



JOURNAL

Tir – Amordad – Shehrever 1378 AY (Fasli)



Behman – Spendarmad 1378 AY, Fravardin 1379 AY (Shenshai)



Spendarmad 1378 AY, Fravardin – Ardibehesht 1379 AY (Kadimi)



Chicago area Zoroastrians celebrate the arrival of the Spring Equinox in a special sunrise ceremony at the lakefront planetarium

Also Inside:



Pakistan Revisited



Passport to Persia Festival



ZAPANJ at the Philadelphia Museum



Navroze Celebrations Across North America



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FALL 2009

From Roots to Wings: The Next Generation of Zarathushti Leaders

Guest editors Jim Engineer, Farah Minwalla,
Mantreh Atashband, Lylah Alphonse

WINTER 2009

Religious Perspectives: The World Parliament of Religions"

Guest Editor

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Photo on cover:



Cover design
Feroza Fitch
of
Lexicongraphics
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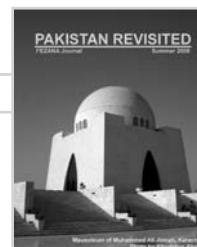
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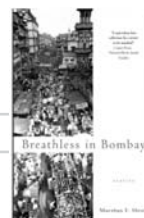
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Opinions expressed in the FEZANA Journal do not necessarily reflect the views of FEZANA or members of this publication's editorial board.

Published at Regal Press, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

FEZANA Journal Vo 23 No 2 ISBN 1068-2376

(USPS 021-495) published quarterly by FEZANA 5750 S. Jackson St Hinsdale IL 60521-5109. Periodical postage rate is paid at Oakbrook, IL 60523 and at additional mailing offices. Annual subscription \$15 (US) ; \$20 (Canada); \$30 (surface) and \$50 (air) for other countries; details on subscription Form. POSTMASTER: send changes to Fezana Journal, 8787 W. Airport Blvd. Houston, TX 77071

A word from the Editor

Dolly Dastoor

ZARATHUSHTI MOSAIC- In Celebration of Diversity

Unity in Diversity is no more evident than in the celebration of NauRooz.

We all spell the most significant event which unites us, differently, in spite of the heroic efforts made by past president Rustom Kevala to make the community in North America adopt an uniform spelling. For this issue of the FEZANA Journal we received materials from several associations across North America and from around the world and each one of them has a different spelling, (and the Journal team made no attempt to make them uniform) each one celebrated Naurooz differently, each one has their own interpretation of haftseen sofreh reflecting their own reality, the haftseen sofrehs are different in Parsi homes from those in Iranian homes. There were intercultural and intracultural differences.

But in spite of all this diversity, there is a glimmer of positive outcomes. In North America, our diversity is gradually disintegrating towards unity. In recognizing our diversity we are becoming more united. We are becoming more united in our diversity. We are beginning to create our own canvas. We are beginning to understand the psyche of each other, understand the mores where each is coming from, and we are coming to a middle ground. The younger generation are of course much more integrated than the older generation.

In what aspects are we diverse? Is it food, language, music, dance, dress, in the practice of religion, our belief system?

But at any social event you see young and old sway to scintillating Persian tunes, waving their hands gracefully, you will hear the Persian National anthem and Chaiye hame Zarathushti sung by all Zarathushtis, Parsia and Iranian, you will find Chelo palo and Laganu nu stew served side by side, And we all speak the common lingua franca of North America, English, though yes we do revert to Gujarati or Farsi when we are with our own for we cannot very well tell a bawaji

joke in Farsi!! There are more Iranian Zarathushtis having the sudreh pushi performed of their children and attending the Jashan ceremonies performed by

Parsi priests. The internet has played a significant part in breaking down this diversity. The cultural and academic events organized by our co-religionists have made us appreciate the zeal felt by the Iranians to show case the rich cultural background of our religion.

Does this mean the Parsis are losing their culture? Or the Iranians are losing theirs? Some die hard purists may think so. But I see this as the beginning of a new amalgamated identity emerging in the diaspora based on mutual respect while the two groups continue to live in their two solitudes in the mother countries.

As you leaf through the pages of this issue of the JOURNAL, give a thought to why we should celebrate our diversity as we are truly writing history together.



Dolly Dastoor

A Message from FEZANA President

The 22nd Annual General meeting of FEZANA was hosted by the Central Florida Group under the leadership of Mr. Mezdi Birdie. We congratulate the CFG members on doing an excellent job of organizing the event.

Mr. Birdie informed me that organizing the AGM brought the community together in an unprecedented way, and he was glad to see volunteers come for the meetings from as far away as Tampa. He was impressed by the way the members got together, and wanted more projects to sustain the momentum and reinforce unity. I congratulate Mr. Mezdi Birdie, Mr. Dinyar Mehta, Ervard Soli Dastur and the CFG Community for a job well done.

Although the AGM went off smoothly and we were able to achieve our goals including that of obtaining the unanimous approval of the North American Zoroastrian Congress (NAZC) and FEZANA Information and Resources Center (FIRES) TOR, we have a growing concern when it comes to the issue of FEZANA donation revenues.

With timely advice from our financial consultant, Mr. Kavasji Dadachanji and Mr. Zubin Bomanshaw of *Integrity Investments*, we converted our investments into cash and saved our investments/endowments from the downward market. However, like any other non-profit organization, we too saw a sharp drop in our donation income.

In the year 2007 our total income was \$ 443,723 while last year, in 2008, we saw our income reduced to \$ 144,518.

Some additional breakup of income

	2008	2007
General Contributions:	\$26,513	\$ 40,183
Welfare and Critical Assistance		
	\$25,883	\$ 90,494
Infrastructure		
	\$ 401	\$ 94,680
Interest and Dividend		
	\$ 18,597	\$ 31,572



For the first time FEZANA members and committee chairs had to re-visit the proposed budget of \$187,200 and cutback to \$126,000/- I thank all members and committee chairs for unanimously accepting the budget cut.

Even then we have supported 100% allocation for ZYNA (Youth), Academic Scholarships, Manuscript Preservation, Sports, UN/NGO, Jungalwala Lecture Series. Other committees have absorbed 5-100% reductions.

The Fundraising Committee Chair, Mr. Jerry Kheradi, launched a new program "The Fareshta Challenge" which should bring in some additional revenue this year with the support and co-operation of the associations.

We all understand that the times are trying for everyone. However we do need to support our community.

If you are contributing to United Ways, you can direct those contributions to FEZANA through United Ways. To forward your funds, they will require the FEZANA 501C3 registration Federal ID 36-3521343. Please check with your company HR. Your company may even decide to match your contribution.

I appeal with the hope that the Zarathushti community will consider our request and donate generously to FEZANA.

Bomi Patel
FEZANA President



Chaordica

Edward Lorenz, a meteorologist at the Massachusetts Institutes of Technology in Boston, is credited with the formulation of the chaos theory in modern times. In a paper entitled: **"Predictability: Does the Flap of a Butterfly's Wings in Brazil Set Off a Tornado in Texas?"** he shared the observation of the sensitive dependence on initial conditions which can affect drastically the long term behavior of complex systems. Chaos theory has applications not only in mathematical models to predict weather patterns, but in biological, physical and social settings. A combination of chaos and order, termed "chaordic" has been applied to leadership in Business Management (1). The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce [WZCC] promotes itself as a chaordic organization. For the WZCC, the order comes from the definition of a stated goal which is accepted by all who choose to belong to the organization, and the chaos is embedded in their freedom to choose how best to accomplish that goal. Within a year, it will be close to a decade since the official launch of the WZCC at the 7th World Zoroastrian Congress and the jury is still out as to whether this model works in reaching its stated goal i.e. to energize and reinvigorate the entrepreneurial spirit among Zarathushtis globally.

Does the chaordic model work in human relationships? Was the recent economic meltdown, the worst in a generation, and its aftermath, a manifestation of a global chaordica? Where can we look to validate the model? Is there an example of a social **chaordica** which has stood the test of time? The answer is illustrated in this issue of the Journal (pages 9-64.).

THE VALUE OF TRADITION

The tradition of the Haft Sheen Sofreh celebrating Jamshedi Norooz over millennia is a prime example of an extremely successful chaordica which draws on a widely abundant, often



neglected resource – human ingenuity! The goal is to pass on the ethical and moral values of our Zarathushti belief systems to future generations – the (Haft) seven pillars, where Ahura Mazda guides Man, Nature and Cosmos through the gifts of Asha, Vohu Mana, Khashathra, Armaiti, Huarvatat and Ameratat. Over the centuries and through generations, the message has endured. No two Haft Seen tables are identical. In letting loose chaos that engenders creativity, we are blessed with beautiful renderings: a colorful montage celebrating Jamshedi Norooz from around the world as each individual, each family, each nation, each culture in its own distinctive style incorporates local flavors and yet keeps true to the original intent of the celebration.

Traditions are a gift from our ancestors passing on experiential knowledge. What other messages are embedded in the traditions at *Norooz*?

- The items selected for the haft seen table: the flowers and fruits (pomegranate, apple), the greens, berries, nuts, water, milk, are selections made through observation and trials as to what is good for healthy living to be cherished and passed on to posterity.
- The preparation prior to setting up the Haft Seen table, "*Khune Tekani*" shines a light on the sagacious wisdom of eliminating clutter:

Behram Pastakia

"Everything in its place and a place for everything" after spring cleaning in our homes.

- The fact that *Norooz* is celebrated at the precise moment of the spring equinox, reminds us of the importance of punctuality and of timeliness in our undertakings. *Sisdeh Bedar* brings us up close to the laws of nature to remind us of *asha* (which stands not only for truth but also for order). The chaordic tradition, *Rooze Derekhtkari*, focuses our minds on our duty to care for creation as rejuvenators of the earth (pages 118-120..).

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

What other lessons does Lorenz's Butterfly from Brazil teach us? We cannot even begin to imagine how a single word of encouragement or an acknowledgement of service to the community rendered by a child shall translate into the behavior of that individual in adulthood. What unknown effect a kind word or recognition of a job well done shall have on this complex system – the human; and on the other complex system, the community? For us, it is crucial to take each opportunity presenting itself as an obligation – to Celebrate, to Promote, to Uplift our next generation so that they shall successfully carry the torch forward, keeping focused on the goal in mind, long after we are gone from this earth – to lead the good life, the ethical, the moral, the prosperous life in harmony and in peace.

(1) Hock, Dee "The Art of Chaordic Leadership" Leader to Leader. 15 (Winter 2000): 20-26.

"Kind hearts are the garden, Kind thoughts are the roots, Kind words are the flowers, Kind deeds are the fruits, take care of your garden And keep out the weeds, Fill it with sunshine, Kind words and Kind deeds"

---Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882)

Behram Pastakia is Chair of the Publication Committee of FEZANA



Presently we are in the midst of the **“FARESHTA CHALLENGE.”** On January 1, 2009 we launched a new program to raise funds for FEZANA – “The FARESHTA Challenge.” There are two goals for this program. The first goal is to increase support and awareness for the FEZANA funds and programs. The second goal is to build community spirit and increase awareness of the larger Zarathushti community by having the local associations work together for a united cause. To accomplish these goals, we structured this program in the form of a competition. We have divided the associations and small groups into teams by geographical areas. The teams will try to raise money for the FEZANA funds and programs over a period of two years, from January 1, 2009 to December, 2010. The winning team will be announced at the North American Congress in Houston, December 2010. Each association on the winning team will be presented with a plaque.

To achieve these goals, we would like to make a few suggestions. Associations should adopt a FEZANA Fund or program just like corporations have adopted a highway in their name. At your local association fund raisers, associations should set aside a % of the funds raised to give to their “adopted” FEZANA fund. Associations that are very close to each other could join together in holding raffles, walkathons etc. to raise money and have fun

FARESHTA CHALLENGE

working together to support the Zarathushti community. FEZANA Funds and programs need more community awareness and support to succeed. With your help all the FEZANA funds will be well supported, especially during these very difficult times.

The FARESHTA CHALLENGE TEAMS are:

TEAM 1 – OZCF, CZO, ZAQ, ZAAC, Z CLEVELAND

TEAM 2 – ZAGBA, ZAPANJ, ZAGNY, IZA, ZAPA

TEAM 3 – ZAMWI, ZAZ, Z VIRGINIA, ZAF, ZATAMBAY, CENTRAL FL

TEAM 4 – ZAH, ZANT, ZCAT, ZAK, ZANO, Z ST. LOUIS

TEAM 5 – ZAC (CHICAGO), ZAKOI, ZAOM, ZARM, Z MINNESOTA

TEAM 6 – ZAA, ZSBC, ZANC, PZO, ZSWS

TEAM 7 – ZCZ, TMZA, ZAC (CALIFORNIA), ZAAZ, SAN DIEGO

Thank you for your help in launching the *FARESHTA Challenge*. All funds donated by individuals, families or associations will be taken into account and added to the *FARESHTA Challenge*. Kindly make your check payable to FEZANA and mail to *FEZANA Treasurer, Katayun Kapadia 33 Preamble Drive, Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054*. You can also make secure online donations at www.FEZANA.org.

*Jerry Kheradi, MD, FACG,
Chairperson, FEZANA Funds and Finance
Morvarid Behziz, M.Ed., Co-chairperson
Katayun Kapadia, Treasurer
Sassan Nadjmi, DMD, FACP
Celeste Kheradi*

ADOPT A FEZANA FUND

**GIVE GENEROUSLY
TO A FEZANA FUND OF YOUR CHOICE**



List of Donations received January 1, through March 31, 2009

(In US \$)

FEZANA GENERAL FUND	
Traditional Mazdayasni Zoroastrian Anjuman (TMZA)	\$ 150.00
Zarathosti Anjuman of Northern California (ZANC)	\$ 150.00
Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC - California)	\$ 101.00
Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania & New Jersey (ZAPANJ)	\$ 100.00
Artemis Javanshir, Tarzana, CA	\$ 100.00
Microsoft Giving Campaign Matching Funds	\$ 100.00
Marzban Daroowalla, Westminster, MD	\$ 31.00
Anonymous	\$ 25.00
Sheroo Rusby, Arlington, VA	\$ 25.00
Armaity Watchha, Gilroy, CA	\$ 25.00
Saghar Behrooz, Flower Mound, TX	\$ 20.00
TOTAL	\$ 827.00
FEZANA WELFARE FUND	
Porus Austin, Stockton, CA	\$ 1,500.00
FEZANA/Zoroastrian Sports Committee (for Navroze Baug Sports Center)	\$ 1,000.00
Prochy Sethna, San Jose, CA	\$ 500.00
Zoroastrian Association of Alberta (ZAA)	\$ 453.28
Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington (ZAMWI)	\$ 300.00
Zenobia & Behram Panthaki, Falls Church, VA	\$ 150.00
Nazneen & Meheli warden, Sugar Land, TX	\$ 50.00
TOTAL	\$ 3,953.28
FEZANA CRITICAL ASSISTANCE FUND	
Beach Cigar Group, Miami, FL	\$ 700.00
Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania & New Jersey (ZAPANJ)	\$ 751.00
Prochy Sethna, San Jose, CA	\$ 500.00
TOTAL	\$ 1,951.00
FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP FUND	
Donations received in the Memory of Dady Kapadia:	
Deloitte Services LP, Hermitage, TN	\$ 300.00
Minoo Adenwalla, Appleton, WI	\$ 200.00
James & Kim Balaschak, Wilton, CT	\$ 200.00
Gregory & Carol Lindstrom, Napa, CA	\$ 200.00
Douglas & Suzanne Bade, Kenilworth, IL	\$ 100.00
John Naitoh & Rebecca Zeiner, La Jolla, CA	\$ 100.00
Scott & Terri Akman, Voorhees, NJ	\$ 50.00
Jayme M. Nozzi, San Luis Obispo, CA	\$ 50.00
David & Diana O'Brien, Cincinnati, OH	\$ 50.00
Michael & Joyce Patrick, Jamison, PA	\$ 50.00
Margaret & Robert McGrath, Los Altos, CA	\$ 25.00
William & Ellen Wagner, Chadds Ford, PA	\$ 25.00
SUB-TOTAL	\$ 1,350.00
Sorab & Mahrukh Panday, Herndon, VA	\$ 200.00
Farokh Billimoria, Palatine, IL	\$ 50.00
Nergis Rumwalla, Cupertino, CA	\$ 25.00
TOTAL	\$ 1,625.00
FEZANA CREATIVE & PERFORMING ARTS SCHOLARSHIP FUND	
Sorab & Mahrukh Panday, Herndon, VA	\$ 200.00
TOTAL	\$ 200.00
PROJECT AMORDAD	
Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington (ZAMWI)	\$ 250.00
TOTAL	\$ 250.00
ZYNA - NORTH AMERICAN YOUTH CONGRESS	
Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC - California)	\$ 250.00
TOTAL	\$ 250.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 9,056.28

TRUST

must be earned

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COMING EVENTS

JUNE 2009 COLLOQUIUM ON THE GATHAS OF ZARATHUSHTRA
SPONSORED BY WZO, ZAGNY, FEZANA- June 27-28, 2009 in New York City *Gatha Perceptions: from Past to Future* www.zagny.org

JULY 2009 12th NORTH AMERICAN ZOROASTRIAN YOUTH CONGRESS 12th North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress, July 1-5, 2009, Freemont, Cal, ZYNA in association with FEZANA Call 630-468-2705 or admin@fezana.org

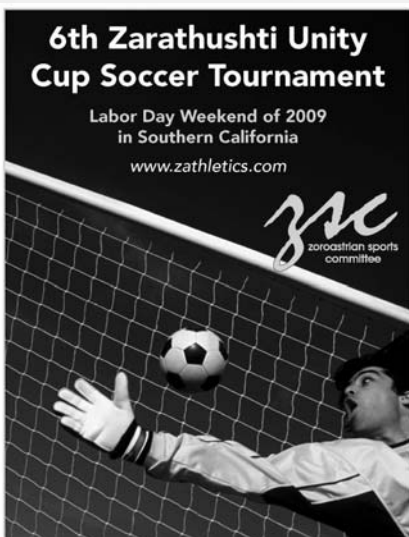
SEPTEMBER 9-11 2009 62nd Annual DPI/NGO Conference "For peace and Development Disarm Now " Mexico City,

SEPTEMBER 12, 2009 NAMC SEMINAR "The Divine Message" ZAPANJ Contact fsidhva@comcast.net; F. Sidhva tkm_11@yahoo.com Tina Mehta

OCTOBER 18, 2009 911 UNITY WALK *Celebrating Diversity - Uniting to Serve*, Embassy Row (Mass Ave , NW) Washington DC Visit www.911unitywalk.org

NOVEMBER 2009 GRAND SSZ conference, in Mumbai
The Scholarly Society of Zarathushtis has organized a conference November 6- 8 2009 at the Banaji Atashbehrum Hall, Mumbai
Contact Pallan Ichaporia, keregar@aol.com
RohintonRivetna_rivetna@aol.com or Ervad Pervaz Bajan pmbajan@gmail.com

DECEMBER 2009 Fifth Coming Together Roundtable
Hamazor Hama Asho Baad, December 30, 2009 in Dubai
To submit items for the agenda contact: Rohinton Rivetna rivetna@aol.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>



**STAND UP! TAKE ACTION!
END POVERTY NOW
OCTOBER 16th, 17th, 18th, 2009:**
Download the SUTA 2009 Announcement
To organize and register your local event visit:
www.standagainstopoverty.org

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 2010, FIFTEENTH NORTH AMERICAN ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS HOUSTON , TEXAS, www.zah.org

AUGUST 2012, SIXTEENTH NORTH AMERICAN ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS NEW YORK , www.zagny.org
"Zoroastrian existence in the Contemporary world "

SEPTEMBER 21 2009

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE WITH WORLD LEADERS AT 64TH SESSION OF UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY , NEW YORK

**"WE MUST DISARM
GLOBAL CALL FOR
CEASE-FIRE AND
NON-VIOLENCE "**



Calendar of Festivals

Calendar of Festivities March 2009 to September 2009

Fravardegan/Panjeh/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar

Five Gatha Days

Monday, March 16-Friday, March 20 (F)

Char-Shambe Soori (Heralding the New Year)

Tuesday Prior to Naurooz

Tuesday, March 17 (F)

NauRoouz or Jamshedi NauRoouz (New Year)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd

Saturday, March 21 (F)

Khordad Sal (Birth anniversary of Asho Zarathushtra)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Khorshed

Thursday, March 26, (F)

Pir e Herisht Festival

Mah Fravardin, Roz Amardad-Khorshed

Friday, March 27-Tuesday March 31 (F)

Ava Ardvisoor nu Parab

Mah Avan, Roz Avan

Tuesday, February 24, (K)

Thursday, March 26, (S)

Fravardegan (Remembrance of the Departed)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin

Wednesday, April. 8. (F)

Jashne Ardibeshtgan

Mah Ardibesht, Roz Ardibehesht

Wednesday, April, 22. (F)

Atash-nu-Parab

Mah Adar, Roz Adar,

Wednesday, March 25 (K)

Friday, April, 24 (S)

, (F)

Maidyozarem Gahambar

Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed-Dae-pa-Meher

Thursday, April 30-Sunday, May 4

Zarathusht-no-Diso (Death anniversary of Asho Zarathushtra)

Mah Dae, Roz, Khorshed

Sunday, April, 26, (K)

Tuesday, May, 26 (S)

Dae Mah nu Jashan

Mah Dae, Roz Fravardin

Monday, May, 4 (K)

Wednesday, June, 3 (S)

Maidhyarem Gahambar

Mah Dae, Roz Meher-Bahram

Friday, May1-Tuesday, May 5 (K)

Sunday, May 31-Thursday, June 4 (S)

Pir-e-Sabz Festival

Mah Khordad, Roz Ashtad-Aneran

Sunday, June 14 - Thursday, June 18. (F)

Pir-e-Banu Festival

Mah Tir, Roz Meher-Bahram

Saturday, July 4-Wed July 8 (F)

Maidyoshem Gahambar

Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed-Dae pa-Meher

Monday, June 29-Friday July 3 (F)

Jashne Tirgan

Mah Tir, Roz Tir

Wednesday, July 1, (F)

Fravardegan/Muktad/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar

Five Gatha Days

Wednesday July 15- Sunday, July 19 (K)

Friday, August 14-Tuesday, August 18 (Pateti) (S)

NauRoouz

Mah Fravadin, Roz Hormazd

Monday, July 20 (K)

Wednesday, August 19 (S)

Khordad Sal (Birth anniversary of Zarathushtra)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad

Saturday, July 25 (K)

Monday, August, 24 (S)

Fravardian Jashan

Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin

Friday, August 7, (K)

Sunday, September, 6 (S)

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



N O R O O Z

Narooz Nauroz,
 Nauruz Nauruz
 Navrez Navroj,
 Navroz Navroze,
 Navruz Naw-Rúz,
 Navroz Nauruz
 Nevruz, Newroz
 Newruz Neyruz
 Habb'3, Nooruz
 Norooz Norouz
 Noruz Novruz,
 Nowroj, Nowrouz
 Nowruz Narooz
 Nauroz Nauruz
 Nauruz Navrez
 Navroj, Navroz
 Navroze, Navruz
 Naw-Rúz Navroz
 Navruz Nevruz
 Newroz Newruz
 Neyruz Habb'3,
 Nooruz Norooz
 Norouz Noruz
 Novruz, Nowroj,
 Nowrouz Nowruz
 نوروز



CELEBRATION OF NOROOZ AROUND THE WORLD

Bomi Patel, President of FEZANA had written to the President of the United States of America urging him to maintain the tradition started of a proclamation and reception for NouRoos in the White House and to Congressman Mike Honda to include the Zoroastrian presence when he announced a resolution in the House of Representatives for NouRoos. (see letters attached). By celebrating NoRoos together, we are showing our pride in our enlightened heritage and common spirituality.

Dolly Dastoor and Khosro Mehrafar again co-ordinated the efforts.

And wow what a celebration we had. There were celebrations in all the cities of FEZANA member associations, in Central Asia, in Iran, England, Australia, Singapore, India etc.

It was very heartening to see the participation of children in all countries (see photo montage pages 65-71)

There was also recognition for NoRoos at the highest level of the executive, President Obama made a broadcast, resolutions by Representatives in Congress Honda and Sanchez recognition in the Ontario Legislative assembly, radio shows on Radio Canada Internationale, newspaper articles in Los Angeles Times, Singapore Straits and Chicago Tribune, the Persian Parade in New York, special events and museum displays in Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles and Washington,

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 Mehrfar

March 21 2008 was of special significance as the calendars of five different religions coincided, giving each faith a reason to celebrate the day. This was indeed a "blessed weekend".

March 21 2009 was of historical significance as well, as the sunrise coincided with the vernal equinox and it happened on the North American Continent. The sun rose at 86 degrees longitude at the time of the equinox. This happened through Chattanooga, Tennessee; Fort Wayne, Indiana and a few miles east of Chicago and west of Louisville, Kentucky. In Chicago the sun rose at 11.54 GMT and this event was celebrated by the Zarathushtis of Chicago on the shores of Lake Michigan at the Adler Planetarium. The astronomical event will occur after 72 years

Tradition takes Nourooz 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.

Nourooz, the most elaborate festival 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.



NOROOZ



Representing 26 Zoroastrian Associations and 12 Small Groups in the USA and Canada

<http://www.fezana.org>

The Honorable President Barack Obama
White House,
1600 Pennsylvania Ave,
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Sir,

On behalf of the Zoroastrian community of North America, and the Executive of the Federation of the Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA), which make up 20,000 Zarathushtis across the continent, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on being elected as the 44th President of the United States of America. We are proud to hail you as "our" President.

Our small but significant community, especially our youth were actively engaged in the political processes of this great country. Many were involved in voter registration drives and in your campaign, and many others had the opportunity to cast their vote in this historic election for the first time.

Mr. President, March 21st the spring equinox is of special significance to the Zoroastrians and the Persian speaking peoples of Iran, India, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kurdistan, It is on this day that they celebrate their New Year.(NouRouz) Today the people of Persian descent are spread all over the world and irrespective of their varied religious beliefs and nationality celebrate NouRouz. This day has both a religious and a cultural significance to our community and is celebrated with great fervor.

The ancient Persians celebrated NouRouz (New Day- the coinciding of the sunrise with the equinox) as a special event when it happened in their kingdom. In 1725 BCE the vernal equinox coincided with sun rise at the town of Sistan, 62 degrees longitude, as a result of which the New Year and the New Day began at the same time. This phenomenon happens every year at a different longitude and could repeat itself at the same longitude probably once in a millennium..

The NouRouz of 2009 or the coinciding of the sunrise with the vernal equinox will happen on the North American continent. The sun will rise at about 86 degrees longitude at the time of the equinox (11:43 GMT/UTC). This happens to pass through Chattanooga, Tennessee, Fort Wayne Indiana and a few miles east of Chicago and west of Louisville Kentucky. In Chicago the sun will rise at 11:54GMT/UTC and in Louisville Kentucky the sun will rise at 11:46GMT/UTC. This will be a second historic event for Chicago and the United States in 2009. It is time to revive the ancient festival with fresh vigor and understanding, introduce this ancient wisdom to the world which was long known before Galileo.

In previous years the White House had a proclamation honoring NouRouz but in 2008 a special reception was held where the Haft seen table was laid out for the first time at the White House. We urge you Mr. President to continue with this tradition of proclamation and a reception and request you as our President (and the White House staff) that while arranging the NouRouz Table at the White House, to kindly highlight the philosophy behind the NouRouz Table (Pls. see attached), which is the path followed in nature, of progress towards perfection, thus bring peace and tranquility to the world specially the financial world. Where, satisfaction is to be derived by perfecting a product and not in the scale of its monetary benefits.

May your leadership guide us to the path of righteousness and success crown your every endeavor.
May God Bless You and America.

Bomi Patel,
FEZANA President
(www.fezana.org)

FEZANA Office: 8615 Meadowbrook Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527
Registered Address: 5750 S. Jackson St., Hinsdale, IL 60521, U.S.A.



Narooz Nauroz,
Nauruz Nauruz
Navrez Navroj,
Navroz Navroze,
Navruz Naw-Rúz,



Nowruz Narooz
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Nauruz Navrez
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Nooruz Norooz
Norouz Noruz
Novruz, Nowroj,
Nowrouz Nowruz

نوروز



PRESIDENT OBAMA SPEAKS TO LEADERS AND PEOPLE OF IRAN SEEKING PARTNERSHIP IN CELEBRATION OF NOWRUZ

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

March 20, 2009

THE PRESIDENT: Today I want to extend my very best wishes to all who are celebrating Nowruz around the world.

This holiday is both an ancient ritual and a moment of renewal, and I hope that you enjoy this special time of year with friends and family.

In particular, I would like to speak directly to the people and leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Nowruz is just one part of your great and celebrated culture. Over many centuries your art, your music, literature and innovation have made the world a better and more beautiful place.

Here in the United States our own communities have been enhanced by the contributions of Iranian Americans. We know that you are a great civilization, and your accomplishments have earned the respect of the United States and the world.

For nearly three decades relations between our nations have been strained. But at this holiday we are reminded of the common humanity that binds us together. Indeed, you will be celebrating your New Year in much the same way that we Americans mark our holidays -- by gathering with friends and family, exchanging gifts and stories, and looking to the future with a renewed sense of hope.

Within these celebrations lies the promise of a new day, the promise of opportunity for our children, security for our families, progress for our communities, and peace between nations. Those are shared hopes, those are common dreams.

So in this season of new beginnings I would like to speak clearly to Iran's leaders. We have serious differences that have grown over time. My administration is now committed to diplomacy that addresses the full range of issues before us, and to pursuing constructive ties among the United States, Iran and the international community. This process will not be advanced by threats. We seek instead engagement that is honest and grounded in mutual respect.

You, too, have a choice. The United States wants the Islamic Republic of Iran to take its rightful place in the community of nations. You have that right -- but it comes with real responsibilities, and that place cannot be reached through terror or arms, but rather through peaceful actions that demonstrate the true greatness of the Iranian people and civilization. And the measure of that greatness is not the capacity to destroy, it is your demonstrated ability to build and create.

So on the occasion of your New Year, I want you, the people and leaders of Iran, to understand the future that we seek. It's a future with renewed exchanges among our people, and greater opportunities for partnership and commerce. It's a future where the old divisions are overcome, where you and all of your neighbors and the wider world can live in greater security and greater peace.

I know that this won't be reached easily. There are those who insist that we be defined by our differences. But let us remember the words that were written by the poet Saadi, so many years ago: *"The children of Adam are limbs to each other, having been created of one essence."*

With the coming of a new season, we're reminded of this precious humanity that we all share. And we can once again call upon this spirit as we seek the promise of a new beginning.

Thank you,.

Also available with Persian subtitles <http://www.whitehouse.gov/Nowruz/> .



NOROOZ



<http://www.fezana.org>
Representing 26 Zoroastrian Associations and 12 Small Groups in the USA and Canada

March 17, 2009

Respected Congressman Mike Honda,
Congressional District 15, California.

Dear Sir,

Sub: Your announcement for a Resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives in observance and celebration of NouRouz (New Year).

I Bomi Patel, am a resident of San Jose- California. I am also the President of FEZANA - Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America.

On behalf of the Zoroastrian community of North America, and the Executive of the Federation of the Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA), which constitute about 20,000+ Zoroastrians across the continent, (1000+ in your own Santa Clara County), I take this opportunity to congratulate and thank you on deciding to introduce a resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives this week in observance and celebration of NouRouz (New Year).

Sir, March 21st, the spring equinox, is of special significance to the Zoroastrians and the Persian speaking peoples of Iran, India, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kurdistan. It is on this day that they celebrate their New Year- (NouRouz). Today the people of Persian descent are spread all over the world and irrespective of their varied religious beliefs and nationality celebrate NouRouz. This day has both a religious and a cultural significance for our community and is celebrated with great fervor.

The ancient Persians celebrated NouRouz (New Day- the coinciding of the sunrise with the equinox) as a special event when it happened in Iran and the rest of the Persian Empire. In 1725 BCE the vernal equinox coincided with the sun rise at the town of Sistan , 62 degrees longitude, as a result of which the New Year and the New Day commenced at the same time. This phenomenon happens every year at a different longitude and could repeat itself at the same longitude probably once in a millennium.

The NouRouz of 2009, or the coinciding of the sun rise with the vernal equinox, will be observed in the North American continent. The sun will rise at about 86 degrees longitude at the time of the equinox (11:43 GMT/UTC). This happens to pass through Chattanooga , Tennessee , Fort Wayne Indiana and a few miles east of Chicago and west of Louisville Kentucky . In Chicago the sun will rise at 11:54GMT/UTC and in Louisville Kentucky the sun will rise at 11:46GMT/UTC.

It is time to revive the celebration of this ancient festival with renewed vigor and understanding and to re- introduce this ancient wisdom to the world which was known long before Galileo's astronomical innovations. In previous years the White House had a proclamation celebrating NouRouz. In 2008 a special reception was held where the Haftseen table was laid out for the first time in the White House.

Sir, I request you to kindly include a mention of Zoroastrians in your announcement for the resolution that is to be brought before the U. S. House of Representatives. I make this request on behalf of the 20,000+ strong Zoroastrian community of North America, which includes the 1000+ Zoroastrians of the Congressional District 15 and over 3500 other Zoroastrians of California.

May your leadership guide us to the path of righteousness and may success crown your every endeavor. May God Bless You and America.

Bomi Patel

FEZANA President

President@fezana.org (<http://www.fezana.org>)



N O R O O Z

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Navruz Naw-Rúz
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Nawruz Nevruz
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Neyruz Habb ʔ3,
Nooruz Norooz
Norouz Noruz
Novruz, Nowroj,
Nowrouz Nowruz

نوروز

Nowruz Resolution Introduced in the United States Congress



March 19, 2009, Washington, D.C. - Congressman Michael M. Honda (CA-15th) introduced a resolution in honor of the Iranian New Year, into the House of Representatives on March 19, 2009. The resolution recognizes the cultural and historical significance of Nowruz, expresses appreciation to Iranian Americans for their contributions to American society, and wishes Iranian Americans, the people of Iran, and all those who celebrate the holiday a prosperous new year.

The resolution has a total of 25 original cosponsors and marks the first time that members of Congress have introduced a measure recognizing the cultural and historical significance of Nowruz.

Cosponsors include but are not limited to, Representatives John Conyers (MI -14th), Bob Filner (CA-51st), John Lewis (GA-5th), Suzanne Kosmas (FL-24th), Zoe Lofgren (CA-16th), Carolyn Maloney (NY-14th), James Moran (VA-8th), Linda Sanchez (CA-39th), John Tierney (MA-6th), and Frank Wolf (VA-10th).



Congresswoman Sanchez Issues Statement on Nowruz for the Congressional Record March 19, 2009



"Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Nowruz which marks the traditional Iranian New Year and dates back more than 3,000 years. Nowruz, literally meaning "new day," celebrates the arrival of spring and occurs on the vernal equinox, which this year will happen exactly on Friday, March 20th at 7:44 am eastern daylight time. It symbolizes a time of renewal, harkening the departure from the trials and tribulations of the previous year and bringing hope for the New Year. It is celebrated by more than three hundred million Iranians and other peoples all over the world.

Closer to home, more than one million Iranian Americans of all backgrounds, including those of Baha'i, Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Zoroastrian faiths, will be celebrating Nowruz. Recognizing the cultural and historical significance of this day and in its honor, I express my appreciation for the contributions of Iranian-Americans to American society and wish all those who observe this holiday a happy and prosperous new year."

Our thanks to Niaz Kasravi, Ph.D. of the PAAIA for bringing this resolution to our attention. Ed. FEZANA JOURNAL





CANADIAN PARLIAMENT DESIGNATES FIRST DAY OF SPRING AS "NOWRUZ DAY" . THE MINISTER OF CITIZENSHIP, IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURALISM JASON KENNY ISSUES STATEMENT ON NOWRUZ

Liberals' motion, which was initially rejected by conservatives last week, passed through the House of Commons by unanimous consent on March 30th, 2009, Toronto Iranians reported.

Establishing Nowruz Day is breakthrough in recognizing the influential role of the Iranian-Canadian community in Canadian life and culture, said Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff.

Despite resistance from Conservative government members, I am happy to see that the Parliament of Canada has designated the first day of spring as Nowruz Day, he said.

"This recognition by the Canadian Parliament of such an important cultural tradition underscores our commitment to the multicultural society we have built together."

Liberal parliamentarian for Richmond Hill Bryon Wilfert also expressed his delight saying, *"This is a victory for multiculturalism and specifically for all those Canadians of Persian descent that hold the celebration of Nowruz so dear."*



The World Zoroastrian Organisation

135 TENNISON ROAD, SOUTH NORWOOD, LONDON SE25 5NF

Website: www.w-z-o.org

Charity No. 1023334

11 Beeches Wood
Kingswood
Tadworth
Surrey KT20 6PR

21st March 2009

Mr. Bomi Patel
FEZANA President
4296 Mountcastle Way,
San Jose, Ca 95136
USA

Dear Bomi,

I was delighted to read your correspondence sent to The Honourable President Barak Obama at the White House and Respected Congressman Mike Honda of California, on the subject of passing a Resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives in observance and celebration of NowRouz (New Year).

May I on behalf of the WZO International Board congratulate you and the Board of FEZANA on the successful implementation of the **Persian New Year Resolution** which was passed into the House of Representatives on March 19, 2009 and included Zoroastrians amongst the other faiths mentioned.

Your success in achieving recognition of the Zoroastrian faith and community at a Congressional level reflects in a positive light on the whole worldwide Zoroastrian community. Wishing you and your family Navroze Mubarak.

With sincere best wishes,

Sammy Bhiwandiwalla
Chairman WZO

THE WORLD ZOROASTRIAN ORGANISATION LIMITED.
Registration No. 1510380 Cardiff England

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Incorporated 1980



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Nooruz Norooz
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Novruz, Nowroj,
Nowrouz Nowruz
نوروز

2nd Session, 40th Parliament,
57-58 Elizabeth II, 2009

2^e session, 40^e législature,
57-58 Elizabeth II, 2009

HOUSE OF COMMONS OF CANADA

CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES DU CANADA

BILL C-342

PROJET DE LOI C-342

An Act respecting Nowruz Day

Loi instituant le Jour du Norouz

Preamble

Whereas “Nowruz” means “New Day” in Persian and traditionally marks the astronomical beginning of spring and the beginning of the Persian new year;

Whereas it is a time of great joy and family celebrations shared by people of many faiths and in many countries that trace their history back to the ancient Mesopotamian civilization and the Persian Empire;

And whereas many Canadians celebrate Nowruz;

Now, therefore, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:

SHORT TITLE

Short title

1. This Act may be cited as the *Nowruz Day Act*.

NOWRUZ DAY

Nowruz Day

2. Throughout Canada, in each and every year, the vernal equinox (first day of spring) shall be known as “Nowruz Day”.

Not a legal holiday

3. For greater certainty, Nowruz Day is not a legal holiday or a non-juridical day.

Attendu :

que « Norouz » signifie « jour nouveau » en langue persane et que ce jour marque traditionnellement le début du printemps astronomique et du nouvel an persan;

qu’il s’agit d’une occasion de grande joie et de réjouissances familiales que célèbrent les gens de nombreuses confessions dans bon nombre de pays dont l’histoire remonte à la civilisation mésopotamienne antique et à l’Empire perse;

qu’un nombre important de Canadiens fêtent le Norouz,

Sa Majesté, sur l’avis et avec le consentement du Sénat et de la Chambre des communes du Canada, édicte :

TITRE ABRÉGÉ

1. *Loi sur le Jour du Norouz*.

JOUR DU NOROUZ

2. Le jour de l’équinoxe de printemps (le début du printemps) est, dans tout le Canada, désigné comme « Jour du Norouz ».

3. Il est entendu que le Jour du Norouz n’est pas une fête légale ni un jour non juridique.

Préambule

Titre abrégé

Jour du Norouz

Statut

402232

Published under authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Available from:
Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5
Telephone: (613) 941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943
Fax: (613) 954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
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Publié avec l’autorisation du président de la Chambre des communes

Disponible auprès de:
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5
Téléphone: (613) 941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943
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No Ruz: The Ancient Persian New Year That Lives On

RASHNA WRITER

Zoroastrianism played a central role in the development of forms of traditions and the dialectic which shaped the earliest Iranian thinking. Zarathustra taught that there were two original principles co-existent from the beginning were twinned as the two mainyus – motivating forces, confronting humankind on earth. One is *Spenta (beneficent)*, which adheres to Ahura Mazda; the other is evil, further explained as *Angra (hostile)*. They are diametrically opposed in Thought, Word and Action, the pivotal ethical triad of Zarathustra's teachings: *humata, hukhta, huvaresha*. Angra Mainyu however, while being wholly evil, is finite in time. Ahura Mazda is assisted in this task of overcoming evil by a heptad of Amesha Spentas and yazatas (those worthy of reverence). Man and the other creations of Ahura Mazda, the physical manifestations of the Amesha Spentas: sky, water, earth, animals, plants and fire, are to work in harmony, thus linking the material and spiritual worlds. Man's role in this scheme of things is pivotal. He is given choice and free will. The heaven or hell he went to after this life was deemed to be the direct result of his thoughts, words and deeds. The future resurrection of the body and the Last Judgement after which everlasting life for the reunited body and soul would ensue are, in Zoroastrian terms, the ultimate *Frasho-kereti* ("making good") of Ahura Mazda's good creation.

Which brings us to the significance of No Ruz: the most important celebration in the Zoroastrian calendar, it is the seventh festival associated with the seventh creation, fire.

It is thought that Zarathushtra imposed only two obligations on his followers: to pray five times a day; and communal celebrations of the seven seasonal festivals or gahambars. Appropriately, six of these feasts are celebrated in mid-spring; mid-summer; feast of bringing in the corn; feast of home-coming; mid-winter, and the feast of the fravashis which is celebrated on the last night of the year.

No Ruz, 'New Day', is the last of the seven festivals, believed to have been founded by Zarathushtra himself at the spring equinox, arguably reaffirming an ancient celebration of spring to Asha Vahista and fire. As the last of the seven festivals it anticipates the Last Day, when righteousness wins decisively, thus representing an annual *frasho-kereti*. No Ruz, the quintessential spring festival, thus celebrates the resurgence of life, when the earth itself appears rejuvenated after the rigours of winter.

Within Iran's rich mythological heritage, Jamshid is possibly the most famous king, when before his fall, the world enjoyed a "golden age." The *farr-i izadi*, the Divine Glory allowed him to preside over the world, seated on his throne on which he himself shone like the sun. To celebrate this event, No Ruz, the first day of the New Year, was introduced, when the world assembled around Jamshid's throne, to pay him homage and celebrate with wine, music and dance. Understandably, some Zoroastrians, the Parsees especially, speak of celebrating 'Jamshidi No Ruz'.

The fixity of No Ruz in the Iranian consciousness is reaffirmed by its celebration by all three major dynasties: ***the Achaemenians (558 BCE-330 BCE); the Arsacid Parthians (247 CE-224 CE) and the Sasanians (224 CE-651 CE).***

The Achaemenian King of kings, rulers of a vast and powerful empire, held court at the majestic palace at Persepolis where representatives of the empire – ranging from Indians and Egyptians, to Babylonians and Greeks – came to offer gifts to the King on No Ruz. There are specific references to the celebration of No Ruz during the reign of the Arsacid Parthian Emperor *Valkash I (51-78 CE)*, while we learn from Pahlavi texts that during the





No Ruz: The Ancient Persian New Year That Lives On

Sasanian era the significance of spring in connection with thoughts of resurrection (frashegird) was emphasized.

An account by a Muslim scholar, written on the basis of Zoroastrian sources in the late 9th century AD gives us a flavour of royal No Ruz celebrations:

"When the King...had donned his attire and joined his assembly there came to him a man, pleasant of name, experienced in luck, joyful of face and quick of tongue. He stood facing the King and said: 'Give me leave to come in.' 'Who are you? Asked the King...The man replied: '...My name is Khujaste (Fortunate One); with me the new year approaches; I have brought good news and greetings and a message for the King.' ...

"Then he put before the King a table of silver, containing cakes baked in different kinds of seed: of wheat, barley, millet, sorghum, peas, lentils, rice, sesame, beans and kidney beans. From each sort seven grains were taken and put on the table's sides...Besides, they put on this table seven white earthen plates, seven white dirhams of the year's coinage, and a new dinar...All this the King accepted while the messenger called on his head eternal life, unceasing kingdom, bliss and power.

"All this day the King abstained from discussing any matter, fearing lest something unpleasant should come of it and head the whole year. The first thing brought before the King was a vase of gold or silver containing white sugar with fresh Indian nuts pared, and bowls of silver or gold...On each of the No Ruz days they set a white falcon flying. Among other things which it was thought propitious to begin this day with, was a mouthful of pure fresh milk and fresh cheese; all the Kings of Persia took it as a blessing..." (1)

No Ruz therefore, is uniquely Zoroastrian in its antecedents: there is a belief that Zarathustra received his revelation on this day; the mythical King Jamshid's Divine Glory was celebrated on this day, and the Great Kings of Zoroastrian Iran not merely celebrated No Ruz, but virtually elevated them to the status of 'national day'.

The several historical vicissitudes of the Zoroastrian calendar notwithstanding, No Ruz is celebrated on the spring equinox. In Iran, spring is quite ravishing, following on the heels of winters that can be severe. Understandably, the ancient celebration of an extended holiday remains a fixed point in the Iranian calendar: for both, Zoroastrian and Muslim alike. (2) Festivities last up to 13 days, and the festival of Chahar Shanbeh Suri, which marks the end of winter is celebrated on the last Wednesday before No Ruz, when dried twigs are placed in bundles, set alight at sunset with celebrants jumping over the fire.

Anticipation of No Ruz begins well before the actual event, when families undertake the great spring cleaning of their homes; preparations get underway for some of the special items associated with the festival, such as painted and decorated eggs signifying fertility, cultivation of the sabzeh (wheat, barley) symbolising rebirth and importantly, new clothes (for the children especially). Then, on the first day of No Ruz – family members gather around the Haft Sin table and await the exact moment of the arrival of spring.

Haft Sin Table

Haft Sin or the 7 'S's' is a major tradition of No Ruz. The table includes 7 specific items starting with the letter 'S' or 'sin' in the Persian alphabet. The items symbolically correspond to the 7 creations of the Amesha Spentas and include:





No Ruz: The Ancient Persian New Year That Lives On

- *Sabzeh* – wheat, barley, growing in a dish
- *Saman* – a sweet pudding made from wheat germ
- *Senjed* – dried fruit
- *Sir* – garlic
- *Sib* – apples
- *Somaq* – sumac berries
- *Serkeh* – vinegar

No Ruz has, over the millennia, become virtually symbolic of Iranian-ness. Its central role in the Iranian peoples' affections meant that following the introduction of Islam in the seventh century AD, the new rulers failed to proscribe this essentially Zoroastrian celebration. In fact, the four Great Caliphs themselves presided over No Ruz celebrations; and during the Abbasid era, the caliphs ruling from Baghdad adopted it as the main royal holiday. Following the demise of the caliphate and the re-emergence of Persian dynasties – the *Samanid* and *Buyid* especially – No Ruz was elevated to an even higher level. Even the Turkish and Mongol invaders did not attempt to abolish this ancient festival in favour of any other celebration. Thus No Ruz remained the main celebration in the Persian lands. Even today, in countries that were historically territories of, or influenced by, the Persian Empire: from Kurdistan to the Uighurs in northwestern China, this ancient Iranian festival, arguably celebrated by the founder of the faith and the kings of imperial Iran remains, not just the defining festival of Zoroastrians, but re-affirms the life-enhancing philosophy of Zarathustra: *frasho-kereti*.

Notes:

(1) From E. Ehrlich, 'The celebration and gifts of the Persian New Year according to an Arabic source,' Dr J.J. Modi Memorial Volume, Bombay 1930, pp.95-101.

(2) This is not the place to re-tell the story of the many calendar reforms dating back to the Achaemenian era, the complexities of intercalation to bring the 12 months of 30 days each to fit the 365-day year; the variations between Iranian and Indian calculations and the placing of 1 Farvardin. Suffice it to say that the ultimate 'secularization' of No Ruz on the spring equinox enabled Muslim Iranians to hold onto this particular feast even as they cast aside the other holy days of Zoroastrianism, so that it is the only festival shared by both Muslim and Zoroastrian Iranians.



Dr Rashna Writer is the author of *Contemporary Zoroastrians: An Unstructured Nation*, and co-author of *The Memoirs of Keikhosrow Shahrokh*. She is Teaching Fellow at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) London University where she lectures on Persian history; and has lectured at Birkbeck College and Richmond College and was a Research Assistant at Manchester University where she undertook research on the Zoroastrian community in the UK. She has participated at international conferences and lectured in the UK,

USA and the Indian sub-continent. Rashna holds a doctorate from the London School of Economics; and runs a political risk consultancy.





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نوروز



Nowrouzestân

PROF. CHRISTIAN BROMBERGER ON NOWROUZ AND IRAN'S CULTURAL HERITAGE

"A first striking characteristic is that Nowrouz is a solar calendar celebration," Bromberger explains. "This calendar is a different one than the Muslim solar calendar and is a strong symbol of the Indo-European specificity of the Iranian world, coming from ancient times."

Bromberger explains the traditions of the first night of New Year's, the Vernal Equinox. "There are several traditions on this night of transition: masquerades, New Year singings (Nowrouzkhâni), divination séances, ritual flights matched with wishes, made by young boys.

"The cycle of the New Year ends the thirteenth day of the first month, the day of *Sizdah Bedâr* (hit the outdoors on the thirteenth!). In order to avoid the bad luck associated with the number thirteen, families go outdoors and have picnics in a green place. As a sign of the end of the Nowrouz celebrations, the Sabze grown for the haft sin is thrown into running water." (photo below)

Bromberger also describes the historical incidents which in some stages diminished the prevalence of Nowrouz as the most prominent national festivity of Iranians, being highlighted and accentuated by the former regime of the Shah as an important symbol of communal honor and nationalistic sentiments.

He explains how the victory of the 1979 revolution, which unseated the U.S.-backed Shah and began to erase signs of Americanism and Westernism from the face of revolutionized Iran, faded the popularity of Nowrouz in the first years, for fear that it might enfeeble the religious solidarity. However, Nowrouz gradually was adopted with religious prototypes and continued to survive with the compromise of authorities and officials who eventually chose to let up and express empathy with the public's interest in Nowrouz.

"From the 1990's, that marked the opening of a relative relaxation of the Islamic government," Bromberger continues. "The national pride took back its rights and 'specifically Iranian' folklore was even partially rehabilitated in order to fight against the western cultural invasion."

".....seminars, conferences, and books about Nowrouz abound. A sort of Nowrouz-mania seemed to have monopolized the cultural background. It had a strong resonance in the countries of Central Asia and Caucasia, embraced within the historical area of Iranian civilization expansion and sharing the same calendar. That is what is called the Land of Iran and that is what we could call, because of this common reference, the *Nowrouzestân*."

Fluent in English, Persian, Russian, Italian, Greek, and French, **Prof Christian Bromberger** has served several years as the Director of French Association of Iranology in Paris and currently holds the Professorship of Ethnology at the University of Aix En Provence.

Source:

<http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2009/04/28/prof-christian-bromberger-on-nowrouz-and-iran%E2%80%99s-cultural-heritage/>

Article by Kourosh Ziabari based on an interview facilitated by translating for the interviewer by Isabelle Rousselot from the French language.





N O R O O Z

**Narooz Nauroz,
Nauruz Nauruz**

“Real NouRuz” at the Chicago Planetarium

At sunrise on March 20th a few Chicago area Zarathushtis gathered at the Spiral Stones sculpture (known as America’s Courtyard”) at the Adler Planetarium on the Chicago lakefront, to witness the arrival of the “Real Nouruz”.



NOURUZ NOURUZ,

The Stones are arranged in a spiral to represent the Milky Way galaxy. Four central stones are precisely aligned to mark the equinox sunrise and sunset locations (directly east/west) and the north/south meridian locations. A Haft Seen table laden with all the symbolic items representing the Creations was set up there. The Zarathushtis recited prayers at this spectacular location with the backdrop of the Chicago skyline. Later on March 20th, the Planetarium organized special programs to commemorate the Spring Equinox, with hands-on activities, talks, demonstrations and Astronomy Conversations.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ‘REAL NOURUZ’. This Nouruz was an astronomical event of special significance in the Chicago area, as sunrise (at 6:54 am local time) occurred at almost the same time as the Vernal Equinox (at 6:44 am). This phenomenon will not occur again for another 72 years in the vicinity of Chicago. After 2013, it will move to the Atlantic Ocean, and will not happen anywhere in North America in our lifetimes.



NEWNOUZ NEWNOUZ

Neyruz Habb 3,

Nooruz Norooz

Norouz Noruz

Novruz, Nowroj,

Nowrouz Nowruz

The ‘Earth Year’ or the “Solar year’ refers to the revolution of the earth around the sun. This is also called the ‘*Sidereal Year*’ in astronomical terms. In the Northern Hemisphere, it is the time period from one Vernal Equinox to the next. The alignment of the Vernal Equinox and sunrise shifts from meridian to meridian around the globe. This year, on March 20, Sunrise coincided with the Vernal Equinox at 85 degrees 12 mins West Meridian, which is close to Chicago (Chicago’s meridian being 87 degrees 41 mins).

The ancient Persians are known to have celebrated this event over 3,700 years ago. The ancients marked the occasion with the positioning of fixed objects that aligned with the sun at the precise time of the Equinox. They also observed that the alignment did not always occur at sunrise. There was a gap of many years before the alignment occurred at or close to sunrise. Archeological evidence is present in a bas relief at Persepolis, where this “*Real NouRuz*” was celebrated, in 487 BCE. Historians have recorded that a square stone was placed in the Apadana Palace where the first rays of the rising sun, coinciding with the equinox, marking the historic event.

Over three millennia later, it was a soul stirring experience for the group of Chicago

Zarathushtis to witness this unique astronomical phenomenon at the present-day Stone sculpture on the shores of Lake Michigan.

[Thanks to Fariborz Rahnmoon (www.ancientiran.com) for drawing our attention to this unique astronomical occurrence in the vicinity of Chicago]



Photo credit: Cyrus Rivetna



THE NOU ROUZ TABLE THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Fariborz Rahnmoon

Over the centuries with the ups and downs of history the Nou Rouz table has taken various forms. That what is common in those numerous forms of the Nou Rouz table is “Haft” the number Seven. Haft Seen, Haft Sheen, Haft Chin, or Haft Seenie.

Archeological evidence is also available at Takht e Jamshid, (Persipolis) the location of the celebration of the Real Nou Rouz of that era, in 487 BCE, where we see in the form of bas relief, the representatives of the various nations in groups of seven bearing gifts for the king of kings.

Seven represents the “Seven Eternal Laws” of Zarathushtra. These seven laws were derived by Zarathushtra from the evolution in nature and is part of his discourse in his Gathas. It is a guide to progress towards perfection. The first three also happen to be the gifts given by the Magi’s to baby Jesus.

The Nou Rouz table is a reminder, a re-commitment, to follow the path followed by nature, of progress towards perfection.

THE SEVEN ITEMS ON THE NOU ROUZ TABLE Represent the HAFT AMESHA SEPANTA THE SEVEN ETERNAL LAWS DERIVED FROM NATURE

AVESTA WORDS	MODERN USAGE	ENGLISH MEANING
1- VOHU MANA	BAH MAN	GOOD MIND
2- ASHA VAHISATA	ARDIBESHT	ULTIMATE TRUTH, NATURE
3- KASH ATRA VAIRYA	SHAHRIVAR	GOOD - LAWS / GUIDANCE
4- SEPANTA ARMAITY	ESFAND	LAWFUL DESIRE
5- HURVATATA	KHORDAD	PERFECTION
6- AMERETATA	AMORDAD	IMMORTALITY
7- AHURA MAZDA	AHURA MAZDA	CREATOR OF WISDOM

Explanation in summary form

- 1- Use your GOOD MIND to inquire and learn the
 - 2- The ULTIMATE TRUTH- the Laws of Nature- Use them to make
 - 3- GOOD RULES – Good Laws- Good Guidance- Which will lead to
 - 4- LAWFUL DESIRE – Righteousness – which will pave the way towards
 - 5- PERFECTION – Mental, Physical and Spiritual – which will lead to
 - 6- IMMORTALITY –a) losing the fear of Death (b) being remembered for your good work for generations—resulting in oneness with
 - 7- AHURA MAZDA -The CREATOR OF WISDOM - through KHOD AH Self Realization
- KHOD = Self AH = to come, to come to oneself.

FOR DETAIL PLEASE VISIT THE NOU ROUZ PAGE AT <http://www.ancientiran.com>



NOROOZ

Khawajah Piruz (Haji Firuz)



In ancient times the celebrations of Nowruz was so prominent that the mayors of towns were literally displaced by the most victorious person in carrying out the commands of Ahura Mazda and his six holy immortals. This victorious (piruz) khwaja or lord was given the rule of the realm for the period. As a part of his duties, Khwaja Piruz saw to it that all the people of the realm were provided with the amenities and joy that were due them. In time, especially after the fall of Iran to the Arabs who would not relinquish rule to defeated foes, the office of Khwaja Piruz deteriorated into its Arabized form, Haji Firuz. Only the duty of stimulating laughter and providing a good time has remained of what must have been a complex set of social affairs. Today, Haji Firuz is no more than a spectacle that occurs during the last few weeks before Nowruz. He and his troupe of musicians appear on the

streets and alleyways all over the country.

Excerpted from: Traditions of NowRuz - Compiled by Phil Masters



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NOROOZ GREETINGS

NOROOZ MOBARAK

Happy New Year

NOROOZ PIROOZ

*Wishing you a prosperous
New Year*

EID- EH-SHOMA MOBARAK

Happy New Year to you

SAD SAAL BE IN SAAL-HA

*Wishing you 100 more Happy
New Years*

JAMSHEDI NAVROZE MUBARAK



JUNGALWALLA LECTURE , TORONTO, CANADA



"Today as we continue to celebrate Nourooz of AY 1378 we also celebrate the life of a dedicated and Ashavan KHORSHED JUNGALWALLA –I said Ashavan, for her life was an embodiment of the Zarathushti way of life, following the law of Asha.

I had the good fortune to know and interact with Khorshed on many occasions. She was a righteous human being, who as the personification of love, compassion, respect and tolerance not only for those who she agreed with, but also for those who differed from her point of views. Her ability to dialog with individuals of diverse views and to generate results acceptable to all, was second to none. We are the richer for having known Khorshed.

She, together with her husband Firoze, represents the foundation stone on which is built the success and prosperity of the present day Boston Zarathushti community. Together, they keenly inspired the youth of the community towards a Zarathushti lifestyle. That is clearly reflected in the vibrant and thriving Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area that celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.

Khorshed's contributions towards Peace and Harmony within Global Zarathushti community were no less than her efforts for the local community. She led her efforts tirelessly, as Chair of the FEZANA Ad hoc committee on the shaping of World Zoroastrian Body. She did that in good health and in discomfort and distress of ill health.

She actively participated as:

President of Metro West International Concert Association.

Board of Director of the Third World Scholars Consortium

On the Governor's Advisory Council

Chair of FEZANA Publications committee

She did all that with the same passion and compassion, same zeal and sincerity, that she followed in her professional career to explore new technology, in insurance and finance. She won awards for her untiring efforts, both, in her professional field as well as from the organizations she volunteered for.

When someone so near and dear to us becomes a memory, that memory truly turns to a treasure, and Khorshed has left with us, a treasure beyond all measure.

*Khorshed was keen and passionate to explore Zarathushti faith, its roots and history. This brought to Boston speakers of National and International repute. One such person of international repute, who she introduced to Zarathushti community is with us this morning, **Professor Oktor Skjaervo**.*

*Lives of great man all remind us
we can make our lives sublime
and departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

When we are dead, seek not our tomb in the earth, but find it in the heart of men
Jalal-ud-din Rumi

Jehan Bagli: Chair of the Jungalwala Lecture, Toronto, Symposium



FEZANA KHORSHED JUNGALWALA LECTURE

Toronto, March 29, 2009

ZOROASTRIAN LITERATURE AS A PART OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF MODERN ZARATHUSHTIS

(abstract)

P. Oktor Skjaervo, Harvard University

It is a great privilege to have been invited by the Zoroastrian community to give this lecture in honor of Khorshed Jungalwala, who introduced me to the Zarathushtis in the Boston area after I came to Harvard in 1991. It was these encounters with Zarathushtis that gave my research in the ancient Iranian languages and literature a purpose outside of academia. I saw that the Zarathushtis I met, some of them in my classes on old Iranian religions and languages, were interested in their ancient literature, but also that there were many things they did not know about their literary heritage. It was obvious, however, that the

Zoroastrian literature was much less easily accessible than that of the Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, and the idea was born that I might make available a means to study the ancient languages and up-to-date English translations of the Avestan and Pahlavi texts. As a result, my introduction to Zoroastrianism with translated texts, as well as introductions to the two Avestan languages and Old Persian are now available on my Harvard website (<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~iranian/>).

Today, I want to talk to you briefly about this literary heritage, its history, problems in understanding it, and the background of some of the disagreements regarding how to interpret it. This heritage is that of your ancestors who came to Iran from Central Asia some 3000 years ago and those who, more recently, went to India some 1000 years ago. It is what they brought with them to Iran and to India and what they themselves produced over the millennia which today enshrines your past (see Table 1).

THE ZOROASTRIAN LITERATURE

A fundamental feature of the Iranian and Indic traditions, which distinguishes them from the Jewish tradition, for instance, is the lack of writing. Although the oldest Indo-Iranian texts date to the second and first millennia BCE, they were written down only from about 600 CE onward, one to two thousand years after they were composed. This applies in particular to the Avestan texts, but also to the Pahlavi texts from the Sasanian period.

The Avesta contains the oldest of all the Zoroastrian texts, as old as the oldest parts of the Old Testament and the oldest Hindu texts, the Vedas. The older part of the Avesta, the Gathas and the Yasna Haptanghâitî, was probably composed in the second half of the second millennium BCE, and the younger part in the first half of the first millennium BCE.

Once the Gathas had been composed, they must have been constantly taught, learned, and recited. Once the Old Avestan language was no longer the spoken language, they were "crystallized," which means that, because they were sacred, they were not changed during the oral transmission. This may have taken place about 1000 BCE, perhaps at the time the Iranians began moving south, from Central Asia onto the Iranian Plateau.

The Gathas, crystallized in the old language, were then transmitted together with other texts in the spoken language, which at some stage must have been Young Avestan.



With time, this language, too, was no longer spoken, and an entire

corpus of Young Avestan texts, including the Gathas, was crystallized, perhaps about 500 BCE, at the beginning of the Achaemenid period, and then transmitted orally in unchangeable form.

As the languages changed, the old texts became hard to understand, and what the priests thought the poems meant had to be translated and explained to the students. These translations and explanations in the spoken languages, which in later times were called **zend**, were also scrupulously preserved, although they must have been modified as the society and culture developed.

A zend in some form was already known under the Achaemenid kings, as Darius' and Xerxes' "speech writers" use Avestan concepts and formulations in the inscriptions. These inscriptions, written in Old Persian, contain the accounts of Darius' and Xerxes' deeds, as well as their personal portraits. These are the first written texts in any Iranian language, but writing Iranian did not catch on, and other languages were used (Elamite, Aramaic) for practical purposes.

No written literature survives from the Parthian (Arsacid) period, and it is not until the third century CE that we again find inscriptions, notably those of King Shapur I and his youngest son *Narseh*. In addition to these royal inscriptions, we also have the inscriptions of the high priest *Kerdir*, which contain important direct evidence for contemporary beliefs.

Although there have been speculations about written Avestas in Achaemenid and later times, it was probably not until after 600 CE that Avestan texts began being written down, not long before the Arab conquest.

The Pahlavi tradition surrounding the Gathas and the rest of the Avesta, which the Sasanian priests referred to as the *dên*, must have subsisted in oral form throughout the Sasanian period and well into the Muslim period and was gradually organized into a collection of 21 books, *Pahlavi nasks*, corresponding to the 21 words of the *Yatâ-ahû-wairyô*. A summary of the contents of the 21 nasks was included in the large encyclopedic compilation called the *Dênkard*, written in the ninth century.

From this time on, the oral tradition, which, earlier, had preserved all this material, weakened, and the priests came to rely more and more on written manuscripts. But manuscripts were easily lost or destroyed, and much of the Avesta as it was on the eve of the Arab invasion has been lost. Indeed, it has been proved that all our manuscripts are derived from a single manuscript for each part of the Avesta, which was in existence about 1000 CE, and the oldest manuscripts date only from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, though most of them are much later.

Now the Pahlavi language also became less and less well known, and Persian was used to write new religious texts, whose authors were mainly Indian Zarathushtis, who also used their own spoken language, Gujarati.

Alongside this religious tradition, there must have existed a narrative tradition, including the epic, which also lived on in the oral tradition and was extensively alluded to in the Avesta and the Pahlavi books, until some of it was written down, most importantly in the *Shahname*, which is also part of the great Zoroastrian legacy.

THE RELIGION

What makes Zoroastrianism a special religion, and what are the ethical teachings that make it comparable to other "ethical" religions? The main aspect of





Zoroastrianism that sets it apart from other great religions is its “dualism.” Unfortunately, the label “dualist” has sometimes suggested inferiority or heresy, since it was also used in Catholicism and Islam to refer to Manichaeism and other so-called “Gnostic” traditions, both of which were regarded as heresies.

The term “dualism” refers primarily to the way the question of “where does evil come from?” is answered. In monotheistic religions, where the entire world is the creation of a good and omnipotent God, this created a serious philosophical problem, because evil arises within the good creation. Why did God permit the blemish of evil to enter into his, presumably, perfect creation? Zoroastrianism also posits a world created by a good and omnipotent God, but evil does not arise within the good creation, but pre-exists and attacks from the outside. Thus God’s creation does not contain the origin of evil. What sets Zoroastrianism apart is therefore that it provides a solution to the problem of evil that does not compromise the creator.

ETHICS

In the world of Mixture, resulting from the attack of evil on God’s creation, humans and everything else in the universe battle darkness and evil, and they have to take sides in the battle. The purpose, as expressed in the Yasna, is to place God back in command and so reproduce the original state of perfection and goodness of God’s initial creation:

YASNA 8.5

May you, O Ahura Mazdâ, rule at will over your own creations!
Place... the sustainer of Asha in command,
the one possessed by the Lie out of command!

The ethics that emerge from this world view are based on the question of whether one’s behavior furthers God’s intention with the world; anything that does not is evil. Everything has to happen according to asha, the principle that underlies God’s creation and truly shows us which way to go: the straight way, which means embracing truthfulness, or straightness, and avoiding deviousness. Every thought, word, and action has to promote generosity and truthfulness (Pahlavi rādîh rāstîh), as well as justice and social equality. Above all of this, however, is the requirement expressed at the beginning and end of the Gathas: that one should care for the poor (drigu).

In indulging one’s pleasures (as long as they are licit), the main requirement is that it should be in moderation and not harm anything. This, too, sets Zoroastrianism apart from many other religions. Always cited in texts giving advice on behavior is avoiding slander, one of the worst sins of all, and having respect for others, as well as for nature: the earth, water, and plants.

THE WESTERN IMAGE OF ZOROASTRIANISM

The basic problem with translating and understanding the ancient texts is linked to the way Zoroastrianism was presented by scholars of Avestan and Zoroastrianism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, namely as an “Aryan” (i.e., Indian and Iranian) religion rivaling the other great religions and by translating the texts using traditional Western Judeo-Christian terminology. Thus, Zoroastrianism was marketed, as it were

*as a hoary old faith, at least as old as Judaism,
as a monotheistic religion, rivaling Judaism,
as a revealed faith, like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam,
as an ethical faith, as ethical as Christianity,*



with a prophet at least as
great as Abraham and Moses,
with a messiah matching the Jewish and Christian Messiahs.

Needless to say, Zoroastrianism is a great religion in its own right and does not need to prove itself by comparison. It has a rich literary heritage, though not as accessible as those of other religions and culture.

How, then, are young Zoroastrians to read and understand their ancient literature? Here, they face the same problem as young people in other religions. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all possess sacred texts, but they reflect the times and places when and where they were composed and need to be interpreted in order to yield meanings that make sense in the modern world. Texts that reflect 3000-2000 year-old societies must be read with this in mind to discover their literal meaning, that is, what they meant to the people who composed them, but also what they meant to those who listened to them throughout the centuries. This meaning did not remain the same, but changed with changing societies and cultures.

On the other hand, when reading the texts as sacred scripture and using them as a guide for one's life, one obviously has to transpose the contents and its messages onto a different level. It is not my task to tell you how to do this. I only suggest you do not let yourselves be embroiled in the discussions of Western scholars with their own agendas, but try to find your own meanings in whatever translations of the texts you consult.

Table 1. Time Frame of Zoroastrian Literature

> ca. 1000 BCE	<i>Old Avesta: Gathas and Yasna Haptanghâiti</i>
ca. 1000 BCE ?	Old Avesta "crystallized"
> ca. 500 BCE	<i>Young Avesta: Yasna, Yashts, Videvdad, Khorde Avesta</i>
ca. 500 BCE ?	Young Avesta "crystallized"
520- ca. 400 BCE	<i>Achaemenid inscriptions of Darius, Xerxes, Artaxerxes, etc.</i>
331 BCE	Alexander's conquest of Iran [Seleucids, Arsacids/Parthians: no literary remains]
3rd century CE	<i>Sasanian inscriptions: Shapur I, Narseh, Kerdîr</i> Development of the Pahlavi Avesta Development of the Sasanian tradition—the <i>dên</i>
ca. 600 CE	Avesta written down Avesta organized in 21 <i>nasks</i>
9th century	<i>First written Pahlavi texts</i> Summaries of the 21 <i>nasks</i> in <i>Dênkard</i> , book 8 Summaries of the 3 Gathic <i>nasks</i> in <i>Dênkard</i> , book 9
> ca. 1000 CE	<i>Zoroastrian writings: Pahlavi books</i>
ca. 1000	Oldest known Avestan manuscripts, originals of all existing manuscripts
ca. 1000 >	<i>Zoroastrian writings: Modern Persian, Gujarati</i>
1278(?)	Oldest surviving Avestan manuscript (<i>Vispered</i>)
1323/1324	Oldest surviving manuscripts of the <i>Yasna</i> and the <i>Videvdad</i>
Since then	Deteriorating manuscript tradition





“Cultural and Historical Perspectives of Zoroastrian Faith”

Toronto Symposium, March 29, 2009



On Sunday, March 29, 2009 the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO), the World Zoroastrian Organization (WZO) and the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) jointly sponsored a symposium titled “Cultural and Historical Perspectives of Zoroastrian Faith” held at the Meheraban Guiv Darbe Meher in Toronto, Canada. The symposium was attended by almost 200 people from the local area as well as other parts of Canada and the United States.

The symposium was the setting for this year’s Khorshed Jungalwala Lecture series which is sponsored by FEZANA and is fast becoming one of the most prestigious lectures to deliver for scholars of Zoroastrian studies. The

symposium covered a variety of topics that dealt with issues related to Zoroastrian history and religion and was interspersed with a few cultural performances. The organization of the symposium was a result of the efforts and vision of Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli who took the lead in getting together an outstanding group of scholars for the event. Dr. Bagli was ably assisted in putting together the event by a group of ZSO volunteers which included (see photo, left to right) Mr. Kevin Mancherjee, Ms. Mithra Jam, Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli, Mr. Sam Vesuna, Ervad Kerman Katrak, Mr. Freddy Mirza and Mr. Daraius M. Bharucha.

The morning commenced with welcome addresses from *Kevin Mancherjee*, *Keki Bhote* and *Firdosh Mehta* who represented ZSO, WZO and FEZANA respectively.

FIRST SESSION : CHAIR DR. JEHAN BAGLI

The Khorshed Jungalwala Lecture, “Zoroastrian Literature as a Part of The Cultural Heritage of Modern Zoroastrians” by Prof. Oktor Skjaervo, of Harvard University.

Prof. Skjaervo has a doctorate from University of Oslo, Norway, in Iranian Linguistics and a Dr. habil, from the Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz Germany in Comparative Linguistics. He has been at Harvard University since 1991 and teaches Old Iranian languages.





Prof. Skjaervo, provided some fascinating insights on Zoroastrian literature; the Avesta, the Pahlavi Texts as well as the rock inscriptions of the ancient Persian emperors. He made some interesting assertions with regards to the historicity and antecedents of some of the texts which both intrigued and challenged the audience into looking at things in new ways. (see pages 24-27)

The lecture was followed by a brief cultural interlude during which the Iranian Zoroastrian Choir led very ably by Mr. Shahram Bastani provided a rendition in song of parts of the Yasna. The performance of the choir was very well received by the audience with much applause and appreciation. (photo page 28)

SECOND SESSION CHAIR MR DARAIUS M. BHARUCHA

"Keepers of the Flame: The Early Zoroastrians of Central Asia."

Prof. Jenny Rose of Stanford and Claremont Graduate University

Prof Rose has an MA in Religious Studies from University of London and a doctorate from Columbia University . She teaches *Zoroastrian Traditions* at Stanford University and Claremont Graduate University.

Prof. Rose provided some unique insights into the early history of Zoroastrianism and focused on the spread of the Zoroastrian religion and its influences on the Iranian people of Sogdiana, Margiana and Bactriana. Through a variety of illustrations, Prof. Rose showed how Zoroastrianism had exerted considerable influence on both the culture and ideology of the people who lived and traded along the Silk Road extending from Iran all the way into China.

THIRD SESSION CHAIR MR FREDDY MIRZA

"The Water of Omniscience and the Milk of Knowledge: Zoroastrian Elements in the Apocalypse of Muhammad." by Prof. Maria Subtelny Professor of Persian and Islamic Studies in the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto. She has a doctorate from Harvard University.

Prof. Subtelny shared with the audience her study and understanding of several Zoroastrian elements that were incorporated into the early versions of the Prophet Muhammad's ascension to heaven. She focused on the symbolism and significance of special drinks that were consumed as well as the motif of the cosmic rooster and its links to the Yazata Sarosh.

This enlightening presentation was followed by the second cultural interlude of a popular Iranian dance presented by our Zoroastrian young ladies : *Mahsa Khodadadi*,





Shahrzad Rahnamoun, Asha Farhadi, Mahshad Khosraviani and Anahita Dehmoubed. (photo page 29) This was followed by a solo flute performance by Ms. *Kaipa Bharucha* who very skilfully and with great flair and mastery performed two pieces of classical music. Both items were much applauded by an appreciative audience. (photo left)

FOUTH SESSION CHAIR ERVAD KERMAN KATRAK

“How a Minority Adapts: Zoroastrians in Ceylon/Sri Lanka from Antiquity to the Present.”

Hon Prof. Jamsheed Choksy, Prof of Central Eurasian Studies, Indiana University
He has his doctorate from Harvard University in History and Religion with Iranian Studies, Archeology and Islamic Studies. He is a member of the US National Council on Humanities (2008-2014) nominated by the President of the United States

Prof. Choksy provided some intriguing and fascinating evidence with regards to the presence of Zoroastrians in Sri Lanka from the sixth century BCE. onwards up to the present time. In particular he focused on the pivotal role and influence of a Zoroastrian Magus (Magi/Priest) on the fortunes and affairs of a central Sri Lankan kingdom.

An open forum question and answer session moderated by Ervad Bagli with all the speakers followed the final presentation. There were numerous questions and sometimes passionate declarations about the various topics from members of the audience.

A vote of thanks was given by Mr. Sam Vesuna President of the ZSO who congratulated all the speakers and presented them with small tokens of appreciation. In addition, Mr. Vesuna also thanked WZO and FEZANA for their sponsorship and co-operation which enabled the cost of the registration at a minimum of \$8.00. Dr Jehan Bagli and the organizing team were also thanked for having put together an enlightening and enriching symposium.



Speakers from left

Prof Jenny Rose; Hon Prof Jamsheed Choksy; Dr Ervad Jehan Bagli, Prof Oktor Skjaervo, Jungalwala lecturer and Prof Maria Subtelny

Photo credits:
Dolly Dastoor



ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF ONTARIO INVITED TO QUEEN'S PARK FOR NOUROOZ RECEPTION



From left VP Zarine Chenoy, MPP Reza Moridi, MPP (Richmond Hill) Parliamentary Assistant, Minister Chan, Khushru and Etty Vajifdar (Rahimi), President of ZSO, Sam Vesuna and Assistant Secretary Anahita Daryushnejad.

Zoroastrian community members of Ontario were invited to celebrate Nourooz on March 9th at a large reception held at the Ontario Provincial Assembly, Queen's Park, attended by Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty, Cabinet Ministers and the MPPs

The ZSO, under the religious leadership of Ervad Kerman Katrak celebrated the ten "*Farvardegan*" days which include the 5 Gatha days with special prayers for the *fravashis* of their dear departed. He was assisted by Ervads Mehad Dastur, Cyrus Panthakee, Jehan Bagli, Rayomand and Behram Antia, Freyhan Daruwalla and Rushad Bharda. Gatha recitals with their meanings in Persian and English were given by *Mona Antia, Soheila Katrak, Mahshad Khosraviani, Nadia and Tara Jam, Kamran Daryushnejad, Anahita Ogra, Keshvar Merchant, Mojgan Dehmiri and Saira Ghadially*

Meals were provided by countless volunteers.

The Nowrooz Jashan performed by 10 Ervads at the Darbe Mehr on March 21st, ushered in the New Year with 250 Zarathushtis participating. 25 little children trained by *Mona Antia* sang a few songs including "I'm proud to be a Zoroastrian", and the Kanoun Choir gave a wonderful rendition of "Yasnas" put together by Choir Master *Shahram Bastani*. Two community members were recognized for their services: Bahram Jam and Khurshed Patel. Delicious food was provided by Percy Daruwalla of Mystik Masala.





PASSPORT TO PERSIA FESTIVAL

Reported by Rashna Ghadialy



On March, 12, 14, 15, 2009 the Chicago land Zarathushtis once again participated in the 3-day Passport to Persia Festival at the Children's Museum, Navy Pier in Chicago. A Zoroastrian Artifacts table was set up by *Tinaz Sevak and Rashna Ghadialy*. Visitors enjoyed thumbing through the pages of the Zoroastrian Tapestry volume. As part of the weekend entertainment program, Iranian dances were performed to popular Persian music by *Sanaya Dukandar and Yazmin Rustomji*; (photo left) *Farobag Cooper* played Khon Ashem Vohu and Chaiye Hame Jarthosti on the key board; and *Rashna Ghadialy* read Shahnameh stories. A slide show presentation on *Respect for the Environment in*

Zoroastrianism and Islam was set up to educate the attendees of the ancient and modern religions of Persia.

Visit http://suncastv.com/channels/chicago_com_en.html

Children's Museum, Passport to Persia



In photo Tina Sevak (left), one of the organizers of the 2009 Passport to Persia festival is the ZAC Youth Committee Chairperson and the ZYNA representative.

Rashna Ghadialy (right) is a demographer, environmentalist and Reiki practitioner. She had served as the Chairperson of the North American Zoroastrian Congress 2002 in Chicago and continues to participate in local inter-faith activities.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM

Chicago Children's Museum's (CCM) mission is to create a community where play and learning connect. The museum's primary audience is children up through the fifth

grade including their families, along with the school and community groups that support and influence children's growth and development. The museum also offers a variety of volunteer opportunities and college internships. Fifteen permanent exhibits and programming spaces provide innovative learning experiences for children and their caregivers. The museum serves more than 500,000 visitors annually. CCM also reaches out beyond its walls by making a significant investment of resources in neighborhoods across Chicago, particularly to children who might not otherwise have access to the museum's rich array of resources.

ABOUT PASSPORT TO THE WORLD

Passport to the World at Chicago Children's Museum is a year-round series of performances, demonstrations and workshops representing the arts and traditions of the city's ethnically diverse neighborhoods. CCM's partnership with dozens of local residents and organizations ensures quality "first person" authenticity of each community-driven presentation. Every Passport celebration culminates in activity-rich three-day festival held at the museum. *The Passport to the World* program is shaped by CCM's vision statement and works to expose our visitors to a rich variety of people, beliefs and cultures. Our goal is not only to break down stereotypes and build tolerance, but also to help children and families build a strong and confident self-identity and an informed and proud group identity. The vision of the program is that visitors will develop an enthusiasm for interaction with diversity that turns simple tolerance into true appreciation of Chicago's rich and diverse culture.



**ZAPANJ AT THE PHILADELPHIA
MUSEUM OF ART**

AROUND THE WORLD

By Porus P. Cooper

A few years ago *Anoo Sukhia*, a longtime member of the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey (ZAPANJ) happened upon an exhibit at the Philadelphia Museum of Art she least expected to see there – a Haft Seen table marking Nowruz. The gorgeous table turned out to be the handiwork of some Iranian Muslim ladies who had persuaded the museum to add Nowruz to its list of weekend “Family and Children’s Programs.”

Bubbling with excitement, Anoo in turn galvanized ZAPANJ volunteers to complement the Haft Seen table with a touch of Zarathushti Nowruz.

ZAPANJ made its debut at the museum last year, and on March 8, 2009, it was back in a bigger way. Tables laden with eye-catching displays of everything from humble sudrehs and Parsi prayer caps to intricately woven heirloom garas drew an unending stream of visitors. There was an astonishing number of them by day’s end – 7,600, according to a museum tally.

Among other treasures on exhibit – the precious possessions of various ZAPANJ members – were a century-old Khordeh Avesta, an ancient copy of the Shah-Nameh, and a complete setup of jashan paraphernalia, including a shiny afarganyu. (photo right)

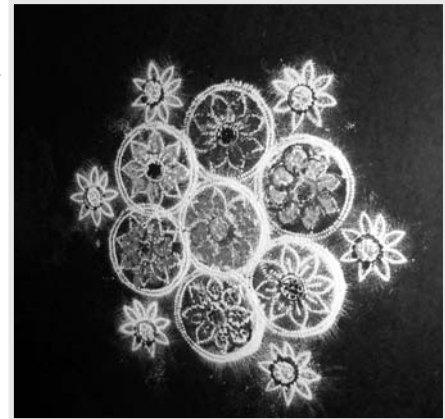
Many of the volunteers were living exhibits: *Ervad Noshir Karanjia* came in his mobed’s attire. Others, including young *Kaizad Jokhi*, came in pristine white daglis. ZAPANJ ladies came in vibrant saris – finery that would be a familiar sight at agiaris and atash behrams at Nowruz.

Given the multiple national origins of the festivities – Persian and Middle Eastern dance troupes, demonstrations of calligraphy and hands-on art workshops for children were among the other attractions – the ZAPANJ display, like the others, drew a virtual United Nations of visitors.

There were those simply curious about a faith and culture they didn’t know existed. And there were those with roots in modern Iran who still were excited to meet up with real-life Zarathushtis, people whom some of them had encountered before only in textbooks. A few of these lingered to wistfully trace family threads leading back to their Muslim nation’s Zoroastrian past. Each time such a connection was made, it was an emotional moment for both the ZAPANJ guide and the visitor.

A popular takeaway at the ZAPANJ exhibit was the FEZANA brochure, “Zoroastrians: Followers of an Ancient Faith that is Relevant to the Modern World.” Hundreds of copies were picked up.

The show-stoppers were a hands-on display of chowk, which drew an endless line of fascinated children trying their hand at this age-old floor decoration art, and the poised presentations by the youngest of ZAPANJ’s volunteers. (photo page 34, *Nergish Karanjia* demonstrating)





NOROOZ

Ayana Unwala, age 8, accompanied by a video of her Navjote playing beside her, patiently explained to visitors what this ancient ceremony is all about. *Kaizad Jokhi*, age 11, confidently fielded questions about the tenets of the Zarathushti religion.

A few words about a woman whose persistence brought Nowruz to this great museum in the first place: *Mersedeh Ahmadi*, a pediatric clinical pharmacist and mother of three, said it took a couple of years of quiet campaigning to persuade the museum to include an annual Haft-Seen table among its cultural exhibits.

Ahmadi said she sensed she would have to overcome political sensitivities. After all, Nowruz is so tightly identified with Iran, and Iran and the United States have hardly been on the best of terms for decades. But she and a group of close friends from Iran didn't lose hope. Five years ago came the breakthrough, Ahmadi said, made possible by a supportive program director, Katy Friedland.

A Haft Seen table was invited into the museum's Great Stair Hall, a prime location. Ahmadi and her friends made sure the table was imposing, as befits a great museum. It was definitely a good deal more ambitious than the modest little Haft Seen table Ahmadi used to put up in her children's elementary school classes. The idea of finding a more public venue, such as a museum, for the Haft Seen table came from other parents, who told her it would be a great way to bring wider attention to this ancient rite of spring.

Now the museum, a Philadelphia landmark known worldwide, cannot wait for Nowruz to come around. Neither can Ahmadi's family. They have moved far away from the Philadelphia area, but still return each year for Nowruz at the museum.

(Porus P. Cooper, a journalist and father of one aspiring tenor and one aspiring computer geek, is a longtime member of ZAPANJ.)





Nowruz with Farhang Foundation at Los Angeles County Museum (LACMA); a festival of renewal and unity

By: *Bitia Milanian*

Photo: *Banafsheh P. Abadi*

Farhang Foundation, together with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), presented a two-day celebration of Nowruz, the Persian New Year, and the Iranian heritage, which is defined as a way of life and culture that has been passed from one generation to the next in an Iranian influenced environment and is not limited to geographical borders

This two-day festivity began on Saturday, March 14th, with a private Award Ceremony and Reception, honoring *Professor Ehsan Yarshater* with the Foundation's Heritage Award 2009, recognizing his tremendous contributions to the study of Iranian civilization and the creation of *Encyclopedia Iranica*. The Heritage Award, of \$5000 was given to *Mr. Ali Attar*, a filmmaker from Iran for his film "The Sevens"/"Haftaan". For this online film competition, filmmakers from all walks of life, Iranian and non-Iranian, were invited to create and submit a short film, visualizing their unique take on Iranian Heritage.



Following the Award Ceremony and Reception, the Premiere of *Zal and Rudabeh*, a beautiful performance by the *Djanbazian Dance Company*, a contemporary dance theater work of Persian born Armenian and multiple awards - winning choreographer *Anna Djanbazian* was presented.

On Sunday, March 15th, the Los Angeles Times Central Courtyard at LACMA was transformed into an outdoor "concert

hall", with continued FREE programming for the public, and several children's programs were provided including story reading from the *Shahnameh*, hand painting, as well as Persian calligraphy illustration by the talented *Mr. Zia Erfanian*.

On both days, a beautiful Haft-sin table, the traditional spread for Nowruz, was on display, along with guides and literature that detailed the meaning and symbolism behind the custom for curious visitors.

As part of the Nowruz celebrations and to continue raising awareness within the community, the Foundation had also sponsored several banners, acknowledging the Persian New Year throughout the city of Los Angeles, along the Wilshire Corridor, Miracle Miles District, as well as Westwood Blvd., which were on display till the end of March 2009. Farhang Foundation plans to continue bringing such festivities and programming to the public, promoting and celebrating the art, culture and heritage of Iranians for the benefit of Iranian-Americans in Southern California, as well as the community at large.

REPORT BY:

ZOROASTRIAN YOUTH OF CALIFORNIA ZOROASTRIAN CENTER





NOROOZ

California Zoroastrian Center – Council on Persian Culture



This year large gathering of Iranians in Balboa park, attracted an audience of more than 30,000 to celebrate the millennia old Persian tradition of Sizdeh-Bedar. The all day program was broadcast live to major cities of U.S., Europe, and Middle East via satellite. More than nine news organizations, radio, TV, newspapers were present, providing the coverage to their audiences.

For more information about this beautiful tradition please see the article on www.Vohuman.org

The ceremony started at 9:00 AM and continued with prayers followed by some entertaining programs. At 3:30 PM the stage was given to the California Zoroastrian Center and the Zoroastrian kids of the Valley and Los Angeles area entered the stage and stood up holding a large Persepolis banner, one of the art cultural works of Mr. M.H. Amini-Sam of Jamshid Foundation.

Dr. Khosrow Mehrfar opened the program with a brief introduction and requested Mrs. Susan Ostad for a translation of *The Gathas of Zarathushtra*. Afterwards, Mr. Firooz Roberto Sofiani, the organizer and coordinator of this Festival for the last 13 years was introduced to the audience.

Mr. Sofiani, thanked the California Zoroastrian Center and read a beautiful article about Norooz and the arrival of Spring with the message of *Peace and Love on Earth*. These messages he emphasized is based on the Mantras of Zarathushtra and his grand vision of Peace and Love on Earth. Mr. Sofiani is a successful business man and very fond of our religion for many



Khosro Mehrfar with Mr. Amini-Sam holding the article in Los Angeles Times about Persian Festival in Balboa Park on its front page

years.

Dr. Khosrow Mehrfar then introduced, Dr. Bahram Goshtasbi, president of Board of Directors of California Zoroastrian Center. Dr. Goshtasbi talked about the cooperation between the Center and various organization and individuals, specially the Peace Foundation which is founded by Mr. Sofiani.

As a token of appreciation for all the efforts of Mr. Sofiani, Dr. Goshtasbi on behalf of the board of directors of the California Zoroastrian Center, awarded a beautiful proclamation and hand woven rug framed in an impressive frame depicting the portrait of Prophet Zarathushtra.

Then on behalf of the Peace Organization, Mr. Firooz Roberto Sofiani, handed the California Zoroastrian Center a very effective proclamation, congratulating the Center for their cultural work and for keeping the millennia old traditions alive and well. The California

Zoroastrian Center program ended at 4:00 PM. The 3:30 to 4:00 PM time slot is always prime time and most watched by the large crowds gathering for the whole festival.

The ceremony continued with top city of Los Angeles officials including council members and other authorities. The famous Iranians singers, Andy, Shamaizadeh, Faramarz Asef, Susan Roshan, Farshid Amin, etc. entertained the audience and continued until late in the evening.





NoRuz preparation and celebration part of the BBC (CBeebies) "Let's Celebrate Series" for children (ZTFE)

The Extra Young Zoroastrians (XYZ) of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) would like to share with the readers their achievements in the lead up to Jamsheedi NoRuz 2009.

CBeebies, a UK television channel of the BBC produces programmes aimed at children 6 years and under and in the process of creating a new 'Let's Celebrate' series, capturing religious and cultural festivals through the eyes of the nation's children. As the Zoroastrian faith is one of the nine world faiths recognised in Britain, the CBeebies was interested in including a Zoroastrian festival as part of their 'Let's Celebrate' series. Jamsheedi NoRuz was selected to be the festival.

Following a screen test at the Zoroastrian Centre by the CBeebies, *Berzin Daruwala* (8 years) his sister *Binaifer* (5 years) were selected to play the leading roles in demonstrating and explaining how Zoroastrian children prepare for and celebrate Jamsheedi NoRuz.

On Sunday 8th March, the CBeebies visited the Centre to film the XYZs at the March Children's Educational Fun Club to film the children in their preparations of planting the sabzeh (wheat) and painting eggs, items laid on the traditional Haftsheen table.

On the morning of Saturday 21st March, the CBeebies visited the home of *Berzin and Binaifer Daruwala* and together with their parents *Anahita and Fraser* and grand parents *Hilloo and Farokh Daruwala*, they filmed the family celebrating the ancient Zoroastrian festival. From their house, the CBeebies accompanied the children and their parents to the Zoroastrian Centre, where they were initially filmed praying in the *Setayash Geh* and paying their respects to the sacred atash padshah and witnessing *Ervad Rustom Bhedwar* performing the maachi ceremony.

The Haftsheen table being laid out by *Mrs Paridokh Falahati and Mrs Nergish Avari* was filmed which included the eggs painted and the tray of green sabzeh planted by the XYZs during the March Children's Educational Fun Club. And being a Zoroastrian the Haftsheen table also included shahrab (wine).

The CBeebies then filmed the Jashan performed in the beautiful Zartoshty Brothers Hall by the dedicated team of *Ervad Sahebs*, including the young *Ervads Zubin Bhedwar and Zubin Writer*.

Following the Jashan the CBeebies filmed "It's NoRuz Time", performed by 25 XYZs (photo page 38) and choreographed by *Mrs Nergish Avari and Mrs Rozy Contractor* with assistance from *Anahita Zubin Daruwala* and other volunteer parents. The youngest performing stars *Sarosh Italia, Kainaz Contractor and Vistasp Jila* were 3-4 years old. They were cheered and applauded by the over 650 member audience, who were really proud of the XYZs for putting on a fantastic show.





N O R O O Z

THE CHILDREN PERFORM THE STORY OF NAUROZ FOR THE LORD MAYOR OF HARROW (ZTFE)



The London Borough of Harrow is the most religiously diverse borough in Britain, probably because Harrow is the location of the Zoroastrian Centre.. In October 2008, each religious / faith community based in Harrow was asked to prepare a small performance by the children of their community. Nergish Avari together with other volunteer parents initiated and co-ordinated "It's Noruz Time". On Sunday March 29th 2009 the XYZs performed this 15-20 minute show for a multi faith audience of over 200 including the Mayor of Harrow and other civic dignitaries. The performance began with an explanation of the origins of our new year 'NoRuz', leading to a short play introducing the 'Haftsheen table' which the XYZs laid on the stage. This was followed by two melodious Zoroastrian songs, which got a well deserved encore. The XYZs were congratulated by members of the multi faith communities on their wonderful performance who also marvelled at the beautiful Zartoshty Brothers Hall so artistically restored by the ZTFE.

The planning for this event began in October 2008 following discussions between the CBeebies, HIFC and ZTFE President Paurushasp B Jila, Vice President Malcolm M Deboo and Trustee Ervad Rustom Bhedwar. The teachers of Children Education Fun Club, *Nazreen Avari and Jennifer Batliwalla together with Mrs Nergish Avari* took up the challenge to organise the show with the XYZs and their devoted parents. Planning for this event has been a team effort! Besides thanking the entire Zoroastrian team, we also thank the HIFC and especially CBeebies for including the Zoroastrians as part of the 'Let's Celebrate' series and providing this opportunity to our XYZs. Since Jamsheedi NoRuz is an annual festival the CBeebies is planning to broadcast the 2009 celebration in 2010 together with festivals of the other faith communities that make up multi faith – multi cultural Britain today. Look out for it!

The children who took part in the fun club presentation were:

Kainaz Contractor, Piroz Contractor, Janine Daruwalla , Sarosh Italia, Khushnaz Italia, Berzin Daruwalla, Binaifer Daruwalla, Vistasp Jila, Vahishta Jila, Shanaia Cowasjee, Behram Printer, Darius Printer, Arzan Sukhia, Yazad Sukhia, Hanoze Daruwalla, Vaspan Sarkari, Derezar Mehta, Hufriya Mehta, Ruxshin Bajina, Yazad Bajina, Freyan Khambatta, Sanaya Khambatta, Vista Jafarabad, Nikta Kerman, Vista Kerman

Written by Nazreen Avari and Jennifer Batliwalla - Teachers of Children's Educational Fun Club, Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe Inc.

Photo credit



NOROOZ

Special Events

AROUND THE WORLD

14th MARCH XYZ PRE-NORUZ PARTY (ZTFE)



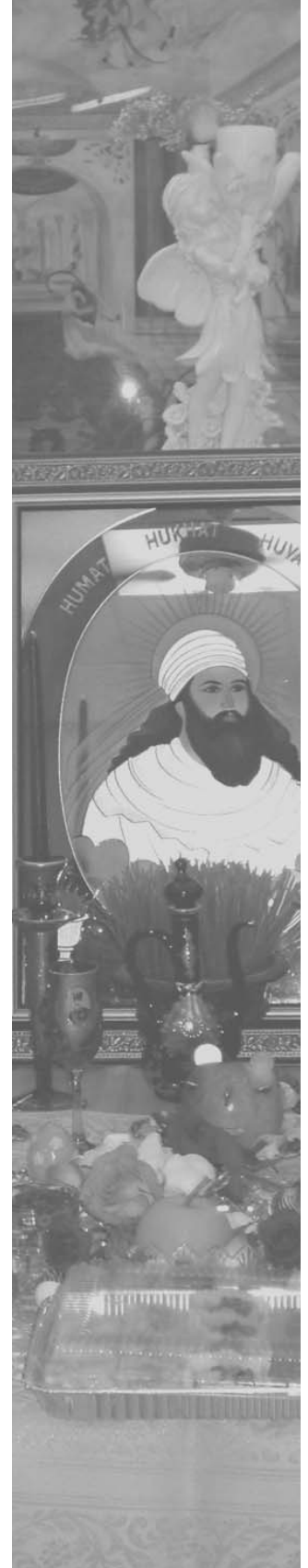
ON March 14th the XYZs had a joyous celebration in anticipation for the big Jamsheedi NoRuz celebrations!!.

Over 100 people participated in the festivities. The evening kicked off with an amazing magic show given by our 'Magical Dara Uncle (Dara Kaka).(photo above) The performance amazed, excited and enthralled the audience from the very, very young to the parents and grandparents who were present. Even a day later some of the children were still talking about the colourful scarf trick that seemed to get longer and longer and longer.

Following the magic show a delicious but simple dinner of dal, chaval, patio and tareli machi was served appealing to the taste buds of all present with some melodious 'Disney ballads' playing through dinner. With appetites appeased, the children were then entertained further by the 'Magical Dara Uncle' who made balloon animals, hats and swords. Ice cream was then served which proved to be a challenge for many of the children fighting to eat their ice creams and play with their balloons all at the same time.

The highlight of the evening was the NoRuz presents donated by Mr & Mrs Shahrokh Sharokh to celebrate this auspicious occasion. The evening ended with a special mini disco, where we saw action packed little dancers boogieing to Disco classics and Bollywood hits. It was hard to choose the best dancer as all our XYZ dancers were just incredible.....After a difficult decision, we did have the most impressive performers who were awarded prizes for the best boy and girl.

**GIVE THE FEZANA JOURNAL AS A GIFT
SUBSCRIPTION
FOR ANY FESTIVE OCCASION
BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES, NAVJOTES,
WEDDINGS,**





ZOROASTRIAN TRUST FUNDS OF EUROPE (ZTFE) CELEBRATES NOUROOZ

Most readers will be aware that the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe is the oldest Anjuman in the western world and has been celebrating Navroze for well over a hundred years. The oldest photograph in the archives of the ZTFE, was taken in 1906 and is entitled "Jamsheedi NoRuz Banquet 1906" taken on Tuesday 21st March 1906 at the famous Café Royal in Regent Street, London. It includes *Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji* as President (who went on to be called the Grand Old Man of India) in the Chair and also seated on the top table is Sir Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhownagjee –another prominent Zoroastrian and Member of Parliament of that age.

The setting was different in 2009, the community in Europe much larger, the venue belongs to the community, the dress code slightly less formal but this year was no different from the previous several decades...with spring in the air, the tulip and daffodil bulbs beginning to show some signs of life, the days turning longer and skies looking considerably less grey, the 21st of March truly signalled not just the spring equinox but the start of a new season and a new year for the Zoroastrians of the United Kingdom and indeed Europe.

The Zoroastrians of the UK have now for several years been celebrating Navroze with a lot of passion and indeed a lot of local associations have an annual Navroze get-together for the residents in their area, for example the annual party for the Zoroastrian Association of Harrow and North London, the Zoroastrians of South London, the UK branch of the WZO, etc. in the weekends preceding or following the actual day.

However, each year the community gathers on the day itself for the Navroze Jashan and Dinner party for the ZTFE (on the Saturday, Navroze Day of 21st March) which saw well over 600 members and their guests from all over, assemble at the Zartoshty Brothers Hall, Zoroastrian Centre, to celebrate this landmark event with great enthusiasm and good cheer.

As is the ZTFE tradition, a Jashan was performed by our young and senior Ervad Sahebs in the Zartoshty Brothers Hall and there was also a *Maachi in the Setayash Gah*.

President Paurushasp B. Jila gave a brief welcome speech and wished all a happy and prosperous NoRuz. There was a banquet style sit-down meal in two parts (with approximately 300 guests in each seating). Drinks and starters flowed throughout the evening and the highlight was a small show put together by some of the eXtra Young Zoroastrians (XYZs) and a Haftsheen NoRuz table presented by our small but active Iranian community members.

A professional band provided entertainment during and after the scrumptious dinner. Following dinner and kulfies, the guests took the opportunity to dance well into the morning of the second new day of the year... Happy NoRuz to all!!



**Report
by
Darius
Karkaria**



CHICAGO CHILDREN LEARN TO SET THE HAFT SEEN TABLE

AROUND THE WORLD

On March 15th the children of the religious class in Chicago, and their parents learnt how to set Haft Seen table and the significance of the items on it. They were given a brief description of the customs and traditions Zarathushtis follow in Iran. The children decorated eggs for the Haft Seen table for the March 21st celebrations of the association.

The Chicago Zoroastrian community celebrated Norooz with prayers led by Mobed Keikhosrow Mobed followed by community service award given to Minoo Press for his years of service and dedication to ZAC. The entertainers on the main stage were Sanaya Dukandar and Yazmin Rustomji, their lively Persian dance was the crowd's favorite. This was followed by delicious food. Beautifully decorated Haft Seen table, flower decorations, music, dancing and more made it



a great event and judging from the reaction of the crowd, everyone enjoyed the evening.

On March 21 activist Kayhan Irani was the chief guest at Michigan University - National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum speaking to women as powerful creative forces in the world.

"It is my community's New Year today, so Navroze Mubarak and Happy New Year to you all. It is really wonderful that just as the Spring has started, and people are celebrating a renewed connection to the earth, and to the creative force of the universe, that you women of Michigan have decided to come together and create a new bond and renew a common sense of sisterhood and purpose. And how perfect can that be since we, as women, are such powerful creative forces in the world!"

That brings me to creativity, art, and social justice. I call myself an activist – artist and activist – a person who uses creativity and art to move the world towards the liberation of all human beings. But we are all activists, we just don't know it! Making social justice takes imagination, creativity, creation, regeneration, and love. It is some of what we women do best – and quite naturally. And so it is vital that we see ourselves and all of our work in this world as part of the continuum for social justice."

Kayhan writes "The people in the photo were community leaders and members who took part in an Asian fashion show. The traditional costumes of Korea, China, Hmong people, Philippines, India, and Bangladesh were highlighted." (Kayhan Irani is in front row fourth from left)





7,500 VISITORS CELEBRATE NOWRUZ AT THE FREER AND SACKLER GALLERIES!



The Freer and Sackler Galleries kicked off a Year of Iran with the ever-popular annual "Iran Film Festival" in February. 2009 Our Nowruz celebration was the second step. Next, will be two major exhibitions back-to-back, each featuring stunning art from Iran. *"The Tsars and the East: Gifts from Turkey and Iran in the Moscow Kremlin,"* May 9- September 13, and *"Falnama: The Book of Omens,"* October. 24, 2009, to January. 24, 2010.

Thank you for celebrating Nowruz with us at the Freer and Sackler Galleries. It was a delight to host such a wonderful crowd and to see so many smiling faces enjoying the festivities, food and fun. And what a turn-out! A total of 7,500 visitors took part in the day-long celebration.

The "Nowruz! A Persian New Year!" event was made possible with the generous support of Mr. and Mrs. Farhad Ebrahimi.



Sa'adi Shirazi, Persian Poet, 13th century

کرنیدی ک پی ی آدم اعضا ی بن
ک گوهرندی که در آفرینش ز
چو عضوی به درد آورد روزگار
دگر عضوها را نماند قرار
ی غم ی گران بی تو کز محنت د
ی د که نامت نهند آدمی نشا

*Human beings are members of a whole,
In creation of one essence and soul.
If one member is afflicted with pain,
Other members uneasy will remain.
If you have no sympathy for human pain,
The name of human you cannot retain.*



NOROOZ

Special Events

AROUND THE WORLD

Freer and Sackler Galleries in Washington, D.C. Celebrate Persian New Year March 7 2009.

Gold coins and goldfish, fire jumping, dancing clowns, the banging of bowls and spoons and many other joyful sights and sounds filled the Smithsonian's Freer and Sackler galleries during an early celebration of "Nowruz! A Persian New Year Celebration,"

SATURDAY, MARCH 7, FROM 10:30 AM. TO 5:30 PM.

The celebration of "Nowruz," or "new day," dates back to 3,000 B.C.E., and marks the first day of spring or the vernal equinox—March 20. It is rooted in Zoroastrianism, the religion of pre-Islamic Iran, and the celebration is also observed by communities in Afghanistan, Bahrain, parts of Lebanon and Syria, Kurdish communities in Iraq and Turkey and many countries in Central Asia.

"We are delighted to host this festival of spring marking the Iranian New Year and hope to make this a signature event for our visitors every year," said Claire Orologas, head of Education and Public Programs at the Freer and Sackler galleries.

"Wild Fire Eve and Stories from the"Book of Kings" in the Sackler Gallery

The celebration began in the Sackler Gallery with a song and dance performance and workshop by *Aatash*, an Iranian culture group from George Washington University. Dancers performed the ancient fire-jumping tradition of "Wild Fire Eve" ("*chahar-shamba suri*"). Children in the audience were invited to participate in a safe version of the ritual. Storyteller *Xanthe Gresham* performed excerpts from the Iranian epic poem "*Shahname*" ("Book of Kings") the animated film "*Babak and Friends: A First Norooz*" (2005, video, 30 min) was screened in the new Black Box theater.

There were hands-on art activities in the *ImaginAsia* classroom. Children and their adult companions explored goldfish, hyacinths, and other symbols associated with the Persian New Year, and created fun designs on greeting cards and T-shirts using stencil art and hand-carved wooden printing blocks.

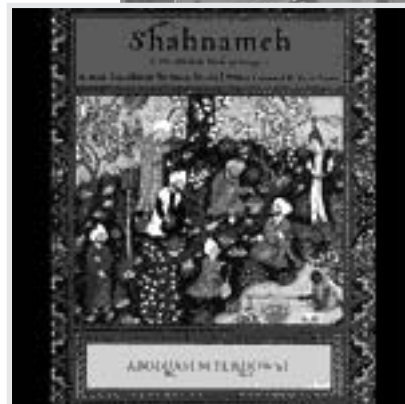
A Nowruz table ("haft sinn") displayed traditional items symbolizing fertility and renewal throughout the day in the Sackler pavilion with discussions of its meaning and significance.

Celebrated chef and authority on Nowruz traditions and food, *Najmieh Batmanglij* discussed the meaning of the Nowruz "haft sinn" table and signed copies of her book "*Happy Nowruz: Cooking with Children to Celebrate the Persian New Year*". Nowruz delicacies such as "*ash-e reshteh*," a noodle and bean soup, and other traditional recipes from Batmanglij's cookbooks were on display.



HAPPY NOWRUZ

Cooking with Children to Celebrate the Persian New Year
NAJMIEH BATMANGLIJ



Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings



Celebrations

N O R O O Z

AROUND THE WORLD

INDIVIDUAL CELEBRATIONS FOR NOUROOZ AT KARACHI

This year NouRooz began in Pakistan at 4:44pm on March 20th, 2009 and as there was a wedding in our community on the 21st, most of our gracious hosts opened their homes on the 20th. Tables of four hosts who shared their homes are displayed below but there are many more having similar celebrations at Karachi.



Aspi & Dilshad Irani (left) have an open house each year in their flat at Mehrabad, Karachi. Though limited for space, Dilshad's table is always a pretty sight having flowers as the focal point. They follow the tradition of having their home open for the full 13 days welcoming all who come to meet and wish them NouRouz Mubarak. Years ago when Aspi lived in Quetta, they used to go on the thirteenth day with the whole Parsi Colony for a picnic in the mountains, near a stream to dispose off the sabzeh. This alas is not possible in Karachi.

Franey & Nariman Irani host an evening for their friends each year on NavRouz at their home in Karachi. Approx 200 people are invited giving us the opportunity of meeting mutual friends on this happy day. Besides having the traditional nan, paneer and roast meat with mint leaves, falooda, a feast both for the eyes and palate, is laid out for all to enjoy. (photos below)



Noshir & Dinaz Irani also have an open house for all their friends, reminding each one verbally to come for sure. A casual and warm

atmosphere is felt at this home, making the visit a special one. (photo page 45 left)

A family of Karachi, who continue to follow the tradition of their parents of having open house each year for NouRouz, welcoming all with great joie de vie. The falooda of this kitchen has the reputation of being one of the finest - the recipes being handed down since at least two generations. (photo right)



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COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS FOR NOUROOZ AT KARACHI

Each year on March 20th the Parsi Pakistan Collegiate Assoc (PPCA) have held a dinner-dance for the younger segment of the Karachi Zarathushti community to bring in the NouRouz and 2009 was no exception. An energetic committee entertained 130 people to a fun-filled evening at the Aquarius Lounge, Beach Luxury Hotel.

The residents of Cyrus Minwalla Colony, in Karachi, held a dinner on 22nd March to celebrate NouRouz. Community members from all localities were welcome to join in. Prior to dinner tambola was played followed by a buffet dinner of Pakistani cuisine at a moderate subscription. 177 people gathered in the open air courtyard of the Colony's hall.

Since the last 60 years the Karachi Parsi Institute (KPI) together with the Parsi Pakistan Collegiate Assoc (PPCA) has held a sports day for the community, known as Hungamma Sports (noisy fun). Initially it was held on 21st March but now it is held on March 23rd as that is a public holiday in Pakistan. Eight teams of six persons of young and older adults, competed in fun races with children over 11 taking part as well. To include the younger children ranging from four to ten, events were thrown open to the audience of about a 100 people, to come forward and enjoy.

This was followed by the favorite tambola on the cool lawns of KPI with about 125 people coming to enjoy the last of the NouRouz celebrations in Karachi for Zarathushtis

Report by Toxy Cowasjee

Photos Toxy Cowasjee; Dinaz Irani



**The Emirates Parsees Group
organized the Navroz function at
GOZO Garden, Airport Millennium
Hotel, Dubai**

Photo credit Goolcher Navdar

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The Kuwait Zoroastrian Association ("KZA") was formed in 1975. Today, KZA comprises of 100 members including off springs and two couples non members. Our goal has been to encourage bonding among the fellow Zoroastrians of Kuwait. An ancillary objective is also to help the less fortunate brethren in any way we can. As a community, we are known for our philanthropy and occasionally the working committee of KZA tries to collect voluntary funds from the members to help underprivileged people directly and through charitable organizations.

The 21st March - Naurooz function is an annual event; the KZA committee organizes a dinner & dance evening



at one of the 5* hotels. The evening is fun filled with a lot of dancing with foot tapping music. This year too the event was organized at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on Saturday 21st March, 2009. Games for kids and the adults were arranged, few spot prizes are called out, and of course, the music floor was alive to the beat of DL Loyola. Housie was also played -an all time favorite and it always ends with a raffle draw.

At these get-togethers, the KZA Committee has a practice of passing out giveaway bags for all the members and guests. These bags include items such as rice, tea, beer cans, cooking oil, etc. Depending on the sponsorships obtained, there are also items like nuts n Arabic sweets, Body Shop body butter, restaurant vouchers, etc. The raffle draw includes prizes from corporate sponsorships which could range from electronic items, household appliances to airline tickets. Our sponsors include leading international telecom appliances manufacturer which gives the latest phone sets, and dinner vouchers from local restaurants with a range of cuisines.

This year, the surprise item was the *Parsi lagan-nu-bhonu*. The Committee members had coordinated up to the last detail by bringing authentic masalas and worked closely with the hotel chefs to develop the final "product". The end result was - *patra ni macchi / sali boti / papeta par edu / marghi na farcha / mutton palav dal and lagan nu custard!*

21st March is one of the biggest event in the KZA calendar year.

Visit www.kzamembers.wetpaint.com.

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OSLO, NORWAY CELEBRATES NOROUZ

Kurosh Goshtasp Aryana

Zarathushthrian Association of Norway (DNZT) celebrated Norouz in Oslo writes Kurosh Goshtasp Aryana, from Norway

Zarathushtis with their families and friends attended the ceremony which took place at a local cultural center. Ceremony started with an Iranian national song (Ey Iran) followed by the Norouz song, sung by *Noush-Afarin and Khoda-dad Kaviani*. Zarathushti Norouz prayer was performed by two members of DNZT. Three speeches were given by members of DNZT regarding Norouz history, Norouz table and Norouz celebration among Zarathushtis of Iran.

After a short break, the celebrations continued with music, diner and dance.

PS. Chahr-shanbeh-souri (fire festival) was organized by an Iranian cultural group in Oslo as well (photo left below)

Det Norske Zarathushthrisk Trosamfunn (DNZT)

Postboks 6688 Rodelokka, 0502 OSLO Norway

TLF:+47-95755306 www.dnzt.org

Char shambe soori



Ghasembad, Yazd

On the dawn of the last day of Panjee (last 5 days of the year, or 6 days for a leap year), Zarathushtis of Ghasembad, Yazd lit fire on their roofs.

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Parsi Zoroastrian Association of South East Asia (PZAS), Singapore

NouRooz Celebration.

Reported by Jasmine Dastoor



ON March 21, 2009 over 150 Zarathushtis, of all ages, came to celebrate NowRooz in style at the Holiday Inn Park View Hotel. A festive NowRooz table with Haft Shin items was set up in one corner of the room.

The evening started with a "Humbandagi" of 2 Yatha Ahu Vairyo and 1 Ashem Vohu, led by Aspar and the children. President Russi Ghadiali then highlighted all the achievements of the Committee for the past year. New members of the community were introduced and children recently born in the community were felicitated. Ang paos were distributed to all the children in honor of NowRooz as



well.

The highlight of the evening was a joyous, rhythmic and exuberant performance by 12 of our little ones to the tune of Bollywood's "Desi Girl". The children did an outstanding job and were enthusiastically cheered by the entire gathering. This was followed by an explanation of NowRooz and the Haft Shin table, by *Jasmine Dastoor*.

A sumptuous dinner of many delicious items including chicken makhani, naan, rice, vegetable lasagna and many other dishes, along with a variety of mouth watering desserts rounded off the meal.

The finale of the evening was the crowning of our very own *Ms. NowRooz: Suna Kanga* and *Mr. NowRooz: Dinyar Panthakee*. They sportingly danced the first dance of the evening together.(photo left).

It was truly a fun filled, eventful evening with many memorable moments, good cheer and laughter.

MUMBAI

NAVROZE: Faith, Festivities and Feasting!

By Shernaaz Engineer

As the Spring Equinox ushers in a fresh season of hope, spiritual resurgence and jubilant celebration for the Parsi and Irani Zarathushti community all over the world, in Mumbai, home to the largest congregation of the community, it's a day of faith, festivities and feasting. Although, truth be told, the focus generally appears overwhelming in favour of food, glorious food, as one moves from celebratory meal to meal!

Early morning in most 'baugs', one can see diligent home-makers festooning their floors with colourful 'chowk', and dangling fragrant and decorative garlands made from fresh flowers on their front doors. Breakfast time is usually



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when the first feast of the day is ushered in with sweet, crisp sev, lashed lavishly with roasted-toasted almonds and fried wrinkled raisins, served with mithoo dahi and some slurpy, sloshy but absolutely scrumptious 'ravo'. As though this weren't a gastronomic overdose in itself, boiled eggs and assorted mithai also appears at the table. And nobody complains!

One would imagine, with such over-indulgence right up at the start, that the rest of the day would be spare... but banish the idea. We 'bawajis' don't believe in tightening the belt and reigning in the appetite!

However, mid-morning, an excursion to the local Agiary, or even the Atash Behram is mandatory, where the blessings of the divine are sought, friends and acquaintances greeted cheerily, and the short pilgrimage is the perfect preamble for diving into an elaborate and over-the-top lunch!

One of the luxuries of living in India is the enormous opportunity for culinary outsourcing, and the indomitable domestic help, both of which makes life merrier on days like Navroze. So the kitchens in most homes turn out delicacies like 'pulao dar' or 'dhan dar and patio', or you can always order from the umpteen caterers who start advertising well in advance, and whose menus are so elaborate and enticing that were you not a true-blue 'bawa' with an ever expandable appetite, you would get indigestion just reading through them!

Lots of people place their orders for these 'bhonu' parcels and run around town picking up their deliveries pre-lunch, only to descend into a contented and sometimes distended siesta after the repast.

Come evening and its either 'foodna chai' or 'falooda', depending upon whether you are a Parsi or an Irani Zarthusthi. The distinction is most evident on Navroze, as only the latter will lay out the table with the 7 S's. The Parsis dress up and go out. A popular option is still a 'natak' (the tradition of Parsi theatre, although nowhere near as glorious as it once was, survives... with a few troupes hosting their riotous rip-offs on vintage Adi Marazban or Dorab Mehta scripts).

Conversely, Navroze also sees community events like the impressive Navroze celebration at the Dadar Parsi Colony, masterminded by its meticulous matriarch, Mithoo Jesia, with her band of tireless volunteers, and thousands of Parsis come together every year for an evening of entertainment, skits, contests, talent shows, live music, and 'lagan nu bhonu'. Although packed to capacity at the Dadar Gymkhana grounds, the evening has become something of a tradition for many families who unfailingly return year after year to partake of the convivial community spirit and an evening well spent with friends old and new.

Another latter-day addition is the Navroze Dhamaka, which has been around since 1996 and has unfailingly seen success every time. It is organized by Diniar Darab Mehta and his wife, Shiraz, along with their team of dedicated colleagues. This year, for instance, on the schedule was a Variety Entertainment Programme, followed by a delectable, sumptuous Parsi dinner on traditional banana leaves. The event was held at Cama Baug, Khetwadi, and a good attendance ensured that the effort was not in vain.

Many Parsis in Mumbai prefer to skip the big functions and 'nataks' and go out instead for a quiet dinner to a restaurant. The joke around here is that despite the threat of the community vanishing, you cannot get a decent restaurant reservation on Navroze unless you have pre-booked well in advance. So the 'bawas' are well, alive, thriving and gorging... thank you! And Navroze is the perfect excuse for living the happy life, brimful with blessings – plus a huge second helping of good cheer, good food, and then some.

Truly, our cup runeth over! Shah Jamsheed would approve.

*** All photographs courtesy Diniar Darab Mehta**

Shernaaz Engineer got her big break in journalism with the late Behram Contractor at 'The Afternoon Despatch & Courier'. Subsequently, she won a prestigious US fellowship to various universities across North America as part of an international study group on women's rights. She currently freelances for several premium publications and is Consulting Editor with the 'Free Press Journal' and 'The Afternoon Despatch & Courier'. Her book, 'Amazing Amils: Lessons from the Lives of Sindhi Achievers', was released by the Governor of Maharashtra, S.C. Jamir, earlier this year. She blogs at: <http://parsi-link.blogspot.com>



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NAVROZE CELEBRATED AT THE INDO-IRANIAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY, MUMBAI

Navroze was celebrated with fanfare by the Indo Iranian Friendship Society at the Islam Gymkhana , Mumbai

A haft sheen table was set with pods of garlic for good health, bunch of mint for greenery and abundance, eggs smeared with "kumkum:" (vermillion) for fertility and productivity, a red apple, shirmac, a spice for wealth and prosperity, sanjed-dry fruits from Iran and other Iranian delicacies. Two lighted candles on either side of the table, a bouquet of fresh flowers, a photo of prophet Zarathushtra, a mirror for good reflections, a bowl of gold fish signifying purity completed the table



Ervad Rooyintan Peer gave the invocation, while Mohammed Reza Mirzaei , director of the Iran Culture House spoke of the significance of Navroze from the Shahname, Mr Godrej Dotivala, of BPP and Secretary General of the Indo-Iranian Friendship Society as well as Mr Dinshaw Mehta, Chairman, BPP spoke of the importance and significance of Navroze.

Mr Ali Mohammadi, the chief guest and Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran spoke of March 21 not only as the first day of the vernal equinox, but as the resurgence of life with new birth, new hope, new vision and new awakening for the spiritual upliftment of mankind.

(photo left below Ervad Peer giving invocation address. On dais from left, Mr Godrej N. Dotivala, Iranian Consul General Mr Ali Mohammadi , Mr Dinshaw R. Mehta, Mr Mohammed Reza Mirzaei, and Mr Mehli Colah. The Navroze Table specially laid is seen in front)



Musicians, comedians and reporters were specially flown from Iran to perform at this event and add to the festivity. The Mehenty family (photo left) entertained the audience with their various skills, five and a half year old *Rooyinton Mehenty*, a child prodigy surprised the audience by reciting the "5 big Gehs, 5 big niyayashs, Char disha no Namaskar" "Patet Pashamani" all from memory. He had been able to memorize this by listening to his father *Ervad Nozer Mehenty* every morning. Ervad Nozer, a martial arts champion, demonstrated squats, dunds, and abdominal compresses, and 7 year old daughter *Sheherevar* demonstrated her gymnastics skills. 74 year old *Adil Patel* performed most difficult yoga asana

"shirshasan" (head balance) on the floor as well as on a small stool while *Ayesha Billimoria* demonstrated her athletic skills on the Swiss Ball.

The evening closed with a sumptuous dinner complete with Falooda

Abstracted from an article by Shernaz Baji Avari, Afternoon Despatch and Courier, March 24, 2009

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IRANIAN ZARATHUSHTIS VISIT HONGKONG



The Irani - Hong Kong Cultural Institution of Hong Kong planned a 4 day Nowrooz Celebrations. The team invited from Iran included Zarthushti artists / performers as well as Zarthushti MP, Dr. Ekhtyari, and Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary . Hong Kong Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman, encouraged and helped, in every possible way, by the Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in Hong Kong, *Mr. Nekunam*, had invited a group of seven, from Iran, to be present at their Nowrooz celebrations.

Haft Sein' table had been arranged and Mobed Firouzgary explained the significance of each element. A jashan was

performed by *Ervad Jamsheed Sidhwa* with *Mobed Firouzgary* assisting (photo left)



Zarthushti youth from Iran performed Zoroastrian songs and recited poems of *Shahnameh*. *Mobed Firouzgary* performed some prayers at different occasions. According to *Mr Jal Shroff* , President of Zoroastrian Anjuman of Hong Kong, the feedback from the attendees of Norooz event has been very positive and encouraging.

According to AmordadNews <http://www.amordad6485.blogfa.com/post-1697.aspx>; *Dr. Esfandiar Ekhtiari*, the representative of the Zarthushti Iranians in the Iranian Parliament, the Hong Kong Zoroastrian Association will grant up to 10 scholarships to Iranian Zarthushti Students who are willing to pursue their education in Hong Kong and at Chinese universities. Priority will be given to those who plan to study at a doctoral level.

Sina Barkhordar played "Taar" (something like the Indian Sitar) *Ardvan Marzban* the " Daff" (Iranian drum) *Payam Khorramshahi* - Violin and *Esfandiyar Najmi* sang traditional Farsi / Dari songs, in tune with the musicians. *Ramin Bamasi* recited selected portions of *Shahname*, highlighting the Springtime and Nowrooz with some background music by the musicians

L_R His Excellency Abdolla Nikoonam, Consul General, of Iran to Hong Kong; Jal shroff President HK Z Anjuman, Esfandiyar Ekhtyari Iranian Z MP, M Firouzgary



L to R Sina Barkhordar,(playing the Taar); Esfandiyar Najmi, (singing religious songs, Payam Khorramshahi (violin) and Ardvan Marzban (drums) - performed at the Conrad Hotel



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Nou Rooz Prayer

We worship you O Ahura Mazda!

You set the order of the universe, the rule of Asha

You created the waters, the plants and the light

You created the whole universe and all the blessings that we enjoy

We praise the souls of the righteous heroes and the right minded men and women

Those who stand against all evils with their alert conscience

We praise the eternal and right minded men and women

Those who always live with good mind and are benefactor to the world

May it go as we wish

May we be among the righteous, the Ashavans

May we all be united

May we all be united with those with good deeds

May we stay away from sin and the sinful

May we share the deeds of those from all corners of the Earth who wear Kushti and those who are good

May we live long

May we live with righteousness

May we live with happiness

May we live with our wishes fulfilled

May our earthly life fulfill the needs of our bodies

May our eternal life fulfill the needs of our souls

May we be united

May we be united with all righteous

Ashem Vohu Vahishtem Asti

Ushta Asti; Ushta Ahmai; Hiat Ashai;

Vahishtai Ashem.



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CELEBRATIONS IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

REPORTED BY SAROSH KHARIWALA, PRESIDENT, ZAV



An unprecedented crowd of 250 Zarathushtis and their friends thronged to the Ted Adjani Centre in Melbourne on 28 March 2009 to celebrate a traditional Jamshed-i-Navroz. The beautifully laid Navroz Table greeted the guests as they entered the hall together with a sprinkle of rose water and the mandatory glimpse in the mirror.

President of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria (ZAV), *Sarosh Khariwala*, welcomed everyone especially *Mr Yasser Soliman*, a representative of the Victorian Multicultural Commission and *Mr. Akbar Iqbal* from the Iranian Cultural Foundation.

An extra special guest that night was *Amoo Nowroz*, the Persian Santa Claus who pranced his way into the hall to the delight and surprise of all present, distributing

sweets to the children and to some lucky adults too.

Entertainment was provided by traditional Persian dancing with a performance by the ZAV choir under the able guidance of conductor *Farhad Mavandadi*. Fifteen choristers sang with gusto two inspiring numbers titled Norooz and Rah E Zartosht. ZAV kids performed a dance sequence *Pappu Can't Dance*, choreographed by *Ms.Kazween Boiko*, followed by two Persian dance sequences one by the young girls and the other by the ladies..choreographed by *Ms Aban Irani*. The happy vibrant beat of the music stirred the audience who responded by joining in.

Melbourne's very own *Merwan's Pies* treated all guests to a sampling of their award winning pies. Veteran bakers from India, the Irani family have set up their bakery in Langwarrin, a suburb of Melbourne, producing their version of the famous Aussie meat pie.



DJ Babak provided the music which kept the dance floor packed with the young and the young at heart, who worked up a healthy appetite for the delicious home cooked meal of *Gosht no Pulao*, *Masala ni Dar*, *Sali Murghi*, *Rye ne Vatena no Papeto*, *Mast Au Khiar* and *Keri Nu Ice Cream*. ZAV president and chef Sarosh Khariwala and his trusty team of committee members had shopped, peeled, chopped, mixed, marinated and laboured since 7 am to prepare this sumptuous meal.

Guest artist *Mr.Fernandez*, dazzled the audience during dinner, with his saxophone playing music from the yester years.

The festivities continued until the wee hours of the morning when a weary committee had to wind up the evening. It had been a fantastic, fun filled beginning to the New Year – may it continue to be a fantastic year for everyone.

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ZARATHUSHTIS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA CELEBRATE NAYROOZ

REPORTED BY BEHRAM COOPER



Jamshedi Navroze 2009, was celebrated on Saturday March 21st by the Zoroastrian Association of Western Australia Inc., at the Australian Asian Associations Hall in the heart of Perth City with a dinner/dance and the exchange of good wishes between ZAWA members and friends. It was an evening to forget about one's troubles, put aside differences and come together as a small but vibrant community that adds colour and spice to the Australian multiculturalism initiative.

Music was provided by *Apollo* brought back by popular demand. Dinner of Indian and one Iranian dish, followed by desert, coffee and tea, was served by smiling committee members and

volunteers.

Musical chairs, musical statues and passing the parcel games were played by the children. This kept them busy for a while and gave their parents some space of their own, to catch up with friends and the current gossip!!.

A raffle with a modest prize was held as part of a fund-raising activity.

It was a very enjoyable evening and people went home with a smile on their faces, a song on their lips and lots of happy memories of the evening to cherish.

FLORIDA CELEBRATES NAUROOZ 2009!

REPORT BY ERVAD SOLI DASTUR

Zoroastrian Association of Florida (ZAF Miami), Central Florida Group in Orlando and Zoroastrian Association of Tampa Bay (ZATAMBAY) celebrated the traditional Navrooz on Saturday March 21st and Sunday March 22nd!

ZAF The spirit of teamwork within the Board and more importantly the support of the community to help put

together an enjoyable and festive Navroz function at the Miramar Hall on March 21 were encouraging and heartwarming. Through the generosity of donors of cash and raffle articles, we were able to keep the function entrance fee nearly half of the actual cost. The number of articles for the raffle far exceeded our capacity to do it all in the available time at the function and hence a



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decision had to be made to defer many items until another function. The Z Club children's' participation, parents' support and Aban & Percy Kavasmaneck's tireless and dedicated energy made the Navroz celebration a truly memorable event in the true community spirit and our rich traditions. There were about 70 adults participating in the celebration

Orlando Group gathered at *Yasmin and Adi Irani's* home to celebrate Naurooz 2009. As always, Yasmin and her helpers had a wonderful Haft Sheen table. There were about 60 people attending the celebration with a traditional Parsi cuisine thanks to Yasmin and Adi. The group, after a sumptuous lunch, got together for a serious singing rehearsal of Chhaiye Hame Zarthoshti for the upcoming FEZANA 2009 AGM to be held in Orlando. The potential for this group in this area is unlimited!

Haft Sheen Table of Yasmin and Adi Irani. From left Yasmin and Adi Irani, Diane and Keki Mody, with Gustad Mody on left and Tanaz Irani on the right. Tanaz and Gustad are going to be married on January 2nd 2010 in Orlando and we all want to wish these young love birds the best of everything!

2. Chef Adi Irani is serving out delicious dishes to all at the Orlando Naurooz (photo left)



ZATAMBAY (photo below) celebrated Naurooz 2009 on Sunday at the beautiful home of *Anahita and Hoshedar Tamboli*. A traditional Jashan was performed by *Ervad Soli P. Dastur*. A beautiful Haft Sheen table was spread by Anahita and her family. The group had a surprising number of 5 "snow flake" couples from Toronto area which swelled the attendance to almost 50 people. A Parsi lunch which was enjoyed by all prepared by the Tamboli family



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ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF KANSAS (ZAKA)

Reported by Firozeh Shahlari, Secretary, ZAKA



The Zoroastrian Association of Kansas (ZAKA) held the annual Birthday of Zartosht celebration on Saturday March 28, 2009. It was an unusually wintry day, and at 5.p.m. there was about 6 inches of snow. Thankfully almost everyone



Felfeli (photo labive left) reciting the avesta and welcoming the new year. Their prayers were followed by a children's program where all the children recited Avesta and told us what being a Zarathushti meant to them.(photo below)



members. The amount of food was incredible and needless to say, very delicious. After dinner, there was music and dancing. We also raffled off several great prizes throughout the night. A wonderful time was had by all!

We celebrated the birthdays of all or members who had a birthday during the week of March 26.(photo above)

The amazing people that make Avesta Class happen every month (photo above middle L-R :R. Scott Nelson, Dr. Farah Zaery, Mobed Sirous Hormozdi, Mobed Sirous Felfeli, and Dr. Daryoush Jahanian).

Lots of dancing to finish off the night. (photo below)



made it to the celebration safely and we had a spectacular evening.

The program started with *Mobeds Sirous Hormozdi and Sirous*

The prayers were followed by a mouth-watering dinner, catered by our generous and gracious



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SAN DIEGO CELEBRATES

San Diego Zarathushtis celebrated Norouz on March 20th (Friday night) at Marina Village in San Diego's beautiful Mission Bay area.

Over 230 Zarathushtis of San Diego, Orange County and Los Angeles were present and celebrated with DJ music and Persian food.

(photo Board of Directors at the Haft Sheen table)



ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA CELEBRATES NOUROOZ (ZSBC)



NouRooz, on 21 March 2009 was celebrated by about 150 Zarathushtis of British Columbia at the Arbab Guiv Darbe Mehr, in Burnaby. It was a meet-and-greet time for all present and adults and children enjoyed a festive morning at our Darbe Mehr. Parents had been requested to bring a surprise gift for their children, and there was a lot of joy to be seen on the children's faces as they unwrapped their gifts which were handed out by the distinguished Amou NouRooz, the ZSBC director of maintenance, Faramarz Souroshi. The gift-giving was followed by snacks. The formal diner-dance to celebrate the new year was held at the Coast Plaza hotel on 28 March 2009 with about 280 persons in attendance.

REPORTED BY PRESIDENT KASHMIRA SURALIWALA

Michigan Girl plays "Chhayye Hame Zarathosti"

Jennifer Bugli was 7 years old when she first heard the song, which most people consider to be 'the Parsi Anthem'. Over the next few months she learnt to sing "Chhayye Hame Zarathosti" and also figured out on her own the piano notes for its melody. As various attempts to locate sheet music for this song failed, her Russian piano teacher helped her perfect the song after first listening to it on tape.

Jennifer has been playing piano for the past 4 years and is now 10 years old. She has skillfully played this song many times for Zoroastrian functions, and has helped teach her other Zarathushti friends the words.

If any budding pianists are interested in learning this song please email bbugli@yahoo.com and the buglis will be happy to share Jennifer's version of the song with you.

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**The Zoroastrian Association Of Michigan [ZAOM]
celebrated its 2nd official Navroz in Novi, Michigan
on the 21st of March, 2009.**

The evening celebration began with a Jashan by *Mobed Noshir Sidhwa*. After which the community maintained a moment of silence to honor the members of the community that had passed away over the last year. The community also came together to thank *Mobed Noshir Sidhwa* and his wife *Khushnam* for their invaluable service and dedication given over the years for all the religious ceremonies.



ZAOM has acquired its 501(c)(3) tax exempt status recently and that was a great piece of news.

The children from the various levels of the Religion Classes had been preparing different projects for Navroz some of which were displayed for the celebration. These included the Haft Seen table items colored and pasted on their own individual projects and the *Tree of Thanks* for all the blessings in their lives.

The kids from the older class presented a play called 'The First Navroz-A Persian Fairy Tale'. In this play King Jamsheed wants to thank Ahura Mazda for all his blessings but does not know how to do so. He is counseled by Angel Sarosh to commemorate the forthcoming Spring Equinox to thank the Wise Lord. Angel Sarosh advises King Jamsheed to lay out a green table cloth before retiring for the night and that Ahura Mazda would take care of the rest. He does so and as he sleeps he has a dream in which each Amesha Spenta appears carrying an offering which is put on the table. When king Jamsheed awakens he sees the entire Haft Seen is laid out.

The star cast included *Xerxes Chinoy* as King Jamsheed, *Darayus Sanjana* as Angel Sarosh, *Natasha Medhora* as Kshathra Vairya, *Avvan Sanjana* as Hauravatat, *Armaity Minwalla* as Spenta Armaity, *Simonne Kapadia* as Vohumana, *Sabrina Bilimoria* as Ameratat, *Sanaya Irani* as Asha Vahishta, *Tanaz Naterwala* as Spenta Mainyu. The narration was provide by *Armaity Minwalla*, *Jasmine Sholapurwalla*, *Avvan Sanjana* and *Sabrina Bilimoria*.

The program concluded with the American National Anthem Sung by *Armaity Minwalla*.

The delicious evening meal catered by Parsi Chef *Aban Daboo* was served and enjoyed by all.

The celebrations ended with wishes for peace and prosperity for the entire Zarathushti community and the whole world on this wonderful occasion of Navroz.

Celebrations

N O R O O Z

AROUND THE WORLD

ZARTHOSHTI ANJUMAN OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA (ZANC) NAVROZE/NOWRUZ CELEBRATIONS



ZANC's celebration for Nowruz was a sold-out evening held at a community centre in Foster City. Maybe it was the location or the draw of the parsī food, but a full capacity crowd turned up to meet and greet each other, as well as feast on real parsī food cooked by our own members- *Khushrow & Roshan Mistry helped by their son Eric*, who works as a chef at the Bellagio in Las Vegas.

Every one enjoyed the *dhan/dal*, *saali-gosht* and *parsi wedding stew*.

A beautiful haft-e-seen table was also laid out, and everyone tasted

the goodies from it. (photo left)

It was a happy and joyful beginning to welcome the spring equinox and the New Year.

The children under the direction of their indefatigable Sunday school teacher- *Annahita Jasavala*, started the evening with a small one-act play entitled

"The Zarathushti Story of Creation" - in which they portrayed Ahura Mazda and his seven creations and the forces of good against evil.

The narrator, *Trista Kersi Daruwalla*, (photo right) introduced the main characters Ahura Mazda – who lived in the abode of Endless Light, and Ahriman – who lived in the abode of Eternal Darkness. Ahura Mazda fashioned the natural creations of Sky, Water, Earth, Plants, Animals, Man and Fire. Ahriman planned to destroy these creations but Ahura Mazda created the Amesha Spentas to protect them.

The play conveyed the message that as each of us, consciously lead our lives with Ahura Mazda's teachings of Good Thoughts Good Words and Good Deeds, along with the help of Ahura Mazda and the Amesha Spentas, we will eventually defeat the forces of Ahriman.

The children and parents topped off the performance with *"Chaiye Hame Zarthoshti"* under *Pervin Mistry's* able leadership.

For research of the play, the playwright referred to *FEZANA Journal* article (Vol. VIII, No. 2 - Summer 1995) on *Bundahishn* by *Rustom Kevala*



PS by Rusi Sorabji *"More than three months of dedication and hard work went into the preparation and production of the play with Producer & Director, Mrs. Annahita Jassawala and her family sacrificing their Sundays, traveling over a hundred and sixty miles for each day of the practice, during the cold and rainy part of the year"*

Celebrations

N O R O O Z

AROUND THE WORLD

JOINT ZAGNY/IZA FUNCTION TO CELEBRATE NAUROOZ

A joint celebration with IZA (Iranian Zoroastrian Association) and ZAGNY (Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York) brought together 450 people at The Greek Orthodox Church in Tenafly. Gev Nentin, President of ZAGNY Shirin Khosravi, President of IZA played co-hosts. A short prayer was followed with some talent display by the community children, an explanation of the Haftsheen table and the history of Nowruz.

(Photos below)



ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF NORTH TEXAS (ZANT) CELEBRATES NAUROOZ

At the ZANT 20th Anniversary / Jamsheedi NauRooz Celebrations on 21st March 2009, our newly ordained *Mobed Ervad Burzin Balsara* was felicitated and honored by the NAMC, welcoming him as a member of the Council.

He was awarded with a purse and a set of prayer and liturgy books, along with an audio cassette.(photo below)

Firdosh Mehta, was requested by the *President of NAMC Ervad Kobad Zarolia* to confer the honors. The program was attended by 180 members and guests. Everyone rejoiced the auspicious occasion.



Ervad Burzin participating in the NauRooz and ZANT 20th Anniversary Jashan as the Raaspee, with his father *Ervad Poras Balsara* presiding as the Zaotar. *Ervad's Cyrus Dastur* and *Hormuzd Karkaria* accompanied in the Jashan ceremony. (photo below)



Celebrations

N O R O O Z

AROUND THE WORLD

ZOROSATRIAN ASSOCIATION OF GREATER BOSTON AREA (ZAGBA) CELEBRATES NOROOZ

Parastu Dubash

On Saturday, March 21st, 93 adults and 48 children were on hand at ZAGBA's celebration of Norooz/Navroze at the Double Tree Hotel in Bedford, MA. As members and friends arrived dressed as recommended, in country-western style clothing – jeans, wide skirts and comfortable shoes – each person was given a straw cowboy hat and choice of red or blue bandana.



Not the traditional Navroze attire for sure, but it was part of the Square Dancing entertainment that was to be the highlight of the evening. This was another of ZAGBA's events in 2009 celebrating its 25th anniversary. For those who understood the subtle connection – 25th anniversary, 25 is a square number, thus square dancing! Brilliant!

The Haft Seen and Haft Sheen Presentation with children from 3 levels of Children's Religious Education classes began at 6 pm. The children each came to the front, presented their assigned item, and placed it on the table. They proceeded to describe the item and its significance. It was wonderful to see the confidence with which the children, ages 4 to 16, spoke. The table came together beautifully with each additional item and the children's descriptions reminded us of our connections with and responsibilities to the Ahura Mazda's 7 creations: Sky, Water, Earth, Plants, Animals, Humans, and Fire.

Ervads Farhad Panthaki and Nauzer Vimadlal led the group in prayer. As always the children joined in with enthusiasm. In keeping with ZAGBA tradition, the translation of the prayers was shared with the group to make the experience more meaningful.

For the next two hours, with brief breaks for drinks and appetizers, the professional Square dance caller & instructor Paul, provided 4 sessions of square dancing, each with increasing difficulty, new steps and new dance words to remember. Fairly soon, the groups were do-si-do-ing with their partners, and doing the allemand left with their corners with great ease. Even the promenades and ladies' chains became easier with practice. Except for an occasional mix-up between 'left' and 'right' the groups did well and had great fun. Just when the dancers would get into a routine and start to predict the next move, the caller would change things around, confusing everyone. He reminded us, "this is not recorded music; this is live,

things change!" It was a very enjoyable evening for first-timers as well as some who had done this 20 years ago and 50 years ago. The dinner was catered by *Gourmet India Restaurant*. ZAGBA would like to thank *Jerry & Celeste Kheradi* for their generous contribution of \$500 towards this March 21st event. This "sponsorship" in part allowed the board to keep the costs of the event affordable for families and

students.

The community got their first glimpse of the latest (3rd edition) *ZAGBA Community-Building and Fund-Raising Calendar*. Over 60 families, including many from out of town with connections with ZAGBA, participated reserving over 170 spots throughout the calendar, and submitting beautiful photos for each of them. The calendars were just in time for the new year. *Tara Raman* created the layout, *Parastu Dubash* compiled the content, and the *Mody Family at Print Aspects* printed the calendar.

In a slideshow presentation following dinner, Treasurer *Aspiyan Gazder* provided a summary of all of ZAGBA's charitable giving locally in the Boston area and to families, programs and institutions in India. *President Jamshed Dubash* and team leaders updated the community on ZAGBA's 25th Anniversary events and projects. The community was invited to ZAGBA's 25th Anniversary Gala event on Saturday, July 25, 2009 to be held at the Wyndham in Andover, MA.



Celebrations

N O R O O Z

AROUND THE WORLD

NOROUZ IN HOUSTON

REPORTED BY ARNAVAZ SETHNA



The NoRouz function was a grand success with over 400 people attending. The atrium and the Hall at the *Houston Cultural Centre* was very tastefully decorated, and the beautiful Haft Seen table, set up by our Iranian community added to the beauty.

The evening started with Humbandagi prayers followed by the festivities of the stage performance of young children of the religious classes of *Vehishta Kaikobad* and *Arzan Gonda's* troupe. It was wonderful to see so much talent in our children. Many thanks to Vehishta and Arzan and all the kids, and their parents, for organizing a fantastic and entertaining evening.

The food catered by *La Sani*, seemed to disappear very quickly. .

Our very own *Farrokh Firozgary* did excellent DJ-ing as always, with a perfect mix of Iranian, Hindi and Western music that had the dance floor rocking till the wee hours of the morning!! Thanks Farrokh!!

It was wonderful to spend Norouz evening with family and friends.



OZCF Navroze Function

REPORTED BY CYRUS GAZDAR

The *Candles Banquet and Convention Centre* in Mississauga was lit up on Saturday March 21st by over 330 Zarathushtis celebrating the arrival of the vernal equinox which signals the start of the Fasli New Year.

Once again the Navroze Jashan was performed solely by our young priests (*Ervads Rushad Bharda, Freyhan Daruwalla, Cyrus Panthakee, Armaan Panthaki, Farhan Panthaki, and Kamran Panthaki*) so gracefully lead by our young budding Mobed, *Ervad Farhan Panthaki*, who took on the role of the Zaoatar. (photo right)

Navroze always heralds high hopes and expectations for the coming year, yet it was the events of the past year which were brought to light..The highlight has been the near completion of the new congregation hall at the *Zoroastrian Religious Cultural Centre (ZRCC)*. What a remarkable achievement for the OZCF and its members in its brief but impressive lifespan! Rightfully so that we should all feel a great sense of pride and achievement!

President Rumi Jasavala thanked members for their continuous support and reminded them that with spring having arrived and summer to follow, the bulk of planned events were just around the corner.

We look forward to seeing our members attend these events and make this a summer to remember.

All in all, it was a beautiful community event we can all be proud of. We are, indeed, blessed by Ahura Mazda. Navroze Mubarak to one and all!



Celebrations

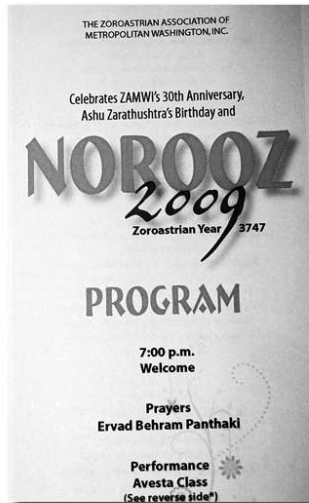
N O R O O Z

AROUND THE WORLD

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITON WASHINGTON Inc. (ZAMWI) CELEBRATES NOROOZ 2009

ZAMWI celebrated Asho Zarathushtra's birthday, Norooz and its 30th anniversary on March 28th 2009 at *St. Peter and Paul's Church* in Potomac, Maryland. The evening started with the Dua Tandorosti prayer recited by *Ervad Behram Panthaki* to bless the congregation. Prayers for Norooz sent by Mobeds from Tehran, Iran, were recited with translations by *Shahnaz Gheibi (Farsi)* and *Navroz Gandhi (English)*. The younger children from the Avesta class sang *Yanim Mano, Yanim Vacho* conducted by Ann Khademian,

Co-principal of the Avesta Class, Mina Aidun is seen holding balloons with



her friend *Sima Yazdanipour*. (photo right below) *Rubina Patel*, co-principal of the Avesta class is smiling with two of her seniors from the class *Vivian Cooper* and *Darius Engineer* who were selected to come to the lectern with their speeches. (photo left below) The high school children dressed up as *Haji Firooz* and *Amoo Norooz*.

Dinner had a very wide choice of traditional Persian Norooz Dishes and Indian/Parsi delicacies. For dessert there was the 30th anniversary cake for ZAMWI in addition to ras-malai from the Indian caterers. A live band with Jahangir, regaled dancing celebrants late into the night with a mix of Persian, Indian, English-American

and even a Kurdish song!



Celebrations

N O R O O Z

AROUND THE WORLD

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF KENTUCKY, OHIO, AND INDIANA (ZAKOI)

Our tri-state community in the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Region had a wonderful Navroz celebration with a gathering of about 50 people. Our growing youth group made some interesting and entertaining presentations for all gathered.

They first gave a presentation on the Haft Seen Table. Each of the sixteen children placed an item on the Table explaining its significance in our lives. Next, the youngest group of children ages 3 to 8 years, sang a delightful song to welcome Spring and wishing Navroz Mubarak to everyone, accompanied by music created by their Hand Bells! Finally, our older kids group, ages 10 - 17 years, gave an ensemble performance (instruments included Violins, Viola, Trumpet, Clarinet, Flute, and the Keyboard) playing the music of Chhaiye Hame Zarthoshti song. The audience had a good time singing the song along with the music produced by the children. (see page 66)

We also officially kicked off our Gara Raffle in this function (you can find info about the Gara Raffle at <http://zakoi.org/live/ZAKOICenter-Fundraiser-GaraRaffle2009.html>), which is one of the several fundraisers for a proposed Religious Center for us. (FJ



Vol 22 No 1 pg 111) All this was followed by a delicious Indian catered dinner. Though small in numbers, the members of our community, young and old, are rich with vigor and passion to learn and to create awareness about our religion in our region here. The children of our community are extremely talented and make us very proud of all their accomplishments, and the devotion they show towards our Zarathushti community

**On behalf of the Zoroastrian Association of
Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana (ZAKOI)
Bakhtavar Desai, President**

A Rare Jewish Ceremony To Bless The Sun Celebrated Once Every 28 Years

Birkat Hachama, the Jewish celebration of the sun is a ritual of blessing the sun on special day that is little known since it is celebrated only once in 28 years This year it was celebrated on April 8, 2009

In Genesis, it is written: "And God said, "Let there be light and there was light" (1:16-19). Birkat Hachama is actually the most joyful of all Jewish ceremonies, made especially so because of the long time interval between one celebration day and the next. On April 8, 2009 began the 206th cycle of the sun since its beginning.

Of all the specific objects in our created world, the sun and planet Earth are the most crucial for the life and

well being of human beings. So a celebration of the sun's creation is a good moment to ask ourselves:

What have we done with the sun's light, warmth and energy, in this past generation? And what do we intend to do in the next generation? In a centuries-old tradition honoring both Creation and Creator, observant Jews worldwide marked the return of the sun to what they believe is its original place in the divine inception of the heavens - an event that, according to Jewish tradition, occurs just once every 28 years.

The *Birkat Hachamah* ceremony, a special blessing of the sun, preceded the start of Passover at sundown April 8th when Jews celebrated with a *seder* their ancestors' exodus from Egyptian slavery. This time around, the sun returned to its initial position on the 14th day of the month of Nisan, the first day of Passover; that is said by sages to have happened only 11 times in the last six millennia.

<http://www.philly.com/inquirer/gallery/20090409>

Naurooz Around the World

Children Celebrating



PAYMAND DAY CARE, TEHRAN



SINGAPORE



BOSTON



CHICAGO



CHICAGO



Children Celebrating



ZOROASTRIAN TRUST FUNDS OF EUROPE (ZTFE), LONDON



MONTREAL



HOUSTON



ZAKOI (KENTUCKY,, OHIO & INDIANA)

Naurooz Around the World

Children Celebrating



MICHIGAN



BRITISH COLUMBIA



NORTHERN CALIFORNIA



METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON DC



FLORIDA Z-club children



ZAGNY and IZA NEW YORK

Naurooz Around the World

Mirror Mirror On The Wall,
Which Haft Seen Is The Fairest Of Them All Celebrating



PASARGADE



TAJIKISTAN



HONGKONG



MONTREAL



KARACHI



OMAN, MUSCAT

Naurooz Around the World

Mirror Mirror On The Wall,
Which Haft Seen Is The Fairest Of Them All Celebrating



Seniors' Centre, TEHRAN



DAHRAIN



SHAHNAMEH



SIRJAN, IRAN, LARGEST HAFTSEEN



LONDON, ENGLAND



PERTH, AUSTRALIA

Naurooz Around the World

Other Events



NOROOZ TRAVELERS VISIT TAQ-BOSTAN KERMANSHAH



PEOPLE GATHERED TO HEAR SHAHNAMEH



YAZD ATASHBEHRAM ON NOROOZ



PEER SABZ BEING CLEANED FOR NOROOZ





Naurooz Around the World

Other Events

New York Parade



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THEIR PHOTOS WITH US, *Ed FEZANA JOURNAL***

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PAKISTAN REVISITED

FEZANA Journal

Summer 2009



Mausoleum of Muhammed Ali Jinnah, Karachi
Photo by Khudabux Abro

PAKISTAN REVISITED

EDITORIAL

Farishta Murzban Dinshaw

Karachi was the focus of FEZANA Journal's Fall 2008 issue (*Apru Karachi: Stories from the City by the Sea*). The contributors for the issue shared information and anecdotes about how Parsi presence in Karachi has left an indelible mark on its public and private landscape. When I first outlined articles for this issue's theme Pakistan Revisited, my idea was to similarly showcase the contributions of the Parsi community in Lahore, Quetta and the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Although far smaller than the community in Karachi – tens of Zarathushtis as compared to thousands – historically and currently, Parsis have been active contributors to the social fabric of these cities. However, as the deadline for submitting the articles drew nearer, I felt it was important to include an article about Muhammed Ali Jinnah's vision of Pakistan. The driving force behind this addition was the passing of the Nizam-i-Adl regulation by the National Assembly of Pakistan on April 13, 2009 that formally established Sharia law in Northern Pakistan.

Pakistan has always been a heterogeneous polity with a mixture of ethnic, tribal, linguistic, communal, and national crosscurrents marking its diversity. However, ninety eight percent of the population is Muslim of various ethnic and sectarian backgrounds, with the remaining two percent composed of Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, Ahmaddiyas and Bahais. Pakistan's creation was based on the premise of a separate homeland for Muslims, but the founder of the nation, Muhammed Ali Jinnah, was adamant that Pakistan would be a secular state. In a broadcast talk to the people of the United States of America on Pakistan recorded February, 1948, he said categorically, "...Pakistan is not going to be a theocratic State to be ruled by priests with a divine mission. We have many non-Muslims - Hindus, Christians, and Parsis - but they are all Pakistanis." Unfortunately, his political ideology did not survive his death in 1948, and Pakistan has been creeping, and sometimes even galloping, towards becoming a theocratic state. This new resolution has implications for Parsis in Pakistan, particularly those who live in Lahore, Quetta and Islamabad, which are already more conservative and less multicultural cities than Karachi. For instance, Parsi, Christian or Hindu women in saris or dresses may be visible in shops or streets in Karachi, but such a sight is almost unknown in these other cities where they have adapted the local dress, *shalwar kameez*, to avoid causing waves.

In 2004, Dina Wadia, daughter of Muhammed Ali and Ruttie Petit Jinnah, visited Pakistan for the first time since his death in 1948. In the visitors' book at her father's mausoleum, Dina wrote: "*May his dream for Pakistan come true.*" As I finish writing about Jinnah's vision of Pakistan, so removed from today's reality, I fervently echo her wish.

Farishta Murzban Dinshaw was born in Karachi, Pakistan. At fifteen, she began volunteering at the Friday School for Little Zarathushtis, and continued to organize activities for children till she left for Toronto, Canada, in 2001. "Discovering Ashavan," her novel about a young boy befriended by Asho Zarathushtra, was published in 2000, and all proceeds from its sale were donated to the Karachi Zarthosti Banu Mandal for education projects. She is a frequent contributor to FEZANA Journal and Hamazor, and has presented papers on Zarathushti heritage and religion at several international congresses, including the World's Religions after September 11 Congress held in Montreal in 2006.



PAKISTAN REVISITED

PAKISTAN: FROM QUAID TO AL-QUAEDA

Muhammad Ali Jinnah, also known as the Quaid-e-Azam [great leader] is often vilified by Indians for his role in the division of the sub-continent, but they tend to forget that he was a liberal, British-educated barrister who smoked, drank alcohol, who once dreamed of being a Shakespearean actor, and who fell in love with a Parsi girl. Hardly the characteristics of a fundamentalist Muslim. **Farishta Murzban Dinshaw** shares this extraordinary man's vision of Pakistan.



Jinnah and Gandhi disagree, 1946. (Photo by Kulwant Roy)

Jinnah was a member of the Indian National Congress in the fight for independence from the British, but he always advocated for independence through constitutional changes. In fact, he left the Congress because he did not agree with bringing religion into politics as Gandhi was encouraging by appealing to Hindu symbolism. D. N Panigrahi writes in his book, *India's Partition* (2004, Routledge); "Gandhi's call for mass movement against what he picturesquely termed 'Satanic Government' was received with an overwhelming response both in the Congress and country at large. Jinnah's voice pleading for moderation at the Congress session in Calcutta in 1920 was drowned by deafening applause supporting Gandhi's resolution for non-cooperation with the British Raj. Gandhi also swore *swaraj* within one year if Indian people fought for it through non-violence. Jinnah disagreed: 'With great respect for Gandhi and those who think alike with him, I make bold to say in this Assembly that you will not get independence without bloodshed.' These

were Jinnah's ominous but prophetic words. Jinnah thereafter resigned from the Congress." (p. 30). Jinnah began to campaign for a separate state for Muslims only after his attempts for an equitable representation of Muslims in to-be-independent India failed. However, Jinnah did not envision Pakistan as an Islamic state. Amir Ahmed Khan, the Raja of Mahmudabad, records in his book, *Some Memories, Raja of Mahmudabad in Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives 1935-47* (Philips and Wainwright, pp. 388- 9): "My advocacy of an Islamic State brought me into conflict with Jinnah. He thoroughly disapproved of my ideas and dissuaded me from expressing them publicly from the League platform lest the people might be led to believe that Jinnah shared my view and that he was asking me to convey such ideas to the public. Now that I look back I realize how wrong I had been."

RELIGION AND STATE

In Jinnah's vision of Pakistan, which he outlined in one of his most famous speeches given on 11 August 1947, the eve of Partition, the new nation would be secular, liberal and democratic

"You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed - that has nothing to do with the business of the State. As you know, history shows that in England conditions, some time ago, were much worse than those prevailing in India today...Now, I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State."

SLITHERY SLOPE

After his death, this speech was published in his official biography *Jinnah: Creator of Pakistan* (Hector Bolitho, London: J Murray, 1954) with a significant change—"You may belong to any religion or caste or creed - that has nothing to do with the fundamental principle that we are all citizens of one State" replaced "...that has nothing to do with the business of the State." This deliberate omission was the first small step down a slithery slope to reinvent Pakistan as a theocratic state, with giant leaps along the way during Zia Ul Haq's rule, such as amending the penal code so that Ahmadiyyas who "pretend to be a Muslim" would be punished, leading to "Assalam Alaikum Cases" where Ahmadiyyas were arrested for using this greeting; introducing a separate electoral system for different religions, and imposing the Hudood

PAKISTAN REVISITED

Ordinance which saw women who were raped being tried for adultery.

After 9/11, Pervez Musharraf sought to repeal many of these amendments in an effort to realign Pakistan with Jinnah's original vision. Under great controversy, he appointed Justice Rana Bhagwandas, a Hindu, as acting chief justice of Pakistan and moved towards a unified electorate. In 2007, Minoo Bhandara, representative of religious minorities in the National Assembly, introduced a Constitution (Amendment) Bill that proposed the insertion of Jinnah's August 11 speech into the 1973 Constitution. Minoo Bhandara said: "The speech has been consistently downplayed by the government of Pakistan since 1949. Parts of the speech have been materially altered, or omitted altogether, in the past." Unfortunately, it never came to pass.

RESPECTFUL HOMAGE

Perhaps the most interesting twist to the story of Jinnah's "8/11" speech was in 2004, when Lal Krishna Advani¹, leader of India's Hindu nationalist party Bharata Janata Party (BJP), on an official visit to Pakistan went to pay respects at Jinnah's mausoleum – the man he was once accused of trying to assassinate². He inscribed the following message in the Visitors' Book.

"There are many people who leave an inerasable stamp on history. But there are very few who actually create history. Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah was one such rare individual. In his early years, Sarojini Naidu, a leading luminary of India's freedom struggle, described Mr. Jinnah as an "Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity". His address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on August 11, 1947 is a classic, a forceful espousal of a Secular State in which every citizen would be free to practise his own religion but the State shall make no distinction between one citizen and another on the grounds of faith. My respectful homage to this great man."

Farishta Murzban Dinshaw's biography is on page 74



L.K. Advani at the Quaid's mausoleum, Karachi, 2004.

1 On an interesting side note, L.K. Advani was actually born in a house in Karachi's Parsi Colony in 1927 and lived there until 1947.

2 A criminal case is pending against L.K Advani and 17 others for allegedly conspiring to kill Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The case was lodged at Karachi's Jamshed Quarters police station on September 10, 1947 a few weeks after Partition. The police did not charge the visiting leader.





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PAKISTAN REVISITED

Rattanbai : Jinnah's Precious Jewel



Rati, as Rattanbai was called affectionately, was bright, gifted and graceful. Although she was only 16 years old when she met Muhammad Ali (Jinnah) she was intellectually much more mature than other girls of her age. She had diverse interests ranging from romantic poetry to politics. With her maiden aunt she attended all public meetings held in Bombay and was familiar with the movement for *swaraj*, (home-rule) . She was a fierce supporter of " India for Indians," and many years later when asked about rumors of Jinnah's possible knighthood and whether she would like to be Lady Jinnah, she snapped that she would rather be separated from her husband than take on an English title.

In the summer of 1916, Jinnah decided to escape the Bombay heat by vacationing at the summer home of his client and friend Sir Dinshaw Petit. The Petit's chateau overlooked Mount Everest in Darjeeling or "Town of the Thunderbolt ", The town was aptly named considering what was to happen to him. In spite of the tremendous age difference - she was 16, he was 40 - he was enchanted with Rati's precocious intelligence and beauty, and she in turn was enamored by Jay as she called him.

Jinnah approached Sir Dinshaw with a seemingly abstract question about his views on inter-communal marriages. Sir Dinshaw emphatically expressed his opinion that it would be an ideal solution to inter-communal antagonism. Jinnah could not have hoped for a more favorable response, and he immediately asked his friend for his daughter's hand in marriage. "Sir Dinshaw

was taken aback. He had not realized that his remarks might have serious personal repercussions. He was most indignant, and refused to countenance any such idea which appeared to him absurd and fantastic." (Wolpert,p49). Although Jinnah pleaded his case as perhaps only a brilliant orator and a man passionately in love could have, but to no avail.

Not only was this the end of the friendship between the two men, but Sir Dinshaw forbade Rati to meet Jinnah as long as she lived in his mansion . As she was still a minor, law was on his side but instead of diminishing their love for one another this merely served to make them more committed. Patiently they waited out the two - year period till Rati attained her majority. She converted to Islam adopting the name Mariam, and on April 19, 1918 the two of them were married at his house South Court in Bombay.

THE HONEYMOON

The raja of Mahmudabad gifted the ring which Jinnah gave Rati. The raja and a few friends of Jinnah were the only guests at the wedding, and later the couple spent part of their honeymoon at the Mahmudabad lodge in Nainital. The rest of their honeymoon was at Maharaja of Mahmudabad's magnificent hotel just beyond the Red Fort in Delhi. Rati and Jinnah made a head-turning couple. Her long hair would be decked in fresh flowers, and she wore vibrant silk and headbands lavish with diamonds, rubies and emeralds. And Jinnah in those days was the epitome of elegance in suits specially stitched in London. And no two people could have been happier or more fulfilled than the Jinnahs in the beginning years of their marriage. The only blot on their joy was Rati's ostracism from her family. Sir Dinshaw ignored Rati socially even after his granddaughter Dina was born.

THE RIFT BEGINS

By mid-1922, Jinnah was facing political isolation as he devoted every spare moment to be the voice of moderation in a nation tone by Hindu-Muslim antipathy. The increasingly late hours and the personal distance between them lacerated Rati with feelings of desolation. That September she packed her bags and took her daughter to London. The echoes of her loneliness are apparent in a letter which she sent to her friend Kanji, thanking him for the bouquet of roses he had sent as a bon voyage gift. "It will always give me pleasure to hear from you, so if you have a superfluous moment on your hands you know [address] where you will find me if i don't lose myself. And just one thing more - go and see Jinnah and tell me how he is - he has a habit of overworking himself and now that I am not there to tease and bother

PAKISTAN REVISITED

him he will be worse than ever." (p78) After her return, Rati tried to see more of her husband but he was too busy campaigning for elections as an independent Muslim candidate for the general Bombay seats. Jinnah too was grieving - photographs of him in this era never show him

smiling - but the task he had under taken was too immense for him to move away from for personal reasons.

A WORLD OF HER OWN

As a result, Rati withdrew into a world of spirits, séances and mysticism .Kanji remain a life line as she turned more and more to him for understanding and support . She wrote to him about her desire to visit a medium and communicate with spirits. She tried to interest to Jinnah in metaphysical matters but his growing conservatism not with standing, his legal practice alone remained so demanding that he had little time to devote to the whims of a wife half his age . She wrote to Kanji," My soul is too clogged! and though I aspire and crave, God knows how earnestly my researches remain uncrowned - even by thorns." She was only 25 years old.

SECOND HONEYMOON

In 1925, Jinnah was appointed to a subcommittee in of studying the plausibility of establishing a military collage like Sandhurst in India. For this purpose he was to under take a five- month tour of Europe and North America. He decided to take Rati with him on what he hoped would be a second honeymoon. Instead the trip simply magnified the growing personal gulf between them.

Rati's health deteriorated rapidly in the years after they returned from their final trip together. But she kept her

up interest in her pets and close friends. Even when her health was frail and her feet were swollen, she often went out in bedroom sleepers, for as she wrote, "no shoes are

large enough to accommodate my elegant and lily - like feet!" (p88). By 1927, Rati and Jinnah had virtually separated, the shifting of the Muslim League's office to Delhi was the final blow to a relationship which was in essence over.

THE TRAGIC CONCLUSION

Rati lived at the Taj Hotel in Bombay, almost a recluse as she became more and more bed-ridden Kanji continued to be her constant companion, and by February 18, 1929 she had become so weak all she could manage to say to him was to look after her cats. Two days later, Rati pPetit Jinnah passed away. It was her twenty-ninth birthday. She was buried on February 22 in Bombay according to Muslim rites. Jinnah sat like a statue throughout the funeral but when her body was being lowered into the grave, but as we was asked by a nearest relative to throw the earth on the grave first, he broke down and wept. Later, Justice Chagla recalled, "That was the only time when I found Jinnah betraying some shadow of human weakness " (p105).

It's not a well publicized fact that as a young student in England it had been one of Jinnah's dreams to play Romeo at The Globe. It is a strange twist of fate that a love story that started like a fairy tale ended as a haunting tragedy to rival any of Shakespeare's dramas .

*This article by **Farishta Murzban Dinshaw** was first published in DAWN Friday magazine. All the quotes are from "Jinnah of Pakistan" by Stanley Wolpert (Karachi: Oxford University Press. Third Impression, 1995).*

TRADITIONAL PARSİ SNACKS

Dar-ni-pori, Khajoor-ni-ghari, Bhakhra
Batasa, Khatai, Agharni Ladoo, Vasanu
Contact, Dilnavaz Meer (281) 491-8436
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PAKISTAN REVISITED

HOLDING OUR FAITH UP HIGH

*Zoroastrians in Pakistan have insulated themselves within their own community in order to maintain their cultural and religious identity from being swamped by the dominant Islamic faith. One way of holding the community together and giving members a sense of belonging is through religious education. Over the years, there have been a number of individuals like Dr. Maneck Pithawala, Tehmurasp Sethna, Virasp Mehta and associations such as Informal Religious Meetings Trust Fund, and Friday School for Little Zarathushtris (see box on page 80) that have stood out because of their passion and dedication to keeping the message of Zarathushtra alive and talked about. In this article, **Farhad Godrej Sidhwa** writes about one such individual, his father Ervad Godrej Sidhwa.*

My father, Ervad Godrej Dinshawji Sidhwa was born in Karachi, Pakistan, in 1925, the oldest of five children. When Godrej was six years old, his father died, leaving his mother to become the family's sole caregiver. It was his mother's wish that one of her sons become a fully qualified priest. Since there was no priestly training institute in Karachi, Godrej had to go to Mumbai to join the M.F. Cama Athornan Institute at Andheri, Mumbai, India where he studied Avesta, Pahlavi, Persian and Pazend languages, and Ancient Iranian literature under the guidance of Dastur Dr. Hormazdyar Mirza, Dr Erach Taraporewalla and others. After being ordained as a Navar and Maratab from Udvada Atash Behram, he returned to Karachi in 1945.

At the time of Pakistan's independence, the Parsi community in Karachi was being led in religious matters by Dastur Dr. Maneckji Dhalla. My father was impressed by Dasturji Dhalla's humility and would often visit him to

Maneck Pithawala, Principal of B.V.S. Parsi High School, Karachi, encouraged my father to further propagate the teachings of Prophet Zarathushtra to the Parsi community of Pakistan. Dr Pithawala in the foreword of his book "Daily Dips into Avesta" wrote about the accomplishments that Godrej had received when Godrej was a youth. Thereafter, my father was appointed as an instructor of Zoroastrianism and Ancient Iranian History at the B.V.S. Parsi High School and Mama Parsi Secondary School, a position he held for 50 years until his retirement. Following that, he was appointed as the Honorary Lecturer in Zoroastrian Theology at colleges in Karachi for the Zoroastrian students. He was also appointed as Examiner in Zoroastrian Theology by the University of Karachi.

His enthusiasm for the religion of Prophet Zarathushtra led him to deliver religious lectures about the Zoroastrian religion and history to the Parsis of Pakistan and abroad. On his visits to India, UK, Canada and USA, various universities and Zoroastrian associations in those countries would arrange for him to deliver lectures on various topics on Zoroastrian theology and history. In 1978, he authored a book, "Discourses on Zoroastrianism" based upon his religious sermons and lectures that he had delivered all around the world.

For a major part of his life, my father has been involved in the social improvement of the Parsi community in Karachi. He has been on the executive committee of over ten social and religious institutions and associations for the last fifty years. He was eager for Karachi Parsis to meet various scholars and arranged for many of these scholars to visit Karachi including Dastur Dr. H. K. Mirza, Professor Mary Boyce, Professor John Hinnells, Professor James Russell, Mr Khojeste Mistri. With these scholars visiting us as personal acquaintances of my father, I had the unique opportunity to meet them on an individual basis, this led me to a better understanding of our Mazdayasni Zarthushtri faith. Godrej has represented the Karachi Parsi Anjuman starting from the First World Zoroastrian Congress held in Tehran (1962) to the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress (2000) held in Houston, USA. In 2000, Godrej had the honor of being invited as a Zoroastrian religious leader of Pakistan to attend the *Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders* held at United Nations Headquarters in New York City. On several occasions he has been invited by the



Three generations – Farhad, Godrej and kayan

help him in making his Dasturji's pagri (the turban that Zoroastrian priests wear). After the demise of Dr. Dhalla, my father took up all the duties of the late Dasturji, in religious as well as social areas. For over fifty years, he has delivered religious prayers and lectures during the Mukhtad (last ten days of the calendar year reserved for remembering those who have passed away).

After the partition of India, the exchange of religious knowledge between the two countries was limited. Dr.

Government of Pakistan to discuss Human Rights issues and other problems faced by religious minorities in Pakistan. He also had the privilege of meeting several heads of state like the Shah of Iran, President Ayub Khan, Prime Minister Zulfikar A. Bhutto, and the late Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Today, at 84 years, he still believes his sole purpose in life is to help his fellow human beings. As the Secretary of the

Karachi Parsi Anjuman, he visits the Anjuman office and still goes on his usual weekly rounds to meet the patients at the Parsi General Hospital. He enjoys visiting the US where he spends time with his five grandchildren. Often, when he is in the US, he is asked to give a small talk on the Zoroastrian religion, which he does with the same zest and fervor as he did in his youth. ***



Farhad Godrej Sidhwa has a Master of Electrical Engineering degree from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and works in the Information Technology industry. Farhad resides in Southern California with his wife, Ferhiz, and two children, Anahita and Kayan. His interest in Iran's Pre-Islamic history regularly takes him to lectures held at the Dr. Samuel M. Jordan Center for Persian Studies at the University of California, Irvine

FRIDAY SCHOOL FOR LITTLE ZARATHUSHTIS

In Karachi, in the mid-70s, Arnavaz Murzban Dinshaw started organizing Friday morning classes 9 weekends in Pakistan in those days for children on Zarathushti religion and history. She was motivated to do this because her two daughters went to a Convent school and she realized that many Parsi children enrolled in non-Parsi schools were inundated with Islamic or Catholic images and information. She volunteered her Montessori school premises for religious education through enjoyable activities. She ran these weekend classes for over twenty-five years, developing a series of four Activity Books and a series of history books to teach children religion through puzzles, stories and games. The Activity Books are now used by Zoroastrian Sunday School teachers and parents around the world. As an educator with experience teaching all ages from toddlers to adults, she understood that people learn best when they are having fun. She also recognized that being a Zarathushti was more than just knowing the facts so she instilled values like respect and fair play through activities. Over the years, Friday School students participated in concerts and plays, quizzes, treasure hunts and picnics to commemorate Jashan e Saadeh and Ardivisur no Parab. Her decreasing health and lack of volunteers forced her to end this innovative program in 2001. ***

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PAKISTAN REVISITED

LAHORE

Ornaments of the City

At the time of independence, there were quite a few Parsi families living in Lahore, one I knew of, in Laxmi Mansion [Rustom and Mehru Irani], where Saadat Hasan Manto came from Bombay to spend his last days. It was and is a small residential enclave just off the Mall between Hall Road and Beadon Road. Members of this particular Parsi family I often saw when on the Mall on their evening walk. I am talking of the early days of Pakistan when the roads of Lahore were quiet and placid and free of the noise and pollution of traffic that is their hallmark today. The young men of this family were always immaculately dressed and there was an amazing similarity in their looks. The Parsi ladies would keep their heads covered with the loose end of their saris. What I always noticed about them, in both men and women, was their dignity. You never heard them talking or laughing loudly. They had great poise and they would take their evening walk with measured steps, smiling shyly and talking to one another but in voices so low that even if you were walking right behind them, you did not hear a thing.

The liquor business in Lahore was a Parsi monopoly. On McLeod Road stood the Gandhi Wine Shop, owned by a Parsi gentleman, who was a man of principal and would absolutely refuse to sell liquor to anyone unless the person had a government permit. I remember trying all kinds of tricks to make him change his mind or make an exception, but it was just like running into a wall. There were other liquor shops in the city, all Parsi-owned. There was Edulji and Company in Commercial Building [owned by Peshotan and Tehmi Bhandhara]. Then there was the English Wine Shop in Regal and the French Wine Shop next to the Shah Din Building. There was also a Parsi-owned wine shop in Temple Road towards its Mall end. There was another such outlet in Lahore Cantonment not far from Globe Cinema. They are all gone – as is the Globe Cinema – but no one who drinks can go dry in the city of Lahore. The business has gone underground, like so much else in Pakistan.

There also used to be a doctor on McLeod Road by the name of Dr Eduljee Bharucha. He was a child specialist

*Lahore is the capital of Punjab, the “bread basket” of Pakistan. It is also called the “city of gardens.” It is the hub of Pakistan’s film, art and literary scene, boasting two of Pakistan’s most famous Zoroastrians, author Bapsy Sidhwa and artist Jimmy Engineer. The Zoroastrian address and telephone directory (Karachi Zarhosti Banu Mandal, 2006) lists 53 Zoroastrians in Lahore. However, Parsis were once a noticeable community in Lahore as reproduced below from an article by **A.Hamid**, with additional information and memories by **Dinshaw Pestonji**.*

and if there is such a thing as a healing touch, then he had it because a dose or two of one of his mixtures and the child would be up and running. [Dr. Bharucha was so popular that the day he died, they closed down the road near his clinic to accommodate the mourners.]

There was also a wonderful Parsi laundry near Lahore Hotel run by an old gentleman who would sit behind his wooden counter and keep scribbling in an old register. Next to his laundry was a bookshop that only sold English books. All those shops have vanished and all those people are gone.

The Plaza Cinema, where we would go to watch Hollywood movies, had a Parsi gatekeeper [Mr Fatakia] who supervised the entry to the second class. He was a quiet man of sixty or sixty-five in strict Parsi attire who wore thick glasses and who always kept smiling. In Nila



Nila Gumbad (blue dome) a Lahore landmark

Gumbad there used to be a Parsi Bank in an old two-storey building [Central Bank of India]. The sign outside showed an evenly balanced pair of scales held by a woman who resembled a figure from mythology.

Dinshaw Pestonji, a Lahori settled in Mississauga, Canada, remembers that the Avabai Cooper agiari, now next to the Parsi Colony in Gulberg III, was once on Rattigan Road. It was shifted after the Ravi river, which runs through Lahore, flooded and the resident mobbed Hormuzji Antia, his wife Shireen and daughters Behroze

and Hilla, were stranded on the agiari's rooftop till the water subsided.

He also mentions that his wife Aban's grandfather built the Dinshaw B.Challa Reading Room and Library in Lahore Cantonment in 1920 which is still in use. The Parsis of Lahore, like its Anglo-Indians, were like an ornament that the city wore. Their disappearance has left it poorer in more ways than one. ***

A Hamid is a distinguished Urdu novelist and short story writer with more than 2000 novels to his credit. He writes a column *Lahore Lahore Hai* [Lahore is Lahore] every week based on his memories of old Lahore. This column was translated from Urdu by Khalid Hasan and published in "The Daily Times", Lahore on Sunday, May 13, 2007.

JUSTICE RUSTAM SIDHWA

One of Lahore's most eminent Parsis was **Justice Rustam S. Sidhwa**, who served as a Supreme Court Judge in Pakistan from 1989 – 1993. He left at the invitation of the United Nations to be one of eleven judges on the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavian war crimes at The Hague. Judge Sidhwa resigned from the Tribunal in July 1996 for reasons of health and had returned to his native Pakistan.

Born on 1 September 1927 Judge Sidhwa commenced his career at the Bar in 1951 and was appointed to the Bench in 1978. He served on the Lahore High Court and as a Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan from 1989 to 1992. In 1968, he had been nominated by Pakistan to the United Nations Register of Experts in Legal and other Fields.

Upon learning of the death of Judge Sidhwa, the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, Judge Antonio Cassese made the following statement: "With the death of our former colleague Judge Sidhwa the Tribunal has lost the guidance and friendship of one of the most wise and perceptive men it has been my honour to know. His ill-health cut short his contribution to the cause of justice in the former Yugoslavia but his unstinting efforts in this field will long be remembered by all who knew him". ***

ZARATHUSHTIS NOW HAVE FULL MEMBERSHIP SEAT ON THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS (ECRL).

Jehangir Sarosh was elected to the Executive Committee of the *European Council of Religious Leaders* at their meeting in Lille, France, in May 2009. The council has 6 groups: Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants, Jews, Muslims and the "Other". The "Other" Group has members from the world faiths new to Europe comprising *Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs and Zarathushtis*. The executive committee of the Council is made up of one member from each group. The Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs nominated **Jehangir Sarosh** to represent them on the Executive Committee, which shows the great trust they have in our community. "We can all be proud of the legacy of our forefathers" writes Jehangir who had previously been on the council in an ex-officio capacity.

Jehangir Sarosh was interviewed by Dorab Mistry on his work in Interfaith and Human Rights. See FEZANA JOURNAL Spring 2009 Personal Profile pages 108-111.

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THE ST★R OF INDUSTRY

Karachi boasts many buildings and landmarks named after Parsi philanthropists, educationists and businessmen. In Lahore, however, there is only one prominent landmark – the five-star hotel Avari Lahore. Inaugurated in 1978, the hotel recently underwent a makeover to keep it abreast with the current trends. Re-opened in March 2009, the focal point of the new, stylish Avari Lahore is the spiral glass staircase and atrium in the lobby. Recent accolades include first prize in the 151 Annual Spring Flower Show 2009 organized by The Horticultural Society of Pakistan. In this article, **Meher Amalsad** pays tribute to the industry of Dinshaw B. Avari, the man whose vision put a hotel chain bearing his name on the map³. Photos provided by the Avari family.



It says in my book “Bread for the Head”™ “When you work with love, you will love your work.” Dinshawji was a living testament of this life transforming philosophy. Being born in a humble family, he studied in the Petit Orphanage in Bombay, tutoring kids to pay his way through college and obtained a B.Com. degree from Bombay University. In the mid-1920’s, as an effervescent and conscientious youth, he started his career with the Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada on a meager salary of 75 Indian Rupees per month. His determination and commitment to success made him rise to greater heights and in 1929, the company transferred him to Karachi to open up a new office. Within a short period of time, he was able to bring

in record business for the Company and was promoted to take sole charge of offices in the provinces of Sindh, Punjab, Baluchistan, North West Frontier Province and Afghanistan. He also holds the honor of becoming the first Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU) in Asia. In spite of being an Insurance magnate, somehow his quest for success was not satiated by the Insurance Business.

As a result, at the age of 42, he chose to charter his attention in a different segment of business – hotels and hospitality. In 1945, he placed his entire life’s savings and borrowed substantially to acquire the Bristol Hotel in Karachi at a purchase price of 100,000 Indian Rupees (a substantial sum in those days). This courageous action of Dinshawji demonstrated his entrepreneurial spirit of adaptability to meet the changing times and adjust to multifarious circumstances. It is worthy to note that in spite of being the Chief Executive Officer of the Bristol Hotel, Dinshawji personally got up at 4:00 A.M. every morning to go to the market and shop for his hotel supplies.

He was just not a man of thoughts and words, but also a man of deeds filled with proactive visions and affirmative action. A story is told about Dinshawji in which Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidaytullah, the First Governor of Sindh, told Dinshawji’s wife Khorshed, “You need to get Dinshawji’s

³ This write-up is an excerpt from DINSHAWJI AVARI – A 5-STAR ZARATHUSHTI. For the complete version, please visit www.vohuman.org. A write up about the Beach Luxury Hotel, Karachi, mentioned in this article, was featured in the article “The Golden Spoon” by Dinshawji’s grandson, another Dinshaw B. Avari, in the Fall 2008 issue of FEZANA Journal.



head examined for building a hotel in the barren, desert grounds of Queen's Road surrounded by marshy lands." Today, we can admire and appreciate the foresight of Dinshawji, when one experiences the beautiful, serene and scenic setting of the Beach Luxury Hotel – a leading hotel of Karachi. Not only do weddings and navjotes take place at this hotel but Dinshawji was also instrumental in turning around this entire marshy land into an elite locality popularly referred to as 'Queen's Road.'

Today, Avari Hotels International is one of the most respected names in the hotel industry in Pakistan. It is known for providing superior services and world-class amenities. It is the only Pakistani Hotel Chain with International Links. In Pakistan, they own Beach Luxury Hotel and Avari Towers in Karachi and Avari Lahore with plans to inaugurate a new hotel in Islamabad. They also manage the Avari Hotel in Dubai.

Dinshawji's spirit of Industry teaches us all that: Don't let your past dictate who you are, but let it become a part of who you will become."



Meher Amalsad is the author of "Bread For The Head.™" and his work on diversity and humanity issues has been endorsed by Dr. Denis Waitley, Brian Tracy, Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, John Bradshaw, Jim Cathcart, Dr. Gerald Jampolsky, John Randolph Price, Arun Gandhi and blessed by the office of Mother Teresa.



INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA IN MONTESSORI EDUCATION GIVEN BY ASSOCIATION MONTESSORI INTERNATIONALE IN MUMBAI

The Sir Ratan Tata Institute, Mumbai India, offers a course in Early Childhood Education, Montessori Teacher Training, under auspices of *Association Montessori Internationale*, The course is given each year from July to April. As this is an internationally recognized course, on successful completion the candidates can get jobs in USA as well.

For more details contact **Zarin Malva, Director of Training**, email zarinmalva41@yahoo.com www.montessori-mumbai.org

PAKISTAN REVISITED

ART, LIT, CAMERA!

This feature profiles three Pakistani Zoroastrians, pukka Lahoris by birth or affection, that have made their mark in art, literature, and film.

ARTIST: Jimmy Engineer

Jimmy Engineer was born in 1954 in Loralai, Balochistan, but he completed his schooling from St. Anthony's High school, Lahore, and after a brief interlude at the Forman Christian College, he spent the next three years at the National College of Arts (NCA), giving him a true love for the city and its history. The stories of the trains that came to Lahore bearing massacred bodies during Partition inspired his famous and popular series of historical



J Engineer paints a nine-foot canvas from the Partition series (photo from his web)

paintings which depict the struggle and sacrifices of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children in the creation of Pakistan.

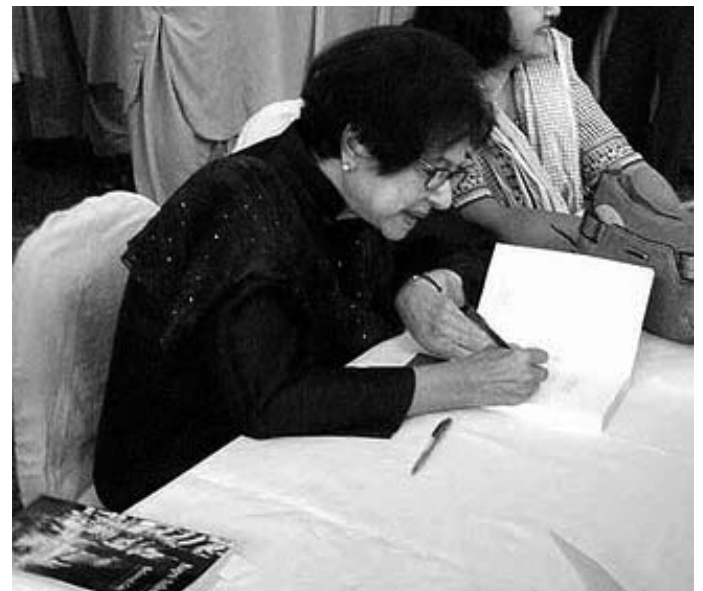
Jimmy Engineer has been donating backlit transparency prints of the Pakistan Movement paintings to several organisations and institutions throughout the country during the last couple of years. He said, *"I want to educate the young people about the struggle their forefathers made in securing a separate homeland under the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah."* (The Daily Times, April 21, 2007) One of his famous Pakistan Movement paintings is displayed at the Art Gallery of the Pakistan National Council of the Arts in Islamabad.

These troubling stories of Partition instilled a love of peace and an ideology of non-violence and humanitarian aid which has informed his charitable work as well as his art. His latest exhibition was titled "Ideology of Peace" and was held from February 3 - 14, 2009 at the Shangri La art gallery in Houston, Texas. The Mayor of Houston, Bill White appointed him as a Honorary Citizen and a Goodwill Ambassador for the City of Houston.

AUTHOR: Bapsy Sidhwa

Although born in Karachi, Sidhwa spent most of her life in Lahore before migrating to the States and loves the city, which, when she closes her eyes, still evokes a city of gardens and fragrances and a riot of spring flowers. She believes the quintessential Lahori saying "Lahore Lahore hai" (Lahore is Lahore) which implies to the rest of the world that there is something special about this city, that there is no place quite like it. In an interview, she said about Lahore, "Despite globalization, McDonalds and so on, the place hasn't changed in its essence. Every year one sees more and more gardens – the government is still very particular about this. The Walled City is more beautiful and neater than its equivalent in Delhi. And poetry is still so alive in the city." (Jai Arjun Singh, 2005).

New York is said to be 'personaggio-città' (city as character) in Woody Allen's films and television programs like *Law and Order* (NBC, 1990) and *Sex and the City* (HBO, 1998). Similarly, Bapsy Sidhwa's novels use her "beloved city" Lahore as a background and, in many ways, a living, loving protagonist. Nowhere is her anthropomorphism of Lahore more obvious than in her first novel, *A Pakistani Bride* (1982) where she describes



Bapsy Sidhwa at the book signing of "Beloved City".

the city: "Lahore—the ancient whore, the handmaiden of dimly remembered Hindu kings, the courtesan of Moghal emperors—bedecked and bejeweled, savaged by marauding hordes—healed by the caressing hands of successive lovers. A little shoddy, as Qasim saw her like an attractive but aging concubine, ready to bestow surprising delights on those who cared to court her—proudly displaying Royal gifts."

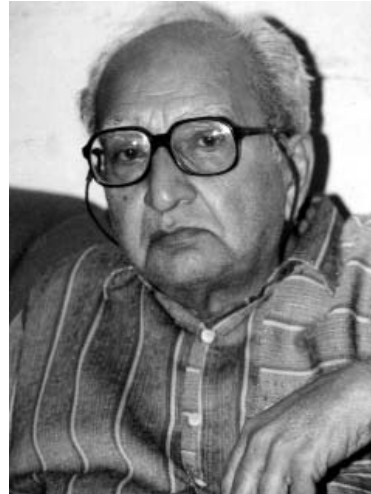
Sidhwa returns to Pakistan often. She speaks of her city, Lahore fondly, "I can write a lot more in Lahore than I can write anywhere else... Lahore does have a very romantic atmosphere and it does release some type of a creative energy." (www.jazbah.org). In 2005, Bapsy Sidhwa edited an anthology "*Beloved City: Writings on Lahore*" (Karachi: Oxford University Press) which covers many different aspects of Lahore in the writings of Pakistan's most renowned writers and poets.

CAMERAMAN: Savak Mistry

Savak Mistry was an established cameraman in Bombay, having worked on movies like the Silver Jubilee hit *Pyar ki Manzil* (1950) and countless other projects under his elder brother Keki Mistry, but he chose to come to Pakistan after Partition. He wanted to take advantage of the fledgling industry in this country. He went on to work behind the camera on a number of Urdu, Sindhi and Bengali movies and became affectionately known as "Daada" by industry stalwarts like Nur Jehan, Allauddin, and Kamal Amrohi.

In Lahore in the early 1960s, Savak Mistry was a "cafeteria buddy" with a struggling actor named Mohammad Ali and promoted him to director Fazal Ahmed Karim Fazli for a villain's role in his upcoming film *Chiragh*

Jalta Raha (1962) on which Savak Mistry had signed on as a cameraman. The film became a Silver Jubilee hit and not only launched Mohammad Ali's career, but also the careers of other new stars of the film Zeba, Deeba, and Kamal Irani. Besides full length films, Savak Mistry filmed many documentaries for the government of Pakistan about the history of government institutions like the



General Post Office and PW Railways. In the early 1990s, he joined Network Television Marketing (NTM) as Director of Photography and worked on several popular serials and long plays such as *Kushkol* (1993), *Naadan Nadia* (1994), *Sheeshay ka Ghar* (1995) and *Naukar Ke Aage Chaker* (1997). In a career spanning six decades,

Savak Mistry worked with a variety of cameras and types of film that parallel the development of the motion picture – he moved from the *Eyemo* in the 1930s, which was driven by a clockwork mechanism powered by a hand-wound spring motor to the *Éclair* in the 60s, which was designed for synchronized sound filming to the new generation of video cameras like the Sony 637. He was one of the last of a generation of movie makers who was part of a new form of entertainment that emerged and grew into a multi-billion dollar global industry.

RECOGNITION AWARDS TO SUNITA SOHRABJI AND NINA WADIA

India West, (California) on May 23, 2009 wrote "India West Congratulates its reporter *Sunita Sohrabji* for winning 2 more awards in *Excellence in Journalism* for our publication. These awards were announced by New America Media, (NAM) the country's first and largest association of Ethnic Media"

Sunita Sohrabji was awarded Second Place in the "**Health Care**" category for her story titled "*Postpartum Depression: South Asian Women Suffer in Silence.*" and Second Place in the "**Environmental Issue**" category for her article titled "*Green Rules Force Small Truckers into the Red*".

The awards were presented at the annual NAM Awards and Expo event on June 4 and 5, 2009 in Atlanta, Georgia." *Congratulations Sunita Sohrabji*

NINA WADIA, OF EAST ENDERS, A BRITISH SOAP SERIES WINS AWARDS FOR 2009

Nina Wadia who plays the part of Zainab Masood in the soap series *The East Enders*.

won the British Soap Awards 2009 for :

- 1 - Best Comedy Performance by an actress.
- 2 - Best On-Screen Partnership - along with her on-screen husband (actor) Nitin Ganatra.

The East Enders won The Best Series Award for the third year running.

Congratulations Nina. Wadia

PAKISTAN REVISITED

RAWALPINDI

-ISLAMABAD

There are seven Zoroastrian families living in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The sole mark of Parsi presence in the public sector is the historic Murree Brewery. Here is a compilation of information from various web resources¹ about the historic Parsi-owned Brewery.



Eat, Drink and be Murree!

The Murree Brewery is one of the oldest public companies: its shares were traded on the Calcutta Stock Exchange as early as 1902, and is now the oldest continuing industrial enterprise of Pakistan. The Bhandara family owns 45% of the company stock, while the rest is traded on the Karachi Stock Exchange. The company operates with its three divisions namely Liquor Division producing beer, gin, vodka and whisky; Tops Division which makes juices, ketchup and preserves; and Glass Division which makes the bottles and jars. Under the present

prohibition law, only non-Muslims and foreigners are permitted to drink alcohol so local market is limited. The Bhandaras are working to break into the British market with the slogan: "Have a Murree with Your Curry". Exporting alcohol from Pakistan is forbidden, so they have licensed a brewery in Austria.

In 1860, Edward Dyer and Edward Whympers founded the brewery at the hill station Murree, not far from Rawalpindi to meet the needs of the British army. Between 1885 and 1890 breweries were also established in Rawalpindi and Quetta (which was totally demolished in the massive earthquake in 1935). The scarcity of water became an emerging problem in Murree so by the 1920s, brewing was mostly transferred to Rawalpindi, but malting continued at Murree till the 1940s, when this property was sold. The Gothic-style historic brewery in Murree was burnt during the Partition riots.

The Brewery has always maintained highest standards of modern technology. In the 1990s, new beer canning and modern bottle filling facility from Germany was installed. Two units for producing extra neutral grade of potable alcohol from molasses were procured from France and Italy to give the Brewery's vodkas and gins a qualitative edge.

Murree Beer was first awarded a medal for product excellence at the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1876, and carries the information on its label to date. The Brewery's heyday was World War II, when it produced 1.6 million gallons of beer a year. In 1977, the Brewery suffered a setback when Zia-ul-Haq imposed prohibition in Pakistan, requiring anyone wishing to consume alcohol to present credentials demonstrating that they were non-Muslim. The Brewery's balance sheets tell the story - in 1945, the brewery produced about 500,000 cases of beer a year. Nowadays, it makes about 200,000. In 2007, Murree Brewery launched its finest vintage, a 20-year-old malt whisky that has been maturing in oak vats in the brewery's vaults. Its two temperature-controlled cellars hold over half a million liters of Malt Whisky of varying periods of maturation. The Brewery also produces non-alcoholic beer for Muslim drinkers.***



¹ Web resources include Wikipedia and murreebrewery.com

PAKISTAN REVISITED

QUETTA

Last records (2006) list 21 Parsis in Quetta. It has a gated Parsi colony, a darbe-meher, a resthouse and an araamgah (cemetery) testifying to a once vibrant community.

A Childhood in Quetta: 4 Voices, 2 Generations

Aban Rustomji was asked to share her memories of growing up in Quetta, but, as she reports, *"In true Quetta-style, everyone in my family had something to say. I realized that even over the generations and decades, childhood in Quetta offered a kind of magic that is shared by any child who is lucky enough to pass through Parsi Colony."* Here are the voices of her family.

ABAN

Quetta has an impressive cantonment for the military and a sprawling city for civilians. There is a main street and several off-shoot streets. It is a small, established town with a core of buildings. One corner of Main Street is taken over by a gas station. Then there was Albert Press, owned by my husbands' family for over 100 years. There was a bakery, shoe shops, a cloth bazaar, a gun and ammunition shop, Singer Sewing shop, and at the end of the road my favorite Quetta Bookstore. And even though one can't walk the streets freely anymore, the built environment of my young age still exist — the bank, the church, the factory, the school, and a number of these places designed by the leading architect of the time — my dad.

Growing up in Quetta was an exhilarating experience. There was freedom within a structure. Our lives were simple but rich. There was no formality in life or religion, and there was no place for the dogma that seems to plague Parsi circles today. One's curiosity and needs were simply satisfied by walking over to the neighbor with the expertise. Our beloved Dasturji Sohrabji told us about Professor Jackson long before I knew of his connection to Dastur Dhalla. Logarithm tables made sense when explained by Minoo uncle. Being Parsi was a way of life. We observed jashans. Tirgan jashan was a highlight as Mehrwanji would distribute huge bags of dry fruit. And there was Navroze and Pateti where we decked ourselves in new clothes and all enjoyed dinner in the open maidan. Khordad sal was observed at the Marker residence with an annual Sports Day. We had musical recitals where we showcased our song and dance routines. Our teacher was Gulu, later to be my mother in law. We marked everybody's birthdays as sev or rava was sent in the morning to each household. An empty plate was never sent back but a small mound of sugar was put in the plate and returned. Many evenings I took my book and read on the cool marble porch of the Darb-e-Meher admiring the roses in the garden. And when winter came, schools closed for three months, we all went to see our

grandparents and uncles and aunts in Bombay, Karachi or Iran only to return in March for another blissful year.

PURVEZ

The colony after the earthquake of 1935 housed 14 homes on 2.5 acres of land with an Darbe-Meher and Rest House surrounded by four-foot boundary wall, on the main street 30 feet wide, with wide footpaths and lined with mulberry trees on each side. Each house had its own garden, with trees, vegetable patches, English roses bushes, and the boundary of each lot was the wild rose hedge. The wild roses would start blooming in March & April and fill the air



Cool marble porch of the darb-e-mehr in Quetta

with perfume. Children would pluck the roses and collect them in baskets and give them to the two Irani households who would turn the roses to rose water. The farms surrounding Quetta would all participate in the collection of rose petals, and there were times when we would swim in the millions of rose petals two feet deep before the petals going into the rose distiller's pot.

There were about 30 kids ranging from 3 to 12 years, and each day was fun filled with games and outings. In the evening, after studies, it was cricket, or climbing trees or flying kites from the roofs, though that was frowned upon by the elders. Even the girls held their own with the boys, and I do not recall any dolls or teddy bears to keep them occupied. At times, the moment decided what was to be done. If a donkey happened to bring gunny bags of roses, he was immediately put to good service by giving the children ride all over the colony.

If Kaka (he was Kaka to only one family but everybody called him Kaka) happen to come to the colony with his Studebaker car, all 30 kids would pile into it and go for a

ride to the Golwalla gardens five miles away. The garden was a heaven on earth. It had an artesian well which supplied water for 30 years 24 hours a day without a pump and the orchards were full of apples, cherries, walnuts, plums, pistachio, and of course rows of wild rose hedges. As the sun dipped behind the surrounding mountain range, it was time to play kick-the-can. This was a fun game not only for the thrill of kicking the can, but because of the idea that you would play with girls. The call to food



A picnic in the Golwalla gardens.

would sound and each would go their homes, but not before smelling the coal burning chimneys giving out aroma that only made you cuddle up to the warm fire awaiting in the home.

In those days we did not think ourselves as Zoroastrians, but as Parsis. The entrance to the Darbe-Meher read "for Parsis and Zoroastrians only". Our Dasturji would chime the bells five times early in the morning and late in the evening. It was a call to prayers, each in his own home environment, and because we were living within sight of the Darbe Meher, it was comforting to know that we were surrounded by the thoughtful prayers of our elders.



Residents of Quetta's Parsi Colony, 1941. Purvez Rustomji, one of the contributors of this article, is the little boy in the sailor suit.

ARISH

Like most small towns, Quetta had a charm of its own. The Parsi colony was a totally enclosed bubble that had a wall that kept us separated from the main city. It was this wall that was the savior of the colony. Children were free to roam the colony streets, the entrance was guarded by

the numerous dogs that roamed around the colony. It made you feel safe. There were Parks in the colony that were common places to meet. Being a Zoroastrian in Quetta was not something, I thought about. During the summer, I would get up very early and sit on the roof of my grandfather's house and watch the Jinnah Road, the main road, come alive. I would take a chair on the roof before dawn and slowly I would see trucks and people fill up the busy street. After watching the daily activities for three hours, I would head down for breakfast.

NERINA

The irony is that no one in my family was actually born in Quetta. Yet, for the Rustomjis and Hodiwalas, Quetta is and always will be home. It is our place of belonging. Today Parsi Colony can feel empty, but for decades it was a rich, vibrant, caring world. I learned all major and some minor lessons of life during my summers in Quetta. I learned what is meant to be loved by grandparents, aunts and uncles, tailors and cooks. I learned how to value friendship, listen to stories of old, and play a mean deck of gin rummy. I learned how to behave in the presence of those who lived with integrity and modesty. Many of my lessons were not rosy, but they were invaluable. I learned about inequality. I learned how to acknowledge my fortune while acknowledging those whose lives offered real struggles. I learned about death, saw dying, and learned it too was a part of life.

It has been several summers since I have visited my first home, and there are three things I miss. I miss the mountains. At nearly every place in the colony you can

see the soaring, imposing mountains whose stark beauty reminds you that you are small, and your life is just one piece of a larger landscape. I miss the evenings in gardens where we would make the rounds from house to house to visit everyone until we finally returned home for dinner after which we sat in our own garden late at night. I miss the days when everyone's doors were open and

all you had to be welcomed was to bellow out "Nilufer Aunty!" or "Mani Aunty!" after you had already made your way into their homes. I miss that being Parsi was just living. It was not the identity that we make it out to be today. We were free to grow up and make our way into the world.***

Aban and Purvez Rustomji and their son Arish are Houston residents. Nerina, whose book is reviewed on page 152, lives in New York.

PAKISTAN REVISITED

SEEKING REFUGE IN QUETTA

Kurosh Aryana, like his ancestors 1300 years ago, fled Iran to avoid religious persecution. In this article he recalls his journey to safety.

I was born in 1967 to a middle-class family in Tehran, Iran. I have two elder and two younger brothers and all of them live in Tehran with their families. After I finished High School in Tehran, I left in 1987 to serve for two years in the army during the war with Iraq. On my return, I graduated from Tehran Polytechnique University with a Bachelor of Science degree in electronics. In spring of 1997, I escaped from Iran to Pakistan when the Islamic regime in Iran found out about my religious activities which went against Islamic rules. I lived in Pakistan for fifty two months, the first two in Quetta, before I left for Norway in 2001.

Traveling as a refugee has nothing in common to traveling as a tourist on an ordinary trip. Since my childhood I had always thought crossing a border meant walking through an official passage between two neighboring countries, stamping passports and seeing strange and curious faces. But when you cross the border without official papers, you feel nothing but tension and your heart beating hard and fast. You see nothing but miles of sand, losing hope minute by minute. Trust me, it's not easy to leave everything you have ever known behind and walk forward to a dark unknown future. I walked feeling hopeless and fearful, with a man who showed nothing but an angry face and ordered what to do, what not to do. Suddenly, Angry Face Man stopped walking and said, "We have crossed the border into Pakistan." Gazing at the desert around me I held my breath. As I stared at his face, I had mixed



Crossing the desert

emotions - I was happy and worried. This was how I crossed border from Iran into Pakistan.

A Toyota took us from the border to Quetta. After a long twelve-hour journey we arrived in Quetta. The Man introduced me to Davood, an Afghan man who had an ice cream shop in Quetta market. He rented me a room in his

three-room house. I told him that I was not a Muslim and that I had to leave Iran quietly. Davood suggested that I should stay home during the day. He thought it might not be safe for me to go out in the day time because I was

living without any official documents or a valid Pakistani visa.

LIFE ON HOLD

Life went on hold in Quetta as I was still not safe. For two months, I lived in a room with only a bed and my handbag with a few clothes. Taking a shower is a pleasant experience for many. It was not same for me in Quetta. There was no bathroom at Davood's house. The day after I arrived, I asked Davood where I could take a bath. He took me to a barbershop where he normally went for a haircut and to take a bath. Davood asked the shop owner if I could take a bath there. The barber showed me a dark-blue painted metal door and told me that I could take a bath there. I opened the door, but I couldn't see anything inside as it was so dark. After some seconds looking inside the room, I could make out an old chair and a plastic tank of water. I told Davood I could not go in there to take a bath. We went back home and on our way we bought a plastic pail, a jug, and a few meters of plastic usually used for tablecloths. We turned one of the rooms at Davood's house into a bathroom. I put some cement blocks on the floor and covered them with the plastic tablecloth. I warmed water and mixed it in the plastic pail with colder water and used the plastic jug to throw water over my head while standing on the blocks covered with plastic. That is how I took a bath during my whole stay in Quetta.

Davood was a nice man. He always gave me hope about returning to my homeland safely. Davood had lived in different cities in Iran and had developed a liking for Iranian movies and TV channels, which I did not like at all as they reminded me of the religious oppression that had made me leave Iran. Once a week, Davood took me to his ice cream shop. Walking through the Quetta market was a unique feeling. Many shops played Iranian pop music and for a man who was missing his home and family, hearing the familiar music from shops selling Iranian products and goods was a strange experience.

I knew there was a small community of Zarathushtis in Quetta, but I did not have any addresses or phone numbers. I explained to Davood about the Zarathushti community in Iran, India and Pakistan, but he said he knew nothing about them. I knew there was a Parsi community in Karachi and even remembered the address of the Anjuman office because it was usually printed in a pocket size Zarathushti calendar produced each year by the Tehran Zoroastrian Anjuman.

REACHING KARACHI

My plan was to go to Karachi where I was very hopeful that if I could find the Zarathushti community then I would

be able to find a job and find a way out of Pakistan. Some years before when I had visited Dubai, I had learned that among Pakistanis you could find people who made fake European passports and visas. I was hoping to save money to buy a fake passport to leave Pakistan for a liberal Western country where I would not be persecuted.

I talked to Davood about my plan of leaving for Karachi and he promised to find a trustworthy person who could take me to Karachi. One day, he came home and told me he had found a Pakistani Balouch man who would help me get to Karachi. Few days later, I left Quetta for Karachi in a double-cabin Toyota. We spent one night in a farmhouse on the way as the driver said it was dangerous to drive in the dark. It was little after dawn when we arrived in Karachi. I took a rickshaw and told the driver to take me to Ranchore Line. There was no one on the streets. Most of shops were closed. I was looking curiously at the buildings in the area. Suddenly, I saw a big building with an open gate and on the top of gate was written Parsi Anjuman Bagh. Finally, I had arrived at my destination in Karachi. I was warmly welcomed by Ervad Godrej Sidhwa and Mr. Dhunjishaw Ghadiali at the Karachi Parsi Anjuman office as soon as they came to know who I was and why I had left Iran.

The next four years were frustrating and sometimes depressing, not knowing what was going to happen in the future as I struggled to find asylum. Now that I am in

Norway I think about the experience in Pakistan, and even as I remember the difficult times, I also remember the goodness of the people who helped me.



Kurosh Aryana works part-time and studies Information technology at the University of Oslo. On March 31' 2009, he married Kiana.

S SHAHROKH KHANIZADEH IN THE NEWS

Shahrokh Khanizadeh has been invited to attend the 1st Summit of *Plant Science Society* in Hawaii, Honolulu . He is among a selected group of two dozen plant science society leaders from Africa, Asia, South America, Australasia, Europe, and North America - a truly global gathering. This summit will explore ways in which our societies can work together to bring a global consensus of how plant biologists are responding and could respond to the needs of the global population

At the summit, Shahrokh will represent Plant Canada, The Federation of Canadian Plant Science Societies (www.plantcanada.ca) and its present member societies (Canadian Botanical Association, Canadian Society of Plant Physiologists, Canadian Phytopathological Society, Canadian Weed Science Society, Canadian Society of Agronomy and Canadian Society of Horticultural Science).. He will give an informal presentation on The

Federation of Canadian Plant Science Societies, its mandate and member societies.

Shahrokh has also received an invitation from Université de Costa Rica to give a talk during the *First International Conference on Post Harvest and Quality Management of Horticultural products*. He will be a keynote speaker for the *6th Iranian Horticultural Science Congress*, July 12-15 2009 to give a talk on '*Designing specialty Fruit - Role of antioxidants*' Shahrokh recently released a new ecologically grown strawberry for northern climates. called "La Clé des champs."

http://www.passeportsante.net/fr/Actualites/Nouvelles/Fiche.aspx?doc=2009060199_la-cle-des-champs-une-nouvelle-fraise-ecologique

Shahrokh Khanizadeh, who lives in Montreal with his wife Elise, daughter Arianne and son Tristan volunteers his time for formatting the **FEZANA JOURNAL**.

Thank you Shahrokh and Congratulations



PAKISTAN REVISITED

JAMSHEED MARKER: INTERNATIONAL MAN OF DIPLOMACY

Jamsheed Kekobad Ardeshir Marker was born in Quetta in 1922. After a stint in his family's shipping and

pharmaceutical business, he started his career as a diplomat in 1965. He is listed in the Guinness Book of Records as having been ambassador to more countries than any other person, serving in eleven different countries with concurrent accreditation to nine others, and has earned the distinction as the world's longest-serving ambassador with a career spanning three decades. This article summarizes some of his learning as a diplomat extraordinaire recorded in the introduction of his book "East Timor. A Memoir of the Negotiations for Independence" (Jefferson:McFarland, 2003).



The Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ambassador Jamsheed Marker, speaks with voters on polling day. Manatuto, 30 August 1999
(Photo by Simon Davies)

According to Jamsheed Marker, he "stumbled into diplomacy" (p 1) when the Pakistan government asked him to represent Pakistan as its High Commissioner to Ghana, concurrent

with similar position in Mali and Guinea. His experience in Africa gave him his *"first lessons in necessity of objectivity and the difficulties inherent in maintaining it."* (p2). After West Africa, for the next ten years he served in Romania, Bulgaria and communist countries in Eastern Europe. He recalls his experience *"under the dictatorial rule of Nicolae Ceausescu and his even more odious wife, Elena"* (p3) as one of moral dilemma: *"one wonders whether the imperatives of the Cold War justified the diplomatic and economic support for Ceausescu's dictatorship, with its implicit acceptance of gross human rights violations. It is questions of this kind that have haunted me ever since and continued to pose a dilemma in my later negotiations."* (p3).

He was next posted in the Soviet Union (with concurrent accreditation to Finland) during the "dark Brezhnev era" which provided him "with a new understanding and admiration for the human spirit, particularly in its capability of survival in most profound adversity." (p3).

His next major assignment was in East Berlin when he opened Pakistan's first resident diplomatic mission in the German Democratic Republic. Here Marker encountered the finest and the meanest aspects of the human spirit – richest quality of creative expression through art and music juxtaposed with the grimness of oppression and disregard for human rights. This experience made him reflect on the choices one makes in one's thoughts and conduct.

Tokyo, his next assignment, gave him the opportunity to shift perspectives. Thirty years earlier, he had fought against the Japanese as an officer in the Royal Indian Navy, now he learned to value and respect them as colleagues and friends. He went on to ambassadorial positions in Bonn, Paris and Washington, but his significant role was as the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations in New York where he had the privilege of working with three Secretaries general – Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Bhoutros-Bhoutros Ghali and Kofi Annan. After retiring as a representative of Pakistan, his personal friendship with Kofi Annan segued into his role as Personal Representative of the Secretary General in East Timor in 1999. He was universally praised for his empathy, his calm approach and diplomatic skills in bringing about the resolution of the East Timor conflict and the independence of that nation. In recognition for his services to Pakistan, in 2004 Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz named Jamsheed Marker as ambassador-at-large. At present, Ambassador Marker is Diplomat in Residence at Eckherd College, St. Petersburg, Florida.

Cyrus Framji Minwalla

Rustom Kevala

- *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor - a Great Parsi of Karachi*

Cyrus Framji Minwalla was born in 1894 in Karachi. Early in his life, he tried his hands at a variety of jobs including as a guard in the North Western Railway, ticket collector, and as a night Superintendent in the Daily Gazette, where he acquired experience of printing and related press work. He then joined the Bombay Steam Navigation Company Limited to gain knowledge of shipping and earned the tag of 'Sailor'. With the advent of the First World War in 1914, Cyrus enlisted in the newly formed Sindh Volunteer Rifle Corps and thus became a 'Soldier'. He then joined Hoar and Company, Army tailors and outfitters and managed the Company's branch in Quetta. He thus added the tag of 'tailor'. After the end of the war, Cyrus became a businessman and merchant (and a 'Tinker') but owing to the death of his father in 1923, he returned to Karachi, and established himself as a contractor for sanitation, drainage and waterworks.

Cyrus's true calling, however, came in 1942 when he built the Minwalla Grand Hotel in Karachi. The following year, he built the Somerset House Mess for the British Army officers and proved himself as an able architect and caterer of distinction. This became a turning point in his life and he gradually developed the facilities at the Grand Hotel and in a short time, converted it into a magnificent establishment with over two hundred rooms. It also had the distinction of having the first public swimming pool in Karachi. The Hotel was a leading contractor to numerous airlines operating in Karachi at that time.

In 1947, Minocher Dinshaw, feeling the need for a hotel of international standards in the city and, impressed by the success and the popularity of the Grand Hotel, approached Cyrus to build a Hotel on his land opposite the Sindh Club. Cyrus set out with zeal to construct what was named the Hotel Metropole, which made its beginning with a banquet in 1950 by the Shah of Iran for the Diplomatic Corps in Karachi. Metropole enjoyed considerable prosperity in the 1950's and the 1960's. It had a night club with foreign cabaret artistes, restaurants, banquet halls and 300 rooms.

With the completion of the Hotel Metropole and the commencement of its business, Cyrus became a household name in the government circles, business communities, and a name which could be relied upon to help and assist at all times those less fortunate, both in the Parsi community and others. Regrettably, with the advent of franchised hotels, beginning with the Intercontinental Hotel in the early 1960's the demands on Metropole decreased and consequently some rooms had to be converted into offices. As remarkable as his



business was, his love for humanity did not consider any sacrifice too great for the preservation and prosperity of the Parsi community. He played a memorable role in elevating housing problems of the middle class and motivated the community to build four new buildings in the Zarathushti compound, later popularly known as the Katrak Hall Compound. He also made major contributions on the Jamshed Baug residential estate and invested very considerable time and money in the development of the Doongarwadi land, which the housing society has named after him, in recognition of his dedication to the cause. Cyrus also built two ceremonial halls in the Saddar Agiary in memory of his parents Framji and Mithibai.

In spite of his manifold business interests, he found time to serve on the Boards of several Zarathushti associations. He succeeded the great and much-loved Jamshed Nusserwanjee on the Board of Karachi Parsi Anjuman Trust Funds in 1952. He was also Chairman of the Zoroastrian Clubs, the YMPA, the KPI as well as a member of the Saddar Agiary Board, the two Parsi Schools, The Parsi General Hospital, Jashan Fund, F Punthaki Fund and the Kharujina Trust. His services did not end with the community. The Lions Movement in Pakistan was started by Cyrus and he was also a Grandmaster of the Masonic Lodge. He served on the Boards of Karachi Municipal Corporation and the Cantonment. He built and presented two schools to the Cantonment and also participated in the Basic

Democracy Movement. In recognition of his services to the nation, the Government of Pakistan in 1956 nominated Cyrus as the Alternate Delegate to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Cyrus married Mehra Birdie in 1924. Mehra had widespread interests also and served the Karachi community in many ways. Early in her life, she served as volunteer of the Red Cross. After the partition of the continent in 1947, assisted Begum Liaqut Ali Khan in All Pakistan Women's Association to meet many serious problems faced due to the uprooting of families and in the rehabilitation and uplift of women and children. She later served as the leader of the Karachi Branch and was awarded the Award of Merit and made a permanent Member of Honor of APWA. She helped her husband in establishing the Lions Club of Pakistan and formed the Pakistan Lioness Club, serving as its president for several years. She served as the president of the Karachi Zarthoshti Banu Madal and vice president of the Bomanshaw Minocher Homji Parsi General Hospital and served on several boards of housing societies and charitable trust funds.

Mehra was a devoted wife and companion who stood by Cyrus faithfully and courageously during his lean times and in their days of prosperity. Together, they



raised a family of five daughters and one son. Today, each one of them contributes help and usefulness to the community, wherever they have settled.

Cyrus Framji Minwalla passed away in 1967. A great Parsi, a great man and a great Pakistani who in his early years saw life as a 'Tinker' 'Tailor' 'Soldier' 'Sailor'.

Rustom Kevala, past president FEZANA, based on an article by M.U. Haq in the Karachi Daily Times Boss Magazine, Jan 14-20, 2008.


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Mumbai's Last Parsi Restaurants

WTS

Deena Guzder, Mumbai, India



With the warmth of an endearingly eccentric relative, 86-year-old Boman Kohinoor (photo above) peers over his wire-rimmed glasses and happily chats with customers at **Britannia Restaurant** in Ballard Estate, South Mumbai. "You must try the Berry Pulav, which my wife introduced in 1982 after returning from a trip to Iran," Kohinoor says, using his hands to punctuate the recommendation with an orchestra conductor's exuberance. Moments later, the Kohinoor family's adaptation of Persian pilaf appears in all its regalia: a generous heap of saffron-golden rice stuffed with tender chunks of curried potatoes mixed with fried cashews, garnished with wisps of crispy onions and studded with ruby-red barberries imported from Tehran. The barberries perfectly punctuate the subtle spiciness of Britannia's signature dish with a sweet, tangy exclamation point. *"In Iran, the food is dry and bland by Indian standards so my wife experimented to find the right spices to liven up the dish,"* says Kohinoor, *"but the exact recipe is a closely guarded family secret."* Britannia offers five versions of berry pulav—chicken, mutton, beef, vegetarian or egg—for a mere Rupees 150–280 (USD 3–6). (photo below)

Other Britannia favorites include sali boti—succulent cubes of mutton marinated in garlic-ginger paste, covered in a sweet cinnamon gravy, and sprinkled with crispy matchstick potatoes—and patra ni machii—pomfret seasoned with coconut chutney and steamed in banana leaves. A popular side dish, bummalo, (photo right) is made with a tender fish called "Bombay Duck"—a misnomer from the British Raj era that, today, confuses many customers including, ironically, British tourists—and

is prepared lightly fried in ghee with chilies, garlic and crushed cumin seeds by Kohinoor's head chef, his son Romin. Kohinoor's older son, Afshin, tends the cash register.

Britannia—founded in 1923 by Kohinoor's father, Rashid—is part of a dying breed of family-restaurants run by the city's rapidly dwindling Zoroastrian community (known in India as Parsis). *"Fifty years ago, there used to be around 500 Parsi restaurants along the stretch of South Bombay, now there are hardly 15 left,"* says Kohinoor who doubts his own restaurant will survive his death. Zoroastrianism, the world's oldest monotheistic religion, was once followed by millions in ancient Persia, but today claims as few as 124,000 adherents world-wide. Despite



fears of impending extinction, the community neither allows conversion into the faith nor recognizes children of interfaith marriages, according to Ramiyar P. Karanjia, principal of a Zoroastrian religious school in Mumbai. In India, home to the majority of Zarathushtis, the community



of 70,000 is declining by about 10% every decennial census, according to a report released by UNESCO.

Parsis are recognized across the subcontinent for their culinary achievements partly because food plays a central role in their daily lives. *“Food is the first thing we think about when we wake up in the morning and we don’t stop thinking about it until we go to sleep at night,”* says Kerban Humranwala, a Parsi who learned traditional recipes from her mother when growing up in Mumbai. *“We live to eat, not eat to live.”*

The Parsi community’s culinary forte may also be its Achilles heel. According to legend, the Arabs who invaded Persepolis during the Islamic incursions in the 10th Century soon realized the only way to conquer the Zoroastrian warriors was to attack them after their traditional Sunday lunch of dhansak. The thick mutton stew served with cardamom-scented brown rice is extremely heavy and requires a siesta afterwards. The synergy of myriad ingredients—lentils, mint, spinach, mango, red pumpkin, white pumpkin, eggplant, tomatoes, onions, chilies, cloves, cardamoms, peppercorns, ginger, cinnamon, garlic, coriander, and sweet potato—creates the unusually thick dhansak gravy in which mutton is stewed. Tens of thousands of Zarathushtis fled Persia and took refuge in India where they followed the three tenets of their religion—good thoughts, good words, good deeds—and rebuilt what was left of their ancient culture, including their unusual cuisine.

Dhansak remains one of the Parsi community’s most popular meals. Operating under the banner, “There is no greater love than the love of food,” Britannia’s dhansak—served with a diced tomato-onion salad and lemon wedges—continues to attract Indians and foreigners of all denominations. *“I used to travel for hours, all the way to Pune, to eat dhansak before I heard about Britannia,”* says Jean Drabhu, a Catholic from Mumbai. *“Parsis are at the very top when it comes to food, but there are so few Parsi restaurants left.”* Other Mumbai dwellers, such as Trishla Jasani, vow that Paradise Restaurant in Colaba, near Strand Cinema has *“the best dhansak outside of a Parsi home.”* The 25-year-old social worker from Mumbai born to a Hindu and Muslim says she craved the Parsi stew when attending college in the United States. *“You take a bite and you don’t know what in the world you’re eating, but it’s incredibly tasty.”*

The best introduction to Parsi cuisine is a traditional Parsi wedding spread—and there’s no need to wait for the increasingly rare occasion when two Zarathushtis tie the knot. Head to **Jimmy Boy** off Horniman Circle in the Fort District for lagan nu bhonu (literally “wedding food”). For Rupees 395 (USD 8), enjoy a fixed menu that includes a choice of Parsi-style fish, chicken or mutton with complimentary helpings of sago wafers (a favorite potato snack), a mountain of Parsi rotis (paper-thin, feather-soft chapattis), and lagan nu custard (baked wedding custard sprinkled with almonds, pistachios, cardamom and nutmeg powder). A la carte Parsi delicacies include kid ghost (mutton cooked in a coconut paste and ground cashew gravy) and khara bhendi (okra stewed in a spicy tomato sauce). In vegetarian-friendly Hindu India, Jimmy Boy especially attracts the city’s few devout carnivores. *“Parsis are hard-core meat-eaters so I love their food,”* says Aqil Sidhpurwala, a student in Mumbai.

The Zoroastrian New Year, Nowruz, is every March 21st and marks the first day of Spring. Nowruz is still celebrated across Iran by Persians of all faiths; in India, Parsis visit their local agiary (fire temple) before returning home to share an auspicious meal called *dhun daar prawn patia* (yellow lentils, spicy prawn salsa, and saffron rice) as well as a special dessert known as sev (caramelized vermicelli cooked in rose essence and adorned with baked raisins or sliced almonds). **Ideal Corner**, off Pheroze Shah Mehta Road, was once a motor garage but now serves auspicious Parsi fare not only on Nowruz but also every Monday. The cozy restaurant with bright orange walls and an upper loft is ventilated by somewhat lackadaisical ceiling fans. Specializing in home-cooked Parsi food in a diner-style ambience, Ideal Corner has a list of daily Parsi specials. *“I love Ideal Corner because it’s tasty, has great service, and serves my childhood favorite dishes,”* says Rishad Choksy, a 31-year-old Parsi.

At teatime—religiously observed around 4pm in Mumbai—experience an authentic Parsi palate at **Sassanian Boulangerie** in Dhobi Talao. Try a mawa cake, which is a subtly sweet vanilla cupcake made with

condensed milk, ricotta cheese and cardamom. “We make all our savorys from my grandfather’s recipes and bake them in our old wooden fire oven,” says Meheraban Yazdabadi, owner of the Parsi joint. Wash down the teatime treat with a kesar falooda at nearby **Kyani & Co Restaurant**. Nothing beats the Mumbai heat like rose-essence infused whole milk, speckled with tiny tapioca pearls, swimming with vermicelli and doused in a generous helping of Kesar syrup imported from Iran. Aflaeoon Shokri, owner of Kyani, says the creamy drink—served with a dollop of vanilla ice-cream—is one of the century-old restaurant’s delicacies.

If you don’t have time to sit down for a lavish Parsi meal, there are several Parsi take-out joints in Mumbai. **Perviz Hall** in the Dadar Parsi Colony is known for its chatni eenda na patties (coconut chutney and egg patties) with tarapori patio (pickle made from dried Bombay duck). For a snack on the road, order their mava ni pori (a flaky pastry filled with clotted cream) and daal ni pori (a thin crust bursting with a sweet lentil puree). On Sundays, Perviz Hall prepares boxed meals full of reasonably-priced Parsi treats loved by the community. “Everything is prepared daily and fresh, so you never fear getting an upset stomach after eating,” says Kerban Humranwala, a Parsi food aficionado.

The **Ratan Tata Institute (RTI)** building on Hughes Road has a flagship Parsi kitchen, which distributes trademark Parsi meals to seven other outlets across Mumbai. The institute was founded in 1929 by Lady Navajbai Tata as a tribute to her philanthropist husband, Sir Ratan Tata. The Tatas aimed to give women with little education and from lower socio-economic backgrounds a means to earn a living; today, the mentally and physically challenged are trained and employed as cooks. RTI is known for their Parsi specialties such as patrel (gram, wheat and rice flour mixed with mashed bananas flavored with molasses, tamarind juice, and ground chilies, which is served in cabbage leaves). The more adventurous may want to sample bheja na cutlets (breadcrumb and egg-battered sheep brain cutlets spiced with ginger, mint and onion) for 40 Rupees each (one US dollar).

As the Parsi saying goes, every meal must be followed by mithoo munoo, making one’s mouth sweet.



Visit **Parsi Dairy Farm** for a taste of agarni nu ladvo. Traditionally eaten by the Parsi community to celebrate seven-months of a pregnancy, the conical dessert is made by simmering pulses, grains

and lentils in sugary ghee. But the declining number of Parsi births provides the community with few opportunities to rejoice with the saccharine treat. In 2008, for every 100 Zoroastrians who died, only 14 were born (Times of India, February 27, 2009).

Perhaps emblematic of the Parsi community’s dwindling population, Kohinoor had 11 siblings but only two sons of his own. When asked about the fate of Britannia, Kohinoor’s brow furrows and his speech loses its usual flowery lyricism of Hafez’s poetry. “Those rascals,” he says motioning towards his sons, “have agreed to continue working at the restaurant as long as I’m around, but who knows after that.” Even if Britannia follows him to his grave, Kohinoor is confident that Parsi cuisine has left an indelible mark on his adopted homeland. “Parsis will go extinct, but not the Parsi food.” He adds with a smile, “Everyone loves the taste.”

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“An abridged version of this article appeared in the April 20, 2009 edition of TIME Magazine (Asia & Europe editions), and is reproduced by the author’s permission <http://www.time.com/time/travel/article/0,31542,1890062,00.html>.

Photo credit Deena Guzdar

ANNEX

The Kohinoor family decided to return to Iran in the 1970s and sublet the space to another restaurateur, but returned to India after the fall of the shah in 1979. Since reopening in 1982, everyone from Mumbai office workers to American Embassy staffers to world-renowned maestro Zubin Mehta have since frequented what one food website voted “Mumbai’s most authentic Parsi eatery.” (www.burrrp.com)

Once as opulent as the restaurants in the high-end Taj and Oberoi Hotels that were frequented by British colonists, Britannia was occupied during World War II and torn down to make office space. “When we rebuilt in 1947, after independence, we didn’t have very much money,” explains Kohinoor. These days, the afternoon sunlight streaming through Britannia’s open-air storefront helps brighten the otherwise mundane décor of slightly rickety chairs, peeling green painted walls, tables swathed with red-checkered picnic cloths and lackadaisical ceiling fans.

Guzder is a freelance journalist in New York City and dual-degree graduate of Columbia University’s School of Journalism and School of International and Public Affairs. She is working on a book, *A Higher Calling*, about religious activism for progressive causes. www.deenaguzder.com

FOR THE FACT-CHECKER:

Name	Location	Ambience	Sample of Dishes	Prices	Contact Phone #s
Britannia & Co. Restaurant	11 Sprott Road, Ballard Estate, Mumbai – 38	Afternoon sunlight streaming through open-air storefront, slightly rickety chairs, peeling green painted walls, tables swathed with red-checked picnic cloths and lackadaisical ceiling fans.	Berry Pulav, Dhansak, Sali Boti, Fried Bombay Duck, Fish Patra	Under 280 Rupees (USD 6)	2261-5264 or 3022-5264
Sassanian Boulangerie	98, Anandilal Podar Marg Near Gol Masjid, Marine lines Mumbai	Marble-top tables, grandfather clock, and old wooden fire oven	Mawa cakes, plum cakes, lagan nu custard, chicken dhansak, fish patra	Under 170 Rupees (USD 3)	2200-6198 or 2209-8001
Kyani & Co. Restaurant	657, Jer Mahal Estate, Opp Metro J.S.S Road, Dhobi Talao, Mumbai	20 tables that sit 30-40 people. Open-air and checkered table clothes	Kesar Falooda	Very cheap	2201 1492
Jimmy Boy Restaurant	11, Bank Street, Vikas Building, Off Horniman Circle, Fort, Mumbai		Entire Parsi wedding fixed-price menu (lagan nu bhonu)	Under Rupees 400 (USD 8)	2270-0880
Ideal Corner	12 F/G, Hornby View, Gunbow Street, Fort, Mumbai	Bright orange walls (Velveeta color) and cheesy sayings hang on the wall like "You can't spell success without a 'u'" Loft up.	Daily Specialties. Monday, Dhun Daar Prawn Patia	Under Rupees 100 (USD 2)	2262 1930
Paradise Restaurant	Sindh Chambers, Shahid Bhagat Singh Road, Near Strand Cinema, Colaba, Mumbai	Very small, around a dozen booths, Adam/eve paintings on the wall	the best bawa fish curry besides a parsi home. Sali Boti and Scotch Broth Soup		22855629
Parsi Dairy Farm Contact	261-3, Princess Street, Near Marine Lines Station, Kalbadevi, Mumbai	Take-away counter with a display of tantalizing sweets (both Parsi and Indian desserts)	agarni nu ladvo	Cheap	22013634 or 22013633
Ratan Tata Institute (RTI)	35, N S Patkar Marg, Hughes Road, Chowpatty, Girgaum, Mumbai	Take-away	Sheep brain cutlet and Parsi patrel	Cheap	Take-away 66236969
Dadar Parsi Youths Assembly	Gruh Udyog section, Perviz Hall, 800, Jame jamshed Road, Dadar Parsi colony, Mumbai 400014.	Take-away	Egg and chutney sandwiches, mava ni pori and daal ni pori	Very Cheap	Take-away. 24106282 or 24129437
Trishla Jasani		(non-Parsee who enjoys dhansak)			9819036683
Kerban Humranwala		(Parsee food aficionado)			9223444746

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A Secret Place: Personal Reflection of San Jose Darbe Meher

Rashna Wadia

In this rat race of a world, where chaos prevails and discord fills the air, where wars are waged and jobs are scarce, where relationships suffer and illnesses are endured, where time is short and stress is all consuming, I have a place to escape to unlike any other.

It is a place where I go to connect with a deeper part of myself, a place where my ancient Zarathushti roots

The gates are open, and I pull up onto the gravel alongside the small, sand colored temple that blends into the hills beautifully with the exception of the golden winged Farohar. It stands alone up there like a bird, waiting and watching as it draws me closer and lures me into the house of peace.(see photo)

I slip off my shoes and cover my head, and suddenly I feel like I have traveled back in time to ancient Persia. To a place I know nothing about, but that my imagination allows me to feel a connection to- a connection to something sacred and special. It reminds me that I am not alone, and that many have walked these grounds before I have.

I open the double doors, one foot outside and another foot in. Holding flowers in one hand, and a small candle in another, I enter completely. The air is still and I stand there in the doorway for a moment, motionless wondering what holy sounds or voices may be echoing inside the room. I hear the ticking of a clock above my head, and the sounds of birds outside. A dog barks, and then I step inside completely and close the doors behind me.



enable me to overcome the challenges of our modern day life.

My journey to this place begins on a freeway. Eventually crowds part, the traffic lights fade, and the multi-laned road merges into one. I am driving on a country road, headed towards the sky. The hills are the color of wheat with scattered specks of green. Horses and sheep, not people, rule the land up here. A deer camouflaged in the brush makes a startling appearance on the road, and stops and stares at me with suspicion. A second later, she loses interest, and wanders back into the brush. I have entered a secret place here in the hills, and like the deer, I make a right turn onto another country road leading higher to the heavens, and then altogether, I too disappear into the hills.



For a few minutes I watch the flames of the fire dance in the golden colored urn resting upon the marble slab within the cordoned off room. I close my eyes and the flames are now dancing within me. I fold my hands together and all thoughts dissolve as I begin to pray **Ashem Vohu.**

My prayers mingle between the ancient Avestan words and my modern day English. I turn again towards the fire in the urn and watch its flames dance, sometimes vigorously and other times so weakly I fear it may burn out.

I look around the temple room, and am reminded of all those other Zarathushtis who have come to pray here within these four walls. I close my eyes and can almost feel their presence.

I hear the clock ticking again, and peace wraps around me like a warm blanket. I wish good things for myself and those I love. I think of my family and friends, and all those who have passed on before me and those

who I never even had the pleasure of knowing. Love fills my heart, and I feel connected to something greater, something outside and within me. I feel whole, content, and free. My spirit is being lifted upon the flames of the burning fire, lifted upon the wings of the Fravashis beyond the ceiling of the temple, high into the sky. The spiritual merges with the physical, and suddenly there is no divide, no demarcation, and no secret world to escape to, as that world now lives within me.

I open the double doors and step out into the world again. With one foot in and another foot out, I glance around. The overhanging tree still stands protecting my car from the hot sun, and the sheep still graze in the camel back hills. This pastoral setting, the home of the San Jose Darbe Meher, provides me with the kind of tranquility necessary for personal reflection and connection. Being here, gives me the kind of inspiration I need to return to my life more energized and purposeful.

As I drive back down the one lane country road that minutes later merges into two, three, and then the four lane freeway that leads to home, I am deaf to the noise from the traffic, and I can't smell the smog in the air. I have found peace.

Excerpt from original essay, "A Secret Place"
written by Rashna Wadia
150 Palm Valley Blvd, #1132
San Jose, CA 95123



Rashna Wadia was born and raised in upstate New York, but moved to the SF Bay Area 10 years ago to take up a teaching job. She has a BA in Political Science from McMaster University and a B. ED from University of Toronto. She teaches English to middle school students in Los Gatos, CA. She enjoys writing and is hoping to publish a children's book.

THE 2009 FEZANA PERFORMING AND CREATIVE ARTS SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Mahfrin Santoke currently enrolled at the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music at California State University Long Beach. is pursuing a Bachelors in Music with a double major in Music Education and Music Performance (Flute Performance). Mahfrin hopes to continue performing professionally and teach music to children in the public school system.

Cyrus Rustomji, a student at Lewisville High School in Texas. He plays French Horn for his school band and attends various camps and private lessons to further his music knowledge. Cyrus dreams of receiving a Masters in Music and eventually conducting for a symphony orchestra.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MAHFRIN AND CYRUS

In The News

DALAI LAMA mentions the contributions of Zarathushtis to the Indian Community at a special reception in New York



On May 5th, Homi Gandhi, was invited by the Office of Tibet and the Tibetan Community in the US to attend a special reception for the Indian community at Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York where His Holiness the Dalai Lama expressed the gratitude of the Tibetan people to the people and Government of India for their generosity and hospitality in hosting Tibetan refugees for the last 50 years.

During his speech, the Holiness also thanked the Indian Government for allowing him to be the Messenger for Peace across the world and commended India and its long standing policies and practices of non-violence and religious harmony where different faiths from

faraway lands have been allowed to flourish. Among these faiths, he referred to Zarathushtis and their arrival in India. He made a special reference to how the Zoroastrian faith flourished in India and how the prospered Zoroastrians contributed to the Indian community.

He called on to the people and governments of the world, especially India, not to lose the sight of freedom of speech and freedom of worship and continue to work for it more vigorously in the coming years.

India's Youth Vote Rises from Ashes Of Mumbai Attacks



MUMBAI -- Before the November terrorist attacks on this city left three of his friends dead, Kaizad Bhamgara, 19, spent his evenings jamming with his hipster goth-rock band or chilling on the wave-sprayed boulders along the high-rise-ringed shoreline.

But the pain of his loss and his frustration over the ineptitude of the government's response to the attacks moved Bhamgara to put down his drumsticks and pick up his laptop.

He set up a Facebook page called "*Rise Up Mumbai! Rise Up India!*" It soon expanded into a Web site, a YouTube channel and a blog, all devoted to encouraging his peers to vote in India's national elections, which will be held in five phases from April 16 to May 13, 2009

"For young India, there was an explosion of anger after the Mumbai attacks. We didn't want that energy to be wasted," said Bhamgara, at the popular Leopold Cafe, one of the 10 sites attacked. "*Young India is restless and desperate for honest political leaders, for better security, for a voice. Earlier, we just weren't sure how to go about it.*"

By Emily Wax, Washington Post Foreign Service , Tuesday, April 7, 2009; Page A01

In The News



“Gram Seva Trust receives the best NGO Award all over Gujarat”

“Every Child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man!” Tagore.



Gram Seva Trust (GST) is Non Government Organization (NGO) working for Health Care & Rural Development since 1994. The hospital is situated at Kharel, Ta: Gandevi. Dist: Navsari of South Gujarat. The organization provides hospital services and community health services.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

The hospital provides medical facilities to about two hundred thousand (lac) mostly tribal people of more than 200 surrounding villages. The 50 bedded hospital is well-equipped & provides services in all disciplines at very affordable rates, even without any charge to very poor patients.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES.

The trust provides services in surrounding 24 villages for health and rural development by creating awareness. The various activities conducted under these services are –

1. CHILD HEALTH AND NUTRITION.

All 0-6 year old children in surrounding villages are checked monthly and treated for minor ailments and malnutrition in the field, free of cost.

Children with major illness are treated in the hospital free of cost. Children are also vaccinated with



Hepatitis B and MMR vaccines. Field workers visit the families of these children and give education regarding child growth, development, illness, nutrition and care.

2. ANTENATAL CARE

The Hospital conducts free antenatal care clinics for the pregnant women of surrounding villages. Field workers visit and give health education regarding care during pregnancy, importance of monthly checkups, nutrition, preparation for delivery, various government programs for pregnant women and importance of hospital deliveries.

3. ADOLESCENT HEALTH

The adolescent girls of the surrounding villages are given life education.

They are checked for any illnesses and given iron and folic tablets, and vaccinated against Hepatitis B and MMR vaccines.

4. SCHOOL HEALTH

The students of the surrounding high schools are regularly checked and given health education.

5. HEALTH AWARENESS PROGRAMS

The hospital conducts health education programs in the villages and schools with the help of audio visual aids, to bring awareness in the community regarding health care.

6. SELF HELP GROUPS

There are 106 women micro credit groups in the villages to cultivate the habit of savings. The groups are also a source of micro loans whenever needed as such micro loans are not provided by banks. This also saves the village women from the traps of money lenders.

7. INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES

The women and adolescent girls of the surrounding villages are given training in tailoring, making toiletries and other handicrafts. The products made by them are sold through a retail outlet and also in different fairs and exhibitions.



In The News



8. TUTORIALS

To strengthen the primary education of the tribal children we have started 15 free tutorials in the villages. Youth from these villages are enrolled to tutor the academically weak children. At present 423 children are enrolled in these tutorials.

9. BALAWAS

Children of migrant laborers and from broken families have difficulties attending school. Hence a residential facility for 22 such children has been started. They are provided a homely, caring environment for their educational pursuits and overall development.

10. SATELLITE CENTRE.

Dang is a hilly, forest, tribal District of South Gujarat. The tribal people of Dang district do not have good health and transport facilities. They travel more than 100 Kms to get treatment for minor ailments. Sometimes due to lack of money they ignore their ailments in early stages and seek treatment when the illness becomes incurable. Hence the organization has started a satellite centre near Vaghai, Dist Dang. Once every week a team of Doctors and Paramedical workers visit this centre and provide medical and laboratory facilities to these tribal people at affordable rates. Every week 150 to 200 tribals benefit from this facility.

11. SERVICE NGO PROGRAM.

GST was selected as service NGO under the RCH-II program of the Central Government. The organization has to provide RCH services to the under served and under utilized areas. Nine villages of Chikhli Block of Navasri District were selected for this project. The organization has achieved the objectives in this project within one year.

In consideration of these activities the Health & Family Welfare department of Government of Gujarat felicitated Gram Seva Trust with the **"Best NGO Award"** on April 7, 2009. The Award was given by the Gujarat State Health & Welfare department for best performance in health services in year 2008-09 at state level to achieve the goals of National Health Program in NGO cadre of Gujarat. The Award was conferred upon Gram Seva Trust by Honorable Health Commissioner Dr. Amarjeet Singh & the Secretary Dr. Ravi Saxsena. Both dignitaries congratulated the Trust Board & the Team of the Gram Seva Trust. The function was organized at Kama Hall, Cancer Hospital, Ahmedabad.

The Gram Seva Trust Team was delighted to receive this award. This award has helped to increase the energy of the team members in their participation in the progress of the trust & services for the rural population.

The trust is thankful to Government of Gujarat for recognizing their efforts and hard work

The Trust is also thankful to the Donors & well wishers in their continuous support in this mission.

Considering the increasing workload in the Hospital, Health & Family welfare department of Government of Gujarat has sanctioned a grant of 61 Lac (Rupees) for the expansion of ICU, NICU & pediatric ward of the hospital.

Managing Trustee Dr. Ashwin A. Shah & his wife Dr. Harsha A. Shah

Dr Roda K. Patel, M.D. Honorary Director of Child Health & Trustee, Gram Seva Trust, India, and President, Gram Seva Foundation, USA together with her husband Dr Khushroo Patel have been associated for many years with the Gram Seva Trust giving selfless dedicated services to the children of Gujarat

DONATIONS can be sent to

In USA: Gram Seva Foundation, USA (a 501(C)3 tax exempt Charitable Foundation), 2030 Post Road, Northbrook, IL 60062. Tel: (847)564-2030. Email: rodak@aol.com

IN India and other countries, Gram Seva Trust, National Highway No. 8, Kharel 396 430 (District Navsari)

INDIA

Visit www.gramseva.org for more information

In The News

ANOOSHIRAVAN HIGH SCHOOL WILL NO LONGER TEACH ZARATHUSHTI STUDIES

According to Amordad News the principal of Anooshiravan High School, Tehran has stopped Zarathushti students from having their religious studies taught in the school at the designated hours and has said that the girls would have to take their studies on Fridays only! The reason for this order is the small number of Zarathushti students in that school.

<http://amordad6485.blogfa.com/post-1395.aspx>)

It is to be remembered that the Anooshiravan High School was built by the Zarathushti community and even if there is only one Zarathushti student registered in that school; she has all the rights to have her religious studies done in the school at the designated time.

The World Zarathushti Community hopes that this decision is revoked and the young Zarathushti girls in Tehran can continue to have their religious classes held in the High School as it has been done for decades in the past.

ZARATHUSHTI YOUTH, IN A SYMBOLIC GESTURE, LIGHT FIRE IN RAY FIRE TEMPLE, AFTER ABOUT 1400 YEARS

Bahram Yazdani, who had initiated this event explained: *"The Ray Fire Temple, called 'Tappeh Meel' has remained from the Sassanian era and may be the oldest fire temple. This ancient structure remains, from the ruins of the great Ray Fire Temple, is one of the most important fire temples of the pre-Islamic era, and in the 'Tabari' history, there was no fire temple older than this".*

Yazdani added: *"The ceremony included 'Jashan khani' by Mobed Sohrab Hengami, who offered the prayers for the health of all Iranians." Yazdani pointed out that the aim of these young Zarathushtis was to acquaint our fellow countrymen with this forgotten and ancient fire temple and draw the attention of the authorities to this ancient memorial".*

The building of the fire Temple was destroyed during Alexander's invasion of Iran and from this quadrivalent structure of the Fire Temple only two 'Minars' (Meel) remained. This is the reason why the remains of the Fire temple, built on a hill, are known as the Meel Hill (Tappeh Meel).

The building is constructed of stone, brick, raw brick and plaster made of lime and ash.

At present only two arches remain of the main entrance to the building leading to a narrow corridor.



Tappeh Meel is situated on a high hill in the "Ghaleh No" village, 12 km south-east of Abdolazim mosque, in the Ray district.

The quadrivalent structure of the Fire Temple had four corridors from which the fire was protected from water, earth and wind, when moving it. Tappeh Meel is registered as a national historical site from the Sassanian era.

Translation by Rowshan Lohrasbpour

In The News

25th Anniversary of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area (ZAGBA)

ZAGBA is celebrating its 25th Anniversary Gala event on Saturday, July 25, 2009 at the Wyndham Hotel in Andover, MA. This event includes a Grand Jashan, a natak (play) by local members, children's vocal, instrumental, and dance performances, a fashion show depicting our history with models of all ages and clothing of Iran, India and the US, a photo slideshow of **ZAGBA's 25 years**, a silent auction, a dinner banquet, and dancing. The 25th Anniversary planning committees have been meeting regularly to prepare for this event. We invite the North American Zarathushti community to join us for our silver jubilee celebration.

Some of the projects/events include:

- **The ZAGBA 25th Anniversary Commemorative Silver Coin:** Members of the community submitted and then voted on the designs. The selected designs will appear on our coins printed in India. All present and past members of the ZAGBA community in addition to collectors are encouraged to order these keepsake coins.
- **A Grand Jashan:** In addition to our local mobeds, we are inviting other mobeds to join in this special prayer ceremony for this special occasion. Local families will host out-of-town mobeds and their families. Currently over 15 priests will be performing the Jashan and we hope to have more.
- **A Raffle:** Members of the community are selling raffle tickets to their family and friends across the U.S. and also their neighbors and coworkers. The tickets are \$20 each and prizes are two Airline Tickets within Continental U.S., a 42" Plasma HDTV, an Apple iPod Touch, a Blu-ray Disc Player, a DVD Camcorder, and two prizes of \$100 American Express Gift cards. The drawing will take place at the Gala event and winner does not need to be present at the drawing.
- **ZAGBA's 25th Anniversary Community Cookbook:** Current and past members of the community are requested to send in their



signature recipes to be compiled into a special keepsake cookbook. Focusing on Parsee and Persian recipes, we invite other (Indian/Pakistani, continental, multicultural) recipes as well. With so many culinary experts in the community this volume will be a pleasure to use for years to come.

- **Commemorative Program Book:** In addition to the program of the Gala evening, this Commemorative Program Book will contain ZAGBA history and photographs, acknowledgments of community service, volunteers and donors, business ads and personal greetings from friends of ZAGBA across North America
- **"I am the Change" - ZAGBA Children's 25th Anniversary Giving Project:** ZAGBA children have been collecting coins since the beginning of the 2009 year and will continue till the end of the year. During the fall of 2009 in their children's religious classes, the children will research and create posters/presentations about specific local or global charities or non-profit programs to which they would like to donate their money. The children will then vote on these and the collected funds will go to the top 3 or 5 based on their votes. This project will help them see that from small efforts great things can happen as they recognize their responsibility to others and to their planet as citizens of the world. The total change collected so far has been over \$150.
- **Sponsorships, Donations, and Ads:** ZAGBA encourages interested individuals or businesses to consider sponsorships for the gala event, ads for the program book, and donations towards the event and ZAGBA's ongoing cultural, religious, social, educational, and charitable activities.

For more information on any of the events in celebration of ZAGBA's 25th anniversary year, or to participate in any of these projects, please visit www.zagba.org

In The News

The Zoroastrian Association of Kansas (ZAKA) elects new board



The 2009 ZAKA board (L-R: Mehrnaz Shahlari (Social Committee), Dr. Zaery (President), Kayshah Parki (Treasurer), Khodadad Yazdi (Vice President), Mina Shahlari (Social Chair) and Firozeh Shahlari (Secretary).

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA 2009-2010 BOARD



ZAF 2008-2009 BOARD (photo left)

From left: Jimmy Major, Kersi Munshi (Secretary), Zersis Minocher (Treasurer), Jehan Daruwala (President), Burjis Shroff (Vice President), Arnavaz Irani, Dustyn Shroff, Soli Dastur. Nina Deboo missing.

ZAF OUT GOING BOARD (photo below)

Left Navroj Irani, Jimmy Mistry (Treasurer), Pauli Bhadha (Vice-President), Aban Kavasmaneck, Jeroo Irani, Khushroo Daruwalla (President), Dustyn Shroff. Jimmy Deboo (Secretary) and Freny Deboo missing.



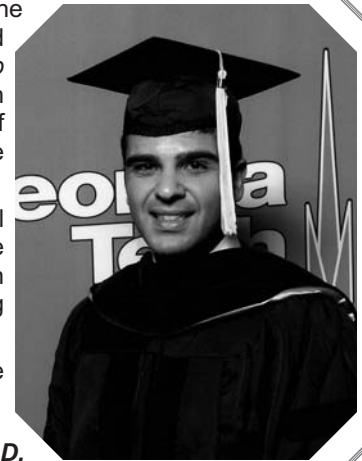
President: Jahanbux Daruwala (JBDARUWALA@aol.com)
Vice-President: Burjis Shroff (BurjisS@aol.com)
Secretary: Kersi Munshi (kershasp@yahoo.com)
Treasurer: Zersis Minocher (zminocher@yahoo.com)
Members-at-large: Soli P. Dastur (dastur@comcast.net)
Nina Deboo (Ninerdeboo@gmail.com)
Arnavaz Irani (amyirani@hotmail.com)
Jimmy Major (Jkmajor721@aol.com)
Dustyn Shroff (dustyns@gmail.com)

In The News

Cyrus Harvesf received his Ph.D. in Electrical and Computer Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology on December 12, 2008. Cyrus's thesis is entitled "The Design and Implementation of a Robust, Cost-Conscious Peer-to-Peer Lookup Service". He has published several peer-reviewed papers and presented his research at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom and the National University of Ireland in Galway. Cyrus is the son of late Dr. Keikhosrow Harvesf, who was an active member of FEZANA

Cyrus organized and led summer camps at Georgia Tech to introduce high school students to technology and engineering. Among his numerous memberships, is the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and he served as an officer in Georgia Tech's chapter of Eta Kappa Nu, the electrical and computer engineering honor society.

He recently accepted a full-time position with Microsoft in Seattle, Washington. where he focuses on Microsoft's cloud computing platform.



Hooshang Harvesf, Ph.D.

FERDOWSI'S BIRTHPLACE TO TURN INTO *Shahnameh* TOWN

Ferdowsi's birthplace "Paj" will turn into Shahnameh town on May 15 the national day of Ferdowsi. *Mohammad-Hossein Tusivand*, director, Ferdowsi Foundation, told MNA, that the project includes renovation of the place.

"Several workshops and a sports complex will be set up in Ferdowsi Park where viewers can watch scenes from Ferdowsi's great epic *Shahnameh* via 3D images," he said,.

Tusivand also announced that the foundation is opening its branch in Tus, in the Khorasan Razavi Province. He is hoping to open several other branches in other cities as he would like the ancient roots of Dari Persian to flourish in the Middle East with the help of the foundation.

"The Middle East includes Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan, all of which were home to the Dari Persian language and were the birthplace of great masters like Rudaki, Avicenna, Jami, Rumi, and Nizami," Tusivand explained.



He further noted that the foundation has also arranged a commemoration ceremony in Berlin on September 11 and 12, 2009

The Ferdowsi Foundation is a private organization established in 2003 by Tusivand. Mir Jaleddin Kazzazi, Hassan Anusheh, Jalal Khaleqi-Motlaq, Fereidun Joneidi and Qadamali Sarami are members of the foundation..

Meher News Agency (ZNA)

Rustam Arin from Uzbekistan writes that the Ministry of Culture of Republic of Uzbekistan has ordered the reconstruction of one of the ancient Dar-e-Mehr of Tashkent city, near North Vokzal. A sculptor master has asked Rustam to explain to him what the interior of a Dar-e-Mehr looks like before any work can start.

More than 30 Dar-e-Mehrs in the Tashkent city area have been unearthed with the excavation projects.

Information via e.mail



INTERFAITH PRAYERS FOR ONESELF AND FOR OTHERS--- INTERFAITH PANEL AT ST ALCUIN MONTESSORI SCHOOL

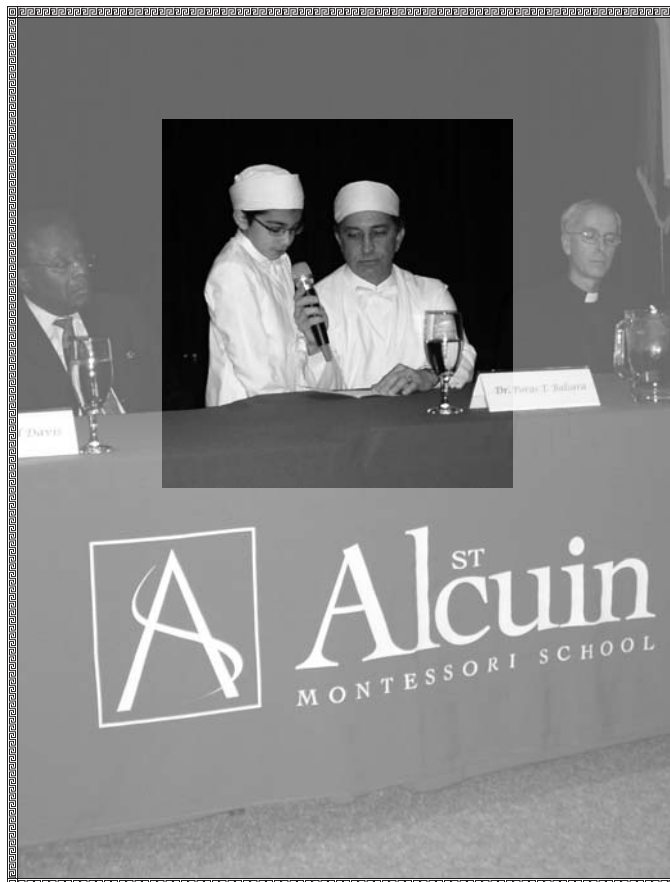
Religions Working for Peace and Justice

The Diversity committee of St. Alcuin Montessori decided that in this school year we would concentrate on the diverse religious background of our school community. We thought an interfaith panel with leaders from religions that are represented in our school would be great. Our topic was prayer for oneself and for others. Since I am on the committee I asked *Ervarad Poras Balsara* if he would be able to speak. Of course, he said yes. At this time, his son *Burzin* had not had his Navar ceremony done. He completed his Navar in December and since the interfaith panel was in January, Poras asked if Burzin could come as well. Our diversity committee loved this idea. (photo right)

Director of Diversity Nichole Franks and her committee did a masterful job in putting together a panel of representatives from six different religious backgrounds. The faiths represented were Unitarian, Islam, Baptist, Zoroastrian, Catholic and Buddhism. The representatives from the Jewish and Hindu faiths were unable to join us that evening. Attendees who were mostly parents, found the evening to be interesting and thought provoking. The presentations were followed by a lively question and answer session.

This is the first time our school has held such a panel. It was enjoyed by all.

Sherazade Mehta is a member of St. Alcuin's Diversity committee



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INTERFAITH AUSTRALIA

Equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

I was flipping through the FEZANA Journal when the phrase “*equal sharing of responsibilities between men and women*” caught my eye. Having two daughters under the age of three, and being at a critical time in our careers, my husband and I are in the constant balancing act that is “equal sharing of responsibilities”. Every day we are trying to strike the best compromise in meeting the needs of everyone in the family and also ensuring we all have the opportunity and encouragement to thrive. As I read further down the page I learned that there is an opportunity to join the FEZANA United Nations Non-Government Organization (UN NGO) committee and attend this year’s Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meeting in New York City with the theme of “the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care giving in the context of HIV/AIDS”. What a great opportunity! Would the kids be OK with one parent for that long? I have to pay my own way and lodging— is it a good use of our family resources? It would be a great networking opportunity – especially in the current economic climate. What if the kids get sick – can my husband take the time off to stay home with them?

These were some of the many issues my husband and I discussed and planned for before deciding that I should attend the CSW meeting. On March 3, 2009, having cleared security and wearing my United Nations’ badge I entered my first session entitled “HIV/AIDS: Considering gender in policy responses”. It shocked me to learn that 10% of new cases in HIV are due to contaminated medical instruments. For example a pregnant woman, who is not infected with HIV, comes to a clinic to get pre-natal care, but because the clinic does not have the resources to properly sterilize their medical instruments they infect her with HIV while giving her a gynecological exam! Wouldn’t it cost much less to provide the clinic with proper sterilizing equipment than have to treat this woman, her children, and partner for HIV and AIDS?

I was still pondering this question as I stepped into a session entitled “Gender budgeting and pay equity: The direct way to equal sharing of responsibilities”. The eloquent and extremely knowledgeable panel stressed the importance of cross training and communication between those determining national and international budgets and those practicing in the field. How often do the healthcare workers in rural clinics have the opportunity to communicate with the government officials responsible for allocating funds to healthcare? How

many women are being trained to understand both these professions and to communicate between these experts? How many women, children, and families are negatively impacted because of a misallocation or oversight in a budget?

Another key issue discussed at the conference was the seemingly logical process by which women decrease their contribution to the labor market and the major consequences this has on them and their families. I know many professional couples who decide to have children and soon after, the woman decides to reduce her work hours or stop working all together. One reason given for this is economics. Unfortunately, women still make less than men per hour for the same work and thus it makes more economic sense for the family, if the woman reduces her work hours and takes care of the family responsibilities than the man. What is not considered in this economic analysis is the long-term impact of this decision on the woman’s earning potential and family’s economic independence. By removing these women from the labor market, at a critical time in their career, they will not climb the career ladder as fast and as far and thus over their lifetime they will earn less and will be less financially secure. Studies have shown that, because women live longer than men and have less in retirement savings, they tend to be much more dependent on social assistance than men— what about the women who live in countries without safety nets such as social security?

On the third day of the conference the FEZANA UN NGO committee was successful in securing a parallel session entitled “Success Stories in Care giving for HIV/AIDS: South Asia”. Besides myself, the other presenters were Deena Patel (New York, NY), Kamalrukh Katrak (Branford, CT), and Farah Minwalla (New York, NY). We had a good turn out and a diverse audience both in background and age. Our presentation highlighted the innovative work being done at Bel-Air Hospital in Panchgani India to treat individuals with HIV and AIDS and to train nurses. The team is not only providing state-of-the-art medical care and treatment to the patients, but also addressing larger societal challenges such as the discrimination and isolation endured by patients and families affected by HIV and AIDS. For more information on this presentation and FEZANA UN NGO’s other efforts please visit <http://fezana.pbwiki.com/>.

During the week that I spent at the CSW I had the opportunity to learn from many world leaders and experts



INTERFAITH INTERALLIA

ZARATHUSHTIS TO DISCUSS ANCIENT CONCEPTS OF EQUALITY AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Religions Working for Peace and Justice



on a range of topics including: the economic crisis, the food crisis, women's involvement and advancement in politics, workplace flexibility, and gender roles in violence. I would like to share what I have learned and have discussions with other FEZANA members on these critical topics. If you are interested in sharing your thoughts and in taking action to make the world a better place please contact me. The best way to reach me is via e-mail trity.pourbahrami@gmail.com.

Trity Pourbahrami is a community builder and consultant in Southern California. She has worked on and is passionate about a variety of issues affecting women and families such as economic empowerment, access to education, health education, and conflict resolution. She has been involved with FEZANA since 1987 when her family first moved to Canada. She has served in various roles internationally, nationally, and locally including being a past president of ZYNA and a Gatha teacher.



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INTERFAITH INTERALIA

TWO HOMIS AT THE UNITED NATIONS *and Justice*

By Homi Dhalla Ph.D and Homi Gandhi

The "Initiative for a UN Decade of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace (2011-2020)" was proposed over a year ago, at a meeting hosted by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO) at Bossey, Switzerland.

During the fall of 2008, Philippines championed the General Assembly resolution A/RES/63/22, which was approved by unanimity. The resolution inter alia

of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace (the UN Decade). A resolution to that effect is to be brought to the General Assembly for endorsement in the 64th Session (September-December 2009) and then the UN Decade would be proclaimed.

A few prominent personalities who have been taking a keen interest in the interfaith movement globally were invited by the United Nations to attend a meeting at Maryknoll (which is located about an hour from New York City) from March 2-4, 2009. It makes us proud to state that two Zarathushtis were invited to participate in this brainstorming conference. They are Mr. Homi Gandhi of New Jersey and Dr. Homi Dhalla of Mumbai. Mr. Gandhi was representing FEZANA while Dr. Dhalla was deputed by the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF), Osaka, Japan.

At Maryknoll, a number of interfaith organizations, religious communities and value-based organizations came together to promote the acceptance of this Initiative, and to constitute this Coalition. In his message to the Coalition, HE Miguel D'Escoto Brockmann, President of the current UN General Assembly, supported the Coalition's Initiative and stated that "I will do what I can to facilitate its adoption" by the

Member States. Until now, 59 organizations have expressed support to join the Coalition, and out of these 43 were present at Maryknoll.

The Coalition is not a new organization, but is action-oriented to facilitate co-operation. A Steering Committee that would have 12-15 organizational members was also established through voting. IARF, which was represented by Dr. Dhalla, has been nominated as one of the members of this Committee. The Committee will co-ordinate the work of the Coalition.

The UN Decade is aimed at promoting partnership between UN member states, UN agencies, as well as religious communities, spiritual movements, organizations representing indigenous traditions and



"requests the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination in the Department of Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, which plays the focal point role on inter religious, intercultural and inter civilized matters, to coordinate with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in facilitating consideration of the possibility of proclaiming a United Nations decade for interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace".

The chance to build on this and other prior UN decisions, in conjunction with mobilizing the immense spiritual, human and organizational resources of the religious communities, spiritual traditions, interfaith organizations, and value-based movements, makes this the opportune time to call for a United Nations Decade



INTERFAITH INTERALLIA



Religions Working for Peace and Justice

other important value-based civil society organizations to advance sustainable peace.

The Decade provides a framework to:

1. Encourage individuals and communities of diverse religions and cultures to co-operate in UN initiatives such as: the Millennium Development Goals, enhancement of human rights, decent work for all, dialogue among civilizations, promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, peace building and shared security.
2. Encourage Member States publicly and constructively to engage individuals and communities of diverse religions and cultures for the common good.
3. Strengthen and deepen the co-operation of individuals and communities of diverse religions and cultures, locally, nationally, regionally and

internationally for building a world of justice and peace.

4. To promote mutual respect and trust between individuals and communities of diverse religions and cultures through dialogue and shared action.

On March 3, representatives were asked to work in smaller groups. Dr. Homi Dhalla participated in the Program of Action group and put forward practical ideas in the field of human rights and peace. Homi Gandhi participated in discussion and drafting of the "COALITION Memorandum of Understanding".

On March 4, a formal meeting was convened at the ECOSOC chamber of the UN where a briefing on the UN Decade took place. The members of the Steering Committee and ECOSOC addressed this meeting, which was well attended by UN agencies, other NGOs and individuals. Both Homis were present at the ECOSOC meeting that took place at the UN headquarters in New York.

Operation Eyesight

A Legacy of the 7th World Zoroastrian Congress, Houston.



On Thanksgiving Week, November 2008 a team headed by *Lion Khush Bodhan*, Lions Clubs of California and Nevada headed for Columbia, South America as part of the ongoing mission to share the gift of sight with the needy. They worked at the camp where eyeglasses were distributed to those who needed them, after proper eye examinations.



<http://picasaweb.google.com/kbodhan/ColumbiaMission>

Operation Eyesight

Donate your
Glasses & Frames



Program will be held at the World Zoroastrian Congress Dubai-2009

Every day as the rising sun paints the world's horizons for all to enjoy, there are many who do not share in this simple beauty of nature, as their vision is eclipsed by blindness.

To step into this dark void and take action in making a difference in the lives of those around us, is called Operation Eyesight.

The goal of this program is to meet the need for vision care by providing intended beneficiaries with properly calibrated lenses. To recycle used eyeglasses is a time tested, simple and effective way to accomplish this objective.

The journey of Operation Eyesight started at the 7th World Zoroastrian Congress held in Houston, Texas.

To continue with this legacy the next milestone is the 9th World Zoroastrian Congress that is scheduled to take place from 28th-31st December 2009.

Look through your desks, drawers and closets for used and usable eyeglasses (sun-glasses are not required) and pack them with you when you come to Dubai or send them with your friends.

Your support to this program will be appreciated!

For queries please write to the Program Directors:

Shahnaz Tarapore (Dubai) - starapore8@gmail.com

Behram Pastakia (USA) - bpastakia@aol.com



The Most Beautiful Flower

*The park bench was deserted as I sat down to read
Beneath the long, straggly branches of an old willow tree.
Disillusioned by life with good reason to frown,
For the world was intent on dragging me down.*

*And if that weren't enough to ruin my day,
A young boy out of breath approached me, all tired from play.
He stood right before me with his head tilted down
And said with great excitement, "Look what I found!"*

*In his hand was a flower, and what a pitiful sight,
With its petals all worn, not enough rain or too little light.
Wanting him to take his dead flower and go off to play,
I faked a small smile and then shifted away.*

*But instead of retreating, he sat next to my side
And placed the flower to his nose and declared with overacted
surprise,
"It sure smells pretty and it's beautiful, too. That's why I
picked it; here, it's for you."*

*The weed before me was dying or dead.
Not vibrant of colors, orange, yellow or red.
But I knew I must take it, or he might never leave.
So I reached for the flower, and replied, "Just what I
need."*

But instead of him placing the flower in my hand,

*He held it mid-air without reason or plan.
It was then that I noticed for the very first time
That weed-toting boy could not see: he was blind.*

*I heard my voice quiver, tears shone like the sun
As I thanked him for picking the very best one.
"You're welcome," he smiled, and then ran off to play,
Unaware of the impact he'd had on my day.*

*I sat there and wondered how he managed to see
A self-pitying woman beneath an old willow tree.
How did he know of my self-indulged plight? Perhaps from
his heart, he'd been blessed with true sight.*

*Through the eyes of a blind child, at last I could see
The problem was not with the world; the problem was me.
And for all of those times, I myself had been blind,
I vowed to see the beauty in life, and appreciate every second
that's mine.*

*And then I held that wilted flower up to my nose
And breathed in the fragrance of a beautiful rose
And smiled as I watched that young boy, another weed in his
hand
About to change the life of an unsuspecting old man.*

Author Unknown



Mahatma Gandhi's Appreciation of Parsis Who Helped Him

(Part I)

MANECK BHUJWALA

The struggle for the rights of Indians under British colonial rule and for their independence from Britain involved many Indian people, including Parsis of India. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi known as Mahatma was instrumental in obtaining a peaceful transfer of power through his non-violent protest movement.

What is not much known is the history of Mahatma Gandhi's contacts with Parsis and his documented appreciation of their help in his life.

Following is the first part of my compilation of instances of Mahatma Gandhi's contacts with Parsis, which I extracted after reviewing his online autobiography. I have also added some information I later gained from Mr. Dinyar Patel's essays (January 2008) at the History Department of Harvard University, USA

In his autobiography (available online and excerpted here in quotes)

Gandhiji writes about his seeking advice from *Dadabhai Naoroji* in England, first law practice attempts in Bombay and Rajkot starting in 1891 and communication with the famous Parsi lawyer, *Pherozechah Mehta*, going to South Africa in 1893 and contacts with Parsis like *Rustomji* there, returning to India in 1896, again communicating with *Pherozechah Mehta*, *D. Wacha*, *Cama* etc.:

Meeting Parsi Member of British Parliament, Dadabhai Naoroji while studying in England

While Gandhi was in England giving exams for the Bar, he writes: *"I passed my examinations, was called to the bar on the 10th of June 1891, and enrolled in the High Court on the 11th. On the 12th I sailed for home. But notwithstanding my study there was no end to my helplessness and fear. I did not feel myself qualified to practice law...."*

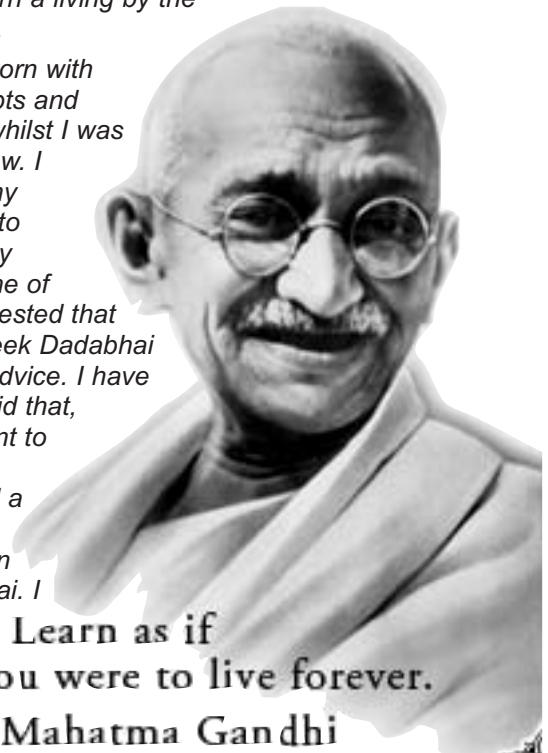
"I had heard of Sir Pherozechah Mehta as one who roared like a lion in law courts. How, I wondered, could he have learnt the art in England? It was out of the question for me ever to acquire his legal acumen, but I had serious misgivings as to whether I should be able even to earn a living by the profession."

I was torn with these doubts and anxieties whilst I was studying law. I confided my difficulties to some of my friends. One of them suggested that I should seek Dadabhai Naoroji's advice. I have already said that, when I went to England, I possessed a note of introduction to Dadabhai. I

**Learn as if
you were to live forever.
Mahatma Gandhi**

availed myself of it very late. I thought I had no right to trouble such a great man for an interview. Whenever an address by him was announced, I would attend it, listen to him from a corner of the hall, and go away after having feasted my eyes and ears. In order to come in close touch with the students he had founded an association. I used to attend its meetings, and rejoiced at Dadabhai's solicitude for the students, and the latter's respect for him. In course of time I mustered up courage to present to him the note of introduction. He said: 'You can come and have my advice whenever you like....' "
Gandhiji considered the letter of introduction to Dadabhai Naoroji (given to him by a Mahrashtrian family friend) as "the most precious"

About his meeting with Dadabhai, Gandhiji wrote in *Navjivan* on Naoroji's 100th birth anniversary *"The thought uppermost in his mind all the time was how*





INTERFAITH INTERALIA



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India could rise and attain her freedom. I myself and many others like me have learnt the lessons of regularity, single-minded patriotism, simplicity, austerity and ceaseless work from this venerable man."

Starting Law Practice in Bombay after returning from England



"....To start practice in Rajkot would have meant sure ridicule. I had hardly the knowledge of a qualified vakil and yet I expected to be paid ten times his fees! No client would be fool enough to engage me. And even if such a one was to be found, should I add arrogance and fraud to my ignorance, and increase the burden of debt I owed to the world?"

Friends advised me to go to Bombay for some time in order to gain experience of the High Court, to study Indian law and to try to get what briefs I could. I took up the suggestion and went...." "...I found the barrister's profession a bad job - much show and little knowledge. I felt a crushing sense of my responsibility...."

"...Virchand Gandhi was reading for the solicitor's examination and would tell me all sorts of stories about barristers and vakils. 'Sir Pherozechah's ability,' he would say, 'lies in his profound knowledge of law. He has the Evidence Act by heart and knows all the cases on the thirty-second section....' "...About this time, I took up the case of one Mamibai. It was a 'small cause.' 'You will have to pay some commission to the tout,' I was told. I emphatically declined...." "...This was my debut in the Small Causes Court. I appeared for the defendant and had thus to cross-examine the plaintiff's witnesses..."...But there was another case in store for

me at Bombay. It was a memorial to be drafted. A poor Mussalman's land was confiscated in Porbandar. He approached me as the worthy son of a worthy father. His case appeared to be weak, but I consented to draft a memorial for him, the cost of printing to be borne by him..."

Starting Law Practice in Rajkot

"..We both came to the conclusion that it was no use spending more time in Bombay. I should settle in Rajkot where my brother, himself a petty pleader, could give me some work in the shape of drafting applications and memorials. And then as there was already a household at Rajkot, the breaking up of the one at Bombay meant a considerable saving..." "...I left Bombay and went to Rajkot where I set up my own office. Here I got along moderately well..."

"My brother had been secretary and adviser to the late Ranasaheb of Porbandar before he was installed on his gadi¹, and hanging over his head at this time was the charge of having given wrong advice when in that office. The matter had gone to the Political Agent who was prejudiced against my brother. Now I had known this officer when in England, and he may be said to have been fairly friendly to me. My brother thought that I should avail myself of the friendship and, putting in a good word on his behalf, try to disabuse the Political Agent of his prejudice...I sought an appointment and got it. I reminded him of the old acquaintance, but I immediately saw that Kathiawad was different from England; that an officer on leave was not the same as an officer on duty...." The British officer refused to listen to him and asked his peon to physically escort him out. Gandhi felt insulted and told the officer he would sue him, but he was not sure how, so he asked Pherozechah Mehta for advice:

"Sir Pherozechah Mehta happened to be in Rajkot at this time, having come down from Bombay for some case. But how could a junior barrister like me dare to see him? So I sent him the papers of my case, through the vakil who had engaged him, and begged for his advice. 'Tell Gandhi,' he said, 'such things are the common experience of many vakils and barristers. He is still fresh from England, and hot-blooded. He does not know British officers. If he would earn something and have an easy time here, let him tear up the note and



INTERFAITH INTERALIA



Religions Working for Peace and Justice

pocket the insult. He will gain nothing by proceeding against the sahib, and on the contrary will very likely ruin himself. Tell him he has yet to know life.'

The advice was as bitter as poison to me, but I had to swallow it. I pocketed the insult, but also profited by it. *'Never again shall I place myself in such a false position, never again shall I try to exploit friendship in this way,'* said I to myself, and since then I have never been guilty of a breach of that determination. This shock changed the course of my life...."



Maneck Bhujwala born in Mumbai, India, migrated to the U.S. for further studies after studying engineering in Baroda. He has worked at many high-tech companies in technical and management positions. He now works as a Realtor, helping community members in real estate transactions. Maneck co-founded Zoroastrian

Associations in Northern and Southern California and has been an active member offering religious classes and priestly services as a Mobedyar. He represents Zarathushtis at many interfaith events. Maneck now lives in Southern California with wife Mahrukh and close to his daughter Shehnaz. . mbhujwala@socal.rr.com

Zarathushti volunteers joined friends from different faith traditions to celebrate Rooze Derekhtkari in Washington DC on 7th March 2009. marking the 30th anniversary of ZAMWI

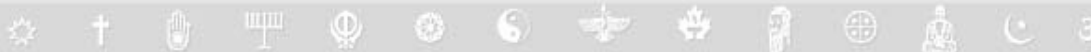
On 7th March 2009 members of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington Inc., planted a Deodar Cedar donated by the Zarathushti community to the St Paul's Parish at Rock Creek in Washington D.C..

Rooze Derekhtkari is an ancient Persian tradition – a day set aside for caring for trees which falls on 15 Esfand. (See FEZANA Journal Vol 22 No 4.). Early spring is the best time for planting cypress and cedar species in the Northern Hemisphere. Selection of the tree species to reflect the Zarathushti faith tradition, the site planning and date of planting was completed after consultation with *Arborist Timothy D. Zastrow (Bartlett Tree Experts)*. During a tour of the premises, Mr Zastrow indicated a deep interest in the ancient Persian tradition in caring for trees and in identifying the appropriate species of cypress traditionally grown in Iran which could be replicated in North America.

The Rector of the Parish, *Rev Rosmarie Sullivan* has promised to nurture the commemorative tree, the planting of which marks the 30th anniversary of ZAMWI and 30th anniversary of the founding of the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington. IFC's theme for the year 2009 is *"Hearing Each Other – Healing the Earth"*. The tree plantations are part of a sustained city wide effort to reforest the Nation's Capital in partnership with the Casey Trees Foundation, www.caseytrees.org



INTERFAITH INTERALIA



Religions Working for Peace and Justice



Left to Right: *Behram Pastakia, Ardeshir Bakhtiani, President ZAMWI (2007-2009) with wife Vida Fouroughi and daughter Arshya Aftab, Farzad Aidun, Vice-President ZAMWI (2007-2009) with son Pedram, Parvin Khorrami, Father Tomy K. visting from Bel-Air Hospital, Panchgani, Maharashtra State, India, (see FEZANA Journal Vol 22 No1) Casey Trees Forrester Sahara Moon Chapotin (with bag on her shoulder) and colleague, Arborist Timothy D. Zastrow (Bartlett Tree Experts) with son Toby on extreme right.*



(Photo left) Young boy Pedram, with his father Farzad Aidun, (both with spectacles) putting the tree into the ground, with Ardeshir Bakhtiani weilding the spade in the foreground, and Fr Tomy K pushing the base of the tree from the other side.

Photo credits: www.caseytrees.org

Of what faith are the waters
Of what faith the trees
Of what faith bounteous mother earth
Of what faith Ahura Mazda
Of what faith was Zarathushtra
Of that faith and that law as well,
A Mazda worshipper am I.
Yasna 12.7

INTERFAITH AUSTRALIA

P

Parsi Zoroastrian Association of South East Asia (PZAS), Singapore



Thirty Zarathushti members and their families planted trees in conjunction with the National Parks Board on Saturday, April 25th, 2009. We were allocated a scenic plot of land along the Geylang Park Connector overlooking the Geylang River. Two types of trees were provided for us, the pretty flowering pink Mempat (*Cratoxylum Formosum*) tree, and the Glum tree (*Puteh, Melaleuca Cajupati*) with a paper-like bark which is indigenous to the area. Everyone was very excited to be part of this project especially the children who couldn't wait to get started on planting their trees. So we put on our gloves, picked up our gardening tools, dug deep into the ground and left our marks, forever, in Singapore. What a worthy endeavour!

Report by Jasmine Dastoor

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN (ZAOM) VISITS GLEANERS FOOD BANK



On Saturday April 18, 2009, 25 children of the ZAOM accompanied by their parents visited Gleaners Community Food Bank (www.gcfb.org) in Pontiac, Michigan to participate in community service as part of their monthly religion classes.

In what seems to be becoming an annual tradition, the children learned the importance of righteous action by helping the hungry. In little over 2 hours, the children and their parents packed food boxes and sorted out lots of donated food items. Their hard work certainly paid off as they managed to pack and sort 17,100 pounds of food, an amount that could feed 4,885 people!! The families who

attended also contributed 234 pounds of food items to the bank and made monetary contributions.

This visit proved to be a rewarding and fulfilling experience for all who attended. They hope to continue this annual tradition and continue to translate the Yatha Ahu Vairyo Prayer into righteous action and so spread joy and peace throughout the world.

Many thanks to the teachers of the religion classes.. *Bepsi Sanjana, Shireen Ghandhi and Shernaz Minwalla* for organizing and coordinating this event.

Contributed by Ardeshir N Irani MD

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN (ZAOM)

PARTICIPATES IN THE 10TH ANNUAL WORLD SABBATH FOR PEACE AND RELIGIOUS RECONCILIATION

On Sunday, January 25, 2009, the children and youth from ZAOM participated in the 10th Annual World Sabbath for Peace and Religious Reconciliation held at

Christ Church Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. (www.wsdaysofpeace.org)

Jasmine Sholapurwalla, a high school student from Rochester Hills, led the Call to Prayer in the Zarathushti Tradition with the following words.... "Religion should help us unleash our enormous potential with a common goal to build a climate of reconciliation and dialogue. Zoroastrianism teaches us to respect all religious differences while celebrating our common humanity."

She then recited the Yatha Ahu Vairyo and Hormuzd Khodai prayers along with their English translations, which brought on a big round of applause.

The younger children who participated were (photo left in order) Delna Sholapurwalla, Sarosh Irani, Sanaya Irani, Afriti Chinoy, Zoish Mehta (not in photo),

They had each made a flag that portrayed a message of World Peace from a Zarathushti Perspective. They carried these flags during the Children of Peace rally that opened and closed the Sabbath. They marched with other children from Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Baha'i, Hindu, Jewish, Native American and Sikh faiths who were all represented at the Sabbath. At the end of the ceremony, all the flags were collected to be sewn into one gigantic quilt that would be displayed all across Metro Detroit.

All those who attended the Sabbath came away with a message of peace, hope and brotherhood towards one and all.

Contributed by Ardeshir N Irani MD





Caring for the Earth - Grass roots initiatives to tackle Climate Change

The Kyoto Box - A solar cooker made from cardboard



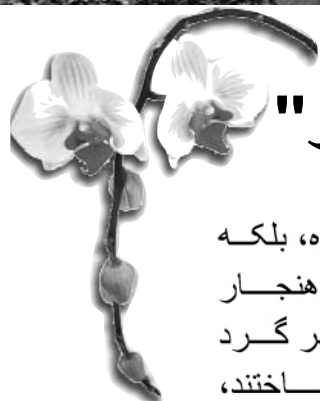
The India Development Coalition of America (IDCA), organized a forum on 25 April 2009 at the Indian Prairie Public Library in Darien, Illinois, that touched on many aspects of not only global warming, but also many aspects of alternative energy strategies.

*Mr. Porus Dadabhoy, who is on the Board of IDCA provided information on low cost solar cooker designs that should help in people's cooking needs. He described a \$6 solar cooker made from cardboard that was named the Kyoto Box, and won a *Financial Times Award for \$75,000, for their Climate Change Challenge* contest for innovative ways to decrease environmental impacts of human activities. The cooker consists of two cardboard boxes, the inner one painted black, the outer one lined with aluminum foil, and has an acrylic cover, that can be used to boil water and cook food.*



Readers wishing to donate to the Solar lights project can send tax deductible donations payable to "IDCA" and for the "Solar Lights Project", and mail it to IDCA, 1213 Stonebriar Court, Naperville, IL 60540.

For other information about IDCA, or for descriptions of its other activities, please visit the website at www.idc-america.org/activities.php.



"درآمدی بر پیدایی و برگزاری جشن نوروز"

جشن نوروز نه برخاسته از نام کسی و نه وابسته به کیش و آیین ویژه، بلکه گزینشی است خردمندانه و برخاسته از اندیشیدن درست و استوار بر هنجار آفرینش و ناموس طبیعت و شناختن زمان و آگاهی بر گردش زمین بر گرد خورشید و این گونه است که سرانجام خردمندان جهان نشستی ساختند، اندیشیدند و نوروز این جشن با شکوه ایرانی را به عنوان دقیق ترین مبدا آغاز سال و آغاز اعتدال بهاری پسندیدند.

نوروز، این اخگر همیشه فروزان و جاودانه فرهنگ ایرانی هر سیصد و شصت و پنج روز و پنج ساعت و اندی فرا می رسد و به یادمان می آورد که دارای فرهنگی کهن، پویا، زنده، بارور و جاودانه هستیم. و این چنین است که اگر این آیین ها و این روش ها را نداشتیم، تا کنون در برابر هجوم های بنیان کن تاریخ همچون شیبخون اسکندر و تک و تاخت تازیان و مغولان دهها رویدادی این گونه از میان رفته و به تاریخ پیوسته بودیم.

فرهنگ ایرانی از این نماد ها و آیین ها فراوان دارد که جشن های مهرگان و نوروز هر دو بر پایه اعتدال پاییزی و بهاری هستند. در گاهشماری ایرانی هر سال دوازده ماه و هر ماه سی و یاسی و یک روز است. سال 365 روز و اندی است که هر چهار سال یک بار با اضافه نمودن یک روز به نام اورداد، سال کبیسه با 366 روز پدید می آید تا هر فصلی در جایی خود بماند. در این گاهشماری هر روز از سال نامی دارد و هر ماه نیز نامی که در دل نامهایی روزها هستند و هر نام، نام ایزدی پاسبان و شادی آفرین.

در ایران باستان هر روز که نام ماه و نام روز با هم یکی می شد را جشن می گرفتند و به نیایش و ستایش خداوند می پرداختند. و نوروز را به جمشید شاه نسبت می دهند که در چنین روزی او بفرمود تا جشن گرفتند و شادی کردند و رخت نو پوشیدند و تا به امروز به نام نوروز جمشیدی مانده است.

چنان چه می دانیم در نوروز یعنی نخستین روز بهار، روز و شب برابر می شوند و هوا نه گرم و نه سرد است. طبیعت خفته بیدار می گردد و همه چیز، همه کس و همه جا پذیرای زندگی نو می شوند، و جهان هستی، پوشش و رویشی نو و تازه و به هنجار پیدا می کند. انسانها و زمین همه دست به دست



هم می دهند تا جلوه گاهی دلکش و زیبا از تجلی شکوه خداوند و هنجار آفرینش گردند.

و اما توده ی مردم نیز مراسمی ویژه خویش داشته و دارند. بدین گونه که از اواسط اسفند ماه مردم به تکاپو می افتند و سبزه می کارند و به پاگیزی می پردازند و در حد توان خود لوازم بایسته نوروز را فراهم می کنند. آنچنان که همه مردم، با خانه های پاکیزه و سبزه هایی خرم و چهره های شاد نوروز را پذیرا می شوند. چیدن سفره نوروزی که سنتی دیرین است و مردم برای آنکه سفره نعمت آنها در سال نو پر بهره تر باشد با انواع خوراکی ها، میوه، آب، شیر، سبزی و هر آنچه از نعمت های خداوند باشد در لحظه یی تحویل سال نو به شکر نعمت ها می پرداختند که این سفره بعد ها به سفره هفت سین و یا ستایش از هفت امشاسپندان، تغییر نام پیدا کرد و با قرار دادن سیب، سیر، سماق، سرکه، سمنو، و سبزه در میان مردم رواج یافت.

سخن در مورد نوروز و آیین آن تمام شدنی نیست و این جشن به عنوان گوهری گرانبها بر چیشانی فرهنگی ایرانی می درخشد و بر همه ی ایرانیان بایسته است که در حفظ و نگهداری این آیین ریا و پر معنی کوشا باشند.

کوروش آبادانی

اللهیار دبستانی

KEEPING THE TRADITION ALIVE

This short essay will introduce the creation and performing of the Norooz celebration. Norooz is not taken from a name of any person nor related to any specific religion but rather a special tradition performed by mostly Iranian people. It has an intellectual theme in the right wisdom and good thought looking at the creation of nature and time.

Knowing about how the earth revolves around the sun is the reason Zoroastrians thought of the "Norooz" New Year and thus started the celebration as the most accurate depiction of time. "Norooz" New Year falls on the first day of spring which is the only day of the year that the twenty-four hours is divided into equal time of daylight and night-time. The Norooz starts every year on the basis of a 365 day, 5 hour and a fraction of time and does so in the same way each year. In the Iranian calendar, each month and day has a specific name. In addition, one day of the month has the same name as the month. This represents the day to pray and celebrate. As a result each year has 12 days in which celebrations take place. The largest celebration takes place on the first day of the month and is called "Norooz".

Norooz is a very important and special occasion for the Iranian people. If not for

this celebration and coming together of the people it would have been impossible to have stood the past history of attacks by different tribes and invaders against Iran, especially Alexander, Arabs and Moguls along with tens of other confrontations that we have been faced with in the past. There are many Iranian celebrations, namely Mehregan and Norooz both which are based on being equal with the beginning of the autumn and spring seasons. These are peaceful and cheerful days of celebration. It is the time for forgiveness and to set aside any animosity one may have with their neighbor, friend or family member and celebrate. Since the day is equal with 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of night time it is neither too hot nor too cold, perfect for looking at what the New Year will bring.

The way Norooz is celebrated is a very wonderful story and embraces thousands of years of Iranian culture and history. It has withstood the test of time before Islam and after Islam. One of the traditions of Norooz is cultivating different seeds and trees that are native to Iran. This task is usually the responsibility of the wives. Prior to placing the seeds in a container the wife makes a wish for happiness, health and prosperity for the entire family.

In the past, the King or ruler of the land had a special day for different people and themes. The first day was for praying and exchanging gifts and happiness with your

family, the second day was for farmers and traders and the 3rd day was for the high priests and so forth.

Although, some traditions have changed throughout the years, the "modern" Iranians continue to still practice the chore of cleaning their homes in preparation of visits from family members, neighbors and friends during Norooz. Making or purchasing new clothes to wear. They also still cultivate seeds and dispose of them on the 13th day of Norooz. The 13th day is also the day in which families come together and spend the day celebrating with food, singing and games (mostly outside of their homes). The food has a symbolic meaning wherein there are seven foods traditionally displayed and all start with the letter "s". Each food has its own special meaning.

Discussing Norooz is very difficult as it has many aspects to the celebration, both old and new. Norooz's history began with King Jamshid, thousands of years ago. There would be food, dancing, gifts and tokens for the children. While we know after the invasion of Arabs in Iran not only did we not lose this wonderful celebration but it is now bigger and better. We are proud to help preserve this tradition for every Iranian as this signifies our identity as a nation and the moment of joyful for all.

Kourosh Abadani & Alayar Dabestani



RAPITHWIN, A 58.33%

PART-TIME GAH !

Ervad Soli P. Dastur

(Part 3 OF 5)

The discussion of Gah represents the Contemplation session of the NAMC, AGM agenda, held at Zoroastrian Religious and Cultural Center at 1187 Burnhamthorpe Rd., Oakville, Ontario, Canada on May 24/25, 2008

"Rapithwin, lord or ratu of the noonday heat and of the seven months of summer, belongs evidently to the ancient Iranian world, when the year was divided by the festivals of the gahanbarst rather than by a calendar of months and days, with four equally divided seasons. The summer over which Rapithwin rules begins on the first day after the gahanbar *Hamaspathmaedaya*, and ends on the last day of that of *Ayathrima*, at the time of driving cattle home to their winter quarters. During this season, 'when Rapithwin is above the ground he gives warmth to the world, and 'ripens the fruit of the trees'. As *Ayathrima* ends, the demon of winter, invades the world, to rule it for the next five months. Rapithwin retreats below the earth where he keeps the waters warm so that the tree-roots do not die. During the day following *Hamaspathmaedaya*, winter retreats, until in his own gah, lasting from noonday till mid-afternoon Rapithwin again becomes master of the earth, to be welcomed and honored once more." [Late Prof. Mary Boyce, *Rapithwin, No Ruz, and the Feast of Sade*, pp.201-215, *Pratidanam, Indian, Iranian and Indo-European Studies Presented To Franciscus Bernardus Jacobus Kuiper, On His Sixtieth Birthday*, Edited by J. C. Heesterman, G. H. Schokker, V. I. Subramonium, 1968 Mouton, The Hague – Paris. (abbreviated to PMB)].

PART I – RAPITHWIN IN OUR RELIGIOUS SCRIPTURES.

"There is clear religious reason for the honor accorded to Rapithwin, who is more than merely lord of a recurrent season and a division of the day. He is the lord also of ideal time. In the *meenog* world of Ohrmazd's creation, before the inrush of Ahriman,

time stood still at noonday, that is, at Rapithwin and Ohrmazd himself, having put on 'a white garment ... the garb of priesthood' 'performed with the six Amahraspands the *meenog yasna* ceremony during Rapithwin Gah, and in performing the yasna created all creation'. And he infused the wisdom of all-knowledge into men, and bade them choose whether or not to be born into the *getig* world to contend against the *druj*. It was still Rapithwin Gah when they made their choice; and it was in Rapithwin Gah, Ruz Ohrmazd, Mah Farvardin, that Ahriman attacked." (Greater *Bundahishn* III 3, 23, Translation by Behramgore Tehmuras Anklesaria, From digital edition copyright © 2002 by Joseph H. Peterson.)



PART II – RAPITHWIN IN OUR DAILY RAPITHWIN GAH

avat vyâkhnemcha hañjamanemcha ýat asti ameshanâm speñtanâm.

bareshnvô avanghe ashnô kheematem, zañtumahe rathwô ýasnâicha vahmâicha, zañtumemcha ashavanem ashahe ratûm ýazamaide.

ashem vahishtem âtremcha ahurahe mazdao puthrem ýazamaide!

To invoke the Lord of Zantum (the province) and to sing (his) praises; the assembly and congregation of the Ameshaspands, which is made in the height of the sky we remember (them). We praise the lord of the righteousness, holy Zantuman.

We praise Ardibehst and the purifying Fire of Hormazd. (Joseph Peterson's: www.avesta.org and Kangaji English Khordeh Avesta)



A quick enumeration of all the deities invoked in this Gah in order of their invocation are as follows:

1) *Rapithwin* itself, 2) *The five Gathas*, Ahunavaiti, Ushtavaiti, Spenta Mainyu, Vohukhshathra, and Vahishtoish, 3) *Fradat fshu* (rest time for the cattle), 4) *Zantuma*, the lord of the town, 5) *Fshusho Manthra* (Yasna 58) the righteous prayer of Thought-provoking Prosperity, 6) *the truthfully spoken word*; the truthfully spoken sayings, victorious, Daevas smiting, 7) the waters and the Earth and the plants, 8) the spiritual *Ashavan Yazatas*, conferring good, 9) the *Ashavan Amesha Spentas*, the Bountiful Immortals, 10) *the Ashavan*, good, powerful, holy Fravashis, 11) the peak of *Asha Vahishta* who is of great Manthra, of great operation, of great fidelity, of great performance, of great effect in spreading the Mazdayasnian religion, 12) *the assembly and meeting of the Amesha Spentas* when they visit the heights of Heaven, to worship and praise the master Zantuma, the Lord of the town, 13) *the Ashavan Zantuma*, the master of Asha, 14) *Asha Vahishta, and Atar*, the son of Ahura Mazda!

Let us try to understand and speculatively explain why we invoke the above 14 deities in

Rapithwin Gah? The numbers below correspond to the respective invocation numbers above.

1) Rapithwin is self explanatory. 2) The five Gathas, may have been invoked because

Rapithwin closely follows the 5 holy days of Gathas during the *Hamaspathmaedaya gahanbar*. 3) The rest time for the cattle: I have spent whole month of May in Udwada last year, the hottest time of the year, and I can picture in front of our bungalow the town cattle resting in the mid-day sun. How true this is throughout the centuries! 4) *Zantuma*: This is the progression of the division of the society into five groups, starting with *Nmana* = home in Ushahin Gah, *Visya* = clan in Havan Gah, *Zantuma* = City in Rapithwin Gah, *Dakhyuma* = country in Uzirin Gah, and *fradat vispanm huzyaite* = for the prosperity of all the living creatures – whole world in the *Aiwisruthrem Gah*. 5) *Fshusho Manthra* is a beautiful prayer asking for protection from Amesha Spentas, Ahura Mazda, etc. Why it is invoked in this Gah is not easy to explain. 6) the truthfully spoken word: This may be due to the relationship of these words with Asha, the hamkara of Rapithwin. 7) The reason for this may be because Rapithwin is believed to protect the waters and plant roots (see Part I above) during winter and

help them grow in summer. 8) This is hard to rationalize. 9) This invocation may relate to the mention of Asha Vahishta in 11 below. 10) The invocation may relate to the fact that Rapithwin follows the Farvardegan, days for worship and welcoming of Fravashis. 11) *Ardibihisht* being a hamkara of Rapithwin, it is invoked here with all its epithets. 12) This is a very interesting and confounding invocation of an assembly of Amesha Spentas for the worship and praise of the Lord of the Town. Why him only and not all the other four Lords is not very clear. 13) Obvious invocation for the Lord of Town. 14) *Asha Vahishta, and Atar*, the Divine essence of Ahura Mazda! are the two coworkers of Rapithwin.

PART III – THE CEREMONIES OF RAPITHWIN ejawani

In an Atash-Bahram Rapithwin must be welcomed by the celebration of a yasna in his honour at noon on *Roz Ohrmazd, Mah Farvardin*, for until this has been done it is not proper for the priests to perform the *boi dadan* ceremony in this gah, which is now restored to its proper place with the other four. Further, during the first three days of the season of Rapithwin the Atash-Bahram priests devote his gah wholly to his honor, and it is not proper for them to perform any ceremonies or ritual duties then, other than *boi dadan* which are not consecrated for his sake.

The Jashan day of Rapithwin, celebrated by the other priests and by the laity, is *Ruz Ardibihisht*. The Yasna of Rapithwin is performed by a zotar and rathwi for that day at noon. In Navsari other priests with the greater khub frequently join them as ham-shariks in the dar-i mihr for the celebration of the Yasna of Rapithwin at noon. This again is recited with the *khshnuman of Ardibihisht*, for the sake of hame anjoman.

After the yasna, either the zotar or the rathwi recites the baj of Rapithwin, consecrated with 4 daruns (sacred breads), with the khshnuman of Ardibihisht. After the celebration of the yasna and baj every priest who can, comes to the hall of the dar-i mehr for the celebration of the jashan of Rapithwin. Here the jashan of Rapithwin has been celebrated annually for over 800 years. The zotar begins the ceremony by reciting the Pazand dibache of the Afrinagan of Rapithwin, with the khshnuman of Ardibihisht. When he reaches the final words *khesh pirojgar baad*, all then recite together the Avestan



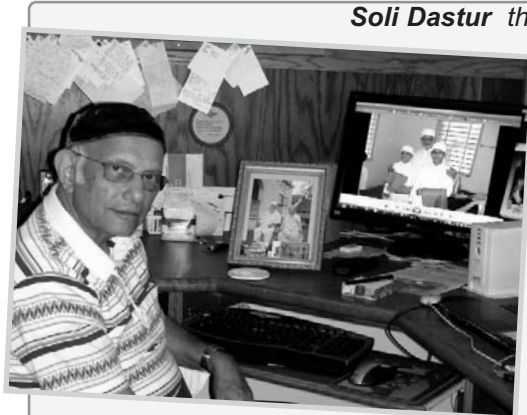
Afrinagan-i Rapithwin. Then follows the *Afrinagan-i Dahmān* and that of *Srosh*.

The whole company then rises to its feet except the zotar, who begins the recital of the *Pazand Afrin-i Rapithwin*, with its moving commemoration starting from Vishtaspa down to the Sasanian Kavad.. With each name come the words *hamazor. bad.* and as the zotar recites, the rathwi performs the ceremony of hamazor, that is, he exchanges with each priest on the carpet this gravely beautiful ritual salutation. (PMB)

The above three parts gives a glimpse of the importance given by our learned forefathers to Rapithwin

CONCLUDING REMARKS

1. Rapithwin Gah is the smallest (only 3 hours out of 24) and a part time (7 out of 12 months only) Gah; however, it has been given a very prominent place in our religion starting from the very creation of the world to its celebration on *Ardibehesht Roj* and *Farvardin Mah*.
2. It has a unique association with *Ardibihisht Amesha Spenta* and *Adar Yazad*, all three representing heat, warmth, truth, etc.
3. It has a unique ritual for its celebration including a Yasna, Baj and a Jashan.



Soli Dastur the last of 11 children was born in a small village, Tarapur, India, to a priestly family from Udwada, He completed his priestly studies and took his S.S.C. examination from the M F Cama Athornan Institute boarding school, Soli completed all the requirements for becoming Navar and Martab, and was initiated as a priest in the Holy Iranshah Atash Behram in Udwada. He also passed the final examination of Samel required by all initiated priests from Udwada to be able to perform all inner and outer liturgies.

Soli is fully retired and lives with his wife of 42 years, Jo Ann, in University Park, Florida. He has been performing religious ceremonies all over Florida and North America when requested. He is an avid tennis player and dabbles with the computer in his free time, basically to learn more about our beautiful religion.

The 1st Zoroastrian Mobeds and Scholars International Congress (ZMSIC) to be held in Tehran 2011

Tehran Zoroastrian Mobeds Council will hold the 1st Zoroastrian Mobeds and Scholars International Congress (ZMSIC) in Tehran during last week of April 2011.

The congress would be divided into two main sections: one for the Mobeds and the other for Scholars. In addition to Tehran, Yazd, Kerman, and Shiraz would also host some events of the congress.

Mobed Pedram Sorosuhpour is the coordinator and *Dr. Mobed Ardeshir Khosrhdian* the secretary. *Mobed Firouzgary* will be in-charge of the Mobeds section and *Dr. Farzaneh Goshatasbpour* for the Scholars section. *Mobed Mehrab Vahidi* heads Public Relations and *Mobed Sohrab Hengami* is the Treasurer.

<http://www.berasad.com/fa/content/view/1600/>

<http://www.amordad6485.blogfa.com/post-1735.asp>



NAMC Lecture Series

THE DIVINE MESSAGE: JOURNEY THROUGH ZOROASTRIAN SCRIPTURES

Report by Ervad Soli Dastur



The North American Mobed Council (NAMC) held a very successful seminar in Houston on Saturday April 11, 2009. *The Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH)*, under the dynamic leadership of Aban Rustomji, hosted the seminar at their beautiful *Zoroastrian Heritage and Cultural Centre (ZHCC)* in Houston.

The lecture series entitled, "*The Divine Message: Journey*

through Zoroastrian Scriptures" had four speakers three of them were NAMC members; *Ervad Brigadier Behram Panthaki* from Washington DC, *Ervad Jehan Bagli* from Toronto, *Ervad Soli Dastur* from Florida and the fourth speaker was Houston's own *Sarosh Manekshaw*. (see photo above with Aban Rustomji) Also attending the seminar were NAMC's *President Ervad Kobad Zarolia*, *Vice President Ervad Noshir Mirza*, and *Secretary Ervad Nozer Kotwal*. Eighty participants included ZAH members and members of the greater Houston community and *Firdosh Mehta* from Dallas thoroughly enjoyed the lectures.



The day's proceedings commenced with a benediction delivered by five young Ervads from ZAH. (see photo left)

Followed by a brief introduction of NAMC its objectives and activities, and its future projects, were presented by *Ervad Noshir Mirza*, Vice President, NAMC. He also thanked *Aban Rustomji* and *Percy Master* for helping NAMC

to video tape the seminar and to arrange with *Yazdi Tantra* in Mumbai to upload this seminar on Internet. *Ervad Mirza* informed all that the same seminar is going to be given in Chicago at the request of ZAC on May 16, 2009, and also in Fall 2009 in Toronto.



The first speaker, *Ervad Brig. Behram Panthaki*'s topic was the *Khordeh Avesta*. Panthaki gave a brief



review of all our Zoroastrian scriptures and how *Khordeh Avesta* was compiled by *Dasturaan Dastoor Adarbad Marespand* during the reign of Emperor Shapur II (309-379 CE). Currently, *Khordeh Avesta* has become an everyday Prayer Book for all Zoroastrians. He explained the meaning of the name "*Khordeh Avesta*", its contents and the several different versions that are available with special focus. *Ervad Kawasji Edulji Kanga's Khordeh Avesta Ba Maeni*, a scholarly work giving word by word translation in Gujarati, which later on was also translated word by word in English.

Next was *Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli* whose topic was the "*Theory and Practice of the Central Yasna Ceremony*". With several illustrations and photographs, he explained the ceremony, the prayers, the rituals and stressed the importance of "Purity" in all rituals. He explained the *Homa Ritual*, the central part of the Yasna ceremony with its significance and meaning. He gave a brief overview of all 72 Has of the Yasna.



The third speaker, *Ervad Soli P. Dastur* presentation was "*Visperad - All RATUS - Spiritual Lords*". *Visperad* is one of our high liturgy and is especially performed during our six Gahambars, the seasonal festivals. It is never recited alone but its 23 Kardehs are always recited interwoven with the 72 Has of Yasna. It is also recited whenever *Vendidad* is recited. He explained various Ratus - Spiritual Lords of the Ahura Mazda's creation mentioned in *Visperad*.

.Photo above Vahishta Kaikobad with the young children Ervad Bagli in background

The fourth speaker *Mr. Sarosh Manekshaw*. was from Houston. He spoke on the *Vendidad*". He briefly explained its contents, especially in terms of the purity laws. He also highlighted the fact that it is probably the only Avesta Nask (volume) out of a total of 21 that may have been saved and salvaged in its entirety from all our scriptures which were destroyed first by Alexander and then by the Arabs. He pointed out the relationship between the Gathas and *Vendidad* - Gathas lay down the framework of Zarathushtra's message - Spiritual and Physical Purity; The *Vendidad* spells out the details of "How to" maintain Physical Purity.

All the four topics were presented very effectively with PowerPoint illustrations, pictures and charts. They were followed by a lively Question-Answer sessions. It was delightful to see the younger generation in the audience participating enthusiastically in the whole seminar.

Written evaluations of the program and comments from the attendees suggest that the lecture series made a great impact. People walked away with an increased awareness of our scriptures and rituals. And after the day was over the audience asked for more time from the speakers who graciously agreed to stay for another hour to address the questions.



Other highlights of the weekend was a tour of the *Treasures of Afghanistan* at the *Museum of Fine Arts* which was an exclusive tour led by docent *Vehishta Kaikobad*. On Sunday the speakers also participated in the Sunday School Classes and the annual ZAH carnival before leaving for Houston the next day.

The NAMC wishes to convey its sincere thanks to the ZAH for hosting this lecture series and for looking after all "out-of-towners" who were accommodated at several host families.



On Sunday the visiting Mobeds attended Sunday School for the different age groups at the Houston Cultural and Heritage Centre.

Arnavaz Sethna with the middle school students (photo on top)

President of NAMC Kobad Zarolia with the adult class (photo middle)



The group at the Museum

From left Hoshang and Arnavaz Sethna, Firdosh Mehta, Jo Ann Dastur (photo left)



The visiting mobeds and their families together with Zarathushtis from Houston went to the Museum of Fine Arts of Houston (MFAH) to see the exhibit "Afghanistan: the hidden treasures" (Photo left)

Photo credits Ervad Soli and Jo Ann Dastur

**8th RESIDENTIAL REFRESHER PROGRAMME FOR OSTAS & ERVADS
1st RESIDENTIAL WORKSHOP FOR BEHDIN PASBANS
HELD AT THE M. F. CAMA ATHORNAN INSTITUTE, ANDHERI**

Ervad Soli P Dastur

The Ex-student Association of MFCama Institute, (MFCAl) Andheri, Mumbai, has been running an annual Refresher Course in May for training Ervads and Ostas and the 8th Annual course was completed with participation of 20+ from ages 16 through 83, yes 83!

This year, for the first time, with the complete approval of MFCAl Trustees, there were 6 Behdin attendees. In his wisdom, and foresight, founder *Seth Meherwanji Mancherji Cama*, had placed a provision in the original document that if there are no Mobed boys available for the Institute, Behdin boys can be registered as well. The Behdin of age 83 came from a small town, sponsored by its Anjuman, to take this course since they have no Mobeds in their vicinity

But the Vada Dastoorjis in Mumbai did not approve the name Mobedyar! So, a new name was invented for them - Behdin Pasban! Please take note as to how we should address them in India

ZARATHUSHTI GENEALOGICAL ARCHIVES

A worldwide Genealogical Archive for the Zarathushti community has been under construction for close to fifteen years. This initiative of the *Zoroastrian Women's International Network (ZWIn)*, when completed as envisioned, shall serve as a resource for future generations who may wish to delve into their ancestral roots.

Families or individuals with archival records to share are requested to contact
Rubina Patel -- RubinaJP@aol.com, or Phone: 301 754 2762



Kusti Weaving

By Friyana Sidhwa

Before we discuss Kusti weaving let us discuss what a Kusti or Kushti is. As I understand, a Kusti is a part of our ritual dress along with the Sudreh. My dad mentioned that the Kusti is made of 72 fine woollen threads which represent the 72 chapters of the Yasna.

It is a very important and religious element in our religion. I was really amazed when I heard that it takes 25 hours to prepare ONE Kusti. I asked my grand-mom and she said sometimes it takes a bit more if the Kusti is very thin (for Navjotes or Weddings). My Dad's grand-mom used to make Kustis but I had never seen one being made and the video was very interesting.

The Kusti makers as we saw in the video are decreasing in number around the world because of the lack of time and money being the main reasons. Besides that people who weave these Kustis should have a steady mind with a lot of patience as this work requires a lot of skill and artistry.

This is something really sad and the skill must be revived as this is a very important part of our religion and gives livelihood and monetary help to our fellow Zarathushtis from villages who are quite poor and struggle to live.

We can help in many ways for example:

- Have an event to raise funds and by creating awareness about these Kusti weavers
- Create a group who can help and donate money from the U.S to that group to give away these donations at places in India.

Friyana Kayomarz Sidhwa, 11 years, is a sixth grade student at the Macario Garcia Middle School, Sugar Land, TX. She attends regularly Houston Sunday School Middle Group Religious class taught by Arnavaz Sethna and Pearlina Collector. She enjoys Bollywood Dancing, Swimming and Fashion Designing



Due to various reasons, as there is a shortage of these Kusti weavers, we must think about things that can revive this kind of art and skill by either:

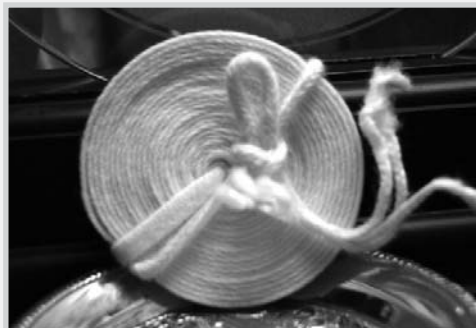
- Paying them a good amount and attracting them to the profession
- Get help from other people who have never been in this trade before by training them and paying them well
- Create co-operative societies which would help these people sell at a better price
- Teach them how to make machine woven Kustis as well as donate some machines if they don't have time

In conclusion, I would like to thank you Arnavaz Aunt, very much for doing this for us and giving us the opportunity as this video was very interesting and informative as I had never seen something like this before and I will tell my parents and my brother to watch it as well.

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED?

How a Kusti is made? What is it made from? Why is it made of 72 threads?

Watch this DVD and follow step by step the complete process of making a kusti starting with spinning yarn from lamb's wool with "chantri" to the finished kusti



Directed by Cyrus Dastoor of Farohar Films

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**"Diamonds Are Forever" An evening of elegance**

Roshan Davar

OZCF held its 6th Annual Black Tie Gala fundraiser on May 23, 2009 at the Burlington Convention Centre, Burlington which offered a perfect and stylish ambience for this glamorous event. It was a smashing success with 420 guests, organised and chaired once again by our Gala expert volunteer-Kermin Byramjee along with a band of over 40 volunteers. Eight months of dedication resulted in a successful evening of glamour, elegance complete with minute details and precision. Gentlemen in their black tie tuxedo looked very debonair accompanied by elegantly dressed ladies in their gowns and gowns. The theme for this year's Gala was James Bond-007 movies and all 40 tables were named after Bond movies.(photo below gala organizing committee, with chair Kermin Byramjee, in middle).

The evening commenced at 6 p.m. with silent auction bidding, on 108 beautiful and well presented items donated by individuals and corporate sponsors. Complimentary photo studio was available and portraits were taken by volunteer youth-Khush Bhandari, who has completed first year in photojournalism at Loyalist College. Thanks to Sam Gazdar, our dedicated photographer, who in every OZCF event selflessly volunteers his time, donates photographs and is committed to the cause.

Before dinner, a glass of Champagne and Diamond raffle was offered for \$25 which entitled the win of three prizes: 1st prize: 1.26 carat diamond ring set in white 14K gold valued at \$11,200; 2nd prize: diamond earrings set in white 14K gold valued at \$1,025, 3rd prize: diamond necklace set in white 14K gold valued at \$890. (draws during dinner)

The hall looked very elegant with tables in black and silver theme, set with centrepieces of tall vases with sparkly silver branches. The Masters of Ceremony were Rahnuma Panthaky – a familiar face on the Film/TV and Theatre circuit and Cyrus Khory – an enthusiastic member involved in Ontario Zoroastrian community's social and cultural scene.

Canadian National Anthem and a short Grace prayer, were sung before a delicious gourmet dinner was served. During dinner, 21 year old Soprano Meher Pavri-Miss India Canada-2007 sang 2 beautiful songs from Bond movies. She is currently obtaining a music (vocal performance) degree at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario.

The President-Rumi Jasavala invited Marzi Byramjee to recognize Behram & Rena Baxter who have supported local and international charities and causes. They were presented with a framed rendering of the completed congregational hall as a token of appreciation. The Baxters had gracefully initiated the fundraising in August 2007, followed by the matching generous donations from the OZCF members, to transform a 3 port garage building into a usable congregational hall which is slated for grand opening with a 'jashan' on July 18, 2009. (photo left, Marzi Byramjee, President Jasavala, Terence Young, MP Oakville, Behram and Rena Baxter.)

Excitement continued with diamond raffle draws, heads or tails game and a live auction of 17 items, presented by a professional Auctioneer-Don Stewart. It created a high-octane auction which generated a lot of excitement, as guests bid for their favourite items, all generously donated by private and corporate sponsors. The evening continued to thrive with everyone dancing to the Live Band of 'Naked Flame' till past midnight, while enjoying late night dessert of delectable pastries, fresh fruits, and tea/coffee.

An electronic display of business sponsors ran throughout the evening. The Gala program book contained congratulatory letters from dignitaries who were not able to attend : Dalton McGuinty - Premier of Ontario , Rob Burton – Mayor of Oakville. Gary Carr – Regional Chair of Halton Region,

Terence Young – MP of Oakville (also attended the Gala)
Kevin Flynn – MPP of Oakville

The success of this year's spectacular Black Tie Gala evening was due to the outstanding work of an energised and dedicated group of volunteers and supporters including the youth members of our community who remain totally committed to the vision and the goals of OZCF. Due to the generosity of all the supporters, this year's Gala raised a total of \$125,500.00, which will be directed towards the building project "for what will become a vibrant center for the preservation of our Zarathushti culture". We are proud to be part of this dream as it becomes a reality

Visit www.ozcf.com for more information,

Roshan Davar is an active volunteer with OZCF, ZSO and other community organizations of Ontario.

She writes for Parsiana, Desi News and Jame Jamshed, Roshan and her husband love to dance, have learnt all forms of dancing and their aim is to keep fit and active in their retired years. They are known as "the dancing couple" of Ontario.



YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....

The 'Black & Gold' Zarathushti Youth Night in Toronto

Simply put, the "Black and Gold" Zarathushti Youth Night organized by the Youth Committee of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) was a huge success! The event was held at the Mehraban Guiv Darbe Mehr on Saturday, January 17th 2009, and despite the snow storm on the evening of the event; many Zarathushti youth from as far east as Ajax and as far west as London, approximately a hundred kilometers away showed up for this event. This 19+ event was a great chance for Zarathushti youth to meet and mingle at a personal yet comfortable level and gave one the opportunity to renew acquaintances with old friends and make new ones.

The 'Black and Gold' youth night was a Zoroastrian Youth Committee initiative. However, the success of the evening would not have been possible without the help of the many volunteers involved in the planning, preparation and execution of this event. These members include but are not limited to *Anita Khory, Kevin Mancherjee, Dinshaw Bharucha, Zenia Tarapore, Farhad Bulsara, Parzan Marolia, Burzin Tampal, and Aashkon Irani.*

The event was free of cost for the 65 to 70 youth who attended. There was no entrance fee and the many tasty snacks and refreshments were also complimentary. There was a cash bar in keeping with the theme of a cocktail night, which was responsibly managed, served beverages for a nominal fee. The Zarathushti Youth were also very fortunate to get an amazing DJ who took many requests

community involvement and the need to continue to maintain a vigorous Zarathushti Identity in North America. The Youth Committee members work together and organize events for all youth, thereby stimulating community involvement and participation.

Several members on the Youth Committee overlap with the *1st Zoroastrian Scouts group, the 100th Toronto Rovers Group*, whose members range in age from 18 to 26 yrs. This group, governed by Scouts Canada, is another vehicle for supporting youth and community involvement. The motto of 'Service' is a concept which governs the planning of most of the events organized by the Rovers. They strive to give back to the community at every opportunity; by helping with the Annual Valentines dance, assisting with the cleaning of the Darbe Mehr for Mukta prayers and by offering service to groups and communities both within and outside our Zarathushti community. Since many members on the Zoroastrian Youth Committee are also registered Rovers, the planning, coordination and synchronization of events makes things easier. The success that this "Black and Gold" event engendered, has inspired and encouraged the youth to organize more events to further strengthen the ties within our community. The Youth Committee has started planning and organizing its next event and hopes to encourage all the youth to participate, by creating friendships and building a sense of community and purpose as well as memories that will last forever.

Zoroastrian Youth Committee Member Cumbysis Tampal



throughout the night and kept everyone happy and dancing right up till the end.

The Youth Committee consists of : *Karina Tarapore (Co-chair), Zaheer Bulsara (Co-chair), Cumbysis Tampal, Rukshana Bharucha, Manichey Tampal, Nousheen Bastani and Shahvir Irani.* The committee is provided with guidance by the ZSO Executive Liason Mr. Daraius Bharucha who has dedicated countless hours to educating the younger youth through the Sunday religious studies program and the older youth through seminars and lectures about the Zarathushti faith, the importance of

Cumbysis Tampal is an active member of many Zoroastrian groups and organizations within Ontario. He has been a member of the *1st Zoroastrian scouts group* for over 18 years and a graduate from the Sunday religious classes program offered at the Darbe Mehr. Cumbysis has recently graduated with a *B.Eng, Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering (Honours)*, from the University of Ontario.



Cumbysis is now an assistant teacher with the religious classes and a member of the Zoroastrian Youth Committee and continues to learn more about Zoroastrianism and strives to unite the community through the youth by organizing many interactive events.

YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....

SHAHNAMEH STORIES WORD SEARCH.

UNSCRAMBLE SHAHNAMEH CHARACTERS IN

LIST A

AND MATCH THEM TO THEIR DESCRIPTION IN

LIST B.

LIST A.

- A. DORAFION
- B. ELASM
- C. LAZ
- D. HAKOZ
- E. DRAMAYOG
- F. ERONIMCH
- G. TNABI
- H. GURMISH
- I. HAMJESD
- J. YARUPMEH
- K. RUT
- L. NESHGUH
- M. ASAM
- N. KANARAF
- O. RAJI.

LIST B.

- 1. The first king, who could talk to animals.
- 2. The king who discovered fire , celebrated every year as Jashan-e –Sadeh.
- 3. The king who introduced the kushti ritual.
- 4. The evil King who overthrew Jamshed.
- 5. Faridoon's mother.
- 6. The king who overcame Zohak and chained him to Mount Demavand.
- 7. Faridoon's father who was killed by Zohak.
- 8. The cow who nursed Faridoon as a baby.
- 9. Faridoon's favorite son.
- 10. Faridoon's evil son who was the oldest.
- 11. Faridoon's other evil son.
- 12. Grandson of Faridoon who killed to avenge his father's death.
- 13. The king who left his son to die on a mountain top because he had white hair.
- 14. The white haired son of Saam.
- 15. The griffin that reared Zal when he was abandoned on the mountain.

By Sarosh Irani (age 10)
Detroit Michigan

ANSWER KEY.

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| 8.J. PURMAYEH | 1.E. GAYOMARD |
| 9.O. IRAJ | 2.L. HUSHENG |
| 10.B. SELAM | 3.I. JAMSHED |
| 11.K. TUR | 4.D. ZOHAK |
| 12.F. MINOCHER | 5.N. FARANAK |
| 13.M. SAAM | 6.A. FARIDON |
| 14.C. ZAL | 7.G. ABTIN |
| 15.H. SIMURGH. | |

FEZANA SPORTS SCHOLARSHIP



Shireen Irani (Alberta, Canada) has been awarded the sports scholarship of \$1000. Shireen attends Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York, where she is a top collegiate competitor in both Hockey and Soccer. She has many accolades in both sports at a National level.

FEZANA created an Excellence in Sports Scholarship (EXISS) Fund in 2006. The objectives of the scholarship is to provide financial support to young Zarathushtis, between the ages of 10-30 who are performing exceptionally and at highly recognized levels in all areas of sports activity. The purpose of

the scholarship is to enable the recipient s to get world class training or study with experts in their field and fine tune and enhance their talent and capability For more information contact Zenobia Damania, FEZANA office manager admin@fezana.org. Applications for 2009-2010 are being accepted.



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Personal Profiles

JAL SOLI SHROFF: A community activist and a business giant from Hong Kong



By Anahita Sidhwa

The enterprising spirit of Zarthushtis has seen many interesting business ventures across the globe over the past century. Adventurous Parsis had set up trading posts in Singapore, China, Macau and Hong Kong in the 1800's and the

descendents of these pioneers are a thriving part of our community today. In the past few years the Hong Kong Zarathushtis have become well known for their generous charities and it was a privilege to recently meet Jal Soli Shroff who is the *President of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macao*.

On a thoughtful but nostalgic note, Jal recounted his early years, and his humble beginnings. He was born in Shanghai in 1937, but the Second World War forced his family to seek refuge in Hong Kong and some members of his family even endured some time in a concentration camp under the Japanese. Although they returned to Shanghai after the war, they had to make a permanent move to Hong Kong in 1949 when the Chinese Communists took over. However Soli Shroff continued the family business, S. Framjee & Co dealing with textiles. Jal obtained a degree in business from the University of London, but he confided that his achievements on the sporting field outweighed academics! On returning to Hong Kong he worked in the family business but also captained the Hong Kong cricket team for seven years. In 1967 when the Kowloon Cricket Club faced the Cricket Club of India led by Polly Umrigar, both teams were led by Parsi captains!

Jal remembers his life in 1960s as being simple, easy going and conventional. He worked in the family business, where office work was interspersed with lunch breaks and evenings were spent playing cricket or tennis. All this changed in 1984, when Jal's wife Pervin experimenting with the memory function of an IBM electric typewriter answered a letter from a young American. This man who lived in Dallas had received 86 responses to his inquiry to set up business in Hong Kong, but he chose to walk into the Shroff office dressed like a tourist. Declaring honestly that he did not know what he wanted to do and how he was going to do it, he was open to any ideas. With Pervin's encouragement Jal gave this inexperienced business man some attention and that was how a business empire called *Fossil* began.

Fossil was launched in Dallas in 1984 with two employees, specializing in affordable watches that were good quality but had unusual and trendy designs. In 1987 Jal and Pervin established *Fossil East* with an investment of \$ 2000. By 1993, *Fossil Dallas* was generating sales of \$ 100 million, and the two companies merged and went public on the NASDAQ Exchange as *Fossil Inc*. Today Jal serves as a Director for Fossil Inc.

While it started as a watch brand, (they make over 20 million watches annually), Fossil has now grown to be much more. Recognizing the manufacturing capabilities in Asia, it has diversified into producing accessory items like handbags, belts, jewelry, sunglasses and men's shoes. Its products are sold in over 330 company-owned stores and through independent retailers in over 100 countries around the world. In addition, it has also acquired or licensed many other brand names like Adidas, Burberry, Armani, Diesel, DKNY, D&G, Relic and Zodiac.

What is the recipe for Fossil's success? While there is no simple answer, Jal credits that correct elements have to blend together at the right time. Some may call it luck, but hard work, honesty, business integrity, ensuring quality products and respect for the different cultures of all their 6,000 employees, have all contributed to Fossil's staying power in a highly competitive field.

Living in Hong Kong amongst the small Zarathushti community, Jal's life has been inextricably linked to community matters. The official Zarathushti presence in South China dates from 1822 with the purchase of a cemetery plot in Macau. In 1845 another cemetery plot



Personal Profiles



was purchased in Hong Kong. In 1929 a small two-storey building which housed a prayer room and living quarters for a priest was completed on Leighton Hill Road. A third storey was added later for get-togethers. Interestingly, the community had the tradition to always employ a full-time priest, generally from India. He was accompanied with a cook, who made sure that the community of less than 200 was well-fed during weekend get-togethers.(photo page 137)

In the late 1980's the community struggled to decide whether their building would remain the dwarf among the jungle of high rises springing up all around them. In 1991 under the leadership of Jal Shroff, the community took the bold step to dismantle the old building and replace it with a multistorey structure that would serve Hong Kong's commercial needs and also generate income for the

community. The 22-storey glass and steel skyscraper named "*Zoroastrian Building*" whose construction was completed in two years opened on March 21 1993.(photo right) With a lobby graced by a fravahar and afargan, the community uses four floors, and the remaining areas are rented for offices. The bank loan has been paid off, and it is probably the most valuable piece of real estate owned by Zarathushtis world-wide. One has to appreciate the far-sighted wisdom of the Hong Kong Zarthushtis and their trustees for taking the bold step to build this edifice at a time when the Tiananmen Square tragedy had occurred only a few years ago and the future held uncertainty for Hong Kong which was due to revert to Chinese rule in 1997.

Jal Shroff has been the President of the Zoroastrian Charity Trust Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macau for more than twenty years. His steady leadership has provided the Hong Kong community with the roots and guidance to move into the 21st century. The business acumen and wisdom of our forefathers seems to be alive and well in the current generation of Hong Kong Zarthushtis! It is also interesting to note that the Founders of the original trust deed, well-aware of their responsibility, had specified that funds should be available for use by anyone needing assistance, without regard to caste, creed or religion.

In reflecting on his life, Jal credits his wife Pervin for his many successes. With their children and grand children, and their many volunteer activities Jal has little time to play cricket these days! The future of the Zarathushti community may be in the diaspora, and there is always something valuable that we can learn from each other. Towards that end, eight guests from Iran were invited to Hong Kong in March 2009. Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary performed a jashan and the community celebrated Naurooz with an elaborate table and recitations of the Shahnameh. (see page 51)

For all of us in Dallas, meeting Jal Shroff was a pleasure. Gracious, modest and humble, he accepted the WZCC Award for Outstanding Zarathushti Professional with humility and spoke to us with candor and humor. The Zarathushti values of honesty and simplicity are important aspects of his life and he lives the creed of quietly doing good deeds to spread harmony and good will.

Anahita Sidhwa is an active member of the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas, and member of several committees of FEZANA

Personal Profiles

ZAVARE TENGRA- thrives on the unconventional as he revels in going “off the beaten track”

BY TEENAZ JAVAT



*He loves the lime light but also loves being left alone.
He seeks attention, but then retreats into his shell.
He makes you laugh but at times becomes pensive.*

To find out what makes this enigmatic personality tick, I go looking for him in a place where he is most comfortable, the Fly nightclub, home of *Besharam*. Zavare Tengra defines his role at Besharam as the “hostess with the mostest.”

Tucked away in the heart of Toronto, Besharam, which has become the largest Bollywood party in all of North America, is where the city’s hippest south Asians converge to party the first Friday of every month. People of all hues are welcome.

I quickly realised that trying to conduct an interview with Desi Girl blaring from the 1,000 watt speakers was not going to be easy. So we move into a quiet alcove privy only to the organizers.

I start my informal chat with Zavare, who by what I have so far witnessed, quite simply is the toast of the community.

Here are excerpts from the interview:

Teenaz Javat (TJ): Can you tell me something about yourself before you came to Canada?

Zavare Tengra (ZT) I was very active in the Pakistani arts and culture scene, back in the 1990s. My directional debut was the musical *Best of Broadway* in 1991 followed by *Doongajee House*, a full length play in 1992. Back then there were a lot more Parsis in Karachi than there are now, so our nataks were attended in large numbers. In fact, to accommodate everyone we used to have re-runs over two or three days.

However, I must tell you at the outset that Parsis in Karachi did not have any Adi Marzban-like iconic figure who presented nataks at regular intervals. So when we put up *Doongajee House* obviously the Parsis wanted more.

Since then, I have acted in and directed numerous comedies such as *Princess Booblita comes to Town*, *Air Farohar*-great people to cry with and *Maneck- ni- Masi*, while also producing several song and dance revues like the *Lighthouse (Lunda bazaar) Collection*.

In addition to doing nataks, I have also choreographed and directed fashion shows for the *Distinguished Secretaries Society of Pakistan* more commonly known as the DSSP and the *House of Calzoom*.

TJ: What happened to all this when you moved to Canada?

ZT: Since moving to Canada in 1996, I had to settle down a bit, and got a day job as a sexual health counsellor. I began working with the *Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP)* very early on, and started a support group for gay/bisexual men through ASAAP. Since then I have been involved with the South Asian queer community. I spearheaded *Dosti*, a support group for gay and bisexual desi men which later morphed into a website by the name www.dosti.ca.

TJ: What about your acting/directing skills. Have you been able to use them in Canada?

ZT: Yes, very much so but not on such a large scale and in a different medium. I play the role of Phul the Hijra for *Meri Kahani: My Story*. *Merikahani* is an innovative play addressing the challenges faced by south Asian survivors of abuse in a North American context. It is normally done by requests from agencies in Toronto.

Also at ASAAP we play an important role in normalizing sex, sexuality and HIV in the mainstream south Asian communities. This led me to be part of their media campaigns and not just in coming up with concepts as a team, but also being in their commercials. We could not afford models so I offered my services on a volunteer basis. Their media campaign was all over the city of Toronto from magazines to subway hoardings aboard the TTC.

Personal Profiles

TJ Does your cultural heritage help or hinder you or does it not matter at all?

ZT: ASAAP as well as Besharam are directly linked to my cultural heritage. For example Besharam has introduced many drag queens and talented south Asian artists to the mainstream Desi community. It has offered up a performance venue for those who were marginalized. In short I think what defines me in Canada is my cultural heritage. Of course, I do work for a mainstream agency as a sexual health counsellor. But also what got me that job was my experience in an ethno specific agency.

TJ: Has Canada defined you in any way?

ZT: I don't know if Canada has defined me in anyway. I think I consider myself more Torontonion than Canadian. My Identity is more defined by the city I live in. My cultural heritage has played a very important role in my life in Canada. A lot of what I've done or do, is directly related to my culture. Given that race and culture are being celebrated in Canada, my experience is just from living in Toronto. I would not know what it would be like in other cities or towns.

TJ: How do you define yourself?

ZT: Both sides of my family have their roots in Karachi, Pakistan for generations. My parents lived in Sri Lanka for a while, but I essentially grew up in Karachi. I find identity politics a strange thing. Growing up in Pakistan your identity, at least mine is more Parsi than Pakistani, and I am more a Karachite-Parsi than anything else.

You then come to Canada and you are a "South-Asian of Pakistani origin," which oddly enough has never been your true identity. As far as I am concerned Karachite-Parsi would be more apt....It's almost like trying to explain to people what a Parsi is, very few people understand till you tell them you are a Zoroastrian...While all along I have never identified as a Zoroastrian, always as a Parsi.

My identity is my culture, food, language, sensibility, never my religion. For example, I have more in common with a Muslim from India than I do with a Zarathushti from Iran. Really, they could be Ukrainians for all I care.

TJ: Tell me something I don't know about yourself?

ZT: I am basically a loner and most content and happy being by myself.

Words of

*Mahatam
Gandhi*



**"HAPPINESS IS WHEN,
WHAT YOU THINK, WHAT
YOU SAY AND WHAT YOU
DO ARE
IN HARMONY"**

**"IN PRAYER IT IS BETTER TO HAVE A
HEART WITHOUT WORDS THEN
WORDS WITHOUT A HEART"**

**"THERE IS SUFFICIENCY IN THIS
WORLD FOR MAN'S NEED
BUT NOT FOR MAN'S GREED"**

20. Zarathushtra

in the Court of King Vishtaspa

Zarathushtra was enlightened and he wanted to share the word of the Wise Lord Ahuramazda with all the people of the world. He traveled far and wide preaching his message of *"Good thoughts. Good words. Good deeds."*

In a dream, God told him to go to the Court of King Vishtaspa. "If the King follows you, the people will." Ahuramazda told Zarathushtra. So Zarathushtra found an appointment in the Court of King Vishtaspa. But the King's wicked courtiers were afraid of him and conspired to get rid of him. Soon, their conspiracies worked and Zarathushtra was imprisoned by the King, accused of doing things he had never even thought of!

But Zarathushtra did not despair. He prayed to Ahuramazda for help and guidance every day.

Then, one day the King's great black horse, Asp-i-Siyah, fell ill. His legs were drawn up to his belly and he was in a lot of pain. The King was so worried about his favorite horse that could not eat or drink. He summoned all of his wise men, but none of them could figure out how to help the horse.

When Zarathushtra heard of the King's troubles, he told his prison guard to tell the King that he could help the horse.

The King called Zarathushtra into the Great Hall of his palace. The horse was brought in on a large wooden platform. Everyone gathered around to see what Zarathushtra would do.

King Vishtaspa said, *"O Zarathushtra, cure my horse and prove the greatness of your God."*

"Look at your horse, my King! His legs are withdrawn and embedded in his stomach. I cannot do much to save him. I can only guide you, but you are the one who must save him." Zarathushtra told the King.

"I have tried everything." Vishtaspa cried. *"Nothing has worked. Tell me what to do. I will do anything"*

Smiling, Zarathushtra said, *"Look again at your horse, great King. He is not ill. His illness is in your*

SUNDAY STORIES FROM THE Shahnameh

mind. Open your mind. Let in good thoughts. Open your mind to the enlightenment I bring. Look at me! Have faith in me! Believe I am truly the Messenger of the One Supreme God!"

Then in a penitent voice, King Vishtaspa said, *"Yes, I was wrong to doubt you. I do believe you are the Lord Ahuramazda's messenger."* There was a clatter of a hoof on the wooden platform. The crowd was amazed.

"Now call the noble Prince Asfandiyar and the gracious Queen Kitayun"

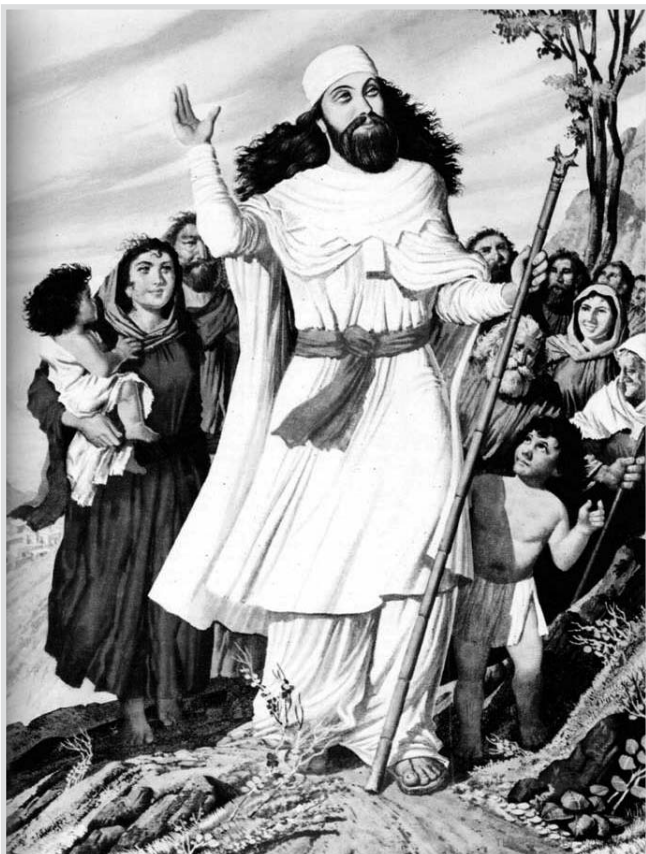
The Prince and the Queen came before Zarathushtra. He looked affectionately at the young Prince. *"Brave, gallant Prince, do you believe in the Lord and will you promise to use your strength for him and spread his religion?"* Asfandiyar replied, *"I do and most certainly will."* Just as he said it, another leg of the horse was freed.

Then Zarathushtra turned to the Queen who had always believed in him. *"Gracious Queen, blessed with a wise husband and a brave son, do you believe in our Lord Ahuramazda?"* he asked. *"I have always believed in your greatness and will willingly accept your God"* the Queen replied. Another leg found freedom on the wooden platform.

The Zarathushtra said to the King, *"Call the keeper of my apartment and ask him of the conspiracy against me."* The King did as he was asked. The keeper of Zarathushtra's apartment confessed to the whole conspiracy against Zarathushtra. The King turned to the conspirators and thundered, *"You are banished from my land, and if I set eyes on you ever again, you will lose your heads!"*

Just as the King uttered his words, shouts were heard through the Great Hall. "Look! Look, your Majesty!" When the King turned, he saw his horse had freed yet another leg. Asp-i-Siyah was standing strong. He looked as well as ever.

The King apologized for doubting Zarathushtra and accepted his religion. The royal family became Zarathushtis.



Shazneen Gandhi is a lawyer/ stay at home mom/ storyteller/ journalist and an avid chronicler of the escapades of her daughter, Shayaan, and the lessons she has learned from them.



She writes about issues related to early childhood on www.examiner.com and is currently working on her first original children's story. She welcomes your comments about Sunday Stories at rabadis@gmail.com.


To convince Vishtaspa beyond any doubt, Ahuramazda made His two Archangels Behman and Ardibehesht descend into the palace of Vishtaspa with the Holy Fire, Meher, and filled it with a radiance past description.

Zarathushtra became the Prophet of the country and people from far and wide came to hear his sermons.

Sunday Stories is usually excerpted from a translation of the Shahnameh by Dick Davis. However, in the second volume of this translation, Davis references, but does not tell, the story of Zarathushtra. Since this story is significant in the Zarathushti community, I have used ...In Search of My God, which was published in 1978 by The Lost Generation Publication, A division of The Zoroastrian Foundation, Los Angeles, California, as a source instead of the Davis translation. Photo credit In search of my God pg 35

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M I L E S T O N E S

FEBRUARY 1- May 1, 2009

BIRTHS

Nozer Pochara, a boy, to Mehzabin and Hormuzd Pochara on October 31, 2008.

Madison Eva, a girl, to Anita and Mike Taistra, granddaughter to Noshir and Dinaz Langrana, in New Jersey on November 17, 2008.

Aidan Mehta, a boy, to Dr. Rohaan and Feroza Mehta, grandson to Firdosh and Maharukh in Minneapolis, MN on November 28, 2008.

Sanaya Shroff, a girl, to Nekzad and Roxan Shroff in Vancouver, BC on December 15, 2008.

Mehroo Danny Birdie, a girl, to Danny and Scherazade Birdie, granddaughter to Khurshed and Phiruja Birdie and Godrej and Soonnu Khursigara in Toronto, ONT on January 7, 2009.

Jasper Patel, a boy, to Armaity and Viraf Patel, brother to Zain in Belmont, CA on February 9, 2009.

Yohan Damania, a boy, to Meenaish and Nozer Damania (New Jersey) on February 12, 2009.



Neville Jeremiah Dastoor, a boy, to Merzi and Elizabeth Dastoor, grandson to Sarosh and Noshir Dastoor and Julie and John Flynn, nephew to Neville Dastoor in Waterloo, ONT on February 20, 2009. (photo above)

Ethan Nicholas Ayoup, a boy, to Firuza and Robert Ayoup, grandson to Mehroo and Rohinton Chothia (Newmarket, ONT), Maneck Sattha (North York, ONT), Gwen and Raymond (Montreal, QUE), and great grandson to Yasmin and Dhun Bhaya (Newmarket, ONT) in Ajax, ONT on March 3, 2009.

Mithra Chothia, a boy, to Hormuzd and Khushamin Chothia, brother to Taronish and Kayishmand in Brampton, ONT on March 10, 2009.

Nia Challa, a girl, to Shahveer and Karrie Challa, granddaughter to Rustam and Nina Challa, great granddaughter to Fali and Perin Engineer on March 24, 2009.

Aryana Khambatta, a girl to Zubin Khambatta and Vijay Shivashankar, granddaughter to Nergish and Kersi Khambatta and Pushpa and APS Shivashankar. Neice to Rayimand Khambatta in Toronto on April 5, 2009.

NAVJOTES

Zubin Parvereshi, son of Yasmin and Jehangir Parvereshi (Sunnyvale, CA) in Mumbai, India on December 19, 2008.

Farzad and Rukshana Sarkari (Houston, TX) in Mumbai, India on January 7, 2009.

Shimera and Kyra Cama, children of Meher and Shiroy Cama in Miami, FL on May 3, 2009.

WEDDINGS

Danny Nanavaty, son of Feroze and Kamal Nanavaty to Satvir Minhas, daughter of Ajit and Balwinder Minhas in Nanaimo, BC on January 2, 2009.

Percy Mehta, son of Dara and Farida Mehta (Mumbai, India) to Arine Elavia, daughter of Arjasp and Nilofer Elavia (Mumbai, India) in Mumbai, India on February 8, 2009. The couple resides in Foster City, CA.

Zer Iyer, daughter of Hari and Yasmin Iyer (Santa Maria, CA) to Rafael Climaco, son of Daryne and Greg Climaco (Brea, CA) in Santa Maria, CA on February 14, 2009.

DEATHS

Hilla Vesuna, 82, wife of Peshotan, mother of Captain Sorab (Jasmine), Delta, B.C., Kerman (Jasmine), Bakhtavar Dady

Deboo, grandmother of Danesh, Varun, Hutan, Kayhan, Kamal, Nazchehr, Aryanish, Rukshaar and Zeenia in Mumbai, India on December 27, 2008.

Minoo F. Dinshaw, husband of Nergish, father of Anahita Rayomand Dubash (Toronto, ONT) and Shahvir Dinshaw (Moscow), grandfather of Sam, Alysia and Sophia in Karachi, Pakistan on December 28, 2008.

Jimmy Ardesher, 87, father of Zarine Paul Bulsara, Roshan Tikari (Palos Verde, CA), Farok Ardesher (Walnut Creek, CA), grandfather of Delna, Roxane, Erin, Tahir, Revez, and Rechele, great grandfather of Quin and Halee in Kolkota, India on January 2, 2009.

Dhunjishaw A. Kapadia, 76, husband of Jeroo, father of Sharook (Yasmin), grandfather of Benafsha Mumbai, India on January 4, 2009.

Paridokht Ardesher Tirandazi, 77, wife of late Khodadad Bonshahi, mother of Manijeh, Mehraban and Homa Bonshahi, mother-in-law of Fariborz Rahnmoon, Shahin Mehri and Goshtasbpour Mehri in Yazd, Iran on January 4, 2009.

Jaloo Jagosh, mother of Ruby (Kersasp) Bhesania (Markham, ONT), Yazdi (Pheroza) Jagosh, Jimmy (Shirine) Jagosh, grandmother of Mehernosh (Niloufer) Bhesania, Teosar (Yesna) Bhesania, Zubin (Linda) Bhesania, Grace (Mark) Knakowski, Sabrina Jagosh and Zehan Jagosh and 8 great grandchildren in Toronto, ONT on January 6, 2009.

Tehmurasp Minocher Patel, 49, brother of Purveen Aspen Marshall (Ottawa, ONT) in Pune, India on January 10, 2009.

Banoo Master, wife of late Minoocher Master, mother of Arnavaz Kersi Sarkari (Toronto, ONT) on January 14, 2009.

Rajah Banerjee, husband of Cyrene, father of Aditya in Calgary, Alberta, on January 16, 2009.

Minoo Karkaria, 80, father of Burgess Karkaria (San Jose, CA) in Mumbai, India on January 19.2009.

Banuben Ramesh Topiwalla, wife of Ramesh Topiwalla, mother of Rashmi, Yatin and Chirag in Oakville, ONT on January 21.2009

Shera Mistry, sister-in-law of Goola Dinshaw Mistry, aunt of Behrooz and Mehroze Mistry, Parveen Farhad Khursigara, grand aunt of Narius Zane, Sean and Sharmeen in Brampton, ONT on January 30.2009.

Dowlat Tirandaz Lohrasb (Shahzadi), wife of late Mobed-e-Mobedan Rostam Shahzadi in Tehran, Iran on February 3.2009.

Ervad Yezdi Antia, husband of late Perin, father of Zaheer and Rayomand in Toronto, ONT on February 9,.2009.

Rayhan Carl Rogers, 8 months, son of Khurshid Mirza Rogers and Jeff Rogers, brother of Zehan, grandson of Putli and Noshir Mirza and Janet and Jon Rogers on February 13. 2009.

Goolcher Keki Captain, mother of Darius (Jeroo) Captain, grandmother of Aban and Shiraz in Roseville, CA on February 15. 2009

Khosrow Namdarian, son of Shahpour known as (Shahpour Sa-at-Saaz) in Detroit Michigan, on March 4th 2009

Noshir Jesia, 84, father of Purveen Canteenwalla (San Jose, CA), grandfather of Eric and Carl, in Mumbai, India on March 5,.2009

Jamshid Khodavandi, husband of Farkhondeh, father of Mehraban, Mahnaz and Bahram in Toronto, ONT on March 6, .2009

Darab "Dady" Kapadia, 89, husband of Roshan Kapadia, father of Homi Kapadia and Shireen Chadds (Ford, PA) and Anita Taraporevala and Feroze (Los Altos, CA), grandfather of Sarita, Cyrus, Kaizad and Neville in San Mateo, CA on March 9. 2009.

Pervin Bhathena, wife of Darius Bhathena, mother of Roxanne,

Cyrus and Shiraz in Caledon, ONT on March 19, .2009.

Hirabai Bhadha, 103, wife of the late Jehangir Bhadha, mother of seven, including Behram Bhadha of Mumbai, grandmother of ten, including Ashees Cooper of Chicago, IL and great-grandmother of seven, including Shahan and Anushe Engineer of Karachi. in Mumbai , March 19, 2009

Aban Noor, 84, wife of Harbans Singh Noor, daughter of Hormusji Cabinetmaker and Jaiji Lall, sister of Parvez Cabinetmaker, and mother of Angad Dev Singh and Jehangir Singh, grandmother of 3 boys and 2 girls, in Baltimore, MD on March 24, 2009.

Piroja (Piloo) Sanjana, 87, sister of Freny (Rumi) Taraporewala (Mumbai, India), mother of Pesi (Bepsi) Sanjana (Detroit, MI) and Berzin (Irene) Sanjana (Charleston, SC), grandmother of Avvan, Darayus, Perin and Kevan (Jenny) Sanjana in Mumbai, India on March 26.2009.

Homi J. Tata, 81, son of late Jamasp and late Nergish, husband of Virginia, father of Jinnyn (Richard), Naju (Bradley), Jay (Suzanna) and Janice (Neil), grandfather of Simone, Timothy, Susan, Jennifer, Scotty, Courtney, Holly and Ian, cousin of Ratan, Jimmy, Adi (Dinaz), Noel (Aloo) in Monroeville, PA on March 29,. 2009.

Fereidoon Ahoorai, husband of Minoo and father of Farhad and Farnaz, and families: Ahoorai, Khorsandian, Izadian, Adeli, in San Jose, March 2009.

Rostam Shahbandari husband of Shirin, father of Khodabakhsh, Katayun and Parisa, father in law of Zaryab Hamavand and Shahram Mehrroostami in North Vancouver on March 31, 2009.

Banu Aidun Anoosheh, mother of Mandana, Khashayar, and families: Anoosheh, Aidun, Mazdiyasni, Mehrafshani, Sohrab, Marzbani, Zomorodi, Behziz, Bordbar, and Salamat. on March , in California.

Percy Printer, 76 husband of Gulchere, father of Anahita (Danny) and grandfather of Samantha, Daena, Ryan, in Montreal on April 2, 2009

Rusi Sidhwa, 57, brother of Maneck Sidhwa, brother-in-law of Parveen Sidhwa in Parlin, NJ on April 7, 2009.

Dick Vazir, husband of Sherroo Vazir, father of Franah (Gerry Marino), grandfather of Sara in Hollywood, FL on April 13, 2009.

Dr Rostam Izadian, 82. husband of Farangis, father of Bina (Farshid Behboodi) of Toronto, Ramesh (Gila Sharokh Naderi) of Boston and Roya (Farshad Khorami), of Toronto, grandfather of Kian, Davin and Armayel, brother-in-law of Jehangir (Celeste) Kheradi in Boston, on April 17, 2009.

Villi Naoroze (Nee Pastakia), sister of Sapal Pastakia, (Mumbai, India) and Soonoo Fali Kanga (Chino Hills, CA) in Mumbai, India on April 18, .2009.

Veera Bharucha, wife of Adil Bharucha, mother of Lyla (Danny) Aga, Lillian (Cyrus) Irani, daughter of Mehroo Dubash, sister of Jamshed and Jessica Dubash, Rayomand and Anahita Dubash, Kemal Dubash, and Gulmohr and Meheryar Bharucha in Houston, TX on May 1,.2009.

Minoo Sethna, father of Shiraz Tampal, Tannaz, Sharukh, and Zarir in Toronto, ONT on May 1, 2009.

NAVAR CEREMONY

Kamran and Arman Panthaki, sons of Rashne and Mahiyar Panthaki (Mississauga, ONT) were ordained as navars in Mumbai, India on December 14, 2008.

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MILESTONES CENSUS - 2007 JOURNAL ISSUES

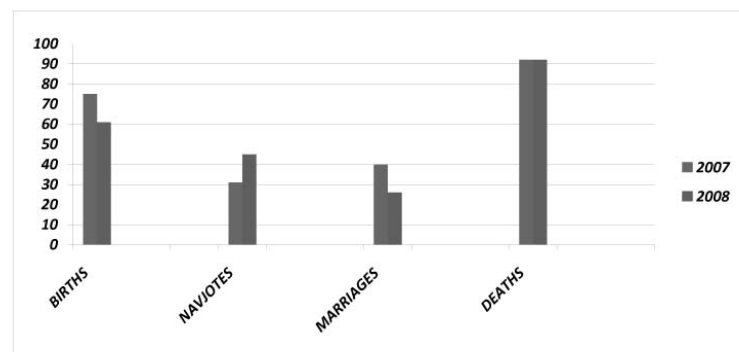
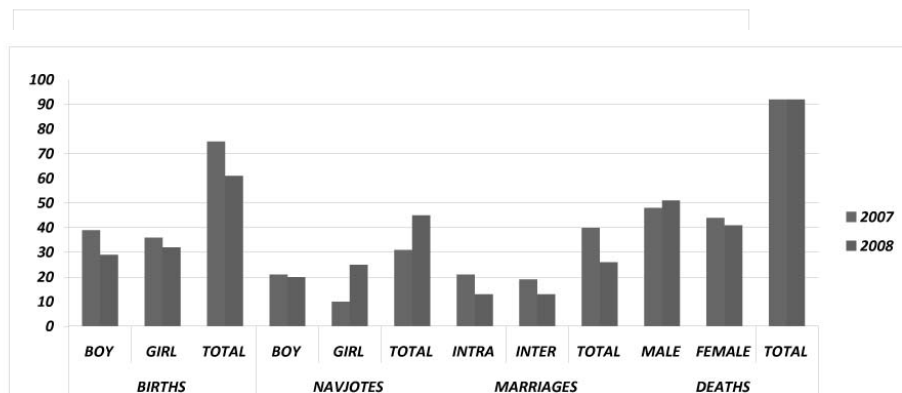
	BIRTHS			NAVJOTES			MARRIAGES			DEATHS		
	BOY	GIRL	TOTAL	BOY	GIRL	TOTAL	INTRA	INTER	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
SPRING	11	16	27	4	3	7	7	1	8	15	11	26
SUMMER	11	11	22	8	3	11	6	1	7	9	12	21
FALL	6	5	11	7	2	9	4	8	12	15	9	24
WINTER	11	4	15	2	2	4	4	9	13	9	12	21
	39	36	75	21	10	31	21	19	40	48	44	92

MILESTONES CENSUS - 2008 JOURNAL ISSUES

	BIRTHS			NAVJOTES			MARRIAGES			DEATHS		
	BOY	GIRL	TOTAL	BOY	GIRL	TOTAL	INTRA	INTER	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
SPRING	3	7	10	2	3	5	7	2	9	10	9	19
SUMMER	11	10	21	3	1	4	0	2	2	18	12	30
FALL	6	10	16	10	7	17	2	5	7	10	9	19
WINTER	9	5	14	5	14	19	4	4	8	13	11	24
	29	32	61	20	25	45	13	13	26	51	41	92

	BIRTHS			NAVJOTES			MARRIAGES			DEATHS		
	BOY	GIRL	TOTAL	BOY	GIRL	TOTAL	INTRA	INTER	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
2007	39	36	75	21	10	31	21	19	40	48	44	92
2008	29	32	61	20	25	45	13	13	26	51	41	92

	BIRTHS			NAVJOTES			MARRIAGES			DEATHS		
2007	75			31			40			92		
2008	61			45			26			92		



Matrimonials

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

Male, 31, BS in Finance from US University, Worked in USA since 2000. Presently in India. Contact zub1@hotmail.com. [M09-07].

Female, 34, graduate from US University. Worked in marketing/business development in major US bank. Presently living and working in India. Actively involved with Zoroastrian community welfare and development. Strong work ethic and also enjoys time with family and friends. Kind, caring and humorous nature. Loves dogs, children, chocolate, music and dancing in the rain. Contact larson645@aol.com. [F09-08].

Male, 29, MBBS (Bombay) with Masters in Health Policy and Administration, Manager in Washington, DC. Enjoys music, hiking, bowling, experimenting with cuisines, reading, movies. Friendly, helpful, outgoing with great family values, good sense of humor, enjoys working hard and living life to the fullest. Contact 814-574 7452 (in USA) or parents +91 92233 61627 (in Mumbai). [M09-10].

Female, 35, MBA, in management role in multinational US (East Coast) company. Interested in meeting highly educated professional. Contact jasmineinnyc@gmail.com. [F09-16].

Male, 34, well-situated professional, would like to correspond with a

young woman of 27 - 33 years. His interests are many, including travel, music and the arts, and sports. He enjoys an adventurous and fun life, and would like to share it with a like-minded individual. Contact parsibachelor@gmail.com or 617-515-8028. [M09-17].

Female, 38, BA, with IT experience, technology manager in investment banking on US East Coast. Enjoys the outdoors. Contact arm0617@gmail.com. [F09-18].

Female, 29, Masters degree from US University, athletic, fair, working as a business analyst for a reputed US (East Coast) bank. Contact smart.parsi.girl@gmail.com. [F09-19].

Male, 32, PhD, born and brought up in USA. Contact Mr. Munshi at 212-865 6683. [M09-20].

Male, 31, well-placed medical professional (MD), would like to correspond with Zarathushti lady in North America, professional, preferably a doctor, to share his interests in travel, music, culture and more. Contact 601-425 7131. [M09-22].

Male, 24, B.Com, diploma in 3D animation, presently residing in Mumbai. His varied interests include reading, music, movies, sports, Karate (black belt). Affectionate and communicative with good sense of humor. Would like to correspond with Zarathushti girl about his age. Contact hybridkarl@gmail.com. [M09-23].

Female, 26, Princeton graduate, working for a digital advertising company in New York. Open to settling down in any part of the world where her career is not greatly compromised. She has strong liberal political views, and varied interests including social, economic and political issues of the world. Contact geets51@gmail.com. [F09-24].

Female, 28, Our highly educated daughter is a successful professional as well as an animal welfare activist in the USA (West Coast). It is very important to her that a potential marriage partner has or aspires to have a cruelty-free diet and lifestyle. If you would like to contact our compassionate daughter, call 310-392 5911, or email mazdayasnie@netzero.net. [F09-25].

Female, 32, professionally well-placed in digital advertising on US (East Coast). Born and brought up in USA. Call Mr. Munshi at 212-865 6683. [F09-26].

Male, 30, MBA and BA (with highest honors), successful business management professional based in USA, currently living overseas for 2-year business assignment. World wide travel and business experience. Hobbies include health and fitness, watching and playing sports, movies, great cuisine and traveling/exploring new places. Great sense of humor and ethics. Contact bruinpop@yahoo.com. [M09-27].

Male, 33, B.Com, currently pursuing professional financial planning in Toronto. Contact burzdee@gmail.com. [M09-28].

Looking for a Soul Mate?

Try these matrimonial sites and services:

<http://matrimonial.zoroastrianism.com>

www.TheParsiMatch.com

www.shaadi.com

Mrs. Gool Banaji, Parel, Mumbai, goolpesi@gmail.com

Obituary

ERVAD YEZDI ANTIA

August 12, 1922 – February 9, 2009

God's gift has a thousand ways to manifest itself and on August 12, 1922 it manifested in the spirit of one man, and Yezdi Antia was born. Those of us who had the privilege of being closely associated with and touched by him are truly fortunate and enriched.

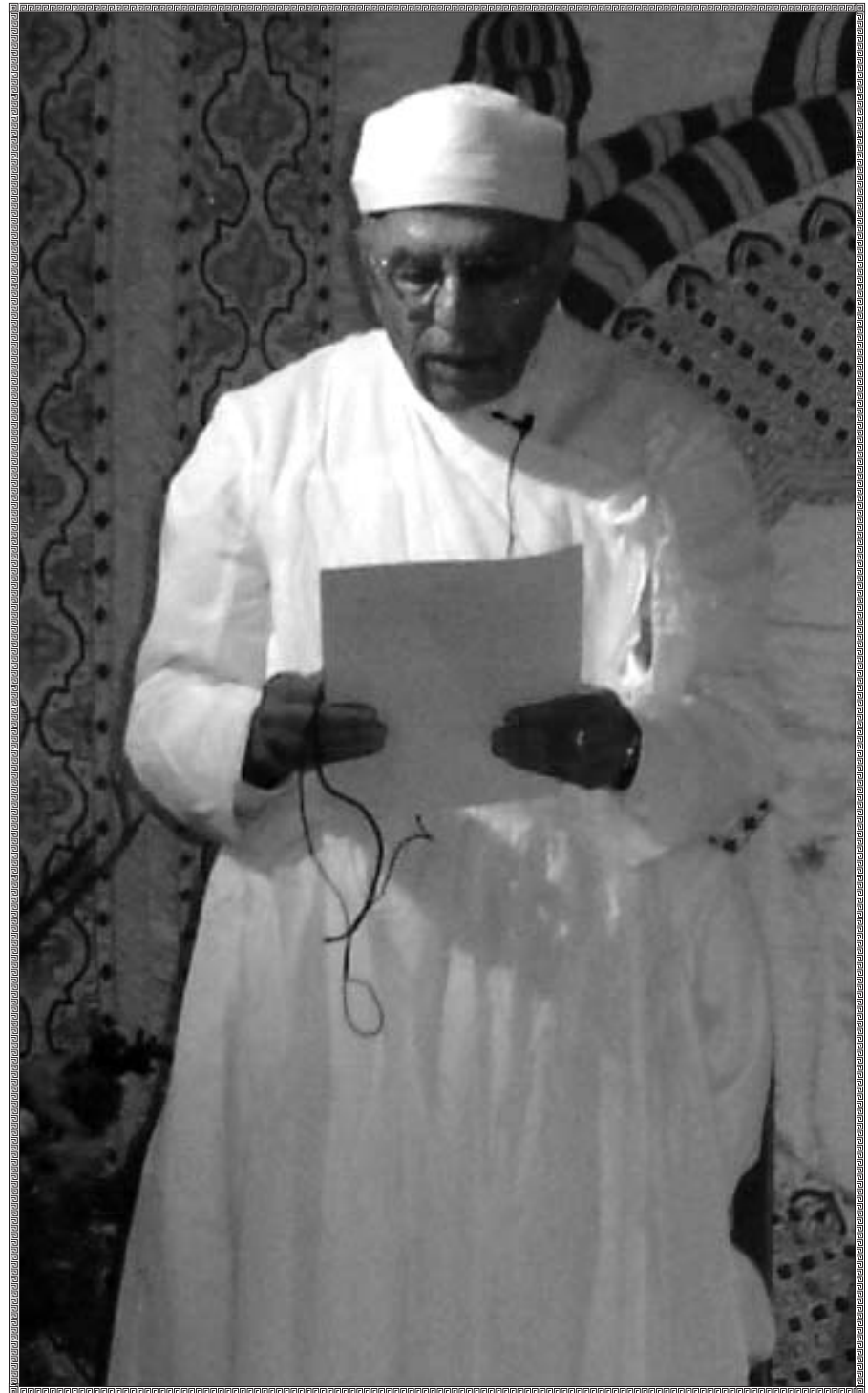
Yezdi was born in Deolali, a small town outside Bombay and grew up in the spiritual surroundings of an Agiary, in a large family of 7 brothers and 2 sisters, his mother Shirinbai and father Pirojshaw who had a Panthak there. Yezdi was ordained a Priest in his young years and he always enjoyed recalling with nostalgia his years in Deolali. He joined the Engineering College at Poona and in 1950 obtained a degree in Civil Engineering. His stay in Poona, brought out his sporting nature, becoming a Master Oarsman, representing his College in boating events as well as boxing and wrestling.

His passion for continuing education, took him to Paris where he spent some time at the Institute of Prestressed Concrete, specializing in the deployment of RCC in construction.

He met Perin in Poona and they courted on the river while boating. They both moved to Bombay, where they were married on September 23, 1952 and had two sons, Zahir born 1953 and Raymond 1955.

He joined Hindustan Construction Co. and Levka Limited and worked as a Civil Engineer in building bridges and other heavy engineering, spending several years in North Eastern States of India, which brought him satisfaction for contributing to the development of these impoverished States.

He immigrated to Canada in 1967, followed by Perin and his two sons. They both worked for the Government of Ontario till their retirement -- Perin in



education and Yezdi as a Civil Engineer.

In Toronto, he offered his Priestly services to the small community of that time who welcomed his religious

guidance. He ably performed Navjotes, Weddings and death rituals first in Toronto and then in other locations in Canada and the US where there was a lack of priests, always volunteering his services when asked

Obituary

.He became exceedingly well known and jokingly earned the title of "Parsee Pope".

Yezdi was one of the three who wrote the initial constitution of the ZSO and became its President in the 1970s. He was also the President of North American Mobed Council and was asked to write a book on Zoroastrian rites for the young initiates. In 1970 he was one of the two people to organize the first Zoroastrian Congress in North America, in Toronto, which was a precursor to subsequent North American Congresses.

Yezdi had an unconditional belief in the brotherhood of man and in 1982 along with 5 representatives of other faiths formed the Mosaic, an interfaith group that seeks to educate rather than convert. He enjoyed visiting schools and teaching about the Zarathushti religion. He was involved in the Provincial Ecumenical Education Commission who, amongst other things, collates articles and readings from all faiths to assist in Interfaith education in schools. He was invited to attend the Mayor's Interfaith Council breakfasts in Toronto and was part of a group who blessed the first Peace Fountain at Toronto City Hall.

He represented ZSO in Interfaith programs and was invited to meet Pope John Paul during his visit to Canada. He was completely non-partisan and believed very firmly in the energy emanated from the prayers and shared this belief with other groups whilst understanding and absorbing the teachings of their faith. Yezdi participated in the Scarborough Missions Interfaith Program, which produced the Golden Rule Emblem, presently displayed in the United Nations and all around the world. Most recently, in 2008, he met with Tenzin, a Buddhist Rinpoche (Chaplain at MIT), and addressed the World Youth Interfaith Assembly as an elder of the movement at the University of Toronto.

He volunteered for several projects like 'out of the cold' working closely with Muslim and Jewish groups for harmonious understanding of their

faiths, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) providing for several years, driving and transportation in his car to people who were visually impaired and had medical appointments. He was commended for this work by CNIB.

Perin became an ardent student of Reiki and introduced Yezdi to it. After some years of suffering, during which time Yezdi looked after her with care, affection and unlimited tolerance, Perin passed away in 1996. Yezdi continued practising Reiki for the benefit of all.

A natural people's person, Yezdi joined several organizations where he could interface with people. In 1984 he joined Freemasons and rose to the rank of a Master Mason giving 10 years' of service as their Chaplain. He was very much respected in the Mason's organization and they were very proud to afford him the Masonic funeral service, which we witnessed today. In 2004 he joined the Rameses Shriners to contribute and participate in their charity programs.

During the last years' of his life, Yezdi suffered ill health and needed support on the daily basis which the medical community was not able to provide and he patiently bided his time. Although many care services were made available he was always in need of comfort and attention. After work, Ray attended to his father during dinnertime and helped him with his evening chores. Yezdi was very much touched and appreciated Ray's involvement. Zahir provided him with advice and suggestions regarding planning and strategies on matters, which one reviews at that point in one's life. Yezdi valued the support he got from both his sons and wished to have this recognized, which we are now doing.

Although he was very understanding and tolerant and accepted God's will for the condition he was in, his suffering was acute and became very intolerable at times. His strength was ebbing very quickly and he could not manage the simplest and the most trivial of chores. He confided

that he had asked God for help to send him a Guardian Angel. He was fortunate to meet Ann Irving, a Reiki friend, who over the years coordinated his medical protocol and provided the care and support he so badly needed. We, his friends are thankful to Ann for all she did.

I asked him what message he would like to leave for the community and he said my message on 'Freedom of Choice', which is as under:

"We do not choose to be born. We do not choose our parents. We do not choose our historical epoch, or the country of our birth, or the immediate circumstances of our upbringing. We do not, most of us, choose to die, nor do we choose the time or conditions of our death, but within all this realm of choicelessness, we do choose how we shall live: courageously, or in cowardice, honourably or dishonourably, with purpose or adrift. We decide what is important and what is trivial in life. We decide that what makes us significant is either what we do or what we refuse to do. But no matter how indifferent the universe may be to our choices and decisions, these choices and decisions are ours to make. We decide. We choose. And as we decide and choose, so are our lives formed."

Yezdi was a very charitable, unassuming, selfless and down to earth person. His loving and caring ways brought warmth and joy to all he met, for which he was revered.

Yezdi, we will miss you. May your Soul rest in Eternal Peace.

**EULOGY by Bomy Boyce,
February 10, 2009 (with thanks to
Ann Irving for her contribution)**

Darab "Dady" Kapadia

January 28, 1920 - March 9, 2009



Darab (better known as Dady) Kapadia passed away peacefully on March 9, 2009, surrounded by family.

Dady, 89, is survived by Roshan, his wife of 55 years, of San Mateo, CA; his son Homi and daughter-in-law Shireen, of Chadds Ford, PA; and his daughter, Anita and son-in-law Feroze, of Los Altos, CA. He is also survived by four grandchildren: Sarita, Cyrus, Kaizad and Neville.

During the 1940s and 50s, the longtime Bombay resident and his late brother Khurshed, became well known across India as the acclaimed Kapadia Brothers table tennis team, winning numerous championships, including the title of All India Champions. In addition, he was a renowned athlete, winning many awards in track & field.

After earning his B.Com from Sydenham College in 1939, Dady began his 42-year career at Tata Oil (TOMCO) in the accounting department, but quickly rose to head the multinational company's human resources department. Dady was known for his ability to mediate labor disputes to the satisfaction of both sides as he was respected for his fairness by both company officials and labor unions.

After retiring from Tata's in 1985, Dady and Roshan set up a second home in Burlingame, CA, where he enjoyed working at Franklin Templeton until the ripe old age of 80.

Dady and Roshan celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 2003, with many family members and friends in attendance. After retirement, Dady continued to live an active life traveling, swimming, and keeping up with his avid interest in international stock markets.

Dady will be remembered fondly for his charm, grace, quiet wisdom, and strong moral compass. He lived a full and successful life and leaves us with many wonderful memories.

A funeral and memorial service celebrating Dady's remarkable life was held on March 12th in Los Altos, CA. Dady always had a very strong belief in education. If you're interested, we suggest a contribution to an education fund set up in his name. Please send your contributions to the *"Dady Kapadia Scholarship Fund"* at FEZANA, 33 Preamble Drive, Mount Laurel, NJ 08054. USA

Breathless in Bombay

By Murzban F. Shroff ,

St Martin's Griffin, 1st edition, 320 pages US\$14.95

ISBN 13:978-0312372705

Reviewed by Zareen Hakim Austin

Breathless in Bombay is an intricate mosaic of fourteen short stories, each forming a vibrant picture of life in one of India's busiest cities. Shroff uses vivid imagery and powerful, descriptive prose to create real-life characters and scenarios; one feels as if they are right in the middle of Bombay (Mumbai) with all its beautiful chaos and fervor. Each story opens our eyes to another way of life, and though these lives may differ from our own, one feels a deep connection to the human condition to realize that we all share the same desires and needs.

I truly enjoyed the short story format, though each one could have easily evolved into a full-length novel. I think this format allowed Shroff to passionately and quickly develop the characters, which was exciting to the reader. When each story ended, you couldn't help but think about the characters and the experiences they would endure in the future. Fortunately, another story would begin and we would be equally enticed...only to go through the literary wave of emotions as the story would develop and then come to an end again. With this arrangement, the stories further mimic life, where everything has its own rhythm and cycle.

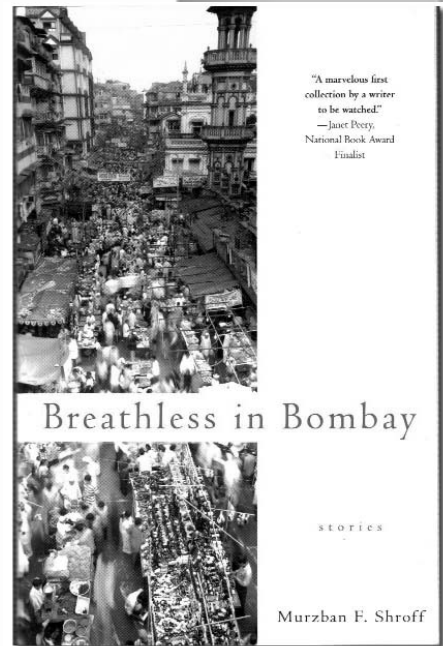
Shroff gives us a generous glimpse into the lives of many interesting characters living in Bombay. In the first story, we are introduced to Mataprasad, a dhobi. He is forced to confront the fact that his clothes washing services are slowly being replaced by automatic washing machines. This reality is threatening the livelihoods of all who live in the dhobi ghat, and the reader becomes sympathetic to their plight. Shroff beautifully describes the way in which the dhobis live, and successfully communicates the pride they take in their work. *"Within an hour, the hill would erupt in a blaze of colors, tents of wet clothes flapping like joyous birds on bright nylon strings, flapping, fluttering, threatening to leave their place and fly into the sun"* – Breathless in Bombay sparkles with these kinds of sentences, painting vivid pictures in our minds.

Next, we are led into the lives of Vicki Dhanrajgiri and Nandkumar Chaurasia in the story *Traffic*. This was one of my favorite stories, because it was honest and raw and I think Shroff did a commendable job of

portraying the thoughts and emotions of a twenty-seven year old woman. What I found interesting is that Vicki's situation could have been experienced in any large North American city, which again draws the parallel that *"we were all meant to understand that, in some strange way or the other, we were all driven by the same motivations, the same hopes, the same dreams and regrets"*. This quote was actually taken from another story in the book, *This House of Mine*.

We then read about a *maalishwalla*, followed by a story concerning a diverse group of tenants, and then the story of Chacha Sawari and Badshah, a victoriawalla and his horse. This too, was one of my favorites, because of the interesting circumstances and the intricacies of the characters. The remaining nine stories are equally riveting and well worth the reading experience!

I think that anyone who picks up this book will thoroughly enjoy Shroff's brilliant descriptions of Bombay and will appreciate every character within the captivating stories. I'm not even sure that the title, *Breathless in Bombay*, does the book justice. My one recommendation to the author is to think about adding a glossary of terms at the back of the book for the italicized words. I know this may seem technical, but it would help a reader who wasn't familiar with Indian regional vocabulary to experience the book at a deeper level of understanding. I highly recommend this book to anyone, especially those who live in Bombay or have ever experienced it. I look forward to reading more from Murzban F. Shroff!



The Garden and the Fire: Heaven and Hell in Islamic Culture

BOOKS
&
ARTS

By Nerina Rustomji. Columbia University Press, NY;

201 pages; \$45.00

ISBN# 978-0-231-14084-3

Voltaire once famously stated, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him." Perhaps the same can be said about notions of heaven and hell. In March 1997, *Time* magazine ran a cover story asking, "Does Heaven Exist?" The article included a poll of Americans' religious beliefs, which found that the majority of Americans believe in a heaven where people live forever with God and a hell where others are punished after they die. In the summer of 1999, a Jesuit magazine suggested hell has no contours, but is marked only by everlasting psychological torment. Further confirming the American public's unsatisfied desire to better understand the details of life after death, LaHaye and Jenkins's *Left Behind* series, which dramatizes the event of the Apocalypse, has experienced meteoric sales in recent years.

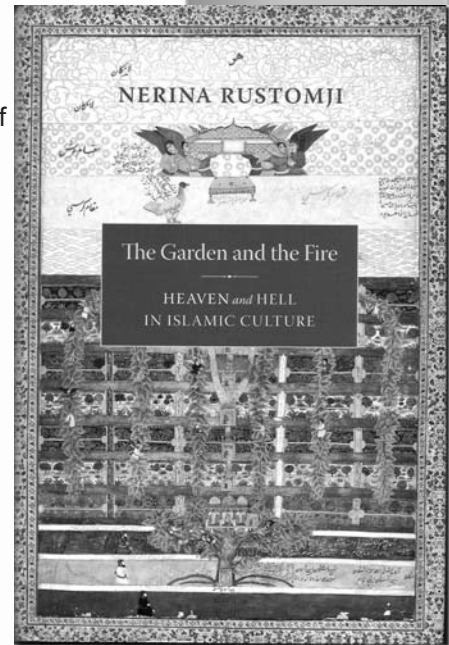
Nerina Rustomji's meticulously researched and lucidly written book, *The Garden and the Fire*, is a unique and timely contribution to our collective understanding of how one religion—Islam—has constructed its conception of the afterworld. Unlike in many other religions where the afterlife is a spiritual state, in Islam heaven and hell are afterworlds where believers can live full, dynamic afterlives. And, rather than extensions of their earthly existence, Muslims' afterworlds provide fresh geographies on which they have mapped the consequences of their earthly decisions.

Rustomji's copiously documented book chronicles the development of "the Garden" (utopia) and "the Fire" (inferno) from an early doctrinal innovation introduced in the seventh century to a highly formalized ideal that the afterworld represented beginning in the twelfth century. Rustomji argues that the complex relationship between earthly existence and eternal afterworld in Islamic history found expression through invocations of material objects and realities of the afterlife.

In Rustomji's incisive analysis of Islamic conceptions of heaven and hell, she delves into primary texts and images to reveal how an evolving religious aesthetic has molded Islamic society. Conceptions of "the Garden"—full of rivers, fountains, golden thrones, silk couches and fine food—and "the Fire"—

characterized by fetid waters, blazing sparks and demon-headed trees—have profoundly influenced quotidian behavior including abstinence from luxuries, such as silver vessels and silk, that are understood as reserved for appreciation in a forthcoming heaven. The material construction of the Islamic afterworld also enabled preachers to promote religious reform by reinforcing fear of eventual judgment. Religion has further enabled the nation-state in the case of the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-89, during which the government fed children "martyrs' syrup" and gave them "keys of Paradise" before sending them into minefields.

By studying an eighth-century chronicle of Muhammad's life, Rustomji challenges the common assumption in Islamic narratives that faith in the afterlife was automatic rather than developed. Rustomji focuses on prophetic traditions (hadiths) to suggest that Muhammad's visions during an eclipse and his journey to the heavens reiterated the existence of an afterworld. Throughout the book, Rustomji expertly explains how the Garden and the Fire helped formulate an Islamic code of ethics linked to religious consequences. Perusing Qur'anic verses, Rustomji explores the parameters and texture of the afterworld before concluding that descriptions of the Garden and the Fire were originally geographically tied to the Hijaz region of Arabia, but have since expanded to acquire symbolic meanings.



In one of the most interesting chapters of the book, Rustomji examines the social dynamic of the afterworld, including interactions with servant boys (wildan and ghilman) and pure female companions (houris) in the Garden. Rustomji notes that they are humans with distinct roles, but also considered as material objects. One hadith suggests that aside from his wife, even the lowest-ranked man in the Garden will enjoy eighty thousand servants, seventy-two wives, and a pavilion of pearls and gems. He will also wear a crown of pearls that will light up the space between east and west. Believers, it seems, can enjoy whatever their minds can conceive, which was problematic for medieval Christian theologians who refused to accept a heaven where corporeal delights were indulged. Similarly, Rustomji notes, contemporary American media are incapable of assessing the role of female

companionship in the Islamic afterworld without superimposing preconceptions of Islam driven by sex and violence. For example, news anchors often reduce the role of female companionship in the afterworld to the cliché of “promised virgins”. At a time when the

American public is quick to demonize President Obama for not being “Christian enough,” Rustomji’s text is a welcomed rejoinder marked by nuance.

One of the myriad interesting questions that arise from Rustomji’s skilled investigation is how the known world influenced religious adherents’ understanding of the afterworld. Rustomji surveys ways that believers could have imagined the Garden through mosque mosaics, illustrated manuscripts, and landscape architecture. Unfortunately, Rustomji’s inquiry is limited mainly to Sunni Islam. Nonetheless, she does reference Shi’a, Sufi, and poetic text when relevant.

Rustomji has written a compelling work of scholarship that exponentially enhances our understanding of how the material character of the Islamic afterworld allowed human longings for (and fears of) a future life to actualize into visions of an afterworld. Rustomji’s exhaustive exploration of the Islamic afterworld shows us how the Garden and the Fire acted as doctrines of faith, promises of future lives, motivations for ethical behavior, mechanisms for reform, and a vocabulary to express the human imagination.

INDIAN SUMMER

Indian Summer. By Cyrus Todiwala
Inkwell Ltd, London; 70 pages; Cost £
10.99

ISBN 978-0-9560859-0-0

Reviewed by Farahad Dastoor, Ph.D,
Orono, Maine.

Indian Summers create a bridge between the hectic vibrant days of summer and the cooler quieter days of winter. In this same way, Cyrus Todiwala’s latest cookbook Indian Summer links the rich exotic flavours of the East and the fresh seasonal produce, subtler spicing and quicker preparations of the West.

Indian Summer is to be the first in a new line of cookbooks written by Cyrus Todiwala – Executive Chef

and proprietor (with his wife Pervin Todiwala) of Café Spice Namaste in London, England. The relaxed yet contemporary atmosphere of Café Spice Namaste is mirrored in this book. Every page contains a beautiful picture of a finished dish, luscious ingredients, a variation of the recipe to try, or “Cyrus’ tip”. The latter being a description of a hard-to-find ingredient with possible alternatives or the description of a technique learned through years of experience. All these elements come together to create a cookbook inviting and valuable to both the novice and experienced cook alike. Indian Summer does not recreate the dishes of your youth. Instead, Todiwala draws from a rich Parsi heritage, key culinary elements and reinterprets them in ways that are faithful and deliciously new.

Zoroastrians are well known for remaining distinct while integrating with the majority culture and Cyrus Todiwala is a master at it. Born and raised in Mumbai and honing his skills as a chef in Goa, Australia and London,

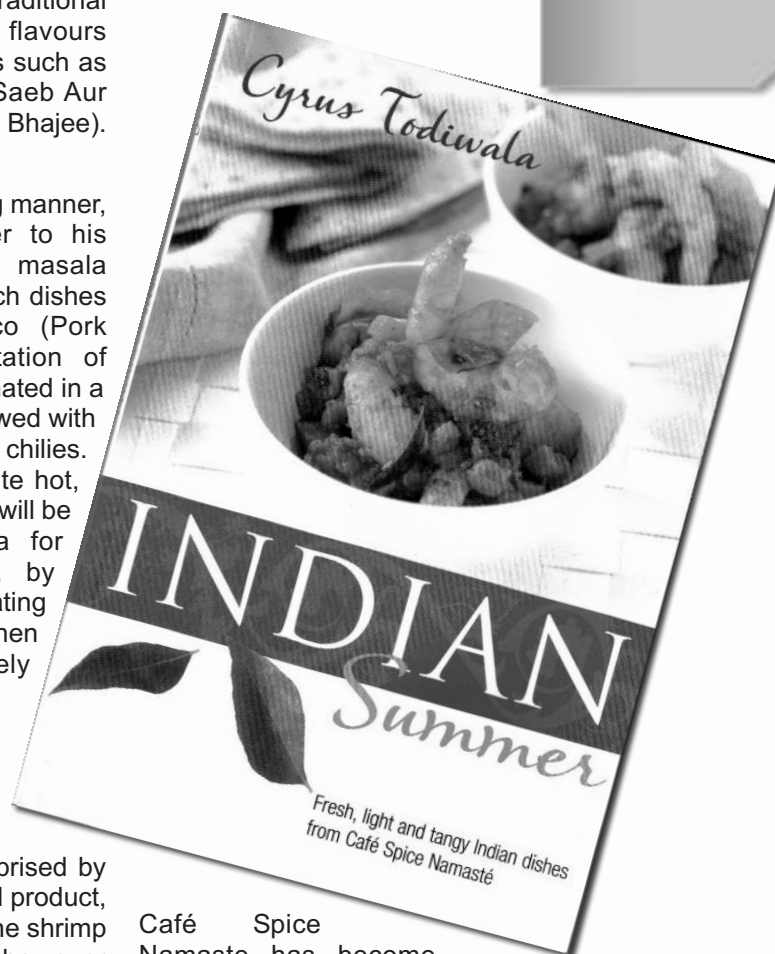
Reviewed by Farahad Dastoor, Ph.D., Orono, Maine.

England, Cyrus Todiwala introduces the western palate to a fresh and light pan-asian cuisine. Todiwala's travels and education have allowed the development of his trademark style blending traditional Indian cooking techniques and flavours with more unexpected ingredients such as green apples in his version of Saeb Aur Aloo Ki Subzee (Apple and Potato Bhajee).

In his very relaxed and easy-going manner, Todiwala introduces the reader to his accessible techniques of masala preparation and marinating in such dishes as Vinha de Albo com Porco (Pork Vindaloo). In this interpretation of vindaloo, pork is luxuriously marinated in a piri-piri masala base and then stewed with muscovado sugar, tamarind, and chilies. The finished dish is with each bite hot, sweet, and sour. Fortunately one will be making enough piri-piri masala for several vindaloo dinners or alternatively, by following "Cyrus' tip", dazzling friends by marinating fish, shellfish or chicken with the masala and then barbecuing. So quick and easy but absolutely delicious!

No cookbook written by a Parsi could be complete without a Kolmi No Patio (prawn patio) or Leeli Machchi Ni Curry (fish curry). However, here the traditional cook will be surprised by the list of ingredients and preparation. The final product, however, will be divine. All the ingredients for the shrimp patio will be reminiscent of traditional patio, however Todiwala's preparation will be fresh and contemporary. The colors and flavors of the final dish will be bright with tomato and turmeric, yet spicy and fragrant with fresh curry leaves. And at the same time – Kolmi No Patio. One of Todiwala's signature dishes is his interpretation of the Parsi traditional Leeli Machchi Ni Curry. This fish curry is reminiscent of a Thai fish curry on the one hand and home cooking on the other - rich with the subtle fragrances of curry leaves, cardamom, and cinnamon. And best of all is the easy step-by-step direction allowing me to create the dish!

If your tastes run toward the vegetarian, Indian Summer contains a wonderful selection of recipes from the more traditional Aloo Ki Subzee (Simply Spiced Potatoes) and Saag Aloo (Spinach with Potatoes) to the lesser known Cabbage and Carrot Foogath (a dish containing curry leaves and fresh coconut) and the already mentioned Saeb Aur Aloo Ki Subzee.



Café Spice Namaste has become known in England for its chutneys, spiced oils, and pickles. Fortunately for those who do not live nearby, these can be purchased online from www.cyrus-spice.com or you can pick from the many recipes included in Indian Summer and make a batch of your own.

Put together your own menu based on memories of home or follow some of Todiwala's menu suggestions included in Indian Summer. In either case, you will be reaching back towards tradition through the integrity of the Indian cuisine at the core of these recipes and forwards to innovation via Todiwala's unique style but you will be left thoroughly satisfied in mind and body.

Iran, The Forgotten Glory

BOOKS
&
ARTS

A film by Makan Karandish

Running Time

Part 1 Achaemenids 52 mins

Part 2 Sassanids 43 mins

Price \$29.95

History is written by the victors and Iran's ancient history has been written and rewritten for millennia by its opponents.

"Iran the Forgotten Glory" by Fars

Movie, directed by Makan Karandish is one among the few recent attempts by the Iranians to project their own history. It has been very well filmed and is of high quality.

This film



is in two parts, the first part deals with the Achaemenian dynasty and the second with the Sassanians while devoting just a couple of minutes to mention the Parthians.

The first part hovers around Takht e Jamshid (Persepolis) while narrating the history which concentrates mostly on the archeological aspects. The second part is interesting in that it shows various archeological sites of the Sassanian era which are less known and which are in a state of devastation. No organization seems to care for it, as one should of such national historical monuments. Many monumental Sassanian libraries were converted into Mosques and western scholars call it Islamic architecture. The film makes a point of it by imposing the picture of one such monument over the mosque.

The title *"Iran the Forgotten Glory"* raises ones expectation and one hopes to hear more than just about the Cylinder of Human Rights and the greatness of Shahpour and Anoushiravan.

Watching the extent of the Sassanian Empire and their architecture and the fact that they ruled successfully for over 400 years, one sees the motive of the propaganda against the Sassanian. A propaganda that has made even Zarathushtes blame them. The film ends with the recitation of the Koran.

The film mentions that the founding fathers of United States of America had studied and had a copy of the *"Cyropaedia"* (The Education of Cyrus) by Xenophon in their library, but unfortunately the makers of the film did not care to read it and instead have narrated the myth by Herodotus regarding the birth of Cyrus and how he revolted against his grandfather. Which is not true, for Xenophon documents the happy times that Cyrus had with his grandfather and how he improved his skills under his grandfather's guidance. Xenophon further narrates how Cyrus went to help his grandfather fight the Assyrian revolts, which lead to his founding the Persian Empire.

There were certain points which if correctly mentioned would have made the film more factual. Like calling Gustasp a mythical king, though Zarathushtra mentions him in the Gathas. Like blaming the Greek soldiers for defacing the statues at Persepolis, while in fact they are of recent origin for there are photographs of most of the bas relief's with their faces in tact. Like mentioning that Ahura Mazda is bestowing the kingship, while describing the bas relief. Or that Daryush is praying to Ahura Mazda while he is standing below the bas relief of the Fravahar. Further while explaining the Fravahar, the skirt is described to depict bad thoughts, bad words and bad deeds. These are from the books of the opponents of the Persian Empire and should not have found its way into the Glory of Iran.

What should have been mentioned was that women were treated as equals and paid to work plus they received paid maternity leave. That women lead the Persian armies and one of the most successful general was Artimis. That woman ascended to the throne and ruled during the Sassanian era. That Gondeshahpour University was an important center of science, philosophy, and medicine in the ancient world, and so on.

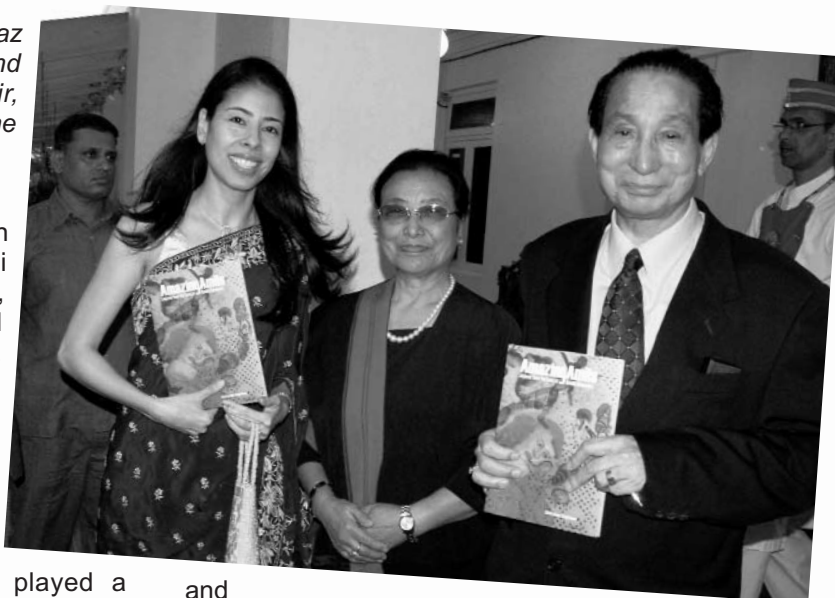
Overall the film is interesting and of high quality. All members of FEZANA should have a copy of it and see and discuss it in their Avesta classes. Supporting such projects will encourage others to make such attempts. The film can be ordered on line at www.farsmovie.com.

Reviewed by: Professor Yezdi H. Godiwalla
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

'Amazing Amils – Lessons from the Lives of Sindhi Achievers' was released on January 28, 2009, by the Governor of Maharashtra, His Excellency S.C. Jamir, at the resplendent Darbar Hall, Raj Bhavan, Walkeshwar, in the presence of Mumbai Sheriff Dr. Indu Shahani, and over 300 several other dignitaries from the Sindhi Amil community.

Photo left, Author Shernaaz Engineer, Mrs Almela Jamir and His Excellency S.C. Jamir, Governor of Maharashtra at the Darbar Hall, Raj Bhavan

The book has been published by the Khudabadi Amil Panchayat of Bombay, (KAP) and is authored by well known journalist and columnist, Shernaaz Engineer. Written anecdotally, and with extensive one-on-one interviews with leading lights within the community, and their families, the book celebrates the lives of inspirational Sindhi Amils.



The Amils are Sindhi Hindus, who played a significant role as administrators in the history of medieval Sind. The word 'amal' appears for the administrative class in documents of Mauryan times. In one view, this is probably the origin of the word Amil. Another view holds that Amil derives from the Persian word 'ilm' i.e. education.

The Amils have traditionally placed great emphasis on education, and were among the foremost ICS officers in the British days. Mahatma Gandhi, when he visited Sind, noted: "The Amils of Sind are probably the most advanced community in that province."

Educated, soft-spoken, fired by idealism, simple and non-ostentatious, Sindhi Amils set themselves apart, even as they integrate seamlessly into the larger societies to which they have migrated. They have contributed greatly to education, and many leading colleges of Mumbai (Jai Hind, H.R. K.C. and so on) were established by prominent Amils. They continue to be run by Amils even today.

Although displaced from Sind (Pakistan) during 1947, there have been many legendary Amils post-Partition,

and there are many lessons to be learnt from their illustrious lives. 'Amazing Amils – Lessons from the Lives of Sindhi Achievers' aims to showcase for coming generations, the values and contributions of the Amil community. The Amils have given India not only leading educationists, but eminent freedom fighters, authors, spiritual leaders, politicians, doctors, industrialists, corporate heads, bankers, diplomats, lawyers, judges, philanthropists, social workers, artists, musicians, and other creative talents.

The Khudabadi Amil Panchayat of Bombay was set up post-Partition in 1952 (although it was originally founded in Khudabad – Sind much earlier) to look after the interests of the dispossessed members of the Amil community. The Panchayat is at the forefront of much good work within the community.

The author gratefully acknowledges the support of the Panchayat (particularly the encouragement and driving zeal of Dr. Indu Shahani, President of KAP), as well as the generous sponsorship of the book by Raj Hiro Mirchandani, CEO of the Ross Group.

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WZCC Artist **Kayhan Irani** uses theatre to transform society in New York City

On Sunday, March 8th, the WZCC kicked off 2009 with its first quarterly meeting in NYC, and featured *Kayhan Irani*, a Zarathushti entrepreneur, who calls herself an 'Artist', seeking to use theatre to activate audiences and transform society.

The focus of WZCC is on business, so many of us who did not know Kayhan before the event, although we did not say it, perhaps had several questions going into the event, one of which was: How does an artist focused on tackling social challenges create a business while making a real difference? The answer.....



Kayhan's blended social conscience, strong values, business sense and stage presence touched the 25 attendees that converged to be inspired, while enjoying each other's company, NYC atmosphere and excellent Indian cuisine at UTSAV. We learned that after receiving traditional theater training from the High School of Performing Arts in New York City, Kayhan went on to expand her repertoire doing traditional and non-traditional theater at various venues such as Lincoln Center, The Public Theater, Chashama Theater, The Lower East Side Tenement Museum and on city streets. Her entrepreneurial one-woman show entitled *We've Come Undone*, highlights the 20 lives of immigrant women post 9/11. What was apparent is that Kayhan is a networker, which when combined with her openness to new challenges, allows for her to have both a constant stream of social inspiration for her work and a stream of income. Her other career highlights include (but are not limited to) being recognized by Mayor Bloomberg for her work with immigrants; working in Brazil and Iraq, consulting and co-editing a volume of essays, published in 2008, *Telling Stories to Change the World: Global Voices on the Power of Narrative to Build Community and Make Social Justice Claims*. When asked what her vision is for her future career, Kayhan replied that she 'hopes to broaden her reach of

activism on a global stage'.

The WZCC members wish Kayhan all the success and happiness she deserves while carrying her message wherever she chooses. Members who want to learn more about, and/or support Kayhan's works and activism, can log onto www.artivista.org.

A special thanks to Zubin Canteenwala, Maharukh Dalal and Usheen Davar for organizing this wonderful event.

By Paul Daruwala
Board Member-WZCC NY Chapter



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