

# The bowl of milk

## A story from the Parsi/Zoroastrian tradition

**Key ideas: tolerance, symbolic gestures**

**T**housands of years ago men lived as hunters. Slowly they began to tame animals like sheep and goats and became shepherds. A group of such shepherds living in Central Asia travelled in search of pasture lands and came to India. They were known as the Aryans. Another group of these shepherds travelled to Persia and were known as Persians or Iranians. Some of these Persians left the shores of Iran in small boats and after a very long journey came to Sanjan in Gujarat.

The ruler of Sanjan was called a Rana. He was a wise and kind ruler. The leader of the Persians sent a message to him saying, 'We have left our home and have suffered many hardships. Please allow us to settle down in your country'. In reply, the Rana sent a bowl of milk which was filled to the brim. He wanted to tell the newcomers that there was no room for them in his kingdom.

The leader was also wise and clever. He took some sugar and put it in the bowl of milk. The milk did not overflow; on the contrary, it became sweet.

The leader of the Iranians wanted to show that just as sugar mixes with milk and sweetens it, so they would mix with the people of Gujarat and help them to make the country a better place. The Rana was very happy at the wisdom of the leader. He gave them shelter and allowed them to live in his country.