

Mummy

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Bachi Karkaria insists that Vivek, the Muslim child lost during the Gujarat riots and found by a Hindu family, must become Muzaffar again. Biological parents have first rights; in this case the only rights

PHOTOS BY BHADRESH GAJJAR



be able to shake off the thought of his real parents, should he continue with his current decision. If he changes his mind, or the Sheikhs' crusaders, led by the unflagging Teesta Setalvad, prevail, he will be plagued by the guilt of 'ingratitude'. It is a lose-lose-lose case for all three parties.

At not-yet-nine, Muzaffar is too young to be entrusted, or burdened, with such a huge decision. He was only two-and-a-half when he came to the Patnis. I am no psychoanalyst, but I would imagine that his mental defence systems must

have made him repress what little memory he had of his earlier life. He was a mere tot flung into a lashing riot suddenly separated from the emotional anchorage of his parents. To his unquestionably good fortune, the straw he clutched at turned into a caring island.

No one can deny Meena Patni's open-heartedness in taking in a little Muslim boy and taking all the trouble it must have needed to help him get over his trauma and grow into a well-adjusted child who "loves watching TV, dancing and wants to become a policeman". But biology must be the deciding factor. I know one cannot be judgemental about such complex situations, but a missing child is different from a consciously abandoned one in cases of reclamation.

When DNA tests finally traced this child back to the Sheikhs, reports exulted over the hope this raised for families like those of Dara Mody whose son, Azzu, also went missing from Gulbarg Society in the same harrowing circumstances. The tragic case of Muzaffar/Vivek reveals that the pogrom of the other Mr Modi has wreaked even more havoc that we had condemned. TNN

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