



JOURNAL

Mah Amordad Shehrever 1377 AY (Fasli) • Mah Behram-Asfandarmad 1377 AY Farvardin 1378 (Shenshai) • Mah Asfandarmad 1377 AY Farvardin-Ardehbest 1378 AY (Kadmi)

LIVING WITH CHALLENGES

**Coordinating between 2 Continents & A Special
Thank You to Ushta Confectioner's Tandarosti Team**



Also Inside:



Erv. Brgd. Panthaki
Invited to Papal Mass



Jamsheed Choksy
at the White House



**Farita – Best Female
Solo Artist, Australia**



**A Rejuvenated Cama
Athornan Institute**



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Mah Amordad Shehrever 1377 AY (F)

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Feroza Fitch
of
Lexicongraphics

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A word from the Editor

Dolly Dastoor



Life is a challenge, which each one of us face in different ways. Some collapse under the weight and some climb to heights carrying the burden, transforming it into

an opportunity. Challenges come in all shapes and sizes from a simple challenge of going through a boring and lonely day, to coping with challenges posed by illness, by death of a loved one, by natural disasters, by collapse of financial institutions, social ostracisms and the list is endless.

This issue of FEZANA JOURNAL offers the reader an insight into the profound beauty of human emotion, on society's problems, on human progress of all sorts, perspectives on turns and twists of history. In this issue you will read of the personal challenges faced by Frian Wadia, Nauvzer Sachinvala, Yasmin Shroff, and their willingness to share their innermost emotions in dealing with them, their determination, their positive attitude, and their desire to see the beauty in their challenges which they considered as opportunities. I am amazed by the driving desire of Anahita Dua, Shirin Kiani, Farishta Dinshaw and Mantreh Atashband to help and empower those devastated by rape, HIV/AIDS, those crushed by society and their patriarchal families, to rise up again. I am humbled to see the sheer effort of Jai Vakeel in transforming the challenge she faced in educating a developmentally deprived daughter into an educational institution renowned all over India and Asia.

But there are also challenges we faced and are facing as a community, and how we dealt with them, did and will define us for years to come. The challenge Maneckji Limji Hataria faced in getting the jizzya tax abolished, defined the future of the Zarathushtis in Iran; the challenge faced by the community in 1839 when a Parsi boy was baptized a Christian at the mission school of Rev Dr John Wilson, propelled the community into action. This challenged Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy to put his money to better use with the

opening of an educational institution for Parsis which is still operational after 167 years. There were other challenges which some may have considered as "heresy" and some as correcting a wrong. e.g. the consignment of bodies of intermarried women to the dokhma. (The Roxanne Shah Case). This led to the formation of the Association of the Intermarried Zoroastrians. An individual's challenges can and do shape events.

The community at present is going through turbulent times trying to cope with the ideological challenges posed by WAPIZ against adult franchise for the election of trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayat, the challenge of reversing the trend of shrinking demographics, the challenge of thinking outside the box to the growing movement of accepting the religion as propounded by Asho Zarathushtra as an universal religion. And now the community faces challenges posed by global warming. The location of the Holy Fire in the Atash Behram in Udvada is in peril with the relentless encroaching of the sea water. But the challenge which threatens the survival of the community is preservation of the Zarathushti identity, being a minority community in a Muslim majority in Iran, in the Hindu majority in India and the Christian majority in the diaspora. How we meet these challenges will define us as a community for generations to come.

In an age when shock value determines the content, it is comforting to know that the FEZANA Journal caters to personal stories & community news to increase (and diffuse knowledge) of what is happening in our Zarathushti world. Each story, each picture and each word illuminates what is startlingly new, everlastingly significant and undeniably entertaining, always with readers' interests in mind.

Have a wonderful summer

CORRECTION

In FEZANA JOURNAL Vol. 22, No 1 page 18, entirely due to inadvertence, we referred to Farangis Zardoshty as the "late". Although we have already apologized to the family as soon as the error was discovered we consider it appropriate to apologize publicly to the family for this unfortunate error

Dolly Dastoor, Editor-in-Chief, FEZANA JOURNAL

A Message from FEZANA President



I believe that the job of the president is to actualize the shared vision of the community. The first part of the job is to understand and articulate this vision. But the harder part is to instill a sense of purpose and direction so that a group of independent-minded individuals and associations are inspired to work together to achieve this vision. If I have succeeded in doing this to even a small extent, then I have done my job.

In a nutshell, our shared vision is to achieve:

- A united Zarathushti community,
- Make Zarathushti presence an integral part of the North American landscape, and
- Develop viable infrastructure.

Community unity does not mean that we must all think and act alike. To me, it means a willingness to listen to the “other side” and to genuinely work towards a common purpose in harmony with the precepts of Asha.

We have made a start by celebrating Naurooz together in a meaningful way. Mehrgan, Tirgan, Pateti and Yalda are other celebrations that have profound meaning in Zarathushti history and culture. We are working towards a seasonal calendar to highlight our connectedness with natural cycles. These initiatives are helping to bind us closer together.

Children’s religious education is the foundation on which rests our future. We owe a great debt to the religious education teachers and mobeds for willingly giving their time and knowledge to teach our children. More and more Zarathushtis are taking up the study of religion at university levels, and behdins and athornans are engaging in serious study and open discussion of our scriptures on their own. As we share our thinking and knowledge, we learn to trust our intuition and beliefs. And trust is what drives us to move forward together with confidence.

Interfaith activities, community service, participation in UN-NGO conferences, and carefully conceived public relations activities are bringing awareness of and respect for Zarathushtis to a wide audience. Zarathushtis are already making inroads into the North American melting pot culture by assuming leadership in professional organizations, community service projects and fundraising drives to support various causes. Our community is growing from strength to strength.

The FEZANA office is now set up and running in Chicago. After finalization and approval, the FEZANA Resource Center (FRC) will provide the fuel for developing our knowledge base and disseminating religious information. My hope is that eventually, FRC

will become a major center for scholarly studies in North America. Beyond the office and the FRC, I envision recreational facilities, retreats, and regional worship centers on the east and west coasts and in the north and south. A business roundtable can be set up to help fund our current and future infrastructure needs.

To put all of the above in perspective, we also need a realistic assessment of where our worldwide community stands today. FEZANA collaborates with many organizations in India, Pakistan and Iran. On the home front, FEZANA keeps close contacts with NAMC and WZCC chapters. Our Associations are also doing their part at the local level. Notably last year, ZAGBA, and ZAGNY volunteers worked with the FEZANA Critical Assistance committee to help a young burn victim from Mumbai to receive treatment in Boston.

Last January, Yasmin and I visited Mumbai, Pune, Sanjan, Udvarda and Navsari, and villages in Gujarat where the WZO-Trust is doing wonderful work to uplift poor Parsi families. We attended meetings and met many dedicated people working to uplift our mobeds, energize the youth and preserve Parsi culture. We are gratified to see that entrepreneurial spirit is thriving. Community properties are helping to provide a better life to many Zarathushtis. But personal agendas and personality conflicts are sidelining many critical issues that need attention. In Iran also, the Zarathushti population is fast declining and facing many problems due to discrimination.

It is quite evident how well FEZANA has served as a unifying force to channel our energies here in North America. We are a product of the environment we create for ourselves. Where we go from here depends on our ability to continually define and redefine our vision by including the clear voices of the next generation, by paying attention to our changing demographics and culture, and by harnessing the increasing confidence we feel in managing our future. In addition, we need to decide what is our responsibility towards Zarathushtis in our motherlands, and towards the world as a whole.

I want to thank the countless individuals who make up the “FEZANA community”; so many in fact, that I dare not try to name them all here. If you know me, then you know that you are included.

May Ahura Mazda bless us all, in all ways, always.

Rustom Kevala, P.h.D. FEZANA President, rjkevala@aol.com, May 1, 2008



Fund\$ & Finance Progress Report

The Financial Challenge



Last year we focused on FEZANA's 20th Anniversary Celebration as our theme to appeal for donations and pledges. We mailed hundreds of letters all over the country asking for support of the FEZANA 20th Anniversary Infrastructure Fund, which was established at the AGM, along with all the existing FEZANA Funds.

We would like to thank Yasmin and William Cumming (the DamKevala Family) for taking the initiative in donating \$50,000 as a down payment for a matching campaign for the Infrastructure Fund. They offered this \$50,000 as a challenge to the community to match it within one year. And, I am glad to report that as of this date we have collected \$61,000 toward this matching program for a total of \$111,000.

We would like to thank Farangis, Homayon and Iran Zardoshty for their generous donation of \$20,000 towards the FEZANA 20th Anniversary Infrastructure Fund in memory of their sister, Paridokht Zardoshty, and their parents, Mehrbanoo and Faridoon Zardoshty, and \$10,000 towards the Religious Education Fund in memory of their sister, Paridokht Zardoshty.

At this time I would particularly like to acknowledge the Beach Cigar Group, Inc. of Miami, Florida, who has been consistently donating and supporting the FEZANA Welfare Fund, especially for the \$20,800 that was given in the last quarter of 2007.

It is very encouraging to note that since the year 2007, the North American Zarathushti spirit of charity and benevolence has developed an upward momentum. If you refer to the FALL 2007 issue of the FEZANA Journal's Financial section July 1 to September 31, we received donations totaling \$48,185. In the 4th quarter October 1st to December 31st, we were very fortunate to receive a grand total of \$103,144.25. Thank you all for your generous support and donations.

This is our challenge - To keep the Zarathushti spirit of charity and benevolence in an upward momentum. By supporting the FEZANA Funds you are supporting and helping Zarathushti individuals and families at home and abroad. We would also like to thank the many volunteers who have given their time and effort in carrying out the work for the various FEZANA projects.

The FEZANA Funds are:

FEZANA General Fund,
FEZANA Welfare/Critical Assistance Fund,
DamKevala Endowment Fund for Welfare,
Bhathena Endowment Fund for Welfare/Critical Assistance,
Tamboli Endowment Fund for Welfare,
FEZANA Religious Education Fund,
Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Religion Education Scholarship,
FEZANA Academic Education Scholarship Fund

Kheradi Scholarship Endowment Fund,
Kapadia Scholarship Endowment Fund,
Mehraban and Paridokht Zardoshty Education Scholarship,
FEZANA 20th Anniversary Academic Scholarship Endowment Fund,
Creative & Performing Arts Scholarship Fund,
Sports Scholarship Fund,
Jungalwala Lecture Series Fund.
FEZANA Journal Fund,
FEZANA 20th Anniversary Endowment Fund for Infrastructure,

Jerry Kheradi,, MD, FACG, Chairperson, FEZANA Funds and Finance

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



DONATIONS

DONATIONS RECEIVED JANUARY 1, 2008 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2008

FEZANA 20th. ANNIVERSARY INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

Burgise & Khursheed Palkhiwala, East Windsor, NJ	\$ 10,000.00
Jimmy & Shahdokht Dholoo, Gaithersburg, MD	\$ 301.00
Anahita & Firoze Sidhwa, Coppell, TX	\$ 100.00
TOTAL	\$ 10,401.00

FEZANA GENERAL FUND

Fariborze Barhamand, Naperville, IL	\$ 500.00
Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC- Chicago)	\$ 500.00
Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT)	\$ 302.00
Adil Daruwala, Austin, TX	\$ 200.00
Traditional Mazdayasni Zoroastrian Anjuman (TMZA)	\$ 150.00
Mr. & Mrs. Pesi Sanjana, Farmington Hills, MI	\$ 101.00
Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC - California)	\$ 101.00
Zarathosti Anjuman of Northern California (ZANC)	\$ 100.00
Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania & New Jersey (ZAPANJ)	\$ 100.00
Dolly Munshi, Coral Gables, FL	\$ 80.00
Jehangir Irani, Sugar Land, TX	\$ 50.00
Aban Shah, Santa Barbara, CA	\$ 50.00
Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC)	\$ 50.00
Burjor Mody, Honolulu, Hawaii	\$ 35.00
Sarosh Olpadwala, Ithaca, NY	\$ 32.00
Banoo & Behram Shahzadi, Fountain Vally, CA	\$ 30.00
Kamal Campbell, Milledgeville, GA	\$ 25.00
Rusi Press, Ramsey, NJ	\$ 22.00
TOTAL	\$ 2,428.00

FEZANA WELFARE FUND

Beach Cigar Group Inc., Miami, FL	\$ 2,000.00
Zarhosti Anjuman of Northern California (ZANC)	\$ 1,465.00
Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania (ZAPA)	\$ 720.00
Hovi & Burjis Shroff, Boca Raton, FL	\$ 500.00
Behram Shroff, McLean, VA	\$ 300.00
Farrokh & Maneck Contractor, Kenner, LA	\$ 250.00
Mr. & Mrs. Vispy Sarkari, Murphy, TX	\$ 60.00
Anonymous	\$ 50.00
TOTAL	\$ 5,345.00

FEZANA CRITICAL ASSISTANCE FUND

Beach Cigar Group Inc., Miami, FL	\$ 1,800.00
Vira Santoke, Huntington Beach, CA	\$ 51.00
Rohinton Shroff, Richmond, British Columbia	\$ 50.00
TOTAL	\$ 1,901.00

FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Anahita & Firoze Sidhwa, Coppell, TX	\$ 1,000.00
Parvez Yeganegi, Vancouver, BC	\$ 158.00
Ruby & Cawas Cooper, Macungie, PA	\$ 50.00
TOTAL	\$ 1,208.00

FEZANA RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FUND

Farrokh Forooghi, Henderson, NV	\$ 72.00
Tanaz Ferzandi, Brookline, MA	\$ 60.00
TOTAL	\$ 132.00

FEZANA JOURNAL FUND

Ayesha Nariman, Williamsville, NY	\$ 25.00
Minocher Reporter, Corvallis, OR	\$ 25.00
TOTAL	\$ 50.00

FEZANA CREATIVE & PERFORMING ARTS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Sorab Modi, Washington DC	\$ 101.00
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MOBED HEALTHCARE INITIATIVE

Zenobia & Sharookh Lala, Farmington Hills, MI	\$ 115.00
Firoza & Firoz Mistry, Chapel Hill, NC	\$ 100.00
Aban & Rayomand Unwalla, Norristown, PA	\$ 101.00
Roshan Malva, Downey, CA	\$ 101.00
Navaz Behramkamin, Portland, OR	\$ 21.00
TOTAL	\$ 438.00

PARSEE GENERAL HOSPITAL

Burgise & Khursheed Palkhiwala, East Windsor, NJ	\$ 90,000.00
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TOTAL DONATION RECEIVED January to March 2008

\$ 112,004.00

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FEZANA JOURNAL

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FEZANA UPDATE

FEZANA OFFICE NOW A REALITY OFFICIAL OPENING AUGUST 31



President Rustom Kevala, announced the set up of the FEZANA Office on the premises of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZSC) at 8615 Meadowbrook Drive, Burr Ridge, Illinois 60521. A prayer of blessings was included at the Nau Rooz jashan on March 21, 2008.

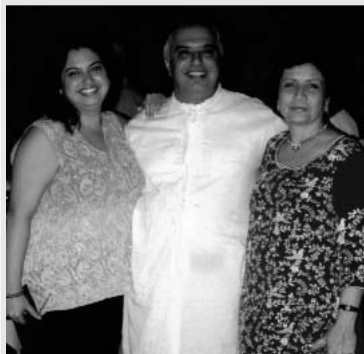
Ms. Zenobia Damania has been appointed as the part-time administrator for the office. She is now setting up the furniture and equipment. The telephone and Internet connection are completed by next week. Hoshang & Bonnie Karani of Lake Forest, Illinois donated an executive desk, chairs and \$3000 to ZAC towards the office set up costs. FEZANA is seeking donations of about \$4,000 to \$5,000 for the computer, scanner and printer that will be needed.

Donations totaling over \$110,000 for the 20th Anniversary Infrastructure Fund have been received by FEZANA. Dr. Jerry Kheradi and his fundraising team are thanked for their efforts.

Welfare & Critical Assistance Committee Report

The Critical Assistance Committee is a FEZANA committee **designed to provide assistance to individuals, families and organizations facing temporary difficulties due to medical emergencies, natural disasters, violence, or legal issues.**

Outlined below is a brief sampling of the types of cases addressed by the critical assistance committee:



1. Hospitals aiding in Zarthushti health issues in need of Medical Equipment.
2. Low Income families w/ sick children and no Medical Insurance (life threatening illnesses).
3. Immigration issues causing immediate family separation.
4. Natural disasters that cause family displacement and affect livelihood. Example: Surat Floods & Hurricane Katrina.
5. Recovery from Terrorist Acts. Example: Bombay Train Blasts.
6. Situations of domestic and familial violence.
7. Widows w/o job skills, needing to re-build their lives.
8. Agiyaries that would be forced to close and are the only places of worship for Parsis in their towns.
9. Low Income families suffering losses of child(ren) needing assistance with funeral expenses.

The Welfare committee chairs Houtoxi Contractor of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Hosi Mehta of Chicago, Illinois started with only an idea in 2002 and because of clear objectives, defined goals and an understanding of what the community needed, the Critical Assistance Committee has partnered beautifully with the Welfare Committee to provide consistent legal, social, medical and educational assistance over the past 6 years.

Today as both our committees, Welfare and Critical Assistance, have grown and successfully helped many of our Zarathushti community, we would like to say **THANK YOU** to those who have over the years shown their support, by lending us everything from their wisdom and listening ear to guidance and financial support.

Until next time.

Ushta-te (may happiness be unto you always),

Houtoxi Contractor--412-367-2948 or
HFMC31@aol.com

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

Freyaz Shroff --+91-98922-73973(in Bombay) or
freyaz@aol.com

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

-Anonymous



FEZANA UPDATE

ROCK, PAPER, AND SPIRITUALITY

RELIGION EDUCATION SEMINAR

Houston and Dallas



2008 FEZANA KHORSHED JUNGALWALA

Lecture Series Speaker

including Almut Hintze

Zartoshty Brothers Senior Lecturer in Zoroastrianism, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

Reported by Yasmin Pavri (Houston)

Anahita Sidhwa (Dallas)

The Zoroastrian Associations of Houston and North Texas (ZAH and ZANT), in co-operation with the Khorshed Jungalwala Lecture Series, held a one-day seminar featuring three distinguished speakers. About 70 people attended the seminar in Houston on Saturday, April 12, 2008 and 60 attended the seminar in Dallas on Sunday, April 13, 2008.



From left Dr Jenny Rose , Dr Matthew Stolper, Dr Almut Hintze

The seminar started with a greet-the-speakers dinner in Houston on Friday night and a similar community dinner ended the seminar in Dallas on Sunday. Both dinners included a tribute to Khorshed Jungalwala, recognizing her intellect, her many talents, her generous nature and her immense contributions to the community. It is fitting that we continue her tradition of scholarship and service by hosting an event that enlightens and educates us all.

The audiences in both cities were most interested in finding out how the speakers' interest in Zoroastrianism arose. Dr. Hintze studied Greek, Latin and comparative philology as an undergraduate, which led her to the study of Avesta. Dr Stolper became a life-long student of Persepolis artifacts after excavating in Iran as a graduate student. The audience was surprised to hear the story of Dr. Rose's Parsi grandmother, who after a stroke could

only recall memories of her childhood in Rawalpindi. It was a family reunion of sorts for Jenny as she found a second cousin in Houston.

Dr. Hintze's first talk was titled ***Prophetic and Priestly Authority in Zoroastrianism***. Every religion needs a hierarchy and institutions to survive. In most religions the prophet is a philosopher/ innovator while the priests are the guardians of tradition - roles often in conflict with each other. Zarathushtra was unique in that he filled both roles. He not only composed hymns of his "conversations" with Ahura Mazda but was also a priest who established a new type of ritual worship that is preserved in the Yasna Haptanghaiti. Of great interest to the audience was her assertion that Yasna Haptanghaiti indicated that men, women, and even minor children could be a Zaothar (chief officiating priest), as long they were learned. Many Yasna verses asking for good rulers were quoted to show the spiritual power of the spoken word that forms the link between the priests of today and Zarathushtra himself. Questions that followed included:

Should women be priests? Dr. Hintze said that she had read in Parsiana that, in 2003, the Iranian Council of Mobeds had agreed that women could be para-mobeds but not priests.

If Zarathushtra was a priest, why do some people believe that he was philosopher, but that he was against rituals? Dr. Hintze did not see any evidence of Zarathushtra being anti-ritual in the texts.

Do we have names of women who were priests? No, but we also do not have names of men who were priests in very early times. The names we have are from a much later period.

Dr. Rose's presentation, ***"Gods, Kings and Priests at the Crossroads – Rock Reliefs of Zoroastrian Iran"*** took us on a fascinating archeological tour of Iran. Since Iran was at the crossroads of Asia and Europe, rulers would use rock carvings to record history and publicity. They were in effect, the "You Tubes of yesteryears!"

FEZANA UPDATE

Comparing Assyrian and Achemenian carvings allowed the audience to appreciate the benevolence and humility of the Persian monarchs and also see how the familiar fravahar symbol has evolved.

Some interesting questions from this session were:

How do you explain the disconnect between Persians as portrayed in the movie "300", with the grandeur of the Persian Empire depicted in these rock carvings? Herodotus was not the only Greek historian who wrote about the Persians, although unfortunately the West often uses him as their only source of information. Other Greek historians have written about Persians as being glorious, gracious, and noble.

Why is there no mention of Zarathushtra in the rock carvings? Although Zarathushtra is mentioned often in the texts of the same period, he is not depicted in the rock carvings. A possible reason may be that since an individual could communicate directly with Ahura Mazda, the carvings show rulers communicated directly with Him.

Dr. Stolper educated us on ***The Persepolis Fortification Project: Steps in a Race to Record Unique Achaemenid Documents.*** The documents are thousands of tablets and clay fragments with seals, and images that were unearthed under the fortification wall of Persepolis, and brought to Chicago in the 1930's. In a lawsuit brought by survivors and families of victims of a terrorist attack, the plaintiffs have asked that these tablets be auctioned off to pay restitution. This has created a need to get as much of the collection recorded as quickly as possible before a judgement is handed down. Even if the judgement is against the plaintiffs, it is very likely that Iran will ask for the tablets to be returned to prevent any other possible law suits. Dr. Stolper's group is making extensive high resolution images of the tablets, which can allow the viewer to manipulate the object on screen as if they were holding it in their hand. The translation of the elamite, aramaic and cuneiform scripts found on the pieces contain information about rather mundane things like the storage and payment of food. But the importance of these artifacts is in what they tell us about every day life at Persepolis. As Dr. Stolper pointed out, "each bit of information may seem useless, but when a number of data points get connected, we begin to see the bigger picture that is of immense historical value."

Dr. Hintze ended the seminar with a lecture titled: ***Defeating Death: Eschatology in Zoroastrianism, Judaism & Christianity.*** Ideas common to Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity include the arrival of the Savior, resurrection, the defeat of evil, and new life in everlasting bliss. Early Jewish beliefs stated that all souls, good and bad, go down to Sheol from where they never return. Later beliefs shift the focus of retribution from the actions of a group to those of an individual – a concept probably borrowed from Zoroastrianism. In dating these ideas Dr. Hintze pointed out that the idea of Farshokereti was fully developed in early Avesta but does not occur in Judaism until after 200 BCE



The religious seminars in Houston and Dallas were initiated by Firdosh Mehta whose dynamic efforts made this series a reality. Dallas seminar included an interesting innovation which was a brainchild of Firdosh where children attending the religious classes had a question and answer exchange with the speakers. This session was moderated by Sherazade Mehta. Some of the questions were:

What did the ancient Persians wear? They wore loose trousers, tunics, belts, and their turbans showed their profession.

Who started wearing the Sudreh and Kusti? We don't know about the first sudreh, but the kusti is from Zarathushtra's times.

(photo left Arbez Patel reading citation to Dr Hintze, with Firdosh Mehta holding mike. In foreground table centre pieces of Persepolis column miniatures made by the children of ZANT for NauRooz.)

How do we know when Zarathushtra was born, and how long did he live? Because the Gathas are in a very ancient language, we think he was born in 1200 BCE. He died when he was 77 years and 40 days old.

What was the significance of the serpent throne on some of the rock carvings? Underground fresh water is considered a source of knowledge, wisdom comes from the earth and the serpent is a connection between earth and sky.

FEZANA UPDATE

HOUSTON ORGANIZING COMMITTEE



From left Rustom Engineer, Arnavaz Sethna, Yasmin Pavri, Meheryar Rivetna, Dr Jenny Rose, Dr Matthew Stolper, Dr Almut Hintze, Aban Rustomji, Purvez Rustomji, Zubeen Mehta, Behroze Daruwalla, Magdalena Rustomji, Jehangir Mistry, Shahnaz Sidhwa, Nauzer Bilimoria

DALLAS ORGANIZING COMMITTEE



From Left to Right: Firdosh Mehta, Anahita Sidhwa, Dr. Almut Hintze, Dr. Jennifer Rose, Dr. Matthew Stolper, Dr. Poras Balsara, Zenobia Chinoy



2008 FEZANA KHORSHED JUNGALWALA LECTURE SERIES

Lecture Series Speaker

Almut Hintze

Zartoshty Brothers Senior Lecturer in Zoroastrianism, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

Zarathushtrotema: Prophetic and Priestly Authority in Zoroastrianism."

Reported by Parastu Dubash Ph.D

The Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area (ZAGBA) was fortunate to be able to schedule a talk with Dr. Almut Hintze Zartoshty Brothers Senior Lecturer in Zoroastrianism, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London and who had been selected by FEZANA as the 2008 Speaker of the Khorshed Jungalwala Lecture Series. This was a particularly important achievement as



FEZANA UPDATE

ZAGBA's talk was scheduled just a few weeks ago, but was deemed significant as this is Khorshed Jungalwala's home community and Boston/Cambridge is her hometown.

Although the lecture was on a Tuesday evening (April 15th) at Harvard University in Cambridge, about 25 people were in attendance. Daryush Mehta, a graduate student at MIT and one of the leaders of the Zoroastrian Students of Boston, introduced Dr. Almut Hintze with great enthusiasm. Dr. Hintze presented her talk informally seated in a comfortable red leather wing chair in the Parlor Room of the Phillips Brooks House while others were seated around the room in similar large leather couches and chairs. It might be interesting to some to know that this is the same building where for over 10 years, a number of dedicated individuals from the Zarathushti Boston community continue to meet regularly to study the Gathas. Khorshed and Firoze Jungalwala were among those who came to this location for years starting in 1996 to pour over numerous translations and to meticulously examine each word within a verse in order to reach a deeper understanding and appreciation of these divine songs.

Dr. Hintze probably recognized that although she had given similar talks in other cities to audiences that might have included a few people who had known Khorshed, the selection as the speaker for the Khorshed Jungalwala Lecture Series and speaking in Cambridge/Boston was somehow on a different level. Khorshed Jungalwala was one of our most-loved, most-respected and well-known member of ZAGBA. Most local community members had special friendships with Khorshed, saw her as a symbol of grace and dignity, and respected her as a pillar of the community. The occasion of Dr. Hintze's talk gave the local community an opportunity to remember Khorshed's dedication to the Zarathushti religion, her embodiment of Zarathushti values, her generosity to others, and her strong dedication to scholarship and education.

Members of the audience included many from the Zarathushti community, some undergraduate and graduate students, and even some families who have been in the Boston area for over 25 years. Others in the audience were who had studied or were studying under Dr. Oktor Skjaervo (Professor of Iranian Studies at Harvard University). There were even two mobeds who had the opportunity to hear Dr. Hintze describe how their religious authority came from the fusion of Zarathushtra's two roles of prophet and priest.

Out of respect, Dr. Hintze began her talk, first by addressing Firoze (Jungalwala) and then the rest of the audience. Dr. Hintze's talk was titled ***"Zarathushtrótēma: Prophetic and Priestly Authority in Zoroastrianism."*** Throughout her talk, drawing on the scholarly research of others and that of her own, she translated specific Yasna verses to argue that Zarathushtra was not only a prophet to whom Ahura Mazda revealed his Daena Mazda religion in a series of conversations, but also that Zarathushtra was a priest who initiated a new type of ritual worship. Dr. Hintze also maintained that Zarathushtra provides the model both for the individual follower of the religion and for the institutionalized priesthood.



From left Daryush Mehta, Almut Hintze and Firoze Jungalwala

Most in the audience appreciated Dr. Hintze's linguistic scholarship and were grateful for the opportunity to listen to a non-Zarathushti who had made it her life work to research and translate important Zarathushti liturgical texts. At the end of the talk, there were a number of interesting questions and clarifications, and also the sharing of some different points of view regarding the translation of specific Avestan words, comparisons to other religions, and even the questioning of whether the Yasna Haptanghaiti is in fact a part of the Gathas. A number of the scholars joined in for a more academic discussion. Unfortunately, the questions were cut short when the room needed to be used by another group. ZAGBA is grateful to Dr. Hintze for accommodating us in her schedule and for the opportunity to listen to her fascinating and thought-provoking lecture.



Calendar of Festivals

Calendar of Festivities

May to December 2008

Daye Mah nu Jashan

<i>Mah Daye Roz Fravardin</i>	Sunday, May 04	(K)
	Tuesday, June 03	(S)

Maidhyarem Gahambar

<i>Mah Daye, Roz Meher-Behram</i>	Thur, May 01- Mon, May 05	(K)
	Sat, May 31 - Wed, June 04	(S)

Pir-e-Sabz Festival

<i>Mah Khordad, Roz Ashtad-Aneran</i>	Sat, June 14 -Wed June 18	(F)
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Pir-e-Banu Festival

<i>Mah Tir, Roz Meher-Behram</i>	Fri, July 4 -Tues, July 08	(F)
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Maidyoshem Gahambar

<i>Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher</i>	Sun, June 29 - Thurs, July 03	(F)
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Jashne Tirgan

<i>Mah Tir, Roz Tir</i>	Tuesday, July 01	(F)
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Fravardegan/Muktd/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar

<i>Five Gatha Days</i>	Tues, July 15 - Sat, July 19	(K)
	Thurs, Aug 14 - Mon, Aug 18 (Pateti)	(S)

NauRooz

<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormuzd</i>	Sunday, July 20	(K)
	Tuesday, Aug 19	(S)

Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra)

<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad</i>	Friday, July 25	(K)
	Sunday, Aug 24	(S)

Fravardian Jashan

<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin</i>	Thursday, Aug 07	(K)
	Saturday, Sept 06	(S)

Maidyozarem Gahambar

<i>Mah Ardibehesht Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher</i>	Fri, Aug 29 - Tues, Sept 02	(K)
	Sun, Sept 28 - Thurs, Oct 02	(S)

Paitishem Gahambar

<i>Mah Sheheravar, Roz Ashtad-Aneran</i>	Fri, Sept 12 - Tues, Sep 16	(F)
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Jashne-Mehergan

<i>Mah Meher, Roz Meher</i>	Thursday, Oct 02	(F)
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Ayathrem Gahambar

<i>Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad-Aneran</i>	Sun, Oct 12 - Thurs, Oct 16	(F)
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Jashne-Avangan (Avan Ardivisur Parab)

<i>Mah Avan, Roz Avan</i>	Sunday, Oct 26	(F)
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Maidyoshem Gahambar

<i>Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher</i>	Tues, Oct 28 - Sat, Nov 01	(K)
	Thurs, Nov 27 - Mon, Dec 01	(S)

Jashne-Adargan

<i>Mah Adar, Roz Adar</i>	Monday, Nov 24	(F)
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Death Anniversary of Asho Zarathushtra

<i>Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed</i>	Friday, Dec 26	(F)
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F=(Fasli), S=(Shenshai), K=(Kadmi)

ELECTION RESULTS

FEZANA EXECUTIVE OFFICERS 2008-2009

President
Bomi Patel

Vice-President

Treasurer
Katayun Kapadia

Secretary
Firoozi Poonevalla

Asst Secretary
Nahid Dashtaki

A BIG THANK YOU TO
RUSTOM KEVALA
Out-going President for his
leadership

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Apru Karachi:

Stories of the City by the Sea

Parsis left their mark on Karachi as it grew from a military port to a metropolis of 13 million people. In the Fall 2008 issue, Karachiites share the legacy, the experience, and the memories of living in this city by the sea.

GUEST EDITOR

FARISHTA MURZBAN DINSHAW



COMING EVENTS

APRIL 2008 STANFORD ZOROASTRIAN LECTURE SERIES

Professor Almut Hintze will lecture on Thursday April 10, 2008 at 7.00 p.m. in Cummings Art Building, Room 2, Stanford University, Palo Alto CA.

MAY 2008 ZOROASTRIAN STUDIES PROJECTS INTERNATIONAL, University of Toronto, Ontario.

Khojeste Mistree MA (Oxford), F.C.A. will give a talk on "Zoroastrianism a living Faith" and an inspiring slide show on "A pilgrimage to Zoroastrian Iran". May 24, 7.00 p.m. Contact hbumgara@hotmail.com

JUNE 2008 ANCIENT INDIA AND IRAN TRUST (AIIT), Cambridge, UK

"Zoroastrianism past and present" conference, June 5 and 6. Participants Almut Hintze, J.R. Hinnells, Mitra Sharafi, Jesse Palsatia.

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

The eleventh Zarathushti games will be held July 2-6 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

SEPTEMBER 3-5 2008

60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will be celebrated September 3-5, 2008 at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France. For the first time the 61st DPI/NGO conference will be held outside New York.

SEPTEMBER 11, 2008 UNITY WALK, New York

SEPTEMBER 21, 2008 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE VIGIL

The International Day of Peace will be observed as a day of prayer to foster peace worldwide. To plan your

event for 2008 please visit <http://www.idpvigil.com/> and register your commitment.

OCTOBER 2008, World Day of Prayer for Peace, Montreal

October 2008 MAMA SCHOOL
Preliminary announcement for the first ever re-union in North America, October 10, 11, 12, 2008 in Houston of the 90th anniversary of Mama School of Karachi.

NOVEMBER 2008 UNITED RELIGIONS INITIATIVE- GLOBAL ASSEMBLY

Pilgrims for Peace : Many paths, one purpose. November 30-December 5, 2008 at Mayapur, West Bengal, India visit www.globalassembly.org

MAMA PARSİ GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL 90TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION IN HOUSTON

The North American Alumni of the school will be celebrating the 90th birthday by holding a reunion on the weekend of October 10-12 in Houston, Texas. The event is open to all those who attended the school at any time in their lives, regardless of where they are living now. It is not limited to only those living in North America.

If you are an alumni of the school, please send your name, maiden name and graduating year to Nancy Yazdani, at msalumni_na@sbcglobal.net. We will then be able to register you as an alumni and also send you further details regarding the reunion. Please register even if you are not planning on attending as we will be making a directory of all North American alumni.

We are also putting together a cookbook as a memento of the reunion. If you have any recipes you'd like to share, please email them to Zeenia Fernandes (zfernandes@cds.ca) and they will be included in the recipe book.

Also share your old school pictures with us. You can send them to Vahishta Canteenwalla (vahishtac@hotmail.com) or they can be mailed to 3 Cedarwood Court, Kirkland, Qc H9J 2Z5.

DECEMBER 2009, WORLD CONGRESS, DUBAI.

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



DECEMBER 2009 PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

The 2009 Parliament Embracing Difference, Transforming the world. will be an international inter religious gathering spanning seven nights and six days – from December 3rd to 9th - bringing together an estimated 8,000 to 12,000 persons. Visit: <http://www.cpwr.org/index.html>



IIT BOMBAY GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION

July 18-20, 2008

New York City

Theme: "Past, Present and Future"

The event is open to all IITB alumni, alumni of other IITs, invitees, sponsors, and their families..

Forward this message to your friends, and ask alumni, if they haven't already done so, to login and update their contact details in the Alumni Directory on www.iitbombay.org in order to receive program information via email.



Going through life we see people living with different challenges. Some have unimaginable disabilities and still make it seem like life is a breeze and some have a harder time dealing with circumstances.

There are no comparisons as each difficulty is different and only the person going through it can know exactly what it is.

There are physical challenges, mental challenges, psychological challenges, religious challenges, social challenges, educational challenges and so much more.

Six years back my friend Houtoxi Contractor asked me to co-chair with her, the welfare committee for FEZANA (for your information we are better friends now). We looked for direction and there was not much available, we were told you will get requests, check them out and respond. We started out doing just that, had very good-on-the job training and learned from our experiences.

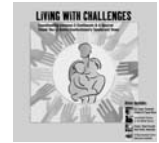
Yes we do know that when there are five Zarthushtis, we have seven strong opinions, but when it comes to helping someone in need, our community comes together and can be very generous, and for me this has been the most gratifying experience to see the unity and the giving spirit to do good for someone who is going through a rough time. This is true not only for our community members but for humanity in general. We experienced that on numerous occasions, e.g. earthquake in Gujarat, Tsunami in South Asia, earthquakes in Pakistan and Iran, Katrina flooding in USA, etc.

Zarthushtis or otherwise we do understand that we all belong to the common human race and that somehow, somewhere we are all connected and our misfortune and well being are also somehow connected. That each one of us has that small part of godliness in us, which we are trying to grow, the purpose of our life.

We noticed that a few people who knew about FEZANA Welfare were requesting and getting the benefit and then President Firdosh Mehta kept encouraging us to spend the funds, but we were being extra careful. We decided to inform the general public about our activities to generate greater awareness and so started the FEZANA column on welfare in our Journal. It took time but brought the necessary results.

Most of our requests were from India and we were fortunate to connect with Dinshaw Tamboly whose help and guidance we have taken advantage of very frequently and we will be grateful to him for his help, always. Due to the laws of our countries of US and Canada for transferring funds, we have to deal with a registered not for

profit organization in the recipient country, and in India, WZO India, again through Dinshaw Tamboly helped us in delivering to the right source. We thank WZO and Dinshaw for that help.



As we started growing we felt the need to write down Terms of Reference, operating guidelines on procedures we follow so that folks who will carry on this work can use our guidelines and improve on that, but they do not have to reinvent the wheel again. Lessons learned in the growing stages have helped us write these guidelines which were approved at a FEZANA annual general meeting some years back. We thank the late Dinshawji Joshi, the first chair of the Welfare Committee for his meticulous and grounding for this committee.

We, then, started getting requests for help from abused spouses. Most of us are naive, at least I grew up with the impression that this does not happen in my community and was shocked to hear of the various cases. We were very fortunate to have the help and guidance of Freyaz Shroff who had some experience in this field. Freyaz took active interest in all aspects of welfare committee and took us to new levels.

We are fortunate to work with three people who have different ways of thinking but with the utmost respect, confidence and trust in each other. We have all gained and learned from each other and grown ourselves and the welfare committee.

We thank the current President Rustom Kevala and Vice President Bomi Patel, Treasurer Katayun Kapadia, Secretary Firuzi Poonevalla who make our jobs easy by working seamlessly with us and encouraging us to do more.

The best teacher to learn from is Ahura Mazda, who has created an environment for us to learn and grow and to better ourselves and our creation. Every one of us can learn to lead better by creating the same environment for folks who work with us.

We have a network of helpers all over North America and some in India, Pakistan, Europe and Australia and we are now developing contacts in Iran also. When we get in a situation where we need local help, we contact our helpers and work with the local association to help and support the person in need. We would specially like to thank our major donors, the Damkevala, the Bhathena and the Tamboli families for setting up the Welfare Endowment Fund

None of us claim to be experts in the Welfare field, we serve as facilitators and try to guide people in the right direction. All three of us are very compassionate people and believe in the Principle of Ashem Vohou: "To do good for the sake of goodness."

We thank Ahura Mazda for providing us the opportunity to serve in this capacity through FEZANA Welfare Committee.



Living with Challenges



Peace, Direction & Wisdom

By Freyaz Shroff

Her husband died today
When He, her brother, was celebrating his son's first birthday.
Not a big party, nor a big show and just a few toys,
Because...you see the little boy reacts violently to noise.
She, the brother's neighbor, just lost her job;
And, so uncontrollably did she seem to sob.
The man across the street had worked fourteen days without any breaks,
Just so that his family could have food on their plates.
He had a little girl, this man across the street,
But pressures would keep her from the final swim-meet.
She, her brother, his neighbor, the man across the street and his daughter,
They all saw each other, on Friday, by the seawater.
Each facing East with folded hands they were praying,
"Lord, Thank You for all we have, and all that You are yet to bring."
After their prayers, they joined their hands as if they all knew the right thing to do,
Together they prayed for peace, direction and wisdom, ending with an Ashem Vohu.
Big or small challenges they are sure to come,
With God, you see they can all be overcome.
May Ahura Mazda always hold us close to His heart,
So that as long as it is required we can keep "playing" our part.

God Bless You!!



Freyaz Shroff has lived in the United States for 20 years and

has dedicated much of that time as a volunteer who has served primarily children and women. She has overseen successful community building projects and supported "stay in school" programs by working with children "at risk." Currently residing in India, she is involved in creating a youth education sponsorship program for Zarathushti children. She has a Bachelors Degree in Sociology and a Masters in Business Administration.



Six years ago when my good friend and past FEZANA president Firdosh Mehta asked me to chair the FEZANA Welfare Committee, I must admit I was a little hesitant to accept. I had spent several years volunteering my time and helping organize charitable events on a local level with the encouragement and support of my husband Farhad, but I had less experience organizing such efforts on a larger scale. But, along side co-chair Hosi Mehta, I feel I have been able to contribute and what's more have gained so much in the process.

When I first started working with the Committee, our main activities involved tapping into the rich resources and generosity of the North American Zarathushtis for very worthy causes, including medical care and treatment for poor Zarathushtis around the world. Over the years, the scope of projects broadened to include helping

victims of earthquakes in Iran, India and Pakistan as well as those affected by other natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina. As a Committee, we knew that our efforts of raising money were going to very good causes; however, as the breath of our projects grew, we decided that we also wanted to play a larger role in the depth of the projects. To that end, in 2004 Freyaz Shroff joined us to help give birth to the Critical Assistance Subcommittee that focuses on providing emergency guidance, support and assistance for individuals within the community who suffer from problems ranging from domestic violence and child abuse to devastating illnesses.

Over the past few years, I have had the opportunity to visit several of the organizations to which the Welfare Committee has donated in order to see firsthand how we could assist them in other ways. While these visits were



Living with Challenges



under the auspice of "official committee business" it was truly a pleasure for me on a personal level to witness the wonderful work that these organizations are carrying out. I was truly touched by the dedication of the volunteers to the people they were directly serving. What's more, through this work I have met some of the most inspiring people in our own community. I have grown up with wonderful role models in my life, from my parents Perin and Darashah Randeria to my in-laws Dina and Minocher Contractor; the people I have met and worked with through the committee serve as new sources of inspiration. When one looks at all the suffering in this world, it is easy to feel overwhelmed. However, through my involvement with the Welfare Committee and through meeting such inspirational and hardworking people along the way, I have new hope for the future. It is because of the generosity and support of the Zarathushti community that we as a Committee have been able to help so many people worldwide. I feel privileged and blessed to be in a position to help others and I look forward to growing both in myself and as a member of the FEZANA Welfare



Houtoxi Contractor lives in Pittsburgh, PA with her husband Farhad. She is the President of the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and is actively involved in many charitable organizations with fund raising activities & currently serves on the board of the Tri-State Indian

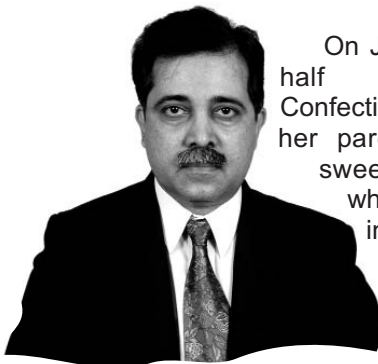
Physician Auxiliary, India Nationality Room committee at the University of Pittsburgh & interfaith alliance of north Pittsburgh. She has two daughters, Laila and Cyra. Houtoxi is proud of her family, including her new son-in law Homi Bodhanwala, for their continual good works and contributions to the community.

Committee. As my mentor Minocher Contractor always said,

"GOD GIVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO GOOD IN LIFE, AND GIVE ME THE LIFE TO DO IT"

CHALLENGES OF COORDINATION BETWEEN 2 CONTINENTS

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO USHTA CONFECTIONER'S TANDAROSTI TEAM



On July 3, 2007 four and a half year old Ushta Confectioner had accompanied her parents to a street-side sweets shop in Mumbai, where she accidentally fell into a large pot of boiling milk on a stove on the floor of this store. She sustained severe burns on 65% of her body and was ultimately admitted to Masina Hospital in Byculla, where Dr. S.M. Keswani (photo above) and Dr. Shirin Mullan attended to her medical needs. The two doctors together managed to save the life of this little girl. On August 11, 2007 Ushta had her 1st skin grafting operation. Because her own skin was being used for the grafts there had to be periods of time to allow for her skin to grow, before a section could be taken for grafting. Due to Ushta's medical needs, the family's financial position and the hospital costs, on August 13, 2007 FEZANA's Critical Assistance Sub-Committee sent out an appeal for funds.

The overwhelming response not only brought in funds from Zarathushtis the world over, but as a result of proactive efforts by Yasmin and Jamshed Ghadiali brought about the option to have Ushta treated free of cost at the Boston Shriners' Hospital for Children with Burns. By September 6, 2007, Ushta's doctors were consulted, the doctors in Boston were sent Ushta's medical records, with her injury photographs and Ushta's parents had made the decision to exercise the option to send Ushta to America for further treatment. Now came the task of actually getting this little girl to Boston. Ushta could not move, she was unable to stand or sit, which of course made the task of coordinating travel a little more difficult. An additional element to consider was that Ushta's body was ready for her next skin graft; hence, timely travel was important.

By now **Critical Assistance team of FEZANA** had been joined by a few proactive FEZANA volunteers who were vested in Ushta's safe travel and arrival into Boston. Taking on a life of its own this team began to be called the **"Ushta Tandarosti Team."** Members of this team included:



Living with Challenges



Rustom Kevala: President of FEZANA

Dinshaw Tamboly: Director of WZO-Trust in India

Yasmin & Jamshed Ghadiali: Secured the Boston Shriner's Treatment

Jamshed Dubash: President of the Boston Z-Association, ZAGBA

Parastu Dubash: Member of ZAGBA

Firdaus Bhatena: Member of ZAGBA

Jasmine Bhatena Member of ZAGBA, and Practicing Pediatrician

Aban Dhondy: Member of ZAGBA

Homi Gandhi: President of New York Z Association, ZAGNY

Navaz Merchant: Vice President of ZAGNY

Many emails and phone calls flew around over the next two weeks. There were several pieces to coordinate:

In India

Clearing off all pending medical bills at the hospital, the pharmacy and the blood bank

Finding a nurse, certified in pediatric and intensive care with a valid passport to travel with Ushta

Getting visas for Ushta's parents and the nurse

Coordinating and procuring a visa for Ushta, as she was unable to go in person for the U.S. visa Interview

Getting airline bookings to bring Ushta, her mother and the nurse to Boston

Creating options for Ushta to travel lying down, as she was unable to sit

Finding donors to pay for the air travel, as the donations that had been received were for medical treatment only

Coordinating travel for Ushta from the hospital to the airport

Getting all permissions to carry on board a commercial airliner, a stretcher, oxygen and other required medical supplies

Getting all airport permissions to allow for a medical ambulance and direct boarding

Working with Immigration and Customs in India to clear boarding in the ambulance, for Ushta and her mother

In America

Ensuring that the American authorities were aware of Ushta's arrival and needs

Coordinating her entry into America with airline personnel

Coordinating with customs and immigration in New York, as that was her 1st port of entry

Coordinating an internal medical flight from New York to Boston, as in-country flights do not accommodate a stretcher

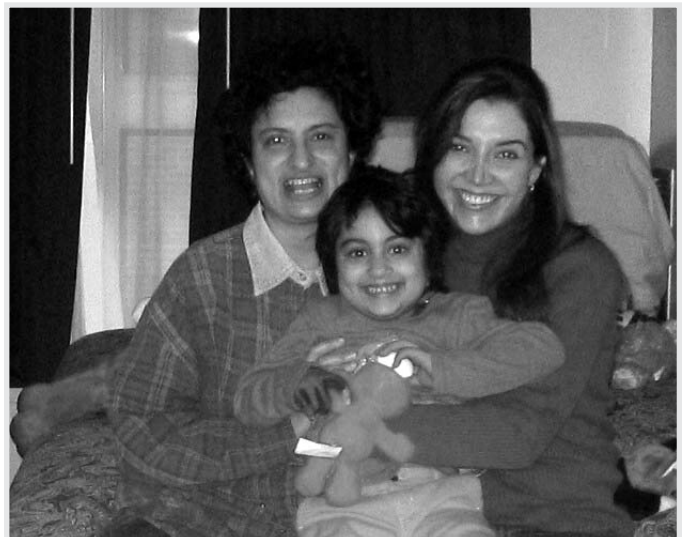
Receiving Ushta in Boston, coordinating the ambulance and travel to the hospital

Taking care of Ushta's needs while in Boston



Taking care of Ushta's mother's needs while in Boston, including meals, lodging etc. facilitating the after hospital care for both mother and child

As one can well imagine there were many challenges and hurdles, but one by one they were overcome, and although we worked well together as a team, it was apparent to us all that Ahura Mazda's hand was ever present at every stage.



On the morning of September 19, 2007 Ushta, her mother and the nurse departed from India for Boston. By October 10, 2007 the doctors in Boston had brought Ushta's fever and skin infections into a stable condition, they had also completed one allograft. An allograft is a



Living with Challenges



transplant, which is sourced from a genetically non-identical member of the same species. What this means is that the doctors in Boston did not need to wait for Ushta's own skin to grow back before performing a graft and this greatly sped up her recovery process. On October 23, 2007, Ushta celebrated her 5th birthday. ZAGBA members worked hard to make this birthday a happy and memorable one for her. On November 19, 2007, Ushta was discharged from the hospital; however she was put on a physical therapy regimen. Upon discharge, Ushta had completed 6 allograft surgeries, replacing her skin on back, thighs, buttocks, lower legs, and other required parts of her body. She was now able to sit; she had a 100% range of movement in her arms and 70% range of movement in her legs. She was able to walk 100 feet on her own, without any assistance. On November 30, 2007, Ushta completed her physical therapy program and was released from Boston Shriners' hospital into the full care of her parents. (Photo page 16) Baby Ushta with mother on her right and Dr Kitayun Ghista on her left)

Sincere gratitude and greatest thanks go to our donors worldwide. Without your support none of our work would have been able to come to fruition. Thank You!

Additionally, many worked very hard towards the recovery of this little girl and much gratitude is owed to them:

In India

Dinshaw Tamboly: For being a constant support, assimilating received donations and disbursing funds as required for medical bills, visas etc.

S.M. Keswani: Burns Surgeon in charge of Ushta's case

Shirin Mullan: Pediatrician in charge of Ushta's case

Masina Hospital: For their full cooperation and assistance

Siloo Ghadiali: For her assistance in establishing contacts for Air Travel

Darayus Mody: For helping navigate Air India's ticketing process

Mukund Barve: For coordinating the stretcher seat, and working with Air India's doctors for medical travel approval

Fali Warden: For assisting in making the air travel more affordable

Nilufer Bhatnagar: For finding seats, and assisting with the ticketing process for Ushta's mom and nurse on the morning of day of travel

Sandy (U.S. Consulate): For assisting with Ushta's visa, by visiting Ushta in the hospital as opposed to requiring her to come in for the interview

Inspector Vijay Shirsath: For one-hour turnaround on the case report filed, for the Visa

Keki Press: For arranging burns

ambulance and accompanying the family until they got on the plane

Jyoti Doshi: For letter required from an Indian association for air travel discount

Naushad Contractor: For arranging baggage transportation to the airport

Puneet & Tripti Arya: For donating the roundtrip airline tickets and the stretcher seat

In America

Air India Airport Manager, NY: Vasumati Jayaraman

His Wings Ministry: Pilot Scott Welch

Boston Shriners's staff: Lindsay Boger, Dr. Sheridan, Sandy Barret

Our Corporate Partners in this magnanimous effort included:

Air India: For its relentless support, unmatched service both in India and America and quick turnaround for timely medical travel.

Arya Iron and Steel: For its faith in a good cause and for donating the funds within a 48-hour period.



LIVING WITH CHALLENGES

GUEST EDITORS

HOSI MEHTA

HOUTOXI CONTRACTOR

FREYAZ SHROFF

CO-CHAIRS

**FEZANA CRITICAL CARE
COMMITTEE**

Living with Challenges



Reflections from our USA

Ushta Tandarosti Volunteer Team

Dr Yasmin & Jamshed Ghadiali: At the August 07, Pateti function of ZAGNY, we first heard about Ushta. We received further details from Navaz Merchant and ZAGNY board.

While we were discussing how the funds could be raised for Ushta, Jamshed thought about the Shriners Burns Institutes. Jamshed, being a Freemason, had heard about the Shriners and their Hospitals who treat children from any part of the world free of charge. We started calling members of the local chapter of Shriners, "Kismet Temple" and through their help got in touch with the doctors at the Boston Shriners Burns Institute.

As soon as the Team agreed that it would be advantageous to bring her to Boston the members made all the arrangements. Jamshed went to see Ushta in Boston during her first weekend and the remark he heard from a nurse says it all for the hospital, "It is great to work in a hospital where we can perform any treatment without worrying about whether the insurance company would approve it."



Navaz Merchant (photo above) who was coordinating the transit arrangements from New York to Boston; writes "It started with a phone call from Yasmin Ghadiali & 3 months later the results were amazing. I felt the love and earnest will from all individuals, like a wave that I could reach out and touch. Once in a while, we have a chance to see people at their best. This challenge was such an experience. The will, the cheerful determination and level of organization was truly inspiring. I feel grateful and truly humble to have seen such goodness abound. My job with the Newark transit done, I drove home, euphoric. I had seen goodness done today. God Bless all the volunteers who gave of themselves so willingly, with such abandon. God Bless my angel, my friend, Yasmin Ghadiali"

"Ushtamai Yadehshai Vahishtai Ashem" Doing right is its own reward. In this case, it also reaffirmed my faith in humanity.

Kitayun Ghista, joined the Ushta Tandarosti team once Ushta arrived in Boston, and was part of the ZAGBA team that regularly visited Ushta. She writes "When I heard that Ushta was destined here for treatment, I was confident that she would be in the hands of a great medical team and a very caring community! It was beautiful to see Parsis come together from across continents for such an extraordinary purpose, and I feel most grateful for Ushta to have been a memorable part of my life for over two months. I deeply treasure the time spent with her, and I derived great joy in seeing her recovery progress as the weeks went by. At just five years old, Ushta had remarkable maturity, and her resilience was exemplary. Her sweet, smiling and playful behavior is permanently imprinted in my heart and mind, and I wish her all the love and happiness in the world."

Firdaus & Dr. Jasmin Bhatena: "Ushta came to Boston in a very difficult situation, and it was gratifying to see how hard everyone worked on her behalf – her doctors in India, the transport team that brought her to



Bhatena family with baby Ushta and Houtoxi Contractor

incredible team at Shriner's Hospital that provided world-class care, free of cost. It was miraculous to see Ushta transformed within a few weeks through the love and care of everyone around her. Playing a role in making this happen was a reward in itself, and we were honored to be part of such a selfless and hard-working team."

Aban and Rohinton Dhondy (photo pg 19) "Ushta was a fighter and a brave child who struggled for her life. Ushta arrived with her Mother and nurse



Living with Challenges



from Bombay for a challenge of her life. She was brave and ready to face the treatment with a smile. On the second day I was accompanying her Mother while she was in surgery. When Ushta was brought back to her room I asked her what would she like, and she said, "aunty I want some Chocolates...and Tomato Wafers."



As time passed by she was getting more and more attached and was longing for our visits. She wanted us to stay with her and not leave her in the nights. She wanted someone around besides her Mother. We had to divert her attention to be able to leave. As days passed we came to know her favorite dishes like Idli

ZAGBA members, for individuals who traveled daily, between their busy schedules and commitments of work, school and family to visit Ushta, prepared and brought home-cooked meals, gave books, toys and videos, and even had a special celebration for her 5th birthday. Members learned about her favorite foods & toys, and brought them for her.

In October, children of Religious Classes, made handwritten cards for Ushta and attached their photos. They made a video greeting, where the older children gave personal messages and the younger children sang Happy Birthday. On Oct. 23rd, Ushta was thrilled when presented with these personal gifts and Elmo and princess-themed presents. A little corner of her room contained other gifts from thoughtful well-wishers from over the past month. Ushta enjoyed chicken biryani for her birthday dinner and chocolate cake.

Once Ushta was discharged from the hospital the ZAGBA community continued to visit Ushta and her mom everyday with home-cooked food, picking up all



Sambar; Dhani Kadi (the way my mummy makes she said). We hope by the Grace of God wherever she is she has a wonderful happy life. With the help of Shriners Burn Center she was able to recover and be back to normal. Many thanks to the staff and the Hospital for their time and love they had for Baby Ushta. She indeed was a miracle to survive the burns.

The **ZAGBA** community reached out and embraced Ushta and her mom by regular daily visits, meals, and offers to host them when Ushta might leave the hospital. Email updates on her medical progress, follow-ups on Ushta's surgeries and recovery were provided on an ongoing basis to the community and FEZANA Welfare Committee. An online calendar accessible to members with a username and password was created to coordinate a visiting schedule. The ZAGBA Board continued to share their gratitude with

the food necessities (eggs, bread, water, milk, juice, fruit, cheese), bringing them some pots, pans and plates.

Upon their departure, ZAGBA donated many of the toys and books that Ushta was not able to take with her to a local Big Brother Big Sister Program.

The Boston community will remember the smile and bright face of a little shy girl who came in need of specialized medical treatment who left healthier and stronger, able to walk and no longer requiring critical and intensive care. Members will continue to feel great pride at how our ZAGBA community reached out to Ushta with love, thankful for the medical treatment opportunities that the FEZANA Welfare committee was able to arrange for her. We wish her a good future!



Living with Challenges



Family Support for People with Developmental Disabilities in the U.S.

Cathy Ficker Terrill, M.S.

Thirty five states in the United States have some form of family support funding available for children with developmental disabilities. The systems are family driven, easy to use and flexible. Each family leads the decision-making process concerning the type and amount of support they receive. Families are not overwhelmed by paperwork and red tape. Families can choose supports and services based on their individual needs and preferences. The main goals of family support programs are to keep families together; to support families to meet the many needs of the child and the family; to improve the quality of supports; to allow the family to participate; and to make a positive difference.

Quality programs focus on the entire family. The funding changes as the family needs change. Families are encouraged to express their individual needs. All members of the family should be treated with dignity and respect. Individual differences are respected. The services need to be easy to find and locally available. Families expect their opinions to be heard, respected, and acted upon.

Some family support programs fund home health care, transportation, adaptive equipment, housing adaptations, information and referral services, family counseling, support groups, future financial planning, and financial assistance. Family support programs vary from state to state. Some states only fund programs for the child with a disability, others also fund family support for adult children with disabilities.

In any family support program families should expect to feel welcome and have their voices heard. They should have control over decision making and how the funds are spent. They should expect a free exchange of information. This places individuals and families in control of resources.

Family support was funded initially because families joined together and asked government to make a change. Families came together to decide what they wanted and what they needed in order to support their child with a disability in their home. The families organized their message in a well organized and sequenced fashion. They told government leaders that they did not want their child to go to an institution. They pushed for community integration and personal empowerment of the child with a disability. They successfully advocated for a base of funding for family support.

Family support may also fund a family consultant. Family consultants are paid staff who can offer to the family valuable information necessary to develop an individualized family support plan. A family knows their family member, their family, and what they need. A family consultant has knowledge about services and supports

available through the community. Together, with families in the lead, the family and the family support consultant can develop a plan that defines the family's expressed needs.

Supporting families is a new way of thinking. Family support programs should provide whatever it takes to maintain and strengthen the family's ability to provide support at home to their child with a disability. Families and their children can benefit from the efforts of the public sector, private sector, as well as from the informal efforts of a variety of caring persons.

Policy makers need to weave together supports so that the child with disabilities receives needed services, families enhance their capacity to provide care and to function as a family, and community-centered helping networks, outside the public domain, are utilized wherever possible. These objectives are best accomplished, when family members and people with disabilities help design family support policies and practices.

How Do I Find Out What Services are Available and How I Can Get Them?

There are many different programs and places that can assist individuals and families that are facing various health challenges. Finding out what might be available in your area and how to access these services is not always easy. This article will try to provide you with some basic strategies to use in your search.

First, it's helpful to know that many services and programs are organized by specific categories, such as disability type, age, health condition, etc. While a particular service may meet your needs, you might find that you don't qualify because you don't meet the criteria established for the program. Many of the different service systems have a "Gate Keeper" component. This is usually a person or an agency whose job is to evaluate whether you qualify for the services available. Knowing whether the services you're looking for are controlled by a "Gate Keeper" is helpful to make sure that you start your search at the right place. You can talk to your doctor's office, school, local government office or state representative's office to help you get your search started.

It will be helpful for you to have an idea about what you want the services to do for you. For example, if you're looking for assistance for an elder who wants to stay living in their own home, think about what specific supports he/she needs to be able to remain living in his/her home. Once you've made a list of what you specifically need, think about whether any "natural supports" can be involved to help meet these needs.



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Rather than paying a service to take care of the lawn, perhaps a young neighbor can assist (many schools require students to perform service hours in their community – this is a great “natural support” resource). Likewise, maybe a friend who still drives can assist with carpooling to the grocery store. Thinking about the many informal supports that exist in communities before trying to acquire formal supports usually helps to narrow the range of services that need to be acquired.

Once you know what services you’re looking for from the formal service system, it’s helpful to see if there is anyone who can function in a “Case Manager” role. This is usually a professional whose job is to help you access and coordinate the services you need. The Case Manager usually helps to link you directly to service providers, and will follow up with you to make sure the services are meeting your needs.

Trying to access services can be a frustrating experience for some families. Unfortunately, it sometimes feels like the service system is trying to keep people out, rather than invite them in. Knowing that you might experience this reaction doesn’t necessarily make it easier to access services, but it might help you to realize that you’re not alone. An excellent place to start in trying to find out what exists in your community is to go to the United Way website (type United Way into your computer search engine). Other national organizations

that may be able to assist you in finding local resources are listed below.

www.thearc.org Provides information on resources for
People with Developmental Disabilities

www.cancer.org Provides information on resources
related to cancer

www.redcross.org Provides information on
resources for emergency situations

www.nami.org Provides information on resources
related to mental illness

www.aarp.org Provides information on resources for
older Americans



Cathy Ficker Terrill is the President and CEO of the Ray Graham Association for People with Disabilities. She is the Past President of the American Association for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities. She can be reached at cathyfickerterrill@raygraham.org.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

Your Subscription Department crew (above from left – Feroze Kharas, Thrity Kharas, Kershaw Khumbatta, Arnavaz Sethna, Hoshang Sethna) reminds you to

- 1 Please inform your change of address when you move. Returned mail, costs higher postage to resend as we do not get the benefit of the bulk mail rate.
- 2 **Expiry dates are on the labels of the envelope.** Please renew accordingly, this will avoid repeated e-mails/letters for reminders.





A LABOR OF LOVE-

The Birth of the Jai Vakeel School for Children with Special Needs

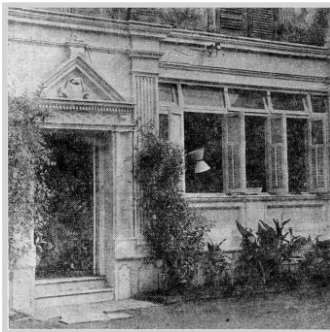
Laila and Cyra Contractor

"NEVER BELIEVE THAT A FEW CARING PEOPLE CAN'T CHANGE THE WORLD.

FOR INDEED THAT'S ALL WHO EVER HAVE"

Margaret Mead

On October 10th 1936, a baby girl was born to the Vakeel family in Mumbai. By the time she was two months old, the family realized that her development was delayed. At the age of six months, the famous surgeon, Dr. R.N. Cooper identified Dina as a child with Down syndrome. This news did not disrupt family life and Dina grew at her own pace. At the age of four, concerned individuals asked Mrs. Vakeel, "What about Dina's schooling?" Mrs. Vakeel replied, "*Dina is a very special child, and so she needs a very special school.*" The Vakeels thus started a one room schoolhouse in the Vakeel's drawing room on October 10th 1944, Dina's 8th birthday. The school, known as the 'School for Children in Need of Special Care' was born and later became known as the **Jai Vakeel School for Children with Special Needs**.



One room schoolhouse 1944



School at Sewri 2008

Within four years, the school expanded to the point where it became too big for one family to financially administer. In response to the need for a greater capacity to be able to work with special needs children, the Society for the Care Treatment and Training For Children in Need Of Special Care was formed in February 1949 and registered with the Charity Commissioner Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 as a non-profit organization.

The past fifty-nine years has been witness to the tremendous growth of the Institute. Much of the growth can be attributed to aide from The House of Tatas, since Mrs. Vakeel was a friend of Lady Tata. By 1953 – 1954 the growth of the student population to more than eighty called for the search for a facility. Mr. Minoo Tata and the Namdar family assisted with the land acquisition at Sewri Hill. In September 1956 the School started on the new premises with almost 100 students of various ages and special needs. According to Dina's niece, Mrs. Zariana Mulla, "All special needs children were welcome to join regardless of race, religion, color or socioeconomic background."

The Institute has not looked back and has grown stronger with the passing of each year. Mr. and Mrs. Vakeel's aim was to establish an Institute, which catered to the maximum needs of those who are mentally and physically challenged with multiple concerns which could all be addressed under one roof. "That target has been achieved," says Mrs. Tehmi Shroff, Dina's sister who currently manages the entire school. She feels she has taken the school to a new level by incorporating multi-dimensional treatment modalities. Today the school has evolved into a Research Society which provides diagnostic services, various therapeutic modalities, special education, vocational training and Rehabilitation, with an aim to increase employability of the individuals it treats, individuals who are cognitively and physically challenged thus allowing them to function to the best of their ability. Often times individuals receiving treatment at the Jai Vakeel School also play an integral role as staff members at the Institute. The Society also aims to conduct research, train competent and qualified special educators and a consultancy service. The activities of the Society draw inspiration from its Motto "LOVE, FAITH & ENDURANCE". Mrs. Shroff recently said "It is a rewarding job, and one feels untold joy when you see the children's happy faces, and the relief



Living with Challenges



of the parents and families.” She credits the success of this Institute entirely to the hard work, sincerity and loyalty of her staff. She says, “The staff has a desire to work for these disabled children and the sincere desire to better their lives.”

Many had come to notice the amazing efforts of the Vakeels and even caught the eye of Jawaharlal Nehru, the First Prime Minister of India. On his visit to the Institute he stated how he " ... was much impressed by the work being done ... a labor of love ... this venture deserves every encouragement ... the only institution of its kind in India, it is more than of local interest and should serve a larger purpose ... "

In Mrs. Tehmi Shroff's own words "The budding school with two children has now grown in to a big tree, sheltering more than 700 children in the urban as well as rural branches of the The Research Society. I and my staff want this tree to expand and grow by removing all the obstacles in the way and reaching out to shelter all these special flowers- as we say **WE TEND SOME SPECIAL FLOWERS**".

ON APRIL 22nd 2008 AT DOORDARSHAN, MRS TEHMI SHROFF WAS AWARDED THE NAVRATNA MAHARASHTRA STATE AWARD FOR SOCIAL WORK



Dedication of Three Generations: from R to L

Mrs. Tehmi Shroff (Hon. Admin. Director), Our Founder Mrs. Jai Vakeel, statue in the background, Mrs. Roxana Colah- Special Educator in the school and Mrs. Shroff's daughter



Laila Contractor Bodhanwala (right) is in her first year of training as a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist at the University of Pittsburgh. In the future she plans to work with traumatized children and families in the USA & Internationally.

Cyra F M Contractor (left) is a Senior Associate with the Investment Properties Group at CB Richard Ellis, Pittsburgh, PA. Cyra has started a program in her office; Birthday Cakes for Homeless Children. She raises money through her office and coordinates all the birthday cake orders and drop offs. The program started out with 2 local shelters and has now grown to 7 shelters. To date over 100 Birthday Cakes have been delivered to Homeless Children in the Pittsburgh area. For many of these children this was their first Birthday cake.

Laila and Cyra are both active members of the ZAPA community.



Living with Challenges



A life so full.....

"Happiness is to him who gives happiness to others"

Yasna 43.1, Ustavaiti Gatha,

Frian Wadia

Life is full of challenges and each one of us faces different challenges, at different stages in our lives. What matters most is not how great and difficult they are or how fast we overcome them, but how well we cope with them and how much we learn through them!

Our oldest son Khushru was 15 months old when he was diagnosed with DOORS syndrome, which is a rare genetic disorder that results in profound deafness, underdevelopment of nails and fingertips, retardation, developmental delay and seizures. Soon after that he was also diagnosed with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) which is a condition affecting communication and social skills resulting in learning difficulties.

In the early days our greatest challenge was simply accepting the diagnosis and not indulging in self pity. I remember wishing it would somehow turn out to be a big mistake and maybe things would just go back to 'normal'! We wondered what the future would hold for our son school? college? girlfriends? career? marriage? children? LIFE? Everything seemed to be a big question mark. I think it felt like being lost in a huge maze all by ourselves, with not a clue to the way out! But, we soon realised we had to move on and stop thinking about what we would all miss out on. Instead we started focussing on what we could do to help our son and make things better for him.

As parents we are able to see in our child a potential that others rarely ever can. Dealing with professionals on a regular basis has taught us a lot about believing in ourselves as parents and persevering and standing up for what we believe in. It has been an ongoing struggle to get the right medical and educational services in place for Khushru. We have learnt not to accept anything at face value but to always trust our instincts, get a second opinion if required, and investigate independently from several different sources. It is quite a challenge to tread the fine line between unreal optimism and dire pessimism, for our actions and decisions will affect and shape our child's future.

While Khushru is a healthy little fellow physically, he is an extremely slow learner; and it takes a lot of time, patience and consistency to teach him basic skills and tasks. It is physically exhausting to work with him as he requires a lot of one on one interaction, direction and physical prompting to do things. Not to mention the number of appointments, audiology check-ups and therapy sessions we have to attend!

I guess when you have a child with special needs you imbibe the virtues of patience, diligence, hard work and sacrifice. The efforts we put in and the sacrifices we make as parents don't ever feel like a task, but rather are an extension of our unconditional love for our child.

However, that being said, it does certainly take a toll on us as a family and as individuals. It puts a strain on us financially, emotionally, physically and mentally; because we are always trying to do our best and the utmost we possibly can. Some days are better than others. You simply learn to cope with all that needs to be done and try to live as normal a life as possible. With most of the focus being on helping and



working alongside a child with special needs, it is indeed a great challenge to strike a balance in our lives. Often we struggle to ensure that we do not neglect our marriage, our social support networks, professional obligations and most importantly our family as a whole unit and our younger sons as individuals.

The last couple of years we have struggled to plan our lives around what's best for our son but have realized that there are no guarantees in life. Embracing a future that is unknown and unpredictable is not easy in the least. But I have now realized that what is most important, is to be happy with the life I have; so I can give some of that happiness to my children and teach them to appreciate life and find happiness come what may. I do believe that in this day and age, this is the greatest challenge most of us face.....accepting our life and finding happiness in it! I have found mine ...hope you find yours!

Frian Wadia. originally from Bombay, India; now lives in Auckland, NZ since 2001 with husband Burzin Mehta and three sons Khushru (3 years old) and Kayan (16 months old), Zeus (born May 4/08) She was an early childhood teacher till 1 ½ years ago but currently spends her time looking after her children. Husband Burzin Mehta, is a quality analyst and tester working with a software company.



Living with Challenges



The Importance of Parent and Family Advocacy

Steven M. Eidelman

Advocacy comes from a Latin root – *advocatus* – meaning to call or to summon. In modern times, it means that a person can act on his or her own behalf, on behalf of others, while groups or organizations can do the same.

American society is structured so that, if you do not have a disability, you work hard and get educated, the basic systems in our society help you succeed -education, health care, housing, transportation and the justice system. These systems are designed for people who do not have a disability. Getting them to do what you need, if you have a disability, particularly an intellectual or developmental disability, is a challenge. This is why we advocate. Being the parent of a child or adult who has a disability is not a spectator sport. Frequently such children and adults need more assistance than any one family can provide.

The rights for people with disabilities are contained in national laws, particularly the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Developmental Disabilities Act, The Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Complete descriptions of these laws can be found at <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/cguide.htm>

The implementation of these laws, and others designed to help people with disabilities, and their families lead decent lives, takes place at the state and, in the case of public education, local level. Some people with disabilities go through the same life experiences as their age peers: education, higher education and/or job training, living outside of their family homes, love, marriage, family, community. Others are in need of specialized services and supports to enable them to accomplish all or some of these things. Regardless of how a person with a disability is characterized, advocacy – either by that person, and/or the family, and/or advocacy groups, and/or legal advocacy organizations – has played and will play a large part in their success as they become adults. Whether they or their families participate directly or not, advocacy looms large in their lives, whether visible to them or taking place in the background.

The key phrase, attributed to Florynce R. Kennedy, an African American civil and women's rights advocate (1916-2000) is, "Don't agonize. Organize." Advocacy is the work of all of us, as, especially in American society, where you get what you work for. Advocacy is important work, and all people with disabilities and their families have something to contribute to that work.

When you see a situation you feel is unjust you must speak out or take action to right the wrongs.

A simple framework for advocacy from the Ontario (Canada) Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services (OACRS) provides a conceptual framework for individual advocacy using the word PROBLEM:

- P - state the **P**roblem
- R - identify the **R**eal issue
- O - list your **O**ptions or choice
- B - select the **B**est choice
- L - plan action **L**ist steps
- E - Execute the plan
- M - Measure your success and evaluate

Advocacy is not about getting angry, it is about getting justice and helping people have a decent life.

LEVELS OF ADVOCACY

Advocacy takes place at four levels: individual; systems; legislative; and legal. Advocacy takes place by individuals, groups, and organizations. All forms are necessary, interrelated, and important.

Individual advocacy is about understanding the person, preparation, presentation, and use of power. You are trying to get what one person needs.

Systems advocacy is about getting an organization or a service delivery system in your community or your state to more effectively meet the needs of your family member, and others like him or her.

Legislative advocacy, at the state or national level, is about getting laws passed or changed and about getting funding for services. State governments are facing enormous pressures for resource allocation, an aging and rapidly depleting work force, and challenges in maintaining their infrastructure from roads to buildings. There are numerous guides on how to write to a member of Congress, and how to testify.



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<http://capwiz.com/thearc/issues/basics/?style=comm>) Like anything else, there are rules and guidelines for being an effective legislative advocate.

Legal advocacy means litigation at the state or federal level. It is expensive and time consuming, but sometimes necessary when all other forms of advocacy have failed.

SELF-ADVOCACY

People with disabilities advocating for themselves is a growing and thriving movement. People who a generation ago were written off as non-contributing, as victims, as people without power or worth are on a daily basis speaking for themselves, organizing and forming associations with others, and changing the way professionals, the media, and the three branches of government think about people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Not content to have others speak for them, self-advocates have adopted the slogan "Nothing about us without us!" They want their voices and ideas to be heard, and do not feel they need intermediaries to help them express them. Their growth and successes are remarkable, and leaders are emerging from that movement in the same way leaders have emerged from other social movements.

The late Justin Dart, Jr. (1930-2002), a person with a disability who served under President George H. W. Bush, who was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Bill Clinton, and who advocated for 40 years for the rights of all people with disabilities said, "Be involved in politics as if your life depended on it, because it does!" The interactions between people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their government are crucial and, fortunately, the tools to be successful are readily available for those who use them.

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Steve Eidelman has led change in a variety of settings for people with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities. A graduate student in Social Work Administration at the University of Maryland in Baltimore he also earned an MBA from Loyola University. In September, 2005 Steve became the first Robert Edelson Chair and Professor in the Field of Services for Adults with Developmental Disabilities, at the University of Delaware. Steve is the President-Elect of The American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (www.aaid.org), the interdisciplinary professional organization in his field.

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1. ibid

2. ibid

3. ibid

4. ibid



Living with Challenges



NOT ALLOWING LABELS TO DEFINE

Yasmin Shroff

Becoming a parent to a special needs child transforms the way you look at life. In hindsight, I'm glad I had this life transforming experience. It helps develop a certain amount of moxie, compassion and understanding for others and the purpose of life.

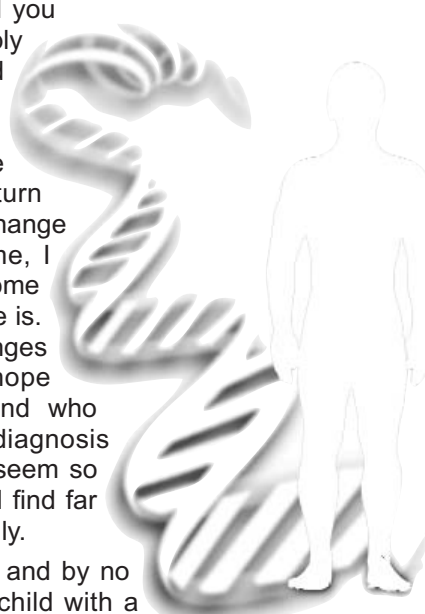
Much focus is put on the negative aspects of having a child with a disability. From the time you receive the diagnosis, your entire life changes. Parenting a child with a disability undoubtedly is busy and challenging, yet you grow in ways that you cannot dream of. Yes, there is heartbreak and disappointment at the beginning. You question your own abilities to meet those challenges, you endure advice from people who in actuality know little about the path you are to walk on. Love in every sense of its meaning is tested several times over, yet you begin to realize just how much you are growing because of this experience.

In the beginning you go through the stages of grief/loss – denial, anger, bargaining/questioning, and after all the tears have dried you reach the stage of acceptance. As time goes on you rejoice in the small successes and with pride see that single word spoken, or the ability to sit up as a miracle. You rejoice in small victories and learn just how much we take every breath for granted. Suddenly your definition of success no longer means an ivy league college education ending in a high powered position.

Its very easy to believe yourself as an accepting, tolerant person, until you are placed squarely in a position where you have to exhibit those qualities daily. When you reach the point of being able to embrace your child's disability with love, in every sense of the word, you begin to see that having a disability does not equate to a loss at all. Once you stop letting a label define who your child is, you begin seeing the possibilities lying there!

Having walked that journey as a lucky parent who has a child with a disability, I would not want her changed at all. Does that sound strange? After all why would any parent want their child to have a disability? But what can be more perfect than having a child who loves without restraint? What can be more perfect than seeing them exude sunshine around, what can be more perfect than having someone tell you that your child has touched them deeply as they see her filling the space around her with unrestrained joy and pure love? When you begin to relax and accept your child, you begin to see the gift you have been given. If I could turn back time or were granted a wish to change the fact my child has Down Syndrome, I would not take it because now I have come to see perfection in her just the way she is. Have there been struggles and challenges along the way, most certainly. Still I hope that any parent who reads this article and who may be dealing with a difficult diagnosis understands that whilst the path may seem so overwhelming, it truly is a path you will find far more interesting and enriching eventually.

Parenting is a learning experience and by no means easy. Undeniably parenting a child with a disability is very, very hard. Yet, it is through that



Poem for Dinaz (Spiritual Beauty)



What do you see?

What do you see when you look at me
A kid with a disability?
Or can you look further to see
The many gifts which are a part of me?
Perhaps you wonder how life can be
When living with a cognitive disability.

Well, Life is just great
Because unlike the rest
I find jest, in all I view.
I do not judge people
By what they have, achieve or
By labels, that others give.

Limitations I have none –
For they are simply boundaries set
By those that tend
To lack true vision
In the end.

Uncomplicated and true
These are just a few,
Of the gifts I bring
To you.

In times of sorrow I show much caring,
If a burden another is bearing.
Instead of living with preconceived notions,
I enjoy each day's small pleasures
With laughter, merriment and much glee
So like me, unfettered and free –
Would you, also like to be?



Living with Challenges



experience you meet along the way people you would never have thought of meeting and learn things you could not dream of learning. You'll see your child teach you far more about life than you can ever expect to teach them and you'll see how little a diagnostic label truly says anything about them as an individual.

Every child is unique and special. I would hope that any family who hears their child has a disability embraces the blessing they've received. Whether they know it or not, despite the challenges they will face, they have been given the opportunity to experience a richness in their life like no other. I speak from having had the privilege of being a parent of a child who has given far more depth to the meaning of life itself than would have ever been possible to comprehend had she not had Down Syndrome.

Yasmin Shroff

Mother to Dinaz Shroff (who is 'chromosomally enhanced' and has Down Syndrome)

'Spiritual Beauty' is the meaning to my name

Isn't that far better than fame?

Manmade barriers I have none

After all is said and done

What is the purpose of this life

If lived with bitterness and strife?

Many gifts I have to share,

If only others would stop, not stare.

Come, sit a while with me and find

True Joy that can be, when you try to see

The abilities of the Real me!

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VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT SAN DIEGO

On Sunday May 11 2008 **The San Diego Zoroastrians** hosted a Volleyball Tournament from 2:00 PM to about 6:30 PM. A Total of 6 teams (3 from Los Angeles, 2 from San Diego and 1 from Orange County) participated in this competition.

One of Los Angeles's teams took first place,

Orange County 2nd place and

San Diego 3rd place.

First place team received custom made T-Shirts made specifically for this event.

These games were organized and headed by Mr. Farhad Kermani.

Reported by Roger Khavari





Living with Challenges



Augmentative and Alternative Communication

Hank Bersani

Communication is essential. We use communication every time we call someone by name, write a love note, or place an order at a fast food restaurant. For most of us, we express ourselves in a combination of ways - with our voices, in writing, by our facial expressions and even our gestures. Communication is an important part of who we are. It is how we let others know what we want, what we need and what we are thinking. Communication is equally important in family life, school, interpersonal relationships and religious worship.

But what if a child has a disability that leaves them unable to speak or if they can not speak clearly enough to be understood? How can we enhance their efforts so that they can be understood? How can we assist them so that they can answer "yes" or "no", ask for "more dessert please", or say "I love you"? That is where Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) comes in. In the broadest sense AAC is any equipment or technique that helps people communicate better.

Common types of AAC include using word boards, or letter boards for people to spell out what they are trying to say, or even using picture boards to allow the child to point to pictures (photos or drawings) to help others understand what they are trying to communicate.

As a hypothetical example, consider Ajai, a 10 year old boy who has cerebral palsy. He is very intelligent, but he can not speak clearly. His immediate family can sometimes understand what he says, but he feels frustrated that others can not understand him, and they assume that he has nothing to say. He is often socially isolated because of his limited communication. By implementing some AAC techniques, his family and teacher were able to increase his ability to communicate with a much broader range of people.

Ajai started with a book of photos – like a photo album that he could carry around with him. When he tried to speak to someone, and they could not understand what he was saying, he could point to a photo that gave them a hint about the topic. This would greatly improve how well people could understand him.

As Ajai progressed, his teacher knew he could read so she laminated a word board on the tray of his wheel chair. Ajai quickly learned to point to key words he was trying to say.

His parents and teachers soon realized he could spell, but no one could read his penmanship. They gave him a letter board so that he could spell out requests and ideas that were much more complex than could be communicated by the picture book, or the word board.

Today, Ajai uses a laptop computer with a modified keyboard that lets him type his homework, and tell friends and new acquaintances everything that is on his mind.

Not every child with a disability will need as much assistance as Ajai. Not every student who uses AAC will be as successful as Ajai. We are all individuals, and AAC is a very individualized process, but the lessons learned from Ajai are universal. We need to value communication. We need to assume that everyone has something to say. We need to find ways for everyone to communicate to the best of the ability.

Communication is essential.

For more information, please feel free to contact:

Hank Bersani

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Hank Bersani is a professor of Special Education at Western Oregon University where he teaches graduate courses that focus on the needs of students with multiple and complex disabilities. His driving force is to give "voice" to people with disabilities by supporting their communication efforts, and by helping them get their perspectives into print. Hank has edited 5 books, all of which include significant portions written by people with disabilities. WWW.wou.edu/~bersanh





TREATY ON DISABILITY RIGHTS UN Secretary-General Ban Hails Entry into Force

3 April 2008 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has welcomed the entry into force of the first international treaty on the human rights of persons with disabilities, after the required twentieth country ratified the landmark convention today.

“It is a historic moment in our quest for realization of the universal human rights for ALL persons, creating a fully inclusive society for all,” Mr. Ban’s spokesperson Marie Okabe said in a statement celebrating the rapid progress of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was adopted in December 2006.

“The Convention will be a powerful tool to eradicate the obstacle faced by persons with disabilities,” she said, pointing to discrimination, segregation from society, economic marginalization, and lack of opportunities for participation in social, political and economic decision-making processes.

Today’s ratification by Ecuador means that the Convention, along with an optional protocol that will allow individuals and groups to petition for relief, will be legally binding as of 3 May. Tunisia and Jordan also ratified the treaty earlier this week.

Through today’s statement, the Secretary-General also congratulated the States that have ratified or acceded to the Convention. Some 126 countries have signed the Convention since 30 March 2007, and 71 have signed the optional protocol.

“It is estimated that there are at least 650 million persons with disabilities worldwide, of whom approximately 80 percent live in less developed countries,” Ms. Okabe noted.

As many as two-thirds of United Nations Member States do not have any legal protection for people with disabilities, according to the UN Focal Point on Disability Akiko Ito, even though they comprise one in 10 of the global population.

“The Convention, together with its Optional Protocol, is deeply rooted in the firm commitment of the international community to rectifying the egregious neglect and dehumanizing practices that violate the human rights of persons with disabilities,” Ms. Okabe concluded, calling on all States that have not yet done so to accede or ratify it without delay.

In a statement issued this past weekend, more than 20 UN departments, agencies, programmes, and funds pledged their support to implementing the convention.

The newly-formed Inter-Agency Support Group for the Convention said that support will focus on six main areas: policies to support the purpose and objectives of the Convention; programmes including international cooperation; capacity-building of Member States, civil society, and the UN system; research and access to knowledge on disabilities; accessibility; and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

THE CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE OF CAMEROON

Shirin Kiani

If your daughter has a disability, why bother sending her to school? She will likely not be able to get a job when she is older. After all, who would employ her? If your sister has a disability, she will likely never get married. After all, why would any man want her? She is a bundle of needs. These statements may raise a few eyebrows in Metro Vancouver; yet, these challenging attitudes are the norm faced by women with disabilities in parts of Cameroon and, no doubt, other parts of the world.

Global citizenship is a fad that mainstream society is increasingly adopting. We see it everywhere: Coffee shops including fair trade items on their menus, clothing stores partnering with international non-governmental organizations in fundraising campaigns and graduate students, like myself, choosing to go abroad to conduct research and get a taste of what it means to be a global citizen. The reality is that these efforts are not reaching some of the most marginalized groups on this earth, groups such as women with disabilities who live in developing countries.

A Cameroonian woman with a disability faces threefold discrimination, first as a result of her gender, then because she has a disability and, lastly, due to her low socio-economic status. She is likely to represent the poorest of the poor.



Living with Challenges



Discrimination starts in her home and spreads from there. Her parents feel it is a waste of money to send her to school, since they do not think she will be able to work when she is older. This can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

A woman with a disability in Cameroon, without an education, has few employment options. If she is lucky, she will learn to sew or make crafts for a neighbor or a female relative and earn a meager income. A continuous challenge is getting money to buy the materials to make the goods she desperately needs to sell. When a young researcher from Canada asks her about whether she has heard of any micro financing NGOs in her area, she stares back puzzled. This is because NGOs involved with micro financing often, though not intentionally, exclude women with disabilities in their loan programs.

Her mother likely never talks to her about sex as she is typically seen as asexual. What her parents don't know is that she is at a higher risk for rape and coercion into sex than her able-bodied counterparts, increasing her chances of contracting HIV. Similarly, the NGOs in her area overlook her as a key target group needing sexual health and HIV/AIDS education. She is seldom tested for HIV as no one ever thinks that she is at risk.

In the same manner, NGOs promoting women's empowerment and women's health neglect to address issues

concerning women with disabilities and marginalization comes, this time, from able-bodied women. The last group that is in a position to help women with disabilities in Cameroon, but who often follows suit in sidelining them, is men with disabilities. Disability support groups in the North West Province of Cameroon are led predominantly by men.

During the meetings of these groups, women attempt to make contributions, but are politely disregarded. The continuous marginalization of women with disabilities, from multiple sources, makes it very hard for them to lead healthy, self-sufficient lives.

It is not all doom and gloom. In the city of Bamenda where I conducted research, not once did I see a woman with a disability begging on the streets; this was pointed out to me by the women in my

research who were proud of this. In addition, a number of women in Bamenda have formed a support group and together they run a shop selling their handmade goods.

Interestingly, the women I interviewed are very aware of some men approaching them primarily for sexual encounters. Despite this knowledge they choose to have relations with men in the hopes of having children, knowing that they will be single mothers.

My experience in Cameroon suggests that women with disabilities in developing countries are resilient, but deserving of greater attention. Their greatest challenge is not rooted in the disability itself but the social discrimination they face limiting opportunities in all areas of their lives. Despite these social constructed

challenges, they are building a life for themselves. What they need from the international community is to be heard, to be visible and to be included in development initiatives. It is time to look hard at who we are missing in our aid programs and to start allocating our attention and resources to these groups.

You can advocate by requesting that the money you donate to a philanthropic organization be directed specifically to issues concerning women with disabilities. If the organization does not have specific programs for women with disabilities you

can encourage it to start including them in its program planning.



Shirin Kiani was born in Iran to the loving Khodarahm and Hourri Kiani. She completed a degree in Occupational Therapy in 2003 and recently a Master's degree in Global Health in Vancouver, Canada. Her interests lie in traveling and working internationally in low resource areas. She will be spending the rest of 2008 working with the NGO 'Handicap International' in Sri Lanka promoting the social inclusion of people with disabilities..



It Doesn't Happen in Our Community: Dispelling misconceptions about abuse

Farishta Murzban Dinshaw

I work with diverse ethnocultural communities in southern Ontario, Canada to raise awareness about domestic abuse prevention. Abuse is a complex issue, linked to the attitudes, values and systems in our patriarchal society. The communities I work with have added vulnerabilities, such as language barriers, marginalization and mistrust of authority. One of the critical challenges that I face in my work is denial that abuse exists. Zarathushtis are no different than the communities I work with when it comes to this issue. Perhaps, this is because it is so pervasive that we accept it as normal and overlook it as ordinary.

"Sera felt that she was up against something insidious...Before, she had always imagined that evil played out on a large canvas - wars, concentration camps, gas chambers, the partitioning of nations. Now, she realized that evil had a domestic side, and its very banality protected it from exposure."

From *The Space Between Us* by Thrity Umrigar (2006)

In this article, I have addressed some of the misconceptions that friends have voiced about abuse in our community.

MISCONCEPTION

It doesn't happen in our community. We are a broad-minded, successful community.

REALITY

Abuse cuts across race, religion, education, class, sex, sexual orientation and age. In the novel *The Space Between Us*, Sera Dubash's husband frequently beats her. He represents a member of our broad-minded, successful community.

MISCONCEPTION

OK, so it does happen in some families, but not frequently.

REALITY

For us to accept that abuse is a reality in many families, we need to understand that abuse stems from inequality in the power dynamics of a relationship, whether it is between partners, parent-child, in-laws or grandparents. Abuse is using fear and intimidation to manipulate the bonds of intimacy and trust to make the other person do what they want them to do. In most families, men have more power because of the way society is structured.

Abuse doesn't have to be overtly violent and criminal like a physical assault or marital rape. One of the most scarring forms of abuse is verbal abuse, including put-downs, taunts and insults, name-calling, unjust accusation of cheating, swearing, and shouting. Abuse may be continuous, or it may be a single incident that leaves members feeling like they have to "walk on eggshells". Abuse has many layers, some of them so subtle an observer might even call it caring or protectiveness. For instance, insisting on taking her to and picking her from work, calling her frequently on the cell to find out where she is, having her account for every conversation

without him. In such cases, one has to weigh the intent behind the action, and this is one of the reasons, abuse within families is such a complicated, nuanced issue.

MISCONCEPTION

He's not like that normally. He only loses control when he's drunk.

REALITY

There is no doubt that alcohol impairs one's judgement and is sometimes a factor in domestic abuse. However, abusers blame their loss of control on alcohol to avoid taking responsibility for their actions. My response is, "How drunk would he have to be to French-kiss his grandfather?" If even in the deepest drunken stupor a man can avoid society's taboos, then why can't he stop himself from hitting a woman or a child?

MISCONCEPTION

Why is it always about men being abusers? Men are abused too.

REALITY

As mentioned earlier, abuse in an intimate or a familial relationship is complex. Men are not exempt from being abused verbally, emotionally, financially and sometimes even physically. Also, in collectivist communities like ours, which support extended families, women often abuse other women and perpetuate hierarchies of power. In *The Space Between Us*, for instance, Sera is intimidated and ill-treated by her mother-in-law, Banu.

However, at a societal level, undeniably and overwhelmingly, men are perpetrators of abuse against women. This is because abuse is inherently about power and control and men in our society have more economic and systemic power than women. Just look at the scope of violence against women; forced marriages, forced abortions, date rapes, rape as a war tactic, trafficking and forced prostitution, genital mutilation, bride burning and dowry-related homicides, pornography and sexual assaults. Violence against women is not simply a domestic abuse issue; it is a human rights issue and the first step to ending it is to acknowledge that it exists and to expose it from behind the curtain of banality.



Farishta Dinshaw works with ethnocultural communities in Ontario to raise awareness about family violence. She is a trainer with the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) Prevention through Early Intervention Project. She has also presented papers on violence against women and immigration and settlement at conferences across Canada.



Living with Challenges



“HIV DOESN'T DISCRIMINATE, DO YOU?”

Mantreh Atashband

Janaya** is a 25 year old woman who has been living with HIV for over 5 years. She has been forced to live in silence since the day of her diagnosis. Her HIV related trips to the doctor's office are said to be for a chronic GI problem, and she continues to hide her HIV medication. Family members that have discovered her illness have shunned her. Now, her 'next of kin' in case of an emergency is her local HIV/AIDS organization!

The story of Janaya is not unique to those who live with HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). Janaya is not a person living in poverty, in a developing country as some would suspect. She is from North America, living in Toronto. Hence, she does not fit the typical stereotype of a person assumed to have HIV. Since her diagnosis, the biggest challenge in Janaya's life has been hiding her HIV illness.

Since the discovery of the HIV virus, the illness has become more than just a medical concern, it has become a social one. These days you can't hear about HIV without it being accompanied by the words stigma, discrimination and fear. Stigma has become a powerful tool to marginalize and exclude populations who are in great need of compassion, support and solidarity. The violation of the human rights of people living with HIV/AIDS (or PHAs) has tremendously increased. An HIV diagnosis is the start of a life filled with many daily challenges such as; stigmatization and discrimination from family members and healthcare providers, possible loss of employment, and unaffordable treatment options resulting in economic insecurity.

FAMILY:

In many cases, when a person is ill a family member becomes the primary caregiver. However for countless PHAs an HIV diagnosis signals a life of loneliness and exclusion. Unfortunately, because HIV is usually associated with certain populations; family members quickly categorize a PHA into a particular social group. This false, stigmatized categorization causes PHAs to be rejected and in some cases to fear their lives.

HEALTHCARE:

Stigmatization by healthcare providers has been evident for decades. Many have withheld treatment, forced individuals to take HIV tests without consent, have not attended to HIV positive patients, and have violated the anonymity and confidentiality of clients. Though it has been proven that HIV cannot be transmitted by casual contact, many individuals are still placed in confined rooms in order to not “spread the virus”. These inexcusable acts of discrimination by healthcare providers have fueled, and are now major topics of discussion at national and international human rights levels.

EMPLOYMENT:

Being silent about living with HIV has become a survival tool for many PHAs. Cases of employee terminations and refusal of employment due to a discovery of some one's HIV infection has risen. Employers' lack of knowledge about the illness and their fear of a supposed risk of transmission has caused increased levels of discrimination and stigmatization for PHAs in the workplace. In some countries a pre-employment screening process is used by administering illegal HIV testing.

ACCESS TO SUPPORT SERVICE:

Though living with HIV sometimes seems like a lonely and endless battle, clients are not in this fight alone. PHAs can turn to local HIV organizations for empowerment, treatment access and confidential support. Advocacy at the community level has been providing enhanced holistic services to those infected/affected by HIV. Community based groups receive funding from local, national and international organizations to help clients with advocacy, treatment access, support, counseling, employment and housing security. Grassroots organizations continue to involve PHAs in human rights lobbying and ensure that HIV related stigma and discrimination is identified and the instigators held accountable. Organizations such as the International AIDS Society and the Canadian AIDS Society provide solidarity, community mobilization and promote education and awareness to reduce the risk of new infections. HIV is fueled by stigma and discrimination as it interferes with global treatment access, advocacy and education and it is through these multi-dimensional collaborative efforts that this illness can be addressed and eliminated.



Living with Challenges



Today, over 40 million people are living with HIV, with women accounting for over 50% of new infections, and hence becoming the new face of the epidemic. This virus continues to ravage homes and destroy communities, causing generational gaps in societies. People living with HIV and those affected, continue to live their lives in fear, silence and shame. And, communities continue to live in the denial that HIV doesn't affect them or their populations. These biased, ignorant social attitudes have led to a deadly silence and hence an increase in the spread of the virus. How can we as a society turn our backs on vulnerable people like Janaya and allow them to live in our shadows? Why do we continue to discriminate against people living with HIV, when clearly, HIV doesn't discriminate against us!

*"HIV doesn't discriminate, do you?"- HIV/AIDS Anti-discrimination Campaign; Canadian AIDS Society.

** Identity of client has been altered for anonymity.



Mantreh Atashband has been involved in the HIV & AIDS movement for over a decade; advocating for people living with HIV (especially women and girls) locally, nationally and internationally. She is also part of the Executive Board of Directors for a local Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre, where she works towards the eradication of sexual violence against women and girls.

Lotus Flowers

"Be like the lotus flower, in a pond of filth take the best and bloom"

Anahita Dua

In a world where not having the latest Ipod is enough to send us on antidepressants, it is a constant wonder that a parallel sphere shares our planet, where people live in the most animalistic conditions and, yet, cling to the quality that makes us truly humans: hope.

I have met some truly incredible people on my medical missions and I do not mean the doctors. We, the medical staff, come and go, but it is the implausible patient and their families that endure a life custom-made in hell and yet live out each day with a smile and the strength to face another, in the face of sexual discrimination, violence, poverty, or war.

PALESTINE

Iham and Jihad Samara could hardly bear it. After spending their whole lives in the depths of the Palestinian conflict losing their third child on the operating table was yet another blow. The life of their 9 month old son Jamal's life was threatened by a congenital heart disease which was not only impossible to afford, but impossible to perform, for there



are no paediatric cardio-thoracic surgeons for the Palestinian people. Many parents in similar situations attributed this ill fate to God's will and gave up allowing nature to take its course. But not this family, they searched every corner of Palestine for an answer and refused to just "accept" that Palestine was in a state of war and saving a baby with a heart defect simply did not rank high on the national agenda. They went from hospital to hospital hoping for a miracle and eventually it paid off. With the aid of the charity The Palestine Children's Relief Fund (PCRF), a British surgeon's arrival in Palestine offered the skill they needed. They spent countless hours at the checkpoints, getting up at the crack of dawn to make it to the massive line. There they waited for literally days begging the guards to allow their son to go to the hospital. Because of his formidable parents, Jamal made it to the hospital and had his operation. He is now almost 4 years old.

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KENYA

Rose was a quiet woman. A single, illiterate mother of 23, in a society that openly rejects sex before marriage in rural Kenya, guaranteed her a life of hard labour, exploitation, and ridicule. Eating only one meal a day in order to provide for her young daughter and aging mother left Rose with little energy, yet when her daughter



Rose

developed a case of the sniffles she came rushing into our clinic. As she came in and sat down, I immediately spotted the diagnosis: a giant facial tumour had grotesquely deformed her face and I would have bet she had come to complain about the horrific pain. But she simply asked me to examine her daughter and got up to leave. I was shocked.

In speaking to her I learned how she had been promised marriage and a hope of a greater life, but had been tricked by the man she loved. Her child was a constant reminder of that, but instead of taking the easy way out, she opted against abortion and condemned herself to a life of single motherhood, a choice she will never regret because she said she knew it was the right one. Women in her position almost always opt for abortion, but her bravery in the face of such adversity is unmatched. We managed to collect the money necessary for her plastic surgery and she was successfully operated on in Kenya. She is choosing to fight society once again and hopes to remarry.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Didien is a 19 year old girl with an intense passion for medicine. She always planned to be a doctor and had successfully completed her secondary school when she came to visit her mother. One night, while she was sleeping, the rebels attacked her village and kidnapped her. She was taken deep into the forest and kept as a sex slave for 8 months during which she was forced to serve these men in the worst ways imaginable. She eventually



Didien

escaped from the camp, while 6 months pregnant from a rape, and miraculously survived a 9 days walk through the jungle without food and water. She gave birth to the rape baby whom she named "innocent" and hopes to give her a life of happiness. I met her during a counselling session and found her to be one of the strongest women I have ever met. She sat across from me, with her baby in her lap, and said that she knew she had no hope of marriage as she was a rape victim, but no matter what she was still going to medical school. The rapists took her body, she said, not her soul.

AFGHANISTAN

View from CURE hospital

1) As the 3rd wife of an aging man, **Irfan** had no choice. It was to have sons or literally die trying. Married off young to a man almost twice her age she knew that love was not a factor in the decision. Sons are like Afghani currency and a woman's worth regardless of her beauty or intellect is contingent solely on their production. Although her husband was dirt poor, once she fell pregnant, Irfan was determined to take care of her children. She approached our hospital for antenatal care, but was dragged away by her husband and forced to eventually deliver her twin sons on the floor of their mud hut. Both her children became severely septic and the first boy died within 2 days of birth from a raging infection. Irfan then defied all custom and took her second twin to the hospital for neonatal care. Tirelessly she sat by his crib watching his temperature go up and down, watching the doctors



Living with Challenges



shake their heads and dismiss her as a “stupid, village, breeding machine.” She was told her baby would die and she should accept that and move on. At the risk of losing her husband and her other children she stayed by her baby. Even when husband started his search for a 4th wife, Irfan kept her faith and kept her baby.

2) Nazia was just a girl. While the other girls cut out Indian film heroes and spoke of their weddings, at 16 she stuck her nose in a book. When the Taliban came to power she was tossed out of school and forced to stay at home, veiled and silent. Once they were gone, schools reopened, but almost all the girls of her class did not return to school. Either they had married in that time or they did not see the point in being in the same class as their brothers who were 4 years younger. But not Nazia she wanted to study law and help liberate the women of her country. But when she asked to go back to school her parents, who had previously arranged a marriage, threw her out of the house. Nothing could be worse for a young Afghani girl, but she managed to find a friend she lived with while finishing her studies. She fought through it all and when I met her, she had succeeded in securing a sponsor to cover her college costs in the USA.

The human mind is a strange and wonderful thing. It can be ones greatest asset or ones greatest enemy. These are just a few examples of the amazing people I met along the way who would not allow the terrors around them to force away their dreams. They stood their ground and did what they thought was right instead of complaining about

the desperate plight they were in and succumbing to a life of resentment, anger, and self-pity. All of these people have one underlying connection: they faced the worst life had to offer and passed the test with flying colours. **They met the Challenge**



Baby Abdul Rehman and Anahita Dua in Afghanistan. She is now in her 4th year of medical school. She is planning to pursue international medicine as an eventual career and a postgraduate degree in international health. Her next elective project will take place in the trauma division at the Medical College of Wisconsin followed hopefully by a medical mission in Darfur, Sudan. Anahita is the recipient of the 2007 FEZANA Outstanding Young Zarathushti Student Award

Figuring Out Our Personal Life Priorities

James F. Gardner

Let's begin with a simple exercise.

Reflect on the priorities in your own life. What are your priorities? What do you value the most? What values or priorities are most important to you? Take a few minutes and list the ten most important priorities in your life. (Just write them down as you think of them.)

The priorities that you just listed above are probably like those of many other people. They have generally listed the following items:

- | | | |
|------------------|-----------|--------------|
| ● health | ● family | ● work |
| ● freedom | ● friends | ● God/faitth |
| | | /religion |
| ● love | ● home | ● security |
| ● accomplishment | ● privacy | ● money |

The people who have identified their priorities are sometimes people with disabilities; others have chronic

illness. Some people are family members and many people are just citizens of their communities. What we discover is that all people, those with disabilities, chronic illness, and their friends and family agree on the same kinds of outcomes.

These categories are the same for all people, but each person has his or her own special definition for respect, health, family or privacy. What we've learned is that we need to engage with each person to determine his or her individualized meaning for each priority outcome.

CQL has met with thousands of people with disabilities and chronic illness in North America, Europe, and Australasia. Our research has identified 21 Personal Outcome Measures that influence our quality of life. They are

My Self:

People are connected to natural support networks
People have intimate relationships
People are safe



Living with Challenges



People have the best possible health
 People exercise right
 People are treated fairly
 People are free from abuse and neglect
 People experience continuity and security
 People decide when to share personal information

My World

People choose where and with whom they live
 People choose where they work
 People sue their environments
 People live in integrated environments
 People interact with other members of the community
 People perform different social roles
 People choose services

My Dreams

People choose personal goals
 People realize personal goals
 People participate in the life of the community
 People have friends
 People are respected.

PERSONAL OUTCOMES AND SERVICES

Health and social services help people achieve their personal outcomes. Two other kinds of outcomes are connected to services – clinical outcomes and functional outcomes. Your health care provider and social service case coordinator will talk with you about these important clinical and functional outcomes. But, you need to keep asking about the connection between the clinical and functional outcomes and your own personal quality of life outcomes or those of your close friend or family member. For example, how do services increase your own personally defined outcomes of respect or friendships?

Remember, the personal outcomes answer the questions of what the person wants to do, or defines as a priority, when the clinical and functional outcomes are achieved.

PERSONAL OUTCOMES

These Personal Outcomes Measures are what people with disabilities and chronic illness expect to result from the services and supports they receive. Services and supports in health care, rehabilitation, social service, personal or attendant care should relate to people's defined outcomes. Long term supports and services must be connected to our personal quality of life outcomes.

CLINICAL OUTCOMES

Clinical outcomes focus on cure and symptom reduction. For example, the clinical outcome from treatment for depression or diabetes, or coronary artery disease is cure of the disease or a reduction/stabilization in symptoms. Clinical services and clinical outcomes are very important particularly for people with disabilities and chronic illness. But, the importance of clinical outcomes is that they greatly increase the possibility of getting us to our own quality of life outcomes.

FUNCTIONAL OUTCOMES

Functional outcomes focus on increasing functional status. For example, physical therapy is provided to an individual to increase range of motion which then enables him or her to handle additional activities of daily living. Training in mobility, communication, or self-help skills increase independence and self-sufficiency. Again, achieving functional outcomes opens possibilities for reaching our own personal quality of life outcomes.

OUTCOME DESIGN INDEX (ODI)™

Outcome	Focus	Result	Where it Happens	What we're called
Personal	Dreams and Priorities	Quality of Life	Community, my world	My name
Functional	Life Functions	Increased Capacity	Program School Residence Day activity	Client Student Resident Case
Clinical	Health & symptoms	Cure; symptom reduction	Hospital Clinic/office Outpatient	Patient Client



James F. Gardner, Ph.D. is the President and Chief Executive Officer of The Council on Quality and Leadership in Supports for People with Disabilities. Dr. Gardner received his Ph.D. in a dual program of American Studies and American Social History from Indiana University, was awarded a Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Medical Ethics at the Harvard Medical School. Dr. Gardner later completed the Masters in Administrative Sciences program at The Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Gardner is a nationally recognized leader in the application of quality improvement methods to the field of human services.



Living with Challenges



5 Critical Elements Necessary To Facing Your Challenges

How Sony Was Created

"helping you achieve your visions, goals & dreams."

1. DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT.



A name that many have never heard of, yet the legacy of his actions continues to have an impact on millions around the world. Akio Morita (left) was born in Japan in 1921. Akio was expected to take over the family business of making rice wine.

But Akio loved to invent things and he decided to go into

business for himself.

In order to succeed at anything, you must begin with the end in mind: by knowing exactly what it is that you desire. Who you want to become? What legacy you want to leave.

We need to visualize our desired outcome in advance. In your mind visualize your outcome, and then carry them in your veins, make it a part of who you are and who you want to become. You must have absolute faith and total conviction in your dreams. To know your outcome is to ignite your passion.

2. TAKE ACTION.

Akio Morita decided he wanted to make electronic gadgets. He was fascinated by transistors, radios, record players...in short he knew he loved to tinker with things. His first invention was a humble little rice cooker.

Once you have clearly defined what it is you want, take immediate, and massive action towards producing your result. Consistently do more than anyone else could expect.

Any action is better than no action. If you act and you are right, you have taken a solid step forward. If you act and you are wrong, you have something you can learn from. If you never act, one day the pain of regret will far outweigh the pain of anything else.

Take action against the improbable, and you will achieve more than you ever dreamed possible.

3. MEASURE YOUR RESULTS.

Akio's rice cooker sold well enough for him to try his hand at building other products. Many failed, but each new idea or innovation gave him further knowledge and experience. Giving him the ability to gauge and measure how well he was doing. He listened to his clients and employees, he met their needs, and his company grew in size.

Once you take action, take notice. Measure your progress to see how you're doing.

As you start moving in any direction you have to measure your results. Just like following a road map, you have to have a means of measuring your progress or reaching certain milestones along the way. If you don't notice your results, you have no way of fine-tuning and improving yourself.

4. MODIFY YOUR APPROACH.

Years into his business, Akio decided that the name of his company "Tokyo Tshushin Kyogu" while quickly becoming popular in Japan, would probably not lend itself to becoming popular in foreign countries. His vision was:

"50 Years from now, our brand name will be as well known as any in the world." And so he decided to modify his company's name into one that was easier to pronounce...A legacy in the electronics world was created – 'Sony'.

They say that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, but life simply isn't like that. It's more like you are the pilot of an airplane. As you encounter any turbulence, you must constantly make adjustments in order to keep moving in the same general direction.

If you find that something isn't working, try something else! Try UNTIL! Keep refining and improving your strategies, your actions, your beliefs - whatever it takes - and try UNTIL you get your desired result. Above all else, never give up on your dream.

5. TRY UNTIL ...

What would you say if I asked: 'How long would you give your infant to learn how to walk? How long would you let them try, before you wrote them off? Before you put it



Living with Challenges



out of your mind and gave up on them altogether?' You'd say that's ridiculous. When learning how to walk my baby is going to try UNTIL he/she succeeds.

That's the magic formula. Try until.

"Nothing succeeds like persistence.

Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent.

Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.

Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts.

Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."

- Calvin Coolidge

The last principle of Leadership is to consistently do what works. The purpose of education isn't knowledge; the purpose of education is action.

It's not what you know in life that matters, it's what you do with your life that matters.



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NAMC AGM MAY 24-25, 2008 at OZCF HEAD QUARTERS, TORONTO ELECTION RESULTS

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Vice-President: Ervad Noshir Mirza

Secretary: Ervad Nozer Kotwal

Treasurer: Ervad Gev Karkaria

Executive Officer: Ervad Gustad Panthaki

On behalf of the entire NAMC, we would like to thank outgoing officers: Ervad Jehan Bagli, Ervad Adi Unwalla and Ervad Cawas Desai, for their wonderful leadership, dedication and scholarship to all of us for six long years.

With the help and direction of Ervad Jehan Bagli and Ervad Kerman Katrak, NAMC is proud to announce their brand new website:

www.namcweb.com

We are planning to make this website a resource for all NAMC communications. One of our goals is to enlist the names and phone numbers and emails (if available) of ALL NA Mobeds for ready reference to the community. In this respect, we will need all FEZANA Associations' help to enlist names of mobeds in their area.

At the request of the new NAMC President and his Executive Board, Ervad Soli P. Dastur is appointed in charge of all NAMC Communications as well as keeping NAMC website up to date.

Please welcome the new NAMC Executive Board!

ERVAD SOLI P DASTUR

Love and Tandoorasti, Soli



The Support Intensity Scale: A New Assessment Tool

Robert L. Schalock, Ph.D.

The supports paradigm that emerged in the field of intellectual and closely related developmental disabilities (ID/DD) during the 1980s required rethinking how we assess the support needs of persons with ID/DD, and how we use that information to develop individual support plans (ISPs) and evaluate personal outcomes. In 2004, The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD; formerly The American Association on Mental Retardation) published the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) that assesses the level of support required to successfully perform important life activities related to home and community living, life long learning, employment, health and safety, social, and protection and advocacy. In addition, the SIS assesses the amount of support required to: (a) maintain or improve a number of ID/DD-related medical conditions; and (b) prevent a number of ID/DD-related challenging behaviors.

It is important to realize that the SIS is NOT a scale to assess adaptive behavior. As summarized below, there are significant differences between an adaptive behavior scale and the SIS in reference to the construct measured, focus, uses, item stems, and item responses.

- Construct measured: adaptive behavior scales assess the adaptive skills that a person has learned and thus assesses achievement or performance; the SIS assesses the extraordinary support that a person needs in order to participate successfully in the activities of daily life.
- Focus: adaptive behavior scales focus on the pattern of adaptive behaviors displayed by an individual; the SIS focuses on the pattern and intensity of supports needed to enhance participation in home and community life.
- Uses: adaptive behavior scales are used to diagnose intellectual disability and to identify relevant education and training goals; the SIS is used to determine a person's support needs in different areas relative to others with ID/DD, and to develop individualized support plans.
- Item stems: adaptive behavior scales include an array of adaptive behaviors or skills needed to successfully function in society; the SIS includes an array of life activities in which a person engages when participating in society.
- Item responses: adaptive behavior scales assess a person's level of mastery or proficiency in relation to adaptive skills; the SIS assesses the pattern and intensity of extraordinary support a person needs in order to participate successfully in major life activities.
- Users of the Supports Intensity Scale are provided with a wealth of information that can be used for multiple purposes. For example,
- The profile of needed supports can be used to determine the type and intensity of individualized supports required in those assessment areas mentioned previously.
- Individualized support needs can be integrated into an ISP that is based on the person's desired life experiences and goals and developed within a framework (employed in a number of organizations and countries) based on core quality of life domains such as emotional well-being, personal development, social inclusion, interpersonal relations, self-determination, physical well-being, material well-being, and rights.
- The Supports Need Index (based on standard scores for each of the six life activity areas listed previously) can be used: (a) at the individual level to provide a standardized profile of needed supports; (b) at the agency level to provide summary statistics for agency/organization clientele in each of the areas assessed; and (c) at the systems

level for research/evaluation, resource allocation, and systems planning.

Since its publication, the SIS has been translated into 11 languages, with additional

translations pending. AAIDD continues to work with current and potential users in interviewer training programs, web-based data entry and analyses, and responding to frequently asked questions. A SIS Companion Guide, which will provide additional resources and updated information about interviewer training, psychometric properties, and implementation examples and guidelines, will be published in early 2008.

Bob Schalock is Professor Emeritus at Hastings College (Nebraska), with adjunct research professorships at the universities of Kansas (Beach Center), Salamanca (Spain), Gent (Belgium), and Chongqing (Mainland China). He is Past President of AAIDD (formerly AAMR) and is currently chair of the Terminology and Classification Committee and a member of the task forces developing the Children's SIS and the Diagnostic Adaptive Behavior Scale. Bob and his wife Susan reside in Chewelah, Washington.



LOVE OF A MOTHER IN THE FACE OF DEATH

Ferzin R. Patel, Pomona, New York

I DEDICATE THIS ARTICLE TO MY BELOVED MOTHER WHO HAS REVEALED TO ME THE PATH OF ASHA AND OPENED MY CONSCIOUSNESS TO THE BEAUTY OF HUMANITY ON THIS EARTH.



I have always held a certain belief that death is the final resting place for all human existence. Death as a concept was something that made us, as humans, feel fearful and want to shirk as long as possible. I always asked myself, "why would God make people suffer and want to instill pain in the loved ones left behind?" However over this past year I have seen firsthand the face of death and how death (the extinction of the physical being) and the existence of the eternal life (the soul) itself can heal the souls of those left behind, particularly the grieving family. It will be one year in May that my mother, Khorshed has passed on. Although, it has been several months since she has gone, to me it feels as if it were yesterday that we lost her. It is one memory in my mind which I will never forget. I would often think to myself, "how will we cope and how will we move on to live without her presence?" However, as the months have passed, I have realized that she is with me and my loved ones. I feel her presence and her love each and every day that goes by. It is the memory of her warmth and caring nature which I remember. Although I do miss her physical presence, I do know her spiritual presence is within me by the way I remember her, the words I speak, the rituals I perform, sometimes even a quick glance in the mirror (people say we look alike) and

the beliefs I embody. A tiny piece of her existence is within me.

Of course there are moments, when I wished she was still with us. Holidays, family gatherings, special moments in our lives, is when I would miss her most. Thanksgiving was always a big celebration at my parent's home. Months beforehand, I would think, "how are we all going to cope with mom not being in the house and have a celebration without her?" I wanted all of us to remain a family, but this would mean that we would need to ask "who we are as a family and how we would now celebrate this holiday as well as other important traditions?" It was time to process all of this while still grieving and coping with all the stressors of the pain of loss. It was time for a new tradition.

I decided with my father and brother, and our families that we should celebrate in a new way. Instead of going to Boston in the cold and having a traditional turkey dinner, we decided to go somewhere warm, sunny, and enjoy the salty taste of margaritas and spicy salsa in Mexico. It was time to start re-living again. It was time for us to stimulate the senses and show the spirit what more there was of life to live. It was something that we all felt was special and helped to break the tension and expectations of how we were intended to play all our roles at this traditional celebration, without the matriarchal member being present. We all enjoyed it so much that we decided that we should go away somewhere different every year. This was our new tradition.

My mother has always demonstrated a certain strength which I never realized existed until the day she died. There is always a certain fear all of us worry about when we contemplate death. "Will it be painful, will those I love suffer, where will I go, and who will I see?" All my questions were answered by my mother's last day on earth. Although she suffered the pains of cancer, I saw in her eyes moments before she died that there would be no more pain and suffering.

There was for only a brief but solace moment, the grace of God bestowed down and the gentleness of humanity passed through me like the wind blowing. It was for that brief moment that I understood how fragile life is for each one of us. It enlightened me, that there was more for me to see and learn and how to appreciate the simple essence of life. She gave me her greatest gift of knowledge. I knew then there was nothing to be scared of any further, that when my time comes that there will only be peace and tranquility. She answered my question of what lies ahead.



Living with Challenges



Prior to her death, she would tell me, “there is nothing to be scared of, there is nothing we can do to change what is inevitable for all of us. So, be strong and never worry about me, I will always be there with you.” Those words have given me the strength to go forward to live everyday with appreciation for others, my family, and myself.

Ironically, a few months before she passed away, she had completed her final co-editorial article on Death and the Hereafter in the Fezana Journal. It was the words of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow that she recalled that I find to be comforting to me as I look back on those long days gone by:

Pslams of Life

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

My mother has certainly left behind her footprints that will live on forever in the hearts and minds of her family, friends and all those who knew her.



Ferzin Patel resides in Pomona, NY with her husband Rajan and 6 year old son Davin. Brought up in Boston, the daughter of Khorshed and Firoze Jungalwala, she consults as a healthcare administrator in NYC and works with Rajan in his law practice and title business. She has been a board member with ZAGNY for the last 3 years and aspires to bridge the community together, as her mother once believed.

COPING WITH CHALLENGES

The WZO Credo

Bachi & Dinshaw Tamboly

**“Exercise compassion,
Help the fallen to their feet,
Be a friend to the friendless,
Try to make an empty life complete.”**

Life is always a challenge. It is about coping with challenges.

In 1986, acting on reports that there was widespread poverty amongst Zarathushtis residing in the rural areas of South Gujarat, WZO London, in association with Surat Parsi Panchayat initiated a sample socio economic survey of the region. The task was assigned to Dr. (Ms) Cashmera P. Bhaya who carried out a sample survey and thereafter in 1988 presented her report in which she provided statistical data of the 687 Zarathushti families that she had visited in 209 villages. The report confirmed that Zarathushtis residing in the rural areas of South Gujarat were indeed facing immense economic challenges and hardship.

It was evident that these rural Zarathushtis, victims of unforeseen political decisions taken post independence, were reduced to abject poverty for reasons beyond their control, mainly on account of introduction of prohibition, enactment of the ‘Tillers Act’ and the nationalization of road transport services.

Lack of adequate awareness about the sad plight that had befallen these rural Zarathushtis resulted in very little support coming their way from community philanthropists and well wishers.

On being made aware of the grim situation, WZO decided that it would be in the interests of these rural Zarathushtis to rehabilitate them and make them stand on their own feet, rather than providing aid by way of doles; to endeavor to lift them from the morass of abject poverty and gradually bring them back into the mainstream of society.

Thus began in August 1990 the massive WZO project to rehabilitate these rural Zarathushtis. Since that time, WZO has reached out to impart practical training, and thereafter, provide necessary inputs to more than 381 families spread over 165 villages.

We were both very fortunate to have been brought into this project by WZO. It was not only our interest in welfare work but the fact that we had contacts and a base at Navsari one of the major centres of South Gujarat.

We believe that without challenge there could be no change. Since 1990 we have been intensely involved, with our other two colleagues, Firoj Panthaky and Farrokh Kasad, in the project to rehabilitate the poor Zarathushtis of



Living with Challenges



South Gujarat through the aegis of WZO Trust Funds.

When we first undertook this project we were ourselves shocked and traumatized to view firsthand the abysmal condition in which members of our community were residing....in huts made from mud and cow dung, some villages located in places possible to reach only by bullock cart or tractor. Residing in a hostile environment, these poor Zarathushtis had no recourse to reach hospitals in time whenever anyone fell ill or to provide education to their

children. Those not seriously ill would have to trek for up to 5 km and wait at predetermined points on the state



some village elder would teach children to read and write a few words in the local dialect.

Fortunately things have changed ever since India jumped on to the fast track towards development.

The quality of roads have improved resulting with rapid accessibility to medical centres functioning in many rural locations. Whilst opportunities for education are now also available in local schools, Team-WZO makes it a point to convince parents to send their children, boys to Bai Dossibai Kotwal Parsi Boys Orphanage at Navsari or to J. N. Petit School at Pune, and girls to Bai Avabai Petit Girls Orphanage at Mumbai.

Team-WZO has so far touched the lives of 381 Zarathushti families living in 165 villages. There is of course much more to do for many more.

A synopsis of the major part of work executed by Team-WZO from August 1990 to December 2007 for these 381 families can best be illustrated by the chart below

The work has been tough and in some instances heart breaking, reaching out to poor Zarathushtis more or less forgotten by the community, traversing inhospitable

01	Wells sunk/deepened/repared	114
02	Electric pumps/diesel engine sets supplied	184
03	Pipelines laid (for no. of families)	165
04	Fields leveled (for no. of families)	107
05	Bullock (pairs) supplied (no. of families)	15
06	Seeds/fertilizers supplied (no. of families)	74
07	Dairy livestock given (no. of families)	29
08	Poultry farms established	33
09	Pump houses built	19
10	Houses repaired / built	74 built; 21 repaired
11	Flour grinding mills supplied	26



highway to meet a government doctor when he would be on his rounds. For those seriously ill their chances of survival were slim. Education at that time was restricted to attending a local school where

terrain to reach them, viewing first hand the abject poverty to which our own people have been reduced to and so on.

Happily, with the passing of time, the gloom has gradually given way. Many of the beneficiaries have progressed from abject poverty to relative prosperity. It has been most heartening to witness that most of the beneficiaries understand the necessity of recycling funds, to receive from time to time, repayments from their



Living with Challenges



enhanced earnings. At the same time it remains a fact and also a pity that some of the beneficiaries have faltered in spite of best efforts, but then life is not kind to everyone.

Life is always a continuing education; Team-WZO has also learnt many lessons from this project which has become a way of life for us.

We have received tremendous support and goodwill from most in our community, and to them we are most

grateful. Some have been critical. We understand and accept that all individuals have a right to their opinions; we have no quarrel to those who criticize us for we believe that if we can live by the best inside ourselves, the worst outside us will crumble. Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass; it's about learning to dance in the rain. After all, life is all about coping with challenges.



Bachi & Dinshaw Tamboly have been associated with the welfare activities of WZO in India for over 25 years. Establishing the Senior Citizens Centres at Navsari was Bachi's brainchild. She manages both the Senior Citizens Centres and the Sanatorium at Sanjan very efficiently. Dinshaw is a professional management counselor to various leading Indian corporations in developing and promoting exports to the sophisticated markets on the continents of North America & Europe, plans marketing strategies for joint ventures and mergers between Indian and overseas corporations. Both Bachi & Dinshaw are 'hands on' workers committed and dedicated to multiple welfare causes espoused by WZO.

LIVING WITH IMMUNE DEFECIENCY *

Navzer Sachinvala Ph.D, MBA

**Dedicated to the memory of Professor Frank Rocco, Department of Special Education, Winona State University, Winona MN. Deceased March 6, 2008*

My name is Navzer (Nozar) Sachinvala. I was born to Gul and Dinshaw Sachinvala, and I have two older siblings Rohinton and Zareen. My parental home was reasonably affluent and caring. Dinshaw (deceased Sept, 2006) was trained in Electrical Engineering and physics (Ph.D.), and taught at engineering colleges in Karachi and Tehran. In addition, he had his own institutions for training engineers and military personnel, and held prestigious positions in Iran, Pakistan, U.S, and Japan. Gul (my mom) is an entertaining home maker.

Early childhood for me was happy, sickly, and developmentally slow. I broke bones easily, and suffered abuse by early education teachers for bad handwriting, my inability to perceive shapes and colors, for reading slowly with hesitance, and for a responsive articulate mouth. My vision since childhood was poor and

worsened because I lost fluid from my left eye following injury. Without correction, it was 20 X 200 in the right eye, 20 x 400 in the left and I was amblyopic in the left eye following injury (age 10). By early 40s I had premature cataracts in both eyes, and my vision was surgically corrected in 2003. I saw rain and cloud formations for the first time in my life at that time.

I've had recurrent upper respiratory tract infections, nasal polyps (surgically removed), sleep apnea, uvula removal, intubations, and have received treatment for rhinitis and asthma all my life. Since age 9-10, I'm unable to eat sea foods; and have allergies to olive oil, many spices, flowers, pollen, grasses, mold, perfumes, and was told to stay away from oral or intramuscular administration of penicillin.

I was/am happiest when I swim because I can breathe well in the vicinity of swimming pools and beaches since tolerable quantities of airborne allergens are present near bodies of water. By about the third grade I was depressed, unable to cope with school and peers, and silently

contemplated suicide. By good fortune, I joined St Patrick's High School in 1969.

At St Patrick's, Karachi, I was advised that I have dyslexia and a high I.Q. From that summer, and for years thereafter, my parents helped me with tutors and professionals to perceive lexicon with correction. I learned to read with a cursor, received talk therapy, music education, used tape recorders to memorize concepts and textual information, and swam and snorkeled to keep fit.

With the help of tutors and counselors, I appeared for my O-Levels (Cambridge University Education System); the SATs; Achievement Tests; and was guided to undergraduate institutions where I could receive help for Dyslexia. At matriculation from high school my academic performance was poor, and coping with dyslexia was a secret I never revealed nor allowed any one to reveal due to my shame. I now realize (age 51) that my shame in my disability was irrational.



Living with Challenges



I came to a Teachers Training College, Winona State University, Winona MN, at age 18 in 1974. Professor Frank Rocco (deceased, March 5, 2008 and to whom this article is dedicated), Department of Special Education, retested me for IQ and dyslexia, afforded guidelines for accommodation, and set the course of my life under the direction of Professors in the Departments of Chemistry and Psychology.

My teachers and advisors at Winona State trained me to strengthen my Gestalt. They treated my deficiencies, foibles, and one serious lab explosion with kindness. They are my best friends and confidants to date. With them, I had a productive three-year stint, graduated early with a Bachelors degree in Chemistry, 1977; and received training for undergraduate research in organic synthesis; L-Dopa neurochemistry; and in the preparation of coordination complexes.

I received accommodation for colorblindness by use of light boxes and potentiometers for titrations. In addition, my friends helped identify colors in laboratory tests. In zoology and botany classes, I discovered I was unable to work with fish and plant materials; and allergists at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, advised that I was immunoglobulin-M (IgM) deficient. I was further cautioned to avoid sea foods, iodine, penicillin, sulfur drugs, and narcotic pain medication.

From Winona, I went home to Iran in 1977, married my wife Villi, gained admission to the Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics (IBB),

University of Tehran, and in immunology classes reconfirmed my IgM deficiency.

My tenure in Iran was abruptly scuttled by the Islamic Revolution in 1979. However, after Iran my growth in life was relatively smooth through 2005:

- I received my Ph.D. in chemistry under Robert G. Salomon, from Case Western Reserve University, Jan 1984 and served a postdoctoral stint with Bob through '84.
- Our son Cyrus was born November 24, 1983;
- I did postdoctoral studies in immunochemistry, at the Hawaii Biotechnology Group, Aiea, and became Group Leader there (Dec. 1984-Dec 1987),
- I joined the Hawaiian Sugar Industry's Research Center and developed plastics from sucrose, anticancer active platinum complexes from sucrose, and epoxy materials from sucrose and cellulose (1988-1998);
- My wife and I did our his-and-her MBA degrees in Hawaii; and
- I relocated to Louisiana and worked as a Research Chemist at the Southern Regional Research Center, USDA-ARS, New Orleans until disability retirement, March 2008;

I've published 54 peer reviewed papers and patents, raised over \$6.2M in research funding; presented 52 invited lectures; published an equal number of abstracts and preprints; and

became an avid and passionate diver (again, no pollen underwater, see pix1).

In 2005, I discovered I could not move and was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. I have lesions in my parietal and temporal lobes and spine. I have received aggressive high dose steroid and cytotoxic agent chemotherapies, plasmapheresis, interferon, and am currently on Tysabri® antibody therapy.

From being unable to walk, I now walk balance and with a walker (pix. 2). I am unable to play the piano or the guitar with facility as I did in childhood. However, I am beginning to hold down a full octave chord on a guitar without sounding dead notes. I want to regain fine motor control so I can play the piano and the guitar again with ease.

From a period in life when I could not read well, I now make contributions to the literature in organic chemistry, immunochemistry, and polymer science, and have received much public recognition, accolades, and growth. And to date, I read slowly with a cursor, or with the help of the Kurzweil® Reading program, and I do not perceive colors well.

So, what's next? I want to understand my disease and make contributions in a new area of academic endeavor.

Always remember lines from Adam Sandler's Water Boy, "you can do it;" and Dr. Seuss: "Do your best to be your best and do it all the time; Oh the places you will go."

Figure: Changes in my body since 2003

2003, Height 6.0', weight: 190lb



2008, Height 5'11", weight 290lb





Living with Challenges



A SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT IS FOR EVERYONE

Laura Abulafia, MHS

An environment and lifestyle free from toxic exposures should be afforded to everyone. Disability due to toxic exposure is unnecessary and most importantly, preventable. Additionally, people living with disabilities may be more vulnerable to toxic exposures throughout the lifespan than the general population, and this can lead to health problems for the individual.

There are complex connections between exposure to neurotoxic chemicals and intellectual and developmental disabilities. Environmental exposures play a key role in human growth and development, maintenance of health and in the development of disability and disease 1,2. Numerous pollutants in the environment including contaminants such as lead, mercury, pesticides, carbon monoxide, radon, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), brominated flame retardants and solvents, can affect brain development and function and contribute to adverse health outcomes and health disparities 3.

Persons living with an intellectual or developmental disability are especially vulnerable to toxic exposures for a number of reasons. Special concerns of this community frequently include behaviors such as Pica activities, or mouthing of nonfood items later in life, which may disproportionately expose persons with disabilities to contaminants in dust or toxicants in the items. There may also be mobility limitations and/or verbal limitations to move away from the source of pollution and communicating discomfort. There is also a high incidence of co-morbid issues for people with disabilities such as mental health issues or respiratory problems and use of medications that may further complicate their body's reaction to toxic exposure.

The gene-environment interaction is key to understanding human health within the paradigm of disability. People are exposed to a host of environmental agents on a daily basis and these exposures interact with the human system in complex and dynamic ways. Some of these environmental exposures include hormones, industrial chemicals, pesticides, pharmaceuticals, air pollutants, heavy metals, and nutrition. Many of the gene-environment interactions are still not well understood. For instance, environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) is a known carcinogen, yet not all smokers will develop cancer. The etiology of toxic chemicals and neurodevelopment disorders is equally as challenging to identify. In 60% of cases of intellectual disabilities the causes are unknown, yet four categories of etiological factors can occur before, during, or after birth: genetic disorders, chromosomal disorders, biological and organic causes, and environmental causes. Proper nutrition during pregnancy, drug and alcohol prevention programs, genetic counseling and prenatal testing, and testing for phenylketonuria, lead,

or hypothyroidism are all important public health steps in disability prevention.⁴

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities have the right to live, work, learn, worship and play in environments that are healthy and safe. The health impacts of contaminated homes, schools, work places, recreational spaces and communities pose a greater risk for the developing fetus, children, and people who already have compromising health issues and are faced with health disparities greater than the general population. Advocacy around environmental health involves working to reduce the environmental hazards that contribute to intellectual and developmental disabilities, and to minimize further health risks for people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It is important to continue investigating causes, treatments, and prevention strategies for health problems associated with unnecessary environmental exposures for all persons, especially those living with an additional vulnerability such as a disability.

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THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990

Clarence J. Sundram

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is one of the most significant laws protecting persons with disabilities from discrimination on the basis of disability in many contexts. This law is organized into five Titles each of which addresses a different domain.

- **Title One** prohibits discrimination by employers with 15 or more employees against "qualified individuals" with disabilities in all aspects of employment. It prohibits discrimination in all employment practices, including job application procedures, hiring, firing, promotion, compensation, training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. It applies broadly to recruitment, advertising, tenure, layoff, leave, fringe benefits, and all other employment-related activities.
- **Title Two** requires that all services, programs and activities of state and local governments—including education, parks, recreation and public transportation—be open and accessible to people with disabilities. This Title is responsible for requiring accessible public transportation, and that public building be accessible to people with disabilities, as examples.
- **Title Three** requires that all services offered by private entities dealing with the public—such as hotels, restaurants, theaters, museums, sports venues, doctors' offices—be offered equally to people with disabilities. This can include removing some physical barriers, or providing goods and services in an alternative manner when barriers cannot be removed.
- **Title Four** requires companies that offer telephone service for the general public to provide telecommunication relay services to people with speech or hearing disabilities.
- **Title Five** addresses miscellaneous issues including the administration and implementation of ADA regulations.

While the general principle of non-discrimination is relatively easy to grasp, the law itself is a complex balance of competing interests. The law does not protect all persons with disabilities in all contexts. For example,

employment discrimination is prohibited against "qualified individuals with disabilities." The ADA defines an "individual with a disability" as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities include seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, caring for oneself, and working. The definition excludes minor disabilities. However, if a person is discriminated against because s/he is regarded as having a disability (even if s/he does not), s/he may invoke the protection of the ADA.

A qualified individual with a disability must meet legitimate skill, experience, education, or other requirements of the position and be able to perform the "essential functions" of the position with or without "reasonable accommodation." Reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a job or the work environment that will enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to perform essential job functions. As one might expect, these terms and other provisions of the ADA have generated a lot of litigation over its meaning and application in various contexts.

There are two important points that the readers should know. First, that the United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division has published a very helpful booklet -- The Americans with Disabilities Acts, Questions and Answers -- explaining the ADA. Second, every state has a Protection and Advocacy agency that may be able to assist persons with disabilities and their families understand their rights. You can get more information about eligibility for this assistance and contact information for your state at this site (http://www.napas.org/aboutus/PA_CAP.htm).

Clarence J. Sundram is a nationally recognized expert on conditions in institutions and community program for persons with mental disabilities. For 20 years, he served as Chairman of the New York State Commission on Quality of Care for the Mentally Disabled, an independent state oversight agency charged with investigating child abuse, patient abuse, and financial fraud in programs serving persons with mental disabilities. He has published numerous articles in legal and other professional journals, and is a frequent speaker at national conferences. Mr. Sundram can be reached at phone: 518-527-1918; or E-mail: cjsundram@alumni.ksg.harvard.edu.



Living with Challenges



A QUICK OVERVIEW OF ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Alya Reeve, MD, FANPA

I would like to invite you to think about several important separate aspects to getting mental health care for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. There are physical, system-based, and mental barriers set up by the medical insurance system (insurance companies, Medicaid, Medicare); there are issues of appropriate training of professionals providing services; there are benefits of being labeled with a mental illness, possibly taking specific medications; there are drawbacks to being given a diagnosis of mental illness, and negative effects of medications; there are complex issues of autonomy – who is making decisions about one patient's experiences, feelings, behavior, opportunities, lack of opportunities; there are challenges to figure out what kinds of activities constitute mental health services and what are health-promoting activities that include mental health. Let us first agree to use a definition of mental health.

DEFINITION OF MENTAL HEALTH

The World Health Organization defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community”. Mental Health requires a safe environment, healthy and steady nutrition, adequate rest, mentally interesting activity and meaningful social relationships. Notice, this state of being has no requirement for any specific level of cognitive ability.

People who have mental illness can be described using the criteria and diagnoses published by the DSM-IV-TR and ICD-10, which are classification systems for diagnosing mental health conditions that have

been agreed upon by professionals around the world. To receive a diagnosis, a person (the potential patient) needs to have a competent adequate appropriate psychiatric evaluation, usually preceded by a medical evaluation. If there are medical conditions creating the psychiatric symptoms, the medical condition needs to be treated! Generally, this should occur first, but sometimes psychiatric and medical treatments must happen simultaneously.

Acutely, any physician or other primary care provider can make emergency evaluations and provide medications, a quick talk, or “a shoulder to cry on”. If the situation is not too urgent, outpatient treatment with a psychiatrist or other therapist (e.g. psychologist, social worker, and counselor) would be better because it is more likely to result in an ongoing relationship. The value of an ongoing relationship is that psychiatric symptoms vary on a daily basis; symptoms and behavioral patterns over weeks and months are important to figuring out an accurate diagnosis and establishing a reasonable hypothesis for treatment. First, this hypothesis (or idea) about what would work for a patient is established; then getting ongoing service of this treatment must be obtained and maintained.

Assessment can be skewed by inexperience, poor listening, or insufficient/incorrect information. Receiving the wrong diagnosis may lead to receiving the wrong forms of treatment. Rarely, a missed medical diagnosis leads to a person dying from the medical condition that could have been treated (such as cancer or cardiac arrhythmia).

Advocating for improved or effective access is a critical piece of

support work done by family, friends and paid support staff of people with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Providing accurate information, assuring that treatment is directed to real problems, assuring that patients are not over-looked because they do not meet expectations – all are necessary advocacy functions. People who have mental illness must be given a chance to understand their illness and receive access to care that will support effective functioning.

RESOURCES.

www.unmcoc.org

www.who.int/mental_health

www.aaid.org

www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/reports

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Dr. Reeve is a practicing neuropsychiatrist, and an associate professor, Psychiatry & Neurology, Continuum of Care Project, at the University of New Mexico specializing in intellectual/developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injury, and other neuropsychiatric disorders. She lives in Albuquerque with her husband and two high school aged children.



THE CHALLENGES FACED BY MANECKJI LIMJI HATARIA

(1813-1880)

Dinaz Kutar Rogers

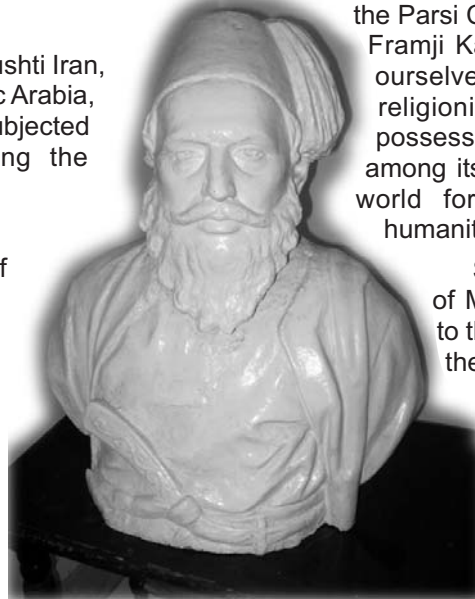
"The followers of Zoroaster who would not accept the religion of Islam expatriated themselves. Those who could not abandon their country [Persia] and continued to cling to their old religion had to resign to frightful sufferings. These dwelt chiefly in Fars and Khorassan. European travelers, who have visited Persia at different periods, have all been struck by their miserable and precarious condition..."

Throughout mankind's history there have been men and women who amidst hopelessness--have with great courage and resolve, come to the aid of their less-fortunate fellow human beings. One of the champions of the beleaguered Zarathushti community in Iran was Maneckji Limji Hataria (1813—1890).

Beginning with the conquest of Zarathushti Iran, around 649 C E. by the armies of Islamic Arabia, the Zarathushtis in that country were subjected to persecution for centuries. Among the hardships they endured were:

- * Forced conversions with massacres of the resisters
- * Confiscation of property belonging to Zarathushti families to be given to the Arabs and to those who had converted to Islam (without concern for the rights of the legitimate heirs)
- * Heavy taxation of property acquired by Zarathushtis for the benefit of the Mullahs (Muslim clergy)
- * Prohibition against building new homes or repairing old ones
- * Prohibition against wearing new or white coats
- * Prohibition against riding horses, only donkeys were permitted
- * Extra taxation on Zarathushti traders, in addition to government tariffs
- * Murder of a Zarathushti by Muslims went unpunished [no Muslim would be killed for killing a kafir (infidel)]
- * Zarathushti sanctuaries such as fire temples and dokhmas were often vandalized

Such deplorable conditions and treatment compelled some Zarathushti (in Iran) in 1511 to contact the Parsis in Navsari, India. They lamented that their current suffering was worse than that under the despotic governance of Tur, Alexander and even Zohak. In response, Changa Asa of Navsari sent Nariman Hoshang to start a religious dialogue with the clergy in Iran.



THE PARSIS Vol I - Mlle. Delphine Menant, 1917 A.D

In 1853, reports of oppression against his fellow co-religionists, and encouraged by an appeal from his third-generation Irani wife, prompted Sir Dinshaw Petit to establish The Society for the Amelioration of the Condition of Zoroastrians in Persia and set up a Persian Zoroastrian Fund. The cause had broad support in the Parsi Community, as expressed by Dosabhai Framji Karaka around that time. "But can we ourselves do nothing for our unfortunate co-religionists in Persia? Our community possesses considerable weight, and includes among its members names known all over the world for their exertions in the cause of humanity..."

Such outcries led to the appointment of Maneckji Limji Hataria as ambassador to the Zarathushtis of Iran to help alleviate their suffering under the rule of the Qajar dynasty. Born in Surat and raised in Bombay, Maneckji was fluent in many languages including Farsi. He had been brought up with passion and pride in his maddar vattan (mother country) Iran, conveyed in stories about the valiant struggles by those who stayed behind. For Maneckji,

this role as an ambassador--to meet the challenges of their physical, mental and spiritual comforts and to protect their religious rights and customs--was a daunting task indeed. In those days, travel in the desert was physically brutal. Beside the constant menace of robbers, the mere fact of being a Zoroastrian presented great dangers in that foreign land.

Maneckji established Anjuman Societies in Yazd and Kerman modeled after the Bombay Parsi Panchayat, to create strong sense of unity and common welfare for everyone. His benevolence and diplomacy won him an honorable place in the court of Nassirudin Shah. He used the goodwill of this Persian monarch, along with help from English and French emissaries, to plead for the suffering of the Zarathushtis. In 1882, he eventually helped abolish the jizya poll tax, along with other despotic laws against the Zarathushtis. One of his most-noted successes was persuading some Iranians in Yazd to immigrate to India, where they came to be known as Iranis.

Centuries of oppression had diminished many religious practices and celebrations. Maneckji persuaded



Living with Challenges



the populace to revive the long-lost ceremonial customs and rites. Through the funds from India, he provided Sudrehs (holy undershirts) and kustis (72" long girdle) to those unable to afford them, thus bringing religious pride and dignity to the people who were called, with derision, ghebers.***

With traditional Parsi generosity, Maneckji helped build schools, orphanages and hospitals. Inspired by this great man, the Anjuman Societies in Kerman and Yazd restored fire temples to their former resplendence. Zarathushtis in Tehran were also beneficiaries of and witness to the Parsis adhering to the basic tenets of their faith of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

In 1865, Maneckji published the tales of his travels in Gujarati in his book Ezhare Shyate Iran. He also published Jamaye –Maneck (Collections of Maneck) compilation of his observations on the social manners, traditions, arts and religion of the Zarathushtis under the Old Iranian monarchies.

In devoting himself for years to the well-being of his fellow co-religionists, Maneckji Limji Hataria freed Zarathushtis in Iran of a myriad of social and emotional challenges and physical dangers that had oppressed them for over 500 years. He was indeed a hero when times were brutal and the desert of Iran was fraught with dangers.



***infidel of the infidel

We heard reports from Irani Zarathushtis and Parsi cousins who have lived in Iran that even in our times, some Zarathushtis there usually carry their kusti in their pockets instead of tied around their waists, for fear of being challenged by fanatics and identified as Zarathushtis.

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3. A Zoroastrian Tapestry

Edited by Pheroza J. Godrej

And Firoza Punthakey Mistree

Dinaz Kutar Rogers is a published writer and a poet. She believes in

"Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds"
Much wisdom in these simple seeds.

Asho Zarathushtra's timeless message to humanity.



NAUROOZ AROUND THE WORLD



Rustom Kevala, President of FEZANA had written "To show our solidarity and resolve, let us welcome NauRoos 2008 all across North America in a spirit of hamazori, togetherness, during the week-end of March 21-23, 2008. By celebrating NauRoos together, we are showing our pride in our enlightened heritage and common spirituality." He outlined the vision of the leadership of FEZANA executives, that NauRoos, be celebrated by Zarathushtis all over the world on March 21, with prayer meetings, jashans, and festivities. This is an all inclusive universal event, so please join FEZANA and 25 member organizations in your locality in North America and across the globe to create awareness of this beautiful tradition for your friends, families, coworkers, colleagues, neighbors and local/regional.

Dolly Dastoor and Khosro Mehrafar were requested to coordinate the efforts.

And wow what a celebration we had. Starting from the Haft Seen Table at the White House, to the celebrations in all the cities of FEZANA member associations, in Central Asia, in Iran, England, Australia, Singapore, India etc. There was also some recognitions for Naurooz at the highest level of the executive, comments by the Speaker of the US House of Representatives, recognition in the Ontario Legislative assembly, the article in TIME, radio shows on NPR, and CJAD, newspaper articles, TV interviews by Homi Gandhi and Jamshed Ghadiali, the Persian Parade in New York and for the first time in San Jose.

Thank you all for your overwhelming response to the coordinated efforts to celebrate Naurooz by FEZANA. The following pages are a photo-documentary of all our efforts.

Dolly Dastoor and Khosro Mehrafar



CELEBRATION OF NAUROOZ AROUND THE WORLD

March 21 was of special significance this year as the calendars of five different religions coincided, giving each faith a reason to celebrate the day. This was indeed a "blessed weekend".

The Zarathushtis as well as Persian speakers and those who trace their roots to Persia celebrated Naurooz which marks the first day of spring according to the astronomical vernal equinox. It is a Persian word meaning New (year) day. (see FJ March Vol22, No 1 2008)

This also coincided with Eid Milad-un-Nabi (the birth of Prophet Muhammad PBUH) on Friday, Christians marked the crucifixion and death of Jesus as Good Friday, while Hindus and Sikhs came together to celebrate Holi, the festival of colors. The Baha'i and Ismailis also celebrated Eid-e-Nauroz.

Tradition takes Naurooz as far back as the time of King Jamshid when the life of Indo-Iranian settlers depended on farming and spring, when nature awakened once again and flowers bloomed. In Zarathushtrian cosmology, after Ahura Mazda created the Universe he assigned six holy immortals (Amesha Spentas) as protectors of the world:

Khashtra (Sharivar), the protector of the sky; Asha-Vahishta (Ordibehesht) the protector of fire; Vahu Manah (Bahman) the protector of animals, Haurvatat (Khordad) the protector of water, Spenta Armaiti (Esphand) the protector of earth and Ameratat (Amurdad or Mordad) the protector of vegetation.

Ahura Mazda himself became the protector of humans and the Holy Fire.

Naurooz, the most elaborate, was to celebrate Ahura Mazda and the Holy Fire at the spring equinox. The Naurooz festival as celebrated today dates back to the Sassanid era. Sassanid celebrations began ten days prior to the New Year when it was believed that the guardian angels (Farvahars) and the spirits of the departed came down to visit humans on earth.

AUSTRALIA

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA JAMSHED-I-NAUROOZ CELEBRATIONS

Kurush Zaiwala.

For and behalf of the ZAV Committee

A sprinkle of rosewater, a glance in the mirror – the traditional greeting welcomed members and guests of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria as they made their way into the hall for the annual Naurooz celebrations held on 29 March 2008. While Naurooz marks the beginning of Spring in the northern hemisphere, in Australia this is autumn and marks the onset of winter. A traditional

Naurooz jashan had been performed by 4 mobeds on March 21 and attended by a large crowd.

The haft sheen table had been laid in the entrance to the hall. The program had a Persian theme that was echoed in the food, music and dancing. Traditional and modern Persian dances were performed by the ladies and girls of the ZAV, who had put in hours of practice. A fancy dress competition was organized for our very youngest members. Eight participants paraded with great aplomb, making the judges choice for the best dressed an extremely difficult one. Delicious Persian food with Falooda was served.

AUSTRALIAN ZOR ASSOCIATION SYDNEY (AZA)

Hutokshi Hira, Sydney Australia.

210 people attended the Naurooz celebrations in the Darbe Mehr with one third of the attendees in the 18 to 25 age group mingling with each other and dressed in their party best.

It was a clear evening and the night was beautiful with the moon and stars shining down on us together with our twinkling lights, our beautiful lamp posts lit up and set throughout our property and our water fountain at the newly fenced billabong area. It was the most ideal and picturesque setting for our function.

A professional disc jockey played musical hits for the young and old including Persian music inside the hall. There was a large variety of a beautifully prepared buffet menu elaborately set up in shining bairmarias which was enjoyed tremendously.

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA (ZAWA)

Zenobia Pavri

One only had to look at the happy faces all around the Len Packham Reserve Clubrooms, to know that all the hard work of organizing a great event had paid off! The venue was well-chosen and perfect for the night.

Great music welcomed ZAWA members and friends as they streamed in. Guitarist/crooner, Rodney Dickinson kept the flow of songs and music was catching. Gifts were handed out to beaming kids who were certainly not shy in receiving them.

Candles were lit at each table to observe 'EARTH HOUR' and as the music played, kids, couples and individuals danced and clapped to the rhythm. Others at tables enjoyed their drinks and nibbles. It was great to see quite a few seniors, teens, young adults and little babies having an equally good time.

Then came the delicious spread everyone was waiting for. A huge bowl of cachumber, rotlis, gajjar/mewa



CELEBRATION OF NAUROOZ AROUND THE WORLD

achaar, sas-ni-machhi, tarkari-pur-eeda, murghi-na-curry/chawal and kulfi for dessert. The food was absolutely delicious – cooked to perfection, well heated and served graciously. ZAWA, on behalf of everybody would like to acknowledge and thank Persis Billimoria, Persis Shroff, the two chefs par excellence, Cornelia Irani, Kuky Wadia, Villie Mistry, Pervez Mistry and all those others who had a hand in the catering and/or organizing.

"View all photos in detail on <http://www.zawa.asn.au>"

NEW ZEALAND

The Zarathustrian Association Of New Zealand (ZANC) - Naurooz Celebrations in Auckland on the 21st of March.



Rashna Tata, on behalf of ZANZ

NauRoouz - 21st March 2008, was an eventful day in the ZANZ calendar. 14 priests, young and old, took part in the Jashan ceremony in the morning with a record crowd of over 275 devotees. President Tata gave special thanks to all the priests – Viraf Fatakia, (lead preist) Freddy Gonda,



Hormuz Patel, Khusroo Master, Farzan Rao, Rishad Katki, Perzaan Mehta, Jehan Bulsara, Riyasp Bhandari, Karan Bhandari, Darian Shalori & Navzad Chhor performed the Jashan ceremony. Young Jehan, Riyasp, Karan, Darian and Navzad had completed their Navar ceremonies in Dec 2007 in India. Ervad Freddy Gonda trains the young boys in Auckland, prior to them leaving for their Navar ceremony in Bombay.

The children of the ZANZ prayer class delighted the large crowd with their lovely religious song performance. followed by the screening of "The Keepers of the Flame" a special CD made by the House of Tata's to inspire the youth.

The ZANZ evening function of Dinner, Dance and Housie was held at the Rangoli restaurant, owned and run by two Zarathushti brothers

SINGAPORE

The Parsi Zoroastrian Association S.E.Asia
Singapore celebrated the NauRoouz on 21st March 2008. Reported by Rusi Ghadiali

The AGM, and Annual Dinner and Dance was held at the prestigious Tanglin Club with 95 adults (including a few guests) and 25 children. Before the dinner the mobed and 10 children led the prayers.

The President gave his yearly speech, and thanked all members for their support. Including the lodge committee representatives for looking after the cemetery, he welcomed and introduced new members. 6 children and youth were given the awards for excelling in studies, sports and arts. 19 children got Hongbao. Children and adults had a gala time dancing and twirling on the dance floor without any care. The food was excellent.

ENGLAND (ZTFE)

The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) organized a Naurooz Jashan, dinner and dance at the Zartoshty Brothers Hall, Zoroastrian Centre for Europe on Friday 21st March 2008. There were 630 Zarathushtis in attendance including 50 from Birmingham, Manchester and Leicester. This was a proud moment as Behzad Karkaria (grandson of Ervad Jal Karkaia, who served the community for 50 years) performed the first Anjuman Jashan. Behzad was ordained as a priest in December 2007 at the Vaatcha Ghandi Agiary under Ervad Asphandiar Dadachanji. President Paurushasp Jila thanked all 6 Ervads for performing the Jashan ceremony and Mrs Falahati for preparing the Haftseen Table.

President Jila launched the 6th edition of Directory of Zoroastrians of UK Europe 2008, exactly 3 years since the last edition in March 2005. ZTFE thanked Mrs Khorshed and Mr Mahinder Sodhi for their continued support and their generous donation which has enabled the installation of new kitchen equipment, used for the first time this Naurooz. Mrs Simin and Mr Shahrokh Shahrokh were thanked for their generous donation and their innovative idea in endowing a fund to provide Naurooz gifts to all children under the age of 11.

NAUROOZ AROUND NORTH AMERICA

ZAGBA (Boston)

On Saturday, March 22nd, ZAGBA members and friends celebrated Naurooz with an incredible function in Bedford, Massachusetts. A total of 93 adults/students and 45 kids were in attendance from the Boston area, all over Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Hampshire!



CELEBRATION OF NAUROOZ AROUND THE WORLD

The highlights of the evening included:

- A moment of silence to honor one of our founding members Rusi Patel who passed away in January 2008.
- Children's musical performances of "21st March" and "12 Days of Naurooz" with accompaniment by a first-time ever ZAGBA orchestra (with keyboard, violin and cello).
- Individual presentations by the children describing a record 28 items for our ZAGBA Haft SEEN (& Haft SHEEN) table!
- Thanking the retiring ZAGBA Board members Edul Nakra and Anaheeta Mody.
- Presenting the new 2008-2010 ZAGBA Board: President Jamshed Dubash, Vice President Firoza Panthaki, Secretary Maharukh Patel, Assistant/Joint Secretary Hufrih Sirohi, and Treasurer Aspiyan Gazder
- Acknowledging the extended board members for their continued leadership and hard work in Children's and Adult Education, Service, Outreach, Youth, Sports and Communications.
- Reiterating ZAGBA's four core initiatives of Community Building, Community Education, Community Service and Community Center
- Highlighting the progress toward the creation of Zarathushti Center of Boston (ZCB).
- Reciting of Navroze prayers (with translation) by a ZAGBA record of FIVE mobeds (priests): Cyrus Karkaria, Yezad Nalladaru, Farhad Panthaki, Nauzer Vimadalal, and Shavir Vimadalal
- Welcoming of the many new families, young professionals, and students who attended a ZAGBA function for the first time. It was a pleasure to meet them and we hope to see them for other events as well.
- And of course a catered dinner and lively dancing.

The "21st March" Song is from the Zoroastrian Studies CD -- I am proud to be a Zoroastrian.

CHICAGO

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM PASSPORT TO PERSIA

Reported by Rashna Ghadialy

In its third year of celebrating the Persian New Year, Shabejomeh organized Passport to Persia at the Chicago's Children's Museum at Navy Pier. Close to three thousand people visited the museum that weekend to participate in the festivities, visiting the egg painting station, haftseen table, Persian foods and spices table,



sampling pomegranate juice, having their names written by a calligrapher in Persian. Performances included children's dances and classical Persian music. Tinaz Sevak (photo above) and Rashna Ghadialy volunteered at the event on behalf of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago.

Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago. Hosi Mehta, President.

Another great event that was celebrated on March 21 in a very modest way was the blessings and inauguration of the FEZANA office. This is a small office but a huge step for FEZANA in coming of independence. "First time in the short life of FEZANA the goal of having an independent office has been achieved and all in Chicago should be proud that it is in our Darbe Meher as this is where FEZANA started and the constitution was decided on." We congratulate all the FEZANA executives and President Rustom Kevala, Zenobia Damania, first FEZANA Administrator and we thank Roshan and Rohinton Rivetna for their effort in building this office and Bonnie and Hoshang Karani and Coleman Doors for donating the funds for the construction and furnishings.

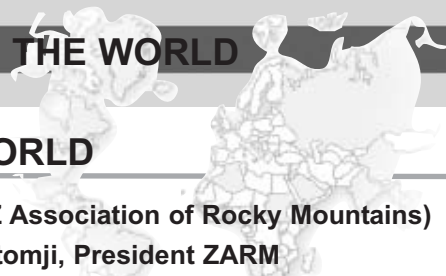
.CALIFORNIA

Zarthosti Anjuman of Northern California

FREMONT, Calif. – More than 240 Zarathushtis from across Northern California celebrated Naurooz, the Zoroastrian New Year, at the Golden Peacock restaurant March 23. Ervad Kobad Jamshed and his niece Pareezad Zarolia started the celebrations with a prayer for Naurooz. The Sunday School children between the ages of 5-8 performed a skit organized by Annahita Jasavala, explaining the significance of several ritual objects associated with Naurooz. Cellist Navaz Jasavala ended the afternoon's entertainment with a solo recital.

SAN DIEGO

Reported by Rostam Akhtarkhavari
<rogerkhavari@yahoo.com>



CELEBRATION OF NAUROOZ AROUND THE WORLD



NauRooz celebration on March 21st was a great success. With over 275 people in attendance, a beautiful



haft seen table, Amu Naurooz Mr. Kavous Kont, handing out coins and sweets to the children (and a few grown ups who let their inner child loose), Persian buffet style food,



and bottles of wine for all to enjoy, a memorable night was enjoyed by all. DJ Rushid played music and young and not so young danced to his tunes until 11:30 PM when we HAD TO end the night. A special thanks should go to Mr. Mehran Sepehri who took this difficult task on and made it happen. You can see him in pictures wearing a white suite (see photo above) and checking tickets at the door, speaking to the people on the microphone and much more. Credit should be given where credit is due. Mehran single handedly managed the entire event from its inception to the very last moments. He was the first person there and the last person to leave. We need more people like him.

DENVER (Z Association of Rocky Mountains) Neville Rustomji, President ZARM

ZARM celebrated Naurooz on Friday March 21st in Denver. ZARM is a very small association but it is still important to hold such events with the knowledge that others across the nation and the world were having similar celebrations. A brief prayer was performed by Rumi Engineer who recently became a paramobed. This was followed by a discussion about the future of ZARM. and a potluck dinner with good parsi food, some wine and beer.

FLORIDA

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA (ZAF)

As you entered the hall, you were transplanted into a make believe Jamshedi Nau Rooz celebration dream world, thanks to Lyla Todywalla (photo below with Jo Ann Dastur on right) and her helpers who tirelessly worked to create Master Pieces with flowers, candles, and table decorations. The dinner was sumptuous - thanks to Khushroo and his helpers and the cooks who created delightful recipes. And that Falooda! Oh My! Chuck that calorie counter! And then the Brazilian Dance program! Wow! What can we say about that except it was exceptional! Reported by Soli and Jo Ann Dastur



HOUSTON --ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON Kaemerz Dotiwala.

539 B.C.E, Babylon (Iraq) has fallen to a new conqueror. Citizens of Babylon men, women and children waited with baited breath to find out what was in store for them. (In those times it was the modus operandi of conquerors to destroy the religious institutions, put the citizen to the sword, loot burn and ransack the conquered city). All fell silent as the young conqueror drove up in his chariot, climbed up the steps of the Ziggurat, paid his respects to the Babylonian god Marduk, turned around to the citizens and announced that they were free to practice



CELEBRATION OF NAUROOZ AROUND THE WORLD

their religion and free to lead happy normal lives as citizens under the protection of Persia.

The Conqueror was Cyrus The Great the one who gave the world its first Charter of Human Rights and also gave the world its first Multi Faith service. (What did this have to do with the Naurooz function in Houston, Texas)?

March 22, 2008 on a beautiful spring day gifted by Ahura Mazda, Zarthushti and their friends gathered in fellowship at, "The Center" to commemorate Naurooz and were met by a most beautifully set, Haft Seen" table arranged by our Iranian Community members. We, in Houston, our most grateful to our Iranian members who every NauRoouz add so much to our festivities.

8:15 PM (Yes, we were on Zarthushti stretchable time), strains of music from Tchaikovsky's Nut cracker filled the centers auditorium as our Sunday School children from the Young and Middle Group presented a powerful performance of a dance drama, "Naurooz with the Farohar". Nearly two months of weekly practice bore dividends as the performance with colorful costumes received rave reviews and left the audience wanting more. A grand banquet comprising of Iranian and Desi food was enjoyed by all.

What did all of this have to do with Cyrus's conquest of Babylon?

The Zoroastrian Association of Houston along with the Inter Faith Ministries of Houston's Meals on Wheels Program have combined Inter faith activities with Naurooz (The idea of King and Commoner breaking bread together, an idea attributed to the mythical King Jamsheed.) by donating \$2400.00 to adopt and feed two senior citizens for one year. ZAH intends to increase the size of its donation and the number of seniors it can adopt on a yearly basis so that no Senior goes hungry. A Great Beginning at the advent of our New Year to, "Follow in the footsteps of our Fathers".

MICHIGAN ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN (ZAOM)

On Saturday, March 22, 2008, the newly founded Zoroastrian Association of Michigan (ZAOM) celebrated its first Naurooz since it opened its doors to members on Jan 1, 2008. The function was held in Novi, Michigan with a Jashan by Mobed Er Noshir Sidhwa at 5.00 p.m. After the Jashan the guests were treated to a welcoming drink of falooda, with appetizers and refreshments and a round of games for children and adults. President Hushedar Mehta updated the attendees on the progress of the ZAOM which now has 102 adult members and 46 kids.

At 8 .00 pm a sumptuous dinner was served and the guests sat at tables that had as center pieces "Naurooz Baskets" which the children attending the monthly religious classes had created. Soon after, the floor was cleared for an energetic dance session that clearly cut across all age barriers. Overall the event was well attended and a tremendous success. Many thanks to the social subcommittee members Parizad Joshi, Parizad Chinoy, Villoo Gheyara, Anahita Kavarana & Despina Mehta for making it all happen.

MONTREAL ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF QUEBEC

The Naurooz Jashan was celebrated on March 22nd by Ervads Jal Panthaki, Gev Karkaria and Mobedyar Khushroo Mirza with over 120 members and guests in attendance. A beautiful haftsheen table was prepared by the Iranian Zarthushti members and gifts were given to all children under 14 years of age. The Naurooz Jashan and dinner with the delicious Iranian food was sponsored by the estate of Dr Firoze M. Ichhaporia Trust

NEW YORK

Shirin Khosravi,
President, IZA

Homi D. Gandhi,
President ZAGNY

New York area Zarathushtis celebrated the following events over ten days:

1. We began our celebrations by sharing the day's event at Arbab Rustam Guiv Dare Mehr in Pomona, New York with local community members and leaders, inter-faith leaders, and diplomatic leaders.
2. ZAGNY's annual NauRoouz event took place on Saturday, March 22, at the Dare Mehr in Pomona.
3. Zarthushti leaders participated in the NauRoouz celebration organized by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg on Tuesday, March 25, at the Mayor's official residence, Gracie Mansion.
4. IZA celebrated NauRoouz event on Zarathushtra birthday on Saturday, March 29, at the Dare Mehr in Pomona.
5. Zarathushtis from many parts of our neighboring area participated in the fifth "Persian Parade" in celebration of NauRoouz Day on Madison Avenue in New York City on Sunday, March 30, 2008.

MARCH 29th After the prayers, there were presentations on the history of Iran, the archeological and cultural heritage of the Persian empire, including a slide show from an invitee from California, music and dance presentations by the children of the Zoroastrian Religious classes run by IZA followed by traditional Iranian food for



CELEBRATION OF NAUROOZ AROUND THE WORLD

the New Year and a fantastic Iranian DJ who kept people on their feet way into the early hours of the morning.

As guests of the New York Zoroastrian community, a sizeable delegation of Zoroastrians from Washington DC led by ZAMWI president Ardeshir Bakhtiani stayed overnight at the Dar-e-Mehr in New York and participated next morning at the Persian Parade on Madison Avenue in Manhattan. *See article on New York Parade*

ONTARIO –ONTARIO ZOROASTRIAN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

As we spring forward, Jamshedi Naurooz offers a wonderful occasion to bid farewell to another year and bring hopes and aspirations for the New Year.

Ervads Nozer Kotwal, Xerxes Bamji, Khushroo Bharda, Rushad Bharda, Rushad Unvala and Freyhan Daruwalla performed a Jashan to commemorate the arrival of Naurooz. Nozer Kotwal thanked the priests for performing prayers during the recently held Muktdas, especially the younger ervads who had taken time out of their March Break holidays to do so. He encouraged more members to attend future prayers during these holy days.

As the crowd of over 400 continued to pour in at the Satkar Palace Banquet Hall in Mississauga, guests helped themselves to tasty hors d'oeuvres. An assortment of appetizers and a sumptuous main course ensured that Naurooz resolutions related to dieting were set back at least another day!

President Niloufer Bhesania thanked Kashmira Laher, the Entertainment Committee Chairperson, and her Committee for the event. She thanked the priests for their commitment and dedication to our community for performing the Muktd prayers, and to all the volunteers for offering their assistance, donations, for preparing food and giving sukher and loban during the five-day Muktd period.

Armaity Anandsagar and Perveen Katila organized games which kept youngsters and their parents active and the raffle, door and table prizes made many winners happy. Following dinner, DJ Rudra Ramlogan played a modern mix of Western and Bollywood hits, keeping the dance floor packed..

ONTARIO -ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF ONTARIO

On March 21st 2008 the Darbe Mehr was filled with devotees who were present for the jashan led by Ervad Kerman Katrak and accompanied by Ervads Cyrus Khory, Boman Kotwal, Cyrus Panthakee, Mehbod Dastur, Hoshang Udwadia, Kaizad Katrak, Behram and Rayomand Antia. Kerman Katrak spoke in English and Farsi on the significance of Naurooz. ZSO recognized

many of its volunteers for years of dedicated service to the community.

ONTARIO: THE IRANIAN CULTURAL KANOON

Celebrated Asho Zarthusstra's birthday on March 26 with prayers. A religious drama and video presentation was followed by dinner. On March 29th a Naurooz dinner entertainment and dancing were organized at a popular Persian Banquet hall

WASHINGTON

In celebration of Naurooz on April 2 2008 The Library of Congress in Washington DC arranged a fascinating Lecture - Recital on "Classical music of Persia - The Precious Heritage of Iranians" by the renowned artist Roya Bahrami. A spell bound appreciative audience attended the celebration in The African Middle Eastern Reading Room when Roya, an authority on Persian music, its history, and influence on other cultures, and an outstanding artist of international note, performed several works of renowned Persian poets and musicians such as Rumi, Hafez and Sepehri.

A LOOK TO 2009

We can now begin to build bridges to cross boundaries of culture, race, nationality and ethnicity in future years for Naurooz and for the revival of other traditional celebrations .

[a] The Haft Seen table affords opportunities at creativity, Now that we have a Haft seen table at the White House, we can look forward to similar displays at the State Capitols with proper advance interaction of community members with elected officials at that level.

The children in the community classes could with their parents explore the possibility of having a display of the Haft seen table in their schools at Naurooz and in public libraries.

[b] In 2008 we had two Persian Parades, [in New York and in San Jose], this trend should continue, with more cities across North America joining in this effort. We can envision wider press coverage, if multiple cities put on a show with the same theme in the same week.

[c] More countries should be persuaded to issue a stamp for Norooz to celebrate the event.

Naurooz is a cultural heritage, of many countries which formed the Persian Empire extending from the Indus River to the Mediterranean and Black Sea for over 5000 years. It is an eternal holiday which celebrates the rejuvenation of life in the spring and is a unifier of all people no matter what race, creed or religion. It is still celebrated by 500 million people in the heart of Asia from Western Turkey to the Wall of China.

Naurooz Around the World

Haft Sheen Tables of North America 2008



California Zoroastrian Centre



Zor Ass of Quebec, from left Ers Karkaria, Mirza and Panthaki



WHITE HOUSE HAFTSHEEN TABLE



Zarhosti Anjuman of Northern California



Zor Assoc of Metropolitan Washington



Zor Assoc of Florida-Lyla Todywala left Jo Ann Dastur, right



ZATAMBY from left, Cyrus, Anushka and Xenia Chinoy

Naurooz Around the World

Haft Sheen Tables of North America 2008



Orlando Group. From left: Soli Jo Ann Dastur, Gustad Mody, Feroze, Yasmin, Tanaz and Adi Irani



Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation



Zoroastrian Association of Michigan



Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area



At Library of Congress from left Roya Baharami, Roshan Bamji, Kersi Shroff (Photo credit Ester Bamji)



New York Darbe Mehr, Er Hormuzdiar Mirza



Central Florida Zoroastrian Community

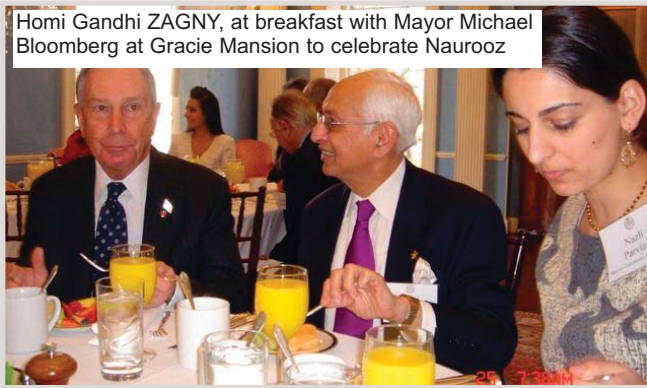
Naurooz Around the World

Other Naurooz Events 2008

Zoroastrian Association of California Sari Competition



Homi Gandhi ZAGNY, at breakfast with Mayor Michael Bloomberg at Gracie Mansion to celebrate Naurooz



Philadelphia Museum of Arts, ZAPANJ



Philadelphia Museum of Arts. ZAPANJ



Philadelphia Museum of Arts. Exhibit from ZAPANJ

San Diego Naurooz party with Amu Naurooz



Naurooz Around the World

Other Naurooz Events 2008

Zoroastrian Assoc of Rocky Mountain



Zoroastrian Association of Virginia



Chicago Children's Museum
Passport to Persia 2008



Chicago Children's Museum
Passport to Persia 2008

CHITHREM BUYAAT

Prayer in English with translation

We have excerpted the first paragraph of Chithrem Buyaat to accompany this photo montage for NauRooz, as the blessings in this beautiful Pazand Setayesh (a song of praise), are most appropriate for the festival of spring and the resurgence of life!

Source: Zoroastrian Studies, Mumbai, March 2002

Khshnaothra Ahurahe Mazdao ---
Ashem Vohu (1)
Chithrem buyaat ahmi nmaane!
Pithwem buyaat ahmi namaane!
Tokhma pithwem buyaat ahmi
nmaane!
Paedaai baad andarin in maan-i
vehaan
Ke hamishe pih va aabaadaan baad!
Pa rasashne baad, pa yazdaan
haadar-i vahaan!
Mehmaan-i dustaan andarash baad!

[Transliterated by Dr. Rooyintan Peer]

May there be happiness in this
house!
May there be prosperity in this
house!
May righteous ones be born in this
house and may they always remain
happy and prosperous.
May the good *yazatas* dwell in this
house and may they live here as
friends and guests.

Naurooz Around the World

Naurooz Celebrations Around the World 2008

Zoroastrian Assoc of Victoria (Melbourne, Australia)



Zoroastrin Association of Western Australia



Australian Zoroastrian Association (Sydney)



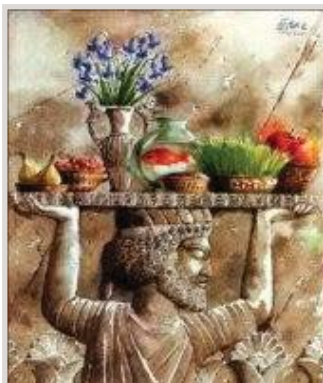
Zarathustrian Association of New Zealand



Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe



J.J. Hospital Parsi Ward Mumbai



Tajikistan

Naurooz Around the World

Haft Sheen Tables of North America 2008



Zoroastrian Association of Houston



Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, Jamshed Jam



Zoroastrian Assoc of Metropolitan Chicago



Naurooz Around the World

Naurooz Celebrations Around the World 2008



Stamps issued by Iran

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

US GOVT WEBSITE
DARIUSH JAMASB
RUSI SORABJI
PAYVAND.COM
ESTER BAMJI

ALL THE ASSOCIATIONS AROUND THE
WORLD WHO SHARED
PHOTOGRAPHS OF THEIR EVENTS

THE POWER OF SEVEN

The traditional Naurooz table is called the Haft-sheen. Haft means seven in Persian and sheen refers to Spenta, the seven guardian angels of the faith. Seven items are laid out on the table, all Persian words starting with S:

- Sabzeh: wheat sprouts, representing rebirth
- Sib: apples, representing health and beauty
- Senjed: a sweet dried fruit, representing love
- Seer: garlic, for its medicinal qualities
- Serkeh: vinegar, representing age and patience
- Somaq: a powder made from sumac, representing sunrise and new beginnings
- Sikka: coins, for prosperity

A candle is lit for every person living in the home and guests are sprinkled with rosewater as if to anoint them ish them well.

Naurooz Around the World

Persian Parade New York for Naurooz

March 30, 2008

On March 29, 2008, Persians and non-Persian New Yorkers and tourists, lined 15 city blocks to watch ballet groups perform time-honored Persian dances and other participants carry flags and symbols of the ancient Persian empire. The parade's organizers estimate that at least 25,000 people attended the parade,

The Persian heritage dates back 5,000 years to the pre-Islamic traditions of Zoroastrianism. The parade commemorated Zarathushtrian teachings with banners conveying the motto, "Good thoughts, good words, good deeds" with the emblem of the Farvahar carried proudly by Homi Gandhi, past president of ZAGNY

Some floats depicted scenes from ancient dynasties, including life in Ctesiphon, a float dedicated to Cyrus the Great, leader of the Persian Empire 2,500 years ago, who developed what is now recognized as the first charter of human rights.

As 2007 marked the 800th birth anniversary of Rumi, the mystic poet of Persia, but wellknown universally In recognition of his contributions and continued academic and popular appeal, the UNESCO declared 2007 "International Rumi Year."

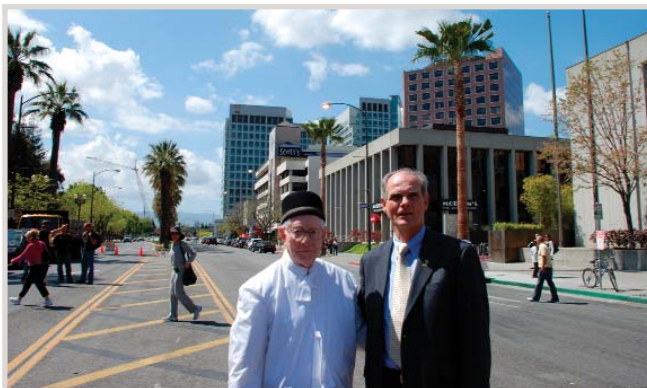
The Persian Parade Foundation idea was conceived in the fall of 2003 by a group of Iranian/American Physicians and their families to introduce the Persian culture to the New York Metropolitan Area and it was inaugurated on New York City's Madison Avenue on March 27, 2004 and has now become an annual event coinciding with the commemoration of Nau Rooz, Persian New Year. The Parade is an effective platform to enhance our community's moral image and unity and to showcase to the world the cultural, humanitarian, and literary contributions of diverse ethnicity of the people of Iran.



Naurooz Around the World

San Jose Persian Parade for Naurooz

March 30, 2008



PZO board would like to extend its appreciation toward every one of you who drove from short or long distances to this memorable event, and we specially thank those who volunteered tirelessly from several days, and weeks before the parade and helped in preparing the organization, materials, customs, or just provided emotional support. Please check PZO website gallery and front-page for what we have to share with you. <http://www.pzo.info/>

Persian Zoroastrian Organization (PZO) is proud to announce that they presented the largest group of participants for the 1st Annual Persian New Year Parade in San Jose with approximately 170 participants. They carried the lead banner followed by three ladies wearing t-shirts with prints of Fravehar and good thoughts, good words and good deeds. 99% of the participants joined hands in a show of unity

PZO was also pleased to host PZO Stars, trained by Beshkan Dance Academy, in which they performed to one of the most favorite Persian songs, named "Dokhtar Abadani," by the Persian artist, Sandy. Unlike any other unit, PZO had Amoo Nowruz in the group as well as four ladies wearing custom made traditional attires all of which significantly helped the group to be magnificent.

There were an estimated 7000 people watching the parade. Prominent Iranian-Americans included San Mateo County Judge Susan Etezadi. Mehren "Matt" Kamkar San Jose's Planning Commissioner, was the person who helped organize this parade.

The mayors of Berkeley and San Jose Chuck Reed were in attendance (photo left, Rusi Sorabji in traditional Parsi dress with Mayor)





NAUROOZ RECOGNIZED THE WORLD OVER

FIRST LADY LAURA BUSH HOSTS RECEPTION ON MARCH 19th 2008 IN HONOR OF NAUROOZ, THE PERSIAN NEW YEAR

The reception represents the culmination of years of lobbying efforts by many prominent members of the Iranian-American community, including Dr. Masood Khatamee M.D, Executive Director, Fertility Research Foundation and Professor at the NYU School of Medicine, who played a crucial role in its fruition.

This is the fifth year that Shiraz born Dr. Khatamee has corresponded with the White House seeking acknowledgement of the seminal contributions of the Iranian-American community with a reception honoring the Persian New Year. The White House has always responded with a proclamation honoring Naurooz, which Dr. Khatamee has recited at various celebrations he has organized and disseminated it through media throughout the years in the tri-state area. This is the first year, however, that his suggestion of a White House reception had been accepted.

"I am honored by the recognition of the Iranian-American community that is embodied in this event," says Khatamee. "To be invited into the people's house by the President, and hosted by the First Lady at a reception, is honor to cherish for life. (Photo above and press release with permission Ali Moayedian, payvand.com)

NANCY PELOSI, Speaker of the House, United States Congress and representative from California's 8th Congressional District in San Francisco, greeted the vibrant Iranian-American community on the occasion of Naurooz, the Persian New Year.

CANADA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO RECOGNIZES NAUROOZ AS THE 1st Day OF SPRING

INDIAN PRIME MINISTER MANMOHAN SINGH greeting the Parsi community in his message for Naurooz said "The festival is an occasion to celebrate the diversity of our country. It marks a new beginning and inspires us to rejoice in the spirit of harmony and goodwill"

IRANIAN PRESIDENT AHMADINEJAD said "Naurooz is the unique occasion for unity among seekers of justice; we can think of no other tradition in the whole world with as deeply spiritual an association as Naurooz," and went on to say that "the revival of nature, marked by the arrival of Naurooz, reminds us of the fact that all periods of darkness and gloom are bound to be followed by light, rebirth and revival."

IRAN On March 10, 2008, University of Tehran celebrated Naurooz at the Sina Hall to full capacity. Different Persian tribes performed music and dance, passages from

Ferdowsi' Shahnameh and other poems were read..Two Zarathushti ladies in their traditional costumes recited verses from the Avesta. The stage setting was based on Persepolis monuments.(pg 63 top)



NauRoouz registered in National Heritage List of IRAN

Proposal to include Naurooz in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage

In a ceremony held in Tehran March 17, 2008 the Iranian New Year, Naurooz, has been officially registered in the

National Intangible Heritage List.

During the ceremony, attended by Iran's President Ahmadinejad, a stamp honoring the National Day of Naurooz was unveiled. In a speech the president referred to the coincidence of the national registration of Naurooz with the anniversary of the beginning of Imam Mahdi's holy mission as the Twelfth Imam of the Shia sect, saying, "This highly meaningful coincidence is truly glorious and inspiring."

The Iranian president was joined in the ceremony by senior cultural officials and foreign ambassadors in Tehran and visited the Haft Seen exhibit held on the sidelines of the event.

Iran, along with nine other countries that celebrate Naurooz, plans to found a Naurooz Museum to showcase the traditions of the festival. This is the first step for the countries influenced by Iranian civilization to propose Naurooz for inclusion in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List

MOSCOW CITY HALL celebrated Naurooz with a cultural ceremony depicting the ancient traditions. www.presstv.ir

ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN, celebrated Naurooz, at a ceremony held on Sunday night. The Iranian ambassador to Kazakhstan, Ramin Mehman-Parast, offered congratulations on the occasion of Naurooz, expressing his hope that Iran and Kazakhstan could boost their cordial cooperation in the New Year. At the ceremony there was recitation of some of the heroic poetry of Persia. Kazakh cultural figures spoke about Naurooz and the endurance of its celebration all over Asia.

TURKISH DAILY NEWS reported in an article by Gul Demiri and Niki Gamm on "Rite of Spring, called Nevruz"

TURKMENISTAN Iranian women residing in Turkmenistan held Haftsin (Sofre-ye Haftsin) competition at the threshold of Iranian New Year, Naurooz, in the presence of foreign diplomats in Ashkhabad, the Turkmen capital.



Happy Birthday Asho Zarathushtra !!!

by Maneck Bhujwala

When spiritual darkness filled the world
Where dark and evil forces took control
There arose a cry from young and old
Deliver us Ahuramazda, let Your Grace unfold

The Lord of Wisdom heard that cry
His good creation, He won't let die
Chose a mighty soul from Heavens high
A Saviour to fight and defeat the Lie

On a beautiful, auspicious day in Spring
Glad tidings, did mother Dughdhova bring
A child was born to her, peaceful and smiling

Their prayers answered, the world was rejoicing

Like the rising Sun, that lights the morning sky
Zarathushtra's teachings enlightened far and wide
Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds that Guide

To spread happiness to all, and make this world
divine

Though thousands of years have since gone by
And fate has often made us laugh and cry
With faith and hope, with our heads held high
O Zarathushtra! we celebrate your birth with pride

copyright 2008

IN THE PRESS

ZOROASTRIAN HELPS KEEP THE TRADITION OF ANCIENT RELIGION ALIVE

Albany Times Union - Albany, NY, USA

Boatloads of Zoroastrians migrated to India in the 10th century. There, they were known as Irani, later as Farsi for the language they spoke, then as Parsi. ...

<http://www.timesunion.com/AspStories/story.asp?storyID=678289&category=REGION&newsdate=4/5/2008>

NAUROOZ –RADIO BROADCAST

By zoroastriansnet

Rick Peterson show, CJAD AM-800, in Montreal, Canada Radio broadcast at Jamshedi NauRoos — March 2008 — interview with Dolly Dastoor, Editor, FEZANA Journal.

<http://zoroastrians.net/2008/03/25/naurooz-radio-broadcast/>

GOOD FRIDAY, HAPPY PURIM, EID, ETC

TIME - USA

The Persian New Year, which is observed with Islamic elaboration in Iran and all the "stan" countries, as well as by Zoroastrians and Baha'is. ...

<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1723811,00.html>

SUGAR IN THE MILK: A PARSİ KITCHEN STORY

March 20, 2008

NPR - <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=88505980&sc=emaf>

THE NAUROOZ TABLE

March 19, 2008

On March 21, Parsis celebrate Navroze with the cry of "Jamva Chaloji" (Let's eat). Here's what the feast and festivities are about.

<http://www.thestar.com/article/347365>

Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra



Farobag Homi Cooper

The WZSO wishes to enhance upon the successful interplay of Zoroastrian musicians and professionals, which was initiated at the 2000 World Congress with members of the Houston Symphony, by increasing the number of participating Zoroastrians as well as expanding the professional base so that each Zoroastrian could sit side-by-side with a professional.

Contrary to popular conjecture, the WZSO is not intended to be a showcase exclusively for Zoroastrian musicians, either amateurs or professionals. The orchestral setting continues to offer a unique pedagogical and motivational setting for our Zoroastrian musicians irrespective of their degree of proficiency. Hence, the funding for professional musicians is paramount to the mission of the WZSO.

The WZSO continues its efforts to enhance the cultural atmosphere at congresses by performing at the 2007 North American Congresses in the past and the World Zoroastrian Congress to be held in the year 2009 in Dubai. We are delighted that FEZANA has assisted us in word and deed by voicing a mandate and by partially underwriting our ventures earlier.

FEZANA has established the WZSO Fund to further help assist with the Orchestra's performances at the North American and World Congresses. All donations are 100% tax-deductible and high visibility is assured for corporate sponsorships.

Please send your donation check payable to FEZANA marked "WZSO Fund." Contact Farobag Homi Cooper for further details at cpas@chicago-philharmonia.org

Administrative Office:

14630 S. Abbott Rd West Homer Glen, IL 60491 USA



Attention Musicians

Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra

Performance Opportunities

The World Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra invites you to be a member of the WZSO that will perform at the World Zoroastrian Congress to be held in Dubai in December 2009.

Professionals as well as amateur musicians of all ages who have attained a sufficient level of proficiency to perform in a symphonic setting are invited to apply. The repertoire will be chosen by our music director and the music will be sent in advance. All participants are expected to have become proficient with the repertoire prior to the Congress.

We invite those who performed in our previous concerts, and other events, to participate in the orchestra as well as perform as soloists. Composers who wish to have their works showcased are also invited to apply. Please email your request to cpas@chicago-philharmonia.org

If you have already participated as a member of the WZSO in Houston, Chicago, Toronto or sent an application previously, or spoken to one of us about your interest, there is no need to complete another application but please do confirm your intent. WZSO performances in Houston, Chicago and Toronto were largely considered as one of the major highlights by congress attendees, and we hope to continue to enlarge as well as enhance the standards of the Orchestra.

Farobag Homi Cooper, *Music Director*

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone / E-mail: (_____) _____ / _____

Instrument(s): _____

Please answer the following on your personal performance history

- How many years have you been playing your instrument?
- List at least three major works in your repertoire?
- Have you played in orchestras or other ensemble settings?
- Are you currently performing with an ensemble?
- How often do you currently practice?
- What is your sight-reading ability?
- Any additional information you would like to offer?

Please forward your application to Farobag Homi Cooper at cpas@chicago-philharmonia.org
Contact Tel. Number: +708 3013010

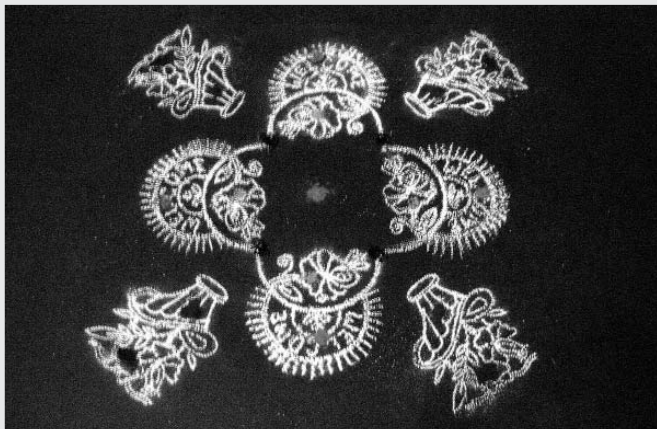


Museum's celebration of the festival draws more than 7,000 visitors

Reported by Porus Cooper, ZAPANJ



(Seated): Nivedita A. Masani and Bakhtavar R. Dinshaw (Standing L to R): Khushru Jokhi, Parwana Chor, Katayun K. Kapadia, and Tina Mehta.



Jimmy Bharucha in traditional Parsi 'dagli' and 'paghri' chats with Er. Noshir Karanjia while Nergish Karanjia attends to her cell phone.

On one table was a gilded 150-year-old copy of the Khordeh Avesta; on another was a traditional "ses"; on yet another table was a magazine-cover illustration from a century or so ago depicting a paghdi-wearing Parsi

Zarathushti praying before the ocean's waters. Spread on a pristine white sheet on the floor was an authentic display of jashan paraphernalia. At another spot on the floor were the effervescent "chowk" (photo below) designs that traditionally adorn doorways to Parsi homes in the old countries. They are tradition festive design done with a metal stencil, powdered chalk, and colored powders

Explaining the tableau to visitors were women in beautiful "garas" and other saris handed down through the generations and men in crisp white daglis.

The display at the Philadelphia Museum of Art was put together by volunteers from the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey (ZAPANJ). Sharing the joy of NauRooz with the wider community of visitors to the museum was a first for the Philadelphia area's Zarathushti community.

For several years, the museum's annual NauRooz exhibit has had, as its centerpiece a richly decorated Haft-Seen table set up by the area's Muslim Iranian community. For this one weekend day around NauRooz – March 9 this year – the museum also features dances, music and crafts from Central Asia. While NauRooz is a secular celebration in these cultures, the Zarathushti exhibit highlighted an aspect of the festival unique to the tiny community – its ancient religious significance. Underlining the festival's sacred dimension for Zarathushtis was a display of sudreh, kusti and "topi" – and the gilded Avesta.

Linking the ancient to the modern – and lending valuable context for visitors – was a poster of prominent modern-day Parsi high achievers. Two who drew particular attention were Ratan Tata of the Tata Group of companies, most recently noted in American news reports for creating the Nano, the world's most affordable automobile, and Freddie Mercury, the late lead singer of the rock group Queen.

According to museum organizers, its NauRooz exhibits this year drew more than 7,100 visitors – up considerably from 4,650 last year.

"All I can say is WOW," Katy Friedland, Manager of Family and Children's Programs at the museum, said in an email message to ZAPANJ after the event. She added: "I know that everyone was in awe of your amazing display. ... I hope that you will join us again next year!"



TWELVE DAYS OF NAUROOZ

HIGHLIGHTS CHILDREN'S FOCUS ON GOOD DEEDS

PARASTU DUBASH AND FARHAD PANTHAKI ZAGBA

The words of "12 Days of Naurooz" were composed by Parastu Dubash and Farhad Panthaki who used the song as an opportunity to highlight the children's class' recent focus on doing good deeds. The number 12 is also significant for the Naurooz song because for Persians and others who celebrate Naurooz, the 13th Day of Naurooz is known as Sizdah-Bedar a day, when everyone goes outdoors to celebrate the coming of spring with a picnic. It is considered unlucky to stay indoors on that day. After 12 days of good deeds, on the 13th day, the kids could just enjoy and have fun!

On the first day of No-Rooz,
I did a go-ood deed
I prayed my prayers sincerely.

On the second day of No-Rooz,
I did a go-ood deed
Folded clean clothes,
And I prayed my prayers sincerely.

On the third day of No-Rooz,
I did a go-ood deed
Set the table,
Folded clean clothes,
And I prayed my prayers sincerely.

.....and so on

On the first day of No-Rooz,
I did a go-ood deed

1. I prayed my prayers sincerely
2. Folded clean clothes
3. Set the table
4. Did my math homework
5. Cleaned my room
6. Said please and thank you
7. Emptied the dishwasher
8. Took turns at recess
9. Put away my toys
10. Shared my snack
11. Helped my Dad recycle
12. Listened to my Mom

Twenty First March

The "21st March" Song is from the Zoroastrian Studies CD –

**I am proud to be a Zoroastrian
(Sing to the tune of Oh My Darling Clementine)**

**Twenty First March; Jamshedi No-Ruz
The festival of Spring,
New life springing; birds are singing
Oh! what joy does it bring!**

**Good has triumphed over evil,
Jamsheed's glory comes to mind,
Gone the days of bitter North winds
Warmth and sunshine we'll find.**

**Tables spread with all the goodies
Almonds, pistachios and fruits
Watermelons, pomegranates
Cooling falooda, too.**

**Eat, drink and be merry
Thank you Mazda we say
May your lives be joyful as spring
Every morrow every day.**

Children's musical performances of "21st March" and "12 Days of Naurooz" with accompaniment by a first-time ever ZAGBA orchestra (with keyboard, violin and cello).



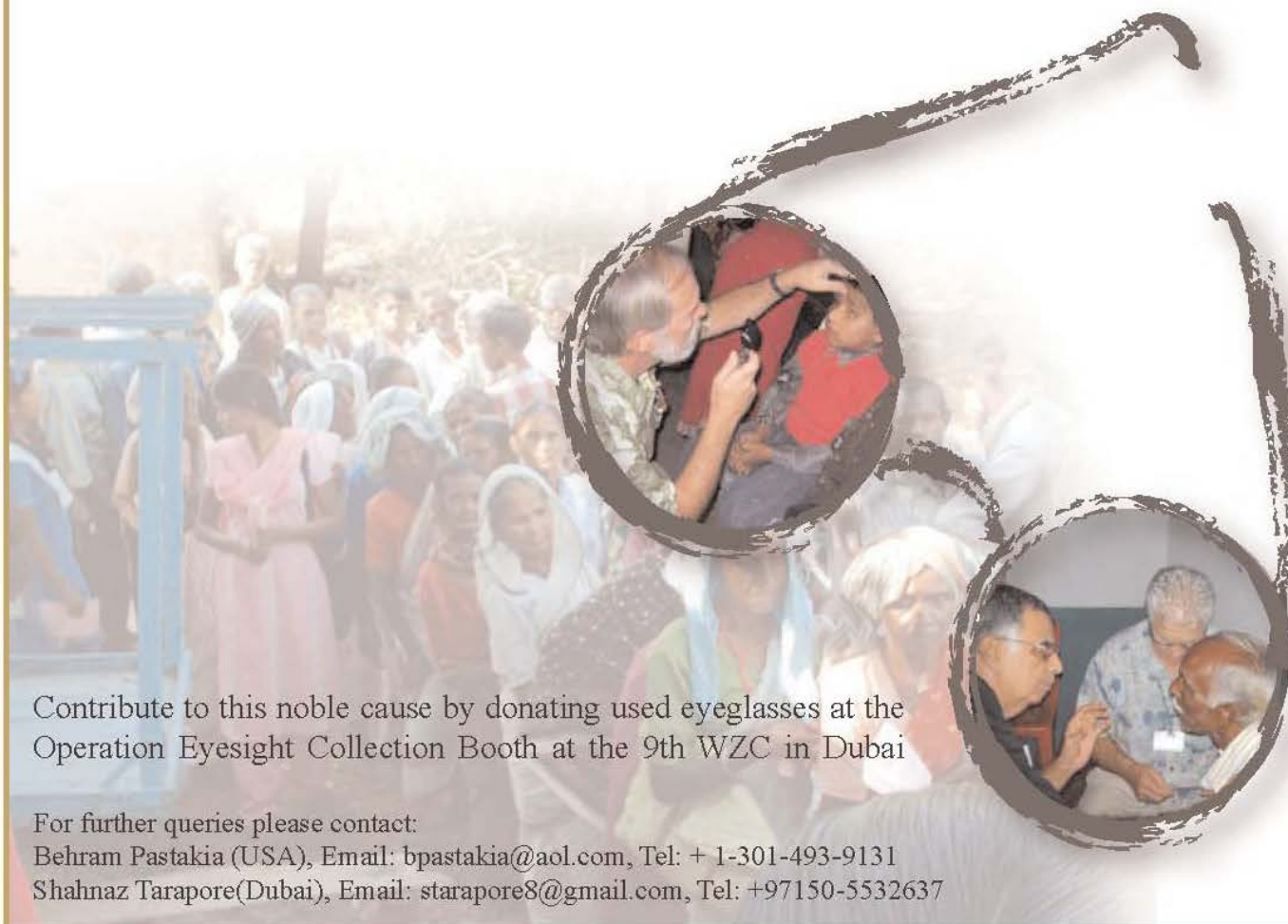
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WOMEN IN FINANCE

COMPILED BY TEENAZ JAVAT

A penny saved is as good as a penny earned and who would know that better than Zarin Patel and Jeroo Billimoria.

These two very exceptional women have been recognised as international number crunchers and have in their own way been able to trim the fat off organizations, thereby making them leaner.



Patel, (photo left) who is finance director at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), is bookkeeper par excellence. The BBC is leaner by Pounds 355 million, thanks to her cost cutting initiatives. Not only has Patel met with this seemingly impossible- at-first- target, but she has surpassed it by Pounds 15 million.

These savings are largely attributed to land sales. The BBC owns prime real estate in the city of London and the entire corporation is selling 30 per cent of its property over the next six years.

After these sales go through, Patel will turn her attention to the several BBC production outposts around the world and the 46 regional radio stations to see where effective cuts can be executed without compromising the quality of programming.

Licensing fees, renewals, outsourcing jobs off shore are all on the table, making her a not-very- popular person at the organization.

However, if the monolith is to survive financially, cuts are the way to go as a leaner and trimmer organisation will move faster and go further.

Moving away from the denizens of the corporate world and into the realm of the non-profit organization is Jeroo Billimoria. (photo right)

A social entrepreneur, Billimoria is the brainchild behind *Aflatoun*, a campaign to promote financial literacy in the developing world. *Aflatoun* was launched in Amsterdam on March 17, 2008. The campaign is aimed at explaining and encouraging the simple act of saving to children between the ages of six and 14. The not-for-profit agency, which Billimoria launched in the villages of India called Child Savings International, has been the driving force behind taking *Aflatoun* to 11 countries including Argentina, South Africa, Vietnam and Zimbabwe.



Photo: Ruhani Kaur

At the suggestion of the European Commission and the Deutch Central Bank, Billimoria has been requested

to adapt project *Aflatoun* for countries like UK, Netherlands, Ireland and perhaps the USA.

Billimoria has grass root experience having worked with Street Kids in India and having developed a successful 24-hour telephone service called *Childline*. Working closely with street kids she realised that most of them were entrepreneurial by nature. The very fact they were bold enough to leave home made them avid risk takers. This could become an asset if these children were provided a better education. So convinced was Billimoria of their ability to be entrepreneurs, that she experimented with them and now is taking this message to countries where she thought might never need her services.

Teenaz Javat is a Mississauga-based freelance journalist who writes for several publications in Canada, Pakistan and India.

She is the editor of the monthly *ZSO Newsletter*.



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"Crisis in Faith: Zoroastrians Today"

Film screening and panel discussion

co-sponsored by :

The Pluralism Project, ZAGBA (Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area) and Zoroastrian Associations of Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

On the evening of April 18th an audience of about 65 people gathered at Harvard Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts for a film screening of *"Crisis in Faith: Zoroastrians Today"* and a panel discussion co-sponsored by The Pluralism Project, ZAGBA (Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area), and



Zoroastrian Associations of Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

DIANA ECK introduced the Pluralism Project, which she founded 15 years ago at Harvard University, to document and better understand the changing religious landscape of America through the study of religious communities, their religious centers, and their forms of religious education in cities and towns. She described the film *"Crisis in Faith"* as among those emerging films and studies that explore how religious traditions are challenged by situations and she was pleased to provide a forum for the discussion of some of the challenges and opportunities brought up in the film.

TENAZ DUBASH who produced the film, *"Crisis in Faith: Zoroastrians Today"* introduced it as her personal journey as a filmmaker to understand the controversies facing followers of her faith

today. She identified the three main themes of her film: conversion and acceptance into the Zarathushti faith, dwindling numbers of Zarathushtis worldwide, and treatment of Zarathushtis as a religious minority in Iran. She said this film had taken her 4 years to complete as she had worked on it part-time while working full-time with survivors of human trafficking at an NGO in New York City.

The audience viewed the first 30 minutes of the film and for the next hour had the opportunity to listen to initial responses and overall opinions of panel members. Diana Eck and Tenaz Dubash were joined by Dina McIntyre (retired lawyer and member of the Zarathushti community who describes herself not as a scholar but a student of the teachings of Zarathushtra), Dr. P. Oktor Skjaervo (Professor of Iranian Studies and Chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University), and Dr. Nasswan Dossabhoy (Professor of Business and Technology at Endicott College, co-initiator of the Harvard Gatha Studies group (in 1996), and a former president of ZAGBA

TENAZ DUBASH said in making the film, she wanted to gain an insight into the lives of others, talk to average people about their experiences and present a "fair and balanced" look into conversion.

DINA MCINTYRE said she enjoyed the film and appreciated the perspective Tenaz showed in the film: "We often argue about rules in abstract, but this film shows how they affect human beings and impact lives." She argued that although the Zarathushti community has always been told that conversion is prohibited; there is a huge body of evidence in Avesta, Pahlavi, Pazend, Rivayats, Gathas that demonstrate the Zarathushti religion was sent by God for all mankind. She invited audience members to email her if they were interested in reading these quotations, chapters, and verses. She found it ironic that the religious mandate says that the religion prohibits conversion, but the religious texts show the opposite. She reminded the audience that Zarathushtra tells us to use our mind and search for the truth, to think it, speak it and do it..

P. OKTOR SKJAERVO'S comments focused on looking at this question from the "outside," from



TENAZ DUBASH'S FILM



From left: P Oktor Skjaervo, Diana Eck; Tenaz Dubash,
Nasswan Dossabhoy, Dina McIntyre

an academic interest, with a background of a translator of texts and a teacher of courses on Iranian Studies and Zoroastrianism. He agreed with Dina that the scriptures support the notion of conversion and argued that Zarathushtra made a new religion and had to have converts. He shared a personal story of a graduate student of mixed parentage who had been profoundly hurt when he heard that 7 priests in India had proclaimed that those of mixed marriages don't count. He recalled the pain that the decree had caused to this person.

NASSWAN DOSSABHOY began by stating that he would provide a more provocative position. He said he was not convinced that there was a "crisis" surrounding the conversion issue, suggesting that if everyone who wanted to convert was allowed, there would be only a handful of converts, 1, 2 maybe 3 ½. He made a distinction between Zoroastrianism (3000 years ago) and Parsi-ism (800 CE) and argued that even if Parsi-ism doesn't survive, his concern

was more with the perpetuation of the religion and not the ethnic group. In a series of questions directed to specific members of the audience, he asked for the numbers of adults and kids attending a ZAGBA event 25 years ago and the most recent Naurooz event in March 2008. There were 10 adults and 15 kids in 1984 and 95 adults and 40 kids in 2008. He felt those numbers were compelling and helped others in the audience recognize why he didn't see the "dwindling numbers" issue as a cause for alarm.

DIANA ECK skillfully moderated the question and answer session and facilitated a compelling discussion on: differences in views against conversion between the Parsees and the Iranian Zarathushtis, priestly seminaries, danger of limited religious knowledge of Zarathushtis in inclusionary or exclusionary situations, conversion vs. acceptance, demographics, contemporary persecution of Zarathushtis in Iran, whether exclusionary practices in India were related to controlling access to wealth, divorce law in India, access to fire temples, and whether different hierarchical structures in our religion would have produced different results.

The discussions continued during the wine and samosa reception while DVDs of the film were available for purchase. There seemed to be widespread agreement that a film (and event) such as this helps to open the dialogue about important religious and community topics.

For more information, please visit:
<http://www.tenazdubash.com>,
www.pluralism.org, www.zagba.org,

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In The News

Farhad Dastur

THE EXEMPLARY LEADER AWARD OF THE CHAIR ACADEMY, AWARDED TO FARHAD DASTUR, PH.D AT 2008 INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE IN DENVER, COLORADO, ON APRIL 3, 2008

Farhad Dastur Ph.D, Chair of Psychology, Kwantlen University College, Surrey, British Columbia, was nominated by his colleagues for this prestigious award for his best leadership practices, for his commitment to his institution, his department, his team and his students. In their book "Leadership Challenge", Barry Posner and James Kouzes state "We need more exemplary leaders and we need them more than ever. We need leaders who can unite us and ignite us"

Under Farhad's leadership, the Psychology department has nurtured its flagship Applied BA degree. He launched a general Psychology BA, added seven new faculty members and integrated them to form a diverse, dynamic department. He developed a most active and forward-looking student association, established and shaped its annual conference on undergraduate research in Psychology, which will run as a National Conference in 2008. He has been a leader in the strategic planning initiative: Creating our Future, and served as Chair of the Research Ethics Board. His colleagues write "Dr Farhad's inspiring development as key faculty leader makes him a most deserving recipient of this award"

The Chair Academy is an organization committed to exemplifying the best practice of organizational leadership worldwide

The area of specialty of Farhad Dastur is Evolutionary Psychology and he is planning to write a textbook on evolutionary psychology during his upcoming sabbatical. His PhD thesis topic at Dalhousie University (Halifax) was titled, "A Controlled, Longitudinal Study of Olfactory Perception and Symptoms of Pregnancy Sickness."

Farhad is the son of Nanu and Zarine Dastur of ZSBC, Vancouver.



BLACK BELT JENNY NAOROJI OF NEW ZEALAND WINS GOLD

15 year old black belt Jenny Naoroji (below) of New Zealand wins gold in the 27th Australian National Karate Championships in Melbourne.

This was Jenny's first international competition and she surprised everyone including herself by winning all seven fights to win gold. "But it wasn't a fluke, she's got great ability and that's showing now." says father Sensei Karl Naoroji, a Fourth Dan black belt from Japanese Karate Association.

Jenny, the daughter of Karl & Tanaz Naoroji, was born in Mumbai, India and immigrated with her parents and sister Afreen to Auckland, New Zealand in May 1999. She is in grade 11 at Pakuranga College and has been practicing Karate since 2003 at the JKA kuranga Karate Club, which is directly affiliated to the world famous Japan Karate Association.

Pakuranga Karate Club was established in June 2003 and is an active member of the **Japan Karate Association of New Zealand**. The members practice the "Shotokan" style of karate under the guidance of Sensei Karl Naoroji, a Fourth Dan black belt from the world famous Japan Karate Association. The training methods optimize both physical and spiritual progress. The club has enjoyed remarkable success in the NZ National and Regional championships over the years, with winners representing New Zealand in International Tournaments.

The Zarathustrian community of Auckland and ZANZ - The Zarathustrian Association of New Zealand, are very proud of young Jenny Naoroji's achievements



In The News

ZARATHUSHTIS CONNECT ON THE INTERNET

Ushtatebook is an innovative online networking site connecting Zarathushtis around the world, from Auckland to Vadodara. Started in January 2008 by Montreal-based **Leena Lakdawala and Aurelio Useche** it has over 1,300 users who upload photos, add music files and videos and connect with old and new friends. Additionally, there are 70 specialty groups; the popular ones include Parsee Cooking, Jobs and Other Opportunities, Bollywood Beat. Users can also participate in discussions on topics ranging from Why is it so hard to find, date and marry a Zoroastrian? to which famous person would you invite to dinner? In order to keep the network private, add a level of accountability, and prevent fake profiles, spamming and uncivil behavior, you must be invited by an existing member of Ushatebook to join. If you would like to join Ushtatebook, please write to the Administrators at info@zvsinvestments.com and they will invite you.

Smt Sheila Dikshit Chief Minister

of National Capital Territory of Delhi shares vision of helping the handicapped and disabled in Metropolitan Delhi area with a Zarathushti delegation on the side lines of the Sixth Bharatiya Pravasi Divas on January 8th 2008.

The Zarathushti delegation was given a very warm and cordial reception by Smt Dikshit at her home in New Delhi. She shared her vision of helping the handicapped and the disabled in the Metropolitan Delhi area through public-private partnerships in new initiatives to improve public road transport and mass transit facilities. Extensive infrastructure development is underway in New Delhi in preparation for the upcoming XIX Commonwealth Games in the year 2010. Views were also shared on plans to celebrate the International Day of Non-Violence on October, 2nd 2008.

Smt Dikshit gave each Zarathushti delegate a copy of a book of quotations by Mahatma Gandhi as a memento, and expressed her intention of further cementing the excellent relationships of her Government with the Zarathushti community.



Left to Right: Dadi Mistry, President of Delhi Parsi Anjuman, Bomy Boyce President of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce, from Toronto, Canada, Smt Sheila Dikshit, Chief Minister of the National Capital Territory of Delhi and Behram Pastakia from Metropolitan Washington D.C. USA.

In The News

Newly elected Zoroastrian Association of California Board



FRONT ROW (From Left) Farida Udvardia (Jt. secretary), Tehmi Damania (vice-president), Vira Santoke (president), Rooky Fitter (Jt. secretary), Hilla Machhi (program chairperson), Chisti Dadachanji (treasurer).
BACK ROW: Mehernosh Gundevia (youth coordinator).

ZSBC'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION: Binaifer Dolasa



On Sunday, February 24, 2008, the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC) proudly celebrated its 40th Anniversary at the Darbe Mehr, Burnaby. Ahura Mazda heartily graced this milestone occasion with glorious sunshine, coupled with pleasant spring-like weather, making this historic day very memorable

for the Zarathushti community at large. Our Darbe Mehr adorned a radiant look, decorated with elegant garland at our entrance door, beautiful flowers, colourful balloons, tealights and vibrant Rangoli to welcome one and all. Around 275 enthusiastic Zarathushti community members; including seniors, adults, youth, kids and infants attended this momentous event. A gazebo was set up outside the prayer hall (with a propane heater installed) to accommodate all our guests comfortably. A tea and coffee counter was arranged to help our guests stay warm. Sandalwood sticks were available for the convenience of our guests. Tables and chairs were organized in the program hall and garden in a manner such that everyone could spread out, mingle around and enjoy the outdoor glory or stay indoors.

In The News

Promptly at 11:00 am, Mobed Adil Antia, Mobed Firdosh Balsara and Mobed Arzan Firdosh Balsara performed a beautiful jashan ceremony. Our 12 year old young member, Arzan is the newest and youngest addition to ZSBC's Mobed group. ZSBC proudly congrats Arzan and his parents Niloofar and Firdosh Balsara for their hard-work and commitment towards this accomplishment. ZSBC also looks forward to Arzan's support and assistance over jashan ceremonies organized in future.

President, Sharook Kapadia invited Mrs. Piroj Amrolia (above left) and Mr. Alayar Dabestani, (middle right with President Sharook in background) two of ZSBC's esteemed members for over 35 years for insightful speeches on ZSBC's history and establishment. ZSBC was officially registered 40 years ago on February 22, 1968. Members of three families namely Mr. and Mrs. Homi Engineer, Mr. and Mrs. Jamshed Pavri and Mr. and Mrs. Sam Confectioner worked zealously to keep the flame of our small faith alive. They worked towards forming a body that could look after the social and religious needs of the future generation. Today, our growing Zarathushti community in BC has inherited a very rich legacy passed on by these pioneers, for which we should be very proud of. A word of encouragement was extended to the new and younger generation to come forward and get more involved in activities associated with our Zarathushti community, take up voluntary work and help those less fortunate. This way, we could play a noble role in spreading the



good name of our community and contribute to this beautiful country we are so blessed to live in. Shabnam Rostamirad, our young and talented youth did a wonderful job in collecting generous donations from our guests.

Many volunteers generously sponsored "home-prepared" sumptuous dishes as part of their contributions towards celebrating ZSBC's 40th Anniversary. Their combined efforts in putting together a delicious menu for 275 attendees is indeed creditable! Lunch comprised of mango and veggie pickle, tortillas, yogurt, salad, rice, dal, grilled chicken and potatoes, accompanied with mouth-watering sweets namely maledo, ravo and fruits. Scrupulous arrangements were made to ensure a smooth movement of our guests. A stellar group of youth co-ordinated the flow of food with a team of volunteer servers to and from the kitchen taking good care that all the dishes were sizzling hot.

The extensive preparations, meticulous planning, dedication and hard-work of all the Board of Directors, their supportive spouses, youth and volunteers along with contributions by way of ideas and suggestions from our community members all deserve mighty applause!

**ZSBC'S 40TH
ANNIVERSARY HISTORIC
CELEBRATION WAS EVIDENTLY
A HUGE SUCCESS THANKS TO
THEIR COMMITMENT, CO-
ORDINATED EFFORTS AND
THEIR SPIRIT OF GIVING BACK
TO OUR COMMUNITY.**

(Photo credits Binaifer Dolasa)

In The News

CELEBRATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA



Houston Celebrates

Momentum is building for the 10th Anniversary Celebration of Zoroastrian Heritage Cultural Center. ZAH will showcase our Zarathushti religion and culture to the greater Houston community, as we establish our identity and move confidently into the future. Visionaries, who made our Center from a dream to a reality, will be honored. A myriad of year long activities starting, with Jashan-e-

Sadeh in February 2008, Sport events, a Mela, a Religious Education Seminar, and a 3-day GALA EVENT in May 2008.

Darbe Mehr Silver Jubilee, Chicago Celebrating 25 Years.

The Silver Jubilee of the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr, Chicago on Labor Day Weekend 2008 (Saturday August 30th-Monday September 1st). Tentative plans for the three days include, "Silver Jubilee Gala" a black tie and gara" affair, "Back to the Future", a Grand Jashan, recognizing and honoring the priests, the "Next Generation", the elders, "WZCC-celebrating Zarathushti Business and Enterprise" with a seminar and lunch recognizing Zarathushti business and enterprise in North America.

A Natak (comedy) performance is planned for Sunday June 21, 2008

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In The News

NEW DARE MEHR IN TENERIFE, SPAIN



Members of the Zarathushti community visiting Tenerife, Spain are

invited to visit the Shroff Darb-e-Mehr located at

Calle Cupido, Puerto de la Cruz 38400, Tenerife, Canary Islands, SPAIN

Phone: 34-649-731091



Khanizadeh Captures Twilight Moods

Artist Shapour Khanizadeh, studies the way the light alters the colors of the sky, the trees and the water at different times of the day, and in different countries. "When I change countries, it influences my painting, the light is different" Native of Iran, which he left in 1987, Shapour lived for sometime in France before immigrating to Canada.

Shapour studies landscapes, first captures the light in pastels, then transfers them to oil.

When Khanizadeh thinks he has done all he can, he hangs the painting in his house and lives with it for 2-3 months, looking at it from different angles, while doing his daily chores. His perception of the painting changes as the light come in from the windows. then adds a different colour till he feels that it is perfect. Shapour's works are on display at Art Galleries in Montreal and Matt Wetmore, manager of The Chase Art Gallery says "Shapour's works are special. He sees light and composition that you and I do not see. It is magic. His paintings sell quickly" Khanizadeh says that sometimes the experience of creating

some works has been so powerful that at the end he cannot part with the painting. There are 5-6 painting he has held back and not displayed at the gallery "I keep them at home".



In The News

"Presence of Iran in the Ancient World",

Report of Conference held March 8, 2008 at U.C.Irvine

Maneck N. Bhujwala

INTRODUCTION:

Professor Richard Frye, Harvard, said that Cyrus the Great was responsible for the first Secular Law Code, throughout ancient history. Iranians have generally kept the separation of secular and religious matters, and Darius the Great was an innovator who started the writing of archaic Persian into Cuneiform and Aramaic.

MORNING SESSION "ART AND ARCHEOLOGY OF THE IRANIAN WORLD":

Dr. Ali Mousavi, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, discussed discoveries of Proto-Iranian sites dated 2000-1000 BCE in north-eastern Iran. Professor Elizabeth Carter, U.C.Los Angeles, covered discoveries of metal alloy sculptures and workshops used by metallurgists of 1600-1100 BCE at sites in Susiana (SW Iran). Professor Kamyar Abdi, Dartmouth, touched on discoveries of the transition period from Neo-Elamite (646 BCE) to Persian (559 BCE) in southwestern Iran, indicating a long history of civilized people with religion, ritual, etc. before the Persian empire. Professor Judith Lerner, New York, talked about the strong presence of ancient Iranian influence in painting, metal-work, ceramics, textiles, etc. of 19th century Islamic Iran starting with the Qajar dynasty.

AFTERNOON SESSION: "RELIGION OF THE EMPIRES":

Professor Hans-Peter Schmidt, U.C.L.A., discussed some controversial claims by scholar Kellens (student of Prof.Humbach) that Zarathushtra was not a historic person and did not author the Gathas, and refuted such claims with observation of the lifelike image of Zarathushtra in the Gathas, supported by Prof. Martin Schwartz, Berkeley who pointed out the existence of patronage of poets in Zarathushtra's time. Professor Jennifer Rose,

Stanford, talked about rock carvings showing God, kings and priests at locations where travelers between Asia and Europe would pass and rest. Professor Martin Schwartz, U.C.Berkeley, discussed how easy it is to be fooled by word groups that sound similar, such as equating Khshthrapati to Mithra based on references in Vedic texts. Professor Touraj Daryaei, U.C.Irvine, described the old tradition of naming buildings after names of famous kings, such as Takht-e-Jamshid and Jamkaran mosque and cave which resembles the Vara of King Jamshid.

EVENING SESSION: "HISTORY, TEXT AND REMAINS OF ANCIENT IRAN"

Professor Mathew Stolper, Chicago, talked about the project of studying the 25000 clay tablets from Persepolis site that contain vital data on languages, dialects, workers, society, religion, art, etc. in the reign of Darius the Great, before they might be lost to plaintiffs in lawsuits against the Iranian government. Professor Shayegan, U.C.L.A., discussed the Parthian rulers' policy of taking enemy kings as hostages for future political advantage. Professor Michael Morony, U.C.L.A. presented arguments in favor of including Sasanian Iran in study of Late Antiquity, pointing out several similarities between Roman and Sasanian empires, and mentioned that Mazdaism was not a universal religion.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

Professor Touraj Daryaei, director of the Center for Persian Studies, UC.Irvine, who organized the conference thanked all volunteers and speakers for making the conference a success.

A detailed report of the talks can be obtained from Maneck Bhujwala by writing to him at maneck_bhujwala@mindspring.com



From left to right standing: Mathew Stolper (University of Chicago); Richard Frye (Harvard University); Touraj Daryaei (UC Irvine); Michael Morony (UCLA); Mrs. Anousheh Razi; Judith Lerner (New York); Jennifer Rose (Stanford University); Mr. Ali Razi; Hanns-Peter Schmidt (UCLA); Martin Schwartz (UC Berkeley) - From Left standing (lady); Elizabeth Carter (UCLA) - Sitting from left to right: Ali Mousavi (Los Angeles County Museum of Art); Kamyar Abdi (Dartmouth College). (photo courtesy Touraj Daryaei)

In The News

FIVE MONTREAL GIRLS TAKE ON THE WORLD AND WIN AT THE SHALHEVETH FREIER PHYSICS TOURNAMENT IN ISRAEL

On April 2nd at the Weizman Institute, in Tel Aviv, Israel, a five girl team from the school THE STUDY, in Montreal finished in first place from 43 other schools from around the world, at the 2008 competition of Shalheveth Freier Physics Tournament. The event required students to employ principles of physics to design and build a safe that nobody can break into.



It started seven months ago with a single sheet of plexiglass, a lock and three pieces of wood, from which the girls had to build an impenetrable safe using the principles of physics. Their subsequent wins at local and regional physics tournaments earned them the trip to Israel.

After two days of testing their safe-cracking skills against their many opponents' entries — while other students tried to break into theirs — The Study girls' design was deemed the best of all the entrants.

The Study physics teacher and coach Miller, who accompanied the girls to Israel, attributed their success to their thorough knowledge of physics principles.

"Fifty percent of the total score is their ability to answer the judges' physics questions," she said. "They were so articulate; they were able to answer all the judges' questions."

Source The Westmount Examiner, Montreal

From left Lara De Stefano, Amanda McCoubrey, Julie D'Aoust, Kelly Miller (Physics Teacher) and Tiffany Madon. Missing is teammate Caroline Jo.

Spenta University Mexico confers the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Zarathushtrian Studies,
Honoris Causa to

Dr Mehraban Shahrvin

**Dr Shahrvin is the editor and publisher of
PAYK-E- MEHR magazine since many years.**

Congratulations

In The News



On Tuesday, March 18th Bapsi Sidhwa offered a book reading from her novel, *A Pakistani Bride*, at the Aicon Gallery on 5th Avenue. The event was organized by the Indo-American Arts Council, a non-profit group dedicated to spreading awareness of Indian art and culture in North America.

Although this is Bapsi's very first novel (called *The Bride*, from 1983), her publishers felt it was now ripe for American readership with Pakistan being a very "topical topic"! Her other books include *Cracking India* (which was the basis of the film, *Earth*) and *The Crow Eaters* (about the Parsis). Incidentally, she remarked that the latter was her favorite book and she regretted that it was not widely read.

The audience was largely composed of Indians and Pakistanis. In attendance was the venerable writer, Anita Desai, who wrote the foreword to this edition, as was the veteran actress and culinary writer, Madhur Jaffrey. Bapsi herself was in high spirits, dressed in a beautiful purple salwar kameez, she delivered the readings with passion and flair. Several press interviews were being conducted

with Bapsi before the evening commenced, during which time the other attendees indulged in fine wine and cheese. Autographed copies of the book were on sale. The setting was quite appropriate for the occasion; a small, airy and cozy room getting plenty of natural light, with paintings and other art décor all around. Before the readings, Bapsi spoke of her childhood and background. Born and raised in Lahore, she was struck with polio as a child and given a private education at home where her Anglo-Indian tutor introduced her to the world of books and literature by giving her Little



From left Homi Gandhi, Bapsi Sidhwa, Rushad Pavri

Women. During her honeymoon in the mountains of northern Pakistan, she heard about an incident involving a young girl from a remote mountainous tribe who had been spotted on the run, and whose mutilated corpse was later found by the river - an obvious case of "honor" killing. Bapsi felt a strong urge to write about the girl's story and began work on what would become *The Bride*.

The book deals with the tragic story of Zaitoon, an orphaned girl adopted by the kind-hearted mountain tribal, Qasim, and brought up in Lahore. But when she is married off to one of Qasim's kinsmen, she must choose between

life in the harsh unrelenting Himalayan climate coupled with rigid and suffocating tribal laws, or escaping to freedom, with all its deadly implications.

Bapsi read part of a scene involving the bride and groom on their wedding night, neither knowing how to proceed, both fearful and apprehensive. That reading humorously captured the innocence of a newly married couple who had never known each other.

Another reading focused on an argument between Qasim and Miriam about the feasibility of marrying Zaitoon to Qasim's tribesman. This passage starkly conveyed the clash between the tribal and urban cultures. Qasim's "word", which he had given to his tribesman regarding Zaitoon, was incomprehensible to the city-bred Miriam.

During the question session, Bapsi spoke about her creative influences, her approach to writing and how her multi-cultural background influenced her work. She answered questions about the book, its main protagonists (she even introduced an American character in the hope of appealing to Western sensitivities), the nature of mountainous tribal life, and whether the book was "feminist" (a charge she denies).

The book promises to be an entertaining read, with its exotic settings and free-flowing style. But also provides a sympathetic, sensitive and poignant look at the clash of cultures and its tragic consequences for those caught in between.

Reported by Rushad Pavri Ph.D, a post-doctoral fellow at Rockefeller University in NYC. who attended the book reading

In The News



Zarrir Bhandara

(left in photo) of California, USA was felicitated by Dasturji Dr. Firoze M Kotwal for his over 34 years of dedicated service to the community in India and USA at the Zoroastrian Children's day celebration organized by Kyoshi Vispy Kapadia along with his team members of Zoroastrian Children's Foundation on 23rd December 2007 in Mumbai, India.

We salute mobed Zarrir Bhandara, and all the mobeds and their families, for their selfless services in helping to keep our faith and traditions alive and shining in North America.

After 40 years of giving the “gift of life”, Jamshed Ghadiali shows no signs of stopping



Jamshed Ghadiali, operations manager at Lake Success (NY) Financial Group, a MetLife Agency Distribution Group office. has been donating blood since August 1965, first in Mumbai, India and then in USA. By January 2008 he had donated 204 times, made up of 98 Whole Blood, 36 Plasma and 70 Platelets, averaging 10 donations of one kind or another per year.

Jamshed has been on the National Bone Marrow Registry for years, and is ready, willing and able to donate marrow should he get "the call." As an active member of the South Asian Marrow Association of Recruiters (SAMAR), a group dedicated to serving patients diagnosed with leukemia and other blood disorders from the South Asian community, Jamshed continually looks for ways to increase awareness of the Registry and recruitment of potential marrow donors.

Jamshed is a walking, talking and sometimes even running advertisement for helping those in need. Over the years, his impressive and selfless resume has grown to include: running the ING NYC Marathon with Fred's Team to raise funds for cancer research, participating in the Avon 2-Day Walk for Breast Cancer and helping raise money and awareness for United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of Queens, a branch of the national UCP organization whose mission is to advance the independence, productivity and full citizenship of people with disabilities.

According to Jamshed, giving has no bounds, and no matter how small the effort, you can make a difference. "You never know when something can happen that will prevent you from being able to help others. We should give until we cannot give any more."

Abstracted from the News Bulletin of Met Life Agency

In The News

Dr Jamshed Kanga honored by the National Cystic Fibrosis Foundation for 25 years of dedicated services.



ZAKOI (Zoroastrian Association of Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana) is proud to introduce one of its founding members, Dr. Jamshed Kanga, Chief of the Pediatric Pulmonary Division at the University of Kentucky (UK) Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky, and Director of the Cystic Fibrosis Center at the

hospital. The National Cystic Fibrosis Foundation honored Dr. Kanga at their annual fundraiser Cystic Fibrosis Winter Ball at the Embassy Suites in Lexington, Kentucky, on November 17, 2007, in recognition of his dedicated services to the Cystic Fibrosis community, helping the children and their families for the past 25 years. Prof Dr Kanga teaches as well as practices Medicine and has won many teaching awards.

Born in Karachi, Pakistan, he completed his medical school before moving to New York in January 1977, where he met his wife, Zavera. They got married in 1979, and have two children. Daughter Fareesh is in her first year of Psychiatry Residency at U.K. and is married to Dr. Stephen Hobbs, a Radiology Resident at U.K. also. Their son, Hormazd, is currently working for the U.S. State Department as Vice Consul in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Zavera has been a member of the Cystic Fibrosis Committee for many years working tirelessly raising funds for the children suffering from CF and families.

Jamshed is a true Zarathushti and most proud of his heritage and religion. Jamshed and Zavera were one of the founding members of ZAKOI ten years ago. Our tri-state Zarathushti community is most proud to have Zavera and Jamshed among us. Our best wishes continue to be with them in all their future noble humanitarian work.

Bakhtavar Desai, President, ZAKOI

MUSIK FOR THE SOUL seeks to use music as a vehicle to raise awareness for Children in Pain.

Musik for the Soul



Meher Pavri (Miss India-Canada 2007) and **Jay Banerjee** performed on Sunday, March 9, 2008 at 6 pm at Victorial Hall Chapel to raise funds for CHIP (Children in Pain –Mumbai Chapter.)

Children in Pain (CHIP) an NGO started in Kolkata in 1997 is a charity for underprivileged children with chapters in Kolkata, Chennai, and Mumbai. It was founded by doctors and educators with a vision to raise the quality of life for underprivileged children and a dream of helping children, particularly children in pain, (mental, physical or emotional pain) by providing basic healthcare, and improving their access to education, extracurricular activities and vocational training. The main focus is to enable children to develop into healthy, literate and productive beings. A primary school at Jogeshwari was adopted which was attended by children from the surrounding slums. The drop out rate of the school was 90%. By changing the infrastructure and providing a happier atmosphere for the school the dropout rate dropped to 0%, with 750 happy and confident children attending everyday.

Since winning the Miss India –Canada pageant in 2007 Meher Pavri has used her platform to represent the South Asian community in many different ways. Her main focus for the year is to help underprivileged children by using her talent for singing. Meher is following the teachings of Asho Zarathushtra and doing a wonderful job in collecting funds for a charity in India.

In The News

Narius K. Dastur, named Volunteer of the Year, for his dedication and loyal service to the New Westminster, British Columbia, Police Crime Prevention Unit

On February 29, 2008, Narius K. Dastur, was awarded the Volunteer of the Year Award, for his dedicated and loyal service for the past two years to the New Westminster Police Crime Prevention Unit. The award was presented by Chief Constable Lorne Zapotichny, (photo right) at an awards banquet to recognize the volunteers who gave their time and efforts to make the New Westminster community a safer place. This coveted award is given annually to an active member of their team whose spirit and commitment to New Westminster Police Service is exemplary and the recipient is carefully chosen from a group of very deserving people .

Narius is acknowledged as an inspiration to all volunteers – volunteers who are considered the community's greatest crime prevention ambassadors. Some of Narius' activities for their organization this past year included:

Designing and updating the Crime Prevention section of the organization's website

Assisting with organizing data in the Forensic Identification Unit

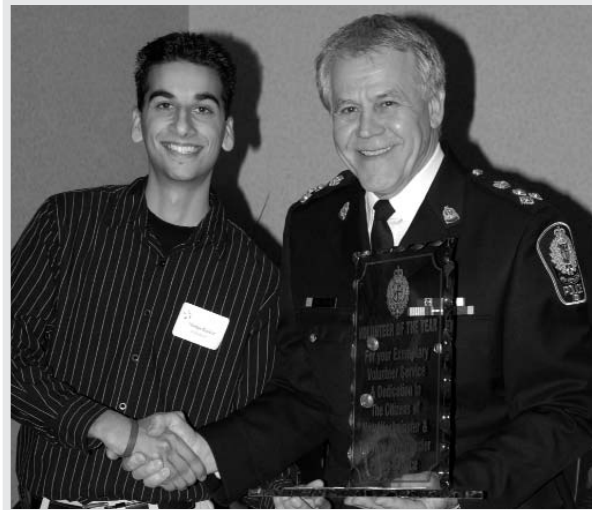
Team leadership and participation in Citizen's Crime Watch Patrol

Organizational photographer and he is in the process of creating a database of action shots of the police members in action

Congratulations Narius, for a well-deserved award!

Narius is a 3rd year student of the Computing Science program at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. He also volunteers as the webmaster for the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia website and for the Zoroastrian Community's FIRST Online Youth Magazine -Zpeakerbox. He was one of the representatives of the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia at the 4th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress held in Ballarat, Australia in 2007 and a recipient of the FEZANA Subsidy Program for the Congress.

Narius is the son of proud parents Khushrav and Kashmira Dastur and brother of Burgess.



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In The News

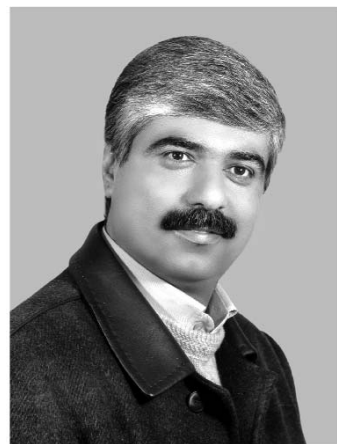
Dr Esfandiar Ekhtiyari is elected to the Iranian Majlees as a representative of the Zarathushti community winning 3605 votes from 7151 total votes cast

42 year old Esfandiar Ekhtiyari was elected to the Iranian Majlees on 14 March 2008. Born in Yazd, Dr Esfandiar received his MSc and Ph.D. degrees from Amir Kabir University of Technology in 2002 in Textile Engineering and is also a Project Management Professional. Since 1994 he is a member of the academic staff at the Textile Engineering Department of Yazd University and has held several other academic position at the University. He was the Director of Research Affairs (2002-2005), Head of Entrepreneurship Center, (2004-2006). He is a part-time academic staff at Amir Kabir University of

Technology, Tehran. He has taught courses in Knowledge Management, I.C.T Management, Entrepreneurship, Creative and Innovation, Data Analysis, Project Management. He has 36 research papers to his credit and 6 patents. He serves on the Editorial Board of Roshad-e-Fanavari –Journal of Science and Technology Park, and Incubators and Vice-President of Science and Technology Park, Iran. He presented a paper "Innovative Center-A climate for attracting and developing creativity" at the XXIV IASP World Conference, Barcelona, 2007

He is a full member of Iranian Inventors Association and Iranian Nanotechnology Society, as well as of YES (Yazd Elites Society). Currently he is the head of Markar Knowledge Paradise, which will design the Zarathushti innovation and entrepreneurship center.

The Global Zarathushti community congratulates Dr Ekhtiyari and wish him great success in all his work on behalf of the community in Iran



خشنه اتره اهورهه مزداو

راستی بهترین است، خوشبختی است. خوشبختی برای کسی است که
بهر بهترین راستی، راست و پاک باشد.

با درود و سپاس فراوان

ضمن شادباش بهار طبیعت، سالروز زایش اشوزرتشت اسپنتمان، بزرگ پیام آور
آریایی، را به زرتشتیان گرمی ساکن در سرتاسرجهان، تبریک می گویم.
بر این باورم که جامعه بزرگ زرتشتیان، با بکار بستن همت، تلاش و امکانات خود
می توانند بیش از پیش موفق باشند و در این راه ارتباط بین انجمن ها و زرتشتیان در هر
کجا که باشند، یکی از ارکان این موفقیت خواهد بود. بدینوسیله آمادگی کامل خود را با
تمام توان، جهت پررنگ تر کردن این روابط، اعلام می دارم.
در انتها امید دارم تا دست در دست هم دهیم به مهر و با بهره گیری از تمدن
کهنمان و به کار بستن اندیشه های نو، آینده ای روشنتر را شکل دهیم.

هما زوربیم همازورهما اشوبیم

ایدون باد

اسفندیار اختیاری

نوروز ۱۳۸۷

In The News

Minoo Saher, CARRIES THE

OLYMPIC TORCH IN OMAN

"I was singularly fortunate to be carrying the Olympic Torch in Oman. I was approached by Samsung, who are one of the sponsors, a few months back informing me that I was selected to be a Torchbearer in Oman and they asked for my CV.



Initially, I took it quite casually not fully realizing what a huge opportunity had presented itself to me. It was only with each passing stage of preparing for the relay that the magnitude of the event got to me and of course, the actual experience was even more profound.

What an uplifting experience it was! Considering that fire is the purest of all elements of nature, I had a personal experience of its unique quality of spreading harmony and peace around the world. I had heard of the spirit of the Olympic flame uniting the people of the world and I am glad to have experienced it when I was running with the Torch".

MINOO SAHER

Soheil Nasseri's CONCERT AT THE KENNEDY CENTRE BENEFITS ZAMWI

WASHINGTON PREMIERE OF KAIKHOSRU SORABJI'S SONATA No 0

On Saturday February 23, 2008 at 7.30 p.m. Soheil Nasseri, gave a solo piano recital at the Terrace Theatre of The John F. Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C. He opened the program with the Washington premiere of the first major piano work by Composer Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji, the Sonata No 0 (1917).

An eccentric composer, Kaikhosru Sorabji (1892-1988) was born in England of Parsi, Spanish and Sicilian descent and during his lifetime he placed a "ban" on the performance of any of his technically very difficult works. The Sonata No 0 is an extraordinarily difficult piece to perform, the manuscript of which had been lost and rediscovered in the late 1980s by the curator of the Sorabji Archives in England.

The Program also included Beethoven, Sonata No 12 in A flat OP 26, Brahms 16 Waltzes Op 39. Schumann Concert sans Orchestre Op 14.

Soheil Nasseri, a pianist of Iranian descent born in Santa Monica, California received standing ovations and gave several encores at the completion of the evening's program. Nasseri will be taking the work of Sorabji on tour to Europe, first to Berlin and then to London, England.

All proceeds of the evening's performance benefited the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington (ZAMWI), which had a one-page write up in the play bill of the Kennedy Centre.



INTERFAITH INTERALIA

The role of Non Governmental Agencies in supporting the Commission on the Status of Women

Dolly Dastoor, Ph.D

THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW)

comprising of representatives of member states, plays an important role as a global forum on gender equality. The Commission emphasizes efforts to ensure a strong focus on national level implementation, interactive dialogues, exchange of experiences and lessons learned, items not achieved, the challenges faced, as well as examples of good practices. Organizations at international, regional and national level are guided in their work by the agenda of the Commission on the Status of Women. In preparation for the 52nd session of the Commission, many organizations via: The World Bank, the UN Interagency Network on Women and Gender Equality, the Commonwealth Meeting of Ministers of Gender Equality; and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, included the priority theme and issues of "Financing for gender equality and empowerment of women" in their work programs. The World Bank realizing that restricting economic opportunities for women is bad economics launched a group action plan (Fiscal years 2007-10):

"Gender Equality as Smart Economics"

THE ROLE OF NON GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES (NGOs) IN THE COMMISSION

NGOs have been active in the United Nations work on gender equality since the establishment of the Commission in 1946. They have played a critical role in highlighting issues for attention on the global agenda, providing critical information and data, supporting implementation on the ground, monitoring government action on global commitments and supporting

governments through partnering on critical issues.

The very effective lobbying by NGOs have placed the issue of Violence against Women firmly on the UNITED NATIONS agenda, resulting in an in-depth study of the Secretary-General, and a comprehensive resolution of the General Assembly, and now a multi year global campaign to end violence against women which was launched on February 25th 2008 at the opening session of the Commission. Launching the campaign Ban Ki-Moon, the Secretary-General said "I am counting on you -- advocates from Government, civil society and the UN -- to carry our message around the world. In this campaign, I will personally approach world leaders to spur action through national campaigns. I will urge all States to review applicable laws, and to revise them or enact new ones to ensure that violence against women is always criminalized. And I will call on all States to enforce their laws to end impunity"

The NGOs are very active during the annual session, providing written and oral statements, participating in all interactive events, organizing parallel events and advocating and lobbying on their concerns. FEZANA which is registered as an NGO with Category III status, organized a parallel event : a workshop "Technology and private sector bringing solutions in financing to impoverished communities".

Prior to the Commission, NGOs are very busy in promoting the themes of the Commission strategically at all levels to generate interest and increase direct involvement which would increase

the potential for implementation of outcomes.

After the Commission, the NGOs take the outcomes back to their constituencies at local level and work towards ensuring that they are well known and used in different contexts.

Over 5,000 NGO representatives pre-registered for CSW 52.

CSW 53 The priority theme for the 53rd Session of the Commission will be "The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS" In June/July 2008 there will be an on-line discussion on the priority theme and in September 2008, an Expert Group Meeting on the priority theme as an early preparatory for the 2009 meeting of the Commission. These are organized by the Division on the Advancement of Women (DAW).

The collaboration between the NGOs and the Commission make a significant difference in the lives of women and girls around the world by increasing resources, strengthening attention to gender perspectives in climate change, enhancing participation of women in conflict resolution and peace-building efforts. Civil society has to work to hold governments responsible and accountable for commitments made in the Commission and to monitor and report on their progress.

Dolly Dastoor has been attending the CSW meetings in New York and Vienna since 2001 as a member of Zonta International, an NGO promoting the status of women and has category 1 a status with the UN. Dolly is the International Service Chair 2008-2010 for Zonta International

INTERFAITH INTERALLA

ZARATHUSHTIS AT THE 52nd COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Over 2000 non-governmental organization (NGO) delegates from around the globe; including representatives from FEZANA, joined in the 52nd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) event at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from Feb. 25- March 7, 2008. The theme of this year's CSW event was *"Financing for gender equality and empowerment of women"*. The event was opened through a heartfelt presentation by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon who vowed to intensify efforts towards the empowerment of women and girls, and emphasized that, "violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable and never tolerable." He continued by officially launching his system wide, multi-year global campaign **"UNITE: To End Violence Against Women"** which will run till 2015.



From left Shekoufeh Zonji, Mantreh Atashband, Homi Gandhi, Afreed Mistry, Farah Minwalla

The two week CSW event consisted of roundtable and panel discussions, workshops and forums attended by delegates from over 150 international NGOs, all with the same goal of advocating for stronger gender equality, with great emphasis placed on the creation of a new UN Women's Agency. The intended development of a "new gender architecture" would be headed by an "under-secretary-general" and would be an amalgamation of three UN entities; including the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues (OSAGI) and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

During a session, June Zeitlin of the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) said "there is a clear consensus that the current structure is insufficient to meet the needs of women around the world or to fulfill the commitments, governments have made at (the 1995 Women's Conference in) Beijing and other U.N. world conferences". She went on to say that "the effort to restructure and expand the U.N.'s women's rights push has also been hindered by extended U.N. negotiations over issues unrelated to gender, such as financing for development and which countries have seats on the Security Council, whose members are appointed by the general membership to address international threats to peace and security."

At this year's CSW, an emerging focus was the importance of financing in gender equality and climate change. It is a known fact, that "women are the main producers of the world's staple crops, providing over 90% of the rural poor's food intake and producing 60-80% of the food in most developing countries" (IUCN). So, when important decisions about the implementation of initiatives for climate change are discussed, why are women not involved? International climate change negotiations must "adopt the principles of gender equity and equality at all stages: in research, in analysis, and in the design and implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies" (IUCN). Women should have equal access to the benefits of market-based approaches to helping with climate change. Representatives from global organizations highlighted these points and emphasized the important role NGOs play in urging their members and communities in increasing education around climate change and advocating for the involvement of women in being "powerful agents of change", rather than mere "helpless victims".

The discussion of financing continued through many workshops and sessions which assisted organizations in seeking, developing and implementing microfinancing initiatives. On February 29, 2008, Zarathushti delegates from FEZANA conducted a well received panel discussion on "Technology and the private sector bringing solutions in financing to impoverished communities". The panel presented the different facets of development work, illustrating

INTERFAITH INTERALLA

ZARATHUSHTIS AT THE 52nd COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

how NGOs, the private sector and innovative tools like micro financing and technology, such as cell phones; play a crucial role in poverty alleviation.

Shekoufeh Zonji from Toronto provided vivid examples from her internship with an NGO, *Walking Together for Health and Development (WT)* in the rural indigenous village of Tlamacazapa, Mexico, and showcased the multiple struggles women face living in acute poverty and the importance of holistic approaches to financing. **Afreed Mistry** from Toronto spoke about India's largest private sector bank, ICICI, who has contributed to alleviating poverty by providing small loans to rural women, empowering them to lift themselves out of poverty. **Mantreh Atashband** used a case study from South Africa to show how micro financing has led to a decrease in gender based violence and a decrease in the incidence rate of HIV. She also emphasized the urgency of synergistic partnerships between NGO's and the private sector in order to implement effective micro financing initiatives.

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon took part in concluding the 52nd CSW event with the celebration of **International Women's Day on March 8, 2008**, with a theme of "Investing in women and girls". He once again pledged his commitment to the advancement of women and girls and encouraged leaders to unite in the mission of investing in women and girls in order to reach the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Mantreh Atashband has been involved in the HIV & AIDS movement for over a decade; advocating for people living with HIV (especially women and girls) locally, nationally and internationally. She is also part of the Executive Board of Directors for a local Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre, where she works toward the eradication of sexual violence against women and girls. Mantreh was the Communications chair for the 2007 North American Zoroastrian Congress- IMPACT, and was also the Marketing chair for the NEXUS- 2003 North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress. She is the co-founder of Camp Yasna; an annual summer camp for local Zarathushti children.



Strong Women vs. Women of Strength

A strong woman works out everyday to keep her body in shape

A woman of strength builds relationships to keep her soul in shape

A strong woman is not afraid of anything

A woman of strength shows courage in the midst of fear

A strong woman would not let anyone get the best of her

A woman of strength gives the best of herself to everyone

A strong woman makes mistakes and avoids the same in the future

A woman of strength realizes life's mistakes can also be unexpected blessings and capitalizes on them

A strong woman wears a look of confidence on her face

A woman of strength wears grace

A strong woman has faith that she is strong enough for the journey

A woman of strength has faith that it is in the journey that she will become strong

"There is nothing more attractive in a person then one who is chasing their dreams. At the same time there is nothing more disheartening to see one lose sight of their inner self in their journey."

Never loose sight of your inner strength.

Author unknown

INTERFAITH INTERALLA

Operation Eyesight



Report by Behram Pastakia M.D.

Blindness is a scourge which can lead to poverty, dependency and despair. Avoidable blindness is defined as blindness which could be either treated or prevented by known, cost-effective means. Causes for avoidable blindness include Cataract, Trachoma, Onchocerciasis, Childhood Blindness, Refractive Error, Low Vision, Glaucoma, Diabetic Retinopathy, Age Related Macular Degeneration.

Of these causes, refractive error is one of the easiest to target. Those of us who live in affluent societies, whether in the western countries or in the global south, change our eyeglasses as and when required and then do not know what to do with the older pair of perfectly useable frames and lenses. Could we not share these old lenses with those cannot afford them and give the gift of sight to the needy? It is with this premise that **Operation Eyesight** was launched decades ago.

Zarathushtis have been involved with this idea for many years. A pioneer in this arena is Phiroz Dastoor of Toronto, Canada who has served as a mentor to those who have followed in his footsteps. The purpose of this article is to share what has been accomplished so far and provide some thoughts on what we can do in the future.

FEZANA's participation in Operation Eyesight began in the months leading up to the 7th World Zoroastrian Congress held in Houston, Texas. At an Onam celebration, Mrs. Lekha Sreenivasan, the wife of the then deputy ambassador of India to the United States, and founder of Karuna Charities chapters in Nairobi, Kenya, New York and Washington D.C., inspired us to get involved in giving the gift of sight, and sparked us to get going. A very positive response from the organizers of the 7th World Zoroastrian Congress, and specially from Rustom Engineer, who as a correspondent with all participants registered for the WZC stood in as an effective communicator to remind registrants to bring old eyeglasses with them as they packed their bags for Houston, led to a very successful old eye-glasses collection. The largest donations in Houston came from Pakistan, with leadership provided by Toxy Cowasjee. Offers to help with buying packaging materials for shipments came in from non-Zoroastrians who heard about the effort. Delegates who attended the 7thWZC chipped in with their elbow grease to get the glasses ready for shipment. A Zarathushti business contact in Canada who prefers to remain anonymous, arranged for the shipment to be air-lifted to Mombassa and these glasses were used in an eye-camp organized by the Lions Club in Kenya by doctors personally known to the organizers of the collection drive.

Building on the success of this model, **FEZANA** repeated the eyeglasses collection drive at the 12th, 13th and 14th North American Zoroastrian Congresses [NAZC], in Chicago in 2002, [Key contact: Porus Dadabhoy]; in San Jose, California in 2004 [Key contact: Ehler Spliedt]; and in Toronto in 2007 [Key contact: Diana Vania]. Firdosh Mehta, arranged for the eyeglasses collected at the NAZC to be sorted and made ready for shipment at a penitentiary in Canada. The months leading up to these North American congresses served as effective windows in time for children in Zarathushti religious classes at the local association level to get involved; some painted posters, others reached out to their neighbors and to friends in school. It served to become an event where families and communities could get together around a project that they all subscribed to, and values they all believed in. Local

public libraries willingly made space available for eyeglass collection boxes to be left in their hallway. One memorable eye-glasses packaging event was held at a local association picnic.

Zarathushtis from different parts of the globe in partnership with colleagues in their communities have taken this idea and run with it. A notably successful drive was carried out by Mrs. Mani Vaccha in Hong Kong, who heard of it on (the old) creatingawareness.com, and was able to get the word out on radio. Generous donors in Hong Kong of all faiths contributed not only used, but new eye-glasses. The response was so overwhelming that the glasses were stored at the old Hong Kong airport, which the



INTERFAITH INTERALIA

Religions working for peace and justice



government made available to charitable organizations. The eyeglasses shipments from Mani Vaccha's efforts went to Mongolia and to different countries in Africa. Optometrists from Canada volunteered their time to work for the project in Mongolia.

In more recent memory, Khush Bodhan, one of the directors of the Lions Club of California and Nevada took a delegation to Mexico {see FEZANA Journal Vol21, No1 Spring 2007 } to provide hands on service to personally give the gift of sight. He then followed it up with a very ambitious program. First he organized a successful wine-tasting event as a fund raiser in Northern California, to

buy new eyeglasses. Then, in November of 2007 he led two teams of doctors, optometrists and volunteers from California, Missouri, Washington State, Oregon, over the Thanksgiving holidays to India. They were joined by local Lions Club representatives in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand state [Key Contact: Behram Bodhanwalla] and in Mumbai, Maharashtra [Key contacts: Daara and Katy Patel] in getting the word out through posters, flyers and media coverage in the local language newspapers [Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati], and making local arrangements to hold the camps. Beneficiaries were first examined by qualified personnel from the USA and then given the appropriate eyeglasses which had been shipped in from abroad. Parsis who were members of local Lions Clubs in Mumbai and Jamshedpur joined colleagues from other faith traditions, Jains, Hindus, Muslims and Christians in providing volunteer support at registration desks, to provide local transport to villages and to serve as translators. A total of 4000 Indians benefited from this effort over a period of one week in November 2007 {photo page 93}

The participants from the United States, headed by Bill Ianacone, made it a point to remind us that this kind of charity is what America stands for, and this was one of the most rewarding Thanksgiving holidays many of the volunteers had spent. Seeing a smile on the face of a woman whose skills are in embroidery and her only source of family income is at stake due to failing eyesight and no resources to get appropriate eye glasses, was reward enough for those who traveled across the oceans to participate in this operation.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:

As this project comes toward the end of the first decade of a coordinated organized effort by Zarathushtis worldwide, we have defined its purpose, and that is to create an awareness of the scope of the problem and find practical solutions to meet the need. The modus operandi so far has been to use International gatherings of Zarathushtis to serve as focal points to continue with this humanitarian effort. The 9th World Zoroastrian Congress in Dubai scheduled for December 2009 [Key Contact: Mrs. Shahnaz Tarapore], shall serve as our next stop on this journey together. Along the way we have found potential partners, including members of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce, which goes to show that the business of business is not all about making money, but also of keeping it in trust and sharing it with the less fortunate in the true spirit of our forebearers. Willing to work with us now is *The Blind People's Association*, in Vastrapur, Ahmedabad, India. The executive director, Dr Bhushan Punani has offered to house and transport volunteers, to give the gift of sight to the needy in the villages of Gujarat.

Do consider volunteering and share your ideas, as to how we can build on what has been accomplished so far. Take ownership of a project in your local town or district or city. Individuals can connect through the wonders of cyberspace to find support. Operation Eyesight opens doors, not only for those who have had difficulty in seeing, but also for those who give of their time and talents.

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Behram Pastakia : bpastakia@aol.com / Tel: + 1-301-493-9131

ERVAD BRIGADIER BEHRAM PANTHAKI INVITED TO ATTEND PAPAL MASS, ON APRIL 17th 2008, IN WASHINGTON DC.



Zenobia and I accepted the gracious invitation of Archbishop Donald Weurl to attend the Papal Mass along with other interfaith and ecumenical faith leaders on April 17th 2008. What we didn't know was that he would give us tickets in the front three rows between the assembled bishops on the right and the Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts and Governors Kaine of Virginia and O'Malley of Maryland, Anthony Williams, ex Mayor of Washington, DC, Adrian Fenty, current Mayor of Washington, DC on the left. His Holiness The Pope walked up the ramp immediately in front of us, less than twenty feet away.

Another surprise was that the Inter faith group leaders were escorted through the stadium in a procession by the Knights of Columbus.(photo above)



Rev. Dr. Wilson Gunn, Presbyterian Church; Rev. Kwame Osei Reid, Associate Minister, United Church of Christ, Rev. Dr. John Deckenback of United Church of Christ, Rev. Dr. Beth Braxton of Burke Presbyterian Church and Ervad Behram Panthaki (Photos courtesy Zenobia Panthaki and Rev Clark Lobenstine)

I was moved by the variety of cultures bringing gifts of song and voice to the liturgy. We heard Igbo, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Spanish, Korean, English and a few other languages along with the classical Latin. The most moving part of the service was when a cross section of people were ushered forward to be blessed by the Pope, ordinary people: a nun, a single young woman, a Benedictine novitiate, a downs syndrome man, an older couple, a single older man with a nine inch crucifix around his neck, a woman in a wheel chair with what I would guess was cerebral palsy. They composed themselves for the journey up the steps right in front of

us where we could catch a glimpse of their souls bared for the experience.



I was seated with: Rev. Kwame Osei Reed, Associated Minister of United Church of Christ, Rev. John Deckenback of the United Church of Christ, Dr. Beth Braxton of Burke Presbyterian Church, Rev. Clark Lobenstine, Executive Director, Inter Faith Conference of Metropolitan Washington,



Bishop John Scholl of the United Methodist Church, Bishop John Chane of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, Bishop Thomas Hoyt of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Morris Shearin of Israel Baptist Church, Constantine of the Greek Orthodox, Bishop Richard Graham of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Rev. G. Wilson Gunn, Jr. of National Capital Presbytery.

Also colleagues from other faiths with whom we shared the place were: Dr. Siva Subramanian of the Hindu faith, Imam Yusuf Saleem of the Muslim faith, Dr. Rajwant Singh of the Sikh faith, Rabbi Fred Dobb of the Jewish faith. And over 40, 000 vibrant Catholics.

ERVAD BRIGADIER BEHRAM PANTHAKI PARTICIPATES IN RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY TRAINING SESSION IN WASHINGTON, DC.

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

Inter Faith Center for Advancing Justice of the Inter Faith Conference of Metropolitan Washington (IFC) held the second Religious Diversity Training Session on Wednesday, April 16, 2008, for their Legislative Review Committee.

The purpose of this meeting was two-fold:

- 1) to educate participants about the basic tenets and practices of each of the eleven IFC member faith traditions, and
- 2) to familiarize participants with the religious freedom challenges faced by each faith community.

The first Religious Diversity Training Session was held in February 2008 where representatives of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Roman Catholic and Sikh communities were invited.

For the second training session the Jain, Jewish, Latter-Day Saints, Protestant and Zarathushti faiths were represented. Ervad Brigadier Behram Panthaki was requested to speak at this event for 30 minutes as a representative of the Zarathushti community.

The audience for the event were members of IFC's Legislative Review Committee, IFC board members and local elected civil and police officials.

The presentation was in two parts: In the first part Brigadier Panthaki familiarized the audience with the Zarathushti faith, i.e. the historical background of Zoroastrianism, its philosophy, tenets, scriptures, ceremonies and primary beliefs. The second half of the presentation was devoted to the religious freedom issues of primary concern most relevant to our faith community. As a representative of the Zarathushti faith community, Ervad Panthaki highlighted religious freedom issues, with a view to give the IFC Legislative Review Committee, an idea of future priorities, and police and elected officials insight into our community's concerns. This was followed by Q and A session.

Ervad Panthaki highlighted the lack of knowledge about our faith in the local community, viz: objections raised by neighbors during town hall meetings and technical clarifications ZAMWI was asked to provide the Fairfax County Zoning Board during the application process for obtaining construction permit to build the Zoroastrian center at Hunter Mill Road property in Vienna, Virginia.

THE ZAPANJ YOUTH GROUP CONDUCT A PARK CLEAN-UP AT COOPER RIVER PARK, CAMDEN, NJ



From left to right:

Bottom Row: Sherry Bapasola, Nergish Karanjia, Kersi Kapadia, Banoo Karanjia, Rustom Dinshaw, Anoo Sukhia, Behnaz Toorkey, Rohan Shroff, Khushroo Shroff, Zarine Sidhva, Fali Sidhva, Guest, Guest, Guest, Bakhtawar Dinshaw & Freney Mehta.

Middle Row: Sam Bapasola, Arish Kanga, Malcolm Cooper, Phiroza Stoneback, Hutokhshi Cooper, Guest, Katayun Kapadia, Khursheed Bapasola.

Top Row: Rachel Stoneback, Feroze Karanjia, Darayus Toorkey, Farzad Sidhva.



T

HE CASE FOR INVESTING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS

Around the world, women struggle to rise above crushing poverty, disease and violence and build a better life for themselves and their families, yet they shoulder a staggering burden and disproportionate share of the world's poverty that statistics barely convey:

- o Women produce half of the world's food but own only one percent of its farmland;
- o The majority of the one billion people living on less than a dollar a day are women;
- o Approximately one in three of the world's women experience gender-related violence;
- o Every minute, a woman dies as a result of pregnancy or childbirth;

Research and experience show that investing in women's health and education yields tremendous benefits not only for the woman but for her children, family, community and nation:

- o Educated girls contribute to increased economic productivity and improved family nutrition: for every year a girl goes to school beyond the fourth grade, her wages rise 20 percent and her family size drops by 20 percent;

Investing in women is not just the right thing to do--it also is the most effective economic development strategy and has been shown to pay dividends for the whole human family.

For more information visit: <http://www.wfd-alliance.org/>

REPORT ON PRESENTATION ON ZOROASTRIANISM & IT'S CONNECTION WITH CHRISTIANITY @ SHREVEPORT - DECEMBER 16, 2007

FIRDOSH MEHTA, Historical Research and Preservation Committee, FEZANA

An invitation was received by ZANT from Brother Mike Loftin of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints of Shreveport, to make a presentation on Zoroastrianism to the congregation of their Church. on Sunday December 16, 2007 at 3.30 p.m. About 50 adults of the Latter-Day Saints faith group attended the meeting. Shreveport is about a five-hour drive from Weatherford, Texas Along with my talk, I showed them slides of "Introduction to Zoroastrianism" prepared by Er. Dr. Poras Balsara. I had also taken some books on Zoroastrianism, copies of "KHORDEH AVESTA", "GATHAS", 'PARSIANA', 'FEZANA JOURNAL' and other articles of our faith, such as the Fravahar, Topi, Sudreh (male & Female) and Kusti.

As requested, I included some aspects of the 3 Wise Men, as being possibly the Persian Magi, who visited Baby Jesus, and some influence of Zarathushti beliefs on Judaism, post Babylon conquest and later into Christianity. The many articles in FEZANA JOURNAL, Fall 2004, were referenced, and a copy was left with Brother Loftin.

It was an hour presentation with an hour of questions from the congregation. The book "Journey of The Magi" by Paul Roberts was presented to Brother Mike Loftin.

I was presented with a book "THE MISSION – INSIDE THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS", which depicts the customs, culture and other aspects of their Church.

The program ended with a prayer recited by Firdosh, followed by a prayer by Brother Brent Merrill, Shreveport Stake President of the Church.

Thanks to Roshan Rivetna, Arnavaz Sethna, Zenobia Chinoy and others for their assistance in forwarding this request to ZANT, and for giving me this opportunity.



Water is sacred in the Zarathushti faith tradition. Not only is it mentioned in our scriptures, but we see it incorporated into many of our traditional ceremonies and rituals. It is part of the spread of the Haft Seen table at Naurooz, it is kept next to the fire and the flowers at Jashans, we see Aban Roj and Aban Mah celebrated every year on river banks and the sea shore. The ancients were trying to send the future generations a message - this life giving resource of mother nature had to be protected, cared for and kept pure.

Yet, the reality of the globe as we find it today is dismal. It is estimated by the United Nations, that close to 1 billion people worldwide have little or no access to clean water. Every 15 seconds a child dies due to lack of clean drinking water. That is 6000 preventable deaths every day.

During World Water Week 16th to 22nd March, 300 restaurants in New York came together in 2007 to do something about this issue. The Tap project www.TapProject.org in collaboration with the The Water & Sanitation Rotarian Action Group www.wasrag.org and UNICEF was launched. Building on the success, with wide media coverage to raise awareness and resources to help children in third world countries, restaurants in fifteen cities across the United States joined in this program in 2008.

Participating Cities

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| • Boston, MA | • Greenville, SC |
| • Charleston, SC | • Los Angeles, CA |
| • Chicago, IL | • New Orleans, LA |
| • Cincinnati, OH | • Portland, OR |
| • Columbia, SC | • Richmond, VA |
| • Dallas, TX Area | • San Diego, CA |
| | • Seattle, WA |

Shall we, as a worldwide Zoroastrian community, spread far and wide geographically, yet connected in values, spirit and a common sense of purpose and identity, join in this public- private partnership of philanthropy, in harmony with our own faith traditions and make it part of our season of service every spring ?

Anjoman-e-Mobedan launches a website

Tehran's Anjoman-e Mobedan have launched their own web site at:
www.anjomanemobedan.com <<http://www.anjomanemobedan.com>> .

Among the items on the site are the Gatha with translation into English and Persian, and a audio collection of Avesta recitals performed by Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary Zoroastrian Calendar, Religious Q/A and many more useful information. At present it is in Persian only.

We wish the Anjoman best for reaching their goals and maintaining this useful and informative website. Also congratulations to Ramin Shahzadi for designing it in a professional manner.

<<http://www.anjomanemobedan.org/>>

Source: ZNA March 28, 2008

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

Religions Working for Peace and Justice



The year 2007 was declared by UNESCO as "International Year of Rumi". To celebrate the 800th birth anniversary of Mevlana Jelaledin Rumi, an important interfaith event was organized at NCPA, Tata Theatre on November 23, 2007. Representatives from various religious traditions were invited to speak on different facets of the teachings of this renowned Sufi.

Following the talk by a few invitees, there was a Sufi music concert and dance performances by Turkish Whirling Dervishes. The function was very well attended and it was a fascinating experience to witness the Whirling Dervishes and their exotic music. Homi Dhalla presented a talk "Is the Message of Rumi Relevant Today"? (Photo above, Farzad Ardeshiri of Metropolitan Washington DC on top of a float for Persian Poet Rumi in Persian Parade, NY, 2008)

(Photo courtesy Dariush Jamasb)

IS THE MESSAGE OF RUMI RELEVANT TODAY?

Dr. Homi Dhalla

Introduction

The Afghans claim that Rumi belonged to them as he was born in present day Afghanistan and the Turkish say that Rumi was theirs, because he died in present day Turkey: but Rumi belonged to all humanity. He was not only a poet but a philosopher and a spiritual guide whose works reveal mystic passion, illumination and revelation. Rumi is not only the shining face of Islam but also an icon of humanity. He passionately believed in the use of music, poetry and dancing as paths to reach God. His poetry and anecdotes are woven together to create a tapestry of his principal teachings.

But the pertinent question one asks is, whether he is relevant today to the current efforts for global peace and amity? Does he have a message for this fractured world? To answer this question, I have selected two short poems dealing with issues, which seriously affect mankind today.

One of his poems entitled "Someone who goes with half a loaf of bread" is very apt today. In this context, a UN Food Agency Report released in February 2008 states that 18,000 children die every day because of hunger and malnutrition, and 850 million go to bed hungry every night. As against this, the world spends \$ 1.1 trillion on arms – the US itself has spent \$ 500 billion on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Is this not a terrible indictment of humanity and our political leadership?

Martin Luther King Junior in 1963 said *"Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided men"*.

The second poem, which appears on the invitation card, is very moving. It says:

"Come, come again, whoever you are, come!

Heathen, fire worshipper or idolatrous, come!

Come even if you broke your penitence a hundred times,

Ours is the portal of hope, come as you are."

This is an open invitation to all for dialogue, friendship and unity. But unfortunately, what do we see around us? Across the globe walls are dividing neighbors for various reasons.

The wall that snakes through **Jerusalem** is to seal off the eastern part of the ancient city from the **West Bank**. **Iran** is building a bulwark with **Pakistan**, **Botswana** has constructed a 48-km. electric fence on the boundary with **Zimbabwe**, **Saudi Arabia** is spending large amounts on a boundary with **Yemen** in the south and from **Iraq** to the north. The **US** is building a fence along its border with **Mexico** and **India** is constructing a fence with **Bangladesh**. It is unfortunate, that when we are trying to bring people together through dialogue in order to foster understanding, trust and love, some countries are building walls to divide them. Danny Seidemann, an Israeli lawyer has said that walls are more than just concrete and barbed wire. They are corrosive symbols of social and economic rifts and iniquities, divisions that eventually must be healed, not merely bottled up.

Rumi expounded music and dance as tools of meditation. This form of group prayer leads to the formation of a spiritual congregation, which ushers harmony and positive energy. Because there is something in music, which transcends and unites, it is used by many musicians today to convey this to the masses

. Finally, because the message of Rumi is relevant to this day it is important for us to keep his memory alive.

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

O my Parsi brothers! Your prophet is not dead. He has not perished. He is watching over the religion that he founded, ever seeking to raise it from its present degradation, to give it back its lost knowledge, its lost power. What nobler work for the Zoroastrian of today than to permeate his brethren with the ancient fire, to relight its blaze on the spiritual altar of their hearts? What nobler work than to study his own scriptures, and to go forth and teach the ancient learning with the authority and power that can only be wielded, by men of the same faith with those he addresses. The fire is not dead; is only smoldering on its ancient altars; white hot are its ashes, ready to burst into flame. And I dream of a day when the breath of the great prophet Zarathushtra shall sweep again through the temples, fanning the ashes on the altars of those ancient fires, and every altar shall flash into fire, and again from heaven the answering flames shall fall, making the Iranian religion once more what it ought to be, a beacon of light for the souls of men, one of the greatest religions of the world.

Speech by Mrs Annie Beasant (1906)

Source: **Khordesh Avesta**

Prayers in Roman Script and translation in English

by T.R. Sethna (1975), MA'ARef Printers, Karachi, Pakistan



PROMOTING DIALOGUE TO DEEPEN UNDERSTANDING

Member associations and small groups of FEZANA are requested to consider promoting inter-religious dialogue to deepen understanding. Screening of a short film provides an effective way to an interactive discussion.

THREE SUGGESTIONS:

[a] *The Refuge*: www.refugefilm.com

Directed by John Halpern (phone: 917.991.9279)

The Refuge, is about the changing religious landscape of North America on account of what has gone on in Tibet for the last few decades. In an interesting insight, The Dalai Lama cautions against proselytisation.

[b] *The Big Question*: www.bigquestionthemovie.com

Directed by Frank Desiderio (phone: 310.454.0688)

The issue is one of forgiveness. Can we forgive others ?
Can we forgive ourselves ?

Frank Desiderio himself can lead a wonderful dialogue. In fact he is in the process of mounting dialogues & film screenings for the remainder of 2008 in different cities in North America.

[c] *The Power of Forgiveness*: from film-maker, Martin Doblemeier.

Stories with Thich Nhat Hanh, Elie Weisel and from the Amish, Ground Zero, Belfast and Beirut.

Funding provided by *The John Templeton Foundation*, and by Fetzer Institute as part of its *Campaign for Love and Forgiveness*. Tour stops throughout North America for these dialogues had been posted on www.fezana.org in 2007. The film has been broadcast on PBS stations in the spring of 2008.

Check the FEZANA web-site www.fezana.org which serves as an archive and for ongoing opportunities to participate.

"Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world - indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

— Margaret Mead



EVOLUTION AND PRACTICE OF ZOROASTRIANISM DURING THE PARTHIAN DYNASTY

CAWAS DESAI

Excerpt of a Paper presented at
The NAMC Seminar on May 19, 2007

HELLENISTIC STATES AFTER ALEXANDER

After the death of Alexander the Accursed, in 323 BCE, there was a falling out among his generals. Ultimately, the conflict was settled at the Battle of Ipsus in Phrygia in 301 BC. Alexander's empire was first divided into five major portions: Cassander ruled in Macedon, Lysimachus in Thrace, Seleucus in Mesopotamia and Persia, and Ptolemy in the Levant and Egypt. Antigonos, who ruled for a while in Anatolia and Syria, was eventually defeated by the other four generals at Ipsus. Control over Indian territory passed to Chandragupta Maurya. By 270 BCE, the Hellenistic states were consolidated, with:

- The Antigonid Empire in Macedonia and Greece;
- The Seleucid Empire in Mesopotamia and Persia; and
- The Ptolemaic Kingdom in Egypt, Palestine and Cyrenaica .

The Greek Interregnum of Iran lasted for some 60 years. The Seleucid Empire itself lasted from 323 BCE to 64 BCE. However, the Seleucids lost control of northern Iran to the "Parni", a nomadic Zoroastrian group which had settled in the satrapy of Parthia in 247 BCE, when Arsaces I revolted against the Seleucids and established the Arsacid (or Parthian) Dynasty, which ruled over Iran for 455 years till it in turn succumbed to the Sassanians in 208 CE.

The religion of the Seleucids shows definite influences of Zoroastrianism. Even after the ascent of the Arsacids in Iran, we see Zoroastrian influences in Eastern Turkey. At Nimrud Dagh, the Seleucid king, Mithradates Callinicus and his son, Antiochus of Commagene proclaimed their descent from the great Darius in a series of colossal ancestor statues and inscriptions. In one relief, Zeus is identified with a Semitic Bel and an Iranian "Religion of the Mazdayasnians", perhaps an euphemism for Ahura Mazda . There are also statues and inscriptions dedicated to "Mithras Apollo" at Nimrud and "Anahita-Nanai" in Armenia.

THE PARTHIAN DYNASTY: Although the Parthian Dynasty lasted far longer than the Achaemenian one,

history seems to have passed it by, probably due to the fact that there are very few written records by the Parthians themselves. According to Richard Frye, "In Mesopotamia Semitic languages were in use, and as we know from the documents of Nisa and Avroman, Parthian was written heterographically with Aramaic words as well as letters. From this awkward way of writing one would not expect an extensive written literature in Parthian, but there was a flourishing oral literature at the courts of nobles and rulers in Parthian times. There is evidence that the Parthians gave the Iranian national epic the basic form in which the Sassanians recorded it and passed it on to Firdausi. Parthian poet-musicians not only created many of the heroic-feudal characteristics of the epic, but they probably preserved the old legends of the Kavis of eastern Iran, the Kayanians of the epic who were the ancestors of Vishtaspa, the patron of Zoroaster" . It is only now, with new research, that this dynasty is being given the recognition it so richly deserves.

EXPANSION UNDER THE PARTHIANS: After the decline of the Seleucids, a reaction began to set in against the penetration of Hellenism. Various powers began to emerge on the world stage, the Iranians and the Kushans in the east, and in the west, Carthage and Rome. These powers were on the fringes of the Hellenistic world and were, to a great extent, affected by Hellenism. The last century BCE and the first century CE witnessed the greatest expansion of the Iranian world since the Achaemenians. Under the Parthian kings, Iranians again advanced to the frontiers of Egypt, the Kushans occupied the whole of North India, Russian Turkistan and part of Chinese Turkistan, the Iranian-Sarmatians, who swarmed over the Eurasian Steppes, became masters of a great part of the northern shore of the Black Sea, reached the shores of the Danube and spread into Central Asia. The Iranians took their revenge on the Macedonians by attacking their two eastern outposts. The Greco-Bactrian kingdom disappeared under the onslaught of the later Kushans, and the Greek settlements on the Black Sea coast were over-run by the Sarmatians. Iran maintained its pressure against the Romans when the latter appeared in Asia. The wars of the Seleucid Emperor, Mithradates of Pontus represent the resistance of the easterners under Iranian leadership against western expansionism . In the titanic duel between Iran and Rome, Iran under the Parthian emperors emerged victorious over the Romans. At the Battle of Carrhae in 53 BCE, the Parthian forces, particularly the mounted bowmen, dealt the Romans, under Crassus, a stunning defeat.



North American Mobeds' Council

IRANIAN RENAISSANCE AND THE RELIGION OF ZARATHUSHTRA UNDER THE PARTHIANS:

The first signs of a new Iranian renaissance appeared under Vologeses I (Valaksh I, CE 51 to 80), whose coinage depicted a fire altar with a sacrificing priest on the reverse. For the first time, Iranian money bore letters in the Pahlavi alphabet.

According to later tradition, the text of the scattered Avesta began to be gathered and compiled in his reign.

Tradition also holds that the contents of the Dinkart began to be gathered and assembled during the same period, although it was finally written centuries later.



It seems that under the Parthians, the religion of Zarathushtra, which was the official state religion under the Median and Achaemenian dynasties, continued to retain its hold on the populace and was the "semi-official" religion under their rule. Certainly, four of the Arsacid kings used the prefix "Mithra" in their names. As with the Achaemenians, the Parthians worshipped Anahita and Mithra. Anahita, enjoyed great popularity beyond the western frontiers of Iran, with her cult spreading to Lydia (where she was called "the Lady of Bactria"), and further west to Pontus, Cappadocia and Armenia. (photo pg 103 Anahita temple) But Mithra, proved even more popular than Anahita. The prisoners captured by Pompey took the cult to Rome, from where it was carried by the Roman armies as far as the Rhine and the Danube and on to Brittany and then to Great Britain.

RISE OF ZURVANISM AND OTHER RELIGIOUS SECTS:

The earliest references to Zurvanism, (the Zoroastrian heresy which gained full ascendancy under the Sassanids), can be traced to its beginnings during the Parthian dynasty. Eudemus of Rhodes, a disciple of Aristotle and the Magi wrote, "call the whole intelligible and unitary universe either Space or Time from which a good god and an evil demon were separated out or, according to others, light and darkness before these. Both parties, however, suppose that this dual constitution of the higher powers is subsequent to and differentiated out of an undifferentiated being. One of these higher powers is ruled by Ohrmazd, the other by Ahriman".

History records that during the five centuries of Parthian rule there were a variety of religious sects and practices concerning the worship of several deities with Graeco-Iranian features and nomenclature, most famous being Verethragna-Heracles, Tir-Apollo, and Anahita- Athena . The early

Parthians followed a policy of tolerance toward all sects and creeds, including Paganism, Judaism and Christianity, and the religious customs of their citizens. This policy of religious tolerance eventually pitted the Zoroastrian



clergy against the growing power of a proselytizing

Byzantine Christian Church, which culminated in the eventual loss of Armenia, a loss which would play a leading part in the weakening of the Iranian Empire under the Sassanids, contributing to its overthrow by the Islamic Arabs. Gradually however, in the first two centuries CE, there is a noticeable change on the part of the Parthian monarchy in favoring the Zoroastrian religion. In any event, long before the Parthian Dynasty gave way to the Sassanians, in fact, at the time of the birth of Christ, Zoroastrianism, in one form or another, was the most prevalent religion in the then known world.

INFLUENCE OF ZOROASTRIANISM ON CHRISTIANITY:

As Lawrence Mills affirms, "the now undoubted and long since suspected fact that it pleased the divine power to reveal some of the most important articles of our Catholic creed first to the Zoroastrians, and through their literature to the Jews and ourselves". John Hinnels further amplifies, "In the decades immediately prior to the birth of Jesus, Zoroastrianism was not a distant or shadowy presence, but the world's most powerful religion. The Christian belief in the devil, heaven, hell, the end of the world, the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment, are not just reminiscent of Zoroastrian beliefs, they have been taken directly from Zoroastrian scriptures".

It is an accepted fact that the religion of Zarathushtra has had a profound impact and influence on every other major religion. Starting with the Cult of Fire and ending with individual accountability leading to the judgment of the soul and the after-life, Zoroastrianism influenced Judaism, Christianity and



Ervad Cawas Desai is an Akabar of the Navsari Bhagarsath Anjuman and a student of the Religion and it's History.



Islam. Hinnels, in his treatise on Zoroastrianism, says Hinduism and Buddhism it is said to have given the belief of a savior to come. But it is Judaism, Christianity and Islam which owe the most to Zoroastrianism. Beliefs in a devil, heaven, hell, the end of the world, the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment, all these are thought to have developed in Jewish, Christian and Muslim thought as a result of Zoroastrian influence. Perhaps no other religion has influenced so many people in so many continents over so many centuries". **Had Constantine not opted to convert to Christianity on his death bed in 337 CE, Zoroastrianism would not be the forgotten religion that it is today.**

- 1 Encyclopedia Wikipedia.
- 2 Rostovtzeff, "Social and Economic History" quoted by Richard Frye in "Heritage of Persia".
- 3 Mary Boyce "Some Remarks on the Transmission of the Kayanian Heroic Cycle", quoted by Richard Frye, "The Heritage of Persia".
- 4 Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Article edited by Shapour Suren-Pahlav.
- 5 R.C. Zaehner, "The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism".
- 6 Duchesne-Guillemin, "Zoroastrian Religion".
- 7 L.H. Mills, "Zoroaster and the Bible".
- 8 Hinnels, "Zoroastrianism and the Parsis".
- 9 Hinnels, "Zoroastrianism and the Parsis".

A Rejuvenated Cama Athornan Institute Invites Students



It was in 1923 that the eminent philanthropist, the late Seth Merwanji Cama laid the foundation of the Muncherji Framji Cama Athornan Institute. His vision was to sow the seeds of religious knowledge and fervor in the minds and hearts of young priests so that they may become torchbearers to the community. It is to the credit of this Institute that several learned Dasturs and scholars have passed through its portals and later guided the community.

Today, a small group of dedicated and dynamic persons belonging to the Ex-Students Association have offered their services to rejuvenate this Institute. The Refresher Course, which has been organized by them with great success for the last five years, is a clear testimony of their deep fervor.

At this Institute, each child will be trained to be a full-fledged Yozdathregar priest, which will qualify him to perform all the liturgical ceremonies. Moreover, he will also be given secular education from the



North American Mobeds' Council



Government recognized A. H. Wadia High School of Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan from grade I – SSC, completely free of charge. This secular education will lay the foundation for an educated clergy, which will enable them to provide leadership to the community in the religious domain. This will be a stepping-stone to higher education and also qualify him to take advantage of the various amelioration schemes for priests. Besides this, the Institute will provide free boarding and lodging, sports training, free books, vocational guidance etc. This would provide holistic development of the student, which will broaden his horizon.

Admissions to the Institute will be offered in three categories, which are briefly mentioned below:

CATEGORY-I:

Athornan boys from Grade I onwards will receive complete Mobedi training (Sampurna Navar, Martab) along with academic education up to SSC.

CATEGORY-II:

An Athornan boy who is a Kacha Navar will also be trained so that he is qualified to be a full-fledged Yozdathregar priest (Sampurna Navar Martab). This will make him fully conversant with all Zarathushti rites and rituals. In this category, age of the student shall be determined on an individual basis.

CATEGORY-III: HELPER PRIESTS

Any Behdin could benefit by this course of study, which would enable him to perform prescribed outer liturgical ceremonies in absence of an Athornan priest. A helper priest would serve the community, especially in locations where there is a scarcity of qualified Athornan priests.

A Working Committee comprising of two Trustees of the Institute, some members of the Ex-Students Association together with a High Priest of the community will supervise the overall administration.

This is an urgent appeal to all Athornans to encourage their sons to join the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute. It will give them an opportunity not only to chart a new life but also to carry forward our precious religious legacy. The priestly class has been in the vanguard for centuries preserving our culture, tradition and literature. May your sons continue to perform this onerous task for posterity.

For details regarding admission to the Institute, please contact: Ervad Mahiar Panthaki-9821049251 or Ervad Hormazdyar Govadia-9969014126.

Dr. Homi Dhalla

ADDENDUM

The alumni of the Institute form the bedrock of priests on this Continent, to name a few: among them are Ervads Kersey Antia, Kersey Bhedwar, Noshir Karanjia, Parvez Patel, Adi Unwalla, Peshotan Unwalla, Behram Panthaki, Dara Sinor, Kobad Jamshed (Andhyarujina), Tehmtan Mirza, Jimmy Panthaky, and Soli Dastur

This institute has produced three Dasturs: Dastur Navroze Minocher Homji, Dastur Feroze Kotwal, and Dastur Peshotan Hormazdyar Mirza. Dastur Minocher Homji and Ervad Manecksha K Panthaki, the father of Ervad Behram and Ervad Gustad Panthaki were the first batch of 36 students enrolled in the institute in 1923 and Ervad Manecksha was the first Navar from this Institute on 2/11/1928.

In addition there were two Mobeds from Iran, Dastur Firooz Azargoshasp and Dastur Rostam Shahzadi, who also received their training at the Cama Athornan Madressa, They were sponsored by the Yazd Anjoman e Moobedan and the Bombay Irani Anjuman, under the leadership of the late Dinshaw Irani.

Dolly Dastoor



**REFUSED ADMISSION AT THE CAMA
ATHORNAN INSTITUTE AS HE DID NOT
SPEAK GUJARATI**

Mobed Firouzgary 's father who was a mobed at the Flora Fountain Dadiseth Agiary in Mumbai wanted his son to be admitted to the Andheri Cama Madrassa so as to make him a well known mobed (though his mother wanted him to be a doctor). His father had spoken to the principal of the madressa about Mehraban, and had received encouraging promises for admission.

When he went with his father to the Cama Institute in June 1948 he was refused admission as he did not speak Gujarati and he was 12 years old. His father's pleas were of no avail. His father, who was a very religious minded person, was disappointed and frustrated, with his hopes crushed and left saying "Maro dikro Hammal taye pan Mobed nahi tava devas" From Andheri they went to Cafe Mondegar, near Regal Cinema, to have lunch. His father spoke to the owner, whom he knew, if they would employ Mehraban. He started working the next morning. After 18 months of working at Café Mondegar , he joined the Boy's Town Parsi School, Nasik

At home he learnt enough Avesta to be initiated as Ervad. "By then, I was over the age of 14 and no one in India would consider committing the sin of initiating a Mobed who had entered his puberty". Mehraban waited till 1957,

when he had passed his SSC and First Year Science and during his university vacation he returned to Iran, to undergo a hurried Navar Ceremony. One month of his vacation was spent in travel (15 days on board a cargo ship to Iran and another 15 days by road/train back). But he was determined to get his Navar ceremony done.

Mobed Firouzgary followed his academic studies until he graduated from the St. Xavier's Technical Institute with a "Degree in Radio and Electronics Engineering", joined J. N Marshall & Co (A Parsee firm) etc. , "but hardly did any religious ceremonies - until I returned to Iran in 1970."

" I have no grudges against the Principal of the Madrassa, as a person, who was following rules, nor against the then leading Mobeds who refused to approve of my being initiated into Navar, inspite of my father's pleadings. If, however, my hardships and dreams shattering will "drive in the nail" that, now a days, we have no choice but to "catch them at any age" as we have been doing in Iran - not simply for Navar but even for Navjotes - I will be very happy that my experience has helped.

Today Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary is a respected mobed of Iran.



North American Mobeds' Council

A Grateful Graduate Reminisces The Wonderful MFCAI!

Ervad Soli Dastur



Standing at the open door of the slowly moving B.B.&C.I.R. train from Ahmedabad to Bombay, a distinguished Mobed in flowing beard beckoned a Cooley to carry an old metal trunk and alighted on the Andheri station platform with his tender age son. The three slowly walked up the hill across the street to that magnificent architectural Boarding School building. The mango trees on the vast grounds were heavy with the fruits. The Mobed was ushered in the Acting Principal Faramroze P. Patel's office. After exchanging greetings, the son's name was duly registered with his entire details of birth date, grandfather's name, the Mobed "Panth" (family) etc. in Patel Saheb's one and only complete School register as the 70th student in the School and 288th from the beginning! Then he strikes the metal plunger bell and orders Keshoo (sepoy) to bring the first standard teacher.

A Gujarati gentleman, in his Dhوتي with a wonderful smile, the most respected, loving, wise, the one and only teacher Kantilal M. Upadhyay appeared and escorted the young recruit to the last class room, informing on the way that he has taught all his 4 brothers before him and they were very good students! We entered the class room with all the students standing up for the teacher and Kantilal Saheb introduces me as Soli Pirojshah Kawasji Dastur from Tarapur and requests me to occupy the only empty desk left! After a few minutes, Kantilal Saheb had to leave the room and he brings his "Dhoko" (club) to me and says: "Sorabji! You are the monitor of this class and take care of it in my absence!" Thus started my initiation to this magnificent Boarding School, The Muncherji Framji Cama Athornan Institute (MFCAI)! The fateful day was June 20th 1945 that started the most formative 9 years of my life until I passed the S.S.C. (High School) exam in March 1954! And all that I am today is due to the wonderful training we all had in this Institute, under the tutelage of those unbelievably dedicated Saheb teachers like Kantilal, Kaikhushroo S. Daruwalla, Rustomji S. Sanjana, Mobed Tehmuras P. Sidhwa, Faramroze P. Patel, Dr. Peshotan K. Anklesaria, Rana, Khambata, and many others! And as a monitor of this unusual class, I was fortunate to have as my class mates, nay as my brothers, Ervads Dr. Kersey Antia, Dastoorji Feroze (Faramroze) Kotwal, Noshir Bharucha, Late Gustad Andhyarujina, and many others!



Alas, gone are the glory days of this Institute with 70+ students and 12+ teachers with teeming activities around the clock from the peel of 100 bells at 5:20 AM to "Khudaavind Khaavind Parvardegaar" Monajat at 9:00 PM before going to sleep!

The school has meant to all of us a steady influence throughout our lives, in thick and thin, and we owe everything that all of us have accomplished to that great philanthropist and far-sighted Parsi Zarathushti, late Meherwanji Mancherji Cama who built this Boarding School for the uplifting of the Athornan families! Many of us school graduates still remember late Meherwanji and his father Mancherji in all our Afringan Deebache even up to this day, a tribute of our gratitude to them!

Now the MFCAI Ex-Students are trying to revive this Institute and they deserve all the help from our community worldwide! We wish them all success, and help! And finally, I leave you all with that haunting echo in my ears of the last lines of our nightly "Khudaavind Khaavind Parvardegaar" Monajat:

"Maneh Paasbaani maa taari suwaad, Bhalaa kaamo karvaa savaareh uthaad!"

(Let me sleep under your watchful eye, and wake me up in the morning to do good deeds again)!"

Dear Ms. Dolly Dastoor,

NEED CONTACT INFORMATION

You will be pleased to know that the book **"With Cyclists Round the World"**

is in the process of being reprinted and should hit the stands real soon. This book will once again prove to the world in general, and to us Parsis in particular that we have always been pioneers in every field. The three Parsi boys of Mumbai late Jal Bapasola, late Rustom Bhungara, and late Adi Hakim who ventured on an adventure-trip round the world on cycles between the years 1923 to 1928, its their story, a diary would be more apt, was written and published by Adi Hakim, and this very book (slightly modified) will now be available in its new Avatar.

Here is where I need the help of FEZANA. We are keen that any of the relatives of Bapasola and Bhungara (and also of the other three who did not complete the world tour!) should contact us and we would appraise them of this development. So through the good offices of your wonderful Journal could I request anyone related to them to contact us on the address below.

Mrs Roda Dara Hakim, 23,Nirant, Cosmic Enclave, Sama Road, Baroda 8.

Telephone: 2792374 or contact us on our email address vadhakim@yahoo.com .

I shall give you all the details about the relaunch of the book. Until then we would appreciate if you would publish this letter in the FEZANA JOURNAL. Thanking you in anticipation, and here is wishing you all the very best always.

Sincerely, *Mrs Roda D Hakim*

ON RELIGION AND MEDICINE

Via E-mail:
dollydastoor@sympatico.com

It appears the authors, FEZANA JOURNAL, Volume 22, March 2008, feel that profound faith in god and religion assists healing. And I ask what happens measurably when one supplements clinical therapy with divine intervention through religious experiences, believes benefit, but gains none? Since data from faith-based experiences are unreliable, and results discussed only with an initial demand of unquestionable belief, one is left without verifiable information.

Visualization methods, on the other hand, as taught in biorhythm training, neurolinguistic programming (NLP), or cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) with or without belief in god or religion show measurable results, and they can be observed with: nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR), neural conduction, sphygmomanometer (blood pressure meter), blood flow behavior (called blood rheology),

and other tests. The internet, psychiatry, clinical psychology, and physiology literature contain weathered information on mind, body medicine.

While testimonies on faith-based healing gain political support from limited constituencies, they leave representation of reality in accounts untested.

I speak only for myself: Since about age 10, I gave up on religion to help me with my illnesses. I did not know then that I was born immune deficient (IgG-3, IgM). Faith and prayer verbiage from any religion didn't (doesn't) help. Since god is a social invention not objectively verifiable (like say Pythagoras's right triangle identity), my interest in faiths and religions is academic (from social psychology and negotiations perspectives).

As we know, when one believes in god(s), objective verification of assertions is irrelevant regardless of reality and timeliness of benefit (even imagined benefit).

I support the rights of all to pursue, accept, and modify any

system from Atheism to Zoroastrianism to gain relief from suffering in real human life time. I caution against untested fervent accounts regardless the authority sources. Such behavior:

- Misleads and replaces measurable truth with zealous arrogance;
- Betrays and deprives the aggrieved from receiving timely therapy; and
- Provides the ill with empty flowery words seeking cures from an inaccessible divinity, or worse, relief in the hereafter.

So very respectfully, please, let's be kind, authentic, informed, timely, and accountable when proposing and receiving therapies.

Best wishes,

Navzer (Nozar) Sachinvala,
Ph.D., MBA
Retired USDA-ARS
Harvey, Louisiana

YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....

INTERVIEW WITH THE FEZANA PARTICIPANTS AT CSW, NEW YORK, MARCH 2008

AFREED MISTRY

INTERVIEW WITH FARAH MINWALLA

Question 1: AFTER VOICING YOUR OPINIONS ON THE TOPIC OF FINANCING OF GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AT THE UN ON BEHALF OF FEZANA WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING WOMEN TO DATE ?

The biggest challenge facing women today is the violence against them and the harmful traditional practices still being practiced in developing countries. 70% of the poorest of the poor in the World are women. They do not have equal access to education, health care and employment. It is normal practice to have girls do household chores instead of getting an education. Women are looked at as the weaker gender and hence not given employment opportunities. The women have no rights to own land. In cases where the husband passes away the wife is denied their inheritance. Proper sanitation for women has been a big issue and has received little attention in development terms. Gender equality and empowerment of women can only come about once abuse, early and forced marriages, rape and lack of equal access to education, health care and employment are eliminated.

Question 2: IN TERMS OF EMPOWERING WOMEN AND CREATING GENDER EQUALITY WHAT HAS BEEN THE MAIN PREVENTION OF SUCH POSITIVE ACTION HAPPENING FOR BOTH PARTIES?

The main prevention of being able to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women has been lack of money and education. Unfortunately, since this group of people are the poorest in the World, they are frustrated due to lack of money and resources and it leads to violence. We need to educate the men and women in these areas from childhood. The men need to accept women as equals and give them their rights. The women need to be educated to ask for their rights. Starting their education early in life will help instill some values in both genders.

Change is difficult and not well accepted but, the people's mind-set and their practices have to change. We have been able to prove that through education and microfinancing,, women have been successful and empowered. It is the women who are strong-willed and are able to feed and shelter their family and that is why microfinancing programs have been so successful. If given the opportunity, women commit themselves fully to achieving their goals and providing for their family.

The first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru once said, *"In order to awaken the people it is the woman who has to be awakened. Once she is on the move, the household moves, the village moves, the country moves and thus we build the India of tomorrow."*

Question 3: WHAT ARE THE WAYS PEOPLE CAN GET INVOLVED WITH THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY?

People can get involved in helping women achieve equality and empowerment by signing up with an NGO in their area or participate in the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meeting next year to get themselves acquainted with the numerous NGOs and their work in these developing countries. If we want a better World for these women then we should follow Mahatma Gandhi's motto, ***"Be the change you want to see in the world."***

For more information visit: <http://www.un.org>
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw>

Afreed Mistry is the owner and President of AIT Services Inc. and works for CIBC Mellon Bank of New York in Toronto, Canada. She has been a member of the FEZANA UN-NGO Committee for the past 4 years. This was her third Commission on the Status of Women meeting and presentation in New York. She was the Co-Chair of the neXus 2003 North American Congress in Toronto which had the largest attendance. Afreed was recently awarded the Shehnaz Munshi Award for Outstanding Religion Teacher by the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario.



YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....

INTERVIEW WITH THE FEZANA PARTICIPANTS AT CSW, NEW YORK, MARCH 2008

Mantreh Atashband

INTERVIEW WITH FARAH MINWALLA

Question 1: AFTER VOICING YOUR OPINIONS ON THE TOPIC OF FINANCING OF GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AT THE UN ON BEHALF OF FEZANA WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING WOMEN TO DATE?

In my opinion, the biggest challenge facing women to date is Gender Equity. Around the world, women are systematically denied equality and equity. Women are still not included in high level decision making processes that affect them and their families directly. Large scale decisions are still made by men, and women are expected to implement these strategies and initiatives in their communities without having been at the table from the start of the process. Effective involvement of diverse women is essential at all levels of society.

Question 2: IN TERMS OF EMPOWERING WOMEN AND CREATING GENDER EQUALITY WHAT HAS BEEN THE MAIN PREVENTION OF SUCH POSITIVE ACTION HAPPENING FOR BOTH PARTIES?

Lack of government support seems to be the leading obstacle to ensuring womens empowerment and gender equality. Local governments still do not see women's issues as topics to put on an agenda. We know for a fact that empowering women and girls, means empowering society as a whole. So, why aren't local governments participating as much as needed? NGO's, grassroots organizations and private sectors need the local governments support to ensure effective and innovative techniques and solutions.

Question 3: WHAT ARE THE WAYS IN WHICH PEOPLE CAN GET INVOLVED WITH THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY?

Speak up! Get your voices heard! The biggest danger to women and girls these days is silence...it is silence that has killed so many. There needs to be solidarity at every level of society, from the government to grassroots organizations. Organize small scale/large scale community events to discuss issues around gender equality and equity. Communities need to mobilize in order to build a capacity for change at high levels. Local governments need to be held accountable for their actions. Men and boys need to get involved in all levels of empowerment. Gender equality is not a fight fought only by women!

Quote from Ban Ki-moon (UN Secretary General) in launching the campaign:
"UNITE-TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN":

"I call on men around the world to lead by example: to make clear that violence against women is an act perpetrated by a coward, and that speaking up against it is badge of honor."

Mantreh Atashband has been involved in the HIV & AIDS movement for over a decade; advocating for people living with HIV (especially women and girls) locally, nationally and internationally. She is also part of the Executive Board of Directors for a local Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre, where she works toward the eradication of sexual violence against women and girls.



YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....

INTERVIEW WITH THE FEZANA PARTICIPANTS AT CSW, NEW YORK, MARCH 2008

SHEKUFEH ZONJI

Question 1: AFTER VOICING YOUR OPINION ON THE TOPIC OF FINANCING OF GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AT THE UN ON BEHALF OF FEZANA WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING WOMEN TO DATE?

Given the many challenges that confront women today, an over-arching challenge, I would say, would be the disempowering perception their communities have of them. A woman is (too) often told what she is and is not capable of doing simply because of her gender. The more horrifying aspect, however, is when a woman internalizes the limits her surrounding places on her, mistaking it for reality – her reality.

Question 2: IN TERMS OF EMPOWERING WOMEN AND CREATING GENDER EQUALITY WHAT HAS BEEN THE MAIN PREVENTION OF SUCH POSITIVE ACTION HAPPENING FOR BOTH PARTIES?

Inertia. Social structures persist as long as they do, because change is inconvenient. However, this is not to say that we have not made progress towards creating more empowering environments for women. Changing

INTERVIEW WITH FARAH MINWALLA

deeply ingrained social perceptions is a slow and arduous process that requires consistent effort by each individual to make more gender-empowering daily decisions like understanding the connotations of words such as “bitch” and replacing them with more empowering words.

Question 3: WHAT ARE THE WAYS IN WHICH PEOPLE CAN GET INVOLVED WITH THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY WITH THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY?

You do not have to make grand gestures by flying off to an impoverished community (although if this is what impassions you – then go for it!) and work on women's right issues, to become engaged in the empowerment of women and gender equality. Educating yourself about the issues is a good start. However, passive knowing is not very useful so becoming aware of your own gender biases by observing the language you use and the way you interact with others and then working consciously to change them is one way in which you can contribute towards gender equality.

Shekufeh Zonji is currently completing an Honours Biology & Psychology degree at McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada. She spent 11 months from September 2006 to August 2007 working for the NGO “Walking Together for Health and Development” in the village of Tlmacazapa, Mexico. Without speaking a word of Spanish upon arrival, she quickly adapted to the complex environment of the organization and the community. She took on responsibilities like managing an income generation project for local women, conducting interviews with post-natal women, attending births with midwives, writing grant proposals and completing a literature review on a widespread bacterial infection in the village. Since her return, she has been involved with the on-campus OPIRG group, Walking with Tlama, doing fundraising and advocacy work on behalf of the NGO. She recently spoke on behalf of the organization during the 52nd Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations headquarters in New York City. She hopes to return to Mexico this fall to continue her work with the organization.



YOUTH CONGRESS – BACK TO THE FUTURE

I am surprised that Zarathushtis from abroad took the trouble to find and marry within the fold says
Mehernaaz Sam Wadia

Back to the future... this oxymoron was the tag line, the usp for the 4th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress at Ballarat this Australian summer. I was there. And I went back to the future.

The congress started shy and cautious; a wonderfully successful divergence from the last day when we all said goodbye. The organizers and the poor volunteers did a superb job. The University of Ballarat was beautiful in all aspects. The events planned seemed fun and most of

those that happened, were. Since a bunch of 300 semi-lazy, unsupervised 15-25 year olds in full holiday mind-set were necessary for the success of the events planned, there were bound to be delays, glitches and cancellations. A lot of the guys rued the cancelled Zoro Olympics, but the football at the beach compensated beautifully.

The religious aspect was enlightening. We had powerhouses of knowledge to teach, guide and answer

YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....

our quirky 21st century questions. I have never been in the presence of a true scholar; James Russell blew us all away. A scholar and professor of Armenian Studies at the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University and an encyclopedia on Zoroastrianism. Indescribable! Dr Russell along with Khojeste Mistree and Dasturji Ramiyar Karanjia, a most pleasant man who took in out and around the whole spectrum of Zoroastrianism. I learnt things I didn't know existed. And like fathers they told us, explained and reasoned with our unreasonableness. And oh, we were insatiable. The interactive sessions, impromptu or planned were packed and devoid of dull moments.

The congress opened my eyes. To more than I realised. I saw my religion living, breathing, struggling, thriving like I never imagined. As a Parsi in Mumbai, I live in a cocoon. I never did Zoroastrian studies or religious things. But it is not just me who's disconnected from the community and the religion. Mumbai is the unofficial Parsi capital of the world. Everyone has been or has someone from Mumbai (so the humor and customs are spot on familiar!). But the concentration itself seems to be our downfall. We take the religion and the Zarathushti way of life for granted! We have agiaries, baugs and say our Ava Yazad prayers at Marine Drive. But we also have elders giving up on some of us, my peers aspiring for the western life, shunning and even worse, being embarrassed about the religion. We're surprised at mixed marriages and some of us even justify them. I don't speak for the whole community though. There are many here whose zeal and commitment is exemplary. The people I talk of are only a small slice of the pie who are Zarathushtis in Mumbai. So when at the congress I met Zarathushtis from abroad, married, I was amazed; that they took the trouble to find and marry within the fold in spite of the multi cultural influence they surely have faced. They took the extra step, endeavored and succeeded in upholding, enhancing and living their cultural identity.

I saw teenagers who probably had never seen Mumbai, in their sadra and abuse like only Zarathushtis can; boys from all over the world acting like the complete jungli and legendary baug boys. I cracked Parsi jokes that Sydneysiders laughed at. And I



conversed in Gujarati with everyone. I saw the familiar in the unfamiliar. We all had one identity and one hope for all our collective futures. We were all proud and even arrogant about our heritage and were repeatedly told that we had the most glorious heritage to back us up as we forge ahead into the future. We all had that inherent common thread of identity. I saw among peers from everywhere the same zeal, hope and commitment to the religion and culture that I feel I possess. I saw stunning potential. Young boys and girls capable to be exceptional world citizens like our celebrated fore-fathers. We have what it takes, and we will take ourselves into the future riding on the past. My determination for a great future for me and my kind has grown stronger and my faith has been reaffirmed. I went back to the future in those 7 days at Ballarat and understood what the organizers tried to get across.

I'm glad I went. It is said that a mind that is stretched with new experience can never go back to its old dimensions. I believe that more so now.

Mehernaaz Sam Wadia

*(mnaaz.wadia@gmail.com)
lives and practices as a lawyer
in Mumbai, India. She writes
about Parsi affairs on her blog
parsikhabar.net and is an
active Girl Guide Captain in
her spare time.*



Farah Minwalla, a freshman in New York City, is pursuing a degree in Journalism and Archeology. She hopes to emphasize faith and community service throughout her articles. She is a regular columnist for the Youthfully speaking section and comments can be sent to PMinwalla@cox.net

Farah is the editor of the Youthfully Speaking section

Youth Education Program



Our Dream Is Large...Our Faith Is Strong...Our Hope Is In You...

We are... a group of young dynamic individuals who are working toward a common goal of strengthening our Parsi / Irani / Zarthushti foundation through inspiring our youth, uplifting our priests, and sustaining our places of worship. We work and we volunteer for Parsi Resource Group (PRG). Founded on 27 December 2005, it is a registered charitable trust under the Bombay Public Trusts Act 1950 (Registration No SDO 1/833/2006).

We believe... education is the key to allowing our community to stay strong and keep pace with today's ever changing world. We know that not every Parsi / Irani / Zarthushti child in India today is receiving even a primary level education. We think we can do better.

Our dream... is to make sure all Parsi / Irani / Zarthushti children are provided an education so that they may grow into productive and contributing members of our society.

We invite you... to please join us in our efforts to create a "No Child Left Behind" Program for our Parsi / Irani / Zarthushti Children in India.

A Look At Our Numbers...

257* = Number of Mobeds' Children across India, yet to receive education assistance

Unknown = Number of Non-Mobeds' children across India, in need of assistance

(Numbers above reflect data in our PRG databases as of Jan. 25, 2008 for children of Parsi / Irani / Zarthushti priests across India)

You Can Help...please sponsor the education of one of our children in need

- You may choose your child
- You will get an official receipt for each payment
- You will have online access to view all available information about your child
- Costs will vary based on the child's level in school and special educational needs if any. The average cost is however Indian Rupees 2,000 (US \$55) per month.

Make a commitment today... please send the information listed below to:

youtheducation@parsiresourcegroup.org

Information Requested:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your Name | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your Contact Phone Number |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your Country of Residence | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Number of Children You Would Like To Sponsor |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your Email ID | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Any notes, comments or references of which we should be aware |

Once we receive your commitment, we will send you a Sponsor registration form to get you registered into our Education Sponsorship Program.

Together Everyone Achieves More (T.E.A.M.)...

is a concept that grounds its foundation in the belief that there is strength in numbers.

We look forward to partnering with you to develop a sustainable and viable future for our Zarthushti Youth!

For Further Information Please Contact:

Mahtab Chapkhanawalla: +91- 98210-60554

Freyaz Shroff: +91- 98922-73973

www.parsiresourcegroup.org

Cross Word

What did the Bombay duck say to human?

Unscramble each of the clue words.

Copy the letters in the numbered to other cells with the same number.

TAASHG	<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 20px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 0; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">1</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 50px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">13</div> <div style="position: absolute; right: 0; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">12</div> </div>
HARBAGMS	<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 20px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 0; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">16</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 30px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">7</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 60px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">10</div> </div>
KAHUHT	<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 20px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 40px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">3</div> <div style="position: absolute; right: 0; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">15</div> </div>
AMHUTA	<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 20px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 35px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">9</div> </div>
TNJEOVA	<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 20px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 0; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">8</div> <div style="position: absolute; right: 0; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">2</div> </div>
ROOZON	<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 20px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 30px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">14</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 40px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">4</div> </div>
TEPROPH	<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 20px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 0; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">6</div> <div style="position: absolute; right: 0; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">18</div> </div>
HRSAUZATHATR	<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 20px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 40px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">17</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 50px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">5</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 60px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">11</div> </div>

<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 30px; height: 20px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 0; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">1</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 10px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">2</div> <div style="position: absolute; right: 0; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">3</div> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 30px; height: 20px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 0; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">y</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 10px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">4</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 20px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">5</div> <div style="position: absolute; right: 0; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">6</div> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 30px; height: 20px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 10px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">I</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 20px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">8</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 30px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">9</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 40px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">10</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 50px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">11</div> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 30px; height: 20px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 10px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">I</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 20px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">12</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 30px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">13</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 40px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">14</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 50px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">15</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 60px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">16</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 70px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">17</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 80px; bottom: 0; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center;">18</div> </div> !
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Clues:

- 1.) There are 5 of them.
- 2.) They are gatherings of people. There are 6 per year.
- 3.) Good thoughts.
- 4.) Good words.
- 5.) A ceremony of welcoming into the Zoroastrian Faith.
- 6.) March 21.
- 7.) A messenger of God.
- 8.) Name of messenger.

Prepared by Avan Antia age 14 years

Parsi Prayer Titles and Some of the 101 names of Ahura Mazda

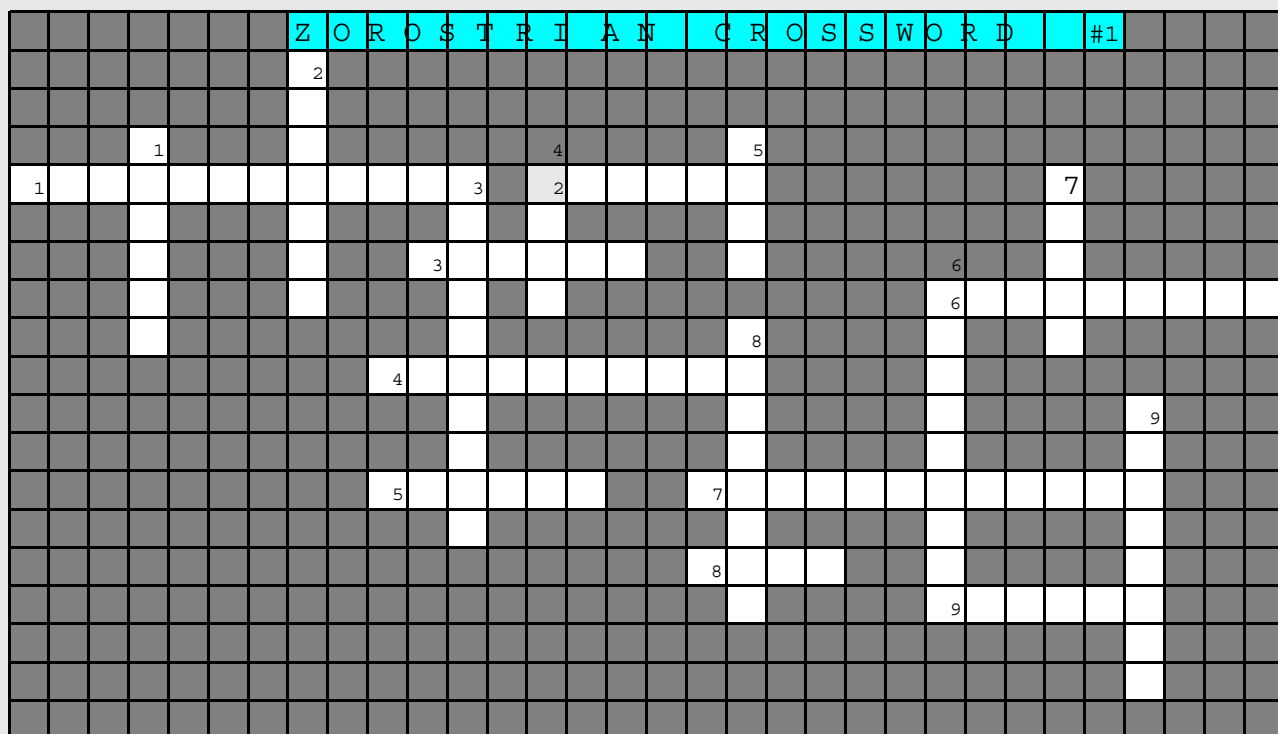
by:Rushad Antia

k h a v a r g g a f v d e t v a h d d n
 h a h s a n a e a i a n p a d m a n i o
 u a h n m o m b f r s y s n u f a a a a
 d i n n o k a l m o p n a t a m d m y f
 a g s g y r h a v z a v s r o z n o a a
 v r a a v r c n w g r a s h a n a y i r
 a d z a m e h g n a v a e m s a j a a a
 n a n j d r s m p r k r e e a a b r o s
 d d n a h z e a a d o h k d z a m r o h
 k o r a d a a h m h g e s a i e h r v o
 k u o b m n r m k n r j f h r n a a a g
 r z d h a r i g a f k a s g i d r g r a
 a r a s o a a v e a r i z d a d t e u r
 t f h o s v a h e a n a t u h s a f n a
 h o r r m e m k d o z n f v n a j r u v
 k r v a m o h e r a a r e a a d r e a r
 o o b s z t a a h u b f a k v s a k s a
 b r a d a d t v a s p a n b z h p v r p
 a j a n f h u s e p a s f h a v k a a a
 n h o h b o l m h n k f n s n i s a n r

abadha
 adaro
 afaza
 ahu
 awakshidar
 dadar
 farashogar
 firozgar
 harvastum
 hu sepas
 jas me avanghe mazda
 kerfeh mozd
 khudavand
 padmani
 parvara
 sanaea
 varun
 vaspan

abarvand
 adaro
 afrazdum
 an ashok
 bokhtar
 davar
 farsak
 gira
 hazazgrem
 iyanah
 ken naa mazdaa
 khavar
 khvafar
 parjatrah
 rayomand
 sarosh baaj
 vasna
 vaspar

abarza
 aekhtan
 ahmaai raesh cha
 ashem vohoo
 chamag
 din no kalmo
 fashutana
 harmana
 hormazd khodaae
 jas me avanghe mazda
 kerfegar
 khorehomand
 nasha
 parvanda
 safna
 taronish
 vaspan
 yazad



CLUES:

Across

- 1 Son of Dogdo and Pourushasp who is considered the prophet.
- 2 Our holy book.
- 3 The holy string which we tie around our waist.
- 4 The kushti prayer in which we ask "who will help me?..."
- 5 Sacred white under shirt worn after navjote.
- 6 Actions speak louder than words.
- 7 Humakta means this.
- 8 Where current day Persia is located.
- 9 In the movie 300, the place where the enemy of the Persians were from.

Down:

- 1 The poems of Zarathushtra.
- 2 Who our ancestors were.
- 3 The Zoroastrian God.
- 4 The good path and our goal.
- 5 Where the parsees came from.
- 6 Gavashni in other words.
- 7 Mother of Zarathushtra.
- 8 Zarathushti priests.
- 9 The first king to believe in Zarathushtra

YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....

Zarathushti artist Farita, Winner of Best Female Solo Artist Australia, (IMAA'S) 2006 & 2007 talks to us about The 4th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress Official Theme Song 'The Light'.

Firstly let me say that I was thrilled to be able to contribute to the congress with my song '*The Light*'. It was a role I took very seriously and writing the lyrics and working the melody to a point I was happy with took me months! Performing the song at the congress was also a thrill and I hope the audience enjoyed listening to '*The Light*' as much as I enjoyed performing for them.

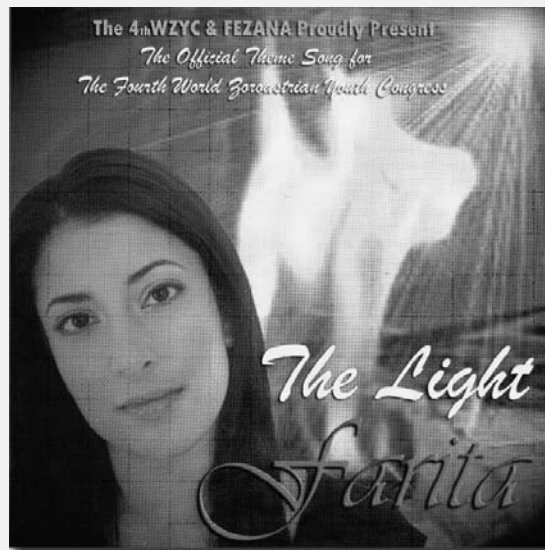
When I was asked to write this track I knew that I wanted to create a song with a modern, fresh twist on a traditional theme. I wanted a song that resonated with people of all ages while still incorporating certain key elements – unity, faith, heritage, tradition, physical symbolism as well as the "Friends Forever" theme that the congress was set around.

I really wanted to inspire the audience into understanding that our religion is a "rare gift" - an essential concept which seems to have faded into the background to some extent in this modern age we live in. I wanted this song to re-affirm our connection with who we are mentally, physically, spiritually and as a true Zarathushti community.

It is my sincere wish that '*The Light*' be heard for many generations to come and may it become an anthem of pride for Zarathushtis everywhere around the world.

To own your copy of 'The Light' and support for this talented artist, you can download the song for only \$1.00 at www.farita.com. Printable free lyrics are also available from Farita's website.

Farita would also like to acknowledge and thank the 4th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress Executive Committee, FEZANA and Meher Amalsad for their support in this project.



THE LIGHT

VERSE 1

We're one forever, we belong together / we share a
sacred bond

And the same desire to ignite the fire / the golden
thread that holds us strong

CHORUS

It's the light that shines in me / and the way it's meant to
be

A history a part of us / this rare gift given I will trust

Don't deny yourself what's true / when it's calling out to
you

It's the light that shines in me / it's the way it's meant to
be

VERSE 2

We're friends forever and we'll be strong together / I
know you feel the same way too

Faith is our oasis / they'll never separate us

No one can dim the flame of truth

CHORUS

Middle-8

The choice is yours but doesn't this feel right / when
faith is pure and burns so, so bright

And every day there is so much to live / so let the
journey of your life begin

Feel what's inside your heart (manashni gavashni
kunashni)

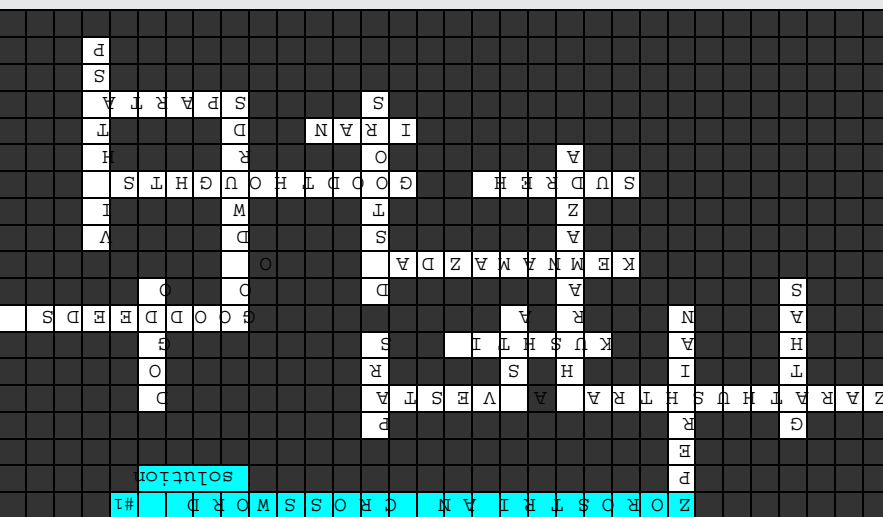
Look deep into your soul (manashni gavashni kunashni)

CHORUS REPEAT

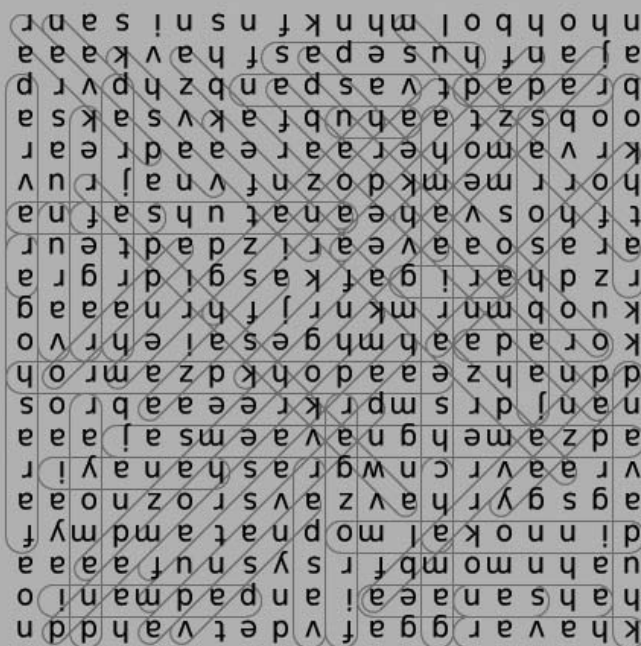
© Farita 2008

Parsi Prayer Titles and Some of the 101 names of Ahura Mazda by:Rushad Antia

Parsi Prayer Titles and Some of the 101 names of Ahura Mazda
by:Rushad Antia



abadhna
adaro
afaza
ahu
awakshidar
dadar
farashogar
firozgar
harvastum
hu sepas
jas me avanghe mazda
kerdeh mozd
khudavand
padmani
parvara
sanaee
varun
vaspan
abarvand
adaro
afrazdum
an ashok
bokhtar
davar
farak
gira
hazazgrem
iyana
ken naa mazdaa
khavar
khafar
parjatrah
rayomand
sarosh baaj
vasna
vaspar
abzarza
aekhtan
ahmaai raesh cha
ashem vohoo
chamag
din no karmo
fashutana
harmana
hormazd khodaee
jas me avanghe mazda
kerdegar
khorehomand
nasha
parvanda
safna
sarna
taronish
vaspan
yazad





مقاومت با مشکلات زندگی

در زندگی نخواهم داشت و یا میتوانند از خداوند بخواهند تا به آنها کمک نماید تا بتوانند کارهای روزمره خود را بخوبی انجام دهند و یا میتوانند فکر نمایند شیرین ترین زمانهای زندگی آنها گذشته است و آینده خوبی در پیش خواهند داشت. شما ممکن است دیگر هیچوقت بدون درد نباشید و در تمام مدت زندگیتان باید با این درد زندگی نمایید. آیا میتوانید یاد بگیرید که چگونه با این دردها زندگی نمایید. در بیشتر اوقات لازم میباشد که روش زندگی خود را عوض نمایید. کسانی که با دردهای دائمی روبرو هستند همیشه باید مثبت به زندگی نگاه نمایند و از خداوند بخواهند که به آنها کمک نماید تا همه روزه بتوانند کارهای روزمره خود را به بهترین نحو انجام دهند. ارزو دارم اگر شما با درد دائمی زندگی مینماید راه درست را انتخاب نموده و از اهورامزدا بخواهید که به شما کمک نماید تا تحمل دردها را داشته باشید و همین دردها به شما قدرت بیشتری دهد تا در زندگی قوی تر باشید و از لحظات شیرین زندگی بیشتر و بهتر لذت ببرید و این دردها به شما کمک نماید تا در زندگی پیشرفت بیشتری داشته و قدم های مثبت بیشتری بردارید.

شاد و تندرست باشید

Fereshteh Yazdani-Khatibi

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مقاومت با مشکلات زندگی

در امریکا میتوان گفت از هر دو نفر یک نفر به انواع و اقسام دردها مبتلا هستند مانند درد استخوان - مرض قند - فشار خون. دردهای عضلانی عوارض فراوانی دارند از جمله خستگی دائم وضعف فراوان. دردهای عضلانی باعث از دست دادن دید چشم عدم تفکر و عصبانیت و استرس از دست دادن حافظه میگردد و فامیل و دوستان و اطرافیان نمی توانند بفهمند که چرا اینگونه دوستان همیشه کمی سر در گم و تنها هستند و خود را از چشم دیگران پنهان نگه میدارند و تنهایی را دوست دارند. کسانی که اینگونه دردهای دائمی دارند باید با دردهای خود بسازند و قبول نمایند که این دردها قسمتی از زندگی آنها میباشد. پزشکان باور دارند افرادی که با اینگونه دردها زندگی مینمایند میتوانند بدون توجه به این دردها یک زندگی کاملاً عادی و لذت بخشی داشته باشند. افرادی که دردهای دایمی دارند یعنی از نظر روحی و روانی و جسمی رنج میبرند و باید شادی را به زندگی خود اضافه نمایند. چگونه میتوانیم خوشحالی و شادی را پیدا نماییم؟ خوشحالی و شادی زمانی وجود دارد که ما درد نداشته باشیم گاهی اوقات این دردها زائیده فکر و خیال های ما میباشد. زمانی ممکن است که ما دردهای بدنی نداشته باشیم اما با فکر و خیال های نادرست خود را رنج میدهیم و در نتیجه بدن ما احساس درد مینماید. زمانی که زندگی بر وفق مراد ما پیش نمیرود عصبانی و ناراحت شده و با فکر و خیال های نادرست خود را عذاب داده و باعث درد های عضلانی در بدن میگردد. زمانی که ما احساس درد داریم دوست داشتن امر بسیار مهمی را بازی مینمایند. دوست داشتن خدا دوست داشتن همسر دوست داشتن فرزندان دوست داشتن خانه و زندگی دوست داشتن افراد فامیل دوست داشتن حیوانات دوست داشتن درخت ها و گل ها و هر چیز دیگری که ما را خوشحال میکند. انسان هر چه بیشتر خوشحالی در زندگی داشته باشد کمتر درد را احساس مینماید. کلمه اصلی و واقعی عشق است عشق ورزیدن درد های جسمی و روانی را کم مینماید. کلمه معجزه گر دیگری کلمه از خود گذشتگی و بخشودگی میباشد. بخشودگی دیگران کسانی که دانسته و ندانسته و یا از روی ندانم کاری و بی نظری با صحبت و یا رفتارشان ما را ازرده اند و شاید خودشان هم از این عمل کرد خود آگاه نباشند. همانطوریکه میدانید محبت نمودن و عشق ورزیدن و یا ازردن دیگران همانگونه به انسان ها عشق و شادی و یا ازرده گی و درد و رنج ارزانی میآورد و بخشودگی اثر بسیار مهمی در زندگی و درد رنج ما دارد. شما اگر به گذشته نگاه مینمایید از پدر و مادر و یا از آموزگاران و دوستان خود ناراحتی دارید با این عمل درد و رنج به زندگی خود اضافه مینمایید در صورتیکه اگر به همه آنها بخشودگی کامل بدهید در نتیجه درد و رنج بدنی و روانی خود را کاهش داده اید. بخشودگی را نمیشود فقط با گفتن اجرا نمود بخشودگی باید از صمیم قلب و بصورت واقعی باشد زمانیکه افراد را از صمیم قلب بخشیدید در آن زمان است که درد جسمی و درد روانی خود را از دست خواهید داد و زندگی بسیار راحتتر و شاد تری خواهید داشت. داشتن درد های جسمی و روانی دائم گاهی اوقات باعث نزدیکی بیشتر انسانها به خداوند میگردد و همه روزه چندین بار به درگاه پروردگار نیایش مینمایند. اینگونه افراد با دردهای دائمی کوشش دارند که بیشتر از زندگی لذت ببرند حتی از خندیدن یک بچه میخندند و کوشش دارند که آرامش بیشتری به زندگی خود بدهند. مسئله مهم دیگر در زندگی اینگونه افراد با دردهای دائمی سر در گمی و غم و غصه فراوانی است که آنها در زندگی احساس مینمایند و گاهی اوقات اینگونه افراد بسیار عصبانی و بد اخلاق هستند. کسانی که دردهای دائمی دارند میتوانند انتخاب نمایند ابتدا میتوانند بگویند من به دلیل داشتن درد فراوان نمی توانم راحت زندگی نمایم و پیشرفتی هم

Personal Profiles



Breaking the Sound Barrier – Dinaz Adenwalla

What do John Brewster Jr., an artist, Juliette Gordon Low, founder of Girl Scouts in America, Douglas Tilden, a sculptor, and Dinaz Adenwalla, an educator have in common? They are all successful members of a silent world --- members we admire for their commitment and passion to make the world a better place.

Rhode Island educator Dinaz Adenwalla's life is silent. But that has not stopped her from overcoming obstacles to achieve her dreams. She believes the key to life lies in education, and she is committed to the education of individuals who are deaf like her.



When Dinaz was five months old, her hometown Kolkata was bombed by East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The earth shook – literally. Dinaz didn't even twitch. It was then that the family realized their daughter was deaf. A period of pain, grief and mourning followed for Dinaz's parents, but at the same time they were determined to do their best to find a source to communicate with their beloved daughter. They contacted various organizations and people in the field of hearing and deafness. They eventually located a school that was geared to deaf children in Bombay, but the school didn't admit children under the age of eight, and Dinaz was only three. There was only one course open to the enterprising Adenwallas – to start a school for deaf children, and they did. The school has expanded and is run by Dhun Adenwalla, Dinaz's mother, who is regarded as a leading pioneer educator for the deaf in India.

Dinaz passed the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education examination and proceeded to Gallaudet University in Washington D.C. to complete her undergraduate degree in chemistry and biology. She worked for General Telephone after graduation, but was not comfortable in the business world and reassessed her career goals and decided to go for a Masters in Education. Adenwalla said she always had a talent for teaching and wanted to give back to the deaf community. She loves her work and clearly identifies with her students who look upon her as a role model.

As a coordinator for secondary school programs for the Rhode Island School for the Deaf in Providence, R.I., Adenwalla's duties include supervising the curriculum, making modifications, to ensure the State mandated curricular goals and objectives for children are met.

She finds her work at school very fulfilling and inspires her students to aim higher as she is aware of the obstacles and challenges these children face. Her

colleagues and administration at the Rhode Island school laud Dinaz's boundless energy and praise her dedication. She is the first to arrive at work and the last to leave, and she passionately advocates for the rights of the deaf. Her commitment is not only to education, but also to the lives of deaf people. She provides real life experiences for her students and seeks every opportunity to mainstream them. One example was when Dinaz invited a deaf lawyer from Washington DC to speak to her students about their rights. From 1993 to 1999 she was the chairperson of the Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing. While on the statewide commission, after a great deal of bureaucratic struggle, she secured funding of \$200,000 for the commission.

What happens when a child is deaf? Deafness is the only impairment that is not visible. Since infancy a deaf child is denied all normal means of communication. And to help the child to make up for their loss, a good institution needs to provide a stimulating learning environment to help deaf children acquire language through modes of communication best suited to their needs. These modes may involve the use of amplified sound, speech reading, sign language, reading, writing, finger spelling, mime and drama. The ultimate aim is to preserve and build the resources of normalcy which have not been impaired by deafness. However, it is not in school that the deaf children face problems. They face problems when ignorant people equate deafness with mental retardation. Many people have a hard time accepting the fact that Dinaz is profoundly deaf as she exhibits the ability to read and write exceedingly well. And there are a lot of people who flatly refuse to make any accommodations for acceptance.

Adenwalla is thankful to modern technology like closed captioning and TTV (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf). As an avid reader, hiker and traveler, Adenwalla travels to India almost every summer to be with her family. She credits her success to her family, her father Dorab and mother Dhun Adenwalla.

Aban Rustomji, Houston, TX

Excerpted from Meera Rajagopalan's article in India New England 2006 "Woman of the Year". Dinaz Adenwalla could not be reached for an interview.

Personal Profiles

The Honorable Jamsheed K. Choksy in conversation with Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi

On March 13, 2008, the United States Senate confirmed President Bush's nomination of Dr. Jamsheed K. Choksy, a professor at Indiana University, to the prestigious National Council on the Humanities. The Council's 26 members serve staggered, six year terms, and advise the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), which is the largest source of funding for humanities programs in the United States. (photo below In the green room, at the White House)

It is an understatement to say that Dr. Choksy has an impressive resume. He came to the US to study biology at Columbia University, but chose to explore his interest in the humanities at the same time. This included studying history and religion and mastering some twenty one research languages, including Avestan. After graduating from Columbia University, Dr. Choksy went on to acquire a PhD in History and Religions of the Near East and Inner Asia from Harvard University. He attended both institutions on scholarship. Although Dr. Choksy currently serves as a tenured professor at Indiana University, he has taught at Stanford and Princeton Universities. He has authored three books, several articles and served as an editor for several publications. The recent nomination to the Council on the Humanities is only the latest in a long list of honors that has been bestowed upon him. Yet, when referred to as "accomplished", Dr. Choksy is downright bashful: "I am honored to be referred to as such, but I doubt so."

Dr. Choksy recently took a break from gardening on a sunny, saturday afternoon to discuss a variety of topics ranging from his nomination, to his career, to the future of Zoroastrianism, and even his favorite type of chocolate.

On the Nomination and the Value of Studying the Humanities

Dr. Choksy had been contacted in mid-2007 by the White House regarding the nomination. He had to cooperate with a background check and answer questions from the US Senators. "What struck me most about the process was how very efficient it is," he explained. "It was very cordial at all points. It was not

particularly invasive. It was very respectful of the entire constitutional and legal process of the United States. And for someone who is a naturalized citizen, this spoke volumes about the way in which law and order does indeed work in the United States." Asked how his meeting with President Bush went, he was characteristically understated: "It went very well, thank you. It was a great honor and a great privilege."

Dr. Choksy speaks passionately of the importance of studying the humanities, which, he believes, provide a fundamental basis for education. "The entire range [of subjects in the humanities] allows us to get a better sense of who we are as a nation, who we are as individuals and provides us with a variety of learning experiences and opportunities that allow us to broaden our knowledge and apply that knowledge in a variety of fields." By funding humanities-related work, the NEH plays an important role in fostering cross-cultural contacts in a world rife with disputes. Significantly, it funds programs involving American scholars and those from other nations in an intercultural realm, making it possible to "establish, maintain and foster contacts above and beyond the political issues that separate countries and cultures."

The Fundamental Contribution of Zoroastrianism: The Notion of Choice

Dr. Choksy grew up in the small Parsi community of Colombo, Sri Lanka. His work in Zoroastrian studies was an outgrowth of his interest in Iranian history and religion, which he explored at Columbia. It might have been difficult to study Zoroastrianism in its canonical language, Avestan, and make that study part of a successful career in academia, if Dr. Choksy had not come to this continent. "Studying the languages is another opportunity that studying in the US affords. Avestan, for example, is no longer taught at the University of Bombay. But it is taught at Columbia and at Harvard. And I teach it at Indiana University. That is an example of the value placed on the humanities in the United States."

Given his study of the religion and culture, I asked Dr. Choksy what he thought was the most amazing thing about Zoroastrianism. To him, it is the notion of choice



Personal Profiles

introduced by Zarathustra. "That is the most fundamental contribution that Zoroastrianism has made to the history of societies. Because even though people may have believed in the final judgment and the after life and all the rest, what Zarathustra really introduced was the notion that every individual has the opportunity to contribute positively to their own lives, to the lives of their friends and family, and to society. And that's the fundamental notion that set Zarathustra apart from his contemporaries and was a very fundamental influence on how all human beings think about their positions and roles in the world."

The Future of Zoroastrianism Lies in North America

I asked Dr. Choksy to speak about the future of Zoroastrianism. "One thing to keep in mind," he said, "is that often people look at a group and see it as one community. And I don't think that, historically, that is something we can substantiate." Just as the Parsi community in India changed over time and became distinct from the Zoroastrian community in Iran where it had originated, so also Dr. Choksy sees the communities in North America, EU, Iran and India changing and becoming distinct from each other. "It will be interesting to see how, in the long run, these communities develop separately, but also attempt to remain connected with each other by fundamental religious beliefs, by notions of how they may contribute to the societies they live in, and how they can enhance the communities and the countries they are a part of."

Dr. Choksy was hesitant to provide a vision for the North American Zoroastrian community. "A single vision? Oh, I think that would require Zarathustra!" Acknowledging that the North American community is not monolithic and is trying to define itself, Dr. Choksy said that in the long run, this community would become increasingly relevant to the practice and study of Zoroastrianism worldwide. And would this greater relevance be cause for concern if other Zoroastrian communities across the globe had evolved in different directions? Dr. Choksy's perspective on change and difference of opinion is unique. It is the perspective of a scholar: "The fact that there are emerging differences shows me that the entirety of the community, whether in NA or India, Iran or the EU, is vibrant; that there are issues that are worthy of discussion, worthy of thrashing over. So what is seen as hostility between different groups, tells me that members of the community are engaged, that there are issues and questions worth discussing and possibilities worth pursuing."

About Quotations and Chocolates

The Journal does not get to profile federal appointees often and I thought it would be fun for our readers to have a sidebar of Dr. Choksy's favorites. But Dr. Choksy has read too much, seen too much, learned

too much, and liked it all too much, to pick favorites: Favorite book? "In all honesty, probably changes every six months. Because I like reading...." Favorite piece of music? "In fact, I tend to listen to a variety from, you know, Wagner to Euro tech." Favorite field trip? "That would be picking favorites. And I have had a wonderful time traveling Iran at certain points, within India, and we had a civil archeological expedition in Baluchistan as well." I was about to give up, but I did ask him for a favorite quotation. He thought about it for a moment. "To travel is to live.' It's a popular Italian quotation. See the world, see different cultures, taste different foods..."

An apt quote from a man who had no trouble revealing that his favorite chocolate was any marzipan piece concocted by Teuscher of Switzerland, a brand he discovered while ambling down a small alley in Geneva to nowhere in particular.

Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi is a member of the Bar of the State of New York and is anticipating admission to the Bar of the State of California later this year.

Ms. Gandhi is currently on sabbatical. She lives with her husband and their daughter in Marina del Rey, CA.



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17. A New Life *For* Seyavash

There on the banks of the River, Seyavash waited with a heavy heart: He had thought his father would be happy that he had made peace with Turan, but Kay Kavas was a proud King and he only wanted his enemy destroyed. So Seyavash felt he could not return home. Now he waited for permission from Afrasiab, the King of Turan, to travel across Turan, so he could roam the Earth far from home.

Soon a messenger came from Afrasiab's court. "Good day to you, young prince," said Piran, Afrasiab's trusted friend. "I have good news for you. King Afrasiab says that you may not only travel through Turan, but you may also stay in Turan as the King's guest. The Court of Afrasiab would be honored to have you!" Seyavash felt honor bound to accept the invitation from the man who had worked towards peace with him.

And so it came to be that Seyavash decided to spend a few weeks in Turan.

But then something really unexpected happened: Seyavash came to like Turan and made it his new home. The young prince's honorable ways won over the courtiers in the land. Piran became like a father to him and the King Afrasiab and Seyavash became best friends.

King Afrasiab hoped Kay Kavas would see that his son had been well treated in Turan and the two countries, Iran and Turan, could set aside their bitter history and be at peace. He arranged for Seyavash to marry his beautiful daughter, Fargis. As a wedding gift, the King gave Seyavash vast lands to rule over and a great deal of wealth to build cities.



SUNDAY STORIES FROM THE *Shahnameh*

Seyavash built many cities, but the best was the one where he and Fargis lived. It was called Seyavashgerd. He made Fargis a beautiful palace of her own and showered her with gifts every day. In his own palace, Seyavash had murals painted of Iranian and Turanian princes and warriors. In his life, he continued to honor the traditions of both cultures.

Word soon reached Afrasiab of Seyavash's accomplishments. After one visit to Seyavashgerd, Piran said to the King, "Heaven's glories do not equal that city, nor is the sun more splendid than Seyavash. Seyavashgerd is unparalleled in all of Persia and China: wisdom and that Prince's soul have combined to make a paradise on earth. From a distance, Fargis' palace glitters like a jewel. No man on Earth is possessed of such magnificence, glory and wisdom as your son-in-law. And our two countries lay at peace because of him."

Afrasiab was curious. He asked his brother, Garsivaz, to visit Seyavash and report back to him about the city his son-in-law had built.

When Garsivaz reached Seyavashgerd, Fargis and Seyavash treated him with kindness and generosity. They showed him the city, with its magnificent buildings, gardens and streams.

Garsivaz grew jealous of Seyavash's success. He saw that noblemen and princes from all over the world came to Seyavash's court and became his friends. He also learned that Seyavash had renewed his ties with several Persian heroes, as well. Everywhere he turned, Garsivaz saw how strong and beloved Seyavash was and how he was honoring both his Turanian and Persian heritage. Seeing all this, suspicion took hold of Garsivaz's heart and he thought, "I must end this reign of Seyavash. He has sovereignty, crown, power, wealth, land and an army. In a year he will rise against Afrasiab and Turan. He must be stopped!"

Garsivaz made a plan. He returned to Afrasiab and reported that Seyavash was doing very well, indeed. "He has a large army and friends from all over the world support him. His wealth grows each day. He receives messages from Kay Kavas and the Persians. Soon he will be a threat to you, King

Afrasiab. You must destroy him. Don't forget the bitter history of our two countries. No good will come of his successes!"

Afrasiab was surprised to hear Garsivaz's report for no one had ever suggested to him that Seyavash was planning to attack him. He decided to find out for himself whether Seyavash was still loyal to him. So Afrasiab asked Garsivaz to go back to Seyavash and invite him and Fargis to visit with him in the capital of Turan.

Garsivaz was cunning. He rode to Seyavashgerd and gave the invitation to Seyavash. But he said, "Don't go, prince! The tide of fortune has turned against you. Someone has poisoned the King's heart against you. This is surely a trap! If you go, you will be in danger! You must wait until I have time to talk to the King about all the good you are doing and make him love you again. Make some excuse for why you cannot go to him just now, and travel to him later when he likes you better."

Seyavash agreed. He wrote to the King that although he would have loved to come, he could not because Fargis was ill. Garsivaz asked for his



Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi lives in Marina Del Rey, CA. She writes as a hobby



Slide 1:

Seyavash Recounts His Nightmare to Fargis, Painted by Qadimi, c. 1520-30 / folio 195r, Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Arthur A. Houghton, Jr. (1970.301.29), appearing in Dick Davis (Trans.), *Fathers and Sons: Stories from the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi*, Volume II (Washington, DC: Mage Publishers, 1998), p. 75.

Slide 2:

Seyavash at Afrasiab's Court, Painted by unknown artist in the Isfahan style 1630-40, By permission of the British Library (MSS. 1256 / folio 120v), appearing in Dick Davis (Trans.), *Fathers and Sons: Stories from the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi*, Volume II (Washington, DC: Mage Publishers, 1998), p. 49.

fastest horse and rode without stopping back to the capital.

When the King asked why he had returned in such haste, Garsivaz did not give the King the letter. Instead, he lied, "I had to come back to you as fast as I could! You must gather your army and march on Seyavashgerd right away. Seyavash treated me terribly when I was there. He did not even come to greet me as is customary. He and his Persian friends spent all their time together plotting and scheming. They plan to attack you soon! You must attack him first!"

Believing him, Afrasiab and his army began to march to Seyavashgerd. When they were close to the city, Garsivaz secretly sent a spy to Seyavash to tell him that Afrasiab's army was coming and he should flee. Seyavash thought that Garsivaz's plan to help him had failed. So he and his army put on their battle armor and came out of the city to meet Afrasiab.

Seeing them ready for battle, Afrasiab got enraged. He was convinced that Seyavash had been planning to attack him all along. So the battle began. Sadly, Seyavash died in the fight. Fargis was imprisoned. But the honorable Piran saved her and took her to his home, where he and his wife cared for her as if she was their own child.

A few months after Seyavash's death, Fargis gave birth to a son, Kay Khosrau. Then she and Kay Khosrau went to Iran and started their life there. With Rustam's help, Kay Kavus accepted his grandson and when Kay Kavus got old, Kay Khosrau became the King of Iran.

NEXT TIME BIZHAN AND MANIZHEH

M I L E S T O N E S as of APRIL 15, 2008

BIRTHS

Erach Patel in Philadelphia, PA on January 25, 2008.

Phil and Karl Daruwala, twin boys, to Aimy and Zubin Daruwala in Vancouver, BC on February 3, 2008.

Ayden Rushad Amaria, a boy, to Gulshan and Rishad Amaria, brother to Dhanyalla; grandson to Adi and Shernaz Amaria (Mississauga, ONT) and Kersi and Sanober Bhesania (Toronto, ONT) in Brampton, ONT on February 13, 2008.

Meena Tanya Capak, a girl, to Trity and Peter Babak, sister to Neeku on February 23, 2008. (photo below)



Anna Roshen Gwynne, a girl to Teresa and Jahangir Nakra, sister to Yezad, in Boston, on March 7th, 2007

Xerxes Kevin Mancherjee, a boy, to Janine and Kevin Mancherjee, grandson to Jeroo and Hosie Mancherjee and Zarine and Rusi Tamboli, and nephew to Zubin Mancherjee in Toronto, ONT, on March 14, 2008.

Yasmine-Simone, a girl, to Nathalie and Rayan Moos, granddaughter to Perviz and Phiroz Moos (Montreal) and Estelle and Jacques Thibault (Montreal) in New Westminster, BC on April 9, 2008.

Azad Antia, a boy, to Nerina Rustomji and Shehriyar Antia, in New York, January 18, 2008

Yashna, a girl, to Ferzin and Zubin Chichgar; granddaughter to Pervin and Maneck Chichgar in Southern California.

Nadia Mehta, a girl, to Ruzbe and Kaezad Mehta in Southern California.

Ella Hanoz Kapadia, a girl, to Ferzin and Hanoz Kapadia; granddaughter to Viraf and Pouru Kapadia (Mississauga, ONT), and Sarosh and Dilnavaz Bulsara (Nasik, India) in Mississauga, ONT on November 12, 2007.

Cyrus Darius Bharucha, a boy, to Darius and Shiraz Bharucha, brother to Danesh and Vera; grandson to Dara and Meher Suntok (Oakville, ONT) and Dinshaw and Dinaz Bharucha in Toronto, ONT on December 18, 2007.

Eshaan, a boy, to Khushnum Narielwala and Nirav Shah in Worcester, MA on December 23, 2007.

Rashna and Rishad Vaghaiwalla, twins, to Marina and Behram Vaghaiwalla, grandchildren to Alamai Vaghaiwalla (Los Angeles, CA) and Mahrukh and Minoo Batliwalla (Sydney, Australia) in Southern California, on December 23, 2007.

Mazreen Sanjana, a girl, to Shernaaz and Ervad Dr. Hormazd Bahmanshah Sanjana, sister to Karl and Ferzine; granddaughter to Nawaz Viraf Wadia and Freny and Bomanshah Sanjana (Houston, TX) in San Antonio, TX on December 28, 2007.

Meher Cyrus Zandian, a girl, to Mandana and Cyrus Zandian; granddaughter to late Ardesheer and Shirin Zandian (Karachi, Pakistan) and to late Khosrow and Dolat Bastani (Tehran, Iran) in Toronto, ONT on January 4, 2008.

Yohan Mehernosh Ghadiali, a boy, to Hoofrish and Mehernosh Ghadiali in Toronto, ONT on January 8, 2008.

Natalia Tara Shepelavy, a girl, to Roxanne and Dan Shepelavy, sister to Daria, granddaughter to Fatima and

Yamil Kourosh Vidar Parsi-Semlali, a boy to Amina and Trita Parsi, brother to Darius, grandson to Dr. Touradj Parsi and Vajiheh Dezfouli; Said Semlali and Viveka Semlali, in Washington, DC on April 7, 2008.

NAVJOTES



Kerfeghar Pervez Mistry, son of Pervez and Zenobia Mistry (Perth, Australia), grandson of Pervin and Jimmy Mistry (Toronto, ONT/Mumbai, India) and Katy and Dara Panthakee (Toronto, ONT) in Udvada, India on December 25, 2007.

Ruzan and Delzin Daruwalla, children of Bakhtavar and Hushedar Daruwalla (Atlanta, GA); grandchildren of Phiroze and late Silloo Daruwalla and Amy and Khushru Chhayela in Mumbai, India on December 31, 2007.(photo above)

Darayus Gorimar, son of Shiraz and Tehmaas Gorimar (Doylestown, PA); grandson of Rhoda Gorimar (Mumbai, India) in Mumbai, India on January 3, 2008.

WEDDINGS

Natasha Mehdiabadi to Cyrus Jilla in Houston, on June 23, 2007

Yazad Dalal to Maharukh Sorabji (New York City, NY) in Mumbai, India on January 4, 2008.

DEATHS

Villy Dadinatha, 76, wife of Minoo Dadinatha, mother of Zarir (Zarrin) (Coquitlam, BC) and Zersis; grandmother of Anaita in Mumbai on November 27, 2007.

Hoshedar H. Mehta, age 52, husband of Freny, father of Malcolm, son of Homi and late Amy Mehta, brother of Roshni Noshir Pundole (Toronto) and Rukshana Behram Bode (Mumbai), nephew of Nellie Darab Unwala (Boca Raton), of Fort Lauderdale, FL., died in Devka (near Udvada) on December 7, 2007

Tehmina Ganjia, 94, mother of Armaity Tehmtan Hathidar (Richmond, BC); grandmother of Parizad in Pune, India on January 7, 2008.

Sam S. Batliwalla, husband of late Roshan Batliwalla, father of Neville Batliwalla (Foster City, CA), Veera Bharucha and Darius Batliwalla, father-in-law of Zarine (nee Khambatta), Sarosh Bharucha and Meher (nee Dalal); grandfather of Zenna and Shyla Batliwalla, Meher, Sherna, and Anaita Bharucha and Zinnia and Jehan Batliwalla in Toronto, ONT on January 8, 2008.

Kekie Sorab Bulsara, 76, husband of late Freny Bulsara, father of Suman (Bhanu) (adopted), Jehaangir (Rukshan) Bulsara (Ottawa, ONT), Adi, (Johanne); Havove Aspi Tarapore (Portland, ONT); grandfather of Dhanung and Pratik, Shameena, Sorab, Kershan, Arzan, Fereshteh, Farrahnaz, in Mumbai, India on January 12, 2008.

Najamai Kaikhushroo Lali, 89, mother of Jeroo, Aspi (Mehroo) (Mumbai, India); grandmother of Arzan (Delnaz) Lali (Indiana) in Mumbai, India on January 15, 2008.

Rusi Framroze Patel, 93, husband of Kashmira of Concord, father of Karishma and Brianna, brother of Nergez Mavji, Sherroo Engineer, Minoo Patel, Goolu Dhalla, Bachi Bharucha and Homi Patel. Also survived by many nieces, nephews and friends, in Burlington, MA on January 22, 2008.

Najoo Noshir Irani, 94, mother of Bejan (Maharukh) Irani (Chicago, IL), Kekoo (Dilnavaz) Irani (Chicago, IL), Roshan (Rusi) Doctor (UK), Ruby (Cawas) Noshirwani (Karachi, Pakistan), and Dhun (Ulhas) Munge (Pune, India) in Karachi, Pakistan on January 31, 2008.

Namdar Merwanji Irani (Hoseni), husband of Roshan Irani, father of Aspi, Mehroo, Khorshed and Jimmy; grandfather of Khushamin Hormuzd Chothia (Toronto, ONT), Cyrus, Delkush, Delshad, Vishtaspa; great grandfather of Taronish and Kayishmand Chothia (Toronto, ONT) in Mumbai, India on February 4, 2008.

Parvin Sarvian, 84, wife of late Hormozdyar Pirouzmand, mother of Parvindokht (Houshang) Mehin; grandmother of Nazanin, Afshin and Ramin Mehin in North Vancouver, BC on February 7, 2008.

Erach Cawasji Guard, husband of Roshan, father of Yasmin (Cyrus) Kotwal, Maharukh (Robert) Kravich and Neville (Marie) Guard; uncle of Dinaz (Ken) Weber in San Ramon, CA on February 9, 2008.

Kaykhosrow Zomorodi, husband of Simmin, father of Katayoun, Cyrus and Darius in San Jose, CA on February 10, 2008.

Hoshang Cawasji Pundole, father of Nergis Kersi Khambatta; grandfather of Zubine and Rayomand in Pune, India on February 11, 2008.

Khodadad Kadkhoda, 82, husband of Katayoun, father of Parisa and Parvin, brother of Rostam and Sohrab Kadkhoda (West Vancouver, BC), Doulat and Parivash in Tehran, Iran on February 15, 2008.

Sam Bhathena, 71, husband of Pauruchisty (Wheaton, MD) in Jodhpur, India on February 17, 2008. (see obituary)

Aloo Nusserwanji Anklesaria, 98, sister to late Navroji, Khorshed Dalal, Jer Challa, and Tehmi in Toronto, ONT on February 18, 2008.

Freny Moos, 89, wife of Bezonji, mother of late Shirin (Rusi) Marolia,

Phiroz (Perviz), of Montreal, Khurshid, Feroza (Anil) Kohhar, Pervin (Parvez) Sorabji of Toronto, grandmother of Zach, Rayan, Shapoor, (all of Montreal) Gayomad, Zahin, (Calgary), Vinesh, Ritesh, in Pune, on February 20, 2008.

Furhok K. Tangree, in La Roche-sur-Form, France, February 23, 2008

Banoo Jal Damkewala, mother of Bomi (Bachi) Damkewala, Shirin (Viraf) Kanga, and Rustom (Yasmin) Kevala; grandmother of Kamal (Sarosh) Saher, Sarosh (Anahita) Kanga, Neville (Tricia) Kanga, Dr. Ruby Kevala, Karl (Jill) Kevala, Diana (Roy) Gazdar, Zarine Damkewala, and Persis Damkewala; great grandmother of Sophia and Ethan Kanga, Zubin Saher and Zachary Kevala in Naperville, IL on February 25, 2008.

Freny Rustom Kermani, 86, mother of Arnavaz Kaikhosrow Farahmand (Clayton, CA), Adi Kermani (Walnut Creek, CA), Dinshaw, Dolly, and Aspi in Walnut Creek on February 27, 2008.

Shahpour Babakan, husband of Homayoon Khosravi, father of Parichehr, Parvaneh, Parivash, Mehrdad, Behdad, and Behzad, February, 2008.

Dr. Hassan Behdadnia, husband of Gohar Behdadnia, father of Babak and Barbak, February, 2008.

Abuzarjomehr Fereydoon Sohrabi, husband of Manijeh Sohrabi, father of Bozorgmehr, Bozorgmanesh, and Bozorgrod, February, 2008.

Paridokht Rostam Foroudian, wife of Khodadad Khodadadi Nasrabadi, mother of Mehrdad, Behnaz, Shahnaz, and Ramin, March, 2008.

Kourosh Shahriari, husband of Roya Zaboli, father of Mahzad (editor and contributor to Chehreh Nama and Zoroastrian Journal publications), Shabnam, Shirzad, Shabahang, and Dena, March, 2008.

Khorshed Panthaky, 75, wife of Mobed Jehangir Panthaky, and mother of Rohinton and Jasmine in Vancouver on March 3, 2008 (see page 127)

Piroja Jalejar Rabadi, 93, grandmother of Farhad Panthaki, (Boston, MA) in Mumbai, India on March 16, 2008.

Keykhosrow Keshavarz, husband of Banu, father of Dariush, Sohil, Homa, Farhad, and Fareydoon (Washington, DC); grandfather of Behrang, Kave, Mitra, Golrukh, Kasra, Yasaman, Nicku, and Shawdi; great grandfather of Nina in Eskilstuna, Sweden, on April 3, 2008.

Dinyar Arghavani, 75, husband of Shirin, brother of Firoozeh (Mrs Khodabandeh Jamshidian), Irandokht

(Mrs Khosrow Namiranian), Mahdokht, and Shahin (Mrs Khushru Irani) all of North Vancouver, in Tehran, on April 16, 2008.

Khorshed Panthaky, will be remembered as a warm and affectionate person, always welcoming to newcomers, and enjoying the company of all. She helped Jehangir in the early days of their stay here with the education of Zarathushti children in Vancouver, and then tended the fire efficiently whenever her husband performed prayers. Her last public function, in good health and accompanied by

her son, Rohinton, was at the 40th Anniversary celebration get-together/lunch at the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr on February 24, 2008. She had conversations - long and short - with many of those who knew and cared for her. On the surface she appeared well, but she did mention that she had a few health problems. May Khorshed's soul rest in eternal peace, and may Jehangir, Rohinton and Jasmine have the strength to carry on as she would want them to.

Bella Tata, ZSBC

Matrimonials

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

Female, 26, 5' 4", B.Com, M.C.A., senior software programmer in India, visiting brother in USA, call 952-837 9852 or heartcherisher@gmail.com. [F08-09].

Male 29, M. Pharm, medical student, specializing in Thoracic Surgery, family well-settled in London, UK. Contact karlos64@hotmail.com. [M08-10].

Female, 26, engineering degree, working in airlines in Bombay. Visiting aunt in Atlanta. Contact 770-993 2963, paareezad@hotmail.com. [F08-11].

Male, 30, pilot in US navy. Mother invites correspondence, contact fajizuru@aol.com. [M08-18].

Male, mid-40s, qualified professional, well-settled, confident, with a sense of humor, based in U.A.E. searching for a female twin soul to share good karmic relationship. Should be pretty, witty, educated and self-confident. Contact bawiseeker@hotmail.com. [M08-19].

Female, 25, 5' 5", executive in Mumbai, enjoys music, movies, traveling, singing, willing to relocate. Contact parents in Mumbai at nozerjal@yahoo.com, 011 91 22 2308 9568 or uncle in Texas at 512-255 7985. [F08-20].

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www.shaadi.com,

Mrs Gool Banaji, Parel, Mumbai,
goolpesi@gmail.com,

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."

Obituary

Dr SAM BHATHENA

(1937—2008)

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Dr. Sam Bhathena of Wheaton MD. Sam was a force behind the founding of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington Inc. (ZAMWI) and past-president of the Association of Indians in America (AIA) and the Association of Scientists of Indian Origin in America.

Born in 1937 in Bombay, India, Sam spent his school years in the J N Petit School for Boys in Pune after losing his father at the age of four. Sam always spoke fondly of his school days which he credited with giving him a first-class education and instilling in him his strong commitment to the Parsi community and desire to work for the benefit of others. He won a scholarship to Bombay University where he graduated with a Ph.D in biochemistry.

Sam came to the US in 1970 as a postdoctoral researcher at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), beginning a distinguished 35-year career in human nutrition and biochemistry. After serving as a visiting scientist at NIH and as Associate Professor at Georgetown University, Sam joined the USDA in 1980, retiring in 2006 as Lead Scientist in the Metabolism and Nutrient Interaction Laboratory. Sam made major contributions to research on insulin-receptor binding, neurotransmitter-receptors. His work on the beneficial effects of soy proteins, flavones, phytoestrogens, and flaxseed won him several awards, including twice the Scientist of the Year award.

Dr Bhathena worked tirelessly for the benefit of the Zarathushti and Indian communities in Washington for more than 30 years. He was an early leader and organizer of Zarathushti events and activities in the Washington area. He played an early and leading role in laying the foundation of ZAMWI.

In 1975, Sam married Pauru Kias in Bombay, India. Through the years, Sam and Pauru opened their home to countless students and young professionals new to the DC community, for which they were dearly beloved. Sam and Pauru consistently dedicated their time and energy to the Zarathushti and Indian communities in the Washington D.C. area, giving tirelessly of themselves.

As AIA president, Sam played the instrumental role in running the Annual Health Fair (now renamed the Sam Bhathena Health Fair) which delivered basic

preventive health care to the Indian community in DC every year.

I cannot say it better than Dr. Govind Kapadia, Past-President of AIA: "Dr. Sam Bhathena was an outstanding human being and a silent community leader. A highly productive biochemist at USDA, he willingly recognized the achievements of others but declined to receive publicity for himself. Sam generously donated both money and time for AIA and other community organizations. Born Zoroastrian, Sam was proud to consider himself an Indian first, and devoted his services to the entire Indo-American community as well to the community at large. His dedication and generosity testifies to the maxim, "Parsi Thy Name is Charity". Our sincere sympathies are extended to his beloved wife Pauruben. May his soul rest in



Peace".

Hormuzd Katki

With great and loving admiration for Sam and Pauru Bhathena, who have been like an uncle and aunt to me.

The Man who joined the History of Iran

(1926-2008)

Manouchehr Farhangi, one

of the greatest Iranian Zoroastrian philanthropists and benefactors was cowardly killed in his home in the suburb of Madrid in Spain, on Wednesday, the 20th of March 2008, on the wake of the Persian Zoroastrian New Year "NauRooz", when three men and a woman at 12.30 PM. rang the bell of his villa in Moraleja on the outskirts of Madrid. When Manouchehr Farhangi opened the door, the woman without a word pushed her long knife in Mr. Farhangi's stomach and ran away with the other three.

Six hours later, Manouchehr Farhangi, despite the efforts of his doctors, died in the hospital.

This crime opens a new chapter in the very long list of assassinations of the opponents of the Islamic Republic, in Europe. Till now, the targets had been

thinkers, writers, religious minorities or political activists, but this time it aimed at a very popular philanthropist and benefactor.

WHO WAS MANOUCHEHR FARHANGI ?

Mr. Farhangi was born into a Zarathushti family in 1926 in Kerman. He was married with two sons, Ramin and Ramesh. He became a very successful entrepreneur and businessman in Iran before the Islamic revolution in 1979. In the early seventies he created near Caspian coast in Bandar Pahlavi, a famous coastal village vacation complex named Dehkadeh Saheli. By the time of the Islamic revolution the project had over 350 villas and 70 apartments built and sold, with another 70 villas under construction. Alongside the same business he and his two brothers opened a pharmaceutical company, which ultimately became one of the largest pharmaceutical manufacturers in Iran.

When the Islamic revolution came to power in Iran, they demanded a halt to the sale and construction of the project, under the pretext that men and women swam together in the Caspian Sea!

Mr Farhangi was summoned to the Islamic courts on several occasions and was subjected to harassment, verbal and physical abuse. He finally decided to take a short trip to London, where he was notified by his staff that the revolutionary forces had taken over his corporate offices and looted his house, burning it down along with his possessions and his priceless private library. Upon hearing the news he returned to Iran to proclaim and protect the leftover of the property which was rightfully his. Shortly thereafter all of his companies and remaining possessions were confiscated.

Mr. Farhangi left Iran, returned to Europe and settled down in Spain. In the early 80s he founded the "International School of Spain", in the suburb of Madrid in Moraleja. Very soon this school became the most prestigious private school in Spain where today over 600 elite students, children of diplomats from 50 nationalities study. After his retirement a few years ago, the school was taken over by his son Ramin Farhangi.

WHY MANOUCHEHR FARHANGI WAS KILLED?

Who could kill this 82 year old man, who was one of the kindest, righteous and a most generous man? The man who used to buy the cheapest cloths or shoes for himself but give all his wealth to help cultural associations, mass-media, writers, students in need of

funds to pursue their studies, organizers of congresses and lectures...

In the early 90s, Iranians, particularly the youth, in reaction to the brutalities and repression in Iran, started to return, in larger numbers, to Zarathushtra's simple existential philosophy that had been for 1200 years the existential doctrine of Persia. It is to build a society based on righteousness where the human beings as well as animals and plants can lead a happy life and enjoy full existence. In this philosophy, men and women are equal, with freedom of thought and choice being fundamental. Since 2000 a very large number of young people have been initiated into Zoroastrianism, which frightened the regime in Iran and there were daily utterances, on video, on "You Tube" or on the net.

As a born Zarathushti, Mr. Farhangi, was very generous to the cultural centers, radios, newspapers and authors who were active in promoting Zoroastrianism. He was a profound humanist, and wanted to see a truly humanistic philosophy

being established in Iran which was not looked upon favorably.

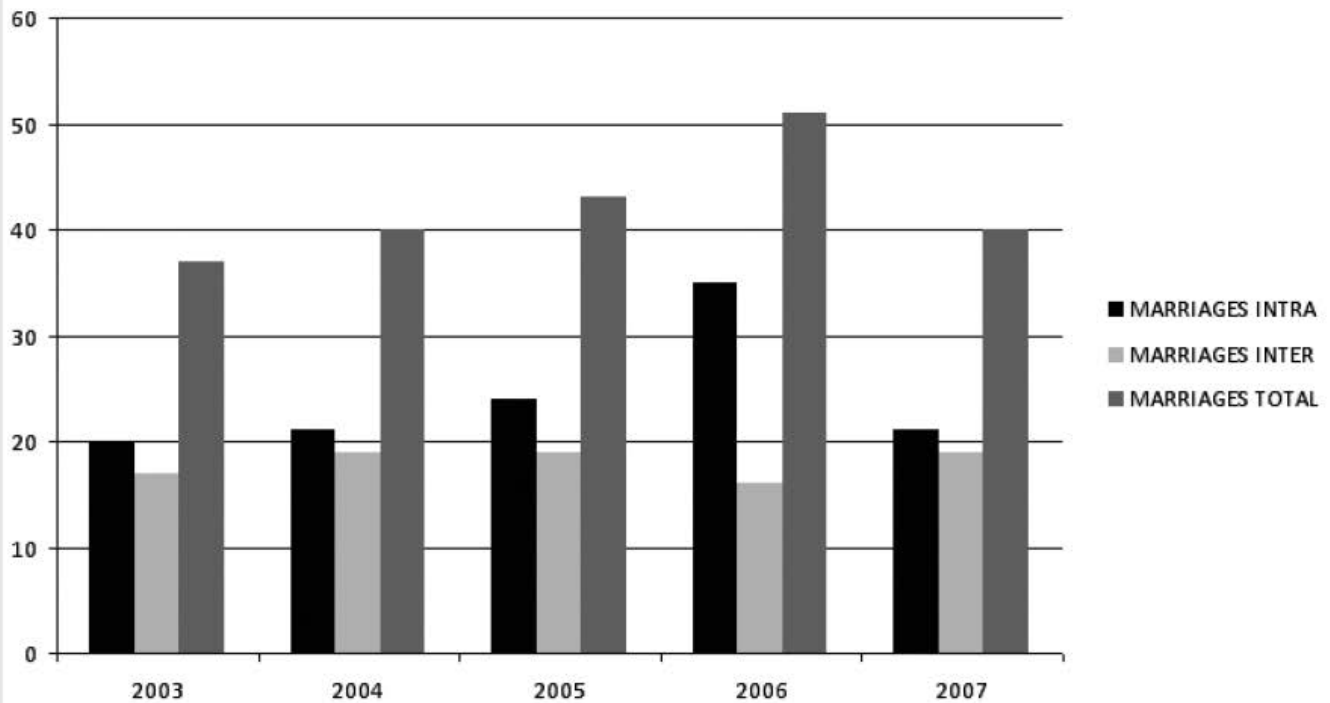
Many prominent Zarathushtis have been killed because of their beliefs and values viz: . **Kasra Vafadari, chair of Iranian History and Religion Before Islam, at the University of Paris, in France; Rudaki Behdin, the head of the Tajik Zoroastrian Anjuman, in Tajikistan.** These two cases still remain a mystery, to the world Zarathushti community, since the authorities neither in Tajikistan nor in France have released useful information with the names and motives of the culprits behind these cold blooded murders. Let's see whether Spain will do otherwise!

Mr. Farhangi, this great philanthropist, will be remembered for ever in the heart and mind of the Iranians as a hero who gave his life for Iran, a person who advanced Zarathushti culture and heritage. Manouchehr donated the money for the statue of Cyrus the Great that has been erected in the Bicentennial Olympic Park in Homebush, Australia

***Abstracted from Dr. Khosro Khazai (Pardis),
Centre for European Studies , Brussels***

25th March 2008

Milestone - Census



MILESTONES CENSUS												
	BIRTHS			NAVJOTES			MARRIAGES			DEATHS		
	BOY	GIRL	TOTAL	BOY	GIRL	TOTAL	INTRA	INTER	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
2003	26	26	52	40	16	56	20	17	37	31	25	56
2004	29	27	56	20	19	39	21	19	40	50	51	101
2005	26	28	54	24	22	43	24	19	43	50	43	93
2006	42	42	84	21	21	42	35	16	51	61	44	105
2007	39	36	75	21	10	31	21	19	40	48	44	92

MILESTONES CENSUS - 2007 JOURNAL ISSUES												
	BIRTHS			NAVJOTES			MARRIAGES			DEATHS		
	BOY	GIRL	TOTAL	BOY	GIRL	TOTAL	INTRA	INTER	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
SPRING	11	16	27	4	3	7	7	1	8	15	11	26
SUMMER	11	11	22	8	3	11	6	1	7	9	12	21
FALL	6	5	11	7	2	9	4	8	12	15	9	24
WINTER	11	4	15	2	2	4	4	9	13	9	12	21
TOTAL	39	36	75	21	10	31	21	19	40	48	44	92

Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States

BOOKS
&
ARTS

by Trita Parsi, Yale University Press, 2007, pp. 361.

Reviewed by Jesse S. Palsetia

Associate Professor, University of Guelph, Canada

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Associate Professor, University of Guelph, Canada

Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States is a history and an analysis of the politico-diplomatic situation between the three nations. Trita Parsi is president of the National Iranian American Council and adjunct professor at the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University. The book notes the nature of the current relationship with the United States and Israel on the one side and Iran on the other, to be a product of the end of the Cold War and the maneuvering of the three countries for supremacy in the Middle East. The book contradicts the perception of the parties as perpetual enemies and notes their overall common interests.

The Iranian Revolution, of 1979 the book notes, changed the public discourse and disrupted the situation. In particular, it introduced the phenomenon of utilizing public rhetoric as part of diplomacy. In the 1980s, the Iranian regime of the Ayatollah Khomeini condemned American and Israeli interests in the region. The rhetoric served to accentuate the revolution's break with the past, and articulated a long-held Iranian grievance of American interference in Iranian affairs. At the same time, the book reiterates, Iranian diplomatic policies were pragmatic and the rhetoric permitted clandestine dealings. In particular, Iran sought to utilize Israel's ties to

the United States to procure military equipment amidst the rise of Saddam Hussein's Iraq. The book notes many instances from the 1980s to the present when Iran made diplomatic overtures to re-establish a working relationship with the United States and Israel over issues. These included pledging to reach a solution on Israel-Palestinian peace, recognition of Israel, non-interference in Lebanon, to fight al-Qaeda, and support the political stabilization of Iraq.

The rhetoric, however, also became part of Israel and American diplomacy. The book details how Israel advocated for Iran to the United States in the 1980s and early 1990s in part to combat the rise of Iraq. However, in the last two decades, with the diminution of Iraqi power in the region, Israel's diplomacy has been to counter Iran's growing influence by way of rhetoric and the pro-Israel lobby in the United States. The rhetoric, the book notes, has been most consequential for the United States. Both international and domestic political considerations have produced an anti-Iranian din in the United States, which combined with a lack of vision in diplomacy have led to lost opportunities. It reached a diatribe under the G.W. Bush Administration, which declared Iran, Iraq and North Korea an 'axis of evil'. American international hegemony and later triumphalism following the invasion of Iraq led to rhetorical and diplomatic confrontation with Iran. In noting American lost opportunities to reach



a working relationship with Iran, the book notes that the proposals of Iran are deserving of, at best, being tested. Ultimately, though, as the theme of the book implies, Iran's overtures on reaching solutions to the issues of the Middle East are also part of a rhetoric that serves Iran's interests for regional supremacy.

Treacherous Alliance's analysis of the motivations and responses of Iran are particularly noteworthy. It demonstrates that Iran's interests are historical and immediate: to exert influence and power in the region; and more importantly, to secure its defense. The latter motivation to secure the revolution and revolutionary regime has dominated Iranian policy since 1979, in the light of the deterioration of American-Iranian relations from the time of the Carter administration, the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf Wars, and the invasion

and occupation of Iraq. Iran's quest for nuclear 'capability', which the book acknowledges as a desire for weapons, can be seen as a direct consequence of the sense of imperilment.

Iran's regional policies and diplomacy must be critically assessed. Whereas Iran's nuclear program may be deemed defensive, there is a difference between securing the defense and integrity of the nation and securing the continuity of a government or regime. The former is a

recognized right under international relations and law, while the latter is a matter of politics. Ironically, the American occupation of Iraq has at present served the enhancement of Iranian regional power, if not supremacy. The level of Iranian rhetoric is also problematic.

The anti-Israel and anti-Jewish rants of Ahmedinejah exceed not only diplomatic but also civilized discourse, and the rhetoric has injurious consequences for Iran's international reputation.

Whereas intrigue and dangerous dealings fill the pages of Treacherous Alliance, the book lays out a hopeful vision that the fundamentals of reaching a modus vivendi between the parties exist. Indeed, the present situation in the Middle East has historical precedent and is unique. It presents the historical issue of how to accommodate the interests of multiple powerful states in a region. At the same time, the presence of a hegemonic power in the form of the United States in the region amidst other powerful states is unique. The American calculus has been to have American and Israeli interests dominate in the region in the interests of stability. Ultimately, as the book notes, the stability of the region must lie in the balancing of all diplomatic interests in the region.

This is an interesting, informative, and important book that lays bare the reality of the Middle East behind the headlines, lack of information, and propaganda prevalent on the subject. The work lays responsibility on all parties for the situation in the region while noting the legitimate and credible claims of all sides to their security. Treacherous Alliance corroborates many aphorisms prevalent in international relations; though, ultimately it confirms that nations have interests, including interests that are both legitimate and manufactured. It reminds readers that foreign affairs, international rivalries, and collective security remain vital issues in the new century, and it exposes the intricacy of international relations that lie behind treacherous alliances.



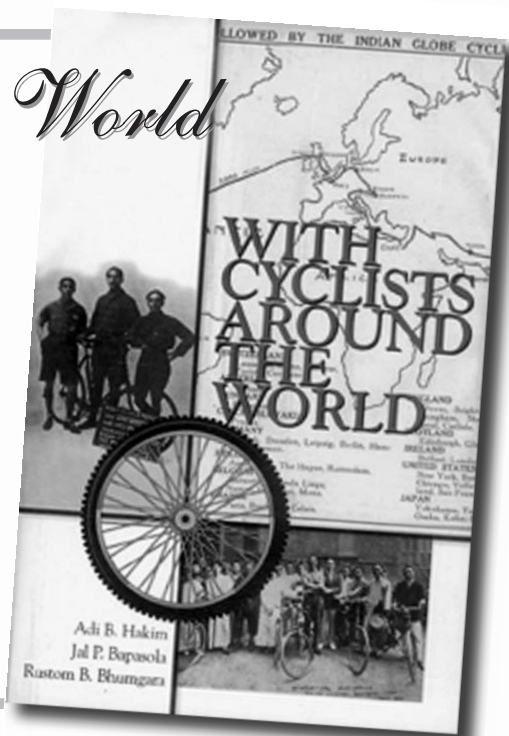
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BUSINESS

IRAs - Ignorance can be hazardous to your Wealth

Farokh Billimoria, MBA, CPA/PFS, CFP®

Second in a series of three articles

In the last issue we covered the ten most common mistakes people make in the handling of their IRAs. In this issue, we will cover a topic that is a veritable landmine when it comes to the handling of IRAs inherited from a decedent. Incidentally, the Tax Code does not consider the surviving spouse to be an "inheritor" of a decedent's IRA. The code essentially defines "inherited" IRAs as those taken over by non-spouse beneficiaries after the IRA account owner's death. Since the penalties and ramifications of incorrect actions are extremely severe, I will list the actions that need to be taken by each category of beneficiary. But first, a few definitions



Farokh Billimoria has an MBA in Finance from the University of Chicago, and is certified in public accounting (CPA) and financial planning (CFP®) and has the Personal Finance Specialist (PFS) designation awarded by the American Inst of CPAs. He has over 25 years of experience in financial/investment advisory services. He currently serves as Summit's Chief Investment Officer. Farokh is the author of the book, *On Golden Pond...or Up the Creek? Making the Right Choices for Your Retirement Security*. The book was a finalist for the Best Books of 2007 in the Business – Personal Finance category. Farokh and his wife Huty reside in Palatine, IL and have two grown sons. GoldenPondRetirement.com

Required Beginning Date (RBD) is the date IRA owners HAVE to start withdrawing funds from their IRA. It is "April 15th of the year following the year the IRA owner reaches age 70½." However, if you wait till that date, you may find yourself having to take two distributions in that year, possibly paying much higher income taxes. To avoid that problem, most IRA owners start their withdrawals in the year they reach 70½.

Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) is the minimum amount the IRA owner needs to withdraw each year from his/her account after reaching RBD. Be sure to use the right Life Expectancy Table when calculating the RMD.

Recalculation of Life Expectancy involves the use of Life Expectancy Tables (Single, Joint, or Uniform) every year to determine the life expectancy. With this method, the life expectancy never reaches zero

No Recalculation of Life Expectancy involves only the initial use of Life Expectancy Tables. Once the life expectancy is determined, the number gets reduced by 1 until it reaches zero. Under the Uniform Tables, for example, even an individual aged 115+ has a life expectancy of 1.9.

SPOUSE AS IRA BENEFICIARY:

1. Name a beneficiary for that IRA
2. If decedent spouse was over 59½ years of age and you are not, do NOT change the title of that IRA to your name. You may need to withdraw some money from that account and could find yourself subject to 10% early withdrawal penalty if you do change the title.
3. Otherwise, rollover to your own IRA and use Uniform Tables at RBD
4. You have to take the decedent's RMD, if applicable, for the year of the decedent's death.
5. If decedent had been taking RMDs, the surviving spouse has to continue taking them using Single Life Expectancy tables, with recalculation.
6. The surviving spouse can remain the beneficiary of the decedent's IRA if he/she is older than the decedent and take RMDs by decedent's age of 70½ using Single Life Tables. Or, on reaching RBD, he/she can rollover to own IRA to use Uniform Tables.
7. When the surviving spouse dies, the beneficiary of the beneficiary (deceased surviving spouse) uses Single Life Expectancy Table using own life expectancy ONLY if surviving spouse had chosen to remain a beneficiary and died before the original IRA owner would have turned 70 ½. Otherwise, the IRA is paid out over the surviving spouse's own life expectancy using Single Tables.

NON-SPOUSE AS IRA BENEFICIARY

1. Name a beneficiary of that inherited IRA as soon as possible.
2. Do not forget to take the RMD for the decedent if he/she was required to, and had not taken it for that year. The RMD is reported on the inheritor's tax returns.

BUSINESS

3. Do not forget to take into account the "basis" of the IRA in case the decedent had made contributions to his/her IRA that had not been claimed as deductions. See if the decedent had filed any Form 8606 in the past to make sure.
4. Above all, do not forget to take your own RMDs on the inherited IRA starting in the year following the year of death, regardless of whether you are 70½ years of age or not. Your life expectancy is based on the Single Life Expectancy Table and is not subject to re-calculation.
5. In cases where the IRA amount was enough to create an income tax liability as well as an estate tax liability, you may be entitled to an Income with Respect to Decedent (IRD) tax deduction every year for as long as you take the RMDs from the decedent's IRA. This is one of the most overlooked items in handling an inherited IRA.
6. Never, ever rollover an inherited IRA to your own IRA. If you do, all of the money in that decedent's IRA will be deemed to be a distribution and subject to income tax. Instead, the inherited IRA should be titled as "John Smith IRA, deceased 6/1/07, f/b/o Tom Smith". The IRA should have the decedent's name and the inheritor's social security number.

So now you realize what a complex job it is to handle a decedent's IRA. Before you take any action, be sure to consult with your tax advisor, and get a second opinion as well. I assure you it will be well worth the time and effort. Not doing so could prove to be hazardous to your wealth.



A Bright Prospect for 2008: Rusi Gandhi Receives RE/MAX 100% Club Circle of Excellence Award.

Mr. Rusi Gandhi received RE/MAX's 100% Club Circle of Excellence Award in the first quarter of 2008. Celebrations for the Award were held in February in Atlantic City.

Rusi offered prospects for global industry growth as he was inaugurated as a WZCC (World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce) World Director, at the 2007 Annual General Meeting in Mumbai. Speaking to about 200 attendees, Rusi outlined six major initiatives for India's real estate industry. Subsequent to his remarks, young real estate entrepreneurs from across the world came for a wise word or two about their dreams and ambitions.

In a brilliant recent transaction, Rusi concluded a seven-figure commercial property deal for acquisition of a thriving business and its real estate. Commercial deals remain more active at present than residential deals.

Rusi is a member of the International Real Estate Federation, FIABCI, which allows him to buy and sell property in 62 foreign countries. His worldwide travel as a World Director for the WZCC helps in building North American and international associations.

The past is prelude to the future in Rusi's case: He began his real estate career while thriving in the face of a 23% interest-rate! Rusi's success --- Realtor, Developer, Investor --- gives a bright prospect in 2008.

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President: Ardeshir Baghkanian; Rep Sohrab Salamatipour

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