



JOURNAL

Mehr – Avan – Adar 1381 AY (Fasli) • Ardebehesht – Khordad – Tir 1382 AY (Shenhai) • Khordad – Tir – Amرداد 1382 AY (Kadimi)

Zarathushti Existence in the Contemporary World

XVI NAZC 2012, New York



Also Inside:



Parsis in Politics
1857-1954



Passing the Gavel to
Katayun Kapadia



Female Mobedyar—
First in North America

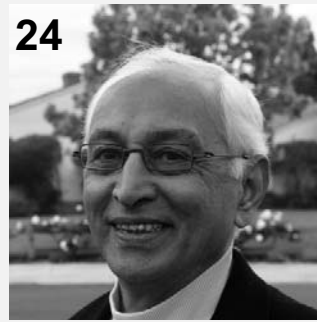


Zoroastrian Delegation
Invited to Kazakhstan

FEZANA JOURNAL

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

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2 Editorial	31 16th North American Congress	122 Milestones
2 Dolly Dastoor		127 Between the Covers
3 Message from the President	73 Cover Story Parsis in Politics	
6 FEZANA Update	103 In the News	
8 Financial Report	120 Personal Profiles	
16 Round Table, FEZANA AGM and 25th Anniversary Gala	121 In Memorium Mobed Mehraban Zartoshty	

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Winter 2012
Cancer Prevention & Treatment
Spring 2013
Scouting and the Z way of life
Guest editor: Arzan Sam Wadia
Summer 2013
The Zarathushti World
a 2012 Demographic picture
Guest editor: Roshan Rivetna

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A word from the Editor



The Year of Celebrations

2012 has been a year of celebrations around the Zarathushti diaspora and it is also India's 65th anniversary of independence from the British Raj.

On June 2nd the 3750th anniversary of the birth of Asho Zarathushtra was celebrated in Vancouver with an International conference of scholars, and with the Government of British Columbia making a proclamation for the Persian year starting March 20th 2012 and ending March 20, 2013 to be known as **"Year 3750 Zarathushtra"** (pgs 62-66), *The Karachi Parsi Banu Mandal* with its well known mission **"SEVA and SAKHVAT"** (Service and Charity) celebrated its 100th year anniversary (Pgs 70-71). FEZANA celebrated its 25th anniversary throughout the year, with its city of birth Chicago celebrating with a traditional **"Lagan-nu Bhonu"** (pgs 67-68); culminating in a gala dinner in New York on August 3rd with recognition of its donors (pgs 25-27). **The Zoroastrian Trust funds of Europe** celebrated their 150th anniversary, the **Zoroastrian Association of Quebec** celebrated its 45th anniversary. The young kid on the block **Generation 1 ALL ZORO Band from Houston**, celebrated its 10th anniversary (pg 69). They entertained at the FEZANA Gala. in New York. And there is more to come in 2013. A special exhibition on Zoroastrianism **"Everlasting Flame"** being organized by The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the British Museum with every possibility of it travelling to North America if sufficient funds can be raised. (pgs 60-61)

We celebrated the illustrious life of **Mobed Mehraban Jamshid Zartoshty** who gave so much to the North American Community and asked for so little in return, except peace and harmony in the community. We owe that to our benefactor Mehraban. (pgs 121-122)

We celebrated men and women young and old who have contributed in Science, Literature, Medicine, Humanitarian work and Religious activity in North America and brought recognition to the community. And the community recognized them with special FEZANA Awards. Congratulations. (pgs 50-53)

We also congratulate the new 2012-2013 FEZANA team of *Katayun Kapadia, Homi Gandhi, Ratan Mistry; Nahid Dashtaki; and Shiraz Italia* to guide the

community to greater heights.

And the Sixteenth North American Congress August 2-5th was a resounding success. Celebrations were in the air. It could not have been otherwise with great attention paid to small details starting with thoughtful packets of home made Parsi biscuits to savoury snacks in the



registration package to tide you between the sumptuous meals. Religious activity program for young children and baby sitting for toddlers allowed parents to attend with ease of mind. The thought-provoking theme presented in an innovative way, together with an effective use of technology made this congress memorable. The talent that the Zarathushti New Yorkers displayed in the entertainment they provided at the closing banquet was most impressive and admirable. It was well-choreographed with flawless precision. Chapeau to the organizing committee of the Congress. Well done.

Our Indophile **Maneck Bhujwala** accepted the challenge of guest editing the cover story of **Parsis in Politics 1857-1954**, to commemorate the role of Parsis both men and women in the struggle for India's freedom in the 65th anniversary year of India's independence. Maneck's diligence and persistence unearthed names and stories of great contributions which were little known. (pgs 73-102)

And so we move forward to our next milestones, how will we meet the challenges facing us in the contemporary world, challenges not only of preservation of identity, but challenges of growth in an economically depressed decade, the challenge of striking a balance between religious practice and norms and social and cultural practices. Time alone will tell how will we shape our future? Hopefully the FEZANA Journal will be around for the next 25 years to chronicle the consolidation of the community.

Dolly Dastoor Ph.D

A Message from FEZANA President



Dear Fellow Zarathushtis and Friends

I would like to thank you for supporting my candidacy for the President of FEZANA and it is indeed a distinctive honor to be elected as the 7th President of FEZANA in its Silver Anniversary Year. I am honored by the trust that you all have placed in me and truly appreciate the support and good wishes that I have received from you and the world Zarathushti leaders.

I would like to thank Bomi Patel, our outgoing FEZANA President for his selfless service to FEZANA and the Zarathushti community in North America (2008-12). I have appointed Bomi Patel as the Chair of the External Affairs Committee and the North American Zoroastrian Congress (NAZC) Committee, so that the goodwill and camaraderie fostered by him in the last four years continues with enhanced vigor to enable FEZANA to continue to work for the common good of Zarathushtis in North America and around the world.

"We cannot live for ourselves alone, our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results." – Herman Melville

With this affirmative statement, as this is my first message as President of FEZANA I would like to share my vision that I intend to incorporate in my agenda as the seventh President of FEZANA.

1. Build, Enhance and Promote A Unified North American Zarathushti Community

- **To preserve our identity, it is vital that we stay as a unified Zarathushti Community on the North American Continent.** I will work towards encouraging joint congresses, educational symposiums, sports events, celebrations of festivals, inter-communal dialogues between the Parsi Zarathushtis and Irani Zarathushtis across North America.
- **To build, enhance and promote a unified North American Zarathushti Community requires a direct, clear, systematic, well-planned and organized communication strategy.** We need to improve communications between FEZANA and its member associations; and each member association needs to develop a communication strategy to enable the information received from FEZANA to be communicated to its members at grass root levels. Further, the decisions, issues from their members, youth, and mobeds should be leveraged at the FEZANA level and shared with other member associations to enable us to

come up with mutually collaborative and supportive solutions.

- **To achieve overall success all FEZANA Member Associations need to collaboratively participate and work collectively on mutual community goals.** I will



encourage larger associations to reach out and extend a helping hand to the smaller associations and corresponding members of FEZANA by inviting them to join in their activities, community projects, educational seminars and celebratory observation of festivals.

- As FEZANA President, I will continue to work closely with Leaders of other Zarathushti organizations across the world to bring a global awareness and formulate solutions to address some critical issues that face our community.

2. Empower & Engage Our Youth in Leadership Roles

- I would encourage member associations **to promote their Youth to take active Leadership Roles at Community Level.** Appoint a young adult on your board, to head one or more of your committees and we will all be enriched by their thought process, vitality and global know-how that they will bring to our organizations.
- As President, I would like **to focus on nurturing the seeds of greatness in our future generation.** I am working to ensure that each FEZANA Committee appoints a young adult as its co-chair to involve our youth in promoting and working towards achieving mutually supportive FEZANA goals.
- As President, I will collaborate with youth organizations in North America and the world like NextGenNow, Zoroastrians Stepping Forward, Youth without Borders and others, **to foster Communal Involvement and Representation for our Zarathushti Community and work together on youth related North American & global activities.**
- I will ensure that FEZANA continues to sponsor youth congresses, sports events, U.N. symposiums and other



events aimed at young adults so that it gives them a bona fide platform to collectively express their ideas, creativity and expertise.

- I will urge **our youth to look for Role Models & foster Mentoring**: Look up to Zarathushti men and women in your local and national organizations and make them your “role models”. Then, you become role models for others in your own community helping them achieve their goals of personal development and communal involvement.

“ *A candle loses nothing of its light by lighting another candle*” - James Keller

3. Education on Zarathushti Religion, Values & Beliefs

- Today we live in a world without boundaries, and we must begin by making the North American & World Community take notice of our Zarathushti religion and community. Let us make it globally known that yes, Zoroastrianism is an ancient religion, but today in the 21st. century, **our Zarathushti Community needs to be counted and recognized with the other main world religions. Let us educate the public in North America locally, nationally & globally of our Zarathushti values and beliefs.** We should continue to support the FEZANA Journal and promote its veracity amongst our communities as I consider it as a Treasure Trove of past, present and future information about our North American Zarathushti Community.
- **Think and Act - locally & globally**: Begin locally in your own community. Children and adults can be proud to be Zarathushtis and speak about your religion proudly in schools, social gatherings, community events, etc. Take pride in doing presentations at schools, girl/boy scout meetings, interfaith gatherings, any place, whenever and wherever, you have an opportunity to **present and showcase the beauty and bounty of our religion.** In this way, once we can raise the awareness of the North American & World Community towards Zarathushti values and community activities, and we make them understand our goals, aspirations and needs, then we can involve them in supporting our community to meet its purpose and challenges.
- Let us encourage the **use of the information in FEZANA Information Research & Education Systems (FIRES) to educate ourselves and our communities – both Zarathushtis & non-Zarathushtis.**

- I urge member associations to support the NAMC and Religion Class Teachers to develop, implement and monitor a curriculum for proper religious education of Zarathushti children in North America. Encourage member associations to sponsor and host religious seminars, symposiums and programs together with NAMC and other Zarathushti scholars so that we continue to enhance our knowledge on the philosophy and guiding principles of our Zarathushti Religion.

KEY MESSAGES SUMMARIZED:

- Each day brings new opportunities so look for creative ideas and affirmative solutions.
- Be visible and partner with other fellow Zarathushtis to provide value added services resulting in the achievement of community service objectives.
- Reach out to others. Develop a spirit of teamwork and network with Zarathushtis locally and globally to share ideas.
- Communicate, communicate, and communicate within your community and with neighboring Zarathushti organizations on community involvement. Develop a process to spread knowledge both vertically and horizontally within and outside your communities.
- Let's all make a promise today to dedicate just one hour per week from our overly busy lives to involve ourselves in Zarathushti community activities, and thus empower ourselves to work towards a **HAPPIER, HEALTHIER, UNIFIED & KNOWLEDGABLE** Zarathushti community in the 21st Century.

I will leave you with this reflection to ponder upon:

Ask not what your community can do for “you”,

Ask what you can do for your “community”!

Many of the ideas that I have outlined above are already being implemented through the actions of various dedicated Zarathushtis and FEZANA Committees. Now let us act in unison to actualize our vision and work towards ensuring that the results will be outstanding!!

I invite you to communicate to me what you would like FEZANA to achieve going forward and what role you would like to play in achieving affirmative and successful outcomes.

Katayun Kersi Kapadia

FEZANA President kkatayun@msn.com



FEZANA UPDATE

FROM THE DESK OF KATAYUN KAPADIA – PRESIDENT FEZANA

5-STAR Guiding Principles for FEZANA

1. **TEAMWORK** – Let us invite and inspire our mobeds, professionals, and youth to team up and network with our neighbors and participate in interfaith and other community activities locally & globally.
2. **RESPECT DIVERSITY** – Raise children to not only tolerate but also to respect the differences among people and to recognize the rewards that come from serving others and honoring diversity. I call this 'affirmative living' – the positive energy we derive from taking pride in who we are, and from having the confidence and moral grounding to reach out to those who are different. Religious teaching reminds us that we are to love others as we love ourselves, it means respecting yourself and being affirmed in your identity.
3. **INNOVATION** – encourage youth and newcomers in your community to come up with creative new ideas about communal involvement, and provide support to their efforts by recognizing their valuable involvement.
4. **EMPOWERMENT** – let us empower our youth so that they can become accountable and responsible for their actions and serve as iconic role models in our society.
5. **OPTIMISTIC 'CAN DO ATTITUDE'** – let us all cultivate this value. Urgency - do not put off till tomorrow what you can do today.

The first step in teaching children to live affirmatively is to give them a strong sense of identity, rooted in their heritage. The degree of our commitment to our future generation will determine whether we graduate to a new era of progress and prosperity or fail our children, community and ourselves. Our decision involves something beyond pragmatism; it is also a test of our values.

Let us collectively join hands to build with pride, a worthy and healthy North American Zarathusti community for ourselves and our children.

By Living the Principles.....

- We can change the outcome
- We can change the direction where we are headed
- We need a "vision": No family is an island; it takes a community to nurture our children with dignity, care for our elderly with humility, and enrich lives with moral values and ethical beliefs.
- **My vision for FEZANA is that those of us who are the nucleus of our individual families and communities can make this happen with a strategy for holistic action by taking active leadership roles at community levels locally, nationally and globally. We cannot do it alone, so involve your families, your friends – Zarathushtis as well as others, to work individually and collectively for a unified, healthier Zarathushti community that can take its place in the front lines with other world communities in the 21st. Century in North America and the World.**



"Derecho"

"And still, after all this time, the Sun has never said to the Earth, 'You owe me.' Look what happens with love like that. It lights up the sky."

Jalal ud-Din Rumi

4th of July 2012 in Washington DC

The Spanish have a wonderful way with words. "Tornado" has a ring about it which brings to mind a whirligig of the forces of nature leaving a swath of mayhem and destruction in its wake. "Derecho," on the other hand, brings visions of getting soaked in a downpour. However, as we learnt to our dismay, it can be equally devastating. Within just fifteen minutes, as an unannounced Derecho swept through Bethesda on a late Friday evening, majestic trees were uprooted; we were without electricity for almost a week. On 29 June, the violent storm tore from the Midwest to the mid-Atlantic leaving a 700 mile trail of destruction and death with a state of emergency declared in Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia. There was a mini heat wave at the same time. Temperatures had hit 104 degrees Fahrenheit just before the howling winds visited. Soaring temperatures continued for the rest of the week.

The powerful, who live in the bed room communities of the nation's capital, were literally without power at home. Food spoiled. Refrigerators were given a long overdue cleaning. It was back to nature, washing clothes with our hands and leaving them out to dry. We learnt the value of *"bread labour"* (1). We learnt to value the sun. We would go to bed at sundown and be up by early dawn. Now, through personal experience (experience, being the surest way to attaining wisdom, as per the Kalama Sutra of the Buddha) I understand more vividly why the ancients had so many rituals which centered on the sun and many tribes and clans worshiped the forces of nature, in the belief of trying to placate them. The Gathas extol the sun:

Thus whatever acts I may perform in the future, and whatever deeds were performed in the past, and whatever is precious in the eyes of the Good Mind – such as the light of the Sun, the glittering dawning of the days – these are for your praise and adoration through Truth, O Mazda Ahura.

Yasna 50.10

In post-Gathic scriptures, we learn how Gaush Urva, the living soul of Gayodad, looking in despair for a savior, went to the Station of the Stars and to the Station of the Moon; none could help her. It was only when she reached the Station of the Sun that the Fravashi of Zarathushtra appeared before her and on hearing the voice of Ahura Mazda from the golden depths of the Sun, was she content, to go down to earth to nourish the creatures, calling upon Mino Raam, the spirit of abounding peace (2) .

It is now clear why in our Agiaries and Atash Behrams we have the tradition of signs clearly marking the east, a direction to look for the rising sun to pray in the mornings, before entering the sacred precincts and why Hosh Bam, the prayer at dawn is considered so important in our liturgy (3).

Back on our street, neighbors, deprived of their internet, computers and cell phones, suddenly found time to talk to each other face to face – a great recipe for effective community building! Independence Day, the 4th of July, brought those equipped with built in generators in homes, reaching out to the less fortunate. Customers reached out with water, shaking crew members' hands in gratitude as they struggled to rebuild infrastructure to restore electricity to the 4 million houses affected. The downed trees were finally hauled away; there was so much mulch created, truckloads were being given away. Firewood was available gratis. If only, as Erv Jehan Bagli reminds us,



the spirituality which binds us at times of crises, could be carried over into our daily lives, we would be that much closer to *Frashokereti*.

Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh - Destruction is just another face of creation.

References:

- (1) See articles by the Russians, T.R. Bondareff and Leo Tolstoy <http://www.ebooksread.com/authors-eng/leon-tolstoi/the-life-and-teaching-of-leo-tolstoy--a-book-of-extracts-hci/page-12-the-life-and-teaching-of-leo-tolstoy-a-book-of-extracts-hci.shtml>
- (2) *The Legend of Gaush Urva* in "The Gathas of Zarathushtra", By Pilloo Nanavutty.
Mapin Publishing, Ahmedabad, India. 1999. Edited by Shernaz Cama. ISBN 1-890206- 09-1
- 3) *Hoshbam* – The Dawn of Consciousness: <http://tenets.zoroastrianism.com/HOSHBAM%20-%20The%20Dawn%20of%20Consciousness.pdf>

Behram Pastakia is Chair of the Publications Committee of FEZANA



Caption: Behram Pastakia, washing soiled dishes in the basement of the Washington Hebrew Congregation, with members of the Steering Committee of the 8th annual 911 Unity Walk, as part of an impromptu inter-religious service project in Washington D.C. at the conclusion of a feast following an American S'lichot Liturgy. The origins of this tradition, historically at midnight, when it is neither night or day, are a mystery. It is a time held sacred through centuries, when Jews come to pray in unity as a community, and in the words of Rabbi

M. Bruce Lustig, "to end all things that are destructive in our lives, in our relationships, in our homes and in our society. We pray at S'lichot for a renewal of spirit and hope".

Photo credit: Dominique Rychlik

Truth is the shattered mirror strewn

In myriad bits;

while each believes his little bit the

whole to own."

Sir Richard Burton (in The Kasidah of

Haji Abdu El-Yezdi)

Professor Kaikhosrov D. Irani -

Zarathushtrian Religion,

Philosophy and History

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3s1t0hr14pE&feature=plcp>



FEZANA UPDATE



FEZANA

DONATIONS RECEIVED - JANUARY 1, 2012 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2012

25TH ANNIVERSARY

Zarthoshti Anjuman of Northern California	\$ 4,000
Zoroastrian Society of Ontario	3,000
Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation	2,000
Zoroastrian Association of Houston	2,000
Zoroastrian Association of California	1,001
Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago	1,001
Traditional Mazdayasni Zoroastrian Anjuman	1,000
Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia	1,000
Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania & New Jersey, Inc	250
Iranian Zoroastrian Association	200
Zoroastrian Association of KY, OH, IN	200
Zoroastrian Association of Northern Texas	200
Zoroastrian Association of Quebec	200
	16,052

GENERAL FUND

Zarthoshti Anjuman of Northern California	1,000
Zoroastrian Association of Florida	600
Porus Austin, Stockton, CA	530
Traditional Mazdayasni Zoroastrian Anjuman	150
Aspi Patel, Rosewell, CA	101
Bachi Billimoria, Northbrook, IL	101
Shahrokh Mehta, Dewitt, NY	101
Zoroastrian Association of California	101
Aban Rustomji, Houston, TX	100
Firdosh Mehta, Calgary, AB	100
Hosi Mehta, Elmhurst, IL	100
Tehehmon Arjani, Glendale CA	100
Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania & New Jersey, Inc	100
Adil Eduljee, Redondo Beach, CA	75
Jamshed Dastur, Newport Beach, CA	75
Kurshed W. Hintz, Vancouver, WA	55
Sohrab Mirza, Irvine, CA	55
Marzban Daroowalla, Westminster, MD	51
Ratan Mistry, San Jose, CA	50
iGive.com	43
Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia	40
Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area	32
Sarosh Sukhia, Hopewell, VA	31
Ayesha Khory, Calgary, AB	30
Dara Sinor, Mount Pleasant, SC	30
Feroze Sidhwa, Copell, TX	30
Gustad Irani, Boca Raton, FL	30
Sarvar Dehmri, Longwood, FL	30
	3,841

BANOObAI & MANEKSHAW KAPADIA SCHOLARSHIP

Dr. Cawas Kapadia, Euclid, OH \$ 15,000

FEZANA WELFARE & CRITICAL ASSISTANCE FUND

Edul & Niloufer Daver, Green Brook, NJ	7,500
Zoroastrian Association of Florida	3,500
Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York	3,000
Axon Tobacco Corporation	2,500
Employees of Entergy Services, Inc - in memory of Mr. Minoo Bhujwalla	1,425
Yazdi and Shahnaz Sidhwa, Missouri City, TX	1,001
Anonymous - Coordinated by the Zoroastrian Association of Florida	1,000
Nazneen & Kershaw Khumbatta, Sugarland, TX	1,000
Iyana Contractor Bodhanwala & Ryaan Contractor	
Morena, Laguna Beach, CA	800
Zoroastrian Association of California	651
MACK Flavor Ingredients, Inc., Riverside, CA	300
Nirvana Anosheh, Los Gatos, CA	280
Farokh & Maneck Contractor, Kenner, LA	251
Rusi and Villoo Tavadia, Novi, MI	200
Rayomand and Benaaz Irani, Oakville, ON	120
Houshmand & Farida Sharyari, Hoffman Est, IL	101
Jamshed J. Jamadar, Coppell, TX	101
Nazneen Warden, Sugarland, TX	101
Yasmin and Rustom Engineer, Sugarland, TX	101
Burjor Nargolwala, Sun City Center, FL (in memory of Mr. Rustomji of South Africa)	100
Erich & Havovi Tavadia, West Bloomfield, MI	100
Khurshed Tengra, Boise, ID	100
Percy & Veera Karanjia, East Brunswick, NJ	100
Zerin D. Bharucha, Herts, United Kingdom	74
Godrej Khusigara, Mississauga, ON	55
Firozi D. Alercia, Belville, NC	50
Parvez Mody, Orangevale, CA	50
Parvez Mody, Orangevale, CA	50
Rusi J. Tavadia, Novi, MI	50
Saghar Behrooz, Flower Mound, TX	50
Noshir & Rhoda Lakdawalla, Valencia, CA	35
Rustom & Shireen Damania, Clovis, CA	35
Homi Minwalla, Las Vegas, NV	30
	24,811

PHEROZE DORABJI TAMBOLI WELFARE FUND

Houtoxi & Farhad Contractor, Laguna Beach, CA 200

HERITAGE PRESERVATION

Zoroastrian Association of Florida 200

Contd....



FEZANA UPDATE



DONATIONS RECEIVED - JANUARY 1, 2012 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2012 (Contd.)

ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Nazneen & Kershaw Khumbatta, Sugarland, TX	\$ 1,001
Sorab Panday, Herndon, VA	1,000
Mehraban Dinyarian, San Antonio, TX	700
Zoroastrian Association of Florida	600
Yasmin Pavri, Houston, TX	500
Parviz Yezaganegi, Vancouver, BC	175
Thritree Baxter, Miromar Lakes, FL	101
Yasmin & Rustom Kevala, Sun City Center, FL	100
Dinshaw Mistry, Cincinnati, OH	55
Kashmira Cooper, Flushing, NY	30
	4,262

CREATIVE & PERFORMING ARTS SCHOLARSHIP

Sorab Panday, Herndon, VA	1,000
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KHORSHED JUNGALWALA FUND

Hoshang and Dilnavaz Shroff, Belmont, MA	50
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20TH ANNIVERSARY INFRASTRUCTURE

Rustom Kevala, Sun City Center, FL	\$ 2,000
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U.N. NGO

Behram Pastakia, Bethesda, MD	858
Homi Gandhi, Glen Rock, NJ	858
	1,716

FEZANA JOURNAL FUND

Adil Godrej, Manassas, VA	250
Soli Dastur, University Park, FL	101
Dolly Dastoor, Brossard, QC	96
Keky Dastur, Karachi, Pakistan	50
	497

PRAYER BOOK FOR JAMSHEDI NAVROZ

Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania	75
J. B. Bastani, Phoenix, AZ	50
	125

GRAND TOTAL

\$ 69,755

FIRST LAW OF FUND RAISING

FEZANA's VISION (see FEZANA's second 10-year strategic plan) is:

To create an environment conducive for growth and progress where every individual feels part of the whole community and every association feels part of the larger organization.

FEZANA's Strategic Plan to achieve this vision includes an important goal: "Ensure economic stability through fund raising and prudent investments". Fund raising is the key to FEZANA's growth and progress. THE FIRST LAW OF FUND RAISING states that for people to donate, they must first feel passionate about the cause.

Here are 3 initiatives that require consideration for additional funding at this time:

1. *An endowed FEZANA Chair for Zarathushti studies at a US or Canadian university,*
2. *Increase awareness of FEZANA activities by vigorously promoting the FEZANA Journal,*
3. *Increase funding for North American congresses, youth events, and seminars, and*
4. *Build community assets and infrastructure to support FEZANA activities.*

What is most important in your opinion? Please provide your vision, ideas, and suggestions on the FEZANA Blog: <http://fezana-funding.blogspot.com>. If you prefer, you can send your written comments and suggestions to the FEZANA Funds & Finance committee via e-mail: rjkevala@aol.com by December 31, 2012.



13th ZOROASTRIAN GAMES – TORONTO 2012 HOSTED BY ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF ONTARIO

DARAIUS BHARUCHA

The 13th Zoroastrian Games were held in Toronto, Ontario from June 30th to July 3rd, 2012, at the York University campus. Two years ago, the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) had put in a bid with the Zoroastrian Sports Committee (ZSC), of FEZANA (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America), to host the games in Toronto. The bid was awarded to ZSO, which made this the second time that the games were held outside of the USA.



The Toronto games had upwards of 265 athletes, mostly drawn from North America, with others coming from as far as Iran, India, Pakistan, France, Germany, Spain and U.K. The Toronto games had the largest ever athlete turnout, with many participating for the first time in the games. Athletes ranged in age from seven to eighty seven and it was evident that the Zarathushti spirit transcends age and country affiliations. Non-winners were cheered just as heartily as athletes who won, so much so, that professional referees at the games commented that they had never seen such camaraderie in any other events where they officiate. (photo left, 87 year old Torch Bearer Jehangir Behboodi bringing in the torch)

These games also featured the largest number of sports disciplines that athletes had competed in at these events. The disciplines were **Track and Field, Swimming, Basketball, Volleyball, Tennis, Table Tennis and Badminton**, while a new sport, **Ball Hockey**, was added by the host committee to represent the Canadian aspect of the games. Each event had spectators of all ages who came out in droves to cheer on friends and family.

The games also included a social service component where athletes and spectators were encouraged to register themselves for the **"One Match"** program which is a registry of potential bone marrow donors which is maintained by the **Canadian Blood Services program**.

On the social side, evening events were organized to allow the participants and local Torontonians to have an opportunity to get to know one another. A disco night at the **"Underground"** at York University was a crowd puller



Darius Bharucha with the Toronto Argonaut Cheer leaders



FEZANA UPDATE



among the younger demographic. On Canada Day, buses were organized to take people to and from downtown for an evening at their leisure, where they had a chance to walk around the city and view the splendid fireworks. The Gala Banquet was the final social event with around 475 attendees who experienced an elegant evening with fine dining and dancing, with entertainment from the ever popular Toronto Argonauts cheerleading team and a DJ who had his finger on the pulse of the crowd, playing popular English and Iranian tunes. At the Gala function ZSO also recognized and celebrated FEZANA's 25th Anniversary. (Photo left, FEZANA President Bomi Patel cutting the 25th anniversary cake)

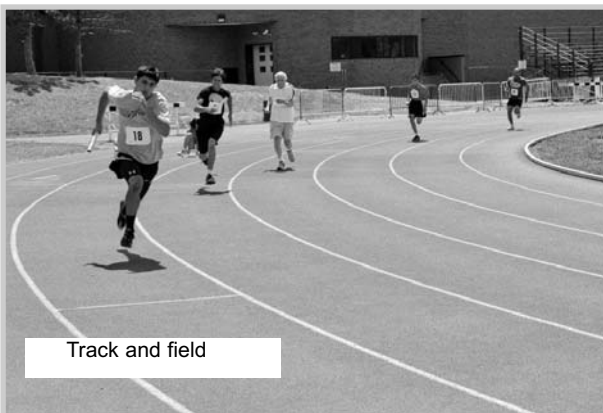
At the Closing ceremony, it was an oft-repeated sentiment that these games had truly energized the Zarathushti community, especially in Toronto, and more so among the younger population. The fact that there were over 120 local volunteers demonstrated that the spirit of giving back to the community is alive and well. Many folks were heard saying that they had such a good time that they were going to start planning on attending the next games in Los Angeles in 2014. All in all, the Toronto games were a huge success and everyone who was a part of it was proud to be a Zarathushti.

Appreciative audience



Youth of ZSO and OZCF performing a Garba at the opening ceremony choreographed by Armaity Anandsagar

Track and field





Standing right Behrouz Meherkhodavandi of the Zoroastrian Sports Committee with wife and friends

"Champions keep playing until they get it right."

~Billie Jean King~

"Adversity causes some men to break; others to break records."

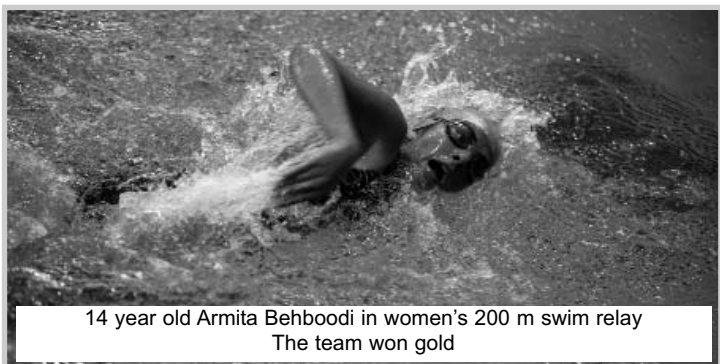
~William Arthur Ward~



The ZAMWI TEAM



MONTREAL WARRIORS



14 year old Armita Behboodi in women's 200 m swim relay
The team won gold



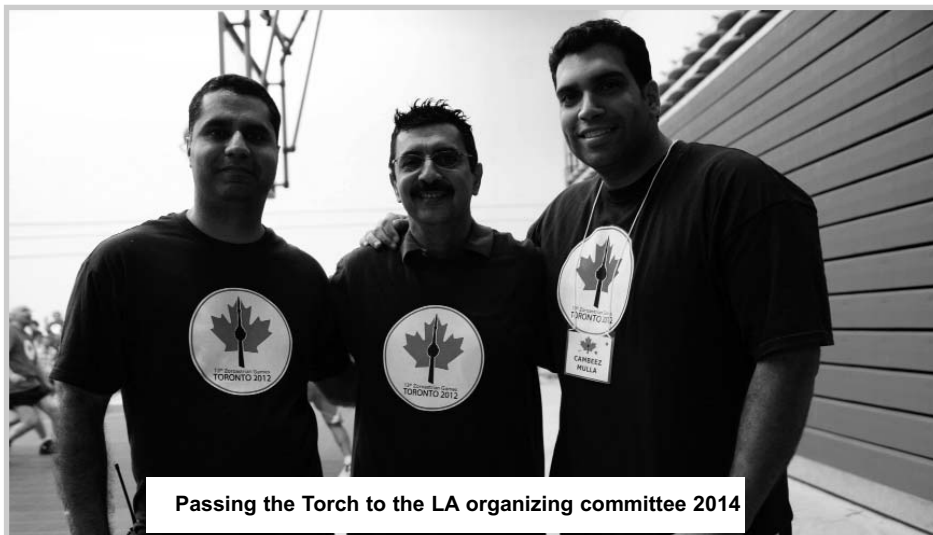
FEZANA UPDATE



The first, second and third Team winners in Basket Ball receiving their medals from Diamond Sponsors Dr Dhun and Farokh Noria. Chair Daraius making an announcement



Jehangir Behboodi with the winners of the swimming meet



Passing the Torch to the LA organizing committee 2014



Organizing Committee of the 13th Zoroastrian Games

DARAIUS M. BHARUCHA
Organizing Committee Co-Chair

NIAS KASRAVI
Organizing Committee Co-Chair

KEVIN MANCHERJEE
Organizing Committee Vice-Chair

CAMBEEZ MULLA
Sports Coordinator, Chair

DINSHAW BHARUCHA
Sports Coordinator, Vice-Chair

DILNAAZ D. BHARUCHA
Project Manager

PHIROZE DOTIWALLA
Treasurer

JIMMY KERSHAW
Treasurer

MEHROO CHOTHIA
Registration Committee Co-Chair

MICKIE KATGARA
Registration Committee Co-Chair

ZAHEER BULSARA
Marketing Coordinator

MORVARID FEREIDOONI
Fundraising Coordinator

FARHAD BULSARA
Opening & Closing Ceremonies Coordinator

ANAHITA OGRA
Medal & Trophy Coordinator

DINAZ DOTIWALLA
Gala and Social Events Committee Chair

KUSHRU CHOTHIA
Transportation Committee Chair

MASHYA AMROLIWALLA
Statistics Committee Chair

FEROZSHAH OGRA
Security Committee Chair

BEHRAM JAM
First Aid Team Chair

Sports Coordinators

YOHAN GAZDAR - Badminton

CYRUS KHORY - Ball Hockey

DINSHAW BHARUCHA - Basketball

DARAIUS M. BHARUCHA - Swimming

BOMI TAMBOLI - Table Tennis

FIONA ENGINEER AND JIMMY KERSHAW - Tennis

MAHIYAR PANTHAKY AND SHAROUKH UNWALLA - Track

ZARA MARTINEZ - Volleyball



Zarathushti Youth Without Borders

ZARATHUSHTI YOUTH WITHOUT BORDERS (ZYWiB) was established under the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America to promote Humanitarian Internships. The objective of the program is to give financial support to Zoroastrian youth interested in helping the underprivileged, from a ZYWiB Fund intended to encourage acts of charity.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND:

The idea of encouraging Zarathushti youth from Canada and the USA to travel to distant lands and work in places with meager resources was part of the first strategic plan of FEZANA promulgated during the term of **Dolly Dastoor, as President of FEZANA**. The intent was to create awareness in the minds of the participants of their responsibility as world citizens as *hamkars* of Ahura Mazda in fostering Frashokereti through action.

Without any champions to take up the cause, the idea languished on the office shelves of the Federation till Mitra Mehr, proposed it de novo at a brain storming intergenerational dialogue of Zarathushtis held in Glen Rock, New Jersey on 10 September 2002.

With inputs from experienced Zarathushti youth who had worked abroad as American Peace Corps volunteers, the Terms of Reference for ZYWiB were drafted and after a three year iterative process were adopted at a General Body Meeting during the first year of the term of **Rustom Kevala as President of FEZANA**.

Ideas for internship topics include, but are not restricted to the following:

- Cultural & Arts Promotion
- Global Medicine, Health & Hygiene Issues
- Rural Education and School Support
- Poverty Reduction & Hunger Relief
- Disaster Relief
- Environmental Awareness
- Interfaith and Multi-cultural Awareness and Support
- Bridging the Digital Divide
- Human Rights
- Microfinance

CURRENT STATUS:

Details of how ZYWiB is expected to function are available on www.fezana.org on its sub-site.

Prospective beneficiaries between the ages of 16 to 35 years shall make efforts to raise funds on their own initiative and seek supplemental support from ZYWiB.

Applicants are expected to exercise due diligence in verifying the bonafides of the organization(s) they wish to pursue work with and in researching the suitability of location(s) where the internship will take place. Prospective partner organizations must be non-partisan, and suggested locations must be sufficiently safe.

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

At the 25th Anniversary celebrations of FEZANA during its Annual General Body meeting, held on 3 August 2012 in Rye, New York the assembly allocated funds to implement this long standing strategic goal of FEZANA.

Zarathushtis interested in applying for funding support are requested to make applications electronically to Behram Pastakia, bpastakia@aol.com Acting Chair, Zarathushti Youth Without Borders.



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

Roundtable of Institutional Bodies

An informal meeting of institutional bodies was held courtesy of Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) preceding the North American Zoroastrian Congress on July 31, 2012 at the Rye Hilton, NY.

BACKGROUND

The Roundtable of Institutional bodies is an informal forum of global organizations, not to be confused with the erstwhile "Coming Together Roundtable (CTR)" or the "Global Working Group (GWG)". The CTR was born at the World Congress in London in 2005 as a forum for regional and institutional representatives to "come together and work together" on issues of import to the global Zoroastrian community. At the World Congress in Dubai in December 2009, the CTR evolved into the GWG under the ownership of elected regional representatives of India (FPZAI), North America (FEZANA), Europe (ZTFE) and Iran, with the intent of later adding other regional representatives -- from Australia, New Zealand, Middle East and Far East. The GWG has since met twice, in Mumbai (Jan 2011) and London (Oct 2011). Reports from previous CTR and GWG meetings are available at www.Zoroastrians.net and in past issues of FEZANA Journal archived at www.fezana.org.

ATTENDANCE

Global institutions represented at this meeting: WZO Trust-India (Dinshaw Tamboli and Freyaz Shroff) WZO and WZO-London (Kersi Shroff), ZWIN (Dolly Dastoor and Zareen Araoz in abstentia), NextGenNow youth network (Shahrooz Bhojti). Other interested persons included: Homi Gandhi (ZAGNY host association), Rohinton and Roshan Rivetna, Behram Pastakia and Firdosh Mehta (conveners of the meeting), Bomi Patel (FEZANA president) Ketayun Kapadia (VP) and Afreed Mistry of FEZANA, Meherji Madan ("On Wings of Fire" video) and Homai Engineer of Udvarda, India. Reports were submitted in abstentia from Homi Dhalla of the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation; and the "Return to Roots" program (Dinsha Mistree, and Rosheen Kabraji with Shernaz Cama of UNESCO PARZOR).

The meeting began with a joint prayer, playing of a Monajat, a welcome by Homi Gandhi on behalf of ZAGNY, self-introductions by each participant and adoption of the meeting agenda and prioritization of discussion items. Individuals then shared their concerns, supported each other's efforts, offering resources at their disposal and seeking out ways and means to assist in the various projects.

1. WORLD WIDE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – TELE-CLASSES AND WEBINARS.

There is a need for global religious education facilities, such as teleclasses, websites, webinars and interactive sessions using the possibilities presented by new technologies. Among the various models cited were the popular tele-classes conducted by Ervad Soli Dastur, Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia's recently launched website at www.ramiyarkaranjia.in and the varied materials available on Yazdi Tantra's www.zoroastrians.net. The need was expressed for sharing religious education materials from FEZANA's religious education program and other organizations worldwide.



From left Firdosh Mehta, Rohinton Rivetna, Homi Gandhi, Bomi Patel, Ketayun Kapadia, Dolly Dastoor, Rustom Kevala

Action Item These initiatives be encouraged, to take the concepts back to their organizations spread the word and seek help as needed. Kersi Shroff mentioned that WZO London is willing to support such initiatives.

2. DEMOGRAPHICS

Roshan Rivetna shared some findings from FEZANA's 2012 world wide demographics study, available for viewing at <http://nazc.zagny.org>. Among the rather disturbing observations were: (a) significant decline in the estimated populations of India, Iran and Pakistan, which were not offset by the gains in USA, Canada, New Zealand and Singapore; (b) Upward trend in intermarriages; Contact Roshan at RRRivetna@aol.com. for details

Discussion ensued on what we, as a think tank group, could do to reverse the effects of these findings, stem the tide.



Action Item *The need was expressed for professional demographers to study these trends, and for the global community leadership to take action, and encourage and*

has better infrastructure and resources to support such an effort, than USA and Canada.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE DIASPORAS

Infrastructure for Zarathushtis to grow and prosper in the 'second diaspora' communities was emphasized. This covers both brick and mortar as well as organizational infrastructures, e.g consecrated atash kadehs, dar e mehrs, administrative centers, resettlement of Zarathushtis, professional demographics study, library/research center (FIRES), Office of the Diaspora in India/Iran, Athornan institutions, promotion of entrepreneurial spirit, retirement homes.

This involves a coordinated approach with the Mobeds councils, WZCC, regional organizations and GWG. The paper is available from Rivetna@aol.com.

Action Item *We need to socialize this vision and seek worldwide support.*

6. PROMOTION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Action Item. *A database of mentors to help in startup of an enterprise needs be set up. A data base for a website for job-seekers and job-creators has been set up by Eric Engineer .*

Action Item *We need to seek ways and means of promoting and encouraging participation of the youth, especially WZCC (India) Youth wing.*

7. PROMOTION OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Action Item *FEZANA to continue to promote performances by Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra at Zarathushti events.*

Action Item *Meherji Madan and Homi Gandhi suggested setting up a database of talented musicians in cities across North America, interested in music. FEZANA could promote this.*

8. ENCOURAGING PARSII/IRANI HARMONY. Behram suggested seeking translators to translate books (e.g. Jashan book) from English to Farsi.

Action Item *Afreed volunteered to send out a call for volunteers to translate from English to Farsi. Observation: Great strides have been made in participating and observing each other's ceremonies and customs, e.g. Parsis are observing Jashne Sadeh, Mehrgan and setting the Haft Seen table, while Iranians are reciprocating by picking up Parsi foods and traditions. However it was observed that in some associations, the children's religious classes are held separately by Iranians and Parsis.*



From left Behram Pstakia; Dinshaw Tamboly, Freyaz Shroff, Afreed Mistry

support local initiatives (e.g. the fertility clinics, BPPs third child program in India).

3. GLOBAL WELFARE AND MICROFINANCING

Dinshaw Tamboly (WZO Trust India) has been working in partnership with the FEZANA Welfare and Critical Assistance Committee with the support of Freyaz Shroff for many years. Freyaz mentioned a website designed to coordinate welfare applications and disbursements from the various trusts (especially in India). At Platform 1, applicants can register their needs (medical only, for now) and at Platform 2, various trusts can register and enter the amounts they can disburse. This provides checks and balances, and avoids misuse of trust funds by habitual applicants. Seven trusts have signed up. YLEP is in charge of the website, set up by Yazdi Tantra.

It was felt that besides financial aid to the needy, the other component of community growth was to promote entrepreneurship and DinshawTamboli's Self-Employment project under the auspices of WZO Trust Funds was cited.

Action Item *It was agreed that FEZANA and organizations of North America would support WZO Trust funds' welfare and entrepreneurship (microfinancing) projects in India.*

4. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS – GLOBAL CATASTROPHIES.

Kersi Shroff mentioned that WZO would like to participate further in support of emergency preparedness and global catastrophes (for both Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis).

Action Item *We need to coordinate and present a unified response worldwide to global catastrophies.. Such a coordinated effort worldwide would make a greater impact at the global level. Behram mentioned that if there was a need to airlift people from a disaster area, Australia*



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

9. ZOROASTRIAN WOMEN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK (ZWIN).

ZWIN founding member Dr. Dolly Dastoor presented ZWIN projects and needs on behalf of ZWIN founding director Dr. Zareen Karani: (1) Breast Cancer Awareness. (2) International student hospitality. Dinshaw Tamboli keeps a list of 70-75 students who go abroad every year, which he will share with ZWIN. It was also suggested that ZWIN place an announcement in Jame Jamshed, an announcement on fezana.org, or send a message on the ZWIN yahoo group, about whom to contact for help (e.g. local association) when students come to USA/Canada. (3) Elderly Assistance Program. Dinshaw (WZO Trust) offered to work with ZWIN on this. FEZANA VP Ketayun Kapadia has offered her support to revive this and other ZWIN programs. Numerous Action Items highlighted - page 19

10. NEXTGENNOW

Shahrooz Bhopti of New Jersey presented the **NextGenNow**

report, covering numerous NextGenNow initiatives: the **"Zoroastrians Stepping Forward"** shoe drive; the ZDIR project (at www.zdir.org); **Z-Meds, the Zarathushti version of Doctors without Borders**; and the **Zoroastrian Journalists group**. For further information visit www.nextgennow.org. Following the impressive presentation by Shahrooz, Kersi raised some interesting questions about passing on the faith to the Next Generation in a new culture: We need to find out from the youth, what are the tools they require to perpetuate the faith? What particular aspects are we failing to do? How do we make the faith relevant to the next generation? Language? What are the fundamentals that this generation has taken for granted, that would inspire the youth? Shahrooz felt that most important was for people to meet each other, go out for dinner, come together, come to congresses, and meet in between congresses.

Action Item Kersi will list some insightful questions and start a dialog with NextGenNow,

11. ON WINGS OF FIRE

Meherji Madan requested help in promoting the film *"On Wings of Fire"* that he co-produced with Cyrus

Bharucha, featuring Zubin Mehta. Can we show it on a website somewhere? Or on a social network?

Action Item Can FEZANA provide the stewardship for this film?

Action Item Shahrooz offered to provide technical help.

12. PARZOR PROJECT – RETURN TO ROOTS

A report on the "Return to Roots" program being coordinated by Dinsha Mistree and Rosheen Kabraji with the support of Shernaz Cama of PARZOR, was submitted in abstentia by Dinsha. Modeled on the Jewish **"Taglit-Birthright Israel"** program, the vision is to provide young Zarathushtis from across the world an opportunity to return to their roots, explore their religion, culture, ethnicity and identity alongside fellow Zarathushtis in India, to bridge the growing disconnect and revive the community.

Action Item All present thought it was a laudable program and should become a Legacy project from the New York Congress. For more information contact DMistree@gmail.com or visit <https://sites.google.com/site/zororeturntoroots/>.

13. WORLD ZARATHUSHTI CULTURAL FOUNDATION (WZCF)

Dr. Homi Dhalla (WZCF founder and chair) submitted a paper in abstentia] covering recent WZCF projects and future plans, as well as Dr. Dhalla's Interfaith activities. Among the most significant projects were: preservation of the historic Bahrot Caves; and two excavations at Sanjan, which now becomes the earliest (1000 years old) Parsi historical site in the world, to be excavated, with immeasurable historical, archaeological and ethnographical importance.

Action Item. Dr. Dhalla has a collection of about 360 rare and valuable books in English that he is willing to give to a Zoroastrian library for a donation of \$4,000. Interested parties may contact Dr. Dhalla at wzcf@bom8.vsnl.in

NEXT MEETING

The next Roundtable of Institutional Bodies is tentatively planned for December 28, 2014, in conjunction with the next North American Zoroastrian Congress (December 29, 2014 – January 3rd, 2015) in Los Angeles, or maybe even earlier, in 2013, if possible.

For more information contact one of the organizers;

Rohinton Rivetna rivetna@aol.com,

Firdosh Mehta fdjmehta@shaw.ca or

Behram Pastakia bpastakia@aol.com.



From left Meherji Madan and Shahrooz Bhopti



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

Zoroastrian Women's International Network

ZWIN

Projects and Needs

Submitted by Dr. Zareen Karani Araoz, ZWIN Founding Network Director

Represented at the meeting by Dr. Dolly Dastoor, ZWIN Founding Member

(1) ZWIN is initiating a Breast Cancer Awareness Program and other Preventive Health Care Awareness Programs and Education for our world-wide communities.

We will begin with Breast Cancer Awareness and then for other diseases that are common in our Zoroastrian/ Parsee community (Osteoporosis, G6PD Deficiency and Neo-natal Jaundice, Diabetes, Heart Disease, etc.). We would like to use the ZWIN Network, and Representatives in 30+ Zoroastrian communities, to spread the word.

ZWINers Dr. Dolly Dastoor and Ushta Daver Canteenwalla (a Genetic Counselor) have offered to help in coordinating the Breast Cancer Prevention Program. Dr. Yasmin Engineer, Dr. Behram Pastakia and Dr. Khushroo Patel have offered to be professional Resources.

Our current needs:

- i. **Breast Cancer Prevention Resources/ Physicians in different locations and those specializing in G6PD, Osteoporosis and Nutrition needed to advise ZWIN and share cutting edge research findings through the ZWIN network**
- ii. **Need interested people/ ZWINers to coordinate programs on the ground in different locations to reach our women.**

(2) ZWIN's International Student Network and International Student Hospitality Program

This program helps welcome Zarathushti students who are studying away from home to be connected to the Zarathushti community and students in their new locations and with Zarathushti. students world-wide through the ZWIN student egroup.

Our current needs:

- i. **We would like to be able to get, asap, the Names and Emails of Zoroastrian students leaving India to study anywhere in the world (possibly from India from the BPP),: Hospitality Reps Needed: Net-savvy youth needed:**
- ii. **Info on students studying away from home within the US and other countries from local Zoroastrian associations:**

(3) A "Zoroastrian Elderly Assistance Link" (ZEAL) program.

See appeal page 113

(4) Every Computer-literate Zarathushti Woman to be a ZWINer:

Help every Zoroastrian Woman Join ZWIN: We request every Zarathushti association, organization or individual to spread the word about all Zarathushti women (young and old) to join ZWIN by sending a blank email to:

ZWIN3-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

ii. Help us think of ways to reach the non-computer literate women and get input on their needs

ZWIN would like to be a platform to support other good work being done for women and children in our community-- Yasmin Ghadiali has the aspiration and an excellent, comprehensive plan for ZWIN to help poor Zarathushti women in India earn a better livelihood, Matrimonial Assistance programs, e.g. by Roshan Rivetna through the FEZANA Journal, and the Karachi Banu Mandal efforts, etc.

For more information contact: zareen@managingcultures.com



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Hilton Westchester, 699 Westchester Avenue, Rye Brook, New York, USA 10573, Friday August 3, 2012

The 25 th Annual General meeting of FEZANA was held at Westchester Hilton with 18 out of 26 Associations represented either by their Presidents or their representatives, giving a voting strength of 61/ 75 votes. 20 committees were represented by their chair persons, Ervad Kobad Zarolia represented the the North American Mobeds' Council as their President . All the officers were in attendance except the Asst Secretary. Detailed reports from the Committee Chairs and the

2 ASSOCIATION NEWS

California Z Centre and Zoroastrian Society of Ontario hold all 6 gahambars.

Religious classes for children are held by all the associations and many hold classes for adults as well

Congress and Educational Activities

Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia

Youth congress summer 2011, 3750 anniversary of Asho Zarathosht June 2012

Zoroastrian Association of Quebec

"Journées des Religions Zoroastriennes" Celebration of the Zoroastrian religion at CEGEP St Foy Quebec city . Nov 2011

Zoroastrian Society of Ontario North America Sports June 2012

Zoroastrian Society of Chicago 25th anniversary celebration of FEZANA and the 3750 Anniversary of Asho Zarathushtra August 2012

Zoroastrian Association of Houston 25th anniversary celebrations of FEZANA October 2012

Zoroastrian association of Florida Recognition award to 2 navars who complete their training Ordination

3 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Relations (Afreed Mistry)

Promoted FEZANA on social media. There is a need for



President Bomi Patel conducting the Annual General Meeting

two more members on the committee : One specifically to be a graphic designer and another to be a journalist with access to print media. The committee has obtained a QR code for promotion and ease of access to information Facebook page and a few associations' pages are linked together.. OZCF mentioned that the PR committee should focus on the associations and help them out with



From left VPKatayun Kapadia presenting a gift to President Bomi Patel, with Treasurer Ratan Mistry applauding

Association Presidents has been placed on www.FEZANA.org hence the Journal will report on the highlights

HIGHLIGHTS

1 Election Results:

President	Katayun Kapadia
Treasurer	Ratan Mistry (by acclamation)
Asst Secretary	Shiraz Italia (by acclamation)

The outgoing president Bomi Patel was thanked profusely for his devotion and dedication to FEZANA , for promoting FEZANA internally across North America and externally across the globe. On behalf of all those present at the AGM., a gift of a glass engraved Afarghan with a Tea Light and a polished crimson piano base with the 25th Anniversary logo of FEZANA, was presented to Bomi Patel in recognition of his services as President. This gift was designed and procured by Firdosh Mehta from ZAA.



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

increasing their public relations in the North American community

UN-NGO: (Homi Gandhi, Behram Pastakia, Afreed Mistry). FEZANA received non-consultative status at the United Nations, which allows it to attend two different meetings every year: Department of Public Information and the Commission on the Status of Women. . As part of the committee's goals, they were hoping to advocate for human rights and religious freedom. The committee would like to send a replica of the Cyrus cylinder with a stand to hold it in place, to all associations and promote the meaning and history of Zoroastrianism. (\$300 each) The team thanked Marzi Byramji of Regal Press, Canada for printing the UN-NGO outreach bookmarks, without payment. These were included in the bags given out to all participants at registration for 16th NAZC.

Interfaith Activities (Homi Gandhi)

The Committee chairs of FEZANA have been very responsive on the topics of religion and foreign policy in the international arena. It would be nice to see programs to engage children in our events. Coordination for the interfaith harmony meeting will continue and Homi Gandhi has been appointed as international chair to regroup the international community. Promotion of an interfaith grove of trees to be planted in various cities in North America

Funds and Finance: (Rustom Kevala)

FEZANA is now registered as a "Cause" with <http://www.iGive.com>. FEZANA will receive a percentage of any purchases made through iGive merchants and businesses such as Amazon, eBay, Home Depot & many more.

Education, Scholarship and Conference (Lovji Cama)

Through the increasing popularity of the tele-conference classes, there is a need to use better equipment. The committee would like to request the AGM attendees to support Yuhan Vevaina for the Stanford Project. The annual University of Toronto's Religion courses commitment for 3 years continues. Additional funding was requested for the University of Toronto (UoT) religious studies Avesta and Pahlavi classes which would be open to the community as well as to students . The commitment would be for \$10,000 for 3 years for a total of \$.30,000 Lovji Cama agreed to be the coordinator for this activity (see resolution below)

Academic Scholarships (Dolly Dastoor)

This year 2 new scholarships have been endowed and monies added to an existing scholarship, bringing the total available for scholarships for 2012-2013 to \$35,000 In the year 2011-2012, \$27,000 were awarded



Information and Dissemination (Behram Pastakia)

It is a major accomplishment that the FEZANA Journal is now available online. For the future executives of FEZANA, the website needs to be clarified for donations being made online. The website needs to clearly state names of books for which donations are made on line .Many member associations have yet to send in their cheques for the books on NowRuz prayers edited by Ervad Soli Dastur.

JOURNAL (Dolly Dastoor)

The special 25th anniversary color issue was sponsored by Marzee Byramji of Regal Press and the Journal expresses a special vote of thanks to Roshan Rivetna: This meeting acknowledges and appreciates all the efforts of Shahrokh Khanizadeh for placing the Journal on the FEZANA website.

FIRES (Aban Rustomji)

The website is now up and running with information on FIRES. The Vendidad Sadeh manuscript has been digitized and is available on the website <http://www.avesta-archive.com>.. Upcoming projects include: digitizing books, getting more representation at meetings and to catalog submissions of books. Please invite Aban Rustomji to your association libraries so that she is able to catalogue the books. Thanks all around for the equipment and support.

Unity and Welfare (Hosi Mehta, Houtoxi Contractor; Freya Shroff)

This committee has a goal to create a nursing home facility for Zarathushtis . The chairs want to promote a Unity and



Aban Rustomji, Chair FIRES



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

Welfare Committee for each association and they are willing to help create those teams in the associations

Strategic Plan: (Maharukh Motafaram)

The 5 main goals

- 1) Increase awareness of FEZANA domestically,
- 2) Foster Hamazori by building strong relationships between various Zarathushti entities/groups
- 3) Advance religious education, cultural awareness, and interfaith dialogue,
- 4) Ensure economic stability through fund raising and prudent investments, and
- 5) Showcase FEZANA's successes around the world.

NAZC Committee, Public Relations Committee and the Unity & Welfare Committee were selected to identify the action items for their committees relating to these 5 goals and discuss how they would achieve them in 1 year, 2-5 years and 5-10 years..

ZSC (Behrooz Mehrkhodavandi)

The goal of the committee is to unite youth through sports. There is always a request for more volunteers for these games. Please send your children and promote unity in our community. In the last Unity Cup there were more than 500 participants. In the ZGames in Toronto there were about 600 participants and 700 athletes and it was a great success. In the San Diego games, there were more than 3,000 participants and athletes. Associations are showing an interest to host the next games and that is wonderful.

Zoroastrian Youth Without Borders: (Behram Pastakia)

Future plan to have Zoroastrian youth go to Gujarat to assist in aiding people in need and to become aware of poverty. Request is to budget \$3,000 for this endeavor as a subsidy for the travels. Rustom Kevala mentioned issues of insurance when FEZANA promotes international travel with individuals. Bomi Patel said that it will be for funding assistance for the mission and not travel. Homi Gandhi commented that reciprocity should also include those wanting to come from Iran and India to the US as an exchange program. Roshan Rivetna mentioned this would



Behram Pastakia, Chair Information and Demination Committee

be similar to assist with other programs that are being promoted at the congress. Behram Pastakia responded that the duly approved ToR for the committee is on the FEZANA website and volunteered to be Acting Chair till such time that the FEZANA executive could appoint a replacement.

External Affairs Committee: (Firdosh Mehta)

Firdosh Mehta shared his enthusiasm for the many youth taking responsibility in this committee and working as co-chairs. This committee should only deal with issues outside the US and Canada.

Fezana Excellence in Sports Scholarship (EXISS): (Shiroy Dadachanji)

The budget is being requested from FEZANA, however the request is to work in conjunction with the Zsports committee to see if they have an income, that could support the scholarship for \$5,000.

4 RESOLUTIONS

A NAMC AWARD RECOGNITION To select one or two Mobeds who have rendered EXEMPLARY service to the community to be presented with shawl. This ceremony should be performed at the Opening, closing or Awards ceremony at the decision of the host association. Proposed by OZCf and seconded by ZSO. Accepted by majority

B CANADIAN CHAPTER : A committee to be appointed by the Presidnet to look into the feasibility of resolving the issues between inter-country transfers of funds. Proposed by ZACHicago and seconded BY ZAH, Accepted unanimously
Kobad Zarolia and Firdosh Mehta are to follow up as this committee.

C INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT : Proposal to create a Committee to look into building a FEZANA Centre (Phase II) The committee to
1 develop criteria for the purpose of the Cente and
2 look into the finding a location based on the Criteria.

D U Of T RELIGIOUS CLASSES The executive can request the use up to \$5,000 out of the PavRI Fund for the University of Toronto Classes for 2013. Proposed by ZAA and seconded bY ZAH. Motion accepted by majority

DATES TO REMEMBER :

26th FEZANA AGM May 3-5 2013 Dallas TX in conjunction with the 2nd anniversary of the Dallas Centre
10th World Zoroastrian Congress, Mumbai December 2013
17th North American Zoroastrian Congress, December 29-31 2014, Hilton Airport, LA



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

FEZANA ELECTS ITS 7th PRESIDENT:

KATAYUN KAPADIA

At the AGM held on August 3rd 2012 at Rye, New York the member associations elected the following officers to guide the member associations for the next two years

President *Katayun Kapadia*
Vice President *Homi Gandhi* (elected later in the post vacated by K, Kapadia)
Treasurer *Ratan Mistry* (by acclamation)
Secretary *Nahid Dashtaki*
Asst secretary *Shiraz Italia* (by acclamation)



- Head of US Office of Internal Audit for Sanofi-Aventis in Bridgewater, NJ, 2004-05
- Vice President & Chief Audit Executive, Internal Audit at Elan Pharmaceuticals, Inc., 2005-2012

Katayun has been actively involved in the Zarathustrian community activities since her arrival in USA in 1979. She has held several positions on the Board of Trustees of the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania & New Jersey (ZAPANJ):

- President –(1983-87),(1997-98), (2005-07)

Katayun (nee Dinshaw) was born in Bombay, schooled at J.B. Vachha High School in Dadar and obtained her Bachelor's degree in Commerce and Economics (Honors) from Podar College of Bombay University in 1971. Katayun became a Chartered Accountant in 1975 and worked as an Account Executive for South East Asia Shipping Company from 1975-1979. After her marriage to Kersi Kapadia in 1979 she immigrated to the USA and settled in the Cherry Hill area of South Jersey (10 miles east of Philadelphia). Katayun and Kersi have two children – Zarin (High School Counselor at the School without Walls Senior High School in Washington D.C.) and Farrokh (Lieutenant in The U.S. Navy, Submarine Corps, in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii).

As a Chartered Accountant (CA), Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) and a Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE). Katayun has extensive domestic and international accounting and auditing work experience in healthcare, higher education, shipping, public accounting, and pharmaceutical & biotechnology industries in a variety of work environments with extensive involvement in:

- Leading Organizational Changes - Management Consulting
- Operations Management
- Project Management
- Strategic Planning - Staff Development & Training

She was Associate Director of University Audits for the University of Pennsylvania & Health System, Philadelphia, 1994-96.

- Senior Corporate Auditor, Rhone-Poulenc Rorer (RPR), Collegeville, PA, 1996-98.
- Worldwide Coordinator, Internal Audit Development & Support, Aventis Pharma, Paris, France, 1999-2003.
- Head of Audit Development & Support, Bridgewater, NJ, Aventis, 2003-04.

- Treasurer – (1981-83), (1989-93)
- Secretary – (1993-95)

Co-chair with Freny Ranji of the 1994 Ninth North American Zoroastrian Congress hosted by ZAPANJ in Philadelphia that resulted in a substantial profit.

Katayun has served as an **Executive Officer of FEZANA** for nine years:

- **Secretary of FEZANA** for two terms from 1993-1997 with both Rohinton Rivetna and Dr. Dolly Dastoor as FEZANA Presidents;
- **Treasurer of FEZANA** for two terms from 2006-2010 with Dr. Rustom Kevala and Bomi Patel as Presidents.
- **Vice-President of FEZANA** from 2011 to 2012 with Bomi Patel as President.

Katayun also served on the following FEZANA Committees:

- Coordination & Planning Committee (Chair);
- Academic Scholarship Committee;
- Funds & Finance Committee

Katayun is one of the founding members of the **Zarathusti/Zoroastrian Women's International Network (ZWIN)**

She was on the Board of Trustees of the Zoroastrian Association de France(ZAF) and held the positions of Treasurer and Vice President during her stay in Paris from 1998-2003. Katayun worked on organizing events and meetings with Mrs. Meherafsoon Sassanfar, President of ZAF in Paris

**THE MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS WELCOME
KATAYUN AS THEIR PRESIDENT**



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

Homi D Gandhi elected Vice-President of FEZANA

Katayun Kapadia, VP for 2011-2012 was elected President of FEZANA 2012-2014, hence an election was called to fill the vacant VP position. Homi D. Gandhi was elected as the next Vice-President of FEZANA, the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America.

Homi has been a long standing member of ZAGNY and has served it in various capacities from being a Board Member numerous times, to heading ZAGNY as its President (2002-2008.)

Homi has also been involved with FEZANA for many years heading various committees and representing them at the United Nations and other forums. Most recently Homi headed the Public Relations and Publication Committee of the XVI North American Zarathushti Congress 2012 hosted by ZAGNY.

Homi is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. He retired from active corporate life in 2009 after 25 years at the New York Stock Exchange and the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority.

Homi says "Our community needs support and contribution from all individuals to further strengthen the Zarathushti presence in North America so definitively, that when our grandchildren say that they are Zarathushti, they can say so with pride, and without encountering puzzlement from their fellow North Americans, as to what a Zarathushti is".



RATAN MISTRY RE-ELECTED AS TREASURER FOR A SECOND TERM

Ratan Mistry has been reelected for a second term as FEZANA Treasurer. Ratan lives in San Jose and has also lived in Toronto and Mumbai. Ratan who is a Chartered Accountant (India and Canada) and a Certified Public Accountant (USA), is a Senior Manager with a Big-Four accounting firm and specializes in auditing public and private software companies and venture capital funds.

Ratan's interests include reading, travel, volunteering and spending time with his wife and children. Ratan actively volunteers at the Zarathoshti Anjuman of Northern California, his local Zoroastrian community association.

Ratan hopes that the present generation of Zarathushtis build a solid foundation for a unified and progressive Zarathushti community that is proud of its culture and its achievements and which in turn, inspires the Zarathushti youth to strengthen this foundation and to excel.



From left Secretary Nahid Dastaki, President Katayun Kapadia, Treasurer Ratan Mistry



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

FEZANA Gala

After months of planning by the Celebration Committee, Bomi Patel, Mantreh Atashband, Niloufer Bhesania, Mehru Cama, Dolly Dastoor, Homi Davier, Katayun Kapadia, Ratan Mistry, Aban Rustomji, bi-



Masters of ceremony Faranak Firoozi (left) and Nozer Buchia (right)



weekly conference calls, the designing of the Silver anniversary pin by Homi Davier, the manufacturing of the 500 lapel pins through the kind donations of Farokh and Dr Dhun Noria of Toronto, the power point production of the FEZANA STORY by Aban Rustomji and her team with technical assistance from Rumi Jussawala of Toronto, the production of the plaques for the recognition of the FEZANA supporters, the design and printing of the elegant programs by Homi Davier, the day finally arrived. FEZANA celebrated its 25th anniversary on August 2nd 2012 at Rye Hilton, New York in conjunction with XIVth North American Congress with 220 people in attendance. The Masters of Ceremony for the evening Nozer Buchia and Faranak Firoozi set the tone for the evening, with entertainment provided by the Nomad Dance troupe, and



the all Zarathushti Generation 1 band from Houston who also celebrated their 10th anniversary (see page 69). The FEZANA STORY unveiled the contribution of the 6 presidents in building FEZANA and the work of the different committees together with the landmark achievements of all the 26 associations. The ceremonial cake was cut by all 6 presidents

The donors and supporters of FEZANA over the years were recognized for their contribution

Scholarship Endowments : Dr Behram and Silloo Kapadia, Dr Cawas Kapadia, Ms Dhun and Bachu Panthaki
Dr Jerry and Mrs Celeste Kheradi
Mrs Mina Saroosh (Morvolid Guiv Foundation)
Mrs Aban Rustomji



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012



from left Rohinton Rivetna, Dolly Dastoor, Framroze Patel, Firdosh Mehta, Rustom Kevala, Bomi Patel

Welfare Endowments

Mr Firdaus and Dr Jasmine Bhathena

Mr William and Mrs Yasmin Cumming
Dr Hoshedar and Mrs Anahita Tamboli
Mrs Farhangis Zardoshty Ms Homayoun Goshtasbpour,
Paridokht Banu and Iran Banu

Religious Education Endowment

Late Mrs Roda Pavri
Mr Firoze Jungalwala
Mrs Farhangis Zardoshty Ms Homayoun Goshtasbpour,
Paridokht Banu and Iran Banu

Those present to receive the award in person were 1 Celeste and Jerry Kheradi with Bomi Patel; 2 right Nerina, Arish and Aban Rustomji with Bomi Patel 3 Dabestani family 4 Rustom Engineer, VP WZCC 5 Ervad Kobad Zarolia, President NAMC 6 Shahrok Khanizadeh for his contribution to the Journal, 7 Mehru Cama, Conference Logistics chair for all her liaison work with the Anniversary committee 8 Ervad Soli Dastur 9 Hosi Mehta and Houtoxi Contractor

The gala was a fitting celebration by and for the organization that has provided 25 years of service to the North American community and seen the growth of its member associations, seen the building of 10 dar-e-mehrs, and has been recognized as a major player in the international Zarathushti community. Well done FEZANA.





Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

W



Normad Dancers



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

WZCC DAY 2012 IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE XVI NAZC: WHY WE BUILD ?

Natalie Gandhi, PhD, WZCC-NY Chair,
Copyright, August, 2012,

The XVI North American Zarathushti Congress was held in Rye Town, New York. and was altogether a wonderful time. WZCC-NY readily mobilized to provide additional excellence in a Congress add-on, WZCC DAY 2012 on August 1, 2012

WZCC DAY 2012 activities included A Tour of The New York Federal Reserve and The Museum of American Finance and an Evening Symposium and Dinner Fete with the President, Professor Jamshed Bharucha, of the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. ZAGNY members of the new generation, Mr. Poruz Khambatta and Dr. Cyrus Hirjibehedin, masterfully interacted in the Evening Symposium with President Bharucha.

The XVI NAZC and WZCC-NY were honored with the presence of Prof. Noriya Sumihara who traveled to the Congress from Tenri University in Japan.

Additional highlights included the Impromptu Organizer's Meeting with WZCC Vice-President Rustom Engineer, WZCC Past-President Rohinton Rivetna, WZCC World Director Firdosh Mehta, and WZCC World Director Dr. Zareen Karani-Araoz. Mr. Nozer Buchia of Houston was on-hand to sign his book: ***Why Entrepreneurs Really Fail, The Road to Success ... Always Under Construction***. Rustom Engineer offered a prospective for the January 2013 WZCC AGM in Singapore.

New York offers some of the world's most fascinating resources for the friends of business. Tour attendees went to the very center of central banking - the throbbing heart of the world's finance - The Federal Reserve Bank of New York. There they considered the Fed's role in the economy

and global finance. The next remarkable site on the tour was The Museum of American Finance, celebrating the spirit of entrepreneurship and the free market tradition. A docent kindly guided attendees through the historic structure. She explained that the particular location of the Museum is the very first bank building in the USA. Accoutrements in the ornate three-story, green marble building are original to their earliest use, such as with the glass and crystal chandeliers and marble.

The Museum is situated kitty-corner to Federal Hall noted as "the Birthplace of the American Constitution". George Washington, America's founder and statesman nonpareil, took the oath of office at Federal Hall. Across the street from Federal Hall is the New York Stock Exchange. The occasion of the tour with thirty-five Zarathushtis visiting



WZCC DAY 2012 Tour, Museum of American Finance

the environs many have been the most ever collected in this deeply storied vicinity.

The Evening Symposium and Dinner Fete, ***"New Sciences and Commerce"*** received numerous words of praise for excellence. WZCC-NY was honored to feature the Keynote Distinguished Panelist, ***President Jamshed Bharucha of Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art***. Founded by inventor, industrialist and philanthropist Peter Cooper in 1859, The Cooper Union offers education in art, architecture and engineering, as well as courses in the humanities and social sciences. From its singular place in American life, the Cooper Union is witness to many historic moments. President Abraham Lincoln himself catalyzed his bid as America's sixteenth President through a speech delivered at Cooper Union's Great Hall. Prior to becoming Cooper Union's twelfth



WZCC DAY 2012 Tour, Museum of American Finance



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

President, he served in academic leadership positions at Dartmouth College and Tufts University. President Bharucha is the first Zoroastrian to serve as the President of The Cooper Union.



Cyrus Hirjibehedin, Natalie Gandhi, Jamshed Bharucha, Poruz Khambatta

Mr. Poruz Khambatta joined President Bharucha as a Distinguished Panelist. Poruz Khambatta graduated from UC Berkeley in May 2012 with a degree in Cognitive Science with honors. He was president of the Cognitive Science Student Association and taught a class on contemporary cognitive science research methods. As an ordained Zoroastrian priest, Poruz believes that science and religion can go hand in hand in helping us better understand ourselves, each other and our world. Poruz is interested in startups and nonprofit ventures which find creative applications for research in order to improve the quality of people's lives.

Dr. Cyrus Hirjibehedin, PhD Physics, served as the Symposium's Distinguished Panel Q & A Moderator. Cyrus is the Principal Investigator and Research Group Leader of the London Centre for Nanotechnology. He is a Lecturer (or Assistant Professor in US terms) in the Department of Physics & Astronomy and Department of Chemistry of the University College London. He is also a ZAGNY young professional. President Bharucha and Poruz incorporated Cyrus's insights from the field of nanotechnology into the Symposium discussion.

The Symposium pursued the theme of using the Good Mind's quest for knowledge well. As we engage ourselves in building the future, high-achievers must take the knowledge and science of our time into endeavors for a flourishing world. New sciences in fields such as cognitive psychology, the human brain, collective action, nanotechnology, and more, share an imminent moment. They are poised on the threshold of a new time of discovery. It is an advancing forefront in the growth of knowledge. How can people intrigued with our advancing

sciences and the growth of knowledge, move ahead professionally, whether through academic work or commercial entrepreneurship?

Questions continued at the Symposium. *What will new knowledge mean for our lives? Can our generations here lead as they led when industrialization struck India? Can we continue a Zarathushtrian legacy of bringing fruitful things to the world?*

We were honored to have *Professor Noriya Sumihara* join us at the Congress. Professor Noriya Sumihara is an Anthropologist from Tenri University of Japan. Professor Sumihara's research on WZCC captures strong insights into Zarathushti life. Since 2009, the Professor's investigations have taken him to Mumbai and Pune several times. In India and New York, he has interviewed leaders from Tata Consultancy Services and met with WZCC Director Yazdi Tantra. WZCC-NY enjoyed an earlier visit from Noriya in 2011. He met with people and interviewed Zarathushti business owners during the Congress. It was a pleasure and a distinction to greet our international traveler a second time.

Guests for WZCC DAY 2012 included a distinguished set from around the world. Jesse Papatolicas (New England), the Collectors (Houston), Dolly Dastoor (Montreal), Aban Rustomji (Houston), Homai Engineer (Gujarat), the Davers, the Shroffs, the Engineers (Houston), the Guzders (Houston), Roshan Harda, Mr. Darius Irani (Los Angeles), Dr. Ali Jafarey (Los Angeles), the Karani-Araozs (Boston), Fereidoon and Yataa Kavosian (Vancouver), the Kevalas (Florida), the Khambattas, Dolly Malva (Los Angeles), the Mehtas (Calgary), Arnaz Maneckshana, the Motaframs (Oregon), Dinsha Mistri, the Patels, the Rivetnas (Chicago), Freni Irani (Karachi), Kayras Irani (Vancouver), Rustomji H. Vania (Carbondale), Tiru Irani, the Mehtas (London), Irma and Sarosh Jehangir (London); the Darukhanwalas (Chicago), the Bansals, Behram Pastakia (Washington DC), Mani Rao (Chicago), and Ruyintan Mehta were among the attendees.

Parsiana superstars Jasmine Driver and Parinaz Gandhi (Mumbai) were welcome figures.

WZCC-NY is well served by a devoted Organizing Team. The Team consists of Natalie Gandhi, PhD, Chapter Chair, Noshir Dutia, Chapter Treasurer, Framroze Patel, Advisor and WZCC Treasurer, Arnaz Maneckshana, Former Chapter Chair, Meher Hodiwalas, Chapter Communications, Dinyar Hodiwalas, Chapter Publicity, Edul Daver, Advisor, and Former WZCC Director, Rusi Gandhi, Chapter Founder and WZCC World Director. Congress organizers Mehru Cama, ArZan Wadia, Ferzin R. Patel, and Gev F. Nentin also provided help that contributed to the success of WZCC DAY 2012. WZCC members throughout the world (Boston, Carbondale, Chicago,



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

Gujarat, Houston, Karachi, Mumbai, Ontario, London, Pune, Singapore, Vancouver, Washington) provided their encouragement and assists for a marvelous day.

As the Symposium Evening began, the Chair addressed the idea, *"We Build and Why"*. With the US President's comments in late July, who builds and who gets credit for building is surely au courant. Together in a group last year, WZCC-NY viewed the DVD "Footsteps in the Sands of Time" produced by the 2010 World Zarathushti Congress in Dubai. Our audience remembered that the DVD revealed Zarathushtis building infrastructure for communities in all corners of the world. Now we build infrastructure in America, for example in the New Darbe Mehr project spearheaded by WZCC-NY Member Edul Daver. Something about these activities and the very dear vision of Zarathushtra say more to us than the plain matter that we build or will build where we go.

Our way of life and our Good Mind, some very small

aspect of Ahura Mazda's divinity, tells us "the why" of what we do. We know something in building. Whether we build a people, a New World Order, a New Darbe Mehr, a new science, an innovative startup, a charitable assist to another, or a Congress, we know something of the significance in doing it. This knowing gives us meaning and purpose for our lives.

WZCC DAY 2012 sponsors included Greg Wareham of Wells Fargo Home Mortgage and The Jamshidian Group. Floral display at the Symposium was provided by the Chair, who grew and conveyed Chrysler Imperial roses to grace the inaugural event. Past-President Arnaz Maneckshana was helpful in conveying the WZCC Mission display to the Symposium.

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Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

The XVI North American Zarathushti Congress: A Wonderful Congress with the Theme of Zarathushti Identity in the Contemporary World

Natalie Vania-Gandhi



A Congress gives us a chance to know and expand Zarathushti culture and initiatives that advance the culture. The theme of the XVI Congress, "Zarathushti Existence in the Contemporary World", provided an excellent departure for the sessions and activities. The Program Committee, led by Dr. Keki Dadachanji, offered a balanced and full range of thoughtful material to attendees. It was an altogether wonderful congress.

Opening ceremonies on day one featured devoted priests with prayers and blessings. National anthems, a Color Guard and Military Tribute to our Canadian and USA personnel also highlighted the opening. Travelers were welcomed and good wishes were mentioned for Zarathushtries in distant places and Iran. In the morning session, Dr. Trita Parsi provided a Keynote Address. **"Building a new World Order –the role of Zarathushti values"**. He emphasized that "Humanity is in need of moral strength of Zoroastrian valueswhere instead of Machiavelli's postulates, if Ashem Vohu is made mandatory reading and political science students are brought up on Zarathushtra's Gathas where Yasna 34.2 stresses that each man must make his own choice, would not the world be different ?"

Ervad Soli Dastur led a session focused on *Core Beliefs*. FEZANA provided *community awards* at a luncheon. *Intergenerational Dialogue* (Navroz Gandhi, Behrose Taraporewalla, Farzin Avari, Ervad Poruz Khambatta, Trity Pourbahrami), *Zoroastrian Empires* (Daulet and Xerxes Kotval), *Speed Friending*, and *FEZANA's Silver Jubilee*





Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

comprised the afternoon and evening events. *Generation I from Houston* conducted its tenth anniversary performance to great acclaim. (see page 69)

The morning of the second day offered a *Historical Review and Demographics* of our community (Roshan Rivetna), an *Interactive Conversation on Zarathushti Identity* (Keki Dadachanji, Ali Jafarey, Ervad Cawas Desai, Ferzin Patel, Ervad Jehan Bagli, Jimmy Kumana, Ervad Kobad Zarolia, Mohsen Zandieh, Parastu Dubash), and a *Basic Course in Zarathushti Religion* (Sarosh Collector). *Parzor* (Rosheen Kabraji) presented its work over the luncheon. Attendees diverged for tours in New York City, Youth Events, or a session from ZWIN, the *Zarathushti Women's International Network* (Zareen Karani-Araoz, Dolly Dastoor, Ushtavaity Davar Canteenwalla). Youth events took place and Friday's dinner entertainment featured comedian K-von and musician Dr Adi Tamboli.

The first session on Saturday ***On ritual practice and the Navjote was truly magnificent.***

Speakers provided strongly developed insights into the meaning of the Navjote ritual (Lovji Cama, Ervad Jehan Bagli, K.D. Irani, Ervad Karl Khambatta, Nahid Dashtaki). Prof. K.D. Irani was foremost to highlight the singular Zarathushtrian attachment to Truth. Ervad Karl Khambatta, of the new generation in the New York region, did something no attendees had yet seen. (see *Journal Cover*)

Karl preformed the beautiful Kusti prayers in English. While normally carrying through on daily recitation in the sacred Avesta, his recitation in English, for many our native tongue, was profoundly moving. The clarity and shining commitment he displayed had to inspire small children who came forward to sit in rapt attention at the stage.

The morning completed with ***Yuhan Vevania delivering the Khorshed Jungalwala Lecture.*** Afternoon sessions included *Preserving Persian Heritage* (Shirin Khosravi, Alayar Dabestani, Behmard Khosravi, Talinn Grigor), a *Teacher's Workshop* (Daraius Bharucha), and a session with good measures for *Combating Poverty in Our Community Abroad* (Kaizad Cama, Armeme Modi, Dinshaw Tamboly, and Priyanka Sinha through Skype).

A banquet dinner offered splendid entertainment and dancing (including Adil Mistry, Freya Motafram, Masters of Ceremony, Tara Jamshidian, Zal Shroff, Vocal Soloists; Cyrus Mehta, Neville Dusaj, Sarosh Mistry, Instrumental Soloists; Shirin Kumana-Wadia, Khan Hannan, Dance Duo; Natasha Dusaj, Spenta Bamji, Tina Dukandar, Zarina Bamji, Choreographers; Cyrus Nentin, Neville Commissariat, Cyrus Cama, Kaizad Cama, Letterwala Monologue; Maryam Esmaeili, Persian Dance; Monajat Singers, Dancers; Dandiya Divas).

The last day of the Congress provided a *FEZANA presentation*, a *Preview of the 2013 World Zoroastrian Youth Congress* (Nahid Dashtaki), a *Preview of the next Congress in Los Angeles* (Khushroo Lakdawala), a *retrospective of the XIVth congress* (Dinsha and Farrokh Mistree), closing remarks (Ferzin Patel, Gev Nentin), and the *ZAGNY Philharmonic Orchestra* (Conductor Piroozi Cooper-Wittlin).

Additional highlights of the Congress included a program for young children (Pearl Satarawala, Vehishta Kaikobad) and tiny

From left Darayus Mistry, Khushroo Lakdawala, Dhunmai Dalal accepting the flame for the XVIIth Congress in LA



Young children participating in religious activities with Vehishta Kaikobad and Pearl Satarawala in the background



Ferzin Patel, Co-Chair



Gev Nentin, Co Chair





Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

tot baby sitting (Hasina Master, Kamal Merchant), an exquisite exhibition, *"The Good Religion For All Time"*, vendors, and facility for a *Genetic Study of Parsi Zarathushties* (Dr. Saroja Voruganti). Attendees received tote bags and Parsi and Iranian Foods cookbooks in their registration packages.

The Congress was masterfully led by Co-Chairs *Ferzin R. Patel* and *Gev F. Nentin*. Volunteers throughout the community assisted. Committee Chairs included *Arnaz Maneckshana* and *Nawaz Merchant*, Exhibits; *Homi Gandhi* and *Kerman Dukandar*, Finance, *Mehru Cama*, Logistics, *Keki Dadachanji*, Program, *Homi Gandhi*, Public Relations, *Khursheed Navder Dusaj* and *Mahrukh Cama*, Social, *Arzan Wadia*, Audio-Visual, and *Dixie Cama*, Youth.

Videographers composed striking accompaniments to the sessions featuring Zarathushties across North America. The Congress employed real-time feedback, polling, and social-media tools, which gave new insight into audience sentiment. The Congress maintained a web site. Pictures and recordings of many marvelous sessions are on-line.

Commendations and Best Wishes in the Congress Program Book include letters from *Bomi Patel*, FEZANA President, *Darius Bharucha*, Chair of the FEZANA NAZC Committee, *Gev Nentin*, ZAGNY President, *Shirin Kosravi*, IZA President, *Steven Harper*, Prime Minister, Canada, *Andrew Cuomo*, Governor, New York, *Robert Menendez*, US Senator, *Charles Schumer*, US Senator, *Salman Khurshid*, Minister for Minority Affairs, National Advisory Council, Government of India, *Dr. Esfandiyar Ekhtiyari*, Member and Zarathushti Representative, The Majlis of the Islamic Republic of Iran, *Mrs. Sonia Gandhi*, Chairperson, National Advisory Council, Government of India, *Michael Bloomberg*, Mayor, New York City, and *C. Scott Vandehoef*, Rockland NY County Executive.

PHOTO DOCUMENTARY OF THE CONGRESS



Exhibition of traditional Parsi attire



Model of the new ZAGNY Home



Monajat Singers



Banquet Entertainers



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

PRESIDENT, IRANIAN ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION (IZA) Collaborators with ZAGNY for the Congress

Welcome, Khosh Amadid, Bhale Padharo,

Thank you very much the members of Zarthushti Associations, Ladies and gentlemen, Doostan and friends may I on behalf of Iranian Zoroastrian Association (IZA) welcome all of you to New York for the 16th North American Zarthushti congress 2012. And might I start particularly addressing more than 150 Zarthushtis from our motherland Iran who registered for this congress but were not able to acquire the entry visa to US due to the political situation existing between Iran's government and US government. You are going to be missed; we hope the complete recording of the congress that the board has decided to send to you would in a small way ease your disappointment of not being present here. Also may I welcome Mr and Mrs Dawalyan who are the only two registrants from Iran who received their visa on time and were able to attend.

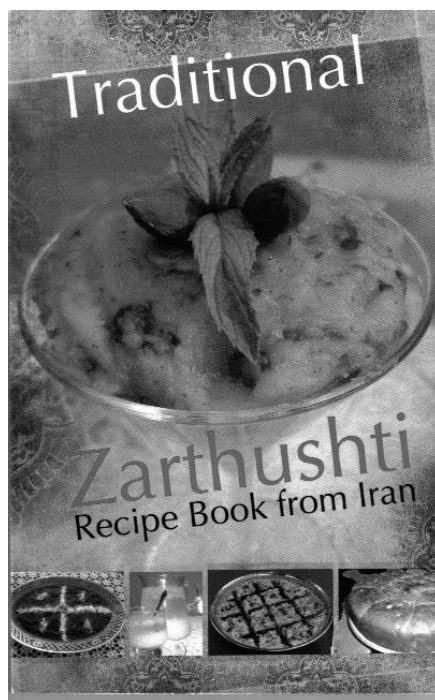
This is the second congress that is being held in NY which our two associations (ZAGNY and IZA) in partnership have organized. I am so proud to be part of this harmonized alliance, we think that this kind of coalition is common sense, we could learn a lot from each other and it is needed more between Iranian and Parsi associations. We Zarthushtis all follow the same teachings of a great mind, Zarathushtra, which is not bound by time or geography.

IZA strives to sustain and pass on Zarthushti faith and preserve Persian customs and heritage for our next generation. Like us here in North America, a lot of Zarthushti families have migrated to countries other than their motherland and therefore the children are growing up away from



their parents' traditions. This also is another product of our time and has influenced the "Zarthushti Existence in the Contemporary world" our congress theme.

In addition to the Iranian track, we have incorporated Persian dance and



SHIRIN KHOSRAVI



music for your entertainment, Persian artifacts for the exhibit room, Persian Monajat, and even an Iranian Zarthushti recipe book. The book is a very unique item and was put together through a community effort and contains recipes from traditional Zarthushti dishes from Iran which is being made at celebrations and ceremonies. This book is included in your registration packages as a gift. Enjoy.

Hope you make the best use of congress' forum as we have many interesting speakers and panel discussions that will enrich the agenda items. Hope your experience stays with you as a lasting and pleasant memory. Thank you.

The recipe book provides insights into the traditional foods to be served at all Gahambars and the details of laying out the SORFEH at weddings (Govah Giran), items for the haft sheen table at NowRuz and foods served at Yalda (Shab-e-choleh) Mehrgan, Tirgan and Sadeh.

It serves as an educational resource for parsis to learn about the traditions from Iran that they forgot when they migrated to the Indian subcontinent and adopted those which appealed to them as they created a new identity for themselves as Zarthushtis in North America.



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

THE MAKING OF A CONGRESS

Keki Dadachanji, Program Chair

The Congress theme was motivated by two considerations:

1. *The demographics of Zarathushtis would suggest that the community will be shrinking if we retain the traditional definition of Zarathushtis (viz. Zarathushti is anyone born of both Zarathushti parents).*
2. *If we decide to broaden the definition of who is a Zarathushti, how far should we go, and what are the implications?*

We believe that it is not enough to survive. The existence needs to be meaningful. The community needs to evolve, not just numerically, but in terms of its comprehension of the core principles and values of the religion. Zarathushtis of future need to personify their beliefs in daily living. What do we need to do to realize this vision?

We wanted the XVIth North American Zarathushti Congress to explore these questions by developing a framework of principles. .

THE FRAMEWORK:

1. We wanted the exploration to be driven not by a few acknowledged scholars, but by the entire community.
2. We wanted to create a genuinely inclusive environment in which different points of view could be expressed and evaluated. No attempt would be made to force a consensus. An open and respectful dialogue on issues of far-reaching importance to the community will be a legacy of this congress.
3. We wanted to engage young Zarathushtis in shaping this congress.
4. We wanted to fully integrate Parsi and Irani communities as one Zarathushti community in creating a vision for this congress.
5. We wanted to create a legacy of actions that will move the community forward in the directions identified at the congress.
6. We recognized that religion has three dimensions: core beliefs, rituals, and congregation. We wanted the congress to have tracks that addressed each of these dimensions.
7. We wanted to use varied formats to include lectures, panels, dramatizations, etc.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Involving the entire community in general, and the audience at the congress in particular, was achieved through:

1. Video Interviews:

Over two years preceding the congress many Zarathushtis were interviewed on video, on questions related to the theme of the congress, giving considerable latitude to the interviewees to express themselves. These interviews revealed the cross-section of opinions and feelings of different age-groups, genders, geographies, countries of origin, and belief-structures.

Selected clips from these interviews introduced each track at the congress.

2 Audience Response Questions:

This congress introduced a revolutionary technology to obtain, organize and display audience opinions on various questions. Five-hundred electronic clickers were distributed at each session. Audience members used these clickers to communicate their opinion on each question. After everyone had expressed their views on a question, a bar-chart on the screen would display the dispersion of audience responses.



3. Question and Answer:

A significant amount of time would be devoted to answering audience questions, as we;; as allow audience members to make brief comments on the questions raised. The audience of the XVIth North American Zarathushti Congress demonstrated that is possible to discuss divisive issues vigorously but respectfully.

MAJOR TRACKS:

The program was divided into tracks, based on the dimensions of religion stated above.

1. Core Beliefs:

Survival requires evolving with changing environment. However, there are some constants that should not change. These are our core beliefs and we need to remind ourselves of what those core beliefs are.

We established some guidelines of how we present Zarathushti core beliefs at the congress.

- (a) *We wanted the presentation to be understandable to ordinary people.*
- (b) *We wanted the presentation to be based on undisputable sources.*
- (c) *We wanted to express that beliefs should translate to practice.*

Hence we wanted the presentation to include personal experiences of Zarathushtis practicing these beliefs in daily living.

Ervad Dr Soli Dastur presented the essence of Zarathushti core beliefs. He involved six young Zarathushtis in his presentation. Anahita Dua, (photo right on top) a young Zarathushti, presented how she was guided in daily life by Zarathushti principles. Late Dr. Roda Patel devoted the last part of her life to the Gram Seva project. Dr. Khushroo Patel, (photo right bottom) in a very touching tribute, remembered how Roda was led to this destiny by her religious beliefs.



2 Zarathushti Identity:

This session attempts to answer two questions: *"What makes a person Zarathushti?"* and *"What do we need to do to ensure that the community progresses to a better future?"*

This exploration would further address questions about religious education, Navjote, conversion, places of worship, and other related topics. At the congress, instead of bringing scholars to answer these questions, we would ask the members of the audience to express their beliefs and opinions, and tell us why they hold those beliefs. This is an unorthodox approach. Would empowering the audience not create chaos and lack of closure?

To overcome this concern, we assembled a panel of eight Zarathushtis to discuss and debate these questions over the period of a year leading to the congress. The diverse panel would be a microcosm of the community and would describe their journey at the congress. They would be the model of how understanding of opinions different from our own can be reached, and respect and friendship can prevail despite differences.

The process started with a brief overview of demographics. Then the audience was asked to respond to a number of questions using the clickers. The interest and engagement of the audience was palpable as results of how they responded to specific questions were displayed. Then the panel members presented their journey over the past year. The audience then got the opportunity to ask questions and make brief comments. The audience established a gold-standard of how sensitive subjects should be debated with total understanding and respect. The energy of the audience was so intense that the session had to be extended into the lunch hour!



The audience commented that the process used in this session (focus-group to explore the issues, audience response technology to obtain and display audience opinions), with some enhancements, should serve as a model for future congresses.

3. Intergenerational Dialogue: Motivation, Inspiration, Action!

See summary of Behrose Taraporewalla page 39

Behind the scenes, a large proportion of interviews captured on video were conducted by young Zarathushtis, on young Zarathushtis. The youth were not a sideshow, but an integral part of this congress.

This session restored our faith that the religion and the community are secure in the hands of our youth.

4. The Navjote Ceremony and the Sudreh Pushi Ritual:

Rituals are an important dimension of a religion. The Navjote ceremony is the central ritual of the Zarathushti religion. It is a declaration of faith to the religion, and a commitment to live by its principles. However, in practice, this spiritual dimension is often minimized or lost, and the ceremony reduces to a social event. The goal of this track was to restore the true significance of this event.

This goal was accomplished in three steps. Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli presented the meaning and significance of the Navjote ceremony. Professor Kaikhosrove Irani reflected on the conversation he had with his father two days before he was going to have his Navjote performed, some eight decades back. He remembered that conversation vividly, when his father asked him whether he understood what was going to happen two days later. Little Kaikhosrov had some vague understanding. His father proceeded to explain to him that he was committing to live his life by the law of Asha, the natural order of the spiritual world. Professor Irani then explained what he now understands that meant, and gave some examples. Finally, Ervad Karl Khambatta performed the Kusti ritual, reciting the prayers in English. Suddenly the meaning of those words resonated with many people in the audience who had recited these prayers countless times without full comprehension.

While the congress was organized primarily for Zarathushtis in North America, we recognized that “no man is an island, entire of itself...”, that we are a part of the worldwide Zarathushti community. Hence we included two sessions, one addressing an important issue in India, the other in Iran.

5. Combating Poverty in Our Community Abroad:

Many Zarathushtis living in North America cannot comprehend the extent of poverty among Zarathushtis living in villages of Gujarat. A panel comprised of *Armene Modi, Priynaka Sinha and Dinshaw Tamboly*, moderated by *Kaizad Cama*, described the situation, and what has been done to address it. The traditional response to the problem has been monetary donations. The panel recommended that we need people from North America, especially young Zarathushtis, to spend time in these areas, working on specific projects. Such engagement would create a deeper bond between Zarathushtis in North America and India, and participants become ambassadors of understanding and goodwill between the two countries. Zarathushti associations across North America were encouraged to sponsor young Zarathushtis for summer projects to address poverty among Zarathushtis in Gujarat.

The panelists and moderator of the **Combating Poverty in Our**

Community Abroad *Armene Modi, Dinshaw Tamboly, Priyanka Sinha, Freyaz Shroff, Framroze Patel and Kaizad Cama*, write “as we shared during our session, the notion that all members of our community in our ancestral homelands are educated, wealthy, and well off is somewhat skewed. Many are struggling to make ends meet, as evidenced in the two videos:

<https://vimeo.com/38288432>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-iZbiilEiU>

We not only wanted to raise awareness about the socio-economic condition of our community, but also call people to action. We need to think through new approaches to lift our community members out of poverty and we need to support existing organizations like the World Zoroastrian Organization Trust Funds (WZOTF) to not only offer relief and immediate care, but also make our community members self-sufficient and economically independent.

As we carve out ways for us to support the underprivileged back home, we are looking to gather the time, skills, and commitment of more individuals here in the North American community.

If this is an area you feel passionate about, we would love to hear from you. Please send us a note and let us know your field of interest and how deeply you would like to be involved. We can be reached at nazc.poverty@gmail.com



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

6. Preserving Persian Heritage:

Many historical and pilgrimage sites in Iran are in a state of neglect and deterioration. This session gave a detailed understanding and visual representation of the current situation. The speakers also reviewed the current renovation and restoration activities related to Zarathushti pilgrimage sites in Iran.



THE RETROSPECTIVE: *The Journey continues*

We wanted the congress to end with self-reflection and the momentum to go forward. Dr. Farrokh Mistree and Dinsha Mistree conducted this retrospective. In keeping with our framework principles, this was done in an audience-centric way where audience members were requested to fill out forms expressing their views after each session. This feedback was used in structuring the retrospective.

Congresses should not be solitary events that occur every other year; they should be milestones in a continuous journey. To that end, the retrospective identified activities that should be progressed between this congress and the next. The prime movers of these activities would be ZAGNY (the host of this congress), ZAC (the host of the next congress), FEZANA, and various Zarathushti associations over North America..



THE LEGACY

Milestones need to be remembered. History enables us to measure progress. Every North American Zarathushti Congress is a milestone, and how its proceedings are preserved and communicated is important. We have video recordings of interviews done prior to the congress. We have summaries of how the audience at this congress responded (using the audience response technology) and we have video recordings of all sessions. This material is available to Zarathushtis anywhere in the world. Most of this is posted on the web. Anyone inspired by this summary to find out the details can explore these resources. This is a legacy of this congress.

The congress identified a number of activities to pursue further which can be found in the video of the retrospective. Some of these activities found immediate sponsors (ZAGNY committed to contribute to sponsoring young Zarathushtis to work on projects to address poverty issue in Gujarat).

It Is All About People:

Events like this are made possible by the tireless efforts of individuals, Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis alike. Some of them are seen on stage, others remain anonymous. We are grateful to them for their dedication. We thank the speakers and panelists who guided us and contributed to this congress. And we salute the audience of the XVIth North American Congress for being not just observers but protagonists, and for doing it with a class.



Keki Dadachanji , is a graduate from the Indian Institute of Technology in Mechanical Engineering with a doctorate from Case Western Reserve University in Operations Research. After his retirement from Mars in 2005, he became a part-time lecturer at Rutgers University and since 2007 he teaches mathematics at Parsipanny High School in New Jersey. Keki has served on the ZAGNY Board and is the chair person of the Program Committee of the sixteenth North American Congress in New York.



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

Congress Summary

CORE BELIEFS AND INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE

BEHROSE TARAPOREWALLA



It was a great pleasure to meet Zarathushtris from all over the world at the North American Congress in Rye, New York. There, many ideas were exchanged on how to seek positive change in our religious community as well as civil society. The congress program showcased programs and individuals who are instrumental to our existence in the contemporary world.

CORE BELIEFS

Dr. Ervad Soli Dastur explained what Zarathushtra says in the Gathas, and how they relate to the **Ameshaspentas**

to promote the youngsters of her association to learn the history and beauty of the Zoroastrian faith. Ervad Poruz Khambatta spoke about his experiences and motives as a practicing priest. Trity Pourbahrami highlighted her story



Core Beliefs panel From left Monaz Mistry, Behrose Taraporewalla, Freya Motafaram, Sam Merchant, Ervad Karl Khambatta, Ervad Viraf Nariman with Ervad Soli Dastur projected on the screen

through Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds. Through an interactive dialogue a panel of three females and three males represented each Ameshaspenta and spoke about its significance in our religion and how they play a vital role in our everyday life. During the presentation prayers were recited and also translated in English.

Intergenerational Dialogue—Motivation, Inspiration, Action

Four young Zarathushti leaders active in making a difference locally and globally highlighted their involvement within the religious community and shared anecdotes on their identity in North America. I, Behrose Taraporewalla, spoke about Zoroastrians Stepping Forward and how it related to the scriptures of our religion. Atlanta Zarathushti Association Religious Class Coordinator, Farzin Avari, talked about how she developed a curriculum and program



The Intergenerational panel from left Behrose taraporewalla, Trity Pourbahrami; Navroz Gandhi,(moderator) Er Porus Khambatta, Farzin Avari

and strong-ties to the religion, highlighting her life as a wife and mother.

As a speaker on two panels, I felt proud to represent the youngsters of my generation. Every day, we make conscious decisions on how to live our lives. As individuals we see the dogmas present in every facet of our existence; but, we know we have been given a choice—to be part of the problem, or to change it. Through programs, exchanging dialogue and by teaching tolerance our religion will continue to evolve in North America and throughout the world. Together we have a sacred responsibility to live-out our core beliefs as citizens, professionals, in our family, and in civil society.

We are in the world to inspire and mobilize positive change, through Ahura Mazda's blessings we will do as our ancestors have done in the past and advance ourselves in all areas of existence in the continually changing world.

COVER FALL JOURNAL Ervad Karl Khambatta reciting the Kusti in English in the panel "Navjote Ceremony and the Sudreh Pushi Ritual" at the 16th NAZC, NY 2012.



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

THE JUNGALWALA LECTURE SERIES

Dr Lovji Cama

Chair Education, Scholarship and Conference committee

To honor **Mrs. Khorshed Jungalwala**, for her work and dedication to FEZANA, FEZANA set up a Lecture Series Fund which provides for the transport, boarding, lodging and other incidental expenses to a recognized scholar to present their scholarly work at any FEZANA Member Association hosted seminar or conference. The selected scholars may be Zarathushti or not and may be from any part of the world.

Khorshed F. Jungalwala was born in Surat and grew up in Poona. At the University she studied History, Political Science and International Law. She worked with the prestigious firm Mulla and Mulla in Bombay, and later

married Dr. Firoze B. Jungalwala, a professor of neurochemistry in 1968. She spent three years with her husband at Cambridge University, England, after which they came to USA in 1971, when Firoze joined Harvard University for research in neurochemistry. They have a daughter, Ferzin the co-chair of this Congress and a son, Jehangir.

Firoze and Khorshed were founders of the Zoroastrian Association of the Greater Boston Area in 1983 and Presidents of the Association. Khorshed was actively involved in Zarathushti Community affairs and organizing seminars and conferences. She was a member of the FEZANA Historic Research and Preservation Committee, a Director of the Zoroastrian Education and Research Society and the Chair of the FEZANA Publication Committee, she also served as chair of the committee to modify the WZO charter so that it became a truly world body for Zoroastrians.



The Jungalwala Lecture Series is administered by the Education, Scholarship and Conference Committee of FEZANA. *Prof. Kaikhosrov Irani, Prof. Almut Hintze, Prof. Octor Skjaervo and Prof. Jennifer Rose, Prof Jamsheed Choksey have been among the Jungalwala Lecture Series lecturers up to now.*

On Sunday August 5th a Wisconsin shooting took place at the Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, a lake Michigan Shore town outside Milwaukee. Six people died including the gunman Michael Wade of self inflicted gun shot wound. Several were wounded. (www.guardian.UK).

This poem was posted on the website of The World Sikh Organization of Canada

WEEPING FOR WISCONSIN

Life is a very precious commodity
More precious than silver & gold
We seem to guard it for dear life
For we know not what the future holds

On a beautiful Sunny day
The Innocent victims came to pray
Not knowing within a few hours
They will be blown away

These senseless acts of violence
Hatred as well as revenge
It never ever pays
As the Almighty as His
Last Say

Those bystanders who
Witnessed this horrific crime

Forever will be etched
In their memory
Till the end of time

Words fail to express
What I wish to say
That I sincerely pray
This irreplaceable loss
Will never be in vain

Our prayers are with you
In your hour of need
Please kindly accept
Our deepest sympathies
And sincere condolences.

Farida,
Canada



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

KHORSHED JUNGALWALA MEMORIAL LECTURE

16th North American Zarathushti Congress
Rye, New York, August 4, 2012

“Thinking with Zoroastrianism in the 21st Century”*

Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina



white, rather xenophobic town in Massachusetts where few had even heard of Zoroastrianism. That was quite a shock after living in South Bombay where I had never had to explain what a Parsi was or what a Zoroastrian believed. Identity was a given and could be lived without a need for consistent self-definition when socially interacting with others.

I had grown up amongst family and friends, two minutes from my maternal grandparents' flat, with perhaps the most culturally prestigious and socially privileged



identities that a child could have in urban India. But here we were, an immigrant family in the US, and all of a sudden, literally overnight, our cultural capital as Parsis/Zarathushtis was almost totally depleted. There are only so many questions about riding magic carpets, tigers, and elephants to school that one kid can take! Those early days were very trying emotionally but I do remember one afternoon that we attended a ZAGBA lunch and Khorshed and Firoze Jungalwala welcomed us into the Greater Boston community, and so, for me to have been asked to speak and now publish in her honor is a genuine privilege! (photo above Firoz Jungalwala presenting a gift to Yuhan Vevaina)

Beyond my desire to honor Khorshed's memory, the reason that I bring up this story is that it is all too familiar. Many, if not most of us who came to North America from Iran, India, Pakistan, the UK, East Africa, Australia, New Zealand, or the Far East have had similar experiences of

As a scholar of Zoroastrianism, I am often asked: What made you go into that field? I sometimes jokingly reply that I was young and foolish or just plain a masochist, but the real impetus for my fascination with studying the history of Zoroastrianism largely came from my early experiences as an immigrant who had to learn to articulate meaningful responses to the hard questions of identity. I suspect that similar immigrant experiences might be the case for many of the older members of the community living in North America. For those born here, you have probably had to listen to Mom and Dad regale you with their immigrant stories ad nauseum! When our family moved to the US in the late eighties we settled in a small, almost exclusively



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

having to find our way in a new land with little of the cultural, community, and institutional support that we relied upon and took for granted in the old countries. When I spoke earlier about the “cultural capital” that we possess as Zoroastrians, I should have mentioned that we as a community earned the interest on that capital over 25 centuries of hard work and tireless dedication! Put simply, the Zoroastrian religion, as one of the world’s oldest living religions confers upon us contemporary folk a legacy that is so old that it is actually quite hard to fully grasp. I want to put this in historical perspective. By the time King Darius (reigned 522 – 486 BCE) had his stonemasons carve his imperial inscriptions in Old Persian (the grandfather of Farsi) at Persepolis, Bisotun, and Naqsh-e Rostam, Zoroastrianism as a religious tradition was already about a thousand years old! The consequences of this extreme antiquity for members of the living communities is that while we are the beneficiaries in terms of cultural prestige — old is gold after all — we also have to constantly grapple with reconciling the beliefs and practices of a profoundly ancient and enigmatic religion with our contemporary identities, diasporic experiences, and modern sensibilities.

Now it is hardly shocking for me to state that self-identified liberals, moderates, and conservatives have different relationships with our shared Zoroastrian past, present, and future. I often hear people on both sides of the great ideological divide — typically intermarriage and conversion — criticize and demonize their counterparts on the other side all the while claiming that their values are worth following. Also, the values they so publicly espouse are always curiously in line with that of Asho Zarathustra himself, so they must be true! I also often hear and read about the long laundry list of problems, crises, and controversial issues that plague contemporary Zoroastrian communities such as: intermarriage; conversion; disposal of the dead; low birth rates; late marriage; no marriage; a lack of adequate pastoral counseling or spiritual guidance from priests; gender inequality in the priesthood; a lack of a recognized priestly body; aging communities; apathetic youth who don’t speak Persian or Gujarati; an increasing loss of religious piety and ritual praxis; socio-economic and religious discrimination and persecution in Iran; declining Parsi privilege and a loss of a shared sense of community in India; and linguistic, cultural, and, of course, culinary differences between Zarthoshtis in Iran and Parsis in India! Did I leave out anything major? My absolute personal favorite of all these anxieties happens to be effeminate Parsi mama’s boys with no ambition!

All of these issues are viewed by us as constitutive of our increasingly globalized Zoroastrian present. Depending on your values or viewpoint you might see some of these flashpoints as deeply destructive for traditional Zoroastrian identities as you understand them. Or,

conversely, you might view some of these issues as opportunities for creating new, emergent forms of a progressive Zoroastrianism in the 21st century. It is not my place to adjudicate who is right and who is wrong, who is “authentic” or who is not, or even to advocate for this fundamental belief system or that set of core values. Nevertheless, Zoroastrians often ask me what they should believe. As an academic with a doctorate, I am the worst type of doctor! One you definitely don’t want sitting next to you on a plane when you experience chest pains, since my professional ethics allow me to diagnose cultural symptoms but not prescribe medication in any heavy-handed manner. Some of you might find that disappointing, others will undoubtedly breathe a deep sigh of relief, and still others will remain skeptical of my claims.

From my vantage point as an academic who studies the history of Zarathushti communities through the centuries and having listened to endless dining table controversies in a Parsi home, I am in a unique position to provide members of the community with some much-needed historical perspective. I find that many of these hot-button issues are quintessentially modern whereas others, in some cases the “big” ones, are actually not as new as people often think. Meaning, we have been grappling with them and debating amongst ourselves for centuries concerning such topics as conversion, the disposal of the dead, cultural adaptations in diaspora, etc. It is these internal debates amongst pre-modern Zarathushti communities, which I find so captivating and which may also potentially serve as meaningful frames of reference for nuancing our contemporary arguments, which will ultimately decide our collective futures as increasingly diverse globalized communities. As a scholar of the history of Zoroastrianism I tend to subscribe to the view that understanding your past makes your present clear and hence, you can then make the future that you desire. But how does one do that?

In philosophical terms, agency — the capacity of agents to act in their respective worlds — is largely determined by one’s understanding of self. In my opinion, one of the biggest stumbling blocks for us Zarathushtis, to navigate modernity as successful cultural agents is the utter lack of an established or commonly accepted body of historical knowledge of our shared heritage. This makes addressing mixed audiences of liberals and conservatives rather challenging for us academics at the best of times and it makes it equally difficult for you all to confidently articulate to those you encounter what we as a community actually believe beyond just pithy maxims like “*Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds.*” In 1826 the Frenchman, *Anthelme Brillat-Savarin*, in his book on the disease Gout wrote the immortal lines “*Dis-moi ce que tu manges, je te dirai ce que tu es*” “*Tell me what you eat and I will tell you*



what you are." All Zarathushtis should be able to relate with that gem! The same goes for what we all learn. Tell me what you read and I will tell you who you are! Unfortunately, many of the Zarathushtis whom I encounter, despite their high degree of education in our increasingly globalized world, are not really readers of Zoroastrian literature; and the level of religious literacy is often quite varied even between family members. Likewise, numerous dedicated people in the various associations often express their frustrations to me about a general lack of interest and motivation on the part of their fellow-community members to invest time and financial resources in reading and learning about their heritage, culture, or religion, especially when what they encounter does not match with their pre-existing ideas and values. And even when some do make the effort, I observe that people typically cite information they found on the web or chain emails most of which are patently inaccurate, intentionally misleading, typically polemical, and often based on totally outdated sources and long-discarded theories. I don't want people to think that I am simply being an elitist or a snob and singling out the consumers of knowledge.

We in academia — the knowledge producers — have largely failed the community by not providing the Zarathushti reading public with engaging and accessible materials in the way of readable books and attractive websites. And when community members do read the books that we academics write they are more often than not quite shocked and utterly dismayed by the wildly divergent claims made by the respective authors, thus adding to a sense of insecurity about what to believe and whom to believe in. This state of affairs is especially acute when one has to give an account of oneself and one's religious beliefs, cultural identity, and ethnic origins in North American public life with questions like: What is Zoroastrianism all about? What do Zarathushtis believe? How is Zoroastrianism different from other religious traditions? Where does it come from, etc?

I strongly suspect that the survival of our shared Zarathushti identity is the most basic hope and desire that brought people to the congress and makes people read this piece. Just survival however is not, in my opinion, enough if a basic knowledge of our shared past and common heritage is at risk of being largely forgotten or totally reinvented with the personal views of certain public figures with Zarathustra complexes presented as historical "truth." A commitment to continuing to educate ourselves about our shared heritage and to then make informed choices, as good Zarathushtis are enjoined to do, is, in my opinion, the only way to continue to meaningfully inhabit our Zarathushti identities in the contemporary world.

I would now like to showcase for you what a professional scholar focusing on the history of

Zoroastrianism can add to some of the hot button present-day issues and debates. What I hope to show the younger people in the community is that there are so many varied and diverse ways to understand and appreciate our heritage than what they typically read and hear from the older, more ideological, and dogmatic crowd who are, in many cases, ill-equipped or unwilling to provide a rich and nuanced view of historical Zoroastrianism. Instead, they inevitably invent a "usable past" cherry-picking facts and manipulating historical data to suit one rigidly ideological position or its opposite neither of which does justice to the complex historical developments that Zoroastrian communities have experienced over four millennia.

Let me now turn to some of our favorite controversies. Increasing numbers of intermarriages strike many as the most profound change for Zarathushti identities and I often hear from conservatives that it is unprecedented in history. It might interest you to know that the Sasanian kings intermarried with both Christians and Jews. So, for example, Yazdegird I, the thirteenth Sasanian monarch who reigned from 399-421 CE, married the daughter of the *Exilarch*, the leader of the Jewish community in the Sasanian Empire. In a geographical text in Middle Persian or Pahlavi called the *Shahrestaniha i Eranshahr* (47) which lists the various cities of the Iranian world and their founders, it states that:

"The city of Susa and Shushtar were built by Shishinduxt, the wife of Yazdegird, the son of Shapur, since she was the daughter of Resh Galut, the king of the Jews and also was the mother of Behram Gor." ¹

The name Shishinduxt meaning "daughter of Shishin" is probably a Persianized pronunciation of the common Jewish girl's name Shushan or "lilly." ² Since Jews practice matrilinearity they probably saw Shishinduxt's son, Behram V commonly known as Behram Gor (r. 421-438 ACE), as a crypto-Jew, just like many Parsis claim that the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was a crypto-Parsi due to having a Parsi father, Feroze Gandhi, himself a member of Indian Parliament, the Lok Sabha. Though, unsurprisingly, we Parsis don't tend to claim Rajiv's brother Sanjay Gandhi and his forced sterilization campaigns; that no doubt being the Indhira effect! I do want to add that before liberals and progressives get too excited, it is worth mentioning a couple of caveats. One of the most striking aspects of Sasanian diplomacy is that they seem to have been willing to marry elite women from other religious traditions, presumably as a form of kinship diplomacy, thus ensuring the loyalties of these two important minority communities. Yet they didn't seem to have been willing to marry their daughters to other groups. ³ This suggests some form of patriarchy or patrilineality that typically male, modern conservatives especially in India, now seem so invested in protecting



even when every out-marriage by a Parsi man means one less potential partner for a Parsi woman who might then be forced to marry out, thus penalizing women at both a social and a demographic level.

Well ladies, I don't wish to dwell exclusively on the patriarchal side of Zoroastrianism. I would like to share a personal anecdote from 15 years ago. In the fall of 1997 I attended the 1st Avestan Conference in Framingham, MA and Dastur Dr. Firoze Kotwal spoke at length about why women could not possibly be priests. His primary reason being that women's menses render them ritually impure for almost a third of every month. An old lady thrust her chair back, stood up and loudly declared: "I'm in menopause, where's the problem?" Dastur Kotwal's jaw dropped and the liberals and progressives in the audience burst out in laughter and clapping! Gender equality is often claimed by many progressives as an essential part of Zarathushti belief structures going back to the Gathas but then we are faced by the long history of an exclusively male, hereditary priesthood. So what are we to make of all this? In **Chapter 22 (22.1-3, 5)** of an Avestan text with its Pahlavi translation and commentary called the *Nerangestan*, edited and translated by Dastur Kotwal himself and Philip G. Kreyenbroek (University of Göttingen, Germany), we actually find a debate between various Zarathushti priestly authorities on whether women can publicly perform the prayers and rituals — a classic battle between the liberals and conservatives of those days! The Avestan text is found in italics and its later Pahlavi translation is found below it with its glosses (i.e. added explanations of a word or phrase not in the original) in square brackets:

22.1) With the performance of the office of zaotar by any one of those who are pious, a person satisfied the Ratus,

Any man of the pious ones may authorisedly perform the office of zot.

22.2) Even (with) that of a woman or a minor child,

And also a woman [at her own (fire)], and a child [at a public (fire)].

22.3) if (s)he knows the end and beginnings of the sections.

If [that is], (s)he is aware of the cutting-off [at the end] of the sections of the liturgy, and their taking-up (beginning), ...

22.5[... Adurfarnbag-Narse said: "except if a woman has recited Avestan on an occasion when it is allowed, it is not permissible (for her to recite Avestan)."

(*Wehddad) the son of Adur-Ohrmazd said: "except if she recites when it is not allowed, it is permissible."

Goguš(n)asp said: "if she recites those Avestan (texts) which are not allowed, then it is 'chattering'." That is, he explain this as follows: "the propitiation of the Sun should not be performed and they should not pray the Niyayišn to the Moon, and they should not recite the words belonging to those who hold the *khub*, and they have no fee-paying 'clients'(?), and they have no precedence (among the congregation)."]⁴

We can clearly see here that the role of women as public ritual performers was not proscribed or forbidden in this particular passage in the Avestan original but it is in the later Pahlavi translation where we can see the attempts of the Zarathushti priestly scholars of Late Antiquity to simultaneously acknowledge the diversity of then contemporary legal rulings in Pahlavi and yet attempt to uphold the centuries-old privileges of the male hereditary priesthood by interpreting the Avestan texts in a far more restricted manner. The reason I cite these examples is to demonstrate just how much more diverse pre-modern Zoroastrianism was than is often acknowledged today. I also want to emphasize that there has been a long and distinguished intellectual tradition amongst the Zoroastrian priesthood who were the great thinkers of their times and who continually negotiated the tensions between keeping Zoroastrianism relevant for the people of their era by adapting the faith to current circumstances all the while affirming the time-honored and long-cherished values and beliefs of the past, just like what we are all experiencing and debating now! In my opinion, our current demographic predicaments tend to make us a little schizophrenic as a community but it is useful to have the perspective of the past to realize that these tensions are not unprecedented and that the Zarathushti world did not come to an end when the values and practices of different social and political contingents differed or were transformed and evolved through the centuries.

As for the equally controversial topic of conversions, we find numerous references to how damaged the faith had become with the Arab conquests of Iran and the steady conversions to Islam in the following centuries. During the first four centuries or so after the fall of the Sasanians in 651 CE we find rare but fascinating glimpses of the social realities experienced by Zoroastrian communities who were now becoming a demographic minority after a millennia of having the support of their imperial overlords — the *Achaemenids* (559 – 330 BCE), the *Parthians* (247 BCE – 224 CE), and the *Sasanians* (224 – 651 CE). There is a common belief that all Zarathushtis were treated as second-class citizens under Islamic law and yet we find references in the late 9th or early 10th century CE Pahlavi text, the *Rivayat i Emed i Ašwahištan* (Question 26), to both apostasy, i.e. converting out, which was common but also a mention of the possibility of Muslims converting in:



" (Assume) a Zarathushti has become a Moslem. Later he is regretful and repents and performs some meritorious deed. After his passing away, should the ceremonial rite for veneration of the soul be offered to him or not? If he is born a Moslem (but) performs all the benefactions and becomes a Zoroastrian (pad weh den ested), what would be the religious declaration? Should the charity donation (ahlawdad) for the priest be given or not?" ⁵

The answer provided is equally revelatory:

"Further, he whose being a Moslem is through heritage and not by his own deliberate confession, as long as through noble behavior he avoids the sins which are recognized in Zoroastrianism, and performs benefactions that are advocated in Zoroastrianism within his possibilities, it would be proper to give (on his behalf) the charity donation of the priests. It would not be a sin." ⁶

In the later medieval Persian Rivayats or correspondences between the Parsi priests and their Iranian counterparts, we also find it stated by Kamdin Shapur:

"A young (female) prisoner of war, bought (of another), if she has not menstruated (yet), should be fed for three nights in a public place and then her head should be washed with the bareshnum. If she has menstruated (already), she should be fed for 41 days in a public space, and then her head washed with bareshnum and then she should be married." ⁷

We also have a fascinating set of questions posed by Zarathushti jurists about the sins committed by converts to Zoroastrianism. What was deeply concerning to them was not whether Zarathushtis could or should convert but rather they focused on the question of whether or not a person's prior sins in their pre-Zoroastrian lives would count against them when they died and were being judged. *Alberto Cantera at the University of Salamanca in Spain*, the world's leading expert on the Vendidad and its Pahlavi translation, has conclusively demonstrated that in the earlier Avestan version of the Vendidad every past sin or crime committed is remitted or pardoned when a person converts to Zoroastrianism. This was presumably done initially to attract converts in an earlier era when conversion was less dangerous. We do however find it stated that there are certain non-expiable — i.e. unpardonable (Av. anap?r?èa) — crimes such as *naro.vaepiia*- "homosexuality" (Vd.1.11); *nasuspaiia*- lit. "throwing a corpse", i.e. inhumation or burial; and *nasuspacia*- lit.

"cooking a corpse", i.e. cremation. In Vendidad 3.40 and 8.28 we find it stated:

"Under which conditions (is it) so?' 'If (the sinner) is one who professes the Mazdayasnian Religion or is instructed in the Mazdayasnian Religion, (then it is so).

But (if the sinner) is one who does not profess the Mazdayasnian Religion or is not instructed in the Mazdayasnian Religion, then (the Religion) remits (the penalty) to those who convert to the Mazdayasnian Religion and in the future do not do any actions that do not fit the ratu-." ⁸

Meaning, Zarathushtis who commit these types of non-expiable or unpardonable crimes are not forgiven. But, crucially, the Vendidad then asserts that recent converts to Zoroastrianism were held to a less stringent set of standards, at least initially. This was presumably because as new converts they were excused for their ignorance of Zoroastrian moral codes, which might have been unfamiliar to them early on. The very act of their conversion is treated as an expiation or forgiveness of their old sins. You convert, your past sins committed while you were in your old religious community are not held against you!

This different standard between older and newer believers clearly bothered the Zoroastrian legal authorities in the Sasanian and early Islamic periods, many centuries later, and so they reinterpreted the same passages in their Pahlavi translations and commentaries of the Vendidad in a slightly different vein, focusing on the intentionality of the person committing the sin, old believer or new convert. As Cantera has shown, they put two conditions on the remission of non-expiable sins according to Zoroastrian law, committed prior to conversion: 1) the awareness of having committed a sin; and 2) the possibility of confession with repentance. So, in the Pahlavi Vendidad, the actions prior to conversion have to be adjudicated according to the previous legal system — presumably Judaism, Christianity, Manicheism, Islam, etc — but the actions that specifically are faults in common in both legal systems would get punished according to the Zoroastrian legal system even if the person had already been punished for the same crime in their old tradition. ⁹ Double jeopardy if there ever was one!

As Cantera points out, many of the Sasanian and early Islamic-era jurists were troubled by the possibility of new converts getting a free pass for violent crimes against third parties. The issue was significantly complicated by apostates, that is, those who left Zoroastrianism, typically for Islam, and who then wished to become Zoroastrian again! In general, people converted back in the early years of Islam in order to claim inheritances that were not available to them at the time of their conversion to Islam. Manuschihr, the High Priest of the Zoroastrians in Kerman



in the 9th century, states in his Pahlavi work, the *Dadestan i Denig* (40.6):

“As it (is said) in the beneficent law of the yazdan: ‘The Good Religion of the yazdan and the superior of the Mazdeans has decreed the atonement so that the atonement for this sin for which usually there is spaieiti expiation does not apply for him.’” ¹⁰

For Manuschihr, living under the Muslims and seeing people out-convert at an alarming rate made him far less charitable with regard to those who changed their minds and repented and wished to return. All this talk of sin might strike many of you as quite Catholic but it is important to remember that in a deeply moralizing system of beliefs like Zoroastrianism, one needs to know exactly what counts as a “Good Thought, Word or Deed,” and just as crucially, what counts as a “Bad Thought, Word, or Deed” since the spiritual penalties after one dies are quite severe and rather long-lasting.

The point I am trying to make with all these examples is that many of the most deeply emotional identity issues related to boundary maintenance, that is — keeping people out or allowing them in or preventing them from leaving or pushing them out — have been with us for more than a millennia and quite frankly I find that the old Zoroastrians were far more principled about how they thought and discussed these issues than most of us tend to be these days. In my opinion, we moderns can learn a lot from these older Zoroastrian debates for understanding the particular era in question, for appreciating how we came to be as we are now, and even perhaps for finding solutions for our continued survival in their debates and interpretations of the Avesta.

I would now like to say a bit about the often-tense relationship between Iranian and Indian Zoroastrians. Nowadays, the two old world communities do not share food, clothing, language, culture, or history in common. And at first glance the differences might seem quite sharp to an outside observer. Parsis are often horrified by the fact that Iranian Zoroastrians do not wear the sudra and kusti and Zarathoshtis are equally perturbed by Parsis wearing black, red, or blue caps, feeling that white should be the color used. Iranians shake their heads at Parsi New Year in August and Parsis roll their eyes at the mention of their Iranian counterparts no longer performing the daily rituals and purity laws. While these differences seem so stark now, they occurred gradually over the last millennium. Some of the most valuable repositories for cultural exchanges between the two communities are the Persian Rivayats or “correspondences” between the Parsi priests and their Iranian counterparts whom they looked to for religious instruction and spiritual guidance. That is, between the

religious practices of the old world and the socio-religious adaptations of the new communities, much like what we in North America face when cultural adaptations here run afoul of older practices in Iran, India, Pakistan etc. In the Rivayats, the Parsis asked the Iranian priestly authorities if it was acceptable to cook with ghee (i.e. clarified butter) and have non-Zoroastrians cook their food, and if it was acceptable for men to wear loincloths rather than pants:

“Kaus Mahyar asks: ‘Can ghee prepared from a gospend (i.e. animal) by a darvand (i.e. a Muslim, originally an evil person) or by one who burns the dead (i.e. a Hindu), be eaten or not?’

Answer: ‘The ghee which reaches one from the hands makes one riman (i.e. impure, polluted < Av. irimant-). (On eating it), one cannot be purified even by the bareshnum purification.’”

“Dastur Barzu states: ‘It has been repeatedly dinned into our ears that the performers of the yasna, and the devout of your quarter (i.e. of India) consume, with their food, the ghee prepared from a goat or a cow, which is supplied by juddins (non-believers); and again those who perform the function of a **yoždathragar (purifier)** and perform the yasna think that such ghee is pure for the reason that it is melted by fire. If it is the case as has been represented (to us), it is quite contrary to the religion and it is inconsistent with their reason and religiousness; because there is nothing more contaminated and impure than ghee (prepared in this manner) as, of all the foods, this finds a place most in the marrow of the bones. It is necessary that they employ some behdins who may prepare it so that there may be no need of the ghee prepared (by the darvands). When we were informed of your motives, it was fit and proper that (our views) should be expressed, and (we hope) nothing will thereby occur to the noble and precious minds of those dear ones, as these statements were repeatedly made by the people of the good religion who had gone to that side (i.e. India).’”

With regard to the wearing of loincloths we find it stated:¹¹

“Jasa and Maneck Changa: ‘We are informed that you put on loincloth. This is not proper according to the religion. Pants should be used, for without pants, yasna services and (other) works of religion will be defective.’” ¹²

Many of the older generation of Parsi gentlemen like my grandfather will undoubtedly be scandalized at the thought of our forefathers going “native” to that extent! Ladies’ saris of course are vouchsafed for by the agreement made with the Hindu Raja in the Persian text from 1599, the Qisse-ye Sanjan (155): “Third, as to mode of dress, your womenfolk shall wear such garments as our



women wear" (sedigar anke az pušēš zananha bepušad pušēš-e hamēun zanan ma). ¹³

You might find it amusing to note that in the centuries after the Persian invasions of Greece by Darius and Xerxes (499 – 449 BCE) the Greek world predictably responded with a great deal of anti-Persian vitriol and propaganda. The Greeks stated so forcefully that the Persians were effeminate, pant-wearing cowards, unlike the real Greek men who wore skirts! Sometimes even the most obvious and seemingly "natural" or "common sense" values and customs were actually quite different in the past and we would do well to always be suspicious of certain ideologues who claim that the particular values they are pushing have always been around, since the time of the prophet Zarathustra or some such.

I would now like to turn to one of the most emotional issues facing Zoroastrians today: the disposal of the dead. As many of you know, Zoroastrians in Iran have been burying their dead since the 1960s, though they line the earth with cement or stone as a barrier to prevent *nasu* or pollution from seeping onto Spenta Armaiti, the earth. The same principle was enforced in earlier days for menstruating women in orthodox families in rural Iran and India when they were required to sleep on iron beds and use metal utensils since it was widely believed that wood — being more porous — was a better conductor of spiritual pollution than metal.

Since the 1980s the Parsis in Bombay and Gujarat have been facing a major challenge due to increased urbanization and the negative side effects of the pharmaceutical industry. As many of you know, the use of Diclofenac, an anti-inflammatory drug and analgesic given to livestock, has led to the virtual eradication of carrion eating birds in all of western South Asia (Pakistan and India), around a 95% decline in 2003 and 99.9% by 2008 in a study on Pakistan's vulture population for example.¹⁴ Many Parsi conservatives have expressed anxiety about the fate of a person's soul if they are buried or the inability to have their souls reunited with their bodies at the end of time if they are cremated and no physical body exists. Recall that the Vendidad condemns burial and cremation as acceptable disposal practices. Nevertheless, many in diaspora, most notably Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli,¹⁵ have responded with indignation at the idea that those who die outside of India and are forced to bury or cremate are somehow spiritually disadvantaged, second-class Zoroastrians in the afterlife.

I would like to add some pertinent historical tidbits that directly bear on this question. In Classical Greek literature we find references to some Persians wrapping corpses in wax and then burying them precisely like what the Iranian Zoroastrians do now and in seeming contradiction to the

proscription found in the Vendidad. For example, Herodotus, known as the "Father of History," states in Book I of his History (I.140):

"But there are other matters concerning the dead which are secretly and obscurely told — how the dead bodies of Persians are not buried before they have been mangled by bird or dog. That this is the way of the Magians I know for a certainty: for they do not conceal the practice. But this is certain, that before the Persians bury the body in the earth they embalm it in wax."

Besides this concern with providing a barrier for the earth by the use of the wax, we have another Greek source that testifies to the sacredness of fire and water in Zoroastrianism. In an epigram about a Persian slave named **Euphrates** who speaks to his Greek master, he says:

"Do not burn me, Philonymos, and do not pollute fire by contact with me. I am a Persian, of Persian parentage, master, and the pollution of fire is more grievous to us than death."

Euphrates goes on to add: "... do not sprinkle my body with lustral water, for I also revere streams." ¹⁶

We also have Alexander's historians mentioning that the Greek armies in the Persian Empire would find exposed corpses and bury them out of a sense of propriety only to find them unburied the next day. Yet, we find the Achaemenid kings like *Cyrus* being buried in freestanding tombs or *Darius*, *Xerxes*, and others in rock-cut tombs on the cliffs of *Naqsh-e Rostam*. In Central Asia on the other hand, we find the archaeological remains of ossuaries or bone boxes used to store the bones of corpses after they were picked clean by animals. What I am trying to illustrate with these contradictory facts is that Zoroastrian religious practices were far more diverse than the common perception today and perhaps we can all learn from these examples and find specifically Zoroastrian solutions to some of our intractable social situations that are now proving so emotional for community members worldwide. But, in order to do that, one has to understand the original theological rationale behind these ancient practices and that requires both responsible religious education and an open mind; both of which are, unfortunately, in exceedingly short supply these days.

As I conclude, you might be wondering what one can do with all these historical facts and where does that leave us modern people? I would like to respond by posing a paradox. It seems to me that for the older generations here in North America to have any hope of having their



Zoroastrian identities actually matter to their kids and grandkids as the 21st century unfolds you must empower the younger generations to embrace radically different socio-economic values than those you have been forced to hold as immigrants.

So what exactly am I advocating for? Observe earlier I said I would not do advocacy! Parents from the old countries stop pressuring your children and expecting them to take up “safe” — bourgeois — occupations, instead encourage and support them, if they show an interest, to reinvest in their Zoroastrian identities. We desperately need some of the best and brightest of the young generation to develop and enhance the study and appreciation of Zoroastrianism by becoming anthropologists, archaeologists, artists, writers, musicians, ethnomusicologists, historians, sociologists, linguists, political scientists,¹⁷ philologists, geneticists, demographers, and scholars of religion so that future generations of young Zoroastrians going to college in North America actually have a critical mass of books, articles, blogs, and websites that they can read; and classes that they can attend in a variety of universities and geographical locales both in the US and Canada where they would be able to learn about their heritage in an informed and critically sophisticated manner rather than being subjected to the same old controversies, finger pointing, and demagoguery that we see so often these days. What I am proposing is not easy, it is not convenient, it is not a magic bullet or cure-all, and it fundamentally requires some material sacrifice. Yet I truly believe that if we put our money where our big Zoroastrian mouths are, the future of our identities will be shaped and determined by us on our terms.

When, as a 20 year-old, I first told my rather religious grandmother in Mumbai that I was determined to study Zoroastrianism for a living she immediately started praying out loud to Zarathustra that I would not do such a stupid and foolish thing! The irony was not lost on me. Even then I understood that knowledge is power and power can be mobilized to effect positive change in the world. Education, acquired in an informed and responsible way and presented in an attractive and accessible manner, is, in my experiences as a teacher and researcher of Zoroastrianism, the only meaningful way to break the downward spiral of apathy and anxiety about the increasingly bleak future of our collective identities. Only education will provide the power of self-definition and self-fashioning to the next generation of community leaders who are looking for a more credible, sophisticated, and well-marketed view of their heritage.

Wandering aimlessly in a rapidly changing world of present and future-looking social media, globalization, and population flows telling anyone who will listen that we are the oldest and greatest religion from ancient times and

spouting “*Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds*” as a platitude with little else in the way of a cohesive worldview, belief system or moral position is not, in my personal opinion, sufficient for contemporary Zoroastrian “youth” to successfully navigate the rough seas of the modern world, even if we conservatively define the term “Zoroastrian youth” as 16-40 years-old or liberally, as any unmarried Zoroastrian still drawing breath!

It is the young amongst us who so clearly see that the new media and technological innovations are potentially profoundly liberating and transformative for us as a community in our battle to maintain market share in the global marketplace of ideas, values, and cultures. And while Marshal McLuhan, the father of media theory, wrote in 1964 that “the medium is the message,” it is patently clear that content — user-generated by community members such as yourselves or produced by experts and paid professionals such as the priests and us scholars — matters a great deal for optimizing the capabilities of the medium in question. Unless the various generations of Zoroastrians come together and make a real commitment to investing in a broad and inclusive educational program both at the institutional and the personal levels there will be little left to preserve of Zoroastrian identity in the upcoming decades and it won't matter in the least what a typical Zoroastrian looks like, if they have a funny sounding name that doesn't end in -walla, or if they can't speak Persian and Gujarati. Zoroastrianism is a religion first and foremost about choice — not just between Truth and Falsehood but also between Knowledge and Ignorance — it is time for us all to make the future we want by investing in education now, in the present, so that we can appreciate and learn from our truly remarkable collective pasts.

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Congress...

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- ² Touraj Daryaee, *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr. A Middle Persian Text on Late Antique Geography, Epic, and History* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2002), 67.
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- ⁴ Firoze Kotwal and Philip G. Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān. Vol. II: Nērangestān, Fragard I* (Paris: Association pour l'avancement des études iraniennes, 1995), 120-125.
- ⁵ Nezhat Safa-Isfahani, *Rivāyat-i Ašwahištān: A Study in Zoroastrian Law*, Harvard Iranian Series 2 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 184.
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- ⁷ Bamanji Nusserwanji Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and Others*, (Bombay: The K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 1932, repr. 1999), 275-276.
- ⁸ Alberto Cantera, "Legal Implications of Conversion in Zoroastrianism," in *Iranian Identity in the Course of History. Proceedings of the Conference Held in Rome, 21-24 September 2005*, ed. Carlo G. Cereti (Rome: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, 2010), 56.
- ⁹ See Alberto Cantera, "Legal Implications of Conversion in Zoroastrianism," in *Iranian Identity in the Course of History. Proceedings of the Conference Held in Rome, 21-24 September 2005*, ed. Carlo G. Cereti (Rome: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, 2010), 63.
- ¹⁰ See Alberto Cantera, "Legal Implications of Conversion in Zoroastrianism," in *Iranian Identity in the Course of History. Proceedings of the Conference Held in Rome, 21-24 September 2005*, ed. Carlo G. Cereti (Rome: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, 2010), 64; cf. also Mahmoud Jaafari-Dehaghi, *Dādestān ī Dēnīg, Part I*. (Paris: Association pour l'avancement des études iraniennes, 1998), 232-234.
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- ¹³ After Alan Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora. Text, Translation and Analysis of the 16th Century Qe□□e-ye Sanjān 'The Story of Sanjan'* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 85.
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- ¹⁵ Jehan Bagli, *Parsiana* (Jan. 2001): 46-47.
- ¹⁶ Shahrokh Razmjou, "Religion and Burial Customs," in *Forgotten Empire: The World of Ancient Persia*, eds. John E. Curtis and Nigel Tallis (Berkeley, 2005), 184.
- ¹⁷ I must thank Dinsha Mistree for politely pointing out my omission of political scientists from my original lecture.

Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevina is currently a Lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies at Stanford University. His position at Stanford has been funded jointly by support from the Department of Religious Studies, Stanford University, FEZANA, member associations and private donors from within the Zoroastrian community worldwide for the period from January 2011 to June 2013. He received his M.A. in 2003 and his Ph.D. in 2007 from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University where he served as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Undergraduate Core Curriculum and as the Lecturer on Old Iranian from 2007-2009. He was a Fellow of the National Endowment for the Humanities from the National Council for the Humanities in 2010. He teaches a number of courses related to ancient and late antique Iran, including Old Persian and Middle Persian Language and Literature; "Winged Bulls and Sun Disks: Religion and Politics in the Persian Empire"; and most recently, "Priests, Prophets, and Kings: Religion and Society in Late Antique Iran." He also teaches classes on Zoroastrianism, such as "Beyond Good and Evil: A Thematic Introduction to Zoroastrianism" and "Sugar in the Milk: Modern Zoroastrianism as Race, Religion, and Ethnicity." He is currently working on a book project on Zoroastrian scriptural interpretation in Late Antiquity, and he is a co-editor with Michael Stausberg of the University of Bergen in Norway, of the forthcoming, *The Blackwell Companion to the Study of Zoroastrianism*, to be published by Wiley-Blackwell of Oxford, U.K.





Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

THE FEZANA COMMUNITY AWARDS

Navroz Gandhi and Shehernaz Joshi Verahrami co-chairs of the FEZANA Awards Committee welcomed attendees to the 2012 North American Zarathushti Community Awards organized at the Awards Lunch on August 2nd 2012 at Rye Hilton, New York .

Before beginning the ceremony Navroz introduced Mrs. Nirupama Rao, Ambassador of India to the United States since September 2011, who – along with FEZANA's president, Bomi Patel – handed out the FEZANA Awards (see the bio of Mrs Rao on page 53)

He thanked the organizers and the judges for all their work for the success of this year's awards. He then went on to explain the process for the nominations and the judging.

There are 7 award categories and each category has a set of criteria with points ascribed to each criterion. Sponsors for a nominee are asked to submit a maximum of 6 pages advocating and explaining how the nominee meets these criteria, and judges base their decision solely on these 6 pages – and nothing else.

This year 32 nominations for the 7 award categories were received. Nominations were received from larger



association as well as from smaller Zarathushti communities and from individuals . The quality of the submissions was once again very high this year, with many



From left, Narius Dastur; Ervad Zerkxis Z Bhandara, Ervad Perviz Patel; Her Excellency Mrs Nirupama Rao, Ambassador of India to the US; Freyaz Shroff; Bomi Patel , President of FEZANA, Shahrokh Khanizadeh; Firdosh Mehta; Firdaus Dhabar; Farrokh Firozgary for son Ervad Bahrom (not in photo Rohinton Mistry)



of these categories being extremely competitive. Each award category was judged by 4 individuals and these individuals were neither a member of the association submitting a nomination for that particular award category, nor were they related to a nominee in that category. Gender and age ratio was maintained for the judges. The identity of the judges was not known even by other judges of the same category.

Given this construct, there was a tie for the “*Excellence in Business or Profession*” award category. Another noteworthy point was that 3 out of the 8 award recipients were priests within our communities. However women made up less than 1/3 of the nominees which was rather surprising given our demographics. And finally this ceremony showed the substantial amount of talent and accomplishments that people of our community have made. They provide role models and are an inspiration to all of us to push our community forward.

Shirin Nariman Dastoor Outstanding Young Zarathushti Student Award

Introduced by Dr Anahita Dua, the 2007 recipient.

ERVAD BAHROM F. FIROZGARY

Born and raised in Houston. Ervad Bahrom is a junior at Rice University majoring in Biochemistry and Cellular Biology, with the goal of becoming a surgeon. In addition to his high grade levels, he is an avid musician, a basketball player, an Eagle scout, an academic mentor, a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity, and for the Baylor School of medicine Shoulder to shoulder program for Honduras.

Being a trained Navar, Bahrom has performed many jashan ceremonies for the Houston community.

The award was accepted by his father Firoz Firozgari as Bahrom was writing his MCAT exams

Mehraban Zartoshty Outstanding Young Zarathushti Award

Introduced by Dinsha Mistree, the 2007 recipient

NARIUS K. DASTUR

Narius a graduate in Computer Science from Simon Fraser University, Vancouver works for the Integrated Police agency as an Information Technology technician. He also works part-time for the New Westminster Police Department. He had volunteered over 800 hours in the Crime Prevention Unit of the same department for which he was awarded The Volunteer of the year award in 2007 and the 5 years Volunteer Service award in 2011.

Narius has managed and redesigned the website of the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia as well as developed and managed the website for the 9th North

American Zarathushti Games and the 5th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress, both hosted by ZSBC.

North American Mobeds Council Community Service Award

Introduced by Ervad Kobad Zarolia, President NAMC
ERVAD ZERKXIS Z BHANDARA

Xerkxis Bhandara is a 17 year old young mobed born and raised in California, USA. He has performed numerous jashans, funeral ceremonies, weddings and navjotes, conducting weekly humbandagi sessions at the Zoroastrian Association of California Center, leading the prayers as well as preparing the food. Together with his father Ervad Zarir he holds Mukhtad prayers for 10 days at their residence. In addition he is a mentor to the young mobeds in the area.

His prime goal in life is to become a well-rounded and properly educated Zarathushti priest and to this end he reads books on Zarathushtrian theology, philosophy, and traditions from renowned authors such as Modi, Kanga, Dhalla, and Kotwal. He also reads books on different religions, acquiring knowledge of all religions thus working towards his academic goal of doing research in comparative study of world religions focusing on the similarities, to create a strong unity in diversity.

Although it is difficult to juggle, one to two hours of daily prayers with high school courses which include Advanced Placement and Honors classes, Zerkxis has maintained a GPA of at least 3.5 and has also actively participated in other extra-curricular activities at school and ZAC.

His services to the Southern California Zarathushti community are truly outstanding and deserving of this NAMC award

Dinshaw Framroze Joshi Excellence in Performing Arts, Painting or Literature Award,

Introduced by Teenaz Dubash. 2002 Paradise Award recipient

ROHINTON MISTRY

Rohinton Mistry is a writer par excellence whose books are recognized nationally and internationally, is the recipient of Guggenheim Fellowship and the Trudeau Fellows Prize by the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, with honorary doctorates from the University of Ottawa, York University and the University of Toronto. He is an elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and the finalist for the Man Booker International Prize, In September 2012 he will be awarded the 2012 Neustadt Prize at the Neustadt Festival at the University of Oklahoma



His collection of Short stories Tales from Firozsha Baug became a finalist for the Governor General of Canada Award for Fiction. His second novel A Fine Balance was the winner of several prizes including the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best Book, Denmark's ALOA Prize, the Royal Society of Literature's Winifred Holtby Award and was selected for Oprah's Book Club, his third novel Family Matters won prizes and accolades including the Canadian Authors Association Fiction Award.

His writings have been translated into more than thirty languages and he is considered today to be one of the most important international writers in the world.

The award was accepted by Sam Vesuna, past President of ZSO as Rohinton Mistry was not able to be present.

Jamshed and Shirin Guzdar Excellence in Business or Profession Award

Introduced by Dr Noshir Langrana , recipient of the 2010 award

Dr FIRDAUS S, DHABAR

Dr SHAHROKH KHANIZADEH

Dr Firdaus Dhabhar, an ordained priest, is Director of Research at Stanford Centre on Stress and Health and holds appointments with Stanford University School of Medicine. His work as a Professor and Head of a Research Lab have earned him over 70 press and media reports . He has published extensively in scholarly and scientific Journals and is the recipient of numerous awards including the prestigious Council of Graduate School Distinguished Dissertation Award which is awarded every two years to an individual who has made an unusually significant contribution to life sciences..

Dr Dhabar holds Ph,D in Biomedical sciences in Immunology and Neuroendocrinology from Rockefeller University / He is a pioneer in the studies of how short-term fight or flight stress response can enhance immunity. His work is supported by the MacArthur Foundation and the National Institute of Health.

Dr Shahrokh Khanizadeh is a research scientist with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Internationally recognized for his expertise in fruit genetics and fruit breeding. A graduate of Tehran University and McGill University, Dr Khanizadeh has developed cold –hardy, disease resistant fruit varieties through new techniques in plant breeding, and has developed soft ware data bases and books on new methods of fruit breeding processes. He has over 200 publications, 12 books and 14 journal cover stories to his name and three of his books are used as reference books in Canada and Internationally. He was the President of the Canadian Society for Horticultural Sciences and is presently the Editor-in-chief of the

Canadian Journal of Plant Sciences. He is the recipient of the Golden Harvest Award from the Government of Canada

Since 2006 Dr Khanizadeh has designed the graphic layout of each FEZANA Journal and has put all the past issues on the FEZANA website in a format which is visible and recognized by internet search engines.

Jamshed Pavri Humanitarian Service Award Introduced by Farrokh Namdaran, 2010

recipient

FREYAZ K. SHROFF

Freyaz Shroff is an ardent and passionate proponent for the rights of all people. She came to the US from India, is the Co-Chair of the Welfare Committee of FEZANA, where she set up a toll-free critical assistance telephone line which would allow Zarathushti victims of domestic violence and for families to seek assistance. She was the co-chair of the Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA).and has represented FEZANA at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, speaking on how to empower rural women to overcome poverty and hunger.

In Mumbai she is a devoted volunteer with World Zoroastrian Organization Trust and with the Parsi Resource Group through which she set up a youth education sponsorship program for the children of Zarathushti priests in India.

Her commitment to humanitarian causes is recognized both in North America and internationally and her humanitarian programs touch all walks of life and people. She epitomizes one of the fundamental objectives of FEZANA which is that we Zarathushtis are a community without borders.

Rohinton Rivetna Outstanding Zarathushti Award Introduced by Ervad Dr Soli Dastur, 2010

recipient

FIRDOSH MEHTA

Firdosh D. Mehta, a registered professional engineer and a fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) is highly regarded within his profession, receiving numerous awards from the Canadian and American Engineering Societies.

Firdosh has been involved with the Zarathushti community in North America for over 32 years in different capacities. He is a past president of FEZANA, and currently serves as the Chair of the External Affairs Committee. His scholarship and knowledge of the Zarathushti religion has made him a popular presenter at



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

various universities, interfaith groups and associations throughout North America.

He has volunteered his services to the community and especially to the youth, serving on the organizing committees of the World Youth Congresses. For his community service and professional achievements. The Vision Foundation based in Ahmedabad, India, awarded him the Non-resident Indian (NRI) Visionary Award. He has been a visionary, a mentor and an unflagging crusader of the Zarathushti faith and its values and his outstanding leadership and service have furthered the cause of the Zarathushti community in North America.



Bomi Patel, out-going President of FEZANA, Katayun Kapadia, in-coming President and Ambassador Rao for several years, and then becoming India's first woman Ambassador to China from 2006 to 2009. Other ambassadorial assignments of Ambassador Rao have included Peru, Bolivia, and Sri Lanka (the latter, where she was India's first woman High Commissioner).

On her return to New Delhi from Moscow Ambassador Rao became the Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs in 2001, the first woman Indian Foreign Service officer to hold this post. Eight years later, upon completion of her tenures in Sri Lanka and China, she was appointed Foreign Secretary, the highest office in the Indian Foreign Service.

Ambassador Rao is a great friend of the Zarathushti community.



SPECIAL NAMC AWARD PRESENTED TO ERVAD PERVEZ PATEL

by Ervad Kobad Zarolia, President NAMC

Parvez Patel (in photo above right) was recognized for his selfless service to ZAGNY in the performance of religious ceremonies for the community. He has performed countless Jashan, Navjotes Weddings, and death ceremonies. He was instrumental in starting the religious classes of ZAGNY and has taught children and guided the community for almost 40 years. He provides his services not only to ZAGNY but all over North America as well.

MRS NIRUPAMA RAO AMBASSADOR OF INDIA TO THE UNITED STATES

Ambassador Rao was a Fellow at the Centre for International Affairs at Harvard University and a Distinguished International Executive in Residence at the University of Maryland

She has over 30 years of experience in diplomacy having joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1973 and has represented India in various capacities all over the world, including Washington, Beijing and Moscow where she was the Deputy Chief of the Indian Mission. She has extensive experience in India-China relations, having served in the East Asia Division of the Ministry at policy level capacities

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Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

ZOROASTRIAN RETURN TO ROOTS

Rosheen Kabraji
Dinsha Mistree



simultaneously benefitting both the individual and the community; firstly it will provide an opportunity to an individual Zarathushti who wants to explore his or her religion, culture, ethnicity and identity alongside fellow Zarathushtis while being exposed to local heritage and customs in India. In doing so, it also hopes to facilitate another avenue for young Zarathushtis to get to know one another and form lasting friendships and professional networks across the globe. Secondly, it is to engage and encourage the Zarathushtrian communities to use the knowledge and expertise acquired down the generations, outside of the ancestral homelands of India and Iran, by exposing them to the opportunities that exist in India that they could, if they so wish, take advantage of and contribute to in areas such as academia, music, art, oral traditions, and business.

Zarathushtis currently have two hubs: Iran and India. Given current political sensitivities and visa restrictions it is almost impossible for US or European citizens to get a visa for Iran. As it is much easier to arrange trips to India the project will initially pilot programs in India. However, it is critical to have Iranian Zarathushtis also engage and reconnect with their religion and those Iranian-American Zarathushtis who wish to come to India will be more than welcomed and encouraged. It is hoped the program will also one day include trips to Iran for young Parsis as well.

It has often been remarked that the Jewish community has been very successful in maintaining strong cultural and social links, even as they are spread all over the world. One of the most successful programs that they have pioneered to promote is called Taglit-Birthright Israel. Participants who attend Taglit show a heightened connection to Israel and Jewish religion and customs. (Taglit is the Hebrew word for discovery.)



At the 2012 North American Zoroastrian Congress in New York, a Zoroastrian Return to Roots initiative was launched under the auspices of UNESCO Parzor Foundation as one means of fostering community links and identity. The initiative seeks to help bridge the disconnect between those Zarathushtis who are scattered across the world and their ancestral communities by connecting with their fellow practitioners.

The purpose of the project is to bring together young Zarathushtis from across the world in a program which would provide an opportunity to return to their roots, reverse the trend and revive the community. It is aimed at



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

Taglit-Birthright Israel is a Jewish Israeli registered charity that sponsors free 10-day heritage trips to Israel as 'gifts'. The goal is to link Israelis with Jewish communities around the world, all the while strengthening participants' personal Jewish identity, and connection to Jewish religion, history, and culture. As of summer 2011, over 250,000 individuals (currently more than 37,000 a year) from 52 different countries have participated since the trips began in winter 2000.

The goal for the Zoroastrian Return to Roots Program is to be able to be networked in and supported by multiple institutions and organizations in the fields of the preservation of religion, history and culture as well as Zoroastrian associations and trusts to ensure the integrity of the program is upheld. The eventual aim is for the program to be able to build an endowment that enables it to run independently with the support of partner institutions.

At this stage, two-tracks have been identified for the program

- a) *religious/community focus*
- b) *community/cultural focus that are held at different times of the year to allow for individuals to choose the focus of their experience.*

These two-tracks need to be further developed and defined i.e. size, composition, itinerary, goals. It is estimated that the tour will be between 10-14 days. Initially, the trips will be held in Maharashtra and Gujarat.

The first track will focus on exposing the participants to learning, understanding and connecting with the Zarathushti religion Zoroastrianism and its rituals in India and Parsi material culture (food, art, music).

The second track will focus on engaging the Zarathushti diaspora, particularly those who have roots and links with India and want to explore their culture, community

and the opportunities that the diaspora offers, can take advantage of contacts in India by being exposed to the work Parsis are doing in business, science, government, philanthropy, arts & music, education by participating in internships/professional visits.

Additionally the pool of individuals and organizations who will provide feedback and support to this program and help further define the tracks need to be identified. A youth survey is currently being conducted to inform the definitions of these tracks. The survey will not be comprehensive but the aim is to serve as indicators as to the preferences of the youth regarding their experience of connecting with their roots. A short youth survey is available on the website. The program hopes to draw heavily on the knowledge and expertise of the global Zoroastrian youth diaspora, as much as possible, in its conception, planning and execution.

At this stage, input is primarily required on the conceptual and organizational areas of the project. Once that has been established we would seek to build the financial model depending on conceptual framework for the programme and its needs. In the second stage a funding proposal would be drafted and circulated to relevant donors and funders.

There is a clear need to engage particularly with the youth who were born outside of the Indian sub-continent, and a wider variety of individuals who have worked within the community on projects both in India and in their local associations in North America and the UK.

Comments are welcome from individuals and organizations that would be looking to support (operationally and/or financially) and to build this much needed and worthwhile project for future generations of Zoroastrians. Please email returntozorooots@gmail.com.



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Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

C

ONGRESS SUMMATION



Did the congress achieve what it set out to achieve.?

Audience Demographics 73.96% of the audience were 51 years and older with an equal distribution of gender, with 67.3 % coming from India and Pakistan and 15% from Iran. 75 % of the audience described themselves as progressive or moderates with 91% born of both Zarathushti parents. Of course this reflects only the audience who were in the room when a clicker count was taken. If the count was taken during the evening social events the demographics would have been VERY different for the age ratio.

On the question of building an Atash Kadeh agiary in North America, 95% were in favor of a place of worship with some reservation as to whether it should be consecrated.

There was no clear reason as to why people do not attend religious classes in North America, lack of interest and inconvenient time and location were the 2 main obstacles. 43% had not attended a religious class for more than a year. However there was an overwhelming majority who would attend on-line classes if offered. 60% wanted religious education to be presented through 21st century technology!!! (The response to the Teleconferences presented by Ervad Soli Dastur of Florida is proof).



Identity is defined by the juxtaposition of Mind, Spirit and Body and this the Congress did very well, The program so meticulously developed fed the

MIND through Core Beliefs, Zarathushti Identity, Intergenerational dialogues

SPIRIT through Opening Prayers by the mobeds with the ringing of the bell, the Navjote panel with Ervad Khambatta performing the Kusti on stage in English, (see cover) the heart wrenching presentation of Anahita Dua and Khushroo Patel, and the emotionally charged poverty panel.

BODY was fed by the FEZANA Gala and the Congress banquet with entertainment provided by the exquisite home grown talent only in New York!!!!

The Challenging questions posed by the panelists were

Do we have to be a Parsi to be a Zarathushti ?

Do we have to be a Zarathushti to be a Parsi ?

What defines a Zarathushti?

What defines a Parsi ?

What will the Zarathushti identity be in North America in 50 years?

Before the start of the identity session, 62% of the audience said: **A Zarthushti is one who chooses for himself or herself the religion of Zarathushtra**, After the session the response was 67.9% to the same question. **This gives an increase of 6%.**

52% of the audience felt that they would participate in a longer term project in their local community association if they believed in the cause. This is an indication to the leadership of the community that they need to develop projects which the community needs and wants.

At the Navjote panel it was mentioned that the Navjote should be the starting point of a life long learning rather than the end of the road terminating with a big party!!! 62% of the audience felt that one should make the commitment to the religion of Zarathushtra for oneself, and have their Navjote sudreh pushi performed at any age.

Did we learn?

Yes indeed from the keynote address of Trita Parsi, from the Jungalwala lecture of Yuhana Vevaina, from the panels of Core Beliefs, Navjote, the State of the Zarathushti World Demographics, the need to preserve *Persian Heritage*



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

What did we take away as practice ?

The empathy the Zarathushti religion taught a Trauma surgeon, the work a pediatrician did in India, International service to humanity, (*yatha ahu variayo in practice*) combating poverty, the return to roots by the Zarathushti youth of North America, the vision of ZWIN moving the community forward, the genetic study of Parsi.Zarathushtis, the eye glass collection.

Were we taught ?

The teachers workshop, the basic course in Zarathushti religion, intergenerational workshop

We shared stories of Sudreh Pushis and Navjotes

Did we network?

Pre congress social events for youth
Visit to the NYC (and the forced networking in a 2 hour return bus journey!!!)
Speedfriending
Lunches
Banquets

Parents of tiny tots were grateful for baby sitting facilities and parents of young children for the children's religious program

What is the Task for the North American Community and how can we continue? :

Dialogue to explore and resolve challenges facing us in the contemporary world?

Develop the religious education of Zarathushti children, adults and parents?

Preserve the Zarathushti cultural heritage in Iran and India (Parzor Project)?

Address issues of poverty of our coreligionists in India?

Develop a Zarathushti Community in North America that is well-connected, well-educated, well-grounded in Zarathushti religious thought, values, and ethics, respectful of diversity, strong in collective giving, economically prosperous, a community which will be recognized for its contribution in all aspects of religious and communal life. (Mission Statement of the 1st and 2nd FEZANA Strategic Plan)

And till we meet again in 2014 at LA

1. What do you think is MOST important for our community to achieve in the next two years?
2. What are you willing to do to help our community achieve what has been identified.

I would like to end with a quote from Behrose Taraporewalla

"If not now - when? If not you - who?"

Dolly Dastoor Ph.D
FEZANA JOURNAL

Adapted from the presentation of Farrokh and Dinsha Mistri at the Closing Ceremony



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PHOTOS IN THE CONGRESS SECTION**



Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

Reflections from Attendees

Jehangir Sarosh, England



One may say I am a professional conference goer, in my work with the different organs of *Religions for Peace*. I participate in youth conferences, women's conferences, high-level conferences of religious leadership and politicians, a full spectrum,

Yet the XVI NAZC2012 was an unique occasion for it encompassed all the above and more. The more was quite clearly the common unity of the Zarathushti community

The inclusiveness of the wide variety of opinions, beliefs and understanding offered the participants the much-needed opportunity to hear the "other" within the community.

Intra-faith dialogue is the most difficult to achieve. The high quality of academic and spiritual input facilitated this difficult dialogue.

I firmly believe the objective of the organizers looking at the ***Zarathushti Existence in the Contemporary World*** was fully met

The process for this well considered objective to enable the community to begin an introspective of who we, the Zarathushties are - where we are coming from - the journey we have taken and what direction ought we to consider then the process has begun in earnest.

My compliments to the organizers for a well thought out program and researching and bringing the most appropriate speakers for each module.

The audience participation and involvement was well balanced and the questions and comments from the audience were of a high caliber and the whole event was a dignified gathering of concerned and forward-looking Zarathushties.

This was my first North American Congress, but I assure you it will not be the last for I left the congress with the mind, body and spirit nourished.

Congratulations to you all and a big thank you to ZAGNY and all the volunteers who made it the great success that it was.



The final thank you must go to *FEZANA*, a body that has enabled each of its members to be autonomous, yet gelled them into a cohesive collaborative and united community. Simply put - a good community, what more could one ask for.

jehangirsarosh@gmail.com

Armene Modi, Pune, India

Armene Modi is an educator and social activist involved with Ashta No Kai, a rural project in India that aims to empower women and educate the girl child.

It was a great privilege to attend the recently held Zoroastrian Congress in Rye, New York, and a pleasure to meet Zarathushti diaspora from all over the North American continent. The organization and arrangements for the NAZC were excellent with an inclusive, harmonious, open and welcoming atmosphere. It was refreshing indeed to hear issues of relevance to the community and the religion debated in civilized and moderate tones which allowed for divergent opinions to be expressed with give and take on various topics. It was also reassuring to note that the diaspora while keeping the spirit and essence of Zoroastrianism alive, in general, seemed progressive in their views and accepting of change.

FEZANA's presence at the Congress lent credence to the impactful role it has played in bringing the North American diaspora together, and transforming it into a ***"Community without Borders"***. Kudos to FEZANA on reaching its milestone of 25 years with a long list of achievements to its credit, among which its instrumental role in helping to forge a common agenda and identity among Zarathushtis from both India and Iran is certainly to be lauded. FEZANA is also to be congratulated for its support of youth by giving them a voice and a platform to carry on the torch.

There were several useful and illuminating presentations at the Congress running the gamut from a deeper insight into the Navjote ceremony and preservation of heritage sites to addressing the poverty in our community





Congress...

Rye Hilton, New York, August 2-5, 2012

back in India. I was fortunate to be part of the latter panel and was touched by the overwhelming offers of support received soon after the panel ended. The use of technology such as Skype to include presenters who were not able to attend in person, to the clickers on each table that enabled the audience to express their views on various topics was impressive. The talent and performances exhibited by the youth at the wonderful evening finale were also most enjoyable.

The youth at the Congress were truly remarkable. They seemed to wear their unique Zarathushti identity and heritage with great pride. They were articulate, talented, and accomplished achievers in various fields of endeavor, and yet, seemed quite engaged and involved with the community and its affairs.

If the youth I met at the Congress are anything to go by, the future of the Zarathushti community in the contemporary world is assuredly going to be a hopeful and bright one. ***Zarathushtis of North America you have plenty to be proud of!***

THE NEW YORK CONGRESS GIVES US REASON TO LOOK FORWARD TO THE NEXT NAZC IN LA! SHAZNEEN R GANDHI, California

Shazneen Gandhi of California, is a lawyer/ stay at home mom/ writer and an avid chronicler of the escapades of her children, Shayaan and Jedd.



That the XVI North American Zoroastrian Congress 2012 was a success should not be surprising to anyone who is familiar with the New York area

Zarathushti community: the event's organizers had been working on it since the day they learned that they would be hosts. I know because a lot of our friends and family were involved with the Congress, and in the last few months leading up to it, it seemed impossible to converse with them on any other subject. They took pride in their involvement. Their investment of creativity and hard work showed in every aspect of the event. They owned it!

The experience of the Congress is different for everyone. My husband and I had been skeptical of the benefits of attending the Congress, given our lack of desire to engage in controversial subjects. We also expected that there would be a lot of seniors, and a younger (single) crowd that can't resist NYC, who we - folks in the middle

"with young kids" - would have little in common with. We also wondered whether it would be worth it to pay the big bucks for it as the needs of our children - a two and a four year old - would surely limit our participation.

Ultimately, we decided to go because we wanted to see old friends. We stayed, participated and enjoyed it because the Congress accommodated many of our needs. Here are a few reasons why the New York Congress was a worthwhile endeavor for us, and why we are looking forward to the next Congress in Los Angeles:

- Everything, for us, is possible only if our children are taken care of. The Congress offered a superb program for children 5 years and older, which our daughter loved. They also offered a playroom, with babysitting by experienced ZAGNY members, which our two year old enjoyed. With our children occupied and cared for, we were able to attend all the sessions and we happily found many other couples like us, with kids in tow.
- In his keynote address, which aptly followed a tribute to all Zarathushtis who have served in the military, *Dr. Trita Parsi* asked the audience to consider how much better the world would be if international relations were conducted in accordance with Zarathustra's teachings, rather than those of *Niccolò Machiavelli*. How inspiring to think of Zoroastrianism, not just as an ancient philosophy that a small handful of people follow, but rather as a philosophy that can, and should, be implemented to make the world a better place today. Dr. Parsi made you feel proud to be a follower of Zarathustra. This was such an unusual keynote address that it grabbed your attention and made you think that this wasn't like all the other Congresses. *What else did they have in store for us?*
- The program did not disappoint. The relevance of the Zarathushtrian ethic in today's world - on a personal, corporate, and political level - was a theme that ran through many of the sessions. The discussions were relevant to our daily life as Zarathushtis, and not merely theological discussions about controversial issues.
- The whole event had a youthful, current vibe. From the participation of many young panelists, to the use of technology to get real-time feedback from the audience, to the flash mob planned in secret, and the entertainment orchestrated by youth and including very young ZAGNY members, the Congress energized participants of all ages.

In other words, there was not a single boring minute at the New York Congress. And because we expect nothing less from ZAC, (Zoroastrian Association of California) we are looking forward to the next one!

SPECIAL EVENTS

APPEAL FOR A LANDMARK EVENT



Corner panel of a gara. China, late 19th century.
Collection: Siloo K Limboowalla

APPEAL FOR A LANDMARK EVENT

The history of Zoroastrianism, ancient and modern, its rich cultural heritage and the influence it has had on the major world religions has never before been given visual expression in the form of an exhibition. This project, organized through the Department of the Study of Religions at SOAS, includes a conference, a lecture series, a program for schools and additional events. It is hoped that the exhibition will tour to North America after it closes in London. Installations especially commissioned for the exhibition, such as the walk-in fire temple, will be donated to a museum dedicated to the Zarathushti faith in India.



Silver coin of Ardeshir I. Private collection



Jamshid enthroned. Tile, Isfahan. Collection: Private

The exhibition consists of a number of 'stories' within an overall narrative that traces the history of the Zarathushtrian faith from its ancient Iranian roots to its emergence in Achaemenid and Parthian times and its consolidation as the state religion under the Sasanians with the establishment of a powerful priesthood. From the shores of Iran to the west coast of India the maritime journey of Zarathushti is followed to their settlement in India, where they

THE EVERLASTING FLAME:
ZOROASTRIANISM IN HISTORY & IMAGINATION
AN EXHIBITION AT BRUNEI GALLERY BUILDING
OCTOBER 9 – DECEMBER 14, 2013

School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS)
University of London



Patron: Maestro Zubin Mehta

came to be known as Parsis, examining their growth as an immigrant community under British colonial rule and the later expansion of the modern diaspora.

Ancient texts and manuscripts from libraries and museums in Britain and around the world demonstrate how the oral tradition was committed to writing during the Sasanian and later periods.



Ivory statue of Parsi girl.
Collection CSMVS

The imperial period of Iranian Zarathushtrian history is presented through the display of artefacts, coins and silverware from museums and galleries around the world. The reach of the Zarathushtrian faith to Central Asia and the Jewish-Christian world is a major theme of the exhibition depicted through the art, iconography and literature of different cultures down the ages.



Stamped ossuary. Collection Bishtek Museum, Kirghizstan. Photograph courtesy of Frantz Granat

Zarathushtrian myths and religious ideas that found expression after the Arab conquests of Iran, through poetry and literature, are



Brunei Gallery Building

SPECIAL EVENTS

APPEAL FOR A LANDMARK EVENT



exemplified in the epic Shahnameh which preserves the quintessential Iranian character of pre-Islamic culture.

The story of the early Zarathushti community in India and establishment of the first sacred fire on Indian soil is displayed with reference to the epic Qisseh ye Sanjan together with accounts by European travelers. By the early 19th century Parsis under colonial rule were actively engaged in the China trade. Wealthy Parsi patrons popularized the European art of portraiture and weavers from Surat learned the art of Chinese silk weaving - examples of which are on display in the exhibition.

The final story in the exhibition is dedicated to the new Zarathushtrian diaspora which is spread throughout the world including Singapore, Australia, Hong Kong and Dubai, as well as significant communities in the United States, Canada and Britain.

Curatorial Team

Sarah Stewart (project convenor) lecturer in Zoroastrianism in the Department of the Study of Religions and Deputy Director of the London Middle East Institute, SOAS.

Almut Hintze, Zartoshty Brothers Professor of Zoroastrianism, SOAS.

Ursula Sims-Williams, Curator of Iranian Languages at the British Library.

Firoza Punthakey Mistree, Zoroastrian Studies, Mumbai.

Pheroza Godrej, Art-historian, environmentalist and writer.

Academic Advisors:

Frantz Grenet, Collège de France, Director of Studies and Professor of Religions of the Ancient Iranian World at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, Sorbonne, Paris.

John Hinnells, Honorary Research Professor, SOAS.

Alan Williams, Professor of Iranian Studies and Comparative Religion, University of Manchester.

Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis, Curator of Middle Eastern Coins at the British Museum and Co-Director of the International Parthian Coin Project.

Jenny Rose, Lecturer on Zoroastrian Tradition, School of Religion, Claremont Graduate University, California.

Design: Colin Morris Associates

Design Advisor: Fereydoun Ave

Enquiries and Location: Email: enquiries@theeverlastingflame.com

Brunei Gallery, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG

Tel: +44 (0)2078984270

In order to make this unique project a reality we urge you to make a donation either individually or collectively through your Zoroastrian Association. This can be done through American Friends of SOAS (AFSOAS)

<http://www.afsoas.org>

AFSOAS is in the process of receiving 501(c)3 exemption from the IRS and all donations made after 8 March 2011 qualify for an income-tax deduction to the limits allowed by law. Employer Identification no. (EIN) is 27-490-0255.

SPECIAL EVENTS

International Conference of Scholars on Zoroastrianism in Vancouver.

Rastin Mehri

On June 2nd, and 3rd 2012, 12 renowned scholars and professionals from across Canada, the US and the UK gathered at the University of British Columbia at Robson Square in Downtown Vancouver B.C., for the first-ever conference on Zoroastrianism. **The sponsors of the conference, all committed to the advancement of the study of Zoroastrianism in North America, included FEZANA, the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC), the Morvarid Guiv Trust, O'Shihan Cultural Organization and the Money Way in Vancouver B.C.**

Key organizers of the event included Dr. Mobed Ardeshir Behi (The University of British Columbia, Vancouver), Mr. Fereydoun Demehri (Vancouver), and Mr. Homi Italia (Vancouver), as well as a number of volunteers of ZSBC.

The list of the presenters included Professor Richard Foltz (Concordia University, Montreal), Dr. Daniel Sheffield (Harvard University), Professor Enrico Raffaelli (University of Toronto), Ms. Manya Saadi-nejad (PhD Candidate, Freie Universität Berlin), Dr. Mobed Rostam Vahidi (California), Mr. Firdosh Mehta (Alberta), Dr. Daryoush Jahanian (Kansas), Mobed Behram Deboo (California), Ms. Shahin Bekhradnia (Oxford), Mr. Fariborz Rahnamoon (Vancouver) and Dr. Ardeshir Khorshidian (Tehran).

During the unprecedented two day event, and at a dinner party event in the hall of the Dar-i Mehr in Burnaby, B.C., the scholars, presenters and the initially small, but gradually growing numbers of attendees, enjoyed the rare opportunity of meeting and learning from each other; discussing, clarifying, and codifying their viewpoints towards the community, disparate experiences, and goals; acknowledging the obstacles to success, and many even began to propose realistic strategies for overcoming them.

The presenters and attendees were welcomed by Mr. Homi Italia, president of the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia. Dr. Mobed Behi and Dr. Dolly Dastoor representing FEZANA. All presentations were chaired by Dr. Mobed Ardeshir Behi. and were followed by a period of questions and answers. The themes and titles of presentations varied considerably; for instance, **Dr. Richard Foltz's presentation**, titled "**Zarathushtra's World: What Can We Know About Ancient Indo-Iranian Society?**" examined the ways in which scholars first began to question the traditional accounts of Asho Zarathushtra's time and homeland, beginning in the eighteenth century, and enumerated a number of theories that have been and still are being proposed and debated to-day. He highlighted the two nascent but distinct approaches that are presently popular amongst most scholars of Zoroastrianism, that of archeology and that of historical linguistics.

Dr. Foltz's presentation was followed by **Dr. Daniel Sheffield**, a recent graduate from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard, and presently a Postdoctoral Fellow in Near Eastern Studies at Stanford University. Sheffield presented a section from his fascinating and thought-provoking PhD thesis titled: "**In the Path of**



The organizing committee from left Mr. F. Demehri, Mr. Namdari, Mr. and Mrs. Kapadia, Dr. Ardeshir Behi, Homi Italia, Bella Ttata, Havovie Sumariwala, Dr. Rastin Mehri and Kayras Irani (sitting in front)

SPECIAL EVENTS

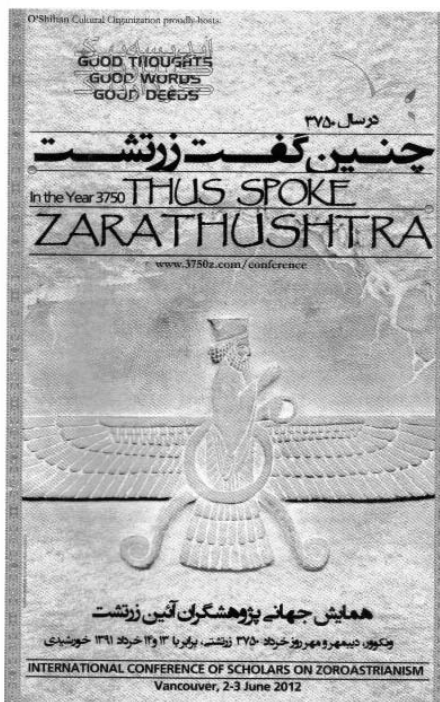
the Prophet: Traditional Stories of the Life of Zarathustra as a Source of Inspiration and Devotional Practice.

Sheffield's dissertation assessed the discursive practices by which Zoroastrians defined their communal identity through constructions of the central figure of their religion. His thesis displays the ways in which Zoroastrians adopted current and cosmopolitan religious vocabularies from the Islamicate and Sanskritic literary traditions for a world in which they were no longer a dominant political force. Contrary to much scholarship, which characterizes medieval Zoroastrian thought as stagnant, Sheffield clarifies how literary production in this period reveals extraordinary intellectual engagement amongst Zoroastrians endeavoring to make meaning of their ancient religious traditions in a rapidly changing world.

The primary focus of his dissertation was upon the evidence extant in the thirteenth century Iranian text, the ***Zaratushtnama (The Book of Zarathustra)***, and examined interactions between Zoroastrian theology and prophethood with contemporary Islamic thought, focusing on the role that miracles played in medieval Zoroastrian conceptions of prophethood. Via examining the corpus of religious texts by a group of Zoroastrian mystics who had migrated from Safavid Iran to Mughal India around the seventeenth century, Sheffield questions the notions of identity, orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Influenced by the ***al-Ishraqi or 'Illuminationist' school of Islamic philosophy*** popular in Iran at the time, this diasporic Iranian community (commonly known as the 'Adur Kayvanis') left behind a body of texts which blur religious boundaries. Sheffield's study is a unique, welcomed and very much needed area of scholarship which sheds light not only upon the medieval history of Zoroastrianism, but may, in fact, render immeasurable influence upon the ways in which modern Zoroastrians today envision their past and see their place in the globalised world today.

Sudden illness prevented ***Dr. Enrico Raffaelli*** from attending the event; his essay was read by the Rastin Mehri. Dr. Raffaelli's presentation, titled ***"Is Zoroaster's Message Still Valid?"*** offered an overview of the recent scholarship on the Historical Zarathushtra. A number of scholars have sought to examine the character and imagery of the man behind the traditions surrounding ***Asho Zarathushtra***. Beginning in the late 1980s there has been a surge of interest, focusing predominantly on the "religious personality" of the prophet, spearheaded by the ***French linguist Marijan Mole (1924-63)***. This trend culminated in the hypothesis which questions the actual historicity of the Prophet Zarathushtra in twenty-first century and in the writings of two prominent linguists, ***Prods Oktor Skjaervø (Harvard) and Jean Kellens (Collège de France)*** who have sought to

From left Dr Dan Sheffield, Dr Rastin Mehri, Ms. Manya Saad Nejad; Prof Richard Foltz, Dr Mobed Ardeshtir Behi



¹ The title of Sheffield's recent dissertation is *In the Path of the Prophet: Medieval and Early Modern Narratives of the Life of Zarathustra in Islamic Iran and Western India*.

SPECIAL EVENTS

separate the Gathas and the Avesta from the historical Zarathushtra. During the past decade the noted scholars, who are linguists and not historians, have published a steady stream of works on Zarathushtra and history of Zoroastrianism. Dr. Raffaelli too seems to agree with the opinions of the noted scholars. Regardless of the extant hypothesis and disagreements, it is my contention that a careful distinction must be made between Zarathushtra of history and the Zarathushtra who is the object of an immense importance in the Zoroastrian faith. There is a connection between the two, certainly, but history cannot measure what a Zarathushti individual learns through his or her faith. A cogent study of the historical Zarathushtra paints a picture not unfamiliar to Zarathushties; Zarathushtra was indeed the real historical figure as the Avesta and later Pahlavi texts say he was. No apologetics or justifications for a quest for the historical Zarathushtra as a historical discipline need be made than one would have to apologize for trying to scrutinize about the historical Aristotle, Plato, Moses, Jesus, or the historical Muhammad.

The confusion often arises from the fact that people claim they are undertaking a quest for the historical Zarathushtra when de facto they are actually conducting studies in linguistics or theology, albeit a theology that is indeed historically informed. In the case of Mole, and more recently Kellens and Skjaervø, these celebrated scholars are trained in linguistics, doing a more modern type of historiography. But for scholars of Zoroastrianism does a basic, or what may be construed as an authentic Zarathushti faith today necessarily entail the need for a historical quest for the historical Zarathushtra? The answer is obviously no.

Ms. Manya Saadi-Nejad's presentation titled "**Araduui Sura Anahita: An Indo-European River Goddess**" focused on the ancient Iranian divinity **Anahita (Farsi: Nahed)**, which she proposed to be connected, both functionally and linguistically, with water goddesses found in many Indo-European societies. Her role and personality, she suggested, date as far back as the common Indo-European period. While in the historical period, during the time of her greatest importance in Iranian society, Anahita possessed many functions reflecting a broad range of influences, it is possible to trace a line of continuity connecting her back to an archaic Proto-Indo-European belief in a river goddess.

The foci of **Dr. Mobed Rostam Vahidi's** presentation, titled "**Power and Strength to Advance Family & Community**", were the contentious notion of community numbers and dispersion of the global Zoroastrians. A number of participants agreed with what appeared to be distressing phenomena, whilst others highlighted that these are largely misunderstood problems. Dr. Vahidi articulated the importance of expanding the extant Zarathushti societies in order to better answer the need of the present and future Zarathushti communities and resolve the challenges they are faced with.

Mr. Firdosh Mehta's presentation titled "**Why Bad Health Happens to Good People... A Zarathushti Response**" focused upon the Gathic Principle of the clear separation of the nature and character of Good and Evil, enhanced by the faith that only all Good Things come from Ahura Mazda. Mr. Mehta presented his thoughts on the notion of understanding, acceptance and overcoming the many health and medical afflictions faced by individuals in today's society.

Dr. Daryoush Jahanian's presentation, titled "**Teachings of Zarathushtra for the Modern World**", highlighted the ways in which time makes certain laws, rituals, commands and taboos impractical, just as legends, myths and superstitions are refuted by scientific discoveries. Myths, legends and superstitions have no place in the teachings of Zarathushtra. Dr. Jahanian articulated that conceptions such as liberty, love, self determination, gender equality, righteousness, justice and peace, service to fellow humans, and promotion of the living world toward perfection, are not bound to time and location. These ideals constitute the essence of the teachings of Zarathushtra. **Asho Zarathushtra's** three principles of "Good thoughts, Good words and Good deeds" and famous phrases of "**let us make the life fresh and make this world new**" and "**failure for the falsehood and victory for the truth**" remain fresh and will shine for ever.

Due to the absence, **Dr. Mobed Ardeshtir Khorshidian's** presentation titled "**Excerpts from Zarathushtra Teachings**" was read by his daughter. This presentation was derived predominantly from his forty-year long examination of the Gathas of Zarathushtra and presented the views and conceptions expressed by the ancient Iranian Prophet Asho Zarathushtra, as expounded in his psalms. These included, amongst others, the belief and affirmation in One Supreme

SPECIAL EVENTS

Being, the Ahura Mazda; the belief in and articulation of the dichotomy of material world (**getig**) vis-à-vis the celestial world (**menog**), as well as notions of **wisdom (xirad)**, **conscience (daena)**, **responsibility and freedom of choice**. His presentation offered a personal view and impression, as a scholar, believer and a practicing Mobed, on the activities and the profound knowledge and accomplishments of ancient Iranian Prophet. It emphasized the importance of separation between texts and profound teachings in the Gathas from those of religious traditions and practice, and specifically the avoidance of orthodoxy and fundamentalist views.

Ms. Shahin Bekhradnia's presentation "**Zoroastrianism and the Environment**" expounded the ways in which the ancient religion celebrated the wonders of the natural world through its annual calendar festivities. These various celebrations of nature, while each play a role in sustaining life, remind us of our interdependence, namely that humans need to work in harmony with nature. Our past traditions, she stressed, have been passed down through generations to ensure that the knowledge of horticulture, arboriculture and agriculture was not lost. Indeed Zoroastrians were renowned for their abilities to create heavenly gardens which they did for a succession of kings in the Safavid and Qajar eras, a tradition which clearly goes back to Darius' gardens at Pasargadae. The word Paradise (or Heaven), too, is derived from the Old Persian pairi daeza (a walled enclosure or garden) which gave rise to the words Paradise and Ferdows. The spiritual and contemplative qualities which are awakened when working within a natural environment are not least among the benefits brought to human kind by this empathy with nature. With such an awareness of the wondrous order, beauty and regularity of nature, Zarathushtrians experience the laws of asha directly. We find the inspiration for this in the Gathas.

Mobedyar Behram Deboo's presentation, titled "**Zarathushtra's Value System for Humanity in Gathas**", highlighted Zarathushtra's unique personality in the history of ancient Iranians and the ways in which human values he taught in the Gathas, are progressive and contemporary for any age to come. Mr. Deboo articulated that though Ahura Mazda is transcendent, he is made immanent by giving Him six divine attributes, and that Zarathushtra was a Divine soul besides being philosopher, Ratu, spiritual leader and Manthran. He wanted the living world free from the suffering due to violence. He emphasized non-violence before Christ and Mahatma Gandhiji. He taught us to love God and be a friendly co-worker to establish peace on this earth. First time, in the history of mankind, Zarathushtra gave us dignity to think ourselves on our own. Zarathushtra believed that each person should listen to the best and decide with their enlightened mind what path to follow.

Mr. Fariborz Rahnamoon's presentation, "**The Gathas of Zarathushtra: A Better Future for Mankind**" articulated how every human being, irrespective of religious beliefs, who aspires to the Ultimate Truth and is interested in progress, with peace, justice and prosperity; towards a heavenly life on this very planet Earth, needs to understand the Gathas of Zarathushtra. That every scholar and every researcher needs to understand the Gathas so that their research does not create a Frankenstein like the Atomic Bomb or the present day Global Warming. Every businessperson needs to understand the Gathas so that we progress to perfection, not wealth.



Rastin Mehri completed his BFA, BA (Religious Studies) and his MA (Biblical Studies) in the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. He recently submitted his PhD thesis on Zarathushtrian history at the Department of Study of Religions in the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London, U.K.

SPECIAL EVENTS



Canada
Province of British Columbia
A Proclamation

ELIZABETH THE SECOND, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom,
Canada and Her other Realms and Territories, Queen, Head of the
Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith

To all to whom these presents shall come – Greeting

WHEREAS the diverse cultural heritage of British Columbians contributes greatly to life in our Province, and

WHEREAS the Government of British Columbia is committed to the idea of a harmonious society based on mutual respect and where diversity is respected and valued, and

WHEREAS the Government of British Columbia wishes to join the with community groups across the Province in recognizing the multicultural nature of our society, and

WHEREAS Our Lieutenant Governor, by and with the advice and consent of the Executive Council, has been pleased to enact Order in Council 903 on October 11, 2002;

NOW KNOW YE THAT We do by these presents proclaim and declare that the Persian year starting from 20th March 2012 and ending on 20th March 2013, inclusive, shall be known as

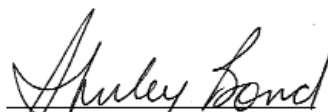
"Year 3750 Zarathushtri"


in the Province of British Columbia.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent and the Great Seal of Our Province to be hereunto affixed.

WITNESS, The Honourable Steven L. Point, Lieutenant Governor of Our Province of British Columbia, in Our City of Victoria, in Our Province, this twentieth of September, two thousand twelve and in the sixty-first year of Our Reign.

BY COMMAND.


Minister of Justice and Attorney General
(counter signature for the Great Seal)


Lieutenant Governor

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must be earned

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SPECIAL EVENTS

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HICAGO CELEBRATES

FEZANA'S 25th and ASHO ZARATHUSHTRA'S 3750th ANNIVERSARIES WITH A TRADITIONAL 'lagan-nu-bhonu' AT THE DAR-E-MEHER.

Roshan Rivetna



From left Past President ZAC Hosi Mehta, Current VP Afshan Barshan, Founding President FEZANA Rohinton Rivetna, Roshan Rivetna; FEZANA VP Katayun Kapadia

The double celebration on July 14, 2012, at the Arbab Rustom Guiv Dar e Mehr in Chicago, with a traditional lagan-nu-bhonu will be etched forever in the memories of the 150 who came, including *invited guests* **Rev. Stan Davis, co-Director of the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago, Barbara Abrajano, Director, Chicago Cultural Connctions, Sister Joan McGuire, director of Interreligious Affairs at the Archdiocese of Chicago and Oakbrook Mayor, The Hon. Lal Malani and Mrs. Malani.**

The hall, set up with long 'panths' (rows of banquet tables) set with banana leaves

(flown in from Florida) had the ambiance of "Albless Baug" with twinkle lights and decorations (of anniversary motifs and posters by Farida Sharyari.)

The evening opened with a prayer by **High Priest of Chicago Dastoor Dr. Kersey H. Antia** and a **Welcome by ZAC Vice-President Afshan Barshan** (as President Dinaz Weber was tending to her new grandchild in California). **ZAC Seretary Zenobia Ravji and FEZANA administrator Zenobia Damania** gave succinct overviews of the history and operations of FEZANA, leading up to the keynote address on FEZANA's first 25 years by **FEZANA Vice President Ketayun Kapadia**, who had traveled to Chicago with her husband Kersi, to grace this special occasion.

After a break for hearty appetizers (by Farida Sharyari) and drinks, the assembly gathered again for a beautiful **Monajat by Mani Rao** and the official cutting of the 3-tiered silver and white anniversary cake (made by Roshan Rivetna). The evening continued with presentations on **"Asho Zarathushtra gives Humankind a Central Role as Stewards of Creation"** by Zal Taleyarkhan and Kamal Saher, **"Relevance of Zarathushtra's teachings in Today's World"** by Khursheed Ichaporia and Eruch Rustomjee, and **"Asho Zarathushtra's Teachings – an Impetus for Family, Community, Country and Global Harmony"** by Persis Driver and Zubin and Zenobia Tantra.

The delightful performances by the littlest ones of ZAC children's religious class -- the animated songs and the 'Game Show' all designed and directed by **Bakhtavar Press, Khursheed Ichaporia and Zenobia Damania**, truly brought the house down and drew standing ovations.

Emcee Darius (DJ) Jamsetjee did a splendid job with the entertaining music and kept things flowing smoothly all evening. All the evening speakers were of the **Next Generation**. It was a proud moment to see their depth of understanding and style of delivery. As Sister Joan later wrote:

"Your Celebration was wonderful! I very much appreciated the hospitality, the food(!!!), the enthusiastic presentations of the young adults and joyful performances of the children. Any religious educator would be proud of their knowledge of the faith as well as the process that enabled each child to be a winner!"

The highlight of course, was the **lagan-nu-bhonu**, which, after months of planning and fretting, all worked swimmingly well! As the guests sat on long banquet tables, with facing rows, the 'celebrity servers' (**past presidents, ZAC**

SPECIAL EVENTS



Bachi Damkevala serving Achar



Zal Taleyarkhan serving drinks

and FEZANA executives, and the volunteers who lined up to help) donned in white aprons, served the food up and down the aisles.

First came the *wafers, rotli* (by **Zarin Karanjia**) and *achar* (by **Kiku Engineer**), *sev* (by **Perviz Patel**) and *dahi* (by **Bachi Damkevala**) followed by *kada-kothmir per eedoo* (by **Roshan Rivetna**), *patra-ni-machi* (by **Kim Mehta**) *salimurghi* (by **Kiku Engineer with Camay Sali from Toronto**), *gos-no-pullav* (by **Nergish Pardiwalla**) and *dar* (by



Kashmira Jamsetjee), ending with the delectable *lagan-nu-custard* (by **Dinaz Weber**) and anniversary cake. Meanwhile another 'celebrity crew' served ice and soft drinks to each guest in their embossed souvenir glasses. Thanks also to **Niloufer Darukhanawala, Katayun and Kersi Kapadia, Dara Rivetna** and many others who helped with the setup and cleanup. (Group photo above) One cannot say enough about the team work and camaraderie displayed by so many who helped bring this idea from **Rohinton Rivetna and Hoshi Mehta** to successful fruition. It took the entire community, led by Dinaz Weber, to orchestrate the event. Everyone who came participated in some way to make the evening memorable. It was indeed a lesson in **Hamazori. Hama Zor Hama Asho Baad**.

SPECIAL EVENTS

GENERATION 1 CELEBRATES TENTH ANNIVERSARY



From left Rustum Challa: Lead & Rhythm Guitar; Farrokh Firozgary: Keyboards; Ziba Colah - Vocals & Rhythm Guitar; Persis Buchia: Vocals and Percussion; Nozer Buchia: Vocals and Percussion; Jamshed Dubash: Drums Aspy Jamshedji: Bass Guitar, Eddie Berana ,Vocals- (not in picture); Sonia Behrana: Vocals (not in pic)

Generation 1 The all Zoro Band from Houston celebrates ten years of performing live music this August! The band debuted with their first live performance at the August NowRuz Function back in 2002 and performed at the August NowRuz function on August 18th, 2012 at the ZAH Center. Having returned recently from a successful performance at the FEZANA Silver Jubilee celebration and banquet at the North American Zoroastrian Congress on Aug 2, 2012 in New York, the band played non-stop for over two hours keeping the guests entertained and dancing to a medley of songs to satisfy the taste of all age groups gathered at our Center.

Born out of an idea and their common love for music, "Generation 1" was formed in 2002 by **Farrokh Firozgary, Aspy Jamshedji, Rustum Challa, Rustom Kanga, and Raymie Daroga**, all members of the Houston Zoroastrian community. Their first vocalist **Sonia Behrana** joined the

band shortly after they were formed. Over time some band members moved on due to work and life demands, however fortunately the slack was picked up by adding new talents of vocalist **Eddie Berana**, **drummer Jamshed Dubash**, an **extremely talented young female rhythm guitarist and vocalist Ziba Colah**, and most recently **multi-talented couple Nozer and Persis Buchia joined the band**.

Over the years the band has continued to perform at events and community fundraisers in Houston, Dallas, Beaumont and New York, including hit performances at the 2010 North American Congress held in Houston, Texas and 2012 North American Congress held in Rye, New York.

The Generation 1 band members that performed at the August 18, 2012 NowRuz function at the ZAH Center are listed below. The band would like to thank **Aderbad Tamboly** for

helping us with the audio logistics during their performance at the function.

Ziba Colah: Vocals and Rhythm Guitar; Rustum Challa: Lead & Rhythm Guitar; Sonia Behrana: Vocals; Persis Buchia: Vocals and Percussion; Nozer Buchia: Vocals and Percussion; Jamshed Dubash: Drums; Farzana Sidhwa: (Guest Singer) Farrokh Firozgary: Keyboards Eddie Berana: Vocals; Aspy Jamshedji: Bass Guitar

A million thanks to our families, ZAH Center, supporters and fans from around the world and community in Houston for all their love and support over the years. A special thanks and appreciation to Aspi Colah who has always been an immense supporter of the band! Generation 1 is available to perform for events and associations and for weddings, navjotes and other gatherings, with DJ service included.

Use the links below or copy/paste onto your browser to view pics of recent performances:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/102089031226044919930/Generation1ZAHNavrozeFunctionAugust182012?authkey=Gv1sRgCM7Ekbrpm7bgSA>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/zagny/7733837956/in/set-72157630956159940>

SPECIAL EVENTS

KZBM

Celebrates Her Centenary Year

Sarfaraz Golwalla



L to R: Mitra Irani [Chair Child Welfare], Alan Rustomji [extra member], Bakhtawar Rabadi [Chair Medical], Farahnaz Marker [Jt Hon Secretary], Kermin Parakh [V President], Navaz Aga [President], Sarfaraz Golwalla [Hon Secretary], Roshan Mehri [Hon Treasurer], Zarin Mobed [extra member], Niloufer [Chair Rehabilitation], Perinbanoo Virjee [extra member], Meher Cawasji [Chair Education], Dinaz Irani [Chair Programme], Spenta Khambatta [Chair Welfare] (Photo Ronnie Dubash)

In 1911, eight women and four men met at the house of **Gulbai Nusserwanji Mehta** in Karachi to discuss the formation of an association to help the indigent of our community.

A year later on 11th November 1912, the **Karachi Zarhosti Banu Mandal** came into being with the mission statement of **SEVA & SAKHAVAT (Service & Charity)**. A charitable association cannot survive without donations, thus we are grateful to the generosity of our donors over the century, and due to the acumen and wise investments of our Treasurers, the Mandal has been financially viable to help all those in need.

Most of us ladies who have ever worked for the KZBM have developed a life long interest and a soft corner for "our Mandal", and no wonder, as it has been part of our Karachi Zarhosti community for the past 100 years. Our grandmothers, mothers, and now the 3rd and 4th generation of ladies have all volunteered their time and energy for the Institution, with loyalty and devotion, following in the footsteps of women with vision and wisdom who have led and guided the activities these past 100 years.

We are proud that in Karachi today, KZBM with the help of our other Zoroastrian Trusts has seen to it that not a single Zoroastrian family can be called poor or needy. Deserving young people are provided with quality education, medical needs of the old infirm and sick are seen to, and welfare and rehabilitation work for the community is undertaken by the dedicated ladies of the KZBM.

It is not all work though, programs of interest and entertainment are arranged once a month for the community. Since most of our community in Karachi is an aging one, the Mandal along with other Associations, has also undertaken upon itself to entertain all the senior citizens of the community with special Senior Citizens Evenings totally free. KZBM also provides special midday snacks for the patients at the Bomanshaw Minocher Parsi General Hospital, with our volunteers personally going to the hospital to serve them. Whenever or whatever the need, the Mandal tries to ameliorate it.

SPECIAL EVENTS

CELEBRATIONS:

The Karachi Zarthosti Banu Mandal has a tradition of celebrating all its important anniversaries. Thus for our Centenary, events were organized to take us through this epic year.

We started off with a Thanksgiving Jashan on 11th November 2011, which we traditionally celebrate each year being the date of the founding of KZBM by the 12 who met at Gulbai Mehta's home.



On 23rd February 2012 an impressive and elegant traditional Parsi sit-down-dinner was held, where ladies were requested to wear their garas or kor saris and the men their duglis. A short multimedia presentation of the history and working of the KZBM was also enacted with our young children interspersing it with short items of song and dance. Photo above Children carrying placards showing the various fields of work carried out by KZBM, at function on 23 February 2012 [photograph by Ronnie Dubash]

26th May 2012 a mega Tambola evening was held followed by dinner where a multitude of hampers and prizes were given away to the joy of over 500 tambola enthusiasts of the community.

In June an Arts & Crafts Exhibition was held to display the talents of our community. Paintings, torans, embroidery work as well as modern bead jewellery was displayed, appreciated by all those who visited.

22nd September 2012 there was a Dinner-Dance Night at Avari Towers

4th and 13th October a Gujarati Natak "Boeing Boeing" in collaboration with friends -YMZA & Dastur Dhalla Institute at the APWA Auditorium, arranged for us by our friends of the **Young Mazdayasnian Zoroastrian Association (YMZA)**.

Grand Finale will be in November to which the whole community will be invited.

Our Centenary Celebrations may conclude, but the "banus" (ladies) of KZBM will continue with their tasks of "Seva and Sakhavat" with the help and support of all our volunteers and community members.

May Ahura Mazda's blessings guide this institution ever onwards.



Sarfaraz Golwalla is a born and raised Karachiite, being the fifth generation of her family living in this city. She has been a dedicated homemaker, mother and grandmother for the past 45 years and given her time as the Honorary Secretary of KZBM these past 14 years serving under three very different Presidents..

SPECIAL EVENTS

ZOROASTRIAN DELEGATION INVITED TO WORLD CONFERENCE IN KAZAKHSTAN

Mr. Rayomand Noble & Mr. Ruzbeh Hodiwala

85 delegations from 40 countries were invited to attend the IV Congress of Leaders of the World and Traditional Religions held at Astana, Kazakhstan on May 30-31, 2012. Dr. Homi Dhalla was invited to represent the Zoroastrian community worldwide and was requested to bring a delegation to this interfaith meet. Consequently, in order to encourage Zarathushtis to be involved in the interfaith movement, Dr. Dhalla invited Mr. Hoshang Dehnugara, Mr. Rayomand Noble, Mr. Adil Rangoonwalla and Mr. Ruzbeh Hodiwala to join the delegation. A number of prominent world leaders including the King of Saudi Arabia, the Emir of Qatar and the Director-General of UNESCO were present.



From left Hoshang Dehnugara, Rayomand Noble, Adil Rangoonwalla, Homi Dhalla; Ruzbeh Hodiwala

The conference was held in the Palace of Peace and Harmony or the Pyramid of Peace, which is an architectural phenomenon. It is a symbol of friendship, unity and peace.

"Peace and Accord as a Choice of Humankind" was the main theme of this Congress. President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan inaugurated this conference. In his opening address, the President exhorted all world religious leaders to work harder towards global peace which is the obvious path to global progress. He condemned terrorism under the garb of religion, describing it as blasphemy. After his inaugural speech, the religious heads and other representatives were asked to speak.

Dr. Dhalla, the leader of the Zarathushti delegation's speech entitled **"The Multifarious Roles of Religious Leaders Today"** described some of the genuine efforts made by various religious leaders across the world to foster peace and protect human rights. His talk revealed some heart-warming and positive results brought about by spiritual leaders in containing child starvation due to poverty, prevention of killing of the girl child, including foeticide, Imam Demba Diawara and his fight against Female Genital Cutting (FGC), Uganda's Christian and Muslim religious leaders fight AIDS together and many others. His speech inspired many to wonder, "If they can, why can't we".

He highlighted the shocking reality that (quote) **"Excruciating poverty and starvation kills one child every 5 seconds in the world today. Poverty kills about 30,000 people every day. In spite of this in 2011, the global military expenditure stood at over \$ 1.7 trillion."**

It was heartening to note that in our presence were former politicians and the Director General of UNESCO. The melting of Religion and Politics can be a necessary and potent tool to help peace filter down to all the would-be beneficiaries, whose lives are torn by cross cultural and inter-ethnic strife. By taking the initiative, President Nazarbayev has placed his hand on his heart towards that promise.

On the second day of the conference, number of panel sessions were formed where papers by various leaders were discussed viz., **Religion and Multiculturalism, Religion and Woman, Religion and Youth**. Dr. Dhalla read a paper on **"Multiculturalism and Religion from a Global Perspective"**. At

the end of this session, various questions were put to the speakers.

Later in the day, the delegates attended the opening ceremony of a monument specially erected in Commemoration of the Kazakhstan Famine Victims during the Soviet era. To quote the President **"This famine and its terrible consequences became the biggest humanitarian catastrophe of the Soviet period. Our people suffered enormous losses. More than 1.5 million people starved to death."** After a moving speech by the President which reminded us of the untold suffering faced by the survivors of pre-Kazakh independence, we were led by the President himself to place a carnation in remembrance of those for whom tears will always be shed.

We also had the opportunity to visit 'Alzhir', the camp for the tortured wives of the men believed to be traitors during the notorious Stalin era. Heart-wrenching stories of human hatred and suffering are entombed in this sobering concentration camp. The closing ceremony of the Congress was held at the Opera hall within the Palace of Peace and Harmony and was marked by spectacular performances of Kazakh cultural art in the form of music, dance and opera, in both traditional and contemporary excellence and grace.

A major outcome of this conference was the establishment of the **new Council of Religious Leaders** – this was an initiative of President Nazarbayev. Dr. Dhalla was appointed on this new Council as the sole Zarathushti representative.

GUEST EDITOR MANECK N. BHUJWALA

a public conference in Germany. For her fight for India's freedom she was exiled and sacrificed her health and family life.

Khurshed Framji Nariman, who was given the title “Veer” by freedom fighter Sarojini Naidu, had participated in campaigns against foreign cloth and liquor, organized the Salt protest movement in Bombay, and gone to jail four times, for the cause of India’s freedom.

Shapurji Saklatvala, fought for improvements in the living conditions of Indian and English workers as a member of the British Parliament. He had met with Mahatma Gandhi and discussed ways to win India's independence.

Perin Captain, granddaughter of Dadabhai Naoroji had joined Mahatma Gandhi's freedom movement and participated in the Salt protest and promotion of homespun Khadi cloth.

Rustom K. Sidhwa from the province of Sind, was also inspired by Gandhiji and in the struggle for equal rights for Indians had served time in jail.

Jamshed N. Mehta, born in Karachi, joined the Home Rule movement started by Annie Besant of the Theosophical Society, and the first Civil Disobedience of Mahatma Gandhi, but focused on establishing educational institutions to prepare for Home Rule.

Cooverji Hormasji Bhabha, born in Bombay, was not a freedom fighter like the others, but he was not afraid to take a stand against British officers when he saw something wrong, as when he pointed out discrepancies to Viceroy Lord Wavell and insisted on corrections, while serving in his Interim Government.

Pervez Damry, who started as a Deputy Collector in Gujarat and became one of the first Indians to serve in the Administrative Service, was also known for his honesty and stand against corruption, which eventually helped him to be appointed as Secretary of the World Bank

Feroze Gandhi fought for India's freedom, became a member of Parliament, exposed corporate and government corruption, passed laws to nationalize life insurance and expand freedom of the press, married Nehru's daughter Indira and taught Zarathushti values to sons Rajiv and Sanjay.

In South Africa, **Frene N. Ginwala** who was born in Johannesburg in a wealthy Parsi family, sacrificed her comfortable life by joining the Youth Wing of the African National Congress, going into exile for fighting against



apartheid and for independence, and eventually succeeded and became a Member of Parliament of free South Africa.

Even at the grassroots level there was good awareness about the independence movement. I remember my mother who was born in Mahatma Gandhi's birthplace of Porbandar, telling us about how they used to shout the slogan "ek do peelee topee fek do" meaning "one two throw away the yellow cap" referring to the yellow cap worn by Indian policemen under British rule. She also used to talk about Parsi women freedom fighters, Gosiben and Perinben Captain, who had joined Gandhiji's freedom movement, and were associated with the Seva Sadan society in Bombay where she went to do embroidery work.



Maneck Bhujwala was born in Bombay to Navroji and Meherbai Bhujwala. He got his Engineering degree from Baroda, and M.S. and M.B.A. in USA. He worked at several high-tech companies, co-founded the Society for Rapid Advancement of India, Los Angeles, in 1968, Zoroastrian Association of California, L.A., in 1974, and Zarthushti Anjuman

of Northern California in 1980, served on the boards, and coordinated religion classes for adults. He currently serves as a Realtor, a priest, and President of the Greater Huntington Beach Interfaith Council.

Maneck gives talks at Zarthushti Congresses and interfaith events, contributes articles in FEZANA Journal, Cheherenah and Hamazor magazines, writes letters/comments to Indian and American news media about the Zarthushti religion, He also transliterates and translates the Kutar Brothers version of Shahnameh to English. Maneck lives with wife Mahrukh in Huntington Beach, California, and near their Attorney daughter Shehnaz who lives in Los Angeles

Besides taking care of their own growing community in India, Parsi leaders used their political influence and prosperity to alleviate the hardship and depressed condition of their fellow-Zarthushtis in Iran, whose numbers had dwindled to around 4,000 under centuries of persecution and humiliation by Iran's Islamic rulers.

After India gained its independence from British rule in 1947, Zarthushtis continued to play important roles in the building of modern India's industries and infrastructure. However, with the passage of time, the fortunes and population of Zarthushtis as well as their religious zeal went on a downward slope, with internal divisions sapping the energy of the community further.

It is our hope and belief that by publishing articles on the lives of several of our Parsi politicians of yesteryears, we can offer our readers inspiring examples to emulate and instill pride in their community and religion. In this issue several Parsis have contributed directly by writing articles themselves or providing material from which I have written articles about one or more Parsi(s) involved in politics during the time of British rule and upto India becoming a republic.



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JAMSHEED K. CHOKSY

75

Parsis in Politics 1857-1954



name of *Framjee Bhikhajee and Company*—had been elected to membership of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

Framjee Bhikhajee and Company was active in export of durable goods, including coconut oil (processed by the Colombo Oil Mills at Grandpass) and coffee using its own ships. The company imported liquors from Europe for sale to Ceylonese. That corporation constructed houses for its managerial staff, many of whom were Parsis from India. Gradually, the firm expanded its property holdings to include Framjee House in the seaside neighborhood of Kollupitiya and a large shopping mall located on the corner of Main and China Streets in the Pettah. Framjee Bhikhajee and Company also specialized in the importation of European liquors for sale in Ceylon. Its mercantile and banking networks spanned the globe—from the United States of America, England, and Western Europe to China, Japan, and Australia. The company became the largest recruiter of Parsis from India, East Africa, and Southeast Asia to Ceylon.

INDIAN COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

My great grandfather *Kaikhusr D. Choksy (1863–1938)* arrived in Ceylon from Bombay during 1884 as an employee of Framjee Bhikhajee and Company. Born and educated in Surat, he had joined that company in 1882. In Colombo, he served as the firm's bookkeeper, then as manager from 1895, and finally as corporate attorney until his demise in 1938. When the Indian Chamber of Commerce consisting of Bohra, Parsi, and Sindhi merchants was established in Colombo during the 1920s, K. D. Choksy served as its first elected President for approximately five years. Jawaharlal Nehru visited Ceylon in 1931 and when he was accorded a civic reception at the Colombo Town Hall, Choksy presided and delivered the welcome address as de facto leader of the island's entire expatriate Indian community. K. D. Choksy also functioned as the Zoroastrian community's unofficial historian, as a trustee from 1923, and as president of the trustees from 1929.

POPULATION STATISTICS AND TIES WITH INDIA

A report to the Bombay Parsi Panchayat by *Muncherjee F. Khan* noted the population of Parsi Zarathushtris in Ceylon during 1901 was 55 males and 40 females for a total of 95 adults and children (Billimoria 1988: 59). The 1911 census of India recorded that 106 male and 75 female Zoroastrians were present in Ceylon, with 155 residing at Colombo, 5 in that city's suburbs, 12 at Kandy, and 9 elsewhere in the country. Many of those families maintained close ties with their relatives in India, often returning there to arrange marriages. An example was *Rustomjee Muncherjee*, who arrived in Ceylon around the year 1860 from the port city Aden (now in Yemen), where he had served the Adenwalla Company. In Colombo, Muncherjee worked first for Framjee Bhikhajee and Company earning Rupees 15 plus room and board per month. He gained education in English at the Royal Academy (earlier Colombo

Academy, later Royal College) in the Cinnamon Gardens neighborhood of Colombo. Next, Muncherjee worked in the textile industry at Kandy; eventually, he established his own corporation for importing cooking oil and flour from India and Australia, and his company also supplied gold and silver thread for ornate clothing. Having originated from Bombay, Muncherjee returned home to marry a Parsi bride, who came with him to Ceylon in 1869. Residing in Ceylon thereafter, Rustomjee Muncherjee served as a trustee of community funds until his demise in 1929.

Anjuman or community association records list numerous Parsis relocating between India and Ceylon between the late 1880s and the early 1900s, keeping the local community's demographic numbers in flux. For instance, *Dadabhoy Nasserwanjee* came to Colombo from Surat and Bombay in 1871. He worked in the printing department of the Times of Ceylon newspaper for a few years, returned to Bombay for marriage, then came back to Ceylon in 1880. When business transactions resulted in unpaid debt, Nasserwanjee moved to the Maldive Islands where he served as Private Secretary to the Sultan of the Maldives in 1899. But he was arrested by British troops and shipped back to Colombo, on orders of the British governor of Ceylon, to settle unpaid debts. In Ceylon, Nasserwanjee filed legal action for illegal arrest and imprisonment against the captain of the ship that had brought him back to Colombo and "was awarded nominal damages." He traveled frequently between Ceylon and India dealing in tea, coconut oil, spices, rice, and kerosene while championing workers' rights through labor unions. Other Parsi entrepreneurs of that era who maintained both business and personal connections with India, traveling back and forth, included *Jamshedjee Rustomjee and Pallonjee N. Kapadia*. Rustomjee was a commodities merchant who had arrived in Ceylon from Billimora in India with his wife Veerbaijee in 1877. Kapadia had joined his father's corporation of Nawrojee Kapadia and Company in 1891, importing wheat flour and sugar. *Eduljee S. Captain*, another Parsi from



India, served as general manager of the Wellawatta Spinning and Weaving Mills from its establishment in 1914 until 1966, even after it became publicly-owned in 1955.

Parsis in Politics 1857-1954



EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONS

Between 1930 and 1945, the Zarathushti population in British Ceylon ranged from 350- 450

Parsis. By then the community had been emphasizing secular education for several decades. Both male and female children were sent to primary and secondary schools run by private organizations, Christian missions, and the state. Upon completion of schooling, they were encouraged to attend universities in Ceylon, India, and England. Educated Parsi men took up professions such as law and medicine. Rustomjee Muncherjee's son was educated as a physician and surgeon in England, returning to practice at Colombo in 1904. K. D. Choksy was among the first Ceylonese Zarathushtis to obtain electricity service to a private residence, during the first decade of the 1900s, so that his son (my grandfather) *N. K. Choksy* could study indoors after dark with adequate lighting (rather than by candle light or by the light of a street lamp) and become an attorney. Parsi women, like the men, routinely completed secondary education at secular schools and began enrolling in, and graduating from, Ceylonese universities. Those women began to play prominent roles in garnering resources for furthering the knowledge, professional training, social welfare, and exposure to western medicine and science of their cohorts.

The *Jilla family* established Colombo Dye Works for providing textile dyes and dry-cleaning in 1911. Insurance businesses were established as well, beginning in 1898 with the arrival of *Dinshaw P. Billimoria* from India. Rustomjee Muncherjee had established Rustomjee and Company, Bakers and Confectioners, in 1875. *Limjeebhoy Billimoria* acquired the bakery in 1884, renaming it the Ceylon Bakery. *Pestonjee E. Billimoria*, who came to Ceylon at the end of the nineteenth century, worked at the Ceylon Bakery, then founded the Kaiser Bakery (renamed Britannia Bakery after World War I) at the corner of York and Chatham Streets (later relocated to Hospital Street) in the Fort of Colombo, and also served successfully as a ship Chandler. Parsis in Ceylon even dabbled in the entertainment industry, operating the Majestic, Empire, and Elphinstone movie theaters in Colombo during the early and mid-twentieth century for the Calcutta-based, Parsi-owned, company of Madan Theatres Ltd. A Ceylon Parsi, *Darabshaw Daruwalla*, relocated to Rangoon in Burma, to establish cinemas there.



PUBLIC SERVICE AND PHILANTHROPY

Members of the second generation of the Khan family of commercial fame held appointments on the Colombo Municipal Council during the first and second decades of the twentieth century. *Jehangirjee K. Hormusjee* was appointed a member of the Colombo Municipal Council in April 1917 and served until his demise in October 1918. *Faramroze Dadabhoy* served on the Colombo Municipal Council as a nominated member during the late 1930s and 1940s. Paralleling the concern for public well-being demonstrated by their coreligionists in India, *Dady Hirjee* was involved with establishment of the Ceylon Literary Society to which he donated a set of The Encyclopaedia Britannica in 1820. The Bhikhajee and Khan families donated wards to the Colombo General Hospital. The Khans endowed prizes in economics and medicine at the university in Colombo and even donated a prominent public landmark, the Khan Clock Tower, in the Pettah. (photo above).

IMPACT OF INDEPENDENCE

National statehood affected demography when Ceylon became independent from Great Britain in February 1948 because nearly 50% of the Parsi community chose to return to India. The rest, led by attorney (and subsequently a judge of the Supreme Court of Ceylon) *Nariman K. Choksy* petitioned the new government for citizenship. Their request was granted and they and their descendants became citizens of the new nation of Ceylon now known as Sri Lanka.

[This essay is adapted from my article "Iranians and Indians on the Shores of Serendib (Sri Lanka)," in *Parsis in India and the Diaspora*, ed. J. Hinnells and A. Williams (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 181-210] The religious practices of Ceylonese and Sri Lankan Zoroastrians was described by me in "Zarathushtis in Sri Lanka: Ancient Times to 2004" FEZANA Journal, vol.17, No4 2004 . 4 (Winter 2004), pp. 51-52]



Jamsheed K Choksy (BA, Columbia University, Ph.D Harvard University) is Professor of Iranian Studies, Professor of History and Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies at Indiana University. He was nominated by The US President and confirmed by the US Senate as member of the Council overseeing the National Endowment for the Humanities. He is the author of three books : *Evil, Good and Gender: Facets of the Feminine in Zoroastrian Religious History*; *Conflict and Co-operation : Zoroastrian Subalterns and Muslim Elites in Medieval Iranian Society*; *Purity and Pollution in Zoroastrianism: Triumph over Evil*. Choksy is also a consulting editor of *Encyclopedia Iranica* (New York: Columbia University)

Parsis in Politics 1857-1954

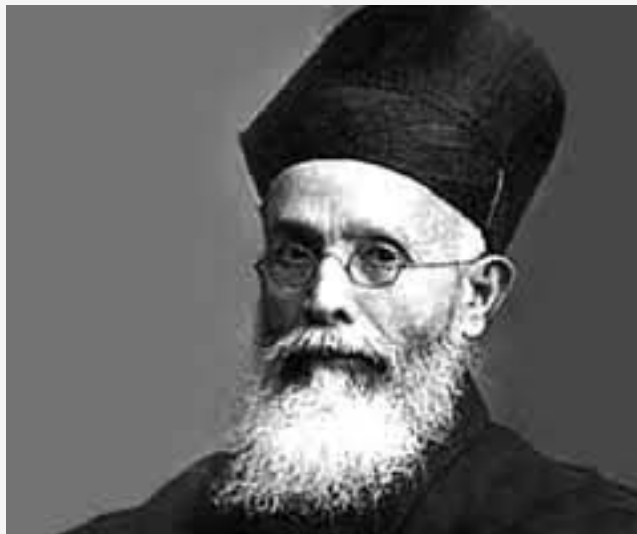


DADABHAI NAOROJI, GRAND OLD MAN OF INDIA

1825- 1917

MANECK BHUJWALA

From a poor priest family, an ordained priest, Dadabhai rose to be a professor, social and religious reformer, prime minister of Baroda, founder of the Indian National Congress and Member of Parliament in England.



EARLY LIFE

Dadabhai Naoroji was born in Bombay on September 4, 1825 in a poor Parsi Priest family. His father, Naoroji Pallonji Dordi died when he was four years old, and he was brought up by his mother, Maneckbai. At the age of 11 years he was married to 7 year old Gulbai. He went to the Native Education Society School and later studied at the Elphinstone Institute, where he got the Clare scholarship and was considered a scholar at the age of fifteen. Besides reading a lot of English literature, his favorite was the Persian epic, Shahnamah by Firdausi.

Although Sir Erskin Perry, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bombay and President of the Board of Education, impressed by Dadabhai's brilliant academic career wanted him to go to London to qualify as a Barrister, the rich Parsis were afraid that he might get converted to Christianity and did not agree. So, Dadabhai was appointed Assistant Head Master of his school, and after two years made Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at Elphinstone Institute at the age of twenty.

EDUCATIONIST AND SOCIAL REFORMER

As a co-founder of the Student Literary & Scientific Society, Dadabhai laid the historic foundation of female education in Bombay on August 4, 1849. Facing opposition from the orthodox public, Dadabhai and other members of the Society went door to door to request parents and guardians to allow their daughters to study the three "Rs". Dadabhai was one of the volunteers who taught at the newly opened school for women, free of charge. Mr. K.N.Cama donated money to improve the school and employ paid teachers.

RELIGIOUS REFORMER

To address the misunderstanding in the community about the Zarathushti religion, Dadabhai started a weekly magazine called "*Dharma Marg Darshak*" (which means Religion Path Guide) and another called "*Rasta Goftar*" (which means Truth Talk). On August 3, 1851, at the age of 26, he founded a Society called *Rahanumae Mazdayasnane Sabha* (which means Guide to the Mazdayasnane Faith), in cooperation with Naoroji Furdunji, an educationist as its President and he, as Secretary.

TRAVEL TO ENGLAND

On June 27, 1855, Dadabhai sailed to London, with his colleagues, Mr. K.R.Cama who had started the Indian mercantile firm in England, and had selected him to be its manager due to his high level of education and integrity. Although he was reluctant to leave his favorite work of teaching, the Cama brothers induced him to join them on the grounds that it would give him the opportunity to initiate connections between England and India, to advise Indian students in England competing for the Indian Civil Service, and enable him to fight for the rights of Indians. During the American Civil War, Cama's firm lost three crores of rupees, but due to Dadabhai's sterling reputation the Governor of the Bank of England called him and gave needed help in the crisis.

In 1856, Dadabhai was nominated Professor of Gujarati in the University, London, and worked there for ten years, taking active interest in social activities and studied the British character. In 1861, he founded the London Zoroastrian Association and was its President till 1907. Indian students, including young Mohandas Gandhi, received guidance here in many activities.

VISIT TO INDIA AND CAMPAIGN FOR INDIANS

During all these activities, Dadabhai always looked for opportunities to voice the grievances of Indians. In 1859 he started a protest campaign against the injustice in the system of recruiting for the Indian Civil Service (ICS), when the India Office reduced the age limit for the examination, and the first Indian student, Rustamji Hirjibhai Wadia was made ineligible. His persistent protest to allow Indians to serve in the ICS, through the press and Parliament finally paid off forty years later.

Dadabhai followed that campaign with evidence he gave before the Public Service Commission in Bombay, demanding simultaneous exams in England and India with the same standards and tests of qualifications, pay, leave, and pension allowances for all candidates for public

A word cloud featuring various political and social terms. A magnifying glass is positioned over the word 'POLITICS', which is the largest and most prominent. Other visible words include 'SCIENCE', 'INTEREST', 'GOVERNMENT', 'CANDIDATES', 'CONTROL', 'LAW', 'ELECTION', 'POLITICAL', 'SHOW', 'PERCENT', 'RACION', 'SHOW', 'RENTENDENCE', 'GOVER', 'RES', 'STATE', 'DIPLO', 'PREDOM', 'CANDIDATES', 'CONTROL', 'LAW', 'ELECTION', 'POLITICAL', 'SHOW', 'PERCENT', 'RACION', 'SHOW', 'RENTENDENCE', 'GOVER', 'RES', 'STATE', 'DIPLO', 'PREDOM'.

government. After a few years, Mr. Behramji Malbari managed it during his absence from India, and incorporated it with his weekly *"The Indian Spectator"* from 1890 to 1912.

At a public meeting at the Framji Cowasji Institute on January 31, 1885, where the Bombay Presidency Association was formally inaugurated, Dadabhai was elected as one of the Vice Presidents. In the same year, he accepted the invitation of Lord Reay, the Governor of Bombay, to join the Bombay Legislative Council.

Dadabhai was one of the moving spirits and Founder of the Indian National Congress, that held its first conference at the Gokuldas Tejpal Pathshala at Gowalia Tank, Bombay, in 1885, and started the great task of the freedom of India.

In 1886, Dadabhai went to England, sought advice from various politicians of his time, and followed their suggestion to contest election to the British Parliament. He was nominated as a Liberal party candidate from the Holborn constituency. Meetings were held all over India to canvass for his election to Parliament. After a tough fight, he was defeated due to the majority of conservative voters in that constituency. But Dadabhai was not upset, and started his work for redress of grievances of India, taking advantage of his exposure to the British public.

At the end of 1886, Dadabhai was invited to attend the second session of the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta, where he was elected President. At that session, he achieved a reconciliation between two great leaders with opposing views – Shri Lokmanya Gangadhar Tilak and Mahadeo Govind Ranade, bringing them on one platform and making them friends. Under his leadership the Congress resolved that Indians should be allowed through their elected representatives a voice in the Legislatures.

Having helped the Maharaja of Baroda in his difficulties with the British Agent to the Governor General in India, by pleading his case in London, Dadabhai was invited by the Maharaja to become his prime minister or Diwan in Baroda. He accepted the position with the goal of bringing about reforms in the State. Although he introduced many reforms as Diwan, the Maharaja, Malharrao Gaikwad did not appreciate them, leading to constant friction and resignation by him, leaving Baroda on January 11, 1875. A student dormitory in the University of Baroda is named in his honor, as Dadabhai Naoroji Hall (where I lived while studying Engineering there).

On July 25, 1875, Dadabhai was elected to the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC), where his knowledge of finance, mathematics, and his skill of marshalling statistics were assets to the BMC. Within three months he was elected to the Town Council (the executive committee of the BMC) where he refused the honorarium payment, considering his work as a social obligation. He discovered an improper calculation of interest to be paid by the BMC to the government for the loan it had taken, but his representations of this error to the government were ignored. He resigned his post of Councilor in August 1876, rejoined BMC in 1883 and went to England again 1886, but did not give up on the issue even in England. In appreciation for his services a marble statue of him was placed in the Corporation Hall.

ELECTION TO BRITISH PARLIAMENT

After the second Congress session in India, Dadabhai again went to England to work for the good of India. He was offered a seat from the Central Finsbury constituency to stand for election to the Parliament. He used his experience from the previous campaign, and visited homes, attended Ward meetings, gave numerous talks and lectures, presided or attended political meetings and kept constantly in touch with the public. This time he was elected to the Parliament in 1892, and he took the oath of office, not on the Bible, but on a copy of the Avesta, the holy book of Zarathushtis. The public in England and India, including the Maharaja of Baroda, Maharao of Kutch, Nawab of Junagadh, and the Prime Minister of Hyderabad were happy and felicitated him.

As a member of Parliament, in historic debates, Dadabhai exposed the gross corruption and oppression by the Europeans that had reduced India to a state of poverty. He once said “*You may create an empire by brute force but*



Parsis in Politics 1857-1954



A TRIBUTE TO SIR PHEROZESHAH M. MEHTA

1845-1915

NAWAZ B. MODY

The life and illustrious career of Sir Pheroze Shah Mehta can be summed up thus: *"A great citizen, a great patriot and a great Indian, a prominent lawyer and a public figure, a leading politician, a journalist and educationist and a great writer – the President of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, Vice-Chancellor, University of Bombay, President of the Sixth Indian National Congress – the Lion of Bombay and the Father of Municipal Governance"*.

Born in Bombay on 4th August 1845, Pheroze Shah passed his B.A. examination in 1864 under the tutelage of Sir Alexander Grant, the then Principal of the Elphinstone College. And within six months of his passing the B.A. examination he passed his M. A and proceeded to England for further studies. He was the first Parsi to pass the M.A. degree of the Bombay University.

From the beginning Pheroze Shah had shown a keen interest in education. As early as 1867, he read a paper at a meeting of the East India Association in London on "The Educational System of the Presidency of Bombay". The address was a powerful plea for the extension of higher education in India urging the establishment of a thoroughly co-ordinated and liberally financed scheme of state education from primary schools to technical colleges and Universities.

Pheroze Shah's association with the University of Bombay began with his appointment as a Fellow of the University in 1867 upon the recommendation of Sir Alexander Grant. He remained a member of the Senate for over 45 years. From 1892 onwards he was also a member

of the Syndicate (now called the Management Council). He had the unique distinction of serving both as the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and the Dean of the Faculty of Law of the University.

During his long distinguished tenure at the University Pheroze Shah witnessed many changes in its functioning and academic and administrative development. He was an active follower of the British liberal tradition. In a paper which he read *"On the Grant in Aid System in the Presidency of Bombay"* in 1869, Pheroze Shah strongly advocated that it was the duty of the British in India to initiate the people into the fullest mysteries of modern civilisation and to promote a system of public instruction commensurate with this ideal. He was truly a great humanitarian and believed in the humanisation of knowledge.

During his career in the Senate, Pheroze Shah vehemently resisted government attempts to "officialise" the system. He strongly opposed government attempts through the Education Commission to recommend courses of study for the Arts and Science degree examinations. Pheroze Shah opposed the government's interference in the autonomy of the University to decide on its pattern of examination and details of its curricula. He believed that the *"aim of education was the acquisition of knowledge and the training of the intellect so that knowledge might be properly and effectively used"*. He felt that educational progress depended, not upon the number of examinations and courses of study in colleges, but upon the condition of the High Schools where the improvements needed to be made.

Throughout his career in the University, Pheroze Shah stood up to defend its rights and privileges. Very fittingly he was appointed the Vice Chancellor of the University of Bombay in March 1915 by Lord Willingdon, the then Chancellor. The Senate also moved a resolution awarding him and Dadabhai Naoroji the degree of Doctor of Law in August 1915. However, Pheroze Shah died before the honour could be conferred upon him.

The Bombay Municipal Corporation always remained the Favourite Child of Sir Pheroze Shah Mehta. He spared no effort to promote its growth. He strove to create the Municipal Corporation of Bombay which was one of the earliest experiments in local self government in India and is regarded as its Magna Carta. He contributed greatly towards the creation of the civic spirit in the city. Sir Pheroze Shah often spoke about his devotion to the civic business of the city. *"I value my work for the Bombay Corporation more than anything else in my life. Our Corporation sits every Thursday and I*





MRS BHIKHAJI CAMA, PARSI LADY FREEDOM FIGHTER 1861-1936

ZERBANOO GIFFORD

A revolutionary Parsi woman who dared the might of the British Empire and suffered exile in Europe for joining other Indian revolutionaries abroad and who planned violent actions to gain India's independence and for unfurling the first flag of independent India during British rule.

BEGINNING WITH GREAT CONTEMPORARIES



Bhikhaiji Patel was born in 1861, the same year as *Rabindranath Tagore and Motilal Nehru*. All three were to have a tremendous impact on the Indian Independence Movement. Tagore inspired a pride in Indian culture with his writings, while Motilal Nehru, father of Jawaharlal the first Prime Minister of India, was the President of the Indian National Congress. Bhikhaiji Cama, the most revolutionary

of the three, advocated the use of force to gain Indian Independence.

MARRIAGE AND SEPARATION

In 1885, her marriage to the wealthy *Rustom Cama* was arranged. A different event in the same year proved more significant in her life. The formation of the first Indian National Congress highlighted some of the differences between Bhikhaiji Cama and her new husband. She was already very interested in politics, while he was not. After many disagreements the couple separated, leaving Bhikhaiji Cama to lead her own life.

BREAKING TRADITIONS

When plague hit Bombay in 1896, she became a nurse in a public charity hospital. It was an unheard of action for a wealthy woman and shocked her family and community. At a time when women had few rights and no real prospects outside marriage, she became one of the first Indian women journalists. Her Zarathushti Parsi community encouraged women to be educated, but even so, Bhikhaiji Cama often scandalized public opinion in the things that she did, such as

playing cricket and sometimes wearing western clothes instead a sari.

TRAVEL ABROAD AND POLITICAL ACTION

Bhikhaiji Cama's tireless work led her to fall ill and she was sent for treatment to Britain in 1902. After a successful operation she toured Germany, Scotland and France for several years, finally returning to London. It would be thirty-four years before she would go back to India.

In Britain Bhikhaiji Cama met *Dadabhai Naoroji*, the first Asian MP in the British Parliament. She helped in his unsuccessful 1906 campaign and through him, met others working for Indian Independence, including men who had chosen more radical methods than Naoroji. Bhikhaiji Cama agreed with their revolutionary ideas. To raise money for her political activities, she sold the family jewellery her mother had given her to wear in Europe.

Bhikhaiji Cama felt that the use of violence to gain Indian Independence was right. Indians loved peace, she said, but the condition of the Indian people meant that revolution was necessary. Peaceful means, she thought, did not work, so she helped train students in bomb-making and shooting, telling them that "*freedom is a conquest, never a bequest*".

In 1907 she wrote that the British could not imprison a whole Indian population if they refused to cooperate with the British-run government in India. Later that year, Bhikhaiji Cama was invited to speak to the Seventh International Socialist Congress held in Stuttgart, Germany. At the end of her speech she unfurled the first design for the Indian national flag to the applause of the audience.

Not surprisingly, Bhikhaiji Cama's activities came to the attention of the British authorities, and she was watched by government agents. Secret reports described her thus "...she regards herself as engaged in a revolutionary campaign against the British government in India. She is anarchical, anti-British and irreconcilable."

To avoid arrest, Bhikhaiji Cama left London, to live in France, but the British still asked the French government to intercept her mail. While in France she started a revolutionary newspaper.

In the 1920s, Bhikhaiji Cama was involved in a taxi accident, which left her with a broken skull and facial paralysis. Realizing that she was gravely ill, and fearing that the British would never allow her back to India, Bhikhaiji

Parsis in Politics 1857-1954



MRS BHIKHAJI CAMA, PARSI LADY FREEDOM FIGHTER 1861-1936

Cama chose a grave in Paris. She had a tombstone prepared with the words: RESISTANCE TO TYRANNY IS OBEDIENCE TO GOD carved in both French and Gujarati. The date of her death was given as "192-" the last number to be filled in after her death.

RETURN TO INDIA AND FINAL GOODBYE

In fact, Bhikhaiji Cama lived in Paris until 1936, when she was finally given permission to return to India. Although Bhikhaiji Cama was by this time barely able to walk or write, it is a sign of her influence

that she had to promise not to make any speeches in India before she was allowed to return to her homeland. She died in the Parsi General Hospital in Bombay in August 1936.

Bhikhaiji Cama was an inspiration to people involved in the Independence Movement. Her fiery politics and unstoppable belief in the right of people to govern themselves were important to India's eventual freedom. Today, her portrait hangs in the Lok Sabha, the Indian Parliament as one of the builders of modern India.



Zerbanoo Gifford Author, human rights campaigner and founder of the ASHA Foundation, Zerbanoo Gifford holds the International Woman of the Year Award 2006 for her humanitarian work, which spans over thirty years of grassroots and global activism. In 1989, Zerbanoo was presented with the Nehru Centenary Award for her work championing the rights of women, children and minorities. Pioneer for Asian Women in British politics, she chaired the Commission 'Looking into ethnic minority involvement in British Life' and was a member of the advisory group to the British Home Secretary. A former director of Anti-Slavery International, she was awarded the Freedom of the City of Lincoln, Nebraska, for her work combating modern slavery and racism.

SHAPURJI SAKLATVALA, Third Asian British MP 1874-1936

ZERBANOO GIFFORD

A courageous Parsi who served in the fight against deadly disease in Bombay, made business trips to jungles of Central India and served as a Communist Member of Parliament in England. "Nothing but death could end his courage and determination in the cause of humanity. Nothing but such determination could conquer death. His work lives on."

Shapurji Saklatvala was known as Comrade Saks, a fiery fighter against prejudice and injustice. He was elected Britain's third Asian Member of Parliament in 1922.

EARLY LIFE

Shapurji Saklatvala was born in Bombay in 1874. After his father's death, he was brought up by his uncle, the industrialist, J N Tata.

There was an outbreak of the plague in Bombay between 1896 and 1902. Many people died because there was no vaccine to protect against the disease, so a famous Russian doctor was asked to help. Shapurji Saklatvala was to be his assistant, and went to the European Club, (where the doctor was staying), but was refused entry because he was Indian. After much argument, he was let in through the kitchen, and the two men met in a small basement. The

insulting treatment Shapurji Saklatvala had received reinforced his hatred of racial discrimination.

Shortly afterwards, he was sent by his uncle to the jungles of Central India to prospect for iron ore and coal deposits, which were needed to build India's independent steel industry. Although he found the minerals that led to the foundation of Tata Iron and Steel, he fell ill with malaria. As a result he was sent to the health spa at Buxton, in Derbyshire in 1905 to recover.

ENTRY IN POLITICS

It was on his birthday, 28th March, that he met his future wife, Sally Marsh and fell in love with her. He proposed to her, on her birthday, and the two were married in 1907. Once a supporter of the Liberal government in Britain, Shapurji Saklatvala began to think that they did not do enough for working people, so he joined the Independent



he was better off in prison than the miners on strike, because he had been fed and housed, whereas the miners received no money to even buy food for their families.

MEETING WITH MAHATMA GANDHI

In early 1927, he went on a speaking tour of India and met Gandhi, but they disagreed over the ways India could win Independence. Shapurji Saklatvala felt that Gandhi's 'simple living' campaign was wrong, saying that furthering progress and increasing living standards for Indian workers was their only hope.

It was his last visit to India, as his visa to visit the country was withdrawn by the British that year. As Shapurji Saklatvala later said, in a speech in Moscow's Red Square, *"I sit in Westminster, making laws for India, and, as an Indian I am told not to go back to my own country."*

He lost his Parliamentary seat in the 1929 General Election, when Labour put up a candidate against him. Soon afterwards he had a heart attack. His health failing, he fought two by-elections – Sheffield in 1930 and Battersea in 1931, but was unsuccessful both times.

FINAL GOODBYE

In 1936 Shapurji Saklatvala died from another heart attack. His memorial tablet at the Zoroastrian Parsi burial ground in Working reads: *"Nothing but death could end his courage and determination in the cause of humanity. Nothing but such determination could conquer death. His work lives on."*

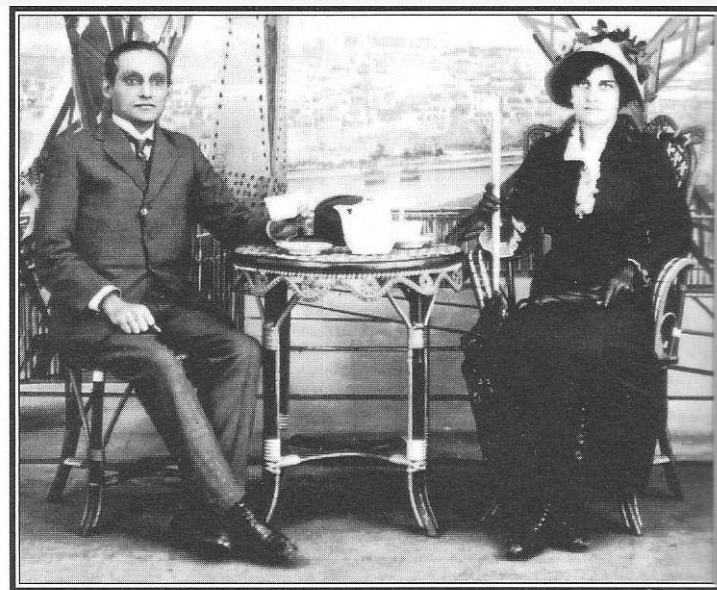
It would be fifty-eight years before any other non-white MP sat in the House of Commons.

Zerbanoo Gifford see bio page 85

We all smile in the same
language

<http://www.peacenext.org>

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service provided
by the Council for a Parliament
of the World's Religions.
Next Parliament
Brussels in 2014*



Comrade Saks with his wife in Paris.

Labour Party (ILP) in 1909. He tried to interest British trade unions in the conditions of workers in India by telling them that their bosses were using India as a source of cheap labour, so they could pay British workers less.

In 1922, he was selected as Parliamentary candidate for Battersea North for the Labour Party. As one newspaper, the Daily Chronicle, said on 8th November 1922, *"Mr. Shapurji Saklatvala is a communist and a sympathizer with the Russian revolution. To do him justice he makes no secret of these leanings, but rather glories in them. Mr. Shapurji Saklatvala will prove too strong even for the Labour element in Battersea."* In fact, at the General Election held on 15th November 1922, he won with a comfortable majority. In his first speech at Parliament, Shapurji Saklatvala accused the government of hypocrisy, because it was working with rulers, such as the Italian fascist dictator, Mussolini and the Serbian king David, who had won power by violence but it would not support the Russian communist government, because they had killed their king, the Tsar.

In 1923, Shapurji Saklatvala lost the election by 186 votes. Now outside Parliament, he went round Britain on speaking tours. In the 1924 General Election, he stood as a Communist candidate, and was re-elected. He was the only Communist in the House of Commons and joked that his was the only united Party in the House.

During the 1926 General Strike, Shapurji Saklatvala was arrested for making a fiery May Day speech in Hyde Park. He was imprisoned in Wormwood Scrubs for two months. Less than two hours after his release, Shapurji Saklatvala was speaking in Parliament. He explained that

Parsis in Politics 1857-1954

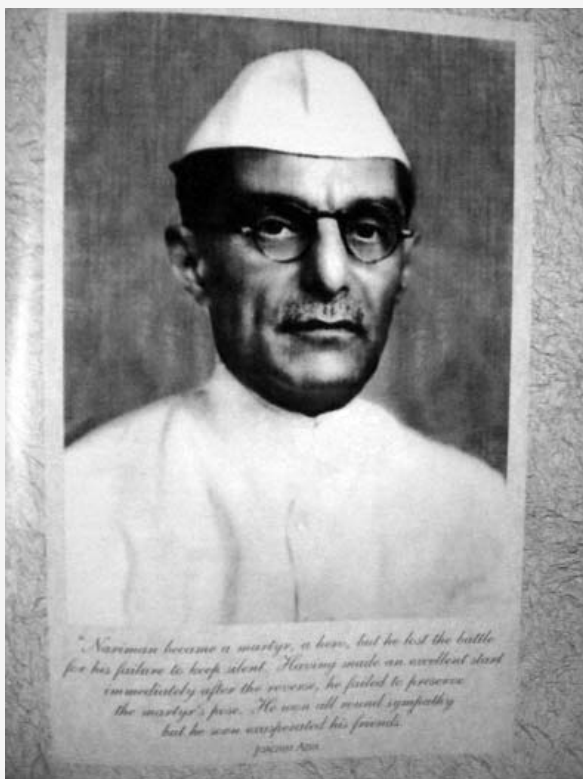


VEER NARIMAN,

THE FORGOTTEN FREEDOM FIGHTER 1883-1948

MANECK BHUJWALA

From humble beginnings to lawyer, freedom fighter and high positions in government, Khurshed Nariman lived a principled life, supporting causes for students, friends, public and country and exposing corruption.



Association and regularly voiced its opinion on important matters.

JOURNALISTIC CRUSADE

During World War I, the prices of land had risen together with other commodities, and house rents had also gone up, pressuring the common man, and creating an uproar against land owners. There was vigorous demand for more land and cheaper houses, especially for the industrial population of the city. The decision to reclaim a portion of the Back Bay and build chawls (low income homes) for the poor was made by the Governor of Bombay, Sir George Lloyd in 1920. The Industrial Housing Scheme to build 50,000 tenements for about Rs. 30 crores was severely criticized by Nariman, who warned the tax-payers not to be deluded by government promises. He wrote articles in the Bombay Chronicle and other Press under the caption "Development Scandals" and exposed several irregularities or shady deals. He also later censured it as a member of the Municipal Corporation.

PREPARATION FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

In 1922, Nariman contested and won a seat from the "D Ward" in the Bombay Municipal Corporation (B.M.C.), thus opening a new chapter in his life. It was considered a training ground for young people aspiring to public service. Other eminent members of the community who had served the people through the Corporation were *Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Sir Rustom Masani, and Dr. Jal Balsara*. In 1923, as a member of the Standing Committee, he strongly opposed the suggestion to increase the tram fares and moved the High Court in the matter, for the benefit of the common man.

In 1923, Nariman was elected to the Legislative Council where he took the opportunity to ask for abolition of the Bombay Development Department that was created to carry out the Backbay and other reclamation projects, charging maladministration and wasting of public funds.

In the session of October 1924, Nariman asked questions related to the indent of bars or rods for the construction of the chawls, and *Sir Cowasji Jehangir*, who was a civil engineer and a master constructor of Bombay, gave the replies, but Nariman was not satisfied with them. In his speech of March 3, 1925 he therefore referred to "ugly rumours in the City and in the whole of the Presidency that the staff of the officers had been receiving secret Commissions from the manufacturers," and said that, "without any reserve, with all the responsibility that I can

EARLY LIFE

Khurshed Framji Nariman was born in Thana, a suburb of Bombay, on May 17, 1883, to a middle-class Parsi family, a year before the formation of the Indian National Congress. His father, Framji who served as *Diwan of the State of Janjira* for a short time and later in the Police department in Belgaum, died while Nariman was very young. He was then raised by his brother-in-law, *Dastur Hoshang Jamasp, the High Priest of Poona*.

Nariman studied at St. Winston Jesuit School in Poona and after matriculation he attended the Deccan College, before moving to Bombay to study Law. Due to his limited finances, he worked as an interpreter at the Police Court, while also attending Law College.

LAW CAREER

After graduating from Law College, Nariman practiced as a lawyer at the Police Court, and willingly accepted cases involving questions of self-respect and unjust treatment or humiliation of Indians at the hands of the British. He worked on cases involving national causes without charging fees. He also served as Secretary of the Police Court Bar



Parsis in Politics 1857-1954



VEER NARIMAN,

THE FORGOTTEN FREEDOM FIGHTER 1883-1948

command, I openly make a charge that there has been a serious wasting of public funds. There have been instances which I can go to the length of calling frauds and I make this charge on behalf of the public and on behalf of the investors of Bombay who have invested nearly 30 crores in this work. I say that if the government shirk an inquiry, suspicion in the public minds will be confirmed."

The public clamour at last forced the British Government to appoint a Committee to inquire into the history of the inception and conduct of the Back-Bay Reclamation Scheme and to make recommendations for its future operation. In August 1926 the Committee started its work, inviting evidence from the public. Nariman supplied a detailed list including the names of officers, and manufacturers who gave secret commissions to the officers. Nariman was sued for defamation and he counter-sued. After a year of hearings of the Harvey-Nariman case, the judge *Sir Hormazdyar P. Dastur* acquitted Nariman. The case made history in the Civic life of Bombay and brought out the best in Nariman as a man, and a criminal lawyer, and gave him a National Standing.

ADVANCEMENT IN GOVERNMENT

After nearly eleven years of legal and social work, Nariman turned to civic affairs. He was inducted into the Nationalist Party by *Vithalbhai Patel* who had formed the Party in the B.M.C. and was its president in 1924-25, and Nariman made a good impression with his performance. When Vithalbhai was elected as President of the Central Legislature, Nariman took his place in the B.M.C. where he worked for many years. During this period, he was also a member of the Law Revenue and General Purposes Committee for five years.

In 1925, Nariman devoted his time watching the proceedings of a sensational murder case, on behalf of *Mumtaz Begum*, the wife of his friend, *Abdul Kadar Bawla*, a Municipal Councillor. A conspiracy to kidnap Mumtaz Begum, who had been a mistress of the Maharaja of Indore in the past, was foiled by alert public who raised the alarm and police and military officers who captured the assailants. At the end of the case, with evidence pointing to Indore, Nariman presented a petition to the Viceroy of India on behalf of Mumtaz Begum. The ruler of Indore had to abdicate the throne in favour of his son..This showed Nariman's belief in giving just and equitable opportunity be given to any accused irrespective of status or position.

Nariman was always sympathetic towards the students and their role in society. Students of the Elphinstone College hostel were once arrested on a complaint by European residents of Colaba. Nariman appeared for them pro bono

and got them acquitted. In 1928, he was elected as their leader. It was under his guidance, the Bombay Presidency Youth Conference decided to fight for complete independence for India, instead of the Dominion Status, as pleaded by some of the leaders. At its Lahore session, therefore, the Indian National Congress declared complete independence as the political objective.

The interview of Gandhiji and Pandit Motilal Nehru (Jawaharlal's father) with the Viceroy had failed. The only course was to decide in favor of complete independence, and to prepare for the Civil disobedience. At this historic point, Nariman was elected President of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee. In this capacity, he organized the Salt movement in the City (protest against British tax by collecting salt from the sea at Chowpatty beach where many women like *Kasturba Gandhi*, *Perin and Goshi Captain*, *Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay* also participated), and set the example. Bombay was thrilled. Ghandhi gave full credit to Nariman for such a unique achievement.

Nariman led the Bombay Youth League (which was a base to reach the height of the Congress hierarchy), and inspired the Youth Movement for about three years. It mobilized under his guidance to successfully boycott the Simon Commission (as it did not include a single Indian, although it was created to decide the future of India). After the historic *Dandi March (Salt Movement)* it united with the Congress and Nariman took over the reins of the Congress leadership. He led the Bombay contingent into the All India Congress Committee, A.I.C.C. Also as leader of the Bombay Legislative Council he was a model of discipline.

TITLE OF "VEER" FROM SAROJINI NAIDU

In recognition of his leadership and efforts in the fight for India's freedom, *Sarojini Naidu* gave him the title of "VEER". He was involved in campaigns against foreign cloth and liquor, and went to jail four times (spending two years in Bijapur prison) for his activities. During his prison terms Nariman wrote two books; *1 Whither Congress ? and 2 What Next*

In the book, *Whither Congress*, 1933, Nariman reviewed the entire political scene, beginning with the first Civil Disobedience movement which he claimed was successful with the Gandhi-Irwin pact. He criticized the subsequent movement for which the country was not prepared and based on a weak technical plea. He also criticized the semi-religious and mystical principles involved in the national movements (such as Mahatma Gandhi's willingness to give up Swaraj if needed to keep his spiritual principles), instead of sticking to realism.

Parsis in Politics 1857-1954



JAMSHED NUSSERWANJI MEHTA,

FATHER OF MODERN KARACHI

1886 - 1952

MANECK BHUJWALA

Among the giants of the Parsi community, Jamshed takes his place with an unblemished character, compassion for fellowmen, honesty in business and public service, a vision and dedication to build a modern and beautiful city of Karachi, and contributions to many institutions and his own community.



EARLY LIFE

Jamshed Mehta was born in Karachi on January 7, 1886 to a wealthy businessman, Nusserwanji and his wife Goolbai. After his college education in the commercial field, as his father had desired, he joined his father's firm, Nusserwanji and Company, which included a big retail shop, a wholesale business in wine, spirits and provisions, a tile

factory, a flour mill, an aerated water factory, an ice factory, a saw mill and a salt manufacturing company.

Parents at first, and later on the teachings of the Theosophical Society were instrumental in molding Jamshed's character while growing up. He especially considered Dr. Annie Besant, the then leader of the Society and an eloquent speaker, as his spiritual guru.

PREPARING FOR HOME RULE

When Dr. Besant visited Karachi in 1917, after starting the Home Rule League of resistance to British rule, Jamshed joined it. His thinking was that it was impossible for the masses to remain non-violent, in spite of the holy talk about non-violence. He observed that behind the façade of non-violent movement, there was hidden hatred for British rule, and he was against hatred for anyone. Jamshed was appointed President of the Home Rule League of Karachi in the same year, and the movement spread.

In order to prepare for Home Rule when it would be realized, Jamshed pushed for establishment of educational institutions that would impart education along national lines. He started a National College at Hyderabad (Sind) in conjunction with his friend Mr. Bhurgri, and financed it anonymously for several years, before it was named Dayaram Gidumal National College, and nationalized by the Pakistan government after 1947. He believed in making primary education free and compulsory for all. He also advocated creating Land Mortgage Banks, Agricultural Schools, roads and demonstration stations.

KARACHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

In 1918, Jamshed was elected as a Councilor of the Karachi Municipal Corporation which he served for 12 years. Due to his great concern for the welfare of fellow human

beings, he was soon elected President of the Corporation where he was able to show his great administrative ability. He did away with many slum areas of the city while planning for housing of the poor and middle class citizens, allotted a large tract of land to the co-operative Housing Societies.

Jamshed was a visionary. To solve the water supply problem of Karachi he proposed using the water from the Indus River that was about 100 miles away. Although initially rejected due to huge expense involved, the scheme was eventually adopted with the outbreak of World War II. He succeeded in constructing wide roads, parks, gardens and playgrounds for the young. He divided the city into wards with one or more primary schools, a clinic and a maternity home in each ward. He organized emergency services with fire brigade and ambulances. With his personal attention and hard work, he made Karachi a modern, well-planned city, and deserved to be called the Father of Modern Karachi.

The Governor of the Bombay Presidency impressed by Jamshed's courage and integrity offered him a Knighthood, but he refused to accept the honor, by replying "If I accept your Knighthood, I would lose my friends, and I love them so much." He was also offered a seat in the Executive Council of the Government of Bombay, but again he declined because he did not like to sell his conscience and become a slave of the bureaucratic government.

SOCIAL REFORMER

In 1928, the Age of Consent Committee visited Karachi, and Jamshed gave important evidence to it. In those days, young girls used to be married off to old persons. The late Mr. Byramjee Malbari, a great social reformer had tried to reform this practice among the Hindus but faced severe opposition from the orthodox Hindus. Jamshed pleaded before the Inquiry Commission to raise the age of consent for girls to 16 and for boys to 18. His effort contributed to the passing of the Sarda Act in 1930 which helped to a limited extent.

POLITICAL OFFICES

In February 1933, the Government appointed Jamshed as an additional member of the Bombay Legislative Assembly where the new Karachi Municipal Bill was being considered. He made important contributions to the debates held in the Assembly on that Bill, leading to its successful

Parsis in Politics 1857-1954



JAMSHED NUSSEERWANJI MEHTA,

FATHER OF MODERN KARACHI

1886 - 1952

passage. On November 8, 1933 he was elected as the First Mayor of Karachi, under the new act.

In July 1934 Jamshed resigned from the office of Mayor, because the new Karachi Municipal Act gave wide powers to the Chief Officer, leaving the Mayor as a dignified figure head of the administration. When Sind was separated from the Bombay Presidency in 1936, becoming a new province with a Governor and an elected Legislative Assembly, Jamshed chose the constituency of a small rural town of Dadu to get elected to the Assembly. After winning the seat, he stayed with the Assembly for less than 3 years and resigned due to the intrigues in the organization.

Jamshed participated in Gandhiji's First Civil Disobedience Movement that was started during World War I, and Gandhiji had great admiration for him. But, in spite of the great friendship between the two, he declined to join the second Civil Disobedience Movement when it started in 1930, as he had developed a distaste for politics.

Although Jamshed was opposed to the partition of India, once it became a fait accompli he decided to stay in Pakistan and gave his full loyalty to the new country. Ministers and other officials of Pakistan often consulted him on matters of State, and he always obliged them with advice and guidance.

Rehabilitation of the large number of refugees who came after partition and lived in squalor, staining the fair name of Karachi known for its modernity and cleanliness, occupied Jamshed's thinking. He suggested plans for moving them outside the city for rehabilitation, but the politicians did not listen to him, leaving him heart-broken.

BOY SCOUTS

Jamshed was the founder of scouting in Sind and in Karachi, and one of the founder members of the Boy Scout Movement in India and Pakistan. He was the deputy Chief Commissioner of the GHQ and its honorary treasurer. He was associated with the organization for 30 years, and for his great service he was awarded the *Order of the Silver Wolf*.

On Jamshed's 61st birthday, on January 7, 1946, his friends and admirers formed the *Jamshed Jayanti Committee* which included representatives from 77 institutions with whom he was actively connected as Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, organizer or advisor, in order to celebrate the event. *Mr. Hatim K. Alavi*, Chairman of the committee read the address and the committee gave Rs. 2500 towards the cost of construction of a land-ship for the sea-scouts, that was named '*Jamshed Nusserwanji*'. To ensure that the younger generation would be acquainted

with Jamshed's life and work, a large photograph of Jamshed was presented to every school in Karachi, and a book called "*Jamshed, A Karma Yogi*" was published by two of his friends.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

For the Parsi community, Jamshed's chief contribution was in organizing communal Muktaf ceremony. In those days, private Muktafs were held at fire temples or homes of priests. He held communal Muktaf prayers at a large hall in the *Jehangir Rajkotwala Baug* (which is now no more), with one single flower vase for all the departed ones and "*Hama Asho Farohar*" (all the holy Farohars). Each attendee was asked to contribute one rupee and a short service was held in the early morning before office hours, so that everyone could attend.

On every day of the Muktaf, Gatha verses were recited and sung, led by a lady with a good voice and each line followed by the congregation, and then there would be a short sermon in Gujarati or English. About 500 to 600 Parsis attended and enjoyed the individual participation, without any objection from the priests.

Jamshed also held religious classes once or twice a month at the *Young Men's Zoroastrian Association*. And, as an exponent of all religions, he also gave weekly lectures at the Theosophical Society Hall, that touched the hearts and minds of all listeners. He believed that TRUTH was the greatest religion and LOVE was the embodiment of God.

No matter how busy he was, Jamshed was particular in visiting all his ailing relatives or friends, bringing comfort, hope and cheer to the patients and their families. In one instance, he attended to a young Parsi girl, *Frainy Patel* who suffered from bone consumption and whose case was given up as hopeless by doctors, for seventeen years. He became her doctor and spiritual minister, and with homeopathic medicine and prayers he succeeded in curing her to a great extent. In gratitude, Frainy wrote a booklet in 1952 entitled "*Jamshed, an Enlightened Healer*" describing her story.

FAMILY LIFE

With his focus on service to others, running a large business, holding leadership positions in many private and public institutions, Jamshed never found the time to get married. He lived with sister Perin in their father's house. A little girl, Gool-Zarina was born to Perin, who became a widow soon after marriage, and became a victim of polio. Even after a hard day's work, Jamshed would tend to his niece. After trying specialists in America and Europe without success, he returned home with her, and she died in her early twenties.

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The Humble Politician 1910 -1986

COOVERJI HORMASJI BHABHA, **The Humble Politician 1910 -1986**

one of the three most important business weeklies in India of that time.

PUBLIC LIFE

Due to his writings on business and economic issues, Cooverji came into the public eye even though he had not joined any political party. In 1941, he was appointed Justice of Peace by a notification of the Home Department, Government of Bombay. In May 1942, he was appointed the Honorary Presidency Magistrate.

In 1946, after the end of the Second World War, the British government decided to form an Interim Government for Indians, with a communiqué from Viceroy Lord Wavell outlining the requirements, including appointment of representatives of three minorities, one of which was for the Parsi community. Cooverji was invited to join the Interim Government as the Parsi community representative. Sardar Vallabhai Patel had phoned him in advance to expect the invitation. Cooverji was thrilled by the personal call from the Sardar, whom he respected as a great man with an outstanding personality. Not being a member of any political party, it was a great honor for him to get the position of a minister responsible for the portfolio of Works, Mines and Power.

In his new position in the Governor General's cabinet, Cooverji made several ground breaking contributions like working on a mining policy for India, setting up the Fuel



. Members of Interim Government (Oct. 26, 1946)

Standing Front Row (L to R): Baldeo Singh, John Mathai, C. Rajagopalachari, Jawaharlal Nehru, Liaquat Ali Khan, Vallabhai Patel, Il Chundrigar, Asaf Ali Khan and Cooverji H. Bhabha. Back Row (L to R): Jagjivan Ram, Ghanzanfar Ali Khan, Rajendra Prasad and Abdur Rab Nishtar.





Parsis in Politics 1857-1954



Research Institute, and starting work on the planning of major irrigation dam and river valley projects.

After India gained independence in August 1947, Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru gave Cooverji the important portfolio of Commerce in his new cabinet. When a colleague, Dr. Rajendra Prasad (who later became President of India) took ill, Nehru asked Cooverji to take care of the Food & Agriculture ministry during his temporary absence for recuperation.

The declaration of independence, was followed by widespread communal riots all over India. Lord Mountbatten was called back on September 4, 1947 by Vallabhai and Nehru to help deal with the situation as chairman of a Central Emergency Committee, and he in turn appointed Commerce Minister Cooverji to head the Delhi Emergency Committee that was constituted on September 9, to handle relief operations for helping the refugees in the capital city. Over a hundred thousand persons were cared for with efficiency and speed, and law and order were restored within two weeks. Lord Mountbatten thanked Cooverji for his work.

Cooverji was also elected on February 13, 1948, by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Bihar, to the Constituent Assembly that was formed to draft the Constitution of independent India. After resigning from the Ministerial position in 1948, he continued to participate in the deliberations of the Assembly for over a year. Due to his mother's deteriorating health, Cooverji expressed his desire to Vallabhai to resign from the Constituent Assembly, and his resignation was reluctantly accepted on February 24, 1949.

COOVERJIS VALUE SYSTEM

Insistence on Correctness

During his public and business life, Cooverji always insisted on following the correct processes and procedures. He would point out any errors that he noticed without mincing words, undaunted by rank, age or race, and insist on setting the record straight. One example of this is shown in the exchange of letters with the then Viceroy of India, Lord Wavell, in which he pointed out the error in his wording of the minutes of a Cabinet meeting of February 28, 1947, regarding approval of the Interim Government Budget, and pointed a way out of the situation with constructive suggestions.

PROBITY IN PUBLIC LIFE

Cooverji believed in complete transparency in all his dealings. Aware that his business interests may evoke controversy, he declared his shareholding in companies.

Within a few days of his being sworn in as a Member of the Interim Government, he wrote to Pandit Nehru, the Vice President of the Interim Government, giving a list of all the companies he was Director of, and that he had resigned the Directorship of those companies. The letter also included a list of 60 companies in which he was a shareholder and he asked Nehru to forward it to other Cabinet colleagues and to the Viceroy, if he thought necessary. *This was 60 years before rules made it mandatory for Members of Parliament to declare their assets.*

In the 1930s and 1940s, the overarching ideology was Fabian socialism. On the one hand there was general distrust of industry and commerce and on the other, the expectations of nationalism to usher in a Welfare State. Cooverji was very aware that corruption could occur sooner or later, if officialdom became over-powerful, and he opposed giving too much power to bureaucracy. He expressed these concerns to the then Finance Minister, R.K. Shanmukham Chetty, in his letter of January 27, 1948, specifically referring to the Cabinet's acceptance of the proposed amendments to the Taxation on Income Act of 1947, which would result in *"endless harassment of the public corruption, blackmailing, and other unhealthy features will become so dominant in commercial life in India that it will tend to shake public confidence, retard industrialization and trade..."*

ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

As Minister of Commerce, Cooverji led the delegation of the Government of India to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Employment at Havana, Cuba in November 1947 and was elected Vice President of the Conference. He successfully presented the case of many developing countries asking for preferential tariffs, to promote industrial growth and development along with international trade.

Cooverji had expressed his views on international trade and economic nationalism in a speech titled *"Ethnicopolis"* which he had made some time before India's independence.

In the speech he had said that *"The nations have been practically crushed into a world community economically. Economic policy and political purpose of different countries are still bound by an impossible nationalism. Herein lies not only the main hindrance to the realization of a world community but the chief menace of our civilization"* He defined economic nationalism as *"the primeval instinct of man for economic exploitation of his neighbors"*.

As Minister of Commerce, Cooverji was also concerned about the need for economic diplomacy. Using the occasion of his trip to Cuba, he stopped over in the USA, and stressed this in his letter to Pandit Nehru, pointing out that India's ambassador in the USA did not know many of the prominent Wall Street figures personally, and had very limited contacts with prominent businessmen, and thereby was not able to serve India effectively in the



USA where human relationships are more important than niceties of diplomatic form and ceremony.

SERVING BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

Although it was not a part of his Ministerial duties, Cooverji showed his helpful nature in the task of nation building, working closely with Sardar Patel and Home Secretary *V.P. Menon*, on handling the delicate task of negotiating with the princely states on their accession to the Indian Union. Letters of appreciation written to Cooverji, including one from the Maharaja of Gwalior attest to his competence and contribution.

RETURN TO BOMBAY

Contrary to some rumors speculating on reasons of competence or personal conflicts with colleagues or Nehru, for Cooverji leaving government, the true and only reason was the deteriorating health of his mother. Sardar Patel in a letter to Ratanbai, had tried to have Cooverji's mother come to Delhi so she could be near him, thus allowing Cooverji to continue in government, and Nehru expressed gratitude in his letter to Cooverji for the work he had done. Many other letters of appreciation from government colleagues like *V.V. Giri, B.M. Birla, and D.D. Thacker* disprove the rumors.

After his resignation from government was accepted by Nehru, Cooverji stayed on at Nehru's request until the end of the Budget session, before moving back to Bombay on April 6, 1949. At the Delhi railway station he was given a send off (as reported by *The Hindu*) by Defence Minister *Sardar Baldev Singh*, Industries Minister *Dr. Shyamprasad Mukherji*, Secretaries of Home, Transport and Commerce departments *Mr R.N. Banerjee, Mr. Y.N. Sukthankar and Mr. C.C. Desai*, respectively, and officers of other Ministries.

As he wrote to Sardar Patel after arriving in Bombay, he went to visit the Fire Temple at Udwarda and planned to go to Mahabaleshwar with his mother. In June 1953 Cooverji's mother passed away.

After returning to Bombay, Cooverji re-joined the Central Bank of India as a Director, an honorary position. In 1955 he was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Board in 1955 and remained in that position until the bank was nationalized in July 1969. As Vice Chairman, Cooverji was involved in many new policy changes in banking, such as extending banking services to rural areas and setting deposit rates as an instrument to attract household savings, and introduction of deposit insurance to protect small savers in case of bank failures as well as to prevent banks from going under. He also served as Chairman of the Indian Banks Association twice.

THE FAMILY MAN

Cooverji remained a bachelor until he was 45 years old due to his full dedication to work and his complete devotion to his mother. He met his future wife Amy, daughter of *Kaikobad Jungalwalla* (who was Director of Public Health in Burma before moving to Bombay after the Japanese bombing there) in early 1953 at a dance party at the CCI Club, Churchgate.

Cooverji and Amy married on March 27, 1955 in the traditional manner with festivities held at Mount Napean, the Dubash residence. The wedding was attended by famous people of Bombay, including the then *Chief Minister of Bombay State, Morarji Desai*. Cooverji had two children – Homi and Rati.

Cooverji was a deeply religious person, doing his daily prayers, kusti before each meal, visiting the fire temple on special days, and especially with the family on Parsi New Year dressed in new clothes. He was also very respectful and caring for the elders, visiting one or two relatives on Sundays with the whole family.

PHILANTROPIC ACTIVITIES

Continuing the Bhabha family tradition of charitable activities, further nurtured by Jesuit schools he was educated at, and having read books on philosophy and spiritualism including *Aurobindo, Vivekanand, and Bhagwad Gita*, Cooverji developed a genuine love and caring for people.

Cooverji was involved with many charitable activities, including the *Bhabha hospital at Khar, Bhabha Sanatorium in Bandra, the Pirojbai Dadabhoy Vatcha Agiary, the Sophia College, the Sophia-Bhabha Institute of Science for Women, the N.M.Wadia Charities, the N.M.Wadia Institute of Cardiology, and the Ratanbai and Hormasji Bhabha Charity Trust Fund*, in providing both management expertise and financial support.

FINAL GOODBYE

After surviving a heart attack in 1969 and a massive stroke in 1979, Cooverji finally ended an illustrious life when he passed away in 1986, but not before attending his daughter *Rati's wedding to Farhad Forbes* earlier in the same year. He is survived by his children *Rati and Homi* and grand-children, *Riah and Darius Forbes and Aliya and Ayesha Bhabha*.

Maneck Bhujwala

*(from Rati Bhabha Forbes' book,
Remembering My Father: COOVERJI H BHABHA)*



Perin Naoroji Captain – A Parsi Freedom Fighter

1888 - 1958

ARDESHIR B. DAMANIA(PhD)

A worthy grand daughter of the Grand Old Man of India, Dadabhai Naoroji, was a young Parsi lady, Perin Captain, who grew up inspired by the example of another great Parsi woman, Bhikhaiji Cama, joining the movement for India's freedom from British rule, forming the National Women's Council and participating in Mahatma Gandhi's protest actions.



the fore and kept the struggle going. The most prominent among these heroic ladies were two Parsis, *Madame Bhikaji Cama* and *Perin Captain*. While Madame Cama was fighting in exile from France, Perin Captain was fighting in the heart of Bombay.

: Photo left: A happy new year post card sold by M. Vadilal & Co. of Bhangwadi, Bombay 2 and printed at Phoenix Printing Works (an underground press), shows a color picture of Mrs Perin Captain with the caption "Fourth Dictator of Bombay". The latter term was to signify her strong character and unflinching fight against the British, that is to say she dictated terms to the British and not vice versa. As one can see in the picture, she wore hardly any jewellery; not even a watch in a true Gandhian sense of simplicity.

POLITICAL ACTIVIST

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

BREAKING THE SALT LAW

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

"The Deputy Commissioner of the Bombay Police, a Parsi named Mr. Cowasji Petigara, made a sudden sweep on the Congress House with his havildars on Thursday evening to dismantle the "salt factory" that the ladies had established in defiance of British salt law in the courtyard of Congress House at Girgaum. The women were making salt by evaporating seawater on three coal fired "sagris". More than 200 policemen with 30 police officers armed with lathis and revolvers, respectively, made their

INTRODUCTION

"We record our homage and deep appreciation for the Womanhood of India who in the hour of peril for the motherland forsook the shelter of their homes and with unflinching courage and endurance shoulder to shoulder with their menfolk, in the frontline of India's national army to share with them the sacrifices and triumphs of the struggle" – From a resolution passed by the Indian National Congress on January 26, 1931, the day the British government released Mahatma Gandhi from prison. In the mid-1920s and 30s most of the male freedom fighters were either in prison or lying low underground for fear of arrest. At that critical juncture in the fight from freedom from British rule it was the women who came to

appearance all of a sudden just on the eve of a meeting. The Congress officials and Satyagrahis on the spot remained cool and calm and Mr. Petigarra and the police party were first met with a non-violent resistance at the hands of Satyagrahi ladies. Ms. Perin Captain, along with other lady volunteers, barred their way. For a time the police party was baffled at the sight of the females and when chivalry failed Mr. Petigara gave orders to remove the ladies' obstruction and the policemen pushed their way through the cordon."

When the police wanted to destroy the salt "sagris" they were again met with another non-violent resistance by Satyagrahis under supervision of Mr. Meherally who formed a cordon round the apparatus. The police party then rushed at the volunteers and after forcibly removing them, dismantled the "factory". In the assault and consequent scuffle that followed the police attack, many lady Satyagrahis received injuries, including Perin Captain, and another four of them fainted on the spot.

The police then put the male Satyagrahis, Mr. Abid Ali, Mr. Meherally and Mr. Sadik, under arrest and marched them to the police motor van waiting outside. By this time news of the "raid" had spread throughout Girgaum and a crowd of more than 5000 supporters gathered around the Congress House. As the arrested leaders were being marched to the van with a police force more than 200 strong they received a thundering ovation with cries of "Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai", "Down with the Union Jack", "Hindu-Muslim Ki Jai" The arrested leaders were kept in the Lamington Road police lock-up.

LIQUOR SHOP BOYCOTT

Perin Captain, a devoted follower of Mahatma Gandhi, was also instrumental in organizing women's boycott and picketing of liquor shops mostly owned by the Parsi mafia located in the Gol Pitha area of Bombay. In all 500 liquor shops in Bombay were picketed by some 2,500 women, during 1930-31. The women would form picketing committees. They would then stand or sit outside liquor shops, including those in European areas, and try at first to convince the shopper not to enter the shops. If the

purchaser insisted they would throw themselves on the floor across the entrance to the shop. If they did not succeed even in this they would hurl themselves in front of the car of the liquor purchaser till finally in frustration the purchaser would be forced to return the liquor to the shop and collect his refund. During one such picketing exercise the police arrested Mrs Luckmani. The women's groups were in an uproar. Perin Captain at once organized a "morcha" through the streets of central Bombay. The procession was led by the daughter of the Mrs Luckmani with Perin Captain marching in the third row among the other women leaders. For all such acts of open defiance against the British, she was considered a firebrand freedom fighter with a temper to match. .

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

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RUSTOM K SIDHWA- REGISTRAR OF PUBLIC GRIEVANCES

Serving Communities Selflessly

Yazdi Bankwala

An honest and principled Parsi who started his political career in the province of Sindh, fought for reforms and independence during British rule and moved to India after independence where he continued public service including writing India's Constitution.

INTRODUCTION

One nation two destinies led to Independence and creation of India and Pakistan. This journey has been a painful and difficult one. Till today the Two Nations are seeking ways to



adjust to each other and co-exist. Yet the example of RK Sidhwa, perhaps shows, when one has a Vision and remains true to one's Values much can be achieved especially in challenging and conflicting situations.

Both Nations are now successful in their own right and have honored their past leaders. In most cities in India there exists a Mahatma Gandhi Road and in Pakistan many Mohamad Ali Jinnah Roads. It may be difficult to find a Mahatma Gandhi Rd in Pakistan or a M A Jinnah Road in India. Yet over half a century later an unknown individual remains honored in Karachi, Pakistan and Mumbai, India with Roads still named after him, a Parsi, R K Sidhwa.

Like many Parsis of the time RK Sidhwa fought for Independence from the British, sacrificing personal and family life. He gave up many of his own personal ambitions for selfless service to the communities of his Nation.

PUBLIC SERVICE

RK Sidhwa was a member of the Congress and the Sindh assembly. Despite standing in an election with a

majority of many prominent and influential Sindhis, he was elected Mayor of Karachi. He served and achieved much during his tenure. The Sindhi community honored him for his contributions by making him an Honorary Sindhi. In the Sindhi website he is known as RK Sidhwa Acharya, a Sindhi Political leader.

We often wonder how as a single person we can influence the societies we live in. RK Sidhwa was just such an individual, determined to push boundaries and raise the standards of living for many. His contributions impacted the lives of many yet can hardly be remembered today except by his family.

"When you leave this world, you can only leave your name and your deeds behind", was a motto he practiced. This philosophy was deeply ingrained to his children and often repeated to the grandchildren too.



The Illustrated Weekly of India did a feature article on him entitled "Registrar of Public Grievances" as he specialized in problems that affected the common man.

Indeed the deeds were numerous and wide:-

During his tenure as Mayor of Karachi, the city was voted one of the cleanest Cities in Asia. In his 1940 Mayor's report he shared the following statistics: -

- o majority of citizens complaints were handled within 48 Hours
- o complaints that had no proper explanation, a time frame was given to resolve

Quite an achievement at that time considering in today's technological age, many nations are still struggling to provide fast and effective responses in serving their citizens.

- He fought for the rights of the Untouchable Caste and convinced the British to provide a township for them with health and educational facilities. This township was named after the British Governor of the State but was illegally changed to Sidhwa in a show of gratitude.
- He was influenced by Gandhi to gain Freedom in a non-violent way. For his principles, he too served time in jail for occupying railway compartments reserved only for the whites, till the echo was heard in the House of Commons leading to the abolishment of this unjust system.
- In 1940, he started a campaign with missionary zeal against provident fund societies and the



RUSTOM K SIDHWA- REGISTRAR OF PUBLIC GRIEVANCES

Serving Communities Selflessly

dowry system which ruined the lives of many.

AFTER INDEPENDENCE

After Partition Sidhwa moved to India and was part of the working team that created the Indian Constitution and was also a signatory to it. He fought on issues like article 36 on the separation of Executive & Judiciary duties. Although he was in the minority, he persisted and finally was successful in getting this passed.

He further argued that if minorities were encouraged to think in terms of permanent safeguards, *'there will be a kind of perpetual instinct in the mind of the minority community representatives that the safeguards are to remain forever, and it will be difficult for these small communities to come nearer to major communities....The ultimate phase of political life of all Indians should be one nation, no community.'*

He was appointed a Union Minister in Nehru's Government. Always keen to seek clarity, he was one who raised the most questions in the House and sought answers and accountability on several issues. He focused on principles and not personalities being confronted in the House by National Leaders like Sardar Patel and Nehru.

He lost the support of the party leadership as he insisted on raising issues related to Kashmir which was not in line with the Party.

Even though he was unable to serve as an elected representative he continued to be a one man watchdog of local government institutions to ensure they provided timely and quality service to the people.

SOME QUALITIES OF A LEADER

He demonstrated abilities of good learners. He believed in learning through observations and practical experience rather than book knowledge. He had an opportunity to travel to UK and kept careful notes in his diary. In observing a set of traffic lights, he was like a curious child and decided to implement this new technology at home and help the nation.

He studied systems with care and believed in high standards. He was also involved in setting up the all India Mayoral Conference and Forum where leaders met to exchange views in improving the cities. This was later extended to Sri Lanka.

In 1909, when newspapers were in financial crisis, he took the courage to start and edit a weekly journal known as the *Parsee Sansar* which he edited for 9 years and supported the cause of Home Rule even though this was not the line taken by the influential Parsis of the time who relied on the British for their patronage.

One of his sons, Noshir was seen smoking at the cinema by his Principal.

The Principal wrote a letter of complaint to Sidhwa but did not get a response. Months later, the Principal read in the press that a law had been passed banning underage smoking.

Like other leaders, he too showed courage of passive resistance despite having a family of 7 children to support. On many occasions, members of other communities would come to his residence with small tokens of appreciation to thank him for his services but he would adamantly refuse. He felt that it was his duty to work for the benefit of others and needed no thanks for just doing his job.

He was diagnosed with leukemia and had only months to live, yet his own will power and determination extended his life span by over 2 years more than the doctors had predicted and he continued to serve till his last.

GOOD THOUGHTS, GOOD WORDS, GOOD DEEDS is a motto that all Parsis aspire to live by. Generations of his family, living in many parts of the world, continue to be inspired by his life, contributing as best as they can in their own ways to their communities.

Some believe that generations are blessed by the deeds of their ancestors. I believe we continue to reap the blessings of RK Sidhwa's deeds and pray that we continue to sow for our future generations towards a harmonious and caring world.



Yazdi Jehangir Bankwala, Director at Arpitha Associates based in Singapore and Malaysia, conducts training programs and coaching for organisations in the areas of "Transformation, Values and Change". His clients include Fortune 500, MNC's and smaller organizations from both the business and not for profit services sectors. He has addressed on Leadership, Values at several International Forums in Asia and Europe including at the European Parliament in 2009. He has authored papers on Leadership and Values, Ethics, Spirituality published in international academic and professional journals. He supports initiatives on the revival of Ayurveda & prevention of Malaria

Yazdi is Charter Member, Lions Club of Singapore Hill View - President (2003-2004) and Co-founder, Centre for Promoting Human Values, Singapore, 2003, Founding Member, Freedom and Fun for Kids, Malaysia and Board member, Centre for the Advancement of Philanthropy, Malaysia 2005 yazdi@arpitha.com



PERVEZ N. DAMRY: A SERVANT OF INDIA AND THE WORLD

1915-2007

DINSHA MISTREE

From a family of bureaucrats, with college education from England, Pervez Damry started as a Deputy Collector in Gujarat, became an IAS officer, influenced policy in finance and banking, rose to be Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, and later Secretary of the World Bank.

MEETING DAMRY

"Do you know what is the biggest problem that India faces?"

"Over-population?" I guessed.

"No, overpopulation is a problem, but it is not the big problem. The big problem is corruption."

I was a young and impressionable undergrad, taking a break from doing some volunteering work to spend the afternoon with a family friend. At that point, all I knew about this elderly gentleman sitting across from me was that he had worked for World Bank for a number of years, and several people who knew of my interest in political economy were encouraging me to speak with him. He proceeded to explain in painstaking detail why corruption is such a large problem, how it first emerged in India in his opinion, how the public was going to stand up to the problem, and what would really need to be done to address it. I was amazed at some of the predictions and prescriptions this gentleman was making, and also why he was talking so passionately about corruption when India faced so many other problems. Indeed, the hour-long conversation with this elderly gentleman was so inspiring that I would subsequently take up the academic study of corruption.

This gentleman would pass away a few short years later, in 2007. It would be another three years before corruption became the daily headline for India, with calls for serious reform brought on by *Anna Hazare and his Lokpal movement*. Even today, I cannot help but feel that the

perspectives that this gentleman, P.N. Damry, shared with me all those years ago were more sophisticated and insightful than 99% of the current discourse by scholars and policy-makers. He was indisputably ahead of his time.

But the emerging issue of corruption in India was not the first instance where Damry had predicted the political future. Indeed Damry had a gift that few possess and many envy: he typically recognized the fault lines of politics before others, and he was consequently much more prepared to address the fissures when they inevitably emerged. He was also unafraid to tell the truth, a rarity among government servants. It was precisely this combination of foresight and honesty that *Robert McNamara* recognized in Damry when in the Spring of 1973 he selected him to become the Secretary of the World Bank, the premier multilateral institution for promoting development. Shortly before hiring him, his soon-to-be boss made Damry promise that he would not hesitate to point out when McNamara went wrong. And for the next eight years – some of the most formative and important years in the Bank's history – Damry did just that.

EARLY YEARS

Damry came from relatively humble beginnings to rise to the top echelons of the international community. Like so many other Parsis, Damry was born to a family of bureaucrats. Damry's father served in the British colonial government, and when Damry came of age in the 1930s, he was sent off to study in the United Kingdom. Damry would complete his studies with an MA from Cambridge

University. Returning to India just before Indian Independence, Damry served as a Deputy Collector in Gujarat. As Indian Independence drew near, following World War II, it became clear that the top echelons of the bureaucracy would need to be replaced with Indians as the Anglo officers chose to return to England. Damry was one of the first officials admitted into the prestigious Indian Administrative Service, the cadre of government officials who do the top-level behind-the-scenes work that makes the Indian State function.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Following several postings as a Collector, Damry became more and more involved in policy-making over the finance and banking sectors. He rose up through the ranks of the Reserve Bank of India, becoming a Deputy Governor in 1967. Over the next six years until his appointment at the World Bank, Damry chaired several important committees that would define co-operative banking, a predecessor system to microfinance. In his typically prescient nature, this work came at a critical time, as developing the agricultural economy would soon become recognized as one of the biggest challenges facing a country battling poverty and starvation. And he laid some of the necessary groundwork for India to launch itself into perhaps its most successful project of its first fifty years, the Green Revolution, where the country achieved agricultural independence from the rest of the world through a mixture of technological adaptations and policy overhauls.



PERVEZ N. DAMRY: A SERVANT OF INDIA AND THE WORLD 1915-2007

ACTIVE RETIREMENT

By 1981, Damry was ready to retire to his wife Zareen's home city of Pune. But even in retirement, Damry displayed the characteristics of a true polymath. Friends report that he was curious about everything. As easily as he could talk about high-level politics and other esoteric topics such as high

art
and

classical music, he was equally interested in talking to a farmer about crops prices and weather conditions. Even if no one else was around, Damry was always reading and thinking more.

For all of his praiseworthy accomplishments, Damry did not participate much in the Zarathushti community. But our community is rather intimate. Everyone seems to know one another within one or two, or at max three degrees of separation.

This is a great boon for those youth amongst us who aspire to work in or on the public sector. Just as important, people like Damry remind us that Zarathushtis are not one-dimensional.

We may be most well-known for our business prowess, but we should also recognize that many in our community have risen to the top by serving their countries' governments, and by serving the world.



Dinsha Mistree is a Ph.D student in the Department of Politics at Princeton University. He has a Bachelor and Master of Science degrees from MIT, along with a Master of Arts in politics from Princeton. He is currently studying corruption, bureaucracy and the political economy of India. When not thinking of politics, Dinsha enjoys spending time with Zarathushtis in whatever part of the world he finds himself. Dinsha was the recipient of the 2007 FEZANA Outstanding Young Zoroastrian Award and is the FEZANA Scholar for 2011-2012 having been awarded the Mehraban and Morvarid Kheradi Endowment Scholarship. He can be reached at dmistree@gmail.com

SOUTH AFRICAN FREEDOM FIGHTER

FRENE NOSHIR GINWALA

APRIL 25. 1932--

DINSHA MISTREE

A Parsi woman from South Africa, educated as a lawyer in England, becomes a fighter against apartheid policy, joins revolutionaries to overthrow colonial rule, and serves in government of free South Africa.



INTRODUCTION

Much is made of the Zarathushtis who have risen to great heights in business. The Tatas and the Godrejs are household names. Much less discussed -- and much less celebrated -- are those prodigious Zarathushtis who have risen to great heights in public service. Forgetting our captains of public service could have deleterious

consequences for our future generations, especially as anxious Zarathushti parents increasingly push their children to be professionals who earn lots of money instead of encouraging them to be "do-gooders." Indeed,

we risk becoming a one-dimensional community if we only celebrate our heroes from the business world.

This article is about one woman who went against the grain and chose to help her country, even when she had ample opportunities to turn her back and focus on her own professional advancement. Through her tireless efforts, she helped topple one of the most deplorable governments the world has ever seen. And if that wasn't enough, this great Zarathushti woman stayed on and was instrumental in forming one of the most acclaimed democracies on the face of this Earth. ***This is the story of Frene Noshir Ginwala.***

EARLY YEARS

Frene Noshir Ginwala was born on April 25, 1932 in Johannesburg, South Africa. She was a second-generation South African, as her grandparents emigrated from British



FEZANA Journal –Fall 2012

Parsis in Politics 1857-1954



FEROZE GANDHI THE INVESTIGATIVE M.P. AND FREEDOM FIGHTER

By Maneck Bhujwala

Exhibiting the values of his Zarathushti religion, Feroze never flinched from exposing and fighting evil in the corporate and political world

Early Years

Feroze Gandhi was born on September 12, 1912, in Tehmulji Nariman Hospital, Bombay, to Jehangir Faredoon Gandhi (a Marine Engineer in Kellick-Nixon company) and Ratimai (maiden name Commisariat). His parents migrated from Bharuch, Gujarat, where his grandfather's house still stands in Kotpariwad.

Brothers Dorab and Faridun, and sisters Tehmina and Aloo preceded him. The family lived in Navroji Natakwalla Bhavan in Khetwadi area. After his father died in the early 1920s, Feroze and his mother went to Allahabad to live with his aunt, Shirin Commisariat, a surgeon at the Lady Dufferin Hospital. Feroze went to Vidya Mandir High School, followed by Ewing Christian College, and the London School of Economics.



Freedom Fighter

In 1930 when the youth wing of the Congress Freedom Fighters was formed, Feroze met Pandit Nehru's wife, Kamala and daughter Indira. In the same year he joined the Indian Independence Movement and also was incarcerated in Faizabad Jail for nineteen months, with the late prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri. In 1932 and 1933 he was again imprisoned while working with Pandit Nehru.

Less than six months after his marriage to Indira Nehru in March 1942, the couple were jailed during the Quit India movement, spending a year in Allahabad's Naini Central Prison.

Family and Career

Feroze and Indira enjoyed five years of domestic bliss, becoming parents of two sons, Rajiv in 1944 and Sanjay in

1946. After independence, they settled in Allahabad. (photo left)

Feroze became Managing Director of the newspaper National Herald, that was started by Pandit Nehru, was on the editorial team of the Indian Express and served as the first Chairman of the Indian Oil Corporation.

Politician

Excerpts from A. Surya Prakash's informative article "The forgotten Gandhi" in The Daily Pioneer of September 22, 2012, paying glowing tribute to Feroze Gandhi and highlighting his political career and fight for Freedom of the Press:

"... the birth centenary of Feroze Gandhi — India's greatest investigative parliamentarian, crusader against corruption, advocate of press freedom and the first campaigner for the people's right to information — has gone unnoticed. He was such a cerebral, diligent and ruthless pursuer of truth that he was once described by a fellow MP as a "dangerously well-informed person". Let us pay our tribute to the man who demanded a strong ethical framework for governance during the formative years of our democracy.

Feroze Gandhi ... became a member of the Provisional Parliament in 1950 and was elected to the Lok Sabha from Rae Bareilly in 1952 and 1957. He emerged as a formidable parliamentarian with his maiden speech on the Insurance (Amendment) Bill in December 1955 in which he exposed the cunning and wicked ways of the proprietors of several private insurance companies. Having done some painstaking research, he held the Lok Sabha in thrall as he narrated story after story about how business barons and companies like the Dalmia-Jain Group played around with the funds of insurers and the web of lies that these companies put out to fool insurers, banks, shareholders and Government. At the end of his narration he demanded strong measures to protect public funds invested in insurance companies, meaning nationalisation of the insurance business. Such was his impact that within two months the President promulgated an Ordinance nationalising the insurance industry.

In November 1957, Ram Subhag Singh and Feroze Gandhi got wind of some shady deals between LIC and HD Mundhra, an industrialist.... Feroze initiated a Half-Hour Discussion on the subject... He unfolded the story of murky deals between LIC and Mundhra companies.... then went

In The News



A First in North America

A Lady Mobedyar Ordained



Ervad Kerman Katrak

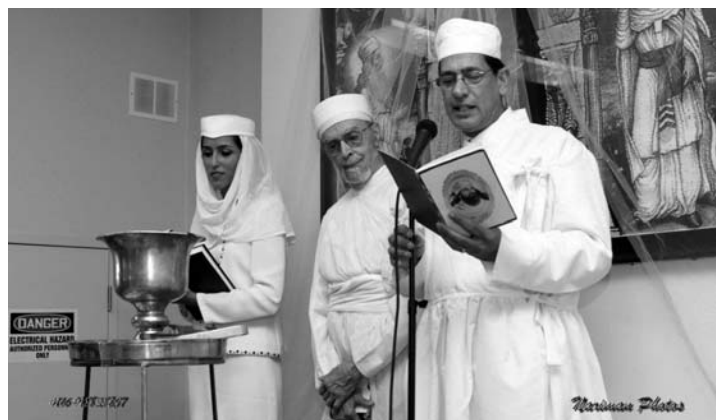
July 28 2012 was a very special day in the history of NAMC and indeed in the history of the Zarathushti community of North America. It was on the evening of this day, at the OZCF center, 1187 Burnhamthorpe road, that the first Zarathushti lady Mobedyar on this continent was ordained. A young Iranian girl from University of Toronto, named Mahshad Khosraviani through her consistent perseverance and dedication trained and qualified for the ordainment as a Mobedyar. (Photo above Ervad Jehan Bagli, Ervad Kerman Katrak, Mobedyar Mashad Khosraviani, Ervad Kobad Zarolia).

It was on this evening that Mahshad took a page out of the Zarathushti historical texts of **Aerpatistan** and **Nirangistan** of centuries ago, and through her determination and sincere effort made the women in Zarathushti priestly activity a reality. Mahshad was trained under the guidance of Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli, the immediate past president of NAMC, and Ervad Kerman Katrak organized the ceremony of ordainment on the evening of July 28, 2012.

The evening started with Mahshad reciting in front of the congregation, the Avestan prayer of Atash Neyayesh and concluding it with the blessings of Tandorosti. This was followed by a short talk given by Ervad Katrak in Farsi and in English. The president of NAMC, Ervad Kobad Zarolia then presented Mahshad with the NAMC Certificate recognizing her as a Mobedyar, and said a few words about this milestone event of the first female Mobedyar in North America, or indeed in the western world.

The dedication and devotion of Mahshad is aptly demonstrated by the fact that before her ordainment in Toronto she went to Iran and underwent a rigorous training period there. She faced and withstood the challenge from the Iranian mobeds who examined her in the art of Avestan recitation, demonstration of Jashan ritual, and other Zarathushti rites and rituals. She went through all the tests in Iran with flying colors and was awarded from the Iranian priesthood the recognition as a Mobedyar. Mahshad is the only Mobedyar in the Zarathushti world who is recognized both in Iran as well as by NAMC in North America..

All this did not happen overnight. Mahshad has been teaching Avesta classes for years and working with children preparing for their Navjote, writing articles for the ZSO newsletter and acting as guest speaker on the radio. She expresses her true sentiments when she says, *"I have always been amazed by the history of my people, and my religion and I am doing this mostly because I love my religion, I love teaching and touching people's heart in a way that will hopefully motivate them at least to live a life of righteousness. It is a choice I have made to better serve Ahura Mazda and I do not see it as a sacrifice."*



Kerman Katrak is an ordained priest who has been in Canada since the last 24 years. He started the practice of performing the Fasli Gahambars, Muktads (Farvardegan), and other religious and cultural events like, Mehregan, Tiregan, Jashn-e-Sadeh since the last 22 years in Toronto. He also initiated Group Navjotes (Sedreh Poushi) and prepared the children for the same. He encouraged and involved youths, in socio-cultural functions and Mahshad Khosraviani is a fine example, he would give her a topic to research and present it to the congregation.

In The News



AN ANNOUNCEMENT

WORLD ZOROASTRIAN ORGANIZATION CANADA CHAPTER

It is our pleasure to inform you that a Canadian chapter of World Zoroastrian Organization UK has been incorporated in Canada and registered as a Canadian Charitable Organization. WZO Canada Inc. has a Charity Registration Number: 844290304 RR0001. and will receive and manage membership issues in Canada on behalf of WZO.

The Executive Committee consists of the following members:

President:	Ervad Jehan Bagli	Vice-President:	Mr. Sam Vesuna
Secretary:	Mobedyar Khushroo Mirza	Treasurer:	Ervad Nozer Kotwal

The objective of WZO Canada is to follow the pattern set by WZO in UK. Our efforts will be directed to alleviate poverty and hunger, healthcare and opportunities in education, environmental sustainability to humanity in general and Zarathushtis in particular. We shall also be disseminating information on Zoroastrianism through seminars and publications.

All donations to WZO Canada are eligible for tax exemption in Canada.

With Peace and Light from Mazda

Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli, President, WZO Canada

Every year, countries throughout every region of the world organize a huge variety of events and activities to celebrate the day, from football matches to free

World Blood Donor Day – June 14, 2012

concerts, and from mobile blood donation clinics to monumental decorations.

WHO and partners had decided to focus the 2012 campaign on the idea that every one of us can become a hero simply by giving blood. The everyday hero responds to an immediate need, whatever the conditions, despite inconvenience, putting the needs of others above their own. Voluntary blood donors come from all walks of life, all regions, backgrounds, religions and ages. By choosing to donate blood without getting paid, these individuals commit an "heroic" act, a gesture of human solidarity with the power to save lives. Some of them do so dozens of times over several decades.

The theme of the 2012 World Blood Donor Day campaign was,

"Every blood donor is a hero" focusing on the idea that every one of us can become a hero by giving blood. While recognizing the silent and unsung heroes like our own ERVAD Zarrir Bhandara who has donated blood and blood products over 150 times through American Red Cross alone, saved more than 450 lives (each time you donate you can save 3 lives). Zarir was honored with a plaque from American Red Cross on June 6th.

ZB /Zarrir Bhandara a vegetarian and a real life hero believes in saving lives without any strings attached and doing good for the sake of good. He experiences inexplicable joy by saving lives.

Wish there were more people like him!



In The News



SHERRY PATEL QUALIFIES FOR 2013 WORLD TRIALS

Sherry Patel, the recipient of the FEZANA Excellence in Sports Scholarship in 2011, has had a remarkable swimming season in 2011-2012. The persevering swimmer and her parents, Keshwer and Cyrus Patel of Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, are thankful



for FEZANA's support, which has provided Sherry with the opportunity to pursue swimming with athletes at all levels.

At the Senior National Championships in Edmonton, from July 19-22, 2012, Sherry placed 6th in 100 m butterfly and 8th in the 50 m butterfly races. Swim Canada's YouTube recording of the Senior Nationals Finals for these events is available at:

100 fly Women's A finals

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAaz51SPnqE&feature=plcp>

50 fly Women's A finals

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuhsc779yBs&feature=plcp>

She is now ranked 5th in the 50m butterfly and 13th in the 100m butterfly, among athletes of all ages from all over Canada. **She set a new personal record of 1:01:38 (1 minute, 1 second and 38 milliseconds) for her 100m butterfly.**

Sherry also led the Mississauga Swim Club's 4x100 freestyle relay team at these Championships. The team ranked 1st amongst the Ontario teams and 9th overall in

Canada at this national meet. Training with the University of Ottawa Gee-Gee's and the Mississauga Aquatic Club has allowed her to improve her times and status in Canadian swimming.

Sherry competed at other high level national meets such as Canada Cup, the Canadian Interuniversity Sport Championships, Canadian Olympic Trials, Quebec Cup, the Canadian World Trials and the Summer Nationals this past year.

At the Canada/Quebec Cup in 2012, Sherry placed 3rd in the 50m butterfly, 6th in the 100m butterfly, 9th in the 200m individual medley and 50m breast stroke and 11th in her 100m breast stroke. These are elite swim meets which require athletes to meet a minimum national swim time standard for events, and swimmers train for years to meet the qualifying times to compete at these meets. These are also the swim meets from which the top athletes are selected to represent Canada at international meets. Because swimming is a sport where progress is calculated in milliseconds the difference between first and last place can be less than a second. Being top 10 in the country at a national swim meet is a huge accomplishment.

With these successes, Sherry has now qualified to compete in the 2013 World Trials to be held in Victoria, British Columbia.

In a sport dominated by swimmers having at least 10 years of experience under their belt, Sherry has succeeded in only 4. She started late in the program having entered it at the age of 15, mastered butterfly, breast and freestyle strokes, and weathered training after dislocating her shoulder. Swimming the butterfly stroke with one arm, for 5km daily, for three months, while her shoulder healed was a true test of endurance, perseverance and strength. What started out as swimming 3 hours a week, has now evolved into swimming at least 25 hours a week, starting the day at 4:30am for a full workout, followed by a day of studies, and ending with another 2 hour workout.

But that's how this competitive swimmer (happily) makes her dreams a reality.... one step at a time.

In The News



ZIA MANDVIWALLA WALKS THE RED CARPET AT CANNES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL-- her 14 minute film 'Night Shift' short-listed.

Farida Master

Screen Director's Guild Awards 2005; Best Director and Best Short Film at the Fitzroy Shorts in Melbourne in 2006.

Talking from Sydney, Zia is thrilled with the kind of response 'Night Shift' is evoking at the Sydney Film Festival. In the first flush of success, Zia openly admits that when she first got a call from Cannes, she didn't quite believe her ears. Talking about how she first reacted to the news, she narrates, ***"I heard the news one evening when I was looking for a car park at the supermarket. I was starving, had been to the gym and saw this long number come up on my phone. I didn't know what to make of it. When I heard a French accent say they were calling from the Cannes Film Festival, I made sure I pulled over! The first person I called was Ari Wegner, the cinematographer who was in Melbourne. When I called, she said she was about to sit down to dinner with her family and asked if I could call her back? I said no, I couldn't call back and that we had gotten into Cannes. What followed was 24 hours of disbelief. I didn't receive the official email until a full day later. As a result of which I started wondering if I had imagined it all. I wondered if I was hearing voices or experiencing the onset of some kind of mental illness,"*** she laughs.

It's easy to see that Zia is in a jubilant mood and the party is on. ***"I am still celebrating!"*** she says *buzzing with excitement. "The success has been celebrated many times with friends, family, fellow filmmakers at Cannes and believe me the buzz between filmmakers at Cannes is incredible--everyone shares a very similar sense of joy at the amazing accolade of being selected for such a prestigious festival,"* she gushes.

Reliving the heady experience at the Mecca which celebrates the world's best films, she says, ***"Cannes is an incredible place. The festival welcomes you and looks after you very well. The film itself was received very well. The response to it was very, very positive. There are lots of special experiences that have stayed with me. On a more frivolous note, there were many star sightings, incredible parties, and amazing fireworks and dinners at beautiful hotels that shrouded the entire experience in a surreal kind of magic!"***

Ever since she can remember, the sensitive filmmaker has been drawn by human drama and has always been interested in the people who exist on the periphery of our lives. She was inspired to tell the story of an airport



Zia Mandviwalla is going places - literally. Trying to trace her whereabouts as she travelled from Cannes to Paris, Berlin, Denmark, Dubai, Sydney, New Zealand is a feat in itself. (In photo above Zia is on the extreme right in dress)

Suddenly, everyone wants a sound bite or a close-up of the unassuming Zarathushti girl with a distinct British accent. The spotlight has zoomed in on Zia who has suddenly found herself in front of the camera instead of behind it. Her labour of love, **'Night Shift'** recently made international headlines. From a total of 4500 short film entries for the International Cannes Film Festival, 'Night Shift' elbowed it's way to the final nine. The fourteen minute film was short-listed for the prestigious **2012 Short Film Palme d'or at the Cannes International Film Festival**. A major achievement, something every film director secretly aspires for.

The 34-year-old filmmaker from the Curious Film stable of directors, with a passion for telling stories on celluloid, walked the red carpet, posed for pictures and got inundated with congratulatory messages and rave reviews. 'Night Shift' succinctly tells the story of Salote, a faceless airport cleaner who quietly tries to make it through another long night shift.

The award-winning film maker who has also worked with Nandita Das in her directorial debut Firaag, is no stranger to being applauded and acknowledged at film festivals. Her work has been screened at film festivals worldwide including London, Pusan and Melbourne. Zia was declared as **SPADA's (Screen Production & Development Association New Zealand) New Filmmaker of the Year**, signalling her arrival as one of the most exciting directors in Australasia. 'Night Shift' is her fourth short film, after **'Eating Sausage', 'Clean Linen' and 'Amadi'**. The girl from Mumbai who moved to Dubai and later to New Zealand has a string of awards to her credit including the **Best Short Film Script at the**

In The News



worker who becomes almost invisible to the traveler as she goes about her work silently without drawing any attention to herself. "The story for 'Night Shift' came about through considerable delays at airports and long hours flying to and from the antipodes," explains the filmmaker who has always been fascinated by airports. "Airports have always intrigued me as places--as public spaces they are filled with people preoccupied with their own destinations, literally. However, there is so much human drama underneath the comings and goings as people



leave lovers, are reunited with family, return home for the first time in twenty years, or take their children overseas for the first time. Airports are emotionally charged, highly surveillanced yet very public spaces. All those things combined, make them fascinating to me. Alongside this, I am very fascinated by the people who work behind the scenes in places like this," she says giving us a backdrop of how the film was born.

Zia loves telling stories on film. "When you make films and you have the opportunity to screen your film in front of an audience you are all of a sudden placed in a very privileged position," she expounds. "For the duration of your piece, the only light in a darkened room comes from your work. You have as a result the opportunity to say something of importance, of substance; and while you might not change or save the world, you may just be able to provoke thought. And the opportunity to get someone to momentarily think about their own lives, or the lives of others is what drives me."

The talented Kiwi filmmaker has had the rare privilege of working with other film directors who are driven by a sense of purpose and are deeply passionate about what they do. An experience that she treasures is the time she assisted Nandita Das in her directorial debut. *Firaaq*, a political thriller which was set one month after the 2002 violence in Gujarat. The film was an obstacle-race-of-

sort which turned out to be one of the best learning experience for Zia. "When I first started working with the unit, it was a bit of a culture shock," says the girl originally from Mumbai. "Though I am used to working with different cultures because that's the way I have been brought up, nothing prepared me for my stint in India," she says recalling the time she asked for a Call Sheet with all the details about the shoot, only to have everyone laugh at her. "It was an incredible film in terms of a powerful subject with some of the best actors like Naseerudin Shah, Deepti Naval, Paresh Rawal, Raghuvir Yadav but there were so many setbacks along the way. It was funny how one would get the feeling that nothing was ever going to happen and then in some kind of a mystical way, it would all gather momentum," she relates.

Zia is full of praise for Nandita whom she thinks is nothing short of a human machine. "A lot of people in her place would have thrown their hands up. It's not easy being a woman in a man's world, making a low budget, independent film with a fiery subject. But Nandita has a will of iron and carried the film on her shoulders as she steered us all ahead," she says in hindsight.

The ability to keep going about something you are passionate about even if the going is tough is something that has stayed with Zia. Her biggest advice to aspiring filmmakers and artists of any kind is to keep working at it. "It is only through doing that you learn, develop and hone your craft. Someone once told me, if you want to achieve something, then work every day towards it. It may be writing a scene, shooting an action sequence, even making a phone call or sending an email. However big or small, do something everyday towards that goal and you will eventually realise it."

For Zia, she is confident that the recognition at the International Cannes Film Festival is the best stepping stone to leverage for feature films. And she is working on it. "We were honored and humbled by the selection for Cannes. This has added more notches to my belt and has made me more open to opportunities that are coming my way. With more people wanting to invest in me, I'm ready to move on to my next big project," she says, ready to take yet another leap of faith.

Zia Mandviwalla Writer/Director

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With offices in Auckland, Sydney and Queenstown



Farida Master has been the editor of several publications in India which include 'Stardust' magazine, 'Society Fashion' magazine, 'Citadel' magazine and the 8-page lifestyle supplement of 'Pune Times Of India'. She has also authored, 'The Making Of A Legend', a biography of Dr K B Grant. In Auckland, Farida has been the Features Editor of 'The Aucklander' magazine. Currently she freelances with a host of publications in New Zealand and India.

In The News



LOOKING FOR MONTESSORI TEACHERS FOR A ZARATHUSHTI-RUN SCHOOL



The Birdie's – Purviz, Tiraz, Aryenish, and Parendi – established Lawrence Montessori School in the fall of 2010 upon the requests of numerous parents and community leaders in Lawrence, Kansas. Prior to its establishment, Purviz owned and operated a small Montessori program from her house which became well known throughout the city for its high-quality authentic program.

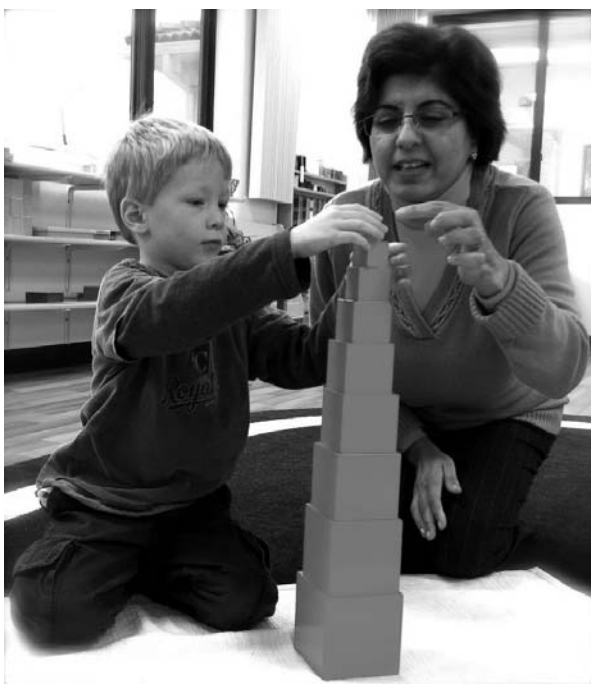
Purviz was fortunate to have been trained by her aunt, **Gool Minwalla**, a protégé of *Dr. Maria Montessori*, and

Gool Rustomji, who was trained by Dr. Montessori's son, Mario. Gool Minwalla attended the first Montessori teacher-training course that was held by Dr. Montessori in Adyar, Madras in 1939, and later served as her assistant. She was the pioneer and guiding force behind the Montessori movement in Pakistan. She and Gool Rustomjee ensured that the teacher training was authentic and tied to the teachings and principles of Dr. Montessori. To this day, Purviz operates the school with high standards that were set by her mentors.

Lawrence Montessori School nurtures the intellect, the spirit of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Each child is provided with the highest level of care and education in accordance with the Montessori philosophy. Lawrence Montessori School has a faculty of experienced and caring individuals who are deeply committed to the Montessori methodology.

The babies in the infant (Nido) community continually amaze the staff and their parents. Within a week of starting at the school the infants are alert, aware and happy to socialize with their peers. They engage with materials designed for their intellectual development and are extremely happy to come to school. The teachers communicate with the babies using sign language and within a few short months the infants communicate with adults using signs too. Parents routinely comment on how their baby has changed, that s/he is more alert, calm, and eager to socialize.

The young toddler's (1 ½ to 2 ½ year olds) create art-and-craft projects, serve themselves daily at a lunch buffet, and eat with real cutlery on china plates. They bake with



In The News



the school chef and enjoy group yoga and music lessons. The primary classrooms (ages 2 ½ to 6 years) are geared to the child's size, pace, abilities, and interests. Each child learns at her/his own pace and rhythm. Most activities are done individually, so that the child can move at their own pace independently. **The core of the**

Montessori curriculum is based on the activities of Practical Life, Sensorial, Mathematics, Language, and Cultural Arts. All activity is guided by respect for the equipment, respect for the work of others, and respect for the teacher. There is also a full day Kindergarten

program for parents who choose a more academic environment for their children. The school is located on a two-acre campus which offers children outdoor classrooms, a beautifully designed playscape, vegetable garden, soccer field, and more. There is also an extensive enrichment curriculum that includes Stretch-n-Grow tumbling, dance, and Suzuki music.

There are many things that keep the Birdie family in Lawrence; among them are the lush rolling hills of northeast Kansas. With its hills, colorful Victorian dwellings, stately churches, and tree-lined streets, central Lawrence might appear to be a misplaced New England village. Lawrence is constantly voted as one of best places to live in the U.S. The National Trust for Historic Preservation named Lawrence one of its "Dozen Distinctive Destinations" touting the city as one of the "best preserved and unique communities in America." *U.S. News and World Report* reported Lawrence to be "one of the top 10 places to retire in the country".

According to the Lonely Planet USA, "Lawrence features perhaps one of the country's nicest downtowns."

Lawrence is home to the University of Kansas located on Mound Oread whose panoramic views inspired poet Walt Whitman to write "Stretching out on its own unbounded scale, unconfined...combining the real and ideal, and beautiful as dreams." Lawrence is a 45-minutes drive from Kansas City, which is home to a wonderful group of dedicated Zarathushtis.

The Birdie's encourage anyone who is either considering Montessori training, undergoing Montessori training, or is Montessori trained to consider applying for a teaching position, by visiting the website. The school offers a very attractive compensation package, which includes retirement and health benefits. Relocation assistance is available including a month of accommodation. The school will also sponsor non-U.S. candidates and work towards obtaining immigrant status if desired by the candidate.

To find out more about the city of Lawrence and Lawrence Montessori School visit

<http://www.lawrencemontessorischool.com>.

ZANE COMMISSARIAT COMPLETES HIS FIRST 5k MARATHON AT AGE FIVE

Five years old Zane Commissariat, who started his kindergarten school in September 2012 at Meadow Park Elementary in Irvine, CA, completed his first 5k (3.1 miles) marathon run on July 4th 2012.

A total of 400 plus runners participated in the marathon which was organized by the Woodbridge Village Association in Irvine

At 5 years of age Zane was the youngest participant. He ran along with his parents Diana and Xerxes and finished the run in an excellent time of 42:41 minutes. He has been training for several months with his parents by running every weekend.

Zane's favorite activities are running with his mom and dad, riding his bike, swimming, playing soccer and best of all being a big brother to his 2 year old sister, Zara.

He regularly attends religious classes and humbandagi prayers at the Zoroastrian Association of California Center in Orange, CA and is fond of learning about the religion. When interviewed by the association, he said that this was his first run and will participate in it again next year. Bravo Zane



In The News



SHERAZAD BAPASOLA, NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY TOP 100 MOST INFLUENTIAL SENIOR.



Sherazad Bapasola graduated *Magna cum laude* from Northeastern University, Boston's College of Business Administration with concentration in Accounting and Finance. She also studied at the London School of Economics and the Chinese University of Hongkong.

Her 5 yr. Coop and classes program included jobs at Black Rock, Wellington Management, Rothstein Kass and Price Waterhouse Coopers.

Sherry was named one of NE University's Top 100 Most Influential Seniors out of the 2012 graduating class of 4000 students. She was honored with an **award for Outstanding Achievement in Co-op Education**.

She will be working full time in NYC at Price Waterhouse Coopers as an audit associate from September, 2012

Her parents Noshir and Khursheed Bapasola and brother Sam are very proud of her !

University of Toronto, Mississauga Campus, Offers Courses in Zoroastrian Studies

The University of Toronto at Mississauga has been offering undergraduate courses on the **History of Zoroastrian religion** since 2007. This year, two courses will be offered in the Fall term:

Introduction to Zoroastrianism, every
Tuesdays from 3-5 pm,
Zoroastrian Religious Writings every b
Fridays from 11-1 p.m.

A graduate course,
Zoroastrian Apocalyptic Literature, will be
offered at the central campus of the
University of Toronto in the spring term, on
Thursdays 2-4.p.m.

The courses are given by
Prof Enrico Raffaelli
enrico.Raffaelli@utoronto.ca



NRT

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JAPANESE INTEREST IN THE ZARATHUSHTI RELIGION

Dr. Meiken A. Okada

In 1971, I was studying in Tehran as a guest student of Tehran University, and the 2500th Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the Persian Empire was also taking place. My teacher Prof. Ashikaga who was the head of Iranists of Japan happened to be invited to the World Congress Iranology in Shiraz. I was sent to study Persian language and Iranian history, and had the opportunity to visit Yazd where the old Zarathushtrian fire temple stood during many centuries. Having the experience in Iran, I was deeply impressed with the Zarathushti culture and tradition. So, since then, I have specialized in Zarathushtrian religion and it is my greatest wish to share with others what I can, of the teaching of Zarathushtra

The Study of the Zarathushtrian religion has a century old history in Japan. For Taisho period (1912-1925), *Araki Shigeru*, a professor of Persian language at Tokyo University, studied Avesta and Pahlavi under A. V. Williams Jackson. But he suffered an early death, so the Iranology at Tokyo was broken down halfway. *Ashikaga Atsuuji* who was a descendant of the *Ashikaga Shogun* which ruled over Japan from 1338 to 1573, stayed in Paris to study Avesta and Pahlavi with *Emile Benveniste*. After the Second World War, Ashikaga was appointed professor of Sanskrit and installed as chairman of the Faculty of Literature at Kyoto University. *Ito Gikyo*, one of the most talented students of Ashikaga, was engaged in translating Avesta and Pahlavi texts into Japanese. In 1967, his translation of the Gathas and Hom Yasht were included in the series of the World Classics, edited by a

director of the Asiatic Library. In 1979, the main works of Ito were collected in a book and published under the title of *"A Study of Zoroaster"*. In this book, we can find much Japanese translation of the *Denkard*.

I, Ashikaga's last student, became a disciple of Ito to begin his career as a scholar of Avesta and Pahlavi literature. My first essay in 1979 was *"Asha and Choice in Zarathushtra's Thought"*, and thereafter, I wrote numerous articles and books on the Zarathushti religion. In 1982, I translated the Yashts of Avesta into Japanese and published them. And in 1984 I translated the Vendidad. In 1988, I wrote a book *"Mysticism of Zoroaster"* which became the most popular book on the Zarathushti religion in Japan. Since then, I have been engaged in enlightening the public on *Zoroastrianism as president of the Mazda Yasna Society*.

For more than twenty years, I have lectured on the religion at universities and cultural institutions. The interest of the Japanese in the Zarathushtrian religion, was directed mainly to its history. People generally think Shintoism is national religion of Japan. But really speaking, Shintoism is not a religion, it has no dogma nor sacred book and really consists of a mixture of veneration of ancestors and nature worship. Buddhism played a great role in shaping Japanese religious mind. The first contact of the Japanese with Buddhism goes back to sixth century when it was introduced into Japan. Buddhism came from India to Japan through Central Asia where Iranian culture was prominent. So Japanese Buddhism is somewhat different from the Indian one. It is a religion which is deeply influenced under the cultural syncretism of Iran and India.

All Japanese sects of importance are Mahayanists. Some scholars insist on the influence of the Zarathushti religion on Mahayana Buddhism. Many Japanese have believed that the best way of winning salvation is to appeal to the mercy of Amida-Buddha who will give them a place in his paradise after death. Amida is the supreme Buddha of Light and his paradise re-echoes with music and pleasant sounds. We can associate these features with *Ahura Mazda and Garonmana*. Some words found in the ancient Japanese literatures can be deduced from Middle Iranian language and they are evidence of the arrival of Zarathushtis in Japan. Recently, a Pahlavi writing on the incense wood was discovered in Horyu-ji temple which was founded in 607 CE by Prince Shotoku-taishi.

Some historical novelists have written their works on this theme. Many Japanese are interested in Zoroastrianism. But their chief interest is the history and the culture of the Zarathushti religion. Most Japanese have not the least interest in the religions of others. They inherit their family religion from generation to generation. Of course, there are a few people who abandon their family faith and believe in Christianity and Islam. But newly-risen religions are mostly generated from Buddhism or Shintoism in Japan. The Japanese are content with their own religion. So, when I lectured on the thought and idea of the Zarathushti religion, they were inclined to be bored. The cultural exchanges between Persia and Japan, however, I told, they are very interested and listen intently to them. And through them, they recognized the Zarathushti influence on their own religion.

Today Japan has witnessed dramatic change in moral conditions.

In The News



The ruin of the school education has threatened the nation. People are trying to work out new frameworks for the moral education program. But, their standpoints have gone out of date. We must think about the foundation of ethics – good and evil.



Therefore the Zarathushti religion sheds new light on the problem. At last, we come face to face with the teachings of Zarathushtra. I hope I shall succeed this time to have a class of Gathas and enlighten the public on the religion of Zarathushtra.

Lastly, the Japanese are greatly concerned about the contemporary economical development in India. Japanese businessmen seek contact with the Indian companies and join hands with them to start new enterprises. They begin to recognize

the important positions of the Parsis in the business world. And they want to know the religion of Zarathushtra. "*Humata, Hukhta, Hvareshta*" is the key to great success of the Zarathushtis. Their enterprising spirit has been inherited from their ancestors. For them, Industry is Charity. The Zarathushtis play a great part in the economic development of India, and this will lead the Japanese to have a better opinion of the religion of Zarathushtra.

Dr. Meiken A. Okada is the only scholar in Japan who is studying the mystical aspects of Zarathushtra. He is also the Chairman of Mazda Yasna Society. One of his best works is 'The mystical ideas in Eurasia', 2005 (in Japanese). There are several books in preparation for publication in the near future.

Rohinton Mistry wins 2012 American Nobel

Critically acclaimed Indian-Canadian writer Rohinton Mistry has been selected as the winner of the **2012 Neustadt International Prize for Literature**.

The \$50,000 Neustadt Prize, awarded every two years, is the only international literary award for which poets, playwrights and novelists are given equal consideration.

Robert Con Davis-Undiano, executive director of international magazine *World Literature Today*, said: "*The world will quickly discover the excellence of Rohinton Mistry's luminous fiction that the Neustadt jury acknowledged with this choice. Giving the award to Mistry is inspired.*"

Mistry is the author of three novels: **Such a Long Journey (1991)**, which won the Commonwealth Writers Prize (Overall Winner, Best Book), **A Fine Balance (1996)** and **Family Matters (2002)**.

His latest book, **The Scream**, was illustrated by Tony Urquhart (2008).

The Neustadt Prize is widely considered to be the most prestigious international prize after the Nobel Prize in Literature and, in fact, is often referred to as the '*American Nobel*' because of its record of 28 laureates, candidates or jurors who in the past 41 years have been awarded Nobel Prizes following their involvement with the Neustadt Prize.

In The News



ZOROASTRIAN ELDERLY ASSISTANCE LINK (ZEAL) ZWIN PROJECT IN INDIA NEEDS YOUR HELP

The increasing plight of some of our elderly Zarathushti in India and other places should be a major concern for our affluent community, particularly for those living in the West. Whatever our financial situations in North America may be, most of our professionals could share a very small amount with some of our struggling elderly Zarathushtis in India in a way that could significantly transform their lives.

Many Zoroastrian organizations are assisting the elderly, but many fall through the cracks, as you can see in the film about the Pune Parsees: *Invisible Parsis: The poor of a prosperous community*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-iZbiilEiU> . The Zoroastrian/ Zarathushti Women's International Network (ZWIN), with assistance from many others, has undertaken to help the elderly in its special way. Their needs are not only financial, but many experience great loneliness and even neglect. We started by inviting 30 of these elderly to the community Navroze dinner.

We have gratefully re-started the ZWIN ZEAL project with seed money (\$3000) from the FEZANA Welfare Committee. This, and all other monies collected by ZWIN, will be sent by ZAGNY to the WZO Trust in Mumbai.

Dasturji Ardaviraf Sinor, Mr. Tehmasp Bharucha and others will assist us in seeking out deserving elders. A Pune ZWIN group, and the WZO Representative, *Viraf Deboo*, will do their due diligence in identifying genuinely deserving recipients, and only then will WZOT distribute the funds quarterly to the identified individuals.

To support these less fortunate individuals, at this stage of their lives:

1. We request you to donate \$35 a month on a quarterly basis for a year to "Sponsor a deserving Elder" as a regular allowance, AND/OR
2. You can send any lump sum donation towards the ZEAL project, which will be used towards much needed and verified personalized services. These monies will be used for pressing needs that an individual elderly has, like transportation for medical services, a wheel chair, food delivery, home repairs, etc.
3. Checks can be made out to: **"ZAGNY Critical Assistance Fund" with a clear notation on the check that it is "For the ZWIN ZEAL project" and**

mailed to: Yasmin Ghadiali, 2686 Belcher Street, Baldwin, N.Y. 11510, USA ghad@optonline.net
Yasmin will send you a tax-exempt receipt.

4. Please also send an email to Dr. Zareen Karani Araoz, ZWIN Network Director and ZEAL program Coordinator at zareen@managingcultures.com indicating that the check is either for services to the elderly or as a monthly sponsorship for a year. We will inform you about contact information of your recipient. Thank you very much!

We are grateful to:

- * *The FEZANA Welfare Committee, co-chair Houtoxi Contractor, FEZANA President (and ZWIN Founding Member) Katayun Kapadia and Past President Bomi Patel*
- * *WZO Trust, India, Mr. Dinshaw Tamboly, Mr. Viraf Deboo and Mr. Noshir Dadrawala*
- * *ZAGNY, ZWINer Yasmin Ghadiali and Gev Nentin (President)*
- * *Mr. Tehmasp Bharucha and Dasturjee Ardaviraf Sinor* and others in Pune for helping us to initially identify the deserving elders, and support ZWIN's thorough and impartial selection process
- * *ZWINers Feroza Saran* for her invaluable support, including home visits to the elderly with Dr. Zareen Karani Araoz and Dolly Malva. Dr. Zarin Cooper will also assist us.
- * *All the kind Zarathushti families in Pune who will be "Friends of the Elderly" and visit them;*
- * *The Zoroastrian Youth Association in Pune* for helping us enlist youth volunteers;

* *All the generous souls in India and the US who have already pledged or donated their support, starting with ZWINers Yasmin and Aysha Ghadiali, Bucky Amaria, Dr. Zareen Karani Araoz and others;*

* *To all contributing ZWINers: to Hovi Shroff for suggesting the pilot project be in Pune, Dr. Dolly Dastoor for recommending we start with 10 families in the US sponsoring one Elder each; Dr. Zareen Karani Araoz for coordinating the project in India and N. America, and to ZWINers Bella Tata, Toxy Cowasjee, Selina Jejina, Ferzin Patel, Roshan Rivetna and others, without whose inputs this project could not have materialized*

In The News



ZOROASTRIANS STEPPING FORWARD

1st International Day of Service

FEZANA SPOTLIGHT

*"Our feet we cover for hygiene and health, Our heads for reverence and respect,
and both are equally important, depending on circumstance and retrospect!
For every head we wish to cover, but feet we have two, the task is thus multiplied.
But so is our enthusiasm and motivation, for what we have successfully supplied!"*

--Firdosh Mehta--

***Khshathremchaa Ahuraai aa
yim dregubyo dadat vasstaarem—
he who becomes the protector and
the nourisher of the poor accepts
the sovereign rule of Ahura Mazda.***

On May 5th, 2012 Zarathusthis all around the world united to give their time to the needy fulfilling the last sentence of our Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer. Youngsters and elders, conservatives and liberals, Parsis and Iranis all came together to promote righteousness to those living in poverty. Through organizing and developing shoe collections, over 6,100 pairs of shoes were collected, in-turn mobilizing individuals who lacked this basic necessity locally and globally.

Our Zarathushti community was involved worldwide and every continent was represented. FEZANA associations and small groups participated in Zoroastrians Stepping Forward (ZSF) activities on a large scale. Promoting the core beliefs of the religious culture Avesta class teachers and executive leadership played an instrumental role in the shoe giving movement; which in turn, means that as a community we are promoting equity for those less fortunate than ourselves. Through our work of providing new and gently-used shoes to a portion of the 300,000 million people that travel and work in various terrains, without

shoes, we are eradicating the likelihood of them contracting diseases that can handicap them.

As ZSF gathers momentum we hope that other Zarathushti groups will get involved to instigate positive change and promote social justice in all areas of society. ***The Second Annual International Day of Service will be held from March 1st-May 5th, 2013.*** Come together with your association, family and friends and join us to live the meaning of our Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer in unison. Together we can make a difference!

Special Thanks for the following groups:

Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia • Zoroastrian Association of Houston • Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania • Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, Inc. • Basel, Switzerland group • Zarathushti Association of New Orleans • Zarathushti Association of Tampa Bay • Zoroastrian Center of Greater New York • Iranian Zoroastrian Association • Karachi Colonies • Zoroastrian Association of Kentucky-Ohio-Indiana • Karachi—YMZA • Atlanta Zarathushti Association • Zoroastrian Association of Quebec • Zoroastrian Center of California

**Behrose Taraporewalla
Glendora, California**

• Zarthoshti Anjuman of Northern California • Zoroastrian Center of Metropolitan Chicago • Zoroastrian Association of Florida • Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey • Zoroastrian Society of Ontario • Ontario Zoroastrian Cultural Foundation • Zoroastrian Association of Michigan • San Diego Zoroastrian Community • Dubai Groups • Private Families/Individuals •

(Information Provided from groups that completed the ZSF Project Summary survey in August 2012.

Zoroastrians Stepping Forward Leadership Team:

Jim Engineer, Mantreh Atashband, Armaity Homavazir, Tanya Bharda, Darius Jamsetjee, Jereastine Jilla, Farzin Avari, Khushnuma Driver, Behrose Taraporewalla

For more information, please visit our website at:

<http://zoroastrianssteppingforward.weebly.com/>

Join our Facebook community, by searching: ***"Zoroastrians Stepping Forward"***

Email:
zoroastrianssteppingforward@gmail.com

Contact: Behrose Taraporewalla,
International Director 626.378.5564

In The News



Come together
with your association,
family and friends,
and join us!



Zoroastrians
Stepping Forward
Second Annual
International Day of Service
March 21 - May 5, 2013

ShoeDrive

Zoroastrians Stepping Forward

Shoes protect our feet and safeguard us against disease and infection. 300 million people live each day without a pair of shoes. Worldwide, walking is the primary mode of transportation. Millions of adults and children suffer from bilharziasis, podocoinosis, staph infections, and other diseases because they do not own a pair of shoes. We invite you to help us change this.



Originally founded as a
nextgennow
shed the light initiative, 2011



For more information,
Facebook® - Zoroastrians Stepping Forward
www.zoroastrianssteppingforward.weebly.com
zoroastrianssteppingforward@gmail.com
626.378.5564 Behrose Taraporewalla
International Director



Behrose Taraporewalla believes being a Zarathushti has shaped her as an individual; constantly motivating her to create and mobilize positive change in this world. Taraporewalla graduated Summa Cum Laude with a B.A. in Liberal Studies and Human Development. Upon graduation she studied at the prestigious Claremont Graduate University, where she earned her M.A. in Educational Studies and graduated in the top 1% of her class. She taught as a Peter Lincoln Spencer Fellow and has presented at several educational conferences and universities. As an Education Specialist, holding credentials in Special Education as well as General Education, she has had the opportunity to educate people of all ages and walks of life. Her life goal is to help narrow the educational achievement gap, so all children can achieve academic success.

In her spare time, Behrose enjoys volunteering, cooking, and engaging in activities that allow her creativity to shine. She is a marathon runner and an avid supporter of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.



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In The News



REFLECTIONS: UDVADA- THE TEMPLE TOWN BY THE ARABIAN SEA.

TEENAZ JAVAT



The word Udvada to a Zarthoshti conjures up images of a fire temple-atash behram- where the holiest of the holy fire burns.

To me that is but one of many images that float in and out of my life, quite like the ebb and flow of the tide pounding the shores on which Udvada lies.

While some schoolmates would visit the cooler climes of north India or in many cases go abroad, our escape from Mumbai's inner city was Udvada. It was our version of the ultimate summer getaway all through the 1970's and 80's. (Photo above The grandmother's home)

By the end of April a smattering of stay-at-home moms would gather their kids, nephews and nieces, and the day after schools were out for the summer, we were huddled onto a steam train bound for Udvada.

Udvada is 240 km north of Mumbai in the state of Gujarat.

Half-way through the journey, which took over 4 hours, packed lunches of spicy pora-pau (spiced omelette) and cutlets-rotli were hungrily devoured- washed down by cold limboo-pani (lemonade) chugged straight from the thermos.

We knew every stop on the way and the one most eagerly looked forward to was Dahanu Junction. It

was a long stop where the steam engine would be replenished with water and we would quench our thirst with water from coconuts plucked from the palm just a few hours ago.

A gastronomic delight followed, as vendors would file into the second-class compartment selling everything from *chicoo* (a soft flesh fruit) to *dal-singh*, (spiced lentils) *targolay* to *chai*. We would gobble up almost any edible item that came our way.

On reaching Udvada we rolled off the train with our olive green beddings and VIP suitcases. Shankar was inevitably waiting for us to drive up the 8 km route into the village. Shankar, who only went by one name, (or probably had two but was distilled to one) owned a black Hindustan Ambassador. A sturdy ox of a car, it could fit as many people as Shankar wanted to, along with their luggage. We knew we were privileged, as the only other users of the ambi-as it was fondly called-were government officials of some standing.

A long bumpy ride later, with the body of the car almost scrapping the potholed road, we'd reach our grandmother's house at the edge of the village. By then we were just as dusty and dirty as the village urchins playing nine-stones at Zanda Chowk.

Mamaiya, as we fondly called our grandmother, and Sheroo masi (mother's sister) along with Laliben would eagerly await our arrival. Cooking and feeding seven additional mouths over the next six weeks would occupy most of their time. Our parents likewise would fill up our beddings not only with our clothes, but jams, cheese, cookies and treats not available in Udvada.

As we were completely snacked out on the train we'd hop in to the neighbor's house looking to see if their grandkids had arrived. It was a big deal to be the first to arrive and the last to leave, as it gave us bragging rights for having the longest stay.

On settling our clothes into the huge wooden almirah's we would run into the fruit orchard looking to eat the mangoes right off the tree. The boys would scale the branches and throw the fruit into wicker baskets held by the girls. As eating would be messy, we were not allowed into the house but were relegated to feasting in the backyard where the toilet was. After cleaning ourselves with water drawn from the house well, we would scamper in to get ready to go to the beach.

On the way to the beach, our group would gain momentum, as we would pass row upon row of stately mansions hugging the main drag called Mirza Street. Grandkids on vacation would join us on the way to the beach, where close to 40 of us would congregate.

The adults would sit in a circle on the upper dunes sharing stories of life in the city and how it compared to that in the village, while we played on the vast stretches of sand wider still when the tide was low.

Several sandcastles were made and destroyed, crushes discussed threadbare by older cousins, choar-police games won and lost, and the

In The News



An older version of Laliben and Sheroo masi were there to greet me. Mamaiya was long gone. (Photo left: Sheroo Masi weaving Kushti on the Jantar)

The neighbours' homes were locked and boarded up.

Mirza House-which lent its name to the village's main drag-was torn down leaving a gaping hole as its lasting legacy.

The stately mansions by the road leading up to the beach and Iranshah Atash Behram were in different stages of decay.(photo left of a once stately house in decay)

Among a few new editions:

A huge mosque built besides the village's Zanda chowk welcomed me on arrival.

A museum that tells us the story of the arrival of Parsis in India, playing homage to our past while unfolding it to the present generation in all its glory is worth a visit.

The hotel strip is thriving as pilgrims come in busloads on holy

No grandmas awaiting arrival of their grandkids.

No body to wave out to or ask the standard questions: When did I come and how long would my stay be.

The old and frail were long gone or moved to sanatoriums in Navsari, their homes left to rot. Entire mohallas (areas) had turned into ghost towns.

A Muslim developer Salim Bhai who has bought up a prominent hotel and other properties is alleged to have clearly stated that there were approximately **39 Parsis living full-time in Udvada and most are over 60 years**. He left the conversation hanging at that-not leaving much to the imagination.

The Iranshah however is well served by the priests. They, from the nine families who have sacred rights to serve and tend the holy fire, do so in rotation and with much reverence. They all do not live in Udvada, but come ever so often to exercise their holy duty.

ultimate game of cricket. The grand-finale every evening was the game of *antakhshari* with songs sung to invoke light in a village rendered dark over daily load shedding and brownouts.

A weekly visit to Iranshah (the holy fire temple) would cap our holidays with a picnic to a nearby village thrown in for good measure.

All these memories stood still on the canvas of my mind when I revisited Udvada in November last year.

I retraced my footsteps- same train-no steam engine anymore.

No Shankar's ambi but Ishwar's rickshaw awaited my arrival as I got off the super fast train which delivered me to Udvada in less than 3 hours from Mumbai.

The 8 km ride into the village took less than 20 minutes. The roads were spanking new, paved over with fresh asphalt and widened, thanks to a visit by Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi just a few months ago.



days (hamkaras) to pay homage and stay for lunch. Some stay over the weekend. (Photo above: one of the few well-maintained homes).

Several low-rise buildings have been built around the perimeter of the Iranshah, but most of them look deserted.

As I walked up to the Iranshah Atash Behram there was no one to greet me as I passed the boarded up homes.

The façade of the Iranshah may have the pillars of Persepolis guarding its main entrance, but the temple town-which holds the crucible of our faith is in different stages of despair and disarray.

Photo credits Armand Colaco, author's 9 year old nephew

Teenaz Javat , is a journalist in Toronto.



Personal Profiles



"PLUG INTO THE NETWORK – AS BEING A PARSI IS YOUR BEST SOCIAL CAPITAL"

Rohinton Medhora

Teenaz Javat



"Growing up I was always surrounded by good economists, my dad being one, so it's no surprise that I decided to become one myself," says the soft-spoken recently appointed president of one of Canada's premier think-tank the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) in Waterloo, Ontario.

Rohinton Medhora grew up in Mumbai, India, and many decades later, still thinks of himself as a 'Bombay boy.' An only child, Medhora grew up immersed in a culture where the printed word was supreme. An avid reader and contributor to India's prestigious Economic and Political Weekly, it was no surprise that once the Medhoras moved to Washington D.C. (where his father Phiroze Medhora was posted) that the younger Medhora would follow in the footsteps of his father.

On arrival in D.C. Rohinton decided to pursue his studies in economics, but not in the U.S. Instead he opted for Canada.

"Canadian universities have a good international reputation and Canada, in my mind, embodies the best of what the world has to offer—a combination of North American efficiency and European values."

So Toronto was a logical destination for Medhora, who in 1977 was admitted to St. Michaels' College at the University of Toronto. The college offered a wide variety of courses and a great faculty to choose from.

This diversity of ideas and thought turned out to be a perfect fit for Medhora who is passionate about the interface of policy and action. He went on to earn his B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. at the University of Toronto where he majored in economics, specializing in monetary policy, international finance and development economics.

A published author of two books, with a third on its way in 2013, Medhora also taught at the University of Toronto before joining the *International Development Research Centre, Ottawa (IDRC)* in 1992.

"It was too hard to resist, as the position offered was in the field of

international economic relations. Suffice to say there are not enough institutions like that (the IDRC) in the world and the 20 years that I was there made me reflect on my past and saw my country India in a way I could never have done had I remained there," he says.

In photo above Rohinton Medhora responds to a question from the floor at CIGI's conference, *An Unfinished House: Filling the Gaps in International Governance*, which was held in Waterloo in November 2011 (Lisa Malleck/CIGI).

Widely travelled, Medhora is a firm believer that Parsis the world over are blessed with a strong network of social capital. He believes we must use this social capital to our advantage. He shares with *FEZANA JOURNAL* an incident which explains how valuable the Parsi network can be.

Medhora, whose wife Marie Claude works out of Florence, Italy where she heads the newly created research division of UNICEF, lives close to the home of renowned music composer Zubin Mehta. *"Once we learnt about the fact, we approached him and the common bond was that we were Parsis. We had nothing in common except our belief system. This social capital which our forefathers have nurtured is of immense value and can open doors and if used judiciously, bodes well for our youth."*

Moving from a crown corporation (IDRC) to a private think-tank (CIGI) has had its challenges, among them keeping a long-distance relationship with his wife who moved to Florence and regular visits to his mother who lives in Toronto.

Medhora took up his position as president of CIGI on September 4, 2012. He was kind enough to take time out to speak to *FEZANA JOURNAL* on the second day of his new job.

Not one to spend his time thinking about being a Parsi, Medhora lets his action speak for itself. *"I do not actively tout my religious beliefs, but go by the basic teachings on which I was raised—translating good thoughts into good words and good deeds. This soft sell works and I believe that Parsi institutions—like the Bombay Parsi Punchayat (BPP), FEZANA, Parsiana are like pillars of the community and although I am not active in supporting them, I feel they give all Parsis the world over immense social capital. By plugging into this network, you can add value to whatever you are doing anywhere in the world."*

Not a 'leaving thought' kind of person, Medhora does not believe it is his job to pronounce on things, but instead to reflect from where we have come from and to where we are going.

"We must build on our collective success and at the same time maintain our identity, as collectively we have achieved a lot more than what we could have done individually."

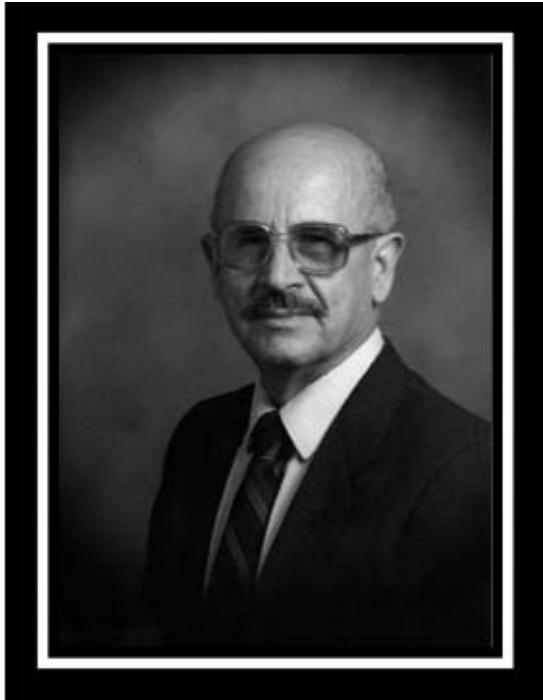
The self-proclaimed Bombay-boy used to always read the profiles of successful Parsis on the pages of the Parsiana and *FEZANA JOURNAL*. We found him on the pages of Canada's national newspaper *The Globe and Mail* and here is his story of quiet perseverance and humility which has him today heading one of Canada's leading institution of innovation.

"I like to call CIGI a 'do-tank' as opposed to a think-tank, because not only are ideas generated and incubated but they are also implemented and put to use."

Mobed Mehraban Jamshid Zartoshty

1917- 2012

*Celebration of a life of a remarkable Zarthushti, a patron, philanthropist and benefactor
who touched the lives of many across the world.*



On July 6, 2012 Zarathushtis of North America and around the world learnt of the demise of Arbab Mobed Mehraban Zartoshty. Within days of his death the North American Community held prayer meetings and memorial services with over 700 people in attendance to celebrate the life of this selfless man, this great soul. Mobed Mehraban lived by the true essence of Ahuna Vairya and Ashem Vohu prayer, leaving behind a legacy of philanthropy and integrity, touching numerous lives and institutions.

Over the centuries our community has produced some outstanding Zarathushtis excelling in various disciplines as well as in philanthropy and Arbab Mobed Mehran Zartoshty takes his place of honour among them. Such noble souls are born into the community once in a generation.

Arbab Mehraban, the younger son of Mobed Jamshid Keikhosrow and Osti Farangis born in Yazd, Iran, completed his primary education and his navar and martab training in Iran and his schooling in India at the Bharda High School and Elphinstone College. Having lost his father at an early age, he looked up to his elder

brother Fereidoon for all respects and together they established '**Zartoshti Brothers Trading Corporation**' in India, and later in Iran, an import-export business that manufactured plastic products, artificial leather and fur. Through their hard work and dedication coupled with strong principles of honesty, their business flourished tremendously within a short span of time. As business partners, they were advocates of working RIGHT and together they made enormous philanthropic contributions to various organizations and associations.

Arbabs Faridoon and Mehraban implemented their father's wise and invaluable advice to set apart a percentage of their profits into a charity account which grew, forming the nucleus of the philanthropy of the Zartoshty Brothers. They used their money wisely through their Trust Fund. *Being committed throughout his life to nurture and structure the life of our Zarathushti community, he contributed immensely towards the building of a strong Zarathushti community through education, medical services and the establishment, maintenance and expansion of numerous Zarathushti religions facilities and pilgrimage sites across the globe.*

Being passionate about preserving the Zarathushti faith and protecting the Zarathushti identity he was instrumental in promoting our heritage and culture. The many institutions he supported with his philanthropy which include the member associations of FEZANA, the Dar-e-Mehrs of Chicago, San Jose, Vancouver, Houston, and across the world, Sydney, Australia, the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE,) the BPP, the Zartoshty brothers wing at B D Petit Parsee General Hospital in Mumbai named after his hero Maneckji Limji Hataria, the Bilimoria Hospital in Panchgani, and above all, the the Zartoshty Brothers Chair, an endowed chair in Zoroastrian Studies at the prestigious School for Oriental & African Studies (SOAS) in London. He also endowed a generous fund to provide full scholarship to Zoroastrian students to pursue Iranian Studies and different aspects of the Zarathushti religion so that a new genre of Zarathushti scholars could be nurtured for the promotion of our religion and heritage. He was instrumental in the reprinting and preservation of old books at the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute in Mumbai and for the construction of the Pherozezshah Mehta

Library Bhavan at Bombay University. He established a fund with the BPP to reward the Zarathushti family that had three children

In Iran his largess extended to the Zartoshty Brothers Community Hall and other facilities of the Shiraz 'Baghe Vaghf' (Donated Garden) complexes, The Isfahan Khaneye Zartoshtian (Home for the Zarthushtis) complexes, The Karaj Kaneye Dowlat, the Atash Behram in Yazd, the schools and institutions in his beloved Iran, and contribution in the construction and maintenances of scores of other Religious and Community facilities in Iran writes Mobed Firozgary of Tehran.

Being deeply religious he performed religious ceremonies and managed the Yazd Atash Behram for 30 years, established the Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America (Kankash-e-Mobedan,) and served as its president for ten years.

He was a Founder member, and a Vice-President of World Zoroastrian Organization, which helped in making WZO a truly global body of Zarathushtis. He was a true

bridge builder between the Parsis and the Irani Zarathushtis

Many years ago while drinking tea with him in his beautiful home in Vancouver he told me "I need to be grateful for the Iranian revolution, which forced me to leave Iran, if not I would still be behind the desk pushing figures and would never have seen this beautiful country Canada."

His legacy is his life of devotion to his family, his magnanimity to the community and to humanity. We extend our deepest condolences to his wife Paridokht, his daughters Homa, Zarthoshty, Vida and Dr Jamshid Jamshedjian, Mehrbanu, and Dr Meherbourzin Soroushian; his grand children Viraf and Vistasp Soroushian, Anahita and Shireen Jamshidian . We also extend our profound admiration for a life lived for the greater glory of Ahura Mazda. May his Fravashi rest in eternal peace. Ravaan esh shad bashad

Dolly Dastoor
FEZANA JOURNAL

M I L E S T O N E S

as of September 15, 2012

BIRTHS

Ryan Vakil, a son to Farzana and Nasli Vakil, in Freemont , CA, on March 8, 2012.

Zoe Ghyara, a girl to Sharmin and Zubin Ghyara in Fremont, CA on March 30, 2012.

Advi Mancherjee, a boy to Zubin Mancherjee and Isabel Cascante, grandson to Jeroo and Hosie Mancherjee and Isabel and Alvaro Cascante (BC), nephew to Janine and Kevin Mancherjee, cousin to Xerxes and Zane Mancherjee in Toronto, ONT on April 7, 2012.

Iyanah Saher, daughter to Aazmin and Nasli Saher in San Francisco, CA on April 24, 2012.

Tahmir Antia, a boy to Nerina Rustomji and Sheriyar Antia, brother to Azad, grandson to Hilla and Darius Antia (Roslyn Heights, NY) and Aban and late Purvez Rustomji (Houston, TX) on May 23, 2012.

Aden and Kara Forughi, a boy and a girl, to Sunita Khambatta and Goshtasb Forughi, brother and sister to Arshan, grandchildren to

Farida and Sarosh Khambatta (Chicago, IL) and Perin and Sohrab Forughi (CA), niece and nephew to Zubin Khambatta (OH), and Binu and Bruce Bedford (Chicago, IL), and cousins to Shanaya and Ariana in Menomonee Falls, WI on May 29, 2012.

Rohan and Jehan Battiwalla, twin boys to Zia (Bhaisa) and Minoo Battiwalla, grandsons to Nina Bhaisa, grand nephews to Dorothy and Shazad Contractor in Bethesda, MA on June 12, 2012.

Ariyanna Dadabhoy Darki, a girl to Dina and Amir Darki, granddaughter to Porus and Zerin Dadabhoy in Hinsdale, IL on June 14, 2012.

Porter Lyon Binnings, a son to Sejal and Arrian Binnings, a grandson to Zarina and Bankim Kaji and nephew to Arnavez and Jamshed Gandhi in San Francisco, on June 21, 2012.

Hormuzd Dumasias, a son to Rashna and Zubin Dumasias, (formerly of San Francisco) in Cranbury, NJ on June 22, 2012.

Emily Perrin Bredlau, a daughter to Katie and Mark Bredlau, sister to Cody, granddaughter to Ken and Dinaz Weber, and Pat and Cathy Bredlau, niece to Michelle Weber and Karen Bredlau in Sacramento, CA on July 6, 2012.

Saphnaa Sanjana, a girl, to Kaneeza and Zubin Sanjana, sister to Delnaz and Ramin, granddaughter to Freney and Bomanshah Sanjana (Houston, TX) in Simi Valley, CA on July 7, 2012.

James Bharucha, a boy, to Jaclyn and Neville Bharucha, grandson to Roshan and Jimmy Bharucha, in Philadelphia, on August 10, 2012.

Zeenia Adil Gheewala, a girl, born to Navaz Frashaoshtra Nekoo and Adil Adi Gheewala, granddaughter to Yasmin and Frashaoshtra Nekoo and Jeroo and Adi Gheewala in Bellevue, WA on August 14, 2012.

Zarina, a girl to Firoza and Malcolm Jussawalla, in Markham, Ontario, on September 13, 2012.

NAVJOTES

Farhad and Anosh Taraporevala, children of Navaz and Zubin Taraporevala (San Ramon, CA) in Mumbai, India on December 12, 2011.

Aavan Vadiwala, daughter of Firuza and Mehernosh Vadiwala (Fremont, CA) in Mumbai, India on December 25, 2011.

Keneesha and Aaria, children of Nainaz and Kannan in New Jersey on June 10, 2012.

Farha Suntoke, daughter of Lily and Kaiomarz Suntoke in Mississauga, ONT on July 1, 2012.

Alexander and Tiana Sherbak, children of Phiroza and Chris Sherbak, ceremony performed by Ervads Jal and Zubin Panthaky in Precott, ONT on July 14, 2012.

Nava and Atash Khosraviani, children of Zabrina and Mehrdad Khosraviani, ceremony performed by Ervads Jal and Zubin Panthaky in Montreal, QUE on July 21, 2012.

Cyrus Kanga, son of Shirazi and Shiraz Kanga in Foster city, CA on August 4, 2012.

Shaudi and Shauhin Yazdani, children of Shahnaz and Fariborz Yazdani in Abbotsford, BC on August 12, 2012.

Dhanyalla, daughter of Gulshan and Rushad Amarai, in Brampton, Ontario, August 25, 2012.

Jasoer, son of Tazeen and Zarir Cooper in Mississauga, Ontario on August 25, 2012.

Nathan Paris son of Anaita and Flavain Paris in Mumbai, on August 25, 2012.

Fiona and Daniela, daughters of Tina and Nar-eeman Patel, granddaughters of Katy and Khurshed H. Patel and Harold and late Carm Cradock, great granddaughters of Gool Homi Patel in Milton, Ontario on August 26, 2012.

WEDDINGS

Parendi Mehta, daughter of Nahida and Dinyar Mehta (Orlando, FL) to Shek Arafain, son of Amena Begum

and Shek Sareful (Bangladesh) at the San Jose Dar-e-Mehr on March 17, 2012 .

Kobad Desai, son of Firdausi and Niloofar Desai (Frisco, TX) to Zareen Khursigara, daughter of Fali and Khursheed Khursigara (Montreal, QUE) in Frisco, TX on June 16, 2012.

Cyrus Cooper, son of Kersi and Anahita Cooper to Shireen Kharwanwala, daughter of Yazdi and Roxanne Kharwanwala in Toronto, ONT on July 7, 2012.

Ashdin Tavarria, son of Mehru and Sashi Tavarria to Senaeya Pestonjee, daughter of Khusroo and Mahazarine Pestonjee in Richmond, BC on July 7, 2012.

Sapur "Sam" Engineer son of Dhun and Katie Engineer to Vanessa Rosette Thomas, daughter of Jesse and Cheryl Peinada and Tracey and Maria Thomas in Pleasant Hill, CA on July 14, 2012.

Armin Bahramshahry, son of Rashid and Ruhangiz Bahramshahry to Arshia Mandegarian, daughter of Bahman and Khorshid Mandegar in Vancouver, BC on July 14, 2012.

Amitis Khorsandi, daughter of Mitra and Jamshid Khorsandi to Richard Ormiston, son of Mr. Ormiston in Vancouver, BC on July 28, 2012.

Erin Yezdi Guzdar daughter of Perveen and Yezdi Guzdar of Concord CA to Carl Minoo Press son of Minoo and Zarin Press of Chicago, IL, in San Francisco, on July 28, 2012.

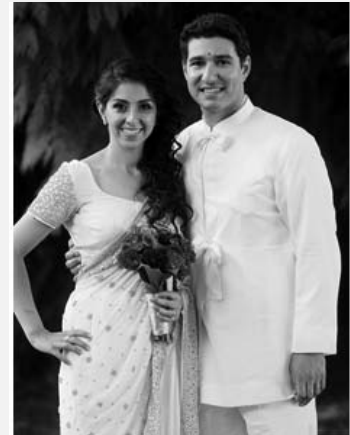
Shermeen Shahroakh Rabadi daughter of Mr and Mrs Shahroakh Rabadi of Karachi, to Numazer Dinyar Pavri, son of Dinyar and Dinar Pavri of Pleasant Hill, CA in Diablo, CA on July 28, 2012.

Cyra Sidhwa daughter of Sooni and late Khurshed Sidhwa to Blair Zasitko son of Patricia McGowan and Ken Zasitko in Mississauga, Ontario, on August 5, 2012.

Gerri Nagarwalla to Stephanie Balistrieri, Chicago, IL

Nasha Mehta daughter of Ratanshaw and late Rashna Mehta to Vardanis Divecha, son of Shermin and

Darayus Divecha in Caledon, Ontario, on September 7, 2012.



Neville Italia, son of Homi Italia and late Maneck Italia to Noushi Khushrushahi, daughter of Rohinton and Homa Khushrushahi in Vancouver, BC on August 5, 2012. (photo above)

DEATH

Fali Pithawala, 75, father of Burjiz and Meher Pithawala (Cupertino, CA), grandfather of Zoish and Arman in Mumbai, India on February 24, 2012.

Goli Farhangi, 82, wife of late Mehrban Farhangi, mother of Padra and Nilgoon, grandmother of Arshia, Kai, River and Juma in North Vancouver, BC on February 27, 2012.

Katy Dinshawji Bokdawala, 78, daughter of late Dinshawji and Jerbai P. Bokdawala, sister of Tehmi E. Hiloo, Homai S Engineer, Dinoo G. Tiwari, Sherroo P. Madon (Montreal), Adil, Noshir, late Gool, late Raty, & late Freny Kersi Raja (Florida) , in Mumbai, March 23, 2012.

Zarir Pesi Madan, 64, husband of Pervin, son of Perin and late Pesi Madon, father of Kainaz Khurshed Daruvala, brother of Homi, Dinyar, Parvez, (Montreal) Hoshang, in Mumbai on April 4, 2012.

Soli Bhumgara, brother of Hushtasp Rutomji Bhumgara and Benifer Hosi Patel (nee Bhumgara) in Winnipeg, Manitoba on April 16, 2012.

- Soli Bhathena, 86, husband of Khorshed Bhathena, father of Rohinton (CA), Zareer (CA), and Behram, grandfather of Shenaz, Mazda and Shanaya in Secunderabad, India on April 17, 2012.
- Jahan Zohrabi, 83, wife of late Shahriar Zohrabi, mother of Gitty, Nahid, Rostam and Niroomand in Marysville, WA on April 21, 2012.
- Aspy Bapooji, husband of Mahrukh Bapooji, father of Sheila Gazdar, Cyrus and Neville in Mississauga, ONT on April 22, 2012.
- Cyrus Irani, husband of Hutoshi Irani, father of Arius and Charlene, son-in-law of Hoshang and Daulat Aga (Mumbai) in Toronto, ONT on April 24, 2012.
- Mobed Feridoon Khorshidian, 87, husband of Banoo Yezeshni, father of Cyrus, Parvaneh, Poursan and Farin in North Vancouver, BC on April 28, 2012.
- Zomorod Behizadeh, 80, wife of Parviz Shahriari, mother of Shahriar, Mojdeh, Shervin and Tooka Shahriari in North Vancouver, BC on April 28, 2012.
- Gul Eruch Jall, aunt of Firoz and Lily Kavina, Dr. Khushroo (late Roda) Patel, Soli (Tehmi) Kavina, late Arnavaz (Perviz) Contractor, and aunt of Rohinton (Arnavaz) Daver, grandmother of Jamshed, Firdos, Faranaz, Binaifer and great grandmother of Jennifer Kavina in Mumbai, India on May 4, 2012.
- Parviz Shahriari, 85, husband of late Zomorod Behizadeh (North Vancouver, BC), father of Shahriar, Mojdeh, Shervin, and Tooka, brother of Hormoz and Sohrab in Tehran, Iran on May 11, 2012.
- Minocheher (Minoo) Bhujwalla (Kenner, LA), 65, husband of Niloufer (nee Ghaswalla), father of Arnaz and Neville, son of late Navroji and Mehrban Bhujwalla, brother of Ketty (Aspy) Wadia, and Maneck (Mahrukh) Bhujwalla, uncle of Boman, Rayomand, and Shehnaz in Mumbai, India on May 13, 2012.
- Rostam Kaypour, husband of Gouhar Kaypour, father of Parvaneh, Farkhondeh, Mehrnaz and Ardeshir on May 30, 2012.
- Gohar Tahamtani (Azarkeivan), mother of Mina Azarkeivan (Vancouver, BC), grandmother of Nisa and Mahsa, mother-in-law of Daryoush Kabolizadeh in Iran on June 1, 2012.
- Aimai Manekshaw Singpurwala, 91, wife of late Manekshaw Burjorji Singpurwala, mother of Erach (Perin), Persis (Adi) Kasad (PA), Shirin (Parvez) Mody (Sacramento, CA), grandmother to Rustam, Roshni, Behram (Nikita) and Armaity in Orangevale, CA on June 5, 2012.
- Berzin Keki Kharas, 68, husband of Marie (Essex, UK), father of Nahla, son of Keki and Nahla Kharas, brother of Roshan Boatwalla (Mississauga, ONT) and Behroze (Hormuz) Mistry (Windsor, UK), cousin of Navzer Sachinvala (New Orleans, LA) at Southend University Hospital, England on June 7, 2012.
- Faranak Dhalla, 66, wife of Noshir Dhalla, mother of Dianne Burzin Patel, grandmother of Carl and Natasha, sister of Hootokshi Hansotia (Boca Raton, FL) in Foster City, CA on June 12, 2012.
- Homai Dadi Mistry, 80, mother of Hovi (Burjis) Shroff, Boca Raton, grandmother of Dustyn and Kevin, in Pune, June 13, 2012.
- Piloo Noshir Guard, 75, aunt of Hovi Shroff (Boca Raton, FL) in Navsari, India on June 16, 2012.
- Sarvar Nikdin, mother of Farhad Farzady, mother-in-law of Sima Sohrabi Farzady, grandmother of Bahram and Parisa in Iran on June 19, 2012.
- Thrity Ghadiali, 84, aunt of Hufri Darayus Mavalwalla, great aunt of Zain, Shiraz and Manek (Richmond, BC) in Vancouver, BC on June 21, 2012.
- Bapsy Jimmy Master, 72, mother of Anahita Patel (South Florida) in Mumbai, India on June 21, 2012.
- Pourandokht Beman Hormozi (Khosraviani), 81, wife of late Bahram Khosraviani (Rasti) mother of Homa Mojgani (Khosraviani), Behrooz Khosraviani and Bijan Khosraviani in Cupertino, CA on June 24, 2012.
- Sheheriar Rustom Bamasi, 69, husband of Freny Bamasi (Orlando, FL) in Orlando, FL on July 2, 2012.
- Captain Noshir Rustom Sachinwalla, husband of late Helga father of Hutoxi, Toos, (Anastasia) Caevan (Pearl) and Ruxana; (Reginald) D'vine, and grandfather to Kamran, Darius, Tehmina, Arwen; Ariel, Gabrielle, Lucas Sachinwalla. Joshua D'vine, brother of late Faram, Khurshedcher, Minocher and Dinshaw and Mrs. Ava Jehangir Kharas of San Diego CA. in Sydney, Australia, July 7, 2012.
- Mr. Sachinwalla trained for seamanship aboard the Dufferin in India, and as Captain, piloted vessels to shores in Karachi; Ghana; Singapore; and Carnarvon Western Australia. He retired from merchant naval duties in 1991.
- Dinyar Kaikhushroo Patel, 80, uncle of Goher Danny Mobed (South Florida) in Zofingen, Switzerland on July 15, 2012.
- Ervad Savakshah Jamshedji Katila, uncle of Kersi Kaikhushroo Katila (Canada), Yasmin Aspi Sethna and Nelly Hormuzd Engineer (Canada) in Udvada, India on July 17, 2012.
- Kamal Choudhury, husband of Marie Celine Choudhury, father of Chelsey Choudhury (Houston, TX), Carioca Choudhury Mhowdawalla, grandfather of Christopher, Chloe, and Tayte in Mumbai, India on July 27, 2012.
- Mehroo Sorabji Jussawalla (Honolulu, HI), mother of Feroza Jussawalla Dasenbrook on July 29, 2012.
- Sheroomai Pheroze Tamboli, 81, mother of Hoshedar (Anahita) Tamboli in Tampa, FL on August 3, 2012.
- Ader Rostami, 58, husband of Shahnaz Kaviani, father of Michelle and Neema in CA on August 7, 2012.

Khorshed Kaikhushroo Merchant, 97, mother of Homai Khajautia (Tampa, FL), grandmother of Jennifer Khajautia in Mumbai, India on August 11, 2012.

Soli Faramroze Dalal, 82, brother of Farrokh Dalal, uncle of Adil (Austin), Zaver & Zenobia (Mumbai) died in St Eustache, Quebec on Aug 11, 2012.

Rumi Khambatta, 57, husband of late Farida Khambatta, father of Maya Purvez Irani (Vancouver, BC), Delnaz, Gulnar on August 12, 2012.

Perin Pesi Madon, 89, wife of late Pesi Faramroj Madon, mother of Homi (Gool) Dinyar (Maharukh) Parvez, (Sheroo) (Montreal) Hoshang (Hutoxi), late Zarir, (Pervin) sister of late Najamai Limzerwala, late Alamai Tavadia, late Homi, late Keki and late Ratan, grandmother of Nazneen Patel, Kainaz Daruvala, Farzan Madon, Delna Madon, Zinnia Elavia & Karl Madon, in Mumbai, August 14, 2012.

Ervad Kersi Nariman Desai, 79, husband of Maharukh, father of Farial, brother of late Mehru,

(Montreal), late Coomi (London); late Ratan and Homi (Navsari; Khorshed (Navsari); Nergish (Toronto) in Montreal, August 16, 2012

Roudabeh Molaei, wife of Manoucher Shidfar, mother of Sohelia (Kerman Katrak) and Sima (Keykavous Varjavand) in Los Angeles, CA, on August 24, 2012.

Jerbanoo Irani wife of Late Major Jamshed Irani, mother of Behramjee (Niloufer) Irani, in Brampton, Ontario, on August 27, 2012.

Dhun Framroze Ogra, wife of late Framroze Ogra, mother of Nusserwanji, Phiruze and Mazdiyar Ogra, grandmother of Phirozeshah (Anahita) Ogra, Richmond Hill, in Karachi on September 2, 2012.

Jaloo Shahpur Pardiwala, 76, mother of Niloufer Rohinton Hathiram in Houston, TX on September 9, 2012.

Parviz Soroushian, husband of Parvaneh Soroushian, father of Tira and Rouhintan Farhadieh (Chicago, IL), grandfather of Piran, Paymon,

Ashkan, and Ardeshir in London, UK.

Meher Bamboat, 90, wife of late Noshir Bamboat, mother of Kewmars (Tanaz) Bamboat (Munster, IN), and Firoza (Yaz) Bilimoria, California. Grandmother of Jenny (Birav) Shah (Chicago), Darius (Khushnaz) Bamboat (Chicago); Karl (Sheila) Bilimoria (Chicago), Nina (Mark) Angelo (NY), Zal Bilimoria (California), sister of Jean Jilla, in Munster, IN on September 14, 2012

Jhangir Austin, 51, husband of Nergish, father of Xarius and Arazish, son of Neelum & Erach Austin, brother of Ardvan and Hermesh, Alberta, in London, England, on September 18, 2012.

Coomi Bhathena, 102, wife of Framroze, mother of Dinaz Irani (Pittsburg), Bapsy Guard (Mississauga), Hoshi Bhathena (U.K.), Pervize Contractor (Prescott), Aspy Bhathena (B.C.) and Darius Bhathena (Caledon), in Toronto, Ontario on October 2, 2012.

Coomi Framroze Bhathena-Legacy of a Zarthushti 1910-2012

Born in 1910 in Jhansi, Coomi aunty called Toronto home and was the heart and soul of the ZSO. Nobody has given so much of their time and effort toward the community as she has. Her courage has been remarkable and I've had the privilege to work with her for 25 years on the Muktaad committee. Every Navroze she would take on the responsibility to cook for up to 400 people. Everything was a challenge to her which she met with success. She has cooked more meals than anyone in the community for all our functions. She supported initiative from scouts to seniors to scattering grounds. When we decided to buy a plot of land at Glen Oaks Memorial Gardens as a burial ground for the Zarathushti community, Coomi aunty donated the entire \$10,000 enabling us to purchase the plot. Her life was devoted to charity. As chairperson of the Senior's group- she even took a group of seniors to Los Angeles.

Coomi aunty's charity resonates in India as well. The meagre amount she made sewing sadras, daglis and beading torans went to supporting the Dadar Madressa where she sponsored three Navars, to the clinic in Udvarda and the luncheon program for nassasalas. **She leaves behind six children, ten grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren.** We were blessed to celebrate her 102nd birthday at the Darbe Meher this August as we have for the past 30 years. We look upon Coomi aunty as a true example of a Zarathushti spirit of giving, striving and achieving. *May her soul rest in eternal peace.*

(Submitted by Putli Mirza)

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.

Male, 29, bank manager in Mumbai, contact kavas810@gmail.com. [M12-04].

Female, 28, 5' 2", B. Tech (Mumbai), post graduate and Masters in IT. (Canada), fair, petite, pleasant personality and good family values. Interested in meeting well-settled, good natured and cultured life partner. 'Non-Manglik' only. Contact kdq09@yahoo.com. [F12-18].

Female, 26, B. Com (University of Toronto) and Diploma in Creative Writing (Humber College). We are looking for a Parsi youth for our daughter who is working in Toronto. The young man should either be settled in Canada or USA, or studying here and be certain of settling in N. America. Our daughter is comfortable with moving from Canada to USA. Interested parties may please contact us at dhanmeher@yahoo.com and exchange CVs and photographs. [F12-19].

Female, 38, B.A. (Hons), B.Ed and M.A. (Child Studies in Education) teacher in Toronto, also lived and worked in London, England. Passionate about photography, nature, foreign film and all kinds of art. Loves to travel, visited countries in North and Central America, Europe and Asia. Enjoys being out with friends and loves hiking, camping, going for movies, dancing, music concerts and cooking delicious food! Looking for a man who is ready to lead a life of adventure, partnership, open to new experiences and ready to start a family. If you think this is you, it would be great to hear from you! Contact my.arezu@gmail.com. [F12-21]

Female, 28, 5' 2", Masters in Economics (UK), working with international consulting firm in UAE. Willing to settle anywhere. Interested in meeting well-educated, well-settled professional. Contact FPM1984@gmail.com. [F12-23].

Male, 26, 5' 11", Masters in IT (Carnegie Mellon University), working in Tampa, FL as a Technology Leadership Engineer. Hobbies include reading, hiking, traveling, cooking. Contact zoroastrianlad85@yahoo.com. [M12-24].

Female, 28, 5' 5", convent educated, B. Com, Diploma in Graphics and Film Animation from NIIT (India) and IATA/UFTA (Montreal), working in travel industry. Good personality, smart, loyal, understanding and caring. Career oriented but also loves family.. Parents interested in settling her in USA/Canada, with a well-educated, well-settled, loyal, family-oriented boy. Sister and family well-settled in Florida. Contact suitablematch83@yahoo.com. [F12-27].

Male, 46, IT professional, Canadian citizen working and living in Canada and USA. Divorced (no kids). Varied interests include music, sports, digital arts, photography. Speaks German and some French, Outgoing, fun-loving, jolly and cheerful, member of elite social clubs in India and Canada. Open to settle anywhere with the right person. Seeks like-minded, smart girl with similar interests. Please send a picture or a facebook profile and I will respond with mine. Contact htmcanada@yahoo.ca. [M12-29].

Female, 27, beautiful, slim, graduate (banking and insurance), Airhostess with International airline, at present in Mumbai. Extensively travelled and very sociable. Outgoing, warm, enjoys music, swimming and traveling. Contact ambint23@gmail.com or call (India) 91 98 20401555. [F12-32].

Female, 52 (looks like 45), 5' 2", post-graduate (Paris-France). French bilingual, having worked with high profile CEOs worldwide. Relocations Consultant and independent business owner. Resided in four countries and traveled extensively. Outgoing, extremely frank and transparent, honest, loves travelling/outdoors, music, swimming, cooking (to a degree) for pleasure and entertaining. Extremely happy-go-lucky, enjoys art, culture, nature and drama. Divorced (one daughter, 27, living independently). Interested in meeting honest, warm-hearted, good humored and fun loving man. Contact cotedor81@hotmail.com, (416) 858 6222 or global +91 98 20401555. [F12-33].

Male, 26, BE (Hospitality and Tourism Management - Mumbai), Masters in International Hospitality Management (Baltimore International College, MD), presently doing MBA in Information Systems Management in New Jersey and working as director of food and management at Holiday Inn, in NJ. Enjoys outdoors, badminton, volley ball, travelling, music, collecting coins, stamps and movies. Contact dynamic.dinoo@gmail.com. [M12-34].

Male, 33, Masters in Engineering and Management (Union, NY), Bachelor in Computer Science (Case Western Reserve), working in Albany, NY. Well settled with his own house, easy going and fun loving. Enjoys good company and is open-minded on most issues. Contact : darius_m_s@yahoo.com. [M12-35].

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.

River of Smoke

By Amitav Ghosh

Review: Dinyar Patel (Delhi: Penguin, 2011) 558 pp.

BOOKS
ARTS &

REVIEWED BY DINYAR PATEL

A popular (and very inaccurate) version of Parsi history in India posits the community's relative obscurity until around the 1700s, when an influx of enterprising Parsis into Bombay—by sheer dint of their hard work and enterprise—brought undreamed of wealth, political influence, social capital, and respect to their tiny community. We are all familiar with the stories of poor moffusil Parsis who lifted themselves out of desperate poverty and established themselves as honest, trustworthy, civic minded individuals, lavishing their fortunes on philanthropic causes and the improvement and adornment of western India's great metropolis.

There is, of course, a measure of truth in this narrative. What is less acknowledged—both inside and outside of the community—is that a good portion of this wealth until the 1850s was built on opium, and specifically the exportation of opium to China. The so-called “*China trade*” was, in reality, largely constituted of the smuggling of narcotics.

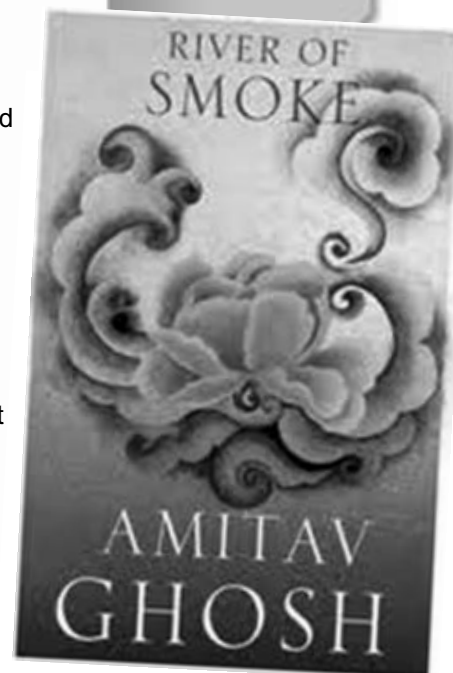
During the first three decades of the nineteenth century, as the scholar Amar Farooqui has demonstrated in his book *Opium City* (2006), Parsis controlled approximately one-third of the firms in the city that dealt in the opium trade. Many of the most prominent, respectable Parsi families—the *Readymoneys*, *Jeejeebhoyes*, *Wadias*, *Banajis*, *Camas*, and the *Tatas*—rose to fame and fortune partly or fully through opium. It is a dark aspect of Parsi history that the community has, for the most part, found it very difficult to acknowledge, leave alone address.

In this light, Amitav Ghosh's new novel, *River of Smoke*, the second part of his Ibis trilogy, is an important book. It delves into the Parsi involvement with the opium trade and the many ways this helped create the modern community as we know it. Parsis would be well advised to read Ghosh's novel—a fictional account premised on voluminous historical research—in order to gain perspective on how some of our ancestors grew rich off the sufferings of a faraway land.

Following up on *Sea of Poppies*, Ghosh centers his story around *Bahramji Modi*, a Parsi trader who bears striking resemblance to Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy. Like Jamsetji, Bahram is born into relative poverty in Navsari but rises quickly to commercial success after marrying into a wealthy family—the Mistris, heirs to a shipbuilding empire. As contracts for ships wane, Bahram advises his father-in-law to diversify into new commercial opportunities. “*Today the biggest profits don't come from selling useful things: quite the opposite,*” he argues. “*The profits come from selling things that are not of any real use. Look at this new kind of white sugar that people are bringing from China—this thing they call 'cheeni.'*” Opium, Bahram continues, “*is just like that. It is completely useless unless you're sick, but still people want it*” (p. 51).

Fast-forward to 1838: Bahram, having long ago convinced his father-in-law and—thereafter—reaped incredible fortunes from his decades in the “China trade,” set out for Canton carrying his most valuable—and, from the standpoint of his business interests in Bombay, most critical—shipment of opium. Ghosh paints a vivid picture of Canton and its foreigners' enclave, “*Fanqui town.*” While the walled Chinese city remains forbiddingly inaccessible, Fanqui town is a whirl of people from all over the globe—Indian lascars, British and American opium barons, Eurasian painters, Cantonese beggars, scraggly European sailors—all packed into a few tiny blocks. And then there is the Pearl River itself, the “*greatest of Canton's suburbs,*” clogged with houseboats, one of which housed Bahram's beloved Chinese mistress, whom had borne him a son, *Freddy or Ah Fatt*. Now one of Fanqui town's most prominent seths, an arbiter of Indian interests and a close friend of the biggest British and American traders, Bahram hastens back to a city that has transformed his life markedly for the better. But all is not well: rumors swirl of an impending Chinese crackdown on the opium trade, one designed to sweep away the atmosphere of graft, payoffs, and broad-daylight smuggling in which the opium trade has flourished.

Much on the novel focuses on a very different conflict: the struggle of Bahram and his fellow merchants to convince themselves that they are simply law-abiding merchants, washing their hands of any hint that their trade transgresses



BETWEEN THE COVERS

REVIEWED BY DINYAR PATEL

legal or moral boundaries. Smuggling opium, indeed, is a very non-Zoroastrian activity: the pious Parsi would shun association with a substance that pollutes both fire and the body. But Bahram resolutely defends his chosen profession. *"It is not we but the Chinese who are responsible for the trade,"* he argues with a fellow member of the Canton Chamber of Commerce. *"It is they who love opium after all"* (p. 387). Occasionally, however, his conscience is pricked. During a chance meeting with Napoleon Bonaparte, now reduced to tending a small garden on his prison island of St. Helena, the ex-emperor catches Bahram unawares by asking him point-blank if he thought the opium trade was evil (pp. 174-75). Once the members of the Chamber of Commerce are confronted by official orders by the new Chinese commissioner in Canton, Lin Zexu, to give up their opium stock and renounce future involvement in smuggling, the Chamber's lone voice of conscience frames the issue much more bluntly for Bahram. *"Think not of this moment but of the eternity ahead,"* he cautions Bahram before a vote on compliance with Lin's edict. *"Who will you choose, Mr. Moddie? Will you choose the light or the darkness, Ahura Mazda or Ahriman?"* (p. 470)

Obfuscating morality is a much easier task for many of Bahram's British colleagues, including William Jardine (who, in real life, had Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy as a major business partner) and Lancelot Dent. Ghosh highlights how such men deployed arguments of "free trade" in order to legitimate their activities—and eventually pave the way for British military action against China during the First Opium War. By transporting opium from India to China, Jardine and his ilk maintained, opium smugglers were simply obeying the laws of supply and demand; Chinese attempts to cut off supplies, furthermore, were nothing more than gross, barbarous interferences with British and American commercial liberties. *"We are not smugglers, gentlemen!"* Jardine roars to an appreciative crowd. *"It is the Chinese government, it is the Chinese officers who smuggle and who connive at and encourage smuggling, not we; and then look at the East India Company: why, the father of all smuggling and smugglers is the East India Company!"* (p. 405)

The Indian angle is important. Ghosh's novel addresses a fundamental paradox in the opium trade for the Indians who were involved in it. The East India Company's laxity with opium exports meant that a handful of Indians did grow fabulously rich in the early 1800s. But what were the costs? Both the Company and British firms, of course, captured the overwhelming majority of the profits. Most Indians, meanwhile, suffered double humiliations in Canton: second-class status in comparison to Europeans and American residents, as well as the glowering contempt of Cantonese who resented India's and Indians' role in the opium trade. But an even bigger humiliation was the fact that, under the juggernaut of British imperialism, the smuggling of narcotics was one of the only avenues open to Indians for personal and material advancement. It was an enterprise that cut at the foundations of India's moral economy and commercial economy while creating only a very select few Jeejeebhoyes, Muhammad Ali Rogays, and Roger de Farias. It was clearly an evil system. This is a realization that slowly dawns on Bahram as the events of early 1839 unfold.

As usual, Ghosh has assembled a massive array of sources—on topics ranging from Chinese and Indian history to botany and the pidgin dialects spoken in Fanqui town—which add real historical depth and dimension to *River of Smoke*. He has also done an admirable job in researching the Parsis. When Bahram dines, he enjoys a selection of akuri, aleti paleti, dar-ni-pori, and various other items par eeda; when he dresses, he puts on the turban and angarkha that distinguished Parsi gentlemen in the early 1800s; and when he speaks, it is with speech patterns, idioms, and phrases that many Parsi readers will immediately recognize. In his Parsi characters, Ghosh has splendidly brought to life the Parsi Gujarati dialect, teaching me some phrases that I need to deploy in daily speech (tukki garden valo haramjada ni nisani—"a short neck is a sure sign of a haramzada." Wise words indeed!). There are some very minor, relatively insignificant historical errors. Symbols such as the farohar or the now-familiar portraits of the Prophet Zarathushtra were quite uncommon in 1830s Parsi society (as for the portraits, see an interesting essay written by Dan Sheffield on the subject, forthcoming in the *Journal of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute*). Similarly, Bahram's ship, the Anahita, has Persepolis-style decorations that also would have been relatively uncommon in that era: such styles only gained popularity in the community around the very end of the nineteenth century.

But these are infinitely minor details. *River of Smoke* is a gripping account of how an array of Indians, Chinese, and Europeans—Parsis, Bengalis, Indo-Portuguese, Scotsmen, a French girl; seths, merchant princes, botanists, dubashes, smuggler agents—were brought together and convulsed in the months before British guns opened fire in the Pearl River Delta. It is a welcome work of literature that will hopefully tackle collective historical amnesia over a significant yet sordid chapter in both Parsi and Indian history.

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Drinking Arak off An Ayatollah's Beard

BOOKS
ARTS &

A BOOK REVIEW AND REACTION
by Dinaz Rogers

A JOURNEY

Through the Inside-Out Worlds of Iran and Afghanistan

Nicholas Jubber

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*"All men who are pious and prudent will praise
My name when I'm gone in the far-future-days.
For so I shall live as my word's seed extends
All over the earth and my fame never ends."*

Ferdowsi

the female *basiji* (morality police), chador-clad women who patrol the streets of Tehran in jeeps and terrorize the female population. They chide the women and then wipe the lipstick off their faces with wadded tissue containing hidden bits of razor blade, thereby slashing the women's lips and faces.

No matter where Jubber travels in this vast region, the name Ferdowsi and stories from the *Shahnameh* pop up. In his journey to learn about the lives of modern-day Iranians and Afghans, he comes across the unexpected: underneath the obvious trappings of Islam lives a vibrant Persian culture that has endured underground and behind closed doors for 14 centuries. He quotes this Old Persian saying: "A man within his own four walls is like a king in his domain." Perhaps it is this spirit that has allowed the clandestine practices to survive.

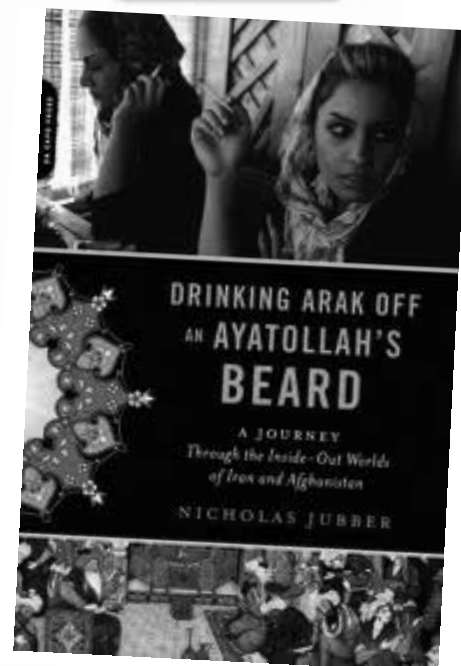
In Tajikistan Jubber discovers that the identity of the Persian-speaking Tajiks is rooted in Ferdowsi and the *Shahnameh*, and the poet's image is perpetuated in many art forms. Even Stalin was aware of this powerhouse poet, and when Tajikistan became a republic in the 1920s, he sent a telegram to the Tajik government saying that the *Shahnameh* was the foundation of Tajik traditions and culture. "Were it not for the *Shahnameh*," maintains the scholar Ustad Valli Samad, "the Turks and the Arabs would have destroyed the Tajik Nation." In 1991, after winning its independence from the Soviet Union, Tajikistan replaced a monument to Lenin with one of Ferdowsi.

Drinking Arak off an Ayatollah's Beard is one man's journey into today's Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia, searching into the past to understand the region's culture and inhabitants. The author, Nicholas Jubber, is especially drawn to the art, poetry and ancient faith of the Persian culture, which has maintained an unbroken line since pre-Islamic Iran and thrives both aboveground and underground, in the hearts and homes of the people. A common thread runs through the book: Ferdowsi and his one-thousand-year-old epic poem *Shahnameh*, which recounts the legends of Zoroastrian Iran. This epic poem becomes Jubber's guide. After many centuries of Arab-Islamic rule, many Iranians and others in the region still celebrate their ancient past through its awe-inspiring tales.

Every chapter is rich in detail. There are amusing but sadly true insights about "WHAT'S GOING DOWN" in Iran (skirt hems; family protection laws; women on bicycles and in advertisements; streets named after royalists or Westerners, like Cyrus the Great Street and Churchill Street) and "WHAT'S GOING UP" (headscarves; polygamy; Mickey Mouse; women being hanged for adultery) since the 1979 revolution.

At times the footnotes make interesting stand-alone pieces. The footnote about the terms "Persian" and "Iranian" contains a wealth of information ranging from efforts to purify the Farsi language to the Western association of "Persian" with fluffy cats. The figures in the book are also worthy of the reader's full attention, notably "Persian Egg-Heads of the Late 10th/Early 11th Century," "Ghaznavids and the Taliban" and "The Arms of Ferdowsi's Disappointment."

Drinking Arak also verified some rumors I have heard about post-revolutionary Iran. A Brazilian couple I met at a Parsi Navroze party in Portland, Oregon, told me about



BETWEEN THE COVERS

Samad tells Jubber about a book he has written: *The Shahnameh in the Destiny of Chernyshevsky*.

Chernyshevsky was a socialist, and in his efforts to save his Russian homeland, he turned to the Shahnameh because it “explains how to fight foreign invaders.” In his exile in Siberia, Chernyshevsky wrote a poem about Ferdowsi. Karl Marx was inspired by Chernyshevsky to also become an admirer of Ferdowsi.

While some hold the Sassanid dynasty responsible for crumbling under the Arab-Islamic invasion, I was heartened to read that over the four centuries of their rule, these Iranians made many contributions to the advancement of civilization: the architectural squinch, the bankers check, heraldry, windmills, polo, backgammon and tennis! In the eyes of Jubber, the escapades of one of the less famous members of the imperial family, Shapur II, read like an ancient version of a James Bond movie. Shapur II's jailer, and then his liberator, is a woman named dilafruz farrukhpai—lucky-footed heart-luster.

In my copy of *Drinking Arak*, I have marked up practically every page and the back blank pages with commentaries and notes. I learned words like Haq (truth), meimum (monkey) and joob (a narrow street side channel that carries water down from the mountains). I delighted in jigaret bokhoram (I want to eat your liver), a term of endearment that Jubber hears one of his young hosts shout out to a young lady in the street. This struck a chord with me; I grew up hearing kalejoo or kalejee (liver) used as an affectionate term for a beloved young child (my aunt used to call me: Diloo, maroo kalejoo). Coincidence? Another phrase that caught my eye was khoshal shodam (I became happy or glad we met). Khoshal or khoosh is Gujarati for happy. While reading this book, I looked for signs of ancestral ties to us, the Parsis, be they language, customs or the stories we grew up with about our Madar Vattan (Mother Country) Iran that might have stood the test of time and distance. Mahtab, ustad, pahlavans, tongas, anjoman, jaan rang familiar to my ears.

In the chapter “*Prisoner Poets*” in Part Two, AFGHANISTAN, I learned a new poetry form, Habisiya, a genre of poetry specifically about jail. Jubber is reminded of how cultural oppression has played a big role in shaping this part of the world. His professor host in Tehran sums it up well: “*Bright-thinkers in this country, we always had difficulties. Look at Ferdowsi!*” Through times of brutal oppression and prohibition, Persian culture has adapted to survive. To quote medieval poet Sa’di: “*If you cannot cut off the hand of the king, then it’s best to kiss it.*”

Throughout the book, Jubber describes instances of people clinging to and celebrating their ancestral past. I found a funeral custom that he comes across in Bakhtiari of great interest. In a yard in the village of Bazoft, a corpse in a cotton shroud is laid on a tripod, and a cockerel sits on the dead man’s ankles. One end of a string is tied to the bird’s claws and the other to the dead

man’s ankles. This, the author is told, is an old custom “*from the time when people here were Zoroastrians.*”

Although most of the residents of this region have been Muslims for a long time, such pre-Islamic customs have been preserved over the centuries. I also enjoyed the Bakhtiari’s droll attitude toward life: Shahrooz is packing a Beretta, and when the author asks him why, he replies, “*When bandits attack, you want to fight them with your hands?*”

Jubber finds that the Bakhtiari have no problem linking their Islamic selves with the pre-Islamic folklore presented by Ferdowsi. A recitation of the tale of Rustom and Sohrab to one family in a dispute over land motivates that family to go and fight for its rights with another family. Tired field workers recite verses from the Shahnameh for motivation to keep going. The verses serve as a general panacea, a kind of “performance-enhancing drug.”

At a party in North Tehran, Jubber meets a cigarette-smoking, vodka-drinking young woman (“It’s what our poets always drink”) dressed in a black miniskirt, white shirt and high heels. As a true act of defiance, she wears a necktie draped over her shoulder. The necktie was banned as a mark of Western depravity after the 1979 revolution. Jubber tells her that he is not here to write about history but to find out what is going on in these parts of the world today. Her response: “...but you know, the past times and today, they are like a tortoise and a shell. Even if you can pull them apart, it is not a good idea.”

Some scoff at Iran’s ancient name, *Ariyana Vaeogo* (*Land of the Aryans*). Jubber understands the true meaning of the word “Aryan,” which has no racist or pejorative connotations in its original usage. He cites the inscription at Persepolis, where Darius the Great calls himself “an Aryan, of Aryan lineage.” Throughout his travels, Jubber comes across many such uses of the term “Aryan.” These reflect the uncorrupted meaning of the word and indicate the close ethnic relationship between the Iranians and the people of Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Defying the edict of the Taliban, Ustad Rajey, chairman of Herat’s official Literary Society, believes that the Shahnameh is not just the history of Iran but also of Afghanistan. He boasts that many of the stories take place in Persian-speaking parts of Afghanistan and not Iran. To bolster this claim, he notes that one of the stories is about the Princess of Kabul, akin to Rapunzel. Interestingly, the classic story of Rustom and Sohrab bears much in common with the Irish legend of Cú Chulainn. In Jubber’s words, it is not a coincidence that the names of Ireland (Eire) and Iran come from the same root.

Surprising to me, the Ayatollah Khomeini put forth a Fatwa permitting sex change operations! The Muslim clergy, wanting people to behave as one sex or the other, preferred sex surgery to “same-sex playing.” If need be, the government will finance the surgery. Also surprising,

BETWEEN THE COVERS

in spite of the repression of women under the 1979 regime, a slogan on a banner in Tehran puts equal obligation on men: "My sister, guard your veil; my brother, guard your eyes."

In the chapter *"In the Land of Fire,"* Jubber travels to Yazd and Fars, the strongholds of Zoroastrianism in Iran. In Yazd he stays with Siyavash. *"An atmosphere of secrecy whispered through these streets."* I found the words of Siyavash that he would rather the mountains take him than the Arabs defeat him very poignant. This was after taking Jubber to the Chak-Chak shrine and relating the story of Nikabanu being swallowed up by the mountain when trying to escape the Arab invaders. Like most non-Muslims and even some Muslims in Iran, Siyavash resents that all women are forced to wear the hijab. *"It is not our religion, it is Islam. But we are forced to do this."* Jubber sees no joyfulness in Siyavash nor in any of the Zoroastrians he meets in Yazd. After studying the horrible plight of the Zoroastrians after the Arab Invasion, Jubber comes to the conclusion that because it is hard for them to live in a strict Islamic system today, it is even harder for them to die in it. He wonders about the forces that *"tipped Zoroastrianism off the road to global prominence."* He thinks that the most famous Zoroastrians in the Christian World are the three Magi and not Freddie Mercury and believes that "Zoroaster's ghost

might be hard to see, but he haunts the Western culture to its core."

Drinking Arak off an Ayatollah's Beard is written with a lyrical flair. Jubber writes that at the ancient site of Bishapur "The women's multilayered dresses and floral-print scarves were so bright...they were like rainbows reassembled as people. As for the men—their rich, thick brows flexed under double-eared felt hats identical to those worn by the ancient Medians on the reliefs at Persepolis as well as the magistrates of medieval Fars—a glimpse of the past on the heads of the present."

What would a book on travel be without photographs? The pictures in this book are captivating. They kindle a longing to walk in the footsteps of Nicholas Jubber and experience his travels anew.

Drinking Arak off an Ayatollah's Beard has taken an honored place on my shelf. Rich with detail, it opens up a world few people know and provides valuable insights into history, language and the tenacity of Zoroastrianism. Having read that Zoroastrian practices are so widespread, I am happy and proud. The Shahnameh has played a pivotal role in the survival of our faith. To quote Jubber's Iranian host, the Professor, *"Because of this book...because of this book we are Persians. Without it—poof."*

How to Double Your Local Business Sales Without Cold Calling

By Farhad Khurshed publisher CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform

178 pages ; \$19.97

ISBN-10: 1456526448 ISBN-13: 978-

1456526443;

(Available only through Amazon see link below)

Having been rather flummoxed by people making sales & marketing concepts more and more complicated in recent years, it was great to read a book that takes you back to what you should know at the onset, and that's the basics of what this field entails.

What distinctly came across by the end of this book is that it deals more with generic overviews as opposed to specifics. It is beneficial for those who want an overview of all the different aspects, which, of course, would require more research at a later point.

The book puts forth brief explanations about marketing, branding, headlines, networking, webinars, press releases, handling complaints, referral programs,

testing and measuring, joint ventures, elevator speeches, and so on.

Since this book covers a snap shot of so many topics, it is effective in giving you a brief idea of pointers you need to keep in mind, and from there, pick the ones you think best suit you and your business. More research, of course, will have to follow accordingly.

The basis of the title is *Doubling Your Sales without cold calling*, and the book is written based on the premise of marketing your business. The author relies on the principle that if you know how to market your wares you will not have to focus as much on selling.

This book is one a novice in the field of sales & marketing can benefit from. For the seasoned sales person, this is a great reminder of the basics to make sure they have not lost sight of it.

WHAT IS SALES, WHAT IS MARKETING?

Given that a number of people are confused about the difference between marketing and advertising, the author states the difference very clearly. He says, *"Advertising is a part of marketing, but it's not the only part of marketing."*

BETWEEN THE COVERS

Reviewed by Fred Sarkari

"Phone calls, and the way you deal with people over the phone are a part of marketing," he adds.

Marketing, in essence, is how we get our name out to our potential clients, and as the author states, *"Do not try to sell to everyone without qualifying them."* Blind selling, obviously, is not the way to go, according to the author of this book.

FRONT END/BACK END MARKETING:

One more important point the author makes surrounds the front and back end marketing. Front end marketing, in his words, is what a business would do *"to acquire new customers."* Back end marketing takes into account the tactics a business has to employ in order to *"sell additional products and services to that customer."*

This is very critical. People who have been in this field for long enough realize that while most businesses work very hard to acquire new customers, a revolving door continues to run at the same time - customers keep leaving as fast as they come in. Paying enough attention to customer retention, consequently, is as important as looking for new ones, if not more.

THE BRAND:

In regards to brand building, the author says that when building your brand, you have to *"see things through the eyes of other people."* *"The best brands,"* he says, *"tap into people's emotions."*

I have been working with clients for years to help them create their brand and, it is amazing how even the large multi-million dollar companies have a hard time wrapping their heads around that concept. Given that most people don't even know what a brand is, thinking it is all about colors and logos. A brand, the book says, is nothing more than the emotions people feel when they are exposed to any part of the business in question.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

In addressing any kind of a marketing campaign, the author rightly points to the fact that businesses need to figure out their message, and their message needs to be attention grabbing.

The author covers 'USP' (Unique Selling Proposition), like most sales books do, but what he also does is break it down in good detail, making it a great guide for those who have never created a USP. A simple example from within the book for someone who's never created a USP look like this - *"Hi my name is (insert name) and I'm the owner of (insert name). We specialize in (insert USP)."*

One great statistic from the book states, *"Businesses that have a marketing plan outperform those who don't by 30%."*

To me, his conclusion has one of the most important points we need to remember in any kind of business, and it states, *"It's time to use what you discovered."* Taking stock of what you've learnt and what you know, after all, can be a great way to chart out suitable strategies.

This review, you should know, does not cover every aspect of the book, not only for the need of more space here, but also because of how wide-ranging the book actually is. What you've read here essentially covers the macro points which I believe overshadow all other strategies the author talks about.

This book relies on presenting a brief about a fair amount of diverse information. In turn, the reader stands to get overwhelmed, with the possibility of nothing getting implemented.

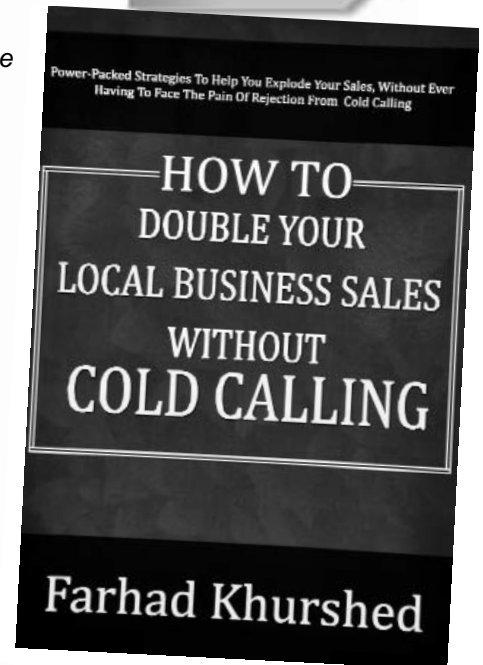
The bottom line being that the reader, having gone through this book which offers insight into a wide variety of sales & marketing concepts, will still need to learn the skill of effective execution. As without this skill no amount of information will be of any value to an individual and the success of their business.

The link on Amazon: http://www.amazon.com/Double-Local-Business-Without-calling/dp/1456526448/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1347596948&sr=8-1&keywords=farhad+khurshed

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