



TARA ARTS GROUP

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"Lead us from Reality to
Unreality,
From Darkness to Light."

Paraphrase from
the Brihad-Aranyaka
Upanishad (c. 8th.C.B.D.)

"MEET ME" ('Pyaar Kiya to Dharna Kya')

by Jatinder Verma

A Note on the subject-matter

TARA ARTS GROUP began work on this play in October 1983; when the Company undertook 3 weeks of research into mental illnesses amongst Asians.

The research was conducted around London, Birmingham, Coventry, Sheffield and Bradford. In hospitals catering for psychiatric patients; in Drop-In Centres where psychiatric out-patients meet each other; amongst social workers; with psychiatrists specialising in problems of Asians and mental health; and, with patients.

Certain key elements emerged quickly from the research:-

- i) Asians tend to understand mental illness in physical terms: tending to equate experiences of mental illness with physical aches and pains - such as stomach disorders, headaches, etc.
- ii) Though Asians on the whole are under-utilising psychiatric institutions, they are evidencing upto 3 times more cases of Schizophrenia and certain types of Depression, than the population as a whole.

- iii) Asians tend to keep cases of mental disturbance within the family. This is often seen by psychiatric specialists as an expression of care and consideration on the part of families. This evaluation is not always born out by the facts: "care" can often take the form of isolation within the home.
- iv) Schizophrenia tends to be prominent amongst Asian males. Depression is more often than not associated with Asian women. Especially perpeural (post-natal) depression. Amongst Asian women, a peculiarity often noted is perpeural illnesses occurring subsequent to the first child-birth.
- v) On average, Asians tend to be given Electro-Convulsive Therapy (ECT - electric-shock treatment) more times than other patients.
- vi) A lack of interpreters is severely impairing psychiatrists' and social workers' ability to help Asians experiences various types of mental illnesses. A situation exacerbated by Government cuts in the Health Service.
- vii) Specialists in mental health face severe problems of understanding the cultures of their Asian patients; thus, a greater potential exists for diagnosing symptoms as "bizarre" - with sometimes tragic consequences.



KAMP (Paul Bhattacharjee)
an up-and-coming young photographer



The RUNT (Arti Prashar) with KAMA

- viii) A great degree of arbitrary judgements and incomplete "cure" endemic in the whole field of mental health: "the facts of psychiatry can be found on the fingers of one hand", according to one notable psychiatrist in London.
- ix) The more the Company heard and observed, the closer dawned our own potential for becoming "mentally ill": psychotic and neurotic disorders being on average about as far away from happening to any of us, as Tomorrow !

In the context of these findings, the TARA ARTS Company for this project made the decision not to try and retrace steps already taken by psychiatrists, social workers and other specialists in trying to understand mental illness amongst Asians.

The Company set out instead to evaluate "sane" humanity's visions of mental health.

In arriving at this viewpoint, an equivalence was perceived between certain states of Love and certain types of Mental Illness.

Hence, the sub-title - "Pyaar Kiya to Dharna Kya": 'Love just Happens, so why Fear it?'

"MEET ME" (Pyaar Kiya to Dharna Kya)

The Play

A story of 2 families, one "Hindu", one "Muslim", and the love of KAMA and SHAHEEN.

KAMA, a young up-and-coming photographer, lives with his MOTHER, AUNT (Mother's sister) and elder sister, USHA. A Hindu family, they have come from East Africa, where KAMA was born. SHAHEEN, a model, lives with her FATHER (Rashid Ali), MOTHER (Rashida Begum) and younger sister, FATIMA. A Muslim family. The FATHER has been in Britain 30 years; both his daughters being born here.

KAMA and SHAHEEN elope after a photography session, and go and live in a Bed-sit. When SHAHEEN is pregnant, they return to KAMA's home. KAMA's MOTHER dies when SHAHEEN gives birth to AINA, a daughter. The AUNT throws SHAHEEN out of the house, but keeps her Baby.

SHAHEEN returns to her parent's house, where her FATHER has plans to get her married off. KAMA rescues her, and they return to his house - with the blessings of SHAHEEN's MOTHER and sister FATIMA.

At home, SHAHEEN injures KAMA as he tries to beat his AUNT.

The final scene takes place in a psychiatric studio, with two PSYCHIATRISTS observing KAMA and SHAHEEN.

A total of 8 characters make up the 2 families. They will be played by 4 Actors.

Cast:

KAMA / FATHER (Rashid Ali)	Paul Bhattacharjee
SHAHEEN / USHA	Naushaba Khan
AUNT / FATIMA	Arti Prashar
MOTHER / MOTHER (Rashida Begum)	Sudha Bhuchar

Directed by Yogesh Bhatt

Design by Cath Pater-Lancucki

Sets by Rajni Chudasama

Stage Managers: Balbeer Bahi
Rajni Chudasama

Publicist: Roopinder Bhullar

Administrator: Rekha Prashar

Acknowledgements:

TARA ARTS GROUP gratefully acknowledges support from Margaret Harris, of Riverside Studios, for loan of some of the lighting equipment.

Thanks are also due to Mrs. Khan for making the costumes, to Pritpal, Roxana, Rezul and Neil for help in preparation of the sets, etc.

Finally, TARA ARTS GROUP acknowledges an enormous debt to all participants in the research for this play: Thank You !

GLOSSARY of terms and Hindustani used in the play:

CHLORPROMAZINE	Largactil: a powerful drug, prescribed to Schizophrenics to temporarily alleviate symptoms.
SOMATIC	physical
AMEEN	Islamic equivalent of the Christian "Amen".
NAMAZ	prayer
ROZA	fast
BHAGVAAN	God
BISMILLAH HIR-RAHMAN NIR RAHIM...	an Islamic invocation; often repeated at the end of prayer.
NOOR JEHAN	wife of one of the Mughal Emperors of India; reputed to have patented perfume, by bathing in a bath full of rose petals.
RUSTOM & SOHRAB	Sohrab, a mighty chieftain, fought Rustom and killed him; only to discover he had killed his own son. An Iranian folk tale.
HEER & RANJHA	the Punjabi tale (c. 15th.Century) of the love of a Muslim girl, Heer, for Ranjha, a Hindu boy.
HAJJ	pilgrimage to Mecca
SHIV	Shiva, the Destructive/Creative spirit in Hindu cosmology
KALI	the Goddess Kali, popular especially in Bengal, is most often seen as a destructive, venomous spirit. She has a creative aspect also.
SIKANDER	Alexander the Great; who met his match in the Punjab, turned back towards Greece, sailing down the Indus River through the Sindh Desert, and died on the way home.
ZAKAAT	the giving of charity: an Islamic obligation.
KATRA	bed-wetting/ejaculation
KABURR	grave
KABURRISTAAN	grave-yard



SHAHREEN (Noushabe Khan), a Model,
and KAMA



KAMA, AUNT, MOTHER (Sudha Bhuchar)
and USHA (Naushaba Khan) at breakfast

GLOSSARY (cont....)

KAYAMUTT	Day of Judgement
ALLAH-HU-AKBAR	God is Great
PERPEURAL	post-natal
KAMA	Love / Desire
SHAHEEN	a Hawk
AINA	mirror

SONGS featured in the play:

1. Pyaar Kiya to Dharna
Kya jubb...
Pyaar Kiya koi chorri
nahi ki, chhuup chhuup
aheyn bhurna kya jubb...

Love just happens,
so why fear it...
Love is not a theft,
so why hide
your eyes...
2. Khudha khayal rukhey
gha usay kayamutt mey
Kay voh bhi luT gayi
hai muhabutt mey...
Usay to luuT liya
mill-kay husn vaalo ney
Ghorey ghorey gaalo ney
Kaaley kaaley baalo ney

God will look after
her on Judgement Day
For today she is
lost to love...
They have abducted her
those lovers
with rosy cheeks
and black hair
3. Shri Shiv-jani meyri
yey sunno, apni puja-sey
Usha sey bolo.
Usha sey kaho humm sey
vo boley tori kripa-sey
humm sey vo boley.

Hear me, O Shiva,
by the prayer we offer,
make Usha speak.
Invoke speech in her,
that by your grace
she speaks to us.

SONGS (cont...)

3. Tori kripa-sey dharti yey
chaley merey Shiv-jani
baatey yey kurey.
Baatey yey kurey
hutkuun naa aaey
merey Shiv-jani hutkunn
naa aaey.

By your grace,
this earth moves on;
move her speech likewise.
So that she speaks
to us without stammer,
without stuttering,
my Shiva !

4. Khudha bhi hai jahaa
jahaa, vafaa bhi hai
jahaa jahaa
Mughar meyra yey
dhil jahaa
Tuldup ruhaa hai dhil
meyra.

God is everywhere
Truth all around

But this my heart,

My heart trembling
from place to place.

5. Kali-kuti maa meyri
Tujhko kunghun peyhnau
ghi
Ishuurr Allah terey
naam,
Tujhko kunghun
peyhnau ghi.

Black-dog mother of mine
I will tie bracelets
around your wrists.
God and Allah be
your names,
grace you with bracelets,
I will.

6. Ley jhaao dhuaaeyn
Leyti jhaa
Pardeys mey reyhney
vaali
Tuhi suhaag hai uskaa
Haa, tuhi sandhur hai
uskaa

Take my blessings
you who now move to
a foreign place.

You are his companion
now, you his mark
of marriage.

"Who created this heaven above
and earth below;
Who created the trees, birds
and the oceans ?
Perhaps he who sits on high,
He Knows!
Or maybe even He Does Not ?"

from the

Rig-Veda
(c.2500 B.C.)



*Tara Arts Group is based in TARA ARTS CENTRE:
a Centre for Asian Arts Activities, in South
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