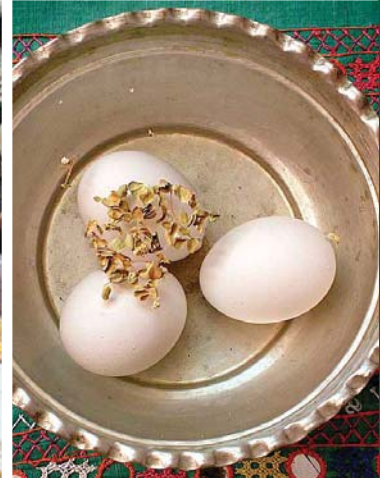




JOURNAL

Tir – Amرداد-Shehrever – 1380 AY (Fasli) ● Behman-Spendarmad 1380 AY – Fravardin 1381 AY (Shenshai) ● Spendarmad 1380 AY – Farvardin-Ardibehesht 1381 AY (Kadmi)



The Food Connection

The Importance of Food in Zarathushti Culture

Also Inside:



Zoroastrian Center of North Texas Celebrates Opening



CM Modi Guest of Honor at 1290th Anniversary of Udvada Atash Behram



Parsi Panorama: Exhibition, Seminar, Workshops, Music



The First Vendidad Sade and Baj in North America



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Community Giving**

Winter 2011

**Spring 2012
Transformation
Guest Editor
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- 2 Editorials
- 3 Message from FEZANA President
- 4 FEZANA Update
Annual General Meeting
Strategic Plan 2011-2021
Financially Speaking
Unity and Welfare Report
- 13 Promoting Marriage Survey
- 15 "Udvada- World Heritage Centre of Religious Harmany "
Narendra Modi
- 17 NEW DAR-E MEHR DALLAS
- 24 COVER STORY--FOOD FOR THE MIND
BODY AND SOUL
- 104 IN THE NEWS
- 118 NOWRUZ (1380) 2011 around the
world
- 130 Interfaith /Interalia
- 133 Personal Profiles
- 135 North American Mobeds' Council
- 138 Milestones
- 143 Between the Covers
- 148 Business



Tir- Amordad-Shehrever, 1380 AY(Fasli)
Behman-Spendarmad 1380 AY, Fravardin 1381 AY (Shenshai)
Spendarmad 1380 AY, Farvardin-Ardibehesht 1381 AY (Kadmi)

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A word from the Editor

Dolly Dastoor

Many events big and small, good and bad have transpired globally since the last issue of the Journal.

In no particular chronological order, Udvada has been finally recognized as a Heritage Site by the Government of Gujarat. This will protect the land from commercial and residential development in areas around the Iranshah Atashbehrām. Noshir Dadrawalla resigned as trustee of the BPP. The search is on for a "consensus" candidate to stand for election for a Trustee. The BPP went to court to defrock two "renegade" priests from performing religious ceremonies for people who are not born of two Zarathushti parents. BPP lost. Then the high priests went to court against this decision. A mediator has been appointed to settle the question whether the Doongervadi Trust deed empowers the BPP trustees to debar duly ordained Parsi Zarathushti priests from performing various ceremonies for Parsi Zarathushtis who opt to have their bodies not consigned to the Towers of Silence. Fine lines are drawn as to what is a legal issue and what is a religious issue? On-line petitions are flooding the internet, on issues dividing the community? Where will all this end? Where does this leave the community? What is an average Zarathushti to think of all this?

A religious community is kept together by love, compassion and wisdom, and when the leadership of a religious community divides the community they lose their spiritual authority and the community has to resort to the civil authorities to intervene. Having lost their spiritual authority the leaders attempt to enforce discipline through dictate to those who were once their disciples. Civil litigation would become unnecessary if the leadership shows an open mind, harmony, tolerance, compassion, good will and above all wisdom. Do we want a disciplined community or a loving caring community? Are the Trustees elected to maintain "discipline" or move the community forward? The Council of High Priests was formed in India, this may lead to a clear definition of jurisdiction between "state and church".

We need to harmonize our differences and even though we will play different instruments we can all produce beautiful music, the best we are capable of. With renewed energy and friendship, I envision the world community coming together, building religious and social infrastructures towards the eventual creation of a Virtual Zarathushti community.

On a happier note the Zarathushtis of North America have established a yet another religious infrastructure in Dallas Texas. The Dallas Zarathushtis celebrated the inauguration of their new Dar e Mehr which was 10 years in the making with a vendidad sade and baj ceremony, the first in North America.



Food plays a very important role in our Zarathushti psyche. We create all varieties of food for different palate and different occasions, special food for happy occasions and special food for not so happy occasions, and we also have food for the dead in our religious ceremonies. In this issue Sarosh and Benafsha Khariwala together with Arnavaz Chubb all of Melbourne, Australia have explored the concept of "Food as our identity" They have done a superb job in soliciting articles expalining the meaning of food in our various rituals, of finding Zarathushti chefs from around the world who have graciously shared their prize recipes with the readers of the Journal. I invite you to read all the articles as it will enhance your knowledge. , it did mine .Relish the experience and the taste.

And finally we would like to hear your opinion on the Journal going on- line. Would you like to hold your copy in your hand and read at leisure or read it on your screen or on your iphone? Write to us at editor@fezana.org as it will help us decide. Enjoy the lazy hazy days of summer, they are too short

A Message from FEZANA President

I am truly honored by the trust you have placed in the present Executive by extending the 2011-12 term to August 2012.

The 24th Annual General meeting of FEZANA was held April, 22-24, in Montreal, and hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec. I want to thank ZAQ for successfully hosting it and I thank all the volunteers and especially the ZAQ President, Dr Faranak Firoozi, and Dolly Dastoor for organizing this three - day event in a very relaxed atmosphere.

The next AGM will be hosted by ZAGNY in New York on Friday, August 6th. 2012, along with the XVI North American Zoroastrian Congress

The FEZANA AGM is an annual gathering of member associations, large and small, and is open to all. I encourage everyone of you, to try attending future AGM's to better understand the workings of FEZANA and the committees.

I thank the outgoing Vice President, Mr. Rashid Mehin, and Secretary, Ms. Firuzi Poonevalla, for their dedication and services rendered to the FEZANA Executive and welcome Ms. Katayun Kapadia as the new Vice President and Ms. Nahid Dashtaki as Secretary to the FEZANA Executive.

I also take this opportunity to thank Celeste and Jerry Kheradi who have been committed to FEZANA for a number of years. Jerry has chaired the Funds and Finance committee for over 12 years and I am happy to state that the strong and healthy financial standing of FEZANA today is mostly because of his vision and hard work.

As we move ahead we need to start planning for the coming years. I am looking forward to the active participation and cooperation of all member associations and Committee Chairs.

FEZANA's first five and ten year plans concluded in 2002 and 2006 respectively. It is now time for the next short and long term plans to be defined and for us to start working towards achieving our goals. Mrs. Mahrukh Motafram, the chairperson of the Strategic Planning Committee, presented a second ten year strategic plan (2011-2021) at the AGM in Montreal. I request all Committee Chairs and Member Associations to proactively participate as agreed upon at the AGM.

2012 will be another milestone for FEZANA as our organization will be 25 years old. We will be celebrating this Silver Jubilee year by spreading more



awareness and showcasing FEZANA at all our functions and events

I am happy to announce the appointment of Ms. Afreed Mistry as the chair of FEZANA's Public Relations Committee and of Dr. Shiroy Dadachanji as the Chair for the Sports Excellence Fund (Scholarship).

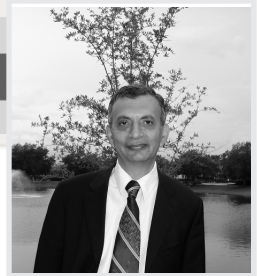
I welcome our Zarathushti youth from all over the world who are attending the 5th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in Vancouver, BC,. Canada. starting June 30, 2011. I congratulate ZSBC youth for organizing this monumental event and wish them every success.

FEZANA has been in the forefront, helping community members by way of educational scholarships, medical assistance, and other welfare assistance. This has been possible only because of your generous financial support. I thank you all and hope you will continue to support FEZANA once again this year. You can now donate online on the FEZANA web site, <http://www.fezana.org>.

FEZANA is now on Facebook and Twitter, please visit our Facebook page and subscribe on Twitter.

Sincerely,

Bomi Patel
President



Junto

A poor boy lands in Philadelphia, works at a printing press, starts a competitive newspaper, becomes a wealthy businessman, publishes the Poor Richard's Almanac which becomes a money spinner, retires at the age of forty-two, works for the postal service and invents an odometer, is designated as an ambassador negotiating with France to obtain support in the American war of independence against the British; is a signatory to the US constitution; invents the lightning rod; develops the concept of the public lending library so that knowledge is available for the common man and not just for the privileged and wealthy; promulgates the idea of paving city roads to reduce pollution from traffic; invents a fuel efficient open stove, finds efficient ways to light streets; proposes the concept of a volunteer fire-brigade, invents bifocals, establishes a secular institution of higher learning which later becomes the University of Pennsylvania..... by now you should have guessed it, these are just some of the accomplishments of Benjamin Franklin. This is the worthy after whom the ornate space in the State Department of the US Government is named, from where President Barak Obama gave his recent policy address on the transformational "Arab spring" sweeping large swaths of the greater Middle East and North Africa for the last six months.

So what does all this have to do with the Zarathushti community? A great deal, if we are to learn from the lives of those who have gone before us, in making a difference in the world. How did Benjamin Franklin accomplish so much in just one lifetime? A reading of his autobiography offers clues (1). Not only was he a strict self disciplinarian, identifying thirteen virtues, making them a part of his life through a personal sustained rigorous strategic plan, but he started a unique innovation called the *Junto*. It would behoove our Zarathushti community in North America to look into adopting this model for our betterment.

The *Junto* was an informal gathering of twelve like minded individuals from diverse backgrounds who met every Friday evening beginning in the autumn of 1727, to mull over seemingly simple questions. The discussions were to be conducted in "the sincere spirit of inquiry after truth, without fondness for dispute or desire for victory..." (1).

Herewith is a sampling of questions reproduced verbatim (2), as relevant today in civil society as they were when first asked:

What new story have you lately heard agreeable for telling in conversation?

Have you met with anything in the author you last read, remarkable, or suitable to be communicated to the Junto? Particularly in history, morality, poetry, physics, travels, mechanic arts, or other parts of knowledge?

Do you know of any fellow citizen, who has lately done a worthy action, deserving praise and imitation? Or who has

committed an error proper for us to be warned against and avoid?

Have you heard of any citizen's thriving well, and by what means?

What unhappy effects of intemperance have you lately observed or heard? of imprudence? of passion? or of any vice or folly?

What happy effects of temperance? of prudence? of moderation? or of any other virtue?

Have you or any of your acquaintances been lately sick or wounded? If so, what remedies were used, and what were their effects?

Hath any deserving stranger arrived in town since last meeting that you heard of? And what have you heard or observed of his character or merits? And whether think you, it lies in the power of the Junto to oblige him, or encourage him as he deserves?

Do you know of any deserving young beginner lately set up, whom it lies in the power of the Junto any way to encourage?

In what manner can the Junto, or any of them, assist you in any of your honorable designs?

Have you any weighty affairs in hand, in which you think the advice of the Junto may be of service?

Have you of lately observed any encroachment on the just liberties of the people?

Do you think of anything at present, in which the Junto maybe serviceable to mankind? to their country, to their friend, or to themselves?

Is there any difficulty in matters of opinion, of justice, and injustice, which you would gladly have discussed at this time?

Do you see anything amiss in the present customs or proceedings of the Junto, which might be amended?

The *Junto* lasted 40 years and eventually became the nucleus of the American Philosophical Society. As FEZANA approaches its 25th anniversary in 2012, we can learn from one of the Founding Fathers of the United States of America who speaks to us over the barriers of time as we seek to forge our new identity as Zarathushtis on this continent.

Acknowledgements and References:

- (1) The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin. ISBN 9978-0-7607-6861-7
- (2) http://www.acadweb.wvu.edu/osl/Standing_Query.htm Standing Queries of the Junto
- (3) I am indebted to Professor Richard B Gunderman, M.D., Ph.D., MPH, at the University of Indiana, for having brought this concept to my attention.

Behram Pastakia is Chair of the Publications Committee of FEZANA



FEZANA Update

The Twenty-Fourth Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America was held in Montreal April 22-24, 2011 at the Arthur Seguin Chalet. Hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec.



OPEN FORUM On Friday April 22, Maharukh Motafram Chair of Strategic planning Committee presented the Strategic Plan to the members present, lively discussion followed, suggestions were made which have been incorporated in the plan. The strategic plan 2011-2021 is presented on page 7 *Photo above, Maharukh Motafram presenting the plan*

Rohinton Rivetna presented the concept of *Infrastructure Development in North America* and some thoughts on *Funding Plan*. With the population in India, Pakistan, and Iran declining and the population of North America increasing we need to ensure the perpetuation of our religion and community in North America by establishing infrastructures. He listed some structures needed together with the funding estimates for each. For this he said, we need massive infusion of capital, now, and not in 50 years and he suggested 1) to create a public charitable "Foundation for the Establishment of Zarathushti Infrastructure in North America" to be operated by a group of individuals appointed by FEZANA members, one of whom shall be the FEZANA Finance committee chair. 2) Create Trusts under FEZANA's Finance Committee for each donor larger than \$1 million.

He also brought an offer from the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago to host a celebration on June 2, 2012 to mark the 25th anniversary of FEZANA. The celebration would focus on raising funds for the infrastructure development in North America by inviting prospective large donors.

The evening concluded with a dinner hosted by ZAQ

SATURDAY APRIL 23, 2011 FEZANA AGM

After a benediction by Ervad Gev Karkaria of ZAQ the meeting opened with a roll call of member

associations. A quorum was established with 16 /23 associations represented either by their presidents or their representative.

The results of the elections were announced : Katayun Kapadia was elected vice President unopposed and Nahid Dashtaki was elected secretary unopposed.



This leaves the post of the Asst Secretary open. A call for nominations will be sent out shortly. The new executive as seen in photo above, *from left Secretary Nahid Dashtaki President Bomi Patel, Vice-president Katayun Kapadia, Treasurer Ratan Mistry.*



AGM HIGHLIGHTS:

Rashid Mehin , the outgoing vice-president and Firuzi Poonevalla, the outgoing secretary, were honored with a plaque as a token of thanks for their continuous services to FEZANA.

Jerry and Celeste Kheradi were also honored with a plaque for their many years of exceptional service to FEZANA helping raise much monies and establishing



FEZANA Update

endowed funds. Jerry was stepping down as Chair of the Funds and Finance Committee. (see page 9)

Each association highlighted their progress throughout the year.

In the year 2010-11 two new Centres in North America were born. July 18 2010 saw the opening of the New Center of the Zoroastrian Association of California and April 30th the new Dar-e mehr in Dallas, (see page 17) The California Zoroastrian Centre also purchased a building and got approval of conditional use permit. OZCF has introduced the first of its kind of live Broadcasting of their events for the benefit of the global community to be able to participate and witness their activities. Zoroastrian Society of Ontario sponsors the

member associations are going "green". ZAQ has started religious classes and a newsletter. They will be participating in the 10th annual "Les Journees religieuses" organized by CEGEP St Foy. who have devoted this year exclusively to Zoroastrianism.

Each committee presented their reports (all committee reports will be available on www.fezana.org)

A new ad hoc committee *Zoroastrian Museum Exhibits*, was created with Behroze Daruwalla of ZAH as the chair and the ad hoc *Manuscript and Preservation Committee* was disbanded.

A motion made by Jerry Kheradi was carried overwhelmingly that *named endowments to FEZANA will be accepted at \$ 25,000/-and they do not need to be at \$ 100,000/-*.

2012 being the silver jubilee of the establishment of FEZANA, various events and activities are being planned throughout the year, one of which will be to start a *Silver Jubilee Academic Scholarship*.

It was suggested that we launch a periodic *FEZANA Bulletin* (electronic version from Headquarters in Chicago) by Zenobia Damania, as administrator.

Dolly Dastoor was honored with the first Rosetta Stone award from FEZANA for her "Unflinching Dedication and Community Service" (*photo left with President Bomi Patel on left and past President Firdosh Mehta on right*).

A recognition plaque was also given to the Journal Team.

The results of the "*Promoting Marriage Survey*" designed to assess the difficulty that the next generation of Zarathushtis face in finding Zarathushti spouses and also generate ideas for how FEZANA, and other community organizations, can help with this issue was



Journal Team from left Shahrokh Khanizadeh, Dolly Dastoor, Aban Rustomji, Merzi Byramji, Behram Pastakia



only Zoroastrian scouts group in North America (see page 106) The Zoroastrian Association of Chicago has sponsored another priest to come to Chicago. Several





FEZANA Update



presented..202 Zoroastrian youth and young adults in North America participated. (see page 13)

The next AGM was voted to be held in New York during 2012 Congress and to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the organization.

The WZCC meeting was held following the closing of the AGM (see page xxx)

The Zoroastrian Association of Quebec was thanked for doing a great job in hosting the FEZANA AGM with transportation, delicious food and a great party on Saturday night.

Photo left : The food committee, Homa Jamshedi, Gita Aidun, Shirine Karkaria, Zerene Saklatwala.

Photo page 6 The organizing team from left Jambi Canteenwala. Zerene Saklatwala, Gita Aidun, Homa Jamshidi, Shirine Karkaria, Jimmy Saklatwala ,Dolly Dastoor, front row Jimmy Ghadiali, Rohinton Marolia, Faranak Firoozi.

Photo credit Negin Atashband, ZAQ

SECOND 10 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN, 2011-2021

The second ten year Strategic Plan for FEZANA is a continuation of the first ten year Strategic Plan that was written in 1997 (1997-2006). The vision and mission statement for the current plan remain the same; with the addition, major stakeholders and five new set of goals have been identified. These goals reflect the present and future needs and desires for the community in the next decade. The first ten year strategic plan outcomes are part of the document, and can be viewed on the FEZANA website.

BACKGROUND

Over the past two years, the Strategic Planning committee solicited input from the stakeholders of FEZANA member associations, corresponding members, standing committees, ad-hoc committees and interested Zarathushti individuals. Further input was solicited during the Houston Congress 2010 in an effort to maximize participation. It was imperative for the planning team to receive feedback, as the plan needs to be and should be a collective vision of most, if not all Zarathushtis residing in North America. The responses received were taken into consideration as the plan was drafted. The past presidents of FEZANA were then invited to review and comment on the initial draft. The completed initial draft was distributed to all member associations, corresponding members, committee chairs prior to the AGM in Montreal for further discussion.



STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 2011,

FEZANA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, MONTREAL

An interactive session beginning with a presentation, followed by a lively discussion on the second ten year plan was held on Friday. Presidents of member associations and committee chairs present were given the opportunity to give feedback on the presentation. The members during the AGM validated the proposed plan, with the intention of the strategic planning team reworking the plan with recommendations received during the session. The team, taking their feedback into consideration, revised the plan to accommodate suggestions/recommendations accordingly.

IN 2012 FEZANA will be celebrating 25 years. With the support of FEZANA President, Bomi Patel, effort is underway to showcase FEZANA at the North American Congress to be held in New York in the summer of 2012.

COMPOSITION OF THE PLAN

The structure of FEZANA provides a platform of responsible parties who will be key players in implementing the plan. The major stakeholders to



FEZANA Update

implement this plan beginning with leadership from the FEZANA executive identified are:

- **Member Associations**
- **Corresponding Members**
- **Standing Committees**
- **Ad-Hoc Committees**
- **Zarathushti community**

The plan consists of five goals. Under each of the five goals are a set of action plan items delegated to a standing or an ad hoc committee to be the primary responsible party. The action plan items, even though under different set of goals, can be worked together by individual committees to achieve optimum results; and, can also be prioritized and fleshed out by the primary standing or ad hoc committee as needed.

The member associations and corresponding members can assist the committees to increase participation, responsibility and accountability towards implementation of the plan. In addition, it is highly recommended that they all work together with different complimentary organizations (WZCC, NAMC, NextGenNow, WZO, and others) to enhance HAMAZORI between Zarathushtis, domestically and globally.

The five goals under the Strategic Plan are:

1. SHOWCASE FEZANA AROUND THE WORLD

To achieve participation from the Zarathushti Community, domestic and global, effort has to be made to communicate the strength of FEZANA. The success stories generated in the last decade, for example, the dynamic success, the majority of the member associations are enjoying in their own communities need to be shared at the national level. The progress achieved by the committees, needs to be periodically communicated to the Zarathushti community.

The success on the domestic front will enable FEZANA to be a recognized global entity. Work towards strengthening ties with other Zarathushti communities around the world and be a key player to explore opportunities for a Global Zarathushti Council/Body.

2. INCREASE AWARENESS OF FEZANA DOMESTICALLY

To build a strong foundation requires pro-active communication and social networking between members, corresponding members and individuals. In addition, the standing committees can be a huge resource; utilizing the various committees to build a robust image of FEZANA that is inspiring, appealing as well as interesting enough, that has potential to increase participation.

3. FOSTER HAMAZORI (harmony) BY BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN VARIOUS ZARATHUSHTI ENTITIES/GROUPS

Increase harmony between groups of diverse nature with the support of members, corresponding members and interested Zarathushti individuals. The main theme is "HAMAZORI"; facilitate dialogues, conduct workshops at conferences; working towards better understanding between different Zarathushti groups.

4. CONTINUE TO ADVANCE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AWARENESS; OUTREACH INITIATIVES THROUGH INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Increase knowledge and understanding for religious, spiritual and cultural traditions within the North American Zarathushti community; raise awareness to the larger community around through community service projects and interfaith dialogue. Emphasis on awards for academic/music/sports and scholarship programs for the academically gifted, and provide aid to the academically challenged. Develop community social programs. Encourage Zarathushti youth groups on College campuses to liaison with each other.

5. INCREASE ECONOMIC STABILITY THROUGH FUND RAISING AND PRUDENT INVESTMENT

Continue to grow the financial infrastructure; encourage innovative fund raising techniques, targeting specific projects sponsored by FEZANA.

RECOMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The plan is for ten years (2011-2021), with immediate short term goal (one-year), short term goals (2-5 years), and long term goals (5-10 years). As mentioned before, the committees will bear most of the responsibility with assistance and support from each member association and corresponding member or any interested Zarathushti. Each committee will put forth their own action plan prioritizing items as needed for the time period, using a template which is being worked upon presently by the strategic planning team. The proposed "Work Plan" is an immediate short term objective to jump-start the planning process. Further planning for short term and long term objectives is in progress.

WORK PLAN

STAGE 1: To be completed by May 31, 2011

- Action plan line items have been assigned to appropriate standing/ad hoc committees, who will bear the primary responsibility for implementation.



FEZANA Update

- Member associations and corresponding members can identify a line item in each plan to work with the Committee

STAGE 2: To be completed by August 31, 2011

IDENTIFY SHORT TERM GOALS

- Each standing/ ad hoc committee together with the member association and/or corresponding member can prioritize 2-3 line-items from each action plan to work upon for the next 2-3 years.

IDENTIFY LONG-TERM GOALS

- Each standing/ad hoc committee together with the member association and/or corresponding members can prioritize 3-5 line-items from each plan to work upon for the next 8-10 years

STAGE 3: To be completed by April 2012

- Each standing/ad hoc committee together with the member associations will implement the goals as required.

- Present the progress at the FEZANA AGM with progress updates during the year, every 3 months

THE ENTIRE STRATEGIC PLAN CAN BE VIEWED ON

FEZANA WEB-SITE

www.fezana.org

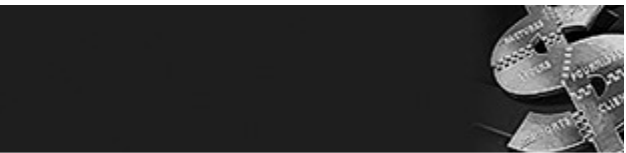
Financially Speaking

THANK YOU, JERRY KHERADI

We salute Jerry Kheradi, M.D., the first Chairperson of the FEZANA Funds & Finance committee, for setting the stage for FEZANA's financial well-being today. Working with the FEZANA executive since 1996, he has set up endowment funds and increased all the FEZANA funds to very respectable levels. Together with his wife Celeste, has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for scholarships, welfare and charity, all for the benefit of our small but growing religious community. We thank Jerry and Celeste for their selfless work for the community and for his dedication to higher education. His life has indeed been a life worth living and emulating. I will be writing more about Jerry and his work in future issues of the Journal. In the *photo right* Jerry and Celeste Kheradi were presented with a plaque by Bomi Patel, President of FEZANA, at the 2011 FEZANA AGM in Montreal, for their many years of dedicated service in raising funds for the community.

WHAT NEXT?

At the last FEZANA AGM in Montreal, the stage was set for next 10-year Plan for FEZANA. The Plan gives specific responsibilities to various committees, including the Funds & Finance committee. As the current chairperson of the committee, I take these responsibilities seriously and am actively seeking volunteers willing to work with me. There is a real need for committee



members from Canada. Please write to me at rjkevala@aol.com or call me at 813-484-8333 if you would like to work on this committee.

The first task for the committee is to develop a blueprint relating to the ethics of collective giving. I don't think we need to be told that charity is important. The question I have for you is: how can one decide what is the best form of charity; or how can one make the loudest "bang for the buck"?

CHOICES

Today I received an appeal for a donation to the Sun City Center Beautification Corporation. This is a non-profit group that maintains the median strip along



FEZANA Update

Highway 674 near my home. The more money it collects, the more flowers they can plant, and better the appearance of the highway. They recommend each homeowner to contribute \$2 per month. So I will send them \$25 as my fair share for the year. I also receive telephone calls and periodic mailings from UNICEF, Veterans' Associations, Firefighter's Associations, Meals on Wheels, and countless others to support various worthy causes. I wish I could support all of them. But I can't. I also get tempting offers of sweepstakes and lottery prizes from the Audubon Society, financial magazines, and even from Zarathushti associations raising funds for building their centers. And of course, there are also many scams and bogus organizations trying to get my money.

Life is full of choices; not all of them of equal merit. How does one decide?

OUR LEGACY

The most fundamental choice we have is to choose our own religion and to pass on our religion, our values, and our beliefs to the next generation. FEZANA was founded 24 years ago because we chose to work together. Together, we have been working to define who we are, what it means to be a Zarathushti in a multi-cultural society, and to claim our rightful place in the world religious community. One of the paths we have chosen to define our legacy as Zarathushtis is to recognize and encourage the achievements of our deserving peers and our youth; and to uplift those of us who are in difficulties and need.

The Gathas are suffused with the basic idea of helping Ahura Mazda's Creation achieve its final purpose, Frashokereti, through love and compassion for fellow man. Confucius, a contemporary of Zarathushtra, is ascribed to have said: "He who wishes to secure the good of others has already secured his own". Clearly then, the urge to help a fellow human being is the basis of being human. And throughout history, Zarathushtis have been working towards that goal.

THE BEST CHOICE

And I am happy to report that the spirit of charity and giving is alive and well among Zarathushtis today. We freely give our time to organize meetings, functions and religion classes in the spirit of Hamazori, provide scholarships for deserving students, and donate generously for worthy causes.

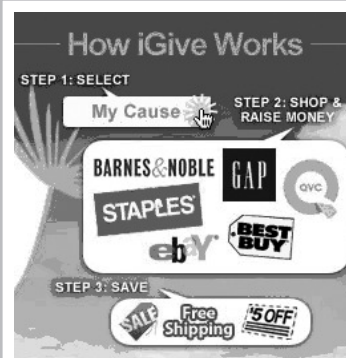
To find out how you can contribute to the success of FEZANA, go to the FEZANA website, become active in committees, local associations, community organizations

and Interfaith work, attend one of the Congresses, participate and send your children to religion classes, subscribe to the FEZANA Journal, network with other Zarathushtis through one of numerous social media sites, and speak to local groups to let them know what it is to be a Zarathushti. You will find that being an active Zarathushti is the best choice you will make in your life.



Rustom Kevala, Ph.D.

Chair, FEZANA Funds & Finance Committee



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To shop and qualify for a donation, you must be logged in as an iGive.com member and you must reach the store through www.iGive.com or www.iSearchiGive.com.

Start helping FEZANA today!

CORRECTION

Arsham Shahlari, the recipient of the FEZANA Scholarship (FEZANA JOURNAL Vol 25, No 1 page 12) is attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison to pursue a PhD Degree in Mechanical Engineering with an emphasis on engine research. He is not a student at UT-Austin in Petroleum Engineering. Error is regretted. Editor



FEZANA Update

"Unity & Welfare" Committee Report

Freyaz Shroff

FEZANA is a registered, non-profit, religious and charitable organization designed to enhance the welfare of our community. In order to accomplish its objectives FEZANA has several volunteer committees that are dedicated to sustain and enhance its integrity.

The Unity & Welfare Committee, established in 2002, is a FEZANA committee designed to provide assistance to individuals, families and organizations facing temporary difficulties due to medical emergencies, natural disasters, violence, or legal issues.

Working in close partnership with one another, Houtoxi Contractor of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Hosi Mehta of Chicago, Illinois and Freyaz Shroff of North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, now living in Mumbai, India, serve as Co-Chairs of the "Unity & Welfare" Committee. However, the "Unity & Welfare" Committee would not be able to meet its objectives without the unconditional support of all local associations, who generously give of their time and energy to support the case applicants within the parameters of confidentiality defined by the committee.

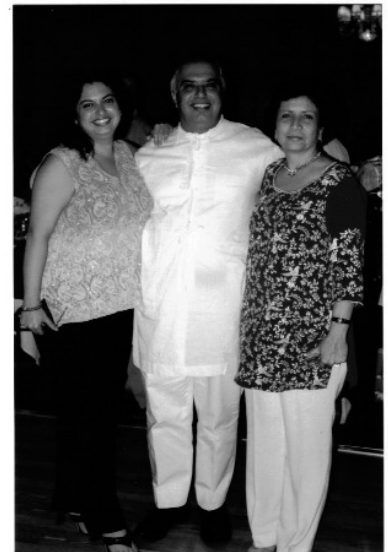
Although based in North America, the committee works for the global community. Over the years we have worked with community members in need from:

- Canada
- Iran
- New Zealand
- USA
- India
- Middle East
- Pakistan

Outlined below is a brief sampling of the types of cases addressed by the "Unity & Welfare" committee:

1. Hospitals aiding in Zarathushti health issues in need of Medical Equipment.
2. Low Income families with sick children and no Medical Insurance (life threatening illnesses).
3. Immigration issues causing immediate family separation.
4. Natural disasters that cause family displacement and affect livelihood.
5. Recovery from Terrorist Acts.
6. Situations of domestic and familial violence.
7. Widows without job skills, needing to re-build their lives.
8. Low Income families suffering loss of child(ren) needing assistance with funeral expenses.
9. The needs of the physically and mentally challenged.

It is our sincerest hope that this report provides a little insight into what our committee does and how it works within the FEZANA structure. Our committee works with extremely sensitive issues and as such we work within the parameters of strict confidentiality. We have experts in the medical, legal and other professional fields who volunteer with us; however, on many occasions advice is sought without divulging names or geographical details of those who seek our assistance. Where applicable every effort is made to give case applicants a support system by establishing a relationship with their local Anjumans or Associations.



If you or someone you know is in need, please feel free to contact us and we assure you that we will do our best to assist. For cases that are not accepted by our committee we will find or refer them to organizations and associations that will be better suited to provide the needed assistance; however, our relationship with you will stay constant until an adequate resolution has been reached.

If you would like to assist our committee by providing your professional services, financial support or would just like to volunteer your time to provide social support to members in need we invite you to please call us and join our family of volunteers and donors.

We would like to say THANK YOU to those who have over the last 9 years shown their support, by lending us everything from their wisdom and listening ear to guidance and financial support.

Until next time....

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

Houtoxi Contractor -- 412-367-2948 or HPMC31@aol.com

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

Freyaz Shroff -- +91-98922-73973 or freyaz@kurniv.com

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



FEZANA Update

FIRES is looking for you!

FEZANA Member Associations have established and located the FEZANA Information, Research and Education System (**FIRES**) at the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH).

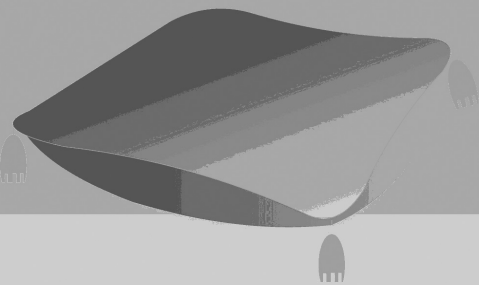
The mission of FIRES is to establish, for all of North America, a centralized collection of books, manuscripts, literature, magazines, and scholarly research materials in print and electronic form, primarily pertaining to Zarathushti faith, culture, and history. It will be a functional North American Zarathushti Library, accessible by FEZANA Associations and individuals for information and research purposes.

In support of this mission, we are asking for one individual from each member Association to serve as a liaison person between your Association and FIRES.

As the liaison person, you may be asked to assist your Association in cataloging its books, and periodically communicating FIRES progress through your Association newsletter or group e-mail.

FIRES is an important initiative of FEZANA, formed with a vision to preserve, protect, and provide a centralized resource of our Zarathushti religion and culture. We urge you to volunteer and be a vital part of this important project.

Please send an e-mail to Aban Rustomji, the Chair of FIRES Operating Committee, at aban@coatingindustries.com if you wish to volunteer, or have any questions.



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Promoting Marriage Survey: A Demographic Crisis for the Next Generation of North American Zarathushtis?

Dinyar Patel

"I am a Parsi girl - age 37 and very keen on marrying a Parsi. But how long can people wait?"

"Please hurry! It is really frustrating, annoying and almost depressing not being able to meet any Zarathushti folks my age."

In April 2011, 202 Zarathushti youth and young adults in North America participated in the "Promoting Marriage Survey," designed to assess the difficulty that the next generation of Zarathushtis face in finding Zarathushti spouses and also generate ideas for how FEZANA, and other community organizations, can help with this issue.

Out of the respondents to the online survey, 86 (42.6 percent) were males and 116 (57.4 percent) were females. Thirty-three respondents (16.3 percent) were between the ages of 20-25; 43 (21.3 percent) were between the ages of 26-30; 71 (35.1 percent), the plurality, were between the ages 31-35; 28 (13.9 percent) were between 36-40; and 27 (13.4 percent) were between 40-45.

I ran this survey as a follow-up to my recent papers and talks on the demographic crisis that the worldwide Zarathushti community, and especially the Indian Parsi community, is facing due to abysmally high rates of late marriage and non-marriage, resulting in smaller and smaller generations of Zarathushti youth.

Survey results indicate that, while many Zarathushti youth and young adults are very keen on finding Zarathushti spouses, a lot of people are not meeting with success. Furthermore, results indicate poor levels of youth/young adult interaction in local associations, financial obstacles toward attending congresses, and a definite sense of disaffection that the next generation is not adequately represented in FEZANA and other community bodies.

A common theme in responses was that there are simply not a large number of fellow Zarathushtis in their vicinity. *"I live in a location where there are no Zarathushtis around me. No one around me!!"*, stated one respondent. This is a stark reality in the North American diaspora, as it is loosely dispersed across the continent. If finding other Zarathushtis to socialize with is difficult, then finding a prospective Zarathushti spouse has become even more challenging. Consequently, those who are keen on finding a

Zarathushti partner must increasingly contemplate a long-distance relationship. While these have worked for some people, many respondents found such relationships extremely difficult.

Respondents acknowledged that FEZANA has done a fair deal of work on youth-related issues, and that congresses and other activities, such as ski trips, have worked well, but stressed that more could be done. A very common complaint was that many youth could not attend regular or youth congresses because they were prohibitively expensive. Many respondents suggested introducing and expanding subsidies.

Aside from congresses, respondents enthusiastically suggested that FEZANA and local associations explore other types of activities to bring youth together on a regional basis. *"It gets expensive to fly all the way to Vancouver or California, but why not have ZAGNY invite ZAGBA and ZAMWI to their events?"* one respondent suggested. Another respondent concurred: *"Better community-to-community communication would be good. If the New Jersey youth are doing something, they should invite the New Yorkers along."*

Many respondents indicated that they have used existing matrimonial sites, both commercial ones like shaadi.com and existing Zarathushti-specific websites that are run privately. Respondents have had mixed experiences on such sites. The great majority of respondents, nevertheless, believed that FEZANA should either set up a matrimonial website or collaborate with an existing one. There was general consensus that, given the dispersed nature of the community, the internet needs to be better harnessed as a connecting force. *"The internet, in some way, is really the answer"* stated one respondent.

The internet can only go so far, ultimately, a lot depends on opportunities for personal interaction both across North America and locally. With some very notable exceptions (especially for those from Houston, Toronto, and Boston), respondents used words such as



FEZANA Update

“poor,” “nonexistent,” “zero,” and “limited” to describe youth and young adult interaction in their local associations. That being said, respondents were candid that much of the problem lies in the apathy and disinterest of the youth and young adults themselves.

A degree of resentment toward adult leadership was evident in some responses. “[Youth interaction] used to be a lot better but now due to a lot of in-fighting among adults things are halted,” one respondent stated. “At our local *dar e mehr*, most youth don’t even show up and are put off with the ‘elders’ who monopolize power every year” another individual commented.

The most striking aspect of these responses was general agreement that, while associations do a good job of promoting interaction for young children and teenagers, activity leveled off thereafter. Much more can be done in order to promote interaction amongst college-age students, young professionals, and young families. These are precisely the age groups on which we need to focus if we do want to promote more marriage, as well as ensure that the newest families are well-integrated into the community.

The survey asked respondents who were married or in a relationship with another Zarathushti to indicate how they found their partner. What our results show us is that, while the internet has facilitated a great number of relationships, it is ultimately personal friends, both Zarathushti and non-Zarathushti, who have facilitated the greatest number of introductions. Local association events, both in North America and elsewhere, have also allowed many couples to meet. More “traditional” methods, such as matchmakers and newspaper matrimonial advertisements, account for the least number of relationships.

The survey also asked respondents who had married non-Zarathushtis as to whether they had tried initially to find a Zarathushti spouse. The majority of respondents to this question indicated that they had. “I did try to find a Zarathushti spouse. I was in a two year long relationship with a Zarathushti and it didn’t work out because it was hard to connect over a sustained period due to the long-distance nature of the relationship,” said one respondent. Another respondent commented that, “Just because many of us ended up marrying non-Zarathushtis does not mean we didn’t try.”

The vast majority of youth and young adult respondents believed that the Zarathushti community needs to be more open and welcoming to both

Zarathushtis who have married non-Zarathushtis and the children of these unions. “I personally think that there are a lot of ‘half Zarathushti’ people out there that like the religion and would love to find a Zarathushti mate, if they felt people would approve. The problem is, even in liberal communities, many parents don’t approve of their child marrying someone who is ‘half,’ one respondent commented. On a related note, many so-called “half” Zarathushtis responded to this survey, indicating their strong attachment to the community and religion, their desire and efforts to remain a part of them, and the many challenges they have faced.

In conclusion, the responses in this survey indicate that much of what FEZANA has done—especially local events and congresses—has been helpful. But a lot more can be done in order to better integrate the youth in the organization and support youth interaction. There is support for a FEZANA, or FEZANA-supported, matrimonial website and social networking site. Cheaper (or better subsidized) and more frequent congresses for the youth are two more options. Associations can hold frequent regional events with neighboring associations, while also better reaching out to individuals in their 20s and 30s (the most crucial demographic for promoting marriage). **Ultimately, youth and young adults themselves need to take initiative and get involved in their communities.**

Time is ticking and concrete action is sorely needed. FEZANA can help by concentrating its efforts, funding, and activities on the youth and young adults, its “next generation.” It must also give real responsibility and authority to them over youth/young adult-related issues and programming. **But at the same time, more youth and young adults need to seriously step up to the plate and take on leadership roles.** Again, time is ticking.

Please read the full results of the survey posted online at the UNESCO Parzor website: <http://www.unescoparzor.com/images/documents/promotingmarriagesurveysummaryreport.pdf>

California born **Dinyar Patel** is a Ph.D Candidate, Modern South Asia, Department of History Harvard University.



NARENDRA MODI, CHIEF MINISTER OF GUJARAT DECLARES

UDVADA AS WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE OF RELIGIOUS HARMONY

Attends the 1290th anniversary of the enthronement of the

Iranshah Fire on April 24, 2011

March 9, 2011 was a momentous day for the Parsi Community of Gujarat in particular and the world in general. Hon. Shri. Narendra Modi, Chief Minister of Gujarat was honored by the High Priests of the Parsi Community in presence of selected elite of the community of Gujarat. The function took place at the Community Centre next to the Chief Minister's residence at Gandhinagar.

Heritage architect Mr. Jamshed Bhiwandiwalla mentioned the heritage and conservation work done by him and his colleague Mr. Pankaj Joshi for Udvada especially the setting up of *Foundation for Development of Udvada's Zoroastrian Information Centre* funded jointly by Government of India and Government of Gujarat through Gujarat Tourism Development Corporation. The road repairs and the sea wall project were all done on the initiative of the Chief Minister and the state mechanism.

A magnificent Casket was presented to the Chief Minister. In the scroll mention was made of the fact that many prominent Parsis and Indians who were born in Gujarat, making Gujarat proud. A copy of the text of the scroll will be deposited in the Information Centre at Udvada •

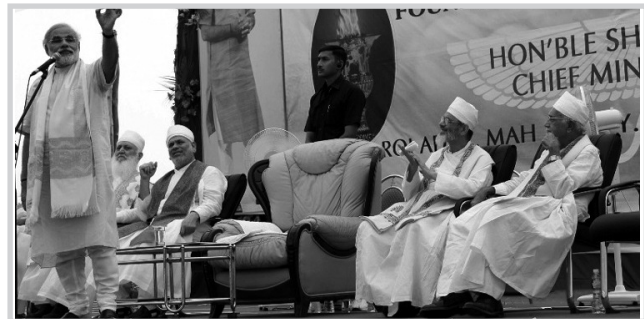
The chief minister reminded the congregation that just as King Jadav Rana had given an assurance to the Parsis that nobody will be allowed to come within ten kilometers of the sacred fire so that it may not be disturbed, he too would uphold that assurance. He graciously and with great pleasure accepted the invitation extended to him by Dasturjis Khurshed and Dr. Peshotan of visiting Udvada on **24th of April 2011** to celebrate the 1290th anniversary of the enthronement of the Holy Iranshah fire. He said that Udvada which was such a quaint village should be widely projected as a symbol of peace and harmony to the world. He expressed the desire that it should have Heritage Status and project itself as the *Global Capital of Peace and Inter-faith Harmony to the World*.

CHIEF MINISTER VISITS UDVADA ON APRIL 24TH 2011 TO CELEBRATE THE 1290 ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENTHRONEMENT OF THE HOLY FIRE AT UDVADA,

On April 24th 2011 Chief Minister Shri Narendra Modi was the special guest at the 1290th Anniversary celebrations of the Atash Behram in Udvada, Valsad. He

declared Udvada village as '**World Heritage Centre of Religious Harmony**', a global centre for peace and harmony and expressed the desire that all Parsis should visit it at least once a year.

Chief Minister Modi was felicitated by the Vada Dasturjis and leaders of the Parsi community. He joined



them in paying his respects to the fire from outside and viewed the display of *Zoroastrian Information Centre* that showcases the lifestyle of Parsis. Shri Modi said he is indebted to Parsi community and that he seeks the blessing of Humata-Hukhta-Hvarshta (Good thoughts-Good words-Good deeds) from Iranshah. (Photo above seated from left Dastur Dr Firoze Kotwa IDastur Kurshedjee Kekobad , Chief Minister Modi (standing) and Dastur Dr Peshotan Mirza, Dastur Meherji Rana)

To Modi it was a matter of utmost pride that the world's smallest of the small, micro minority gave him a standing ovation because whether a regime is working well or not, whether the approach of the regime is same for all or biased towards some is answered and hailed by world's micro-minority here. Modi said there was no other certificate needed now.

"I sometime think that if the Parsi community had not arrived here (shores of Gujarat), what would have happened to us Gujaratis? We would not have learnt to smile, we could not have learnt to face and overcome our problems with smiles," he said.

"This is the community that doesn't want anything from the government. They even don't want election ticket. This shows that their love is without condition, without any expectation, and therefore purest possible. I haven't heard any Parsi going to jail. All other communities have tasted jail term, but not Parsis. Some



FEZANA Update

tradition, some 'Sanskar' must be there to explain this, and Gujarat has benefited by this. One could find a Parsi on the top of every area, be it industry, science, army etc. It is a fact that the Parsi population is not growing, but I think if Parsis did increase, then the nation could get great benefits out of it, and I pray Iranshah for more and more contribution of Parsis to this nation," Modi further said.

Modi said he came to Iranshah with a motive to get blessings for three things that he wanted: "good thoughts, good words and good deeds." *I want blessings so that I don't commit mistake, and I don't do anything that is harmful to anyone."*

Modi appealed to Parsis to visit Shyamji Krishna Verma monument in Mandvi, Kutch where one section is devoted to Madam Cama. *"Madam Cama's glorious history has been showcased in Mandvi, you will be proud of your heritage after visiting that place."*

Modi continued that the government of India had been facilitating once-a-year tour to Iran for Parsis living in India, however it is unfortunate that this tradition has been discontinued by present central government. *"We would put a demand to the Central Government to hold talks with Iran and start facilitating such tours again."* He had also urged the previous Tourism Minister Jagmohan, to start the tours of Udvada and Sanjan. He said, *"In the era of religious and sectarian conflicts, Sanjan and Udvada are the biggest global destinations showcasing religious harmony."*

Dastur Kurshedjee Kekobad hoped that a decade later Shri Modi would be able to attend the 1300th celebration of Iranshah as the Prime Minister of India. He continued that Parsi people felt very secure in Gujarat. And that the 'Foundation for Development of Udvada' is the result of Chief Minister's farsightedness. Zoroastrian Information Centre was also developed with the help of Chief Minister's funding.

Noted Hindi film actor Boman Irani described Shri Modi as the guardian of the sacred fire Atash Behram, second to King Jadav Rana of Sanjan who gave shelter to Parsi people.

BJP national office bearer Smruti Irani, religious leaders, Parsi community leaders and Collector Sushri P.Barthi were present on the occasion among others.

On behalf of the North American Zarathushti community, represented by the NAMC and FEZANA, Ervad Dr. Soli Dastur (right) and Ms. Freyaz Shroff (left) presented plaques to Honorable Shri Narendra Modi, Chief Minister, Gujarat, India, (Photo right top)

The FEZANA Trophy is on a silver base with vinyl trim around. The NAMC trophy is etched in a crystal

plaque. (Due to reflections the photo does not do justice to the beauty of the actual trophies).

**Reported by Parsi Khabar,
Photos Ervad Dr Soli and Jo Ann Dastur**





FEZANA Update

A NEW DAR-E-MEHR IS BORN Zoroastrian Center of North Texas

The Zoroastrian Center of North Texas opened its doors with inauguration prayers on Saturday, April 30, 2011 and followed this event with an Opening Ceremony Gala on Saturday, May 7, 2011. These two weekends

These discussions continued and in 1995 the ZANT Building Fund was created, numerous volunteers participated in the search for land or an existing building. These were years when the community formalized



were truly historic moments in the 22 year history of the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT). Our journey to this momentous occasion of our Opening

Operating Rules for the Building Fund and Center were diligently worked to create a vision for our new home. But funds needed to be there for this vision to become a reality. The funds had started trickling in, but with the formation of the ZANT Fundraising Committee in 2002, chaired by Behram Irani, that effort took on new urgency and yielded immense results. ZANT purchased a 2.5 acre parcel of land in Flower Mound, Texas in 2006, the future home of the Zoroastrian Center of North Texas.



Ceremony has been one of a community binding together to turn a Dream into a Vision and finally that Vision into our Reality! Today, ZANT has a home for religious and social activities, where our elders can draw together and feel comfortable in, our young adults can pray and party in, and most importantly, our youth can gather to grasp the magnitude of their unique religion and heritage through a new sense of belonging.

EARLY BEGINNINGS

ZANT's history recalls a first meeting in early 1991 to discuss the possibility of having a building in North Texas.

The ground breaking ceremony for the Zoroastrian Center of North Texas took place in early 2009. The ZANT Building Committee stepped forward at this critical juncture in our building process to take on the awesome responsibility of managing the construction of our Center. The seven member team, under the leadership of Chairman Jamshed Rivetna, allowed ZANT to begin construction. The Building Committee members are Kamran Behrooz, Kali Buhariwalla, Spenta Irani, Jamshed Jamadar, Karl Mistry and Darius Shroff. These committed individuals each played a vital role in their areas of building and organizational expertise to see this project through to completion. In the words of his fellow Building Committee member, "*Jamshed Rivetna basically took on this enormous responsibility, which equated to a full time job for the past two and a half years.*" Jamshed's countless hours of personal effort for the Building made it possible for ZANT to be its own General Contractor.



Jamshed Jamadar, Karl Mistry, Spenta Irani, Darius Shroff, Jamshed Rivetna, Kali Buhariwalla, and Kamran Behroozi.

Cyrus Rivetna, of Rivetna and Associates, has been responsible for the beautiful architecture of the building. Cyrus, in collaboration with our Building Committee, came up with the layout and design of our Center. Cyrus'



research and knowledge of fire temples in Iran and India was utilized in creating the one of its kind structure we have today. His design prowess is most notable in the wonderful prayer room in our Center. Thanks to the tireless efforts of Firdosh Mehta and the generosity of the Bharuch Agiary in India, we were able to acquire an almost 100 year old Afargaanyu (fire urn) for our prayer room. This Afargaanyu is now an integral part of our new home. Additionally, Technical Advisors owned by Manek Bharucha, a local Engineering business was utilized in the Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing areas. Our Zarthushti community at home and abroad impacted this project in numerous positive ways.

Throughout this process, our community stepped up to meet every challenge with determination and togetherness. We are proud that 70% of the 1.2 million dollars raised to construct this Center was generated from within the ZANT community, a testament to our community and the efforts of our Fundraising Committee. However, we recognize that without the generous donations from Zarathushtis all across the US and the world, we would not have been successful in this effort.

ZANT is grateful to all our well wishers over the years for their steadfast support for this project.

THE RELIGIOUS CEREMONY FOR THE OPENING OF THE CENTRE

The Inauguration Prayers (see page XXXX for detailed report) to open the Zoroastrian Center of North Texas had been a long anticipated event. The planning and preparation encompassed three separate prayer events, a Vendidad Sade Prayer, a Baj Prayer of Sarosh Yazad and an Inauguration Jashan. The early hours of April 29, 2011 began with the first Vendidad Sade Prayers, Ervad Soli Dastur, Ervad Poras Balsara and Ervad Yazdi Dastur prayed for 6 hours straight and completed this prayer before sunrise. The Baj ceremony was performed by Ervad Soli Dastur on the morning of Saturday, April 30. A complete Pavi was created and this was yet another first for our community to witness. The



Ervads Zubin Kotwal, Hormuzd Karkaria, Yazdi Dastur, Soli Dastur, Poras Balsara, Cyrus Dastur and Burzin Balsara, in front

Inauguration Jashan took place later that afternoon, with seven priests presiding; the above mentioned three as well as, Ervads Cyrus Dastur, Zubin Kotwal, Hormuzd Karkaria and our youngest priest, Burzin Balsara. ***The Afargaanyu from this Jashan was led to our prayer room and the Atash was transferred to our main Afargaanyu, bringing our Center to life!***

GALA OPENING OF THE CENTER

Our new Zoroastrian Center of North Texas would celebrate its grand opening on Saturday, May 7, 2011. The masterful planning had begun in earnest with the formation of the Opening Ceremony Committee, led by co-chairs Farieda Irani (in sari) and Arbez Patel, who put their heart and soul into this effort. (photo page 19). Their twelve member team thought of every detail. Since ZANT decided to build this Center in phases and will be building the larger gathering hall in Phase 2, the Committees first task was hosting over 300 guests for this special day. Much research went into locating the one tent company



FEZANA Update

that would provide what ZANT required, thereby making it possible to host this event on our own property, Delnaaz Irani led this effort.

Our Opening Gala was to begin at 11:00 am and our

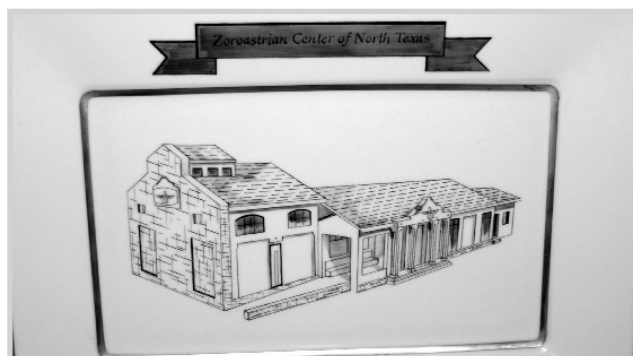


Committee made sure we would keep everyone happy with fresh brewed Starbucks Coffee and biscuits to greet guests upon arrival. Each family received a registration packet containing the program for the afternoon along with a commemorative DVD of ZANT, created by Anahita Sidhwa and Vispi Sarkari. The afternoon began with a benediction led by Ervad Poras T. Balsara

followed by a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem, sung by Zara Patel, with the presentation of the flags by our ZANT Boy Scouts. Saghar Behrooz and Keshvar



Buhariwalla served as the Master of Ceremonies for the day. The ZANT Awards Presentation recognized all those who assisted in bringing the Zoroastrian Center of North Texas to reality. Each award recipient was presented with a personalized award created by Karin Nayar, a hand drawn replica of our Center on a ceramic plate, beautifully finished with gold borders. (photo right above) We also had a few special recognitions on this day, the most memorable of which was the presentation of quilts to our ZANT Children's Religious Class teachers, Pearl Balsara, Nina Kalianivala and Sherazade Mehta. (photo right) These quilts were handmade by Dilnawaz Rustomji, from blocks created by each child. The stage



overflowed with children as they were asked to come forward to present this award to their teachers.

With the awards completed, the entertainment part of our program began. The program, *ZANT from A to Z*, was directed by Cyra Shroff, assisted by Sherazade Mehta and it was a production that included over 80 cast members. The concept, detailed planning, and flawless execution was in large part due to the efforts of Cyra. Her



creative talents have no bounds and ZANT was able to put on a show that showcased the best of our community. The practice schedules started months ago and the end result showed the dedication of these many hours. There were songs prerecorded, introductions for each letter of the alphabet in poetic verse, dances choreographed, rap lyrics created, and costumes and props that would dazzle any theater goer. Many volunteers were involved in these processes and the outcome was a magnificent show enjoyed by all.

Lunch was then served. A feast of Mediterranean delicacies to include lamb shank and salads was catered from a local favorite restaurant. Our dessert included



FEZANA Update

cakes served with three different types of tea. People mingled, chatted, took tours of the new Center and many made their way to the Prayer Room. The garlands that hung throughout the Center and especially on our main door were beautifully created by Kashmira Mistry and Nina Kalianivala. The afternoon was picture perfect, with sunshine and a slight breeze. The interment of the time capsule, designed and created by Firdosh Mehta, was the final official ceremony of the day. A crowd gathered outside the prayer room and prayers were done by all as we lowered the capsule into the cavity that had so carefully been planned from day one of construction.(photo below) All that was left was to clean the Center and get it ready for our Children's Religious Class the following afternoon. For the past 15 years, these classes have always been held on the second Sunday of each month, well that Sunday in May was the following day! Ruth Dinaz Sarkari was the committee lead in ensuring this task was completed and along with the help of many, the center sparkled to its morning glory!



Our day was perfect, it could not have been better and the work of many volunteers insured just that outcome.

What a wonderful day of so many moments and memories, one that our ZANT community will remember forever. As we were all cleaning up, it dawned on us that we were cleaning up our own home now, not a rented Senior Center that we have used for so many years or a community club house. We were not on a strict time crunch to turn back a key, no this was our home now. The kids were welcome to keep running around outside, the adults were welcome to keep on sipping on their choice of teas and those who chose to, could make their way to a beautifully stunning prayer room, one that reminded many of a prayer room from their youth, and just enjoy this new home we now call the Zoroastrian Center of North Texas.

Photo credits Kali Buhariwala

Keshvar Buhariwala

is the mom to three young men, Zaal, Cyrus and Hormuz, the fourth young man in her life is her husband Kali. She has been involved in ZANT from the mid 90's, serving on two ZANT Boards and being involved in the ZANT Building process from the beginning. She served as



the Master of Ceremonies, along with Saghar Behroozi, for the Opening Ceremony Gala.



Cyra Shroff and Sherazade Mehta , directors of the program ZANT A to Z performing



Seniors performing in the ZANT Program A to Z. From left Adi and Arnavaz Vakharia, Samad Parvin Moghadam, Rusi nad Zenobia Dadyburjor



Young rappers in the ZANT Program A to Z , rapping to P for prayers : Arshan Irani on mike and Jamsheed Yazdani



COMING EVENTS

JULY 2011, FIFTH WORLD ZOROASTRIAN YOUTH CONGRESS, VANCOUVER, BC,
June 29- July 34, 2011.
Congress2011@hotmail.com

SEPTEMBER 2-4 2011 GOPIO INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, Toronto, Canada
CONTACT jay@jaybanerjeei.com

SEPTEMBER 3-4 2011. 7th UNITY CUP SOCCER TOURNAMENT, Los Angeles The Zoroastrian Sports Committee (ZSC) of FEZANA.
ZSC@fezana.org

SEPTEMBER 3-5, 2011, 64th Annual DPI/NGO Conference of the United Nations, BONN, GERMANY
"Sustainable Societies: Responsive Citizens"

SEPTEMBER 11, 2011 UNITY WALK
Unity Walk on 9/11/2011, Embassy Row, 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Begins at Washington Hebrew Congregation and concludes at Mahatma Gandhi Memorial, Massachusetts Ave, NW, Washington DC
www.911unitywalk.org

SEPTEMBER 17-18, 2011, NEW YORK, PARSİ NATAK SASOO NO SUNTAP, a hilarious comedy by Toronto Parsi Drama Group, fund-raiser for the 16th North American Congress, August 1-5, 2012.

NOVEMBER 19-22, 2011 Annual Meeting, American Academy of Religions, San Francisco, California, Moscone Center & Surrounding Hotels
http://www.aarweb.org/Meetings/Annual_Meeting/Current_Meeting/default.asp

FEBRUARY 2012, 56th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women February 27-March 9, UN, New York. Theme: *The empowerment of rural women*

and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges. Contact UN-NGO co-chairs Afreed Mistry afreed.mistry@gmail.com, Homi D Gandhi homidgandhi@gmail.com, Behram Pastakia bpastakia@aol.com,

JULY 4, 2012 13th ZOROASTRIAN GAMES, hosted by Zoroastrian Society of Ontario.

AUGUST 2012, SIXTEENTH NORTH AMERICAN ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS NEW YORK, August 1-5, 2012. Zarathushti Existence in the Contemporary World
www.zagny.org

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Calendar of Festivals

MARCH 2011 to SEPTEMBER 2011

FRAVARDEGAN/PHANJEH/HAMAPATHMEDAYEM Gahambai

Five Gatha Days

Wednesday March 16- Sunday, March 20 (F)

CHAR-SHAMBE SOORI (Heralding the New Year)

Tuesday Prior to Naurooz

Tuesday, March 15 (F)

NAUROOZ or JAMSHEDI NAUROOZ (New Year)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd

Monday, March 21 (F)

KHORDAD SAL (Birth anniversary of Asho Zarathushtra)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Khorshed

Saturday, March 26, (F)

PIR E HERISHT FESTIVAL

Mah Fravardin, Roz Amardad-Khorshed

Sunday, March 27-Thursday March 31 (F)

AVA ARDVISOOR NU PARAB

Mah Avan, Roz Avan

Thursday, February 24, (K)

Saturday, March 26, (S)

FRAVARDEGAN (Remembrance of the Departed)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin

Friday, April. 8. (F)

JASHNE ARDIBESHTGAN

Mah Ardibesht, Roz Ardibehesht

Friday, April, 22. (F)

ATASH-NU-PARAB

Mah Adar, Roz Adar,

Friday, March 25 (K)

Sunday, April, 24 (S)

MAIDYOZAREM GAHAMBAR

Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed-Dae-pa-Meher

Saturday, April 30- Wednesday, May 4 F

ZARATHUSHT-NO-DISO (Death anniversary of Asho Zarathushtra)

Mah Dae, Roz, Khorshed

Tuesday, April, 26, (K)

Thursday, May, 26 (S)

DAE MAH NU JASHAN

Mah Dae, Roz Fravardin

Wednesday, May, 4 (K)

Friday, June, 3 (S)

MAIDHYAREM GAHAMBAR

Mah Dae, Roz Meher-Bahram

Sunday, May1-Thursday, May 5 (K)

Tuesday, May 31-Saturday, June 4 (S)

PIR-E-SABZ Festival

Mah Khordad, Roz Ashtad-Aneran

Tuesday, June 14 - Saturday, June 18. (F)

PIR-E-BANU Festival

Mah Tir, Roz Meher-Bahram

Monday, July 4 - Friday July 8 (F)

MAIDYOSHEM GAHAMBAR

Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed-Dae pa-Meher

Wednesday June 29-Sunday July 3 (F)

JASHNE TIRGAN

Mah Tir, Roz Tir

Friday, July 1, (F)

FRAVARDINGAN/MUKTAD/HAMAPATHMEDAYEM Gahambar

Five Gatha Days

Friday July 15- Tuesday, July 19 (K)

Sunday, August 14-Thursday, August 18 (Pateti) (S)

NAU ROOZ

Mah Fravadin, Roz Hormazd

Wednesday, July 20 (K)

Friday, August 19 (S)

KHORDAD SAL (Birth anniversary of Zarathushtra)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad

Monday, July 25 (K)

Wednesday, August, 24 (S)

FRAVARDIN JASHAN

Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin

Sunday, August 7, (K)

Tuesday, September, 6 (S)

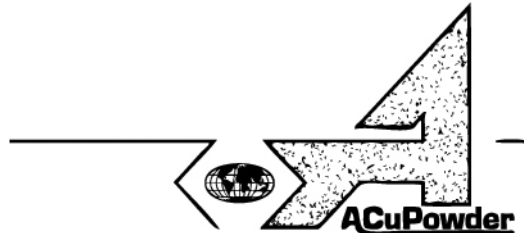
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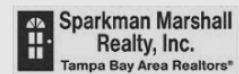
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FOOD FOR THE MIND, BODY AND SOUL ZARATHUSHTI CULINARY TRADITIONS

Sarosh Khariwala, Arnavaz Chubb, Benafsha Khariwala (Melbourne)

Besides prayer, food is the greatest bond that binds and brings Zarathushtis together. Whether we live to eat or eat to live, food and all that goes with it, from the preparation to consumption, is an integral part of our culture and way of life as Zarathushtis. From lavish celebratory feasts to solemn liturgical rituals, food and the enjoyment of Ahura Mazda's bounty surely defines the Zarathushti ethos more than anything else. Zarathushti philosophy and theology may be cogitated in ivory towers, but it is in the family kitchen that a big part of our culture and traditions have been kept alive.

To the Zarathushtis of the Diaspora, memories of home are often linked to food and returns to the motherland almost always involve gastronomic indulgences that are long remembered despite or because of the sometimes violent protestations of the digestive tract.

We live in times when coronary conditions, diabetes and other insidious lifestyle diseases threaten to stand between the Zarathushti and the enjoyment of their culinary birthright. Or so we are given to understand. Our forebears however were celebrated for their longevity and vigor. What was their secret? Come, let us sniff and savor our way through the delights of our Zarathushti culinary heritage and discover how and why we nourish our minds, bodies and souls.

Within these pages, foodies from all walks of life record and revive the favorite and the forgotten delicacies that make up our culinary heritage. Academics and priests give us an insight into historical, nutritional and religious aspects of food, while chefs and passionate cooks share their recipes and stories. Our thanks and appreciation goes to all the contributors for their efforts and the friendships forged along the way. We all have to eat to live, so in what better way can Zarathushtis participate and share in preserving and perpetuating our traditions than through cooking and eating.

When Dolly Dastoor first approached Sarosh Khariwala, President of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia and his wife Benafsha to guest edit this issue of FEZANA, the task was taken on with enthusiasm and some trepidation. Sarosh, a chef and Benafsha, a pharmacist involved in the production of professional pharmaceutical journals co-opted Arnavaz Chubb, a student of the Zarathushti religion and one time Editor of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria newsletter, to join the team. Rashna Tata, erstwhile President of the Zarathushtrian Association of New Zealand; and Jehangir Mehta self-confessed foodie and past President of the Zoroastrian Association of Western Australia, have assisted and contributed to this Journal, making it a truly Down Under effort.

Our thanks to Dolly Dastoor and Behram Pastakia for their invitation to guest edit and for their guidance, patience and faith in us while we gathered, prepared and eventually plated up this tribute to our gastronomic heritage.

Be farmoid and jamvaa chaaloji



From left Benafsha Khariwala, Sarosh Khariwala and Arnavaz Chubb,

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Ba Naame Yazad - Prayer of Grace

Rusi Sorabji (Campbell, CA, USA)

Before and after any meal in a Zarathushti home came the thanks giving prayer. It used to be recited by the head of the family at the dining table before partaking of any meal in Zarathushti households of old. With folded hands and closed eyes we recited the prayers. Once that was over, with happy anticipation we attacked the always delicious Parsi/Irani dishes that was served to us.

The following is the traditional prayer of grace with its translation in *italics* below.

**BA NAAMEE YAZADE BAKHSHAAYANDEHE
BAKHSHAYASHGARE MEHRBAN
ITHA AT YAZAMAIDE AHUREM MAZDAM
YE GAMCHA ASHEMCHA DAT
APASCHA DAT URVAOSCHA VANGHEUSH
RAOCHAOSCHA DAT BOOMEMCHA VISPACHA VOHU**

In the name of the Lord Benevolent, Gracious, and Kind

Here we worship Ahura Mazda

The Giver of The Righteous Earth

The Giver of The Good Waters And Plants

Giver of Lustre to The Entire Earth

It is concluded with the Ashem Vohu prayer (three times):

**ASHEM VOHU VASHISTEM ASTI
USHTAA ASTI, USHTAA AHMAAI
HYAT ASHAAI VAHISHTAAI ASHEM**

*Righteousness is the best good
and it is happiness; happiness is his,
who is righteous for the sake of being righteous.*



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FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL USE OF FOOD

FOOD IN ZARATHUSHTRIAN RITUALS

Ramiyar P Karanjia (Mumbai)

Food is essential to the body and the body is essential to the soul. So, in a way, eating food is a religious and spiritual act as it nourishes the body, the greatest ally of the soul. The most commonly used word for food in the Avesta is *khvaretha*. This word is sometimes also used figuratively to indicate food for the soul, as in Yasna 55.2, where the Gathas are considered food for the soul. The word 'bad food' is also used in the Gathas (e.g. Yasna



TRAY OF FRUIT FOR GAHAMBAR

31.20 and 49.11) for the recompense that comes to the lot of the evil doers.

In this article, we will talk of tangible, tasty, cooked food used in our rituals, which strengthen and invigorate the physical body and make the taste buds dance with joy. In almost every Zarathushti ritual some food item is present. In the outer liturgical rituals like Afringan, Jashan and Farokshi, generally fruits are used, but in rituals like Stum, cooked food items are used. The Iranian Zarathushtis offer cooked food like naan in their rituals which are especially connected to the gahambar celebrations.

DRON

The dron or daran is the most ubiquitous cooked food used in all inner rituals like Baj-dharna, Yasna and Vendidad. The word dron is derived from Avesta *draonah*, and is used in the sense of 'a part, a portion' offered through consecration in a ritual, to divine beings. The word dron is variously rendered into English as 'sacred bread', 'sacramental bread', 'unleavened round bread', 'unleavened wheat bread made into thin round cakes', 'consecrated bread', 'sacred cake' or 'wheat cake'.

The dron is made of unleavened good quality wheat flour, ghee (clarified butter) and water. The flour is first kneaded with clean water and made into small rounds



COMMUNAL NAAN MAKING IN YAZD

which are flattened by a velan (metallic rolling pin) and then heated on a tava (hot plate) till it is evenly cooked. Sometimes a special rolling pin with metallic beads is used. The clinging sound it makes is supposed to keep away evil while preparation is in progress.

The dron are preferably cooked on wooden fires. Even in modern times, much after the advent of gas and electric stoves, open wooden fires are the preferred cooking option. Traditionally, dron are exclusively prepared by male or female members of the priestly class and are generally made fresh each day and not re-used the following day.

One dron is used in the performance of all inner rituals, except for the Baj-dharna ceremony, in which 4 or 6 are used for each performance. Four different types of dron are used in the Baj-dharna ceremony. One type has 9 marks on it, referred to as '*names*'. In Gujarati they are referred to as *nam padela* (one that has been given a name) or *nam vala* (one with a name) *daran*. The '*names*' refer to the 3 marks that are made with a rolling pin or tip of a knife while the dough is being rolled out. The marks are made in 3 rows, starting from down to up while thrice uttering the Avestan words *Humata*, *Hukhta*, *Huvarshata* (good thoughts, good words, good deeds).

Frasast is the name applied to plain dron, which do not have any marks on it. However nowadays, there is no difference between dron and frasast and mostly unmarked dron are used. *Chitya* are the smaller dron about 3 inches in diameter, which are used for specific Baj-dharna performances. In Iran, the term *luwag* was used to refer to a big dron. It could be made from any flour. In India, in the *Baj of Siroza* somewhat larger and sweeter drons are



consecrated, which may be a reflection of the Iranian practice of keeping luwag.

OTHER PREPARATIONS

There are some specifically Zarathushti cooked preparations which may optionally be placed in the morning Stum or Baj-dharna rituals. *Malida* is a sweet preparation used especially in Jashan and Baj ritual. It is made from wheat flour, semolina, ghee and sugar. *Papri*, which is prepared from wheat flour and generally goes along with malida, are round, thin, hard and salty fried preparations, about 4 inches in diameter. *Chapta* are a sweet fried delicacy, mainly used in the Siroza Baj. They are made from wheat flour and usually have a filling of coconut shavings cooked in sugar syrup. They are semi-circular in shape with the diameter of around 6 inches. *Bhakhra* are deep-fried, thick doughnut like preparations made from wheat flour. Other sweet preparations which are similar are *karkaria* and *popatji*. Three sweetmeat-like preparations which are usually offered in jashans, especially at the time of gahambar, are *kopra-pak* made from coconut and sugar, *maisur* made from wheat flour and *gor papri* made from jaggery and wheat flour.

Varadh-pattar/Varadh-vara is a special preparation made and consecrated especially at the time of weddings. It is made essentially from flour, semolina, ghee and sugar. It is consecrated in a Baj with the invocation of *Mino Ram Yazad* a couple of days before the wedding.

Recipes for most of the above delicacies can be found in books such as *Parsi Food and Customs* by Ms. Bhicoo J Manekshaw and *Jamva Chaloji* by Dr Katy F Dalal.

STUM

The stum is the special ritual for food offerings. This name is derived from the Avestan word *Staomi* which means 'praise'. In this ritual, cooked food, prepared by a Zarathushti who observes the strict rules of ritual purity, is offered to the souls and fravashis of the dear departed ones. Offering of food plays a significant role from a ritual and theological view point in Zarathushti religion. Though the souls and fravashis do not physically consume the food, it is believed that they enjoy and appreciate the aroma of the food and feel remembered and contented.

The stum ritual is generally performed three times a day, at or around the time of breakfast, lunch and dinner/supper. In the breakfast stum, tea or milk and certain sweetmeats connected with breakfast like *ravo* (semolina custard) are offered. In the stum ritual performed at the time of lunch and supper, cooked dishes such as rice, daal, curry, vegetables, non-vegetarian dishes (optional) and sweet dishes along with salads and chapatis are offered.

Since ancient times, Zarathushtis have offered food in rituals. Theopompus wrote in his book *History* in the 4th century BCE that a table of food would be set for the immortal spirits of the kings either in the outer precinct of the fire temple, a community building or the palace. This practice seems to be the stum ritual or something very similar. The stum ritual is also mentioned in the Persian *Rivayats* which were written between the 15th and 18th centuries.

The idea of offering food stems from the desire expressed by the fravashis in the *Fravarden Yasht* (XIII.50): *Ko no stavat ko yazaito ko ufyat ko frinat ko paiti janat gaomata jasta vastravata ashanas nemangha* (Who will praise us, who will honour us, who will love us, who will welcome us with offerings of clothes, food and sincere prayers).

We are further told in paragraph 52 that being satisfied with the offerings, the fravashis bless the persons who remember them, in the following words: *'May there be in this house an increase of cattle and men! May there be a swift horse and a solid chariot! May the man who prays to us with offerings of food and clothing be famous and powerful.'*

Ervad Dr Ramiyar Parvez Karanjia, is the Principal of Dadar Athornan Institute, and Sir J J Z and M F Institutes for Indo-Iranian Studies in Mumbai. He has obtained his Masters and Doctorate in Avesta-Pahlavi from Bombay University. He teaches Avesta and Pahlavi at undergraduate and post graduate levels. He has

worked as a research scholar with Universities and Institutes in Sweden, Germany and Moscow. An author of various books, he conducts courses and seminars, gives talks, and presents papers on Zarathushti religion, spirituality and Iranian history all over the world, for children, youths and adults.

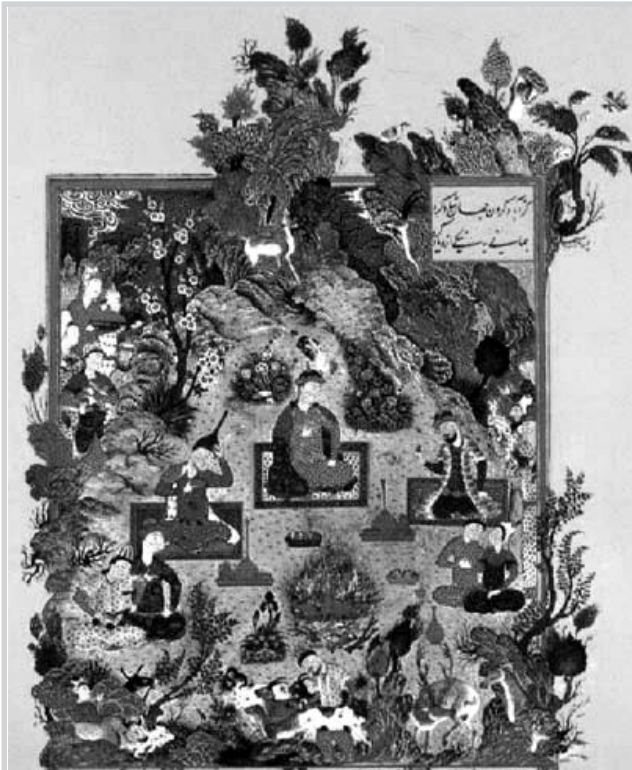


FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL USE OF FOOD

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON ANCIENT PERSIAN-IRANIAN CUISINE

K E Eduljee (West Vancouver, Canada)



The first Aryan feast in legend. King Hushang and the Feast of Sadeh celebrating the discovery of the divine fire. Humans and animals live in harmony

PRE-HISTORICAL REFERENCES

Anthropology informs us that humans first started as hunter gatherers and then advanced to settled agrarian communities. For the early Aryans, this transformation seemed to have happened sooner than later. In the archaeological finds along the northern slopes of the Kopet Dag mountains that form the modern border between Iran and Turkmenistan (Parthia or Parthava), we find evidence of what may be some of the oldest settled agrarian communities known to humankind.¹ Early Aryans also developed a system of water irrigation using the *kareez* underground water supply system.²

Legend informs us that during the Pishdadian era and the age of King Hushang, the concept of agriculture and domestication of animals were further developed.³ Domestication of animals had first started during the preceding age; the *Age of Gaya Maretan* (Gayomard, Kaiumars) or the Aryan Stone Age.

According to anthropologists, humans were generally hunter gatherers during the Stone Age. But were the Aryans of prehistory, hunters and meat eaters? The *Shahnameh* might contain clues to the answers preserved in myth and legend. Early Iranian-Aryan cuisine may have been vegetarian – based on flat bread, vegetables and perhaps dairy products.

WERE ANCIENT IRANIANS AND ZARATHUSHTIS VEGETARIANS?

In Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, there is a story of the seduction of Zakhak by *Ahriman* or *Iblis* (Islamic word for the devil).⁴ Zakhak was the 'foreign' king who overthrew King Jamshid. In the story, *Ahriman* moves to bring Zakhak under his control by becoming his cook and seducing him with meat. A section of the *Shahnameh* (adapted from the Warners' translation) reads:

Foods then were few, yet men did not kill to eat

But lived on the earth's produce of vegetal.

Scheming the evil-doing Ahriman designed

To slaughter animals for food, and serve both bird and beast.

That the monarch when possessed of the carnal lust for blood and flesh

Would as a slave obey him, and do all his bidding yet.

Zakhak develops a taste and fondness for meat and comes under the control of Ahriman. What follow are the overthrow of King Jamshid by Zakhak and the completion of the first great Aryan tragic cycle. The Aryan lands which had risen to great glory, now fell on evil times.

When Ferdowsi made *Ahriman* or *Iblis* the initiator of eating slaughtered animal flesh, he couldn't have made his point about the ethics of eating animal flesh more emphatically. Ferdowsi's principal source is reputed to be the Middle Persian Pahlavi Zarathushti work, the *Khvatay-Namak* (*Khodai-Nama*).

Dr Pallan Ichaporia states that the only direct reference in a Zarathushti text to vegetarianism is a sentence in Book 6 of Dinkard the 9th century CE Middle Persian (Pahlavi) text written by High Priest *Atrupat-e Emetan*.⁵ Based on Ichaporia's translation this author has: 'They hold this also: O you people (mardoman), be plant eaters (*urwar khwarishn* i.e. *vegetarian*) so that you may live long. Keep away from the body of animals (*tan-i gospan* - body of sheep. Ichaporia has 'meat of cattle'), and deeply reckon that Ohrmazd, the Lord has created



plants in great number for helping living creatures {Ichaporia has 'cattle (and men')}.'}

Frashogard (journal of the Ilm-e Khshnoom movement) states that at *frashogard* (Avestan *frashokereti* - making anew or the final renovation), death of any kind will be no more. The connotation here is that humankind will then become vegetarian.

Today, other than individuals or a sub-group such as the Parsi Vegetarian & Temperance Society, we have no consistent tradition of community-wide Zarathushti vegetarianism. The Zarathushti bastions of Irani/Parsi food in India, the Irani cafés are noticeably non-vegetarian. Nevertheless, this author has heard Iranians state that according to tradition, consuming an excess of red meat and fats results in evil thoughts and make a person selfish.

If ancient Iranians or Zarathushtis were indeed vegetarian, that tradition only survives in legend. By the Achaemenian era some 2500 years ago, the Persians, and by implication Zarathushtis, were meat eaters.

DIETARY TRAINING OF ACHAEMENIAN PERSIAN CHILDREN

Several classical Hellenic authors discuss Persian cuisine or eating habits during the Achaemenian era (700-330 BCE). Xenophon (430-354 BCE) mentions in *Cyropaedia*, the biography of King Cyrus the Great (559-530 BCE), that children were taught self-restraint (2.8) and that their lunch was – if the Athenian Xenophon will excuse this metaphor – spartan.⁶ For lunch, the children brought to school from home bread and cresses (the relish of cresses included herbs and nasturtium). We are given the impression that the bread the Persians ate was flat bread or bread cakes made from wheat or barley flour. Children were taught the virtues of self-restraint, control of their hunger and to eat only at meal times. Over indulgence and gluttony were seen as a vice. When the children grew older, they accompanied the king on hunting expeditions. Ostensibly, the hunting party ate and brought back game.

ACHAEMENIAN PERSIAN KING'S TABLE

According to Greek authors, the early simplicity of Persian fare gave way to exotic cuisine in the Achaemenian era. The level of sophistication of Persian cuisine was at its highest at the king's table during a feast. Several Hellenic writers attest to the amazement at the food served at the Persian king's table. *'For just as all other arts are developed to superior excellence in large cities, in that same way the food at the king's palace is also elaborately prepared with superior excellence.'* (Cyropaedia 8.2.5.)

Xenophon: *'Again, whatever sorts of bread and pastry for the table had been discovered before, none of all those have fallen into disuse, but they keep on always inventing something new besides; and it is the same way with meats; for in both branches of cookery they actually have artists to invent new dishes.'* (Cyropaedia 8.8.16.) Athenaeus of Naucratis in *Letter of Parmenion* (8.8.16) mentions cooks who specialized in dairy dishes and that different dishes were brought to the table in courses.

An account by Macedonian writer Polyaeus (2nd century CE) lists the ingredients for the king's dinner as 'sweet grape jelly, candied turnips and radishes prepared with salt, candied capers with salt, from which delicious stuffings are made, terebinth (pistachio nut) oil, Ethiopian cumin and Median saffron' (*Strategemata* 4.3.32). In this and other references mentioning the use of dates, pomegranates, figs, apples, raisins, and almonds, as well as the planting and use of quince and pear. In Persepolis' inscriptions, we see that fruit and nuts are classic ingredients in Persian cuisine and the list of ingredients is long and varied.

In *Deipnosophistae* (dinner of the sophisticates), Athenaeus remarks that cleanliness at the king's table was paramount. *'All who attend upon the Persian kings when they dine first bathe themselves, spend nearly half the day on preparations for the dinner and then serve in white clothes.'*

From Aelian's *Varia Historia* (2.17) the vision of how the Persians ate is that of a knife held in the right hand and a piece of bread held in the left hand. The food (presumably held in place by a piece of bread) was cut with the knife and then placed on the piece of bread. The combination of bread and morsel was then placed in the mouth.

The British Museum states that *'Dining in Achaemenid Persia must have been a spectacular affair. Gold and silver vessels seem to have been plentiful... The craftsmen who made them were highly skilled and came from as far away as Egypt and India'. 'Ancient Persian cuisine was highly developed, with specialty cooks, armies of servants and elaborate dining etiquette. Seating plans were complicated and banquets were typically composed of several different courses. Fruit, nuts and saffron are among the classic Iranian ingredients which originated in the Achaemenid period and are still used today.'*

Silver duck-headed spoons have been found at Pasargadae and *Ikiz tepe*. The surviving evidence of forks dates to Sasanian times, 500 to 1000 years later. Nevertheless, Persians were using forks, knives and spoons at least 1500 years ago.

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL USE OF FOOD



Finely crafted gold bowl from Hamadan(?) at the British Museum. It has a cunneiform inscription around the neck written in old Persian, Babylonian and Elamite, and records "Xerxes the King"

PARTHIAN CUISINE

The Parthians (247 BCE-224 CE) overthrew post-Alexander Macedonian rule of Iranshahr. The Parthians were native to the northeast of today's Iran and North Khorasan province.

Parthian Soup (*Eshkeneh*): During campaigns, soldiers of the first Parthian king, Arshak I (Arsaces I) reportedly supped on an onion soup, a predecessor of today's *eshkeneh* soup made with sautéed onions, fresh fenugreek and eggs (as in an egg swirl soup).

Roman texts *De Re Coquinaria* by Marcus Gavius Apicius (4th to 5th century CE) and *De Agricultura* by Marcus Porcius Cato give us some Parthian recipes.

Parthian Chicken (Apicius 6.9.2): Sprinkle chicken liberally with pepper. Combine wine, fish sauce and laser (*asafetida*), lovage (perennial seasoning herb) and caraway seeds and pour over the chicken. Cook covered and then open to roast and brown the chicken. Serve with sauce poured over the chicken.

Parthian Lamb (Apicius 3.6.5): Rub lamb with olive oil, chopped garlic, salt and pepper. Roast and baste with wine. Sauté chopped onions in olive oil with salt, pepper and herbs. Add prune, fish sauce and crushed garlic and cook to a sauce. Pour wine over roasted lamb and serve with sauce.

Parthian Bread: Roman legions were familiar with 'Parthian bread' and Pliny (the elder, 23-79 CE) claimed that it would keep for centuries. The bread was hard and crisp similar to a cracker. It was probably twice baked like a biscuit since double baking improves keeping qualities.

SASANIAN CUISINE

A Sasanian era (224–652 CE) book translated by Jamshedji Maneckji Unvala, *King Husrav and His Boy* (P Geuthner, Paris, 1921) contains references to Sasanian cuisine. In the text, Khosrow II (580/591-628 CE) interviews a young man of noble birth named Vashpur for a position as his page. King Khosrow poses 13 questions to Vashpur to test his nobility. In one of his questions, Khosrow asks Vashpur which dish was the finest and most savoury.

Vashpur describes a preparation made from the organ meats of a 2-month-old lamb fed on its mother's milk and



A flask of wine, a book of verse and thou.....scene from the Rubaiyat of Omer Khayyam. Artist Rene Bull (1872-1942)

also cow's milk, rubbed with olive juice, marinated with herbs, cooked in a beef broth and drizzled with whey (*kashk*). Today in Yazd, Kerman, and Azerbaijan, a similar preparation called *boz ghormeh* is served. *Boz ghormeh* is goat's meat or mutton pieces, sautéed in butter and simmered in a beef broth to which saffron, salt and pepper (turmeric, cinnamon, tarragon and mint are optional) have been added. The meat is served topped with fried chopped onions and drizzled with yogurt or whey (*kashk*).



TIDBITS

First pizza: There is a story (6th to 5th century BCE) that links Darius the Great's soldiers with making the first 'pizza' using their shields over a fire. The 'pizza' was made from flat bread topped with cheese, dates and herbs.

Pasta originated in Iran, not China: According to chef/author Najmieh Batmanglij, 'most food scholars agree that pasta originated in Iran, not in China as the Marco Polo legend has it'. Noodles are a significant ingredient in aush (soup).

Sugar: Anne Wilson, in *The Book of Marmalade*, theorizes that 'the Persians may have been the first people to have employed sugar as a foodstuff'.

WINE

Wine lies at the heart of Persia's culture. Sipping and enjoying wine lace the verses of classical romantic Persian poetry as exemplified by Edward Fitzgerald's translation of a verse from Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat* (1048-1131 CE)

Here with a loaf of bread beneath the bough

A flask of wine, a book of verse and thou

Beside me singing in the wilderness

And wilderness is paradise now.

Several Greek writers document the Persian fondness for drinking filtered beer (barley wine) and wine during public banquets. Despite Herodotus' account of the Persians being 'very fond of wine' (Histories 1.133), Persian texts speak of moderation as the rule and excess as being deviant.

The making and drinking of wine has been associated with Persia and the surrounding regions from earliest times. The name Shiraz is indelibly associated with wine now produced around the world. Shiraz is located in the southern Zagros mountain region of south-western Iran. There is evidence of wine making in Hajji Firuz and Godin Tepe located further north in the Zagros mountain region of Western Iran from around 5400 BCE.⁷ Far preceding the making of wine in France 5000 years later in the 6th century BCE.

Ferdowsi's predecessor, Tajik poet Daqiqi (935/942-980 CE) wrote these poignant lines before he was murdered by his servant – enraged because Daqiqi admired the Zarathushtrian faith and lamented the loss of his native Aryan culture after the Arab hordes had overrun Iranshahr:

Of all that's good or evil in the world,

Four things suffice to meet Daqiqi's needs.

*Ruby-coloured lips, the harp's lament, blood-red wine
and Zarathushtra's creed.*

A legacy of ancient Zarathushtrian-Iranian cuisine is the accompanying culture of sophistication, good manners, moderation and romance

NOTES

1 Nisaya from <www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/nisa/anau.htm>

2. Kareez underground water supply system
<www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/kareez/index.htm>

3. Aryan prehistory <www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/aryans/prehistory.htm#hushang>

4. Shahnameh Zakhak. <www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/shahnameh/page07.htm>

5. Vegetarianism in Zoroastrian teachings. Dr Pallan R Ichaporia. <tenets.zoroastrianism.com/vege33.html>.

6. Xenophon's Cyropaedia. <www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/reference/xenophon/cyropaedia/cyropaedia1.htm>

7. Hajji Firuz. World's oldest wine-making.
<www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/urmia/index.htm#firuz>

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FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL USE OF FOOD

CELEBRATION OF ALL CREATION - THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GAHAMBAR

Armin Wandrewala (Mumbai, India)

The genesis and provenance of the *gahambar* is shrouded in the mists of time. The gahambar as it was observed and celebrated centuries ago, was doubtless vastly different from the gahambar as it is now understood, observed and celebrated. The essentials, however, remain unchanged and the gahambar continues to be a time for the community to come together, to feast and to bond! The origins and meaning of the word *gahanbar* or *gahambar* vary. According to the Iranians, the word is *gahanbar*, derived from the Persian, signifying storage of food for the lean winter months. Another version describes the word gahambar as a time for gathering of food and people. Yet another version places the literal meaning as 'the proper season'. Some scholars credit the provenance to the Pahlavi word *gaasamber* - *gaas* meaning time, and *ambar* meaning getting together of people. Consensus evidently boils down to: a time for gathering of food and people, in various seasons. According to some scholars, the gahambars are said to be instituted by the Prophet Zarathushtra himself, and are the only festivals mentioned in the Avesta. King Jamshed is credited with having initiated the gahambar ceremony. Initially, agricultural in nature, the gahambar subsequently assumed religious and social dimensions, as well as cosmological.

Each year 6 gahambars are celebrated and represent the changing seasons, as also the 6 stages of the evolution of the Universe, reflecting the 6 primordial creations of Ahura Mazda:

1. Maidyozarem Gahambar, the mid-spring feast (heaven), from April 30 to May 4;
2. Maidyoshahem Gahambar, the midsummer feast (water), from June 29 to July 3;
3. Paitishahem Gahambar, the harvest feast (earth), from September 12-16;
4. Ayathrem Gahambar, the herding feast (flora, vegetation), from October 12-16;
5. Maidyarem Gahambar, the mid-winter feast (fauna, animal life), from December 31 to January 4;
6. Hamaspathmaidyem Gahambar, the feast of all souls (man), from March 16-20.

Each gahambar is celebrated over 5 days. The first 4 days are devoted to prayers and liturgical services, beginning with the benediction ceremony, the *Afrin* (*Afrinagan*, *Afrinameh*). The 5th day is for communal interaction and feasting.

Today, to the uninitiated, the word gahambar means community get-togethers, over a feast. And rarely is a gahambar celebrated over 5 days. However, that does not and should not detract from its significance, purpose or



Gahambar offerings

importance in the lives of Zarathushtis. Five day gahambars held 6 times a year would perhaps be difficult to observe in modern times. However, regular observance of the gahambar, even for a day, would be an excellent way for the community to meet, bond, and resolve differences, share ideas, interact, aided by good food, good wine, and camaraderie.

Since time immemorial, the gahambar commemorates the celebration of brotherhood, of charity, of good deeds, of truth, together with the celebration of All Creation, the different seasons of the year, the universe, and of course, the Creator of All: Ahura Mazda. The Zarathushtrian religion approves of celebration and gives an important place to food and victuals. In all our rituals and liturgical services, food for all living beings and for the souls (as distinct from the 'soul') holds an important place: (*jashan ni chaashni*, *satum nu bhonu* (favorite delicacies of the departed are offered together with the prayers) and the custom of keeping *gai nu daran*, *kutra no buk* and *chakli no daano*.

Fasting or deprivation has no place in Zarathushtrian tenets, and scholars believe that the prophet laid an obligation on his followers to celebrate the high feasts. Thus, meals in every season are enjoyed in remembrance of the beneficent Creator, who has created such plenitude for the maintenance and health and happiness of every living creature, and also the Archangels. It is believed that the aroma of good food attracts spiritual beings, and that during the high feasts, or the gahambars, spiritual and physical beings together partake of the victuals laid out.

The gahambar is also a great equalizer. Rich and poor, learned and not-so-learned, young and old, get together, pray together, sit together, eat together, laugh together and enjoy together. Traditionally, gahambars were funded by those who could afford it and the meals were prepared and served by volunteers. The importance



of the various acts of piety, including *radih* (being charitable) and *rastih* (being truthful) is re-indoctrinated into the minds of all, and one is re-oriented with one's religious and social roots.

What about 'food for the body'? And let's not knock 'food for the body, folks! Lin Yutang, in his iconoclastic collection of essays, *With Love and Irony*, quotes Lord Balfour as 'wisely saying' that 'the human brain is as much an organ for seeking food as the pig's snout', placing robust common sense and practical survival above abstruse, abstract thinking. We Parsis, of course, are great ones for good food!

What would the menu of a traditional gahambar consist of? The good old papeta ma gos, aush (traditional Iranian soup) and sirog (fried bread). There would also be kharu gos, ambakalio and kachumbar. And the aujil or lork (mix of 7 different dried fruit and nuts: pistachio, roasted chickpeas, almonds, hazelnuts, figs, apricots and raisins). Variants could include roasted squash or melon seeds, walnuts, cashews and mulberries.

Lork blessed during a gahambar and distributed among humdin.

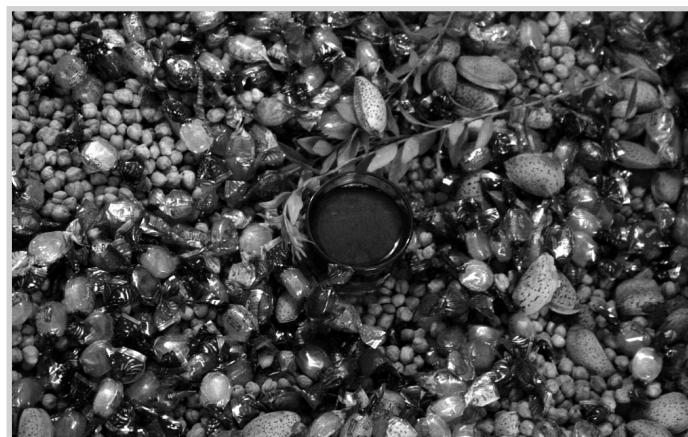
Nowadays, at most gahambars, one is served the traditional lagan nu bhonu, or the sagan no dhandaar patio, or fish curry rice, accompanied by bharuchi akuri, bhaji dana nu gos, etc. Rarely, is the service done by volunteers, or for that matter, the actual cooking and preparation of the meal. Nor is every gahambar necessarily one of the 6 mentioned above. There is also the khushaali no gahambar, sometimes sponsored by one or several humdin, for a celebratory purpose, or a

party, and paid with their lives in the process. This day - legend has it, roz Ashishvang, mah Farvardeen - was thereafter commemorated by the men with a gahambar, at which only vaal was served.

Gahambars are funded by those who can either afford to or wish to, the rich, the affluent and the charitable. Gahambars are also funded by contributions collected from the community at large. While there are funds specially created for holding gahambars, there are also gahambars held to raise funds for worthwhile causes all over the world, wherever the diasporic Parsis have made their homes. And the charities are not necessarily limited to the country or place in which the gahambar is hosted, the charitable objective may well be in a different country!

Today, our community is at the crossroads. Divergent views, notions and perceptions are creating avoidable divides, and from what I can gather (subject to correction, please!), especially in India, the 'mother country'. This is something all of us can ill afford -worldwide. We need a unity of understanding, some commonality of perception, and a tolerance of differing views and perceptions, so as to hold together. We need to count our blessings and curb our cribs. We have enough, within our community, for the wellbeing of all. Perhaps we need to revive the tradition of the gahambar, holding one at least for half a day, 6 times a year. Then, uplifted by prayer, soothed by wine, replete with good food, charmed with camaraderie, perhaps – just perhaps – the divisions will not seem so divisive, and rapprochement seem not impossible. Perhaps then we can truly reaffirm our faith, while maintaining our individual identities, so that the ethos and identity of the community are not lost in the infighting of individuals.

Jamva chaloji, saune salamati!



gahambar to commemorate something or someone. There is both precedent and authority for that.

One of the most moving tales of a commemorative gahambar is the vaal-no gahambar, linked to the legend of the Jung-e-Variav. In this battle the women of Variav fought as valiantly as the men, when attacked while the men were away at another village for a vaal and toddy

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and Not just Legally Speaking (2006). She has given readings and talks at several institutions in India, and also at the University of Richmond, London; the Zoroastrian House, London; the University of Siegen, Germany, and the Universities of Barcelona and Tarragona in Spain. Armin is a nature lover and loves trekking in the Himalayas. Other interests include reading, music, gardening, dramatics, dancing --- and of course, arguing!



FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL USE OF FOOD

CHOM-E-SWAA

Rusi Sorabji (Campbell, CA, USA)

During Sasanian times, *chom-e-swaa* or saving some food for stray dogs and other animals was a food-related Zarathushtrian tradition that continues today. In our scriptures it is mentioned that 'it was obligatory, as thanksgiving' to save a bit of the meal at the end for stray dogs.



Scooter and Alexis at the Sorabji's *pachloo baan-nu* (photo above)

Those who did not have a pet dog used to carry the saved food to *paachhloo baannu* (back door) to give it to a stray dog. My parents did the same in Delhi. Besides the dogs of which he had many, my father had a handsome pet Rhode Island Red Rooster who would walk in at breakfast time to peck at the piece of omelet on toast, or charvaloo eedu with rotli.

My wife Villy, carried on the tradition in California right to the very end of her days. Before she took a bite at breakfast, she would offer our dog a piece of toast that was held out on a special fork. The dog would gently walk up to Villy, sit down and then delicately slip the bread off the fork with the side of his mouth, without ever touching the fork. Then with an expression that conveyed a silent 'thank you' and without waiting for a second helping he would softly tip-toe away to the entrance room where he sat at the window as our self-appointed guardian. Villy would save a piece of bread for our two dogs at each meal. Even towards the end of her days, Villy continued to set aside crackers or bread rolls from her hospital meals and sent it home for the dogs. They even got a share from her very last dinner.

Breakfast time brought several winged visitors to our back door waiting for their daily hand out of bird feed. Although we had many well stocked bird feeders, sometimes when we forgot to refill them or ran out of feed, the birds (ranging from finches, robins to black birds and doves) would make it a point to remind us by parking themselves in a row on the clothes line in the back yard, hoping patiently that a kind-hearted human would notice their silent protest. Sometimes on weekends when we were late for breakfast, the inquisitive squirrels would

stand on their hind legs and scratch on the dining room glass door to remind us that we had delayed their mid-morning hand out.

Some readers may frown on such acts but this daily ritual with our pet, this insignificant act of kindness passed down to us, gave us tremendous joy, and a great lift-off to a beautiful day.

My late father-in-law Dinshaw Burjorji Karbhary used to feed crows and mynah birds after breakfast in Valsad. They would fly onto the first floor balcony on time to see if the old man was at the table. Dinshaw and his wife Gool had given each bird from the group, an identifying Parsee name. It was wonderful seeing the birds announcing their arrival as they assembled in a row on the parapet awaiting their piece of *mullai-nay rotli* (cream chappati) or just plain rotli from the old man's hand. While making the rotli my mother-in-law Gool, with a happy sing-song voice, would always say, '*Ah-ay chul-ia-oh-nay-var-ray chay*' (this is for the birds). The birds would share the nastoe (breakfast) and fly away. Sometimes a bird or two would linger on and the old man would tell his wife, '*Gool, Muncherji nay Cawasji nay var-ray please rotli la-o-so kay, aje-jay aa low-og-no his-so koi bee-jo khai ghee-yo.*' (Gool please bring bread for Muncherji and Cawasji, today someone else has eaten their share.) It was wonderful watching the old folks excited and delighted in hosting this daily rotli party for the birds.

The dogs had their turn at night time from the *kutra nay var-ay bhonu* that was saved from dinner to be equally divided among the dogs that would be waiting downstairs.

I hope future generations of Zarathushtis will continue these beautiful acts of kindness and make time to follow these traditions with the same love and reverence as our forebears. May they experience the transcendental joys inherent in these little but not insignificant Zarathushti acts.

Rusi is an economist turned engineer, with a career spanning 47 years of rich and varied professional experience at mid and top management levels. A young-at-heart, multi-talented and innovative personality, Rusi is an award winning photographer and an avid traveler. His hobbies include writing, music, electronics, chocolate making, gardening, trekking, flying, building and flying radio-controlled aircraft. He was an all round sportsman, excelling in cricket, badminton, tennis and table tennis. Lastly, Rusi was a ZANC prize winning chef.





PERSIANS AND WINE

Touraj Daryaee (Irvine, CA, USA)

"I could drink much wine and yet bear it well". - Darius the Great, King of Persia (6th BCE), Athenaeus 10.45

The history of wine making and wine drinking is an old one in Persia, and today the Dariush vineyard in the Napa Valley which has become renowned in the art of wine making, is attempting to revive this tradition in the United States. Wine connoisseurs today may be familiar with the word Shiraz, the name of a town in southwest Persia famed for its grapes.

Whether or not the Shiraz grape was the source of the Medieval Syrah, brought to France from Persia in the 13th century CE by the knight, Gaspard de Sterimberg is not central to the issue.¹ What is important is that the mere fact that Shiraz is alleged as the source of the Rhone Valley grapes in Avignon, makes it clear that the prestige of the town and its grapes was fabled in antiquity and the middle ages. It was the Shiraz grape, again, which was brought to Australia in the 19th century CE, and which has become well known in the United States.

But the history of wine making in Persia is much older. How old, one may ask? Archaeological investigations have shown that it was in Persia that the earliest wine was made in world history.² At Godin Tepe in Western Persia the earliest evidence for wine making and wine points to the 4th millennium BCE.³ The jars found there have yielded evidence of wine residue and it is thought that they were used for storing wine as its funnel for the wine makers.⁴ The location of *Godin Tepe* along the east-west trade route also plays along with the story of Shiraz grape having been taken to the West, and the evidence here suggests that wine making may very well have had its diffusion from this location.

It is with the first Persian dynasty, the Achaemenid Empire (550-330 BCE), that we find the culture of wine drinking in the form of long drinking vessels known as *rhython*. We hear that the Persian court was most elaborate place of feasting that the Greeks knew. The existence of rhytons and the mention of wine filters (Greek *oino th toi*) in the antique literature from Persia, all suggest the importance of the drink.⁵

Herodotus tells us that the Persians were very fond of wine (Old Persoan *batu*) and that they made important decisions in the following manner. First they became drunk, since they believed that only when you are drunk do you tell the truth. Then, the next day when they were sober they reconsidered the matter.⁶ Of course Herodotus has it wrong. The reason the Persians made decisions over wine was because it was believed that wine made

one's mind sharp and alert. Still, they waited to rethink the decision the next day to make sure that it was not done over excessive drinking. Pliny states that wine was also used with drugs for collecting information. The type of drug used with wine was called *Achaemenis* which had the following effect: 'when it is drunk in wine, criminals confess to everything'.⁷

This interest in wine in Ancient Persia is manifest not only in material culture such as jars, plates and cups but is also documented in the written sources. A Middle Persian text from the Sasanian Empire (224-651 CE) entitled (King) *Husraw* and Page mentions the best foods and drinks that are fit for a king. It is really a royal menu which is rarely noticed by food historians. The text was composed at the court of the King of Kings, *Khosraw I* in the 6th century CE, one of the greatest of the Sasanian monarchs who ruled Persia. What this text demonstrates is that, just as today when we identify wines with regions such as France, Australia, Italy and California, the Persians also were interested in wines from all regions. By this time the various kinds of wines were distinguished, by their color and filtering technique.

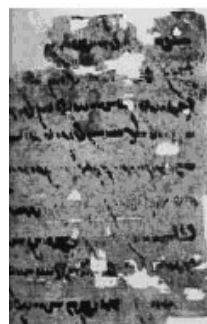
In this passage from the text the king asks what are the best wines and the Page answers:

gōwēd rēdag kū anōšag bawēd ēn hēd may ī hamāg nēwag ud xwaš may ī kanīg kē nēwag wīrāyēnd ud may ī harēwīg ud may ī marw-rōd ud may ī bustīg ud bādag ī halwānīg bē hamwār abāg may ī āsūrīg ud bādag ī wāzarangīg ēc may pahikār nēst

Middle Persian Text From The Sasanian Empire

"May you be immortal, these wines are all good and fine, the wine of Transoxania, when they prepare it well, the wine of Herat, the wine of Marw-Rud, the wine of Bust and the must of Hulwan, but no wine can ever compare with the Babylonian wine and the must of Bazrang."⁸

The taste for various wines included *may i sepid* (white wine) and *may i suxr* (red wine). These wines had different qualities such as *may i wirastag* (clarified wine) or



YWM 'št't HS y spyt 3 lkynk'
HS y gwahr 18 lkynk' gwspand 1

*rōz ī āštād may ī spēd 3 lagēnag
may ī gohr 18 lagēnag gōspand 1*

Day of Aštād, 3 containers of white wine
18 containers of stock wine. 1 sheep...

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL USE OF FOOD

badag i abgen (crystal wine) and were served in a *dolag* (tong). For information on the daily usage and consumption of wine we can look at the papyri which are basically letters between Persian officers in the 7th century CE and which mention the following (Papyri 8809 photo page 35):

PAPYRI 8809

'With the coming of Islam the consumption of wine and other alcoholic beverages was deemed haram (illicit) but Medieval Persian texts, especially the genre known as 'Mirrors for Princes', demonstrate the continuing love of wine. Persians throughout history have been able to compartmentalize their contradictory habits and mores. Thus, while Islam became an important facet of the Persian culture and, in turn benefited from that culture, 'wine' remained a constant motif in Persian literature.'

NOTES

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4. Ibid. p. 51.

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6. Herdotous, I. 135.

7. Pliny, *Natural History*, 23.17

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The International Journal of Ancient Iranian Studies and the creator of Sasanika: The Late Antique Near East Project. His interests are varied, but his main work is on the Sasanian Empire which was the major power in the Near East, rivaling the Roman Empire. He also deals with the Zoroastrian intellectual tradition which was at its height from the 6th to the 9th century CE. He has written on Zoroastrian classification of fruits, as well as on Zoroastrian political and religious history.

GUEST EDITORS -- FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

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Arnavaz Chubb has a Master's degree and a gold medal in Avesta Pahlavi from Bombay University. She has been Editor of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria newsletter – Ratheshstar, conducts religious classes for the association, and has been a past president and a long standing committee member.

Benafsha Khariwala -is a pharmacist by profession and is currently Managing Editor of a professional pharmaceutical journal published in Melbourne, Australia.



RITUAL FOOD TRADITIONS AMONG THE ZARATHUSHTIS OF IRAN

Mehraban Firouzgary (Tehran, Iran)

The preparation and partaking of food in the Zarathushti tradition is much more than just a physical act for the gratification of the needs of our physical body. Rather, it encompasses the spiritual and material aspects of creation, nourishing both body and soul. In many Zarathushti ritual observances, ceremoniously prepared food plays an important part. Food is also prepared for services for the departed where it is believed that the aroma of the food is enjoyed and appreciated by the souls.

The physical presence of foods at religious ceremonies, whether cooked or fresh, has an inseparable connection with their spiritual guardians the Amesha Spentas. These food items are meant to remind those present about the debt of gratitude owed to Ahura Mazda for the boons provided to living beings and prayers are offered in order to keep up such bounties. Small portions of this food will be sanctified, while the remainder will be partaken by those present and distributed among others

who are unable to come or for charitable purposes. The receiver of such food items would never feel embarrassed in accepting the food, rather it is considered as bestowing a favor on the distributor if one were to partake of food prepared for such a ceremony.

In the old days when community halls for public gatherings did not exist and the Zarathushti community was concentrated mainly in Yazd and Kerman, each house had its own, secluded construction for religious rites. Such a place must be clean, well lit, close to the kitchen and secluded from frequently used rooms, especially bedrooms. Raised, open ended platforms, each the size of a room, called *peskam* are an architectural feature of most Zarathushti houses.

PESKAM

All religious ceremonies and domestic prayer recitations took place on this *peskam*. Facing the open



Jashan ceremony held in a peskam (photo above)

side of the *peskam* would be facilities for the attending crowd to sit and participate. The *peskam* would be well swept and spread with *gell-e-sefid* (white clay), a watery mixture of a lime like clay. The solution was sprinkled on the floor and walls of the *peskam* and also smeared over the entrance to the house indicating to passersby that a religious ceremony was in progress. It is also believed that the white spots help guide souls and *fravashis* to the location of the ceremony. A brick painted white with the *gell-e-sefid* is also placed next to the eatables prepared for the ceremony (*myazd*) which are set out on a square, white tablecloth (*sofre*) spread on the floor.

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL USE OF FOOD



Myazd offerings laid out on a sofreh (photo above)

The main items placed on the sofreh are a bowl of milk (animal product, symbol of Vohu Manu Amesha Spenta or Bahman); a fire censer (*afringaniyu*) with burning fire smoking with sweet smelling incense (symbol of Asha Vahishta Amesha Spenta or Ardibehesht); a zinc bowl filled with water with an apple and some *avishan* (oregano) leaves floating in it, a copper or aluminum *calacha* (metal pot) (symbol of Kshatra Vairya or Shahrivar Amesha Spenta); a tray of seasonal fruits, another with dry fruits and the *sheshe* (products of earth a symbol of Spenta Armaiti Amesha Spenta). The water in the above metal pots (symbol of Haurvatat or Khordad Amesha Spenta) and myrtle branches, an evergreen plant that also represents the *barsams* (plant kingdom, symbol of Ameretat or Amordad Amesha Spenta); plus portions of ceremonial cooked food items. The solid food items are called *myazd* and the liquid items called *zaur*.

These days the sofreh is often spread on a table. The Farsi word for table is *meez* and *meezbaan* means a host - literally, one who spreads a table, indicating that a table was mainly used to serve food.

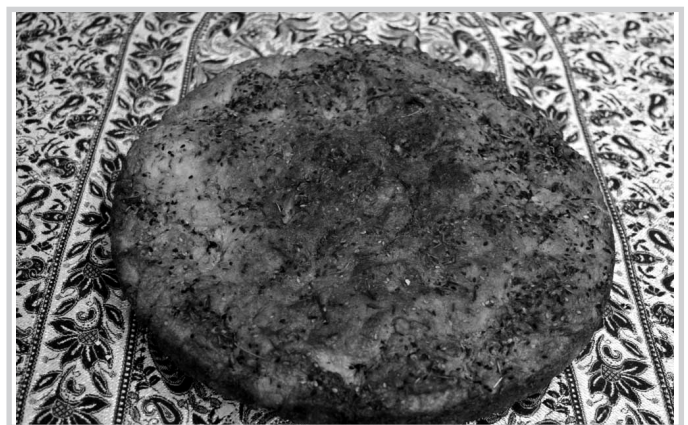
The Iranians have four popular ceremonial tables - the Nowrouz Table, popularly known as the Haft Seen Table; the Marriage Table; the Sedre Pushi or Navjote Table and the Jashan and Ghanbar Tables. Due to the different purposes for which the Tables are laid some of the items vary but common to all is a framed picture of Zarathushtra, a prayer book, a lighted oil lamp, metal trays with lork (mixture of dried fruits) and a flower pot. On the Nowrouz, Marriage and Navjote Tables is placed a mirror and rosewater sprinkler as well as a variety of sweetmeats. The flower pot is filled with flower bouquets lined with Cyprus tree branches. Flowers are also used for festive jashans like one held for memorial occasions. At these jashans, a variety of fruits are kept, partly cut up (just a bruise on the skin) during the prayers. The lork is spread

over with sugared almonds. *Sofreh Haft Seen* (photo below)



The Death ceremony and Jashan/Ghambar Tables are devoid of the mirror/rosewater. The flower pot is replaced with the *kalacha* holding myrtle (*moort*) branches. Samples of food items prepared for the ensuing feast, including the *Chom-e-swaa* (portion for the dog), and plenty of lork, without sweets are provided. Fruits are cut and the sizzling, strong smelling *sir o sedove* is brought in during the Afringan prayers, the fragrance intended to delight Departed Souls.

Komaj



Sir o sedove is made especially for religious ceremonies. *Sedab* leaves (from a strong smelling, bushy plant) are crushed with garlic and mint leaves and fried in oil. Some spices may be added, followed by vinegar. It is diluted with some water and poured over pieces of naan, *sirog* (fried bread) or *komaj* (cake), (photo above) in a copper bowl to which dried mint powder is added. It is always brought to the ceremonial table in the midst of prayer, hot and aromatic.



Sirog preparation (photo below)



The beautifully laid out Haft Seen Table is the most significant part of Nowrooz celebrations. This traditional table is set with 7 (or sometimes more than 7) items beginning with the Farsi letter Seen. The number 7 corresponds to the 7 holy immortals – the Amesha Spentas and the 7 creations which they protect. The 7 mandatory items on the Haft Seen Table are:

- 1) **sabzeh** - wheat, barley or lentil sprouts - symbolizing rebirth
- 2) **samanu** - a sweet pudding made from wheat germ- symbolizing affluence
- 3) **senjed** - the dried fruit of the oleaster tree - symbolizing love
- 4) **sir** - garlic - symbolizing medicine
- 5) **sib** - apples- symbolizing beauty and health
- 6) **somaq** - sumac berries - symbolizing (the color of) sunrise
- 7) **serkeh** - vinegar - symbolizing age and patience.

On the Nowrooz Table except for *komaj* no other cooked food is placed. Komaj is a cake made from flour, sugar, ghee, walnuts, almonds and rosewater, and baked in copper pots. In making the komaj, all the worldly aspects of the Amesha Spentas are invoked. The butter and milk come from the animal kingdom representing Vohu Mana (*Bahman*). The fire used for baking represents Asha Vahishta (*Ardibehesht*). The metal baking pot represents Kshatra Vairya (*Shahrivar*). Flour and sugar are the products of the soil representing Spenta Armaity (*Esfand/Aspandarmazd*). Water represents Haurvatata (*Khordad*) and raisins, dates and nuts which are plant products represent Ameratat (*Amordad*).

Falooda is the favourite traditional delicacy of Iran which adorns the Haft Seen Table. While wheat starch, one of the main ingredients for Falooda can be bought readymade today, traditionally its preparation for Nowrouz began at the start of winter. It was prepared by soaking washed wheat in a big copper or earthen pot. This was kept in a cold place to prevent the wheat from germinating and the water regularly changed for 40 days allowing the wheat to swell and burst. The wheat was then transferred into a large stone mortar and crushed with big wooden pestles. A thick white cotton cloth is spread over the resulting wheat juice and clean, sifted wood ash is spread on the cloth. In 24 hours the moisture is absorbed and white cakes of wheat starch remain. These are cut into pieces and air dried. The wheat starch is then dissolved in water to make a thin paste. The paste is slowly added to the boiling water and stirred continuously until cooked. It is then passed through a copper sieve held over a pot of cold water into which the pearl like drops fall. The pearly falooda is stored in a cool place.

More precious than pearls is the bounty of Ahura Mazda which we Zarathushtis enjoy and give thanks for. Good food nourishes and comforts the body; heartfelt prayer nourishes and comforts the soul. Healthy food strengthens the body and appropriate prayer fortifies the soul.



Mobed Mehraban Firoozgary is the Head Moobed of the Tehran Anjoman, Iran and Chehre Mandegar. He is an elected member of the managing committee of the Anjoman e Moobedan (Kankash e Moobedan) for the past 40 years and since April 2003 he is the Chief Registrar for Zarathosti Marriages in Tehran, appointed by the Justice Ministry of Iran.

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL USE OF FOOD

MEMORIES OF MY TRADITIONAL UPBRINGING IN YAZD

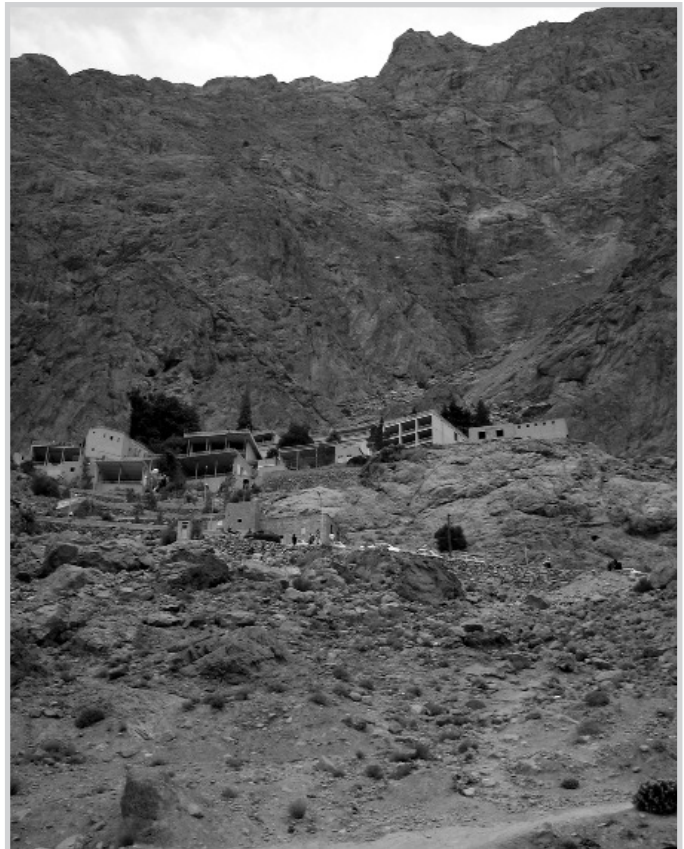
Shirin Simmons (London, England)

The Arabian conquest of Persia and the consequent compulsory conversion to Islam led to a sudden decline in Persian culture. A small number of Zarathushtis who had escaped conversion to Islam settled in the cities of Yazd and Kerman where they maintained their customs such as nowrooz. Preparations for nowrooz begin during the harsh winter months when there is still snow on the ground. Wheat and lentils were germinated in the *koozeh* (traditional earthenware pots) and each day the growing shoots would proclaim the advent of nowrooz.

NOWRUZ (NOWROOZ)

The 21st of March (1st of Farvardin) began with warm air gently blowing over the snow; the day the legendary Jamshid Shah was crowned; when the first blossom appeared through the snow, signifying the birth of spring. My most special memory of nowrooz was that of the smoked fish specially sent to us once a year from Tehran in a wooden box by my brother Kiumars. He sent enough fish to be distributed to all of our relatives living in Yazd. This was the only time of the year we tasted fish, as Yazd is not near the sea or a river. My sister Sarvar and I would scale the fish and wash it and then *meme* (mother) would fry the fish in little oil, in a saucepan sometimes with sugar and a small amount of water and steam the fish gently until it was cooked and the gravy formed a syrupy texture. It would then be served with rice cooked with orange and almonds and flavored with saffron (Entertaining The Persian Way 1988).

Family gatherings were important on nowrooz. *Meme* always wore a dress of raw silk in pale green, to signify good luck and prosperity. We gathered in the lounge where a low coffee table was set with various sweets laid on large china or silver plates. The family stood near the Haft Seen table laid with a hand-embroidered white tablecloth. On it was a small dish containing white fondant, a small silver tray lined with a green silk cloth containing strands of fern, thyme, sorb and a few *noghl* (white fondant sweets). *Meme* would pour a little rosewater in our cupped hands to stroke our hair with. The perfumed water spread a special fragrance through the room. We were offered *noghl* to make a New Year wish. One of the most traditional dishes placed on the Haft Seen table is *kuku-ye-sabzi* (savory herb cake).



Pir-e-Sabz (courtesy of Wikipedia)

PIR-E-SABZ

Returning to Yazd recently, brought back many wonderful childhood memories. Whilst there, I visited many places but my wish was to see Pir-e-Sabz (the green shrine) again. Pir-e-Sabz is situated on the mountain slope in the South of Iran. Only the shrine is surrounded by greenery and vegetation while all around the mountainside is rocky and bare. One can hear the water trickling from a giant rock into the pond which has been walled. It is a place of peace and tranquility.

As children, our *meme* would wake us early to start the journey to Pir-e-Sabz to avoid the heat of the midday sun. Many Zarathushtis, living in the villages scattered around Yazd prepared to travel to the holy shrine. It was time for charity and sharing food cooked in the large saucepan donated by a wealthy member of the community. *Ash-e-reshteh* or *ash-e-khirat* and *sirog* (fried naan) served with *pashmak* (candy floss), were shared by all. Along with the communal feast there would be tambourine music, dancing and singing. Each family



would take boxes of sweets and nuts with them to offer to all to enjoy. When the boxes were opened they would first be offered to their sons or daughters or a member of the family who had been granted their wishes, such as having a baby or passing an exam.

SHAVRAHRAM IZAD

On Ruz Bahman, family and friends gathered together to prepare the dough for sirog before taking it to the shrine of Shavrahram Izad. The dough was a mixture of flour, yeast and water and a little salt which was rolled into small balls, flattened out by the palm of the hands and fried in shallow oil. When lightly colored, it was removed from the frying pan into a large plate or a tray and sprinkled with sugar and chopped pistachio nuts. Sirog was also made on the anniversary of a deceased family member.

The fried naan is cooked as usual and while still in the hot oil, one or two eggs are broken over the naan. The naan is removed on to a plate and placed with other

cooked dishes on the sofreh (table cloth) in front of the moobed to say prayers over the food.

GAHANBAR

A gahanbar would be celebrated to commemorate the good deeds of deceased family members who had bequeathed part of their estate for the benefit of the poor. The commemoration took place in every season. The most important one was 5 days before nowrooz. Everyone in the small community knew which house was to hold the gahanbar as the house door was left open from early in the morning to welcome everyone. The gathering took place in the most spacious room in the house where the moobed dressed in traditional white gown and cap would sit in front of a large table spread with a sofreh laid with various foods. A large copper tray was piled high with lork – dried fruit such as figs, dates, sultanas, peaches and apricots and nuts such as pistachios, walnuts, almonds and roasted hazelnuts. The moobed recited Avesta with his musical voice.

The old Zarathushti baker Bahman would bake more than a hundred loaves which were sandwiched with cold roast lamb, sliced cold potatoes, coriander leaves and sprinkled with cumin seeds. Volunteers would take the sandwiched naan to all members of the community and those who could not attend the ceremony, rich and poor alike.

SEN-E-BOLOUGH

In the Zarathushti religion, the onset of puberty has always been an important occasion. The event takes place with style when the girl reaches puberty. When I was a girl of 9, my meme told me we were invited to Aunt Gohar's house to celebrate my cousin Keyan's *sen-e-bolough* (coming of age). The house was packed with friends and relations and there was a loud sound of music. Keyan sat on a low chair while guests arrived showering her with presents. Tea was served with homemade cookies followed by a lunch of *tafteh* (sweet turmeric soup).

Tafteh is also given to the mother after the birth of a child and then offered to all the guests to celebrate the happy occasion.

WEDDING

Gossip that there was a wedding to take place in the near future was always a cause of great excitement. Invitations were issued with style with cards sent to those living afar. Those who lived in the same village would be visited by two ladies one each from the groom and the bride's family, dressed in Zarathushti costume walking gracefully through the narrow back streets of Yazd calling



Women frying sirog

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL USE OF FOOD

at individual houses to offer their *rokhsat* (invitation). It was a custom to seek permission for their sons and daughters to be married. The ladies handed their guests a piece of fern, some oregano leaves (*abishan*) and a few *noghl* from their handmade *doolog* (silk bag) which they carried with them. The ladies would be welcomed and offered black tea in *estekan* (glasses) with a sugar lump on the side and sweets. At that moment the name of the guests were added to the list for the happy day.

The wedding ceremony lasted 7 days but the most memorable and colorful day was when the groom and the bride received their presents. The house was filled with the joy and laughter of family and friends. The bride and groom sat beside each other on a low chair. The bride's mother approached the bride and the groom and with a smile she placed a small silver tray containing a type of grass called *movr*, symbolizing everlasting marriage, under their feet. The groom then gently removed the stocking from one of his wife's feet and the bride reciprocated by removing one of his socks. Then their two feet were put on top of each other on the grass in the tray. The bride's mother handed the groom a china jug containing cold milk. The groom washed his bride's feet with the milk. The bride repeated the ritual, which symbolizes strength. The groom then offered a rosewater drink to his bride, holding it to her lips and the bride repeated this for her husband. Finally the tray was moved away and the spilt milk was poured into the nearest running stream. At this moment the priest and bridegroom recited prayers from the Avesta blessing the couple with a healthy and happy life.



Shirin Simmons was born in Yazd into a middle class Zarathushti family. Her grandfather, a distinguished historian, was the author of a book on the culture and food of Persia, and her mother Homayoun was a gifted cook. Shirin has lived in England since 1970. Encouraged by her friends' enthusiasm for her cooking, she produced her first book in 1988. Her works are far more than cookery books; the recipes are given a historical and cultural context, and her writing is strongly influenced by her childhood memories of cooking and eating with the members of her family.

IRANIAN ZARATHUSHTI TRADITIONS: HEALTH GIVING AND HEALING FOODS

K E Eduljee (West Vancouver, Canada)

The Zarathushti tradition of foods that have health-giving, healing and even spiritual powers may have its roots in the *haoma* (hom) traditions and the accompanying Yasna ritual. In addition to the inherent healing ability of the *haoma* plants (such as ephedra and pomegranate), a spiritual component is infused through the Yasna ritual that ritualizes the preparation and adds the spiritual efficacy of the manthra.

In orthodox Zarathushti communities, the tradition is found embedded in the preparation of foods during the communal *gahanbar/gahambar* and *jashn/jashan* feasts, when certain foods are prepared according to tradition and then blessed by prayer. Much of the food preparation and sharing is steeped in a rich cultural heritage and history.

Priest's Corner During Ghambar (photo right)





For the people engaged in the preparation and distribution of the food, their effort is a service to the community. For all partaking in the feast, the feast and its attendant traditions and rituals bring enjoyment and comfort to their mind, body and soul. The preparation of the food and its communal sharing helps build and maintain the health and spirit of the community as well.

One such food is the traditional aush soup prepared during festivals and feasts in the Iranian-Zarathushti neighbourhoods and villages of Yazd and Kerman.

AUSH

The food commonly prepared and served to the congregation is *aush*. Aush is said to have health giving as well as healing powers for those who are ill. Aush is made of finely chopped herbs to which are added previously soaked legumes and lentils in a whey (*kashk*) broth. Persian noodles (*reshte*) complement the soup.

Every step in the preparation and serving of the aush including opening the lid of the large pot is a ritual. After prayers are said over the food, it is considered blessed, health giving and healing for those who may be ill. It is health giving and healing not just because of the ingredients, the method of preparation, and the formulation that has through the ages been put together to restore 'the hot and cold' in the body, but also because it contains the spiritual power of the healing *manthra* that was recited to bless the food and give it spiritual strength. Three spoons of aush are considered sufficient to aid the body heal itself and restore balance of hot and cold in the body.

BALANCE IN FOOD TYPE - HOT AND COLD

According to an age-old tradition, there are two types of food – hot/heating (*garmi*) or cold/cooling (*sardi*). There are foods that are generally balanced between the two and there are restorative foods depending on a person's condition or ailment that help restore balance in the body. The concept is similar to yin and yang in Chinese food classification.

The person making this determination is an experienced and knowledgeable healer. However, with the move of Yazdi and Kermani Zarathushtis to Tehran and their desire to be super-modern through a rejection of the old ways, this knowledge too is in danger of dying out.

'Hot' and 'cold' in this context are metaphors. Referring to the hot and cold manner the body utilizes these foods, and whether they perk up or slow down a person physically, mentally and spiritually. Some say that hot foods thicken the blood while cold foods thin the blood. In what might sound like an anomaly in English, hot foods may produce cold sores in those so prone.

The classifications of food into the two categories (actually three, since some foods are neutral) have been developed by tradition. Certain foods are hotter and colder than others and some placements are debated.

In general:

- animal fat, poultry, some meats, wheat, sugar, sweets, wine, some fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs and spices such as mint and saffron, all dried vegetables and fruits fall into the hot category;
- beef, fish, rice, dairy products including yoghurt, beer, specific fresh vegetables and fruits such as radishes, watermelon and pomegranate fall into the cold category; and
- foods such as onions, tea and tomatoes are almost neutral.

An excess of cold foods is considered dangerous for a person's health and can be found at the root of many 'circulation' related problems. Therefore, fish eaten with yoghurt is a combination of two 'cold' foods that can cause problems. Worse is a super cold combination of yoghurt and watermelon. Anecdotally, eating a lot of yoghurt followed by watermelon is a cold cocktail potent enough to bring on a heart attack.

While this may seem a contradiction, another tradition is to avoid an excess of "cold" foods in hot weather and "hot" foods in cold weather. The contradiction is the popular yoghurt-cucumber based drink taken to cool down in hot weather. Overdoing the consumption of such a beverage in hot weather may cause problems. Perhaps, it is an issue of degree.

The balance of hot and cold foods in their preparation makes for balance in aesthetics, taste and properties – all essential elements of good cuisine. For instance, in the preparation of *fesenjoon*, a sauce for chicken dishes made from pomegranate molasses, walnut, and cardamom – walnut a hot food, and pomegranate a cold food, are combined in order to provide balance. A meal of 'hot' kebabs is likewise balanced with 'cold' *mast* (yoghurt) and *khyor* (cucumber), cheese and vegetable relish such as radishes and parsley. 'Cold' pickles serve a similar purpose in helping to neutralize the effects of 'hot' fatty foods.

AUJIL-E MOSHKEL-GOSHA

In Iran, dried fruits and nuts called *aujil* or *aujil-e-moshkel-gosha* (problem-solving nuts) are distributed at a communal feast for the participants to take home. The nuts have previously been prayed over perhaps reciting a *nirang*. Among the Zarathushtis of India there is a tradition with a similar name called *moshkel aasan*. Both traditions implore the spiritual aid of *Shahbehrām Izad*, the angel *Vahram's* (*Verethagna* in *Avestan*) to help solve problems and overcome difficulties.

Aujil is a mixture of 7 dried nuts and fruits: pistachios, roasted chick peas, almonds, hazelnuts, figs, apricots and raisins (keshmesh), the number 7 being auspicious. Some substitutions are made according to locale, availability, taste (salty or sweet) and family preferences. Roasted squash seeds (*tokhmeh kadoo*), roasted melon seeds (*tokhmeh hendooneh*), walnuts, cashews, and dried mulberries (*tut*) are possible substitutes.

Bio page 31

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL USE OF FOOD

MYTHS ON PARSI FOOD AND FOOD HABITS BUSTED AND BLOWN

Jehangir Ratanshah Mehta (Perth, Australia)

As I begin to write this article, I wonder how much more flavor and confusion I will add in the minds of people who are already trying to promote wellness, fitness and weight loss through different diets. Are you on the dieting merry-go-round? Are you on all protein diets or only carbohydrate diets or on deprivation diets? It is true that while one man's food is another man's poison, it is not what you eat, rather when you eat and how you eat, that is said to give you energy and help in weight loss.

One evening at a social dinner in Perth many summers ago, my friend introduced me to the book, *Fit for Life* (by Harvey and Marilyn Diamond). At that time, I noticed the transformation in her; she looked fit, healthy and had a pink glow resembling that phoren (foreign) look. For some time I patiently tried to duck and dodge her conversations around healthy eating. Imagine one Parsi telling another Parsi that under no circumstances should meat be eaten with a vegetable. What? No mutton in veggies! That would amount to blasphemy towards these all important pleasures of life. My myths on food were shattered. She went further to add insult to injury and said that you can have curry rice but without meat or fish, i.e. you should not combine carbohydrate with protein. Imagine any Parsi home having dhansak (rich lentil and vegetable curry) without meat or curry minus the botas (pieces of meat). Well at least the vegetarian section of our late Katy Dalal's book *Jamva Chaloji* would remain unaffected, but the meat/poultry content of wedding feasts would need to be removed. Goodbye to *govar sing-ne-gharab no-patio* (greens with fish roe), *lasan-ne-kothmir-nu bhejoo* (lamb brains cooked with garlic and coriander), *choraa ma kharia* (trotters with black eyed beans). Goodbye to traditional recipes which are a hallmark of Parsi cuisine.

All these years I have taken the position that I live to eat and not eat to live. On the lighter side of life, I always thought that our lives are not in the lap of God, but rather in the lap of the cook. That eating is meant to be enjoyed – Serenely full, the epicure would say - Fate cannot harm me, I have dined today. I believed that a big hearty Aussie breakfast would give me a kick start for the day. At home in Dadar we always had *poro* (omelet) or *akoori* (spicy scrambled eggs) or *aleti paleti* (spicy finely diced offal) with bread and layers of Polson butter, jam and cheese with *fudna chai* (lemon grass and mint milk tea) It was instilled in us that you must eat breakfast like a king, lunch as a prince and dinner as a pauper. This would give a

chance to burn the calories during the day. *Fit for Life* blows this myth away.

Digestion of food takes more energy than running, swimming or bike riding. When you wake up in the morning you want to feel energetic all day. Eating a big breakfast is said to sap the energy in digestion. Our biological clock has three cycles – 4 am to noon is the elimination cycle, noon to 8 pm is the eating and digestion cycle and 8 pm to 4 am is the assimilation or the absorption cycle. Our traditional eating habits, such as eating too much at the wrong times, not eating enough fruit and vegetables, eating wrong food combinations, eating too much meat and drinking water with the meal, is said to obstruct the all important elimination cycle resulting in excess weight and build up of toxins. Eating high water content foods like fruits and veggies helps remove toxins and expedites the elimination cycle.

I think these days, healthy eating advice and healthy eating conversations are not so uncommon among Parsis. Recently, my friend from Mumbai gave me some guidelines for healthy and correct eating, throwing our forefathers habits out of the window. Eat 80% raw and 20% cooked food. Until 11 am eat only fruits or dried fruits. No tea in the morning but if your body craves something hot in the morning, then have plain warm water or ginger or mint tea only. If Mark Twain was alive today, he would have to rephrase his famous quote '*Part of success in life is to eat what you like and let the food fight it out inside*'.

Plain *dahi* (yogurt) was the miracle formula of our grandparents used to stabilize stomach disorders. New





age ideas condemn yoghurt as a catastrophe. If the advise was to be strictly followed to the tee, no more milk with cereal, no more yoghurt or dairy, and no more of my favorite ham and eggs, baked beans or eggs Benedict in the morning. Ouch! That hurts! Of all the pleasures in life, food is the most innocent.

The human body is not designed to digest more than one concentrated food at a time. Proper food combining is said to optimize the energy required to digest the food. So I would be curious to get the reaction of a Parsi/Irani having a traditional lunch fare of *berry pulav* (pilaf) or Bombay Duck fry with rotli (chapattis) at *Britannia* at Ballard Estate and the *lagan nu bhonu* (wedding feast) at *Jimmy Boy Cafe* in Fort. And what about the famous *Ideal Restaurant* (photo page 44) where Parsi motorcycle enthusiasts would gather and talk about their love affair with Jawa and Yezdi motorcycles while enjoying the

salad with my meat. Avoid potato with meat where possible. The other tool that is suggested for weight loss is the principle of correct fruit consumption. I had absolutely no idea and neither did my wife Phyrooza that there is a *when and how* to eat fruit. Most of the fruits pass through the stomach within 20 minutes giving us instant energy. We still eat fruit but all that has changed is we avoid eating fruit with our meals. This makes common sense to me. So has this blown away your eating habits?

Life's gift to you is your body and in return we must look after it. We all have our habits to eat a big breakfast, to mix proteins and carbs, to eat fruit after meals, to drink water with our meals, to eat late at night. While I have no intention of strictly following the food combining regimen, due to my love for tasty Parsi cuisine, I have increased my fruit consumption from a single banana per day to a variety of fruits. I thank my health conscious friends for giving me this gift to better understand our old habits and make changes to them for a healthier lifestyle. Well, at least till such time as science and human minds concoct new nutrition guidelines and we return to the old habits. Our forefathers ate two eggs per day and that was rubbished as unhealthy. Lately, experts have debunked the myth that eggs are unhealthy! So, go ahead and crack that egg. Debunking food myths is so tricky; it's enough to make you lose your appetite!



dhandar and kolmi no patio (rice, yellow lentils and spicy prawn stew). photo above

Would it make any sense to them if healthy eating restricted lunch to raw vegetable salad and vegetable curry rice? Their reply would probably be the traditional one: There is no love greater than the love for eating. Drawing parallels between cooking and composing, English chef Rick Stein notes how both involve the skilful combination of ingredients and how they share a common purpose in bringing pleasure to many.

So I am not about to give up my favorites – *sali boti* (diced meat with fried potato straws) or *sali par eedu* (eggs on fried potato straws). But I have found simple ways to balance this combining tool. I have copious amounts of

Jehangir Ratansha Mehta lives with his wife in Perth, Western Australia. He is a Master Mariner by profession and currently works as a contract marine pilot for offshore oil and gas terminals in the North West Shelf of Australia. His love for food is legendary and a good restaurant is always on the itinerary when travelling abroad. In the last 3 years, he has embraced cooking at home and is continually improvising on tried and tested Parsi recipes, especially the simple ones.

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL USE OF FOOD

SOME FACETS OF THE TRADITIONAL ZARATHUSHTI KATHOR DIET ON THE SUBCONTINENT AND ITS HEALTH-SUSTAINING PROPERTIES

Sam Kerr (Sydney, Australia)

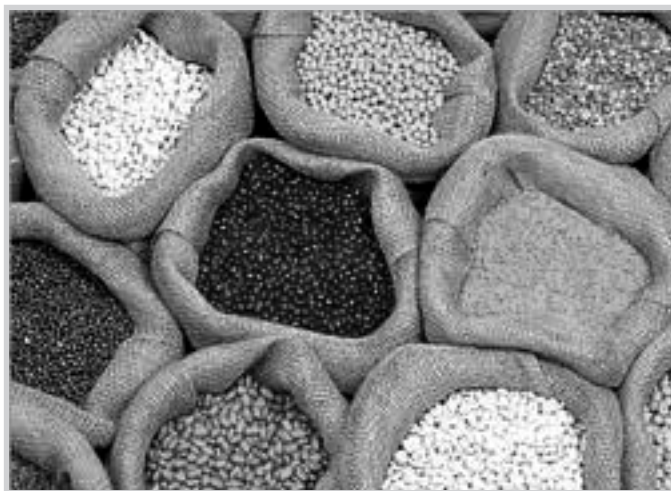
Genetic inheritance per se is responsible for only 7 to 10% of living well all of our life. Almost 90% of our health is dependent on a hygienic/disciplined/active way of life, proper diet and an ideal environment. Of these three, notwithstanding the genetic hurdle, proper intake of food and drink gains absolute precedence over the other two factors in governing our life long wellbeing and, most probably, in promoting longevity, too.

In order to fulfill our deep yearning to live in good health to a 'ripe old age' we would really need to be born of parents born of longevity and other life-sustaining genes. Recently, in an interview, when queried about his 'excellent health' an outstanding aged Z-medical consultant of Mumbai replied, I have a very small breakfast, hardly any lunch and I'm not social so I don't go out to dinner. What a considerate manner this is of indicating, without being judgmental, that frugal eating and simple home cooked food is good for one's constitution and wellbeing. Still, it is only human to deviate sometimes from a set pattern of food intake and, occasionally even over-indulge in rich commercialized foods compared to the health sustaining traditional Z-home cooking.

Our traditional wedding and navjote celebratory feast is so enormously unbalanced it is difficult to digest easily. Elaborately abundant in animal proteins - eggs, chicken, meats, fish (traditionally, the lot, just to enhance the diversity) and dripping in fats, it is liberally infused with highly energizing condiments to enhance the taste, aroma, ornate quality and appearance. Nevertheless, the hearty meal and the accompanying lively environment make the total experience thoroughly gratifying.

Health wise, I have selected just a single topic for discussion. The Gujarati word, kathor revolves around our traditional legendary dish dhansak (literally rice-vegetable to distinguish it from dhandaar, where the daal is plain and not spiced).

So, what then is kathor and what is so unique, health wise about dhansak? I like to equate the composite word, kathor to 'therapeutic herbs'. It encompasses a wide variety of seeds of leguminous plants of the family of pulses, which include peas, beans and lentils. The term 'pulse' is now used exclusively for dry seeds, thus excluding green peas and a variety of green beans, which are considered green vegetables.



NUTRITIONAL AND MEDICINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Since Zs often like to affirm they 'live to eat' I would need to proceed rather sensitively and try to avoid academic jargon. To begin with, there is no such thing as bad food. Even the 'bad cholesterol' (LDL = low-density lipid) is vital to health in the right amount for the integrity of the body cells, nerve fibers, bile salts and some hormones. LDL excess is unwelcome and becomes harmful when deposited in the lumen of blood vessels, brain, etc. Just 20% of the circulating lipids are from the average home cooking; 80% are manufactured by liver cells.

Here, let us pause to note the value of kathor in an 'English' breakfast - a huge pile of fried fatty non-veg items - eggs, sausages, lamb chops, steak, liver slices and 'haggis' (in Scotland) slices, deep-fried potato pieces, tomato. Although dripping in lard the saving grace is offered by a mere tablespoon of baked beans on the plate. In comparison, the 'Continental' breakfast is much lighter - toast/butter/ honey, cheese, fruit juice and coffee/tea. Yet, there is no significant difference in the rate of heart disease in the two populations.

Pulses are vital because of their high protein content (around 25% protein, which is twice the amount in wheat and triple that of rice) but the essential amino acid constituents are marginally less. Pulses are gluten-free and have a high content of 'resistant starch', which is not absorbed in the gut, thus reducing total calorie intake. Their combination of insoluble fiber and soluble fiber gives a mild laxative effect ensuring intestinal health. A protective fatty acid also keeps colon cells healthy



because of its anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties.

The cholesterol lowering effects of pulses are related to these factors: soluble fibre, vegetable protein, chemicals of the gut organism (*E. coli*) and fatty acids. They thus reduce risk of heart disease by lowering blood pressure. They restrict serum glucose levels from rising too rapidly, thus reducing the risk of diabetes and obesity. They increase absorption of non-heme iron (iron of vegetables).

Pulses in our traditional Z-diet comprise of churaa (black-eyed beans), chanaa daal (two varieties of chickpeas). Masoor (whole red lentils), split red lentils, red kidney beans, broad beans (Fava beans), toovar (toor daal), mag (mung beans), vaal beans and urad daal.



Photo above Theme courtesy of Parsiana

DHANSAAK

The dhansak daal recipe varies widely in different households. An early 1900s Surti book, (Shirin Jehangirji Kalapesi, *Swaadisht Vividh Vaangio* (Gujarati), Shree Harihar Poostakaalya, Tower Road, Surat) recommends the following:

Toor daal 4 tablespoons, mung daal, vaal ni daal, chana daal, split red lentils 1 large tablespoon each.

The vaghaar base consists of spices: dhana-jeeru, haldi (turmeric), ground pepper, sambhaar, chili powder fried in a small amount of oil. Other common ingredients vary - green chilies, ginger, garlic, coriander, methi bhaaji, onions, eggplant, potatoes, pumpkin, doodhi, tomatoes, cumin seeds, ajmo, cloves, tuj (Cassia bark), fudno (mint), finally salt to taste. The use of dhansak masala and garam masala is not mentioned in this book. The addition of kid goat's meat, too, came much later.

Make kachumbar from sliced onions (anti-inflammatory, anti-allergic, anti-cancer, anti-thrombotic),

chopped cucumber/tomato/coriander, vinegar, diced raw turmeric (digestive).

Khichdi is a highly nutritious meal and its pulses:rice ratio is 2:3. Added yoghurt kahri, *vaghaarelo mango pulp* and/or vegetables make a well-balanced lunch.

MERITORIOUS PROPERTIES OF KATHOR

Pulses must be soaked overnight to eliminate most or all of the phytic acid content, which interferes with digestion, delays absorption and causes abdominal fullness/bloating.

CHANNA DALL or Bengal gram (kala chanaa)/Kabuli gram (safed chanaa) has markedly high fiber content, very low 'glycemic index' (rapid carbohydrate break down to release glucose into circulation), good for those with insulin sensitivity or diabetes and blood cholesterol lowering effect.

CHORAA (black-eyed beans) DAAL

Rich in the best 'soluble' fiber, it depletes cholesterol deposits, reduces blood pressure because of a high-



potassium, low-sodium content. Low in fats and high quality proteins the protease inhibitors dampen cancer cells proliferation.

MASOOR AND SPLIT RED LENTILS

Rich in proteins, including the 'essential' amino acids - isoleucine and lysine, folate, vitamin B1, and minerals they are good sources of non-heme (vegetable) iron.

MAG (mung) DAAL

Quick to cook and relatively easy to digest, it makes a weight-reducing diet. High protein and fiber content help to lower cholesterol levels. Its soluble fibers release complex carbohydrates to balance the blood sugar levels and halt rapid rise of sugar levels just after meals. Mag is rich in

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL USE OF FOOD

vitamins A, B, C and E and a perfect source of minerals - potassium, iron and calcium. Mag also helps in healing



infective wounds, lowers blood pressure and protects against heat-strokes.

TOOVAR (toor) DAAL

Rich in fiber, folates, vitamin B1, minerals, iron, it also has inexpensive vegetable proteins, including the essential amino acids, isoleucine.

URAD DAAL (black gram/black lentils)

The black skin pigment absorbs the cooking flavors, has a potent antioxidant action and protects against heart disease and the ageing process. It has twice as much iron and cholesterol-lowering soluble fiber as the other legumes. High in folates, they reduce the risk of birth defects and increase the milk of lactating mothers.

VAAL NI DAAL


These beans are hardly known and not easily available in the diaspora. They seem to have no English name. A staple food in North Africa, they were possibly brought to Gujarat by the early Gujarati and Zarathushti migrant traders. Large white split kidney-shaped beans they are sold separated into two halves. The whole, unsplit and sprouted vaal beans are lightly sautéed (Gujarati word for the dish - titori) as a rich source of protein and vitamin E and B1.

SPROUTING OF DRY PULSES

The sprouting process (created by wetting in soaked cloth) increases nutrient and health properties, which were locked in by anti-nutrients (such as phytic acid). Once the germinating process starts, the dormant dry seeds start to become alive with all their whole-plant nutrients. A greater concentration of vitamins, minerals, proteins, enzymes, anti-oxidants and chemicals is released. They help prevent fatigue, work against toxins, invigorating the body's immune system to resist cell mutation to form

cancer. Ideally, a weekly home-cooked health-promoting diet should, therefore, ensure it contains some form of katorh dish, dhansak and khichdi evenly distributed through the week interspersed with the other dishes.

Sam Kerr was born in Bombay. He was elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine (London). He obtained postgraduate surgical qualifications from the Colleges of Surgery in London, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Australia. He has worked in his profession as a surgeon on four continents over more than 50 years. He was appointed Surgeon/Lecturer, the University of NSW and its College Hospitals, Sydney, Australia in 1968 during the year of migration. He has been the Emeritus Surgeon at the University of NSW and its College Hospitals since 2003. He initiated the Australian Zoroastrian Association of NSW, Sydney in 1969 and became its founding member. In addition to his professional writings he has published and lectured on the social, cultural, historical and scriptural aspects of the religion of Zarathushtra.



CYRUS MEHTA RECEIVED THE 2011 MICHAEL MAGGIO MEMORIALI PRO BONO AWARD ON JUNE 16, 2011 IN SAN DIEGO, CA.

The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) awarded *Cyrus Mehta* the founder and managing attorney of Cyrus D. Mehta & Associates, PLLC, in New York. with the 2011 *Michael Maggio Memorial Pro Bono Award* for his outstanding efforts in providing pro bono representation in the immigration field. Mr. Mehta was Chair of AILA's National Pro Bono Committee (2009-2011) and past Co-Chair of the AILA New York Chapter Pro Bono Committee (2007-2010).

In partnership with the New York City Bar, Mr. Mehta and the AILA Chapter joined with Legal Aid to create the Varick Street N.Y Immigration Court project to represent detained immigrants.

Mr. Mehta has a BA from St. Xavier's College, Bombay University, and an MA in Law from Cambridge University, England and and LLM from Columbia Law School, New York



HEALTH BENEFITS OF POPULAR PERSIAN/PARSI CUISINES

Nikan Khatibi (Orange County, CA, USA)

Boy, does my mom know how to cook! Just ask any of the neighbors we've ever lived next to and I guarantee they'll tell you about their favorite dishes. It's kind of funny because growing up she would always say, "*Nikan, some people are made to eat and some are made to cook. I was made to cook and apparently for you*". But as I watched her slaving over the hot stove for hours just to satisfy my hunger for a couple of minutes, little did I realize, it wasn't just for the sake of making my stomach happy which in turn would keep me quiet – it was more about helping me grow stronger bones and a healthier mind.

You'd be surprised about all the health benefits many of our traditional Pars/ Persian cuisines have. Some of the healthiest spices and herbs can be found in our very own dishes including saffron, cinnamon, turmeric, and cayenne just to name a few. These are the very same spices used for thousands of years to alleviate coughs, colds, inflammation and other symptoms.

I've handpicked a few of my favorite dishes and listed their main ingredients and explained the health benefits of each. Hope you find it useful. Bon Appétit!

FESENJOON (pomegranate walnut stew)

Ingredients: Pomegranate, saffron, olive oil, ground walnuts, chicken, lemon juice, sugar, onions.

Comments: The pomegranate (literally meaning 'seeded apple') is native to the Iranian plateau and northern regions of India and Pakistan. For centuries it has been used by various cultures to treat diarrhea, headaches and sore throats. But today, research has suggested that the active ingredients within pomegranates provide antioxidant protection, disabling the inflammatory processes responsible for bad cholesterol build-up in our



arteries. In other words, there is the potential to help reduce cardiovascular disease.

Another ingredient of *fesenjoon* that shouldn't be overlooked is *saffron* – known at one time as the golden spice by ancient civilizations. As one of the oldest spices known to man, saffron was cultivated almost 3000 years ago by various tribes and civilizations that were looking for a way to treat stomachs. Today, most of the literature with regards to saffron is mixed. This is because chemical analysis has identified over 150 different components that have shown health benefits ranging from menstruation relief and cancer prevention to use as an anti-depressant and abdominal pain reliever. The bottom line is – saffron provides an array of health benefits ranging from neuroprotection to cancer prevention, so use more of it; just watch out because it can get pricy!

BAMIEH (okra and lamb stew)

Ingredients: Lamb, okra, garlic cloves, turmeric, onions, tomatoes, olive oil, lemon juice.

Comments: First cultivated by the ancient Egyptians, okra, otherwise known as 'lady fingers', is quite the source for essential vitamins and minerals. In fact, it is one of the quintessential sources of fiber. This is important because fiber can lower your risk for many disease states including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, diverticulitis and constipation. Current guidelines in the US recommend adults consume 20-35 grams of fiber a day. Just a half cup of cooked okra provides you with close to 10% of your



daily requirements let alone your requirements for vitamin B6 and folic acid.

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL USE OF FOOD



Turmeric, a deeply hued yellow spice, is a concentrated source of antioxidants and a great addition to the bamieh stew. Just a small teaspoon of turmeric has as much antioxidant power as half a cup of red grapes. Besides its antioxidant properties, turmeric consumption has been linked to a risk reduction for Alzheimer's disease.

GAHAMBAR NU PAPETA MA GOS

Ingredients Mutton, ginger, garlic, cumin, chilies, cinnamon, cardamoms, tomatoes, potatoes, onion.

Comments: Derived from the same family of plants that brought you turmeric and cardamom, **ginger** was first cultivated in South Asia before spreading to other parts of the world including the Middle East, Europe and the Americas. This multi-tasking spice fights menstrual cramps, soothes achy muscles and joints, and cleans up dry winter skin. For many individuals, ginger has become the answer for gastrointestinal symptoms. Specifically its



Papeta Ma Gos (photo above)

use as an anti-nauseant, during pregnancy and with motion sickness has been praised by millions. So the next time you take your kids on a road trip, try adding some fresh ginger to their foods or drinks an hour before you plan on leaving – you'll say goodbye to car sickness!

Another spice familiar to most households is **cinnamon**. Recent research suggests that cinnamon may be helpful as a supplement to regular treatment in people with type 2 diabetes - whether cinnamon can lower blood sugar by itself is a topic of debate. But it takes more than just a sprinkle on your morning oatmeal – we're talking daily teaspoons. So don't be shy when using cinnamon the next time you cook ghambar nu papeta ma gos.



CHICKEN DHANSAK

Ingredients Boneless chicken, lentils, garlic, seeds including fenugreek, cumin, coriander, sesame, tamarind paste.

Comments: Lentils are one of the healthiest sources of plant-based protein on earth. And if you're a vegetarian, listen up closely - lentils provide close to 60% of the daily quota for iron, a mineral that most vegetarians often lack sufficient quantities of. Not to mention they come in a vast array of colors that can mesmerize your guest. Yet another healthy ingredient found in dhansak is the **fenugreek** seed. Native to India, Egypt, and parts of the Middle East, these seeds contain high amounts of fiber that can help with your battle against diabetes. The mechanism is thought to delay gastric emptying, slow carbohydrate absorption, and inhibit glucose transport across the intestinal membrane.

Dr Nikan H Khatibi is a certified medical physician currently completing his residency training in Anesthesiology at Loma Linda University Medical Center in Southern California. He graduated from the University of California, Irvine with a Bachelor in Science in 2004 which was followed by a Masters in Business Administration in 2005 and Medical Degree in 2009. In 2010, Dr Khatibi was named Orange County Metro Magazine's 'Top 40 Under 40' - this is a list of 40 professional elites under the age of 40 who are recognized for their influence in the community and who are anticipated to inspire Orange County in the next 10 years.



PERSIAN CUISINE – COOKING UP THE PERFECT BALANCE

Tanaaz Chubb (Los Angeles, Ca, USA)

The foundations of Persian cuisine may be lost in the dim mists of the past, but the traditions that are alive and well in the kitchens of Iranians today are rich and aromatic. They are a delight to the senses, both visual and olfactory. The ancient Persians looked at food from a philosophical, medicinal and cultural perspective. Good, nourishing food was essential in promoting a healthy body and healthy mind. The Gathas, which could well be considered the spiritual food of all Zarathushtis, extol the virtues of settled, agrarian community life as opposed to the transitory lifestyle of nomads.

The ancient Persians were believed to be one of the first civilizations to understand and benefit from the use of herbs, spices and foods as medicines. The ancient Greeks, Indians and Chinese also had similar ideas of food as medicine and it would be very difficult to pin point where these actually originated. Ancient Iran stood at the crossroads of the world, spanning east and west and the cross cultural impact of these major civilizations would have doubtless benefited and enriched them all.

The ancient Persian medical system was holistic and considered an integral part of daily life. It was based on the physical, psychological and spiritual characteristics of individuals. The Zarathushtrian way of life emphasizes the importance of cleanliness of body and mind and of the care and protection of the environment. *The Vendidad*, the Zarathushti book on the *Law against the Demons*

elucidates at length on the elaborate laws of cleanliness that are at the very foundations of the religion and are so much a part and parcel of the Zarathushti way of life. In the *Vendidad*, there exist three kinds of medicine: through the knife *kareta*, plants *urvara*, and the sacred word *manthra*. Of these three, the last one is the most highly regarded.



Photo above *Ephedra vulgaris* or *haoma* (courtesy of Herb Review)

It seems logical then that in ancient Persia the roles of priest and physician became fused together and the spiritual or *menog* and physical or *getig* became part of an intrinsic whole.

In early times, health and wellbeing were considered the gifts of *Ahura Mazda* while death and disease were attributed to *Angre Mainyu*. The world as created by Ahura Mazda was beautiful and perfect until it was contaminated by the vengeful Angre Mainyu whose mission it was to destroy the beneficent creations of earth, air, water, fire and mankind. Angre Mainyu's entry into the world created a state of flux - *gomezishn* which involves mankind making the right choices for the protection and continuation of the good creation. Of all the good creations of Ahura Mazda, human kind is the best. Armed with a thinking mind and strong physical energy, humans are the protectors of the rest of his creations. This is our spiritual and physical duty. When the soul and the mind are healthy and happy, so will the body align itself and be in equilibrium and balance. When the soul and the mind are depressed and burdened with negativity, this will have a harmful impact on the wellbeing of the body no matter how strong it may be.

Zarathushti scriptural texts mention a vast number of herbs that Ahura Mazda placed on earth to counter the illnesses and diseases that Angre Mainyu inflicted on human kind. Of the many 1000 species of medicinal herbs, the most important one mentioned in the Avesta is the *Haoma* plant. Zarathushtra talks about Haoma with reverence. Haoma is identified as *Ephedra vulgaris*, an herb native to the Iranian plateau. On account of its various therapeutic effects, especially for cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, Haoma was particularly important to the ancient Iranians. It was used in religious ceremonies and a Yasht (hymn of praise) was devoted to it. Haoma even became personified into a deity.

The vast collection of other herbs and medicinal plants found their way into the daily diet of the Iranian people. When used in the appropriate combinations and quantities these helped to maintain bodily balance and promoted good health. Garlic, rue, borage, marjoram, fenugreek, basil, chicory and mint to name a few are all used in the traditional cuisine of Iran.

The natural balance of the body was also maintained by the judicious blend of hot and cold foods in the diet. Persian cooking was designed to be energetically balanced by combining both hot and cold ingredients. Hot and cold does not refer to the temperature of the food, but the energetic effect that food has on the body, very similar to the Chinese principles of yin and yang. For example,

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL USE OF FOOD



Pomegranate and walnut classic cold and hot foods respectively

tea has a cold energy, so even though it may be drunk hot, it is actually a cooling beverage.

The Persians believed that the consumption of too many 'cold' foods slowed down the body's digestive processes and caused fatigue, whereas too many 'hot' foods caused an acceleration of digestive processes and alertness. The coldness or hotness of foods is based on their supposed effects on the system after digestion and absorption. There is no valid reason for classifying a food as hot or cold according to the principles of modern medicine and nutrition, however, these notions are so ingrained in the culture and practice of Persian cuisine, that they are an unconscious part of the daily ritual of meal preparation. We give little thought to the nutritional properties of the staples of our cuisine – the pinch of ginger and garlic that is tossed into every meal; the turmeric that is equally indispensable; the eggs and fish

that are essential celebratory foods – all of the many spices and herbs with which we season our dishes help to keep our health well balanced. Unfortunately, we have forgotten these traditional healing practices and the healing and restorative powers of nature's bounty. Cardiovascular diseases and diabetes, both by and large, preventable and reversible lifestyle ailments are rampant among the Parsi/Irani communities. Why are we failing to look after the very best of Ahura Mazda's creations – ourselves?

The Sasanian sages advocated the balanced path of moderation – patmaan – the golden mean. Let us align our bodies to that fine balance and live healthier and happier lives. Looking after ourselves is our sacred duty and moral obligation and what better way of doing it than enjoying delicious, healthy, wholesome food.

Tanaaz is a 3rd year student of Holistic Nutrition and an advocate of healthy, holistic living. She is as passionate about organic, whole foods as she is about developing a healthy mind through spirituality and meditation. Born and brought up in Melbourne, Australia, she is currently living and working in Los Angeles, California pursuing her other big passion – acting.



UPDATE ON ZOROASTRIAN STUDIES PROGRAM AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Dr Yuhan Vevaina Ph.D

Through community efforts for fundraising spearheaded by Farrokh Billimoria, Dr Yuhan Vevaina has been teaching at Stanford University for the last 2 quarters of 2010-2011. Dr Hester Gelber, Prof and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies informs us that "Dr Vevaina has been a stellar additions to our department.:

He is exceeding well received by students and faculty and has received one of the highest ratings from students, a faculty member at Stanford has received".

Farrokh Billimoria is appreciative and thankful of the community support in getting Dr Vevaina to Stanford. He would like to remind associations of their annual pledge for this effort for the school year 2011-2012. The cheque should be made out to Stanford University with a memo saying "**Zoroastrian Studies**" and mailed to Farrokh Billimoria 10, Woodleaf Ave, Redwood City, 94061 CA and it will be hand delivered to the development group at Stanford.



EGGSTRAORDINARY GASTRONOMY

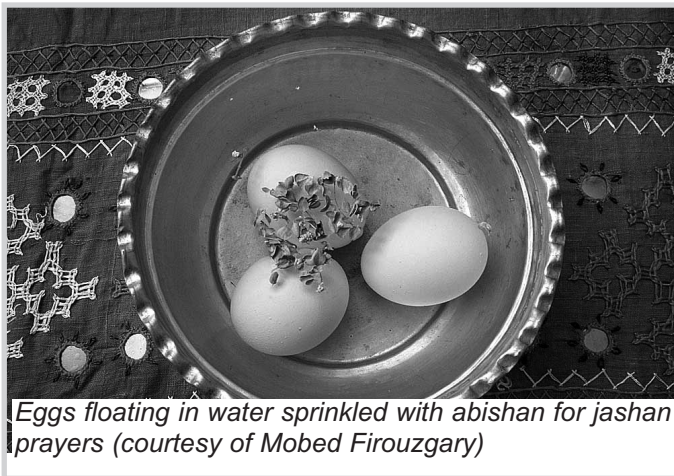
Sarosh Khariwala (Melbourne. Australia)

G'day folks, or as the Aussies say – Oi, oi, oi! A greeting that is a far cry from the kem chev (how are you?) that I used in Bombay, now amchi Mumbai.

The Parsis have a legendary love affair with eggs. In my many years as a chef, I have yet to come across a cuisine that incorporates eggs in such inventive and extraordinary ways as we do. While in other cultures, eggs are usually a breakfast food or included as part of more complex recipes, for the Parsis, eggs are a complete meal for breakfast, lunch or dinner and anytime in between.

Born and brought up in Dadar Parsi Colony, my journey from the land of many to the land of plenty has been memorable. Zarathushti community life instills in you not just good values and a sense of integrity and honesty but above all a fondness for eating and enjoying good, tasty food in the company of family and friends. There was never a shortage of food in our household, but on the occasion when the pantry appeared to be empty, the magical request would come quick as a flash from my mother: '*dikra tu ne ek eedu banavine aapu?*' (son, can I cook you an egg?)

'Dikra, sikkhi bhani ne doonya ma sojjoo naam kamaaje ne aapri kom nu naam wadhaarje (son, further yourself with education and prayer; earn yourself a good name in this world and do your community proud) – was often repeated by parents and elders at every available opportunity. On auspicious occasions out came the ses (ceremonial tray) which included an egg that was circled around the orbit of your head three times and cracked at your feet. The egg – the ubiquitous egg; the faithful food staple; the good luck omen; where would Parsis be without eggs? We would surely be lost in eggzile!



Eggs floating in water sprinkled with abishan for jashan prayers (courtesy of Mobed Firouzgary)

Eggs are full of religious symbolism in the Zarathushti religion. They represent fertility and the beginnings of new life and are present in most ritual ceremonies. The golden yolk resembles the life-giving sun and the white shell symbolizes the Zarathushti color of purity and its fragility, reminding us of the frailty of life and the imperative to care and nurture it. Perhaps, it is these symbolic qualities that have made eggs such an indispensable item in the Zarathushti kitchen.

The Parsis' love, fascination and devotion to the humble egg continues ... Surely our community must be the connoisseurs of the delicious egg delicacies that are created and devoured on a daily basis in Parsi households. Whether it is an auspicious occasion or an early breakfast; leisurely lunch, scrumptious dinner or banquet; in sickness or in good health, Parsis don't need an excuse to eat eggs. On their own or with anything and everything that can be found in the fridge or the kitchen pantry, cooked on it or under it, eggs are always a winner. The trusty *charvella eeda* (scrambled eggs), *akoori* (our very own spiced scrambled eggs), *khurchan per eeda* (eggs on a mix of left over vegetables and offal), *taamatar per eeda* (eggs on spiced tomatoes), *papeta per eeda* (eggs on potato), *sali per eeda* (eggs on straw potato), caramel custard, *lagan (wedding) nu custard*, *baida* (egg) curry, *baida bheja masala* (lambs' brains with eggs), *baida kheema ghotala* (eggs gone wrong) and the list goes on. Crack 'em and devour 'em by the dozen.

For generations our forefathers consumed eggs in vast quantities, and lived long and healthy lives. The myth of eggs being high in cholesterol and bad for your heart are being put to rest by the latest findings that eggs have little effect on blood cholesterol levels. Eggs have lived up to their reputation of being a very valuable source of our daily nutritional requirements. They provide us with 11 different vitamins, especially vitamin D, minerals, protein, healthy fats and antioxidants. Eggs also provide zinc, are rich in omega 3 fatty acids, making them the most versatile ingredient in our cooking repertoire.

Take it or leave it, till death do us apart, the egg is our savior as it is a provider of strong vision, helps prevent muscular degeneration, promotes healthy strong bones; and yes, you can 'have egg on your face' which is literal, as egg white has long been used as a facial mask.

Egg yolks are used in shampoos and conditioners; cholesterol, lecithin and some of the egg's fatty acids are used in skin care products. Eggs are colored, blessed, exchanged, cooked and cracked in most of our ceremonies. The egg stands out with pride with so many

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL USE OF FOOD

varied uses, whether it is Parsi style or the French way with their fancy omelets and soufflés. One thing is for certain, don't waste your money on Faberge eggs! Give me a *char eeda ni akuri* for breakfast, *papeta per eedu* for lunch and *caramel custard* for dinner!

EGGY HINTS

For a fluffy omelet, add a few drops of water to the eggs as you start beating them with a whisk and incorporate a few drops of olive oil in the mix.

White color eggs are just as good as brown eggs -

The color of the shell is directly related to the breed of the hen.

A hardboiled egg will spin whereas a raw egg will wobble.

A rotten egg will float on water whereas a fresh egg will sink.

Crushed egg shells can be used to clarify stocks, soups and sauces; they lift up the impurities from the liquid.

Sarosh Khariwala, a chef and foodie, has worked in the hospitality industry for over 30 years. After graduating from the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition in Mumbai he started his career with the ITC Welcomgroup Sheraton Hotel chain. Before migrating to Melbourne, Australia in 1984 he was the Executive Chef at the Fariyas Hotel group. Sarosh's culinary career has spanned executive positions in hotels, clubs and restaurants and running his own catering business. Sarosh is the President of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria (Australia) and has a long standing association with the community.



ROOTING FOR OUR ROOTS

Niloufer Adil Mavalvala (Mississauga, Ont., Canada)

"A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots." Marcus Garvey

Parsis/Iranis, all Zarathushti by the descent of religion, tend to have similar but curiously separate culinary delights to proudly call their own.

The Parsis arrived in India in the 10th century CE from the former Persian Empire. The Hindu Raja Jadi Rana and his people were convinced of giving us refuge, when Neriosang, the head priest of the group, said that as a community we would blend into his flock of people—similar to sugar being stirred in a full glass of milk without spilling over!

The Iranis on the other hand arrived in India around 200 years ago. They migrated from Iran to Maharashtra, India and settled mainly in Mumbai and Pune. The Iranis set up wonderful tea shops, which are still famous in Mumbai today. At a typical Irani tea shop the father sat at the *gulla*, (the Till) collected the cash, while making sure everyone got their tea and *bisckot*, (biscuit) perhaps with a plate of *bun musko*. (bread and butter)

Traditionally, large families meant open homes and warm hearths with an abundance of food in the kitchens.

The Persians still tend to keep the *samovar* of their favorite tea brewing in anticipation of a friend, a neighbor or family stopping by. Parsis love to entertain, the focus being mainly the food served at our table. The essence of socializing is a good meal. It bonds families, brings cultures closer and even gives diplomacy a chance. In a strange and unique way, one can describe it as a universal 'human language'. There is no life without good food. For every religion, culture, tribe, village, even in the remotest corner of the world, some form of sharing of food is a part of the heritage. Breaking bread together is an ancient tradition (and we still 'break-fast') that creates opportunities to strengthen harmony and love within families.

Cooking is an art and should be embraced with passion and happiness. All cuisines are intertwined despite regional differences. The Parsi and Persian cuisines have many similarities, the roots being the same. Cuisines originated based on local produce. When transporting foods was unheard of, each area developed its own fare from what was available locally.

In ancient Persia, animals were hunted for food, berries were used to sweeten food and nuts to thicken stews. The cold weather taught them to dry fruits for months when trees could not bear fruit. Spring brought



fresh fruits and vegetables, while the fall months brought nuts that were stored away to provide nutrition and sustenance during the long winter months. Most farming was done seasonally, how fresh and beautiful it must have been! Eating everything in rotation allowed our bodies to remain in balance. The phrase 'too much of a good thing' proves true in this context; excess is, and has always been, discouraged in our culture.

It is believed that many of the old world fruits like the fig, date, pomegranate and the crocus flower producing saffron originated in ancient Persia. Parsis use the pomegranate in the offerings of fruits for jashans and other prayers. Almonds, pistachios, raisins and rosewater are used in many sweets and puddings. Persian food is incomplete without the use of a nut, dry fruit or a berry of some sort. The Parsi fondness for '*khatu mithu*' (sweet and sour) possibly stems from that same root.

Yogurt is an integral part of Persian cuisine. Used abundantly it is healthy and cooling to the stomach. Parsis also eat yogurt on auspicious occasions and keep this as part of a healthy daily diet. Legend has it that a local farmer filled milk into his cow hide flask which was left out in the hot sun, soon he found the milk had turned thick and thus yogurt was 'discovered'.

Another ancient food which may perhaps be the oldest sweet known to mankind is *baklava*. There are a variety of tales surrounding this famous sweet. It is believed to have originated in Assyria and was initially made from dough and not phyllo pastry as is the norm today. The Iranians continue to make it similarly to the original method, filling the dough with dates and nuts. The closest thing that the Parsis have in their repertoire is the *khajoor ni ghari and dar ni pori*.

Another tale claims that a chef who was asked to create dishes to impress his Ottoman kings came up with baklava. When summoned to the court to explain the masterpiece, he explained with much trepidation about the '1000 leaves' he had made by hand, thinly layered and filled with the king's favorite nuts and sweetened with honey. This then spread all over the Middle East and to Greece in the West. Each culture stamped the baklava with the mark of their region using the predominant nuts grown in their local areas, such as aromatically flavored sugar syrup with lemon, rosewater or orange oil and added cardamom and saffron.

The Parsis moved to India taking with them lots of old traditions; one that may live on forever is our love affair with eggs - *akuri*, *Parsi omelet*, *bheeda per eedu*, *papeta per eedu*, *tamota per eedu*. A reflection of these egg dishes is found in the Irani *kuku*, their top spot is reserved for cauliflower *kuku*.

Iranis also share the Parsi "ma gos" favorites. *Bamieh khoresh* is similar to the Parsi *bheeda ma gos*. Parsis substituted the delicate Persian flavors with the bold spices that were available in India. Green chilies, red chilies, coriander powder, turmeric, cloves, garlic and ginger were infused into Parsi cuisine. While *zereshk* (barberries), *saffron*, *cinnamon*, *lemon*, *dried crushed rose petals*, *juniper berries*, *black pepper*, and *dried mint* make up the Irani food flavors. Another similarity is the *garam masala*, a blend of dry spices. The Iranis use *advieh* made from a special blend of dried rose petals, cinnamon, cumin, cardamom, regionally changing the two latter spices to black pepper and nutmeg.

The famous *bun musko* (bread and butter) is still a favorite of Parsis and Iranis. What we know as brown or clarified butter was known as *smen* in the Old World. *Smen* is also used in sweets such as *badam pak*, *eeda pak*, *vasanu*, and has an amazing nutty flavor. In my opinion, the taste of *smen* cannot be substituted. A dash of *smen* in daals, *vaghars*, or even simple rice, completely transforms the food. The Iranis use butter in their rice dishes liberally.. Morocco, Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and much of that region use *smen* to flavor their foods.

As we are what we eat, it is important to eat sensibly. Foods can be divided into hot and cold. In general, foods like nuts, dried fruits, meats are hot, while fresh fruits and vegetables are cooling. Keeping a balance between the hot and cold foods helps us to be healthier. It may also shape our temperaments to a degree.

Life is a circle. The internet and television has helped give world cuisines a boost by sharing knowledge at an accelerated pace. Now the circle seems to be complete once again as 'old world' foods are being promoted

Nloufer was born and educated in Karachi. She has lived in Dubai and currently resides in Mississauga, Ontario with her family. She loves to travel, write and be a part of the Parsi community of Ontario. Her passion is to teach cooking and research culinary links. She has given cooking demonstrations in Karachi, Dubai, London, Dorset, Guildford, Toronto and Mississauga. Her other passion is in real estate and she also manages property professionally. Currently, she is co-editing a cookbook with her mother Shireen Jamshed Wania.



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DELICIOUS REMEMBRANCES

Dinaz Kutar Rogers (Albany, Oregon, USA)

Our day started with the 5 am knock of the *doodhwalla* (milkman), who would travel on the train from the suburbs carrying fresh buffalo milk. Grandmother met him at the door holding a metal vessel, and he measured out the milk with a ladle. Some of this milk was boiled to make tea for the grownups, and the leftover lukewarm milk was ours to drink before leaving for school. And every morning, in preparation for dinner, mother would knead rice flour, hot water and ghee, and grandmother would toast the *chokha nee rotli* (rice flatbread) on an iron griddle.

On the morning of my Parsi calendar birthday, my mother would cook *sev* (caramelized vermicelli) or *ravo* (sweet cream of wheat). Before anyone could eat, mother would dish some of the *ravo* on plates, top it with fried raisins and slivered almonds, and the non-birthday child would take this to our favorite neighbors. At each apartment, the neighbor would transfer the food to their plates and put a cup of sugar on the empty plate. Never send a plate back empty, grandmother taught us. This she said could be traced to the time our ancestral wise priests put sugar in the cup of milk sent to them by King Jadav Rana, signifying that the new arrivals to India, would blend in peacefully with the local population. Another relative told me that this custom could stem from an even older story, *Mooshkale Aashan Behram Yazad*.

Our birthday breakfasts sometimes included *baffela eeda* (hard-boiled eggs) and *dahi* (sweet curds). *Sev*, *ravo*, *eeda* and *dahi* are considered auspicious for any celebration. On my family's meager budget, a full breakfast was rare, but occasionally we were treated to *Parsi poro* (omelet) or *aakoori* (scrambled eggs with onions, tomatoes and spices).

Lunch on school days might be *chaval* (rice) and *daar* (pureed lentils or beans) or a simple bread and butter sandwich. On celebratory days, lunch was *dhandaar* (split peas with salt and no spices served over rice) with a side of *kolmi no patio* (shrimp cooked in spices and tomatoes, with a dash of vinegar). Sometimes the patio was replaced by *tarelee machhi* (fish fillets dredged in turmeric and chili powder, and deep fried) or *tarela taja boombila* (fried fresh Bombay duck, which is eel). If the fish contained *gharab* (roe), it was an extra bonus.

We ate fish a couple of times a week. My grandmother was in charge of going to the fish market at Bombay Central Bridge.

In my family, chicken was a rarity. On a birthday or the Parsi New Year, my grandmother and mother would go to the Crawford Market and bring home a live hen, which

they prepared and cooked. Never eat a rooster, grandmother admonished us, because the rooster's crowing each dawn rebuilt the gnawed chain that held the evil Zahhak on Mount Demavand.

Dinner on celebratory days would usually be a treat of *sali ma marghi* (shoestring potatoes straws with spicy chicken) or *sali ma boti* (shoestring potato straws with spicy goat meat). Dessert, a rare treat, might be *kulfi* (ice cream usually made with crushed pistachios), which was purchased from the *kulfiwalla*, who was asked to come by for the festive occasion. On Jamshedi Navroze (Persian New Year), we enjoyed homemade *kalingar noo serbet* (watermelon chunks in their own juice, enhanced with raspberry soda), or we would walk to Jai-Hind, an Irani-run dessert shop, for *falooda* (milk and rose syrup with shredded vermicelli, *tootmoria na bee* [water-soaked basil seeds] and ice cream).

Sunday lunch staples were either *dhansak* or *curry chaval*. Parsis never eat *dhansak* on festive days because *dhansak* with meat is eaten on the 4th day of mourning after a death (eating of meat is forbidden during the preceding 3 days). The Sunday *dhansak* or *curry chaval* would be lost without *kachuber* (chopped onion, cilantro, tomato, cucumber and green chili, garnished with pieces of red or white radish and slices of lemon).

Spiced *kolmi na kawabs* (shrimp kebabs) or *khima na kawabs* (minced meat kebabs) and *papadams* were typical adjuncts to lunch or dinner. *Tarapori no patio*, made with dried Bombay duck, was yet another tangy and spicy side dish.

In our family, most lunches and dinners were served with *achaar* (pickles), typically *methianoo* (spiced mango), *gor kerinoo* (jaggery-sweetened mango) or *limboonoo* (lime). *Lagaan noo achaar* (grated carrots, raisins and dried fruit) was the first thing served on the *patru* (banana leaf) at a *navjote* (child's initiation ceremony into the Zarathushti faith) or *lagan nu bhonu* (wedding feast). Pickles were also eaten with *rotli* as a snack.

Almost all our Parsi dishes start with *vaghaar chumkaar* (paste of fresh ground herbs). Every morning after the supper bread was prepared, my mother ground *aadoo lasan* (ginger-garlic) and *jeero lasan* (cumin-garlic) with a mortar and pestle. If a larger quantity of paste was needed, such as for curry, the spices were crushed using a rolling pin made of black stone and an 18-inch-long stone slab. Fresh coconut was first grated on a *khamni* and then included in the paste.

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL USE OF FOOD



Rice is the staple of a Parsi lunch. Mother would pressure cook the rice—along with other foods—in a 3 foot tall, brass pressure cooker. The pressure cooker had a compartment for coals under the tall vessel that held the water and the lidded, stacked pots in which the food was placed. *Khichri* (spiced yellow rice) was often cooked instead of plain rice. The khichri was usually served with *dahi nee kadhi* (yogurt curry), *kolmino patio or saas* (sweet and vinegary sauce). On very special occasions, the rice served was pulav, cooked with saffron, cinnamon, cloves and such spices—a feast for the eyes and the taste buds.

Dinner was typically *masoor* (lentils) or *choraa* (black-eyed peas), with or without meat, along with vegetables and the accompaniments that we had with lunch. Among my favorite dinner dishes were *tabota per eeda* and *papeta per eeda* (eggs cooked over spiced tomatoes or potatoes). I also loved *kheema per eeda* (eggs on minced gos). Grandmother would mince the piece of boneless meat herself using a cleaver and a wooden block. Certain varieties of mango cooked with gos also turned up at our dinner table.

Vegetables such as *kareloo* (bitter gourd) and *titori* (sprouted Hyacinth beans) made me wince at every bite because of the bitter taste, but they appeared on our plates from time to time because they were good for us!

Except for festive occasions, our Parsi meals were simple, well balanced and affordable. Leftovers were rare, as everything was cooked and portioned out in modest quantities. Grandmother would chide us if we asked for seconds. Zarathushti Iranian friends with whom I have discussed food quoted this Persian proverb: '*If you eat in modest quantity, you will sleep soundly*'. Did this belief come to India with our ancestors? We had no recipe books; my grandmother and mother were the recipe books.

If I told my mother that I was hungry after school, she occasionally allowed me to buy *brun pav* (hard-crust bread) or *bun pav* (a sweet bun studded with raisins) from our local Irani restaurant—delicious with white butter slathered on it! Other snacks were *bhakhra* (deep-fried sweet dough), *khaaree* biscuits (buttery, salty tea biscuits) and *naan khatai* (sweet biscuits). For the Birthday of Water on *Ava mahino ne Ava roj* (day of Ava in the month of Ava), mother made *dar ni pori* (sweet bean paste in a flaky, round pastry). The round shape signified the shape of the good earth, and as a symbolic gesture, we would put a couple of the pastries into the sea at Chowpatty Beach.

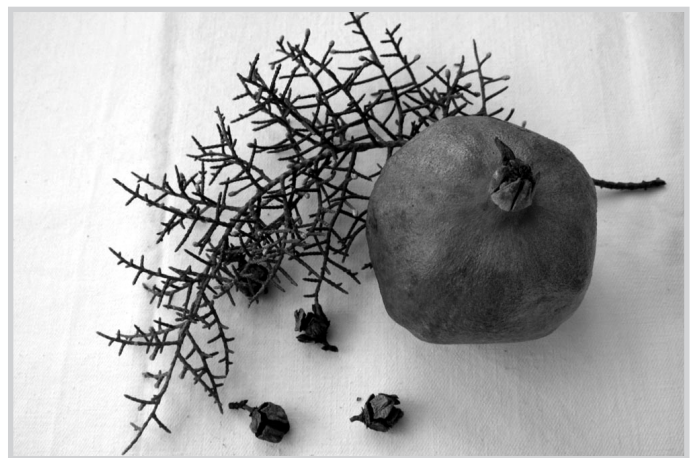
Winter provided some delicacies that lack of a refrigerator made impossible in other seasons. Opaque white strands of *ghaas nee jelly*, about 6 inches long, were melted in hot water and the liquid poured into small glasses that were then placed on a *khoomchi* (metal tray)

filled with water. This was covered with a cloth and left to cool in the winter night, and the delicious jelly-like treat was eaten early next morning. Other such delicacies were *doodh na puff* (milk puff), *vasanu* (traditional power food made with dozens of ingredients including ground dried fruits, seeds and nuts).

The Parsi love of food starts with a baby's first auspicious drink made with sugar or molasses, a command from the holy book: *Farziat Nameh*. A mother is also commanded to nurse a baby boy for the first 18 months and a baby girl for the first 15.

Parsi *lagan* (wedding) is truly a joyous time, and of course food is of the utmost importance. Before the wedding feast, the couple eats *dahi-koomro* (special curds) from the same dish to signify unison in their promise to share life's joys and sorrows.

Our love for food also is evident in the offerings at liturgical ceremonies. Along with an urn of fire, a *khoomchee* (metal tray) laden with flowers, another bearing myrrh, incense and sandalwood, and other *khoomchees* with food are placed on the floor of the prayer room. The food offerings are called *chasani*, which literally means tasting. One *khoomchee* is filled with *darum* (pomegranate), *khajoor* (dates), *darakh* (raisins), *anjeer* (figs), *badaam* (almonds), *pista* (pistachios) and *kajoo* (cashews). Another holds *papri* (crispy fried bread) and *malido* (sweet farina paste topped with fried raisins and slivered almonds). Water has replaced wine in the ceremony, even though there is no prohibition against wine, which has always been considered sweet and nourishing. After prayers by the priests, the congregation partakes of the offerings.



POMEGRANATE

The fruit and leaves of the pomegranate tree play an essential role in all our rituals. They represent one of Ahura Mazda's creations: the Vegetable World that



supplies sustenance to man. The pomegranate, which contains 100s of small seeds, also symbolizes the womb of nature and represents fertility. The dates on the offering tray symbolize immortality because our ancestors were in awe of the ease with which date trees propagated in their empire of old.

I feel blessed by my Indo-Iranian heritage, which has provided me with wonderful legends, beautiful saris, a rich language, and most of all, a multitude of culinary delights. To quote from another culture blessed with a rich cuisine: 'What is patriotism but the love of the food one ate as a child?' Lin Yutang



Dinaz Kutar Rogers is a teacher, a published writer and a poet. She thinks of herself as a modern-day Johnny Appleseed not sowing apple seeds but hope, knowledge,

inspiration, pride and joy about the magnificence of Ariana Vaego and the ancient Zarathushti deen.

CULINARY EXCELLENCE IN AOTEAROA – THE LAND OF THE BIG WHITE CLOUD

Rashna Dorab Tata (Auckland, New Zealand)

Parsi's will generally agree to disagree on most things, but when it comes to things gastronomical, the community is in complete unity and harmony!! Any true Parsi worth his salt thinks with his stomach. Others may eat to live, but the Parsi motto continues to be 'Live to Eat'.

Bheja (lamb brain) fry, *mutton chaap* (lamb chop), *papeta per eeda* (finely sliced seasoned fried potatoes topped with eggs) and *aleti paleti* (spicy diced lamb liver) are part and parcel of our unique 'parsipanu'. These are words a parsi child becomes familiar with at an early age.

Childhood memories would be incomplete without the traditional *sev dahi* (sweet vermicelli with vanilla yoghurt) and *ravo* (semolina pudding) followed by a large lunch of *dhan daal* (yellow lentil) and *kolmi no patio* (sweet and spicy prawns).

Culture and age-old traditions in any Parsi household are finely balanced with favorite recipes from *mamaijee* (maternal grandmother) and *bapaijee's* (paternal grandmother) days. A Sunday lunch of *dhansak*, *kachumbar* (salad of cucumber, onions, tomatoes, green chilies, coriander) and *mutton kebabs* accompanied by a cold beer is the pathway to heaven.

The booming call of '*Jaamva Chaloji*' (please come and eat) at any Parsi wedding, heralds the mad dash for a place at the dinner table. But no lagan or navjote will be worth remembering if the *patra ni maachi* (fish pieces coated in green chili, coriander, mint and coconut chutney and steamed wrapped in banana leaves), *lagan nu custard* (rich custard), *kid gos* (goat cooked in cashews) and *mutton pulao dal* (lamb pilaf and lentils) failed to meet the high standards set by the guests.

When Parsis migrate to foreign lands in far flung corners of the world, they carry *Kolah's pickle* and *Motilal's*

dhansak masala (spices used to cook dhansak) in their bags and fond memories of five course family meals in their hearts. The agony of leaving family and friends is doubled by the trauma of having to leave behind *dal ni poris*, *bhakhra*s and *vasaanu*.



Hoshang and Maharukh Katki (photo above)

The fortunate Parsis of Auckland, New Zealand, have been spared the trauma of being separated from traditional flavors and time tested family favorites. Our Parsi caterer **Hoshang Katki** ably assisted by his wife **Maharukh**, have been the saviors of our taste buds. Their catering service '*Sensational Seasoning*' provides the Zarathushti community in this far corner of the world authentic and traditional Parsi food. We are well provided with any dish that the heart desires. Their ever increasing repertoire extends to Continental, Mughlai and even Arabic food. You name it and Hoshi will deliver a meal that makes the Parsi heart sing!!

Hoshang has a fully functional business kitchen and can handle large numbers efficiently. Most of the

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

COMMUNAL FOOD

ingredients used by the Katki's are authentic and sourced from India or made from scratch by them. They do not believe in shortcuts and make no compromise with quality, authenticity or flavor.



A Katki creation

Having started his culinary journey as an apprentice at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay in 1977, Hoshi carried his skills to the *Bahrain Hilton*, polishing them further with an 8 year stint at the *Dubai Renaissance*. He moved with his family to Auckland in 2002 and holds the position of Senior Chef De Partie at the *Stamford Plaza Hotel*.

Hoshang and Maharukh have served the Parsi community well and have catered for innumerable Zoroastrian Association lunches and dinners and social events, even managing 250 guests in one evening. A fact I can personally vouch for in my capacity as Past President of the Zoroastrian Association. Hoshi's food was the highlight of many of the events organized by us.

The Katkis have catered for a number of weddings, navjotes, birthdays and anniversary parties and continue to have a long list of regular party and daily orders from Parsi and non Parsi clientele. Quite a feat when you are doing all the preparation, cooking and cleaning on your own. It is tedious work and long hours for Hoshi and Maharukh who fit in all this along with their day jobs. Their passion for good food makes it all worthwhile.

Hoshang and Maharukh have also had great success with the larger Indian community. Word of mouth publicity is the best and news of great food travels fast. The quality of their food is consistent, and their pursuit for authenticity, taste and perfection has been persistent. We are truly blessed to have them in our midst. Mumbai can boast of its Godiwalla caterers and Auckland can raise a toast to the Katkis.



**Hoshang
Katki and Rashna and Dorab Tata**

Rashna and Dorab Tata with son Piran migrated to Auckland, New Zealand in 2001. Rashna has been the President of The Zoroastrian Association of New Zealand for 6 years from 2003 to 2009, and is very involved with the New Zealand Parsi community. One of the major highlights during her tenure as President, was organizing interactive evenings for the Zoroastrians with Ministers and Members of the New Zealand Parliament of the two major Political Parties - Labour and National. Rashna works in advertising with the largest daily newspaper in New Zealand.

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A PLAN OF SATISF-ACTION!

Freyan Bhatena (Mumbai, India)

If you ever get the chance to visit the city of Pune, I recommend visiting a culinary treasure called **ABC Farms** in the heart of this warm and cozy place. At ABC Farms good family values and great food ingredients come together to create a unique space. When you reach ABC Farms here's what I suggest you do.

First: Pop into the dairy. If you get lucky one of the friendly members of the family may even take you through the racks of crazy inventive cheeses, on par with your European favorites!

Second: Pick the cheese that gets your tummy growling. Done that?? Good!

Third: Concentrate for a minute and listen to what your tummy says: Is it Pan Asian, Iranian, Hyderabad, Italian or just a cup of coffee that it wants, make up your mind and head a few steps off inside the gravel ground property to satiate your cravings!

Fourth: After the good meal, pop into the office and book yourself a mini vacation at the ABC Farms Beach Resort in Goa

Fifth: Head to the riverside Ayurveda spa where you can indulge in serious body nirvana inside the heritage Kerala huts!

And did I forget to mention organic, organic, and organic! All of this goodness in one place? That's exactly why I recommend it! ABC Farms is a name well known across India for its dairy, it's wonderful restaurants, its eclectic mix of cuisines and its ever ready hospitality!

ABC Farms casts a spell of warmth and good vibrations on all its clientele! The reasons are pretty simple. Throw in a hardworking Zarathushtrian gentleman, his warm and loving family, a humble and honest work ethic, a mantra of health and home grown herbs and ingredients and some serious cheese into the pot and you can't help but come up with a recipe for success.

The name ABC is derived from the first letters of a large and happy extended family of the **Agas, Bhatenas and Chinoy**s. As a young man, Sohrab Chinoy studied dairy technology and trained in cheese making in Germany. After 6 years of work experience, he returned to India and started ABC Farms. From trying to sell cow's milk to a predominantly buffalo milk market in the 70s to now, where ABC Farms is the foodies paradise of the city, his policy of hard work and enthusiasm for the art of creation has become the mantra that has rewarded Sohrab with loyal clients, fans and customers.

Sohrab Chinoy, his wife Marlene and their three children Zubin, Tina and Diana have grown ABC Farms into the multi-cuisine platter of Pune. Along the way, they have added an *Ayurveda Spa*, an Eco-farm and a delightful resort by the beach in Goa. Each of their outlets exudes enthusiasm, flavor, hospitality and wholesome natural goodness.



Cheeses available at ABC Farms (courtesy of Siddhartha Joshi)

Let's get back to the cheese. The Chinoy clan is in demand for its 100 plus varieties of cheese. In fact, each year their famous winter cheese exhibition grows in size and the lines for the free tasting and wine pairing are shamelessly long! From rum-and-raisin cheese (a bawaji favorite) to Surti paneer and bacon flavored cheeses there is a hit-the-spot flavor just waiting for the right taker!

Natural cheeses are relatively unknown in India and considered a luxury product. At the Cheese Festival, a huge cheese board with about 15 to 20 different cheeses is laid out for people to try. Innovative and exotic flavors abound, like the popular cognac and almond cheese, French after dinner cheeses ripened in charcoal or wood ash, Gocobo cheese (made from three different types of milk, i.e. goat, cow and buffalo) and many more. Cheese inspired dishes like dips, quiches and cheese cakes help the crowd understand the importance of using good quality products. To add to the cheer, wine companies join in the fun and everyone samples away!

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

COMMUNAL FOOD



Arc Asia Restaurant, Pune (courtesy of Siddhartha Joshi)

The Cheese Festival is a yearly affair, but you needn't wait 365 days to taste the goodness of ABC Farms' freshness! Just pop into one of their restaurants!

Since the 90s, ABC Farms has expressed its love for food through the menus of its popular eateries. The 6 restaurants on the premises are popular landmarks on Pune's eating scene. Swiss food with fondue and raclette at the Swiss Cheese Garden, delectable Iranian cuisine and great live music jazz shows in the charming ambience of the Shisha Café, wood fired pizzas and Mediterranean food at Curve, mouth-watering mutton chops, pather ghosth and Hyderabad food at Bina's Golconda. The newest addition is Arc Asia offering food starting in Pakistan and making an arc all the way through India,



Cheese board at the Cheese Festival (courtesy of Siddhartha Joshi)

China and Thailand. The sixth restaurant is an international chain café from Australia called Aromas which is extremely popular for its coffees.

The ABC Ayurveda Centre is an extension of the feel-good ethos that makes ABC Farms so special. A serene

space occupied by 300 year old Kerala huts and some warm and motherly doctors, makes the spa a regular for expats and Indians to take cleansing courses or Ayurveda massages and treatments.

The Kerala huts also make a statement in *Bhivri*, a small hilly area outside of Pune where Sohrab spends his weekends creating a full-fledged Ayurveda getaway and eco environment. Here a true organic lifestyle is practiced where the guests can stay in the Kerala huts and spend their days in treatment surrounded by greenery and enchanted by the clear night sky and the breathtaking sunrises which God reserves only for rural and natural life!

Through all of this, goodness and freshness remain the high sellers. The ABC theme according to the family is '*where health meets lifestyle*'. With no chemical preservatives in their products they take this mantra very seriously. At their farm outside of Pune, the family practices organic farming and grow their own rice, wheat and herbs. In fact, the cheeses manufactured at ABC Farms are made using vegetarian rennet and are completely vegetarian in keeping with the Indian sentiments and a growing market of health conscious eaters!

As an organic thinker and eater, it is hard for me to steal myself away from their promise of goodness and taste. Once you follow the directions to ABC Farms and the plan I've suggested, you will be too! You needn't thank me in person; I will hear satisfied souls miles and miles away!

Freyan is President of The Mango Tree, a brand strategy and marketing organization based out of Mumbai, India. Freyan is recognized for her boundless energy and unique creativity. She is a fervent advocate of the voice of the '*independent thinking youth*' and enjoys being involved in forums for the intelligent and restless souls of the community.





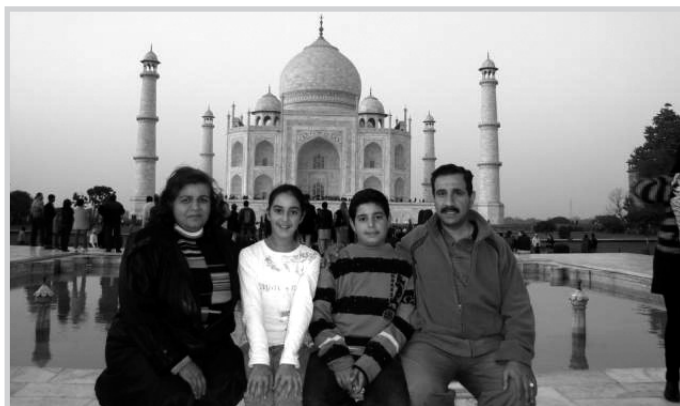
THE LONG ZARATHUSHTRIAN TABLE AT PARSIANA IN NEW ZARATHUSHTI LAND

Daulat Shahlori (Auckland, New Zealand)

It was not a business venture, nor was it the outcome of the needs and wants of a large community. Parsiana - the abode of the Shahlori family and the first port of call of many new Zarathushtrians when they migrated to the Land of the Long White Cloud, grew out of the generosity of one Zarathushti family and the need of a parent who wanted their child to grow up in a traditional Zarathushti milieu.

Daulat and Aspi Shahlori started Parsiana in the Auckland suburb of Pakuranga in 1994. A large house, too large for just Daulat and Aspi, with a large heart and an earnest desire to keep the Zarathushti tradition alive in their adopted country, was the motivating force that convinced them to open their home and hearts to fellow Zarathushtis who had decided to make Auckland their home. 82, Pakuranga Rd, Pakuranga, also known as Parsiana, was thus born of a vision to help new migrants settle into New Zealand.

Indeed the Zarathushti population of New Zealand has steadily increased and now boasts several 1000 souls with their accompanying stomachs.



Shahlori Family

Aspi, a chef with a background in the Irani restaurant business in Bombay (*Café Shapoor and Milan*, Crawford Market) started the *16 Treasures of India* restaurant in Parnell overlooking Rangitoto Island, Auckland. There were a few Indian restaurants in Auckland at the time (1991), but Aspi's restaurant was the only one that served Parsi cuisine. *Biriyani* and *sali boti* were a resounding success and not only among the Parsis.

(Persian soup with legumes and herbs) were offered as daily specials. Sacrilegious as it may be, dhansak never made it as a hot favorite for the indigenous New Zealanders. Daulat rues that New Zealanders are not lentil eaters, preferring meat as their source of protein.

Missing their family and their roots, in 1993 the Shahloris sold their restaurant and moved back to Mumbai. A year in Mumbai convinced them that as hard as life was in New Zealand, it was where they wanted to be and so they returned to Auckland and purchased the large property at Pakuranga in 1994. By sharing their sprawling home with other newly arrived Zarathushti migrants who were given a roof, meals and the comforts of Zarathushti understanding in a new country, the Shahloris established Parsiana - the Zarathushti hub of potluck and parsipanu in distant New Zealand. New migrants first lived at Parsiana and the Shahloris assisted them in settling around Pakuranga, an eastern suburb of Auckland. Pakuranga has since been nicknamed Parsiranga. During 2000-2004 there was a huge influx of Zarathushti migrants into New Zealand and to cater for this, Parsiana moved to bigger premises and adjoining properties were added on.

Dinner time at Parsiana involved a long table in the style of the langar of the Sikhs, which was attended by humdin from the neighborhood. Aspi was the chef, and besides creating the comfort food of nostalgic memory for new migrants, he encouraged them to discuss the events of the day and share stories of their experiences, thereby making the process of establishing themselves in a new homeland easier and less bewildering. Each new migrant was assigned a buddy who helped them to find their way around and provide support and encouragement. Aspi's *sali boti* and *biriyani* are fondly recalled by the Parsis of New Zealand who have dined at the Shahlori's long table as are the many unique and intriguing tales shared over those meals.

Weekends offered no rest for the Shahloris. Sundays were dedicated to tours and travels in a 15 seater bus, which included packed Parsi style picnic meals. Daulat recounts that the bus was eventually pensioned off, but Aspi was convinced to buy it back as it was 'lucky'. So the



Faroud Shahlori Dar-e Mehr, Auckland

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

COMMUNAL FOOD

faithful bus was put back into service, until it could no longer cope with the replete bellies of the Parsis that rode the Sunday ride.

As the Zarathushti community in New Zealand grew, so did the talk of setting up a place of worship. With two community associations and no consensus on who was a Zarathushti, and much debate and discussion ensued. Meanwhile, the Shahloris were in a dilemma, their children were increasingly exposed to the traditions of other more dominant faiths. Daulat and Aspi wanted their children to understand and imbibe the Zarathushti way of life and culture. This was the impetus to start a small place of family worship, which then developed a life of its own! On 1 August 2004 the Faroud Shahlori Dar-e-Mehr was opened and dedicated to Aspi's father.

For the first time in the history of the Zarathushti community in New Zealand, both associations came together under one roof and mobeds of both associations prayed together. There were 19 mobeds and over 300 Zarathushtis attended. Although the Dar-e-Mehr is small, it is a place of dedication and is being looked after by the devotees with guidance from Aspi. The fire burns for 24 hours, which has been possible because the Dar-e-Mehr is in a central location and open around the clock. Shift workers en route to work keep the flame burning. Exam



Faroud Shahlori Dar-e-Mehr Anniversary Prayer

days see an influx of youth in attendance and Daulat believes that the fire has developed a reputation of answering devotee's prayers and hence the faith is unbelievable.

Truly, the Shahloris of Auckland have provided not only food for the body, but also food for the soul for the Zarathushti community of New Zealand.

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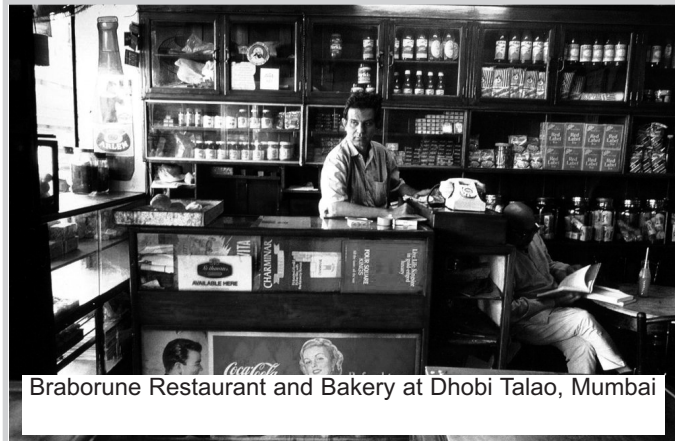
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IRANI CAFES – DISAPPEARING HERITAGE

K E Eduljee (West Vancouver, Canada)



Perhaps dining at an Irani café should become a Zarathushti pilgrimage tradition. For eating each morsel of a well-prepared and authentic Irani-Parsi dish in an Irani café is for some akin to a spiritual experience filled with history and tradition. Somehow food tastes different when imbibed at an Irani café.

Irani cafés serve another purpose as well. As an integral part of Zarathushti heritage and history, they present a facet of Zarathushti identity to others. The moment a patron walks through the door of an Irani café, they begin to experience elements of that identity and its values. It is not just the food but the egalitarian environment as well that makes for a complete experience. Most surviving Irani cafés are over 100 years old, time capsules of a bygone era: the bentwood chairs, the marble or glass topped tables, the portraits on the walls

DISAPPEARING HERITAGE AND HISTORY

There is some urgency to the opening suggestion. Authentic Irani cafés are fast disappearing. According to a report by Naomi Lobo of the Indian Express, while there were 350 Irani cafés in the 1950s, by 2005 the number had dwindled to just 25. For the main part, the cafés are to be found in Mumbai, India. To understand the heritage that each Irani café carries, let us briefly examine the history behind the cafés.

HISTORY

The Irani cafés or restaurants were set up for the main part by Irani Zarathushtis from the Iranian provinces of Yazd and Kerman fleeing the murderous persecution of the Islamic Qajar dynasty (1794-1925 CE) of Iran.

The Iranis were aided in their flight to the west coast of India by the Parsees of Bombay. For many Irani

Zarathushti refugees the Parsi housing colonies in Bombay's Fort district were their first home in India. From there, they spread out to settle in Pune and Hyderabad. Once settled, they in turn provided assistance to other Irani Zarathushtis seeking refuge in India from religious persecution in their homeland. Irani Zarathushti migration from Iran to India continued into the 1900s.

The Irani Zarathushti immigrants to India were a hard-working, industrious and self-reliant lot. They lacked the capital to establish themselves in trade, banking and industry as had the Parsis, but since they were determined to be self-reliant and productive, they established modest cafés and bakeries.

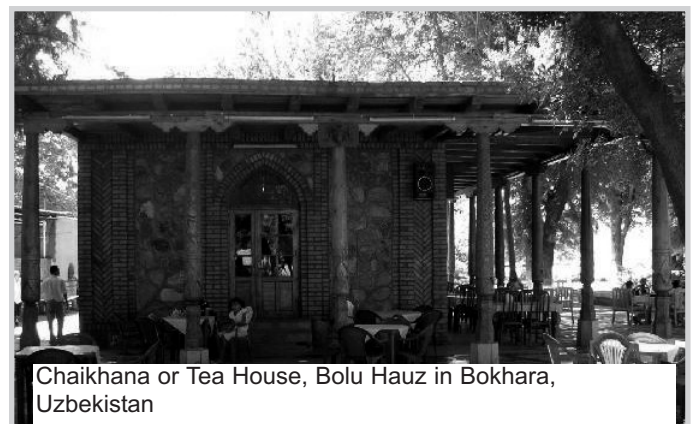
ETHIC AND AMBIENCE

Irani cafés soon became iconic features in their localities. They became known for good, honest, reasonably priced food and beverages. Their clients were invariably individuals of modest means for whom the cafés provided a place to drop-in for an inexpensive cup of tea, wholesome snacks, or a meal – or to just congregate and socialize, for the cafés also served a social function. By welcoming everyone, the Irani cafés created a micro environment that was classless and casteless – free from societal and religious distinctions and divisions. Some café owners even posted signs such as 'everyone welcome' or 'all castes welcome'. Others displayed religious icons from different religions on their walls.

ROOTS OF THE IRANI CAFE AND ITS CUISINE

Tracing the roots of the culinary traditions of the Irani cafés of India and the development of the concept, is a fascinating and illuminating exercise.

The culinary traditions of the Irani cafés are embedded in the tradition of the old Aryan chai khanas (tea houses) - an adjunct of the Aryan and Zarathushti



FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

INSTITUTIONS OF NOSTALGIA



Somsa freshly baked at a bazar in Khira, Uzbekistan.

trading tradition. The chai khanas could be found all along the Aryan trade routes¹, otherwise called the *Silk Roads*, and were used by travelers and locals alike. They even shared the same Persian name '*chai khana*', regardless of the language spoken in that country.

Irani cafés are more chai khanas than cafés for the principle hot beverage they serve is tea and not coffee. The 'Silk Roads' chai khanas served the local and travelling public. That very feature required them to be welcoming to people from different cultures. But it also meant that their food had to have broad appeal. The food needed to be simple, nutritious and comforting. Individuals came to the chai khana to sip a cup of tea and meet friends, to eat a simple meal, or even conduct some business.

CHAI KHANAS OF UZBEKISTAN AND TAJIKISTAN

Compare some of the fare available in an Uzbekistan chai khana² to what can be found in Iran and India: *shashlik* (kebab cooked and served on long flat metal skewers), *pilau* (rice with meat and vegetables), *kazan kabob* (fried meat with potatoes), *somsa* (pastry stuffed with meat and onions), as well as *naan* made in a *tandir* (tandur in India).

In Tajikistan, the oven is variously called a *chagdon*, *degdon* or *tanur*, while the *somsa* is called a *sambusa*.

The baked items served at the chai khana bring us to another associated tradition, that of an attached bakery. India's Irani bakeries are also an integral part of Irani Zarathushti heritage.

IRANI CAFE FOOD AS PART OF THE ZARATHUSHTI IDENTITY

It is this author's contention that culinary and other traditions are a more significant indicator of a region and people's cultural heritage than is language. For instance, the Parsi/Iranis of India speak Gujarati and English. Yet, their historic roots will not be found in Gujarat or England. Their Iranian, Persian, or Central Asian roots are found more in the concepts behind their traditions – religion, root culture and values. In developing the Irani cafés of India, Irani Zarathushtis may have adapted the décor and the menu of the chai khana to local tastes, but they maintained the underlying Zarathushti and Iranian-Aryan concepts and values developed over 4000 years along the Silk Roads.

This flexibility in adapting outward customs including food, language and dress, while firmly maintaining traditional values and way of life, is itself a defining trait of the Zarathushti identity. Over 2000 years ago Herodotus noted: '*There is no nation which so readily adopts foreign customs as the Persians.*' However, in quickly adopting local customs, the Persian Zarathushtis added a flair of their own making the adopted custom uniquely Zarathushti.

When the Irani Zarathushtis of Yazd and Kerman migrated to India, they adopted the established Parsi cuisine, which itself was an adaptation of Gujarati cuisine.

In her article, *For the love of Parsi Food*, Monica Bhide journals her impression of Parsi food: '*Their cuisine is a tantalizing marriage of Persian and Gujarati styles. Flavoring their curries with nuts and apricots, they brought the richness of Persia to the simple Gujarati food. Parsi food is not hot with chillies but has complex flavours and textures. They are primarily non-vegetarians and enjoy eating chicken, mutton and eggs.*'

One significant change between Iranian and Central Asian cuisine and Indian influenced Irani/Parsi cuisine is



Jimmy Boy Irani Cafe near Horniman Circle, Fort Area,
Photo credit rediff.



the shift from herbs and fruits to spices as the main flavoring ingredients. To this writer's untrained palate, the use of spice in Iranian food is far more subtle. Iranian food is seldom, if ever, chili hot.

However, at least one Irani café has not entirely forgotten its Iranian roots – the *Britannia* at Ballard Pier in Mumbai's Fort district. Britannia is famed for its *berry pulao*, an adaptation of the Iranian *zereshk* (barberries or *Berberis vulgaris*) *polo* (cooked rice). *Zereshk* is widely grown in Iran's Khorasan province making Iran the largest producer of *zereshk* in the world. *Zereshk* has famed health giving properties and may be a candidate for inclusion in the *haoma* family of health-giving and healing plant foods. The berry itself has a slightly tart flavor. If



Mutton Berry Pulav with Sali Boti(plate top right) at Britannia, Ballard Pier, Fort. Photo credit Amindo Ghosh at Flickr

meat is left out, the *zereshk* or berry pulao remains a vegetarian dish.

While vegetarian food may not be what Irani cafés are known for, patrons can help develop this part of the menu by specifically ordering vegetarian dishes. The literature tells us that at its very basic, Parsi foods consist of rice and daal (lentil) stews of various kinds (*dhansak* is a glorified lentil and pumpkin curry-like stew). Leaving the meat out of the cooking of these dishes keeps them vegetarian. For some reason, some Iranians don't particularly care for daal. They use the term *daal khor* meaning daal eater as a put-down for Indians and Pakistanis (the term even has its own Wikipedia page!). This is one part of the Iranian connection we can safely ignore.

IN CLOSING

We cannot conclude an article on Irani cafés without remembering that the first target of the Islamic terrorists who attacked Mumbai on November 26, 2008, was the Zarathushti Irani owned Leopold café. The Leopold café is located close to the terrorists' second target, the

Zarathushti owned Taj Mahal Hotel in South Mumbai. The Leopold is an example of an Irani café that transformed its menu in order to prosper in a changing environment. Hopefully, with the notoriety that articles such as this may bring to Irani cafés, some of their owners



Leopold Cafe , Colaba Causeway, Mumbai.

Photo credit Ashok Mandy at Flickr

might be encouraged to reinstate authentic Irani/Parsi dishes to their menus.

The great tragedy of the slow demise of the Irani cafés is not just the loss of an affordable and honest source of a unique cuisine. That food can in theory be prepared anywhere. The greater loss is that of the attendant culture and traditions – for each Irani café is a microcosm of a cultural heritage and a unique ethic that has taken shape over thousands of years through a blending of cultures from along the Silk Roads. The experience in eating the cuisine of an authentic Zarathushti Irani café owned and run by Iranis with roots in Yazd and Kerman, will never be the same in any other environment.

Irani cafés were dying out because of a lack of patronage. Some cafés have changed their menus in order to survive. Increasing our patronage – making Irani cafés a pilgrimage stop if you will – will help keep alive these iconic cafés and what they are renowned for: good wholesome Irani-Parsi food at reasonable prices.

Notes

This article is based on information at Zoroastrian Heritage <www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/> and <www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/irani/cafe.htm>

1. Aryan Trade at <www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/aryans/trade.htm>
2. Chaikhanas of Uzbekistan at <www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/uzbekistan/index.htm#chaikhana>

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

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REPAST AT THE RESORT – THE DINA HOTEL

Naval Jal (Mahabaleshwar, India)

Holiday destinations for the Parsis of India may be varied today, but tales of vacations spent in and around the many hill stations of India a couple of generations ago are legendary. Primarily, on account of the lavish Parsi fare offered in the many Parsi run establishments in these summer holiday retreats. Discovered and largely established by the British, Matheran, Mahabaleshwar, Panchgani, Khandala, Lonavala – all located on the Western Ghats in the vicinity of the major cities of Bombay and Poona, were cool destinations to which the well heeled migrated in the summer months to escape from the sweltering city heat.



Dina Hotel

The hill station of Mahabaleshwar, located in the Sahyadri Mountains of Maharashtra, is one such holiday destination. Most Parsis visiting Mahabaleshwar would sojourn at the Dina Hotel - a family owned and operated venture since its inception close to 100 years ago. The first member of the family to reach Mahabaleshwar was Cawasji, who in 1824 was part of the pioneering expedition of General Lodwick. Lodwick was instrumental in establishing Mahabaleshwar as a British rest and recuperation resort.

Cawasji with his son Cooverji prospered and became owners of several properties. Fountain Hotel, the oldest and one of the few resorts, was also among their properties. Unfortunately, Behram the eldest of Cooverji's sons, singlehandedly destroyed the family fortune through drink and gambling. He died in 1902 leaving his widowed mother, young brother Jehangirji (my grandfather) and Jehangirji's wife Dinamai and their 4 year old son Jalejar (my father) destitute.

In 1916, Jehangirji with the assistance of a sympathetic Parsi philanthropist built the first stage of the hotel building now known as the Dina Hotel and leased it to Jehangirji to run. When the benefactor died sometime around 1923/4 his successors auctioned off his properties. In 1927, Jehangirji, purchased the property for Rs 40,000 -a huge fortune in those days, creating a burdensome mortgage.

The family name Mahabaleshwarvala was adopted by Jehangirji (previously it was Hathikhau). This rather unusual and funny former name came about one evening when after a long heavy day, Cawasji was joined by friends for a get together. During the time it took for the repast to get ready, Cawasji declared that he was so famished that he could consume an elephant – thus the Gujarati derivative 'Hathikhau'.

The hotel, named Dina after my grandmother, operated for only 9 months of the year, remaining shut during the monsoon season from June to August. In the early days, Mahabaleshwar had no electricity, no plumbing or running water and no telephones, nor hardly any privately owned motor vehicles. The roads were un-tarred and dusty. To reach Mahabaleshwar from Bombay entailed a full days' tiresome journey. But on arrival, one found that the climate was superb; bird life in the thick woods in profusion, and wild animals, including stray panthers, were in abode. The atmosphere was clean with breathtakingly crystal clear mountain range views from the many scenic points. During the summer rush, single male guests housed in a dormitory style 12 bed rooms, enjoyed their holiday stay for Rs 1 per day!! The hotel clientele was almost wholly Parsi with a handful of Muslim and other guests. The four course menu was Parsi fare with a few western dishes.

Jehangirji, my grandfather, died on 3 May 1940. My father was his successor. World War II was on; and arising from tragic and continuous early setbacks suffered by the Allies, serious shortages of food and materials occurred and remained for a decade until the 1950s. In the day to day operation of the hotel, my mother Alamai was the back bone. She was a tower of strength and took control of the kitchen, house-keeping, and public relations. On account of her honest and unselfish nature, she was loved by all and remained a popular figure through her life. An article in the Jam-e-Jamshed paper, in the 60s, dubbed her 'The Grand Old Lady of Mahabaleshwar'. Cookery was her main focus and a wide variety of dishes were prepared and served to meet the demands and expectations of the guests. In those days, the average stay at the hotel lasted

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

INSTITUTIONS OF NOSTALGIA

from one week to a month. My mother's pride was that she did not repeat a dish until a lapse of at least 10 days.

A typical selection from Alamai's menu, served to this day, included the favorite *doodh-na-puff*, made famous by my mother. Milk was hung out on tree branches the night before in muslin bags in bowls to be infused and chilled naturally by morning dew and then whipped with sugar into a thick froth and eaten with great relish by children and adults alike. Porridge, spiced goat's liver and kidneys; brain (*bheja*) cooked as cutlets or in onion bhaji; eggs cooked to order; bread, butter and fresh cream with jam (homemade from fresh fruit in season such as strawberry, mulberry and guava). On auspicious occasions, *sev or ravo* was served. Definitely, a grand repast to start the day!



Typical lunch course on offer at Dina Hotel (Photo above)

Lunch consisted of a first course of soup, followed by either cutlets or bheja, mutton chops, potato patties stuffed with minced meat or sweet corn, masala liver, onion or vegetable per eeda, kheema plain or with green peas. Then came the main course of curry with rice, khichdi or rus (gravy) with mutton or chicken, several varieties of biriyani with daal and raita, and of course the all-time favorite dhansak. A variety of desserts finished off the midday repast.

The dinner menu began with soup, followed by fish and samosas. Next was the popular Parsi ma gos seasonal vegetables cooked with meat and finally a kathor – lentils or pulses of one kind or another. A selection of western style desserts ended the meal.

My mother used a, now out of print, two volume Gujarati recipe book entitled *Vividh Vaani* by Meherbai Jamshedji Wadia (1866-1897) containing 2180 recipes. It is a masterpiece! It contains details on all culinary aspects from masala preparations, pickles, chutneys, jams, and preserves to all sorts of dishes imaginable. She also often followed recipes from two volumes in Gujarati called *Mun Pasand Mishtaan*, written by two Parsi ladies.



Mulberry Trifle Dessert a Dina Hotel Specialty (Photo above)

Mahabaleshwar is and can be a soothing and enjoyable change for a short stay. Except for the monsoon period, the weather is sublime with very little humidity and the pollution is almost non-existent. A pleasant, happy and contented vacation is guaranteed. Although, almost all the old Parsi hotels are no more, at The Dina, now modernized with a vast one-acre landscaped garden, solar panel heating, satellite TV, WiFi, a taste of Parsi cuisine with friendly personalized attention, hopefully can make a short holiday memorable. You will be at home away from home!

Naval Jal was born in Mahabaleshwar in 1927 and has been in charge of operating and running the Dina Hotel in Mahabaleshwar since 1986. Naval is one of the fifth generation of the Mahabaleshwarwala family to do so, alongside with his late elder brother Firoze's son Hormuzd.

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

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TWO QUINTESSENTIAL ZARATHUSHTI EATING PLACES OF OLD

Rusi Sorabji (Campbell.CA, USA)

Recalling the quintessential Irani restaurant, now fast disappearing and difficult to find; the typically luscious Irani/Parsi foods they served in their heydays of the first half of the 20th century; the unbelievable prices we were charged then and the good natured and very pleasant Irani greetings/service we received. We, it seemed lived in a world full of Zarathushtis who derived joy from simple and natural things.



Photo above Rusi (L) and Cyrus at the Ideal Corner ('new' Irani restaurant) with the old time Irani chaiwalla ambience situated on the corner of Gunbow St and Pherosha Mehta Rd)

IDEAL RESTAURANT

The Ideal Restaurant was the quintessential Zarathushti restaurant of old and a gastronomic haven situated next to Dadi Seth Agiary, in Mumbai. It is an old building standing guard – resolute and proud with a typically Victorian façade, elaborately decorated in stone and brick, an edifice that was a symbol of times gone by. A fine Irani restaurant that I first set foot in, before fire reduced it to a shell. They called it the Ideal Restaurant Building although it had another name. It stood at the corner of Hornby Road (one of Bombay's main arteries) and Ghoga St, next to the Dadi Seth Agiary, at Flora Fountain. Just a hundred yards down the road lived my uncle Ardershir Sorabji, on the top floor of the Kalfati Mansion and this is where we spent most of our summer vacations during the 30s and 40s.

Often after visiting the Agiary, the aroma of the freshly baked wine cakes, cheese cakes, chicken patties lured us

into the restaurant with our parents in tow. For these little perpetually hungry Parsis coming from North India, the Irani restaurant with its falooda, ice cream, *daram-nu-juice* (pomegranate juice), fresh *khari biscuits* (flaky biscuits), *batasaas* (savory butter biscuits), mouth drooling chicken or mutton puffs, *kheema-na-pattice* (mince patties), wine 'kake', warm cheese 'kakes' with a crispy cheese crust, lagan-nu-custard (wedding custard), bun/muska (butter), etc. was like manna from heaven, better still, it was like being in a gastronomic heaven.

What I found peculiarly interesting if not amusing was that the waiters and the staff were all Iranis or bawas very much like us, dressed in traditional black velvet *bhunva-ni-topees* (prayer caps), *white bundis* (jackets), long white shirts on top of wide flowing white *laygas* (pajamas) with the long ends of their *kustis* trailing behind. Only the manager or the owner, the man at the counter near the entrance/exit, to whom you paid the bill, was dressed in a coat type *duglo* and wore thick horned rimmed spectacles. When the waiters came to take your order they spoke grammatically incorrect Gujarati sprinkled with a few English words and we had a tough time trying to choke back our laughter. We kids were addressed as, *boochas* (kids) and *dickras* (darlings).

Another peculiarity was that at the end of the meal no bill was presented. But no sooner did you get up to leave, from the corner of the huge sprawling hall, someone would shout in a sing-song voice, giving details of what you had ordered and the amount you had to pay. We could never figure out how they did it. It is said no one ever escaped the shouter's watchful eye or got off without paying. If someone walked into the restaurant and walked out without buying or eating, all could hear the loud sing-song chorus as the person passed the cashier's counter, '*this one did not eat or drink*'.

It may be of interest to readers who in January 2007 paid the Ratan Tata Industrial Institute (RTI), Rs 15 for a mutton puff, pastry or cutlet, or Rs 35 for a packet of wafers or *khari biscuits* that in the 1940s at the Ideal Restaurant we paid 2 annas (Rs 0.125) for a large glass of *dudh-na-puff*, falooda with ice cream or pomegranate juice. A large portion of custard or *kheema na pattice* cost 2.5 annas (Rs 0.16) as did a full breakfast with two eggs, bun, muska and tea. Cheese cake as big as a standard muffin was 5 paisa or 1.25 annas (< Rs 0.08). Pastries such as chicken/mutton/vege puffs, packets of 8 *khari biscuits*, *nan khatais* (sweet biscuits), packet of *batasas* or wine cakes, were just 1 anna each, that was the price also for a large 5 inch fresh bun with a liberal helping of muska

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

INSTITUTIONS OF NOSTALGIA

(butter) and a hot cup of tea. Gravy cutlets with bun was 3 annas (Rs 0.18), plate of sali boti or a well stacked up plate of dhansak with two kababs was 5 annas (Rs 0.31).

Many a times as we were leaving after a spicy meal, the good natured man sporting the thick horned rimmed spectacles would politely inquire in his broken Gujarati; 'Khaadda? Gum-yaah?' (Did you like what you ate?) He would then hand out small packs of 4 English toffees or caramels or cubes of gaaz (nougat) from Iran. In response to our shy 'thank you' he would say, 'God bless you my child'.

We, it seems, lived in a world then that was full of Zarathushtis who derived joy from simple and natural acts.

THE RIPON CLUB, FORT

A 19th century place in the 21st century serving traditional Parsi food from Victorian times. Tucked away in a Victorian building behind the Prince of Wales Museum, at Kala Ghoda is this rare, exclusive, nearly 150 years old Parsi club that is a vital link to a very different time.

I was first introduced to the club over 50 years ago. The old fashioned, dimly lit elevator pulled us up, groaning and moaning to what seemed like the 15th floor, although this building was no more than 4 or 5 stories high, for the roof terrace provided a panoramic view of the majestic buildings of the Bombay University. Entering the hallway of the club was like being transported into the Victorian era. The furniture, wall hangings, clocks, decorations, picture frames, billiard table, book cases and the books looked no younger than 100 years but well preserved. The fans with long wooden polished blades rotated in three quarter time as if keeping in tune with the music of the

Queens's era and long easy chairs with folding leg rests that resembled a gynecological examination table. However, the pictures on the walls of eminent Parsis and faces of those seated or relaxing in the easy (or as it was then pronounced 'EG') chairs reminded that you were in a Parsi place. There were no ladies present as membership was then restricted to Parsi gentlemen only and there was a long waiting list. Apparently, now the Club had opened its doors to Parsi ladies.

My next visit was in 2001 and everything looked just the same as in the 1960s, except for the addition of the TV that looked out of place. My wife and I were invited by my friend, former boss and mentor, the late Dr Keki R Hatti of Godrej. We were extremely fortunate that our visit that day coincided with the Club's 'All you can eat dhansak day'. And dhansak is what the Ripon Club is very famous for. The taste of Ripon Club's dhansak and kababs served with kuchumbar spiced with wine vinegar stays ever after in your mind as a meal to judge all other meals.

The charge of just Rs 50 for this Parsi dish of global renown, richness and flavor was an insult to the dish. I would be happy to dish out Rs 500 for the same meal. Interestingly, you can still get Rogers Soda for Rs 50 at the Ripon Club. In 2007, the price for their other dishes like, sali boti, masoor ma gos, gravy na cutlets was only Rs 58 each.

My request for permission to video tape or take pictures was turned down to protect the privacy of the members stretched out on the easy chairs after their gastronomic orgy.

Bio of Rusi Sorabji on page 34

Sunita Sohrabji And Kainaz Amaria Win Awards From The Peninsula Press Club

On May 21, *Sunita Sohrabji*, staff reporter with India - West and free lance photographer *Kainaz Amaria*, jointly accepted a second place award for their series, "**End of Life**" which examined the Dickensian conditions under which US electronic waste is disposed off in slums of India (*Dharavi and Sakinaka*) by elderly women and children, largely by hand and without any health-protecting gear. One of the most captivating shots, of Amaria, on a Fulbright scholarship for the series, depicted a young boy in Dharavi, standing before a huge mountain of discarded computers, monitors and printers with a tiny screwdriver in his hand. "*That one photo* published on the front page of India-West, *captured the entire story*"

Sohrabji received another second place award for her story "**The Nani Diaries**" documenting the work force abuse, elderly Indian immigrant women often face in the homes of their Indian American employers- low wages, long hours, verbal and physical abuse, but also that their sons and daughters, and/or in-laws were equally abusive.

Amaria's images and multimedia have been recognized by contests including, Women in photojournalism, the National Press Photographers and the South Asian Journalists Association. *Sohrabji* has received six journalism awards from New America Media and the Peninsula Press club. *Congratulations to Sunita and Kainaz,*



FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

INTERNATIONAL CHEFS

A BASKET CASE: Topli Nu Panir AND ME Niloufer Ichaporia King (San Francisco, Ca, USA)

This is a love story, and like many love stories it has elements of greed, passion, persistence, frustration, disappointment and joy. It's about my undying, greedy love for topli nu panir, the stuff of yearning, where in my fantasies, it's morning in Bombay and the paowala has come, amused by my delight in naram (soft) and gotli pao (crusty bread), when sliced bread is much more modern. I'm waiting impatiently for the panirwala's weekly ring. He's a gentle-mannered old Muslim man dressed in a checked lungi and kurta, his beard stained with henna. He reaches into the dented aluminum vessel he carries on his head, gently pulls out a dozen or so plump, quivering panirs with the mark of the basket on them and places them into a waiting bowl, along with some of the whey. My mother will see that this delicious whey is quickly replaced with boiled water, but before that, I sit down to a breakfast that has no equal: an immoderate number of these exquisite poems in milk, along with a little naram or gotli pao and WIT's fabulous gooseberry jam. My mother will eat her modest single panir with a triangle of crisped flatbread from the Decent Tandoor Bakery in Nagpada, this, too, brought to the door by another polite, elderly Muslim man.

Till today, topli nu panir has had to remain a fantasy, realized only on trips to Bombay, where my mother bought more panir than she ever wanted just to keep the panirwala coming back regularly. Somewhere along the line, the old man retired to his muluk (home town), to be replaced by his young nephew Salim. Dressed in 'shirt pant', Salim gave me a telephone number where he could be reached and which was to be given out only to good 'kastambars'. Salim's ambition, he confided, was to come to America, make panir in my house and take it around, just as he did in Bombay. Before that could happen, my mother came to live with us in San Francisco and Salim eventually stopped his rounds.

Relatives and friends said he hadn't been seen in a long time. His telephone number (which I still have) rang but was never answered. It's not surprising. In an India of call centers and computers, a bright young man might think there's more to life than wandering around in the sun all day with a heavy vessel on his head.

For a while, until it closed forever, the irreplaceable Swabal Stores in Cusrow Baug had a delivery of panir from Surat, along with other delicacies from Gujarat. In the absence of a panirwala or Swabal Stores, one has to hope that there'll be a perfect little panir on the patru at a lagan or navjote. If it's not the wedding season, there are now a few public-spirited Parsi women who make topli nu panir

to order, and my kind friend Firoza Kanga indulges me generously in Salim's absence from both our lives, by ordering me dozens.

About 25 years ago, hearing my wails about longing for topli nu panir, my father consulted his sister Roda who told him that to begin with, he could get baskets made in the galli (lane) that led off Princess Street to Chandanwadi. She then dictated the principles. Unlike the common panir, either the rubbery sort used in cooking or our creamier Parsi variety, both made from milk curdled with acid, topli nu panir is made from milk coagulated with animal rennet in the form of chusda (dried chicken gizzard linings). The custard-like curd drips through individual baskets set on top of glasses. Each panir is then inverted and plopped back into the baskets so both sides get markings. Then they are slipped out of the baskets into the collected whey.

I brought four dozen baskets back with me to San Francisco where until today they have hung in a string bag taunting me. My first attempt started out with a perfectly coagulated mass made with rennet tablets. The trouble lay in getting the panirs to leave their basket homes. In the wreckage there may have been one or two acceptable examples, but they didn't taste particularly good. Over the next few years, Dhun Bana, a friend of my cousin Roshan Bavadam, kindly consented to give me a tutorial in topli nu panir. Nothing to it, she modestly said. Indeed it seemed simplicity itself. Dhun's panirs popped out of the baskets with no trouble at all. She like the panirwala used regular Bombay buffalo milk, commercial rennet and her toplis behaved perfectly.

The first thing I did on returning, was to make another batch of rennet-coagulated milk, using liquid rennet brought for me from England by Amy Nicholls, an old school friend. The same thing happened. My baskets didn't want to let go of the panirs regardless of whether I soaked them or used them dry. Eventually, after more attempts of this sort, I gave up trying, but it has now been almost two years since I had a topli nu panir and my desire for them has begun welling up.

I have this notion that animal rennet, in the form of dried gizzard linings, might possibly account for the particular subtle tang of the panirwala's panir. Bhicoo Maneckshaw in *Parsi Food and Customs* (1996) has a recipe for topli nu panir using *gizzard* linings soaked in vinegar, but nothing is said about the quantity or time entailed, and whether it's the vinegar or the gizzard itself that's used.

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

INTERNATIONAL CHEFS

A chef friend, Amaryll Schwertner of Boulette's Larder, brought me a bag of prime gizzards from well-brought-up chickens, and my biochemist husband has decided he likes this essay in natural products chemistry hoping it will result in a constant supply of floating panir as he calls it, as opposed to the sitting variety. With a sure hand and a sharp knife, he separated the gizzards from their linings. I made a confit of the gizzards and David took the linings to his lab where he lyophilized (freeze-dried) them, returning them in a zip lock bag looking like exotic dried mushrooms.

Meanwhile, I corresponded with a scholar in Virginia who used chicken gizzard linings to recreate a recipe from Thomas Jefferson's cook for a sweet cream made with green tea. An internet search yielded various scientific discussions on the use of gizzards and animal stomachs as coagulants for milk. We were on the right track with vinegar, so David suggested pulverizing the gizzards and macerating them in a jar of mild Japanese rice wine vinegar. I did what I should have done all along: consult *Vividh Vani* (1915) which had pages on topli nu panir and several other kinds as well, with meticulously detailed instructions. My Gujarati is regrettably deficient but I was able to get the gist of things. I tore off to Nitin Bhatt of the New India Market to get an expert's reading of every nuance. I learned that *chusda*, refer to the first stomachs of young goats, and that chicken gizzards (*teti*) are the alternative, though both get macerated in vinegar.

I set four baskets to soak, prepared four squares of web-like cheese cloth as liners, and heated a cup each of raw (stemming from comments by Sorensen and Chubb) and pasteurized cow's milk, inoculating it with 1 1/2 teaspoons of the gizzard tincture. In four hours, the milk set, the raw milk producing a denser, creamier mass. We lined the baskets, set them on glasses and divided the milk. In about 2 hours, we turned each panir, finding that the raw milk had once more behaved better in the dripping stage, and each little proto-panir was easier to invert. In another 2 hours, we were able to pour off the whey and slip 4 skinny panirs into it.

The raw milk won on all fronts, looks, taste and texture, but even with the gizzard mixture, the taste seemed bland until I added a bit of salt to the collected whey. By 10 p.m., we shared our first panir. It may not have passed Salim's uncle's test, but the summit is within sight and within reach, and there's a great sense of satisfaction in understanding what must be an ancient process. The Bakhtiari tribesmen have a cheese, khiki, which is set with goats' stomach linings (Food and Agriculture Organization, 1990), and a type of panir corresponding to our 'sitting' panir is important in the diet of modern Iran, Muslim or Zarathushtrian. It doesn't seem

out of the question, therefore, to speculate that our fleeing forebears may have brought the technique for both kinds of panir with them to India.

While our gizzard-set panir was in its baskets, an e-mail arrived from a cousin, Feroze Dalal, husband of the late Katy Dalal, with whom I would have loved to have had a conversation on topli nu panir. He had heard the panirwala's cry, bought some panirs and asked questions about the process. Yes, gizzards were formerly used, swirled about in the milk and then discarded, but nowadays, '*kai pavdar vaprech*' (some sort of powder is used). Feroze added that the panirs were a sad disappointment.

We tend to see cultural preservation in larger terms, but so many every day, ephemeral expressions slip away, taken for granted until they are no longer there. Topli nu panir is a rare and precious part of the worlds' repertory of cheeses and we need to encourage and document its makers and sellers. There are generations of artistry in every stage, whether it's judging the curd, or turning it out of the baskets or reaching into the vessel with knowing, gentle hands to present us a perfectly made panir and nothing brings that home as much as attempting to replicate the process.

The author thanks Dhun Bana, Roshan Bavadam, Nitin Bhatt, Arnavaz Chubb, Feroze Dalal, David King, Leni Sorensen, Amaryll Schwertner for their participation in Project Panir past and present.

Niloufer Ichaporia

King has lived and cooked in the USA for almost 50 years in the course of which she repeatedly attempted to master topli nu panir. She is the author of *My Bombay Kitchen: Traditional and Modern Parsi Home Cooking* (2007) and is now working on tropical food plants and their cross-cultural uses. She has an MA in Design from the University of California at Berkeley, and a PhD in anthropology from the same institution, for which she has made a collection of Parsi ethnographic material. Anyone who has insights into topli nu panir can reach her at <nuxindica@yahoo.com>.



FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

INTERNATIONAL CHEFS

PASTAKIA'S PAVILION IN CHINA

Sarosh Khariwala and Arnavaz Chubb (Melbourne, Australia)

The challenge of tempting the Chinese palate with dhansak is not for the faint hearted. Not one to shy away from attempting to breach the culinary great wall that divides the Parsis and the Chinese is Mehernosh Pastakia - partner and general manager of Beijing's Taj Pavilion Restaurant. An Indianized version of Chinese food has long been a popular alternative cuisine for many Parsis and Indians in general, but the notion of popularizing Indian and Parsi cuisine to the Chinese has been slow to take off. Notwithstanding the fact that the Persians of old, the Indians and their Chinese counterparts have long been trading with each other along the ancient Silk Route, their cuisines have remained quite distinct.

The opening up of China to business and tourism in recent years has led to many Indians travelling there for work and pleasure, but back in 1991, China was still a closed book to many when Mehernosh decided to take up an assignment there. *"I was trying to start up a business in Mumbai, but somehow it would not take off"*, recalls Mehernosh. *"Finally, when there was an offer to work as a manager for an Indian Restaurant in Beijing, I went with it. Beijing was an unexplored land at that time in 1991 and my parents and friends were all aghast at my choice to work there. But then I also liked challenges so went ahead with it and am still here."*

Located in the heart of Beijing's commercial area in the China World Trade Center, The Taj Pavilion, according to its website, was opened in 1998, with the aim of fulfilling the demands of Indian food hunters. The restaurant has become a home away from home for Indian travelers and an exotic destination for others in Beijing, notes the website, adding that readers of "That's Beijing" voted it the restaurant of the year in 2004. The restaurant has predominantly an Indian decor surrounded by wooden carvings on the walls under a huge central dome. There are silk paintings on the walls depicting the royalty and culture of the Mogul era.

The Taj Pavilion serves typically North and South Indian dishes, but the menu on the website also includes dhansak, the token Parsi specialty. It is however, Chicken Tikka Masala which is the most requested dish on the menu, according to Mehernosh, who adds that, *"this happens to be a dish which goes well with all, Indians, Chinese and other expats considering it is not very spicy*

or bland and has a mixture of tandoori and curry flavour." Over the years, Mehernosh says he has had many special requests which have involved changing flavors and the spiciness of a dish to accommodate individual preferences of taste.

The Taj Pavilion has hosted heads of state such as Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and business men such as Mukesh Ambani, but Mehernosh is also known for inspiring a feeling of community among Indians living in Beijing and for serving as an informal, yet effective, link between them and the Chinese, according to a news item in the China Daily. Apparently, at Diwali (the Hindu New Year) time, Indians living in Beijing receive a box of sweets from Mehernosh.



Mehernosh Pastakia and his family

Helping to foster the feeling of hindi-chini bhai bhai (brotherhood between the Indians and Chinese) through his food, it is Mehernosh's ambition to open an authentic Chinese restaurant in India when the opportunity arises. He is inspired and motivated by the drive to get the job done and in a right manner and this is what keeps him going. *"Growth is something which cannot be stopped or reduced. Whenever possible I would love to add on to the growth of our*

business", says Mehernosh when asked about his plans for the future.

Brought up and educated in the Parsi stronghold of Mumbai, Mehernosh values his Zarathushti upbringing. His advice to younger Zarathushtis is to follow the path and maintain the Zarathushti culture. *"If there is a way of helping out people then we must go out of our way to do so. After all we Zarathushtis should be practicing a good deed a day."* Mehernosh is involved with the Beijing Charitable Association which works in the field of education, writes the China Daily, adding, *"He is guarded about donating the proceeds of weekend sales to help run a school, a practice he has engaged in every year over the past decade to mark the restaurant's anniversary"*.

Home for Mehernosh is in Beijing these days, where he lives with his Chinese wife and young son, but his other home is Mumbai, *"my roots will always be in India, might branch out, but the roots will stay in India"*, he says. What he prizes above all else he says is, *"Family values, after all we do everything for our families"*



FROM MASTERCHEF FINALIST TO LIFE IN THE FAST LANE OF SPICE COOKING

Interview by Jehangir Ratanshah Mehta (Perth, Australia)

MasterChef Australia 2010 contestant Jimmy Seervai has his future set out for him. Despite being eliminated in the finals of the popular TV cooking competition, Jimmy's life is racing fast. He has found premises for his own Indian restaurant, in Surry Hills, Sydney. He is sharing his love of Indian food via a website with free recipes and joined World Expedition to lead a culinary tour of India in October 2011. This 18 day journey to India is a perfect recipe of incredible Indian highlights, lovely heritage hotels, and tantalizing gastronomy thanks to the master

classes Jimmy will conduct with India's best known chefs.

"Growing up in an Indian shop with all these crazy ingredients around me taught me a very different language from a very young age. I knew then what I know now, that food with spice is the only food for me."



Jimmy Seervai

After being in the MasterChef competition I found my passion to cook would not remain just a pastime but something that I want to share and make available to others who love to cook with spice. Jimmy's Spice Kitchen is about me sharing my recipes and ideas, to tell a story of whom I am and the food I love to create. This is only the start of my fantastic food dream."

Over the coming months, expect more recipes, cooking demonstrations, a cook book and of course that new restaurant. My ultimate dream is to inspire people to be more adventurous with their cooking. Flavors are like language, they remind us of happy times and memories we've experienced growing up. Stay tuned and spicy food will never be the same!

When did you first become interested in cooking?

My parents moved from India to Australia when I was 2 years old and opened an Indian spice shop in Sydney.

As a child I was exposed to various Indian cooking techniques, that is how I developed my passion for cooking.

Were you influenced by your mum's cooking?

Yes, my mum is a fantastic cook. She is an Anglo Indian who also learnt the art of Parsi cuisine.

Why did you decide to pursue a culinary career?

I am a scientist by training - Food Science - and working in the food industry was only a dream for me until MasterChef propelled that dream by providing the exposure to start my culinary career.

Cooking is learned in a kitchen from Masters. Who have been some of your Masters and how did they inspire you?

My masters are Atul Kulchor, Neil Perry and Peter Gilmore. During the MasterChef competition, I met many world acclaimed chefs who offered kind words of support, direction and encouragement. Neil Perry has offered personal support in setting up my restaurant. Atul Kulchor's restaurant in UK, with his fusion technique combining traditional Indian with a modern twist is what I would like to offer in my restaurant. So I tap into their experience and style to improve my own skills.

You were one of the four finalists of MasterChef Australia. This has lifted your profile and your fame in the culinary world. What did you learn from your elimination in the finals? Do you feel let down?

I did not feel let down at all, in fact I was shocked that I made it that far. Being a finalist did make me a household name when it comes to Indian cuisine.

As a home cook aspiring to reach higher culinary skills, what do you think about the quality of Indian cuisine in Sydney and generally in Australia?

There are many Indian restaurants in Sydney and over the years they have improved. Initially they offered only North Indian cuisine now there are a number of restaurants offering regional Indian cuisine.

You are starting a new restaurant in Sydney. What will you name it and what is the cuisine on the menu?

The name of the restaurant is Jimmy's Spice Kitchen and it will have a mix of North Indian and Parsi food.



FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

INTERNATIONAL CHEFS

You have recently joined World Expedition to lead a culinary tour to India. What motivated you to take on this project?

Imagine being given the opportunity to lead a tour around your favorite place in the world (India) on a culinary expedition. Words can't describe how excited I am.

Your website and twitter network encourages sharing of recipes with the world. Why do some people like to keep their recipes close to their chest and beyond to their grave?

Ha ha. Well I have to say that all the people I have met always open up whenever you get talking about recipes and food ideas. The likes of McDonalds and Coke seem to keep recipes to themselves, and to be honest, who wants their recipes anyway!!! People can contact me via my website <www.jimmysspicetkitchen.com.au> and I will only be too happy to respond.

There are many renowned top Zoroastrian chefs around the world. Do you keep in touch with them?

I have spoken to Cyrus Todiwalla of Café Spice Namaste in the UK, but unfortunately I have not had the pleasure of meeting any Parsi chefs.

Are you into healthy eating? How does Parsi food and eating habits weigh up on your healthy scale?

That all depends on what you think is healthy. Parsis are known to be overweight, eat lots of eggs and fatty foods and the average life span of a Parsi is over 80..... I say I'd take that style of living any day.

You have become a dad recently. Will this slow you down in your business venture and other projects?

Now that I have a 3 month old baby at home my focus has changed but I wouldn't say that it will slow me down. I just have different priorities now which will reduce time I had to myself.

What is a typical day in your life like?

It varies as I still have my research and other business ventures. I focus my energies on what needs to get done. I am busy setting up my new restaurant, launching new products - whole meal *atta* (flour) is the latest, plus spending time with family.

Kitchen disaster stories - do you have one?

Plenty of disasters! I would say most of them have been on MasterChef. Like the challenge of setting up an Italian restaurant in 4 hours; complete with a new menu! Some of us had never worked or cooked in a restaurant

before - there were people waiting desperately for food to eat - it was a disaster!

When things go wrong in the kitchen, how do you handle the situation? Do you show your honesty in owning up your mistake to the customer?

I haven't had too many opportunities to cook for paying customers but in the future when I do and there is an issue with food, the responsibility ultimately rests with me as my name is on the door.

What have been your greatest stresses and joys?

Dealing with my family has proved to be both stressful and joyous. My biggest success was winning the Master Chef V8 cake challenge.

Do you have a favorite restaurant in Sydney?

My favorite restaurant is Spice I Am in Wentworth St, Sydney

What's your regular comfort meal?

My favorite comfort food is dhansak on a Sunday.

If you weren't in the food business, what would you be?

Unemployed - I have always worked in food and I can't imagine doing anything else.

What do you most appreciate about your Zarathushtrian upbringing and Parsi culture?

The multiculturalism of our faith and our cuisine - we have an Iranian ethnic background but we have also embraced Indian culture. Parsi food is very much a fusion of old Persian and modern Indian.

You have achieved such great success in your career, what advice would you give to future chefs?

My advice to everyone is to make sure that you enjoy what you do. Doing things for money or pride is short lived. Working in food doesn't pay big dollars but it provides a great sense of achievement for me.

Is there one special ingredient that you love to use in your cooking?

Garam masala. A unique, versatile mixture of 5 different spices. I use it in many of my recipes.

Do you have a favorite curry?

Sali boti is my favorite curry. It has a whole lot of spices including apricots.

What is your favorite place on earth to vacation?

Mumbai.



CYRUS TODIWALA'S NEW WAVE PARSİ CUISINE - NAMASTE AND JAMVA CHALOJI

Cyrus Todiwala, (London, England)

Late last year, Cyrus Todiwala was named by the *London Evening Standard* as one of the *1000 Most Influential People in London*. Considering that today London is universally lauded as the culinary capital of the world -- edging out Paris and New York -- that is no mean feat.

But it was despite his traditional parents' fears that



Cyrus decided to pursue a career in catering and graduated in Hotel Administration & Food Technology from Bombay's Basant Kumar Somani Polytechnic. Afterwards, encouraged and supported by his wife Pervin, he rose to become Corporate Executive Chef of the Taj Holiday Village, The Fort Aguada Beach Resort and The Aguada

Hermitage in Goa. Together, they left India for London in 1991 where, at a restaurant called Namaste, Cyrus developed his hallmark style of blending traditional Indian culinary techniques and flavors with unexpected ingredients.

An inspiring blend of exotic and unusual ingredients in traditional recipes distinguishes the innovative Indian cuisine that Cyrus Todiwala has become famous for in the UK. Todiwala is the undeniably creative half of a formidable husband and wife team that owns the famous Michelin BIB Gourmand awardee, *Café Spice Namaste*, where he creates familiar Indian dishes with a twist. Pheasant, partridge, wild boar, ostrich, venison, crocodile and bison, to name a few, are the very unusual ingredients Todiwala incorporates into his traditional tikkas, koftas and curries. He has earned the reputation as the most innovative and creative Indian chef of his generation, as described by the testimonials within his first cookery book – *Café Spice Namaste – New Wave Indian Cooking* (1999).

Parsi and Goan tastes and traditions appear to be the main culinary influences on Todiwala's repertoire dhansak and leeli chutney ma salmon; Goan king prawn curry and rice and pork vindaloo; all the traditional staples of these two traditions feature on the menu at Café Spice Namaste along with the not so familiar such as Darjeeling style Beef Curry a la Dada and Bhindi aur Mushroom ki Jalfraezi.

Born and brought up in a Parsi family in Mumbai, it would have been hard for Todiwala not to be steeped in the Parsi culinary tradition. Given too that London has a substantial Parsi population, it seems inevitable that Cyrus and Pervin were called on to give the Parsis of London what they craved – traditional Parsi food. This appears to have been the origins of the *Khaadras Club Nights* that were initiated at the Café Spice Namaste and have now become a regular feature. The aptly named *Khaadras or Greedy Gourmands Club*' nights serve traditional Parsi fare in typically generous bon homie. Now on its eleventh club night, in just over a year, it is proving popular not only with the Parsis but also with those keen to sample the diversity of Indian cuisine.

In a city where 'curry joints' are everywhere, Todiwala's restaurant with its sophisticated cuisine, has set itself apart and created a niche for itself. As one customer put it people expecting to find an ordinary curry house simply do not get it. *'We wanted the restaurant to reflect India's true nature: bright, vibrant, colorful, creative and above all diverse...the philosophy behind our restaurant is to let customers experience variety through the food of the subcontinent,'* says Cyrus, in the introduction to his first, much acclaimed cookbook, *Café Spice Namaste*.

The diversity of Indian regional cuisine is a feature of the restaurant's menu and also features in his cookery books of which he has authored three: *Café Spice Namasté, India: International Cuisine and Indian Summer*. Todiwala's varied approach to Parsi cuisine is also reflected in his menus for the Khaadras Club nights which have featured forgotten favorites such as *vengna ni buryani*, while the humble and prosaic *wafer per eeda* and traditional sev and dahi appear to have been lifted to new gastronomic heights. Cyrus Todiwala appears to have given Parsi cuisine its legitimate place as an intrinsic part of modern Indian culinary tradition.

In addition to his dedication to bringing a fusion of flavors and cooking styles to discriminating palettes, Cyrus is committed to investing in the development of skills and opportunities among his staff and to the philosophy of lifelong learning. He is currently a Trustee of

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

INTERNATIONAL CHEFS

Learning for Life, a charity dedicated to improving educational opportunities for young people on the subcontinent and Afghanistan.

For his many and varied services to the hospitality industry in the UK, he was conferred the **Order of the British Empire** in 2010 by Her Majesty the Queen. Ten years earlier, he had been made a **Member of the British Empire** for his services to education and training.

Ever the keen environmentalist he has helped to establish two bird sanctuaries in Goa and is Honorary Wild Life Warden for Goa, India. Cyrus prefers to cook with organic and sustainable products and supports and

encourages the use of local produce wherever possible. In 2011,

Cyrus and Pervin, on behalf of Cafe Spice Namaste, were at Mansion House, the Lord Mayor of London's official residence, to collect the award for Sustainable Food from the Corporation of London and for Leadership in Sustainability from the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Cyrus Todiwala also entered the UK's Who's Who for the first time, for lifetime recognition of leadership in his chosen profession, and an additional accolade for the world's Parsi community.

THE PASSAGE TO PERFECTION – JEROO'S STORY

Jeroo Mehta (Mumbai, India)

I have often been asked what persuaded me to write the book *101 Parsi Recipes*. It was because I did not want any bride to be in my plight when she got married - not knowing absolutely anything about cooking! Worse – I married a naval officer and his posting immediately after our wedding was to New Delhi. No mother to fall back on and no cook! Luckily, we were accommodated in the best officers' Mess. While breakfast was brought to our suite by

our private bearer (butler), lunch and dinner was in the Mess dining hall.

Even so, I rang up my kaki (father's brother's wife) who lived in Delhi and asked her how to make green chutney so I could offer my husband chutney sandwiches for tea. Success with the green chutney, gave me the courage to try and cook some 'real' food.

At that time, I possessed two cookbooks given to me by my mother – one was by the famous *Gamadia School of Cooking* written in Gujarati and the other was a small book of party as well as Parsi dishes written in English by a thoughtless author. Instructions like 'add salt to taste' (how much? What if you had to add to raw meat as in cutlets?). If it wasn't mentioned, I did not add it anyway! Then there was 'add water' (how much?).

Fish Molee is one of my favorite dishes so I decided to attempt it for my first entertainment. I did everything exactly as the recipe instructed, except I had to guess how much water to add. So, I added 1 cup, and 20 minutes later the curry had not thickened. Not knowing the basics of cooking I just kept on adding more water when one lot evaporated and expected that the curry would somehow thicken. One hour later, the consistency was still the same but the curry had ended up with all the parts of the fish - flesh, bones and skin, floating in different directions. Nobody told me fish only took a few minutes to cook! The results were disastrous and I gave up!

It was not until 12 years later, when my husband was given a diplomatic assignment as Naval Attache that I finally learnt how to cook. That was because we took with us a woman as domestic help who said she knew cooking. She asked if we liked limboo noo achaar (lime pickle) and other mouth watering dishes. She claimed she would



Jeroo Mehta



prepare these for us in, of all places, Moscow! We took her with us in euphoric anticipation to look after our 5 year old daughter. However, having reached Moscow, we

had borrowed 101 Parsi Recipes from a friend but did not want to return it! Where could she get a copy?



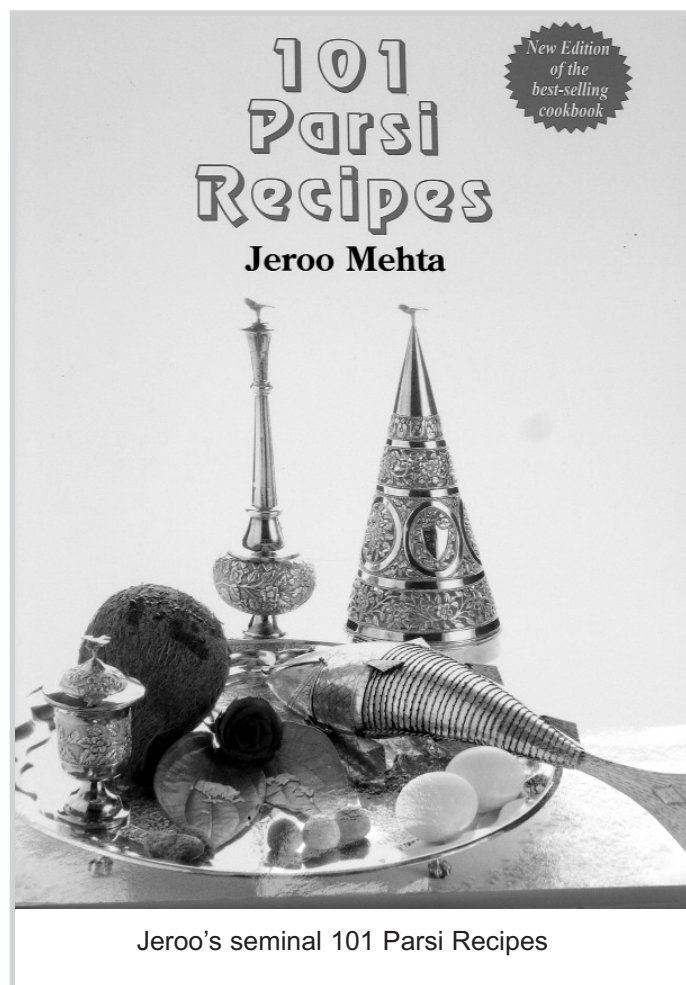
Jeroo's Malai per Eeda

discovered that she knew no more about cooking than I did!

That is when I started with baked fish which I remembered something about. Emboldened by my success I tried one more recipe which fortunately had remained embedded in my memory. That remained my total repertoire until friends came over and bailed me out by teaching me one dish after another. But the best teacher was my mother, who having received my SOS of 'please send me some recipes' began sending perfectly detailed and accurate recipes which truly got me started.

Two years later, on our return home, and very happy at the genuine appreciation of the fare at my table abroad, I decided to write a recipe book which any novice could follow and produce dishes with perfect results. I selected Parsi food because it is enjoyed not only at home in India but abroad as well. This is obviously because of the delicious and unusual blend of Persian cooking with other Indian flavors which the Parsis experimented with after their arrival in India. The Persian influence of using nuts and dry fruits in festive fare makes the dishes rich and delectable and adds great flavor to our cuisine.

When on a visit to Paris I was asked to give a demonstration of Parsi cooking to wives of diplomats. I cooked fish pilau which was so well liked that the American diplomat's wife had it published in The Washington Post! One of the 3 recipes from '101' published by request in Time Life series "*The Good Cook*" is Meat with Apricots. The late Jane Grigson, the doyenne of English cooks, published *Ambakalya* in her famous column in The Observer. She wrote me a letter saying she



Jeroo's seminal 101 Parsi Recipes

Actually the first time I realized that Parsi food is a great favorite abroad was, when studying in New York, students from different countries were asked to prepare a couple of dishes for the school's annual food festival. I requested the school cook to prepare chicken vindaloo from my mother's recipe and to my delight it was the first dish that was completely finished at the festival!

I wanted Parsi food to get its well deserved status in international cuisine and to be universally appreciated.

I am glad it continues to do so.

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

INTERNATIONAL CHEFS

PARSI CATERING - CRÈME DE LA CRÈME -- A TRIBUTE TO TANAZ GODIWALLA

Vispi Mistry (Mumbai, India)

A Parsi businessman and his wife are discussing dates for their daughter's wedding, coming December. Finally after much debating they have shortlisted on an auspicious day. *Darling let's call up Albless Baug and find out the availability of the venue immediately. Arrey dear, croons the wife, Pehle Tanaz Godiwalla ne phone kar ke ae available che ke (let us call Tanaz Godiwalla first to check her availability). It's the peak season and she may already have taken several functions on the same day.*

The above dialogue, as fictitious as it may sound is a fact, for Tanaz Godiwalla has at times 4, 5 or even 6 functions, which she caters on a particular day. All credit to Tanaz for reaching this pinnacle in her profession at such a young age. The foundation stones had been laid by her late parents Freny and Rohinton Godiwalla in the early 1960s, who through sheer hard work and sacrifice even at the cost of their own health, ensured that the customer was satisfied and satiated. Rohinton, the scion of the Godiwalla family always had a penchant for catering. Like most Parsis he was a true khaanaar peenaar (big hearted).

Rohinton who started his career as a clerk in the docks, got the opportunity to run the Cusrow Baug pavilion canteen in Mumbai. He first catered for his elder brother Jal's youngest son's navjote in 1965 at the Colaba Agiary and yours truly who was a mere 13 year old at that time still remembers the function because of the sumptuous patra (feast) served by Rohinton. The well attended function left a lingering taste on many a palate which translated into a slow and steady trickle of assignments. The famous caterers of those times viz Wadia, Aasha and Pavri realized the competition from the young Godiwalla was too much to handle and many who even then were old war horses, simply faded away.

Rohinton with full support from Freny, the known Godiwalla face in the field, started experimenting with new dishes, replacing the sali marghi (chicken with fried potato straws) with salia marghi (chicken on skewers). The traditional tarkari pur eedu (eggs on chopped vegetables) gave way to the finger licking chicken maiwala (do not ask me the story behind the coining of this name!). It is a dish served in an aluminum foil with a base of shredded chicken with kaju (cashew nuts) and kismis (raisins) in ghee with an egg on top.

Saas ni machhi (fish in a piquant white sauce) incidentally is universally accepted as Godiwalla's signature dish and no one can make saas ni machhi like the Godiwallas, even today. Fish fillet and cutlet with tomato gravy was another mouth watering concoction of



the Godiwallas. They were also the first to serve *bhejas* (lamb brains) at a Parsi wedding.

Of the three Godiwalla siblings, Neville and Tanaz joined the family business and learned the finer points of the trade from their parents. After Rohinton passed away in 1991, Freny despite her failing health carried on the Godiwalla tradition and continued to groom her children especially Tanaz in the finer nuances of the catering trade. Ever smiling despite her aches and pains, Freny continued to be the face of the Godiwallas. After her demise in 1998 the baton was passed on to her children, Neville and Tanaz. After Neville's sudden death in 2001, Tanaz has been holding the reins of the business and has taken it to an unscaleable level.

Today in Mumbai when one receives an invitation, inquiries are immediately made as to who the caterers are. Of course 9 times out of 10 it is Tanaz! But on the odd occasion if one learns of another caterer, then many get a little disappointed.

Tanaz has been the recipient of many awards including the prestigious Times Good Food award as the best Parsi caterer in 2010 and has also featured on BBC and Indian television. Prime Ministers, the Gandhi family, Bollywood stars and industrialists have all feasted on Godiwalla's fare.

As time moved on and culinary skills and food presentations became more refined, so did Parsi catering and Tanaz always makes sure that she is ahead of the competition through constant innovation on the evergreen patra (banana leaf).

Starting with crisp linen and silverware, exotic dishes waltz their way on to the patra making weddings and navjotes an occasion to look forward to. The chaanto paani (whisky/rum and soda) bar of the old days that served peanuts and wafers, has been replaced by professional bartenders serving exotic cocktails and delicious appetizers like chicken wings, fish fingers,



Photo above *Lagan nu patru* (photo courtesy of Tanaz Godiwalla)

popcorn chicken, seekh kabab, butterfly prawns, sev puri and paani puri spiked with vodka. The traditionally preferred *lagan nu achaar* (wedding pickle) has given way to *mango mewa nu achaar* (mango and dry fruits pickle), wafers are now served with dips. Rotlis got jostled out by *naans* and *parathas*, kid gosh has been replaced by succulent *raans* (spicy roasted deboned legs of lamb), and croutons are added to the *bharuchi akoori* (scrambled eggs with dry fruits) or served with *garlic brun* (crisp bread). For the rich and famous who can afford to splurge, *lobster daree* can be added to the menu. This extravagant dish is prepared in a tasty sauce and the recipe is fiercely guarded by Tanaz. *Lagan nu custard* (wedding custard) is served in a tri sweet platter with *gajjar halwa* (carrot sweetmeat), *badam paak* (almond sweetmeat) or *mithai* (sweetmeat). The menu is extensive and the price of the *patru* (feast) is dictated by how much one wishes to spend.

Tanaz, blessed with an elephantine memory provides her personal touch to the occasion by remembering the preferences of eminent guests, for example how they like their eggs or fish fried by ensuring that guests are served exactly what they like during the dinner service. The smile of approval and satisfaction on their faces makes her day.

Being so close to Tanaz, the author has never ceased to wonder how she manages the business so efficiently. Catering at five different venues, most of her business is conducted over the cell phone, which would ring at least 10 times an hour. As soon as the phone rings, Tanaz takes out a slip of paper from her pocket. This piece of paper is her lifeline and has all the details jotted down neatly. Attention to detail is one of her greatest attributes. Her instructions over the cell phone are brief, concise and clear, while being pleasantly direct and forceful. The supplier on the other end of the phone knows exactly what is required and for which venue it is required. On most days, cooking is done at a central venue and the food is transported by vans to other sites which have smaller kitchens and limited facilities. No matter how much the

pressure, Tanaz remains cool and calm, the very quality and temperament needed to run this business.

The *dagla topi* (coat and cap) *lalyas* (waiters) have made way for shirt and bow bearers. Tanaz personally inspects each bearer and ensures that they are properly shaved and attired before each function.

It is universally acknowledged even by fellow caterers that when your guest list crosses a 1000, Tanaz is the only one to manage your function. The Jamshedi Navroz function at the Dadar Parsi Colony, where they actually stop selling tickets when numbers reach 2700, is managed by Tanaz each year with clockwork precision. It is a treat to see how well coordinated the catering is with at least half a dozen dishes served on the *patra*. There is also an annual gambhar where around 7000 Parsis/Iranis are catered for simultaneously at Albless and Cama baugs by Tanaz. All Parsi/Irani social organizations know that if they want their function to be a success the name 'Catering by Tanaz Godiwalla' has to be printed in their advertisements for the tickets to sell like hot cakes. Tanaz sponsors a gambhar every Khordad sal where around 1000 poor Parsis/Iranis are fed and food is also sent to charitable homes, dharamsalas and doongerwadi.

Tanaz, despite her name and fame, is very friendly, loving and big hearted but at the same time a reserved person with a handful of close friends with whom she chills out and unwinds. During the navjote/*lagan* season, at the end of a long tiring day, which finishes mostly in the early hours, she goes home to a cooked meal and watches TV (Discovery and National Geographic are her favorite channels) and unwinds. She is a big cricket buff, enjoys travelling, loves to swim and play table tennis.

Most of the managers and staff of her parent's days continue to work with Tanaz. These loyalists have been groomed by Tanaz to independently handle a venue during the *lagan/navjote* season. Adored by her staff who affectionately call her baby, a name from the good old



Jeroo and Vispi Mistry

days of her parents when as a kid she used to come to the baugs has stuck. Tanaz baby sure is the undisputed gastronomic queen of Parsi caterers.

Vispi Mistry is a first cousin of Tanaz Godiwalla. Vispi and his wife Jeroo are Tanaz's closest friends. A computer professional, he is now retired and living in Mumbai.

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

INTERNATIONAL CHEFS

THE NEXT IRON CHEF? MEHTA SHOWS HIS METTLE

Arnavaz Chubb, Sarosh Khariwala, (Melbourne, Australia)

Chef Jehangir Mehta, prior to becoming the Next Iron Chef runner up in 2010, and opening his two restaurants, *Mehtaphor* and *Graffiti*, in New York City, he was the highly acclaimed pastry chef at some of New York City's finest restaurants. Jehangir is passionate about inculcating the love for good food in children and getting them to eat healthy.

Mumbai-born Jehangir's journey started when, much to the amusement of his family's maids and cooks, he took an interest in the goings-on of the kitchen. After he voiced a desire to pursue a career in the culinary arts, Jehangir's family put their full support behind him and sent him to the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York.

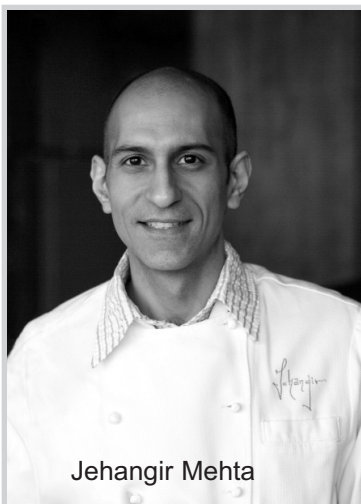
Jehangir's cultural heritage fills him with endless inspiration, including Ayurveda, and his favorite ingredients, fruits and spices. Now it is only left to his imagination as to what he will conquer next.

There has probably never been a better time to be a chef – chefs have developed celebrity status these days and ordinary folk are taking to eating good food, reading cookbooks and watching cooking shows on TV like never before, why do you think people are embracing food with such a passion at this time?

The world is much more global now than it was 25 years ago. As people travel more, they experience different cuisines. Tasting local food is one of the best ways to get to know a new culture. Once they are back home, they talk about their experiences and some enterprising people take it a step further and open a restaurant to offer those taste and flavors to people in their home country. I think this has contributed to the increased passion for food. TV has also played a big role. Cooking shows are all much more dramatic than they were in the past. All this adds to the excitement and it's a good thing.

Your background is Parsi Zarathushti, your professional training as a chef has been predominantly in the Western tradition, and do you see the possibility of combining the two culinary traditions successfully?

I have always used Asian ingredients in my food. Combining them with a French style of cooking is my signature style.



Jehangir Mehta

Recently, I have given my spin to three Zarathushti dishes that I grew up eating, *the patra-ni-machi*, *papeta-ma-gos* and *tamato-par-edu*. Variations of all these are on the menu at Mehtaphor.

You once said that anyone wanting to learn to be a chef today should learn from the trunk and not the branch. Would you say that your trunk has been the Parsi Zarathushti School of cooking? How has traditional Parsi cuisine influenced you and directed your progression as a chef, if at all?

I would not exactly say that, but my roots are most definitely Zarathushti and the love for spices and herbs was instilled in me by my grandfather. He knew the medicinal property of most herbs and spices and always treated us for minor injuries and illnesses with homemade recipes. That's what sparked my interest in food.

Do you think that the Zarathushti culinary tradition is worthy of preservation and would you popularize it through your menus

I think all ancient cultures are worth preserving. As I mentioned, I am definitely influenced by my Persian roots and therefore have created spins on dishes I enjoyed eating as a child. Apart from that, I have spins on Spanish and Asian food too. I think culture is rooted deep and therefore anything that springs from it comes out strong.

If you had to put together a degustation menu based on Zarathushti food classics, what would it be? Which of our traditional recipes do you think would showcase our gastronomic heritage in the best possible way?

Here is what I would offer:

- Mincemeat crostini (keema pav)
- Cinnamon tomato eggs on cocotte (tamato-par-edu)
- Banana leaf cod, coriander chutney, onion fritters (patra-ni-machhi with onion bhajias)
- Braised lamb, shoestring potatoes (sali-boti)
- Spicy tomato shrimp, cumin rice, turmeric lentil puree (dhun-dal-chawal)
- Falooda shot (faluda)
- Warm date tart, rum & raisin ice-cream (khajur-ni-ghari with ice-cream)
- Tea cookies with mint, lemongrass, ginger chai (khatai and chai)

What are your personal favorite foods to cook and/or eat? What ingredients do you love to cook with at home? What is the dish/food you least love to eat?



When cooking at home, I like simple food. I eat a lot of vegetables, fish and chicken. But when I go back to Bombay, I am spoilt. I do not cook there. Our cook in Mumbai makes chappatis that are paper thin and I can eat a dozen of those at a time, and my mum's prawn curry rice and *dhun-dar-patiya* are to die for. I also like *bheda-par-edu* a lot!

You say that you incorporate the principles of Ayurveda in your cooking, can you give some examples of how home cooks could do the same? Which are the most efficacious herbs and spices for good health and well being, in your opinion?

Ayurveda is all about balance. Not necessarily with just food. Most Indian cooking incorporates this concept. For example, *chaas*, *dahi* or *raita*, is generally eaten with Indian food as it helps cool the system, since Indian food is spicy. My principle is to balance out the taste. Therefore all my food has some crunch, something sweet, something tangy so all the flavors explode in the mouth. I think this is simple for homecooked food. For example, add some dried fruits or nuts to a salad. Not only does that give the sweetness and the crunch but it's also healthy.

For good health, most herbs and spices have some medicinal value. Nothing is more simple and easy to incorporate in Zarathushti cooking than ginger, garlic, pomegranate, turmeric and cinnamon. Garlic is said to have antibacterial properties where as ginger is good for the heart and helps with colic. Pomegranate is a great antioxidant and turmeric helps purify the blood and from what I have read, it helps prevent Alzheimer's disease. Cinnamon prevents colds and coughs and even helps regulate blood sugar.

How would you evaluate your journey to this present moment in your life? What stage would you say you are at in your career at the moment? What plans do you have for the future?

I don't think I can ever visualize an end to this particular journey. For me each day brings in new learning opportunities. I taste something, see something and I know I want to learn more about it, work on it, till I can create something new with it. However, much as the chef in me can sometimes go wild, I realize that the restaurant is a business. So if a dish I create is not appreciated by my guest, I have no ego issues in taking it off the menu and working on a replacement. At home however, I subject my family to my craziness. My wife likes most of my creations but sometimes I get it back from her!

Career wise too; I think there is a long way for me to go. The first 10 years were the foundation, now I begin my climb. There is a lot more work to be done to get on top. Often, it takes more effort to stay on top than it does in reaching there. I would like to open boutique restaurants in other cities across world.

Who or what inspires your cooking the most and why? How would you hope to inspire the next generation of Zarathushti chefs?

As I said the love for food and the interest in medicinal properties of herbs, plants and spices was instilled in me by my grandfather. At present I think I am inspired most by my twins. Ever since they were born, I have been cooking for them. All their pureed food was made at home. I am now working on a children's book which I hope will be enjoyed by them as much as I am enjoying putting it together.

I think because most Zarathushtis love food, this will tempt a lot of our young into this industry. However, I have to point out that this should not be the sole reason for entering this field. For, what most people do not realize, is that this industry requires long hours of physical work, no evenings or holidays to spend with the family, and working in a kitchen is a totally different culture from working in a corporation. So unless your passion and zeal is really strong, and you have full support from your family, do not enter this industry. There are other ways for you to be creative. Take up cooking as a hobby or start a home business on the side. But if your commitment and passion is strong and you enjoy pleasing people, by all means become a chef. For the satisfaction you get when people tell you that they enjoyed the meal and their dining experience, is immeasurable.

Gastro kids and Candy club are your initiatives for young kids. Many chefs do not have the patience to teach young kids. What inspires you to work with our younger generation?

I started with *Candy Camp* over 10 years ago. I think as a chef, it is my responsibility to instill a love for healthy food in children. I used to often see children come to a fine dining restaurant and yet want to eat nothing but junk food. At first I was disappointed seeing that but later I realized that I could do something to change it. The first Candy Camp class actually started just before Mother's Day, for I thought it would be a great idea to teach kids how to prepare breakfast for mum on Mother's Day. However, the class got so much popularity and the concept just took off.

The Gastro Kids After School program runs every Friday at my restaurant Mehtaphor. It's a fun class where kids tour my kitchen and pick up one thing that they have never eaten before. We then cook together and prepare dishes that they never realized they could love!

You have two famous restaurants Graffiti and Mehtaphor. Why is Graffiti so special and dear to your heart besides being your first restaurant?

Graffiti has its own culture. When a customer comes to Graffiti I want them to feel that they are entering a friend's home and not a restaurant. As the name indicates, graffiti is self expression. Everything about the place is my self-expression. The décor, the style of dinning, the food and the



serving experience. Before the guests leave, we offer the tab in an envelope and encourage them to graffiti it to let us know how they enjoyed this dining experience. This is a way of knowing what our guests' self expressions were. Until they are too worn out, these envelopes are used to present

the tabs to other patrons and the graffiti keeps adding on! Over the years I have hundreds of graphitized envelopes and have kept them all.

Last but not the least IRON CHEF!! What would this title mean to you? Would it ever change Jehangir Mehta's approach to cooking?

To be honest, competing in this challenge was tough. At first because of my background in pastry, nobody thought I would be a serious contender. But as I kept winning, it did irk some of my peers. Most of them did not know that I had studied culinary art at the Culinary Institute of America and therefore, had a good foundation in savory, and that I owned a restaurant. My reputation as a pastry chef, I guess, overshadowed my culinary skills until then. After the Next Iron Chef series, people started taking me seriously. That is funny because as a chef, my approach to food had been the same prior to and post this competition. Being on national television definitely got my message out to a far larger audience than I could ever have done otherwise. So in that aspect I am glad I competed. The finale was a close call and I could not believe how hard Jeffrey Steingarten rooted for me! It was exhilarating but exhausting!



Jehangir teaching kids at his Gastro Kids After School Program

AN EXOTIC JOURNEY—Darius Karani **Rashna Dorab Tata (Auckland New Zealand)**

As a youngster growing up in Pune, Darius Karani always knew that he wanted to be different. He wanted to run his own business and be the master of his own destiny.....the typical 9 to 5 job failed to excite him, neither did the ultimate Parsi dream - a safe secure bank job!! Never in his wildest dreams, did he imagine that his journey into entrepreneurship would take him from Pune to far flung New Zealand, where he would become a wine maker and deal with some of the finest, award winning wines this country has to offer.

After a few forays working in industry, Darius shifted his focus towards a career in landscaping and started his own company called *Flora Exotica*. Darius had always been fascinated with plants. The joy of watching things grow and the ability to change an ordinary piece of land into a picture perfect work of art brought him immense gratification. He soon realized his calling in life was working with nature. His maternal grandfather had been the Chief Conservator of Forests in India and his wise words – *'If you choose your profession wisely, you will never have to work a single day in your life'*, had sown the seeds of Darius' future. Following his dreams coupled with his keen business instincts paid off. With wife Homai by his side, *Flora Exotica* grew rapidly and prospered.

Darius had twice visited his sister who lived in New Zealand and had fallen in love with this beautiful country. He decided this was where the next chapter in his life would begin. Once more, following his dreams he left his flourishing business for new destinations and new challenges. With his wife Homai and two daughters Ryna and Fiona, he migrated to New Zealand in 2008.



Darius and Homai Karani

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

HEALTH GIVING FOODS

Manuka
Gold Liqueur



New Zealand with its rich soil, crisp climate and clean, green image was fast becoming famous the world over as a wine growing paradise. Connoisseurs of wine were wowed by the premium wines produced in New Zealand. Small boutique vineyards were making award winning products and taking the world by storm. The wine industry in New Zealand was going from strength to strength and for Darius, venturing into a new business with great growth potential seemed the perfect career move.

Darius the man with the 'Midas touch' was once again following his instincts. He knew the wine industry was his calling card and as a man on a mission soon entered into a partnership with *Koura Bay Estate Wines*, a boutique vineyard located on the banks of the Awatere Valley in the famous Marlborough region - a place synonymous with quality wines in international markets. The Awatere Valley has been described as, 'the jewel in the crown' of Marlborough wine makers. Koura Bay is a company committed to producing premium New Zealand wines with their low cropping levels, attention to detail and hand picking at harvest which maximizes the fruit and concentration of the wines.

Darius then started his own wine distribution company - *Koura Bay Distributors* assisting Koura Bay Estate Wines reach new markets in China and India.

The Bragato Wine awards, Air New Zealand Wine Awards and the New Zealand International Wine Show are just a few of the significant awards won in the face of some very stiff competition by Koura Bay Estate Wines.

Darius' drive and determination has seen Koura Bay wines accepted by the Taj Group of Hotels in India.

Never one to rest on his laurels, Darius started Exotica Enterprise Ltd to help create and market a unique blend of natural liqueurs. Their first product is the world's first honey liqueur - *Manuka Gold*. This natural and health enriching product is made from the honey of blue borage flowers which grow wild in New Zealand's South Island high country. It is infused with grape brandy and distilled extracts of highly beneficial Manuka honey. Manuka honey is synonymous with New Zealand and its amazing healing properties have always been known to the indigenous people of this land. Darius could well have created a product that is 'worth its weight in gold'. Manuka Gold has captured the huge Chinese market and the response from Europe is extremely encouraging.

A *Sauvignon Blanc* liqueur, *Malbrouk*, is another winner in their expanding list of offerings and will soon also include a *Crayfish liqueur* - *Ecrevesse* - a tribute to New Zealand's abundant and unique marine life.

Exotica Enterprise Ltd also started a new label of wines, under the brand name *Marlborough Exotica*. The wines under this label are *Marlborough Exotica Sauvignon Blanc*, *Marlborough Exotica Pinot Gris* and *Marlborough*



Koura Bay Estate Vineyard

Exotica Pinot Noir. These three wines won the acclaimed *Bragato Gold* awards in 2009.

Darius is making a significant mark in the wine industry. The accolades which continue to pour in are a testimony to his ingenuity, hard work and his ability to convert his visions into reality.

Darius' involvement with the Zarathushti community of New Zealand is genuine and generous. He offers encouragement and support by making his wines available free of cost for community activities or by way of quiet, behind the scenes charity. Darius leads by example and encourages new Parsi migrants to follow their dreams and make their mark on the multicultural fabric of New Zealand.

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

HEALTH GIVING FOODS

Designing Fruits Enriched in Antioxidant

Shahrokh Khanizadeh, (Quebec, Canada)

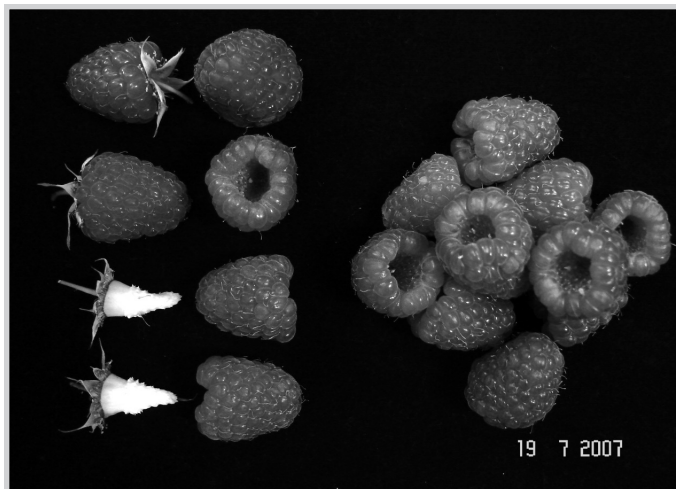
High dietary intake of fruits and vegetables rich in antioxidants has been linked to reduced risks of many chronic diseases including cancer and cardiovascular diseases. Value-added foods and nutraceuticals containing such bioactive phytochemicals have been popular and made available on the market. A large variation of antioxidants exists within apples, strawberries and raspberries and it is possible to use this as a marker to develop new lines. Elevated concentration of antioxidants could extend the shelf life and reduce the incidence of diseases. Interest in antioxidant activity of fruits has been very high in recent years owing to their contribution to sensory quality of fruit, juice, dried fruits, cider, frozen fruit treats, dried fruit bars, and fruit roll ups and their possible relationship with shelf life and disease susceptibility and the reduction of several chronic diseases.



L'Authentique Orléans Strawberry rich in antioxidant released in early 2000 and presently being cultivated by licenced nurseries in Canada.

For the past few years, growing interest has been devoted to antioxidant properties. These compounds are known to influence quality, acceptability and stability of foods and also play an important role in the fruit aging process and shelf life and human health. It has been shown that total antioxidant capacity of a fruit or vegetable might be from compounds other than antioxidant, such as vitamin C, Vitamin E, or beta-carotene. The antioxidant capacity and the composition in bioactive compounds of fruits and vegetables are influenced by several factors of which the most commonly cited are: total yield, maturity, pre-harvest conditions (climate, temperature, and light), cultural practices, post-harvest handling and processing.

Molecules with antioxidant properties play significant roles in several biological processes that sustain life and defend against factors that could pose a stress to the fruit. In plant organs, oxidative stress is involved in physiological processes such as fruit ripening and aging. Plants have several mechanisms protecting them from the toxicities induced by internal and environmental oxidative stresses, which are produced by both stressed and non-stressed plant cells. To alleviate damages, plants have developed a complex antioxidant system containing lipid and water soluble compounds, which can be employed to delay or inhibit the oxidation of lipids, proteins and nucleic acids by preventing the initiation of oxidative chain reactions. Consumption of these compounds by humans through plant foods lead to a reduction in the risk of cardiovascular disease and certain forms of cancers, the leading causes of death in humans, as supported by considerable epidemiological evidence. Thus, general recommendations to consumers and food producers might be consumption of foods rich in antioxidant compounds and production of foods with high levels of antioxidant, respectively. Strawberries are a good source of antioxidants. To develop firm strawberries and raspberries with a long shelf life suitable for transportation, a project was started in 1996 by me to develop new strawberry, raspberry and apple cultivars enriched in antioxidants. Chemical analysis of the new developed cultivars revealed a correlation between the level of antioxidants, and shelf life. My preliminary research demonstrated that antioxidants not only improve the fruit quality by making them more resistant to pest and diseases which consequently reduce the use of pesticides in the fields and orchards but also are good for human health. Most of the fruit developed by my team have higher levels of antioxidants. We developed 11 new strawberry cultivars.



Jeanne-d'Orleans raspberry released in 2006 rich in elagic acid

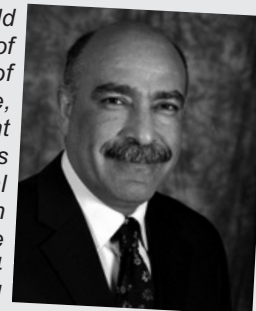


(www.khanizadeh.info/strawberry) out of which two (Yamaska and Saint Pierre - http://www.meiosis.co.uk/fruit/saint_pierre.htm) crossed the Canadian borders and are presently being cultivated in Europe, especially Germany. Our recent invention was the new raspberry line "Jeanne d'Orléans" which has two fold higher antioxidant content compared to commercially grown raspberries in Quebec (www.meiosis.co.uk/fruit/jeanne.htm). The team is continuing research on development of new fruit crops improving the chemical composition of the fruit for human health while making sure that new released cultivars are sufficiently resistant to pests and diseases in order to reduce the use of pesticides, thus ensuring protection of the environment. . All of the developed fruit cultivars by our research team are either patented in US or registered with the Canadian Food inspection agency or



obtained the European Plant Variety Rights certificates (www.khanizadeh.info/patent). A list of released strawberry, raspberry and apple cultivars is listed under his web site at www.cyberfruit.info or via agriculture and Agri-food Canada (www.khanizadeh.ca/aa/c)

Shahrokh Khanizadeh, Eng, Ph.D. Born in Kerman, Iran and terminated his post doctoral in genetic and physiology from McGill University. He developed 11 unique strawberry cultivars, one raspberry, 17 disease resistant apples cultivars. He was involved in release of 'Dnahua Xiangshuili' and 'Hanhong' chine se pears; 'Galarina' and 'Reinette-Russet' in France. Shahrokh received the Gold harvest award from the minister of agriculture for recognition of exceptional excellence, innovation, genetic enhancement and cultivar development. He has built a national and international reputation as a key player in development of fruit crops. He published 160 manuscripts, 14 books and book chapters and trained over 40 graduate students and supervised 14 visiting/scholar-fellows. He received over 40 invitations as guest-keynote speakers/lecturers; including four recent international invitations to present his novel method "Designing Specialty Fruits/Role of Phytochemical" in Mexico, Italy, China, and Portugal. He is Assistant/Adjunct Professor at Guelph, Laval and McGill universities and president of the CSHS and Plant Canada. He represented six Canadian societies during the first Strategic Summit of Plant Science Societies in Honolulu to discuss global issues, hunger and humanities. He is representing Canada on the International Society for Horticultural Science Council and is the Editor-in-Chief of Canadian journal of Plant Science.



DEATH BY MALAI KHAJA

Ruby Lilaowala (Mumbai, INDIA)

We Parsis agree to disagree on almost anything and everything. No issue is too small or too big to start a debate with at times, either you're with us, or you're with them. In fact, where there are two Parsis, there are usually three opinions. Perhaps there are very few things that we all universally agree on and one of them is our love for the humble malai khaja (cream puff). Call it positive collective consciousness or something else but it is deeply embedded in our genes. As a community, we have a latent genetic-memory gene which results in a passion for eating mithais (sweetmeats) made from milk and pure ghee (clarified butter).



Malai khaja

In the good old days, our grandparents ate everything and that too, invariably cooked in pure ghee. They rarely fell sick and led productive lives until they died at 99 or 100. My granny used to say: What do doctors know?

Those days, I had a heavy dinner, didn't sound like a church confession. Fat wasn't fatal and eating didn't equal to sin. Sin was committing adultery or cheating an old widow out of her Cusrow Baug flat. Today, adultery and cheating are minor misdemeanors which happen all the time. Real sin comes in the shape of a malai khaja, inside the Parsi Dairy Farm box on which is printed its symbolic statutory warning in its buffalo-emblem. The warning? 'If you eat like a buffalo, you'll look like one.'

I love close encounters of the high-calorie kind, the more sinful the food, the better it tastes but the diet police lurk everywhere in the guise of a husband, children, relatives and friends. In my family, this police force is always on duty with the three grandsons as the latest recruits. How do you tell a 25 year old grandson, What I eat is a private matter between my stomach and me!

But obviously this isn't a private matter. It's everybody's business including a friend's daughter who is a psychiatrist. How do you tell her that I am a God fearing, nutritionally alert weight watcher who doesn't substitute food for having missed out on mother's love?

Today's low calorie, low cholesterol food doesn't taste like food (it's worse than Airline food.) Can you imagine eating a low calorie malai khaja? Wouldn't you prefer death by an old fashioned calorie laden sinful khaja? Come to think of it, the person who invents the zero calorie yummy malai khaja is going to be an instant billionaire.

The oft repeated law of wellbeing states that your happiness is inversely related to your body weight and that we should watch the 'poisons' we pile on our plate which were earlier called 'food'. Well, my happiness doesn't depend entirely on the number on the weighing scales, but last year I made a resolution to go easy on all things sweet, including malai khaja.

It is one year now and my spouse just uttered those three magic words, putting me on cloud nine. Not I love you – that's passe and hopelessly outdated after more than four decades of married life. Hubby darling's soul soother was: You've lost weight! I am so happy that I'll have a couple of malai khajas to celebrate your weight loss!!

Ruby Lilaowala is a columnist and motivational counselor. She is a graduate of Arts and Law and lecturers in India and abroad on spirituality, philosophy and various other topics.



FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

GENERAL

MAY YOURS BE A SWEET LIFE

Arnavaz Chubb (Melbourne, Australia)

To marry and procreate is a great virtue in the Zarathushti tradition. Matrimony is a blessed institution, sacred and not to be entered into on a whim. The *Vahishtoishti Gatha* also referred to as the wedding hymn, which was chanted by Zarathushtra on the occasion of his daughter Pourouchista's marriage to Jamaspa Hvoguva stands as testimony to the solemnity of the ritual.

Sacred and solemn as they should be, weddings are also occasions for celebration and feasting. The elaborate wedding feast of the Parsi/Irani is more significant to the celebration these days than any other aspect and may be compared to the considerable public anticipation and brouhaha surrounding the dress of a royal bride! For Zarathushtis, food takes precedence over all else, it begins with symbolic food for the soul that forms part of the religious rituals and ends in the feast that satisfies the senses.

The many blessings of fertility, sweetness, longevity, wisdom, productivity and prosperity that are showered upon the couple are reflected in the many and varied ritual food offerings that form part of the wedding ceremonies. The symbolism of these offerings can often be forgotten in the enjoyment of eating them, but the appeal of their metaphor has endured and ensured their continuity through the ages.

The aspiration for sweetness in the lives and in the words of the couple is reflected in the assorted sweets that are prepared and served. Most popular among the Parsis are *sev* (sweet vermicelli) and *ravo* (semolina custard). Among the Iranis, *noghl* or sugared almonds and *baklava* (Yazd is especially famous throughout Iran for its version) are popular. Lumps of rock sugar, sugar biscuits and a variety of *shirini* (sweetmeats) are generously indulged in. Sweetness of thought, word and deed between husband and wife are essential ingredients for a happy married life, without a doubt!



Ravo sprinkled with pistachios and almonds

Rice is a symbol of prosperity and plenty in most cultures. Zarathushtis shower uncooked rice on the bride and groom at various times during the wedding celebrations and also during the ceremony. Sun and water, life giving forces of nature are needed in the cultivation of rice and thus this staple food comes to represent enlightenment, abundance and productiveness. Among the Zarathushtis of Iran, *naan berenji* (rice flour cookies) are popular at weddings.

Eggs are an ancient symbol of fertility. They embody the essence of life and represent creative energy. The golden yolk within the egg represents the life giving sun. Raw or boiled eggs are always placed on the Zarathushti wedding *ses* (tray) or *sofre* (tablecloth). Among the Parsis, the raw egg is thrice circled around the head of the bride and groom in the belief that any evil that may be lurking around the couple will be captured within the confines of the shell, much as *Ahriman* was confined within the hard shell of the sky that envelopes this world. This egg is then smashed at a distance from the couple in the hope that evil may likewise be far removed from their lives.



Naan berenji and chae (courtesy of My Persian Kitchen)

Among the Iranis, the egg symbolises the relationship between parents and children. The egg nurtures the embryo within and prepares it for life outside its shell. The act of giving the egg away after the wedding ceremony has come to signify the separation of the child from the parent and the transition to maturity. The parent-child relationship should henceforth be based on mutual love and respect, consultation and advice.

Yoghurt is another traditional food item that forms part of all celebratory rituals among the Zarathushtis. An ancient health food, the longevity of the people of the Caucasus region has been attributed to the regular consumption of yoghurt. Yoghurt and honey were considered the food of the gods.

Fish is always found in Zarathushti religious offerings. The wedding feast is not complete without fish on the menu. Fresh uncooked fish was included as part of the *ses* along with the other symbolic items. This has latterly been replaced with the *mawa ni boi*, a confectionary look

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

GENERAL



Sofre gavah giri (courtesy of Mehraban Firouzgary)

alike of *boi* which is a variety of fish caught off the coast of Gujarat that is specially enjoyed by Parsis. Fish patterned *chalk* (lime) designs are also regularly used as decorations on festive occasions.

An ancient and potent symbol of fecundity and regeneration, the fish lives in water from which supposedly all life began. In the Avesta, the fish called *Kara* lives in the legendary sea *Vourukasha* protecting the holy White Haoma tree – the tree of life and immortality. The *Kara* has been endowed with penetrating vision and insight. Fish is an incarnation of the Hindu deity *Vishnu* who was revered amongst the indigenous fisher folk of the coastal villages of Gujarat where the Parsis settled and from whom they adopted many customs that found an echo in their own traditions.

A variety of nuts like almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts and pistachios are also a part of the *ses* and *sofreh*. Nuts are hard, but the kernel they hide is sweet and nutritious, they are therefore considered a symbol of toughness in adversity while preserving inner tenderness. The coconut

and sweet on the inside. The cracking of the coconut is meant to represent the breaking of ego's hold on us. Among the Indians, every part of the coconut palm is used for some practical purpose and nothing goes to waste – thus the coconut has come to stand for resourcefulness.

Every religion has its basis in philosophical and theological concepts, but these concepts can be far removed from the everyday lives of ordinary people. To be meaningful, they need to be tangible. When philosophy and theology have been digested and translated into laymen's terms, they take the form of symbols, of custom and practice. A tangible faith is a real faith, a living, meaningful faith, and the symbols that make it tangible should not be considered superficial but spiritually significant. May we all move towards sweetness and light.



Wedding of a young Zarathushtrian couple in Tehran by Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary



Mava ni boi decorated with silver paper (courtesy of Bhavnagri sweets)

is an essential item used in the *ses*, probably on account of its symbolism in Hindu traditions where it is considered a symbol of the ego – hard and rough on the outside, soft

Arnavaz Chubb was born and educated in Bombay, India. She arrived in Australia 25 years ago with a Masters Degree and a Gold Medal in Avesta and Pahlavi from Bombay University, but was completely clueless in the kitchen.



Spiritual sustenance alone was not enough and she had to learn how to keep the body nourished as well. Blessed with a husband who loves Parsi food and children who love anything but, the Chubb kitchen is a melting pot of fusion-confusion. Arnavaz conducts the religious education classes for the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria and has been its past President and a long standing committee member.

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

Recipes

Favorites from an International Z cuisine

FOOD for PRAYERS

Dron

Katy P Karanjia (Mumbai, India)

Place 200 g wheat flour in a *thali* (metallic plate) and add 4-6 tablespoons of water and make dough.

Knead till the dough is quite hard.

Add half a tablespoon of *ghee* and knead into the dough.

Make 10-12 small equal sized pieces from the dough.



Dron

Take another *thali*, upturn it and put a piece of dough on it and roll with a *pital* (metallic rolling pin) till they are about 10 to 12 cm in diameter. Do not use flour while rolling, a little *ghee* may be used if required.

The disks may be kept in another plate.

Heat the disks on the *tawaa* (hot plate) and turn them with a *tawatha* (flat ladle), but not for a long time. They should have some *dazy* (dark spots) on them.

The cooked *dron* have to be transferred to another plate. They should be kept separately and not piled one on top of another or they may stick together.

Papdi

Katy P Karanjia (Mumbai, India)

Mix 1 cup flour with 2 cups wheat flour, half a cup of semolina, four tablespoons of *ghee* with some water and add salt to taste.

Mix and knead in a plate to make a firm dough.

Make 18-20 small equal sized pieces from the dough.

Take another upturned plate and place a piece of dough on it and roll with a rolling pin till they are 10 to 12 cm in diameter.

Fry the rolled disks – shallow or deep - according to taste and requirements.

Malido

Late Kumi R Sorabji (Delhi, India)

1 kg cream of wheat/coarse semolina

1 kg whole grain wheat flour

250 g rolled oats

2.25 kg sugar

1 tsp sea salt

32 oz (950 mL) water

12 eggs

1.8 kg canola oil/ghee/butter

1.5 kg dry fruit combination as per your preference or as below:

450 g slivered almonds

250 g split cashew nuts

120 g flax seeds

80 g pumpkin seeds

60 g sunflower seeds

60 g pine nuts

4 tbsp shredded coconut

100 g orange cranberries

100 g pistachios

100 g walnuts

60 g dried diced apricots

60 g raisins

120 g crystallized fruits

120 g honey

3 tsp green cardamom powder

2 tsp ginger powder

Vanilla essence or rosewater to taste

Step 1 - Bhakras (fried)

Mix the cream of wheat, whole grain wheat flour, rolled oats and sea salt in a mixing bowl and knead to smooth dough with a small amount of tepid water.

Roll the dough onto a smooth surface to a 1 inch high sheet.

Cut with a pastry cutter mould into 2 inch rounds.

Heat enough ghee/oil to fry the rounds till golden brown on a medium flame. Let cool to room temperature and crush the fried *bhakras* into crumbs with a rolling pin.

Alternative Step 1 - Bhakras (baked)

Add 3 tbsp baker's yeast to the dry flour combine flour, salt, cream of whole wheat, rolled oats, 250 g ghee/butter and knead with water to make a soft dough. Leave it to rest for 6 hours.

Roll out on a flat surface to a 1 inch thickness and cut rounds, place them on a baking sheet and bake in the preheated oven on 350F for about 20 minutes till cooked.

Let cool to room temperature and crush the baked *bhakras* to crumbs with a rolling pin.

Step 2 – Sea-row (sugar syrup) & Malido

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

Recipes

Favorites from an International Z cuisine

Fry all the dry fruit and mix lightly and keep aside.

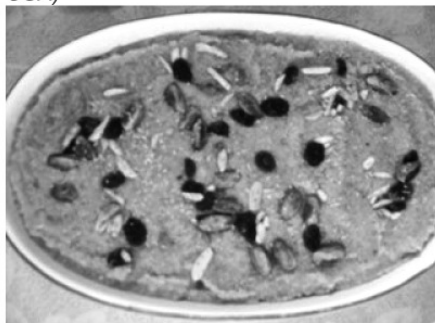
In a heavy bottom pan make sugar syrup with all the sugar and water till desired syrupy consistency. When warm stir in the crumbed mixture of the *bhakras* mixing all the time. Add honey, ginger powder, coconut, cardamom powder. Mix well by stirring continuously. Keep stirring all the time. Add lightly beaten eggs one by one and cook gently on a low heat till the mixture starts to leave the sides of the pan.

Add $\frac{3}{4}$ of the fried fruit mix and leave the rest for garnish when serving. Mix well. Add rosewater or vanilla essence.

When ready to serve garnish with the remaining dry fruit mix and serve warm on our traditional *papdi*.

Note: Variation for friends in Pakistan and Delhi where hapshi halwa is available. Reduce the butter/ghee to 1.4 kg, reduce the sugar to 1.75 kg and reduce dry fruits to 1 kg and instead add 500 g hapshi halwa to warm *malido* and mix well.

(Recipe courtesy of Rusi Sorabji, Campbell, USA)



Malido (courtesy of Aban Kekobad)

Gahambar nu Papeta ma Gos

Armin Wandrewala (Mumbai, India)

1 kg boneless pieces of mutton
4 marrow bones cut into 2 inch pieces
100 g ginger
20 g garlic
10 g toasted cumin seeds
4 fresh green chillies
8 Kashmiri dried red chillies
4 pieces cinnamon bark
13 black peppercorns
8 cloves
8 green cardamom pods
80 mL oil

300 g onion finely diced
500 g potatoes (peeled and diced medium)
500 g tomatoes finely chopped
10 green cardamom seeds ground
Salt to taste

Combine ginger, garlic, cumin seeds, red and green chillies and toasted cumin seeds in a grinder and grind to a smooth paste with lukewarm water as required to achieve desired consistency. Leave aside to rest so it matures in taste and flavor.

Heat the required amount of oil in a thick bottomed sauce pan and crackle all whole spices, add and fry the diced onions till golden brown in color.

Add diced lamb along with marrow bones and brown the meat. Add the ground ginger and garlic masala paste and brown further taking care not to allow the meat pieces to stick to the pan. Add finely diced tomatoes to the mix and brown further. When all ingredients are combined together add the required amount of water to cook till the meat is tender. The best way to cook the meat is on a very slow heat to achieve maximum flavor and minimum shrinkage.

While the meat is cooking, blanch the potatoes in hot water till they are half done and drain off all excess water. Allow to dry in a colander. Heat the required amount of vegetable oil and fry the potatoes till golden brown and immediately salt them.

When the dish is ready to be served add the fried potatoes and mix well. Sprinkle with ground green cardamom powder.

FOOD for RITUALS

Sir o Sedove (rue and garlic sauce)

Shirin Simmons (London, UK)

1 tbsp oil
5/6 garlic cloves crushed
1/2-1 tsp turmeric
Leaves of one mint sprig finely chopped or 1 teaspoon dried and crushed
85 mL/3 oz vinegar
2 heaped tsp sugar
Salt and pepper

Stir the garlic in moderately hot oil for a few seconds (if cooked longer it will burn), add the turmeric and the herb and stir for another one minute.

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

Recipes

Favorites from an International Z cuisine

Dissolve the sugar in the vinegar, stir into the pan, season with salt and pepper to taste. Simmer gently for another 2-3 minutes until thick.

This dish can be served with fish.

Tafteh (sweet turmeric soup)

Shirin Simmons (London, UK)

30 g/1 oz butter

1 tsp turmeric

1/2 tsp ground or rice flour

1 tsp white basil seeds, soaked

2 tsp sugar or to taste

Fry the turmeric in butter for 1-2 minutes.

Dissolve the rice flour in 900 mL/1-1/2 pint water. Stir into the pan and simmer. Add the seeds with their soaking water. Serve hot with *naan*.



Preparation of Rue and Garlic Sauce

Kuku-ye-Sabzi

Shirin Simmons (London, England)

1 medium onion chopped

140 g/5 oz chopped spinach

90 g/3 oz chopped chives or spring onion or young leek finely chopped

30 g/1 oz each parsley, dill and coriander finely chopped

2/3 lettuce leaves chopped

1/4 tsp each turmeric and ground cinnamon

4 large eggs

1 tsp self-rising flour

60 g/2 oz chopped nuts

Oil

Salt and pepper

Fry the onion in 2-4 tablespoons oil, until soft add the chopped herbs and turmeric, stir for 1-2 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350F/180C/gas4.

Pour 2 tablespoons oil into a 5 cm/2 inch deep, 20 cm/8 inch wide square baking dish, and place in the oven until hot.

Beat the eggs, season with salt and pepper.



Kuku-ye-sabzi (courtesy of My Persian Kitchen)

Mix with the cooked and cooled onion and herb mixture. Remove the dish from the oven, add the egg mixture and return to the oven and bake for about 15 minutes. Serve hot or cold with rice or sandwiched between *naan*.

Agarni no Lavro

Sarosh Khariwala (Melbourne, Australia)

350 g gram flour

1 tsp soda bicarbonate

400 g white sugar

180 mL water

10 green cardamoms pounded

30 g pistachios

30 g slivered blanched almond flakes

Ghee/vegetable oil

Orange or yellow color as required

Make a thick batter with the gram flour. Add the coloring. Dissolve the soda bicarbonate in a tsp of water and add to the batter. Rest the batter for 20 minutes.

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL Recipes

Favorites from an International Z cuisine

Prepare the syrup with sugar and water to a two string consistency (coating the back of a tsp).

Heat oil/fat in a wide deep frying pan. Pour the contents of the premixed batter in a small pouring jug and slowly pour the batter through a round perforated frying spoon. This will let the droplets of the prepared batter into the hot oil.

Let them fry for a minute or two till they retain their shape and seem crisp. Remove the fried boondi and pour into the sugar syrup. Add the crushed cardamom, pistachios and almonds into the mixture and combine well so all ingredients are mixed and start to form a ball.

Line the conical *lavra* tins with grease proof paper in the shape of a cone or grease them with oil. Fill the prepared *lavra* tins with the warm mixture and compress with your fingers so as not to leave any air pockets. Seal the tin with a grease proof paper round to prevent the mixture from getting dry. Let the mixture set and take a conical shape.

Once set, demould the *lavras* and roll in slivered almond and *barak* (silver leaf).

Sweet Yoghurt

Arnavaz Chubb (Melbourne, Australia)

- 1 L full cream milk
- 2-3 tbsp live yoghurt culture
- 5 tbsp sugar, or according to taste

In a heavy based pan, bring the milk to the boil and simmer stirring constantly until it is reduced somewhat. Add sugar and continue to cook until reduced by half. Take off heat and cool to blood heat.

Brush the bowl in which the yoghurt is to be set with some of the live yoghurt culture and add the remainder into the warm but not hot milk. Pour into the prepared bowl and leave covered in a warm place to set overnight.

Ravo

Arnavaz Chubb (Melbourne, Australia)

- 1 L milk
- 3-4 tbsp semolina
- 3 tbsp butter
- 2 tbsp sugar

To garnish:

- Rosewater or vanilla essence
- Sultanas
- Slivered almonds
- Extra butter

In a deep pan, melt the butter and add the semolina and cook until the grains are slightly swollen, but do not allow to burn. Gradually add the milk and sugar and cook stirring constantly until the mixture coats the back of the wooden spoon. It will thicken further as it cools. Take off heat and allow to cool slightly before adding the rosewater or vanilla essence. Pour into a serving dish. Cover the top of the *ravo* with a layer of cling film to prevent a skin from forming as it cools. Leave to chill.

In a small pan heat the extra butter and when melted sauté the slivered almonds until golden and the sultanas until plump. Remove from pan and leave to cool. Garnish the *ravo* with a sprinkling of the almonds and sultanas.



Ravo (courtesy of Aban Kekobad)

Mawa ni Boi

Arnavaz Chubb (Melbourne, Australia)

- 375 mL evaporated milk
- 2 cups powdered milk
- 300 g castor sugar
- 1 tsp cardamom powder
- 5 to 6 drops vanilla essence
- 1/4 cup crushed almonds and pistachios
- Fish shaped mould

To make *mawa*, place the powdered milk in a mixing bowl and add the evaporated milk. Mix until a hard dough is formed.

Freeze the dough for about 30 minutes and then grate it using a coarse grater. Warm 500 g of the *mawa* and cook on low, stirring continuously, to form a very soft consistency. Remove from fire, add vanilla essence if desired. Mix and cool to room temperature. Add sugar, 3/4 of nuts and mix well. Transfer to a work surface, sprinkle with some icing sugar, knead well. Sprinkle icing sugar inside fish mould. Sprinkle remaining nuts in mould, distributing it equally. When a soft and smooth

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

Recipes
Favorites from an International Z cuisine

consistency is achieved, press the dough neatly into each mould. Refrigerate for 2 hours till well set. Pry out of mould carefully, using tip of a small knife. Store in flat boxes arranged in single layer, refrigerate till required.



Mava ni boi (courtesy of Bhavnagri sweets)

SAVOURY - VEGETARIAN

Vaal

Armin Wandrewala (Mumbai, India)

1 cup whole *vaal* soaked in water overnight
 1 onion, sliced thin
 1 tomato diced
 1 tbsp garlic-ginger paste
 1 tbsp cumin-garlic paste
 1 tbsp Parsi dhania-jeera powder
 Red chili powder to taste
 1 tbsp Parsi garam masala
 Medium lump jaggery
 1 tbsp tamarind pulp
 1 tsp cinnamon powder
 4 cloves
 1 tsp mustard seeds
 30g grated coconut, fresh or dry (optional)
 Oil
 Salt to taste

Heat a thick bottom saucepan, sauté finely sliced onions till golden brown. Add mustard seeds, and once they crackle add ginger-garlic and cumin garlic paste and sauté. Add diced tomato.

Add all whole spices and dry powdered spices. Add water to the mixture and add the whole *vaal*. Cover and leave to cook over a slow flame. Once the *vaal* is nearly cooked, add the grated coconut. Mix the jaggery and tamarind in some water to make a fine paste and add the mixture to the nearly cooked *vaal*. Simmer for a few minutes, and remove from heat. If

desired, garnish with freshly chopped coriander leaves just before serving.

The *vaal* should be cooked dry. Serve with freshly made wheat chapattis and *ambakalio* (Parsi mango preserve).

Another ideal accompaniment to *vaal* is fist pounded onion soaked in malt vinegar or chopped green chilies soaked in malt vinegar.

Ambakalio

Armin Wandrewala (Mumbai, India)

1 kg semi ripe mangoes (Alphonso is the best but can be substituted by other available varieties. Green mangoes can also be used but increase the sugar content if raw mangoes are used.)

200 g jaggery (can be substituted with raw sugar and a small amount of honey)

200 g baby onions

6 cloves

2 sticks cinnamon bark

10 green cardamoms slightly ground

6 whole black peppercorns

3 bay leaves

2 cups water

Red chili powder to taste

Salt to taste

Peel the mangoes; remove the seed and slice the flesh lengthwise preferably leaving them chunky.

Pour water in a heavy bottom pan. Add jaggery, cinnamon, cloves, bay leaves, peppercorns and cardamoms and cook over a medium flame, stirring occasionally.

Once the jaggery has melted, add peeled baby onions and mangoes. Cook over a low heat stirring occasionally, being careful not to break the mango slices. Cook until a syrupy consistency is achieved.

Remove from heat and cool.

Store in sterilized glass jars with a tight lipped lid at room temperature or can be refrigerated for prolonged use

Ambakalio is an ideal accompaniment to *papeta ma gos*, *masoor*, *dhansak*, *vaal ni dar*, *papeta per edu* or great just on its own with freshly made *gau na atta ni rotli*.

Cauliflower Kuku

Niloufer Mavalvala (Ontario, Canada)

In a 10 inch skillet heat 1 tsp oil and sauté 1 large onion thinly sliced

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

Recipes

Add

1 tsp of cumin powder

1/2 tsp garlic paste

Pinch of turmeric

Generous pinch saffron

1 finely cho

Small pinch

500 g cho
pieces)

Sprinkle w
cooked. Ad

While this is mixture.

In a bowl be

6 eggs at room temperature

Season with salt

Handful of finely chopped fresh herbs -
coriander, parsley or basil

4 oz grated cheese

4 oz milk

Pinch of baking powder

Once the cauliflower is cooked to desired
tenderness pour over the egg mixture.

Cover and cook on low heat until it is cooked
(about 5 minutes).

Alternatively, bake in a hot oven at 375 F. Do
not cover if baking. It will take 12 minutes to
bake to golden brown.

Malai-pur-Eeda (eggs baked on cream)

Jeroo Mehta (Mumbai, India)

4 eggs

2 tsp butter

4 large cloves garlic finely chopped

1 green chili, seeded and finely chopped

8 tbsp thick cream

1/3 tsp salt

Heat butter, add garlic and chili and fry for 1
minute or just till the garlic is golden, not
brown.

Add cream, mix well and cook 2 minutes.

Divide cream into 4 or 6 individual baking
bowls (ramekins), sprinkle with salt and allow
to cool.

Break an egg onto the cream mixture in each
bowl and place in a hot oven till eggs are firm
but not dry.

Remove from oven and serve.

SAVOURY - NON-VEGETARIAN

Lamb Trotter Cinnamon Jelly

Sarosh Khariwala (Melbourne, Australia)

8 lambs' trotters

2 tbsp brandy

2 tbsp fine tea leaves

2 cinnamon sticks

5 tbsp caster sugar

4 egg whites

4 egg shells crushed

8 green cardamoms pounded

3 limes juiced

Trim and wash the lambs' trotters well and
cook in a heavy bottom pot with water for
around 3 to 4 hours. At intervals lift the scum
off the surface and keep the stock clear.

Strain the stock when trotters are cooked and
add the egg whites and crushed egg shells.
Whisk and blend all ingredients into the stock,
add the cardamoms, cinnamon, sugar and tea
leaves. Bring to a boil.

Reduce the flame and let the stock reduce on
low heat allowing the egg shells and the egg
whites to work and clarify the stock and the tea
leaves to infuse its color into the stock. Add
lime juice.

Gently strain the stock a couple of times
through a very fine muslin sieve. Add brandy
to taste and allow to cool for 2 hours. Pour into
serving glasses and chill in the fridge overnight
to set. The set jelly should be clear of any
particles and must be translucent.

Serve as is or garnish the top of the jelly with a
cinnamon sugar mix (2 parts icing sugar and
one part cinnamon powder).

The cinnamon, lime juice and cardamom can
be adjusted according to taste.

Kebab Barg

ABC Farm (Poona, India)

1 kg boneless lamb

1/2 cup olive oil

1/2 cup fresh lime juice

2 onions large

1 bud fresh garlic

5 tomatoes Large

1/4 tsp saffron

1/2 tsp black pepper powder

Salt to taste

Prepare the marinade with grated onion, grated garlic, olive oil, lime juice, salt and black pepper powder.

Dissolve the saffron in warm water to extract color and add to the above marinade.

Add lamb cut into 15 cm long and 2 cm thick pieces to the marinade and let it rest in the marinade for 24 hours.

Thread the marinated lamb on long skewers. Retain the marinade for basting.

Brush the tomatoes with olive oil and salt and also thread them on long skewers.

On a charcoal barbeque cook the lamb and tomatoes and baste them constantly with the left over marinade until tender.

Serve with plain rice pilaf and fresh lemon.

Khoresh-e-Bamieh

Niloufer Mavalvala (Ontario, Canada)

In a pot heat 2 tbsp oil and sauté 1 large thinly sliced onion until golden brown.

Add

1 tsp crushed garlic

500 g lamb/goat meat on bone in small pieces, and brown the meat well for 10 minutes stirring often

Add

1 tsp salt

1/2 tsp turmeric

1.2 tsp red chili powder

2 tbsp tomato paste

2 crushed peeled tomatoes

Pinch of black pepper

Mix well and add 1 cup of water. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, cover the pan and cook for an hour until the meat is tender.

Once ready to eat add:

500 g tender baby okra that has been parboiled in a pan of salted boiling water. (Do not overcook as it will become mushy. Fresh is best but frozen okra may be used.)

Juice of one lemon.

Allow to cook for 10 minutes on a very low flame, uncovered, until all the juices are mixed and the meat and okra are infused.

Serve hot with Persian flat bread. The Persians tend to serve it with saffron rice and *chelow* kebab. The *khoresh* can also be made with chicken.

Dahi-ma-Murghi

Jeroo Mehta (Mumbai, India)

1 chicken (1¼ kg/2 ½ lb) skinned and cut into 8 pieces

2 medium onions, finely sliced

1 medium onion finely chopped

1 teaspoon garlic-ginger paste

2 tbsp finely chopped fresh coriander

2 green chilies finely chopped after removing seeds.

1 cup plain yoghurt

1 ¾ tsp salt or to taste

2 tbsp vegetable oil

Rub garlic-ginger paste over chicken pieces. Cover and keep at least 1 hour.

In a pan heat the oil and fry sliced onion in it till brown.

Add coriander and chilies and mix well.

Add chicken and cook on high heat till chicken turns color.

Add 1 to 1½ cups water, chopped onion and salt and cook covered till chicken.

is cooked and 1 cup gravy remains

Add yoghurt, mix well, then cook on medium heat, uncovered, till 1 cup or more gravy remains.

Serve sprinkled with potato straws if desired.

Cranberry Chicken

Jehangir Mehta (New York, USA)

3 tbsp olive oil

4 Cascabel chilies

1 cup diced chicken

½ cup cranberries

1 tbsp sugar

1 tbsp pomegranate reduction

1/3 cup sliced shitake mushroom

Small handful of micro herbs

Heat a skillet on high flame. Add the olive oil. Toss the chilies followed by the chicken. Sauté for 3 to 4 minutes.

Add the cranberries, followed by the sugar, pomegranate reduction and sliced shitake mushrooms.

Serve with assorted micro herbs.

Vindalho De Porco

Cyrus Todiwala (London, England)

The term vindaloo comes from the Portuguese *vindalho* meaning with wine vinegar and garlic. It is more a pickle than a curry and the term vindaloo is not a barometric sign for chili heat. This is a classical dish and always cooked with pork.

2 tbsp oil
3 medium sized onions finely chopped
10-12 fresh curry leaves
150-200 g piri-iri masala
3-4 green chilies (long and slender)
500 g pork diced from belly and shoulder
2-3 tbsp tamarind pulp/paste/concentrate (if using concentrate use much less as it has a tendency to discolor the dish. Not recommended unless no option)
1 tsp sugar (brown muscovite)
Salt to taste



Pork Vindaloo and Garlic Pulav

Heat the oil in a large saucepan until it gets a haze.

Add the slit green chilies (do not de-seed), sauté for half a minute and add the shredded curry leaves and sauté for a few seconds only.

Add the onions and sauté until a deep golden brown.

Stir in the *masala* and cook until the oil separates out from it. But stir regularly and prevent it from sticking to the bottom. If this happens deglaze the pan with some water or stock.

Add the pork and sauté until well browned.

Stir in some water or stock, then add the tamarind and sugar and bring to the boil.

Simmer on a low flame until the pork is cooked. Remember pork tends to dry out so be careful how you cook and its best to take it out just at the point when it is done.

Season with salt and serve with Garlic Pulav or crusty bread.

Masala nu Roast Gos

Cyrus Todiwala (London, England)

Shank of lamb, which has first been part roasted to seal in the juices, is then simmered in the gravy until tender and juicy. This dish is not spicy but has a delicious onion and tomato based gravy flavored with whole spices.

2-3 tbsp oil
2 cm cinnamon stick
3-4 green cardamom pods
1-2 black cardamom pods
1-3 cloves
2-3 dried red chilies
3-4 medium onions chopped
2-3 medium lamb shanks (200-300 g each)
1 tsp ground cumin
1 ½ tbsp ground coriander
3/4th tsp ground turmeric
1 ½ heaped tblsp ginger and garlic paste
1-2 large potatoes peeled and cut into large chunks
4-5 tomatoes chopped with flesh
1 tbsp coriander chopped for gravy and a little for sprinkling
Salt as desired
Heat the oil in a hot saucepan until a haze forms on top. Add cinnamon, cardamom, cloves and red chilies.

As soon as the spices swell and change color add the lamb and brown well turning occasionally, until browned on all sides.

Alternatively put the shanks in a hot oven at 200° C for 20 minutes or so until browned and sealed well.

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

Recipes

When the liquid in the pan has almost dried up, add the chopped onions. Sauté until soft and brown.

Add the ground spices and the ginger garlic paste dissolved in 250 mL of water and stir well.



Masala nu Roast Gos

Until it almost dries up and oil begins to surface again.

Then add some salt and enough water (or stock) to just about cover the lamb. Cover with a tight fitting lid and simmer for 15-20 mins, stirring from time to time and making sure the sides of the pan are clean.

Add the potatoes and mix them in well, and add the tomatoes.

Cover again and simmer until the lamb and potatoes are tender and the lamb is fully cooked.

Check the seasoning and sprinkle with some fresh chopped coriander. Stir some in as well, if you like, for an extra kick.

Gaam no Patio

Dinaz Kutar Rogers (Albany, Oregon, USA)

Clean and cut a *chamno* (pomfret) into pieces.

Mash to a paste, *jeeroo* (cumin seeds), *lasan* (garlic cloves) and *marcha* (seeded green chilies).

Brown a chopped onion in hot oil; add a couple of teaspoons of red chili powder and the garlic paste-ball. Add a couple of teaspoons of

turmeric powder, *dhana-jeeroo* (coriander-cumin powder mix), and Parsi-style *sambhar* masala. Salt, to taste.

Add fish pieces. Pour about one and a half cups of brown vinegar (malt vinegar or apple cider), enough to cover the fish pieces. Cover and simmer till fish is done. Toward the end add about half a cup of *gor* (jaggery, brown sugar).

This *Gaam* (village) *no patio* is the perfect side dish with *mori dar chaaval*.

This recipe travelled from the village of Nargol to Bombay with my grandmother.



Gaam no patio (courtesy of Jehangir R Mehta)

Turmeric Chili Cod

Jehangir Mehta (New York, USA)

1 pound Cod
1 green Chili
2 tbsp olive oil
½ tsp turmeric powder
Salt and pepper to taste

Heat the skillet with olive oil. Add the green chilli. After 50 seconds, add the cod, turmeric powder, salt and pepper. Sauté until cooked

SWEETS

Naan Berenji

My Persian Kitchen

2 cups rice flour
2 cups castor sugar
250 g (1 ¼ cup) oil
1/2 cup rosewater
2 eggs
Poppy seeds

Separate eggs and set egg whites aside. In another bowl, sift castor sugar and add egg yolks. Add oil to sugar and yolks and mix well. Beat egg white in another bowl until firm. Add rose water and rice flour to the eggs, sugar and oil. Mix well. Fold in the egg whites. Mix well. Let the dough rest over night in the fridge.

Shape dough into a small ball the size of a hazelnut and place them on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. The gently press them down into a round shape. With tines of a fork create indentations on each cookie. Then sprinkle some poppy seeds on each cookie and bake for 25 minutes in a 300 F oven.

Dar ni Pori

Niloufer Mavalvala (Mississauga, Canada)

Preheat oven to 400F.

Grease and flour 8 or 9 inch spring form pan.

In a large pot cook 2 cups of non oily *toovar daal* with enough water to cover the *daal*, once soft, remove from fire.

Add

6 tbsp of sugar

2 tbsp of *ghee/smen*

Return to the stove and keep mixing on a low flame until everything has melted and it looks like a thick paste.

Remove from fire and when just warm add:

2 tbsp chopped blanched almonds

2 tbsp chopped blanched pistachios

2 tbsp *charoli*

2 tsp cardamom powder

1 tsp freshly grated nutmeg

2 tbsp rosewater

1 tsp vanilla essence

1 1/2 tbsp crystallized orange peel or glazed crystallized cherries

Once mixed, this is ready to fill the *dar ni pori*.

Roll out a sheet of readymade puff pastry in a circle about 16 inches to 18 inches, if it is already rolled out you may need to trim of the edges to round it up.

Place the pastry on the disc of the pan, fill up the centre with the *daal* mixture and close the pastry sealing it with a pinch.

Bake in the preheated oven for 25 to 30 minutes.

Alternatively, bake it on a cookie sheet or a parchment paper for easy release.

Khajoor ni Ghari

Niloufer Mavalvala (Mississauga, Canada)

A modern version of this ancient recipe but the taste and texture has been kept as authentic as possible. They can be made as large or as small as you wish.

Iranian rosewater tends to be the most aromatic but Lebanese rosewater is a good substitute. Do not use essence of rose as it has a bitter after taste. It may be better to substitute with vanilla extract.

In a pan heat 3 tbsp *ghee/smen* and on medium heat sauté 500 g of chopped, pitted dates until cooked and soft.

Add

1 tbsp rosewater

Dash of salt

For the pastry, in a food processor add

2 cups flour

4 tbsp semolina

1 tsp baking powder

1/2 tsp salt

2 tbsp *ghee* or *smen*

Pulse together and add a dash of rosewater if too dry. Keep mixing until pliable dough consistency.

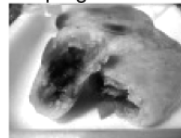
Remove the dough from the machine to a flat surface and roll it out in a large circle.

Brush a mix of 3 tsp soft *ghee/smen* and 2 tsp flour all over the large circle.

Twist the circle into a long sausage and keep it in the fridge for 30 minutes to relax.

Cut the dough into 2 inch rounds and form them into a cup, fill the date mixture into it and close the dough up to cover.

Flatten slightly to make perfect discs and shallow fry in *ghee* and butter till golden brown and cooked through. Cook on both sides, keeping the flame on medium high.



Khajoor ni gari (courtesy of ifood.tv)

Luggan-nu-Custard

Jeroo Mehta (Mumbai, India)

2 cups half and half milk

1/4 cup or 3 tbsp sugar

1/4 tsp cardamom powder

1/4 tsp nutmeg powder

1 1/2 tbsp *charoli* (small round nut) or 6 almonds

3 eggs

1 tsp vanilla essence

If using almonds, boil, peel and slice them finely.

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

Recipes

Warm the milk to near boiling point and remove from heat.

Add sugar and stir till dissolved.

Cool milk and add cardamom and nutmeg powders. Stir well.

Beat eggs till just frothy, add vanilla essence, mix and pour into milk. Stir gently.

Pour mixture into a pie dish or pie plate so that the mixture is about 1½ inches deep.

Sprinkle charoli or almonds over surface of mixture and bake in a moderate oven till slightly golden on top and custard has set.

Allamai nu Mithu Cream

Sarosh Khariwala (Melbourne, Australia)

3 vanilla pods
3 tbsp vanilla
1.125 mL fl
110 g castor
10 egg yolk
4 green cardamom

Place the pods in a pot of water and bring to a slow boil. Remove the pods and cardamoms. Reduce the milk to around 750 mL. Take off the heat and allow it to cool to lukewarm.

Beat the sugar and egg yolks in a stainless steel mixing bowl until thick and creamy. Strain the lukewarm infused milk into the egg yolk mixture slowly and stir continuously. Be mindful, as the egg mixture could curdle if the milk is too warm or combined too quickly.

Transfer the mixture to the top of a double boiler or over a pan of hot water. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon over very low heat until the mixture coats the back of the spoon. Immediately remove from heat and keep stirring to cool slightly.

Strain the custard through a fine sieve into a glass bowl or serving jug and allow it to chill in the fridge. Serve the custard with chilled stewed seasonal fruits.

Caramel Custard

Sarosh Khariwala (Melbourne, Australia)

250 g castor sugar
3 vanilla bean pods split with seeds scraped out (preserve the seeds)
2 L full-cream milk
12 egg yolks
12 eggs

Caramel

425 g (1 cup) castor sugar

250 mL (½ cup) water

Combine the milk and sugar in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Add the vanilla beans along with the seeds. Simmer for 10 minutes on low heat stirring gently and taking care not to let the mixture burn or stick to the bottom of the pan. Remove the pan from the heat and allow to stand at room temperature for 35 minutes.

For the caramel, add the castor sugar to cold water and gently simmer on medium heat stirring to dissolve the sugar. Do not stir once the liquid starts to simmer. Brush the sides of the pan with a wet bristle brush if any crystallization occurs. Simmer the sugar until it starts turning a deep caramel color. Immediately remove the pan from the heat and carefully pour equal amounts of the caramel into 12 220 mL oven proof ramekins. Hold the moulds at the top of the rim and swirl to coat the moulds halfway up their sides with the caramel. Set aside to cool.



Caramel custard (courtesy of flickr)

Preheat the oven to 185°C.

Lightly whisk the eggs and yolks in a bowl making sure not to over whip. Strain the cooled milk mixture into the whisked egg mixture, slowly whisking until it combines all the liquid. Strain again and gently pour into the prepared ramekins. Lay a tea-towel on the bottom of a deep roasting tray. Place the ramekins on the tray and fill it with hot water until it reaches halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Cover the tray with foil and place in the centre of the oven to cook for 30-45 minutes, or until set. Allow to cool, transfer from the roasting tray onto a flat tray and store in the refrigerator to chill for at least 6 hours or overnight.

To serve, pour some boiling water in a deep tray and allow the chilled custard ramekins to rest in the hot water for around 20 seconds. Run a knife around the inside of the mould and

shake the ramekin to loosen the custard. Place a serving plate on top and quickly upturn the caramel custard and gently remove the mould, allowing the caramel to run down the edges of the custard. Serve with some whipped cream if desired.

Add coarsely ground roasted pistachio kernels or roasted macadamia kernels to make caramel custard with a difference.

Jimmy's Chai Flavored Crème Brûlée *Jimmy Seervai (Sydney, Australia)*

600 mL thickened cream
 ½ tsp ground cardamom
 10 saffron threads
 ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
 1 vanilla bean, split, seeds scraped (or vanilla extract)
 6 egg yolks
 ¼ cup caster sugar
 60 g caster sugar (for caramelizing top)
 Cinnamon powder for dusting

Step 1: Preheat oven to 120 °C.

Step 2: Place the cream, saffron, ground cardamom, nutmeg and vanilla bean and seeds in a saucepan over medium heat and bring to scalding point, then remove from heat. Remove vanilla bean and discard.



Step 3: Whisk together egg yolks and caster sugar in a bowl for 2-3 minutes or until pale. This is also called creaming the eggs and sugar together.

Step 4: Pour hot cream over egg yolk mixture, continuing to whisk until well combined, careful not to cook the eggs with the hot cream. I suggest adding the cream slowly. Strain mixture into a jug; and evenly divide between 4 x 200 mL ramekins.

Step 5: Carefully place ramekins in a deep roasting pan lined over a folded tea towel. Pour boiling water into pan to come halfway up the sides of ramekins. The tea towel will be submerged in the water; this will prevent any splashing of the hot water once it comes up to

boiling point. Cover pan loosely with foil, shiny side down.

Step 6: Bake in the oven for 40 minutes or until the custard has just set. Remove ramekins from the water bath, and set aside to cool. The ramekins can be placed in the fridge but not the freezers.

Step 7: When ready to serve, take the ramekins out of the fridge and sprinkle caster sugar evenly over the surface of the baked custards. Run a kitchen blowtorch over the custards, or place under a preheated very hot grill until the sugar bubbles and caramelizes.

Step 8: Dust a very fine layer of cinnamon powder over the top and serve. Make sure that you do this at the very end or the cinnamon will burn if you use a blow torch on it.

PICKLES

Shrimp Pickle

Khorshed Sidhwa (Karachi, Pakistan)

Clean 2-2 ½ lb shrimp and wash them with cold water.

If the shrimp has a fishy smell, apply about 2 tbsp flour on them and mix gently. Keep the flour on the shrimp for about 30 minutes, and then wash it off. This removes the smell.

Sprinkle 2 tsp salt on the shrimp, mix gently and keep for about 15 minutes.

Grind in the blender:

16 cloves garlic
 1 ½ inch piece of ginger
 1 tsp cumin seeds
 ¼ cup cider vinegar

Apply 2 tsp of the above spice mixture on the shrimp and mix it gently. Marinate for about 30 minutes.

Put the shrimp in a non-stick pan on low heat and let water come out. As the water increases, raise the heat and allow the water to dry off.

In a large pan heat 1 cup of oil. Add all the remaining spice mixture and fry until light brown. Then add:

½ cup sugar
 ¼ tsp turmeric
 ½ cups cider vinegar
 shrimp (above)

Allow the whole mixture to cook gently. Usually the shrimp is cooked before this, but if not, allow it to cook at this time.

FOOD FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL

GENERAL

Add 6 tbsp red pepper.

Switch off the stove 2-3 minutes after the pepper is added.

Allow the pickle to cool then mix in 2 tsp of French's prepared mustard.

This *achar* achieves the right color and consistency only after the mustard is added. Don't be concerned if it does not "look right" as you make it!

Gajar Meva Nu Achar

Khorshed Sidhwa (Karachi, Pakistan)

Thinly slice 3 lbs carrots shoe string style. It is better to slice by hand. You can use a food processor, but that makes the carrots mushy.

Apply 3 tbsp salt on the carrots and store in a large closed container for 24 to 48 hours. Mix the carrots about 3 to 4 times during this marinating period. Before cooking, drain the water that has been released, wash the carrots and dry them on paper towels.

In a blender grind 2 oz crushed red pepper flakes with 3/4 cup vinegar.

In a large pan take 5 cups sugar and 4.5 cups cider vinegar. Put the pan on medium heat and let the sugar melt. Add:

16 cloves of garlic finely sliced

2 inch piece of ginger finely sliced

12 oz dried apricots

12 oz dried figs cut into small pieces

6 oz golden raisins

drained carrots (above)

red pepper masala (above)

Raise the heat to high and let the mixture boil vigorously. Keep mixing it often so it does not stick to the bottom of the pan.

When the *achar* attains the right consistency, adjust salt, vinegar and red pepper to taste.

This is a traditional *achar* served at weddings.

(Recipes provided by Khorshed's daughter-in-law Anahita Sidhwa.)

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In The News

DHUN NORIA INDUCTED TO SCARBOROUGH WALK OF FAME

Dr. Dhun Farokh Noria has added another feather to her already full hat of achievements. On May 12, 2011 Noria, along with six other equally illustrious citizens, was inducted into *The Scarborough Walk of Fame (SWOF)*.

For the Raichur-born physician this was a humbling moment. *"I'm truly honored to be working in this great city of Scarborough,"* she said in her acceptance speech at a glitzy gala held in downtown Scarborough—a borough east of Toronto, which became part of the city in 1997.



Deflecting the praise showered upon her, Noria was gracious in crediting much of her success not only to the city of Scarborough where she has worked for over 25 years, but also her co-worker physicians of The Scarborough Hospital Birchmount Campus who nominated her for the award.

The SWOF is a not-for profit organization, dedicated to honoring individuals who not only bring pride to the community but serve to inspire the leaders of tomorrow.

The gala award ceremony (attended by several Toronto-area Zarathushtis) is the culmination of a day-long celebration where the inductees unveil their individual star on the Walk of Fame Pathway of Stars, located at the Scarborough Town Centre. (photo left with husband Farokh and family)

Criteria to be inducted into SWOF:

- Inductees must either be born in or have spent most of their formative years in Scarborough.
- They must be accomplished in many walks of life namely sports, the arts, health care, entertainment, education, and community contributions.
- The ethos behind every 'star' on the Walk of Fame pathway is an individual whose talents and accomplishments have deeply enriched the community.

A surgical pathologist and chief of laboratory medicine for the Scarborough Hospital Birchmount campus, Noria is also a successful business woman, owning several medical-related companies in Scarborough. She was awarded the *2004 Business Woman of the Year* by the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to indulging in big-game fishing in her spare time, Dr. Noria is looking forward to welcoming an addition into her family as she is soon to become a proud grandmother later this summer. Wonder what inspiring stories this illustrious grandmother will tell her newly minted grandchild!

Reported by Teenaz Javat .

In The News

ZENOBIA RAVJI: TO MISS ILLINOIS USA PAGEANT

We can all be proud that *Zenobia Ravji*, daughter of our mobed Jamshed and Dinaz Ravji, has been selected from hundreds of applicants, as an official State Finalist in the 2012 Miss Illinois USA Pageant to be held in November 2011 in Chicago. The winner, of course will represent Illinois in the Miss USA 2012 pageant.

Zenobia is an accomplished young lady with degrees from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in economics, Spanish and health sciences, and a Masters in public policy. She has received numerous awards and fellowships, won the position of Illinois Student Senator and has led groups of students on volunteer projects around the world. *"I aspire to be a broadcast journalist and eventually have my own talk show, much like Oprah,"* writes Zenobia, *"My mission is to have an affirmative impact on humanity by focusing on educating and inspiring young people, in whose hands lie our future."*

To learn more about Zenobia please visit her website at ZenobiaRavji.com. Wouldn't it be great if we could have a Zoroastrian Miss Illinois or Miss USA?

Zenobia we are very proud of you! We wish you success!



FAROHAR EMBLEM NOW PART OF THE LIST OF EMBLEMS APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, USA

Rodabe Bharucha, whose son Col Kurush Bharucha-Reid was buried at Arlington, with full military honors (FJ Vol 24, NO 3 Fall 2010 page 133-134) informs us "that after much effort and delays the VA administrators at Arlington Cemetery have agreed to add the Farohar, as a symbol of religion to the symbols allowed on the headstones. Lindee Lennox, Ag. Director, Office of Field Programs, Dept of VA, National Cemetery Administration writes *"I am pleased to inform you that we have added the emblem (Farohar) to the list of those available for inscription on Government-funded headstones and markers. The current list of emblems including the Farohar emblem is available on http://www.cent.va.gov/hm_hm.asp"*

Rodabe wishes to thank Ervad Behram Panthaki, Kersi Shroff and Farhad Aidun who wrote supporting

letters. But in the end, even with their help and that of the US Army, the VA department was not convinced until the intervention of *Senator Carl Levin, a Michigan Senator and Chair of the Armed Services Committee*. There are very strict requirements by Arlington before a design is approved. : 1) it must be a digital image/format 2) when printed or rendered it should be no more than three inches in diameter 3) the image must be black on a white background. Rodabe and her son Rustam had to meet those requirements under time pressures.(photo inset)

Through the efforts of Dr Rodabe Bharucha-Reid, future Zarathushti young men and women who will lay down their lives in the defense of their country can have the Farohar symbol on their head stones. This information could be of interest to the readers of Fezana Journal.



In The News

THE FIRST ZOROASTRIAN SCOUT GROUP-100 TORONTO CELEBRATED BADEN POWEL DAY



On Saturday, February 26th the Zoroastrian Scout Group celebrated the birthday of Lord Baden – Powell the founder of the scout movement, at the Darbe Mehr, with the singing of the Canadian National Anthem, followed by 2 yathas and one ashem vohu. The beavers and cubs attending enjoyed the Beaver Buggy and the Cub Kar Rally under the supervision of the scout leader Khushroo Bharda. A delicious buffet dinner prepared by cub leader and super chef Kersi Khambatta was served. The chief guest for the evening Dr Phiroz Dastoor, one of the founding members of the scout group, distributed Rally prizes to the beavers and cubs. Maneck Sattha, a much decorated member of the scout movement was a special invitee. *(photo above Rusi Unvala, Chair, of the Scout group Chief guest Phiroze Dastoor, Freddy Mirza, Maneck Sattha, and Vispi Patel, Scout Group Treasurer).*

"100th Toronto" is a "sister scout group" of now extinct Homavazir Scout Group of the Dadar Parsi Colony, which was, 11th CBDA and before that was "100th Bombay" from 1927 to about 1950. Since many of the scouts who started the 100th Toronto were all ex-"100th Bombay" they used their scarf colours and hence became a "sister group". The flag which is being held by the senior scouts is the original flag that Scout Manack Sattha managed to get from Mumbai.

PHIROZ DASTOOR RECOGNIZED FOR VOUNTARY SERVICE



Dr Phiroz Dastoor was awarded a plaque for contractual work with Defense Research and Development Canada (DRDC) for providing voluntary services of reading, taping, recording, computer work, science consulting work for 17 years, assisting Robert Arrabito, M.Sc Defence Scientist, Advanced Interface Group, Human Systems Integration who is legally blind since childhood. Congratulations.

In The News

RAYHAN ARDESHIR LAL, A JUVENILE DIABETIC, OBTAINS HIS M.D. DEGREE TO FIND A CURE FOR DIABETES .



From right : Dr Ardeshir B. Damania, Mr. Ardeshir (Adi) R. Lal, Dr Rayhan A. Lal, Mrs Zenobia A. Lal, and Miss Aban R. Lal.

Rayhan A. Lal, son of Zenobia and Ardeshir (Adi) Lal of Antioch, California was awarded a Doctor of Medicine (MD) at the University of California, Davis. At a glittering ceremony at UC Davis on May 21, 2011 marking the 40th Commencement 2011, the Dean of the School of Medicine Dr Claire Pomeroy introduced Rayhan as follows:

"I am extremely honored to introduce this year's class speaker Rayhan Lal. People are called to be physicians for many different reasons. Rayhan's was quite personal. At the age of 12, he was diagnosed with type-1 diabetes. This discovery inspired his dream of one day helping people. He wanted to combine engineering and biology to create an invention that could help care for the sick or to become a physician. After graduating from UC Berkeley with a degree in Electrical Engineering, fate once again intervened. His two younger sisters (Julie and Temi) were also diagnosed with type-1 diabetes. That convinced him to become a physician."

According to his fellow students, his kind and caring nature is infectious. These qualities convey a passion for serving others, putting their needs above his own, and bringing comfort and caring. The next stop on Rayhan's journey will be a 4-year residency on Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at the University

of Southern California University's Hospital (USC in LA) where he hopes to become an adult and pediatric endocrinologist".

In his speech Rayhan Lal mentioned *"My friends, your hard work, dedication and service have earned you recognition as doctors of medicine. We did not embark on this journey alone. The support of our friends, family and partners eased our burden and made every day better. It is not possible to adequately repay you all for your kindness. Dr. Albert Schweitzer stated, "To educate yourself for the feeling of gratitude means to take nothing for granted, but to always seek out and value the kind that will stand behind the action. Nothing that is done for you is a matter of course. Everything originates in a will for the good, which is directed at you. Train yourself never to put off the word or action for the expression of gratitude." Never forget the sacrifices made to bring you here today. Let us take a moment to show our gratitude to all of those in the audience who have aided, inspired and believes in us. If you would, please stand and show them your appreciation with a round of applause.*

Dr. Hasan Bazari, the Massachusetts General internal medicine program director, wrote in December issue of New England Journal of Medicine *"Even in this era of health care as a business, with increasing pressure to contain costs, the secret of being a good doctor clearly still lies in what we do, feel, and communicate at the bedside. To ensure that the next generation of physicians is equipped to give patients what they need, we must nurture their humanism and empathy – and redouble our efforts to preserve physicians' ability to truly care for patients and their families as they bear witness to the inevitable cycle of birth, life, illness, and death. With this in mind, continue to provide phenomenal care and service to your patients. Enjoy the opportunities to share in victories and remember you will ultimately succeed if your patient's smile give you cause to grin. Congratulations class of 2011"*

In The News

Parsi Population Decline: News Excerpts

On 7 May 2011, Dinyar Patel, Ph.D. candidate at Harvard University, delivered a talk entitled *"Understanding Parsi Population Decline: A Historical Perspective"* at the Nehru Centre in Mumbai.

The full text of the talk, as well as video footage of the event, is available online at: <http://parsikhabar.net/issues/understanding-parsi-population-decline-video-and-text-now-available/3157/>

At the conclusion of the event, Dinshaw Mehta, Chairman of the BPP, made the following statement:

"We [the BPP] will be taking action after seeing all this. It is high time. ZYNG (Zoroastrian Youth for the Next Generation) was given birth because of this issue. We will be taking this up and I hope that the trend reverses. That is all that I can assure."

The chairman of the BPP has acknowledged our demographic dilemma and pledged to take action. It is time for us in North America to do the same.

CNNGo.com, 6 May 2011

"Demographically speaking, the Parsis are a complete anomaly in India. At a time when India's population increased by 185 percent (between 1951-2001) the Parsi community registered a 'stunning decline' of 38 percent, about 40,000 people. According to this data, verified by Dinyar Patel, a PhD candidate in History at Harvard University, there were approximately 69,600 Parsi individuals left as of the 2001 census. The biggest community lives in Mumbai and funnily enough, appears not to give a hoot about procreation and propagation."

TimeOut Mumbai, 29 April 2011

"The 2001 census showed that the community had shrunk to 69,601 members, down from 115,000 people in 1941. A major reason for the decline is a drop in fertility rates caused by Parsis marrying late, said Patel, who will offer a historical perspective on the shrinking community at the Nehru Centre this fortnight. The median age of marriage among Indian Parsi women is 27, while it is 31 for men, according to a recent study by the International Institute for Population Sciences in Mumbai. 'A lot of people think that the Parsis are predisposed to infertility,' said Patel. 'There is no evidence of that. The reason is we are marrying late.'"

"One out of every five Indian Parsi men, and one out of every ten women is still unmarried by the age of 50, according to a 2009 study conducted by Sayeeda Unisa, a professor of demography and statistics at the IIPS. Staying single isn't only an urban trend. A study conducted in rural Gujarat found that 13 to 55 per cent of Parsi women were unmarried even in their fifties. 'In India, there is a lot of pressure on people to get married, but it is amazing how little pressure exists within the Parsi community,' said Patel. 'The idea of the Parsi bachelor or spinster is a cultural staple.'"

Times of India, 8 May 2011

"It's not so much the elephant in the room that no one wants to acknowledge, but rather the unicorn they all imagine--that the global Parsi population isn't so desperately in decline, but that it has somehow miraculously ballooned to four million. Rubbish, was the emphatic denial of Dinyar Patel, a California-born, PhD candidate in history at Harvard University, who held his largely Parsi audience at Nehru Centre in thrall last evening, when he catalogued for them empirical evidence of their decline, and warned them of their fall."

"Dinyar produced Parsi scholarship and demographic surveys to revisit the crisis of the falling numbers of Indian Parsis, while positing more tenable theories for their attenuation than widely-circulated myths about migration and marriage outside the community."

"He believes an answer lies in the prompt reconciliation of liberal and conservative stands in the matter of intermarriage, and a redoubling of efforts, not only to get more Parsis to marry, but to conceive. 'And if all else fails,' pitched a valiant lady in the gallery, 'perhaps even institute sperm and egg banks.' It's radical but, perhaps, requisite."

**Submitted by Dinyar Patel, Ph.D candidate,
Harvard University**

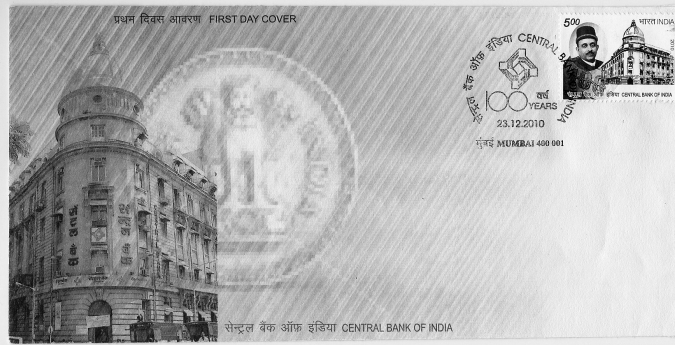
In The News

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP RELEASED ON THE CENTENARY OF THE CENTRAL BANK OF INDIA

ON Decemebr 23, 2010 Central Bank of India announced the beginning of its centenary celebrations with a simple and elegant function.

The President of India Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil released the Commemorative Postal Stamp and First Day Cover of the Founder *Sir Sorabji Pochkanwala*, in the presence of the Minister of State for Communications & IT, Government of India, the Governor of Maharashtra, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, the Minister of State for Finance. Other Ministers & Dignitaries also graced the occasion.

Started by *Sir Sorabji Pochkhanwala*, as a bank totally managed by Indians, exclusively meant for Indians on 21st December 1911 the Bank today has evolved into the third best bank. With a total business



of more than INR 2,70,000 Crore (as on September 2010) the bank has set itself a target of crossing INR 3,00,000 Crore by the end of current fiscal year. It is one of India's premier public sector banks. (see FJ Winter 2010 Vol 24 No 4 pages 94-95)



MAJOR ARNAVAZ DARUWALA OF THE INDIAN ARMY



On September 17, 2004 Major Arnavaz Daruwala, 28, was the first Zarathushti female to be commissioned as a Lieutenant on the Signal Regiment in the Indian Army. After 6 years of excellent service she was promoted to the rank of Major on September 2010. Her first posting was at Tiufujia (Assam), followed by Chakarata in Uttaranchal, followed by Mhow. At present she is posted at Ponda, in Goa.

Arnavaz holds a Master's degree in Physics (first Class). She is the daughter of Dinaz and Kersi Daruwalla of Bangalore and the grand neice of Koomi Italia of Vancouver, BC.

Congratulations Major Daruwala.

In The News

PARSI PANORAMA: EXHIBITION, SEMINAR, WORKSHOPS, MUSIC.

Dinyar Patel



Between 12-16 March 2011, the UNESCO Parsi-Zarathushti (Parzor) Project held its *"Parsi Panorama"* exhibition and program at the India International Centre in New Delhi. Celebrating over ten years of research and work, the *"Parsi Panorama"* primarily highlighted the community's rich heritage in textiles. The event also brought together a diverse array of individuals: academics and authors, kusti weavers from Navsari, NGO representatives, design students, and dignitaries including the Chief Minister of Delhi, Mrs. Sheila Dikshit, and the wife of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Mrs. Gursharan Kaur.

Over the past decade, Parzor has worked to document several aspects of Parsi heritage, assist in preservation efforts, and even revive some crafts. One of its first major projects was to help renovate the *Meherjirana Library in Navsari*, which houses a priceless collection of Zarathushti manuscripts. For the last several years, Parzor has trained several skilled crafts persons and helped them with recreating Parsi textiles and works of embroidery. The organization has displayed some of these textile items at exhibits in Dubai, Bombay, and elsewhere in India, and has also encouraged Parsis to try their own hand at kusti weaving through special workshops held across the country.

Chief Minister Dikshit formally opened the exhibit on the 12th before a packed auditorium. (photo above) She praised the Parsis for being unique in India in the sense that all other communities had deep respect for them. *"Whatever the Parsis touch, it will succeed,"* she commented. Noting the declining Parsi population, and the fact that only 500 or so Parsis remained in the Delhi



area, she concluded her short address with the words, *"We'd like to conserve you just as much as you'd like to conserve yourselves. May your tribe grow."*

Dikshit was joined on stage by Dr. Shernaz Cama, director of the Parzor Project; Tulsi Vatsal, co-editor of a new publication on Parsi textiles, *Peonies and Pagodas*; (FJ Vol 24, No 4 Pg 109) Mr. Armoogum Parsuramen, the UNESCO Director for the South Asia region, and Mr. S. Sridhar, CEO of the Central Bank of India. Central Bank, celebrating the hundredth anniversary of its foundation this year, served as the chief sponsor for the *"Parsi Panorama."* Sridhar mentioned that, as a *"Parsi product,"* Central Bank felt duty-bound to support Parzor's work.

Over the next few days, visitors streamed into a colorful exhibit of Parsi garas, jewelry, and other embroidery items put together by noted fashion designer Ashdeen Lilaowala. Parzor also



In The News

simultaneously organized a series of workshops on Parsi textiles that brought together both academic experts and practitioners.

On the morning of 13 March, Dr. Cama (photo page 110) opened a special seminar that focused on the history of Parsi textiles. Zarathushtis, she noted, have long been renowned for their skill in weaving and embroidery, and through slides and display of original fabrics, Dr. Cama explained how Parsis literally wove Zarathushti motifs into their textile items. Children's jhablas, for example, contained plentiful images of the rooster of Sarosh, which heralds dawn and drives away darkness. This was believed to provide extra protection to Parsi youth who had not as yet undergone the navjote ceremony and, therefore, did not have the spiritual armor of the sudreh and kusti.

Professor Jasleen Dhamija, one of India's most prominent experts on textiles and textile history, spoke glowingly about her many years in Iran in the 1970s where she worked for the United Nations and befriended Farangis Yeganegi, the daughter of Kaikhosrow Shahrokh. Through Yeganegi, Dhamija was introduced to Iranian Zarathushti culture and soon began documenting their community's vibrant textile heritage.



Tulsi Vatsal (photo above) gave one of the most thought-provoking talks on the seminar by examining the history of Chinese-inspired Parsi garas. She began by tracing Parsi links with China, noting that Parsi traders from Bombay had dominated the opium trade prior to the 1860s. Parsis, who traded opium and cotton for prized Chinese tea, were regular fixtures in major ports such as Canton, where they were known as *baitouren*, Mandarin for "white-hatted people" due to their prominent white turbans. In her research, Vatsal tried to date many surviving Parsi garas and discovered that the majority dated from the early 20th century; therefore, well after the Parsi mercantile connection with China had waned. Vatsal concluded, therefore, that Chinese-style garas might not have

been a direct outgrowth of the Parsi China trade. Rather, she suggested that Parsi adoption of Chinese patterns and motifs might have had more to do with the world of late Victorian fashion in Europe, which experienced an "*oriental craze*" for ceramics, paintings, and textiles from East Asia. The Parsis' reception to European fashion might explain why Chinese-style garas came into vogue amongst Parsi women, while the fashion of other Indian communities which had engaged in commerce with China, such as the Bohras and the Sindhis, reflected no such cultural borrowings.

In his presentation, Ashdeen Lilaowala (photo below) gave a comprehensive overview of *kustis* and *kusti weaving*. Whereas *kustis* are occasionally made of camel's hair in Iran, he noted, in India lamb's wool imported from Australia is utilized. Lilaowala traced



the complex process of turning this raw lamb's wool into the consecrated sacred thread. *Kusti-weaving* is oftentimes a multi-week process, including steps such as *kusti utlavanu*, or turning the partially-woven *kusti* inside-out, and *kusti dhupvanu*, where the *kusti* is purified and bleached with a piece of sulfur, which gives the thread its well-known cream-like color. Finally, the *kusti* thread, which is tubular in shape, is flattened out before given to a Zarathushti.

Lilaowala stressed that Zarathushtis need to understand and appreciate the symbolism of the *kusti* and the complexity behind its creation. By simply disposing of the *sudrah* and *kusti* due to ignorance or the whims of fashion, he stated, Zarathushtis only do themselves a disservice.

A three-day embroidery workshop was supervised by Mrs. Ava Khullar and Lilaowala and assisted by skilled crafts persons who were there to aid and teach the participants. Khullar and Lilaowala led participants through the techniques of draping a *gara* in the traditional Parsi style and organized a demonstration of *kusti weaving*. Arna Tamboli of Navsari provided participants with the unique opportunity of seeing how

In The News

a Parsi toran is made. The workshops were discovered by two Iranian teachers of textile design, who having flown to India the same morning, participated in an opportunity that they considered too valuable to pass up.

The "Parsi Panorama" concluded on 16 March with a performance of Hindustani ghazals by famed vocalist Penaz Masani.(photo below) Masani (who first



reminded Parsis in the audience to say "vah! vah!" regardless of whether or not they understood the high Urdu of the ghazals) began with a Gujarati monajat, an apt reminder of the Parsis' own musical heritage, of

which many Parsis are themselves completely unaware. Seated in the front row was Mrs. Gurshuran Kaur, an avid lover of music who was clearly enjoying her time at the Parzor event. After Persian and Hindustani ghazals, Punjabi songs, and even a rendition of "Chaiye Hame Jarthoshti," an upbeat Masani left the stage declaring, "may our community survive."

The entire Parsi Panorama program highlighted how the Parsi Zarathushtis across history have adapted socially to fit into their community and country of adoption while keeping their core culture intact. It is this ability which has resulted in the syncretism of their life in India and now in the diaspora, but it is based on a confidence in their own cultural and religious traditions which have contributed so much to history. Parzor has worked over the years to show cultural experts this unusual amalgam which needs to be maintained by the Zarathushti community.

The UNESCO Director for the South Asia region, Armoogum Parsuramen, stated that the "success of the Parzor Project is an example to all cultures the world over for how to preserve heritage."

CONNECTING ZARATHUSHTIS ---- ONE INSTITUTION AT A TIME

Yazdi Tantra from Mumbai writes

"As you are aware, the parsidirectory.com has been a resounding success. Within a short period of a few years, the directory now has more than 73,000 persons listed online. Zoroastrians.net too has become the preferred choice of the community worldwide, clocking more than 400,000 hits in a short span of time, averaging 400-500 hits per day.

I am now attempting to create another database for the community called TheParsiInstitutions.com. I propose to list all community institutions worldwide, including Federations, Anjumans, Agiaries, Trusts and Funds, Schools, Museums, Local Bodies etc. etc. If you have access to any such data, please pass it on to me and I will have it entered in this unique worldwide database. All contributions will be gratefully acknowledged.

There are many Parsi institutions doing remarkably good work, silently, unknown to the world at large. The objective is to bring them all under one roof, to be easily accessible both from the givers' and the takers' perspective.

I am sure that with all your generous support, we will be able to build another robust database for the benefit of the community. Regards, Yazdi Tantra yazdi@on-lyne.com

Most of the larger organizations are well known and easily accessible, Yazdi is looking for smaller institutions in the following categories Agiaries, Anjumans, Associations, Clubs/Gymkhanas, Infirmarys, Cultural Societies, Daremehrs, Dharamshalas, Foundations, Funds, Hospitals, Hostels, Libraries, Museums, Religious Societies, Schools, etc.

If you have information on any of the above please contact Yazdi Tantra at yazdi@on-lyne.com

+91-9892219340

In The News

CAPTAIN NEVILLE F. DASTOOR, J.D, LL.M, THE FIRST ZARATHUSHTI IN THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL (JAG) CORPS



The US Army Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corp, founded by George Washington on July 29, 1775 after he took command of the continental army is a wide ranging practice that includes military law and criminal prosecution to international law and legal assistance both in the US and abroad..

33 year old Neville Dastoor, of Gainesville, Florida, is perhaps the first Zarathushti to be admitted to the JAG Corp. After being admitted to the Florida Bar in 2004, Neville worked in the field of corporate law for 4 years, and left it to pursue his passion for International Law with special emphasis on International Human Rights.

He went back to school at NYU to get his LL.M Degree (Master in law) in International Legal studies which led him to work at an international level with the Nepal Government, to secure Dalit Rights in Nepal's New Constitution. He also worked in India to document violations of Dalit Rights in Gujarat, India and he co-authored a report submitted to the UN Human Rights Council. At the INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT (ICC) in The Hague, Netherlands he conducted research and application of International Human Rights Law and International Criminal Law to potential triggering situations. At *PEOPLE'S WATCH*, NGO, Madurai, India 2008, he held a fellowship at the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice. Here he coordinated and supervised Public Tribunals on Police Torture of Dalits in various Indian States as part of the National Project on the Prevention of Torture in India (NPPTI) and drafted observations and recommendations.

JAG has been the next step in Neville's career goal. He trained for the JAG Corp program from October 2010 to February 2011 at the JAG school of Military Law, in Virginia.

The admission process was highly selective and competitive, and the training included challenging academics in military law, and rigorous physical training. The Direct Commissioned Officers Course in leadership and tactic is designed to challenge JAG officers physically and mentally, which includes combat training, rifle marksmanship, land navigation training etc. Neville is now promoted to the rank of Captain.

Since March 2011 he has been deployed to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait to provide legal assistance to soldiers in the 1st Theater Sustainment Command. He will practice a wide variety of law in the JAG Corp, including prosecuting and defending court martial.

Neville is the son of Dr Firdaus Dastoor (Gastroenterologist) and Tehmi Dastoor (Interior Designer) and brother of Dr. Sarosh Dastoor, (Periodontal/Implant Surgeon), of Houston, Tx

In The News

Author Nina Godiwalla Visits Harvard University

by: Daryush D. Mehta

As part of her national book tour, Nina Godiwalla visited Harvard University on March 7, 2011, to speak with members of *Harvard Undergraduate Women in Business*. Nina is the author of the recent critically acclaimed book *Suits: A Woman on Wall Street*, in which she recounts her work experiences in the heart of Wall Street at JP Morgan and Morgan Stanley. Major themes of the book include the struggle for gender equality in the workplace, being a public school graduate in the midst of Ivy Leaguers, and the influences and pressures of a Parsi Zoroastrian upbringing.

As there are many reviews of *Suits* out there, this article will not attempt to rehash them. Instead, to provide a brief taste: Nina's book comprises of alternating chapters dealing with work experiences in the financial industry and family life with profound impacts on each other. Referred to as a modern-day Liar's Poker (and from a woman's perspective), *Suits* is the story of a Parsi woman who was the lone intern from the University of Texas in a sea of students from "upper echelon" universities. While Nina's summers were filled with relaxing days "with Grandma eating Pop-Tarts and watching soap operas," she found herself disconnected from other students who led an active country club lifestyle.

Undertones from many biases occur throughout Nina's journey in the financial industry, including subtle and not-so-subtle discrimination against minorities, women, youth, and upbringing. During her talk, Nina detailed examples of subtle gender biases that pervade the Wall Street culture, which allows such harassment and bias in more nuanced ways than they used to be in the past. One of her motivations for writing *Suits* was her desire to open dialog among the many different players in the financial industry, especially to aid new hires who might benefit from a strong support system. She tried her best while in that world by starting women's support groups to give employees a safe space in which to discuss their problems.

Nina entered into the corporate culture because that was what was expected of her. Her Parsi family drilled this expectation into their daughters, who were engulfed by the pressures to achieve high grades, follow the rules of proper etiquette, and land lucrative careers. While doing what she was meant to be doing, Nina says she thrived on the "Oh my God, you're so smart" tag. She did very well for herself at JP Morgan and Morgan Stanley, learned quickly on the job, and rapidly progressed. In the end, however, she unfortunately did not enjoy it.

Nina now does what she loves and is free of her former expectations. During a ten-day intense



Nina Godiwalla (center) with Daryush Mehta and Roshni Kapadia of the Zoroastrian Association of the Greater Boston Area (ZAGBA).

meditation session, Nina came to realize her two loves: writing and meditation. Nina discovered that there was a latent desire for meditation by her fellow business students and colleagues. At Wharton she started a student-run organization that mentored individuals on the practice of meditation. As her client base increased, Nina realized that she could best serve others by holding group sessions and training others to help run these sessions. And so she founded *MindWorks*, a company that trains business professionals to use meditation as a tool for communication enhancement and stress management.

After her talk, the audience asked Nina questions about how she combated gender discrimination; to which she responded, "Sometimes you just have to play the game and choose your battles." "The reality," Nina said, "is that people naturally bring in people that look like them" While under the guise of looking for a "good fit," the reality is the danger of fostering groupthink and discrimination. Asked if Wall Street had reacted strongly to her exposé, she replied that there were a couple of isolated harsh reactions but nothing unified.

The idea of writing a book came to Nina after she had tried out her primary career on Wall Street, when her husband Boris asked one day, "Do what you love. You like writing, don't you? Why don't you write a book?" And so she did! Encouraged by her professors at Dartmouth, Nina's master's thesis in creative writing became the template for *Suits*. Interestingly, Nina did quite poorly on a standardized writing exam in high school. Suffice it to say, as with the stock market, past performance is not necessarily a reliable indicator of future performance.

Daryush Mehta is a joint postdoctoral research fellow in electrical engineering and voice research at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard University. He is also the Zoroastrian Chaplain at Harvard.

In The News

Author Nina Godiwalla visits Houston

Suits Never Looked So Good! Discover Nina Godiwalla

An admiring group of 100+ onlookers gathered at the Zoroastrian Cultural Center in Houston on April 8, 2011, and amongst them were two extremely proud and glowing parents and sister of Nina Godiwalla. Amongst the many supportive attendees were two of Nina's biggest fans; her husband Boris and their son Zubin who was in sheer awe and trying to absorb everything that was in front of him. We all gathered for our own glance and interaction with our very own local and exceptional author Nina Godiwalla.

Nina's book, *"Suits A Woman on Wall Street"*, was released in February and I was one of many that anxiously & patiently waited for it to hit the stands. Wall Street with all its glitz and glam is a life-style that many strive and aim to achieve, yet fewer earn the granted access into the male dominated, tailored- suited white fraternity. Nina's debut is a Tell All Memoir that dishes on the reality of Wall Street (regarding minorities and women), but also sheds light on the strong loving bonds of her family, coupled with parental big dreams, first generational struggles, advice, the Zarathushti upbringing, while all leading up to her self-realization & pursuit for individuality and inner happiness. Nina spent two fast-paced, 80+ hour work weeks, over-the-top spending years as a junior analyst where she witnessed emotional & personal breakdowns, prescription depended colleagues, crass & tactless humor from the leadership team, women & minorities denied opportunities of growth which left her thinking is this what I want to do, is this who I want to be? In 2000, following her passion for something more Nina completed her Masters in Liberal Arts from Dartmouth College, where she reflected on her experiences & upbringing, and was encouraged by her professors to get adventurous as a writer, which has led to the publishing of

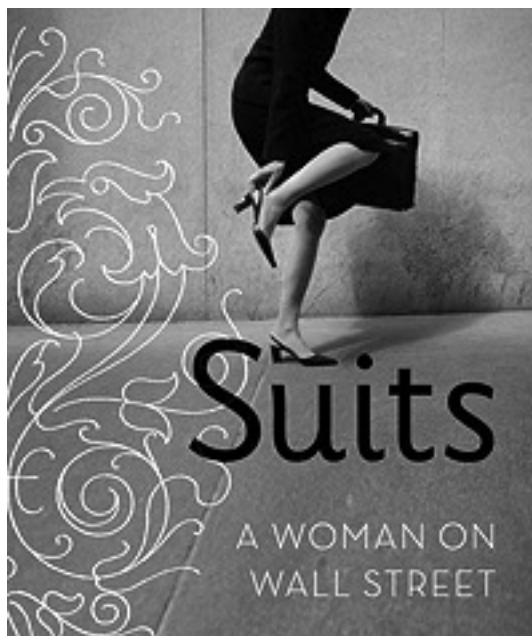
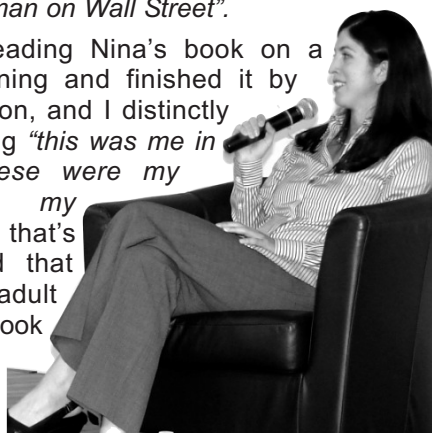
By: Zeeba N. Kayani, Houston

"Suits A Woman on Wall Street".

I started reading Nina's book on a Wednesday evening and finished it by Saturday afternoon, and I distinctly remember thinking *"this was me in my old job, these were my concerns, my struggles"*, and that's when I realized that every young adult should read this book

Aban Rustomji led the event with a Q & A which was later opened to the audience who eagerly wanted to interact with our local author. Nina graciously shared her advice and her perspective to follow your goals and dreams. As well as her personal epiphany came when a question prodded by her husband during a discussion, *"Why don't you do what will make you happy?"* A simple thought which consisted of 9 words. Along with her realization for happiness, Nina shared her experiences of wasteful dinners, having a second living space in her desk, being forced into a mold that is expected for individuals while working on Wall Street, as well as the camaraderie of private school and vacation destinations. Her conclusion for happiness was writing and becoming her own boss. Along with writing, she has founded *MindWorks*, a stress management-consulting firm. Her aspirations and goal as CEO of *MindWorks* is to provide a new perspective on the high-blood pressure environment of offices like the ones she began to work at as a freshman in college.

Follow Nina Godiwalla at www.ninagodiwalla.com.



In The News

RUNNING START/WAL-MART STAR FELLOWSHIP ANITA RAO, ONE OF SEVEN RECIPIENTS

Anita Rao, a resident of Downers Grove, Illinois, and a graduate with a Bachelors Degree in International Health from Georgetown University has been selected for The Running Start / Wal-Mart Star Fellowship.

The Star Fellowship is an exciting program that brings together college women from across the country to intern on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. Seven college women are placed in offices to intern for a female Representative or Senator through this program.



from top people in the field. Seminar topics include: *History of American Women in Politics, Campaign Fundamentals, International Women in Politics, Political Advocacy, Social Activism, Media Training, Fundraising Fundamentals, Public Speaking.*

Anita is the daughter of Mrs Mani and Dr Murali Rao of Illinois, members of the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago.

STAR FELLOWSHIP INCLUDES:

- Interning on Capitol Hill in the offices of female Representatives and Senators so they can learn from successful women firsthand. Each Star Fellow will be required to interview the Member they work for and present to the other fellows and Running Start staff on what they learn.
- Free housing on Capitol Hill, and a stipend for living expenses during the semester
- Star Fellows will attend Seminars where they will be given a deeper knowledge of politics and the opportunity to learn about how politics really works



FRED SARKARI HELPS RAISE \$10,000 FOR "CHARITY ABOUT FACES"

Fred Sarkari gave away 7000 copies of his new book, *Courage To Be Naked*, for free in the hopes that people who took them would also consider donating to. *Charity About Face*. He was able to raise over \$10,000 for the cause, which will allow 25 children born with facial differences to attend a week long camp which help these children build self esteem and create a community of supportive friends.

Through the partnerships Fred created, he was able to get exposure for the charity to close to 250,000 people, and show to the world the impact we can do if we all slowed down enough to help each other. He chose this particular charity (whose energy also impressed Fred) as it had no government funding and it was for children with facial differences, helping them with their self-esteem, confidence and awareness. (which is Fred's topic),

Visit his blog at www.MentalSidewalk.com to see all the impact made and the closing presentation video.

WORLD ZARATHUSHTI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (WZCC) AWARDS

KHUSHROO DARUWALLA

THE OUTSTANDING YOUNG ZARATHUSHTI PROFESSIONAL / ENTREPRENEUR FOR 2010-2011

This award was given in London by Lord Karan Billimoria Founder of WZCC, UK and Shernaz Engineer, WZCC Chair

WZCC are holding their AGM in Tehran, Iran mid 2011 and Khushroo will be recognized at the Gala Dinner, together with the winners of other categories. He will make a presentation of twenty minutes of his inspiring story to the delegates from all over the globe.
Congratulations Khushroo

In The News

THREE ZARATHUSHTI WOMEN HONOURED BY ZONTA CLUB OF BOMBAY 1 AND BOMBAY III.

The Woman of the Year Award of the Zonta Club of Bombay 1 was presented to social activist and Trustee of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat, *Mrs Arnavaz Jal Mistry*.

The Woman of the Year Trophy of Zonta Club of Bombay III was presented to *Mrs Firoza Mullan*, a company secretary who was the Winner of the ASA Asia-Pacific Contest of the Association of Secretaries and Administrative Professionals.

A *Special Recognition Award* from the Zonta Club of Bombay III was given to *Afsheen Fareedoon Irani* who received recognition when she asked President Obama

during his visit to Mumbai the now famous question *"Why is Pakistan so important an ally to America, so much so that America has never called it a terrorist state?"*

Zonta International is a service organization that improves the legal, economic, educational, health, and professional status of women at the global and local level through service and advocacy. The Zonta Clubs of Bombay I and III are part of District 25 of Zonta International.



Photo left: Arnavaz Mistry, District Gov. Naheed Moyeen and President, Zonta Bombay 1 Khorshed Billimoria
Photo right: District Gov. Naheed Moyeen, Ms Firoza Mullan, President Zonta Bombay III Zarine Khambatta.



District Gov. Naheed Moyeen, Afsheen Irani, and past Area Director Havovi Dotivala



NOWRUZ

Nowruz has become the symbolic nostalgic commonality that integrates people from as far away from Iran as Xingjian's northwest China and Himalayan foothills of Kashmir, India and Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia and the surrounding smaller republics in the caucuses and Caspian Sea regions, Turkey, Albania, Iraq and the Kurdistan regions, The Persian Gulf sheikdoms and sultanates, as far west as Egypt.

Since 2010, The United Nations General Assembly recognizes March 21 as the "International Day of Nowruz" and it has been officially registered on the UNESCO list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Many other countries have proclaimed March 21 as "Nowruz Day" and celebrated with much gusto.

Nowruz 2011 was celebrated around the world, at the UN, in Singapore, in Australia, in Mumbai, in England, in North America. The following pages will give just a flavor of these celebrations. We thank all those who submitted the account of their event.

Dolly Dastoor, Editor-in-chief

UN CELEBRATES THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF NOWRUZ

Homi D Gandhi

On March 21, 2011, the co-sponsors (Afghanistan, Albania, Azerbaijan, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Tajikistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan) of the UN 2010 General Assembly resolution celebrated Nowruz and the first anniversary of the UN General Assembly resolution. The official ceremony was conducted at the General Assembly Hall under the guidance of Mr. Joseph Deiss, President, UN General Assembly. (Photo below with Homi Gandhi)

After reading the greeting message of Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary-General, Mr. Vijay Nambiar, UN Under-Secretary-General, reminisced about his impressions of Nowruz celebrations in his earlier years at a Parsi home in Mumbai. Afterward almost all UN ambassadors of the resolution co-sponsors spoke about the history of Nowruz and what it meant in their country. Almost universally there was a reference to Zarathushti legacy and history in their speeches. But the most noteworthy speech came from Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri, India's UN Ambassador. His remarks began with highlighting the contribution of Zarathushtis (Parsis) in India and continued praising the community and their ethics and qualities for almost half of his speech, naming the Houses of Tata, Godrej and Wadia. He continued with Zarathushti contribution to the world and even went on to promote the marketing of Jaguar and Rover cars, now under the ownership of Tatas.

After the ceremony ended, there was a sumptuous dinner reception at the General Assembly Lobby and a very entertaining cultural program with music and dances from some of the co-sponsor countries. *The Haft-Seen* table at the center of the UN lobby reminded everyone about the advent of the prosperous New Year.

Homi Gandhi is the co-chair of the UN-NGO committee of FEZANA





NOWRUZ

ON INTERNATIONAL DAY OF NOWRUZ, BAN CALLS ON THE WORLD TO CELEBRATE ITS TIMELESS VALUES

21 March 2011 – *The spirit of peace and harmony in Nowruz, the Persian spring festival marking the New Year, is more appropriate than ever at a time of upheaval and pressing concerns in much of the world, said the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. In his message for the International Day of Nowruz, which is celebrated on 21 March each year, Mr. Ban called on people worldwide to “let the spirit of Nowruz prevail”. Nowruz means “new day” in Farsi and marks the vernal equinox in the Northern Hemisphere. “Nowruz is a day for renewal,” the Secretary-General said. “It is an opportunity to reflect on the intimate links between people and the natural world. And it carries a strong message of peace and harmony between peoples of all cultures on the basis of mutual respect and understanding.*

“These timeless values are at the heart of the mission of the United Nations, and are more relevant than ever as we grapple with such pressing global concerns as environmental degradation, human rights abuses, intolerance and armed conflict.”

An estimated 300 million people worldwide celebrate Nowruz, with traditions and rituals particularly strong in the Balkans, the Black Sea and Caspian Sea regions, the Caucasus, Central and South Asia, and the Middle East.

Nowruz is also inscribed on the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

AUSTRALIAN ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION (AZA) NOWRUZ FUNCTION WINS THE VOTE OF ZARATHUSHTIS ON POLLING DAY

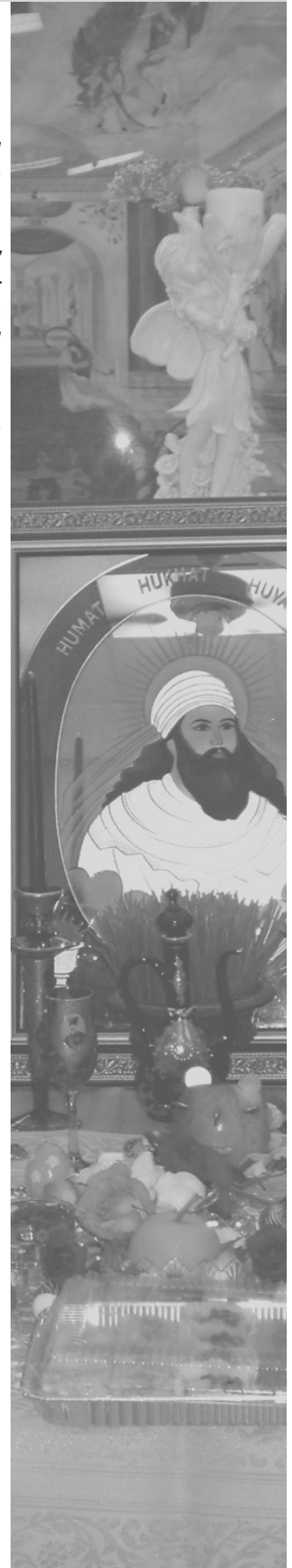
FARHAD KHURSHED, EDITOR, MANASHNI

Call it sheer coincidence, but for the second time Sydney Zarathushtis had to line up at the polling booth before heading over to the Dar e-Mehr to celebrate Nowruz. On a windy morning the AZA committee members dispensed with voting early and set about preparing the Dar-e-Mehr for the evening ahead.

With the help of volunteers Huzan Davar and Danesh Bharucha the tables were set up in neat rows, the operation being supervised by Vice president, Zubin Bilimoria and committee member Nawzer Billimoria. The heavy lifting dispensed with, the hall and pavilion were swept clean. Jerestene Saher, the dashing AZA Secretary set up the audio-video system with practiced ease, while AZA Treasurer Avan Umrigar added her artistic touch to the surroundings with colorful rangoli.



water, before looking into a mirror to make a wish. The Haft-Sin table, the showpiece of the evening, was a visual delight, every detail carefully attended to by President, Seema Honarmand. The two goldfish darted excitedly in their bowl every time someone got close to the table, demanding their share of attention.





N O W R U Z



Traditional Persian music set the mood for the evening, and soon the pavilion was filled to capacity. It was heartwarming to see so many Zarathushtis, some young, others young at heart, meet and greet each other like long lost friends, the conversations easily drowning out the music. The State elections, the Cricket World Cup and the impending Easter holidays were the hot topics of discussion. While the baby boomers reminisced about the happy times they enjoyed in their heydays, the

youth found their own corner to try and figure out what the future held in store. Not to be outdone, the tiny tots excitedly ran around the Dar e-Mehr squealing with delight, thrilled to meet so many of their friends all at once.

Few Australians know about our religion and Zarathushtis are often dubbed as fire worshippers. People of other faiths are intrigued when they hear about our *Towers of Silence*, and some even describe the thought of "dead bodies being eaten by vultures" as repulsive. To create awareness about the Zarathushti religion and dispense some of the prejudices commonly held against our religion, the ABC radio contacted the AZA with a request to enlighten them about our great religion. Mr. Noel James Debien, Producer, ABC Radio Religion Unit, was invited by the AZA committee as a special guest. Noel mingled freely with the guests uncovering some pearls of knowledge from the elders, while coaxing the youth for what the religion meant to them.

While the guests made merry, the kitchen was a hub of activity, with our very own Master chef, Schezad Umrigar in total command. The rice, kebabs and other tasteful delights were heated on the newly installed kitchen stove before being whisked away to the serving table. The committee members and volunteers served the lineup of guests with the efficiency of a German factory production line.

The menu, a choice of three kebabs, Baghali Pulao, Kashk-e-Bademjan, Ghormeh Sabzi, Mast-o-Khiyar, and garden salad was fit for a king's banquet and the guests showed their appreciation by dispensing what was in their plates by the mouthful.

What Zarathushtis lack in numbers, they make up in spirit, talent and achievement. While there are several individuals who have done us proud through their achievements in business or in their professions, our youth show great promise through their academic performance. Every year, the AZA recognizes and honors youth members who excel in the HSC exam. This year Aresh Ostowari claimed the trophy for the highest score among the AZA youth members with 91% overall. Well done Aresh, we are proud of you. Aresh also received an award of \$101 from the Dang family in appreciation of this achievement.

While the committee members make a huge effort to organize functions at the Dar e-Mehr, the hard work of the volunteers behind the scenes is crucial for the success of any function. Family members of those on the committee over the years have always shown their support and do a lot of the grunt work. Besides these family members, special thanks to Huzan Davar, Danesh Bharucha, Mithi Daver, Jamshid Tantra, Pearl Tantra and Sarosh Irani for their invaluable assistance.

As the guests departed, the Dar e-Mehr was restored to its peaceful state. The Haft-Sin table was soon cleared but there was still the business of the goldfish to be dispensed with. It was left to Avan Umrigar, who whispered a silent Ashem Vohu and gently released the goldfish in the AZA fish pond, signaling the end of another Nowruz celebration at the Dar e-Mehr.



NOWRUZ

NOWRUZ IN SINGAPORE BRING IN PEOPLE OF THE SILK ROAD

On Friday March 18th the ballroom of the *Orchard Hotel* was decked up and waiting for a most stellar event..The evening would forge bonds of new friendships, showcase the wonderful talents of people from diverse backgrounds, yet having similar roots and above all usher in a fun-filled spring season. The Parsi ladies glittered elegantly in their stunning garas and tasteful jewellery while the men looked regal in their crisp white Daglis and the children looked as beautiful and excited.



Photo above from left : Mr. Zubin Karkaria, Dr. Mehran Talebi, Mr. Homiyar Vasania, Mrs. Vidya Vasania, Mr. Neville Dotivala, Mr. Rustom Ghadiali (Vice President, PZAS), Mrs. Dilnawaz Zaveri (President, PZAS), Mrs. Jasmine Dastoor (Secretary, PZAS), H.E. S R Nathan (President Republic of Singapore), Mrs. S R Nathan, Mr. Freddy Bavaadam (Treasurer, PZAS), Mrs. Shirin Ghadiali, Mr. Manesh Zaveri, Mrs. Shenaz Dabu, Mrs. Minaz Kanga, Mrs. Armin Dotivala, Dr. Pesi Chacha, Mr. George Yeo (Minister for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Singapore), Ms. Eve Marie Seng, Mr. Amin Bagheri

The Iranians and Central Asians ladies' were gorgeous in their pure silk creations fitted beautifully on their graceful silhouettes and the men looked dapper in their Armanis and Zegnas.

At precisely 7.30 p.m. the doors opened and the guests floated into the ballroom and took their seats after gliding by slowly to take a look at the Haft-Seen and Haft-Sheen tables tastefully set-up by our Iranian friend Elahe Talebi and her daughters Azam and Isun.

Gentle mingling and the lilting sound of laughter filled the room and now it was only a matter of time before the guests of honor would parade in and the festivities would kick-off.

And so they did... H.E. S R Nathan, President of the Republic of Singapore, Mrs Nathan and Mr. George Yeo, Singapore's Minister of Foreign Affairs strode in regally among thunderous applause and the animated pitter-patter of little feet all excited to take their first look at the stars.

The evening unfolded like a dream. Anchored beautifully by Mrs Jasmine Dastoor and Mrs Shenaz Dabu, the events took center stage and glided on as smooth as silk. Our PZAS President Mrs Dilnawaz Zaveri welcomed the guests and ushered in the festive line-up for the evening. Traditional musical ensemble from Kazakhstan, Iranian traditional dance performed by Talebi sisters, performing on the "dombra" a 1000 year old instrument with 2 strings, display of traditional garas and duglis of the Parsis.

From the opening slideshow on Persian history, art and culture to the stunningly choreographed Iranian traditional dance by Iranian sisters Azam and Isun Talebi and from the groovy "New Dawn" belly-dance act performed by the little girls and young ladies from *Rhythmic Fitness* and choreographed by





NOWRUZ



Soheila Forughian to the superbly styled and yet rib-tickling fashion show put-up by our very own in-house talents, every act just floated on spell-bindingly.

A lavish spread was unveiled for dinner. The guests enjoyed the delicious Persian meat, fish and vegetarian preparations whipped-up by the award-winning Shiraz Restaurant, which added a beautiful touch of authenticity to the Central Asian festival of Spring as also the lip-smacking continental creations dished out by the chefs of the Orchard Hotel. Not to be missed and much worth mentioning were the wide range of mouth-watering desserts particularly the Iranian Baklava sweet.

The action continued with the Talebi sisters once again showing off their wide range of talents with an act on the *Daf*, the traditional Iranian drum and a traditional music ensemble from Kazakhstan performing on their traditional guitars. They were

students from the *Lee Kuan Yew school of Public Policy and the Nanyang Technological University* on a scholarship from the President of Kazakhstan.

Jasmine Cooper Dastoor secretary of the Association presented a bouquet to Mrs S.R. Nathan, the wife of the President of Singapore Mr S.R. Nathan, (photo below)

Gifts were then given to the visitors. Our association presented H E President Nathan and Minister Yeo with the book..*Parsis-The Zoroastrians of India* by *Sooni Taraporevala* and they also received tokens of gratitude from Shiraz,. Managing Director Amin Bagheri and our very generous sponsor Mr Zubin Karkaria, who is well on his way to setting up a branch of a huge international conglomerate here in Singapore. Mr. Russi Ghadiali, our Vice-President,

presented H E President Nathan and Minister Yeo with the first copies of *SOUTH ASIAN LINK*; Connecting South Asians Worldwide. This issue was especially printed for our Nowruz occasion by Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore.

Mr. Ghadiali then delivered a vote of thanks to all the members, their families and all who had worked so hard, in order to make this function the huge success that it turned out to be.

Numerous photo shoots (particularly with droves of excited children) and a few autographs later, the dignitaries took our leave, which then threw open the doors to mischief. For as they strode out, a belly dancer from Shiraz restaurants shimmied in. It was a riveting act, which got everyone into the mood for a jig and jive and as the DJ mixed the hip-swinging Iranian and Bollywood numbers, the stage thundered with the moves of the

real stars... us.

The evening literally swayed on as we danced our way into the wee hours of the morning and were still left begging for more.. but alas.. our feet ached and sleep beckoned and so we knew it was time to call it a day.

We had done it... we had pulled it off... and how..we couldn't have asked for a better Nowruz celebration and we knew we had to do it again..and by the grace of the one Almighty who draws us all together..we will come together again next year to celebrate Nowruz with our friends from Iran and Central Asia and show to the world that... *small is truly beautiful*.

Report prepared by
MINAZ KANGA
Singapore



NOWRUZ

JASHN-e-NOWRUZ

INDIA-Mumbai

On 17th March 2011 under the auspices of the *Indo-Iranian Friendship Society (IIFS)* and the *Iran Culture House* a colorful pageant in celebration of Jashn-e-Nowruz was held at the Islam Gymkhana, Marine Drive, Mumbai.

Ervad Dr. Ramiyar Parvez Karanjia, Principal of the Dadar Athornan Institute, gave the invocation and mentioned that Jamshedi Nowruz is the harbinger of Spring when we see nature in all its glory.

(photo right Ervad Dr. Ramiyar P. Karanjia giving the Invocation Address. Others seated on the dais are from l. to r. Ervad Yazdi Panthaki, Mr. Behram T. Dastur, Mr. Zarir Bhathena, Mr. Godrej N. Dotivala, H. E. Mr. Ali Mohammadi, Mr. Minoo R. Shroff, Mr. Mohammad Reza Mirzaei and Mr. Javad Hatkari

Jamshedi Nowruz (21st March) is generally referred to as the Birthday of the Sun, the giver of life and light to the whole world. Astronomically the sun traverses the twelve signs of the Zodiac and comes back into the first house of Aries on this day. This is the day on which the sun crosses the earth at the equator and goes from the Southern Hemisphere to the Northern Hemisphere.

King Jamshid's Coronation took place on this day and has been vividly depicted in the *Shahnameh*:

Ba-Jamshid bar gauhar afshandanad.

Maran ruz-ra ruz-nav khan-danad

Chunin jashne Farrokh az-an ruzgar,

Bema dah azan khusravan yadgar.

"King Jamshid's Coronation on Nowruz day was celebrated with great rejoicing pomp, splendor and wine, food, music and dancing abounded".

In his introductory remarks Mr. Minoo R. Shroff, President of the *Indo-Iranian Friendship Society* observed: *"The year gone by was a tumultuous one. The world started recovering from the economic crises which fortunately had a limited impact on Iran and India because of their sound economic, political and social foundations.*

Tragically in the last few months there have been political upheavals in the Middle East, North Africa and now we have the most devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

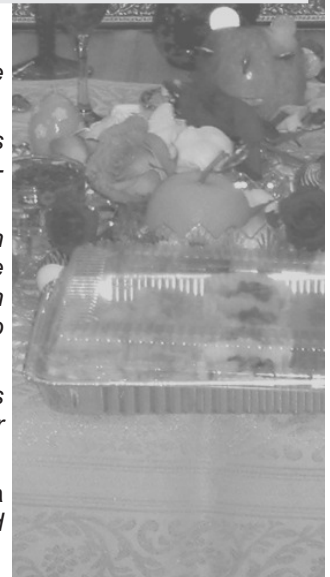
Hopefully this will be all behind us as we usher in Nowruz the harbinger of Spring, the season of vivid colors, gorgeous flowers and above all a period of joy and cheerfulness.

Iran celebrates the Nowruz over an extended period of two weeks. We Zarathushtis observe Nowruz as our pristine festival, combining our offerings to the Almighty with family get-togethers and festivities.

According to Jawaharlal Nehru – *'few people have been more closely related in origin than the people of India and Iran.. Iranians have greatly influenced India's life and culture over the last 25 centuries. We are bound by Community of Ideals and this bond is more enduring than Economic or Military Ties. We are two Old Civilizations which have immensely contributed to the Evolution of Human History'.*

Hence let us rejoice on this Happy Day so that our age old and treasured relationship is preserved and strengthened over the coming years. This can best be done through greater people to people contacts, exchange of scholars, trade missions and cultural events."

In his Welcome Address the Director of the Iran Culture House Mr. Mohammad Reza Mirzaei stated: *"On the occasion of Nowruz I convey my greetings to all the Iranis and*





N O W R U Z

Zarathushtis and to all who admire the Persian language and culture. Jamshedi Nowruz always has a very special significance for the Zarathushtis."

Guest of Honour Mr. Zarir Bhatena, Managing Partner of Hilla Builders said : *"May this New Year usher in amity and harmony amongst Parsi / Irani Zarathushtis in India and let rancor and discard be things of the past."*

Godrej N. Dotivala, Secretary General of the Indo-Iranian Friendship Society gave a discourse on the Universal Recognition of Nowruz , which falls each year on 21st March which happens to be the auspicious occasion of Vernal Equinox that is Equal Day and Equal Night. What is more, the Iranian Government even today recognizes it as the New Year Day.

Besides Iran, Navroze is celebrated in many other countries as well such as Iraq. Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In ancient Egypt too 21st March was marked as a day of rejoicing and it has been established by archaeologists that exactly at 12 noon on this day each year a shaft of light passes right through the Pyramid at Giza. For several millennia this unique phenomenon has been observed.

In our own land we find that the Festival of Spring is celebrated by the Hindus as Holi. South Indians call it Pongal and North Indians name it as Baisakhi. The Japanese herald Spring with the Chrysanthemum Festival.

The Iranian Consul General His Excellency Mr. Ali Mohammadi who was the Chief Guest of the evening dwelt on the significance of Nowruz in his Key Note Address: *"As we have been doing in the past, we have all gathered together to celebrate the age old festival of Nowruz. I take this opportunity to extend my best wishes and felicitations to you all. Nowruz is a festival of nature, not restricted to any nation, caste, creed or religion but belongs to the entire humanity and to each and every human being who wishes to experiment living in peace and tranquility."*

The grand finale was a soul stirring performance by Iranian Musicians.

Mr. Behram T. Dastur, Vice President of IIFS proposed a vote of thanks and the program concluded with a lavish spread, enjoyed by all.

NowRuz 2011 celebrations at Zoroastrian Centre London

Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) has been celebrating Jamsheedi NowRuz in London for the last 105 years! The oldest photograph in the archives of the ZTFE is of the Jamsheedi NowRuz Banquet dated **21st March 1906**, taken at the historic Café

Royal Restaurant in Regent Street, London with ZTFE President Dr Dadabhai Naoroji in the Chair together with Sir Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhownagree KCIE and Honorary Secretary N. J. Mulla, with the Guest of Honour Allan Octavian Hume, father of the Indian National Congress and the Persian Charge D' Affairs of Qajar Iran.

2011 was no exception! *The Foreign & Commonwealth Office Film Unit* was invited to film the celebrations which commenced with a celebratory Jashan, in the Zartoshty Brothers Hall, performed by our Ervad Sahebs followed by a Humbandagi. After the Jashan, President Malcolm M Deboo welcomed everybody wishing them a happy and prosperous NowRuz and also launched the *"Directory of Zoroastrians of UK and Europe 2011"*. It has become a tradition in ZTFE that the new edition of the Directory is launched on

Jamsheedi NowRuz. After the Jashan a Maachi ceremony was performed in the *Setayash Gah* followed by a 4 course sit down meal washed down





N O W R U Z

with liquid refreshments purchased from the licensed bar, dance and merriment all night long. A Haft sheen table was laid out for the occasion, organised by *Paridokht and Jamshid Falahati*, which included the customary bowl of *shaabzi*, gold fish and a glass of wine.

The Children's NowRuz party for the extra Young Zoroastrians (XYZs) organised by the Young Zoroastrians (YZs), and was held on Sunday 13th March in the Zartoshty Brothers Hall. Thanks to the "*Simin and Shahrokh Shahrokh NowRuz Children's Fund*", all the children up to 12 years of age get a special NowRuz gift from Amu NowRuz. Games and entertainment was organised for the XYZs by the YZs including tales from Iran of Amu NowRuz followed by lunch and a children's disco.

The *Panjeh* ceremony was held on Wednesday 16th March 2011 organised by Jamshid Falahati assisted by other Irani Zarathushtis. After the prayers everybody had a hot bowl of Aash and a bag of dried fruits and nuts.

On Saturday 26th March, a Jashan ceremony in the Zartoshty Brothers Hall followed by a Humbandagi to celebrate Shahenshai Ava Parabh and Khordad Sal, as both these festivals were on the same day. After the Jashan there was the screening of the award winning film; "*Spring Rites in and around the Fire Temple*", by Ali Attar of BBC Persian Service, depicting the NowRuz festivities in Taft and Yazd. A Gahambar meal was enjoyed by all, including inter faith guests, A Gahambar Fund had been set up over two decades ago by *Nahid and Bahman Mobed*, for the ZTFE to organise this annual event celebrating the birth anniversary of our beloved prophet Zarathushtra.

This year there was an additional event on Thursday 24th March 2011. *The Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC)* declared March 2011 as '*Celebrating RE Month*'. Since ZTFE is a member of the REC, it participated in a month long celebrations of religious education, commencing with a launch ceremony on Tuesday 1st March 2011 in the Houses of Parliament. Though many of the activities planned during this month took place within individual schools there were large national events in different parts of the country, including a three hour event at the Zoroastrian Centre on Thursday 24th March 2011, jointly organised by ZTFE and REC as part of their '*Celebrating RE Month*' and focused on the teaching of Zoroastrianism in English schools. It commenced by the

Ervads Sahebs lighting the atash and reciting the Atash Nyaish followed by several local schools in the London Borough of Harrow with their pupils from 7 – 16 who had visited the Zoroastrian Centre over the previous three months, making impressive presentations on Zoroastrianism including the 101 Names of Ahura Mazda. (photo left)

The Official Welcome was by The Mayor of Harrow and the Chair of Harrow Standing Advisory

Council on Religious Education (SACRE). with opening introductions by Professor Bill Gent of the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) and ZTFE President Malcolm M Deboo, while REC Chair Professor Brian Gates did the Closing Thanks. There was an invited audience of around 200 dignitaries from local government and council, interfaith networks, teachers and RE specialists The event received local media coverage and provided a great opportunity for children and young people of all faiths and their parents, SACRE and other faith community members and teachers to visit the Zoroastrian Centre and increase their awareness of the Zarathushti religion.





N O W R U Z

MANY EVENTS WERE HELD ACROSS THE CONTINENT, TO CELEBRATE NOWRUZ, THESE ARE JUST A FEW.

ALBERTA

Neelum Austin, the president of Zoroastrian Association of Alberta (ZAA) reports that a Nowruz Jashan was performed by Mobed Burzin Atashband, assisted by Arash Ardeshiricham. This was followed by a Frashokereti Song presented by the ZAA Calgary Chorus Group, to the music of Arthur Fiedler and The Boston Pops' version of The Age of Aquarius with lyrics by Firdosh Mehta. The singers were: *Ruby, Farsos and Vahbiz Balsara, Pervin Irani, Parvaneh & Kaykhosrow Javizian, Dina Khory, Firdosh Mehta, Shirin Modami, Bahar Salamaty, Nooshin Sohrabi-Sharifabad and Neelum Austin.*

There was also a Talent Show by the children: *Mahrin Atashband, Bryanna and Kavi Balsara, Rhiya Cooper, Cyrus Irani, Kashmira Irani and Asha Pooladi-Darvish.* The evening concluded with a dinner of Persian and Indian dishes.

CALIFORNIA NORTHERN-

SAN JOSE AND SAN FRANCISCO

On Sunday, March 20th a thanksgiving jashan was held at the Dar e-mehr in San Jose followed by a traditional lunch of dhan/dal patia and traditional sweets, brought by members of the community.

The Sunday School class of children under the guidance of their teacher Annahita Jasavala and their parents, prepared a 'haft-seen' table, with each child bringing an item for it. Everyone enjoyed being involved in growing their wheat sprouts and decorating the table.

On Saturday March 26th, the Fasli Khordad saal, a dinner dance for the community was held in a local restaurant. Over 250 persons attended and enjoyed meeting and greeting each other, while noshing on the appetizers. A group of ladies and children entertained the audience with the song "Spreading Peace and Love" which was composed for the 9th World Zoroastrian Congress.

Everyone ate, drank and danced the night away to the music of DJ Mehrdad, in true Zarathushti fashion.

CALIFORNIA SOUTHERN-

ORANGE COUNTY

On March 19th the Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC) community enjoyed a very pleasant, balmy California evening celebrating Nowruz in the company of friends and family in our (relatively) new ZAC hall in Orange, California. A crowd of 200+ were entertained by stand-up comic Sami Rustomji, who regaled us with entertaining anecdotes, followed by our very talented Danish Bhandara, dancing in true Bollywood style. The raffle of a stuffed Wells Fargo pony created a lot of excitement among young and old. (photo left)

The highlight of the evening was the delicious food and the evening ended with energetic ZAC youngsters dancing the night away. A very positive start indeed to a wonderful New Year !!

March 20th marking the arrival of "Nowruz", a Jashan was performed by 8 mobeds led by Ervad Zarrir Bhandara. An interesting presentation of the Haft-seen table by the children





NOWRUZ

from the ZAC community was followed by all the attendees holding hands and bringing in the new year with a "hambandagi".

March 26th was the day for a "double" celebration; it was the Khordad Sal according to the Fasli calendar and the Avan Parab according to the Shenshahi Calendar. An informative talk by Silloo Mehta was followed by delicious *Dhan-dar and kolmi-no-patiyo*, prepared by Sheila Madon.

Supervisor Mirkarimi Hosted the Persian Nowruz at San Francisco City Hall on thursday, March 31, 2011, from : 5:30-8 PM with musical entertainment, viewing of the Haft Seen and art work while sweetening the taste buds with traditional Persian sweets, fruit and tea.

The event was attended by San Francisco Mayor, Ed Lee, a host of supervisors and President Nazneen Spliedt



CHICAGO

Zarathushtis participate in 2nd Annual Nowruz Parade in downtown Chicago.

There was a good showing of Zarathushtis in the second annual Nowruz Parade in downtown Chicago on Saturday, March 26th. The group gathered at Daley Plaza at 11.15 a.m. for the start of the parade at 12 noon and walked down Dearborn, and up Clark Street, carrying two large banners -- a vinyl "Happy Nowruz" banner and a navy and silver Farohar made by Roshan Rivetna and Farida Khambatta. Thanks to all those who braved the cold Chicago winds to participate in the Parade: Darsi Cooper, Zenobia Damanian and son Ness on his scooter, Binaifer Darukhanawalla, Darius Jamsetjee, Hoshang Karani and Sabrina, Ariz and Mahazbeen Master, Dilshad Patel, Minoo and Cyrus Press, Jehan Rivetna, Rohinton Rivetna and Hooshmand Sharyari (in his "Proud to be a Zoroastrian shirt"), Thanks to Rohinton for coordinating the Zarathushti presence in the Parade. For more visit www.Chicago-Nowruz-Parade.org.



Nowruz was also celebrated at the Darbe Mehr on March 26 organized by Farida Sharyari. It started with prayers by Dastur Dr Kersey Antia, community award presented to Roxana Dubash with prayers, the singing of "I am proud to be a Zoroastrian" by ZAC young children, the singing by the Chicago Chorus of the Monajat written by Mani Rao, and then dancing to the sounds of the youth DJs Cyrus Pooniwalla and Darius Jamsetjee. The evening could not be complete without a beautiful Haft Seen table, beautiful spring flowers and delicious Persian food.



DENVER

The Zarathushtis of Denver celebrating Nowruz at the residence of Bucky and Navroz Amaria, (photo right)



VANCOUVER

Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia, celebrated at the Arbab Rustam Guiv Dar e Mehr, Burnaby, where hundreds of members visited the Dar e Mehr on Sunday March 20, 2011 to greet family and friends. Haft Seen table was beautifully arranged by volunteers. Light refreshments, fruits and cake were served. Amou NowRuz dressed in wonderful green outfit distributed gifts to children. Indeed a very memorable and fun filled evening. It was very heartening to see such a huge crowd consisting of seniors, adults, youth and children all having a good time and welcoming NowRuz with a zeal.





NOWRUZ



HOUSTON

Nowruz arrived at 6:20 p.m. in Houston, but as it was a working day, the Zarathushti community in Houston, Texas, celebrated the advent of spring heralding the new year with great fanfare on Sunday, March 27, 2011 at the Zoroastrian Cultural and Heritage Center.

Hambandagi was performed at the Center on March 21 evening with 150 devotees led in recitations from the Gathas by Ervad Peshotan Unwalla. In keeping with ancient Persian tradition,

50 days earlier, on January 29 *Jashan- e-Sadeh* ceremony was held with recitation of *Atash Niayesh* by four mobeds, led by Ervad Bomanshaw Sanjana followed by the lighting of a bonfire in the yard and subsequent dinner of selected Iranian dishes followed by dancing. Each year it is our small Iranian Zarathushti community that spearheads this event to whom we are very thankful. The write up with photograph of this function appeared in local Indo-Pak periodical. (Voice of Asia)

An amply supplied haft sheen table in the atrium greeted the guests before they proceeded to the main hall where tables of ten were laid out with humus, ajvar and nuts. 325 attendees were entertained before dinner to a song and dance spectacle: Vehishta Kaikobad's Sunday School group of the very young regally dressed, gave a haft sheen presentation to the lilting waltz of Strauss. Not to be outdone, seven experienced youngsters enthralled the audience to a diva dance and tiny Jesil Bharucha (photo left) did a magnificent solo to the music from an Indian movie. And, that's not all. Our melodious four teenagers (photo left below) captivated us with a modern song-dance routine and Behzad Irani and his team sang soothing Iranian songs to the accompaniment of a santoor and a dombak. The hushed audience broke out in rapturous applause after each performance.

Dinner was of Iranian dishes and dancing went on till late at night. What a delightful evening, a resounding success. *Contributed by Jehanbux R. Mehta on behalf of ZAH Executive Committee*



Other Events

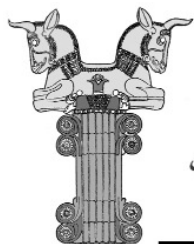
Persian Parades were held in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles.

Victoria & Albert Museum, and Iran Heritage Foundation (IHF) London, held a study day March 25th to celebrate this joyous holiday period with great cultural resonance. This study day introduced art, music and poetry from Iran with a special connection to the customs and history of Nowruz. *Dr Moya Carey is the IHF Curator of Iranian Art at the V&A.*

President Obama gave a special televised message to the People of Iran wishing them "Nowruz Mubarak".

Fire in the Heart – Celebrations in Azerbaijan
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=.x>

CORRECTION FEZANA JOURNAL Vol 25, No1 page 21
Congress 2000 Legacy (Zoroastrian Association of Houston)
Bahram Firozgary is the recipient of the
Cyrus Rohinton Desai Award
Zal Bhathena is the recipient of the
Congress 2000 Legacy Award.



Jamshid Foundation

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مهندس امینی سام

نوروز خجسته طپش قلب ایران سرفراز را به هم میهنان ارجمند شاد باش میگوئیم .
روز یکشنبه بیست و هفتم مارچ جشن جهانی نوروز مادر همه جشن های جهان در خیابان وست وود که چندین سال است به همت آقای بیژن خللی مدیر و صاحب شرکت کتاب این مراسم با شکوه با حضور ایرانیان بیشمار انجام میشود
در جشن باشکوه دیداری نمادی از فرهنگ ایرانی که دارای عنصر اصیل انسانی میباشد همراه با رنگهای زیبای رنگین کمان اوج خود را نشان میداد . ایرانیان از خرد و کلان از پیر و جوان با چهره های خندان و شاداب به یکدیگر نوروز کهن ترین یادگار جمشید شاه پیشدادی را شاد باش می گفتند ساز و آواز رقص و دایره زنگی حاجی فیروز به فضای خیابان رنگی با شکوه امید ، عشق ، دوستی ، آرمان ، آرزو ، پایداری ، پیوند ملی ، هم بستگی جهانی و احترام به بنیانگذاران این جشن فرخنده را نشان میداد سفره هفت سین که در مرکز خیابان گسترده بود و نمادی از پیوند ایرانیان را با طبیعت نشان میداد مانند خورشید و ماه و ستاره زیبائی داشت گل سرخ آن با سه رنگ سرخ ، زرد ، و بنفش رنگهای پرچم کاوه آهنگر را در ذهن ما تازه میکرد و گل لاله آن یاد آور جشن نوروز در تخت جمشید که نمایندگان استانها ایران بزرگ برای معرفی تولیدات کشاورزی و دست آوردهای خود گل لاله به دست که نشان شکوفگی بود می آمدند تا شادی را برابر گفته داریوش بزرگ که آفریده پروردگار جهان است
در نشان دهند " پروردگار بزرگ اهورا مزداست که آسمان را آفرید و زمین را آفرید و انسان را آفرید و شادی را آفرید " .
هفت امشاسپند ، هفت خوان رستم ، هفت اختر ، هفت چنار ، هفت خوان اسفندیار همانند هفت سین نوروزی در فرهنگ ایرانی تماماً جایگاه ویژه ای دارند . سه قاب از سبزه ها به نشان اندیشه نیک ، گفتار نیک و کردار نیک زیبا ترین پیام انسانی همراه با سیب ، سنجد ، سبزه ، سیر ، سرکه ، سمنو و سماق در خوان نوروز قرار دارند و همه در کنار آن چشم به راه هستند تا هنگام گردش سال فرا رسد و سال نو با رسیدن فروردین ماه آغاز شود .
ایرانیان در این روز باشکوه با وجود غم آوارگی در پیرامون سفره هفت سین بیاد ایران بودند و آرزوی شادمانی صلح برای مردم ایران داشتند .

ایران تا بوده نوروز بوده و تا ایرانی هست نوروز خواهد بود به امید روز که نوروز جشن جهانی بشود و از این راه آشتی و صلح آرزوی همگان باشد . بنیاد جمشید

3 / 27 / 2011

INITIATIVE FOR A UN DECADE OF INTERRELIGIOUS AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE, UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION FOR PEACE

Coalition for the “Initiative for a UN Decade of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace”.

HOMI GANDHI

PEACE IS A COMMON ASPIRATION FOR HUMANITY, A SHARED VALUE FOR RELIGIONS
AND A CORE GOAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS.



Photos above Participants at the 3rd meeting of the Coalition in Maryknoll, New York, on March 7-9, 2011. (List of names with affiliations at the end of the article)

The “Initiative for a UN Decade of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace (2011-2020)” was proposed in early 2008, 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.

In March 2009, a number of interfaith organizations, religious communities and value-based organizations came together at Maryknoll, New York, to promote the acceptance of this Initiative, and to constitute this Coalition. 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. The Steering Committee is responsible to co-ordinate the work of the Coalition. FEZANA was invited to participate at the Maryknoll conference, and Homi Gandhi represented FEZANA at that meeting. FEZANA became the founding member of the Coalition.

This coalition of religious and spiritual communities, faith-based and value-based organizations came together, to seek a partnership with the work of the United Nations. A “UN Decade of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace” was proposed as the vehicle for fostering such a partnership, as expressed in the following Vision:

VISION

The long-term vision of a United Nations Decade of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace is for a genuine and lasting peace that will be deeply rooted in diverse people’s spiritual beliefs and cultures as well as in the hearts of all human beings.

We seek a peace that is based upon:
equitable, caring and harmonious societies
respect for and adherence to human rights
respect for all manifestations of life, justice for all
economics of sharing rather than economics of
excess and greed,



INTERFAITH INTERALIA



Religions Working for Peace and Justice

the appreciation of people's cultural and spiritual diversity dialogue replacing all forms of violence for preventing and resolving conflicts care for Earth and sustainable development.

The second meeting of the Coalition was held in Melbourne, Australia, in November-December 2009, just prior to the *Fifth Parliament of World's Religions*. The meeting reviewed the Coalition's activities during the year and made a video presentation to the Parliament. Homi Gandhi attended both the second Coalition meeting and the 5th Parliament of World's Religions.

The idea of proclaiming a UN decade of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace was brought once again to the attention of the UN General Assembly (GA), due to start in September 2011. In preparation for the coming GA session, the UN Secretariat (DESA) started in late February 2011, a consultation with the UN member states asking for their views about proclaiming a "decade of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace". The results of this consultation will be included by the Secretary General in his report to the 66th session of the General Assembly on "Intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue".

The Coalition believes that such a decade would greatly enhance cooperation not only within and among religions, cultures and value-based communities but also among governments and United Nations agencies. The pursuit of this dream was discussed at the 3rd meeting of the Coalition in Maryknoll, New York, on March 7-9, 2011. A new Steering Committee was constituted and FEZANA was nominated to the Steering Committee of the Coalition. Homi Gandhi accepted FEZANA's nomination and represented FEZANA at the first meeting of the new Steering Committee at the conclusion of the Coalition meeting.

As of March 11, 2011 there are 68 faith-based and value-based organizations supporting the Decade Initiative and participating in the activities of the Coalition.

Homi D Gandhi is the co-ordinator of FEZANA Interfaith Activities Committee and Treasurer of Religions for Peace-USA Inc ,

Legend of photo on page 130

Front Row: Rev. Dr. Jean Ford ((CONGO-Geneva), Abdul Mukti (Muhammadiyah-Indonesia), Syed Naqvi (Interfaith International), Ishtar Adler (GWPF-Geneva),

Dr. John Taylor (IARF-Geneva), Doye on Park (World Buddhist International), Sister Anne McCarthy (Monastic Interreligious Dialogue), Sister Eileen Gannon (USG-Women's congregations), Homi Gandhi (FEZANA).

2nd Row: Ambassador Mussie Hailu (URI-Ethiopia), Rabbi Richard Marker (IJCIC), Dr. Gerardo Gonzalez (Executive Secretary, Faith Decade for Peace- Chile), Erik Larson (Brahma Kumaris Spiritual University).

3rd Row: John Solecki (UNHCR-NY), Vijay Kappur (East-West Cultural Organization) , Emily Chou (GFLP), Hannah Wallace (TonyBlairFaith Foundation-England), Daniella Raveh (TB Faith Foundation-USA), Beatriz Schulthess (CONGO-Geneva), Daniel Perell (Bahai International), Father Daniel Le Blanc (USG-Men's Congregations).

Last Row: Florence Kapoor (East-West Cultural Organization), Hiro Sakurai (Soka Gakkai International), Jane Wolfe (YWCA-Geneva), Azaria Ulmer (World Subud Assn), Rick Clugston (Earth Charte Initiative), Anne Whiteford (World Orgn, of Scout Movement-Geneva).

(For more details on the Coalition and its activities, please visit www.faithdecadeforpeace.net)

Letter to the Editor

The Editor,
FEZANA Journal

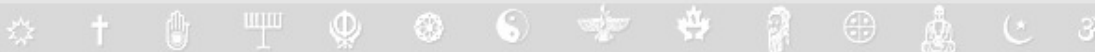
Dear Madam:

I was impressed with the December 2010 issue of the FEZANA JOURNAL, and kudos to you and your team to produce a world class magazine with articles on Ferdowsi's Shahnameh. Mr. K. Eduljee's informative and educative article as also his Heritage website is always a pleasure to read. May I suggest that Mr. Eduljee be encouraged to write an article in each issue of Fezana Journal. Frankly I found it hard to put down this issue without reading it from beginning to end.

*Ervad Jal M. Panthaki.
Montreal, Canada.*



INTERFAITH INTERALLIA



Religions Working for Peace and Justice



**64th Annual UN Department of Public Information
Non-Governmental Organizations Conference**
Bonn, Germany • 3-5 September 2011

COMMIT • ENCOURAGE • VOLUNTEER

As a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) in Consultative status with the Economic and Social Council [ECOSOC] and the Department of Public Information [DPI] of the United Nations, FEZANA, the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America is invited to participate in the Annual NGO Conference.

This premier NGO worldwide forum provides participants networking opportunities to collaborate with like minded individuals in formulating actionable agendas which can be implemented on return to their home countries at the local level.

**The theme for the conference in Bonn, Germany, from 3rd to 5th September 2011 is:
SUSTAINABLE SOCIETIES; RESPONSIVE CITIZENS**

More details at:

<http://www.accessinitiative.org/sites/default/files/64th%20UN%20Conference%20-%20INFO%20SHEET%201.pdf>

Costs for travel, visas and hotel stay at the venue of the conference shall be the responsibility of the participant. More about how the United Nations and its various arms work to engage civil society are available at www.un.org

The fifty-sixth session of the COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN will take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from Monday, 27 February to Friday, 9, March 2012.

THEMES

PRIORITY THEME

The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges

REVIEW THEME

Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women (agreed conclusions from the fifty-second session)

Zarathushtis interested in participating, in the **Bonn conference and/or the New York conference** are required to send in their curriculum vitae, and a letter explaining how they see themselves furthering the mission and vision of the United Nations to Co-Chairs of the FEZANA UN-NGO committee

Afreed Mistry, afreed.mistry@gmail.com, **Homi D Gandhi** homidgandhi@gmail.com,
Behram Pastakia bpastakia@aol.com



**Commission on the
Status of Women**

Personal Profiles

A legacy of great food! Nargis Rohinton Jasavala

Teenaz Javat

"We came away with whatever we could carry with us. We sneaked out in the dead of night-carefully, quietly, so that no one would hear us. It is tough to keep five small children quiet for any length of time. Tough to explain to them that we cannot take anything with us and that we should be grateful that we are simply alive."

So in the dead of night in 1968 Rohinton and Nargis Jasavala gathered their kids *Rayomand, Farshogar, Jehanbuksh, Yesna and Hutoxi* and left a lifestyle in Zanzibar, which no matter how hard they tried, they could never manage to reclaim for the rest of their life.

Sitting in her wing chair, her walker besides her, Mrs. Jasavala poignantly recalls her life in Zanzibar (an island off the East coast of Africa) and seldom in the course of the interview do her eyes remain dry.

"My father Ratanshaw Bulsara was the editor of Adel-e- Insaaf a local newspaper in Zanzibar. We had good standing in society and although not very rich we were comfortable. The Parsi community was thriving under the British protectorate and the Parsi Agiary was the hub of all activity," she adds.

However, the future did not hold much promise. Soon after the British left in 1964, all foreigners were told to leave Zanzibar. The island gained independence from Britain in December 1963 as a constitutional monarchy. A month later, was the bloody Zanzibar Revolution, in which thousands of Arabs and Indians were killed and thousands more expelled. The revolution led to the establishment of the *Republic of Zanzibar and Pemba*. In April 1964 the republic was subsumed by the mainland former colony of Tanganyika. This United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar was soon renamed the *United Republic of Tanzania*, of which Zanzibar remains a semi-autonomous region.

Eight months pregnant with her fifth child, the young Nargis was sent away to India in an attempt to keep the family safe. *"Four kids in tow I left Zanzibar first for Dar-e-Salem then onto Nairobi, then to Egypt and at last to India...what a journey it was. I delivered in a month of reaching India and was totally stressed out."*

In an attempt to hang on to his job at the British cable and wireless company Rohinton Jasavala stayed on in Zanzibar. In fact, after his youngest child Hutoxi was born in India, he called the family back to Zanzibar thinking that things would improve after the revolution, as moving around with five kids had its challenges.



"So I came back," says Mrs. Jasavala. *"Where can you go with 5 kids. Nobody will keep you for long?"*

The family decided to ride out the revolution under the hope that things might calm down. Only when it was just not possible to continue, did they leave for the United States. They settled in Philadelphia where Mrs. Jasavala worked as a teacher's aid and her husband in Western Union.

In 1972 on her brother's insistence, the family left the rough neighbourhood in Philadelphia and moved to Canada and settled in Mississauga, Ontario. And it is here that the seeds of the legendary business took root.

Bringing up five kids was hard even a generation ago and having learnt to cook at her mother-in-law's house Mrs. Jasavala started cooking dar-ni-pori, batasas, vasanoo in addition to taking party orders for meals.

"I used to cook for seven on a daily basis, so cooking a bit more was not such a big deal." One to recognize great food, the Parsis in the Greater Toronto Area responded by overwhelming her with food orders to an extent that soon she was cooking out of a rented kitchen in Etobicoke.

The Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) came on board and soon they were regularly asked to cater to Nowruz and papeti functions for over 300 people.

"We made sure we were never short of food and never till today has my food ever gone bad. We were known for our quality," she adds.

Personal Profiles

Pesh and Zarine Patel would drive in from Sarnia (3 hours southwest of Toronto) for her food. *"We just felt a trip into Toronto is not complete without a visit to Mrs J's kitchen. We would load up our cold box with as much as we could fill. Her Parsi sev and chicken chops, they almost melted in you mouth,"* recalls Zarine who now lives in Oakville.

In 1996 when the Patels had their childrens' navjote at the Dar e Mehr in Toronto, 30 extra people landed up and it was then that they realized that had it not been for Mrs. Jasavala rising to the occasion, the function would have been a disaster.

"She stood up to the occasion and catered graciously to all," recalls a grateful Zarine.

"Several clients would find my food expensive, but we had to maintain quality and that comes at a cost," she adds.

In 2004, 28 years after setting up her first kitchen she called it quits. The mother of 5 and grandmother of 10 found it hard to continue.

The aging couple was finding it increasingly hard to continue. Cooking is extremely labour intensive and as

the business grew they had to hire help, which would eat into their profit margin.

"It was just too much work. So we decided to throw in the towel," says Mrs. Jasavala.

While Mrs. Jasavala enjoyed her retirement, Rohinton did not take it well. *"The business was his pride and joy,"* she adds wiping away a few tears. *"He was lonely and did not know what to do with his time. When we were running the business he would be up at the crack of dawn going to wholesale markets to buy groceries, sorting it and then helping in the cooking. He missed his work a lot."*

Mr. Jasavala did not live long to enjoy his retirement. He passed away of cancer in 2009. Mrs. Jasavala still lives in the family home in Oakville surrounded by fond memories of a hard life well lived.

Teenaz Javat is a journalist living in Mississauga, Ontario. She works for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), teaches journalism at Sheridan College, Oakville and freelances for newspapers and magazines in Canada and abroad. She can be reached at teenazjavat@hotmail.com



*"By Thy perfect Intelligence, O Mazda
Though didst first create us having bodies and spiritual consciences,
And by Thy Thought gave our selves the power of thought, word, and
deed.*

Thus leaving us free to choose our faith at our own will."

Ahunuvaiti Gatha- Yasna 31, Ha 11 - Translation by DJ Irani

"Compliments of Nawaz and Hoshi Merchant"





The First Vendidad Sade and Baj in NA at a Dar-e-Meher Inauguration, and Enthronement of Dadgah in the ZANT Brand New Built From Scratch ZCNT (Zoroastrian Center of North Texas) April 29-30 2011!

Ervad Soli P. Dastur

BACKGROUND

At the FEZANA AGM in Dallas in 2007, I first saw the dreams and plans of ZANT (Zoroastrian Association of North Texas) for building a brand new Dar-e-Meher in their Zoroastrian Center of North Texas (ZCNT) in Dallas. And I instantly made a pledge that I will be there to celebrate their Center's opening! And with the grace of Ahura Mazda and with the blessings of Pak Iranshah, Jo Ann and I were so fortunate to attend this inauguration with the prayers of the *Vendidad Sade and Baj* performed the first time in a NA Dar-e-Meher inauguration!

Over the years, I have been in contact with Firdosh Mehta and my good fellow Mobed friend Ervad Poras Balsara as regards their Dar-e-Meher installation, what prayers to perform, etc. We contacted Dasturji Dr Feroze Kotwal, Ervad Dr. Ramiyar Karanjia, London ZTFE President Malcolm Deboo and my fellow Mobed Rustom Bhedwar of ZTFE, and others to learn from their experiences and to seek advice and guidance for these ceremonies!

After a number of false starts, I received an email from Poras in Mumbai that the inauguration is finally set to be on April 28th Friday morning with the Vendidad Sade prayers starting after mid-night, followed by a Baj next day in the morning and the inauguration Jashan and Dadgah installation in the afternoon. I had to change my plans to arrive in Sarasota on Tuesday 26th from Mumbai and to Dallas the next day! So, here we were at the Center on Wednesday helping out with the next day prayers!

VENDIDAD SADE PRAYERS

The first ever Vendidad prayers were performed by Mobed Poras Balsara, Mobed Yazdi Dastur, grandson of late Vada Dasturji Ferozeji Dastoor of Udwada, both from Dallas and myself.. We started the prayers around 12:20 AM with the participation of about 35 local ZANT members and were very happy and relieved to complete all the 22 Fargarads of Vendidad by 6:10 AM! About 25 ZANT members were still there to see the completion.

It was the first Vendidad Sade by me after some 60 years when I became Martab in Pak Iranshah! I prepared for this by going over the prayers in Udwada, as well as at over 30,000 ft. in the planes coming from Mumbai! A great way to be closer to Ahura Mazda!



Three Mobeds praying Vendidad. Sagar keeping the fire burning! Three Mobeds putting loban at the end!

BAJ PRAYERS OF SAROSH YAZAD

In the morning of Saturday April 30th, we started the *Sarosh Baj* prayers, performed by myself. The first ever *Baj ceremony* may have been performed by my brother Mobed Palanji P. Dastoor, Panthaki of JD Colaba Agiary in Mumbai, in May 1986 in the home of Roshan and Pervaze Rabadi in Toronto at the occasion of *Varadh Pattar* for their son Neville's wedding. Also, Mobed Gustad Panthaki has performed Baj ceremony in OZCF Dar-e-Meher during Mukhtad Days. However, this is the first time in NA that a Baj ceremony is performed for a new Dar-e-Meher inauguration! There were about 50 ZANT members to witness this ceremony.



Making of the Pavi. The complete Baj ceremony layout. Soli performing Baj. Poras, Pearl, Jo Ann & Soli.

INAUGURATION JASHAN

In the afternoon, at about 4:15 PM, under the leadership of Ervad Poras Balsara, the inauguration Jashan was performed with 6 other Mobeds: the youngest *Ervad Burzin Balsara, son of Poras, Yazdi Dastur, Cyrus Dastur, Zubin Kotwal, Hormuzd Karkaria, and myse,f*. The Jashan was performed with 5 kardas.

DADGAH INVESTITURE

After the Jashan, the fire in the Afargaanyu was led by the Mobeds in a solemn procession to the sanctum sanctorum and was transferred to the main Afargaanyu in the Dadgah. 6 sandalwood pieces were used for the first Maachi arranged over the transferred embers. Then all seven Mobeds participated in the first Boi ceremony performed by Ervad Poras with the recitation of *Atash Nyayesh, Doa Naam Setaayashne and Doa Tandoorasti!*



The start of the Jashan. The seven Mobeds and the fabulous fruits etc. spread! The attentive children!

The first 3 peel of the bell created a magical moment with many a wet eyes in the prayer hall! The outside weather was cloudy throughout the Jashan ceremony but just about the time when the Mobeds were able to set the fire ablaze, the sun burst through with its wonderful golden rays right on the fire which created a surreal atmosphere to be remembered by all present! Someone up above was showering HIS blessings to this new wonderful Dadgah! The 7 mobeds around the afarganyu are from left Ervads Yazdi Dastur, Soli Dastur, Zubin Kotwal, Hormuz Karkaria, Burzin P. Balsara, Poras T. Balsara, Cyrus K. Dastur (in glasses).

Almost 150 ZANT members attended the Jashan and the Dadgah Investiture as well as the dinner.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

In our 45 years together, Jo Ann and I have been very fortunate to have uplifting moments in our lives! However, our participation in this inauguration and my personal involvement in all the prayers will always be with us as one of the most uplifting moments in our lives! We want to thank Dadar Ahura Mazda for allowing us to witness this as well as the whole ZANT community who has adopted us both as one of their own and we bow our heads to all of them in humility and gratitude for allowing us to be one of them! We pray that this center will bring this wonderful



Jashan Atash carried to Dadgah! Poras transferring Atash to main Afarganyu. Mobeds bathed by sunlight

community together as one, for ever in HIS service and prosper and achieve all that they want to for their wonderful community and the ZCNT!

FINAL PRAYER

In the last Para of Atash Nyayesh, "*Upa-thwa hakhshoit geush vanthwa*", the fire blesses the devotee who brings an offering (sukhad, incense, etc.) to him.

"Unto thee (i.e.in thy family) may the flock of cattle increase - have ample means. Unto thee may there be an increase of heroic men (sons having heroic strength) – Blessed with many worthy sons! May thou have an active mind (may thou be clever and intellectual) – Endowed with active and alert mind! May thy life be active (may thou perform benevolent and virtuous deeds) – Spending the life for others! Mayest thou live a joyous life – Enjoying life of larger interests! Those nights that thou livest. This is the blessing of the Fire (for him) who brings to that fire dry fuel! "

May these blessings of the ZANT Dadgah Fire be bestowed upon all ZANT families and all the FEZANA families so that we all help to spread the knowledge of our beautiful religion among all our fellow Zarathushtis and to all with whom we come in contact!

Atha Jamyaat, Yatha Aafrinaami! (May it be so that I wish!).

On December 20, 2010, *Zaal Panthaki* of Norwood, Massachusetts, son of Firoza and Ervad Farhad Panthaki, and brother of Sanaya, completed the Navar ceremony at the Malcolm Baug Agiary in Mumbai, India, under the guidance of Ervad Keki Panthaki. Zaal learned the prayers for the ceremony over a period of two years. In preparation for the ceremony, he stayed at the Agiary for 24 days maintaining the disciplined schedule and learning the prayers required for performing of the Yazashne ritual. The Navar ceremony was attended by over 120 family members and friends. Ervad Zaal will continue his journey towards learning more about religious ceremonies and join his father and other priests in serving the Zarathushti community.



Milestones

A Celebration of Coomi Nariman Munshi Recently turned 101 Years!

By Farah Mahrukh Coomi Shroff
Vancouver, BC

Our wonderful Granny was born on April 10, 1910 in Baruch. She was the eldest of 12 kids and spent much of her childhood raising them. When she grew up she was determined to have a small family and educate herself and all the kids. Being very bright, she had been forced to stay home to help with child raising and she regretted not being the doctor she had aspired to become all her life.

In her early 20s, she met a distant relative and they fell in love. She speaks very very fondly of her Nariman, to this day. Love marriage was not altogether common in her era but he was a Parsi from a good family so there were no objections. They had 4 boys, spaced 2 years apart, starting soon after marriage. Her husband really wanted a girl so they kept going until their Rani was born; her real name was Mahrukh—our mom. That gave them 5 kids and they were happy. Her husband's work took them to various parts of India and she enjoyed getting to know the country well. She told me how Mamavaji would come home from work, first calling her name "Molly! Molly" (his nickname for her) and they would spend the rest of the evening together. Being so deeply in love, it was a huge tragedy when her husband was murdered by one of his factory workers who was an alcoholic and had been demoted by Nariman.

The whole family, including Granny, was in a state of shock from the death of their powerful patriarch. They just couldn't believe that he was dead. Life became challenging and Motamai (as she is known by her siblings) became a single mother at age 42, fending for her children ranging in age from 12-18 years. The eldest ones were earning and Granny somehow managed to keep heart and soul together in her grief.

She lived a full and hearty life, in her fifties, becoming a grandmother and loving this role. As her eldest grandchild I remember her lovely lullabies, proverbs, stories and most of all, her encouragement. She'd tell me to "Shine out!" even though I wasn't a boy and thus would have some hurdles. She told me that I could do anything I wanted to. We were very lucky that she spent many years in Canada with us so I know her well. We enjoyed

watching her teach English to some new immigrants from Japan!

She is hale and fit well into her centurion days, walking every day. She garnered the attraction of men as she maintained her good looks into her senior years.

We've all heard the story of how her fiery anger took over one day and she wound up and slapped one of her male in-laws in public, causing quite a stir! Granny was also the consummate market woman. She could bargain like nobody's business! She enjoyed the friendly to and fro verbal fracas.

Many have wanted to know Granny's secret for making it to such a ripe old age. There don't appear to be many of the age old maxims like "eat very healthy food" or "don't eat too much". Granny loves her food—lots of it! She would eat cakes of butter in a few bites and late at nite she'd sneak into the kitchen to eat pastries that the family had denied her a few hours earlier. She used to be quite roly poly and super active. She inspired us all with her hard work.

With such love, she helped to raise many of her grandchildren and currently lives with 4 generations under one roof! She is indeed the roots of a huge and sturdy tree.



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M I L E S T O N E S

FEBRUARY 15, to May 15, 2010

BIRTHS

Dario Robin Mirossini, a boy, to Mehrdad Mirossini and Morvarid Eftakari, grandson to Simin Dokht Eftakari in Toronto, ONT on October 26, 2010.

Darya Sophie Bald, a girl, to Ruby Panthaky and Michael Bald, sister to James, granddaughter to Mary and late James Bald and Jai and Noshir Panthaky in Toronto, ONT on November 16, 2010.

Lukas Dante Ayoup, a boy, to Firuza and Robert Ayoup, brother to Ethan, grandson to Mehroo and Rohinton Chothia, and Ray and Gwen Ayoup, great-grandson to Dhun and Yasmin Bhaya, and nephew to Rayomand and Sandra Sattha in Ajax, ONT on February 1, 2011.

Ryaan, F C Morena, (below) a boy to Cyra Contractor Morena and Farzin Morena, grandson to Houtoxi and Farhad Contractor and Late Dolly and Sam Morena, nephew to Rayomand Morena, Laila Contractor and Homi Bodhanwala in Mission, Viejo, CA on February 23, 2011.



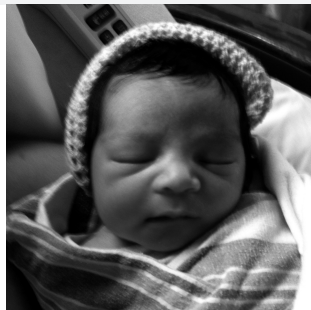
Kayaan (below) and Karl Panthaki twin boys to Ervad Dr Zubin and Dimple Panthaki, grandsons to Dr Nergish and Ervad Jal Panthaki (Montreal) and Hoofrish and Satish Hirji (Mumbai) in Miami, Florida, on February 14, 2011.



Kamran, a boy, to Aseena and Damon Kade, brother to Ashdin, grandson to Avan and Jehangir Shroff in Houston, TX on February 17, 2011.

Ariana, a girl, to Zia and Rustom Anklesaria, sister to Shireen, in Houston, on March 2, 2011.

RiZaal Hormusji Manuel T. Wadia, a boy, to Hormuz Parvez Wadia and Jennifer Grace T. Wadia, brother to Rayana Brielle T. Wadia, grandson to Parvez Hormusji Wadia and Dilnavaz P. Wadia, and Plaridel Palma Tordilla and Gertrudes Navalta Tordilla in Tampa, FL on March 25, 2011. (below)



Ava Ogra, a girl, to Anahita and Ferozshaw Ogra, granddaughter to Aban and Keki Daryushnejad and Farida and Nusserwanji Ogra, neice to Kamran and Kaivan Daryushnejad, in Richmond Hill, Ontario, on April 5, 2011.

Rashna Asmaan Sarkari, a girl, to Hutoxi (Damania) and Marazban Sarkari, granddaughter to Pervin and Minocheher Damania of Mumbai, and late Manecksha and Arnavaz Sarkari of Mumbai in West Chester, Pennsylvania, on April 13, 2011. (below)



NAVJOTES

Anaita Wadia, daughter of Kaikhushroo and Jasmine Wadia (Toronto, ONT) in Mumbai, India on November 7, 2010.

Varun and Malcolm Shroff, sons of Ruzbe and Zarir K. Shroff, of Toronto, in Mumbai, India on December 17, 2010.

Sarosh Vaccha, son of Rustom and Baktavar (Fremont, CA) on December 31, 2010.

Malcolm Darikhanawalla, son of Nash and Anahita (Fremont, CA) on February 2011.

WEDDINGS

Farzad Rahnamoon, son of Manijeh and Fariborz Rahnamoon (North Vancouver, BC), brother of Mehraban and Farhad Rahnamoon to Atousa Mojangi, daughter of Manijeh and Farhad Mojangi in Yazd, Iran on October 2, 2010.

Farhad Mistry, son of Roshan and Dinyar Mistry (Langley, VA) to Shireen Panthakee, daughter of Behroze and Dinyar Panthakee (Singapore) in Udwada, India on December 26, 2010.

Rashna Ghadialy (Chicago, IL) to Dr. Rohinton Karanjia (Wilmington, DE) on Dec 28, 2010.

Neville Bharucha, son of Roshan and Jimmy Bharucha to Jaclyn Gesualdi, daughter of Angela Ehst and John Gesualdi in Philadelphia, PA on December 31, 2010.

Firdosh Khambatta, (Dallas) son of Shahnaz and Viraf Khambatta to Shireen Irani, daughter of Aban and Khodabad Irani, in Mumbai, on March 24, 2011.

Michelle Berana, daughter of Sherry and Eddie Berana to Robert Heider in Sugarland, TX on March 19, 2011.

DEATHS

Maneck Khambatta, husband of late Katy Khambatta, father of Rati, grandson of late Dastoorji Dr. Maneckji Dhalla, grandfather of

- Jason and Jamie in Toronto, ONT on December 3, 2010.
- Hoshang Kasad, 90, husband of Coomi Kasad, father of Khurshed Kasad (Detroit, MI) and Mehernosh Kasad (Richmond, BC), father-in-law of Zenobia and Sherna, grandfather of Cherag, Karishma, Farzad and Nazneen in Navsari, India on December 13, 2010.
- Eruch Mohta, husband of late Dolly Mohta, father of Mahrukh Aspi Irani (Dahanu, India) and Firuzee Parvez Pooniwalla, grandfather of Karina Pooniwalla in Toronto, ONT on December 18, 2010.
- Firoze Rabadi husband of Perviz, father of Behroze and Rashna, brother of Pervaze Rabadi (Brampton) in Nagpur, India on December 31, 2010.
- Roshan Minoo Narielvala, mother of Farida Sarosh Aibara, Ferozy Sam Chapgar, Farhad Minoo Narielvala, grandmother of Cyrus and Sanaeya Aibara, Varun and Viraf Chapgar, Jehan and Meher Narielvala in Toano, VA on January 15, 2011.
- Piloo Cooper, mother of Zenobia Guzder (Houston, TX) and Khurshid Vakil, mother-in-law of Jal Guzder, grandmother of Karmin and Deena Guzder, Darius and Cyrus Vakil in Mumbai, India on January 23, 2011.
- Whabiz D. Merchant, 64, wife of David G. Nether, daughter of Dinaz and Dinshaw Merchant, sister of Hoshang D. Merchant, sister of Maharoukh D. Merchant and Arnavaz D. Merchant in Chicago, IL on January 27, 2011.
- Deena Mistry, mother of Farhad Mistry (Houston, TX) and Afshad Mistry (San Jose, CA), grandmother of Tasha and Jamsheed, aunt of Tanaz Sunawala in Karachi, Pakistan on January 27, 2011.
- Khurshed Jemi Sidhwa (ex-Karachiite), husband of Sooni (Minwalla), father of Cyra and Neville in Toronto, ONT on February 2, 2011.
- Mehli Birdie, husband of Rati Birdie, father of Karen and Cami, brother of Mehru, Freny, late Khorshed (India) and Nergiz Birdie (Toronto, ONT) in Mumbai, India on February 5, 2011.
- Parvin Zartoshty, 77, wife of late Rostam Zartoshty, mother of Manoucher, Parviz, and Bahram Zartoshty, and Mehrbanoo Behrooz in West Vancouver on February 7, 2011.
- Farida Rumi Khambatta, 59, wife of Rumi Edul Khambatta, mother of Maya Purvez Iani, Delnaz, and Gulnar, sister of Dinyar and Cyrus Irani, sister-in-law of Mehra Hansotia (Mississauga, ONT) in Vancouver, BC, on February 10, 2011.
- Coomi Ardeshir Engineer, 94, mother of Yezdi (Roshan) Engineer (Houston, TX), late Percy (Rita) Engineer (Boca Raton, FL), grandmother of Michelle (Ron) Patel (Toronto, Canada), Percy Engineer, (Midlands, TX) and Rehan Engineer (Dallas, TX), and great-grandmother of Shanaya Patel and Brandon Patel (Toronto) in Houston, Texas, on February 13, 2011.
- Doulat Hoshang Aga, mother of Hutoshi and Cyrus Irani (Toronto, ONT), Aramaity and Sanjiv Shukla, (Montreal, QUE) and Cyrus and Piloo Aga (Mumbai, India) in Mumbai, India on February 16, 2011.
- Godrej Khursigara, husband of Soonnu Khursigara, father of Scherazade Danny Birdie and Natasha Khursigara, grandfather of Mehroo Birdie in Mississauga, ONT on February 19, 2011.
- Viloo Bharucha, wife of late Maneck Bharucha, mother of Daraius (Dilnaaz) Bharucha, grandmother of Kaipa and Pahlav (Ajax, ONT) in Mumbai, India on February 26, 2011.
- Parvin Foroudi, 58, wife of Farrokh Irani, sister of Khosrow, Manoucher, Behzad and Farkhondeh Foroudi, sister-in-law of Shahnaz Namiranian and Timi Irani (London, U.K) in Vancouver, BC on February 27, 2011.
- Nergis Adi Unwalla, 82, wife of Ervad Adi Jehangirji Unwalla, mother of Daraius (Kristen Runke) and Shehnaz, grandmother of Alexis, Simone, Madeline and Victoria, daughter of late Ervad Pestonji and Meherbanoo Unwalla of Bangalore, sister of Banoo Sidhwa and late Dasturji Nadirshah, Fram, Jamshed, Gul, Piloo and Dhun Motafaram, in Marlton, New Jersey, on March 11, 2011.
- Zenia Tushad Mehta, wife of Tushad Mehta, daughter of Khorshed and Dara Daruwalla, sister of Mehernaz Mistry, daughter-in-law of Coomi and Kersi Mehta, sister-in-law of Farzeen Mehta-Pal in Chicago, IL on March 13, 2011.
- Joli Rusi Bharucha, wife of Late Rusi N. Bharucha (Mumbai), mother of Sunnie Gustad Irani (Mumbai) Jasmine Kersi Chesson (Richmond Hill, Ontario), and grandmother of Zubin, Cherag, Jamie and Jennifer, in Mumbai, on March 16, 2011.
- Ervad Hormuzd Faramroze. Andhjarujina age 55 Son of (Late) Ervad Faramroze Jamshedji Andhjarujina, (Late) Austi Perviz Faramroze Andhjarujina. Brother of Havovi Faredoon Minwalla and Darayus Faramroze Andhjarujina. Brother-in-law to Faredoon M. Minwalla of Brampton, Uncle (Mama) to Narius, Farishtae (karachi) & Nasha F Minwalla. (Brampton), in Karachi on Friday March 18th, 2011.
- Aktar Nasrabadi, mother of Loharasp Nasrabadi (Shanavaz), grandmother of Arzoo, Aramaity and Sam in Livermore, CA on March 24, 2011.
- Sabar Bulsara, sister of Russi Bulsara in Toronto, ONT on March 24, 2011.
- Adil Panthakee, husband of Perin Panthakee, father of Farokh and Aimi, brother of Dara, Dinyar and Zareen Tamboli in Toronto, ONT on March 27, 2011.
- Jal R Choksi, 79, husband of Shehnaz, father of Anjali,

Rustum and Jehangir, in Montreal, Que, on March 30, 2011.

Sylla Framji, wife of late Adi Framji, sister of Khorshid Jobani (Toronto, ONT) and aunt of Gulrukh Patel and Adil and Dara Anary in Pune, India on April 1, 2011.

Dolly Jain, mother of Deepak Jain (California) aunt of Arnavaz Jamshed Dhabhar (Mississauga), in Billimora, Gujarat, on April 4, 2011.

Faraidun K. Aidun, husband of Manijeh Aidun, father of Mina and Farzad Aidun in Reston, VA on April 8, 2011.

Homai H. Mistry, mother of Kernaaz (Kersi) Engineer, in Florida on April 10th. 2011.

Hutoxi Pallan Ichaporia, wife of Pallan Ichaporia, mother of Burjor, Farida, Aban, Mani and Rashna, sister of Freny Pilcher, Katy Patel and Mehroo Pinheiro, in Reading, Pennsylvania, on April 11, 2011.

Noshir Jamsetjee, 84, father of Bachi (Boman) Damkevala, Rumi (Kashmira) Jamsetjee, grand father of Diana (Rohinton) Gazdar, Zarine (Mehrab) Deboo, Persis (Burjis) Sidhwa, Darius, Roshni and Tanaz Jamsetjee, great grandfather of Natasha and Kashmira Gazdar, in Chicago, on May 9, 2011.

NERGIS UNWALLA 1929-2011

ONE OF THE BEST PARSI COOKS IN NORTH AMERICA, PASSES AWAY

Nergis Unwalla, beloved wife of Adi Unwalla and mother of Daraius and Shehnaz Unwalla, passed away on March 11, 2011 at the age of 82.

She was many things to many people.

She was not only our mother but was a surrogate mom and a matriarch to all of our many cousins who immigrated to the US and Canada after we did.

She was one of the best Parsi cooks in North America. She along with her sister-in-law Nergish Karanjia and with help from their friend Kamal Desai coauthored one of the most popular books on Parsi Indian cooking available today. ***An Adventure in Exotic Parsi Indian Cooking*** by Nergish Karanjia and Nergis Unwalla. Ask one of your friends. They probably own a copy and use it all the time.

She had very definite political views and always made sure she voiced them. She was a lifelong democrat and eloquently argued her political viewpoints with her children who are lifelong republicans.

She majored in English and French in college and gave tuitions to many school children while in India and became a teacher's assistant when we came to the United States in 1970.

She always wanted to be a paralegal and went back to school in her 50's and became one. She was hired by Cigna Insurance immediately upon graduation because of her top-notch grades. While working as a paralegal she continued to teach under privileged children how to master the basics of reading in her spare time.

Over the last few years our mom lost her battle to Alzheimer's disease. The disease slowly took her memory but it had no chance at taking her inner happiness. She was too strong for that to happen. She smiled and laughed and kept her wonderful personality till the end.



The night before she passed she called for her mother and father to come and take her away. She died peacefully in her sleep the next night.

May god bless her, always watch over her and give her eternal peace of Garothman Behest.

Her grieving family.

Matrimonials

Male, 24, MS in hospitality management from Baltimore International College, working as director of Food and Beverage Department at a Holiday Inn in New Jersey. Enjoys outdoor activities, sports, music, collecting coins/stamps and movies. Contact mother in Mumbai at dynamic.dinoo@gmail.com [M11-3].

Female 23, residing in Mumbai, doctor by profession (MBBS), seek matrimonial alliance from well-educated and settled, good natured men, under 30 years, living in North America. Contact totalsol@vsnl.net or call aunt in USA at (781) 769 5309. [F11-4].

Female, 38, 5' 4", MA in psychology and clinical social work, working at a clinic in New York City, as a clinician. Contact apny769581@gmail.com. [F11-5].

Female, 29, very pretty, MS in Finance and Marketing, working in Mumbai for Fashion and Lifestyle publications. Very sociable, from a very well-established, professional family in Mumbai. Enjoys music and traveling. Willing to settle abroad. Contact Management1@cdcuniverse.com or call Mumbai +91 98 2002 6822. [F11-7].

Male, 29, 5' 7", Masters in Management Information Systems, working as a Technology Analyst at a noted Consulting company in Texas. Enjoys trekking, outdoors and traveling. Contact fredbest007@gmail.com. [M11-8].

Male, 42, 6' 3", originally from Karachi and Iran, currently living in Brooklyn, NY. Involved in his own business (restaurants and construction company) for over 13 years. Fluent in several languages. Non-smoker and non-drinker, with high family values. Contact bijan100@gmail.com. [M11-9].

Female, 30, A degree in web development, living in USA with her parents. Very pretty, happy spirited, loving and easy to get along with. Interested in meeting a loving, smart, understanding man from North America. Contact: heavenly_destiny81@yahoo.com or call (717) 795 8143. [F11-10].

Female, 30 Chartered Accountant from Mumbai. Professionally well-placed with a multi-national company. Currently on a two year assignment on the U.S. east coast. Good natured, well traveled, family oriented and enjoys music and reading. Parents invite correspondence from professionally qualified, well-settled and good natured Parsi boy between 30-35 years of age, preferably from India, settled in the U.S. Contact mbmb5678@gmail.com. [F11-22].

Female, 31, with modern outlook, looking for an educated Parsee boy with similar interests as me. I have a Bachelors degree in Music from England and a Post Graduate diploma in primary school teaching from New Zealand. I currently teach at a private girls' primary school in Auckland, New Zealand. I enjoy socializing with friends and like to live life to the fullest, keeping fit, trying new cuisine and travelling around the world. I am willing to settle anywhere -- but preferably not in India. If interested in

knowing more please contact me on todaysmail123@gmail.com [F11-23].

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

www.Matrimonial.Zoroastrianism.com

www.zoroastrians.net

www.TheParsiMatch.com

www.shaadi.com

www.ParsiMatrimony.com

www.ParsiShaadi.com

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

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

Please send all submissions for "Milestones" to Mahrukh Motafram, 2390 Chanticleer Drive, Brookfield, WI 53045, maharukhma83@gmail.com
Tel 262-821-5296

NOTE: If no year is specified it implies "within the past 12 months"

Leap Like the Deer

BOOKS
ARTS &

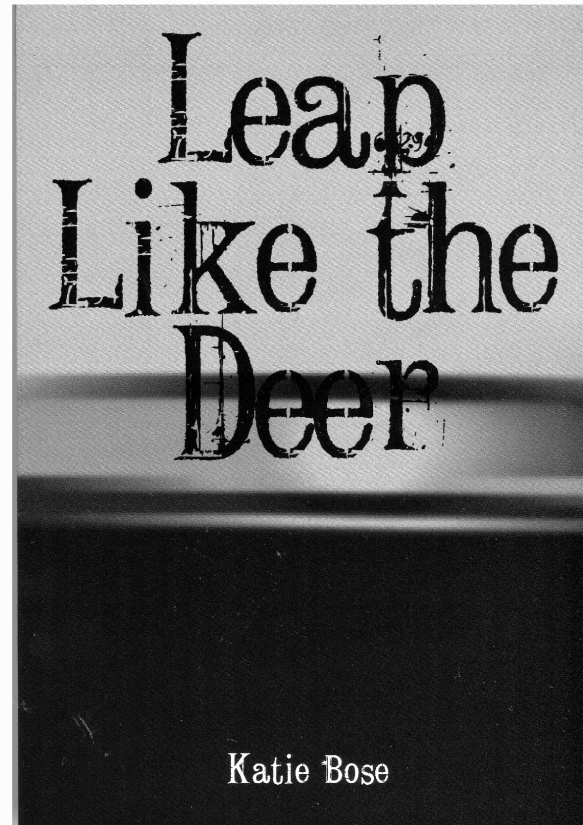
**Katie Bose, 2010,
New Generation Publishing
(Legend Press), London, UK,
ISBN: 978-1-907756-51-1 377 pp.
\$18.**

The book is the life-story of a twice-married British-born author, Katie Bose (a nom de plume) and her family, who although of mixed Anglo-Indian parentage ends up marrying a Parsi "*Rustom*" from Grant Road area in Bombay, who worked for Air-India in London. However, the initial chapters of the book relate to her first marriage to an army officer in newly-independent India. The story in the book begins with her grandparents in Madras, India in 1884, and ends back in London, England in 1990 after the family's return from the United States.

Since almost all the characters in the book are still living, the author has used fictitious names for them to protect their identity. This true-life drama book reads like a 1960s Bollywood movie, which starts off in an idyllic setting, with mirth, laughter, travels abroad in Spain and Italy, (a privileged life-style of the British Raj), and whirls towards the middle to an unhappy first marriage that includes acrimony, violence, and a divorce. But then the author meets Rustom resulting in a re-marriage and happiness that was temporary.

The total acceptance by Rustom's Parsi family (poor king Edward the VIII had no such luck) of his marriage to a non-Parsi divorcee is effectively narrated in the book when the grand old man, the family patriarch, hands over a bundle that he had saved of his late wife's heirloom jewels to Katie to keep. Rustom was the last of his children to get married. Katie's perseverance as a Roman Catholic, to get her first marriage annulled, despite one child, is also interesting to read. The church's final decision is as dramatic as it is sudden!

One of the most poignant parts of the book relates to Katie and her husband Rustom's attempt to migrate to the United States that goes horribly wrong and bankrupts



the family in the process. The family's experience in this regard is an eye-opener for prospective migrants and the book may be worthwhile reading for that reason alone. The reader is left wondering at the naiveté of Rustom and Katie when dealing with and trusting repeatedly an immigration lawyer who tricks them after charging 5000 pounds sterling. One feels like just picking up the phone and calling them to say "*Don't do it!*" But unfortunately, they do with rather unpredictable results.

One paragraph is particularly dramatic as the author and her young daughter, Nina, successfully enter the United States from Canada illegally under the floorboards of a pick-up truck. "*After less than ten minutes, we eventually came to a stop only a short distance from the tunnel that we had gone through right after the customs post..... He pulled open the van door and handed what looked like a hundred dollar note to each of the two women. Two poor black mothers smuggling (humans) for \$100! It was better than prostitution, I*

suppose. They said that we must go now, and I felt sorry for them when we said good-bye, taking all the risks for so little....." Katie reveals her soft side, when in the middle of Detroit at 2 AM knee-deep in her own predicament; she sympathizes with the two black women who drove her and her daughter across the border so that she could be with her husband Rustom. One cannot but admire Katy's unbridled love for her husband.

Further heroic attempts by Katie and Rustom to make a success of an ill-fated business venture in Del Mar, California follows, and the reader cannot but feel sorry for the author and her family as they struggle hard to keep their heads above the water and, then finally throwing in the towel and walking away from it all. They leave behind their "American Dream" with only loose change in their pockets having exhausted their entire life savings.

A great deal of Parsi history, culture, and religion are also mentioned in the book through the eyes of a non-Parsi. When on a trip to Udvada with Rustom, the author correctly observes that for a Parsi "Each visit to a fire-temple is like a personal pilgrimage."

The only criticism is that sometimes the author goes into too much detail about her life which only a relative or very close friend would appreciate. Also, the manuscript has plenty of typo errors and has not been proof-read properly. The book is recommended to all those who love real-life drama with Anglo-Indian and Parsi culture in the background. The story is told in gripping detail and I had trouble putting it down once I started to read.

Dr Ardeshir B. Damania,
University of California, Davis

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Lexicon of Arms and Armor from Iran

by Dr Manoucher Moshtag Khorasani

Published by Legat 560 pp,
ISBN-13;978-3-93294-31-0

BOOKS
ARTS &

A few years back I had reviewed in the Fezana Journal (Summer 2007 Vol 21 No 2) a book by the same author titled *Arms and Armor from Iran* He has now written another book.

Dr Khorasani is an intellectual writer specializing in Iranian history from the earliest recorded history to the present. His penetrative understanding of the subject takes place with his examining the arms and armors of Iran and the writings carved on the instruments.

At the end of the book there are beautiful pictures cataloging the arms and armor.

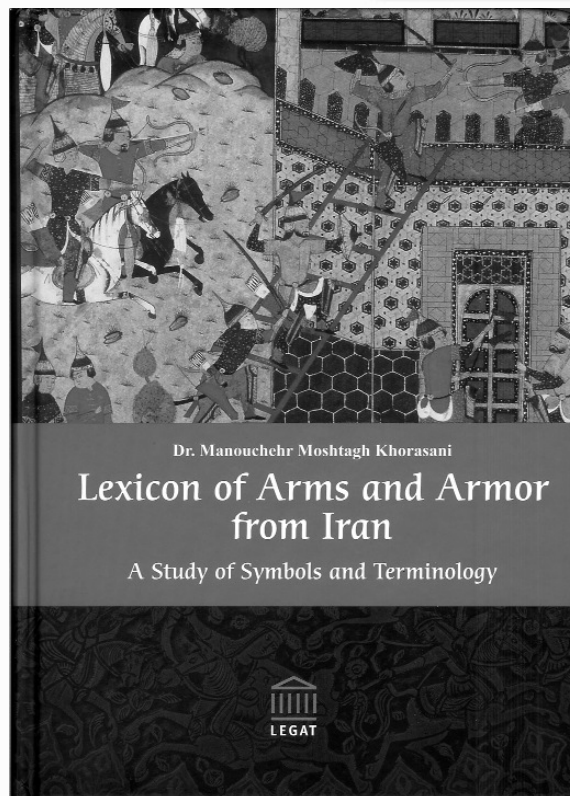
At the first reading it may not be easy to perceive the importance of arms and armor in understanding the past..Please remember that tools had to be created among other purposes to cut meat, to carve wood, to create sharp edges to dig ground for agricultural and other purposes.

The author states that there is evidence to show that as far back as "45,000 years ago "weapons were created to inflict deliberate violence to injure one's opponent."

To understand the past, a true scholar, among other qualifications must be a philologist, an archaeologist and a connoisseur of arts.

All the Iranian dynasties from Achaemenian times based their power upon their armies and upon the ability of the craftsmen forging high-quality weapons.

In the paintings and pottery of Neysabur one observes the military splendor of the Samanids visible in the rare fragments of swords and blades preserved in



the Metropolitan Museum of Arts in New York or the National Museum of Iran.

Fights between the followers of light against those of darkness is one the central themes of Zarathushti Iranian culture. In the Shahnameh, the poet Firdowsi recounts the story of King Jamshid as the forger of weapons from iron.

Dr Khorasani is a martial arts instructor, a linguist and I need hardly add, exceedingly fond of swords!

My hope and prayer is to persuade the writer that in future he reviews the history of Iran through its religion of Zarathushtra, its philosophy and well regarded poetry.

This book was named the **Book of the Year** by the Government of Iran.

Hoshang Shroff
Vancouver

"A different approach to The Gathas"?

Daryoush Jahanian, M.D.
Kansas City, Kansas

After reviewing Mr. Joseph Petersen's comments on the two new translations of the Gathas in the *FEZANA JOURNAL*, Volume 24 No. 4, I would like to add the following comments and I hope they will help to clarify some of the riddles.

Certain Gathic words as in other languages may have multiple meanings and at times cannot be translated into one word, perhaps the meanings have to be defined. For example Asha has been translated as: truth and justice, the law of cause and effect, righteousness, universal order and physical and mental purity. Of course within the context, the author has to choose the meaning that is most suitable. One example is Yasna 53-7 wherein Zarathushtra advises the couple about to marry earlier translation by Humbach was graphic because one of the words has different meanings.

This rendition however, in the later edition by Humbach-Ichaporria has been revised. Here question comes, would it have been possible that thousands of years ago for a spiritual man to stand before the marrying couples and make a bizarre statement? It is inconceivable for this to happen even a thousand years from now. Sometimes if authors put their translations in practical perspective their choice of words would be different and more reasonable.

Another issue is the word "*geus*" that often has been translated as "cow". If we accept this meaning then in Yasna 29 cow is speaking and in Yasna 31-9 & 10 "cow" has wisdom and willpower to choose the rightful leader and avoid the leader who pretends to be pious! We should agree that either this word has a different meaning or another connotation that belongs to that era. We can research in other verses and decipher the meaning that is suitable for all those sentences. Yasna 48-6 "cow" gives us good dwelling and in 51-7, Mazda has fashioned the "cow", the waters, the plants. It is obvious that in these two verses the word "cow" is incongruous and the appropriate meaning is the mother-earth or living world.

Perhaps we can not come up with the exact connotation of the word *Geus*, it is a term that belongs to that era but if we do not limit our views to the agricultural and nomadic era, by reviewing different translations of the Gathas we can come close to the intended meaning. I tend to concur with Dr. Khazai, it appears that in that era the planet of mother-earth was purported to be a living planet with body and soul, *Geus-tashan* and *Geus-urvan*, because not only our life is dependent on, but it generates life such as plants and vegetables. The soul of mother-earth or living world not only laments destruction and pollution, but whenever there is bloodshed, cruelty and injustice.

It is amazing how Zarathushtra carefully chooses his words and even at times designs a new word to conceptualize the issue. For instance the word "*un-life*" "*Ajaiitim*" in Yasna 30-4 denotes the state of being alive but not living a productive and constructive life. Un-life or absence of life constitutes ignorance, deceit, injustice, oppression and lack of freedom. Unfortunately some authors continue translating "*Ajaiitim*" to "death" which has generated confusions in the interpretation of Yasna 30.

Also in Yasna 31-8, it is interesting how Zarathushtra expounds that God has no birth and no death, God is beginning-less and endless, God has always been and always will be, in Pahlavi: *Abada, Abianjam*. He states, God is the oldest and the youngest entity. This is a free rendering, but the word that Zarathushtra has carefully selected, extends the Divine entity beyond "the oldest" because he uses the word "*Pourvim*" or the most ancient, to conceptualize that the Divine entity has no beginning and is infinitude in time; it is not the oldest but the most ancient (*Pourvim*).

Aside from translation, Gathas like other religious texts are subject to interpretations. With all due respect for the selfless endeavor of the authors and scholars from different parts of the world, it may be easier for an Iranian to comprehend and interpret the Gathas because many of the Gathic styles, words, terms and concepts have evolved in the contemporary Persian language and mysticism. Gathic words may have Divine or mundane status and again within each context one has to differentiate which one is intended. For example every person can attain the Divine attributes as virtues and become whole and immortal (*Ahura*) and join God (*Mazda*). Ahura as an attribute is shared by God and human, but Mazda is exclusively the name of God. A perfect human indeed is the mirror image of God. In Persian mysticism, a perfect man is manifestation of the Divine essence. Thus, the word *Ahuraorangho* (*Ahuras*) in 30-9 and 31-4 has been construed by Humbach as Divine attributes and by Jafarey, as perfect humans or the lords of wisdom. By the same token Daevas not only may imply "false gods", but their followers and representatives on the earth and in better words false gods disguised as humans. In the contemporary Persian language 'Div' may indicate demon or evil person. An Iranian who studies the Gathas automatically realizes in which sentence Daeva applies to demon and where does it intend evil person.

Gathas rendition should not be besieged and limited by its time and environment, because many concepts that Zarathushtra introduces are new and contemporary. He is presenting human faculties as: mind, wisdom, intellect, thought, will-power, soul and conscience, and introduces innovative concepts of human rights, liberty and freedom of choice. His view of removing the tyrants and corrupt priests and replacing them by "Chosen Dominion" remains fresh and modern.

Many thinkers, philosophers and poets are exceptional products of human society whose brilliant thoughts extend ways beyond their time and era. Centuries have passed, and Iran has yet to produce someone like Ferdowsi, Khayyam, Saadi, Hafiz and Molavi.



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WORLD ZARATHUSHTI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

REPORT on the APRIL 24th, 2011 meeting of the WZCC – Montreal, Quebec, Canada



Easter Sunday was the auspicious day when more than 40 people brought honor and recognition to the WZCC meeting. This was to encourage the local community of Montreal towards the formation of a new WZCC Chapter.



This meeting was a continuation of the program following the FEZANA Annual General Meeting, a precedence started a few years ago, which we hope to make a tradition of mutual support between our two organizations. For this we are very grateful to the FEZANA Executive officers, especially President Bomi Patel. We also thank The Zoroastrian Association of Quebec (ZAQ) Executive Board & President Faranak Firoozi, for being our gracious hosts and Dolly Dastoor & Pheroze Austin who helped out with the publications of the meeting notification to ZAQ members.

After a sumptuous lunch, the meeting began at 2 pm, with a welcome introduction of Firdosh

Mehta by Pheroze Austin. Firdosh presented a Power Point version of WZCC Vision, Mission, International Chapter structure, requirements of formation of a Chapter, website, community recognition awards, etc.. He explained the various levels of the fee structure and a portion of the fees collected to be repatriated to the Chamber.

Firdosh introduced Rohinton Rivetna as the founding father of WZCC and requested him to say a few words on WZCC origin and early history.

Rohinton Rivetna spoke about the WZCC formation, the structure of the International Board Members and Chapter workings. He also spoke about the Hamazori to energize the Zarathushti Entrepreneurial spirit. There are close to 22 chapters around the world and each of them is an autonomous, linear organization with no hierarchy. There are approximately 1300 members around the world. He also requested every member of our community to join their local chapter, since it's not exclusively for those who are self-employed or own a business.

Firdosh requested Behroze Daruwalla, (photo page 148) the current Corporate Secretary and International Board Member to share her experiences as the Chair of the Houston Chapter. Behroze gave a detailed account of the various activities that the Houston Chapter is involved in, including hosting an AGM. She also emphasized the importance of working with local Chambers of Commerce, with other ethnic groups and participation with them for mutual benefit.





Firdosh requested Sarosh Collector, one of the founding members and the Treasurer of the Houston Chapter, to share some thoughts regarding the WZCC status as a 501(c)3 Charitable Organization registered in the State of Illinois, USA.

Firdosh took the opportunity to introduce other WZCC personalities such as Kobad Zarolia, also a founding member of WZCC.

Attendees were requested to introduce themselves and their area of work. It was interesting to note a local artist, Firooza Aubry, who designed the book-marks that were distributed at the FEZANA AGM plans to open her art gallery.

Firdosh encouraged some local entrepreneurs to showcase their experiences and observations as entrepreneurs.

Firdosh started with introducing the first local entrepreneur,

Hormuzdyar Nekoo. Hormuzdyar is a one person entrepreneurship where he provides translation services between French and English to a variety of technical and non-technical clientele.

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Firdosh introduced the second presenter of the day: **Parviz Shahriari** (photo left). Parviz has a unique product that he has developed and patented himself. He has a company by the name of PaCoSy Inc which manufactures and markets HAND DRYERS that are used in restrooms of restaurants etc. PaCoSy introduced this remarkably flexible hand dryer at ISSA Interclean show in Orlando FL, in November 2010. It is the first and only hand dryer on the market that allows the user to control the air flow and temperature, by simply moving your hands up and down under the dryer. Dimensions 10.6"Hx 6.0" W Depth 2.75 adjustable with a 10 year warranty Parviz can be contacted at 514-476-8243 www.flexhanddryer.com

He is looking for interested parties to set up sales representatives with possible exclusive territories.





The final entrepreneur for the afternoon was: **Hushang Namirani** (photo left)

Hushang demonstrated a very innovative lighting system that he has invented. Under the banner of "Future Lighting Technologies", he wishes to market a bright lighting system that can replace the existing fluorescent lighting. He demonstrated the high candle power of lumens of light produced with very low consumption of wattage of electricity.

He can be contacted at
h.namirani@specmar.com or 514-295-3581.

Firdosh presented all the local entrepreneurs with a WZCC PIN as a token of appreciation.

A few copies of blank membership application forms were handed out.

A short break followed, with tea, coffee and refreshments, and further networking.

Our special thanks go to all our speakers for their presentations. Thanks to all the ZAQ volunteers for arranging the refreshments. A BIG thank you to all those who attended and supported this event.

The meeting adjourned at about 5:00 pm and all those who attended found the sessions very informative, interesting and above all enjoyable.

For more information on WZCC Membership details please contact: Firdosh Mehta 403-719-8983

For more information on WZCC and its worldwide activities, visit
<http://www.wzcc.org>

Report prepared by Firdosh Mehta

ERRATA FEZANA JOURNAL Spring 2011 Vol 25, No 1 page 105-106

The paragraph for Chicago should read:

Similarly, in 1980, Arbab Guiv promised the Zarathushti community of Chicago a sum of \$150,000. This amount was released to ZAC, after a group, "Parsi Partners" raised \$60,000 in 1982 and purchased 5 acres of a 20 acre Guiv Trust property in Mettawa, IL. With additional funding from the community, Arbab's vision came to fruition with the construction of the first Center in North America -- the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr-Zoroastrian Center of Chicago, on a 2-acre plot in Hinsdale, IL. The gracious Morvarid Khanum Guiv placed the first sandalwood offering, at the inauguration on September 3rd, 1983.

submitted by Dr Mehroo Patel. Illinois, USA



FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA (FEZANA)

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