



**KHOJA HERITAGE TOUR  
DECEMBER 2018 REPORT**



THE WORLD  
FEDERATION  
OF KSIMC





**7**  
CITIES



**17**  
PARTICIPANTS



**3**  
COMMITTEE  
MEMBERS

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# TOUR OUTLINE

DATE	DAY	CITY	CITY/MODE OF TRANSPORT
20-Dec-18	Thursday	Mumbai	Arrival in Mumbai, CHECK IN 12 NOON
21-Dec-18	Friday	Mumbai	Opening Ceremony
22-Dec-18	Saturday	Mumbai	
23-Dec-18	Sunday	Bhuj	Mumbai-Bhuj (flight)
24-Dec-18	Monday	Bhuj/Kera	Bhuj/Kera/Mandvi
25-Dec-18	Tuesday	Bhuj	Sightseeing: Rann of Kutch
26-Dec-18	Wednesday	Bhavnagar/ Amreli	Bhuj-Amreli (coach - 345 kms) Amreli-Bhavnagar (coach- 125 kms)
27-Dec-18	Thursday	Bhavnagar	
28-Dec-18	Friday	Ahmedabad	Bhavnagar - Ahmedabad (171 kms)
29-Dec-18	Saturday	Ahmedabad	Closing Ceremony
30-Dec-18	Sunday	Ahmedabad	CHECK OUT 10 AM



Welcome Kit: Khoja Heritage Tour 2018

# KHP MESSAGE

## **KHOJA SENIORS FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE IN SEARCH OF THEIR ROOTS**

### **In the name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the Ever Merciful**

The historic Khoja Heritage Tour was undeniably a very inspiring event by of the World Federation and its regional members. With a deep yearning for 'connecting with the roots', a group of committed elderly khoja men and women from across the globe embarked on a journey to venture into the lands where our forefathers once used to walk. The land had an instant aura of 'homeness' from the palpable joy and sense of belonging felt by the participants.

They neither acted as tourists nor were they were treated as visitors. One should have been there to witness how community members engaged with each other, irrespective of where he or she was from Lalpur or London, Bhuj or Boston. Trying to fathom their compassionate attitude, one may conclude that it was the profound 'sense of one community' which tied them together. Amazingly, family relations, languages, family names etc. were all eclipsed by an overwhelming feeling of the global 'Khoja Community'. This is indeed the power of our social capital the world over, which make the Khoja Community so unique.

This exciting 10-days 12-city Tour, provided

a glimpse of the genesis of the Khoja Community, which dates to the late fourteenth century in the desert of Sind, and our conversion by a missionary named Pir Sadruddin, who arrived to live among them. To fit into the neatly organised Gujarati Society based on trade or vocations, our ancestors needed to have a new identity. They could no longer be called Thakkars.

Pir Sadruddin obliged and gave them the title of Khwaja, which morphed into the term Khoja. Over a period, several Pirs came after Sadruddin such as Pir Gulamali Shah and Pir Dadu whose shrines were visited in Kera and Bhuj respectively. Gradually, the beliefs of the pluralistic Satpanthi faith crystallised into Ismaili, Ithna Asheri and Sunni strands.

In the wake of the turmoil of the late 19th century as the Khoja Community tried to define its beliefs, the likes of Nur Muhammad Meghji, Hasham Dosa and Dewji Jamal visited Ayatullah Zayn al-Abedeem Mazandarani in Karbala through the guidance of an Indian student in Karbala by the name of Mulla Qadar Husayn, soon to join Dewji Jamal in India to promulgate the teachings of Ithna Asheri faith amongst Khojas of Mumbai. Thus, began this journey of the nascent Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Community, as it contained its faith in the crucible of Khoja culture. Our visit to Mulla Qadar Madrasa was in fact to pay tribute to this great personality in the history of KSI Community.

The Khoja Heritage tour highlighted the contribution of many key personalities who helped shape us as a community. During the course of the tour, we paid tribute to Lalji Sajan and Hirji Alarakhia, two innocent souls who gave their lives for what they believed, in Mumbai. We also got chance to reflect on the immense contribution of the great religious author Allama Haji Naji the prolific author of the Khoja History, Edalji Dhanji Kaba as we visited their graves in Bhavnagar and Amreli respectively.

History serves as a model of who we are and what we are to be, as well as to know what to strive for and what to avoid. The Khoja Heritage Project team passionately believes that a concerted effort to preserve

our heritage is a critical link to our faith and cultural legacy. It must never be forgotten that the Community is what it is today, largely because of an integrative locus of Khoja heritage and Islamic faith as per the teachings of Ahlulbayt (as). The two are far from being mutually exclusive.

We sincerely thank each and every one who assisted us in accomplishing this milestone in the history of KSI Community.



**Hasnain Walji**

Chair  
Khoja Heritage Project



**Kumail Rajani**

Deputy Chair  
Khoja Heritage Project

# WHAT IS KHOJA HERITAGE PROJECT?

It is all about the preservation, documentation and appreciation of the religious and cultural heritage of the KSI Community.

## AIMS & OBJECTIVES

1. To promote and preserve all aspects of heritage of the Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Community.
2. To collaborate with other Khoja communities in promoting the shared heritage of the Khojas.
3. To engage with academia to enhance the field of academic Khoja Studies.



Sunni Khoja Kabrastan, Mumbai



Khoja Studies Conference, Mumbai 2019







# KHP MAIN PROJECTS

- KhojaPedia  
<http://khojapedia.com>
- Khoja Timeline  
[http://khojapedia.com/wiki/index.php?title=Khoja\\_Timeline](http://khojapedia.com/wiki/index.php?title=Khoja_Timeline)
- Collection & Digitizing the books related to Khoja history and culture  
<http://khojahistory.org/projects/>
- Collection of Magazines  
(Noor e Hidayat, Rahe Najat, Salsabil)
- Resource Library  
(Specialised collection)
- Khoja Calendar
- Khoja Family Tree
- Awards and Medals for Khoja Contribution
- Khoja Jamat Directory
- Khoja Community Heritage Day
- Interviews with Seniors
- Khoja Module in Madaris
- Khoja academic conference  
<http://www.khojastudies.org/>
- Gujarati Language Promotion
- Khoja Heritage Sites
- Khoja Documentary Extensions  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-08bqh-IRnc>
- Academia Engagement  
(Funding for Scholarship)
- Online Khoja Course
- Khoja Heritage Tour
- Khoja Symposia
- Translation of seminal works on the history of Khojas
- Virtual Museum of KSI heritage
- Audio Books on Khoja History
- WF History Archive
- Reading Circle Group
- Youth Camps



Khoja Heritage Exhibition, Mumbai



Funding and restructuring library, Nagalpur

# KHOJA HERITAGE TOUR 2018

## MUMBAI



Opening Ceremony at Mulla Qadar Mehfil

**MUMBAI:** The name of this largest city of India is associated with trade, finance and commerce. A land of opportunity!

No wonder why our ancestors migrated to this place from Kutch and Kathiawad in early 19th century.



Hasnabad-Burial Place of the 46th Imam of Agakhanis



Reflection Session in Aarambaug



Gateway of India



Bonding over a refreshing Coconut Drink

# BHUJ | RANN OF KUTCH

**BHUJ:** Has come to be known as the synonym of culture and heritage. It is house of ancient palaces, shrines of saint and beautiful temples. The sensation of this desert land is undeniably captivating.



The Beautiful Peer Ghulam Ali Shah Dargah



Camel Cart Ride at Rann of Kutch



Posing with the Hostel Kids



Kutch Museum



The Impressive Kala Dungar



Enjoying the Auto Ride

## MANDVI | KERA

**MANDVI:** This port city of Kutch is a perfect destination for a summer retreat. Its shipbuilding industry attracts thousands of visitors who want to gain first-hand experience about how dhows were built and sailed in the sea.



Visiting Shipbuilding Industry

**KERA:** Is a historical town of the Kutch district. The most significant place of interest for a Muslim visitor is the shrine of the 15th century mystic, Peer Ghulam Ali. The aura of the mausoleum inspires tranquility, perhaps the most important lesson this sage would have ever given.



Learning History from Elders



KSI Jamaat, Kera



Serenity of Mandvi



The Authentic Desi Thali



In the ship, Mandvi

## BHAVNAGAR | AMRELI

**BHAVNAGAR:** Is the 5th largest city of Gujarat with a booming economy and a vibrant culture. The most distinguished Shia religious scholar of the community, Allama Haji Naji Saheb is buried in Bhavnagar.

**AMRELI:** This small town of Gujarat in the Bhavnagar district is a historic place for the Khoja awakening movement of the late 19th century. Edalji Dhanji Kaba, undeniably the most significant historian of the Khoja Community, is buried in Amreli.



Mingling with the Locals



Remembering Edalji Dhanji Kaba, Amreli



A Deep Dive into Haji Naji Saheb's Life



Offering Juma Prayers



Visiting Umme Kulsum Centres



Interacting with the Youths at Mehdi School

## AHMEDABAD



Breaking Bread with Community Members

The largest city of Gujarat claims its name from the founder of this city, Ahmad Shah I. It has since been the political and economical capital of the state of Gujarat.



Meeting a Satpanth Saint



Farewell to Bhavnagar



Discovering Khoja History in the Coach



Closing Ceremony



# FEEDBACK FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

## TOUR LOGISTICS

PROPORTION OF VERY GOOD/EXCELLENT RATINGS



**77%**

PRE TOUR  
COMMUNICATION



**88%**

ORIENTATION  
SEMINAR



**79%**

ITINERARY &  
UPDATES



**100%**

MANAGEMENT  
SUPPORT



**100%**

MEALS





*I have come here to learn more about Khoja story. I also wish to learn about my Maternal Grandfather and my Paternal Grandfather's journey from India to Madagascar. I wish to speak in Gujarati, learn more Gujarati and learn to read in Gujarati.*

**Hani Goulamaly**

## TOUR ACTIVITIES

### PROPORTION OF VERY GOOD/EXCELLENT RATINGS



**64%**

VISITING JAMAT CENTRES



**86%**

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES



**86%**

VISITING TRUSTS



**79%**

HISTORICAL SITES



**100%**

KHOJA HISTORY DURING TOUR



# PARTICIPANTS' TESTIMONIALS



*Mandvi jamaat is very small yet they have preserved their religion living amongst the Hindus since so many years. I was filled with utmost happiness to see all this, to talk to all these people, to go to their houses and see their way of living. We came to know from these people that we who migrated to others states indeed; have our roots here.*

***Shakila Nourah Saleh***



*For me, it's quite surprising to have this kind of a travel and this kind of trip because it's uncommon to have the occasion to deep dive into your past history.*

***Mohammed Hirdjee Djina***



*In this trip for me, so far, I've seen is that I love the leaders, the helpers, you know, they accommodate you. I know I have a problem with my leg and I am walking slowly. But I can't see a face that they pull to say, "oh dear, she's slow". No. They say, "Let her take her time". And you can feel it. They are full of help. And that's what I can go back and say to people that it's okay if you got a bad arm or a bad leg. Go for it. Because they are there to help you.*

***Fatema Dhala***



## MANAGING COMMITTEE

### **KUMAIL RAJANI**

The lands of Kathiawad and Kutch have an aura of the spiritual teachings of the early Satpanthi peers. I could sit for hours at Peer Gulam Ali Shah's Dargah in Kera contemplating on the perilous journey of the mountains of Sind and the deserts of Kutch. The tour has encouraged me to revisit some of my assumptions about style, structure and content of preaching the message of Qur'an and Ahlulbayt (as).



#### **ASAD VIRANI**

The Khoja Heritage Tour has highlighted the importance of the need of recognition of those personalities who have sacrificed a great many things for our Khoja Community. Physically walking on the streets once walked by our ancestors gave me a nostalgic feeling and an experience of a life time.

#### **SHABNAM MERCHANT**

The Khoja Heritage Tour helped me gather pearls of wisdom whilst serving the elders of our community and also gain perspective on Khoja ancestry whilst actually visiting those places where our ancestors attained enlightenment. I'm filled with gratitude and respect for all those who have spent their lives in leading and guiding the Khoja community and also those who have taken efforts in preserving its rich heritage.



## LIST OF ATTENDEES



Mylane Goulamaly  
Fatema Dhala  
Goulzaraly Mamodhousen  
Jaffer Manek  
Zeinab Goulamaly  
Mohamed Hirdjee Djina  
Camila Hirdjee Djina  
Shakila Nourah Saleh Goulamaly  
Hani Goulamaly  
Housen Bay Nourah Saleh  
Kavsarbano Nourah Saleh

Hilal Goulamaly  
Mikdad Goulamaly  
Mahmood Fazal  
Yasmin Fazal  
Yusufali Alidina  
Hasnen Reza Sheraly

**MANAGING COMMITTEE**

Kumail Rajani  
Asad Virani  
Shabnam Merchant



**KHOJA**  
**HERITAGE**  
**PROJECT**