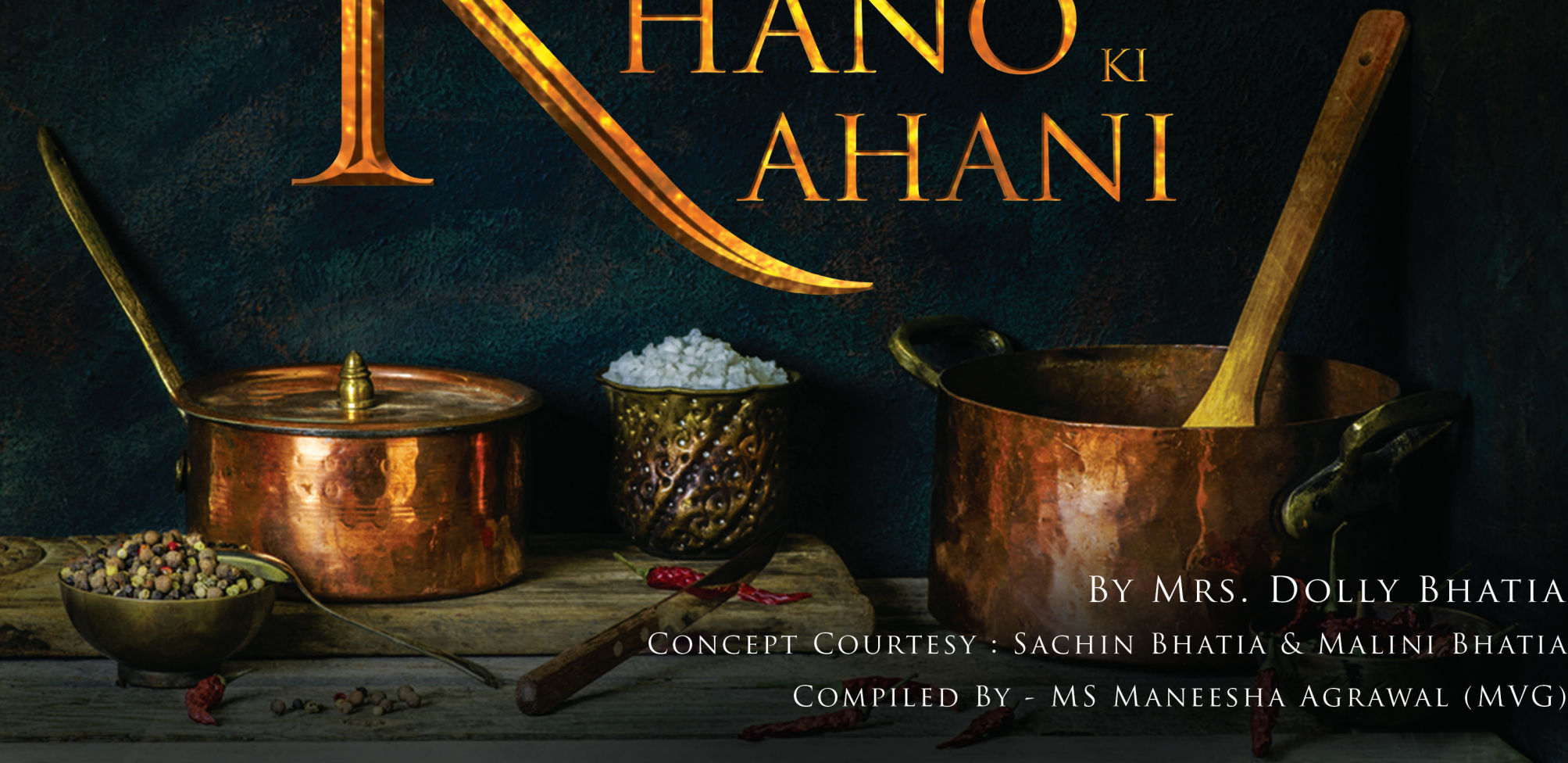


CULINARY LEGACY OF THE ACCLAIMED **BHALLAS** & THE EMINENT **BHATIAS**

KHANDANI HANO_{KI} AHANI



BY MRS. DOLLY BHATIA

CONCEPT COURTESY : SACHIN BHATIA & MALINI BHATIA

COMPILED BY - MS MANEESHA AGRAWAL (MVG)

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“It took me quite a while to think what to write about my Dadi because I think she is really exceptional. And as to her cooking, all of her dishes are equally sapid.

I start with saying that she an extremely adept chef who not only excels at cooking but has created a family legacy for us... be it her traditional Punjabi tandoori vegetables or a scrumptious French cheese cake, or her presentation and serving style that are equally good.

Today I’m going to wish her a very Happy Birthday and talk about my personal favourite preparation of hers. It is the thick Belgian Waffle dipped in Whipped Cream and Canadian Maple Syrup. She makes as it a faultless combination... the waffle being perfectly baked, just the right amount of cream and right fruits. It is the best I’ve ever had.

One of my other favourites is the desi lemon cake. She makes it unlike other boring bland English Lemon Cakes. Instead of being a sour cake it is a sweet cake with a tinge of lemon (retaining its lemony flavour) in it. Oh it is such a fabulous cake.

Thank you Dadi. I love you so much.”

Uday Bhatia

“Happy Birthday dear Dadi. I love many things of yours but my favourite one is carrot cake. Because, it’s so sweet and yummy. I love the cinnamon flavour in it. You are the best Dadi, and I love you a lot.”

Loads of Love,

Yash Bhatia





Introductory Word

This book is a concept. It is a venture spanning more than hundred years – emerging from my parent’s parentage and intended to go beyond my son’s progeny. The vision is to bring the generations closer, together on one dais where my grandson gets to know my grandfather whom he would never actually meet.

It is like empowering the branches to know their roots. And what can be more elaborate than food to achieve this!

I must add that the purpose here is not to list the foods or the recipes, it is to understand the people that we have been – our lifestyle, habits, the thought process, the love, the bonding and above all, our essence.

With such unique theme and intent I sincerely hope this book is able to delineate the way family heritage can be preserved and handed over to generations. And I wish that each and every member of our family can experience this connect here - the same way as I do.

My mother enjoys an exceptional proficiency with cooking. She has, I’ve always noticed – an inventive finesse with the way traditional and modern cooking can be merged. I have seen how well her methodical integration has worked to suit the culinary preferences of three generations present in our household. This book is also an ode to my mother’s creativity in the kitchen.

My special thanks to Maneesha for her tireless energy, enthusiasm and commitment to bring out the book in less than a month. I am glad we could bring this on Mom’s 70th birthday. On this special day, I want to wish Mom a very happy birthday, and am sharing a message for her through this book -

“Mom you are the most loved person in the whole of Bhalla and Bhatia families. You are the most extraordinary and beautiful woman, best Mom, are the backbone of our family and of course you are the best chef. Love you always.”

- Sachin Bhatia & Ameena Bhatia

For me, mom is the epitome of a super mom. And in a particular - a super cook. Her love for cooking and creating dishes for her family and loved ones is something I would certainly like to imbibe and take forward. She puts her heart and soul into every dish she cooks and you can feel that love in her cooking. She has been instrumental in teaching me my love for cooking - something that I now consider almost therapeutic.

This book is an ode to her immaculate talent. Something that she has inherited from her previous generations and lovingly passed on to the future generations. I consider us blessed.

This precious legacy has been captured via many recipes that are special to our family. Something that we and our children will cherish for the rest of our lives.

Mom, on this milestone birthday - we would like to remind you that you are truly the best. One day of the year is not enough to celebrate the amount of gratitude we have for you. Thank you for being who you are. We love you.

Always
Malini & Sameer Bhatia





Nearly a month ago I was approached by Sachin to assist his mother Mrs Dolly Bhatia with a project he had conceptualized. The idea was unique, undertaking was sensitive and the inspiration was exciting.

Now at the end of three weeks I feel extremely fortunate to have been a part of this project – one of my first experiences working with Sachin. Words fall short when I want to describe the comfort zone one enters while working with a person as admirable as he is. I shall suffice with expressing my utmost desire to be granted the privilege yet again.

For this particular project, my efforts involved meeting up all the members of Bhalla and Bhatia families. I was to collect and compile fragments of a story through their memories... it was like putting together strewn pieces of a faded picture. The job was a bit delicate, but the journey?

It was simply enthralling. Oh what an experience it has been for me – I have met one of the finest set of people of my city!

This project has given me a chance to interact with some real people. I find them real - their grace isn't superficial, their charm hasn't diminished and their warmth has touched me to the core. I feel that such are the people who make this world habitable. A big thanks yet again to Sachin for putting me through to this entirely enriching excursion.

A special word for Mrs Dolly Bhatia is what I cannot resist adding here. Her elegance is always going to stay in my memories of these few days. Her refined sensitivity creates an air of certain unique virtuousness – and that is so infectious. May the good God bestow her many more smiles is my birthday wish for her. Have a very happy birthday and continued years of blissful life Ma'am.

I close my write-up with a one last word

– Moments are rapid travellers. But the ones we can treasure are going to be ours forever.

- Maneesha Agrawal (MVG)

Let's stir the spice

To enhance
The aura of yore
We all have inside
Complimenting the savour
Let's stir the spice!

Every hearth has a fire
Of shades ethereal
Tastes are distinctive
Cuisines are familiar.

Memories bear smears
Of exotic dished delights
Of divine sapid pabulum
And dinning invites!

Let's pep up the zest
Relive moments in trice
Let's feel the flavour
Let's stir the spice!



CONCEPT COURTESY

SACHIN BHATIA
&
MALINI BHATIA

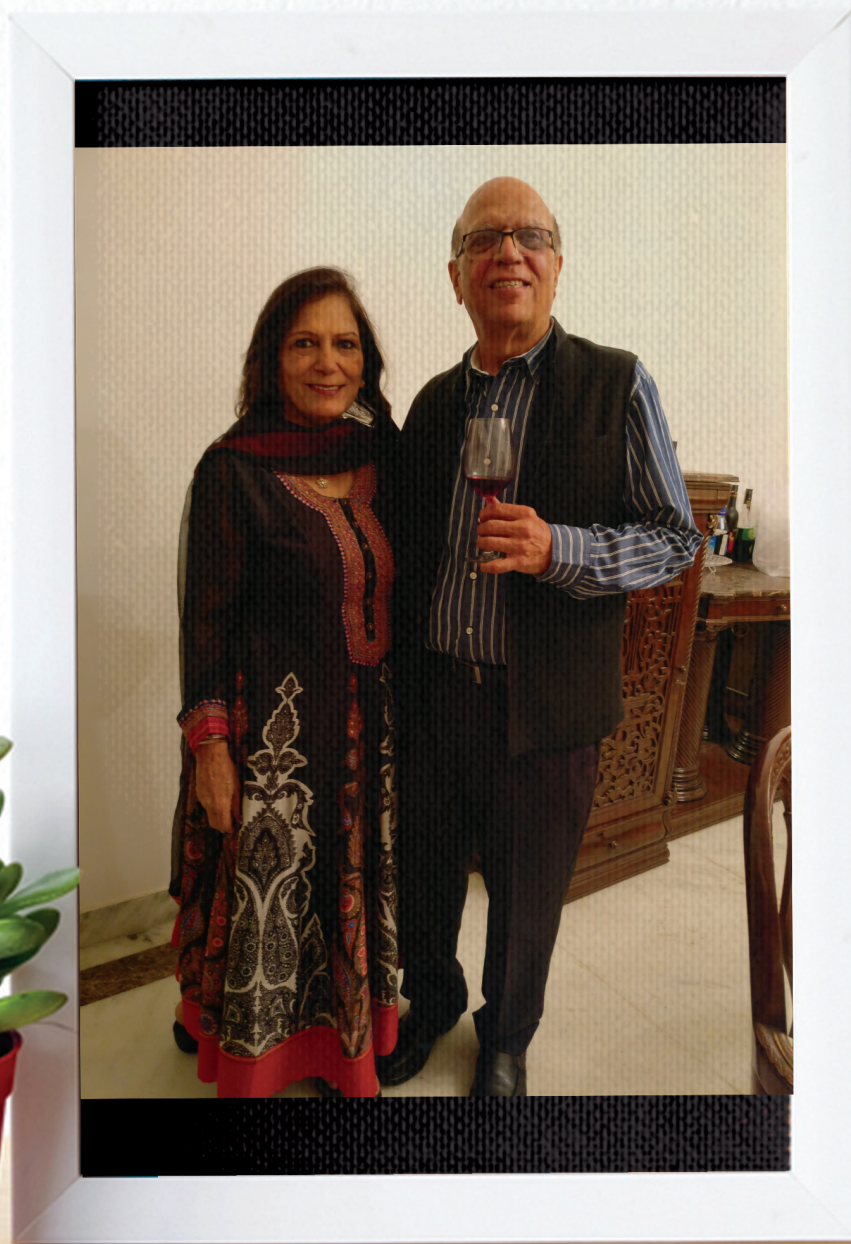
COMPILATION & COMPLETION

MS. MANEESHA
AGRAWAL (MVG)

A BOOK BY

MRS DOLLY BHATIA





MR SATISH
&
MRS DOLLY
BHATIA

Hi All.

A warm welcome to the 'Khandaani Khaano Ki Kahani' – a culinary legacy of our grand illustrious families – The acclaimed Bhalla's and The eminent Bhatia's.

The glory of our provincial ancestors is an integral part of our heredity. It's a legacy peppered with zests and seasonings that our culture carries, richness of which still whiffs in our veins. We sustain a gorgeous luxury transferred to us through our lineage. Through this effort I look to celebrate that incredible luxury in a unique style – that of our Culinary Inheritance.

We have been regal in tastes, and this can't be an overstatement. I'm sure all of you affirm this as a fact ever since earlier times... the times of a big grand family brimming and dining together. If one was left to think about it, one might feel how we actually longed for those ornate days decked with awesome preparations dished out by mom or granny. The taste... it never gets wrapped up!

Today with the passage of time we have lost many of those wonderful people from amongst us, but we have their beautiful memories.

The memories are with us, augmenting our lives with an everlasting aroma and ambiance. Those moments shall forever be with us, when scrumptious looking banquets almost always invited eager attention and encouraging annotations from the feasting invitees.

So here's my attempt to make such reminiscences everlasting through this volume. And I wish that our coming generations will further create their own moments and add them here.

Parenthetically, my wish has been fulfilled even before I could express it – youngest generation of the family has indexed a signature in my chronicle! Let us all whole heartedly applaud our two progenies - Jay Khanna and Naira Kapoor who are my contributing editors for Chapter no. 7.

I invite each of you to be here with me in this book – with a hope that each one of you will be able to relate to the recipes as well as theme of the book, which I feel is not just a book – it is a chronicle belonging to us and our children.

Since I belong to both The Bhalla's and Bhatia's, I have dedicated a section each to my family tree . I begin with the Bhalla's for they lead in numbers as contributors to this chronicle.

- Mrs Dolly Bhatia

THE ACCLAIMED BHALLAS

Bhallas originally belong to the Jhelum province in pre-partition Punjab, which is now in Pakistan. After partition my Father Sh. Hansraj Bhalla and his wife Smt. Sitawati Bhalla had moved to Delhi. They made their home at 22, Park Area, Karol Bagh, New Delhi in the year 1950. It was a house lived in by 25 to 30 members at a given point of time.

The gentlemen of the family were continental people. They all were members of the Prestigious Gymkhana Club, and were good at all kind of sports. Today they may have withdrawn from the visible horizon but can never fade away from the memories.

Memories I feel, are like a pack of cards.... you pull one out and so many come tumbling one after the other. I am beginning to shuffle through and rearrange them today in an aromatic spectrum – that of food.

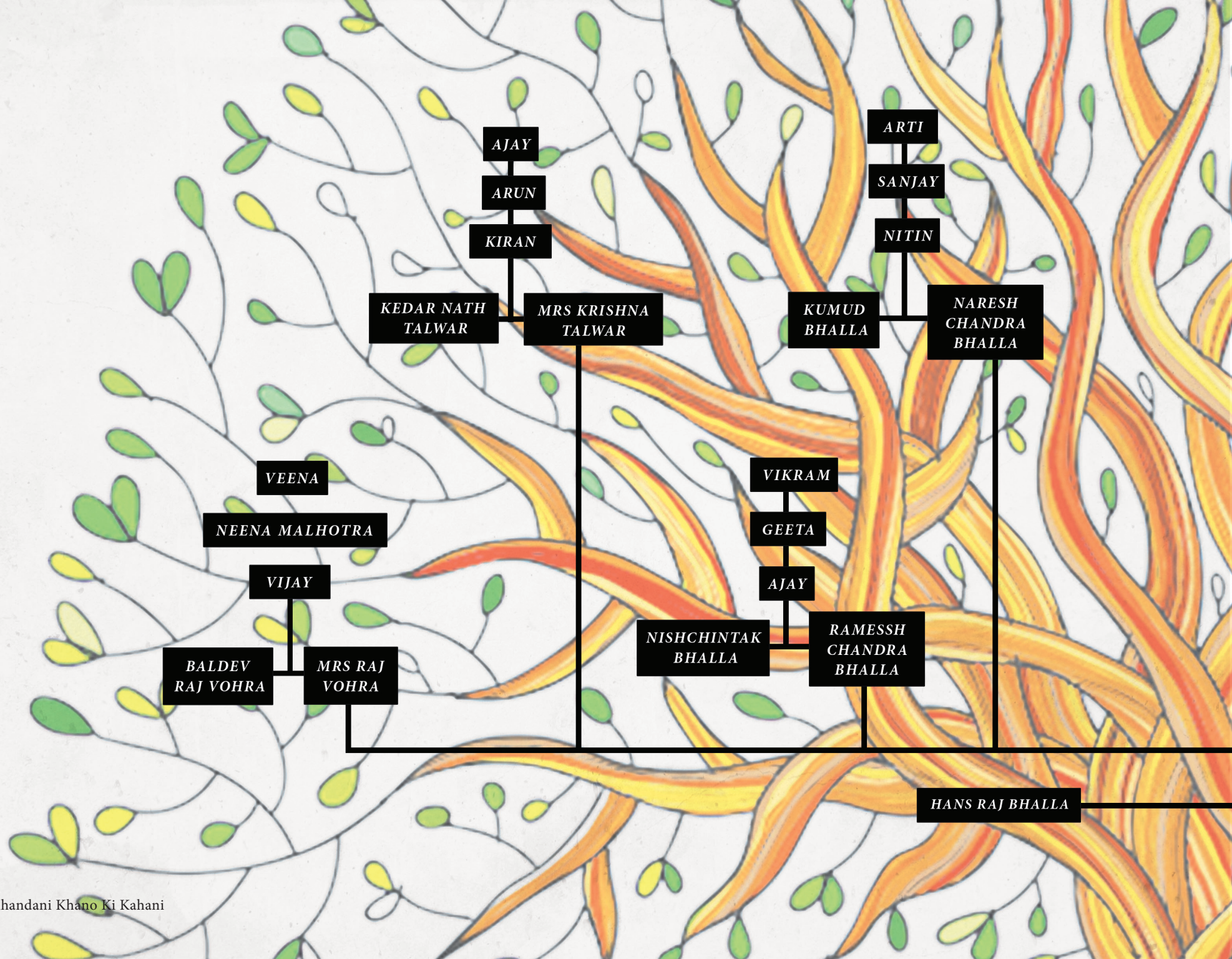
Talking of culinary nostalgia I'd begin with our vast spread out house, with the tandoor in the courtyard as my focal point. Smt. Sitawati Bhalla's all nine children and their successive families today would easily recognize that peculiar warm waft of air... the scent emerging out of the in-house tandoor which always used to lurk in the veranda, beyond which was the Dining - Hall where a ten seater dining table stood stationed.

For years that table-top has served countless delicacies and dishes which we are now going to visit through this journey. So without a longer prologue, I commence by introducing the first branch in the Bhalla family tree.

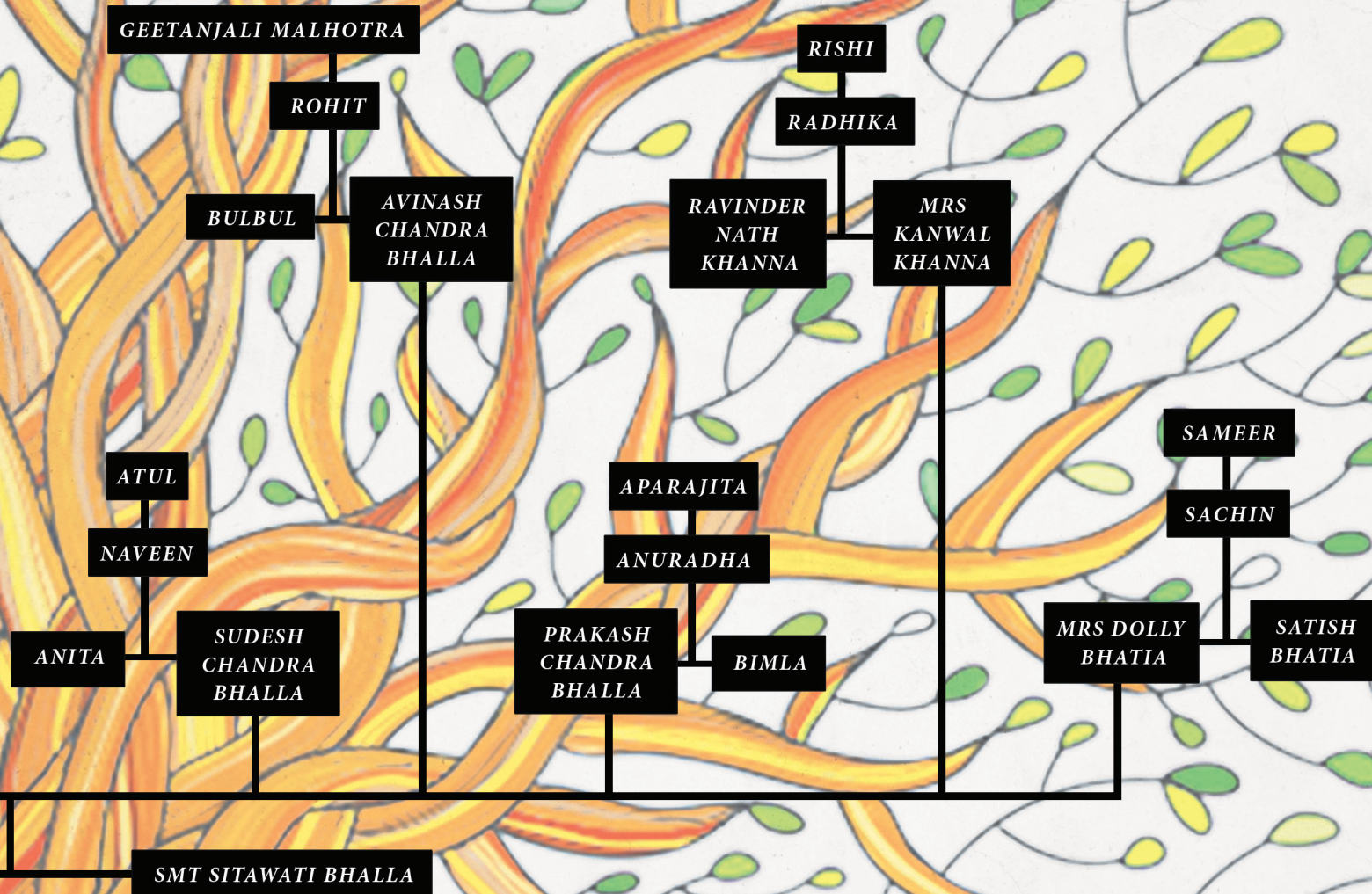




Sh. Hans Raj Bhalla & Smt. Sitawati Bhalla



BHALLA'S FAMILY TREE



Mrs Raj Vohra & Mr Baldev Raj Vohra

(Vijay , Neena , Veena)

Contributions By –

Mrs Neena Malhotra & Ms Pooja Malhotra



“ Oh they were and still are all such beautiful people. ”

My book's opening chapter couldn't have been prettier. For, I am going to begin articulating my tête-à-tête with someone as lovely as Neena. She has a most affable quality of making an effortless, transcendent connect when one is talking to her.

What she remembers and tells about the family is very expressive, *“oh they were and still are all such beautiful people*. Yes, they have been fond of food. The first thing that comes to mind is that they celebrated life in every fashion they could. They would play, eat, read and animate life in a very positive spirit.”

Absolutely appropriate I must say – positive spirit. That's the way this chronicle has to go from the start to finish!

Neena continues, “Almost every evening leisurely card parties were held at our Nana's house which obviously earmarked interesting culinary provisions.”

I intend to have listed here a few of those snacks for the old time's sake.



Terrific Spinach Tikki

Ingredients

- ◆ Chana Dal (Gram lentil) – 1 Bowl (soaked overnight)
- ◆ Spinach – 1 Kg (Steamed/boiled)
- ◆ Bay Leaf (Tej Patta) – 2 leaves
- ◆ Cloves – 4 pc
- ◆ Badi Elaichi – 2 pc
- ◆ Pepper Corn – 5 pc
- ◆ Cumin – 1 Tsp
- ◆ Chopped Garlic – 4 Tbs
- ◆ Chopped Ginger – 4 Tbs
- ◆ Chopped Onion – 6
- ◆ Breadcrumbs – 6 Tbs
- ◆ Deghi Mirch – ½ Tbs
- ◆ Salt – To taste
- ◆ Oil to Fry



Preparation

Heat oil in a pan. Add the khada masala (bay leaf, elaichi, cloves, cumin, Peppercorn).

Add garlic, ginger, onion in that order.

Cook till the onions get golden brown.

Add soaked chana dal, salt and also deghi mirch. Add some (1 cup appx.) water.

Cook for 25 minutes or pressure cook for one whistle.

Grind the boiled spinach (separated from water).

Grind the cooked dal mixture separately.

Mix the two to make a thick dough like consistency.

Add bread crumbs, and roll out cutlets in the shape you prefer.

Deep fry till golden brown in colour.



Commendable Keema Koftas

Ingredients

For koftas

- ◆ Mutton mince (keema) - 500 grams
- ◆ Fresh coriander leaves - chopped 3 tablespoons
- ◆ Green chillies - chopped 4
- ◆ Cumin seeds - 1/2 teaspoon
- ◆ Coriander powder - 1/2 teaspoon
- ◆ Red chilli powder - 1/2 teaspoon
- ◆ Turmeric powder - 1/2 teaspoon
- ◆ Salt to taste
- ◆ Oil to deep fry

For gravy

- ◆ Oil - 5 tablespoons
- ◆ Onions - chopped 3 medium
- ◆ Green chillies - chopped 3
- ◆ Ginger-garlic paste - 1 tablespoon
- ◆ Cloves - 2
- ◆ Black cardamom - 1
- ◆ Cumin seeds - 1/2 teaspoon
- ◆ Fresh tomato puree - 1 cup
- ◆ Red chilli powder - 2 teaspoons
- ◆ Turmeric powder - 1/4 teaspoon
- ◆ Coriander powder - 2 teaspoon
- ◆ Salt to taste
- ◆ Fresh coriander leaves - chopped 1 tablespoon

Preparation

To make the koftas squeeze the water from the mince. Add coriander leaves, green chillies, cumin seeds, coriander powder, red chilli powder, turmeric powder and salt.

Make small round portions and deep fry till golden brown in colour and set them aside. To make the gravy heat oil in a pan.

Add onions, green chillies, ginger-garlic paste, cloves, black cardamom and cumin seeds and sauté till onions turns golden brown in colour.

Add fresh tomato puree, red chilli powder, turmeric powder, coriander powder and salt and sauté till oil separates from the mixture.

Add one cup of water and cook for two to three minutes. Add the koftas to the gravy and garnish with coriander leaves.



Neena is second daughter of first sibling of Bhalla family. The age gap between the first and the ninth child – Raj Vohra and Dolly Bhatia goes well beyond a generation. That is the reason I was closer to the children than the mother. Neena Di (my sons call her maasi while she is really a cousin) has a flowy personality – augmented by her kind eyes that I’ve always seen sparkling with affection.

Her mother Mrs Raj Vohra - Neena recalls, was a very intelligent lady. She had inherited the astuteness of her father and was quite close to him more as a friend than a daughter. She used to cook amazing Punjabi delicacies like phirni, melt-in-the-mouth tandoori parantha stuffed with dal and an absolutely out of the world dahi (curd) ki subzi which I can’t resist listing here.

Sober Dahi Ki Subzi

Ingredients

- ◆ Yogurt - 2 cups
- ◆ Oil - 1 tablespoon
- ◆ Cumin seeds - 1/2 teaspoon
- ◆ Green chillies slit - 2
- ◆ Red chilli powder - 1/2 teaspoon
- ◆ Turmeric powder - 1/4 teaspoon
- ◆ Medium onion finely - chopped 1
- ◆ Salt to taste
- ◆ Coriander powder - 12 teaspoon
- ◆ Milk – 1 & 1/2 tablespoons
- ◆ Garam masala powder - a pinch
- ◆ Fresh coriander leaves chopped - 1 tablespoon

Preparation

Heat oil in a non-stick pan. Add cumin seeds and let the seeds change colour.

Add green chillies, chilli powder, turmeric powder and onion, mix and sauté for 2 minutes.

Add salt and coriander powder, mix and sauté for a minute.

Add milk to the yogurt, mix well, add to the pan and stir to mix and bring to a boil.

Switch off heat, add garam masala powder and coriander leaves and mix well.

Serve hot.



Ravishing Dahi Bhindi

Ingredients

- ◆ Bhindi (Okra) – ½ Kg
- ◆ Mustard Oil – 2 Tsp
- ◆ Tomatoes - 2 medium sized, finely chopped
- ◆ Curd (Dahi) – 300 gm (appx)
- ◆ Curry Leaves – a few
- ◆ Garlic – 2 Tsp, finely chopped
- ◆ Urd Dal – 2 Tsp
- ◆ Onion – 2 medium sized, finely chopped
- ◆ Salt and Deghi Mirch – as per the taste

Preparation

Slice the Bhindis in two halves longitudinally.

Flavour it with the deghi mirch and add bhindi followed by salt. Mix well.

In a pan heat up the oil and fry the Urd dal till golden in colour.

Cook the vegetable on low flame till done.

Add the curry leaves, garlic, ginger, onion one by one and roast them nicely.

Before serving (serve hot) add 300 gm churned curd and turn-in gently with a light hand.

Add the tomatoes and fry till done.

Our Nanaji was also a person of refined tastes and hobbies. Each year he would rent out a bungalow or a plush accommodation in hills for the family during summer holidays, which would then be kept occupied by visitors from within the family throughout the season. Out of the nine siblings, a couple or more families were stationed in the hills of Musoorie, Shimla, Nainital or Ranikhet in summers.” Neena reveals a few of the family’s cherished aftertastes and I feel obliged to add them here.

Some of the very old, incredibly traditional tastes also I wish to present now. They may seem commonplace, but these form integral part of our rich Punjabi Cuisine that is known for its affluence the world over.

Tangy Green Chilli Pickle

Ingredients

- ◆ Garlic – 50 Gm
- ◆ White Vinegar – 3 ½ Cups
- ◆ Cumin Powder – 60 Gm
- ◆ Ginger – 50 Gm
- ◆ Sugar – 1 Cup
- ◆ Salt – 60 Gm
- ◆ Tamarind Pulp – 125 Gm (extracted out of 250 Gm Tamarind)
- ◆ Fenugreek seeds (Methi) Powdered – 50 Gm
- ◆ Mustard Oil – 2 Cup

Preparation

Make a slit in the chillies and keep aside.

After nearly half a minute add the tamarind pulp and vinegar to it.

Heat the oil in a pan, let it fume.

Mix in sugar and salt. Stir in till the sugar dissolves.

Reduce heat and allow it to cool slightly.

Lastly add the green chilli and cook for a while till tender.

Add ginger, garlic, methi and cumin powder

