

DR ZULEIKHA MAYAT

An Appreciation

Saleem Badat



Dr. Zuleikha Mayat: An Appreciation

Saleem Badat

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publish@digniti.co.za

+27 81 076 6121

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Foreword by Ebrahim Moola

In Dr. Zuleikha Mayat: An Appreciation by Saleem Badat, we embark on a compelling journey through the life of a legendary figure in South African society, Dr. Zuleikha Mayat. This booklet stands as a testament to her lifelong commitment to gender parity, philanthropy, and noteworthy contributions as an author.

Driven by a passion for cultural preservation, Dr. Mayat's founding of the Women's Cultural Group, and her editorship of the renowned tome on Indian cuisine, *Indian Delights* has left an indelible mark not only in Indian households but also resonates in the multicultural tapestry of our global society.

Saleem Badat skilfully navigates through Dr. Mayat's diverse literary landscape, from the culinary realms of Indian cuisine to the textile and fashion history encapsulated in *Nanima's Chest*. With poignant prose, he captures the essence of her semi-autobiographical work, *A Treasure Trove of Memories* reflecting on her formative years in Potchefstroom, a town steeped in patriarchy. Here, Dr. Mayat's unwavering commitment to gender equality shines through, creating a captivating narrative that transcends time and resonates with readers across generations.

Though largely narrative in style the book records a number of astute observations including the passage "Although the WCG's motives, meetings and philanthropic endeavours were often centred on ideas of justice and equality, they were not a traditional activist group. Their acts of defiance were more subtly against cultural norms or traditional limitations on women rather than political defiance." This compact yet comprehensive volume, unfolds the layers of Dr. Mayat's life, offering readers a glimpse into the rich tapestry of her experiences as a global citizen.

Saleem Badat's eloquent and readable style ensures that this book not only preserves the legacy of an extraordinary individual but also serves as an inspiration for future generations. As we delve into the pages of this appreciation, we are invited not just to read but to live the moments that shaped Dr. Zuleikha Mayat's remarkable journey.

Her life story, meticulously captured by Saleem Badat, is a testament to resilience, activism, and the timeless pursuit of equality. May this book be a guiding light for those who seek inspiration in the remarkable life of Dr. Zuleikha Mayat.

Ebrahim Moola, Attorney

Durban, November 2023

Foreword by Mahmoud Youssef Baker

I know Dr. Zuleikha Mayat very well, as we served together as directors of Albaraka Bank for many years and she was one of my trustees at Iqraa Trust.

When she retired from Iqraa Trust, we organised a prestigious farewell function and she made a great speech.

When I met with Dr. Mayat for the first time, she reminded me of Indira Gandhi. Both have sharp minds and beautiful smiles.

After our first meeting, she invited me regularly to her home to meet her family and to attend the seminars she organised at the Women's Cultural Group. I realised how intellectual she was. I learnt a lot from those seminars and from my meetings with her and her beautiful family.

I have a deep appreciation for the remarkable contributions Dr. Mayat has made to this country over the years. Her dedication and selfless service to our community have left an ineradicable mark, and it is with great admiration and gratitude that I extend my heartfelt thanks to her.

Through her life and her exciting books, Dr. Mayat has exemplified outstanding human values for our generation and has left a legacy that will hopefully continue to guide future generations.

Dr. Mayat, you have both elevated our nation and set a standard of excellence for others to follow and your genuine commitment to humanity and your wisdom have had a profound impact.

We will always remember your sincere efforts to assist all in need without discrimination. You are proof that one person can indeed make a significant difference.

May Allah bless you and your family and keep you in good health.

Dr. Mahmoud Youssef Baker

Chairperson Iqraa Trust
Founding director, Albaraka Bank
Trustee, Durban University of Technology
Foundation

November 2023

Foreword by Shabir Chohan

When I joined Al Baraka Bank as CEO in 2004, one of the members attending Board meetings was Dr. Zuleikha Mayat. She impressed me with the counsel that she provided and in bringing up very appropriate and strategic discussions relating to the clients and the communities served by the Bank. Her contributions were very relevant in what are normally very technical and high-level complex banking discussions.

Since then, I have interacted with Dr. Mayat through various charitable organisations, including the Iqraa Trust and Women's Cultural Group. She has displayed great commitment, energy and proactiveness and her intellect and attention to detail was outstanding. I was very impressed with Dr. Mayat's meticulous manual record keeping, with correspondence and information always readily available.

I recall that she was instrumental in 2017 in arranging a dinner to recognise the late Mr Solly Bux and Chief Justice Raymond

Zondo, who was then Deputy Chief Justice and was assisted in his studies by Mr Bux.

Dr. Mayat's role in the community ensured the raising of both domestic and international issues. No matter how controversial issues were, she commented to promote social justice. Her involvement included attendance at marches and demonstrations. She walked the talk!

Dr. Zuleikha Mayat is a legend. As a leader, she has been an inspiration to me and to many others in all walks of life.

We salute you. May you continue with the excellent work that you do.

Dr. Shabir Chohan

CEO, Al Baraka Bank Ltd.

November 2023

Introduction

Few Indian South African women have achieved wider recognition and received greater accolades than Dr. Zuleikha Mayat. An Honorary Doctorate in Social Sciences by the University of KwaZulu-Natal-Natal in 2012, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Iqraa Trust in 2019, a Women of Influence Award in the same year and another Lifetime Achievement Award from the Durban Book in 2021 are just some of the awards bestowed on her.

It is fitting that her rich life and lifetime of civic contributions are celebrated. For Dr. Mayat has, over a life spanning 97 years, been a remarkable pioneer, an evocative writer, public commentator and speaker, active civic, cultural and community worker, philanthropist and advocate of human rights.

In sum, a public intellectual, an exemplary one too, who has not been afraid, in Palestinian Edward Said's words, to 'speak truth to power' on a range of issues. Said reminds us that intellectuals cannot sit on the fence but must choose sides. Dr. Mayat did.

She has also been an ever-present and beloved mother of three, grandmother of eight and great grandmother to eight.

I met Dr. Mayat 48 years ago, through my friendship with her three children, Nasim,

Razia and Aslam. During the late 1970s the Mayat home in Leander Crescent, Westville, was a place where we spent happy times, playing table tennis, pool cricket, listening to music and generally larking about, while being served sumptuous meals and interesting conversations.

During the 1980 education boycotts, the Mayat home was my refuge from the apartheid security police. In 1981, when I departed for the University of Cape Town, a copy of Indian Delights, the majestic cookbook Dr. Mayat inspired two decades earlier, was in my suitcase. Forty-two years, three continents and six cities later, that original signed copy remains a prized possession.

Returning to live in Durban again after 38 years, I had the delight in 2020 of reviewing and copyediting various drafts of her most recent book, The Odyssey of Crossing Oceans, penned with great imagination, verve and eloquence at age 94.

To appreciate is to recognise, value and admire the qualities of someone, to express approbation and gratitude for their contributions, actions and example, to hold them in high esteem, to rate them highly. Dr. Zuleikha Mayat: An Appreciation is crafted in the spirit of those meanings of 'appreciate'.

Early Years

Dr Zuleikha (official identity document name 'Zooligha') Mayat was born on 3 August 1926 in Potchefstroom, at that time a town of some 11 000 people that was founded by the Voortrekkers in 1838 and was for a short period the capital of the Boer Transvaal Republic.

Her birth year is shared with royalty, queen Elizabeth, and revolutionaries, Fidel Castro and Joe Slovo, and was the heyday of Coco Chanel and the art deco movement in architecture, furniture and fashion.

Dr. Mayat's life has straddled a century of momentous political, economic, social and technological changes. From the appearance of the first traffic lights and radio broadcasts to television, cell phones and smart phones, from travel mainly through lengthy and often arduous train and ship journeys to faster and more comfortable motor car and air travel.

She has witnessed the transition from labour-intensive ways of producing food, clothing and household and other goods to industrial and rapid automated manufacturing, canned and packaged food, 'modern' dress and the ubiquitous fast food and take-aways, against which she cautions. Alongside, globally, Dr. Mayat has observed the horrors of the rise of fascism in Germany, Italy, Japan and elsewhere during the 1920 and 1930s,

the second imperialist world war of 1939-1945, colonial dispossession and plunder, holocaust, the tragedy of the Nakba and the continuing genocide of Palestinians by apartheid Israel.

But she has also borne witness to courageous, inspirational hard fought and won anti-colonial and other struggles, the Spanish Civil war of the late 1930s, freedom for India in 1947 and Cuba in 1959, for other formerly colonized countries and for her own country of birth, even as old colonial overlords try to maintain their hold over formally independent counties for economic reasons to do with oil, gas, minerals and agricultural resources.

Back at home, Dr. Mayat's life has extended from the white Union of English and Afrikaners from 1910 onwards and the oppressive and discriminatory segregation to the 1940s, to brutal apartheid between 1948 and 1994 and the racist and exclusively white republic of 1961, to the promise of a democratic South African republic after 1994 and its painful disappointments. She has, however, not simply observed and borne witness. She has, herself, been an actor, beginning by contributing, as a young woman, hard-earned pocket money to subscribe to the anti-apartheid Guardian newspaper and extending in later years in word and deed her commitment to equality and social justice for all.

Dr. Mayat grew up in King Edward Street, the third-generation child of shopkeepers of Gujarati origins. She was one of seven children of Mohammed and Amina Bismillah, who married in Gujarat in 1914 and settled as a family in Potchefstroom in 1920.

As a young girl she listened attentively to the stories of her grandfather, Hassim Bismillah. He arrived in South Africa in 1881 at age 16, from Dhabel in the Surat district of Gujarat province, India. British colonial domination of India and the exploitative extraction of its resources greatly prejudiced the prospects of her farmer descendants and Hassim, like other young Indian men, hoped to create a better life through migration across the 'kala pani.'

Hassim was called the 'Arabier' by the white Potchefstroom locals and commanded respect. Dr. Mayat recalls in *A Treasure Trove of Memories* that grandfather Bismillah was never quite able to identify when 'Arabier' was displaced by the derogatory and inaccurate term 'coolie.'

For Dr. Mayat and her immediate family, 'life revolved around the shop', Dhabel House aka 'Mina's se Winkle' after her popular mum, Amina. It was a meeting

point of people of different classes, 'races', religions, cultures and languages.

She learnt from the example of her grandfather that intermingling across social divides and boundaries was important as was 'learning the languages and folkways' of other social groups.

In Potchefstroom 'there were many who lived below the breadline and relied on [her father's] generosity to feed their families. "Customers would come to my dad in desperate need of goods, often short of cash and already with a big bill. But dad never refused anyone".'

Each evening, from the 'day's takings he would take out a percentage for charity.' It 'drummed into [her] the lesson that others have a share in our incomes.' It later led her to say 'that the Bounty of God is not just for a select few but possessions, knowledge and talents must be shared so that a maximum number of people can benefit as a result.'

Growing up, Dr. Mayat became 'fluent in Gujarati and Afrikaans', learnt 'some Urdu and Arabic' at madressa and 'a bit of Sotho.' She read voraciously, aided by a Chinese friend who kept her 'perpetually supplied

Humaira Surve (Granddaughter)

“ Nani is a pioneer and leader. With all she's done in the community, be it as chairman of the Women's Cultural Group or as a board member of a bank or school, it makes me think that there are no need excuses to sit

around and do nothing. In her era, being a female would have had challenges, but it didn't stop her. Further, Nani has never stopped learning and creating, writing a book in her 90s. This taught me that the world is for exploring, learning and doing and that you're never too old for this. ”

with magazines and books', read to her and her sisters and 'loved to discuss literature.' Other pastimes included horse riding, swimming, fishing and tennis.

Racialism reared itself acutely for her when she was denied the opportunity to attend a school of her choice and to study further. In an era of pre-apartheid segregation, she attended the local Indian-built school, Potchefstroom Indian Government School, until Grade 6 but there was no secondary

school for Indians. None of the schools designated for whites would permit her to enrol. Roman Catholic nuns offered to teach her after hours, fearing that otherwise 'there will be an outcry.'

Patriarchy played a role too. Boys, like her brothers, were sent to continue secondary education in other towns or cities 'but sending daughters away was almost unheard of' during Dr. Mayat's time. She noted that 'no one, not even extended family, would ever take a female. Girls had to be looked after by their own parents.' And, so, her ambitions to become a doctor were thwarted.

Determined to study further, she enrolled for secondary education as a correspondence student with Union College, through whom she achieved a Junior Certificate and then, in 1945, a Joint Matriculation Board Senior Certificate matric exemption. At age 14 she 'discovered that she had a gift as a writer, an intellectual orientation, and a capacity for expressing strong views.' A correspondence course enhanced the 'English in which she would come to write' prolifically. Later, she was awarded a certificate in journalism through further correspondence education.

1944 was a turning point. An 18-year-old Dr. Mayat posted a letter signed 'Miss Zuleikha Bismillah of Potchefstroom' to the editor of Indian Views, M.I Meer, the father of Fatima Meer. M.I Meer published the letter, in which she 'argued for higher levels of education for girls' in a 'style that



Mikhail (Great Grandson) Age 9

“ I remember when Nani came to visit me in Switzerland and I was 3 years old. My

favourite game to play was train-train. I think Nani was 90 years old, but she played Train-Train with me and was saying Chuuu-Chuuu. ”



Tennis in Durban in the days when wooden rackets were used.

revealed not only a principled passion concerning this matter but also [her] sharp wit.'

Zuleikha Bismillah urged: 'Will not our parents realise that in these modern times we would prefer a good sound education which would equip us to face the future, rather than have them shower on us gifts of clothes or sending us to bioscopes or weddings as recompense? If the girl of today is given a chance, the woman of tomorrow will be able to bring up better Muslims and citizens.'

Jaleel Mayat (Grandson)

“ Our pillar, our axis of life, love and happiness. As a child that's all I can remember light and warmth, love like no other. I can't help breaking into tears while writing this. She Leads by example that is one of her many mottos. SHE is highly driven and she is continuously moving. Islam and daily prayer

When Miss Zuleikha Bismillah of Potchefstroom penned her 1944 letter to Indian Views, little did she know that it would be a catalyst of correspondence with a suitably impressed young Wits medical student, Mohammed Goolam Hoosen Mayat, a classmate of her brother who occasionally visited the Potchefstroom family home. In a 1944 letter to him she remarked that 'her desire to be a doctor was motivated by a passion for women's rights, the hope that she might be in a position to 'make the women dissatisfied with their menial and subordinate position.'

is the core of her existence, Family, Friends Plants and Animals as well as the thirst for knowledge truth and justice has made her a Wonder Woman of our Time. She has shown us how we should be living our lives. The life of service and betterment of one's self

My fondest memories are the holidays, traveling with Ma and time spent cooking and listening to stories.

”

Marriage and Durban



Marriage to Mohammed Mayat, 1947

In a departure from how marriages usually occurred at that time, Zuleikha Bismillah and Mohammed Mayat married in 1947, when she was 21 and 'considered too old.' It was a connection that she somewhat coyly says was 'at an intellectual level' of 'shared ideas' and discussion on 'interesting things.'

Mohammed Mayat, she observes, 'was forthright, never avoided speaking the truth.' He was also 'unique' and well ahead of his time.' He was greatly supportive of her interests and encouraged her 'to spread my wings.' "

"Don't hang onto me, do your own thing!" was his attitude. They 'went everywhere together, lectures, cinema', even to the all-male Orient Club. In the 1950s and 1960s it was not the norm for women to attend cinema. Mohammed Mayat was a pioneer in his own right, founding the Shifa Hospital as a 70-bed institution in 1968.

Later, the couple spent a year in London so that Mohammed could specialise in gynaecology and obstetrics which, under apartheid, he could not do in South Africa. She used the stay to undertake 'courses in journalism and Islamic Studies at the University of London.'

The couple moved to Durban and lived for six years with husband Mohammed's family in Mansfield Road. Later, as a consequence

of the Group Areas Act, the family was dispersed and the Mayat's purchased a home in Clare Estate, having celebrated photographer Ranjith Kally as a nearby

fellow resident. Between 1950 and the late 1970s, over 65% of Indian South Africans experienced uprooting and relocation under the Group Areas Act.



Dr. Mayat, with children, Aslam, Nasim and Razia in Clare Estate home, circa 1960.

Her new Durban milieu and network included 'the Gujarati intellectual elite, modernist in orientation, politically vocal and important architects of communal and economic infrastructures in the city.'

She 'was cocooned in a very elite family with elite friends and so on. You didn't need anybody else in that situation.' She noted wryly that in Durban 'the mother-in-law ran the household and the daughters in law were bored.'

When Dr. Mayat moved to Durban, she thought she was leaving behind a small conservative Indian community, only to discover that that the Durban 'community' was far more conservative, with its class, caste and language distinctions and obsessions.

She found 'the gendered worlds of Durban Muslim households... to be in many ways more constraining and culturally partitioned than what she had encountered in her previous life.' She missed 'sorely missed the spectrum of communities in Potchefstroom.'

During the early 1950s there were three children. The eldest, Nasim, was born in 1952 and, like his father, became a gynaecologist who has spent much of his life in dedicated public health service, often in rural areas. Razia was born in 1953, specialised in fine arts and has been a creative force in the arts. Youngest child Aslam arrived in 1955 and is an attorney and civil society activist.



Dr. Mayat and Dr. Mohammed Mayat

The Women's Cultural Group

Dr. Mayat observed that in the 1950's 'every woman was supposed to be a perfect housewife. But now, we wanted something more than being just a housewife.' She noticed 'many talented young brides languishing in domesticity' and 'felt the time was ripe to gather them to do something collectively.'"

The immediate impetus was 'a group of young, mainly Muslim women' participating 'in the first of a series of annual speech contests sponsored by the Durban Arabic Study Circle. Taking inspiration and courage from their 'outspoken participation, they left the meeting with the idea of forming a circle of their own.'

In 1954, Dr. Mayat, then aged 28, invited friends to her small apartment in Durban's 'Casbah.' After supper, thirteen of them – 11 Muslims, one Parsee and one Hindu - began the Women's Cultural Group (WCG). Political activists Dr. Kesaveloo Goonarutnum Naidoo (Dr. Goonam) and Fatima Meer attended. They did not become members but acted as mentors. Over the years there was a multiracial membership of nearly a hundred.

As a founding member of the WCG she began mobilising other women, telling them "now come on, you've got more within you than just, you know, the four

walls of your beautiful homes".' The WCG aimed to 'channel their creative and civic energies, cultivate their friendships and their intellects, and to express themselves as modern women.'

Given the marginalisation of women, this was a bold attempt to mobilise women for social change, to get women involved beyond the household sphere in the public civic and political sphere, a domain traditionally restricted to and dominated by men.

Dr. Mayat did not view the boundaries between these different spheres as fixed and impermeable.

For her, 'women's social and cultural worlds in the Gujarati Muslim diaspora were dynamic, fluid and negotiable, domains of civic concern and action.'

She sought to use her agency and those of women more generally to redefine and renegotiate the role of women in mid-20th century South Africa. For Dr. Mayat, 'Our fight has always been not only for gender. Our fight was also against different things: against the government, against politics, against our own backwardness, and against orthodoxy.' Although the WCG's 'motives, meetings and philanthropic endeavours were often centred on ideas of justice and equality', they were not a traditional

activist group. Their acts of defiance were more subtly against cultural norms or “traditional” limitations on women rather than political defiance.’

There was opposition to her and the WCG perceived transgressions. It ‘was subtle, but powerful.’ Tradition bore ‘down on her, both religious and cultural, and the older generation expressed concern in the actions of the younger women in the Durban Muslim society.’

Even if partners were supportive, they ‘had to navigate both their “in-laws” and “the Ulama”, the Islamic religious leaders.’ She recognised that in seeking to discover and develop their own talents as women, they were stepping ‘into territories dominated by males.’ Astutely, they began to network with the men ‘which resulted in better aid for deprived causes.’ Through their activities, WCG ‘members were not merely practitioners, ambassadors and connoisseurs of culture. They were also producers, agents and brokers of culture.’

Appreciating the sumptuous meals served at meetings at homes and sensing that with many young girls ‘entering secondary schools and no longer learning cooking from mothers and aunts,’ Dr. Mayat sensed that there was need for a cookery book and urged the WCG to initiate one. She also saw the book as a WCG fundraising effort.

As the only woman ‘with some journalistic experience’, she ‘became the editor’ of the various editions of Indian Delights, ‘a book on Indian cookery.’ The book literally flew off the bookshelves, ‘like hot samosas at a buffet’, so well was it received. They used business contacts to ‘get 60-day credit from the publisher’ but ‘paid the publisher inside 30 days.’

The ‘book is dedicated to all the husbands who maintain that the best cooking effort of their wives can never compare with what “mother used to make”.’ This dedication can be interpreted in different ways, intended and unintended. Its popularity is indisputable. Since the original first edition in 1961, there have been fourteen further

Nureen Mayat (Granddaughter)

“ Nani really knows how to tell a story. Her way with words and her imagination kept us enthralled when we were growing up. She would weave each of us grandkids into her stories which made us each feel so special. This coupled with her vast general knowledge and experiences from her travels would keep us entertained. I’ve always felt like I learn so much and gain so much with every minute I

spend with her.

Nani is constantly reading and constantly seeking knowledge across various subject matters, something I think, that impacted me greatly. She is a powerful woman both within our family and out but one who wields it with such kindness, grace and dignity. I remember her once saying to me “Nureen, you always attract more bees with honey” – and this is her inspiring approach to life.

”

editions and Indian Delights, including Enlarged Indian Delights, Super Indian Delights, Best of Indian Delights and A Treasury of South African Indian Delights. It is 'the bestselling book of any genre throughout South Africa, selling well over 500 000 copies.'

Running the family shop, while her father Mahomed 'spent most of his days involved



Dr. Mayat with the various editions of Indian Delights from 1961 onwards.

in sport and politics', Dr. Mayat's 'mother hardly had time to cook let alone teach' her to cook. Her 'few cookery skills' were acquired from one of her sisters.

Mohammed Mayat came from a family of 'super cooks' and 'not at all intimidated by this' she 'used the little knowledge I had to make the best meals possible.' Producing the Indian Delights took her culinary knowledge, expertise and skills to another level.

The recipes in Indian Delights were 'from close family and friends.' But, if someone was known to make a very tasty dish they were contacted for the recipe." There were various challenges, such as the methods of preparation and the amounts of ingredients.

She 'had to test every recipe to make sure we got it right' and soon she 'was cooking and baking up a storm at home. This is what I wanted to give to other women.' For Dr. Mayat, a home-cooked meal is incomparable.

She urges cutting 'out the takeaways' and getting 'into the kitchen' recognising that there are many work, family and other obligations. She thinks that a proper balance to ensure home-cooked meals 'can be achieved.'

Almost 70 years later the WCG, one of Dr. Mayat's important life works and legacies is still in existence, successfully sustaining and reproducing itself over 40 years of apartheid and outliving it, and almost 30

“Isa Surve (Great Grandson) Age 6

She tells nice stories.

years into a new democracy. She is the WCG’s Lifelong Honorary President.

In 1999, despite the sweat and toil and blistered hands and sore feet, Dr. Mayat expressed gratefulness for the ‘time and energy’ and the opportunities for learning and strong ‘forged bonds of sisterhood’ through WCG members activities that aimed to support ‘disadvantaged persons.’

She forthrightly critiqued a perceived lack of appreciation of the WCG’s contributions. In 2007, when Shamil Jeppie’s ‘The Arabic Study Circle of Durban’ was launched, ‘with characteristic directness’ she took issue with ‘a glaring absence’.

Women, she observed, were ‘left almost entirely out of the account’ despite the WCG working on ‘the same terrain as the Circle, suffering public attitudes, criticisms’ and working ‘closely with the Circle in those programmes that interested us.’ She rightly took umbrage with women and the WCG being ‘airbrushed from the Circle’s minutes and deleted from the memories of the officials that had been interviewed’ by Jeppie.

An inspirational mentor to scores of women, ‘mentor Mum’ is credited with instilling ‘old fashioned virtues’ in colleagues and collaborators: volunteering at events without pay, paying for one’s own ticket and meals, contributing food, serving it and cleaning up. A younger associate

Aidan (Great-grandson) Age 4

I love her and that’s it.

remarks that ‘Mum believes if you do the small things right, the big things take care of themselves.’

Book sales have enabled the WCG to annually provide bursaries to disadvantaged higher education students; the WCG was the first non-profit organisation to issue interest-free loans to students, to arrange educational and cultural activities and undertake some relief and charitable activities. In 2019, the WCG provided zakaat and loan bursaries valued at R1 million.

There was no restriction on WCG membership beyond being above age 16 and above, and it aspired to be a multiracial, multi-religious cultural body. In practice, it comprised essentially Muslim middle-class women.

Its collective, cooperative and thrifful civic endeavours may not have directly eroded racism and capitalism and their inherent inequalities and its efforts were reformist rather than radical. But that is to misunderstand its purposes and goals.

It operated within the realities of race, class and caste privilege and, focused on harnessing the time and resources and activating women from the leisured classes, it did not attract women of all classes. Importantly, though, it did not impede the struggle for social justice and democracy in South Africa.

”

‘Speaking truth to power’: Fahmida’s World

Between 1956 and 1963 Dr. Mayat, ‘contributed a weekly column to Indian Views, a newspaper published in Gujarati and English.’ She was just 30 and raising three children aged between one and four; for her to command her own column was pioneering and a great achievement.

The 1956-1963 period was a turbulent one. Apartheid was becoming entrenched in all spheres of life. Mass removals under the Group Areas Act were devastating communities and dispersing long-settled residents to drab townships with little social infrastructure. At the same time, ‘apartheid’s attempt to correlate civic identity with racialized geographical space was unifying people from diverse backgrounds through acts of resistance.’

Following the militant political campaigns of the early 1950s, the state began to handicap the national liberation movement through the 1956-61 Treason Trial of prominent leaders and then, after the Sharpeville massacre of 1960, decimated it through banning the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress, detentions, mass arrests, banning and torture.

Fahmida’s World ‘was one of the first instances in which the opinions, musings, thoughts and ideas of a Muslim woman were regularly aired in Southern African

print.’ She says she was ‘thinking in Gujarati, vocalizing in Afrikaans, writing in English, naturally my column was pitiable.’ The editor, however, ‘had warned the proofreaders that while grammatical errors were to be corrected, my thoughts should be left strictly alone.’

Her column, ‘Fahmida’s World’ (‘Fahmida’ means ‘wise’, ‘intelligent’ in Persian) ‘brought a signature liveliness and humour, as well as a sharp moral eye, to bear on topics that ranged from childcare to apartheid, from unemployment to the launching of Sputnik.’ She is credited with articulating ‘a view of the social good to a diasporic community that was rooted locally but also deeply integrated in Indian social networks of family and village.’

Themبisa Waetjen writes that Dr. Mayat wrote ‘as a housewife and modern enthusiast, her submissions expressing the progressivist optimism of her times, welcoming the technological innovations that were mechanizing the household domain of women in her class.’

Being’ situated in the world of the customary, her writing was one of several means she employed in crafting a public voice and in bearing witness to the political transformations around her. Thus, she is not merely an individual woman, expressing her lived experience.’

‘Fahmida’s World’ was written as ‘a public intervention, a moral prescription towards a definition of national citizenship that she envisioned could best secure the local reproduction of diasporic community and its hard-won socioeconomic prosperity and class standing.’

For Dr. Mayat, ‘Fahmida lived in the world and she observed everything and she was part of everything so she had to write.’ It meant ‘a mixed column’ that covered a range of issues, including the ‘concerns of the peers who comprised her female readership, and her expertise was offered around housework, marriage, and childrearing.’

In an early column in March 1956, she posed that ‘were it the intention of our creator to make of women cooking and childbearing automatons, then why were we given the faculties of independent thought and reasoning power?’

Her response was that ‘a woman’s world is the central point around which society and life revolves’ and that ‘what is rightly a woman’s world is an awareness of the social and political conditions of our environment, of the country and the world.’ It meant ‘not just an interest but a very active participation in these affairs.’

She pointed out to women not in

employment and able to have domestics that they had the time to participate.

Appreciating the realities of class among Muslims, the challenges of navigating modern life and holding fast to Islam, as Fahmida Dr. Mayat advocated for ‘space for women in mosques, education for girls, and interpreting Islam in a way that showed women to be equal partners in public affairs.’ For her, Muslim women were ‘morally and religiously required to develop ‘the welfare of others’ as well as their own minds.

In other Fahmida’s World columns, she addressed social hierarchies and took issue with ‘ethnic and class prejudices’, called out racist and inhuman conduct and commented on ‘the ethical triumphs and breaches of daily life.’

She condemned bias related to the ‘complexions of Indian women, drew attention to ‘the plight of Africans seeking city work and ‘the underpayment of retail assistants’, criticised ‘the (un) Civil Service’, praised disposable nappies and highlighted ‘new bathroom décor.’

The columns ‘delivered a moral lesson, with principles for right living related to the larger social good in the South African context.’ The columns resonated with women readers; in time, Fahmida’s World

“ Amelia (Great Granddaughter) Age 4

Nani made me my favourite woollen scarf - it keeps me warm and has my favourite purple colour. And I'll always love it.

”

also became a conduit for the concerns, complaints and injustices expressed by women – young and mature.

For Waetjen, Dr. Mayat's column was important for two reasons: it revealed both 'the changing position of women in her diasporic and class milieu' and 'how the negotiation between boundaries separating public and private "worlds" were part of a larger discussion concerning the meanings and agency ascribed to the spaces of home, nation and transnationality.'

Dr. Mayat was 'a strong voice advocating a dignified status for women in the diasporic community.' Despite being free to comment on whatever she wanted and her ability 'to 'write with an edgy sharpness around certain issues', her writing reflected a 'sense of diplomacy.'

She had to say 'what [she] wanted to say', but demonstrated great sensitivity in constantly giving thought to what her Transvaal uncles could say about her views.

Miya Mayat (Great Granddaughter) Age 10

“ Here are some of my favorite memories with me great grandmother, Nani:

I remember when I was little, I would swim in her pool and I still do but I remember she had a slide going into that pool and I would be scared to go down that slide. I then remember how strong Nani is and that gave me the courage to slide down into the pool. Just thinking of her and what she did

Fahmida's World displayed a sharp appreciation for difference, diversity and inclusion and held out an imagery of a different and kinder society. She was concerned that Muslim Indian South Africans were not sufficiently involved in and 'invested in, the local scene: "we all live in the same country, yet we don't know one another".'

Despite her writing being tinged with a 'communalist loyalty - the sense of her concern for aarpawalla compatriots, people 'of her own kind' – she criticised 'those complicit in the group think that manifested in compliance with the segregationist program.'

She urged Muslim Indian South Africans to root their identity in other sources rather than just religion and their original homelands. For her, her 'national home was firmly South African'; others too should 'embrace and value themselves' and 'identify...as South Africans.'

Brilliantly deploying a 'culinary metaphor' that would appeal and resonate with

gave me the courage and because of that, I have achieved so many things on the sports field in the classroom. When I would visit her she would take me in her garden and take the time to show me all her beautiful flowers. For Nani, family always come first and my favorite meal from her recipe books is Khowse.

Nani is the smartest, bravest, and sweetest woman I know.

”

Dilshad and Asif Mayat

“ We had the benefit of being raised in the same home as granny.

Hopefully we have imbibed some of her wisdom and guidance.

What we have taken most is her all-round middle path, and courage to venture into uncharted territory and respect for all. But she did it whilst remaining true to her own traditions and belief.

Ma played tennis, rode bicycles and horses, even soccer and cricket with her children.

She wrote Gujerati plays, Urdu poetry. She was a journalist, wrote books, gave weekly talks on Islam.

Ma contributed on the board of Albaraka Bank and many other organisations.

She took her small part in political matters, both South African and international.

Ma mixed with all hues, backgrounds and beliefs. She dabbled in so many things, with great courage and determination, but always steadfast to her core values. She never shirked her housewife duties.

In her 90s she criticised India's Hindutva trajectory at a GOPIO function and a talk supporting Ivan Pillay and others unfairly criminally charged pursuant to a state capture project.

In summary she taught us to live a full life, but never at the expense of raising the family.”

especially women, she asked one to imagine South Africa as 'a bottle of chow-chow pickle.' 'God' she said, 'intended South Africa to be a stew pot of many races and cultures and in that way it retains the tang and piquancy of the chow-chow pickle. Dividing it in unnatural barriers makes it insipid.'

The imagery of a bottle of chow-chow pickle powerfully critiqued and indicted the apartheid programme of separate development, continued white domination and the repression of the talents of blacks and women.

Simultaneously, it projected a compelling vision of an exciting, tangy and piquant society, full of vitality and promise, precisely because it dignifies and draws on the

diverse knowledge, wisdom, abilities and efforts of all and includes all - women and men, black and white, immigrants and indigenous people.

Unfortunately, in 1963, her Fahmida's World column came to an end. There had previously been no censorship of her views at Indian Views. With its closure and a new newspaper initiated, she felt that it 'had a different political agenda.'

She 'was with the activists' and wrote some things 'tinging on politics' that the new editor would not permit and 'scrapped.' She 'couldn't have anybody scrapping my thoughts...it's a women's column and if women want to be interested in politics it's our right. I said to him sorry, I am not working for you anymore.'

Life beyond the Women's Cultural Group

Separately from the WCG, Dr. Mayat worked with the Black Sash, a liberal anti-apartheid group. There were friends and associates from across the political spectrum. Inkatha Freedom Party founder Mangosuthu Buthelezi's children were delivered by

Mohammed Mayat, and he sometimes stayed over. By the 1980s Buthelezi, of course, turned into a political reactionary, connived with the apartheid regime and was responsible for atrocities and many deaths.



Dr. Mayat with Mangasothu Gatsha Buthelezi and Irene Audrey Thandekile Buthelezi, father-in-law Goolam Hoosen Amod Mayat and daughter-in-law, Shameema

Close friends and mentors Fatima and Ismail Meer roped the Mayat's into their revolutionary and clandestine activities. When Nelson Mandela needed a safehouse during his underground activities, the

Mayat home was one of those at which he slept 'overnight a few times', with Mohammed Mayat collecting him and depositing him at prearranged petrol stations.



Dr. Mayat, with Prof Fatima Meer and Mrs Seedat

In 1963, the family 'home was raided in the wee hours' by security police, after Mosie Moola, Abdulhay Jassat, Harold Wolpe and Arthur Goldreich. Escaped from detention at Marshall Square Police Station in 1963,

resulting in a national police hunt.

Over the years, Dr. Mayat has been involved in numerous institutions and organisations, including the McCord Zulu Hospital, Shifa

hospital, Black Womens Convention (founder member), South African Institute of Race Relations, the Natal Indian Blind Society, the Arthur Blaxwell School for Blind, Darul Yatama Wal Masakeen,

Sanzaf, Orient School (trustee), old age homes, mosques in Kwa Mashu and at the University of Durban-Westville, Albaraka Bank and Iqraa Trust.



Dr. Mayat at a South African Institute of Race Relations meeting



With husband, Dr. Mayat at an event

Zara Mayat (Great Granddaughter) Age 12

“ My Westville Nani is one of my biggest inspirations in my life. Some of my favorite memories with her are whenever we were at her house we would ride on these plastics motorbikes inside the house and she would love watching us. Nani knitted my sister and I each a scarf. They are so pretty and so special to us and I love them. I also really love her beautiful blooming garden. I remember

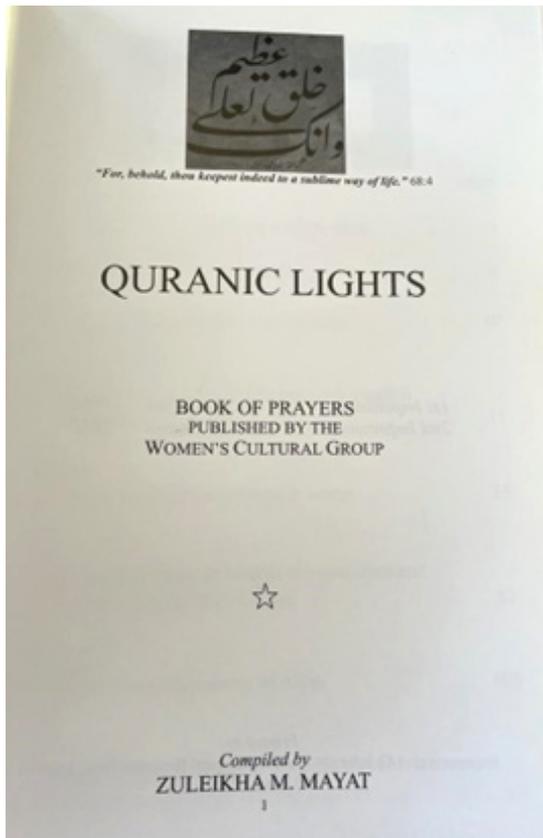
when I was younger she would always take me for walks in her garden and show me all her pretty multicolored roses which were my favorite. Nani always fights for what is right and is the kindest person with the biggest heart. She would always cook the most delicious meals when we would visit.

I love my Westville Nani so much and I wish to be like her one day. She is so loving, pretty and kind. ”

The Author and her Books

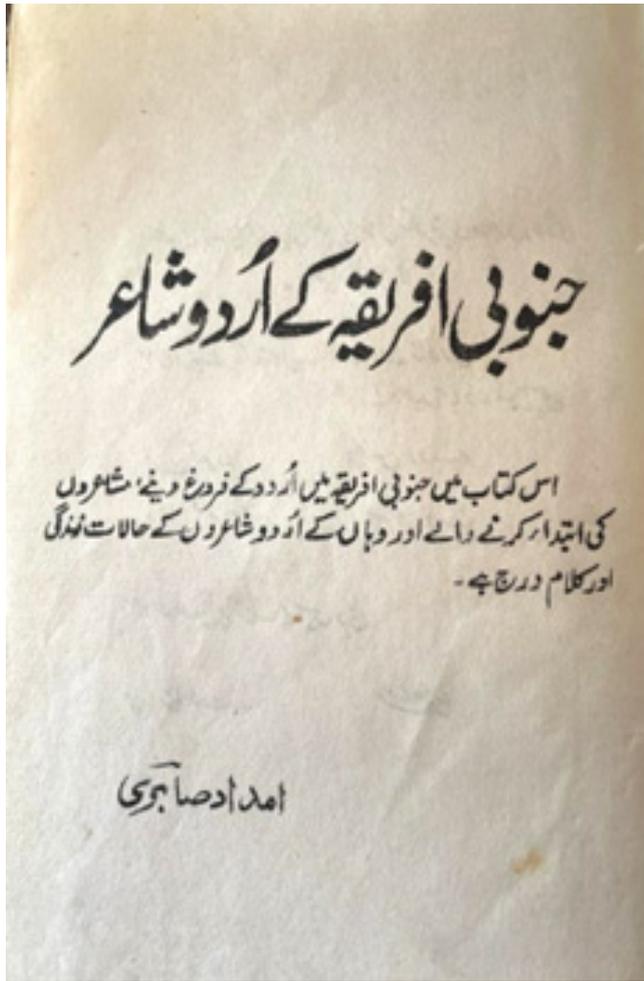
Apart from Indian Delights, in 1966 Dr. Mayat compiled Quranic Lights, a book of prayers. The first edition of 2 500 copies was sold out and a second edition was published by the CG in 2012. The different sections covered prayers and verses from

the Quran, with English translations, prayers adapted from Quran verses, classical prayers of Islamic personalities and prayers from the Quran and other sources that were to be recited under specific circumstances.



Under the name 'Fehmida', Dr. Mayat penned Urdu poetry that she recited along with other women and men at mushairas

that were convened by a local organisation Buzme Adab (a gathering for poetry and literature).



A book in Urdu titled South African Urdu Poets that includes poetry by 'Fehmida'

In 1981, Dr. Mayat published Nanima's Chest, in the hope of promoting the appreciation of traditional Indian textiles and clothing and encouraging their preservation and wearing.

The stimulus was coming across an aunt's decorated zinc chest. 'Within that chest there was "a way of life", which she sought

to preserve and cherish through the book.' Nanima's Chest is an 'ode to the textile and fashion histories of western India, Pakistan and Bangladesh' that looks at 'the nomadic Baluch people in Pakistan to Gujarati and Rajasthani dress and textile histories in India' with sections on Memon garments and Gujarati clothing.



Artist Andrew Verster wrote that Nanima's Chest 'was 'the first catalogue of Indian heirlooms in private homes.' It was 'important as it made 'heritage accessible' and countered the idea 'that culture can be divided.' Its message was 'that these are ours, for us all to enjoy.'

The book is more than 'a catalogue of dress and textiles'; it 'shows how textiles carry a living history. Culture, as evoked in the book, is active, looking both back and forward. In Nanima's Chest there is no search for a pure or authentic culture.' It 'reflects the complex makings of culture on which those of South Asian ancestry in South Africa can reflect, question, critique and ultimately say is "ours, for us all to enjoy".'

Coolam Vahed draws a line between the Indian Delights in 1961 and Nanima's

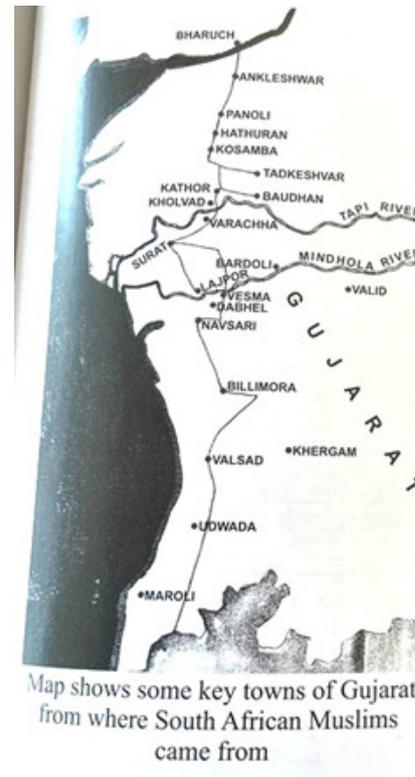
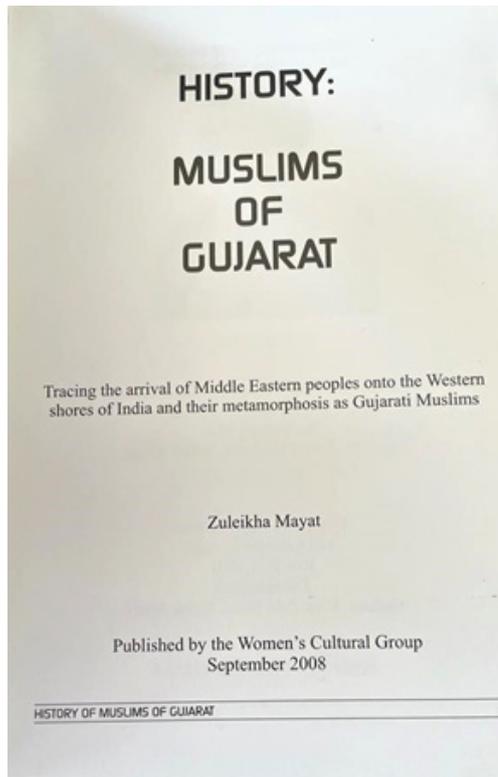
Chest. For him, 'Indian Delights is not just a collection of recipes...it was also a project of preservation of generations' culinary knowledge.' Nanima's Chest fitted 'into this stable in terms of attempting to preserve clothing and traditional attires, and more broadly an aspect of north Indian Muslim "culture".'

In 1996 came the semi-autobiographical A Treasure Trove of Memories - A reflection on the Experiences of the Peoples of Potchefstroom that recounts growing up and life in Potchefstroom, one time capital of the Transvaal Boer Republic. Scholar Betty Govinden describes the book as 'an important contribution to autobiographical fiction in this country.'

History: Muslims of Gujarat was published in 2008, a book that took many years to complete. It was, she writes, the result of 'inner urges' that 'kept impelling' her 'to probe into' her past, with its roots in Gujarat in northwest India.

Responses to questions like 'where do we come from' and 'how did we come to be where we are' required one to 'travel back in time and space to find out about the Islamic presence in India, how Islam arrived there', and 'how it progressed in a continent that had a civilisation much older than Islam.'

Through the book she sought to 'shift back the veils of time and peep into India some centuries before the birth of Islam, focusing on the Western Coast especially Malabar and Konkan and the advent of Muslims



and their penetration into the interior of Gujarat.'

A year later, an edited collection by Goolam Vahed and Thembisa Waetjen, *Dear Ahmedbhai, Dear Zuleikhabehn: The letters of Zuleikha Mayat and Ahmed Kathrada 1979-1989*, was released. It was based on 75 letters exchanged over 10 years between Mayat and ANC stalwart and Robben Island political prisoner Ahmed Kathrada covering culture, politics and religion.

In 2015, a memoir of travels over the years, with recipes, was the subject of *Journeys of Binte Batuti*. Deemed too friendly with radical elements, the Mayat's were denied

the right to possess passports, being only begrudgingly allowed to leave the country to attend medical conferences.

They took advantage of those opportunities to travel widely, visiting some 51 countries, including India, Pakistan, Japan, Indonesia, Kenya, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Spain and the Soviet Union in 1973.

Journeys of Binte Batuti (journey of daughter of Ibn Batuta) published at age 89 in 2015, arose from travels to some 20 countries. It is 'a playful homage to fourteenth-century Moroccan explorer Ibn Batuta', who also wrote his famous travelogue *Rihlah* (Travels) 'from memory.'



The book 'weaves a powerful narrative of the great intellectual, artistic and theological traditions in Islam.'

Appreciative of difference as a positive wellspring for human wellbeing, for Dr. Mayat, 'every country has its own beauty, its own culture, which is heartwarming.' They 'hardly stayed in fancy hotels' but 'in simple places where we could taste the 'real food.'

She encourages travel, for each place holds out lessons, 'ultimately enriches character'

and often exemplifies the 'unexpected generosity' of strangers.' Life she observed 'is one long travel, from space to space, from situation to situation, and the more challenges that are faced, the stronger they leave a person.'

If India and Pakistan felt 'like a comfortable pair of shoes, given still-extant family networks,' she 'also has a soft spot for Iran', describing Iranians as 'warm, hardworking, cultured people' and critical of the unfair



The Mayat's in Spain

maligning of the county by Western imperialist powers.

She appreciated 'the fabulous ancient temples of the south, the sculpting out of rock of an entire complex with three-storey edifices, the embellishment on the statues which exposed to the seeing eye the beliefs, traditions and arts of ancient Hindu India.'

Visits to ancient cities on the Silk Rout, Bukhara, Samarkand and Tashkent 'are

crafted in picturesque detail! Having visited Afghanistan, she 'bemoans the destruction of the Bamian Buddhas'; the fact of the Taliban destroying 'this piece of art sculpted by such loving hands brought indescribable pain to my heart.'

A fond memory is 'eating a football-sized kebab in Spain, filled with nuts, raisins and eggs.' Family became the testers of new overseas dishes and recipes.

A trip to the Bolshoi ballet in Moscow

became a humbling experience. She was draped in a 'turquoise blue sari with great care' but while awaiting the performance became 'conscious of the many not very friendly glances.' She quickly worked out 'that everyone else had come in their work clothes, for the proletariat came to

enjoy the opera and only the bourgeoisie dressed up to show off.' She 'felt cheap and humbled.' It is little wonder that Journeys of Binte Batuti is considered an opportunity 'to see the world through enchanting, enlightened eyes.'



Dr. Mayat and Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, India, 1979.



Nervous moments elephant riding in the Eastern Cape

In 1979 tragedy struck. Mohammed Mayat attended a meeting involving Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, a former Stellenbosch academic and leader of the Progressive Federal party. van Zyl Slabbert and Buthelezi launched the National Convention Movement 'in an unsuccessful attempt to pressure the government to negotiate with all political groups.'

Thereafter, they, her sister and a niece travelled to Potchefstroom to meet visiting overseas family. On route, their car was rammed. She and her niece sustained injuries, but her sister was killed and Mohammed Mayat was seriously injured.

He was denied treatment at the nearest hospital because it was reserved for whites. By the time they did get to a black hospital 'it was too late.' A man whose profession was to look after the medical health of others was denied medical assistance

Nasim Mayat (Son)

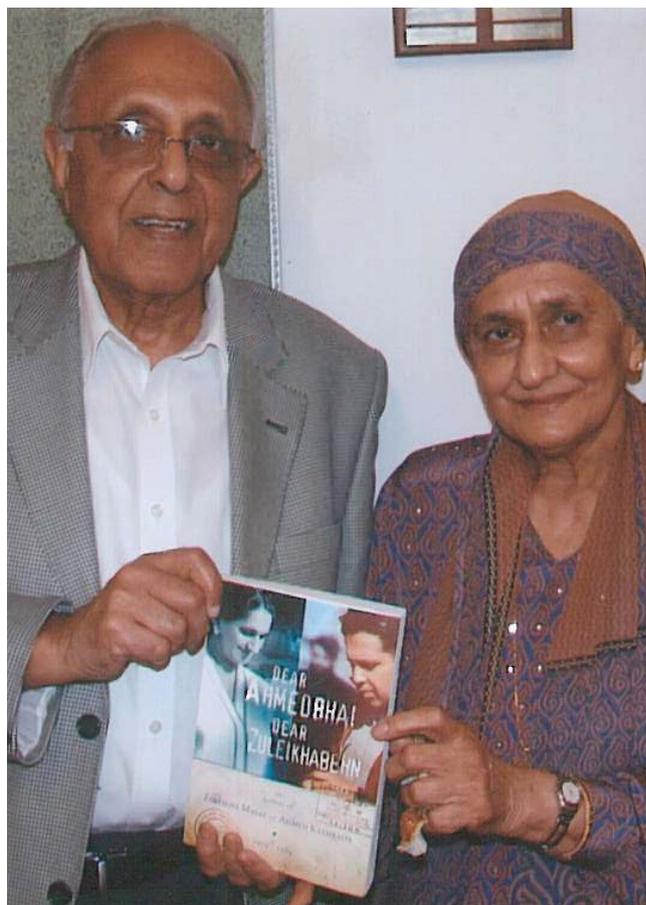
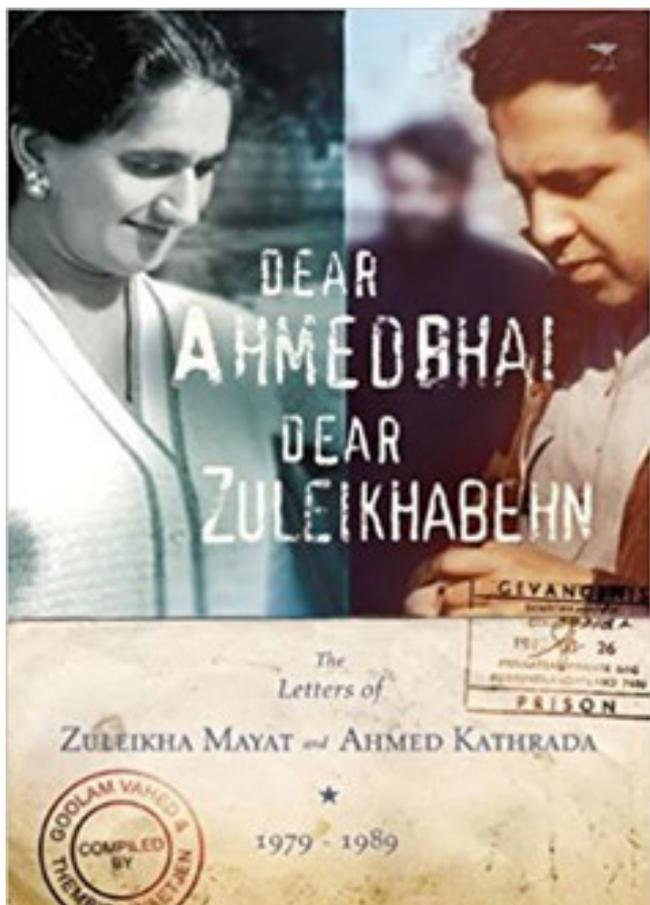
“ What do I admire most in my mother is hard to recall. In my early childhood she was the one who was one who encouraged my sports development. She bought me my first soccer ball. It was later in my pubertal and high school years that I realised she was different from my other aunts. She did not need a driver. She drove. She wrote a column for a newspaper. Started a women's tennis club which met every Tuesday. I thought she was outgoing and adventurous. Now I realise it was her way of activating for women's rights in a very conservative community. The women's cultural club and the resultant

Indian Delights was her way of taking women out of the kitchen and expressing their skills.

After my dad died she did not crumble, but showed an inner strength and continued writing books, becoming a director of a bank and involved herself in civil and community affairs. Now at this late stage of her life besides what she has achieved personally, I realise how highly the community regards her.

Today when she reads or hears of a women achieving success in business, political, scientific or sporting codes she I believe she can have a deep satisfaction that she may had a role in this.

”



The decade long correspondents, Ahmed Kathrada and Dr. Mayat.

because he was black and could have possibly been saved.

The tragic death of her husband, a kindred spirit and unwavering supporter, and especially his cruel denial of treatment at the nearest hospital, would have been a great and ghastly body blow and could have easily irrecoverably devastated many women. Dr. Mayat picked up the pieces and plunged herself into educational, cultural and community work. Son Aslam Mayat

notes that 'unlike many widows, her life did not end when her husband died 40 years ago on 1 April 1979. She took stock, faced the challenges and strode valiantly forward.'

She undoubtedly missed her husband, Mohammed Mayat. Paraphrasing the idea that 'behind every man is a woman', for her 'behind me was my husband who undeniably led me to nurture my own talents.' In separation by death, 'more

than the kisses is missed', so too is 'the companionship that had been enjoyed.'

A letter of condolence from Ahmed Kathrada gave rise to a decade long correspondence between the two. Kathrada, three years younger than her, was at the time imprisoned on Robben

Island and later at Pollsmoor Maximum Security Prison, having been sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964 for resisting apartheid.

He was involved in the early 1950's Defiance Campaigns of the ANC and the South African Indian Congress. Between 1956 to



Dr. Mayat and the Women's Cultural Group clan.

1961, he was one of the 156 trialists in the Treason Trial and then a Rivonia Trialist from 1963-1964, together with Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki and others.

He was released in 1989, a year before Nelson Mandela. She met Kathrada at Victor Verster prison; an institution familiar to me since I was incarcerated for 83 days there in late 1986.

Betty Govinden says about Dear Ahmedbhai, Dear Zuleikhabhen that 'we feel that we are eavesdropping on a uniquely private exchange between two persons, deeply aware of the circumscribed condition of the one and the largesse and magnanimity of the other.'

For her, the exchange of letters 'is an admirable testimony to the mutuality and reciprocity that should define our entire human existence; it is all the more valuable given the circumstances in which it was undertaken.'

It is, moreover, evidence 'of the many small, and hitherto unknown, acts of heroism that sustained those who suffered during the dark days of apartheid.' In his memoirs, Kathrada quoted the great historian Eric Hobsbawm: 'Men can live without justice, and generally must, but they cannot live without hope.'

Govinden comments that Dr. Mayat was 'deeply aware of the significance of the letters, and of their historical and symbolic value [she meticulously kept copies of the correspondence, making carbon copies of her own letters].' She understood that the letters could have value for future research on Kathrada; typically, it would not have entered her mind that it could also have value for those wishing to conduct research on her.

Into Democracy: Post-1994



With ANC Western Cape premier, Ebrahim Rasool, later South African ambassador in Washington



With Enver Surty, former minister of Justice and Constitutional Development and deputy minister of Basic Education



Dr. Mayat with (from left to right) Adv Zuby Seedat, Prof Fatima Meer and Dr. Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, former minister of Health

Post-1994, Dr. Mayat has maintained her principled fight for equity and social justice. She has spoken out against and marched in opposition to various injustices locally and globally.

She has been a consistent and firm supporter of the Palestinian cause for freedom and an end to Israeli settler colonialism and apartheid.

In 2017, she took part in protesting the killings of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar's Rakhine state that resulted in thousands becoming refugees in Bangladesh. The UN

High Commissioner for Human Rights' fact finding mission concluded that the 'gross human rights violations' amounted to 'the gravest crime under international law.'

In 2019, Dr. Mayat took to the streets to protest the Indian Citizenship Amendment Act that the 'Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government in December 2019 adopted.' The Act 'for the first time [made] religion a basis for citizenship.

Human Rights Watch wrote that 'the act, together with a planned nationwide



Protesting the Rohingya genocide in 2017



Dr. Mayat and Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister of International Relations at the time of the Rohingya genocide.



Marching in 2019 against the Indian Citizenship Amendment Act of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party.

verification process to identify “illegal migrants,” can threaten the citizenship rights of millions of Indian Muslims.’

Awarded the Women of Influence Award by the Global Organisation of People of Indian Origin in August 2019 at the Redfern Community Hall in Phoenix, she used the occasion to castigate ‘India for its brutal oppression of the Kashmiri people.’ India, she stated, had ‘departed from the Indian nation to a Hindutva nation’ and compared its conduct to that of Israel.

She also criticised the ruling ANC government, which had ‘departed from the Freedom Charter ideals to endemic corruption and state capture.’ ‘Cherished ideals’ she observed ‘should not be a

thing of a bygone age.’ She urged that ‘whilst embracing technological and other advances, ‘we must treasure justice (including economic justice) for all, both in South Africa and elsewhere.’

Rajend Mesthrie reporting on activities in 2010 related to the 150th year of the arrival of indentured labourers in South Africa that ‘Zuleikha Mayat spoke on women’s culture and their role in politics...[and] alluded to the production of Indian Delights and the channelling of income into bursaries for needy students.

He observed that ‘for the visit of Zuleikha Mayat close to 300 people were packed into a community hall; especially noticeable was the large presence of women, some of

Al-Qalam

Zuleikha Mayat: 'Sadly, India has departed from Indian nation, to Hindutva nation'

By Al Qalam Reporter

As an activist for justice, South Africa's iconic figure, Dr Zuleikha Mayat (93) is never one to mince her words no matter how uncomfortable the truth can be.

So when she was invited to receive the "Women of Influence Award" from The Global Organisation of People of Indian Origin (Gopio International) in Durban recently, she wasted no time in castigating India for its brutal oppression of the Kashmiri people, saying "India has departed from the Indian nation, to a Hindutva nation"

Dr Mayat, who is also a noted writer and humanitarian, was one of 28 people from all backgrounds to receive awards for making a difference in society as a whole. The event was held in conjunction with GOPIO and IWoman Pact Foundation, at the Redfern Community Hall, Phoenix.

In her acceptance speech, Dr Mayat praised the organization for it strides to enhance links between Indians in the

Diaspora with India. "I am honoured to accept this prestigious award in Women's month from GOPIO, which promotes international alliances."

"Coming from the old school I believe in the importance of retaining culture. India has more to offer besides the enjoyable Bollywood."

"To know one's roots is NOT to be sectional. I am South African, where I lived my entire life experiencing all the good and bad that my country has given me."

The Holy Quran states: "*O mankind, We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another*".

"What this means is that diversity enriches the rainbow nations of the World, and should NOT divide and cause dispute. My little reading of Hindu, Jewish and Christian texts reveals that their sacred Scriptures resonate with similar ideals. Each promotes good for all of humanity."

"At 93, having passed my

sell-by-date, I ponder over what to share with you. In remaining true to myself, I must say things NOT to please, but to share my innermost feelings with you."

"I have always had the fondest regard for India. Its culture is part of my DNA. It has helped shape who I am. I have visited India on numerous occasions, savouring its rich tapestry of history, beliefs, magnificent architecture and cuisine. I have stayed in the very basic mud homes of my relatives in Gujarat."

"From adolescence I was proud of our activists, Nacker, Goonam, Ismail and Fatima Meer, all principled leaders like Mandela, Sisulu and Kathrada. I was equally proud of the greats like Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru and Sarojini Naidu. Both in India and South Africa, we lived in hope because of these leaders who were not only eloquent and intelligent, but principled, standing up against injustice everywhere."

"Sadly South Africa has departed from the Freedom



Dr Zuleikha Mayat with Queen Nompumelelo Zulu, wife of King Goodwill Zwelithini, at the GOPIO Awards event.

Charter ideals, to endemic corruption and State Capture. I despair at R472-million Gupta wedding."

"Sadly India has departed from the Indian Nation, to a Hindutva Nation."

"I could never have imagined an India, when at the stroke of midnight, 70 years of oppression is proudly de-

clared as the new normal, which has lost its sight by taking its cue from Israel to imprison a state with military occupation, firing pellets to blind little children. These are not my words, but those of Amnesty International, of which our Kumi Naidoo is the Secretary General."

"Cherished ideals should NOT be a thing of a bygone

age. Sure the world was economically poorer, technologically backward, but immensely richer in values. Whilst embracing the advances, we must treasure justice (including economic justice) for all, both in South Africa and elsewhere."

Dr Mayat's speech was warmly received amidst loud clapping.

whom otherwise seldom ventured out to hear academic or public talks.'

Fifty years after creating the WCG and penning her Fahmida's World columns, Dr.

Mayat continued to be appreciated as a public intellectual and demonstrated being able to still draw into the public sphere 'non-traditional' groups.

In December 2021, on receiving the Durban Book Fair Lifetime Achievement in Chatsworth, she spoke out about the July 2021 events of 'looting, violence, loss of life, food shortages, anger and fear' in 'the name of a man [Jacob Zuma] who has caused untold damage to our economy and country.'

With such 'trials, tribulations, and realities of life' she was reminded of Nelson Mandela's words in *No Easy Walk to Freedom*. During 'dark moments [when our] 'faith in humanity [may be] 'sorely tested', we cannot give ourselves 'up to despair'. 'That way lays defeat and death'. Instead, we must keep our heads 'pointed toward the sun, [our] feet moving forward.

She said that 'there is lots of work to be done' and hoped that 'the Durban Book Fair, our institutions and organisations and we as citizens will work tirelessly to build unity and reconciliation in our communities and productive, rewarding, healthy and safe lives for everyone in our city, province

and country'. She urged that 'as we do that, we must respect whatever differences of colour, origins, nationality, ability, language, culture, cuisine and religion exist among us. These differences do not stand, and must not stand, in the way of our unity as people and South Africans.'

'Respect for and acceptance of such differences is what diversity means and they must be celebrated. That is why our Constitution speaks about us being "united in our diversity".' Accepting an award in 2019, she insisted that 'to know one's roots is not to be sectional' and that 'I am South African.'

Aziz Pahad, former Deputy Minister of International Relations, congratulated Dr. Mayat on her Durban Book fair award, saying that it was 'much deserved further recognition of your lifetime of contribution to community and country.'

He thanked her for her 'continuing concern with impoverishment and unemployment

Javid Mayat (Grandson)

“ Dear Nani, I can't put into words how incredibly amazing you are. Your boundless kindness and dedication to philanthropy have touched my heart and the hearts of so many. You've shown us the true meaning of giving back and making a positive impact on the world. Your selflessness is an inspiration, and I'm so proud to be a part of your family.

In addition to your incredible philanthropic work, your talent as a cook and your remarkable cookbooks have delighted

palates around the world. Your culinary talents are out of this world. Your recipes have filled our family gatherings with warmth and laughter, and they've been shared with countless people who admire your skills. The love and care you put into every dish are what make your cookbooks more than just recipes; they're a taste of your heart. You've shown how food can bring people together. You're not just an amazing woman, you're an amazing Nani, and I cherish every moment we spend together.

”

that affects so many of our people. We must all do what we can to tackle and defeat these scourges because, as you say, "it is the right thing to do".' Pahad noted that Dr. Mayat's 'encouragement to the Durban Book Fair to take their efforts also into communities like Chesterville, Chatsworth and elsewhere beautifully highlights your concern with literacy, reading and educational opportunities, to which you have admirably contributed much.'

He acknowledges her as 'a pioneer in encouraging opportunities for girls and women long before this was fashionable' and for upholding 'the dignity of everyone' in calling for unity in our diversity and for advocating that everyone must lead "productive, rewarding, healthy and safe lives."

He salutes her for 'important and diverse contributions over seven decades' that either anticipated or tried to 'give effect to



Dr. Mayat was a much sought after public speaker.

the Freedom Charter and our Constitution and Bill of Rights.'

And he expresses the hope 'that young people will be inspired by your great example as a cultural and community activist and will continue the great work that you have inspired and undertaken over so many years.'

In 2016, she observed to Rachel Anderson, an overseas student, that Muslim Indian South Africans were feeling uncertain

about their status and were 'withdrawing from politics.' Her attitude was that 'unless you have a voice there [in politics] nothing is going to happen for you.'

Anderson noted that 'she speaks of balance often..., balancing tradition and modernity, balancing freedoms with duty, balancing the Qur'an and culture, and I wonder if perhaps balance is the key to a long life like hers.'



Dr. Mayat, Chief Justice Raymond Zondo and Shabir Chohan of Albaraka Bank

The Odyssey of Crossing Oceans

Dr. Mayat's 2008 History of Muslims of Gujarat enjoyed wide acclaim from young and old, and suggested to her that humans have a thirst to know their roots. Ever since, she toyed with the idea of a book on the people who originated in Arabia, moved to India, and over time, made their way to Gujarat – a history experienced by those who endured, and not one penned by outsiders.

Family and friends responded: 'Well, get on with it.' She did, and in 2021, on the eve of turning 95, Dr. Mayat published a new book: *The Odyssey of Crossing Oceans*. It is



an enthralling and expansive narrative told by a consummate storyteller and embodies some of her philosophy of life.

The book spans pioneering maritime and land odysseys over a 1500-year period, from Arabia to Malabar, then to Gujarat in India, and eventually, to South Africa. Drawing on various sources, not least on her immensely fertile imagination when facts are elusive, *The Odyssey* continues a wonderful tradition of animating and honouring the unsung heroes and heroines who in myriad ways made and remade themselves and the world around them.

The book beautifully weaves together in a compelling narrative fact and fiction, conjecture and speculation, local, regional, transnational, personal, and communal histories, and the experiences of migrants. Like Karl Marx did in the mid-19th century, she reminds her readers that 'it is people who make history, historians only record their perspective of it.' *The Odyssey* records the spread of Islam and trade from western Arabia, across India, and down through the Indian Ocean to southern Africa, the interaction between traders and local leaders in India who became Muslim, and Islam's role across the Indian Ocean.

On the heels of the indentured workers who arrived in 1860 to work on the sugar plantations of the British colony of Natal

came “free” or “passenger” Indians. This late 19th and early 20th-century interregional movement of capital and labour laid the basis for South Africa’s Indian population.

The migratory trade networks and transmission of people, products, and the cultural, religious, and trade practices in new settings are narrated through family histories that bring to life the stories and struggles of real people.

Those hailing from Gujarat in north-west India, known as Gujaratis, initially lived transnational lives; it was sometimes decades before South Africa became “home”. Some Indians created sizeable businesses, but most new migrants were either indentured labourers and workers or engaged in hawking and other small trades in the service of diverse clientele. All contributed to forging the economic, political, social and cultural foundations

of South African society. Tracing the experiences of different families, the book shows the determination of immigrant people intent on making a success of their lives and contributing to their new country.

The brutality of apartheid forced long-settled residents to ponder whether they should fight apartheid or relocate to more dignified lives elsewhere. The majority elected to stay and fight, a few left for other countries.

More philosophically, Dr. Mayat insists that it is vital for people to know their historical origins, the ups and downs of predecessors, and how the present was forged through sacrifices and struggles. She says that unless the roots are strongly embedded, the saplings cannot survive the trials, tribulations and realities of life.

For her, all life is a steady movement, and history is an attempt to record

Iman Sali Ameen (Granddaughter)

“Hearing that we would be going to Nani’s house always brought joy to me. From entering her house, I would be enveloped in a soft smell of spices and rice. I used to sneak straight into the kitchen and peep into the pots to see what delight was getting warmed up. We’d gather around the table and listen to stories about Nani’s family, about her history and about her views on what’s happening in the news. There was never a time when a newspaper wasn’t around her. I remember how we would sit around Nani in the evenings to listen to her stories and how she weaved in Islamic history into her

stories to us, how the stories made us proud to be Indian Muslims and how important it was to know about our heritage. When she explained concepts about the Quran to us, it was never from a point of fear, but to understand and love Islam.

We would joke around that Nani was the Oracle, but truly speaking, her wisdom was so vast, and always encouraging us to learn more, to travel more and empower ourselves.

She is also the epitome of modesty for me - while so knowledgeable and being a prominent figure in Durban, she didn’t ever let ego get to her.

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that movement. Much of the history of colonised people, she says, has been obliterated, maligned and obscured. The heirs of rich heritages were force-fed Western colonialist literature and began to imbibe the distortion and trivialising of their past. Those who insist on a new de-colonial approach to history and other disciplines and call for decentring western approaches to knowledge, knowing, and writing will readily agree with her. Truth, she argues, cannot remain hidden forever. Knowledge gleaned from oral histories and recovered from other sources must resound through our minds, among families, within institutions and around the world.

Diasporic youth must treasure their rich heritage, including a strong work ethic and caring for each other and for others. This is great wisdom in a world in which the rich and powerful rule with impunity, oblivious to the needs of others, and in which greed, corruption, bribery and crass materialism run rampant. She, like many others, is distressed at contemporary conditions in post-1994 South Africa. The great German poet and playwright Bertolt Brecht wrote of the “struggle of the mountains” and

Nadia Mayat (daughter-in-law)

“ When I married and moved into the family home I did not know how to cook. Nani taught me, and today I get compliments from her for my vegetable curries.

I appreciate her not just for the big achievements but for the little things in life,

the “battle of the plains.” If a constitutional democracy is akin to the mountains, it has been largely, though not irreversibly, won.

The ‘battle of the plains’ is the infinitely more arduous task of ensuring environmentally sustainable economic development, creating decent jobs, eliminating unemployment and poverty, providing effective education, health and other social services, enhancing social equity and extending and deepening democracy. That equitable and humane society remains to be won.

She contends, for good reasons, that ‘we are repeating all the mistakes of the past; those who were in the riding seats – now it’s only the colour that’s changed. It looks as if a lot of them are there for themselves. Not for the people.’

She, and South Africans more generally, ‘had better expectations. We really thought it was going to be dramatic change...[that] there’d be more even-handed progress all round, from the lowest to the top. You’ve seen some people getting very much richer and some getting poorer. Now that gap is widening when we should be bridging the gap, narrowing that gap.’

especially family get togethers. I have great memories of our road trip from Mumbai to Delhi with Nani, Chotikala, Nasim and Nureen. We could not get to Dhabel, Nani’s village, because of the bad roads. The family came to meet us at our hotel in Surat with the food they had prepared for us. It was very humbling.

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An Exceptional Life of Selfless Contribution

Paul Maylam's Enlightened Rule: Portraits of Six Exceptional Twentieth Century Leaders, teaches us that outstanding leaders hold fast to 'some key fundamental values', live the core values and embody integrity and honesty.

Leaders believe in the 'innate worth and dignity of all human beings' and take on the 'responsibility to create conditions in which all humans can realise their potential. They have 'an unwavering commitment to democracy and human rights,' including 'proper access of all to education, health care, personal security' and 'social and economic justice.'

They have a 'generosity of spirit,' an 'egalitarian spirit' and 'a sense of obligation to further the common good.' Leaders take learning, intellectual endeavour, education and knowledge seriously. They know that these are vital for understanding our world, for gaining insight into our problems and challenges and for creating a hospitable world.

Leaders look beyond themselves. They see potential all around them, they strive to build new generations of leaders who will surpass them and create opportunities for people to develop themselves.

'The leader is best. When people are hardly aware of [her or] his existence. When [her

or] his work is done, [her or] his aim fulfilled. The people say, "We did it ourselves".' So wrote the ancient Chinese Taoist philosopher, Lao Tzu.

Of course, leaders need committed, but critical, supporters, who also act as agents of change, and need strong functioning institutions. Leadership, then, becomes everyone's task and responsibility. That is the real meaning of the slogan, 'Power to the People.'

Dr. Mayat says of herself that 'the candle by consuming itself may have given light to others but it was the inspiration and assistance of the team players that ignited the flame and kept it burning.'

She humbly adds that 'the wind under my wings, coming from the team players, took me soaring high. Without the inspiration provided by the liberal Maulanas of those times, the cooperation of NGO's, aunts, uncles and friends the flame would have flickered out.'

Dr. Zuleikha Mayat embodies the qualities of outstanding leaders that Paul Maylam highlights. For some 70 years there has been a Zuleikha Mayat way that is principled, faith-based, socially committed, with inspired leadership predicated on special talents and indomitable resilience.

Like other outstanding leaders, she has

MR Haffajee (Son-in-law)

“ I first met Dr Mayat when her book with mouth-watering pictures of Ramadan iftar delights lay on my mother’s kitchen table. “Ma, make that for us tonight?”

Little was I to know that my life would become intertwined with Dr Mayat and her friendly family when I married Razia. I fondly call her “Nani”, because our children do. Nani and her family became my adopted family in Durban.

We are blessed to have her. Even now, she still tells us stories! We are still transported nightly by her vivid life stories of growing up in small rural Potchefstroom, an old “boere

dorp” in the “Transvaal”. Time, places and people have resided in her mind with much compassion all her life, and she has shared those freely with all of us.

At university I came across a book called Journeys of Binte Batuti that opened my eyes to the remarkable world of the Middle East. Nani added much to that. Making some overseas journeys with Nani, I was taken by her deep knowledge, historical insight and compassionate understanding of the peoples of the Middle East and other parts of the world – and, of course, their culinary habits. She had a marvellous habit of challenging tour guides with fanciful tales.

”

provided selfless leadership that is mindful of people’s needs and troubles, with the courage to challenge the status quo and the passion to achieve change, committed to service and persevering to overcome obstacles, sometimes at personal cost.

There has been steadfast adherence to core values like equality, equity, social justice and the Islamic faith, the latter comprising for her the ‘foundation for social and intellectual engagement.’

Faith, culture and tradition are important. Dr. Mayat understood that we need them as sheet anchors that provide ballast. But we must be careful that they don’t harden in ways that imprison our thinking, blind us to other’s needs and discomfort and exclude others. They must help us to navigate the world and to work out what is the right course of action. If Dr. Mayat’s

identity and culture was Muslim and Indian, it was also fluid and dynamic. She owned her roots but was open to and embraced other ideas and cultures.

While her own immediate community has tended to wall itself from others and limit its hospitality to people like themselves, she extended hospitality to everyone. She understood, like Edward Said, that ‘humanism is not about withdrawal and exclusion’ but about ‘enlightenment’ and ‘emancipation’ and embrace of difference, diversity and inclusion.

Precisely because she did not cut herself off from others but looked onwards, Dr. Mayat was highly aware of the plight and suffering of others, that for many the world is an inhospitable place. Like Mandela, she wanted ‘justice for all’, ‘peace for all’ and ‘work, bread, water and salt for all’, for

people to be 'freed to fulfil themselves.'

The world that she was born into, of segregation, apartheid, patriarchy and prejudices, was not the world of her choice, the kind that she wanted to live in. Refusing to accommodate to that existence, she courageously acted to change that world.

There has been a powerful commitment to supporting and developing individuals, groups, communities and society economically, educationally and culturally. Alongside, has been keen strategic sense of (changing) contexts and needs and sensitive deliberation on possibilities based on insight into the thinking and lives of the social groups with whom the WCG was most immediately involved.

Add also innovative, resolute and energetic leadership and practical contribution to

social change and brave opposition to apartheid, locally, and globally in Israel, Kashmir and elsewhere.

Add too, in a context of rapid technological change, an adaptation and transition, if sometimes begrudging, from old manual means of doing things to modern computerized systems and determined resilience in the face of adversity and challenges.

Amid attitudes where too many men imagine 'that we are made just for their pleasure', Dr. Mayat had a father, brothers and a husband who were different, who appreciated her intellect and companionship and encouraged her to develop and to express herself.

The terms in which she describes Dr. Mohammed Mayat, her supportive

Jihaan Haffajee (Granddaughter)

“ For me, Nani embodies all the qualities of an exceptional human being. While she is dearly loved by all of us, her family, she is also greatly loved by a vast number of people who have met her.

This, I believe, is because Nani shows a genuine interest and empathy for all those she comes across.

My father said that as a young man, Nani always showed a genuine interest in everyone who visited her home. So that people were instantly drawn to her (something she has passed on to my Uncle Aslam). Not a superficial kind of interest, but a sincere and

genuinely caring one. It is this very caring and compassionate nature that has led Nani to become extensively involved in the social upliftment of the community over the years.

And what sets her apart is that she has always had vision, a vision to let others see what could be achieved through drive, determination and collective action. Her determination and energy is what amazes me the most. Because even at the ripe old age of 97, Nani refuses to give up, insisting on exercising, reading and fiercely defending her independence.

Every day is a new lesson with Nani. We are incredibly blessed to have her.

”

partner and companion for 32 years is an appropriate description of herself. She, too, was indisputably ‘unique’, ‘well ahead of [her] time’ and encouraged and supported many ‘to spread [their] wings.’

She intelligently worked out how to both ‘navigate and negotiate tradition’ and to grant ‘respect to the elder generation’ but also prod them to respect and support opportunities for the development of women.

Perhaps it is the balance that Anderson refers to, ‘balancing tradition and modernity, balancing freedoms with duty, balancing the Qur’an and culture’ informed by knowledge, reason and experience that is the key to her great success as a leader of people and on important issues.

She has sought to uphold the dignity of everyone with whom she has associated

and to embody the value of equity – fair and just treatment. Asked in 2019 by Al Qalam what is one thing for which she should be remembered, Dr. Mayat replied ‘for being someone who interacted with everyone, no matter who they were, without prejudice.’

Part of her life mission has been ‘making life better for someone else’, something that she connects with her adherence to Islam and to her everyday life and practices. Ramadan has especial meaning for her, as a time of introspective, reflexive stock taking and rededication.

It ‘is not only about fasting but a time to reflect on one’s life, the community, the state of the nation. It’s the cleansing of the heart and about making life better for someone else. For me it’s like reviewing the annual balance sheet of my life. What have I done and how can I improve.’

Razia Haffajee (Daughter)

“ People know my mum as being instrumental in the revival of Indian cooking and its varied regional forms. My personal good fortune was to have someone teach me how to appreciate colour, texture and design. From an early age I was exposed to art and craft.

Whenever my parents returned from their extensive travels the first thing I looked forward to was the opening of their suitcases and sometimes trunks. My mum would take out each of the treasures that they had purchased from local craftspeople,

explaining their origin and what materials they were made of. Rough spun khadi and silks with block printed design, tie dye from India, Indonesian batiks, Irish linen, the Japanese use of natural materials and their nature-inspired aesthetic.

*The many rare books they brought back on eastern architecture and craft taught me to observe and appreciate the diversity of creativity. All this culminated in the collection of Indian artifacts and embroideries from the local South African community in the beautifully illustrated book *Nanima’s Chest* that she authored.*

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Shameema Mayat (Daughter-in-law)

“ Mum believed a community should “fly on both wings”, male and female.

The quality that I most admire is that after the death of her husband, she did not withdraw, instead she continued to develop and grow to live a full and meaningful life.

Even when most other people would slow down, she continued to contribute to society. In her 90s she spoke from the entrance of the City Hall at the protest against the oppression of the Rohingya in Myanmar.

As patron of the Active Citizens Movement at 94 years of age, she spoke at Park next to the Workshop Shopping Complex protesting for the withdrawal of charges against Ivan Pillay and others and against the state capture of SARS.

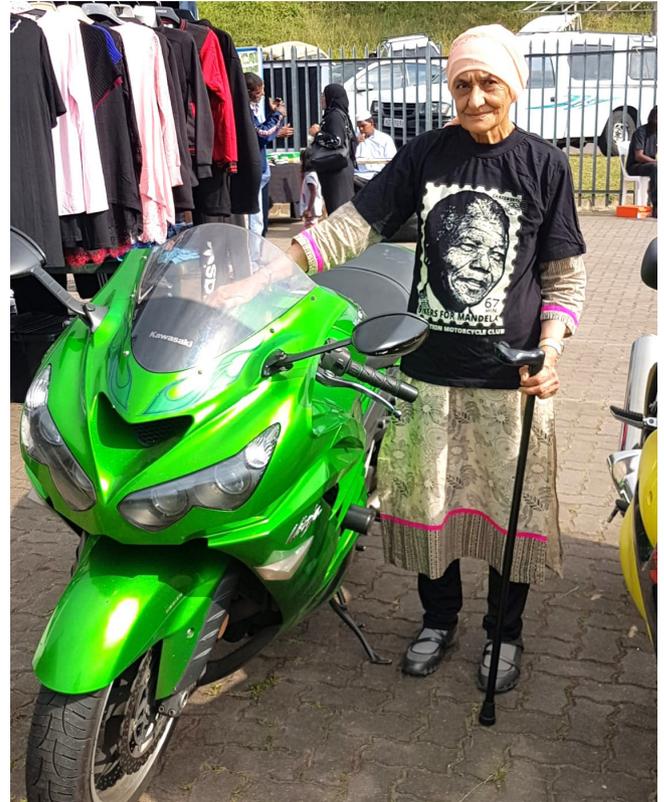
In December 2024 at age 97 in a wheelchair, she attended a fundraiser for the victims of the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

This indomitable spirit to live a meaningful constructive life to its fullest makes her stand out from most others.”

Her message is ‘Live every moment of your life to the fullest. Love all humanity. Above all, stay true to yourself.’ Take ‘pride’ in whatever contributions that you may make to advancing justice and the common public good but ‘never forget that no one is an island. People ‘need each other, whether it is family or community’ and that should make ‘us to always be humble.’

An overseas student interviewer wrote in 2016 about her: ‘You are truly an inspiration not only to me, but also to so many young women and your life work has paved the way for so many women to embrace their full potential. I hope to be half the woman you are if I am lucky enough to be a great grandmother like you some day!’

Not one clamouring for public acclaim and expressing the hope that she has ‘proved worthy’ of accolades, she has heeded a friend’s advice to not ‘go running after recognition or accolades but if it comes



Weekend biking outing, Chatsworth

your way, accept it with thankfulness and grace.' That she has done with humility.

Borrowing from the Iqraa Trust's motto 'Life is not measured by what you own, but what

you can do for others, son Aslam Mayat rightly observes that 'Zuleikha Mayat's life or more accurately many lives is the epitome of this motto.'

Aslam Mayat (Son)

“ Mum was an all-rounder. She lived with her faith as she understood it, namely to steer a middle path. She tried many things without neglecting her core duty of taking care of her family and raising her kids.

She rode bicycles and horses and swam. Played tennis with her lady friends, and played cricket with us children.

She interacted with all faiths, races and religions. Despite her less conservative approach, she commanded the respect of

most Muslim religious leaders.

She wrote plays, books and Urdu poetry. She was regarded as an asset for her contribution to the Board of Al Baraka Bank and Iqra.

She was courageous with dignity. She gave an award acceptance speech at GOPIO very critical of the BJP Indian government's Hindutva programme. Despite the condemnation, the speech was well received, not just because of her standing in the broader community, but also the manner in which she delivered her speech.

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As this is not an academic article, and for ease of reading, I have not footnoted any quotes. All quotes are from the sources below.

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Author Bio

Saleem Badat is Research Professor in the History Department at the University of the Free State. He is a graduate of the universities of KwaZulu-Natal, Boston (USA) and York (UK), with a PhD in Sociology from York.

He is the former vice-chancellor of Rhodes University, a post that he held between 2006 and 2014. He was the first black person in 102 years to hold that position.

Before that, he was the first Chief Executive Officer of the Council on Higher Education, the policy advisory body to the Minister of Higher Education and Training. In that capacity, between 1999 and 2006 he worked closely with ministers Prof. Kadar Asmal and Dr. Naledi Pandor.

In 2014, he was invited to become the first Program Director of International Higher Education and Strategic Projects at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York. He worked with research universities in South Africa, Uganda, Ghana, Egypt and Lebanon and with pan-African and pan-Arab institutions, making R1 billion in grants for arts and humanities scholarship.

Saleem holds honorary doctorates from the University of Free State, from the

University of York and from Rhodes University. In 2008, Inyathelo awarded him its Exceptional Philanthropy Award for leadership in personal South African philanthropy.

He has been a visiting fellow at the University of California: Berkeley and at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies. He is the recipient of numerous scholarships, fellowships and research grants. He is a former chairperson of Universities South Africa and of the Association of African Universities Scientific Committee on Higher Education.

Saleem is the author of four books: *Tennis, Apartheid and Social Justice*, *The Forgotten People: Political Banishment under Apartheid*, *Black Man, You are on Your Own* and *Black Student Politics, Higher Education and Apartheid*.

He is co-author of *National Policy and a Regional Response in South African Higher Education* and co-editor of *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles in South Africa*. He has authored some 60 book chapters, journal articles and research reports and over 40 magazine and media opinion pieces.

To appreciate is to recognise, value and admire the qualities of someone, to express approbation and gratitude for their contributions, actions and example, to hold them in high esteem, to rate them highly. Dr. Zuleikha Mayat: An Appreciation is crafted in the spirit of those meanings of 'appreciate'.

An exemplary public intellectual who has not hesitated, in Palestinian Edward Said's words, to 'speak truth to power' on a range of issues. Said reminds us that intellectuals cannot sit on the fence but must choose sides. Dr. Mayat did.

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Ebrahim Moola

A compelling journey through the life of a legendary figure in South African society. A testament to her lifelong commitment to gender parity, philanthropy and noteworthy contributions as an author.

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Layout and printing: @dignitiprint
publish@digniti.co.za
+27 81 076 6121