

## JOURNAL

Mehr–Avan–Adar 1385 AY (Fasli) • Ardebehesht–Khordad–Tir 1386 AY (Shenshai) • Khordad–Tir–Amordad 1386 AY (Kadimi)

## AGING GRACEFULLY

### Challenges And Opportunities





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



# FEZANA JOURNAL

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GENDER EQUALITY

Guest Editor Zerbanoo Guifford

SPRING 2017

FEZANA 30th ANNIVWESARY  
SOUVENIR ISSUE

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See bottom of page 5

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# Editorial

## A Word from the Editor



The genesis of this issue on Aging Gracefully -Challenges and Opportunities was the Survey commissioned by FEZANA on the Needs of Zarathushtis 55+ living in North America. You will read the preferences of Zarathushtis as to where they want to live and their hopes to be able to live their lives to the fullest.

Population Aging is the most significant trend in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a cause for celebration. We are all living longer thanks to advances in medical interventions, technological advances, nutrition, housing and public health. With life expectancy rising to around 80 in north America, the 65 + population is the fastest growing segment. By 2035 13% of the world population will be above age 65.

So if we are living longer in relatively good health what are we going to do with all the extra time we now have? How are we going to occupy ourselves?. Scientists are already talking of making us live well beyond our present 100 years. In the pages of this issue "Aging Gracefully-Challenges and Opportunities", guest edited by Nawaz Merchant, read about people making the best of the **opportunities** afforded to them, embarking on second careers, expressing themselves through philanthropy, while others meet the **challenges** of age with courage and fortitude. You will also read about how to plan for financial stability for retirement years, stay healthy, eat healthy with exciting recipes made with anti-oxidant foods, exercise, and to avoid the stress of caregiving. But this is not to say that retirement and aging does not bring about loneliness with the empty nest and

empty bed syndrome. This issue will give you new hope and new courage to face the future!!

The 2011 Indian Census released early in July also reflects the same trend for the Zarathushti population in India. We should not assume that the population decline is offset by growth outside India. The Indian Census shows that there are fewer of us, producing fewer children, but living longer, (pages 4, 26) We then have a moral responsibility to address both, aging well and concurrently the diminishing numbers. The **Jiyo Parsi** scheme is doing yeoman service (80 babies born since the start of the scheme)

to change the mindset of young people, to marry early and enjoy the joys of parenthood early. And we all have to do our share. A good example is set by the cashless treatment initiative set up at Navsari by the WZO Trust Funds and D.N, Sarvajani Hospital for couples who cannot afford to pay upfront for the expensive fertility treatment .

In India we hear the mantra in India, " for survival; it is the quality not quantity that matters". But the caveat that Late Dasturji Peshotan Mirza expressed so well, **"our survival does not depend upon numbers, it depends upon unity within our community"**. Do we have unity within the community? The 5<sup>th</sup> estate is being used as a pawn to generate disunity, the BPP trustees are showing fissures again. The moot question then is **if there is no unity and the numbers are falling, how are we to survive ?**

Let us not end on a note of doom and gloom but rejoice and celebrate the achievements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century of uplifting the world population to a higher level. With good thoughts, words and deeds, the Zarathushti population can follow suit.

## A Message from FEZANA President

### The Life in your Years

Earlier this year, Nawaz Merchant, Dolly Dastoor, and Piroja Press presented the results of a survey of seniors (55+) in our community and their needs. Although participation was not as high as it could have been, enough seniors responded to provide the surveyors with a statistically viable sample. The results of the survey should, therefore, be taken seriously.

Significantly, the results show that our seniors would love to participate in many activities, but many of our associations do not offer such activities for various reasons. Loneliness, lack of transportation and need for rental housing were voiced as key issues. The survey also indicated that a small segment of our senior population could benefit from financial support. The full presentation is available on our FEZANA website.

Our seniors are a valuable community asset. They have devoted their lives to building their families and strengthening our communities in North America. They should not be forgotten or ignored. We should be doing all we can to provide them a fantastic quality of life in their golden years.

Some seniors in North America live with their children in joint families. They are included in their children's social lives but sometimes feel isolated because of a lack of the company of their own peers. Community senior centers may provide some outlet for interaction with others of the same age. Our Zoroastrian communities are small and scattered over large geographical areas. But if our associations can offer sub-groups of seniors the opportunity to socialize with others who share a love of their common heritage and common interests, it would enrich their lives substantially.

Often our seniors need to feel useful and needed in order to thrive, but they may not know how to be of help. Our association leaders should publicize opportunities where the wisdom of the ages could be leveraged. Remember "it takes a village to raise a child"! Giving youngsters a chance to share their areas of their expertise like technology can afford them opportunities to exhibit leadership. Learning constantly keeps seniors mentally sharp. Such



interaction can help youth, young families and seniors, who are a vibrant part of our community.

Many seniors who are dependent on their children may need assistance in finding resources offered in their community, not only by their local Zoroastrian associations, but also from public and non-Zoroastrian organizations. Some of our associations already provide such assistance and can share their best practices.

It is time for local associations to support our senior community. FEZANA stands ready to lend its support for all local initiatives. Let us make life for the people who gave so much of themselves for our community, a happy, productive one. After all, as President Abraham Lincoln once said, "in the end, its not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years!"

Hama Zor, Hama Asho Bade!  
May we be united in righteousness!

Homi D. Gandhi  
President, FEZANA

## CAN WE STOP THE DISAPPEARING ACT? EDITOR'S PERSPECTIVE ON ZARATHUSHTIS IN THE CENSUS

### Letter to the editor



The 2011 Indian Census results published early this year showed 20 percent decline in the Parsi population from 69,401 to 57,000 . The decline is steeper than the earlier 13% (1991-2001). Our population decline of 20% (between 2001 to 2011) means that during the period 2011-2016 we would have declined a further 5,700 heads. As a result we have a total of about 51,300 Zarathushtis , men, women and children in India. Very worrisome!!

All India		Gujarat		Maharashtra		Mumbai	
1901	94,910			58,093	61.2%	46,231	48.7%
2001	69,601	11,594	16.65%	54,739	78.6%	46,557	66.9%
2011	57,265	9,727	16.98%	44,854	78.3%	40,084	70.0%

The Parsis are an ageing community with a below one total fertility rate (TFR), which means that on average, a Parsi woman has less than one child. According to a study done by the Ministry of Minority affairs, 30 per cent of Parsis have never married and 31 per cent are over 60. Only one family in nine has a child below the age of 10.

Many approaches have been suggested to reverse the trend. 1) The Jiyo Parsi (JP) project of PARZOR supported by the Ministry of Minority Affairs which is bearing fruit ( 80 births and counting) 2) JP success stories in print, face book and you tube. The stories and films need to go out and touch people's hearts, to spread the advocacy net wider through media. 3) Youth should be involved as standard bearers of the JP initiative 4) A "think tank" of elders and youth of the community. **Kersi Kabraji** suggests one such approach.

Other stalwarts are also concerned. **Dinshaw Tamboly** writes "As a community, we may be struggling on a difficult wicket, but we simply cannot buckle down and write ourselves off without putting in a sincere and strong effort". **Shernaz Cama**, the Director of the PARZOR JP project writes "But with the Census results out we all have to work much harder and encourage as well as support and help our young to find partners encourage a balance between personal life fulfilment and successful professional work . Most importantly we must collectively and consciously realise the urgency of taking responsibility to save a precious world heritage from disappearing".

---

From Kersee Kabraji '[kerseekabraji@gmail.com](mailto:kerseekabraji@gmail.com)'  
PUNE, 20th August, 2016

The recent news about the fall in birthrate of Parsis may have created a small ripple among the community members. I would like to share my views about the decreasing numbers of Parsi community here for your readers.

We Parsis are known as '**pachham budhia**' in Gujarati meaning getting wisdom after the event. The fall in population is not at all a new happening--it has been going on for nearly 80 years or even more. We were about one lakh and thirty one thousand (1,31,000) as per the 1931 count. Thereafter it has been steadily coming down and now much more rapidly so as of today we are about 57,000 strong.

In 1930 there was the same controversy plaguing the community--whether we should accept others in to our community? I quote the following from Autobiography of Dastur Sahib Dr. Maneckji Dhalla page 395. (The original in Gujarati was published in 1942 and the English Translation in 1975:



“At the moment, until the social atmosphere of the community undergoes a change it is understandable that due to high death-rate,.....the fall in birth-rate due to family planning and other reasons, the strength of the community shows a downward trend. When we, or the generations to come, become aware of the danger of our decreasing numbers, then fresh answers will be found to suit the changing circumstances.”

## Letter to the editor



One can see this was forecast more than 80 years ago. But our community members and its leaders and high priests seem to be happily practicing '**Khavasni, Pivasni and Suvasni**' -good food, good drinks and good sleep. .Let us see what Dr. Dhalla says further:

“It is just possible that after decades the community may create an enlightened and educated priest class and a proper understanding that to spread the good faith and to increase our strength is not only commensurate with the precepts of our religion but also in the interest of our social well-being.”

How long shall we wait to see that 'enlightened and educated priest class' emerging and 'understanding' by our community members about spreading our religion?

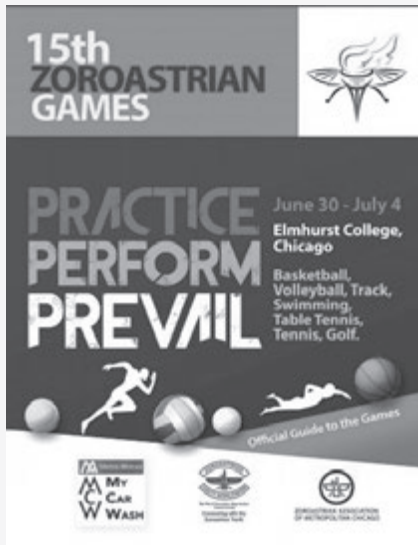
The problem or the issue needs to be resolved by using our heads and not sentiments. Would welcome views from your readers, They are free to write to me also. But please let them be only constructive suggestions based on reason only? Some one has said: He that cannot reason is a **fool**, He that will not, a **bigot**, He that dares not, a **slave**. It will be appreciated that at an age of 86, I am allowed to be refrained from associating with fools, bigots and slaves.

## Cover Design:

***The cover art for this issue “Aging Gracefully- Challenges and Opportunities” celebrates seniors in their many roles, as life partners, inter-generational relationships and engaged in self actualization endeavors.***

***Three inter-connected circles depict Jehan and Freny Bagli, a Zarathushti grandmother gardening with her grandchildren and Rusi Sorabji towing his twin engine plane.***

***The green motif and impression of leaves show that we are intrinsically connected, and that we immigrants are putting down roots and aging in North America.***



## THE 15TH ZOROASTRIAN GAMES MAKE HISTORY IN CHICAGO

Report by Hosi Mehta, Host City Z Games Chair

Two years ago, the founding father of the Zoroastrian Games (Z Games), Bijan Khosraviani, sent an email in search of a Zoroastrian Association located in the Midwest or East Coast to host the 15<sup>th</sup> Zoroastrian Games.

The board of directors for the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) discussed the request and elected to host the 2016 Z Games to bring the community together and to increase involvement among young adults.

ZAC board member, Hosi Mehta, was appointed to oversee the event. Soon after, a newsletter announcement was released bringing together a small group of volunteers who would end up forming the core team to lead the event

### The Chicago Z Games 2016 Core Organizing Committee:

**Host City Z Games Chair/Project Sponsor:** Hosi Mehta; **Treasurer:** Shar Cavyan  
**Registration Leader:** Delnaz Vazifdar. **Housing Leader:** Roshni Jamsetjee  
**Security Consultant:** Darius Jamsetjee. **Sports Event Leader:** Jamshed Rivetna  
**Golf Leader:** Bejan Irani; **Photography Leader:** Rummy Dukandar  
**Entertainment Leader:** Farida Sharyari;  
**Opening and Closing Ceremonies Leader:** Porus Dadabhoy, Mani Rao ;**Marketing and Communications Leader:** Jim Engineer;  
**Children's Program Leader:** Persis Driver; **Medical Coordinators:** Zenobia and Zubin Tantra ;**Core Team Coordinators:** Rita Balaporia, Tushad Driver, Rayo Ravji, Aban and Pesi Vazifdar;  
**Project/Planning Leaders:** Zinnia and Eric Elavia

The team spent two years planning the event. The Zoroastrians in Chicago are blessed to have so many dedicated individuals with amazing talent and professionalism who took on the challenge of organizing this grand event.. It was a daunting task, as the team had never organized a sports and entertainment event of this magnitude.

One of the toughest aspects for organizing the event was finding a venue that would meet all the sports and housing requirements for the Games. After an exhaustive search from multiple schools, the team came to the realization that no one college or university in the geographical region met all the requirements that were set forth. Ultimately, it was decided that Elmhurst College

would be a great venue selection for this large sporting event even though it did not have a pool. York High School, which was a 10-minute walk from campus, had an adequate pool and two extra gyms that were utilized.

Pricing for registration packages were developed using historic costs. The goal was to keep prices comparable to previous events, and to make the registration process electronic and easy to administer with minimal volunteer staff involvement.

Financially it is an undertaking of \$150K to \$200K, a risk for any association but with responsible budgeting and holding every sub-committee accountable for their proposed budget, reducing operating costs, re-negotiating contracts and utilizing a disciplined budgeting process the team was optimistic that the Z Games would be successful and profitable.

The 2016 Z Games attracted 236 athletes. Per our demographic breakdown:

- Gender - 66% of our athletes were male, and 34% female
- Age Range - 12% under 15 years of age, 19% between the ages of 16-20, 42% between the ages of 21-35, 17% between the ages of 36 and 50, and 11% were over the age of 50.
- Geography - 78% of the athletes were from the United States, 20% from Canada, and 2% were from Australia, and the United Arab Emirates.

The sporting events this year included: swimming, basketball, volleyball, tennis, table tennis, track, and golf. Individual athletes as well as teams showed such a high level of skill and talent; it was very exciting to see Zoroastrian



athletes so focused and composed, yet so passionate and energetic about their event(s). The organizing team has heard from many youth interested in attending the 2018 Z Games because not only did they enjoy participating in the games, but also because they felt inspired by the adult athletes participating before them. And that is really the end goal: to inspire a sense of Zoroastrian Community amongst our youth, and instill a love of sports.

Along with daily sporting events, social events were planned for the conclusion of each evening, allowing athletes and spectators to enjoy Chicago's food and nightlife. Over 650 individual social event tickets were sold! On the first night, after check-in, the participants were welcomed with an ice cream social on the college patio, a demonstration of AcroYoga (organized by Tushad Mehta) and a demonstration of Ultimate Frisbee (organized by Shazad Mehta). The second night was tons of fun with dinner and dancing at Reza's Restaurant. On the third night, athletes and spectators were given the Chicago Experience, and visited ZAC's Darbe Mehr, where they were treated to Chicago-style food, followed by a tour of downtown Chicago. The final night featured the Red Carpet Banquet at Waterford Banquet Hall with outdoor grilling stations, followed by a delicious dinner, a great DJ, and lots of dancing.

Our association in Chicago takes a great deal of pride and ownership when hosting an event. The Chicago Z Games Core Organizing Committee appreciated all the feedback in our post-2016 Z Games Participant Survey and will communicate our best practices and lessons learned to future Z Games



**Planning Teams.** Some of the strengths that were highlighted were the ease and overall presentation of the website, the electronic registration

process and overall customer service. What really impressed the Zoroastrian community in Chicago was how our young adults got involved and worked together for the success of the Z Games. The entire core organizing committee got a better understanding of who they were and a mutual respect and trust for each other and their own abilities. Any big projects undertaken by our community from this point forward will not seem as daunting because of the solid foundation that we have built!

The Core Organizing Committee for the 2016 Z Games would like to thank ZAC-Chicago, the FEZANA-Sports committee for their guidance, as well as Elmhurst College and York High School and their staff for their extraordinary service. A big thank you to all our sponsors who believed in us and encouraged us with their financial support: Mrs. Farangis Zartoshti, Mehta Motors/My Car Wash, the World Zoroastrian Organization, and the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago. Our special thanks and appreciation to the over one hundred local volunteers who worked hard to make this a truly memorable event. Finally, we would like to thank the Z Games' star marathon runner for perpetuating the Zoroastrian Games tradition of lighting the torch and running it to the opening ceremony. Jehangir Mehrkhodavandi (photo left) ran about 13 miles, lighting the torch in the early hours of the morning auspiciously from ZAC's Darbe Mehr in Burr Ridge, and running it to the stadium in Elmhurst.

The organizers of the 2016 Z Games were proud to 'carry the torch' in organizing the event this year. Together, we created memories to last a lifetime, and ultimately passed the torch to the Los Angeles organizers, who will start planning for the 2018 Zoroastrian Games.

*For more details see the FEZANA Bulletin, July 2016*



**DONATIONS RECEIVED (in USD) - January 1, 2016 TO June 30, 2016 (page 1)****GENERAL FUND**

Rohinton & Roshan Rivetna	3,000
Parvin Dinyarian, San Antonio, TX	2,500
Nazneen Khumbatta, Sugar Land, TX	2,001
Sorab and Mehrugh Panday, Herndon, VA	1,000
Russ Kevala, Sun City Center, FL	1,000
Zarathushti Anjuman of North California	550
Behram Shroff, McLean, VA	500
Prochy Sethna, San Jose, CA	500
Zoroastrian Association of Michigan	500
Bergez Mistry, Montreal, PQ	500
Pesi & Bepsi Sanjana, MI	500
Farokh & Yash Mistry, Purcell, OK	202
Jimmy Dholoo, Gaithersburg, MD	201
Homi Italia, Burnaby, BC	201
Aspi Bharucha, Cincinnati, Ohio	150
Traditional Mazdayasni Zoroastrian Association	150
Parizad Patel, Modesto, CA	150
Adil Godrej, Manassas, VA	150
Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia	110
Sacramento Zoroastrian Association	109
Zoroastrian Association of California - LA	101
Vira & Burjor Santoke, Huntington Beach, CA	101
Ardal Minodherhomjee, La Jolla, CA	101
Jamshed Dastur, Newport Beach, CA	100
Gene & Gooloo Wunderlich, Springfield, VA	100
Zubin D'Sinor Agency, Inc.	100
Nari & Dinoo Dastur, Cheshire, CT	100
Jehangir Madon, Bedminster, New Jersey	100
Shavak Madon, Oakville, ON, CAD	72
Noshir Motivala, Nashua, NH	65
Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area	50
Persian Zoroastrian Organization	50
Iranian Zoroastrian Association	50
Parizad Patel, Modesto, CA	50
Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington	45
Arizona Zoroastrian Association	40
Marzban & Karen Amaria, Riverside, CA	40
Marzban & Karen Amaria, Riverside, CA	40
Jehangir Rudina, Lakeville, MN	31

Total 15,310

**WELFARE & CRITICAL ASSISTANCE**

Hoshang Sabawalla, Schenectady, NY	1,000
Behram Shroff, McLean, VA	500
Farokh Contractor, Kenner, LA	500
Bahram Banki, San Diego, CA	101
Armin Tarapore, Kenner, Louisiana	101
Parvez Mody, Orangevale, CA	100
Daulat Engineer, Glen Elly, IL	50
Davar Family, Falls Church, VA	50
Burjor D'Ghandji, Grosse Pte Wds, MI	50
Kersi Shroff, Rockville, MD	50
Total	<u>2,502</u>

**ASSOCIATION CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENERAL FUND**

Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York	3,000
Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington	3,000
Zarathushti Anjuman of North California	2,500
California Zoroastrian Center	2,000
Zoroastrian Association of Houston	2,000
Zoroastrian Association of California - LA	1,500
Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia	1,473
Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania & New Jersey	750
Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago	500
Zoroastrian Association of Michigan	500
Persian Zoroastrian Organization	500
Zoroastrian Association of Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana	500
Zoroastrian Association of North Texas	500
Zoroastrian Association of Quebec	500
Total	<u>19,223</u>

**ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP**

Trust of Dr. Firoze Ichhaporia, Montreal, QC	1,019
Feroze & Anahita Sidhwa, Coppell, TX	1,000
Total	<u>2,019</u>

**FEZANA****DONATIONS RECEIVED (in USD) - January 1, 2016 TO June 30, 2016 (page 2)****JOURNAL SPONSORSHIP/DONATIONS**

Guiv Foundation	1,500
Jimmy Dholoo, Gaithersburg, MD	300
Dara M Rivetna, Willowbrook, MI	300
Daryoush Jahani, Kansas City, KS	200
Darius Jamshidian, Stamford, CT	175
Khatibi Yazdani	101
Jimmy Dubash, Wellington, FL	101
Dhru Mehta, Easton, PA	100
Deenz Coachbuilder, Riverside, CA	100
Rohinton Shroff, Richmond, BC	95
Kersi Shroff, Rockville, MD	51
Lyla & Sam Todywala, LLC, Miami, FL	51
Yasmin Medhora, Houston, TX	50
Daryoush Valshoori, Cambridge, MA	35
Bahman Noruzian, Winnipeg, Manitoba	35
Freny Deboo, Deerfield Beach, FL	35
Kersey Shesania, Toronto, ON	31

Total 3,260

**PUBLICATIONS**

Anonymous	10,000
Total	<u>10,000</u>

**GUIV SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT**

Guiv Foundation	2,500
Total	<u>2,500</u>

**PERSEPOLIS EXHIBIT**

Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington	900
Total	<u>900</u>

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Khunshed Jagus, Safety Harbor, FL	200
Total	<u>200</u>

**STANFORD UNIVERSITY ZOR. STUDIES**

Zarathushti Anjuman of North California	1,000
Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York	1,000
Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago	1,000
Zoroastrian Association of Quebec	500
Total	<u>3,500</u>

### Transforming Vision to Reality – Zoroastrian Association of Houston

#### VISION 2020



“Vision 2020” is a strategic program of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) to build a strong financial foundation for the growth and preservation of the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center in Houston, TX..and to better serve the present and future generations. To achieve this financial goal and to sustain a New Atash Kadeh, build and maintain a multi-purpose multimedia room (Purvez Rustomji Room), as well as to build a Maintenance and Façade Upgrade Reserve, a number of initiatives are in place.

One initiative is a **RAFFLE**.with great prizes. **1<sup>st</sup> prize** – 50” 1080p Smart LED TV; **2<sup>nd</sup> prize** – Pink Gara Sari (incl. blouse material and petticoat); **3<sup>rd</sup> prize** – Cillie’s Basket filled with delicious goodies. Winners need not be present to win. Free shipping is offered to winners. Raffle draw will take place on November 19, 2016. Raffle tickets are priced at: 1 for \$20; 3 for \$50; and 10 for \$100 (Best Value) and they can be bought online at <http://zah.org> (click on ZAH Raffle 2016 on the left hand side and fill up the correct details). Organizers will give the ticket numbers via phone or email once payment (via paypal) is received. If paying by checks, all payments should be received latest by 11/01/16.

**Please support this initiative. All fellow Zarathushtis are encouraged to participate in this initiative, to win the gorgeous prizes, and support ZAH to make their vision a reality.**

For further questions contact Nargis Cooper at (713) 937-4441 or Yasmin Medhora at (713) 301-1521 or Kayo Sidhwa at (832) 802-3036

### WELFARE COMMITTEE REPORT



As our community gets older in Canada, USA and other parts of the world, the wear and tear increases as well as our share of aches and pains increase in proportion.

But as our illness increases our ability to cope with it decreases. Financial burden increases and that affects the whole family. Even when we have health insurance the

deductible which has to be paid, increases on a regular basis, medicine costs are skyrocketing and that takes away from what a family can spend on their children and what they can do. God help them if they have college going children!

We get requests from all over the world where folks have used up their savings and have nothing left to pay for their illness. Just to give you an example, one person did not want to go through a major surgery and said it is ok if he dies, because all his life savings would be used up for this surgery and what if something happens to his wife, he did not want to leave her destitute. This is just to create awareness as to what happens in our community like in all others as well.

We are very grateful to our donors who have stepped up and given when an appeal is sent, but we do

not send appeals for all the requests we get. We distribute funds from what we have and from the income of endowment funds that have been set up for welfare purpose.

If you are interested to set up an endowment fund in the memory of a loved one please contact our Funds and Finance co chairs **Ratan Mistry or Nawaz Merchant**. They can guide you through the process, answer all your questions, and honor your wishes for the cause.

Love and good thoughts,

**Houtoxi Contractor,**

**Freyaz Shroff, Hosi Mehta**

**Co chairs**

**FEZANA Welfare Committee.**



## A survey of Zarathushtis over age 55

NAWAZ MERCHANT



Many Zarathushtis who came to North America to study or work are now seniors or approaching their senior years and may become isolated as they age. So it's quite natural that they seek the company of others from their familiar culture. Many Zarathushtis are also caring for dependent parents. Support from community members can help both seniors and caregivers as studies show that greater social support, being mentally and physically active is correlated with better health and quality of life. Zarathushti associations can organize activities for seniors and leverage existing public and non-profit programs. They are a forum to make friends and set up virtual groups, which result in a vibrant and loving network of community support. By participating in informal volunteer roles, seniors can also keep active and engaged.

### INTRODUCTION

The FEZANA executive commissioned Nawaz Merchant, Dolly Dastoor and Piroja Press to conduct a Needs Assessment of Zarathushti seniors and associations early in 2016. The survey assessed health, emotional, functional and financial needs of North American Zarathushti seniors. By making FEZANA member associations aware of the needs and preferences of seniors, programs and services could be tailored to help seniors remain independent and healthy.).

### METHODOLOGY

The research used both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. Two online surveys were administered 1) to Zarathushti individuals (aged 55+) recruited through member associations (FEZANA bulletin, association newsletters, email blasts) and 2) to representatives of Zarathushti Associations and small groups. Those without online access were sent paper surveys. Responses were aggregated into three age groups, 55-64, 65-74 and 75+ (which included 18 seniors over 85!). All questions were not answered by every respondent.

Responses were aggregated to retain confidentiality and privacy. **No Protected Health Information was collected.** Reminders were sent to obtain an adequate sample from Zarathushtis from Canada and Zarathushtis from Iran living in North America. Nine qualitative interviews were recorded and analyzed to identify best practices among associations (see page 16).

Seniors were asked **"Which of the following are unmet needs for you or your spouse?"** Options were: *High need (no services or help are available), Medium need (services are sometimes available), Low need (services are mostly available), Cannot estimate this/Not Applicable.* By selecting High or Medium need, the senior could indicate the severity of their concern. If they chose Low, or Not Applicable (or skip the question), that was not an area of concern to them. Seniors could select "other" and type in comments.

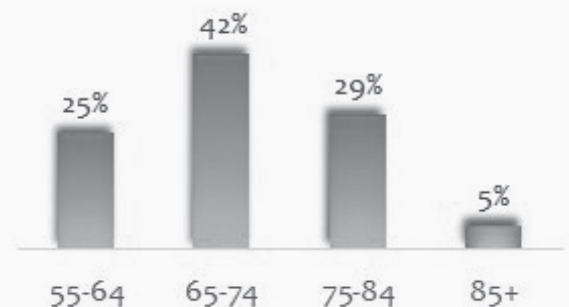
Functional/ technology related	Difficulties with mobility/transportation
	Language barriers, or difficulty understanding North American accents
	Training to use technology (computer, internet, mobile phone, skype)
Social/emotional needs	Lack of family members/adult children living nearby
	Lack of friends living nearby
	Cultural gap with children or grandchildren
	Loneliness/Lack of emotional support

Health related	Difficulties with activities of daily living (cooking bathing etc.)
	Difficulty meeting dietary needs
	Difficulty using or coordinating health services
	Lack of health insurance
	Difficulty hearing or communicating
Financial/ information needs	Difficulty getting legal advice (Making a will, Advance Directive/Living will)
	Difficulty getting financial help/information (example how to access your foreign assets)
	Shortage of finances for living expenses

### DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

According to the 2012 Census (FJ 2013), about 20,800 Zarathushtis (or 19% of world Z population) live in the USA and Canada. Approximately 2,760 are over 65. This survey sample of 280 Zarathushtis (over the age of 65) was 10% of the North American Zarathushti senior population. Of the 400 respondents, 280 were over 65, 100 were in the 55-64 age group, and the remainder skipped this question. Slightly more men than women answered the survey. Three fourths of the respondents live in the US, while about a quarter reside in Canada. Individuals from all major Z associations in the US and Canada took the survey, which shows it is geographically well distributed. 91% of seniors marked South Asia as their area of origin, and 9% indicated "from the Middle East" or Other/Africa/Europe. Most respondents migrated when they were under the age of 50, and 12% migrated after they had turned 50.

Age of Respondents



Of the 26 Zarathushti associations and groups, 15 association representatives respond to the survey of associations. This data was used to gauge estimate number of seniors in the area, what issues the associations are aware of, and what programs are offered.

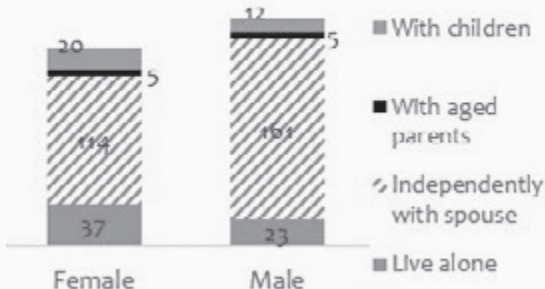
### INCOME:

60% of respondents had annual incomes over \$50,000, 30% had incomes between \$20K- \$50K, and 10% were under \$20K. Many of those in the under \$20K group live with adult children. Those who live alone were more likely to indicate financial hardship in later questions.

Income Ranges



Living arrangement by Gender  
(More women live alone)



### LIVING ARRANGEMENTS:

A majority of both sexes live independently with their spouse. However 21% of women, and 11% of men live alone. 11% of women and 6% of men live with adult children. 2-3% of both sexes live with aged parents.

A quarter of the 75+ age group live alone. This was higher than any other age group, indicating that they may need additional community support.

## RESEARCH OUTCOMES –PARTICIPATION LEVEL

Seniors contribute to local volunteer opportunities, South Asian groups and have informal groups of friends, and join events at their Z group. 41% said they only want to attend key events (Nowruz, Sadeh etc) in their Z group, while 31% said they participate every month. However, 11% stated that they would like to participate but are not able to do so. (25% of Canadian respondents wanted to participate, but felt unable to do so.) Most of those unable to attend were aged 55-64 (many were still working/volunteering) or in the 75+ group. Reasons given were: *Lack of transportation, distance to meeting places, having other commitments or working, lack of interesting events, financial constraints, poor or uncertain health, caregiver to spouse or parent, and reluctance to drive at night.* Some Zarathushtis of Iranian origin noted that they felt excluded. Responses from associations' representatives indicated they were aware of these barriers to participation.



## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS

The top three issues were '*lack of family members/adult children living nearby*', '*lack of friends living nearby*' and '*loneliness/lack of emotional support*'. About 85% of respondents marked *Low need/ Not applicable*, or skipped the question, indicating that these needs are generally met. Among those who marked *high/medium need*, lack of family members/adult children nearby was the key issue. The lack of friends nearby was noted particularly by the 75+ group. **Associations may not be fully aware of seniors need to socialize, since only 3 out of 15 associations noted that these were High/Medium needs.**

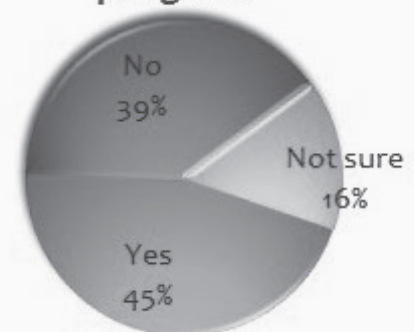
Seniors were divided on whether they would like to attend an adult day program where they can socialize, volunteer or participate in activities. 45% said yes, 39% no, while the remainder had no transport, were still working or volunteering, were the caregiver for spouse, or unable to attend for health reasons. Some voiced concerns over the control of all major events and associations by Parsis, making extremely difficult for Iranian Zarathushtis to get involved.

Most seniors are aware of some local activities, but some were reluctant to attend them, perhaps as they were the only Zarathushti or South Asian there. Forming small groups to join these events could make outings more approachable and enjoyable.

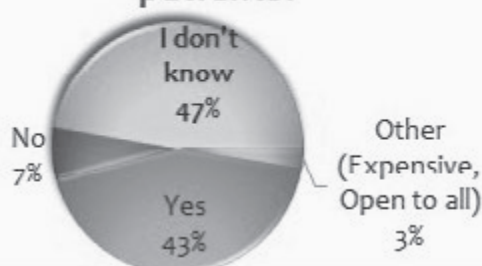
## HEALTH NEEDS

Most respondents indicated they were healthy. Very few Z seniors (N=20) noted lack of health insurance, difficulty meeting dietary needs, difficulties with Activities of Daily Living (cooking, bathing) or difficulty using or coordinating health services. A few seniors stated there was "no assistance" when experiencing a medical issue. **This points to a need for local care committees.**

## Interest in an adult day program



## Are you aware of a local facility for Alzheimer's patients?



### committees.

73% of seniors were aware of a local assisted living facility accessible to them, 12% were not. 15% mentioned that existing facilities were not accessible as they were too expensive, or there were no other Zarathushtis there. 62% said they want local nursing homes where they can be together (see chart). When asked "**Is such a nursing home available in your area?**" Seniors were evenly split between yes, no and I don't know, two thirds of Z seniors do not know, or do not have a nursing home where they can be together



with individuals from their own culture.

The picture was worse for awareness of **Memory Care units**. While 43% felt they were aware of such facilities, 47% did not know. Many noted that while such facilities were available they were extremely expensive. **Associations may wish to work with Health Care professionals in such facilities to negotiate a group rate or discount.**

## FUNCTIONAL NEEDS AND COMFORT LEVEL WITH TECHNOLOGY

30 seniors indicated a high need for training to use technology (computer, internet, mobile phone, skype). An overwhelming majority had no difficulties hearing/communicating, nor experiencing any language barriers. 40 respondents noted difficulties with mobility or transportation as a high/medium need and half were 75+. Associations are aware of this, as seven of the 15 Associations surveyed noted seniors' transportation needs, (6 also felt there was high/medium need for training on technology use).

## COULD SENIORS DRIVE EACH OTHER TO LOCAL EVENTS?

While 37 seniors indicated they would need a ride in order to join local activities, a whopping 148 seniors said they can drive others occasionally within 20 mile radius, (44 were willing to drive others every week). An insight from discussions was that seniors do not want to inconvenience others which indicates a transportation coordinator is needed. 8 seniors said they were home-bound and 54 would participate using the phone or computer (music/discussion/hear talks on computer or phone). This indicates an audience for digital outreach may exist.

*"I cannot afford the cost of events and activities. \$35 for dinner is too much. I donate \$15, so that I can attend the function and I don't have the dinner." (Respondent, senior survey)*

## FINANCIAL NEEDS

In general, most seniors are financially secure. However, a handful noted significant hardship (shortage of finances for living expenses). Associations may be unaware of these situations, as only one (ZANC) noted it; However 17 individuals from ZAH, ZSBC, ZSO, OZCF, ZAGNY (and other z associations) marked "shortage of finances for living expense" as a *high/medium need*. While many associations discount seniors' fees, a senior pointed out that "For retirees, \$25 is a bit too expensive."

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Senior activities committees** (such as those at ZSO, OZCF, ZSBC, ZAH) should offer seniors excursions and fitness activities. A **Transportation Coordinator role** can be modelled on best practices by OZCF and ZSBC.
- Immigrants tend to be self-reliant, and can miss opportunities to use public and existing programs. A **South Asian/ Persian community liaison** can disseminate news of events in the wider community.
- **Care Committees** are needed for inter-generational support for both seniors and caregivers. This can be modeled on the ZSBC support group that helps in times of medical or other need. These volunteers call up individuals with medical difficulties/bereavement, sit with them and give them company. Health professionals within the community can also assist.
- Associations can **subsidize events** for seniors and many do. A voucher or nominal fee (plus donation on honor system) could be explored. Seniors frequently wait to register, because of uncertain health, so a few seats can be reserved for late responses.
- Associations should recognize and **support caregivers**. A volunteer/caregiver column in Journal could leverage existing resources on caregiver wellbeing.

Encourage **senior social groups** to connect using newsletters to disseminate information about free **entertainment resources**, like old movies, songs, pictures, coloring books, crosswords, Sudoku, short stories, book recordings.

- FEZANA and WZCC may wish to maintain a **Senior Services Directory**, and include non-Z providers/ services for a fee. This can help Z seniors locate services where they can be together. For example, Aristacare Nursing Home in NJ has a South Asian floor with food, music, movies and includes a Memory Care floor; CumberLodge in Toronto near Dar e Mehr offers similar facilities for Zoroastrians. Canadian families can contact a service for a live-in domestic help. Seniors want local “Bhonavala” services, (people who supply food to homes). This can support small businesses like Parsi Pantry. Sharing financial education resources can help seniors use public programs like free tax filing services and senior centers.
- Associations can **expand their infrastructure to include Senior Housing**. Z seniors want to live near a Dar e Mehr where they can enjoy each other’s company and attend activities. (See article “Housing Options” pp 22)

## LIMITATIONS AND CAVEATS:

The survey results are not generalizable; it was not exhaustive nor a census. Survey respondents may be relatively more computer savvy. Seniors with poorer health may be less likely to respond to surveys, skewing the sample toward healthier seniors.

The survey had low representation from Irani Zarathushtis, so future surveys should be translated into Farsi. About 30 respondents abandoned the survey after 2 pages, perhaps due to privacy concerns. Their concerns were addressed and they were re-invited to complete the survey and a third complied. Healthcare policy impact on senior immigrants needs further research and advocacy. Lack of Medicare coverage to new immigrants, and high cost of US health insurance may prevent migration or put immigrant seniors at risk.

## CONCLUSION

In general, Zarathushti seniors are independent and active. Gaps uncovered were: loneliness and lack of transportation which limits their activities and social interaction. Only half the Zarathushti Associations and groups organize activities for seniors. Leveraging other communities’ events can also help our seniors remain active and engaged. Some seniors are looking for rental options near Dar e Mehri where they can connect with other Zarathushtis. This research uncovered several best practices of Z associations, and made recommendations to build infrastructure for the growing Zarathushti community in North America.

## REFERENCES:

FEZANA Demographic Survey of 2012 in FEZANA Journal, Fall 2013. Vol 27, No 3

***Nawaz Merchant** is an analytics and market research professional living in New Jersey. After successive roles in the pharmaceutical industry, she completed a masters degree in Health Policy from Thomas Jefferson University. She also writes fiction and non-fiction articles and stories on multicultural topics. Nawaz and Hoshi have two sons in college and are active members of ZAGNY.*

## What seniors asked for:

Transport to events and  
Doctor visits, Ride sharing

Medical:  
Live-in help; affordable long term  
care; assisted living with other Z;

Employment – part time

**Social and Activities**  
“I would love to participate in a regular social activity  
that does not require too much physical energy. I get  
tired easily. In Bombay I enjoyed meeting friends at the  
Gymkhana. Would be great if we could do that here  
during the afternoon. All my family is so busy working,  
they don't have any time to just relax and chat  
during the weekdays.”



Need help in finding services:  
In-home care; “A Parsi Bhonavalla service!”  
Snow shoveling and lawn maintenance; Cleaning  
services; Gardening and house cleaning or handyman;  
Guidance to possibility of returning to India (Bombay) at  
the end of life; Funeral Services; **More classes on gathas  
and less on custom/ritual ;**

**Entertainment**  
“Music I grew up with”; “Newspaper  
I can read in Gujerati or Urdu”; “Web  
driven activities-- daily or weekly  
news or tit-bits (Like parisi Khabar),  
entertainment like cross-word, etc”.

**Housing**  
“I would like to live in a sub-division of mainly  
Zoroastrians, with a common gymkhana within  
walking distance, where our **community can  
gather for activities** like cards, table-tennis,  
mahjong, yoga, etc, or just to socialize for  
parties, movie-night, etc.”<sup>1</sup>



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## Senior activity group best practices

**NAWAZ MERCHANT**

**A**s Zarathushtis age, we increasingly need the company of our Zarathushti friends. For example, the Gujarat Club in New Jersey is a group of friends who lived or went to school in Gujarat. This group meets in each other's homes and enjoys songs and stories, anecdotes and the Gujarati phrases they grew up with. Such groups of friends provide more than social contact. They are a crucial support structure for aging immigrants.

A recent survey of Zarathushti seniors and associations in North America found that about half the fifteen associations surveyed routinely organize programs tailored to seniors. Nine qualitative interviews were conducted with association representatives. From these discussions the following best practices, (and unmet needs) emerged.

### TORONTO

**ZSO: Ms. Daulat Divecha** described many activities organized for seniors. The group meets on alternate Fridays to enjoy talks, cooking demos and music. The senior committee organizes visits to gardens and nearby towns, and seniors pay \$10 per visit for a simple meal. ZSO does not fund these activities. So once a year the team holds a food fair to funds some outings.

Key needs include transport and loneliness. Although Toronto has "wheel-trans" (home to home transport), it is not convenient, as seniors must wait outdoors and it does not cover suburbs. (The team is seeking volunteers to facilitate events/drive.) A Care Committee to support those undergoing medical issues is also sorely needed. The Buddy-system of phone calls has ceased perhaps due to lack of engagement or issues with hearing.

**OZCF (Ms. Minnie Mirza)** holds weekly activities during summer (from April to October) for seniors at the OZCF center. The season opener is a lunch get together. Thereafter on Tuesdays, activities alternate between Yoga and Zumba and sometimes laughter therapy. A small \$5 cost is charged per week when the senior attends. Participants take turns to provide snacks/lunch. Summer excursions take seniors to casinos, boat ride/cruise, fall colors trip, movie matinees, museum visits. A \$15 fee covers transport and a snack. The Annual grandparents' day for seniors and grandchildren includes interactive games and bingo (with free lunch). OZCF provides some funding for this. A key unmet need is for some contact in winter months, when individuals are concerned about icy roads.

Minnie noted that seniors don't want to "give anyone trouble", and are reluctant to request rides directly, so the team built a **Volunteer Driver Program**. Requests come to the coordinator, who matches up the routes with the volunteers. After starting this program, attendance at activities increased from about 10 to over 40 seniors each week. (The OZCF Board has approved the Volunteer Driver Policy, to protect legal rights of volunteer drivers and ensure the safety of all those involved.) There are about 6 to 12 volunteer drivers, mostly women.

### VANCOUVER

**ZSBC (Ms. Bella Tata)** About 15-30 people (parsi and Irani) participate in monthly activities on the third Sunday of each month. It includes exercise/yoga, and a lecture from a Mobed followed by lunch. Seniors also join a monthly Behram roj prayer get-togethers and enjoy picnics in summer. Friendly visits are organized through a care committee, to reach those who would like to have a familiar visitor to provide support and comfort.

Seed capital from Heritage Canada Funds initiated this senior program. Seniors enjoy a free prepacked lunch with salad and fruits. A Best Practice at ZSBC is to **share the coordinator role**, by rotating the coordinator for senior activities. The monthly notice is sent out in the newsletter, asking seniors if they need transport. The coordinator matches up the requests to the established list of volunteers and informs both parties.

#### **ZAKOI:**

Ms. Bakhtavar Desai noted that senior membership at ZAKOI is discounted by 25%. ZAKOI members are actively fundraising for a Dar e Mehr to serve Zarathushti residents of a wide area of Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana. Although many seniors live alone and in small towns, they are a close-knit group. About 40 to 50 regulars offer rides to seniors for ZAKOI events. Due to the distance, there are separate groups in KY and Columbus OH, where young families help out seniors and enjoy their company. A key need to address is Loneliness – someone to sit with a senior and spend an evening. Other needs are rides to events, hospital and doctors, and support for care givers.

In addition to the children's monthly classes, ZAKOI hold **Adult Religion Camps** each year. Bakhtavar has built the content from the children's religion class curriculum. The adult religion camp was requested by parents/grandparents of religion class kids. Twice a year, 4-5 couples stay at her home for a weekend and attend the camp. The team studies during day, and enjoys potluck/ fun in evenings. (In the **Youth camps**, between 10 and 16 college kids now stay with her and her husband, a Mobed, for 8-9 days to learn, discuss and enjoy the company of their friends from the youth classes. The camp will be held three times in 2016.)

#### **HOUSTON**

**ZAH Golden Group (Ms. Zarine Balsara)** About 35-40 seniors meet approximately once a month. They attend every ZAH event – Zarine arranges rides for those who approach her. The group has planned trips to the mall followed by brunch (catered or at a restaurant). On birthdays they donate \$10 to the senior birthday boy or girl. Seniors also taught youngsters how to cook over summer vacations. These activities are not funded by ZAH. Once a year they cook and sell food items on game day to collect funds. The "Dar ni Pori" day is always a hit. An annual fee of \$10 forms the kitty fund, and the group makes some contribution to the ZAH Dar e Mehr as well. Key needs include affordable housing with personal security and close to ZAH center. Frequently seniors who lose a partner, or have no children experience deep loneliness. So a support system for bereavement is needed. Presently friends help, but there is no structured support. Community doctors do help seniors in need.

**CONCLUSION** Of course, many Zarathushti families meet regularly to share stories of the travails of aging or the progress of their children / grandchildren. Zarathushtis who served together on local elected boards, are finding support from each other as they grow old, building on the relationships they had created years ago. Senior group activities also encourage and facilitate such friendships and Zarathushti associations that organize such interaction can learn a great deal from each other's best practices.

#### **Sources:**

Needs Assessment of Zarathushti Seniors, FEZANA PRE AGM Session (April 2016, Novi, Michigan).

October 6 marked the 26TH Anniversary of the  
International Day of Older Persons  
**TAKE A STAND AGAINST AGEISM**

*An event commemorating the International Day of Older Persons was organised by the NGO Committee on Ageing in New York in partnership with the UNDESA Focal Point on Ageing and sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Argentina to the UN.*

*The programme and a panel discussion featured speakers representing the UN system, Member States and civil society as well as a distinguished author on ageing issues.*

# Are South Asians Prepared To Age In America?

MEERA NAIR

*This article has been adapted from the article that was originally published in India Abroad, and later in the Huffington Post. (July 28, 2016)*



As the first generation of South Asians age into their 60s and 70s in America, elder services specific to their culture are scarce. They have lived, worked, and paid their taxes in America for 30 or 40 years. Their children have grown up in the USA and some of them have found spouses outside their own culture. This is not a generation that has resisted assimilation.

Yet, in their old age they long to return to their roots. They want to be around people who speak their language and who like the same favorite foods. There are also other groups of elders: the ones who have grown old in their home countries and are now moving to the US to be with their sons and daughters.

What makes **India Home** unique in the New York area is that its programs are organized around the philosophy that understands that as South Asians age, they want the familiar comforts of home.

Between 2000 and 2010, the number of foreign born seniors in New York grew by 30 percent or 42,000, with the population of Asian elderly growing by 68 percent. According to the Center for an Urban Future's report in New York City alone, Indians are the second largest immigrant group.

**Yet the undeniable fact is that as a group, South Asians are singularly unprepared to deal with the growing numbers of their elderly in the United States.** Dr. Rashmi Gupta, an Assistant Professor of Social Work at San Francisco State University warns: *"South Asians haven't caught on that there's an impending crisis (in aging) coming."* According to her, Jewish, Chinese and Korean non-profits or faith-based groups have long recognized the need for creating a network of elder care facilities that provide culturally competent services and language access to their aging populations. However, there are few organizations that provide the comfort of familiar culture to the growing numbers of South Asian seniors or have staff that speak at least one South Asian language.

South Asians are proud of all that they have achieved in this country, Dr. Gupta says. But now, she says: *"The younger generation needs to think about 'what's going to happen to my parents?'"* Even if South Asian seniors are ready and willing to go to a senior center, they often face opposition from their sons and daughters. Respect and care for elders is ingrained in South Asian culture. Until recently generations lived under the same roof, and children were expected to take care of their aging parents.

*"South Asians have a psychological block. We think we can take care of our parents like we would have back home. Why send them to a senior center?"* says Dr. Vasundhara Kalasapudi of Queens, NY, the Executive Director of India Home, a geriatric psychiatrist.

However, studies have shown that social isolation is the biggest problem confronting South Asian elders. With both partners working and children in school all day, retired seniors have nothing to do at home. Dr. Gupta sees this phenomenon first hand. Seniors say, *"I am in a gold cage,"* she says. They are home bound and have nowhere to go. *"People in NYC are lucky—there's the subway. In places where there's no public transportation, where you have to drive, seniors are stuck at home."*

Even on days that everyone is at home, there is what Dr. Kalasapudi calls *generational isolation*. As she



explains, “We invite our friends home on the weekend and think we’ve included our parents in the conversation.” Still, they are lonely. “They need to talk to people their own age,” she says. Farida Talukdar agrees. Coming to the center, she says is like, “A sigh of relief. How much can I talk to my daughter-in-law?”

Senior centers are about socialization and sharing. But for South Asians, says Dr. Gupta, the realization that seniors need much more than just being fed and clothed by their well-heeled sons and daughters, “is happening slowly.” What we need, she thinks, is to learn from other immigrant communities who came earlier to the United States. “Look at Jewish charities—how organized they are,” says Dr. Gupta. “What we [South Asians] need is a sea change in our thinking.”

The resistance to facing the truth of aging in America also extends to charitable giving. Finding funding is a struggle. “Building a community donor base is hard,” says Dr. Kalasapudi.

Indian Americans are among the richest of ethnic groups in the United States, earning a median income of \$100,547 in 2013, according to data from the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), much higher than the American median income of \$51,939 that year.

In spite of their success, Indians mostly send money back home to support charitable causes in India. In a report titled, ***On the Shoulders of Generations***, the Silicon Valley Community Foundation found that regardless of age or generation, affluent Indians felt that donating to India was a better investment because the need is greater and the money goes further.

The Silicon Valley Community Foundation report also noted that “first wave” Indians, who immigrated in the 1960’s and 1970’s, established a foothold in the country by setting up temples, mosques, churches or gurdwaras. The place of worship became a space to practice identity and thus much of South Asian charitable giving has traditionally gone toward religious activities and institutions.

Dr. Kalasapudi has plans to start day programs for South Asians with dementia, as well as assisted living facilities and nursing homes. “This is a common topic for all of us, how difficult it is to take care of families with medical problems,” she was quoted as saying in a recent [NY Times article](#). But the nonprofit she runs is tiny and the need for funds is great.

At India Home’s center in Sunnyside, Queens, Usha Mehta talks about her daughter: “She amazing. I began to live the moment I held her in my arms.” Several others stand up to speak and there are frequent references to God’s grace. Many express gratitude to mothers and fathers long gone. To me, it feels like a typical South Asian gathering, voluble, loud, talking over each other, at ease with the fact that they all understand each other. The atmosphere is like a group of close friends sitting around in a familiar living room, sharing intimate memories. The camaraderie, the lack of formality, the comfort that comes from a shared culture and the lack of need for explanations feels like a glimpse of what is possible for South Asians growing older in America.



**Photo above** Seniors at India Home’s center in Queens, New York, look on as Kamuben Chavda speaks on Father’s Day. They are part of the first generation of South Asians of South Asians aging in America.

**Photo Credit** Preston Merchant

**Meera Nair** is the author of books for adults and children and is based in New York. Follow her on Twitter [@MeeraNairNY](#).

## Caring for seniors

NAWAZ MERCHANT

**M**any adults will care for a parent at some point. 43 Million Americans presently care for seniors (NAC/AARP, 2015) and will likely benefit from the experience. A recent study (Roth and Haley et al 2013) found that caregivers had “18% reduced rate of death compared to non-caregivers”. Caregivers also say they benefit by growing personally and spiritually from rewarding relationships with seniors.

However, caring for a senior can be a strain. Caregiver stress can lead to Elder Abuse. The US Health and Human Services defines elder abuse as any knowing or negligent act by any person that causes harm (or risk of harm) to a vulnerable adult. According to Helpguide.org, the warning signs of elder abuse are: Frequent arguments or tension between the caregiver and the elderly person; Changes in personality or behavior in the elder.

Among immigrants, multi-generational families are common. These support ‘aging in place’ for as long as possible. However, immigrant seniors including Zarathushtis, may sometimes experience burdensome expectations or neglect.

### Managing expectations

Seniors with diminished mobility or mental acuity may not be able to keep up with toddlers, or cook for a multi-generational family. If adult children have expectations that the senior is not comfortable with, this can create significant stress and emotional turmoil. Seniors need to share their feelings and partner in finding alternative solutions.

### Social contact

Seniors need varied activities and to be connected to people. Adult children bear the responsibility of dependent children and their own parents, and are called the ‘Sandwich Generation’. The parent’s social needs can get neglected, if they cannot drive or have no vehicle. Senior may be unwilling to ‘give others trouble’ and resist asking for visits or outings. The senior may remain isolated all day, with minimal contact from busy family members.

Family members need to be sensitive to their own behavior and the impact it has on the senior. Here are some ways for caregivers to better manage stress.

### Strategies to help you care for seniors

- **Listen** to seniors and their caregivers.
- **Friends and family can intervene** by asking questions, offer their time to sit with the senior or take them where they need to go.
- **Caring observation** means daily spending time with your loved one, and watching them closely (in person, on the phone or using mobile devices with Facetime/skype!). This also helps caregivers detect changes in seniors’ health.
- **Planning:** Plan or cook meals ahead of time. For example, cooking the next day’s meal AFTER eating dinner with family each day.
- Caregivers can **build support networks** by requesting help, from friends, relatives, or respite care agencies.
- Caregivers need care too! It is healthy for caregivers to **take**

Elder abuse can include:

- **Physical Abuse**—inflicting pain or injury, restraining by physical or chemical means, non-consensual sexual contact.
- **Exploitation**—the illegal taking, misuse, or concealment of a senior’s funds, property, or assets.
- **Emotional Abuse**—yelling, inflicting mental pain or distress on a senior such as humiliating, intimidating, or threatening.
- **Neglect**—failing to provide food, shelter, health care, or protection for a vulnerable elder.
- **Abandonment**—desertion of a vulnerable elder by anyone who has assumed the responsibility for care or custody of that person.
- **Self-neglect**—the failure of a person to perform his/her own essential, self-care tasks.

**some time off** by themselves, go for a massage, or a manicure or just have coffee with a friend. *Avoid self-neglect!*

- Don't try to be superman/superwoman. **Outsource services** where you can, (ex. lawn moving, snow removal).
- Join a **Caregiver support group**.
- Find a local **adult day care** program. Your local Division of Aging Services can help.
- Many health systems have **caregiver training**. The NYU-Caregiver Intervention increased caregiver well-being and forestalled nursing home placement of Alzheimer's patients for nearly 2 years. This is a saving of about USD 180,000.
- **Helplines** in the US: 1-800-677-1116 (Eldercare Locator), Canada: 310 1818. Examples of **useful websites**: <http://www.seniorsresourceguide.com/> and [www.seniorsbluebook.com](http://www.seniorsbluebook.com). Canada Resource Guide at <http://www.seniors.gc.ca/eng/index.shtml>

Seniors overwhelmingly prefer "Aging in place", living in the comfort and familiar surroundings of home. Caring observation, planning ahead and building support networks help seniors and their caregivers develop strong and rewarding relationships, and for adult children to enjoy their time with their parents.

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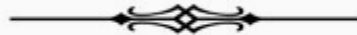
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#### CAREGIVER PERSPECTIVE (ANONYMOUS)

Being a caregiver is very frustrating because one sees a spouse suffer and is unable to help them medically. Since the caregiver is a lay person and not a doctor, the patient may not listen to every suggestion. At times a caregiver may find it difficult to attend to their own regimen of exercise or routine. Lack of sleep due to pain or stress for patient or caregiver can deplete one's strength.

I was always interested in medical science, so when my spouse experienced a serious medical condition that was not easily diagnosed, I did a lot of research online. Our primary care doctor sent us for a number of tests, and then referred us to specialists like hematologist and rheumatologist to rule out some conditions. This required constant monitoring of what is the next step, when do we get the results of the tests and what do they mean? Depending on the tests, what is the current medication regimen? Keeping the medical records organized (blood tests, CT scans, MRI etc.) allows me to have productive discussions with the physicians for my spouse's care. Since we are both present in the discussions with the doctors, we can discuss their comments later. When one spouse is unwell, the other spouse becomes the care coordinator, but may be unprepared for this. I was not aware that hospitals have caregiver training courses. Had I have known that I would have definitely benefitted from learning what to expect and how to handle this role.

Community support is important. I wish we had some more Zarathushti neighbors who could come and visit frequently. Meeting someone familiar helps us and we feel more active. We get occupied making tea and snacks for them and we enjoy their company. Chatting with someone, going for a walk, spending time together or meeting in a restaurant are the things we enjoy and they bring us happiness. Is important to have a friend, who we can invite over, talk and listen, speak of fun things. It occupies your mind and brightens your outlook. At our age, we love to see our peers and younger visitors. visit us.



## Housing options in our senior years - Infrastructure Needs

### NAWAZ MERCHANT

*"I would like to live in a sub-division of mainly Zoroastrians, with a common gymkhana within walking distance, where our community can gather for activities like cards, table-tennis, mahjong, yoga, etc, or just to socialize for parties, movie-night, etc."* (Respondent to Survey, March 2016)

Research discussions (see article on Survey of Z Seniors) with Zarine Balsara (ZAH) uncovered a key need of community seniors: *"Affordable housing, with personal security and close to the ZAH center"*. Manek Bhujwala also shared that Californian Z seniors' want to stay close to Dar e Mehrs as religious centers and social meeting places.

Our seniors' preferences were solicited in a recent Needs Assessment Survey of Zarathushti Seniors. When asked *"Would you like to retire in residences where you can live near other Zarathushtis?"*, 53% of Z seniors said Yes, they would. (29% said No, and 18% Maybe). Important factors were: #1 Financially affordable, #2 Social activities are offered, #3 Medical care available on site, and (in fourth place), Warm climate.

Seniors were evenly divided on whether they preferred residential facilities that are open to all, or only for Zarathushtis. The 55-64 age group were slightly more in favor of living in residential facilities open to all communities. Living among South Asians was ranked second for all age groups. Two distinct residential options emerged:

### OWNERSHIP RESIDENCES

Zarathushti seniors have many ownership options where they can live close to other Z seniors. Many prefer Active Senior housing complexes (55+, no school-going children) in their known areas. For example, couples have joined friends in the Active Adult Community Townhouse Developments in East & West Windsor, NJ where homes of 1,778 - 2,500 square feet cost \$340,000 - \$418,000. They want an active social life, near varied entertainment facilities and health services.



1 A model home in Sun City Centre

in Florida enjoy the warm weather with no state taxes and excellent highways, airports and cruise terminals. Sun City Center (SCC) near Tampa offers 6 club houses of activities, hobbies (art classes, bridge, Mahjong, dance and yoga classes, etc.), health and fitness centers and golf clubs. Single family homes are priced from \$120,000 to \$550,000 and Condos are available from \$80,000 to \$350,000. Monthly fees (\$450) cover all maintenance and access to the club houses (this excludes electricity and internet).

Greater SCC area includes a hospital, medical offices, and facilities for Independent Living, Home Care Services, Assisted Living, and Nursing including specialized Alzheimer units. Yasmin Kevala, (Realtor and local resident) feels that “Zarathushtis should take advantage of this wonderful facility that has so much to offer. At present there are three Zarathushti families living in SCC, and a large support group of American, Maharashtrian and South Indian families socializing daily.”

## RENTAL RESIDENCES

Our seniors pointed out that low cost rentals specifically for Zarathushtis do not exist. Many seniors want rentals near Dar e Mehrs, where they can live off savings from their home equity. This does not compete with any public programs. HUD (Housing and Urban Development) provides rentals priced at 30% of income for individuals in need, but there are long waitlists.



Architectural plan of the ZAH development

Rustom Engineer was interviewed on the ZAH planned initiative to build senior residences. The envisioned residential units will be adjacent to the Dar e Mehr, and comprise about six buildings with 2 units each of 1200 square feet. Construction would take about 9-12 months after permits/designs are finalized. Possible options are: 1) Pre-sell to ~12 owners, with a purchase contract that requires resale to Z seniors only. 2) Build rental units (managed by a Z Trust). The capital required is about \$1.5 to \$2 Million.

a large banquet hall will be leased or rented out to defray the operating costs of the consecrated Atash-kadeh and to partially subsidize the senior residences. 40 rental units for seniors will range from 800 sq. Ft. To 1,200 sq. Ft as part of a full service senior residence with catering and recreational facilities.

Our seniors overwhelmingly prefer to be independent, while “aging in place” in ownership or rental facilities. While facilities like Sun City offer engaging activities and the company of friends, associations like OZCF and ZAH

need your support to build senior residence centers for our community.



OZCF view of the proposed development of their 10 acre property.



## SOURCES:

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Sun City Center Video at <https://youtu.be/6tCE6-GLajY>

Rustom Engineer (ZAH envisioned architectural plans and unit floor plans)

Phil Sidhwa, OZCF Vision

## UNDERSTANDING OF AGEING IN THE THEOLOGICAL SYSTEM OF ZARATHUSHTRA

DR. JEHAN BAGLI

The phenomenon of aging is associated with a progressive functional decline. However, people differ on how well they are prepared for it, and accept this stage of their life. In general biogerontology or biological ageing is termed senescence (from Latin *senescere* meaning 'to grow old'). These biological changes may lead to serious pathological conditions in some cases.

There are multiple volumes written by psychologists and neurologist how to overcome these deleterious changes. However, a true Zoroastrian cannot and must not lose sight of the very fundamental teaching of the theological system of Asho Zarathusht viz., 'Fight evil and bring it to the path of good'. That becomes a formidable struggle, more important than ever, in the aging phase of life.

We learn from *Vendidad* (Fargard II) that *Yima* the son of *Vivanghant* followed the guidance of Ahura Mazda that led him to create a society where there was neither cold wind nor heat, neither sickness nor death - an 'un-aging' society (also Yt.19.33). This legendary monarch became the protector and nourisher of the land and people.

That was the progress in the religion of Ahura Mazda that is brought to us by Zarathushtra. Zoroastrianism is a Faith of progress. It is the religion of *Spenta* that the genius of the Prophet has conceived and entrenched in *Spenta Mainyu* - the Progressive Mental aspect - of Mazda. That is the mentality that one needs to pursue to the fullest, as ageing sets in. *Spenta Mainyu* symbolizes

the ideal and perfect existence as conceived in thought by Ahura Mazda. In the process of aging one should not lose sight of that progressive mentality. Zarathushtra has given us an entire Gatha (Ys 47-50) in his Holy Hymns to elaborate this progressively benevolent mentality.

It is through this mental aspect that all the biological changes that occur during ageing can be mitigated. By directing one's lifestyle through following the three active *Amesha Spentas* (Immutable Principles of Progress) - *Vohu Manah* (Good Mind), *Asha Vahishta* (Global Order of Truth), *Khshathra Vairya* (Divine dominion of Service) - an elderly person can clearly see their way through to the rewards of *Spenta Armaity* (Right-mindedness), *Haurvatat* (Completeness, or Perfection) and *Ameretat* (Deathlessness). It is through these recompensing Divine aspects that an aging human being can find their way to newer projects, activities to occupy and counter their weakening mental condition and even be of service to those who need their help.

The entire Divine ladder of *Amesha Spentas* is so designed that mankind and particularly the ageing members, by aligning their mind on the Holy mentality of *Spenta Mainyu* can, through their efforts direct their *Vohu manah* to deeds that will evolve them to Spirituality and elevate their mental status to guide them from Manliness to Godliness.

We are cognizant of the fact that ageing, death and decay are associated with the terrestrial while the celestial is eternally enduring - *tevishi utayuiti* (Ys 34.11, 51.7),



exempt from such changes and is immortal. It is indeed important to comprehend the implication of *Ameretat* in the context of one's standing as *Hamkar* - coworker - of the Creator, as one gets older. While *Ameretat* literally refers to 'deathlessness' in the Holy hymns of the prophet, at the level of mortals it can be interpreted as the 'boundless dimension of creativity'. On that plane of understanding one can refresh and renovate the ageing nature of - *Vohu manah* - their Good Mind, to keep it fully engaged in inventive and imaginative creative visions.

Zoroastrianism does not see the existential duality to continue endlessly. It sees the goal of existence as rising to a state of holistic perfection exemplified by the eradication of the undesirable, and win over the uninviting state - that of ageing. This road to holistic perfection is deeply entrenched in the understanding of *Amesha Spentas* and must be brought to life with the onset of ageing.

In the Holy songs of Zarathushtra 'immortality' is all about the triumph of the Innate Divine Spirit over the human limitations and the cosmic evolution to Godliness.

**Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli** is a retired scientist, an ordained priest, a member of the International Board of World Zoroastrian Organization (WZO) and president of WZO Canada. He has lectured worldwide and written extensively on Zoroastrianism and related topics.





**Gatha Ushtavaiti Yasna Ha 43 Verse 1:**

**Ushtaa ahmaai ýahmaai ushtaa kahmaaichît!**

Vasê-khshayaans mazdaao daayaat ahurô;  
Utayûitî tevishîm gat tôî vasesmî,  
Ashem deredyaaî tat môî daao aarmaitê,  
Raayô ashîsh vanghêush gaêm mananghô! (to be recited two times)

**Ushtavaiti Gatha, Yasna 43 Verse 1**

(Translation from "The Gathas The Hymns of Zarathushtra", By D. J. Irani)

Happiness be the lot of him who works for the happiness of others.

May the Lord grant him health and endurance.

For the effort to uphold Truth, I beseech these very gifts from Thee!

Mayest Thou, through Armaity, the Spirit of Rightmindedness,  
Bless me with the perfection of **a life guided by the Good Mind!**

Compliments of  
Yasmin and Jamshed Ghadiali

## INTRODUCTION TO THE LIFESTYLE SECTION

Increasing longevity is one of humanity's greatest achievements, and it is a cause for celebration. People live longer because of improved nutrition, sanitation, medical advances, health care, education and economic well-being. In all world regions, the 60+ group is growing at a faster rate than the total population: 60+ growth rate is 2.2% vs 1.1% for all ages. In 1900, life expectancy at birth was 45-50 years and in 2015 it is 80+ in 33 countries of the world.

The challenge for all of us over 60 years is how to maximize the rest of our life, how do we adjust our life styles that we remain healthy, financially viable and enjoy life to the fullest. In this section you will find articles by experts on how to live to be a centenarian, how to maintain your brain power, eat nutritiously, exercise to keep your joints flexible and stay mobile, travel, start second careers and invest your time in philanthropy and voluntary work, be socially active and involved in your community.

In spite of all good intentions we may notice small lapses of memory. Hence we need to maintain basic brain health and reduce risk factors which may aggravate memory problems, and learn to manage stress. We need to get regular health checks for our body as well as our brain, the most vital organ which gives us our identity. Many of us face challenges that make it difficult to enjoy our lives. Articles on *Caring for Seniors* and *How to avoid Falls* may contain useful information. In this section you will also read testimonials from people who have undergone knee replacements or survived cancer.

**Remember Getting old is mandatory, but feeling old is optional!!**

### LIFE EXPECTANCY

The world has experienced dramatic increase in longevity, Globally, life expectancy at birth has gained more than 20 years since 1950 to reach 68 years. However the life expectancy varies across countries Statistics for countries where there are concentration of Zarthushtis is given below

	1910	2011	2015
Australia	57.0 years	82.0 years	82.8 years
Canada	52.5 years	81.3 years	82.2 years
New Zealand	NA	81.2 years	81.6 years
UK	53.3 years	80.8 years	81.2 years
USA	55.4 years	78.7 years	79.3 years
Iran	N/A	72.3 years	75.5 years
India	24.3 years	64.9 years	68.3 years

Data Source Clio Infra (Life expectancy)  
UN Population Aging and Development  
World 2009

**Abstracted from "Understanding Parsi Population Decline: A Historical Perspective." Dinyar Patel Ph.D at Jawaharlal Nehru Centre, Mumbai May 2011, Mumbai**

***As the life expectancy in all countries of the world is growing, so also for the Zarthushti population. We are living longer and producing fewer children. In 1955 there were 788 births and 878 deaths, in 1999 there were 276 births and 928 deaths (Hinnells: The Zoroastrian Diaspora, pg 48). This low birth rate has a great impact on the dependency ratio. The number of younger people have shrunk dramatically over the past century while the number of elderly with dependency needs have greatly increased. This means there is a smaller and smaller generation of youth and a larger proportion of aged persons.***

***All professional demographic studies have shown that intermarriage or migration to the west is not the prime reason for population decline.***

## HOW TO LIVE LONG, FULFILLING LIVES.... THAT IS, ACCORDING TO SCIENCE.

DR NIKAN KHATIBI

The Hippocratic Oath is one of the oldest binding documents in history. Written in antiquity, its principles are held sacred by doctors to this day: treat the sick to the best of one's ability, preserve patient privacy, and teach the secrets of medicine to the next generation.

Regretfully, it never mentions how to deal with the notion of why God lets one person live and takes another. And as numbing as it has become to witness the routineness of death as a member of the house of medicine, I can tell you personally, one never loses that thrust to continue asking why. And so, if we cannot comprehend such an issue supernaturally, let us at the very least attempt to understand why some people live longer naturally, or scientifically.

Below I have summarized the works of an explorer who has forged a movement towards helping the human race thrive. Hope you walk away with some new outlooks on life. Enjoy!

**Nikan Khatibi**

### THE BLUE ZONES

To his close circle of peers, **Dan Buettner** is somewhat of a legend. Along with his brother, they had set the Guinness World Records for transcontinental cycling – a formidable task for even the most talented Iron Man. But to the world, Buettner is known for his captivating exploration and research on the five places in the world – **dubbed Blue Zones** – where people live the longest, and are the healthiest.

These zones are

(a) **BARBAGIA REGION OF SARDINIA** – Mountainous highlands of inner Sardinia with the world's highest concentration of male centenarians,



(b) **IKARIA, GREECE** – Aegean Island with one of the world's lowest rates of middle age mortality and the lowest rates of dementia,



(c) **NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA** – World's lowest rates of middle age mortality, second highest concentration of male centenarians,





- 1 **Move Naturally** - The world's longest-lived people don't pump iron, run marathons or join gyms. Instead, they live in environments that constantly nudge them into moving without thinking about it. They grow gardens and don't have mechanical conveniences for house and yard work.
- 2 **Purpose** - The Okinawans call it "Ikigai" and the Nicoyans call it "plan de vida;" for both it translates to "why I wake up in the morning." Knowing your sense of purpose is worth up to seven years of extra life expectancy
3. **Down Shift** - Even people in the Blue Zones experience stress. Stress leads to chronic inflammation, associated with every major age-related disease. What the world's longest-lived people have that we don't are routines to shed that stress. Okinawans take a few moments each day to remember their ancestors, Adventists pray, Ikarians take a nap and Sardinians do happy hour.
4. **80% RULE - "Hara hachi bu"** – the Okinawan, 2500-year old Confucian mantra said before meals reminds them to stop eating when their stomachs are 80 percent full. The 20% gap between not being hungry and feeling full could be the difference between losing weight or gaining it. People in the Blue Zones eat their smallest meal in the late afternoon or early evening and then they don't eat any more the rest of the day.
5. **Plant Slant** - Beans, including fava, black, soy and lentils are the cornerstone of most centenarian diets. Meat—mostly pork—is eaten on average only five times per month. Serving sizes are 3-4 oz., about the size of deck or cards.
6. **Wine - Wine 5** - People in all Blue Zones (except Adventists) drink alcohol moderately and regularly. Moderate drinkers outlive non-drinkers. The trick is to drink 1-2 glasses per day (preferably Sardinian Cannonau wine), with friends and/or with food. And no, you can't save up all weekend and have 14 drinks on Saturday.
7. **Belong** - All but five of the 263 centenarians we interviewed belonged to some faith-based community. Denomination doesn't seem to matter. Research shows that attending faith-based services four times per month will add 4-14 years of life expectancy.
8. **Loved Ones First** - Successful centenarians in the Blue Zones put their families first. This means keeping aging parents and grandparents nearby or in the home (It lowers disease and mortality rates of children in the home too.). They commit to a life partner (which can add up to 3 years of life expectancy) and invest in their children with time and love (They'll be more likely to care for you when the time comes).
9. **RIGHT TRIBE** - The world's longest lived people chose—or were born into—social circles that supported healthy behaviors, Okinawans created "moais"—groups of five friends that committed to each other for life. Research from the Framingham Studies shows that smoking, obesity, happiness, and even loneliness are contagious. So the social networks of long-lived people have favorably shaped their health behaviors.

To make it to age 100, you don't necessarily have to have won the genetic lottery. Most of us do have the capacity to make it well into our early 90's and largely without chronic disease. It just takes a little motivation to change the way we eat, love, and pray!

Reference: <https://www.bluezones.com/>

**Dr. Nikan Khatibi** is a Persian-American physician anesthesiologist, pain management and addiction medicine specialist. He lives in Laguna, California. [www.DrNikanKhatibi.com](http://www.DrNikanKhatibi.com)

# FINDING PURPOSE IN OUR SENIOR YEARS

AN INTERVIEW WITH NAWAZ MERCHANT

Khushroo E. Patel MD, a 1960 graduate of The Grant Medical College of the Bombay University, is a practicing Board Certified Cardio-Vascular-Thoracic Surgeon for the last 55 years, affiliated with Advocate Lutheran General Hospital, Northwest Community Hospital and Presence Holy Family Medical Center. He is a trustee with Gram Seva Trust, in Kharel, in rural Gujarat. This hospital provides low cost and free medical care. Many of its patients are families and children of landless laborers. He is also a Trustee of S. M. Batha High School, Panchgani, his alma mater.



## WHAT IS YOUR MOTTO IN LIFE?

I have two mottos: Service to humanity is service to God: That is, help in any way you can – by alleviating physical pain, financial agony, & by uplifting the downtrodden. Work is worship. While many focus on the needs of the poor, a middle class person has nowhere to go. For example the kids that I have helped send to school, seeing them flourish, I find that so rewarding. Anticipate someone's need, boost their self-respect. Provide help without being asked, see how they blossom! Next to world peace, there is no ideal that deserves more homage than the gift of education.

## WHY DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH COMMUNITY HEALTH?

As a surgeon, I could only care for one patient at a time. As a community physician, your single decision can impact many. My late wife (Dr Roda Patel) discovered that malnutrition resulted in permanent mental & physical retardation in children below the age of five. With Gram Seva's nutrition program and education, to date 11,000 children are spared the permanent ravages of the Physical and Mental retardation. Being involved with community projects, as a community physician we are able to impact thousands with one innovation or change in their

lifestyle. Photo below, Dr Roda Patel examining a child at Gram Seva.

## WHAT GIVES YOU A SENSE OF PURPOSE?

Whatever I am today, I owe it to S. M. Batha High School in Panchgani & Parsi charities. My parents were earning 80 rupees a month, the boarding school fees were 70 Rupees. I was severely asthmatic & the Panchgani climate did wonders. The compassionate Hiramai Batha reduced the fees to Rs. 40 per month. Today I am a trustee of this school. I can never forget



Savaksa and Hiramai Batha – we called them papa and mama. Hiramamma was the noblest soul, very kind, compassionate, forgiving and full of practical wisdom. When I kept the school account books, I learned that we were in the red each year! They were a model for me for the rest of my life. To me this is the pay-back time for the magnificent life I was very fortunate to enjoy.

#### **HOW DO YOU VIEW AGING IN GENERAL?**

Aging gives you life's experience, helps you make mature decisions. You can feel as old you want to be or as young!

#### **YOU ARE ALSO A GRANDPA- HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO BRIDGE BOTH CONTINENTS?**

In India I'm blessed with a great team. As a team we brain storm projects and estimate funds needed. Dr. Sharmistha, runs our Health & education department very proficiently.

In the US, my sons, daughter, and son in law, daughters-in-law are all involved with the foundation and connecting with the donors. After my grandkids visited India, they said "we want no more gifts on birthdays, instead give gifts to the kids in Gram Seva." I want my children and grandchildren to be compassionate- they are my greatest success in life!

#### **HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH THE GRAM SEVA FOUNDATION?**

This is the beautiful legacy left by my wife. She met (physicians and founders of Gram Seva Trust) Ashwin and Harsha Shah in 1994, worked with them for over 22 years. After she passed away in 2011, we try to carry on her noble. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help someone else.

#### **WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT ROLE AT GRAM SEVA?**

In 2001 we initiated the US foundation for Gram Seva, so that US donations could be tax deducted. Now donors can earmark funds for Bhojan (free meal for patient and one relative), Eye Camp, Sanitation (we've built 25 toilets in rural Gujarat) etc.

Roda said 'she was a shameless beggar for my children at Gram Seva'. I have taken on this role, to support these children's education health & general well-being. I give talks, invite donors, let them know

how we use their funds. Every dollar is used for the noble work- not a penny used for administration. Our managing trustee Ashwin Shah & his wife Harsha worked for a pittance for many years, now they insist that they will work for free. In an ocean of corruption, Gram Seva is an island of integrity.

#### **WHY DID YOU JOIN GRAM SEVA? WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?**

When human beings suffer, we have an obligation to help if we can help. When I saw an intoxicated mother with a hungry kid crying, trying to wake her up, that sight cannot be forgotten. We cannot save the world, but to help even one person, it is worthwhile.

Gram Seva covers 22 villages in Gujarat, serving about 300,000 people (70,000 children). We have cared for about 20,000 children. There is so much more to be done, and we are limited by finances.

#### **WHICH PROJECT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?**

Roda's dream was to care for children of migrant workers and orphans. In 2008 she started a small Bal Awas (child residence), in a 2 room rented place, for 11 boys and 30 girls. She wanted a child shelter where the children could live and learn. Chagankaka, a wealthy landowner volunteered to donate the land for her dream. Before she expired she collected funds tirelessly. Roda expired in 2011 before construction began. **In January 2016, we completed building the first green hostel in India to house a hundred children.** Harvested rain water, sewer water are processed and used for flushing, garden etc. Solar cookers, solar panels cover needs for 8 months of the year.

#### **WHAT DOES PHILANTHROPY MEANT TO YOU?**

Philanthropy is too big a word for me. Without our donors, we could not do what we are doing. The donors are the philanthropists, not me, and I am very thankful to them.

I advise everyone to find the right causes and people to work with. Take the time to check that your funds are going for the actual cause. That is time well spent.



**WHAT, IN YOUR OPINION, ARE THE REWARDS OF PHILANTHROPY?**

Roda used to say: *"In this business there is no recession, no competition, and rewards are rich and priceless".* On the way, you meet so many like-minded, good hearted, beautiful people.

**INDIVIDUALS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT SAVING FOR THEIR FUTURE, AND MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DONATE MUCH. HOW CAN THEY ENJOY THE REWARDS OF PHILANTHROPY?**

It is not the dollar amount that counts, but the zeal to help others that matters. A single dollar is worth Rs. 66, which can give nutrition to a child for 30 days! So do what you can, it will make a difference.

**IS THERE ANY ADVICE YOU'D LIKE TO GIVE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS?**

Young professionals should focus on their families and save enough to secure their future. Once you are an empty nester, it will free you to do what you like.

Earlier my goal was to educate my children. If I joined Roda in 1994, we could not have achieved what we have. I kept working for another 10 years. It allowed us to fund the (US foundation of) Gram Seva Trust initially.

**WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO SENIORS AND OTHERS APPROACHING THEIR SENIOR YEARS?**

I love this quote: *"Live large, go swim naked, run in the surf, be a polar bear, ride a moped!* Growing old is in the hands of God. Staying young takes human skills and it is up to you." It's a matter of your mindset.

Our religion teaches moderation. Watch your weight. exercise, eat and drink in moderation, absolutely no smoking, you will live a healthy life. Keep your mind agile and active (along with physical exercise) and the senior moments will diminish!

***Remember that every stage in life has a purpose. In the end it is not the years in your life that counts, it is the life in your years.***

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## CLIMBING THE GRAND PEAK OF LIFE

DR KEKI DADACHANJI

*"Old age is the most unexpected of all the things that can happen to a man."*

- Leon Trotsky

*"One makes great discoveries in the second half of life."*

- A Hindu Proverb

I got up early and came home late most days. During last few years I traveled on business a lot. Many evenings were spent with work associates in meetings and over dinners. Then one day I walked out of the workplace for the last time. Friends celebrated my retirement with a warm sendoff. As I drove home that day, I understood the meaning of the word *angst*, abstract heretofore, as I thought, *"What shall I do now?"*

I spoke to those who had been here before. I got a range of advice: travel, learn golf, paint the house, attend Friday lunches at the Chinese restaurant with other retirees, set up a consulting business using the skills I had acquired and contacts I had developed. I tried all the fun things but, while great as diversions, I could not see them as the center of my life. Next, I set up a small consulting business. As I explored potential projects, I realized that to succeed in consulting, I needed to have good salesmanship and a willingness to compromise, attributes that were distasteful to me.

At this point I sought clarity as to what I really wanted. After some thought, this is what I concluded: I wanted to be financially secure, physically healthy, mentally challenged, emotionally unshakable, and spiritually living life in accordance with nature of things ("asha"). The rest of the article describes how these basic needs were translated to decisions and actions.

Working with a financial planner, I had already developed a financial plan with contingencies. This gave me freedom to pursue other things. I recognized that financial freedom comes from a balance between inflows and outflows. Therefore, simplifying my wants was important. Doing so would not only help preserve financial freedom, it would make me focus on doing things rather than buying things, nurturing relationships rather than visiting shopping malls. Things do not give lasting pleasure; people do. It breaks my heart when I see a friend who needs to continue to work

in autumn years despite failing health because he assumed debts to own things that he did not really need, and no longer give any pleasure.

Physical health requires good nutrition and exercise. I became a vegetarian some time ago. That decision was more prompted by compassion for animals, but it helped health. I accepted that I could not do high-impact exercises without risking damage to my aging body. So I used yoga and walking as my primary exercise vehicles. Yoga, misunderstood in the West, is not just a physical discipline; it is a spiritual practice. Hence, in addition to the yoga postures, I established myself in meditation. For me, walking in a park is sheer joy. Listening to summer breeze rustling through the leaves of trees, and birds singing their divine melodies, remind me of my responsibility to protect environment for our children. That means not buying what is not essential (since that becomes waste at some point), and recycling everything that is recyclable.

Next came mental health. This brought me back to the question, *"What should I do to occupy myself?"* I asked myself, what do I really enjoy doing, and am reasonably good at doing? And I found the answer: I really enjoy teaching. My dad was a teacher, and many of my role models were teachers. I took a position as a part-time lecturer at Rutgers University. This was most satisfying. I enjoyed it so much that I wanted to teach full-time. However, this required getting tenure, and I had no interest in writing academic papers in order to secure tenure. At this time I took a major leap. I got certification from the state of New Jersey to teach high school kids. Many friends thought I was crazy, and I must admit I had some doubts about my ability to handle classroom discipline. In the end, I took the job and stayed there for eight years. In answering questions of these teenagers, I learned more about



calculus and more about children. For the first time in my life I felt that what I did made a difference.

After leaving my teaching position, I moved to the other side of the desk. In New Jersey, senior citizens can audit any course at Rutgers University at no cost. I took courses in Indian Philosophy and History and Philosophy of Yoga. Currently I am signed up to take a yearlong course in Sanskrit. I have always enjoyed learning new things, and the ability to take any course that captured my imagination, regardless of its commercial utility, is a privilege I could only have in old age.

I have learned lessons in emotional security from Epictetus: *"Happiness and freedom begin with a clear understanding of one principle: Some things are within your control and some things are not."* The Bhagavad Gita elaborates on this fundamental premise: *"It is in your jurisdiction to act, but not to expect results."* What we do is in our control, but the outcome of what we do is not. I have tried to absorb these teachings deep in my consciousness. Despite eating sensibly, and doing regular exercises and meditation, I was struck by a heart attack. My family members were understandably quite shaken, but deep within I felt a serene acceptance. I could not think of anything I could have done to avert this; this event (triggered by genetic factors) was not in my control. It was futile to worry about it. The episode passed, and I felt reassured that the wisdom of ancient India and Greece was still valid.

As we approach the final great transition, it is important to have spiritual security. In my youth, I once told my father that I had become an atheist. A deeply religious person, he smiled and did not reply. As I grew older, I realized that spirituality consists of having a right conception of the Ultimate. We often reject God because we understand Him wrong. Every one of us

needs to reach this right conception on our own.

I will only offer a few thoughts rather than suggest any definitive position. It is better to be spiritual than be a member of any particular religion. The right understanding of any of world's great religions can lead us to spiritual life. Competition is fundamentally non-spiritual, and claiming one religion to be better than others is the worst kind of competition. In a world of inter-faith marriages, it is important that we project this all-embracing acceptance with love. I believe that Zarathushti religion is a great religion, but it differs from other ancient religions in one important aspect.

Religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism have extensive commentaries on their foundational texts written by people who lived close in time to the founders of those religions. These commentaries give richer understanding of the basic texts of those religions. I have not been able to find similar commentaries on Zarathushti texts written by people who lived in or around the times of Zarathushtra. To bridge this gap, I have looked at the texts and commentaries of religions that evolved around the same time. I have found this exercise invaluable in getting a deeper understanding of ideas such as *"Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds"* and the law of *"Asha"*. As I approach the undiscovered country beyond my final moment, I want to be able to meet the Ultimate with calm embrace.

The purpose of this article is not to suggest that what I found and did to guide my journey is the right one for anyone else. It is to inspire all my co-travelers to reflect on these questions themselves, and live intentionally with whatever answers they discover. This is what Asho Zarathushtra told His audience in the Gathas when he *presented* His great religion to them: *Listen to me carefully, and make your choice.*

**Dr. Keki Dadachanji** born in Mumbai, received his Baccalaureate degree in Mechanical Engineering from Indian Institute of Technology, and Doctorate in Operations Research from Case Western Reserve University. He worked for Jos. Schlitz Brewing Company in Milwaukee for 3 years, and M&M/Mars in Hackettstown, NJ for 26 years, in various positions. He retired in 2005, and became a part-time lecturer at Rutgers University. In 2007 he joined Parsippany High School as a teacher of mathematics and computer science. He held this position for 8 years. Since 2015 Dr. Dadachanji has been taking a variety of courses at Rutgers University as continuing education. Dr. Dadachanji is a certified Yoga teacher, and the coordinator of a fellowship group of meditation practitioners since 2001. He was the program committee chairman for the 16<sup>th</sup> North American Zarathushti Congress held in New York.



## CHALLENGES OF BEING A SNOWBIRD

ROSHAN BHARUCHA



For many years, during our visits to Florida, we had been thinking of investing in a property. Repeated visits familiarizing ourselves on different locations did help our decision on where to buy. Also, engaging with multiple real estate agents and visiting potential properties gave us a clearer picture on availability. Finally, in 2009 we decided to invest in a second property in Florida where we could escape the harsh winters of Philadelphia. Since then we have been spending 3-4 months as snowbirds enjoying the warm, sunny weather.

While there are many wonderful advantages, living in two different locations does bring some (very manageable) challenges. Most obviously, you are faced with two sets of bills - utility bills, taxes, insurance, the hassle of forwarding mail and having someone to check on your place while you are away. Also every time you arrive as snowbirds you have to deal with opening up your home and getting situated and likewise shutting down your premises upon departure. Over the years I have developed a checklist of what I need to do weekly until our arrival or departure. Staying organized is the key to not forgetting anything and not feeling rushed.

Buying property is not the only way to get away during the winter months. Many folks find it more convenient to rent during the cold months. Certainly it is a simpler option, as you do not have to concern yourself with maintaining the property, paying mortgages, taxes, utility bills, etc. Whatever you decide, I am sure you will enjoy your time away.

Transportation is another scenario one needs to consider. Do we leave our car in Florida, do we rent a car for the period of stay in Florida or do we drive down. There is also the option of traveling on the car-train. We have found that driving down is both the most economical choice and also affords us ample space. One challenge we have got used to, is going from two cars in Philadelphia to one car in Florida.

The real challenge for us, however, was getting used to being away from our children and grandchildren for four months specially since they reside close to us in Philadelphia. Luckily, today we have technology and Aps like FaceTime which allows us to see and interact with loved ones. It puts a smile on our faces every time we see them.

We are also fortunate to have such a friendly and welcoming Zoroastrian community in Florida. Being outgoing, making friends with neighbors and the community, has given us a sense of family even while we are away. It also helps to be able to trust that people will look out for your property while you are away.

Looking back, buying a second property was one of our best decisions. Despite the challenges, we thoroughly enjoy dividing our time between the two and couldn't be happier.

**Roshan Bharucha** is a retired grandmother, originally from Mumbai, India, and a longtime member of ZAPANJ (Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey). She lives with her husband Jimmy in Philadelphia. She has also authored the book *Parsi Wedding, Navjote & Other Traditions* which is a step by step guide in planning special Parsi occasions.

## OUR RETIREMENT EXPERIENCE

### PEARL SATARAWALA AND JOE BALL

In early June 2016 we were gainfully employed and living in our five bedroom, three bath, home in the suburbs of New Jersey. By late June, just a few short weeks later, we were retired and living in a rented home with two small bedrooms and one bathroom in Richmond, Virginia. What brought about this dramatic change in our lives? A beautiful baby boy! Our grandson we now spend much of our week days with.

Looking back on this huge transition in our lives, we are surprised it went so smoothly. No doubt it helped that we began to discuss the possibility of such a move two to three years earlier. We talked with a financial planner and made sure we could afford to retire while still maintaining our life style. Once that was determined, we made plans with our previous employers, and, more importantly, with our daughter who lives in Richmond. She was keenly supportive, in part because our willingness to help as caregivers for our grandson would enable our daughter to return to her work in the corporate world. Our son-in-law was equally supportive. With their help we found our new rental home and continued to make preparations for the move.

Getting both professional and personal advice from as many people as possible also helped us with the many life-changing decisions we had to make. For example, we are enjoying the flexibility afforded by living in a rented home—advice we got from many people. As we settle into life in Richmond, we are comforted knowing we can always move to another neighborhood or even to another state if our circumstances change in the next few years. It is also a relief to know that we can call the landlord if the toilet overflows or there is an infestation of ants! We were also advised to develop a social network of new friends and activities outside of our family as soon as possible. Naturally we got in contact with the local Parsi community within the first few weeks of our arrival. We also joined the local library, a nearby

community fitness center, and checked out local museums and live theater. We also registered to vote in Virginia as soon as we could!

Medical care and insurance are other areas where we received excellent advice. Joe signed up for Medicare Part A at age 65 as required, then he applied for Part B at the local Social Security office once he was approaching full retirement. In addition, he researched all the options for Medicare Part D (medications), and applied for that directly with the provider (Humana). We learned, too, that former employers must offer COBRAs for both medical and dental insurance, so we are considering a COBRA for Delta Dental.

Perhaps the most important part of our transition to retired life was close communication between husband and wife. We made the choice together, and we continued to support each other as we said goodbye to beloved friends—including our many friends at ZAGNY and ZIG.(Zoroastrian Intermarried Group) Now that we are in Richmond, we continue our mutual support as we care for our grandson. Being a retired Montessori teacher, Pearl has taken the lead with child care, while Joe lends moral support to Pearl and also prepares to teach part time at a local private school. On a typical week day, Pearl drives the one mile to our daughter's house and arrives by 8 am so both daughter and son-in-law can get to work on time. Joe usually arrives an hour or so later on his bicycle, carrying books and a laptop computer. Pearl is the expert on all areas of raising a baby, but Joe has progressed to the point where he can even change a dirty diaper. Since our daughter is working part time, she is usually home by 3:30 pm and we are free to explore life in Richmond.

As wife and husband, we share the philosophy that we are here on Earth to be of service to others. No one knows what the future holds, but for the time being we feel blessed and fulfilled in our new roles as full time grandparents.

***Pearl** was born to Nozar and Perviz Satarawala in Bombay, India. She lived in England and Iran before coming to the USA in 1973. Pearl and Joe have been married for 37 years. They have three children and two grandchildren. After being a full time mother she taught in the public and private schools in New Jersey for over twenty years.*

***Joe** grew up in suburban New Jersey. Although he taught in Thailand and earned a graduate degree in comparative religion at Harvard, he considers going to teach in Iran the best decision he ever made in his life because that is where he met Pearl. He worked as a teacher and administrator at Newark Academy, Livingston, New Jersey for the past 36 years.*

## LIVING IN FRANCE

DR RASHNA WRITER

When my husband and I decided to migrate to France three years ago, some of our friends in the UK were incredulous (“Why?” “what are you going to do there?” etc.); others were supportive (“Great, what an adventure”). I had spent over four decades in and around London, one of the world’s greatest cities; my husband Roger, was born and brought up in the great metropolis, and now, we had bought a home in a little known rural *département* of north-western France. Had we gone mad?

In fact, we like to think that we have taken a considered decision. It is no secret that the British and French have a chequered history, but Roger is a Francophile. And as a Parsi, I feel uniquely qualified to adjust to my new home. After all, migration has been a corner-stone of our story. Yet, a new country implies new customs, regulations, friends, and much more.

We bought our home in a listed town with a 14<sup>th</sup> century chateau. An ancient barn, converted to suit 21<sup>st</sup> century living may throw up challenges, but when you discover bits of Roman pottery in your garden, there is an undoubted frisson of excitement. French red tape is notorious, but as long as you carry all the relevant papers, the bureaucracy is manageable. Certainly, all of this presupposes that you can speak the language, because as is well known, the French have a genuine sense of pride in, and affection for their culture and way of life.

This is where the real challenge lies. Long hours at work, is arguably a sacrosanct mantra of the Anglo-centric world. Here in France, everything stops for lunch! Between 12.00 noon and around 2.00pm, everything shuts for lunch! This is virtually non-negotiable. And don’t think that just a sandwich will do. A proper meal is part of one’s human right, and no-one will dare to deprive you of it. So, we have learned the delineations in the day; not easy at first, but not impossible to adjust to. On the subject of food, I actually think that the Parsis have much in common with the French: eating is one of life’s joys. The difference between the two however, is the sense of rigidity of meals. There is a strict order in French dining: you begin the meal with a starter, which is followed by the main course, you then partake of the cheese platter, which is followed by the desert. And remember, it is never desert before cheese, as some of our British friends persist in doing.

When we moved to France, we knew nobody. Now we have a circle of friends and a social life that keeps us more than busy. The reason for that is the warmth and genuine kindness of the local people, and the fact that there is a rather large British expatriate community in our *région*. The cross-section of the British are represented here: from a butcher to a Lloyds name! I sit on a committee of an Anglo-French organisation which organises an annual fair that attracts nearly 3,000 visitors.

Coming from India via the UK to France – a country with which I had little or no connection – has, for me, been a great opportunity. As Parsis, we don’t realise how Anglo-centric our world view is. Now that I live in France, I see the French point of view, and the distinctive way in which they ‘do’ things. The strengths would include the infrastructure, which is impressive, whether it is roads or hospitals; families socialise on a



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requent basis. And all the world knows that among the short-comings is the country's attachment to strikes, long lunch hours, and long holidays. Americans particularly, find the latter incomprehensible. However, wherever one lives, much depends on one's mental attitude. Speaking personally, I think the secret is to keep oneself occupied, ideally, with something you enjoy. For some it may be gardening, for others, studying the stars. I find that I can continue to pursue my interest in research, writing and teaching here in France, as I could in the UK. Perhaps, all this is possible – moving from one country to another – because technology and speed of travel have enhanced opportunities to embrace the wider world. How lucky are we!

***La vie est belle !***



*Dr Rashna Writer is the author of Contemporary Zoroastrians: An Unstructured Nation (1994), co-author with Shahrokh Shahrokh of The Memoirs of Keikhosrow Shahrokh (1994) and author of The Reshaping of Iran from Zoroastrian to Muslim (2013). She has lectured on ancient Iranian history at Birkbeck College (London) and Richmond College (London); was a Research Assistant at Manchester University where she undertook work on the Zoroastrian community in the United Kingdom. From 2008 to 2013, Dr Writer was Senior Teaching Fellow in the Department of Study of Religions, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London University, where she lectured on Zoroastrianism in Ancient and Modern Worlds. She has participated at international conferences and lectured in the UK, USA and the Indian sub-continent on Iranian history. Dr Writer holds a doctorate from the London School of Economics in International Relations.*

*By training, Dr Writer is a political scientist, and has pursued a parallel career as a political analyst.*

## THE AGING BRAIN AND THE REVIVAL OF BRAINPOWER

DR MAZDA TUREL



All of us have had a grandfather who remembers every flamboyant batting innings of Farokh Engineer, especially when he hit a 46-ball century and helped India win a Test in England for the first time. Not only that, but they also remember how many boundaries Engineer glided through the leg side and how many sixes he hooked over the fence. But this same ever-loving, doting grandpa simply cannot recall where he keeps his dentures every morning and struggles to search for them with the choicest profanity providing a quick chuckle for the grandchildren that are not allowed to learn of curse words that are considered sacrosanct by the elderly of the community. This ties into that old phrase, “if you don’t use it, you lose it,” your memory that is, not the expletives, when you are Parsi. The big question we need to address is how might we age wisely?

### FOR COGNITIVE WELL-BEING:

Learning something new is the key. When one is learning something new, it builds new information pathways in our nervous system, which is immensely important. We spend the first half of our lives building our ‘cognitive reserve’. New experiences and erudition help build and maintain these pathways. This includes things like travelling to new destinations which forces one to navigate in unfamiliar surroundings. Simply surfing the Internet won’t do. The more senses you use in learning something new, the more of your brain will be involved in retaining the memory. If you learn recipes while actually eating and smelling that fabulous *Patra ni Machii*, you are more likely to memorize the ingredients! You can also try repeating what you know. That way, you reinforce the memory or connection. If you do place your dentures somewhere other than its usual spot, tell yourself out loud what you’ve done. (That way, even your neighbors will know where your dentures are, helping you find them when lost) Making mnemonics is also a great tool. My grandfather had one for things he needed to pick up before he walked out the door, his keys, his wallet, his kerchief, his spectacles and his 4711 eau de cologne; a standby for any ailment in every Parsi household.

### FOR PHYSICAL WELL-BEING:

As Edward Stanley had remarked, “Those who think they have no time for bodily exercise will sooner or

later have to find time for illness.” Aerobic exercise increases oxygen supply to the brain and hence potentially helps stave off cognitive impairment. The weekly goals for adults are two hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity like brisk walking or one hour and 15 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity, like jogging muscle-strengthening activities on two or more days of the week. If you’re 65 or older and have a chronic health problem, just be as active as your abilities allow. Ten thousand steps a day should be the target, which roughly translates to 5 miles.

Heart healthy eating could also help preserve memory and other mental skills. Studies show that the closer you are to a DASH (Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension) diet, the higher you score on standard tests of memory, language, and movement. The DASH diet involves eating more vegetables and fruits, healthy vegetable oils, and moderate amounts of meat and dairy. You also need to remember the three B vitamins. Folic acid, B6 and B12 can help lower your homocysteine levels, high levels of which have been linked to an increased risk of dementia. Fortified cereal, other grains, and leafy green vegetables are good sources of B vitamins.

“You can live to be a hundred if you give up all the things that make you want to live to be a hundred.” Said the crafty Woody Allen. And unfortunately for us this bon mot is quite true. Do not abuse alcohol.

This being said, thankfully for Parsis, a few studies have linked low-dose alcohol with a reduced risk of dementia in older adults. Avoid tobacco at all costs and in all its forms. Observational studies suggest that long-term use of aspirin and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) may reduce the risk of dementia by 10%–55%. It's hopeful information, but it's preliminary. Experts are not ready to recommend aspirin specifically for dementia.

#### FOR EMOTIONAL WELL BEING:

Is the aging brain a victim of its own infirmity and frailty or do factors such as isolation and emotional detachment from their cherished ones expedite the process? Aging affects love, friendship, and the ability to cede control. Social isolation causes people to lose their cognitive reserve and the neural networks not in work begin to disappear. Volunteering for causes close to one's heart provides good benefits as it helps one exercise one's skills and have contact with a variety of people and also puts one in new situations. We must also take responsibility for our emotions. Sleep deprivation, depression and exhaustion tend to accelerate mental decline in old age.

Also, it has been wisely noted that the expressions you characteristically show will lead you to develop the lines that engrave your face, as you get older. At 20, you have none of these lines, but by 50 your typical expression will ineluctably have carved itself into your forehead and around your eyes and mouth. Smile and your facial creases will have a friendlier feel.

#### SO WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SOLUTIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL AGING?

Busting those Sudoku and crossword booklets and brain game apps? Research has found that although these games help improve working memory which is

the ability to remember and retrieve information; they do not expand other brain functions like reasoning and problem solving. The better solution is actually *going back to school!* Classes help us learn complex skills, which also involve long-term memory that is more beneficial to the aging brain. Group participation, conversations and discussions are other perks of going back to school. And remember you can study anything that sparks your interest from urban design to public speaking! Many states offer tuition waivers for seniors. For more information on resources, one could contact a local Area Agency on Aging or AAA ([www.n4a.org](http://www.n4a.org)) or the National Institute on Aging ([www.nia.nih.gov](http://www.nia.nih.gov))

So in addition to nurturing a 'neuroprotective' lifestyle and in light of the immense complexities involving aging, what our community needs is an integrated approach to age-management. An all-encompassing care for illnesses and quality of life issues associated with aging that require a combined assessment of Geriatrics, Neurology, Rehab Medicine, Neuropsychology and Psychiatry. The hybridized scrutiny of physicians within a single facility from all these disciplines of medicine will best enable geriatric patients to receive accurate and timely evaluation and treatments. It is best to remember that medical care continues to offer only limited protection in terms of cognitive decline. There is absolutely no replacement for the feeling that comes from being loved and cared for by family and friends.

I would like to end on a rather somber yet graceful note, in the words of Emily Dickinson. "*Because I could not stop for death – He kindly stopped for me.*"

To me, it is not that ageing or subsequent death steals us of life, but that it brings us to a beneficent ending. And that is the truly Zarathushti way!

**Mazda Turel** Born in 1981, Mazda was ordained a priest in 1992. He completed his degree in medicine (MBBS) from Grant Medical College and Sir JJ groups of Hospitals in Mumbai, and a MCh degree in Neurosurgery from the prestigious Christian Medical College in Vellore, India. He was awarded the Jacob Chandy Gold Medal at his graduation; a distinction that has only been conferred previously to 4 other recipients in the last 35 years ago. After his residency, he earned a Diploma in Minimally Invasive Neurosurgery from Beijing, China and . o completed a fellowship in Skullbase surgery and neurooncology at the illustrious Toronto Western Hospital and is currently pursuing another fellowship in complex spine surgery at the Rush University in Chicago.

He is an avid writer and is passionate about photography. He lives in Chicago with his wife Debashree and their two naught toddler daughters, Meher and Khursheed



## EXERCISE FOR HEALTHY AGING



### ANAHITA KAVARANA

**Healing Power:** Injuries and wounds take longer to heal as people age. Regular exercise may speed up the wound-healing process by as much as 25%.

**Chronic Conditions:** Exercise is an effective treatment for many chronic conditions. For example, studies show that people with arthritis, heart disease or diabetes benefit from regular exercise. Exercise also helps people with high blood pressure, balance problems, difficulty walking and helps control joint swelling and pain associated with arthritis. Many medical conditions are also improved with exercise, including Alzheimer Disease and other dementias, colon cancer and obesity.

**So what kind of exercises should you include in your regular routine?** *(Older adults should consult with a physician before beginning a new physical activity program.)*

To get all of the benefits of physical activity, try all five types of exercise – **weight-bearing, endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility.**

**Weight bearing** exercise is any activity you do on your feet that work your bones and muscles against gravity. When your feet and legs carry your body weight, more stress is placed on your bones, making your bones work harder and making them stronger. Examples are brisk walking, hiking, jogging/running, dancing or stair climbing.

**Endurance** exercises are activities that increase your breathing and heart rate for an extended period of time. Examples are walking, jogging, swimming, raking, sweeping, dancing, and playing tennis. Endurance exercises will make it easier for you to walk farther, faster, or uphill. They also should make everyday activities such as gardening, shopping, or playing a sport easier.

**Strength** exercises build muscle, and even very small changes in muscle strength can make a real difference in your ability to perform everyday activities like carrying groceries, lifting a grandchild, or getting up from a chair. The most common strength training methods include using weight machines, elastic bands/tubes, working with free

*“The doctors insist on regular exercise but aren’t my day to day activities enough exercise?!” “I am too old and it is hard to exercise and I am afraid that exercising may hurt me.”*

These are responses that we physical therapists commonly hear from our patients, especially the elderly. This article will help clear some of these doubts and questions and will shed light on the fact that regular physical activity and exercise are important to the physical and mental health of almost everyone, including older adults. Let us briefly discuss some of the benefits of physical activity.

**Bone Density and Risk of Osteoporosis:** Exercise prevents bone mass loss. Better bone density reduces risk of osteoporosis, falling and breaking bones. Post-menopausal women can lose as much as 2% bone mass each year, and men also lose bone mass as they age.

**Gastrointestinal Function:** Constipation is a very common complaint amongst the elderly. Regular exercise helps boost metabolism, promotes efficient elimination of waste and encourages digestive health.

**Immune Function:** A healthy, strong body fights off infection and sickness more easily and quickly.

**Emotional Aspect:** Regular, moderate physical activity can help manage stress, improve your mood and may help reduce feelings of depression.

weights or doing exercises that use your own body weight (push-ups, for example). Although these resistance exercises focus on increasing muscle mass, they also put stress on bones and have bone-building capacity.

**Balance** exercises, along with certain strength exercises, can help prevent falls. Examples are standing on one foot, walking heel to toe.

**Stretching or flexibility** exercises give you more freedom of movement for your physical activities and for everyday activities such as getting dressed and reaching objects on a shelf. Some seniors whose

physical abilities are limited by medical conditions or general frailty need to exercise more carefully than others, but do not have to dismiss it entirely. The benefits of exercising regularly, especially in the elderly, far outweigh the risks. Being physically active can help you stay strong and fit enough to keep doing the things you like to do, and help you maintain your independence as you age.

**For detailed exercises visit National Institute of Health Senior Health website at <http://nihseniorhealth.gov>**

*Anahita Kavarana has a Masters degree in physical therapy from University of Mumbai and a Masters degree in Advanced Human Movement Science from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is currently working as a Physical Therapist at Specialists in Rehabilitation Medicine outpatient clinic in Commerce, Michigan. Residing in Novi, Michigan with husband and 2 daughters, Farah and Ferzeen.*

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# PREVENTING FALLS, ENSURING SAFETY WHAT CAN YOU DO?

ABAN SINGH, PT, LL.B

## INTRODUCTION

**D**id you know that every 15 second, an Emergency Department sees an older adult for a fall-related injury? And, every 29 minutes, an older adult dies from a fall? Falls are the leading cause of both fatal and non-fatal injuries for individuals 65 years and over in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The CDC reports that more than one third of adults 65 and older fall each year, and of the people who fall 20-30% suffer moderate to severe injuries.<sup>2</sup> These statistics are already alarming, but unfortunately the chances of an older aged adult falling and being seriously injured increases with age. So, as physical therapists, what can we do about this growing danger?

Individuals need to be educated on everyday risks that could lead to falls, and what can be done to ensure safety in the home to prevent falls before they happen. With increase awareness, we have the potential to impact the prevention of falls and educate the patients and community on safety measures that can enhance a person's health and improve outcomes.



grandchildren are around, paper, furniture.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CAUSES INSIDE THE HOME:

1. Most falls occur when a person is tired, and less alert, especially in early mornings and evenings. Falls happen inside the home, due to inadequate lighting, or very bright lighting, which can blind an older adult. Supplemental lighting or indirect lighting can help resolve this along the pathway which is most commonly used.
1. Carpets and Loose Rugs: Carpets should be securely anchored to the floor by tape, or removed completely. No loose rugs!!
2. Wiring: long electrical telephone, TV wiring should be secured taped. If a person is using oxygen, very important, to have the length as long as needed to bathroom /bedroom. And should be kept over shoulder and in the web of the thumb, so pathways are clear.
3. Clutter: Pathways frequented, should be clear of clutter like books, toys specially when
4. Beds: beds can be very high which may necessitate a step stool. These stools should be broad based and about 4 inches in height and at least eight to ten inches long for adequate stability. Buying a smaller box spring with a regular mattress can also alleviate this problem.
5. Stairs: Most homes have staircase. Each staircase should have a side rail, both sides would be much better. Red tape-glow in the dark kind, should be placed on the last and first steps better if all steps have one), to demarcate the end of steps. Each steps should be each less than 8 inches.
6. Bathroom: Bathroom are high risks hazards, especially if they are small and wet. Grab bars should be placed inside bath space and around toilet seat area for easier exit/entry. A shower chair or bath-bench can aid an individual for easy sliding into the tub. Removable long handle shower heads can add to ease of bathing and allow a person to be independent. The toilet seat should be higher for easy get up/down, or a commode with side handles can be used to raise the height of the toilet seat and also assist with sit-stand. Bathroom space should be dry, with non-skid backing rugs.



7. Kitchen Hazards: All rugs which move should be removed or attached to the floor or use non-skid backing rugs. Utensils, plates cups should be within easy reach of a person to prevent stretching and over reaching. Using good body posture is essential to prevent falls and backaches.

### OUTSIDE THE HOME:

1. Steps: Steps leading inside or outside a home should have a firm hand rails.
2. Door Threshold: Door threshold in homes sometimes can be high (8-10 inches) and need added strength to overcome that. A small handle at an appropriate height that someone can comfortably hold on the door frame, can allow easier entry/exit. A small slab of stone or wood (about 1-3 inches in height) can be also placed in front door to make the step shorter.
3. Curb Negotiation: Sometimes difficult for our elderly, hence use of an assistive device like rolling walker, cane, 4-wheel walker with a seat can assist.
4. Sidewalks: should be clear of any debris, small stones, or tree roots. Uneven a/broken pavements should be avoided as they cause an imbalance and fall.
5. Driveways: should be clear of and smooth, without water, ice or rain, which would make it slippery. Sloping driveways should be handled with increased caution, since a person with weakness or imbalance may have difficulty walking up a sloped surface.
6. Community: If the patient is out and about in the community, they should have a speed rate of walking eight feet within 2 seconds to allow them to cross roads in a safe and timely manner. Anywhere from 4.30 seconds to 12 seconds is a prediction of risk for falls.<sup>3</sup>

### PHYSICAL, PERSONAL, AND MENTAL FACTORS CAUSING FALLS

There can be many physical, personal, and mental reasons that cause individuals to fall. Activities of daily living (ADLs) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) can be affected by deficits in functional mobility, leading to falls. The following are some physical and personal reasons that can cause an individual to fall,

1. Age: Higher risk of falling for those older than 80 years of age.
2. Improper use of an assistive device such as a walker or straight leg cane with correct sequencing of gait.
3. Assistive device that is not the correct height.
4. Gait imbalance.
5. Speed of gait and stride length of gait.
6. Gait bearing status, touch toe gait, non-weight bearing status.
7. Weakness of muscles of the lower extremities; the inability to take a firm step can lead to fall.
8. Hypotension<sup>4</sup>
9. Visual deficits can cause a fall. To avoid this, have a different color tape on each stair on the staircase so they can distinguish between steps. Vision check every year.
10. Dizziness and dehydration
11. Urinary incontinence.
12. Hypoxia-need 90% oxygen saturation to function adequately
13. Back pain, which can lead to poor body posture and thus a fall.
14. Balance problems
15. Obesity can result in increased risk of compromised balance.
16. Donning and doffing pants: Undergarments can also be challenging for patients to put on or take off which can easily lead to a fall. Use of either a long handle reacher, support of a walker, handles, or grab-bars for support can allow for the pulling up or down of underclothes safely.
17. Poor fitting or un-sturdy footwear. Good footwear is very essential to the prevention of falls. Loose fitting shoes, or barefoot can lead to falls

**MENTAL FACTORS** can also be major risk factors to falls. Mental factors can lead to a loss in concentration and confidence in the patient's ability to walk and move without injury. The following are some mental factors to be aware of:

1. Depression
2. Anxiety
3. Pain
4. Cognitive and spatial issues
5. History of falls
6. Fear of falling<sup>5</sup>

## DISEASE AND MEDICATION RISK FACTORS

Medication issues associated with falls are The following types of medications: psychotropic medications, benzodiazepines, sedatives, antidepressants, antipsychotics, narcotics, other pain medications, antihistamines and diabetic medications.

1. Prescription of more than four medications, with their actions, interactions and contraindications.
2. Laxatives/diuretics may cause individuals to fall when rushing to the restroom.
3. Sleep enhancing medications
4. Cardiac drugs-antiarrhythmic, diuretics

Additionally, most common diseases associated with falls are:

1. More than 4 co-morbidities
2. Parkinsonism
3. Alzheimer's
4. Cardiac conditions
5. Strokes

**CONCLUSION** Falls can be easily prevented, with a combination of interventions. A physical therapist will evaluate an individual's risk for

falling and accordingly recommend environmental modifications, medication reconciliation, and educate on progressive exercises programs for balance, strengthening the body and flexibility to avoid falls. Education in raising the awareness of what, why, how, of falls can enhance good outcomes and improve life style including keeping the older adults out of the hospitals and in the home.

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**Aban Singh** has been a Physical Therapist for over 35 years and a dedicated member of the APTA since 1989. She was Director of a Physical Therapy Department, treating patients in outpatient clinics, acute care, and home health settings. Born and raised in Bombay, India Aban practiced in India, Canada, and Kuwait. She enjoyed volunteering with Girl Scouts, her church group, and local schools. Aban co-wrote APTA's (American Physical Therapy Association) recent edition of "Providing Physical Therapy in the Home" and also serves on their Publication Committee. She is also a Geriatric Specialist and a strong advocate for seniors. She lives near Philadelphia with her husband and three daughters and works in the Home Health Department of a large non-profit hospital.

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## MY EXPERIENCE WITH KNEE REPLACEMENT

KERSI BELLIHOMJI

**E**ight years ago I was in a lot of pain. The cartilage of my knee was worn out, and the bone scraped on bone in my knees. The excruciating pain made it impossible to walk. Even with a cane I had a lot of pain. For over five years I tried everything: exercise, bending knees, stationary bike, treadmill, supplements, pain killers. This prolonged period likely put a lot of strain on my back, and herniated disks. Ultimately when on vacation in California the pain grew so bad that I had to return on a wheelchair. I took disability leave, using oxycodone and other painkillers. Having exhausted all other options, I resolved to have total knee replacement surgery. Since both knees were worn out, I decided to go for total bilateral knee replacement surgery.

To prepare for the surgery, I met with my orthopedic physician and did my own research online. It is daunting to see some of the online videos. I was given an epidural and anesthesia. The surgery took many hours, and then I had pain management through IV. Since this was bilateral knee replacement, I had two surgeons performing the surgery, one for each knee. After three days I was moved from the hospital to a Rehab facility where we had already made arrangements for my rehab stay. For six weeks my wife visited me in Rehab each day.

In rehab, I worked with the regimen my doctor recommended for physical therapy, including the continuous passive motion machine. My wife did a fantastic job taking care of me. Each day therapists checked my knees for flexibility and strength. Using the treadmill and stationery bike strengthened my legs, but honestly I could hardly wait to come home!

After the surgery I have regained a wonderful quality of life, with the same mobility I had in my thirties and forties. I can walk, bicycle, run, even squat, and simply feel great. I still exercise to maintain my weight, the strength in my legs, and to protect my spine.



My back hurts since I have herniated disks, however the knee surgery gave me back my life.

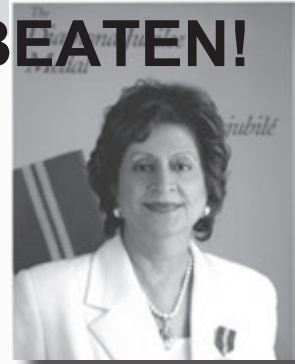
I delayed having knee replacements for about five to six years because I was uncomfortable with the idea of surgery. I wish I would have done it earlier and enjoyed quality time of life for those years. Doing both knees at the same time was difficult, and I had to get blood transfusions during and after the surgery. Being of an average weight was helpful for me. I continued physical therapy for about 9 months which really helped me recover quickly.

**Kersi Bellihomji** is a retired accounting professional with global experience who lives with his wife Khorshid in Sayerville New Jersey.



# OF COURSE CANCER CAN BE BEATEN!

## DR DHUN NORIA



It is a sad fact of life that as we age, our body weakens; our eyes, our knees and backs are not what they were in our 20's. While a wealth of life experiences makes us wiser and better, our bodies become weaker. Many seniors will also battle a particularly great adversity; cancer.

I faced cancer twice in my life; once in my 50's and then again 10 years later. Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> of May, 1994 is forever imprinted in my mind, for that was the day I first received the diagnosis of breast cancer. I was extremely fortunate to receive timely and expert care for my cancer.

In retrospect, the physical challenges of surgery, chemotherapy and radiation were the easy part. Much harder were the psychological aspects of a cancer diagnosis. I went through first the **ANGER** "why me" stage. Then came **FEAR**. Fear of dying, fear of isolation, fear of uncertainty of what lay ahead; fear for my children and husband – what will happen with them should I die prematurely. And then came **GRIEF**. Grief and depression for my healthy body that was no more. Grief for all the surgical scars. Depression as radiation and chemotherapy took a heavy toll on my body. Depression when my hair fell out after chemo.

At my lowest moments I remembered

the words of B.T. Washington, "IF YOU WANT TO LIFT YOURSELF, LIFT UP SOMEONE ELSE"

My family rallied around me. They supported me every step of the way. They were there for me when I was weak and I realized they understood me and loved me more than I ever thought. I feel that as a family we grew closer to each other in those trying times.

I realized you could not truly heal the body without healing the mind. Involvement in community work was the true healer for me. Eleanor Roosevelt once said "When you cease to make a contribution, you begin to die." And I did not want to die.

For all but the chemotherapy appointments, I continued to work. I am a founding member and sit on the Board of Directors of the Scarborough Hospital where I doubled my efforts. I was active in regional councils directing health care in Ontario. I Chaired the committee of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario where we fundraised more than \$2.2 million for our local chapter. I sought out opportunities to help whether big or small. When some part of me wanted to close the door to hide away from life, I opened the door instead and invited life—my friends, my community to come in. I realized that in doing

this work it was I that was being truly helped. My depression lifted as I received great joy and satisfaction from helping others.

Many people will face a significant health scare in their senior years. For some it will be cancer, as it was for me. For others it may be a major heart or lung disease, and for others still, perhaps dementia. When faced with a health challenge,

I urge you to surround yourself with people who care. Allow yourself to go through the stages of anger, fear and grief – passing through those stages is necessary.

I hope you will then find the strength to find whatever helps your spirit to recover. Joy and hope will return into your life when you make good things happen, when you engage with your community and give a helping hand where it is needed.

I will close with a message of faith, hope, charity and love from Zarathushtra:

**"Happiness comes to those who bring happiness to others."**

**Dr. Dhun Noria**, the Chief of Lab Medicine at The Scarborough Hospital. She obtained her fellowship in Anatomic Pathology from the U of Toronto and Health Care Organization and Management Certificate from the Canadian Medical Association. She is the Founder and Chair of Shared Hospital Lab, a model of collaboration of microbiology services for North York General, Toronto East General and Scarborough Hospitals crossing three LHIN boundaries. She currently serves on the Toronto Police Services Board, and is Trustee on the Board of University Health Network UHN, (Toronto General, Princess Margaret, Toronto Western and Toronto Rehab Hospitals) Dr. Noria is the Chair of UHN's Quality Committee, as well as Trustee at Yee Hong Centre of Geriatric Care.

Dr. Noria is a Member of the Order of Ontario, and recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, OMA Presidential Award for Outstanding Services by a Physician to the Community and Life Time Achievement Award from The Scarborough Hospital. In recognition of her medial and philanthropic achievements, the City of Scarborough honored Dr. Noria with a Star on the Scarborough Walk of Fame. She received The RBC (Royal Bank of Canada) top 25 Canadian Immigrants Award. In 2015.

Compliments of  
Dr. Dhun Noria &  
Mr. Zubin Noria

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## Two Words to Challenge You: What IF?

ANNE ELIZABETH DENNY

**W***hat if?* If you are like most adults, these two simple words have and will from time to time trigger either excitement or anxiety in your heart. Sometimes, even unconsciously, both positive and negative *what if* questions do shape your decision-making. For many people, a *what if* mindset is an undercurrent to life.

Many people approach life—at any age—without acknowledging the negative *what if* questions. Denial seems easier than being prepared.

Indeed, most people approach the end-of-life without considering *what if*.

- *What if* you couldn't speak for yourself in a medical emergency? Who should speak for you?
- *What if* treatment decisions were required on your behalf? Who would know your wishes?
- *What if* your family had to guess or argue treatment choices? Would the conflict rip them apart?



Preparing for future healthcare decisions will protect you and those you cherish from suffering painful conflict and confusion. These are some of the *what if* questions every adult needs to address now, while you are able, by writing a *meaningful* healthcare directive.

And here's a hint—it requires more than checking a few boxes on a boilerplate form. It requires an investment from the heart, written not only to make your preferences clear, but as important, to support your loved ones and decision-makers through the journey.

Writing a truly *meaningful* healthcare directive requires 3 steps.

### STEP #1 – DESCRIBE YOUR DETAILED TREATMENT PREFERENCES.

You've likely heard—or maybe even said —***"I don't want any heroic or extraordinary measures."*** Such broad phrases are not sufficient to truly guide your decision-makers. Be careful what you ask for.

Make your wishes clear by writing healthcare instructions that include:

- thoughtful treatment guidelines that set boundaries for your care
- statements of values and beliefs that should govern any decisions made on your behalf
- an explanation of your needs for physical (non-medical), emotional and spiritual care.

### STEP #2 – CHOOSE THE RIGHT DECISION-MAKERS, CALLED YOUR HEALTHCARE AGENTS.

Carefully consider who has the skills and strength of character to zealously serve as your proxy for your medical decisions if at some future time you are unable to speak for yourself. While you might instinctively choose your spouse or eldest child, he or she might not be prepared and equipped to honor your wishes in a crisis. Choose a primary healthcare agent, and have a second and even third agent as backup. Once you have chosen your decision-makers, be sure to legally empower your chosen agents by completing a healthcare power of attorney as part of your healthcare directive.

### STEP #3 – COMMUNICATE YOUR WISHES.

You can help your loved ones, chosen agents and healthcare providers to be prepared to honor your wishes



by ensuring they understand your preferences. Organize a family meeting to share your choices. Walk through your healthcare directive decisions, including your rationale. Loved ones are more likely to honor your choices if they can understand the “why.”

Also, be certain to schedule an appointment with your healthcare provider(s) to share your wishes. Offer a copy of your executed healthcare directives and ask that these critical documents be added to your medical record.

Finally, offer online access or paper copies of your documents to your healthcare agents.

*What if* medical decisions are ever required on your behalf? By following these 3 steps, you will have peace of mind in knowing your wishes will be honored; you will receive the care *you* desire. And importantly, your loved ones will experience less turmoil, guilt or remorse if faced with difficult choices through unanticipated circumstances.

That is one less *what if* to worry about!

**Anne Elizabeth Denny** is a Healthcare directives expert who educates, inspires and equips families to share meaningful conversations about future healthcare choices. Anne graduated from the University of Notre Dame and has served as a business consultant in the healthcare industry since 1995. Anne's professional and personal experiences inspired her to write her book *My Voice, My Choice: A Practical Guide to Writing a Meaningful Healthcare Directive*, create her blog, and develop her program *Healthcare Choices from the Heart*. Most of all, Anne loves to share motivational presentations to make future healthcare planning approachable for everyone. [AnneElizabethDenny.com](http://AnneElizabethDenny.com)



## FINANCIAL OPTIONS FOR CANADIAN SENIORS... EH !

**TEHEMTON MIRZA**  
M.COM, CPA., CMA., CFP



Canadian seniors of today, in general, are blessed with better health, mobility and longevity than their parents. Well thought out and planned financial options are essential to enjoy these blessings.

Let us examine the financial options available to Canadian seniors. Government of Canada has set up various programs to aid seniors in their senior years.

### CANADA PENSION PLAN

As a Canadian senior, you are entitled to Canada Pension Plan (CPP) benefits if you have contributed to it during your working life through payroll deductions and you are 60 years of age or older. Benefit amount depends on the amount of your contribution to the plan and the age you start to collect it. Benefits are taxable in the year received.

### OLD AGE SECURITY BENEFIT (OAS)

OAS is available to Canadian citizens or legal residents who are 65 or older and have lived in Canada

for at least 10 years. Benefit amount depends on years lived in Canada. You are eligible to receive maximum OAS if you have lived in Canada for at least 40 years after age 18. Benefits are subject to clawback for high income earning seniors (15% clawback for income over \$ 73,756 for 2016)

Low income seniors who are receiving OAS are entitled to a **Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)** to top up their income for a comfortable retirement.

Government programs are very helpful to a lot of seniors, but today's seniors need significantly more to afford their active lifestyle. Some Canadians have the benefit of their employer pension plan but most have to provide for their own retirement. Most Canadians have stepped up to this challenge and have indeed provided for their own financial security for their golden years.

## REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVING PLAN (RRSP)

Throughout your working life, each February everyone said it; the TV anchor on CBC, the local newspaper article, your CPA, your bank teller and even your own know-everything brother-in-law that you should contribute to your **Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSP)** to reduce your upcoming income tax bill and save for your retirement. Each year your annual income tax assessment gives you your contribution limit for the following year. Having followed their advice, you should have a sizable amount in your RRSP account at your disposal on your retirement.

If you retire early, you may consider an early RRSP withdrawal to meet your financial obligations and to enjoy your early retirement. If your income from other sources is modest during your early retirement years, you may consider early RRSP withdrawals. Though you will pay taxes on these early withdrawals, the process will use up your low marginal tax rate and preserve your future entitlements to other government benefits like Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement. Once you are 65 or older, first \$ 2,000 of your RRIF withdrawal qualifies for an eligible pension credit; so you may consider **converting a portion of you RRSP into a RRIF** to generate this \$2,000 of potentially low tax (in some cases tax free) RRIF withdrawal.

At your discretion, you can withdraw your RRSP at any time (and pay taxes on the amount you withdraw during the year), but you are not required to withdraw it until the year you turn 72. By the last day of December in the year you turn 71, you need either to *cash out your RRSP* (not a good idea as it is fully taxable in the year you withdraw it), *purchase an annuity* from an insurance company (not very attractive in today's low interest rate environment) or *convert it into a Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF)* (*most favoured option*).

## REGISTERED RETIREMENT INCOME FUND (RRIF)

Though there is no *maximum* withdrawal limit from RRIF, the federal government dictates *minimum*

withdrawal from your RRIF based on your or your spouse's age and the value of your RRIF each year. The older you get, the more you are required to withdraw. You may choose to withdraw frequently during the year or one withdrawal during the year as long as you withdraw the minimum required amount. Keep in mind that all these withdrawals are taxable in the year withdrawn.

## TAX-FREE SAVINGS ACCOUNT (TFSA)

You can keep your money (within limits) in a *Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA)*. Though contributions to a TFSA are not tax deductible for income tax purposes, any amount contributed and any income earned in the account (interest, dividends or capital gains) are tax free, even when it is withdrawn.

## BE PREPARED FOR THE INEVITABLE TAP ON YOUR SHOULDER

Be prepared of the day you get a tap on your shoulder to say that the party is over. Life's two certainties (death and taxes) go together, so Estate Planning is a prudent process. **A power of attorney (living will)** and **a will** is a good start. Make sure you appoint a competent **Executor (Estate Trustee)** and give clear instructions on your wishes for the balance of your estate (bequeaths or donations to charities or community associations, foundation for special projects or distribution to your children, family and friends).

You can simplify your affairs, reduce cost and speed up distribution of your assets at death by naming beneficiaries for your company pension plans, life insurance, TFSA, RRSPs and RRIFs. You need to name beneficiaries to each of these plans individually. All your assets are deemed disposed (considered sold for tax purposes) at death and your RRSPs and RRIFs are considered cashed and hence subject to income taxes. You can defer these taxes if the assets are left to a surviving spouse. Remember to take these final taxes into consideration in your asset distribution in your will.

***Life is too short. Plan it, Finance it and most importantly..... Enjoy it.***

**Ervad Tehemton Mirza** operates a CPA practice in London, Ontario, Canada, providing tax and business advisory services to small and medium business. He is also a Certified Financial Planner and provides Executor and Estate Administration services. As a Mobed, he volunteers religious services to Zoroastrians in South Western Ontario and Michigan. His is the Vice-President of North American Mobeds Council.

# 10 TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL RETIREMENT

FAROKH BILLIMORIA, MBA, CPA/PFS, CFP®, RICP®



**K**eeping your fingers crossed and hoping things will work out is not a viable retirement strategy. It is due to this strategy that such a large percentage of people aged 65 cannot afford to retire. They either have to keep working (if they have a choice), or be dependent on the government, their family, or their friends. Here are 10 tips that might help you avoid becoming a statistic during your golden years.

## 1. ACT NOW!

Time is money. The earlier in your life you decide to save, the more time there is for your money to grow. For example, if you started investing \$500 per month at age 30, at an annual rate of 6%, your investment would grow to \$712,355 at age 65. But, if you waited till age 40 to do so, your investment would have grown to only \$346,497. In other words, your nest-egg would have been more than double if you had just started earlier. **Regardless of when you start, it is imperative that you do start.** In the example above, if the person had started saving at age 50, the investment would have grown to only \$145,409 but that's still better than nothing, right?

## 2. PAY YOURSELF FIRST

Many people decide that they will save and invest whatever money is left at the end of the month. That is never a good idea. If you do so, you will probably find that there is too much month left at the end of the money. You will be much better off if, as soon as you get paid, you set aside a certain percentage of your take-home pay for your savings/investments and then tailor your expenses to fit the balance. **And, if you are a two-income family, try to make do with only one paycheck and invest the other.**

## 3. AVOID CREDIT CARD DEBT

The people that *migrated* to this country grew up in their old country with the philosophy “*If you can't afford it, don't buy it.*” Not so their American counterparts or their own children. With the proliferation of credit cards, many people get into serious financial trouble buying things they don't really need with money they don't really have, running up huge credit card balances hoping that their future income will be enough to pay off those card bills. When making payments on this debt eats up a significant portion of your take-home pay, you know you are in serious trouble. Avoid this vicious circle by never letting the debt get out of hand. **Use credit cards as a convenience, not as a lending machine.**

## 4. CONSIDER IMPACT OF INFLATION AND TAXES

A dollar today will not be worth a dollar in the future. You have to consider what inflation will do to your purchasing power. The nest-egg you have built up for your retirement may look adequate today (age 65) but that nest-egg could lose purchasing power the longer you live. At an annual inflation rate of 4%, your monthly expenses would be double what they are today in 18 years (age 83). Similarly, you also have to take into account, the impact of income taxes on your nest egg. Your tax-deferred retirement account (e.g. 401k, IRA) could easily lose 25%-50% after taxes. These tax-deferred accounts could be worth substantially less than what you think.



**If your investments/savings cannot at least match the rate of inflation and your income tax rate, you know you are losing purchasing power.** You need to take corrective action before it is too late.

## 5. MAINTAIN INVESTMENT DISCIPLINE

Being overly conservative could be just as bad as, and sometimes worse than, being overly aggressive. Once you have determined your risk tolerance and investment objectives, decide on a well-diversified asset allocation plan that allows you to sleep at night, and then stick to it. Chasing performance, market timing, investing in pie-in-the-sky ventures, etc. seldom work out and more often than not, lead to rude awakenings. ***Fear and/or greed should not drive your investment decisions.*** Dollar Cost Averaging is a good strategy that can be effectively utilized to prevent these emotions from dictating your investment decisions.

By the same token there are some people who will never invest in anything they consider even remotely risky (e.g. stock market). Investing in fixed-income vehicles may look safe, but you could very well lose purchasing power. While being overly aggressive offers at least some possibility of gain, ***being ultra-conservative when you are younger is never a winning strategy.***

## 6. REDUCE/ELIMINATE YOUR VULNERABILITIES

Consider the impact of your death or disability on your family. How would you be able to handle the loss of income from the premature death of the main bread-winner? With people living longer and longer, a nursing home stay is a distinct possibility. Nursing home stays usually do not last more than 4 years but it can easily cost \$100,000 per year or more. Long-term care insurance, life, health and disability insurance should all be considered as part of your overall risk management plan. ***Most people cannot afford to “self-insure” and insurance is the only option.***

## 7. KEEP SCORE

Do you know what your Net Worth is? If not, you should. It's the difference in the value of what you own and what you owe and measures your financial health. ***Your Net Worth should be constantly growing during your “accumulation” (pre-retirement) years.*** If it is not, you need to determine why and then take corrective action.

## 8. AVOID ACTING ON “CONVENTIONAL” WISDOM.

People have a tendency to take the easy way out by taking things they read about or that have worked for other people, and blindly apply it to their own situation. Some examples of pre-conceived ideas:

- 30-year mortgages are not a good idea because you pay too much in interest. Or, always pay off your mortgage as fast as possible. ***In fact, a long-term mortgage will allow you to make your payments in the future with cheaper dollars (due to inflation) and, if used wisely, you can use the bank's money to grow your own net worth.***
- Roth IRAs are not a good idea because you should not ever pay income taxes unless you absolutely need to. ***In fact, Roth IRAs allow you to grow your nest-egg tax-free.*** For example, if you pay \$25,000 (25%) on a conversion of \$100,000 and that \$100,000 grows to \$250,000 in the future, you have essentially paid taxes at 10%. ***And, you do not have to ever worry about Required Minimum Distributions at age 70½.***
- Annuities are never a good investment. ***In fact, these vehicles are a great way to reduce the income shortfall, if any, during retirement by guaranteeing income that can last a lifetime for***

both spouses.

## 9. KEEP YOUR ESTATE IN ORDER

After your time on earth, it's time to dispose of your assets. As such, you need wills and/or trusts that specify your wishes. Pay attention also to having a Living Will and Powers of Attorney. ***Thinking these through and implementing them will help your beneficiaries implement your wishes and avoid family conflicts.***

## 10. SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

False pride (ego), inability to delegate, and reluctance to pay fees are probably the biggest reasons why people are reluctant to seek out professional help. If you are interested in working with a professional, visit the Financial Planning Association website (***FPANet.Org***) for referrals in your area. ***In addition to names, the site will even provide you with a list of questions you need to ask before selecting one.***

With these tips, you have been given the keys to financial security at retirement. But, for your sake and your family's sake, you have to act on them, and you have to act now.

Farokh Billimoria and his son Eric runs an investment advisory firm, WealthCare Advisors, LLC in Schaumburg, IL and Sugar Land, TX. He has 33 years of experience in personal finance consulting and is the author of "On Golden Pond...or Up the Creek? Making the Right Choices for your Retirement Security." He can be reached at ***Billimoria@att.net***

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# TIME TO EAT RIGHT SOME FOODS CAN BE AS GOOD AS MEDICINES

NILOUFER MAVALVALA

**T**wo thousand years ago, Hippocrates said **“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.”** The current renaissance of ancient cuisines has unearthed a cornucopia of spices, fruits and nuts beneficial to health. Cinnamon from Indonesia, cloves and peppercorns from the Caribbean Islands, saffron from Iran and Spain, garlic from China, India and USA, chillies from Mexico and the world over, all play an integral part in keeping our bodies pumped with the right antioxidants and help build our immune systems.



Fresh Turmeric and Garlic

## SPICES

The oldest spices are **Turmeric** and **Ginger**. A part of the same family tree, these two roots have been in existence as a healing spice since the beginning of medicine (i.e. Siddha Medicine in India). In spite of being known to mankind since time immemorial, it is only recently that North America has included it as an integral part of the healing process; and finally voted it as the spice of the year in 2015.

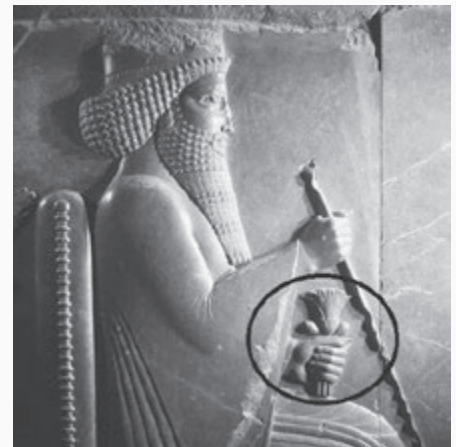
A natural anti-inflammatory, turmeric pills are recently being suggested to people with a strong history of cancer. However in the sub-continent Turmeric is revered as a *cure all*, specially after an accident. It is used to stop bleeding, prevent blood clots, even given to babies after a fall

to avoid bruising. Fresh ginger is commonly used in tea to help cure a persistent cough. It is also a natural digestive and helps in dry-mouth syndromes by activating the saliva glands. It is packed with Vitamin B's and some essential minerals.

## FRUITS

**Lemon** has properties that cleanse our organs and help balance the alkaline in our body. It is the only citrus that is not acidic. It also works well in cooking as it enhances flavours if there is less salt or sugar and cuts the spice levels if needed.

**The Pomegranate**, one of the oldest fruits known to mankind is good in all forms; it helps cleanse our blood. It is an antioxidant and helps prevent cancer cell growth. It is also high in minerals that build our bone mass and prevent us from feeling low. On a personal note, it helped me through my morning sickness during pregnancy. While all berries are nutritious, **blueberries** are perfect for older folk to keep their cognitive systems functioning smoothly. It is also the best fruit for diabetics as it keeps their blood sugar levels balanced for longer periods of time having a high Glycemic Index (GI). It has an abundance of Vitamin K and Manganese great for soothing aches and pains. Adding two handfuls to your morning bowl of porridge, cereal or pancakes is the simplest form of including it to our daily diet. **Photo above Bas relief at Takht-e-Jamshid, of Achemenid Monarch, Darius the Great holding the pomagranate flower, which is full of anti-oxidants that protect cells from aging related damage. Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org and <http://www.persepolis.nu/>**



## VEGETABLES

**MUSHROOMS** have a high Vitamin D content. This particular vitamin is vital to our wellbeing. Unfortunately not enough awareness has been raised until recently on the importance of checking the levels of Vitamin D in ourselves.

Statistics show that 40 % of the population has lower than normal Vitamin D in their blood stream which can be the root cause of many diseases. The most potent of all mushrooms is the **Maitake** mushroom.

**BRUSSEL SPROUTS** like most green vegetables has a health benefit of most essential vitamins and minerals with a high potency of Vitamin K and C, however this is only when they are not overcooked!

Brussel sprouts are also an excellent source of fibre, and are known to remove toxins from the body and help to prevent certain forms of cancer.

**CARROTS** originated in the areas of Ancient Persia; what is modern day Iran and Afghanistan, history takes us back 1100 years ago to this root vegetable. Continuous studies link the beta carotene found in carrots to help prevent colon cancer and reducing cardiovascular disease.

Carrots come in a variety of colours like deep purple, yellow, deep and light orange and almost red. The darker the carrot the healthier the carrot is.

## NUTS

Nuts are an important part of our diet and abundantly used in most ancient cuisines. They are a healthy source of nourishment when eaten in small quantity on a daily basis. Walnuts keep our brain sharp. The walnut represents the human brain when dissected. A coincidence, I think not.

**PISTACHIOS** (photo right) are full of minerals and vitamins. They have high amounts of copper and iron as well as some manganese, potassium, calcium, magnesium, zinc, and selenium all necessary for our continued good health.

Very high in Vitamin E it is good for a glowing and healthy skin. The Vitamin B and B-complex which is also present raises our energy levels. The folic acid in the pistachio nut is a positive advantage to pregnant women.

**ALMONDS** have always been known to keep our minds sharp. It is common for elders in our community to eat 7 almonds a day to keep young. It is now well known that eating almonds helps

our bodies with fibre, protein, minerals and vitamins. Almonds are available in many forms besides whole. It is available powdered, sliced or slivered, skinned or blanched, as oil, butter and even as milk. Recently naturopaths all over the world are recommending almond milk as a healthier alternate to ordinary milk.



FOLLOW NILOUFER MAVALVALA ON HER BLOG [WWW.Nilouferskitchen.com](http://WWW.Nilouferskitchen.com)  
<https://www.facebook.com/NiloufersKitchen>



## RECIPE FOR A BLUEBERRY COBBLER

Serves 8 to 10

Preheat the oven to 175C /350 F. Keep an oven proof deep dish, with a capacity of approximately 1.5 litres or 6 cups of liquid aside for the pudding to be baked in.

### INGREDIENTS

#### For The FILLING

1 tbsp salted butter

260gm/9 oz fresh blueberries

454 gm/1 lb hard apples; granny smith or any other

½ cup soft brown sugar

250gm/8oz soft cream cheese, mascarpone or any other

Heat in a skillet, the butter and add the sugar until it melts and bubbles. Add the peeled sliced apples and caramelise them lightly. Remove from the fire and add the blueberries. Give them a good mix. Tip it all into the baking dish. Whip the cream cheese with a spoon until smooth. Spoon it in large dollops all over the fruit. Keep aside.

#### For the cobbler

95gm/3oz salted butter chilled

1 ½ cup sifted plain flour

1 tsp baking powder

1/2tsp salt

¼ cup brown sugar

Zest of one fresh lemon

½ cup full cream milk

In a bowl sieve the flour, baking powder, salt, sugar and lemon zest. Rub the butter into it until it resembles crumbs. Make a well in the center and add the milk. Mix it into a soft ball of dough.

Break this into 8 to 10 pieces, top it all over the dish. Bake in a preheated oven of 175C /350F for 30 minutes until it is golden brown and the dough is cooked through.

Let it rest for 10 minutes and serve.

### Tips

If blueberries are not available, you may substitute them with blackberries or even raspberries. Goose berries and cherries may also be an option of choice. Add an extra tbsp. of sugar if the fruit is extra tart.

Frozen packets of berries are often available.

Use any hard apple in season. If you prefer to leave the peel of the apples on, simply wash them well.

While brown sugar is healthier, caster sugar may also be used.

Use your favourite cream cheese.

You can serve this pudding with Vanilla Ice cream or double cream if you desire.



ENJOY

# AGING GRACEFULLY IN NORTH AMERICA

RITA JAMSHED KAPADIA

So many pleasures await you - there is a certain joy to retiring in North America. One of them is of course the joy of eating good food with activities that keep the body and spirit well-nourished for example Travel, Gardening and Exercise.

Good food is made of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients. Some of them are:

- **Vitamin A (a.k.a. pre-formed Retinol; Beta-Carotene)**

**What is it good for?** Promotes growth and repair of body tissue, healthy eyes, good night vision and a strong immune system.

**Where do you get it:** Liver and fish oils, whole and fortified milk and eggs, carrots, sweet potatoes, spinach and other leafy green veggies, yellow squash, peaches and apricots provide Beta and other carotenes.

**Watch out:** Vitamin A can be toxic in large doses, and when taken during pregnancy can cause birth defects. Your body stores excess vitamin A so don't exceed the RDA.

- **Vitamin B-1 (a.k.a. Thiamine)**

**What is it good for?:** Helps convert food into energy, nerve functions, growth and muscle tone.

**Where do you get it:** Wheat germ, pork, whole and enriched grains, dried beans, seeds, and nuts.

- **Vitamin B-2 (a.k.a. Riboflavin)**

**What is it good for?:** Releases energy, keeps red blood cells healthy, makes hormones.

**Where do you get it:** Dairy products, meats, poultry, whole and enriched grains, and green vegetables such as broccoli, turnip greens, asparagus, and spinach.

**Tidbit:** High doses of B-2 may help prevent migraine headaches.

- **Vitamin B-3 (a.k.a. Niacin)**

**What is it good for?:** Releases energy, important for a healthy digestive system, blood circulation, nerve function, appetite.

**Where do you get it:** Poultry, fish, whole and enriched grains, dried beans, and peas.



- **Vitamin B-5 (a.k.a Pantothenic Acid)**

**What is it good for?** Converts food into energy, necessary to make important hormones, vitamin D, and red blood cells.

**Where do you get it:** Found in almost all foods.

**Vitamin B-6 (a.k.a Pyridoxine)**

**What is it good for?** Helps convert food into energy, keeps red blood cells healthy, makes antibodies, maintains nerve function, enhances the immune system, helps prevent heart disease.

**Where do you get it:** Poultry, fish, pork, eggs, and whole grains.

**Tidbit:** Small doses of B-6 may help alleviate morning sickness. Check with your doctor.

**Watch Out:** B-6 in high doses can cause balance difficulties, nerve injury.

- **Vitamin B-12 (a.k.a Cobalamin)**

**What is it good for?:** Releases energy from food, keeps red blood cells healthy, helps maintain the nervous system, boosts the immune system, helps prevent heart disease.

**Where do you get it:** Dairy products, lean beef, fish, poultry and eggs.

- **Vitamin D**

**What is it good for?** Calcium and phosphorus metabolism, aids bone growth and integrity, promotes strong teeth.

**Where do you get it:** Fortified milk, egg yolks and fatty fish, like herring, kipper and mackerel.

- **Vitamin E**

**What is it good for:?** Antioxidant powers protect cell membranes, essential for red blood cells, aids cellular respiration and protects lung tissue from pollution.

**Where do you get it:** Vegetable oils, wheat germ, green leafy vegetables, seeds, nuts, seafood, apples, carrots and celery.

- **Proanthocyanidins.** These are powerful antioxidants that promote urinary tract health.

**Where do you get them:** Cranberries. (Recipe: Cranberry Apple Sauce )

You will find the complete list on Rita's website at <http://www.ParsiCuisine.com/?p=4639>

<https://www.facebook.com/parsicuisine>



**Rita Jamshed Kapadia**  
**Author and Founder – Parsi Cuisine**  
[www.ParsiCuisine.com](http://www.ParsiCuisine.com)

## PICKLED CRANBERRY APPLE SAUCE

The sweet and tart flavors go well with Roast Turkey/Chicken, Gravy, Mashed Potatoes and Stuffing.

**Make the pickled cranberries a week in advance.**

### Ingredients:

#### For the pickled cranberries:

- 1 cup fresh Cranberries
- 1 cup white Vinegar
- 1/2 cup salt
- Combine Cranberries, White Vinegar and salt in a glass bottle.
- Cover and pickle for a week.



#### For the sauce:

- 14 oz Jellied Cranberry Sauce Canned
- 1 cup chopped Apples
  - 1/2 cup Sugar (or use sugar substitute if diabetic)

### Method:

In a non-stick pan add the Pickled Cranberries and chopped Apples, Sugar and Jellied Cranberry sauce.

1. Boil for about 15 minutes or till thick.
2. Serve hot.



**Enjoy!** Perhaps you will add this to your bucket list of good food,

*Rita Kapadia is the founder of ParsiCuisine.com and since 1999 has provided recipes, food news, health tips and articles on this website. She has published several Parsi Cuisine cookbooks.*



*Thanks Giving*

(DEENAZ COACHBUILDER)

Thank you for the gift  
of the mourning dove's  
plaintive salutation of dawn  
that seeps through my window,  
the world's symphony transformed  
into arias of winged souls,  
splash of tumbling water,  
a goods train's rumbling clatter.

For many years  
I did not hear its song.

I had a cherished dog whose golden eyes  
spoke to me of ancient stories.  
He meets me in my dreams.

Flinging my arms around  
an ancient California redwood  
I learned to hear its heartbeat.  
I have lost and loved and lied and learned,  
have harvested and burned.  
You gave me a lasting love  
a lover with whom to grow.

Mine is a mind that finds no rest  
a spirit that strives towards  
space and quietude  
Mine the mistakes  
that return and those that escape,  
thank heavens, no ownership of just desserts!

Thank you for a grandson's  
damask cheek, curly hair  
his trusting fingers clinging to my hand  
the pure luck that is the gift  
of his toothy smile.

Thank you for the myriad words captured  
in Scheherazade's tales,  
poems that haunt  
that echo in the heart.

They spread like an invisible carpet  
across the miracle that is my life.

Thank you for the friends who stitch  
each fold of fading yesterdays  
into tomorrow's crystalline sunrise.

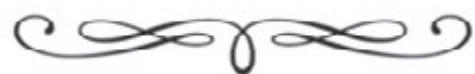
*Reflections*

(DINAZ ROGERS)

In the mirror I see  
a stubborn hold-out  
from an ancient past  
eager to broadcast  
that we are still here  
and hold dear  
a magnificent legacy  
of Ariyana Vaego  
Now Iran.

In the mirror I see  
a stubborn hold-out  
who did not sell out  
despite horrendous persecutions  
persuasive coercions  
bribes and threats  
tenaciously, we clung to our ways  
with no regrets  
nurtured by wisdom of the Gathas:  
Teachings of Zarathustra.

In the mirror I see  
a stubborn hold-out  
adherer of the basic tenet,  
the beautiful and simple ...  
to Think, to Speak, to Do  
as one should  
only good  
knowing and celebrating  
as Bearer of a legacy  
Unsurpassed  
To be proud  
No questions  
No doubt  
I see  
Us all in that mirror  
a richly woven tapestry,  
an ancient echo  
of a glorious past  
Blessed be ...  
Till eternity.



COMPILED BY RUSI SORABJI [rr@sorabji.org](mailto:rr@sorabji.org) Cover Design: The cover art for this issue "Aging Gracefully- Challenges and Opportunities" celebrates seniors in their many roles, as life partners, inter-generational relationships and engaged in self actualization endeavors. Three inter-connected circles depict Jehan and Freny Bagli, xxxxx gardening with her grandchildren and Rusi Sorabji towing his twin engine plane. The green motif and impression of leaves show that we are intrinsically connected, and that we immigrants are putting down roots and aging in North America.

In the 1940's, while bombs rained down and London burned, people took solace singing "There will be Blue Bells over the White Cliffs of Dover". For those of us transiting life's metallic ages (i.e. Diamond, Platinum), one young at heart 'oldie' with a dozen life threatening problems finds joy and solace in the lyrics to songs from 'somewhere in my youth and child hood'. These musical reminders from the past revive pleasant memories, help forget pain, have a soothing therapeutic value and as Julie Andrews sang, may even "throw a whirling Dervish out of whirl".

Tip: To hear them free, search on Youtube or Pandora applications or on the internet. Enjoy these with family members singing along: Smile, Eternally and This is my song (Charlie Chaplin); Those were the days; Young at Heart; Somewhere my love (Lara's theme); The sound of music; Somewhere (Barbara Streisand)' Take me to your heart again (La Vie en Rose); Wouldn't it be lovely; My Favorite Things; When you wish upon a star; You will never grow old (Nat King Cole); For lyrics email [nawaz@fezana.org](mailto:nawaz@fezana.org) or [rustam@sorabji.org](mailto:rustam@sorabji.org)

### THE WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER (Vera Lynn)

*Credits: Walter Kent, Nat Burton*

**CHORUS:** *There'll be bluebirds over  
The white cliffs of dover  
Tomorrow  
Just you wait and see*

I'll never forget the people I met  
Braving those angry skies  
I remember well as the shadows fell  
The light of hope in their eyes

And though I'm far away  
I still can hear them say  
Bombs up  
But when the dawn comes up

#### CHORUS

There'll be love and laughter  
And peace ever after  
Tomorrow when the world is free  
The shepherd will tend his sheep  
The valley will bloom again  
And Jimmy will go to sleep  
In his own little room again.

### SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW (Judy Garland)

*Credits: LYRIC MODE*

Somewhere over the rainbow way up high  
There's a land that I heard of  
once in a lullaby

Somewhere over the rainbow  
skies are blue  
And the dreams that you dare to dream really  
do come true

Someday I'll wish upon a star  
And wake up where the clouds are far  
Behind me

Where troubles melt like lemon drops  
Away above the chimney tops  
That's where you'll find me

Somewhere over the rainbow,  
bluebirds fly  
Birds fly over the rainbow.  
Why then, oh, why can't I?

If happy little bluebirds fly  
Beyond the rainbow.  
Why, oh, why can't I?

## WINNING ENTRIES OF THE YOUTH POEM AND ANECDOTE CONTEST

### REFLECTIONS ON AGING

#### Grandparents Day

I wake up today  
I look up and say  
Hey, its Grandparents Day!!  
I ask myself, hey what should I do today?  
I try to find a card, but is very hard  
None of the cards I find are just as fine  
So I decide to come up with mine  
I draw them a picture with all my heart  
It gives them a glimpse, of my mark  
I wish my grandparents the best on Grandparents Day

**SANAYA IRANI, Age 11, Harrisburg, PA ZAPANJ**



#### WHEN I AM 65

With age, comes wisdom.  
With time, comes age.  
When that time comes,  
I hope I still have my ribcage.  
Instead of dentures,  
I want my own teeth.  
But,  
What if I can't feel my feet?  
If my muscles tire,  
And I sleep all the time.  
I hope I can have,  
An earlier bedtime.  
Though my meals may be,  
Delivered to me daily.  
I still want to be,  
Up on my feet.  
Will I have to wear grandma glasses,  
If I cannot see anyone who passes?  
I hope that when I'm 65,  
That I will  
Possibly,  
Hopefully,  
Still be alive.

**CARINA DARUWALA (Age 13, CT)**





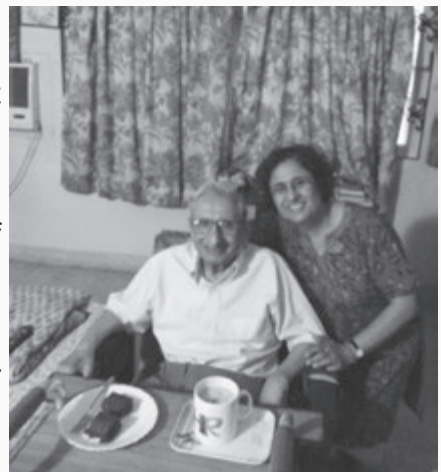
### SLEEPOVERS WITH BAPAIJI AND BAPAWAJI

Bapaiji and Bapawaji open the door with welcoming smiles and kindly allow my sister and me in. Their house is full of Indian stuff and delicious smells. We have chicken, dhal, egg, sunflower seeds, potatoes, fruits and ice cream. I eat everything. After dinner, we put on our "nightdresses" as Bapaiji calls them. Then, we brush our teeth and Bapaiji reads my sister stories while I do workbooks. She tucks my sister into bed and comes over to do prayers with me. Then, Bapawaji says good night and Bapaiji tucks me in and turns out the light.

**RASHNI KATKI, Age 8 Maryland**

As I think about my dear parents after having just visited my Dad in India, I am reminded of the legacy of values that they have left me with. These values include perseverance, working hard and playing hard, being honest even when it was not convenient; enjoying family, friends and nature; taking care of dear ones and also the community and world at large; treating everyone with respect; having faith and hoping for the best even in times of adversity. I hope I am passing these on to my son!

When I feel stressed or struggling, it is always nice to remind myself of my Mum sitting on the verandah sipping a cup of coffee with her friends after they were all done with their cooking, or my Dad tinkering with the speakers and amps of his gramophone player with his friend and then enjoying beautiful music, and both of them laughing and talking with us, their children, as well as other dear ones. May I always hold on to these memories



*Shiraz Tata is a psychotherapist living in Illinois with her family. She visits her father in India each summer and partners with her sister to care for him.*

### Over the Summer, the FEZANA JOURNAL held a YOUTH CONTEST

to encourage youth under 16 to submit their original poems and anecdotes.. This was announced in the Fezana Bulletin and topics were related to grandparents or to age.

These are the winning entries

First Prize Best Poem: Carina Daruwala (Age 13)

Second Prize Best Poem : Sanaya Irani (Age 11 )

First Prize Best Anecdote : Rashni Katki (Age 8)

Each of them was awarded \$25.

## DIALOGUE WITH THE PAST

JANGOO MISTRY

It is said that “History Hides in Plain Sight”. History teaches us who we are, where we have come from and often by deduction, where we’re going. The history of a community is a unique, valuable treasure worthy of preservation for posterity. There are innumerable oral history projects all over the world that have been undertaken whenever there is a need to preserve something valuable before memories fade and life stories are lost forever. For example, the Holocaust Memorial Museum’s oral history collection is one of the largest and most diverse resources for Holocaust testimonies in the world.

Oral history is the first hand recounting of memories by living people about events or social conditions which they experienced in their earlier lives, taped and preserved as historical evidence.

As a first-generation diaspora, uprooted and settled into a vastly different culture, the stories of our lives are worth capturing. We all have stories to tell, stories we have lived from the inside out. So in 2014, the Library Committee of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) launched the ambitious Oral History Project that recorded and preserved the rich backgrounds and experiences of our fellow Zoroastrians in Houston. A little over 30 seniors were interviewed, who shared their life experiences and recollections of personal, religious, and historic events, as well as their daily lives dating back to early years in their homeland, and as immigrants to the U.S.



Author with wife Anoo and her parents Jerbanoo and Peshotan Bhadha interviewed for the Houston Oral History Project

Fascinating stories emerged, sometimes funny but always enlightening and uplifting. Recalling glimpses from their past, interviewees narrated their life in their home country, the struggles in their early years in America, and the successes in later life. Recently, ZAH presented a captivating session that was organized to showcase the progress of this Oral History



ZAH oral history group visit to Rice university where their audio archives are stored

## Oral Histories & Life Stories

project. Over 100 people came to our Zarathushti Cultural and Heritage Center to listen to snippets of the most interesting recordings and presentations of stories (sometimes surprising, and sometimes shocking) of their fellow ZAH members. Among others, Nano Daroowala took the audience on a trip down his memory lane by recalling his funny and enlightening life experiences based on a book he has written. Merwan Boyce recalled glimpses from his early days when he came to the U.S. at 18 as a student, and went on to become a Professor of Engineering, a successful entrepreneur, wrote 8 books, and was one of the early founders of ZAH.

Every interview was recorded and has been transcribed and catalogued into the new digital Zoroastrian Archive at Rice University. This means that anyone, anywhere in the world, can now access every Zoroastrian oral history either as an audio recording or as a written transcript. These interviews are preserved as historical documents and will be accessible to researchers, historians and others for generations to come. Thanks to the wonder of Google, just typing in the name of any community member who was interviewed followed by Rice University will find the actual interview for you (for example: Homi Erani Rice University). Or, more simply, you can just search on "Zoroastrian Community Interviews" and the entire list of people whose oral history is recorded will show up, and you can click on any name to read or hear the oral history.

In Houston, my wife Anoo and I interviewed her father, Peshotan Bhadha, at 97, just less than 6 months before he passed away. What is incredible is that even though he was my father-in-law for 43 years, and even though he lived with us for the last 15 years, there were things in his amazing life story that we just did not know about. Things that were revealed to us only when we sat down to do the recording for this oral history project.

Now, my grandchildren, who are Peshotan's great grandchildren, will someday learn about their ancestor and feel grateful, and have a sense of pride in their heritage.

Collecting oral histories has given us a sense of catching and holding something valuable from the receding tide of the past. We have made just a modest beginning. There is a crying need to extend this project to other Zoroastrian Associations and communities. Most of us who emigrated in the 60s, 70s, or even 80s are now over 60 or 70 years old. Many are over 80. Time is running short. There is justifiable anxiety, that panicky realization that this treasure house of valuable information is slipping away from us at every moment. Historians have finally recognized that the everyday memories of everyday people, not just the rich and famous, have historical importance. If we do not collect and preserve those memories and those stories, then one day they will disappear forever.

The New York Times in an amazing study: "*The Stories that Bind Us*" showed how knowledge of a family's history made families more resilient. Overwhelmingly, the more children knew about their family's history, the stronger their sense of control over their lives, the higher their self-esteem, and the better their emotional health and happiness.

ZAH is planning to continue interviewing many more community members as we launch the second phase of this important project. We are ready and willing to share our learning experience with any organization that is interested in undertaking this important project. Just contact Aban Rustomji ([aban@coatingindustries.com](mailto:aban@coatingindustries.com)) for help and guidance.

Your grandchildren and great grandchildren will someday learn about you, their ancestor, about your real-life struggles, your sacrifices and achievements, and feel grateful and proud. This is what the power of Oral Histories is. It is not a pretentious egotistical exercise. Each one of us has changed the course of history. By uprooting ourselves and having the courage to start a new life halfway around the world, we have changed the course of future for our children and grandchildren. As such, we should be proud to document our lives for posterity. We welcome other FEZANA Associations to join us in this pioneering effort.

**Jangoo Mistry** worked at Ford Motor Company in Detroit for 32 years, and is now living in Houston. He is a member of the ZAH Library Committee, the FIRES subcommittee of FEZANA, and on the Board of WZCC's Houston Chapter.



## Saga of Two Treks to the *Promised Land*

DINAZ KUTAR ROGERS

Trek: To walk usually for a long distance; to go on a long and often difficult journey.

Merriam- Webster Dictionary

*"Of all the needs which drive us - hunger, thirst, desire -- perhaps the most powerful is the simple need to be free." – "From Outer Limits". Season 3, Episode 7*

About four years ago at our Jamshedi Navroze Parsi Party in Portland (Oregon), standing near the spectacular display of the *Haft Seen* table, Nuvana Zarthoshtimanesh (our hostess, fluent in Persian and Gujarati) mentioned, "My grandfather walked all the way from Iran to India." That sparked my interest, and I wondered if more of these stories could be gathered from our community seniors? In turn, Fariborz Rahnamoon (Ed. of IRAN ZAMIN) responded with his fascinating family story.

How many such tales are still to be told among the generations of Irani-Zoroastrians of Bombay and those in our modern-day Diaspora in US, Canada, etc.? *How can we capture and honor their unbelievable experiences of courage and determination before these generations die out?*

Steven Spielberg initiated The Shoah Project (recorded/filmed personal accounts of holocaust survivors) some twenty years ago, as he felt time was running out. So should we. In 2007, a trio (Dinyar Patel, Hormuzd Katki and Nawaz Merchant) organized Zarathusti youth to conduct over forty interviews with seniors, described in the Oral History Project issue of the Journal. (FJ Fall 2007. The Oral History Project pgs. 38-80). Presently ZAH in Houston is undertaking a similar project to preserve and share the voices of our beloved seniors and their stories.

One of the favorite stories among the Parsis is the "Milk and Sugar" story, about the arrival of their Irani Zoroastrian ancestors on Indian soil, and the sea voyage they took to flee Iran many centuries ago. Later on there were many such departures by sea, air and by land. The land routes, so frequently taken to reach India by many of India's invaders (who came to plunder the country of its fabulous riches and to spread their religion), were also taken by some Zoroastrians fleeing poverty and persecution in Iran.



Later on in the early twentieth century -- because of appalling living conditions in Iran -- many Zarathoshtis decided to leave Iran for their *Promised Land* – India! In spite of all the dangers, these brave Zarathoshtis dared!

Beginning with the conquest around 649 CE. of Zoroastrian Iran, by the armies of Islamic Arabia, Zoroastrians in that country were subjected to persecution. Here are a few hardships they endured:

- Forced conversions with massacres of those who resisted
- Confiscation of property belonging to Zoroastrian families to be given to the Arabs and to those who had converted to Islam (without concern for the rights of the legitimate heirs)
- Heavy taxation of property acquired by Zoroastrians for the benefit of the *Mullahs* (Muslim clergy)
- Prohibition against building new homes or repairing old ones
- Prohibition against wearing new or white coats
- Prohibition against riding horses, only donkeys were permitted

- Extra taxation on Zoroastrian traders, in addition to government tariffs
- Murder of a Zoroastrians by Muslims went unpunished [no Muslim would be killed for killing a *kafir* (infidel)]
- Zoroastrian sanctuaries such as fire temples and *dokhmas* were often vandalized
- The dreaded Jizyah tax

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### THE STORY OF KHODARAM KHANI

Even in the 1900s, conditions in Iran for most Zoroastrians were awful. Poor medical care or a lack thereof caused many women to die during childbirth. Khodaram Khani was born on February 13, 1928, in Yazd. His mother, who suffered from cancer, had an open wound and was unable to nurse her baby. Other new mothers became his wet nurses and that was

and little rain each year.

One evening, when he was twelve or thirteen and reciting his prayers, his father who was very old, came home late and died of a heart attack right in front of him. If life were harsh, it became worse during and after WWII. There was a shortage of everything, especially food (only black bread was available). This spurred Khodaram's decision to leave Iran for India with other Zarathoshti families when he was only seventeen.

Although the exact route is unknown, it would be easy to guess that starting from Yazd, they passed through Kerman. In Zahadan they found a trustworthy Baluchi guide, who took them into the province of Baluchistan. Could they have passed through Quetta, where there was a small community of Parsis and other Zoroastrians? [See [FEZANA Journal](#), Summer 2003 p. 108]



how his life began – overcoming obstacles with good people coming to his aid. Due to severe malnutrition, he was unable to walk till he was almost seven. His father was a farmer, and they lived in a mud home mixed with hay; chunks of this, were placed on top of each other with the bottom row being the widest and the top reduced in thickness. They called these walls, the Elephant Leg, which prevented the heat and cold from coming in. The ceiling was made with mud and hay bricks which were dried in the sun and laid in the form of a dome. They were very strong and would last for hundreds of years if taken care of after the rare

Khodaram would always mention to his family that the Baluchis were good to them, kept them alive, and gave them food and dried dates -- one date per person -- every day. The Baluchis also gave them flour and the travelers would make small round balls with a few drops of precious water and cook them over whatever fire they could make; they were brown and half- cooked. He distinctly remembered the flour bundled in a large piece of cloth. Later, to stretch their flour ration they would mix a little desert sand in it. This harsh diet -- not fit for human consumption -- affected Khodaram's health throughout his life and

left him in chronic pain. In spite of this he worked all his life, and never complained except once in a while he would tell his family with much sadness, "You have a good life!"

They traversed the harsh desert and high mountains with great difficulty. He was haunted by visions of members of his group dying along the way, especially the little children from malnutrition and overexposure. When they entered Pakistan everyone had severe stomach pains, as more sand was mixed in to extend the flour. Everyone walked and the donkeys carried their food and water. When I asked if they were attacked by robbers, his youngest Bombay-born daughter Shahnaz, (my chief source of this narrative) replied, "They had nothing worth robbing!"

In Pakistan (might have been Karachi, with a large Parsi population) their guide introduced these weary trekkers to another guide who helped them with train tickets, which must have been a Godsend to the exhausted travelers.

This incredible journey of at least 1,500 miles took them roughly twenty-five days.

In Bombay, Khodaram got a job at a cousin's restaurant. At night, he stayed in the backroom of the restaurant and washed and dried his meager wardrobe. He worked hard, and later got a contract job making sandwiches and fruit drinks at *Harding Cold Drinks House*, at Ballard Pier. After nine years he returned to Iran, got married, stayed there for a year or two, and then returned to India. After eight years, he called for his wife and children. His daughters Ghaver (now in Bombay) and Zarin (now in Australia) were born in Iran, and the youngest Shahnaz, in Bombay.

Khodaram was a very hard-working man and donated money to Parsi General Hospital (Bombay) and other needy organizations. When he was hospitalized after a heart attack, he asked to be placed in the General Ward with others and not in a private room. He would say, "Remove *one coat sleeve, and let someone else have it, as you can live on just one sleeve. No need to have both.*"

Khodaram passed away in 2005 in Tehran at the home of his daughter Shahnaz (now in Houston, Texas).

*Khodaram Khani, in spite of all the obstacles thrown your way, you overcame them and triumphed! Yours was a life well-lived and richly rewarded by the Grace of Ahura Mazda ... you are not gone -- as you live on in your children, your grandchildren and your great-grandchildren -- and now the rest of us are enriched by your enduring legacy.*

*Forever Rest in Peace.*

## UNTOLD STORIES

### FARIBORZ RAHNAMOON

In 1854 when Maneckji Limji Hataria went to Iran on official duty representing the British Government, he expressed his desire to meet his co-religionists; that led him to Yazd, where he found them in very dire conditions. These Zarathushtis had to pay the dreaded Jaziyeh (infidel tax) to the Muslim rulers to be able to keep their religion. They were not allowed to go to school and were even forbidden to learn to read and write at home. They were not employed nor allowed to trade in anything that was wet (like the fruits and vegetables that they cultivated in the desert), for they were considered untouchables (Najest) under Sharia law.



As customers in the market, they were not allowed to touch any product, and if by mistake they happened to touch it, they had to buy it. They were not allowed to wear new clothing and were forced to tear it and put a patch over it. Their houses had to be lower in height than the houses of Muslims. The door of their homes had to be a single piece door, one side hinged to the wall, and the other locked into the wall. Double doors with a lock in the center were reserved for Muslims.

Zarathushtis were not allowed to ride on a donkey in the presence of a Muslim. When it rained, they were forbidden to come out in the streets, for being untouchables they would pollute the water and



as a consequence -- the entire street.

On seeing their abject conditions, Maneckji decided to bring about changes and immediately started to work towards them. He conducted a census and found only 7,711 Zarathushtis were left in the entire country, and in spite of the odds, openly professed their religion. On his return to India, he met with the leaders of the Parsi community, collected funds, and with the help of the British Government managed to meet with the King of Iran. He negotiated to pay the Jaziyeh, every year directly to the king on behalf of the Zarathushtis. Thereafter, Maneckji funded schools in every village and slowly their conditions started to improve.

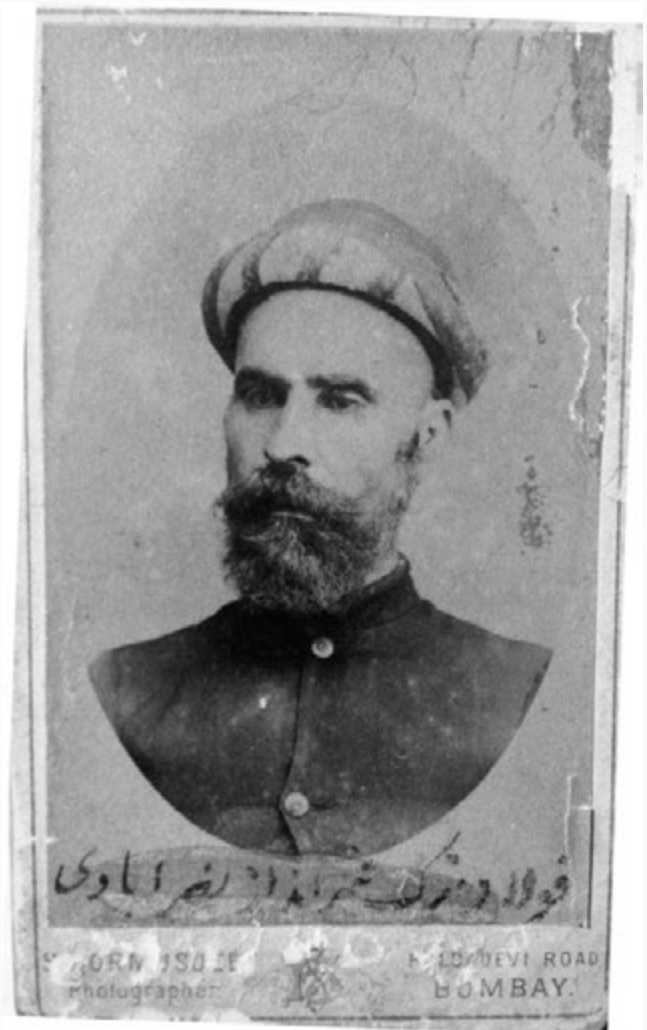
With the lifting of the Jaziyeh many Iranian Zarathushtis had peace of mind and dared to travel to India in search of work. Among them were my maternal great-grandfather **Poulad e Tork e Tirandaz e Nasrabadi** and my grandfather **Mehraban e Poulade Tork e Tirandaz e Nasrabadi**<sup>1</sup>. Mehraban is said to have travelled over a dozen times to India, initially to Karachi and then mostly to Bombay. He travelled by road on the back of donkeys and camels and later by train to India. The roads were infested with dacoits who attacked him. He was brave and daring; he did not run away and instead managed to make friends with them. They noticed he was wearing his Sadreh and Kushti and learned that he was a Zarathushti; for some reason thereafter, they respected him and he would bring gifts for them from India on his way back. In later years when he did not travel, he would give letters of indemnity with his seal to Zarathushti friends and the dacoits would give them safe passage.

In Bombay, he earned a reputation among his fellow Iranians as an arbitrator of disputes among them. Once while trying to settle a dispute among the parties, he banged his fist on the marble table to make a point and broke the thick marble into two. Thereafter he was nicknamed "Mehraban e Table e Sang", Poulad means "Steel" and now he had earned the title of "Stone". Unlike many that settled in Bombay, he would establish a restaurant and make his money by selling the restaurant. He would take the money and go back to Yazd. Once he had spent the money, he would journey back to make more. **Aspandiar, my mother's mama (maternal uncle)** who had married a Parsi and manufactured envelopes in Tardeo always said, "If Mehraban had kept for himself one Anna

share<sup>2</sup> in all the restaurants that he had established he would be a very rich man." Mehraban Poulad was restlessly active and could not see himself, sitting behind the counter running a restaurant.

In those days, tea was unknown to the Indian palate. The British had started tea plantations in India in the 1920s, so owners of Irani Restaurants would stand by the doorway in full public view and sip at an empty cup and shake their head in appreciation of the drink, enough to create enthusiasm among the passersby who would venture in, to begin their addiction to tea.

Due to Mehraban's constant travel, his wife had moved from the village of Nasrabad to the village of Mariamabad to be close to her parents. In contrast, their son Khodadad did not venture beyond his village, he managed a few farms and orchards. He became a much-respected teacher at the local Zarathushti School teaching both Zarathushti and



## (END NOTES)

1 Before the reign of Reza Shah the Iranians did not have surname and were known by the name of their father's lineage.

2 Partnership Shares in those days were not in percentage. One Rupee, which had 16 Annas, would indicate the share of each partner. So four Annas was 25 percent and one Anna 6.25 percent.

3 A Muslim neighbour had become very sick; he could not speak, could not eat, and doctors were unable to figure out his ailment. They had tried everything and failed, when someone suggested that they should ask Ustah Khodadad to recite prayers from the Avesta for him. Khodadad had heard that he had become sick in the orchard, so they carried him to the same orchard. There Khodadad lit a fire, put rue seeds and *loban* (incense) in it and started to pray. Halfway through the prayers, there was smoke all around -- a snake jumped out of a hole and rushed past the sick man who could hardly sit straight. The sick man seeing the snake gave a loud cry jumped up and fell a few feet away.

They carried him home and he started getting better. Later, after the recovery, he said that a year ago he had come upon a snake hole in his orchard, which he tried to destroy; two snakes jumped at him from the hole and that scared him to death. Thus, the second shock had put him back on his feet. The news had spread and Khodadad became famous. Every Wednesday and Friday there was a line of Muslims asking him to pray "Tan Dorosti" for their sick family members. He never charged them for his prayers and many of them would bring him fruits and vegetables from their farms when available. That was a dramatic change -- from once being regarded as untouchables!

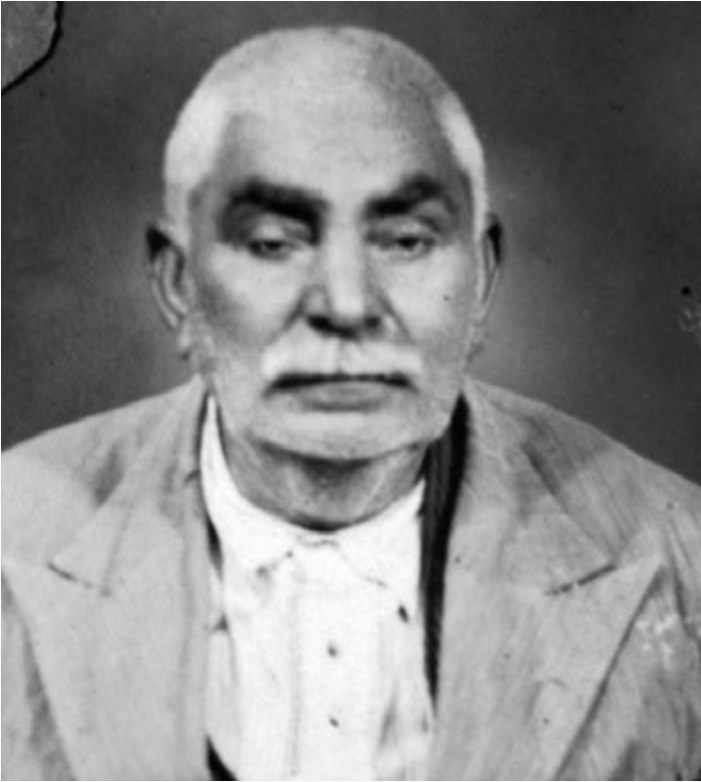
***Live today, not yesterday, not tomorrow.***

***Just today***

***Inhabit your moments***

***Do not rent them out to tomorrow***

***Jerry Spinelli  
Author***



Muslim students. He was also a self-taught bone setter, and a *para* Mobed performing ceremonies in the absence of a Mobed. Even Muslims would come and ask him to pray "*Tan Dorosti*" for their sick family members. The reason: he had once cured a sick Muslim who had been written off by the doctors, by praying the Avesta to him<sup>3</sup>. ***Mehraban's daughter Homayun***, my mother, moved to Bombay when I was four to live with my dad Mehraban e Ardeshir e Rostam e Rashid, who had settled in Bombay. Mehraban Poulad did not travel anymore and died at a ripe old age in Mariamabad, Yazd. He was consigned to the Dakmeh in Yazd, which was still operational at that time.

### **PHOTO PAGE 70**

***Poulad e Tork e Tirandaz e Nasrabadi***

*This photo was taken by S Hormousjee a photographer at Kalbadevi, Bombay: one of the first photographers established in 1840*

### **PHOTO ABOVE**

***Mehraban e Poulad e Tork e Tirandaz e Nasrabadi***  
*photo between 1890 and 1900*



## مهرگان خجسته باد

روز مهر و ماه مهر و جشن فرخ مهرگان      مهر بیفزای ای نگار ماه چهر مهربان

یشت دهم که پس از فروردین یشت بلند ترین یشت است و یژه ایزد مهر میباشد که به ۳۵ پاره بخش شده است. مهر یشت یاد آور دوران باستانی فرهنگ پارسی است. مهر یشت در بنیاد افراد (تبلیغ) راستی و دلیری به بهدینان است. مهر یشت گویای کارنامه راستگویی و پهلوانی ایرانیان است که در گذشته پیش از گسترش فرهنگ دژمنش تازی در سر زمین بر تر خدا ایران در زمینه این فروزه ها پر آوازه و سرفراز بودند. در مهر یشت آمده است که ایزد مهر آیین به نبرد ابزار راستی، درستی و دلیری پشتیبان سربازان و سرداران راستگو و دلیر است. در این یشت به بهدینان اندرز داده میشود که در پیمان و سوگند استوار باشند و ارج و بزرگداشت پیمان برای هر بهدینی بایسته و شایسته است. ایزد مهر راستگویان را به زیور دلیری، دارایی، خوشی، سرفرازی و نام نیک میآراید و در میدان نبرد زندگی پیروزمندان میکند همانگونه که پیروان دروغ را سیاه روز و سیاه بخت مینماید.

ایزد مهر نگهبان گاه هاون از سپیده دم تا نیمروز است و گل بنفشه به نامگانه این ایزد است. در فرهنگ افسانه ای در بندهش آمده است که مشی و مشیانه که نخستین مرد و زن آفریده شده اهورامزدا در فرهنگ پارسی هستند در چنین روزی به جهان آمدند. در گذشته دور جشن مهرگان را متراکنا که واژه اوستایی میتر است مینامیدند به آرش جشنی که از آن مهر است. جشن مهرگان در مهر روز از مهر ماه آغاز شده و در رام روز از مهر ماه پایان مییابد و روزهای سروش، رشن، فروردین و ورهرا را نیز در بر میگردد. ابوریحان بیرونی میگوید خورشید که همان مهر است در این روز پدید آمد. از اینرو پادشاهان ایران در این روز تاجی خورشید گونه بر سر مینهادند و بار همگانی میدادند. کتزیاس کارنامه نویس یونانی میگوید که پادشاهان هخامنشی به جز در جشن مهرگان می نمینوشتند و در این روز پادشاه به پایکوبی میرداخت. در گذشته نیاکان ما به هنگام فرا رسیدن مهرگان همانند جشن هزاره ها نوروز پیروز خانه تکانی کرده، همگان به گرمابه رفته و تن را پاک مینمودند و با اندیشه نیک پندار را نیز آرایش میکردند و پس از پوشیدن رخت و پوشاک نو و پاک بر سر سفره مهرگان نشسته و از سوی بزرگ خانواده به هنگام چرخش هاونگاه (پیش از نیمروز) به رپتونگاه (نیمروز) مهر یشت خوانده میشد و سپس خانواده، دوستان و خویشان به یکدیگر شاد باش گفته و ارمغان میدادند و پیمان دوستی و مهر نو میکردند.

از آنجا که زندگی مردمان در ایران باستان بیشتر از راه کشاورزی و دامپروری میگذشت، از اینرو مهرگان از دید دارایی و فرآیند مالی برای گذران زندگی نیز ارزشی نیکو داشت. زیرا با رسیدن مهرگان خرمها را برداشته، بره ها، گوساله ها، کره اسبان و خران و دام ها بزرگ شده و مردم میتوانستند در سایه کار و کوشش تابستان هفت ماهه نیازمندیهای زمستان پنج خود را اندوخته و سپس با اندیشه ای پرآسایش و آسوده جشن مهرگان را با شکوه و زیبایی برگزار میکردند و به پای کوبی و شادمانی میرداختند که هنوز نیز جشن خرمن که همان جشن مهرگان است در تمامی روستاهای کشورمان در میان روستاییان و کشاورزان با شکوه و یژه ای بر گزار میشود و دختران و پسران جوان در این روز با یکدیگر نامزد شده و به یاری ایزد مهر برنامه و سازمان یک زندگی شاد و سراسر خوشبخت را پایه گذاری میکنند.

در میان جشنهای باستانی ما، نوروز و مهرگان همواره پایگاهی بسیار برتر داشته تا آنجا که با کار شکنی های بسیار تازیان، مغولان و ازبکان این دو جشن هیچگاه از شکوه و درخشش نیافتاده و روز به روز بر ارج و بزرگداشت آن افزوده میشود.

در دوران پادشاهی هخامنشیان مهرگان را بسیار با شکوه جشن میگرفتند و ماه مهر ماه نیایش و ستایش اهورامزدا بود. در دوران اشکانیان نیز جشن مهرگان از ویژگی بسیار با شکوهی بر خوردار بود و به آن ارج فراوان مینهادند.

در دربار پادشاهان ساسانی بر گذاری جشن مهرگان آهنگ ویژه خود را داشت که بدون کم و کاست تا پیش از آئند تازیان به نیاخاکمان هر ساله بر گزار میشد. به اینگونه که پادشاه جامه ای ارغوانی میپوشید، تاجی خورشید گونه بر سر مینهاد و بامدادان پیش از بر آمدن آفتاب بر تخت خویش فرود میآمد. نخست مردی که او را بیک خجسته مینامیدند و از شب پیش بر در بارگاه پادشاهی به پرمویی (انتظار) نشسته بود، همزمان با بر آمدن خورشید بدون پروا و پروانه به دربار رفته و به تخت شاهی نزدیک و به دیدار پادشاه میرفت. شاه از او میپرسید تو کیستی؟ از کجا آمده ای؟ و چه همراه داری؟

بیک خجسته پاسخ میداد من پیروزی ام، از سوی دو فرخنده امرداد و خرداد میایم و بیک پیروزی میباشم. و پس از گزارش پیروزی ها و پیشرفته گیهای کشور و مردمی به سوی پادشاه رفته و نزدیک او جای میگرفت. سپس مردی دیگر بدرون میآمد و خوانچه ای میگستراند که در



ان نانهای کوچک گردی نهشته بود که از آرد هفت دانه گندم، جو، ارزن، زرت، مرجک (عدس)، برنج و لوبیا پخته شده بود. پس از آن خوانچه ای دیگر میامد که همانند سفره نوروزی میوه های گوناگون خشک و تر و شاخه های سبز گل، شکر، دانگ (سکه) نو و شاخه های گیاهی از بید و زیتون، به و انار، کاج و یا سرو در آن بود و بر این باور بودند که نگاه به آن شگون دارد و گرداگرد این خوانچه فرازهایی از فراز "روزی افزایش باد، شادی و پیروزی باد" نگاشته شده بود و آن مرد در حالیکه دست بر سفره داشت نیایش های ویژه ای برای پایداری کشور و به زیستی مردم میخواند. پس از آن بار همگانی بود که مردم گروه گروه به دربار میامدند و پس از گفتن شادباش مهرگان به پادشاه، مالیات سالانه را به خزانه میپرداختند که در دفتری ویژه نوشته میشد و اگر در درازای سال کسی با کمبود رو به رو میگشت از این خزانه برای گذران زندگی به او پرداخت میشد. شاه نیز در این روز به پاکاران (خدمتگزاران) کشور و مردم پوشاک نو تابستانی و زمستانی میبخشد. پس از گرد هم آیی همگانی به نیایش دانای بزرگ هستی بخش اهورامزدا میپرداختند و ایزد مهر را ستایش کرده و به یاری ایزد مهر از اهورامزدا خواستار سر بلندی کشور، آرامش، تندرستی، شادی، کامیابی، فرزندان خردمند، دلیر و نیرومند، خوبرو، روزی فراوان و زندگی دیر پایا میشدند. سپس آهنگ سازان، نواز شگران و رامشگران به ساز زنی و پایکوبی پرداخته و چکامه سرایان چکامه های ویژه مهر ایزد میسرودند و همگان به شادی و شادمانی میپرداختند. در گذشته بخشی از ورستاد های بایسته فرهنگی بود که در این روز فرخنده سرداری دلیر در سرای پادشاهان بانگ بر میآورد و فرشتگان را از آسمان به یاری کشور، پادشاه و مردم فرا میخواند تا شاه و کشور را در نبرد با اهریمن و دشمنان یاری کند. بهشتی روان خداوندگار زبان پارسی فرزند فرزند مام میهن ایران فردوسی توسی در هایش (تایید) این ورستاد میگوید

چه آذر گشمب و چه خرداد مهر      فروزان چه ناهید و بهرام و مهر

دهش به بی نوایان و تهی دستان از سوی توانگران به گونه ای که آنان کوچک به شمار نیایند در این روز از بایسته گیهای دینی پسندیده و ستایش آمیز است. همچنین یکی دیگر از ورستاد های زیبایی که در گذشته در وابستگی به این روز فرخنده از آن پیروی میشد، نامگذاری نوزادانی بود که در این روز زاده میشدند و نام آنان از پیشوند و یا پسوند مهر بهره میگرفت همانند مهراب، مهر آذر، ورتامهر، مهر اسپند، مهری، مهر آفرین، مهران، مهر داد، میترا، میتران و سد ها نامهای پر آرش و زیبایی مزدیسنی و پارسی دیگر.

نیاکان وارسته ما همانگونه که نوروز را یادگار گرانهای جمشید پیشدادی میدانند، مهرگان را نیز به فریدون پیشدادی وابسته میدانند. مادران و پدران باستانی ما بر این باور بودند که در این روز پر شگون فرشتگان و ایزد مهر به یاری کاوه آهنگر و فریدون پیشدادی آمدند و فریدون توانست به یاری کاوه آهنگر بر اژی دهاک مار دوش پیروز شده و در رام روز او را در کوه دماوند در بند کشید و به متم کاری هزار ساله او پایان داد و تاجگذاری کرد. بهشتی روان فردوسی توسی میگوید

به روز خجسته بر مهر ماه	بسر بر نهاد ان کیانی کلاه
بفرمود تا آتش افروختند	همه انبر و زفران سوختند
پرستیدن مهرگان دین اوست	تن آسایی و خوردن آیین اوست
کنون یادگار است از او ماه مهر	بکوش و برنج ایچ نممای چهر

از آنجا که هارون خلیفه عباسی تازی در هنایش تراوش های دژ منشانه فرهنگ تازی به زور با یک دختر ایرانی از بادغیس خوراسان بدون زناشویی همخواه شد از این آمیزش فرزندی زاده شد که او را مامون نام نهادند. گر چه مامون پسر بزرگ هارون بود ولی چون از مادر ایرانی زاده شده بود، هارون خلافت را به پسر کهنتر خود که از همسر تازی داشت نامزد کرد و به او داد و در باره مامون تنها به فرمانداری خوراسان بسنده کرد. ولی پس از مرگ هارون، مامون با لشگری از ایرانیان بر امین تاخت و او را گردن زد و خود خلیفه اسلام شد. در دوران ستم روایی تازیان به جز یک دوره کوتاه از دودمان عباسی در دوران مامون که مادرش یک ایرانی مزدیسنی بود اجازه بر گزاری جشنهای دینی و میهنی به ایرانیان داده نمیشد زیرا تازیان بر این باور بوده و هستند که این جشنها وابسته به بی دینان (کفار) است. پس از افند خانمانسوز تازیان تنها در دوران مامون عباسی بود که ایرانیان پروای پرداختن به آیین و ورستادهای خود را داشتند و هم در این زمان بود که موبد آذر فرنبغ فرزند فرخزاد که در سده سیم تازی میزیست و تبارش به موبد موبدان آذر پاد مهر اسپندان میرسید گرد آوری اوستا را آغاز کرده و به پایان رسانید. ولی از دوره صفاریان به انگیزه نا سازگاری صفاریان با خلیفه اسلام که خلفای عثمانی بودند برای همزوری و هم بستگی ایرانیان بر پاد خلفای عثمانی ناگزیر به ایرانیان پروای فراداد (تبلیغ) و بر گزاری جشنهای با شکوه و پر آرش مزدیسنی و پارسی کمر بسته و بر گزاران این جشنها از سوی فرمانروایان ایرانی و مردم بر انگيخته و ایزان (تشویق) میشدند. گر چه بسیاری از این ورستادهای با شکوه و پر آرش آیینی و فرهنگی ایرانیان به دست فراموشی افتاده بود ولی چندی از موبدان از جان گذشته با دشواریهای بسیار و پذیرش شکنجه های فراوان آنها را سینه به سینه در میان زردشتیان رد کرده و چنانچه میبینیم پس از دودمان ایران پرست پهلوی که در هزار سال گذشته

نخستین خاندان ایرانی بودند که بر تمام ایران پادشاهی کردند دوران زرین آیین مزدیسنی و فرهنگ پر بار آریایی آغاز شد و هم اکنون بیش از هر زمان دیگر پس از افند تازیان به نیا خاکمان ایران فروزه های گران سنگ و پر آرش آیین سپنتای زردشتی و فرهنگ پر بار پارسی روشنایی بخش هازمان (اجتماع) و چبیره (جامعه) ایرانی و آریایی و جهان گشته است

جشن مهرگان در میان ایرانیان راستین ریشه ارج و بزرگداشت بسیار ژرفی دارد، و ایرانیان رخدادهای تاریخی و کارنامه ای بسیاری را به این روز خجسته وابسته میدانند که از آن فراز است

۱- رویارویی کاوه آهنگر و آژی دهاک

۲- گرفتار شدن آژی دهاک به دست فریدون

۳- بر تخت نشستن فریدون پادشاه پیشدادی

۴- تاجگذاری ارشیر بابکان

۵- جشن خسروان یا تاج گزاری شاهان ساسانی

۶- جشن کشاورزان که با برداشت فرآورده های کشاورزی همراه است

۷- جشن آغاز زمستان

۸- جشن دوستی و پیمان

۹- جشن فرهنگی

۱۰- جشن درخت کاری

۱۱- جشن مردوشی دانشجویان دانشکده های افسری زمینی، هوایی، دریایی، ژاندارمری و شهربانی کشور شاهنشاهی ایران

گرچه در هنایش (تاثیر) کینه ورزیهای تازیان، مغولان و ازبکان، بسیاری از ورستادهای ما برای چندی فروغ و درخشش خود را از دست دادند، ولی از نوشته های کارنامه نویسان چنین بر میآید که با تمامی دژ منشی های تازیان، مغولان و ازبکان با فرهنگ و آیین مزدیسنی، هیچگاه نتوانستند از درخشش فروزان فروزه های این ورستادهای پر بار که به بهای سرهای بریده و زبانهای از گلو در آورده شده بسیاری از نیاکان سرافراز و میهن پرست ما از لایبای فراز و نشیب کارنامه تلخ و شیرین مام میهن به دست ما رسیده بکاهند

به هر روی جشنهای کهن که ویژگیهای استوار میهنی و آیینی برای ایرانیان دارد، در دست مایه گاهشماری مزدایی یا زردشتی هنجار شده و سامان یافته و در دوره های گوناگون از سوی بهدینان این تنها نگهداران راستین ورستادهای فرهنگ و آیین سپنتا، پرچسته و سرفراز نیاکان بهدینمان با پرداخت باجها و خراجها و پذیرش شکنجه های پیگیر از سوی بیگانگان آنها را نگه داشته و سینه به سینه به ما رسانده اند

جشن مهرگان یکی از نموده های برتر و ارزنده فرهنگ ایرانی است. مهر خرمی بخش زندگی، اندیشه و پیوند دلهاست و بهدینان نژاده بر این باورند که شادی در زندگی انگیزه تابش فروغ مهر در دلها میباشد. با نگرش به آرش گسترده مهر در آیین پاک زردشتی و فرهنگ پر بار ایرانی و نخشی که مهر در دوستی میان مردم و آرامش کشورهای جهان دارد. بر هر پارسی نژاده بایسته و شایسته است که جشن مهرگان را همانند نیاکان پر نازشمان گرامی داشته و فروزه های سپنتایش را به کار بندیم

باشد که فروغ مهر بر اندیشه، گفتار و کردار ما پرتو افکند و به یاری مهر ایزد بر اهریمن، دشمنی، کج اندیشی و بدسگالی چیره گردیم و جهان را تازه و نو سازیم و در سایه دست آوردهای ورستادهای برتر آریایی جهانی پیراسته و آراسته از نیکی ها و خوشی ها بهره همگان گردد و به زودی این جشن فرخنده را در کشور گرامی مان مام میهن سر زمین برتر و برگزیده خدا ایران برگزار نماییم

مهریانی کن به روز مهر و جشن مهرگان  
و ندر آن منگر که لاله نیست اندر بوستان

مهریانی کن به جشن مهرگان و روز مهر  
جام را چون لاله گردان از نبید باده رنگ  
مهرگان فرخنده باد  
ناخدا نریمان آریابان

فرست پونت آف اریز First point of Aries

سان دکلیشن Sun Declination

فرست پونت آف لیبرال First point of Liberal

Article in Farsi by Commander Nariman Aryaban

Part I appeared in FEZANA JOURNAL Summer 2016 Vol 30 No 2 pages 39-41

Synopsis in English by Armita Soroosh page 42



# In The News

## WZCC Central Florida Chapter Annual Gahambar Welcomed Over 160 Guests on Sunday, July 24, 2016



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3

**Picture 1: From left- Lily Golwala, Dolly Irani, JoAnn Dastur, Yasmine Irani, Molly Kermani**

**Picture 2: From left- Katy Kapadia, Arnawaz Irani, Delphina Bharucha, Adil Irani, Dilnawaz Irani**

**Picture 3: From left- Rustom Kermani, Adi Irani, Afsaan Kermani – President WZCC Florida Chapter, Ervad Soli Dastur**



It was a very special Gahambar gathering this year in Orlando. It was also the 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of Ervad Soli Dastur and his wife JoAnn. Soli and JoAnn have been the life of various Zarathushti celebrations for as many years as they have lived here.

As always, the Gahambar luncheon was preceded by a Satum Prayer, performed by “Soli Uncle” as he is lovingly addressed by the entire community. Guests from ZATAMBAY, Tampa and ZAF, Miami, joined in the celebration and Orlando even welcomed special guest Behram Pastakia from FEZANA, traveling from as far away as Washington, D.C.

There were speeches and games and a silent auction with special Zarathushti themed items offered, and a



# In The News

food stall with traditional pastries like bhakras, chicken cutlets, copra pak, etc, It was all topped off by the delicious lunch prepared and served on banana leaves, by Orlando's stalwart volunteers in true Gahambar spirit. The mouthwatering menu featured *Sali Murghi, Masala Dal-Chawal, Bhindi Pateta, accompanied by Sarya, Rotli, Gajar Meva nu Achaar*, followed by mouthwatering *Sev and Dahi*. And, a good time was had by all.

## FELICITATION TO ERVAD SOLI (AKA SOLI UNCLE) AND JOANN ON THEIR 50<sup>TH</sup> WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Dinyar Mehta, treasurer of the WZCC Central Florida, in his felicitations mentioned that Ervad Soli's dream of performing the Mukta prayers became a reality as the stage was set with marble table tops, afarganyus, khumchas and other necessary implements to honor our departed. He was always been available for nav-jotes, weddings, jashans, and paidasts (funerals) to keep the traditions alive for the community. Soli Uncle as he is affectionately called, played an instrumental role in editing and publishing the work of Dasturji Nowrooz D. Minocher-Homji which explains and interprets of the jashan prayers.

Dinyar complemented his lovely and devoted wife of 50 years JoAnn, who has been with him every step of the way to support and co-lead many initiatives to fulfill so many of his visions for the community.

Soli uncle and JoAnn, were presented a gold coin with love, affection and heartfelt thanks from the community on this very special occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary

**Happy, happy 50<sup>th</sup> to the young couple!**

***Atha jamyat, yatha afrinami!***



From left. Behram Pastakia - Publication Chair FEZANA, JoAnn Dastur, Ervad Soli Dastur, Dinyar Mehta, Treasurer WZCC Florida Chapter, with the FEZANA JOURNALS Ervad Soli guest edited, and the book *The Divine Songs of Zarathustra* by Dr Irach Taraporewala.

***Words are under your control until you speak them***

***But you are under their control once you have spoken them***

Anonymous

# In The News

## SMALL SHOVELS, BIG DREAMS



With their small shovels, the children dug into the Texas grass. On August 14, 2016, the Zoroastrian Association of Houston held the Ground Breaking Ceremony for an annex of the Zarathusthi Heritage and Cultural Center to be called the **Purvez Shiavax Rustomji Room**. The donation by Aban Rustomji will provide for a 1680 square foot state-of-the-art multi-media conference room and a 1000 square foot classroom for the middle school students



Aban Rustomji with daughter Nerina, son Arish and grandsons



The late Purvez Shiavax Rustomji

The ceremony began with the prayers of 13 mobeds and ended with the children's ceremonial digging with 12 silver shovels. While the ground was not easy to break, the children were undeterred as they enjoyed being an "active" part of the ceremony. But the children were not the only ones who dug. Even 88 year-old Nergish Sethna, a beloved member of the community who hosted the Rustomji family in 1979 when they emigrated from Pakistan to Houston, made her mark with a larger shovel.

ZAH President Aderbad Tamboli then thanked everyone and invited Aban Rustomji to address the group. She noted that the Zoroastrian community still had a mission to build and grow. Building a home for the community was a life-long passion of the late Purvez Rustomji who was instrumental in developing the Zoroastrian Heritage and Cultural Center in 1997 and in maintaining its facilities until his passing in 2010. After the ceremony and presentations was food - Dhan-dar, patio, sev, and mithu dhai! Construction will begin soon!

### NERINA RUSTOMJI

# In The News

## **ZAH Z-CAMP 2016 – EMPOWER, INNOVATE, LEAD!**

The Z-Camp 2016, hosted by Zoroastrian Association of Houston was held from July 29<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> with 69 kids from Houston, Austin, Boston, San Antonio, Dallas, New Mexico and South Africa (yes, South Africa) and was a tremendous success once again.

ZAH Z- Camp Group



### **INTRODUCTION**

There were 15 different sessions planned with 11 presenters besides other activities which included Zumba, culinary, creative innovations, engineering & sporting skills besides other interactive sessions like treasure hunt, Jashan on the run, etc.

At around 7.30 pm on a sultry Friday the first contingent from San Antonio, Boston and New Mexico had just landed and before we knew, there was some heated debate on whether to build a wall around the ZHCC center. The next to get in was our Dallas entourage at around 11 pm when most had finished their dinner, with some looking for TUMS and other digestive options.

The kids networked and talked for hours while some played various games. The adults as usual, were busy gulping the lagan-nu-custard, bataasas, phudina chai, etc. After some “leg-pulling” and incessant noise levels of boisterous laughs, all went to bed around 1 am.

### **Z-CAMP ACTIVITIES**

The breakfast (A-La-Akooorie) had just concluded on Saturday morning and our Center started to buzz around with kids. Once the registration activities concluded, we started with our customary prayers and announcements with the kids divided into 4 teams. The **Fire Flaming Farohars**, **Jungli Chatni Chadis**, **Bum Fatigayu** and **zorolives** matter started their rivalry in right earnest.

This year we learnt something interesting regarding the teams: each and every kid has some strength that the teams should explore and that they should never underestimate anyone however small or weak they seem. Although, having said that, our camp theme stresses empowerment, learning innovative skills, leadership and making new friends, rather than focusing on winning.

The Z-Camp kicked off with a Zumba routine which energized the kids. Then the campers were asked to come up with a presentation of how they would manage an event with a limited budget and the campers put on their thinking caps and got on with their planning activities.

Soon after a hearty lunch served via a Food Truck to give our campers a unique experience, the treasure



# In The News

hunt session began where the teams were seen running around for the concealed clues. Once the winners were announced, the career conversation session by WZCC, Houston Chapter began with speakers from diverse professions talking about their careers.

While these sessions were happening, our middle group kids were busy with “Benefits of Team Sports”. At the same time, the 5-10 age group kids were just enamored and in hyper active mode with their Jashan on the run and Mad Scientist sessions.

The much awaited ZAH Iron Chef session started right after the break where the campers showed off their culinary skills and in a matter of minutes some great dishes were ready.

After that, the campers were sent outdoors for some fascinating sporting activities and at the end were pretty exhausted with the sweltering heat taking its toll. This year we introduced “Camp dinner with kids” where parents experienced the camp activities at dinner. After dinner the campers had their last session and finally the lights went out at 2 am.

Sunday started with a healthy breakfast followed by a very interesting session on the concept of impossible engineering where the kids had to use their creative mind. While this was going on the kids under 10 were making some great models of an Agiary.



ZAH Z camp Volunteers

## WRAP-UP

Soon after lunch was served, our final session began with kids performing a short skit. As usual, our “**No soda no cell**” policy was enforced at the camp.

Each camper was charged a nominal fee of \$25 while other expenses were covered by our ever generous donors. The camp was a great success with all of us making great new friends, long lasting relationships and above all bringing the entire Community together. Finally, thank you to all the parents, volunteers, donors, presenters and our campers without whom this camp would not have been possible. See y'all in 2017!

Please view the full article in our Manashni Newsletter - August 2016 edition on our ZAH Website [http://zah.org/?page\\_id=8](http://zah.org/?page_id=8).

For Z-Camp photos please click here [http://zah.org/?page\\_id=30&album=20&gallery=38](http://zah.org/?page_id=30&album=20&gallery=38)

**Reported by Kayo Sidhwa**

# In The News

## *The Zoroastri community gathers to celebrate Nowruz in Melbourne, Australia.*

Who would have thought that one could get a comprehensive taste of Zoroastrian culture in one day, in Melbourne? Food, song and dance performances, a history documentary, a cultural exhibition and, possibly, the entire Zoroastrian community in Victoria, were all on offer at Kingston City Hall in Moorabbin!

*In photo right of mobeds from left to right: Ervads Armin Dumasia, Adil Antia, Keki Madan, Kaivan Antia, Fezan Antia*

The Zoroastrian Association of Victoria (ZAV) showcased all that it had to the Victorian community on Sunday 28 August, 2016. With close to 500 people in attendance, the community was proud to present and explain its ancient culture and religion that dates back some 3,500 years. *"We had a vision to showcase our community to Victoria and encourage the public to discover who we are, what we stand for and what place we take in history,"* said the President of ZAV, **Kazween Boiko**. Along with the ZAV committee, and the community at large, a fantastic and uplifting display was presented. The attendees were able to browse items in a mini-exhibition consisting of religious and cultural artefacts, traditional clothing, books, informative posters and



Dance Academy where traditional and modern routines were combined to entertain the crowd of all ages. A singer, saxophonist and dancer represented the Australian Persian Arts Centre and also presented eloquent traditional acts.

The documentary **'Zoroastrianism – An Enduring Legacy'** was shown and the Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Inga Peulich, noted it was "the best presentation" she had ever seen at any community group function that she had attended. Kazween Boiko mentioned *"Our community is going to hold more events in the future and continue to integrate with fellow Victorians in this wonderful multicultural society."*

Attendees were thrilled to learn about Zoroastrian culture and were impressed with the seven-course meal, *lagan nu patra* (traditional celebration feast served on a banana leaf) which included *dhanshak dal*, *tokri paneer*, *patra ni machi* and *sali margi*. Sarosh Khariwala, the resident Community Chef worked tirelessly prior to the event to prepare all the food with the help of the Parsiana Kitchen group from Perth. Zoroastrians are determined to keep their culture alive and make others aware of the fundamental role Zoroastrians have played in shaping modern civilization. The community appreciates the support it receives from government bodies and organizations and ZAV thanked Vasan Srinivasan



models, and ceremonial displays. (photo above) The local community, with the assistance from their relatives in India and Iran, sourced various items to provide visitors with a broad appreciation of Zoroastrian heritage. There were performances by the Shiamak Davar

# In The News

(Australian Multicultural Council Member), Mayor Tamsin Bearsley (City of Kingston) and Graham Watt (Victorian member for Burwood) for attending the event and meeting the community.

*This is an edited version of the original article first published in the Indian Link Melbourne Edition, September 2016 Paper (pg. 17). **Photographer: Sheroy Irani***



*From left to right: Tamsin Bearsley Mayor of Kingston Council. Kazween Boiko, President ZAV. Anhita Mirza, Khurshed Mirza, VP, ZAV, Honorable Inga Peulich Shadow multicultural minister of Victoria*

**Carl Buhariwala:** Studying law, has found great interest in issues to do with equity and sustainability. Having an inquisitive mind, he enjoys solving problems and contentious issues.



## WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE *BUILDING THE ZARATHUHSTI ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT* THE 2016 ANNUAL GLOBAL; MEETING HOSTED BY

The Incorporated Zoroastrian Charity Funds of  
Hong Kong, Canton and Macao  
December 16-18, 2016

Hong Kong, a bustling city is a founding member of World Trade Organization (WTO) and committed to free and open trade. Hong Kong has no tariff on imports and export of goods, Excellent venue for Zoroastrian Business.

Regal Hong Kong Hotel, centrally located has special rates with breakfast for this event.

Contact Spenta Travel and Tours Pvt Ltd for all travel arrangements including air tickets and pre and post AGM tours. Ms Viv Patel, Manager Operations Tel 022-22154919 Mobile +91-9819050040

e.mail [spentatours@gmail.com](mailto:spentatours@gmail.com) Website [www.spentatours.com](http://www.spentatours.com)

For any other assistance contact Ms Zarine Khan WZCC Central Administrative Office  
+91 22 23532522/ +91 9619165444 (Office hours 9.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. IST)



## COMPROMISE TO CONTENTMENT: LESSONS FROM SIX DECADES TOGETHER

*Ervad Jehan Bagli has been instrumental in organizing the Zarathushti community in North America. He was the founding President of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec (1968-1970). As president of the North American Mobed Council (2002-2008), he initiated the mobedyar program to train laity as auxiliary priests to meet the chronic shortage of priests. An internationally renowned scholar, he has written and lectured extensively about Zarathushti doctrine, raising our profile at inter-faith forums. He was the founding editor of North America's first Zarathushti publication, Gavashni (1974-1990) and of the FEZANA Journal (1988-1990). He and his wife Freny are celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this year so **Farishta Murzban Dinshaw** sat with them to chat about their life and learnings from a relationship that spans six decades.*

It was 1956 when Jehan Bagli, then twenty eight, returned to Mumbai for a short break from the



United States where he was doing his Post-Doctoral research at John Hopkins. Prior to his visit, his mother had told him of her conversation with an astrologer who had said that if Jehan does not marry a Zarathushti girl at this time, he will not marry one. When his cousin, Dhun, introduced him to his friend, Freny Marshall it seemed like destiny. Freny at that time had done her B.A. and B.T. in 1948 and 1951

respectively, from Bombay University and was joint Principal of The Imperial High School in Mumbai. After a whirlwind courtship of a couple of weeks, the couple were married on September 16, 1956 and four days later left for a short honeymoon in Paris, courtesy of Freny's uncle, and for their life together in the US. "We were not supposed to stay in the US forever. Jehan said, 'Five years maximum, then we'll return'."

The promised five years were tumultuous and changed the course of their lives. Their son, Darius, was born in



1958. The following year, Jehan was on his way to a postdoctoral fellowship at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology when a glitch in Jehan's visa saw him without a job and without legal status to remain in the US. Earlier, Jehan had turned down a fellowship offer from the National Research Council Canada. He phoned them to accept the job and within days the family was on a train to Montreal. Freny recalls, "We were worried because we did not have immigration papers,

# Personal Profiles

*but all we heard was 'welcome to Canada'. We have no regrets about moving to Canada. The Quebecois are lovely people."* Although they moved back to the US in 1983, when Jehan's employers Ayerst Research labs moved their operations to the United States, they returned to Canada in 2000 to settle in Toronto to be close to their son Darius and daughter Shiraz.

Jehan is quick to credit Freny for the sacrifices she made during the first years of their marriage. *"We were financially strapped because we were sending money home. I would come home for dinner and then go back to the lab till 11 pm. She was the nucleus for the harmony in our home, kept it going. She made sacrifices for what I wanted, and I saw that and then responded in the same way. Marriage is an evolution."*

Freny adds, *"You have to change for one another. Jehan was involved with his job and did not spend time with the children. There was a flare up and then he kept Sundays for the children."*

They agree that disagreements are a part of a relationship. *"Both of us are obstinate and things are said in heat, but you have a glass of water and things simmer down. You have to laugh it out."*

Freny inserts, *"You have to be honest with each other and try and understand the other's point of view. There has to be give and take, but you need to get satisfaction to your questions too."* Throughout the interview, both stress the importance of compromise.

The Baglis lost their young daughter Shiraz to ovarian cancer in 2004. Since then they live to celebrate her life as a tribute to their daughter's vitality and courage. Jehan says that their faith got them through the grief and loss. *"Spirituality has inherent strength. I always say that there are two components of strength – spiritual and physical. Spiritual strength props you up when you lack physical strength."*

When asked what advice they would give to young couples planning to marry, true to his calling, Jehan recommends Zarathushtra's counsel at his daughter's wedding for the bride and groom in Yasna 53.5 to excel each other in righteousness. [The complete verse is *"These words I speak to you, maidens and newlywed husbands, and hope you will bear them in your minds carefully. Understand them deep within your souls and live always full of love with pure mind. Try to surpass each other in truth and righteousness. Thus, each one of you shall, indeed, reap the reward of joy and happiness."* (Translation of Gathas the Holy Song of

Zarathustra, from Persian into English by Mobed Firouz Azargoshasb, March 1988, San Diego, California.)]

Freny's advice is more practical. ***"There are some things you can't talk about with a husband. You need a woman friend to talk to."***

To sum up a lesson from sixty years of marriage, Jehan says, ***"Happiness is fleeting, strive for contentment."*** \*\*

## Editor's note

**Jehan and Freny Bagli will be celebrated three very special events on September 16, 2016**

**Freny's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, Jehan's 89<sup>th</sup> birthday and their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary**

**Congratulations to this wonderful couple**

DOB Freny: September 7 1927

DOB Jehan September 25, 1928

***I do not dwell on my age  
It can limit what I can do***

***As long as I have  
my mind and my health,  
it is just a number***

***Nola Ochs (born 1911)  
World's oldest college graduate***

# M I L E S T O N E S

## BIRTHS

**Sam Katki**, a boy, to Megan Guenther and Hormuzd Katki, brother to Rashni (age 8), Aban (age 5), grandson to Freny and Aspandiar Katki and late Raymond and Judith Guenther in Maryland on December 22, 2015.

**Kamron Master**, a boy, to Mahazabeen and Ariz Master, brother to Nazneen, granddaughter to Viloo and Viraf Darukhanawalla and Mani and Rusi Master (Mumbai, India) in Chicago, IL on February 25, 2016.

**Ava Farokh Karani**, a girl, to Rashna and Farokh Karani, granddaughter to Zareen Karani and Alberto Araoz (Boston, MA) and Havovi and Cyrus Saiwalla (Mumbai, India) in Boston MA on April 12, 2016.

**Ameera Sidhwa**, a girl, to Persis and Burjis Sidhwa, sister to Arman, granddaughter to Bomi and Bachi Damkewala, and Maneck and Pervin Sidhwa (Houston, TX) in Naperville, IL on April 21, 2016.

**Aveesa Zohrabi**, a girl, to Abtin and Atoosa Zohrabi on April 30, 2016. (ZSO)

**Shailee Gump**, a girl, to Dilshad and Michael Gump, sister to Jolene, granddaughter to Zarine and Adil Balaporia and Sandy and Raymond Gump, niece to Rita Balaporia, Tanaz (Andrew) Walendziewicz, cousin to Aiden, Elijah on May 17, 2016 (ZA-CHI)

**Ava and Razine Davar Patel**, twin girl and boy, to Tamina Davar and Raj Patel, grandchildren to Pervin and Adi Davar (Falls Church, VA) and Lata and Ramesh Patel in London, England on June 1, 2016.

**Miles William**, a boy, to Farishte and Jamie Eriksen, granddaughter to Meher and Jal Panthaky (Mississauga, ONT) and

Nancy Newman and Ralph Eriksen on June 15, 2016. (ZSO)

**Zoe Ava**, a girl, to Anita and Mehrdad Irani, granddaughter to Ronny and Delbar Irani and Fredoon and Pervin Khory, great granddaughter to Sheroo Mistry on June 20, 2016. (ZSO)

**Zailyn Turner**, a girl, to Karina and Dr Zain Turner, granddaughter to Gulshan and Khushroo Tarapore (Toronto) and Mahnaz and Dr Yazdi Turner (Montreal) in Montreal, QUE on July 1, 2016. (ZSO)

**Shanaya Ullal**, a girl, to Rohena and Gautum Ullal, sister to Jayden and Raiyen, great granddaughter to Sheroo Eduljee, granddaughter to Annoo and Dara Elavia, Kripa and Suri Ullal, niece to Eric (Zinnia) and Kevin Elavia, Vishal and Shyam Ullal, cousin to Serena, Ethan, Priyanna and Devan on July 3, 2016. (ZA-CHI)

**Kriyan Adi Elavia**, a boy, to Tanushka and Teshtar Elavia (MA), grandson to Aspi and Roshan Elavia and Kersi and Yasmin Fraser on July 4, 2016.

**Nika**, a girl to Firoz and Soraya Tarapore, sister to Ava and Parasa, granddaughter to Silloo and Erach Tarapore on July 13, 2016 (ZANC)

**Shawn Desai**, a boy, to Diana and Svetang Desai, brother to Serena, grandson to Yasmin and Rustom Engineer, on July 26, 2016 (ZAH)

## NAVJOTES

**Ariana and Darian Pavri**, children of Anahita Deboo and Ervad Cavas Pavri, grandchildren of Yasmin and Shapur Pavri and Gulestan and Farrokh Deboo, niece and nephew of Shanaya Deboo in Haverford, PA on May 16 2016.

# Fall 2016

**Yasna Shahriarian**, daughter of Homa Dastani and Shahzad Shahriarian on June 5, 2016 (ZAPANJ)

**Ashdin and Yohan Hansotia**, in Mississauga, ONT on July 1, 2016

**Rashni Katki**, daughter of Megan Guenther and Hormazd Katki, granddaughter of Freny and Aspandiar Katki in Boyds, Maryland on July 2, 2016.

**Danika and Katy Surkari**, in Vaughan, ONT on July 17, 2016.

**Ava and Katy Daruwala**, children of Khushnaaz and Zubin Daruwala, grandchildren of Arnavaaz and Hoshi Daruwala (FL) and Maharukh and Brjan Irani in Naperville, IL on July 17, 2016.

**Naomi and Rayan Bhathena**, children of Parivash and Rustom Bhathena, grandchildren of Katy and Kersi Bhathena and Banoo and Homi Golwala (Toronto, ONT) in Brookfield, WI on July 22, 2016.

**Zehan Mirza Rogers**, son of Khurshid and Jeff Rogers (Colorado), grandson of Putli and Noshir Mirza (Melancthon, ONT) and Janet and John Rogers (MI) at Mirza Farm in Melancthon, ONT on July 23, 2016.

**Zara Kruse**, daughter of Khursheed Parakh and Joel Kruse, granddaughter of Silloo and Khurshed Parakh and Brenda and LeRoy Kruse in Plymouth, MN on July 30, 2016.

**Aiden and Ashton Sorabji**, children of Delna and Zahin Sorabji, grandchildren of Roshan and Jimmy Ghadiali (Montreal, QUE) and Parvez and Pervin Sorabji (Toronto, ONT) on July 31, 2016.

**Arman Sidhwa**, son of Shahroukh and Riah Sidhwa, brother of Jahan and Kashmira Sidhwa, grandson of late Bejan



# M I L E S T O N E S

and Dinoo Sidhwa and Nani and Roshen Wadia in Weehawken, NJ on August 6, 2016.

**Rayomand and Cyrus Patel**, children of Khushnuman and Pashang Patel. (ZAPANJ), grandchildren of Armaity and Framroze Patel in Downingtown, PA, on July 3, 2016.

## WEDDINGS

**Narius Dastur**, son of Kashmira and Khushrav Dastur and **Anahita Rustom** daughter of Mahrukh and Sarosh Rustom, in Pitt Meadows, B.C., on June 26, 2016.

**Roshni Kapadia**, daughter of Rita and Jamshed Kapadia to **Cyrus Hirjibehedin**, son of Pouruchishti and Farokh Hirjibehedin in Cape Cod, MA on July 10, 2016

**Behzad Shroff**, son of Sanobar & Rumi Shroff and **Katie Avari**, daughter of Kumi & Noshir Avari, in London, England, on July 15, 2016.

**Pervez Dastoor** son of Sarosh & Katy Dastoor and **Sana Fakh** daughter of Fouzia & Abdul Alim Fakh, in Richmond, B.C., on July 31, 2016.

**Kaiwan Mistry**, son of Behroze and Rumi Mistry and **Vera**, daughter of Tushnumaity and Jamshed Minwalla, in Langley, BC., on July 31, 2016.

**Deena Guzder**, daughter of Zenobia and Jal Guzder to **Peter Turner**, son of Julie and Jim Turner in New York on August 6, 2016.

**Capt. Eric Chavda** son of Aban Chavda and Harry Sadarangani to **Sheena Sharifzadeh**, daughter of Martha & Saeed, in Acworth, GA on August 20, 2016.

**Farhad Dastur** son of Nanu/ Zarine Dastur & Roxy/Karl Fichter and **Harleen Randhawa** daughter

of Satnam & Jagdish Randhawa, in Pitt Meadows, B.C., on August 21, 2016.

**Malcolm Dastur**, son of Persis & Farid Dastur and **Rama Badlani** daughter of Numrata & Harish Badlani, in Coquitlam, B.C., on, August 21, 2016.

**Dina Collector** daughter of Pearline and Sarosh Collector (Houston) and **Ian Michael Kuecker** son of Michael and (late) Terri Kuecker in Galveston, on September 4, 2016.

**Zareen Kasad** daughter of (Homai and Arvand kasad of Belmont) to **Danesh Irani**, son of Shahrukh and late Hooty Irani of Toronto, in Atherton, on Septemebr 10, 2016. (ZANC)

## DEATHS

**Dolat Jehangirji Cama**, 104, mother of Cawas (Nelly) Cama, Naval (Maharukh) Cama, grandmother of Tenaz Cama, Sherry (Steven) Blunt, Parizad (Anthony) Torres, Dilnavaz and Goolshan Cama, great grandmother of Mackenzie, Steven, Priya in Kingston, NY on December 12, 2015.

**Roshan Fali Porbunderwala**, mother of Kersi and Dolly Mehta, mother-in-law of Hormuz Mehta and Silloo, grandmother of Jamshed, Maneck, Porus, Ruzbeh, grandmother of Danesh, Tushar, Yasha on March 22, 2016 (ZAGNY)

**Parin Homi Munshi**, 87, wife of Homi Bhikhaji Munshi (Ahmedabad, India), mother of Rita (Jamshed) Kapadia (Carlisle, MA), Tehnaz (Edu) Bamji (Freehold, NJ), Vispi Munshi (Ahmedabad, India), Grandmother of Roshni (Cyrus) Hirjibehedin, Cherag Kapadia, Zarina & Spenta Bamji, and Setareh Munshi, in

# Fall 2016

Ahmedabad, India on May 25, 2016.

**Gulcher Jimmy Dorabjee**, mother of Xerxes and Vispi Dorabjee in Pune, India on June 8, 2016 (ZANC)

**Khorshed Khambatta**, mother of Zeenia Bhathena, mother-in-law of Rushad Bhathena, grandmother of Karl and Kareena Bhathena in Mumbai, India on June 30, 2016. (ZSO)

**Ardeshir Rostami**, brother of Parichehr Rostami, son of Irandokht Rostami in Skillman, NJ on July 4, 2016.

**Noshir Khudamard Irani**, brother of Shapur Irani (Indianapolis, IN) in Pune, India on July 9, 2016.

**Nergis Rumwalla (96)**, mother of Jehangir Chinoy, of San Jose, in Cupertino, on July 21, 2106. (ZANC)

**Aban Jamall**, wife of late Aziz Jamall, mother of Sascha Jamall, Shahpur Lamall, Feroze Jamall, Nyla Jamall, Lyla Jamall, sister of Vera Dastur, Goshi Masnata, Arnaz Marker, Mitzie Birdie, Happy Minwalla in Pakistan on July 17, 2016 (ZSO)

**Naoshir Ardeshir Vesuna, 92**, father of Sarosh (Nilufer) grandfather of Sam and Jamshed. on July 25, 2016 (ZANC)

**Alloo Shiavax Mehta**, sister of Rattanshaw Mehta on August 14, 2016 (ZSO)

**Daisy Katrak**, wife of Behram Katrak, mother of Meherzeen Daruwalla (ZAGNY), Darius, Carina in Mumbai, India on August 15, 2016.

**Azita Namiranian**, wife of Korosh Bastani, mother of 2 daughtres on August 16, 2016 in Houstn, TX

# MILESTONES

# Fall 2016

**Perin Engineer**, 91, wife of Fali Engineer, mother of Nina (Rustum) Challa, Jimmy (Shiraz) Engineer, Kersi (Thrity) Engineer, grandmother of Zeenia, Shahveer (Karie), Saroasha, Zubin, Zaran, Zarius, great grandmother of Nia and Zane, sister of Khurshed Chinoy (UK), Narges Kapadia (Australia), Hoshi Chinoy (Karachi, Pakistan) in Houston, TX on August 18, 2016.

**Pacy Khasru Divecha**, husband of Mani Divecha, father

of Darayus, Xerxes, and Nerius in Toronto, ONT on August 22, 2016.

**Dinshaw Kanga**, 80, husband of Armaity Kanga, father of Persius (Mary Jane), grandfather of Natalie, Nicole in Toronto, ONT on September 3, 2016. (ZSO)

**Freddy Lakdawala**, 84, husband of Sanobar. father of Cyrus (Nancy) Jimmy, Jasmine Greene (John) Grandfather of Nolan and Ivy Greene, Timothy, Lana Lkdawala, brother of Ness Lakdawala (Montreal); Kersi

(Mumbai) uncle of Khushroo Neville, Mehernosh, Aban, Leena Roxanne, Farad and Zubin in San Diego, on October 2, 2016.

**Rowena Irani**, 22, daughter of Toranj and Behram J Irani, sister of Rooshad and Afshan Irani, granddaughter of Mani Jehanbux Irani and Sunny B Khursigara, in Wichita, KS, on October 4, 2016.

## STATISTICS FOR 2014 - 2015 AS RECORDED IN THE FEZANA JOURNAL

BIRTHS	NAVJOTES	WEDDINGS	DEATHS
		Z INTERFAITH	
82	56	18 17	182



**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](mailto:RRRivetna@aol.com).**

**PLEASE SEND ALL SUBMISSIONS FOR MILESTONES TO  
MAHRUKH MOTAFRAM TEL 425-961-0298  
[MAHRUKHM83@GMAIL.COM](mailto:MAHRUKHM83@GMAIL.COM)**

## Matrimonials

**Female 37**, MBA, working as Human Resource Specialist with a leading bank in Interested in the outdoors, social work and music. Willing to settle abroad. Contact mother at [katydara@hotmail.com](mailto:katydara@hotmail.com), tel: 98 2139 2235. [F16-37].

**Female 29**, educated, working as a health care professional in USA. Please contact her at [girl.parsi@gmail.com](mailto:girl.parsi@gmail.com) for further details. [F16.42].

# Obituary

## Parin Jehangir Manecksha 1919 - 2016.

She was always a ravishing beauty. Parin Jehangir Manecksha, beloved wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, passed away peacefully on 22 July 2016 in Ipoh, Malaysia. At 96 years of age, my grandmother's is a life to celebrate and a story to be told.

From growing up in India to being an adventurous young bride and mother in Malaysia the experiences my grandmother has had we can only begin to imagine. She tragically lost her own mother at the tender age of two and was raised by her doting father, Erach M. Lafa. A devout Zoroastrian, my grandmother loved India and in her heart, it always remained home. Yet she used to tell me of her childhood dreams of experiencing life in lands far away. She met my grandfather, Jehangir, when she was just 19 years of age. He was visiting India from Malaysia in search of a bride. They met and from what I understand had quite a connection. She said he was handsome and wore a smart suit, and of course, was from the exotic Malaya! He courted her with long walks on the beach, where they would sit, chat and laugh together. She agreed to marry him and it was decided that they would be united on 16 December 1939.

After a honeymoon in Kashmir, the young couple moved to Taiping, Malaysia, my grandfather's family home. As exciting as it sounded to her, I know that leaving her family and home with a man she hardly knew, was not easy for my grandmother, especially after arriving and realizing that the traumas of World War 2 were occurring quite literally at her doorstep. They were married for 76 spectacular years. Their enduring love was always apparent and something we all aspired to have, and at the age of 105, my grandfather is now mourning the loss of his soulmate.

In their first year of marriage, their first born, Nelly Manecksha (now Doctor) my mother, came as a blessing. And in quick succession my four uncles followed. At that time, the Manecksha clan was the only Zoroastrian family in Malaysia. Granny and grandpa ensured their children were raised understanding the importance of a solid education and unwavering faith. Her children have all successfully progressed through life and in their own way, made their mark on our society as professionals, citizens, neighbors and friends. My grandmother's strength is something we all admired and learnt from.



Granny's gracious family life was also always felt. She loved nothing more than when we were all together, especially at our family home in Ipoh, Malaysia. Her favorite time of day was at 6.30pm when we would gather together in our parlor and have aperitifs before dinner. Up until the day she passed away, Granny always had her signature glass of brandy. Granny never stopped taking pride in her appearance. She always had stylish shoes, elegant clothes and often reminded me of the importance of wearing a fragrant perfume.

And then there was her softer side, which has always captured me. She was an undeniable natural beauty on the outside and a true beauty on the inside. She had a kind heart that always remained young. Granny loved grandeur, yet was humble and always ensured generosity to those in need. She wasn't just a good, but a great, Samaritan, believing that charity starts with those nearest to us. She had a cheeky chuckle when we got into mischief and a coy pout when she disapproved of something I had done. Granny's soul is now with Ahura Mazda. May it rest in eternal peace as we revel in our memories of a life worth celebrating and a story I will continue to tell.

**Zileena Doctor** recently moved to Nairobi, Kenya from Singapore. In spite of having lived around the globe, one of her favorite places remains their family home in Ipoh, and her favorite time of the day too is when the family gets together for an aperitif at 6.30pm.



# THE PARSI ART OF COOKING: REVIVING AN ANCIENT CUISINE

**Niloufer Mavalvala**

Austin Macauley, London:UK. 2016

ISBN 978-1786290427

109 pages US\$31.95

Reviewed by Farishta Murzban Dinshaw

Admittedly, I went into reviewing *"The Art of Parsi Cooking; Reviving an Ancient Cuisine"* biased since the author, Niloufer Mavalvala, is an old friend and I have enjoyed every meal she has prepared for us over the years.

The introduction describes how her parents Shireen and Jamshed Wania, and her paternal aunt, Villie Mehta, influenced her culinary aspirations and life's journey by being exemplary role models. I was particularly impressed by a recollection of her mother's hosting skills - Shireen used to keep a book with guest lists and details of menus she created for parties to avoid repeating the foods served!

Niloufer created a website, *"Niloufer's Kitchen"* in 2013 to share recipes with like-minded foodies and it has outreached over a 140,000 readers in the past three years. She has authored 10 electronic-cookbooks and writes about travel and food for Huffington Post and other magazines. Her first cooking class was when she was 17 years old, and ever since she has led cooking demonstrations at specialty stores such as William Sonoma, and at fund-raising events at a beautiful manor in Guildford Surrey, UK, where the event raised five hundred British pounds for McMillan Cancer Society. She has led an intensive two-day course at a Bed and Breakfast in a small village in Dorset called Wareham where the traditional Parsi menu comprised many of the dishes included in *"The Art of Parsi Cooking"*: *Akuri* (scrambled eggs with spices, page

4), *Sali Boti* (meat with potato straws), *Bhaji Jhinga* (shrimp with spinach), *Papayta Per Edu* (eggs on potatoes, page 14), *Sas Khichri* (lentil rice and fish in tomato gravy, page 39), *Doodh Pak* (almond and rice pudding, page 74) and *Ravo* (semolina and egg pudding, page 80).

This book is a culmination of a long-held dream to share the flavor and aroma of Parsi dishes with the world. However, by its very origin Parsi cooking has ingredients that are associated with India so the ingredient list may prove a disadvantage for people who live in areas where certain lentils, spices, or the more exotic berries like *kokum* are difficult to come by. This cookbook will appeal to cooks who are familiar with the diversity of Indian cuisine, live in multicultural communities with Indian grocery stores, or are serious foodies who will make an effort to buy the ingredients via the Internet.

This is one book you *should* judge by its cover. The elegant design by *Zara Contractor* draws you in and the close-up photographs of the food by *Sheriar Hirjikaka* tempt you to don the apron. The book is a collection of flavor-packed recipes that work for everyday meals and dinner parties alike. The book is divided into conventional categories such as Appetizers, Main Dishes, Side Dishes, Desserts and Snacks. What is unusual is that Niloufer has put them in the order that traditional three course Parsi meals were served. Along with traditional favorites like *Patra ni Machi* (fish in green chutney in banana leaves,



page 20) and *Dhansak* (lentils with meat and brown rice, page 53), Niloufer has also re-imagined dishes, such as *Calamari Pakoras* (calamari puffs, page 10) as testament that cuisines, no matter how ancient, are always evolving.

She has included a section at the back of the book titled "Parsi Cook's Spice Island" with recipes for the ground spice blends used in many of the recipes. It might have been better to have these explanations at the beginning of the book to introduce the idea of the different spice mixtures for those who are unfamiliar with Indian cuisine. Her tips at the end of the recipes are wonderful for amateurs in the kitchen like me and I even learned new things, like who knew *tuar daal* (a yellow lentil) is known as split pigeon peas?

I liked the conversational introduction to the recipes and the personal stories behind the recipes. It gives a cheerful feel to the book as if you are invited into Niloufer's home to share a meal, which is very much a legacy of her childhood. In a blog post, "The French in My Food" (Huffington Post, March 29, 2015) Niloufer says, "Growing up in a generous family in Karachi [Pakistan], our dining table was an open and welcoming place to gather around. There was hardly a day when we did not have extended family, friends, and sometimes even strangers, joining

us for a meal. I strongly believe my passionate love for cooking and creating at a whim stems from this.”

In a recent interview (Al Arabiya English, August 10, 2016) Niloufer said, “Food is such a happy platform to chat about, and it can

give pleasure to all who cook well, eat well and enjoy sharing at their table.” Her book, “The Art of Parsi Cooking” will help make that happen.

## LIEUTENANT GENERAL BILIMORIA – HIS LIFE & TIMES

*By Major General Ian Cardozo AVSM, SM (New Delhi, Published by Centre of Armed Forces Historical Research, United Services Institute of India, 2016). pp 92*

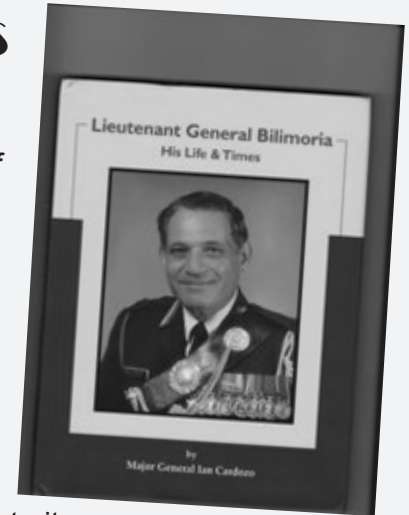
*For private circulation only, ISBN 978-93-84695-13-2.*

A brilliant and informative tribute to General Bilimoria that captures the essence of his life from childhood to the higher echelons of the Indian Army. He always cherished his Parsi roots and was proud to be from the community that contributed immensely towards the progress and development of our society. His father, Brigadier Noshir Dhanjisha Bilimoria, was a graduate from Sandhurst and was commissioned into the North Stafford Regiment, and then the 1<sup>st</sup> Rajputs, one of the renowned regiments of the Indian Army. The advice the General gave his son Karan was, “Where ever you live in the world, integrate with the community to the best of your ability, but never forget your roots”. When Karan took the oath on appointment to the House of Lords he did so on the Zoroastrian prayer book the *Khordeh Avesta*. It goes without saying that the greatest support and strength in his distinguished life was his wife Mrs Yasmin Bilimoria. His younger son Nadir has an established business in Hyderabad.

After Doon School he joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Course at the Joint Services Wing, and later passed out high in the order of merit from the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun. He fulfilled

his cherished aspiration when he was commissioned into 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion the 5<sup>th</sup> Gorkha Rifles (Frontier Force), in June 1953. This battalion was known as the VC Battalion for having won three Victoria Crosses in Burma during World War II (two of them on the same day). Closest to his heart was the command of the Battalion. During his command the Battalion gave an outstanding account of themselves in the 1971 War in Bangladesh. The battles at Pirganj and Bogra, in North West of Bangladesh, contributed to the lightening victory for India. The combat military overview, with carefully selected pictures immensely enhances the appeal of this book. His professional career progressed steadily, with assignments that gave him vast experience of national strategic dimensions. The appointment of General Officer Commanding - in - Chief of Central Command was the acme of his career. His selection to be the Colonel of the 5<sup>th</sup> Gorkha Rifles (Frontier Force) was a regimental honour. Soon after the prestigious appointment of President Gorkha Brigade was bestowed on him.

The author through his painstaking research has succeeded in bringing to life a great military personality for



posterity.

After retirement, in 1989, the General was honoured with the Colonel Adi Tarapore award from the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of India for excellence in the military field. Whereas the Parsi community forms the backdrop to this story, the narrative is essentially of a man whose code of conduct and ethics endeared him to one and all. He won the respect and love of his officers, his soldiers and all who interacted with him. Letters and accounts from those who knew him exemplify the attitude and magnanimous qualities of his character. His keen desire to work for the rehabilitation of the gorkha ex-servicemen gave him immense satisfaction. This meant more to him than many other achievements. This book is an enthralling inspiration for the officers and men of the Regiment.

**Reviewed by Brigadier Ashok Malhotra (Retired) 5<sup>th</sup> Gorkha Rifles (Frontier force)**



## MOVIE: *Rustom*

**Reviewed by:** Farishta Murzban Dinshaw

“Rustom” is inspired by the infamous K.M. Nanavati v/s The State of Maharashtra murder trial. The court case was historic on at least two counts – one, it was instrumental in abolishing the jury system in India, and two, the tabloid, “Blitz”, played an immense role in creating a public frenzy that ultimately resulted in Nanavati receiving a pardon for murder.

### THE FACTS

Commander Kawas Maneckshaw Nanavati was a decorated Indian Naval officer married to Sylvia, an English woman, with whom he had three children. While Nanavati was away at sea on assignment, Sylvia fell in love with his friend, Prem Bhagwandas Ahuja. When Nanavati returned to Bombay in April 1959, Sylvia confessed about the affair. Nanavati dropped his family at the Metro Cinema and went to the Naval base where he collected his service pistol. Then he went searching for Ahuja. According to his testimony, Nanavati asked Ahuja whether he intended to marry Sylvia and accept their children to which Ahuja reportedly replied, “Will I marry every woman I sleep with?” Nanavati fired three shots killing Ahuja. He then went to the Provost Marshal of the Western Naval Command and confessed his crime, later surrendering himself to the Deputy Commissioner of Police.

At trial, the crux of the defense was that Nanavati shot Ahuja in the ‘heat of the moment’. However, the prosecution stated that it was a premeditated murder. Thanks

to the nationwide interest in the case sensationalized by the “Blitz”, Nanavati came across as an upstanding patriot “who did the right thing in the wrong way” while Ahuja was seen as a callous playboy who had seduced the lonely wife of a war hero. In an 8-1 verdict, the jury found Nanavati ‘not guilty’.

The verdict was appealed in the Bombay High Court which agreed with the prosecution that the murder was premeditated and sentenced Nanavati to life imprisonment. The Supreme Court also upheld the conviction. The public came out onto the streets of Bombay demanding a pardon. With intercession from Vijaylaxmi Pandit, the Governor of Maharashtra, the victim’s sister Mamie Ahuja was persuaded to assent to his pardon in writing. Nanavati was released after spending three years in jail.

Following his pardon, Nanavati with his wife Sylvia and three children immigrated to Canada, where he died in 2003.

### THE FICTION

This is not the first time the Nanavati story has been fictionalized for cinema. In 1963, “Yeh Raaste Hain Pyar Ke” starring Sunil Dutt, Leela Naidu and Ashok Kumar had a similar storyline. Ten years later, Gulzar wrote and directed “Achanak” about an Army officer in a similar situation, starring Vinod Khanna, Lily Chakravarty, and Om Shivpuri. However, the publicity for “Rustom” has made an effort to link the movie with the Nanavati case, even using the



“Blitz” headline, “Three Shots that Shook the Nation” as its tagline.

“Rustom” is not meant as a docudrama. As the title suggests, the names of the characters have been changed. The reason Kawas Nanavati becomes Rustom Pavri (played by Akshay Kumar) is so that the storyteller, Vipul K Rawal, can take cinematic license. The film adheres to the bare bones of the triangle and the trial, but offers a motive that lionizes the lead character Commander Rustom Pavri into a conscientious patriot dealing with corruption in the corridors of power. The changes ups the already larger-than-life drama into a Bollywood melodrama complete with loud, ominous music that announces every twist and turn. You are not allowed to forget that he is a decorated Naval officer because he remains in his wrinkle-free, spotless white dress uniform throughout the trial even when he is in a dark, dank jail cell.

### THE FAUX PAS

Given the symbolism of the pristine uniform, it appears that it is not as upstanding as the hero. Sandeep



Unnithan set Twitterverse on fire when he shared a tweet identifying “a laundry list of embarrassments”<sup>1</sup>, including medals that were of recent origin. Another major faux pas was Rustom’s moustache. Unlike the Army, Navy personnel could not wear a moustache without a beard in 1959.

Even if the uniform errors go unnoticed by many uninformed cinema goers like myself, there is one issue that is likely to feel slightly off for discerning Parsi viewers like my sister. In the opening montage that showcases Rustom’s romance with Cynthia (Illeana D’Cruz), their marriage ceremony is depicted as a traditional Parsi wedding with the glowing groom in a dagli fetah and the blushing bride in a sari surrounded by smiling family members. Apparently, these shots were replicated from wedding photographs of Perin and Naval Kohla, who are parents of Akshay Kumar’s personal assistant, Zenobia Kohla.<sup>2</sup> The discordant note is

that in 1950s, it is highly unlikely that a Parsi mobed would have performed a traditional ashirwad ceremony for a Parsi groom and a Christian bride. In actual life, Kawas and Sylvia were married in England.

## THE FANS

Akshay Kumar plays the title character, Commander Rustom Pavri. As part of the publicity rounds for the film he met with Parsis of New York and New Jersey who gifted him a gold farohar pendant. He posted a photograph on Instagram with the message, “Blessed and honoured to receive this Faravahar from the Zoroastrian community in New York & New Jersey! Thank you so much for your best wishes for Rustom”

## THE FINAL VERDICT

“Rustom” offers something different from the run of the mill Bollywood romcoms or action movies. It is a Noir-ish period drama with shadowed

lighting, illegal transactions, and many flashbacks. Akshay Kumar carries the role of Rustom on his shoulders. Literally. His posture is impeccable. The ensemble’s acting isn’t exceptional, but none of the performances are cringe worthy, even Esha Gupta who vamps it up as the victim’s sister with glowering looks, low cut necklines, and cigarettes in holders. “Rustom” may not be an instant classic, but it is entertaining and entirely ‘paisa vasool’ [full return for your money]. It seems the public agrees because “Rustom” is a smash hit, breaking into the ‘One Crore Club’ at the Indian box office within 10 days.

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## Remembering the Magick of the Light

Kavasji H. Homji

Self-Published, Toronto, Canada, 2013

ISBN 978-0-9936221-1-3 255 pages CD\$20 with full proceeds

donated to the Ontario Zoroastrian Community

Fund (OZCF).

**Reviewed by Farishta Murzban Dinshaw**

Albert Einstein, one of the foremost scientists of all time, wrote, “A human being is a part of the whole, called by us “Universe,” a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. The striving to free oneself from this delusion is the one issue of true religion. Not to nourish it but to try to overcome it is the way to reach the attainable measure of peace of mind.” Homji’s book, *Remembering the Magick of the Light* about Zarathushtra’s life and message echoes this thought.

Although it is a story about Spitama Zarathushtra, it is not a biography since Zarathushtra lived five millennia ago and very little is known about him. Although fictionalized, it is not historic fiction as there are many anachronisms. In spite of references to wizards and sorcerers and experiences in the magical realm, it is not a fantasy novel. The likeliest genre that this book would fit into would be “motivational personal development stories” like Robin Sharma’s *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari* or Dan Millman’s *Way of the Peaceful Warrior*.

Like Robin Sharma’s and Dan Millman’s stories, this book also has autobiographical leanings. The author’s own journey onto the “Highway to Heaven” (page v) through the practice of Reiki, an abiding faith in his Zarathushti heritage, the study of various philosophies like Buddhism and Hinduism, and the profound impact of the words of *Desiderata II* shine through the words on the page. Even though the book focuses on the story of Zarathushtra’s life, it is a very personal retelling. As Homji writes in the preface, “This book is not intended as a historical treatise on Zarathushtra’s life...It is the author’s personal understanding of the esoteric nature of a soul’s existence from birth to passing. The book is meant to encourage readers to explore the mystic teachings.” (page ix)

The book starts with the assassination of Zarathushtra at the behest of Arejataspa, a Turanian who was Zarathushtra’s sworn enemy, and then goes into flashback a generation earlier when Zarathushtra’s father Pourushaspa meets Zarathushtra’s mother Dughdao. Zarathushtra’s birth, his childhood as a novice Magi priest, his Divine awakening, and his life as a Master are then covered in the course of the story. Interestingly, the author refers to him as Spitama from birth onwards till his “awakening” after which the author refers to him as Zarathushtra. The story significantly differs from canon in that thirty-five year old Spitama is ‘awakened’ when he meets Havovi in a “short encounter with destiny” (page 133). This, perhaps, is an autobiographical reference to Homji’s relationship with his wife Doris Lynn, whom he calls confidant and soulmate, because traditionally Zarathushtra was thirty years old and meditating alone in the mountains when the Revelation occurred.

As the title reveals, the story positions itself in the metaphysical realm instead of the physical world. Homji is committed to “transcend[ing] the illusory veil between the seen and unseen” (page vii). Parts of the story follow the traditional myths surrounding Zarathushtra’s life such as Dughdao’s unusual radiance that caused her to be feared, Zarathushtra’s laughter at birth, and the miraculously thwarted attempts on his life. The other parts of the story are interpretations of Gathic verses. A particularly clever representation is the conversation between Ahura Mazda and Geush Urvan from the Ahunavaiti Gatha, Yasna 29, creatively portrayed in the book as an old Magi priest’s mystical vision when he taps into the Unified Consciousness.



It took me two months to finish reading the book. One reason is that Homji does not limit it to a story about Zarathushtra's soul journey to Realization. He also ambitiously provides suggested practice for aspirants to begin their own journey as well as a section on understanding the Amesha Spentas. Essentially, this is a three-books-in-one deal. Another barrier to an easy read is the inconsistency in the writing style, which goes back and forth between sensorial descriptions ("As the dancing flames cast flickering shadows eerily alternated by partial illuminations...The snapping and crackling of the kindling and fragrant logs was music to his ears. The perfumed smoke purified the air..."), dry narrative, and paragraphs-long dialogue.

It also took me time to finish the book because there are a lot of esoteric expositions that were unfamiliar and complex. I had the choice to skim over them or revisit them. I chose to revisit them. I cannot say in good conscience that I fully understood everything the author was trying to get across, but I take consolation from the words of Kaikaus, Zarathushtra's mentor in the story: "Be gentle in your understanding. All things shall be revealed to you in Divine timing." (page 90)

For those who are simply looking for a story about Zarathushtra's life, this book may not be suitable. It, however, deserves a wider readership and will interest Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis alike who are on a spiritual journey in search of the Path to Light.

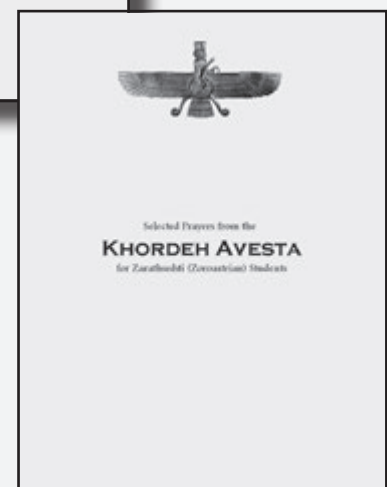
**Farishta Murzban Dinshaw** became interested in Zarathushti religion, history and heritage as a teenager when she volunteered in the Friday School for Little Zarathushtis, Karachi. She has presented at interfaith and Zarathushti conferences internationally. She is also the author of "Discovering Ashavan", a Young Adult novel set in ancient Iran, and the editor of FEZANA's e-publication, "Eat, Live, Pray: A Celebration of Zarathushti Culture and Cuisine"

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In February 1985 the **Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America** published the Khordeh Avesta using Ravanshad Dastoor Firouz Azargoshasb's pronunciation and reproduction in the English script. The publication was welcomed by students and parents and the publication was sold out almost immediately. Mobed Dr. Tooraj Khodabakhshi and Mobed Dr. Ardeshir Behi, have revised and published the updated book, which is now available for purchase through The Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia ZSBC. The selected prayers from the Khordeh Avesta are both in the Farsi and English scripts, for our children and youth

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To order, please contact Mrs. Azita Dehmobed ([azita2000ca@gmail.com](mailto:azita2000ca@gmail.com)), ZSBC, 6900 Halifax Street, Burnaby, BC V5B 2R5, Canada.





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