



JOURNAL

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 Mah Adar-Dae-Bahman 1376 AY (Kadmi)

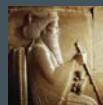
Social Justice

How far have we come since Cyrus the Great's first human rights charter?

*"Therefore may we be
 those who shall
 heal this world."
 —Yasna 30.9*



Also Inside:



**ZARATHUSHTRIAN
 RESPONSIBILITY**



**LENDING A HELPING
 HAND**



**LIVING A ZARATHUSHTI
 LIFE**



**FORGOTTEN IN
 PALESTINE**



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FEZANA JOURNAL

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Cyrus Cylinder

The Zarathushti Call for Action

"May we be among those who renew the world." (Yasna 30:9)

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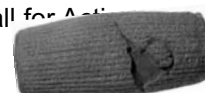
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ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

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Summer 2007:

**20th
ANNIVERSARY**

Fall 2007

ORAL HISTORY

**Guest Editors.
D.Patel H.Katki**

N.Merchant

Winter 2007

**Preserving and
Conserving our
Books and
Manuscripts.**

**Guest Editor
Homi Dhalla**

**Deadline for
Submission
Fall 2007**

August 1st 2007



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A word from the Editor

Dolly Dastoor

I begin writing this editorial on the last day of 2006 and you will read this probably on the first day of spring 2007. Much has happened in this period and much will happen. We will reflect on some and then contemplate on how we can move on.

2006 shook the Zarathushtis of the world with the controversy surrounding the allocation of housing in Mumbai, which led to the mass resignation of the Trustees, (later withdrawn), to the exposure of the deteriorating state of the "doongervadi" tower of silence, to the continuous mudslinging between people of different persuasions, for all sorts of issues. Now how does all this affect us in North America, you may ask? We are thousands of miles away, carving our own destiny here, with our own problems, some imported from the motherlands, and some home grown? But we live in a "global village", which is also very well connected in cyberspace, so that a ripple in one corner can cause a tsunami in another. And we need to change these ripples of negativism into ripples of positive energy. And this is exactly what our two young guest editors, Shireen Cama and Vistasp Sorooshian have been able to do in this issue.

They endeavored to find young people across the continent who have harnessed their creative energy into making this "global village" a better place to live. They have looked at the very difficult issue of "Social Justice" from different angles, the textual, the historical and the contemporary. They have made us reflect on our responsibility as Zarathushtis and as citizens of the world, to correct the injustices which exist, one step at a time.

We all cannot have the good fortune of being the movers and shakers of the world, but we can all give our time, our talent and our money to be agents of change in whatever corner of the world we live in. Our actions have to be motivated by fairness and doing the right thing. As Mr Ratan Tata, the chairman of the Tata Conglomerate said in an interview, "I want to be able to go to bed at night and say that I haven't hurt anybody". Simple

thought in simple words but with profound implications.

So what is the connection of social justice with the disharmony we saw in one part of the Zarathushti world in 2006. **The connection is the next generation.** Religion is not practiced in a vacuum, religion needs an infrastructure and a positive environment to flourish. The young people portrayed in this issue, the scholars and the social activists, are exercising responsibility and creativity as Zarathushtis, and it behoves the guardians of their generation, us adults, to put our differences aside and provide a solid platform for them to continue to flourish.

What better time than Spring and Naurooz, to pledge ourselves to "Frashokereti" to make this world a better place, both spiritually, politically, and socially.

*"Whatever thou dost not approve for thyself
do not approve for anyone else,
When thou hast acted in this manner
Thou art just."*

Sad Dar 65.12 Pahlavi Text ("Hundred Chapters")



Dolly Dastoor



Malcom
Patel
age 7



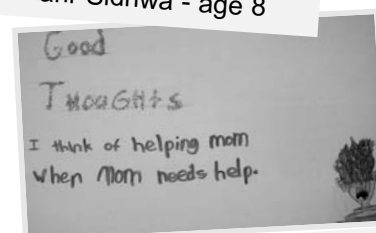
Darian Bathena - age 8



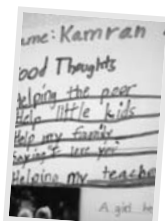
Michelle Dastur -
age 8



Zarir Sidhwa - age 8



Cyrus Irani - age 8



Kamran
Sirohi
age 7

A Message from the President

NauRooz Pirouz, the Dawning of a New Day

In English, "new day" can mean just another sunrise, or the beginning of a new phase in life, or even the dawning of a new age. NauRooz means all of the above. But most of all, NauRooz is a happy time, a time for welcoming the new, saying good bye to the past.

The last Zarathushti king, Yazdegard III was crowned on NauRooz, 632 at the age of 21. The Mahestan Assembly, which consisted of Zarathushti religious leaders and clan elders, wanted Yazdegard, the grandson of Khoshro Parviz, to restore the Sasanian empire to its past glory. There was great pomp and celebration. But the Yazdegard era did not turn out the way people had expected. The sovereignty of Iran passed into the hands of invaders in 641. Yazdegard died 10 years later. And with his death, the religious hierarchy and organization that the Sasanian elite had built up to sustain the Zarathushti faith, crumbled and fell.

But the Faith survived. Zarathushtis continue to celebrate NauRouz, wherever they live, regardless of who is the ruler or who is in charge.

NauRooz arrives at the moment of spring equinox. It signals the start of the growing season, the opening of flowers, and the sprouting of seed. It teaches us the law of the farm: one must plant the seed, water it, fertilize the soil, and provide the right environment for it to grow and produce fruit. If you plant something and neglect to take care of it, it will die.

So it was that a seed was planted by a few Zarathushtis in 1986. They sat down and drafted a constitution for a Federation that would stand the test of time. The constitution was signed and FEZANA was born the next year, in 1987. There was no coronation, no fanfare -- just a feeling of accomplishment and a hope for the future.

The mission of FEZANA is: "To further the cause of Zoroastrianism in North America." The essence of FEZANA's constitution is that we have resolved to work together to address the issues facing us in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, while at the same time guaranteeing the autonomy of individual associations and individual Zarathushtis. The focus is on resolving issues, not on personalities, politics, or power. It is indeed a new beginning for Zarathushtis, a NauRooz.

Over the last 20 years, we have strived to live up to these expectations. We have nourished the seeds and made FEZANA grow. But as we tried to work together, we found many differences. Zarathushtis have a distrust of leaders telling them what to do! Our different roots in Iran, India and Pakistan caused conflicts. The autonomy of the Associations makes it difficult to find common ground.

We are still learning how to work together. And we are finding commonalities and we have many talented people who truly love the community and want to work for the cause. We are addressing difficult issues, one by one. We have built trust.

So, now on NauRooz 1376, let us resolve to make more effort to learn from one another, to understand each other, to respect our differences and strive for synergy. Synergy is signified by barsom. When the thin, pliable barsom rods are tied together, it is impossible to bend or break them!

NauRooz celebrations start on the day of the spring equinox and continue for 12 days. NauRooz is a time to forgive and forget all grievances and differences and start the year with a fresh, new outlook. Whatever wishes one makes on NauRooz will come true during the year. On the 13th day, Sizdeh Bedar, everyone goes outdoors to enjoy

mother nature. The FEZANA Annual General Meeting on April 6-8 will fall during this auspicious period. We will listen to the success stories of our Associations to learn about community building, we will discuss different viewpoints on what it is to be Zarathushtis in North America, and we will find synergies that will pave the way for our bright future -- a future that we will all be proud to have created!

NauRooz Pirouz, Have a Successful New Day!

Rustom Kevala, FEZANA President





We would like to wish all our fellow Zarathushti a very happy Nourooz and at this time we would like to extend our sincere thanks to all our faithful donors to the Thousand Points of Light and a special "thank you" to those who continue to donate and support the FEZANA funds on a regular basis.

I took over the position of Funds and Finance Chairperson in December 1999 and at that time we had less than \$100,000 in all the FEZANA accounts. Our initial strategy was to create endowment funds in order to give a permanent financial stability to FEZANA funds. And as of today I am proud to say that we have been successful in establishing 5 endowment funds:

1. DamKevala fund for Welfare
2. Bhathena Endowment fund for Critical Assistance and Welfare
3. Kapadia Endowment fund for Academic Scholarships for undergraduate students
4. Kheradi Endowment fund for Academic Scholarships for graduate students, The FEZANA Scholar
5. Newly established fund by Dr. & Mrs. Hoshedar and Anahita Tamboli Endowment fund.

Let us also not forget the generous donation of \$25,000 from the Zardoshty family for Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Religion Education Scholarships.

With the grace of Ahura Mazda, we now have close to \$700,000 in all the FEZANA accounts as of the end of December 2006 when this report is being written. The Thousand Points of Light campaign was started in the fall of 2001 and at that time our long term ultimate goal was to reach \$1,000,000 in the next ten years. I am happy to inform the community that since the Fall of 2001 through to Fall of 2006 we have succeeded in reaching half our goal of \$500,000 and hopefully in the next five years we will have succeeded in achieving our full goal of \$1,000,000. Now that we are at the half way mark, we are changing the format to infuse a new excitement into the campaign.

FEZANA is happy to announce that we have been able to help a number of individuals and families by tapping into the reserves obtained from the dividends and

interest of these accounts and at the same time maintaining a secure solid base for all the above endowment funds. Besides all the money given out by the Welfare and Critical Assistance committee under the able guidance of Co-chairs Houtoxi Contractor and Hosi Mehta, FEZANA has approved the allocation of the following funds for 2006-2007 totaling \$114,538.

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------|
| Academic Scholarship Fund | \$10,000 |
| Religion Education Fund | \$ 7500 |
| Awards Committee | \$ 6538 |
| Sports Committee | \$ 7000 |
| ZYNA NA activities | \$ 10,000 |
| ZYNA for young Zarathushtis in India | \$ 9,000 |
| ZYNA for young Zarathushtis in Iran | \$ 9,000 |
| Research and Preservation | \$ 6,000 |
| Khorshed Jungalwala Rel. Lecture Series | \$ 5,000 |
| Excellence in Sports Fund | \$ 5,000 |
| Zarathushti Symphony Orchestra | \$10,000 |
| Creative and Performing Arts Fund | \$ 7000 |
| External Affairs (Interfaith) | \$ 500 |
| Un-NGO Committee | \$ 2,000 |
| World Z Youth Congress, Australia | \$ 10,000 |
| Zarathushti Youth Overseas Activity | \$ 5000 |
| Stanford U, Zoroastrian Studies Program | \$ 5000 |
| TOTAL | \$114,538 |

The appeals and needs of our community continue to expand every year. We need your support to maintain the projects that have been a core of the FEZANA organization and for the new projects that are developed each year. Thank you for all your support and help and I hope we continue to have positive growth of the funds with each passing month. Kindly continue to make your checks payable to FEZANA and indicate the fund/funds you support and mail to *Katayun Kapadia*, Treasurer, 3 Preamble Drive, Mount Laurel, NJ 08054.

CHAIR: Jerry Kheradi MD, FACC.

Committee : Katayun Kapadia, (Treasurer), Rashid Mehin, Behram Irani Celeste Kheradi



FINANCIAL UPDATES

FEZANA Updates



Between October 1, 2006 and December 31, 2006, donations totaling \$41,547 were received for the following funds. We thank you most sincerely for your very generous contributions. Each quarter we will report on the donations received which will enable you to see the growth in each fund.

Jerry Kheradi, Chair, Funds and Finance & Katayun Kapadia, Treasurer

Donors between Oct 1- Dec 31/06

- \$12,000** Jerry and Celeste Kheradi, RI
\$ 4,000 Aderbad and Sanobar Tamboli TX
\$ 2,500 Beach Cigar Group, FL
\$ 2,000 Anonymous, Daryoush and Mahin Jahanian
\$ 1,000 Anonymous, Anahita and Pheroze Sidhwa, TX;
 Cumberland Consultancy, CA; Capt Dinyar Karai, Mumbai;

| | JUNE 1-SEPT 30 2006 | OCT 1-DEC 31, 2006 |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS | | |
| ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP | \$ 2,644.00 | \$ 1,677.00 |
| KHERADI ENDOWMENT FUND | \$ 00 | \$ 100.00 |
| KAPADIA ENDOWMENT FUND | \$ 00 | \$.00 |
| Performing Arts SCHOLARSHIP | \$.00 | \$ 00 |
| SPORTS SCHOLARSHIP | \$ 00 | \$ 00 |
| RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FUND | \$ 852.00 | \$ 1,210.00 |
| JUNGALWALA LECTURE SERIES | \$ 5,000.00 | \$.00 |
| JOURNAL FUND | \$ 1,001.00 | \$ 626.00 |
| GENERAL FUND | \$ 855.00 | \$ 4,873.00 |
| WELFARE FUND | | |
| FEZANA WELFARE FUND | \$ 4,907.00 | \$ 16,065.00 |
| DAMKEVALA ENDOWMENT FUND | \$ 101.00 | \$.00 |
| BHATHENA ENDOWMENT FUND | \$.00 | \$ 00 |
| TAMBOLI ENDOWMENT FUND | \$ 10,000.00 | \$ 00 |
| FEZANA CRITICAL ASSISTANCE FUND | \$ 6,027.50 | \$ 1,017.00 |
| DISASTER RELIEF | \$ 6,896.00 | \$ 1,978.00 |
| SPONSORING IRANIAN YOUTH TO AUSTRALIA | | \$ 14,000.00 |
| TOTAL | \$38,284.00 | \$ 41,547.00 |

Ardeshir Namriman, TX; Proachee Sethna, CA,
Z Ass of N Texas; Z Ass of N. California

\$ 800 ZAPANJ

\$ 501 Rashna and Firdosh Mehta, TX; Tehmton
and Dogdoe Arjani, CA; Dr Homeyar and
Ayesha Dinshaw, LA; Dr Farokh and Maneck
Contractor, LA; Dr Mehr Merairie, LA; Carl
Chinoy and Marissa Sequeira, GA; Carole and
Sharookh Cambatta, IL; Farokh and Niloufer
Bilimoria BC; Wadia Construction, Connecticut

\$500-\$100 Jal Birdy, CA; BA and Christine
Palkhiwala, NY, AD and DN Sukhia, NJ; Dhun
Noria, Ont; Khurshed Tengra, Idaho; Bella Tata,
BC; Kurush and Nivi Shroff, SC; F.P. Marketing,
NC; Hushedar and Bakhtavar Daruwalla, GA;
Perin Marawala, CA; Rohinton and Armin
Tarapore. LA; Nawzer and Kitty Parakj, LA; Dr
Navzer and Villi Sachinvala, LA; Dr Pesi and
Shemaz Umrigar, LA; Kersi and Nina Daruwalla,
CA; Aspi and Meher Patel, CA; Homai and Arvi
Kasad, CA; Tirandaz Taraporewalla, GA;
Tehmul and Firuza Mir, PA; Rustom and Yasmin
Engineer, TX; Khursheed and Meher Dastur, PA;
ZAPA, ZANT, Minoo Italia, CA; Adi Dutia,
Alabama; Homey Writer, CA; Sorab Modi, DC;
Mezdi and Meena Birdie, FL.



FEZANA Updates

Twentieth Annual General Meeting (AGM) of FEZANA - April 6, 7, 8, 2007

Friday, April 6, 2007

1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Religion Education Teachers' Workshop

6:00 to 9:00 p.m. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FORUM

1. Each Association will summarize its activities during 2006
2. Two or three Associations will be invited to present their success stories.
3. Associations planning to build Centers will present their plans and schedules
4. Open Forum on Community needs.

LIGHT SUPPER WILL BE PROVIDED

Saturday, April 7, 2007

Annual General Meeting ,

Election Results, Reports by officers, Committee
Chairs, Working Groups

Financial Statements, Reports on N. American
Congress and World Congress

EVENING DINNER PROGRAM

FEZANA's 20th Birthday -- arranged by ZANT

Sunday, April 8, 2007 9.00-12.00 noon

MEETING OF THE MINDS FORUM

1. Review of "Coming Together" meeting in Mumbai (Rivetna & Mehta)
2. Current issues in India and Iran (speaker TBD)
3. Major issues facing community in North America (Moderated)

Lunch

After lunch WZCC/Texas Chapter meeting till 4:30 PM

Hotel Information

Spring Hill Suites Dallas DFW Airport North/Grapevine
2240 W. Grapevine Mills Circle, Grapevine, Texas
76051

<http://www.marriott.com/property/propertypage/DALGV>

For reservations:

Call 1-972 - 724 - 5500 after January 3rd, 2007
mention ZANT (code for special rates). Special rates
expire on March 2, 2007. Complimentary Breakfast,
Free airport shuttle. All rooms are suites and can
occupy 4. 2 Double Beds: \$ 109, Single Bed King
size: \$ 99 (12 % Tax per night)

Critically Speaking

FEZANA Updates

The Critical Assistance team of FEZANA continues to do some fabulous work within our Z-community in North America and overseas. For this Journal discussing Social Issues, we thought we would shed light on two worthy projects that need our community's attention. We hope they move you to action, much as they have us.

Over the course of the last year we have worked with the Young Rathestar Group and Joshi Memorial Trust in order to respond to a food appeal request that was received for Zarathushtis in Gujarat villages, for whom fighting hunger has become a daily struggle. Last year, while in India, I met a lady who walked me through this program and allowed me to get to know some of these families. It is truly sad to know that there are many in our community who struggle to find one square meal a day. The group makes its way through the villages a couple of times during the year, taking bags of wheat, rice and other non-perishable food items. Occasionally, upon request, they will also take clothing mainly Sudrehs and Kushtis. There are many ways in which you can help this effort:

1. There is the potential of sponsoring a portion of the food taken out to the villages.
2. You may donate Sudrehs and Kushtis or a myriad of other items.
3. If you are in India during one of these food donation pilgrimages, the Young Rathestar Group

would welcome you to join and assist with the disbursement.



We have also received requests for assistance from the S.P.J. Sadhana School for the mentally challenged. The S.P.J. Sadhana School is an organization that supports Autistic and Mongoloid Children; over 50% of the children attending are Parsee Zarathushtis. We invite you to visit their website at <http://www.yougivemewings.org> to learn more about this sweet little school. It is truly inspiring. To the left of their home page you will find a link called "give me wings." This has the school's wish list. They need everything from volunteers and towels to computers and paint.

We encourage you to support either of these well deserving efforts and please know that we will be happy to facilitate any exchange or effort between you and the appropriate organization.

Together we believe that slowly we can begin to meet the needs of our community and help all its members to live happy and positive lives.

Ushta-te,

Freyaz Shroff

843-283-4676 or freyaz@aol.com

Welfare Committee Chairs:

Houtoxi Contractor 412-367-2948 or HFCM31@aol.com

Hosi Mehta 630-833-6923 or hosimehta@aol.com

"Believe in the strength that comes from one hand holding another through times of trouble..."

Anonymous

APPEALS FOR AID

PLEASE GIVE FROM YOUR HEART

Laurel, NJ 08054. Make checks payable to "FEZANA," specifying the fund (General, Welfare, Critical Assistance, Religious Education, Academic Scholarship, Creative/Performing Arts Scholarship and FEZANA Journal). All charitable donations to FEZANA are tax deductible in USA. Donors of \$250 or more will receive a confirmation letter for tax records. For donations under \$250, use your canceled check as a receipt.

Appeals. All appeals for community welfare, medical, social and critical assistance should be sent to the FEZANA Welfare Committee: Chair – **Houtoxi F. Contractor**, 2301 Colony Court, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, tel: (412) 367-2948; HFCM31@aol.com. For information, visit: www.fezana.org.

Donations. Unless specified otherwise, please send all donations to: **Katayun Kapadia, 3 Preamble Drive, Mount**



Defendants' Motion to Dismiss denied. Judge rules that the Church of Cognizance is NOT a religion. The case goes to full trial for violations of the Controlled Substances Act.

Most of you have heard about the recent case in which a group called the "Church of Cognizance," based in Pima, Arizona, claimed that they were following "neo-Zoroastrian practices" by smoking marijuana in their homes, which they call "individual orthodox member monasteries." FEZANA and the North American Mobeds Council (NAMC) cooperated with the US Attorney's office to testify against the defendants in a hearing on August 22, 2006. **On December 22, 2006, the honorable judge ruled that not only is the Church of Cognizance NOT a religion, but also that, even if it was a religion, the way that it is practiced by the defendants is not sincere.** Hence the Church of Cognizance's claim that the government is unduly interfering in the practice of their religion is not valid.

Background

Danuel and Mary Quaintance, founders of the Church of Cognizance, were arrested in New Mexico in February 2006 for having 172 pounds of marijuana in their possession. The Quaintances, who live in Pima, Arizona, filed a motion through their lawyer to dismiss the charges, basing their defense on the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), which says that the government needs to justify any action that would substantially burden people from practicing their faith. The Quaintances claim that marijuana is central to their religious beliefs and hence they should be allowed to use it. Further the church claimed that marijuana is the same as haoma, which has been used by Zoroastrians for centuries.

FEZANA's Position

FEZANA immediately offered to provide an expert witness to the US Attorney's office to testify that haoma is not marijuana and explain the significance of the actual Haom Yasht liturgy. The attorney's office wanted a witness with credentials to speak for North American Zoroastrians. After reviewing our options, the NAMC and FEZANA arranged for Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli, President of NAMC to appear as an expert witness at the hearing held on August 22-23 in Albuquerque, NM.

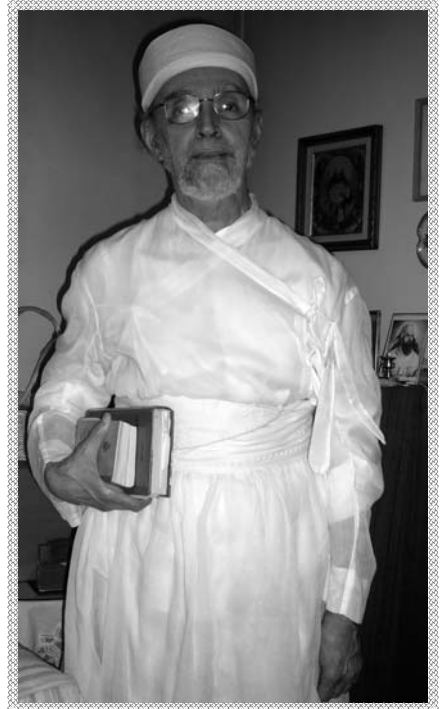
The Hearing

Erv. Bagli (photo right) prepared and made a statement of the correct Zoroastrian liturgical practices and ritual use of Haoma. He testified that haoma as used in the present day ritual is not Cannabis. Zarathushtra rejected the use of intoxicants or hallucinogens in Zoroastrian rituals. Bagli testified that Zoroastrians believe that Mind is a priceless Divine gift to mankind; and any mind-altering substances that abuse that gift are not acceptable. Haoma was worshipped as a deity and used as a plant in religious practices, in the pre-Zoroastrian Indo-Iranian era. Archaeological evidence shows that different plants were used at different times based on availability. That haoma was a plant with hallucinogenic properties remains a speculation rather than fact.

The defense produced Deborah Pruitt, a cultural anthropologist and college professor in Oakland, Calif., who testified that mainstream religions typically view new religious forms as cults or charlatans, but the new religious forms (like the Church of Cognizance) should be recognized as genuine. The defense cross-examined Erv. Bagli about the Pundolites and Ilm-e-Kshnum among Zoroastrians. Erv. Bagli showed that they are not cults since they do not have separate "churches" for their members. All Zoroastrians practice

the same religion, but some may interpret it differently.

When the defendants took to the witness stand, they did not claim that they were Zoroastrians or neo-Zoroastrians, but said that they just wanted to show that the use of marijuana is prevalent in other religions. Their motion to dismiss the case against them was justified in that the government was unduly



interfering in the practice of their belief that marijuana provides them with "inner knowledge and spiritual fulfillment."

The Ruling

The United States District Court for the District of New Mexico, in a written Memorandum Opinion handed down on December 22, 2006, denied the Church of Cognizance's Motion to Dismiss the Indictment and Incorporated Memorandum. The Memorandum Opinion considered the evidence presented at the hearing on August 21, 2006, which included the arguments of the counsel, written briefs, and applicable law.

The 38 page Memorandum Opinion includes a discussion of many factors that can be considered to determine if a belief system is or is not a religion with deeply observed philosophical, metaphysical, moral and ethical underpinnings. By precedent, a religion should provide the believer with answers to many, if not most, of the problems and concerns that confront humans. The judge noted that the Church of Cognizance did not have an established place of worship; no clergy or priests or "keepers of knowledge"; no established liturgy, ceremonies, rituals or sacraments; no structure or organization; no holy days, holidays, or special clothing requirements for clergy or lay

persons; and does not conduct any mission work.

The Honorable Judge found not only that the Church of Cognizance is NOT a religion, but also that, even if it was a religion, the way that it is practiced by the defendants is not sincere. Hence the defendants' Motion to Dismiss was denied.

The Future

By denying the Motion to Dismiss, the judge has opened the door to a full trial for violations of the Controlled Substances Act. It is important to understand that this case has no bearing on the laws and conditions in any country except the United States, and it is no longer a

RFRA case. Nevertheless, FEZANA is reviewing the legal ramifications of the matter. We want to ensure that no teachings, rituals or beliefs of our religion are used by anyone for illegal or self-serving purposes. FEZANA and NAMC seek everyone's cooperation, vigilance and above all, patience. The Internet is full of misinformation and is open to mischief by anyone. The only way to win is to adhere to our religious principles and continually seek the guidance of Ahura Mazda in all we do.

Any comments or suggestions should be directed to the FEZANA President at rjkevala@aol.com.

A Message from the Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA)

Chairman, Nikan H. Khatibi, MBA

FEZANA Updates

Board of Delegates: Farzin Avari (AZA); Zain Mavalvala (ZSBC); Shireen Cama (ZAGBA); Farzin Morena (ZAC); Ferzeen Chapgar (ZANC); Ramin Shahriari (CZC); Anahita Khosraviani (PZO); Tinaz Dhunjisha (ZAC); Keyarash Jahanian (ZAK); Kevin Mancherjee (ZSO); Rita Balaporia (ZAPA); Tina Mehta (ZAPNJ)

1) ATTENTION: Student Physicians, Pharmacists, Dentists, Optometrists and Nurses

Come join ZYNA and dedicate yourself to serving mankind by providing free health care to people in remote areas of the United States. We are looking for 15 students and 3-4 licensed professionals to travel to Tennessee to provide healthcare to the underserved. This will be a wonderful learning experience for all students and what better way to learn than to be part of a group of Zoroastrian youth who will be providing outstanding community service!

Location: Crossville, TN

Date of Event: April 14-15, 2007

Housing: Will be provided by ZYNA

Food: Will be provided by ZYNA

For further information and to receive an informational packet, please contact ZYNA at nikan2@aol.com.

2) 14th NORTH AMERICAN CONGRESS – TORONTO

June 29 to July 2, 2007; please visit <http://www.zoro-impact.com/>

3) COME JOIN JIMMY AND ME.....

ZYNA is committed to basic human rights and social justice for all. Please come join Jimmy Carter and myself for a week long of laughter, fun, and camaraderie as we build houses for low-income families in Los Angeles, CA. This five-day event will not only provide housing for families who only dreamt of owning a home, but will increase awareness of a very real American housing crisis and a long-term commitment for action from community leaders and individuals to resolve it.

Location: Los Angeles, CA

Date of Event: October 28-November 2, 2007

Food and Housing: Sponsorship will be available

To embark on this unprecedented event, please contact ZYNA at nikan2@aol.com to receive an information packet.

4) 4th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress – Australia

December 27, 2007 to January 3, 2008; Please visit <http://members.optusnet.com.au/smileyam/4wzyc.html>

5) Zarathushti Youth Leadership Conference (ZYLK)

This conference offers talented young people the most authentic leadership opportunities in a real world setting today by testing abilities, improving confidence, and developing skills in a dynamic, hands-on atmosphere that will be both challenging and fun. ZYLK is expected to be held in 2008 – stay tuned for details.



Calendar of Festivals

March-September 2007

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Fravardegan/Panjeh/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar Five Gatha Days | Fri, Mar 16-Tues, Mar 20. | (F) |
| Char- Shanbe-Soori (Heralding the New Year) Tuesday Prior to Nouruz | Tue, Mar 20 | (F) |
| Naurooz or Jamshedi Nauroz (New Year) Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd | Wed, March 21 | |
| Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra) Mah Fravardin, Roz Khorshed | Mon, Mar 26. | (F) |
| Pir e Herisht Festival Mah Fravardin, Roz Amardad-Khorshed | Tues, Mar 27- Sat 31. | (F) |
| Ava Ardvisoor nu Parab Mah Avan , Roz Avan | Sun, Feb 25. Tues Mar 27. | (K) (S) |
| Fravardegan (Remembrance of the departed) Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin | Sun, Apr 8. | (F) |
| Jashne Ardibeshtgan Mah Ardibesht, Roz Ardibehesht | un, Apr 22. | (F) |
| Atash-nu-Parab Mah Adar, Roz Adar | Mon, Mar 26. Wed, Apr 25. | (K) (S) |
| Maidyozarem Gahambar Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher | Mon, Apr 30-Fri, May 4. | (F) |
| Zarathusht-no-Diso (Death anniversary of Zarathushtra) Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed | Fri, Apr 27. Sun, May 27 | (K) (S) |
| Daye Mah nu Jashan Mah Daye, Roz Fravardin | Sat, May 5. Mon, June 4 | (K) (S) |
| Maidhyarem Gahambar Mah Daye, Roz Meher-Behram | Wed, May 2 –Sun, May 6. Fri, Jun 1- Tues, June 5 | (K) (S) |
| Pir-e-Sabz Festival Mah Khordad, Roz Ashtad-Aneran | Thur, Jun 14- Mon, Jun 18 | (F) |
| Pir-e Banu Festival Mah Tir, Roz Meher-Behram | Wed, Jul 4- Sun, Jul 8 | (F) |
| Maidyoshem Gahambar Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher | Fri, June 29-Tue, Jul 3 | (F) |
| Jashne Tirgan Mah Tir, Roz Tir | Sun, Jul 1 | (F) |
| Fravardegan/Muktad/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar Five Gatha Days | Mon, Jul 16 – Fri, Jul 20 Wed, Aug 15- Sun, Aug 19 | (K) (S) |
| Navroz Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd | Sat, Jul 21 Mon, Aug 20 | (K) (S) |
| Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra) Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad | Thur, Jul 26 Sat, Aug 25 | (K) (S) |
| Fravardian Jashan Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin | Wed, Aug 8 Fri , Sept 7 | (K) (S) |

(S=Shenshai, K=Kadmi, F=Fasli)

UN/NGO Events

Zarathushtis are invited to participate on the FEZANA Team in Future UN/NGO activities.

Interested individuals may send CV to Homi Gandhi
homidgandhi@gmail.com

or

Behram Pastakia
bpastakia@aol.com

THE FEZANA WELFARE COMMITTEE NEEDS YOUR ASSISTANCE

The FEZANA Welfare Committee helps the Zarathushti community members, across the globe, in crisis and determines the best course of action.

Requests are also received for medical assistance from people not qualifying for health insurance, women in abusive marriages and wanting to become financially independent to make a fresh start, from families who have lost their sole bread earner etc. The committee works diligently with member associations, community action groups and the families and individuals in need of assistance to verify the need and then determine the best course of action. Their track record has been stellar.

Please support our efforts to assist our community members by sending your donation to: FEZANA WELFARE & mail it to the Treasurer; Katayun Kapadia; 3 Preamble Drive; Mount Laurel, NJ 08054 For information and suggestion for opportunities to extend support and to work in partnership, contact Houtoxi Contractor, Hosi Mehta, Freyaz Shroff, FEZANA Welfare Committee



COMING EVENTS

JANUARY 2007 "Coming Together to Work Together" Roundtable

"Coming Together to Work Together" Roundtable on January 8, 2007 at Mancherji Joshi Hall of the Athornan Madressa, Dadar, Mumbai, 9 AM to 5 PM. Organized by Rohinton M. Rivetna rivetna@aol.com Chicago

JANUARY 2007, FEZANA RELIGIOUS TEACHERS WORKSHOP.

FEZANA EAST COAST ASSOCIATIONS TEACHERS WORKSHOP, January 14, 2007 Organized by the Education, Scholarship and Conference Committee of FEZANA. Hosted by ZAGNY and IZA at the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr, Pomona New York.

JANUARY 2007, STANFORD UNIVERSITY, ZOROASTRIAN LECTURE SERIES.

Zoroastrian Lecture Series, January 19, 2007 Co-Sponsored by FEZANA, the Stanford Terrace Inn and the Zarathushti Community of N. California: P Oktor Skjaervo, Aga Khan Professor in Iranian Studies, Harvard University: Two Millennia of Orality: Continuity and Integration in Ancient Literary Tradition-from Central Asia to Mesopotamia.

APRIL 2007, FEZANA AGM.

The 20TH **FEZANA AGM** will be held April 6-8, 2007 in Dallas/Ft Worth hosted by Zoroastrian Association North Texas (ZANT). All member Association representatives and committee chairs are encouraged to attend. Contact Rita Engineer, Secretary, ritaengineer@yahoo.com Tel 561-487-4343

MAY 2007, NAMC EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR.

"Passage of Time and its influence on Zarathushtrian Traditions" ZAPANJ will host a one day educational seminar, May 19, 2007. Contact Ervad Jehan Bagi. jbagli@rogers.com

JUNE, 2007, NORTH AMERICAN CONGRESS, TORONTO.

The X1V North American Zoroastrian Congress "IMPACT" will be held in Toronto, June 29 - July-2 2007, hosted by the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario. www.zoro-impact.com

June 2007 WZCC

WZCC conference Meet the Titans June 29, Toronto, Ontario, Contact www.wzcc.org

SEPTEMBER 2007, FIFTH ZARATHUSHTI UNITY CUP SOCCER.

THE Fifth Soccer Tournament will be held on September 1-3, 2007. Contact zsc@fezana.org http://www.zathletics.com/

DECEMBER 2007, WORLD YOUTH CONGRESS, BALLARAT, AUSTRALIA.

The Fourth World Zoroastrian Youth Congress "Back to the Future" will be held at the University of Ballarat, Victoria, Australia, December 27, 2007 to January 3, 2008 Contact Shiraz Mistry, at Smileysjm@optusnet.com.au

JULY 2008, ELEVENTH ZARATHUSHTI GAMES, San Diego, CA.

The eleventh Zarathushti games will be held the 4th of July weekend 2008 in San Diego. See more at http://www.sandiego.org/nav/Visitors

SUMMER 2008, FEZANA YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE.

University of Missouri, Kansas City, Details to follow. Contact Nikan2@aol.com

WORLD CONGRESS, DUBAI 2009

9th World Zoroastrian Congress "Unity through the Sands of Times" to be held in Dubai, Decmber 28-31 2009. Contact meher_bhesania@hotmail.com



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The art work seen throughout the Journal are from 17 children ages 4 -14 years of the ZAGBA Religious Education Classes. They had prepared a poster with their interpretation of "good thoughts, good words and good deeds".

A special thanks to ZAGBA children, teachers and parents, for making this a successful and educational project, and for allowing us to use their work.

Ed. FEZANA JOURNAL

ASHA - THE ORDER AND ITS ANNUAL OBSERVANCE



Ervad (Dr) Jehan Bagli

Another cycle of the Universal Order of Nature has completed its turn, and we are back to the season of renovation and refreshing – The Spring at its Vernal Equinox. Nature has a cyclic rhythm in all its events. This profound cadency can be perceived in the invariable change of seasons, in the punctual rise and fall of the tides, and in the uninterrupted course of dawn, mom, noon, and evening followed by the birth of darkness at night, as the day dies out. This is the striking demonstration of the Immutable Order of Asha

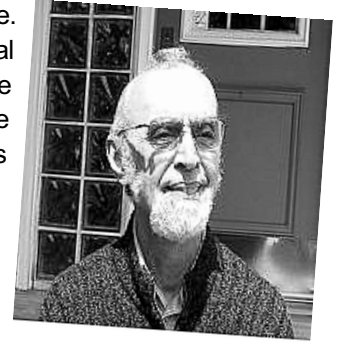
The same cadence of the immutable order continues in life span of the plant, animal and mankind as the cycle of life and death continues unabated following the Immutable Order of Ahura Mazda.

As spring approaches Zarathushtrians celebrate the great festival of the new year day of Nowruz preceded by Hamaspathmaidhaya Gahanbar (Guj. Gahambar). As Zarathushtis enter the new year they welcome the emergence Pithwa (heat) from the subterranean domain, as the heat and light from that profound source of Sacred Fire – Hvarecha - the Sun energizes the earth from a distance of 93 million miles, in the outer space. The welcoming of the Rapithwin and the recycling of the observance this Gah (period of the day) is traditionally celebrated with a Jashan on Roz Ardibehesht of Mah Fravardin. Starting of the observance of Rapithwin is associated with the increase of the length of days, in Divine Order of Asha with springtime. In particular, this Gah is dedicated to the reverence, praise and propitiation of the Holy Fire of Ahura Mazda (Ashahe Vahishtahe āthrascha Ahurahe Mazdāo).

45 days into the New Year begins the celebration of the Gahanbars starting with **Maidhyozarem** (Middle of Spring) followed, after the next **60** day period, by **Maidhyoshem** (middle of summer). The next **75, 30 and 80** day periods mark the observation of **Paitishem, Ayathrem, and Maidhyarem** Gahanbars respectively. These are correspondingly, the commemoration of harvesting, returning the flock to their shelters, and middle of winter. The cyclic rhythm is completed with the observance of **Hamaspathmaidhaya** during the five days of the Gatha, at the end of the **last 75 days**.

All of the above celebrations and festivities are designed through Zarathushtrian religious tradition and perpetuated in time as a refresher for understanding of that unique Immutable Order of Nature, rooted in the concept of Asha, propounded by Asho Zarathushtra. It is indeed crucial that these rituals be

performed in harmony with that Divine order, following a calendrical system that retains them in their proper place. The only computational system that can retain these rituals in harmony with the Immutable Divine Order is the seasonal Fasli calendar.



To be in synch with the Order of Asha is the very basis of the teaching of our Prophet. It is incumbent upon Zarathushtrians to make every effort to do that in moral, social and religious sectors of life. The present day Shenshai and Kadimi calendar system are entirely out of tune with the Divine Order and provides essentially no Spiritual Harmony considering the time, when these rituals are performed. The rituals of Gahanbars and Jashans performed at the wrong time of the year, in principle, vitiates the Order of Asha and are devoid of intended spiritual communion.

It is indeed a difficult task, to extirpate the spirituality that is rooted over several generations. We must however realize that Zarathushtrian way of life is a progressive course of learning, a quest for Truth. There is unambiguous historical records to demonstrate the existence of a religious calendar system that had intercalation. The reason why it died out is because the mode of intercalation was far from practical. The question here is to set right an order that has gone astray, using a rational practical mode of intercalation. There is not a shred of evidence in any Zarathushtrian religious text to proscribe a single day intercalation employed by the Fasli Calendar.

It is beyond question that Zarathushtrians have the responsibility to make an informed choice, whether to be in Harmony with the path of Asha or not to be, in the matter of offering their devotions to follow the Immutable Divine Order of Mazda. Despite the emotional attachments to any calendar system, it is a duty and a responsibility of all Zarathushtis to objectively and truthfully disseminate this factual information to the younger generation to aid sow the seeds, to transform the chaos of multiple calendar system to concord and Order, of a Single Unified Seasonal calendar in this North American Diaspora.



NAUROOZ MUBARAK 1376 AY

NORUZ MUBARAK
TO ALL ZARATHUSHTIS
MAY OUR YOUTH
INTRA-MARRY EARLY AND PROSPER
FROM ARDESHIR & PARVIN DAMANIA

WHOLE-HEARTED NORUZ SALUTATIONS TO
READERS OF FEZANA JOURNAL,
PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY ALL MEMBERS OF THE
**ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF ATLANTIC
CANADA.**

"WISHING ALL ZARTHUSHTIS OF THE WORLD,
GOOD HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY
ALWAYS.
WITH LOVE, THE AUSTIN FAMILY, LONDON.
ONTARIO, CANADA."

NOWRUZ MUBARAK AND BEST WISHES TO ALL
JOURNAL READERS FROM
THE ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF
METROPOLITAN CHICAGO!

HAPPY NOURUZ

HERE'S WISHING YOU
A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR
FILLED WITH HAPPINESS PEACE LOVE LAUGHTER
AS WELL AS CHEER!

"THERE IS NOTHING ON THIS EARTH
MORE TO BE PRIZED
THAN TRUE FRIENDSHIP."
WISHING ALL OUR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES
A VERY HEALTHY AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!
JERRY AND CELESTE KHERADI

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FEZANA JOURNAL wishes all readers NAUROOZ MUBARAK 1376 AY



NORUZ GREETINGS
MAY THE ZARATHUSHTI COMMUNITY
APPRECIATE THE ONENESS AMONG HUMANITY
MAY THEY ACCEPT MANKIND AS A
SACRED CREATION OF AHURA MAZDA
WISHING ALL ENLIGHTENMENT

BAGLI FAMILY

NOWRUZ GREETINGS
TO THE ZARATHUSHTIS OF NORTH AMERICA
MAY WE ALWAYS PROGRESS & PROSPER
USHTA TE !
THE ZARATHUSHTIS OF MICHIGAN

NOWRUZ GREETINGS
TO THE ZARATHUSHTIS OF NORTH AMERICA
MAY OUR COMMUNITY PROSPER AND FLOURISH
MAZDAYASNI FAMILY
FROM ESTER AND ROSHAN BAMJI
ebamji@aol.com

NOURUZ GREETINGS
TO THE ZARATHUSHTI COMMUNITY OF NORTH
AMERICA
ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF QUEBEC

WISHING ALL OUR FEZANA FAMILIES CHOICEST
NAVROZE BLESSINGS.
FROM THE ZAC FAMILY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

HAPPY NORUZ TO THE ZARTHUSHTIS OF NORTH
AMERICA
WE WISH YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY AND
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR
ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF KANSAS (ZAKA)

THE ATLANTA ZARATHUSHTI ASSOCIATION
WISHES EVERYONE
A JOYOUS NORUZ WITH GOOD HEALTH AND
PROSPERITY. MAY PEACE BE ON EARTH
<http://www.a-z-a.us/>

UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF AHURA MAZDA
THE CALIFORNIA ZOROASTRIAN CENTER
WISHES OUR NORTH AMERICAN AND
GLOBAL ZARATHUSHTI COMMUNITY
A VERY HAPPY & PROSPEROUS
NOWRUZ



FRIENDS ARE THE GIFTS
THAT WE HOLD
IN OUR HEARTS...EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR.
NOROUZ MUBARAK!

ABAN AND PURVEZ RUSTOMJI



NAUROOZ MUBARAK 1376 AY

HAPPY NAUROOZ
TO
THE ZARATHUSHTIS OF NORTH AMERICA
FROM
RUSI & VILLOO TAVADIA
OF NOVI, MICHIGAN

"ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF GREATER NEW
YORK WISHES YOU AND ALL YOUR LOVED ONES,
A HEALTHY AND HAPPY NAUROOZ.
USHTA-TE!"

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON
GREET THE ZARATHUSHTIS OF NORTH AMERICA
WITH ALL GOOD WISHES FOR NAUROOZ 1376

MAY THE YEARS AHEAD BRING HAPPINESS AND
PROSPERITY
THE ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
IN VANCOUVER, CANADA SENDS ITS BEST
WISHES AND NAUROOZ GREETINGS TO THE
ENTIRE ZARATHUSHTI COMMUNITY FOR THE YEAR
3745.
MAY WE ALL PROSPER AND FLOURISH IN THE NEW
YEAR.

Nowrooz Greetings from IZA
to all Zarathushtis of North America
Wish you all Happiness, Peace, Harmony, and Prosperity
Iranian Zoroastrian Association of New York

Noruz Greetings
To the Zarathushtis of North America
May our community prosper and flourish
Zoroastrian Society of Ontario

Noruz greetings to the Zarathushtis of North America

We are proud of the strides made by our
Zarathushtis to rejuvenate
the
Entrepreneurial spirit of our forefathers



WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

NAUROOZ GREETINGS TO ALL ZARATHUSHTIS FROM THE



ZARATHUSHTI ANJUMAN OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

PO Box 4568 • FOSTER CITY • CA 94404



NOUROOZ MUBARAK 1376 AY

**NORUZ GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES
FROM
THE FALI CHOTHIA CHARITABLE TRUST**

The Fali Chothia Charitable Trust was established in 1988 to help provide scholarships and interest-free loans to needy Zarathushti students. Awards are based on financial need, educational achievement and community service. The trust is established under the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington Inc. (ZAMWI), and in the past 18 years it has awarded scholarships and loans to students from all parts of the US and Canada. To demonstrate solidarity and trust between organizations while serving community causes, the US Chapter of the World Zoroastrian Organization joins the Fali Chothia Trust Scholarship Program by adding an amount up to of fifty percent to every scholarship given. This year the Trust was able to award 10 scholarships.

ZAMWI Fali Chothia Charitable Trust 10300 Farnham Drive Bethesda MD 20814 .

Tel (301) 564 3726

*Navroze Mubarak
from*

**THE ONTARIO ZOROASTRIAN
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

JOIN OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

WWW.OZCF.COM



Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation

On the North American Scene

ZARATHUSHTI YOUTH SCHOLARS OF 2006

Dolly Dastoor Ph.D, Chair, FEZANA Academic Scholarship Program

What advances a community is not so much to prop up its weakest and most helpless members, but to lift up the best and most gifted, so as to make them of greatest service to the community. **Jamshedji N. Tata**

It is heartening to note that more organizations and individuals are beginning to recognize that education is a personal achievement of an individual's desire to succeed requiring the right opportunity. It is also recognized that the investment in our youth is investment in the future of the Zarathushti community.

This has resulted in the growth of number of scholarships offered in North America. In addition to the FEZANA scholarships, (academic, sports, performing and creative arts, religious education) we now have the Chothia scholarships, the Ahura scholarships, and the Massiah Foundation scholarships, as well as scholarships from member associations, all of which undergo a strict selection process.

Reading through the biodata of the scholarship winners, one realizes that these students are not only academically gifted but display a social conscience espousing different and difficult issues of social justice and a spirit of volunteerism—all ingredients for making great leaders of tomorrow. Rustom Kevala, President, FEZANA, writes "these scholarships are but a token of our support to these young and enthusiastic Zarathushtis who are pursuing higher education to further their careers. They are at the same time furthering the stature of our community as an erudite and well-placed community worthy of respect".

MEHRABAN AND MORVORID KHERADI ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP

THE FEZANA SCHOLAR 2006-2007

The Kheradi Endowment Scholarship for graduate students based on **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND OVERALL CONTRIBUTION TO THE ZARATHUSHTI AND NON-ZARATHUSHTI COMMUNITY**

FAROKH IRANI, Medical student, University of Florida

It is a great honor to be the recipient of the Mehraban and Morvorid Kheradi Endowment Scholarship. My name is Farokh Irani and I was born in Orlando, FL. I studied Biomedical Engineering at Duke University, and I am currently a first-year medical student at the University of Florida, where I am working on fulfilling my dream of becoming a physician. I have always wanted to

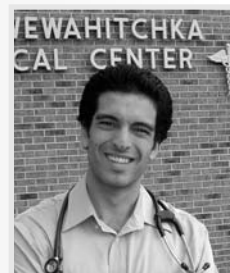


Jerry Kheradi (left)
& Farokh Irani

carry on the Zarathushti legacy of service to the community. I am an Eagle Scout, I received the Duke Griffith Service Award, and I have volunteered at rural health clinics as well as for inner city schools.

In the past two years, I have helped found a charity called AIDS Climb, which raises funds for HIV clinics and orphanages in Moshi, Tanzania, by climbing mountains in the US and Africa. While I do not know what specific type of medicine I want to practice, I hope to maintain my commitment to international medicine, helping the medically underserved both in the US and abroad.

This scholarship is a particularly meaningful award to me, because it carries with it the support of the Zarathushti community. Even though we are a relatively new group in North America, I hope that, as we Zarathushtis have done wherever we have settled in the world, we can make up for lack of numbers with strength of character. With this scholarship, I hope that I can contribute in my own way to



creating a good name for Zarathushtis in this country.

(Left) The Kheradi Family, who have instituted the Kheradi



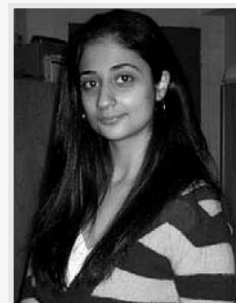
Endowment Fund for the FEZANA Scholar in memory of their parents Mehraban and Morvorid Kheradi, The 2006 FEZANA Scholar, Farokh Irani, between Dr Jerry and Mrs Celeste Kheradi.

BANOOBAI AND MANECKSHAW KAPADIA ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship is based on academic standing and need

NASHA MINWALLA, Molecular Biology and Genetics, University of Guelph, Canada

Born in Karachi, Pakistan on January 1st, 1988, Nasha was raised in Atlanta, Georgia and is now living in Mississauga, Ontario. She is currently in her first year at the University of Guelph, Ontario, specializing in Molecular Biology and



Genetics working towards an Honours degree in Bachelor of Science. Aside from this, Nasha works as a laboratory assistant in a research lab at the University, that deals with Protein Structure and Characterization in Multiple Sclerosis. When she is not in class or in the lab, Nasha volunteers on-campus at the Centre of Disabled Students, where she guides and helps the students to better understand biology and its concepts. To become more a part of the community at Guelph, Nasha was selected from a wide range of students to take part in the ambassador program at Guelph.

While working towards her goal, Nasha aspires to put all her effort in the field of research to find cures, or at least improve the hope of fighting various types of cancer and major health-related issues. Alongside this, she would like to become a doctor and work at the Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto.

For Nasha, winning this scholarship reveals to her just how great a community she is a part of and how blessed she is. "Always willing to help and support in difficult times. Zarathushtis are truly the foundation of all that is good in this world."

Vision for the Community: "In the near future, I pray more Zarathushtis understand and realize how sacred our religion is. It is a gift from Ahura Mazda. We need to embrace our identity and share what we know with others. The youth of today are strong and wise, and together we can become more united and continue to see the success of our religion for the future."

FEZANA SCHOLARS

The FEZANA scholarships are awarded to graduate and undergraduate students judged with their peers based on a combination of merit, need, extracurricular activities and community service.

ANAHITA AMALSAD, Pre-Med, University of California at Riverside

Daughter of Katayoon & Meher Amalsad, born and raised in Orange County California, Anahita, graduated from the Cornelia Connelly High School as a straight A distinguished honor roll student, with a gold seal of the California Scholarship Federation on her diploma. Anahita is the recipient of several prestigious awards and tuition scholarships from the State of California for her outstanding achievement and leadership skills. She was a recipient of the President's Education Award Program and featured in the National Honor Roll, Who's Who Among High School Students, National Society of High School Scholars and All American Scholars Directory.



In addition to being the President and Founder of Literacy Club for underprivileged kids at her high school and a member of the Hearts and Hands committee, Anahita is a gifted artist and flutist devoting her time

playing music for senior citizens during the Holiday Season. At age of 11, her artwork received the first prize in the entire Orange County. She also represented her school and received the first prize for Veterans of War, Voice of Democracy, Audio Essay Competition. She thinks that it is important for us to preserve and protect our unique religious identity and strengthen the tradition that holds the fabric of our integrity; which comes through proper education – not only within our community but also among others in our society. "This FEZANA scholarship has further strengthened my core belief of serving humanity for which I am deeply grateful".

Henry Ward Beecher said: "**In this world it is not what we take up, but what we give up that makes us rich.**"

Anahita wants to give the gift of her time to enrich the lives of others.

PERINAZ BHADA, MS, EARTH RESOURCES ENGINEERING, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NY.

Ms. Perinaz Bhada is currently pursuing her MS in Earth Resources Engineering at Columbia University in New York, where she also received her Master of International Affairs degree in Environmental Policy. After finishing high school in Mumbai, Perinaz came to the US in 1997 for undergraduate studies at Franklin & Marshall College in Business, Environmental Policy, and Economics. At Columbia, she has been involved in organizing the Global Roundtable on Climate Change, an initiative to bring together top-level executives from around the world to reach consensus on climate change. As part of her master's thesis, Perinaz is currently doing research on the feasibility of introducing waste-to-energy technology in Mumbai in order to combat the growing garbage problem and to provide a supplemental source of energy. Her career goals include representing India internationally on environmental matters and creating better environmental regulations there.



Perinaz is very appreciative of being a recipient of the FEZANA Academic Scholarship because she believes the scholarship recognizes her achievements over the past few years and encourages her to pursue her research interests in an academic setting. More importantly, the scholarship recognizes the significance of environmental problems, such as climate change, which are relevant to current and future generations and require our timely attention.

ANAHITA BHARUCHA, Honours Degree in Business Administration from the Richard Ivey School of Business and a Bachelor of Medical Science from University of Western Ontario.

My community has provided me with the opportunity to become a dynamic leader, get involved, and learn from my experiences. At my high school, the alarming number

of students who fail to complete their mandatory forty hours of volunteer service required to graduate, motivated me to take action. I founded the Student Volunteer Centre: an after-school drop-in centre designed to provide students with volunteer opportunities in the community. Through the music department, I coordinated a massive fundraising initiative called Rehearse-a-thon. This six-hour musical marathon raised over \$13,000 in 2004 and \$15,000 in 2005 for the Children's Wish Foundation. In addition to teaching in the Zoroastrian Religious Education Program, I coordinated a student leadership retreat for the graduating class. I was also an executive member in many school clubs and organizations, including Student Council, DECA, Amnesty International and Music Council.



I am looking forward to volunteering abroad in Nepal this summer and further developing myself into someone who inspires action on a new level.

This scholarship has played a large part in providing for my post-secondary education. I am so grateful for the opportunity to acquire new skills, knowledge and experiences everyday and would like to thank FEZANA from the bottom of my heart

FARSHAAD BILLIMORIA, Science, University of British Columbia

I thank you very much for awarding me the "Fezana Academic Scholarship." This award will greatly facilitate me as I continue my education in the faculty of Science at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. From there I hope to transfer to a Medical School and pursue a career as a Medical Doctor.



This Fezana scholarship has bestowed upon me that the Zarathushti community wishes me to succeed and progress. Even though we Zarathushtis are spread out around the globe, we can still support each other as distant family members. Knowing that I do have the support and the well wishes of my Zarathushti community will infuse me with more confidence to face the many challenges ahead.

I do know there were many deserving applicants for this "Fezana Scholarship", and so I am very pleased and humbled to be one of the few chosen recipients.

I hope that in the future I will be able to reciprocate this kind gesture of "Fezana" to the best of my capacity.

RAYOMAND DABHOIWALA, Masters (MS) in Mechanical Engineering; Diesel Engine Emission Control and After-treatment

A decade from now, say by 2020, demography of the Zarathushti Community will bear a very different outlook. Relatively there will be more people in the age group of 22 to 55 who will be more productive and in turn will support world economy. With superior professional education and skills, larger percentage of total Zarathushtis will be more "a d a p t a b l e t o c h a n g e" which is necessary even in today's society. They will be a VISIONARY Community.

Today our Zarathushti community largely consists of reasonably educated and economically better placed MIDDLE CLASS whose main virtue is imparting Quality Education to their children. Though human values are dwindling in any society, our parents surely make an honest effort to imbibe "humanity" in us. We are vulnerable to human cause and empathy. This had always been and always will be the main reason for our survival in spite of us being the smallest minority in the world.



Hence, young Zarathushtis in near future will be well equipped to face challenges of expertise assignments (Projects, Research, Marketing, Finance, International Laws, etc) or respectable Government Jobs or even as an entrepreneur. Disciplined and monitored approach will surely make targeted goals easy to achieve.

Today I see larger percentage of our youth making their careers in Service Oriented jobs. Very few opt for careers in Projects, Manufacturing, Research, etc which are Building Blocks of industry and are probably more gratifying. Eventually, these people will be the first to be picked up for higher-ranks in multi-national industries. I would rather be in this second category.

Diligent, Discerning, Adaptability / Acceptability traits will make Zarathushti Community stronger in the next decade - - and thereafter. I will have made my contribution in that. I will be lucky too to enjoy these achievements.

FARAHAD JAMSHIDI , Structural Civil Engineering, American River College, Sacramento, California.

Born in Tehran, Iran to a Khodadad and Parvin Jamshidi, Afsaan is studying in and planning to get his degree on Structural Civil Engineering after transferring to a four-year university. One of his objectives for the future is to get his degree and be a proud Zarathushti whose society counts and relies on him. "I see myself becoming an individual who is successful in his educational path. And much of my success depends directly on FEZANA's financial aid. This aid,



aspired me even more to continue on my educational path, and see, once again, that Zarathushtis are cooperative and can lend a hand to each other to build an improved and better future. This scholarship was not only a financial aid for me to be more focused on my education, but I see it more of a relation and connection. I wish for FEZANA's stability and the pride of all Zarathushtis."

AFSAAN RUSTOM KERMANI Bachelors in Computer Software Engineering, University of Central Florida at Orlando

Born in Jamshedpur, Afsaan completed his schooling in Ahmednagar standing third in his 10th grade SSC exams. After which the family moved to the United States where he completed the 11th and the 12th grades of school. He received the National Honor Roll for both these years and graduated Magna Cum Laude. He hopes to be an accomplished software engineer working for a renowned software company. "Winning this scholarship means a lot to me especially helping with my college studies and also working towards my goal. This scholarship shows that there are organizations which help aspiring Zarathushti students achieve their goals. Last but not the least, I would like to say that "I am proud to be a Zarathushti".



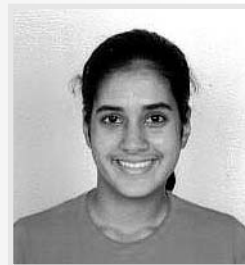
SHIRIN KIANI , Masters in Global Health, Simon Fraser University, British Columbia

Born in Tehran Shirin came to Canada in 1989 This scholarship means a great deal to me. It means that I have the support of my community in pursuing studies that I hope will benefit marginalized groups of people in developing countries. It reminds me how grateful I am to have the opportunity to pursue an education when many women don't have that luxury, especially those in developing countries. In my studies in Global Health I have been made aware of the health inequities that exist globally. I would like to advocate for the rights of women and people with disabilities in developing countries. My dream for the community is to further focus on social change, activism and philanthropy and to inspire the youth and also our parents' generation to 'Think Globally and Act Locally.'. This can be done in many ways and I hope people look towards different organizations in their communities and join them to contribute to positive social change. That's my hope for our community."



KAINAZ YAZDI MISTRY, Faculty of Science, McGill University

Born in Mumbai, Kainaz came to Vancouver, Canada to complete her schooling winning the Principal's Honour Roll Award in Grade 12 and achieving 'A' Grades with a 4.0 GPA. In addition to being a good student, Kainaz is a good athlete, having excelled in Athletics (Shot Putt). Her ambition is to be a doctor "so as to help serve our needy brethren in the community and to win laurels for our MICROSCOPIC ZARATHUSHTI COMMUNITY. "Winning this scholarship not only helps me to fulfill my ambition and dreams but has built up my confidence and to pursue my goals.



RASHNA K. UMRIGAR Masters Program in Public Health, (Concentration in Community and Family Health) at University of South Florida, Tampa

Rashna holds a MD degree in Obstetrics and Gynecology from Mumbai, India and was awarded a prize for presenting a case study "Creation of patency of cervix in right horn of uterus didelphyus in a MOGS, March 2002.

She has co-authored 4 publications in peer-reviewed journals on different aspects of obstetrics and gynecology

"When I leave academics and begin medical practice, I want to give back to our community by way of free consultation to the deserving, helping in any medical emergency need and also playing an active role in the community. I firmly believe that younger people in our community who have the ways and means to contribute in any way, shape or form must start taking the initiative to make our community even more advanced.

It is indeed an honor and a privilege to receive this scholarship from FEZANA. It is an eloquent testimony to the fact that charity still is alive and well in the hearts and minds for Zarathushtis world wide. On a personal level, it has inspired me to work even harder so that one day I can help future fellow Zarathushti scholars to inspire them to reach even greater heights".



From left husband Cyrus Chinoy, Rashna Umrigar (Chinoy) daughter Kainaz, FEZANA President Rustom Kevala, and wife Yasmin Kevala

Performing & Creative Arts Scholarship

2006 WINNERS

ZARINA KOTWAL in her final year at the Boston Conservatory of Music. She is the assistant principal/section bassist in a number of college orchestras.

FARAH BALA continues her acting career with her one-woman one-act play "To The Death of My Own Family" which has been performed in various theatres in NY and Connecticut. She has a role in a feature film "Karma, Confessions and Holi" that will be released soon and she works with various high schools in Brooklyn and Bronx on drama projects.

KAYHAN IRANI bills herself as an "artist", an activist artist who uses storytelling to bring about awareness of social justice. Her one-woman show "We've Come Undone" has been performed about 20 times during the past year in cities like Lahore, Chicago, Syracuse, Princeton and also at the NY Darbe Meher. She continues to lead workshops in community theatres and is co-editing a volume of essays called "Telling Stories to Change the World."

DINYAR VANIA has had a remarkable year as Tenor. He celebrated a debut season at the New York City Opera and made his Carnegie Hall debut as tenor soloist in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as part of the Pakistani Earthquake Relief Concert. He had debut performances with opera companies in Connecticut, Cedar Rapids and Nevada and has a number of exciting and impressive engagements lined up for the upcoming year.

MOOBED FARIDON ZARDOSHTY RELIGION EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

2003-2007 RECIPIENTS

These scholarships of US\$1,000 were awarded on an annual basis, for five years from 2003-2007, to students pursuing Higher Education in Zarathushti Religion and/or its languages at a recognized Institute of Higher Learning anywhere in the world.

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ZARTOSHT ATROPATENE | Postgraduate student at University of London, SOAS studying the Zarathushti Religion and Avestan Languages. |
| SUSAN KARANI | Post graduate student at University of Michigan- Ann Arbor, beginning Ph.D in Old Iranian Studies. |
| MANDANA MOAVENAT | Post graduate student at University of London, SOAS studying for Ph.D in the Zarathushtrian Religion. |
| BAHMAN MORADIAN | Post-graduate student at the University of Paris studying for Ph.D in Languages and Culture of Ancient Iran. |
| BURZINE K. WAGHMAR | Post graduate student at University of London, SOAS studying for Ph.D in Iranian and Central Asian Studies. |

THE FALI CHOTHIA

Charitable Trust

The Fali Chothia Charitable Trust was established in 1988 to help provide scholarships and interest-free loans to needy Zarathushti students. Awards are based on financial need, educational achievement, and community service. The trust is established under the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington Inc. (ZAMWI), and in the past 18 years it has awarded scholarships and loans to students from all parts of the US and Canada.

To demonstrate solidarity and trust between organizations while serving community causes, the US Chapter of the World Zoroastrian Organization joins the Fali Chothia Trust Scholarship Program by adding an amount up to fifty percent to every scholarship given. This year the Trust was able to award 10 scholarships.

Chothia Scholars

ANAHEET GAZDAR, Architect, Diploma in Fine Arts, School of The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

"As a practicing Architect in India, I had the privilege of giving back to the community by designing a low-cost housing facility for Dastoorjis and designing and executing the construction of a Community Hall for the Parsi colony at Lullanagar, Pune". Her long term goals include opening her own studio as well as being involved in the restoration of old historical buildings and artwork.



"I am especially proud that our community supports creative careers like fine arts; a shift from the traditional ones like engineering and medicine. Thank you once again to the Fali Chothia Charitable Trust and the WZO for their generous donation."

NAVROZE TARAPORE, Masters in Electrical Engineering, The University of Texas at Dallas

"Firstly heartiest thanks to 'The Fali Chothia Charitable Trust' for deeming me fit for their scholarship. I completed my Bachelors of Engineering in Electronics and Telecommunication from Mumbai University in July 2006 and came to the USA in the Fall 06 semester to pursue Masters of Science in Electrical Engineering with major in Telecommunication from The University of Texas at Dallas.



I feel very elated that my academic performance is appreciated by your organization and by granting me a scholarship, you have further encouraged and motivated me to do my best in achieving my academic and career goals with which I have come here in USA. Furthermore, your scholarship has also reduced the monetary burden of my parents in India."

Navroze has an impressive academic background, and has won numerous scholarships for his achievements, and has also been active in volunteer service

ZENOBI RAVJI, Pre-Med, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Currently a junior at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, "I'm a pre-med student majoring in economics and international studies. I hope to work as a doctor in the developing communities of Latin America and Africa, along with working with the United Nations on improving developing economies". She is also studying languages and economics because she believes that in addition to being a doctor, she can help developing countries more fully by being active in their political and economic systems. She says, "in a way, I just want to do it all."



In a recent interview with a local non-governmental organization, I was asked about the motivation behind my passion. My answer was injustice. It is the suffering of others, poverty, racism, and inhumane treatment faced by millions around the world that lights the flame of passion inside of me. This is the passion to use my skills, knowledge, and abilities to the fullest in order to serve the underserved. Receiving the Chothia Scholarship is a means that will help me put my passion and energy to use.

AMY SUNTOKE, Ethics, History and Public Policy, and Statistics at Carnegie Mellon University.

Amy Suntoke, a junior at Carnegie Mellon University, is majoring in Ethics, History and Public Policy. This degree will provide a solid background in the humanities and social sciences. Armed with this knowledge, Amy plans to pursue graduate studies, in International Relations or Journalism. These areas are especially



interesting to Amy because they offer the opportunity to be informed in current international events, which is becoming increasingly important in the context of globalization. This interest in global affairs has in part been cultivated by attending a study abroad program in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Amy, a devoted cellist, has played in orchestras, and has worked with several community service organizations. She hopes to blend statistics and music to work in organizations to affect change in peoples' lives.

Amy is highly honored to be chosen for this scholarship as being a recipient of this scholarship implies that her academic accomplishments have been recognized by an outstanding and worthy organization. This is a privilege that Amy does not take lightly. On a more practical note, it is obvious that while higher education has been a necessity these days, it has also become a major financial investment. For Amy, any assistance in financing college is greatly appreciated.

SHIREEN CAMA, Doctor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass

Upon graduation she hopes to run a clinic that not only provides care to low-income families, but also educates them about anti-hunger programs. She has worked abroad developing an HIV/AIDS prevention program in India, and teaching health care in Nicaragua.

Shireen is The Mehraban and Morvorid Kheradi FEZANA SCHOLAR FOR 2005-2006



RAYOMAND DABHOIWALA, Masters in Mechanical Engineering, Michigan Tech.

Rayomand is a member of various professional organizations and is involved in charitable and volunteer projects. He holds a GPA of 4.0/4.0

RAYOMAND, IS THE RECIPIENT OF THE 2006 FEZANA SCHOLARSHIP



RASHNA UMRIGAR, Masters in Public Health at the University of South Florida.

Rashna aspires to establish a community health clinic for underprivileged women and children. She also hopes to use her professional training to help other Zarathushti women, and to serve her community.

RASHNA IS THE RECIPIENT OF THE 2006 FEZANA SCHOLARSHIP



ANOSH WADIA Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, Texas A&M University, College Station

Anosh left his hometown Porbandar, at the age of seven to attend boarding school – The Rajkumar College (RKC), Rajkot, then attended St. Xavier's College, Bombay and later The International Centre For Applied Sciences(ICAS), Manipal. All this has given Anosh an opportunity to broaden his horizons and has made him an independent and confident person. At RKC, he attained the second rank in the CBSE 10th standard examinations.

Being fond of outdoor activities, he represented his school at the Gujarat State Tennis Tournament and has also won awards in swimming, gold medals in English Recitation and the Gentleman's Cup for all round performance in the Junior School. At ICAS, he stood first in his field of study— Mechanical Engineering. He participated and volunteered in the organization of the All India Technological Festivals and represented ICAS at the Intercollegiate Tennis Tournaments.

Anosh is pursuing a B.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering at the Texas A&M University, College Station and has secured a 3.75 GPA at the end of the first semester of the Junior Year.

"Caring for and sharing with others is what I have grown up observing at home. I feel scholarships like the one awarded by the FCCT encourages the youth of our community to work diligently to achieve excellence and expresses solidarity in a very meaningful way."

JANAZ GHADIALI is pursuing a degree in Biology at Binghamton University. Janaz is a highly motivated student, and has participated in charitable programs such as the leprosy project, and anti-poverty campaigns. She has also been actively involved in several extra-curricular activities.

BURZIN CHAVDA is pursuing an MS and PhD in Biological Science at Binghamton University. He obtained an MS in Biochemistry at the Institute of Science in India before joining this program. Burzin has been the recipient of two academic awards for standing first in his class.

Read

FEZANA JOURNAL

Send a gift subscription to family and friends

Ahura Scholarship



Ahura scholarship mission: "To promote leadership among local Zoroastrian youth in academic, social, and political fields."

For a community to thrive, it must nurture the leaders of tomorrow.

A necessary condition for a successful, prosperous and expanding community is the community's ability to nurture its future leaders. These leaders take ideas and turn them into reality by persuasively moving their community toward change and growth. What else does a leader do?

- 1) A leader understands his community's problems and finds ways to resolve them.
- 2) A leader knows how to describe an idea and impress people of its importance.
- 3) A leader is also an organizer.
- 4) A leader encourages collaboration between people.
- 5) A leader is a good coach and mentor.
- 6) A leader with his good deeds is a role model for others.
- 7) In short, a leader thinks "good thoughts", speaks "good words" and does "good deeds".



In order for our community to be successful we need to foster good leaders for our future. One way is to encourage and promote young people who demonstrate leadership and present them to other young people as role models. The goal of the Ahura scholarship is to encourage and promote young leaders.

Ahura Scholarship invites Zarathushti youths to apply for our leadership scholarship for academic year of 2007-2008. It is a one time grant for the amount of \$3000 which maybe used for a bachelor or a graduate program. Applicants must be accepted or are currently enrolled in an accredited U.S. or Canadian institution. Payment of the scholarship is dependent on receipt of a tuition statement and confirmed enrollment for the FALL semester of 2007. All completed applications must be postmarked by July 15, 2007. Visit <http://www.pzo.info>. For specific questions please contact **Koorosh Vakhshoori** at vak1232003@yahoo.com.

2006-2007 AHURA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Each of the three winners has shown exceptional leadership in different aspects of their respective academic fields, community, and life in general. These three are presented as role models for Zarathushti youth to follow, in hope of seeing more of our youth showing similar leadership qualities in upcoming years. Here is each recipient's short biography.

Ahura Scholarship Board of Directors

PERINAZ BHADA is currently pursuing her MS in Earth Resources Engineering at Columbia University, New York, where she also received her Master of International Affairs in Environmental Policy. Perinaz came to the US from India for undergraduate studies at Franklin & Marshall College in Business, Environmental Policy, and Economics. At Columbia, she has been involved in organizing the Global Roundtable on Climate Change, an initiative to bring



together top-level executives from around the world to reach consensus on climate change. Perinaz is currently doing research on the feasibility of introducing waste-to-energy technology in her hometown, Bombay, in order to combat the

garbage problem and to provide a supplemental energy source. Her career goals include representing India internationally on environmental matters and creating better environmental regulations there. **PERINAZ BHADA IS THE RECIPIENT OF THE 2006 FEZANA SCHOLARSHIP.**

SHAHIN SHAYANDEH was born in Tehran, Iran. He received the B.S. degree (with honors) in computer engineering from Sharif University of Technology, in 2004. He is currently a graduate student in the Department of Computer Science of University of Southern California (USC) working towards his PhD degree as a research assistant in the database systems laboratory of USC. Besides his academic engagements, he has served Iranian Zoroastrian Society by being an



active member of different Zarathushti community organizations and holding related events. He was a member of the board of Zoroastrian Students Organization (ZSO) from 2001 to 2003. During these 2 years he was on the organizing committees of numerous events held by ZSO and two workshops titled "Challenges of Zoroastrian Iranian Youth" were hosted by him in Sharif and Tehran Universities. He is a recipient of several academic awards of which USC Viterbi School of Engineering Graduate Award was the most recent one.

PANTEA FARAHMAND is a fourth year honors student in University of California, San Diego. She is currently in the process of applying to medical school with the hopes of becoming an Oncology Surgeon. In addition to studying the courses necessary to get a diploma in the Neuroscience and Animal Physiology field, she also participates in various extracurricular and clinical research activities. She is a mentor in the organization Friends Understanding Needs, the Publicity Chair in the Pre-Health for the Deaf Club, and an independent researcher in the Language and Cognitive



Science Laboratory of Professor Tracy Love in UCSD. She is also very proud of her involvement as the co-founder and an active member of UCSD's Zoroastrian Club. The club has been successful in educating university students—Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis—of the religion's historical significance. Since she believes it is important to be immersed in socially conscious involvements she makes it her life's goal to work hard and deduce new ways of improving the world's condition.

FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS (2007-2008)

Applications are invited for the **FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP MEHRABAN AND MORVORID KHERADI (MMK) ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE - THE FEZANA SCHOLAR.**

BANOOBAI AND MANECKSHAW KAPADIA (BMK) ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP

All scholarships are open to Zarathushti applicants who have obtained admission for attendance at institutions of higher learning (accredited degree-granting colleges or universities) in USA or Canada.

Scholarships: Scholarships for the academic year 2007-2008 will be awarded in September 2007

Eligibility: Applicants must complete the application form and provide documentation for: (1) proof of USA or Canada citizenship. (For non citizens a minimum of one year or two semesters residency in USA or Canada academic institution is required) (2) past academic records and accomplishments (attach documentation of the past four years only) (3) program of study (4) annual financial need including assistance already pledged by other funds, charitable institutions or the institution of choice; (5) other financial assistance available from family and friends (6) community service including contributions to Zarathushti functions and organizations (7) three reference letters

Award Criteria: Applicants will be rated on Scholastic Achievement (40%), Financial Need (40%), Extra-curricular Activities (10%) and Community Service (10%).

The Mehraban and Morvorid Kheradi Endowment Scholarship of \$5000 will be awarded to a post graduate student for scholastic excellence

The Banoobai and Maneckshaw Kapadia Endowment Scholarship of \$1000 will be awarded for undergraduate studies to a student with good academic standing who demonstrates financial need.

Application: Application forms are available from the FEZANA website at www.fezana.org or from Dr Dolly Dastoor (dollydastoor@sympatico.ca) Completed application forms should be post-marked August 1, 2007 to:

DOLLY DASTOOR Ph.D, Chair, FEZANA Academic Scholarship Program, 3765, Malo, Brossard, QC Canada J4Y 1B4

ANNOUNCEMENT

PERFORMING AND CREATIVE ARTS SCHOLARSHIP 2007



The FEZANA Performing and Creative Arts Scholarship (P&CAS) provides financial support to Zarathushtis who are performing artists in music, drama, etc. or practice other creative art forms like literature, poetry, fine arts, sculpture, painting, etc. The scholarship is to enable the recipients study with experts in their field and fine tune and enhance their talent and capabilities, IT IS NOT FOR BASIC EDUCATION IN THE ABOVE FIELDS.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA; Applicants must (1) profess and practice the Zarathushti faith (2) be high school graduates (3) be legal residents or citizens of USA or Canada. Foreign students holding legal status in USA or Canada may also apply provided they have been in North America for at least one year.

SELECTION CRITERIA : Applicants will be judged on their academic preparation, and past record in their program of study, their commitment to pursue the chosen art form, their annual financial need, the assistance pledged by other sources, extra curricular activities and services performed for the Zarathushti community.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE : Application forms available at www.Fezana.org .

Submit 5 copies of the form with all attachments (including portfolio items) by March 31, 2007 to:

SHERAZADE F. MEHTA, 5400 Preston Oaks Rd, #3048 Dallas TX 75354 (U.S.A), Tel: (972) 385-4847 e-mail: sherazadem@yahoo.com

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

A list of miscellaneous scholarships is given below:

● **FEZANA Scholarships** and **Mehraban & Morvord Kheradi Endowment Scholarship – FEZANA Scholar, and Bannobai and Maneckshaw Kapadia Edowment Scholarship** for students at institutions of higher learning in USA/Canada. Dr. Dolly Dastoor, dollydastoor@sympatico.ca, tel: 450-656-2036, www.fezana.org.

● **Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Religion Education Scholarships** for higher studies/research in Zarathushti religion at an institution of higher education anywhere in the world. Kayomars P. Mehta, kayomehta@aol.com, tel: 630-654-8828, www.fezana.org.

● **Fali Chothia Charitable Trust** scholarships for students in NA universities. ferozafitch@lexicongraphics.net, tel: 301-564-3726, www.zamwi.org/about/2001FCCT.pdf

● **ZAC (Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago) loans/scholarships** for study in USA & Canada. ZACscholarships@yahoo.com, www.zac-chicago.org.

● **ZSBC (Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia)** awards scholarships to its members seeking admission to a university. Homi Italia, (604) 438-2076, www.zsbc.org.

● **Performing & Creative Arts Scholarship** offered by FEZANA/ZYNA. Application form is on www.fezana.org. Anahita Sidhwa, afsidhwa@dcccd.edu.

● **Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowships** support graduate education for immigrants and children of immigrants. www.pdsoros.org.

● **Houtan Scholarship Foundation** offers a scholarship of \$2,500 per semester for studies in Iranian language and culture. Visit www.houtan.org.

● **Indo American Community Foundation** offers scholarships of \$3,000 per year to Indian Americans. Visit www.upakar.org.

● **Individual Advanced Research Opportunities (IARO)** scholarships, for research in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Tajikistan). www.irex.org/programs/iaro. Also visit www.irex.org/programs/roberts for study grants in Iran.

● **Institute of International Education's** Scholar Rescue Fund offers fellowships to scholars from any country and in any discipline, whose life, security or work is threatened in their home regions. Visit www.iie.org/SRF. Email: SRF@iie.org.

● **Harvard's Pluralism Project** offers research grants. staff@pluralism.org; www.pluralism.org/research/student_grant.php. For summer internships, visit www.pluralism.org/resources/calendar/summer_internships.php

● **National Science Foundation** offers grants for documenting endangered languages. Visit v/Applicants/NSF/OIRM/HQ/04-605/Grant.html.

● **Gates Millenium Scholars Program** offers awards for science studies. Visit

www.gatesfoundation.org/Education/Scholarships/Announcements/Announce-040607.htm.

● Global Environment Facility of the **World Bank** and **YES**, offers fellowships for entrepreneurs in field of renewable energy. Visit http://www.projects.takingitglobal.org/

● Scholarships for **Commonwealth citizens**. www.csponline.org/hostcountries/uk/

● **Royal Society scholarships** in science. www.royalsoc.ac.uk/funding/

● **Marshall scholarships** for Americans in UK. www.marshallscholarship.org.

● **Fulbright exchange programs**. Visit www.fulbrightexchanges.org/base/grant.asp.

● **UNESCO** 'Information for All,' an international information society initiative offers funding for information literacy projects. www.portal.unesco.org/ci/en/

● **Indicorps fellowships** for a one-year public service program in India. www.indicorps.org. Email: info@indicorps.org, or contact 2004 Indicorps scholar roshnikasad@yahoo.com.

● **Canadian Subsidy Directory** contains 3100 listings of government grants and loans, including foundations and associations. \$69.95. Call 450-224-9275.

● **Boren Scholarships** and **Graduate Fellowships**. http://nsep.aed.org.

● **Jacob E. Javits Fellowships**. Undergrads or first year of graduate study. Includes social sciences, arts, humanities. www.ed.gov/programs/jacobjavits/index.html.

● **Gates Cambridge Scholarship**. All countries (except UK) eligible. www.gates.scholarships.cam.ac.uk.

● **Harry S. Truman Scholarship** Foundation. Graduate funding for career in government or public service. www.truman.gov.

Keyannejad-Kapadia Zoroastrian Scholarship Fund (endowed by Homi Kapadia and Mahkrokh Keyannejad) for a member of Triangle Fraternity. www.Triangle.org/TEF. [See ad in this section].

● **Rotary Scholarships**, to citizens of all countries where there are Rotary Clubs. Rotary ambassadorial Scholarships are at: www.rotary.org/foundation/educational/amb_scho/rotarian/award/avail.htm

● **Goldwater Scholarships** for sophomores and juniors, for mathematics, natural science, engineering. www.act.org/goldwater.

● A list of **trusts/organizations in India**, which support postgraduate studies abroad is given in Parsiana, December 2001. Contact Parsiana@vsnl.net.

● Scholarships **mainly for students in India**. http://educationsupport.nic.in/allscholarship.asp?allsch=Yes.

● **Engineering Scholarship by Northrop Grumman** of \$10,000 to student in Maryland, Baltimore and Illinois. www.es.northropgrumman.com

MOOBED FARIDON ZARDOSHTY RELIGION EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

FEZANA has established a Religious Education Scholarship fund in memory of Late Moobed Faridon Zardoshty. We are grateful for the munificence of Zardoshty sisters, Pari, Homayoun, Iran and Farangis and their families for their generous donation to FEZANA in memory of their beloved father to set up this scholarship fund.

The Moobed Faridon Zardoshty Scholarship(s) is to be awarded to selected Zarathushti individual(s) for higher studies and research in Zarathushti religion at a recognized institution of higher education anywhere in the world. Current plans are to award these annual scholarships for a period of 5 years starting in 2003. An amount has been budgeted for each academic year and may be divided amongst one or more selected individuals. The Religion Education Committee of FEZANA will manage the eligibility of selection of awards. Awardees will be required to follow FEZANA and/or the Zarathushti community to receive the tangible benefit from their study and/or research.

All interested Zarathushti individuals can request an application for scholarship from

Lovji Cama, Chair, FEZANA Education, Scholarship and Conference Committee,
58 Leroy St, Tenafly, NJ 07670, USA. e-mail: ldcama@verizon.net 201-569-7359



Deadline for receiving the completed applications with all attachments is March 31, 2007.

FEZANA SPORTS SCHOLARSHIP (EXISS)

FEZANA created an EXcellence In Sports Scholarship (EXISS) Fund last year for the first time. The objectives of the Excellence in Sports Scholarship is to provide financial support to young Zarathushtis (between the ages of 10-30) who are performing exceptionally and at highly recognized levels in all areas of Sports activity. The purpose of the scholarship is to enable the recipients to get world-class training or study with experts in their field and thus fine tune and enhance their talent and capabilities. If you feel you would qualify for this scholarship or would like more information, please email us at exissfund@yahoo.com.

In order to apply for this scholarship, you will have to complete a formal application, which we will send you by email once you have contacted us regarding your interest to apply. The deadline for all applicants is March 31, 2007. For any further questions or information, please contact Khushchehr Italia, the Co-Chairperson on this committee, at the email address above.



MASSIAH FOUNDATION EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

The **Massiah scholarships** of \$10,000, funded by Dr. Fariborz Maseeh will be awarded to two (2) qualified, full-time Zarathushti students, studying in 12th grade high school or are undergraduate or graduate students as of December 31st 2006, majoring in Arts, Science or Engineering.

Qualifications

- Admission or enrollment in one of the top accredited US universities.
- Academic excellence in Arts, Science or Engineering with a minimum of 3.5 cumulative GPA.
- Based on the student's high school records for candidates with less than one year of college with minimum SAT of 2100 or On the student's college records for students with more than one year of college.
- Two letters of recommendations from professors.

Recognitions

- The scholarships will be named the Massiah Scholarships and the recipient will be designated as Massiah Scholars.
- Each student will be awarded \$5,000.00 towards his or her educational expenses.
- The award will be presented to the students in the FALL of 2007 in a special ceremony at California Zoroastrian Center in Westminster, California or any other similarly appropriate place.
- Payments for educational expenses will be paid within 30 days of the award ceremony of scholars.

Applications

Send transcripts with a brief cover letter, including contact information and recommendation letters to the address below or to emehrfar@yahoo.com and CC to cPc_Conference@cZc.org with email subject of 'cZc/cPc Massiah Scholarship' at your earliest convenience. Qualified candidates will be contacted.

For more details, please see 'cPc' on www.cZc.org.

California Zoroastrian Center - Council on Persian Culture

Massiah Foundation Educational Scholarships

8952 Hazard Avenue Westminster, CA 92683

For more information regarding Massiah Foundation, www.Massiah.com

Jacobs Foundation

The **Jacobs Foundation** established by Klaus J. Jacobs in December, 1988, in Zurich, Switzerland, is a private philanthropic organization, operating throughout the world. The Foundation supports scientific research projects and their implementation which

- lastingly enhance the quality of young people's lives
- promote their personal and professional development, and
- enable them to personally contribute to shaping tomorrow's world

Application procedures: <http://www.jacobsfoundation.org/> Applications accepted March 1 and September 1 of each year



International Reporting Project (IRP)

Fellowship is based at Johns Hopkins University, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies [SAIS], one of the country's leading graduate schools devoted to the study of international relations.

Each year the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation provides support for IRP Fellows to cover global health issues.

The next deadline for applications for the IRP Fellowships and the NPR-Bucksbaum International Fellowship is April 1, 2007, for the Fall 2007 program.

For more information, email irp@jhu.edu or visit www.internationalreportingproject.org.

For additional information on the NPR-Bucksbaum International Fellowship, visit <http://www.npr.org/about/fellowships/international.html>.



ADVANCE NOTICE **The Points of Light Foundation** **Mini Grants available** **January 2007 and January 2008**

In 2005 The Foundation received nearly 70 grant applications, and after a series of technical assistance conference calls/e-mails and an internal review process, the applicants were awarded grants in increments from \$1,000 to \$10,000, for a total of \$90,000.

For the year 2007 about \$ 90,000 will be available as grants. **This is a competitive process which requires planning, organization in advance and writing a good proposal**

http://www.pointsoflight.org/about/mediacenter/tothepoint/2006/03/volaction_belovedcommunity.cfm

For more information on MLK Day and the Faith and Outreach Initiative, please contact Reverend Mark Farr, senior director, Outreach at (202) 729-8144.

NOTE

The wonderful volunteer work the Zarathushtis did earlier this year, with the earthquake clothes collection drive for survivors in Pakistan, can serve as a backdrop for future applications to the Points of Light Foundation, since those who make the decisions will be looking for evidence that the organization receiving the money can deliver what they promise to do.

Rev Mark Farr, the senior Director of Outreach knows of FEZANA. This is an authentic program and an opportunity available to volunteer groups all across the USA. (Editor)

North American
Zoroastrian Congress

IMPACT

Unleash the Spark Within

TORONTO

2007

XIV NORTH AMERICAN ZOROASTRIAN
CONGRESS
FRIDAY JUNE 29 – MONDAY JULY 2, 2007,
TORONTO, CANADA
CONGRESS COMMITTEE, MAKING AN IMPACT



(Left to right back row): Kamlu Mehta, Sam Vesuna, Anahita Daryushnejad, Russi Surti, Sam Meer

(Left to right middle row): Zarine Chenoy, Armin Dumasia, Roshni Captain, Mantreh Atashband, Phee Vania, Freny Engineer

(Left to right front row): Dinaz Dotiwalla, Mehroo Chothia, Daraius Bharucha, Niloufer Kavarana, Dilshad Kershaw

MASSAGE THERAPIST FARAH SHROFF

Dr. Farah Shroff Ph.D has been appointed the first Director of Research at the Massage Therapists' Association of British Columbia. (press release January 7, 2007) Dr. Shroff is also an Adjunct Professor at the UBC Department of Family Practice, Medical School, and an Adjunct Professor at the Boucher Institute of Naturopathic Medicine where she teaches Public Health.

Dr. Shroff earned her PhD at the University of Toronto in 1996. Her thesis was titled "New Directions in Canadian Health Policy." A year later Dr. Shroff published a book: *The New Midwifery: Reflections on Regulation and Renaissance*. She has also published articles in various health areas including, HIV/AIDS, midwifery, natural medicine and health policy. visit www.massagetherapy.bc.ca



EVENTS AND HONOURS

ZARATHUSHTI MARATHON RUNNERS NYC NOVEMBER, 2006



Three Zarathushtis participated in the 26 mile long New York City Marathon on November 5, 2006. The oldest male in the marathon was an 87 year old and the oldest female 88 years. More than 38,300 runners representing 120 countries started the race and around 98% finished. All

three Zarathushtis completed the marathon. And according to all three of our runners "This was truly a world class event and an UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE."

<http://www.nycmarathonorg/home/index.php> -

The three runners at the ZAGNY breakfast given in their honor before the marathon. (photo above from left Jamshed Ghadiali, Firdaus Dotiwala, Sohrab Mirza)

SOHRAB MIRZA, 64 years, ran a 13.05 minute mile to finish the marathon in 5 hours, 42 minutes and 50 seconds. Sohrab, originally from Karachi is a Transportation Engineer by profession and works for the State of California. He used to run the 800 and 1500 meters in College.



"the Marathon was - in one word - AWESOME. I was so taken up by the runners and the crowds that I ran the first half faster than I should have so miles 23 to 26 were not that easy for me. BUT I DID IT completing the Marathon in 5:42:50 thus achieving my goal. The best part was at the finish when they put that medal around your neck. The energy, 37,000 runners and the crowd were extremely encouraging, the whole experience was absolutely fantastic. Loved every second of it...."

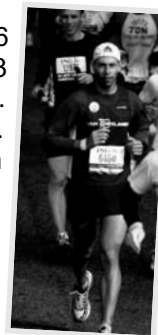
JAMSHED GHADIALI, 60, years ran a 14.30 minute mile to finish the marathon in 6 hours, 19 minutes and 59 seconds.

"They say everyone who completes the Marathon is a winner. Finally after over 40 years of dreaming about it I got my medal of completion. I took



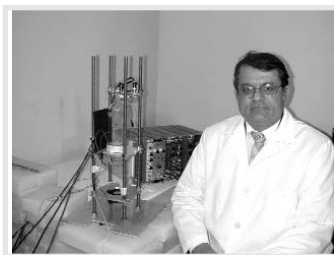
6:19:59 hours to finish it and was number 36,708 out of 38,368. I shocked myself by actually running the first 15K in 1:49:49. I had never run that long a distance in my life before." Jamshed works in MetLife and is the Operations Manager.

FIRDAUS DOTIWALA, 37, ran a 8.56 minute mile to finish the marathon in 3 hours, 54 minutes and 27 seconds. finishing 10,075 out of 38,000 finishers. This was his 7th New York City marathon since his arrival in USA 7 years ago. Firdaus is an accountant (controller) in New York.



Rusi Taleyarkhan of Purdue University successfully overcomes attacks of detractors to silence his fusion energy work on alternatives to fossil fuels – Landmark independent confirmations announced at international conferences; University exonerates Taleyarkhan and issues Press Release

Taleyarkhan is one of the world's leading researchers on acoustically-driven thermonuclear fusion (a.k.a., bubble fusion, or sonofusion) an investigation and novel approach into energy research (recreating conditions of supercompression and extreme temperatures approaching hundred million degrees within the stars like our Sun, the fundamental engines of the universe) that Taleyarkhan and supporters consider a possible low-cost alternative to the large, multi-billion dollar forms of conventional fusion research as well as a possible alternative to fossil fuels.



On March 8, 2006 Nature hastily published a series of four articles to attack and an effort to silence the work of Taleyarkhan. He has been working for a year since the publication to respond to the attacks on his work and character. On February 8, 2007 Purdue University released its final report exonerating Taleyarkhan of all allegations and put its full support behind him stating "Professor Taleyarkhan is engaged in very promising significant research and we hope he will be able to give his full attention to this important work" The proclamation has since been carried by worldwide news outlets like the *Washington Post*, *Science News* and *New York Times*

EVENTS AND HONOURS

The articles, which could have destroyed Talearkhan's career, were published in Nature's news section before the alleged scientific evidence against his work was published in the scientific literature. One of the articles was titled "Silencing the Hype," which displayed an intolerance for new science as well as a breakdown in the relationship between science and science journalism.

On Oct. 6, 2006 *Physical Review Letters* published the alleged evidence from Talearkhan's detractors-competitors countered with Talearkhan's successful peer-reviewed and scientifically-vetted rebuttal.

However, ultimate vindication and vetting of a discovery lies in someone else proclaiming a confirmation of the discovery following the time-honored scientific tradition of peer-reviews and presentation-cum-publication at acclaimed international conferences and archival publications. This often takes several years.

We learn from history over the centuries that, for any major discovery a lag time exists between the first announcement of the paradigm-shift scale discovery and it's independent confirmation or replication. For example, in recent memory, Einstein's Nobel Prize winning work related to the *Photo-electric Effect* work of 1905 was at first considered heresy, but eventually confirmed more than a decade later. The rest is history as we know it today in terms of the enormous impact it has in everyday life. In a similar vein.

Talearkhan's group announced their discovery in 2002 (first published as a central article coupled with editorial coverage in the March 3, 2002 issue of the prestigious journal *Science*). During 2006, following the recent Nature attacks, the world has now finally experienced two landmark independent confirmation proclamations wherein two papers were presented and published after careful peer reviews in November, 2006 at the *Intl. Meeting of Fusion Energy* and at the mainstay *Intl. Conf. of the American Nuclear Society*, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA.. This has followed four public demonstrations of *bubble fusion* to industry, academia and government.

Now, Brian Josephson of Cambridge, a 1973 Nobel prize winner in physics and a supporter of Talearkhan, questions whether Nature has violated journalism ethics as outlined by the United Kingdom Press Complaints Commission. And whether *Nature* published "inaccurate, misleading or distorted information" and failed, once the facts were brought to its attention, to publish a "correction, promptly and with due prominence, and -where appropriate - an apology."

Steps are now being taken for protecting intellectual property rights and commercialization along with furthering the science for attaining energy independence together with short term applications of the science.

Source: <http://newenergytimes.com/news/news.htm>
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/08/>

LEGAL LUMINARY FALI NARIMAN VISITS WASHINGTON, DC.

Padma Virbhushan Mr Fali Nariman, Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court of India, member of the Rajya Sabha (Upper House) 1999-2005, a very highly placed jurist who was named as "Living Legend of the Law" in 1995 by the International Bar Association, visited Washington, DC, in October 2006 with his wife Bapsy.

He represented the Government of India as Lead Counsel in the Baglihar Hydroelectric Dam Project Dispute against Pakistan before a Swiss Neutral Expert appointed by the World Bank under the Indus Water Treaty. He was in the US on behalf of the Government of India for meetings held at the World Bank for the same project

During their visit they were felicitated at the home of Kamal and Rohinton Tengra where they met Zarathushtis from Metropolitan Washington.

Mr Nariman is an advocate of Human Rights and has served as the Co-Chair of the Human Rights Institute of the International Bar Association (2001-2004) and Chairman of



the Executive Committee of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Geneva (1995 to 1997).

He was awarded the JUSTICE PRIZE 2002 by the Peter Gruber Foundation, a Gold Medal and a cash prize of US \$ 1,50,000/-: the citation reads – "He has over many years given exceptional leadership in a legal community whose thinkers and doers have inspired the development of a creative jurisprudence that facilitates the binding together of a diverse nation, helps control the exercise of public power and seeks to enable the poor, minorities and the marginalized to claim their basic rights to human dignity."

Above from left Behram Pastakia, Fali and Bapsi Nariman Parvin Davar, Kersi Shroff, Adi Davar with members of ZAMWI. Photo Jimmy Dholoo

EVENTS AND HONOURS

NAVAL COMMANDERS IN US NAVY

ERIC WEILENMAN, son of Nancy Mistry of Mumbai and A Weilenman, of Switzerland, a 1988 graduate of the US Naval Academy, was selected for command of a new Arleigh Burke class guided missile destroyer, Oscar Austin, at the change-of-command ceremony on 20 October, 2006 at Norfolk, VA. Upon graduating from USNA, Eric attended the Surface Warfare Officer Division Head course at Newport, RI and subsequently reported to USS San Jacinto where he served as Assistant Navigator, Assistant CIC (Combat Information Center) Officer for deployment to the Persian Gulf and operation Desert Shield.



Upon completion of this tour, he commenced his Department Head course and upon completion reported to USS Flatley as Combat Systems Officer. This was followed by a second Department Head tour aboard USS Ticonderoga in the Caribbean for counter-drug operations. He then entered the PXO pipeline and served as Executive Officer on USS Leyte Gulf during the second gulf war. Prior to his selection for command, he served on the OPNAV staff within the Surface Warfare Directorate in Washington.

COMMANDER KURUSH F. MORRIS, son of Zhaver and Fred Morris, assumed command of USS Taylor (FFG 50) in December 2006. Kurush was one of the first recipients of the Zarathushti religious emblem, which encouraged and promoted the "Good Life" program of ZAGNY. Kurush's brothers, Murzban and Bezan, also joined the US Navy after graduating from Annapolis Naval Academy. (FEZANA Journal Summer 2006).



Around THE WORLD

THE YEAR OF ARYAN CIVILIZATION, TAJIKISTAN. 2006

In 1992, Tajikistan celebrated its first independence day by holding the First Avesta World Conference in Dushanbe. In 2003, they led the world and UNESCO in celebrating the 3000 years of Zarathushti civilization. In 2006 President Rahmonov of Tajikistan declared Tajikistan celebrate the Aryan civilization reminding the people and the world of their glorious past and showing how they can once again build a glorious future.

The four day celebrations September 7-10, highlighted an International Symposium with 45 speakers presenting papers, an independence day concert, a continuous performance of dance, music and songs including a song "we are the heirs of Avesta, we are the fire of Zarathushtra", a musical play in which "Zarathushtra" appeared with hundreds of young girls and boys around him carrying Avesta written on cowhide. President Emomaly Rahmonov in his speeches implored the people of Tajikistan to follow the ethical teachings of Zarathushtra whom he described as the first "Hero" of Tajikistan. Video clip on <http://www.ancientiran.com>

Dame Dr Prof Meher Master Moos, President, Zoroastrian College attended the celebrations with a delegation of 9 persons, Evrad Khushroo Madan, Evrad Framroze Mirza, Mrs Gulistan Irani, Mr

Navroz Singaporewalla from India, Mrs Mehrbanoo Bustani of Tehran; Fariborz Rahnmoon, Editor of Iran Zamin from Canada; Fariborz Jamshidi, President Australian Zoroastrian Association. Evrads Mirza and Madan performed 45 Sedreh Poushi (17 in Khujand and 28 in Tashkent) after screening each candidate individually and ascertaining their ancestry, including the family of president of Khujand Zarathushtrian Anjuman. Five jashans were performed, four in Tajikistan and one in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, which were televised by the Government TV. The Cultural Centres in Dushanbe and Istaravshon (below) are built by funds provided by Mr A. Sassanfar of France.



Zarathushti Cultural Centre cum Darbe Meher in Istaravshon

Evrads Khushroo Fali Madan writes that he had a wonderful start to his journey from Delhi to Tashkent when he read an article in the "In flight Magazine" Zoroastrianism in Uzbekistan"

For travel Tajikistan/Uzbekistan contact Gulistan Irani, FARSHAK TRAVELS farshak@vrthere4u.com

Source: *Revival of Ancient Aryan Civilization Tajikistan and Tashkent 2006 - Making History-August-September 2006 ARYAN REVIVAL in TAJIKISTAN Report by Dame Dr Prof Meher Master Moos. President Zoroastrian College.*



Pherozeshah Mehta Bhavan and Research Centre

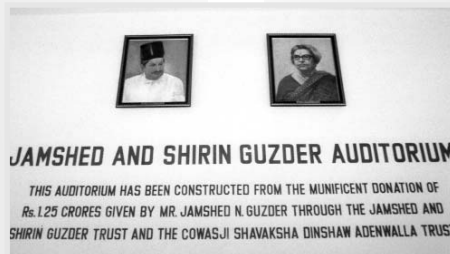
On December 27, 2006 H.E. Shri S.M. Krishna, the Governor of Maharashtra and the Chancellor of the University inaugurated the Pherozeshah Mehta Bhavan and Research Centre built at a cost of Rs. 6 Crores at the Kalina Campus of the University of Mumbai. On this occasion Mr. J.N. Guzder, Vice-Chairman of the Sir Pherozeshah Mehta 150th Birth Anniversary Celebrations Committee formally handed over the Bhavan to Dr. Vijay Khole, Vice Chancellor, University of Mumbai.

This Bhavan will house the University Department of Civics and Politics established in 1948 with the endowment of a Chair, to celebrate the Birth Centenary of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta in 1945. The Bhavan has a well-equipped auditorium, a seminar room, a library cum research centre, students common rooms and classrooms. In addition it will house three Specialized Research Centres : i) a Centre for Good Governance, ii) for Human Rights and Citizenship and iii) a Centre for the Study of Mumbai, focusing on emerging multidisciplinary areas like political economy, human rights, urban history, problems of the city, new trends of governance and the emergent role of civil society.

Generous personal donation of Rs. 1 Crore 25 Lakhs was received from Mr. J.N. Guzder, for the constructing and equipping of



Pherozeshah Mehta Bhavan and Research centre



auditorium have been named after the donors. Shri I.M. Kadri, former Sheriff of Mumbai, the architect for this unique educational edifice contributed his services free in memory of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta.

Sir Pherozeshah Mehta was one of the founders of the Indian National Congress in 1885, the maker of the city of Bombay and its municipal governance, the 'Uncrowned King of Bombay' was closely associated with the University of Bombay and appointed Vice Chancellor in 1915. Vice-chancellor Dr. Vijay Khole, paid glowing tribute to the contribution of the Parsi community particularly in the field of education and singled out Sir Pherozeshah Mehta as "a great humanitarian who believed in the humanization of knowledge".

Dr. Nawaz B. Mody who holds the Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Chair at the Bombay University gave the vote of thanks. Mrs. Homai Modi anchored the entire event with meticulous precision and aplomb. This beautiful complex, the only structure in the country, dedicated to Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, will render yeoman service to the city of Mumbai and the University in the true spirit of remembrance of this great humanist.



Source: Mrs Homai N. Modi; Member
Dr. (Smt.) Nawaz B. Mody Member- Secretary,
Sir Pherozeshah Mehta 150th Birth
Anniversary Celebrations Committee



Jamshed Guzdar in Centre.
Homai N. Modi to his right and
Dr Nawaz B Mody to his left.

the auditorium, while Zartoshty Brothers (Mehraban and Faridoon) donated Rs 90 lakhs for the construction and equipping of the library. Both the library and the

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RETIREMENT LIVING



RELOCATING



Around THE WORLD

Back to the Future



27th Dec. 2007 ~ 3rd Jan. 2008

The Fourth
World Zoroastrian Youth Congress
~ University of Ballarat, Vic. Australia

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

Aussie
Olympics

Why come for the Congress?

Youth Yakka

Son et Lumiere

Zoro Expo

Cookery Contest

Youth Debates

Friends Forever! Beach Party

Preserve, Practice, Perpetuate.

S. J. Mistry, "Ushta Tai," 11 Tamarisk Avenue, Glen Waverley, VIC – 3150, Australia.

Telephone: ++ 61 3 9562 0543.

Email: chairman@4wzyc.org

The 4thWZYC Inc. A0049539Y

Website: <http://www.4wzyc.org>

ABN 57 817 377 043

4th WORLD ZOROASTRIAN YOUTH CONGRESS. BALLARAT, AUSTRALIA Dec 27, 2007- Jan 3, 2008

ALL YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT AUSTRALIA

With all the usual activities and so little time, it is no wonder that many people want to experience something that is new at a World Zoroastrian Congress. You might be thinking what makes this Congress so special. The Executive Board has been working very hard to include brand new activities and to promote fun while learning about our Religion. We want to see as many young Zoroastrians at this Congress as possible. We want to encourage active participation and encourage Hands-On

Practices, Youth Debates, Q&A Sessions, Treasure Hunts, Our Own Original Oz Olympics and so forth!

One of the major themes we have hit upon is making 'Friends Forever'. I have been to many Congresses and this is one thing that has certainly stuck in my mind. The friendships that have been created do tend to bond us from Congress to Congress. People who have joined the 4thwzyc Yahoo! Groups will be able to meet face to face with friends they have made in cyberspace already! Others that have been corresponding via emails and forums will also be able to put faces to names and our hope is to have these friendships go well beyond the 4th



Shiraz Mistry, Chair

World Zoroastrian Youth Congress. So come on Downunder in December 2007 and be with your forever friends!

WHY COME TO AUSTRALIA?

This can be answered in many ways. I would like to concentrate on the flora and fauna that makes Australia unique. The diversity of Australian Native Animals and the variety of our plants and vegetation are something to come and discover. Some of these distinctive subjects below may be seen at our Congress at the Ballarat Wildlife Park.

Flora and Fauna of Australia

Anigozanthos manglesii (Kangaroo Paw, Red & Green).

The colour and form of kangaroo paws make them one of the most rewarding Australian native plants for the home garden. Kangaroo paws are also very good cut flowers. They are exported to many parts of the globe and are grown commercially in the USA, Israel and Japan.



Tachyglossus aculeatus (Echidna).

The echidna is best known for its amazing biology. Like the platypus, this unusual mammal lays eggs and suckles its young. The echidna and platypus are the only members of a primitive group of mammals known as monotremes.



Vombatus Ursinus (Wombat)

The common wombat is the largest burrowing herbivorous mammal. Indeed, it is such an accomplished burrower that early settlers called it a 'badger', a term that is still heard today. However, the closest relative of the wombat is, in fact, the koala. With its short tail and legs, characteristic waddle and 'cuddly' appearance the wombat is one of the most endearing of Australia's native animals.



Shiraz J Mistry
Chairman, 4th WZYC2007.

What is so good about Australia? We all are!

Try to understand all the hard work being done on your behalf by our Entertainment Sub-committee for 4WZYC2007 (from left to right): Shalayne (Perth), Monaz (Sydney), Delara (Perth), Farita (Perth) & Farzana (Perth).



"Australia is simply beautiful. It may not be classically pretty, but you can't help but be in awe of the rugged, vast landscape." – **Delara Mistry (Vice-Chair)**

"There is so much to do and see, you'll never get bored!" – **Shalayne Ghaswala.**

"Australia is a cosmopolitan and multicultural society. The beaches are spectacular and the people are warm and friendly. Oh, and the Koala's are cute too!" – **Farita Khambatta**



What is so good about attending 4WZYC?

"It is a chance for the youth of the world to come together as one and share ideas and build friendships that will last a lifetime!"

–**Farita**

"Learning about our religion and culture in a fun, dynamic way." – **Delara Mistry (Vice-Chair)**



"Knowing you can make a difference!"

"No parents! Woohoo!" – **Shalayne Ghaswala**



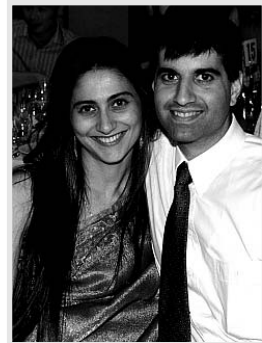
The 4th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress 2007 is a once in a life time adventure in the Heart of Australia which has been specially designed to be a week of excitement! Definitely one that everyone will remember for years to come, it's packed with sporting activities, dinner dances, a historical pageant, local tours, gold digging, beach parties, bush dancing, debates, presentations and that's only the beginning!

If you always wanted to come to Australia this is your chance! Australia is a truly unique country with spectacular natural beauty. Ballarat is a city that boasts a mixed lifestyle with its distinctive charisma and legacy of the gold rush era. It is famous for its decorative arts and has the largest concentration of public statuary in any Australian city, with many parks and streets highlighting monuments and statues dating from the 1860's to the present day creating a charming urban landscape. The city also has some of the finest botanical gardens with extensive varieties of native and introduced species of plants and trees.

Come and join in the Fun and Festivity as we get a chance to mingle, meet, and discover more about our rich and magnificent Zarathushti culture and heritage.

It will be a great opportunity to meet and interact with Zarathushti youth from all over the world. In addition to learning about our religion, there will be heaps of activities, games, sporting events and of course some yummy food ...something for everyone to enjoy! In 2007, 6 million people will visit Australia, why not be part of the action? Australia is home to people from virtually every part of the globe and most people live a safe and prosperous life. Australia is the size of Europe but as there are only 20 million residents, there is lots of open space and plenty of room for Zarathushtis considering a trip. Australia is an open, clean and friendly country, geared

for tourists and offers plenty of attractions for all ages. Ballarat will be the base for the duration of the 4th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress but Melbourne - famous for international sporting and cultural events, shopping and nightlife is just an hour away by car. From Melbourne, an hour north by plane will take you to Sydney - world famous for its breath taking 4 harbour, the Opera House and wonderful



beaches. Another hour north by plane and you will be on the Gold Coast, Australia's most popular tourist destination. My suggestion is that you do some homework on the internet and see what, when and where things are available, and plan your trip accordingly. Australia offers an enormous amount, so come prepared to have a great time and stay for as long as you can.

Mehernaz and Naushad Mistry (Sydney). (Photo above) Sports sub-committee, reception, finance sub-committees

Hi all... I've been requested to write a few words on why I think its great having the 4WZYC down under....well what can I say ..? Except for... I cant think of having the congress at a better destination than



Farzana Pestonji

Oz....beautiful as Australia is, its also a fantastic place with its own culture and sense of fun....which you will undoubtedly experience with all the fun activities we have planned for you at this congress...what with the bush dance and a beach party and a visit to the famous Sovereign Hill...also having an up close and personal experience with the aussie wildlife for the nature lovers...it leave you asking for more....! So get packing and book your tickets now....for an all aussie fun experience down under...I will sign off in true blue Aussie spirit. "Cheers Mate!!" Thanks!



Parshana Bhatha

Parshana Bhatha. (Melbourne) International Liaison Sub-committee

What's so good about attending the 4thWZYC2007? Well, there is nothing not good about it! People from all over the world... especially the youngsters should come down under and get involved in the Australian Zarathushti experience. Learn more, play more, meet more people, and have more fun!

What's so great about Australia? Australia is a whole new world in one country. This is a "must have experience" that, one would not find any where else in the world. And if that is not enough to get the Zarathushti youth Down under, here in Australia, I am certain, the sun, surf, sand and entertainment definitely will be.

What's the best thing that will happen to any one who elects to come on Downunder in December 2007? (Besides getting a hug from me of course! - and a couple of mars bars thrown in for good measure!). There will be music, games, competitions and much, much more to ensure that no one will ever be bored. There will be guest speakers and info sessions, just to keep the balance between learning and having fun.



Kashmira Jimmy Daruwalla

Come along Downunder, have one of the best experiences of your life, as well as meet other Zarathushtis from all over the world. We can't wait to see you all, and introduce you to Australia and the rest of us down here.

Kashmira Jimmy Daruwalla - Melbourne.

The 4thWZYC - A WELCOME NOTE!

4thWZYC is on and we have less than 385 sleeps to go before we can all step back into the future of our beloved Zarathushti religion. What makes this event more special is that it's a Youth Congress ... and the Youth as we know, are the future of our religion and culture.

And guess what ... this time it's the turn of Australia, a land so young and yet so new. ... a land so full of contrasts and yet so true ... to play host!

I liken the Zarathushtis of the world so similar to my land – Australia. We are so ancient and deep rooted in our cultures in one way, and so modern and westernised in so many other ways.

Australia a land of stark contrasts ... here you have the culture of the ancient aboriginals, so also of the Europeans who moulded this once convict colony to a great Nation of respect, tolerance and equality. The first thing to strike any visitor to Australia will be the extreme friendliness of the Aussie people.

The second would be the extreme informality of the Aussies. Aussies are an extremely friendly and open-minded race of people and informality goes to startling lengths.

You will be greeted by the nonchalant greeting “G'day mate!” by perfect strangers. You may even roll your eyes and say to yourself “Hey... what the hell was that?” And yet, that's the Aussie way. I can guarantee this is a phenomenon not to be witnessed anywhere else in

the world. Australia also is an epitome of religious and cultural tolerance. I am sometimes almost angered by its lack of apparent religiosity but enamoured by its spirituality. Aussies don't really care what your race, creed or colour of your skin is. All they care for is that they get a smile back in return for their “G'day Mate!” to you. Australia's truly a melting pot of a variety of cultures and faith. Apart from the typically blonde Aussie you will find Asians, Greeks, Persians, Turks, Lebanese and Indians ... Italians, Poles and the list goes on and the “Happy Australian Spirit” is quite contagious.

Australians are a happy people and this is reflected in all aspects of life. This I believe is a result of the sheer equality of people. Unlike in many countries of the world, there are no extremes in Australia. Everyone's on the same level more or less. Apart from its people Australia has great scenic/natural beauty.

From beautiful world class beaches, to ski resorts, from the best of Café and Restaurant dining, to the great architecture everywhere you turn, Australia is truly a holiday maker's dream.

It abounds in unique wild life not found anywhere else on the planet. Kangaroos, koalas, crocodiles and wombats are just a few of the unique animals that call Australia home. All these with the ancient culture of the Outback aboriginals whose belief in the spirits of the animal and plant kingdom makes their Faith so similar to ours which attributes divinities to any creation of the Good Lord.

But how does all this bear relevance to the 4thWZYC to be held in Australia? The very fact that our Youth, our children can travel to a foreign land and meet their

humdins and see for themselves how the Zarathushtis in another part of the world are, how they live ... they will see for themselves that Zarathushtis no matter where, are intrinsically the same. At the same time the learning experience they will share with Youth from all over the globe, the interaction they will have with each other, the bonds of friendship they form will last a lifetime. And who knows ... there's a good chance that some lucky Youth will find that special someone they might like to know better ... or even for life.

The organisers of the 4thWZYC are working very hard to make it an experience of a lifetime for one and all, and I assure you it will be. So folks, don't forget to mark those important dates – 27th Dec 2007 to 3rd Jan 2008 and do try to send our youth (your children) from all over the world, to come and visit us Downunder for an adventure of faith and fun!

See you there ... real soon!!

Ushta té!!

Pashmina Mahyar Contractor, Melbourne.

May you come, see and be conquered forever!

We love this Lucky Country variously referred to as Terra Australis, the Great Southern Land, Downunder, OZ – or simply Australia, which we, your hosts, also call Home.

Q: Why come all the way to OZ? What's there to see? What's there to do?

A: How long have you got? At least a lifetime - or two?

Where do I begin to start to talk of all that awaits all those who choose to participate in this wonderful moment in the history of the Zarathushti Religion in Australia? What shall I start with?

...The Beautiful Land!

... The Wonderful People!

...The Exciting Events!

... And of course just heaps of huggles from all of us!

THEY ALL AWAIT YOU!

There's so much to see and do and we don't have the time to do it justice – so we shall simply say come and see it for yourselves and remember it all in great happiness for a lifetime

Where else will you find the great golden beaches and the bluest of seas and the gorgeous skies - the sunniest of smiles - and of course there's US! – THE FRIENDLIEST AND LIVELIEST OF ZOROASTRIANS – SIMPLY WAITING TO WELCOME YOU ALL.

Thank God, there isn't too long for us to wait till we can sing out –

“WELCOME! KHUSHAA MEDEED! BHULLAY PUDHARO!”

And may you all be sure to have the best time of your life!

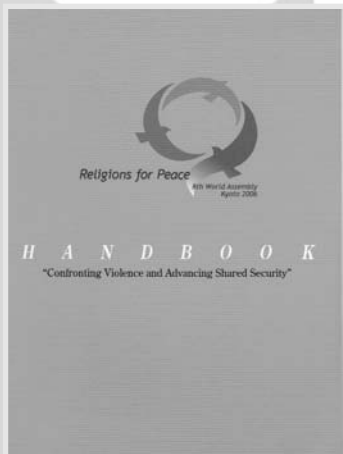
DREAM TEAM 2007 – WHO WILL ALWAYS CALL AUSTRALIA HOME!



INTERFAITH INTERALIA

World Congress of Religions for Peace and Zarathushti Relevance: Reflections on the Kyoto Conference

Religions Working for Peace and **Minoee Modi**



In August 2006, on FEZANA'S request I attended the **Religions for Peace, 8th World Assembly in Kyoto, Japan**. This World Conference spanned over nine days, starting with a first-ever conference exclusively for youth in Hiroshima, a city that knows only too well the value of peace, continuing with a brief two-day Women's Assembly in Kyoto, home of the

organization's first World Assembly, as well as Japan's cultural capital and the prime original target of the Atomic bomb. The main conference consisting of five fully-packed days of talks and meetings was also held there.

The theme of this Assembly attended by over 800 people from around 100 countries was **"Confronting Violence and Advancing Shared Security"**, and although the lack of pre-conference literature kept me mystified, later literature made clear, the aim was to "address the concrete ways religious communities can work together to stop war, eliminate poverty and protect the earth." To this end, matters were focused in three directions: Conflict Transformation; Peace-building; Sustainable Development; and most of the non-administrative activity at the conference was divided along these lines.

The day typically started with plenary sessions featuring various speakers (sometimes so varied that their assessments of the general global situation were in direct opposition) after which delegates gathered in smaller "working groups" to discuss the topic at hand. Apart from the usual learning and discussion that goes on at such conferences, each of the three sub-conferences had the task of charting a declaration. That of the Youth Assembly was the "Hiroshima Declaration; there was also a "Women's Declaration", and the main "Kyoto Declaration". They are all remarkable documents, available on-line:
http://www.wcrp.org/files/youth-2006_0.pdf,
<http://www.wcrp.org/files/women-2006.pdf>
<http://www.wcrp.org/files/KyotoDeclaration.pdf>.

If you do read these, perhaps you will disagree, that the one put forth by the Youth Assembly is most impacting. But the innocence, energy and positivity that this document exhibits from its very start that declares "we choose hope because that is the only way forward" was also part of the process of its drafting (this group, of all three constituting the

conference, went to great lengths to include all its delegates in the process – opportunities were created for discussing drafts, reasons were presented, numerous drafts were made in response to suggestions), as well as everywhere in the air at this part of the conference. This may not seem noteworthy to the extent that we think of these attributes characteristic of youth, but when considered in light of the fact that today's global, civil, communal, inter-religious, intra-religious disharmony is very little of their doing (they haven't been around long enough to affect these situations significantly), yet they have them as their inheritance, it is astounding. Moreover, it sent the important message that the obligation to secure peace is not only of the warring parties'.

Yet, truth be told, I wondered initially about the point of Zarathushti participation at this conference. Surely it was not to "show face" at a high-profile event of this nature. And although learning that it was an obligation fully within the aim of the conference, of how the Zarathushti community could be of help along with other faith communities, in the conflicts that mark today's news, very little of this was directly relevant to being Zarathushti per se (as opposed to a citizen of the world); issues involving the Zarathushti religion are neither the subject of inter-religious/-communal/-regional conflicts nor the unique solution to them. What, then? In asking this I was, erroneously, skeptical of an intra-religious usefulness, as I was under the impression that our small numbers (along with our homogeneity on various significant fronts) meant small numbers and extent of community problems – until I asked the question of fellow Zarathushtis ubiquitously. Issues apart, **I discovered that the severity of conflict in our community is considerable.**

So, when at the main conference we were required to join a commission of our choosing, I opted for **conflict transformation** commission that concerned conflict mediation and negotiation which I considered most relevant for us. The agenda for discussion here as well as throughout the conference was, understandably, multi-religious in scope. Talks thus revolved around inter-religious cooperation as a solution to conflict. And for those conflicts that arise inter-religiously this seems appropriate. **But religious communities are not monoliths, and a good share of the world's conflict goes on within them, in addition to between them.** This, if true, has implications for the nature of resolution of inter-religious conflict. Hence, I participated with the hope of learning ideas for its intra-religious example in our community.

More than anything else, I was gripped by the idea that although the substantive aspect of conflict resolution invariably causes us to label it "complex", the form of conflict resolution can be rather simple. It isn't much different than when we fought with siblings in childhood – and were made

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

Religions Wo

to sit down and talk it out. Before this makes you call me a novice in mediation, I will call myself one. But I do not know of resolution that has ever been achieved without this step, and it is this step that is missing for many of us who find ourselves troubled by community matters. Consequently, peace fails at its first locus: **within the self**. Of course, there are those conflicts for which no number of forums for discussion have proved fruitful. So, although it is the first step, more is needed. The conference, however, could not provide this specific **"more"** for me, although it provided reminders that more was indeed needed.

Post-conference, I feel that the **"more"** is also simple – a change in our conception of peace from something that is achieved between parties, after which everyone goes home and resumes life, to a way of life. This means there is no going home, or to put it another way, **peace goes with you wherever you go – or not at all**. That's what understanding "peace" requires, and until we understand, we don't know what we're asking for in negotiation. So, **there isn't the peace out there, an inert state-of-affairs, and us here, active beings pursuing various ends, among them, peaceful resolution**. If it isn't part of who we are, trickling into the smallest, most mundane details of our life (how we queue-up or speak or drive, say) then it won't evolve out of thin air in negotiation. I propose this to both sides in all our community conflicts. A good part of the power of Gandhi's effort during the struggle for India's independence derives from this holistic approach; nonviolence for him was not strategy, but life-guiding principle. It permeated all thought, word and action. Anything less wouldn't have worked.

Biography: "Minoee Modi is currently a philosophy student at Tufts University. She spent her childhood in India and Japan. She welcomes your comments on her ideas and invites those interested, particularly youth, to join hands in navigating our current community conflicts to resolution. She feels that the power of being one in strength or "hamazor" in such an endeavor has yet to be seen. (odi@tufts.edu)"



ZARATHUSHTI ELECTED TO COUNCIL OF WORLD ASSEMBLY OF WCRP

Mrs Homai Modi, Trustee of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute in Mumbai and the Governor's nominee Maharashtra State Branch of the Indian Red Cross Society was elected unanimously to the Council of World Assembly at the **World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP)** which met in Kyoto, Japan 26-29th August, 2006.

Over six hundred and fifty delegates from one hundred countries representing all major faiths elected their Word Council for a term of five years. The Council consists of fifty prominent leaders and personalities from different faith communities who can contribute to the peace keeping and humanitarian work of WCRP worldwide. Congratulations Homai. Minoee Modi represented FEZANA at the same conference.

[Source Jehangir Sarosh, President, Religions for Peace - Europe

www.religionsforpeace.net/Europe
www.religionsforpeace.org

"Poverty and blindness are the result of a vicious cycle where one condition feeds upon the other. Through medical and social intervention this cycle can be transformed: sight can be restored to the blind, and blindness and malnutrition can be prevented in the young, and therefore, lives are improved, and individuals regain their vital connection to their community. This is the work and focus of Operation Eyesight."

Rohinton Mistry

Author and Operation Eyesight donor

[Posted on: www.ozcf.com]



VISION 2020: The Right to Sight is a joint initiative between the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness and the World Health Organization, with an international coalition of NGOs, professional bodies and eye care institutions, which aims to eliminate avoidable blindness worldwide by the year 2020, in order to give everyone in the world, and particularly those who are needlessly blind, the Right to Sight.

Visit: <http://www.vision-2020.org/>

Zarathushtis Without Borders

Operation Eyesight in Vera Cruz, Mexico

Khushroo Bodhanwalla (aka Khush Bodhan) of Hayward, California was part of a group of doctors and volunteers from the Lions in Sight Program of California and Nevada to serve the visually impaired in the city of



Khush Bodhan (left) volunteering in Vera Cruz , Mexico

Vera Cruz, Mexico. The mission was coordinated with the Lions Club of Vera Cruz.

Lions are recognized worldwide for their service to the blind and the visually impaired. This service began when Helen Keller challenged the Lions to become "Knights of the Blind in the crusade against darkness". Lions Club International is the world's largest service organization whose members total about 1.5 million in over 200 countries. **The Lions in Sight** program has collected over 5 million pairs of glasses for distribution in the developing countries.

Through the years the Lions Club has charted an increased need within the Mexican community for donated lenses. The Lions of Vera Cruz did a fabulous job of organizing the entire event and generously donated their time and facilities that included a small but efficient low vision center. The doctors would write out the prescription and the volunteers would match the prescriptions to the donated glasses as closely as possible. Over a two day period, Doctors Demshar and MacNeil and the volunteers distributed approximately 500 pairs of glasses to the visually impaired and generally the poorest section of the populace in the port city of Vera Cruz, Mexico. The visually impaired would then take the glasses home as a gift from the Lions in Sight Program. The Lions were

overcome with the need for such a mission, as all of the needy were desperately in need of corrective lenses. These corrective lenses are collected by the Lions in Sight Program from the general population all over the world. The targeted areas include sporting events, offices, apartment complexes, schools, colleges etc.

The guiding lights that encouraged Khush's efforts came from his parents, who in Jamshedpur, India, spent endless hours running among other things the Jamshedpur Blood Bank, Tata Meherbai Cancer Clinic and of course the Jamshedpur Blind Center. His mother and Mother Teresa of Kolkata fame worked to help those that were less fortunate than the rest of society.

Upon returning from India after his father passed away in 2004 he learned that the Lions Center for the Blind in Oakland, California was going to close because of a lack of funds and adequate management. He, along with two other Lions took it upon themselves to ensure that this facility would not close. They ran the Center and it continues to flourish today serving more than 500 clients. The Lions Center for the Blind in Oakland provides a variety of services (recreational, educational and support groups) and training (Braille, Orientation & Mobility, Computer, Life Enrichment) for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, including those with developmental disabilities. In saving the Blind Center from sure foreclosure, Khushroo was awarded the **Melvin Jones Fellowship Award**, which is the highest award given to a member of the Lions club.

Khushroo along with six doctors and a team of 15 will be going to India around November 2007 to continue the work in the spirit of Lionism (Lions in Sight Mission to Mumbai). They will be assisted by Lions Mr and Mrs Kommissariat, Neville Mehta and Mr Karani in distributing about 7000 eyeglasses to the poor. If you wish to assist in the upcoming trip please e mail him at kbodhan@gemsedi.com.



Khushroo, a CPA and a real estate broker, lives in Hayward, California with wife Nancy, and his two children Shanta (aged 25), and Seth (aged 17). Seth Bodhan, continuing the tradition of his Grandfather and his Dad, recently spent about 100 hours contributing his time at the Oakland Blind Center during his last summer vacation.

Stand Up Against Poverty

Zarathushtis Join Global event to enter the Guinness Book of World Records

Zarathushtis from Toronto, New York, Chicago and Washington DC held "Stand Up" events in their home towns in October 2006 to join a global call to action. Six years ago, 189 world leaders sat down and agreed to end poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. A powerful international statement was made by individuals from civil society working in concert to draw the attention of governments to remember their promises and eliminate the scourge of poverty. Photos from local events organized by member associations of FEZANA were featured on the United Nations web-site.

Official Guinness World Record:

The world record for the most people to 'Stand Up Against Poverty' in 24 hours was set on 15 - 16 October 2006 for the United Nation's Millennium Campaign and involved a massive total of 23,542,614 participants in 11,646 events around the globe. **STAND UP** is part of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty month of mobilization around The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP).



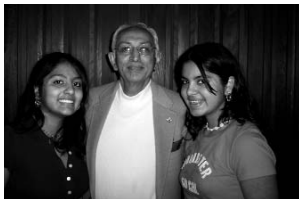
www.millenniumcampaign.org

www.standagainstopoverty.org



Zarathushtis Join Together and Stand Up against Poverty!

Jasmine Dukandar, Edison, New Jersey



While growing up, I have noticed that many times the only issues that people are interested in are those that affect them. It is because of this mentality that the truly important issue of poverty in the world is not given due importance. Most people feel that since that is a prevailing problem in other parts of the world, there is nothing we can do about it. That, however, is where a program such as "Stand-Up" comes into play. "Stand-Up" is a Millennium Project program that allows everyone to raise their voices against poverty. By making a statement, we can make a difference.

In their campaigning, our governments have made promises to take action against poverty, but have not carried them out. With only 20% of the world's population consuming over 80% of its resources, we must ensure that this plague can be overcome. My younger sister Tina and I believe in causes like "Stand-Up", so we took it upon ourselves to host ZAGNY's first ever "Stand-Up" Event. The goal of this worldwide event, held over a span of two days, was to have as many people as possible literally and mentally "stand up" against poverty.

With the help of our ZAGNY President Homi Gandhi, (photo above) we were able to hold this event on the 15th of October in conjunction with the Annual Udvada Function. After the prayers for the Udvada Function were completed I went up to the podium and gave everyone a brief introduction of "Stand-Up" as well as raised the concerns and issues that poverty is causing. My sister then followed and asked everyone to rise as she read the "Stand-Up" pledge out loud.



After our official event was over, my sister and I, along with the help of the other kids, went around selling the "Stand-Up" wristbands. People were very generous with their donations and were eager to buy the wristbands as a reminder of the issues that those less fortunate face. I was very pleased with the enthusiastic way our Zarathushti community had responded to this serious issue and was ready to take action. Many adults were surprised by the fact that such a heavy issue was brought to ZAGNY's attention by two teenage girls. Our response was, "As long as you strongly believe in a cause, you're never too young or old to fight for it."

Tina Dukandar is 14 years old and is an eighth grader at Herbert Hoover Middle School. She held a "Stand-Up Against Poverty" Event with her Zarathushti community as well as at her school.

Jasmine Dukandar is 17 years old and a senior at the Middlesex County Academy for Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Technologies. Helping out in the community is important to her and she aspires to become a doctor someday.

MOVE OVER “Y” GENERATION,

**INTERFAITH
INTERALIA**

A NEW GROUP OF ZARATHUSHTIS IS COMING!



Sherri Billimoria

A new group of young Zarathushtis is to attend the 51st session of the Commission on Status of Women (CSW) at United Nations Headquarters in New York from February 26 to 9 March 2007. They are Yasna (7) and Gordiya Khademian (11) from Washington DC, Sherri Billimoria (14) from Palo Alto, California, Tina (14) and Jasmine Dukandar (17) from New Jersey. As they are below 18, their respective parents will accompany them.

Each of these youngsters has already contributed to promote world peace by their commitment to further the objectives of the United Nations. Yasna and Gordiya (left) worked side by side with ZAMWI members in January 2006 to collect, sort, box, and ship clothes for the survivors of the South Asia earthquake (see FEZANA Journal Spring 2006). In October 2006, they conducted “Stand up Against Poverty” pledge for the Millennium Development Goals program of the United Nations with the children in their Avesta Class and other members of ZAMWI.

During her vacation break in India last year, Sherri volunteered for a few weeks at Akanksha, an NGO that educates slum children near Pune. She writes, “This experience fueled my interest in this year’s CSW topic, particularly because it relates to underprivileged children, like those in Akanksha.” Recently her school has started to develop a globalization project, the goal of which is to prepare and send students to either India or China for a month as a graduation prerequisite. She plans on becoming further involved with this project.

Tina conducted “Stand up Against Poverty” pledge to over 150 ZAGNY members on October 15, 2006 and followed up with the pledge recitation at her school on the following day. Over 600 students and faculty members participated in that event. On May 7, 2006 Jasmine held a charity event at Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr in New York for “Pedals for Progress” (P4P). (FEZANA Journal Spring 2007). She partnered with the P4P Organization to collect used bikes for the needy and less fortunate people overseas who need cheap transportation to get to their jobs, schools, etc., also raised money to cover the shipping and handling charges for the bikes by organizing a bake sale. Thanks to everyone’s help and charity, she collected 36 bikes to send overseas and a donation of \$450 for shipping. Two veterans join these youngsters. Shefukeh Zonji (2003 FEZANA Scholarship winner) from Canada is currently working with an NGO in Mexico, Caminamos Juntos para Salud y Desarrollo (Walking Together for Health and Development) in an impoverished village called Tlamacazapa in Guerrero, Mexico. She mainly works with the women in the village, helping them transform their oppressed realities through building capacity and self-esteem. She works primarily on two projects: the Income Generation project, where she manages a micro enterprise set up to empower women by teaching them business skills and self-sustainability and the Health Research project where she conducts interviews with postnatal women about their health and birthing histories and assist the Midwives with their births.

Ferzeen Chhappgar (below) from Palo Alto, California, has been a leader in her own field of business and project management. She has applied her talents to her community service activities like North American Zoroastrian Congress in San Jose in 2004-5, the inaugural conference of the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce, Chicago Chapter, in 2003, and during her college days at Pune University in India. Currently, she volunteers for different community projects in the Bay Area.



The NGO Committee on UNICEF Working Group on Girls (WGG) is organizing special programmes to enrich the experience of girls who will attend the 2007 session of the CSW. Zoroastrian community is looking forward to our representatives’ contribution during and after this session. GO GIRLS!

Zarathushtrian faith is built on compassion. Our prophet’s willingness and responsibility as caretaker of the flock reveals that moral courage and leadership are among the building blocks of our faith. Following the example of Zarathushtra, we must work to end injustices and promote peace across the globe. Yasna 39.

Homi Gandhi Co-Chair FEZANA UN-NGO Committee.

DIMENSIONS OF PEACE AND VIOLENCE

The Foundation for the Unity of Religions and Enlightened Citizenship (FUREC) was launched in 2004 due to the vision of the Hon'ble President of India, Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam and the Jain spiritual leader Acharya Mahaprajna.

At a meeting in Bangalore with the members of the Apex Body of FUREC, Dr. Kalam initiated a discussion on the problem of widespread violence and possible curbs. At this meeting, Dr. Homi Dhalla presented his views to the President about the valuable contribution of some religious leaders to the cause of peace in certain parts of the world. Out of this discussion, Dr Dhalla developed a detailed paper entitled "The Dimensions of Peace and Violence" and a power point presentation with more than 130 images depicting the various forms of violence and the measures undertaken to face this challenge. It highlights the role of politicians, religious leaders, artists, educationists and eminent thinkers on the subject globally.

On June 16, 2006, this CD was shown to all the religious leaders of India who had gathered as members of the Apex Body in New Delhi. That afternoon when the Apex Body was invited to the Rashtrapati Bhavan, Dr. Dhalla presented a CD to the President of India who showed interest in the subject and asked a number of questions about it. Dr. Dhalla has been invited to speak on this subject by various peace organizations in and out of Mumbai. Earlier this year, he made this presentation at the global conference of the International Association for Religious Freedom in Taiwan. **Source Dr. Homi Dhalla**



Dr Homi Dhalla , presenting the CD to the President of India, other religious leaders of India are seen in the foreground.

INTERFAITH INTERALIA



Dorab Mistry elected First Vice Chair of Faith Based Regeneration Network, UK (FBRN)

Dorab Mistry, a Trustee of the FBRN, was elected by a secret ballot on October 9th 2006, as Vice Chair of this leading national multifaith network in the UK for community development and regeneration. The network provides a link between community and policy at local and national government level.

Dorab Mistry is the immediate past president of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE).

The European University Center for Peace Studies (EPU), Stadtschlaining, Austria INVITES 44 students from around the world to TO STUDY PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION taught by leading specialists in the field including Johan Galtung, one of the founders of the academic discipline of peace research and frequent mediator in international conflicts. Peace Studies are a highly interdisciplinary and growing academic field grounding students in both theory and practice to face the challenges of global conflict transformation.

For a more detailed explanation of the program, a course calendar and a catalogue with course descriptions, see www.epu.ac.at. A first university degree (bachelors or equivalent) is required, and preferably some professional experience. Summer term 2007: 3 June - 25 August MORE INFORMATION AND TO APPLY: Contact Anita Flasch, EPU Administrative Assistant epu@epu.ac.at Tel +43-3355-2498-515 (mornings).

R

eligious (in)fluences on human rights and religious freedom

Religions Working for Homi Gandhi, Chair, Interfaith Activities

INTERFAITH
INTERALIA

There have been moments in history where statements promoting tolerance of all religious and a-religious systems have affected the lives of people in vastly positive ways. There have also been movements in history where religiously influenced political statements promoted intolerance.

In Honor of International Human Rights Day and the 25th anniversary of the Declaration of Religious Freedom or Belief, The NGO Committee of Human Rights and other NGOs, including FEZANA, had co-sponsored a panel discussion on the topic of "Greatness was and can be Again" on December 7, 2006 at the Tillman Chapel of the United Nations Church Center in New York City.

Four knowledgeable individuals looked at four different periods of history and depicted how laws and proclamations, declarations and edicts on tolerance or intolerance affected the lives of people. Ibrahim Ramey, an Islamic Scholar, presented Cordoba, Spain (711-1492), a story about Islam's influence in the Iberian Peninsula. Dr. Muninder Kaur Ahluwalia, from Montclair State University, talked about "The Zafarnamah (1705, Notification of Victory issued by the Sikh Guru against the Mughal Empire), Shamil Idriss, of Alliance of Civilizations, rounded up the presentations by bringing us back to the 21st Century when he reflected whether there was any thing paralleling our current context in these three earlier time periods.



Cyrus Kar, (left) filmmaker and Founder of Spenta Productions, initiated the presentation with the Edict of Cyrus (548 BCE, Persian Empire). He showed a short trailer of the documentary "In the search of Cyrus the Great" and talked about King Cyrus's policy of religious freedom. Cyrus recognized that the only environment in which all religions can live in peace side-by-side is in a secular context. All citizens within his empire were entitled to certain rights and no one, not even he himself, could violate those rights. This is the true meaning of Human Rights; the true meaning of religious freedom and tolerance.

Many people in the world today see human rights as "western values", a sinister plot of western neo-imperialism. But it was Cyrus the Great, an Easterner, who demonstrated for the first time in the history that a government affording its citizens certain rights could in fact not just survive but flourish; that government did not necessarily have to sustain itself through fear. It is inscribed in Cyrus's cylinder: "The people of Babylon, who, against the will of the gods had suffered a yoke unsuitable for them....., I offered relief from their exhaustion, and ended their servitude".

And the poem on the Statue of Liberty reads : "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Was Cyrus the Great responsible for creating those values which we have come to know as "Western" values? Was Cyrus responsible for shaping the western civilization as we know it today? Whether he was or he was not, this is without a doubt the most enduring legacy of Cyrus.

Rooze Derekhtkari--Healing the Earth

Join in the UNEP Billion Tree Project

The UN Environmental Program, inspired by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Wangari Maathai has an open invitation for a world wide campaign to plant trees (from a single tree to 10 million trees) in 2007. The campaign is open to all individuals, children and youth groups, schools, community groups, non-governmental organizations, farmers, private sector organizations, local authorities, and national governments. Tree planters will be able to see who their partners are and where in our world trees are being planted. For details, visit <http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/>

Social Justice

The Zarathushti Call for Action

"May we be among those who renew the world." (Yasna 30:9)

Guest Editors Shireen Cama, Vishtasp Soroushian

Social justice is based on the principle of a fair society. For most people, this idea is a bit ambiguous and raises several questions. What does it mean to be fair and just? How can we, as fallible and impressionable humans with our own biases and interests, determine where that line of justice may fall? Moreover, what are our responsibilities as individuals and members of a society towards others within that society?

There are no easy answers to these questions. Philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas, John Stuart Mill and John Rawls have all contributed to the evolving concept of social justice, with varying degrees of morality, rationality and duty infused in the definition. While our personal understanding of social justice certainly draws upon these ideas, we all have one of the most powerful guides to help us answer the aforementioned questions for ourselves: our Vohu Manah (good mind) and our conscience. As Zarathushtis, we are charged with a responsibility to improve the world around us, and have each been granted the free will with which to execute this duty in our own way, given our individual resources, circumstances and values.

As the world around us changes, so too do the challenges that society faces and our responsibilities to address them. As exemplified in our rich history – and throughout the pages of this journal – there is no one surefire way to promote justice. Those who fight for the ideal can do so at any stage in their life and through any modality: politics, responsible business, philanthropy, medicine, academia, education, and even by simply treating others with due respect. As Zarathushtis, we must reflect upon our place in the world, what we are gaining from it and contributing to it, and what we stand for as individuals and as a community. As followers of the path of Asha, it is our privilege and our duty to be among "those who shall heal this world" (Y30.9 Insler translation).

In this issue of the FEZANA Journal, we will explore the role of Zarathushtrianism in the promotion of justice. First, scholars will take us straight to the source and shed light on how this principle is addressed within our religious texts. Next, we will learn about justice movements of the past and the Zarathushtis who offered their resources, energy and passion to supporting these causes. Finally, we are pleased to introduce you to some of the individuals within our community who are currently acting as agents of social change. With the words of our contributors, we hope to expose you to some of the social justice ideas and challenges of our time from the perspective of people who have been intimately involved in an aspect of the issue. While you may not agree with all that you find within these pages, we hope that the words push you to think critically about social justice and the role we can play as followers of the Zarathushti faith.

Thanks!

Shireen Cama and Vishtasp Soroushian

Vishtasp Soroushian, a graduate of the University of California Berkeley, currently resides in Brooklyn, New York. He has been involved with non-profit organizations aimed at improving working conditions and wages for low-income individuals



Shireen Cama is a second year medical student at Harvard University and the 2005 FEZANA SCHOLAR and 2006 recipient of a Fali Chothia Scholarship and ZAGNY scholarship. She has worked with underserved communities in the US, India and Nicaragua.



Darius Irani - age 7

Read

FEZANA JOURNAL

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Introduction

Zarathushtrianism is a faith of free will, personal responsibility, and action. As Zarathushtis, we are asked to follow the path of Humata, Hukhta, Hvarashta, (good thoughts, good words, good deeds): a simple phrase with complex implications. In this section, we will try to analyze some of these implications by hearing from some of our community's enlightened scholars, who will teach us how our religious texts and traditions view and promote social justice.

A Higher Step

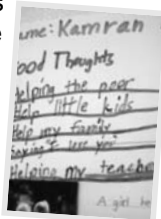
Dina G. McIntyre

The article explores how the teachings of the ancient Zarathushti Deen relate to modern social justice.

What is social justice? At one level, it is a framework of good laws that ensure that society works smoothly and that individual rights are protected. In ancient times, in both Europe and Asia, whatever the King said was the law. If the King was good, the rules by which he governed were just. If he was corrupt or oppressive, the rules by which he governed were likely to benefit only him and those whom he favored, resulting in oppression, violence, and injustice. We know from the Gathas that Zarathushtra lived in a society in which both the religious and secular leaders were corrupt and oppressive. He tells us: "During their regimes, the Karpans [a type of priest] and the Kavis [princes] yoked (us) with evil actions" Y46.11; "...the rich Karpan chose the rule of tyrants and deceit rather than truth" Y32.12; "...Since they chose the worst thought, they then rushed into fury, with which they have afflicted the world and mankind. Y30.6. As a solution to this problem the tyranny, violence, and oppression which plagued his society, Zarathushtra came to the conclusion that good rule (vohu xshathra) should not be defined by who happens to be the king, but an objective standard under which the ruler should govern. He describes good rule—not as the rule of King Vishtaspa or any other prince—but as "the rule of truth [Asha] and good thinking [vohu mano]" Y29.10, and the rule of aramaiti ("Grant thou, [aramaiti] your rule of good thinking..." Y51.2). Indeed, unlike the local gods of Zarathushtra's day, Mazda's rule -- the rule of truth -- was an objective standard under which Mazda governed. At both the secular and religious levels, this was a revolutionary idea indeed. It took the tribes, and later the nations, of Europe and Asia many millennia in governance to arrive at the same conclusion so far as earthly rulers are concerned. (One wonders whether they have even today arrived at that conclusion so far as the "Gods" they worship are concerned). Over time, the idea of "the (secular) law" changed from depending on the whims of a particular ruler, to a system of fair laws that were applicable to all, thus establishing a foundation for social justice, and prosperity. **In short, societies and nations evolved to recognize that the ruler was not above the law, but rather, had an obligation to rule and act in accordance with the law.** In the United States, this idea that everyone is subject to the law has

been periodically reaffirmed by decisions of the United States Supreme Court, holding that even the President of the United States is not above the law. Good laws derived from representative government, and that applies equally to everyone, are an essential foundation for social justice and prosperity.

At another level, however, social justice cannot exist without another one of Zarathushtra's most basic teachings -- individual responsibility. A law is only something written on a piece of paper. It is worth nothing unless individuals make choices to abide by the law, and to enforce it with courage and integrity. Moreover, it is not possible to make laws that cover every possible human experience (thank goodness!). So in the final analysis, the establishment of social justice is up to the individual making choices. We have to use intelligence committed to goodness (vohu mano) to find good solutions to problems that confront our families, our neighbors, our communities, our countries, and our world. In taking such individual actions, the term "social justice" is a good first step, but it falls far short of Zarathushtra's insight. How does Zarathushtra describe a person



Kamran
Sirohi
age 7

Dina G. McIntyre, is a Zarathushti, born in India and came to the United States to attend college. She received a bachelor of science degree from Carnegie Mellon University (then Carnegie Institute of Technology), and a law degree from the University of Pittsburgh, School of Law. Dina has practiced law in the United States since 1964. She has two sons who also are practicing lawyers. Prior to her retirement she was a member of the bar of all federal and state courts in Pennsylvania, as well as the United States Supreme Court. She has been a student of the teachings of Zarathushtra since the early 1980s, and was the Editor of a 12 lesson course on the Gathas called An Introduction to the Gathas of Zarathushtra, which she distributed world-wide in 1989-90. She has lectured on the teachings of Zarathushtra at various conferences and seminars in the United States, Canada, England, India, Venezuela, and at the World Parliament of Religions in 1993. Her writings on the teachings of Zarathushtra have appeared in various Zarathushti Journals and on the following websites: www.vohuman.org and www.zarathushtra.com



who makes the right choices? He does not describe him as "just" or even as "righteous". He describes him as "beneficent." "...And between these two, the beneficent have correctly chosen." Y30.3. We sometimes forget that Asha includes the truths of mind and spirit, of which beneficence is an integral part. Zarathushtra describes Mazda Himself, as "...the Lord, beneficent through truth [Asha]..." Y 48.3. What is beneficence? It is: "..... active goodness, kindness, charity; bounty springing from purity and goodness." It is significant that to Zarathushtra, a good first step on the path of spiritual evolution for an individual, and for a society, is justice. It is the 1,001 generous choices of individuals that establish good rule, a good society, the rule of Wisdom personified (Mazda). Teaching through questions, Zarathushtra describes this rule as follows:

Where shall there be protection instead of injury?
Where shall mercy take place? Where truth [Asha]

which attains glory? Where [spenta aramaiti]? Where the very best thinking? Where, Wise One, through Thy rule? Y51.4. The Vohu Xshathra Gatha..

If we remember that Asha (truth, beneficence, what's right), vohu mano (its comprehension), and aramaiti, (its realization in thought, word and action) are divine qualities, then we come to understand that a rule which personifies these qualities, would indeed be paradise on earth, and that it is brought about by each one of us, making good choices in thought, word and action.

All quotations from the Gathas are from those of Professor Insler of Yale University, as set forth in The Gathas of Zarathushtra, (Brill, 1975). Words in square brackets have been inserted into quotations by me, by way of explanation, or to show the applicable Gathic word, but without its grammatical inflections.

Webster's International Dictionary, 2d Edition, (1956).



Zarathushti Religion and its concern for the Poor

Prods Oktor Skjærvø

In this article, Prods Oktor Skjærvø writes about the importance of caring for the poor in the history of the Zarathushti religion, from the Gathas and the Avesta to the Achaemenid inscriptions and the Sasanian law books.

The Gâthâs

One of the main themes of the Gâthâs is the dialogue between Ahura Mazdâ and Zarathushtra, about what man can do to help banish evil from the world and renew it to God's original form to function according to the principle of asha. The Gâthâs present the relationship between Zarathushtra and God as a guest-friendship, an archaic social institution that is based on a bond of mutual obligations and the giving of gifts (see Yasna 43.14). This primary relationship between God and his human spokesman, their "deals" (urwatas), also provides the model for human relationships in general and family relationships in particular (Yasna 45.11). When the "deals" are adhered to, man is rewarded accordingly, and his community will prosper. When they are broken, evil will reign (see especially Yasna 31). Foremost among these obligations is caring for the poor, as stated in the Yathâ ahû vairyo, which introduces the Gâthâs, and in Yasnas 34.5 and 53.9, in the conclusion to the Gâthâs.

The Younger Avesta

The concern for the poor recurs frequently in the Younger Avesta. God's mercy protects the poor (Yasht 2.2), Haoma makes his thought as large as that of the rich man (Yasna 10.13), Sraosha protects his dwelling at night (Yasna 57.10, Yasht 11.3), the poor man deprived of his rights invokes Mithra for aid (Yasht 10.84), and the Sôshâns will come to the mistreated poor to restore their rights (Pursishnihâ 25). Following these

divine examples, the good Mazdayasnians should also protect the poor (Âfrînagân î Gâhânbar 4), and nothing they do in this world will help them if they do not care for the righteous poor (Pursishnihâ 44).

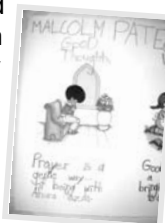
The Achaemenid Inscriptions

The inscription by Cyrus the Great is often referred to as the first human rights document in history, but this was a slogan propagated under the last Shah of Iran in connection with the celebration of 2,500 years of Iranian monarchy. Cyrus permitted the Jews of Babylon to return to their homeland (not specifically mentioned in the inscription), but the inscription does not speak about human rights in general, and the passages adduced "in fact reflect a long tradition in Mesopotamia where, from as early as the third millennium BC, kings began their reigns with declarations of reforms" (<http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk>).

On the contrary, the fundamental concern for social justice, spoken by God to Zarathushtra in the Gâthâs and the Avesta, is clearly articulated by the first Achaemenid kings, Darius and Xerxes. The kings' ruled their land following the above fundamental religious imperative. However, while the Gâthâs and the Avesta rather one-sidedly stress the need of the poor, Darius applies it to his entire population. The poor should be protected, but not at the expense of justice, which applies to everybody. Also, no hasty judgment should be passed:

"I did wrong to neither the poor nor the mighty. The man who exerted himself in my homeland, him I treated well. Whoever did evil, him I punished well"
(inscription of Darius at Bisotun, column 4)

"It is not my wish that a poor man should be wronged for the sake of the mighty, nor is it my wish that the mighty should be wronged for the sake of the poor. What



Malcolm Patel
age 7

is straight and true, that is my wish ... I treat the man who exerts himself according to his achievement. I punish according to his evil deed him who does evil. It is neither my wish that a man should do evil, nor is it my wish that a man who does evil should not be punished. I do not believe what a man says against another man until I hear the testimony of both."

(inscription of Darius at Naqsh-e Rostam, repeated by Xerxes at Persepolis).

The Pahlavi books

Under the Sasanians, a detailed code of social jurisprudence developed, which regulated the rights of all citizens, including women and slaves. Several texts have survived, among them the *Mādayān ī hazār dādestān*, the book of a thousand judgments. To protect the rights

of the poor in particular, an ombudsman office was created, the *jādag-gōw ī driyōshān* (cf. *Mênōy ī khrad* 14.20), presumably modeled on *Shahrewar*, whose special task it was to speak for the poor before God (*Bundahishn* 26.57).

Prods Oktor Skjærvø was Senior Assistant Editor of the *Encyclopædia Iranica* from 1985 to 1991. He was then appointed Aga Khan Professor of Iranian Studies at Harvard University, where he teaches, among other things, Avestan, Old Persian, and Zoroastrianism. He has published numerous articles on Avestan grammar, poetics, and myths. (see www.fas.harvard.edu/~nelc/faculty/skjaervo.htm)



ZARATHUSHTRA AND THE EARLY FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Ali Makki

The article looks at how social justice was perceived through Gathic Zarathushtrian teachings. By reexamining the teachings first-hand, we may reevaluate the present concepts of social justice and reach a workable universal model that transcends cultural boundaries.

Introduction

Social justice has been defined by some as working towards the realization of a world where all members of a society, regardless of background, have basic human rights and equal access to public resources. By this definition, social justice is based on the conception of an equitable society that through equal opportunity enables an individual the fulfillment of physical, intellectual, and material needs.

As we have empirically observed, throughout most of recorded history, nearly all civilizations have fallen short of attaining social justice to a meaningful extent, whereby a reasonable working-model would serve as an example for all cultures to consistently follow. In spite of the development of a multitude of ideologies over time, the demand for true justice has only now been on the rise, and with an ever-increasing sense of individual self-awareness leading to a new perspective on the worth of each member of society, utilitarian values have paved the way for numerous social models. Yet it appears that our present state of existence in the context of social justice has only nominally changed since the days of Asho Zarathushtra, when he composed the beautiful drama played out in the *Ahunavaiti Gatha*, *Yasna 29*, where *Gaush Urva* is lamenting the injustices that prevailed during that time period.

Zarathushtrian conception of justice

It is of little practical value and out of the scope of the present publication to

draw any conclusions about whether Prophet Zarathushtra was the first person in history to address the need for social justice, but we can certainly conclude that his *modus operandi* was to lay out the foundations for justice and social harmony.

A demand for justice and a call to action

Yasna 29:

- Unto Thee, O Lord, the Soul of Creation cried¹:
"For whom didst Thou create me, and who so fashioned me?
Feuds and fury, violence and the insolence of might have oppressed me;
None have I to protect me save Thee;
Command for me then the blessings of a settled, peaceful life."
- Thereupon, the Creator asked *Asha*:
"Whom wilt Thou have as savior for the world, to be its protector and upholder of order?
Who with his sagacity and zeal may bring prosperity;
Whom wilt Thou have as its lord, who will repel violence,
and dispel the forces of Evil?"

The two opening stanzas of *Yasna 29* set the stage for a glimpse into social grievances that existed during Zarathushtra's lifetime and play out in an allegorical style to bring attention to the disenfranchised. In essence, Zarathushtra is bringing attention, perhaps for the first time in recorded history, to the concept of injustice.

Later in *Yasna 33* we read:

- In accordance with the Primeval Laws of this existence,



- The Ratu² shall deal perfect justice to all;
 To the good who chose the Truth,
 To the evil who chose Falsehood,
 And to those in whom good and evil are mixed.
2. He who opposes Evil by his thought or word,
 Or by the work of his own two hands,
 He who instructs people to their good,
 Makes a worthy offering of faith to Thy Purpose,
 O Ahura Mazda!
3. He who is most good to the righteous,
 Be he a noble, or a peasant, or a dependent,
 He who zealously makes the good living creation flourish,
 He shall come to dwell with Truth in the realm of the Good Mind.
4. I am he who by devotion and prayer shall
 Keep disobedience and the Evil Mind far from Thee,
 O Mazda,
 Keep insolent heresy away from the nobles,
 The distrust spread by slanderers, from the community,
 And the evil of destruction from the pastures of cattle.

In the above stanzas Zarathushtra calls the community and the clan into action to bring about a just society founded on Truth. Furthermore, in Y 33.3 he cleverly emphasizes that regardless of social rank, one may attain peace and harmony through the right choices, thereby blurring out class distinctions and privileges attached to such notions in the Indo-Iranian social structure. In our daily prayers we can also clearly see the desire to strive for social justice as we pray the Yatha Ahu, so we may attain this ideal:

*Yatha ahu vairyo atha ratush ashatchit hacha
 vagheush dazda manangho shyaothanenam angheush
 mazdai*

*khshathremcha ahurai a yim drigubyo dadat vastarem*³

Conclusion

One can arguably state that it hasn't been the lack in number of theories offered on social justice in recent times that have kept us from real progress, but rather the rise in the desire for self-preservation, perhaps, driven by anxieties about our own vulnerability, mortality, and the pseudo-reassurance afforded by the status quo that have prevented us from giving a working chance to brilliant ideas that have come and gone with the waxing and waning of civilizations and the passage of time.

With respect to Gathic Zarathushtrian teachings, most definitely a lack of knowledge of the meaning of their contents has also deprived us from having access to notions that still offer brilliance in thought and clarity in logic that if closely followed could still ultimately lead to a

harmonious society and the attainment of social justice in its true sense. Interestingly, traces of Zarathushtrian teachings have permeated into many of the world's belief systems through millennia of cross-cultural transmissions and interactions but still have fallen short of the pristine original message intended in the Gathas, since 'Truth' as the basis for a sustainable platform has not remained the core focus as in Zarathushtrian teachings.

As practicing Zarathushtis, to a greater extent, we have preserved many of these principles in our daily lives, which have become ingrained into our cultural and family values and religious practices over the centuries. Fortuitously, the original sources of these ethical teachings, founded on the principles of social justice, have been revealed to us in the last one hundred years—thanks to recent linguistic advances that enabled scholars to decipher the exceedingly complex and ancient Avestan dialect of the Gathas, which hitherto had been shrouded in mystery.

Translation: Just as one is to choose God, the Lord of life, based on Truth, so is the temporal leader to be chosen based on Righteousness. These two choices are made through good mind, so the acts of life are done for the Wise One, and the dominion of God is well established, where the chosen person becomes the protector of the oppressed.

While there are still unresolved questions about certain parts of the Gathas and the actual meanings of some of the terminology, it is unquestionably worthwhile to once again reexamine the teachings first-hand, so we may reevaluate the present concepts of social justice and reach a workable universal model that transcends cultural boundaries. This is perhaps one of the very few instances where returning to the fundamental values in a literal sense may be viewed as progress rather than be perceived as regression into a remote and static past. In other words, this "fundamentalist" approach can serve as a new paradigm that can enable a reformulation of our current understanding and notion of social justice in a new century wrought with new challenges, so we may find novel solutions to satisfactorily fulfill the needs of our age.

Dr. Ali Makki was born in Tehran and grew up in Dayton, Ohio. His interest in Zoroastrian studies began informally as a teenager embarking on rediscovery of his Zarathushti family heritage. While preparing for a medical career, he continued to learn ancient Iranian languages at an academic level, giving him access to original textual sources.



During his professional training at the University of Pennsylvania, he founded the Penn Zoroastrian Society and has since been active in inter-faith and inter-cultural dialog in North America. He publishes and lectures on topics of the Zarathushti religion and currently lives in Los Angeles, California, where he is an oro-facial pain specialist and holds academic appointments at UCLA and Loma Linda University.

¹Gaush Urva, ² spiritual leader, ³ Yasna 27.13



ZARATHUSTI RELIGION AS AN ALTERNATIVE

Kambiz Sakhai

In this article, Kambiz Sakhai tells us how the Zarathushti religion is a balanced alternative to combat the evils created by capitalism. The life-affirming attitude of the religion promotes active participation in the world and constructive involvement with it.

Our world is going through a deep crisis. The paradigms that were dominant since the beginnings of the modern period have lost their legitimacy. Meanwhile, the other paradigms—those that were pushed aside by the triumphant forces of capitalist modernity—have not yet gained enough confidence to claim their place in history.

The growth of material wealth and the process of industrialization with total disregard for the environment has not only, not lead us to total prosperity and happiness, but is threatening the survival of humanity and even the planet. The pursuit of self interest and atomistic individualism, ignoring the community and our empathy with and obligations towards other human beings, disintegrates all the existing social and personal structures, without being able to substitute them with alternatives that have even the appearance of plausibility. Poverty, homelessness, war, human trafficking, antisocial personality, and other similar negative actions are the fastest growing symptoms of capitalism.

One of the consequences of the above mentioned processes is the decline of the legitimacy of the capitalist ideology and the attraction of the system that is founded upon it. This, in turn, has contributed to the resurgence of the worldviews that were considered defeated by capitalism during the past two centuries. Nonetheless, not every worldview that is trying to take the place of the decomposing economic, social and political order is qualified to do so. Many ideologies and even religious worldviews that claim to have the solution to the dilemmas of modern capitalism are in worst situations than the system they want to replace. The Zarathushti alternative, on the other hand, is in a unique position in this regard. It contains the qualities that make it

similar to what is attractive in modernity, as well as the qualities that romantics ascribe to pre-modern and pre-capitalist world.

Zarathushti rational ethics provides the individual with the freedom s/he needs to be independent from the crowd and not be forced to suppress his or her uniqueness in order to be accepted by the collective. The life-affirming attitude of this religion promotes active participation in the world and constructive involvement with it. Zarathushti deen promotes an active life, without denigrating pleasure, and the pursuit of happiness within this same world and not in the one beyond. It also appreciates the nature and is against the use and abuse of the environment. Zarathushti rationalism is not instrumental; its hedonism is not utilitarian; its individualism does not alienate the person from the collectivity, and its revolutionary approach to life does not oppress the individual. The Zarathushti religion is capable of having a great impact on and contribute immensely to the critical social theory and emancipatory social practice.



Nasreen Bhumgara
age 5.

Kambiz Sakhai was born in Tehran Iran, in the decade of the 1970. He received his elementary and secondary schooling in Tehran, and continued his studies in Sociology and Social Research at the University of Rome, Italy. He continued at Columbia University, New York receiving his Ph.D. in Iranian cultural history.



The areas in which Dr. Sakhai has conducted research include: Medieval Islamic and Zoroastrian Thought, Anti-Islamic trends of thought in Sufism, Sociology and Soviet Legal Thought during the twenties. The common theme of his work is the analysis of the revolutionary theory and practice, and emancipatory struggles of the poor and powerless people of the world over the centuries. Dr. Sakhai is a professor in the School of Graduate Psychology at New College of California, San Francisco.

9th World Zoroastrian Congress "Unity Through the Sands of Time"

December 28-31, 2009, Dubai, UAE

"It gives me great pride in confirming that the 9th World Zoroastrian Congress will be held in Dubai from December 28-31, 2009. Formal permission to host the Congress has been received from **His Excellency Shaikh Hasher Maktoum, Director General, Department of Information, Government of Dubai.**



"The Committee seeks your valuable inputs to make the Congress a purposeful and meaningful event. Please submit names of persons from your area to serve on the extended Congress team. We are also seeking individual and corporate sponsors to keep the fee structure low. Dubai being the centre of commerce and trade, sponsoring companies will receive tremendous benefits. "We, the Zarathushtis of Dubai welcome you all, our Mobeds, heads of various anjumans, community visionaries and Zarathushtis around the world to Congress 2009" With blessings of Ahura Mazda, Meher Bhesania, Chair, Congress 2009 besania@emirates.net.ae



Zarathushti Women: Co-workers in Perpetuating the Good Religion

Jenny Rose

In this article, Jenny Rose explores the role of women in relation to the Zarathushti tradition of promoting social justice. The Gathas disclose the Divine mandate that men and women together must promote the path of Asha.

I recently read an article that discussed the “fourth wave” of feminism, describing a “new kind” of political activism, which is motivated and sustained by the fusion of social justice and spirituality. This dynamic approach focuses on issues that are often global in scope. Religious traditions - including conservative Christianity – are espousing this activism, which is, in fact, rooted in the earliest teachings of those religions.

Gathic Concept of Social Justice

This is particularly true of the Zarathushti tradition, where the Gathic concept of the ashavan – the one who upholds Asha (variously translated as Order, Right, Justice, Truth) - is, from the outset, applied to both genders (for example, Y. 53. 5, 6). The Gathas disclose the Divine mandate that men and women together must promote the path of Asha. Much of the Gathic terminology that describes the struggle to uphold Asha against the forces of Deception (drug, druj) is equivalent to our “human rights issues:” the tyranny and corruption of unjust rule, the struggle of the needy, and the lack of protection for those who are most vulnerable. It is incumbent upon women and men to address these and all other social evils, for at the Bridge of the Separator both genders will be held accountable for their actions in life (Y. 46.10).

The pursuit of social justice is, therefore, woven into the guiding principles and eschatology of the Gathas. This spiritual directive is gender neutral in regards to social or ritual status. The ancient sacred prayer, the Ashem Vohu, which is still recited on a daily basis by both sexes, presents a continued reminder of this obligation.

The notion that our actions today have future repercussions is reinforced through the feminine Avestan concepts of daena and fravashi as they relate respectively to the “religious understanding” and “divine component” of each human being, (see Hadokht Nask 2.10-14).

Such teachings and symbolism provide the Zarathushti paradigm for decisive ethical action. The prescient decision of the fravashis to participate in the struggle for freedom from “the enmity of the Adversary,” to effect “the future restoration” (Gtr. Bd. 3.23-4), echoes the real choice facing all humans: whether to think, speak and act beneficently or not; whether to bring healing or hurt. (Y30.3, 9, 6). There is no standing on the sidelines.

What evidence exists that Zarathushti women put this moral philosophy into practice throughout Zarathushti history? Since we lack texts concerning “ordinary” people, we must rely on sources that illustrate how high-ranking women exercised “Just Rule” for all.



Tara Yadav - age 7

Achaemenid Period

Greek and Near Eastern sources report that prominent Achaemenid women, including members of the royal family, were estate owners throughout the Empire. Persepolis fortification tablets record that such women, alongside their male counterparts, gave equal rations to male and female workers, with special rations to women who headed work crews, and to new mothers. This is a clear example of good stewardship of people, land and resources.

Parthian Period

We have only sparse evidence of women's status in the Parthian period, but Babylonian, Greek, and Roman texts indicate that noble women were defined through the king and his rule. The ancient Iranian notion that the queen was an active participant in the Good Rule (Vohu Khshathra), an expression of divine kingship (Y.48.5; cf DB 4.61-7), is found in the love-story, Vis and Ramin. In this narrative, which derives from a Parthian original, the heroine, Vis, becomes co-ruler with Ramin. They reign with justice in which the state of ecological, emotional and economic harmony is a precursor of the ultimate establishment of the good hegemony of Ahura Mazda (Y.34.15).

Sassanian Period

From the Sasanian period, we know that royal daughters could succeed the throne, having the same obligations towards their subjects as male rulers. Both Tabari and Ferdowsi refer to the coronation speech of Queen Boran (regnant from 629/630 CE), in which she pledged to encourage pious conduct, spreading justice and helping the poor. The slogan on her silver coinage, “Boran increased in glory” (boran xwarrah abzud), indicates that she fulfilled her promise, bringing order to the empire.

The “new activism” is, therefore, as old as the Gathas themselves, and its concerns relate to the transformation and growth of all humanity and the rest of creation. According to the Gathas, the maintenance of social justice must be a central focus of both male and female ashavans, for it anticipates the frashokereti, that final state when the world and its divisions are healed, and Asha prevails for eternity.

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Introduction

Zarathushtis are known throughout history for their generosity, honesty, and ingenuity. Some earned such a reputation by leading great empires while others led a simpler life; regardless of how they have made their contribution, all have gone the length to preserve peace and promote happiness and prosperity for those around them. Travel through time with us, as we learn about some of the prominent Zarathushtis in our history and the causes in which they so passionately believed. We'll also be given an opportunity to think critically about some of our community's shortcomings in promoting equality for all.

Zarathushtrian Responsibility Is Human Responsibility

Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli

In this article, Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli explains how the Zarathushti religion teaches us the importance of treating others with dignity and the relation of the religion to human rights. The monarchs of Iran in 6th century BCE displayed full consciousness of human rights and responsibilities. They were the believers in the Spiritual way of life, in consonance with the Will of Ahura Mazda, as proclaimed by Asho Spitama Zarathushtra.

In 1878 at a site in Babylonia, a baked clay cylinder—23 cm long by 11 cm wide, inscribed in Akkadian Cuneiform—was excavated by Iranian archeologist Hormuzd Rassam. This object was hailed later by United Nations, as the first Charter of Human Rights. That the find was pronounced as the most precious historical record of the world is no exaggeration.

History records that the Charter belonged to Cyrus the Great, founder of the Achaemenid House, who entered the city of Babylon in 539 BCE and was officially crowned on the first day of spring. On the cylinder Cyrus says, **"Now that I put the crown of the kingdom of Iran on the head with the help of (Ahura) Mazda, I announce that I will respect the tradition and religion of the nations of my empire...Never let my governors look down or insult them until I am alive. As long as I am the king of Iran I never let anyone oppress others...and (will) penalize the oppressor."**

During the excavation of Persepolis, a monumental project initiated in 518 BCE by Darius the Great, a close successor of Cyrus, 30,000 clay tablets were uncovered. These tablets, with Elamite and Babylonian Cuneiform inscriptions, provided invaluable information on the socio-cultural aspect of how the artist and artisan working on the project were treated. The tablets revealed that in 6th century BCE they had unemployment benefits, disability pay, and leaves of absence. Based on the writings of Mary Koch—as described by Dr. Khurshidian in his book, **'A New Look at Persepolis'**—wages and

working conditions for men and women were similar and provided equal training and learning opportunity to people of both the genders.

To think that when much of the alleged civilized world of that era was still involved in the exploitation of humanity through slavery, these monarchs of Iran in 6th century BCE displayed full consciousness of human rights and responsibilities. What motivated these powerful rulers to be so deeply concerned about the rights of the common people? The only explanation that one can envisage for these Noble attributes, some 2500 years later, is that they were the believers in the Spiritual way of life, in consonance with the Will of Ahura Mazda, as proclaimed by Asho Spitama Zarathushtra.

Zarathushtra, some 3700 years ago, hailed freedom in bondage, rule of choice in domination, and moral justice for all mankind. At the same time, he carried with him the heavy burden of responsibility, to unite mankind of his time, under the single banner of unconditional Love and Compassion through the concept of the Global Truth - Asha. He pronounces that at the end of Ys 31.3 in the words:

Reveal unto us O Wise One

With Thy words of wisdom

Help me guide all the living to choose the right
(Ys 31.3)



Trisha Yadav
age 5.

In relating his message, the great Manthran, unambiguously lays the burden of accountability to those committed in understanding his proclamation. To all the true followers, Saoshyants (benefactor), he declares that Ahura has revealed to him the religion of righteous Saoshyants (Ys 31.3) to whom God is a friend, a brother or a father (Ys 45.11).

In his vision of human creation the prophet proclaims in his hymn (Ys 31.11) that the Creator has endowed humans the freedom to choose and express as they wish, which must be exercised in moderation, in keeping with the concept of Asha.

It is the sacred duty of humanity to be the steward, over the physical and moral well-being, of less fortunate people for they are a part of the Creation as a whole. Divinity, in the corporeal existence, manifests itself through the divine actions of humanity. The last line of Yatha Ahu Vairya prayer reminds us

khshthremcha ahurai a yim dregubyo dadat vasta rehem.

Ahura empowers him, who

Rehabilitate the less fortunate

Historically, Zarathushtrian is the first religious tradition that holds the creation of the heavens, water, earth, vegetation, animal kingdom, and humans as

sacred, for Spirit of the Creator resides in each one of them. This is the notion that has lead later tradition to attribute, bounteous immortals (Amesha Spentas) as guardians of the elements of creation. Preaching the path of purity and cleanliness, this Aryan sage directs Zarathushtrians and others to the reverence for the elements of Nature.

The idea that humans are the care-takers of the earth, put here for the purpose, and accountable to the Wise Lord –Ahura Mazda - is deeply entrenched in the teaching of Zarathushtra more than three millennia ago. This notion is only recently emerging in some of the other major traditions.

Zarathushtrian faith sparks the awareness to humanity that mankind cannot continue to be the predators of the biosphere. Zarathushtra urges us to be responsible, to revere and venerate the universe, to be its steward, protect the environment, save it, share it and renew it. To be One with Creation through unconditional Love and Compassion is to be one with God –Ahura Mazda. That is the Zarathushtrian Responsibility, which is also the Human Responsibility.

Dr. Jehan Bagli obtained a Doctorate in Medicinal Chemistry at the University of London. He has done post-doctoral research, at Johns Hopkins University, and at Laval University in Quebec. Presently he is a retired Distinguished Research Fellow of the Wyeth Research Laboratories. Dr. Bagli became an ordained priest at the age of 14 years. He has been the Editor of Gavashni, since its inception in 1974 until 1990. Presently he is the chairperson of FEZANA Research and Preservation committee and President of NAMC. He has lectured at Zoroastrian Congresses in Toronto, Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and Vancouver and has published widely on a variety of topics related to religion of Zarathushtra. He is author and co-author of three books on Zarathushtrian Faith and its Rituals.



The Question of the Female: Sasanian Law & Contemporary Society

Susan Karani

The article explores social and gender hierarchies present during the Sasanian Empire and in contemporary Zarathushti society, as well as their ramifications on women in each era.

Social justice is an important, if not difficult, term to define. There is some debate as to what constitutes social justice, let alone how it may fit into the Zarathushti context. Though “social justice” can be quite a relative term, and while it would be best to agree that the term does not and should not have a fixed definition, we must be able to loosely define it.

Social justice may be identified as the fair treatment of all human beings in society. Inherent to this definition is the quest to uncover the truth about long-standing institutions, ideals and traditions. In this case, social justice challenges the religious values and customs of modern Zarathushtis. The notion of social justice for women in Zarathushti society was nonexistent during the Sasanian Empire, but in reference to modern society, the answer is less certain. Women have attained many liberties, perhaps due more to the advancements in secular society than because of any specific religious movement. “Social progress” may be a more accurate term to describe the current environment, as the word “progress” indicates an active quality, as opposed to the more stationary ideal of “justice.”

While theologically, the Gathas imply equality among the sexes, historically, the legal practice of such an ideal demonstrates the contrary. This article addresses the legal underpinnings of the status of women in Sasanian law and contemporary Zarathushti society. Sasanian law-books reveal that women and slaves were treated as strikingly similar, and they are often treated equally unjustly. While women today have gained such legal rights and protections, they are still restricted from certain privileges and positions, i.e., priesthood.

Women in Sasanian Law

Sasanian law recognizes a wide variety of living things, i.e., human beings and animals, as having obligations and positive and negative rights. Sasanian law sets a hierarchy of living beings, placing humans at the top and animals below. However, winah i ruwanig, “sins pertaining to the soul,” or human sins against those beneficent animals possessing souls, could lead to fines and/or severe corporal punishment, as elaborated in the Videvdad. It is evident that the law required human compassion for animals, particularly those perceived as sacred.

In Sasanian law, this hierarchy set apart human beings, placing the woman and the slave at the bottom. A woman was generally treated as subject to a man’s command, and the slave as subject to that of a free person’s. The slave, a free man’s possession, was most often treated as a “thing,” though his inherent humanity set him apart from other living species. As Maria Macuch argues of the slave in Sasanian law,

Though the slave was defined as a ‘thing’ (xwastag), it could not be easily ignored that he possessed human faculties, which set him apart from other objects or animals. The human nature of the slave, his possession of reason and speech, made it difficult to place him completely into the category of ‘things’...

As Macuch contends, the slave has a double status as “thing” and “human being.” For example, the Madigan i Hazar Dadistan forbids and punishes “cruel treatment and mutilation of slaves” by their owners. The slave is considered a “thing” because he is owned, but he also has the protection a human being is granted against “cruel treatment and mutilation,” with which a “thing” is not privileged.

This concept of the double standard provokes the idea that a human being, whether free or slave, adult or child,

male or female, does have by virtue of his or her humanity, an inherent privilege against other species. By this rationale the woman, bought by her husband and sold by her father at the instrument of dowry, is a “thing,” though their mutual humanity also defines them as “human beings.”

Women in Contemporary Zoroastrian Society

Today, the practice of the Zarathushti Deen is much more democratic. We elect women as religious leaders, association presidents, or editors of literary projects, like the present editor of this journal. This is simply symptomatic of the time in which we live; in contemporary society, women have risen to positions unimagined centuries ago. Our core institutions, however, have not been shaken. Women are denied entry to the priesthood, for example. This is one such institution that is very unlikely to be changed or helped along by secular society, though similar movements are occurring in other faiths. While the Zarathushti priesthood itself is commonly understood as endangered – mostly due to the next generation’s decreasing interest in tradition in diasporas – one next logical step might be to consider females of the priestly bloodline to fill the empty shoes.

The Zarathushti Deen forbids women to attain the status of priest. However we may look at this fact – whether from a tight reading of the religious text or through a more liberal view favorable to the equality of women – we must ask why the Zarathushti deen forbids the priesthood to women. The myth of “Jeh” is a commonly veiled and misunderstood religious myth. The story goes that the feminine mythic figure, Jeh, was kissed on the head by Ahriman and made to menstruate. Menstruation is seen as a feminine evil, thus preventing any woman from entering a fire temple during menstruation, as she was seen as contaminating the atmosphere of worship; hence, she could also not become a priest. While most Zarathushtis no longer believe in this myth, “Jeh” lives on in our religious imagination, and the myth is primarily responsible for the restriction of women to the priesthood. What matters is whether or not we consider it truthful to the way we practice the Zarathushti religion today. Having shed the myth to unveil the truth, how can we argue that the denial of women to the priesthood is just?

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A former Editorial Assistant at the Encyclopaedia Iranica, Susan holds a BA with Honors from the University of Chicago and an MA from Columbia University.



¹Maria Macuch, “On the Treatment of Animals in Zoroastrian Law,” *Iranica Selecta. Studies in Honor of Professor Wojciech Skalmowski on the occasion of his seventieth birthday*, ed. A. van Tanagerloo (Turnhout, 2003), p. 186.

²Maria Macuch, “Barda and Bardadari ii. In the Sasanian Period,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. III, 1989, p. 765.

³Madayan i Hazar Dadistan, Pt. 1, 1.4-6, in Macuch. Ibid.

Perin Naoroji Captain – A Parsi Freedom Fighter

Ardeshir Damania

In this article, Ardeshir Damania describes the contributions of Mrs. Perin Captain, a brave and prominent leader of the Bombay Satyagrahis, in the freedom fight against the British.

“We record our homage and deep appreciation for the Womanhood of India who in the hour of peril for the motherland, forsook the shelter of their homes, and with unfailing courage and endurance, shoulder to shoulder with their menfolk, marched in the frontline of India’s national army to share with them the sacrifices and triumphs of the struggle” – From a resolution passed by the Indian National Congress on January 26, 1931, the day the British government released Mahatma Gandhi from prison.

In the mid-20s and 30s most male freedom fighters were either in prison or underground. It was at this critical juncture in the freedom fight against the British that the women came to the fore and kept the fight going. The most prominent among these heroic ladies were two Parsis, Madame Bhikaiji Cama and Perin Captain. While Madame Cama was fighting from exile in France, Perin Captain was fighting in Bombay.

Among the grand daughters of the Grand Old Man of India, Dadabhai Naoroji, Perin Captain was the most prominent in public life. At an early age she came under the influence of Madame Bhikaiji Cama, who had sought exile in France, and formed the Rashtriya Stree Sabha (National Women’s Council) in Bombay. Perin Captain was the leading member of the Civil Disobedience Campaign against the British in the 1930s. Mahatma Gandhi was in correspondence with her while he was in prison or at the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad. On March 12, 1930, he set upon his famous Dandi March from the Ashram, vowing not to return until India was free. The Mahatma kept his promise 17 years later.

A news item on how Bombay Satyagrahis (Satyagraha was a non-violent and non-cooperation movement devised by Mahatma Gandhi to fight the British) resisted police attack, appeared in the Bombay Chronicle of April 11, 1930.

“The Deputy Commissioner of the Bombay Police, Mr. Cowasji Petigara, made a sudden sweep on the Congress House with his havalgars on Thursday evening to dismantle the ‘salt factory’ that the ladies had established in defiance of British salt law in the courtyard of Congress House at Girgaum. The women were making salt by evaporating seawater on three coal fired ‘sagris’. More than 200 policemen with 30 police officers armed with lathis and revolvers, respectively, made their appearance all of a sudden on the eve of a meeting. The Congress officials and Satyagrahis on the spot remained cool and calm and Mr. Petigara and the police party were first met with a non-violent resistance at the hands of

Satyagrahi ladies. Ms. Perin Captain, along with other lady volunteers, barred their way. For a time the police party was baffled and when chivalry failed Mr. Petigara gave orders to remove the ladies' obstruction and the policemen pushed their way through the cordon."

When the police wanted to destroy the salt "sagris," they were met by non-violent resistance of Satyagrahis under Mr. Meherally's supervision. The police then rushed at the volunteers and, after forcibly removing them, dismantled the "factory". In the assault and consequent scuffle that followed the police attack, many female Satyagrahis received injuries, including Perin Captain. Four of them fainted on the spot.

The police then put the male satyagrahis—Mr. Abid Ali, Mr. Meherally, and Mr. Sadik—under arrest and marched them to the police motor van waiting outside. By this time, news of the "raid" had spread throughout Girgaum. A crowd of more than 5,000 supporters gathered around the Congress House. As the arrested leaders were being marched to the van by over 200 police, they received a thundering ovation with cries of "Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai", "Down with the Union Jack", "Hindu-Muslim Ki Jai." The arrested leaders were kept in the Lamington Road police lock-up.

Picketing of Liquor Shops by Women

Perin Captain, a devoted follower of Mahatma Gandhi's teachings, was also instrumental in organizing women's boycotts and picketing of liquor shops mostly owned by the Parsi liquor mafia located in the Gol Pitha



A "Happy New Year" post card sold by M. Vadilal & Co. of Bhangwadi, Bombay, and printed at Phoenix Printing Works (an underground press). It shows Mrs. Perin Captain with the caption "Fourth Dictator of Bombay". The latter term was to signify her strong character and unflinching fight against the British; that is to say she dictated terms to the British and not vice versa. (Photo 1)

Women marching in a morcha to protest the arrest of Mrs. Luckmani for boycotting the liquor stores in Bombay. Perin Captain can be seen in the third row on the left in a white khadi sari. (Photo 2)

area of Bombay. From 1930-1931, some 2,500 women picketed all 500 liquor shops. The women would form picketing committees. They would then stand or sit outside liquor shops, including those in European areas, and try to convince the shoppers not to enter the shops. If this failed, they would throw themselves on the floor across the entrance to the shop. If they did not succeed, they would hurl themselves in front of the car of the liquor purchaser until the individual returned the liquor to the shop. During one such picketing exercise, the police

arrested Mrs Luckmani. The women's groups were in an uproar. Perin Captain, at once, organized a "morcha" through the streets of central Bombay. The procession was led by the daughter of Mrs Luckmani, with Perin Captain marching in the third row among the other women leaders (see photo #2).

For all such acts of open defiance against the British, she was considered a firebrand freedom fighter with a temper to match. She also featured on greeting postcards sold to the public in which she was described as "Mrs. Perin Captain – Fourth Dictator of Bombay" (See photo #1). As one can see in the picture, she wore hardly any jewelry—not even a watch in a true Gandhian sense of simplicity.

Ardeshir B. Damania was born in India in 1945, and received his education leading to a Bachelors Degree in Zoology and a Masters Degree in Botany from Mumbai University, and a Masters and Ph.D. in Plant Genetic Studies from University of Birmingham, England. Dr. Damania's professional activities in Agricultural and Food production studies has resulted in his traveling and living in many countries of the world. He is currently associated with the Genetic Resources Conservation Program at the University of California, Davis. Despite his distinguished and active professional life, Ardeshir has always found time to research and study his ancestral heritage and religion and has published a number of educational papers on such subjects.



BHIKAJI CAMA: THE MOTHER OF INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE

Dinaz Kutar Rogers

Stuttgart, Germany may not hold a special place in the hearts of Indians, but in history it was the place where--at the International Socialist Conference on August 22nd, 1907--Madame Cama unfurled the colorful Indian flag which had Vande Mataram (Salutations to Mother India) written in the middle.

"This flag is of Indian Independence! Behold, it is born! It has been made sacred by the blood of young Indians who sacrificed their lives. I call upon you gentlemen to rise and salute this flag of Indian Independence. In the name of this flag, I appeal to lovers of freedom all over the world to support this flag."

Some consider Bhikaiji Cama—born September 24, 1861 into a well-to-do Parsi family--as the Mother of the Indian Independence Movement. She married Rustom Cama, a well-known pro-British lawyer; political disagreements between Bhikaiji and Rustom were obvious and it was an unhappy union.

Since her early childhood days Madame Cama had an aptitude for foreign languages which proved to be an

asset later on in her exile. She also had an independent and a rebellious spirit, both of which served her well. In Bombay, during the famine and Bubonic Plague thereafter of 1896, Madame Cama, without any concern for her own well-being, tended to the sick and dying at Grant Medical College. She contracted the plague, but survived and in 1902, left for London to recuperate.

She was not only devoted to charitable activities and social work but was also inspired by the Suffragette Movement (during her travel to the United States), and became an ardent supporter of women's rights. This was evidenced by her words in Cairo, Egypt in 1910:

"I see here the representatives of only half the population of Egypt. May I ask where is the other half? Sons of Egypt, where are the daughters of Egypt, Where are the daughters of Egypt? Where are your mothers and sisters? Your wives and daughters?"

I believe that such a spirit of equality permeated our Parsi community and still lives on. One of my favorite comparisons I use when asked about our faith and our people: "The British called us Parsis, the Jews of India. A Jewish mother would say, 'my son the doctor, my son the lawyer...' In our Parsi community our mothers would say the same, but with a slight difference—'My son and daughter the doctor, my son and daughter the lawyer...'"

While in London, Madame Cama worked as a private secretary to another stalwart of the Parsi community, Dadabhoi Naorji. He was the first Asian elected to the British House of Commons and the first to publicly ask for India's independence. It was at this time that she became more enthusiastic and vocal about her antipathy toward the British Rule in India.

Madame Cama remained in exile in Europe for almost 33 years, because she refused to sign a statement that would prevent her from participating in any nationalistic or independence movements. She traveled throughout Europe, active in the publication and distribution of radical literature for India's sovereignty. Madame's powerful oratory, revolutionary zeal and influence alarmed the British Government so much, that they devised a plot to assassinate her. As a result she fled to France. She was so committed to her social justice causes that she took the blame for her fellow revolutionaries when they were caught smuggling weapons to India. Seeing that her approach to gain India's independence was not getting results, she stepped up from reason and pacifism to combative fanaticism.

Her home in France became a gathering place and sanctuary for revolutionaries from all over the world, including Lenin. In her cause for social and political justice she taught young revolutionaries how to make bombs.** She sent weapons--disguised as Christmas presents--to Irish and Russian revolutionaries. During the First World War the French Government imprisoned her at Vichy instead of turning her over to the British.

Her bout with the plague and years of exile had taken their toll, and at 74 years of age, Madame returned to Bombay extremely ill. She passed away--unheralded--

on August 13, 1936, at the Parsi General Hospital in Bombay.



The Asiatic Act of 1907 in South Africa declared that only Christian marriages were legal and all Asians over the age of 8 should register or face punishment. It was then that a young lawyer Mohandas Gandhi urged others to disobey this act in a non-violent manner and **The Satyagrah (the philosophy of non-violent resistance) Movement was born!** The call to Quit India inspired by this movement went forth from the Gowalia Tank Maidan, near Malabar Hill in Bombay.***

In the early years of the Indian National Congress, a good number of its members were Parsis from Bombay, fighting just not for the rights, but also swaraj (independence) for the people of India.

After making such an epic contribution to our Indian history, today only one street in Mumbai that bears the name of Mme Cama and only one postal stamp commemorating her, issued on 26th January 1962, is all that remains as concrete evidence of a great and courageous life.**** (also see page 60)

Dinaz Kutar Rogers is a teacher and published writer. She thinks of herself as a modern-day Johnny Appleseed; sowing not apple seeds, but hope, knowledge, inspiration, pride and joy about the magnificence of Ariana Vaego and its ancient faith—Zarathushti Deen



**No matter what the cause, on a personal level, I do not have any admiration for such an activity.

*** This area is still populated by the Pasis and nearby on the top of a gentle hilly slope, is the Bai Soonabai Hirji Jivanji Readymoney Adarian (fire temple).

****In 1997, the Indian Navy launched a coastguard ship "Bhikhaji Cama" and a business complex in New Delhi, is named after her.

SOURCES:

Kamat, Joytsna, Bhikaiji Cama: A Biography- Mody, Nawaz. Madame Bhikhaji Rustom Cama—Sentinel of Liberty

Sundaram V. Madame Cama's call for Bande Mataram in Europe

Pictures: From Vohuman.org, Wikipedia.org/Bhikaiji Cama.

www.kamat.com

The Birth of Satyagraha

Sana Kirmani and Behram Pastakia

"If humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inescapable. He lived, thought, and acted, inspired by the vision of humanity evolving toward a world of peace and harmony. We may ignore him at our own risk."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Mohandas K. Gandhi's arrival in South Africa in 1893 was marked by immediate personal emotionally painful experiences. The story of his expulsion from a train in spite of holding a valid ticket, on account of his skin color, has become legend. However, it was not until 1906 when the Transvaal government proposed a bill requiring every Indian, including children, to obtain a certificate of identification with a thumb impression, a process required only of criminals, that such issues of social justice affecting the Indian community, roused him to think about taking action. Those found wanting to produce this paper on demand by governing authorities could be jailed or deported. This was tantamount to legalizing racial discrimination; Gandhi's ire was raised and he called for a public meeting.

Over three thousand Indians gathered at the Empire Theatre on that historic day. In a resolution, the community "solemnly determined" not to submit to the Ordinance "and to suffer" all consequences. A Muslim member, Sheth Haji Habib, declared in the name of God that under no circumstances would he ever submit to such "degrading legislation," urging those present to join him in this vow.

Gandhiji, initially taken aback by this strong voice, explained: "We all believe in one and the same God, the differences of nomenclature in Hinduism and Islam notwithstanding. To pledge ourselves or to take an oath in name of that God or with him as witness is not something to be trifled with. If having taken such an oath, we violate our pledge, we are guilty before God and man".. He emphasized that those present should take the oath, without duress, and only if convinced that it was the right thing to do. They all did. **This pledge on September 11, 1906 marked the birth of the Satyagraha movement.**

Gandhi believed that the oppressor lived in hate and fear of the other; by causing misery to the oppressed, the oppressor was, in reality, also oppressing himself. The foe was not the perpetrator but the destructive force itself. Violence against a powerful antagonist was sure to beget greater violence. Faced with overwhelming physical superiority, Gandhi's methodology was to unleash a force that would be combative of wrong without being violent. This was spiritual force. After a few iterations, he called the method Satyagraha. "Satya" means "Truth" and "agraha" means firmness. Satyagraha is thus "Soul Force" or "Non-violent

Resistance or Action" Satyagraha has as its basis the moral force of truth, which is interfaith non-sectarian morality. Its germination and initial implementation was in the combined spiritual strength of Hindus, Muslims, Zarathushtis (Zoroastrians) and Christians. A person practicing Satyagraha is called a "Satyagrahi."

A satyagrahi will do no harm to the opponent, but will joyfully suffer even unto death. Assaulted, he will never retaliate in kind. He will never submit to wrong. The satyagrahi will voluntarily submit to arrest. If anyone assaults an opponent, a satyagrahi "will protect him even at the risk of his life."

Satyagraha is a powerful tool in the hands of the politically powerless for fighting injustice without violence. A satyagrahi hates the injustice without hating the opponent. Satyagraha also is an act of love towards the perpetrator because it eventually frees him from the yoke of his own violence.

With the South African government's reneging on a previous agreement with the Indians to repeal the oppressive law, two thousand courageous souls milled into the Hamidia Mosque at Johannesburg and burned their cards in protest. Thousands filled the jails. Hogtied, the government negotiated with Gandhi, to pass legislation more amenable to Indian sensibilities.

Satyagraha is expressive of the firm faith that, confronted with the moral force of truth, evil will eventually and must yield. This idea and faith in the eventual victory of justice and truth is non-sectarian, non-ethnic, and non-racial and is morally universal. That it is so is proved by the idea's ready adaptability and applicability to any situation that is humanly immoral and disenfranchises human beings by robbing them of their human rights.

Deeply influenced by this philosophy, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. adapted Satyagraha to mount the civil rights movement in the USA. The legacy of Gandhi is as relevant today as it was a hundred years ago. May we be wise enough to heed the words of Martin Luther King Jr. in heeding the powerful message of satyagraha in applying it to our own times.



Zaal (age 7) and Sanaya (age 4) Panthaki

Sana Kirmani is a Muslim representative and Behram Pastakia is a Zarathushti representative to the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington DC www.ifcmw.org serving as board members.



They are founding members of WIIN – The Washington India Interfaith Network.

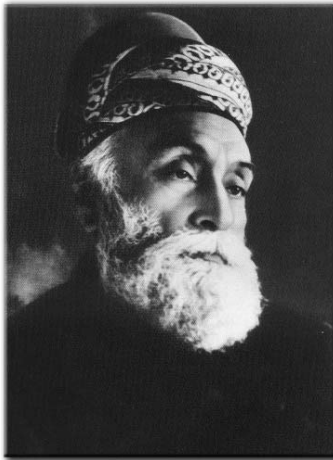
Living a Zarathushti Life

Veera M. Sigamporia and Behram R. Pastakia

Jamshedji Nusserwanji Tata: a man before his time!

This is the story of J.N. Tata, a man who practiced the Zarathushti principle of Asha in life and business. This led to his success and the enrichment of his country and community.

"Jamshedji Tata embodies all that is good in the Zarathushti character. He was fearless in implementing new ideas and technologies. He was fearless in the face of strong opposition from the British rulers. He wanted to better the conditions of his fellow-countrymen and women regardless of caste, race or religion. At the same time, he always affirmed that he was a Parsi Zoroastrian. His sons followed his example and started the steel works, the Indian Institute of Science and many other industries." Rustom Kevala, President, FEZANA



greedy business owners in the west, per Zarathushti principles of industry, integrity and charity, Mr. Tata was using profits to enhance the living conditions of his employees. Advancement of the work force, via training, education and eventual rise in an organization was an ethic and a management tool incorporated into every section of his economic empire. Though dutifully providing for his family's financial future, he put vast sums into endowments and trusts to benefit civil society. Even today, the centennial year for Tata Sons, the family owns only about 2% of the assets of the Tata Group. About 65% is owned by charitable trusts that provide assistance to students and undernourished children, for medical research, and to provide venture capital for pioneer projects. To quote his son, Sir Dorabjee Tata "To my father, the acquisition of wealth was only a secondary object in life; it was always subordinate to the constant desire in his heart to improve the industrial and intellectual condition of the people of this country.... their principal object the advancement of India." (2)

Zarathushtra taught us that since this world, created by Ahura Mazda, is essentially good, man should live well and enjoy its bountiful gifts. We are enjoined to lead a prosperous life, enjoying the fruits of our labor in moderation; monasticism, celibacy, fasting, and the mortification of the body are anathema to the faith. Man is encouraged to lead an active, industrious, happy, and, above all, an honest and charitable life. (1)

These teachings blossomed in the life of a great Zarathushti who lived over a century ago: Mr. Jamshedji Nusserwanji Tata! As an unassuming, far-thinking, clear-headed visionary, he worked towards India's industrialization. He held the firm belief that for the underprivileged country of his birth, struggling under the yoke of colonialism, to one day take its rightful place in the comity of nations, a vibrant, self-reliant industrialized base would be vital. He faced many obstacles; success did not come easily. When his business ventures were enduring financial difficulty, he shared his personal assets and deprived himself of remuneration, to ensure that his workers and their families did not starve or suffer. By dint of example, he left a legacy of philanthropy that his successors have emulated.

While the late 19th Century was rife with strikes by laborers battling

With his first large venture, The Empress Mills in Nagpur, which opened on January 1, 1877, Mr. Tata, transformed his vision into reality. For the first time, mills were properly ventilated. Pension funds, provident fund schemes, free health care for the workers and their families, free education facilities for children and adults were all provided by the management. Crèches were opened outside the mills gates to allow peace of mind to working mothers. Profits were shared with shareholders and employees alike.

A Nationalist at heart, in 1886, J.N. Tata bought a sick cloth mill. He poured capital, expertise, and hard work to convert it into the Swadeshi Mills, a large producer of good quality home spun cloth, blessed with labor friendly policies, transposed from Nagpur. When the Iron & Steel Works were started in Jamshedpur, Bihar, in eastern India, Jamshedji had passed away, but his legacy lived on. In 1912, an eight-hour working day was implemented in Jamshedpur, long before it became statutory in the Western world. Native financing for national projects was envisioned as a unifying factor, which would instill a sense of pride and confidence in the country. His sons fulfilled this dream: the Tata Hydroelectric project and the Iron and Steel Works were both built primarily with local funding.



Photos Courtesy of Ardeshir Damania

Top Picture: Office-bearers of the Bombay Flying Club and the Governor of Bombay inspect the first flight of a glider built by the Tatas that has just landed at the Mahalaxmi Race Course, Bombay, 1937. A reception was later held at the Turf Club.

Bottom Picture: The person in the black suit, tie and hat is Sir Roger Lumley, Governor of Bombay (1937 to 1943), the person with spectacles, no hat, and brown suit is Ardeshir C.P. Wadia, the scion of the Wadia family and President of the Bombay Flying Club, and the man in the white khadi suit is Behramji Mancherji Damania, Secretary/Instructor of the Bombay Flying Club.

Never seeking accolades or praise for himself, Jamshedji paid tribute to his friends, employees and business associates at every available opportunity. He followed the spirit of the Zarathushti religion faithfully, wherein he gave unselfishly of himself, asking nothing in return but honest hard work and an open mind. "Humata, Hukta, Huvarashta" are the tenants by which every Zarathushti attempts to live his/her life. The keen inquiring mind of J.N.Tata was always seeking what was best for his people. His philanthropic and charitable deeds, coupled with his own unselfish efforts towards the success of his undertakings, show the world how faithfully this son of a clerical family in a small village in western India could turn the tide of industrialization in India; putting it on the path of self reliance and providing its people with a sense of pride and confidence in their country.



Jamshetji Tata and the three men who, together, formed the nucleus of the Tata group during the patriarch's lifetime: cousin R.D. Tata (center) and sons Sir Ratan Tata (standing), Sir Dorab Tata (right)..



Zarir Sidhwa - age 8



Veera Siganporia and

Behram Pastakia
"Children of Jamshedpur"

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TATA buys slice of Boston History

November 11th 2006 [Times of India]

WASHINGTON: Steeped in hospitality history itself, the Tata Group has added a slice of western legacy to its chronicles by acquiring the landmark Ritz-Carlton in Boston, once part of a hotel chain that engendered the word 'ritzy' to denote posh or fashionable.

The Tata-owned Indian Hotels Co. Ltd., operator of Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces, confirmed Thursday it has signed an agreement to purchase the Ritz-Carlton Boston for \$170 million. The 79-year old hotel will be renamed Taj Boston when the deal with current owner Millennium Partners closed in January.

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/NEWS/Intl_Business/Tatas_go_Ritzy_buy_slice_of_Boston_history/articleshow/402094.cms

Ratan Tata named on RAND Corp. Board

Tata Sons Ltd Chairman Ratan N. Tata has been appointed to the Board of Trustees of the RAND Corporation, a nonprofit research organization, RAND President and CEO James A. Thomson announced.

Tata Sons Ltd. is the promoter company of Tata Group -- India's largest private sector conglomerate with operations in seven business sectors through 96 operating companies, including Tata Steel, Tata Motors, Tata Power, Tata Tea, Tata Chemicals, Indian Hotels and Tata Teleservices.

Rand is based in Santa Monica, California and has offices in the Washington DC area, in Pittsburg, and in Jackson Miss., along with offices in Europe and in Qatar.

Ratan Tata serves as chairman of India's Investment Commission, and is a member of the Prime Minister of India's council on Trade and Industry and the International Advisory Board of J.P. Morgan Chase. The Government of India honored him with one of its highest civilian awards, the Padma Bhushan.

[Source: India Review, a publication of the Embassy of India, Washington DC,

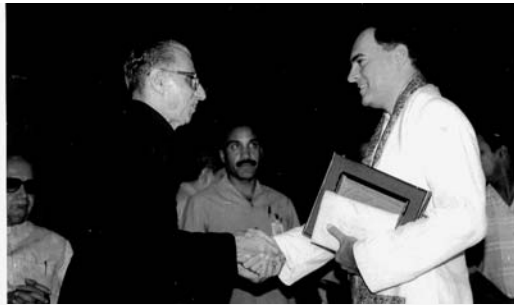
Vol 2 Issue 12 December 2006]

The life of Dr. Minocher K. Contractor

Cyra Contractor

“God, give me the opportunity to do good in life, and give me the life to do it.”

In this article, we hear about the contributions of this great man from his granddaughter, Cyra Contractor.



Dr Minocher K. Contractor, presenting the photo of Mme Bhikhaiji Cama, to the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, to be placed in Parliament House, New Delhi

Dr. Minocher K. Contractor (1917-1992) led his life as a model citizen and Zarathushti, committed to helping create a free and independent India in which the rights of all were preserved. He lived each moment of his life guided by the principles of Humata, Hukta, and Huvarashta, and was dedicated to fighting social injustice and advocating on behalf of the impoverished.

Endowed with a strong sense of nationalism, Dr. Contractor spent his late teenage years working to end British rule in India. His sense of duty to his country was so great that he left his own home in protest of the fact that his father, Dr. Kaikushru Ardeshir Contractor, who was the First Indian civil surgeon in the former Bombay State under British rule and never agreed with young Minocher's views on Indian sovereignty. Through the pursuit of his conviction, Dr. Contractor had the good fortune of meeting great national leaders, such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharal Nehru. He was also jailed for starting a peaceful resistance movement against the British in Surat, entitled India for the Freedom of India. His determination and passion are well reflected in a book he wrote on the unity of India, entitled *“Our Language Problem and Unity of India: An Approach”*.

As a physician, Dr. Contractor dedicated more than half of his medical practice to the impoverished, providing them with free or substantially subsidized treatment. His gentle demeanor, astute diagnosis, and – most importantly – his strong character, made him successful in attracting patients from all over Surat and its neighboring towns. As a proponent and firm believer in the importance of education, he often assisted his patients with admissions to schools, colleges, and job placements. Furthermore, this highly principled man is believed to be one of the first Parsis to hire someone

from the “untouchable” cast to work in his dispensary and at his home. He was known for treating all with the utmost respect and love.

Dr. Contractor's sense of duty also motivated him to play a prominent role in the city of Surat and in the Parsi community. He and his devoted wife Dinamai were the co-founders of the service organization, the Parsi Pragati Mandal. The Mandal started as a charitable organization that offered educational scholarships for underprivileged Zarathushtis. After 60 years, the annual fee for services has remained at just one rupee per family! Because of his contributions to the community, Dr. Contractor was later appointed as Trustee of the Surat Parsi Panchayet and became a member of the Surat Municipality and Surat Congress Committee. He also served on the boards of many non-profit organizations, and was President of the Red Cross chapter of Surat. Due to his persistent efforts and the influence of a book he wrote on Madame Bhikhaiji Cama, a photo honoring Madame Cama was placed in the Parliament House in New Delhi by the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Be it through his political actions, his professional life or his display of character, Dr. Contractor has been and will continue to be a beacon of light for the Zarathushti community.

His daily prayer was as follows, “God, give me the opportunity to do good in life, and give me the life to do it.” Let his life serve as an example to us all of the power of the individual to practice our Zarathushti principles through our daily actions and make a difference for those we serve.



Zinara Dubash - age 4

Cyra F M Contractor is the granddaughter of Dr. Minocher K Contractor, who has been a source of inspiration throughout her life. Ms. Contractor was born and raised in Pittsburgh, PA. She attended American University, and worked in commercial real estate in Washington, DC and Baltimore, MD. Currently, she lives in Pittsburgh and works in the investment sales department of CB Richard Ellis.





Introduction

In this final section, we will meet some of the Zarathushtis who are currently trying to do their part to uplift the lives of others in this unjust world. Of course, the paths that they have chosen are by no means the only paths one can take – as we learned from the historical profiles in the previous section, each person can find their own unique way to make a positive contribution. We do hope, however, that stories you read in the next several pages peak your curiosity about the issues they address, and we encourage you to contact the authors or the editors of this journal if you would like to learn how you too can become involved.

Justice in a Bottle

Shahriar Shahriari

In this article, Shahriar Shahriari asks us to reflect upon the impact of the choices we make.

In California, it is a very common sight to see individuals carrying their water bottles around wherever they go, in the gym, on the road, when hiking, in cars, even in shopping malls, they each hold their bottle of water, to quench their thirst and avoid dehydration. And no, this is not because of convenience or better health education, but because tap water is not suitable for drinking.

Is it surprising then to see so much polluted water around us? Our oceans, lakes and rivers are polluted. Water authorities need to fence off water reservoirs that are used for human consumption in order to keep them from contamination.

What has all this to do with justice? The answer is simple: how we do anything is how we do everything, as individuals and as a society. The society is a collection and reflection of individuals, and the individual is a component and by necessity a mirror of the society.

When we have protected water reservoirs, we must also carry our little reservoirs around in the form of water bottles. And when we get comfortable with water bottles, we also get comfortable with water reservoirs and by extension, polluted oceans, lakes and rivers around us.

In the same manner, justice too begins at home, and not in the judicial or legislative system.

When we shout at our kid because we were angry with something that happened at work, are we then surprised to see the extremes of such anger in society in the form of child abuse?

When we are OK with taking a pen or a paper pad from work, are we surprised to see its extreme manifestation in the form of Enron's and WorldCom's of this world?

When we are fine with twisting a truth, or perhaps simply withholding it from our friends, in order to achieve a desired end, are we surprised to see politicians giving foolish and empty promises to simply get to elected office?

When we walk by a homeless and hungry person down the street without giving a thought to feeding them, or worse yet, in our minds blaming them for being lazy or not getting a job, are we surprised to see poverty and mass starvation in many nations of the world?

When we are suspicious of our neighbor for blowing their leaves over to our side of the fence, and end up grudgingly cleaning up "their" mess in our yard, week after week, are we surprised to see nations being suspicious of each other and accusing each other of various undesirable activities?

When we finally stop talking to that neighbor, are we surprised to see the refusal of nations to negotiate and resolve their problems in an amicable manner?

When a separation or divorce gets ugly and ends up in a court battle, are we surprised to see the complaints of various nations to the United Nations, that eventually end up in conflict and war?

When we terrorize the neighbor's kids to stop them from throwing their ball into our yard, for the 15th time this week, are we surprised to see international terrorism raising its ugly head?

Certainly the news-worthy examples in the social and international arena are extreme enough to warrant our attention. Surely taking a pen out of the office is nowhere near the scale of taking away pensions and life savings of thousands and millions of people.

But injustice is injustice, and even the smallest amount of injustice at home, paves the way for unleashing grave social evils.

When we catch and stop ourselves from performing small unjust acts, we are like the boy who put his finger in the hole in the dam, and we stop the floodgates of massive social upheaval.

It is not surprising that in Yasna 31, Vs. 18 Zarathushtra pleads:

"Let no one give ears to the words of false and the wicked ones, because such persons shall lead the home, the village, the town and the country to ruin and destruction..."

And earlier in Vs. 16 he states it in the positive:

"The truthful righteous striving to establish the dominion

That will further the well-being of his house,

his province, and his country,

How shall his spirit be like unto Thee?"

Zarathushtra knew that social justice, like everything else begins at home, that the macrocosm and microcosm are reflections of each other. And to change one, all we need to do is to change the other. Zarathushtra knew that the individual could not change the macrocosm, so he started by asking us to change the microcosm, to begin at home, because he knew that justice is served in a bottle.

Shahriar Shahriari
Los Angeles, CA

Shahriar Shahriari, is the author of "Thus Spake the Real Zarathushtra", producer of "Domains of Belief", and creator of www.Zarathushtra.com. He currently lives with his wife, Mahboobeh, and his son, Soroush in Los Angeles.



Lend a Hand to Your Fellow Zarathushti

Dinsha Mistree

In this article, Dinsha Mistree sheds light on the poverty within our own Zarathushti community.

Beneficence is one of the hallmarks of our community. Soundly rooted in our principles is the notion of altruism: that a good Zarathushti must help others to the utmost extent possible. This notion is culturally reinforced; as folklore goes, the Zarathushtis who landed in India explained that they would act as sugar in milk, sweetening the Indian society while seamlessly integrating. Many of us grew up idolizing those sugar cubes – the Wadias, the Tatas, and the Jeejeebhoyes – who used their fortunes to improve the fortunes of others.

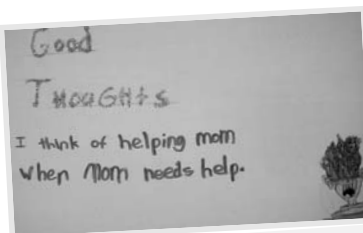
While we take great pride in helping others, Zarathushtis also have a long and equally noteworthy history of taking care of those within our own community. Those who are less fortunate have long been educated, fed, and housed by the assets of several charitable trusts. The baugs which house our friends and relatives throughout western India also stand as testament to such giving. These colonies were originally established by wealthy Zarathushtis so that the rest of the community could be enriched. In turn, the Zarathushtis who are raised in these baugs have continued to sweeten the milk by helping their fellow Indians, Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis alike.

Unfortunately, another aspect to all this is our community's poor internal organization and especially rancorous trust management. Parsi buildings in Pakistan and India are dilapidated and are quickly deteriorating. More important than any buildings, however, are the Parsi and Iranian Zarathushtis who live in similarly impoverished conditions. Despite our notable past of taking care of our own, today there are Zarathushtis whose poverty requires the attention and intervention of our community.

I discovered this harsh reality during the summer following my freshman year in college. I decided to visit India and learn about service firsthand, as a form of tribute to my recently departed grandmother (Nergesh Mistree), who had devoted her life to serving and helping others. I embarked on many different endeavors – I helped educate farmers about HIV/AIDS, I played with inner-city orphans at a shelter just outside of Mumbai, and I observed several other NGOs at work – but the project which really captivated me was the **Zoroastrian Poor People's Project (ZPPP)**. The ZPPP is a charity which gives aid to the most destitute Zarathushtis, mainly in India, but also in Pakistan and Iran. The ZPPP is run by my uncle, Khojeste Mistree. That summer, he

recruited me to survey those who received funds from ZPPP to understand how the disbursed money was being used. Together with Setare Irani, a good friend who knew her way around Mumbai, we met hundreds of Zarathushtis who desperately needed that money for healthcare, food, and clothing. I was horrified by much of what I saw: a widows' chawl filled with women who were so malnourished and so sick that I wondered how they could survive; a woman who had nothing more than a bucket and a mat in her humble baug tenement.

What Setare and I saw in Mumbai paled in comparison to the impoverishment we saw in Udwada. For those who may not know, **Udwada** is a small village in Gujarat that is home to the Iranshah Atash Behram. The people who live in this town have traditionally made their living from Zarathushti pilgrims and tourists; however, the decreasing number of visitors combined with an exodus of younger Zarathushtis, has made Udwada into a town of elderly Zarathushtis with no reliable source of income. The Zarathushtis we met in Udwada were in desperate need of the most basic supplies: money, food, shoes and medicine.



Cyrus Irani - age

When I returned to the United States, I wanted to remain involved with the ZPPP. I soon found that \$100 a month – less than 15 hours of working at the front desk in my dorm – is enough to feed and clothe dozens of poor Zarathushtis. I chose to give through the ZPPP because I had seen for myself that the money was being given to the neediest Zarathushtis, and because the organization also has independent, outside auditors checking the books. However, there are several other organizations through which one can help poor Zarathushtis, such as the World Zoroastrian Organization and the Bombay Parsi Panchayat. Additionally, many community projects such as Parsi General Hospital or the several widows' chawls accept monetary donations directly. Beyond giving money, there are several other possibilities. For instance, on your next trip to visit relatives in India or Pakistan, consider filling your suitcases with old baby clothes to give to Zarathushti orphans instead of gifts of chocolate and cheeses (which can all now be found in India itself) for family. As Zarathushtis, it is our duty to lend a helping hand to our community; if we don't, then who will?

Dinsha Mistree currently lives in Atlanta, GA. He recently graduated from MIT with a B.S and an M.S. in Political Science, with a particular focus on Development. He is currently writing a book on how technology can best improve governments in developing countries. He can be reached at dmistree@alum.mit.edu.



FEZANA as a UN-NGO

Homi Gandhi

In this article, Homi Gandhi explores FEZANA'S partnership with the United Nations.

Yenghe hatam, aat yesne paiti vangeho, Mazdao Ahuro, vaetha Ashat hacha. Yaonghamcho tascha taoscha yazamaide.

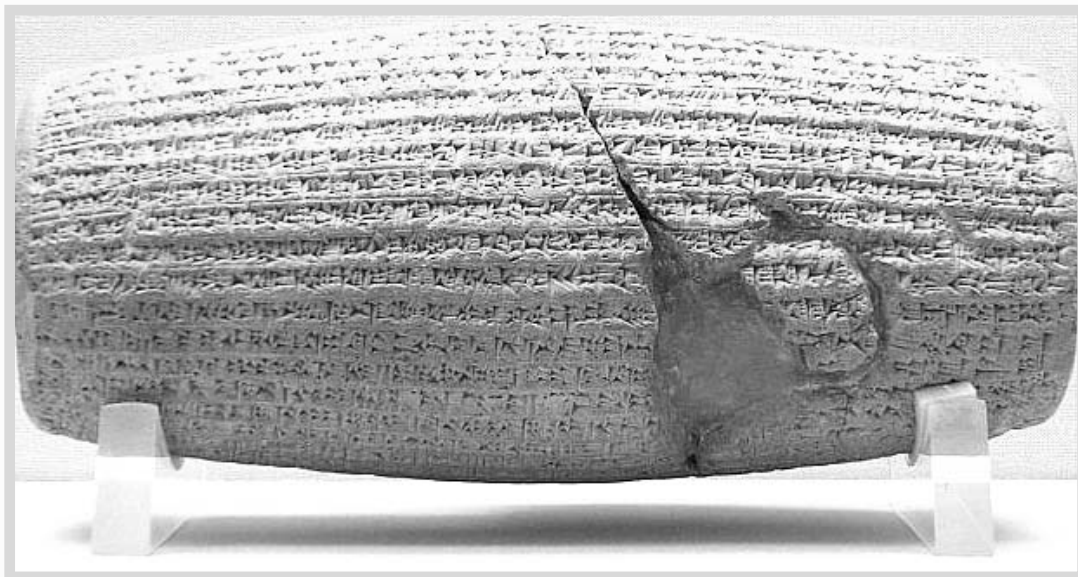
Mazda Ahura knows well, those men and women, whose every act of worship is living a life in accordance with highest Righteousness. Such men and women we revere.**

FEZANA was placed on the Roster of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations in 1997. This was accomplished through

status at the UN and made a brief presentation to the FEZANA executive and Rohinton Rivetna in Chicago at the North American Zoroastrian Congress. At that meeting, Firdosh Mehta, Farrokh Mistree, and Rohinton Rivetna gave a go ahead to Behram Pastakia and myself to coordinate the FEZANA activities at the United Nations. This is how the revival of our continuing affiliation with the UN was born.

It has been over five years since Behram and I have been working for the FEZANA UN-NGO committee. At the outset, we made two important decisions. One that we would make it an overarching policy not to engage in proselytizing, in keeping with our faith tradition. Second, in order to be effective, we identified "Youth Development" and "Environment" as two priority areas to work on, within the framework of the United Nations objectives.

In these last 5 years we have facilitated the participation of over 30 Young and Adult Zarathushtis at the Annual UN- NGO conferences held at United



the great efforts of Prof. Kaikhosrov Irani, Framroze Patel, Rohinton Rivetna and others.

In the early spring of 2002, Rohinton Rivetna approached Behram Pastakia of Metropolitan Washington DC, to see if he would voluntarily take on the responsibility of reactivating FEZANA's relationship with the United Nations, which had been lying moribund for many years. Behram believed that a representative from the New York area should ideally take this up, because the UN Headquarters is located there. However, when informed that FEZANA was likely to lose its consultative status with ECOSOC unless some activity was breathed into this effort, Behram agreed to participate in this venture.

During the 15th Annual General Meeting (May 2002) of FEZANA in Montreal, I heard the same dismal story from Rohinton Rivetna regarding the impending loss of FEZANA's NGO status. To me, this sounded like climbing Mount Everest and dying there without getting any benefit out of it. Thus, I agreed to help revive FEZANA's

Nations headquarters in New York. While we have provided access and security clearance to the meetings, the costs for transport, lodging, and food are borne by the participants themselves; this attests to their commitment to the cause. We held the first ever seminar at the United Nations on "Microfinancing" as part of our participation at the 48th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. There was a two hour panel discussion covering the basics of Microfinancing - what works and what does not, several case-studies from developing countries, the Grameen Bank's history and success factors, and a Microfinancing implementation plan for the interested NGO's. These young adults have continued to participate in community work at the local level in their hometowns, and are furthering the objectives of the United Nations in fostering world peace.



Darian Bathena - age 8

Additionally, this committee was in the forefront during the world celebration of 3000th Anniversary of Zarathushti Culture

in 2003, and it will continue to create awareness of our community's culture and its contribution to ethics and a democratic way of life. Recently, we proposed to the United Nations that it consider formally declaring a "Season of Peace" every year during the period of September 11-21. I am very happy to say that Mr. Anwarul Karim Chowdhury—Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS), United Nations, whom we met at the 2006 DPI/NGO conference—has indicated that, in his opinion, this is a proposal he is willing to share with his colleagues at the United Nations at the appropriate time and occasion. So watch out Zarathushtis; here is one more Zarathushti contribution at the United Nations level. Gear yourselves up to participate in the relevant activities at the appropriate level in the near future.

***Ashem vohu vahistem asti; ushta asti, ushta ahmai
hyat Ashai, vahishtai Ashem.***

**Righteousness is the highest virtue. It leads to
enlightened happiness; This happiness is**

Religions for Peace

Jehangir Sarosh

*In this article, Jehangir Sarosh highlights the work of the
multifaith organization, Religions for Peace.*

When I was asked to write this article about my involvement and the work of Religions for Peace (RfP), the first question that came to mind was, how did I get here? I had no special qualifications. I had no degrees in international relations or conflict resolution nor am I a theologian or a scholar in Zarathushti religion or Inter-faith relations. My only asset is I am a Zarathushti, and what an asset it is!

When I was a child, I accompanied my father on a drive from Indore, India – where I was born – to London. As a grown man, I completed this trip several times myself. These journeys through various countries opened my eyes to the different cultures, traditions, and religions of the world.

At the age of 14 I was pressured by my father to join the British Royal Air Force. The next 5 years were spent without meeting a single Indian, let alone a Zarathushti. This isolation from my community aroused my interest in philosophy and religions, and inspired me to read books on Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. When I later started reading different translations of the Gathas, I was struck by its logical and unique wisdom. My study helped me to separate information from knowledge and knowledge from wisdom. I felt free to enquire into the teachings of Zarathushtra, free from dogmas, rituals and another person's authority. Learning about Zarathushti Deen outside the institution of our religion allowed me to appreciate the spirituality of our religion, rather than the theology, for theology of any faith is often taught to

**attained when one lives righteously for the sake of
Righteousness.****

**** (Courtesy: The Good Life; Published by Zoroastrian
Association of Greater New York**

Homi D. Gandhi has served the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) as President (2002 -) as Treasurer (1986-1988) and as the Treasurer and Chairman of the Darbe Mehr Zoroastrian Temple - the religious corporation that owns the Arbab Rustam Guiv Dare Mehr in Pomona, New York. Homi has been recently appointed as the Chair of the FEZANA Inter-Faith Committee and has been the Co-Chair of FEZANA'S UN – NGO Committee since its inception in 2003. He is FEZANA's main representative at the United Nations. Recently, Homi has been appointed as a member of the Executive Committee of the Religions for Peace Inc. USA.



convert or further convince the follower that it is the only true and right religion.

The two elements in the wisdom of Zarathushtra, which are profound for me, are:

1) Zarathushtra offers us the greatest freedom – freedom not to obey him but to hear his words for ourselves and decide for ourselves (Yasna 30.2)

2) Zarathushtra's definition of good: only that is good which is good for any-body whatsoever (Yasna 43.1)

Our assets as Zarathushtis are many fold. We are trusted fully by all faiths, thanks to the legacy of our forefathers. We, as minorities, do not threaten any faith, culture or nation. Our spiritual understanding of the good enables us to be impartial and thus act as a catalyst in areas of conflict and disagreement. Zarathushtra calls us to be proactive in refreshing the world, and wherever Zarathushtis have got involved they have achieved leadership roles and contributed to the common good. My colleague, Mr John Taylor, former Secretary General of RfP pays tribute to our community thus:

"It has also been noticeable how Zarathushti individuals and communities have worked tirelessly and effectively for example in reviving the interfaith initiatives of the Parliament of Worlds Religions based in Chicago or in contribution to the International Association for Religious Freedom. The experience of being a minority has given credibility and sensitivity to all these contributions most significantly their work has been not out of self-interest or self importance but in a genuine spirit of human solidarity and devotion to ultimate values of peace and justice".

From this you will note that each one of us, as a Zarathushti has a lot to offer.

Working on a voluntary basis, yet with full commitment to Religions for Peace, enables me to meet the full spectrum of religious leaders and religious despots, from religious adherents and those who see religion as a cause of conflict. Too often one forgets that if religions are the cause of conflict they can also be the instruments to resolve conflict. For instance, RfP deal with issues such as peace education, elimination of power politics, conflict resolution and even health care.

Just as nations have learned that they must work together in organizations such as the European Union, we have realized that no faith community can single-handedly bring about peace. We must facilitate building of Inter-Religious Councils (IRC's) at local, regional, national, and international levels. Today the local groups of RfP help build trust and confidence amongst different faith, cultural and ethnic communities that have been brought together through the coming of the global village. Through dialogue and understanding, we move onto cooperative action.

As RfP believes in "different faiths - common action" its orientation is not discussing theology. Instead, their focus is how each community can move from talking together to working for each other. For the symbolic importance, the faith communities working together has a much more powerful influence on the decision makers, whether they be at the local municipality level, national governments or regional institutions. Some examples:

It was the IRC of Sierra Leone that brought the RUF rebels and the National Government around the same table to dialogue and agree to stop the violence. Today the IRCs of Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina are working with different divisions of the United Nations to rebuild their countries whilst sustaining peace and promoting understanding among the previously warring factions. The peace education commission of RfP takes different avenues to build shared trust by looking at how other faith communities and cultures are depicted in the text books e.g. how Islam is depicted in the German text books and how Christianity is depicted in the Egyptian text books.

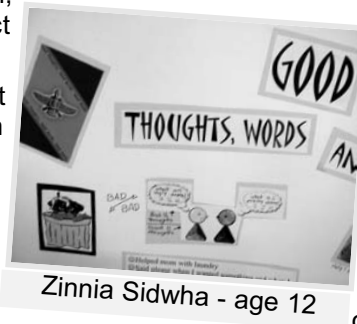
Recently, we facilitated a meeting of the leaders of faith-based youth organisations in Europe. Similar exercises have been done in other regions of Asia, Australia, Latin America, and the USA, with the view of bringing these young leaders, who devote their time and energy working to make the world a good place for all, to cooperate with each other for common action. These different regional Inter-Faith Youth Councils met in Kyoto in August 2006 with 500 religious leaders and political leaders and offered the youth perspective on what the world needs now.

The IRCs that RfP facilitates work on two major principles: the principle of representation to ensure that each faith is represented by the faith community nomination, and the second principle of subsidiarity to

ensure that the needs of each locality are met, rather than an arbitrary imposition.

It is vital that the faith communities work with other civil society institutions such as the education and health care systems, police, and local and national governments, to promote the general welfare of the community and to build cohesive societies. Today Zarathushtis are involved and are offering their wisdom working at the local grass roots level, as well as being involved in international issues. The variety of work to help build peaceful and just societies is vast and varied and one can always find the niche that suits oneself.

My only regret is I did not get involved earlier in my life. We, Zarathushtis, are called to refresh the world, and there is no greater joy than to see a small change that has come about through one's involvement in working with others.



Jehangir Sarosh is President of Religions for Peace Europe and founder and executive member of the European Religious Leaders Council. He is also executive member of the Inter-Faith Network of the United Kingdom and several other registered charities. He is chairman of the MRJ Group of international companies and lives in the UK. He can be contacted at wcrp@btconnect.com.



The Politics of Reform Human Rights and Women's Rights in Iran

Niaz Kasravi

This article gives an overview of the struggle for women's right in Iran.

Discovered in 1878 at the Babylon excavation site, Cyrus the Great's cuneiform cylinder was declared the first ever human rights charter by the United Nations in 1971. Most Iranians take pride in this historical tie with the human rights movement. However, the development of this movement in Iran has been different from its progress in the West. The development of the women's rights movement in Iran – which is intertwined with the human rights movement – has been even more complex due to the importance of women's role in Islam, the country's current ruling religion.

The human rights ideology places great importance on individualism. In contrast, Islam values the roles that individuals play in society. Hence, the human rights movement in Iran – and particularly, the women's rights movement – has often relied on this paradigm, focusing



on the rights of women as mothers, children, students, and other roles within a social context.

Historical Backdrop

Iranian women's rights movement gained visibility in early 20th century after the Constitutional Revolution. Secret women's organizations were formed dealing with a range of issues including the right to participate in government, vote, publish magazines, and mandated education for girls. After World War II and the creation of the United Nations (UN), the Pahlavi regime began a process of secularizing Iran. This historical backdrop provided an ideal context for pushing forth with women's efforts for equality. By 1962 women gained the right to vote, and in 1968 the Family Protection Law expanded women's rights in marriage, divorce and custody.

However, many of these rights were lost after the revolution of 1979. And in 1998, the Supreme Council decided that Iran would not become party to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) because many of its provisions contradict their notion of Islamic law.

The Current State of Affairs

Iranian women have not been discouraged by these setbacks, and today they play a vital role in various human rights organizations. The importance of women's role in this movement is signified by the work of Shirin Ebadi. In 1975, Ms. Ebadi became the first female judge in Iran. After the 1979 Revolution, women judges were dismissed, forcing Ms. Ebadi to step down from the bench. Refusing to allow the politics of Iran to prevent her from her goal of advancing human rights, she continued her work as an attorney and a human rights activist. Though the work was more than difficult and even led to her imprisonment at one point, Ms. Ebadi pushed forth. Her courage and endurance was internationally recognized in 2003 when she was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize**, making her the first Iranian, the first Muslim woman, and the third woman ever to receive this prestigious award.

As head of a leading Iranian NGO (non-governmental organization), the Society for Protecting Children's Rights (SPCR), Shirin Ebadi's successes include a 1997 amendment to Iran's custody law. Under the Shari'a, or Islamic law, fathers receive automatic custody of children after a divorce. The amendment that SPCR successfully pushed for, provided an avenue to challenge fathers and prevent them from automatically gaining custody of their children if they are proven unfit in a court of law.

This victory is symbolic of how reform is often achieved in Iran: through the strategic use of human rights standards, with an explicit emphasis on the roles that individuals play in society. SPCR activists used human rights principles with emphasis on family and custody laws, relying heavily on prescribed gender roles to promote women's rights as mothers, and not specifically

as individuals. In this way, women rely on human rights ideology to focus on traditional female roles and legitimize their struggle for equality.

The Moral of the Story...

This article sheds some light on the difficulty of creating change in a complex setting – like the one that prevails in Iran today. Attempts at reform have been numerous, but successes have been few and far between.

Since 2003, many who live relatively comfortable lives outside of Iran have become avid critics of the efforts of Shirin Ebadi and other Iranian activists, making unsubstantiated accusations towards them such as claiming that they are secretly working with the government, or that they are not doing enough to create reform. Unless those who criticize these efforts are willing to leave their comfortable homes in the diaspora and go back to Iran and lend a hand to the struggle of activists in the country, their critiques are misinformed and often destructive to the human rights movement as a whole. This is not to suggest that we should not criticize Shirin Ebadi, or other activists for that matter. The right to dissent is in fact a most fundamental right. However, if we choose to criticize, we must follow it with a recourse for action, a recourse in which we are willing to actively participate.

Niaz Kasravi received her Ph. D. in Criminology, Law & Society from the University of California, Irvine. A National Science Foundation grant allowed her to travel to Iran and work with Shirin Ebadi, the Nobel Peace Prize recipient of 2003, on women's rights and the reform movement. She has worked as the lead researcher and associate for the Domestic Human Rights Program of Amnesty International USA. Additionally, Niaz has served as the policy associate for Stop Prisoner Rape. Currently, she is a consultant for several foundations in California and she is actively involved in writing and public speaking engagements.



One of the world's children

Shara Godiwalla

Shara Godiwalla reflects on the lessons she learned as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

I felt butterflies in my gut as I read the acceptance letter from the U.S. Peace Corps. I recalled absent mindedly filling out the application and completely forgetting about it thereafter. Serendipitously, I agreed to the challenge of working overseas for two years in the South Pacific as a Health Promotion and Education Officer. Only well after my return to the US did I fully comprehend all that I had learned during my stay in Fiji—one that taught me how to be a better fellow human being.

After receiving three months of intense training in culture, politics, religion, nutrition, language, communications, and public health, I was posted to a town on the second largest island, Vanua Levu, of the Fiji Islands. Working overseas requires a substantial learning curve, because more than just the landscape is different. The culture, governance, religious and social beliefs, languages, and environment all influenced my approach to daily living. For example, communication on health issues in Fiji generally followed a top-down approach (doctor to patient). Thus, it was a social and cultural challenge to teach health education and communication techniques to health care providers using a bottom-up approach. In addition, it was initially difficult for me – a single, young female, culturally a world apart – to gain credibility with the health professionals. However in due course, I made progress with the nurses by combining the local method of storytelling with new interactive learning techniques. They began to use similar techniques of listening and sharing information with one another and consequently communicating more effectively with their patients.

After a year of observation, my newly gained fluency of the language, and a better understanding of the culture, I initiated “The Youth for Better Health” project. This project entailed day or weekend seminars dedicated to health issues for youth. The collaborative project provided young people with interactive presentations on various health topics including drug use, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS. The entire community participated: village leaders gathered participants; ministry workers provided transport and teaching materials; local nurses developed talks on the above health topics; and the youth enjoyed the event and the attention, while learning something new in the process. By the end of my posting in Fiji, I recognized an adjustment in my values, but I did not realize just how much I had gained from the experience until my return.

Many former Peace Corps volunteers desire to continue similar work upon returning to the US. Back in my hometown of Houston, Texas working as a county community health specialist, I learned from community leaders in Fourth Ward, or Friedman’s Town. This town had a history of producing prominent African American physicians, attorneys and musicians. Over the years, however, the community had lost its vibrancy and has now begun the process of revitalizing itself. The lessons learned from this town’s remobilization efforts helped me guide a team of county public health leaders to identify other communities in the county that may benefit from similar work. I realized that my Peace Corps experiences of building trust, credibility, and being culturally sensitive helped me rapidly build relationships with community members and leaders. In a short period of time, they began to ask for my advice on health and other issues.

Today I continue to work on issues of children’s well-being. In my last position, I worked with state governments to combat childhood lead poisoning and currently work with the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention to coordinate a national report with 22 federal agencies on children’s statistics.

My experiences with different communities have underscored how the simple realities that all human beings share bring us far closer than we may believe. The very fact that we, as human beings, all need a place we call ‘home,’ regular food to eat, clothing, a sense of belonging, and love, makes us far more similar than we may admit. Rather than celebrating our similarities, we often emphasize the “differences” between us. For example, one may partake in rituals and practices that may seem strange to another (such as placing a black mark on a child’s face to ward off evil). However, many seemingly different rituals often aspire to a common goal (like protecting our children). Thus, the “differences” in our cultural practices quickly disappear when we understand that the motivations behind them, are often universally desired and accepted.

In essence, the following Chinese poem exemplifies my idea of leadership at its best.

Go to the People.

Live among them.

Love them.

Learn from them.

Start from where they are.

Work with them.

Build on what they have.

But of the best leaders,

When the task is accomplished,

The work completed,

The people all remark:

"We have done it ourselves"

Lao Tsu

A point this poem makes is that great leadership requires empowerment through mentoring and teaching, not just delegation. For me, this poem presents many aspects of a great leader and beautifully sums up the approach needed when working with communities.

Ushta té,

Shara Godiwalla and substantially edited by my fiancé.

Cyrus Subawalla.

Shara Godiwalla has worked and resided in the Washington D.C. area for nine years. Raised in Houston, she completed her bachelor’s in Biochemistry from University of Texas, Austin and her master’s in International Health from Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. Shara is engaged to be married to Cyrus Subawalla of Mumbai.



Lending a helping hand

Shelley Saklatvala

For a long time I have wanted to work in a third world country helping people but never had the courage to actually make it happen. My love of the Spanish culture prompted me to volunteer this summer in Guatemala.

My name is Shelley Saklatvala and I am currently a third grade teacher at Westpark Elementary School in Montreal, Canada. I was honored when asked to share my experiences about volunteering in Guatemala.



Shelly Saklatvala with children in Guatemala

The thought that I could make a difference started three years ago when I was teaching a class of grade five students. I introduced my class to school children in Mauritania, Africa through letter writing. This led to a multitude of activities as my

students quickly realized that they had the capacity to help the African children. I decided to send school supplies and other small toys which were collected by my students. This exchange taught the children about sharing and gratitude for the quality of life we have in Canada. That same year my grade five class raised over \$900 to send to India and Africa for sustainable development through World Vision.

Earlier this year my students collected money by selling pens to send to an orphanage in Rwanda in a project I called "Kids helping Kids." I finally decided that instead of just raising money and supplies for large organizations to send abroad, it would be better if I went myself so that I could actually see how the money was being spent and be a constructive participant. As a society we are full of good intentions; however, we rarely follow through on these good thoughts and I decided that it was time for me to actively do something to help the less fortunate.

There were several reasons why I decided to volunteer in Guatemala. First, as I have a working knowledge of Spanish, I chose a country where language barriers would present less of an obstacle. More specifically, the country was entrenched in a civil war for over 36 years and although the war has been over since 1996, the people of Guatemala are still suffering. Many people were caught in the crossfire, turning thousands of innocent children into homeless orphans. There is a tremendous need for volunteers to help rebuild the country.

Once in Guatemala, I assisted in a multitude of programs, but opted to work in a school due to my teaching background. My placement was in a school to help children with special needs. The ages of the

children ranged from four to twenty-two years, and I generally worked with the younger ones. Some of them were simply kids with learning disabilities who, if in Canada, would be placed in normal classrooms, while others had severe disorders and diseases. Some of the children I taught were deaf, and we communicated by using hand movements and symbols which at times was a rather frustrating experience for me. Generally the younger ones just wanted to be hugged and held. As soon as I entered, they would all crowd around me and want to hold my hand. It was touching to see what happiness a small gesture of kindness could bring to these children. It was a wonderful way to start my day...being hugged and seeing their eyes light up when I handed out treats like pencils, erasers and books I had taken with me from Canada. These children had so little, yet they always shared whatever they had.

During my time in Guatemala, I visited an orphanage where all the children ranging in age from 20 days to 18 years were HIV positive or suffered from AIDS. This was a heart breaking and eye opening experience, as I realized that the only love and attention these kids received was from the caregivers and volunteers who visited them. In spite of living through incredible pain and hopelessness, they were loving and extremely appreciative of the time we shared.

We all have moments in our lives when we realize that we can do more if we put our minds to it; be it our chosen career paths, academics or something closer to the heart. This experience has really taught me that when we get stressed with deadlines from work or school we should simply take a moment to think about all the people who would long for the opportunity to be given a chance at our lives. Life is what we make of it...sometimes you know that you have lived an absolutely incredible experience from the people you have touched.

Shelly was born and raised in Montreal, Canada. She completed a degree in Education in 2002 from McGill University and is presently a teacher for third grade students in a suburb of Montreal.

She is the board member of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec organizing activities for children.

A Zarathushti's trip to the 'Land of Many Waters'

Shirin Kiani

In this article, Shirin Kiani relates her experience as a volunteer in Guyana. And how this experience helped her learn to slow down and most importantly connect with people and nature

In June/July of 2006 I spent 5 weeks in South America in a country called Guyana (formerly British Guyana). Guyana literally means 'the land of many waters' as it has many rivers running through it which

serve as a primary source of transportation; oftentimes, roads aren't as developed and efficient as water travel.

So . . . how did I end up in Guyana? I graduated from the University of British Columbia in 2003 in Occupational Therapy. After a few years of practice I felt ready to work in my field in a developing country. I did a bit of research and contacted a few therapists who'd worked internationally to see if I could follow in their footsteps. The non-governmental agency "Youth Challenge International" (YCI, www.yci.org) kept on popping up from various sources as a reputable organization that had its volunteers work at the grassroots level, alongside community members. While I knew that I wouldn't be doing Occupational Therapy specific work with YCI, I knew that I would inevitably and informally use some of my therapist skills while on projects.

I checked out the YCI website, liked what I saw and signed up. It was that simple. I didn't ponder on it too much, I just went with my gut and left the rest to Ahura Mazda. YCI is a non-profit organization and volunteers need to pay their own way. I fundraised for the entire trip with the help of my co-workers, friends, family and the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia.

My journey began with several days of orientation in Toronto and then Guyana to help me and other 'challengers', as we were called, understand the intricacies of living and working in Guyana. During this training we did it all, from running practice workshops to learning about diseases endemic to Guyana and how we could protect ourselves. Throughout my fundraising and pre-departure, my friends and family were most concerned about my health and safety; fortunately, this was never an issue, and the most eventful health concern was being covered by countless, itchy mosquito bites by Day 2 of the project.

For my project, I was stationed in a small northern Island called Wakenaam, embedded in the largest river in Guyana, the Essequibo. Wakenaam is composed 25% of afro-guyanese and 75% of indo-guyanese villagers. We stayed in a village of 500 people, called "Maria Johanna" (the land was bought by two afro-guyanese sisters). We had an extremely warm reception on our first day. A number of the children swarmed our home and asked us questions about who we were and why we were there; they also wanted to play with us and were keen to show us where to go swimming in the Essequibo River. We were in paradise.

Our Guyanese group leaders had previously visited the Island on a 2-day assessment to see what the needs of the various communities were. As such, we had a little bit of direction and insight into what projects to initiate and which community members to work with. During our time there, we painted a local church, ran several

workshops in different villages on: HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, teen pregnancy and garbage disposal (a big problem there: people throw their plastic bottles straight into the Essequibo River). We also conducted "Community Needs Assessments" in 7 villages on the Island. These needs assessments were done for the UNDP (United Nations Development Project), which is bringing funding to Wakenaam and wants to identify the types of needs. For these assessments, we went door to door and spoke to villagers about their community and individual needs. I was surprised at how open they were to talk to us and how very basic their needs were (clean water during dry season, electricity for extended hours, activities for the youth to avoid substance abuse, and employment opportunities).

We also spent time at the local elementary school running literacy sessions. I taught the grade 4 class; but sadly about half the class had great difficulty reading. We also held a 'decision-making' workshop related to sex and substance abuse, at the only high school on the island. In addition, we met with the 'health club' of the high school and organized a HIV/AIDS Awareness Culture Show. The culture show took much energy and perseverance as we had to recruit and assist Guyanese youth in their performances. The youth were not accustomed to being involved in activities, and motivating them to get involved and giving them confidence to perform was challenging. Things did, however, come together beautifully and we put on a fabulous show. In between performances, people read poems on AIDS, performed skits on contracting HIV and presented general facts on HIV/AIDS.

Throughout our time in the village we ran into several challenges as well. Getting adults to attend our workshops was very difficult. Most villagers work long hours farming and were not interested in attending night workshops. Even if they had been interested, we had no facilities with electricity in which to hold night workshops; thus we held most of our workshops in late afternoons hoping to catch adults getting off work and the last hours of daylight. In general, we sensed a lack of interest, but could recognize the barriers – such as time when they were not working or caring for their families – that kept the adults from taking more active parts. Consequently, we tried to channel our energy into the youth; the youth, however, were shy and had difficulty taking on leadership roles to help make projects sustainable, and maintain an effect beyond the 5 weeks we were present.

During our HIV/AIDS and teen pregnancy workshop we learnt about the inaccessibility of condoms for the youth. Condoms can only be found at the local hospital. However, as the island is a small one, word travels fast and none of the youth dare go to the hospital and ask for condoms. They are afraid that their family members will immediately find out due to lack of confidentiality that they are sexually active. In a way, what we were discussing with the youth regarding safe sex seemed very idealistic, because in practice, it is hard for them to implement what we discussed. This lack of accessibility



to condoms can be the focus of a second, lengthier YCI project to Wakenaam.

Overall, this journey touched me deeply. I lived, laughed and worked with 9 other strangers (7 Canadians and 2 Guyanese) who slowly became my family. I learned to do my laundry by hand, showered out of a bucket, used a headlamp as my source of light and played with Guyanese children for hours on end. This experience helped me learn to slow down and most importantly connect with people and nature. All my fundraising and anticipation was well worth it. And of course, I encourage all adventurous youth looking to step out of our little North American bubble to embark on such a journey.



Shirin Kiani was born in Iran and lived in Switzerland before moving to Vancouver, Canada when she was 8 years old. Shirin studied

Shirin Kiani, in front with children from Guyana

Occupational Therapy at the University of British Columbia and worked as a therapist for a few years. She is currently working on her Master's Degree in Global Health at Simon Fraser University. Shirin hopes to promote public health in low to middle income countries.

Artist with a cause

Carlos Rodriguez Martorell

This article was originally published on November 8, 2006 in the New York Daily News (www.nydailynews.com). Reprinted with permission

From Harlem to the streets of Baghdad, all the world's a stage for actress, playwright and "activist" Kayhan Irani — literally.

The dreamy-eyed 28-year-old New Yorker of Indian descent has been involved in dozens of plays and artistic actions advocating social justice. Her celebrated one-woman show, "We've Come Undone," has toured colleges and community centers nationwide.

The series of monologues first staged in 2003 portrays the struggles faced by Arab, Muslim and South Asian communities following 9/11 in a suddenly hostile America. For instance, a young girl experiences bewilderment at her father's disappearance



after being interrogated by the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

After the performances, Irani normally receives the gratitude of audience members for giving voice to their story.

"Ever since I was little, I had this idea that your life is to serve a greater world," she says in her cozy apartment in Harlem.

"Also, it's a very important part of my work," explains Irani, who is a Zarathushti, a millenary creed founded in ancient Persia. "The tenets are good thoughts, good words and good deeds. It's not only about having happy thoughts; it has a lot of social justice ethics.

Those are also essential ideas to her work.

Irani facilitates artistic workshops for colleges and community organizations such as the Riverside Church, Suffolk Law School, Communities of Faith for Housing and the International Rescue Committee.

She also finds time to do street performances in Harlem or attend protests against the Darfur genocide in Washington.

"Art is such a powerful medium to explore understanding," says Irani, who calls herself an "activist." "You can say, 'Okay, terrorists, people of the Middle East ...,' but you don't understand what their life consists of every day.

"Through theater or the arts, people are able to suspend that kind of judgment, whatever it may be, and they can actually somehow connect and care. Even if they hate the character, they want to see how it ends."

Anny Bakalian, author and associate director of City University of New York's Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center, said Irani's play has made a difference for an increasingly isolated population.

"She captured the dilemma of people caught in the 9/11 backlash with accuracy and compassion. What is more amazing is that she managed with her writing and acting to explain to her audience the human side of governmental initiatives," says Bakalian.

In search of this human side of conflict, Irani traveled to Iraq in February 2004 with the pacifist organization Code Pink and held theater workshops with children. "Somehow I needed to see what was going on," she says. "I thought, how can I not be doing more?"

On Nov. 18, Irani will premiere her latest play, "7 Women, 7 Heavens," at the ASMA Society in Manhattan. The new piece exposes "different scenarios of women in Islam who are trying to exert their right to self-actualization," says Irani, who will not act this time.

Kayhan Irani was born in Bombay (now Mumbai), but her family soon moved to Iran. When she was 3 they fled an Iranian revolution unfriendly to non-Muslims and settled in New York.

Irani grew up in Queens, at the border of Forest Hills and Rego Park, sharing a one-bedroom apartment with her brother and her parents. "And, on top of that, we would have people who came to live with us!" she

remembers with a glint of nostalgia. "For my parents, there was always room as long as you had an open heart."

At home, she would speak Gujarati and eat Indian food, only to discover another colorful universe across the door: her Korean, Puerto Rican, Chinese and Jewish neighbors. The perfect environment for a would-be actress: "I think I am good with accents anyway, but I was able to pick up a lot of accents and gestures."

Her artistic passion grew in her very early, and she swears that her first memory ever is in a preschool class, trying on clothes and making up characters and stories.

"My first instinct was to make theater, and ever since I first remember I was doing it," she says. She had bold ideas, too. A play she put on in school in the fourth grade was about an abused woman involved in the suffragette movement.

The natural career choice was show business, so she enrolled in the High School of Performing Arts (the "Fame" school). But she felt disillusioned after it.

"I thought it was a very self-serving industry," she says, and she didn't replug with her early passion until years later, when she got acquainted with Brazilian Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed.

"I realized: Wow, this is exactly what I was looking for! It says: Theater is a tool for communication, a way to analyze problems and understand the world better."

After 9/11, she got deeply concerned by the social retaliation it sparked. The law that forced all immigrants from Arab countries to register and get interviewed by the government was the catalyst for "We've Come Undone."

"These people are contributing members of our society," she says. "Nobody was saying, 'Hey wait a minute that's my friend, that's my neighbor.' In fact, the opposite."

In "We've Come Undone," she doesn't only play dramatic characters. There is also room for humor in the rant of an INS officer. "What terrorist is going to stand in line for eight hours?" she fumes.

"I wrote it for my country and for the society I live in. I thought, how could we just enter into a round where no one talks to each other, where people are suspicious of their next-door neighbors?"

Irani is now back in college, majoring in theater and social change at CUNY. As for the future, she wishes only to do more work and training internationally.

And no, although she wouldn't mind working in a mainstream production to raise money for her work, she is not planning to become a star.

How to measure success, then?

"Success is raising awareness," she says carefully, after some hesitation. "The more people who get to hear about an issue and think about it and maybe even discuss it, the better." *For more information on Kayhan Irani's performances visit www.artivista.org*

Americorps Literacy Campaign

Veera Sidhwa

My family and religion both inspired me to dedicate a year to community service

Veera Sidhwa describes her year as an *Americorps Volunteer*.

"AmeriCorps is a network of national service programs that engages more than 50,000 Americans each year in intensive service to meet critical needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment. AmeriCorps members serve through more than 2,100 nonprofits, public agencies, and faith-based organizations. They tutor and mentor youth, build affordable housing, teach computer skills, clean parks and streams, run after-school programs, and help communities respond to disasters" www.americorps.gov

I was a part of Literacy AmeriCorps and served through the Palm Beach County Literacy Coalition. I served two sites in Delray Beach. The first was the Carver Estates Youth Program, an after school care program situated in governmental subsidized housing with 30 kids who attended the after school program. My goal was to help these children become fluent readers. I intensely targeted 7 of the 30 kids. When I wasn't promoting literacy at Carver I was providing them with enriching activities. One of which was a cultural day. I taught them about Nouruz, Indian food, clothes, and music.

My other site as an Americorps volunteer was Village Readers, where I taught English as a Second Language to adults who are functioning at the lowest level of English literacy. My students were mostly Haitian with no formal education, and some Latino students. I helped them with basic English survival skills like reading a clock or bus schedules.

My family and religion both inspired me to dedicate a year to community service. Both of my parents have been involved in philanthropic work both inside and outside of our community. I am not very religious; however, one part of the Zarathushti deen that I do carry with me wherever I go is manashni, gavashni, kunashni. Community service is something I grew up around, physically and spiritually, and hope to stay involved with throughout my life.



Veera Sidhwa was born and grew up in Flint, MI. She graduated with a BA in psychology from the University of Texas at Austin and is now pursuing a Masters in school psychology from California State University at Long Beach



Fair Trade: An Easy Way to Make a Difference

Viraf Soroushian

“I felt helplessly evil knowing that my comfort and happiness were linked to so much pain and suffering in the world and felt compelled to find the root of this injustice.”

In this article, Viraf Soroushian shows us that a little effort can go a long way towards helping end poverty.

I believe that people should always try to do what is within their means to help others in need. Of course, we can only be expected to offer in the capacity that our life situations allow. It is this mentality that has led me to advocate for **Fair Trade** products.

Throughout my life, I have been very fortunate. I come from a good family, always had food on my plate, received extensive schooling, and live in a country with limitless opportunities. So, it troubled me to think that while I had so many great things, there were people who lived hungry and homeless. Even harder for me to stomach was the high probability that the clothing on my back was made in sweatshop factories where laborers – sometimes children – are subjected to horrible working conditions and paid less than a living wage. I felt helplessly evil knowing that my comfort and happiness were linked to so much pain and suffering in the world and felt compelled to find the root of this injustice. As I learned more on the subject, all fingers seemed to point to the debate surrounding trade liberalization.

Many believe trade liberalization – or free trade – is the best system to spread wealth and stability to developing nations while increasing abundance and efficiency in the global economy. Others argue that free trade has failed because it reduces national sovereignty, destroys the environment, and makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. In my opinion, free trade has the potential to benefit all those involved, but, as it currently operates, it has significantly exploited the poor and our natural resources. The system's survival depends upon our ability to address these problems. However, change needn't only come from the top down. Every individual can help overcome these injustices through simple and everyday ethical consumption.

In recent years, **Fair Trade** products emerged as a consumer based initiative to fight global poverty and unfair trade practices. Fair Trade alternatives are offered on a wide variety of products, from tea and coffee to crafts and clothing. Special logos exist (similar to the organic certification concept) that guarantee that high social and environmental standards were maintained in the production process of the good. Fair Trade targets farmers and artisans in developing countries who are usually the hardest hit by international free trade agreements. Through Fair Trade programs, they are structured into democratically run cooperatives, form long-term relationships with business partners in

the developed world, and use environmentally friendly production techniques. Moreover, a certain portion of the proceeds from product sales must be used for community development programs, such as building school houses or updating business technology. And, producers are paid fair wages that afford them the opportunity to pull themselves out of poverty and secure a higher quality of life.

In addition to directly helping farmers, artisans, and the environment, Fair Trade products offer consumers an opportunity to permanently alter current standards of acceptable corporate practice. As Fair Trade consumption increases, the market will shift to fill the demand, and more businesses will adopt ethical production practices to maintain a competitive edge. Even now we see hints of the changing currents: companies that market themselves as Fair Trade businesses – such as Equal Exchange and World of Goods – are thriving. Major corporations like Starbucks and Ben and Jerry's are also trying to gain ethical market share by offering Fair Trade products.

Fair Trade products embody the idea that people should contribute what is within their means to combat poverty, and offers a simple and effective option for those who are able and willing to do so. Because Fair Trade products can be slightly more expensive than their conventionally produced counterparts, I wasn't always able to afford Fair Trade alternatives as a college student. However, higher ethical production standards are important to me, and I made an effort to look for the Fair Trade label whenever possible.

Learning about Fair Trade products has helped lift a giant burden from my shoulders. I discovered that many of my college peers had similar feelings. We were all in a position where we recognized global injustices, but felt politically and financially powerless to change them. Fair Trade provided an easy way to make a daily difference. This realization drove us to advocate for Fair Trade Certified™ coffee and tea at our university. We passed resolutions in support of Fair Trade products in the student government, held educational events, and distributed free Fair Trade coffee during exam periods. We then circulated petitions to present to the university chancellor. The support we received was overwhelming. It wasn't long before most campus eateries offered Fair Trade coffee and tea options.

As Zarathushtis, we hold goodness, righteousness, and social responsibility in high regard. The principles of Fair Trade resonate deeply with our religious teachings. It offers a simple action for very complex virtues. Alone, Fair Trade products will not solve all the world's problems, but they offer a starting point for individuals



and communities who want to make a difference. Individually, we can commit to educating ourselves further and shopping for the Fair Trade logo. As a community, we can begin serving Fair Trade tea and coffee at religious functions. Ultimately, it is a choice we must all make based on what we are capable of giving in this world.

In the U.S. there are two Fair Trade programs, Fair Trade Federation and Fair Trade Certification. Their logos (see page 72) can be found on several Fair Trade products. To find out more about Fair Trade products and certification guidelines, please visit the following websites: www.fairtradefederation.org and www.transfairusa.org. To learn more about Fair Trade in general, please visit <http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/>.

Vishtasp Soroushian, a graduate of the University of California Berkeley, currently resides in Brooklyn, New York. He has been involved with non-profit organizations aimed at improving working conditions and wages for low-income individuals



The Forgotten

Anahita Dua

The global community is partially responsible for every act of social injustice that occurs in the world,

This article describes the situation in Palestine from the perspective of a medical student volunteer.

Social injustice is created by two ingredients: exploitation of one population by another and apathy from the rest of the world towards said exploitation. In other words, the global community is partially responsible for every act of social injustice that occurs in the world, because through our lack of understanding, acceptance of the exploitation, or neglect of the situation we help create the perfect environment in which social injustice can fester and thrive.

In no situation are we guiltier of this crime than in the country of Palestine. There is a common misconception that the problems in Palestine stem from Jewish versus Muslim sentiments. It could not be further from the truth; the truth is that the war is waged by the rich on the poor, the haves on the have-nots, and the Israeli government on the Palestinian people. In this article, I hope to educate FEZANA JOURNAL readers based on my personal experience in Palestine.

As a member of a cardio-thoracic surgical team, I recently went to Jerusalem, Gaza, and the West Bank to perform reconstructive surgery on children who have no

access to medical care. These children had no access because there is not a single major hospital in all of Palestine.

The strategic compartmentalization of Palestine into destitute Gaza and the neglected West Bank was a political play to geographically divide the country and spread the sparse resources even more thinly. This resulted in a major victory for the state of Israel because they now control the border into Gaza and into the West Bank meaning that for "security reasons" (that are never described) no medical supplies, no food, and no water can enter Gaza.

While in Palestine I did not meet a single Palestinian who lived in a house. One-hundred percent of the population I met lived in refugee camps that were established in 1948 or 1967 and can be legally demolished without any warning by the Israelis. And they do demolish houses; every day a new camp is flattened to the ground and hundreds of people left homeless, injured, or dead. Gaza is the most densely populated region in the world with 10,000 people living in 1 square kilometre (BBC). Daily shots are indiscriminately fired at the general public in Gaza and the weekly death toll is approximately 10 people just by "accidental gunfire." This, of course, is in addition to the people who die of disease, starvation, and poverty each day.

The Palestinians have no right to education, no right to own property, no right to marry outside of the hideous, cold, gray walls that loom around their once beautiful country. Without exaggeration, the entire country is fuelled completely by the aid of the UN. All food and housing are in limited supply by the UN; if they were to withdraw the entire population would be crippled within days. The UN currently serves 4 million Palestinian refugees according to the UNRWA (www.un.org). The population of Palestine according to the CIA Factbook is 4 million with 2,460,492 living in the West Bank and the rest in Gaza. Palestinians can neither apply to go to universities nor build new businesses. After working in Palestine, it became obvious to me that Israel had a clear plan to ethnically cleanse the Palestinians, whether they are Muslim, Christian, or Jewish.

And we here in the comfort and safety of North America are doing nothing. We justify it, we ignore it, and we allow it. The Palestinian Children's Relief Fund (PCRF), the group with whom I worked in Palestine, is an organization started by an American man named Steve Sosebee who went to Palestine to do a college project and left with a sense of disgust and shame that we, the "free world," were doing nothing to help the poor, underprivileged,

and exploited. His organization provides specialized medical care, food, sponsorship, and education to the people of Palestine.

As Zarathushtis, it is our duty as deemed by Ahura Mazda to take care of those who need our help. And I,



Anahita Dua with a sick child in Gaza

after travelling and working in places like India and Africa, have yet to see a group of people more traumatised, exploited, and hopeless than the Palestinians. Death looms over their heads on a daily basis and life has no enjoyment. We must help them. And we can start by not justifying Israel's position as a tyrant. There is a fine line between ethnic cleansing and genocide. Israel, 1 year ago, in the "withdrawal" of troops from Gaza, crossed the line.

Miss Anahita Dua Anahita46@yahoo.com

Anahita Dua is a third year medical student at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. She holds a BA in Organic Chemistry with a minor in South Asian politics. Through undergraduate education and medical school she has engaged in numerous voluntary medical missions including working as a travelling brothel doctor in the red-light area of Bombay, working as a medical consultant in rural Africa, and, most recently, working as part of a surgical team in Palestine. Upon graduation she intends to pursue surgery and continue her involvement in international medicine through work with the UN. She is the Palestine Children Relief Fund coordinator for the UK chapter of this US based NGO and aims to promote the activities of the organization. Please visit the website at www.pcfr.net for more information or to send donations.

Anahita Dua was the recipient of 2004 FEZANA Academic Scholarship.

"Opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of FEZANA or members of the FEZANA Journal's editorial board."

TEACH ME GOOD INDUSTRY

Feroze Sidhwa

The soul of the Universe complained, O Ahura Mazda.... Upon me has fallen wrath, plunder, violence, evil, outrage, aggression and oppression. There is no protector for me other than you, therefore, teach me good industry whereby I may get rid of such calamities.

Ha 29.1, from Gatha-ba-Maani, translation by Ervad Kavasji Edalji Kanga

The State of Israel was established in 1948. Concurrently, Israel ethnically cleansed 700,000 Palestinian Arabs from the land of the new state, creating what is now the world's longest-running refugee problem. In June 1967 Israel invaded the West Bank and Gaza Strip and put the one million Palestinians living in those territories under the rule of a military regime. Today approximately four million Palestinians live under Israeli military rule.

Since 1967 Israel has demolished thousands of Palestinian homes, leaving tens of thousands of people homeless; killed tens of thousands of Palestinians including thousands of children; imprisoned approximately half the male Palestinian population and tortured or ill-treated the vast majority of those detained, including tens of thousands of children; stolen precious water and agricultural resources

from poor farmers; bulldozed ancient olive groves; constantly closed Palestinian newspapers, schools and universities; denied Palestinians access to basic medical care; continuously denied Palestinians freedom of movement; and built hundreds of Jewish-only colonies (called "settlements") on Palestinian land. Since 1948 Palestinian groups have killed about two thousand Israelis, approximately half of them military and security personnel. Israelis and Palestinians always claim they are acting in self defense, while most neutral observers reject these claims.

I spent eight months in Israel and the West Bank, from October 2004 to May 2005. In that time I witnessed in often graphic detail how Israel is dismembering the West Bank by expanding its network of Jewish-only colonies and Jewish-only roads deliberately meant to eviscerate and fragment the Palestinian economy and Palestinian society, and to permanently separate the West Bank from Jerusalem, the center of Palestinian socioeconomic and cultural life. Israel is now building a massive concrete and razor-wire wall that, when completed, will enclose one-third to one-half of the West Bank, including the region's most precious water resources and most fertile lands.

I also saw what this brutalization of a helpless people is doing to Israel. This previously functional, cohesive socialist society in which healthcare, education and other necessities were once guaranteed is now decaying, with a sharp rise in chronic drug abuse, drug trafficking, violent crime, human trafficking, spousal abuse, homelessness, unemployment, prostitution, forced labor and the like. Israel was born through Palestinian misery; if it stays the course, Israeli society will no doubt self-destruct.

Fair enough, but why should the JOURNAL readers care?

Zoroastrians have a unique historical link to the Jewish people. Cyrus the Great ended the Babylonian Captivity, repatriated the enslaved Jews to Jerusalem, and subsequently issued what came to be known as the First Charter of Human Rights. Cyrus is the only non-Jew named to the position of messiah in the Tanakh, and Koresh ("Cyrus" in Hebrew) is a common family and street name in Israel. We dishonor Cyrus's legacy by sitting idly by and letting the self-declared "Jewish State" run drunk with power.

Furthermore, the United States bears primary responsibility for this human disaster. The US government funds and subsidizes Israel's military to the tune of four to six billion dollars per year. Without this unprecedented level of funding, Israel would be forced to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza Strip immediately. Every relevant Arab and Palestinian group and government has stated that such a withdrawal would immediately end the armed conflict.

American Zoroastrians, then, shoulder a heavy burden. We can continue funding Israel's liquidation of Palestinian society and Israel's own self-destruction, or we can carry forth the humane legacy of Cyrus and apply his Charter to all people.

How? One major reason the US government funds Israel's military is because the American arms and high technology lobbies encourage that funding, for their own reasons. Were the arms industry forced to pay a price for its

role in this human catastrophe, it might rethink its involvement. The heavy weaponry made by companies like Caterpillar and United Technologies are used extensively by Israel in maintaining the military regime in the West Bank. Divesting from companies that profit at the expense of Palestinians and Israelis alike by refusing to hold stock in their companies would be a major step forward in ending the violence. Through our wallets we can teach good industry by example, and help get rid of such calamities as the conflict over Israel/Palestine.

In August 2005 the American Presbyterian Church identified five multinational corporations whose business practices are "believed to contribute to violence in Israel and Palestine": Caterpillar, Citigroup, ITT Industries, Motorola and United Technologies. Divesting from these companies is one real, serious way to refuse to participate in the ultimate destruction of these two peoples.

feroze.sidhwa@gmail.com

Feroze Sidhwa graduated from Johns Hopkins University in 2004 with a B.A. in Public Health Studies. He lived and volunteered in Haifa, Israel and traveled in the West Bank from October 2004 to May 2005, taught 8th grade science at Thurgood Marshall Middle School in Baltimore, MD in 2005-06, and is currently attending medical school in San Antonio, TX. He recently spent three weeks in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe observing and assisting in surgeries at private and public hospitals.



Feroze Sidhwa

There is a massive body of work on the history of Arab-Israeli relations, most of it by Israeli historians and much of it available in English. See in particular the work of Shlomo Ben-Ami, Ahron Bregman, Noam Chomsky, Norman Finkelstein, Simha Flapan, Baruch Kimmerling, Ilan Pappé, Livia Rokach, Ze'ev Schiff, Tom Segev, Avi Shlaim, Ehud Yari and, most especially, Benny Morris, among many others. For information on Israel's human rights record, see the websites of B'Tselem (The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories), The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, al-Haq (The International Commission of Jurists, West Bank) and al-Adameer. On the impact of Israeli colonization of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, see reports by the International Crisis Group, and, especially, by Harvard Senior Research Fellow Sara Roy.

Toya Richards Hill, Presbyterian News Service, "5 Corporations selected for talks about ties to Mideast violence", August 5, 2005

"Opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of FEZANA or members of the FEZANA Journal's editorial board."

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YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....

Social Justice In Its Simplest Form

Nikan H. Khatibi, MBA

Do you feel we live in a socially just society? Let me tell you what I believe social justice to be. Social Justice to me is the principle that all persons are entitled to basic human rights, regardless of superficial differences such as economic disparity, class, gender, race, ethnicity, citizenship, religion, age, sexual orientation, disability, or health. This includes the eradication of poverty and illiteracy, the establishment of sound environmental policy, and equality of opportunity for healthy personal and social development. Do you still feel the same way about your decision?

I took a moment to think why we fail to see equality among the different people of the world. Why do we still look at others as less than human and build this hierarchal class system? I for one can not even fathom the idea of inequality among human beings – as in my belief system, we were all created equally in the eyes of God and thus intrinsically deserve equal respect. I don't think there are any religions out there that preach the ideas of not helping neighbors in times of despair or turning backs to people who are starving to be recognized and helped. Nor do I believe that any true religion would advocate for inequality among society. Then why is it that inequalities among people of different faiths, cultures, and languages still exist?

I believe that the social inequalities that exist today are out of fear. People choose to separate themselves from those who are not like them because they fear they will not be considered equal – and by belonging to the 'conformed' community, it gives a sense of value and worth to that individual. But in fact the message that has been lost with people who choose to discriminate and create classes of worth, is that all human beings are equal and deserve to be treated equally with respect.

Look at governments today where religion is the basis of law. You will find that those who do not follow the religion that has been dictated by law to be abused and treated unjustly. Why is that? Who has decided to bestow upon those individuals who create inequality, the power to decide who is of worth and who is not?

We, as Zarathushti youth and future carriers of this great religion, must not forget that life in itself is valuable and the way we choose to live our lives and the way we choose to influence others in our lives is the means by which Zarathushtra will ultimately decide upon our destiny. Meaning to one's life comes from the values of hard work, charity and the respect that is given to all living things. The religion of Zarathushtra is

unique in that its ideas of social justice and equality among man kind can be the basis for any sound solution to the problem of inequality and social injustice that the world faces today. Thousands of years ago, Zarathushtrian religion shared with the world the following rules of justice:

1. equality of all people
2. respect, kindness to all living things
3. the values of hard work, charity
4. loyalty, faithfulness to family, country

If only as a community we could continue to share these words of wisdom with the world, the concepts of inequality and social injustice can be a memory of the past. I do hope you will join me, so together we can change this world for the better, one soul at a time.

Nikan H. Khatibi, MBA,
Nikan2@aol.com, Tel: (949) 842-9628
Graduated from the University of California, Irvine with a Bachelor in Science (B.S) in 2004 and then spent a year

earning his Masters in Business Administration (MBA), Nikan is currently in medical school pursuing a career as a physician. In the future, he envisions himself practicing medicine for some years before taking on a position as a member of the United States Congress.



Social Justice: Just a dream?

Farah Minwalla

One of the most preached tenants of Zarathushtrian religion would be the idea of giving back. If anything, to put good thoughts into good deeds, is not only a religious ideal but a train of thought that all socially conscious people act upon. To broaden equality and prosperity to the needy is not only the 'morally right' thing to do, but it is also society's social justice as well.

Social justice is the premise that in a just society, all individuals and groups would be treated fairly and that the benefits of society would be accessible to all. It is most apparent that in the 21st century, this idea is not coherently possible. But the idea of Zarathushti

religion is to somehow make all opportunity available for all of God's children. Whether that is through charity or breaking racial boundaries, social justice is just an idea that the Zarathushtrian religion strives to one day make possible through: good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.

A clear example of how social justice should be applied is when a major natural disaster happens in any country. Only after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, did people start to pay attention to the poverty within parts of Louisiana. Vicinities such as the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans are still clogged with debris; public transportation and schools are still far from recovery. The hurricane itself destroyed nearly 19,000 businesses and more than 200,000 apartments and homes in distressed neighborhoods. This natural disaster along with the Asian Tsunami should have been a wake up call to start focusing on how people were treated differently depending on race and social status. Maybe a tragedy has to occur in the United States that was already so divided in the issues of its time, to remind people to unite and help.

But as long as society keeps accepting that anything less than social justice is suitable, then we, the people, have a problem. I believe that a society is truly responsible for what it does, and if the poor get neglected then that reflects on a poor government and selfish people. Instead of playing the blame-game on Bush or the United States, we as a nation should promote for more to be done for all races. But the real question our nation must answer is whether the minority are being neglected for what they can not help or what they can not receive. The one thing that still jolts me to this day is that people still believe that nothing can be done about social justice. Yes, there is still a lot that has to be done that will take years upon years, but the real hurdle to overcome is getting something done. Every step, is one step forward, not one step back. As long as society keeps looking on the road that lies ahead, then there is nothing to lose.

Farah Minwalla, Currently a senior at Palo Verde High School, Las Vegas, Farah has been actively involved in leadership, journalism, community service, and debate. Spending many hours at the Ronald McDonald House is how Farah impacts her community. Writing for six different magazines, Farah hopes to connect Zarathushti youth through FEZANA and spread "good thoughts, good words, and good deeds".



Readers Forum

Dear Dr. Dastoor,

Please accept my gratitude on being able to purchase and read the Spring 2007 FEZANA JOURNAL. As an enthusiast of historical arms, it was a pleasure to read Manouchehr Moshtagh Khorasani's article entitled "Arms and Armor of Achaemenians and Sassanians." The author's love for his subject poured through not only in his prose, but in the referencing he placed in the article so as to allow the reader a chance to study the topic in greater detail and not take the author's words on unbound faith. Seeing pictures of the swords and spears which shaped and defended large parts of the world's history was a great treat as well.

Now to immerse myself in the rest of the Journal's archaeological articles!

Best wishes,

Thom Bregan, Derry, NH.



CORRECTION

Rukshana Nanji informs us that on page 74 of the Summer 2006 issue, Rukshana Nanji was erroneously mentioned as Archaeologist –in-charge of the Sanjan excavations. The Journal would like to clarify that the Director of the excavation is Dr. S. P. Gupta, Chairman of the Indian Archaeological Society, New Delhi, and the co-director is Dr. Kurush Dalal. Dr Homi Dhalla is the Principal of the project.

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The Zarathushtrian

Oral History Project

LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

YOUTH VOLUNTEERS TO SERVE AS INTERVIEWERS

SENIOR VOLUNTEERS INTERESTED IN BEING INTERVIEWED

Objective: The Zarathushtrian Oral History Project is an effort to document our heritage as Zarathushtis. The aim of the Project is for youth to interview Zarathushtis, especially seniors, and record their oral histories for posterity. **We plan to excerpt interviews for the Fall 2007 issue of the FEZANA Journal.** Second, we hope that it will stimulate youth interest in their heritage and culture. In the diaspora, much of our culture risks being lost once the immigrant generations pass on.

Reasons: In the past century, the Zarathushti community has witnessed remarkable transformations. After more than a millennium of existence in the rural strongholds of Gujarat, Yazd, and Kerman, Zarathushtis have become a largely urbanized, well-educated people dispersed around the world. Many members of our elder generation have witnessed first-hand the changes that have greatly impacted our culture, traditions, and religion. It is in our interests to record their stories while they are still with us—within the Parsi community, 30 percent of the population is above the age of 60.

Example Topics: Topics for discussion—historical, cultural, and religious in nature—are diverse and unlimited. Examples include: Life in a Gujarati or Iranian village, village customs and traditions, life in India and Iran during the Second World War, Parsis in the Indian independence movement and newly independent India and Pakistan, migrations from Yazd and Kerman to Tehran, or from rural Gujarat to towns in Gujarat to cities all over India, The Zarathushtians in the Pahlavi era, reasons for migrating to North America, and how early Zarathushti immigrants adjusted to life outside of their homelands.

Interviewees: Interviewees are the heart of this project. We need people who are willing and interested to share their experiences and recollections of personal and historic events, describe daily life when they were children, as well as their migration stories. If you would like to help provide images and stories of our collective heritage, please let us know.

Interviewers: Although we encourage anyone to participate as interviewers, we are especially looking for youths. Youth participation will be a way to foster interest in their family and community heritage. Youth participation in the project may fulfill community service requirements in some schools.

Local Coordinators: We are looking for people to help coordinate interviews in their area. The project contacts listed on right will mail interviewers suggested topics and questions and notes about how to take oral histories.

Inputs, suggestions, and comments related to this project are greatly appreciated. We do hope that you can help make the Zarathushtrian Oral History project a success!

Contacts:

*Dinyar Patel (ZAMWI), (left),
dinyar.patel@gmail.com*

*Hormuzd Katki (ZAMWI), (right),
hkatki@gmail.com*

*Nawaz Merchant (ZAGNY),
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Contact Perviz C. Patel or Cowas G. Patel at (626) 967-0037.



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DOCUMENT ON FILM

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Purpose: There are lots of events, monuments, traditions, customs and generally cultural items in Iran, India, Pakistan and elsewhere that need to be filmed and documented. God forbid, if a disaster like Bam Earthquake, were to happen in Yazd or any other place, many

Zarathushti valuable historic sites and priceless establishments may be lost forever. Before it is too late, we can document and preserve them for posterity, at minimal costs.

What could you do ? By donating US\$1,000, you can help these local film makers to document the films of Zarathushtrian community interest by producing short films of 10-15 minute segments. If you contribute, your donation will be acknowledged by putting your name or the name of your choice (a loved one) in the title/leading/ending of the films.

How can you make a difference? O'Shihan Cultural Organization (non-profit) who manages Zarathushti and Iranian Culture Film Festival (ZIFF) shall manage the promotion and announcement, selecting the film makers, approving the films subjects (to make sure it is related to our Community), collection of the fund from the donors and issue the release of the funds to film makers based on their progress, receive the films, archiving them in Archive of Zarathushti Films, and screening them during Zarathushtrian Community events.

Just imagine how your Thousand Dollar contribution can assist in promoting our great culture in a modern technically advanced way, in today's world. Donations payable to "O'Shihan Cultural Organization" with a footnote-- "Adopt a Zarathushti Film Program". All donations are tax deductible and will be acknowledged.

For more information contact:

Fereidoon Demehri O'Shihan Cultural Organization

2092 Gordon Ave. West Vancouver, BC. V7V 1V7 CANADA

Tel: (604) 926 9891 info@oshihan.org



Laugh & Be Merry

Jamshed Udvadia

Over coffee, Katy was relating the events of the previous day. ..Last night I was invited out for a night with 'the girls'. I told my husband that I would be home by midnight, "I promise!"

Well, the hours passed and the margaritas went down way too easy. Around 3 a.m., a bit loaded, I headed for home. Just as I got in the door, the cuckoo clock in the hall started up and cuckooed 3 times. Realizing my husband would probably wake up, I quickly cuckooed another 9 times. I was really proud of myself for coming up with such a quick-witted solution (even when totally smashed), in order to escape a possible conflict with him.

In the morning my husband asked me what time I got in. "Midnight", I said with a straight face. He smiled and nodded.

Phew! Got away with that one!

After a minute he said, "We need a new cuckoo clock."

"Why?" I asked.

Well, last night our clock cuckooed three times, said, "Oh darn!", cuckooed 5 more times, giggled, cuckooed another 4 times, and then tripped over the coffee table and hiccupped."

[forwarded by Yazdi Sidhwa, Texas]



A few years ago, Japan's Prime Minister Mori was given some Basic English Conversation training before he visits Washington and meets president Bill Clinton.

The instructor told Mori "Prime Minister, when you shake hand with President Clinton, please say 'how are you'. Then Mr. Clinton should say, 'I'm fine, and you?' Now you should say 'me too'. Afterwards we, translators, will do all the work for you."

It looks quite simple, but the truth is ... When Mori met Clinton, he mistakenly said "Who Are You?". Mr. Clinton was a bit shocked but still managed to react with humor: "Well, I am Hilary's husband, haha ..."

Then Mori replied confidently "Me too, hahaha hahaha"

[forwarded by R.B.Poonegar, Mumbai, India]

Three retirees, each with a hearing loss, were playing golf one fine March day. One remarked to the other, "Windy, isn't it?" "No," the second man replied, "it's Thursday"; then the third man chimed in, "So am I. Let's have a beer."

[forwarded by Anaheeta Minwalla, Virginia]



فقر و نابرابری طبقات در دهکده جهانی

منظور ما از طبقات در دهکده جهانی چیست؟ طبقات دهکده جهانی مربوط میشود به توضیح نابرابر ثروت-قدرت و پرستیز در جهان و بهمین دلیل نابرابری مردم جهان دارای زندگی گوناگونی میباشد. همانطوری که کشورهای متحده امریکا به طبقات متفاوت تقسیم شده جهان ما نیز به قسمتهای نابرابر با اختلاف شدید ثروت و فقر تقسیم شده است. بطور مثال اختلاف در آمد مابین ثروتمندترین و فقیرترین

مردم جهان هر روز بیشتر میشود. در هر صورت وقتی ما مقایسه نابرابری اقتصادی و اجتماعی را در کشورهای دیگر بررسی مینماییم ملاحظه میشود که این نابرابری ها به مراتب از کشورهای متحده امریکا بیشتر و چشمگیرتر میباشد.

همانطوری که فاصله ما بین ثروتمندترین و فقیرترین افراد در جهان اضافه میشود فاصله و در آمد ما بین فقیر و ثروتمند بیشتر و بیشتر می گردد. در سال 1960 بیست درصد از ثروتمندترین مردم جهان 30 برابر در آمد 25 درصد مردم فقیر در آمد داشته اند. در سال 2000 بیست درصد از ثروتمندترین مردم جهان در حدود 80 برابر در آمد 25 درصد فقیرترین مردم را داشته اند. چنین بنظر میرسد نابرابری اقتصادی مربوط به اختلافات ثروت و در آمد است. در نتیجه نابرابری اجتماعی یک مانع بزرگ و علت نابرابری اقتصادی میباشد.

نابرابری اجتماعی که در نتیجه مسابلی از قبیل تبعیض بر پایه نژاد- کشور تولد- جنسیت - و یا مذهب باعث نابرابری اقتصادی میگردد و بعبارت دیگر نابرابری اجتماعی و اقتصادی پایه اصلی فقر کشورها میباشد. بنابراین هر اجتماعی بایستی کوشش نماید که نابرابری اجتماعی مابین همشهریان ایجاد نماید تا بتوانند کشور خویش را از فقر نجات دهند و چنین بنظر میرسد مردم کم درامدی که در کشورهای غیر پیشرفته زندگی میکنند احساس مشکلات اقتصادی بیشتری نسبت به کشورهای پیشرفته که افراد کم در آمد هم دارند احساس مینمایند.

من امروز بعنوان یک بانوی تحصیل کرده زرتشتی ایرانی کوشش نموده تا ابزاری را برای جوانان مهیا نموده تا آنها بتواند بیشتر مثر ثمر در جامعه خود باشند.

What is global stratification, and who does it affect in our daily life and how does it contribute to economic inequality?

Stratification is the hierarchical arrangement of large social groups based on their control over basic resources. People are treated differently based on where they are positioned within the social hierarchies of class, race, gender, and age.

Global stratification refers to the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and prestige on a global basis, which results in people having vastly different lifestyles and life chances both within and among the nations of the world. Today, the income gap between the riches and the poorest 20 percent of the world population continues to widen, and within some nations the poorest one-fourth of the population has an income that is only a slight fraction of the overall average per capita income for that country.



طبقه بندی جهانی و اثرات آن در زندگی روزمره انسانها

مطالعه جامعه شناسی بسیار در زندگی من موثر واقع شد. و این یک ابزار و الاتی بود که من بتوانم جامعه



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جهانی را بیشتر و بهتر مورد مطالعه قرار داده ضمن یک تغییر مثبت در خود بتوانم اجتماع را با دید بهتری بنگرم. یک حقیقت اجتماعی آنستکه اجتماع یک امار نیست یک نیروی غیر قابل نگاه دارنده است بلکه در عوض یک ترکیبی از بوجود آمدن مداوم یک فرد است که تصمیم گیری نموده و سپس آن را بحالت عمل در میآورد. چند موضوع مهم که مورد توجه من قرار گرفت مسئله نابرابری اقتصادی نه تنها در جامعه خود من میباشد بلکه در طبقات اجتماعی هم بخوبی ظاهر بوده که باعث این نابرابری میگردد. همچنین چنانکه خواهیم از نقطه نظر عدالت اجتماعی در باره دهکده جهانی نظر بیندازیم متوجه مسئله فقر-نابرابری و عدالت میگردیم که اثرات آن بر روی هر فرد و کلیه افراد جامعه در سرتاسر جهان موثر میباشد. بررسی این مسایل باعث میگردد که به تفاهم بهتری در جهان خودمان پی برده و در محیط کار و اجتماع بیشتر درگیر و فعال شده و از تجربیات خود استفاده کرده تا در تغییرات اجتماع در آینده موثر باشیم. در اثر این مطالعات راهم را مشخص نموده و علاقمندم در باره مسائل اجتماعی و آگاه نمودن افراد اجتماع و بهم نزد یک کردن آنها که عمل کرد خوبی داشته باشند قدم های موثری بردارم

نا برابری اجتماعی بر پایه عدم توانایی

اشخاصی که بطور وضوح عدم توانایی جسمی شان قابل محسوس است اغلب مورد تبعیض یا تنفر قرار میگیرند که با این عمل زندگی روزانه آنان ازار دهنده میشود. گاهی تصور واهی بر آنستکه یک شخص بر پایه عدم توانایی میتواند شخص مخوفی باشد و یا مانند فیلم های بت من که شخص مورد نظر بصورت یک جانور مخوف نشان داده میشود. حمایت کنندگان و طرفداران اشخاص با عدم توانایی جسمی متوجه شده اند که این نگاه حقارت زده به این اشخاص فعالیت روزانه آنها را بخوبی نشان نمیدهد در حالی که آنان با تلاش دائمی بایستی فعالیتهای کوچک روزمره خود را انجام دهند. امروزه اغلب اشخاصی که عدم توانایی جسمی دارند استخدام نشده اند و بیشتر آنان باور دارند چنانکه مسئولیتی به آنان واگذار گردد و فرصتی داده شود حاضر هستند که بکار مشغول گردند. چنانکه شغلی پیدا نمایند با مقایسه با اشخاص سالم به آنان اغلب مبلغ کمتری پرداخت میگردد. استخدام- فقر- و عدم توانایی از یک طرف بهم مربوطند مردم ممکن است از نقطه نظر اقتصادی به علت امراض و عدم توانایی وضع نامساعدی داشته باشند از طرف دیگر مردم بی بضاعت امکان کمتری نسبت به فرا گرفتن دانش خواهند داشت و همچنین از داشتن مواد غذایی کافی و سالم که برای سلامتی کامل لازم است محروم خواهند بود. تمام این مسایل دست به دست هم داده و ریسک داشتن و مبتلا شدن به امراض را در آنها بیشتر مینماید. عدم توانایی جسمی و روحی باعث میگردد که قادر نباشند در نیروی کار شرکت نمایند مضافاً انواع مشاغل قابل ارائه برای این گروه با مبلغ محدودی که به آنها پرداخت می نمایند باعث تشدید عدم توانایی آنان می گردد. این گونه افراد امکان دارد در اماکن خطرناک از قبیل معادن - کارخانجات - کارگاههای شیمیایی و یا در کارهای ساختمانی شرکت نمایند که در این حالت شانس اینکه شدیدا به عدم توانایی آنان منجر گردد بیشتر میباشد.

روابط بین درآمد و عدم توانایی

- 1-بیشتر تجسس بر روی افراد مبتلا به عدم توانایی جسمی با شرایط بخصوص انرا بصورت مشکلی برای تصمیم گیری در میآورد که فرد در اثر عدم توانایی جسمی چه مبلغ از دست میدهدو نمی تواند حق اصلی خود را دریافت نماید.
- 2- در مورد گروههای مختلف بطور مثال (سفید-سیاه-لاتین تبار) به علت اختلاف داخلی گروهها تبعیضاتی حتی بین گروههای لاتین تبار وجود دارد برای مثال دستمزد مکزیکی تبار و کوبایی ها و پرتوریکویی ها با هم متفاوت میباشد.

بیمه سلامتی

تکنولوژی یک محرک اصلی برای تغییرات اجتماعی و سیستم بیمه سلامتی میباشد. در کشوری مانند امریکا افراد دارای درآمدی در سطح بالا هستند و این معرف سرعت پیشرفته تکنولوژی در آن کشور میباشد. این پیشرفت از چند دهه گذشته شروع و با سرعت بیشتری به پیش میرود تا به درمان امراض مختلف به متخصصین یاری دهد.

The Story Of Zal (Part 2)

A Persian Fable From The Shahnama Of Firdausi

Dr Ardeshir N. Irani

For unto Simurgh did the Wise Lord speak,
"Come to the aid of Zal, so helpless and weak."
"Bring him to your nest, and for him care."
"Teach him your wisdom, leave nothing to spare."
"For this infant is born with a great destiny,"
"His life will be long, his feats will be many."
"Care for him, as one of your own,"
"Long after your nestlings, have grown up, and flown."

Upon which Simurgh, spread her majestic wings,
And with a note so sweet, as a nightingale sings,
She soared off over the jagged peaks,
Drawn by the helpless infant's shrieks,
And, alighting upon an icy edge,
Espied the babe, lying below on a ledge,
With thorns for a pillow, and cold rock for a bed,
Upon seeing such a sorry sight, Simurgh's heart bled,
As she thought of her own chicks, so warm in their nest;
What man, that cast out his own, was worse than a beast at best.

Above in the heavens, as clouds gathered in a storm,
With a branch of aloe, a girdle did Simurgh form.
Which she wreathed around the helpless child,
And carried him above the clouds, where the weather was mild,
And arrived at her nest, made of sandlewood sticks,
Where she laid Zal to bed, among her chicks,
Where he snuggled to rest, both weary and worn,
And slept in dreamless slumber, until next morn.

So the storm and darkness passed, with the dawn's breaking,
And Simurgh's nestlings were soon stirring, and waking.
Upon which she set about bringing them food,
Tasty morsels, to suit every palate and mood.
The portions Simurgh brought, were indeed very vast,
And Zal was fed first, and her own chicks last.

Zal settled into his new home, ever on higher,
Simurgh's nest on a cliff, surrounded by stones of fire;
Jewels and precious stones, of every kind,
Some so rare, as never been mined.
Among them Zal played, happily all day,
And rode on Simurgh's back, to lands far away.

And as the years rolled by, Zal in stature grew,
And Simurgh taught him, all the wisdom she knew,
Carrying him on her back, to distant lands,
From dense wooded jungles, to barren desert sands,
Where Zal learnt, of various peoples and places,

Of different tongues, and different faces.

And down below, in his lonely palace,
Saum mourned for the son, he had dared not face.
Burdened with guilt, which had taken its toll,
And grief, that made him weary, in body and soul.
His own hair, which was once, black as the night,
Now, with the passing years, had turned snowy white.
The silver locks of Zal, which once filled him with dread,
Now, by painful irony, crowned Saum's own forehead.

And the messengers that brought tidings from East and West,
Spoke of a fair youth, raised in Simurgh's nest.
Fair and radiant, as the morning sun,
As fast and nimble, as any deer could run.
Strong as an ox, with a lion's heart,
He could shoot arrows on targets, great distances apart.
His chariot was Simurgh, the Bird of God,
Who carried him to places, no man had ever trod.

Upon hearing glad tidings of this gallant youth,
Saum summoned his Mubids*, desiring the truth.
*Mubids=wise men

Upon which they counselled him, about the lad's origin,
How by casting him out, Saum committed a mortal sin,
For which he owed, a lifetime's repenting,
And needed to seek out, this Simurgh's nestling.

The Mubid's counsel, Saum did heed,
And unto Mount Alburz, he did proceed,
To bring back the son, he had cast out,
Upon arriving at the mountain's foot, he proceeded to shout,
Zal's name, unto the heavens high,
Up, unto the highest peaks, where eagles fly.
For to climb any further, did not seem possible,
Up above him stretched a cliff, steep and impregnable.

This original poem written by Ardeshir Irani is serialized in three issues. This is the second part. All rights reserved. Copyright 2006

Dr. Ardeshir Namdar Irani, MD born in Mumbai, obtained his MBBS, DCH and MD before moving to the US in 1995 after training for 2 years in the UK. as a pediatrician. Fascinated by Firdausi's Shahnama, he took up writing poetry as a hobby and through the medium of verse, hopes to stimulate an interest and appreciation of our great past and glorious culture. Ardeshir is involved in the religion classes of the Zarthushti Youth Group Of Michigan (ZYGOM). He lives in Farmington Hills, Michigan with his wife Shekufa and children Sanaya and Sarosh.



Sohrab & Gordafarid

Sohrab gathered up an army of Turks to fight the Persians. He wanted to conquer Iran and make his father, the great warrior Rustam, the King. Rustam has no idea that his son had discovered who his father was and had set out upon this plan.

On the way to Iran, Sohrab had to enter the White Fortress, which Rustam himself had captured in his youth for the King of Iran. The Fortress was now guarded by a commander named Hejir, who tried to stop Sohrab but was summarily sent sprawling with one strike from Sohrab's lance. When news traveled to the families who lived within the Fortress that Hejir had been captured, they were very afraid. None of them, except one young woman named Gordafarid, had the courage to defend their home.

Gordafarid put on a knight's armor and helmet and rode out on to the battlefield.

"Where are your heroes, your warriors, your tried and tested chieftains?" she roared at the enemy ranks. When Sohrab heard her taunts, he rode out to her and the two engaged in a fierce battle. Gordafarid was an expert archer and she let loose a hail of arrows on Sohrab. She weaved her horse in and out of the fields like an experienced horseman. Ashamed at being the target of so many well aimed arrows, Sohrab held up his shield and advanced toward her. When he was close enough, he wheeled around and struck his lance at Gordafarid's waist. The force of the blow severed the fastenings of Gordafarid's armor, but she continued to fight. She unsheathed her sword and hacked his lance into two. Sohrab bore down on her again and snatched the helmet off her head, revealing her glorious hair and radiant face.

Amazed at her beauty, Sohrab wondered out loud, "How is it that a woman should ride out from the Persian army and send the dust up from her horse's hooves into the heavens?" He unhitched his lariat and flung it, catching Gordafarid by her waist. Gordafarid knew she must escape from him, so she said to him, "O lionhearted warrior, two armies are watching us and if they see my hair and face, they will laugh at you for fighting a girl. Now you have won; you can have anything in the fortress. Just let me return to it without shame and I shall advise them to surrender."



SUNDAY STORIES FROM THE Shahnameh

Sohrab agreed and rode beside her to the gate of the fortress, which opened and let in the weary, wounded, woman warrior. Inside the fortress, everyone was proud of what Gordafarid had done. Gordafarid, herself, was pleased that her ruse had worked. She climbed up on the fortress walls and looked out over Sohrab's army. When she saw Sohrab perched on his saddle, she shouted down to him,

*"O king of all the Asian hordes, turn back,
Forget your fighting and your planned attack."*

She laughed; and then, more gently, almost sighed:

"No Turk will bear away a Persian bride;

But do not chafe at Fate's necessity –

Fate did not mean that you should conquer me.

Besides, you're not a Turk, I know you trace

Your lineage from a far more splendid race;

Put any of your heroes to the test –

None has your massive arm and mighty chest.

But news will spread that Turan's army's here,

Led by a stripling chief who knows no fear;

The King will send for noble Rustam then

And neither you nor any of your men

Will live for long: I should be sad to see

This lion destroy you here – turn now and flee,

Don't trust your strength, strength will not save your life;

The fated calf knows nothing of the knife."

Hearing her, Sohrab felt a fool. He was angry that she had tricked him and he had missed his chance to capture the fortress. He resigned himself to starting the battle anew on the next day. But by then Gordafarid had send a letter to the King telling him of Sohrab's prowess and, secretly, before dawn, most

of the Persians left the Fortress and traveled toward Iran and safety.

When the sun rose and Sohrab's army invaded the White Fortress, there was no one there to defend it and everything of value was gone. Sohrab advanced further on Iran in the hopes of deposing the King and giving the throne to his father, Rustam.

In the meantime, the King received Gordafarid's warning and quickly summoned Rustam. The great warrior came to the aid of his King. "It sounds like another Sam is loose in the world. It would be no surprise if he was Persian, but the Turks have never had a warrior like this before. I myself have a son there by the princess of Samangan, but he is only a boy. His mother tells me there is time yet for him to become a warrior." Rustam sighed and then continued, "Its possible Fortune has turned against us, but if not, this campaign will not prove difficult. When this young warrior sees my banner, his heart

Shazneed Rabadi Gandhi lives in Marina Del Rey, CA. She writes as a hobby

Notes: Photo Assault on a Castle. Attributed to Behzad c. 1475-1500. Courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Bequest of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller (1960.99)

Photo appears on page 250 of The Lion and the Throne, Stories from the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi, Vol 1 2005



will know his revels are all ended. He won't be in such a hurry to fight anymore. This is not something we should worry ourselves about." Rustam called for food and wine and rested before setting out on the war path against Sohrab.

Next Time: Rustam and Sohrab



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Personal Profile

NILOUFER BHESANIA, B. Com. CA

President: Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation (OZCF)

National President: Kidney Foundation of Canada



Niloufer Bhesania, President of Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation, (OZCF) was born in Mumbai in 1957, and moved with her family to Toronto when she was 10 years old. She obtained her Bachelor of Commerce degree from University of Toronto and became a Chartered Accountant in 1982 while articling with KPMG. She has since worked with Onex Corporation and Celestica, both publicly traded on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

Philosophy of Giving: Niloufer comes from a family of very community oriented volunteers who were the founding members of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO), and she remembers being required to go to various events as a teenager. This, she does not necessarily remember as a positive experience, with the result that from total immersion in community affairs due to her parents, she was totally turned off from it. However whilst working in industry she learnt from both of her employers, the importance of giving back to the community what one receives. Even though this is a very Zarathushti concept, Niloufer admits that she had not associated the two together.

Community Involvement : During her university years there was no impetus to go to the community functions as they were not tailored to meet the needs of people in their 20s and 30s. But she is quick to add "when you have a career and not a 9 to 5, job with a family of toddlers, there is little time for community work". Even if she had wanted to, her family and professional responsibilities, left her little time to be involved, except to take the children to the religious education classes and provide some support for the program by coordinating lunches for the children.

Having achieved a measure of success in her career and personal life, Niloufer felt the need to give back to the community. In this she was encouraged by her employer with an altruistic philosophy who wanted his senior staff to volunteer for community work. Niloufer was sponsored from her company to register for a "Leadership Training Program" provided by Board Match Altruyst. This Toronto based organization maintains a registry which matches people with open board positions in volunteer organizations. The Kidney Foundation of Canada, an organization with 13 chapters across Canada, was looking for a treasurer and Niloufer with her finance background was a good fit. After serving for three years as the National Treasurer she transitioned into the role of National President on June 6, 2006.

The OZCF was founded in 2002, an organization which was based on a philosophy, a vision and mission which she could relate to, hence she got deeply involved in the fledgling organization. The goals of buying land to build on, an organization whose membership was made up of younger people, and many of whose current board members are under 40, appealed to her.

Niloufer on Community Building: Niloufer feels that if we really want to rejuvenate our anjumans and associations, we need to demonstrate to the young people that we are listening to their concerns and their criticisms. The young need a voice and we have to make sure their voice is heard. "Get them involved at committee levels". "We need to run the meetings more professionally, the young adults are either busy with

university work or in the corporate world and have no time for any emotional bickering at the meetings. The meetings should not give the impression of being run like a country club".

Challenge Facing the Community: "In the 60s and 70s we all had similar backgrounds with a lot of commonalities, we were all immigrants, all trying to find our way. We did get together and founded associations and anjumans. 40 years later, the group dynamics has changed, the group is very mixed, there are the new immigrants with their set of needs and then there are those who came as children, like me, who are very comfortable now, some with their own children born on this continent, who do not know any other way of life except that of Canada and the US. The needs of these two groups are very different and these needs drive the needs of the community and it is a challenge for all our community organizations to find a balance."

How to pass the torch on: "Many of our organizations are run by folks who founded them and it is a challenge to maintain the continuity and the vibrancy of what was built up with love and dedication, into the next generation and beyond, it is a challenge to move from that stage of serving the new immigrant to serving the needs of the 1st and 2nd generation Zarathushtis.

On the question of whether the community in Ontario can support two large organizations, both fund-raising for properties, Niloufer replies "the community in Ontario is large enough to support the two, but the Zarathushtis would like one organization which recognizes the fact that "one size does not fit all". In the early years of the immigrant history of Ontario, the heart and pulse of the community was in the central Toronto area. Now with the upward mobility of the community, the locus has shifted to areas to the west, north and east of the city. Niloufer feels that "we need an organization that is flexible and dynamic, which can accommodate the growing and shifting needs of the community".

At present OZCF has completed the exciting first phase of their mandate, the land has been bought and the second phase of finding funds to build on the land is well on its way.

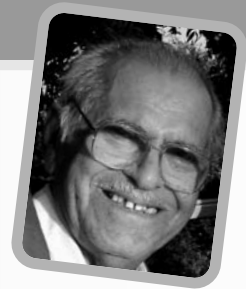
Her pastime: Niloufer belongs to two book clubs, is a voracious reader of mystery detective novels, does a fair amount of crossword puzzles, travels extensively including going on a safari to Africa, in 2005, and goes for long walks with her dog Connor. Besides, her three children, Jimmy (22 years), Natalie (19 years) and Sean (17 years) keep her very involved and busy.

Whether it is for the people living with kidney disease or for the people of her Zarathushti community, Niloufer brings a dedicated sense of community to her presidency coupled with her strong business and financial background. She brings facilitation and team-building skills while harnessing the potential of team dynamics.

OZCF and the Kidney foundation of Canada are in very capable hands

Bahram Foroud Khosraviyani (Rasti) 1925-2006

Founder of Rasti Printing Press of Iran - (Shahrivar day of Dey month, 3744 z) in San Jose, California



BAHRAM KHOSRAVIYANI, son of Shireen and Foroud was born in 1925, in Rahmad Abad Yazd. He was kin to 3 sisters and 3 brothers, with whom he spent his early childhood. At the age of 14, he migrated to India and began working in Bombay, to help support his family.

He held a passion for athletics and received weightlifting, swimming, and body building awards in his early adulthood. By age 24, he returned to Iran where he married his wife of 56 years, Poursan Hormozi. They had 4 children, Homa, Naheed, Behrooz, and Bijan.

Bahman Khosraviyani and his older brothers, the late Keikhosrow and Jamsheed founded the Rasti Printing Press, which was the pioneer and prominent Zarathushtrian printing shop in Iran and the majority of our Zarathushtrian religious books were published by this firm. Its famous Rasti Calendar has been a Norooz item in every Zarathushti household in Iran and overseas for almost half a century. In addition, a number of successful Zarathushtis experienced their first training in this printing press.

Bahram was a lover of life. Through the most difficult of times, he continued to greet the world with his smile and warmth. He was a model by his actions, not by his words. Until his very last years, he was a physically active and involved human being. Despite his most recent severe illnesses, he maintained his strong will and continued to fight for each day. With his positive view on life, in spite of all difficulties, he served as a great example of the Zarathushti we all strived to become.

Bahram loved people: to family, friends, and all those whose life he graced, he showed a genuine affection. Many came to him for aid, advice, and confided in him a great deal. Young and old found solace and friendship in him. And he gave without expectation his time and support. Although he is no longer among us, and we miss him dearly, his sweet memories, smile, optimism towards life, tolerance and patience with difficulties, his purity, and honesty will always remain in our hearts. May his soul be joyous and strong in the warmth of heaven.

Arnavaz Murzban Dinshaw 1936 – 2006

The spirit behind Karachi's Friday School for Little Zarathushtis

Arnavaz Murzban Dinshaw passed away on 21 September 2006 after a brief illness in Karachi, Pakistan at the age of seventy. In her fifty-year teaching career, Arnavaz taught a range of ages, from two-year olds in Montessori schools to teenagers in high schools to seniors who enrolled in the Montessori teacher training programs. In college she toyed with the idea of becoming a dentist, but discovered her true calling when in 1956 the nuns from her alma mater St. Lawrence's Convent, Karachi invited her to teach mathematics and general science.

In 1970, a personal tragedy changed the course of her life. Her nine-month old son Darius suffered irreversible brain damage when food got stuck his trachea, cutting off oxygen to the brain and leaving him with minimal responses to his environment. In the search for ways to stimulate her son, she became interested in the Montessori Method of education and in 1972 she earned a diploma from the Association Montessori Internationale, The Netherlands, and began working under the guidance of Gool K. Minwalla who had studied under Dr. Maria Montessori. The following year Arnavaz started her own school Markaz-e-Montessori, which she managed till the last days of her life.

In 1976, Arnavaz joined the managing committee of the Pakistan Montessori Association (PMA) and at the time of her death she was serving as the President. She was the spirit behind many of PMA's most successful programs for parents, children and public, including a children's concert dedicated to Peace Education held in January 2006. She organized the International Montessori Congress (1985) in Karachi, and represented Pakistan at congresses in India (1989) and Japan (1991). Darius's condition also affected her at another level. She began searching for answers in philosophy and spirituality, never losing faith in God or becoming bitter. She used to say, "When you fall into boiling water you can become soft and sweet like a potato or hardboiled like an egg. I pray 'God, please make me a potato'." She read books on the Zarathushti religion, attended lectures and corresponded with scholars. Recognizing that Zarathushti children in Pakistani schools were inundated with Islamic or Catholic images and information, she spearheaded a movement to start religious classes for them. She volunteered her school premises for the purpose and ran the Friday School for Little Zarathushtis for over twenty-five years. She developed a series of four Activity Books and a series of history books to teach children religion through puzzles, stories and games. Over the years, Friday School students put up many successful concerts and plays. The Activity Books are used by Sunday School teachers and parents around the world. Educator to the core, Arnavaz shared all the materials and games she prepared with teachers at the PMA so they could adapt them to teach Islam. Arnavaz was the proud mother of daughters Farishta (Toronto, On.) and Diana (Chatham, NJ) who follow in their mother's footsteps as teachers and as active participants in community and religious affairs.



BIRTHS

Aryana Kianpour, a girl, to Kouroush Kianpour and Mojan Partovi, granddaughter to Keikhusruv Kianpour and Tahmineh Jamaspian, niece to Kiumurs Kianpour in Washington D.C on June 24, 2006.

Aeden Zubin Battivala, a boy to Sheela and Zubin Battivala, brother to Yohaán, in Andover, MA, on June 27, 2006.

Sheryl and Shanaya, twin girls to Nauzer and Khushnam Vimadalal, in Boston, MA, on August 16, 2006.

Summer Elise Averill, a girl, to Shanaya and Barry Averill, sister to Sabra Jade, granddaughter to Arnavaz and Adil Godiwalla in Houston on September 3, 2006.

Isaac and Luke Calderon, twin boys, to Firoza and Joshua Calderon, brothers to Isabell, grandsons to Peshu and Hilla Irani in Chico, CA on September 14, 2006.

Diana Commissariat, a girl, to Ambrose and Hormazd Commissariat in Sunnyvale, CA on September 18, 2006.

Sabrina Warden, a girl to Nazneen and Melhi Warden in Houston, TX, on September 20, 2006.

Zehan Mirza Rogers, a boy, to Khurshid Mirza and Jeff Rogers, grandson to Putli and Noshir Mirza (Ontario) and Janet and John Rogers (Michigan) in Colorado Springs, CO on October 14, 2006.

Dinshaw Irani, a boy, to Natasha and Adel Irani, brother to Roxanne and Isabelle, grandson to Katie and late Dinshaw Irani (Houston, TX) and Dolly and Phiroze Dastoor (Canada) in Houston, TX on October 16, 2006.

Natasha Dungor, a girl, to Minaz and Nozer Dungor in Houston, TX on October 25, 2006.

Ariana Deboo Pavri, a girl, to Anahita Deboo and Cawas Pavri, granddaughter to Gulestan and Farrokh Deboo (New Canaan, CT) and Yasmin and Shapur Pavri (Houston, TX) in Philadelphia, PA on November 5, 2006.

Nariman Darius Bharucha, a boy, to Darius and Jarafeen Bharucha in Houston, TX on November 9, 2006.



Saena, a girl to Hutoxi (nee Damania) and Marazban Sarkari, sister to Mithra, granddaughter to Arnavaz and Maneckshaw Sarkari (Bombay and Pervin and Minocheher Damania (Bombay) in Louiseville (near Denver), Colorado, USA. on October 25, 2006.

Baby Saena Marazban Sarkari



Freyana, a daughter to Natasha and Shiavax Lord granddaughter to Roshan and Rusi Dalal of London, and Zenobia and late Jimmi Lord of Matheran near Mumbai, in London, UK on October 31, 2006.

Baby Freyana Shiavax Lord

Zane Boga, a boy, to Shemaz and Cyrus Boga, brother to Arman and Milan, and grandson to Sam and Gooloo Polad in Houston, TX on November 16, 2006.

Arash Roomie Karai, a boy to Gulshan and Roomie Karai, brother to Friyana, in Mississauga, Ontario, on November 20, 2006

Cyrus Vakil, a boy, to Sharaine and Zubin Vakil, brother to Shanaya, grandson to Dara and Ratan Vakil (Mumbai, India) and Khursheed and Roshan Bharucha (Quetta, Pakistan) in Houston, TX on November 29, 2006.



Orion Glenn Alphonse Saunders, a boy to Lylah Alphonse Mistry and Micheal Saunders, brother to Alanna, Savannah, Arthena and Gavin in Boston, MA, on November 1, 2006.

Baby Orion Alphonse Mistry Saunders



Neeka Farsinejad, a girl to Shirin Isadvastar and Ashkan Farsinejad, granddaughter to Homa Kasnavi and Shapour Isadvastar (Tehran, Iran) and Mahin and Arastoo Farsinejad (Kerman, Iran) on November 16, 2006.

Baby Neeka with her proud parents

Neilly Mehr-Rostami, a girl, to Shahbahram and Anita Mehr-Rostami, sister to Aundia, Nikon and Arshon in Falls Church, VA.

Nicole Jhangir Irani, a girl to Zena and Jhangir Irani, sister to Sam and Zachary, grand-daughter to Roshan and Jimmy Bharucha (Philadelphia) and Amavaz and Gustad Irani (Boca Raton, FL) in Bryn Mawr, PA, on January 12, 2007

Zane Darius Damania, a boy to Zenobia and Darius Damania, brother to Ness, grandson to Roshan and Rohinton Rivetna and Minoo and late Viloo Damania in Glen Ellyn, IL. on January 12, 2007

NAVJOTES, SEDREH-PUSHI

Malcolm Patel, son of Maharukh and Kaizad Patel, of Shrewsbury MA, in Mumbai, India, on July 16, 2006.

Shirin Natlie and Maxwell Dhun, children of Nina and Jeff Adams, grandchildren to Katie and Dhun Engineer in Sacramento, CA on September 23, 2006.

Keshmira Fanibanda, daughter of Mahrukh and Dara Fanibanda, at the Chicago Darbe Mehr in Burr Ridge, IL on October 15, 2006.

Tanaz Naterwala, daughter of Zenobia and Homyar Naterwala (Novi, MI) in Mumbai, India on December 18, 2006.

Carl Bilimoria, son of Beenaifer and Neville Bilimoria (Alpharetta, GA) in Mumbai, India on December 29, 2006.

Cyrus Unvala, son of Yezdi and Feroza Unvala (San Francisco, CA) in Mumbai on December 29, 2006.

WEDDINGS

Zubin Canteenwalla, son of Marezban and Bakhtavar Canteenwalla (Calgary, AB) to Ushtavaity Davar, daughter of Kamal and Virasp Davar (New Jersey) in New Jersey on July 28, 2006.

Kaivan Irani, son of Burjor and Behin Irani (Karachi, Pakistan) to Arzana Shroff, daughter of Murzban and Meher Shroff (Richmond Hill, ONT) in Richmond Hill, ONT on October 8, 2006.

Kamalrukh Katrak to Cyrus Karkaria in Chicago, IL on October 21, 2006.

Khodadad Irani (Lahore, Pakistan) to Mehru Irani (Mississauga, ONT) in Mississauga, ONT on October 22, 2006.

Eddie Madon, son of Perviz and late Sam Madon (North Vancouver, BC) to Rhonda Halabe in Sydney, Australia on October 27, 2006.

Barzeen Pajnigara, son of Minoo and late Silloo Pajnigara (Karachi, Pakistan) to Parivash Kadkhodai, daughter of Jamshed and Mehroo Kadkhodai (Mumbai, India) in

Mississauga, ONT on October 29, 2006.

Diana Damkevala, daughter of Bachi and Bomi Damkevala (Chicago) to Roy (Rohinton) son of Dhun and Sam Gazdar (Toronto) in Chicago on November 24, 2006

Zinnia Madon, daughter of Sheroo and Parvez Madon (Montreal, Quebec) to Eric Elavia, son of Arnavaz and Darayus Elavia (Chicago, IL.) in Mumbai, on December 23, 2006.



Mahazarin Kaikobad (Milwaukee, WI), daughter of Drs. Perviz and Rumi Kaikobad (Mumbai India) to Behram Ginwalla (Rockford, IL), son of Urvakshi and Rustom Ginwalla (Indore, India) in Mumbai, India on January 8, 2007.

DEATHS

Dinshaw Kaekhushru Nariman, father of Anoo (Diniar) Sukhia in Pune, India on May 30, 2006. (ZAPANJ Newsletter)

Behram Mistry, husband of Sheroo Mistry, father of Jimmy (Mumbai, India), Pervin Khory (Toronto, ONT) and Roshan Ghadiali (Montreal, QUE) in Mumbai, India on August 8, 2006.

Khorshed Marawala, 85, mother of Perin and Zarir, grandmother of Dina, Zachary, Ryan, and Rory in Hayward, CA on August 10, 2006.

Maneck Nariman Sukhia, father of Diniar (Anoo) Sukhia, in Pune, India on August 15, 2006. (ZAPANJ Newsletter)

Jal Dinshaw Unwala, 84, father of Rayomand and Aban Unwala in Mumbai, India on September 7, 2006. (ZAPANJ Newsletter)

Amy Ranina, wife of late Phiroze Ranina, mother of Homi and Bapsy Premjee of Toronto and sister of late Nani Palkhivala, in Mumbai, on September 7, 2006

Arnavaz Minoo Shroff, 77, sister of Noshir (Nergish) Karanjia (Marlton, NJ) in Mumbai, India on September 15, 2006.

Arnavaz Murzban Dinshaw, 70 mother of Farishta (Toronto, On), Diana (Chatham, New Jersey) and late Darius, in Karachi, Pakistan, September 21, 2006.

Godrej Irani, husband of Nargesh (Nancy), father of Khodi, in Houston, TX, on September 25, 2006.

Sam Morris, husband of late Mithoo (nee Karanjia), father of Malcolm Morris, grandfather of Dylan and Nicholas and brother of Soli, Jehangir and Fred in Pittsburgh, PA on September 27, 2006.

Sam Joshi, husband of Jer Joshi, father of Kamal Sengupta, and Feroza Yezdi Unwala (San Francisco, CA), grandfather of Lyla, Karl, Karina, and Cyrus in Mumbai, India on October 1, 2006.

Alastair Broome, husband of Gulnar Broome in Mississauga, ONT on October 16, 2006.

Rusi Fardoonji Ghaswalla, 84, husband of (late) Perin Ghaswalla, father of Khushroo (Mumbai), Niloufer Bhujwalla (New Orleans) and (late) Hoshedar, brother of Tehmi Irani, Najoo Nasrabadi and Mahrukh Mistry, father-in-law of Minoo, and Sammannaz and grand-father of Nauzad, Parinaz, Arnaz & Neville in Mumbai, on Sunday, October 22, 2006.

Cyrus Fatakia, 36, son of Erna and Roy Fatakia (Riverside, CA), brother of Daraius, in San Francisco on October 29, 2006.

Christobel Nargolwala, wife of Sam Nargolwalla, mother of Ciaran, Darius, Killian, Farhad, Liam and Mariam, sister-in-law of Feroze and Nari Nargolwalla, Mani Divecha and Dinaz Rustomji in Markham, ONT on October 31, 2006.

Nergis Mehta, mother of Zubeen Mehta and mother-in-law of Meheryer Rivetna in Mumbai, India on November 6, 2006 (MANASHNI Newsletter)

Sehroo Shroff, 82, mother of Dilshad Mancher Deboo, grandmother of Parinaz and Farhad, in North Vancouver, BC on November 7, 2006.

Jehangir Jamshed Merchant, 22, son of Pheroza and Jamshed Merchant, brother of Sohrab and Shireen, grandson of Gool and late Rusi Kalyaniwalla (Ottawa) and Mehroo and late Rusi Merchant (England) and great grandson of Aloo Madon, in Ottawa, Ontario, on November 15, 2006.

Maneck Sanjana, 89, wife of late Khushroo Sanjana, cousin of Poras Patel and Daisy Suderwalla in Toronto, ONT on November 13, 2006.

Dinoo Antia, wife of Billy Antia (Miami, FL), mother of Phil Antia, mother-in-law of Viola, and grandmother of Damien and Marina in Mumbai, India on November 23, 2006.

Perin Kharas, 94, wife of late Cursethji Kharas, mother of Aban

Archer (UK), Zenobia Biggs (UK), Ron Kharas (Toronto, ONT) and Zarine Kharas (UK), grandmother of Henry, Elizabeth, Vicky, Vera, and Zane, sister of Babu, Jamshed, Soli, and late Fiji Cowasjee in Karachi, Pakistan on November 23, 2006.

Noshir Ardeshtir Mistry, father of Ardeshtir and Sohrab Mistry (Dallas, TX) and Shireen Shroff (Ft. Lauderdale, FL) in Karachi, Pakistan on November 28, 2006.

Zarine Kersi Limathwalla, wife of Kersi Limathwalla (WZCC Director and Mumbai Chapter Chair) in Mumbai on December 16, 2006.

Bahram Foroud Khosraviani (Rasti), husband of Pouran Hormozi, father of Homa Mojjani (past president of PZO), Behrooz and Bijan Khosraviani (active members of FEZANA Zoroastrian Sports Committee) in San Jose, CA on December 19, 2006.

Shahriar Rostam Khodadad Zohrabi, 90, husband of Jahan, father of Rostam, Guity, Niroomand and

Nahid, father-in-law of Allahyar Dabestani in West Vancouver, BC on December 26, 2006.

Lovji Tengra, husband of Amy Tengra, father of Pheroza, Shiawak and Hormuz Tengra. (ZANT Newsletter)

MATRIMONIALS

Looking for a Soul Mate?

Try these matrimonial sites and services, <http://matrimonial.zoroastrianism.com> - www.TheParsiMatch.com

www.shaadi.com, Mrs Gool Banaji, Parel, Mumbai goolpesi@gmail.com, Mrs Serah Kotwal, Dadar, Mumbai

Tel 91 22 2142 3570

Please send all submissions for "Milestones" to Mahrukh Motafram, 2390 Chanticleer Drive, Brookfield, WI 53045, mmotafram@msn.com, Tel: 262-821-5296. NOTE: If no year is specified, it implies "within the past 12 months."

New Navars

8 boys from North America, 2 from India and 1 from Dubai underwent the Navar ceremony at the Vatcha Gandhi Agiary under the auspices of Ervad Aspandiar Dadachanji between December 06 and January 07. The ceremony for Kyrus Buchia was performed at Sodawaterwalla Agiary, under the auspices of Panthaky Pervez Karanjia.

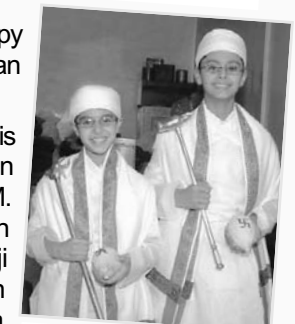
| | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Kyrus Nozer Buchia, | TX, USA | Dec. 15, 06 |
| Yazad Jehangir Dastur. | CA, USA | Dec. 20, 06. |
| Farhad Sheroy Ranjee. | NY, USA | Dec. 20, 06. |
| Varun Rayomand Bhadha. | CA, USA | Dec. 25, 06. |
| Darius Farhad Bhadha. | CA, USA | Dec. 25, 06. |
| Zerkxis Zarrir Bhandara. | CA, USA | Dec. 28, 06 |
| Rayomand Percy Katrak. | TX, USA | Jan. 07, 07 |
| Vispy Percy Katrak. | TX, USA | Jan. 07, 07 |
| Yash Cyrus Raja (Maratab) Dubai. | | Dec. 29, 06 |
| Burgese Nadir Godrej, | Mumbai, India | Dec. 30, 06 |
| Sohrab Nadir Godrej, | Mumbai, India. | Dec. 30, 06 |

Yazad, Farhad, Varun, Darius and Zerkxis were trained by Mobed Zarrir Bhandara of Los Angeles CA, and Kyrus, Rayomand and Vispy were trained by Mobed Peshotan Unwalla, of Houston, Texas.

The Navar ceremony of Zerkxis Zarrir Bhandara was performed in the presence Dasturji Dr Firoze M. Kotwal, Dasturji Dr Peshotan Hormazdiar Mirza, and Dasturji Khurshed Kekobad Dastur, on December 28, 2006 at Vatcha Gandhi Agiary



Ervad Kyrus Buchia (Houston)



Ervads Rayomand & Vispi Katrak

It is indeed an honour for the North American Zarathushti community to have 8 new Ervads in our midst. Congratulations to each and everyone of you and to your parents for their efforts in keeping the traditions alive.

And we hope you will follow the advice Mobed Zarrir Bhandara has to give "priests need to be living witnesses, reflecting a life of a true Zarathushti taking care of all living beings as Zarathushtra did, and their lives need to attract and inspire everybody they meet. The priests need to engage the youth in religious activities and the youth should come to know and see their priests as someone they can relate to and consult over any life issues"



WZCC-
India
president
Minoo
Shroff
[left]
felicitates
founding
president
Rohinton
Rivetna

Message from WZCC president Rohinton Rivetna

Six years ago, this organization was just a dream in the hearts of its Founding Directors. Today it is a toddler, full of life, vigor and energy, yearning to set forth for wider horizons. It has been a long journey, the climb has been steep, the shining city on the top of the hill is still distant. But it beckons ...

Our community is blessed with a glorious business **Tradition**. We have a **Vision** – which is “to be the engine that drives the economic prosperity and wellbeing of our global community” through our Mission, which is “to energize the Zarathushti spirit of enterprise, through a networking of businesses and professionals.” All we need now is **Action**. And for that, we must remember the ten little words: “*IF IT IS TO BE, IT IS UP TO ME.*”

WZCC is a ‘*chaordic*’ (order within chaos) organization, built around a single purpose. It has no hierarchy and thrives on complete freedom of operation. Ours is unlike any other Chamber of Commerce; rather, I would look upon it as a Fraternity. Let us avail of the strong ties, the instant bonding that we share, and heave together, shoulder to shoulder, to make that ascent to the top. The global economy demands it. That is the way of the future.

When we become members of WZCC, we become members: not to receive value, but to give value; not to be served, but to serve; and not to get rich overnight, but to spread richness, growth and prosperity all around. Our membership obligation, then, is to inspire and be inspired so that we may indeed “Energize the Zarathushti Entrepreneurial spirit” and reach that shining city on the top of the hill.

n

WZCC: celebrating six years of growth



With professional flair, WZCC-India hosted the sixth AGM of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce, January 4-8, 2007. Delegates from Australia, Canada, Iran, Middle East, Pakistan, Singapore, UK and USA joined Indian entrepreneurs, businesses and professionals to share their experiences, recognize their successes and energize the Zarathushti entrepreneurial spirit.

Some, like international hotelier Byram Avari, theatre businessman Alayar Dabestani, construction magnate Pallonji Mistry and corporate counselor Minoo Shroff – all members of the WZCC Honorary Members Guild, and at the zenith of their life careers – came to lend their guidance and inspiration.

Many, however, were taking their first fledgling steps in their chosen enterprises, and came to learn, and draw strength and support from their fellow Zarathushtis. Some came to showcase their ideas, their products and services, and to avail of the opportunity to network and grow. It paid off for at least one young entrepreneur, Zinobia Schroff [shown below at her stall at the WZCC event] who was pleasantly challenged with a large order of customized paper bags for the Avari chain of hotels.

Founding directors retire. This AGM was a watershed in the history of WZCC, as the Founding Directors, who had the vision and the passion to nurture the Chamber





Clockwise, Byram Avari being felicitated as Honorary Member by Corporate Secretary Edul Daver, and 2004 Honorary Member Pallonji Mistry; VP International Dadi Mistry congratulates Outstanding Zarathushti Professional Dr. Sam Kerr; Outstanding Zarathushti Entrepreneur Viraf Kapadia; Outstanding Young Zarathushti Entrepreneur/ Professional Navaz Kotwal.

through its conception at the FEZANA Business Conference in Las Vegas ten years ago, through its birth at the World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston in 2000, and its growth internationally today, would now hand over the reins. Each was recognized with a commemorative



plaque: president **Rohinton Rivetna**, VP **Homi Davier**, VP International **Dadi Mistry**, Treasurer **Sarosh Collector**, Corporate Secretary **Edul Daver**, directors **Ness Lakdawala** [left, above], **Dorab Mistry** and **Kobad Zarolia** [left] and **Meherwan Boyce** and **Fali Shroff**, both of whom had retired earlier.



2006 Honorary Membership. At the gala evening, at the West End hotel on January 6, Byram Dinshaw Avari was inducted as the 2006 Honorary Member for outstanding business achievements and humanitarian service. In his impassioned response, Mr. Avari, of the Avari Group with companies in the hotel, real estate, travel, brewery and pharmaceutical industries, and a passionate yachtsman to boot, recounted the story of his family's purchase of their first hotel 60 years ago, from their life savings of Rs.

1 lakh, and their growth "through hard work, persistence and determination." "We are here to stand by you," he pledged, and offered the facilities of his hotels in Karachi, for the next WZCC AGM.

Recognitions. Three outstanding Zarathushtis with exceptional achievements, as judged by a panel of international judges, were recognized at the gala. The annual recognitions program is administered by WZCC-Australia (Filli Madon, pars09@yahoo.com).

Outstanding Zarathushti Entrepreneur: Viraf Savak Kapadia, CEO of Star Navigation, Canada, is the inventor of a real-time flight data recorder that alerts operators to potential aircraft problems. This is a jointly patented product which will revolutionize the airlines industry, setting new standards in passenger safety.

Outstanding Zarathushti professional: Dr. Sam Kerr, Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, is a pioneer in innovative surgery and teaching practices. He has developed a unique drainage tube for the ear, Tympanic membrane healing, pioneered head and neck cancer surgery and voice rehabilitation.

Outstanding Young Zarathushti Professional/Entrepreneur: Nawaz Kotwal [photo previous page] works with the Commonwealth Human

Rights Initiative in India. Her contributions towards preservation of civil liberties include working with relief camps, rehabilitation of the displaced, documenting crime and securing access to justice.

The gala evening continued with a viewing of the film *"The Merchant Princes of Bombay"*; a multimedia presentation by **Meher Bhesania** (WZCC-Middle East) on the next World Zoroastrian Congress, in Dubai, in 2009; hilarious *Parsi skits and songs*, including a hearty version of the ubiquitous *Chaiyye Hame Zarathushti*, by the talented **Pervez and Marzban Mehta**, of the erstwhile *"Darling Orchestra"*; cocktails, networking and buffet on the terrace.

Business Panel and Success Stories. The program on January 7, again at the West End, provided ample opportunities to meet, mingle, discuss and be inspired. It included a panel discussion on *"Doing Business with India"* [photo above]. Panelists: **Adi Engineer** (former Managing Director, Tata Power Co.) related how India was poised for a great growth story; **Dr. Zareen Karani Araoz** (President, *Managing Across Cultures*) touched upon the human factor in global business; legal luminary **Nadir Modi** saw the value in this global economy, for Zarathushtis "on both sides of the waters" to interact more; Real Estate agent and developer **Rusi Gandhi** saw unparalleled opportunities in the real estate industry in India; **Farokh Balsara**, head of Ernst and Young India's Media and Entertainment, noted that global outsourcing was changing the face of corporate India.

Edul Daver, CEO of *ACuPowder International*, New Jersey, dominant producer of metal powders globally, with over \$75 million annual sales revenue, presented the story of his "leveraged buy-out" of that company, using asset-based financing, giving true meaning to his definition of entrepreneurship as "the pursuit of opportunities beyond the resources currently available."

Tehmasp Printer, Managing Director (India) of IGI, the *International Gemological Institute*, the world's leading diamond and jewelry certification institute, spoke of India's growing diamond industry. **Cyrus Driver** presented his "work in progress" story. Switching from a job at JPMorgan, he founded *Calorie Care*, delivering



"Doing Business with India" panel: Engineer, Araoz, Modi, Gandhi and Balsara



"Entrepreneur of the Century" award for Ratan Tata: seated, Bomi Boyce, Tata, Minoo Shroff, Rohinton Rivetna. Standing, Farrokh Rustomji, Yazdi Tantra, Zarine Commissariat, Alayar Dabestani and Kersi Limathwalla.

customized, calorie conscious meals, cooked from scratch in a health kitchen, to a customer base of over 200.

Directors Meetings and Field Trips. The WZCC programs started on January 4th, with a gathering hosted by Zareen Araoz at the Karani family estate in **Lonavla**, and a visit to the **Tata Power Company's** environmental research station in an idyllic setting at Valvan Dam. January 5th started with a visit to the facilities in Pune, of Forbes Marshall, a leader in Process Efficiency and Energy Conservation, where the venerable founder Darius Forbes and son Naushad underlined the company's commitment to social responsibility towards employees and the community. Lively discussion ensued at the Tea at the Turf Club with **WZCC-Pune** (chair-Adi Engineer), which boasts a surprisingly large number of enterprises, from the famed

Kayani Bakery with its legendary Shrewsbury biscuits to Anu Aga's *Thermax*, Dr. Keki Grant's *Ruby Hall Hospital* and numerous other established and upcoming enterprises.

WZCC directors met with Managing Directors Keki Mistry of HDFC Bank, Farokh Banatwalla of Zoroastrian Co-Op Bank, Hosi Sinor, Chief Executive, Indian Banks Association, and others, to explore **venture capital funds**.

WZCC-Delhi hosted an excellent program "*Lessons in Entrepreneurship*" with telecommunications consultant **Dr. Percy Batlivala**, and distributor of computer supplies, young entrepreneur **Adil Nargolwala**, most proficiently organized by Dadi and Nergish Mistry, Secretary Veera Mavalwala and President Rustom Daroga.

Meeting with Ratan Tata. Possibly the most significant of the Directors' meetings was with business icon Ratan Tata, chair of the Tata Group, at his office in Bombay House. "I am very, very deeply touched by your words ... Over time, one has lost touch with the community. To be recognized by them is a great and special honor," he said, referring to the "*Entrepreneur of the Century*" award

presented to him by WZCC, at the Congress in London in 2005. He expressed his wish that "Zoroastrians stand out in business as they did in past years," and added "I would love to re-engage ... be associated with your organization to make that happen." "If there are young Zoroastrians that have a good idea," he said, "I will be happy to contribute." He said he "would be very happy" to make himself available for a video conference address at the Toronto Congress in July 2007.

Conclusion. Kudos to WZCC-India for the magnificent orchestration of this AGM, notably Kersi and Zarine Commissariat and Yazdi Tantra, for covering all the logistics with such professional flair, Shernaaz Engineer for the excellent Souvenir Book, and others behind the scenes.

By any standard this AGM was a great success. But – as Kersi Limathwalla observed: "At the end of the day, the only true measure of our success will be in counting the number of enterprises we help to set up and grow."

- **Roshan Rivetna** (also see www.wzcc.net)

WZCC Board of Directors assume office as Founding Directors retire

The new WZCC Office Bearers and Board of Directors, elected at the AGM on January 7, in Mumbai, were:

President: Bomi Boyce (Canada)
Vice-Pres: Kersi Limathwalla (India)
Treasurer: Framroze Patel (USA)
Corp. Secry: Zarine Commissariat (India)
Tech. Director: Yazdi Tantra (India)

Directors: Zareen Karani Aroz (USA), Rustom Engineer (USA), Shernaaz Engineer (UK), Rusi Gandhi (USA) and Firdosh Mehta (USA).

They will join **Continuing Directors:** Khodayar Attaie (Iran), Meher Bhesania (Middle East), Nowsherwan Irani (Pakistan), Hoshang Karani (USA) and Filli Madon (Australia).

The outstanding contributions made by the outgoing Founding Directors Rohinton Rivetna, Homi Davier, Dadi Mistry, Sarosh Collector, Edul Daver, Kobad Zarolia, Dorab Mistry, Ness Lakdawala, Meherwan Boyce and Fali Shroff – were recognized.

We congratulate the next Board and wish them a successful tenure with the leadership of Bomi Boyce, a Consultant in International Business, with a focus on Viability Studies, Joint Ventures and Collaborations, Marketing, Financial and Legal, and formerly (1969 - 1980) a manager at IBM Canada. As he said at the Board Meeting, "It will be very difficult to follow in Rohinton Rivetna's footsteps, but we will all try our best."

- **Zarine Commissariat**



Seated, Bhesania, Rivetna (ex-officio), Boyce, Commissariat. Standing, Mehta, Tantra, Engineer, Aroz, Gandhi, Limathwalla and Attaie [inset].

Hamazor

*ham?-zor b?d veh?ne haft-
keshvar zam?n ... em?n av?
esh?n, esh?n av? em?n, ham?-zor ham-baher, ham-
y?red*

"May we all be in co-operation with the righteous men of all the seven regions (i.e., the whole world) May we be one with them and may they be one with us. May we all benefit one another, and help one another."

[?frin?-G?hamb?r 3]

Hama Zor 'united in spiritual energy.' (Ham? = 'together'; Zor, Av. Zavare, z?vare = 'strength, vigour', as in *yasnemcha, vahmemcha, aojascha, zavarecha*. Zor means much more than just 'strength':

First level (Personal): Synergy with fellow men. For that, it is essential to have understanding and tolerance.

Second level (Cosmic): Connected with a matrix with all creations. Hence *Hamazor* with mountains, plants, rivers and other creations.

Third level (Celestial): We belong to a field which is connected with spiritual entities: God, *yazads* – spiritual entities presiding over time, Gatha, gahambar etc.

Fraspayokhedhram – progress is possible only with unity.

*ham?zor b?d, ham?zor ham? asho b?d,
ham?zor ham? nekih b?d, ham?zor ham? khoreh
b?d,
ham?zor vesh kerfeh b?d, ham?zor kam gun?h b?d,
ham?zor zarthoshti din r?stih? bokht?r b?d,
dine m?zdayasn?n hakikat dorost b?d.*

"May we be united in strength. May we be united in strength with all righteous people. May we be united in strength with all goodness. May we be united in strength with all divine energies. May we be united in strength with many meritorious deeds. May we be united in strength with the least sins. May we be united in strength with the Mazdayasni religion which gives redemption through righteousness. May all the teachings of the Mazdayasni religion be properly preserved."

[Afrin ? Ardafravash, 1]

Hamazor is a beautiful concept, but very difficult to put into practice because of our individual egos. In order to achieve unity we need obedience – to a person, community, idea, message or a cause; and for obedience to set in, we have to control our sense of right (our ego) and give importance to the sense of right of others.

The 'Hamazor' handshake. Among our ancestors, and even in times not long ago, the word '*Hamazor*' indicated a special handshake. It is an ancient tradition to express *Hamazor* with each other on any festive occasion, like New Year's Day. Today, priests exchange it among themselves during rituals, and with others after the ritual.

[Presentation by **Er. Dr. Ramiyar Karanjia**, Principal, Athornan Madressa, at the "Coming Together Roundtable"]



coming together in hamazori

Zarathushtis from India, Iran and the diaspora, gathered at the one-day "Coming Together Roundtable" in Mumbai for discourse and dialog on projects and issues of import to the global Zarathushti community.

Following up on the first "Coming Together Roundtable" held at the World Congress in London in June 2005 [see *FEZANA Journal*, Fall 2005], and availing of the opportunity when a number of Zarathushtis from the diaspora would be in Mumbai for the preceding WZCC meet, Rohinton Rivetna, Founding President of FEZANA and WZCC, convened this second Roundtable, at the Mancherji Joshi Hall of the Athornan Madressa in Dadar, Mumbai, on January 8, 2007. All participants of the previous Roundtable and any other interested Zarathushtis were invited.

Ervad Dr. Ramiyar Karanjia, principal of the Athornan Madressa, set the tone of the meeting with a beautiful talk on the traditional **concept of "Hamazor"** [at left]. After a round of self-introductions by the sixty or more participants, from India, Pakistan, Iran, USA, Canada, Australia, UK and Singapore, Rohinton Rivetna [left] stressed the urgency for our global "Community Without Borders" to **"come together and work together"** on global challenges and projects. "We must foster connections between the diaspora and homeland communities, focussing on social togetherness, harmony and cooperation, with respect for religious diversity. Our actions must be deliberate to strengthen, not fragment,



Clockwise, from previous page: Nawaz Mody, Homai Modi, Kersi and Coomi Mehta (Mumbai), Soli Dastur (Florida), Sam Billimoria (California); Zareen Araoz (Boston) facilitating the discussion, from left, Adi Engineer (Pune), Kersi Commissariat and Minoo Shroff (Mumbai), Bomy Boyce (Toronto), Jehangir Patel, Veera Patel, Arnavaz Mama and Marzban Giara (Mumbai); Jimmy Mistry (Mumbai), Russi Ghadiali (Singapore) and Ness Lakdawala (Montreal); Firdosh Mehta (Dallas) and Rustom Engineer (Houston).

VISION for the community (developed at the London Roundtable, 2005):

"To nurture a caring, compassionate, harmonious, observant, esteemed and prosperous community"

MISSION for the community:

"To come together and work together in hamazori for the Zarathushti and global communities."

the remarkable bonding we share, and to enhance our social capital. This is an action-oriented, working meeting towards our vision" [see above] he said, and proposed a list of twenty-plus discussion items for the day, culled from the long list of projects and challenges, generated at the London meet.

Zareen Karani Araoz (ZWIN International network, zwinzsn@yahoo.com) made an impassioned plea for the community to harmonize their efforts and stay away from political and religious divisiveness.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ACTION ITEMS

Supplies and services for overseas Zarathushtis and a web-based Zarathushti directory. Yazdi Tantra (yazdi@on-lyne.com) is developing **TheParsiMall.com**, with an online payment gateway, to include ordering liturgical items (sudreh, kushti, sukhad, ses, diva, prayer books), sending flowers/mithai to loved ones, and financial/accounting/legal services. With Ader Gandhi, he has also created **ZoroastrianDirectory.com**, a worldwide listing of Zarathushtis, **TheParsiMatch.com** (for matrimonials) and **TheParsiChronicle.com** (for news).

Coordinated welfare programs. Prompted by a suggestion, in absentia, by Porus Dadabhoj of Chicago for overseas Zarathushtis to participate in BPP's 3rd Child Assistance program, Firdosh Mehta explained the **procedure for sending donations from overseas** for welfare, critical assistance or natural calamities, and tax implications in USA and Canada. Alayar Dabestani addressed aspects of sending donations to Iran. Jimmy Mistry, founder-trustee of the **Parsi Resource Group** (info@ParsiResourceGroup.com) mentioned shortage of funds to sponsor PRG's programs for the Youth, Mobeds and Agiaries, such as children's educational sponsorships, and Medicaid assistance for Mobeds. He will follow up with Houtoxi Contractor, chair, FEZANA Welfare Committee (HFM31@aol.com) about "**Adopt-a-Child**" and "**Adopt-an-Agiary**" programs.

While some, like Oorvaksh Medora of Ahmedabad and Parsiana's Jehangir Patel, questioned whether excessive doles "would really help the community to grow?" or "Are we creating a class of professional beggars?" most agreed on the **need for coordinating welfare efforts**. BPP chair Minoo Shroff suggested that the welfare trusts review their archaic systems, be accountable, and share a coordinated application review process to avoid duplication. Homai Modi, trustee and Hon. Secy. of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (krcamaoi@vsnl.com), offered to facilitate **reviving the Liaison Committee**, and ensure that the various trusts support this Committee.

Armaity Desai, formerly director of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, and a member of the PARZOR board (armaity@vsnl.net) presented funding needs for projects



Clockwise, Perin Cooper (Pakistan), Rusi Gandhi (USA), Sam Kerr (Australia), Oorvaksh Medora (Ahmedabad), Rustom Chami (Mumbai), Khodayar Attaie (Iran); Armaity Desai and Prof. Feredoon Kapadia of Aatash Consultants; Mr. Salamati (Iran), Alayar Dabestani (Seattle) and Yazdi Tantra (Mumbai).

undertaken by the **PARZOR** organization with assistance from UNESCO (www.unescoparzor.com): a **genetics and fertility research** center at Masina Hospital; publication of a **children's book** on Zoroastrianism by Shernaz Cama; **language studies** and several other projects.

Other projects. Minoo Shroff saw the need for a **study on aging and elder issues** among Zarathushtis. Mention was made of a **"Doctors Without Borders"** network spearheaded by Porus Dadabhoy (porusdad@yahoo.com) and Dr. Mehroo Patel of Chicago. Such a cadre of medical professionals could be an invaluable resource for our Zarathushti and global communities. Behram Pastakia (bpastakia@aol.com), former President of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, presented follow up on **Operation Eyesight**, which offers eye care and glasses to the needy; opportunities for a **Zarathushti Peace Corps**, encouraging individual acts of charity on a world wide basis; supporting a **Genealogy Archives** project by Dr. Rubina Patel to help Zarathushtis understand our common heritage; and his vision of a safe, efficient, state-of-the-art environment for patient care at **Parsi General Hospital**. At a subsequent meeting, Hector Mehta, Hon. Secy of PGH, was apprised of these opportunities.

I **Preservation of manuscripts and documents.** Dr. Homi Dhalla [left] founder of **WZCF**, the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation, urged that **precious books and manuscripts** at the Maherji Rana Library in Navsari and elsewhere must not only be preserved, but also made readily accessible, and distributed – to safeguard against a calamity. He has placed 45 **out-of-**

print books on a CDROM, and offered a **collection of 400 old books** to any worthy Zarathushti library. Natalie Vania mentioned **Google's project to digitize** the world's great literary works and make them searchable over the Web. Homai Modi described **restoration efforts** at the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute. Notable work has also been done for the **Navsari manuscripts** by Shernaz Cama of PARZOR. At a subsequent meeting, Dasturji Kotwal lamented on the dilapidated condition of the storage building at the **Navsari library**, and the critical need to rebuild that structure. Russi Ghadialy suggested donating rare and valuable items to museums and libraries to be restored and showcased to the world. Dhalla touched upon other WCZF projects: **excavations in Sanjan** and an **archeological museum** for the excavated artifacts; a forthcoming **book on Navsari**; reviving **Gujarati language and monajats**; conservation work at **Bahrot Caves**; a traveling **textiles exhibit**, which could also evolve into an opportunity for sales/export. Mention was made of the **Persepolis tablets** excavated at the Oriental Institute, that are currently under contention with the Iranian government. Shirin Mistry requested help in collecting artifacts for a **Zarathushti Expo** at the World Youth Congress.

I **Participation in Interfaith and UN programs.** Behram Pastakia [left] urged organizations to seek **UN-NGO status**, as FEZANA has, and participate in their numerous humanitarian and peace programs, and offered help in that process. Zarathushtis in the diaspora are very active in **Interfaith work** and in humanitarian projects such as **Habitat for Humanity**. He suggested developing a **traveling Zarathushti exhibit** that could be loaned for events around the world, e.g. at UN

Headquarters in New York. Homi Dhalla is working on this exhibit, through WZCF. Behram is also working on placing the **Zarathushti logo in the UN chapel**. Maneck Bhujwala (maneck_bhujwala@mindspring.com) made a plea, in absentia, for Zarathushtis to take the lead in forming **Interfaith organizations in India**, and organizing events with government and industry leaders. An All-India Interfaith gathering was suggested, on the model of the **Parliament of World's Religions**.

I **Public Relations**. Bomi Boyce and Sam Billimoria pointed out the need to give a **coordinated response to misinformation** in the press, on the internet, and in books. A FEZANA Committee has been formed to address this need. Numerous efforts are underway to bring awareness at the international level, e.g. UNESCO has been approached to commemorate **Nouruz as a world heritage day**.

I **Selection of World Congress Venue**. Firdosh Mehta, Behram Pastakia and Rohinton Rivetna will establish a formal process for allocating world congresses, to be effective for Congresses after the 2009 Congress in Dubai, and the 2007 Youth Congress in Melbourne.

I **World Zoroastrian Council**. Alayar Dabestani reported that a **"World Zoroastrian Council"** has been established in Paris, with a donation of 2 million Euros from Dr. and Mrs. Sassanfar, that will cater to the purported large numbers who wish to claim Zarathushti heritage; and suggested forming a Think Tank to address this development. "When we open our doors indiscriminately, when we stop using our Parsi-Irani identity, we are asking for trouble," said Khojeste Mistree, "This should be a lesson to all of us, especially in America."

Alayar also pointed out the need to form an **Iranian Ad-Hoc Committee** to aid Zarathushtis in the event of a political emergency in Iran.

Alayar mentioned that work is in progress by Homer Abramian of Australia to place **Cyrus the Great monuments** in a hundred locations around the world, including India. There was some sentiment that it might be more impacting to put replicas of the Cyrus cylinder – which has been generally acknowledged as the world's first "Bill of Human Rights."

I **Proposal for a World Zoroastrian General Assembly**. Kayzad Namdarian of Australia submitted a proposal in absentia: **"United Towards Frashokereti,"** for a World Zoroastrian General Assembly (WZGA) to serve "as an evolutionary step forward from the Coming

Together Roundtable." The proposal is to "create an open structure forum of Zoroastrian entities around the world for the following objective: To ensure that Zarathushtra's message survives future millennia, by solving common problems for Zoroastrians, across the world, in a non-binding, voluntary way." WZGA is

conceived to be "simply a formalized gathering forum" and not a body-of-bodies. "It is completely non-binding, and serves to address common issues in a professional, formal way through dialogue, action and results." For the full proposal, contact kayzadnamdarian@hotmail.com.

I **Network of Anjumans in Mumbai**. Marzban Giara and Jimmy Jesia indicated interest in facilitating the formation of a network of local mandals in Mumbai, to facilitate

communication and dialogue.

I **Passing the Torch to the Next Generation**. Chair of the Indian Federation of Zoroastrian Youth (**FOZYA**), Nauzer Kasad, painted a bleak picture: "Youth is frustrated by all that is happening ... they are ready to give up, they are drifting away. No trustee, no organization is interested in helping" he said, "We have to literally go around begging."

Jimmy Mistry mentioned PRG's **Youth Empowerment (YES)** and **Making a Difference (MAD)** programs have been successful in attracting the youth. Freyaz Shroff mentioned **ZYNA's** (Zoroastrian Youth of North America) efforts to compile a **world youth directory** and an **online youth network**, **zspeakerbox**, and its active participation in projects at the local community and national level. Minoo Bhujwala of New Orleans (mbhujwa@cox.net) has submitted a proposal, in absentia, for a **"Save the Zarathushti Youth"** program and youth camp with a team of psychiatrists and statisticians, and would like to discuss this further with any interested persons. Shirin Mistry (shirinjmistry@yahoo.com.au) mentioned the **"Friends Forever"** program at the **World Youth Congress** in Melbourne in 2007, and hoped that a legacy of that event would be closer bonding between Zarathushti youth.

Next Steps. The day was short, and many important items, such as concerns about interfaith marriages and demography, could not be covered. From the level of interest, though, and the breadth of topics covered, it was evident that this was an effective forum. Notes, with action items and ownership will be sent to all participants and other interested persons. Contact rivetna@aol.com for a copy. This will be a living document, to be updated until the next opportunity for a Roundtable.

- Roshan Rivetna



Shirin and Jimmy Mistry (Melbourne), Nauzer Kasad (Surat) and Khojeste Mistree (Mumbai).

LATE NEWS.....



Air Marshall Fali Homi Major (left) a helicopter pilot has been appointed Air Marshall of the Indian Air Force (IAF). Before this promotion Air Marshall Major was based in Shillong commanding the Eastern Air Command. He assumes his position March 31st

Congratulations and the FEZANA JOURNAL wishes him a great tenure as Air Chief Marshal.

RUMI MOHTA (left in photo with family and Gov Kaine) appointed Commissioner on the Community and National Service Board by Gov Tim Kaine of Virginia. He has been invited to accompany Gov Kaine on his 1st trade mission to India in April 2007, and will be joining the trade delegation. Rumi encourages all Zarathushti businesses in India interested to work with him and the delegation to contact him at Rumi Mohta, President Richmond Travels, LLC Tel: 804-763-5688 www.RichmondTravels.com



WZCC CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR OUTSTANDING ZARATHUSHTI RECOGNITION AWARDS

Outstanding Zarathushti Entrepreneur, Outstanding Zarathushti Professional

Outstanding Young Zarathushti Professional/Entrepreneur

All nominations will be judged by a panel of three judges and the awardees honored at the WZCC Annual General Meeting in 2008 in Karachi, Pakistan

DEADLINE : July 31, 2007

Visit www.wzcc.net or request forms from: Filli Madon, Director WZCC-Australia, pars09@yahoo.com

GLOBAL FORUM : POWER OF PEACE,

January 2007. Conference organized by UNESCO and Govt of Indonesia. Dr Zareen Karani Araoz presented "the possibility of Dialogue between civilizations .

With Best Compliments From
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Zarathushtrian Kusti Prayers

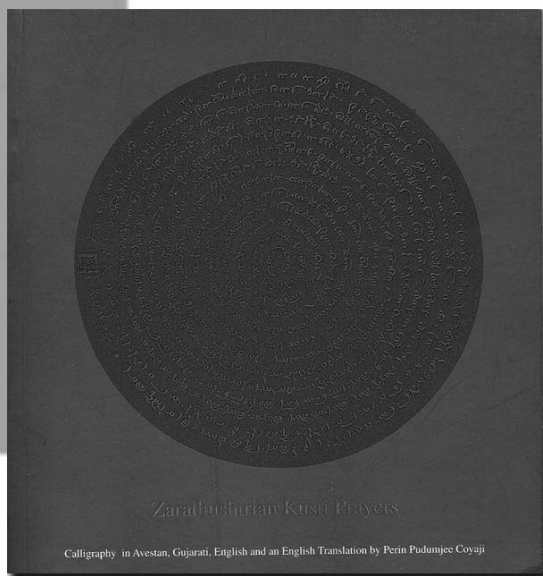
Second edition 2006 , 92 pages \$22 USD plus postage

By Perin Pudumjee Coyaji humata67@hotmail.com

Reviewed By Hoshang B. Shroff, Vancouver Canada

BOOKS

ARTS



This book is a good and radical departure from the average Zarathushti prayer book in which generally little attempt is made to give visual delight on just glancing at the book.

Perin Coyaji a freelance copywriter has therefore made a significant contribution in presentation of the following prayers:

1. **Ashem Vohu**
2. **Yatha Ahu Vairyo**
3. **Kem na Mazda**
4. **Ahura Mazda Khodae**
5. **Jasa me avanghe Mazda**

Each prayer is presented in three scripts: English, Avestan and Gujarati with a translation in English of each prayer.

A child preparing for formal initiation in the religion with this book has a far greater chance of being attracted and inspired by the beautiful presentation. For starters, the cover is red, has set out one hundred and one words of Ahura Mazda in tiny gold Avestan script set within a sphere.

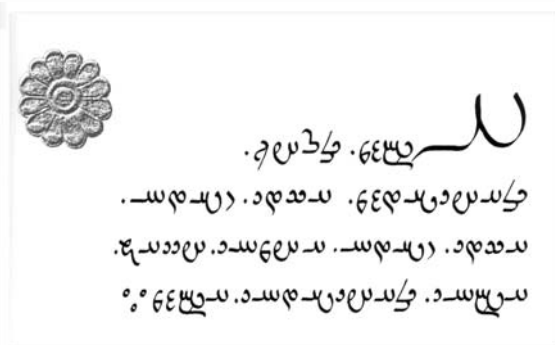
Perin has gone into this project single-handed inspired by her interest in calligraphy and love for prayers.

By profession she is a free-lance copy- writer. Her serious study of calligraphy and the Avestan language commenced as recently as 1996. Being a resident of Pune, India, she travelled for nearly three years once a week to Mumbai studying calligraphy. In 1998, she was given a copy of "Practical Grammar of Avestan Language" by Ervad Kanga, a 100-year-old book. With the help of her teacher she photocopied each letter of the Avestan alphabet, enlarged, cut and placed them on a grid. She also attended lectures at the University of Pune and Vaidika Samsodhana Mandal. She learnt the technique of Chinese brush calligraphy at Obiron University in Tokyo where she also held an exhibition entitled:

Humata :calligraphy from India displaying Gujarati, Devnagiri Hebrew, English Chinese and Avestan scripts.

The brush she believes is a live instrument but difficult to wield. In her words "You go with the flow, release energy through heart and hand" By way of illustration I reproduce her rendition of Yatha Ahu Varyo in Avestan script

It is also note worthy that in our cherished tradition of charity she was sponsored by Jamshed Guzder and the trustees of the J.C.D. Adenwalla Trust. I am certain that without such assistance, publication of her book would have proved rather daunting. My complements to the Adenwalla trust.



Hoshang B. Shroff, Q.C.: Completed his early schooling in Gujarati, in Navsari before going to Karachi. He was refused ordination as a priest as he was not from a priestly family even though he stood first in his class for reciting navar and martab prayers. He was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, England and practiced law for 10 years in Nairobi, Kenya. Came to Canada in 1968 and is Queen's Counsel in British Columbia where he has been living and practicing. He is married with 2 daughters and three grandchildren. He enjoys classical music, both Western and Indian, literature, particularly Shakespeare, yoga and racket ball.



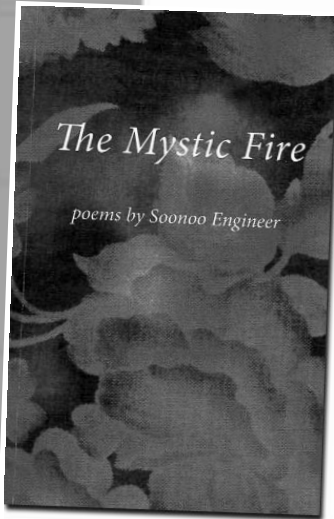
The Mystic Fire

Poems by Soonoo Engineer 2006;

Pages 76 \$12

Reviewed By Hoshang B. Shroff, Vancouver Canada

BOOKS
&
ARTS



Samuel Taylor Coleridge the English poet said:

"Prose: words in their best order;

Poetry: the best words in their best order."

Another definition that interests me is of another English poet W.H. Auden.

"In poetry you have a form looking for a subject and a subject looking for a form. When they come together successfully you have a poem." (Emphasis added)

Soonoo Engineer in her book of poems, written over the past several years, acknowledges receiving encouragement from several people including Roshan Rivetna the past editor of this Journal. We wish to continue to encourage Soonoo in her endeavours to express herself in the most challenging form: as stated before: the best words in their best order.

"The Compass Devine" reproduced below is one of her poems in a section called "Autobiographical-From Despair to Delight"

Oh God, grant me a compass divine

To steer me through my storm tossed mind.

Too long have I floundered in murky shallows,

Too long battered by the savage winds of chance.

Grant me gentle gales and tranquil seas

So I may glide home to Thy sheltered harbour of peace.

Soonoo Engineer is now in retirement. She lives in Vancouver and had taught English and a course in Eastern religions and culture at the local community college. The book is self-published. The sale price inclusive of postage is \$12 CDN for Canada and \$12 USD for United States. Those interested in acquiring a copy of her book may write to her at: 504 – 360 East 36th Avenue, Vancouver, Canada. V5W 4B9.

"THE MOTHER AND OTHER SHORT STORIES"

By Khorshed R. Javeri

A book of short stories that has caught the fancy of the reading public. The style is reminiscent of authors like Ruskin Bond and R.K. Narayan-simple but compelling; as are the commonplace characters and situations to which every reader can relate.

The stories have a delightful Parsi flavor. They satisfy in the older reader the yearning for old world values, which sadly today are disappearing before his or her eyes. The young, will by reading them discover the world of their parents and grand parents. A "must-read" that will delight both young and old.

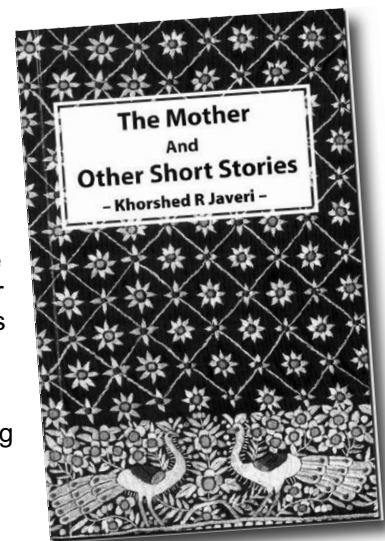
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Namaj, A Selection of Zoroastrian Prayers

The CD

BOOKS
ARTS &

Reviewed by Dina G. McIntyre.

In Zarathushtra's day, music was so important a part of his people's lives and religion, that he used the name "House of Song" as a metaphor for paradise -- an indication of the rich tradition of music that must have then existed. And he expressed his theology in the form of seventeen songs to Mazda. One can only wonder at the severity of the persecution that resulted in eliminating all traces of music from the Zarathushti religion. Even those who fled to India carried with them a religion bereft of its rich, ancient musical tradition.

That is the sad past. The CD **Namaj, A Selection of Zoroastrian Prayers**, is the happy future. It starts with birdsong! And it brings the joy of music back into our prayers. It appeals at more than one level -- explicit as well as subtle.

Explicitly, it contains a few verses from the Gathas, its Yanim Mano introduction, some familiar Avestan prayers -- Yatha Ahu Vairyo, Ashem Vohu, Yenghe Hatam, Ahmai Raeshcha, the Avestan parts of the Kemna Mazda, the Mazdayasno Ahmi part of the Jasa me Avanghe Mazda, (Fravarti Y12.8 - 9), as well as some not familiar to me -- Tao Ahmi (Afrigan i Dahman 2 - 7), two Pazand pieces -- the Hamazur Beem and the Dir Ziveem, and a modern Monajat. Some of these pieces are harmoniously chanted by Mobeds. Some are beautifully sung by a choir (with an exquisite solo of Y31.8). And all are complemented by instrumental music that is so lovely, so haunting, so moving, it gave me goose bumps. Each piece is followed by an eloquent translation in English. These translations use good modern English without sacrificing ancient style and beauty (although I would have preferred the use of Zarathushtra instead of Zoroaster, and may have translated a bit differently here and there).



Included is a flyer with a helpful introduction, and each prayer in its original language. I wish the English translations had also been printed.

At a subtle level, I love the way the CD combines birdsong with human music (reminding us that we are a part of nature) and uses male and female voices (expressing equality between the sexes). The CD cover also blends the ancient and modern -- the ancient Avestan script proclaims the word 'namaj', and the art work combines, with contemporary flair, many lighted candles and fingers holding a koshti.

This CD is a tiny jewel of creative art. All those who took part in its creation and implementation deserve our sincere respect, admiration, and gratitude.

| | |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chanting | <i>Mobeds M. Firouzgary and K. Niknam;</i> |
| Melodies and general arrangements | <i>Fereidoon Demehri;</i> |
| Singing by the Gatha Group choir; solos | <i>Dowlat Azarshahri, Ms Azar and Jamshid Adily;</i> |
| Monajat lyrics | <i>Bahram Ravari;</i> |
| Musical instruments and musicians | <i>-- Tar (Farin Sardari), Setar (Guiv Homaee), Kamancheh (Bahman Khosravi), Divan (Houman Abtin), Tanbour (Majid Faraji);</i> |
| English translations and editing | <i>Dr. Ali Makki;</i> |
| Recital of the English translations | <i>Valerie McNichol and Michael Robinson;</i> |
| Cover design | <i>Negar Demehri;</i> |
| Produced in Canada | <i>O'Shihan Cultural Organization.</i> |

Copies may be ordered through www.oshihan.org/namajE

**Would you like to write poetry for enjoyment and light reading?
Then apply for membership in the two new poetry groups created.**

<http://groups.msn.com/ZoroastrianPoetryGroup>

<http://groups.msn.com/ahunavar>.

ZIFF-4

Fourth Zoroastrian & Iranian Culture Film Festival



Fourth Zoroastrian and Iranian Culture Film Festival (ZIFF-4) held on 16th November 2006, at Kay Meek Centre, West Vancouver featured 16 short and long films related to Zarathushti and Iranian culture. This bi-annual festival which is the first of its kind in North America absorbed the audience and all the three sessions were 'full-house' capacity as in previous years.

This is a non-competitive film festival and people's best choices announced were:

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 'Persepolis Recreated' | by Farzin Rezaeian of USA |
| 'The Rebirth of Rostam' | by Saeed Ghahari from UK |
| 'Mashi & Mashianeh' (Adam & Eve) | by Hassan Naghashi of Iran |
| Preview of 'In Search of Cyrus the Great' | by Cyrus Kar of USA |

These films received the Crystal Cedar Trophy as appreciation.

| | |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 'The Empty Cluster of Those Days' | by Sohrab Akhavan, |
| 'This Cradle will Shake' | by Foroud Evazpour |
| 'Parsic Tree' | by Hassan Naghashi |

received the appreciation diplomas.

'Palms Die Standing' and **'Share of Immigrant'** by Panahbarkhoda Rezaee with **'Soshious'** by Hassan Naghashi drew good attentions from the audience.

A photo exhibition of Zarathushtrian Ceremonies taken by Zarathushti photographers were on display in the waiting hall. Due to a good response by the audience and the film makers, this festival may become an annual event. If you want any of the films to be shown to your community, you may contact ZIFF by email.

ZIFF Manager,
Fereidoon Demehri



International Music Aid Awards 2006

For her track "Get up now"
From her CD "Karma - The EP"



Music Aid, an internationally recognized and respected event, began in England in 1998 and has hosted some of the biggest names in music organizing the International Music Aid competition.

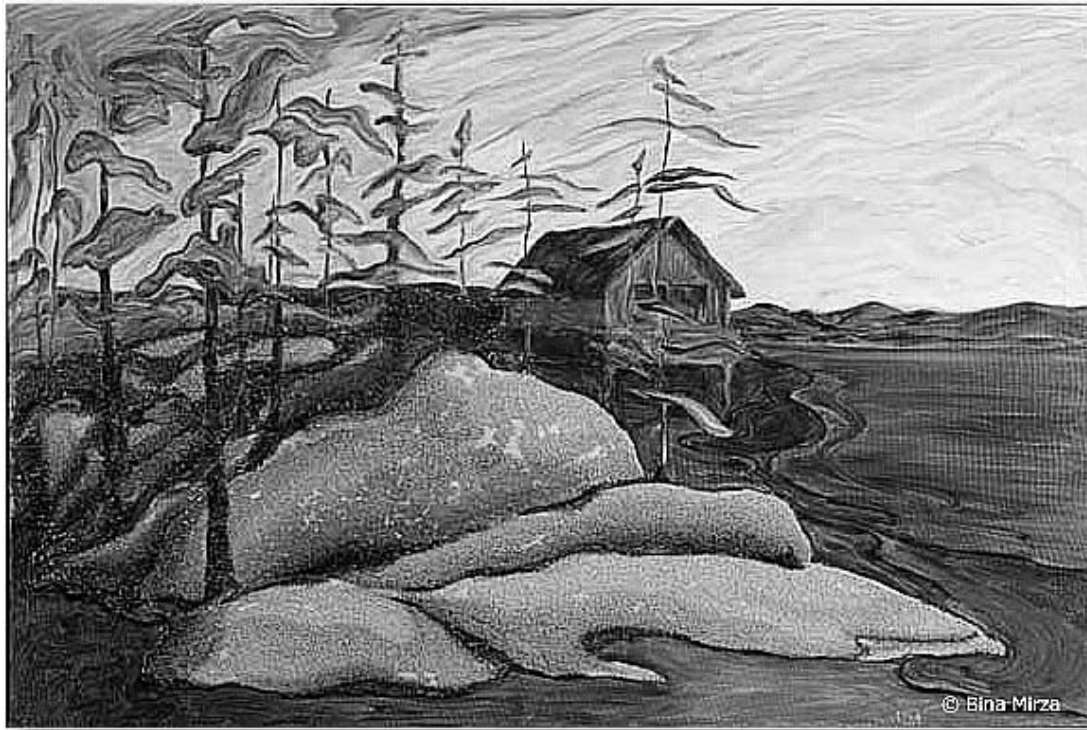
Visit: <http://www.musicaid.org/awards.htm#aus> to view the awards and to find out more about Music Aid.

Farita will make a donation to the 4th World Youth Zoroastrian Congress in Ballarat Australia, for every CD 'Karma - EP' (\$10) sold. For more information visit www.farita.com.

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Binaifer Mirza

Canadian-Zarathushti visual
artist from Ottawa.



*"Our environment shapes our understanding and our perceptions,
by integrating nature into my art, the canvas becomes a window
to the magnificent world around us." ~Bina Mirza*

Bina is a contemporary, Canadian-Zarathushti visual artist from Ottawa. Her current series on landscapes merges sculptural relief with oil-painting to create three-dimensional representations of the places that have inspired her in life. Visit www.bina.ca to learn more about this emerging artist, her inspirational works and upcoming exhibitions.

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Sooni Taraporevala wins more laurels for the book

"The Parsis"

In October, 2006 photographs from Taraporevala's book "The Parsis" was featured in Lille, France, at a huge festival of India and the diaspora. Several large prints of her photographs were exhibited, with more featured in their exhibit catalog with the book being sold. Beaux Arts, a fine arts magazine, featured 2 photographs.

<http://www.lille3000.com/> and

http://www.indeeparis.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=385

The photography was also featured in a beautiful 3-page spread and interview in the spring issue of Anokhi Magazine (a popular glossy South Asian diaspora lifestyle magazine, published in Canada, (distributed in the US and UK too)) <http://www.soonitaraporevala.com/media/spring2006.html>

Sooni Taraporevala's next film, THE NAMESAKE, directed by Mira Nair and based on Pulitzer Prize winner Jhumpa Lahiri's novel, will be released in spring 2007.

Subscription Rates (US dollars)

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