

JOURNAL

Das – Behman – Spandarmad 1382 AY (Fasli) ● Amordad – Shehrever – Meher 1383 AY (Shenshai) ● Shehrever – Meher – Avan 1383 AY (Kadimi)

Perpetuating the Zoroastrian faith for future generations



Also Inside:



Dorab Mistry Receives Order of British Empire



The Everlasting Flame Exhibit and Conference



Personal Profile: Aban Marker Kabraji



Across Oceans and Flowing Silks

FEZANA JOURNAL

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

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1382- AY (Fasli)

Amordad - Shehrever- Meher

1383 AY (Shenshai)

Shehrever - Meher - Avan

1383 AY (Kadimi)

Photo on cover:



Cover design

Feroza Fitch of Lexicongraphics

SPRING 2014
Academic Scholarships
Guest Editor Dolly Dastoor

SUMMER 2014
Zoroastrianism in Central Asia
Guest Editor Dolly Dastoor

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A word from the Editor

PERPETUATING THE ZOROASTRIAN FAITH FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Was it a coincidence that the theme of the cover story of this issue “Perpetuating the Zoroastrian Faith For Future Generations “ and the theme of the 10th World Zoroastrian Congress “Zoroastrianism in the 21st Century: Nurturing Growth and Affirming Identity” were similar ?

Zarathushtis in the diaspora, in India and in Iran are concerned about preservation of the religion and the culture of the community. We in the diaspora are actively pursuing the problem, seeking solutions through open dialogue, inviting young people to express their views as in this Journal issue guest edited by Jamshed Rivetna and Behrose Taraporevala .

What a wonderful opportunity the 10th World Zoroastrian congress would have provided to discuss openly and directly the issues which confront the community: falling numbers, lack of interest by the young adults in community affairs, mixed marriages, death rituals etc.

But no, all controversial issues were off the table. The “apex body” did not have the courage to organize the program where such controversial issues could be discussed in a dignified, well monitored dialogue and debate. Instead we spent four days listening to monologues from panelists who often did not respect the time limitations and were off the topic.

It was very disappointing was seeing empty seats in this large cavernous auditorium. Where were all the Zarathushtis of Mumbai, where were all the members of the clergy, where were all the prominent community members? Even those who were presenters spoke and left. To his credit, Lord Karan Billimoria was the only dignitary (outside the congress organizers) who was present all four days. 1250 people attended of which 50% must have been from the diaspora. Does that show a mindful interest in the affairs of the community? The diaspora which is always looked down upon for allowing the religion to be diluted boasted of 2,500 attendees in Houston!!.

The congress was salvaged from being annulled, thanks to the intervention of community activists both in India and in the diaspora and by Dr Cyrus Poonawalla and Mr Nadir Godrej taking control of its leadership., The congress had excellent entertainment value both visual and gastronomical. There were some very good thought-provoking presentations which will

be reproduced in subsequent issues of the FEZANA Journal

But we need to be thankful to Pheroza Godrej and Firoza Punthakey for curating the exhibition: “Across Oceans and Flowing Silk- from Canton to Bombay 18th-20th Centuries”.

It was a total visual delight showcasing the Zoroastrian community’s entrepreneurial spirit, wealth of talent and largesse.

“No Parsi is an Island” curated by Ranjit Hoskote and Nancy Adajania with Pheroza J Godrej traces the work of Parsi artists from the late colonial period to the present.

This exhibition at the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) former Cowasji Jehangir Public Hall was planned to coincide with the 10th World Zoroastrian Congress. And it is to the credit of these two ladies that this beautiful exhibition, which was more than a year in planning, was not allowed to be derailed with the congress.

To coincide with the Congress, the Cyrus Cylinder, after completing its five museum tour in the US also visited the century old Prince of Wales Museum in Mumbai which now has a new tongue-twisting name Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya , CSMVS in short.

All will not be lost if the Zarathushtis of Mumbai wake up from their lethargy, shake off their disinterest for community affairs and make an effort to visit these two exhibits, buy (and read) the delightfully illustrated catalogue of the Across Oceans and Flowing Silks. Our heritage encapsulated in there will open our minds to move forward.



Jolly Darlow

A Message from FEZANA President

*Dear Zarathushtis,
Greetings & Best Wishes from the FEZANA Family to You & Your Family in 2014. May Ahuramazda shower his choicest blessings with Abundance of Good Health, Peace, Love, Joy, Happiness and Prosperity. Let us all begin the New Year 2014 with love and understanding towards all fellow Zarathushtis as well as all humanity and live in peace & harmony for times to come.*

The theme for this issue is **Perpetuating the Zoroastrian Faith for Future Generations**. The FEZANA Strategic Plan 2012-2022 outlines the roles, responsibilities and activities that the Next Generation can involve themselves in, work together & contribute to enhance the religious and communal life of the Zarathushti community in North America as well as globally.

Here are a few action items that FEZANA continues to work on that involve and impact the Next Generation:

To Empower & Encourage Our Next Generation in Leadership Roles We continue to advocate member associations to promote their Youth to take active Leadership Roles at Community Level. Appoint a young adult on your board, to head one or more of your committees. We will all be enriched by their thought process, vitality and global know-how that they will bring to our organizations.

To focus on nurturing the seeds of greatness in our future generation, I am working on ensuring that every FEZANA Committee has a young adult as its co-chair so as to involve our youth in promoting and working towards achieving mutually supportive FEZANA goals.

We will continue to work together with youth organizations in North America and globally like ZYNA, NextGenNow, Zoroastrians Stepping Forward, Youth without Borders etc, to **foster Community Involvement and Representation for our Zarathushti Community**.

We will ensure that **FEZANA** continues to sponsor youth congresses, sports events, U.N. symposiums and other **events aimed at young adults** so that it gives them a **bona fide platform to express their ideas, creativity and expertise**.

I will urge our youth to look for **Role Models & foster Mentoring**: Look up to Zarathushti men and women in your local and national organizations and use them

as “role models” for yourself. Then, you become role models for others in your own community helping them achieve their goals of communal involvement and development.

My personal message to the Next Generation is: each day brings new opportunities so look for creative ideas and affirmative solutions; be visible and partner with other fellow Zarathushtis to provide value added services resulting in the achievement of community service objectives; reach out to others; develop a spirit of teamwork and network with Zarathushtis locally and globally to share ideas. Communicate, communicate, and communicate within your community and with neighboring Zarathushti organizations on community involvement. Develop a process to spread knowledge both vertically and horizontally within and outside your communities. Let's all make a promise today to **dedicate just one hour per week** from our overly busy lives to **involve ourselves in Zarathushti community activities**, and thus empower ourselves to work towards a **HAPPIER, HEALTHIER, UNIFIED & KNOWLEDGABLE** Zarathushti community in the 21st Century.

I would like to thank my colleagues on the FEZANA Executive, Presidents and Representatives of FEZANA's 26 member associations and 14 corresponding members as well as 23 Committee Chairs for their help, coordination and efforts as well as garnering the support and participation of their members in promoting the various activities and causes supported by FEZANA in 2013. The FEZANA Executive and I look forward to working with all of you collectively in harmony and with an optimistic can-do attitude in supporting FEZANA's goals and activities in 2014.

Katayun Kapadia
FEZANA-President



THREE WOMEN

“It is one of the supreme wonders of God that, though the Parsee community does not number more than one hundred thousand in the whole world, it has made a name for itself everywhere by virtue of its many illustrious qualities.” – M.K. Gandhi (1)

Mahatma Gandhi has on numerous occasions, paid tribute to our community. What can we in turn learn from his life? At the 9/11 Unity Walk on 8 September 2013 at the footsteps of his grandfather’s statue in Washington D.C., Arun Gandhi shared stories, particularly about the impact of three women on his grandfather (2).

DAI (Baby-Sitter) – COURAGE

As a little child, Mohandas was fearful of many things – particularly of darkness. It was his baby-sitter who advised him to say the name of the Lord when assailed by fear. Following this loving precept, the boy took the lesson to heart - the rest is history.

MOTHER SELF DISCIPLINE

Gandhi’s mother was prone to taking vows. One such vow she took was not to eat unless she saw the sun. This was troubling to the son, when during the monsoon, with overcast skies the sun would not shine for days together, and yet his mother smilingly kept steadfast in her resolve. The lesson the young boy learned from this example was of self-discipline.

WIFE – CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Married to Kasturba almost as children, Gandhi was lost and, scholar that he was, went to the library to learn how a husband was to behave with his wife. In a patriarchal society, he read that he could order his wife around and told her not to go out of the house without his permission. Asserting her rights, Kasturba quietly went about her business, and informed him that if he had problems with her behavior she would be glad to bring it up with his parents, a prospect that the young child-husband could not bring himself to countenance – it was a classic and early lesson in conflict resolution, that Gandhi did not forget

The simple messages resonate with what we believe. We need not be fearful in the choices we make; truth-tellers need loads of courage. Self-discipline is ingrained in us – saying our *kusti* prayers at the appropriate time every day is part of this mind-full exercise. Becoming bridge-builders to resolve

conflicts peacefully is our natural Zoroastrian ethos. May we continue to build on those “*many illustrious qualities*” that M.K. Gandhi recognized in our community and practiced in his own life, as we pass the baton on to the next generation of Zarathushtis.

REFERENCES:

- (1) Quotation Displayed at Exhibit opened on the sidelines of the 10th World Zoroastrian Congress, December 2013, at Mumbai’s National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA). Titled *Across Oceans & Flowing Silks: From Canton to Bombay – No Parsi is an Island*.
- (2) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZN3ZIDHuPg> Video clip from 9/11 Unity Walk taken outside the Embassy of India, Washington D.C.



Behram Pastakia is Chair of the Publications Committee of FEZANA

9/11 Unity Walk , 8 September 2013, Embassy Row, Washington D.C.

Behram Pastakia (in Dagli) with Rev Clark Lobenstine, Executive Director of the Interfaith Conference

Photo credit – Dariush Jamasb



FEZANA UPDATE



FEZANA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ADVANCE NOTICE

THE Annual General meeting will be held May 16-18 2014 at Hotel Sheraton, Bellevue, Washington State, hosted by the Zoroastrian Society of Washington State.

Address

Sheraton Bellevue Hotel

100 112th Ave NE
Bellevue, WA 98004
+1(425)455-3330

<http://www.sheratonbellevue.com/>

On Friday afternoon there will be a session on FEZANA Infrastructure Development in North America, so please plan to attend.

Election of FEZANA Officers – for the term in office from 2014 to 2016.

1) President 2) Treasurer 3) Secretary, and 4) Assistant Secretary

At present the position of Secretary is vacant and needs to be filled.

The deadline for receiving all nominations is by midnight on, March 10, 2014.

The elections will be held at the AGM in Bellevue, Washington on Friday, May 16, 2014.

Current President: Katayun Kapadia has completed one term and is eligible to run for re-election, as per terms of the FEZANA Constitution.

Current Treasurer: Ratan Mistry has successfully completed two consecutive terms and is not eligible to run for re-election as per the terms of the FEZANA Constitution.

Current Assistant Secretary: Shiraz Italia has completed one term and is eligible for re-election, as per the terms of the FEZANA Constitution. She was appointed at the 2011 AGM, to fill a vacancy created in the middle of the term

Please note that only those associations whose membership lists, membership dues form and check payments for their 2014 membership dues have been received will be eligible to participate in nominating and voting as per terms of the FEZANA Constitution.

RESERVE THE DATES, DETAILED INFORMATION TO FOLLOW

FEZANA UPDATE

DONATIONS RECEIVED - JULY 1, 2013 TO DECEMBER 31, 2013

FEZANA WELFARE & CRITICAL ASSISTANCE FUND

Farokh N. Hirjibehedin, Dr. Pouruchishti F. Hirjibehedin and Dr. Cyrus F. Hirjibehedin, Manhasset Hills, NY	\$ 51,000
Soli and Jo Ann Dastur, University Park, FL	6,100
Zoroastrian Association of Florida	2,600
Aderbad and Sanober Tamboli, Sugar Land, TX	1,500
Kersi and Shiraz Hansotia, Mississauga, ON	1,001
Zoroastrian Association of California	1,001
Behram and Farieda Irani, Plano, TX	1,000
Cyrus Austin, Chandler, AZ	1,000
Dilnavaz Subawalla, Schenectady, NY	1,000
Lydia Tata, San Francisco, CA - in memory of Jehangir Bejan Tata	1,000
Porus Austin, Miramar Beach (Destin), FL	1,000
Prochy Sethna, San Jose, CA	1,000
Husheder, Bakhtavar and Phiroze Daruwalla, Dunwoody, GA	700
Viraf and Anita Patel, Coppell, TX	500
Farrokh Cooper, Fair Oaks, CA	200
Noshir and Yasmin Medhora, Houston, TX	101
Parvez Mody, Orangevale, CA	101
Bakhtavar and Fred Desai, Fairfield, OH	100
Behram Shroff, McLean, VA	100
Darius and Jeroo Captain, Granite Bay, CA	75
Adi B. Gandhi, Los Angeles, CA	51
Burjor and Vira Santoke, Huntington Beach, CA	51
Ava Lala, Norristown, PA	50
Marzban Marzbani, Schaumburg, IL	50
Navaz and Rustum Bankwalla, Washington D.C.	50
Noshir Lakdawalla, Valencia, CA	50
Shapur K. Irani, Indianapolis, IN	50
Tehmton and Aloo Mistry, St. Louis, MO	50
Behram Kapadia, Sewickley, PA	30
Noshir Dutia, Randolph, NJ	30

71,541

GENERAL FUND

Jimmy Dholoo, Gaithersburg, MD	500
Tehemton Mirza, London, ON	118
Eruch Karanjawala, Santa Maria, CA	100
Gooloo S. Wunderlich, Springfield, VA	100
Xerxes Bhappu, New York, NY	100
Zavera Kanga, Lexington, KY	100
Adi B. Gandhi, Los Angeles, CA	50
Kaikhosrav Irani, New York, NY	30

1,098

INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

Navaz and Rustum Bankwalla, Washington D.C.	50
Saghar Behroozi, Flower Mound, TX	30

80

CREATIVE & PERFORMING ARTS

Sorab and Mahrukh Panday, Herndon, VA	\$ 1,000
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UN NGO

Anonymous	350
Farhad and Houtoxi Contractor, Laguna Beach, CA	330

680

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND IN MEMORY OF KERSI D. KAPADIA

Katayun Kapadia, Mount Laurel, NJ	\$ 3,000
Dogdo and Tehemton Arjani, Glendale, CA	1,000
Bomi and Binu Patel, San Jose, CA	501
Jehangir Madon, Bedminster, NJ	301
Mogha and Saroj Desai, North Wales, PA	200
Arzan S. Wadia, Brooklyn, NY	101
Diana Dadachanji, King of Prussia, PA	101
Zoroastrian Association of No Texas	101
Bharati Desai, Haddon Heights, NJ	100
Bucky and Navroze Amaria, Littleton, CO	100
Jamshed Arjani, San Jose, CA	100
Lawrence and Marjorie Rueger, Wynnewood, PA	100
Mehta Motors Inc.	100
N T Assur, Stamford, CT	100
Porus Cooper, Cherry Hill, NJ	100
Ava Lala, Norristown, PA	51
Fram Dalal, Marietta, GA	50
Hilla Singh, Hainesport, NJ	50
Khershed Cooper, Fairfax, VA	50

6,206

ZYNA NOWROOZ RETREAT

Dr. Pouran Rostamian, North Vancouver, BC	350
Hoshang Shroff, Vancouver, BC	200
Mrs. Piroj Amroliya, Burnaby, BC	200
Shekoufeh Farin, North Vancouver, BC	200
Rashin Mandegarian, North Vancouver, BC	150
Nanu and Zarine Dastur, Port Moody, BC	120
Aubtin Yazdgardian, Maple Ridge, BC	100
Homi and Koomi Italia, Burnaby, BC	100
Jessi and Dinaz Partovi, Richmond, BC	100
Mojgan Ourmazdi, Maple Ridge, BC	52
Hormazd and Binaifer Dolasa, Coquitlum, BC	51
Mehernosh and Sherna Kasad, Richmond, BC	51
Rohinton Shroff, Richmond, BC	51
Perviz Madon, North Vancouver, BC	50
Zenobia Turnbull, Burnaby, BC	50

1,825

JOURNAL FUND

Jimmy Dholoo, Gaithersburg, MD	501
Adil Godrej, Manassas, VA	250
Navaz and Rustum Bankwalla, Washington D.C.	50
Rustom Kevala, Sun City Center, FL	30

831

Contd....

ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS

Behram Baxter, San Diego, CA	\$ 1,000
Estate of Dr. Firoze M. Ichhaporia, Montreal, QC	1,000
Feroze and Anahita Sidhwa, Coppell, TX	1,000
Sorab and Mahrukh Panday, Herndon, VA	1,000
Navaz and Rustum Bankwalla, Washington D.C.	100

4,100

GRAND TOTAL

\$ 87,361

FEZANA UPDATE

THREE ASSOCIATIONS ELECT NEW BOARDS IN 2013

ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF ONTARIO (OPPORTUNITY)

The New Board was elected July 28, 2013 for a two year staggering term



Seated L- R : *Fredoon Khory (Secretary), Bina Behboodi (EVP) , Sarosh Bharucha (President), Dara Panthakee (VP), Jamshed Kershaw (Treasurer)*
Standing L-R: *Khushru Chothia (Executive Officer), Percy Surti (Asst. Secretary), Meherwan Wadia (Executive Officer), Atoosa Javandmarian (Asst. Treasurer)*

In his welcome address President Bharucha mentioned: In 1971, ZSO started out as the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario. Today, I welcome you to the New ZSO – the Zoroastrian Society of OPPORTUNITY, the opportunity to contribute, the opportunity to excel, the opportunity to have your vote make a difference, and the opportunity to speak your mind without fear or favour.

In the spirit of openness and accountability, the EC meetings will be open to all members who wish to attend, as observers. The Long-Term Planning process is being re-designed by opening to each and every member. ZSO is not an organization of entitlements and birth-right for a few privileged families; but one of hope and commitment. A “Strategy Day” will be announced and all are invited to bring ideas.

The Project Devolvement Sub-Committee was thanked for arranging the return of all BCC-donations. With the completion of their work this committee is now terminated

ZSO’s administrative structure established 40 years ago in 1972 needs to be revised now. This will happen only after members’ views are heard on Strategy Day.

The ZSO Newsletter is available to anyone (anywhere in the world) free of charge, via email. Please send an email containing your contact information (name, mailing address, email and tel number) to office@zso.org to order your copy.

The President Mr Sarosh Bharucha resigned February 19, 2014.

FEZANA UPDATE

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF QUEBEC



A New Board was elected June 9th 2013 for a two year term

From Left, Aptin Jehan, Faranak Firoozi , Aazeen Irani; Dolly Dastoor (President), Vida Feredoonzad, (Vice –President) ; Zabrina Kadkhodayan (Co-Secretary) ; Zareen Austin; Mobed Jal Panthaki; sitting Rohinton Marolia (Treasurer) Firooza Aubry (Secretary) Not in photo .

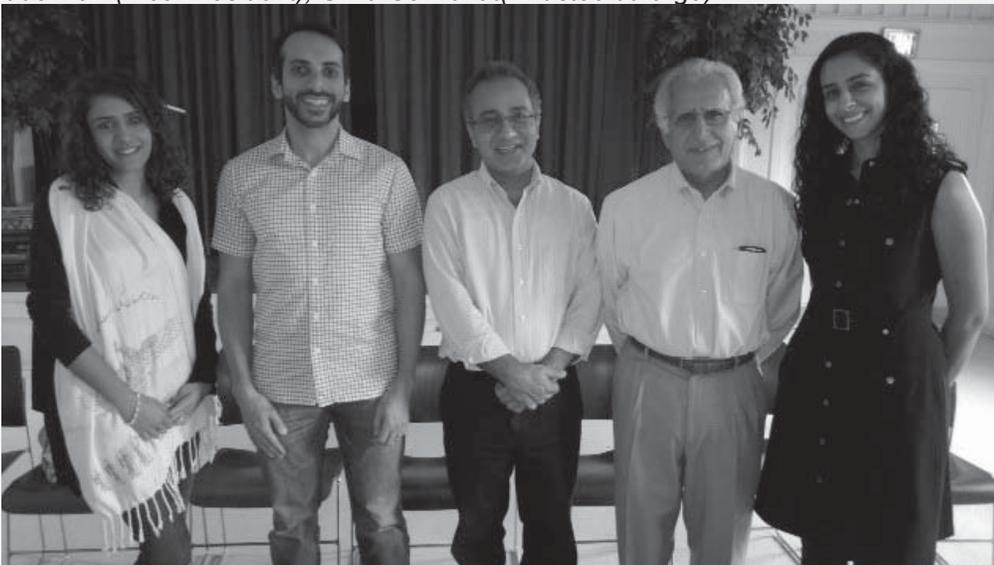
ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, INC (ZAMWI): Elected September 29, 2013 for a 2 year term

President's wish list for accomplishment during the next 2 years:

- Open the dar-e mehr which is under construction. We're on the last mile awaiting our occupancy permit.
- Increase membership in the association and attendance at our functions
- Further develop and improve our community spirit
- Attract more Zarathushti priests to the area
- Increase the level of adult religious education
- Develop a new website

Photo below from left Parmis Khosravi (Secretary), Navroz Gandhi (President); Bahram Saroosh (Jt Secretary); Dr Zarir Khademian (Vice-President); Sima Sekhavat(Trustee at large)



**Not in Photo Mahazarin Chinoy, (Treasurer); Zeenia Irani (Jt Treasurer)
Photo courtesy Jimmy Dholoo**

FEZANA UPDATE

Zarathushti Dinner Theater



The Zarathusti Dinner Theater Group of Houston presented “Cyrus the Great”, a play produced and directed by **Shahnaz Sidhwa**. There were 30 cast members including the technical crew, some doing multiple roles. The play enlightened the audience on the life of one of history’s most revered monarchs. **Percy Ktrak** gave a brilliant performance as Cyrus the Great, with **Ronnie Sarkari** in the role of General Harpagus.

The lavish costumes, elaborate set and props added to the success of the play. **Aspi Colah** transformed a one dimensional stage view into a three dimensional majestic view of three different palace settings. **Aderbad Tamboli** very skillfully programmed the stage lights allowing every character to shine!!! Stage manager **Persis Behramsha** also played the role of the older princess Cassandane.

It was undeniably an entertaining evening. Shahnaz Sidhwa very generously donated half the proceeds to the ZAH library. In the words of Shahnaz ‘ I appeal to the community to be involved in plays telling the story of our kings and heroes, as do other communities. We have a glorious and fascinating history. Let it not be limited to the pages of the text books’.

Manashni, ZAH News Letter,



DASTUR M.N. DHALLA MEMORABILIA

Goimohr Cantel, granddaughter of Dastur M. N. Dhalla, graciously donated a silver chest, scroll, family pictures and other artifacts belonging to the late High Priest of Karachi. These items are a welcome addition to the existing Dhalla Trust collection on display in the ZAH library. The silver chest, on a large wooden stand, posed a considerable problem in transportation from Ms. Cantel’s home in London to Houston. With patience and careful planning the chest and other items were transported across the Atlantic and will grace their new home in Houston.

FEZANA UPDATE

On Sunday, November 10, 2013, the foodies of Toronto and the GTA were in for a treat as the bawā chefs continued to demonstrate the magnificent variety of Parsi Cuisine. Twenty vendors set up stalls to create the third *Jamva Chaloji* at the OZCF in Oakville, Ontario. As the constant stream of people walked through the hall, the room was full



of warm energy and a feeling of contentment all around.

Vendors and the entertainment committee worked hard to put this food fair together. It was coordinated by *Parveen Katila* and *Jeroo Madan* to perfection. The committee itself handled freshly made Falooda and served hot Dhansak (Parsi rice dish) for lunchtime. The Scouts had put together a superb Parsi tea stall. The Bhel-Puri stall provided a quick delicious snack. The other vendors generally catered to everyone's favourite prepared foods, picked up for take-away to freeze and stock up on for unexpected guests.

Kudos to our Zarathushti Community in Ontario for preparing such a diverse menu. Bheja na cutlets (*Brain cutlets*) to gharab nu achar (*Roe pickle*), bhakra (*parisi sweet snack*), batasa (*parisi savoury snack*), dar ni pori; (*puff pastry pie with sweet lentil filling*), jhinga no patio (*sweet and spicy shrimps*), all varieties of cutlets, kebab rolls, ground masalas, lagan nu custard; (*baked custard*) all kinds of different pilafs and dals (*lentils*), malido-papri, (*traditional food for prayers*) chutneys, murumbas (sweet pot pouri) and achars (pickles) of everything edible seemed to be awaiting purchase! Batasa, bhakra and dar ni pori were the top 3 items to sell out.

This bi-annual event *Jamva Chaloji* is organised twice a year for this large community who still holds on strongly to its culture and cuisine with pride and passion. It also serves as a fundraiser to the Community Centre, as 10% of the total sales plus a nominal table fee is given to the OZCF by all those participating. Word for this event seems to have spread to the friends of OZCF far and wide. This wonderful food market is not exclusively a Parsi event, but welcomes folks of diverse cultures to try out the tastes of our culinary delights which adds to the event being such a success each time around. It is a Sunday morning well spent: eating, socialising, networking and enjoying the shopping spree all rolled into one!

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FEZANA UPDATE

*Ervad Bahrom Firozgary,
A Legend At Rice University, Houston*



RICE OWLS # 44 BAHROM FIROZGARY

Position - Forward, Ht: 6' 8"
Rice Class - Senior
Stratford High School
Hometown: Houston

Ever since Ervad Bahrom Firozgary elected to join the line of Zarathushtis at Rice University he made a concerted effort to educate his peers and his professors about our ancient religion and the growing community in Houston. The recent display of the Cyrus Cylinder added more value to the Persian Empire and its forward thinking followers.

It was a phenomenal decision for Rice to declare Nov 23, 2013 as the Zarathushti Day at the Rice University and that too on a day when our Zarathushti star who was on the basketball team that played Princeton University!

The Zarathushits of Houston were not going to let such an opportunity slip by. A team quickly got into gear and many pitched in. It was clearly evident that the Zoroastrian fan club had come to cheer their team and *aapro (our)* Bahrom. In spite of a nasty cold front, 170 tickets were sold and Zarathushtis of all ages came for the event, adding another Chapter to Houston's rich history of community participation.

Thanks to substantial funding by the Mehta Trust Fund, ZAH showcased the Zarathushti religion, which added value to the **Rice Zoroastrian Day!**

The Display Materials and Exhibition was put together by a team that comprised of Aban Rustomji, Sarosh Collector, Homi Davier, Kaemerz Dotiwalla, Farrokh Firozgary, Aspi Colah, Darayus Kolah, Aderbad Tamboli and Yasmin Medhora.

The ZAH booth was set up by Aban Rustomji which included: A brochure with the history of ZAH, ZAH's connection with Rice University, books from the ZAH Library, home of FIRES; Fezana's brochure "Followers





FEZANA UPDATE



The Rice Owls Basketball team was amazed on the turnout and the support from our community who they referred to as their fan club!

of an Ancient Faith that is Relevant to the Modern World”; book marks from Library/FIRES; Bahrom Firozgary’s basketball card; pictures of Bahrom playing basketball, Bahrom’s Navar ceremony pictures, etc.; Picture of the Zoroastrian Heritage and Cultural Centre with its address, directions and telephone number; The Zoroastrian Creed; information on Cyrus the Great Cylinder; History of Zoroastrianism; and a very informative Video on Zoroastrianism

The exhibit displayed a banner with the ZAH logo. (photo right) and life size cutouts of Persian Archers were designed by Aspi Colah, These will be available at future events at ZAH.

At half time, 11 year old Chloe Choudhury sang the Katy Perry song “Roar” and brought the auditorium down with a roar of applause! Those who know Katy’s songs are aware of the difficulty in singing her songs as they range from high to low notes and Chloe (daughter of Chesley and Tanaz) got them just fine.

Any ball game, whether you win or lose must be followed by a tail gate party and this was enjoyed by all, thanks to all the local families that donated yummy homemade sandwiches!

Thanks to all the volunteers who helped during the party and cleanup in the end. Mr. Percy Behramsha volunteered his time to take lots of pictures. A huge thank you to the Rice Coordinator, Mr. Shu; (Shulmith Muthyala) and his Rice team for all the help they gave us before and during the event.

It was a successful and memorable event and ZAH sure made Houston proud!

***Reported by Homi Davier, Houston
Photographs Farroukh Firozgary***

Visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3lqy-3kVV8> to see pics and video related to the event.



FEZANA UPDATE

ROSTAM AND BEHMAN ABADIAN ZOROASTRIAN CULTURAL CENTER



In 2011 the California Zoroastrian Center in order to meet the needs of the growing Zoroastrian community in Los Angeles and other near by communities. Half of the money for the purchase of the building came from donations from the community and the other half was funded by California Zoroastrian Center. The building is approximately 4400 sq. ft. and is currently under remodeling to join its two smaller halls into a larger hall with the capacity of approximately 200 people. The current remodeling is also being fully funded by donors. The building is named Rostam and Behnam Abadian Zoroastrian Cultural Center who donated \$300,000.

Currently religious classes for youth are being held at this center and as soon as the remodeling is completed, other programs like religious and cultural seminars, women's group events and privately held functions will be resumed. The address for the new centre is 6515 De Soto Ave. Los Angeles, California 91303, phone number is 818-610-8610 and the email is: info@czc-la.org.

Thanks to the generous donation from FEZANA, OZCF and ZSO, the University of Toronto will be offering an introductory course on Ancient Iranian Languages starting January 2014 at their St George Campus, downtown.

**Interested students should contact
Enrico Raffaelli (enrico.raffaelli@utoronto.ca)**

**Enrico G. Raffaelli has published a book on the Avestan text Sih-rozag, and its Pahlavi translation, titled The Sih-rozag in Zoroastrianism:
A Textual and Historico-Religious Analysis**



Calendar of Festivals

Calendar of Festivals

September 2012 to March 2013

Fravardian Jashan

Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin

Tuesday, August 6 (K)
Thursday, September 5 (S)

Maidyozarem Gahambar

Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher

Wednesday, August 28 - Sunday, Sept 01 (K)
Friday, Sept 27 - Tuesday, Oct 01 (S)

Paitishem Gahambar

Mah Sheherevar, Roz Ashtad Aneran

Thursday, Sept 12- Monday, Sept 16 (F)

Jashne-Mehergan

Mah Meher, Roz Meher

Wednesday, October 02 (F)

Ayathrem Gahambar

Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad-Aneran

Saturday, Oct 12- Wednesday, Oct 16 (F)

Jashne-Avangan(Avan Ardivisur Parab)

Mah Avan, Roz Avan

Saturday, October 26 (F)

Maidyoshem Gahambar

Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher

Sunday, Oct 27 - Thursday, October 31 (K)
Tuesday Nov 26- Saturday, Nov 30 (S)

Jashne-Adargan

Mah Adar, Roz Adar

Sunday, November 24 (F)

Death Anniversary of Zarathushtra

Mah Dae, Roz Khorshed

Thursday April 25 (K) (K)
Saturday, May25 (S)
Thursday, December 26 (F)

Maidhyarem Gahambar

Mah Dae, Roz Meher-Bahram

Tuesday, Dec 31-Saturday, Jan 04 (F)

Jashne Daegan

Mah Dae, Roz Daepdin

Tuesday, January 07 (F)

Jashne Bahmangan

Mah Bahman, Roz Bahman

Thursday, January 16 (F)

Paitishem Gahambar

Mah Sheherevar, Roz Ashtad-Aneran

Friday, Jan 10 - Tuesday, Jan 14 (K)
Sunday, Feb 9 - Thursday, Feb 13 (S)

Jashne Sadeh

Mah Bhman, Roz Aban

Friday, January 24 (F)

Ayatherem Gahambar

Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad-Aneran

Sunday, Feb 9 - Thursday, Feb 13 (K)
Tuesday, March 11 -Saturday, March 15 (S)

Fravardegan/Panjeh/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar

Five Gatha days

Sunday, March 16 - Thursday, March 20 (F)

Char-Shanbe-Soori (Heralding the New Year)

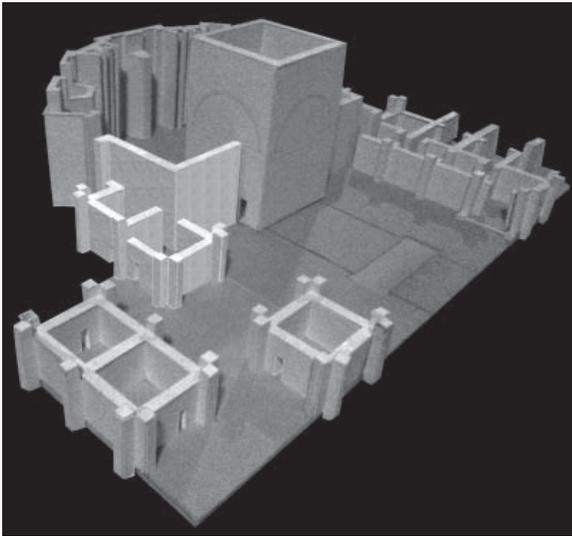
Tuesday Prior to NauRooz

Tuesday March 18 (F)

NauRooz or Jamshedi NauRooz (New Year)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd

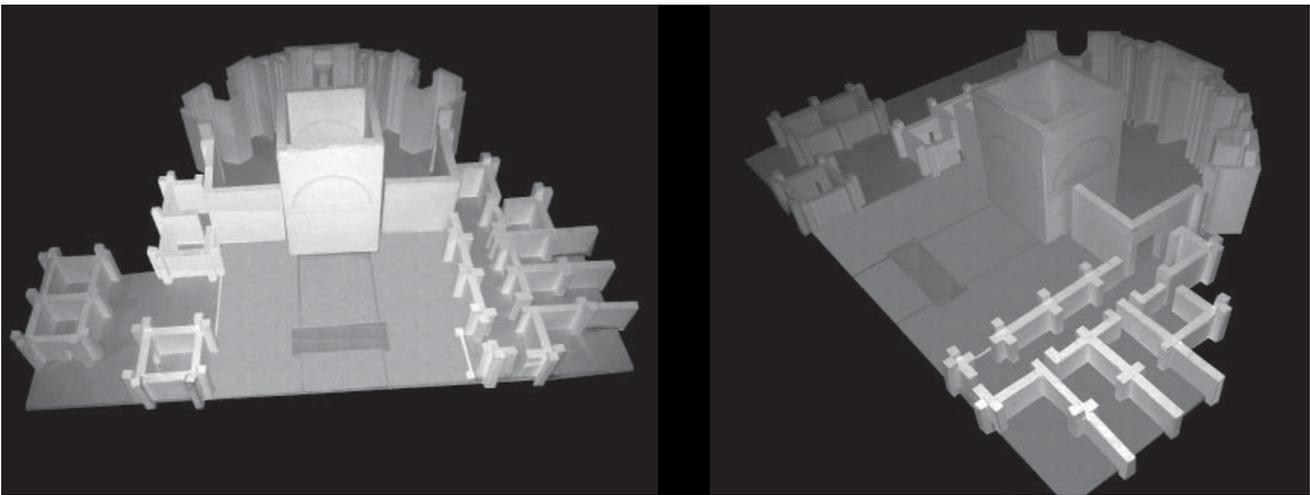
Friday, March 21 (F)



RAISING EXPECTATIONS FOR OUR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

By Neville Rustomjee
Denver, Colorado

Throughout history, some of the most magnificent structures have been devoted to the worship of God. Examples include Stonehenge, Mesopotamian ziggurats, Egyptian pyramids, Greek temples, Gothic cathedrals, Islamic mosques, Hindu temples, Buddhist shrines, and the list goes on. Our Persian heritage has its own archaeological wonders like Persepolis. In all these architectural projects, the designers strived to create a feeling of piety and awe. Religious structures served as links between heaven and earth, and were erected with utmost care and sensitivity. They evolved in form within each religious sect, and often tested materials and engineering to their limits.



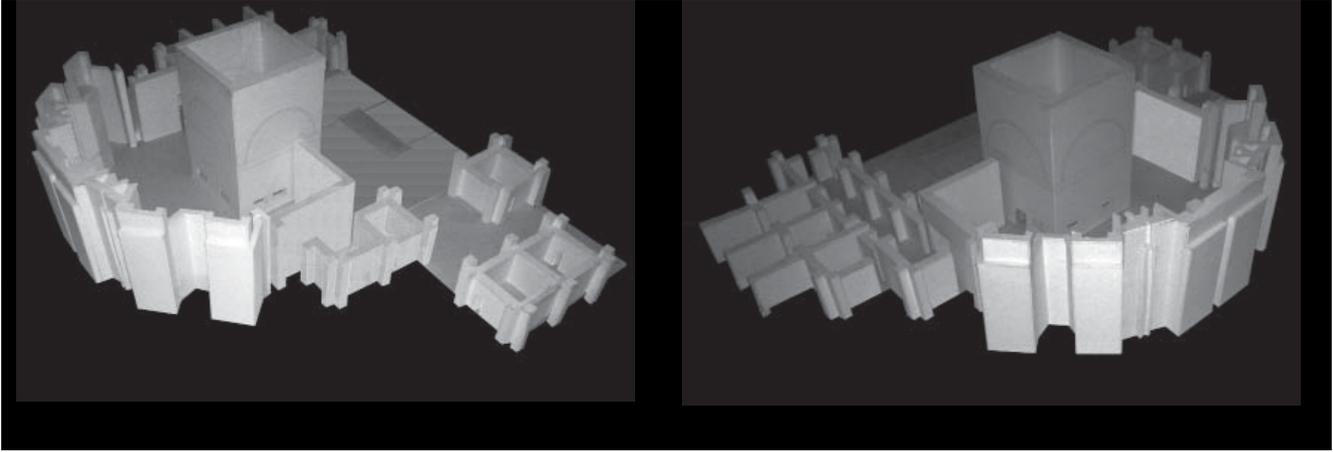
Front and Side view of Neville's thesis design for a Fire Temple

The advancement of building form was influenced by ritualistic demands, traditions, socio-political and economic conditions, climate, geography, and other regional factors. Each successive generation of architects and builders attempted to surpass their predecessors. Thus, architecturally, sacred spaces present an enormous challenge since they are representative of the most exalted entity the human mind can conceive, and are judged against some of the best examples of architecture throughout the ages.



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Religions, and buildings that house its followers, are one of man's oldest institutions out of which others like education have emerged. Religious buildings should attempt to capture a timeless quality, as well as attempt to serve



Back views showing the sculptural nature of the building form

as an inspiration for those yet to come

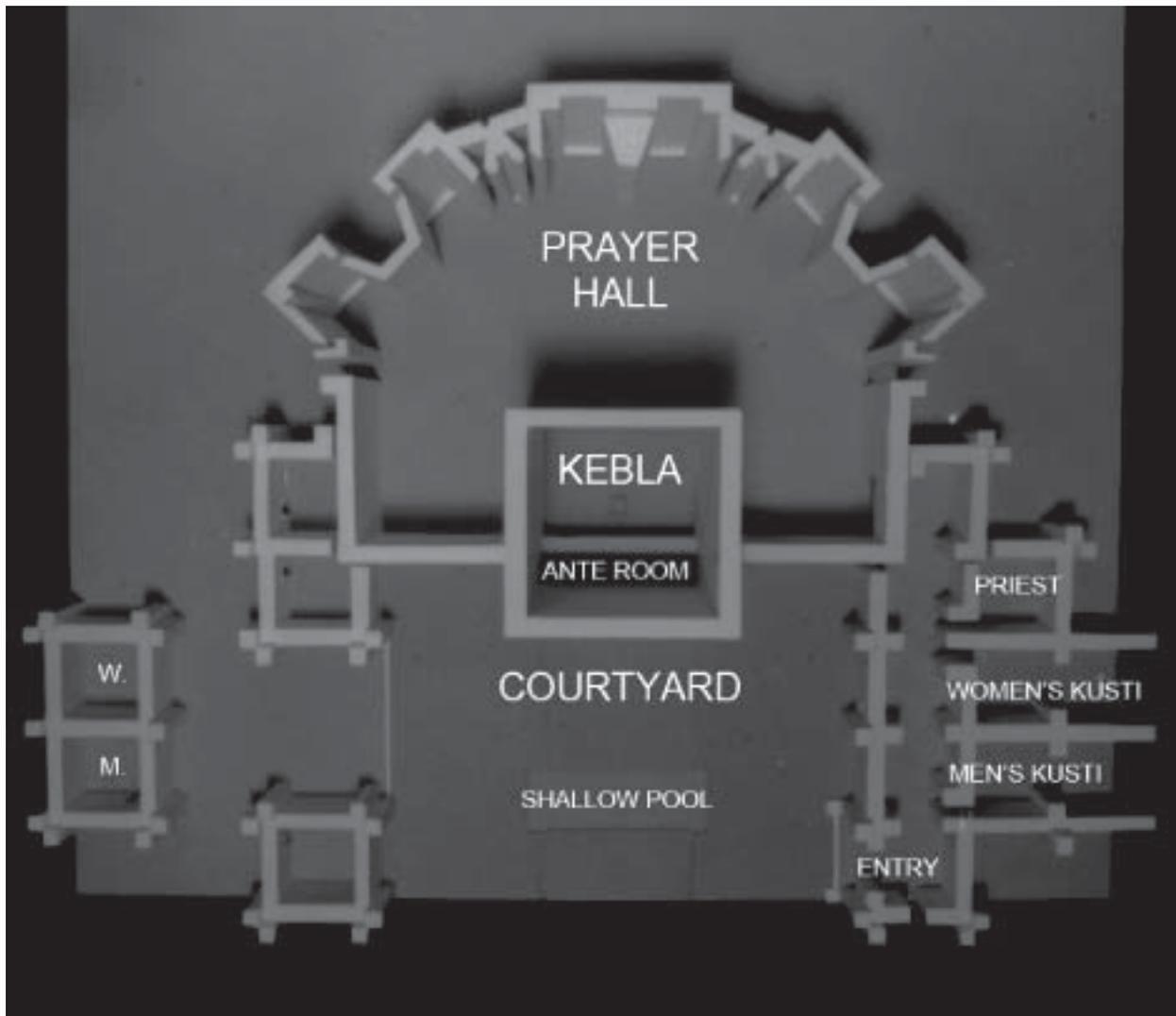
Many Zarathushtis in the US and Canada are now third and fourth generation immigrants. The early Zarathushti immigrants struggled to find people like themselves and it took time to establish their local communities. At first, they met in each other's homes to observe religious celebrations, food, customs, and camaraderie. As these communities grew, the need for larger venues became apparent. They started renting large halls in churches and other civic buildings. Soon some of the larger communities felt confident enough to secure a center of their own. Some chose to purchase existing buildings and renovate them, whilst others chose to buy land and erect new buildings better suited to their particular needs.

WHAT ARE OUR NEEDS?

First there are the 'objective' needs. These include establishing a budget and raising funds; finding a suitable location; determining the building size; and defining the desired functional and support spaces/rooms in these buildings. These are the elements that involve the greatest amount of people's time, energy; and political capital.

But, what about the 'subjective' needs? Here is where I think we are lacking. What are we building? What other purpose should these infrastructure projects serve? How do these buildings relate to other Z-buildings across the nation? What do these buildings say about us as Zoroastrians to our immediate neighbors and the broader community? What do they say about our aspirations? What legacy do they leave for the next generation of Zoroastrians? In my opinion, the majority don't say much. We have been building square or rectangular boxes, plastering some token ornamentation copied from Persepolis or fire temples in India, and adding a few columns and /or steps at the entrance.

People will say that our budgets are tight and we can't afford anything more than the basics. Is this really true? Does good design necessarily have to cost more? My question is, can we realistically expect to continue to raise funds here and abroad for 'yet another box'? How does the local community, let alone the extended community, get excited enough to donate money for another bland and uninspiring project? It isn't any wonder that fund raising is difficult. The truth of the matter is that nothing is being offered that stirs our imagination and allows us to feel proud that our religion's name and the rich history is associated with these buildings.



The curved south facing back wall of the Prayer Hall catches sunlight and diffuses it into the space. The light is sculpted to create a feeling of piety on the inside of the Prayer Hall.

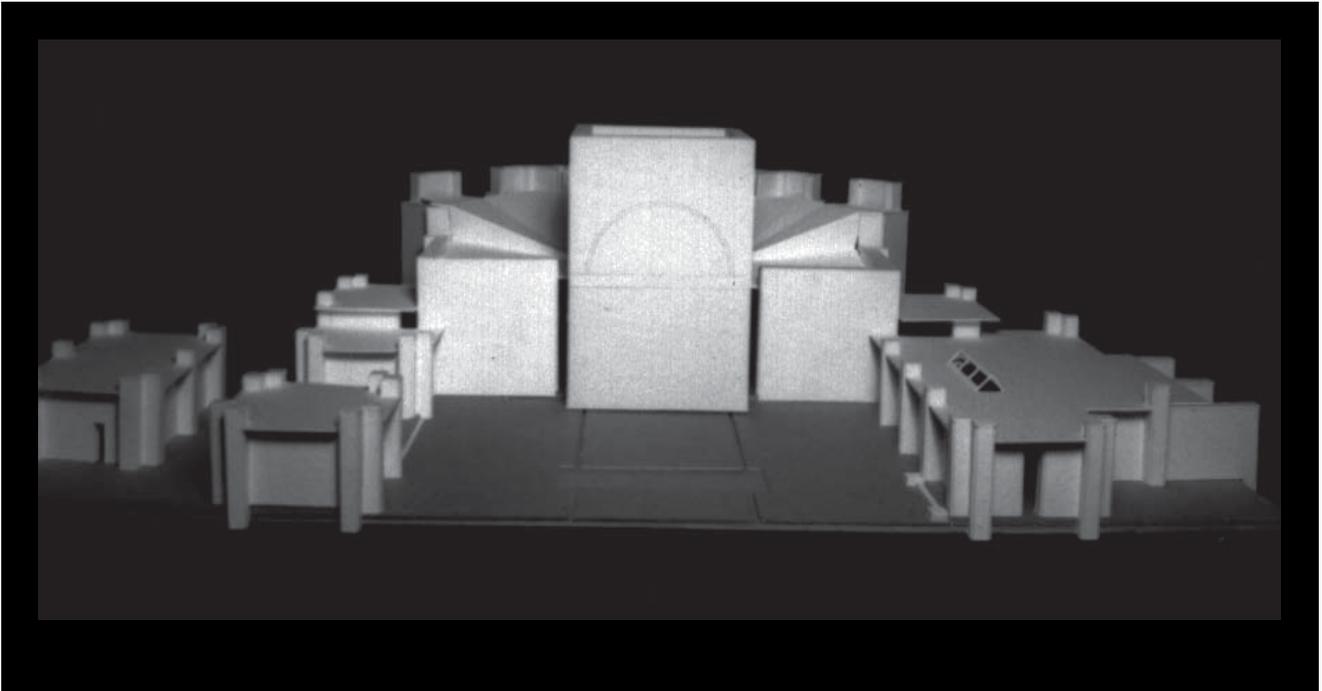
AM I ALONE IN WANTING TO ELEVATE OUR EXPECTATIONS?

Not really. In the summer 2012 issue of Fezana Journal, Behram Pastakia has written an article entitled '... the next 25 years'. He states, 'over the last few centuries we have copied architectural models from our Sassanian heritage'. He goes on to propose some alternate precedents to consider. Behram has noticed this 'pastiche formula', and I respect his notion that we need a change of vision. I would add that rather than copying architectural elements from our past and simply pasting them on our buildings, we should understand the 'essence' and the 'evolution' of these historical buildings. We can then use the roots of these designs and interpret them in a manner that is more reflective of our present age, technology, and materials. Artists are inspired by the masters, but don't just copy pieces of their paintings. They interpret and understand the original inspiration, and transform it into something of their own that has more contextual relevance to current society. In the same issue of Fezana Journal, Rustom Kevala states 'sound infrastructure...will not only unify and raise the profile of



FEZANA UPDATE

Zarathushtis, but will be a valuable gift from the founding generation to the next'. He goes on to suggest that we need to extend the scope of infrastructure projects beyond the local community center and consider projects like retirement communities, a national worship center, and a seminary. Rohington Rivetna suggests an Atash Kadeh with a continually burning fire and proper facilities for performing liturgies. Families like the Guiv's, Dabestanis, Zardoshty's, Kheradi's, Tamboli's, Bhatena's, Rustomji's, and many more have been extremely generous in their support of North American Dar-e-Mehrs. I commend their generosity, and would like to encourage them to raise the bar on the 'quality' of these projects.



View showing the curved back wall rising above the roof to capture natural light.

HOW DO WE ELEVATE THE DESIGN QUALITY OF THESE PROJECTS?

For starters, the design selection process needs to be more transparent and inclusive. When a new project is being considered, the Fezana Journal should publish a full page 'Call for Participation'. The President of the association undertaking a project should email other associations and small groups announcing how interested Zoroastrian professionals can get involved in the design process. Selecting the best candidate from a larger pool of architects, engineers, builders, and other professionals is bound to improve the talent pool and consequently, the 'quality' of these projects. Currently, this is not what is happening, and instead a few select people are being 'given' these projects with limited, if any, competition. Perhaps an open competition for the design of a facility can be administered. In architectural competitions, often the name of the applicant is not allowed on any drawings. Instead, a number identifies the design so there is no partiality exhibited by the judges. We could invite professors in architectural colleges to participate in the selection process. I'm confident some would participate pro bono. They can enhance their reputations by saying they have participated as a juror on a selection panel. Members of the association's building committee and large financial contributors who have pledged to fund the project would also have a vote on this panel. They would all benefit from the discussion between the architectural professors on the merits of each submission during the selection process. In this age of Skype,



conference calling, etc. there is no reason why jurors could not be spread all across the country to encourage a fair and unbiased selection process. Many great buildings have been commissioned using a design competition to come up with a creative proposal.

WHAT ABOUT COMPENSATION FOR ZOROASTRIAN DESIGN PROFESSIONALS?

I was involved with ZAMW's first center project that sadly never got built. I served pro bono as the design consultant for the American architect who had no prior knowledge of this building type. Together, we refined her design based on my understanding of historical and ritualistic requirements. She was paid her professional fees, as were the engineers and other design professionals. Zoroastrian professionals who work on infrastructure projects for our community should likewise be paid for their time and professional services. At their discretion, they may choose to provide a discounted rate for their services, and be accessible evenings and on weekends.

OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

People in our community have asked me *'what other infrastructure projects do you feel we should consider'*? Some suggestions include:

SENIOR HOUSING

With a communal kitchen, dining room, and activity room (for our aging baby boomers). If these have some success, they could follow our Indian 'parsi colony' model where they have a small central atash dadgah in the community building. They could be designed as single family homes; duplexes, four-plexes, and assisted-living facilities for those who need more supervision and care.

ATASH-BEHRAM

These need to be built in large Z-communities where they can be warranted and maintained.

Vacation Retreat Centers (Dharamsalas)

These could bring our youth together & hopefully lead to future Z marriages. One could hold religious classes; personal /businessdevelopmentseminarswithsuccessfulZ-mentors. These centres could also be used for family vacations (Dharamsalas) and for other communal functions like Lagans (weddings), Navjotes (sudreh-push) and Navrooz celebrations.

Some people might be offended by this article. Especially, those who have sacrificed their personal time, money, or both, for our infrastructure projects. It is not my intent to offend anyone, but I do feel it is time to elevate our expectations of our infrastructure projects. I too have devoted countless hours over many years for such worthwhile and long lasting endeavors. It is for this reason I feel qualified to raise questions about the process and end result of these various projects springing up across North America.

Neville Rustomjee is a registered architect based in Denver, Colorado. He graduated in 1991 from 'School of Architecture', Virginia Tech, which has consistently ranked in the top ten design schools in North America. Excerpts of his thesis, 'Design of a Zoroastrian Fire Temple' were published in the Fezana Journal, Fall 2002. Neville also has two Associates of Science degrees in Renewable Energy Technologies. He served as a design consultant for the ZAMW center project, and the European Zarathushti Trust Fire Temple Trust. He served on the Infrastructure Committee during Rustom Kevala's term as Fezana President. Currently, Neville is the President of ArchSol Design, PLLC based in Denver, CO (www.ArchSolDesign.com). He can be reached at neville@ArchSolDesign.com.



Perpetuating the Zarathushti Faith for Future

Generations

Guest editors Jamshed Rivetna and Behrose Taraporewalla

When we look at the Zarathushti Diaspora in North America, it resembles scattered puzzle pieces. The pieces can be linked together to create a beautiful picture, but individually there are great challenges for each piece to maintain its identity in the contemporary world. As individuals—young or old, male or female, immigrant or non-immigrant, Parsi or Irani, Liberal or Conservative... we have all experienced an identity crisis either feeling or wanting to be in North America's "melting pot", yet at the same time struggling to preserve our Zarathushti faith and traditions. For many decades, there has been constant discussion and debate on how we'll preserve our Zoroastrian "identity", or on how we'll pass the torch to the next generation.

For this edition of the Journal, we decided to get a fresh perspective on how we're doing as a community and what can be done differently. We collected articles from a broad cross section of the community: from youth, to middle-age second generation, to older first generation. The contributors were asked to provide their perspectives and include a set of action items for the community based on the ideas in their articles. Generally speaking, we selected youth and middle age contributors having little involvement with FEZANA, and older contributors with extensive involvement on the North American stage. This sampling provides us with a true "grass roots" perspective, plus an "establishment" perspective on the future of our faith in North America.

Despite the variety of viewpoints on what should be preserved, there was consensus that our religion is more than texts and prayers in books. It is our profound doctrine and rituals, close-knit communities, and rich culture and traditions. All three aspects of our identity and heritage need to be preserved as our legacy, as all three are equally challenging for future generations.

OUR DOCTRINE AND RITUALS

The one indisputable thread that all Zarathushtis share is our practice of the core tenets of our faith. But how do we ensure the continued practice of the faith? How do we ensure the proper education and understanding of the religion with future generations? Within each of our local communities across North America, we are sure to find some form of religious education activities for youth and young adults. Many Zarathushti associations have regular adult religious discussions as well. But participation is light. It is clear that we need to find better ways of engaging people (young and old) in religious dialog and education.

We need to educate our youth and adults on the indisputable core of the faith: the prayers, the gathas, the core principles, and the history. We need to train our religious teachers on effective methods of teaching, rather than rote lecturing or preaching. We need to train them how to teach BIG ideas, then allow students to fuel their knowledge in other ways. Teachers should teach perspective and concepts - children should interpret them and shape their own knowledge and perspective.

OUR COMMUNITY

Today when we talk about the community of arathushtis in North America, what are we referring to? Some communities are defined by ethnicity, others by geographic proximity, still others by spirituality. Considering that no person's beliefs are better than another's, how do we thrive as a community and establish our identity in the ever-changing world? A community is formed and nurtured with true bonds and connections between families and individuals. It is not formed by holding events and monthly social functions. It is not formed by simply "getting people involved", or by building buildings. Creating a true sense of community is challenging and requires

Perpetuating the Zarathushti Faith for Future Generations

deep and focused conversation. At the local level where community members are in close proximity, community-building is an easier task, and to a great extent, has been successful in most North American Zarathushti population centers. On the national stage however, there seems to be too much “noise” within our Zarathushti community. People, and youth in particular, not regularly involved with the North American community at large, or with FEZANA specifically, are not getting a clear message or sense of togetherness. As such, they tune out on the national scale and continue engaging with and supporting their local community and all that goes with it.

In the recent worldwide demographics survey (See FEZANA Journal, Fall 2013), it was found that mixed marriages are occurring at unprecedented levels. Our communities (local and otherwise) need to understand that mixed marriage families have very different needs than non-mixed marriage families. Since mixed marriages are ever increasing, we need to think in terms of how to help these families with community bonding and learning the faith- enough for the parents to pass it on to their children and their children’s children, etc. In a mixed marriage, there are many unspoken challenges and forces pulling on the Zarathushti spouse and the children. If we don’t address their needs, we will lose many of them. At the local level and at the North American level, there needs to be deep conversation and focused initiatives tailored to encouraging and assisting these families with following the Zarathushti faith and feeling a sense of belonging within the community.

OUR CULTURE AND ETHNIC TIES

Our North American culture differs from that of Pakistan, India or Iran. First-generation immigrants to North America have strong ties to their homeland culture and traditions. But, starting with second-generation North American Zarathushtis, the knowledge and understanding of that culture begins to fade. With still later generations, there may be little connection to past traditions at all. We may still go through the motions, but there is little understanding or true feeling in the traditions. With our diverse backgrounds in North America, an authentic Zarathushti culture is difficult to pinpoint. Second generation Zarathushtis, with an already diluted and seemingly superficial cultural

experience, find it difficult to closely follow the traditions and customs of their parents. There is still a strong will to perpetuate the rich culture, but it is an ever-daunting task, one that too few are willing to undertake. Also evident with second and later generations, preservation of the culture and traditions is not as important as understanding the religious doctrine and strengthening the community. While we are constantly striving to understand and follow our Zarathushti customs and traditions, there is a stark realization deep down that our Zarathushti “culture” is slowly eroding, especially in North America.

We need to educate and celebrate our religious rituals, so we can preserve our past to maintain our existence in the future. Not only do we need to know our traditions, as a community we need to practice and educate others on their significance.

THE ROAD AHEAD

When we were younger, we talked about a worldwide Zarathushti population of around 170,000. Our recent demographics survey puts the number at fewer than 120,000. It is evident that our coming generations of Zarathushtis have a daunting challenge ahead. If we dilute our culture, or lose our sense of community, the Zoroastrian religion becomes a lost doctrine kept alive in small pockets around the world. On the other hand, if we maintain our sense of community, but neglect to perpetuate the doctrinal and cultural aspects of our faith, we become a community drifting with no compass or true sense of purpose. So, it is clear that we need to make very special efforts to preserve all three aspects of our faith: doctrine, community, culture and traditions. While all three aspects are tightly intertwined, they must be deliberated and addressed independently (but not dissociated from one another). If not, we end up with grand, often ambiguous, initiatives lacking any focus or beneficial outcomes.

Since the inception of our North American local associations and FEZANA, there has been a never-ceasing dialog on community-building and preservation of the Zarathushti faith. Our younger generation Zarathushtis are setting great examples for us: *Return to Roots, Zoroastrians Stepping Forward, Zarathushti Olympics, ZYNA Retreats and other initiatives*. An organization’s true priority is conveyed by where it

Perpetuating the Zarathushti Faith for Future Generations

spends its money and by the programs it initiates and supports. Perhaps it is time to follow the footsteps of the younger generation by investing in and embarking

on initiatives that will foster bonds between Zarathushtis young and old (but especially young), and which will ensure the proper education of our community members, again young and old, in the core principles and tenets of our faith. Efforts to preserve our customs and traditions are also important but should not thwart the progress with community building and religious education.



Jamshed Rivetna recently moved to Chicago with his wife and three daughters. Prior to Chicago, he spent fifteen years in Dallas where he was actively involved in the local Zoroastrian community. He spent three terms on the ZANT board of directors and was instrumental in the construction of the Dallas Darbe Mehr.

Behrose Taraporewalla teaches 3rd grade in the Claremont Unified School District, and writes curriculum for various educational organizations. In her spare time, as an Education Specialist, holding credentials in Special Education as well as General Education, she has had the opportunity to educate people of all ages and walks of life. Her life goal is to help narrow the educational achievement gap, so all children can achieve academic success. Behrose enjoys Crossfit,

volunteering, cooking, and engaging in activities that allow her creativity to shine. She is a marathon runner and an avid supporter of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.



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Perpetuating the Zarathushti Faith for Future Generations

“AN HONOR AND A PRIVILEGE” DISCUSSIONS ON ZARATHUSHTI IDENTITY

Farishta Murzban Dinshaw

Identity, or “the qualities, beliefs, etc., that make a particular person or group different from others” (Merriam-Webster.com), is neither static nor one-dimensional. It evolves through interaction with the socio-geographic environment as well as historic influences. A Zarathushti living in 2013 is different from a Zarathushti who lived in 1320. Even in 2013, a Zarathushti from Yazd may understand what it is to be a Zarathushti differently from one from Ahmadabad or Los Angeles. The understanding may be further complicated by identity markers such as age, gender, education, profession, health and ability, nationality. The choice of a romantic partner, regardless of whether the partner is Zarathushti or non-Zarathushti, will add on another layer to the expression of identity. Add to that the way a particular Zarathushti may have been perceived by and interacted with non-Zarathushtis - classmates in a predominantly non-Zarathushti schools and universities or colleagues while working as an expat outside the ‘home country’ - and you have another range of variables that will influence how that person will view ‘being Zarathushti’.

FEZANA’s 2012 study of Zarathushti demographics (see “*The Zarathushti World - a Demographic Picture*” at www.fezana.org) showed a significant increase in population in North America (24% or from 16,769 to 20,727), most of it attributed to immigration. The study also showed some subtle indications of decline in the future as a result of assimilation into North American society. A follow-up survey by FEZANA was conducted in the summer of 2013 to seek ideas to counter assimilation and sustain and grow the community. As part of the survey, participants were asked to “Please share with us what it means to you personally to be a Zarathushti.” This article is based on the responses of over a 100 self-identified Zarathushtis who answered the survey. Its purpose is to identify commonalities in the responses to explore what factors influence Zarathushtis to consider themselves as Zarathushtis.

The responses were analyzed using an “open coding” process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), referring to the process of initially reviewing the data and noting evident themes. There were two notable themes that emerged: (1) personal Zarathushti identity as a member of an in-group and (2) Zarathushti identity as an expression of philosophical/scriptural tenets. This article specifically focuses on the first theme of belongingness, and the second theme will be discussed in the next issue of FEZANA Journal (Spring 2014).

A SENSE OF BELONGING

Belongingness, also referred to as connectedness, has been identified by social scientists to be a primal need among human beings. Abraham Maslow in “A Theory of Human Motivation” identified it as one of eight basic needs that people need to survive. Belonging to a group gives members a feeling that they are a part of something bigger and more important than themselves. One respondent said, “The cultural connectivity is, for me, the most important factor [of being Zarathushti]: being able to share similarities of language, food, religious belief, and shared community conscience.” Another said, “The sense of a small community that is closer knit and open/respectful/helpful to one another is far more important than being part of a larger community.”

One respondent focused on the social aspect as the primary source of identity rather than the religiosity aspect of being Zarathushti: “I am not a very religious person in terms of wearing a sadra, khusti¹, prayers etc - But I value what we have as a community the most! I like the sense of community and always love knowing that our association is planning events, avesta [sic] classes etc.” Another respondent echoed this by illustrating how the *lack* of social connectedness has resulted in a corresponding lack of identity as a Zarathushti. “My schooling was non Zoroastrian, my parents are hardly Zoroastrian in practice, the only Zoroastrian friends I had were my cousins so in truth I cannot say that I am Zoroastrian.”

¹ Sadra (also sudra, sudreh) is a vest and khusti (also kasti, kusti) is a sacred string that is bestowed upon a Zarathushti at the time of initiation into the faith, usually before the onset of puberty. Zarathushtis are obligated to wear it daily as a physical expression of their commitment to the faith.

Perpetuating the Zarathushti Faith for Future Generations

These responses emphasize the need for the community as a whole, and FEZANA in particular, to offer opportunities for socializing to build up a sense of being Zarathushti. One respondent suggested that one of the keys to sustain and grow the Zarathushti community in North America is to recognize this aspect of our collective identity and build on it. “It’s critical we build community for the next generation. My parents grew up in Karachi or Bombay and had a built-in Parsi community network. The bond is so strong that it traveled with them when they and their families and friends immigrated to America and other places and just transferred here seamlessly although with effort because they were all new immigrants striving for the American dream. Kids growing up here don’t have that same built in community network and it’s therefore critical that we build something for us/them so that it’s not so easy for them to abandon the religion and community because they feel invested and have a stake (i.e., their closest friends are Parsi or Zarathushtis, they have fond memories of being with other Zarathushtis and they have a group they can identify with who knows where they come from and what they’ve been through). We can’t and shouldn’t make it so easy to walk away from it.”

PROMOTING THE GROUP

Tajfel & Turner’s Social Identity Theory suggests that one of the ways people promote belonging to a specific group is to make comparisons between the group to which they belong (in-group) and other groups (out-groups). These comparisons are often emotionally-based and self-enhancing, singling out the in-group as ‘*the best*’ or ‘*unique*’ and that belonging to it is “*an honor and a privilege*”. Membership, therefore, allows one to bask in reflected glory. Some of the responses that illustrate this point are listed below:

- *“I am extremely proud to be a Zarathushti. In Karachi, being a Zarathusti is a symbol of trustworthiness, honesty and respect.”*
- *“Very proud to be a Zarathustri as our religion has some of the best teachings that we can pass on to future generations.”*
- *“I take great strength and inspiration from the history and heritage of the Zarathushti and Parsi communities—I think that the community has set itself a very high bar of achievement, something which encourages further achievement and good work.”*
- *“At the core of being a Zarathushti is truth, practicing truth in our daily lives, imbibing truth in our youth and community, and maintaining the level of decency and respect that has been associated with the Zarathushti community for centuries.”*
- *“I am proud to be a Parsi Zarathushti, even though I do not agree with many of the Parsi community’s positions. I hold on to the belief that Zarathushtis are good people, who do good things, and make the world better.”*

Unfortunately, the other side of the coin is that group members of an in-group may subconsciously enhance self-image at the cost of other groups, thus insidiously promoting prejudiced views, even racism. The Zarathushti community needs to make a conscious effort to minimize this side-effect, particularly as Zarathushtis the world over live in multicultural societies. Additionally, an ‘*us vs. them*’ attitude affects interfaith families. One intermarried Zarathushti respondent from Canada wrote: “Our dasturji (priest) is liberal and does jashans (religious ceremony) at my house but this is rare. One priest called mixed children khachar (mule) on TV program. It is not about outlying areas like in the USA as we have two agiaris (places of worship) here but it is simply about attitude of people. We have many Parsi friends who I have grown up with from my days in [an apartment colony in Mumbai] but they can still be insensitive like not inviting us for jashans. When my daughter was seeing a Parsi boy, his parents made so much fuss about it. My own mother is like this. She still favoritizes [sic] my brothers’s [sic] children.”

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CULTURAL vs. RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

One of the complexities of the Zarathushti identity is that it is a composite one with culture influencing rites and rituals and expressions of religiosity, and religion influencing various cultural expressions and traditions. This is especially apparent if one were to sub-categorize members as Parsi-Zarathushtis, Iranian-Zarathushtis and Diasporic Zarathushtis. For example, upon death a Zarathushti may be put in a dokhma, buried, or cremated depending mainly on socio-geographic reasons rather than religious ones.

Two respondents clearly recognized this bilateralism and identified being “Parsi” as their primary identity: “I am a Parsi more than Zarathushti. Still I do my kusti prayers everyday.” and “My husband is more religious and does the divo and wakes up at 5.30 in the morning to says [sic] his kusti and pray for an hour every day. I guess I am more Parsi than Zarathushti because I like my dhansaak and sarees and jewellery!!!”

An exploration of the cultural dimensions of Jewish identity, a community facing similar challenges, may inform the Zarathushti community’s need for preserving its cultural identity. For instance, FEZANA can look to the National Foundation for Jewish Culture (NFJC), which provides resources and encouragement for documentary filmmaking, art, theatre, conferences and festivals, for inspiration.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The 2013 FEZANA survey offered some insight into the concept of Zarathushti identity, but a major aspect that did not emerge is how Zarathushti identity has been impacted by minority status experiences. A study on biculturalism, defined as a relationship with the dominant culture where one “...take[s] on its characteristics and identity while at the same time retaining own culture and identity” (Gonzales and Cauce, 1995, p143), would offer a greater understanding of Zarathushti identity in North America and possibly strategies for countering assimilation. **

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A NEXT GENERATION PERSPECTIVE ON THE 2012 DEMOGRAPHICS PICTURE

Poruz Khambatta



us never seems to. Nonetheless, the FEZANA issue was painstakingly objective in handling these disagreements and focused on facts and figures. Based on the facts, several authorities in the issue pointed out that much of the decline in our population can be attributed to factors like late marriage, non-marriage and infertility. What's oddly comforting about this is that these are not problems steeped in controversy. They are not challenges faced just by those with liberal or conservative viewpoints. These problems are universal; they transcend ideological differences. And so should we, if we want to resolve them. It will take all of us to address the difficulties facing our global community.

So what can we do? Given our desperation, perhaps it would be best to line up all single Zarathushtis of child-bearing age, marry them off in unison and compel them to procreate as much as humanly possible. However, I'm told this may violate some of the teachings of Zarathustra as well as a few international laws. Thus, it may be better to encourage marriages through more natural means and provide wedded couples with the medical and financial resources they need to create healthy families. As the journal mentioned, the Bombay Parsi Panchayat, the Indian government and other organizations have already taken bold steps toward these ends. Nevertheless, many more must become involved for these interventions to have their full effect on restoring the population.

Ultimately, despite some somber realizations, the FEZANA report also delivered good news. The Zarathushti population has grown in recent years in many corners of the world such as the United States, Great Britain, Canada, New Zealand and Singapore. Though frightening, the sharp decline in the past few years does not mean we should give up hope.

We are curators for the living tapestry of Zoroastrianism. Our religion, culture and rich heritage are what weave us together across continents and ideological divides. Our community cannot exist without them, and they cannot exist without us. Thus, only by saving our Zoroastrian community from diminishing can we keep our faith alive.

See bio on pg 38

The Zarathushti World 2012 Demographic Picture, published in the Fall 2013 issue of FEZANA Journal, offers a revealing view of the current state of Zoroastrian Religion around the world. It estimates a world Zarathushti population of about 112,000, which is roughly 13,000 less than the reported estimate in 2004. That means the population of Zarathushtis seems to have fallen more than 10 percent in less than 10 years. That's pretty terrifying.

I'm even more scared when I wonder what will happen in the next 10 years. What will the world Zarathushti population be when I have children? How much of our vibrant culture and community, will they have a chance to experience and contribute to?

To make matters worse, as I read the analyses and opinions various individuals had contributed to explain the data, I noticed some of the same all-too-familiar disputes. There were discussions of intermarriage from individuals holding liberal or conservative stances on the matter. There was talk about conversion. Occasionally, people referenced scripture to highlight the Divine inspiration for their beliefs.

While the world population of Zarathushtis may be shrinking at an alarming rate, the number of disagreements among

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Staying Engaged: 25 Years of Challenges and Opportunities

Trity Pourbahrami

Over the past 25 years I have stayed connected and engaged with the Zarathushti community for a variety of reasons and despite the challenges. My reasons are rooted in my definition of identity. Genetics, family, and our profession play key roles in defining our identity but what we define as our community is essential to our overall happiness and fulfillment. By community I mean all the groups that we associate with, contribute to, and from which we have the opportunity to learn. This includes our religious and cultural communities, our hobby communities, and our neighborhood groups. These communities are different from our professional groups, because we are more willing and able to let down our guard within these groups and be who we want to or aspire to be.

For the purposes of this article I am focusing on my Zarathushti community and have started my story of community engagement with my family's immigration to Vancouver Canada from Iran in 1987. This was a pivotal time in my life. Having left the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Iran-Iraq war I was finally able to freely think about the various aspects of my identity. In middle school I struggled with learning English, and only took advantage of a few opportunities to share my culture and religion with my peers. One of these opportunities was giving a short presentation in my class during world religion week at school.

As I became fluent in English and the North American culture I was presented with several opportunities through the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia and FEZANA that shaped my path as a Zoroastrian. One was the opportunity to be an attendee and presenter at the United Nations (UN) 50 Anniversary Interfaith Conference in San Francisco. At the conference I met youth from around the world including Muslim youth from Iran. I vividly remember how challenging it was for me to articulate why there are so few Zoroastrians in the world and why we do not have stricter rules of conduct, such as praying daily and eating religiously appropriate foods. Furthermore, I was placed on a panel with much older and experienced individuals representing Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. This was a challenging experience for me, but was fundamental to shaping my character. After the conference I was determined to learn more about Zoroastrianism and to sharpen my debating skills, developing one of the corner stones of my success as Director of Communications at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) Division of Engineering and Applied Science.

A few years after Zoroastrian Congress presentations at the UN, I was honored when I was asked to be the Canadian president of the Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA) and, in collaboration with the USA co-presidents, write ZYNA's first constitution. I really enjoyed the work, but I severely underestimated the time commitment involved at a time when I was pursuing a double bachelor's degree, one in Physics and one in Physiology. I remember the challenge of juggling my academic responsibilities, organizing a North American youth congress on a cruise, representing Canadian youth at the London world congress, and representing ZYNA in Iran during my first visit back since leaving in 1987. At this stage in my life I had to prioritize and do something I never thought I would do, resign as president of ZYNA. This was devastating for me and I felt like a failure. Looking back, I am grateful for this experience, because it gave me the tools and courage to make even more challenging decisions later on in life. The strength and ability to prioritize opportunities has been essential to my continual involvement with a variety of communities. When serving on boards such as Leadership Pasadena, Caltech Women's Club, and the Program Committee for the 2014 North American Zoroastrian Congress I have the experience and confidence to let my fellow committee and board members know that I can only commit to certain things. Furthermore, I ask many questions and try to be as clear as possible about my peers' expectations.

As a North American Zarathushti I faced the challenge of staying connected with the Zarathushti community as I pursued my career, which took me far from Zarathushti cultural centers. I first moved from Vancouver to Ottawa to work for the Canadian Society for International Health and the European World Health Organization. This position gave me the opportunity to travel to the South Caucasus region and work with Armenians, Georgians, and Azerbaijanis, but also left me isolated from and with little time to connect to the Zoroastrian community. Then I moved to Honolulu Hawaii where my husband and I constituted half of the Zoroastrian community. Despite this isolation we built a thriving community by inviting our secular communities to share our traditions such as Norouz and Mehregan. I have fond memories of our colleagues from University of Hawaii adding traditional elements, such as a white pomegranate, to our **Haft Seen table**. We enjoyed the opportunity to explain the history of the kushti

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and why Zarathushtis put wine, milk, and sharbat on the *haftseen table*. Now a decade later, our Hawaiian friends still remember Norouz and our *haftseen table* and these memories are part of our family Norouz traditions.

My husband Peter and I made a conscious decision at our next career junction to move to Southern California where there is a thriving Zarathushti community. We were ready to have children and wanted to live near communities that spoke Persian and practiced Zoroastrianism. Of course our first choice would have been to move back to Canada to be near our parents and siblings, but we were forced to strike a balance between career opportunities, family, and community. Today I get immense pleasure from the fact that my children take Zoroastrian studies at the same time that I teach the Gatha class.

I am grateful to the Southern California Zoroastrian community that has embraced us and is helping me share this great religion and culture with my husband and children. Staying engaged and involved with the Zarathushti

community has brought me and my family great fulfillment and happiness. I have enjoyed both contributing to and learning from the community.

ACTION ITEMS

- Find your own unique way to get involved with your Zoroastrian community.
- Take on the challenges and opportunities presented to you by the Zoroastrian community.
- Have the courage to say no and prioritize the opportunities presented to you.
- Take the time to make your own family traditions connected to Zoroastrian religious and cultural events.

Trity Pourbahrami and her family succeeded in leaving the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1987. Canada offered her the opportunity to explore her Zoroastrian identity freely without fear and thus as a young adult she was very active in the local and international Zoroastrian community. She met her husband, Peter Capak, during her undergraduate studies in Physics and Physiology. Peter became very interested in Zoroastrianism and decided to convert before they got married in 2002. Today Peter and Trity live in Los Angeles and have two young daughters Neeku and Meena. They are active in the Iranian and Zoroastrian communities, where Peter and the girls are taking Persian Language (Farsi) classes and Trity is teaching the Gathas. In addition to her community volunteer roles Trity is the Director of Communication for the California Institute of Technology Division of Engineering and Applied Science.



MY LIFE AS A ZARATHUSHTI

Arshya Bakhtiani

When I tell others I am a Zarathushti, people think I am an Iran native. However, I was born and raised in the United States of America, and for that I am thankful. Since I am the first child in my family to be born in the United States I am part of the fabric that sews our ties to our identity in North America as a first-generation American. The rest of my family lived in Iran, and spent most of their upbringing there as well.

So why are we living in America? My family immigrated to the United States, because they were discriminated against because of their religious faith. My parents came to Virginia, through the hard work of many Zoroastrian organizations and individuals. Although the journey was not always easy, they are happier here than they were in Iran, because they have more freedom and are not persecuted against. As an empowered young Zarathushti, this has positively affected me!

As an Irani-Zarathushti I am able to meet new people and not be victimized, in the community I live, my center, and at school because of what I am. Living in Virginia (from birth to my early teenager years) has made me realize that I am an individual, entitled to my own thoughts and beliefs, and because of that, I am able to live without any fear. When I

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moved to Los Angeles, it was a challenge because I stood out like a tomato in a salad, but as years passed by I got used to it, and maintained my identity while blending at times into my surroundings. I have met many people in California who have no idea what my religion is, but I am able to tell them what it is and how important it is to me.

For my family and myself, many positive things have come about in our immigration story. In America we have the freedom to practice our religion, and have the chance to live as we chose. I have met many Zarathushtis who are neither born into the Zoroastrian faith, nor are Persian, but are inspired by others to join our customs. The times I have been to Iran were not that memorable, which in turn makes me more appreciative and proud to be an American. For example, in Iran I thought it was unpleasant because all the women were wearing either scarves around their heads, or covered head-to-toe with full-body clothes; it seemed unfair because the women were dehumanized, and it was alarming to me because I have never experienced this before (even though I live in a community with many Persians). I thought everyone around the world lived in areas where they were able to speak their mind, and do things as they pleased, but I saw in Iran changed my perspective on the world today and forever.

Most of my peers and teachers think that I am either Muslim or another well-known religion, and they do not know what Zoroastrianism even is. Throughout my years in school, my teachers have asked me what my religion is, and most of them have never heard of it before. My peers also do not know what Zoroastrianism is, but I explain to them what I think it is. It mainly surrounds itself around good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.

I believe that you have to think before you say and do. Many people are fascinated by it, because it does not only revolve itself around a God, such as Puritanism, but it lets you believe in what your own being wants to become. There are not many Zoroastrians in the world, but people are converting into it because they believe it to be a wonderful religion. The Zoroastrian community is slowly growing to become a vast group of individuals.

I have seen very few Zarathushtis who do what they believe in, and I want to see many more follow their beliefs. We have such a big community in California and in Virginia and are still growing. In moving from Virginia to California, I have made many new friends who have no idea what faith I follow. I am motivated to encourage people to learn more about my religion and make it prosper. Personally, I am able to use my beliefs in my daily life and am voluntarily going to use them in the future to become a recognized figure in my community. I want to become a true Zarathushti that believes

in myself, and inspires others to truly be who they are.

ACTION ITEMS

- *Encourage Zoroastrian communities to become more of a place to welcome everyone, even if they are not Zarathushtis.*
- *Encourage Zoroastrian associations to arrange interfaith events and get-togethers.*
- *Organize events (such as Nowrouz) to show non Zoroastrians the many great qualities of our religion.*

Arshya Bakhtiani

is a student of El Camino Real CHS. She believes that she is able to change the minds of others to be true to who they are and persuades them to think freely. Being a Zarathushti means everything to her because it taught her to be herself.



**“ IT IS NOT ONLY
FOR WHAT WE DO
THAT WE ARE HELD
RESPONSIBLE**

**BUT ALSO FOR WHAT
WE DO NOT DO”**

MOLIÈRE (1622-1673)

Perpetuating the Zarathushti Faith for Future Generations

The Role of Zoroastrianism in Building a Bright Future

Saghar Javanshir-Behrooz

We are living in a dynamic world, whose increasing complexity affects our daily lives. The birth of the internet and its resultant information superhighway has eliminated geographical & cultural boundaries. With advances in technology, communication efficiency and quality has entered a new era. The wide range of information application has created endless possibilities which are unprecedented and exciting.

The new technology era has its own challenges. Limitless resources & information delivered at our fingertips, while overwhelming at times, facilitates our intellectual growth. Without specific goals, a clear path, sufficient knowledge, & effective communication, it is easy to lose our grasp of our vision. Social media has facilitated interpersonal relationships across the world, but it cannot replace face to face social interaction, imperative for our cognitive well-being. Through media, our children and youth are exposed to advanced moral challenges they are not developmentally ready to understand and resolve. Economic stability has adopted a new meaning leading to an unstable & variable job market. The rate at which the world and its events and issues revolve has imposed increased strain on our daily lives. The process of adaptation to the use of technology, social media, internet, and communication devices has compromised our physical & psychological well being.

As individuals, we are facing more complex decisions, reduced social interaction, decreased time to interact and care for nature, lack of time to develop self concept, and compromised physical and psychological health. With personal communication devices, the comfort of family life has changed forever, and the perception of economic needs has strained parental/family relationships. On a community level, we are experiencing a decrease in active participation of members due to time limitations & other restraints. The Cultural and Religious boundaries have also been compromised calling for a new equilibrium. Globally, the world is seeking new solutions to current and future challenges, To meet our challenges, establishing a path towards a constructive goal is imperative. Innovation is the key to seeking new solutions, while collaboration & creativity are imperative. Understanding the concept of time & its limitations, teamwork, common vision, flexibility towards events & challenges, & empathy towards all human beings will increase our chances of survival. Our interaction and care for the environment remains one the most important factors in advancing our overall health.

Zoroastrian fundamental principles provide us with all the tools necessary to achieve our goals & meet challenges at any time and place. These principles allow us 100% freedom of thought, speech & action, emphasizing our need for indefinite advancement of knowledge & wisdom

to live a dynamic and constructive life. Care for the environment, and continuous need to renew the world is emphasized repeatedly in our Gathas and our Manuscripts. By rebuilding bridges across generations and cultures, we can facilitate innovation & creativity. The possibilities are endless, and the guiding principles are ingrained within each of us, placing each person at the center of the solution. The World Zoroastrian Organization and FEZANA are instrumental in creating a platform to allow open dialogue, effective communication, collaboration, and innovative solutions. The driving force comes from within each individual, bearing the responsibility of carrying the torch of advancing humanity into a bright future.

ACTION ITEMS

- *Develop an infrastructure in North America (and eventually globally) to assist displaced or migrated Zarathushtis adapt to their new environment and become productive members of the society.*
- *Develop a direct and efficient communication network between FEZANA, its North American Member Associations, and the individual members of each association allowing immediate and fast delivery of information.*
- *Develop short term task forces to systemize the ideas and programs for addressing community and personal support needs of Zoroastrian Associations and individuals.*
- *Determine a common day on the calendar for all Zoroastrian Associations to perform some common task. For example: Choose a date for youth appreciation or external/internal community service.*
- *Hire organizational advisors and/or experts to make recommendations for reorganizing FEZANA for more efficient operation as needed.*

Saghar Javanshir-Behrooz is a practicing Physical Therapist. She served on the board of the First Zoroastrian Youth Congress in Los Angeles and has been an active member of the California Zoroastrian Center.

She is currently an active member of the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas and served several terms on the board and different committees. She continues to pursue her passion in developing youth programs, community support, and educational programs.



MY ZARATHUSHTI CONVERSATION CONTINUING INTO THE FUTURE

Keshvar Buhariwalla

“Well where are you from, your accent is definitely not Texan?” Where AM I from? That’s what I’ve been trying to answer for the past thirty years since our family moved to the United States from India. As I have grown increasingly comfortable in my own skin, the more important question I now try to answer is “who really is Keshvar Kali Buhariwalla?” In answering the initial question, I normally start with - I grew up in New Orleans, from the time I was in the 3rd grade, but I am originally from India. So the response comes back as expected, “Well you surely don’t look Indian!” So again I have the ready answer, “Well yes, you are correct. You see, I am a Zoroastrian, (the funny look begins to take place on my new acquaintance’s face). It is an ancient Persian religion. Our ancestors came from modern day Iran and our religion predates Christianity.” The conversation continues something like “now that is very interesting, first monotheistic religion huh, well tell me some of your beliefs.” This conversation repeats itself on numerous occasions and I have perfected it to a science. But is it going to be enough, will my children carry on this conversation? Therein lies my greatest challenge.

I thank the editors for giving me an opportunity to share my thoughts on the challenges we are facing as second generation Zarathushtis living in North America. Our community’s greatest challenge was one that the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT) met head on: the need to build a community center which would serve as our home, a place we could meet to practice our religion and socialize. This dream was realized on May 7, 2011. As any community that has gone through the process will tell you, building a center is no easy task. There were varying visions and differences of opinions. It was a 15 year journey and there were many bumps along the way. Yet, those hurdles were overcome and we are grateful to now have a place we can call our own.

Kali and I are in complete agreement that our greatest challenge is being able to pass on the Zoroastrian religion and the core values of honesty, integrity and charity to our three boys, Zaal, Cyrus and Hormuz. Even though our children are growing up in North America, our constant travels to Bombay, India have exposed them to the cultural and religious norms not readily available in Dallas. Though that experience is priceless, we strive to make their home experience the one that really matters. Even though we are from India and in all honesty never grew up having a Haft Seen table in our home, we have made it a point to

include this important cultural practice in our celebration of Navroze. In Dallas we are blessed to have our Zarathushti families from Iran participate in many of our Indian customs, and we in return are celebrating the festivals that originated in Iran. This is the challenge: to forge an identity in North America that does not exactly match the one our parents passed on to us from India, while continuing to be true to our Zarathushti faith.

Our children are growing up in an environment that we as parents can somewhat identify with. How will they now deal with wearing their **Sudreh and Kusti** to school and handle changing into their PE uniform? I remember those days. They made me who I am today. Is that the same path I maneuver my children through and hope for the best? Not exactly. I marched into their elementary school a few days after their **Navjotes (sudreh pushi)** and explained to each of their classrooms what they had gone through, what they were wearing and what it all meant. My parents were not able to do this for me, yet this was the way our family dealt with this challenge.

There are numerous hurdles to overcome living in North America. The task of finding a Zarathushti partner to spend the rest of your life with is a daunting one. We are blessed to have welcomed a non-Zarathushti spouse to our extended family and our children have experienced the enrichment that Mike Masa (Uncle) brings to our Zarathushti clan. Each step leads us down the path we see for our future. Will we still continue to celebrate three New Years in North America due to our many calendars? Which one should we emphasize to our children? These challenges are real, but so are the solutions we are working on daily. I have great hope for our Zarathushti faith to continue long into the future.

There is so much to teach our children as far as religion is concerned and we often pare it down to telling them – **Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds**. Really, is that enough to teach our children in North America about their religion? I think not, and therein lies the challenge. Do we teach the more ritually based, dogmatic view of Zoroastrianism that comes to us from the Indian sub-continent or do we teach the more philosophical Zoroastrianism that comes to us from Iran? Or in my very own private thoughts, do we teach a new path forward? The one that we are forging every day in North America and Europe with groups such as our local Zoroastrian

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Associations, FEZANA and the North American Mobed Council? This is the path I want to teach my kids, but I have come to the realization that we are just in the midst of this transformation. We are the ones constructing this new path, we are the ones trying to light the way ahead. So what will this teaching look like? Will we be able to give our children enough of a foundation so that they are able to stand and have these conversations with complete strangers that I am able to have today?

My humble answer is a resounding YES! We as a community have much to contribute to this nation that we now call home, just as we contributed to the nation that took us in and gave us shelter from religious persecution. We need to work together on our common faith, values, and beliefs. Yes there are many challenges; but we are more than ready to rise to the occasion and raise our children to be the best Zarathushtis they can be in North America.

ACTION ITEMS

- *Help fund Zoroastrian Centers across North America. Enable smaller Zoroastrian Communities to put down roots and create a home where the religion can thrive.*
- *Continue to focus on Children's Religious Education classes in our Zoroastrian communities. There should be a resource bank of material, submitted by current religious class teachers, for all ages. FEZANA can be the keeper of these materials and make them available to anyone interested,. therefore making it easy to begin a children's class. There is no reason to keep reinventing the wheel.*
- *Inculcate in our youth the importance of passing on the Zoroastrian religion to the next generation. Our community must open our arms to families with one Zoroastrian parent. Passing on their faith and their heritage must be emphasized to our youth.*

Keshvar Buhariwalla is a member of the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT) and is currently serving as the ZANT President. She received her Bachelors of Science degree from Loyola University in New Orleans and served in the Army Corps of Engineers as an officer for 4 years. She is married to Kali and has three sons - Zaal, Cyrus and Hormuz.



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Fighting for a Dying Culture

Like most religions, Zoroastrianism has its controversies, but there are three basic tenets that unify all Zoroastrians—**good thoughts, good words, and good deeds**. Being a Zarathushti is more than just a religion I follow. It is a way of life that helps me apply these tenets to everything I do. Zarathushtis come from a well-respected ancient heritage that is sadly dwindling as time passes, and it is our responsibility to maintain Zarathushti values and ideals that have been so admired for the past thousands of years. I am honored to have the privilege to maintain this unique culture while upholding the values of the religion in whatever I set to accomplish. Unfortunately, the journey to understanding what being a Zarathushti meant to me was not so translucent.

Being a first generation Parsi in the United States, I felt neither fully Parsi nor completely American. As instructed by my parents, I would always wear my *sudreh and kusti*, a religious undershirt and a cord that is tied around the waste. Throughout high school, kids bullied me so much that whenever I changed in the locker room, I secretly tucked in my kusti and removed my sudreh and shirt at the same time so no one thought I was different. I realize that I feared facing social adversity; I tried to hide my culture, and thus hide who I was. Only in college did I start to value my diversity and realize that knowledge is essential to understanding and accepting who I am. To appreciate its personal meaning, I needed to learn how being a Zarathushti enhances my perspective.

First, I actively changed the way I thought about being Zarathushti and what it meant to me. As I was surrounded by a highly diverse environment at UC Berkeley, I transitioned from wanting to blend in, to understanding the need to stand out and embrace my culture. I minored in Global Poverty and Practice (GPP) and engaged in dynamic discussions about inequality and poverty. I realized the necessity to recognize my own values and acknowledge how my experiences define me, and be a person that strives to live his life based on good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. I then started the first Zoroastrian Club at UC Berkeley with the goals to help reestablish our identity and give the youth of our community a voice. Each person espouses beliefs about the world from their culture and life experiences; every perspective is valuable and adds dimension to the richness of human existence. As a Zarathushti it is my personal duty to harness my culture and values and engrain it in my everyday actions.

For so long I have tried to hide and reject my culture, but now I see how my background has shaped me into a unique individual. My exposure to diversity at UC Berkeley

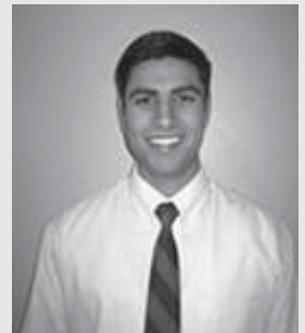
PORUS MISTRY

taught me the importance of maintaining one's individuality by embracing one's culture. I am now very confident in who I am and what it means to me, ***I am a proud first generation Zarathushti in the United States.***

ACTION ITEMS:

- Change our collective attitude from feeling entitled as a Zarathushti to understanding the privilege of what it is to be a Zarathushti.
- Propagate awareness that we belong to a dying culture and the only way to promote growth is to take responsibility in our community. The next few generations are critical for our community and there needs to be self-initiative to support each other for the betterment of ourselves and our community.
- Politics aside, individuals need to show a desire to learn about our culture and religion in order to properly understand who we are as a community.

Porus Darayus Mistry graduated from University of California, Berkeley with a major in Molecular Environmental Biology and a minor in Global Poverty and Practice. He is currently working for Quest Diagnostics. He recently went to Kenya, where he helped a project associate with Innovations for Poverty Actions, do a long term follow-up to the Primary School Deworming Project, which distributed medicine for schistosomiasis and soil transmitted helminthes to school kids in 1998. He is an aspiring doctor and will start medical school in August 2014.



Perpetuating the Zarathushti Faith for Future Generations

ZOROASTRIAN RETURN TO ROOTS

Sasan Jahanian & Diana Vania

The Zoroastrian Return to Roots (RTR) program is a youth-led initiative that brings together students and young professionals to experience the past, present, and future of our admired and successful community. Designed for Zarathushti youth who live in the diaspora, the RTR program aims to **'return, reconnect, and revive'** the religion and community. The first-ever Roots trip took place from 23 December 2013 to 6 January 2014 and included the World Zoroastrian Congress. During the inaugural tour, RTR Fellows from Canada, the United Kingdom, USA, and Pakistan explored various significant Zoroastrian historical, religious, cultural, and archaeological sites. With the support of scholars and archeologists, Fellows travelled along the paths of their Parsi ancestors from *Nargol to Sanjan, Udvada, Surat, Navsari, and Mumbai* over a period of two weeks. For many of the participants, this experience provided insight into the positive influence the Parsis have had on the development of India, as well as enabled them to learn about our different religious practices.

RETURN

As the 2013 Zoroastrian RTR program neared its inaugural tour, Fellows were excited and anxiously awaiting the start of the program. For some participants, this was their first time to India. Some had visited with their families before, but very few have had the chance to be immersed in our history and culture, which made this adventure fascinating.

Participants were eager to visit the exact spot where Zarathushtis landed on the Indian shores of Nargol (Fig. 1). They also followed the path to Sanjan where Zarathushtis were granted asylum by the Hindu king **Jadav Rana** in the famed "sugar in milk" story. Standing at Nargol Beach, **Bezan Irani (Canada)** expressed that *"visiting where our ancestors arrived was majestic and should be experienced by all Zoroastrians"*. It is at this place where Iranian and Indian Zarathushtis alike can appreciate the journey and struggles of our community. It is here where the RTR Fellows returned to their roots and saw how a small community has made a huge impact on such a vast population.



Figure 1. RTR group visiting Nargol Beach, where Parsi ancestors first landed. *From left to right: Cumbysis Tampal, Anahita Sidhwa, Farzin Avari, Armeen Mistry, Binaifer Daji, Hutokshi Marker, Shireen Havewala, Diana Vania, Bezan Irani, Aban Marker Kabraji, Rosheen Kabraji, Dinsha Mistree, Semira Jahanian, Sasan Jahanian, Fareeza Doctor, Rustom Kapadia, Vandad Pourbahrami, Shahyan Dastur, Rukshana Nanji, Kurush Italia, Kaiyan Mistree, Jenny Rostami, Jehangir Madon, Burzin Tampal, Farroakh Govadia, Khojeste Mistree, and Kurush Charna.*

RECONNECT

Reconnecting with our culture and traditions is important for the Zarathushti youth living abroad who might not normally get the opportunity to experience our customs and rituals. Visiting agiaries and Atash Behrams allowed RTR Fellows

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to partake in the religious customs, while learning about the history of Parsi establishments such as the Taj Hotel, Britannia Restaurant, Bombay House (TATA headquarters), Jimmy Mistry's house, Dotivala Bakery, Meherjirana Library, and Munshi Farms enabled participants to see the presence of the Parsi community in India (Fig. 2). Above all, Fellows were educated by "renowned speakers about our history and its important role in the development of a world class city (i.e. Bombay)" (Burzin Tampal, Canada).



Figure 2. A guided tour of Munshi Farms.

During the tour, the Fellows visited eight agiaries and Atash Behrams in Mumbai and Gujarat (Fig. 3). While each fire temple resonates differently with each person, the Iranshah Atash Behram in Udvada imparts a stronger connection and had the greatest impact on participants. For **Jenny Rostami (US)**, "being in the presence of such an ancient fire was absolutely a life changing experience." In addition to learning about the history of how the flame was carefully transported from Iran and the care it takes to keep the fire going over the centuries, Fellows attended two of the highest Zoroastrian religious ceremonies, the Nirangdin and the Boi. **Fareeza Doctor (Pakistan)** says that witnessing these ceremonies was the highlight of her trip, and she has "never been so proud and fortunate to be a Zoroastrian."

Over the two-week journey, Fellows experienced their own transformation and strengthened their bond with the religion as well as with the community. Visiting the different institutions and businesses, RTR members were able to learn of the impact the community has made in the development of Mumbai and India. Welcomed into the home of Jimmy Mistry, **Bezan Irani (Canada)** stated, "the interactions with Jimmy Mistry really helped me understand how one Zoroastrian entrepreneur can make such a big impact in the community." Seeing how an individual, such as Mr. Mistry, developed a business empire and gave back to the community has left a mark on many of us, while instilling the desire to do the same.

Learning about the many entrepreneurs led **Rustom Kapadia (UK)** to feel that "one of the most important aspects gained from the RTR trip was a sense of identity and enjoyment in being a young Zoroastrian. Understanding my religion on a cultural, political and social level gives me a great sense of pride and ambition to become more involved in the community. It has also inspired me to work on giving back the way our forefathers and previous generations have."

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REVIVE

As the trip slowly came to an end, each member reflected on their experience, evaluating the impact that the RTR



Figure 3. Visiting the Atash Behram in Surat.

program has made on them. The program, for many, went beyond educating. Vandad Pourbahrami (Canada) explains that he has “gained a better sense of identity and a great network of motivated, fun and like-minded Zoroastrians.” As the tour involved us spending every waking hour together for two weeks, we also felt we became a family, and we have all found that our meaning of being a Zarathushti has changed. Moreover, Semira Jahanian (US) felt that “the program has fostered a sense of belonging to a global community educating the religion while forging long lasting friendships.” For Fareeza Doctor (Pakistan) the program had more of a spiritual experience where she learned “that prayers are a link and continuity with the past, taking us back to our prophet and our ancestors.” The trip has not only strengthened her views as a Zarathushti but it reminds her of why it is important to practice our faith.

Living away from India, many have lost a sense of this rich culture, history, and even the faith. But the RTR program, as Jehangir Madon (US) describes it, “helps young Zoroastrians develop an identity that is becoming lost as many assimilate into the mainstream culture. We must strengthen our community so that with each generation we maintain our identity as Zoroastrians”, he explains. As a small group we have thrived, but now “we have to make a better effort outside India to keep the customs going and to have our community in our mind everyday” (Kurush Italia, US).

This first Zoroastrian RTR trip was extremely successful, with all participants benefiting from learning about our religion, history, and impact on the greater Indian society. Recollecting a quote from Mahatma Gandhi: “*Parsis: In numbers beneath contempt, but in contribution beyond compare,*” **Cumbysis Tampal (Canada)** feels after this trip he and his

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new RTR family have developed a appreciation of the contributions their ancestry and community has made in the country. After completing the program, Fellows hope to impart knowledge about our small but powerful community, spread awareness about the RTR program, and help garner funds and sponsorship for subsequent Roots trips.

The RTR program is essential in order to maintain our Zarathushti values, ideas, and traditions for future generations. Each member from the first RTR trip sincerely hopes that more Zarathushti youth from around the world are able to engage in future trips. We hope to form a global network of RTR alumni who are committed to serving their local Zoroastrian associations, giving back to the community, and encouraging other youth to participate in RTR. As we constantly hear about our dwindling population size, it is imperative that we support our youth in returning to, reconnecting with, and reviving our community.

The next RTR trip will take place later this year. If you are interested in supporting us or in becoming a Fellow for the next trip, please visit our website for more information: www.zororoots.org.



Sasan Jahanian: *Sasan is an Iranian Zoroastrian born in Baton Rouge, La, growing up in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. He has recently completed his Masters in Biology while developing a non-profit outreach program providing oral hygiene education to rural and low income families in California.*

Diana Vania: *Diana is a Global Health graduate student from Canada. She is interested in health and social policy in India. She was born and raised in Toronto, but has visited India several times and hopes to move to Mumbai in the future.*



Religions for Peace 
Different Faiths, Common Action.



From left Homi Gandhi Ervad Poruz Khambatta and Jehangir Sarosh

The Religions for Peace World Assembly was held on November 20th through the 22nd in Vienna, Austria. In attendance were over 600 religious leaders and people of faith as well as representatives of the UN, UNICEF and numerous world governments. I had the privilege of serving as one of ten youth delegates chosen to represent North America at the assembly. We were selected based on recommendations from senior leaders in our religious community and our past accomplishments. Before the Assembly began, the North American Youth Delegation met with the other youth delegates from around the world at the Youth Pre-Assembly. At this event, we shared our experiences and aspirations as young people representing a diverse assortment of religious traditions from every corner of the globe. It was inspiring to meet such driven, accomplished young people and brainstorm with them ways we could create a more just and harmonious society through youth-led, grass-roots initiatives.

The Assembly gave me newfound hope that Peace is possible, and that religion can be a powerful engine driving us towards Peace. At the Assembly, I had the honor of being

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elected by my peers to be the youth representative on the Drafting Committee, which was tasked with writing the Assembly Declaration. What I learned from this experience and the Assembly Declaration that we ultimately produced (available at [http://www.rfp.org/sites/default/files/publications/Vienna Declaration - Final.pdf](http://www.rfp.org/sites/default/files/publications/Vienna%20Declaration%20-%20Final.pdf)) was that all the world's religions hold the attainment of Peace as a core principle and instruct their members to work towards it. The fact that we are all united in seeking Peace and are compelled to promote it means that there is no great religious or spiritual divide preventing us from achieving global harmony. Peace is "common sense," as Lawrence Chong, a youth representative from Singapore aptly declared at the Youth Pre-Assembly. However, he pointed out that Peace has not yet been attained because selfishness and short-sightedness can lead those with tremendous influence away from actions that will promote the common good.

We, as Zarathushtis and citizens of the world, can promote Peace by following the teachings of our faith and seizing upon opportunities to collaborate with others on peace-building endeavors. There are numerous threats to peace that stand before us. They include poverty, political unrest, violent extremism, human rights violations and systemic injustices. Many of these factors are inextricably linked and feed off of each other in a vicious (photo above The North American delegation, Homi



Gandhi in front row and Ervad Poruz Khambatta in the last row on left)

cycle. I believe our faith calls on each and every one of us to intervene and address these problems. Prayer and reflection can imbue us with the courage required to face these issues but are alone not enough to solve them. Good thoughts and good words are incomplete without the presence of good deeds. We must be brought to action.

I came away from the Religions for Peace World Assembly with a changed perspective. The theme of the Assembly, "Welcoming the Other," was envisioned through a multiplicity of lenses by a multitude of speakers. Ultimately, it made me realize that despite their diversities and differences, all of the world's religions are more similar than they may seem.

We are connected in our desire to achieve sustainable Peace. Our own religion captures this sentiment beautifully through a phrase priests recite as they clasp hands during prayers. *Hamazor hama asho bad*. Let us be united in righteousness.

This article celebrates the tremendous achievement *Homi Gandhi and Jehangir Sarosh* have made for Zarathushtis around the globe by being elected to the *Religions for Peace World Council*. Jehangir Sarosh was elected co-president of the World Council and Homi Gandhi was elected Hon President of the World Council till the next World Assembly. They are an inspiration to young Zarathushtis like myself and exemplify the true meaning of service to one's faith and community.

World Council (WC) of Religions of Peace is a deliberating apex body, which makes fundamental decisions about direction, topics, financing, etc. from one World Assembly to the next or in between the assemblies. Presidents (co-Presidents) and Hon. Presidents (members of WC) participate in discussions and decisions. Hon. Presidents do not have a vote. **The Zoroastrian delegation did us proud !! (ED)**

(This article is placed in this section as the young author was perpetuating the faith by attending **Interfaith Conferences. ED)**

Poruz Khambatta was born in New York City and moved to New Jersey when he was six years old. He has been involved with the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) for as long as he can remember; he attended religion and prayer classes as a child and later taught them himself. In addition, he is an ordained priest and has performed numerous religious ceremonies in the United States, Canada and India. Poruz has also had the honor of representing the Zoroastrian religion at several interfaith gatherings around the world most recently at the Religions for Peace World Assembly in Vienna. He graduated with honors last year from UC Berkeley with a bachelor's degree in Cognitive Science, and he is interested in researching ways behavioral science can help us better understand and resolve social problems.

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THINGS TO BUILD A FUTURE

Shazneen Hushmندی

Being born in India and brought up in a western culture with distinct ideologies has created a bimodal state of living. My traditional views superimposed with modernized 21st century modes of living has at times established uncertainty and confusion for some, yet opened doors of different ideas and traditions.

The need to encourage and motivate our future generations to devote more time and energy to their religion has been voiced by many. Establishing organized youth events, enhancing networking opportunities, creating mentorship and career counseling programs are keys to success for our future. Having someone to show the path to success and walk you towards a brighter future can easily be achieved by incorporating the many successful stories of our frontrunner physicians, lawyers, businessmen and many other professionals.

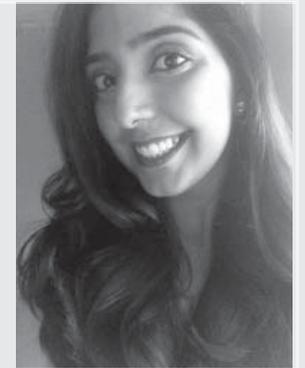
All these fascinating opportunities can be realized along with religious studies, while experiencing a deeper recognition of our faith. Congresses and youth events can highly benefit from talented and knowledgeable mentors; online socializing forums can connect our youth worldwide and broaden their networking opportunities. Through presenting more flexibility in our traditional views and incorporating many modernized means of dialogue, we can establish a strong unified Zarathushti youth community. Unification and mentorship of our second generations not only answers their diverse educational and vocational challenges but also establishes opportunities for them to strengthen their religious roots and values to enlighten the future of our Zarathushti community worldwide.

ACTION ITEMS

*** Providing networking opportunities, creating mentorship and career counseling programs are keys to success of our future generations.*

*** A Strong unified Zarathushti community can be achieved through presenting more flexibility in our traditional views and incorporating many modernized means of dialogue.*

Shazneen Hushmندی, born and brought up in a Zarathushti family in Mumbai, India, moved to Albany, New York, at age 12, where she finished high school and graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with a double major in Biology and Psychiatry. While working/volunteering in the local hospitals and studying, helped her gain valuable experiences that inspired her to embrace medicine for her future career. She finished her Medical degree at New York College of Osteopathic Medicine and is currently a second year Obstetrics and Gynecology resident at Albany Medical Hospital. Shazneen has greatly enjoyed being involved in her religious community. She hopes that Zarathushti youth will revive and strengthen the community toward a brighter future.



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PLAN, ADAPT AND THRIVE

To be able to accurately prognosticate about events and the nature of communities and society at large, a decade or two into the future, requires the prescience of a prophet. Most of us have realized our mortal limitations with our ability to do the same, and to those that do still choose to attempt that task, I herald their courage in the face of a long history of doomed endeavour.

What we can do, however, with a much greater sense of accuracy and outcome is to envision a plan of action that would lead to a preferred outcome or end goal. The envisioned outcome or end goal here is to have a vibrant, dynamic, established and functioning Zarathushti community in North America two decades in the future. ***In order to do this successfully it is necessary to take stock of our current situation, identify challenges and successes and create a game plan for the future.*** The key component for us in this game plan is to recognize change and to manage change effectively. We also need to identify core areas on which to focus and two of the most important, amongst many others, in my opinion, are the establishment of an inclusive North American Zarathushti identity and the creation of community infrastructure hubs that serve as anchors for local Zarathushti communities.

Those of us who live in North America are familiar with some of the challenges with regards to identity and faith. Those of an orthodox bent of mind often rue the changes we are experiencing and cleave in a dedicated fashion to continually practicing the faith “in the manner of our forefathers”. This blinkers them to the realities we are widely experiencing. In no particular order some of these realities are: syncretic influences on Zarathushti practices due to the dominant Judeo-Christian milieu we find ourselves surrounded by, a fusion between Parsi and Irani customs and practices, and the integration of spouses and children of those married outside the faith. The solution to this is not to practice an exclusionary model of Zarathushtianism but rather to evolve an inclusionary model that embraces these realities without leading to assimilation. To do this is challenging but is of vital necessity and is not without precedent. Our forefathers who left Iran in the first diaspora to the Indian Sub-continent adapted and adopted practices and customs without sacrificing the core beliefs of the faith while still maintaining a sense of collective Zarathushti identity. Given the nature and complexity of North American society as compared to the society our forefathers found themselves immersed in, it is a more challenging task for us to achieve. Our model of Zarathushtianism can and must be uniquely suited to our contexts but that should not make it any less valid if we made the adaptation without sacrificing the core

Daraius M. Bharucha

beliefs and principles of the faith. However, intensive effort will be required to sustain this model.

One key to be able to do so with success is to develop a greater focus on educating our children in the core principles of the faith while simultaneously nurturing the understanding that our cultural model and practices may be somewhat different from those of our forefathers but are no less valid. This understanding will lead to inclusive and positive identity formation rather than generating the confusion and conflict that is currently produced which tends to drive our youth away from the faith rather than towards it.

In terms of having a definable vibrant community with a strong sense of identity, the role of community infrastructure also becomes paramount. We need to have a strong sense of who we are and to continue to foster this we need to have a place to belong to. The creation of Darbe Mehers and community centers to nurture spiritual and cultural practices and create a sense of community is therefore vital to our existence. Here too there is challenge and change that needs to be effectively managed. In this we are faced with hurdles that perhaps our forefathers did not have to overcome, the key one being that of dispersal. As a community we are not only dispersed across North America but also widely dispersed in the cities that we live in. To create community hubs located so that they can conveniently serve the needs of the majority of the local population is often a herculean task given factors such as available land, financial cost and competing political interests at the local level. Despite these challenges many local Anjumans have persevered and been successful. The precedent for success therefore exists but now must be accelerated in a planned fashion that caters not only to the local community but is done in keeping with continent-wide needs and in a fashion that reaches out to smaller communities. It would therefore behoove local organizations to work together to accomplish continent-wide infrastructure goals rather than compete for a finite pool of resources. A concerted, balanced, and uniform approach coordinated through FEZANA would be the roadmap to success. It is of paramount importance that the newly created infrastructure fosters the inclusive identity model of Zarathushtianism.

The vision for the future then is the establishment of a roadmap that manages change taking into account the existential realities we face here in North America. To execute this successfully will require collective will, good leadership, great management and the blessings of Ahura

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Mazda. One does not have to be prescient to see that a successful outcome will lead to the existence of a vibrant, dynamic and vigorous Zarathushti community -- one that is confident in its identity and ability and positioned to carry the faith forward for another thousand years.

ACTION ITEMS

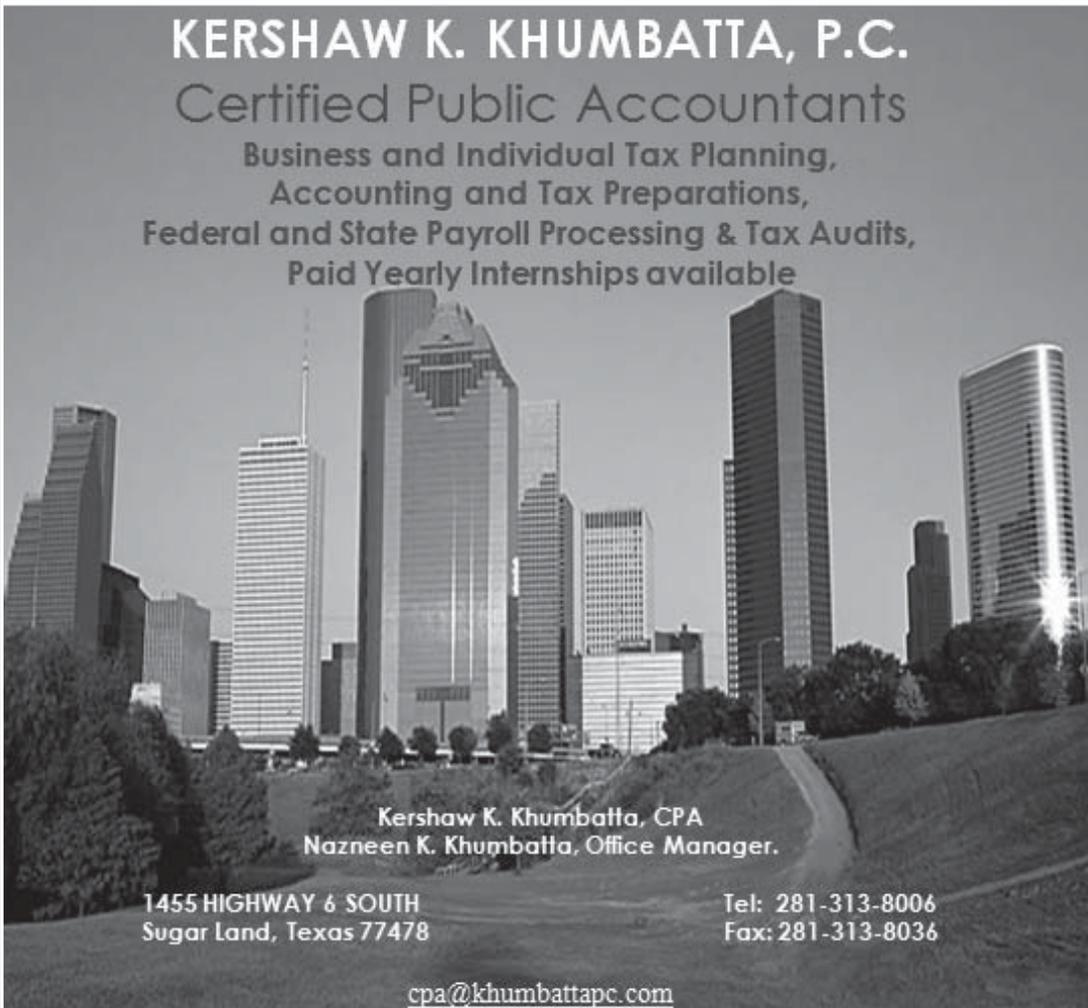
- *Develop an inclusive model of a North American Zarathushti identity.*
- *Develop an inclusive curriculum of Zarathushti Religious Education for youth.*
- *Coordinated development of an inclusive community infrastructure based on principles of need, resource availability and greater good.*
- *Develop a unified vision and road map for the North American community that has "buy in" at the grass roots level.*

Daraius M. Bharucha

is the Past President of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario and Past Chairperson of FEZANA's North American Zoroastrian Congress Committee. He served as Chair of Zoroastrian Society of Ontario's Religious Education Committee, Inter-Faith Committee and of the Z- Games Committee as well as an Executive Officer on the ZSO Executive Committee for four years.



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MY VISION FOR NORTH AMERICAN ZOROASTRIAN COMMUNITY IN NEXT 20 YEARS

Homi Gandhi

FEZANA has recently embarked on its 2nd Strategic Plan 2012-2021, adopted by the member associations at the AGM in Dallas, with 5 goals. (visit www.fezana.org to view the details). With the commitment of the committee chairs, member associations, corresponding members, and the FEZANA Executive, I am sure that the North American Zoroastrian community will rally around for the successful implementation of this Plan. This is a must if we plan to leave a continuous strategy for the next generation and for them to build on the next (third) strategic plan.

After discussing our physical infrastructure and building capacity in North America for a number of years, member associations approved an Infrastructure Committee, under the stewardship of Rohinton Rivetna, at the FEZANA AGM in Dallas on May 4, 2013. From a slew of 13-14 projects, the community decided to concentrate on 2 projects (Atash Kadeh and FEZANA Center) while FIRES works on its enhancement. Request for Proposals (RFPs) have been sent out for these 2 projects to the Member Associations. We are on our way to creating a physical infrastructure in North America.

FEZANA has recently embarked on new steps for our Youth. **Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA)** has been empowered with new programs and meetings. North American youth Zarathushtis have been participating for the first time in "Return to Roots" program.

I want to build on what FEZANA has accomplished and further strengthen the Zarathushti presence in North America so definitively, that when my grandchildren say they are Zarathushti, they can say so with pride, and without encountering puzzlement from their fellow North Americans, as to what a Zarathushti is. This identity is vital in motivating our future generations not only to adhere to the beliefs, traditions, and rituals of our great religion and culture, but also to energize them to participate and lead our communities into the future.

IMPLEMENTING THIS VISION

1. Take "Return to Roots" to the next level. A formal program, subsidized by FEZANA, should be set up to facilitate a religious and cultural exchange program for youth, allowing North American youth to explore their Parsi or Iranian heritage, and allowing youth from India, Pakistan and Iran to explore the experience of the Zarathushti in North America. This will also build a growing international relationship at the grassroots level, thereby fostering a more constructive dialogue at future Global Working Group meetings.

2. We need to further empower and support youth groups such as **ZYNA, NextGenNow, and Zoroastrians Stepping Forward (ZSF)**. Developing the next generation of community leaders needs to be a joint effort between FEZANA and local associations.
3. **The FEZANA Information Research Education System (FIRES)**, established in Houston, should be galvanized to offer education seminars not only in the Houston area but also at other locations. FIRES enhancement can be used to develop an Internet-based education program. Supporting this program is an essential part of keeping our traditions alive for future generations.
4. More than 10 Zoroastrian Associations and all the Small Groups in North America lack their own centers of congregation. FEZANA should help associations in building/purchasing their own centers.
5. FEZANA should work closely with the North American Mobed Council and the North American chapters of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce for the benefit of our Zarathushti community.

I would like to conclude my vision by repeating the following sentences I spoke at the FEZANA AGM in Dallas in 2007.

We have been building local association centers, Dare Mehrs, libraries, and cultural centers in the last 35+ years. It is high time that we think about building a National, nay a North American, Cultural and Educational Centre. In my opinion, the building architecture of this center should reflect the old Persian architecture and inside of that building includes a library, cultural, and research center on the lines of Smithsonian, where young and old, scholars and laity, Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians can find the necessary information about our community—Prayers, history, culture, etc.—with the help of interactive computerized equipment. This center should also include a consecrated place of worship. I know that this will arouse emotions in many people. But a time has come to discuss without emotions and with respect for each other

Homi Gandhi, Vice President of FEZANA, is also FEZANA NGO's Main Representative to the UN and Co-Chair, FEZANA Interfaith Activities Committee. Homi was recently elected as Honorary President on the World Council of Religions for Peace, the world's largest and most representative multi-religious coalition.



10th WZC Congress 2013, Mumbai

INAUGURATION OF THE 10th WZC BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA SHRI PRANAB MUKERJEE



The 10th World Zoroastrian Congress was inaugurated by President Pranab Mukherjee at the National Sports Club of India, in Worli, Friday, December 27, 2013

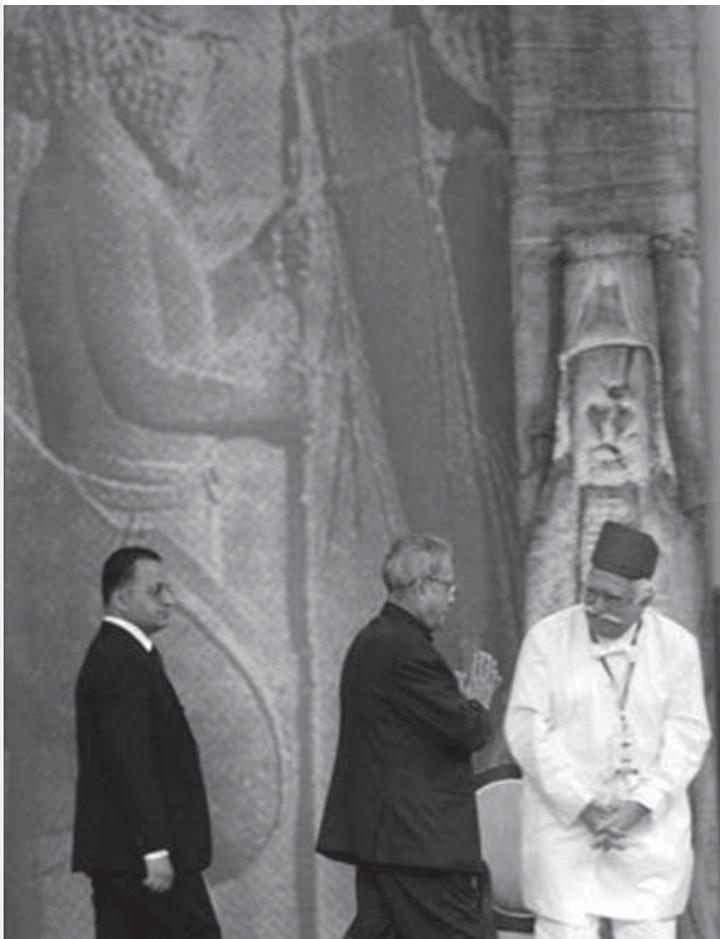
Zoroastrianism in the 21st Century: Nurturing Growth and Affirming Identity'

At the inauguration, Mukherjee said, "I reiterate the fact that whether it is in the world of business and industry or art and letters, leading our defence forces or breaking new frontiers in the field of advanced science and technology, the Zoroastrian community in India has always extended itself and reached the highest echelons of achievement and success." He acknowledged the contributions of various eminent Parsis, both philanthropic and otherwise, including Dr Homi Babha — the first Chairman of the Atomic Energy Conservation, JRD Tata — founder of India's first commercial airline, Field Marshall Sam Manekshaw for leading the Army in the 1971 war and Jamshedji Tata for his contribution in India's industrial rise.

He then asked "Why is that today the community has come to a crossroads where it feels threatened with extinction"

The President said that while the demographic statistics indicated that the Zoroastrian community in India is declining by about 10 per cent every decade, he was optimistic that this trend could be arrested. Expressing concern over the dwindling Parsi population, which he said is now less than 1.40 lakh, he spoke about the Jiyo Parsi scheme, the four-year-

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plan launched by the Government of India to stabilise the Parsi population and increase the number of Parsis in the country by adopting scientific protocols.

Lauding the contribution of the Parsis to the country's development, President Pranab Mukherjee said that « Successive generations of Zoroastrians have sweetened our Indian society, Mumbai has been home to the largest and most vibrant Zoroastrian community in the world. Zoroastrians have reached higher echelons of success in business, industry, art and culture, defense, as well as science and technology, they have merged into India's socio-political fabric,» he said. President Mukherjee recalled the contribution of Parsi stalwarts like Madam Bhikaiji Cama and Dadabhai Naoroji in India's freedom movement.

He also lauded the contribution of nuclear scientists Homi Jehangir Bhabha and Homi Nusserwanji Sethna, besides industrialist JRD Tata and Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw. He described Manekshaw as «hero of the 1971 Bangladesh War who won the hearts of soldiers».

In Mumbai, it is acknowledged that it is the Parsi community which laid the foundation of industry,» he said. The President praised Parsis for their role in charity and philanthropy which had even been acknowledged by Mahatma Gandhi,» President Mukherjee said. «It is significant but not surprising that in a recent function organized by a television channel, to honor 25 Indian

global icons, three were Parsis,

He stated that he has no doubt that a community that has such high literacy, talent, and discipline is bound to continue on the path of advancement and growth. The government has taken measures for the welfare of minorities, including Parsis, he said.

The President then welcomed delegates from abroad who had come for the event. I specially welcome delegates from Iran and other countries. We have a warm place for you in our hearts», he said

In his address to the 1,250-strong crowd, Mukherjee urged Zoroastrians to search for a solution to the demographic crisis facing the community over the course of the conference. "I understand that in your meeting over the next few days, you will reflect on the challenges facing the Zoroastrian community around the world over and discuss its future. I am certain this will result in a good initiative that will ensure that this respectful community grows in numbers and continues to flourish," said Mukherjee, alluding to the government's 'Jiyo Parsi' scheme, launched to curb the population decline."

Report by Dolly Dastoor

Photos courtesy Jasmine D Driver, Parsiana

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Iran's President Hassan Rouhani sends message to World Zoroastrian Congress

Tehran, Dec 27, IRNA

President Hassan Rouhani in a message to the 10th World Zoroastrian Congress said

"all divine faiths will benefit from safe guarding the true essence of religion which they share."

According to the Office of the President, the message pointed out that *"Iran is birthplace of Zoroaster, messenger of goodness, and the first homeland of the Zoroastrians"*. He further stated that holding such a congress was an honor not only for the followers of the great prophet Zoroaster, but all Muslims and Iranians as well.

The top executive also said the congress will help highlight intercultural and inter-civilizational commonalities which are beneficial for all. He further termed the notion of

□ *Good thoughts, Good words and Good deeds* □

as valuable teachings which would channel the thought and behavior of man into the divine direction and spirituality. The world today is more in need of coexistence among various faiths, he said, contending that solidarity and understanding among faiths is a necessity for neutralizing the evil efforts aimed at inciting sectarian strife. He called on the followers of all the religions to stand united and shun divisions.



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Impressions of The Congress



Arzan Sam Wadia, New York
Founding Editor Parsi Khabar www.parsikhabar.net

DAY ONE

Finally after weeks of yes and no, the 10th World Congress took off on 27th December 2013 at the NSCI (National Sports Club of India) Complex in Worli, Mumbai India.

Over 1250 (not official) delegates gathered from 8:00 AM onwards, streaming in droves to pick up registrations badges and getting seated in the impressive indoor auditorium, the size of a small football field. The stage had a backdrop made up of imagery from Persepolis columns. The delegates were seated in classroom style seating.

The opening ceremony started with a benediction by the Vada Dasturjis and the lighting of the lamp. The Chairman of the 10WZC **Dr. Cyrus Poonawalla** welcomed the delegates followed by **Nadir Godrej** the Vice Chair of the 10WZC. Messages from various political leaders and other dignitaries were read out by **Homai Mody**, the Program Chair. Some of the political leaders from Iran read out their messages in Dari with an English translation on the side screens. The technology evident at the Congress left a lot to be desired!!

Lord Karan Bilimoria, introduced by Dorab Mistry who was recently awarded the OBE by the Queen of England,

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Mr Nadir Godrej



Dr Cyrus Ponnawalla, Chairman



Lord Karan Bilimoria

addressed the audience in his erudite manner and spoke about what the Zoroastrians had achieved in the UK and his efforts to bring about recognition of the faith in the House of Lords in the United Kingdom. He spoke about the influence of Mandela on his work and life ethic and reminded all about Mahatma Gandhi's quote of the Parsis being inconsequential in numbers but incomparable in contribution to society. In speaking about the Cyrus Cylinder, Lord Billimoria stated that he considered the historic Magna Carta juvenile when compared to the Cyrus Cylinder. I would love to have known what the British response was to that !! He ended his talk by a very telling line that the BPP Trustees should heed ...*"Management is doing things right. Leadership is doing the right thing"*.

After a much needed tea break, the Congress resumed with a **Panel Discussion on the Zoroastrian Identity**.

There are a lot of people who complain that at many Congresses the same topics are hashed over and over again, and nothing comes out. This panel was a poster child for this gripe!! At the last North American Congress in New York in 2012, this issue had been discussed at great detail and some amazing discussions had ensued. ***What transpired today was mostly a waste of time both for the audience and the speakers.***

The moderator **Dorab Mistry** introduced the panel **Meher Bhesania of Dubai; DR Esphander Ekhtiary, Iranian MP; Dinshaw Mistry, the Chairman of the BPP; Katayun Kapadia, President FEZANA; Sarosh Bharucha, President, ZSO, Canada; Rohinton Rivetna, USA; and Malcolm Deboo, President ZTFE.** (from left in photo page 48, Alayar Dabestani, far left was the translator for Farsi). Besides **Katayun Kapadia**, none of the speakers were prepared to discuss the issue, or frankly had a grasp of what the moderator wanted them to talk about. **Dinshaw Mehta** in a very undiplomatic move pinned the moderator and the ZTFE by saying that they had now changed their identity and stopped supporting BPP. When asked what he thought the Zoroastrian Identity meant to the Mumbai Zarathushti, he said it is about the BPP providing housing. Seriously ?

Malcolm Deboo used the poster of *The Everlasting Flame Exhibition* as the epitome of what the Zarathushti Identity is in the UK. Even as he spoke about how the posters were plastered over all the tube stations in London, the question that begged to be answered is what had it to do with the Zarathushti Identity!!!!

The last speaker on the panel **Sarosh Bharucha**, of ZSO went on a complete tourism spiel for Tourism Ontario.

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He welcomed and asked people to migrate to Ontario and promised every sort of help. Even though the moderator prompted him to come off his infomercial on Tourism Canada, he continued about how ZSO welcomes new comers and how it wanted to make Toronto the BPP of the West. Again **at no point was the topic of the panel discussed, it was a total lack of respect for the audience.**

Sadly an opportunity was lost for what could have been a very important topic and something that could have set the tone for this entire Congress.

A much welcome lunch break ensued with the organization groaning and creaking under first day barrage of 1200 "bhookha bawajis". (hungry Zarathushtis). A lovely spread that included *Dhan dar patio*, *lagan ni sev*, *dahi* and other delicacies satiated everyone's appetite.

The post lunch sessions on the **Bombay Parsi General Hospital** tested everyone's stamina to stay alert after a heavy meal as some very valid facts were discussed in a very dry academic manner. This was followed by another presentation on the **Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India.**

After these two events, the stage was set for book launches in the present and future. **Ashdin Lilaowalla's** wonderful book titled "**Threads of Continuity**" about the art of Kusti Weaving in India was launched by **Lord Karan Bilimoria.**

This was followed by a series of anecdotes from a forthcoming book by **Brigadier (Retd) Behram and Zenobia Panthaki (from Washington, USA)** on the life of India's greatest soldier **Field Marshall Sam Manekshaw.** They shared stories from the times when Behram served as the ADC to the Field Marshall. The last book to be released was "**Fire Altar**" by **Keki Daruwala.**

After a short break, there was massive energy in the crowd all of a sudden as news about **President Mukherjee** entering the auditorium spread like wild fire. Delegates rushed back to their seats and the President of India accompanied by the Governor of the State of Maharashtra came up on the stage.

The President was welcomed by Dr. Poonawalla who then addressed the crowd in a very personal and heart

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warming address. He noted the accomplishments of the Parsis of past and present to India and urged the Parsis to do something about the dwindling numbers. He concluded by welcoming the Parsis from abroad and reminded them that for Parsis worldwide, India will always be home. The crowd rose as one to give him a standing ovation. (see page 43-44)

Getting the President to inaugurate the Congress was a master stroke and the organizers need to be lauded for pulling this off.

Paranjoti Academy Choir (photo below) conducted by Coomi Wadia entertained the President and the audience with few songs and the inauguration concluded with the singing of the Indian National Anthem, Jana Gana Mana.

After the President's departure, the evening networking slot was open where delegates freely mingled catching up with friends here locally or from shores beyond.

The evening entertainment was a wonderful dance drama by the world renowned **Mallika Sarabhai** and the **Darpana Performing Group** titled **They came to India**. They traced the history of Zoroastrians from before the birth of the Prophet all the way to the landing at Sanjan and beyond.



The evening ended with a wonderful dinner spread to satiate everyone's appetite.

The first day of the Congress did not create the intensity of purpose that one had hoped for, especially in a world event of this nature. The sessions lacked continuity. The program was a mish mash of individual events with no underlying thought process or theme evident. The Bombay Parsi Panchayet Trustees and the turmoil of the last few weeks were hinted at time and again by different speakers however there seemed to be a general aloofness from all the organizers. The pride and the passion of the organizers was never evident at any time. The organizers tried their best to make things work to the best of their abilities. Dr. Poonawalla was seen

stomping around the dinner serving area admonishing the maintenance crew about the malfunctioning air conditioning system in the area.

DAY TWO

Dorab Mistry the moderator of the panel "**Practices Of The Zoroastrian Faith In India And Other Parts Of The World**", asked all the participants to be respectful of each other's view. I then thought that this would be an interesting session with the proverbial "fireworks" that everyone wanted to see.

Pervin Mistry the first speaker represents the orthodox traditional camp of the Parsi Zarathustis. She made a few statements that were opinions delivered as if they were facts. Her claim that the way Zoroastrianism is being practiced in the world diaspora today will lead to its extinction, has no facts to substantiate it. Mrs. Mistry resorted to a very theological approach in her talk and frankly lost the audience who are not all students of religion.

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Katayun Kapadia, FEZANA President was her usual lucid self as she laid out the practices followed by the largest diaspora, the one in North America. Associations flourish with the rituals and ceremonies. North American mobs choose who they perform ceremonies for. There is total autonomy for individual associations and that extends to individuals. Katayun also made a very valid observation that the Zarathushti diaspora needs new role models. With due respect to the Tatas, Bhabhas and Engineers; they do not resonate in the same way with the youth of today in the diaspora. With the population demographics coming up later, Katayun observed that by 2050 there will be more Zoroastrians in North America, than in India.

Bomi Patel spoke about some of the other initiatives that FEZANA has launched.

Sarosh Maneckshaw of Houston, USA gave a vague presentation on how the religion is practiced in the diaspora with some very large generalizations about the community in the entire continent of North America. **Parviz Varjavand**



(photo left receiving the gift from moderator Dorab Mistry) represented the Iranian perspective on the panel. He said that there was the same confusion amongst the Iranians about what path to follow for the future. However he saw optimism in the future.

Malcolm Deboo gave us a History 101 of the ZTFE and the Zoroastrians in the UK....again !

Firoz Rustomji of Perth, Australia informed the audience about the practices in Australia. He made a presentation that waxed eloquence on Western Australia and Perth, and how it was the best place in Australia. This would have been a good spiel at a Pan Australia event, and not the World Congress.

Sadly what has now become a repetitive element at this Congress is that panel discussions turn rogue and panelists just talk about what they want and not what is being discussed. And the moderators are mostly helpless. I am not sure where the breakdown in communication lies. But surely the moderator would have communicated to the speakers, the general gist of the topic being discussed.

The real discussions should have focused on religion and ethnicity. These are not synonymous or



interchangeable. Zarathushti religion will survive somehow even without the Parsis. But the Parsis may not survive. And that would be a massive loss of ethnicity....culture, customs, food, literature, music....life!! Why is no one discussing this!!!!.

The next presentation was by **Darius Khambatta** (photo left) who made an excellent case on how we need to change with the times. Very eloquently he walked the audience through ancient Persia right to the issues of today. His comments on the repercussions of the Justice Davar and Beamon judgments from a century ago, and the resulting lacunae a century later was sadly very true.

He ended by appealing to the BPP to either open the doors to the Fire Temples to one and all, or allocate some funds so that new ones can be built for those who want to follow a new path of Zoroastrianism. Amidst massive applause from a section of the crowd, it also provided the first booping of the Congress where a gentleman got up frustrated, and booped and walked out, only to be then booped at by another lady. What fun !!

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This was followed by a session on **ZYNG: Zoroastrian Youth of the Next Generation**, the youth wing of BPP. They took the audience on a journey of their activities of the last few years. Ironically all the three presenters were guys, and the women leadership of ZYNG was absent. They addressed the touchy hot topic of intermarriage stating for the record that they encourage people to marry within the community, at the same do not tell people what they should not do. The achievements of ZYNG are notable in their short history. What I would have loved to hear was their means and methods leading to their successes. Sadly that was missing.



The next panel discussion was the first cohesive one of the Congress. A discussion ensued on the contribution of Parsis in the world of **Media, Advertising and Cinema**. **Sam Bulsara** suggested that the Parsis need a brand manager who would look after the brand PARSİ that has been built up over centuries. He cautioned the community that it only takes one evil deed to overturn 100 good ones and therefore we all should be careful of what our actions will result in for ourselves and our community, before doing them. **Bachi Karkaria** urged Parsi to de-caricature ourselves. She lamented that we do not have to be seen as the motorcycle loving, gara wearing, eccentric people all the time in the media, which is the case in the present time. **Maneck Daver** feels that the President of India addressed our Congress because of the brand "Parsi" that our forefathers have built. *(photo below Sam Bulsara with Bachi Karkaria)*

At the Panel on **Philanthropy Dinshaw Tamboly** the powerhouse administrator of WZO and a giant amongst trust management in India spoke about the complete lack of collaboration of the various trusts, even after numerous efforts to bring them all to the table and create a modern clearing house for the dispensing of aid. What was also evident is that the diaspora is as active in philanthropy as the motherland.

The stage was then set for **Khojeste Mistree**, a **BPP Trustee** and a leading scholar of the religion to take the stage and talk about the Zarathushti Legacy.

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Khojeste extolled that the religion is for the Iranians only. And akin to the 12 tribes of Israel, there were the 2 tribes of Persia/Iran....the Parsis and the Irani Zarathostis. They were the only true followers of the Prophet and the religion. And because of that, no non-Iranians have been able to sustain the religion over extended periods of time. Khojeste urged the audience to remain true to the *Parsi-panu* as the only way to keep the faith intact and save it from becoming extinct. In his usual excellent oratory Khojeste said that religion cannot be left to the legal eagles to tell us what it should be. That should be left to the religious scholars. Khojeste Mistree fired a concluding and parting salvo to the audience asking those who want to reform the religion to go forth and build their fire temples and their own institutions. The Parsis will support them but they need to go forth and do their own thing.

In a breakout session **Yuhan Vevaina**, the Zoroastrian scholar at **Stanford** and a good friend raised the very grave issue of the lack of scholarship in the religion at the University level, worldwide. He urged the powers that be to look into establishing chairs at Ivy League universities. When prodded regarding the costs, his estimate was that a 5 million USD endowment at an Ivy League school would lead to the establishment of a chair.

The Zoroastrian Link to Nature and Conservation” was a very interesting panel chaired by **Aban Marker-Kabraji** who brought her years of experience working at a UN Agency in the field of environment. She emphasized that by the wanton destruction of natural resources we are allowing the triumph of Evil over Good in Zoroastrian terms. **Dr.**



Percy Avari on the panel shared an anecdote about how in his field of work, he once had to take care of a wounded vulture and that he was the only one the vulture did not attack when it was being fed. His professor remarked that he “Percy was born into the right religion!”. **Homi Khusrokhhan** spoke about how in a corporate scenario they used local

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help to educate the community into conserving natural habitat and in one case walked away from a site, because of the impact it would have on the environment. **Ervad Rohinton Peer** spoke about the presence of conservation and the elevated importance of Nature in our religious texts. **Dr. Erach Bharucha** spoke about Nature in Zoroastrianism.

The last session of the day dealt with the **Population Demographic Studies by Roshan Rivetna**. She walked the audience through the process of collecting numbers of the Zoroastrian populations from all parts of the world had various colleagues including **Dolly Dastoor** walk the audience through the process of how the census was conducted.

The evening entertainment by **Shiamak Davar** Dance Company presented *Selcouth* (Unusual), a celebration of the glory and marvel of the human body. It was top-notch and brought to an end a long day at the Congress. (photo page 52)

The individual speeches and lectures today raised the tempo of the Congress. Sadly the panel discussions left a lot to be desired.

DAY THREE

First session on **Demographics chaired by Roshan Rivetna** (photo right) explored attempts to reverse the trend of population decline. Some of the speakers on the panel spoke from the psychological/counselling or medical perspective. There was near unanimous agreement amongst the panelists that the issue was not one of medical infertility, but rather socio-economic and other issues that were the primary underlying reason for the low birth rate. **Dinshaw Mehta**, the BPP Chair expressed frustration that even with multiple efforts by the BPP in consultation with the experts in the field, they were still unable to reverse the situation. **Shernaz Cama**, who heads the UN Parzor Project introduced the **Jiyo Parsi** scheme set up by the Government of India to provide funding towards fertility treatments of Parsis all over India.



Dr. Rustom Soonawala, the eminent gynecologist addressed the audience and suggested ways and means to improve women's health.

Bergis Desai addressed the Congress after the Tea Break on **Challenges for Parsi Philanthropy Management experienced by BPP and other trusts**. (see page 63) . The points he raised were all very valid. What begs the question is why did he not take his friend Dinshaw Mehta, the Chairman of BPP and actually try to help them resolve this issue.

The next panel discussion chaired by **Adille Sumariwalla** addressed **Parsis in Sports** and the lack thereof today. **Cawas Billimoria, Nari Contractor and Mickey Mehta** shared their thoughts on what it meant to be at the top of their "game" in their respective sports. Mickey urged people that in life and in sport don't worry about what you win. What is important is how you played.

Nari Contractor expressed disappointment that Parsi representation in cricket was zero at all levels. From the glory days of 1962 when the likes of Farrokh Engineer, Rusi Surti, and Polly Umrigar along with himself were in the Indian XI to today where there is no Parsi cricketer at any level....from school to International level.

Cawas Billimoria urged parents to find out what sport their kids had a passion for and then support them fully.

After another scrumptious lunch spread, the audience was introduced to what can probably be the single most important initiative to come out of this Congress.

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The Zoroastrian Return to Roots Program to bring young Zarathushtis from all over the world to visit their “motherland”. **Aban Marker-Kabraji and Shernaz Cama** as co-chairs mentored a core group of Zoroastrian youth....

From left Aban Marker-Kabraji, Shernaz Cama



Return to Roots Group



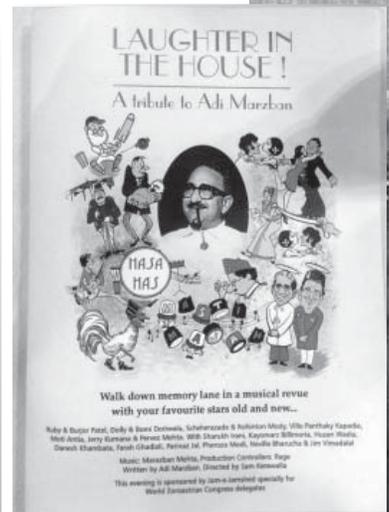
Dinsha Mistree, Rosheen Kabraji, Shireen Havewala and Kaiyan Mistree (photo above) who conceptualized the program and brought it to fruition. Over 40 applicants applied and after a rigorous selection process, 16 of them arrived from USA, Canada, UK and Pakistan into Mumbai on December 23rd to become the first ever Return to Roots Fellows. (see page 34)

The program raised funds through sponsorship and a nominal contribution from each Fellow. The hope and aspirations are that future programs will bring new fellows to Iran and other parts of India for diverse experiences and to connect them back to their Zoroastrian and Parsi roots. Check out their website at www.zororoots.org

The last session of the day the Shah Nameh the Persian epic by Ferdowsi. **Vesta Curtis of the British Museum** explained parts of the literary work through slides and illustrations.

With that it was time to hit the races !! The Zoroastrian Millions Trophy was held at the Royal Western India Turf Club aka Race Course. All decked up, suited and booted; the delegates of the Congress were seen at the Race course, placing bets; following the races or just taking in the atmosphere and the hospitality arranged by Cyrus Poonawalla, who is intrinsically involved with the RWITC at many levels.

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After the races, the delegates made their way back to the NSCI for the evening entertainment.

Laughter in the House was a variety entertainment program put together to remember **Adi Marzban** the legendary theater personality who epitomized Parsi Theater in the 20th century. For over an hour, many of his old actors and newer ones put out a series of skits, songs and performances all written by Adi many many years ago. There was a beautiful homespun quality to this entertainment program when compared with the “overly” professional one from the two previous nights.

If the BPP is looking to promote culture....here is your answer. Take what we saw today and nurture it, and let it flourish. This is as important a part of our heritage and culture as anything else. Music, dance, theater are the pillars of any society and we have been blessed with this in abundance. Let it not die out is my personal plea to Dinshaw and Khojeste and Jimmy and the other trustees.

DAY FOUR

The last day of the Congress was definitely the best day of the Congress for me, for various reasons as you will read ahead.

The first panel was on **Zoroastrian Entrepreneurship and Business**. Zoroastrians have been at the forefront in business, industry and trade for generations. India's largest business conglomerate is a Parsi....the House of TATA.

Homi Khushrokhani headed the panel and opened the discussion amongst the panelists asking them what challenges they faced in their daily business lives.

Yazdi Tantra urged the audience to embrace entrepreneurship which he said is akin to a tea bag. The real flavor does not come out till you are in hot water.

When asked to differentiate between being in business and being an entrepreneur, **Keki Mistry** said that a businessman is usually driven by profit, while an entrepreneur is driven by



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the passion of an idea.

The session on **Nationalism, Nation Building and the Armed Forces**, had Air Chief Marshall (Retd) Fali Major addressing the crowd. He reminded all the Parsis of India in the audience that they were first Indian and then Parsi. He laid out the history of Parsi involvement in the Armed Forces

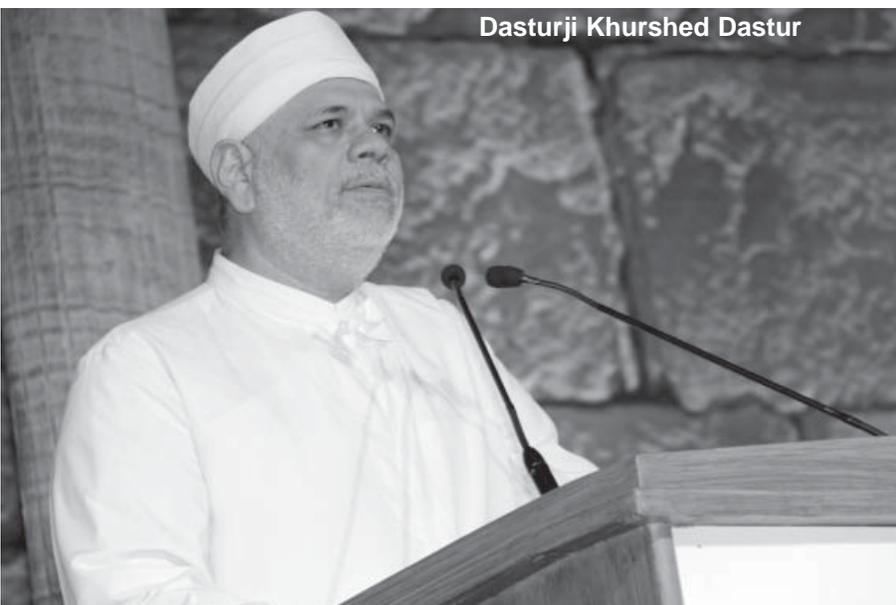
The Congress chairman then welcomed **Mr. Rehman Khan the Minister of Minorities**. In a speech to the audience, he upheld the virtues of the Parsi Zoroastrians as model citizens of India. He urged us to settle our issues amicably and do all there is possible to stem the tide of declining population.

After a mid-morning tea break the book of photographs on **Udvada Town** was released in the presence of **Pervez Damania** who initiated the project, **Shantanu Das** the photographer who took the amazing photographs and the two Vada Dasturjis of Iranshah, Udvada.

Dasturji Mirza then spoke about the history of priesthood at the Iranshah and the history of the Iranshah itself.

This was followed by **Dasturji Khurshed Dastur** who gave a status update of Udvada today. His was easily the most emotionally charged and powerful speech of the entire Congress. He waded into those who had tried to sabotage the attempts of the Udvada Anjuman to improve the conditions and life of Udvada town. He laid bare all the false propaganda and signature campaigns that abound the internet. He urged people to write to him and check the facts before putting their names and signatures on campaigns that is misleading the public, to suit certain people's politics. He also asked people not to judge others by the color of their skin. Zoroastrians can be dark-skinned too. We just need to look at our pallbearers to see this.

He took the opportunity to thank the generous benefactors who have donated to the Iranshah decade after decade. He thanked the diaspora for the contributions year after year, and singled out the contributions of the Zoroastrian



Dasturji Khurshed Dastur

Association of Greater New York, ZAGNY for sending in large donations for the last quarter of a century and more. He said that the priests of Udvada will take care of the Iranshah and that it is in safe hands.

The next session was devoted to **FEZANA and ZTFE** the two largest diasporic associations. **Katayun Kapadia** the President of FEZANA informed the audience that the religion was alive and kicking in North America. Several past presidents of FEZANA who were in attendance at the 10WZC joined her on stage.

After a quick lunch break, the much anticipated session **Redevelopment of Punchayet Lands and Baugs** in Mumbai



Yazdi Tantra

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PAST PRESIDENTS of FEZANA FROM LEFT Firdosh Mehta, Bomi Patel, Dolly Dastoor, Homi Gandhi (current Vice President) Rohinton Rivetna, Rustom Kevala



started. **Jimmy Mistry**, a BPP Trustee and a developer himself, chaired the session and was joined by two panelists, **Zarir Bhatena of Hilla Builders** and **Boman Irani of Rustomjee Builders**. In terms of interactivity and meaningful discussion, this was by far the best session of the Congress and one needs to thank Jimmy Mistry for his very open style of discussion and debate. After the two panelists had spoken for 5 minutes, Jimmy stepped into the crowd, “running the mic” himself. The questions from the crowd were addressed by Jimmy, Boman and Zarir. What was evident was that not doing anything regarding the redevelopment was not an option. If not now, then in a few years we would need to do something. And currently the government schemes were some of the best there have ever been in terms of floor space index etc. (Though important, this session was of not much interest to the youth and delegates from the diaspora, Ed)

At the final closing session of the Congress a vote of thanks was given to all the sponsors, volunteers, the hosts BPP and the attendees. The torch was passed on to the hosts of the next Congress-the 11th World Zoroastrian Congress,



the Zarathushtis of Singapore. Russi Ghadiali of Singapore welcomed the audience to the next Congress and assured of a fantastic show.(Photo left)

With that the formal proceedings of the Congress came to an end. The Parsi anthem **Chahiye Hame Zarthoshti** as well as the Indian National Anthem, the Jana Mana Gana was sung.

The delegates then had a break before convening at the Turf Club at the Mahalakshmi Race Course for an evening of festivities and a sit down **patra nu bhonu** (traditional dinner on plantain leaves) by Tanaz Godiwalla.

The work of many in the community , who have dedicated their lives to human

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welfare and social issues by giving self less service to the causes they believe in. The award for the **Unsung Heroes** was given to: Religious educator **Ratamai Peer** and **Bomi's Boys**, the team that voluntarily goes to clean and repair fire temples.

The entertainment for the evening started with a full parsi rock band playing some amazing numbers. The Youth Talent Night of the evening was conceived and compered by the incomparable **Boman Irani** of Bollywood fame and **Cyrus Broacha** to showcase the best of the talent of the community. It included soprano **Delna Mody** singing O Sole Mio and many other dance performances and solo singing performances by **Shazneen Arethna**.

After a few encores and standing ovations the performers, organizers and trustees of the host BPP gathered on stage to take a bow and end the event. Once again the Chahiye Hame Zarthoshti was sung followed by the Indian National Anthem.

All performers at the finale



The crowd then settled down for some amazing food by Tanaz Godiwalla

Arzan Sam Wadia is the founder of *Parsi Khabar*, the oldest online Parsi news website. This article first appeared on the website as a recap of each day's events at the 10 WZC., Mumbai.
Parsi Khabar is a *Wadias.Inc* Enterprise

All pictures – photographer Jasmine D Driver – courtesy Parsiana

10th WZC Congress 2013, Mumbai

Other photos

1 Inauguration Jashan at Wadiaji Atashbehran 2 Dr Espandiar Ekhtiari, MP of the majlis from Iran with Mobydyar Rashin Jehangiri 3 Exhibition area in the lobby of NCPI 4 Meher Bhesania from Dubai and Neville Shroff from Hongkong 5 Fariborz Rahnamoon, Vancouver, 6 Laughter in the house, an Adi Marzban natak



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CHALLENGES FOR PARSI PHILANTHROPY MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCED BY BPP AND OTHER TRUSTS



Paper presented @
10th WZC, Mumbai, December 2013

BERJIS DESAI

trustees must interpret what the Settlor would have wanted done, if he was still alive. In other words, while such wishes may indeed be of paramount consideration, however, they have to be interpreted with the changing circumstances and the passage of time. This ability and flexibility to carry out a living interpretation of the Settlor's core objective is missing.

2.2 The role of a trustee is to govern, that is formulate policies, clarify the vision and mission of the charity and provide leadership. A trustee is not there to manage, and worse still, to micro manage. Most of our trustees fail to appreciate this difference between governing and managing.

2.3 A desire to serve the less fortunate of the community is the primary quality required in a trustee. This has to be coupled with an ability to understand the complexities of charity issues in India. An excellent social worker, not having the competence to grapple with these issues, does not make a good trustee, any longer. On the other hand, a sharp intellect having the ability to steer through this maze, but lacking compassion and empathy, is even more undesirable. Unfortunately, for our community, the young and the intelligent are increasingly indifferent to community affairs. Those who are interfaith married are virtually never appointed or elected as trustees. As a result, the average age of trustees in our charitable and religious institutions is above 60. For several of them, a trusteeship is a status symbol, which they find difficult to give up, even when physical and mental infirmity renders their functioning as trustees, sub-optimal. Most continue as trustees for decades and come to believe that the trust is their fiefdom. Accountability takes a back seat and the slightest criticism is not tolerated. One would have thought that a highly educated community like ours would necessarily throw up excellent trustee material. Unfortunately, it is not so. A small band of men and women are trustees in many charities. Few trustees give meaningful time and attention. Barring a few exceptions, these individuals no longer consider themselves as mere legal owners of trust property but

1. INTRODUCTION:-

1.1 The quality of management of Parsi charities in India is poor. While the level of expectation of the beneficiaries is unrealistic, good trustee material is rare. Legal, regulatory and tax complications are plentiful. A communication gap exists between those being served and those who are serving. The skill sets of the administrative staff are inadequate. There is no inclination to adapt modern philanthropy management practices. Compared with Parsi Zoroastrian charities in the West, India is at the lowest rung. At first blush, this may sound like exaggerated self-flagellation, however, this paper will try and demonstrate that the above is actually a polite understatement.

1.2 This paper highlights the challenges faced by the Bombay Parsi Panchayet (BPP) and other major Parsi charitable trusts, primarily in Mumbai, but also in other parts of India.

2. TRUSTEES:-

2.1 A trust is not a legal entity in India. It is the trustees who are the legal owners of trust property. More importantly, they are the custodians and guardians of trust property. It has been consistently held by the Courts in India and elsewhere that the intention of the Settlor / the original donor is paramount. The Trustees are duty bound to carry out the wishes of the Settlor. Nevertheless, the

treat the trust as their patrimony or their backyard. To put it mildly, the human material available to serve as trustees is grossly inadequate.

2.4 In almost all Parsi charities barring the Panchayet-trusts, vacancies are filled up by surviving trustees. Friends and family are often the first choice, and not necessarily, the best. Young professionals are reluctant to serve as trustees. In the Panchayet-trusts, local residents elect the trustees, save and except in the Panchayet-trust of Surat.

3. **BPP AND UNIVERSAL ADULT FRANCHISE:-**

3.1 Since 2008, the BPP elects its trustees by universal adult franchise. A Parsi Zoroastrian, anywhere in the world, is eligible to be registered as a voter. Presently, 21,000 voters are registered and elections are held under a Bombay High Court notified Scheme. Earlier, the BPP trustees were elected by an electoral college, which was progressively controlled by one or two dominant individuals until 1980, when a movement called the Committee for Electoral Rights (CER), brought in reforms under which community participation in the electoral process increased substantially. Almost three decades later, the present direct vote system or universal adult franchise was ushered in. While far from perfect, the new system has excited the community and elections have been vigorously, and at times, acrimoniously contested. Barring an unseemly skirmish or two, the elections have been free and fair.

3.2 Critics of the new system contend that (a) this has politicised the BPP (b) money power prevails and deserving candidates are reluctant to get embroiled in the hustle and bustle of an electoral fray (c) the electorate is not mature enough to select the most deserving candidate. While undoubtedly there is merit in each of these criticisms, the earlier alternative was worse. An intelligent community does not like trustees to be foisted upon them by a cabal or coterie.

3.3 Aggressive electioneering along party political lines often vitiates the dynamics in the Board room. Ability to gracefully disagree on policy issues is missing. Ego and personality clashes, at times, degenerate into a cycle of allegations and counter allegations, often leading to litigation in the Courts and before the Charity Commissioner. Outside forces having their own agenda fish in troubled waters with intent to create maximum misunderstanding amongst trustees. Such disputes are increasingly being given coverage by the mainstream newspapers. This results in the erosion of the brand equity of our community.

3.4 Universal adult franchise has been blamed for the aristocratic or gentlemanly trustees being replaced by aggressive populist trustees, who are averse to consensus building, and which disturbs the harmonious functioning of the trust. On the other hand, the protagonists of the system contend that due to an alert electorate having a direct vote, trustees who understand ground realities are being elected, housing allotments have become fairer and more transparent, interaction with beneficiaries is polite and cordial and instances of corruption and nepotism have diminished. However, it cannot be denied that those who are excellent trustee material are reluctant to be trustees, whatever may be the system of selection or appointment.

4. **ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:-**

4.1 The administrative staff of most charities is poorly remunerated and lacks the requisite skill sets for modern philanthropy management. There is no retirement age, preference is given to Parsis and productivity level is low. The sensitivity required for interacting with the old, infirm and poor beneficiaries is missing. 60 plus trustees coupled with 60 plus senior administrative staff leads to a geriatric approach to charity management. Reform is easily possible but the trustees do not have the inclination or desire to effect change. Like liquids, mediocrity finds its own level. As a result, the over all beneficiary experience is bitter and unsatisfactory. Inefficient staff is unable to cope with the increasingly complex legal, regulatory and tax issues, exposing the trust to actual and potential liability.

4.2 The goodwill earlier enjoyed by the community, having largely dissipated, neither the trustees nor the administration

are able to effectively communicate with increasingly hostile public officials, whether in the land registry, the Charity Commissioner's office, tax authorities, the Courts and the housing repair boards. In a country, where even private enterprise is exasperated with issues of corruption and regulatory complexity, one can imagine the plight of our charity administrators.

- 4.3 Most of these charities are landlords. The BPP is a landlord of more than 4500 tenements. This requires attending to requests for repairs, material structural alterations, property taxes and rateable value, tenancy transfers to legal heirs and outsiders and landlord – tenant litigation. The last mentioned issue of litigation is the primary reason for the unpopularity of the trustees with their tenant – beneficiaries. The BPP still refuses to transfer the rent receipt if the tenant is married to a non-Parsi. It continues to sue tenants for eviction on the ground of their inter faith marriage. Even in the face of the severest demographic decline, this anachronistic approach continues to prevail. Scarce resources of charity are deployed in such unnecessary litigation. Most of these trusts are averse to any reasonable compromise, which leads to litigation being fought at multiple levels. Legal costs soar and the already stretched bandwidth of the administration comes under increasing pressure.

5. **DONORS AND FUNDS MANAGEMENT:-**

- 5.1 Charities can only invest in approved securities. Approved securities, by the very nature, carry minimal risk. However, within the universe of approved securities it is possible to maximise yields and returns on the surplus investible funds of the trust. Several Parsi charities are not optimally deploying the investible surplus, either due to lack of knowledge or proper advice. Even though the BPP manages properties valued at a couple of billion dollars, its cash corpus is inadequate. Some charities carry out activities or plan their affairs in a manner which brings them perilously close to losing their income-tax exemption. In a nutshell, financial management leaves much to be desired, and that too, in a community which boasts of international quality financial talent.
- 5.2 This results in strained cash flows, which then leads to poorly paid staff and mediocre service providers. More importantly, financial assistance towards medical help, education and relief of poverty is dismally low. A Parsi student pursuing international education is sanctioned a grant of hardly a couple of thousand dollars. The amounts spent on legal costs are higher than the financial assistance provided to the beneficiaries. Apart from cash constraints, the mindset of the trustees is stuck in the past. Realistic financial assistance is not contemplated. It is not appreciated that financial assistance ought to be commensurate with efficiently achieving the objects of charity.
- 5.3 Marketing the charity to overseas donors is virtually absent. Few trusts are pro-active in seeking large donations from wealthy donors. Interaction with these donors is unsatisfactory and many donors are upset with the response of the trust. Charities of other communities in India masterfully garner funds in a highly efficient manner. Parsi trusts must emulate them.

6. **ACCOUNTABILITY:-**

Modern charities make themselves accountable to the stakeholders – the donors, the beneficiaries, the staff. None of our charities implement accountability standards. The BPP has started publishing its annual accounts, though in an abridged form. A meeting of the electorate is seldom convened, and too, to celebrate some election victory. No state-of-the-affairs address is made. The BPP Review, its official newsletter, provides information about some activities, but in dribbles and in a highly sanitised form. Pertinent questions are not asked and there is no debate on critical issues.

7. **BENEFICIARIES:-**

- 7.1 Several major charities are landlords. BPP alone has more than 15,000 tenant-beneficiaries. Housing is therefore, the single largest issue. In the Panchayet-trusts including the BPP, housing allotments are publicly notified, merit rating systems (though not perfect) are implemented and greater transparency has been ushered in. The Wild West, which prevailed three decades ago, has been tamed. However, the overhang of the past has not disappeared. Tenant – beneficiaries continue to feel disgruntled, although in small measure. Flats continue to remain unused for

years and unauthorised tenancy transfers continue. This brings us to the mindset of our beneficiaries.

7.2 Even when economic circumstances change for the better, most tenant-beneficiaries continue to avail of charity housing. Seldom does a tenant-beneficiary voluntarily surrender a flat, even when he no longer requires it but extricates his pound of flesh from the trust. Contributing to repairs of dilapidated buildings, sharing the burden of ballooning property taxes, accepting reasonable redevelopment proposals, sharing the cost of bettering the living environment, to all such issues the general attitude is one of non-co-operation and deep rooted suspicion about the motives and integrity of the Trustees. Some beneficiaries avail of charity help from multiple charities. The so-called Liaison Committee of various charities barely functions. Dealing with this beneficiary mindset is exasperating. The administration, therefore, responds in a rude and tough language and justifies it as the only language understood by the tenants. Until there is a change of consciousness, the relationship between the trustees and the beneficiaries will continue to remain one of mutual mistrust, suspicion and resentment.

8. **FUTURE CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:-**

8.1 As our demographic decline becomes increasingly grim, in the next three decades, there shall be no waiting lists for allocation of charity housing, hospitals like the Parsi General will have even more empty beds, even fewer persons of standing will agree to serve as trustees resulting in yet lower integrity and efficiency, regulatory and tax problems will become more unmanageable. Many Anjuman trusts, holding valuable properties are fast becoming defunct and rudderless. Shrinking beneficiaries, inept trustees, soaring property values – all make a deadly cocktail for our charities becoming vulnerable to hostile external forces – both State and non-State. Property sharks and fortune hunters will find our trusts easy prey. If this sounds unduly pessimistic, you must be a believer in divine intervention.

8.2 Some solutions do exist. Partially converting institutions like our hospitals to cosmopolitan user. Relocating tenants from far flung suburbs and distant places to better and more comfortable colonies and selling the vacant tenements to generate cash corpus. Recognising the children of interfaith married Parsi women as Parsi Zoroastrians and, therefore beneficiaries. Introducing modern management practices in the administration. Legal challenges from the orthodox sections of the community may make some of these solutions difficult to implement. However, the sheer desperation of the situation may lead to greater acceptability.

8.3 The single largest threat to our charities is a take over by an Administrator appointed by the Charity Commissioner. It has not happened so far, but it can. Woe betide our charity if this were to pass. If our trustees continue to wash dirty linen in full public view, this possibility very much exists. Our trustees have to resolve their differences privately or through a retired Parsi Supreme Court judge. Public interface must remain united.

9. **CONCLUSION:-**

The report card on Parsi charities in India does not make happy reading. Large donors no longer prefer to donate to our Panchayets but to organisations like the WZO Trust, which is doing excellent ground level work for the rural Parsi poor. Even the organisations which work well are dependent upon a couple of key individuals and hardly have any succession planning. Like a McKinsey reshaping an ailing corporate, we require to commission a scientific study of the state of affairs and recommend effective solutions. Our forefather donors had only the poor in mind. They obviously never expected that our philanthropy management will itself be so poor.

(The author is the Managing Partner of a national law firm, long time columnist of 'Parsi Tari Arsi' in the Bombay Samachar and once upon a time, a community activist.)

10th WZC Congress 2013, Mumbai

World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce

Global Meet



The Global AGM in session ; From L to R Mr Bomi Patel , Global Vice-President , Mr Minoo R Shroff, Global President , Ms Behroze Daruwalla, Corporate Secretary, and Mr Temo Arjani , Treasurer.

World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) organized a glittering event during their Global Meet on Thursday, 26th December, 2013 at Hotel Taj Lands End, a luxurious Hotel situated at Bandra Band Stand, Mumbai, facing the Arabian Sea. It served as a platform for interaction between its Chapters spread worldwide to exchange ideas, experiences, and professional and business expertise. Representatives of various Chapters from UK, USA, Canada, Dubai, Iran, Mumbai, Pune etc. participated enthusiastically with the objective of proliferation of trade, commerce, industry, entrepreneurship and professionalism.

Global president, Mr. Minoo R. Shroff, welcomed the overseas members and a minute's silence was observed in memory of WZCC's past president, Mr. Bomy Boyce who passed away in Toronto on 25 December 2013.

Mr. Shroff in his opening address mentioned that in today's scenario there is a deceleration of employment and job opportunities are not many, with many employees being

laid off. Hence the key to Success, especially for the youth is "**Entrepreneurship**". He advised the youth not to sit in the comfort zone of their jobs, but forge ahead and take on the new opportunities that are coming, mainly in India.

He mentioned that although "funding" was available from various sectors e.g. : "Venture Capital Scheme" of BPP; unfortunately there are very few takers.

The world economy is still in a tepid state. India is supercharged with excitement about the possible change of guard after the 2014 elections leading to change in economic policies.

He added that "**WE**" *Women Entrepreneurs Wing*, launched by WZCC about two years ago, has got off to a very good start. It organizes programs from time to time to involve participation of women entrepreneurs. It has evoked enormous interest both in Mumbai and Pune.

WZCC has also worked out a collaborative arrangement with "**TIE**", the internationally renowned organization for

10th WZC Congress 2013, Mumbai

arranging joint programs and affording opportunities for our member to participate in their very instructive programs. We also have collaboration with **IMC**, the leading body of businessmen in Mumbai and we get regular invites for our members to attend their programs and network.

The environment is exciting but getting more competitive and the younger generation will have to be smarter and faster than we were, to succeed, with technology changing at a mind boggling pace. Those who plan to venture will have to be innovative and fleet footed.

After the Global AGM, there was a youth panel discussion on **“Challenges of being an Entrepreneur”**. chaired by Mr. Yazdi Tantra, Managing Director, On-Lyne Comptech (India) Pvt. Ltd, Vice Chairman of Zoroastrian Co-op Bank Ltd (ZCBL) and the Chair of WZCC Technical Committee.

The three panelist were :

- **Mr. Maher Dhamodiwalla** – *Financial Planner*
- **Mr. Burzin Engineer** – *MD of Elemental Crafts and Founder CEO of Dwellar Elemental Crafts* combines design technology and marketing teams to turn around innovative solution to help business achieve growth.
- **Mr. Kobad Bhavnagri** – *An Environmentalist and Energy Consultant*, currently Head of Australia for Bloomberg, New Energy Finance.

The presentations, were followed by vibrant interaction between the Panel Chair, the panelist and the audience.

Post Lunch at the **Economic Forum Session**. **Mr. M. R. Shroff** addressed the audience on the **“Overview of Global/Indian Economy.”** He said that *“An Economic slowdown is when your neighbor loses his job. When you lose your job it is a recession. But when a journalist or an economist loses his job, it is a depression.”*

The Economic Forum Panel chaired by **Mr. Sam Balsara**, Chairman & Managing Director of Madison World, discussed the topic **“Innovation- Key to Success”**.

The three panelist were :

- **Mr. Edul Daver (USA)** – Entrepreneur who bought over Powder Division of the Company that he worked for and as CEO/President of the new company ACU Powder International, LLC implemented an “Open Book Management” technique with all employees having a stake in the business and sharing 20% of pre - tax profits. His presentation was **“Transition from Professional Manager to Entrepreneur”**.
- **Dr. Rohinton Karanjia (USA)** – Senior Banking Executive who has worked in large US Banking institutions, including JP Morgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Bank of America. He specializes in Credit Risk, Market Risk and Counter Party Credit Risk Management. His session was **“Risk Analysis – Its growing importance”**.
- **Mr. Kanchan Kumar** – Executive Director of The Indus Entrepreneur (TiE) Mumbai. He has over two decades of experience in the software product Industry and over 10 years as an Entrepreneur – He is founder and CEO of FLUOUS – Leader in Enterprise HR Solution. His session was **“Innovation – Changes over the last decade”**.

The Chief guest, **Mrs. Meera Sanyal**, gave a power-point presentation on how Indian ingenuity works in converting opportunities to very fruitful business entities. She showed how small scale business can develop in far-flung villages by people who earlier were simply written off. She stressed the importance of **“Intellectuals in Public Life – Need of the Hour”**. She talked about the need for Leadership,



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involving Ethical, Progressive and Decisive qualities and then emphasized the need for capacity building which should include Ideas, technology and access to markets. However, the most touching and pertinent point in her entire talk was when she brought in the wisdom of Zoroastrian Religion in terms of the Avesta Prayer. The audience truly appreciated her talk with thunderous applause.

The two Awards were then presented by Meera Sanyal to:

Dr. Beheruz Sethna from USA as the *Outstanding Zarathushti Professional of the year 2013*. Dr. Sethna is a distinguished Alumni of two higher Education Institutions in India/Asia IIT-Mumbai and IIT-Ahmedabad. Dr. Sethna is the Regents' Professor of Business and President of the University of West Georgia from 1994 to 2013, the longest serving University President in the States. Dr. Sethna is the first known person of Indian origin to become President of a US University.



He has published a Book – “**Research Methods in Marketing & Management**” and published 69 papers (30 since becoming UWG President), several case studies and obtained externally funded research from US Dept. of Energy, IBM, A.T.&T. and others.

Dr. Sethna has been a judge for Zoroastrian Scholarships for the past seven years, has made presentations to Zoroastrian students and been honored by Zoroastrian Associations over the past couple of decades. (Photo page 68)

Mr. Kobad Bhavnagri from Australia as the *Outstanding Young Zarathushti Professional* of the year 2013. Mr. Kobad Bhavnagri holds a degree in Bachelor of Engineering (Hons. 1) in Mechatronic Engineering from University of New South Wales and is part way through a Masters of Environmental Management at the Institute of Environmental Studies, at the University of New South Wales. (photo in left column) .

Kobad Bhavnagri is the Head of Australia for Bloomberg New Energy finance and is responsible for USD 1m a year in business. He is the youngest Country Manager in the Company which has offices in 14 countries around the world. Kobad has achieved widespread recognition as a thought leader in the rapidly changing Energy Industry and regarded as one of Australia's leading experts on Energy policy, economics and business, particularly in the renewable energy and carbon markets. Kobad's analysis on energy issues has made headlines in the international and local media.

Alongside his professional life, Kobad is a professional level opera singer and an active member of one of Australia's major political party and served as President of his local District Branch.

He is heavily involved with youth and community leadership within the Zoroastrian community in Australia as well as the Zoroastrian community worldwide.

WZCC global corporate secretary, **Ms. Behroze Daruwalla** then honored the Chief Administrative Officer – **Mr. Aspi Antia** and Administrative Officer **Ms. Zarine Khan** for their outstanding contribution in organizing this event.

Mr. Bomi Patel Global Vice President gave a vote of thanks to the untiring efforts of Mr. P. P. Kharas – Director of the International Board, Mr. Adi Siganporia and his team of Mumbai Chapter and Mr. Viraf Deboo and his team of Pune Chapter as well as the team led by Mr. Farhad Cooper of Samsons for providing excellent sound system and photography. The evening was compered by **Mr. Burzis Taraporevala**

The Event concluded with cocktails and sumptuous food served by Taj Lands End.

REPORT OF TEAM WZCC

ACROSS OCEANS AND FLOWING SILKS FROM CANTON TO BOMBAY 18th -20th CENTURIES AND NO PARSI IS AN ISLAND

Museums used to be considered conservators of artefacts and archeological digs, standing for something old and dusty, boring, rarely relevant to real life but this has all changed. They are now educators, they tell a story, and the events they cover have broadened spectacularly which now goes well beyond traditional subjects. Sir Nicholas Serota, director of Britain's Tate Galleries describes the museum as a "forum as much as a treasure box".

The two exhibitions, one curated in London at the Brunei Gallery, "*The Everlasting Flame*" (see page xxx) and the second in Mumbai, "*Across Oceans and Flowing Silks from Canton to Bombay 18th -20th Centuries*" and "*No Parsi is an Island*" at the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) former Cowasji Jehangir Hall, from December 26, to January 28, 2014 left little doubt in the mind of the viewer, that these are exhibits with a story, the story of our heritage and evolution, *the story of our community*.

The exhibition mounted in Mumbai and curated by Pheroza J Godrej and Firoza Punthakey Mistree traces the extraordinary evolution of the Parsis trading with Canton, China -their ship building, trading and banking activities in Bombay, as well as their relationship with the Portuguese, English, Dutch and French East India companies and the

pioneer businessmen in uncharted territories resulted in amassing great wealth was one thing but what they chose to do with their wealth was another!!

As philanthropists, they set up the social infrastructure of Bombay of the 19th century, establishing schools, higher education institutions, hospitals, housing for the needy, water tanks, roads and bridges. ***They shaped Bombay city into an international financial hub and played a key role in India as nation builders.***



After the lighting of the traditional Divo the exhibition was opened by Dr Farokh Udawadia, the eminent physician and Mr Soli Sorabjee, former Attorney General of India, two luminaries of the community .

The exhibition is planned in 6 sections each highlighting a vibrant aspect of Parsi history and heritage

- Section 1** *Yazd: land of Mountains and Pirs*
- Section 2** *The shores of a new Homeland-Parsi Arrival*
- Section 3** *The gateway to China Trade*
- Section 4** *The Call of trade*
- Section 4B** *Of Chests, Silks and Unfurled Sails*
- Section 5** *Of Grandeur and Splendour*
- Section 6** *Parsi Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy - Shaping a New world*



free trading houses of the West.. The success of these

10th WZC Congress 2013, Mumbai

From left Firooza Punthakey Mistree, Dr Farokh E Udvadia, Dr Cyrus Poonawalla. Mr Soli J Sorabjee, Pheroza, J Godrej.



Each of these sections is illustrated with exquisite displays from private collections

No Parsee is an Island, curated by Ranjit Hoskote and Nancy Adajania with Pheroza J. Godrej traces the work of Parsi artists from the late colonial period to the present starting with Pestonji Bomanji (1851-1938) to Mehlii Gobhai (b 1931) and Gieve Patel (b. 1940), and a host of other artists in between. Parsi artists have participated actively in the domain of modern and contemporary art since the second half of the 19th century.

The forward to the catalogue is by Homi K. Bhabha followed by essays from seven eminent scholars and historians. In

addition a series of outreach programmes **A Zoroastrian Rhapsody** were planned for the month of January.

All those who did not get to see the exhibits must pour over the catalogue to enhance their appreciation of the community.

The community owes Pheroza J Godrej and Firoza Punthakey Mistree and their teams a great deal of gratitude for this was a true labour of love.

The Cyrus Cylinder also arrived on December 20, 2013 at the Prince of Wales Museum, (now known as the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya *CSMVS Museum) and will be on display for a month.

In addition the completely renovated Alpaiwalla museum, at Khareghat colony, will display the 30 foot long glass panel depicting the western stairway of Darius' palace and a replica of the sanctum sanctorum displayed at the Exhibition in Brunei Gallery, London (see page 77)

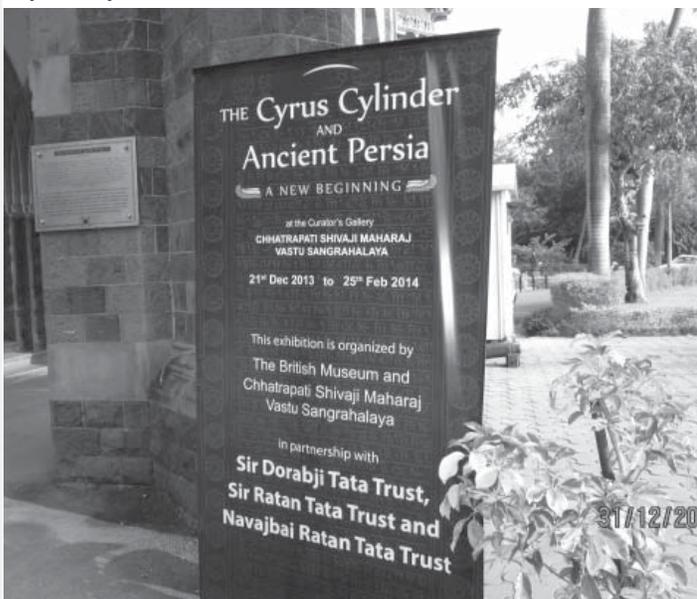
There was also an exhibition on the Shahnameh by Silloo Mehta of California at Alexander Girls High School during the Congress.days with talks by prominent scholars.

All these exhibitions will expand the cultural horizon of the Zarathushtis worldwide.

Dolly Dastoor

Photo credit for Exhibition photos Jasmine D Driver, Parsiana

Photo credit for Cyrus Cylinder : Dolly Dastoor



In The News

Prayer Hall Trust

With the vultures having vanished from the Mumbai skies over the last three decades, the present system of 'dokhmenashini' has weakened considerably, leaving many of the community with no option but to opt for alternate methods of disposal of the dead, particularly cremation. In a recent survey reported in the December 2013 (Special Congress issue) of Parsiana, 28% of the respondents said they would now opt for cremation.

However Parsi-Irani Zarathushtis who opt for cremation are presently not permitted use of the Bunglis at Doongerwadi and are compelled to use facilities at Public Municipal Crematoria. These facilities are not well maintained nor are they conducive to the performance of last rites and prayers for deceased Zoroastrians. Also it has been very difficult for families to locate prayer halls at which the other 4 day prayers can be done. Therefore, for some years now, there has been an unmet need for a well-constructed, well-maintained and conveniently-located Prayer Hall attached to a crematorium for use of the community.

We are very fortunate that after protracted discussions over the last two years and thanks to the untiring efforts of certain like-minded people without whose help this project would not have been possible, the Greater Mumbai Municipal Corporation (GMMC) have agreed to let our Trust ("The Prayer Hall Trust") build and hand over to the GMMC as a donation a well-designed Prayer Hall on a plot of land within the existing Cemetery / Crematorium complex on E. Moses Road, Worli (opposite the Four Seasons Hotel). A MOU has been executed by 'The Prayer Hall Trust with the GMMC and The Prayer Hall Trust is now registered with the Charity Commissioner, Mumbai.

Details of the proposed '**Prayer Hall**' that we shall be constructing are as follows:

1. This will be an "L" shaped structure with a built-up area of around 3,700 sq. ft. that will be constructed and handed over free-of-cost by The Prayer Hall Trust to the City of Mumbai. The structure will have 2 halls – one larger and one smaller, which can be used as one large hall or partitioned-off and used as 2 separate halls when required concurrently for two funerals.
2. As per the GMMC rules, all Prayer Hall/s have to be open to all faiths, not just Zoroastrians. However, upon our request they have agreed that in view of the donation, preference will be given in perpetuity to Zoroastrians for use of the Hall at the times when our funeral and other 4-day prayers are conventionally held, viz between 7.00 am to 9.00 am, 3.30 pm to 8.00 pm and 4.00 am to 6.00 am.

3. The Prayer Hall will in fact also be available to Parsi-Irani Zoroastrians for performance of the four day obsequies irrespective whether the cremation has taken place at Cemetery / Crematorium complex on E. Moses Road, Worli or elsewhere in the city. There will be no provision for residential accommodation but there will be a room for 'sachkar' and the design will be similar to that of a Doongerwadi Bungli.
4. The total cost of construction of the building, together with a small green area around the structure and pathways between the plot and the crematorium is estimated to be approx. Rs 13,500,000/=.

A second trust, '**The Prayer Hall Services & Maintenance Trust**' which will also be set up shortly, will maintain and keep the Hall in a clean condition at all times and also assist families of deceased Zoroastrians with regard to making arrangements for a Hearse, Priests, Flowers, etc. A 24-hour telephone help-line is also intended be set up for this purpose.

Whilst the use of the Prayer Hall for 4 days will be without any charge, expenses on payment of the priests who officiate at the various ceremonies will be as per normal prevailing practices.

It is intended that an additional amount of around Rs.35 to Rs.40 lakhs will need to be collected and set aside as a corpus of 'The Prayer Hall Services & Maintenance Trust', the income of which will facilitate ongoing operating expenditures towards providing obsequial services, which will be for Parsi-Irani Zoroastrians only.

In total therefore, between both the Trusts' we would like to raise by way of donations up to Rs.1,75,00,000/= (Rupees one crore seventy five lakhs).

Both the Trusts will be managed by a common Board of Trustees, who presently are:

1. **Dinshaw K. Tamboly, Corporate Counselor (Retd);Trustee of many Charity Trusts.**
2. **Karl F. Tamboly, Advocate: Bombay High Court,**
3. **Fali P. Sarkari, Consultant & Chartered Accountant; Trustee of many Charity Trusts.**
4. **Keki M. Elavia, Consultant, Chartered Accountant & Company Director.**
5. **Sarosh E. Bharucha Advocate:, Bombay High Court.**
6. **(Mrs) Farzana D. Mojgani, Solicitor & Advocate; Trustee of many Charity Trusts.**

In The News

Commitments for donations have been received from various community members towards the construction of the prayer hall, which many feel was long overdue. We are confident that the community will come forward to support this initiative and we will be able to commission this Prayer Hall within the next 12 to 15 months.

We look forward to your support and cooperation and request that your initial cheque be made payable to "The Prayer Hall Trust". Please mention your PAN either in the covering letter accompanying your donation or on the reverse of the cheque.

Both the Trusts' being for 'Religious Purposes' we have been advised that donations will not qualify for grant of recognition under section 80G of the Income Tax Act nor will it be possible for us to seek registration under FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act 1976) by which we can receive funds from overseas.

It will thus be necessary for our well-wishers and supporters residing overseas to make arrangements to support our

initiative by arranging for donations through the banks accounts they may be having in India or through their relatives and friends residing in India.

Cheques may be sent in the name of "The Prayer Hall Trust" and mailed to us at: Shanti, 5th floor, 6, Banaji Street, Mumbai 400 001.India.

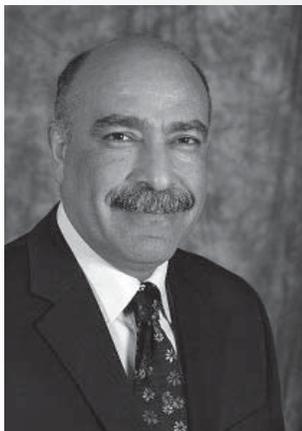
We have been informed that BMC has allotted 3,700 Sq ft of land inside the Worli Crematorium for a prayer hall for parsis who opt to cremate their dead.



Dinshaw K Tamboly; Chairman

Honorary life membership & Distinguished Member Awards

Shahrokh Khanizadeh Received the Canadian Society for Horticultural Science Distinguished Member Award, during the joint annual meeting of the Canadian Society of Agronomy, Canadian Society for Horticultural Science, North American Fruit Explorers, Certified Crop Advisors - Prairie Board and Agricultural Institute of Canadian Saskatchewan "Adapting Crops to Change" and also received the Honorary Life membership from Canadian Society for Horticultural Science. The awards recognise the outstanding contribution made to horticultural science as a researcher, a teacher, editor and a mentor.



Shahrokh served as President of the Canadian Society for Horticultural Science from 2006- 2008 and is currently President of Plant Canada, the federation of Canadian plant science societies. He has been serving as Editor-in-Chief of the Canadian Journal of Plant Science and is a member of the Agricultural Institute (AIC) of Canada Scientific Journals Committee. He was elected to the AIC Board of Directors in 2011 and received the honorary

appointment as guest Professor of Beijing Engineering Research Center in 2013.

He recently accepted a position to lead a Spring Wheat Breeding program in Ottawa. He loves gardening, canoe camping and sailing. Details on his activities are posted at <http://khanizadeh.info>

In The News

Jehan Daruvala: On Track for Formula One

FEZANA Journal Staff Writer

With strong wins at the highly competitive 2013 Asia Pacific KF3 and 2013 British KF3 Karting races, 15 year old Jehan Daruvala of Mumbai is earning the respect and attention of international Karting and Formula One racing press, fans, and competitors. In a recent interview with *Parsi Times*, Jehan discussed how his passion for



racing was kindled when he was 9 years old and went **Go Karting** in Powai with his dad. In 2009 he joined Rayo Racing (a professional Formula Car and Go-Kart Racing team). Shortly after, he entered the Sahara Force India Academy's "One from a Billion" competition, becoming short listed in Hyderabad and selected in Goa to be among the top 10 contenders. All 10 were tested in Silverstone, England where three of the boys (Arjun Maini, Tarun Reddy, and Jehan Daruvala) were chosen.

Force One (formerly named Spyker Team and more recently renamed to Sahara Force India Formula One Team) was founded in 2007 by Indian billionaire and Chairman of UB Group and Kingfisher Airlines, Dr. Vijay Mallya. Dr. Mallya is also Force One's Team Principal. Recognizing the need to recruit and develop talented junior Indian Karting drivers into winning Formula One competitors, Dr. Mallya launched the two-year One from a Billion program in 2011. Based on the program's success at the end of 2012, the Sahara Force India Formula One Team created an academy to provide a balanced curriculum including fitness, psychology, and media management training. The Academy's professionally taught, advanced driver training program develops junior Kart drivers' skills, stamina, and discipline needed to successfully compete in GP3 and GP2 feeder series races and, ultimately, advance to Formula One racing. The Sahara Force India Formula One Team Academy's first inductee was Jehan Daruvala.

Jehan's rising prominence in international Karting and Formula One racing was highlighted during an October 25th Q&A at a Federation Internationale de l'Automobile press conference between Bharat Sharma, of the IndoAsian News Service, and Dr. Mallya who stated:

I think that ever since I became involved as a team owner in Formula One I have consistently maintained that we will find an Indian driver who eventually will be in Formula One, and that's why we started Force India Formula One academy. Jehan Daruvala is a product of that academy and I'm absolutely delighted with the fact that he's won the karting championship ...

Quick to share his success with his driver-coach, Terry Fullerton; Dr. Mallya; and the Sahara Force India Formula One team, Jehan is modestly adapting to the media spotlight. As a role model for Indian youth, an exhilarating up-and-comer for Indian racing aficionados around the world, and a source of pride to his parents, *Kainaz and Khurshed Daruvala*, this young Zarathushti epitomizes the spirit of a resurgent India.

In The News

THE EVERLASTING FLAME

RECEPTION, EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE



Two extraordinary events took place during October, 2013 at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies), University of London—the EXHIBITION *The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination* and the CONFERENCE *Looking Back: The Formation of Zoroastrian Identity through Rediscovery of the Past*.

EXHIBITION For the first time ever, our three-millennia

Zarathushti heritage was housed under a single roof. Carefully selected, and gathered from throughout the diaspora by an expert international curatorial team, *The Everlasting Flame* exhibition brought together more than 200 antiquities and artifacts spanning the centuries from the Susa I period in Iran (4200-3700 BCE) through the twentieth century.

At first thought it may seem incongruous to use the word “magical” to describe the exhibition and conference. But, on second thought it is not .

The “magic” for many of us started, of all places, in the London underground, the “tube,” where Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (Inc.) (ZTFE) sponsored the creation and placement of 150 posters throughout the system. Fellow passengers were clearly interested in the beautiful posters; pointing at them, recording them on smart phones, or making a hurried note to themselves.

While we waited for the official opening of the exhibition, we chatted with old friends and colleagues, met new friends, and had the wonderful opportunity of meeting those who we had previously known only through their writings. Scholars, authors, philanthropists, clergy, educators, and friends of Zoroastrianism discussed ongoing projects and exciting new ones. Although we all looked forward to the exhibition, these moments of intellectual immersion were exhilarating and rewarding at so many levels.

The evening’s opening remarks were from the exhibition’s patron, **Maestro Zubin Mehta**, who joined us through video conferencing, and **Professor Paul Webley, Director and**



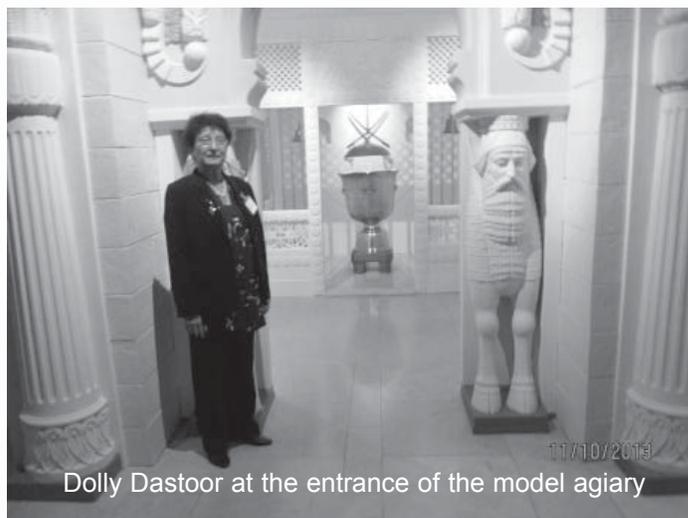
In The News

Principal of SOAS. Professor Webley wove a vivid verbal tapestry of Zoroastrianism's origins, emergence as the foremost religion of the Achaemenid and Parthian empires, and its consolidation as the state religion under the Sasanians. He skillfully followed Zoroastrianism through the diaspora and highlighted the Good Religion's influence on Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Professor Webley next introduced the book *The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination*, edited by **Sarah Stewart**, which chronicles the exhibition with stunning photographs of more than 200 items. Clearly written, erudite chapters from leading Zoroastrian scholars will make this book a primary resource for decades to come. The book's forward, a testament to Zoroastrianism's positive influence on civilization through the ages was written by **HRH Prince Charles, The Prince of Wales**.

The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and

the breathtaking collections spanning millennia, starting with painted pottery vessels dating from 4200-3700 BCE, then flowing to a nude figure from 1500-1100 BCE, and progressing through time with a continuum of artifacts meticulously selected by the curators. One of the more popular items on display was the Dakhma chart from the History of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (1860-1960). It shows how a dakhma is constructed—stone plinths form



Dolly Dastoor at the entrance of the model agiary

three concentric circles: the outer for men, the middle for women, and the inner for children.

The penultimate experience was a full-scale, finely detailed model of a walk-in *Agiary* (Fire Temple), complete with a magnificent silver *afarganu* (Fire Vase), still used in all Zoroastrian fire temples to sustain the Ever-burning Fire. A continuous, sonorous recitation of the Yasna by **Ervad Aspandiyar Dadachanji of Dadiseth Agiary, Mumbai** played in the background as visitors learned more about the Good Religion's ceremonies and rituals by visual displays.

Indeed, "magical" is a good word to sum the intellectual, spiritual, and emotional response to the celebration of Zoroastrianism's history and influence on our civilization.

The Zoroastrian Community and its friends are indebted to the exhibition curators (**Sarah Stewart**, **Firoza Punthakey Mistree**, **Ursula Sims-Williams**, **Almut Hintze**, and **Pheroza J. Godrej**) for their unstinting devotion to the project. We also commend Sarah Stewart for enabling the curators' work to be documented and shared with future generations in *The Everlasting Flame*, the book. Of course, the reception, exhibition, and book would never have come to fruition if it weren't for the beneficence of their patrons and sponsors. To them, we offer our



Homa Zartoshty with ZTFE president Malcolm Deboo

Imagination was dedicated to the memory of the **Zartoshty Brothers**. Mobed Mehraban Zartoshty's daughter **Homa** traveled to the event for the book's launch and thanked everyone involved in the exhibition, the book, and the conference for their contributions to her father and uncle's memories and Zoroastrianism. Whether spoken or thought, there was a sense among the attendees that the Fravashis of the Zartoshty Brothers were with us.

After the reception, we were invited to take in the exhibition. Some of us joined colleagues, stopping and discussing exhibits of common interest; others were more reflective and savored the historic, religious, and cultural milieu in the company of their own thoughts. Professionally designed exhibits guided visitors through

In The News



Firoza Punthakey Mistree; Sarah Stewart, Almut Hintze



Reception prior to the opening

gratitude and the gratitude of those who will follow us. Core funding of £180,000 was provided by *The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE)*. Other major sponsors were *Aequa Foundation*, *Dr. Cyrus Poonawalla, principal sponsor (India)*; *Tata Enterprises*; *Farrokh Kavarana*; *Vahid Alaghband*; *Zarir Cama*; *California Zoroastrian Centre*; *The Farangi Foundation*, *Dr. Abtin Sassafar*; *Iran Heritage Foundation*, *British Institute of Persian Studies*; *Soudavar Memorial Foundation*; *Mr. Pallonji Mistry*; *The BPP*; *Erach Roshan Sadri Foundation*; *Ms. Vika Irani*; *Vahid Kooros*, *The Incorporated Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton, and Macao*. For more information, please see to the excellent website : www.theeverlastingflame.com.



Ten metre glass etching based on the cast of the western staircase from the palace of Darius at Persepolis



From left, Lord Karan Bilimoria; Malcolm Deboo, President ZTFE, Homa Zartoshty, Prof Webley, Sarah Stewart. Zarir Cama, Dorab Mistry, OBE, Past president ZTFE



Parsi Salon : Display of cupboard with carving of Zarathushtra on bottom panel (1880) and traditional silk embroidered garas

In The News

The Everlasting Flame Exhibition *Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination* has received one of the largest attendance for an exhibition at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS. Over 15,000 have visited!

CONFERENCE

The exhibition launch was followed by a two-day conference organized by the Centre for Iranian Studies, LMEI, SOAS. on October 11 and 12, 2013 Conference participants were invited to consider the general theme with regard to one or more of the eight key presentation topics

“Looking Back: the formation of Zoroastrian Identity through rediscovery of the Past”

It was divided into six tracts each with an impressive array of well known scholars.

The keynote speaker **Philip G, Kreyenbroek (Georg-August University, Göttingen)**, gave a presentation titled **Return to the Past, in the Gathas and in later Zoroastrianism**

SESSION 1

Scriptures and Significance for the Tradition

SPEAKERS

Prof Almut Hintz, (SOAS, University of London), A Zoroastrian Vision

Dastur Dr Firoze Kotwal (Mumbai), Continuity, Controversy and Change: a study of the ritual practice

Alberto Cantera (University of Salamanca). The ‘Sacrifice (Yasna) to Mazda: its antiquity and variety

SESSION 2

Tradition, Authority, Orthodoxy, Continuity, Change, Origins, Conservatism and Innovation in Zoroastrian (Iranian and Parsi) Religion and Culture

SPEAKERS

Touraj Daryaee (University of California, Irvine), Refashioning the Zoroastrian Past: from Alexander to Islam

Antonio Panaino (University of Bologna), Uranography and Astrology in the History of Zoroastrianism, No one stands Nowhere: the insider-outsider problem in the study of Zoroastrianism

SESSION 3

Enduring Zoroastrian Symbols and Iconic Forms in Art and Architecture

SPEAKERS

Frantz Grenet (Collège de France, Paris), extracts from a calendar of Zoroastrian Feasts : a new interpretation of a Bactrian silver plate at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis (British Museum), Zoroastrian Symbols in Parthian and Sasanian Culture

James Russell (Harvard University) Imagery of Zarathushtra: continuity and change in tradition

SESSION 4

Cross fertilization of ideas between Pre-Islamic and Post-Islamic Iran

SPEAKERS

Albert de Jong (University of Leiden), The Denkard and the Zoroastrians of Baghdad

Jamsheed Choksy (Indiana University, Bloomington), Zoroastrian Goodwill in Medieval Muslim Contexts

Ashk Dahlén (Uppsala University), He addressed the Kayanian King: “I am a Prophet” –the image of Zoroaster in the Shahnameh (Book of Kings)

SESSION 5

Minority Status: cultural/religious identity and relations with the majority religion

SPEAKERS

Khojeste Mistree (Zoroastrian Studies, Mumbai) Collision, Conflict and Accommodation - A question of survival and

the Preservation of the Parsi Zoroastrian Identity.

Dan Sheffield (Princeton University), Magian Mystics. Azar Kayvan and his followers between Persianate, Zoroastrianism and Imami Shi'ism

Jenny Rose (Claremont Graduate University), Riding the (Revolutionary) Waves between two worlds: Parsi involvement in the Transition from Old to New

SESSION 6

Modernity : the use of the past in the balance of traditional Zoroastrian Culture and modernity

SPEAKERS

Shernaz Cama (University of Delhi), Sacred Armour : Relevance in a changing world

Richard Foltz (Concordia University, Canada), Zoroastrian symbolism and Tajik Nation building

SUMMARIZING REMARKS

Alan Williams (University of Manchester), Lord Karan Bilimoria, CBE, DL addressed the audience on the second day. His presentation was titled **The Everlasting Flame Of Zoroastrian Identity: An Unbroken Thread of Achievement from Cyrus the Great to Today**

The printed version of these presentations will be available at a later date.

Photo credits

John Hollingworth, Brunei Gallery, SOAS

Report

Dolly Dastoor , FEZANA Journal

In The News

DORAB MISTRY RECEIVES ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (OBE) FROM HRH PRINCE CHARLES



On December 6th, 2013, at an investiture ceremony held at Buckingham Palace, Dorab Mistry, received his OBE from Prince Charles. This award is a recognition of the efforts an individual has made to benefit the wider community.

Resplendent in his Dagli and Pheta, Dorab was accompanied to the ceremony by his lovely wife Shehnaz dressed in a traditional Kor sari and his three daughters Tina, Sherie and Roxanne.

The OBE was in recognition of his services to the Zoroastrian Community and for the promotion of interfaith relations. Dorab was the 24th president of Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe. It was under his leadership that the Zoroastrian Centre, in Harrow, London, was purchased. He is chairman and honorary Treasurer of the Inter-Faith Network in Britain.

A qualified Chartered accountant, Dorab is the Director of Godrej International Limited and Vice president of Godrej in charge of vegetable oil buying and selling portfolio for the Far East. He is an expert in commodities and is known as a leading world analyst of commodity price behaviour. His opinion is sought after by the press.

In the words of Lord Karan Billimoria, "Dorab Mistry has not only been a leader of the Zoroastrian Community in the UK and globally for several years, but has always been an absolute stalwart, always ready to assist

members of the community and is a constant Ambassador for the Zoroastrian Community in every arena."

Well done Dorab, the community salutes you.

Congratulations

Mr. Byram Avari of Karachi, Pakistan.

Mr Avari was a proud recipient of HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE MEDAL which was presented to him by Jason Kenney the Minister for Employment, Social Development & Multiculturalism, on Sunday, 15th September 2013 in Toronto.

Mr. Avari has been Honorary Consul of Canada for 30 years and this was awarded to him for his services to Canada.

Mr. Avari has been helping communities all over the world for many years and we wish him and his family all the best and are very proud of his achievements.

In The News

THE 6th WORLD ZOROASTRIAN YOUTH CONGRESS WILL BE HELD AT KINGS COLLEGE, AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

DECEMBER 28, 2015 to JANUARY 2, 2016

We can truly say that we have come a long way from March 2011; fundraising, networking, holding numerous meetings and learning, and now all the hard work is starting to pay off. The 6thWZYC Organising Committee along with its host organisation, the Zarathushtrian Association of New Zealand, are very excited to present to you Kings College, which will be home to the 6th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress from December 28, 2015 to January 2, 2016.

Founded in 1896, Kings College is one of New Zealand's top private secondary schools. It prides itself at being the best it can be through the College's various disciplines, which includes: academic, sporting, cultural, spiritual and social. With links to the Anglican Church, the foundation of Kings is built on generosity of spirit, gratitude, honesty, moral courage, pursuit of learning, respect, spirituality and tolerance (<http://www.kingscollege.school.nz>).

Successfully hosting several youth congresses and different religious conferences, we are confident that Kings College will provide the best of facilities and services to our delegates. We cannot wait to show off this little gem situated in the suburbs of Auckland and we hope to see you all there!

Visit our website, www.6wzyc.co.nz, to discover this charm. We welcome any overseas donations towards making this congress a huge success and keeping the cost for all our delegates affordable. For more information about donations please email us on 6thwzyc@gmail.com. Thank you for your support!

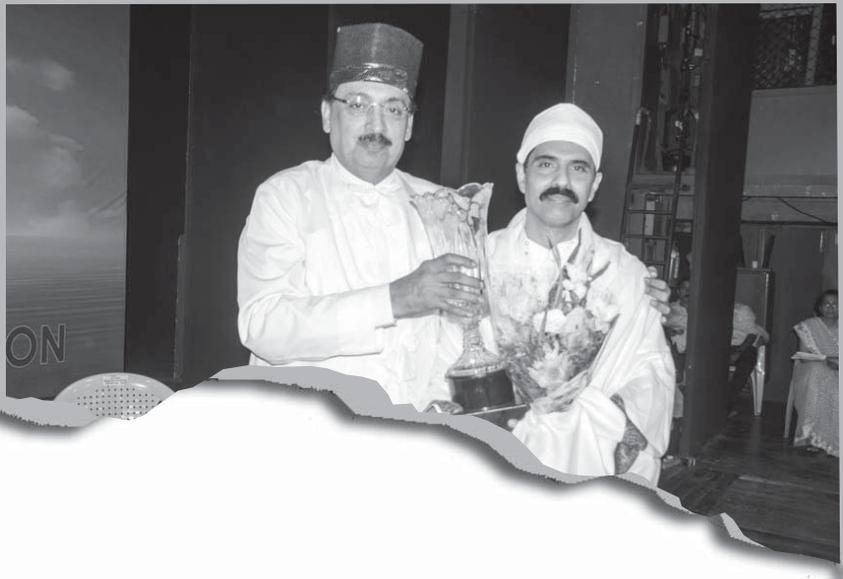


Courtesy of: Kings College, Auckland, New Zealand

In The News

Ervad Zarrir Bhandara

Ervad Zarrir Bhandara of California USA receiving the "Jewel of the Community Award" from Kyosi Shishan Vispy Kapadia at the 11th Zoroastrian Children's Day at Birla Matushi hall in Mumbai, India for rendering 40 years of humane, social and religious service to the community in India and USA



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In The News

YAGHMAGRAPHY

Solo Exhibition by Siamak Jamshidizadeh
January, 3-19, 2014 - Mehrva Art Gallery
www.mehrvaartgallery.com

Tehran, Exhibition,
Siamak Jamshidzadeh, a prominent Zoroastrian artist, had an exhibition of his paintings based on lyrics of prominent Persian poet, Yaghma Golrouee. whose pure and persistent songs are always in the mind of the public. Hence this is the most comprehensive and influential literary genre. The artist takes these songs as the central piece of his work in this collection and since he does not find people to be interesting to the world of visual arts, he tries to paint people with picture and imagination by illustration of Yaghma Golrouee's memorable songs. With this, he opens a space for a broader



from right to left Yaghma Golrouee, Homan Javid,
Siamak Jamshidizadeh



dialogue, challenging his audiences and himself by presenting two pictures for each selected song. So that beside the concept, the vision, imaginary and creativity could be discussed to honor the song, the songwriter and the lovers of song.



from right (Siamak Jamshidizadeh &
F. Pirgheibi

«یخماگرافی»

نمایش آثار سیامک جمشیدی زاده

«تا 29 دی ماه 1392 - گالری «مهروا 13

» با نگاهی به ترانه های «یخما گروی»

ترانه‌های ناب و ماندگار بی آنکه متوجه باشیم در اذهان عمومی جای می‌گیرند و این گونه‌ی ادبی به این واسطه، فراگیرترین و بانفوذترین گونه‌ی ادبی موجود می‌یابند. همین امر باعث شده است تا هنرمند در این مجموعه، ترانه را در محوریت کار خود قرار دهد، و از آنجا که مردم را با دنیای هنرهای تجسمی در قهر می‌بیند، تلاش دارد تا با تصویرسازی ترانه‌هایی بهیادماندنی از «یخما گروی»، طیف گسترده‌تری از مردم را با تصویر و تجسم آشنایی دهد. در همین راستا وی با به چالش کشیدن خویش و مخاطبانش، با ارائه‌ی دو تصویر برای هر ترانه‌ی منتخب، فضای گفت و شنود وسیع‌تری را باز میکند تا تصویر و تجسم و خلق و انتزاع در کنار مقایسه، به بحث گذاشته شوند؛ تا هم ترانه را ارج نهد هم ترانه‌سرا، و هم مردم ترانه‌دوست را.

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

Twelve year old youngest Mobedyar in North America



From left Ervad Khushroo Bharda (NAMC); Mobedyar Zen Panday; Brigidiar Ervad Behram Panthaki.

On Saturday August 3, 2013, twelve year old Zen Panday of Herndon, Virginia, became the youngest Mobedyar in North America. The ceremony was conducted by Ervad Brigadier Behram Panthaki (ZAMWI).

The ceremony began at 4 pm and ended at 6 pm. Zen prayed loudly and clearly with confidence. Around 90 family and friends from Mumbai, Dubai, Toronto, Florida, North Carolina, Ohio, Maryland and Virginia, gave him a standing ovation when the ceremony was completed. Ervad Khushroo Bharda from Toronto, representing the North American Mobed Council, congratulated Zen on his achievement and presented him with a certificate to commemorate the occasion.

Zen's journey began 3 years ago in the summer of 2010. He has two cousins in Mumbai who are Navar/Murtab. However we decided to explore options for Zen to learn his prayers in North America. We felt more comfortable having him in familiar surroundings with less pressure.

For the first year Zen and his dad Ervad Sorab, read the basic Avesta prayers from the Khordeh Avesta. The next year, Zen was given the 'Understanding and Practice of Jashan Ceremony' a book authored by Ervad Jehan Bagli and Ervad Adi Unwalla. Those prayers were harder. It is a challenge for children living in this part of the world to pronounce the prayers correctly since they rarely get a chance to visit Agiaries or listen to jashans. But Zen kept studying the prayers through school and a full schedule of preteen activities.

Zen's training with Brigadier Ervad Panthaki started in real earnest from January 2013. For a month, every Saturday, Zen would be driven by his father to Brigadier Ervad Panthaki's residence, a distance of over 20 miles, to spend a couple of hours practicing. Ervad Panthaki would coach and guide Zen on attaining fluency of recitation, laying stress on correct pronunciation and intonation to ensure proper effect and resonance. Zen was trained to self-discipline and concentration until the recitation came from the heart. The prayers were not mere prose, but began to find the rhythm of poetic form. Ervad Behram suggested that Zen, at this very young age, should develop his own style of recitation with undulating tone and rhythm.

For the next four months the training was on the phone in a one-hour session each Friday evening. Zen would recite different prayers as requested by Ervad Behram. The frequency of coaching increased to twice or thrice a week as Zen's ordainment date approached. By end of July, Zen had mastered the prayers and understood the rituals of a Jashan ceremony.

During the last month the emphasis changed to practical training i.e. performing the rituals of a jashan ceremony. This training was imparted at the Panday residence. The last were in full regalia to give Zen confidence and to get him accustomed to sitting on the floor in a Jamo and Pichori for an hour. Through these practical training sessions Zen got used to fire and smoke, and learnt the knack of balancing the Padan on the bridge of his nose.

On the day of the ordainment Zen went through the Padyab Kusti ritual followed by the Farazyat i.e. 101 names, Sarosh Baj and Ujiran Gah. The ceremony started with the recitation of Atash Niyesh. After exchange of "Hama Zor", Zen started the Jashan ceremony. It included Afringans of Dadar Ahuramazda, Dahman and the Sarosh followed by the Aafriins of Ardafravarsh (Farohars) and Buzorgaan (Zoroastrian Religion stalwarts of yester years). The ceremony ended with the recitation of Tandrosti followed by everyone joining hands in a "Hum Bundagi" and speeches. In true Zoroastrian fashion, the celebrations continued till after 10 pm with dinner and drinks.

As a Mobedyar, Zen hopes to assist Ervad Behram Panthaki in the Washington area. To start the ball rolling, the very next week Zen assisted Ervad Behram at the Mukta prayers. We owe our heartfelt thanks to Brigadier Ervad Behram Panthaki for his support, guidance, advice, encouragement and patience with Zen through this journey.

Reported By Ervad Sorab and Mahrukh Panday

INTERFAITH INTERFAITH

The 12th Annual Youth Assembly at The United Nations: Inspiring Youth Across Cultures to Lead

GORDIYA KHADEMIAN
NYU

In August 2013 I had the privilege to represent FEZANA as a delegate at the 12th Annual Youth Assembly at the United Nations. The main focus of this conference was understanding the **Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs) and learning about efforts to convert them to **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs). The group of people I met there were unlike any I had ever met before. I met youth from across the world, excited to be there and teeming with potential. These were youth ready to change the world. We also met and listened to incredible and inspirational people working hard to make the MDG a reality.

The Millennium Development Goals are established by the UN, and are global efforts to combat poverty and inequality in the world.

The MDGs are:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
4. Reduce child mortality.
5. Improve maternal health.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability.
8. Global partnership for development.

Each MDG has a target goal, which organizers hope to achieve by 2015. For example, on the UN website, while much has been done to eliminate gender disparity, it is noted:

The world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, but only 2 out of 130 countries have achieved that target at all levels of education. Globally, 40 out of every 100 wage-earning jobs in the non-agricultural sector were held by women in 2011. This is a significant improvement since 1990. More information and the source of these quotes can be found at <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

Another one of the main ideas of this conference was how very different cultures can interact with one another. To prevent a “clash of cultures”, **Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the United Nations General Assembly** noted that we must exchange arts and culture to build bridges between diverse cultures. As a growing demographic, youth are very critical in this cross cultural understanding.

The Romanian Ambassador to the United Nations, **Simona Miculescu**, continued this important idea in her speech. 1 in 5 people in the world is between the ages of 15 and 24. There are 1 billion youth in this world and 85% of them live in developing countries. Because we are such an important demographic, we must take an active step in helping to shape the future we want and empowering others, or as she said “creating a space for people to improve their lives.” Within her speech, the Ambassador outlined the three crucial points of the triangle that are needed to create a culture of peace. These are youth, development, and global leadership. These, along with learning and creativity are all indispensable. Again, this is where the youth come in.

Sam Vaghar, a member of the Special Envoy on Youth, gave a speech I found particularly personal. He shared his “single best piece of advice” with us which was “Never be afraid to talk to anyone.” Every voice is important; we have to listen to everyone. Intent is never enough. We can mean to do a lot of good, but that doesn’t mean it will ever get done. This brings the responsibility to the youth. We have finally come to a point where we are being taken seriously.

To build a culture of peace, we must embrace our “*ever energizing diversity*”, which is the essence of a new humanity and global society. With well-educated and responsible youth this is possible. I hope to be able to work with the interesting and inspiring people I met at this assembly again. I also encourage anyone interested to check out www.beyond2015.org for more information on the MDGs and to get involved.



Gordiya Khademian is an active member of The Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, Inc. (ZAMWI) and one of the Youth Representatives for FEZANA at the United Nations. Gordiya is currently a freshman at New York University in the Liberal Studies Program.

INTERFAITH INTERFAITH

Interfaith Meetings at Astana and Rome

Dr. Homi Dhalla

Religions Working for Peace and Justice



In October 2013 Dr. Homi Dhalla was invited to Astana (Kazakhstan) to attend the **Congress of Leaders of the World and Traditional Religions** which was chaired by Mr. Kairat Mami, Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament.. About 30 religious leaders and scholars belonging to various faiths were in attendance. Dr. Dhalla made a presentation on the various activities which could be launched by this interfaith organization to make it more meaningful.

In Rome he attended another international conference “**The Courage to Hope: Religions and Cultures in Dialogue**”. There were 31 panels each holding discussions on various aspects pertaining to the theme of the conference. Dr. Dhalla was asked to participate in the session focusing on “*The Spirit of Assisi*”. The theme of his presentation was “**Global Events Reflecting the Spirit of Assisi**”. This was followed by a lively discussion.

On the final day, prayer meetings of the different faiths were held which was open to the public. Dr. Dhalla conducted this prayer meeting by first delivering a brief introductory talk on ‘Zoroastrianism’. A Monajat (devotional song) was played to provide a Zoroastrian flavour. He performed the Kusti ceremony followed by prayers on **harmony and human rights** (providing an English translation) from Zoroastrian literature. Participants from various faiths gathered for a peace procession at Piazza del Campidoglio in Central Rome. There was an audience of about 5000 people for this final function. Representatives of each faith were asked to light a candle and exchange greetings of peace. Dr. Dhalla lit a candle on behalf of the Zoroastrian community at this final celebration.

The next day a selected representatives from each faith were invited to the Vatican to meet Pope Francis I. Dr. Dhalla had the honour of meeting Pope Francis and exchange greetings on behalf of the Zoroastrian community worldwide.

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

Z

Zoroastrian Faith Hill at Balaji Temple in Birmingham

A 3D Farohar unveiled



In the suburbs of Tividale, near Birmingham, England stands the Balaji Temple on a giant 25 acre site, the second biggest Hindu site in Britain. The original Tirupati Temple in India is surrounded by the seven Tirumala Hills which serve as protector of the Lord Venkateshwara.

Dr Narayan Rao, the founder chair of the temple in England had a unique idea of creating seven small hills



around the Balaji temple complex and to dedicate each to a different faith. The first two hills celebrating Buddhism and Christianity have already been consecrated. Dr Rao's vision was embellished by the trustees of the temple who together with their Zoroastrian well wishers and with Jimmy Sutaria, Chairman of the Zoroastrian Association of Northwest UK, as their advisor decided to install a *Farohar* on the third hill. Lord Karan Billimoria became an early supporter of the project.

On Saturday September 28, the third hill was consecrated as the **Parsi Hill** with the installation of the world's first 3D Farohar made from Tata steel, sculpted by Luke Perry, the Cradley Heath artist.

The Zoroastrian contingent of about 200 along with 200 devotees of the temple walked in a ceremonial procession to the Parsi Hill. Ervad Rustom Bhedwar, senior mobed of ZTFE (right of the Farohar in the photo) together with Ervad Nalladaru of Banaji Atash Behram, Mumbai (left of



the Farohar) and his son Ervad Dr Ferdaus Nalladaro, chanted prayers before the Farohar was unveiled by Lord Bilimoria and Kashmiri Cooke, the sister of legendary Freddy Mercury (photo above).

A formal function, with a slide show by Dorab Mistry, ZTFE past president *From Trincomalee to Jaguar Land Rover*, a presentation on *Zoroastrianism* by Malcolm Deboo, the present president of ZTFE and a speech by Lord Bilimoria on his own family connections with Birmingham and his pride in being a Zoroastrian, an Indian, a British Peer and a UK citizen.

The 400 strong congregation sang a very appropriate song with great passion " I'd like to teach the world to singto live in perfect harmony" . Dr Narayan Rao added "The celebrations is a day of building deep friendships with our Parsi brothers and sisters and it is a step forward to demonstrate to the world that different faiths can live together and celebrate each other . This historic day is a day billed to celebrate similarities rather than focusing on each other's differences".

Report adapted from Dorab Mistry UK Parsis on Faith Hill, Jame Jamshed October 13, 2013

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

An Act of Faith, Tolerance and Respect:

Religions Working 9/11 Unity Walk Calls for Peace

by Molly McCluskey



It began at the Washington Hebrew Congregation, continued to the Islamic Center, and ended at the Gandhi Memorial. Along the way were nun-baked cookies, spontaneous dancing, African drums, tai chi and yoga lessons, chanting and prayer in a variety of tongues. The day, dedicated to former South African President Nelson Mandela, had one theme across all faiths: **peace**.

The 9/11 Unity Walk, which was started in 2005 as a reaction to 9/11 terrorist attacks and growing religious intolerance worldwide, was held on Sept. 8 on Embassy Row and streamed live around the world

The 9/11 Unity Walk concluded with samosas and cookies at the Indian Embassy and closing remarks at the Mahatma Gandhi statue by Arun Gandhi, the

grandson of the Nobel Peace Prize winner. (Correction, Mahatma Gandhi did not receive the Nobel Prize, Editor FJ) Gandhi said he learned an important lesson from 9/11: *"There is tremendous ignorance about each other. We need to learn more about each other and try to understand and respect each other."* Quoting his grandfather, Gandhi said, *"If something is worth doing one day, it should be worth doing every day."* (photo above)

In any event there is a singular tone-setting moment, and at the Washington Hebrew Congregation, that moment came when a young volunteer began to dance to the music of **Kwame Ansah-Brew's** drum and encouraged those sitting quietly in the seats to join her. Within

moments, a dancing crowd had formed in the front of the auditorium, those still seated were clapping enthusiastically, and the day shifted from one of simply learning to one of joyous celebration.

Mistress of Ceremonies Jan Du Plain opened the event with a warm welcome. *"We represent all forms of spirituality — strong religious beliefs, no beliefs, questioning beliefs, and all areas in between,"* she said. *"Wherever you are on your own journey in life is absolutely perfect."*

9/11 Unity Walk founder Kyle Poole echoed the welcoming sentiment, saying, *"The 9/11 Unity Walk is not meant to be a religious service. It's a way to meet your neighbor who might be different from you."*

Young Mormon missionaries wear Hare Krishna beads during the eighth annual 9/11 Unity Walk, where people visited houses of worship and embassies along Massachusetts Avenue, and faith guides were on hand to answer questions about their respective religions.

South African Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool spoke on the perils of dogmatism, claiming it stems from fear and uncertainty. He called for humanity to understand the core, shared values of people of all backgrounds



INTERFAITH INTERALIA

FOR PEACE

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

to promote understanding. “*The world is in turmoil because we have forgotten generosity,*” Rasool said.

Rabbi Bruce Lustig, the senior rabbi at the Washington Hebrew Congregation, lauded those gathered, saying, “*It will not be heads of state who bring peace. It will be common, loving human beings who chose a different path [than violence].*”

As the walk commenced down Massachusetts Avenue, faith guides wearing purple sashes were on hand to answer questions about their respective religions. A Buddhist monk sang at a mosque. In a rare display, the Vatican Embassy opened its doors to a crowd that, according to Poole, was larger than the embassy had ever seen. Service projects at St. Albans School and the Vatican Embassy encouraged guests to bag potatoes or make trail mix to be delivered to local nonprofit organizations.

To ensure all were welcome, houses of worship with dress codes provided appropriate head and/or

shoulder coverings, as well as signs and friendly volunteers to explain the customs

And of course, there was the food.

The nuns at the **Vatican Embassy** baked cookies that were sinfully delicious. Volunteers at **Sikh Gurdwara**, which recently reopened after a two-year hiatus, served a large crowd in a traditional, family-style shared meal of chickpeas and lentils with scents so rich they wafted from the basement to tantalize visitors on the front steps. **Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral**, with its stunning Byzantine art, served mouth-watering baklava.

Jessie Caola of Washington, D.C., participated in the walk for the first time. “*I thought the entire event was uplifting,*” she said. “*The generosity that was provided by all who participated was enough to make you feel truly inspired to learn more about the differences of cultures and become more understanding of their beliefs. I walked away with a little gem from every stop I made.*”

Anne Golightly, director of public affairs for the **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** for the Washington metro area, was one of several faith leaders to bless those gathered. “*Religious beliefs are very personal, and deeply felt. Often we only share those deep feelings within our own faith communities,*” she said. “*Here, we are permitted and even encouraged to share these feelings openly and honestly with those of all faiths.*”

As the day drew to a close, the words of **Imam Abdullah Khouj, director of the Islamic Center of Washington**, reflected on past unity walks and all the ones to come. “*We honor each other as humans beings,*” he said. “*We walk as an act of respect for each other.*”

Molly McCluskey is an independent journalist dividing her time between Washington, D.C., and various cities in Europe. Follow her on

Twitter @MollyEMcCluskey.

IN MEMORIUM

A poem dedicated to all innocent people who have lost their lives in war or in unfortunate circumstances

*The tears have dried
Deep chasm of excruciating
Pain still remain
Wondering when will
They meet their loved ones again
No matter under what
circumstances
They did die
Alas! it was their Last Good Bye!*

*Heroic Souls have lost their lives
Some even their precious limbs
So that humanity can live in
peace*

*But it doesn't seem to work that
way
Front right left center
Innocent people are dying every
day!!!*

*Let's stop this madness
Pain & suffering
Instead let there be
Restoration & Rejuvenation
Let us value life
Of those that are gone
Cherish the values
They died for*

*Let not their passing
Be in vain
But make this
Worlds a better place!*

*Ahura Mazda doesn't run
A Postal Service
Sorting souls according
To their color caste or creed
Solely bases His Judgment
On Good Thoughts, Good Words
As well Good Deeds*

Farida B. Ottawa, Canada

Personal Profiles

The Wealth of Nations

An Interview with Ms. Aban Marker Kabraji, Regional Director of Asia for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)



Aban Marker Kabraji is the Regional Director of Asia for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the world's oldest global environmental organization. Her portfolio covers 23 countries and over 350 staff members. Raised in Quetta, Pakistan, but now based in Bangkok, Thailand, Ms. Marker Kabraji talks with Aysha Ghadiali about her childhood in Quetta and the people and values that inspired her to become an international policy leader on the environmental stage.

Aysha Ghadiali (AG): Ms. Kabraji, thank you for taking the time to be interviewed for the FEZANA Journal. Some readers might not be familiar with IUCN. Can you briefly tell us a little about IUCN's mission?

Aban Marker Kabraji (AMK): In the aftermath of World War II, there was massive destruction of the environment for economic progress. Scientists first raised the alarm that the world needed a union to advise governments on environmental and economic policies. What makes IUCN unique is that it is a Union including governments, scientists, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). It is a value-based organization emphasizing that natural resources have intergenerational equity, i.e. sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

AG: What skills do you find you utilize the most in your role as a director in an international organization?

AMK: I started as a field biologist at IUCN and then moved into the management realm. Being an effective leader requires intelligence, not just IQ, but intelligence in terms of picking up nuances. One of the greatest skills top managers have is the intuition to scan the

horizon for potential problems, see a crisis before it develops, anticipate how governments will react, and find a positive opportunity in the cracks. I have had good mentors and bosses, good colleagues, and good training and that has made all the difference.

AG: I was lucky to meet you and your sister at the IUCN World Conservation Congress last September in Jeju, South Korea. Your sister, Meher Marker Noshirwani, is a technical advisor to the *Trust for Conservation of Coastal Resources*, a NGO based in Karachi, Pakistan. Did your family instill an appreciation and respect for the environment when you were young?

AMK: We grew up in a place called Quetta in Balochistan, near to Iran. It was an idyllic childhood. In the 1950s to the 1970s, it was a wonderful, sleepy, old colonial town in beautiful surroundings. There are high, barren mountains, huge gardens, and vineyards, and we picked our own vegetables. I remember digging up the carrots; we didn't use pesticides and we would eat tomatoes right off the vine. There were beautiful flowers all over: daisies, roses, pansies, and a great diversity of birds. We would sit by the lake and climb the mountains and trees and look at the flora and fauna. Like many Parsis, we loved our pet dogs. That was my childhood.

We grew up being taught a great deal of respect for nature; that you do not destroy nature, that you respect water. These are Zarathushti values and my grandparents were very staunch Zarathushtis. This formed my basis for the appreciation of nature, so it is not surprising that its values are reflected in what I do today.

AG: Who and what are the other people that have inspired your career?

AMK: There are three categories of people that have inspired my career. First, my family; I grew up with inspirational people. My mother, Roshan, was disabled with polio at age 21, after I was born. She was in a wheel chair all her life and died in her early 50s. She was a courageous mother who had three children and never made her disability an excuse. It gave me respect for disabled people. My father, Khursheed Marker, was one of God's good people and a successful businessman as well. He served as a minister in the government. He was a gentleman and great mentor and a role model for me. He, thank God, was also a role model for my children and lived until his 80s. My great grandparents both wrote memoirs, as did my uncle, the Ambassador Jamsheed Marker.

Personal Profiles



A lot of my inspiration comes from my family. I have a husband who is a rock. My kids indulge my idiosyncrasies and support me. I have a tremendous family without which I couldn't do what I do. I had tough love from the beginning. When you fail, my family will give you sympathy, but no pity. Treat successes lightly and when you fail you learn and move on. These are also my Zoroastrian values.

Second, the professional people in my life, especially the good bosses. If you are a good boss, you allow people to grow in your shadow. My mentors were those people, and I hope I have been able to do the same for my employees.

Third, the world leaders I have met. The kind of people they are and the lives they have led are inspirational. In this category I include **Nelson Mandela, Bill Clinton, Ratan Tata**—their lives have affected many millions around the world. I made a presentation in front of President Clinton once, at the United Nations headquarters in New York. He has incredible charisma and is a very sharp and impressive man. When I met Mandela, it was a courtesy visit. He was concerned about Pakistan and held my hand and asked about Bhutto, Musharraf, and the people he met in Pakistan, and what I thought about democracy. It was an amazing moment. And as for Ratan Tata, he is a man of great charisma and humor and compassion.

AG: Many Zarathushtis know about the decrease in vulture populations in South Asia. As vultures play a significant and historic role in the Zarathushti life cycle, drivers

of their depletion are of interest. Can you give us an update on IUCN's work with vultures in South Asia?

AMK: Vultures provide incredibly important ecosystem services; they remove decaying organic waste and other matter. Their loss in nature is staggering with populations of three key species declining by around 99% during the last two decades. This is the largest decline of any animal in South Asia. It is due to **Diclofenac**, a common anti-inflammatory drug administered to livestock in India. A vulture that eats the carcass of an animal treated with Diclofenac will die. IUCN is now working with partners, such as UN Environment Program, to put a vulture rehabilitation strategy in place. IUCN also works with **the Bombay Natural Science Society** to bring vultures back to India.

AG: Sandalwood is another important natural resource in Zarathushti rituals. Indian sandalwood is a precious wood famous for its fragrance, oil, and cultural value. Does IUCN work on conserving the sustainability of this precious tree?

AMK: We do not have a Sandalwood program now, but that does not mean we won't in the future. India has a dispensation for wood that is used in religious practices. However, because of its value there is interest in growing sandalwood in Gujarat. Of course it is most beneficial if it is grown in a sustainable way.

AG: What are some of the projects you are most proud of leading and managing for IUCN?

AMK: Oh there are many; starting with my very first, the conservation of sea turtles on the beaches of Karachi. But there are also the national parks, the wildlife in the mountains, the policy change as we influence the way a country governs its environment, the big mangrove project that spans the coasts of Asia. I can go on.

AG: Some people argue that environmental concerns drive up the cost of business. Do you think that environmental concerns are a luxury problem?

AMK: This discussion should have died a long time ago! It is a given that all economies base their growth on natural resources. It is not in anybody's self-interest to deplete the planet. The argument of either/or is no longer an argument. The air will not always clean itself. The ocean is not going to clean itself. When we didn't know the science it was different, but today we know that the pollutants in the ground, air, and water are not okay. Sometimes the top of the manufacturing chain doesn't realize how intrinsic the connection is, but the poor experience it every day. They are the ones who know how polluted the water, air, and soil is. They are most connected and they don't have the most options. It is not true to say environmental concern is a luxury choice. It is integral to survival and it is unfortunate that the economic model we work under favors the short-term markets of today, not tomorrow.

Personal Profiles

AG: Singapore's unbearable air pollution due to clearing forest and agricultural practices in neighboring island of Sumatra, Indonesia was in the news this year. It is a clear example to me of why environmental issues are a global problem. Are governments playing well in your region?

AMK: In Indonesia the clearing of virgin forests for oil palm plantations is a major problem. Our own assessments show that this volume is due largely to people who clear land for corporate oil palm plantations. Singapore is willing to fund work to address the issues. This is something that IUCN is in the midst of designing now.

AG: In your eyes, what are the biggest three environmental concerns facing Asia--the world's most populous region?

AMK: The number one issue is water. From water comes biodiversity. Climate change, environmental stress, conflict, all have impacts on fresh water, but also on rising seas, storm surges and ice melts. This is the most important natural resource issue.

Second, and important in Asia, are environmental security issues. As a result of environmental stress, you have disputes over territory and rights. When the resources are depleted, conflict can ensue.

Third, the depletion of biodiversity and wildlife species rates is a huge concern.

AG: IUCN's Director General, Julia Marton-Lefèvre, as well as other leadership, are female. Do you think this is unique to IUCN, or the future of multilateral organizations?

AMK: In my own career, I had a shared passion for both women's development and environment. I was heavily involved with feminism in the 1970s. I see a lot of

parallels between the women's and the environmental movement: issues of injustice, exploitation, anger. One of the things I would like to do in another lifetime is a paper on the interconnected origins of the environment and the women's movement in South Asia.

I believe in a tough work ethic; you don't get things because you are a woman or a man, you earn it. However, where I can, I look at the gender balance of my staff and make sure I have women coming through the leadership streams.

AG: What would be your advice to young men and women starting out careers in the international affairs realm?

AMK: My career advice would be to expect environment to be one the biggest growth fields in next 20 years. Go straight into this field! The jobs are going to be more nuanced and greater in number. But, remember, your jobs might not be in Europe or North America. The real growth will be in the rest of the world.

AG: Thank you very much for your time and sharing your interesting experiences. Best of luck with your important work.

Readers can learn more about Aban Marker Kabraji and IUCN on their website at

www.iucn.org and <http://zororoots.org>.

Aysha Ghadiali is a policy analyst for the US Forest Service, International Programs office.

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GOD IS WITH US: What Near-Death and Other Spiritually Transformative Experiences Teach Us About God and Afterlife is a compilation of 19 previously-published articles of Ken R Vincent from *De Numine*, *Journal of Near-Death Studies* and the *Universalist Herald* where he analyzes the latest scientific research on mystical / religious / spiritual experiences, that relate to life after death.

This online book is available free of charge in several versions. Individual Chapters of this book can be read at: www.near-death.com/vincent.html.

A single web page version can be read at: <http://www.near-death.com/god-is-with-us.html> . An e book version in PDF format is available to download at: <http://www.near-death.com/ebooks/nde/God-Is-With-Us-What-NDEs-and-Other-STEs-Teach-Us-About-God-and-Afterlife.pdf>.

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BIRTHS

Rohan Eric Mistry, a boy, to Cristina and Eric Mistry (Las Vegas, NV), sister to Riya, granddaughter to Roshan and Khushrow Mistry (San Francisco, CA) and Norma and Javier Garcia (Las Vegas, NV) in San Francisco, CA on May 23, 2013.

Calvin Water Mobed, a boy, to Darius and Jamie Mobed, grandson to Goher and Danny Mobed (Miami, FL) in Boston, MA on June 3, 2013.

Kaizad Panthaki, a boy, to Zubin and Dimple Panthaki, brother to Karl and Kayaan in Miami, FL on June 9, 2013.

Ella May Cooper, a girl, to Xerxes and Karen Cooper, granddaughter to Kersi and Aniheeta Cooper (Toronto, ONT) and John and Mary Tu (Niagara Falls, ONT) in White Plains, NY on June 24, 2013.

Ava Jasavala, a girl, to Zubin Jasavala and Holly Wilhelm, granddaughter to Armaity and Rayomand Jasavala, great granddaughter to Nergis Jasavala and Arnawaz and Burjor Golwala and Cathy and Tony Wilhelm in Oakville, ONT on June 26, 2013.

Parsa Tarapore, a boy, to Soraya and Phiroz Tarapore, brother to Ava, granddaughter to Erach and Silloo Tarapore in San Francisco on July 22, 2013.

Zara Jasavala, a girl, to Ruzbeh and Bnaifer Jasavala, granddaughter to Armaity and Rayomand Jasavala and great granddaughter to Nergis Jasavala, Arnawaz and Burjor Golwala and Adil and Pilsa Desai (Vancouver, BC) in Oakville, ONT on July 24, 2013.

Marcus Jal Avari Silva, a boy, to Jennifer and Jonathan, brother to Asha, grandson to Dinci and Nausheer Avari (New York) on August 11, 2013.

Sophie Lynne Engineer, a girl, to Katie and Godrej Engineer, granddaughter to Khurshid and Jehangir Engineer and Lynne and Roger Galvin, great granddaughter to Perin Engineer on September 3, 2013.

Julie Shirin Flynn Dastoor, a girl, to Elizabeth and Merzi Dastoor, sister to Neville and Seamus,

granddaughter to Sarosh and Noshir Dastoor and Julie and John Flynn, niece to Tineke Keesmaat and Neville Dastoor in Waterloo, ONT on September 6, 2013.

Jeuna Kohl Munshi, a girl, to Stephanie and Feroze Munshi, granddaughter to Dolly and Kersi Munshi (Miami, FL) in San Francisco, CA on September 10, 2013.

Olivia Lyla Karanjia, a girl, to Melissa and Zarvan Karanjia, sister to Zarius and Joshua, granddaughter to Zarin and Neville Karanjia, and Debbie Jones, great granddaughter to Hilla and Dara Deboo and Dhun Karanjia, niece to Kureshan (Oscar) Roman, cousin to Adora Roman in Chicago, IL on September 26, 2013.

Ayden Bansal, a boy, to Amit and Pooja Bansal, grandson to Percis and Rakesh Bansal in New York, NY on October 3, 2013.

Jayhan Firdosh Bhesania, a boy, to Firdosh and Rushna Bhesania, brother to Kaizad, grandson to Kersy and Meher Bhesania (Dubai, UAE) and late Baji and Perviz Patel, nephew to Deenaz Patel (Schaumburg, IL) in Kirkland, WA on October 14, 2013. (PICTURE BELOW)

Ariana Deboo, a girl, to Zarine and Mehrab Deboo, sister to Camran,



granddaughter to Sunny and Hoshi Deboo and Bachi and Bomi Damkewala (Chicago, IL), great granddaughter to Hilla and Dorab Deboo, niece to Sherry Deboo, Diana (Roy) Gazdar, Persis (Burjis) Sidhwa, cousin to Natasha, Kashmiri, and Arman on October 15, 2013.

Vida Roxana Irankhah, a girl to Roya Farsinejad Kermani and Afshin Irankhah, sister to Mitra in Montreal, on October 25, 2013.

Maya Bhathena Grandis, a girl to Anahita Bhathena and Joe Grandis, grand-daughter to Sheroo and Minoo Bhathena (Mississauga, Ont) in Chicago, on December 8, 2013.

Andreas Mirza, a boy to Shireen Dholoo and Tony Vahedi, brother to Kamran and grandson to Jimmy and Shahdokht Dholoo, in Gaithersburg, Maryland, on December 11, 2013.

Jake, a boy to Feroza and Gil Nusbaum, brother to Gev, grandson to Khorshed and Cyrus Mistry, in New Jersey, on December 24, 2013.

NAVJOTES

Darius Sohrabji, son of Neville and Robyn Sorabji in San Jose, CA on June 6, 2013.

Jehan Bhandari, son of Zarina and Rohinton Bhandari in Gilroy, CA on August 3, 2013.

Sofia Dell, daughter of Daren and Roshni Dell, granddaughter of Marzi and Kermin Byramjee on August 3, 2013.



Jesil and Shayan Bharucha, children of Jamshed and Sneha Bharucha (Houston TX) on October 12, 2013.

Cyrus Bharucha, son of Kersasp and Tazeen Bharucha, brother Zahra, grandson of Rusi and Banoo Bharucha and Sam and Khursheed Behramfram in Richmond, BC on November 10, 2013.

Zachary, Sam and Nicole Irani, children of Zena and Jhangir Irani of Philadelphia, grandchildren of Roshan and Jimmy Bharucha (Philadelphia PA.) and Arnavaz and Gustad Irani (Boca Raton, Florida) in Mumbai, on December 18, 2013. (Photo above)

M I L E S T O N E S

as of December 31, 2013

WEDDINGS

Sufna Gheyara, daughter of Vistasp & Viloo Gheyara (Michigan) to Joseph John, son of Dr. Chacko & Rosemary John (Louisiana) at Shenandoah Country Club in West Bloomfield, MI on June 1, 2013.

Farishteh Panthaky, daughter of Jal and Meher Panthaky to Jamie Ericksson, son of Ralph Ericksson and Nancy Newman in Blue Mountain, ONT on July 27, 2013.

Shaheen Oshtory, daughter of Meherji and Abha Oshtory to Rohit Khosla, son of Meena and Narendra Khosla in Atherton, CA on August 3, 2013.

Rukshana Bharucha, daughter of Guloo and Yazdi Bharucha (Toronto, ONT) to Kamal Baliappa on August 4, 2013.

Daena Ghadi ally, daughter of Toni and Viraf Ghadi ally to Jordan Faiman on August 17, 2013.

Sharon Natasha Byramjee, daughter of Zavar and Roshan Byramjee (Oakville, ONT) to Farokhzad Jamshed Gandhi, son of Jimmy and Perviz Gandhi (New Brunswick, ONT) in Jasper, AB on August 18, 2013.

Natasha Bhesania, daughter of Sanobar and Kersi Bhesania to Bashir, son of Farida and Moh Versa on August 30, 2013.

Cyrus Press, son of Minoo and Zarin Press to Anna Lee Davis, daughter of Cal and Mary Davis in Chicago, IL on September 1, 2013.

Dinaz Maia Vilms, daughter of Kamal and late Juri Vilms (Palo Alto, CA) to Matthew Harmon, son of Janet McKenney and M.C. Harmon in Gilroy, CA on September 21, 2013.

Darius Billimoria, son Katy and Minoo Billimoria, to Ladan Soheilian daughter of Azardokh Mani and Hekmat Soheilian, in Montreal, on November 22, 2013.

Dinyar Patel son of Phiroze and late Aban Patel (California) to Parinaz, daughter of Zinobia and Mahiar Madan, (Mumbai) in Mumbai on December 22, 2013.

DEATHS

Banoo Daruwalla, 80, wife of Pesi Daruwalla, mother of Zenobia (David Matthews) Daruwalla,

Hooprize (Zlatko) Bjelic, Eric Daruwalla, grandmother of Steele Matthews, sister of Viloo Driver in Richmond, BC on August 9, 2013.

Bomanji (Bomi) Shiavex Cowasji, husband of Freny Cowasji, father of Shireen (Hormuzshaw) Wania, Arnaz Cowasji, Shiavax (Vahishta)



Cowasji in Mississauga, ONT on August 15, 2013.

Vera Nadirshaw, 89, wife of Rustom Nadirshaw, daughter of Justice Minocher Lalkaka, mother of Perveen (Mujtaba) Tayabali, Zubin (Tanaz) Nadirshaw, Farrokh (Zenobia) Nadirshaw, grandmother Kayzad, Tushna, Rizwan, Shaista, Irfan, sister of Khorshed Cama in North Vancouver, BC on August 24, 2013.

Jamshid Khosravan-Ahoora, 64, husband of Mahvash, father of Azita and Anita, brother of Farangis Ahoora (Yazdani) and Pari Ahoora, cousin of Parvin Anousheh (Khosravi) and Paridokht Anousheh (Sorooshi) in Tehran, Iran on August 25, 2013.

Maneck Pirojshah Elchidana, 76, father of Annahita (Jehangir) Jasavala, grandfather of Navaz Jasavala and Rohini (James) Chitwood in Belgaum, India on September 2, 2013.

Sohrab Faramroze Mobed, husband of Meher Mobed, father of Cyrus and Jamshed Mobed, brother of Homee Mobed and Zarin (Sam) Mavalvala in North Carolina on September 8, 2013.

Parvindokht Ziabary, 82, wife of late Khodayar Kaviani, mother of Mahindokht, Mehrafarin, Mehrangiz, Bozorgmehr, Azadmehr Kaviani, mother-in-law of Armit Rostami in Tehran, Iran on September 16, 2013.

Faramji Minwalla, 80, husband of Mani Minwalla, father of Jamshed, Jahingir, Perosha and Mehrin Dastoor, father-in-law of Tushnamaity Minwalla, Cyrus Dastoor and Stacy, grandfather of Vera, Jazmin, Narius, Aneeta, Daraius, Karen, Justin and Savannah on September 19, 2013.

Shernaz Noshir Nicolwalla, wife of Noshir Nicolwalla, mother of Adil and Neville Nicolwalla and Farzana Wania in Karachi, Pakistan on September 20, 2013.

Viloo Rusy Mory, 73, wife of Rusi Mory, mother of Zubin (Dilnaz) Mory (New York), grandmother of Jeh, Zaal and Jidina on October 1, 2013.

Akhtar Khadiv Parsi, 95, sister of Hormozdyar Khadiv Parsi (Vancouver, BC), mother of Pari (Aspi) Batha (Jamshidi), grandmother of Raieti and Kaveh Batha in Melbourne, Australia on October 7, 2013.

MaryAnne Patell, wife of Sam Minocher Patell (Chicago and Florida), sister-in-law of Rohinton Minocher Patell and Zarin Minocher Patell in Chicago, IL on October 7, 2013.

Mobed Framroze (Fali) Kanga, husband of Sunnu Kanga, father of Deelnavaz Daraius Tarapore in Chino Hills, CA on October 7, 2013.

Farrokh Keki Ghadi ally, husband of Naomi, father of Zain, Zavera and Shaan Ghadi ally, son of Pearl Ghadi ally, brother of Katy Tamboli (Houston, TX), Hoshang, and Sorab in Mississauga, ONT on October 8, 2013.

Mobed Dinyar Goshtasb Shahzadi, 61, husband of Mahvash Behmardi, father of Delshad and Shiva Shahzadi, brother of Fereidoon (Shahi) Shahzadi, brother-in-law of Shahin Bastanipour in Yazd, Iran on October 18, 2013.

Erika Nargolwala, wife of Burjor Nargolwala, mother of Andrew Nargolwala in Sun City, FL on October 26, 2013.

Rati Godrej Bhagat, mother of Nevill, Percy and Aban, mother-in-law to Maharukh, Meher and Yazad, grandmother of Burzis (Farzin) Jasper, Arzan (Roxena), Roneesha

M I L E S T O N E S

as of December 31, 2013

and Hufriya in North Vancouver, BC on November 27, 2013.

Katayoun Rostam Marzban on November 20, 2013.

Marzban Dalal, father of Meenaish Damania (NJ) in Pune, India on November 28, 2013.

Rostam Poulad-Noshirvan, 69, husband of Mitra Poulad (Sotoodian), father of Niloufar Zartoshti, Mehrbanoo Mehr-Rostami and Mehrban Poulad, brother of Poulad Poulad-Noshirvan in Vancouver, BC on November 30, 2013.

Mahrukh Bhujwala, wife of Maneck Bhujwala, mother of Shernaz, sister of Kyanosh, Viraf and Goolestan in Huntington Beach, CA on December 4, 2013.

Zarin Jimmy Pestonji, wife of Jimmy Pestonji, mother of Shehryar and Shahveer, daughter of late (Brigadier) Jal and Golab Golwalla, sister of Behroze Ghadially in London, UK.

Adil Godiwalla, 72, husband of Arnavaz, father of Shara (Cyrus Subawalla) (Illinois), Shanaya (Barry) Averill (Texas), Nina (Boris Siperstein) (Texas), Amy (Shaun Kruse) (N.Carolina), grandfather of Daraius Subawalla, Sabra and Summer Averill, Zubin and Zarina Siperstein, Landon Adil Kruse, brother of Yezdi (Wisconsin) and Kersi (Jamsedpur), died in Houston, on December 16, 2013.

Bomy Boyce, husband of the late Dina Boyce, father of Jamsheed Boyce and Pheeroozah (Phee) Vania, father in law of Anna Boyce

and Gaman Patel, grandfather of Diana and Alison, in Toronto, on Tuesday, December 24, 2013.

Khushroo Burjorji Mody, 94, husband of Dr Mani K Mody, father of Dr Cyrus (Freny), Dr Kamal (Behram) Taraporewalla; Perveen (Minoo) Katrack; grandfather of Dr Aimee (Percy Gyara), Dr Anahita and Behrose Taraporewalla; Behman and Kaizeen Mody; Raemin and Nasha Katrack, brother of Freny K Nalavala (Banglore) and Homai S Canteenwalla (Montreal) in Los Angeles, on January 3, 2014.

PLEASE SEND ALL SUBMISSIONS FOR MILESTONES TO MAHRUKH MOTAFRAM

Tel 262-821-5296

maharukhm83@gmail.com

Dr. Khushroo B. Mody

June 18, 1919-January 3, 2014

THE PASSING OF A BELOVED PHYSICIAN FROM KARACHI AT AGE 94 IN LOS ANGELES



My grandfather Khushroo Mody was born in Karachi to Burjorji M. Mody and Dossamai Mody. He was the second of five children. He was a genuinely good person who always put his patients first. He became a doctor because he choose to help people--to him his profession was his religion, and he followed the true Zarathushti way of treating people.

He received his MBBS in Bombay and then went to study further in London, England. He met my grandmother Mani B. Contractor in Europe, and in 1952 they got married and they returned to practice their professions. He practiced as a family practitioner, and my grandma practiced as a *Neuropsychiatrist*.

They had three children: a daughter, Kamal who is a pediatric dentist, a son, Cyrus, who is a Neurologist, and another daughter Perveen who is a Speech Pathologist. All three of them live in the Los Angeles area.

My Pappa as I know him was a happy, smiley, and lovely person, and has left behind seven grandchildren: Dr. Aimee Taraporewalla Gyara (and her husband Percy Gyara), Dr. Anahita Taraporewalla, Behrose Taraporewalla, Behman and Kaizeen Mody, Raemin and Nasha Katrack. His sisters Freny Nalavala of Banglore and Homai S. Canteenwalla of Montreal. He also leaves behind his sons in-law Behram and Minoo, and his daughter-in-law Freny.

He will be missed terribly by all his near and dear ones, and all his patients as well as those who he loved and care for. Pappa, your smile and love will be missed by one and all. May you rest in peace with all our loved ones. Watch over us for we will forever miss you.

Behrose Taraporewalla
Granddaughter

FEZANA Journal will coordinate initial contacts between interested parties; We do not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials. Contact Roshan Rivetna at RRRivetna@aol.com.

Female, 25, attractive, 5' 5", BA in Economics and Political science, post-graduate in Public Relations and Corporate Communications from Xavier's College, Mumbai; specialization in Event Management and Marketing, working as Manager of Marketing and Events in Mumbai. Extremely warm, loving and family oriented. Enjoys traveling, movies, family and friends, trained as professional dancer. Contact Farida at 9821105172, faridadordy@gmail.com. [F13-39].

Female, 31, slim, very fair, 5' 2", BE in Information Technology from University of Mumbai, currently working with Tata Consulting Services. Loving, family-oriented, sociable, loves music, books, willing to settle abroad; two older sisters married and settled in Vancouver and New Jersey. Contact Gool at 91 22 26416316, ginwalla@vsnl.net. [F13-43]

Female, 25, 5ft 8" tall, very pretty, B.Tech in Interior Design, currently working as Lecturer at Institute of Fashion and Interior Design and Interior Designer with Architectural Firm. Interests include music, reading and traveling. Shortlisted in Regional semifinals in the Miss India competition. Alliance invited from well-qualified, professional Parsi men. Willing to settle in India or abroad. Contact uncle in USA at temxer23@gmail.com. [F13-46].

Female, 28, attractive, Masters Degree in a para-medical field, well-settled in West Coast, USA; outgoing, friendly, fond of reading, music and the outdoors. Seeks alliance from a highly qualified, professional male, well-settled or willing to settle in the USA. Please contact aunt at dianatar@hotmail.com. [F13-49].

Female, 29, 5' 3", M.Sc. in International HR from Manchester University, UK, B.A. (Hons) in Hotel Management, presently working as Training Manager in an International Hotel chain in Pune, India. Outgoing, warm, loves traveling, a complete foodie, willing to settle anywhere. Interested in meeting well-educated, well-settled professional. Contact aemehta54@yahoo.com or call India 91 79 2685 0303 or 91 9974355403. [F13-51].

Female, 26, BSc in Business and Management Studies from Management Development Institute of Singapore, presently working as International Marketing Manager in Mumbai. From highly educated family, with good ethics and values, willing to settle anywhere, brother is studying at Harvard. Contact topcollege4@gmail.com or mobile in Mumbai at 91 98 2107 4317. [F13-54].

Male, 62, widowed, living and working in Mumbai. Extremely good natured and outgoing, athletic, looking for companionship and possibly marriage. Contact sister in USA at maltese27614@yahoo.com. [M13-55].

Female, 68, Well-settled in West Coast, USA, young at heart, loves traveling, reading, music, movies; pleasant and sociable. Interested in meeting educated, professional gentleman. Contact Zubin at zubinbombaycoast@msn.com. [F13-56].

Female, 33, happy, fun-loving professional, 5' 5" tall, slim and attractive living in BC, Canada. Loves to travel and enjoys dancing and spending time with family and friends, among many other things. Interested in meeting a bright, happy, well-settled professional, who has integrity, a sense of humor, and a zest for life. If this sounds like you and piques your interest, say hi to: qtqtpy@yahoo.com. [F13-57].

Male, 48, MBA, CPA, well-settled in USA, self-employed successfully in motel management, travels frequently on business. Very sociable by nature, enjoys Parsi food and Indian music. Staunch believer in the Zoroastrian religion, values and traditions. Interested in meeting Zoroastrian lady with similar values and ethics. Contact friend at bnamaria@aol.com. [M13-58]

Female, 33, 5' 8", PhD, working in media (based in Singapore). Enjoys charity work, reading, trying out new restaurants, the gym, cooking, dancing, travel and frequenting the cinema. Down to earth / girl-next-door, has a big heart, attractive, versatile, cultured, witty and adventurous! Contact Parsi88@mail.com. [F13-59]

Female, 29, very pretty, fair, slim, Masters of Dental Surgery (Bangalore), practicing Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics in Bangalore. Enjoys reading, dancing, cooking, baking and traveling. Interested in meeting smart, good looking, well-educated boy. Contact dr.rohintonvevai@gmail.com. Willing to move to any country. [F13-60]

Male, 24, MS (EE), Michigan Technological University, Firmware Developer in Rochester, MN. Enjoys traveling, motorcycling and movies. Contact pezaan@gmail.com, 1 906 370 1585. [M13-61]

Looking for a Soul Mate? Try these matrimonial sites and services:

www.chaalokaajkariye.com (new website, launched in 2011)

www.Matrimonial.Zoroastrianism.com

www.zoroastrians.net

www.TheParsiMatch.com

www.shaadi.com; www.ParsiMatrimony.com

www.ParsiShaadi.com

www.MatrimonialParsiZoroastrianism.com

Mrs. Gool Banaji, Parel, Mumbai, goolpesi@gmail.com, tel: 91-22-2416 6120.



Mahrukh Maneck Bhujwala October 17, 1949 - December 4, 2013

Mahrukh Bhujwala of Huntington Beach, California, daughter of the late Ervad Dadiba and Perin Raimalwalla, passed away on Wednesday, December 4, 2013.

Born in Udwada (near Iranshah Atash Behram) Maharukh grew up in Nargol and Vapi, and studied upto B.A. Economics at Daman College, India. After her marriage and coming to the US she got her A.A. degree in Early Childhood Education at Pasadena City College, California, and her CNA license in nursing at Mission College, Santa Clara, CA. She worked as a pre-school teacher, doctor's assistant for several doctors in CA and Austin, Texas, nurse at various hospitals, clinics and private homes, and ran a Daycare service in her home in Cypress, CA, Austin, TX, and San Jose, CA.

Mahrukh was a devoted wife and mother, who volunteered cooking food, etc. at community events ever since we co-founded the Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC) in Los Angeles in 1974, and the Zarthushti Anjuman of Northern California (ZANC) in 1980, her specialty being preparing Malido for Jashans (the last one she made in spite of her poor health, in honor of Ervad Fali Kanga who passed away a month ago). She was a generous person and always helped all whom she saw in need specially poor homeless people and school children.

May Ahuramazda bless her soul with eternal peace !

A memorial meeting was held on Sunday January 19, 2014 at the CZC Centre, Orange, CA

Profound condolences Maneck Bhujwala and daughter Shehnaz Bhujwala

ADIL GODIWALLA

March 29, 1941--December 16, 2013



Adil Godiwalla graduated from Banaras Hindu University and received a Masters in Civil Engineering from the University of Missouri at Rolla. For many years his name was synonymous with the Houston Airport system and he had endeared himself to many in the engineering and construction profession in the Bayou City. He shared his expertise with foreign airports, working on projects in Ecuador and Costa Rica.

After more than 35 years of service working for the City of Houston, Adil retired in October 2012 and worked as a consultant. On his retirement Houston Mayor Annise Parker issued a city proclamation making October 6, 2012 Adil Minoo Godiwalla Day. His colleagues described Adil as a genius; a brilliant, kind, quiet, gentleman with a great sense of humour and an extraordinary memory, and was considered a legend in the Civil Engineering profession and he was likened to "Encyclopedia Britannica" by his boss.

Adil passed away in his Houston home on December 16, 2013 and is survived by wife Arnavaz; daughters Shara, Shanaya, Nina, Amy; and brothers Yezdi and Kersi Godiwalla.

WOMEN IN THE SHAHNAMEH : THEIR HISTORY AND SOCIAL STATUS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL SOURCES

By Djalal Khaleghi Motlagh; Edited by Nahid Pirnazar
Translated by Brigitte Neuenschwander
Published in 2012 by Mazda Publishers
ISBN 978-1568592787

The thought of learning new and interesting facts about the women in the *Shahnameh* was the motivating factor in my reading and review of the recently published book *Women in the Shahnameh: Their History and Social Status within the Framework of Ancient and Medieval Sources*, by Djalal Khaleghi Motlagh. This book was edited by Nahid Pirnazar and published in 2012 by Mazda Publishers. The original manuscript was written in 1971, in German, by Djalal Khaleghi Motlagh as his doctoral dissertation. Dr. Brigitte Neuenschwander translated this original dissertation from German to English. Dr. Pirnazar has included additional commentaries and updates to this text by Dr. Khaleghi. As an addition to the original German text, Dr. Pirnazar has ensured that all the Persian versions of the verses referred to or quoted in the text in the footnotes have been traced and added. It has been a 14 year journey for Dr. Pirnazar to bring this extremely important work to the academic community, accessible to all in English.

The book starts with an introduction by the author in which he tries to clarify the role of the female gender within the mythology of Iran. This examination takes place in order to help determine if women played an important role, and if so, to what extent. We are introduced to the early Zoroastrian system of family structure that existed at this time. Armaiti, Ashi, Daena, and Anahita are a few goddesses that are discussed in the first part of the book. The author examines these goddesses from various sources of the time: Avesta, Gathas, and Yashts, just to name a few. The introduction comes to an end with the story of creation from the Bundahishn, which leads us to the first women in the *Shahnameh*.

The *Shahnameh* is a very fascinating and renowned literary work in Persian history. In general, literary works of this time portrayed women as not particularly knowledgeable, not given many rights, and generally perceived as subservient to men. Yet, the author's convictions state that the women in the *Shahnameh* were "lively figures with warmth, courage, intellect and even a certain degree of independence." He goes on to say that the women in the *Shahnameh* as lovers are always willing to give everything to prove their love; they don't shy away from risk. As wives, they are loyal comrades

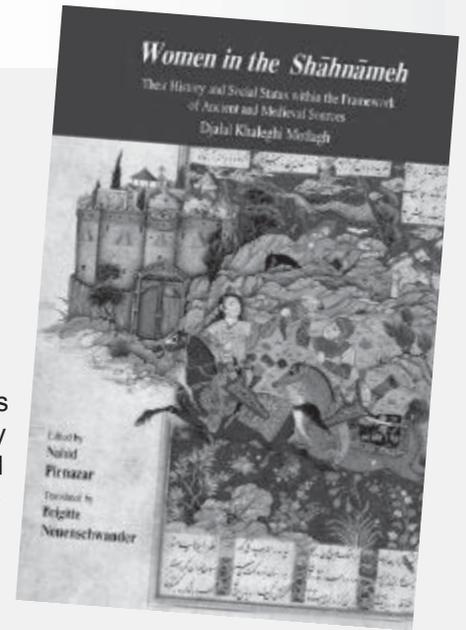
to their husbands; as mothers they live only for their children; and as heroines, they are as brave as men, yet can be tender and full of femininity.

This is lofty praise for the women of this period not often bestowed on them by other literary sources.

There are many female characters in the *Shahnameh* and therefore, the author discusses all the women from the mythical part and only the most important from the historical part. The historical part is divided into women of nobility and women belonging to the common people. The women of the nobility are represented by Faranak, mother of Feridun, Rudabeh, wife of Zal, Sudabeh, wife of Key Kavus, Tahmineh, wife of Rostam, and Katayun, the daughter of the emperor, they represent some of the highlighted women. The author defines for us the role these women played in the *Shahnameh* and outlines their characteristic traits for the reader to get a clearer picture of the women of this era.

The common woman is also examined in the course of this book. These common women had numerous roles: servants, slaves, female cupbearers, musicians, singers, dancers, teachers and wet nurses. As is the case in most patriarchal families, including those of old Iran, boys were always more desired than girls. The boys continued the family name and supported the house in times of war and peace. Yet, the author gives us specific examples of how in the *Shahnameh* girls are wanted in a family, especially if they already have boys in the family. One specific quote from the *Shahnameh* from the poet himself states, "If the child is well-behaved and thrives splendidly, then hold it dearly, no matter if boy or girl." This emphasizes the ready acceptance of girls among the Iranians compared to other cultures of this time.

Various other topics such as the status of the wife within marriage, the marriage rituals and the place of women in society are covered in this book. Reading this book has



encouraged me to read in more depth the *Shahnameh* itself. I have come away with the knowledge that women did play a significant role in society during this period, there was even a mention of women who ruled Iran, even though the rule was brief! Much emphasis is placed on analyzing and comparing the accounts of women during this era by

numerous sources of this time. The individual stories about the women and the detail to which the author compares and contrasts the salient points will serve any academic study of women in the *Shahnameh* well. This new book will only enhance the understanding of women during this era and will serve as a basis for further study.

Reviewed by: Keshvar Buhariwalla is a member of the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT) and is currently serving as the ZANT President. She received her Bachelors of Science degree from Loyola University in New Orleans and served in the Army Corps of Engineers as an officer for 4 years. She is married to Kali and has three sons.

Anahita Ancient Persian Goddess and Zoroastrian Yazata

Edited by Payam Nabarz

Published in 2012 by Avalonia, UK 275 pages

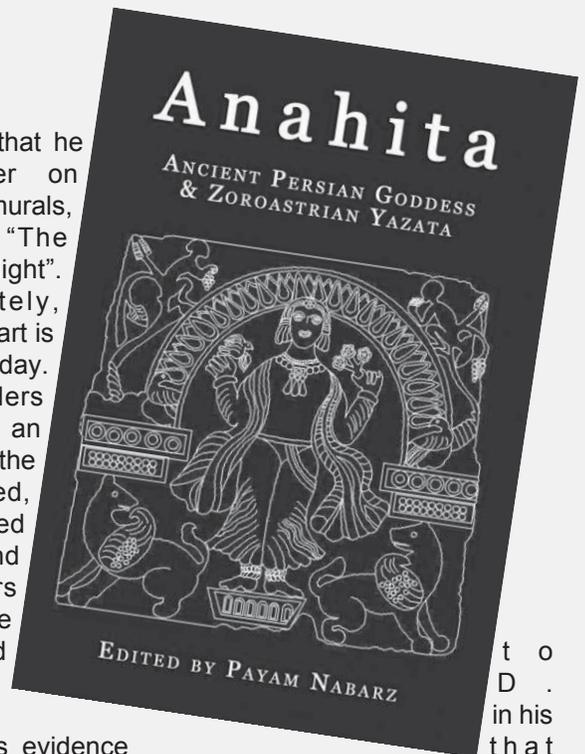
ISBN 978-1-905297-30-6

Anahita has become a very popular name for girls in the last twenty years, especially in North America; however, Anahita was even more popular as a goddess in ancient history, as far back as 3000 years ago. In the Zoroastrian religion, Anahita, or Aredvi Sur Anahita is a Yazata. In fact, reading the book, one finds she was considered so important that Ahura Mazda sought her help in making Zarathushtra a true believer in the religion. Payam Nabarz writes in his introduction on page 19, "...we see a glimpse of her eminent pre-Zoroastrian role as even Ahura Mazda pays her homage and asks for her help." He continues with this thought on page 21 when he quotes from verses 17-19 of the Aban Yasht. The book is divided into three parts. Part I of the book is a collection of academic papers, Part II portrays Anahita depicted in the arts, and Part III features poetry.

Part I features the contribution of thirteen scholars. The following are some of the highlights. According to Dr. Israel Campos Mendez, in the 5th century BCE, "...Ahura Mazda is no longer the only deity being invoked..." instead, He, along with Mithra and Anahita, formed a "triad acting as the main gods among Persians". Dr. Kaveh Farrokh in his article propounds the idea of a link between goddess Anahita and Dame du Lac (Lady of the Lake) of the Arthurian legends of ancient Britannia. In his article, Dr. Matteo Compareti describes the carvings in the rocks at Taq-i Bustan. It is a complex of monuments in the outskirts of Kermanshah, in Western Iran. Based on the descriptions of Anahita in the Aban Yasht, it is believed that the lady in the carvings at Taq-i Bustan is Anahita.

Sheda Vasseghi writes about a very interesting fact. William Morris Hunt was a prominent American artist of the 19th century. He was asked to paint two murals for the New York State Capitol in Albany. He was so fascinated

by Anahita that he painted her on one of the murals, titled "The Flight of Night". Unfortunately, this work of art is lost to us today. The builders did not do an efficient job, the roof leaked, paint started peeling, and ten years later, the murals had been removed. M. Murdock, article, gives evidence Anahita was the mother of Mithra.



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In ancient times, cures for illnesses were not known so prevention of illness was of primary importance. As a result, cleanliness and sanitation were highly regarded. It is no wonder, then, according to Sam Kerr, in his article titled "An-ahitam Purity", that Anahita, whose name means, "not impure, not polluted", should become such a respected deity.

In their article on "Politics of Hot and Mineral Springs and Anahita", Seyed Sadrudin Mosavi Jashni, Farhang Khademi Nadooshan, Hassan Nia, and Masoud Sabzali say, "The construction of Anahita's temple reached its apogee at the time of the Parthian period." The Sassanian dynasty also gave great importance to Anahita. This can be seen in the rock reliefs at Darabgird, Naqsh-e Rostam, and

Taqi-Bustan. In fact, the Sassanian kings believed their right to rule was bestowed upon them by Ahura Mazda, Anahita, and Mithra. There is also evidence of an Anahita water ritual being followed in Mahayana Buddhism in Japan.

Behzad Mahmoudi, Amir Mansouri, Dr. Kamyar Abdi, Dr. Gholamreza Karamian, and Farhang Khademi Nadooshan in their abstract on page 203 talk about the recent excavations in 2009 and 2010 that have revealed stucco from the Sassanid period. It is believed that the female figure depicted could very well be Anahita. Maryam Zour, Saman Farzin, and Babak Aryanpour write about the role of women in Ancient Elam (which would be the area southwest of Iran today). Women were considered superior; in fact, it was almost a matriarchal society. The final article expounds on the beginning of urbanization in Gour City in the Sassanian Empire. In fact, the Plan of Gour pictured in the article indicates a high level of design and development. At the center of this concentric city plan is an Anahita temple built next to the palace, indicating her elevated position in

the royal family. We can see how Anahita had a very broad influence over society spanning hundreds of years.

In Payab Nabarz's words, "This brings us to 2012 and this anthology which is the single largest study of Anahita in 1000 years." Part II of the book has pictures of several statues and paintings, and photographs of the Temple of Anahita at Bishapur. Finally, Part III is a beautiful poem titled Great Lady Anahita, by Katherine Sutherland. The poem extols the many virtues of the goddess/Yazata.

Having named my daughter Anahita, I felt this book was a must-have! I cannot say I came away with one clear vision of Anahita, because so many scholars have made contributions towards this compilation. However, I did come away with the idea that she was a very significant presence in ancient times and played a vital role not only in religion and society, but in politics also. It was fascinating to see the temples built in her honor, the coins minted with her image, and the authority she wielded over kings and the common man.

Reviewed by: *Nina Kalianivala lives in Fort Worth, Texas with her husband Zarir, and her mother-in-law, Maneck. Her daughter, Anahita, is studying in Greensboro, North Carolina. She is a member of ZANT and teaches religious class for the little ones. By profession, Nina is a middle school English teacher.*

Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw: A Man of His Time

By Brigadier Behram M. Panthaki (Retd) and Mrs. Zenobia Panthaki
Published by Niyogi Books, New Delhi, India. # of pages 250

The book launch is scheduled for April 3, 2014, at the Manekshaw Center, Delhi Cantonment, to celebrate Sam's 100th birthday. It was presented at the 10th World Zoroastrian Congress, Mumbai, December, 2013.

How does one characterize a General who liberates a country within two weeks and in the thick of war finds time to unwind at a discotheque... or was this just another rumour? What was his yardstick for discipline versus indulgence when his only comment to a captain, whose dalliance with a tribal girl resulted in a military standoff, was, "Boy, I hope she was worth it!" Which General carries music LPs and Playboy magazines for officers serving on pickets, and walks away from bacon and eggs at the officers' mess, opting for a 'puri saag' breakfast with his troops? How much steel do you need in the spine to tell a Defence Minister to mend his ways or to offer your resignation to a Prime Minister rather

than be catapulted into an untimely, unplanned war? How did the Chief of the Army Staff keep the bureaucracy perpetually on its toes with his bold and mystifying comments on files?

All of the above and much more about the life and times of Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw can be found in a coffee table book written by Brig Behram Panthaki and Zenobia Panthaki. Behram served on the General's staff from 1965 to 1973. His closeness to Sam gave him a unique insight into his ideals, his military prowess, his humour and his way with words. With 200 plus photographs, citations, letters from eminent personalities like Lord Mountbatten, and with the backdrop of the geo-political situation in the subcontinent, the book has a lot to offer. It transports the reader to a time of gracious living and high thinking. Information on where and how to get this treasure trove will follow.

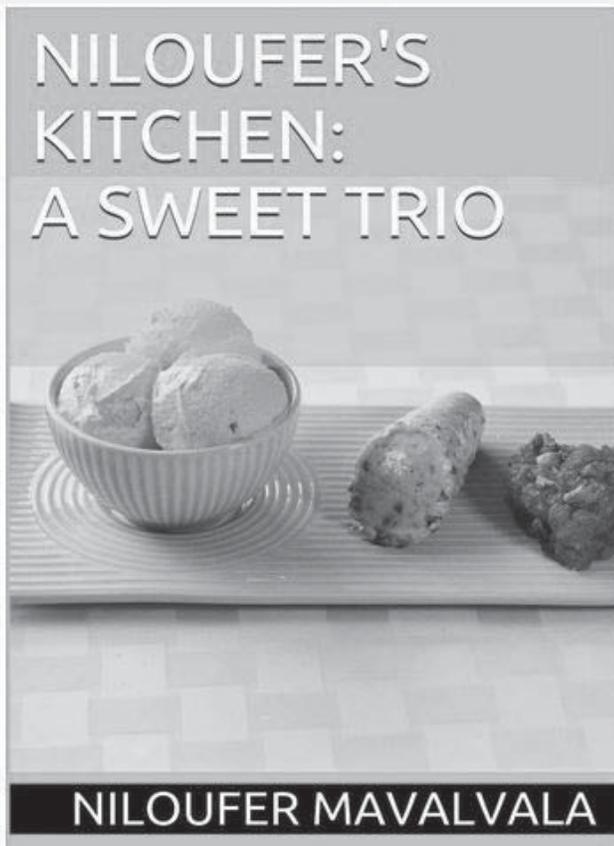
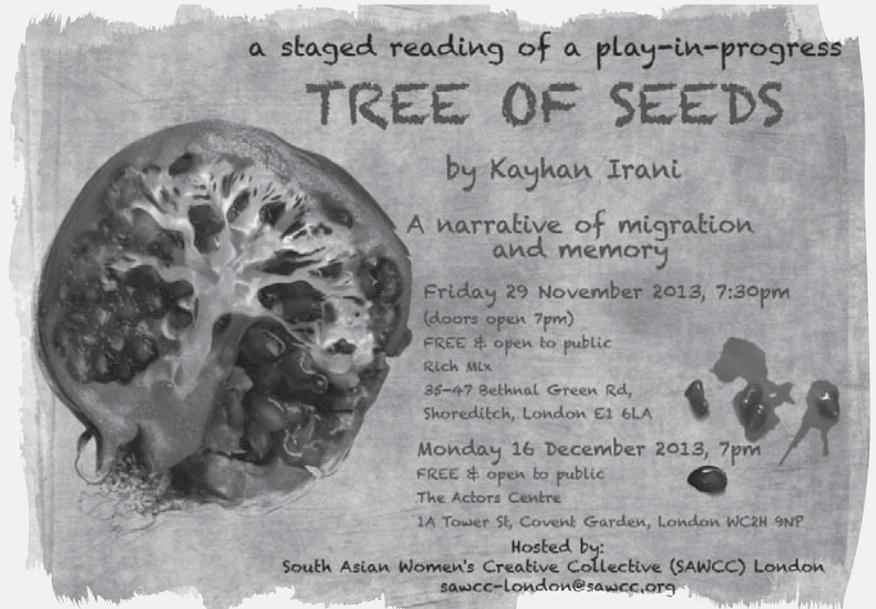
Tree Of Seeds

staged reading of a play-in-progress by Emmy award winning American writer Kayhan Irani
Directed by Zachary James

A narrative of migration and memory

A young woman and her brother sail from Iran to India. Found on the docks in Yemen, they are taken in by a local Indian family on the eve of an anti-British uprising.

As hostilities rise, public and personal boundaries are drawn. Evolving embroidery traditions weave a tale of two communities bound by religion yet separated by culture, and the history of a people in transition.



Decades of passion and having taught cooking all over the world has finally prompted Niloufer to write e-cookbooks. This technological approach came in keeping young adults in mind. Many live in small spaces. These e-books are the solution. Preview it and buy with a simple click. The result is a cookbook library stored within your Kindle reader!

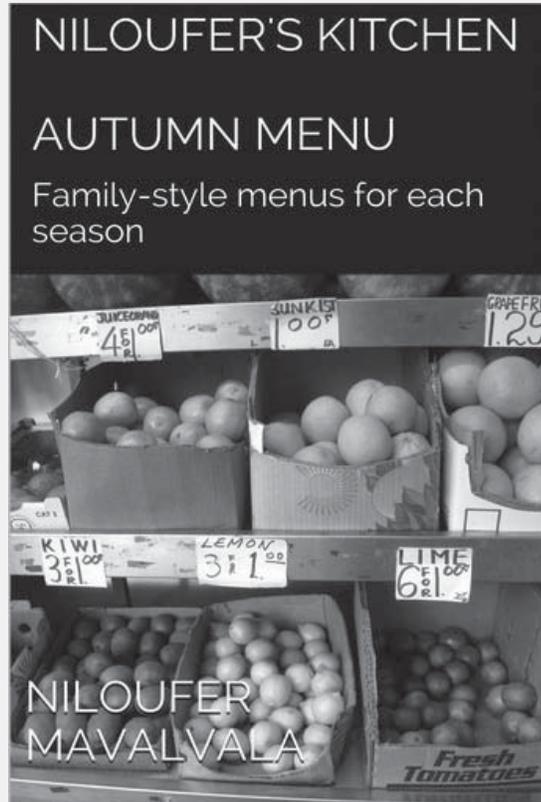
The books are menu or cuisine based. The first is a set of four - one for each season. With Autumn and Winter both currently in circulation, it has already achieved a 5-star rating! Many more are promised, with *French Bistro Food* and *Moroccan cuisine* being her personal favourites already in the pipeline. Niloufer has promised to create one on Parsi cuisine to follow at some point.

Being a teacher at heart, detailed explanations and tips give these books a fresh outlook. She writes as she would verbally teach; a format and style she has chosen for her books. Trivia and Tips make it interesting for the learner and the expert. It is an art form narrating her own life story. The series is called *Niloufer's Kitchen*.

Born and raised in Karachi, Niloufer started to bake at 8 years old. She started teaching solo at 17, and from there, there was no turning back. Having to move from her home base, she soon realised that cooking was a wonderful way to make friends; food shared is a special kind of experience. In Dubai she managed to

organise cooking classes which made her 6 year stint enjoyable and memorable. Moving to Canada, it made her resolve even stronger to start the same, a happy way of making new friends, who share the joy of cooking.

Now, 13 years later, she has started holding fundraisers through her talent, continuing to support a couple of her favourite charities through the years.



Fortunately for her, both her daughters enjoy cooking and eating, and her husband is her source of truth and inspiration. Her mother who is a baker par excellence, does not hold back on her critical analysis, which has pushed Niloufer to excel. Her brother was the one who started her off on this journey with positive encouragement and continues to be her ardent supporter. Her Villie fui (father's sister) has taught and guided her, having shared her own wealth of experience and knowledge that could not possibly be found anywhere else in this world. But nothing would have been possible without her father's sincerest belief in her. The bribing, cajoling and unconditional love that embarked her on this journey on which there is nothing but loving gratitude to her dad, whom she remembers every day, knowing he is smiling down while enjoying this journey with her!

Niloufer has now created a blog page to be accessible to all who wish to ask her recipe related questions.

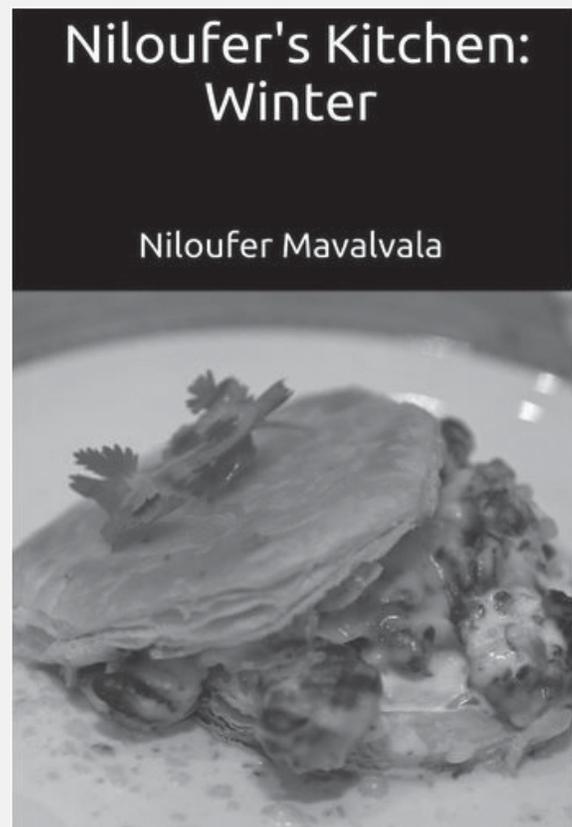
To access or purchase her books and all other inquiries please visit her blog at nilouferskitchen.blogspot.ca

The e-cookbooks are now available to gift through amazon.com. It can be gifted worldwide where ever your friends can use their Kindle. Gift Niloufer's Kitchen: Winter. It is a complete menu for the festive season from start to finish for 8 persons. With tips included to prepare and prep ahead of time.

Reviews for Niloufer's Kitchen: Autumn

My Gujarati friends and I prepared a veggie version of the mulligatawny soup from your cookbook. We used veggie broth and didn't add any chicken stock. We all loved it, including their children who really loved it. - *Jamsheed Wania*

Thanks Niloufer! I tried the mulligatawny soup which was amazing! Still need to try the other recipes. Amazing idea about these recipes. Wish you much success. - *Masooma Anvarali*



Excellent recipes! Worth a read and trying these - simply delicious and authentic. Perfect for entertaining your friends this fall. - 5 star review on Amazon.com

Reviews for Niloufer's Kitchen: Winter

The Escargot sauce was amazing. All 5 stars!! - *Villy Divecha*

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