kashmir. The party was headed by a man of great piety named Shri [Mansa Ram Ji Razdan](#) [died 1826] to whose blessed memory stands a big shrine called "Dhuni Sahib" at Qiladar the only one of its kind outside Kashmir. The writer's great grandfather and his son accepted the discipleship of Mansa Ram Ji and probably for some years derived their living from the spiritual ministration of the laity. Both were apparently well-off as the writer's inherited houses in Qiladar from his father which he sold off to clear his debts after retirement from government service.

A political storm during the time of Gulab Rai swept our family out of Qiladar. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh [27 June 1839] the Sikh ruler of Punjab, the land of five rivers became the hunting ground for ambitious chieftains and adventurers. During the [battle of Gujrat](#) in [February] 1849 [[Second Anglo-Sikh War](#)] the shrine of Dhuni Sahib attracted the attention of a band of Sikh soldiers who raided Qiladar. With a view to saving the holy place, the priests, headed by Gulab Rai who was then a Kardar (administrator) of a number of villages and also held charge of the shrine negotiated with the raiders to buy them off and some terms were agreed. But as usually happens the raiders broke faith and pillaged the shrine. Gulab Rai jumped from the temple at the dead of night, ran away and swam across the Chanab River to save his life. Soon thereafter the rule of the Punjab changed hands and the country was annexed by the British.

God alone knows how Gulab Rai rehabilitated himself. All I know is that at the time of the mutiny in 1857 he was a Subedar [Segeant] Major in an Indian Regiment which joined the mutineer's and was disbanded. A year or two later he became a sub-inspector of police in Peshawar and thereafter was transferred to D.I. [Dhera Ismail] Khan [city in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan] as Kotwal [chief police officer], where he celebrated the marriage of his only daughter [Diddajan Hazari, post marriage, Parmeshwari Muttu] who was married at the age of nine to a child [Pyarelal Muttu] of the same age who was the son of a well-known Deputy Collector in the Punjab. In 1931 I met an old gentleman in D.I. Khan and he had a very dim recollection of my grand-father.

From our father's description Gulab Rai was a man of medium height, healthy complexion, lynx-eyed, compact built and of unusual physical courage. In the evening of his life, he turned a recluse and preached Vedanta to one and all he came across. He served as a police officer in Peshwar, D.I. Khan, Bannu, Delhi, Karnal and Ambala and retired from the last mentioned place as Inspector of Police round about 1884. Gulab Rai's wife spent most of her young life in her parents' home. The writer's father was the eldest child. He was born in 1848. Next to him was Moti Lal who died young and next was Hari Shankar who died in 1896. The youngest was daughter Dayaji. She died at Gwalior at the age of 81 in 1944. Megh Raj started education when Christian Missionary was digging in his toes with the bait of school, the hospital and similar charitable institutions, expectant to tear away big chunks off the unsophisticated Hindu society of that time. For a career under the new masters of knowledge of English language was essential and Megh Raj was sent to a missionary school much against the wishes of his father, presumably under the pressure of the European Deputy Commissioner of D.I. Khan. He indirectly put serious obstacles in the way of the young child fearing that he might not be weaned away from his religion; nevertheless, the lad managed to acquire a tolerable acquaintance with the foreign language.

It would seem that Megh Raj was a spirited youth, a kind of rebel son. He was married when hardly six or seven years later he joined the Indian Army as a Cavalry Dafadar [Non-Commissioned officer, equivalent to sergeant] which job he took up in defiance of his father's wishes. Time and again the son and father parted company. Leaving the army service, after a year or so he restarted life as a subordinate official in Revenue Department through his father's help. This was in 1868. He rose to be a Tehsildar [revenue collection officer of a Tehsil] and retired from service in 1903. He has had a chequered life. While still below 30 he lost his first wife and did not remarry until 7 years later. Born during stormy days when the Sikh Raj fell, he saw the great Indian Mutiny of 1857. A self-reliant man, he could face any storm unperturbed. He was somewhat gay in his youth and possibly irresponsible, particularly when he was a widower. But he was endowed with a personality and firmness of character. He held every job with credit and was respected by the people he came in contact with. He loved his first wife passionately. She left a son named Gauri Shankar who also died young in 1887. The writer and his four brothers and two sisters all sprang from the second union. Megh Raj lived in comfort comparatively but when he was about 50 the fortune of our family suddenly took a bad turn. Megh Raj had a nasty fall from a horse while touring on duty in the country-side which caused a fracture of his hip-bone. This calamity brought great suffering to the family. Despite repeated setting the injury left a permanent disability (a limp) for the rest of his life.

He ate up all his savings and invalided out of service on an inadequate pension. My mother fought a losing struggle in her effort to equate diminishing resources with growing expenses and heavy debt had to be incurred. Had a grant of 90 acres farm by the government in 1905 in recognition of father's services not come to our rescue our fate would have been sealed. The old man toiled on the land which yielded good dividends and the family was rehabilitated.

Medium sized, wiry and sun tanned, Megh Raj's features appear to have been wrought for facing hardships. He had an authoritative look and stentorian voice. He had a tender heart and wide catholic sympathies. His command over tongue was remarkable and he had a fund of anecdotes and homely stories to narrate. There was a charm in his spoken word and he wrote excellent Urdu. During his prolonged bed-ridden period he studied astronomy, astrology and religion and compiled some useful notes on Hindu philosophy, Theosophy, Astronomy and agriculture.

He never forgot his first wife, her charms and gift and was indifferent if not rather unkind towards the second. He did not however, have a studied attitude but was impulsive and his mood varied from extreme kindness to extreme harshness towards her. He had unwavering belief in God and was an optimist even during his dark days. *"What God ordains is for the good and everything will be alright"* so he used to say.

I should confess regretfully that I had more fear than affection for him. He was kind to me but his almost total baldness stern and wrinkled visage and expression due to advanced years, his gait and perhaps his harshness towards mother was disagreeable to my child psychology created a gulf between us and even when I was fully grown up I could not fully respond to his love.

DOWN MEMORY LANE IN LAHORE - March 2006 By Vinod Mubayi



Kunwar Rani Razdan (post marriage Kunwar Mubayi, accompanied by her son, Vinod Mubayi, approaching the entrance of her family house in Lahore where she was born and raised

The city of Lahore often evokes an intense nostalgia among its former residents who were displaced by the Partition of India in 1947. This nostalgia is partly due to the memories of the unique cultural character of Lahore but mostly to the pangs of separation from the many close friends who remained behind with whom the bonds of a shared living space became a memory of loss. This writer was born in Lahore, so were his parents. My mother [Kunwal Rani Razdan, 1919-2011 post marriage Kunwar Rani Mubayi, daughter of Jeoshuri Hazari and Manohar Nath Razdan), now 87, has always had an intense desire to re-visit the city where she was born, grew up, was educated, married, and had her children, once before it was too late. The occasion of the marriage of a daughter of close friends provided an opportunity for her (an Indian citizen) to get a visa to Pakistan and visit Lahore.

To say the visit surpassed all her expectations for recognition, friendship and people-to-people contact would be an understatement. Inside the old, walled city where she was born, a visit undertaken without any notice of any kind on a Sunday morning with our hosts in Lahore (who live in the cantonment area themselves) showed how the past is not really past at all but the present. As we turned into the Wazir Khan Masjid chowk memories of the lanes came flooding back to my mother and she began to walk with a new sense of purpose and direction towards the Kucha Hussain Shah where her erstwhile house was located. But it was the random meeting with an old man on the small winding street leading up to the haveli that

was the clincher. This man not only recalled my grandfather's name (the haveli is still named after him) but he also remembered the names of my mother and her cousin while my mother recalled all her old neighbours, Mirza Sahab, Hakim Sahab, and their children who were her friends when they were 8 and 9 years old. Soon we were seated in the room which she had grown up in surrounded by most of the neighbourhood plying us with tea, snacks, tales of who went where while my mother regaled them with tales of where an ancient well where they drew water was, of how her uncle kept fighting with a maulvi who was their neighbour and how her father used to reprimand his younger brother for doing so.



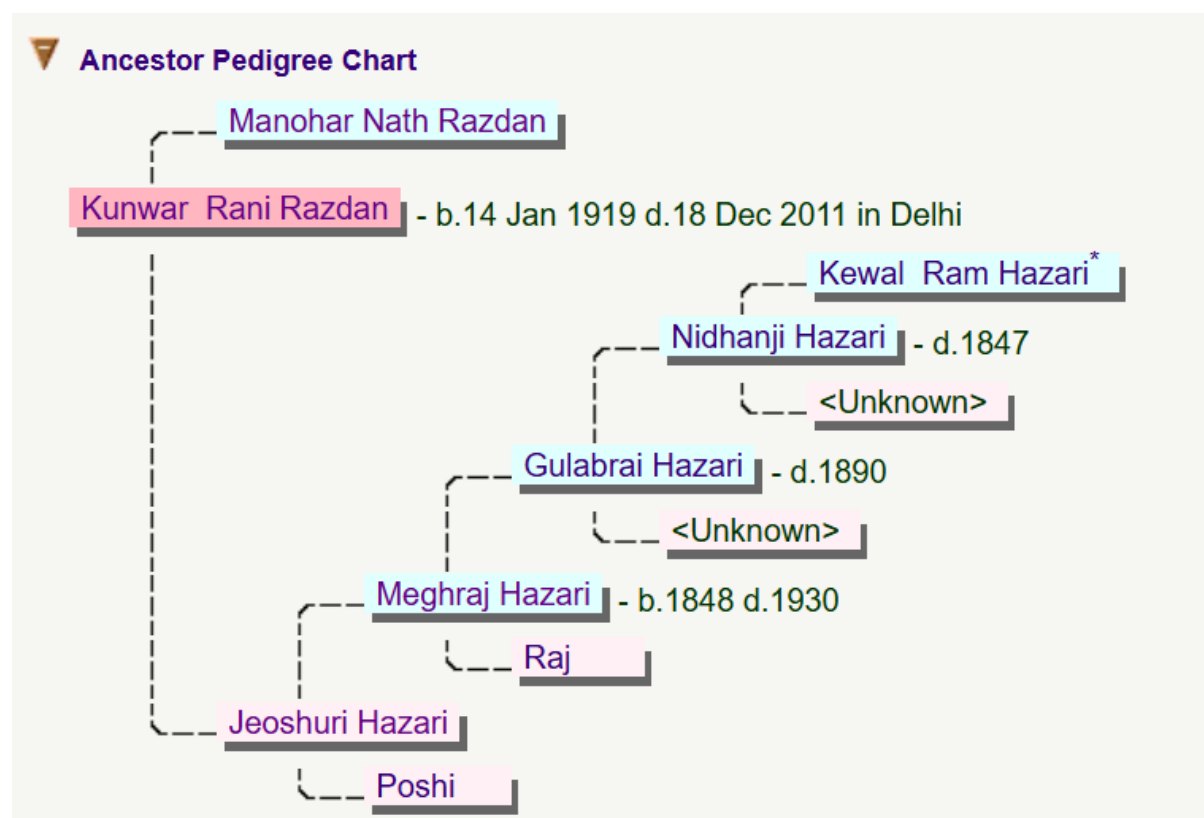
Neighbourhood gentleman who remembered Manohar Nath Razdan

It was difficult to tear ourselves away. The *mohalla* people all said you have come back after 60 years, at least stay 60 hours, if you cannot stay 60 days. Only the fact that our escort's daughter was getting married that evening allowed them to let us leave after a few hours. The affection and desire for contact was simply overwhelming, so intense that it went beyond clichés of Indo-Pak friendship; it was more a re-discovery of the humanity that resides within all of us.



Many neighbours came to see her.

To see the video of the visit click [here](#)



AVTAR KISHAN KAUL (1907-1988) married Kamlapathi Hazari



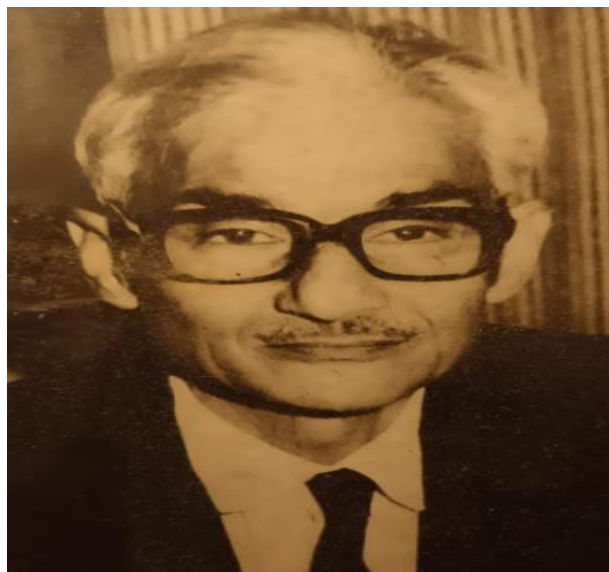
Nilofer Kaul on her grandfather

My grandfather Avtar Krishan Kaul was a handsome man with an imposing presence. As a police officer he was feared and respected. But at home, I am told he was quite a compliant husband, father and grandfather. He doted on his grandchildren. As he was the son of a humble postmaster in Kashmir who died young, Ba (as we his grandchildren called him) grew up shouldering

responsibilities for his sisters. He helped get his nephews and nieces educated and settled. He helped his extended family cross the border during the violent days of the Partition. He was very devoted to his two sons and was keen to have his son, my father Raj Kumar Kaul (1927-2003), study at Oxford. It was an improvident ambition, as it was way beyond his modest means. But Ba dreamed of his son studying in Oxford and went without a winter jacket. His younger son, Brigadier Brij Kumar Kaul ('Nikkoo', 1928-1973) was a promising Army officer who died prematurely. After Nikkoo Chacha's untimely death, Ba turned his attention to looking after his widow Shobha Wali (Shobha Kaul, 1931-2014) and the two bereaved sons. The tragedy was compounded by the elder grandson's (Sunil Kumar Kaul, 1957-1986) tragic death. It has to be said that Ba received these cruel blows with grace and equanimity.

But my fondest memories of him are of his long visits when he played Scrabble and endured my childish babble for hours with merriment. And most of all, his arriving on my birthday with a little pup Kaloo who was with us for 13 years. For all this and so much more, I feel very grateful to Ba.

PROF. RAJ KUMAR KAUL (1927-2003), son of Kamlapathi Hazari and Avtar Kishan Kaul



Varun Kaul on his father

Born in Lahore in 1927, graduated (B.A.) from Government College, Lahore and M.A. from Delhi University (1st Rank). He did Honor's from Magladden College, Oxford, M. A. / Diploma and a Ph. D. from Birkbeck College, London, Topic - Dr. Samuel Johnson on the Doctrine of Nature, under Prof. Geoffrey Tillotson. He first joined Punjab University (PU) as Lecturer and came to Rajasthan University as Reader as he was not getting his due promotion in PU. He later went for a Fullbright Fellowship to Yale University 1970-1971.

Joined as Lecturer at Punjab University, Chandigarh (1955)

Joined as Reader at University of Rajasthan (September 1962)

Promoted as Professor at University of Rajasthan (1967)

He held various administrative positions at University of Rajasthan as follows:-

1. Director- School of Humanities
2. Dean - Faculty of Arts
3. Member- Vice Chancellor (VC) Committee under Justice Vedpal Tyagi (Retired Chief Justice, Rajasthan High Court)
4. Director- University of Rajasthan, Library
5. Acting Head- Department of Foreign Languages
6. Member – Syndicate
7. Acting VC - University of Rajasthan
8. Retired - June, 1988
9. Re-employed - 7 years after retirement
10. Last Assignment - Director (Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla)

Nilofer Kaul on her father

My father Raj Kumar Kaul was the elder of the two sons of Avtar Krishan Kaul (1907-1988) and Kamla Hazari. From an early age, he was a reader, drawn to literature, philosophy and history. Unlike his worldly wise father, my father lived in a library of his mind. He was loving and generous to all, as long as he was allowed his undisturbed time with poetry, philosophy, and music. He was a student not just in Lahore, Delhi, Oxford and London, but all his life. He was always teaching himself new things- be it the Devnagri script or computers. My father had been a Gandhian and while England changed his thinking in many ways, he retained an austerity learned in his youth.

He was playful and fun too and the first storyteller in my life.

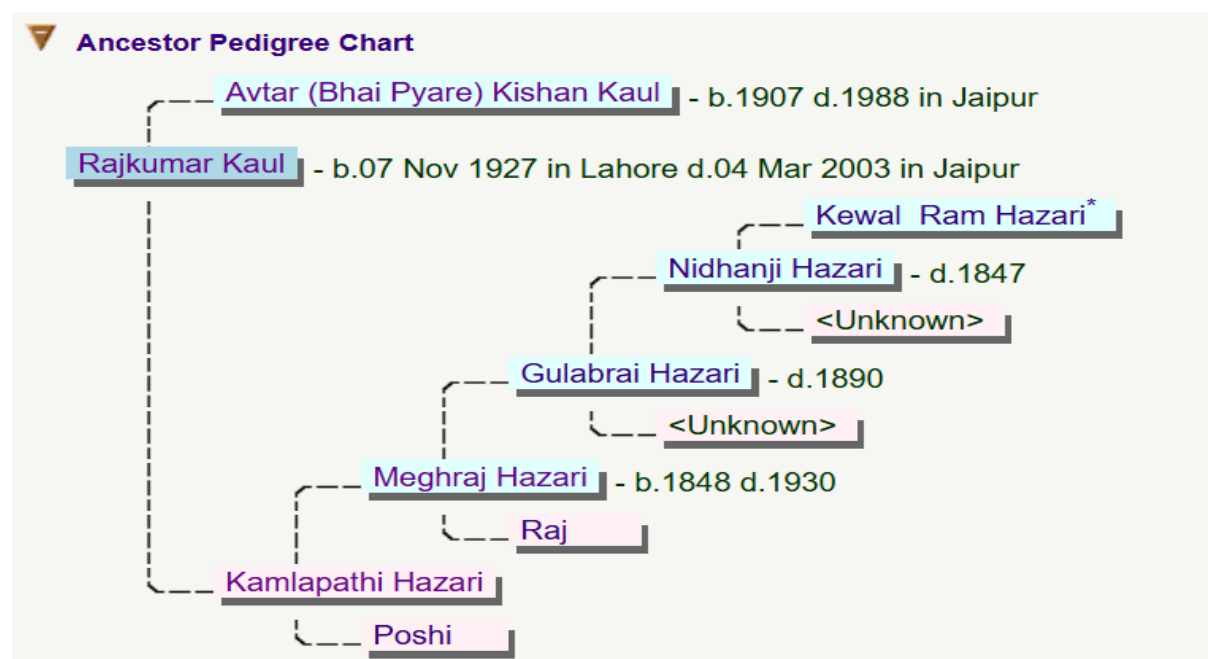
Most of all, it was his students and colleagues who respected and loved him as much for his depth of learning as for his unwavering integrity.

[Anil Razdan](#) (son of Manmohan Nath Razdan and Kamla Malla (Razdan)) reminisces on Raj Kumar Kaul

Dr Raj Kumar Kaul. Bubboo Chacha to us.

He was an alumnus of Government College, Lahore, Punjab University. He taught English in Punjab University Hoshiarpur, and Chandigarh and later in Rajasthan University.

His students in Punjab University at Hoshiarpur and Chandigarh, and subsequently at Rajasthan University, Jaipur, were in awe of his dedication and depth of knowledge. He had a deep knowledge and appreciation of Urdu poetry. An extremely affectionate, transparent and a straightforward person.



BRIGADIER BRIJ KUMAR KAUL (1929 - 1973) (son of Kamlapathi Hazari and Avtar Kishan Kaul)

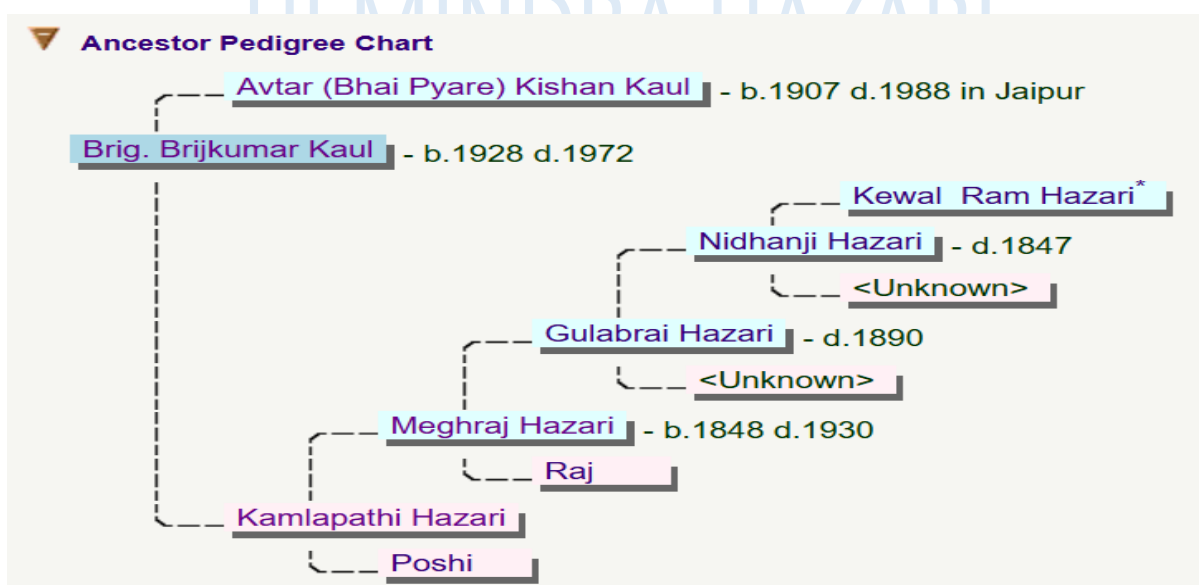


Brig. Brij Kumar Kaul was born in 1929 at Lahore. Subsequent to the completion of his schooling joined the Indian Military Academy Dehradun in 1949.

He was posted in various sectors and fought the wars with China in 1962, 1965 and Pakistan 1971.

He became a Brigadier at a very young age and was posted as a brigade commander at Noushara in Jammu and Kashmir during the 1971 war and took active part as the brigade was posted at the front lines with Pakistan.

However, in an unfortunate incident in the forward area of J&K he expired on 26th February 1973.



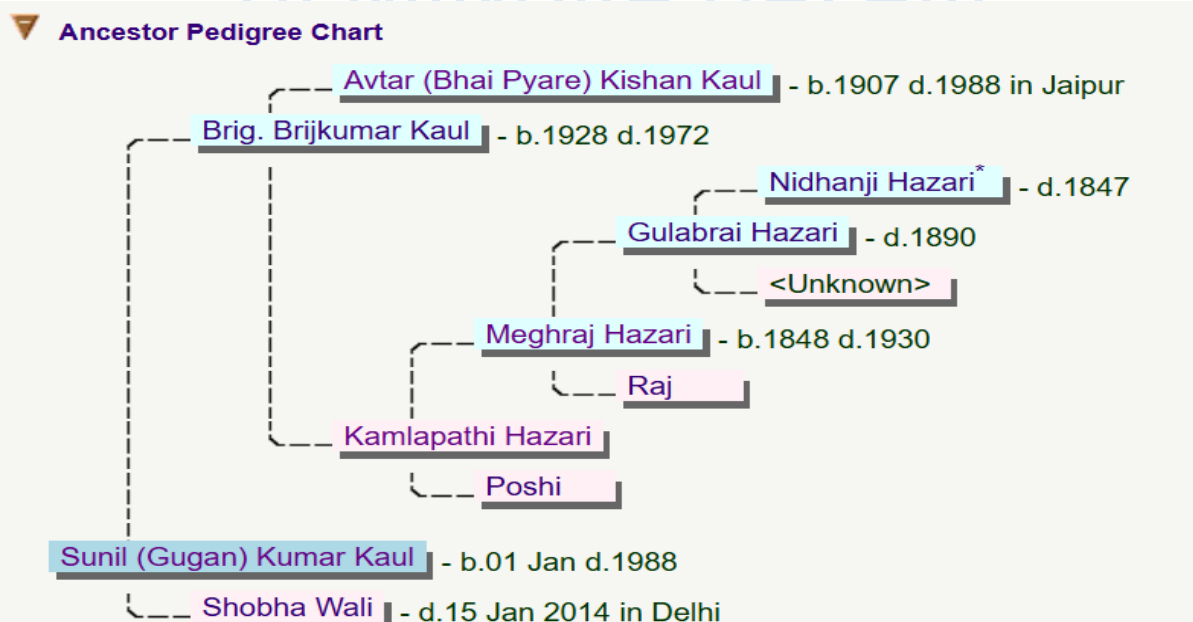
SUNEEL KAUL (1957-1986), son of Brig. Brij Kumar Kaul and Shobha Wali (Shobha Kaul)



Suneel Kaul was born in 1957 to Brig. Brij Kumar Kaul and Shobha Wali (Kaul). Since his father was in the Army and with regular transfers, he was put into boarding school and passed out in 1973 from Lawrence School, Sanawar. Post schooling, he got selected in Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi.

After completing his mechanical engineering degree he worked in a public sector organization and then, subsequently joined State Bank of India in 1979 as a Probationary Officer, and was posted to Canada for three years. Unfortunately, he expired in 1986.

HEMINDRA HAZARI



Lt. Gen. (R) KANWAL KISHEN HAZARI (1929-2021), son of Sri Kishan Hazari and Krishna Mohini Raina



Nonita Hazari (post marriage Chand) on her father

Lt. Gen. Kanwal Kishen Hazari retired from the Indian Army on 31st May 1987 as Vice Chief of Army Staff. He had a very distinguished career in the Indian Army and was also awarded the AVSM and the PVSM award.

Kanwal Kishen Hazari was born in 1929 to Sri Krishna Hazari and Krishna Mammohini Hazari. He went to Lahore University and soon after graduating, he got caught up in the

partition of India. He recounted that as India was a new country and there were few job opportunities, therefore the Indian army attracted a lot of good applicants. He was commissioned into the Army from the Indian Military Academy (IMA) in 1948. He joined the elite 17 Para Field Regiment. In his early years in the Army he not only excelled at his work but also played squash at the highest level. He won the national title consecutively for two years in 1956 and 1957. He unfortunately injured his back and so had to give up squash but he played tennis and golf all through his career.

In the early 1960s he topped the Staff College examination and was sent to Camberley, UK to attend Staff College. He was also the only one in his era who got a distinction in 2 courses of Instruction-Junior Command and Regimental Signal Officer courses.



R K Hazari, then Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India, accompanied by then Brig. K K Hazari, Amritsar, 1974

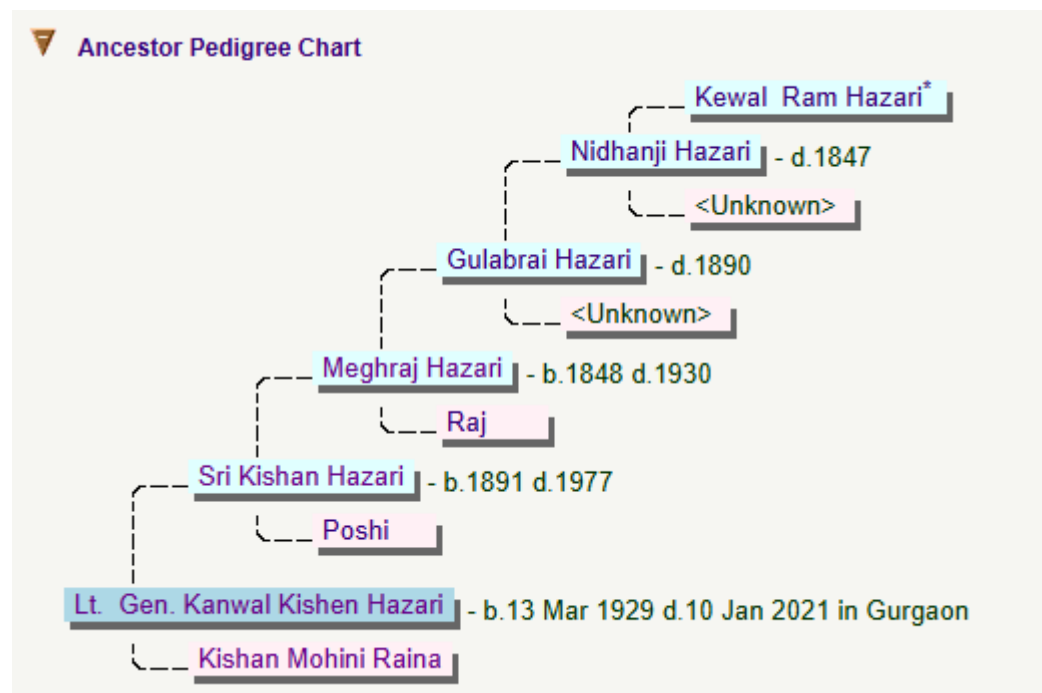
Lt Gen KK Hazari held many top positions in the Indian Army over his lifetime. He was the Corps Commander 16 Corps in Nagrota, Jammu from 1983-1985 after which he was the GOC-in-Chief Central Command in Lucknow from 1985-1986. He also was the Director of Weapons and Equipment and Director Military Operations in the HQ in New Delhi. He was considered to be a war planner, advocating for new armoured strategy following the

Indo-Pak 1971 war to secure more decisive outcomes.

Post retirement he continued contributing to military discourse via think tanks and media commentary. He was also one of the 4 members of the Kargil Commission Report about the Kargil war.

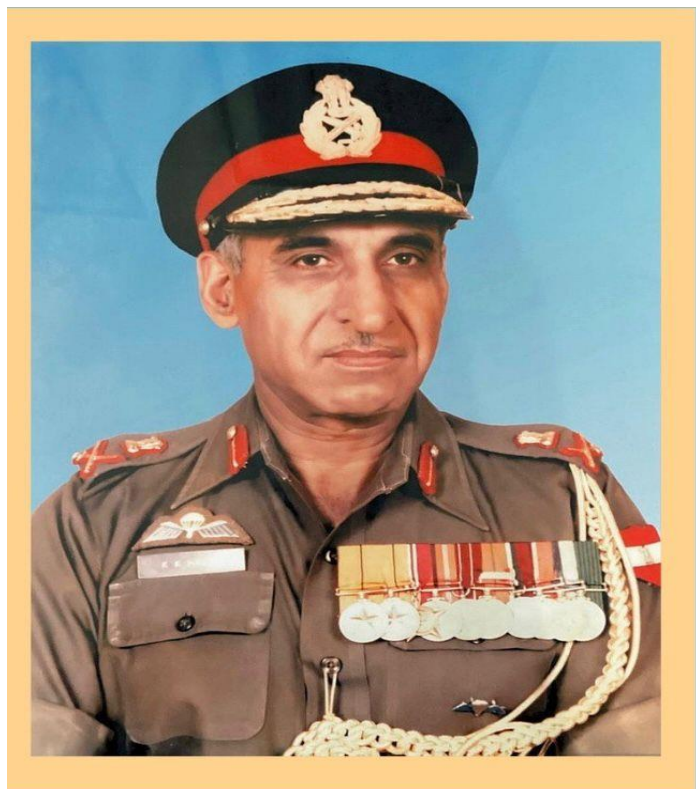
Gen Hazari was not only held in high regard by all his colleagues and associates in the Army but he was well loved by all his friends and family. People came to him for advice and help all the time. He was meticulously organised and methodical. He learnt to use a computer in his 70's and used it to organise his work and finances.

He lived his life with the highest integrity and with kindness.



Lt. Gen. (R) Narayan Chatterjee on Lt. Gen. (R) K K Hazari

Lt General KK Hazari was a multifaceted person. Apart from his most distinguished deep professional knowledge, he was a man with a human touch with his dealings with officers and troops under his Command. He never gave an abrupt decision to any issues or problems. He had the uncanny patience to read individual problems; be it an officer or soldier. He always imparted the most judicious solution; a very rare quality, which was deeply appreciated.



Lt General Hazari was himself an outstanding sports person. Even as a Commanding Officer or as a Commander of a Formation, he was always present at the sporting events to motivate and guide the younger generation in any discipline of sports. He may have excelled as National Squash Champion but his knowledge of all sports played in the Army was commendable. The Regiments and Formations excelled in all sports under his Command.

Lt General Hazari was a man of exceptional knowledge in all subjects in addition to his outstanding professional achievements in the Army. In Officer Mess, especially in the operational area, the evenings

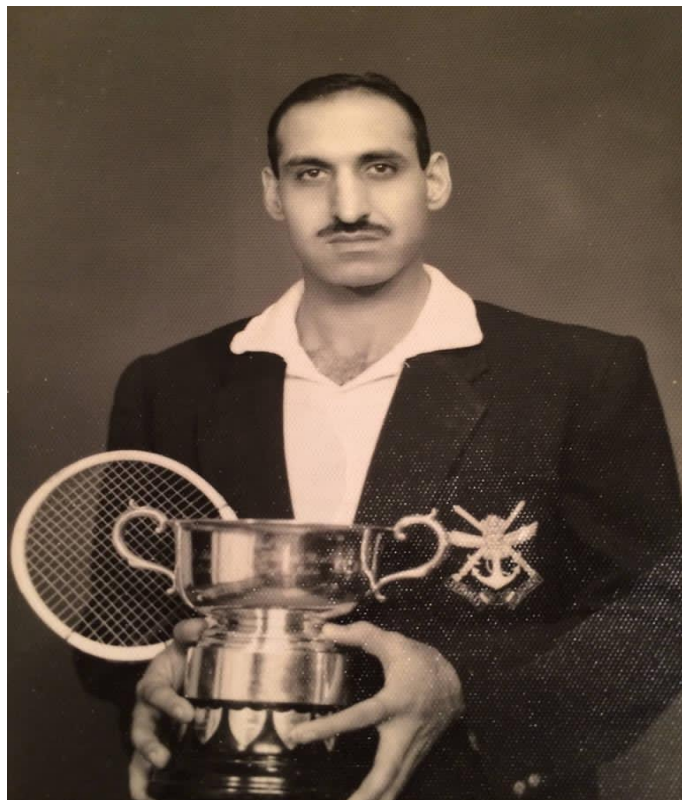
were a matter of education for the young Officers. He used to enlighten the Officers in all issues of current affairs and general knowledge, which were a boon for the Officers...no books could have given so much of knowledge! His objective was to make every one a total all round personality.

Lt General Hazari was most meticulous in his staff work from his young days in the Army. He never drafted an official letter/note with a pen for the typist. He always drafted with a pencil and kept an eraser to correct any mistake. He never overwrote any draft letter..the reason he always explained..the typist never made any mistake reading his draft. Amazing learning for the younger generation!

Lt General Hazari served in two of the elite Regiments of the Artillery, among other units. He was a Battery Commander in 22 Mountain Regiment, the only Victoria Cross Artillery Regiment and he was the Commanding Officer of 17 Para Field Regiment. Both units had the unique privilege of his most distinguished services during his tenures.

Tenure in 22 Mountain Regiment (July 1964-July 1966) by Brig. (R) Darshan Khullar

Major (later Lt. Gen.) K K Hazari arrived on posting to 22 Mountain Composite Regiment (Pack) in July 1964 then located at Bareilly. There was visible excitement when we learnt about his posting to the regiment. He was after all then one of the most if not the most outstanding field officer of the Indian Army, a paratrooper, Silver Gunner, Camberley Staff College, National Squash Champion, Services Tennis player. It was in a way, a great honour both ways, because ours was also a very famous regiment, designated as the Corps De Elite, with its glorious history, including the Regiment of Artillery's only Victoria Cross and the Kiplingesque mystic of screw guns, mules, horses and mountain gunners.



On arrival he took over 221 Mountain Battery. A few months later he was appointed as the Regiment's Second in Command (2IC). I was then the adjutant and it was a privilege and an honour of working closely under him. To say that we all learnt a lot and tried to imbibe his many qualities and lifestyle would be an understatement.

Our Commanding Officer (CO) was a very strict disciplinarian and hard taskmaster and Major Hazari, our new 2IC (second in command) proved to be a perfect foil with his calm, composed and professional personality. It was a great combination (the CO and him) and the regiment flourished. As a result, there was lot of hard work and a lot of happiness.

The professional aspects and office work received a major fillip. Regimental Standing orders, Training syllabi, Operational orders and instructions were revised and updated. His felicity for drafting letters and paperwork were awesome, there never was any pending file on his desk. He kept a thick noting pad, HB pencil, and erasure.

Throughout his two years with the Regiment, we never saw him losing his cool or temper even once. He would correct, guide but never reprimand. He was a no-nonsense person but compassionate. As the 2IC, training, welfare and running of the various regimental institutes including the Officers mess fell within his domain. The regiment organised a young officers' fortnight, a training programme for all young officers of 6 Mountain Artillery Brigade at Pithoragarh, Uttarakhan. Numerous precis and lesson programmes were issued. There was a mark of perfection both in terms of training and administration. It was a great feather in the Regiment's cap.

Major Hazari believed in a robust life and had a unique sense of humour. He enjoyed his evening drink and used to smoke Four Square cigarettes, which also became the preferred brand of other officers as a kind of follow the leader trend. He inculcated the habit of reading books amongst us. He was himself an avid reader and I recall his favourite author those days used to be Ian Fleming, author of James Bond books.

During the 1965 Indo-Pak War, the regiment was deployed at Joshimath on the UP-Tibet Border. The families had remained behind at Bareilly. There is an interesting anecdote which is worth recounting. Mrs Hazari (Meera Nehru) used to off and on send a homemade delicacy whenever someone from the Regiment was coming from Bareilly to Joshimath. On one such occasion she had sent a nice big home baked cake, which some of the youngsters intercepted. Between them they had a good treat and finished it off. They then asked the mess Havadar to prepare a requisite amount of Halwa and had it placed in the carton that Mrs Hazari had sent, and it was duly handed over to Major Hazari. Later in the evening when all officers gathered in the officers' mess for drinks and dinner, it was also the time the officers got to speak to the families back in Bareilly. Soon Mrs Hazari (a very elegant and graceful lady) was on the line speaking to her husband and enquired whether he had received the cake that she had sent. "Yes, the Halwa was quite delicious" was the reply. What followed was a somewhat resentful protest and a counter protest, and the culprits who were present in the mess wore sheepish looks and owned up after the call was over. Major Hazari took it sportingly and had a quiet laugh. As the adjutant I had been made aware of the prank but had not partaken in the feast and waited for the cat to come out of the bag as it did. Years later in 1985, the general recalled this incident with a hearty laugh when I met him at his farewell dinner at Udhampur, Jammu prior to his taking over as GOC in C, Central Command Lucknow.

Major Hazari left the Regiment in July 1966 to take over of command of 17 Para Field Regiment. He was given a befitting farewell and for those who had served in the Regiment under him, it would remain a memorable experience that we continue to cherish.

RABINDRA KISHEN HAZARI (1932 – 1986), son of Autar Kishen Hazari and Vidya Razdan (Chandermohini Hazari)



Rabindra Kishen Hazari (born October 21, 1932 in Patiala, died November 8, 1986 in Bombay), M.A., Ph.D, was educated at Government College, Lahore, St. Xavier's College, Bombay and School of Economics and Sociology, Bombay University.

He taught Economics at St. Xavier's College, Bombay (1951-1964), during which he also contributed frequently to *The Economic Weekly*, assisted S.D. Mehta in "Cotton Mills of India 1854-1904", participated in the Columbia University Law School project in India on Public International Development Financing and was honorary director Research Programme Committee, Planning Commission.

He was appointed Professor of Industrial Economics at the University of Bombay in 1964; during his three years there he was also honorary consultant, Planning Commission and Government nominated director on the board of *The Times of India* group. His scholarly work, *The Corporate Private Sector: Concentration Ownership and Control*, 1966 exposed the concentration of power and the managing agency system in the private corporate sector. The Hazari Report on *Industrial Planning and Licensing Policy*, 1967 was widely debated in Parliament in 1967.

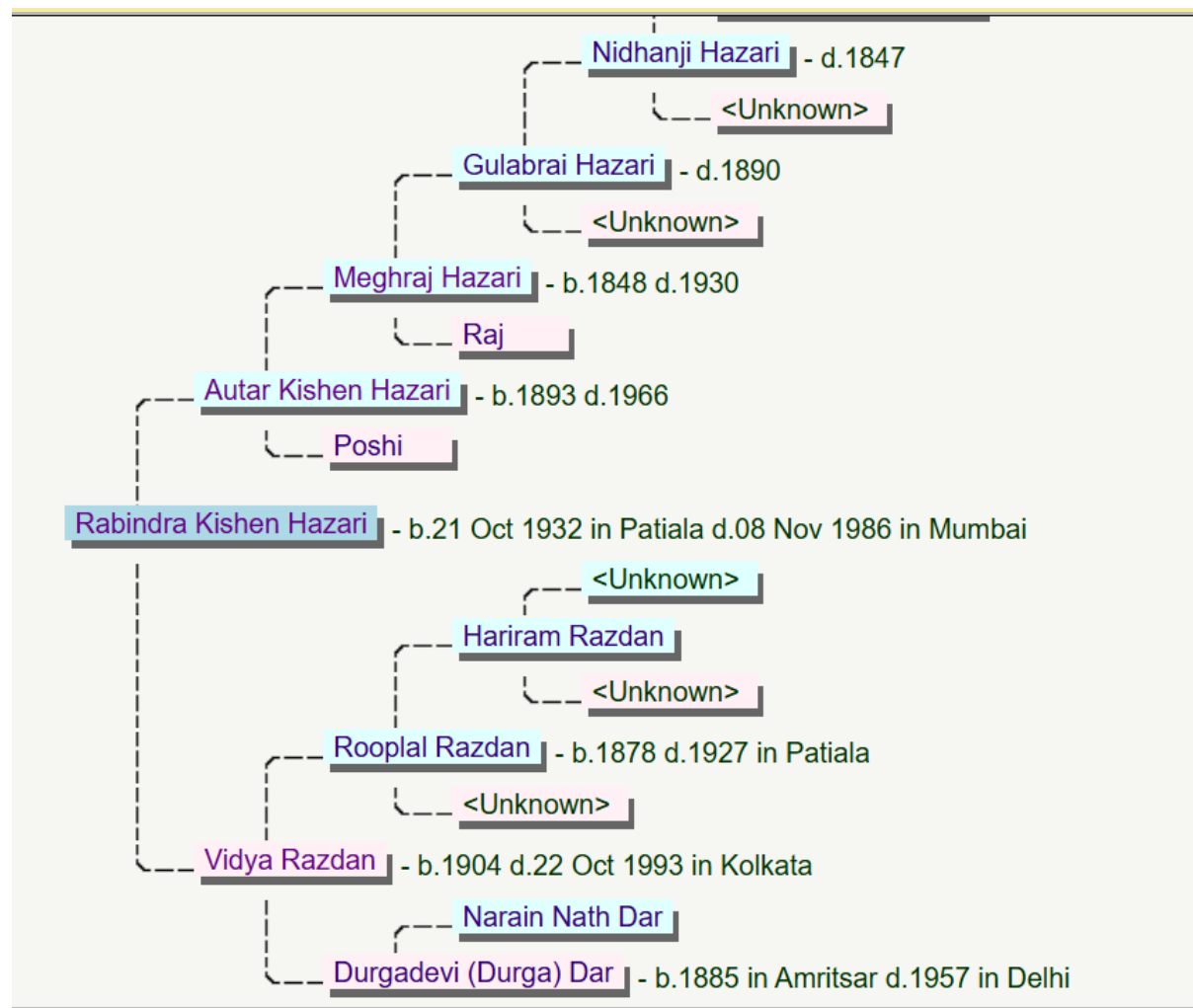
He became editor of the *Economic and Political Weekly (EPW)*, Bombay, in 1967 and simultaneously director of Bharat Electronics, Ltd., Bangalore and Visiting Professor at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

Soon after the major commercial banks were nationalised in 1969, he was, at the age of 37, appointed Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, the youngest person to hold this post and in 1977, at 45, the youngest person to relinquish it upon completion of his tenure. Subsequently, he was associated with a number of companies as director or consultant and was Visiting Professor at the National Institute of Bank Management, Bombay (present campus in Pune) and the Xavier Labour Relations Institute, Jamshedpur. He was also Visiting Lecturer at the Economic Development Institute, World Bank, Washington D.C. and was on two RBI Committees, one on sick undertakings and the other on reform of the monetary system (*Chakravarty Committee*).

K.S. Krishnaswamy, economist and former deputy governor, RBI wrote in R. K. Hazari's obituary, "[Ravi Hazari: A Remembrance](#)", *EPW*, November 29, 1986,

"He had a presence and an air about him which made it easy for people of all ages to believe that he was their contemporary...Ravi left suddenly, taking away from the world of those who had the privilege of knowing him more than a little bit of its rich flavour. He lived, not long enough to rest on his oars or accumulate riches, but meaningfully enough to leave a memory that one can cherish."

Ancestor Pedigree Chart



Ravi Hazari: A Remembrance by K.S. Krishnaswamy

Published in *The Economic and Political Weekly*, November 29, 1986



With K.S. Krishnaswamy, RBI Deputy Governor, at the Farewell function for R.K. Hazari as Deputy Governor, RBI, November 1977.

I

RAVI HAZARI was not by any means an old man when he died. He was barely fifty-five, though he had Retired' as Deputy Governor eight years ago. Several friends of mine who knew him only by reputation have expressed surprise that he was so young; perhaps this was their delicate way of condoling his death, perhaps it was something more—a measure of their appreciation of his achievements. Whatever their intent, I suddenly realised how totally unaware I was of our age difference in all of the years I knew Ravi. He had a presence and an air about him which made it easy for people of all ages to believe that he was their contemporary.

I first met Ravi Hazari in Bombay with Sachin Chaudhuri sometime in 1953. I am not certain whether it was at Sachin's office, or in his celebrated salon at Churchill Chambers. Ravi was one of the band of young intellectuals whom Sachin both sought and attracted in the formative years of *The Economic Weekly*. They were discussing a short note on some public limited company drafted by Ravi—Sachin ever so dextrously modifying a word here or a phrase there, and Ravi valiantly trying to preserve his original. What struck one was the graciousness of each in dealing with the other. Barely twenty-two and strikingly handsome, Ravi was obviously a willing neophyte. He was specialising, Sachin told me, in industrial economics at the University School and also teaching economics at St Xavier's College,

I cannot say that from that moment on a friendship of classical proportions began to blossom. Though I came to live in Bombay soon after, and though both of us kept in close touch with Sachin, we met each other only infrequently. But we got to know increasingly of each other's writings— again at the pre-publication stages of the *Weekly*. Ravi was, at that time, more at home with micro-economics while I preferred macro-economic balances, development

strategies and the like. With virtually no knowledge of Indian industry, corporate finance or company law, I was attracted by the company notes and analyses Ravi brought to Sachin. And I suspect that Ravi felt more at home with my broad economic generalisations than with Sachin's subtleties of social dynamics. It was only by the late 1950s, after Ravi's comments on an article of mine in the Indian Economic Journal and my rejoinder, that our contacts grew rapidly.

Ravi had by then established himself as a very considerable industrial economist— with a series of perceptive articles on organisational structure, concentration of economic power and control mechanisms in the private sector of Indian industry. His enquiries into the holdings of and management control by large family houses such as Birlas generated a public debate of serious proportions, besides arousing the wrath of capitalists. I had moved over to the Planning Commission by 1961, but our contacts continued as Ravi's visits to New Delhi became frequent, both to fight the court cases filed against him by the industrial houses he had 'offended' and to gather further data for his research work. It was largely during this period that we got to know each other well personally. Through his empirical work, he had arrived at an economic philosophy that was close enough to mine, and we felt at ease with each other's position on policy matters. Though not by any means a Marxist, Ravi was familiar with socialist thought and had by then come to the conclusion that the modalities and ethics of the Indian corporate sector made it inherently acquisitive and exploitative; and that state action was essential if industrial competition was to prevail. He was enough of a socialist to appreciate the need for the public sector occupying the commanding heights of industry, at least at that stage of India's development. But, in retrospect, I have the feeling that his allegiance to the public sector was, even at that time, less wholehearted than mine. Subsequent events have proved that he was more right than many of us in cautioning against the dangers of placing too much faith in the efficiency of the public sector and too little in the social awareness of the new generation of private industry.

Ravi's pioneering work on industrial concentration had a lasting impress on academic thinking in India as well as on industrial policy and legislation. It also elevated him to the Bombay University's chair in industrial economics. Meanwhile, the political and economic situation became extremely fluid—with the transition from Jawaharlal Nehru to Lal Bahadur Shastri to Indira Gandhi. The fierce in-fighting within the Congress Party had started a process of polarisation in society and the gulf between 'socialistic planners' and 'organisation Congressites' quickly widened, raising fresh debates on public sector investment, priorities, controls and the policies of planning. Inevitably, pressure groups and vested interests of all kinds surfaced in this turbulence and began to align themselves with one or the other of the Congress schisms. It was not a situation from which activists and idealists in academia, the press and elsewhere in society could keep aloof; and Sachin Chaudhuri and Ravi Hazari, with their deep sense of social responsibility, could hardly watch it all passively. They were both deeply involved, each in his own way, in sorting out the essentials, counseling those in power or those aspiring to it and—most importantly —striving to raise the level of public understanding of vital issues at stake. Ravi's contributions on the industrial structure heightened, in particular, the debate on the need to curb monopoly and restrictive practices in both private industry and trade-extending there from to banking which was still very much their preserve. Sadly, Sachin died at the height of all this turmoil, and after an interval, Ravi stepped into the editorial position of the EPW.

Hazari had by then become a somewhat controversial figure and I recollect the hesitation some senior associates of Sachin Choudhuri had about inviting him to edit the journal. I had in the meantime shifted to Washington DC for a stint at the World Bank and cannot, therefore, speak on this episode with any claim to detailed knowledge. There were, however, a couple of letters to me from some of those interested, setting out the pros and cons of possible incumbents and asking for my views. I cannot honestly claim to have come out strongly in favour of Ravi; my doubts centred mainly on whether Ravi could maintain the very high standards of fairness, scholarship, political and historical assessment and aesthetic sensibility set by Sachin. But I could not also pretend that any of the other candidates could do so, that Sachin's world was permanent or that his style would continue to be suitable in the changed situation. Nor did it appear to me correct that the new editor, whoever it may be, should be denied the privilege of shaping the task in his own way or developing a new style, as long as they were in tune with the basic spirit and objectives of the journal. Ravi was in the end entrusted with the task; and it is now a matter of history that in the brief period of his stewardship, the EPW not merely endured but grew in strength. It attracted new talent without losing the older ones; and while its editorials and weekly notes may have lacked the depth and refinement of Sachin's writing, they maintained the objectivity and relevance that had given The Economic Weekly a special position amongst professional journals. Rather importantly, Ravi fashioned for the EPW an organisational and financial base which it so sadly lacked in the past.

II

The traumatic changes in India during 1969 also ended Hazari's stint as an editor and, much to the amazement of many, he was catapulted into the Reserve Bank to become youngest deputy governor in the bank's history. Since I was still in the service of the bank, he had become very much my senior in the hierarchy, and I cannot pretend to have been entirely pleased with this development. While I was still trying to figure out whether, and if so how, I should reshape my re-entry into India and the Reserve Bank, Ravi sent a warm and gracious note to me through a common friend, hoping that his entry into the RBI would not result in my quitting and looking forward to some exciting joint operations, when I returned. I came back to the RBI three years later, by which time it had become, so to speak, a different ball-park.

This is not the place nor the occasion to indulge in historical digression. But the years 1969-72 were apparently so eventful in Ravi's life that some recounting of the environmental changes may not be out of place. One of the issues in the 'great divide' of 1969 was bank nationalisation, and it is now well known that not only the so-called Syndicate in the Congress but many others in high places—including, it would appear, the then governor of the RBI and several senior officials in the government of India—were strongly opposed to it. Steps already taken, such as 'social control' and the appointment of the Banking Commission, were expected by them to rid the banking industry of the many ills to which it was heir; and the official argument was that these measures should be tried out before any drastic action was taken. But (as it became clearer later) gaining the commanding heights of banking was for Indira Gandhi not just a bargaining chip in the internal politics of the Congress party but an integral part of her grand strategy of emasculation of all institutions outside of her office. Unsurprisingly, the opponents of nationalisation lost out; the recalcitrant governor was

moved out and, as it appeared to the rest of the world, a young knight in shining armour was entrusted with the task of remoulding the banking sector.

I do not know whether, as many seemed to believe, Ravi Hazari played a crucial role in the bank nationalisation episode—or whether he had at all pushed the case for it. But it was common knowledge that both Mohan Kumaramangalam, who had become a cabinet minister, and P N Haksar, the prime minister's principal secretary, were much in favour of the move. It was also widely known that Ravi was close to both of them, and they might have been instrumental in inviting him to take over at the Reserve Bank. In any event, he came to the Reserve Bank with the specific instruction that he should have complete charge of banking operations and development, apart from any other responsibilities entrusted to him.

By the time I returned to the bank in 1972, Ravi Hazari was well established in the upper echelons of India's policy-makers. He was no longer the sleek young academic I had known in the early 1960s. He had put on some weight and his gait had turned a trifle ponderous. He seemed to enjoy the authority he had, as well as the awe in which his colleagues and associates held him. He made no attempt to hide the fact that he was on the hot-line to New Delhi or that his voice was heard on many matters besides banking policy. However, the old-world courtesy, the deliberate—almost calculated—gestures and a liking for intellectual activity remained, along with the obvious enjoyment of the good things of life. Over the years, he had cultivated new mannerisms—an oracular style of public speaking and a penchant for innuendo and the sly remark in private discussion. Above all, he had very successfully projected the impression of a strong, courteous and constructive person in office as well as outside. Part of his aura and reputation understandably derived from the confidence reposed in him by the prime minister whose stature had grown immensely in the wake of the Bangladesh war. But there was little doubt that Ravi had earned most of it. In his three years of office he had travelled extensively, gained intimate knowledge of Indian bankers and banking, and established his competence to administer tough measures. To my pleasant surprise, I found that at this stage power still flowed from the RBI at Bombay insofar as the financial world was concerned, despite government ownership of major banks and the ceaseless efforts of the Department of Banking at New Delhi to gain ascendancy. Not a little of this was due to the strong handling of the transition from private to public banking by Ravi Hazari, and the dedicated support he got from both his colleagues in the RBI and the leaders of the banking community

As in all established bureaucracies, those who had gone up the official ladder through sheer seniority and become high priests of precedence and procedure resented Ravi's power, popularity and eagerness to get things done quickly rather than 'according to rules'. The younger officers in the research and operational departments relished this clash between the new and the old, and cooperated fully with Ravi. He had made it a practice to listen to the case worker, whatever his or her level, when consulting with the heads of departments; but he did so in such a way that the normal 'lines of control' were not disrupted. However, within each department under his control, he had established channels of information of his own!

The high noon of Ravi's power was clearly the years immediately preceding the celebrated Allahabad High Court judgment against Indira Gandhi, and the subsequent rise of Sanjay Gandhi to power. Apart from the accidental death of Kumaramangalam, the eclipse of P N

Haksar and the progressive strengthening of the finance ministry's hold over public sector banks, Ravi's power-base was eroded later by the differences between RBI and the government on matters of policy. Drought and balance of payments difficulties had thrown a heavy burden on demand management to counter domestic inflation. While RBI pressed for effective curbs on government expenditure along with credit control, government was keen on securing greater access to commercial bank deposits for public sector financing and deeper cuts in credit to the private sector, especially to large and medium industry and trade. Runaway increases in money supply and domestic prices were blamed on the Reserve Bank's failure to control bank credit, and the bank was made to appear weak and partial to large borrowers in the private sector. As events moved relentlessly towards the Emergency, pressure mounted on the Reserve Bank to raise the statutory liquidity ratio, lend more to the Food Corporation, Indian Oil Corporation and other public sector enterprises, and finance the growing budget deficits; and correspondingly those who resisted these demands incurred the displeasure of the supreme power in New Delhi. Ravi had, perhaps, the worst of it all, given his reputation at that time of being the man who counted most in banking affairs.

Had the RBI-government differences been only on matters of broad policy, the dust would perhaps have settled down as soon as the awesome power of the government came into full play with the Emergency. But there were other specific matters on which Ravi had taken a strong position— such as application of the Credit Authorisation Scheme fully to public sector enterprises; grant of commercial bank credit to the Maharashtra government's scheme of monopoly procurement of cotton, transmission of RBI's statutory inspection reports on banks to the Department of Banking; grant of additional credit facilities to Maruti enterprises and other sick units controlled by those who had clustered around Sanjay Gandhi; licensing of bank branches on political recommendations, etc. Further, the power centres in New Delhi had by then realised the immense potential the public sector banks had for the exercise of pressure and patronage. As was only to be expected in these circumstances, the RBI and Ravi soon found themselves in a bad squeeze. When in 1975 a new governor of the Reserve Bank was appointed, it was not Ravi Hazari who was elevated, as seemed more than likely only a few months back. And as if this was not enough of a blow, the governor took the earliest possible opportunity to divest Hazari of the banking operations and credit policy portfolios. Much to my embarrassment, these departments were transferred to me; Ravi urged me to take over rather than let them pass to New Delhi's minions in the bank and helped me unstintingly with his advice.

III

It is a measure of Ravi's strength of character that he bore these blows with great dignity and forbearance. Instead of sulking or complaining feebly or seeking sympathy, he turned his full attention to the Agricultural Credit and Development Corporation, of which he was ex-officio chairman.

Given the political situation, he was most careful in his public utterances and associations and maintained a low profile in all he did thereafter. But the urge to organise and develop the institution under his charge effectively and in a manner that gave it an inherent stability to grow, continued. Despite slights and personality differences, he participated in the bank's corporate deliberations and activities as before. He scrupulously avoided doing anything that

smacked of encouraging dissension within the Reserve Bank or outside. It seemed as if the light had gone out of him. Perhaps some of it had; he had an acute perception of the political dimensions of what was happening under the Emergency, as well as the ruthless action that would be taken against him at the slightest indication of defiance or non-cooperation, and chose to be discreet. But he continued to resist the 'crowding out' of the private sector in the money and capital markets, arguing that utilisation of unused capacity in the private sector, particularly for the supply of wage or investment goods in great demand, was a matter of high priority in the inflationary conditions then prevailing, and that denial of essential credit to the private sector would only intensify the pressure on prices and balance of payments. His courageous stand on this issue was interpreted in official circles as anti-public sector, with the delays and inefficiencies of which Ravi had no patience. His scepticism about the relevance of many of the existing administrative controls or of the competence of the administrative service to manage business enterprises efficiently had become stronger over the years. Much later, he spoke bitterly of the 'Rents of Misdelivery' which the government's policy of mindless extension of the control machinery had generated; but in those years of terror and persecution he had bottled it all up.

All this was no tonic to a sick body. In the hectic years of the past, he had sadly neglected his health and unbeknown to his colleagues or family or even himself he was on the brink of a breakdown. The blow fell a few months before his second term as deputy governor ended and thereafter the flesh remained weak though the spirit stayed as strong and as free from self-pity as ever.

Despite all the intensity and glory of his long career as a teacher, researcher, activist intellectual, policy adviser, editor and policymaker, Ravi had not Retired' rich. He did not have a pension or a comfortable nest-egg to fall back upon. Thanks to one of his earlier investments, he had an apartment of his own in Bombay—for the reconditioning of which a fair portion of his savings had to be utilised. But the income from other sources was not adequate for his young family's needs; his wife Saroj continued to teach at St Xavier's and despite failing health he had to find ways of supplementing the family's earnings. Among his enduring interests were management training and business counselling, which now offered him some scope for living honourably. The enormous moral support he had from his wife and children, and the regard and affection of numerous friends in banking, industry and academia made it possible for him to be much more active than it seemed possible for one so frail in health. Resolutely he had eschewed smoking, alcoholic drinks and gourmet food—all of which he had enjoyed to fully and for so long—and gradually built up enough strength to travel, attend board meetings or work as visiting faculty or consultant. Meeting him off and on, I had begun to think that the worst was over, and that, as his sons settled down and the rancours of the past ebbed away, he was at the start of a new chapter in his illustrious career. His contributions as a visiting professor, writer, company chairman and member of the prestigious Chakravarty Committee on the Working of the Monetary System had strengthened that feeling. But Ravi left suddenly, taking away from the world of those who had the privilege of knowing him more than a little bit of its rich flavour. He lived, not long enough to rest on his oars or accumulate riches, but meaningfully enough to leave a memory that one can cherish.

Remembering Napoleon and Dad by Rabindra Kishen Hazari Jr.

Napoleon was very short. He was my father's hero. Dad, Rabindra Kishen Hazari, was also very short, barely 5'3, and he didn't wear platform shoes.

Dad would read out Napoleon's speeches and those of Cicero, Seneca, Tacitus, Nehru and many others from Plutarch's Lives and other classics from ever since I can remember.



When I was around 2 to 4 years old, I would wait for Dad to return from his lectures when he was a Lecturer in Economics in St Xaviers College, Bombay, or from New Delhi, where he would be working on Commissions from the Finance Minister.

I would eagerly scramble into Dad's lap with books which I couldn't read then but I would point with a grubby finger at various extracts I had marked and have Dad read them to me again and again and again.

Dad would explain and answer my hundreds of questions with incredible patience whilst my mother and grand-mother would scowl and scold me for not letting Dad rest, eat or sleep. I often fell asleep in Dad's arms midway through these readings and intense quizzing.

Later, when my younger brother, Sona, and I were older, we would accompany Dad on his private and official trips to some of the most beautiful, remote and most backward places in India; all over the North East, Himachal, Kashmir, the areas which were later hotbeds of insurgency, Konkan, Deccan, Kutch, Rajasthan, Punjab, all over South India, the Sunderbans and tea gardens in the Nilgiris, Assam, Darjeeling and the Dooars, North Bengal, where I much later worked briefly on a summer job whilst in College.

Rabindra Hazari Jr. and Somindra Hazari Accompanying R K Hazari on Trips in the 1970s



L-R: ?, Sona, R K Hazari, ?, ?



Rabindra Hazari Jr. extreme left and R K Hazari third from the right

My happiest memories of Dad is of listening to his reading out speeches and extracts of famous books, attending his public speeches and travelling with him all over India especially by train and road.

What do you make of this countryside, Dad would ask?

Nothing, my brothers, Sona [Somindra Hazari], Hemu [Hemindra Hazari] and I, South Bombay born and bred, would reply.

Look again, carefully this time, Dad would urge.

What are the houses like? *Kucha* or *pucca*?

Are there electricity transmission towers and power cables?

Is there water? Wells, tanks, canals? Pumpsets? Tractors?

That showed whether the land was irrigated or non-irrigated. Tractor meant prosperous farmer.

Roads, dirt or tarred?

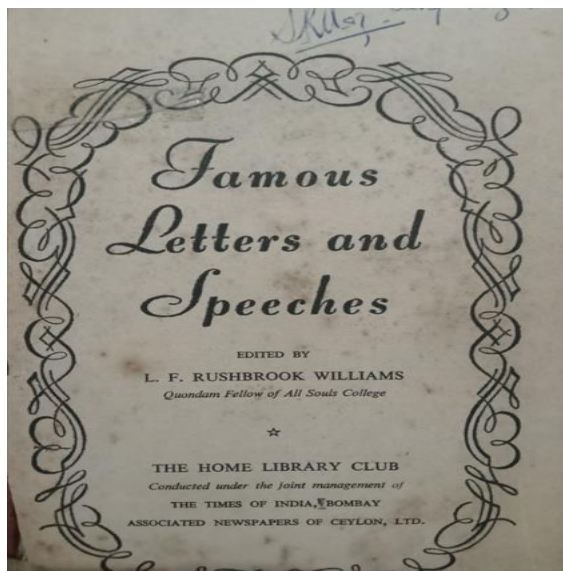
Later, the kinds of crops grown; food single crops for sustenance on arid non-irrigated soil, bajra, jowar; whilst wheat and sugar cane are double cash crops on irrigated soils, with huge differences in farm income and rural wealth.

Coconut and fruit bearing trees; these take years to bear fruit. What does the farmer live on until his trees bear fruit? He must have fruit bearing trees already or alternative income. Poor, landless, marginal farmers cannot suddenly start with fruit trees. If they do, it's often a scam to get farm credit in the names of benamis.

These are the indelible memories of my father who sadly died young, aged just 54 in 1986.

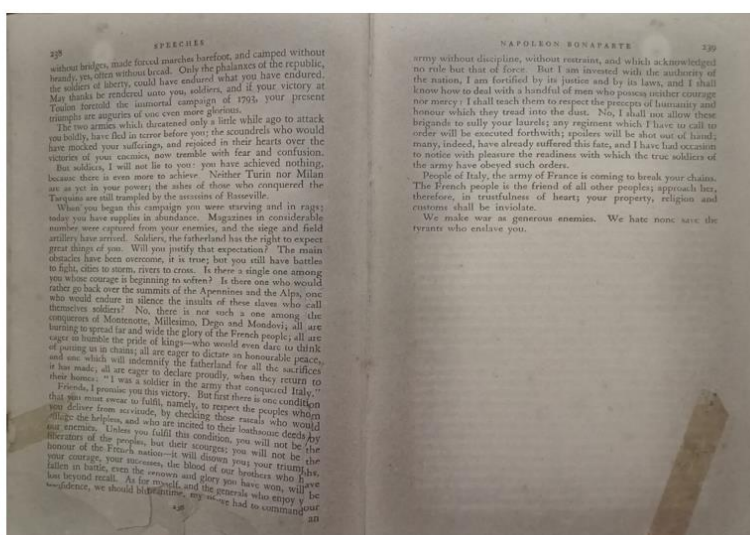
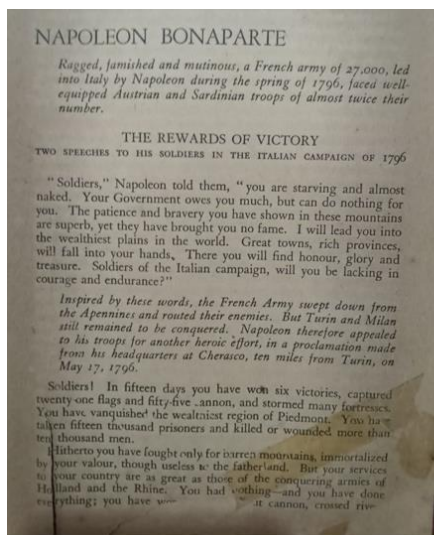
My family still reeling in shock at Dad's sudden death was at a loss of what to do at his funeral. Dad had warned us umpteen times since we were knee high, when I die, no priests, no prayers, no rituals. We obeyed. None of the above. However, there was a vacuum, we needed something to say or said, some closure.

Then I remembered my father's hero, Napoleon. I pulled out the precious book, "Famous Letters and Speeches", which Dad would read to us.



Standing next to my father's body, I read out his favourite speech, [Napoleon's speech in 1796](#) at the start of his celebrated Piedmont Campaign, when following Hannibal's footsteps in the Punic Wars of Carthage [264 - 146 BC] versus Rome, Napoleon did the unexpected and the impossible, he crossed the Alps with a French army of conscripts, peasants and artisans, starved and in rags, and with great valour and brilliant generalship routed several Italian and Austrian armies, conquering Italy. And so it was with the stirring words of Napoleon's great speech still ringing like a war mantra in our ears, exhorting us to do the impossible, we said Bye Bye to Dad.

HEMINDRA HAZARI




SOMINDRA KISHEN HAZARI (1961-2021), son of Rabindra Kishen Hazari
and Sarojini Rao (Sarojini Rabindra Hazari)

Speech by Mr. Somi Hazari at the 104th Birth Anniversary of Mr. K. Kuruvila Jacob

The Fifth Annual Function of the Kuruvilla Jacob Initiative for Promoting Excellence in School Education at the Museum Theatre. Egmore, Chennai. August 3, 2008

Programme	
4.25 p.m. - 5.15 p.m.	: Tea
5.15 p.m. - 5.20 p.m.	: Invocation
5.20 p.m. - 5.30 p.m.	: Welcome Address Mr. S. Viji
5.30 p.m. - 5.45 p.m.	: Concept of Teaching Prof. Krishna Kumar, Director, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)
5.45 p.m. - 6.05 p.m.	: Distribution of certificates to schools
6.05 p.m. - 6.25 p.m.	: Launch of Multimedia enhanced elementary science - a web based joint project of the Kuruvila Jacob Initiative and IIT Madras for schools, by Dr. M. S. Ananth Director, Indian Institute of Technology Madras
6.25 p.m. - 6.40 p.m.	: The Impact of Kuruvila Jacob on my life- Mr. Somi Hazari, Managing Director, Shosova Properties Pvt. Ltd. [Student of Kuruvila Jacob from Cathedral and John Connon School, Mumbai]
6.40 p.m. - 6.45 p.m.	: Vote of Thanks Mr. V.K. Chandrakumar
6.45 p.m.	: National Anthem

KURUVILA JACOB INITIATIVE



**for Promoting Excellence
in School Education**

Honorable members on the dias and distinguished invitees

At the outset, let me thank the core committee of The Kuruvila Jacob Initiative for Promoting Excellence in School Education for having me on board and to have bestowed on me the honor of having me speak here today to this august gathering.

Padma Sri K. Kuruvila Jacob was my principal at Cathedral & John Connon School Bombay from 1969 until 1978. I joined the school in 1966 in Standard 1 and passed out in 1980 after having completed my 12th. Std.

He was to me, apart from being my Principal my philosopher and guide.

The impressions on my life by the late Mr. Kuruvila Jacob have been several. I would like to share some of these with all of you today.



School Colours awarded to Somi Hazari for Boxing and Rugby, 1979-1980

I was by no means a good academic student in my early school years. Boxing and Rugby were my forte.



*Cathedral & John Connon School Boxing team, 1978. L-R. Sitting: Sanjay Ghosh, Mr Pal, Sanjay Khanna (Boxing Captain), Mr Wally Abrahams, Juddah Gabbe. Standing: Phiroze Dubash, Vikram Malani, Kevin Malaney, **Somindra Hazari**.*

I was dubbed as a teacher's nightmare. Life to me at that stage was all fun and games with a little bit of compulsory study thrown in.



*Cathedral & John Connon School Rugby team, 1978. L-R. Seated: Rajesh Sachdev, Sanjay Khanna, Mr. Wally Abrahams, Virendra Ahuja (Captain), Mr Nepali, Karan Singh, Sunil Khanna (Kheru). Standing: Shrenik Nanavati, Nilesch Somaiya, Neville Moos, Sanjay Kohli, Ravi Khote, Mohan Paniker, Sandeep Mathrani, **Somindra Hazari***

In fact, when the invitations for this function were set out one of my favorite teachers Mrs. Cherian who had taken great pains to ensure that I studied French got in touch with me through the core committee and inquired if I was the same student. I called her and we had a good long chat. It was a great feeling to have connected with her again after all these years.

Very often was I marched off or summoned to The Principal's office for deeds and misdeeds. A visit of that nature in those days went around the school like wild fire. Mind you in those years there was no mass communication such as e-mail or anything near it.

On each of the visits began a special relationship developed between a student who could do only wrong and his Principal who had a mission to correct the situation.

His words – Not you again / I knew that you had to be at the bottom of this/ Next time and you will be expelled – at times still echo in my head.

Our school had the infamous pink card system – if you got 3 of them then you were automatically expelled. In my long years I was privileged to have got 9 and survived. If I had any other Principal other than Mr. Kuruvila Jacob my story would have been different and I would definitely not be standing here in front of you today.

On each occasion of these visits he first heard what I had to say, in my defence, then gave his views and then asked me what I thought about his views and the course of action directed by him. He was flawless in analyzing the authenticity of the perceived problem and working towards a swift solution.

I can say with confidence that what he did in these difficult cases and more important the manner in which he executed it, has taught me what no Management Programme or any other course has until date.

In the year 1977 after we had finished our never ending cross country run I was helping myself to my 3rd cup of tea and having my 12th biscuit or so, when I was approached by Mr. Kuruvila Jacob who said that the well-known old English public school The West Buckland School, Devon, England was offering a scholarship and that I should consider it.

I was shocked and thought he was being sarcastic, as he was also known for a good sense of humor I thought he was joking but there was a serious tone in his voice. I was no doubt confused.

Within a week he announced at the school assembly that the school had done well when the best academically inclined students were sent on scholarships and the students sent had done the school proud. He paused a while and then went onto announce that it was time that the school be acknowledged for its strengths in other areas namely Boxing and Rugby for which no other student was better suited other than me.

The news was greeted with some sighs and scepticism.

Later he called me into his chambers and said I have taken this decision against all odds and a lot of opposition so please don't fail me.

The faith he put in me made me determined to live up to his expectations and raise my own expectations accordingly.

To cut a long story short I did not disappoint him at all. In fact, I did better than that.

When I thanked him profusely on my return he thanked me and said those golden words – I knew you wouldn't let me down.

Mr. Kuruvilla Jacob was a man who was a visionary, he made Home Science and Cooking compulsory for both boys and girls in the 11th, and 12th, standard. We all thought of it as a major joke those days. He made sure that all of us took it very seriously. Normally old students announce with pride and like a "Badge of Honor" that they are Gold Medalists of Science/Maths/Humanities/Accounts etc. I say with great pride that I got the prize for The Best Home Science Student which still ensures that I can make myself more than a decent square meal for myself at least, as you can see.

Great pains were taken by Mr. Kuruvilla Jacob and his able team – to name a few – Miss. Hallegua who spared no effort in ensuring that our English was better than The English, Mrs. Bhesania who ensured that Accountancy was drilled into our heavy heads, Mrs. Nargolwalla who made sure that Hindi became second nature to us, Dr. Wagh the “Tough as Nails” NCC and Marathi Master who would have us sit and walk ram rod straight and have discipline written all over us as well as speak Marathi as a local would, Mr. Lobo the tough ex Naval Officer who made sure Physics sailed through our heads despite several choppy days.



*Cathedral & John Connon School, National Cadet Corps (NCC). Best Troop in Maharashtra, 1975. L-R Kneeling: Rajat Sampat, Phiroze Soonawalla, Yatin Saraiya, Sundeep Honnekkeri. Seated: Sanjeev Aggarwal, Zarir Baliwala, Dr Wagh, **Somindra Hazari**, Sam Todywala. Standing: Phillip Thomas Kovilakath, Arun Rao.*

The objective of our teachers was to instill in us a deep sense of values and the irrelevance of material things.

Honesty and integrity had to be a virtue of ones character.

It was emphasized to us that one had to be a good loser and at times victory in defeat was better than a hollow victory.

We were told that it was important to look up when the chips were down and to always remember the old saying – Only when the going gets tough only the tough get going.

Mr. Kuruvila Jacob had an eye for detail and a zero tolerance level for certain “unforgiveables” as he put it. Shoes had to be polished and were checked not only in front but from the rear as well.

Despite all this, there was always something humane down to earth about him. One example of this quality was when the local municipality confiscated the wares of the local “channawalla” the street hawker who sold channa / peanuts and the much favored raw mango slices diced with salt, chili powder and a squeeze of lime, he wasted no time in having a meeting with a few of us and had the channawalla reinstated within the school premises where he could sell his wares in more hygienic conditions thus benefiting all of us.

Cathedral, being a co-educational institution Mr. Kuruvila Jacob ensured that both boys and girls got along “socially” The 70’s if you remember was the age of rock and roll and of course discos.

School socials were organized where western music was played and dancing between boys and girls were encouraged BUT the boys had to request the girls with – May I have the pleasure of this dance with you ? and a thank you after the dance was over, if the offer was accepted. It was here that the boys grew into Gentlemen and the Girls into Young Ladies.

We were also instilled with loyalty true to our school song which says School First, House Next, Self Last.

Ones school years are the most impressionable at least for me.

When one has been fortunate enough to have had a Principal such as Mr. Kurvila Jacob one cannot ask for more.... It is now our time to deliver.....

Thank you ladies and gentlemen.

Remembering Somi by Rabindra Kishen Hazari Jr.

March 31, 2021

Mes Amis. Thank you all for your messages and calls and outpouring of love, concern and grief for Somi, or Sona, as my much beloved mountain bear like brother, Somindra, was called at home.



We are totally devastated at Sona expiring so suddenly. He was ailing for the last few days. His grotesquely swollen and maimed legs which had been gouged with gangrene when his appendix burst inside his abdomen when he was less than 3 years old was a constant ravaging pain which he bore with his customary joke and cackle; the diabetes, the pancreatic and all other miscellaneous ailments, he made light of and charged through like the Rugby player of old that he was and remained at heart.

My Mum spoke to Sona on Holi morning and was alarmed at how listless Sona sounded. "Dont Worry Mama", I assured her, "Sona is Sona. He will get well soon and smash through yet again".

Instead, there was this frenzied banging on my bedroom door at about 4 pm. I was fast asleep. Giddy and disoriented, I opened my door and my youngest brother, Hemu, charged in. "Nika (Sona's wife, Varanika), just called. Sona expired".

It was a bullet to the brain. What followed was unreal. I thought it was a horrible dream, that Sona's characteristic chuckle will be heard anytime soon heralding that this is a macabre joke. Instead, I heard a sobbing Nika say that Sona had his lunch in his upstairs bedroom in his charming duplex penthouse in a rural area outside Madras, that when she returned to the bedroom, Sona wasnt breathing. All their efforts at pulmonary massage, resuscitation, were of no avail. Sona was gone. Poof! Just like that! Gone!

Sona, the Great Grand Daddy of all Pranksters, had played his final prank. He had quietly slipped away, giving doctors and hospitals his beloved middle finger salute, as he did the ultimate bunk of all; from life altogether.

Telling Mum was the most difficult part.

We gently roused Mum from her afternoon nap. The first thing Mum sleepily said was, "How is Sona? I didnt like the sound of his voice when we spoke in the morning."

"Please wash your face, Mama" , said I, hoping that my voice didnt tremble.

Our 92 year old Mum, quietly freshened up in the bathroom without a word, then emerged, standing tall and straight, she looked at us directly and with a tremor in her voice said, "You have both come. You have something terrible to tell me...isnt it?"

That is when the three of us collapsed into each others'arms, holding each other tight as we wept for our beloved Sona, the light of our lives, not believing that we will never hear his booming voice again.

What followed was a blur.

Hemu and I flew down to Madras on the 30th.

We arrived at Sona's residence which is in a resort complex in a village in Kanchipuram District of Tamil Nadu, one and a half hours from the Madras airport.



Palmyra Springs, Nariambakkam village, Sriperumbudur taluk, Kanchipuram district

As per our family custom, we insisted on no religious rituals, no priests nor prayers, and that Sona's daughter, Shonali, aged 31, will light the funeral pyre.

This deeply shocked the villagers as women never go to the cremation ground and the lighting of the funeral pyre is a strict male prerogative which is carried out with complex Hindu ceremonies all of which we had cheerfully short circuited.

So the villagers, who adored Sona and Nika, diplomatically set up the pyre 50 metres from the open corrugated roof shed which is the roadside village crematorium.

At home, Sona's body was kept in a Sleeping Beauty like viewing casket cum refrigerated box. I thought Sona was sticking his tongue out which would have been his way to say his last irreverent good bye.

Hemu embraced the casket repeatedly and for long, too choked for words, sobbing his heart out.

I sat far away. I was glad that our mother did not have to see this sight. No mother should see her child dead before her.

Sona seemed too restricted in the casket for my liking. He looked uncomfortable. This is not the way I wanted to remember him. Of course, its a bloody miracle that they found a casket big enough to hold him considering that Sona tipped the scales at a mere 158 kilos, which was down from his proud peak of 175+kilos.

In the meantime, George arrived. We grew up with George when we lived in Bank House when George was an integral member of our household. George hailed from Tuticorin, near the southern tip of Tamilnadu, more than 600 kms from Madras. He had taken a flight from Tuticorin and rushed over to be in time for Sona's funeral.

George and Sona shared a special bond. Sona was perpetually falling foul of the Cathedral School teachers. Not for nothing was Sona called, "Teachers' Pest", an accolade that Sona typically wore with great pride. Dr Krishnan, our celebrated English literature teacher, was fond of doling out punishments, like, "Someeendra! You horrible boy!! You will copy out the entire Act II of Julius Caesar. I want it on my table by 8.30 am tomorrow."

Sona would nonchalantly roll home and rouse George. "George, let us improve our English. And what better way of doing so than by studying Shakespeare. Let us start with my favourite, Julius Caesar. " Of course, the joint study session was just a ploy to get George to write all the detention work which George gladly did thereby earning Sona's undying gratitude.

Soon George became so famous that Sona's entire Galllery of Rogues, all got their detention homework written by George.

Many years passed and George returned to Tamilnadu as an union leader of the erstwhile Vijaya Bank Staff Union but he always maintained his close relationship with our family, naming his daughter, Shonali, after Sona, and his son, Rabindrajeeva, after me.

Seeing George, and holding him tight and close, I wept for how lucky we were to have good, solid, loyal friends like George, and how chuffed Sona would have been, to have George at his side to say the final good bye.

We had to wait a long while for the shops to open in the nearby Padappai town where firewood and other funeral pyre materials had to be bought. More time passed as the funeral pyre had to be laboriously constructed by the villagers.

Finally, they were ready. It was now 1 pm. The sun burnt hot and fiercely with gusts of wind. Accompanied by shrieks from the women, who usually are barred by custom from proceeding further, Sona's refrigerated Sleeping Beauty casket was wheeled out of his apartment.

A paltan of about 15 solidly built Thambis lifted Sona out of the refrigerated casket, then down from his penthouse apartment to a gaudily decked out open hearse, which was a cross between a Mahabharat charriot from a Tamil mythological potboiler, and an Election Special Rath Yatra of our warring DMK parties.



Sona was laid to rest on the top of the flower decked bier, while his wife, Nika, and daughter, Shonali, sat on the steps of the flower decked celestial charriot. Rose petals were liberally strewn while Hemu, George, I and many villagers, males only, accompanied the chariot on foot.

I was pleased. Sona would have been happy. He loved pomp and pageantry. Going out in style, lying on top of a flower decked charriot, with half the village following in his wake, was something Sona would definitely have approved of.



Walking in the burning Sun, we walked out of the resort complex and onto the kucha village road until in a patch of scrubland we came to the pyre.

I gazed dumbstruck at the laboriously constructed pyre, which had obviously been made with much skill and expertise, but it was unlike any funeral pyre I had previously seen, and I had seen plenty.

Firstly, it wasn't all wood. I was horrified to see that the bottom

layers consisted of old tyres. Burning tyres I associated with street protests and black smelly smoke!! Then I grinned. Sona always loved cars as did his son, Somi Jr, who was sadly stuck in far away Toronto. Father and son were happiest talking cars, or even better, driving into posh showrooms all dressed up, pretending to buy those over-priced four wheels, which they would take out for a spin and return the car with a trembling salesman who had often wet his pants at their high speed skid antics.. "Just testing the brakes, old chap.."

Sona, would have approved of a pyre made of tyres!

What the Hell, Get the Show rolling, Sona would have hollered.

And so the show began. With more wailing from the ladies, and grunts from the Thumbi Paltan which had to be reinforced, Sona was placed, swaddled in a Toga like bedsheet, on top of the pyre of old tyres and logs of wood.



I remembered Sona's 5th Standard class play, in Middle School, in 1971, (I was in the 7th), when Sona played King Midas, he was similarly caprisioned in a toga. Rags, Ravi Khote, was feeding Sona porridge as Midas couldnt feed himself because everything he touched, turned to gold. Sona, ever greedy, was thrilled at being fed porridge on stage. "Mama, they are feeding me real porridge in my school play", he informed my annoyed mother, who had tartly enquired whether he was fed fake porridge at home.



Dilip Panniker feeding Soma as King Midas, 1971

Sarcasm had no effect on Sona. Food was food. It had to be supplied liberally and fast. This, Ravi Khote, to his misfortune, forgot. He dithered in feeding Sona the porridge at the requisite

speed whereby Sona lost his patience, and caught Rags in an armlock on stage whereby Rags fed Sona porridge superfast while being throttled while the audience roared.

More was to come. Sona, as all those who knew him, knew that he was fascinated by shit. Scatology was Sona's all time favourite subject on which he could effortlessly hold forth for hours, analyzing every whiff, fart, flavour, fragrance, frequency, colour, consistency and a myriad other variables which would put a path lab to shame.

The villagers now produced bags of dried, flattened cow dung cakes which were distributed like prasad amongst us. We reverently placed the dried dung cakes, totally odour free, (Sona would have been disappointed as he liked them pungent), all over Sona.

Raw rice was then scooped and released in three handfulls by each of us on Sona's mountainous middle. Again, Sona would have approved, as he loved rice, which he religiously devoured like a pucca Englishman, with fork and spoon only.

Chilled milk, another favourite of Sona's, was also poured by the family, including George, at the corners of the pyre.

Finally, a huge bale of hay was produced and the hay was spread all over Sona until he disappeared completely under a mountain of hay.



Then, Shonali lit agarbattis, (incense sticks), which were placed at the foot of the pyre.

Then squares of white wax and camphor were placed strategically on top of the pyramid of hay, which Shonali lit, and suddenly the hay was alight and burning.



Everyone walked away quickly. We were told not to tarry, not to look back, but to just go.



L-R: George Elango SM, Rabindra & Hemindra Hazari

So off we went.

The next day, the villagers delivered Sona's ashes in a Kalash.



We are waiting for Sona's son, Somindra Jr, 29, to arrive from Toronto on Friday, when we will decide where we will immerse Sona's ashes.

Mahabalipuram, one of Sona's favourite watering holes, may be considered.

I am deeply concerned, however, at my beloved Sona arriving at Yama's threshold parched and famished.

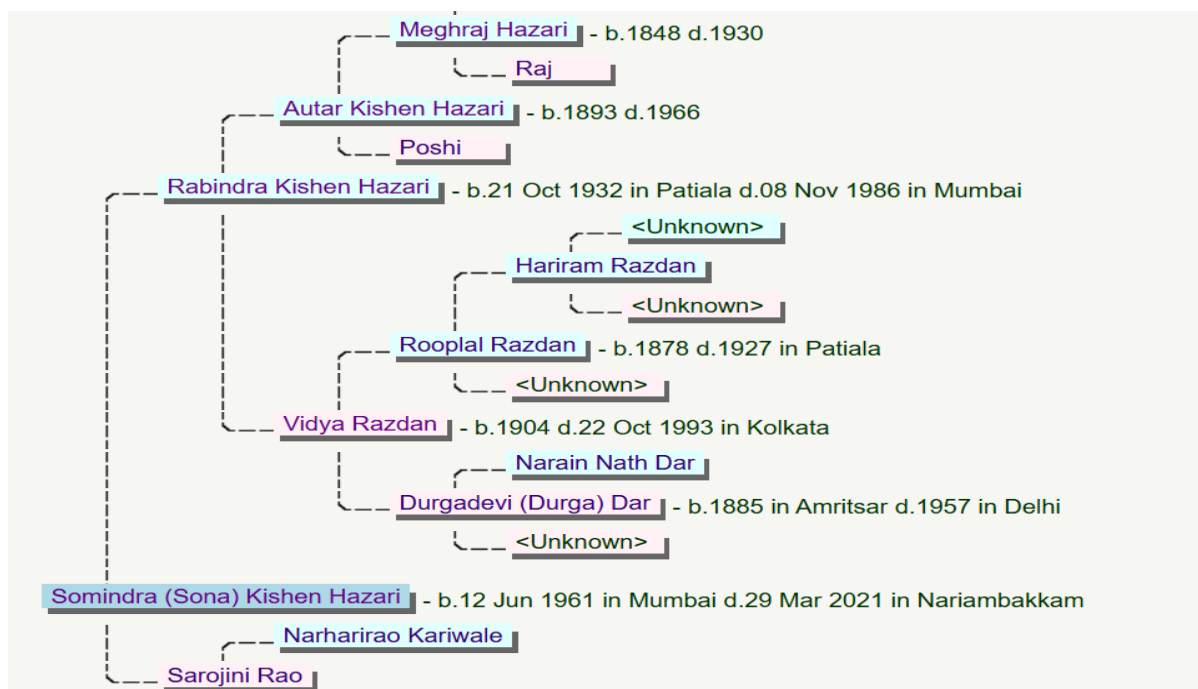
I will hence recommend to our family that the Kalash containing Sona's ashes be filled with Sona's favourite Old Monk Rum and Thums Up and maybe some of his favourite chips as well, so that when Sona meets up with Pal Yama, they have a rip roaring rum soaked Mother of All Parties together.

So, *Mes Amis*, remember Sona with a tumbler of Rum and Thums Up in hand, eats galore, and dance music playing, for Sona lived to eat, drink, crack jokes and be merry, and that is the way to honour Sona!!



April 2, 2021. Somi Jr arrives from Toronto after 3 years. Raising a toast to Soma Hazari. L-R Hemindra (Hemu), Shonali, Rabindra (Ravi) Jr, Varanika, Kiron Kumar and Somindra Jr.

Ancestor Pedigree Chart



HEMINDRA HAZARI

Papa, My Hero By Somindra Kishen Hazari Jr.



April 1, 2021

Air India Flight AI-118 Toronto-Delhi, Flying Somewhere Over Russia

Your lessons on life were well thought
 You loved me even though we fought
 Even in silence you understood me
 Close my eyes and a bigger picture I see
 You showed me how to live with pain
 Making others laugh was always your gain
 Clean shaven, and smartly dressed
 You always knew how to impress
 You commanded the respect of the room
 Even though you didn't like to broom
 You picked yourself up when others brought you down and showed them all
 Who is the king of this town
 You were called Sona, a Hindi word for gold
 But I remember you for being bold
 Not only did you show me how to survive
 But also discovered my passion which is to drive
 You made us laugh even when we were angry with you
 How you did this? I still have no clue
 You were one who would love to eat
 While your conversations were always a treat
 I still don't know how you put up with life
 Looking after two kids and a wife
 We would circle around you and listen to your story
 Funny, light hearted and nothing gory
 You always said what was on your mind

Even when others gave you the grind
 Eat, sleep, greet and meat
 The only thing you couldn't tolerate was a cheat
 People would always call on you for a favor
 And you showed us how this improves our own behaviour
 You knew that I was never really good with words
 That I am an animal lover except for birds
 We loved our moms you and I
 We get upset when they cry
 Simple, elegant and true
 If only I had more time with you
 I didn't know where time flew
 As the distance between us grew
 For you it was day and for me it was night
 At least we didn't have to fight
 There were times when I needed to take a tough stand
 My intuition was always guided by your hand
 Learn from my mistakes was always what you will always say
 Thanks to you, in the mornings I now pray
 You made me realize my full potential and push myself to strive
 Oh, how I wish we could go for one more drive.
 A world pandemic came about and we had to realize
 About all the necessary things and how to prioritize
 We celebrated at the thought of my residency
 And I planned to go home and have my loved ones around me

Then one morning I got the call
 That shattered me and caused me to fall
 For the first time in my life I lost all control
 Lost my fighting spirit and my emotions raged
 The inner fighting animal was caged
 I tossed, turned, wailed and cried
 I just couldn't believe that you have died
 Will time ever make me heal?
 The next day was just unreal
 I know now that your laid to rest
 But I just couldn't get over this pain in my chest
 You will always be in my heart and thought
 No matter how often we fought
 So from now on no matter how things can get bad
 I will always be proud of you my dad
 Nothing may ever be the same
 As I carry on your name.

Good Bye My Brother, Sona by Hemindra Kishen Hazari

Rabindra Kishen Hazari Jr. edited and contributed to this article

April 15, 2021



Sona and I over the Years

We lost our father, Rabindra Kishen Hazari, in 1986, when I was in my final year (TYBA) in St. Xavier's College, Bombay. I was just short of being 21 years old. The suddenness of Dad's death, (he was only 54), was repeated 35 years later when on Holi, 29th March 2021, Yama embraced my elder brother, Somindra Kishen Hazari, ("Sona" to his family and "Somi" to his friends). Sona was 59 years old.



The Family Hazari. February 11, 1984, Calcutta. L-R: R K Hazari, Rabindra (Vicky) Jr., Saroj, Somindra (Sona) & Hemindra (Hemu)

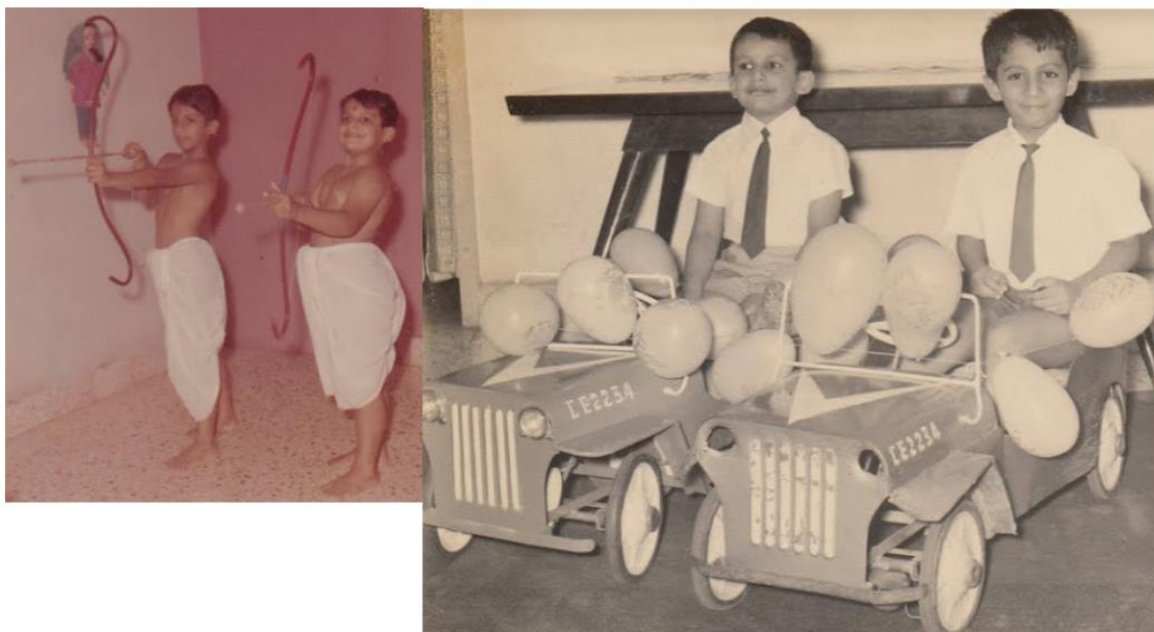
My eldest brother, Rabindra Kishen Hazari Jr, Ravi, (or “Vicky” as we call him at home), wrote a moving [tribute](#) to Sona, while Sona’s son, Somindra Kishen Hazari Jr., penned an emotional [poem](#) on his flight from Toronto to India. Sunil Khanna, (“Kheru”), Sona’s schoolmate, modified the Cathedral and John Connon school song to a rousing [ballad](#) in Sona’s memory. Sona leaves a painful void in our lives and is survived by our mother, Saroj, wife, Varanika, daughter, Shonali, son, Somi Jr., and innumerable friends and relatives, who are all shocked at his abrupt departure.

In 1964, when he was less than three years old, Sona miraculously survived a burst appendix, with gangrene ravaging his small body resulting in massive surgical wounds which erased his navel with horrific scars which covered his abdomen. Sona, lacked an inner stomach wall, and hence had to wear an abdominal belt throughout his childhood.



Rare photo of Sona as a baby with his navel

My father had warned my eldest brother, Vicky, in his incessant fights with Sona, that he could hit Sona anywhere but never in his stomach. My two elder brothers were notorious fighters. They fought constantly. They fought in our home, in the homes of our relatives and friends, in parks and playgrounds and just about everywhere. At home, chairs were smashed as they ripped into each other. My mother would scream in panic but my father, puffing away at his pipe, enjoyed the fisticuffs, egging both sons on, interfering only when the furniture was at risk of getting damaged. Only then, would Dad swiftly stop the fight.



Mid to late 1960s

My elder brothers, (two years separated them), were called “Laurel and Hardy”. Vicky was slim, supple and wiry while Sona was always big and heavy like Yogi Bear. Looking at the pair, it appeared that Vicky never stood a chance. Sona’s fighting strategy was to knock Vicky to the ground and then simply squash him by sitting on him. In contrast, Vicky kept dancing out of reach, hitting Sona with fast, vicious punches and kicks using his skill as a gymnast combined with a street fighter’s cunning. In all the bloody fights I witnessed, the honours were even with Vicky having the edge.

When Vicky and Sona were not fighting each other, they ganged up and thrashed everybody else. They soon became notorious as “the Hazardous Hazaris”, an accolade which they mumbled proudly with puffed chests and bloody noses.



Left: On Sona's wedding day, April 2, 1989. Right: Around 2010-2015

As the age gap between Sona and me was 4 ½ years, my physical fights were restricted to Sona and never with Vicky. All my fights with Sona were completely one-sided and they all ended with me running wailing to my mother for protection.

Sona was famous for his hilarious one-liners. I was the perpetual victim of Sona's jokes and taunts. Once, when I had a particularly painful abscess on my backside, which made sitting very painful, Sona, gleefully introduced me to all and sundry as "the boy with a boil on his bum!". My anguish, was Sona's delight, as Sona liked nothing better than roaring with laughter at his own jokes.

Sona's fond nicknames for me were, "Slave" and "Dog". I retaliated by calling him "Pig". Sona was rather porcine in appearance and habit; as hygiene and cleanliness were never Sona's strong points. Visiting relatives were aghast at our terms of endearment for one another. They sternly coached us to address the elder brother with proper respect as "*Bhaiya*". This made both my elder brothers hoot with horror as they vehemently objected at being confused with "*Doodhwala bhaiyas*"; the Bombaywala's derisive nickname for men from the Cow belt.

One bright summer morning, my mother discovered some pictorial magazines hidden in my brothers' room. The treasured magazines were, of course, promptly confiscated by an apoplectic Mamasan. Mum flipped out and screamed herself hoarse ending with the dreaded threat, "*I shall speak to your father about this.*"

Dad, though usually quite lovable, packed a wallop in his open-handed slap which was destined for your face. Just when you thought that the first slap was bad enough, he followed through with a terrific backhand smash. Dad rarely slapped only once but was a combo slapper with a formidable forehand-backhand combination.

The next morning, both my brothers sat silently at the breakfast table, glumly watching Dad sip his tea and peruse the *Economic Times*, fatalistically awaiting Dad's celebrated combo slaps. After carefully noting that Mum had exited the dining room, Dad looked up and said, "*Your mother has informed me of your reading habits. She has handed me your magazines. In future, when you get such magazines, kindly extend the courtesy of promptly sharing them with me.*"

Thereafter, as per the Concordat arrived at between father and sons, we faithfully shared with Dad whatever magazines we got. Likewise, whenever Dad returned from his foreign trips, he dutifully handed over the latest magazines for his boys. In school, Dad became a celebrity as Sona and I became the librarians of our respective classes for the treasured, well-thumbed issues which Dad so thoughtfully provided. In the years to come, whenever we recalled those lovely ladies, we sang hallelujahs of praise to Dad for spurring us on in the pursuit of happiness.

Hailing from a hard core carnivorous family, my mother, a Tulu speaking Mangalorean, who loved chicken and fish, and Dad, a renegade Kashmiri Pandit, who relished mutton, beef and pork, our world revolved around non vegetarian food.



Our mom had a tradition of dressing each of us as Krishna. But one look at Sona and a relative observed, "Yeh Krishna nahi, yeh to Bhim hai."

Sona, ever the Glorious Glutton, was obsessed with food. Always hungry, with the size, appetite and temperament of Bhim, Sona jealously watched my mother doling out portions of meat or chicken at mealtimes, when he would erupt with rage, accusing Mum of favouring me, with the choicest pieces of meat. Sona bitterly complained to Mum with all seriousness; *"You only believe in odd numbers, 1 and 3; I am the even number 2, so I get treated like your step son"*. For several years, Sona caustically reminded me, *"As I was served only bones, I became tough and strong, while you are soft and weak as you were fed the choicest cuts of meat!"*

Sona, despite wearing an abdominal belt, secretly enrolled for boxing in school without informing our parents. Fortunately, he did not suffer any injury which would have been catastrophic as he did not have any abdominal wall. In the 8th standard, Sona underwent a major four hour surgery whereby multiple hernias were corrected and his stomach muscles were reconstructed. Sona no longer had to wear an abdominal belt.

The surgery magically transformed Sona who lost his big paunch and he could now play rough games with impunity. Sona was now dashing handsome, with a physique resembling Michaelangelo's David and he was constantly surrounded by a bevy of girls who fawned all over him. Sona's Harem was Sona's Pride and Brothers' Envy.



Early to mid 1980s

While Sona and I regularly fought and Ravi occasionally ribbed me, the rules were clear: only my brothers and nobody else could tease me. No other boys, senior or bigger than me, dared bully me as my brothers suddenly descended on them with fraternal fury. However, when it came to boys of my own age and size, they did not interfere. Instead, they coached me in boxing, in which they both excelled. My brothers taught me to fight well and hard with no quarter asked nor given. Non-violence was never an option. The lessons in fisticuffs came handy. Decades later, when I tread the lonely path of exposing the powerful, the corrupt, the greedy, and the incompetent, in India's revered financial world, I was never really alone, as in my corner my guardian brothers always protected my back. Taking on the high, the mighty and the privileged never deterred us. Whenever the occasion demanded, we stood up to be counted and fought the good fight. We were, after all, the Hazardous Hazaris.



February 20, 1984. The Hazari brothers

In Cathedral School in those days, boxing started in the 7th standard. The boxing ring was traditionally erected in the senior school quadrangle with screaming students lining the balconies on three sides looking down on the ring, reminiscent of the blood thirsty Roman mobs of the gladiatorial arenas.

When I entered the 7th standard, I jokingly told my brothers that I will not box. My brothers were appalled. Vicky sternly rebuked me stating, *"Your real education is not in the classroom. It is when you are blooded in the boxing ring and are trampled and torn on the Rugby field."*



*Cathedral & John Connon School Boxing team, 1978. L-R. Sitting: Sanjay Ghosh, Mr Pal, Sanjay Khanna (Boxing Captain), Mr Wally Abrahams (deceased), Juddah Gabbe (deceased). Standing: Phiroze Dubash, Vikram Malani, Kevin Malaney, **Somindra Hazari** (deceased)*

And so it was that I was well blooded in the Inter-House Boxing Tournament. Sona was in my corner as my second. Vicky had already passed out of school. In the first round, I was hammered hard; my face being a mess of blood, sweat and saliva. As the bell sounded for the end of the first round, I returned to my corner, bloodied, bruised and in shock. In those thirty seconds between rounds, Sona pumped me with courage and cunning, and in the next two rounds, I gave as good as I got, eventually losing narrowly in a closely fought fight. Later, Sona counselled me, *"You panicked initially when you got hit. It is only when you get hit, that you learn. You learnt. Don't worry. The lessons of the Ring; are the lessons of life."*

Years later, when I left Cathedral School for St Xavier's College, I returned to the boxing ring in our school quadrangle to cheer my former classmates. The school boxing captain, [Arjun Erry](#), a fine technical boxer, was about to commence his bout. Knowing how butterflies flutter furiously in a boxer's stomach before the bell sounds, I sauntered to his corner and said *"Erry...When the bell rings, you hit first, you hit hard and you keep hitting."* That's what Erry did and that's how he won his bout. These were the lessons of the Ring; learnt hard and

well with blackened eyes and bloodied lips, which were to guide me as a beacon in my future career as a research analyst.

Sona had a heavy hand and boy did I know it well. My last physical fight with Sona was when I was in Junior College. I took the family car, a classic 1961 FIAT 1100, BMF 7658, which was the love of Sona's life, without informing Sona. Worse, I came back late and on seeing Sona frothing at missing his date, I made the cardinal mistake of laughing in his face. Sona shrieked with rage and rushed at me like a maddened bull elephant in musth. I thought I stood a chance as I was at the peak of my fitness but then so was he. Sona's right hook slammed into my jaw. My head snapped back bouncing off the wall behind me and I was stunned, Dad sprang to my defence, lashing Sona with his celebrated forehand-backhand combo slaps, restraining Sona from administering me the coup de grace.

Sona continued with boxing in Sydenham College participating in the Bombay University Inter-College Boxing Tournament. Vicky was very excited and rushed back from Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi to coach Sona. In the final bout, Sona out fought his opponent to be crowned the heavy weight boxing champion of Bombay University. The following year, an over confident Sona did not bother to practice at all. Instead, Sona kept preening himself as Sylvester Stallone in "Rocky", whose lisp he faithfully mimicked along with the dark aviator goggles which he tirelessly wore all day and all night. Vicky could not come from JNU to act as Sona's second. In a keenly contested fight, Sona lost his heavy weight boxing crown but broke his opponent's nose.

While I gave up fisticuffs after my last scrap with Sona, both my elder brothers, even in their late-fifties, remained incorrigible, gleefully wading into fights with fists flying, baying with fury, the blood lust burning bright in their eyes.



1980s. L-R: Hemindra, Mom & Sona. Sona's trophies in the background

In school and college, Sona was a party animal, rarely to be seen at home. It is not for nothing that Amma, our quick-witted maternal grandmother, nicknamed Sona as *“Road Inspector.”* Sona’s constant partying and being out late with friends annoyed my mother no end. One late morning, Mum angrily inquired, *“What time did you come home?”*

Pat came Sona’s reply, *“I was home early.”*

“What nonsense Sona, don’t lie to me. I was up till past midnight and you had not come home.”

Sona smoothly replied, *“I am not lying Mama. I came home early...early in the morning.”*



Around 2000-2010. L-R: Shonali, Sona, Somi Jr., Varanika

Marriage changeth the Man or so they say. For Sona, marriage meant acquiring a wife who was his unwitting accomplice. Post marriage, Sona went on an eating binge whereby his weight peaked at 215 kilos. Sona, however, remained surprisingly quick on his feet. During a stay at the Taj Malabar in Cochin, with his petite Anglo-Indian wife, Varanika, Sona was in the loo, performing lustily on the Throne, when there was a thunderous crack followed by a roar of rage from Sona. Alarmed, Varanika rushed into the loo to find that the western commode had shattered with jagged shards intermingled with crap all over the

floor. Sona was miraculously unhurt but was howling with rage. While Varanika stood thunderstruck wondering how to clean up the foul mess, Sona quickly cleaned himself and rushed out. The next thing she knew was that the hotel manager was in the room with a formally dressed Sona was hollering at him. Pointing to Varanika, he said, *“Look at her size. I can understand if it had been me on the pot, but no, it was her on the pot, and yet your damn pot broke!”*

There was something obviously wrong with the quality of the commodes at the Taj Malabar. In the span of the next two days, Sona smashed a further two commodes. However, each time he claimed that his dear wife had been perched on the commode when it mysteriously fell to pieces. And hence it came to pass, that Sona earned for his wife the title of *“Commode Breaker”*.

Based in Madras, Sona was a familiar figure in the South Indian Chambers of Commerce with his extensive business contacts with Sri Lanka, Southeast Asian and European countries. A

frequent speaker at events he elaborated on the need for growing trade between India and neighbouring nations.



Mid 2000s

Sona's generosity was as wide as his girth which was massive. When I went through difficult times, as I was continually exposing powerful corporate cronies, Sona helped me tide over this tough period. Sona was always there, ever generous with gifts for both Vicky and me, for which Sona never kept tabs. Sona's visits to Bombay were like the first rains following a drought. He came laden with gifts for family and friends and our home filled with laughter as he regaled us with his latest antics. Sona was a One Man Movie, with his stories projected on a 70 mm screen in Technicolour and Dolby sound. Sona played his role of prankster and Court Jester with full zest; remaining at heart the Honourable Schoolboy who never grew old.

Mum, Vicky and I were knocked out when we heard that Sona had expired on Holi. It was unbelievable. It was

not possible that our dear indestructible, ever playful Sona had left us so quietly and so suddenly. How could he leave us so? Numb with disbelief, we left Mum in Bombay, and Vicky and I flew to Madras. There we choked on seeing our beloved Sona entombed in a glass covered refrigerated casket. I recalled how Sona had found humour even in the most sombre of moments. Many years earlier, when accompanied by his langoti friend and fellow prankster, Arun Rao, (aka Rho), they attended the funeral of a colleague lying in an open coffin. As they stooped over the body to pay their last respects, Sona turned to Rho and enquired, *"Do you know why cotton is stuffed in his nose?"*

When Rho pleaded ignorance, Sona replied, *"To stop the smoke from coming out,"* as the gentleman was a chain-smoker throughout his life.



The 3 Stooges from School. Visit to Haji Ali, Bombay, 2009. L-R: Arun Rao, Somi Hazari, Phillip Thomas Kovilakath. "We converted to this religion but converted back just before Happy Hour"

Death is not a pretty sight but as I gazed with tear soaked eyes at Sona's face for the last time, all I could see was the goodness in him for he was my elder brother who loved me fiercely and I too loved him with all my heart



April 5, 2021. Immersion of Sona's ashes, Juhu beach, Mahabalipuram. L-R: Somi Jr, Shonali, Hemu, Varanika, Vicky

SAROJINI RAO (1929 -, Post marriage Sarojini Rabindra Hazari) married to Rabindra Kishen Hazari

The Case of the Mesmerising Mother by Rabindra Kishen Hazari Jr.

April, 27, 2021



As Mum tested positive for Covid last week; we have been inundated with queries about how Mum is doing, and so I thought I would write the following:

Mum is at home with me. She is stable. Mum personally monitors her O2 and blood sugar levels on her own.

I hover around her like a pesky bumble bee screeching at her to wear her mask, while Mum looks at me reproachfully as the errant schoolboy who never learnt any manners.

She is right, of course. Manners were never my strong point. Mums with narrowed eyes immediately target your many failings which are unerringly brought to your immediate attention to make you wriggle with discomfort.

I have vast experience over the last 61 years and more of Mum inspired wriggling discomfort.

As we are both Virgos, according to the rest of the family, our tempers and temperament and war like disposition are identical. This is news to both Mum and me as we do not recognize any similarity whatsoever between us.

Last year, at the start of the lockdown in March 2020, I insisted that Mum shift from her own apartment across Peddar Road to mine.

Last week on returning to Bombay from Madras, I was apprehensive on learning that our housekeeper had fever and a sore throat which she had passed on to Mum. The tests showed that our 75 year old housekeeper was negative for Covid, while Mum, all of 92 years, tested positive. The housekeeper immediately fled remembering to take her salary but forgetting about the mess in the kitchen which I cleared. Mum's personal maid who came from outside also immediately stopped coming. We were all alone. Just Mother and Son. No other relatives. Worse, no servants. None at all. Not even those servants who come and go. By Indian upper middle class standards this was a horror story.

I told Mum that we can shift her to a hospital or hire help from hospitals or agencies but all such suggestions were summarily rejected. Mum insisted that we will manage without any housekeeper, who ran off, or nurse, who was not needed. End of discussion.

Not having any maid nor any housekeeper or any household help has been a challenge but Mum has been incredible.

My youngest brother, Hemindra, is a constant support, his elder son, Akhil, stayed with



Hemindra with Mum on her 90th birthday, August 24, 2019.

Mum, while Hemu and I were away; my sister in law, Nika, niece and nephew, Shonali and Somi Jr., call constantly. As do many relatives and friends. Mum has been wary of what she eats but she greatly relished the *shudh* Gujarati tiffin meals which Viral so lovingly sent from his own home.

There is no TV in Mum's room, which is now her prison, which she does not seem to miss at all.

Mum is very meticulous and self-contained. She writes everything down in different note books very systematically. Phone numbers are all written down in her diary. None of this nonsense of tapping contacts on the wretched mobile which she views with suspicion as a sly student who is not to be trusted. So, into her notebooks are recorded readings, medicines, advisories, accounts and admonitions. Everything. Or at least, something of everybody of note.



L-R: Akhil, Shonali, Mom & Arav, August 25, 2018



Somi Jr., December 2013

My collection of ex-wives used to freak at my habit of taking copious notes in my pocket notebooks. I used to politely request them to please rewind in slow motion their litany of complaints against me so that I could record their grievances more fully but for some odd reason it would only aggravate matters and send them ballistic. They should have seen my Mum. I am nothing, just a novice compared to her; while Mum, of course, is Mother Superior.

Mum hobbles all over the quarantined seclusion of her room, which struggles to contain her, holding her rubber tipped steel stick like a Field Marshal's Baton, while she inspects the massed ranks of my floor to ceiling book shelves for books which she considers worthy of her time and attention.

Most fail muster. Most reek of gunpowder and shot, spear, sword and shield, the blood and gore of battlefields littered through time and space.

However, occasionally, Mum finds something in my library which she fancies.

Mum's hot favourite by far is not Shakespeare or Thomas Hardy or other similar boring authors which English Literature Departments like the sort she once headed, have been inflicting on generations of long suffering students from time immemorial.

Mum's hot favourite is Erle Stanley Gardner.

Erle Stanley Gardner is the pseudonym of a very successful California based criminal trial attorney who made his reputation defending immigrant Chinese clients in the 1930s, who faced terrible racist prejudice and persecution.

Gardner wrote the celebrated series on Perry Mason, a criminal trial attorney, who always succeeds in not only getting his client acquitted but also exposes the real murderer.

Mum absolutely adores Perry Mason. With single minded devotion, Mum has been going like a Panzer Leader through my entire Perry Mason collection, which I mostly bought second hand on pavements. I used to study Perry Mason novels from cover to cover as a 18 year old student litigant in St Xavier's College in 1978-79, as these novels gave fascinating tips in

advising my lawyers on what questions to ask in cross examining my Jesuit opponents, and later, when I was cross examined myself.

Perry Mason is brilliant on cross examination technique especially of eye witness testimony which is devilishly difficult to contradict. Perry Mason novels are full of realistic scenarios obviously drawn from the author's experience as a trial attorney, which were a great inspiration in my own student case and in many professional cases much later when I became a lawyer.

Seeing Mum *blitzkreig* my Perry Mason collection brought forth a wave of nostalgia for those years in St Xaviers' College, where both my parents had studied and taught, had fallen in love, courted and married, and where I too, and my youngest brother, Hemindra, had studied as students.

Living with Mum last year, and this year, has been a revelation. Mum is a rock and is remarkably perceptive. I was soon reminded that her eagle eye and x-ray vision missed nothing and that there was so much that I could and did learn from her.

I was particularly enchanted by her stories of growing up as a 3 year old girl in Mangalore in the early 1930s; their Catholic, Muslim, Jain, Billava, Bunt, Saraswat, Malyali and other community neighbours; of how the family migrated to Bombay and lived in Walkeshwar, Girgaum, Opera House and finally, Gamdevi, in the 1930s before World War 2; of life and festivals of the different communities in their neighbourhoods and of the trams, tram lines and tram stations which defined Bombay.

It was like rewinding an old sepia toned film of Bombay from the 1930s to the 1960s.

I am grateful, very grateful, for these precious times with Mum. These are privileged moments. I wish I had recorded her reminiscences which are remarkably lucid and evocative of a bygone age.

As with much else, there is so much that we can learn from our Mum's.



Mum's 90th birthday, August 24, 2019. L-R Ravi Jr, Shonali, Varanika, Sona (who died on March 29, 2021) & Mum

I have to learn from Mum on how to handle grief with poise and dignity.

That I have not been able to do at all.

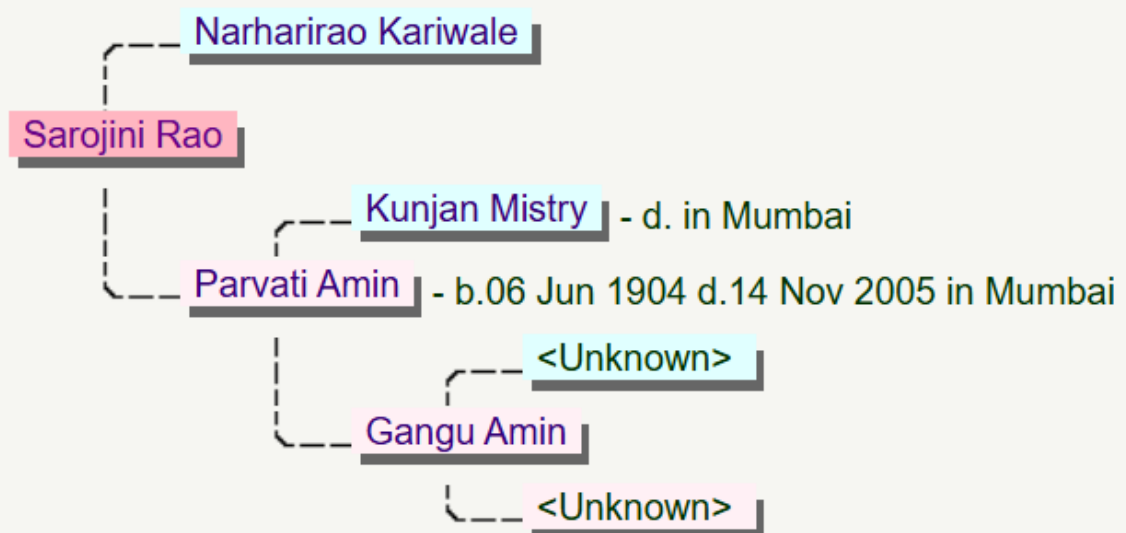


Sona's birthday, June 12, 2017.

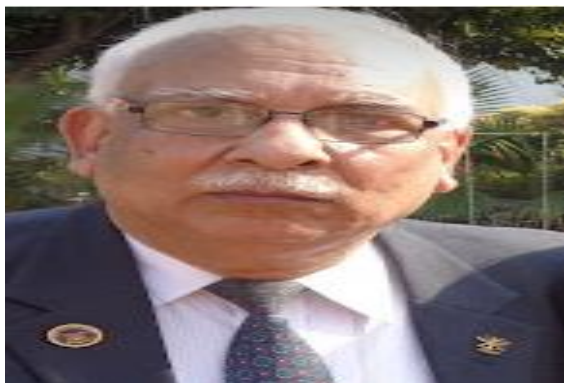
HEMINDRA HAZARI



Ancestor Pedigree Chart



GROUP CAPTAIN (R) AJIT GURTU (1947-), son of Lalita Razdan and Anand Kishen Gurtu



I was born in Patiala then known as PEPSU (Patiala and East Punjab States Union, was a state of India that existed from 1948 to 1956, formed by uniting eight princely states, with its capital at Patiala. It was eventually merged with the larger state of Punjab in 1956) just after Independence. My maternal grandfather was Pandit Roop Lal Razdan who came to Patiala from Lahore and

was in Patiala State service as Foreign Service advisor to the then Maharaja Bhupendra Singh who was famous for keeping 108 queens. He was adept in 4 languages English, Urdu, Persian and Gurmukhi.

My grandmother was Durgadevi Dar (post marriage Suhagrani Razdan) daughter of Narayan Das Dar.



Durga Devi Dar (post marriage Suhagrani Razdan)

My father Pandit Anand Krishna Gurtu was the son of Pandit Raj Krishna, son of Maharaj kishan s/o Karta Kishan s/o Mehtab Rai S/o Gulab Rai S/o Narayna Das who came to Oudh in UP in 1795 from Habba Kadal (locality in the old city of Srinagar) in Kashmir.

My grandfather's brothers were Pt Sri Krishna Gurtu of Gwalior and Harikrishna Gurtu also from Gwalior.

My grandmother was Lilawati Gurtu nee Lilawati Nehru daughter of Pt Bihari Lal Nehru whose younger brother was Brij Lal Nehru father of B K Nehru and Ratan Kumar Nehru.

After graduation from Delhi University (Hindu College) I was pursuing my MSc final in Chemistry in the 1968 when I got a call from the Indian Air Force (IAF). I left MSc and joined the IAF and did my training at Air Force Administrative College, Coimbatore.

I was commissioned in June 1969 and posted as a Pilot Officer at Madh Island Bombay.

My maternal cousin, Dr Rabindra Kishen Hazari used to stay at Pedder road. I used to go and stay with them on weekends. The amount of love and affection I got from my Bhabhi [Sarojini Rao, post marriage Sarojini Hazari] and three young boys (Rabindra

Jr., Somindra and Hemindra) I never felt home sick. Then in late 1969 my cousin was appointed as Deputy Governor Reserve Bank of India, and moved to Bank House next to Mantralaya which became my second home on every weekend till June 1972 when I was posted out from Bombay.



Then Pilot Officer Ajit Gurtu attending Hemindra Hazari's 5th Birthday, Bank House, Bombay, 1970, 3rd from Left, Somindra Hazari, second from right, Sarojini Rao (Hazari), rightmost, Rabindra Hazari Jr.



Then Wing Commander Ajit Gurtu

During the 1971 war there was a very funny phenomenon. As the Bombay people had not experienced a war earlier they were not observing the Blackout procedure very religiously especially the well off localities near the sea coast. On the night of 6th December 1971 there was a false alarm given by a railway employee at Nalasopara station and the Ack Ack guns were made free to fire on any aircraft seen by them. The master gunner on the Trombay

hills had hallucinations and saw the aircraft warned by Nalasopara station and he opened fire.

All the 36 L 70 guns deployed around Santacruz Airport opened fire. This firing continued for almost 45 minutes. After which my shift started at 8 PM. My Shift commander said that no Pakistan aircraft coming from Karachi can stay that long over Bombay. He ordered Guns to be Tight. That night the guns fired around 1500 rounds. Few shells fell in Posh localities and few people got minor injuries.

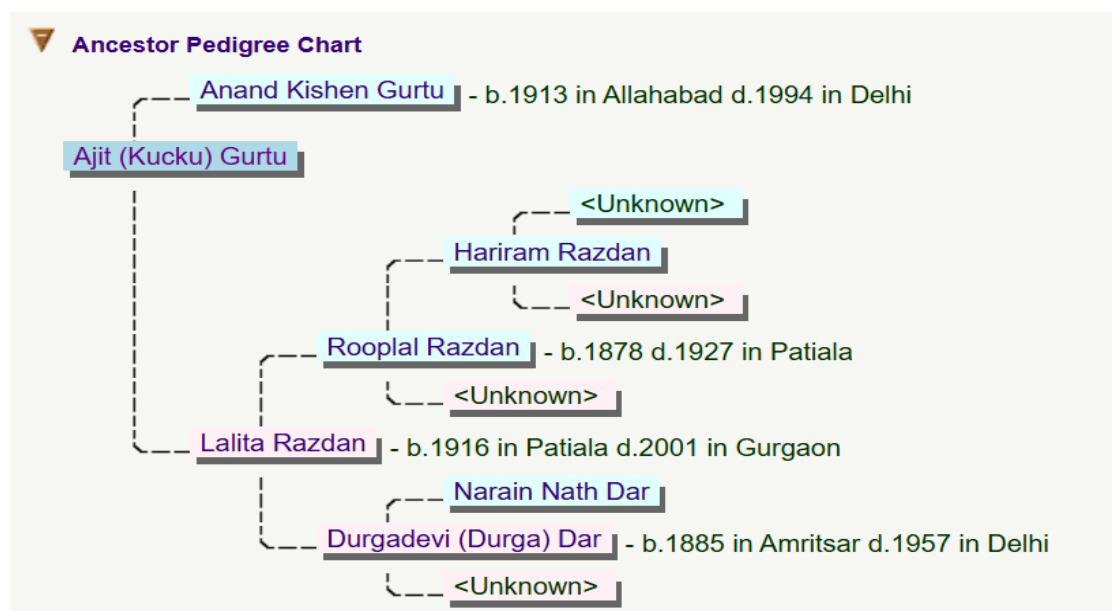
Next night when we asked our Recce ac the extent of Blackout, the pilot informed that it was 100%. all over Bombay.

After Bombay I was posted to Delhi, Bareilly, Bikaner, back to Delhi, Bagdogra, Amritsar. I got my Wing Commander rank there in 1989. Amritsar was a challenging tenure as it was the peak of Khalistani movement.

After Amritsar I was posted to Gwalior to command a unit. After that I got my promotion as a Group Captain and posted as a chief administration officer at Agra. Then I was posted to Air HQ. From Air HQ I was sent on deputation to Air Force Naval Housing board as a project director for construction of about 1,200 flats in Greater Noida.

After this I was posted to HQ Maintenance Command at Nagpur and finally to Western Air Command Delhi.

In September 2004 I Hung up my uniform and since then I have been enjoying my retired life.



Contact Hemindra Hazari hemindrahazari@gmail.com, www.hemindrahazari.com

Click on this link for the [Hazari, Razdan and Amin Family Tree](#)