

JOURNAL

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USHTA TE
May Happiness Be with You





***Congratulations on your 30th
Anniversary***

***With Best Compliments
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The Incorporated Trustees
Of the
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Hong Kong, Canton & Macao***



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FALL 2017

SCIENCE AND
SPIRITUALITY

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EDITORIAL



The summer issue has been delayed because of several happy events which took place in this quarter and we wanted to bring them all to your attention. In April FEZANA celebrated, its 30th anniversary together with the AGM in Houston, the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec, (ZAQ) the first and oldest Association on North America, celebrated its 50th anniversary in August, Ervad Soli Dastur trained and initiated two new mobedyars, according to the NAMC guidelines, one in Seattle and one in Washington DC .

We were delighted to witness the opening of yet another Dar-e- Mehr in Sacramento. Our North American community welcomed with open arms the Kurdish delegation and their representative Awat Darya, who was invited to the US by the US government. We had a very successful book tour by Zerbano Gifford and Farida Master for her book *Uncensored Life*, the magnificent display of Paintings with a Needle at ZAGNY by Ashden

Lilaowalla, the visit of Mani Rao to Poland to spread her soul searching singing of the Monojats.

The cover story of this issue is on ***Happiness***, very ably shepherded by Farishta Dinshaw, our guest editor, who has assembled a group of very talented writers to reflect on this subject. But what is happiness? We all wish each other health and happiness on birthdays, on New Year, on weddings etc . What do we mean? I really did not know, do you? Is it just a rhetorical statement , writing these feel good words? Then I read the headlines of an article in the Globe and Mail of July 29, 2017, which gave a quote from a Syrian refugee to Canada. It said ***I miss Happiness, I do not miss the money, I miss happiness. Happiness is the food for the soul***” It was then that I started reflecting and researching on the cover story for this issue – Happiness!

Dalai Lama XIV in the Art of Happiness states “*Happiness is determined more by one’s state of mind than by external events*”. The purpose of life is to be happy, from the moment of birth, every human being wants happiness and does not want suffering. But where and how do we find it? Is it by doing what one is passionate about, building meaningful connections, by making a conscious decision to live in the moment and enjoy life, cherish life. We also need to distinguish between happiness and pleasure. We cannot chase happiness but we should let it come to us through our actions of love and compassion. We will find happiness in making others happy. *Ushta ahmai yahmai ushta kahmai-chit: Gatha Ushtavaiti, Y 43.1*). In

this issue our guest editor Farishta Dinshaw in her editorial has very succinctly given us the Zoroastrian concept of happiness which is also expounded by other authors like veteran journalist Tenaz Javat, and noted social activist Dinshaw Tamboly. Niloufer Mavalwala tells us about comfort foods that bring us happiness, or it is pleasure!! You will find a variety of people, writing about their interpretation of happiness. You will find this a very interesting and refreshing read bringing a smile to your face!!

In June and July we lost two of our iconic Zarthushtis Prof Kaikhosrov Irani and Dhunmai Dalal. We mourn them but also celebrate their lives and their achievements. Prof Kaikhosrov enlightened us and brought credibility and gave a positive image to the world wide Zarathushti community with his erudite discourses. Dhumnai was the catalyst who gave birth to FEZANA, and it is ironic that she died on its 30th anniversary!! Read about both these great personalities in this issue .

Till the next time, keep smiling and be happy.

EDITORIAL



Homi Gandhi, President

“For a community to be whole and healthy, it must be based on people’s love and concern for each other.” - Millard Fuller, Habitat for Humanity Founder.

Many articles in the last Journal discussed engaging the next generation, gender equality, and interfaith marriage. I think these issues are interrelated and wish to share my thoughts on these matters.

Go to any association or FEZANA meeting, and you hear a common refrain: our youth need to be involved with community leadership roles. We think that simply inviting them to participate is enough. I believe we need to do more to motivate youth participation. We should address issues that matter to youth, engage in ongoing, thoughtful, positive dialogue with them and relinquish decision making and implementation to them when they do step up.

Gender equality and interfaith marriage are issues of personal significance to our youth. In India,

they are linked because of the practice of discrimination against Parsi women when they marry non-Zarathushtis in India. Some North American Parsis informally continue these practices here. However, in North America, gender equality is the rule, rather than an exception. FEZANA stands for gender equality in all aspects of life. Our North American Zarathushti communities are not bound by the legal decisions or social norms of the Parsis of India. Each individual has the power to choose which traditions to follow and which to eschew. I encourage FEZANA member associations to support the choices of all individuals in our community.

Marriage is a personal choice. We should respect the free will of our children to choose a life partner, even when they choose a non-Zarathushti partner. If these multi-religious families choose to bring their children into the Zarathushti fold, they should be welcomed, regardless of which parent is Zarathushti. In my personal experience in New York, embracing these multi-faith families has strengthened bonds within our community, motivated youth to learn more about, and appreciate, our religion, and has led to leadership and participation by our youth in ZAGNY and other successful community ventures. In my opinion, this genuine welcome and inclusion is what enriches our community and allows us to perpetuate the practice of Zoroastrianism in the next generation.

Just as the Persians who landed on the shores of India did many moons ago,

so also, we in North America have to define our own identity in our current cultural context that is true to our Zarathushti values. Our youth should be proud of their Zarathushti identity and not view it as something that brings conflict to their life. We should equip them with knowledge of history and traditions, not just of ancestors in the motherlands, but also of our own here on this continent.

Let our community be identified with inclusion, equality, and *hamazori* among ourselves and people of other faiths who join our families. Let our community be empowered by love and understanding of our traditions, but also of our people. That is how we keep our children from walking away. That is how we secure the Zarathushti – and Parsi – future in North America.

Atha Jamiyaat, Yatha Aafrinaamahi!
May it be so even as we wish it!

Homi D. Gandhi

FEZANA *Update*

FEZANA Celebrates 30 years at their AGM Weekend

AFREED MISTRY



The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) celebrated its 30th Anniversary at their Annual General Meeting (AGM) weekend in Houston, Texas from April 27th to 30th. This aptly coincided with Zoroastrian Association of Houston's (ZAH) ten-year anniversary of their Legacy scholarship program.

The four day weekend started with a meeting hosted by the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce (WZCC). Participants toured the Coating Industries factory, a local Zarthushti owned business. After lunch they met at the Zarathusti Heritage and Cultural Center (ZHCC) for a WZCC meeting.

The day ended with *An Evening with FIRES* - FIRES stands for **FEZANA Information Research Education System**. The evening started with the opening of the new Purvez Rustomji Hall donated by Aban Rustomji in memory of her husband. Aban's family including her son Arish, daughter Nerina and grandson Aaryan participated in the ribbon cutting ceremony. The program opened with Houston Sunday School's youngest kids singing the beautiful Khan Ashem Vohu prayer carrying a ses and traditional artifacts down the aisle. The audience was invited to visit the newly renovated library which was set up with rare and collectable items that are part of the FEZANA-FIRES collection.



The guest speaker for the evening was Aban Marker-Kabraji the Regional Director of the Asia Regional office of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (ICUN) who came all the way from Bangkok. She spoke on "Memory and Identity" - about growing up in Pakistan and about Zoroastrian identity. Aban talked about how Zoroastrians don't have a country of their own like most other faiths do and that Zoroastrians have adapted to other countries and cultures, starting from the first group of Zoroastrians that went from Iran to Gujarat. She also said that what "the young people who participated in the Return to Roots program learnt from an experience connecting them to their ancestral homelands, is that they engage with a multitude of ideas, definitions, memory, customs,

rituals, people, place and culture that comes to constitute a complexity of home and belonging. Memory, belonging, space, emotion, are all essential elements when discussing the idea of home." She spoke about Return to Roots and how the youth have a sense of belonging by how they feel and not a sense of belonging from a physical location, i.e. a country.

After the lecture, the FIRES library was officially opened for viewing to the crowd. The library exhibit contained some very rare books, pictures and items that were donated or on loan from local Houston families to display. Some of the interesting items were, a ses with Chinese motifs that was over 100 years old, and gara sarees going back a few generations - one gara was done in French knots and sold in a wooden box with carvings on the top. There was a beautiful Shahnameh, done in gold and other colours, commissioned as a gift from the Queen of England. There were pictures on one wall of families of ZAH members from three to four generations ago. The night ended with a wonderful dinner and catching up with old friends.



On Friday, the AGM began with a benediction. It was attended by all 5 of the current executive members, all seven past presidents of FEZANA, 18 of the 26 member associations, representing 53 of the total of 66 votes. 22 of the 26 FEZANA committees were present. Representatives of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce and the North American Mobed Council also attended. The newly elected officers, Shirin Jahanian (Treasurer), ArZan Sam Wadia (Vice-President) and Percy M. Master (Secretary) gave their acceptance speeches. Homi Gandhi (President) and Afreed Mistry (Assistant Secretary) continue their terms until 2018.

Delegates heard the reports of the various FEZANA Committees. The Chairs of the World Zoroastrian Congress that will take place in Australia in June 2018 made a presentation as did Chair of the World Zoroastrian Youth Congress which will be hosted by California Zoroastrian Centre (CZC) in 2019. The Houston Sunday School kids performed a Shahnameh musical play at dinner. The whole play was choreographed and produced by Vehishta Kaikobad with wonderful dancing and costumes. After that the Presidents of all the Zoroastrian Associations who were present gave a brief report about the numerous activities that take place throughout the year at their local Association. The Zoroastrian Association of California-LA and the Sacramento Zoroastrian Association had grand openings of their new centres. On Saturday, after a benediction by Ervad Jehan Bagli the AGM continued with committee reports. After much discussion on the new FEZANA budget process the budget was approved.

The glittering 30th Anniversary Gala that evening was hosted in two parts. The first part, compèred by Zeeba Kayani to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of their Scholarship Program, started with entertainment from the Sunday School kids performing a short play on the importance of learning our Zoroastrian traditions and rituals such as the making of a kushti. ZAH awarded four scholarships:

- Congress2000 Legacy Scholarship – Tanya Behramsha
- Congress2000 Legacy Scholarship – Farzad Sarkari & Alyssa Tamboli
- Cyrus R. Desai Award – Katie Master
- Mike Engineer Scholarship – Michelle Balsara



ZAH also presented a Lifetime achievement award to Sarosh Collector a founding member of ZAH.

Katayun Kapadia, past President of FEZANA, was Master of ceremonies for the FEZANA part of the evening. ArZan Wadia unveiled the new FEZANA logo designed by Zara Nader-Contractor from Karachi, Pakistan and explained how the logo represents air, water and earth. (photo left). Homi D. Gandhi, the FEZANA President presented the FEZANA Lifetime Achievement Award to Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli. Dolly Dastoor inaugurated a special 30th Anniversary Issue of the FEZANA Journal titled *Voices of the Future* by handing out a copy to Dr. Bagli and to each of the past presidents. Dolly said that it was fitting that the Journal's very first editor should inaugurate this 30th anniversary issue.

On Sunday, a *boi* ceremony was performed in the prayer room in a moving ceremony as all attendees held hands in prayer. The AGM concluded with presentations by past Presidents Rustom Kevala and Framroze Patel, by Edul Davar, President of WZCC, ArZan Sam Wadia for the Good Life Program and Ardaviraf Minocherhomjee President of NAMC. The day ended with President Homi Gandhi sharing his vision and path forward for FEZANA.

The next AGM will be held at California Zoroastrian Centre (CZC) in April 2018. For more information on FEZANA please visit: www.fezana.org

Afreed Mistry is the Asst Secretary of FEZANA



Past Presidents of FEZANA with Ervad Jehan Bagli, the recipient of the Life Time Achievement Award with the 30th Anniversary special issue of the FEZANA JOURNAL. From left Bomi Patel, Firdosh Mehta, Framroze Patel. Current president, Homi Gandhi, Dolly Dastoor, Jehan Bagli, Freny Bagli, Rohinton Rivetna . Roshan Rivetna, Katayun Kapadia, Rustom Kevala.



FEZANA Executive : Percy Master, Secretary; Zenobia Damania, Admin Asst; Afreed Mistry, Asst Secretary; Homi Gandhi, President, Ervad Jehan Bagli, Niloufer Shroff, out-going Treasurer, Shirine Jahanian, in-coming Treasurer, Arzan Sam Wadia, Vice-President



ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF QUEBEC CELEBRATES GOLDEN JUBILEE AT GLITTERING GALA IN MONTREAL, AUGUST 4, 2017.

North America's oldest Zoroastrian Anjuman, the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec (ZAQ) celebrated the 50th anniversary of its founding in 1967, with a glittering Gala function in Montreal, Canada on August 6th 2017 at Crowne Plaza Hotel.

ZAQ was founded in 1967 in Montreal, the same year the city hosted the eponymous Expo 67, that had then marked the centenary of Canada. Today, 50 years later the community gathered at the Crowne Plaza hotel to celebrate the past five decades and to begin the journey of the next 50.



Pheroz Austin, the MC for the evening (photo below with his wife Zareen, the new President of ZAQ) welcomed the sell out crowd of over 220 guests, and invited Ervad Gev Karkaria to give a benediction to begin the evening's event. Dolly Dastoor, chair of the 50th Anniversary Organizing committee then gave an update of ZAQ's activities introducing all the past Presidents, present in the audience, and thanked her organizing team for pulling off an excellent event. Dolly then introduced the Guest of Honour Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli, who sadly could not be present, as he had broken his hip in a fall last Sunday and was recovering after surgery, and could not make the journey from Toronto. Ervad Bagli was ZAQ's founding president and in many ways laid the solid foundation on which subsequent ZAQ Presidents and Boards built upon. It was at ZAQ that Ervad Bagli had started North America's first Zoroastrian publication GAVASHNI in 1974. Gavashni was the precursor to what would in the next decade become the FEZANA JOURNAL, who's founder editor was Ervad Bagli and current editor is Dolly Dastoor.



Dolly read out Ervad Bagli's message, in which he thanked the community for the honor and regretted not being there in person. In his message he recalled the times in 1967 when Montreal and Quebec were going through historic times and how ZAQ was formed in the early years.

ZAQ also recognized its two priests Ervad Gev Karkaria and Ervad Jal Panthaki who have tirelessly over the past 35 years provided yoemen service as spiritual leaders of this community and region. They were both presented mementos along with their wives Shirine Karkaria, and Nergish Panthaki, who have steadfastly supported them in the religious services all these years.

FEZANA President Homi D. Gandhi addressed the gathering congratulating ZAQ on behalf of all the Zarathushtis of North America. He reminisced about his visit to Montreal exactly 50 years ago at the end of a 45 day greyhound bus tour of North America, little knowing that he would be returning 50 years later to join in the festivities of ZAQ. He recognised ZAQ's role as one of the founding member associations and having played an active part in hosting FEZANA AGMs and Congresses.



Francis Scarpaleggia the local Member of Parliament, Government of Canada congratulated ZAQ on behalf of the larger Canadian community. He was very appreciative of the community and its achievement in Montreal and said that the Zoroastrians here were a very integral part of the multicultural Canada that is today leading the world in welcoming people from all backgrounds and beliefs who have come to make Canada their home.

The formal part of the function came to an end with the awarding of ZAQ's Lifetime Achievement Award to Dolly Dastoor. Dolly has been a pioneer in many walks of life and has led ZAQ as its President at 4 different times in its 50 year history for a total of 13 years. Ervad Gev Karkaria read out her achievements professionally and in community matters and it was

a stupendous list of achievements. Dolly was completely taken by surprise at receiving this award. In her acceptance speech, she said that the Award itself did not matter as much as the recognition by the community of those who volunteer their time and took this opportunity to urge the youth to step up to the plate and give of their time and talent towards the working of the community in the years to come. Dolly has been a true ZAQ treasure and continues to represent ZAQ at FEZANA and the world stage including being the only Zarathushti serving on the Board of the Parliament of World's Religions.

Festivities were interspersed throughout the evening including a traditional welcome song in Dari sung by Khanoom Irandokht Esfandiar Mehrbani, a senior member of the community (photo 1). Traditional Iranian Music Group Arsam (photo 2) Bollywood Bhangra performers (3) regaled the crowd with some Bollywood style dance performances and then the DJ got the crowd swinging with music across all ages.

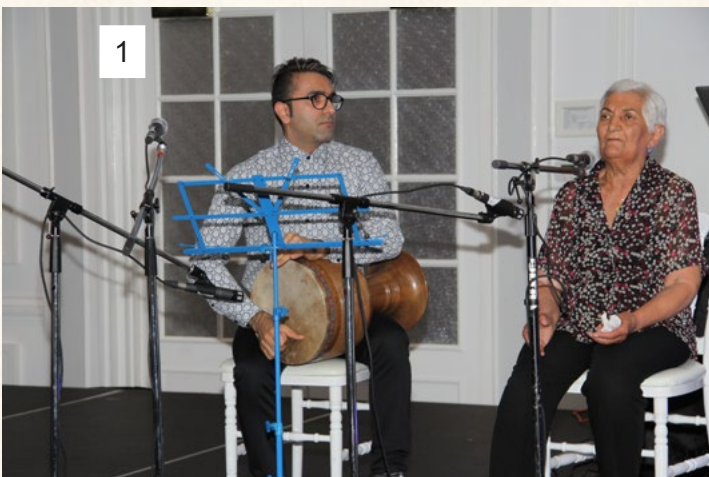




Photo 1 Khanoom irandokht Photo 2 Traditional Iranian singers Photo 3 Bollywood Blast



In the end a 50th Anniversary cake was cut by all the Past Presidents of ZAQ to bring the festivities to an end. In the photo below from left Gev karkaria, Ness Lakdawala, Vida Fereydoonzad, Dolly Dastoor, Faranak Firoozi; Khushroo Mirza; Nari Madon.(Not in Photo Jehan Bagli, Edul Kanga, Faredoon Mistry)

Zoroastrian Association of Quebec has been a pioneering association in the North American Zoroastrian diaspora. It published the first North American Zoroastrian publication GAVASHNI, was the first Zoroastrian association to have a lady President (Dolly Dastoor), hosted a seminal Congress in the early 1980's before the formation of FEZANA, and then became integral as a founding member of FEZANA. As a speaker said, today's event was as much a celebration of the past five decades as it was one about the beginning of the next five. ZAQ today has a great mix of the founding generation guiding and supporting the current youth in taking the association to greater heights.

FEZANA *Update*



Photos top row from left
Gev karkaria, Jimmy
Saklatvala, Xerxes Bamji;
Soonnoo and Rohinton
Marolia; Zerene Saklatvala
and Shirine Karkaria
Middle Row Sheroo
Madon; Dolly Dastoor,
Parvez Madon, Mahnaz
Turner, Yazdi Turner;
Coomie Gazdar and Vahishta
Canteenwalla. Third row
Zara Canteenwalla and
Shauna Hills; Dolly Dastoor, Jimmy Bharucha and Roshan Bharucha



Photo Credits Jerbanoo Irani; Yazdi Kapadia; Arzan Sam Wadia.



SACRAMENTO ZOROASTRIANS WELCOME THEIR NEW DAR E MEHR

Darius Captain

Khordad Sal (March 26, 2017) was a day of anticipation for the local Zoroastrian community of nearly a hundred families living in and around California's capital city, Sacramento. This was the day when the fire in the new Dar e Mehr was to be installed with a Jashan performed by seven mobeds.

The Dar e Mehr has 850 square feet of floor space and is located 15 feet from the 10,000 sq ft Sacramento community center. It was the third to be installed in North America within a year and has some special significance. While being only the second free standing Dar e Mehr on this continent—the other being Los Angeles that opened a month earlier—this newest association member of FEZANA was probably the first to build and inaugurate a Dar e Mehr even before the community center was completed. Another interesting fact is that, for



the first time a Dar e Mehr opened in North America, two of the performing mobeds were a 93-year-old grandfather, Sorabji Chhor, and his 18-year-old grandson, Rustum. Also from Northern California was Ervad Kobad Jamshed who led the Jashan and Ervad Homyar Dastoor. The other participants were Ervads Ardaviraf Minocherhomji, president of the North American Mobed Council from Los Angeles; Ratansha Vakil from Dallas; and Iranian Mobed Ashkan Bas-tani from Los Angeles. Unfortunately, Ervad Sorabji passed away peacefully in his sleep four days later after fulfilling his last wish, to participate in the opening of this Dar e Mehr.



(L-R) Mobed Ashkan, Ervads Ratansha Vakil, Ardaviraf Minocherhomji, Kobad Jamshed, Sorabji Chhor, Homyar dastoor, Rustum Chhor

The large afarganyu is connected to a natural gas source fed by a flexible pipe. The pilot light on top of the afarganyu is used to ignite the main fire remotely. The wood on the top is not real and does not burn. Sandalwood is not burnt on the main afarganyu, but on a smaller one next to it. The priest who holds the Chamach, with the sandalwood, touches the larger afarganyu and then places the lit sandalwood on the smaller afarganyu. The smaller one was used by the late Ervad Jimmy Makauji-na at all religious ceremonies and gifted by his wife Amy to the SZA.

The Dar e Mehr took about a year and a half to complete, most of the time being consumed by designing the facility and getting the required permits from various city departments. Mehran Torki, the Sacramento Zoroastrian Association's past president (2015–2016) led a three-member committee, the other two were the current vice present Khodadad Pashutani and the FEZANA representative Darius Captain.

The Sacramento Dar e Mehr was built with a very generous donation of \$200,000 from the Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton, and Macao through the kind support of their member Gustad Irani. The *afarganyu* was donated by the Trustees of the Wadiaji Atash Behram with the kind assistance of Solicitor Nadir Modi, a leading trustee and also the grandson of the well-known jurist/scholar/author Sir Jeevanji Modi.





Among the nearly 275 community members present at the Dar e Mehr opening were Gustad Irani from Hong Kong; Homi Gandhi, the current president of FEZANA; and two past presidents, Bomi Patel, Firdosh Mehta (left). After the Jashan and chasni of malido, sev, ravo, and fruits, the gathering moved to an outside banquet hall for a dinner of Iranian and Indian food. Sacramento does not have a full time mobed, but we are fortunate to have the services of Ervad Kobad Jamshed of ZANC from the Bay area who is always ready to drive nearly 120 miles to perform religious ceremonies when needed.

In February 2010, five Zoroastrian women (Manijeh Behziz, Anahita Azarkeyvan, Dowlat Afshari, Sima Jawanmard, and Nahid Afshari) founded The Zoroastrian Women Organization (ZWO) as a non-profit organization

that responds to some community needs, such as religious classes, cultural, and festival functions. In early 2014, ZWO facilitated the purchase of the 10,000 sq ft building property for \$550,000 to open its activities to all Zoroastrians in the area. The name of the association was later changed to the Sacramento Zoroastrian Association and retained its non-profit status. SZA's new board took over in January 2015. The local Zoroastrian population is comprised of about 75% Iranian Zoroastrians and 25% Parsees. The local population has many working families with young school children, a few college students, and a good many senior citizens, many of whom migrated from Iran. The median age of the local Zoroastrians could roughly be put at 40.

The Zoroastrian Center building is currently being upgraded and renovated with a \$250,000 loan added to the existing loan of \$300,000 used for the purchase of the property. The modifications needed to get a building permit are expected to take another 3 to 6 months before it can be opened for regular use for the community.

The community's plan for the facility includes using it for children's religious classes and other activities like sports, lectures, a functioning library, and the celebration of religious and festival occasions. Sacramento Zoroastrians can look forward to having a working Center with their new Dar e Mehr in the very near future.



Sacramento Zoroastrian Association, second Board.

(L-R) Dowlat Afshari, Shahin Ravani, Manijeh Behziz, Nahid Afshari, Sima Mehrshahi

Darius Captain came to USA in 1967 after graduating in Physics and Electrical Engineering from Nagpur University. He completed his post-graduate degree in Engineering Administration from Michigan Tech. He worked for IBM in information technology in Chicago while attending night school for his MBA from Northwestern University, Chicago. In 1979, he moved to San Francisco to work for Levi Strauss. In 1992, he moved to Sacramento and joined the state of California and retired in 2009.

Darius was the founding member of Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, Zoroastrian Anjuman of Northern California (Bay area), and Sacramento Zoroastrian Association. He was the president of ZANC 1986-87 and later a Trustee.



Editorial

MAY HAPPINESS BE WITH YOU

Farishta Murzban Dinshaw



There are two kinds of happiness. One is like a caffeine shot—it gives you a boost—but, it is fleeting. A bonus in your paycheck, news that your child got admission into a prestigious university, a surprise party thrown for you by your friends. The other, longer lasting happiness, comes from an internal sense of wellbeing, it imbues a contentment built on feeling loved, fulfilled, engaged, feeling connected to something bigger than oneself. It includes having both peace of mind and peace in the heart. *Ushta te*—may happiness be with you—is a Zarathushti blessing. It encompasses both kinds of happiness because Zarathushtra’s message is pragmatic.

This issue of *FEZANA Journal* contains personal contemplations on happiness, as well as ideas of achieving both material and spiritual happiness. A recurring theme in the articles is about achieving happiness through action (*huvarshtha*)—through compassion for others, our connection with nature, and our actions in making a positive contribution to society. This is not surprising. We grow up hearing “happiness is to the person who gives happiness to others” (Free translation of *Ushta ahmai yahmai ushta kahmai-chit*: Gatha Ushtavaiti, Y 43.1). Zarathushtra’s message about our obligation to serve others has been echoed by the United Nations, which marks the International Day of Happiness on March 20, the advent of NoRooz. In 2015, the UN launched 17 Sustainable Development Goals that seek to end poverty, reduce inequality, and protect our planet—three key aspects that lead to well-being and happiness that Zarathushtra shared three millennia ago.

Another theme that runs through many of the articles is that happiness is a choice. Despite the things that happen to us, we can adjust our attitude to be positive, be grateful, be in the moment. This, too, is entrenched in the Zarathushti philosophy of free will and embodied in the Ahunavaiti Gatha, Y 30.2, where Zarathushtra tells us to use our open, rational minds to choose between truth and falsehood, between light and darkness, between positivity and negativity. We need to temper this staunch belief in freedom of choice, even if it is relegated to just the choice of attitude, with compassion and acceptance. We should be aware that those dealing with clinical depression may not be in control of their emotions because of chemical imbalances in the brain or hormonal fluctuations post-partum or during menopause. Or, that those who face challenges, such as coping with being marginalized for their sexual orientation or dealing with a traumatic event, may be in such a dark place that the light doesn’t filter through. Making informed and healthy choices is not innate, it is a learned skill. However, there is hope, even for those experiencing the bleakest of times. By monitoring levels of brain activity in real-time, scientists have shown that people are able to alter activity in specific parts of the brain by thinking of something that makes them happy. This neurofeedback technique has proved successful in teaching people with various psychiatric conditions, including depression, to regulate brain responses. It seems that, in all things perceived as modern, we can trace their roots to Zarathushtra’s timeless message of good thoughts (*humata*).

Although the pursuit of worldly happiness is sanctioned in our faith, the true Zarathushti concept of *ushta* lies beyond happiness in the physical world. It is a state of spiritual “being,” not “doing”; a transcendental joy that comes through an enlightened, resting mind (*vohu mana*). Albert Einstein, an undisputed genius, was able to put into words this feeling “that takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law” and is “a sort of intoxicated joy and amazement at the beauty and grandeur of this world...” (Einstein, *The World as I See It*, 1934). This kind of intoxicated joy is not the purview of geniuses; it is within the reach of each of us. In the *Gathas* (Ahunavaiti Gatha,

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Y.29.6, Spentamainyush Gatha, 48.3; 50.5, 6), Zarathushtra is referred to as *manthran* (from Sanskrit *mantrayate*, meaning the methodology that dissolves the mind) and tasked to teach others how to enrich their inner selves. There are countless techniques to dissolve the mind including prayer and meditation, focusing on your breath, spending time in nature, and yoga. When our thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and desires flow from this state of grace, they influence our words and deeds, and guide us in how we interact with the world around us so that we become co-creators of a perfect world. Professor Kaikhosrov D. Irani, in his speech “*The Enlightenment Message of Zarathushtra*” (Sydney, Australia, May 6, 2003) said, “As humans advance in moral intelligence, the ability of Vohu Mana promotes a society of Righteous Order, which continues to actualize. And such a progressive society then leads to the moralizing of humans and brings them to a state of enlightened happiness, Ushta. Such is the ethical stance and cosmic optimism of Zarathushtra’s message to humanity.”

May we all attain this state of enlightened joy.

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HAPPINESS IN ZARATHUSHTRA'S TEACHINGS

Dina McIntyre

Fear is a powerful, controlling tool in many religious paradigms—fear of natural calamities; fear of unhappiness; fear of suffering; fear of punishment, in this life and the next; and even fear of what brings us enjoyment—attributing to the notion of “god,” the very human characteristic of being jealous of another’s good fortune. A religious paradigm that controls through fear is not Zarathushti. Zarathushtra taught that happiness and joy are parts of Wisdom’s nature (*mazda*), inherent in His path, and the reward for taking that path—ideas that survived in Younger Avestan (YAv.) texts. Translations here are mine except where otherwise noted. Avestan words are from Geldner’s *Avesta*, (1886).



AS A QUALITY OF AHURA MAZDA

The unknown author of the (YAv.) *Hormezd Yasht* has Wisdom reciting His names (that reveal His nature) including:

“... *vispa.xvathra nama ahmi* ...” (... I am named all-happiness ...) and
“... *pouru.xvathra nama ahmi*...” (... I am named full of happiness...) Yt. 1.14.

This “all happiness” is also used to describe paradise—even in many YAv. texts that describe “heaven” as:

“... *vahishtem ahum ashaonam yazamaide, raochanghem, vispo.xvathrem* ...” (... the most-good existence of the truthful, we worship/celebrate, lightfilled, all-happiness ...) *Visperad*, Ch. 23, § 1

In Zarathushtra’s thoughts, Wisdom is not a “God” of wrath or vengeance, but One who is wholly beneficial (*spenta* and its superlative *spenishta*) and wholly good (*vohu* and its superlative *vahishta*). These qualities Zarathushtra also sees (imperfectly) in humans, qualities that bring happiness.

IN TANDEM WITH THE MATERIAL WORLD

Many religions teach that, to achieve spiritual growth, we must control and reject material things that give us pleasure and, therefore, are “sinful” or a distraction. This mindset has so conditioned us that even some (well-intentioned) Zoroastrian priests have expressed similar ideas. But, this is alien to the Gathas and to Zarathushtra’s Indo-Iranian culture in which material things—fire, water, air, and certain plants—were thought to have spiritual essences. So, material things were not regarded as antithetical to spirituality, rather they were a part of spirituality. Zarathushtra does not teach the idea of multiple spiritual essences (deities) that control human behavior through fear, but he does not reject the material. He sees the material existence as the matrix through which spiritual growth is achieved. He describes his teachings as bringing joy:

“Yes, to those (of you) seeking, I shall speak of those things which are to be borne in mind ... which things are to be looked upon in **joy** throughout your days.” Y30.1, Insler 1975.

The YAv. Yasna 1.1 speaks of “... Ahura Mazda ... who sends his **joy**-creating grace afar ...” Mills’ translation.¹

And the YAv. *Hormezd Yasht*, “... I will come unto thee for help and **joy**, I, Ahura Mazda ...” Yt. 1.9,



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Darmesteter translation.²



IMPACT TO OUR LIVES

How do these teachings bring joy? In many ways. They generate a mindset in which the material world is seen as something to be used for good and, in the process, enjoyed and celebrated. Wisdom (*mazda*) does not require that we deprive or chastise ourselves, to gain His approval, but, instead, that we enjoy our material existence (without harming others or ourselves), use it to benefit, care for, and bring joy to all the living.

Sometimes doing what is true, right, can bring grief. But, generally (in the long run), it brings happiness. Take a family. If family members understand what is true and right, if they care for each other, are friendly, treat each other in good ways, the family will be happier than if they are rude, insulting, cruel, unjust, or deceitful to each other. The same is true for a work place, a community, a nation, the community of nations, and our world.

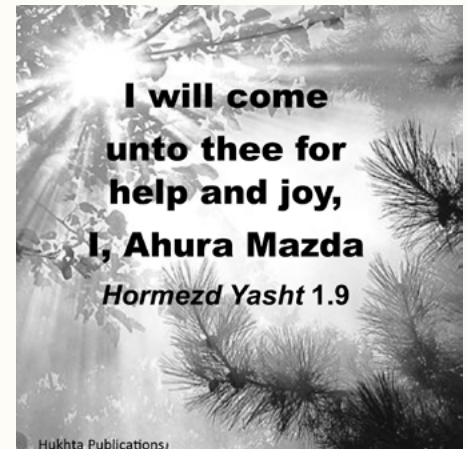
I think that one of Zarathushtra's significant (and profound) ideas is that true, lasting, happiness is achieved only when we are in sync with the true (correct) order of existence (*asha*). We cannot be happy if we are out of sync with *asha*, "... happiness has been lost to the deceitful who violate **truth** [*asha*] ..." Y53.6, Insler 1975.

In Zarathushtra's thoughts, wealth and prosperity are not equated with "evil." In a Pazand text a soul, after death, is praised because during life he acquired wealth honorably (and was generous to those in need—giving them not only essentials but "entertainment"!)." If all else is equal (good management, good products etc.) in Zarathushtra's thoughts, the true (correct) order of existence (*asha*), and the good governance which implements this order (*vohu xshathra*), bring prosperity, "...the rule of good thinking, through the actions of which the creatures allied with truth [*asha*] do **prosper**..." Y43.6; "... truth [*asha*] which **prosper**s the creatures..." Y33.11, Insler 1975.

This idea is validated by experience. In the last few decades we have seen undisputed examples of the demise of powerful corporations whose officers and directors acted in dishonest ways, bringing on the collapse of such businesses; causing enormous damage and unhappiness to shareholders, employees, and customers; and almost destroying the economy itself—the very opposite of prosperity and happiness. Of course, good social order also requires that a society protect itself from the wrongful (or criminal) choices of its members. That too is a part of a "good rule"—a rule that is not predatory, that involves using whatever power we have justly, fairly—even with enemies! In the Ashirwad part of the Zarathushti wedding ceremony, the priest giving (a lot of) advice to the bride and groom on how to live their lives according to Zarathushti teachings, says "Deal with your enemies according to justice ...".⁴ How cool is that?

Zarathushtra teaches the freedom to choose. True, this freedom does not always bring happiness. Unthinking obedience may sometimes provide the comfort of a security blanket (which brings short-term happiness). But, in the long run, a person who is required to obey without question is not going to be as happy as a person who is free to make his own life choices (and learn from them). Zarathushtra teaches that the more we search for, discover, and choose the true (correct) order of existence *asha*, the more truth-filled (*ashavan*) we become. And, if we make wrong choices, we experience the consequences of such choices and learn from our mistakes. So, in the long run, (with mutual, loving help) we grow spiritually, from both our "good" and "wrongful" choices. In the Gathas, this process of spiritual growth (of incrementally changing into a state of being that is closer and closer to the true (correct) order of existence) brings happiness.

"I who shall serve ... you, Wise Lord, with good thinking, to me are to be granted the attainments of both existences—yes of matter as well as of mind—those attainments befitting truth [*asha*] through which one might set



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Thy supporters in happiness.” Y28.2, Insler 1975.

The path of truth is not free of difficulties. Handling difficulties is the way we grow, as individuals and as societies. But unlike fatalistic religious paradigms, Zarathushtra teaches us to be proactive, to find ways to improve a bad situation. Lies by the powerful teach us the value of truth. Earthquakes teach us to care for each other, build earthquake-proof buildings, and improve early warning detection systems. Illnesses and injuries motivate us to find cures, invent prosthetic devices for lost limbs, and take preventative measures. The difficulties we experience are Wisdom’s “heavy blessings”—opportunities for growth, materially and spiritually, which bring happiness.

When we speak in such generalities, it sounds trite, one-dimensional—as generalities usually do. It is only when we see how these generalities apply in the infinite variety of our life experiences, that we appreciate how true Zarathushtra’s teachings are, and how they do indeed make life happier, and more prosperous. Sometimes, in the short run. Always, in the long run.

Finally, one of the most important aspects of Zarathushtra’s teachings that bring happiness is that, in his thoughts, there are no rejects. Everyone eventually will make it. In the Gathas, evil is defeated, not by damnation and punishment in hell, but by changing minds through the law of consequences and other life experiences. The process is a long one. It includes experiences that are painful—earned and unearned. But, with mutual, loving help—from the Divine, from each other (and other life forms)—we will make it through the refiner’s fire. To Zarathushtra, the qualities that make a being Divine (the amesha spenta) are the true (correct) order of existence (*asha*); its comprehension of good thinking (*vothu manah*); its beneficial embodiment in thought, word, and action (*spenta aramaiti*); its good rule (*vothu xshathra*); its complete, undying attainment (*haurvatat, ameretat*); and the wholly beneficial, sacred way of being (*spenta mainyu*). These are also his path to the Divine and, the reward for taking that path, is a state of being that he calls (among other names) the “**healed existence**” (*ferasha ahu*), the “**most good existence**” (*ahu vahishta*), the “**house of good thinking**,” and the “**house of song**”—the joyful bliss of enlightenment, which is Wisdom personified (*mazda*).

1 Sacred Books of the East (SBE) 31, p. 196.

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2 SBE 23, p. 26.

3 The Pazand text, *The Book of Mainyo-i-Khard*, §§ 133 -- 134, E. W. West translation 1871.

4 Translation by Shahin Bekhradnia, (with her kind permission).

*Happiness is when
what you think,
what you say and
what you do are in harmony*

Mahatma Mohandas K Gandhi



HAPPINESS IS AN INSIDE JOB

Havovie Bomanji

Happiness. That elusive state of being that we humans continually chase in the often misguided belief that it should be our perpetual condition or at the very least an end goal, is actually in reality, not really that elusive at all.

Happiness is an inside job. It is a state of mind. It transcends almost every situation we find ourselves in. Why? Because happiness is a choice; it's a conscious decision and when we choose to feel happy, even when we're not actually feeling it, by choosing it, even initially faking it, we are giving ourselves permission to allow happiness to enter our lives. Do not make the mistake of waiting for the happy phases in life—seek out the happy moments. Live those moments. Don't stop and take a selfie and spoil what could be incredible moments. Allow those moments to sink in and fill each and every cell in your body. Don't think happiness is just around the corner—that it is akin to pushing it away before it has the chance to even reach you. Savour your happy moments as and when they come, for they could actually appear in times of the most terrible turmoil.

How do we choose happiness when we feel like our world is caving in, when hearts are broken, when finances are far from healthy, when it seems that it's just one problem after another? We choose it because these are exactly the times we need to tune into our faith-centered being and trust that the Universe has our back.

It is so easy to say we have faith, easier still to recite our prayers. However, if those prayers are not consolidated with deeply entrenched soul-based faith then the prayers are coming from a place that is less than whole. Faith and happiness are inextricably tied together. Look at the people who truly walk their faith: no matter how dire their current situation, their faith centred happiness shines from within and those they come into contact with cannot help but soak up the “happy” rays their aura emits.

The happiest people are rarely those who seemingly have it all, despite outward appearances. The people who live with gratitude are the ones who hold the keys to their own happiness. I cannot count the number of times each day I find myself looking heavenward and mouthing a

silent (or not so silent thank you) to the Universe. Clients often tell me that they cannot think of things to be grateful for beyond the obvious of home, work and family. However, once we start appreciating everything around us and consciously learning to keep gratitude in our hearts, embracing the “living with an attitude of gratitude” mindset, daily life can be quickly transformed.



Happiness is knowing that no matter what fate may throw our way, we can always choose happiness. Be creative in your appreciations of gratitude. Keep that daily gratitude journal or download one of the many gratitude apps available on your smartphone. Witness the little changes that slowly occur, the synchronistic events that confirm you and the Universe are on the same wavelength. Suddenly, the people who come into your life are so much more aligned with you; the people who are not will swiftly and easily fall away. Opportunities will begin to appear almost effortlessly and going with the flow becomes a way of life, not just an idealistic theory.

For me, happiness is seeing wild rabbits on my early morning drive to work, simply being able to drive. Happiness is a glass of red grape juice and a bowl of cashew nuts. Happiness is seeing our kitten turn his nose up at tuna but pounce on the smoked salmon. Happiness is my beautiful eleven-year-old German Shepherd who lovingly shadows my every move. Happiness is knowing that despite the turmoil and political agitation. It is all necessary to enable people to wake up to their true callings, to break free of existing outdated paradigms that are based in fear and, thus, facilitate new ways of being and living. Happiness is being asked to write this article. Happiness is seeing teenagers argue and debate with a wisdom beyond their years. I am convinced this new generation have come to earth “ready-downloaded” with the wisdom of the ages already in their DNA.

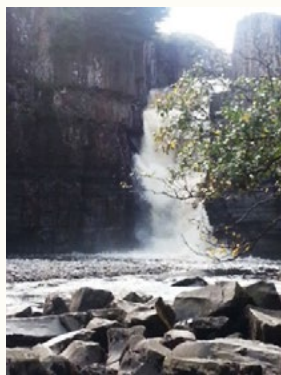
The happiest people are those who live “paying it forward.” These people think nothing of purchasing a coffee for the person standing right behind them in the

Happiness



queue, paying someone's fuel bill at the gas station, or giving away their still valid parking ticket to the next person who drives in. Have you ever tried saying a silent "Bless You" to each and every person you happen to walk or drive past for five minutes or more? Try it and see the warmth that spreads across your heart when you can do this indiscriminately. Making this a regular habit is a wonderful way to live in heart-centred happiness. Add to that volunteering, even an hour a week to a cause close to the heart, not only benefits the community, but increases those feel-good vibes and keeps a person very much in the flow of that all-important heart-centered giving. No one, no matter how busy, is ever *so* busy that they cannot give an hour per week.

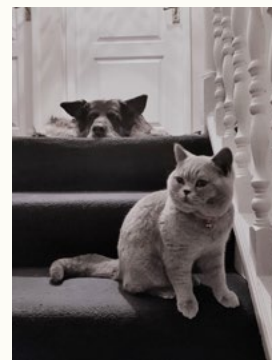
I'm convinced that to live a life filled with those happy moments, it is essential that we submit to our authentic truth. Suffering in a high paying job may make the bank balance look aesthetically-pleasing, but if the soul is slowly withering, screaming for a chance to live joyfully, what good will come of the accumulated wealth? Staying in a relationship because it is a safe, but comfortable, rut ultimately ensures that true happiness is kept at bay. It is so important for our youth to follow their passion, and more importantly to be allowed and encouraged to do so. Forcing them down conventional, traditional career paths, though generally a safe option, is not going to give them the happiness pursuing their passion could have. Perhaps,



it is time to trust both our youth and those with that middle-age calling for change to be guided by their intuition and take one brave new step, allowing the Universe to then facilitate the next.

Of course, it is impossible, and not normal, to be happy all the time. We humans have been blessed to have been given a wide range of emotions to access. Every one of them necessary in experiencing being human in totality. Our ability to feel anger, sadness, joy, anxiety, grief, fear and love, make our soul journeys the valuable and often steep learning curves that they are. Our souls have chosen to evolve and often in ways we cannot even imagine.

Far too often we get consumed by career, family, and the daily humdrum of modern living. But, thankfully, it is often in this daily humdrum that our soul gets the chance to develop. Happiness is knowing that on a *soul level*, it is not about the job we have, the cars we drive, or the vacations we take. It is being aware that our soul has come to embody, or at least attempt



to take on a particular trait it may as yet have been unable or unwilling to do so. It may be the power to forgive and, the more the idea of forgiveness riles us, the more the soul knows it has to finally accept how to do this. Conversely, a soul may want to discard a more negative trait it has carried, a common one being self-sabotage or jealousy—both linked strongly to fear and lack of faith in oneself. Therefore, being in situations where we can use the full range of our emotions is vital when attempting to really live our truth and fulfil our soul's purpose.

So, for all we can choose happiness at any stage in our lives, it is vital we accept that happiness comes from accepting that it is by allowing ourselves to feel all our emotions and honouring them for what they teach us that truly enriches us. Embracing these emotions, no matter how painful and being grateful that we have the opportunity to *live* this human experience in all its multi-colored glory.

Some might say happiness is fleeting. I prefer to believe that happiness is our right and if we have the mindset to choose it, then we can allow it. Our mind permits us to create and attract happy moments, and it is in those moments that we let the light in. It takes as much energy to think happy thoughts as it does to stew with darker ones. Humans are fundamentally synchronised with energies and vibrations. Our thoughts do indeed create our reality, however only when we are in a vibrational match to the Universe. Moreover, is it important to choose happiness? It absolutely is.

Havovie Bomanji is a happily unconventional woman in a tad too many ways. Life Coach with a twist. An outspoken, modern day "witch." An intuitive healer and teacher. Providing clients with the tools to heal, connect with universal light and their higher selves. A mentor for youth offenders, their families, and a Samaritan.



IN PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

Danny Khursigara

This article contains extracts from Danny Khursigara's forthcoming book that is intended to influence and impact our conventional ways of education by incorporating life skill training and knowledge. The author believes this will help us make better life choices.

Everything that happens in our lives stems from a need of some sort. It is essentially the “why” behind the “what.” It is important to know what our needs and motivations are so we can make decisions and take actions that work for us. This can lead to wonderful things, including careers we resonate with, relationships that are healthier and nurturing, and financial decisions that are sound. It is important to note that we do not always recognize what our motivating needs are on a conscious level, but they often dwell within us on a subconscious level.



The reason I believe it is so important for us to understand our needs on an intimate level is because when we are not aware, we cannot make informed decisions in our lives. Likewise, it is also more challenging to evaluate choices and options that are in our best interests, leaving the others behind. One of my mentors, Tony Robbins, has a model which explains six universal needs that propel us—the first four are what he calls the needs of personality and ego, and the last two are the needs of the spirit.

Need # 1: The Need for Certainty and Control

Most people often crave the need for control and certainty in life because it offers the illusion that we can manage all aspects of our lives. This is appealing till such time that certainty is taken away—by way of a job loss, a dissolving relationship, health not holding up, or finances going south. No one can maintain control all the time and in all situations. When this happens, we tend to get off-balance; everything begins to spin and we can't stop its momentum. And, that's when we realize that certainty and control are illusions, at best.

One of my clients has a compelling story that highlights the importance of the illusion of control compared to the deeper, more meaningful need that would lead to genuine fulfillment. She was the president of a high-end fashion label, in charge of distribution for China and Japan. She was exceptional at what she did and held onto that job with all her might, committed to remaining in control no matter what. What was strange about her desire to maintain control through this position was that she wasn't truly passionate about the job. When asked, she mentioned that it would not even make her top-five list. Yet there she was until... she lost her job, sending her to a point where she felt like she was walking a tightrope. Nothing was under her control anymore. Except one thing—following her passion. It so happened that her passion was real estate; everything about being a real estate investor resonated with her. Many times, when things happen that shake up our lives and force us to realize we don't always have control, the best results can happen because of it. The key takeaway is to accept that nothing is certain and that things will happen that are out of your control is necessary.

Need #2: The Need for Uncertainty

The need for uncertainty is a startling one, a paradox, but we all have this to some extent, even if we do not define it so boldly. Just imagine how lackluster our lives would be if we knew everything that would happen every second of the day. Life would be quite boring! There is something quite invigorating about spontaneity and what it offers our lives. Even the most rigid people need to “shake it up” occasionally to feel alive.

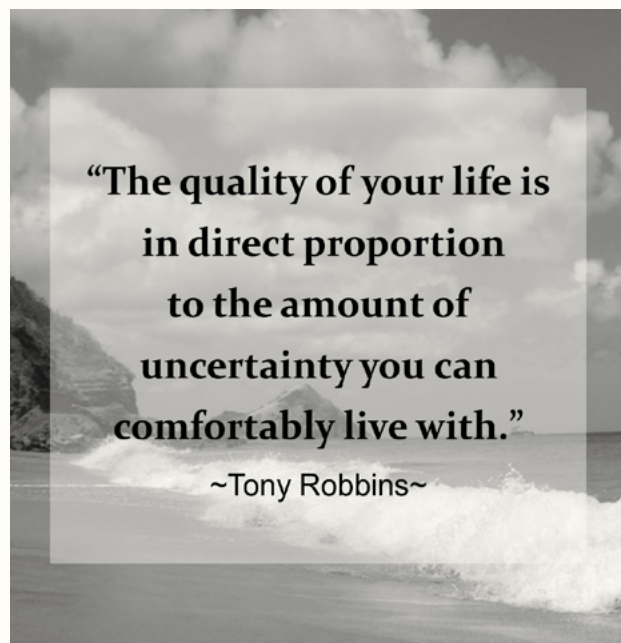
On average, people tend to want a ratio in their lives of 90% certainty and 10% uncertainty. A little, but not too much. If we look at people who went from being good to great, they lived through high levels of uncertainty before



something materialized for them. With the need for uncertainty the takeaway is that risk is in direct proportion to reward. If we don't try to leave our "control zone" we will never create the challenging opportunities that better fulfill our genuine needs.

Need #3: The Need for Power, Prestige, Position, and Significance

This need starts with two questions: when deciding if your driving need is to attain power, significance, or position, is that a valid need to fulfill? And, why do we chase it? In fact, the very word "significance" means separate from, unique, different, more important than others. Often, people make career decisions that are based on money and prestige, seeing them as routes to respect and prosperity. They give you access to friends in high places, more money, and opportunities that are not available to others. This isn't necessarily a bad thing if you love what you do, you're doing it for the right reasons and have worked hard for it. However, when gaining significance, authority or position becomes our driving need, they can derail us into thinking that we are better than others and that, the more significant we are, more people will respect and love us. Therefore, we must be mindful that we never make decisions based solely on this need. The key take-away from the need for power, prestige, and significance is that we can use these opportunities to grow, but we shouldn't place our self-worth as a contributor to mankind in those roles, alone. Use them as gateways to greater thinking. In adversity, you will know who your friends are.



Need #4: The Need for Acquiring Love and Connection

Genuine love and connection, or "unconditional love," cannot be bought. A paradox to the need for significance. Many people believe it can be, but again, it goes back to control and sustainability. One cannot force something to last forever. When we do this, we are creating the illusion of love and connection, while never really attaining it—in other words, *conditional love*.

We may enter a relationship based on attaining power and position, or an ideal that we have of what love will bring you. This may be the starting point, but when something shifts or goes away, what's left? We may enter relationships that are personal, social, or business, for reasons that are related to gaining significance or being attached to someone with significance. At some point, the perceived benefits of such relationships can be challenged. That's when we find out what we have, and sadly, many times it was not what we really needed.

Need #5: The Need for Growth and Need #6: The Need for Contribution

These two needs are intertwined. People who wish to make decisions on the premise that they want to grow and contribute are motivated by these needs. These needs are more sustainable and have the great potential of longevity in one's life because we can continue down that path and contribute toward the process. They supersede the previously mentioned needs. Let me share why.

The need for growth and contribution doesn't come from a place of ego like the previous four needs. Through studying nature and the universal laws that exist within it, we know that nothing that grows or contributes is thrown



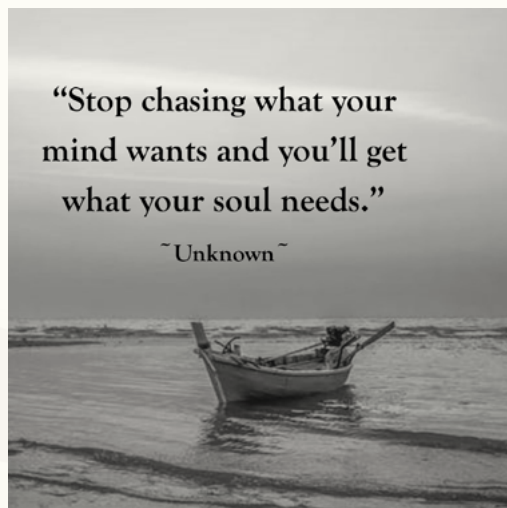
out of the food chain. What does this mean for us? When our driving need comes from a deeper place of growing and contributing and that there's no desire to prove our worth or control everything we tend to feel more fulfilled and confident. Our focus shifts from being driven by a need for certainty and significance to raising the significance of others.

This shift of focus to others is very powerful and as it is happening you are growing and contributing in the process. From this perspective, you can make decisions that are supported by a different need, from ego or from spirit, leading to two very different outcomes. This can be a defining moment. In a world where external factors can be the same, our internal factors are what will make the difference.

Personalities, such as Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, Jr., had significance and certainty, but this was not their driving need. Their driving need was growing and contributing to a cause and an ideology that was bigger than themselves. Though they lived in uncertain times and felt a great deal of uncertainty, it didn't drive them or dissuade them. They are evidence of the potential that exists when legitimate and genuine respect takes place.

Through elevating others by building their significance, showing more love, and embracing our connections to them, we can become a formidable force of change in this world—a source of hope and aspiration for many. And we benefit and are rewarded from this as well. Have you ever felt a wonderful reward from just seeing the genuine smile or joy in someone else's eyes from something you did? Everything is worth it in that moment, whether it was large or small gesture to you because it clearly meant something to them. This link that is forged inspires and motivates, reminding us of why the need for growth and contribution is so powerful. The key takeaway in being motivated to act from the need to either grow or contribute is remembering that nothing that stands still grows—stagnancy neither inspires nor blooms:

An important point to note here is that we cannot get rid of any of these needs, as ego and spirit are part of who we are. They're always there, but how we re-prioritize our top driving needs is what determines our experience and outcomes in life. *The "Why" behind the "What" will determine our life experiences.*



In my opinion, the Zarathushti community's driving need is growth and contribution and that's the reason why we enjoy the benefits of being acknowledged and recognized world-wide—I do take pride in that. But on the flip side, I also think that we are driven by a need for significance—"being unique and separate from." The question to ask ourselves is whether this will help us in terms of longevity and a thriving community for future generations? To demonstrate this point, we simply need to look at where we are now in numbers as compared to where we were before. Our present results are the culmination of the thoughts we thought in the past, the images we held in the past, and the actions we took in the past. In short, if we want a better and more thriving future for our community, we may need to think different thoughts now, hold different images, and take different actions. The habits of thought, behavior, and visualization will continue to provide us what we're currently experiencing. So, if we want something different, we'll have to do something different. And, perhaps, rather than hanging on to the past or current reality, we can shift our focus to our divine unfoldment, our vision, our dream.

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BEING A HAPPINESS MAGNET

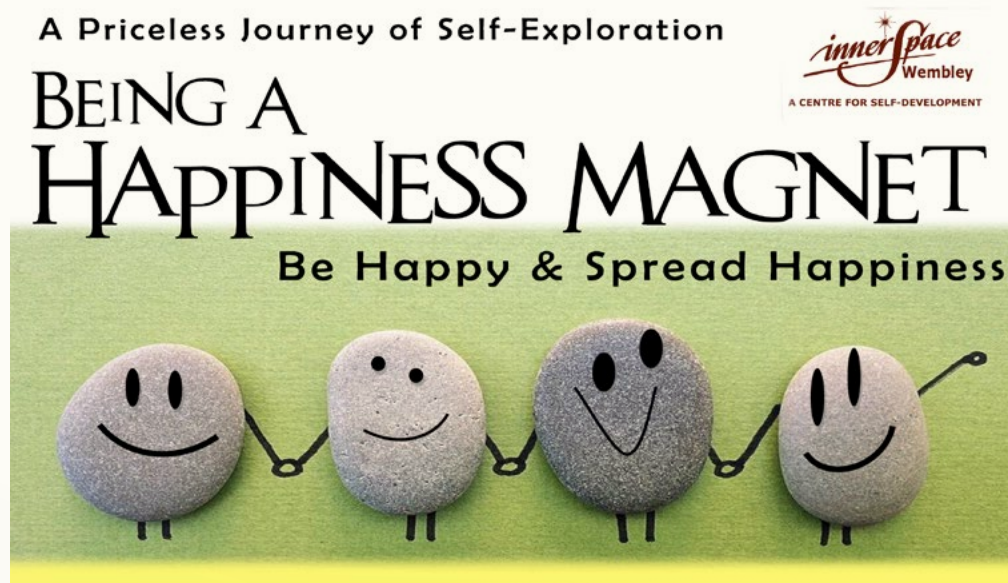
Nawaz Vatcha

The Happiness Project is a program designed by Inner Space Wembley, London, UK, which is run by the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University UK. My personal involvement with this project began at Inner Space, where I have been a student of Raja Yoga meditation for nearly seven years. I have found the practice extremely beneficial in my spiritual journey of self-discovery and self-mastery. I have also studied other courses taught there, such as Overcoming Anger, Positive Thinking, Stress Management, and Promoting Self-Esteem. I am now a regular team member and for the past two years I have also been teaching some of these courses myself.



The Inner Space team have compiled this six-month program about “Being a Happiness Magnet.” It is specifically aimed at young adults between 18 and 40 years. A lot of young adults find today’s world confusing and chaotic. There are overwhelming pressures associated with getting a good education, competition in the workplace, and earning big money, with the accompanying stress related to relationships, mental health issues, and just getting and having more and more of everything.

Somehow, despite this material success there is little inner happiness, joy and contentment. All the accumulated material “stuff,” more and more of everything, somehow fails to bring happiness. In the relentless race to acquire more, something ineffable and intangible has been lost. That inner spark of pure joy, innocence, and inner freedom has been sacrificed. We can see the deep malaise and unhappiness that is widespread across the globe—especially among young adults. It seems that one of the urgent needs of our time is to address this issue and to find some solutions and a way forward to a brighter, happier future.



“Being a Happiness Magnet” is an invitation to young adults from all walks of life, various faiths, and those with no faith at all, who have an interest in spirituality, to explore, enquire, and a desire to “be happy, no matter what.” The aim is to motivate and inspire young people to rise to the challenge of initiating dynamic social change, to make a difference by rediscovering an eternal Happiness deep within and to share it. This program is a platform to explore, share, gain insights, respect, and understanding. The group can then take



these insights and practices out into their families, friends, and communities to build bridges and spread Happiness in a meaningful way.

This program will:

1. Explore spirituality to be Happy as individuals and as a community.
2. Enable participants to share inter-spiritual practices, inner self-exploration, and to celebrate our Happiness together.
3. Explore how to be Happy and stay Happy, no matter what.
4. Include field trips to share new learning in a variety of settings and provide opportunities for sharing Happiness.
5. Provide on-going support to youth-led Happiness projects worldwide.
6. Conclude with a weekend retreat to close the program.

The project is constructed around four strands:

1. Training

This will provide a forum for self-discovery. Discussions on topics such as “Being Myself,” Inner Resources, Purpose, and Meaning will build an understanding of ourselves and each other.

2. Being a Happiness Magnet

This strand will focus on individual inner resources and connecting with the ultimate Source of Happiness. Quality time spent together as a group will increase understanding and help to emerge our deep and latent qualities and resources.

3. Workshops

These will focus on interactive and facilitated conversations. These conversations enable the group to implement practical ways to look at the new learning and to rediscover forgotten inner wisdom and knowledge.

4. Field Trips

These will include visits to prisons, detention centres, refugee camps, and care homes, where there are opportunities to spread and share Happiness in practical way, by befriending, entertaining, listening to, and engaging with people in a positive and uplifting way.

A ZOROASTRIAN PERSPECTIVE ON HAPPINESS

For a Zoroastrian, the goal of life is to achieve *Ushta*. *Ushta* has no single meaning, it is a concept that includes Happiness, Spiritual Wisdom, and Peace. When a person chooses to follow the path of *Asha*, or Order and Truth, and live life as an *Ashavan*, he gains a kind of spiritual confidence and inner Happiness.

This spiritual path is manifested as an ethical life lived in alignment with Zarathushtra’s teachings, encompassed in the three principles of Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds. This quest involves seeking solitude and a space for quiet so that the inner voice is heard, that *Ushta* is realized. Introspection, meditation, and contemplation all involve an individual journey, but that does not mean a life of isolation. It is then manifested in a life lived in productive labor, the fruits of which are shared and in an attitude of benevolence and charity towards all. *Ushta* is visible in the way we work, in the way we serve God’s creations and in bringing Happiness to others.

Happiness



These spiritual practices also serve to quieten the mind so that negative thoughts are replaced with positive thoughts i.e., the Good Mind is developed. This ultimately leads to Good Words and Good Actions which result in Happiness for the self and others.

As proclaimed in the Gathas:

Ushta ahmai yahmai ushta kahmaichit (from Gatha Y. 43.1).

Free translation: (Ushta) Happiness comes to them who bring Happiness to others.

Ushta asti ushta ahmai, hyat ashai vahishtai ashem (from Y. 27.14)

Free translation: Abiding Peace and Happiness is theirs who choose (Asha) goodness for its own sake.

Culturally and socially, this principle of Happiness is evident in the love of good food, good company, a sense of friendship and amity with all, and a self-deprecating sense of humour. No gathering of Zoroastrians can be complete without a feast. This sharing of food enhances the sense of community, togetherness, and comradeship, as well as giving thanks for the bounties of Nature and many blessings of Ahura Mazda we enjoy. The Jashan ceremony is a good example of this.

The concept of charity and philanthropy is an injunction for all Zoroastrians. To share and donate to those less fortunate than ourselves, to act in ways that will enhance another person's life. To give, not just in a material sense, but to give of one's self so that just being present in someone's life is of benefit, to act in ways that cause no harm to anyone and protects the environment. All these codes of ethical conduct make one Happy and help to spread Happiness to all.

In conclusion, in today's turbulent times, humanity's search for Happiness seems to be more elusive than ever. For too long, we have equated Happiness with the short-term and temporary pleasures we all experience but these seldom bring long-lasting benefit. So, Happiness, then, has to be experienced by enquiry and study of our inner world, our spiritual world.

The quotes from the Gathas above clearly point to the path of Happiness. Happiness is not to be found "out there," it isn't even something to search for, but an innate and inherent quality of our very souls. God has gifted each of us souls with pristine, powerful, and positive attributes. Happiness is one of them.

A project such as the Happiness Project is reaching out and providing a forum for people from all walks of life to participate and study, learn and then share new insights and knowledge with others. It is my hope that young people everywhere will benefit from opportunities such as these and move forward together to fashion a brave new world of Peace and Happiness.

Ushta Te

Happiness be unto you.

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<http://wembley.innerspace.org/happiness-magnet>

Further Information available at

Website: <http://wembley.innerspace.org/>

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DESIGNING HAPPINESS

Sheeraz Wania

When I was invited to contribute an article for the Summer 2017 issue of this journal on the theme of happiness, it got me thinking about what happiness means to me and what it implies to be “happy.” In this article, I will use “happy” in quotation marks, as I feel that one tends to use the term at times rather interchangeably with many other similar emotions and feelings.

Writing this piece did not come easy to me as I find the whole concept of happiness to be illusive and slippery and, hence, I decided to embark on a micro-research journey that included doing some reading and talking to people on the street, among other more personal undertakings.

Being a graphic designer by profession, I tend to look at most things from that perspective and I truly believe that everything around us is by design, consciously or subconsciously. As individuals with varied personalities, we design our own lives and, hence, we design our unique “happy” in context. As a result, I decided to title this article “designing happiness” and discern how each of us, in our own special way, design and engineer our personalized path to this intangible phenomenon.

Embarking on this pursuit, I decided to read a book by Gretchen Rubin called “The Happiness Project.” My reason for reading this particular book was two-fold; first, because Rubin also seems to be trying to get a grip on this whole concept of “happiness” and conducted year-long research on the topic, and second, I liked the cover’s design. Yes, I often pick up books based on their cover design; it is, again, the designer in me that compels me.

The premise of the book sounded interesting, the book started out to be a light read, but within a few pages I realized it was not what I had hoped for. I did not enjoy the book for several reasons—in terms of writing style, it was awkwardly set up. It also gave tips for what to do each month that made little sense to me, and its concept of

“happiness” seemed trivial and something that could be achieved via a to-do list. Like most, I was searching for a deeper, probably a more profound meaning of the term “happiness” and what the book offered was actions, such as going to sleep earlier, starting a collection, and getting rid of junk. Overall, I found the book to be way too simplistic in its approach, focusing more on short-term fixes that could, no doubt, lead to fleeting pleasure. Having said that, it was reading this book or, to be precise, after skimming beyond page 85 that I realized how we generally focus on our actions in the attainment of “happiness”—then, I started drawing a deeper link to “happiness” and its interrelatedness to the key doctrine of our religion: good thoughts, good words, good deeds.

According to research [<https://projecthappiness.com/science-of-happiness/>] 40% of our happiness is intentional, 50%, is genetically disposed, and 10% is due to our circumstances. So, we have a substantial control over our own “happiness” and it has a lot to do with the choices we make and being mindful about the same. With this information in hand, I decided to ask several people what makes them “happy.” This came easy to me as I like getting into conversations with random strangers from various walks of life during my daily commute, the people I meet on my way to work or sitting in a



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café, and even some wonderful individuals who have decided to make the street their home. Talking to them made me realize that the term “happiness” can mean different things to various people, each of them manifesting their “happiness” in their own manner.

One such person whose story stood out for me was the woman who distributes a free newspaper at my early morning streetcar stop. I see her daily. She starts her day at 6:00 am, standing outside, often in Toronto’s snow and sub- zero temperatures. She would always be in good spirits, greeting everyone who passed by with a genuine smile on her face. With this project occupying my heart and my head, I decided to ask her how she managed to be always so “happy.” What she told me left me thinking a million thoughts. She said that she hoped her positivity would make everyone’s day a wee bit better and, in turn, this would have a domino effect on the people they met and, hopefully, the world would be a better place one day.

I came back inspired, but the more I thought about her the more I wondered whether she was genuinely, deep down, “happy” or was this positivity a façade to cover some more troubling realities of her life. In all, her positive attitude did help (I know first-hand) to make someone else’s life a bit better and, therefore, it was important—as Voltaire would say, to “not let the perfect be the enemy of good” and to continue doing the little things in the hope to have a more profound impact.

Today’s world is full of grim news and depressing global events; the media’s continued re-echoing does not help. When I started looking for books and readings on happiness, I found it amazing how many have been penned in the last decade. To cancel out this angst, we, at times, live behind a façade to cover up the pain and negativity that enters our lives. That makes me dispute if true “happiness” is about putting on a happy face and staying positive in all situations, and if it is deeper than reading feel-good books, watching inspirational documentaries, meditating and praying, and keeping gratitude jars (I have one and I love it). By all means, let’s do all of that, but not at the cost of losing a grip on reality. Let’s not always pretend problems don’t exist; let’s try and solve them. This world needs positivity, but more so it needs action to make it a better place. After speaking to her for some time I realized that my lovely lady on the street was doing both. She was hiding her personal sorrows behind that veil of cheerfulness, but, at the same time, her actions, with the hope to make this world a better place, were well-placed and impactful indeed.

These experiences bring me to a personal story that has always stayed with me. Many moons ago, when I was a little girl, my aunt once said, referred to the “good thoughts, good words, and good deeds” doctrine of our faith, that good deeds or actions are the easiest to carry out. Good words follow, as we generally are more aware of what we do and how we speak; but, good thoughts are the toughest to accomplish, as our thoughts are not visible and so we don’t feel the need to always inspect them. She said that it is our thoughts, more than our deeds and our words that truly define us. It is when we have “good thoughts” that we have reached the pinnacle of being good human beings.

Many people believe that true or profound “happiness” happens when we can strike a balance between the small everyday pleasures of life and the ability to attain higher purpose and meaning in life—what Maslow calls self-actualization, which he placed at the top of his hierarchy of needs. That leads us to the idea that we accomplish self-actualization or profound deep happiness when we attain higher purpose, beyond small everyday pleasures.

It was funny, but one thing that I realized in my quest, and being more mindful about the idea of happiness, was that I felt happier when I gave something rather than received, whether it was love, praise, positivity, help in any way. It is interesting that even our religion states that “happiness comes to them who bring happiness to others.”

So, the conclusion I drew from this little exercise was that good deeds and actions resulted in me feeling good about myself at that moment. I basked in its warmth and it made me feel good. I made a difference to some lives in some small way perhaps, and that is a definite plus. Trying to use good words always, not be harsh with people around me, not to say demeaning things about anyone, in the smallest of ways, not to let the worst of me take over in an argument; those gave me more long-term peace and contentedness. However, I believe that it will be to control my thoughts, to try and think the best of people and work towards overcoming the negative aspects of my own personality—not for anyone else, but for myself—will lead to true and more sustained state of “happiness.”

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PASSING ON HAPPINESS TRAITS

Diana Dinshaw

We only need to turn on the TV or skim through Facebook these days to be inundated with news that we can identify using a sad or an angry emoji. As adults, we sometimes forget that children get affected by the mood of the environment as well. On top of that, they face pressures of trying to fit in, struggles with school work and grades, expectations of looking fashionable, and troubles with fickle friendships. Sometimes, we are unable to sympathize with how difficult children's problems can be to them because we look at their problems with adult eyes and, having grown up in a different time, we are unable to relate to their unique struggles in this social media era when their life mirrors a reality show, whether they want it or not.



Having worked as a teacher and supervisor of teachers for more than three decades, I can proudly say that most teachers want to foster an environment where students can be happy, engaged, and responsible, along with achieving their academic goals. Unfortunately, the testing culture in our education system constrains them so students' well-being becomes something separate from the curriculum.

Carol Gerber Allred, President/Founder of the Positive Action Program, (www.positiveaction.net) has designed their program based on 26 years of research, evaluation, and development, and has implemented it in more than 13,000 schools. The Positive Action curriculum covers the following concepts, which, not surprisingly, are consistent with the Zarathushti principle of *huvarshtha* or good deeds.

- The importance of doing positive actions to feel good about yourself.
- Positive actions for a healthy body (such as nutrition, exercise, and sleep).
- Positive actions for the intellect (such as thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills).
- Positive actions for self-management (such as managing time, energy, emotions, and other personal resources).
- Positive actions for getting along with others (such as treating others fairly, kindly, and respectfully).
- Positive actions for being honest with yourself and others (such as taking responsibility, admitting mistakes, and not blaming others).
- Positive actions for improving yourself continually (such as setting and achieving goals)."



However, to ensure that the children are emotionally well, the burden cannot only be on the school. Parents at home need to play their part. The first piece of advice for parents, particularly those from our community who place such onerous significance on high grades, is to avoid the "myths of success." Emma Seppala, the author of "The Happiness Track," and science director of Stanford University's Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education, coined the term "myths of success" to refer to the erroneous belief that stress is a part of success, that perseverance at all costs is a character trait of successful people, and that personal weaknesses must be hidden.

HAPPINESS AT HOME AND SCHOOL

Children who are happy at home tend to be happy at school and this helps them do better academically. Seppala said, "Happy kids show up at school more able to learn because they tend to sleep better and may have healthier immune systems. Happy kids learn faster and think more creatively. Happy kids tend to be more resilient in the face of failures.

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Happy kids have stronger relationships and make new friends more easily.”

She also suggests that parents should become role models of “happy” behavior rather than just paying lip service to it. Here are some suggestions based on Seppala’s work:

- Model resilience by sharing examples of when you failed or overcame challenges.
- Strive for improvement, but avoid self-criticism because it focusses on the negative.
- Just as you should be kind to yourself, you should model kind behavior to others. Encourage children to share and be supportive of others.
- Learn to do nothing. Western societies focus on high excitement and being on the go all the time. Although it is good to be engaged and energized, particularly in outdoor activities, don’t schedule your day to the last minute or feel guilty if your children don’t have something to occupy themselves. Being bored isn’t necessarily a bad thing. It allows for creativity and insight by encouraging self-reflection. One of the best things you can do for your child is to have “no screen” times.
- Teach stress-coping strategies like breathing exercises. One of the easiest for young children is for them to hold up one hand and use the index finger of the other hand to trace their breathing pattern by moving their finger up while inhaling deep slow breaths and moving their finger down while slowly breathing out.
- Get outside and move. Just walking out in nature, what the Japanese call “forest bathing,” makes our brains start producing the endorphins that make us happy.
- Find time for prayer or meditation. There is abundant evidence about how meditation causes changes in our brain chemistry that produce feelings of calm and well-being, but you don’t have to do formal meditation if that isn’t your cup of tea. Teach the children to use their prayer time as a time to “listen to Ahura Mazda” rather than race through the kusti ritual.



Nelson Mandela said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” We can help change the world, one child at a time.

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Diana Dinshaw has been teaching students and supporting special education teachers for almost three decades in the USA and Pakistan. Diana has presented at the Teacher’s Institute for the Arizona Department of Education and is currently a Special Education Specialist for a network of charter schools in Phoenix, Arizona.



COMFORT IN FOOD

“There is no sincerer love than the love of food,” said George Bernard Shaw. How true that is. Love of food manifests itself in many ways and like most things in life has a positive as well as negative connotation. For so many of us, food and happiness go hand in hand, as it evokes feelings of love and comfort because of the people we eat it with or the occasion we are celebrating. However, for others, even the term “comfort food” is associated with what makes them feel better at times of sadness or sickness.

Niloufer Mavalvala



FOOD AND MEMORIES

Food recreates emotionally charged memories; while some smells and tastes may awaken your senses to a favourite kitchen, like a particular spice in grandma’s home, some smells and tastes may remind you of your least favourite foods as a child, something that you secretly gave away at school.



For me, the aroma of my favourite curry brings me back to the days of a lovely childhood, of family lunches. Then, there’s the familiar aroma of Mutton Biryani, which instantly brings back with nostalgia the wonderful family picnics my uncle would organise on a Sunday, driving down to the beach for the day. Remembering the routine of picking up the freshly prepared biryani from a cave like home, always seems to flood my mind with all the cheeriest remembrances affiliated to the day out. To me a very happy place indeed.

Many memories of meals are associated with special occasions, like the wedding or *navjote* feast. The thought of a delectable Dhansak will always trigger my happiest memories of attending annual *ghambars* (congregational meals) at the Karachi Parsi Institute on scorching summer days with my cousins and friends. Despite the stifling heat, sitting outdoors under the skies, among the chatter of a few hundred Parsis; row after row, we patiently awaited for our banana leaves to be filled with a meticulously orchestrated, multi-course meal. We often felt trickles of sweat rolling down our backs as we wished for the wind to pick up and give us a moment of cooling relief.

And, it is quite an undisputed fact that, for many wedding guests, the recollection of a bride’s dress, hairdo, or jewellery came in second to the food they ate and the good time they had sitting with friends. Reminiscing even a decade later, we can often recall an outstandingly delicious cake, that “something different” menu, or the taste of champagne; which, back in the day, was a rare treat. On the flip side, we remember catering that went wrong, which are the source of just as much chatter! After all, these are memories attached to food, however unfortunate.

FOOD AND MOOD

But, what does eating food really have to do with emotion-evoking memories? There is ample evidence that “mood and food” are scientifically associated. The right food scientifically enhances moods effectively, eating the wrong foods may work negatively on some people. If we eat junk food, specifically called that for a reason, not only does it pack on the pounds, but it also make us hyper or irritable. Science has shown that chocolate has the ability to improve our mental

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well-being, as well as tasting delicious—a definite win-win. However, this is only the case for pure chocolate, without all the additives; not candy bars, which are loaded with sugar and contain chemicals called phenylethylamine, anandamide, and theobromine, which are mood pick-me-ups.

FOOD AND MEDICINE

When we wish our friends and families “health and happiness” on special occasions, our wishes are intrinsically linked with food. Hippocrates (c. 460—c. 370 BC), considered the Father of Medicine, demonstrated his awareness of the link when he said, “Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.” The Renaissance of ancient cuisines has unearthed a cornucopia of spices, most of which are beneficial to health. The oldest spices are turmeric and ginger. A part of the same family tree, these two roots have been in existence as a healing agent since the beginning of medicine; (i.e. Siddha Medicine). In spite of being known to humans since time immemorial, it has been only recently that North Americans have included spices as an integral part of the healing process. A natural anti-inflammatory, turmeric pills have only recently been recommended to people with a strong history of cancer. However, in the sub-continent, turmeric is revered as a cure-all, especially after an accident. It is used to stop bleeding, prevent blood clots, and even given to babies after a fall. Fresh ginger is commonly used in tea to help cure a persistent cough. Other spices, nuts, and flavourings used in our food are also beneficial. Lemon has properties that cleanse our organs and help balance our bodily alkalinity. Cinnamon from Indonesia; cloves and peppercorns from the Caribbean Islands; saffron from Iran and Spain; garlic from China, India, and USA; and chillies from Mexico and globally play an integral part in keeping our bodies pumped with the right antioxidants, which help boost our immune systems. All forms of pomegranates, from juice to molasses, help cleanse our blood. Nuts are also an important part of healthy cuisines and are nourishing, when eaten in small quantity. The abundant use of walnuts in Persian food helps keep our brains sharp—have you noticed that walnuts resemble the human brain when dissected. "A coincidence, I do not think so".



FOOD AND MULTICULTURALISM

With cities and communities exposed to multiple cultures through new restaurants, food fairs, street foods etc., it seems food is what everyone is always talking about. Social Media is bursting with food blogs, Facebook pages and groups of foodies where recipes are freely exchanged. Established journalists are trending toward becoming specialised in foods of the world, undertaking an ongoing food revolution that is bringing about change on many levels—such as eating habits. Having access to varieties of grains, pulses, spices, fruits, vegetables, and other ingredients has made the food discovery journey so much easier. What was once considered exotic is now just an interesting ingredient, a result of the global criss-cross migration in recent decades. Perhaps it is access to cheap and frequent travel that has made us more adventurous, or the numerous food programs on television and, of course, the wonderful food photography and filmography that stimulates our taste buds—as we eat with our eyes, too.

Undeniably, food brings us joy, builds friendships, promotes fabulous foodie discussions, and, most importantly, creates cultural awareness. Food provides a wonderful opportunity to embrace our differences and connect with people from every corner of the world. Chances are it will leave a smile on your face and a warm glow in the heart. After all, food is happiness.

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AROUND THE WORLD

I've always considered myself a happy person. But, since I started travelling and really seeing the world, I've had moments of happiness that would rival my previous experiences. I remember being on a trek in Nepal, it might have been the second day of my seven-day trip to the Himalayas. I had been walking for a few hours without a single thought in my mind. I was at peace with the nature around me; the lush valleys, the green hills, the stony path ahead. There was no obtrusive noise to be heard—no traffic, no phone calls, no construction. Just maybe a few goats bleating nearby. Next, I remember looking up and seeing the first snowy peak peeking out from beyond the hills. It was truly an incredible sight for someone who had always imagined the Himalayas as part of an old, mystical tale. I stood there with my friends staring at the distant snow blowing off the top of the mountain. We must have appeared strange to the local villagers with our smiling, dazed look. But, at that moment, I can say I was completely happy. Now, even thinking back to that memory brings a smile to my face. I've had countless similar experiences on my travels, which is why I believe travelling creates happiness.



Scientifically, it is thought that a good travel experience releases dopamine in our brains, the chemical that makes us feel happy. So, when you access that memory in the future, it brings the same effect. I've noticed that even experiences, which seemed bad at the time, still make me smile when I tell the story or am reminded of the thought (like when I had my backpack with valuable items stolen from right next to me). I think it's because I almost can't believe it is my story to tell and I feel a sense of accomplishment having gained something from it—tips for future travel. When you land in a new country, without knowing the language or the culture or what to really expect, you face an exciting challenge. It might seem daunting at first, but it's an opportunity to learn something new, to meet interesting people, and to see life differently. The more time you spend in a place, the more you discover. Even if you're somewhere for only a few days, you might end up falling in love with the place and wanting to return. In some cases, you might never leave!

Some might argue that you're only happier when you travel because you're worry-free and away from the reality of your life. It is true that a vacation is just that—a break from reality. It's a chance to fully relax without the stress of work or paying bills. Whatever the reason, it's the chance to travel that made you happier. And again, you can think back to the time you were lying on the beach with a drink in your hand and feel happy.

We are constantly striving for ultimate happiness, to be happy in all aspects of life. Nobody wants to feel sad or upset, so we try our hardest to avoid these feelings. What ends up happening is that we look for instant gratification, and in our modern world of technology, that's quite easy to get. We go online and read about a celebrity's glamorous life so we can forget about ours. We buy a new cellphone so we can have the most updated apps to make our life easier. We watch Netflix so we can relax and numb our minds. We don't even have to leave our homes to go shopping—if we stay within our comfort zone as much as possible, we are safer. The problem is that the happiness we feel in all these situations is temporary. Of course, we can't be completely happy all the time as sadness is still a part of life. But, we can create a stash of happy memories in our brain



Happiness



that we can access at any time. Those happy memories can come from many different things, like spending time with family and friends. Whatever it is, they are created from experiences, not things. And travelling is an experience like no other. There will never be a shortage of places to go. It doesn't necessarily mean you must spend thousands of dollars going halfway around the world every time. Just giving yourself a goal of going somewhere new even as little as once a year is good enough. Take a weekend trip to a town you haven't visit. Go on a day trip to a national park. Get in your car and just drive.

It's the sense of adventure to look forward to that will help you get through your day-to-day routine. If you restrict yourself to your home all the time, you can predict the stories that will occur. You burnt your dinner, you slept in through your alarm, your kid missed the bus again, etc. The most exciting thing might be that there's a new season of "Game of Thrones" starting soon. Of course, we can't expect life to be full of adventure and excitement at every turn, but, like I've said, travel is what gets you closest to that. When you travel, things become unpredictable. Even if you plan your trip out to a T, something is bound to happen that you didn't account for. This shouldn't make you nervous to travel, instead you should just go with the flow. Travelling gives you the opportunity to live in the moment and take things in stride. If you feel yourself getting frustrated on a trip, take a deep breath and look around. Ground yourself to the present feeling because it will pass and then you'll be wishing you were back in Indonesia stuck in the muddy road on your motorbike in pouring rain with no one else in sight (one of my best travel memories, by the way).

So, whatever your style of travel—drinking pina coladas in a pool at a tropical resort or sleeping in a closet to save money while backpacking—go and do it, as much as possible. Trust me, once you start, it's nearly impossible to stop. **



Danny Bamboat studied Hospitality and Tourism and works in the hotel industry. He started his own tour operating company (Building Adventure Minds Travels BAMtravels)) from his own passion for travelling and living abroad. Besides taking people on tours, he enjoys the outdoors, eating, drinking, and living life.

Happiness



IF YOU'RE HAPPY,

AND YOU KNOW IT...

Vera Dinshaw Springett



The idea of “being happy” is driven into our psyche from a very young age. Whether it’s through infant songs and nursery rhymes that tell us to clap our hands and stomp our feet for happiness (despite how we really feel), or the joy we experience from watching cheery cartoon characters generated by master marketers, like Disney. As humans, we strive for happiness.



Just like any other emotion, happiness is often superficially derived by the marketing industry. Professionals within the multiple channels of marketing such as advertising, public relations, journalism, and more, use persuasive words thoughtfully juxtaposed against powerful imagery to illustrate how consumers should—and will—feel about their purchase, emotional or otherwise. After all, evoking a reaction is the bread-and-butter of an industry that thrives on exposing human vulnerabilities and creating the emotional consumers we are. Quite brilliant.

Similarly, as emotional beings, we also attempt to create our own happiness, every day, in every way. We buy flowers to brighten up a room—and our mood. We hang pictures in our homes and workspaces to lift our spirits. We watch movies to laugh, cry, feel excited, or become romantic. We visit museums to feel informed and inspired. We even pray to religious figurines and images for good luck, good health, and happiness. All this, and so much more, for the sake of fulfilment and well-being.

But is it all just a set-up? Are we all simply buying into the image of happiness? For most of us, it’s unknowingly so.

While there are many, there are three ways images can audaciously manipulate us into feigned happiness.

SHOWING SKIN

It’s competitive out there. Promoting sexuality, even for a product that’s entirely non-sexual, shows you’ve got skin in the game. Why? Because, as the saying goes, sex sells. And, achieving sales goals is the bottom line for any business today.

Imagine a bottle of water for sale. Now picture a print ad for this water bottle in a tourist brochure. The image: a long-haired, bikini-clad beauty drinking seductively from the bottle of water, while posing under a picturesque waterfall. The headline reads something to the effect of “Water never looked this good.” With a scandalous call to action of “Experience the fountain of youth.”

It all seems harmless, right? Right. Except for the tourists, young and old, who are on their way to a hot spring or hike through a national forest or park. This fabricated image, strategically placed in a popular section of the brochure, will naturally persuade the purchase of water bottles at the next stop. Regardless of age, men and women will experience different emotions from the product’s purchase. Visually, this ad causes the release of hormones that subconsciously produce positive feelings about the product once it is seen and purchased in a store. Either way, both genders will be

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equally “happy” about their purchase. That’s just how it works. And that’s how marketers have perfected the art of exploiting sexuality to both men and women, in one ad, to make the sale.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

Ever watch those commercials about how your small monthly donation can save the lives of starving children in Africa, or mistreated animals? That’s what marketers do. They often manipulate video clips and images to build emotions around the causes you may care about. They may even offer you a complimentary t-shirt or canvas bag to make sure you feel good about your donation. In turn, you may proudly sport the t-shirt or bag in public. But, in all honesty, you’ve just provided free advertising and publicity for their “cause.”

In some cases, it’s a fair-and-square trade. One good thing for another. You did your research. The organization was legit. And you experienced immense joy in helping and making a difference. Well done! Your happiness is well-deserved.

But, that’s just it. To make sure your donation—and happiness—is in good hands, make sure you thoroughly vet the causes to which you donate. It’s one thing to fall prey to the messaging and images marketers use to catch you off-guard and cause you to donate emotionally, not rationally. Always donate to a cause where administrative (salaries, fundraising, etc.) costs are roughly 20-25% of revenues; if the charity spends much more on admin, you might consider an alternative. After all, your donation is to help the end recipient; you and they should be happy. Not so much. (See <https://www.charitywatch.org/charitywatch-criteria-methodology> for evaluation criteria and stats of major charities.)

KIDS COME FIRST

The oldest trick in the book. From the Gerber baby to the precocious little girl in the famed Welch’s Grape Juice ad, children will always find a way to melt your heart and remind you to pick their favorite brands at the store. And advertisers know it.

Granted, kids are a strategic move. They are often a go-to for advertisers when it comes to making brands stand out. From their friendly charm to unique voices and characteristics, visually, kids leave a lasting impression on viewers. In fact, their uninhibited qualities can easily take consumers through a range of emotions, sad and anxious to happy and worry-free, within a 15, 30 or 60-second television ad, print ad or digital ad. Quite different from the feelings stirred up by luscious blondes and freezing puppies.

For example, which parent can resist watching a beautiful child happily scarfing down a bowl of cereal? It’s every picky child’s parents’ dream-come-true—and now a must-have cereal brand added to their grocery list. Better yet, imagine a commercial or print ad of a sick child who now feels better thanks to a popular new strawberry-flavored, syrupy drug. It’s enough to make a parent or family member run out, purchase the product and do whatever it takes to make their own child feel better as soon as possible. The image of a child happy or suffering invokes so many feelings. It’s only human nature. But are brands exploiting people, especially parents, with these conjured-up images? Definitely.

So, there you have it. Our everyday lives are so inundated by pictures and depictions of what happiness should look like that the line, between what’s true happiness versus what’s not, has been blurred a little. A little more than a little, actually.

As humans, our gut is our strongest instinct. Yet, we are easily influenced by the media, brands, and the images they convey, all in the pursuit of instant gratification—and happiness. But, it is up to us to weed out the imposters, so we can focus on leading more meaningful lives.

Vera Dinshaw Springett is a Senior Copywriter and Creative Lead with 15+ years of combined advertising agency and in-house branding experience. Originally from Pakistan, Vera pursued a BA in Journalism and Mass Communication with a double-major in Advertising and English from Drake University. She then completed an MS in Integrated Marketing Communications from Roosevelt University in Chicago, where she now works and resides with her husband and daughter.



AY CHEESE! TIPS FOR A HAPPY SMILE

Shanaya Kadkhodayan

Mark Twain once wrote, “Wrinkles should merely indicate where smiles have been.” A smile is among the simplest of all human expressions, so much so that even a baby with their limited comprehension is able to smile. A baby’s smile, just like its love, could be considered the purest form, for it is without reserve or inhibition. A baby does not worry about how it looks and whether it has teeth or not—a baby simply smiles when happy. And therein lies the key to happiness. A truly happy smile can only manifest when a person is confident and free of self-consciousness.

A smile is a powerful tool. It can brighten a room. It can change a life. It implies more than just happiness—it shows kindness, care, love, and so much more. Mother Theresa, in her Nobel Lecture, highlighted how a smile is the beginning of love. If a smile can have such an impact it seems logical that we make sure that when we smile, we are offering the best possible smile, regardless of the situation.

A smile has several components—the emotional, as well as the physical, including the lips and teeth. Smooth, moisturized lips, and healthy gums and teeth can make all the difference between a beautiful, unreserved smile and one that seems guarded. Being comfortable with our mouth’s appearance helps us to smile confidently and hold nothing back.



Maintaining a Confidently Happy Smile

Caring for your teeth is simple—all one must do is brush twice a day. Not less. Not more. Floss at any opportunity and make sure you don’t skip your routine dental check-ups. While most people make it a point to brush in the morning, brushing at night often seems unnecessary and troublesome. However, most people do not realize that brushing at night is as, if not more, important than brushing in the morning. The reason being that, physiologically, the rate of saliva flow decreases while you’re asleep, which means the *rate of clearance* (how much you swallow) of bacteria is lower. Brushing at night helps in two ways: it takes off any remnant food particles that maybe present on your teeth and gums and it helps reduce the bacteria in your mouth. Therefore, by eliminating as many bacteria as possible after your last meal and before you sleep, you greatly reduce the chance of tooth decay or gum diseases that these bacteria could cause.

While brushing provides numerous benefits, it is also a mildly abrasive activity. The typical toothpaste contains an abrasive ingredient, which with the friction from your brush, provides a mildly abrasive action that helps clean and polish your tooth enamel. Therefore, while it is imperative that you use them synergistically to remove tenacious colonies of bacteria attached to every surface of your teeth, overdoing it either by brushing too often or too vigorously can result in the loss of enamel. Like time, enamel once lost, can never be replaced. Brushing twice a day and with a soft bristled tooth brush (unless otherwise specified by your dentist) is the perfect way to care for your pearly whites.

Brushing technique matters more than frequency. If the wrong technique is adopted, you can cause more harm than benefit. Improper techniques most commonly result in receding gums and an excessive abrasion of tooth structure, which can result in hypersensitivity. During your next visit to the dentist, ask if the brushing and flossing techniques you use are correct. If not, request her/him to demonstrate the best method for you. Toothbrush bristles are great at cleaning most surfaces of your teeth, but are limited in their coverage of the areas in between teeth. The only way to remove the bacteria from those hidden areas is by flossing. Again, technique matters more than frequency!

A good practice would be to visit a dentist and get a checkup and professional cleaning done at least once every six months. There are nooks and crannies in your mouth that the toothbrush will not reach and these act as zones for the bacteria to flourish. A professional cleaning eliminates the bacterial buildup that can harden on the surface of the teeth, which cannot be removed by routine brushing and flossing. Failure to remove these can lead to chronic infections and reactions in the gums, which could cause them to recede accompanied by bone loss and possible tooth loss.

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Visiting a dental clinic also gives the hygienists and the dentists a chance to find any decay. Dealing with decay as soon as it is diagnosed is extremely important. If left untreated and uninhibited, decay will continue through the enamel and the inner layers of the tooth, affecting the nerve inside the tooth. Ouch! Apart from the pain that one may experience at this stage, if bacteria continues to multiply within the tooth, they may slowly infect the surrounding supporting structures and bone eventually causing swelling, fever, and enlarged lymph nodes. If you get to this point, you will most certainly tell yourself that you wish you had proactively dealt with the issue six months, before when it was sensitive to cold and sweets. At this stage, a root canal or extraction is the only option; the former costing nearly 10 times the price of a simple filling, the other resulting in losing a tooth. One step closer to becoming *boka* (toothless). Get the filling done, now!



Another common dental problem that could affect your happy smile is stains and yellow teeth. Drinking excessive amounts of tea, coffee, wine, pop, and/or smoking are some of the many causes for stained teeth, which are most noticeable on your lower front teeth. Stains tend to manifest along the gum line, creating an environment for bacteria to colonize and affect your gums. You can prevent them from occurring by reducing exposure to the causative agents. The only way to eliminate stains is a round of professional cleaning.

Consider a “Smile Makeover” to Enhance Your Happy Smile

If your teeth are yellow, despite having a meticulous oral hygiene routine, the problem is not major and often just means that the shade of your dentine (the inner layer of the tooth) is visible through the enamel. Your dentine has a different shade, thickness, and opalescence, as well as a different outer enamel color, than anyone else's. The final shade of your teeth is a combination of the shades of your dentine and enamel. A simple way of addressing yellow teeth is a smile makeover, which may involve a professional tooth whitening or dental veneers. Dental veneers are placed on the front surfaces of the teeth and they can be customized for any size, shape, or color to give you that perfect happy smile. As appealing as tooth whitening may sound or as tempting as getting a perfect smile with a new set of veneers may seem, the truth is, each type of make-over has its pros and cons. It is important for you discuss these options with your dentist and make an informed decision regarding such procedures. As a general rule, if you feel like certain aspects of your smile, such as the color of your teeth or one that is out of place, is the reason for you being self-conscious and not smiling, then a smile makeover may be just the thing for you.

Another common problem that stops you from spreading cheer with your smile is having bad breath or halitosis. Halitosis can be caused by several problems, some of which are present in the mouth, while others may be a manifestation of a more systemic problem. Most halitosis problems originating in the mouth can be remedied by meticulously brushing and flossing your teeth, coupled with a gentle tongue cleaning. If the condition persists, discuss the issue with your dentist at your next visit. Your dentist may recommend a professional cleaning with a general evaluation. Some systemic problems that cause halitosis may be easily identified through routine tests and can be easily dealt with following their diagnosis.

Enjoy Your Confident Happy Smile

Having and keeping your lovely smile does require a bit of work. A daily brushing and flossing habit, a little care, and a routine checkup can go a long way in preserving your teeth and your beautiful smile. To quote a man who made more people smile than any other—Charlie Chaplin—“I have many problems in life, but my lips don’t know that—they always smile.”

Shanaya Kadkhodayan is a dentist settled in Mississauga, Ontario.

Happiness



THE GIFT OF SELF-CARE

Nusheen Goshtasbi

”Should the cabin lose pressure, oxygen masks will drop from the overhead area. Please place the mask over your own mouth and nose before assisting others.”

We hear flight attendants announce this over the loudspeaker right before we take off. It seems simple enough; take care of yourself before helping other passengers, even if those other passengers are your family members. It makes sense, if you are not healthy and breathing then how can you help those around you? Caring for yourself, or self-care, is an integral part of regulating both one’s physical and emotional well-being. It is a gift you give yourself.

Today, self-care is defined as various actions that an individual will take to take care of oneself physically, emotionally, socially, and/or spiritually. There are some self-care tasks that are intrinsic human needs, such as breathing air, eating, and drinking water. Today, self-care also refers to relaxation and de-stressing activities such as meditation, yoga, exercising, etc. Taking time out of one’s day for these self-care activities has been linked to higher levels of emotional regulation and self-compassion.



Self-care originally caught on as a medical concept. Medical professionals started teaching self-care to patients to help them improve their quality of life by implementing healthy habits—meditation, walking, and improving nutritional intake. Under the guidance of a medical professional, many patients could better manage their medical conditions and improve their autonomy and happiness. Patients with chronic conditions, such as high blood pressure, diabetes and psychiatric problems, could gain more satisfaction in their lives through these practices.

One of the ways self-care is practiced is through mind-



fulness. I recently took a course called Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn developed the MBSR program 30-years ago. In this course, we were trained on how to implement mindfulness activities to bring one’s attention to the present. Too often we are lost in our thoughts and worries that we forget to be alive in the present. Through guided body meditation, mindful eating, and yoga postures we could cultivate mindfulness in day-to-day activities. Extended practice of mindfulness can lower stress levels and encourage happiness in the here and now. MBSR has been tested on anxiety disorders, chronic pain, insomnia, chronic illnesses, etc. The research has shown that the brain’s grey matter, known to regulate emotions and memory, changes in density after MBSR practice.

Self-care can be practiced easily every day in your own home. All it takes is five to ten minutes. Some easy ways to practice self-care are,

- ☺ leisurely walking or any form of physical activity that you enjoy;
- ☺ mindful eating (eating without distractions, focusing on each bite);
- ☺ taking a short nap;
- ☺ unplugging from all electronic devices;
- ☺ taking a weekend vacation; and
- ☺ cooking your favorite meal for yourself.

Self-care can improve one’s quality of life, maintain wellness, and cultivate happiness. By caring for our bodies mentally and physically, we can achieve lower stress levels and improve our happiness. However, we need to remember to put the oxygen mask on ourselves first; we need to meet our needs first. Self-care is not selfish, but rather it allows us to take care of ourselves and, in turn, others—with our best foot forward.

Nusheen Goshtasbi graduated from University of California, Irvine, with a Bachelor’s degree in Biological Sciences. She will attend graduate school this August for a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies. In her free time, she enjoys knitting, playing guitar, and painting.



GIVING HAPPINESS TO OTHERS

Teenaz Javat

HUMATA HUKHTA HUVARSHTA

Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds are the cornerstones of our religion, distilled into the minds of Zarathushti children long before their navjote.

For me it was always about ‘Huvarashta’ and how it transformed a significant portion of my adult life. My inspiration to volunteer can be traced back 40 years, to my Mamaiya’s (maternal grandmother) house in Udvada, the temple town by the Arabian Sea. Ever since I can remember, at least three times a year, we took the train from Mumbai, 190 km north to Udvada. It was where we spent our summer, Diwali, and Christmas vacations.

My *Sheroo masi*, who lived with my Mamaiya, was the go-to person for everything in town. That happened by virtue of our house’s location. We lived on Mirza Street, Udvada’s equivalent of the main drag, which was book ended by Zanda Chowk (Flag pole where Graam Panchayat sponsored official ceremonies like Gantantra Divas-Republic Day and Swatantra Divas-Independence Day took place) at one end and Fakeer-nee-dukkaan, (that sold all kinds of soda-water-bottle-fanta-rim-zim) at the other.



The author’s aunt, Sheroo, at her kusti loom in Udvada, India. She epitomizes helping others.

SHANTANU DAS

And, if that was not enough, we were opposite the village mosque, steps away from the mandir, across from the *sabzi mandi* (vegetable market) and next to the bus stop. This downtown village location meant that whoever needed whatever, anywhere in the village, would let Sheroo masi know about it.

“Please send the *matcchi wali* (woman selling fish) if you see her” or “*kadach doctor dekhai* to please *mokaljey*.” (If you see the doctor, please send him). The *mocha* (cobbler), *chammar* (sweeper), *kapravala* (fabric seller), *vasan walla*



(utensil seller), *doodh-na-puff-walla* (seller of rice and milk puffs), or any walla, for that matter, would have to pass by our house to enter the village.

Sheroo masi, the benign gatekeeper, most generously obliged and volunteered to be on the lookout. On many occasions we were on *otla* (porch) duty to try and spot the required person and holler out. Most times we matched the right person to the right request and send them on to the right place. A few times that didn't happen.

A weaver of *kustis*, sometimes we would find Sheroo masi gone for hours at a stretch, warning us to stay away from her *jantar* (kusti loom). It was then that Mamaiya took over and her afternoon siestas were time for us to indulge in village games and horse play.

Those long stretches, we now know, were when she was requested to perform *sachkar* (special prayers) for the dead.

These memories and more often tumble out of my inner consciousness every time I step up to help others on my time. Volunteering gives me a sense of purpose and immense happiness. So, when I was requested to offer my skill set toward producing the monthly newsletter for the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO), it was a no-brainer. I said yes and I was delighted.

I already knew I was going to be a stay-at-home mother till my younger child was in full-time school. With one eye on the calendar, I decided, for the sake of my sanity, to plunge into community work head first. Writing and then editing the ZSO Newsletter would offer an opportunity to continue with my craft, albeit in a very small way. Thus began an almost 15-year relationship between me and my new community.

Soon, I realized that volunteering in the local school was a way of getting to know how Canada functions. Whether it was washing dishes at the children's co-op nursery, lunch room supervision at the local elementary public school, signing up for the All-Star Reading program for children with reading challenges, or the school safe arrival, they were all ways for me to explore how the system worked. My learning curve was steep, but volunteering facilitated my entry into mainstream Canada. In fact, it made it easy, as I was allowed to learn at my pace, and made for a safe place where my errors and omissions were treated as a part of the learning process.

I am not sure if my work made the people I came in touch with happy (journalists by the nature of their work cannot aspire to achieve that end). While the larger Zarathushti community was gracious in their interaction with me, I did get my fair share of disgruntled Newsletter readers.

I got immense happiness from my work. In addition to opening doors, volunteering gave me a sense of purpose, at a time in my life when, outside of cooking, cleaning, washing, and other kid-related chores, there was not much else I could do.

Huvarshata has, by default, made me a better person.

My children are now on the cusp of adulthood, and in the last decade I have been channeling my energy toward paid writing. It is often that I look back at the time when "doing nothing for a living" actually meant "all of the above" and was the essence of living a productive life.

Teenaz Javat is a senior writer at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in Toronto. She writes headline across multiple platforms at CBC News. While she's lived in five cities and three countries, in two continents, her heart lies in Udvada, the temple town by the Arabian Sea.



THE ABSENCE OF HAPPINESS

Farishta Murzban Dinshaw

In my early thirties, I was diagnosed with an ovarian cyst. After it was removed, I was placed on medication for a year; the side effects of which included nausea and depression. If you have ever been in a swimming pool you know what it's like to be underwater—everything feels sluggish, slow, and you must push against the weight of the water. And, there is a heavy silence that surrounds you. That is how I felt every day for a year. There were days I could barely get out of bed and there were days I wished I could go to sleep and never wake up. I used to tell my mother, “Even my bones are sad.”

It didn't make a difference knowing that the feelings were drug-induced and temporary. What did make a difference was the amazing support I got from my colleagues at work and from my mother. I was working at Teachers' Resource Centre, Karachi, at the time; they made accommodations for me, let me work reduced hours, and gave me responsibilities that were manageable. My Mum was my rock. What I remember most is her patient and loving support—she never once said, “Snap out of it.”

Within a few weeks after stopping the medication, I was back to being my optimistic self—it was as though I never disappeared into a drug-numbed, different world. But, I learned from this experience, which was especially humbling because, growing up in a Gatha-inspired home, I had it instilled from childhood that our thoughts, words and deeds were based on our free will, our own choices. The lack of control over how I felt was demoralizing. In my case, the cause of depression was medication, but in many other cases it can be a result of physiological impairments over which the person does not have any control. In general terms, depression is divided into two types:

- Endogenous (internal) depression, which arise from a “chemical imbalance” in the brain or hormonal changes.
- Exogenous (external) depression, which is thought to arise from a specific, identifiable external cause, such as a traumatic event, continuous exposure to violence, or as side effects of a drug.

Herbs and medicines may help restore chemical balances in the brain or hormonal fluctuations, thus reducing endogenous depression. Changing the way we think can also makes a difference. The Zarathushti principle of *humata* (good thoughts) explains the essence of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) used to treat anxiety and depression. By monitoring and recording thoughts during difficult situations, people learn that how they think can influence their feelings. CBT helps to reduce these emotional problems by teaching people to,

- identify distortions in their thinking,
- see thoughts as what is going on in their minds, rather than as facts, and
- take a step back from their thinking to consider situations from different viewpoints.

Studies using functional MRI scans (fMRI) prove that *changes in thinking* cause significant, measurable changes in brain chemistry and functioning. Dr. Alex. Lickerman, who has the website, “Happiness in the World; Reflections of a Buddhist Physician,” writes,

In one study, patients suffering from spider phobia underwent fMRI scanning before and after receiving CBT aimed at eliminating their fear of spiders. Scans were then compared to normal subjects without

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spider phobia. Results showed that brain function in patients with spider phobia before receiving cognitive behavioral therapy were abnormal compared to subjects without spider phobia but then *changed to match normal brain patterns after cognitive behavioral therapy*. This may represent the best evidence to date that changes made at the mind level can functionally “rewire” the brain, and that the brain and the mind are more mutually influential than we’d previously thought.... None of this is by any means to say we can simply *decide* to believe we can solve a particular problem when no solution is obvious or forthcoming. Changing any belief, whether consciously recognized or not, is literally one of the hardest things to do.

I learned that, although having depression may not be a choice, we do have free will and a choice about what to do in the face of it. Dr. Sonja Lyubomirsky, a University of California-Riverside psychology professor, writes in her book, “The How of Happiness,” writes that only 10 percent of our happiness levels arise from life circumstances or situations such as income, health, beauty, achievements, 50 percent from genetics, and as much as 40 percent from intentional activities that we can choose to do in our everyday lives. In an article in “Psychology Today,” Dr. Lickerman gives suggestions about ways to create hope during a dark time:

- **Remember that your depressed self is not your true self.** Whatever life-condition you find yourself in at any one moment always feels like the only life-condition you’ve ever had or will have. But your life-condition can and often does change from moment to moment.
- **Recognize that your thoughts are profoundly influenced by your mood.** Once depression has established itself, it takes on an insidious life of its own, further diminishing your belief in your ability to solve problems, plan, and to have hope for the future. In this way, the cause of any depression always reinforces itself.
- **Understand that anti-depressants only treat the symptoms of depression.** In the right patient, anti-depressants reduce the symptoms of suffering exceptionally well and can be life-saving. But, they can’t make anyone *happy* because happiness isn’t merely the absence of suffering.
- **Identify the problem or problems you don’t think you can solve.** It’s amazing how often you don’t know why you’re depressed and how helpful it can be to figure it out. Making a list of everything that’s bothering you—a sort of stream-of-consciousness rant on paper—can be a fantastically helpful exercise. Or, if you do know why you’re depressed, recognizing the cause isn’t that you have a problem *per se* but rather that you have a problem *you don’t believe you can solve* can be remarkably empowering.
- **Find a way to raise your life-condition.** Your *inner life state* has more to do with your ability to believe you can solve your problems than anything that may be going on in your life. If your thoughts are swirling in despair, act to break free of them and attain a fresh perspective. Become immersed in a great book that moves you or watch a movie that transports you. Exercise. Go where it’s warm. In short, do what you know from experience bounces your thinking to a more optimistic place.

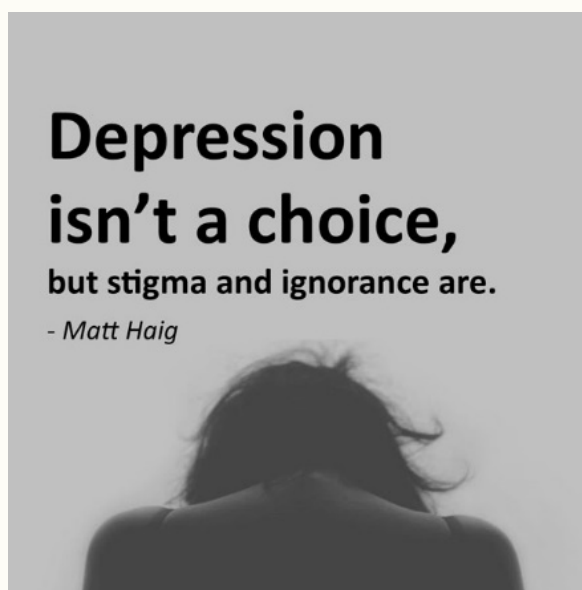


Because of my own experience 20 years ago, I understand how debilitating depression can be. But, empathy does not necessarily have to come from experience or exposure. We can all try to learn accurate information about the issue. We can learn about symptoms and diagnosis. Feeling down because the day is dreary or sad because of a breakup is not being depressed. Symptoms, such as loss of interest in activities you once found pleasurable, difficulty thinking, concentrating or making decisions, or thoughts of death or suicide, must last for two weeks for them to be classified



as a Major Depressive Disorder or clinical depression. Even grief, which often has similar symptoms and duration as depression, is different as you do not lose your self-esteem as part of grief and the low moments are interspersed with positive experiences. We can all help change the way society thinks of mental health by educating ourselves about it, talking about it, normalizing it, and accepting it as we accept other chronic ailments like asthma or high blood pressure. Social stigma of mental health can be terribly isolating—I can't imagine what it must be like to face it alone, hiding it because you don't want to be labelled "weak" or "crazy." Within a few weeks after stopping my medication, I was back to being my optimistic self. Now I understand how debilitating depression can be.

If you think you or someone you love has symptoms of depression or other mental health issue, please seek professional help; there are others who have gone through something similar and will support you through it.



Resources in USA

American Psychiatric Association www.psychiatry.org

- National Alliance on Mental Illness 1-800-950-6264
- Suicide Hotline 1-800-999-9999

Resources in Canada

- Canadian Mental Health Association www.cmha.ca
- Mental Health Helpline 1-866-531-2600
- Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868

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The author's biography appears on the Editorial page.



HAPPINESS IS...

Illustrations by Shehla Shahid

Happiness is different things to different people. Most times it's those fleeting moments when our hearts just feel so much lighter. I can be driving to work when suddenly a song on the radio can bring such a sweet, sharp memory that it suffuses your whole being with happiness. Seeing a child help someone without being asked, can leave me with a warm glow. When I am in that semi-state between sleep and wakefulness, loathe to leave my bed, then I hear the birds chirping, and it's a sign of warmer weather. What happiness does that bring! Sitting on a bench, feeling the warm sun on me, being able to eat outside. A quiet evening at home watching TV and knitting. Such little things, but they sure up my happiness quotient.

So, it's just those little fleeting moments. You never know what or from where, something will happen that makes you just so happy. A phone call from an old friend, out of the blue, with some good news. The fact that my husband brings me my hot water with lemon every morning when I wake. My daughters calling to tell me their good news before they've told anyone else. The fact that I am healthy enough, that I still have a job, that we are in a position where we can travel now and then. Happiness starts, but ends with thankfulness, or is it being thankful for all these little things that lead to happiness?

Vahishta Canteenwalla, Montreal, Quebec

Spending time with family and friends. Having an instant connection with another Zarathusti.

Kashmira Kharas, Troy, Michigan

Happiness is relative, and often temporal; one without a "right" definition for it is not a word rather a feeling that we habitually fail to recognize owing our complaints of flawed life affairs. Too often, one's happiness correlates with their tangible possessions, relationships, and financial stability. However, for me, happiness is a choice! I choose to have a sense of contentment, to be happy and spirited for I'd rather see the opportunity and the light than the darkness in my day-to-day life events. As a Moobedyar (priestess) I seek Happiness in helping my fellow Zoroastrians build and boost their morale and changing their lives for the better. My "happiness" is based on the impact I make in the world with my Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds.

To boot, a warm cup of coffee on a gloomy Monday morning makes me happy; a day spent with my family, a conversation with an old friend, an extra hour of sleep before work, hearing my Grandpa's laughter, and kissing my parents goodnight before bed are simple ingredients to a "happier" day for me. Happiness lies within us, and only we can unleash it fully; it is the sense of joy and contentment with life's offerings. These are the notions that I use to live a Happier life instead of blindly focusing on the materialistic things that steal away my real happiness.

It is a choice I make every day.

Mahshad Khosraviani, Toronto, Ontario



What makes me happy is to see the younger generation being smarter than their parents, which shows progression and that we have done our job. What makes me happy is being outdoors with the trees, birds and animals.

Xerxes Wania, Mississauga, Ontario

As a Zarthushti, I have come to appreciate that happiness is not just what we strive for in ourselves, but something we hope to create for others and maybe even encourage them to do for others.

Happiness is enjoying friendships and close relationships. Happiness is meeting new people and strengthening old connections. Happiness is surrounding ourselves with people with a good sense of humor, positive attitudes, and a genuine caring about making the world a better place.

Happiness



Happiness is always thinking of ways and working towards reaching greater fulfillment in our activities—work and leisure. Happiness is being open to uncertainty and adventure, and using our resources to deal with potential stressful situations for ourselves and loved ones.

Happiness is always being grateful for what we have. Happiness is giving our time and effort to others, sharing our talents and resources, and striving to help others grow and be stronger and better than they were before.



Happiness is creating environments of comfort where sharing of diverse opinions and having meaningful conversations are encouraged. Happiness is giving and getting support. Happiness is learning new things and helping others learn too.

Every day we create our own happiness. Let us also help others create their happiness.

Parastu Dubash, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts

The little everyday things that makes me happy are feeling accepted rather than judged by the people who matter to me, the beauty of nature, the smile of a dog, a song, nice food, and feeling healthy.

Adil Dastur, Mission Viejo, California



I believe true happiness lies in the impact one has on the lives of others. I have found this partly through my service as a physician and as an advocate for the voiceless. In these roles, I have worked tirelessly to break the cycle of poverty and addiction for the most vulnerable families in our communities, while also advocating for policy changes that can echo for generations.

Nikan Khatibi, Laguna, California

What makes me happy? If I have been able to enjoy decent health and do something useful. Just sitting and reading endlessly or watching television does not constitute happiness for me, but adds up to make me happy if I have been able to be productive and useful to my family, friends, and the community work that I do.

I have not analyzed why being a Zarathushti makes me happy, but now that I have had to think about it, it is the simple code of conduct that the religion has passed on to me. Good thoughts, good words, good deeds—even a dummy can be happy if s/he follows the light and guidance in those six words. Not that they solely embody the principles of the religion, but because they are the arrows which go straight to make us what we are. Being at community functions—be they happy or sad ones—fulfills our desire to be part of a great faith.

Bella Tata, Vancouver, British Columbia

I believe happiness is a conscious choice. It's the little things that bring the most happiness in my life—family and friends, kind words, meaningful gestures, and love

Lyla Daroga, Houston, Texas

Shehla Shahid is a communication designer with her own ad agency, 506 Communications, that provides imaginative and creative design solutions. She has a background in advertising and design and her experience includes planning strategies for 360-degree communications, building creative ideas, writing concepts and jingles, designing layouts and illustrations.



SPREADING JOY AND HAPPINESS THROUGH PHILANTHROPY

Charity is for today—Philanthropy is Forever

Dinshaw Kaiki Tamboly

There is a Chinese saying that goes: “If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing. If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody.” For centuries, the greatest thinkers have suggested the same thing: Happiness is found in helping others.

What are the underlying objectives of Charity and Philanthropy? I think bringing happiness into the lives of others to alleviate problems, support needs, and build futures.

Are charity and philanthropy synonymous? They are not. I will illustrate their differences and explain why philanthropy scores over charity in building a strong community; that is, in the context of the Zoroastrian community in India.

Charity is an act of benevolence to others, made by a willing heart.

The essence of benevolence to Zoroastrians is, in part, to provide meaning to our lives. We feel a sense of connection and purpose to life when we give our time, money, and energy. It is how we attempt to fulfil our beliefs.

Philanthropy is not the same as charity. The distinction being, that whilst charity’s goal is to relieve the pain of a social problem, philanthropy attempts to address the root cause of the problem. In essence, giving fish to hungry people versus teaching them how to fish.

While we generously give to charitable causes, we rarely examine if our renowned and well-intentioned charity is helpful, wasted, or, even, harmful to the people we help?

Charity administrators quietly admit that our charity—or, charities in general—may be more deleterious than helpful by creating dependency and destroying personal initiative. When we replace individual initiative with our charity, we often create a sense of entitlement, which destroys their motivation to help themselves.

For all our failed efforts to eliminate poverty through our charities, all we have done is to create a permanent underclass by eroding their moral values and benefits of work. Sadly, we have inadvertently created a downward spiral where the poor continue get poorer.

Giving to those in need, when they could be gaining from their own initiative, may well be the kindest way to destroy people. We mean well, our motives are good, but we have neglected to conduct our due diligence by monitoring our charities’ efficaciousness regarding positive emotional and economic outcomes to those receiving our charity.

As compassionate people, we have evaluated our charity by the rewards we receive through service, rather than the benefits received by those served. We have failed to calculate the effects of our service on the lives of those reduced to objects of our pity and patronage. Unfortunately, our compassionate instinct has a serious shortcoming. We respond with alacrity to desperate circumstances, but are often unable to shift from crisis relief to the more complex work of long-term development.

Sadly, some of our charities’ programs have resulted in their recipients’ being conditioned to think, “*Why should we work hard when we can sponge off our Charity Trusts.*” To eliminate this attitude, the trustees and administrators of our many trusts must leverage their largess by creating programs that encourage pride in accomplishment, rather than dependency on welfare. Welfare dependency erodes the work ethic and becomes counterproductive by creating unhealthy situations, which often become a way of life for generations.

It must be recognised that all charity is not necessarily good charity. Even the most kind-hearted, rightly motivated giving can exact an unintended toll on the dignity of the receiver.

Decades of free aid from well-meaning benefactors has produced an entitlement mentality and eroded the spirit of entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency in our community. Humanitarian responses **unaccompanied** by disciplined



Happiness



development strategies have stymied the growth and economic progress of our community.

Relationships built on chronic need are seldom healthy. An immediate urgency may pluck at one's heartstrings, but if it persists (despite copious charity), the tune, in time, goes sour. Benefactors never intend to support irresponsibility or create dependency. At some point accountability is required.

Trustees and administrators of our community charities must transition from charity to philanthropy—if our community is to be strengthened economically with long-term, sustainable programs that enable those who wish to help themselves.

For example, a simple, but effective solution to eradicate poverty in our Indian community would be to invest in financially marginalized populations by funding interest free loans to help them build small, life-sustaining businesses, rather than continuing the dole.

A few of our trusts have adopted a successful model that effectively mixes charity with philanthropy. They have provided charity to the aged and infirm, while using philanthropic programs to make interest free loans to able-bodied recipients that, otherwise, would have been lost to the morass of poverty. To date, results of such initiatives have been very encouraging.

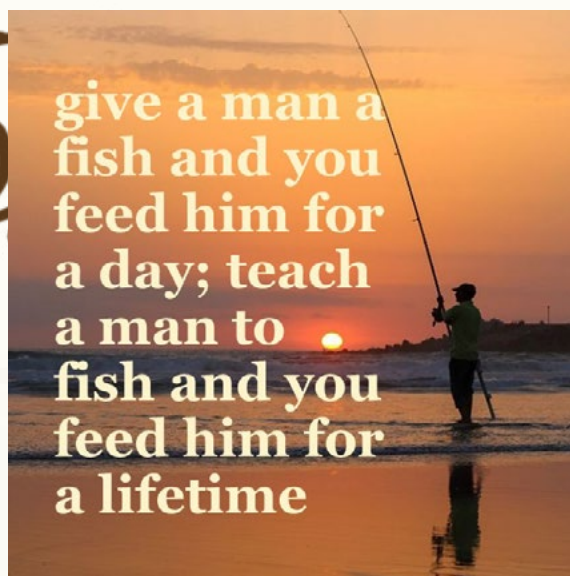
Having said all the above, we must also consider the reality that our rapidly declining numbers are affecting and eroding our general economic affluence and influence. We are a multi-layered socio-economic community whose poorer classes are significantly economically disadvantaged and live on very low subsistence support. Contrary to popular belief, a Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) report of a study published in 2009 has revealed that a small fraction of the community exists below the poverty line (\$1.25 or Rs.80 per day, the India's official definition of poverty).

In conclusion, it must be mentioned that it would be futile to expect any improvements from such an insipid scenario, till such time the trustees and administrators of our charity trusts understand, accept, and implement the real meaning of the adage: **Give a man a fish, feed him for today. Teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime.**

To these wise words let me add: whilst charity is for today, philanthropy is forever.

Let it never be forgotten that those who spread joy and happiness through their philanthropies are the happiest people in the world.

Dinshaw Tamboly has been involved in community affairs since 1983, specially in community welfare activities. He heads the WZO Trusts registered in India since their inception in 1991. He was one of the driving forces in establishing the Prayer Hall at Worli, Mumbai that facilitates performance of obsequies to Zoroastrians getting cremated. He is a former Trustee (1996 to 2008) of Bombay Parsi Punchayet.



In The News

PAINTING WITH A NEEDLE

ZAGNY AND ZAC FACILITATE A GRAND USA DEBUT FOR DESIGNER ASHDEEN Z. LILAOWALA

Natalie Vania Gandhi

In his June debut trunk show in the United States, Ashdeen Lilaowala, a brilliant textile designer and entrepreneur, brought his collection to New York and Los Angeles. His work is critically acclaimed throughout the world.

Ashdeen kicked off his US tour with an exhibition in Los Angeles at the Zoroastrian Association of California on June 11. This was followed by two back-to-back exhibitions and sales in New York on June 16 and New Jersey on June 17, which were organized by the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York.

Behroze Clubwala spearheaded the effort in New York. She is happy that her idea, which germinated years ago, finally materialized. Behroze appreciates her team of ZAGNY volunteer's support and work.



(L-R) Nina Mistry, Ashdeen Lilaowala, Ferzin Patel, and Kayhan Irani

Behroze introduced the event with:

ZAGNY is hosting an outstanding fashion event and sale of hand-embroidered gara work on Saris, lenghas, shawls, stoles, dresses, jackets, and evening clutch bags on 16th June in midtown Manhattan and on 17th June in Princeton NJ. These events promise to be a wonderful opportunity to bring friends and all those who admire and treasure hand-embroidered gara type creations. Ashdeen, the young designer from Mumbai, working out of his atelier in New Delhi, has designed and created unique fashion designs and exquisite work based on the old gara designs and motifs that originated in ancient Persia and China. ...



ZAGNY models (L-R) Rashna Harde, Shirin Kumana Wadia, Pooja Bansal, and Jasmine Dukander,

Ashdeen's designs and creations have been acclaimed worldwide; beyond dressing celebrities like Beyonce and Mariah Carey, he has also dressed many haute couture clients in Europe and Bollywood. This is his first show in the US and a certain portion of the proceeds will go to ZAGNY for the upkeep of its new Dar-E-Mehr.

Ashdeen was available during the events to consult with attendees on future creations, including special designs based on the customer's tastes and needs. To see more of his designs, please visit www.Ashdeen.com or ZAGNY's website at www.zagny.org/ashdeen. Ashdeen's creations are available for purchase online.

In The News

Parsi traders journeying to China during the 19th century came across and brought gara (hand embroidered) robes back to India, where Parsi craftsmen replicated Chinese artistry. Designer Ashdeen Lilaowala spent a decade traveling through Iran and China where he traced trade routes and origins of his craft. Ashdeen said at the event, “*It [the gara craft] is an amalgam of Parsi, Indian, European, and Chinese aesthetics.*” He presented his unique perspective of its history and origins, the design aesthetic of Parsi Garas, and his contemporary interpretation of the craft.

With their rare and precious motifs, Ashdeen’s saris have souls and stories to tell. The imagery evokes the traditional Parsi aesthetic of garas and kors (borders). Cockerels, peacocks, and butterflies are entwined with flora and fauna, gracing figures, and pagodas in a narrative unique to the Orient. Regal and romantic silk threads and silver and gold zari embroideries adorn a bold palette of rich jewel tones. A softer palette speaks to the romanticism of style that is timeless, creating a style that has been called “Painting with a Needle.”

Ashdeen launched his eponymous label—ASHDEEN—in October of 2012. His embroidered cocktail dresses, gowns, and saris have been appreciated for their contemporary, unique take on the traditional Parsi Gara embroidery. ELLE magazine voted him “The hottest design talent of 2013” and awarded him for his excellence in reviving embroidery. His book *Threads of Continuity—The Zoroastrian Craft of Kusti Weaving* was released at the World Zoroastrian Congress 2013. Ashdeen has created haute couture embroideries for clients in Europe and America at his atelier in New Delhi. International celebrities, such as Mariah Carey and Beyonce Knowles, have worn his hand-embroidered creations.

In 2005, Ashdeen and PARZOR Foundation conducted a detailed research project on Parsi Embroidery for the Ministry of Textiles. Ashdeen says, “We have a lot of reverence for Nature. The gara designs depict flora and fauna in a realistic and artistic manner.” He is also a part-time lecturer at the NIFT (National Institute of Fashion Technology), New Delhi, and a freelance fashion and travel writer. He is a graduate of Textile Design at the National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad.

The June 16 exhibition was held at DAG Modern in NYC’s historic Fuller Building. Chef and WZCC Award Winner, Jehangir Mehta, of Graffity, provided exquisite appetizers to the attendees. The June 17 exhibition was held at Elements at West Windsor Clubhouse, local to the Princeton, New Jersey area. Scrumptious appetizers were provided by Nick Manekshaw of Palace of Asia.



An enticing part of the exhibitions were the elegant models draped in fine saris. The gracious and beautiful ladies of the ZAGNY volunteer team wore the saris. Guests also draped saris on their bodies—looking glorious. Very little can be more gorgeous than such abundance of beauty wearing world-class textile artistry. All in all, each event was fabulous and stunning.

Volunteers from ZAGNY included: Percis and Rakesh Bansal, Sheela Bhatnagar, Rustam Bhojti, Mehru and Lovji Cama, Behroze and Astad Clubwala, Niloufer and Edul Daver, Hira and Toos Daruvala, Percis and Vispi Daruwala, Aashish and Dinyar Devitre, Khursheed Navder and Shilendra Dusaj, Jasely and Kerman Dukandar, Jasmine Dukander, Natalie and Rusi Gandhi, Rashna and Kersi Harda, Kayan Irani, Sheroo and Vispi Kanga, Goolcher and Kayomarz Kambatta, Nawaz and Hoshi Merchant, Nina and Adil Mistry, Mindi Nair, Ferzeen Patel, Yasmin and Cyrus Pavri, Piroja and Rusi Press, Dhun and Phil Shroff, Zarine and Sam Shroff, and Shirin Kumaana-Wadia and Arzan Wadia.(photo left).

Photo Credits: Kaika Clubwala, Kerman Dukandar, and Arzan Sam Wadia

In The News

SOAS Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrian Studies

Dr Sarah Stewart, Shapoorji Pallonji Lecturer in Zoroastrianism

Prof Almut Hintze FBA
Zarthoshty Brothers Prof of Zoroastrianism



SOAS University of London is delighted to announce a £5 million donation to create the SOAS Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrian Studies. The donation will support a lectureship in Zoroastrianism, several scholarships for undergraduate and postgraduate students of Zoroastrianism, and outreach activities. The new SOAS Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrian Studies will be a resource dedicated to enhancing the research, learning and teaching in the field of one of the world's oldest religions. The institute will be co-chaired by Dr Sarah Stewart, the first Shapoorji Pallonji Lecturer in Zoroastrianism, (photo left) and Professor Almut Hintze FBA, Zarthoshty Brothers Professor of Zoroastrianism. (photo below)



SOAS has a long-standing history of benefactions by Iranian and Indian Zoroastrians as well as non-Zoroastrians for the study of Zoroastrianism. From 1929 to 1947 the Bombay Zoroastrian community funded a post in Iranian Studies at SOAS by annual donations raised in India from within the Parsi community. Dr J J Modi from Mumbai was instrumental in procuring the necessary subscriptions year after year, and it was at his suggestion that the title of the lectureship was "The Parsee Community's Lectureship in Iranian Studies." The lectureship was first instituted for the academic session 1929–30 at a minimum salary of £440 per annum for five years, and the lecturer was re-appointed annually to the post, subject

to the funds coming forward. Sir Harold Walter Bailey was the first post holder. When Bailey left SOAS in 1936 to take up the Chair of Sanskrit in the University of Cambridge, W B Henning was appointed as his successor. Like Bailey, Henning was re-appointed on an annual basis, but the post lapsed in 1947 with Henning's promotion to a Readership at SOAS. When Henning accepted the Chair of Iranian Studies at the University of Berkeley in 1961, Mary Boyce succeeded him as Professor of Iranian Studies (1947–1982). She put the university on the world map of Zoroastrian Studies and made an extraordinary impact both on the school and on the subject. Since then, SOAS has had many other distinguished scholars of Zoroastrianism and Iranian Studies, including Philip Kreyenbroek (at SOAS 1988–96), ADH Bivar, John R. Hinnells (at SOAS 1993–1998) and Nicholas Sims-Williams (appointed in 1976). Today's leading lights are Professor Almut Hintze and former student of Professor Boyce, Dr Sarah Stewart. The 2013 exhibition The Everlasting Flame, which was transferred to Delhi in 2016, also cemented SOAS's reputation as a world-leading centre for Zoroastrian scholarship.



In The News

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR MINORITIES APPOINTS VADA DASTURJI KHURSHED DASTOOR AS PARSI MEMBER

Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor of the Iranshah Atashbehrum in Udvada has been appointed as the Zoroastrian representative on the National Minorities Commission of India. We congratulate Vada Dasturji and look forward to his leading the interests of the Parsis. According to sources in the Union Minority Affairs Ministry, social activist from Uttar Pradesh Gayarul Hasan will be the chairperson of the Commission. Activist and BJP leader from Kerala, George Kurian, former Maharashtra minister Sulekha Kumbhare, Jain representative from Gujarat, Sunil Singhi and Vada Dasturji Khurshed, chief priest of Udvada Athornan Anjuman, are the other members of the panel. It is perhaps for the first time that all the members are social activists who know the ground realities, of the community at the National and Governmental level.

The Union Government set up the **National Commission for Minorities (NCM)** under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992. Six religious communities, viz; Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis) and Jains have been notified in Gazette of India as minority communities by the Union Government all over India ^[1]

Besides NCM, 15 states, including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Assam, which are home to sizeable minority populace, have set up commissions at their respective levels. Aggrieved persons belonging to these communities may approach the state minorities commissions concerned for redressal of their grievances or send their representations to the NCM after exhausting all avenues of remedies available.

The functions of the state commissions, inter-alia, are to safeguard and protect the interests of minorities provided in the Constitution and laws enacted by Parliament and state legislatures.

Dasturji's response to the letter of felicitation from the editor of FEZANA JOURNAL

Thank you for your congratulatory wishes and truly appreciate the same.

Getting this wonderful opportunity to represent our beloved community at the highest level in India, I earnestly look forward to the support and good wishes of all our Zoroastrians in India and in the diaspora. I strongly believe that we, united as a community worldwide, can move forward confidently on the path of progress, peace, and harmony keeping utmost faith in the basic tenets of our religion namely, 'HUMATA, HUKHTA, HUVARSHTA'.

**IRANSHAH
UDVADA
UTSAY**

Certainly hoping to see you at the 'Iranshah Udvada Utsav' on December 23-25, 2017!

Havovi joins me in sending our good wishes to you and your dear family.

Dasturji Khurshed K. Dastoor,
High Priest "IRANSHAH"

Dasturji Khurshed K. Dastoor writes

23-25 December, 2017

We just launched the edition of "IUU-2017" yes-



In The News

terday and you will find all the details on our website iuu.net.in. You can download the registration form and even pay online. The dates are 23-24-25 December, 2017. Please pass the word around.. Thank you. The first ever Iranshah Udvada Utsav in 2015 was a great success.

Rohinton Rivetna writes

Many thanks, Dasturji, Congratulations; several of us look forward to the event. This event gives meaning to being part of our worldwide community, which those living in India will never be able to comprehend. You have done your part. It is our challenge to spread the word so that the Pravasis participate in large numbers.

Note that half our community lives outside of India and therefore it behooves us to have half the participants from abroad.

Dr Poras Balsara Receives the 2017 Provost Award for Faculty Excellence

Dr Poras Balsara, professor of electrical engineering and associate dean for academic affairs at University of Texas-Dallas, was recently honored with one of two 2017 Provost Awards for Faculty Excellence in Research Mentoring. The awards recognize faculty members who guide and support UT Dallas students in their research endeavors

Balsara, the recipient of the new graduate research mentoring award, arrived at UT Dallas in 1989. He is a fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, and has received several awards from UT Dallas, including the Jonsson School award for Best Teacher in Electrical Engineering. He also has been recognized by the Jonsson School for outstanding service and exemplary contributions to PhD education and research.

From 2002 to 2013, Balsara served as the associate department head for graduate studies. His research interests include VLSI design, power electronics, design of energy-efficient circuits and systems and digitally assisted mixed-signal design. He has published journal and conference publications, holds patents and has co-authored a book with a student that was translated into Japanese.

"When I joined UT Dallas in 1989, it already had some of the best colleagues that one would ask for. However, we were not known outside the Dallas area," Balsara said. "Now, because of our students' success beyond the local area, we are recognized at national and global levels."

"My students constantly inspire me to become a better teacher and mentor; they may not be aware that I learn as much from them as they learn from me. They enable me to explore somewhat ill-defined or at times 'weird' ideas and bring them to fruition. I dedicate this award to all of them."

Poras Balsara is an active member of the Zoroastrian Association of Northern Texas (ZANT).

Photo and text credit UT Dallas website.



In The News

HISTORIC MOBEDYAR INITIATION OF AN IRANIAN HUMDIN BY NAMC

Ervad Soli P. Dastur

The Zoroastrian Society of Washington State (ZSWS) is a member of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA), based in Seattle, Washington. It has over 70 Irani and Parsi families. However, they did not have any Mobeds near them.

Several years ago, at the Seattle FEZANA AGM, the then NAMC President Mobed Kobad Zarolia was approached by Humdin Alayar Dabestani with an urgent need to have a Mobedyar trained in Seattle to perform basic ceremonies for Irani and Parsi families. He suggested a very capable and enthusiastic Irani Humdin, Jamshid Pouresfandiary, as their NAMC Mobedyar candidate.

As required by the NAMC Mobedyar Manual, Alayar sent a formal request to Mobed Kobad; NAMC agreed to train Jamshid and requested Mobed Soli P. Dastur to be a mentor for Jamshid, to which Soli agreed.

Initially, Soli and Jamshid communicated by telephone using the NAMC manual and started with the basic prayers. However, this mode of communication was not satisfactory. Many thanks go to another Mobedyar candidate, Humdin Hormuzd Katki from Washington, DC, whose suggestion to use Skype (video conferencing software) proved to be very useful and has been used ever since.

Due to Soli's many health problems and move to a new home, training was sporadic. However, they restarted in earnest during July 2015. They held regular meetings on Sundays from Soli's home; Soli's friends' (Jahan and Nancy Daruwalla) home; and, even, from Soli's nephew's (Mobed Zarir and wife Rukshana) Udveda Station Bungalow.

We closely followed all the prayers prescribed in the NAMC Manual and even added new ones required by a Mobedyar. Soli created audio files of all prayers with translations for some. The two books on Jashan and Obsequies by Mobeds Jehan Bagli and Adi Unwalla were very helpful and essential for the Mobedyar training.

For each SKYPE meeting, Soli had selected a prayer to be learnt by Jamshid, which Jamshid prayed during the SKYPE meeting. Soli corrected Jamshid's pronunciation and meaning as required, while adding historical background as appropriate. Soli kept an Excel spreadsheet to track the prayers' progress.

Jamshid's enthusiasm, perseverance, and eager-to-learn attitude was beyond comparison. Soli has seen no better Humdin for Mobedyar training. They often compared Parsi prayers with Irani prayers; Jamshid helped Soli understand the differences. Sometimes, Jamshid wished he could get corresponding prayers for Irani Humdins. Soli, through his connection with Dasturji Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary in Tehran, as well as Mobed Fariborz Shahzadi in California, were able to get this material for Jamshid. Jamshid was very appreciative, and we both were very grateful to these wonderful Irani mentors. In so doing, Soli learnt also about Irani prayers, ceremonies, and customs.



In The News



Finally, it was time for Jamshid's examination to become a Mobedyar. President Arda Minocherhomji requested Mobed Tehemton Mirza to give the exam to Jamshid as required by the NAMC Mobedyar manual. This was happily done by Tehemton using SKYPE—Jamshid passed the exam with flying colors. Tehemton was very impressed with Jamshid's knowledge of the required prayers of a NAMC Mobedyar and, above all, he was really impressed by Jamshid's prayers. As he informed the NAMC AGM in Toronto: "Jamshid does not pray! He sings!!" You could not give a better credit to any Mobedyar.

Jamshid's initiation, held in Seattle, was set for Saturday, June 3 in the presence of over 80 Irani and Parsi Humdins. Jamshid was first given a Nahan in his home by Soli and then Jamshid performed the Daily Prayers with Soli. He then performed the Jashan Ceremony with Soli as his Rathwi, (helper). The entire initiation was wonderfully performed by Jamshid. At the end of Jashan ceremony, everybody prayed together 21 Yatha and 12 Ashem, as well as the Doa Tandoorasti.

After the Jashan, Soli gave a glowing tribute to Jamshid for his enthusiasm, perseverance, and always-ready attitude to learn. Soli then thanked the Humdins of ZSWS, especially Alayar Dabestani and Mahrukh Motafram, for their continued involvement in the process and to NAMC for giving him a unique chance to train an Iranian Humdin to become a NAMC Mobedyar. He specifically directed his request to the Parsi families to use Jamshid as their Mobedyar to perform the ceremonies he can do.

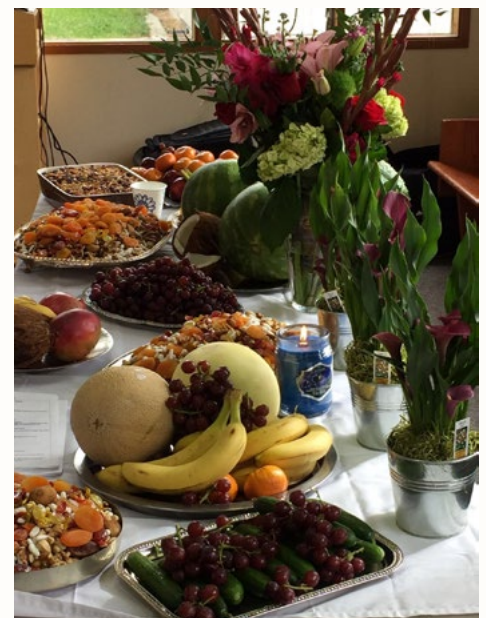


Mobed Arda Minocherhomji, NAMC President, then administered an oath to Jamshid for what he can and cannot do as an NAMC Mobedyar and then presented him with the NAMC Mobedyar Certificate signed by NAMC (left). Alayar then spoke and thanked NAMC and Soli for training Mobedyar Jamshid. He also repeated Soli's request to the Parsi families to use Jamshid as a Mobedyar.

President Navzer Hormuzdi of WSZS then thanked NAMC, Arda and Soli for training Jamshid, and said that he hoped Jamshid would perform both Irani and Parsi prayers for their association to bring Irani and Parsi communities together. Jamshid then thanked NAMC, Soli, Arda, and all for training him and for attending this very important event in his life.

Finally, thanks to so many Irani and Parsi ladies, we had a humongous spread of Irani and Parsi food buffet style (right) which was heartily consumed by all.

As mentioned in the subject of this event's description, this was a very unique event and we all should be very proud and hopeful for many cordial get togethers of North American Irani and Parsi families in future.



In The News

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON (ZAMWI) HAS A NEW MOBEDYAR: HORMUZD KATKI

On Saturday, August 5, 2017, after one-and-a-half year of coaching using Skype (video conferencing software), Hormuzd Katki was officially declared as the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington's (ZAMWI) new Mobedyar by Mobed Adi Unwalla on behalf of the North American Mobed Council (NAMC). Mobed Adi as NAMC representative examined Hormuzd, and declared him fit to be a mobedyar. The ceremony was held in ZAMWI's beautiful Kamran Dar-e-Meher.

Mobed Soli Dastur, Hormuzd's instructor, gave a Nahaan to Hormuzd in the Dar-e-Meher, followed by Hormuzd's wonderful Jashan prayer, with Soli as the Rathwi and Adi as an attending Mobed. ZAMWI President Navroz Gandhi and his beautiful wife Parinaz managed the entire function. Rubina Patel helped acquire materials and equipment for the Jashan and assisted the Mobeds.

After the Jashan, Mobed Adi gave Hormuzd the NAMC oath and presented him with the NAMC Mobedyar certificate. As a surprise to us, President Navroz presented a \$501 check to NAMC from ZAMWI for our efforts in coaching and initiating their new Mobedyar.

Prior to the Jashan, NAMC gave two well-received presentations to the ZAMWI Humdins. Mobed Soli presented *The Influence of Zoroastrian Religion on other Religions* and Kersi Shroff read the presentation written by Mobed Behram Panthaki (absent for the initiation) titled *Practicing the Faith in 21st Century in this Diaspora*.

We wish Mobedyar Hormuzd all the best for his selfless service to the ZAMWI Community.

CONGRATULATIONS HORMUZD



Mobed Soli Dastur displaying the \$501 cheque to NAMC. President of ZAMWI Navroz Gandhi with mike looks on.



Mobedyar Katki displaying his NAMC certificate.



(L-R) Mrs. Freny Katki (mother), Jo Ann Dastur, Mobed Soli Dastur, Mobedyar Hormuzd Katki, Mobed Adi Unwalla, Megan Katki (wife), Asfandiyar Katki (father), Megan Katki's brother

Report Mobed Soli Dastur
Photo credit Jo Ann Dastur

In The News

CHHAIYE HUMAY ZARATHOSTI WHERE DID THE TUNE ORIGINATE?

JEHANBUX MEHTA
HOUSTON

Mystery surrounds the origin of the tune of *Chhaiye Humay Zarathosti*. In the July issue of *What's On*, in the note accompanying the lyrics written by Firoz Batliwala, it stated that the tune is based on "Blue Bell" composed by Theodore Morse in 1904. Did he compose it or was it "borrowed" from somewhere else?

When abroad at company conferences, I always took a couple of days off to go sight seeing. On one such occasion, when in Seville, Spain, after a hearty Sunday pub lunch downed by a pint of strong ale, I was wandering aimlessly among the picturesque cobbled lanes and suddenly stood mesmerized at hearing two boys humming "our Z anthem". With very little Spanish to my credit, I asked them what the tune was. They were surprised that I was not aware of it being a very old popular Spanish folk song. This was confirmed with energetic nods and toothless smiles by the elders who were witnessing the boys playing a game of marbles. And how amazed they all were when I joined in, albeit singing in a strange language. Forthwith there was another round of cerveza, compliments of my new friends. Viva Espania!

Ah, so Mr Morse, it was from

Spain that you brought it, didn't you? But the mystery deepens and surprises don't end! A few years ago, while shopping with Sillie at a Chinese – yes, you read right, Chinese – supermarket, very much here in Houston, over the PA system was this lilting tune played on Chinese instruments. So beautiful! Yes, it was *Chhaiye*. Both of us made a dash to the service counter to ask what the tune was and whether we could purchase a CD. We were informed that it is a Chinese spiritual song which they have been singing for many centuries. Unfortunately, we were not able to acquire a CD. So, Spain, move over. The Chinese must take the credit unless some other reader of this story comes up with yet another surprise.

The tune has indeed been popular. I believe that the British army used to march to it. Not to be undone, the Nazis during WW II also plagiarized it and turned it into a boisterous tune starting with a drum roll – which we have unashamedly built into the start of our own anthem – with thundering 'heils', clicking heels and swaying

swastikas. [Some 'researchers' claim that the Brits took the marching tune from the huns. Whatever!]

The tune is beautiful and the words of our anthem so inspiring. I am proud to sing it out aloud at our gatherings and I should believe all other Zarathostis share my sentiments. British? German? Spanish? Chinese? Maybe, but it is very much Zarathosti. And, we sing it sans boundaries. Let's keep it ours.

In The News

KAREN ROGERS APPOINTED TO QUEBEC SUPERIOR COURT

Karen M. Rogers, a partner at Langlois and head of the firm's Litigation group, has been appointed a judge of the Superior Court of Québec. This was announced by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, The Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould.

Madam Justice Karen M. Rogers brings over 28 years of litigation experience to her new role. Raised in an Anglophone family in Quebec City, she received her law degree from Université Laval. Since being called to the bar, she has practised primarily in civil and commercial litigation, developing strong expertise in professional liability and discipline. Before her appointment to the judiciary, she led the litigation group at the firm Langlois Avocats. She has been involved on a regular basis with administrative investigations before regulatory authorities such as Quebec's health insurance board (RAMQ), its financial markets regulator (Chambre de sécurité financière), its regulator of distributors of financial products and services (Autorité des marchés financiers), and the Insurance Board of Canada.

Madam Justice Rogers has contributed to the legal profession as a member of the Barreau du Québec's discipline and arbitration committees. She also taught at l'École du Barreau for nearly a decade. As a member of the Association of Quebec Women in Finance, she serves as a mentor to young women. Madam Justice Rogers is also an active member of a fundraising team that supports the Jewish General Hospital and its research into women's cancers.

Madame Justice Karen is a member of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec. She lives in Montreal with her spouse Kurush Bhedwar and their twin children Kaila and Kayvan.

We wish Karen every success in her new position.



MITHRA SARKARI IS KARATE BLACK BELT

Mithra Sarkari, age 14, studying in the 10th Grade at E.N. Peirce Middle School of West Chester, Pennsylvania, USA, received his black belt in karate after successfully passing the black belt test on 13 May at the International Shotokan Karate Federation in Philadelphia. The black belt is commonly the highest belt color used and denotes a degree of competence. Testing for black belt is commonly much more rigorous and more centralized than for lower grades. It is also a relatively recent invention (dating from the late 19th century in Japan) rather than an ancient custom. After obtaining a black belt the student may also begin to instruct, and may be referred to as a "Senpai" (or senior student) or "Sensei" (teacher).

Very little is known of the exact origins of **karate** before it appeared in Okinawa, Japan. One popular theory states that it came originally from India over a thousand years ago, brought to China by a Buddhist monk called Bodhidharma (or "daruma" in Japanese). Daruma himself, legend has it, never fell when practicing karate, and even if he did on rare occasions he always stood right back up.

Mithra started his karate training with Sensei Todd Elliot at The Empty Hand Karate studio in West Chester, Pennsylvania in 2010. Mithra was born near Denver, Colorado in November 2002 and moved to Pennsylvania with his family in 2009. Besides karate, Mithra also plays the violin in his school orchestra and regularly participates in mathematics and trivia competitions. Mithra is the son of Hutoxi (nee Damania) and Marzban Sarkari.



In The News

KYRA SINGH

Doctor of Philosophy in Statistics



Kyra Singh was born and raised in Pennsylvania. She is an intelligent young woman who has followed a rigorous academic path, while pursuing her hobbies and staying involved in her communities. Throughout her childhood and young adult life, she has been an active member of the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey (ZAPANJ). She earned her Good Life Emblem Award after participating in multiple high school volunteer events and by writing a paper on the five Gehs. She co-taught the children's monthly religion class. Kyra was an active member of the Girl Scouts and earned their highest award, the Gold Award, for starting a "Save a Life" club (an advocacy for organ donation) at her high school.

After high school, Kyra attended Carnegie Mellon University, where she completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Economics and Statistics and a minor in Psychology. Most recently, Kyra graduated with her PhD in Statistics from the University of Rochester in upstate New York. Her research dissertation, "Variable Selection Methods for Model-Based Clustering: Procedures for Functional Data and Bayesian Inference," developed two novel methods identifying different features that best describe different groups in a dataset. Kyra worked closely with physicians, scientists, and researchers and advised them on data management and the statistical analyses of their research queries, which resulted in multiple co-authored publications in international journals. Kyra received a fully funded travel award to present her research work at an international conference in Sardinia, Italy in June 2016. Additionally, Kyra mentored young students as a Teaching Assistant in basic and advanced statistics courses.

Despite the rigors of graduate studies and research projects, Kyra appreciated opportunities to help others and stay involved within her communities in Rochester, NY. In her time away from school, she took photography classes and volunteered at the Crisis Nursery, a unique home providing disadvantaged parents with emergency daycare services for their children. Taking advantage of the opportunity to represent her local Zoroastrian community, she attended the World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in Auckland, New Zealand in 2015. She is grateful for the travel funding award she received from the FEZANA and ZAPANJ organizations to attend the congress. Lasting friendships were formed during this visit, which has motivated Kyra to take a more active role in her communities. Upon return from the congress, with five fellow Zarthushtis from ZAPANJ, Kyra made a strong impassioned bid to host the next World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in Philadelphia in 2019. Unfortunately, their bid lost narrowly to another North American association. Kyra accepted two summer graduate internships in the San Francisco Bay area in California. In her second graduate internship, she worked on the Advanced Measurement and Technology team at Google. Kyra will return to this team as a full-time employee in New York City. She looks forward to the excitement of a fast-paced NYC life and connecting with local Zoroastrians as she begins her career as a Googler!

In The News

COMMUNITY SERVICE BY A YOUNG ZOROASTRIAN FROM ZAMWI RAISING FUNDS WITH FUN FOR BATTLE AGAINST CANCER

YASNA GOSHTASBI



Below from left Dr. Khademian, Yasna Goshtasbi with the Copy of the Check, and a member of the American Cancer Society who received the check.

1,228,600; That is how many people are expected to be diagnosed with cancer in 2017 in just the United States. Out of that number, around 564,800 are expected to die - that is over 1,500 people each day. Unfortunately, most people have been affected by the words, “you have cancer” - either because their parent, cousin, child, grandparent, aunt, uncle, best friend, colleague or themselves have been diagnosed and they don’t know what is going to happen next. Personally, I have had too many family members go through this, and have seen and experienced how difficult it is for every person involved. That’s why in the fall of my sophomore year of high school, I decided I wanted to do something that would help, even if just in a very little way.

I knew I wanted to organize a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society, and my first idea was to organize a “water balloon fight” at our new Dar-e Mehr in Boyds, Maryland. The day the event was supposed to take place, it rained and we had to cancel the water balloon fight. So, I contacted Navroz Gandhi, ZAMWI Pres-

In The News

ident, again and asked for support to organize a party to raise funds instead. I put together a fundraising committee and after months of planning, we held a Valentine's Party at the Dar-e Mehr and raised a total of \$5,633.

With the success of that event, I knew I wanted to do another fundraiser. By May, we got together with the fundraising committee again and started planning for the next event; this time a masquerade ball.

By November, everything came together and the event took place. ZAMWI members and their friends enjoyed the night dancing to music, were

entertained with a program delivered by our MC, Fereydoon Keshavarz, participated in a raffle and ate delicious catered dinner and dessert. Couples and siblings surprised each other, as well as kids who surprised their parents with packages that included an anonymous message read out loud by the MC. The big event of the night was the "best dressed/best mask" competition with a prize of a solo dance on the dance floor. The Masquerade Ball Fundraiser was an even greater success than the first event. Thanks to everyone who came, donated, and supported the event in any way, we raised a total of \$8,580 - \$2,680 for ZAMWI and \$5,900 for the American Cancer Society. And special thanks to the fundraising committee, Manijeh Aidun, Mojgan Ariaban, Navroz Gandhi, Jamshid Goshtasbi, Fereydoon Keshavarz and Shahrzad Yazdani, without whom these events would not have been possible.

I'm excited to organize at least one more fundraiser before going to college, and after that, my sister is eager to take over! This year I am also planning to organize a service project to help families with parents or kids who have cancer. Hoping to find volunteers who would be cooking a meal for the family once a week to help take a little stress away from the parents and hopefully make things a little easier on the family.

Cancer is something that, unfortunately, affects the lives of way too many people. I hope that the money we raised and will raise in the future helps further develop cancer research and ultimately make it so hearing the words "you have cancer" isn't so scary.

http://www.thomlatimercares.org/Cancer_Facts.htm#HowManyNew

Photos courtesy Mr. Farshid Behmardi



Dancers at the masquerade ball with Manijeh Aidun

***Yasna Goshtasbi** is a junior at Bethesda Chevy Chase High School. In her spare time, she loves to spend time with her friends and family, run, and play and teach piano. She has been involved in the ZAMWI community for many years as co-editor of Avesta Class yearbook, pianist for ensemble and Interfaith Concert, and co-MC for the talent show.*

In The News

IN A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN – ZERBANOO GIFFORD AND FARIDA MASTER TOUR NORTH AMERICA

Zerbanoo Gifford and Farida Master's North American book tour of *An Uncensored Life* was an unmitigated success! The thought-provoking biography of Zerbanoo Gifford by Farida Master was written for young adults, women and the 'selfie generation.' Launched at the Times Litfest in India and later in New Zealand and Singapore, the book provides an inspirational account of the United Kingdom based human rights campaigner, past politician, and founder of the ASHA Leadership Centre. During the month of May 2017, there was a celebratory U.S. book tour.

The book tour started in Los Angeles and was followed by visits in Houston, Chicago, Washington DC, Philadelphia and New York. The audiences at these events included brilliant minds at NASA Goddard Space Centre in DC, academics at George Washington University, women from the Turkish Raindrop in Houston, high profile social entrepreneurs in Philadelphia, the literary circle in New York, and of course the Zoroastrian communities in every cities they visited. indomitable way came alive to redefine success and pushed people to stand up and make a difference even when the going gets really tough.

Gifford and Masters reached out to diverse audiences in Houston as they shared the pages from Zerbanoo's vivid life. The local Houston Radio station 106.1 FM interviewed Gifford and Master, and they were featured in three events. The Ismail Jamatkhana hosted Gifford for an afternoon talk. The start of the program was a short video that highlighted Gifford's life and introduced The ASHA Leadership Centre as an international retreat and training venue working for greater peace and understanding among diverse communities, especially young people. Ranging from funny to fascinating, uplifting to downright outrageous, Zerbanoo's life stories illustrate the challenges facing women in the modern world. They also highlight the possibilities available to those open to life and address how to build resilience, confidence and cultivate balance in an increasing complex world. For Zerbanoo, the art of fighting for a better life for others started early. She was six when she raised nearly ten pounds



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in London by selling flags, which she sent to the then Indian Prime Minister Pandit Nehru, because she felt motivated to work for the people back in Poona. She eventually found herself working for the rights of women, children and minorities. By the time she was in her early thirties, she had already made an impact and was re-writing the political history in Britain. She was elected in Harrow, Middlesex as the first non-white woman councilor for the liberal party.

The Turkish Women's Raindrop group also hosted Zerbanoo for an event where she talked about creating British history by infiltrating the all-white male bastion of British politics as the first non-white woman to stand for Parliament. It was a time when ethnic minority women and social power seemed like a contradiction, and the female sex was a forgotten one in politics. Zerbanoo went through baptism by fire, literally, when the xenophobes threatened to burn down her home and kidnap her children. A suburban housewife and a political neophyte, Zerbanoo astutely masterminded her political campaign from the kitchen table, boldly challenging self-serving politicians who didn't quite know how to deal with a British Asian firebrand activist.

The final event was held at the Zoroastrian Association of Houston where a large crowd of members and guests gathered to hear both Gifford and Master. This time the format had an added feature. After the introductory video and Farida reading a couple of passages from the book, Zerbanoo shared memories of her father and the profound impact he had in the course of her career. She talked about how he bolstered her determination to stay in politics when politics



Zerbanoo Gifford and Farida Master at the California Zoroastrian Centre. Prof Farhang Mehr is seated in the front.

got ugly and how long it took for him to accept her husband Richard since he was not a Zoroastrian. Zerbanoo's openness and generous personality endeared her to audiences who found her warm and energetic and the 45-minute book session went on for over two hours. The day before also happened to be Zerbanoo's birthday and the organizers had a cake to celebrate!

At the heart of the women's movement, Zerbanoo has relentlessly fought for the social and economic empowerment of women. She has also given voice to the voiceless, passionately fighting for neglected children and those subjected to bonded labour and abuse. Through court battles and absolute determination to walk the righteous path, Zerbanoo and her husband Richard, a human rights lawyer, created their legacy in the ASHA Centre. In a unique environment built on the principles of justice, sustainability and community, this multicultural oasis congregates future thought leaders from different corners of the world. Her work continues to impact lives of the young all over the globe.

At all the events, people left knowing Zerbanoo was no longer a name in a book, but a real person with experiences that can teach us all valuable lessons. And they left feeling the buoyant impact of Zerbanoo and Farida's generous spirits. These two women write, "Most of all it was the Zoros in California, Houston, Chicago, Washington DC, New Jersey and New York who embraced us with open arms, making our trip such a special one in North America. We go back home with lasting friendships, gratitude and a song in our hearts."

Aban Rustomji, Houston, TX
www.fires-fezana.org

In The News

MANI RAO, OF CHICAGO TAKES HER MONAJATS TO POLAND

April 20, 2017 -April30, 2017

I met Professor Paulina Niechcial of Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland in September 2016. She had come to the US to attend a conference on the East Coast, and then visited Chicago to interview Mr. Homi Gandhi, President of FEZANA, and attend the Conference of the Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism (SSZ) at the Arbab Rustam Guiv



Darbe Mehr Chicago. She heard me sing monajats at the conference, and also got a CD of Monajats from me which she found very soulful and peaceful. She wanted to know the meaning. I told her I was planning to translate all of them into English for the younger generation and try to put them to music so that they may experience the same peace in their heart and soul as many of the listeners. <https://zoroastrians.net/2012/08/12/zoroastrian-monajats/#comment-104954>

Paulina thought that was very interesting. She asked me: "Why don't you do it for my students and faculty. We can have a nice presentation." That is how it all started. We communicated by email to shape up this whole project of presentation on monajats (introduction/ explanations) followed by soulful singing. She also wanted me to talk about Zarthushtis in North America

- Contemporary Zoroastrianism. http://www.psc.uj.edu.pl/aktualnosci/wydarzenia/-/journal_content/56_INSTANCE_kMeIm9B2IhI9/30300043/136181235

Monajat is an arabic word which is translated as Intimate conversation, a prayer through which a person converses with God and pours out his/her own personal feelings of devotion. In India they were started by Mobeds, first in Persian and then in Gujarati. They are normally poems written in praise of God. It is normally written in the language of an individual who is praying which could be Persian, Gujarati and now it could be English. That inspired me so much that I decided to translate Gujarati monajats into English and also wrote one or two in English. I am now trying to write some more in English for the younger generation. Unfortunately Monajats are becoming the things of the past with not much interest in them now. For details click on the following link <http://www.avesta.org/wzse/wzse128.pdf>

My first presentation on April 25th at Jagiellonian University. was very well received. Their Dept. Head Dr. Marta Kudelska thanked and presented me the books on The Polish Arts and Culture published by their University. I was really amazed to see the interest they have in Iranian Studies and how much they know about it! Professor Anna Krasnowolska, Department Head of Iranian studies, who took me out for dinner along with other professors, was like a walking encyclopedia.

My second presentation on April 27th, was at University of Warsaw, Poland, which is a bigger University. The room was filled with students and faculty members. They asked many questions about our religion and day-to-day living as a Zoroastrian. Interesting questions such as: "Do all Zoroastrians wear Sudreh-Kusti all the time?" "Are women treated equally as men?" One student is doing research on Zoroastrianism and he said he was not allowed to go into the Fire Temple in Mumbai. "Can you please tell us what are other restrictions for Non-Zoroastrians who are doing research on Zoroastrianism?" "Where does the funding come for the Dar-e-Mehers that are opening in North America?" I found people in Poland very friendly, sociable and pleasant. My hostess, Paulina had a nice cozy one bedroom condo and

In The News



she let me use her bedroom throughout my stay. When I left Krakow, she sent me a message: “Mani I got so used to having you over here that I am missing you and our chats covering all topics from religion to banking to world peace. She took me to visit many attractions, like salt mine, Schindler’s factory and also to meet with her parents in the countryside.

Poland is highly developed now but still retains its own traditions and the people are very happy to share their rich history and culture.

My Poland trip was very enjoyable, successful and gratifying.

I just have two words: THANK GOD that YOU gave me an opportunity to spread the message of

Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds

Mani Rao has an MBA from the University of Springfield, IL, and after having worked in different financial Institutions she is now self-employed as a Health Benefit Consultant. Music is her passion, and she has produced a monajat cd, which she donated to a few North American Zoroastrian Associations for their fund raising activities. She participates in devotional singing at cultural events and has sung with visiting artists from India as well as in Chicago.

through Zoroastrianism)

A proud son Dr Zubin Daruwalla writes

Awards

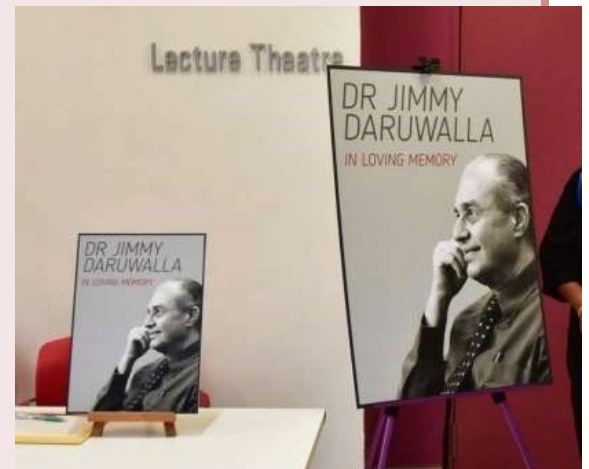
***Dr JIMMY S DARUWALLA AWARDED THE PUBLIC SERVICE MEDAL
POSTHUMOUSLY BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SINGAPORE ON THEIR NATIONAL
DAY AUGUST 9, 2017***

On behalf of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS), Rotary Club of Raffles City (RCRC), Parsi Community in Singapore and most importantly Dad’s closest friends and my family, I’d like to share how proud we all are of my late father, Dr. Jimmy S Daruwalla for being awarded the Public Service Medal by the Singapore Government this National Day in recognition of founding the DAS and being its President for the last 25 years.

From the time our family first moved to Singapore in 1976, Dad always led a life that entailed giving back to the community.

Although he had many achievements, including starting Singapore’s school health screening service for scoliosis and being one of the pioneers in scoliosis surgery, his largest achievement was undoubtedly the DAS from the time it was conceived by the RCRC in 1989 and formalised in 1991. From 1991 till his death in 2016, Dad had dedicated 25 wonderful years to the DAS

While its a pity that this award has come posthumously, I am sure Dad is smiling down on us, appreciating the recognition of his selfless efforts throughout his lifetime in Singapore. God bless you, Dad.



In The News



A SEA OF CHANGE

A young Zarthushti's experience at the United Nations Ocean Conference

Anahita Verahrami

During the week of June 5th, I had the wonderful opportunity to take part in the United Nations Ocean Conference at the UN Headquarters in New York City. As this was my first time attending a UN conference, I was a bit apprehensive prior, not knowing

what to expect. I arrived the morning of June 5th to a sea of individuals in suits, as more languages than I could count fluttered through the air around me. As we all made our way into the General Assembly room, excitement overcame my uneasiness, as I realized I was entering a hall dedicated to global [positive] change, which I am so passionate about. I settled in, and for the next few days I absorbed the precursors to change around me.

At the conference, I had the opportunity to hear from and speak with some of the most impressive marine biologists, dedicated government officials, and visionary fellow conservationists. Each event I attended encompassed the UN's commitment to diversity. One panel had the CEO of the Wildlife Conservation Society as a speaker, while another was made up of several women from indigenous populations in the Pacific Islands. Regardless of nationality, religion, gender, or socioeconomic class, each and every person at the conference was welcome to speak and listen. One similarity between all attendees stood out however: each individual's strong commitment to the critical task of protecting and restoring our Oceans. Now that the conference has come to a close, I ask you all to make this same commitment to the Earth's blue Elixir.

The protection of our Oceans is not only ethically imperative, but is also crucial for our species' survival. Developed parts of the world have adopted a detrimental paradigm of extreme consumption for far too long now, and our globe as a whole is beginning to face the consequences. And while it may be easy to point fingers at the countries that may play a larger role in generating these environmental catastrophes, climate change is **not** discriminatory and therefore, it is crucial that each and every country, state, and **individual** do their part.

You are a consumer, but I now ask you to be an educator as well. It is easy to dismiss actions on land as only that. But what we do above the water does have great implications for what goes on below. Take a few minutes to read about where that single-use water bottle you just finished may end up if you throw it in the trash. Then, share that information with someone else. Before you go on that next cruise, read about the effects of ship noise on marine ecosystems. Educating yourself so that you may educate others will greatly enhance your ability to play a greater role in the protection of the environment.

While I hope that one day we may attain the globalization of national efforts for a cause as noble as protecting our environment, I fear that this day may not come quickly enough. This conference has showed me the great power of community action and I firmly believe that this may be the greatest agent for positive change. Jacques Yves Cousteau once said, "People protect what they love". We have limitless reasons to love our Oceans. They give us food, produce more than half of our planet's oxygen, absorb the carbon that we are so keen on producing, and play a large role in our global economy. If economic incentive is what you need to love something, fine. Oceans provide it. But our Oceans are keepers of more than untapped economic benefits. They are home to the most breathtakingly diverse creations of our planet. Life below the water's surface epitomizes the beauty of our planet's diversity. Let us protect and cherish it.

Anahita Verahrami is a recent graduate from Cornell University with a passion for conservation biology and environmental protection. She has a background in bioacoustics, or the study of sounds by or affecting living animals, and attended the conference in hopes of learning more about how we can protect our oceans from anthropogenic noise such as shipping, sonar, and navy vessels.

In The News

The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America supports



The United Nations: Goal #6 for Clean Water and Sanitation



FEEDING OUR THIRST FOR CHANGE: THE BEGINNINGS OF GLOBAL IMPACT VERA MISTRY



Left Bottom Row: Kazmin Khapoliwala, Benafsha Iradia, Nazneen Kasad. **Left Top Row:** Vera Mistry, Kaiwan Mistry, Tashnumaity Minwalla, Sanya Muncherji, Denzil Muncherji, Wayne Briggs, Narius Minwalla, Jazmin Minwalla, Abhaydeep Khera, Gary Sidhu. **Photo Credit:** Susanne Milner

On March 22nd 2017: World Water Day, World Vision introduced a global 6K walk to raise money and awareness for the UN's Goal #6: clean water and sanitation. The aim was to help many countries that are not receiving their basic needs for adequate survival. World Vision chose Saturday, May 6th 2017 as the official day to challenge thousands of citizens world-wide to get-up and feel the hardships that so many face around the world to have a glass of clean water.

On Saturday, May 6th 2017 an intimate group of dedicated people came down and showed their support to walk 6 km at Hawthorne Park in Surrey, BC. The sun was shining bright, and 14 participants were eager to put themselves into the shoes of the thousands of women and children who walk a minimum of 6 km to access contaminated water in wells and other unhygienic sources. Each member of our team: Thirsty for Change, donated \$50 to provide one person in-need with clean water. Those who couldn't make it out generously donated to our team and showed their support. Together, we raised

almost \$1300, providing 26 people with clean water! Joining us were 27,000 global participants resulting in a total \$1.7 million dollars raised and 31,386 children given access to clean water!

World Vision will now be going into the many developing countries that currently have water crises, and will be starting up clean water projects such as building wells, pipelines, water kiosks, and solar pumps, along with training local community members on how to maintain these structures for long-term impact on these rural communities.

A big thank you to all the participants, donors, ZSBC, and FEZANA for supporting such a worthy cause and providing someone with the means of survival! I hope to hold this campaign again next year and aim to double the donations received!

If you'd like to stay updated on the progress of these projects or would like to participate next year, please contact: Vera Mistry at

vera.minwalla@gmail.com.

What your support looks like: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FK5Z-9sYtLo>

Vera Mistry is a Biology undergraduate student at the University of British Columbia, and will be graduating this June. She loves volunteering her time to her community, and likes to focus on the stigmatized and under-represented population of the Downtown East-side in Vancouver. She currently volunteers at a Needle Exchange attached to a Clinic, an Overdose Prevention Site, as a support or accompaniment to others, and with World Vision Canada. Additionally, she works with individuals with disabilities and supports them in maintaining a fulfilling life. She truly believe that it is with a helping hand, the world can be a better place for everyone

In The News



FREEDOM MONUMENT – THE FLAME OF FAITH

Picture : WaySkalij -Los Angeles Times

The historical Freedom Monument of Cyrus' cylinder was unveiled on Santa Monica Boulevard in Century City, Los Angeles on July 4, 2017 as part of the LA Freedom Festival, and American Independence Day . Crowd-funded with over 1 million supporters from 50 countries, the Freedom Sculpture project has raised over \$2.2 million, making it one of the most crowd supported public monuments in U.S. history. With its design based on the Cyrus Cylinder, widely considered the world's first human rights document, the Freedom Sculpture will be a "Statue of Liberty" for the West Coast.

The unveiling of the Cyrus Cylinder column was witnessed by a very large crowd of about 75,000 people. It included hundreds of Zoroastrians under the white flag of the California Zoroastrian Center (CZC).

CZC was represented by Shabnam and FEZANA president Mr. Homi Gandhi, while the Zoroastrian Association of California was officially represented by president Mrs. Tehmi Damania, Mr. Maneck Damania, Ervad Zerkxis and Ervad Zarrir Bhandara. (photo right). Many CZC members also attended the event.



In The News

According to the Freedom Sculpture website: "California Governor Jerry Brown, Los Angeles Mayor, Eric Garcetti and 5th District Councilman Paul Koretz (along with all 15 LA City Councilmen) sent messages of unequivocal support for *"this soon-to-be national landmark and great symbol to our shared humanity! But now the door is open and we need to seize on this opportunity that is before us to do much more."*

The sculpture has been designed by the U.K. architect and engineer CECIL BALMOND who is reported to have stated that, **"It is a symbol of timeless values of freedom and tolerance"**. The script on the cylinder do not seem to be static, they seems to be alive and moving as you drive past. Thanks go to the **Farhang Foundation**, a nonprofit organization of Los Angeles for the production of the sculpture and for promoting the study and appreciation of Iranian art and culture. Mr. Razi, the founding chairman of the **Farhang Foundation**, stated that the unveiling on the Fourth of July, of the 20,000 pound Cyrus Cylinder set upon travertine stone, carries a very special symbolic meaning for all peace and freedom loving people.

To learn more about the Freedom Sculpture story and to donate to the crowd funding campaign, visit: <http://freedomsculpture.org/>

Submitted by Rusi Sorabji



COMMUNITY TO ME

By Maya C Joshi, Age 16
DuPont Manual High School Louisville, KY.

The smell of sandalwood and smoke
dark and cool metallic shadows as familiar as an
old friend
The taste of a half remembered prayer, spoken
through fumbling lips
Joining the strong chant surrounding me
Low whispers from papery mouths
Ancient and irreverent to all but this moment
The joy in the return
Regret and relief mingling in guilty goodbyes
Laughing and teasing, jokes and Parsi Bol
Daal chavel and Dandar Patio and Sali Murghee
Hello to old neighbors, forgotten family
members, college acquaintances. Paying
respects all the same
Gossip in the kitchen, uproar at the table, and all
gathered round yelling at the tv by nightfall
We're not so different, We're not so alone
But if everyone sees what they look for, who am
I to pick at that bone

Bright sharp eyes that can explode every flaw
with just one look
Gentle hands that can slip lemongrass and
honey into chai and spill not a drop Furious
minds that make the choices they can and
absorb details and ink like sugar in milk
We were all " Wallas" once, hailing from Gujarat
in our Gara saris with jolly, unfiltered words
Eyes deepened by suffering yet left unclouded
by it
We were all Persians once, the empire made
great by our achievements
We were all that we still are, only spread
throughout the world
Our bowl of milk is bigger now Yet we spill no
drops
But still sweeten all around us

***This poem won 7th place for Audio narrative
at the Z media Festival, Louisville, KY***

In The News

THE 11TH ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS PERTH, 1-4 JUNE 2018 TOGETHER TOWARDS TOMORROW

The 11th Zoroastrian Congress is being held in Perth, Western Australia, one of the world's most beautiful and clean cities. This is the first time that the Congress since its inception in 1960 has been awarded to the southern hemisphere and we are honoured and pleased to have it in Perth. The congress was awarded to Perth after the Business Association of West Australian Zoroastrians (BAWAZ) made a presentation to the Global Working Group at the Iranshah Utsav in Udvada on December 25, 2015.

The Congress team started at the ground level to ask the people their thoughts and views on what they would like to see in the Congress; lay persons, scholars, priests and business people have contributed their ideas, views and thoughts. We have tried to implement those views as best as possible for our Congress sessions.

Main features are:

- Topics of similar nature to be clubbed together
- Emphasis on finding solution to global community issues, not just voicing them
- Highlighting issues that are crucial for our young adults, women & seniors
- Increase Hamazori amongst delegates & increase network to foster friendship and bonding
- A highly interpretive website already re-launched on 1 June 2017 highlighting main features for Congress. You may browse it at: www.11wzcp Perth.com.au
- Requesting people globally to add their request of interest to join



Congress and voice their views

- In the few days of Congress, not much can be decided on various topics. So to overcome that, we have launched a special discussion page on our website. Anyone can add in their views, concerns & ideas and it will be read and reviewed by people from all parts of the world
- It is not just a Congress. We are also offering delegates a once in a lifetime opportunity to visit and sightsee Australia and New Zealand. Special discounted packages have been offered to cater to various interest groups and budgetary concerns
- Those who want to attend only the conference can do so, with optional tours to join in if they feel like one
- Pre and post congress tours are available in our region. Delegates can enjoy sightseeing in Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, Gold Coast, Adelaide & New Zealand

Firoz Pestonji, Congress Chair

- www.aussieperthtours.com.au
www.aussiedestinationtours.com.au Or Zoroastrian travel Agent at +61 08 9221 2400
- We will also try and arrange for multilingual people to assist our brethren from Iran, India, Pakistan etc for whom the English language may be a concern
- Special emphasis on Entrepreneurs & business community to highlight their success stories and struggles
- Arrange to have site visits to engineering factories, medical hospitals, educational institutions etc if required by our foreign delegates to network with their local counterparts

Stage 1 of the Congress website has been released and was positively received by all.

It showcases main points of interest to people. We have tried to highlight the major events leading to the Congress. Very brief idea on Programmes during Congress is highlighted. Most tours being offered are also highlighted.

Stage 2 : Will showcase the Major speakers, more detailed information and synopsis of what to expect. Forms and detailed immigration information will be released.

Stage 3: Release Congress Pricing and Booking options.

Delegates can make their own choices on line or visit their trusted travel agents locally to book the Congress and tours.

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SPENTA MAINYU

Zarathushtra often references the intellectual faculties for self-realization and to remind us of our responsibilities in making decisions. They include: Mind, Wisdom, Conscience, Intellect, **Spenta Mainyu**, Will-Power and Soul (48-4), in order to guide us to the right thoughts, teachings, intentions, choices and deeds (45-2). In Yasna 30 and 45, he reminds us to adhere to our Spenta Mainyu when making decisions and determining our destiny.

Spenta Mainyu has been variously translated as: Progressive Mind (A. A. Jafarey), Benevolent Spirit (S. Insler) and Bountiful Spirit (D. J. Irani). The present writer has interpreted it as Intuitive Insight. For the ease of understanding here, Benevolent Spirit will be used, as translated by Insler. The word spirit, however, is to be construed within the context of the spirit of freedom, or perhaps phenomenon. The real meaning of Mainyu needs more definition. Zarathushtra, in Yasna 30, recommends that on the Great Event of Choice, we adhere to Spenta Mainyu. **But what exactly is Spenta Mainyu?**

Sociologists who have spent time among primitive tribes, have been amazed by the honesty of tribal men. Despite the absence of an organized religion, police force or justice system, they venerate honesty, and abhor lies, deception and stealing (1). They are gentle toward children and the elderly. This is an **inborn Spenta Mainyu** that humans enjoy, which helps them to live together and form productive tribes and societies.

But are humans the only creatures that possess Benevolent Spirit? A dog's loyalty to man and to cattle is well known. Also, it has been observed that dolphins can express gratitude, elephants mourn the loss of their companions and chimpanzees support the weaker among them (2). Other animals are found to have a spirit of benevolence, although to a lesser degree than humans.

In the Gathas, Spentishta Mainyu reflects God's benevolence and creativity. In Yasna 44, Ahura Mazda, through this faculty, creates and sustains his magnificent creation, the universe. This faculty is shared by humans as well. Humans, by their creative mind, Spenta Mainyu, can create poetry and writings, design buildings and gardens and make inventions and discoveries. In Yasna 47, through this faculty one can discover the truth of creation

Daryoush Jahanian



and recognize God. Through Spenta Mainyu all men and women can attain the Divine Attributes, receive evolution (*Haurvatat*) and become Godlike (*Ameretat*). It is through this faculty, that human is the only creature that has evolved over many millennia, from residing in the cave to a modern society.

God, through his Spentishta Mainyu, and by the means of Divine Light (*Bright Mind*), delivers justice (*Asha*) to both, the righteous and the wrongful.

BUT WHAT DOES ZARATHUSHTRA TEACH?

In Yasna 30, people should think with bright mind and choose one of two paths. They determine their own destiny and fate. On this great moment of choice, one should adhere to Spenta Mainyu or Benevolent Spirit because by turning away from it, the other Mainyu (as in later Avesta called, *Angra Mainyu*) shall prevail which is not progressive and even regressive. But choosing Spenta Mainyu should be associated with Wisdom and Conscience (together called bright mind) in particular for those who cannot decide. Here, Zarathushtra advises that men and women should use their Wisdom (*Khratus*) to differentiate right from wrong and good from evil. Conscience (*Daena*), or the inner conception should be used to discern the results of right or wrong choice and let their good spirit prevail.

For instance, if a man is crying for assistance to buy his medicine for the weekend, our Benevolent Spirit immediately dictates that we should give him the money. But our wisdom reminds us that he has been doing this repeatedly, he may be an addict and that any financial aid to him will go up in smoke. Using the Benevolent Spirit, Wisdom and Conscience, the right course of action would be to direct him to a doctor, to quit his addiction and offer to pay his medical bills. Thus, the Benevolent Spirit

(*Spenta Mainyu*) in association with Wisdom (*Khratus*) and Conscience (*Daena*) will direct the will power (*Ushtish*) to act, and the soul (*Urvan*), or the whole energy, will carry out the decision in order to achieve the best result. The result of right or wrong choice is discerned in the conscience.

So, through *Spenta Mainyu*, we can recognize God, attain wholeness and immortality, and become Godlike; we can be benevolent in our life and be creative like the Creator.

Zarathushtra, envisions the world as a magnificent creation of God, which needs to be physically and spiritually perfected toward evolution (*Haurvatat*), and for this purpose human with perfect capabilities is in charge. Those who participate in enhancing the living world, are called God's friend and companion, *Urvato*.

By studying the Gathas, we can conclude that in the teachings of Zarathushtra the person of Devil such as Satan does not exist, it even does not appear in the Achaemenid's inscriptions. We learn that Zarathushtra does not compile all the evil in one entity to be feared or worshipped out of fear. There is no *destructive entity* which

stands against the Constructive Creator, Ahura Mazda. **Evil spirit stands in the human mind and society in opposite to the benevolent spirit or Spenta Mainyu.**

Were the above teachings originally intended for the scholars and wise people who could understand and transfer to the public? In Yasna 29-11 which is the beginning of Zarathushtra's ministry, he declares "*When this teaching might spread far, when shall the society of Magas, Magavan or scholars discern your teachings.*" In Yasna 32-1, we will realize that, the Magavan who have accepted the new religion, according to their level of knowledge have been classified in three groups. Of interest, is that in this association, Kavi Vishtaspa and his court ministers formed the association whose responsibility was to perceive and spread the knowledge to ordinary people.

1-J.Ashtiyani, Management not Governance, in Persian
2-C.Zarre, Rahavard, V 115, in Persian

Daryoush Jahanian is one of the founders of Fravahar Zoroastrian Youth organization in Tehran and the Zoroastrian Association of Kansas. He has served on the board of trustees of Rustam Guiv Foundation, has been guest lecturer and published a book on The Zoroastrian Doctrine and Biblical Connections and recently, Gathas the message of Zarathushtra.

GATHAS, THE MESSAGE OF ZARATHUSHTRA COMMENTS AND FREE TRANSLATION BY DARYOUSH JAHANIAN

EDITED BY SCOTT R. NELSON

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MENSES AND ECCLESIASTICAL RITES

Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli

Reflections on Pollution—Gathas and Later Zarathushtrian Tradition

It is an undisputed fact that the Gathas, without making any specific references to any of the physiological processes, emphatically upholds the **Principle of Absolute Purity** embedded in the **fundamental concept of ASHA**.

The Older Avesta clearly defines human beings as a composition of the physical and spiritual. (**Ys 26.4, 55.1**). Of these only the **physical is mortal**, while the **spiritual is perceived to be immortal**. **At the end of life**, the **physical perishes**, while the **spiritual component** continues its onward journey **through eternity**.

Zarathushtrian theology infers that **any organic matter separated** from a living human body is dead matter. It is common knowledge that **dead organic matter** is a source of **pollution**. Thus, **nails, hair, breath, saliva, perspiration, tears, semen, and menstrual bleeding** that leave the human body are dead, polluting matter.

Ritualistic disposal of **nails and hairs** are described in the later Avesta and Pahlavi literature (**Videvdat (Vd) 17.4-9 and Persian Rivayat Dhabhar pgs 248, 250**). To preserve the **purity and sanctity of the sacred Fire—the embodiment of Ahura Mazda—and its surroundings**, during a ritual, from exhaled **breath and saliva**, the priest must wear a cloth mask, *Padan* (**Vd, 14.8, 18.1**). Rivayats also refer to the revival of bodily ritual purity after **urination, fecal excretion, and nocturnal ejaculation**. Traditionally, *Barasnum-I noh sab—a nine-day nahn ritual*—undertaken by both genders, is deemed vitiated (**M. Boyce, Persian Stronghold, pg 116**) by nocturnal discharge or by menstrual bleeding.

Blood, **once outside the human circulation system**, is considered as dead, putrefying matter; Rivayets (**Persian Rivayat, Dhabhar pg 212, 253**) describes how bodily purity may be regained. Similar restrictions are also noted in the Hebrew and Islamic laws related to the preservation of purity, spirituality, and physical cleanliness. (**Leviticus XV, 16-24; Deuteronomy Ch. 23; and Qur'an Sura 2.222**)



What is Menses? Is it dead matter?

The female physiology incorporates a **beautiful biological mechanism for the miracle of procreation**. This physiological mechanism permits young women of childbearing age to physically prepare for fertilization. The process involves enrichment of the uterine wall through proliferative and secretory phases early in the monthly sexual cycle by providing blood and nutrient that enrich the uterine tissue, thereby facilitating and nurturing the implantation of a fertilized egg.

In the absence of fertilization, nature has endowed the **female body with a remarkable mechanism** to reverse the process. Through hormonal changes in female physiology, **necrosis sets in**, the excessive tissue growth withers, and the **dead organic matter is expelled over time**. The removal of **necrotic matter** results in **menstrual bleeding**, which takes several days to clear the matter from the body. Often, during this period, many young females experience cramping, headaches, and general fatigue. If bleeding occurs **after fertilization**, the result is a **miscarriage**.

In summary, **menstrual bleeding is the discharge of dead matter**, which returns human vitality to normal levels. Extreme caution must be taken during this time: (a) for the health of the individual from hygienic and sanitary viewpoint and (b) to properly dispose of the waste to protect the environment from being contaminated. **Ignorance** of hygiene and sanitation often caused earlier societies to impose strictures on women during their menstrual cycle.

However, in 21st century, we are **better equipped to understand** menses and **better prepared to handle the hygienic aspects**. Women may now pray and make offerings as they choose during their menstrual cycle. Having said that, it is **important to analyze this issue** in its relationship to communal, **spiritual observances, sacred Fires, and sacred spaces in the places of worship**.

Menses and Zarathushti Ecclesiastic Commitments

All Zarathushti religious rituals represent a **communion with the Ultimate Divinity—Ahura Mazda**. Everything humanly possible must be done to **maintain the sacredness** of the process that invokes the highest the Supreme Divinity. No Zarathushti would consciously choose **to compromise Mazda's perfection**.

We believe that Divine essence (*Fravashi*) is a part of the human constitution (**Ys 26.4, 55.1**). It is hard to imagine that a human being, **with necrotic matter** in them could attain the **highest level of ritual purity** that a Sacred Communion demands. The physical state of a person with necrotic matter **compromises, to some degree, the ritual purity needed to attune with the Divine**. Therefore, it is **incumbent** upon the person in that state **to make concessions and respect the absolute sanctity** of a sacred ritual.

Tradition holds that a person in menses should be barred from ritual observances. **This is fallacious**. Rivayat (**Persian Rivayat, Dhabhar, pg 211**), as well as Videvdad (**Vd.16.4**) states that “she (during her menstrual cycle) should be **15 steps away from Fire, 15 steps away from Water, and 15 steps away from barsom spread holily and three steps away from Holy man.**”

It is clear from the above that a woman in her menses is **not altogether prohibited** from attending a Zarathushti ceremony. However, there are **restrictions to preserve the event's sanctity**. Consequently, a person in menses should stay 15 or more paces away from the **sacred space**.

There can be **no policing** of this matter. However, with necrosis, one must **exercise complete discretion** and full consideration of other members' **sensibilities** at all

communal religious events. The decision is entirely up to one's conscience and innate honesty

The above relates to rituals performed at **private locations**. In the case of **entering a consecrated place of worship**, one must understand and appreciate that **intensive efforts have been made** in the sacred place of worship's design **and consecration**. Presence of any defiling matter, veiled or overt, is tantamount to **desecration** and the **disrespecting of the extensive efforts** undertaken to enthrone that **exalted Divinity** in an Atashgah. **A woman in menses** must deeply ponder and commune with **their conscience** and, out of deep respect for the **perfection of the Divinity**, refrain from **entering a consecrated House of God**.

Menses is not a question of a woman being spiritually unclean. The concept of exuded dead matter, applies to **both sexes**. A woman in menses is entirely free to make her offerings to the divinity and is not spiritually constrained in any way. The **intent here** is to preserve—out of sheer respect for the Divine—the sacredness of a ritual or of a place of worship that is **open to community**.

However, it is crucial to fully value the **spiritual experience** as a reality for all and to preserve its piety and sanctity of a religious event. Therefore, it is **entirely up to one's conscience** to make the choice **under these circumstances**.

The objective of this essay is to disseminate a clear explanation of the subject on physiological grounds and as it relates to the religious observances. While one has the moral obligation to **respect the sentiments of the community**, in a congregational offering, **the ultimate choice rests with the individual**. I hope that this will permit Zoroastrians to make **an informed judgment on the subject with Guidance and Enlightenment from Ahura Mazda**.

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Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli is the past president of the North American Mobeds' Council and president of World Zoroastrian Organization, Canada. He is a retired senior Research Medicinal chemist at Ayerst Pharmaceuticals.

WZCC-NY SUMMER QUARTERLY AND YOUTH EVENT HELD ON JULY 9, 2017



Natalie Gandhi

WZCC World Director

The New York Chapter of WZCC held its Summer Quarterly and Youth Meeting on July 9 at the Ravagh Persian Restaurant in Manhattan. The featured speakers were Mrs. Spenta Captain Kandawalla and Mrs. Shaan Kandawalla. Edul Daver, WZCC's President, organized the event and introduced the speakers. The mother and daughter team gave an engaging talk, "Business in Pakistan, Entrepreneurship in New York." They discussed the challenges and achievements of their careers from the two poles of their dynamic endeavors—a brick and mortar business in Pakistan and a digital enterprise in New York.

Spenta is co-owner and Director of Captain-PQ Chemical Industries, the leading manufacturer of silicates in Pakistan. She has also served as MD of Kandex Sales Pvt. Ltd. which introduced Honda automobiles into Pakistan. During her career, she served as an independent director on the boards of several publicly listed companies in the food, insurance and banking, industries. She is also on the Board of Standard Chartered Bank Pakistan Ltd. Spenta is the first and only woman to serve on these boards and is a pioneering business woman in Pakistan.

She is the Founding Trustee of the i-Care Foundation, Pakistan's first Donor Advised Fund and Managing Trustee of her family foundation, the Captain Foundation. She also serves on the boards of several not-for-profit organizations, including the Advisory Board of the Pakistan Scholars Pro-



gram at the Woodrow Wilson Institute in Washington, DC, and is the founding member of the Business Leadership Council of Wellesley College.

Spenta graduated from Wellesley College with a degree in Political Science and Economics and is the founding member of the Business Leadership Council of Wellesley College. She is married to Darius Kandawalla and has two daughters and four grandchildren.

Her daughter, Shaan Kandawalla, (above) is the CEO and Co-Founder of PlayDate Digital, a developer and publisher of high quality, interactive, mobile educational software for children. She has spent the last 15 years in Kids Entertainment and Media, building digital and retail businesses for global kids' brands.

Prior to starting Playdate Digital, Shaan was VP of Digital and Consumer Products at Nickelodeon and Brand Manager for Hasbro, where she managed Toy Brands, including Star Wars. Shaan started her career in Finance, working in the Investment and Capital Markets Group at Goldman Sachs. She was featured in the NY Times article, "You're the Boss—The Art of Running a Small Business." Shaan is currently a member of YEC (Young Entrepreneurs Council) and has also served on the board of Women in Toys. She has a BA from Wellesley College and an MBA from Harvard Business School. She lives in NYC with her husband Shaun and her children Riah (4) and



Zane (2).

Both speakers provided insights into the dedicated and unending work involved in their endeavors. Whether dealing with chemical processing in Karachi or developing digital applications in Manhattan. They agreed that satisfying customers with excellence in product and service has been crucial to their successes. Neither relied on their gender to succeed; rather, they relied on their innate professionalism, creativity, and competence, which are underpinned by their Zoroastrian values. Together, they are unstoppable visionary entrepreneurs.

The presentation was well-received by an enthusiastic audience of nearly sixty people. The region's Youth contingent enjoyed unparalleled access to these phenomenal speakers and achievers. WZCC-NY organizing team members and friends, including Arnaz Maneckshana, Noshir Dutia, Natalie Gandhi, Darius Jamshidian, ArZan Wadia, and Shilandre Dusaj ably handled event logistics.

WZCC-NY's upcoming programs include a mini-fundraiser featuring 1931 Model-A car rides for ZAGNY religious class attendees in September and a quarterly meeting in October with visiting Global WZCC VP, Yazdi Tantra.



Personal Profile

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PRESIDENT OF YASNA ORGANIZATION AWAT HOSAMADIN TAIEB (AWAT DARYA)

REPRESENTATIVE OF KURDISTAN ZOROASTRIANS IN MINISTRY OF ENDOWMENT AND RELIGION AFFAIRS

By: Ariyana Ash



Q 1: *How do Zoroastrians practice Zoroastrianism in Kurdistan today? Because prior to the Iraq War in 2003, Zoroastrians were in hiding and they were not allowed to practice freely. What has changed?*

AWAT DARYA (AD): With the grace of Ahura Mazda. Everyone knows that Iraq had been governed by many dictatorships one after another during its long history. The minorities such as Zoroastrians were fiercely oppressed with no rights. We could not show our religion.

However, in 2015 an article-5 passed as law in the regional state- government of Kurdistan in Iraq constituting freedom to practice any religion. Since

then we started practicing our religion freely and in the open. Every religion has an official, representing their community. I am the official representative of the Zoroastrians of Kurdistan in Iraq. Today we have no problem with any other religion, we exchange ideas and communicate with each other, we celebrate with each other and we tolerate each other; Muslims, Zoroastrians, Christians and all other religions, It's been a long time, about over 1,400 years that we have been oppressed and persecuted. But in this century, since the time our government facilitated freedom for us, we are coming out to freely practice and it is time for us to unite and work together as one.

Q 2: *The foundation of the Zoroastrian belief and the larger Iranian culture from Tajikistan to Kurdistan is freedom. Freedom is a precious and amazing contribution from Iran to the entire world. Do you agree with this?*

A D: The principles of our religion are dependent on choice and freedom. Choice and freedom places humanity before everything and gives humans a purpose in creation. This is primal, before race, gender or anything that divides humanity. Humanity is number one here. What connects people is the freedom of choice that Zarathustra promotes.

Q 3: *One thing I've noticed is that regardless of religion, the Kurds have a special unity with their heritage, culture and Zoroastrian beliefs. This has always been the first thing that has united Kurds regardless of religion. It is as though religion has played a secondary role in their life; culture comes first.*

AD : There were many major wars that happened in the Kurdistan part of Iran, such as Alexander and Arab invaders. If the Kurds weren't very close to their culture and to their identity, then they would have been dissolved by now. Their language, identity and the hardship they faced has made them stronger. The struggle that all of our people went through has left us united.

Q 4: *What is the geo political situation in the area?*

AD : We Zoroastrians, when in darkness we don't hold swords, we light a candle. Today in the Middle

Personal Profile

East, the hands of darkness are destroying the lands; these hands are harvesting many innocent souls. Kurdistan especially is becoming the war zone along the border that extends over 1,500 miles. People are living in very hard conditions; over 2 million refugees have come to live amongst a population of 5 million. This is a big burden on the population. Many people have immigrated from distant lands. Many have survived under difficult conditions. Some have died from drowning in the seas or died in the cold mountains, some from hunger in remote areas. Why all of these atrocities? Why can't we live in peace in such an advanced civilization? Does this remind you of Yasna 29, Stanza 1? We all know who can help in this case. The Gathas, the way of Asho Zartosht. We Zoroastrians were the first who wrote the human rights articles. We have contributed the most to humanity, but yet we have lost our right in much of our native lands to practice our indigenous religion. Today our contributions are impressive, including: taking care of the environment, planting trees in the barren mountains, volunteering to clean the city streets, helping the needy, finding jobs for young people, educating and making people aware of our religion, making good relations with other religious groups and organizations, and fighting the forces of darkness.

Q 5: What do you expect from nations in that area?

AD: I hope other countries: Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan grant us Zoroastrians the same rights to their citizens that we now have in Kurdistan part of Iraq. The Zoroastrians are peace loving, and progressive; who will contribute to the progress of these nations. In Kurdistan we have started the Yasna Organization. which is in the frontline to gather Zoroastrians together. Slowly the ones who were practicing our religion in secret are coming and announcing their religion without fear. Zoroastrians are growing in numbers and groups. Lately tribes have been declaring that they are Zoroastrians. Groups that are near the ruins of old fire temples invited the Yasna Organizations and announced openly their good religion. Now we have a fire temple in Kurdistan. We are freely practicing like other religions. This is what we wish from other nations. We have developed relations with foreign consulates like the United States of America, France, and England. We have good presence in the media. We appear on many talk shows and debates. Our voice is reaching many. We have a fire temple in few cities that were inaugurated in 2016. Local nations should take advantage of our wisdom to improve the human condition.

Q 6: What is your dream or wish?

AD : My wish is to solve all of today's problems and

catastrophes, look at the wars that are happening right now over religions, men and women are not finding the right way of living. Asho Zartosht teaches us to select the right path to follow. Therefore, my wish is for all Zoroastrians to unite. I wish for more people around the world to read and understand Zoroastrianism. I want to thank all the Zoroastrians of California who received us in such a kind and hospitable manner which demonstrates that we are capable of uniting and working together.

We need to unite; the teachings of the Gathas can unite us. We possess many intellectual philosophers amongst us who can be very beneficial for our community. Maintaining contacts and communication and good relations, amongst us, no matter how near or how far. Keep circulating news and activity reports. We need to develop good leadership. Teach the youth groups to work together, to study together, and to understand together. Help your brothers and sisters of Kurdistan. They are on the frontlines. They are spearheading the return of Zoroastrianism and making great efforts in dangerous circumstances, they need your help.

Ariyana Ash was born in Santa Monica, California and currently resides in Irvine, California. She is 17 years old and attends University High School and is a staff writer for their newspaper. She enjoys tennis, writing, and piano. She also attends teen classes and performs music at the California Zoroastrian Center.

BACKGROUND TO THE INTERVIEW

Several visitors from Kurdistan, Iraq, toured the United States under the auspices of the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program. The program was arranged by Meridian International Center, Washington, D.C. Included among the visitors were Mr. Mariwan Mahmood Kakashikh Naqshbandi, the Director General, Kurdistan Regional Government, Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs (MERA), and Mrs. Awat Hosamadin



Personal Profile

Taieb, (Darya) the Zoroastrian Representative in MERA.

A roundtable meeting was held on March 15, 2017, between the visiting delegation from Kurdistan, Iraq, and representatives of faith communities in the Washington Metropolitan area (Bahai, Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Zoroastrian). The meeting was chaired by the Rev. Dr. Carol Flett, Interfaith Programs Coordinator, Cathedral College, Washington National Cathedral. Interpreter services were provided by Mr. Peshwaz Faizulla

The Director General of MERA, Mr. Mariwan Kakashikh Naqshbandi, introduced the delegation (photo left, Awat Darya and Kersi Shroff, second and third from right)) and described the situation of Kurdistan as being complex, riddled with political, military and religious cross-currents.

In 2015, the Kurdistan Regional Government enacted a law to officially protect religious minorities, which is unique for a Muslim state/region. It allows citizens to freely declare their religious affiliation, by “selecting a religion.” According to Mrs. Awat, under the pretext of finding the remains from the Iraq-Iran war, Iranian personnel are damaging ancient sites, including the ruins of ancient Zoroastrian temples, and looting any artifacts they uncover. In one instance, she had a wall/fence built around a building with an *atash gah*, but it stands the risk of being officially declared to be a Christian site. She also stated that they have approached UN agencies concerned with the conservation of historical sites, but have not received any support.

Kurdistan has a population of around 5.5 million, of which 1.5 million belong to minority faiths. The culture in Kurdistan is different from that of Arabs. The region serves as a refuge for minorities. Iraq is a “graveyard for religious minorities” and the country is a lost cause for Kurdistan. The rich Mesopotamian culture recognizing two major faiths, Islam and Christianity, and other minority faiths, is being destroyed in Iraq. Baghdad has cut the budget for Kurdistan, so salaries and funding are not provided. A referendum is planned in Kurdistan seeking to break-off the region from Iraq. The support of the world community will be essential for achieving the split.

A separate law on Identity Cards, apparently allows the identification of only two religions: ***Islam and Christianity***. A clause within the law, based on Sharia, dis-inherits the siblings of a person who converts to Islam. While inter-marriages between Muslims and spouses from other religious communities are registered, any offspring is automatically considered to be a Muslim.. Another clause allows nine-year old girls to be married. The law also makes provisions for the contracting of “temporary marriages.” A multi-faith demonstration against the ID law was held in

front of offices of the United Nations in Erbil.

There are no official statistics maintained, but according to Mrs. Awat, there are around 200,000 Kurds who have “declared” Zoroastrianism as their faith, while many others practice it in the shadows. They were like “foreigners in their own lands” until the 2015 law allowed Zoroastrians to reengage with their 3,700-year old faith. However, there is constant pressure from Baghdad and there are repeated accusations that Zoroastrians are “fire worshippers”, commit incest, and indulge in propaganda. The takeover by ISIS of Iraqi territory has added a great pressure on Kurdistan. The region has sheltered many Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), including Christians and Yazidis. After the departure of ISIS, things could get much worse, she said. The minority communities participate in the Pesh Marga forces, the military arm of Kurdistan. Thankfully, the Kurdistan Regional Government is very supportive of its minorities.

Mrs. Awat said that Kurdish Zoroastrians must create their own institutions and change the mindset of the majority community. She is requesting support for the establishment of multi-faith committees for the protection of all religions and to fight against ignorance, poverty, violence against women, and Female Genital Mutilation. The U.S. State Department reports do not mention the “horrible things” that Baghdad is doing against the Kurds.

Asked about the biggest problem facing Kurdistan, the delegation was unanimous in stating that an independent Kurdistan is the only answer to their problems. To them the creation of Iraq was an aberration, foisted on the region by colonial powers.

Awat Darya is very active on Facebook and has garnered a lot of support, she speaks with passion about prospects for the revival of Zoroastrianism in Kurdistan. Her people were forcibly converted to other religions and are now seeking



Personal Profile

their rightful Zoroastrian heritage. She also spoke of her vision of uniting worldwide Zoroastrians and to welcome us in Kurdistan one day.

Report by Kersi B. Shroff, Zoroastrian Interfaith representative in Washington Area who attended the Round Table.

Kurdish delegation then visited California and were received by all the groups and organizations. It is very encouraging that our community has been united in receiving our Zoroastrian guests from another country and setting aside differences for the better cause. We should be grateful to the **Zoroastrian Assembly**, Dr. Ali Jafarey and Mr. Daryoush Irani for arranging this program and taking full responsibility, Dr. Daryoush Jahanian of the **Guiv Foundation** for facilitating the visit, **CZC** who invited the delegation and arranged for them to become acquainted with the local community with other endeavors for TV interview. **FEZANA** represented by its President Homi Gandhi, Tehmi Damania, **Zoroastrian Association**

of California- (ZAC) Centre in Orange with welcome celebration, reception and presentation, and with a visit to the Atash Kadeh, **North American Mobed Council (NAMC)** - the delegation were invited by Ervad Ardaviraf Minocherhomji, President NAMC with a warm reception to his home. (photo pp 77) Ervad Minocherhomji with Mariwan Naqshbandi, Director General of Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs (MERA).

The different Zoroastrian organizations participated in the spirit of co-operation and made an impression that we are one. Let's move in a concerted manner to assist and support our fellow Zarthushtis in Kurdistan. There is no time to waste. In the words of Awat Darya "better days are coming". EDITOR FJ.

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BIRTH



Arshya Homi Contractor Bodhanwala, daughter of Laila and Homi, grand daughter of Dolat & Viraf Bodhanwala and Houtoxi & Farhad Contractor. Sister to Iyana & Arshan. Niece to Cyra (Farzin) Morena and Nozer, in S. California, December, 29th 2016. (photo above)

Raina Ellen Press, a girl, to Anna and Cyrus Press, granddaughter to Zarin and Minoo Press (ZA-Chicago), Mary and Cal Davis, niece to Erin and Carl, Rachel and Ryan, cousin to Elias on January 28, 2017.

Aava Bharucha, a girl, to Neza and Farhang Bharucha, granddaughter to Neville and (late) Zarin Sarkari and Burzin and Farida Bharucha, niece to Sheriyar Sarkari and Karl Bharucha, god-child to Bucky and Navroze Amaria in Denver, CO on February 16, 2017.

Kian Khory, a boy, to Tanaz Khory, Alim Jivraj on March 25, 2017. (ZSO-Canada)

Rayzad Shiroy Choksey, a boy to Delzin and Shiroy Choksey, brother to Zinaya, grandson to Thrity and yazdi Tantra, and Vikoo and Sohrab Choksey in Sunnyvale, CA on June 12, 2017.

NAVJOTES

Sohrab and Kamran Kothari, children of Yasmin and Reji Kothari, brothers of Lia Kothari, grandchildren

of Katy and Kersi Bhathena and Yasmin and Kanti Kothari in Elmhurst, IL on April 15, 2017.

Ariana Elavia Raetz, daughter of Cheherazad & Jim Raetz, granddaughter of Diana & Ardeshir Elavia and great granddaughter of Ruby Majaina in Irvine, California on July 28, 2017

Liam, son of Jennifer and Firdaus Bhathena, grandson of Zarin and Behli Bhathena of Halifaz, in Toronto, August 5, 2017.

WEDDINGS

Navaz Khory, daughter of Farouk and Yasmin Khory to **Stewart Dean** on December 29, 2016. (ZSO-Canada)

Burjis Cooper, son of Nargis and Homi Cooper to **Amanda**, daughter of Esther Pena and Milton Valentin in Dripping Springs, TX on June 16, 2017.

Sanaiya Sarkari, daughter of Jasmine and Yezdi Sarkari to **Gave Poonawalla**, son of Seema and Boman Poonawalla, in Atlanta GA, on June 23rd, 2017.

Devin Chohan son of Benifer (Bina Batliwalla) and Anupam Chohan to **Gillian Werthner** daughter of Joan and Peter Werthner in Ottawa, Ontario on June 24th, 2017.

Jimmy Sethna, son of Shermeen and Jal Sethna to **Whitney Franklin** daughter of Pam and Darrell Franklin in Houston, TX on July 8, 2017

Daisy Daver, daughter of Sanobar Kasad and Dinyar Daver to **Alexander Fix** son of late Douglas Fix and Joan Fix in Edmonton, on July 14, 2017

ShaunaCanteenwalla to Sean Hills, in Gatineau, QC, on July 29, 2017

DEATHS

Khodadad Mehraban Dehghanian, husband of Simindokht, father of Dariush, Homa (Hormozdyaran) and Sima (Jam) in

England, UK on January 1, 2017. (ZSO-Canada)

Gohar Jahangir Pourbahrami (Moavenat), mother of Mandana (Bahman Moradian), Shapour in Iran on February 3, 2017. (ZSO-Canada)

DR Mahyar Ardeshiri, husband of Bibi Yazdani, father of Dr Farnaz and Farzad Ardeshiri, in Toronto on February 28, 2017.

Farhang Soroosh, husband of Homa Hakhamaneshi, father of Tasha and Mina on March 1, 2017. (PZO-CA)

Pariza Mehta wife of Khushroo Mehta, mother of Zeus, on March 14, 2017 (ZSO).

Sorabji Jamshedji Kavina (86), father of Zersis (Anita) Kavina, Ruxana (Gustad) Anklesaria, brother of Firoz (Lily) Kavina, brother-in-law of Perviz Contractor in Ratlam, India on March 15, 2017 (ZAC-Chicago).

Homayoun Guiv Farin, 96, sister of Keikhosrow Guiv, mother of Parichehr Soroushian, Parvaneh (Parviz) Soheil, Shekoufeh (Bahram) Yeganegi, grandmother of Faranak Ghadeharizadeh, Siamak Soroushian, Kambiz and Anahita Soheil, Shahram Mehraban, Esfandiar Yeganegi, great grandmother of Shideh Ghadeharizadeh, Ryan and Shirin Dunker, Sousan Soroushian, Daryon and Kayvon Mehraban, Xavi Yeganegi in North Vancouver, BC, on March 27, 2017.

Behram Pheroze Katrak, father of Meherzeen Daruwala in Mumbai, India on March 31, 2017. (ZAGNY)

Parvin Foroutan Salamat mother of Behnam Salamat and Behdokht Salamat, grandmother of Triti Ahouraei Sotoudehnia; Khashyar Ahouraei, and Mitra Namiri, Jamshid Sotoudehnia, and great grandmother of Shahyar

Sotoudehnia, in Washington, DC . on April 1st, 2017.

Avi Vania in Highland Park, IL on April 3, 2017.

Fereidoon Khosrow Khosravian, husband of Morvarid Khosravian (Kiamanesh), father of Shekoofeh, Jamshid and Khosrow in CA on April 6, 2017.

Dinshaw Bejan Sidhwa (Kingsland, GA), 64, husband of Tracey, son of (late) Bejan and Dinoo Dinshawji Sidhwa, father of Michele (Charlie) Dehn, Darius Dinshaw Sidhwa, grandfather of Cyrus and Archer, brother of Phil (Marook) Sidhwa, Shahroukh (Riah) Sidhwa, uncle of Farokh, Lila, Danny, Jahan, Kashmira, Arman in Jacksonville, FL on April 7, 2017. (ZSO-Canada)

Sheroo Rusby, 90, mother of Paul Baman Rusby (Amanda Wood) (Arlington, VA), Shireen Marjory Rusby (Mark Shepardson) (Ownings Mills, MA), grandmother of Maya Chyenne Shepardson, Kayla Tehmi Rusby-Wood, Samuel Jahan Shepardson, Baman Tate Rusby-Wood in Arlington, VA on April 22, 2017.

Mehrdad Khodadadi Nasrabadi, brother of Behnaz Dianat, Shahnaz Yazdani and Ramin Khodadadi on April 26, 2017.

Noshir Karaka, brother of Nilufer (Phiroz) Darukhanawala (ZAC-CHI) in Mumbai, India on April 28, 2017.

Shapur Khudamurad Irani, husband of Judith Ann (Hurt) Irani, father of Katrina (Christopher) Donahue, James Edward Nichols; grandfather of Ian Donahue, Leah (Devin) Dummel, great grandfather of Declan, Dryden Dummel in Indianapolis, IN on April 28, 2017.

Dhunmai Karanjia, mother of Ervad Neriosang (Zarin) Karanjia, grandmother of Kureshaan (Oscar)

Roman, Zarvan (Melissa) Karanjia on May 9, 2017. (ZAC-Chi)

Keikhosrow Guiv, husband of late Shirin, brother of late Mehraban Guiv, nephew of late Arbab Rustom Guiv, father of Freni, Guiv, Shahpur, daughter-in-law Mehrnaz, grandfather of Neda, Parvin, Azita, Vesta in Vancouver, BC, Canada on May 10, 2017.

Morvarid Mehraban Kolah, 80, mother of Rustam, Sohrab, mother-in-law of Firozeh and Mahnaz, grandmother of Ardeshir, Aubtin, Aurash, Afshin, great grandmother of Aarzu in Maple Ridge, BC, Canada on May 11, 2017.

Arnavaz Presswalla, wife of Cyrus Presswalla, sister of Eruch, Kerman, late Kali and Dinyar Mistry in Toronto, ONT on May 13, 2017.

Nariman Bhikhaji Daruwala, 94, husband of Dhun Daruwala, father of Nina (Adil) Eduljee (Houston, TX), Kersi Daruwala, Zarin Moloobhai (Mumbai, India) in Navsari, India on May 16, 2017.(ZAH)

Homi Bhikhaji Munshi, 90, husband of late Parin Homi Munshi, father of Tehnaz (Edul) Bamji (Freehold, NJ), Rita (Jamshed) Kapadia (Carlisle, MA), Vispi Munshi (Ahmedabad, India), grandfather of Zarina Edul Bamji, Spenta Edul Bamji, Roshni (Cyrus) Hirjibehdin, Cherag Jamshed Kapadia, Setareh Vispi Munshi in Ahmedabad, India on May 16, 2017.

Rustom Patel aka Rustomji, 102, husband of Micheliena "Lien", brother of Jarbanu, uncle of Perviz Mancherji, Quinee (Zav) Patel (Cobble Hill, BC), Parvez (Thrity) Panthaky (India), Nargis (Byram) Gariwala (India) in Victoria, BC, Canada on May 18, 2017.

Naju Shroff, sister of Keki Shroff in Toronto, ONT, Canada on June 1, 2017.

Kaikhosrov D Irani, 95, husband of late Piroja K Irani, in New York, June 29,2017 (see obituary)

Aspi Khambatta, brother of Kawas (Kali) Khambatta (Houston), uncle of Farah and Kershaw Khumbatta (Houston) in Karachi, July 5, 2017.

Bahman Mobed, 98, husband of Nahid Mobed, father of Ketty and Jasmine, brother of Jehangir (Olive) Mobed, Keikhosrow (Parvin) Mobed (ZA-Chi), Mahinbanu Mobed (Shahzadi) in Honolulu, HI on June 10, 2017.

Dolly D'Costa, wife of late Herman D'Costa on June 12, 2017. (ZSO-Canada)

Fali Dubash, husband of Silloo Dubash, father of Niloufer (Mehernosh) Bhesania, Behram (Shaan) Dubash, grandfather of Jimmy, Natalie, Sean, Farzan, Arish on June 20, 2017. (ZSO-Canada)

Jerbanoo Bhadha, wife of late Peshotan Bhadha, mother of Sam Bhadha, Arnaz (Jangoo) Mistry, grandmother of Cyrus, Zareen, Benaifer, Shanaya on June 22, 2017 (ZAGNY)

Katie Lelinwalla, mother of Eric (Nicole) Lelinwalla and Mark Lelinwalla, grandmother of Violet, sister of Furrokh (Mary) Shroff, Khursheed (Jimmy) Wadia, aunt of Zorast and Kate Wadia, Cyrus and Dianne Wadia, Michael and Kevin Shroff, great aunt to Nicholas, Julie and Aiden Wadia on June 30, 2017. (ZAGNY)

Dhunmai Phiroze Dalal, 79, wife of Phiroze Dalal, mother of Hormuzd, Armita, Zane Godrej, grandmother of Shayan, Arman, Shireen, sister of Franey (Dolly) Nariman Irani and Behroze Kandawalla in Los Angeles, CA on July 3, 2017.(see obituary)

MILESTONES

Freny Patell wife of Syavux B Patell, mother to Freddy and Cyrus, mother-in-law to Amy E. Patell, and grandmother to Elias J. Patell. Sister to Dr. Aspi Daruwala of Ringoes, NJ; Sanobar B. Daruwala, Surat, India; and Viraf B. Daruwala, Surat, India, in Fort Washington, PA, on July 5, 2017 (ZAPANJ)

Jameshed Modi, husband of Navaz Modi, uncle of Dhun Baltliwala, Daulat Engineer on July 6, 2017 (ZA-Chi)

Zarir Kolah, husband of Mani Kolah, father of Rashnavi and Jennifer in Toronto, ONT on July 10, 2017.

Firdosh Behram Irani, husband of Hutoxy Irani, father of Arzaan Irani, brother of late Hooty Irani, brother-in-law of Shahrukh Irani, uncle of Shaveer and Danesh Irani. (ZSO-Canada)

Rostom Khodayar Azarbehi, son of Shenaz, Khodayar Azarbehi. (ZSO, Canada)

Shahriar Mehrshahi, condolences to Daryoush, Koorosh, Siroos, Shahnaz, Farahnaz and Ardeshir Mehrshahi. (CZC)

Rajan Modi, husband of Meena, father of Vikram and Arjun, brother of Satish Modi, brother-in-law of Phiroza, uncle of Danesh, Tushar, Yasha, Valerie, Lauren, Isha. (ZAGNY)

Dara Minocher Rivetna, husband of late Dinoo, father of Zubin (Roxanna) Rivetna, Jehan (Chris) Bell,

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grandchildren Xerses and Carmen Rivetna, brother of Perviz (Krish) Krishnayya and Rohinton (Roshan) Rivetna in Chicago on July 25, 2017.

Matrimonials for Summer 2017

FEZANA Journal will coordinate initial contacts between interested parties. We do not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials. Contact Roshan Rivetna at roshanrivetna@gmail.com.

Male, 40, MS (Computer Engineering) from University of Southern California, working as Software Engineer in California. Contact dara.mehta@gmail.com. [M17-37]

Female, 28, 5' 3", MDS (Master of Dental Surgery) Oral Medicine and Radiology, working in Pune, India. Contact weddingbell12345@gmail.com. [F17-45]

Female, 28, 5' 3", MDS (Master of Dental Surgery) Periodontics and Implantology, working in Pune, India. Contact weddingbell12345@gmail.com. [F17-46]

Female, 29, 5' 3", Bachelor of Arts (Mumbai), working in financial consultancy as a PA to an M.D. Family from Mumbai, currently living in Dubai. Contact wadihira@gmail.com or goolpesi@gmail.com. [F17-49]

Male 32, Master in Financial Management, UK, ACCA (accountancy) Qualification, UK, working as a Financial Controller in a Technology company and as a non-Executive Director in a charitable organization in Edinburgh, UK. Interested in meeting an educated, caring and understanding girl, who respects Zoroastrian tradition and culture. Contact Hanoz.Mirza@yahoo.com. [M17-50]

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www.Matrimonial.Zoroastrianism.com

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www.ParsiShaadi.com

www.MatrimonialParsiZoroastrianism.com

Mrs. Gool Banaji, Parel, Mumbai, goolpesi@gmail.com, tel: 91-22-2416 6120.



CUPID STRIKES AGAIN

We are delighted to announce wedding bells for M15.27 and F16-40 who met through this Matrimonial column in FEZANA Journal. We wish them a long and happy married life!

We are looking forward to many more successful matches!!!

A TRIBUTE TO DHUNMAI DALAL

By: Meher Dadabhoy Amalsad

Westminster, California, USA



DhunMai Dalal

A Mark of a Remarkable Lady

**Life Becomes Worth Living,
When It Is Geared Towards Giving**

I had the distinct privilege of knowing DhunMai—a wise and gentle soul—who always bent over backwards to reach out to others. In 1985, when I first started working with DhunMai on communal projects, I soon realized that she was not afraid of making mistakes. It is because she believed that, “Mistakes are lessons not sentences.” That was a remarkable quality about this formidable lady. She saw mistakes as stepping stones for

future success.

She also personified that it’s not being stubborn to maintain one’s beliefs. Rather it’s a show of character. And, for that, my hat is off to you, DhunMai, for the exemplary character that you have displayed to your family, as well as to our community and society.

DhunMai was born in Karachi, the eldest daughter of the late Shireen and Godrej Kandawalla. After being educated in the UK, she returned to Karachi for a few years before getting married to Phiroze Dalal in 1961. Their two sons, Hormazd and Zane, were born and educated in UK. Together, they emigrated to Los Angeles in 1977.

DhunMai served our North American and Global Zoroastrian community in numerous roles over the past three decades. She served with passion as the Chair of the *1985 5th North American Zoroastrian Congress* in Los Angeles. At this monumental Congress, she along with Farangis Shahrokh placed on the Congress’s agenda a session titled: *Proposal for the Organization of a North American Zoroastrian Body*. This session was the impetus for FEZANA’s birth. She was the *2014 17th North American Zoroastrian Congress* Chair, held in Los Angeles, which was a very successful event for our Zoroastrian community. As a founding participant of FEZANA, DhunMai served as the FEZANA Congress Committee’s first Chair, which provided the vision that ignited and united the spirit of community solidarity throughout North American Congresses.

DhunMai was also actively involved in the founding of the California Zoroastrian Center in Westminster, California, and was a strong supporter of the Zoroastrian Association of California and served as the Secretary of the ZAC Committee during its initial years. She was one of the major donors to the ZAC Center in Orange, California. She has also served as a Trustee and Director on the international board of the World Zoroastrian Organization in London. She was an avid supporter and promoter of youth leadership within our Zoroastrian community and has been a valuable financial sponsor for numerous North American and World Zoroastrian Youth congresses since 1987. She was also involved with many not-for-profit

organizations, including the American Youth Symphony, which she served for over 25-years, and as its Director from 2011 to 2014.

Most people see with their eyes and feel with their heart, but DhunMai could see with her heart. And, that's why I called her "a lady with a heart." A lady, whose heart was aligned with her mind. DhunMai believed that true wealth is the ability to fully experience life; and that one's happiness lies with their choices and actions; because, at the end, they may not be able to count their money, but they can surely count on the love and memories left behind. Generally, people say that life is short, but DhunMai believed that life is too short to be lived without joy. And, she radiated the essence of that joy in the lives of her family and friends.

Over the past three decades, DhunMai and I worked together on a few community projects, some in the forefront and some behind the scenes. On some, we agreed and, on others, we disagreed. Once, when we disagreed, I jokingly said, "DhunMai, if you and I agree on everything, then one of us is not necessary."

She chuckled and said, "I agree Meher, but even when we have disagreements, we should never become disagreeable." And, that's one of her most commendable character traits that I truly admired.

Our community and society has lost a stalwart; whose legacy of service will be remembered for a long time by her loved ones. A stalwart, who was passionate about serving humanity with dignity and humility and a stalwart whose prime purpose in life was focused on how to keep us united as a community through the bonds of our Zoroastrian faith.

DhunMai left a legacy of selfless service for future generation to emulate with community pride. Our hats off to her for her relentless dedication and her conscious intention of reaching out to others. May her life and pioneering deeds continue to inspire us, and may her Fravashi protect us; so that, like her, we may continue to work for the betterment of our community, society, and humanity.

DhunMai has truly left a mark of a remarkable lady in our community and our society, for which I salute her.

A LIFE WELL LIVED

Ervad Sorab Burjorjee Chhor

September 22, 1923-March 31, 2017 (93 years)

Sorab Burjorjee Chhor passed away peacefully in the early morning hours of Friday March 31, 2017

From Nargol to Nagpur to Northern California—Sorab's life's journey was a joyous adventure. Born in Nargol, he moved to Nagpur and started his career at the tender age of 14 years as an apprentice to Jehangir Panthaky, General Manager for Empress Mills—simultaneously going to night school to get his High School diploma. He spent most of his life in Nagpur, India, and worked there for over 40 years for the Tata Textile Empress Mills, retiring as the Spinning Master. He then moved to USA, where he spent the last 20 years of his life with his children in California. Sharp witted and intelligent his passion for learning was boundless which continued well into his later years and although he did not have the



opportunity for a college education he seized every opportunity to learn something new, something exciting. More recently, his grandchildren became his tutors: from them he enthusiastically learned how to use the latest electronic gadget, ipad and iphone with ease and dexterity. He had a passion for cars and would proudly display his first driving licence he acquired in 1942. He continued to drive his own car days before his passing doing errands for others, visiting friends who were ill or helping his retired buddies to get to their doctor's appointments.

Zarthushti to the core he never missed his daily visit to the *Agiary* in Nagpur, rain or shine. He not only loved reciting his favorite *Avesta* prayers twice daily with joy—he actually put the prayers into practice. Honesty and integrity were deeply ingrained in his character-- a well known fact among his colleagues and clients. He was the first appointed Chief Representative for Unit Trust of India, and knew all the tax laws with detailed perfection. He was a financial advisor to countless families in Nagpur who for generations trusted Sorab to handle all their investments. It was amazing how he always had a cheerful word, a piece of practical advice or the right words of consolation and hope for an aching heart. His was a genuinely positive outlook on life—so infectious, no one around him could languish in despondency. He managed to see the bright side of the worst situation giving guidance from his profound store of ancient wisdom combined with practical knowledge. Charity came naturally to him. There are countless families in Nagpur he helped financially in his own quiet way.



“The left hand shall not know what the right hand giveth” was his dictum. Even while struggling financially himself, he never missed a Thursday to distribute free food to the impoverished folk at Taj Baug in Nagpur where he was fondly known as “Parsi Baba.” During the last few years he was most excited to learn about the new *Darbe Meher* coming up in Sacramento. On March 26 of this year he very happily sat alongside his grandson Rustum—whom he tutored for his navar (photo above). He participated in the opening prayers of the Dare mehr and five days later after reciting *Sarosh Yasht Vadi* and *Sarosh Yasht Hadokht* late at night, he crossed over in the early morning. A blissful ending to a life well lived.

He is survived by his wife Nergish of 70 years, son Khushrav, daughters Hilla, Jeroo and Parizad and grandchildren. Aban, Shiraz, Tanaz, Behroz and Rustum

Remembered by his daughter Jeroo Darius Captain

Jaloo Manek Captain

February 3rd, 1923 – March 17th, 2017

94 years young

Our Mother, Jaloo Maneck Captain, lovingly addressed as “Momsu” by her children, Late Manchi M. Captain, Feroze M. Captain, late Mehernosh M Captain and Rita P. Engineer, and “Murghu” by her two loving grandsons, Rehan P. Engineer and Mehernosh M Captain, was an incredible spirit!

Born in Tarapore, a remote village of Gujarat, India, she self educated herself by reading everything written she could lay her hands on and was savvy and social beyond the boundaries of a village life. She married young to her handsome love, Late Maneck M. Captain and had 3 sons and a daughter. She loved life and celebrated life even in the toughest of times as life was hard when she moved to Mumbai to start her married life.

Life then sent her to work for Tata Textiles in accounts where she spent 23 years and even till today she is remembered by all. She later migrated to the US to provide a new beginning for her daughter Rita P. Engineer and her grandson Rehan P. Engineer

She was an incredible mother, grandmother and most recently became a great grandmother and was over the moon with joy! She even celebrated her great granddaughter, Ashoi's “Pagla” ceremony in Mumbai.

Wherever she went, she touched lives with her congenial personality. She was a social butterfly. Her enthusiasm and her sparkling energy not only inspired, but also swept everyone along, engulfing all in her love and life. Her unbridled courage, determination, self-confidence and zest for life have made Jaloo a truly inspiring woman. She continued to travel the world on her own, and was always game for new adventures, new horizons and most recently wanted to take an idea to Shark Tank! Her love for the casino was infectious and she always hoped of striking it big! But it is we who struck it big by having her as our Mother!!

Living in Florida with her daughter Rita, she took care of herself, ignoring all her personal difficulties; never wanting to burden anyone. She spent the night before choosing and packing what she wanted to wear for Navroz in Singapore but sadly she never made it, and instead passed away in the arms of her son in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Jaloo will always be remembered for her positive, sunny adventurous attitude; her strength of character and her undying and selfless love for her family and friends – Let's celebrate the life of Jaloo! She lived life large!!



Rani Mahrukh Shroff, MSW

Nov. 9, 1944-Jan.1, 2017, aged 72

Our one and only radiant, Rani Mahrukh Shroff (born Munshi), *MSW*, passed away suddenly in January 2017 at age 72. Rani was a very well loved wife, mother of two daughters, grandmother of three, a beloved sister, aunt, friend, cousin and social worker. She is missed immensely by her family and friends in Vancouver and abroad who knew of her strength and perseverance in the face of a long-term illness. Despite the illness, which she did not allow to define her, she was smart, feisty, courageous, funny and charming. In 1996, she had a consultation with the American doctor, Andrew Weil, who marveled at her ability to out run her illness. For decades, her husband and youngest daughter formed an interconnected daily care tripod with Rani so that she could still enjoy traveling, fine dining and adventures. Education was important to Rani, but key to her was not whether a person was educated, but rather if they expressed themselves as a “good human”. She valued kindness, caring and love above all else. Rani believed in good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

She doted on all her family pets, used to smile at them and say, “What are they thinking, looking at me with those big, lovely eyes?” Her beautiful smile and lively humour were two of her best features and



earned her much popularity as a psychiatric social worker at Riverview Hospital. Rani took on life for 72 years, laughed with her loved ones and friends, lived on three continents, traveled extensively, hosted animated dinner music parties with her husband, played a gutsy hand of bridge and enjoyed swimming, yoga and scrabble. Up until the last, Rani loved mangoes, sushi, chocolate cake, ginger tea and dining at the Teahouse.

She will be loved forever. May God grant her eternal peace.

Veeda Shroff, Daughter

It is not what you gather
but what you scatter
that tells what kind of life
you have lived

PROF. KAIKHOSROV D. IRANI, A BELOVED ZARTHUSHTI, PASSES AWAY AT 95

May 1, 1922–June 29, 2017



It is with great sorrow that we report that our beloved Prof. Kaikhosrov Irani (KD and Keku to his associates and close friends) passed away on June 29, 2017, at age 95.

Kaikhosrov Dinshah Irani, born on May 1, 1922, in Bombay, India, was the eldest son of Dinshah Jijibhoy Irani and Banu Mithibai Sethna. He graduated from St. Xavier's College in Bombay and earned a law degree from Bombay University. He met his future wife, Piroja, a colleague in the law firm where they worked. He came to the United States and worked on the Manhattan Project at the University of Chicago and, later, at the Princeton Institute of Physics, where he had many interactions

with Albert Einstein. So impressed was Einstein with him that he wrote a letter of recommendation for a teaching position in Philosophy at City College in New York which helped him to be hired. Later, KD returned to Bombay to marry Piroja.

Prof. Irani became Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the City College of New York after teaching there for 41 years. He was Chairman of the Department for 9 years, the Director and Executive Director of the Program for the History and Philosophy of Science, and was responsible for the development, execution, and teaching of the Program. He was also the Director of the Academy of Humanities and Sciences for 12 Years. He retired from teaching at 90, with a teaching record at City University in New York of 60 years. A quote from one of his students, "Irani is an amazing professor; knows almost every major figure alive during his incredibly long lifetime; is lucid, precise, with a fantastic memory. Be prepared for old, European pre-war teaching style. Take the class to learn, not to get a grade; he will not grade your work at all, but will give you a final grade from the gestalt of your performance."

Among the awards he received, are the:

- City College citation for distinguished teaching in 1960
- Outstanding Teachers Award in 1984
- Award from the Society of Indian Academics in America in 1991 for service to Education
- Award for service to Zoroastrian causes from the World Zoroastrian Organization in 1991
- The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America Lifetime Achievement Award, 1994

One of his greatest honors was the establishment of the K D. Irani Chair of Philosophy, at The City College of New York, through an anonymous contribution of \$2,000,000 made by one of his students in 1999.

Prof. Irani's original field of teaching and research was Philosophy of Science. He was one of those rare individuals whose unique background and interests allowed him to understand the works of both Albert Einstein and Emanuel Kant and to successfully apply this knowledge to his chosen field, the Philosophy of Science. In the last thirty years, he worked in the History and Philosophy of Ancient Thought—Religious, Moral, Mythic, and Technological. He contributed to the Seminar for Ancient Ethics by presenting a paper on the Dawn of Conscience, where he applied these philosophical analyses to Zoroastrian Scriptures. His original analysis of forms of religiosity was applied to Zoroastrianism and the Indo-Iranian religions and was published in the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Journal (1986) as part of the Government Fellowship Lectures in Bombay in 1981.

Prof Irani arrived in New York in 1947, long before the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) was established. Over the long years of his association with ZAGNY and, indeed, the entire North American Zoroastrian community, he was our teacher and advisor and made us think what Zarathushtra really meant by our belief in Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds. His wisdom and guidance benefited all of us. His lectures on Zoroastrianism and Philosophy instructed and guided us to be good Zarthushtis. His standing within academia helped the Zarthushti religion to become recognized in North America.

As a philosopher, one may have expected him to be an "ivory tower" type. Far from this, he, as a true Zoroastrian, involved himself in the life of the community. During 1993-95, Prof. Irani served as the President of ZAGNY and was on numerous ZAGNY Boards. He arranged seminars and conferences under the ZAGNY umbrella. He arranged the first and second Gatha Conferences

held in the UK and Los Angeles and the first Yasht Conference in New Rochelle, NY. From the time of Arbab Guiv Dar-e- Mehr's inception in New York, Prof. Irani conducted classes for adults on Zoroastrianism. His common sense and ethical approach to problems helped him shed light on many complex problems that arose within the North American Zoroastrian community.

He has lectured on Zoroastrianism throughout North America, Europe, India, and Pakistan. His knowledge of Zoroastrianism, especially the Gathas, his wit and sense of humor, and his ability to fit the subject of Zoroastrianism in the broader field of Philosophy made him an engaging speaker and a great teacher. Prof. Irani was a person of great honesty and integrity, he has a firm belief in the teachings of Zarathushtra and was dedicated to these teachings. He had often trouble reconciling the social practices of Zoroastrianism when they conflicted with these teachings.

Prof. Irani's academic standing and respect gave him the ability to convincingly and successfully represent and explain Zoroastrianism at many interfaith meetings. He was a unique treasure to the Zoroastrian community. His connections into the academic world provided the community access to some of the best minds who work in the field of religion and Zoroastrianism. We were fortunate to have this great philosopher, teacher, and friend of our community and one of its finest members among us.

Condolences may be sent to his niece Zarine Weil, zbweil@comcast.com and Zarine's son Darius Weil, darius.weil@gmail.com.

At Prof. Irani's request, the funeral was simple and private. A memorial meeting was organized by ZAGNY at the Dar-e-Mehr, on September 9, 2017

Respectfully authored by Dr. Lovji Cama, ZAGNY.

ZOROASTRIANISM 2—A BOOK REVIEW

Zoroastrianism—A Collection of Articles from the Encyclopedia Iranica,

Edited by Mahnaz Moazami, August 2016, Published by Encyclopedia Iranica, New York, VOL. I & VOL II, ISBN-13: 978-1-934283-46-2, pages 1070 and ISBN -13: 978-1-934283-47-9, pages 2116. \$79.

Reviewed by Ardeshtir B. Damania (PhD), UC Davis

Zoroaster is famous throughout the world as the principal founder of Zoroastrianism. A pious, noble, and compassionate person, Zoroaster was a great messenger of Ahura Mazda and eventually became the Prophet of Iran. The message of the Prophet was simple—lead a high moralistic life that would pave way for immortality and eternal bliss. He also asked people to follow the doctrine of the God of Righteousness, Ahura Mazda.

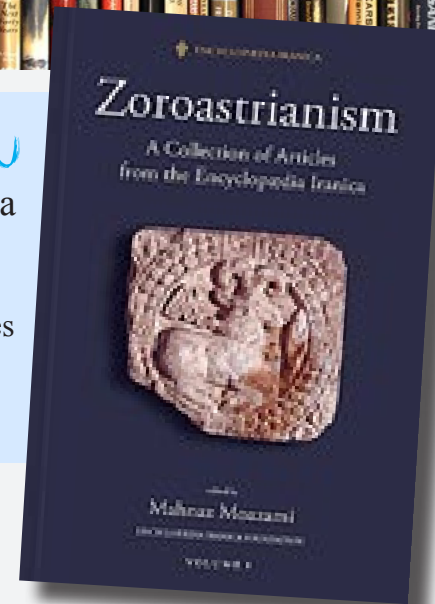
Volume II Includes the Following Sections:

- Ablutions and Purification Ceremonies—6 Chapters
- Prayers, Hymns, and Incantations—8 Chapters
- Priestly Titles and Prominent Zoroastrian Priests—15 Chapters
- Legal Aspects of Zoroastrianism—19 Chapters
- Death and After Life—13 Chapters
- Festivals—10 Chapters
- Places of Worship—7 Chapters
- Zoroastrian Heroes and Adversaries—19 Chapters
- Mythical and Historical Locations—19 Chapters
- Parsi Communities—3 Chapters
- Index

Volume II may be of greater interest to most readers as it deals with the day-to-day life of a Zoroastrian. In the first chapter by Mary Boyce on cleansing in Zoroastrianism, she has written about the various ways in which a Zoroastrian man or women

can become defiled and the ways by which the affected person can be cleansed following Zoroastrian texts. For example, the worse kind of defilement occurs when a person comes in contact with a corpse of a recently deceased person. This is believed so because the dead person is thought to have been conquered by Angra Mainyu. Such a defiled person must be cleansed by a priest and segregated thereafter for nine nights.

In the section “Prayers, Hymns, and Incantations,” the meaning and pronunciations of common Zoroastrian prayers, such as Ashem Vohu, etc. are given by various authors. The *Asirvad* prayers (blessing, benediction), usually recited by the two priests officiating at a Parsi wedding, are directed at the couple. Mary Boyce, with Firoze M. Kotwal, wrote a chapter on *Atas Niyayisn*, which are special prayers directed to the fire and its divinity. The tradition of the *Monajats* (a personal conversation with God, where the reciter pours forth their own feelings of devotion and humility) is given by Beate Schmermbeck (in a PhD thesis presented to the University of Heidelberg). The literary genre of the poetical prayers (the *Monajats*) are Islamic in origin; but, in time, Zoroastrian priests in Iran and India began to compose *Monajats*. The priests in India began to compose *Monajats* in the Gujarati language; but, as the author notes, the praying of



Monajats is not very popular today. Attempts

have been made to remedy this situation by reviving them through songs like *Khushali na geeto* and the *garbas*, recorded on audio cassettes and CDs.

Under the section “Priestly Titles and Prominent Zoroastrian Priests,” the various names ascribed to Zoroastrian priests, such as the *Magi* or *Magus* are discussed. However, from the time of Darius I (550-486 BCE), the *Magi* or Zoroastrian priests began to play an important role at the royal courts and enjoyed great influence as can be seen from the wall carvings at the ruins of Persepolis. But, in the beginning of the 4th century BCE, *Magus* began to take on a different meaning in the west (Greek and Roman times), such as a conjurer, sorcerer, soothsayer, etc. However, the same word was also applied to wise men (those men of knowledge from the east) in general. And, so, when three such men from the east (some say from the town of Kashan in Iran) came to offer presents at the birth of the infant Jesus they were called the “*Magi*” and became an enduring part of the Christian tradition. The word *Dastur* comes

to us from Sasanian times, writes author Mansour Shaki, saying that it denotes one of authority or having power or is well-versed in religious matters. It can also refer to a high-ranking theologian to whom members of a community could turn to for authoritative advice or a decision.

The judicial and legal systems practiced under Zoroastrianism are explained in the section “Legal Aspects of Zoroastrianism.” The legal systems of the Achaemenians, Parthians, and Sasanians are documented. Courts sat in panels and consisted of members from various classes and backgrounds. Heads of households typically represented the legal interests of their respective household members. Women were not discriminated against and often stood in cases involving “inner-family” disputes, especially in cases involving dowries, or the protection of their business interests, just like men. State officials acted as judges, but the highest religious authority was the Mobedan-e-Mobed—the high priest—who could be replaced in certain cases by the King. As far as ownership of property was concerned, three forms of ownership were recognized by the courts: 1) lands that had been passed down from the ancestors (generation to generation), 2) property assigned to a person or a family by a third party, and 3) property directly purchased by a person using their own earnings or wealth. This chapter details the different kinds of properties and how they were treated by the judicial system.

Also under “Legal Aspects of Zoroastrianism,” the institution of matrimony is exhaustively discussed under “Marriage,” which includes an interesting subheading “Next-Of-Kin Marriage in Zoroastrianism.” The term *xwedodah* refers to marriages between father and daughter, mother and son, or brother and sister. How-

ever, during post-Sasanian times and also among the Parsis who migrated to India, the term refers to marriages between cousins, which was commonly used to keep wealth within a family.

In the chapter “Women in Avesta” author Leon Goldman makes it clear that Zoroastrians believed in an essential parity between men and women. Both men and women participated in the thread ceremony; the timeframe given was up to 15 years of age. Furthermore, there was no discrimination in religious education and, hence, it is just as well that we now have women *mobedyars* in Iran and other parts of Central Asia.

The chapter “Zoroastrian Festivals,” by Mary Boyce, will be interesting to any reader who wants to know about the origins and meanings of Zoroastrian festivals. Two categories of festivals are given by Boyce: Nowruz and the six *Gahambars* (also discussed in a separate chapter having the same name) and the major and minor feasts. Major feasts were in honor of the *yazatas* (benign divinities). In addition, each *Atash Behram* holds an annual festival to commemorate the day its sacred fire was enthroned. Individuals and communities can hold a *jashan* (or festival) to celebrate their thanksgiving for any event that had been desired—or, merely for the sake of worship. Almost all festivals in the olden days were accompanied by music, dancing, and wine. The festivals were guided by the calendars. This chapter also discusses the details of how Zoroastrian calendars evolved from Zarathushtra's time to today.

The significance of Nowruz is described as the “holiest and most joyful festival of the Zoroastrian year.” Boyce states that as far as can be remembered or archaeological records show, Nowruz was always celebrated on the first day of spring,

March 21st, when the sun regains its strength and overcomes winter's cold and dark days. The meaning and origin of *pateti* (repentance for sins committed during the past year) and *muktads* (remembrance of departed souls) are also discussed.

Zoroastrian places of worship, the *atashkadeh* (literally, “house of fire”), are discussed—this Zoroastrian term means a consecrated fire that burns continuously. After the Arab conquest of Persia, a different name (*Dar-e-Mehr*) was used for the atashkadeh. The oldest identifiable remains of a fire temple (a general term used by Westerners) is located in Sistan province. During Islamic times, the sacred fires of Persian fire temples were either doused and the temple destroyed or converted into a mosque. It was for this reason that very few Persian fire-temples remain.

In “Zoroastrian Heroes and Adversaries,” there are chapters that discuss the stories of Afrasiab, Rustom and Sohrab, Esfandiar, Shah Lohrasp, Faredun, Jamaspa, King Jamshid, etc., some of whom we are familiar with and others of whom we know very little, if not at all. The *Shahnameh* and the various characters that appear therein are also the subject of many chapters in this Section.

The section “Mythical and Historical Locations” discusses the legend of Paras Banu, or Pars Banu. This is a Zoroastrian shrine located at the end of the Yazd plain. Cecast, a mythical lake in eastern Iran, was later identified as Lake Urmia. Another important place mentioned is the “fortress of archives,” which contained several hides with letters of gold carrying the teachings of Zarathushta which Alexander the accursed is reputed of destroying it. Other famous locations in Zoroastrian history discussed include Estakr where Persian kings, including Yazdegird III,

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were crowned.

“Parsi Communities” will interest readers of FEZANA Journal. The opening chapter is by John R. Hinnells, who has extensively researched Parsi talks about the arrival of the Zoroastrians in Hindustan by boats and their subsequent, continued persecution by Islamic rulers that attacked from the north. Ghaznavid dynasty ruler Sultan Mahmud is specifically mentioned (he commissioned the Persian poet Ferdowsi to write the *Shahnameh*).

Navsari’s rise in importance as a Parsi religious center and place of learning is noted. Libraries to preserve old documents and texts were constructed and schools and hospitals established. The rise of the Parsi sethias that originated in Navsari (e.g., Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy and Jamshetji Tata) are discussed in this chapter. Other centers of Zoroastrianism, such as Surat and

Broach, are also mentioned. The communities of today at Poona (now Pune) and Karachi are also mentioned. The recent interaction between the Parsis in Mumbai (Bombay) and the worldwide diaspora are clearly and interestingly presented.

Jesse S. Palsetia, the author of a recent book on the life of Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, has a chapter on the Parsi communities in Calcutta. Dadabhoi Behramji Banaji was the first Parsi to come to Calcutta from Surat in 1767. A detailed chapter by Hinnells “The Bombay Zoroastrian Community” is most interesting and full of facts which include 1) a brief overview of Bombay history; 2) The Zoroastrian contribution to the rise of Bombay as a commercial and financial capital of India; 3) Bombay as a center of Zoroastrianism; and 4) the interaction of Bombay Zoroastrians and their co-religionists in Iran

The two-volume set, I must confess, is not for everyone, but for a serious learner of the religion of Zarathushtra, its origin, spread, pinnacle, the decline, the migrations to India, the successes of the Parsis in their adopted land, and, finally, the second migration to other parts of the world after India’s independence. Both volumes would be an excellent addition to any collection of books on Zoroastrianism and the Parsis. The price is reasonable when you consider the amount of information and humongous amount of time it required to compile and edit this valuable collection. I wholeheartedly recommend this two-volume set to all Zoroastrians around the world, wherever they are settled today—for this is our history.

GO HOME

by Sohrab Homi Fracis

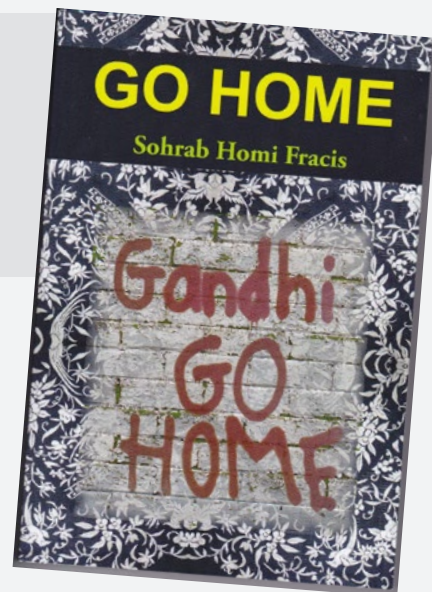
Knut House Press, September 7, 2016, ISBN -13; 978-0692761465
pp 250; Amazon, Paperback, \$15.00

reviewed by Deenaz Paymaster Coachbuilder, Ph.D.

Fracis, an Indian-American, is the winner of the Iowa Short Fiction Award for his collection *Ticket to Minto: Stories of India and America*. He taught literature and creative writing at the University of North Florida, was a fiction and poetry editor of *State Street Review*, judged at the *Page Edwards Short Fiction Award*, led fiction workshops, and been a Visiting Writer and Artist in Residence at several institutions and venues. Fracis is now critique faculty at the Florida Heritage Book Festival in Flaglar College, St. Augustine, and has been invited to read selections

from *Go Home* at many conferences and literary events.

Fracis, like his protagonist in the novel Viraf, is a descendant of Zoroastrians who fled Iran around 850 C.E. to avoid decades of discrimination and forced conversion by Arab Muslims that had conquered the Persian Empire. India became their adopted land. Here, the Parsis, as they are called, were a small minority—currently about 69,000—and have prospered through the years. They have contributed greatly to the economic, administrative, artistic,



literary, and civic society of India. As an Indian-American Parsi writing in English, Fracis joins a long and illustrious list of recent Parsi novelists such as Bapsi Sidhwa, Rohinton Mistry, and Boman Desai.



Books & Arts

Go Home is the story of Viraf, a Parsi Indian from a middle-class family in Bombay (now Mumbai), educated at a prestigious university, and nurtured in modest luxury by a close and loving family. He emigrated to America in the turbulent 80s, when the U.S. endured the Iranian hostage crisis, the ensuing gasoline embargo, and its after effects. He spends his first few years in Delaware as a graduate student with a teaching assistantship, and then... this is his story.

The cover graphic highlights graffiti sprayed on a brick wall, “Gandhi Go Home.” I wondered about its significance. In 1896, the Indian civil rights leader and freedom fighter Mohandas K. Gandhi sailed home from the British colony, Natal, Africa, after having written off the insults and humiliations faced by Indians in South Africa. On his return to Durban, he is faced with a hostile mob ready to attack him due to their misinterpretation of his critical statements. He wonders, should he quit and go home, or should he stay on and fight for and defend the rights of his fellow Indians? He decides to stay on for several crucial years, which had a lasting effect on his life and legacy. Viraf’s journey in the U.S. takes him through experiences traumatic, mundane, unexpected, exhilarating, bewildering, humorous, and enlightening. In his own way, he too is discovering “his” place in the world, determining for himself where he belongs and who he really is.

Go Home has three segments: Part I, **New World**; Part II, **World Gone Bad**; and Part III, **No Simple World**. The titles and chapter headings suggest their respective story lines.

Viraf’s new world is violently introduced to the reader in the prologue, *Hear Me*. He undergoes a baptism by fire during a road rage incident on lonely Porter Road, not far from the University, which upends his ordered, sane world. Nearly avoiding an accident between his Pinto and a new Bronco, he stops his car and steps toward the other driver to logically discuss the incident. Instead, he is violently attacked by the driver and his friend. His glasses are broken as he is pummeled and called a “goddam dago.”

Viraf is familiar with American culture, music, movies, and, even, Wimpy burgers. Despite its superficiality, he soon becomes immersed in the culture. His unmarried neighbors, Ali and Doug, befriend Viraf. To him, they are associated with America’s sexual freedom. He experiences the euphoric and psychedelic result of a hit of acid in their company, discovers the different ways words are pronounced—schedules, laboratories, routes—and how things are named, like “flashlight” for the Indian “torch.” He looks upon his friends superciliously as he realizes that his mastery of English vocabulary is better than theirs, or that his cultural heritage and background is superior.

Francis uses the stream-of-consciousness technique effectively. Though not as extreme as James Joyce, his style is closer to Marcel Proust’s style; that is, the story leaps from continent to continent, the U.S. and India, within paragraphs and sometimes, within the same sentence. Transposed over the present, we encounter, through Viraf’s internal monologues, his family, his close friends, his university days, the life he left behind in Bombay. They

are not referred to casually, but in cameos carefully and lovingly etched and brushed, often with a sense of nostalgia.

We are introduced to Maya, a beautiful, dark-complexed South Indian Hindu woman. She is aware of her skin color, which is viewed disdainfully by some Indians, but makes no difference to Viraf.

Viraf’s father, Aspi, expects Viraf to acquire his master’s degree in the U.S. and return to Bombay to join his construction firm. The future seems to be guaranteed for our hero, if he returns and becomes a partner in the firm. Aspi’s form of discipline for his young son is threat and bluster. Only once has he touched his son to discipline him. Viraf grows up in a home where physical violence is not the norm. Throughout the novel, violence is something that he abhors.

Viraf understands that his accent, weak knowledge of American history, and social skills make him stand out. He becomes keenly aware of the American society’s hierarchical structure and its class distinctions (“rednecks,” for example). Further distinguishing him from those he encounters are his educational level and sophistication. Soon, “He’d begun to wonder where his place in the world really was.” His memory of India “had the consistency of a watercolor in contrast to the thick reality around him.”

The author mingles humorous interludes throughout the book; such as, when he neglects to change his watch for the change to Daylight Savings Time. He hurries to perform his teaching assistant duties at the college only to discover he is an hour late and the classroom deserted.



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In *World Gone Bad*, we begin to see Viraf's character flower in depth and richness. He gains confidence in himself and stops trying to fit in. He gets a pair of contact lenses as his old spectacles were smashed during the Bronco incident. The world begins to change literally and figuratively. "Never had he seen so clearly." As with Oedipus, truths are revealed after he gouges out his eyes. Without his sight, he can see through the fog of humanity. He states, "The blind man's words will be instinct with sight." With Viraf, his contacts give him a "sense of being free" from old contraptions and old perceptions of people. He gains new instincts and insights.

Viraf's experience of the Bronco incident morphs into an understanding of **why** humans behave as they do. The "rednecks," as his friends labeled them, displayed pent-up frustration with their lives bereft of any upward mobility—unable to think and discuss rationally, they resorted to name calling and violence.

Viraf spends his summer break in Bombay, where he and his family experience a terrifying incident when they are caught up in a mill workers' strike. As his family drove by the strikers, the workers struck their car and attempted to roll it over, with them and his beloved mamaiji (grandmother) inside. Their frustration "had manifested itself in the shape of impoverished and angry human beings." The strikers seemed to cry out to Viraf for recognition and understanding. Their plea was reminiscent of the Bronco thugs' "do you hear us?" Yes, he hears and sympathizes with them. Now, he is the one who is different in his native country. He is the one with a different

accent, a worldlier view of people, a sympathy for the lives of the maid, the obliging lift man whose eyes are always tired, even an appreciation of the precarious life he has left behind in the U.S.

Viraf returns to Delaware. He is glad to be back. He immediately notices the differences from Bombay: white wooden houses that are painted and clean, no beggars, and no hierarchy of servitude. But, unexpectedly, his assistantship has not been renewed. Viraf assertively presents his case to the Department Chair, who mocks him because he is not intimidated by his browbeating. It is as if his fate is decided, he will have to go back home and join his father's firm. Viraf is gaining confidence in himself, his battered pride is slowly regained. Eventually, his assistantship is temporarily renewed.

The tale begins to take a positive tone. His own advisor appears in a new light, genuinely concerned about him, providing sound advice. His friends are delighted by the renewed stipend. At that, "something in Viraf felt released and overwhelmed to see their happiness for him," including beautiful Ali with the "marmalade" hair for whom he has unrequited feelings. Unlike many encounters in which he was jeered and told to "go home," his friends side with him. Despite being rescued by a T.A friend, whose supervisor offers him a new assistantship, Viraf is still a loner at heart, but without the old feeling of loneliness.

In *No Simple World* Viraf admits that "... there was way too much he did not know ...", yet another self-awakening. After completing his master's degree, he returns to Bombay and works for a software

consultancy firm, an American-Indian collaboration. Much like himself, a hybrid. When he analyzes the past years, it is with nostalgia, clearly appreciating the positives, and accepting the negatives, a balanced view of his sojourn.

The software company transfers Viraf to the U.S. He seems to be destined to return. He is showered with epiphany after epiphany. There has been a fusion within him, of two continents. He begins to gain perspectives into the dignity of labor, reminding himself of Jadhav, the liftman in Seth Building, who is always worn out and never appreciated enough. His best friends in Delaware have been "hippies" at heart, true and honest to themselves and to him. Ali after all, has been faithful to her promiscuous Doug.

Ironically, his project is for the Ford Motor Company in Detroit, the company that made the Pinto of the Bronco incident. For the first time in the U.S. he is integrated with workers from a variety of religions, ethnicities, and nationalities, including those of mixed marriages. They treat him with respect. They were "rough," friendly people who "struck up a conversation with him." He is **one** in a mixed body of humanity.

As Viraf prefers to live in a warm climate, he obtains a job in Jacksonville, Florida, and coincidentally, will live close to his old college friend, Nitin, who is happily married to a white American. During a relaxed evening with Nitin and his wife, Viraf recounts the bottled-up incident of violence on Porter Road. Both are shocked and sympathetic. "You can find ignorant and violent people anywhere." This retelling to an Indian friend, married to an

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American, brings him absolution. He views himself now as an Indian-American.

The last chapter, “A Man of the World” depicts an ideal setting. In Jacksonville, Viraf drives to Metropolitan Park for an annual festival called the World of Nations. Booths representing many countries sell their food and their wares. It is a cosmopolitan scene, where “no one was a minority.” It was a global village. He comes to love his adopted city, a city steeped in history. He recognizes that there is class distinction and discrimination in India, a secular country, as well as the U.S., that people are not perfect, but they can strive to better themselves. Fracis builds a character that is lovable,

vulnerable, wary, introverted, tense and lonely, unable to get dates, who matures, and carves his own destiny.

Through Viraf’s journey, we witness the strain and stress that immigrants endure as they slowly integrate into American society. It is a transition from the old into the new, a process of assimilation while discovering and holding onto one’s identity. *Go Home* is most timely. In the current hostile environment against minorities and immigrants, including the shooting of two Indian men in February of this year, Viraf’s story illustrates the possibility of an inclusive, respectful America that continues to illuminate the world.

Fracis’ simple, energetic prose

attains a touch of lyricism in the book’s last sentences that symbolically connect this Indian American immigrant’s two lives, past and present.

High above the tower, the lightest pink now streaked the sky. He took a last look over the rail, up and down the breath of the river. Faintly, in the distance, he could see both sides.

It was Shylock who said, “If you prick us, do we not bleed?” *Go Home* affirms our common humanity.

Deenaz P. Coachbuilder, is a writer, educator, artist, an environmental advocate, wife, mother and grandmother. She lives in California, Seattle, and Mumbai. Her poetries, commentaries and essays have been published internationally. Her book of poems, Imperfect Fragments, has been received with critical acclaim. She is the recipient of President Obama’s “Volunteer Service Award”.

Two Indian men in their thirties both engineers met after work for a beer at a strip mall in Austins Bar and Grill where they were well known

A man walked in, accosted the two friends “get out of my country”, the T V was loud they ignored him, but he was back with a gun, shots rang out

One immigrant, Srinivasn, a Hindu was on the floor dead, the other wounded

Brad removed his shirt and tied it tight around Alok’s leg to staunch the bleeding Ian was shot trying to intervene

A few days later, Srinivasan’s wife Sunaya said they had so many dreams... they love America and wanted to do much for “this” country her heart broken

Now he is everywhere and no where his clothes, his side of the sink she thinks of the way he used to brush, shower. He was a very loved child, his father’s trusted son, she said as her voice faded into a whisper.

On Feb. 22nd. 2017, in Olathe, Kansas, two legal Indian immigrants were shot by a Caucasian man who hurled racial insults at them. Srinivas Kuchibhotla died, while Alok Madasani was hospitalized.

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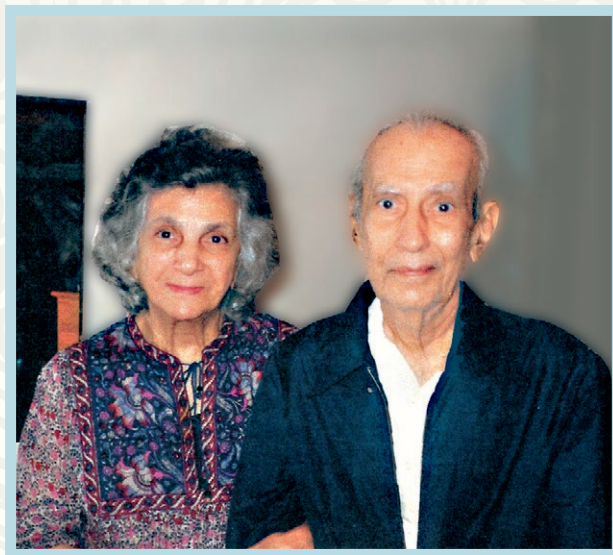
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