



JOURNAL

Dae – Behman – Spendarmad 1380 AY (Fasli)

Amordad – Shehrever – Meher 1381 AY (Shenshai)

Shehrever – Meher – Avan 1381 AY (Kadimi)

Community Matters

Zarathushtis around the world work to make their communities matter



Also Inside:



Tanya Bharda in the Slums of Mumbai



A Celebration of Tolerance, Friendship and Fraternity



Calligraphy of Ashem Vohu in 10th Century Chinese script at the Museum of World Religions



*With Best Compliments
from
The Incorporated Trustees
of the
Zoroastrian Charity Funds
of
Hongkong, Canton & Macao*



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**SPRING 2012
TRANSFORMATION ,
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SUMMER 2012
25th anniversary Souvenir Issue
FALL 2012
PARSIS IN POLITICS
Guest Editor, Maneck Bhujwala**

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2 EDITORIALS

3 MESSAGE FROM FEZANA President

4 FEZANA Update

9 FINANCIAL REPORT

17 COMMUNITY Matters

45 IN THE NEWS

73 INTERFAITH/INTERALIA

78 NORTH AMERICAN MOBEDS' COUNCIL

83 PERSONAL PROFILE

88 MILESTONES

91 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

93 BETWEEN THE COVERS

98 BUSINESS



Dae –Behman – Spendarmad
Amordad – Shehrever- Meher
Shehrever – Meher – Avan

1380- AY (Fasli)
1381 AY (Shenshai)
1381 AY (Kadimi)

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A word from the Editor

Dolly Dastoor

When the WINTER Journal was being planned, it was felt that the community matters which were dividing the community would be discussed viz falling demographics, low birth rate, aging population, lack of respect to the priests, who can enter the at ashkadeh and who cannot, lack of attention given to the traditional ceremonies viz, navar, martab by the diaspora Zarathushtis etc.

But as the events unfolded in the last quarter and articles started coming in, it soon became evident that the community was making *it matter* in the wider society. Prince Phillip entered the Zoroastrian House in a Tata Jaguar to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe. Bravo to ZTFE for pulling this off so successfully (see page 59)

Perviz Dubash through his vision and determination to place the religion of Zarathushtra at the Museum of World Religions in Taiwan to take its place centre stage with all subsequent religions was realized, in November 2011. Seeing Perviz's determination and persistence, made the Zarathushtis worldwide think that it was a *community matter*. Zarathushtis from North America, Iran, India, Australia gave willingly of their time and talent to realize this event. (see page 66)

A small community in Montreal took their religion and their culture and their food and their music for 4 days to the French community college in St Foy because their community mattered. (see page 55) So also the seminars in Houston, Calgary, Chicago, 150 years of Zoroastrian Studies commemorated by a conference co-hosted by ZTFE, British Museum and SOAS. Why do people in this hyper-connected world want to make a difference and make their *community matter*?

Because they believe in the universal message of Asho Zarathushtra which offers hope, healing and solace to humanity, the Committee for Coordination of Global Celebrations of the year 3750Z is proposing the year 2012 as the year to celebrate (starting on 20th March 2012) the 3750th year since Asho Zarathushtra propounded his teachings. This is a milestone of historic proportions. 2012 is a propitious year, FEZANA will be completing 25 years since its establishment. This is the year when our community should matter to all.



Though a toddler compared to the other Zarathushti federations and anjumans, FEZANA has achieved much in its first 25 years demonstrating that community matters. Starting with the 2012 Spring issue, the Journal will be showcasing the individual and collective achievements of Zarathushtis. We invite you to send by February 1, 2012 a 50-word submission on either a person or an event, which in your best judgment has made a significant footprint on the fabric of our North American Zarathushti community. 25 submissions will be chosen for publication. Send to editor@fezana.org (See page 10)

Farishta Murzban Dinshaw is undertaking a project for the 25th anniversary celebrations, a taste-tempting cookbook "**Eat, Pray, Live: A Celebration of Zarathushti Heritage and Cuisine**" featuring favorite recipes from our readers and past issues of FEZANA Journal. Write to Farishta Dinshaw at hukhtapublications@yahoo.ca for recipe submission guidelines if you are interested in participating in this project. (see page 10)

So as we enter the next Gregorian calendar year 2012, I wish you renewed strength and vigor to move the community forward to where it matters.

Best wishes to all

A Message from FEZANA President

The year "2012" marks a significant milestone for the North American Zarathushti Community as FEZANA celebrates its 25th birthday. Throughout the year FEZANA, its member associations and small groups will celebrate events to showcase FEZANA in their local community and beyond.

FEZANA will officially celebrate its Silver Jubilee at a function on August 2, 2012 at the XVI North American Zarathushti Congress in New York.

I congratulate the visionary Rohinton Rivetna who started FEZANA in 1987. Since then FEZANA has represented the North American Zarathushti community in the world Diasporas and today it is one of the two leading federations in the Zarathushti community.

FEZANA now has 26 member associations each ranging from 50-5000 members and 10 Corresponding members (small groups) each ranging from 5-50 members. The total population of Zarathushtis in North America is conservatively estimated to be around 25,000-27,000.

A milestone in the FEZANA history was achieved on August 31st 2008 when the FEZANA office was officially inaugurated in the ZAC Dar-e-Meher building. Immediate Past President Dr. Rustom Kevala and current President Bomi Patel cut the ribbon. Dr. Rustom Kevala was the guiding spirit behind its establishment and it his dream came true on this day. All presidents past and present were in attendance.

FEZANA was formed in a spirit of cooperation and farsighted hopes, and as we celebrate the Silver Jubilee, we can proudly say that FEZANA has continued on its mission path. In the spirit of cooperation FEZANA is fully involved in the betterment of community not only in North America but worldwide.

To name a few activities, the FEZANA Welfare and Critical Assistance Committee assists people worldwide each year in medical and other critical assistance. The Scholarship Committee each year hands out scholarships totalling over US\$35,000/-. FEZANA is a member of United Nations NGOs and the UN/NGO committee participates and creates awareness and opportunities in this international arena for our youth to attend international conferences under the auspices of United Nations. Over 50 Zarathushti youth from various parts of the world have attended UN/NGO conferences so far. In the year 2000 FEZANA successfully hosted the VII World Zoroastrian Congress which was attended by over 2000 participants from all parts of the globe.

In 25 years, the FEZANA Journal started by Dr. Jehan Bagli as the first editor - a typewritten ten pages of news Vol.1.No1 dated September 1988 was transformed to a magazine in early 1991 (Vol 1V, No 1) with Mrs Roshan



Rivetna as the editor to a color magazine. In Spring 2006, the stewardship of journal passed to Dr. Dolly Dastoor as editor-in-chief. In 24 years from Jehan to Roshan to Dolly and their editorial teams, the Journal has evolved into a magazine of world repute often mistaken as FEZANA itself.

In October 2011, I had the privilege of being invited by the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) at their 150 years celebration of Zarathushtis in Britain which was attended by HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, K.G., K.T. I had the distinct privilege to meet HRH Prince Philip and present HRH a Farohar plaque on behalf of the Zarathushti community in North America.

FEZANA is also one of the four regional representatives along with Iran, ZTFE (Europe) and FPZAI (India) in the Global Working Group (GWG). The celebration was followed by the GWG meeting of representatives of FPZAI, ZTFE and FEZANA, October 8 & 9 2011. FEZANA was represented by Roshan and Rohinton Rivetna, Behram Pastakia and myself as President and Co-chair of GWG.

I invite you to send me your thoughts on what is important to you, for the progress and betterment of our North American Zarathushti community and what role you would like to play to ensure a successful outcome.

Please join FEZANA on Twitter and Facebook.

I look forward to meeting you all at the Silver Jubilee Gala Dinner on August 2nd, 2012 in New York

Wishing you all a very Happy and Prosperous 2012.

Best Wishes.

Bomi Patel, President

2012 FEZANA Silver Jubilee year



FEZANA UPDATE

GLOBAL WORKING GROUP MEETS IN LONDON OCTOBER 8 AND 9 2011

The Global Working Group (GWG) met in London, October 8 and 9 with representatives of FPZAI, ZTFE, and FEZANA.

FEZANA was represented by Mr. Rohinton Rivetna, Mr. Behram Pastakia and I as the FEZANA president and Co-chair of GWG.

Although GWG evolved from "Coming Together Round Table Conference" which was an open forum where the community needs were matched with available resources, the definition, vision and objectives of GWG has moved away and changed to a formal group of representatives of regional bodies namely FPZAI, FEZANA, Iran and ZTFE with future invitation to Pakistan & Middle East, Hong Kong & Singapore, Australia and New Zealand as regional representatives of GWG.

The meeting in London set a path for GWG with a Definition, Vision, Objectives as under:

DEFINITION : The GWG consists of elected regional bodies (FPZAI, FEZANA, Iran and ZTFE with Pakistan & Middle East, Hong Kong & Singapore, Australia and New Zealand) and institutional bodies be invited /involved on as needed basis.

VISION : To be the global voice of the Parsi/Irani Zarathushti/ Zoroastrian community worldwide and to function as a coordinating body for all regions of the world while at the same time respecting the autonomy of each region and adopting the code of civil conduct as prepared by Ervad Dr. Ramiyar P. Karanjia for the working and conduct of the GWG.

OBJECTIVES: To protect and enhance the interest of Parsi/Irani Zarathushtis /Zoroastrians worldwide.

To advance the study and dissemination of information and knowledge of the Zarathushti faith and community.

The vision and objectives will be revised and additions may be done at a later date as other regional bodies join the GWG.

The members present discussed various issues facing our Zarathushti community and decided on a short term action plan below:

GLOBAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM: It was decided that BPP, on behalf of FPZAI, will host a youth exchange program in two age groups for youth from all over the world. The youth 20 to 35 years will meet in March 2012 and the youth 13-20 years will meet in

December 2012. FEZANA will advertise this program once full information from the host is received.

SCHOLARSHIPS: To promote scholarships and create career opportunities for Zarathushti Scholars.

WORLD CONGRESS: To promote and decide the venue of future World Congresses

INDIA WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM : Presently, this program is mainly for benefit of youth in London but in future it will be available to all. Work experience in India is highly appreciated and considered favorably by local companies in London.

DECLINING POPULATION : To inculcate the responsibility for perpetuating the community and reversing the declining population trend.

PROMOTE PRIESTHOOD IN INDIA: This is an initiative to start a Mobed Trust proposed under the chairmanship of Dasturji Dr Firoze M. Kotwal, supported by Mr Nusli Wadia, BPP, PRG and others. The expected cost of amelioration of the priestly class in India inclusive of educational aid is estimated at Rupees 6 crores per annum. FEZANA and ZTFE are also invited to be part of this program.

Regional representatives requested time to examine and revert with support of at least Rupees 50 lakhs* per annum per region for 3 to 5 years.

FEZANA will host the next GWG meeting in New York on July 31 and August 1, 2012.

I invite you to come forward and send me your thoughts on what is important to you, for the progress and betterment of our North American Zarathushti community and what role you would like to play to ensure a successful outcome.

Please join FEZANA on Twitter and Facebook.

Best Wishes.

Bomi Patel, President

2012 FEZANA Silver Jubilee year

*Please read **MOBED SCHEMES** blue print by **UNITED COUNCIL OF ATHORNAN (UCA)**.(page 5) If you are interested in getting more information regarding this scheme or would like to donate towards supporting the UCA, please e-mail admin@fezana.org.

MOBED SCHEMES RUN BY UNITED COUNCIL OF ATHORNAN

Sr No		Month	Year
1	Madressa Children's Parents		
	Madressa Children's parent's to be paid Rs 10,000 till applicant passes 10th exams - 25 nos	2,50,000	30,00,000
2	Current Mobeds		
	Current Mobeds monthly income to be brought to Rs 25,000(Difference to pay Rs 15,000 considering average income of Rs 10,000/Mobed)	37,50,000	4,50,00,000
	In Mumbai and Outstation - 250nos		
3	Cashless Mediclaim Insurance (Already being done since the past 5years)		
	Cashless Mediclaim Insurance for entire Mobed community across India of Rs 1,50,000/family + a floater of Rs 10,00,000		
i	Mobed - 630		
ii	Wives - 298 1111 nos	3,75,000	45,00,000
iii	Widow - 21		
iv	Children - 162		
	* Imp Note : Boys 0 < 7 years only 25nos across India		
4	Pension for Mobeds above 65 years of age who have served the community for more then 25 years. (Already being done since the past 5years)		
	In Mumbai @ 1000/month - 42 nos (After VRS)	42,000	5,04,000
	In Mumbai @ 2000/month - 51 nos (Mobeds who have served fulltime)	1,02,000	12,24,000
	Outside Mumbai @ 1000/month - 12nos (After VRS)	12,000	1,44,000
	Outside Mumbai @ 2000/month - 50nos (Mobeds who have served fulltime)	1,00,000	12,00,000
5	Children's Education		
	In Mumbai 44 nos (Age 0 > 24) (Already being done since the past 5years)		
i	Children @ 500/month - 3nos	1,500	18,000
ii	Children @ 1000/month - 8nos	8,000	96,000
iii	Children @ 1500/month - 18nos	27,000	3,24,000
iv	Children @ 2000/month - 15nos	30,000	3,60,000
	Outside Mumbai (Age 0 > 24) Gestimation of 104 nos @ Rs 1250/month	1,30,000	15,60,000
6	Navar		
	At navar level the applicant's parents get Rs 50,000		
	Gestimation in Mumbai Approx 6Nos / year		
	Outstation Approx 6 nos / year, Total 12 nos @ Rs 50, 000/-	50,000	6,00,000
7	Martab		
	At martab level the applicants parents get Rs 1,00,000	50,000	6,00,000
	Approx. 6nos/ year @ Rs. 1,00,000/-		
8	SSC/ICSE Exams		
	Upon completion of 10th exmas from Dadar / Andheri Madressa the applications/parents will be given lumpsum of Rs 2,50,000. Rs 1,25,000 for applicant/Parents . Rs 1,25,000 to be put in a joint deposit for Applicant/UCA , to be given on wedding / 30years whichever is earlier.(Gestimation of 6 nos / year)	1,25,000	15,00,000

9	Studies along with Mobedi for std Xlth & XlIth upto graduation		
	Monthly Stipend of Rs 20,000 + college fees if they enroll for post Madressa Classes & the applicants will have to do Mobedi including giving Boi + Prayers at Doongerwadi 3hours /day. Madressa classes will be for 2 hours in a structured course. The course shall be conducted inter- alia by specialists who may be Indians or Non Indians, Zoroastrians or Non - Zoroastrians having the the knowledge and the learning of the Zoroastrian religion and its history, customs, practices and traditions. (Gestimation 12 boys @ Rs 20000/-)	240,000	28,80,000
10	On Graduation		
	The applicant will be required to work as a full time Mobed in an accredited Fire Temple with an assured sum of Rs 25,000 / month + gets to be listed for a flat from BPP's 15% quota for Mobeds as per BPP Merit Rating System.		
11	Avesta / Pahlavi		
	If the applicant decides to take up Avesta and / or Pahlavi studies in standards XI and XII, he will be expected to do 3 hours of mobedi per day (18 hours per week) at an accredited fire temple. Such an applicant will be given a monthly incentive of Rs 35000/- per month in a financial scheme. (Gestimation 3 boys @ Rs 35000/-)	1,05,000	12,60,000
12	Post Graduation		
	Upon graduation with Avestan and / or Pahlavi as principal subject/s, the applicant continues with further studies for an M.A. in any field of Iranian studies, he will be entitled to receive a sum of Rs. 1,00,000/- per month. It is UCA's intention to encourage scholar priests in the Parsi/ Irani Zoroastrian community. Such a person will be required to give his time to teaching in the madressa and elsewhere for 12 hours per week, and will be given additional financial incentives to work for and obtain his Ph. D, in any area of avestan and/ or Pahlavi studies pertaining to the Zoroastrian religion, its theology, rituals, history, culture and/ or studies done on its people, the Parsis and the Iranis (Gestimation 2 @ Rs 1,00,000/-)	2,00,000	24,00,000
13	Housing		
	The BPP will provide suitable housing to any young male adult who works as a priest under the scheme formulated for 5 years and/or additionally who has the intention of wanting to get married and start a family. If the young priest decides to marry earlier, then his case will be taken up and he gets the house allotted by the age of 22 to 25 as the case may be. the necessary document will be drawn up between the BPP, UCA and the concerned applicant. If the young priest ceases to work as a full time priest at any point of time the BPP has the right to take back the housing facility given to the priest and his family and cancel the Leave and Licence Agreement.	BPP	BPP
Holistic expenditure for the entire Mobed Community		55,97,500	6,71,70,000

Students who have completed their Madressa studies as martab level since the year 2005 will also be considered eligible for this scheme on case to case basis.

The applicant and his parents will enter into necessary contract/ understanding/ writing on the above terms and conditions to safe guard the interest of both the Trustees and the applicant.

Mediclaim: the United Council of Athornans shall be continuing the Cashless Mediclaim Scheme for the entire mobed Community, their wives & children as per current database.

Under the scheme, the helpers working in the fire temples will also be considered for appropriate financial help and benefits based upon a case to case basis.

PEACE AND UNITY



This issue of the Fezana Journal is themed on “Community Matters”.

The word “matters” is used advisedly as an imperative, for if we would make a difference in the

world, building community becomes an integral part of who we are and what we stand for. Let us pay special attention to a contribution in this issue, titled “A Code of Civil Conduct”. It helps us understand the essence of our prayer, the *Jasame-Avengha Mazda*, which we recite many times in the day after ablutions and tying our *Kusti*. Truthfulness, sincerity, progress, non-violence, dedication, service and unity are summed up in the conceptual words:

Fraspaayokhedhraam, Nidhaanasnaithishem, Khaetvadathaam, Ashaonim. Practised daily, they lead to respect for the other, love, understanding and forgiveness – key elements in building community.

It was heartening that the Global Working Group, which met in London, United Kingdom, on 8th and 9th October 2011 adopted this document as a guide for its future deliberations and conduct. We are

grateful to Erv Dr. Ramiyar P. Karanjia for sharing his knowledge and showing us the way. The thoughtful contribution is a result of introspective dialogue at one of the Coming Together Roundtables, held at the Dadar Parsi Colony in Mumbai a few years ago. This is an excellent example of how an enlightened and knowledgeable priest guides the laity.

The civil code of conduct is not merely meant as a light for the Global Working Group representatives, present and future, when they meet at periodic intervals to brainstorm in identifying action items of mutual interest for *Hamdins*. It is shared with our entire worldwide Zarathushti community so that we can strengthen relationships with those with whom we interact individually on a daily basis. For us in the western diaspora, the document serves as a riyavat from the home country. It teaches us the meaning of *Hamazor*, as we perfect the art of living at peace with ourselves and with those around us.

Please do care to write back to us and share your views on how we can improve ourselves as we strive toward *frashokerettri* together.

Dated: 11/11/11

Metropolitan Washington D.C., USA

Behram Pastakia is Chair of the Publications Committee of FEZANA

JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT

ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF ONTARIO and ONTARIO ZOROASTRIAN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The ZSO (Zoroastrian Society of Ontario) with the support of the OZCF (Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation) is undertaking the first ever census/survey of Zarathushtis in Ontario, Canada.

It will help the community greatly if you and all your eligible family members and friends were to complete the survey. It will take you only about 5 minutes to complete it!

Because we are attempting to send this survey out with email, this request may come to you from more than one person. Do not fill it out multiple times, but only once; then you can delete further notices of the same.

Additionally, we would encourage you to forward the link to all your Zarathushti friends and contacts living within Ontario. The more of us who complete the survey the more accurate the information is.

The survey is available at <http://app.fluidsurveys.com/s/zoroastriancommunityofontariosurvey/>. Please click on the underlined link to begin.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely, The respective committees of ZSO and OZCF



Calendar of Festivals

Calendar of Festivities

September 201 1 to March 2012

Calendar of Festivals	September 2011 to March 2012
Fravardian Jashan <i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin</i>	Saturday, Aug 7 (K) Monday, Sept 6 (S)
Maidyozarem Gahambar <i>Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher</i>	Sunday, Aug 29 -Thursday, Sept 02 (K) Tuesday, Sept 28 - Saturday, Oct 02 (S)
Paitishem Gahambar <i>Mah Sheherevar, Roz Ashtad Aneran</i>	Sunday, Sept 12- Thursday, Sept 16 (F)
Jashne-Mehergan <i>Mah Meher, Roz Meher</i>	Saturday, Oct 02 (F)
Ayathrem Gahambar <i>Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad-Aneran</i>	Tuesday, Oct 12- Saturday, Oct 16 (F)
Jashne-Avangan(Avan Ardivisur Parab) <i>Mah Avan, Roz Avan</i>	Tuesday, Oct 26 (F)
Maidyoshem Gahambar <i>Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher</i>	Thursday, Oct 28 - Monday, Nov. 01 (K) Saturday, Nov 27- Wednesday, Dec 01 (S)
Jashne-Adargan <i>Mah Adar, Roz Adar</i>	Wednesday, Nov 24 (F)
Death Anniversary of Zarathushtra <i>Mah Dae, Roz Khorshed</i>	Tuesday, April 26 (K) Thursday, May 26 (S) Sunday, Dec 26 (F)
Maidhyarem Gahambar <i>Mah Dae, Roz Meher-Bahram</i>	Friday, Dec 31-Tuesday, Jan 04 (F)
Jashne Daegan <i>Mah Dae, Roz Daepdin</i>	Friday, Jan 07 (F)
Jashne Bahmangan <i>Mah Bahman, Roz Bahman</i>	Sunday, Jan 16 (F)
Paitishem Gahambar <i>Mah Sheherevar, Roz Ashtad-Aneran</i>	Tuesday, Jan 11 - Saturday, Jan 15 (K) Thursday, Feb 10 - Monday, Feb 14 (S)
Jashne Sadeh <i>Mah Bahman, Roz Meher</i>	Sunday, Jan 30 (F)
Ayatherem Gahambar <i>Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad-Aneran</i>	Thursday, Feb 10 - Monday, Feb 14 (K) Saturday, Mar 12 - Wed, Mar 16 (S)
Fravardegan/Panjeh/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar <i>Five Gatha days</i>	Wednesday, March 16-Sunday, Mar 20 (F)
Char-Shanbe-Soori (Heralding the New Year) <i>Tuesday Prior to NauRooz</i>	Tuesday March 15 (F)
NauRooz or Jamshedi NauRooz (New Year)	Monday, Mar 21 (F)

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



FEZANA - Donations Received - July 1, 2011 to November 30, 2011

ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS

Aban & Purvez Rustomji (Scholarship) Endowment

Aban Rustomji \$ 100,000

Morvarid Guiv Endowed Scholarships

Morvarid Guiv Trust 25,000

Mehraban & Morvarid Kheradi Scholarship Fund

Farokh and Sandra Kheradi, Wayne, PA 100
125,100

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FUND

Burzin Atashband, Calgary, AB 51

FEZANA GENERAL FUND

Prochy Sethna, San Jose, CA 500
Lyla Aga, TX 150
Guloo Austin, London, ON 101
Pesi Sanjana, Farmington Hills, MI 100
Gulnar Surveyor, Upper Arlington, OH 94
Jamshed Dastur, Newport Beach, CA 75
Soli Dastur, University Park, FL 64
Rustam Dalal, Alexandria, VA 30
iGive.com 25
Khushru S. Chhor, Fremont, CA 25
Noshir Bhathena, Houston, TX 25
1,189

PRAYER BOOK FOR JAMSHEDI NAVROZ

Zoroastrian Association of Michigan 95

GUJARAT FOOD SCHEME

Zoroastrian Association of Florida **3,574**

FEZANA WELFARE & CRITICAL ASSISTANCE FUND

Mehrbanoo Bamasipour (Zardoshty) Welfare / Critical Needs Endowment for Women

Zardoshty sisters-Farangiz Banu, Paridokht
Banu, Homayoun Banu, Iran Banu \$ 100,000

Others

The Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hongkong,
Canton and Macao, Hongkong 2,000

Merzi Amaria, Riverside, CA 1,000

Pesi Sanjana, Farmington Hills, MI 1,000

Rohinton & Najoo Panthaky, Carlsbad, CA 501

Dr. Jehangir Rao, Commerce Township, MI 500

Prochy Sethna, San Jose, CA 500

Zoroastrian Association of Florida 500

Giti Rostami, Centerville, OH 400

Ervad Jamshed Antia, Bolingbrook, IL 250

Noshir & Ketayun Daruwalla, Northbrook, IL 201

Erich Tavadia, West Bloomfield, MI 200

Rusi Tavadia, Novi, MI 200

Nandini & Zubin Patel, San Jose, CA 101

Pesi A. Vajifdar, Bolingbrook, IL 101

Sheriar Khory, Calgary, AB 101

Anonymous 100

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Dara Homavazir, Thornhill, ON 51

Edu Nakra, Brighton, MA 51

Daulat P. Engineer, Glen Ellyn, IL 50

Farokh Billimoria, Palatine, IL 50

Firdosh Chinoy, Troy, MI 50

Freny & Kiumars Romer, Brampton, ON 50

Minoo & Jerroo Chinoy, Flint, MI 50

Navaz Bhavnagri, Bloomfield Hills, MI 50

Perry D. Unwalla, St. Augustine, FL 50

Rustom & Shireen Damania, Clovis, CA 50

Yasmine Amaria, Santa Monica, CA 50

Zubin & Navaz Taraporevala, San Ramon, CA 50

Manek & Meher Dustoor, Carlsbad, CA 41

Viraf Khambatta, Richmond, TX 30

Erich Tavadia, West Bloomfield, MI 25

Jamshed Dubash, Shrewsbury, MA 25

Jamshid Kekobad, Santa Clara, CA 25

Pheroza Sethna, University Park, FL 25

109,079

GRAND TOTAL

\$ 239,088

**UNite to combat
CLIMATE CHANGE**



Contact us for any new and creative
campaign ideas that you want to
collaborate with us on
unepweb@unep.org



FEZANA UPDATE

GIVE GENEROUSLY AND FROM THE HEART

A 35 year old single parent in Mumbai is being treated for Encephalitis. Her retired parents have used up all their savings for her medical expense.

She was the sole breadwinner for her parents and her 7 year old daughter.

Your donation to this cause will help three generations. It will lighten the financial burden on the retired parents, it will give the patient peace of mind that will help her recover faster knowing that there is a caring community who is helping her.

Ahura Mazda willing, if enough funds are collected, we can set up some of the funds for the future care and education of her 7 year old daughter.

The strength of a community is gauged by how it takes care of its weakest links.

If you would like to help please send your checks or credit card information to *FEZANA Treasurer, Ratan Mistry, 1258 Water Lily Way, San Jose. CA 95129. USA.*

SEEKING SUBMISSIONS FOR SPECIAL 25th ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Dear Zarathushtis of North America and Global Zarathushtis:

2012 marks the historic 25th anniversary of the establishment of FEZANA and the FEZANA Journal. For this monumental silver jubilee, we will be publishing a special 25 page Journal issue showcasing the North American Zarathushti community and their milestone achievements in the past 25 years; and would like our Global Zarathushti community to be an integral part of this legacy to create a cohesive spirit of communal solidarity.

Thus, we invite you to send a 50-word submission on either a person or an event, which in your best judgment has made a significant footprint on the fabric of our North American Zarathushti community. People can be posthumously recognized as well.

You do not have to be a resident of North America to participate in this submission. 25 submissions will be chosen for publication.

Please send your submission by FEBRUARY 15, 2012; via email to editor@fezana.org

Dolly Dastoor Ph.D, Editor-in- chief, FEZANA JOURNAL

EAT, PRAY, LIVE

A Celebration of Zarathushti Heritage and Cuisine

To mark its 25th anniversary in 2012, FEZANA is preparing a taste-tempting cookbook "*Eat, Pray, Live: A Celebration of Zarathushti Heritage and Cuisine*" featuring favorite recipes from our readers and past issues of FEZANA Journal. The cookbook will also contain special pages of interest and helpful cooking hints. It is sure to become a treasured collector's item in the years to come so please write to Farishta Dinshaw at hukhtapublications@yahoo.ca for recipe submission guidelines if you are interested in participating in this project.



FEZANA UPDATE

Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC) YOUTH SHOW

The Eighth bi-annual ZAC Youth Show was held on August 27, 2011 at the Golden West College Auditorium in Huntington Beach, CA . Over 300 people attended an almost packed performance. The show was a huge

success and was enjoyed by everyone in the audience. Participants ranged in age from 3 years through senior citizens. (photo left)



The acts showcased the talent of the youth and were very well received. The crowd was entertained by our dynamic MC's, Zuri Erani & Mehernosh Gundevia.

The show included dances from hit Bollywood films, classical and pop music performances, musicals by our youngsters and the ever-popular ZAC choir led by Pervin & Maneck Chichgar. Our very own talented Nauzad Sadry entertained everyone with a medley of songs filmed on the late Shammi Kapoor.



The ever-popular ZAC natak group once again entertained the audience with an award winning natak Hoon

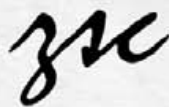
Khon Kari Besas produced and directed by Arnawaz Dungore. Several individuals spent countless hours in rehearsals, ticket sales, advertising and various other administrative and backstage tasks to make this show a success.



The show was a fund raiser for the youth of the ZAC community, and the funds raised help subsidize their activities throughout the year, e.g. send them to Congresses, etc.. The event raised approx. \$12,000 !!!!! Bravo ZAC youth

*Submitted by Persis Choksy
Youth Show Chair*

June 29 - July 3, 2012
York University

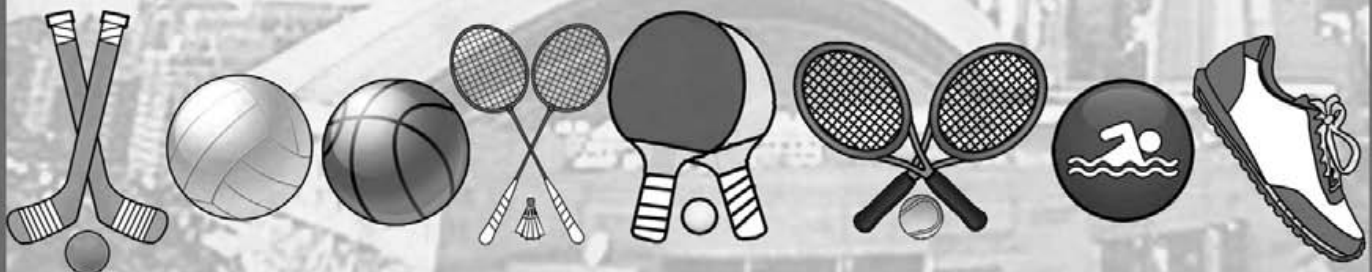


zoroastrian sports committee



Zoroastrian Society of Ontario

13th Zoroastrian Games
TORONTO 2012



Registration details coming soon

www.zathletics.com

www.zso.org

www.facebook.com/ZoroastrianGames13

www.twitter.com/ZGames2012

The XVITH NORTH AMERICAN ZARATHUSHTI CONGRESS

will bring together Zarathushtis of all ages from all over the world to celebrate our community and explore the theme of the Congress "ZARATHUSHTI EXISTENCE IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD". What makes someone a Zarathushti? What can we do to make navjote a more meaningful ritual for children?

The Congress will provide a forum for these and other questions, the opportunity to strengthen old friendships, and to create new ones. Pack your bags and book your tickets to New York from August 2nd to 5th, 2012.

For up-to-date information about the 2012 NAZC Congress or to register ONLINE please visit <http://nazc.zagny.org>

For all general queries about NAZC 2012, please contact
GEV NENTIN **FERZIN PATEL**
Congress Co-Chair NAZC 2012 *Congress Co-Chair NAZC 2012*
& President, ZAGNY
gev@zagny.org ferzin@zagny.org
 Tel: 1-631-462-0763 Tel: 1-845-354-5163

For registration related queries for the 2012 NAZC please contact:
MEHRU CAMA **PIROJA PRESS**
Chair, Logistics; NAZC 2012 *Logistics, NAZC 2012*
mehru@zagny.org piroja@zagny.org
 Tel: 1-201-569-7359 (5 - 10 pm EST only) Tel: 1-201-236-9440 (5 - 10 pm EST only)

REGISTRATION RATES

All rates are in U.S. Dollars. Each 2012 NAZC registration includes :
 3 lunches, 4 Coffee/Teas and The Gala Banquet Dinner on Saturday August 04, 2012

Postmarked By	0 - 5 years	6-12 years	13-24 years	25-65 years	66 & above
Early Bird Before 01.31.2012	\$ 100	\$ 150	\$ 250	\$300	\$ 275
Regular 02.01.2012 - 05.31. 2012	\$ 150	\$ 200	\$ 300	\$ 350	\$ 325
Late 06.01.2012 - 07.26.2012	\$ 250	\$ 325	\$ 425	\$475	\$450

WZCC DAY 2012

The WZCC NY Chapter is organizing a WZCC DAY 2012 commencing in the afternoon of August 01, 2012, preceding the Congress. The day's program will include visits to NYC's business districts and dinner with keynote speakers. For further details, please visit www.WZCCDAY2012.COM

ADD-ON OPTIONS

FEZANA 25th Anniversary Celebrations Thursday August 02, 2012

The year 2012 marks the 25th Anniversary of the founding of FEZANA. To mark this event, an evening of Celebrations, Dinner and Dance will be organized during the Congress.

An Evening In New York City: Friday August 03, 2012

Participants will have the opportunity to avail of an add-on event: An Evening In New York City. The NYC Transportation add-on option only includes bus transportation from the hotel to NYC and back.

Buses will leave promptly at 3:00 pm from the hotel and return from NYC at 11:00 pm and 1:00 am. The Congress organizing committee will negotiate discounted rates for NYC sightseeing. Full details at <http://nazc.zagny.org>

CONTD...



**XVI NORTH AMERICAN
ZARATHUSHTI CONGRESS 2012**

ZARATHUSHTI EXISTENCE
IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD


Venue: Hilton Westchester, Rye Brook, NY
Date: August 02 - 05, 2012

Host:
Zoroastrian Association
Of Greater New York



In Partnership With Iranian Zoroastrian Association

CONNECT WITH US ON

 <http://facebook.com/nazc2012>

 http://twitter.com/_zagny

For those not visiting New York City that evening, an entertainment program and dinner will be organized at the hotel during the evening.

In order to ensure a proper headcount all FEZANA AGM Delegates must select this option.

REGISTRATION FORM

	ATTENDEE 1	ATTENDEE 2	ATTENDEE 3	ATTENDEE 4								
First Name												
Last Name												
Email Address												
Age as of Aug 01, 2012	<input type="radio"/> Senior (66+ years) <input type="radio"/> Adult (25 - 65 years) <input type="radio"/> Youth (13 - 24 years) <input type="radio"/> Child (6 - 12 Years) <input type="radio"/> Toddler (0- 5 Years)	<input type="radio"/> Senior (66+ years) <input type="radio"/> Adult (25 - 65 years) <input type="radio"/> Youth (13 - 24 years) <input type="radio"/> Child (6 - 12 Years) <input type="radio"/> Toddler (0- 5 Years)	<input type="radio"/> Senior (66+ years) <input type="radio"/> Adult (25 - 65 years) <input type="radio"/> Youth (13 - 24 years) <input type="radio"/> Child (6 - 12 Years) <input type="radio"/> Toddler (0- 5 Years)	<input type="radio"/> Senior (66+ years) <input type="radio"/> Adult (25 - 65 years) <input type="radio"/> Youth (13 - 24 years) <input type="radio"/> Child (6 - 12 Years) <input type="radio"/> Toddler (0- 5 Years)								
Meal Preference	<input type="radio"/> Non - Vegetarian <input type="radio"/> Vegetarian	<input type="radio"/> Non - Vegetarian <input type="radio"/> Vegetarian	<input type="radio"/> Non - Vegetarian <input type="radio"/> Vegetarian	<input type="radio"/> Non - Vegetarian <input type="radio"/> Vegetarian								
Banquet Meal Preference	<input type="radio"/> Beef <input type="radio"/> Fish <input type="radio"/> Vegetarian	<input type="radio"/> Beef <input type="radio"/> Fish <input type="radio"/> Vegetarian	<input type="radio"/> Beef <input type="radio"/> Fish <input type="radio"/> Vegetarian	<input type="radio"/> Beef <input type="radio"/> Fish <input type="radio"/> Vegetarian								
Registration	US \$	US \$	US \$	US \$								
FEZANA 25th Anniversary Dinner Thu Aug 02, 2012	<input type="radio"/> US \$ 75 (ADD-ON OPTION)	<input type="radio"/> US \$ 75 (ADD-ON OPTION)	<input type="radio"/> US \$ 75 (ADD-ON OPTION)	<input type="radio"/> US \$ 75 (ADD-ON OPTION)								
NYC Roundtrip Transportation Fri Aug 03, 2012	<input type="radio"/> US \$ 25 (ADD-ON OPTION)	<input type="radio"/> US \$ 25 (ADD-ON OPTION)	<input type="radio"/> US \$ 25 (ADD-ON OPTION)	<input type="radio"/> US \$ 25 (ADD-ON OPTION)								
Entertainment & Dinner at Hotel Fri Aug 03, 2012	<input type="radio"/> US \$ 50 (ADD-ON OPTION)	<input type="radio"/> US \$ 50 (ADD-ON OPTION)	<input type="radio"/> US \$ 50 (ADD-ON OPTION)	<input type="radio"/> US \$ 50 (ADD-ON OPTION)								
Attendee Total	US \$	US \$	US \$	US \$								
Donation	US \$	FOR OFFICIAL USE <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Received On</td> <td>Registration #</td> <td>Entered By</td> <td>Checked By</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="height: 40px;"></td> </tr> </table>			Received On	Registration #	Entered By	Checked By				
Received On	Registration #				Entered By	Checked By						
GRAND TOTAL	US \$											

Primary Registrant (We will use these contact details for all communications regarding your registration)

Name

First Name *Middle Name* *Last Name*

Address

Street Address *City* *State* *Zip* *Country*

Telephone

Email

Home *Cell* *Email Address*

Emergency Contact Name and Phone Number

Children Activities

The following activities will be provided free, at no additional cost, to all registered children. These activities will be held only if we have a sufficient number of children registered for the specific activity. The children's program will take place concurrently with the adult sessions. Parents must pick up their children at meal times.

Zarathushti Program for Those Registered Children Ages 5 - 12 Years

Number of Children: _____

Ages of Children: _____

Baby Sitting for Registered Children Ages 1 - 4 Years

Number of Children: _____

Ages of Children: _____

Registration and Payment

If registering by MAIL: Please refer to registration and add-on option rates and make check payable to ZAGNY. In the memo line of the check please mention NAZC 2012. Payment must be in US Dollars either by a personal check or by cashier's check. Please mail all checks and completed registration form to:

Piroja R. Press; 653 Richmond Court, Ramsey, NJ 07446, U.S.A.

If registering ONLINE: Visit <http://nazc.zagny.org> and complete your registration online. You will have the ability to make a secure online payment with a credit/debit card at no additional cost.

Accommodation Information

Accommodations are at the Hilton Westchester Rye Brook, 699 Westchester Avenue, Rye Brook, NY 10573. We have negotiated special rates for Congress attendees. For a detailed list of accommodation rates, policies, and airport transportation please visit our website <http://nazc.zagny.org>

General Policies, Instructions and Questions

A detailed list of our registration and cancellation policies and other Congress related information is available on our website <http://nazc.zagny.org>

DC's Dream is Almost a Reality

Our nation's capital will finally have a Zoroastrian presence. After thirty years of being wandering nomads, renting various halls and schools, the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington (ZAMWI) will have a center where the community can come together as one, nurture and disseminate our religious and cultural heritage, and continue to flourish.

In early 2008 Mr. Khodamorad Kamran purchased a property in the suburbs of Washington DC to build a Darbe Mehr and Community Center. He worked tirelessly on the architectural and engineering plans and finally obtained the relevant permits. Ground was broken in January 2011 and construction is currently under way.

Although the major part of the construction will be paid for by Mr. Kamran, we need your help in completing our mission. Now is your opportunity to contribute to this great cause—a tangible Zarathushti presence in the nation's capital! An elegant recognition tree will be constructed in the main entry hall of the Darbe Mehr, displaying the name of each donor with a dedication engraved on individual leaves. These leaves in bronze, silver, and gold will recognize three different donation levels.

Every dollar counts. Please make checks payable to ZAMWI and mail to: Mr. Rohinton M. Tengra, 7104 Copperwood Court, Rockville, MD 20855. Please visit our website at www.zamwi.org to learn more about the project, to download the donor recognition form or to make a contribution through paypal. For more information, please contact Mr. Kersi Shroff at kersi.shroff@gmail.com.

Please visit us on your next trip to the nation's capital.

Please Help Us Achieve the Vision



**THE KAMRAN DARBE MEHR—PRESERVING, PROMOTING, AND
PROPAGATING OUR RICH RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE**



CODE OF CIVIL CONDUCT

PEACE AND UNITY:

Progress is possible only through peace, and peace is possible only with unity. Hence if we want our Community to progress and our religion to flourish, peace and unity is not a choice or an option, but an inevitable course of action.

Peace cannot come about by treading on the toes of others, hurting the sentiments of people and destroying precious legacy. In order to achieve peace and harmony, it is necessary to have

1. **RESPECT** for peoples viewpoints, whether we agree with them or not. This includes respect even for those who cannot defend and speak for themselves.
2. **TOLERANCE** gives rise to understanding, love and forgiveness. These are the virtues of a mother. If we learn these three values, hatred will stay far away from us.
3. **OBEDIENCE** to a person, community, idea, message or a cause is an important aspect for achieving unity. For obedience to set in, we should realise that our sense of "right" may not always be correct and hence other's sense of right has to be respected and understood.

Being at peace with oneself and others is an art, which needs to be inculcated. We need to learn to be at peace in concentric circles, starting from our own self, then progressing to the ones close to us and later reaching out to family members, neighbours, society, town, country and the world at large. Once we understand that God is a part of everything, it will be very difficult for us to hate anyone, as hating anybody would then be like hating God Himself.

HAMAZOR:

The word *Hamazor* means "united in spiritual energy". It means the inner strength essential for being assertive and affirmative. *Hamazor*, a beautiful concept, is very difficult to put into practice because of our individual wishes, desires and beliefs and sense of personal rights and wrongs.

In order for *Hamazor* to work, we need to have empathy for others, irrespective of their beliefs and leanings. In order to develop empathy, it is essential to have understanding and tolerance towards fellow men.

The four fundamental teachings of our religion encapsulated in the *Jasa Me Avanghe Mazda* prayer are a fitting code of conduct for all to lead to a state of *Hamazor*:

1. *Fraspaayokhedhraam* "Unity which leads to progress"
2. *Nidhaanasnaithishem* "Not using force/violence"
3. *Khaetvadathaam* "Self-dedication – service for a cause"
4. *Ashaonim* "Truthfulness and sincerity."

Our scriptures tell us that all of us are liable to *gunah* "sin". We are exhorted to sin as little as possible. Since all of us commit mistakes it is imperative that we adopt a forgiving attitude to mistakes committed by others knowingly or unknowingly. Thus *Forgiveness* becomes an important aspect of *Hamazor*, that is "uniting in spiritual energy." However, this does not take away from the concept of Justice or Divine Justice. Corporeal as well as spiritual justice is meted out to those who do not learn their lessons in spite of repeated teachings and forgiveness.

(Er. Dr. Ramiyar Parvez Karanjia)

**Code of Civil Conduct adopted by Global Working Group (GWG) in
London, England, on 9 October, 2011**





THE QADIMI HAMAZOR-A PRAYER OF UNITY

*Hamazor bim,
hamazor asho bim,
hamazor vesh kerfe bim;
ham kerfe karan bim,
dur az vanah karan bim,
sare sarat va chinvat pul buzrag shad va asan man,
bevadirad behest garothman va fashum akhan raushan garothman,
hama khur-rami avar rasad. 'Ashem Vohu' (Recite once)*

THE TRANSLATION

[May we remain united in strength,
may we remain united in righteousness,
may we remain united in many good deeds, and
may we remain the doers of all meritorious deeds, too,
may we remain afar from the guile of evil doers,
may we be able to cross the Chinwat Bridge with rejoicing and ease, from over the summit,
may we, then, attain eternal bliss in the Heavenly Celestial Light of Garothman,
may such pious yearnings be granted unto us]

SAM KERR, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA.

The emblem was created by Perviz Dubash, Melbourne, past president of Zoroastrian Association of Victoria, Australia



THE VISION AWARD FOR FIRDOSH MEHTA An Outstanding Community Leader



THE VISION FOUNDATION, conferred *The NRI VISIONARY AWARD* for 2011 to Firdosh Mehta, Past President of FEZANA and Zoroastrian Association of Alberta, in the ENGINEER Category, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat State, India on November 24, 2011.

One of the objectives of the Foundation, is to support advancement of all round progress and human welfare through diligent and dedicated individuals & institutions, and the other is to inspire successful businessmen, professionals and social leaders by recognizing their talents.

The award was given to Firdosh for being an outstanding innovative Mechanical Engineer and a community leader.

This was a well deserved award, as over the years Firdosh has played a key role in promoting the field of Mechanical Engineering and the advancement of the Zarathushti community, both in the Diaspora and globally, by promoting education, innovation, youth, welfare, commerce and

entrepreneurship.

Congratulations Firdosh!



FOCUSING ON THE POSITIVE IS CRITICAL FOR OUR SURVIVAL?

Dinsha Mistree

I recently returned from the Vancouver Youth Congress. Many aspects of the Congress were truly great: seeing a beautiful city, a couple of stimulating panels featuring successful members of our community, and of course it is always great to meet old friends and to make new ones. But what concerned me was the tone of the Congress, with respect to our religion and our community. Time after time, I listened to participants and presenters alike bemoan the state of Zarathushti affairs. The community is too spread out, archaic rituals are scaring people off and they need to be abandoned, our population is declining, Parsis cannot get along with Iranis, and so on. Indeed, I could see how participants came away from this Congress thinking that the community cannot be saved unless we eliminate rituals and various other community practices, and even then, our survival is doubtful at best. As a young person, my take home message after such a congress would be why bother about the community, or this archaic religion: we are anyway on the verge of disappearing so there is nothing to lose. I should add that I have attended several Congresses now, and I frequently come across first-time attendees feeling this way, especially when Congresses are held in North America.

I believe the next decade will be tremendously important for our community, but not because of the challenges mentioned above. Instead, I am worried that this incessant focus on our community's blemishes may force us to push panic buttons that should not be pushed, but more than that it will encourage people to disconnect themselves from the community. By exclusively focusing on the community's problems we will frustrate young Zarathushtis, and we may even scare them off altogether.

To ensure that this does not happen, I think that it is vital we focus more on our community's positive aspects going forward. We have experts in nearly every profession, with plenty of young Zarathushtis seeking to be engaged with their religion ("archaic" practices and all), and having traveled all over the world for my studies, I am perpetually amazed with the warmth and caring exhibited by my co-religionists. It is these qualities that we should focus on, and I will strive to foster just such a positive perspective in our community. I will do this in much the same way I have engaged our community over the past decade. I plan to write more articles for FEZANA Journal. I will present and participate more at upcoming Congresses and I will work towards making young people aware of the joys of being a Zarathushti rather than echoing the imponderables which we may not be able to solve. I will continue to engage students my age, locally, internationally, and through the virtual world. I also will continue to be active in my local association, regardless of where I am living. Reminding others about why our community and our religion is so special is critical to our survival and it is what I will endeavor to do over the course of the next decade.

Dinsha Mistree is a PhD student in the Department of Politics, Princeton University currently studying corruption, bureaucracy, and the political economy of India. For the academic year 2011-2012, Dinsha is conducting field research in India on the Indian Institutes of Technology, exploring why the faculty at these universities "work" while bureaucrats in so many other public institutions do not perform. Dinsha enjoys spending time with Zoroastrians and in Zoroastrian-themed adventures, having just completed with his cousin a trip to all the 42 consecrated fire temples in Bombay in a single day. He also helps Zoroastrian students with their applications for undergraduate and graduate schools. He has Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in political science from MIT, and a Master of Arts in politics from Princeton. Dinsha was awarded the FEZANA Outstanding Young Zarathushti Award in 2007 and he is the FEZANA SCHOLAR for 2011-2012 having been awarded the Kheradi Endowed Scholarship. He can be reached at dmistree@gmail.com.





RELIGIOUS LIVES OF PARSI/IRANI ZARATHUSHTIS (PIZs) IN INDIA AND ABROAD

ERVAD DR SOLI DASTUR

Parsi community consists of the Zarathushtis who migrated in 10th century from Iran after the Arab conquest. They settled in the western state of Gujarat, India, finally spreading in other parts of India and Pakistan and later concentrating in Mumbai. Iranis are Zarathushtis who migrated from Iran much later during the 18th to 19th centuries. Both communities follow essentially the same religious principles; however, they follow different religious calendars and in some cases, a different language in their homes (Gujarati by Parsis, Dari/Farsi by Iranis).

From this main stronghold, as well as from Iran, many Zarathushtis migrated to England, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and almost all corners of the world comprising of the second diaspora of the Zarathushtis. They are very closely aligned with their co-religionists in India and Iran, but have developed their own daily life styles to assimilate in and adapt to their surroundings.

This prompts us to look at the daily life of a Zarathushti in his/her stronghold of Mumbai in the Parsi/Irani community as well as in other smaller towns and villages in India, and compare it with the same in other parts of the world, in the second diaspora.

RELIGIOUS LIVES OF PARSI/IRANI ZARATHUSHTIS (PIZs) IN INDIA

A typical Parsi/Irani Zarathushti (PIZ) home, especially in Mumbai, where most of the families live in a Baug (PIZ colony) there is usually an Agiyari (Fire Temple) near-by in walking distance. All over Mumbai there are 40+ such Agiyaris (plus 4 highest grade Atash Behrams) and so they are easily within reach for most PIZs. Many PIZs visit these Agiyaris/Atash Behrams at least 4-5 times a month on special holy days of the calendar, and some devout ones visit every day, usually before going to work. Generally, a Mobed is always present in these Agiyaris to take care of the religious needs of the devotees. Each devotee usually takes a

bath before the visit, and on arrival at the Agiyari, washes his/her face and hands and performs the Kushti prayer before entering the Prayer Hall. The devotee brings a piece of sandal wood as an offering to the Holy Fire in the Sanctum Sanctorum, places it on the threshold, together with some money for the Mobeds as Aashodaad, and takes a pinch of holy ash from a ladle and places it on his/her forehead. The sandal wood is taken by the Mobed and is offered to the fire. He keeps the money for himself. Some devotees light a floating candle and place it at the designated place in Agiyari/Atash Behram.

These Mobeds also perform Rituals and Ceremonies (Afargaan, Farokhshi, Satum), especially on anniversary days of the departed ones on behalf of the visiting family members, usually in the mornings. Frequently, there are community Jashans on Parab Days (Religious Calendar days with the same name month and day) usually in the afternoons. They also perform daily in Atash Behrams and frequently in Agiyaris, Yazashne and Baj Ceremonies in the mornings. On special occasions like six Annual Gahambars, or for a Navar Ceremony, Visperad Ceremony is performed. Also, Vendidad Ceremony is performed in the night starting after mid-night infrequently for the Martab Ceremony as well as for the requesting families in memory of their departed ones or for themselves. Thus for Parsi/Irani families in Mumbai, these Agiyaris/Atash Behrams are the center of their religious activities.

These Mobeds also teach the children their daily prayers as well as prepare them for their Navjote (initiation) and for their Navar and Martab ceremonies (only for the children of the Mobed families). The Navjote ceremonies are usually performed in Agiyaris/Atash Behrams or in Parsi Baugs, and in some cases in a Hotel. Navar and Martab ceremonies can only be performed in Agiyaris/Atash Behrams. Wedding ceremonies are usually performed in Baugs, but sometimes also inside Agiyaris/Atash Behrams. Wedding celebrations of the Parsis are famous for the sumptuous feast served on banana leaves.

The Death Ceremonies are usually performed in Doongerwadi in Mumbai for first four days.

In some Agiyaris/Atash Behrams, a weekly Hum Bandagi (short congregational prayers for the whole community) has become quite popular and hundreds of devotees flock to them weekly. There are also special Community Jashan/Parab/Gahambar festivities, usually performed in Baugs, where the whole community is invited.

At the end of the Religious Calendar(s), the solemn ceremony of Muktaad is celebrated during the last 5 days of the last month, Asfandarmad, and the next 5 Holy



Gatha Days before the Navroze, New Year Day. Due to 3 different calendars followed by Parsis/Iranis, Mukt ad is performed three different times of the year, each for 10 days. According to the scriptures, the Fravashis of the departed family members visit this world during these 10 days and are very pleased if ceremonies with flowers, fruits, clothes and meals are performed in their names. Each family has a vase for their departed ones, and Mobeds place fresh flowers in them and they are placed on marble tables in rows and present a very wonderful site to behold! In villages, the homes are cleaned, repainted before these 10 days to welcome the Fravashis. During these 10 Holy Days, Parsis/Iranis visit the Agiyaris/Atash Behrams almost every day for prayers. Navroze or the New Year Day is for all to put on new clothes, to go to Agiyaris/Atash Behrams for prayers, to

Mehr is set up similar to an Agiyari but the fire is not kept burning 24/7. Usually such places are too far away for many PIZD families and hard to reach for all functions. Except in major cities like Toronto, these Dar-e-Mehrs are opened for few hours during a weekend with a Mobed present to take care of starting the fire and doing prayers and servicing the needs of a devotee. On special occasions like Parab, Gahambars, special community celebrations, many local Zarathushtis gather there for the prayers usually followed by a lunch or dinner.

The community gets together in the form of Sunday Religious Classes,



Religious Nook in an Udvada Family Home



Dadgah fire in an Udvada Family Home

meet families and friends and to have a wonderful feast to celebrate it.

The first day of Spring is popularly called Jamshedi Nowruz by Parsis and is celebrated with the same enthusiasm as the Nowruz explained above.

Inside a PIZ home, there is always a sacred nook where a floating candle is burning 24/7 surrounded by photos of Zarathushtra, Farohar, and departed relatives of the family. In villages like Udwada, some families still keep a family fire 24/7 as their Dadgah fire, which is also used to cook "Chokhkhu" (pure) food to be used in religious ceremonies. This is the place family members do their prayers each day, mostly individually, and this is where each one fulfills his/her religious duties.

RELIGIOUS LIVES OF PARSI/IRANI ZARATHUSHTIS (PIZs) IN DIASPORA OUTSIDE INDIA/IRAN

Most of the traditions explained above for the lives of PIZs in India are followed by the Parsi/Irani Zarathushtis in Diaspora (PIZD) except with a few major differences. Unless they live in big metropolitan cities in the UK, North America (NA), Australia, New Zealand, etc., they do not have a formal place as Agiyari close by like the PIZs in India. Usually, in major cities like New York, Chicago, Toronto, Vancouver, Houston, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, a religious place usually referred to as Dar-e-

celebrations of Holy Days, etc., usually in big cities.

Unlike in India, no daily ceremonies are performed in these Dar-e-Mehers. On special anniversary days of the departed ones on behalf of the visiting family members, usually in the mornings or afternoons, local Mobeds perform rituals and ceremonies (*Afargaan*, *Farokhshi*, *Satum*) in the memory of the departed. Frequently, there are community Jashans on Parab Days usually in the afternoons, followed by *Hum Bandagi*.

Higher liturgical rituals and ceremonies like Yazashne, Visperad, Vendidad, Navar and Martab, in their full-fledged format, can only be performed in a consecrated Agiyari/Atash Behram. In the Diaspora there is no such consecrated Agiyaris/Atash Behrams so far and so such higher liturgies are not performed. However, plain recitals of these prayers (Sade version) can be performed like the first ever Vendidad performed in the new London Dar-e-Mehr during its initiation and the same in North America at the opening ceremony of the





Dallas Dar-e-Mehr. Baj Ceremonies are usually performed inside Agiyaris/Atash Behrams in India;

however, they can also be performed anywhere as long as prescribed ritual purity conditions are met. The first ever Baj ceremony was performed in Brampton, Canada, by Mobed Palanji Dastoor in 1986 at the occasion of a wedding celebration. These Baj ceremonies have also been performed in major cities during 10 Muktab days in the mornings and sometimes during the initiation of a new Dar-e-Mehr (like in Dallas in May 2011). Fareshta ceremony was performed in Los Angeles (2010) at the opening of the new building.



A NA Diaspora family Religious Nook



Navjote and Wedding Ceremonies are usually performed in family homes or in Hotels and Public Halls.



Death ceremonies in Diaspora are usually performed in selected Funeral Homes which have agreed to follow our religious procedures for the ceremony before, either the burial or cremation of the body. There are no Dokhmas in any Diaspora.



Due to the above prevailing conditions for most Diaspora family outside India, the private nook in the home takes the place of the Agiari. In this sacred nook, as in India, there is always a floating candle burning 24/7 surrounded by photos of Zarathushtra, Farohar, and departed relatives of the family. This is the place family members



do their prayers each day, mostly individually, and this is where each one fulfills his/her religious duties.

PRESERVING BY ADAPTING

Diaspora Zarathushtis have worked diligently to preserve most of religious customs, prayers, and ceremonies as far as they can under the prevailing circumstances, adapting when necessary. They have built Dar-e-Mehrs wherever possible and these places of worship become the center of all religious activities. Diaspora is blessed by the voluntary services of our Mobeds for Navjotes, Weddings, Jashans, Gahambars, five or ten day observance of Muktab, Hum Bandagis, as well as four day death ceremonies. North American Mobed Council (NAMC) has helped tremendously to provide help and guidance as required by making sure Mobeds are available to all communities when needed. It has published books on Jashan ceremonies, Obsequies ceremonies, Congregational participation in Jashans, and Nowruz prayers in Gujarati, Farsi, and English. Religious lectures are delivered when requested, all voluntarily! Diaspora Muktab layouts can rival any in India! And these Mobeds usually pray the full-fledged prayers in all these ceremonies as taught to us in our Religious Institutes in India. And many a times I have been approached after a Jashan by Behdins visiting from India and commenting that they have not heard such prayers prayed so well in India anymore!

A major emphasis is to involve our youth in our religion by conducting Religious Classes, involving them in prayers and Hum Bandagis, teaching them the basic prayers with their meanings, helping them to form their own Youth Groups and conduct their own conferences, involving them in community service, etc.

In summary, religious practices of a Zarathushti in Diaspora are similar to those in India as far as there are no Religious restrictions for those practices. In spite of preserving these customs and practices, however, there are some major differences because of these restrictions and the Diaspora families have adapted to their living conditions to continue their daily Religious practices.



A Triple Navjote in Davie, Florida



A Parsi/Irani Wedding in Orlando, FL



Muktab Layout in Boca Raton, FL



Community Matters

Relevance in Today's Environment

In our Daily Lives:

✓ Places of Worship

India/Pakistan

- Atash Behram(s)/Agiyaris
- Walking Distance or close by
- Open all day with devotees coming/going
- Daily Rituals/ceremonies
- Center of Religious Activities for families

NA Diaspora

- Dar-e-Mahers (may be)
 - Miles away
 - Open only on weekends/special functions
 - No Daily Ceremonies
 - Center for Special Community Celebrations
- For MOST Families
 - Small nook in home is our Agiyari with a Deevo, Zarathushtra, Family Photos, Khorddeh Avesta, etc.

Relevance in Today's Environment

In our Daily Lives:

✓ Rituals and Ceremonies

India/Pakistan

- ✓ Mostly in Atash Behrams, Agiyaris/Baughs
- ✓ Navjotes
- ✓ Weddings
- ✓ Navars/Martabs
- ✓ Death Ceremonies - Doongerwadis

NA Diaspora

- Dar-e-Mahers (may be)
 - Navjotes/Weddings (mostly in Hotels, Halls)
 - Navars/Martabs - never
 - Death Ceremonies - Funeral Homes

- Most of the rituals (Yazashne, Visperad, Vendidad, Navars, Martabs) can only be performed in consecrated Atash Behrams/Agiyaris
- NA Diaspora so far have NO consecrated places.

Relevance in Today's Environment

In our Daily Lives:

✓ Community Special Occasions Prayers

India/Pakistan

- Atash Behrams, Agiyaris, Baugs
- Parabs Jashans (same Day and Month occasions)
- Hum Bandagis - weekly in some Atash Behrams/Agiyaris
- Other ceremonies

NA Diaspora

- Dar-e-Mahers (may be)
 - Parabs Jashans (same Day and Month occasions)
 - Hum Bandagis - during special occasions
 - Other ceremonies

Relevance in Today's Environment

In our Daily Lives:

✓ Individual Prayers

India/Pakistan

- Atash Behrams, Agiyaris
- Daily for devoted Parsis, before going to work
- Parab Days (same Day and Month occasions) or special calendar days for most
- Sukhad, Deevo offerings

NA Diaspora

- Dar-e-Mahers (may be) or the Home Prayer Nook
 - Daily lighting the Deevo, Parab Days and/or special calendar days
 - Individual Prayers

Relevance in Today's Environment

In our Daily Lives:

✓ Rituals and Ceremonies

India/Pakistan

- ✓ Mostly in Atash Behrams/Agiyaris
- ✓ Yazashne - infrequent
- ✓ Baj - quite frequently
- ✓ Afargan/Farokhshi - almost daily
- ✓ Satum - almost daily
- ✓ Jashans - frequently
- ✓ Vendidad - infrequent
- ✓ Visperad - Gahambars, Navar

NA Diaspora

- Dar-e-Mahers (may be)
 - Yazashne - never
 - Baj - seldom
 - Afargan/Farokhshi - frequently
 - Satum - frequently
 - Jashans - frequently (mostly at homes)
 - Vendidad - never
 - Visperad - never

Ervad Dr Soli Dastur was born in a small village, Tarapur, India, to a priestly family from Udwada, as the last of 11 children. Soli completed his high school in the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute boarding school and completed his Navar, Martab, and Samel ceremonies in Udwada.




After his B. Chem. Eng. from the Bombay University Department of Chemical Technology in 1960, he obtained his M. S. and Ph. D. in Chemical Engineering from the Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. He joined the Procter & Gamble Co. (P&G) in Cincinnati in 1964 as a Research Chemical Engineer, but drifted away to Computer Technology, retiring in 1994 after spending three years in Brussels, Belgium. Soli has been performing Mobed duties all over Florida and NA wherever he is requested to do so. He was elected to the Zoroastrian Association of Florida (ZAF), Miami, Executive Board and helps to create its Newsletter and started the first ever all Florida Mukhd Gatha prayers in Miami in 2009. He is an active member of NAMC and is in charge of all its communications. Soli has been married to Jo Ann for 43 years, and they live in University Park, Florida. He is an avid tennis player and dabbles with the computer for his free time.



SHORTCUT AND DIFFERENCES IN PRAYERS AND CEREMONIES

ERVAD GUSTAD M. PANTHAKI



The first three centuries of Sasanian rule witnessed the renaissance of the Zarathushti religion. The government officially sanctioned the Zarathushti religion as the 'state religion', and through this patronage, prelates like Tansar, Kardar and Adarbad Mareshpand revived the Avesta. One part of this exercise was to impose standardization upon the performance of ceremonies and recitation of prayers. It was this Avesta (the liturgical cannon and its ritual ceremonies) which was sheltered by the Zarathushtis for approximately 150 years in Iran, after the defeat of the last Sassanian monarch Yazdegerd III in 651 CE. Several attempts were made to re-collate the Avesta in this period, necessitated due to the destruction of the State infrastructure (schools, archives, temples, priests and intelligentsia) as a consequence of the Arab invasion of Persia. We have accounts in this period, for example via the exchange of letters between the brothers Manuscher and Zadsperam, which have become one of the treasured pieces of the Pahlavi literature, that there were debates regarding forms of ceremonies and practices. The resolution was usually that tradition, defined, as that which existed as the official Zoroastrian religion in the reign of Yazdegerd III, would be respected and accepted as legitimate.

A few weeks ago an e-debate was activated after the following comment was made regarding Navar ceremonies of non-Indian initiates: "Athornan children from the Western Diaspora should not use shortcut methods for their initiation as NAVARS.....Western Quicke Mobeds dilute, diminish their religion by diluting their scriptures and rituals".

Let us begin to examine this issue from the historical context. Recall that there were three irreparable destructions of Zarathushti literature: in 330 BCE by

Alexander's Greeks after the destruction of Persepolis, in 641 CE by the Arabs during their conquest of Persia, and in 1250 CE during the conquest of Iran by the Mongols of the Golden Horde. Thus the Avesta was re-constituted thrice, succumbing to substantial loss in each of its incarnations. The first revival began during the reign of Ardeshir Papekan (226-241 CE) under the leadership of Dastur Tansar. He collected and edited the scattered Avesta into 21 books called Nasks. These Nasks were translated from Avesta into Pahlavi during the reign of Shapur II (309-379 CE) by Adarbad Marespand, and he most probably also re-arranged and systematized the ceremonies. Commentaries were added to the Pahlavi translation of Avesta in the reign of Khusro I (531-579 CE). After the Arab invasion and subsequent exodus of the Zarathushti group, who became the Parsis, to India, these ceremonies once again underwent a change; producing among other things the differentiation between the Shenshai and Kadmi groups. Furthermore one may examine differences among different "panthaks" (dioceses): Sanjana, Bhagaria, Suratia, Godavara. Even the boi ceremonies and Manchi offerings in all Atash Behrams have differences. Bahgarias and Udvadias have differences in pavmahel ceremonies and obsequies.

It should be clear from this synopsis that the terms 'new', 'reform', 'reconstituted', and 'transformed' were historic realities which occurred and can not be refuted or declared 'heretic' or 'apostic' without also considering the Avesta as liturgy and ceremony (and Zoroastrianism as a religion) as a whole to be defunct and invalid. As to the question of whether there is anything wrong or new about short and long ceremonies and prayers. Let us look at some examples:

NIRANGDIN: This ceremony is performed to consecrate bull's urine (taro), which after consecration is known as "nirang". It takes two mobeds about twenty days to complete the ceremony. However in the event when the nirang is needed and not immediately available, a substitute ceremony of "kam-chalao nirangdin" is performed, which can be done in about two hours (vide Dastur F. Kotwal Zarhosti Dharma ane Kriyao vise Lakhano, pg 44).

HAMAYASHT: The performance of Hamayasht varies according to the type of the Hamayasht; Moti



(large) or Nani (small). Moti Hamayasht consist s of 144 Yasnas and 144 Vendidads. If one pair (two mobeds)

performs, it would take 144 days about 5 months. Nani Hamayasht consist s of 144 Yasnas and 12 Vendidads. It can be finished much sooner than the Moti Hamayasht.

KHUB: It is a liturgical qualification required for a mobed, who wants to perform pavmahel ceremonies. There are two types of khub; *Moti and Nani*. Moti Khub requires a performance of *Mino Navar Yasna* every fourth day, which takes about two and a half to three hours. *Nani Khub* is a performance of baj dharna commonly known as *panchtai* and takes about twenty five to thirty minutes.

JAMVANI BAJ: There are three different types: *Gaus Hudao Baj* is recited with barsam by the mobeds who observe moti khub. *Baj-e Hormazd* is recited by mobeds before meals without barsam. *Itha Aat Yazamaide Baj* is the most common and shortest baj may be recited before meals by all.

PURIFICATION CEREMONY: Four types of purification ceremonies are provided in the Zarathushti religion.

(1) **PADYAB:** It is the simplest form and we perform several times a day, and takes about 2-3 minutes. It is commonly known as *kusti*, and does not require a mobed. Even padyab has two forms; *Kem na Mazda ni kusti*, and *Sarosh ni kusti*.

(2) **NAHN:** It is higher than padyab and requires a mobed to officiate. It takes about 30 to 40 minutes.

(3) **BARASHNUM:** It is the highest form of purification and takes nine days. Presently people who go through Barashnum ceremony are professional corpse bearer, both before joining the profession and on leaving it. For a priest it is necessary, both at the time of initiation of Navar and Mart ab, and before he can perform *pavmahel* (inner liturgical) ceremonies.

(4) **RIMAN:** It requires two people, one of whom must be a mobed. It lasts about half an hour, and is confined to those who have come into contact with dead bodies.

JASHAN: There are variations even in this common ceremony. The number of afringan kardas may be three, five or even seven. Recitation of afrins one, two or three

is simply a custom. In fact afrins do not form a necessary part of the Afringan ceremony (vide J. J. Mody, *The Religious Ceremonies And Customs Of The Parsees* pg 364). Even Afringan's dibacha can be cut short af ter 2/3 kardas (vide *Dastur K. Dabu, Rahnuma e Din*, pg 375)

FARESHTA: It is a ceremony performed in honour of 33 Yazatas. Until very recently it consist s of 33 afringans and 33 baj lasting about four to six hours for eight to ten mobeds to complete. Recently due to scarcity of mobeds it is now reformed to a short ceremony of about 11 afringans and 11 baj.

NAVJOTE: It is the initiation ceremony of a child into the Zarathushti religion. There are three common variations in the ceremony. If one includes the method given by Late Ervad Phiroze S. Masani in the preface of Pazand *Nirang ba Maeni*, pg 75-79, there would be four variations.

MARRIAGE: About fifty to sixty years ago marriage ceremony consists of two Ashirwad recitations; (1) *Pazand* and (2) *Sanskrit*. Currently only Pazand recitation is done during the ceremony.

PRAYERS FROM KHORDEH AVESTA: In the Yashts literature one may find Nani (small) and Moti (large), e.g. *Nani Hom Yasht and Moti Hom Yasht, Nani Haptan Yasht and Moti Haptan Yasht*.

Ava Niyaesh can be shortened by not reciting verses from *Yasna ha 65-A hatamcha*.

Patet (penitentiary prayer) has five different versions; (1) *Patet I Adurbad*, (2) *Xud Patet*, (3) *Patet Murdagan*, (4) *Patet Irani* (vide *Dastur Firoze Kotwal and Almut Hintze, Iranica 16, pg 14*) and (5) *Patet Avesta which is the shortest version*.

Din-no Karmo (Zaraqthushti Creed) are of two types; (1) *Avesta no – Yasna Ha 12* and (2) *in Pazand* which is made





up of only two verses and the shortest of the two.

YASNA: Dastur Dabu in *Rahnuma-e Din*, pg 376, talks about different types of Yasna, and short version to save time. In ancient Iran the Yasna ceremony was performed by eight mobeds. Currently Yasna is performed by only two mobeds. Er. (Dr.) Ramiyar Karanjia writes on page 17 of his book *The Baj-Dharna*, “.....there may be two types of reciting the Yasna. One an abridged form, without the chanting of the Gathas.....a usage attested even in present times. Presently there is a practice among priests, to perform such a condensed service, which would qualify them for a proper service (*italics mine*).”

GEHSARNA: This is a very somber ceremony performed before the disposal of a dead body. Generally two mobeds perform this ceremony, but in extraneous circumstances; when two mobeds are not available, a mobed and a behdin or even a mobed with a pet animal could do.

‘SHORTCUT METHODS’ FOR INITIATION AS NAVARS: In this method the candidate for Navar only memorizes the chapters wherein rituals are enacted. This method has been in place for a long time; even in 1950s many Navars have been initiated by this method. In fact Dastur Dabu wrote in 1947/48 that candidates should be allowed to read from the book instead of reciting from memory (*Athravan no Dini Prakash*, pg 236). This would perhaps end the present short cut method. Recitation of Vendidad is not done from the memory!

CONCLUSION

This short essay has illustrated that variations are both a historic and customary norm, and that ‘shortcut s’ of prayers and ceremonies have been mandated as ‘official’ and ‘traditional’ practice which are considered religiously sound. There is therefore, no issue of deceit, distortion or fraud. Moreover such a statement of ‘fraud’ leads one into a larger issue of considering the prayers and ceremonies of our Irani brothers as ‘inauthentic’ because they seem by

comparison to be very short and different. Other religions such as Hinduism, Christianity and Islam also have long and short ceremonies. Indeed, the general lessons of history, and specifically the history of religion, clearly indicates that religion is a living archive serving the community and hence religions are never closed indisputable dogmas (which if they attempt to be, either perish or cease to be purposeful in the true purpose of religion). Thus, young mobed initiates in North America neither diminish religion nor dilute scriptures and rituals. On the contrary they provide a valuable voluntary service to the community and contribute to a living faith. To paint them as Mobeds (who) dilute, diminish their religion by diluting their scriptures and rituals, is simply incorrect and undeserved criticism.

From the make-up of ritual books and the Khordeh Avesta it can be verified that since ancient time long and short methods of ceremonies existed side by side. An abridged Yasna ceremony is presently a practice among mobeds as stated above. Looking at the recent change in Fareshta ceremony, also substantiates that evolutionary reform is an ongoing process.

The true worth of a ceremony depends not on the time it takes, but on faith, reverence, veneration, devotion and intent with which it is performed.

Gustad Panthaki was born in Udvada in 1940 and had the proud privilege of being ordained as a Navar at the Iranshah in 1952. Having obtained his electrical engineering diploma from Pune, he migrated to Canada in 1967 where he worked for Enersource Mississauga Hydro for over three decades till his retirement in 2005.

When Gustad was called upon to perform the role of a mobed in Canada, he channelized his energy towards a self-study of not just the Zarathushti religion but other faiths, too. After his retirement Gustad has immersed himself in Zoroastrian study to enhance his better understanding of the faith. A voracious reader, he has vast knowledge of our religion, its history, culture, customs and traditions. In addition, he has vast knowledge of contemporary religions, especially Hinduism. Because of his interest in interpreting our scriptures, he is currently learning the Avesta language through self study. His other passion is chess.

He is one of the first generation mobeds in Ontario.



PREPARING FOR NAVAR

Navar is the primary initiation of a son from a priestly (Athornan) family into priesthood. The term NAVAR is interpreted variously. It signifies a person who is newly initiated in the task of offering prayers and rites to the divine world. Literally the term Navar is explained from the Pahlavi Pazand words nav and bar which mean "a new offerer (of libations)."

An Athornan child is required to undergo Navar before he attains puberty. Only children from priestly families can be initiated as Navars, and hence it is a singular and special privilege to be able to undergo this initiation.

The Navar ritual is about 25 days long, after undergoing which, the candidate can perform all outer rituals. Properly undergoing this ceremony helps one evolve mentally and spiritually and takes one closer to Ahura Mazda and His divine world. After the Navar initiation, the candidate is entrusted the responsibility of conveying the prayers of the laity to the spiritual realms and bringing blessings from there for the people.

In our community, there is a tradition of sons from priestly families undergoing the Navar initiation in two ways - *Kachha* (partial) and *Sampurna* / *pucca* (complete / perfect). The terms *kachha* and *Sampurna* have been used since the ancient times and have not been coined now.

In the training for *Sampurna Navar*, the child is made to memorize most of the *Khordeh Avesta*, entire 72 chapters of the *Yasna* (including 17 chapters of the *Gathas*) and 23 chapters of the *Visperad*, along with the accompanying ritual performances, *Afringans* and *Baj*. This training takes about 5 years, if approximately 2 hours are devoted daily for about nine to ten months in the year.

For the *Kachha navar* it takes about 2 years of regular memorization, about an hour each five times a week. The child is made to learn by heart the basic prayers from the *Khordeh Avesta* (like *Sarosh Baj*, 53 *Has*, *Khorshed*, *Meher* and *Atash Nyaishna*, *Patet Pasheman* and *Stum*) and fluently read other important prayers (like *Sarosh Yashts Vadi* and *Hadokht*, as also *Hom*, *Vanant* and *Siroza Yashts*) from the *Khordeh Avesta*. The following important ritual intensive chapters (Ha) from the *Yasna* are expected to be learnt by heart: 1 to 8, 11, 15, 16, 22 to 27, 62, 65, 66, 71 and 72. A *kachha navar*, properly done, is an acceptable part of the Zoroastrian priestly religious tradition.

Athornan boys in India and from the diaspora do learn some chapters of the *Yasna* and prayers from the *Khordeh Avesta*, as stated above, meticulously taught by their parents / priests / teachers, undergo Navar in India and then render service, mostly voluntarily, to the

ERVAD DR RAMIYAR P. KARANJIA



community, which is a commendable thing, and there is nothing wrong in it.

Unfortunately, since the past many years, quite a few Athornan children undergo *kachha Navar* with little or no prior training. The parents are often under the mistaken impression that the three and a half weeks spent at the fire temple for the Navar ritual is all it takes to be a Navar. The prior training if at all is reduced to a few months of sporadic learning.

Thus Athornan children who hardly know a couple of chapters of the *Yasna*, and are not conversant with even the basic prayers from the *Khordeh Avesta* undergo Navar with hardly any proper training, which is quite objectionable. Such children, on account of lack of proper guidance, take up a big responsibility on their shoulders which they may not be able to carry out later.

The best solution to overcome this problem is to admit sons of priests to priestly institutions either at Dadar or at Andheri so that they can turn out to be *Sampurna Navars*. The training as well as boarding and lodging at these Institutes is absolutely free of costs. However if the parents want to train their child at home and initiate him as a Navar, proper training is very necessary.

Though it is not objectionable at all to undergo *kachha Navar* as mentioned





above, it is not advisable to have such candidates to undergo Maratab (second initiation into priesthood). After all, Maratab is mainly required to perform high and inner rituals which a kaccha navar may never need to perform. In the past when candidates used to undergo kachha Navar, they were made to learn by heart all the Has if they desired to undergo Maratab.

The Navar is an honerous spiritual responsibility as well as a right wrested in the hands of a few chosen ones. It is only the priests and priestly families themselves who can ensure that this sacred right is neither violated nor misused.

Ervad Dr. Ramiyar Parvez Karanjia, is the Principal of Dadar Athornan Institute and Sir Jamshedji Jeejeebhoy Zathoshty and Mullan Feroze Institutes for Indo-Iranian Studies. He has a Masters and Doctorate degree in Avesta-Pahlavi from Bombay University and 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, youth and adults.



THE VIRTUE OF DISCRIMINATION – A LESSON IN VALUES

Just how are we coping with religious issues in this, our second Diaspora?

Most Australian Zarathushtis would ask, "What issues?" and continue with, "We have none!" When one sees no problems in one's environment, one fails to seek solutions to them!

Like the elephant in the room, it's a value judgement that most people refuse to make in case they are seen to be treading on sensitive toes about issues that would vanish - if only left unrecognised! Speak of the devil and the devil appears; so why bother even thinking of things that may cause evil to rear its ugly head? Brush all controversial subjects under the carpet and then in true Aussie style, "No worries mate!" because when left unacknowledged, we have no problems! God's in His Heaven and all's right with the world, even when your world is being torn apart by blind ignorance, deaf self-centredness and dumb unawareness!

Funnily enough I find the Youth have more sense than some of the adults I have had the displeasure of encountering! When we had openly asked the youngsters to tell us what they would like to hear about at our Congress (The 4thWZYC2007) we were categorically told that they simply did not wish to be bothered by "going nowhere subjects" like Conversion or Intermarriage! Yet I have noticed it still seems to be a focus for many an adult as if either subject is going to put paid to the self induced fears of our

SHIRIN J MISTRY, Melbourne, Australia

supposedly falling numbers - in India, may be - but one must count us now around the world!

If we mean to live by our religious values, surely the first step has to be to learn to honestly discriminate between what is Right and what is not! What is wrong with helping people to remain within their own fold, not to give up on their own family and Faith, not to think that the grass is greener on the other side? Why are we expected to hurt other mothers by making them lose their sons? What part of "NO!" do people not understand? Must we lose our own values by causing others to lose theirs? Being wilfully blind we can see nothing wrong!

Judging a person does not define who they are; it defines who you are! I don't have to lower my standards to accommodate anybody else's sense of worthlessness at being what they were born! There is no bigotry involved in following the rules and customs that have brought us this far with such distinction! It doesn't mean the others are less than we are or that their own religion of birth is somehow lacking and we must help to bring them up to ours or else somebody may call us selfishly greedy, wanting to keep all the goodies for ourselves. In fact by accepting non-Zarathushtis into our fold, we would actually be conceding that their own was not worthy of honour and therefore needed to be abandoned as soon as possible!

When parents themselves forget where they have come from, how can they ever hope to



impress their children with what we deem to be religiously valuable and de rigueur? I don't just blame some of the Youth for the way they are going, but I do wonder about parents who have let their responsibilities slide, because it is easier to do, than "lose" their children by denying them getting what they want or living the way they please!

Were our parents wrong in teaching us to make wise choices and marry within the fold, for it is not just our own life that would be in jeopardy but also those of our beloved children who never asked to be born and will never really have a sense of true belonging? The entire fabric of our society is based around FAMILY within the community and when you shatter a sense of full membership to it, you are taking away more than just a sense of pride; you are taking away a sense of self-worth in knowing who they really are – or, as one of my young pupils had once jumped up to avow, "I am half-German, half-Polish! I am a nothing and a nobody!" Saddest of all is that both her parents were practising Catholics and we were not discussing intermarriages or any marriage at all! I have not forgotten her name, her face or her words! I wouldn't want any child to ever feel like "a nothing" and "a nobody"! Would you?

Endorsing a cyber site meant to promote marriages of young Zarathushtis within the fold was actually deemed to be an insult to other communities, by a Parsi claiming to live in Australia, and who may be an Australian by Nationality now but is certainly not a fair dinkum Aussie at heart! Perhaps then, to please such minds we should be merrily promoting intermarriages, conning people into conversions when not forcing them to do so at the point of a sword, leaving off all our precepts and practises and taking on board alien ideas without further thought! After all, it is "our" value system and which we need to "choose" to keep, for that, sets us apart from all others rather than making us just a part of some other community with its own ideas to adhere to, or we'd definitely perish for want of a desire to perpetuate it!

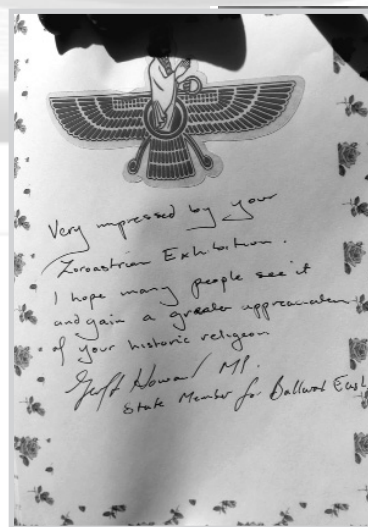
If our Youth today are not conscious of their ancestry and so cannot wish to uphold it come what may, it is because few know much about it. This is where the adults have failed them. Oh sure, the kids have some laughable idea of "Hummay Parsi, hummay great!" but what actual knowledge of our achievements or the reasons for our successes in the past are being rigorously imparted or are being held up as shining examples to be imitated? It is all very well to wish to enlighten the whole world about who we are and to take our place amongst the religions of the world, yet our own children are left in the dark about our own historical precepts and religious practices, because it is a tad inconvenient to do so and still be taken as a world citizen in the melting pot that passes as secularism, modernity or egalitarian social norms! Like charity, religion begins at home and a great part of Zarathushtiism rests on discrimination - making the right choice based on our value system, not on somebody else's!

The Youth have no point of reference. The parents are not inculcating the cultural achievements of our past. When was the last time our Youth were encouraged to study more about our religion, to go to India, still the bastion of Zarathushti religion, to insist on a religiously long established proper Zarathushti navjote or marriage ceremony, to listen to discourses by our internationally acclaimed religious

scholars, priests and laymen alike, rather than exposing them to self professed and laughable accounts by self-invited speakers? How many of our Youth were actively encouraged to attend a World Zarathushti Youth Congress in their own backyard and how many are still being taunted maliciously as traitors for doing so? Who was betraying whom? I dare say some egoistic adults not only let down the Youth they also failed Zarathushtis by irresponsibly opposing an excellent endeavour that not only showcased Zarathushtis in Australia but also put Australia on the world Zarathushti map!

"Though comparatively small in point of numbers, the Parsees occupy one of the foremost places among Indian nationalities" Has anything really changed since this was written in The National Geographic Magazine of December, 1906? Do we really want to give up on being in the forefront, by giving up on our own standards and adopting those of others?

Someone in cyberspace has recently stated that "Any tenet, philosophy, or thinking, that is not open to change, is headed in only one direction, extinction" What kind of change is being advocated to keep us from dying out? Where shall we begin? How about getting rid of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds for starters? After all they must be at least 3800 years old! Then let's change all that old philosophy about being morally upright and ethically up standing - gosh, how outmoded can you get?! And then let's all aim at mediocrity in all our endeavours rather than excellence at





everything! As for our wellknown tolerance for all other religions, first up, let's start being nasty to the Hindus for being Hindus, the Christians for worshipping Christ, the Jews for following Judaism, the Muslims for not giving up on Islam and so on and so forth! From idol worshipping to the Holy Trinity, to matriarchal descent, to forcibly converting anybody who isn't one of us - let's give up on all our religious tenets and traditions and espouse alien ideas! Let's refuse to do any more charity and start dole bludging - let's bring tons of children into the world and insist they are the State's responsibility; let's blame the way our kids turn out, upon their buddies, schools, teachers, the media, modern times, overpopulation, poverty and upon anything and anyone else, except upon ourselves! Let's stop being our own Salvation just to please the wiseacres!

How far a cry is that from just 150 years ago when our astute forefathers in England decided to come together and form an Association that took care of its own?

"One of the initial objectives of the Zarathushti Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE), established in 1861, was to ensure that Zarathushtis, mainly the Parsis from India who then were coming to Great Britain for the purposes of trade and further technical and medical education, would never be a financial burden to the British Exchequer either when alive or after their demise."

Only such reasons could ever elicit from the well known impetuous lips of the self styled Dontopedalogist, Prince Philip - The Duke of Edinburgh at ZTFE's Sesquicentennial Function in London recently -

"I have heard what a tremendous contribution the Zarathushtis have made

to this country, even before 150 years ago. It's a remarkable record." Is anybody willing to destroy that track record by following alien ways or rather giving up on ours, BECAUSE THEY ARE NOW SO OUT-OF-DATE AND WE MUST MOVE WITH THE TIMES? Or, should we learn to discriminate and retain all the values that make us uniquely ourselves anywhere in this world?

"The community has made a huge contribution to the British Isles and it is very much appreciated. It occurred (sic) to me that I arrived in a Zarathushti car." Had we already given up on excelling - after all, that religious admonition too is so passé and in today's feckless world lacks any fiscal value, would any appreciation have been forthcoming from Prince Philip, hoping we'd still be around in the British Isles 2000 years from now?

The difference between success and failure is based on choice not chance! To make such a choice a practising Zarathushti needs to be able to distinguish between options and pick one that is worthy "of a member of this remarkable race!"

You are not defined by this moment in time.

You are not what has happened to you!

It's the way you choose to respond that matters

And what you decide to do.

Courage is not the absence of fear,

But a powerful choice we make ~

The choice to move forward with PURPOSE

Regardless of what it takes.

So what choices will you make, with well thought out judgment or without any discernment? Will you learn to discriminate and with courage hold on to your ancestral values or simply give in out of fear of being socially ostracised by the leading lights of your careless community? What will you decide to do? Move forward with purpose? Practise or pass over? Preserve or give in to peer pressure? Perpetuate or perish? The choice as always is yours! I've made mine long ago!

"The world cannot end today, for it is already tomorrow in Australia!"

Cheers from Down Under!

Shirin J Mistry Melbourne, Australia.

"Having chosen to remain a practicing Zarathushti, come what may, with discrimination aforethought, Shirin Mistry elected to become an Australian citizen, long before most other Parsis had arrived in Melbourne."





AND WHERE SHALL WE LIVE?

Dinaz Kut ar Rogers

*When the last individual of a race of living things breathes no more
another heaven and another earth must pass before such a one can begin again.*

William Beebe, Scientist

The mighty Persian Empires succeeded in large part because they did not impose their religion and customs on the conquered populace and at times gladly adapted the traditions, language, food and attire of their subjects. When Zarathushtis arrived in India a few hundred years later, this easy-going, live-and-let-live attitude enabled them to thrive. The longevity and many of the accomplishments of the Parsi community in Mumbai are the result of the qualities of our long-ago ancestors. Times have, however, changed in Mumbai, and the number of Parsis has been declining.

Prominent among the reasons for this is the lack of suitable housing, especially for young couples who would like to start families. When I was growing up in Gamadia Colony in the Tardeo area of Bombay, the Parsi community was cohesive culturally and geographically. Near my colony were two other Parsi colonies and many Parsi-owned and occupied buildings, along with four agiyaris (fire temples). This geographical confluence was of great advantage for maintaining our Parsi identity. Enclaves of other ethnic and religious groups were scattered throughout the city, and this "separate but equal" arrangement functioned well. We all met at school, play, college and work but went to our own neighborhoods come sunset.

The Parsi colonies are now in jeopardy. At the entrance of Gamadia Colony where I grew up was a building called Hoonersalla, akin to a vocational education center for Parsi boys and young men. With changing times, the enrollment in this school dwindled, and the vast building stood empty for a number of years. Colony residents had many practical suggestions as to what to do with that building, such as opening a cooperative market. In the residential building across from this Hoonersalla, a Zoroastrian Bank occupies one of the ground-floor flats, and relocating this bank to the co-op thus freeing up the flat for a family would have been a great idea. The need for apartments is acute.

On my last visit to see my family and neighbors in Gamadia Colony I was horrified to see a skyscraper in place of the Hoonersalla! The person who owned the land sold it, and now non-Parsi housing sits within the Parsi Colony. The Parsi residents of the colony are unhappy.

In the Dadar Parsi Colony, the landlord of the building across the street from the Parsi Madresa added two more stories and rented the flats out to non-Parsis. The original building was constructed by benevolent Parsi donors, and I believe that it should be forever reserved for Parsis, in the interest of community survival.

Other factors are contributing to the shortage of housing for Parsis in Bombay. For example, in #10, Mody

Building, where I grew up, a second-floor apartment sat unoccupied for a long time! The couple in that flat died childless, and a niece and a neighbor fought over the rights to the flat. Termites and roaches moved in, and the neighbors above and below battled to keep the vermin from migrating to their flats. Fortunately for all concerned, this matter got settled and a new family moved in.

The Mody Building is part of a charitable complex and not ownership flats, so why did it take so long to settle this matter? Why was quick action not taken against this tug-of-war when so many of our young people cannot find a place to rent? Many young couples are holding off marriage while they wait to find a decent place, instead of cramming up with two or three generations in a small, two-room flat.

Another issue for our Zarathushti community is indifference toward faith and culture. Many people of Zarathushtian descent are drifting away. The idea of establishing a consecrated agiary in the United States or Canada is under discussion. But this is not a simple question of constructing a temple and stocking it with the usual amenities. Who would be allowed to enter this fire temple?

In India signs at the temple entrances say "No one except Parsi admitted." Nowadays at some temples an additional sign reads "No admittance to Parsi women (or their children) if married to a non-Parsi." Is this what we want here in the land of civil liberties? We had better think this through.

The existing, smaller dar-e-mehrs in United States and Canada have no such prohibitive signs. I think this is a good first step. How, then, do we bring those who have drifted away back to the faith?

I say, worldwide, we should be missionaries to our own people. Tell those who have not reaped the benefits of growing up surrounded by other Zarathushtis about the enormous impact our faith has had on other religions. Distribute pamphlets and books, post





articles on the internet, tell our people about our history and our contributions. I am sure many are hungry for such knowledge of their ancient faith and will welcome it.

I have heard that in South Korea Buddhism is losing out to Christianity, and as a response Buddhists have started going door to door visiting former Buddhists who have fallen out of practice. Buddhists calling on their fellow Buddhists has been effective in inspiring the "backsliders" to return to their religion. Surely we can do the same.

Hope is at hand. A revival of our faith is occurring amongst both the old and young, especially in India. Still, we need

to reach out to the drifters. The Zarathushti religion has survived in India for 1300 years. Surely with modern technology, conviction and a little chutzpah we can survive forever. Our ancestors did not flee from Iran in vain. Let us do them proud.

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.



ARE WE TREATING OUR MOBEDS FAIRLY ?

Author unknown

The other day when I was at the Anjuman and Wadiji Atashbehram, praying before the jubilant fire, a thought came into my mind, which has prompted me to write to you with a hope that you would please forward these thoughts to all Zarathushtis, who today are the privileged ones to stand before the consecrated fire.

During the prayers, when one heaps on loads of sandalwood sticks, how many of us drop in a note of a decent denomination into the 'ashodad' box for the priest? More often than not, it is a coin, and that too, a Re. 1/- or Rs. 2/- coin. In some cases, it may be a generous Rs. 5/- coin. And sometimes there is a ten rupee note visible. Of course there are some who give generously, but these are few and far between.

I stood there for long, watching the aged priest chant the beautiful "avesta" words which filled the hall. Besides me, there were only 2 other persons, but the priest prayed loud and clear, enunciating each word which filled the space therein. While droplets of sweat trickled down my back and face, my mind was urging me to go out where there was breeze

and get on with my other chores for the day. But a part of me kept holding on inside the inner space where the "boi" ceremony was going on.

The aged priest bent down and picked up the few paltry coins in the tray and dropped them in the box. From a distance I could see a few one rupee coins and maybe a couple of five rupees. That was all that was there. Out of the collection, he would get a part of this as his share of earnings, as it would be shared amongst all the priests on duty at the Atashbehram.

I was witnessing all this in a sort of disinterested stupor, when a thought suddenly flashed in my mind which made me feel very small. I recalled that when we order something from the grocer round the corner, or the vegetable vendor, or when we order burgers from McDonalds, or a pizza, we very graciously dish out a five rupee note or more often ten rupees to say the least as a tip to the delivery boy for his service. Sometimes this happens more than a couple of times a day to different vendors rendering different services. When we go to a restaurant, a fifty rupee or a hundred rupee tip for the waiter is considered in order. All this for a task done for us. Perhaps this is because anything less would invoke scorn from the receiver.

Then why do we save the least for our priests who tend to our holy fires? Why do they have to be the last on our minds? Why must there be only "one person among a hundred" to put a hundred rupee note in the 'ashodad box'?

In the sweltering heat at unearthly hours, 24X7, they serve the community. Despite their long hours of prayers, they do not gorge on all the blessings of the Lord. They tend to the fire, keep it burning day and night. Often we wait for the machi bells to be rung and leave the fire temple. While they toil through the hour on their feet in the heat of the sacred fire and fill the air with the resonance of the beautiful prayers even if there is no one around to hear them chant. Still, in our minds, they do not deserve more.

How callous can we be, how small can we get. As I was about to leave, I saw someone else enter. I stopped, hoping there would be a stretch in the generosity; but the struggle began... to find a coin of the least denomination.

I have changed from today. I hope with this email, you can help me in changing the hearts of others. Maybe my silent prayer can heal others too. -

God Bless



ZARATHUSHTI PRIESTHOOD: EDUCATE AND REJUVENATE

Arnavaz Chubb

The Zarathushti religion is unique in that it is the only one of the revealed religions to have a priest for a prophet: *Ushta no zato athrava yo Spitamo Zarathushstro*. (Hail! Spitama Zarathushtra, the Athravan has been born for us.)

Every Zarathushti priest after that would have had extremely large shoes to fill both professionally and personally. For several thousands of years of Zarathushti history, the mystique and majesty of the Magi (magu; mobed) was the stuff of legend, not only amongst the Zarathushti people, but across the civilized world. Zarathushti priests of yore were men of learning. They were healers, astronomers, scientists and seers and held high offices in royal courts. Religion and science were complementary disciplines for the Magi and not mutually exclusive as they have now become. Pythagoras and Plato were known to have sought and admired the erudition of the Magi.

While they once commanded respect and were pillars of society, sadly, the last 100 years have seen the status of the mobed become moribund. Reduced to being the last resort of the inept and indolent, the priestly profession amongst the Zarathushtis commands little respect today. The once high estimation of the Zarathushti priest is evident from the fact that Athravan is one of the titles of Ahura Mazda himself. Yet today, the Athravan is considered to be a "bringer of andharu (darkness)"; from the word Andhiaaru meaning a teacher-priest.

Traditionally, the role of the priest has been to provide a link between men on earth and their gods in heaven. While the laity saw the safeguarding of this link as vital, the priesthood prospered. Increasingly, modern man sees this link as irrelevant and consequently the power and prestige of the priest has declined. Secular studies have undermined the importance of religious education, which is considered disparate from one's normal course of study. Ignorance has resulted in spirituality being reduced to superstition and religious earnestness being considered tantamount to bigotry.

When religious fervour is viewed with trepidation and secularism is viewed as the benign option where does that leave the custodians of religion – the priests? Practicing priests of the past few generations have been disillusioned and dejected and have striven to provide their sons with a secular education and encouraged them to develop professional careers outside of the priesthood. Priestly duties at best have been limited to part-time practice and at worst been rejected altogether. The hereditary nature of the Zarathushti priesthood is in itself restrictive and this has seen the numbers of priests dwindle alarmingly. In the heyday of the Zarathushti empires of pre-Islamic Iran, Zarathushti priests were

formulators of public opinion, today they have been relegated to the background, their advice and opinions hardly if ever sought even from those competent to give it.

The global trend towards secularism has undermined most religions and the Zarathushti faith has not been exempt. The loss of status of the priesthood of all the major religions is endemic. Brahmins are being berated, Padres are being pilloried, Rabbis ridiculed and Mullas mocked. This world-wide phenomenon is amplified a hundred fold for the miniscule Zarathushti community that struggles to remain relevant and meaningful to its followers swamped in multi-cultural societies.

During the 19th century, the Parsis of India increasingly migrated from the villages of Gujarat to Bombay where they embraced a more western way of life. The pursuit of knowledge and education has always been a priority for Zarathushtis and many Parsis flocked to Christian missionary-run educational institutions to acquire learning. Under the sometimes proselytising pressure of these missionaries, these Parsis found themselves having to justify their ancient traditions and way of life. Traditions that had been for generations unquestioningly accepted were now being challenged and under this strain, Parsis discovered that their knowledge of their religion was inconsistent and inadequate.

Religious studies had through the centuries remained the preserve of the Zarathushti priesthood who underwent a rigorous training in the traditional manner at special schools or madressas. Their specifically religious training left them behind in more secular education. Behdins were becoming doctors and lawyers in the western education system while the traditionally educated priest was relegated to the ranks of bumpkins.

During the latter half of the 19th century, Khurshedji Rustomji Cama, (photo pg 34) a behdin educated in the west in the philological methods of studying Avesta and Pahlavi realised that the only way to ameliorate the lot of the





Parsi priesthood was to educate them. He took it upon himself to educate priests with modern methods of scholarship and succeeded in producing a band of devoted and scripturally educated priests that could once again command the respect and admiration of the Zarathushti community.

Despite Cama's best efforts and those of his devoted band of scholar priests, the initial impetus dwindled away and regrettably, today extremely few priests choose to pursue religious studies. The lack of encouragement offered to pursue such studies is too well known to the few that choose to do so and who do so in spite of receiving no acknowledgement from community members. Not every priest has the aptitude for scholarship, in fact the majority of Parsi priests do learn the *tarikats* (rituals) and *bhantar* (prayers) by rote, but the sheer discipline and stamina, both mental and physical that this entails

is lost on the laity. In a world of instant gratification, if there is no immediate, tangible nirvana, both ritual and priest are pronounced worthless.

Asceticism and renunciation are not part of the Zarathushti religious ethos. Communion with the divine is not obtained on top of distant mountains, but amongst the daily hustle and bustle of life. All Zarathushtis, priests and laymen are enjoined to marry and beget children and to live a full life enjoying the fruits of this earth in moderation and with responsibility. The highest office of Zarathushti priesthood is only attainable to married priests, but the meagre remuneration received by the priest is hardly conducive to the establishment of a comfortable family life.

The current status of the priestly class has to be a reflection of the general apathy displayed by the community towards their religion. It is a matter of some surprise that a community that generally places such a high value on education has so neglected religious studies both amongst the priests and the laity. The Zarathushti community needs to realign and reassess its priorities if our religion and culture are to survive in any meaningful way. If as a community we fail to support and encourage the infrastructure that produces high caliber priests reminiscent of the ancient Magi, then surely we have rung the death knell for ourselves.

Arnavaz Chubb holds an MA degree from Bombay University in Avesta and Pahlavi for which she received the Khurshedji F. Parekh Gold Medal. She studied the scriptural languages at the Sir J.J. Madressa in Bombay under the tutelage of Dastur Dr Kaikhushroo M. JamaspAsa and the late Dastur Dr Hormazdiyar Kayoji Mirza. Arnavaz lives in Melbourne, Australia with her husband and daughters.





"ATASHKADEH IN NORTH AMERICA"

ERVAD KOBAD ZAROLIA

INTRODUCTION

Zoroastrian population in North America has now reached a critical mass to establish their own place of worship in various cities throughout North America. These associations have committed significant resources to purchase properties with an intention to build Zarathushti places of worship.

North American Mobed Council (NAMC), in its capacity as advisory body on Zoroastrian religion in North America, has been approached to provide instruction and guidance in setting up Zoroastrian place of worship; suitable to North American environment.

This publication is thus produced for use by various North American Zoroastrian Associations as they fulfill their members' religious and cultural needs by constructing or expanding their places of worship.

NAME OF ZOROASTRIAN PLACE OF WORSHIP:

These places of worship came to be known by different names; most popular amongst them being "Fire Temple", "Agyari" (Place of Agni or fire), "Dar-e-Meher" (Door of Mithra) and ATASHKADEH (Place of Fire)

The structures described above are built to serve the fire that resides in it. Name of Fire Temple describes the physical structure of the temple. The Fire within the structure is described by the type of fire.

(E.g. an "Agyari", "Dar-e-Mehr" or "ATASHKADEH" (being the structure) contain an "Atash Behram, Atash Adaran or "Atash Dadgah" (type of fire housed in the structure).

In keeping with our Zarathushti heritage and to appropriately describe the structure, it is NAMC's view that a Zoroastrian place of worship in North America be commonly known as "Atashkadeh"

CATEGORY OF FIRE:

Modern day Zarathushtis pray in the presence of three categories of Fire:

ATASH DADGAH

The Atash Dadgah is the basic grade of sacred fire. It can be either a perpetually burning fire or allowed to be extinguished and relit when necessary. It does not require periodic Boi ceremony. A Mobed (in absence of a Mobed, a Mobedyar and in the absence of a Mobedyar, a lay Zoroastrian) can tend the fire in the Atash Dadgah.

ATASH ADARAN

Atash Adaran, the "Fire of fires" is the middle grade of fire. It requires a gathering of hearth fires from representatives of the four professional groups: the

priesthood (*athornan*), the soldiers (*ratheshearan*), the farmers or herdsmen (*vastryoshan*) and the artisans (*hutokhshan*). This procedure takes about three weeks. Atash Adaran is a continuously burning fire and needs to be attended five times a day by a Boi ceremony performed by a Mobed.

ATASH BEHRAM

Atash Behram, "Fire of victory" is the highest grade of fire. It involves gathering of fires from 16 different sources, including lightning and cremation pyre. This procedure could take up to about a year.

To comply with the current conditions in North America, NAMC recommends that "Atash Dadgah" be established in North America at the present time, with a view to upgrade it to Atash Adaran when circumstances permit.

ATASHKADEH STRUCTURE:

ARCHITECTURE:

Zoroastrian fire temples of yesteryears were magnificent edifices, worthy of pride in their architecture and the communities that constructed them. The surviving structures are a testament to such magnificence.

NAMC believes that an ATASHKADEH should be a magnificent structure. It should depict Zoroastrian Persian architecture and it should be an edifice worthy of the sacred fire that it houses.

To maintain security of the structure, to prevent flooding and to preserve ritual purity the entire ATASHKADEH structure should be elevated by about 3 feet from the adjoining normal ground level.

USE AND CAPACITY OF ATASHKADEH:

Entry and use of an ATASHKADEH should be open to ALL who adhere to the Zoroastrian customs with requirements of covering their heads while in the ATASHKADEH.

To maintain ritual purity and to distinguish from other buildings, the ATASHKADEH should be a stand alone structure; distinctly separate from a





community centre, banquet hall, gymnasium or any other utility building.

The occupancy capacity of the Congregation Hall should reflect the size of the Zoroastrian community in the vicinity and the affordability of the association.

DIRECTION:

Though it is recognized that various fire temples throughout the world face in different directions, NAMC feels it be preferable for the Atashkadeh entrance to face east.

SEGMENTS OF ATASHKADEH:

PADYAAB KUSHTI AREA

Zarathushti tradition enjoins, before entering the main body of an Atashkadeh, visitors are to perform *Padyaab Kushti*.

Adjacent to the entrance, a separate area for men and women should be set aside for *Padyaab Kushti*, where facilities be made available to visitors to hang their coats, store their shoes, and cleanse the exposed areas of their body. A prayer cap and scarves dispenser should be provided in this area.

PRAYER HALL AND KEBLA

Prayer hall or Main hall could be set up two ways. Please refer to the drawings.

Fig 1. An open prayer hall with KEBLA in center or on one side.

Fig 2. Prayer room with another room with KEBLA in it

A convenient and safe area should be set aside in the Prayer Hall for lighting Deevo (an oil based flame lit lamp) or a substitute thereof that would comply with the local environmental regulations.

KEBLA

The Sanctum Sanctorum of the edifice is known as KEBLA.

Zarathushtis regard this area in an ATASHKADEH as an HOLY area as it holds the holy Fire.

The KEBLA area should be clearly identified as a separate area restricted to all visitors. A railing, mini wall or such

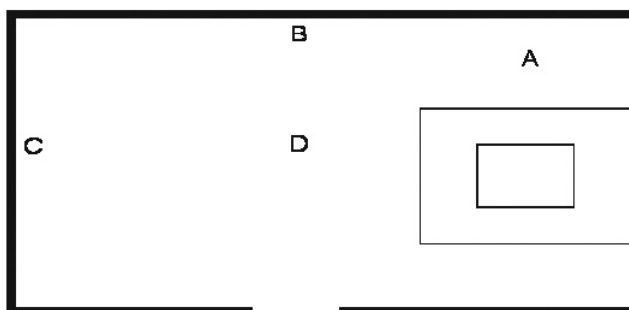


Fig. 1

Kebla could be placed at any of the ABC or D positions

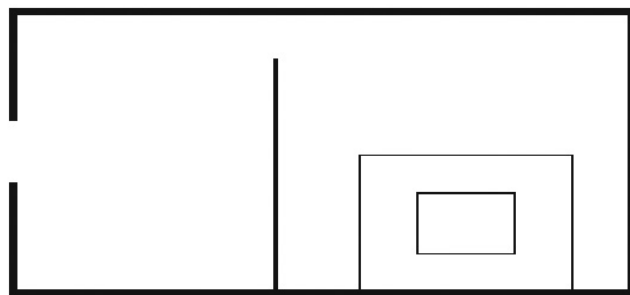


Fig. 2

other architecture should form a barrier to prevent accidental entry by an unauthorized person.

An entrance area should be provided for the Mobed to enter and exit the KEBLA, and the same area may be used by the visitors to bow their heads to the holy Fire.

Since devotees pray in front of the holy fire, their focal point and centre of concentration is the holy fire, the direction being faced by the devotee is of no consequence.

KEBLA should consist of an area of 15' x 15' of stone, marble or tile flooring.

To simulate the idea of heavenly dome, the roof of the KEBLA should be dome shaped, designed to facilitate unobstructed escape of smoke from the holy fire, while preventing water, snow and direct sunlight.

PAVI: ritual furrows, act as a barrier to guard the ritual purity of the holy fire, and act as drainage while cleaning the inside of the KEBLA

Pavi should be two inches in width and two inches in depth with a spot for water drainage and should mark the outside parameter of the KEBLA

According to rituals the attending Mobed is required to disengage himself from outside surroundings as he enters the KEBLA. An area marked by a Pavi at the entrance to the KEBLA should be made available for such disengagement.

In the centre of the KEBLA an ornate stone pedestal about a foot in height should be constructed to represent the throne on which the holy fire is enthroned. The pedestal is marked by a Pavi to guard its ritual purity.



Holy fire is placed on this pedestal in an **Afarganyu**; a special metal fire vase. The Afarganyu should be about 3' high.

The holy fire is tended by the attending Mobed, by performing a **Boi ceremony**. Boi ceremony involves ritual cleaning of the stone pedestal and sounding the bell. Two metal bells should be placed at diagonally opposite corners (South East and North West) of the KEBLA. They should be suspended at a distance from the Afarganyu such that the Mobed could reach them comfortably while making connection with the Afarganyu with a metal ladle (*Chamach*).

URVISHGAH:

In their efforts to preserve and protect their religious rituals and customs, the Zarathushtis of North America have expressed their desire to be able to conduct the inner liturgical ceremonies; often referred to as "*Pav Mahel Kriya*"

Pav Mahel Kriyas generally refer to the ceremonies of *Yazashne*, *Visparad*, *Vendidad*, *Nirangdin* and *Baj*.

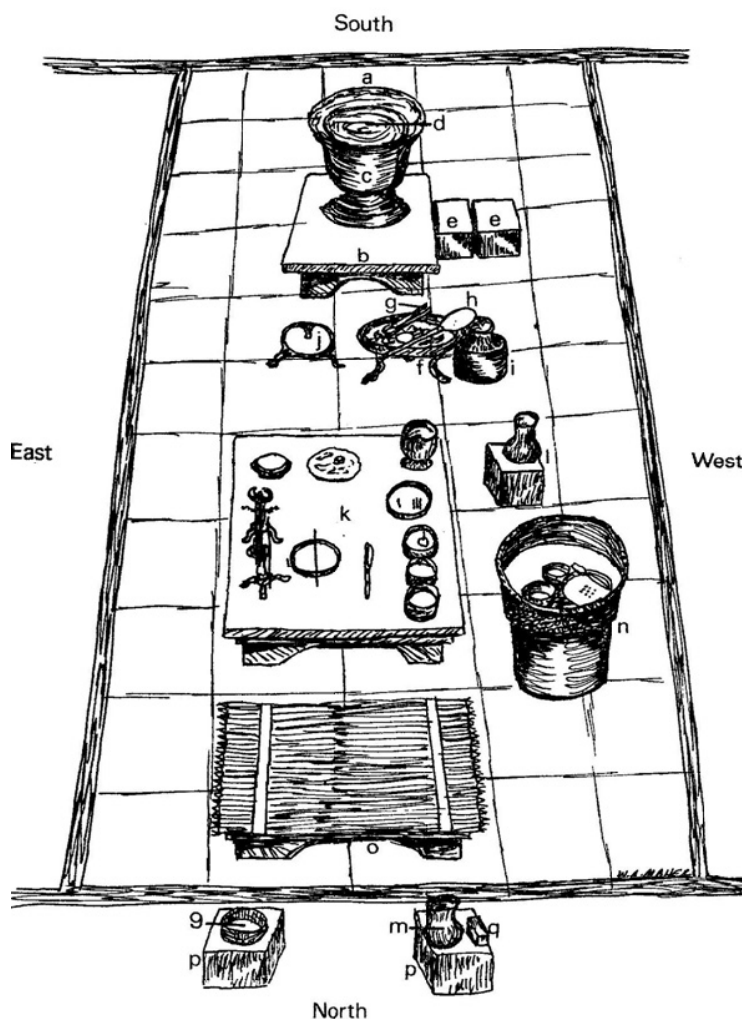
Pav Mahel Kriyas are performed in a specially assigned area in a consecrated Atashkadeh by Mobeds.

The area dedicated for Pav Mahel ceremonies is known as "*Urvishgah*" and forms an integral part of an Atashkadeh.

Situated on north south axis and the outer area marked by a Pavi, the Urvishgah should consist of an area of 18' x 10', of stone, marble or tile flooring and have pedestals as identified in the layout.

MISCELLANEOUS AREAS:

To maintain ritual purity of the Atash Dadgah, the following miscellaneous areas should be separately constructed and connected by a corridor with the ATASHKADEH.





MOBED CHANGE ROOM:

Mobeds should be provided with a separate rest and change room, wash room and shower facilities.

NAAHAN AREA:

As Pav Mahel ceremonies require a Mobed to undergo Naahan or Bershnum ceremony requiring seclusion for 9 nights, a room should be set aside for this purpose.

KITCHENETTE:

A separate kitchenette should be provided for the use by Mobeds and others attending to the needs of the ATASHKADEH.

STORAGE AND BOILER ROOM:

Provision should be made for storage of wood and other supplies needed for smooth functioning of the ATASHKADEH.

WATER SOURCE:

Pav Mahel ceremonies require a source of clean water.

Locally available source of clean water; including tap water may be used for ceremonial purposes and a man made body of water or a garden be used to return the ceremonially used water to its source

CONSECRATION CEREMONY OF ATASHKADEH (Building)

LAYING THE FOUNDATION:

A Baj and a Jashan ceremony in honor of Asfandad Ameshaspand has to be performed on the isolated area.

The foundation stone may include a time capsule containing Zoroastrian artifacts, gold and silver coins, prayer books (*Khorde Avesta*, *Yazashne*, *Vendidad etc.*) and information on the Zoroastrian association that constructs it.

CONSECRATION OF THE ATASHKADEH:

The KEBLA area should be cleaned three times with clean water.

For three days, starting from the third day prior to the final enthronement of Atash Dadgah, a Mobed is to perform a

Baj of Daron dedicated to *Sarosh Yazad* in the Havan Gah. The fire used on the first Baj should be kept burning and the same fire should be used through all the Baj ceremonies.

Using the same fire, at midnight on the day prior to the final enthronement day, *Vendidad Sadeh* should be performed by a Mobed.

Using the same fire, in the *Havan Gah* of the day of enthronement, after the completion of the *Vendidad*, a Baj dedicated to Ahura Mazda is to be performed.

After the Baj ceremony, the fire is transported by a group of Mobeds from the *Urvishgah* to the KEBLA while visitors line their route and recite aloud, in unison, *Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer*.

On reaching the KEBLA, the Mobeds enthrone the fire on the Afarganyu.

The Mobeds who performed the Baj ceremonies for the three previous days should be given the honor to offer the first Boi ceremony for the newly enthroned Atash Dadgah.

A Jashan in honor of Ahura Mazda for thanksgiving should be performed on the first day of the enthronement of Atash Dadgah.

ADHERENCE TO RITUALS AND TRADITIONS :

There is every reason to believe that the Zoroastrians of North America will preserve their faith, rituals and culture while adapting to the North American environment, just as their ancestors did through centuries of prosperity and adversity.

At the next AGM of NAMC in 2012, this paper will be presented and adopted as a NAMC Paper.

I would like to recognize the input of Ontario Mobeds and special thanks to Mobeds Ervad Gusti Panthaky, Ervad Tehemton Mirza, and Ervad Noshir Mirza who helped in preparing this paper.

Ervad Kobad Zarolia



President NAMC

Paper prepared for North American Mobeds Council



The Establishment of a “Traditional Consecrated Dar-E-Mehr In the Western World Another such challenge--From Dream To Reality”

Kaemerz Dotiwala

This article will discuss

1. *Reasons no consecrated place of worship has been established.*
2. *Need for a Consecrated Dar-e-Mehr*
3. *Reasons for Consecrating*
4. *Taking on the Challenge*
5. *Research Process*
6. *Challenges*
7. *Design*

Our forefathers after horrendous religious persecution left their beloved homeland Iran to preserve our Mazda Yasne religion. It is therefore but natural that when they landed in India one of the very first acts they performed was the establishment of a consecrated Atash Behram.

Zarathushti pioneers who came to the West did so mostly for economic reasons. Naturally after they had taken care of their immediate needs and those of their families, their thoughts then turned to establish community centers with prayer halls where the community could congregate, practice the faith and preserve the culture.

There has always been a deep yearning in the collective communal heart of Zarathushtis in the Western World to have a consecrated Atash Adaran.

A number of communities have explored this possibility; some like ZTFE have even carried out very detailed research.

Although many wonderful community centers have been established over time, no consecrated Dar-e-Mehr has been established to date. The question that comes to mind is why?

REASONS NO CONSECRATED PLACE OF WORSHIP HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED IN THE WESTERN DIASPORA.

The reasons often given is :

1. Alat required to consecrate are not present and it is not possible to bring them from India or Iran because the Alat have to maintain constant contact with earth and thus cannot be flown or brought by sea.
2. Commitment from membership and community to maintain the ritualistic purity is not present.
3. In order to maintain the ritualistic purity of the sacred precincts of a consecrated Dar-e-Mehr, non-Zarathushtis or those married outside the faith and their offsprings would be proscribed from entering and using the Dar-e-Mehr. The existing constitution of the various Zarathushti associations as written would not

be able to accommodate that requirement.

The question that begs to be answered at this juncture is why do we need a consecrated Dar-e-Mehr when we already have very good prayer halls and facilities for worship at all of our centers? Is the community ready and committed to this idea?

NEED FOR A CONSECRATED DAR-E-MEHR

The community has matured and feels that the establishment and consecration of a Dadgah as advised by our Vada Dasturjis would be a step in the right direction to

1. Satisfy the religious needs of the community,
2. Bring about a renewed religious fervor within the community, especially in our youth,
3. Most importantly, it would be a place where Zarathushtis could go for spiritual renewal, a place to recharge their spiritual batteries.

A poll taken by the Zoroastrian Trust Fund of Europe (1999) shows that:

- 77% felt that a place of worship was in their two top priorities.
- 58% felt a place of worship was the most important priority.
- 81% of the youth between 15 & 25 years remarked that a place of worship was the highest priority.





-- 75% of respondents aged between 26 & 50 felt it was most important.

-- 68% of the respondents who were over 50s population felt the place of worship was most important.

REASONS FOR CONSECRATING

To answer that question we need to look at the very act of consecration and see what the ancients believed was supposed to happen when we consecrate, and try to understand the act of consecration through a scientific lens of the modern times.

CONSECRATION

The very act of consecration presupposes for the faithful that the rituals prescribed to carry out that act of consecration allows the Spirit of Divinity to enter into the object or objects which are being consecrated.

ANCIENT THOUGHT

In the ancient days Zarathushtis believed that by following the prescribed ritual of consecration they were causing a, "Yazata" (worthy of worship) to be generated within the object being consecrated. e.g, *the Darun or the Myzad in the Jashan ceremony*.

SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT

In the Bundahishn (Zarathushti story of creation) it is stated that at the time of creation Ahura Mazda created among other creations, "Yazatas" (substitute Yazatas as "Forces of Energy"). If we look at the concept of consecration with our scientific minds we can conceive that at the time of creation Ahura Mazda created various forces of energy. Applying the law of conservation of energy, we know that energy can never be destroyed, it can only be transformed.

In the consecrating process, the prescribed rituals of prayer, "Sound Energy", develops a reservoir of energy in the object being consecrated. In our case, the fire and or the building where the fire will be enthroned (Consecrated Dar-E-Mehr). This consecrated place of worship then acts as a receiver as well as a transmitter of energy; for example:

prayers at the time of Boi Ceremony continues to charge the reservoir of energy. When a person comes to worship they say their prayers which are received by the fire, consecrated and that energy is returned to other worshippers, this constant exchange of, "Divine Energy" continues to oscillate between the worshiper and the worshiped. We are also told that in order for this process to have its highest efficacy, it has to take place in a consecrated place of worship if it is kept, "Ritualistically Pure". Ergo, for a Consecrated object to have its highest efficacy it is very important to maintain "Ritualistic Purity". Worshipping in unison is important to maintain "Ritualistic Purity" of the Sacred Precincts. As an extension it could be stated that it is possible for worshippers of different religious groups to transmit and receive these energies at different bandwidths.

TAKING ON THE CHALLENGE:

A group of traditional minded Zarathushtis in Houston, after much research, determined that in order to have and maintain a truly ritualistically pure consecrated Dar-e-Mehr, the task to construct, maintain, and operate it would have to be done on a purely private basis.

Research was carried out on the way to operate a religiously correct consecrated Dar-e-Mehr.

Two and a half acres were purchased for this purpose adjacent to the Zoroastrian Heritage and Cultural Center in Houston and has been donated to MYZDF (Mazda Yasni Zarathushti Dar-e-Mehr Fund) free and clear.

Mr. Cyrus Rivetna has been hired by MYZDF as the architect of record to design, construct, and develop the concept of one of its members, Mr. Aspi Colah. Cyrus Rivetna has carried out studies on the architecture and design of Zarathushti places of worship in Iran and India.

The total structure that will look like a Farohar when viewed aerially will comprise of:

1. The Dadgah with a perpetually burning fire,
2. Urvirshgah,
3. A Multi purpose Hall for other religious ceremonies like Navjot, Mukhtad ceremonies, Weddings, training of young Navars etc.
4. Well
5. Area for Padyab Kushti
6. Area for Mobed Sahibs to prepare and rest.
7. Relative Shower, Nahan and Toilet facilities

RESEARCH PROCESS:

In the style of the Rivayats, a detailed letter was addressed to the Vada Dasturjis (high priests) for advice and direction. Detailed response was received from the Vada Dasturjis advising us on the appropriate means and



methods required to operate a Dar-e-Mehr in accordance with established tradition.

Preparations have been made to start with the design and construction of the first consecrated Dar-e-Mehr in the western world as advised by our Vada Dasturjis.

CHALLENGES :

One of the biggest challenges faced by our committee has been fundraising.

Substantial funds have been offered if the committee agreed to operate the Dar-e-Mehr on a totally open basis, or at the very least on the basis of which our Adarans and Atash Behrams are operated in India.

Members of the MYZDF group have been committed to operate and maintain the Dar-e-Mehr in a ritualistically pure manner, hence they have decided to accept funding exclusively from those individuals/groups who agree to follow the operation of the Dar-e-Mehr as has been advised to us by the Vada Dasturjis.

PROTECTING THE SANCTITY:

The Dar-e-Mehr will be open for worship to all Zarathushtis who are born of both Zarathushti parents.

Management and members of MYZDF are totally committed to protect the sanctity of the Dar-e-Mehr as has been prescribed to us by our Vada Dasturjis.

At this juncture it is important to point out for the benefit of our fellow Zarathushtis who may hold a different viewpoint that restriction of entry into consecrated Sacred Precincts is practiced in most if not all major religions.

The time has come for our community to light a candle rather than curse the darkness. Those community members who do not subscribe to exclusivity of born Zarathushtis only, to our sacred precincts already have places of worship at the Centers, which they are able to avail. Those Zarathushtis who do subscribe to maintaining Zarathushti exclusivity at our sacred precincts do not have a place where their religious needs are truly met. They will now have a place to call their own where their spiritual needs will be met.

This is our call to all Zarathushtis. The fire that was lit by Asho Zarathustra (*Din-E-Mazdayasni*) is not dead in the West; it is only smoldering ready to burst into flames. What nobler task can there be for the Zarathushtis of today, no matter where they reside, than to fan these glowing embers so that the fire of our ancient altars blaze once more in the West as we unite as Zarathushtis seeking *Harmony in our Diversity* helping each other in our spiritual needs and growth by uniting to build the First Consecrated Dar-E-Mehr in the Western World so that the perpetually burning fire of the Dar-E-Mehr charged with the blessings of Ahura Mazda becomes a beacon to our future generations. May that spark of Sacred Fire

never be quenched and may the Holy Flame continue to blaze as Din-E-Mazda Yasni taught to us by Asho Zarathustra lives on into Perpetuity.

For more information and details on plans for the construction and operation of *The Mazda Yasni Zarathushti Dar-E-Mehr* please visit our web site

www.myzdgroup.org

Atha Zamyat Yatha Afrinami.

Kaemerz Dotiwala a founding member of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston, (ZAH) has been actively involved with the Zarathushti Community as well as interfaith activities Nationally and Internationally since 1975. He represented ZAH on FEZANA and was its first Chairperson of the Welfare Committee

Kaemerz is presently Chairperson of the Mazda Yasni Zarathushti Dar -E-Mehr Funds, a 501 (c) (3) Non-Profit Organization committed to establishing a Traditional Consecrated Dar-E-Mehr in the Western World.

In the Zarathushti spirit of protecting the environment, Kaemerz is the President of a unique Environmental Company, Q Environmental, Inc. which provides Sustainable Environmental Solutions to its clients helping them reduce their carbon footprint.

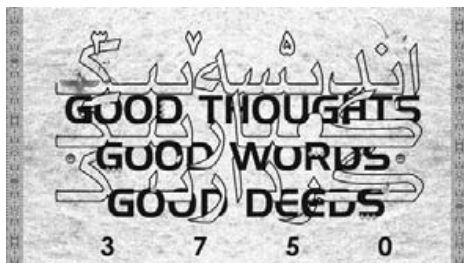
Kaemerz resides in Houston with his wife Havovi and daughters Aryehneesh and Naasha.





3750 ZARATHUSHTI ERA THE PERSIAN CALENDAR

Committee for Coordination of
Global Celebrations of the year 3750Z



The Gregorian calendar is well-known amongst nations today. However, there is insufficient awareness about the Ancient Persian Calendar. This article attempts to address that lacuna. It was a calendar invented and used for about four millennia in Persia, a land with a much larger geographic footprint than today's Iran. The Persian calendar has one of the longest chronological records in human history, modified over eons to suit administrative, climatic, and religious purposes.

Though the first fully preserved calendar system, from Persia, is that of the Achaemenians, the earliest evidence of Persian date tracking traditions is from the second millennium BC, in the age of Prophet Zarathushtra. Avestan and later scriptures show that Zarathushtra improvised the old Indo-Iranian calendar as early as 1725 BCE.

The late Zabih Behruz, a mathematician and astronomer, in his books about the art of calendar making in Persia, has shown that the period of the acceptance of Zarathushtra's Religion by Kavi Vishtaspa, and his court members, coincided with the entrance of Aries in the vernal equinox which occurred on 21st March 1725 BCE. Since Zarathushtra declared his mission 12 years prior, on that very day, the Zarathushtrian Religion Era began in 1737 BCE. This date is, also, within the Rig Vedic period, 1000-1700 BCE.

Persians were amongst the earliest cultures to use a solar calendar and have long favored the solar one over

lunar and lunisolar approaches. The sun has always been a symbol in Persian culture and the prevailing calendar was lunisolar. The lunar year is of 354 days. An intercalation of one month after every thirty months kept the calendar almost in line with the seasons. Zarathushtra, the Founder of the Good Religion, himself an astronomer, founded an observatory and he reformed the calendar by introducing an eleven-day intercalary period to make it into a lunisolar year of 365 days, 5 hours and a fraction.

Later in the post-Gathic period, the year was made solely a solar year with each month of thirty days. An intercalation of five days, and a further addition of one day every four years, was introduced to make the year 365 days, 5 hours, and a fraction. Still later, the calendar was further corrected to be a purely solar year of 365 days 5 hr 48+ min. The year began precisely with the vernal equinox and therefore, there was no particular need of adding one day every four years and there was no need of a leap year. This was, and still remains, the best and most accurate calendar produced so far in history.

Zarathushtis have six seasonal thanksgiving festivals, called "*Gâhânbârs*," to celebrate in a year. Vernal Equinox, called *Hamaspahmaidhaya* in Avesta, meaning "*Middle of Equal Paths*," or in simpler rendering "vernal equinox" is the top celebration. It was called in later days as "*Nava Saredha*" and still later *Now Sal*, both meaning "New Year". Today it is known as Nowruz, New Day. It is the first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere.

The Zarathushtrian era was abandoned when the Achaemenian monarchy was influenced by the prevailing custom in Mesopotamia. The year recordings started with the accession to the throne of every monarch. That is the reason why Zarathushtis, mainly from Indian subcontinent who follow, either the Fasli (solar), the Shahenshahi (majority of Parsis) or the Qadimi (a minority of Parsis and Iranis of India and Pakistan) calendars use the Yazdgerdi era, the year King Yazdgerd ascended the throne in 632 CE. Both Shahenshahi and Qadimi reckoning have a year of 365 days only. They have advanced almost seven months by gaining one day every four years. It means that they gave up the leap year (*avardâd sâlgâh* -- literally "*perfection of year -time*") about 852 years ago -- in about 1 150 CE. All Iranian Zarathushtis follow the Fasli, the seasonal or the solar calendar, which changes exactly at the Vernal Equinox.



When Iranian Muslims returned to the solar year, they reckoned with the Hejra year in solar terms. It will be 1391 Khorshidi (solar) on Nowruz (March 20th, 2012). The name of months is the same as their ancient Persian names:

SPRING:

- 1-*Farvardin* (Guardian spirits, souls of the righteous)
- 2-*Ordibehesht* (Best "Truth/Righteousness")
- 3-*Khordad* (Wholeness/Perfection)

SUMMER:

- 4- *Tir* (Sirius)
- 5-*Mordad* (Immortality)
- 6-*Shahrivar* (Desirable Dominion)

AUTUMN:

- 7-*Mehr* (Covenant/Sun)
- 8-*Aban* (Waters)
- 9-*Azar* (Fire)

WINTER:

- 10-*Dey* (The Creator, i.e. Ahura Mazda)
- 11-*Bahman* (Good Mind)
- 12-*Esfand* (Holy Devotion)

The Persian year begins at the first day of Spring Season, i.e. the first day of Farvardin which is considered as the best option for beginning of a New Year.

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ZOROASTRIAN CALENDAR:

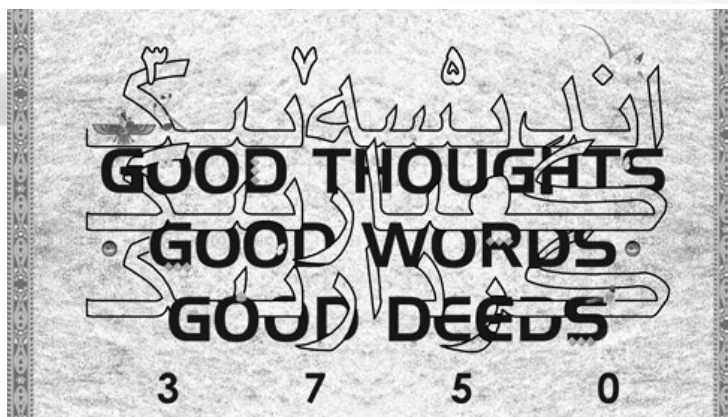
The first Zoroastrian calendar was maintained and utilized for 300 years after the time that Zarathustra preached his message; but it fell into disuse because of disturbed days that followed the fall of the Kayanian Dynasty. However, today the Zarathushtis of Iran accept the dates 1767 BCE as the year of birth, 1738 BCE as the year of His being Chosen to be a Prophet, and 1690 BCE as the year of passing away of Zarathushtra. Therefore, the Zarathushtrian New Year, March 20th, 2012, is 3750 Zarathushti (3750Z).

It gives one pride and great pleasure of realizing the age of the dynamic Divine Message of Asho Zarathushtra -- 3750 years. The Zarathushti Era, begun by Zarathushtra and followed by his companions, started as a reformed lunisolar calendar, was improved and changed into a true tropical calendar by later Avestan astronomers. It was faithfully followed as the *vehizakik* by the Sassanian rulers despite the tradition of "ascension eras," was revived and further improved by Iranian scientists of the post-Sassanian period, and now stands restored and in line with Zarathushtra's wish to "know all this and more." Astronomically and practically, it is the most perfect calendar in the world.

LET US PROMOTE 3750 Z.

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3750TH Anniversary of Propounding of Asho Zarathushtra's Teachings

The upcoming Persian New Year celebration (starting on 20th March 2012) will mark the 3750th year since Asho Zarathushtra propounded his teachings which is a milestone of historic proportions. The core of his universal teachings, compiled in the Gathas, delivered a universal message of peace, social justice, and righteousness. Aptly, in a world currently riddled with so much turmoil, we would like to mark this great occasion by increasing awareness of Zarathushtra's teachings by means of a global celebration.

The 'themes' we are proposing for this global celebration are chosen to convey our belief that the ancient teachings of Asho Zarathushtra are as relevant today as they were thousands of years ago. We believe that his universal message offers hope, healing and solace to humanity. The three themes we propose are as follows:

- 1- ***How Asho Zarathushtra's teachings can benefit the individual on a personal level and improve his/her life***
- 2- ***How Asho Zarathushtra's teachings can benefit one's family and community (neighbourhood, village, city, state, country, etc.)***
- 3- ***How Asho Zarathushtra's teachings can help improve and maintain the earth's natural environment (dealing with environmental challenges)***

We are inviting the whole world, particularly fellow Zarathushtis and Anjumans, Organizations and Associations to participate in celebration of this unique occasion. Simply remember to mention this anniversary when announcing or celebrating event s. Please let us try to educate the youth and children on Asho Zarathushtra's great teachings. We have provided some examples of how one can participate in the celebration through our web site, www.3750Z.com.

And as our last request, please let us know of your activities to mark this occasion by emailing the details of your celebrations to info@3750Z.com.

We will publish relevant news as well as a global calendar which will contain details of lectures and articles presented throughout these celebrations. This site will also contain useful information to download and use for various events.

We would appreciate your advice and input for the celebrations, conferences, festivals, etc.

**Committee for Coordination of
Global Celebrations of the year 3750Z**

In The News

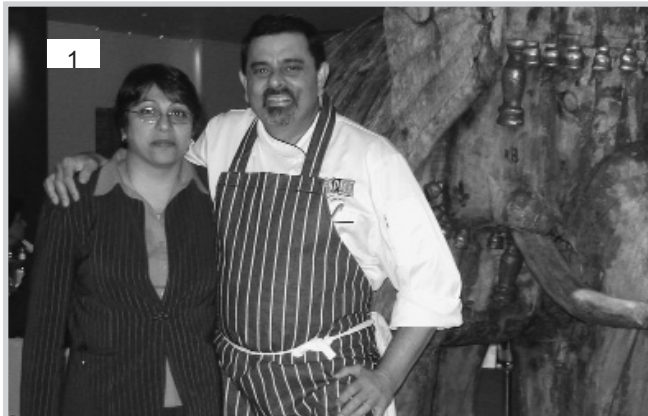
PARSI CUISINE AT LONDON'S HEATHROW HILTON

Roshan Rivetna

Cyrus and Pervin Todiwala take Parsi cuisine to new culinary heights at their latest restaurant in London

Mr. Todiwala's Kitchen, situated on the upper lobby of the swanky new Hilton near London's Heathrow Airport Terminal 5, is Cyrus and Pervin Todiwala's latest venture, following on the success of their popular Café Spice Namaste, one of Britain's most highly regarded Indian restaurants, with more awards than any other. We were fortunate to be there on opening day, for a dinner reception hosted by Dorab Mistry and the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe in celebration of that venerable organization's 150th anniversary.

With its stark wood flooring made from retrieved shipboards, white vintage furniture from environmentally-friendly re-cycled materials, art works from foraging in local art galleries, and an over-sized antique wooden elephant dominating the dining room, the décor was as eclectic as the food.



[Figure 1: Pervin and Cyrus with the 150-year old pachyderm nicknamed Roy in the Dining Room at Mr. Todiwala's Kitchen. Roy, named after a friend who found it in a front yard in England, was brought from India by a relocating army officer.]

[Figure 2. By the kitchen, Chef Arun Dev and Cyrus.]

The feast, a traditional Parsi Lagan-nu-Bhonu took on an air of haute cuisine. While true to its delicious original flavors, each dish was given a creative flair and served up with surprising elegance. Even the humble Bhel Puri arrived on a white



monogrammed plate, accompanied by a ramekin of *Bheenda Tamota Purr Eedu* (described as a "coddled egg on okra and tomato") as the first course. For the next course, *Patra ni Machchi* ("Fillet of Cod wrapped in green coconut chutney, rolled in banana leaf") shared an elegant square white plate with "*Squid Peri Peri on Spiced Cole Slaw*". The main course, served family style and replenished generously by the wait staff under Pervin's attentive eye, comprised of *Masala nu Roast Gos no Palav* ("Lamb simmered in a rich spice flavoured gravy, blended with steamed rice"), *Masala ni Daar* ("Puréed spiced lentils sizzled with garlic, cumin and chili") and *Murghi na Farcha* ("Egg fried leg of marinated chicken"). The sumptuous meal was topped off with a delectable *Lagan nu Custard* in a diamond-shaped white ramekin and a scoop of Rose and Cardamom Ice Cream.

The restaurant offers a diverse repertoire of culinary delights. Their "*Indian Tea Library*," can vie with any fine wine cellar; for example "*The Darjeeling Makaibari Estate First Flush Grand Reserve 2011*," described as "A single lot of 110 kg, the premium picking of the first flush season from Darjeeling's finest estate. Grassy and herbaceous with notes of passion and banana." The menu offers "*Indian Street Food*" (bhel puri, chaat), South Indian dosas, Parsi dishes (the signature dhansakh of course), Goan (Pork Vindaloo), Tandoori platters and vegetarian options, all true to tradition, yet lifted with Cyrus'

In The News



creative flair to new gastronomic heights. For the uninitiated, they suggest "Mr. Todiwala's Gourmand Tasting Menu" described as "a continuous array of small courses designed to take you on a culinary excursion packed with regions, flavours, tastes and creativity, accompanied with three glasses of paired wines."

[Figure 3. A delectable starter portion of Venison Tikka. Figure 4. Mr. Todiwala's "Splendidly Spicy Parsee Wedding Pickle", one of a line of chutneys, pickles and spices.]

With his many awards and accolades for services to the hospitality industry and to education and training, and for environmentally-friendly and sustainable practices; and his many titles – of OBE (Order of the



British Empire) and DL (Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London) from Her Majesty the Queen, and DBA (Doctorate and Honorary Professor from The London Metropolitan University) ... Cyrus Rustom Todiwala OBE DL DBA, and Pervin, have certainly done all of us Zarathushtis around the world, very proud. For putting Parsi cuisine on the map, we can right fully now bestow on him our title of "Aapro Cyrus."

[Mr. Todiwala's Kitchen is located at Hilton Heathrow Terminal 5, Poyle Road, Colnbrook SL3 0FF, tel: 01753766482. Café Spice Namaste is a short stroll from The Tower of London, at 16 Prescott Street, London E1 8AZ, tel: 020 7488 9242. For more on Cyrus and Pervin Todiwala, read FEZANA Journal, Summer 2011, p. 77 and visit www.mrtodiwalas.com.]

Photo credits Roshan Rivetna

Roshan Rivetna retired as editor-in-chief of FEZANA Journal in 2005. She took the Journal from a fledgling newsletter in 1991 to a world class magazine read around the world. She continues to coordinate the Matrimonial Page and takes great pride when a Zarathushti match is made through her efforts.



SHEHNAZ BHUJWALA ELECTED TO BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA (CAOC)

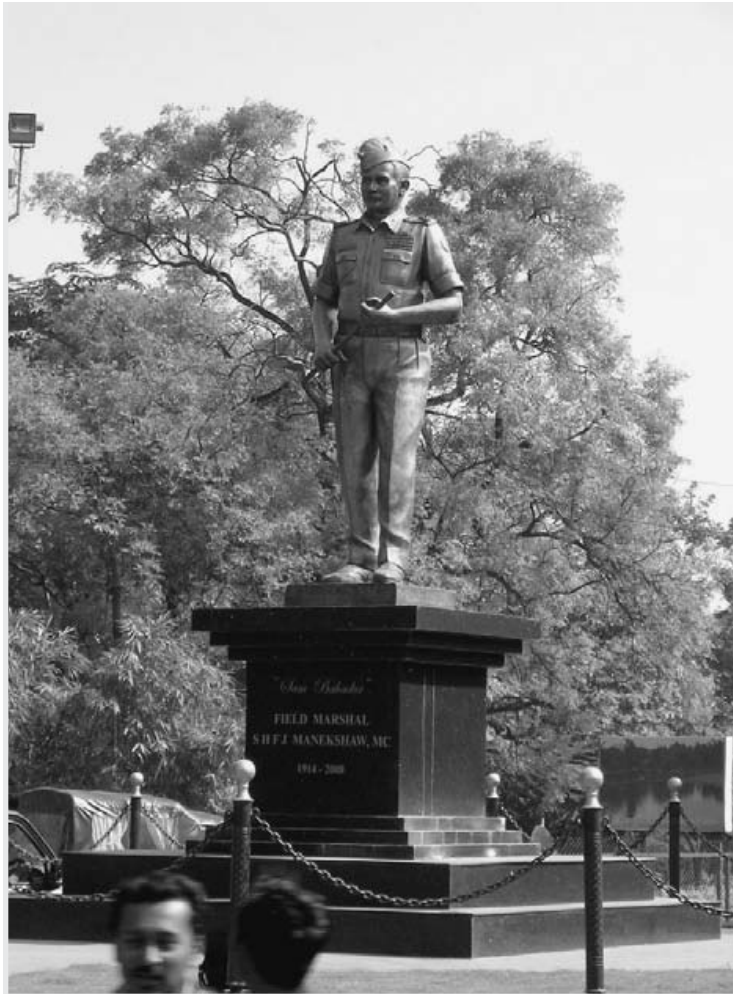
Shehnaz M. Bhujwala, a senior attorney at Beverly Hills law firm, Kiesel, Boucher & Larson LLP, was elected to the Board of Governors of the Consumer Attorneys of California (CAOC). Daughter of Maneck and Mahrukh Bhujwala, Shehnaz obtained her B.A. degree at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Juris Doctor law degree at the University of Southern California, and worked at prominent Los Angeles area law firms specializing in Civil Litigation on behalf of Plaintiffs in major consumer lawsuits.

The mission of CAOC is "to seek justice for all by preserving and protecting the constitutional right to trial by jury for all consumers and championing the cause of those who deserve redress for injury to person or property encouraging and promoting changes to California law by legislative, initiative or court action, opposing injustice in existing or contemplated legislation advancing the common law and promoting public good through the civil justice system upholding the honor, integrity and dignity of the legal profession", and "inspiring excellence in advocacy and advancing the finest traditions of jurisprudence through training, education and scholarship."

CONGRATULATIONS SHEHNAZ !!

In The News

STATUE OF FIELD MARSHALL MANECKSHAW THE FIRST OFFICIAL MONUMENT OF A SOLDIER IN INDIA



PUNE: A statue of the late Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw was unveiled near the headquarters of the Southern Command on Tuesday, October 28, 2009, Infantry Day which is observed to mark the day Indian soldiers landed in Srinagar on October 27, 1947 to defend the city against Pakistan. The Southern Command thus chose Tuesday to unveil the statue of Manekshaw.

The statue was inaugurated by Lt Gen Pradeep Khanna, Army Commander and General-Officer-Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Command who described "*Sam Bahadur*" as "man of honor; the best of the kind," "*the Field Marshal had a fantastic sense of humor. He could keep us in fits of laughter. With him you were kept laughing all the time, even if he didn't know a person too well,*" he said. "*His smile was enduring.*" "*We hope that people passing by will look at the statue and get inspiration.*"

SHFJ Manekshaw was the first of only two Indian military officers to hold the rank of field marshal. His distinguished military career spanned four decades and five wars, including World War II. Manekshaw rose to be the eighth chief of staff of the Indian Army in 1969 and under his command, Indian forces concluded a victorious campaign during the Indo-Pak war 1971.

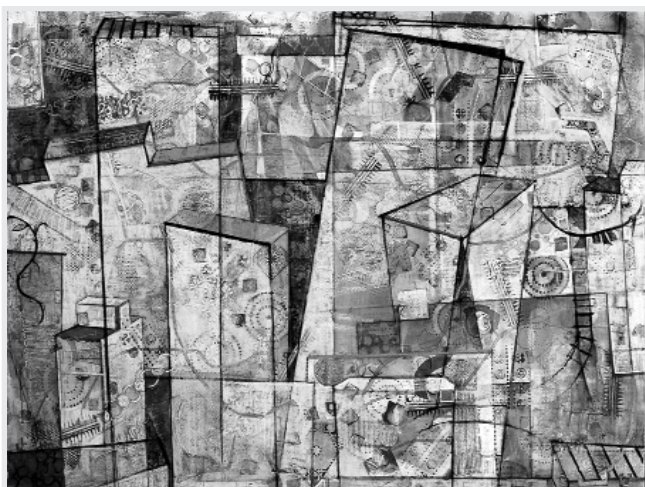
The 9-ft-tall, bronze statue, weighing 700 kgs was made in eight months designed by city-based sculptor Abhijit Dhondphale and the project coordinated by Cyrus Dalal. The statue was made in Pune and its casting work was done in Mumbai. "*For two months during the preparation of the clay model, we read books on Manekshaw and spoke to soldiers who had worked with him to learn as much as possible about him,*" said Dhondphale. "*We wanted to capture the personality of the man. We have tried to bring life to the statue, as much as possible, complete with light eyes whose effect will be visible at night*" said Cyrus Dalal, who conceptualized the Rs 20-lakh project along with Dhondphale.

In The News

Delna Dastur of Northern Virginia exhibits her art from October 19, 2011 – November 20, 2011 at Gallery Plan B, located in the exciting Fourteenth Street Arts Corridor, in Washington, DC.



Delna Dastur of Virginia creates her art in two extremely different locations — a tranquil, tree-shaded studio in her home in Northern Virginia and a high-rise apartment balcony in Mumbai. Delna says, *"Whether I work in India or the States, it makes very little difference to what I put on a canvas. I like the work to be complex, to be multi-layered. I usually begin by carefully choosing a paint color, keeping it liquid enough to be poured and manipulated over the surface of the canvas. This is followed by stamping, using wooden textile blocks from India in combination with rubber stamps. Next comes the building up of textures with gels, pastes and clear gessoes using hardware implements and templates. It is only after this layering that I begin the drawing of the image with charcoal and soft pastel."*

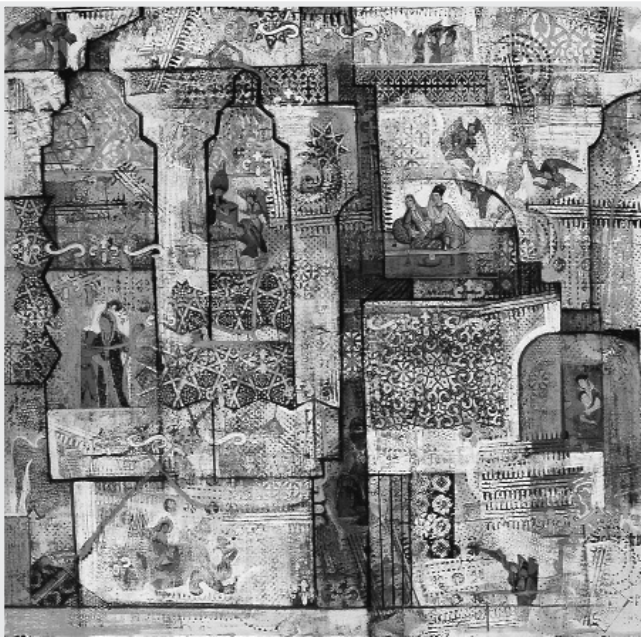


Urban dominance

Delna Dastur was raised in Mumbai and received her B.A. from the University of Mumbai. She moved thereafter to the States and continued her education at Wellesley College, Massachusetts, majoring in Art History. After graduating she relocated to Virginia where she pursued her M.F.A. in oil painting at American University in Washington D.C. Delna's work has been exhibited in solo and group shows in many galleries in the States and India. Her work has been reviewed in several newspapers and magazines including The Washington Post, The Washington Times, Time Out Delhi, Span Magazine, (published by the American Center, New Delhi), Parsiana etc.

In addition to the time devoted to creating her art, she is a faculty member at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, and The Art League, Alexandria, Virginia. When in India, she teaches art and language skills at The Central Society for the Education of the Deaf, Mumbai and at El Shaddai for street children, Goa.

In The News



Secret Affairs

Her work has been purchased by The State Bank of India, New York, NY; Hilton Hotel Worldwide Headquarters, Virginia; Astra Zeneca, Wilmington, Delaware; PRTM, Washington DC and by private collectors in the United States, London, Hong Kong and India

Delna Dastur says, *"I've tried to create compositions that would involve the viewer in the interpretation of the work. I want the viewer to be intrigued, to pause and contemplate the painting, to decipher its complexity, to discover concrete forms hidden betwixt the abstractions. Geometric shapes about flowing lines, intricate details are adjacent to strong charcoal marks. I endeavor to transport the viewer beyond the lure of color and subject matter and want them to feel the intensity of my commitment."* www.delnadastur.com
delker25@aol.com.

Nozer Buchia – Speaker, Author, Entrepreneur Inspires Hundreds with New Book



Hundreds of Houstonians gathered on Friday evening at the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center to honor the internationally-acclaimed motivational speaker, and new author, Mr. Nozer Buchia. His much anticipated new book, entitled *'Why Entrepreneurs REALLY Fail'*, is, he believes, "not just a manuscript, but a revelation about entrepreneurship." Nozer admits to making several mistakes and enduring multiple failures in the past, and his book takes the reader through the many lessons that his failures have taught him.

The evening was filled with entertaining speeches and endorsements from several community leaders, including David Wallace, former Mayor of Sugar Land; Tommie Dorsett, Director of The Inner Change Freedom Initiative; and William Sherrill, former Governor of the Federal Reserve and Founder of The Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship at The University of Houston's Bauer

College of Business. The talented dance troupe, Rhythm India, led by Mrs. Arzan Gonda, put on a vibrant and enjoyable dance tribute in honor of Nozer's book launch.

When Nozer himself finally took the stage, his energy and charismatic sense of humor filled the room. He spoke of the many inspirational figures in his life, including his late mother, Mrs. Coomi Buchia and his late father Mr. Jemi Buchia. He shared with the audience his personal experiences, including frank disclosures of his many failures that have made him what he is today.

All in attendance would agree that Nozer is a compelling communicator. He speaks with passion and brutal honesty. He is known as a 'speaker's-speaker' due to his dynamic delivery and practical approach to any situation. Nozer has travelled the world as a much sought-after motivational and keynote speaker, inspiring hundreds to re-evaluate their self-worth and the way things are done.

In The News

Zarathushtra's Teachings in the Gathas: Prof. Stanley Insler at the Annual Library Lecture of Zoroastrian Association of Houston



Insler explained that Zarathushtra lived in the early century of the 1st millennium in the northern area of Iran where times were troubled. Like us, Zarathushtra expressed his despair and frustration to Ahura Mazda and searched for an answer to heal and cure what Insler termed "a disease".

Zarathushtra's despair about the current state of affairs led him to question and seek enlightenment. The Gathas are the poems that resulted from his conversation with God.

For Zarathushtra, for every good and positive thing in the world there is a counter negative evil force, and this leads to the continual battle between good and evil that we all face. The side of good was Truth and the side of evil was Deceit. Every person was then to choose to ally himself either with the side of truth or the side of deceit.

On October 22 and 23, the ZAH Library Committee presented its annual Library event. This year, the event featured Dr. Stanley Insler, recently retired as Chairman of the Department of Linguistics at Yale University. An acclaimed Gathic scholar, Insler's translation of the Gathas is based on his philological expertise and is considered to be one of the most definitive works on the understanding of the complicated text of the Gathas. And yet Insler's vision of the Gathas was direct and powerful, and his knowledge of religion, culture and linguistics made it an unforgettable experience for those who attended.

There was no predestination in Zarathushtra's religion. There was only free will and each person was responsible for choosing sides in the continuing conflict between good and evil. What emerges in the Gathas, then, is a "*philosophy of living*". According to Prof. Insler the Gathas feature the importance of good thinking (Vohu Manah), the compliance (*Armaiti*) of the laws of Ahura Mazda, and the rule of Truth.

For several hours on both days, attendees learnt from this recognized luminary in an informal setting, and asked questions on topics ranging from



In The News

rituals ("the grammar of religion") to even abortions and the death penalty. The two day lecture and discussions were a real treat for everyone who attended. ZAH library acknowledged the Mehta Fund for sponsoring the two day lecture series.

One of the attendees paid tribute to Insler by penning short poems while listening to his lecture.

THE HOLY GATHAS

Our good Lord Ahura Mazda

So extolled in the Holy Gathas

Prophet Zarathushtra enlightened us all

By giving these Holy Hymns to big and small

The world would be so much better

If we all followed the Gathas in spirit and letter .

To teach us so much we did not know

Our ancient religion practiced by so few

Takes an academic like him to ignite anew.

Now we know so much more

Than we ever knew before

So thank you Dr. Insler

For enlightening all those of us here.

Report prepared by Aban Rustomjee Chair, ZAH Library Committee

Mr. Rusi D. Gandhi, M.B.A. earns the prestigious Re/Max Hall of Fame Award



Mr. Rusi D. Gandhi M.B.A., was presented with the RE/MAX HALL OF FAME AWARD, in New Jersey becoming the first Zarathushti to be inducted in the RE/MAX HALL OF FAME. RE/MAX offices are in over 70 countries including INDIA.

"Rusi D. Gandhi is an integral member of our team and is more than deserving of this very prestigious award," said Mr. Jeff Snyder, RE/MAX of New Jersey co-owner . "Winning the Hall of Fame Award is a tremendous accomplishment. Mr. Gandhi continues to raise the bar in real estate, making us and the central New Jersey community proud."

Mr. Gandhi has worked in the real estate industry for thirty-four years and has extensive experience in residential, commercial, investment properties, and in business sales. He has represented over 3,000 buyers and sellers for commercial and industrial properties, office buildings, residential property, and franchise businesses such as Subway, Dunkin Donuts, Seven Eleven, Baskin Robbins and small businesses. Mr. Gandhi also specializes in 1031 Exchanges.

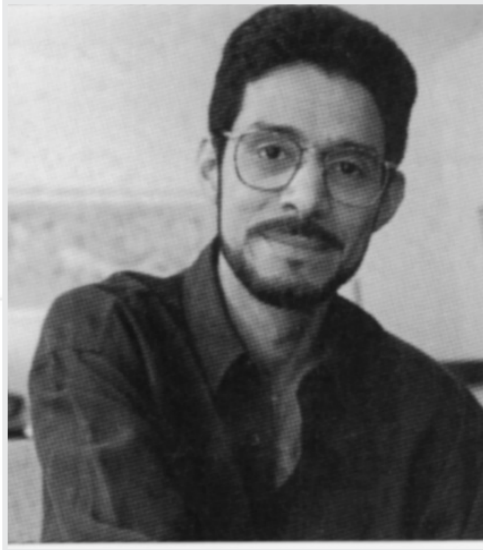
Rusi finished his MBA from Western Illinois University in 1972 and worked as the financial controller for Evanston Hospital. He entered real estate in 1977 and built his own team, becoming a member in 1994 of

Paris' FIABCI, the Federation of International Real Estate, and joined hands with RE/MAX of New Jersey . He is a Broker of Record in Illinois and a Broker Associate in New Jersey and participates in SPIRE, Stanford Professionals in Real Estate, a dynamic and growing organization newly formed in 2009.

Mr. Gandhi is an active community leader who supports local governmental representatives. He serves as a World Director for The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) was the founder of the WZCC New York Chapter, is a member of The World Zoroastrian Organization (WZO) as well as serves on advisory boards for Indian organizations. He has sponsored the India Cultural Foundation's Navratri Festival in Parsippany, New Jersey for five years. Visit www.RusiGandhi.com, or send him e-mail at RusiGandhi@gmail.com.

In The News

Rohinton Mistry-Bookended by yet another prestigious award.



Mumbai-born Canadian writer Rohinton Mistry has won the 2012 Neustadt International Prize for Literature. The winner of the \$50,000 award was decided by jurors representing nine countries.

In a statement released by his publisher Mistry said, *"I am delighted with the news. It is, needless to say, an honour to join the list of Neustadt laureates. But it is equally so to be among the many nominees for the prize; a quick glance will reveal as much, whether one looks at the 2012 authors or the lists for previous years."*

With this award he joins the ranks of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, David Malouf, Octavio Paz and Canada's Josef Skvorecky who have been previous winners of the Neustadt Prize.

According to the nominating statement, juror Samrat Upadhyay said Mistry writes with great passion, and his body of work shows the most compassionate and astute observations of the human condition, making him one of the most exciting and important contemporary novelists writing in the English language.

Often referred to as the American Nobel, the Neustadt is presented every two years by the *University of Oklahoma, the Neustadt family*

and World Literature Today magazine to poets, playwrights or novelists.

Mistry, who graduated with a degree in Mathematics and Economics from the University of Bombay, immigrated to Canada in 1974. Settling in Toronto, he worked at a bank before returning to studies at the University of Toronto, leading up to a degree in English and Philosophy. The Zorostrians of Ontario are indeed proud of this shy writer who lives and writes out of his home in Brampton, Ontario.

AWARDS WON BY ROHINTON MISTRY:

- 1983-Canadian Hart House Literary Contest for short story, *One Sunday*
- 1984- Canadian Hart House Literary Contest for short story *Auspicious Canadian*.
- 1985- Annual Contributors' Prize, *Canadian Fiction Magazine*
- 1991-Governor's General Literary Award, *Such a Long Journey*
- 1992- Commonwealth Writer's Prize for best overall book, *Such a Long Journey*
- 1992- Books in Canada First Novel Award, *Such a Long Journey*
- 1991- Shortlist for the Man Booker Prize, *Such a Long Journey*.
- 1995- Giller Prize, *A Fine Balance*
- 1996- Los Angeles Times Book prize for fiction *A Fine Balance*
- 1996- Finalist for Man Booker Prize, *A Fine Balance*
- 1997- Shortlist Irish Times International Fiction Prize, *A Fine Balance*
- 2001- Oprah Book Club, *A Fine Balance*
- 2002- Shortlist James Tait Black Memorial Prize, *Family Matters*
- 2002- Winner Kiriya Pacific Rim Book Prize, *Family Matters*
- 2002- Shortlist Man Booker Prize, *Family Matters*
- 2002- Canada Reads, *A Fine Balance*
- 2012- Neustadt International Prize for Literature

(Compiled by Teenaz Javat with files from the Globe and Mail and National Post)

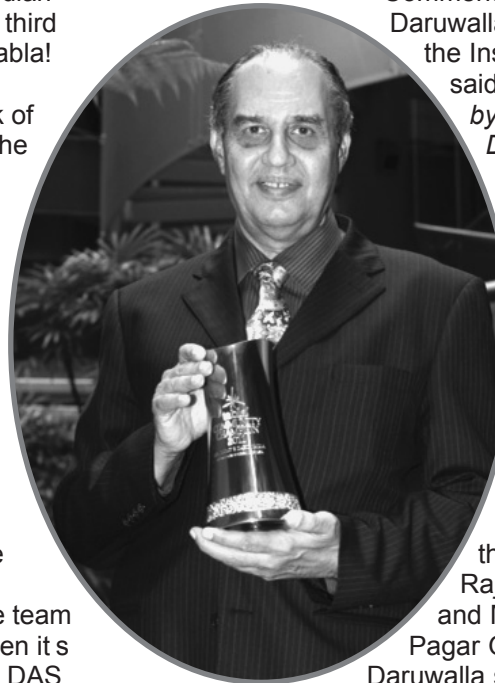
Teenaz is the recipient of the 2011 Ontario Premier's Award in the Recent Graduate category and Senior writer and researcher with CBC News Desk and associate producer for CBC Radio's Metro Morning

In The News

Dr Jimmy S. Daruwalla, an orthopaedic surgeon of Singapore recognized for his work with Dyslexia

Tabla!, the newspaper for the Indian community in Singapore marked its third anniversary with the launch of the Tabla! Community Champion Award. The award, supported by the State Bank of India, is presented to a member of the Indian community who has done distinguished work with the less fortunate in Singapore. The event was attended by over 200 members of the Indian community, including business leaders and professionals from all walks of life.

Dr Jimmy S. Daruwalla, an orthopaedic surgeon, was the inaugural Tabla! Community Champion Award recipient. He was recognized for his efforts and contributions as the President of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS). Dr Daruwalla was part of the team that set up DAS in 1991 and has been its president since its inception. Today, DAS operates nine learning centers in Singapore, catering to the needs of 1,849 students. The award also comes with a donation of \$10,000 from State Bank of India and Tabla!



Commending Tabla! in honoring Dr Daruwalla, Mr K. Kesavapany, Director of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies said: *"Started as a community initiative by the Rotary Club of Raffles City, Dr Daruwalla got together a small group of friends to form the Dyslexia Association of Singapore. Over the years, he has built it into one of the most active social organizations in Singapore. Thanks to his sustained and single-minded championing of the cause of dyslexia, thousands of Singaporeans and others afflicted with this impairment have their problems dealt with."*

The award was presented by the Guest-of-Honour, Ms Indranee Rajah, Deputy Speaker of Parliament and Member of Parliament for Tanjong Pagar GRC. Accepting the award, Dr Daruwalla said he was greatly honored by the recognition from the Indian community and hoped it will raise awareness about dyslexia among Singaporeans.

The award is well deserved and has made the small Singapore community very proud.

JEHANGIR SAROSH, OBE---AN OFFICER OF THE ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

In the New Year Honor List 2012, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, conferred on Jehangir Sarosh the title **Officer of Order of the British Empire (OBE)**. He was named, because of his work as President Emeritus, European Chapter, World Council on Religions for Peace) for Services to Inter-Faith Relations. (Watford, Hertfordshire).

Although from a minority Zoroastrian community he was elected as the President in a mainly Christian Europe. He encouraged and facilitated the building of "European Council of Religious Leaders, a regional body, "Inter-religious Councils in different European countries, national bodies," The European Women of Faith Network, and "the European Interfaith Youth Network". Jehangir has facilitated different religious leaders and faith communities to come together and campaign for Total ban on Cluster Ammunitions and sign petitions for an Arms Trade Treaty as well as support for victims of HIV/AIDS and fund raising for the orphans of HIV/AIDS. He played a leadership role in organising a meetings of 11 different religions from 29 European countries to come together to discuss how to *"Manage the changes taking place in Europe"* and a *"Celebration of Cultures"* festivals where people of all faiths come to celebrate the Diversity within the Unity of Humanity **CONGRATULATIONS TO JEHANGIR AND HIS WIFE IRMA for this distinguished honor,**

Read more about this tireless campaigner and titanic achiever of Interfaith and Human Rights in an interview with Dorab Mistry in *FEZANA Journal, Spring 2009, Vol 23 No 1, pgs 108-111*

In The News

Zoroastrianism: Introduction & History UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY. CANADA



On Sunday October 30, 2011, The Zoroastrian Association of Alberta supported by FEZANA – Jamshed Pavri Religion Education Fund and The PERSIAN GULF CLUB, UNIVERSITY of CALGARY presented “Zoroastrianism: Introduction and History”.

The speakers were **Dr. Mitra Ara** who received her B.A. in Religious Studies, her M.A. in South Asian studies, and her Ph.D. in Asian studies from the University of California, Berkeley, with a concentration on the religions and languages of West Asia. She is an Assistant Professor and Founding Director of the Persian Studies Program in the College of Humanities at San Francisco State University. She spoke on *Historical Settings Of The Early Zoroastrians* Rooted in Indo-European/Iranian religious traditions, the historical and cultural development of Zoroastrian religious tradition in the

Persian Empires was presented with an overview of the connection of the Good Religion with the Kingdom (Photo left, Dr Mitra Ara with ZAA Calgary Chapter Social Secretary Bahar Salamaty, on right.)

Dr Jennifer Rose who has an MA in Religious Studies from the University of London, where she studied with the late Prof. Mary Boyce, and a Ph.D. in Ancient Iranian Studies from Columbia University, teaches two classes on the Zoroastrian religion through the CGU School of Religion. Dr Rose spoke on *Zoroastrians Of Central Asia & The Silk Road*, an illustrated presentation on Zoroastrians of Central Asia, where she discussed her recent visit to the ancient Iranian sites of the region, and introduced some of the religious art and inscriptions of Sogdian Zoroastrians that have been discovered and deciphered in the last decade. (photo below: Dr Rose with Founder President of ZAA Neelum Austin on right).



BOOK REVIEWS

Zoroastrianism: An Introduction Dr. Jenny Rose Based on courses taught at both Claremont Graduate and Stanford Universities, it provides a general outline to the historical development of the religion from earliest times to the present, including the most recent research materials and theories. (See FJ Vol 25, No 3 pp 97)

Eschatology in the Indo-Iranian Tradition: Dr Mitra Ara traces the roots of the belief, in life after death from the earliest religious beliefs of the Indo-European people to the Zoroastrian beliefs.

Sasanian Iranshahr:-The Importance of the Sasanian Empire" Dr. Touraj Daryaee Portrait of a Late Antique Empire. the Sasanian era (224-651 CE) is an important period in the history of the Near East, the Caucasus and Central Asian history. Some of the basic institutions and ideas that developed in the ancient Near East passed to the Sasanian Iran and through it became the foundation of later Islamic civilization. (FJ Vol 25, No 1 pp 109).



In The News

A Celebration of Tolerance, Friendship and Fraternity

For the past decade, Cegep de Sainte Foy, a community college in Quebec City, Canada, has organized conferences on various religions and belief systems to inculcate "tolerance, amitié et fraternité" amongst its students. (photo below) In 2011, they chose to showcase Zarathushti religion and invited the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec (ZAQ) to partner with them in organizing exhibitions, presentations, cultural events, and group discussions on Zarathushti history and religion from November 7-10, 2011. *Faranak Firoozi*, ZAQ's dynamic president, and a committee of Montreal-based Zarathushtris including *Dolly Dastoor*, *Zareen Hakim-Austin*, *Pheroze Austin*, *Farzad Behboodi*, *Rohinton Marolia*, *Madjid Movahed*, *Negin Atashband*, worked with the principal organizer, Professor *Daniel Gignac* for over a year to organize the conference.



OPENING

The opening event on Monday, November 7 commenced with a recitation from the Jashan ceremony by *Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli* and *Ervad Gev Karkaria*. It was followed by a performance by the *Khorshid Khanoom troupe*. This Montréal-based company was founded by *Aram Bayat* in 1988 and has been working to teach, preserve and perform Persian folk dances. (Photo page 56 top: *Ervad Jehan Bagli* and *Ervad Gev Karkaria*)



PRESENTATIONS

Daily events for the next three days started at 7.45 am with recitation of prayers in the main auditorium, followed by presentations. Majority of the presentations were in French, and covered diverse subjects such as *Funeral rites of Parsis* by *Marcelle Saindon*, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies Laval University, Quebec; *Zarathushti heritage* by *Dr. Khosro Khazai (Pardis)*, European Centre for Zoroastrian Studies, Brussels; *A brief overview of ancient Iran* by *Jacques Desautels*, Emeritus Professor at the Faculty of Education, Laval University; *a discussion on Friedrich Nietzsche's "Thus Spake Zarathushtra"* by *Pascal Ouellet*, Professor of Philosophy, Cegep De Levis-lauzon, Quebec; *lessons from Zarathushti history* by *Zarathushti priest and scholar, Dr. Jehan Bagli*; the "Shah Nameh", the treasure of Persian literature by

In The News



Fariba Afzali, an Iranian storyteller, about *Parsis of Mumbai* by Alain Bouchard, lecturer at Faculty of Theology and Religions, Cegep de Sainte Foy; *Aging and Alzheimers in the Zarathushti community and around the world* by Dr. Dolly Dastoor, McGill University, Montreal. Ervad Gev Karkaria gave a presentation in English on Zarathushti rituals and



From left Daniel Gignac, Aram Bayat, Dr Dolly Dastoor, Dr Khosro Khazai, Dr Faranak Firoozi, Farzad Behboodi

ceremonies, and Azadeh Ehsani, a doctoral student at Concordia University, Montreal, presented on the interaction between Zoroastrianism and Judaism based on Sassanid texts.

Two English films by Parsi-Zarathushtis were also showcased. One of them was *"Little Zizou" (2009)* the award winning movie about two battling Mumbai



From left Tenaz Dubash, Farishta Dinshaw; Dr Sam Cooper

families written and directed by Sooni Taraporevala. Tenaz Dubash, a US-based documentary filmmaker, flew in from New York for a day to present her film *"In the Footsteps of our Forefathers" (2000)*, which follows thirty-four young Zarathushtis from the USA, Britain and Canada, including Tenaz, on their journey to Iran. Two members of the original group, Zareen Hakim-Austin and Pheroze Austin, were also present.

INTERACTION WITH STUDENTS

During the course of the three days, there were several activities aimed at interacting with students. "Hi! Nice to meet you!" were one-hour sessions organized several times a day in which a group of Zarathushtis visited classrooms and answered questions. Frequently asked questions were about festivals, history, initiation into the faith (navjote), and Zarathushti views on afterlife, same sex relationships, conversion and inter-faith marriages.

In the gallery next to the library, there was an exhibition of Iranian and Parsi artefacts, clothing, books, and calligraphy collected from ZAQ member families and friends. Paintings by local Montreal artist Parvin Farzaneh and Firooza Aubry as well as photographs of Zarathushti ceremonies by Sam Kanga of Toronto were displayed. A photographic slideshow by Cyrus Rivetna, of Chicago, on the architectural highlights of dar-e-mehrs and Atash Behrams played in a continuous loop on a computer screen. Twice a day there was a guided tour of the exhibition by ZAQ volunteers. These tours were attended by groups of approximately 20 students and their teachers, and provided another opportunity for students to learn about different aspects of Zarathushti history and heritage. Students were particularly fascinated with the sudreh kusti on display.

A more informal way of connecting with students was serving Iranian cookies, brought especially from a bakery in Montreal. This attracted students who were passing by the library and offered an opportunity to

In The News

inform them about ongoing presentations and the exhibition.

EVENING EVENTS

On Tuesday, 8 November, *Benjamin Rene*, a professor of music at Cegep de Sainte Foy, introduced the symphony "*Thus Spake Zarathushtra*" by Richard Strauss. Composed in 1896, the initial fanfare entitled "Sunrise" became widely known after it was included in the soundtrack of Stanley Kubrick's film "2001: A Space Odyssey".



Speaker Farishta Murzban Dinshaw

On Wednesday, 9 November, there was a community dinner featuring a performance by *singer, Rofida Koboli, and composer, Sheida Gharchedaghi*. (both of Montreal). More than a dozen Zarathushti were present at the dinner, some of them having driven over two hours from Montreal to be part of the festivities. The Zarathushtis present were placed in twos and threes at each table so that students and faculty could get a further chance to share stories and ask questions. Favourites from Iranian cuisine, catered by *Neshat Zariyan*, of Quebec City, were

served. Faranak Firoozi took the opportunity to thank Professor Gignac and his team for their work, and gave him a token of appreciation on behalf of ZAQ.

The closing presentation on Thursday 10 November, attended by more than 300 students, was delivered by *Farishta Murzban Dinshaw, author of "Discovering Ashavan"*. In this story set in ancient Iran, Ashavan, a stable boy ill-treated by his peers because of a deformed leg, fights to clear his name of the charges of sorcery. A young Zarathushtra befriends Ashavan, and gives him the courage to resolve the fears within himself and take a stand for what he believes. The presentation used themes from the story to illustrate Zarathushtra's timeless and universal message of humata, hukhta and hvarshta and illustrated practical every day examples.

The conference was a success in terms of quality of presentations, student engagement and scope of topics, but this would not have been possible without the enthusiasm and dedication of the people involved. Professor Gignac and his incredible team of volunteers, including the design team that produced the programs and backdrops, put together a conference that was both interesting and informative. *Samuel Gaudreault Belly*, one of the volunteers, was particularly helpful as an interpreter and general "go to" person for questions about food, parking tickets and other issues. The Zarathushti contingent at the conference was fluid in number as people attended based on their work commitments and presentation schedules, but on any given day there were at least six people present. Dr. Sam Cooper, Dr. Adi Bharucha, (with wife Lorraine) two bi-lingual retired scientists, were the only non-presenters to attend all four days, volunteering their services as interpreters. The fact that many took time off from work to present or attend the conference is testimony to their commitment to their community and faith.



REPORT PREPARED BY FARISHTA MURZBAN DINSHAW

In The News



Photo credit, Yves Aubry, Zarene Austin, Farishta Murzban Dinshaw

In The News

BRITISH ROYALTY VISITS ZOROASTRIAN CENTRE IN LONDON

Roshan Rivetna

As part of its 150th anniversary celebrations, Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) orchestrated a Thanksgiving Service at the Zoroastrian Centre in London, graced by His Royal Highness The Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh.

Kudos to the ZTFE team led by President Malcolm Deboo, previous presidents Paurush Jila, Dorab Mistry, Rusi Dalal and their talented committees, for orchestrating this visit at Zoroastrian Centre (The Zartoshty Brothers Hall) in Harrow, London on October 6th. 2011

Over the years ZTFE has developed good relations with Royal and religious personages: ZTFE officials have formally met Her Majesty the Queen at Buckingham Palace; were invited for the Papal Visit to the UK by His Holiness the Pope Benedict XVI in 2010; and even secured an invitation for the 'wedding of the century' of HRH Prince William and Catherine Middleton at Westminster Abbey in April. While they have hosted dignitaries in the past, most notably the landmark visit of the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury in 2010 and HRH Prince Edward and Sophie on the occasion of The Queen's Golden Jubilee, in 2002, this was the first time in the history of the 150-year old organization that the Consort of the reigning Monarch of the United Kingdom had visited a Zoroastrian place of worship.

As His Royal Highness arrived promptly at 11:00 am, he was escorted by ZTFE president Malcolm Deboo and Lord Karan Bilimoria (of Cobra Beer fame) from his Land Rover on the red carpet rolled out on

the street for the Royal visit, to the entrance of the imposing Art Deco building of The Zoroastrian Centre. At the door he was greeted with a traditional ceremonial welcome and a garland of fresh flowers by ladies in exquisite garas and colorful Iranian dress, and introduced to a reception line of ZTFE officials and Ervad Sahebs.

The 90-year old Duke, dressed in an unassuming business suit, entered the Zarathushty Brothers hall to the strains of Khon Ashem Vohu and a standing ovation from the distinguished gathering of Zarathushtis in national and traditional dress and guests from faith organizations, academia and



Prayers of Thanksgiving. From left, Dorab Mistry at the podium, Ervads Zal Sethna, Rustom Bhedwar, Zubin Writer, Zubin Bhedwar, Jalbhai Karkaria and Marzban Dastoor



HRH is given a traditional ceremonial welcome

dignitaries from Harrow, many wearing their medals, decorations and badges of office. Among those presented formally to H.R.H. were Bomi Patel and Dinshaw Mehta, as Presidents of the North American (FEZANA) and Indian (FPZAI) federations "where 75% of the Zoroastrians in the world reside."

HRH watched with interest as six ZTFE mobeds led by Er. Rustom Bhedwar, stood around a sparkling silver afargan and recited prayers of Thanksgiving for the founding of ZTFE a century and a half ago.

Past president Dorab Mistry traced the Zoroastrian-British odyssey "From Trincomalee to Jaguar Land Rover:" HMS Trincomalee, built by the Wadia shipbuilders in Bombay for the Admiralty in 1817 and now at Britain's Maritime Museum, being the oldest Naval ship still afloat and Jaguar and Land

In The News

Rover are, of course, the two iconic British brands acquired by Tata Motors in 2008. Back in 1854, Queen Victoria enabled Maneckji Limji Hataria to visit Iran under British protection and ameliorate the conditions of Zarathushtis in that country. Zarathushts had served with distinction in the British Armed Forces in both World Wars. Dorab proudly recounted the fact that the first three Asian Members elected to the House of

would never be a financial burden on the British Exchequer." "Zoroastrians have a high regard for the Monarch, the Government and Judiciary of the UK," he said, "This country has allowed us to practice our religion freely ... we have witnessed unparalleled peace, grown from 50 in 1861 to around 5,000 in 2011, and become prosperous. In turn, it has enabled us to



Bomi Patel presenting Farohar plaque to HRH. From left, Dinshaw Mehta, Rusi Dalal, Karan Bilimoria, Malcolm Deboo and Shernaz Engineer.

Commons of the British Parliament were all Zarathushtis: Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji in 1892 for the Liberal Party, Sir Mancherjee Bhownagree in 1895 for the Conservative Party and Shapurji Saklatvala in 1922 for the Labour Party and in 1924 for the Communist Party. More recently, in 2006, Lord Karan F. Bilimoria DL, CBE was ceremonially appointed to the House of Lords as a Cross-Bencher.

Paurush Jila, immediate past president recounted the multifarious activities and achievements of ZTFE covering its leadership role in Inter Faith forums, links with prestigious academic and governmental institutions, and service to the Zarathushtis as well as broader community in Britain.

Welcoming The Prince on this historic occasion to The Zoroastrian Centre, *"the only recognized Zoroastrian place of worship in the UK and perhaps the whole of Europe,"* President Malcolm Deboo noted, *"it was today, exactly 150 years ago ... on 6th October 1861, that the Zoroastrians of the UK agreed to establish the Association ... to ensure that Zoroastrians*

return the wealth by implementing philanthropic projects and serve the nation."

"Prince Philip needs no introduction to Zoroastrians," said Lord Karan Bilimoria, as he related a story. At a meeting at Buckingham Palace, of Prince Philip's favorite World Wildlife Conservation, Lord Karan mentioned to the Prince the problem of vultures dying out due to the drug Diclofenac. *"It has nothing to do with Diclofenac" joked the Prince, "it is because they don't get enough Parsis to eat!"* Remarking how Zoroastrians are both capitalists and socialists, Lord Karan noted: *"We are capitalists – entrepreneurs, busy generating wealth, with a per-capita achievement perhaps highest in the world; but we are also socialist s – we give back and take care of the community."*

Director of Tata Industries, Farrokh Kavarana recounted the contributions of the Tata Group to the British economy. With Tata Consultancy being one of the largest software companies in the UK and Tata Motors' acquisition of Jaguar Land Rover, Tatas have invested billions in the UK economy, generated millions

In The News



Rohinton and Roshan Rivetna with HRH, as Bomi Patel presents a Silver Chalice to ZTFE

in tax revenue, and are probably the largest employer in the manufacturing sector.

An affable and unassuming gentleman, HRH Prince Philip drew laughter from the gathering, as he remarked *"It just occurred to me that I arrived here in a Zoroastrian car!"* *"I'm delighted to join you in this celebration"* he said as he congratulated the community on its achievements and *"huge contributions to the British Isles."* *"The tremendous contributions Zoroastrians have made to this country, even before 150 years ago ... It's a remarkable record ... and very much appreciated. But 150 years is peanuts,"* he added, *"I hope you're still here 2,000 years from now."*

ZTFE honored HRH with a ceremonial shawl and presented him with a commemorative medallion and copies of *"Zoroastrians in Britain"* by John Hinnells (who was present for the occasion) and the Chemould Publications and Arts Trust publication *"Portrait of a Community"*.

On behalf of the Zarathushtis of North America *Bomi Patel* presented Prince Philip with a plaque bearing a silver farohar. The Duke presented commemorative service medallions to *Godrej Bhumgara, Marzban Dastoor, Silloo & Kersey Jasavala, Hoshang Khambatta, Mahnaz Ostad and Savak Rustomji; special awards to Brian Pierce OBE (Founder-Director of the Inter Faith Network) and The Zartoshty Brothers (collected by Mrs. Simin Shahrokh); and to three members celebrating their 90th birthday this year – Nariman Contractor, Jal Karkaria and Dara Merchant.*



Silver Chalice

HRH enjoyed a private lunch in the ZTFE Board Room with Young Zarathushtis, of Dhun-Dar ne Macchi-no Patio with Sev for dessert, prepared by *Armin's Catering* (Armin and Yazdi Dastur are cousins of Freddie Mercury). The priests and their families were presented to the Duke in the Setayesh Gah where ZTFE children recited a prayer. The Duke then unveiled the Marble Plaque in the Donor's Gallery and met major donors.

In commemoration of this historic occasion Bomi Patel presented a Silver Chalice to ZTFE, on behalf of the Zarathushtis of North America.

This momentous event, so skillfully orchestrated by ZTFE did much to further preserve and perpetuate the magnificent legacy of the Zarathushti diaspora in Britain. We can all be proud of the inspiring story of Zarathushti enterprise, philanthropy and progress in the UK over the past two centuries, while yet preserving the fundamental values and traditions of the faith.

Report prepared by Roshan Rivetna (for bio see pg 46)

Photo credit Malcolm Toddywalla, Mumbai

In The News

THE ZTFE JOURNEY

Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe is the oldest religious voluntary organization of South Asian origin in the UK, established in 1861 when there were about 50 Zoroastrians in the UK. Currently the Zoroastrian population is around 5,000.

1861 "Religious Fund of the Zarathustrians of Europe" was formed, with Seth Muncherji Hormusji Cama as Chairman. A small hand-written letter in Gujarati, dated 15th August 1861 is the oldest document in the archives of ZTFE. Addressed to "The Zoroastrians of England" Muncherji Cama wrote:

"Our people go abroad to several countries for business. When there, each person could give according to his means for religious and charitable purposes. This would enable them not only to perform good deeds but also to live in harmony with one another in good and bad times ... It is essential to consider this matter urgently" ...

1863 Dadabhai Naoroji serves as Chair until 1908. Acquisition of an exclusive burial ground for Zoroastrians at Brookwood in Surrey.

1889 Name changed to Charitable Fund of The Zoroastrians of Europe

1908 Sir Mancherjee Bhownagree, KCIE, serves as Chair until 1933.

1909 Incorporated as The Incorporated Parsee Association of Europe

1929 Zoroastrian House was purchased at Russell Road, Kensington for £7500, with major donation of £6,000 from Sir Dhunjibhai and Lady Frainy Bomanji.

1969 Larger Zoroastrian House was purchased at 88 Compayne Gardens, West Hampstead with expenditure of £45,000, with a Setayesh Gah donated by Dasturji Dr. Sohrabji and Dr. Mrs. Shirinbanoo Kutar.

1969 Name changed to Zoroastrian Association of Europe (Incorporated).

1979 Name changed to Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (Incorporated).

1983 New Assembly and Dining Halls built at Zoroastrian House with donations from Arbab Guiv (£50,000) and Zartoshty Brothers (£50,000).

2000 Larger Zoroastrian Centre is purchased (an Art Deco style former Cinema House) at 440 Alexandra Avenue, Harrow HA2 9TL, for £1.35 million, with main benefactors Mehraban and Faredoon Zartoshty.



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In The News

150 YEARS OF ZOROASTRIAN STUDIES

First conference co-hosted between ZTFE, the British Museum and SOAS.



From left sitting; Sarah Stewart (SOAS), Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis (British Museum), John Hinnells, Dastur Kotwal, Almut Hintze (SOAS), Khojeste Mistree. Back Row: Rusi K. Dalal (ZTFE Trustee: Past President), Frantz Grenet, Noshir Avari (ZTFE Counsel Emeritus), Rashna Writer (SOAS), Malcolm Deboo (President ZTFE), Dorab E. Mistry (ZTFE External Relations & Inter Faith Officer: Past President), Jenny Rose, Jamsheed K. Choksy, Rohinton F. Munshi (ZTFE Young Zoroastrians Coordinator), Alan Williams

A conference to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe was held at the Zartoshty Brothers Hall of the Zoroastrian Centre for Europe in Harrow, England, on October 22nd and 23rd, 2011. The conference was preceded on October 20th by a lecture given by *Dastur Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal at SOAS, University of London*, entitled “*An Overview of the History and Development of the Parsi Priesthood in India up to the Nineteenth Century*.” The focus of this lecture concerned the priestly transmission of Avestan manuscripts in the medieval period, and the evolution of the Sanjana and Navsari Bhagaria priesthood before and after the establishment of the Iranshah Atash Behram in Udwarda. Dastur Kotwal made reference to individual priests who had been part of these developments in the religion, several of whom were his ancestors giving a sense of personal narrative to the information.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22nd

The conference was formally opened by ZTFE President Malcolm M. Deboo, who spoke about the rationale behind the original founding of a Zoroastrian anjuman in London – initially known as the “*Europe ne*

Zarathoshtianu Dharamnu Khatu” (the Religious Fund of Zarathushtis in Europe) – and its three main aims: to provide the means for religious, social and communal functions of Zarathushtis in Europe; to protect and enhance their interests; and to support and encourage the scholarly study of the faith. Mr. Deboo pointed out that what had begun as a small acorn had grown into a sturdy oak, so that the community could now celebrate the first conference co-hosted between ZTFE, the British Museum and SOAS, and could look forward to further connections with such prestigious organizations.

Nirmalla Rao, the Acting Director of SOAS, University of London, then traced the history of the study of the Zoroastrian religion at SOAS from an initial sponsorship of Iranian Studies by Parsi communities in Bombay to the 2001 establishment of a Zartoshty Brothers lectureship and eventually the endowment of the Zartoshty Brothers Chair in Zoroastrianism which was partly funded through a bequest from the late Mary Boyce, and is currently held by Prof. Almut Hintze.

Karen Armstrong, the renowned author of several books on religions in the modern world, and a Trustee of the British Museum, spoke about the need for scholars to bring their knowledge to the general

In The News

public. She highlighted the Zoroastrian religion as the oldest religion with a moral structure and imperative, which provides a template for understanding later religions.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 23

SESSION 1

Malcolm Deboo introduced the first session of the conference, a presentation by *Prof. Almut Hintze*, the Zartoshty Brothers Professor of Zoroastrianism, entitled "*On the Concept of Creation in Zoroastrianism*." Prof. Hintze focused initially on the texts describing the notion of the two existences – the one belonging to thought world (Av. mainiiaua/ MP menog) and the other to the material or "living" world (Av. gaethiia/ MP getig), and then referred to the qualities of Ahura Mazda, particularly those of omniscience, creativity and goodness.

The second lecture was by *Prof. John R. Hinnells*, *Honorary Research Professor at SOAS*, who spoke on "*Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe: A History of 150 Years*." Much of this presentation derived from the research for Professor Hinnells' groundbreaking book *Zoroastrians in Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). The history began with the first Parsi on record as visiting the UK (Naoroji Rustomji Sett, in 1723/4). The founding of the initial Trust Fund, supported by Dadabhai Naoroji, raised the issue of the seat of authority for the religion, particularly when the building of a fire temple in the UK was mooted, or when grounds at Brookwood Cemetery were purchased for Zarathushtis who died in Europe. Prof. Hinnells traced the progression of the ZTFE from its early role as a supportive organization, with Articles of Association, to its formal institution based in a series of premises across London, beginning in Cromwell Road to the southwest, then moving to Kennington Rd in the southeast, Compayne Gardens in the northwest, and eventually to Harrow. The supportive work of ZTFE for the community continued through the exile of Asians from East Africa in the 1960s and 70s, the period of the Iranian Revolution, and into the present.

SESSION 2

The early afternoon session was introduced by *Dorab E. Mistry*, the current External Relations and Inter Faith Officer of ZTFE, and Past President.

The third presenter of the day was *Khajeste P. Mistree*, *Co-founder and Trustee of Zoroastrian Studies* in Mumbai. Mr. Mistree's topic was "*Select English and European Scholars and their Study of Zoroastrianism*."

The presentation began with a photo of Raphael's famous School of Athens painting, in which Zarathushtra is depicted holding the celestial globe, and proceeded to introduce a range of travelers to India from France and Britain beginning in the early 17th, who had interacted with and commented upon the beliefs and practices of the Parsis. Perhaps the most significant of these was Anquetil Duperron, who brought the text of the Avesta to the attention of European philologists, such as Rasmus Rask, Eugene Burnouf, and Friedrich Spiegel. Spiegel taught K.R. Cama at Erlangen University, who then returned to Bombay to educate his fellow Parsis, including many priests.

Dr. Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis, *Curator of Middle Eastern Coins at the British Museum*, spoke on "*The Magic of Ancient Persia: Nineteenth-Century Travellers and Discoveries*." This talk highlighted the role of antiquities' collectors, including William Ouseley and James Morier, and artists such as Robert Ker Porter, in documenting experiences of the architecture of ancient Iran and its contemporary inhabitants from the late 18th century onwards. The 19th century saw the arrival of Henry Rawlinson and the deciphering of the Old Persian, Akkadian and Elamite of the great Behistun inscriptions. This was followed by the discovery of the Cyrus cylinder, which had been placed as a foundation inscription under one of the walls of the city of Babylon near the Esagila temple.

SESSION 3

The last session of the day was introduced by *Rohinton F Munshi*, *Young Zoroastrians Coordinator for ZTFE*. Mr. Munshi welcomed *Dr. Jenny Rose*, *Associate Professor of Zoroastrian Studies* at Claremont Graduate University in California. The theme of Dr. Rose's illustrated presentation was "*Agents of Change: Dynamic Encounters between Parsis and New Englanders in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries*," which looked at the connection established between the English East India Company and the Parsis in Surat in the early 17th century, and detailed subsequent trade relations between settlers in New England and India. In early 1772, as America was transitioning from its colonial status to independence, one of its leading politicians, Benjamin Franklin, read and recommended Anquetil Duperron's travelogue and translation of Zoroastrian texts. This early interest in the Parsis is reiterated in journals held in the East India Society Marine Museum (now the Peabody Essex Museum) in Salem, Massachusetts.

In The News

The final speaker of the day *Professor Jamsheed K. Choksy, Professor of Iranian Studies at Indiana University* spoke on *"The Zoroastrians of Colonial Ceylon and Independent Sri Lanka."* Iran had trading relations with Ceylon during the time of Darius I, and the later Sassanian empire, when pearl-harvesting was established around the island. The late 15th to late 18th centuries saw an increase in trade with Iran and India, and the arrival of Parsi Zarathushtis in Ceylon, some of whom were appointed as agents by the British. Their presence on the island is denoted by their gravestones with funerary inscriptions. These graves faced east on the east coast, west on the west (that is, facing the rising or setting sun). Prof. Choksy's great grandfather and grandfather had kept written records of some of these sites. In the 19th and early 20th century, many Parsi merchants and professionals, such as lawyers or civil servants, were drawn to Ceylon, but retained their ties with India. After independence, many Sinhalese Parsis migrated to India, but others moved to the Antipodes or to Hong Kong, and in the late 20th century, to the USA and Canada. There are now no Iranian Zoroastrians and about 60 Parsis left in Sri Lanka, mostly in Colombo.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23rd SESSION 4

The second day of the conference began when ZTFE Trustee (Past President) *Rusi K Dalal* introduced *Prof. Alan Williams, Professor of Iranian Studies and Comparative Religion at the University of Manchester.* Prof. Williams spoke on *"Diaspora Then and Now in the Mirror of the Qesse-ye Sanjan,"* beginning with the notion that a "diaspora" group is distinguished by a collective memory. The Qesse-ye Sanjan represents one such collective memory of the Parsis: it is a story of loss of land, survival, and bringing Iran back to life in the community, in the institution of the Iranshah. It remains relevant to Iranian Zarathushtis and Parsi communities today, particularly those in "diaspora," where the living flame is metaphorical, rather than actual, but still central. The memory embodied in the Qesse takes the form of a religious poem in which the main theme is the triumph over evil. In this respect the story acts as a mirror for the community.

The next lecture – *"Zoroastrian Funerary Art in Sogdiana and China"* – was given by *Prof. Frantz Grenet, the Chair of Religions of the Ancient World, and Directeur d'études at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, at the Sorbonne, Paris.* Prof. Grenet

focused on some of the iconographic motifs that are found in Bactria from 1st-3rd centuries CE, and in Sogdiana between 5th-8th centuries CE. Some Kushans in Bactria were Zarathushtis, and the coins of several Kushan kings, particularly Kanishka, contain representations of the yazatas and Ahura Mazda in Greek or Hindu guise. Prof. Grenet equated the Sogdian term Adbag ("supreme god"), who holds a sitar, with Ahura Mazda. A scene from Panjikent showing bearers with face-masks carrying a statue of a god atop a book could possibly be the earliest image of the Avesta. Sogdian funerary monuments from northern China also depict genuine Zoroastrian scenes, including what appear to be priests conducting the chaharom ceremony.

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

The morning program culminated with the formal presentation of Honorary Life Membership to *Dastur Dr. Khaikhusroo M. JamaspAsa and Dastur Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal.*

After a Parsi-style lunch served at the Zoroastrian Centre, the last session of the conference was introduced by *Mahiar Ardeshir.* The penultimate speaker was *Dr. Sarah Stewart, Lecturer in Zoroastrianism, and Deputy Director of the London Middle East Institute, both at SOAS.* Dr. Stewart's



topic was *"Negotiating Transition: From dakhmeh to aramgah,"* and was partly based on a four years' research project, for which she and Mandana Moavenat conducted 250 interviews with Zarathushtis throughout Iran. Although an aramgah was set up in Tehran in the 1930s, and later in other Zarathushti communities, both methods of disposal of the dead remained in place until the 1970s. The last exposure

In The News

in Cham was 34 years ago. The Tehran aramgah was erected partly due to the reformist agenda of the Tehran anjuman, and partly because the city had encroached towards the dakhmeh, which was then subjected to vandalism. *Kaikhosrow Shahrokh, the Zarathushti representative on the majles*, gifted land that was the location of a Qajar palace to the Tehran anjuman through a *waqfnameh* (a religious endowment). Since then, successive land nationalization and redistribution directives have meant that the anjuman has continually had to re-negotiate its use of the site.

The last lecture of the conference was given by *Dr. Rashna Writer, Senior Teaching Fellow in the Department of Religious Studies at SOAS*, who addressed the issue of *"The Role of Education: Keeping the Zoroastrian Heritage alive"* She began by relating the question of Zarathushti identity to Prof. Williams' definition of the diaspora group as retaining a collective memory, noting *"What we once were should not be forgotten."* Just as Hindu India and the British Raj impacted the Parsis, and Islam left its imprint on Iranian Zarathushtis, so the migration to Britain will result in a new positioning - a "re-rooting" - of the

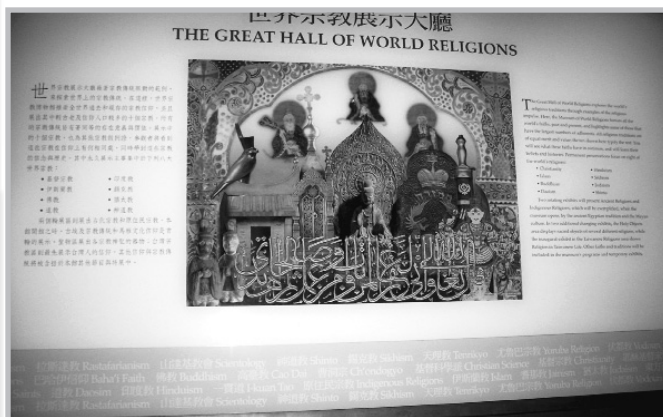
religion. Dr. Writer stated that as the number of British-born Zarathushtis increase, in order for the collective memory to continue, the community should work to ensure that the religious/ethnic heritage is not lost altogether. The four-pronged approach she suggested includes: the education of adults in the fundamentals of belief and practice; the education of young people in the religion, both in the home and in youth groups; the introduction of long distance learning through modern technology; and the provision of youth summer camps. Dr. Writer felt that the British Zoroastrian community, as the longest established diaspora group, could become a template for Zarathushti associations elsewhere in the world.

On both days of the conference, a summary of the day's events and a vote of thanks to the speakers, moderators and organizers was given by ZTFE *Counsel Emeritus Noshir J Avari*.

Report and photo credit Dr Jenny Rose

This report is part of a longer report prepared by Dr Jenny Rose

THE RELIGION OF ZARATHUSHTRA IN MUSEUM OF WORLD RELIGIONS (MWR)



INTRODUCTION:

Jatindra Mohan Chatterjee, the great scholar of Zend, Sanskrit, Pali and Persian, once mentioned, that The Zarathushtis are well known for, sharing their wealth, but they have not shared their greatest wealth - "The Wisdom of Zarathushtra." This thought stuck in my mind. The introduction of the Religion of Zarathushtra, in the Museum of World Religions is my feeble effort to rectify this situation.

VISION OF A PURE MASTER:

Dharma Master Hsin Tao originated the idea to build a museum of world religions, with the guiding philosophy, "respect all faiths, value all cultures and love all living beings." His mission is to work together to create a global family of love and peace.

Apart from displaying artefacts of religious and cultural beauty, the museum employs the use of modern technology and multimedia facilities to enhance the visitors spiritual stimulation. I quote, *"....a tour of the museum is more like a spiritual baptism. It is not merely a religious exhibition hall, but a living organism, a safe haven in the secular world."*

MWR:

Compared to the great Museums of China, it could be termed "a baby museum." The MWR occupies approximately 7,224 square metres in Yonghe city of Taipei county, Taiwan.

The visitors go through various facets of the museum, to name a few, Pilgrims Way, Golden Lobby, Hall of Life's journey, Avatamasaka world. Finally the visitor reaches The Great Hall of World Religions.

In The News

My impressions of the great hall were both exhilarating and depressing at the same time. Hinduism, Daoism, Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism, and Shinto were represented. Astonishingly though, the religion that influenced and established many of the tenets of all the religions, the Religion of Zarathushtra, was not represented. That broke my heart.

I met the authorities, put up our case as best as I could, they listened patiently, but they had a practical dilemma. Where could they house us? The great hall of religions was completely occupied. I could not give up. I would not give up.

I approached the Dharma Master. He listened to my plea through an interpreter. His demeanour exuded tolerance, and affection. Here was a man of peace. If he gave me his word, I could rest easy. He said something in Chinese to his assistant, somehow I felt assured of a fruitful result. Weeks and anxious months passed by. Then one day I got a letter in broken Chinese/English. They provided us a small place, ten feet of display space, I was overjoyed, I thanked Ahura Mazda for his blessings, little realising that there were many hurdles to overcome. But one by one the hurdles were crossed. Finally a contract was signed, my wish for a permanent contract did not materialize. A three year period was assigned. Whatever the period,



The Religion of Zarathushtra would now be represented.

PROCUREMENT OF ARTEFACTS:

A new phase had started in the quest.

A hunt for artefacts. Genuine Persian/Zoroastrian artefacts were impossible to find. I discussed the problem with the curators. They understood my dilemma, and allowed us genuine replicas. One more hurdle was overcome. Minor miracles kept on happening, one by one the artefacts were procured. Zarathushtris from Iran, USA, India, Middle East and Australia, helped. The procurement of various artefacts

is a story of minor miracles, by itself, which can be told another day. (See below)

GENESIS - THE ZARATHUSHTRIAN STAND:

The hectic job of the Zarathushtrian display stand had started.

It looked like an impossible job. Sitting on a computer, miles away from the museum, organizing the descriptions of the artefacts. Organizing the multimedia facilities. Organizing the display boards scripts.

And then a miracle occurred. Enter *Mrs. Alison Hsiang Yi Liu, Assistant Curator of MWR.* (photo pg 68) Despite her very busy day to day schedule, she took up the very, very hectic job of organizing each and every detail about the stand. I called her "our Guardian Angel." Truly the Divine provided the Zarathushtris with a Guardian Angel, who worked day and night. She even referred lovingly, as 'our display stand'. And boy was she thorough. She would not let me go easy. She even scolded me a few times, she gave her best and extracted the best of me. She learnt as much as she could about our religion, translated the scripts that we gave her from English to Chinese, educated the staff. I must honestly admit, that without her, the Zarathushtrian stand would not have been a reality. With her very hectic schedule, believe it or not, the Zarathushtrian stand was finally completed on the last hour of the last day.

MWR DECENNIAL CELEBRATIONS:

Respect, Tolerance and Love are the three solid foundations of MWR. These are the solid platforms for interreligious dialogues and understanding. The museum has been established for ten years. but it took ten years prior to that to plan and establish it. And the Decennial program has already started initiating various missions for the next ten years. And what is the Master's Key to achieve this vision. He says, "*True Heart has No Obstacles.*"

MWR had invited various experts, scholars, and professionals to attend the symposium on Museum establishment, planning, finance, etc., with a view of replicating similar museums all over the world. His dream remains the same - *Establishment of a Global Family of Love and Peace.* At this point I would like to proudly mention that a very good rapport between the Global Zarathushtri community and the museum has been established, I hope the world Zarathushtri Bodies take a note of that and act positively in the future.

VISIT TO WU SHENG MONASTERY, LING JIOU MOUNTAIN:

Visit to Ling Jiou is always a memorable spiritual experience. The Wu Sheng Monastery is perched on a steep mountain cliff with vast panoramas of the Pacific

In The News



ocean. It almost seems that you are breathing the breathtaking natural beauty of nature with the Immense Silence of the Divine. One is reminded of the old adage "The language of God is Silence, the rest is all babble." The monks and nuns display serenity and affection to the nth degree. Here you can feel a living, breathing religion which is beyond words. All you have to do is open up your heart and clean up your mind. Here you can feel the true essence of all religions. Indeed We Are One.

Here we had our group discussions and seminars and in the night there was an informal meeting with the Master. He cracked jokes and told us funny stories full of insight and wisdom. In the last minutes he taught all of us a 'One Minute Chan Meditation'. This was his last gift before we returned home.

SINCERE THANKS:

My sincere thanks go to Prof. Emeritus Dr Kaikhosrov Irani, for his thoughts and words adorn our main board, Dina McIntyre for her commentaries on Gathas, Rohinton Rivetna for introducing me to the world Zarathushtis, Alayar Dabestani for his invaluable gift of Shahnameh and making a genuine effort, to attend the celebrations in Taipei despite his busy schedule.

Mobed Mehraban Firozgari and Houshang Kiani of Iran in procuring The Pious Slab from Iran, Hoshi Kyani of Melbourne, Australia for freighting the artefacts from Melbourne, my cousins Pervez & Dolly Mistry and Hiloo Laly for procuring the artefacts from Mumbai, Members of California Zoroastrian Center and Members of Zoroastrian Association of Victoria, Nadish Naoroji of ZAV, who always rises up to the occasion and helps us in varied ways with his technical skills and photographic talents. Mrs. Pheroza J. Godrej who gave her kind permission in letting the MWR use the photographs from her book 'The Zoroastrian Tapestry: Art, Religion & Culture'. This book was a great help in providing much

valuable information to Alison Hsiang Yi Liu who in turn translated some rituals and traditions of Zarathushtis into Chinese to inform the volunteers who will be at the stall.

Meher Bhesania of Dubai for her gifts of CD, DVD & Coffee table book.

Dr. Sharoukh Razmjou and Prof. Azhideh Moqaddam for help in procuring a genuine replica of Cyrus Cylinder from The British Museum. Dr. Farzin Rezaeian for giving permission to display excerpts from Persepolis Recreated, Kaizad Bhabha of ZAGNY, for giving his permission to display 'Zoroastrian Journey', Dr. Sam Kerr of Sydney who provided his research paper on Cyrus the Great, and Phil Madon of Sydney who introduced me to so many of his prominent Iranian friends, Dr. Cyrus Irani of Sydney, who provided highly valued early Persian coins, Jenny Rickards, the dedicated sculptor who undertook various jobs and did the impossible job of creating four artefacts in the short period of time. And lastly my dear wife Nergish and family who are the real wind beneath my wings, who give me support and tolerate my endless whims to make my dreams come true.



From left Perviz Dubash, Nergish Dubash, Alayar Dabestani

And many, many more Zarathushtis all over the globe who helped me one way or another on this project.

And of course the Director, Curators and staff of MWR. And finally Dharma Master Hsin Tao, whose pure desire makes every thing possible.

ZARATHUSHTRIANS UNITED:

I always dreamt of a global body of sincere souls who would have but one goal - to spread the recognition of our Great Prophet Asho Spitaman Zarathushtra and spread his wisdom throughout this entire Globe, for all humanity.

In The News

May we wish and pray with all our hearts for His second coming and for the restoration of our Great Persian Empire to its former glory.

And I believe it will come true, if we learn from the Buddhist principle (Indra's Network) like a beautifully jewelled net, each living being, a jewel, simultaneously illuminating and reflecting all the others.

May we be blessed with Zarath (burning) Ushtra's (light), all consuming Wisdom.

Perviz Dubash
Melbourne, Australia

Photo credit Nergish Dubash



Perviz Dubash was born in Bombay, India and graduated with a Bachelor of Electrical Engineering, Indiana Institute of Technology Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA.

He worked in a Consulting Engineering Firm in St. Louis Missouri, USA and as a Technical Officer, Air India, Bombay, India. After his marriage to Nergish (nee Daruwala) he settled in Melbourne, Australia. He is the father of 3 children and grandfather of 3 lovely grand children. Perviz co-ordinated the Zarathushti presence in the Parliament of World Religions in Melbourne, Australia. He initiated the representation of The Religion of Zarathushtra in the Museum of World Religions in Taipei, Taiwan.

ARTEFACTS DISPLAYED

- Zarathushtra statuette.
- Callography of Ashem
- Vohu in 10th C Sogdian Chinese script
- Bas Relief of Cyrus the Great
- Fravashi Image glass casting
- Pious Slab
- Zarathushti religious apparel - Sudreh & Kushti.
- Parsi headgear - pagri
- Parsi ceremonial items - Ses.
- Set of early Persian coins.
- Afarganyu and Takht complete with bell, chipyo and chamach
- Avesta prayer book.
- Gurz.
- Zarathushtrian credo, marble slab.
- Winged Bulls.
- Shahnameh.
- Cyrus Cylinder.
- Tower of Silence, small scale model.

(Due to lack of space some items will be displayed at a later stage)

In The News

SSZ 2011 Conference on Zoroastrian Connections with Judaism and Christianity

On November 12-13, 2011 Zoroastrian Association of Chicago (ZAC) hosted a SSZ Conference, organized by the Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism (SSZ), an initiative spearheaded by Dr . Pallan Ichaporia and Rohinton Rivetna, and supported by FEZANA and WZO. The SSZ vision is to revive the tradition of scholarship within our community, and to promote interaction among academicians, theologians (priests), educationists, lay scholars and practitioners of Zoroastrianism. Believing in *Yasnaicha*, *Vahmaicha*, *Khshnaothraaicha*, *Frasastayaecha* (proper study and understanding, gaining knowledge and imparting that knowledge to others), young Zarathushtis are also encouraged to participate in the "Zoroastrianism-101" presentations held alongside the Conference.



Navaz and Jim Modi with the plaque awarded by ZAC and SSZ.

DAY 1: CELEBRATING SIR JIVANJI MODI. Over 90 persons attended on Saturday evening to celebrate the life of the illustrious Sir Jivanji Modi. After a reception of hearty hors d'oeuvres, benediction by Er. Neville Karanjia and monajat by Mani Rao, president Dinaz Weber, welcomed all. Jivanji's grandson, ZAC's very own Jim Modi presented *The Life of Sir Jivanji Modi, an Inspiration*. The Chicago community recognized Jim and Navaz, whose vision spawned the fore-runner of ZAC, in 1965, with a plaque that read:

*Presented to Jamshed and Navaz Modi
In recognition and deep appreciation of your
Lifetime of Service
to the Chicago Zoroastrian Community
following in the footsteps of your illustrious
grandfather, Sir Jivanji Modi.*

*With deep gratitude
Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago and
Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism.*

The evening continued with well-researched and inspiring presentations on *Works of Sir Jivanji Modi* by Khursheed Ichaporia and *Sir Jivanji Modi's travels to Heritage Lands where formerly Zoroastrianism flourished* by Er. Soli Dastur.

DAY 2: ZOROASTRIAN CONNECTIONS WITH JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY. Over 70 persons participated on Sunday for very interesting and enlightening presentations by scholars and religious leaders of the three faiths. After a benediction by Er. Neville Karanjia and monajat by Mani Rao, Rohinton Rivetna presented an Introduction to SSZ.

Session I

It started with a paper comparing *Life after Death in Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Judaism* by Dr . Pallan Ichaporia.

Rabbi Harold Kudan, the highly respected founding Rabbi of Congregation Am Shalom in Glencoe, IL enthralled the audience with his presentation on *Zoroastrian Connection and Influence on Judaism*. He drew parallels between Zoroastrianism and Judaism – six periods of Creation, Mankind derived from a single



A copy of the FEZANA publication "Zoroastrian Connection with Judaism and Christianity" edited by Roshan Rivetna is presented to Slister McGuire and to Rabbi Kudan. Speaker Keki Bhote on right

In The News

couple, angelology, eschatology, Gathic themes in the Dead Sea Scrolls, heaven and hell, lighting candles/fire, coming of a Messiah/Saashyant – and noted the “benevolence of King Cyrus, who is referred to in the Bible as The Anointed One.”

The FEZANA publication: *The Zoroastrian Connection with Judaism and Christianity* edited by Roshan Rivetna was formally launched, and a copy presented to Rabbi Harold Kudan and to Sister Joan McGuire, a representative of Cardinal George of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Er. Soli Dastur with Mobedyar Bomi Damkevala, lead an interactive session on *Jashan Participation with Understanding*, based on the new ZAC-Chicago publication *Jashan Prayers with Understanding, a legacy of Late Dastur Nowrooz Minocheher-Homji*. This book has been compiled by Rohinton Rivetna from My Prayer Guide by the venerable Dasturji and notes/recordings from his series of 40 lectures in Chicago in 1984. Keki Bhote, a life-long student of Zoroastrian theology and history, and a pioneer in furthering Zoroastrianism in North America, in keynote address at lunch traced *The Strong Influence of Zoroastrianism on Judaism*.



Speakers from left Tobin Hartnell and Tony Evenson

SESSION II, chaired by Kayomars Mehta.

The Very Reverend Aren Jebejian, St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church of Chicago gave some very interesting insights into *Zoroastrian Connection*

with Armenian Christians. Chicago High Priest, Dastur Dr. Kersey H. Antia presented *The Religious Concepts and Doctrines Zoroastrianism Shares with the Judeo-Christian Tradition*, unfolding how Zoroastrianism laid the foundation for beliefs very central to early religious development. In his absence, the paper was read by Bomi Damkevala.

SESSION III chaired by Bomi Damkevala.

Religious Studies professor at St. Ignatius College, Tony Evenson, who holds a Masters in Theology from the Catholic Theological Union and a PhD in South Asian Studies, spoke on *Zoroastrianism and the Christian Apocalyptic Imagination* and showed how early Christianity has been most noticeably influenced by Zoroastrianism via Jewish apocalypticism. PhD Advanced Student at the University of Chicago, Tobin Hartnell presented *Zoroastrian Culture and the Development of Ancient Persia*, stressing the multi-cultural aspects of his findings from archeological excavations at Persepolis.

As satisfying as the nourishment for the mind, was the nourishment for the palate. Participants were treated to grand meals on both days -- hearty appetizers and pullav-dar dinner on Saturday; and a big breakfast, delicious lunch of seafood and spinach-mushroom crepes and a lavish high-tea spread on Sunday.

Thanks to Rohinton and Roshan Rivetna for organizing the Conference, to President Dinaz Weber and many ZAC members for their generous hosting, and to the participants some of whom, especially Er. Soli and Jo Ann Dastur, and NAMC President Kobad Zarolia and Nergish, who came from long distances and helped to make this Conference such a memorable and inspirational event.

It is encouraged to hold such SSZ Conferences at different locations, in order to fulfill the vision and mission of SSZ. Mumbai and Houston are planning SSZ Conferences in Mid January 2012 and October 2012 respectively.

Report prepared by Roshan Rivetna

Photo credits Roshan Rivetna

In The News



My name is **Tinaz Karbhari** and I am a student of Visual Arts at the Auckland University of Technology. Being born in Hong Kong, where my dad still runs his law firm, I moved to New Zealand at the age of 8 where I currently live. I graduated from Macleans College, Auckland, New Zealand where I took on several leadership roles such as Deputy Head Girl, School Prefect & House Captain for my Whanau House - Snell in 2008. As an individual, I always like to stay busy, on my feet and am highly self motivated. Being the recipient of the Prentice All-Rounder Cup for Girls reinforced my commitment to co-curricular activities back at school.

Having been exposed to a multicultural background since my youth has given me the opportunity to develop several talents ranging from sports through to dance.

Overall, my interests lie in art and design, specifically photography. I see my camera not as a toy, but my most indispensable tool. It's the object I use to interpret and reveal life around me - depict how I see and observe things. As soon as I see something of relevant significance, I feel the need to photograph it. I hold that very special connection that any photographer has to their subject. This is revealed through my commitment to the photography company I currently work for. I believe, that any photograph can capture a moment, but a good photograph captures a memory. With the experience that I am gaining I am

6th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress- New Zealand, 2015

hoping to one day set up my own event photography business, titled Tinaz Karbhari (TK) Photography International. I see myself capturing the unforgettable memories that the world has to offer through my lens and my overall vision is to spread the message of love, peace and prosperity through TK Photography.



My name is **Roxanne Medhora** and I am from what people call the 'City of Sails', Auckland. I have lived in Auckland, New Zealand, with my family for the past 10 years and have really grown to love this country and its people.

Starting off at high school in Auckland gave me a great opportunity to explore my interests, passion and leadership skills. I was highly involved in sport and cultural activities at my school and was a leader for most of those groups. Tennis was my sport of choice and dance became my part time passion. My college years also gave me a fairly good idea of where I wanted to be academically and so I chose my path to a BSc degree from which I graduated last year with a Research Scholarship award. I am currently pursuing my Bachelors of Optometry degree at the University of Auckland and working toward a goal to part take in the WHO 'Vision 20/20' project upon graduation (which will most certainly happen before we welcome our youth to the 2015 congress!).

Making the decision of stepping up to be the Co-Vice Chair of the 6thWZYC was an easy one as I was astounded by the support we got from our small but strong community and the youth. We are all aspiring towards the same goal, to make this congress a huge success, and to grow into strong, responsible individuals who can make a difference in our wider community.



My name is **Nazneen Sukhia** and I am currently a student at the University of Auckland. I am in the fourth year of my Bachelor of Commerce degree, majoring in Accounting, Commercial Law and Marketing.

New Zealand has allowed me to pursue activities which I would never have been able to experience otherwise. Being a person who loves the outdoors, I enjoy sports such as tennis and sailing. As a result of my ten years experience in sailing, I was granted a scholarship to attend a 10 day voyage on the Spirit of New Zealand.

As Co-President of the Pakuranga Rotaract Club, I am very committed to giving back something to the extended community that I have grown up in. We are committed to raising money to help struggling charities and groups in our area within Auckland city. This is done by organising events such as movie nights, social evenings, and sausage sizzles, where the proceeds go to assist the needy in our townships.

INTERFAITH INTERALLA

Bound to Live Together

Religions and Cultures in Dialogue

International Conference in Munich September 11-13, 2011



An International conference “*Bound to Live Together – Religions and Cultures in Dialogue*” was held in Munich, September 11-13, 2011. A number of religious leaders from various parts of the world representing various traditions participated and Dr. Homi Dhalla was invited as the sole Zarathushti representative. Prominent political personalities and a few Heads of State also participated.

On September 11, an open air commemoration ceremony was held in the presence of *His Excellency, Christian Wulff, President of the Federal Republic of Germany in Marstallplatz* and in the afternoon for the victims who perished in the tragedy of 9/11 in New York. Images of 9/11 were projected on a large screen and brief condolence messages were exchanged with New York.

This was followed by the opening ceremony where President of the Federal Republic of Germany delivered a speech. On this occasion, thematic remarks were made by Alpha Conde, President of the Republic of Guinea and Danilo Turk, President of the Republic of Slovenia.

On September 12, at the Plenary Session a keynote address was delivered by *Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany*, followed by brief remarks by *Cardinal Reinhard Marx, Archbishop of Munich*.

A number of sessions were held on September 12-13, dealing with peace, religious freedom, human rights, globalization, immigration, Jewish-Christian dialogue etc. Dr. Dhalla participated in the panel focusing on “*Religions in Asia: The Challenge of Modernity*” and presented a paper entitled “*How religions in Asia are working towards social transformation*”. This session was chaired by Cardinal Oswald Gracias, Archbishop of Mumbai. A question-answer session followed the presentation of these papers.

On September 13, the delegates were taken to the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial site where a brief prayer meeting was held, representatives of the various religious traditions were provided separate locations to recite prayers and perform a simple ceremony. After playing a monajat, Dr. Dhalla recited a very brief talk on the Zoroastrian religion followed by the performance of the Kusti ritual. He then recited prayers on ‘Peace’ from the Zoroastrian scriptures, with a simple translation and answered a number of questions from the audience.



This was followed by a peace procession leading to the Marienplatz where thousands had gathered for the closing ceremony. Dr. Dhalla was asked to light the Lamp of Peace on behalf of the Zarathushti community worldwide. (photo above)

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

Dr Dhalla's peace message

For millions of students



Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, past President of India, had invited religious leaders from the various traditions to establish the Foundation for the Unity of Religions and Enlightened Citizenship (FUREC). Dr. Homi Dhalla had been invited to be a member of the Apex Body as the Zarathushti representative.

At one of the meetings of the Apex Body held at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi, Dr. Kalam discussed 'Peace' and 'Violence'. As Dr. Dhalla had been involved in the peace movement for many years; he dialogued with Dr. Kalam about this subject. Arising out of this challenging dialogue, Dr. Dhalla decided to develop a power point presentation "Many Faces of Peace".

This CD which deals with the concept of 'Peace' from a holistic and global point of view has been shown at various conferences in many parts of the world. In December 2009, it was shown in Melbourne, Australia, at the Parliament of the World's Religions. Dr. Jitendra Shah, the Director of the renowned Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad, was very impressed on seeing it. Under the auspices of this Institute, this presentation of 140 images, each having an appropriate and relevant message, was translated into the Gujarati language in the form of a book.

On November 11, 2011, Dr. Kalam visited the Institute at Ahmedabad, was introduced by Dr Dhalla and after inaugurating the electronic library of the Institute, he launched the book in Gujarati Many Faces of Peace. As this is to be used as an educational tool for schools and colleges of Gujarat State, this message of 'Peace' will benefit millions of students.

In January 2012, another organization will commence the project of translating this CD into the Tamil language. Thus millions of more students will once again receive this message of 'Peace' in Tamil Nadu.

Congratulations Dr Homi Dhalla in helping spread the message of peace which is so desperately needed in the world today ...Ed.



60+

EARTH HOUR

UNITING PEOPLE TO PROTECT THE PLANET

EARTH HOUR 2012: SATURDAY 31ST MARCH, 8:30PM

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

American Academy of Religions (AAR) Meeting Reception

Nov 18, 2011, San Francisco.

The American Academy of Religions had its Annual Meeting in San Francisco this year. One of the early events was a reception hosted by The Pluralism Project. The Project's mission "is to help Americans engage with the realities of religious diversity through research, outreach, and the active dissemination of resources." The reception was well attended, with about 40 professors, graduate students and community representatives from around the world, including Britain, Ireland, Netherlands and India.

During the reception, Dr. Diana Eck, Director of the Project, gave the participants a brief update on the scope of the Project. One aspect includes developing case studies of public misunderstanding of activities involving other faiths, such as the recent storm over the building of a cultural center called Cordoba House near Ground Zero in New York City. The cases are written up and available for use as a teaching aide for academic courses in interfaith studies. Dr. Eck introduced some of the staff, including Whitney Barth, who is the new Assistant Director, and Ryan Overbey, who is involved in updating

the content of the web resource "On Common Ground: World Religions in America 2.0".

Ms. Barth spoke about a pilot study, "The Interfaith Infrastructure: Citizenship and Leadership in the Multi Religious City". This study of 20 American cities maps the locations of places of worship of all religions in each selected city, together with data on the distribution of populations of each of those religions in city neighborhoods and data on whether those populations are immigrant or native born, their income, etc. The maps also provide links to websites associated with each place of worship. When complete, this study will bring together data from many sources and be a valuable resource to enhance understanding of the rapidly evolving multi-faith landscape in this country.

Mr. Overbey spoke about the progress made in updating the web resource "On Common Ground", which has essays devoted to world religions in America, some historical perspective on those religions and links to other sources for further research. Overall, the work being sponsored was extremely interesting and valuable for furthering a knowledge-based, peaceful interaction of diverse faiths living in harmony together.

Harvard Pluralism Project Photography Contest

Percy Katrak of Houston is one of the finalist

Over the past five decades, immigration has dramatically changed the religious landscape of the United States. Today, the encounter of people of different religious traditions takes place in our own cities and neighborhoods. In 1991, the Pluralism Project at Harvard University began a pioneering study of America's changing religious landscape. Through an expanding network of affiliates, we document the contours of our multi-religious society, explore new forms of interfaith engagement, study the impact of religious diversity in civic life, and contextualize these findings within a global framework. <http://pluralism.org/>

Looking at New Horizons (Houston, TX)

Current members of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston, TX continue to aspire towards religious tolerance and interfaith camaraderie by bringing to life



voices from the past in their presentation "Along the Silk Road".

This image submitted by Percy Katrak of Houston reflects the co-existence of religions that paved their way along the Silk Road by depicting a Zarathushti priest, Lord Buddha, Goddess Saraswati, and the Roman presence in Eastern hemisphere. The Pluralism project staff write

"A wide and rich variety of images were received that documented the vibrancy of religious diversity in the United States. Each entry was studied and your image truly stood out to our judges and we appreciate the time, attention, and creativity that went into your submissions." The images that have been selected as finalists will appear on the website, www.pluralism.org, along with those of the grand prize winners.

Congratulations Percy and the Zoroastrian Association of Houston

INTERFAITH INTERALLA

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

Every Child Needs Equality and Not Charity.

Tanya Bharda's experiences in working with underprivileged children from slum areas in Mumbai

My name is Tanya Bharda and I am pursuing an undergraduate degree in Social Sciences at the University of Toronto in Mississauga, Canada. In summer 2011, I had the opportunity to spend 4 months in India doing internships with 4 different NGOs (Non-Government Organizations); **CRY** (Child Rights and You), **Salaam Baalak Trust**, **Vinimay Trust**, and **PremDan Garden School**.



I was mostly working with underprivileged children from slum areas, street homes, and also institutions. I basically worked with children and taught them basic math, and most importantly, English. These children usually learnt their ABCs and 123s, with words, shapes and other fundamental information. My main goal was to ensure that they can communicate in English (E.g. 'my name is...', I am... years old, etc.).

I worked with **CRY** for 6 weeks, and have been part of an Anti-Child Labour Campaign which encourages children to get an education instead of forcibly pulled into

child labour. I believe children have every right to get an education to ensure a better future. Aside from participating with the **Anti-Child Labour Campaign**, I also did a study on **Child Marriages**. I wanted to undertake this study to be aware of the lives of these women who have so many problems and issues but at the same time are happy for what they have. Living in a country like Canada, I have always seen that men and women are treated equally and there is no gender discrimination. But when I came to India, I saw a totally different side of the world where there is always some kind of conflict between men and women in society. The stories that I witnessed were narrated by these incredible women who really put a different perspective to my life and made me think of how fortunate I am to have equal opportunities and rights.

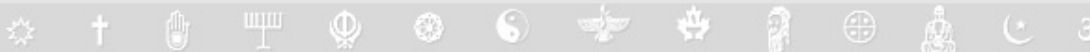
My next NGO was **SALAAM BAALAK TRUST**, where I worked for 5 weeks helping children learn English. I was working in Dongri (a predominantly poor area in Mumbai) where the children would come before or after school for help in their homework. Aside from helping the children, I also went to see where these children live on the streets. I went there because I had to inform the parents that if they have not got their children enrolled into school, and need help doing that, Salaam Baalak Trust can get them admission and also pay for any other costs incurred with the school. There was this girl who was about 8 years old and who did not go to school because her mother wanted her to do housework, while her brother went to school everyday!! So we asked, why is it fair for her to stay at home while her brother can go to school and she said, "Because I am a girl". So the plan was that one day her brother would stay at home and one day she will, but her brother said "I cannot do that because I am a boy".

I volunteered with **VINIMAY TRUST**, which is an organization that helps underprivileged children who live in institutions such as Chembur Children's Home, Bal Kalyan Nagar (BKN) Home, and two other institutions in Ulhasnagar and Worli. I attended a camp with these boys, in Khandala, to show them the outside world so they can prepare for the future.

The last place I went was **PREMDAN GARDEN SCHOOL**, which is a center run by nuns. I was teaching children from 3-6 years old. They usually learn ABCs and 123s, and just communicating in English.

I had raised about \$2500 from friends and family in the Zarathushti Community in Toronto which went first

I NTERFAITH NTERALLA



Religions Working for Peace and Justice



hand to the street kids. Among other things, the money was spent in uniforms, books, stationery, food and even a sweet dessert which the kids enjoyed.

Overall, my experience in Mumbai was priceless and I really feel fortunate for everything that I have in life. I would like to thank all the people who donated money for me to give to different organizations in India. Your donations have gone a long way. I hope to go back to India next year and continue with my quest to make this world a better place.

I hope my contribution and time has made a difference in the lives of these street kids. In future I would like to fight for the rights of these street children as I strongly endorse that **EVERY CHILD NEEDS EQUALITY AND NOT CHARITY.**

Tanya Bharda

First Annual International Day of Service Zoroastrians Stepping Forward

—A NextGenNow Initiative—

On May 5, 2012 put your tennis shoes on and be part of something great. Join your local Zarathushti community to move, breath, mingle and get an endorphins rush!

Zoroastrians Stepping Forward is an international day of service that will be led by local chapters. Associations are encouraged to organize a day of fun and host a shoe drive to support local charities. This event will help raise awareness about the importance of shoes in enhancing the physical, mental and emotional lives of disadvantaged individuals. Furthermore, it's an opportunity for the Zarathushti community to gather and celebrate philanthropy and health.

We are inviting every center, as well as remote populations, to join in on this inaugural event. Together we can foster unity within our community both locally and globally. Zarathustra once said: *"Taking the first footstep with a good thought, the second with a good word and the third with a good deed I entered Paradise"* Let us all take the first step together to help those in need!



More information

Facebook community: <http://www.facebook.com/ZoroastriansSteppingForward>

Emails: zoroastrianssteppingforward@gmail.com



ERVAD JALBHAI KEIKOBAD KARKARIA

A lifetime of priestly services to the Parsi Zarathushti Community



Ervad Jalbhai Karkaria, born on August 17, 1921, in Vankaner in Surat District, Gujarat, was one of the three members of the community introduced to His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh as a fellow nonagenarian when The Duke visited the Zoroastrian Centre in London on 6 October 2011. When Jalbhai lost his father at the age of three; his mother took him and his sister to Navsari, where his brother was already at a boarding school. Jalbhai's formal school education was at the Zoroastrian Tata Boys' School in Navsari, from where he matriculated. Born in a priestly Karkaria family, the young Jalbhai was expected to learn about priestly duties and rituals, under the guidance of Dastoorji Hormasji Kotwal. He attended classes in Zoroastrian Studies at the Navsari Madressa for eight years, from the age of six, and in 1936 was ordained as a navar before becoming a murtab. For the next six years he served as a priest at the Jeejibhoy Agiary in Navsari, along with his cousin, Dara Bomanshaw Karkaria. The family income was derived from the toddy and liquor trade

A new phase in Jalbhai's career began when he and his cousin were both invited to serve as priest s for the Zarathushti community in Mombasa, Kenya. This community had first begun to be formed as early as the late nineteenth century; and with British rule at the turn of the century more opportunities opened for

people from British India to work or trade in Kenya and Uganda. During the first half of the twentieth century a number of young Parsi men from the Gujarati towns of Navsari, Valsad, Surat, Bharuch, Gandevi etc, came to Mombasa in search of employment. Most settled in their new home, and the community steadily grew. It was a community without priests, which made it difficult for Zarathushti customs and rituals to be practised. It was only in 1941 that the idea of inviting two priests from India to serve the religious needs of the community was proposed by *Edulji Cawasji Bajina*, a far-sighted leader, who sent his colleague, *Sorabji Navroji Sethna*, to India to recruit two mobeds.

Story has it that upon a satisfactory hearing of Kusti prayers being loudly recited by the two young priests – Jalbhai & Dara Karkaria – that they were immediately recruited by the late Mr Sethna. In February 1942 they set sail for Mombasa in S.S. Shirala, a steamship run by the well known firm of McKenon McKenzie & Co of London. It was a ten days' trip in the deck class (which meant sleeping rough without the privacy of a cabin) and, this being war time, there was always the danger of a German submarine destroying the ship. During the night s, when strict compulsory blackout was observed at sea, the two boys used to recite Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayers – one standing at the helm and the other at the rudder of the ship.

When the ship arrived at Mombasa, the first person to welcome the two young men was my father-in-law to be in the years to come – the late *Mr Jamshedji Framji Digaria*, also of Navsari, and the baggage master at Mombasa docks. The same evening accommodation was found at the home of the late *Mr and Mrs Mherwanji Bajina* who lived in Kilifi, Mombasa. The next day, the two boys were introduced to the President, *Edulji Cawasji Bajina* who, being the Head Clerk of the Kenya Landing & Shipping Co, immediately recruited the two mobeds as shipping clerks on the Mombasa docks. Salary was fixed at 112 shillings per month (current rate: GBP£1 = 135 Kenyan shillings). Half of the salary, i.e. Sh. 56 was remitted each month to the widowed mother in Navsari; Sh. 28 was compulsorily saved, and the remaining Sh. 28 per month was spent on living expenses, i.e. Sh 1 a day!



The first Navjote performed by Jalbhai and Dara was that of *Katie Framroze Austin* – now living in the US. Each month Hamkara Jashans were traditionally recited. Every member of the community generally participated; and the practice of regularly attending Jashans left a deep impression upon the minds of young Parsis. Later on, when many of these East African Parsis arrived in London, they became the agents of change in support of traditional Zarathushti values within the London community. The Mombasa Parsi Association gradually grew in numbers from a mere 50 or so in the beginning to almost 750 in the mid-1960s; and the Jashans were the highlights of each month. Everyone ate chasni together and a sense of powerful comradeship grew within the community. All children addressed the elders as “Uncles” and “Aunties”. It was traditional for sev, ravo or jalebi to be sent to each others’ homes on auspicious occasions. Each month the “Anjuman Boy”, who happened to be an African, went with a circular to everyone’s home to collect monthly donations that varied from 1 sh. to 5 shs. These powerful values of loving and giving, embodied in our ancient practices and followed for centuries in India, were responsible for the creation of a uniquely bonded community in Mombasa where everyone was made to feel that it was one large family. Even though the community in Mombasa has now almost disintegrated, this feeling of comradeship continues to prevail amongst varied settlements of Mombasa Parsis.

Over the years Jalbhai and Dara performed various ceremonies of navjotes, weddings and funerals. Most importantly, they did not charge for their services which they gave voluntarily. Even the envelopes containing ashodads were never opened by our noble priests, instead they always added 5 shillings or so and returned the unopened envelope in another envelope to the provider of the ashodad. Parsi – thy name is charity – was indeed a deeply ingrained concept practiced in Mombasa.

Priestly duties were, however, not without fun. Pursuit of social activities within the community led to Jalbhai meeting Naju in 1947 when playing badminton. Their love blossomed, and they have been happily married since December 1950. In 1952 their daughter Shernaz was born, followed by Darius in 1959. In 2010 Naju and Jalbhai celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary

In 1967, prior to his departure for the UK after a 25 year service to the Mombasa community, a

grateful Association felicitated Jalbhai for his honourable and distinguished service during which he remembers reciting innumerable number of Jashans and performing approximately 150 Navjotes, 50 weddings and about 40 death ceremonies.



Upon arrival to the UK with his family, Jalbhai was fortunate to secure a job as a Cargo Assistant with Air India at London Heathrow Airport, retiring in 1988. The first 20 years of his stay in England were largely uneventful not requiring any rigorous priestly duties. However, Jalbhai's retirement from active employment coincided with the changes then being initiated within the London Zarathushti community by many East African Parsis who were asking for a deeper and a more meaningful promulgation of the Zarathushti faith within the UK community at large. Since 1986 successive managing committees at the helm of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe have invoked a greater and more vibrant spirit of Zarathushti religious practices on a more regular basis; and with the purchase of the new Zoroastrian Centre in Harrow, our mobed sahibs are actively



engaged in their priestly duties. What an honour for Jalbhai that, during his 45 years in Britain, he has performed another 400 navjotes, 200 weddings, almost 2000 jashans and some 500 death ceremonies.

When asked how he viewed the future of the Zarathushti Community in Britain, he replied: *"remain united – be kind and good to each other in everyday matters – remain generous and charitable in outlook – and the religion of Zarathushtra would prevail in perpetuity"*. How true and timely was that sentiment expressed in his living room over dinner on 18 October 2011, when only two days later I had the privilege to listen to our own very dear High Priest Dastoor Dr Firoze M. Kotwal speaking at the London School of Oriental and African Studies at the inaugural lecture in celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe when the Dastoorji,

quoting from the Vandidad prayers – chapter 18.6 – described a Zarathushti Priest: *"Him and him alone thou shalt call a priest, thus spoke Ahura Mazda. O Holy Zarathushtra, who at the appointed time of the whole night enquires wisdom from a holy person, which makes a man free from distress, with stout heart and giving good life at the Bridge of the Separator (Chinwad Puhl) and which makes him reach that world, that holy world, that excellent world, the world of Paradise"*.

May Jalbhai and Naju live a long life in continuous service to the Zarathushti Community.

NOSHIR J AVARI

***Counsel Emeritus and Honorary Life Member
of The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe
(Incorporated)***

ERVAD FALI KANGA

**Felicitated for 77 years of priestly service to the community IN INDIA, PAKISTAN AND AMERICA by
the Avesta class of Southern California, on September 11,
and
Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC) on October 23, 2011**



On September 11, 2011, the Avesta Class of Southern California felicitated *Ervad Fali Kanga* for his seventy-seven years of service to the Zarathushti communities of Mumbai, Karachi and Southern California. Ervad Kanga who turned ninety on September 29, 2011, became a navar at the age of twelve. But far from retiring, Ervad Kanga continues to serve as one of the senior priests of Southern California, participating in many religious ceremonies,

including in July 2010, the two hour long, complex, Fareshta ceremony to commemorate the grand opening of the new Center of the Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC).

The event began with a rousing Chaiye Hame Zarthosti, followed by a prayer benediction led by a junior member of the Avesta Class, four year old, Zane Commissariat.

Meher Amalsad, the master of ceremonies, then read several letters from Ervad Kanga's admirers from all over the world. *Ervad Kobad Zarolia*, President of The North American Mobeds Council, extended the Council's felicitation, "with gratitude" for Ervad Kanga's "lifelong dedication, commitment and service to our Zarathushti community in India, Pakistan and United States."

Ervad Kanga's work as a priest began in Bombay. *Dinshaw R. Mehta*, Chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, called it a "stupendous uninterrupted inning of a Priesthood", and observed that seventy-seven years of service is the equivalent of the life span of Zarathushtra.



Toxy Cowasjee, Vice President of the World Zoroastrian Organization, noted Ervad Kanga's readiness to serve the Karachi community, which suffered from a short age of priests. *"Though Fali immigrated with Soonu in 1994 to the USA, I have in front of me an image of him, as a gentle, shy and smiling human being"*, she wrote.

In his missive Malcolm Deboo, President of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe noted that Professor Richard Frye once said, "No Mobeds, No Religion!" Noting with gratitude the work of Mobeds in Britain, Mr. Deboo commended the California community for sponsoring the felicitation. *"May Ahura Mazda shower his choicest blessings on to Mobed Fali and may he continue to serve our community and humanity at large"* he wrote.

The California community, which has benefitted from Ervad Kanga's services since 1994, was particularly grateful. Striking a more personal note, ZAC President Vira Santoke, stated in her missive, *"We are indeed very fortunate to have you as one of our priests... and we sincerely appreciate all that you have done for us."* ZAC had a felicitation for Ervad Kanga on October 23, 2011.

On a similar note, Ervad Jal Birdy of the Traditional Mazdayasni Zartoshti Anjoman, noted that Ervad Kanga had *"always been present whenever called upon and [had] willingly performed [religious] ceremonies... [and] the difficult task of Farokshi prayers... reciting them with ease"*.

Jamshid Shahrokh, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the California Zoroastrian Center (CZC), where the event was hosted, expressed his gratitude to Ervad Kanga in person and noted that he had served not only Parsi, but Iranian families as well. Mr. Shahrokh looked back with fondness at a time when



the worldwide Zarathushti community was united and supportive of all Zarathushtis, regardless of their nationality. (photo left Meher Amalsad on right of Ervad Kanga and Jamshid Shahrokh on left)

Ardeshir Baghakhanian, Past President of the CZC Board, (photo above with Ervad Kanga) who volunteered to handle the Audio Video arrangements for the event, also echoed these sentiments. True to the sentiments of unity expressed by these gentlemen, the CZC, which is run by Iranian Zarathushtis, allows the Avesta Classes, which are taught by, and attended mostly by, Parsis, to be held at their Center, and arranged for the felicitation event to be held there as well. A letter from the CZC captured the sentiments of this Zarathushti congregation towards Ervad Kanga: *"We are truly honored by the dignity he brings to our community,"* wrote CZC President Shiva Khorshidian.

Jehangir Dastur, a teacher of the Avesta Class, noted that Ervad Kanga still performed jashans whenever asked and often, with young mobeds of the community. *"Fali uncle is an example of dignity and grace for our mobed youth"*, he said. This was echoed in the message of FEZANA President Bomi Patel, who wrote, "His commitment is a source of pride for our future generation to emulate for which we salute him." Indeed, throughout the event, the elder priest was escorted and assisted by Zerkxis Bhandara, a young priest who now continues his father Zarrir's tradition of service to the community.

When the floor was opened for felicitations from the audience many spoke with great admiration, respect and gratitude about Ervad Kanga, and his wife, Soonu, who was also in attendance, and acknowledged for her support of her husband's community service. Dhunmai





Dalal, a long time friend, spoke of the Kangas' sense of humor. Marzi Mody and Jamshed Lal, members of the Avesta Class, did not know Ervad Kanga personally. But they were nevertheless moved to take the floor and express their admiration and gratitude as well.

In honor of Ervad Kanga's upcoming birthday, the gathered assembly sang him Happy Birthday followed by Tum Jiyo Hazaar Saal, led by Teenaz and Danesh Bhandara. And in the tradition of Parsi humor, Ervad Zarrir Bhandara read a humorous poem he had penned for Ervad Kanga.

After receiving his plaque, Ervad Kanga made an eloquent speech, partly in English and partly in Gujarati. "*Jeh mai keedhooch, tay mai oopkar nathi keedho*", he said. Roughly translated that means "*what I have done, I have not done out of obligation*". Ervad Kanga went on to speak of the gratification he felt upon serving the community. He told the Avesta class children that he was proud that they were there, learning about their religion, and he encouraged them to find out more about it. He recounted stories of being

service that should receive acknowledgment from the communities they serve often.

In the spirit of acknowledging community service, "best teacher" awards were also presented to the teachers of the Avesta class: The award for the Junior class was presented to *Shazneen Gandhi* by Meher Amalsad, and the award for the Senior class was presented to *Jehangir Dastur* by Ervad Zerkxis Bhandara.

The event, was followed by a reception, where people continued to talk to and about Ervad Kanga and his charming wife, Soonu, both of whom have truly inspired much admiration and love in the Southern California community.

Reported by: Shazneen Gandhi.

On Oct. 23, 2011, the Zoroastrian Association of California held a special function at the ZAC Centre in Orange, to honor and felicitate our very beloved mobed, Ervad Fali Kanga who turned 89 this year. Spanning a period of over 77 years, Ervad Kanga has served the religious needs of our community in India, Pakistan and now the USA.

Members regaled us with anecdotes about Ervad Kanga and his wife Soonoo, and other mobeds praised his vast knowledge of our prayers and readiness to go wherever needed.

We wish Fali uncle and Soonoo aunty long life and happiness.

Photo below from left: Ervads Zarir Bhandara; Fali Kanga; Zerkxis Bhandara; Dr Khushro Unwalla; Darius Bhadha; Maneck Bhujwala.

Reported by Vira Santoke. President, ZAC

Photos by Meher Amalsad



a new priest in India, where there are plenty of priests guarding their turf, who are threatened by the arrival of new priests. But he noted that in America, because of the shortage of priests, a new priest like him had been welcomed.

Indeed, the event offered a rare glimpse into the life of priests. In North America, our dasturjees have other professional commitments and yet, like Ervad Kanga, they are called upon at the convenience of the laity, to serve their religious needs, and often oblige without remuneration and always with sincerity. Theirs is a



Personal Profiles

Ervad Dr Soli Dastur in an Interview with Hovi Shroff



Hovi Shroff (HS): Ervad Soli tell us a little about your early beginnings from Gujarat, India.

Soli Dastur (SD) I was born in a little village called Tarapur in Maharashtra; this incidentally is the first Indian Atomic Station. My father was a Panthaky for many years and was the priest for over 100 families mainly sethias or “jungle” landlords in remote villages, about twenty to forty miles from Tarapur. I was the last of 11 children, which included 4 sisters and I was the last of 7 boys and we all became Mobeds.

HS:: Did you know you were going to become a Mobed and follow in your father’s footsteps?

SD:: There was no other alternative- my family was one of 9 Iranshah Mobeds. Besides, my father supported our whole family on a very meager Panthaky salary and so going to the Cama Institute was my only choice. My father sent 5 of my brothers including me to Cama Institute and the other two went to the Dadar Institute.

HS: Did you have a role model at the Cama Institute?

SD: My role model at the Cama Institute was my teacher Mobed Tehmurasp Pirojshah Sidhwa. When I joined the school, our religious studies teacher was Mobed Dinshawji Minocherhomji, father of Dasturji

Nawroz Minocherhomji whom, we all called Ervad Saheb. He was very strict but in my second year he passed away and Mobed Sidhwa from Udwada became our teacher and that changed my whole future in Mobedi. He was very supportive of me, knew my family very well and gave me the support I needed to complete all the prayers by heart. I was ordained Navar on 3/27/1949 (12 yrs. and 4 months) and Martab on 2/25/1950 (13 yrs. and 3 months) in Iranshah Atash Behram (before my elder brother Palanji). At age 17 in 1952 I passed all my exams and became Samel with Palanji. I was awarded Best Boy Medal when I was in 7th Standard (usually awarded when you are in 10th Std). I was first in every subject like religious studies, prayers as well as in sports like cricket, table tennis and chess. – My illustrious class mates were: Kersey Antia of Chicago and Dasturji Kotwal, Mumbai.

HS: How did you come to the United States? Was this a dream or did it happen accidentally?

SD: After my SSC graduation in 1954, I rejected the Avesta Pahlavi Scholarship and opted to go to St. Xavier’s College following a Science track for 2 years from 1954 to 1956. I continued at Bombay University and won an award of Rs 75/ from my chemistry professor Dr. Kothare. After the completion of Inter. Science, I did not

Personal Profiles

know what to do and this is where my older brother stepped in and changed my life. He was a librarian at the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute and he sent me to the Head of Bombay University's Vocational Guidance Department. Here the Professor asked me to list my first and second best subjects. My answer was Chemistry and Math. This was when I discovered that there was a field out there, Chemical Engineering at the University Department of Chemical Technology (UDCT) in Matunga next to VJTI and Don Bosco from where I graduated and became a Chemical Engineer after 4 years.

I studied hard and stood first in all 4 years and got a scholarship from Bombay University; this was the only way I could sustain myself in the University. Also my cousin Hillamai Taraporewalla was very kind to me and allowed me to stay with them for 4 years in Dadar Parsi Colony at their home, Hira Villa, for only Rs 60 per month, boarding and lodging. In the last part of my 3rd year, all my "rich" class mates applied to foreign universities and got admission. I had no money and so thought I would get some kind of job after finishing Chemical Engineering.

HS: What brought you to the United States?

SD: My luck changed, when a Parsi Professor named Dr. Garda from Oklahoma University, came to India as a Post Graduate Research fellow at UDCT. I somehow became his "Gofer" did all his lab work and got to know him very well. He was annoyed when I told him that I was simply going to get a job after B. Chem. Eng. He helped me apply to Ohio State, Wisconsin and Northwestern Universities and assisted with applications to a number of Parsi Charities for my Graduate schooling in USA.

HS: So you applied for a Zoroastrian scholarship?

SD: Yes. I put in my application to the JN Tata Endowment Office in Bombay House in front of that strict lady Mrs. Vesugara. She was instrumental in my life. She wanted me to be selected as a JN Tata Endowment Scholar and sent me to meet with Lady Jehangir at her palatial home on Malabar Hill. I was shaking in my boots, when Lady Jehangir gave me a check for Rs. 5,000, an amount I had never even heard of!

HS: Which US University did you get accepted to?

SD: I got admission in all 3 Universities but I was very late for any University scholarship for that semester. Wisconsin had the best top 3 Chemical Engineering Professors and so I decided to join Wisconsin. However, at the last minute I got the National Science Fellowship Award from Northwestern and so I chose that.

HS: Did you fly to the US?

SD: (Haha) I set sail in the P&O cruise liner SS Oronsay on August 5th 1960. We sailed through the Suez Canal, the Mediterranean, the Thames and then onto New York. From there I took a Greyhound Bus to Northwestern University, in early September of 1960.

HS: Can you describe your journey as an immigrant and how you started your career?

SD: Prof. Thodos at Northwestern was my mentor and my friend and I cannot thank him enough. He helped me all through Graduate School with my MS and PhD degrees. I completed my 250 page dissertation, typing on a 'clackety' old typewriter. I was offered a job after my Masters in India but decided to complete my Doctorate in the US. After my PhD, I applied to more than 50 companies in the US but only 3 responded positively. The rest said I was over qualified!! . Who would give a job to an Indian in those days?

I picked the job offer from Proctor and Gamble in Cincinnati and worked there for 27 years until I retired. For 3 years we were in Brussels, Belgium on an extended contract. In 1994, P&G announced their first ever golden handshake and I took it right away and retired to University Park, Florida where I did some consultation work and I finally retired in 2000.

HS: Now here's the part that I really want to hear about. How did you meet the love of your life and was it love at first sight?

SD: I met my future darling wife Jo Ann on a blind date, proposed to her in weeks and married her within 7 months on July 2nd 1966 because that was the only week I had available. I was the Captain of the Louisville Cricket Team and we had no games that weekend! Right priorities even for my wedding!

The rest is history. Next came our twin daughters Shirin and Anahita born on May 16, 1968.

HS: Were you always interested in computers? How do you know so much about this field?

SD: I started as a Chemical Engineer in Proctor & Gamble, but then saw that computers were coming in and so I taught myself on weekends in the P&G lab. The rest of my career in P&G was in computer technology, analyzing vast amounts of data, creating software for analysis, and finally for the last 15 years in sales and training all using computers.

Personal Profiles

HS: What was the impetus or the reason to get involved in community issues and how did the immersion of your total self to the cause happen?

SD: Till 1994, we unfortunately had little contact with Zoroastrian families. It was only after we moved to Florida, we hooked up with ZA TAMBAY (Zoroastrian Association of Tampa Bay) and then Orlando and then ZAF (Zoroastrian Association of Florida).

HS: How did the idea for the interactive Jashans come about?

SD: The culprits are the three Tamboli kids!! They asked me the meaning of the Jashan prayers after I had performed a Jashan at their home.

HS: So you put your computer expertise to excellent use and communicated in a language that is current and understood by the younger generation.

SD: Yes. I performed the first interactive Jashan for the ZATAMBAY Association, then in Orlando, and then in ZAF. I performed one for the youngsters at the Miami Youth Congress in December 2005 and eventually its culmination in the WZYC in Vancouver July, 2011.

HS: Not many people know this Ervad Soli but you are one of the few Priests who assisted in 'transliterating' the script of our existing prayers to address the needs of everyone across the globe.

SD: Yes. Past FEZANA President Rustom Kevala, together with Behram Pastakia, Homi Gandhi and I were involved in a project to transliterate our Prayers for the general public for the upcoming Nowruz Celebrations of 2009, and I was given the project. I consulted Dasturjis, scholars in India, Iran, and USA and came up with the first version of these in English so as to address the needs of the younger generation. I then added a Gujarati version to address to the needs of the older generation that preferred to read the Gujarati script. We all thought it necessary to also add a Farsi version in order to include our brothers and sisters of Iranian descent. This way the whole Z community could come together and pray as one. I completed the Nowruz Prayer Book for Hamaa Anjuman before the Nowruz Celebrations of 2009 and the book was distributed via FEZANA to all our 26 Associations.

HS: Tell us about your involvement of and with the Zoroastrian youth?

SD: This was always my big interest for our Z Youth all over NA and Mumbai and India. I wanted them to learn how wonderful our prayers were if meaning was provided and the reason for praying. I scanned Kangaji's Gujarati and English Khordeh Avestas, with the help of

my good friend, Joseph Peterson, placed them on his wonderful website: www.avesta.org which was one of the best things I ever did. This was followed by scanning Gatha books and Dasturji Dhalla's Autobiography.

Sarosh Collector from ZAH who is a religious teacher, requested me to come for a weekend lock in with his class in Galveston in the summer 2009. This was a wonderful experience for JoAnn and me to interact with 20 boys and girls and their parents. About seven to nine of these youth were Ervads and it was joy learning with them.

HS: How did winning the Award for the most outstanding Z come about? What are your feelings?

SD: You have to blame our esteemed President of ZAF, Jahanbux for the same. He worked hard to put together my resume and present it to the Awards committee and I will always be indebted to him and touched that all of you nominated me.

HS: In conclusion, I have some mini questions for you.

Number1- Name 3 of your greatest accomplishments.

SD: Last of 11 children who survived his journey from India to the US, someone who left a legacy of many firsts in P&G in Data Analysis and Sales technology and last but not the least, raising my girls with Joann to be good human beings.

HS: What are your hobbies Ervad Soli ?

SD: To learn more and more about our customs, religion, prayers and to help out anyone, anywhere in the world and to play tennis 3-4 times a week.

HS: What is the mantra you live by and what is your dream for our religion and for yourself?

SD: To be a facilitator among people on any subject, to help anyone who needs help and to follow and spread the message of *Jasa Me Avanghe Mazda along with Fraspaaayo kehdraam - Bridge Builder*, *Needhaa snaitheesem - Peace Maker*, *Khaetwadathaam - Self Confident and Ashaonim - Religious*.

HS: You are indeed a pioneer, a beacon and a scholar! Thank you for sharing your knowledge, your warmth and your positivity with us.

Hovi Shroff is a mental health consultant currently pursuing her Ph.D. She lives in Florida with her husband Burjis and sons Dustyn and Kevyn.

Personal Profiles

Encyclopedia Iranica

Ehsan Yarshater's Grand Obsession

Porus P. Cooper

Ehsan Yarshater has nursed a grand, perhaps Quixotic, obsession for decades: He wants to create the most comprehensive and definitive sourcebook of information in the English language on Iran and its flourishing history and culture, from antiquity to the present day.

The Encyclopedia Iranica has been Yarshater's preoccupation for 38 years, and far longer if you include the time he spent dreaming of and preparing for the monumental task even as he attended to his day job – teaching Persian literature and cultural history first to university students in Iran and then in the United States. Yarshater is now the Hagop Kevorkian Professor Emeritus of Iranian Studies at Columbia University in New York and director of its Center for Iranian Studies.

Since beginning the encyclopedia project, from his base at Columbia University in 1974, and as he has aged, he confesses he has slowed down – somewhat. He used to put in 12-hour workdays. *"Nowadays I do not work more than 11 hours a day,"* he says. His collaborators are a small group of paid expert assistants and scholarly contributors from around the world, among them names that would be familiar to FEZANA Journal readers, the late Mary Boyce among them.

He has ploughed on despite becoming, as he puts it, "persona non grata" with the current Islamist regime in Iran, whose cultural vigilantes see mischief in his efforts. He says he has not been back to Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Alas, the encyclopedia will not be completed in his lifetime, he has concluded. The math of the project is inexorably against him, he says: In April 2012 he will turn 92, and the print version of the encyclopedia has only reached the 11th letter of the English alphabet – K. *(There's one glaring omission even under K – Ayatollah Khomeini. Passions still run too high in evaluating the founder of the Islamic republic, Yarshater says.)*

While a parallel online version (www.iranicaonline.org) contains entries all the way to Z, including "Zoroaster" and "Zoroastrianism" and down to "Zur-Kana," the traditional gymnasium of urban Persia, even that is far from complete.

(Already "the Encyclopedia Iranica has absolutely the richest coverage of Zoroastrian topics, on the rituals, the festivals, questions of calendar, and so on and so forth, written by the best and most outstanding scholars," he

says, singling out Boyce, John R. Hinnels, William W. Malandra and Shaul Shaked.)

"Obviously I cannot see the encyclopedia to its finish ... even if I should live another few years," Yarshater says. His voice quavers and is barely above a whisper as he speaks. He is frail and his hand trembles. But with his typical meticulousness he has made detailed plans for colleagues to carry on after him.

"I have made arrangements both financially and editorially for my colleagues who already are working with me," he says of the three expert researchers who have worked with him as editors on the encyclopedia. *"Should one of them become incapacitated, then the other two will choose a replacement."*

(He is famed, even notorious, for his close attention to detail. Jenny Rose, one of his collaborators, recalls that it took numerous iterations of the long-horned Persian ibex, the symbol used by the Center for Iranian Studies' newsletter, before Yarshater was satisfied.)

Dr. Yarshater spoke recently to FEZANA Journal. Here are excerpts of his remarks:

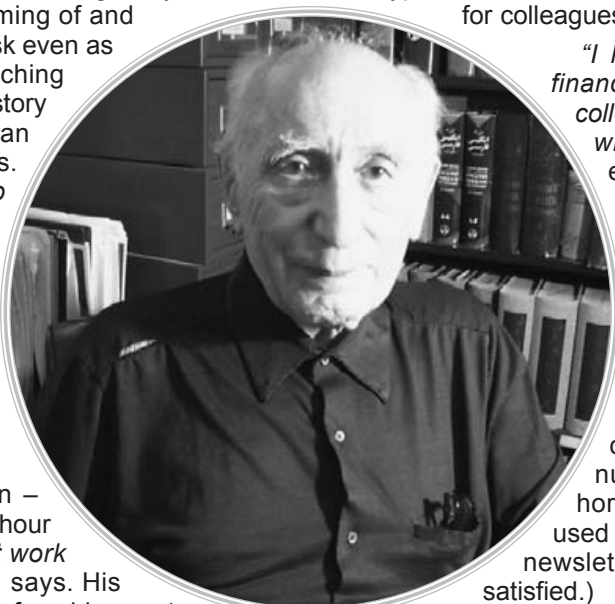
Q: *How did you come to conceive of the encyclopedia?*

A: My first doctorate was in Persian literature, and I fell in love with Persian poetry. When I came to Columbia to teach, I taught mainly but not exclusively Persian classical literature, also Persian modern literature, as well as Iranian cultural history. I embarked on creating the Encyclopedia Iranica because I learned from my students that there was quite a conspicuous gap in the available sources of information on Iran and its history and culture. There is an excellent encyclopedia of Islam, but it does not cover the pre-Islamic history of Iran, and even when it comes to the Islamic period, even though it has some excellent entries on it, Iran is not covered as fully as Arab countries and Turkey are.

When I came to Columbia and started teaching here, I realized that the time had come and the resources were at hand to start the encyclopedia about which I had dreamt.

Q: *There is scant historical information about Zarathustra and people disagree on when he was born. Was he a real person?*

A: It is absolutely clear he was a real person, and we have today his own hymns in the Gathas. He was protected by King Vistaspa, one of the last of the Kayanian dynasty, and he lived in northeastern Iran and spoke in the



Personal Profiles

Avestan language. He was a great teacher of ethics and a great thinker who realized that our world is an arena of competition and conflict between the forces of good and the forces of evil, and this realization also defined the ethical duty of man, which was to opt for the good and help the forces of good to eventually triumph over the forces of evil.

What is controversial is his date, and this has varied from some impossible dates, such as 3000 years before Christ, to what is very close to reality, which is between 900 and 600 B.C.E.

Some scholars like Mary Boyce, put him back much farther, say to 1200 BC, and some nationalistic Iranian scholars have put him even further back, but their views have not been accepted by the majority of Iranian scholars.

Q: *Were the Achaemenids Zoroastrian?*

A: It's controversial. People like Mary Boyce believe that they were.

Q: *What do you believe?*

A: I think that they were Mazdayasnians – and this is not necessarily Zoroastrian – believing in Ahura Mazda as the supreme god along with a number of other deities like Mithra, Anahita, and so on. This was probably the religion of the majority of Persians. Zoroastrianism rose in the east of Iran and took time to penetrate the rest of Persia.

Q: *Zoroastrianism was the state religion under the Sasanians. Why did it collapse after the Arab conquest?*

A: Zoroastrianism apparently was facing a crisis anyway. The Zoroastrian establishment controlled a great deal of real estate and had become very wealthy. People had stopped believing in the establishment's legitimacy.

(Even before Islam) Christians were propagating their religion in Sasanian Iran. There was a Persian church. Iran was a neighbor to the eastern Roman empire and to Byzantium. There was give and take between the peoples. There was trade, there was war, there was peace. So the Iranian people were exposed to Christianity. Sasanian kings appointed the archbishops of the church.

At the same time, people were exhausted by the wars against Byzantium. The mobeds also lost their good name because of the abuses of some of them who tried to gather wealth while putting too many restrictions on the people.

Islam arose at this opportune moment. It was a simple religion, easily understandable. The Arab fighters, fired by this new religion, faced a country that was suffering from old age, the abuses of government, and the abuses of the mobeds, and was ready for a change.

It is possible that if Islam had not come to Iran, then Christianity might have made inroads. The Islamic fighters faced a country with a great name and great wealth that was rotten inside. Like an old tree, which is eaten from inside, it fell.

Q: *Besides the small Zoroastrian communities still present, what influence of Zoroastrianism still lingers in present day Iran?*

A: Zoroastrian theology and rituals have disappeared, but sometimes linger in a new guise. For instance, on Friday evenings, people serve food to the poor or to relatives, just as Zoroastrians used to put out food for the faravashis.

Also, the Iranian rituals of mourning for the third Imam, Hussein, follow the ancient pattern of mourning for Siavos, a holy figure of pre-Islamic Iran. The weeping and singing of dirges resembles the mourning for Siavos. Old habits die hard. Siavos was also a young, holy figure. He was killed by Afrasiab, who was seen as an enemy of the Iranian race the same way as Yazid is seen as an enemy of the Shiites.

Q: *What is the state of the Zoroastrian community in Iran?*

A: Many of the Zoroastrians, because of the pressures put upon them, have left the country and many of them now live in England, Canada or the United States.

Under the Pahlavis, they lived freely and were glad to see Zoroastrianism being respected and the ancient monuments of Iran associated with Zoroastrianism being honored. Because they belonged to ancient Iran, the Persian nationalism of the Pahlavi period favored them. After the Islamic revolution, they reverted to the old conditions. If a member of a Zoroastrian family became Moslem, they would say the inheritance should go only to the Moslem.

(But for the most part) pressures now are mostly local. The grocer or the butcher may treat them as aliens and be unkind to them, or from time to time a mullah may excite people against Jews and Zoroastrians, and has to be silenced by giving him some money.

The Zoroastrians and the Jews are not persecuted. They have to suffer limitations. Bahais are newer and they have been severely persecuted. Bahais have been dismissed from government jobs, their children are not accepted in universities, and they have been arrested and jailed and sometimes tortured and killed.

Q: *You were born in a Bahai family, though you now do not profess any religion, correct?*

A: Yes, because the encyclopedia, in order to succeed, needs to be seen as absolutely impartial. There are enough accusations and calumnies already that this is by the Bahais, or this is by the Jews, or that the British or Americans have a hand in it. No matter what might be my religion, impartiality is one of the essential conditions, and essential features, of the encyclopedia.

Encyclopedia Iranica must be the best source for the study of Zoroastrianism, for the study of Shiism, for the study of Bahaim, for the study of Babism, or for the study of Manicheism. While Christianity and Judaism are not covered (as religions), the Christian community and the Jewish community in Iran are being fully covered.

(Porus P. Cooper is a veteran journalist in the United States.)

M I L E S T O N E S

as of December 15, 2011

BIRTHS

Zal Cooper Daver, a boy, to Shirin Cooper and Vispi Daver in Menlo Park, CA on January 12, 2011.

Anaiya Jokhi Singh, a girl, to Monaz and Jadwinder Singh, sister to Nishaan, granddaughter to Gool and Fakir Jokhi (Mumbai, India) and Gurbin and Bhupidarpal Singh (South San Francisco, CA) in San Bruno, CA on June 24, 2011.

Leo Calderon, a boy, to Firoza and Joshua Calderon, brother to Isabell, Isaac, and Luke, grandson to Hilla and Peshotan Irani in Chico, CA on July 13, 2011.

Darien Vimadalal, a boy, to Khushroo and Parynaz Vimadalal, brother to Freyaan, grandson to Kashmira and late Dinyar Vimadalal (Mumbai, India) and Firdosh and Maharukh Mehta (Springfield, NJ) in Summit, NJ on July 22, 2011.

Ava Ryan, a girl, to Shanaz and Arvin Martin (New York), granddaughter to Hutoxi and Dinshaw Bardoliwala on August 8, 2011.

Joshua Neville Arjani, a boy, to Neville and Mandy Arjani, grandson to Mehroo and Minoo Arjani (Hamilton, ONT) and Gene and Linda Beauchamp (Brookville, ONT) in Ottawa, ONT on August 19, 2011.

Aarya Zubin Noria, a girl, to Zubin and Tania Noria, granddaughter to Dhun and Farokh Noria, niece to Sabrena in Toronto, ONT on September 13, 2011.

Zahra Damkevala, a girl to Mahnaz and Zal Damkevala of Washington, DC.. Granddaughter to Soonnoo and Rohinton Marolia, of Montreal and Hiloo and Rohinton Damkevala of Mumbai on October 15, 2011, in Washington DC.

Kyan Lali, a boy, to Arzan and Delnaz Lali in South Bend, IN on October 17, 2011.

Landon Pesi Dhalla a boy, to Stephanie and Shahveer Dhalla, grandson to Nozer and Rakhshandeh Dhalla in North Texas on October 21, 2011.

Aiden Boyd, a boy to Rukshana and Matthew Pilla, of Montreal and Adelaide, grandson to Dr Kelly

Gheyara and Pilloo Billimoria (Montreal), and Wendy and Dean Pilla (Adelaide, Australia), in Hong Kong on October 28, 2011.



Zayne Kerawalla, a boy, to Geeta and Burges Kerawalla, brother to Cyrus, grandson to Godrej and Ruby Kerawalla in Walnut Creek, CA on November 4, 2011.



Ilyana Minoo Contractor Bodhanwala a girl to Laila and Homi Bodhanwala Grand daughter to Dolat and Viraf Bodhanwala and Houtoxi and Farhad Contractor. Niece to Nozer Bodhanwala and Cyra and Farzin Morena. Cousin to Ryaan Morena, November 17, 2011.

NAVJOTES

Lyla Patel, daughter of Parizad and Neville Patel, granddaughter of Adi and Armaity Sadri and Ron and Roshan Patel in Stockton, CA on July 16, 2011.

Farah Pavri, daughter of Azarmeen and Rezwan Pavri, granddaughter of Sam and Nergis h Jamasji and Dinar and Dinyar Pavri in Menlo Park, CA on July 17, 2011.

Tia Irani, daughter of Parinaaz and Cherag Irani in San Jose, CA on July 18, 2011.

Darius Vazifdar, son of Hoshi and Annette Vazifdar, brother of Nya, grandson of Cora and Phil Torres and Aban and Pesi Vazifdar in Chicago, July 30, 2011.

Spencer Rohinton Green and Corynne Adora Green, children of Nilufer and Scott Green, grandchildren of Viloo and Rohinton Surty in Menlo Park, CA on August 6, 2011.



from left Dana Nepton with Ervad Noshir Mirza; Samantha Nepton with Ervad Nozer Kotwal; Ryan Nepton with Ervad Xerxes Bamji, with Hosi Surty tending the fire in background

Samantha, Dana and Ryan Nepton, children of Anahita (Printer) and Daniel Nepton of Richmond Hill, Ontario, and grandchildren of Gulchere Printer and the late Percy Printer of Montreal, Quebec, in Richmond Hill, on September 25, 2011 (photo above)

WEDDINGS

Rukshana Patel, daughter of Pervez and Jeroo Patel (West Vancouver, BC) to Percy Irani, son of Rustom and Viloo Irani in Baltimore, MD on May 11, 2011.

Marsha Malbari, daughter of Ruby and Farhad Malbari (Richmond, ONT) to Allan Lee, son of Mantuk Wu and Joseph Lee in Nobleton, ONT on June 18, 2011.

Ardeshtir Dabestani, son of Gitty and Alayar Dabestani (North Vancouver, BC) to Arshin Mehraein, daughter of Parvin and Mehraban Mehraein in Toronto, ONT on July 15, 2011.

Khushnaz Ogra, daughter of Pervin and Rohinton Ogra, granddaughter of Arnavaz Irani to Daruis Bamboat, son of Tanaz and Kewmars, grandson of Meher Bamboat in Merrillville, IN on July 16, 2011.

Mehrdad Hormuz, son Dilbar and Shariar Hormuz (Foster City, CA) to Morvarid Khosraviani, daughter of Iraan and Jahangir Khosraviani (Tehran, Iran) in Tehran, Iran on July 17, 2011.

Negin Sharyari, daughter of Farida and Houshmand Sharyari, granddaughter of Nergish Sharyari and Irandokht and Keki Kianipour to Michael Voss, son of Suzanne and Robert Voss, in Schaumburg, IL on July 23, 2011.

Behram Mody, son of Shirin and Parvez Mody (Orangevale, CA) to Nikta Namdaran, daughter of Farzin and Fereshteh Namdaran in San Francisco, CA on August 6, 2011.

Khojasteh Batliwala, son of Minoo and Ruby Batliwalla (Surrey, BC) to Laura Artuso, daughter of Joann and Dorino Artuso in Vancouver, BC on August 20, 2011.

Jimmy Avari, son of Dinci and Nausheer Avari to Janki Modi, daughter of Shilpa and Sudhir Modi in New Jersey on September 3, 2011.

Shahroukh Dastur, son of Delna and Kersy Dastur to Ivy Mclemore, daughter of Laura and Jim Mclemore in historic New Orleans on 3rd November 2011. The wedding ceremony itself was in the courtyard of Maison Dupuy and a second line parade followed the reception with a jazz band leading the party through the French Quarter of New Orleans.

DEATHS

Harash Saigal, 78, husband of Kamlesh Saigal, father of Tina (Mehernosh) Daroowalla and Adarsh (Marzena) Saigal, grandfather of Rayan Daroowalla and Jai Saigal in Maywood, NJ on June 15, 2011.

Sohrab Barjorji Gimi, husband of Hutokshi Gimi, father of Barjor Gimi (Boston, MA), Khursheed Rayomand Ichhaporia, grandfather of Rustom Ichhaporia in Mumbai, India on June 28, 2011.

Bapsy Elavia, mother of Arnava (Ervad Jamshed Antia,) Nadir Khurshid), Jamshed (Delnaz), grandmother of Priyana Elavia, sister of Sheroo (Rumi) Karanjiawalla, brother of Farrokh (Villoo) Bonesetter.

Dali Keki Mistry, 64, husband of Jasmine Mistry, father of Karishma Zubin Mistry (San Francisco, CA), grandfather of Yohan Zubin Mistry, brother of Roshan Dinyar Mistry (Langley, BC) in Mumbai, India on July 30, 2011.

Frairani Irani, 93, wife of Dr. Rustom Irani (Houston, TX), mother of Amy Bulsara and Nergish Irani in Mumbai, India on August 20, 2011.

Manek Behram Shahbadi, 53, husband of late Ournai Shahbadi, father of Meher Shahbadi on August 20, 2011.

Mehraban Bakhtiari, 86, husband of Manijeh Boostani in Houston, TX on August 20, 2011.

Arastoo Aflatooni, husband of Simin Aflatooni, father of Koorosh, Shahnaz and Aflatoon in Toronto, ONT on September 1, 2011.

Dolly F. Wania, mother of Xerxes (Charis) Wania, Fawzia (Pesi) Setna, grandmother of Zain, Cyrus, Jimmy and Danny in Mississauga, ONT on September 5, 2011.

Jolly Shapur Pardivala, mother of Binaifer Irshad (Houston, TX), Cashmira Adil Irani (Houston, TX) and Niloufer Rohinton Hathiram (Florida) in Houston, TX on September 9, 2011.

Tehmi Homi Kolah, wife of late Homi Kolah, mother of Jahangir Kolah (India) in Toronto, ONT on September 20, 2011.

Aloo Nadir Engineer, mother of Sarosh Engineer, Pearl Behram Dubash, grandmother of Pervez and Neville Dubash, sister of Freny Minoo Talati (Bolingbrook, IL), aunt of Khushroo (June) Talati (Australia), Kashmira (Rumi) Jamsetjee (Bolingbrook, IL) and Pervin (Cyrus) Todiwala (London) in Mumbai, India on September 30, 2011.

Keikhusruv Kianpour, husband of Tahmineh Jamaspian, father of Kiumars and Kourosh Kianpour, daughter-in-law Mojgan Partovi, and grand daughter Aryana Kianpour. in Tehran on October 18, 2011.

Homayoon Sorooshian on October 23, 2011.

Tehmina Nariman, mother of Anoo Sukhia (New Jersey) in Pune, India on October 29, 2011.

Rustom Behram Minwalla, son of Homai Minwalla and late Behram Minwalla, husband of Havovi Minwalla, father of Behram and Narius, brother of Farrokh Ghadially in Toronto, ONT on October 30, 2011.

Khushroo Shroff, father of Khushroo (Nilufer) Shroff (New Jersey) in Mumbai, India.

Putli Pardiwalla, aunt (fui) of Binaifer Irshad (Houston), Nilufer (Rohinton) Hathiram (Florida), Cashmira (Adil) Irani (Houston), sister of Shapur (late Jolly) in Karachi, November 3, 2011.

Gul Dinshaw Sachinvala, 90, wife of Dinshaw, mother of Rohinton (New York), Zareen and Avni (Nevada); Navzer (Villi) Louisiana; Grandmother of Dina, and Cyrus, in Mt Sinai Medical Centre, Queens NY, November 16, 2011.

Coomi Nariman Munshi, 101 years, wife of late Nariman, mother of Mahrookh, Kersi, Pesi, Rusi, (the late) Mehrnosh, grandmother to 10, and great grandmother of 12, died in Mumbai, October 30, 2011.

Shine Out! She Exclaimed

I heard the voice of my grandmother calling me, and all of us. She said to Shine Out! To live life to its full potential. Now is the time, she emphasized. Wait no longer, for the world is in need of us all. We must awaken from our slumbers, induced by caffeine and other drugs. The Earth expects us to work for her today, acting in the interests of life. She remarked that many barriers stand in the way of living fully. "In my life some of the highest fences were erected by my own family. Society put up more fences. With Asha, we must learn to walk around, climb over and/or knock down these fences. The forces of greed and corruption will only be overcome by love, empathy and brilliance. Bring your heart and head together to lead the world to a more just and equitable place! Humata, Hukta, Hvarsta."

She taught, by example, the power of hard work, a hearty laugh and deep understanding. In her moment of death she breathed her quintessence into the world-leaving us with resiliency, hope and strong determination.

Our Granny, on the Dokhma like our Zarthusti ancestors before her, is performing her last act of charity-feeding birds and other life with her body. May the world continue to be enriched by her legacy. **By Farah Mahrugh Coomi Shroff, Vancouver BC**

Matrimonials

Male 59, looks like 49, tall, healthy and amicable personality. After many years of flying as In-flight Manager with Air India, now financially independent, settled in New Zealand, with a good job. Divorced in 2008, two children (15 and 12). Diverse interests, enjoys good food and traveled extensively around the world. Interested in meeting intelligent compatible woman in good health, to build a relationship starting with friendship and culminating in matrimony. Contact sister in USA at 813 380 0064, yasminhomes@verizon.net [M11-53].

Female, 31, 5' 3" Bachelors in Physiotherapy from India, MS in Health Sciences (Physical Therapy) from USA, working as Physical Therapist in Indiana. Enjoys reading, movies, music, new cuisines and restaurants, outdoors activities, good sense of humor. Career oriented but family and friends always come first. Contact kfrapest@gmail.com [F11-54].

Female, 24. Parents looking for well-educated and well-settled man for their fair, slender, pretty daughter currently completing her higher education in the healthcare field in the USA. Outgoing, warm-hearted, enjoys music and traveling. If interested, please contact girl.parsi@gmail.com or parents at behram53@gmail.com [F11-55].

Female, 30, beautiful, slim, 5' 2", Associate degree in graphic arts and web design. Living with parents in Pennsylvania. Smart, loving, understanding, very sociable, with good sense of humor. Needs some assistance in walking because of weak legs. Looking for understanding, loving, smart man, from USA or Canada. Contact Heavenly_destiny81@yahoo.com [F11-56].

Male, 34, PhD in Business and Marketing, well-settled professor at a University in Pennsylvania. Enjoys sports, music, movies. Interested in meeting a good-natured, educated, very good life partner. Contact 724-599 5640 or mother in India at 91 97 6924 6286 [M11-57].

Female, 30, 5', slender, finishing Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, currently doing her internship in North Carolina. Family-oriented and fun-loving, willing to settle in India or abroad. Contact aunt at (919)929-6966 or myniece2011@hotmail.com [F11-61].

Male, 33, 6', fair, B.Sc., Web Engineering Certificate, professionally well-settled as Project Manager for Global e-Commerce company in Mumbai. Interested in meeting girl willing to settle in India. Contact jahangu@gmail.com, tel 91-22 2209 5311, or mother at silloo@gmail.com [M11-62].

Male, 39, 5' 6", fair, B.Sc (Physics), Diploma in Software Technology from Mumbai. Working as Software Consultant with leading US company since 2,000. Enjoys movies, traveling. Contact ruzhere@yahoo.com or mother at silloo@gmail.com [M11-64].

Female, 31, very beautiful, B.A., working as Airport Manager for Qatar Airways at Tehran airport. Previously worked as Supervisor for KLM Royal Dutch Airlines at Mehrabad Airport. Speaks fluent English, Farsi, Gujarati and Hindi. Interested in meeting well-educated and smart boy from any part of the world. Contact friend Anahita in Michigan at 586-268 4146 or Zarin in Mumbai at 91-22 2203 7225, zkotwal@yahoo.co.in. [F11-65].

Male, 30, BA and Masters in Business Administration from US universities, well-settled as Financial Analyst at an IT portfolio management firm in California. Contact xdd200@nyu.edu. [M11-71].

Looking for a Soul Mate?

Try these matrimonial sites and services:

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

www.Matrimonial.Zoroastrianism.com

www.zoroastrians.net

www.TheParsiMatch.com

www.shaadi.com

www.ParsiMatrimony.com

www.ParsiShaadi.com

www.MatrimonialParsiZoroastrianism.com

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

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."

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.

Letters to the editor....

*Letter received from Sr Lourdu
Mary. N, Principal, Bel-Air College of
Nursing*

Panchgani, Satara - 412 805

for the article in FEZANA Journal, FALL, Vol 25, No
3 28-29

NOSSO GRATIDUO / GRATITUDE FROM BEL-AIR NIGHTINGALES

For the contribution of books received from University of
Illinois at Chicago, College of Nursing for
Bel-Air College of Nursing (Library)

"Gratitude is the fairest blossom which springs from the
soul."

We, the Bel-Air fraternity are thrilled to recognize and
express our gratitude for the steadfast support you have
been extending for us all these years. Your commitment
to us is admirable and it is our pleasure to accept your
support as an honour.

It is said that "give light and people will find the way".
Indeed, the very literal sense of it was followed by
contributing books to our library, enhancing the
knowledge of young nurses.

A book is a gift one can open again and again. Books
are the best companions of students which brighten
their minds, broaden their view and strengthen their
knowledge. Yes, the books rewarded by you were not
just lumps of lifeless papers but enlightened minds alive
on the shelves. It blessed the students with golden
opportunity to improvise themselves with the latest
studies, researches and updated knowledge, building
up themselves as competent nurses.

A well composed book is a magic carpet on which we
are wafted to a world that we cannot enter otherwise.
The expedition through the foreign edition books was
more beneficial to the students in improving their
proficiency to the international standards. The quality
and content of the volumes provided to us inculcated a
feeling of yearning for completion of our studies

To the generous mind, the heaviest depth is that of
gratitude, when it is not in our power to repay it. On
behalf of management, faculty and students of Bel-Air
College of nursing we would like to express our
appreciation and gratitude for the continued, remarkable
services and support extended year in and year out.

Sr. Lourdu Mary. N, Principal
Bel-Air College of Nursing
Panchgani, Satara - 412 805

To The Editor
FEZANA JOURNAL

I have just received a copy of the FEZANA Journal,
FALL issue

Thank you so much for publicizing the work of DADAR
MATUNGA PARSI ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION
pages 23-24. I have one request. In your next issue
could you please give the addresses where people can
send donations.

DADAR MATUNGA PARSI ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION

757-ROAD NO 7 - PARSI COLONY- DADAR (E)

MUMBAI 400014 - INDIA.

J. N. PETIT READING ROOM AND LIBRARY

WEST VIEW - 616 JAME JAMSHED ROAD -

PARSI COLONY - DADAR (E) -

MUMBAI 400014 - INDIA.

I am the contact person for both. Cheques to be made
in the above two names.

I shall be deeply grateful if you can publish these
addresses with a request to patrons to donate lavishly
for these 2 good causes.

Thanking you and God Bless,
Rustom Chothia, Mumbai

Dear Dolly Dastoor,

Very many congratulations to you and your guest
editors from Melbourne Australia, Sarosh Khariwala,
Arnavaz Chubb and Benafsha Khariwala, for putting
together an outstanding summer 2011 issue of the
FEZANA Journal – an issue that contained several
articles on 'Food for the Mind, Body and Soul'. I have
appreciated reading the various articles and the wealth
of information they contain. I have read the articles
copiously, discovered much information, made notes in
the margins, and have learnt much. As with all the
issues of the FEZANA Journal, this issue is a
keepsake. I will be returning to it and referring to its
articles.

It is evident – and I speak from personal
experience as well – that you and the guest editors
have worked diligently and tirelessly. You can all take
great pride in the results. My renewed appreciation and
congratulations to you all.

Sincerely,
K. E. Eduljee, Vancouver, BC

Letters to the editor....

Editor Dolly Dastoor
FEZANA JOURNAL, Summer 2011

Dear Editor,

I liked your editorial in the Summer 2011 issue. Forthright, it hits to the core of the issue. We can co-exist despite the progressive/conservative divide. But for that to happen we must show compassion, tolerance, acceptance of differing viewpoints, forgiveness and kindness. And it is humanly impossible to enforce uniformity in religious beliefs upon men of diverse temperaments and of different stages of intellectual and spiritual advancement (... Dr Dastur Dhalla..)

Sarosh- I loved your Eggstraordinary Gastronomy. Such a simple food- yet egg can be had in so many variations. Phyrooza is a happy vegemite- can make do with eggs or veg curry. But when will God give me the wisdom to go veg.

Rusi dear- I liked both your articles. You write juicy, you write real, you write from your spirit and we as readers discover what you really have to say. So which one is the better fed because one of the boys looks more well fed than the other. Must be the scooter.....

Dina- I enjoyed the Delicious Remembrances. I love kareloo and wife used to add gor to make it sweeter, but now I don't mind eating without gor. I enjoy kareloo, but cannot buy it in market. Sometimes we get it from a friend who gets it from an Italian who grows it.

In fact I enjoyed the contributions of all the writers and each one has a special feature on food. I would love to pass my compliments to each one personally, but for now, I am happy to share with you. My sister tells me that my first floor neighbor takes orders for paneer. so a few paneers in December will be on the cards. I might pass Niloufer King's article to her and perhaps they might reinforce each other's passion for topli nu panir.

Dina Hotel- I have lots of memories. My dad and his friend Jolly uncle were a great team back in late 60's. Dad with his cook would organize the logistics of taking all the foods and masalas etc from Mumbai. Jolly uncle would organize the government bungalows in Matheran and Mahableshwar. About 6 families and our youth friends sometimes a whole charter bus would go..... great memories. Remember having lunch at Dina hotel.

Sarosh- my passion for cooking has diminished lately, Wonder how you chefs cook day in and day out. Chefs and cooks deserve better pay rises

Best wishes

Jehangir Mehta, Perth, Australia

To the Guest editors
FEZANA JOURNAL

Dear Arnavaz, Sarosh and Benafsha

Forgive me for not writing earlier to thank you for sending me the FEZANA JOURNAL. Thank you also for the 2 page spread on me and the pictures. Also I was pleased about there not being even A SINGLE printing error! There are so many errors and misinterpretations in the write ups here in India.

Now a new edition of my second book 'Cooking for the Family' is to be launched in a couple of months and I dread, not only the onslaught of the media but the garbled version of what I say that may be printed in some papers!

Your journal is so interesting and it is great to know so much about Zarathushtis the world over. I wish you much success in your future publications.

With my very kind regards

Yours sincerely

Jeroo Mehta Mumbai

I shall tell you now of what is best in this life;

*That is to act in consonance with the Spirit of Truth,
the holy Asha,*

Thereby realizing Mazda who created him,

*Mazda, the father of Vohu-Mana, the ever active
Good Mind,*

*Mazda, the father of Armaity, of benevolence and
zeal;*

The all seeing Lord whom none can deceive.

Gatha Ushtavaiti, Yasna 45.4
(Translation by Dinshaw J. Irani)

Joyous Flame

**By Rukshana Shroff and Kerman Mehta,
illustrations and design by Naasha Mehta
Forward by His Holiness The Dalai Lama
Parzor Foundation Publication 2011;
pp 90, \$20. ISBN 978-81-910957**

A Glimpse of the "Joyous Flame"

"Joyous Flame" is a joyous illumination for children and adults to enjoy! Under the auspices of Parzor Publications the book adds yet another chapter in bringing to light the heritage and culture of the Zarathushtis.

Over the years, I have successfully used the Montessori Method as a mode of instruction for imparting Sunday School knowledge. Reading "Joyous Flame" totally complemented the hands-on/visual style of learning which creates the foundation of early childhood education and beyond!

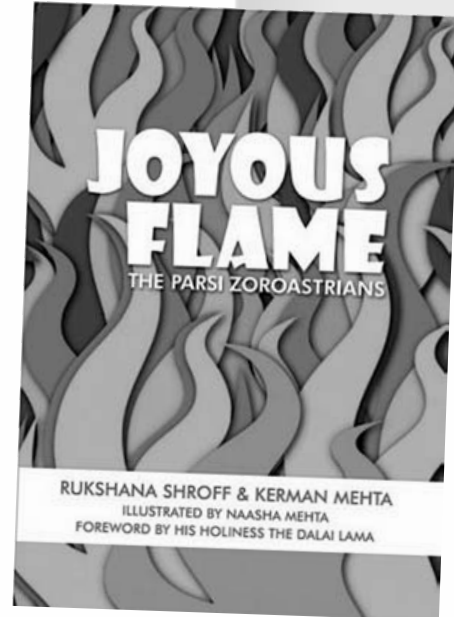
"Joyous Flame" is an extremely well organized compilation that introduces the Zarathushti in religious text through its chapters on 'Beliefs and Practices', highlighting topics such as the Zarathushti calendar amongst others. The 'Historical Background' of Zarathushtis is beautifully complemented with simple timelines, maps and even Zarathushtra's family tree! Besides religious concepts, the book incorporates stories from the Shahnameh which are extremely child friendly to read and understand. The concepts are conveyed in a concise yet effective manner. It is a book that every Zarathushti family can share as part of their daily reading time together. It also serves as a stepping stone for Sunday School teachers to research and enhance their own knowledge and curriculum.

Moreover, it fulfills the dream of what the authors set out to do – to educate and draw awareness of our ancient religion amongst children/people of other faiths besides our own.

This has further been elucidated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama through his comments - "I trust that the book will not only enable Parsi children to appreciate their own cultural heritage, but will also educate children of other faiths about this valuable and vibrant community".

The book so far, has been successfully used in both, Zarathushti Sunday School of Houston and a multi cultural Montessori classroom where the Shahnameh stories from its contents have been narrated. It will also be used with pride and joy in my workshops with students

BOOKS



at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston and with the museum's docent education sessions.

I highly recommend parents and Zarathushti organizations around the world to add this wonderful book to their collection. Well written by Rukshana Shroff and Kerman Mehta and beautifully illustrated by Naasha Mehta it will serve to be a source of joyous enlightenment for young minds.



Vehishta Kaikobad has been serving as a Sunday School teacher for the Zoroastrian Association of Houston since the 1980s. She is a Montessori/early childhood educator and also works in the capacity of a Senior Docent and an Educator at large at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

My Little Book of Zoroastrian Prayers

BOOKS
ARTS &

**Simplified and Written by Rebecca Cann,
Illustrated by Nassim Azadi, Asha Publications, 2011, pp 75, \$14.95
ISBN 9780615374598**

My Little Book of Zoroastrian Prayers is just that – a beautiful guide to living a Zarathushti life. Though this book is geared towards a younger audience, people of all ages can truly benefit from its message.

Rebecca Cann does an excellent job of simplifying high-level interpretations of the Gathas, the Haptanghaiti, the Yasna, the Khordeh Avesta, the Yashts, and the Visperad. For example, the first section of the book offers a translation of the Gathas, Zarathushtra's holy songs.

Song 8.1 reads:

***“May God give happiness to the person
who gives happiness to others.
I pray for power and courage
to defend the good.
O God, grant me peace and blessings.”***

Furthermore, this little treasure of a book includes “Simple Answers to Everyday Questions” along with specific activities to encourage learning. Many important and complex questions about life and about how to be a good Zarathushti are answered in precise, easy to understand ways.

Haven't we all wondered:

***“Why did God create people?”
“Does it matter when or where we pray?”
“Why do we have to be good?”
“Will God forgive us if we make a mistake?”
“How did God create the world?”***

Cann really makes an effort to make the Zarathushti religion accessible and easy to relate to by also adding activities. After all, the good religion is all about putting our good words and deeds into ACTION. For example, there is a list of ten different ways to save our planet (and these are all things that kids can actually do, like using a recyclable shopping bag, or turning off the lights, etc.).

Another great activity related to the question, “Why does Zarathushtra want us to have good rulers?” reads:

***“Activity: Put aside a jar. Every time you read or hear
about a conflict or a war drop a coin into your jar.
Donate the money to a peace organization.”***

A glossary of Zarathushti terms completes this small, but powerful book.



BOOKS
ARTS &

I identified so much with this book, having grown up as a Zarathushti in North America, where I was always searching for easy to understand and translations or interpretations of prayers and/or Zarathushtrian texts. Thanks to my parents and the wonderful ZAGNY community, I had many resources, but a book like this one from Rebecca Cann would have been invaluable. I would like to personally thank Ms. Cann for creating this book, with the help of Dr. Ali Jafarey's translations of our ancient Zarathushtrian texts. Other translations and contributions from Mary Boyce, Joseph Peterson, L. H. Mills, B.N. Dhabhar, and James Darmesteter, must also be recognized.

As a religious class teacher myself in Montreal, I feel that this book is a "must-have" in our libraries (alongside the other incredible books which have been written for children in recent years). The complex philosophies of our religion have been simplified in a useful and relevant way. It is a great resource and a pure joy to read again and again.

Rebecca Cann is also the owner of the website Zoroastrian Kids Korner (www.zoroastriankids.com), where children (and adults!) can learn about Zoroastrianism, play games, do some crafts, and learn some prayers.

Parents, Grandparents, Teachers...buy this book for your children – I'm sure you will want to keep a copy for yourselves!

Zareen Hakim Austin is a religious class teacher in Montreal

Dear Zarathustis,

I have created a website at the request of a few parents whose children have reached the age when they can start reciting our prayers.

It will be beneficial to our young Zarathusti children who are preparing to learn their daily prayers for their navjote ceremony.

Please click on the link below to access my website:

<https://sites.google.com/site/ZarathushtiPrayers/>

On the left are links to the basic prayers which are recited at a slower pace so the child can catch the proper pronunciations. On the right are the same prayers and a few more recited at a regular pace. Please feel free to download the prayers you need and also pass this along to others who are unaware of this website.

Rohinton Keki Tarapore

Chair, Zarathushti Association of New Orleans (ZANO)

rktarapore@cox.net

The XVI North American Zarathushti Congress

Driven by dozens of volunteers from Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York and Iranian Zoroastrian Association, we have an experienced team that has been at the organizational forefront. Our Team comprises of various committees overseeing the organizational aspects of the Congress.

Let us introduce "Our Team".

**Gev Nentin Co-Chair &
President, ZAGNY**

gev@zagny.org

Ferzin Patel Co-Chair

ferzin@zagny.org

Mehru L. Cama

Chair, Logistics

Keki Dadachanji

Chair, Program

Homi D. Gandhi

Chair Public Relations and
Publications

Khursheed Navder

Chair, Social & Entertainment &
Vice-President ZAGNY

Maharukh Cama

Vice-Chair, Social & Entertainment &
Board Member, ZAGNY

Kerman Dukandar

Chair, Finance and Fundraising &
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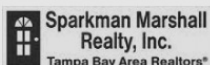
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Natalie R. Gandhi, Ph.D.,

The times are not quiet, the era is fraught, and we mourn the too early loss of Steve Jobs. With America suffering, its first ratings downgrade, soaring unemployment, Euro crisis, Arab Spring unrest, disasters natural or man-made globally, are people serene? Take hold.

And see what we do at WZCC-NY. For with us you will find inspiration to move mountains and electrify generations. As pioneers in a brave and singular North America, we embrace and surmount vast challenges of our times. Our speakers inspire. Each reveals a special greatness by using sheer industry and a Good Mind for life's puzzles. Let us meet them.

Cyrus D. Mehta, Immigration in Depth

Mr. Cyrus D. Mehta is the founder and managing attorney of Cyrus D. Mehta & Associates, PLLC (CDMA), www.cyrusmehta.com. With twenty years expertise, Mr. Mehta handles strategies for securing or preserving immigration status. Whether for one's self, family or workforce, Cyrus represents corporations and individuals worldwide. His services include consular matters, naturalization, family court, federal court litigation, and asylum. He advises lawyers on ethical issues.

Cyrus blogs at "The Insightful Immigration Blog", (www.cyrusmehta.blogspot.com) and is an Adjunct Professor at Brooklyn Law School. He chairs the American Immigration Lawyers Association's (AILA) National Pro Bono Committee and co-chairs its NY Chapter. His many awards and honors include AILA's Joseph Minsky Young Lawyers Award (1997) and its 2010 President's Commendation. (FJ Summer 2011, Vol 25 No 2)

Cyrus is Special Counsel to New York's Appellate Division and is on the Board for Volunteers of Legal Services, Inc. His training includes St. Xavier's College (BA), Bombay University, Cambridge University (MA, Law), and Columbia Law School (LL.M). Cyrus plays the violin and enjoys a beautiful family.

Cyrus shared judicious, thoughtful insight about the politics and economics affecting immigration. The system in the US is very encumbered. Attaining citizenship takes a long time. It is nonetheless vital to secure citizenship. Doing so provides protection against a danger most do not fully anticipate. Citizenship removes the threat of deportation due to incidental, small, or unexpected legal matters.

Cyrus stressed adherence to truthfulness in visa and citizenship applications. Due to immigration processes' length, it is important to have knowledgeable expertise, especially as concluding stages approach. Laws may have changed since applying or regulatory adjustments may cause intricacies. Whether entering as student, worker, family, or asylum seeker, strategic depth in current legality is crucial.

In discussion, Cyrus agreed that enforcement mechanisms monitoring immigration status are weak, as is monitoring wealth transfer between countries. However, full compliance with the law, such as a USA citizen reporting all income wherever earned; is paramount.

Cyrus took an entrepreneurial path by founding his own practice. It was a brave step in Manhattan's fast-paced competitiveness when contemporaries sought employment in large practices. Cyrus' business employs nearly twenty additional people, including other highly trained attorneys.

BUSINESS

Navroz H. Gandhi and Sarosh G. Nentin Careers in the Financial Field

Two young professionals give interesting accounts of dynamic career paths. Mr. Navroz H. Gandhi is a commodities and equity trader for himself and a consultant and investor with private equity funds on energy investments. He was a managing director at Constellation Energy until 2009 and led Constellation's Eastern Group, with contracts over 12,000 MW of energy.

Navroz worked at J.P. Morgan's Latin American Mergers & Acquisitions and Private Equity groups. Navroz is a graduate of Brown University (A.B. with honors, magna cum laude, Business Economics and Organization Behavior & Management) and The Harvard Business School (M.B.A., 2001).

Navroz's story of a life-long interest in finance is engaging. As a small child, Navroz had a piggybank for saving. It sparked an intense curiosity about the force of compounding money over time. A high-school summer job did little to invigorate this active intelligence for the subject of growth.

But a college internship was different. After sending two hundred resumes, Navroz interned in Chase's Insurance Division. To his surprise, he had stumbled into something "absolutely fascinating". He learned that large hospitals have a cash flow crunch. Medicare takes ninety days to pay hospitals and hospitals need to pay suppliers within thirty days. Again, the mystery of time and money consumed his mind.

Navroz's financial mind was also a Good Mind, exhibiting Vohuman. Navroz and team designed a securitization program providing about five percent return and offered it for a risk-free rate to hospitals; a problem-fixing result. In another project, Navroz dealt with aircraft structured finance, traveling to Los Angeles, Rio, Buenos Aires, and Mexico City. After Harvard, Navroz entered Constellation Energy. Deregulation made for a dynamic time in the energy field and ninety percent of job entrants would leave within their first year.

But Navroz spent nine years with Constellation Energy through remarkable growth, achieving management status. Perennial questions of cash flow and its representation again came into play. Today, in striking out on his own as an entrepreneurial trader, Navroz manages his own schedule. This lets him assist his family and he steps up to give wonderful care when needed. He enjoys world travel and adventure; recently climbing Mount Everest, hiking New Zealand and Australia, and foraging Lake Victoria, Africa.

Mr. Sarosh G. Nentin attends the NYU Stern School of Business and is pursuing specializations in Corporate Finance and Financial Instruments & Markets. He spent a summer internship in Equity Research at Morgan Stanley in 2011. Sarosh is NASD Series 7 and 63 licensed and received a B.S. in Finance and Economics from Boston College in 2005.

Sarosh was an associate in the M&A Advisory group at Dexia Global Structured Finance, LLC, an investment bank in New York focusing on Power/Renewables. He worked as an analyst in the Corporate Finance group at FTI Consulting, specializing in bankruptcy, reorganization and corporate restructuring.

The line of thinking leading to Sarosh Nentin's path also appeals. Coming from a family with deep ties to the financial world, he grew up playing a stock market game. And he learned how to value companies, not at all easy. During youthful summer jobs, Enron went into bankruptcy, inverting creditor and debtor and posing monumental questions of valuation. Helping his study of proper valuation and its effect for business success, Sarosh assisted the CEO of a major manufacturing company. He consulted, working alongside friends and traveled. Sarosh represented groups of creditors on the Calpine bankruptcy. At Dexia, he handled eleven transactions totaling one billion dollars in equity investments and advised on capital raising transactions.

In discussion, Arzan Wadia mentioned we lose seventy percent transmitting energy. Would technological solutions, Arzan asked, help more than financial solutions for providing energy? Navroz explained a unique feature of USA energy. America's federated system entails that fifty states and the federal government together regulate energy distribution. With fifty legal jurisdictions, scaling technologies is intricate.

BUSINESS

Additionally, business interests may prefer the short-term over longer term. Navroz holds that government's part in setting frameworks for industrial development should be to attend to doing the right thing over a long scale. Sarosh pointed out that for many hours of the day, we use a very small percentage of overall utilization rather than peak demand. Sarosh and Navroz concurred in holding that large inefficiencies must be resolved; and risk-equipped business models must be developed, if we are to succeed in providing energy.

Sarosh discussed the variability of opinion among stock analysts. Many analysts mean many opinions about a stock and these may differ. If we consider cash flows, multiples of shares, the on-demand gold price, or predicted prices, results differ. Sarosh estimates that an equity analyst who is correct in his/her opinions even fifty-five percent of the time can have a very successful career. On potential Dodd-Frank legislation, Sarosh was inclined to enjoy potential new trade volumes, while understanding Dodd-Frank could adversely affect bank profitability. Both Sarosh and Navroz think it incumbent upon us to address financial policy concerns.

Darius J. Jamshidian, A Franchise Path to Growth

Mr. Jamshidian arrived in the USA in 1976 from Tehran and today owns many New York Subway franchises. He credits being a Zarathushti for his phenomenal success and began his talk with great urgings for Zoroastrian values. "I am a Zarathushti" is his opening sentence's *cri de couer*!

During M.B.A. studies, Darius took a part-time job at Subway. After graduation, he worked at Sun Chemical on cost accounting in the budget department. As some also experience, the harder he worked the less credit he received. After six months, he quit while researching food businesses. His strengths included strong research skills, business analytic skills, determination, and an unstoppable work ethic.

Darius knew Subway offered something good that he could make even better. But he had no funding and it was the economically slow Carter era. But he had confidence in himself and staked his future on trusting himself. He borrowed from a local bank at eighteen percent interest for his first store. It is a testament to him that he paid off the loan within seven months and financed every successive purchase of a growing enterprise himself. Darius says, "I am my own banker!"

Why did he choose franchising? Darius emphasizes free training, unified mission, and a highly developed, good product. He uses Subway's state-of-the-art accounting, discounted raw food costs, and a cutting-edge technology infrastructure. The brand alone gives a twelve percent rental reduction. The franchise invests in tremendous research. Darius' advertising is national, far more powerful than one has alone. Now in ninety-five countries, Subway offered a strong vision of what it could do. It opened a store in Vietnam and Darius helped bring the first Subway store to China.

As Darius opens a new store, hands-on operations insure the facility comes to it's best. Each store is an independent profit-center. Darius establishes new locations rather than buying low-performing stores. His son, Keyan, is enamored with the business. Keyan manages stores and does commercial real estate. Darius' wife, Linda, believes in his entrepreneurial endeavors and handles accounting.

Darius' creed is simple and powerful. He credits virtues such as moderation and balance in his success. He believes in doing the right thing, not shortcuts, and in steady, determined work, neither too fast nor too slow. He shares success with others and helps start people on the path he took. Darius invests in employees to ensure they have good training and provide good service. He organizes monthly and weekly meetings across the enterprise for managers. Regular cost-benefit analysis is key to successful performance.

Diversifying also helps business growth. Darius is an investor in real estate and the stock market (buying Apple around forty dollars). Diversifying works also in second way. He is an earnest ambassador of Good Thoughts, providing valuable energy to civic life. He is a YMCA Board Member, serves The Boys and Girls Club of America, helps the Muscular Dystrophy Association, and coaches baseball.

BUSINESS

Darius has risen to prominence in the Subway organization. He serves on its National Board of Advertisers. The franchise respects his East Coast leadership. Eight hundred to nine hundred people have their jobs today due to Darius' enterprise.

Darius encourages people to "know themselves", and assume "an obligation" and "duty" for success. From the duty, a capacity grows. It is an increased ability to be benevolent, to provide, and to take care of others. A fine thing emerging from Darius's care, is Tara, his daughter, who pursues excellence as an opera singer.

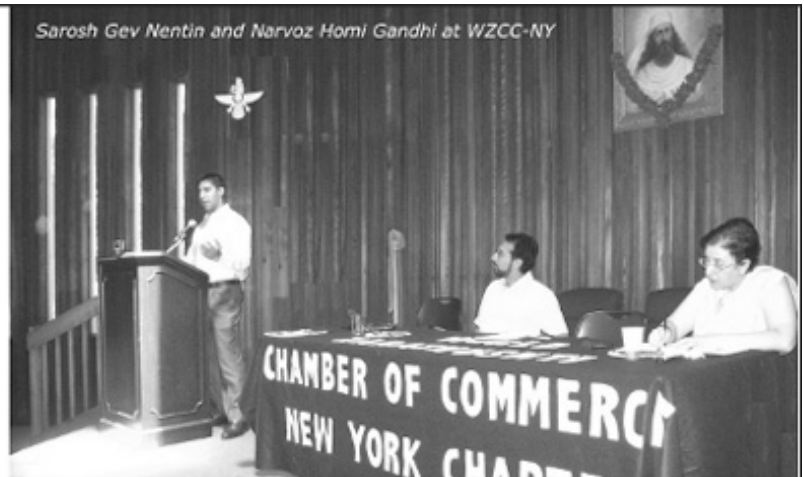
During questions, Darius praised the people of Iran and Pakistan for industriousness and leadership. It is a touching thought we shared from a man who left his country of origin many years ago to come here with a willing heart and a Good Mind.

Using Vohuman, the Good Mind, for puzzles at hand, has good effect. Chicago's President Robert J. Zimmer believes inquiry enables people to

"... make imaginative and creative contributions across the spectrum of human endeavor, and change the world"
(WSJ, May 6, 2009.)

When we understand the industry and the thinking of our speakers, we are far from disquiet in times of ferment. We are inspired for good work in all challenges or triumphs.

WZCC-NY



Natalie R Gandhi (née Natalie H. Vania), Ph.D., is the WZCC-NY Chapter Chair, a Philosopher and Entrepreneur.



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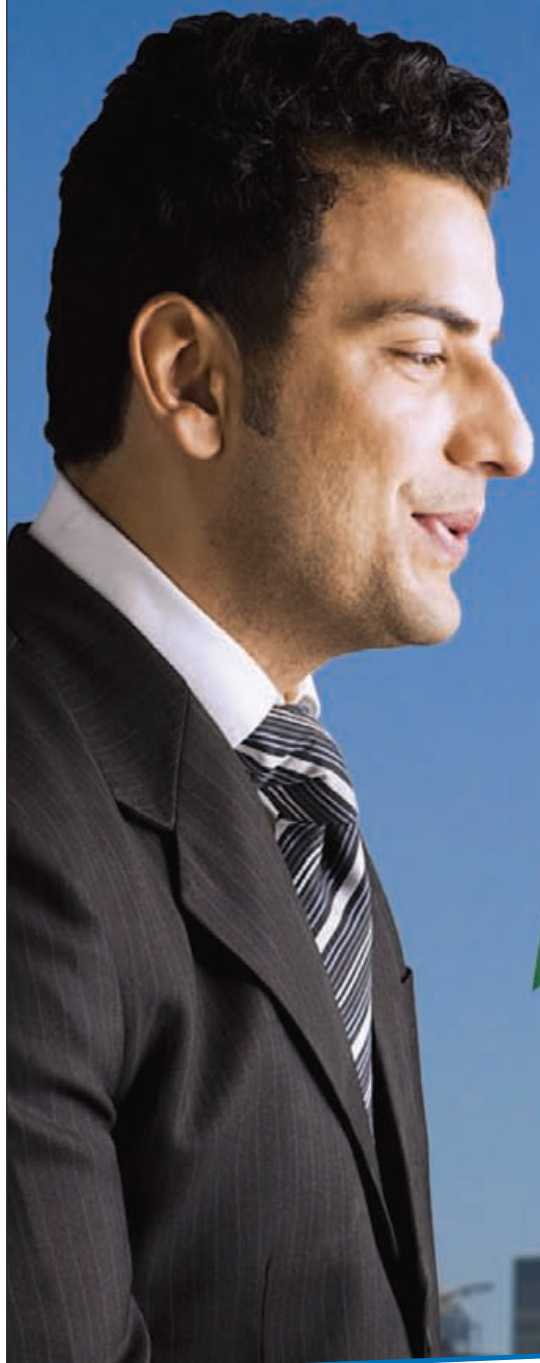
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