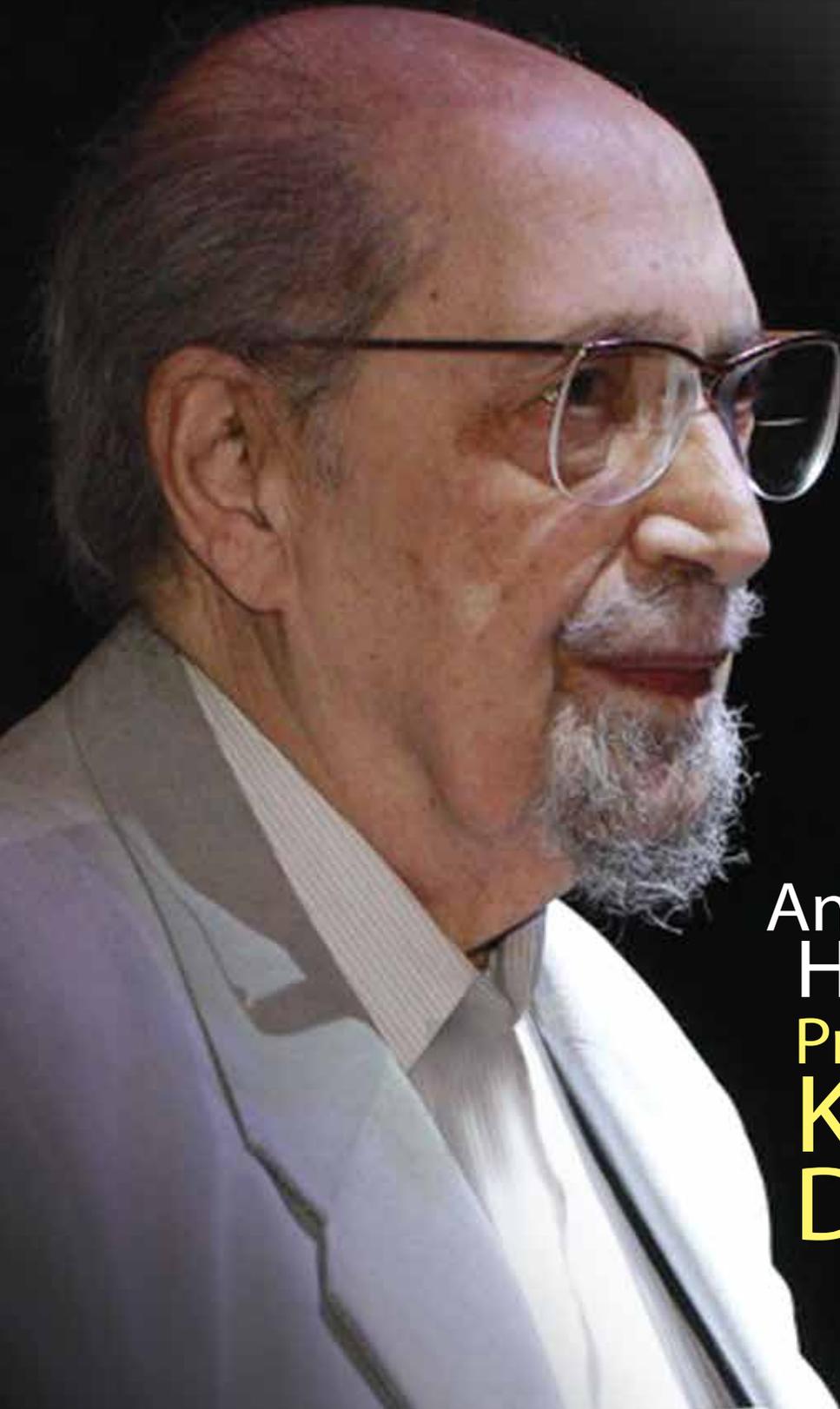


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3
issue 2017



An Extraordinary
Human Being
Professor
**Kaikhosrov
D Irani** | 1 May 1922
29 June 2017



The Right Honourable Judge Firdaus Dordi
page 35

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Prof K D Irani addressing his New York community on the opening of their Dar-e-Mehr on 26 March, 2016. Photo credit ArZan Wadia.

PHOTOGRAPHS

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From the Editor



As the Hamazor goes to press, we have heard the sad news of our beloved Prof K D Irani going to his heavenly abode.

Though known to his friends as KD or Keku, I could only refer to him as Kaikhosrov as to me and to so many others, he was just too refined a human being to be called by anything other than his given name. I had the privilege of being introduced during WZO's First Gatha Colloquium, London, held in 1993 which he helped organise, and for me it was instant bonding.

Kaikhosrov was on WZO's International Board since 1984, Vice President during 1989-92 and a constant face participating for many of our lectures and seminars. In 1990 on the occasion of WZO's 10th Anniversary, Kaikhosrov was honoured for his service towards the Zarathushtrian religion.

The community has probably lost the finest mind we had, sharing his wisdom and knowledge quietly with all those who listened. He spoke with reason and left it to one's own mind to accept or not. His face resonated with empathy and kindness – leaving all those who came in touch with him having a deep affection.

To portray two small personal gestures of kindness of Kaikhosrov. Years ago in 1995 a simple letter was sent, requesting Piroja and him to visit Karachi so that he could talk to us, a community who seldom has lecturers on our religion especially the likes of him. Promptly came the reply it would

be his pleasure and in so doing, not only did he address the community but separately, in a more simplistic level talked to our Parsi school children and staff of the Mama Parsi School and the BVS Parsi School.

The last time he contributed in the Hamazor, though he had fallen, been through surgery and was finding it difficult to walk, had hand written his piece as he normally did, walked to the post office so that he could fax it to me, just so that it would come in time. A gesture of kindness never to be forgotten.

Having retired after 60 years of teaching at the City University in New York at the age of 90, he leaves behind a multitude of students who have benefitted from his wisdom and methodology of teaching, resulting in a singular honour bestowed on him, the establishment of the K D Irani Chair of Philosophy. What better memory can one leave behind?

Thankfully during Kaikhosrov's lifetime, Hamazor carried his image on its cover for Issue 2 of 2013 in celebration of his 90th birthday together with tributes and landmark images. Today regretfully, but with sincere fondness we remember our friend, fellow committee member and Professor, for the good Zarathushtrian life he led. May his soul rest in heavenly peace with his beloved Piroja.



30 June 2017

The back cover which normally carries a quote from the Gathas using Prof Insler's translation, for this issue I have used a translation from Kaikhosrov's father, Dinshaw J Irani's booklet called 'Understanding the Gathas - The Hymns of Zarathushtra' which was printed by Kaikhosrov in 1994.





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Charity No 1023334

At the Committee Meeting held on 22nd April 2017 the Chairman and members of the Committee recorded the following RESOLUTION unanimously,

Resolved that the Committee of the World Zoroastrian Organisation, joins its membership of Zoroastrians worldwide, in congratulating Ervad Dr Jehan Bagli on receiving the highest accolade of FEZANA's Life Time Achievement Award bestowed upon him. Together with Professor Farhang Mehr and Professor K D Irani you are the third member of our International Board to receive this award for meritorious service to the community.

For WZO you have been a pillar of strength through many difficult times, as our community faced many challenges in the changing diaspora. Your commitment to perpetuating the Zarathushtrian Faith as a Universal way of life and your enduring passion in the unification of the Zoroastrian calendar across the Zoroastrian world were shared and endorsed by us and indeed are the core beliefs of WZO.

WZO is also indebted to you for the establishment of WZO (Canada) as a registered charity in February 2012.

You not only fit the description of a true Zoroastrian in thought, word & deed, but also as a role model for us lesser mortals to follow.

For and on behalf of the WZO Board,

**Shahpur F Captain
Chairman**

Visit to Baku from 26th - 30th May, 2017

by shahpur captain

As Chairman of WZO I received an e-mail from Farroukh Jorat, an Azerbaijani Zoroastrian about a couple of years ago, enquiring if we would be willing to restore the ancient Atashkadeh at Khinalig, which was a place of pilgrimage and prayers by local people since Sasanian times. After corresponding with Farroukh and being made aware that the cost would be \$5,000, the WZO committee decided to restore this Atashkadeh. Farroukh promised to keep me posted with the progress of the building of the Atashkadeh. There was only a short period in the summer to do the work before the onset of severe winter. Almost at the tail-end of the construction, I received an e-mail asking me to send a further \$3900 demanded by the Government for authorising work to proceed. Farroukh paid this amount from the \$5000 WZO had remitted and so had no funds to progress the work.

At this point of time, I approached Firuz Madon Foundation to donate \$5000 to which the Trustees agreed and the scheme became a joint venture of WZO and Firuz Madon Foundation. This amount was remitted to Farroukh and the restoration work was completed.

The last photograph of the natural fire received from Farroukh of the restored Atashkadeh was so powerful, burning so bright, that instantly I found myself reciting one Ashem and Ahunavar prayers before that fire on my screen. I decided to visit this Atashkadeh in 2017.

As agreed with Farroukh, we landed at Baku International Airport at 6am on the 26th of May. Later in the afternoon Farroukh and I went to the Government offices to meet the Chief of the Department of Preservation and Restoration of Ancient Monuments. There we met Mrs Konul Jafarova, a slim elderly lady in Western attire and Fuad, Director of Baku Atashgah. I had a long

conversation with them. The Government of Azerbaijan had done a lot to restore and preserve ancient Zoroastrian monuments and were very happy to assist us in restoring the Atashkadeh at Khinalig. They would continue to help if we were willing to assist in the restoration of other such monuments in Azerbaijan which during the Sasanian period were all Zoroastrian. We agreed to meet Fuad at the Baku Atashkadeh the next day.

That Saturday evening (26th May) we went to the "old town", which looked very pretty at night with electric lights galore and ancient fort walls well restored. In there stood a round stone tower which we were informed had seven fires burning inside and was a Zoroastrian place of worship. Unfortunately, it was late in the evening and we were unable to go in the tower. We had to satisfy ourselves by taking a photo of this imposing ancient monument.

Thereafter, we went to the home of a reputed local artist / sculptor, who lived in the old town. Apparently Huseyn Haqverdi was well known locally and internationally. He was an abstract artist and his petite wife was a puppeteer. Their flat was crowded with abstract paintings and stone sculptures.

Next day, Sunday, we were supposed to go to the Atashkadeh at Khinalig, but the trip was postponed to Monday, as we had not received the permission from the military in that area. Khinalig is 27 kms from the Russian border and falls within the Military Zone. The local population can travel freely within the militarised zone and go to the Atashkadeh but those from outside need permission whenever the Russians block the border.

As Sunday was now free, we visited the Baku Atashkadeh. It was well preserved and maintained by the Department of



Antiquities. It is fortified with living quarters within a fairly large compound. There we met Fuad, Director of the Monument and the person responsible for it's

maintenance and orderly running as a Museum. There is an Atashkadeh in the centre of the fortified area, encasing the natural flame coming out of the ground and burning ever so brilliantly, with another spouting out of the ground to the rear right of the Atashkadeh. The brilliance of the flames was eye-catching. One could not help but recite spontaneously Ashem and Ahunavar prayers. The fortified enclosed space is referred to as Baku Atashkadeh Caravanserai. The walled area had "residential rooms" for travellers to occupy. One such was for Zoroastrians, some for Sikhs, Hindus etc. At the request of the person in charge of this monument, Inderjit read the Punjabi inscriptions on one of the residential areas.



Our trip to Baku coincided with that of Kurosh Gustashp Aryana of Bozorg Bozorgast Association of Norway, who has been helping

those who wish to convert to Zoroastrianism to go through their Sudreh Pushi ceremony (Navjote). He had arranged with Farroukh to

have such a Navjote ceremony of eight would be Zoroastrians, majority of whom were from Iran, to be performed at the Baku Atashkadeh. Four men and four ladies all dressed in white clothes, proudly showing their sudreh. The Navjote ceremony was performed by Kurosh dressed in priestly garb and the kustis were tied whilst reciting prayers. The ceremony, a bit different from the ones known to Parsis was solemn and dignified. The setting was just ideal. After the ceremony we congratulated the Navjotees who reflected happiness on their faces at being Zoroastrians. Kurosh follows up with new Zoroastrians with studies through Skype tuitions.



On Monday 26th May, Farroukh picked us up in a van along with Kurosh Aryana, his colleague from



Oslo, a "new Zoroastrian" of some years standing and few others at 9am. We were ready for our visit to the Atashkadeh at Khinalig. The van journey took almost three hours. As we climbed the mountain range, the scenery was beautifully green with tops of mountains covered in snow. It was sunny but there was a cold wind. At Khinalig we were joined by some more Iranians.

We were welcomed by Hasan Shahkaram Aghayev, a modest man who had built the Atashkadeh with local workers from the village. He was short, sun tanned with shining bright light brown eyes, typical of mountain folks. As suddenly so many had descended compared to just the five



originally coming with Farroukh, at very short notice, Hasan and his wife had to lay out a

Enjoying Mr & Mrs Hasan Shahkaram Aghayev's hospitality a veritable feast.

After lunch, we were informed that the Border Military had closed the border at the request of the Russian Border Guards due to some terrorist activity on the Russian side of the border. Farroukh and Hasan went up the mountain to negotiate with the border guards to allow Farroukh, Hasan, Inderjit and myself to visit the Atashkadeh for a brief period of time. Farroukh and Hasan returned with a "nyet". I then requested Hasan to go back, fix the plaque on the Atashkadeh which showed it was restored by The World Zoroastrian Organisation and Firuz Madon Foundation and to take some photos of the Atashkadeh. Hasan went up again with a local friend. The friend was not allowed in the militarised zone and Hasan was escorted by a soldier with his sten gun at the ready. Hasan returned with the photos including one of the plaque fitted on the walls of the Atashkadeh.

Naturally Inderjit and myself were upset at this sudden turn of events and my wish to say the Atash-ni-nayash at the Atashkadeh could not be fulfilled. It was a sad day, so near yet so far.

Whilst in Khinalig, we visited two local museums which were interesting. They were situated further up the mountain resulting in my suffering altitude sickness. One of the museums had a metal oil lamp with a glass chimney. It reminded me of my school days when we studied from light emanating from such an oil lamp. It was much later that electricity came to Karachi.

I thanked Hasan for building the Atashkadeh and for his hospitality that day, in addition to his going up and down the mountain to help me fulfil my wish to see and pray at



The restored Atashkadeh undertaken by WZO & The Firoz Madon Foundation



the Atashgah. My genuine thanks were acknowledged gracefully by Hasan. We then left Khinalig in our bus, returning to the hotel at 10pm. Before leaving, I requested Farroukh to have lunch with us at the hotel at noon when we talked about Zoroastrians in Baku / Azerbaijan, the attitude of the Government to population turning to Zoroastrianism etc.



That evening Mr & Mrs Mehdi had arranged a special performance of Muzorgh music at the flat of Huseyn

Haqverdi. The three musicians gave an excellent performance and presented me with a disc of their music. From there, we went to an art gallery in the old town showing the surreal paintings of the son of Huseyn Haqverdi, which was full of young and old.

The next day, Tuesday, we were set to depart from Baku in the evening and so took the opportunity to invite Mr & Mrs Mehdi and their lovely son Ferren for lunch to say a thank you for looking after us during our stay in Baku.

Our visit was for just four days but we seemed to have done much more in this short period than if we had stayed for a week.

May Azerbaijanis return to the Zoroastrian fold so that Zoroastrians do not become a footnote in history.



Group photo at Khinalig



Performance of Muzorgh music at Huseyn Haqverdi's flat



Shahpur Captain, originally from Karachi, immigrated to UK in 1956. His contribution to the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) have been outstanding. During these 25 years he extended the previous Zoroastrian House, placed its finances on a strong footing, forced the Brookwood Cemetery company to cede the freehold of the existing burial ground and provide further lands for just GBP1 and converted the association into a charity. In 1980, Shahpur formed the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) London and has been working ceaselessly since then.



Indejit, Ferren & I

Times of India - Wednesday, 24th May, 1905

New Fire Temple at Bhuj opened by the Rao of Kutch

shared by great grandson maneck bhujwala

*T*he ceremony of consecrating a fire temple at Bhuj, built at the expense of the late Khan Bahadur Pestonji Sorabji Bhujwala, was performed on Friday, last week, by his Highness Maharao Shri Kengarji Sawai Bahadur, in the presence of a large gathering. The ceremony was particularly interesting in that a Parsee place of worship was being opened by a Hindu Prince. It was the desire of the donor to have the building opened at the hands of his Highness and a day was fixed for that purpose last year, but Khan Bahadur Pestonji suddenly died and it was with a view to carrying out the wishes of his late officer that his Highness was pleased to accept the invitation of the relations of the late Khan Bahadur to declare the building open prior to the ceremony of the installation of the sacred fire by the priests. A large shamiana was erected in the compound and among those present were his Highness Rao Khengarji, GCIE; Kuvur Madheva, heir-apparent; Kuvur Kuluba, CIE; Kuvur Manuba; Colonel Abud, Political Agent; Dr Damania; Mr Chunilal Sarabhai, Dewan; Mr Chotalal Sevakram, private secretary; Mr Pallonji Bejonji and many others.

In the course of an eloquent speech requesting his Highness to declare the new temple open, Mr Dhanjishah Sorabji, brother of the deceased, said :
 "Your Highness Maharaja Dhiraj Mirza Maha Rao Shri Sat Sir Khengarji Savai Bahadur, GCIE, Colonel Abud, Ladies and Gentlemen. Allow us to thank you all for your presence in the name of our most revered worthy father Khan Bahadur Pestonji Sorabji Bhujwala. We have met here this evening for the purpose of opening for use as a "Sacred Fire Temple," this building with all the articles of furniture pertaining to its use, which was built and

furnished entirely at the expense, of our late father Khan Bahadur Pestonji Sorabji Bhujwala, to perpetuate the memory of his late good father Sorabji Dadabhai Bhujwala who for the whole of his life had been a merchant and a respectable Government contractor in Cutch and Kathiawar. No such sacred institution has existed in the whole province of Cutch until to-day, and the necessity for such a place of worship was greatly felt. We most certainly consider a great favour and honour to see the institution opened at the auspicious hands of our royal noble patron his Highness Maharaja Maha Rao Shri Sir Khengarji who always has at heart our welfare and interest, and whose benevolent protection our ancestors, as well as our worthy dear father Khan Bahadur Pestonji Sorabji, have always enjoyed. To the Hindu Princes of India, the Parsis also owe their political education and advancement, for it was by them, that they were first admitted to important administrative posts of trust and confidence in their States and there is hardly a Native State in the Bombay Presidency at present, wherein Parsis are not 'en evidence' more or less. Baroda, the premier native Hindu State, has at present a Parsi Dewan, and similarly other important native States such as Kolahpur, Cutch, Rutlam, Jamnagar, Bhavnagar, Junagadh, and Gondal, have at one time or another, taken a Parsi as their Dewan or Naeb Dewan. Most of the Parsis living in Cutch owe their position and prosperity to the benevolence and generosity of his Highness Maharaja Rao Shri Sir Khengarji. We now request you Majaraja Rao Shri Sir Khengarji to favour us in opening the building with your auspicious hands and declare it open for use. Allow us to say once more that whatever has been accomplished for the good of the cantonment of Bhuj and elsewhere by our late respected father

Khan Bahadur Pestonji Sorabji Bhujwala during his lifetime was entirely due to the gracious encouragement and generous treatment he had invariably received at the hands of his noble patron Maharaja Rao Sahib Sir Khengarji. We beg most cordially to thank his Highness Maharaja Rao Saheb Sir Khengarji and you all for the honour that has been done to us today.”

His Highness then opened the lock on the door of the building with a silver key and declared the building open for the performance of the ceremony of the consecration of the fire by the priests, according to their religious rituals. His Highness then addressed the assembly. He said :

“Colonel Abud, ladies and gentlemen, – I have been requested to preside at to-day’s proceedings and it is in compliance with the earnest wishes of the members of the family of the late lamented Mr Pestonji that I have consented to undertake the duty. But we cannot proceed without being moved with a touch of melancholy sympathy for the loss which the family has sustained. However, as the late gentleman has a good record behind, the family concerned should try to assuage their sorrows. It may here be added that he was a zealous officer of the Durbar and did his duty earnestly wherever he was placed. Moreover, he was well known to the public of Bhuj as a citizen who possessed wide sympathies and a goodness of heart. I believe it would not be inappropriate to remark that all the duties which we are enjoined by religion to undertake the one that contributes towards the worship and adoration of the Most High is pre-eminently the best and most worthy of adoption. In conclusion, I hope all present on this occasion will cooperate with me in declaring open the Fire Temple which I now do. It will be honoured with its consecration by the religious part of the ceremony to be performed, as I am informed at the hands of the Parsi priests a few days after. Lastly, I may express my thanks to the members of the family for having particularly wished me to preside over a ceremonial function which, properly speaking, should be presided over by a privileged member of their own community.”

The usual nazranas were offered to his Highness and the Kuvars, and in return H H the Rao presented poshaks to Mr Pestonji’s sons and brothers, and this terminated the proceedings.



Pestonji Ardeshir Bhujwala, a former pilot in the Indian Airlines, has brought to our attention, funds are required to maintain the Dar-e-Meher and Aramgah. His plan is to build a structure in the compound as an office and renting it out, which would give a steady income to supplement the maintenance cost of the Dar-e-Meher. The cost of the construction is IRs35 lakhs for a 2,000 sq ft building. Please consider donating to “Shri Kutch Parsi Anjuman Trust Fund” which can be mailed to the Trustee, Captain Pestonji Ardeshir Bhujwala, No. 4, Babulnath Road, Mumbai 400007, India or by emailing Maneck Bhujwala at mbhujwala@socal.rr.com

Some images of the interior are on <https://zoroastrians.net/2010/04/19/bhuj-agiary-photos/>



Photo credit Katie Bhujwala

A Tribute to a Glorious Event in North America

by behroze daruwalla - mumbai

Zoroastrian Society of Washington State (ZSWS) is a Member Association of Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) based in Seattle, Washington State. It has over 70 Irani and Parsi families. However, they do not have a Mobed available to conduct any Zarathushti ceremonies and rituals in their proximity.

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

As required by the NAMC Mobedyar Manual; Alayar sent a formal request for the same to Mobed Kobad Zarolia and NAMC agreed to train Jamshid Pouresfandiary. NAMC requested Mobed Soli P Dastur to be the mentor for Jamshid who readily agreed to this request.

Initially, Soli and Jamshid started their journey by communicating via telephone. Mobed Soli sent the NAMC Mobedyar Manual to Jamshid and the training for basic prayers commenced. However, this mode of communication was cumbersome and a recommendation from another Mobedyar candidate, Hormuzd Katki from Washington, DC, to train via Skype and that did the trick! The training became meaningful and encouraged both the Mentor and the Mentee to move forward expeditiously.

Both faced many obstacles during the training to test their commitment to this project which included health issues of

Mobed Soli Dastur but that did not deter either party to back off or give up the project. The training may have slowed down a little but the enthusiasm and commitment did not waver. Regular meetings / training were held on Sundays from various locations in USA and Udvada so that the chain and continuity of training was never compromised.

All prayers prescribed in the NAMC Manual with additional new ones that could help and were required by a Mobedyar, were followed. Mobed Soli put in considerable effort to create audio files for all prayers with translations so that a Mobedyar could benefit in his training. Books on Jashan and Obsequies written by stalwarts in our community - Mobeds Jehan Bagli and Adi Unwalla were utilized and proved very helpful and essential for this process.

At each Skype Mobedyar Training, the house of both Mentor and Mentee would be filled with prayers recited by Jamshid and Mobed Soli which enriched the training with correct pronunciations, meaning and even historical background as appropriate. This created the true essence of the training so that Jamshid not only learnt the prayers but imbibed the power of Zoroastrian prayers and rituals. What is remarkable is that Mobed Soli like a true Zarathushti consciously kept an excel worksheet to keep track of the prayers and the progress of this training.

The enthusiasm, perseverance and unimaginable efforts put in by Jamshid to learn and Mobed Soli to teach is beyond comparison. Mobed Soli insists that the eagerness to learn and the positive attitude of Jamshid was instrumental in making this training a success for he has not seen any better Humdin for this kind of Mobedyar training.

The Humdin and Mobed built such a great rapport that many times, they compared

Parsi prayers with Irani prayers and it was Jamshid who helped Soli understand the difference. Mobed Soli left no stone unturned to provide Jamshid with Irani prayers through good offices of Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary in Tehran as well as Mobed Fariborz Shahzadi of California and in that process Mobed Soli also happily proclaims that he learnt quite a bit about Irani prayers, ceremonies, and customs.

Finally, it was time to launch Jamshid as a Mobedyar ...

What started as a journey in July 2015 was about to culminate into fruition after having crossed all hurdles and challenges over the years!

NAMC President Arda Minocherhomji requested Mobed Tehemton Mirza to give the exam to Jamshid as required by the NAMC Mobedyar manual and Jamshid passed the exam with flying colors. Tehemton was very impressed by Jamshid's knowledge of the required prayers by a NAMC Mobedyar and above all he was really mesmerized by Jamshid's prayers. Tehemton informed the NAMC AGM in Toronto that "Jamshid does not pray ... He sings!" High praise indeed for any Mobedyar!

Jamshid's Initiation was held in Seattle on Saturday June 3rd in front of over 80 Irani and Parsis. Jamshid was first given a Nahan in his home by Soli and then Jamshid performed the Daily Prayers with Soli before the Jashan ceremony followed by the Jashan Ceremony with Soli as his Rathwi, helper. The whole initiation was wonderfully performed by Jamshid. At the end of Jashan ceremony, all prayed together 21 Yatha and 12 Ashem as well as the Doa Tandoorasti, and history was created in North America!

Mobed Soli did not hesitate to give a glowing tribute to Jamshid for his enthusiasm, perseverance, and 'always ready attitude' to learn and thanked the people of ZSWS, especially Alayar Dabestani and Mahrukh Motafram, for their continued involvement in the process as well as NAMC for giving him a unique chance to train an Iranian Humdin to be a NAMC Mobedyar. He specifically directed his request to the Parsi families to use Jamshid

from now on as a Mobedyar to perform the ceremonies for them.

Mobed Arda Minocherhomji, NAMC President, performed the oath ceremony for Jamshid and apprised him on the guidelines of a NAMC Mobedyar. He then presented Jamshid with the NAMC Mobedyar Certificate and history was created for North America.

Alayar Dabestani thanked NAMC and Mobed Soli for training Mobedyar Jamshid. He also repeated Soli's request to the Parsi families to use Jamshid as a Mobedyar.

Mobedyar Jamshid thanked NAMC, Mobed Soli and all those involved in his training and assured to bring the Irani and Parsi communities together by playing a pivotal role in performing ceremonies for both the communities.

This unique event was attended by Irani and Parsi community members and since no event can end without a humongous spread of food - Parsi and Irani ladies rose to the occasion and fed all present with delicacies of Irani and Parsi fusion food.

Thus history was created and North America has amongst them a Mobedyar who can perform ceremonies and prayers to bring Irani and Parsi families as one community in future !

The above sequence of events were reported by Mobed Soli Dastur who aptly concluded :

"May the Flame of Fellowship, Love, Charity and Respect for all burn ever eternal in our hearts so we can do HIS work with humility, diligence and eternal enthusiasm!

Atha Jamyaat, Yatha Aafrinaamahi! (May it be so as we wish!)"

(Aafrin Pegaamber Zartosht, from Ervad Kangaji Gujarati Khordeh Avesta Baa Maaeni – Page 424, adapted as Aafrinaamahi - we wish instead of Aafrinaami – I wish, in the original).



Parsi Traders and Travellers : Global Zoroastrians in the Age of Empire

by jesse palsetia

While European travellers charted the world and produced travelogues of their journeys in the non-West from the beginnings of European exploration from the 16th century – the details of non-Western peoples travels and travel diaries is a less detailed phenomena. Local maritime and Indian Ocean trade had been going on for centuries among Indian traders that undoubtedly produced perceptions of their travels. The Muslim traveller Ibn Battuta left a famous account of his travels; though largely limited to the Muslim world. From the 16th century, a new age of globalization shaped by colonialism would break the barriers of overseas travel for many Indians and lead to the growth of Indian travelogues. Parsi travellers were some of the first non-European travellers to voyage and make detailed accounts of their voyages in the modern period. Moreover, early Parsi travels and writings reveal aspects of the Parsis' complex identities and attitudes to their place in empire. Parsi travel consequently complimented the development of Parsi identity.

The 17th and 18th century in India marked an era of tremendous change and significance. Across India, European trading companies were consolidating their commercial and political situations. Equally, the rise of European power in India affected Indians and communities. Parsi contact with Europeans would transform their material and social state. The Parsis' acute sense of their minority situation shaped a historical imperative to safeguard their community interests and group identity at all times and under all conditions. Parsis responded to the possibilities of trade and travel that commercial collaboration with Europeans offered. By the late 18th century, trading ties bound Indians and Europeans in a complex system of commercial activities. Parsis benefited from British security and protection

and Europeans found reliable local agents. Parsis transformed from basic hawkers and simple mediators to commercial agents buying and selling goods, extending credit, and owning ships.

Rustom Manock of Surat

Successful Parsi commercial strategy of the first half of the 18th century is best typified in the example of Rustom Manock (1635-1721) of Surat. Manock was the premier Parsi broker-merchant of the 18th century who developed a network of commercial and political contacts. Rustom and his descendants followed a discernible strategy that aimed to increase their wealth and social status, and benefit the Parsis. The Manocks' commercial strategy included: to economically collaborate with Europeans; to diversify their economic activities to internal and external trade; and to operate a family business. Rustom Manock redefined the definition of Indian broker from simple medium to an independent merchant that engaged in local and international trade alongside European contacts. Rustom's sons Nowros, Famji, and Bomanji and later his grandson Manock Nowrosji continued the family business. Family connections permitted Parsis to pass on and expand their business. Many of the great Parsi business concerns of the 19th and 20th century began with Parsi-family run businesses of the 18th century.

The Manocks were successful Parsi businessmen able to compete head on with powerful established bania interests; and even challenge Europeans. So much so that in 1724 after the English reneged on financial commitments to the Manock family to the sum of over 700,000 rupees, and bullied and imprisoned Rustom's two sons over the English debt, Nowros Manock travelled to England to seek redress;

and became the first Parsi to travel to England. He called upon all the contacts the Manocks had made over decades – from ships' captains to business and government officials – and succeeded in gaining redress to the sum of over 560,000 rupees, and the release of his brothers. Nowros noted in a note to a ship's captain that "The English are a fair race provided one not trust them too easily".

The Manocks' also pioneered an important social strategy to forge and exploit moral and social ties among the Parsis. The success of the Manocks redounded to general Parsi success. The Parsis of Surat and later Bombay benefited from many amenities from bridges and roads, wells and water tanks, to rest centres and community residential areas or colonies within a town, known as a *wadi* or *pura* made possible through the Manocks' wealth.

The Parsis of Bombay

By the 19th century, other Parsis would replicate and elaborate on the strategies the Manocks had pioneered in pursuit of yet further wealth, influence, and community. It was at Bombay and under British colonialism that the Parsis radically transformed their state and set the foundations for the accomplishments of the community within and without India. Among the rising merchant-princes of Bombay were the Nanabhais, Dorabjis, Patels, Banajis, Modis, Camas, and Jamsetji Jejeebhoy all of whom had ties to the British. The Pandays built some of Bombay's first walls; the Patels controlled the local customs trade and started the first shop for the sale of British and local liquors in Bombay; the Modis, the Petits, and the Jehangirs were brokers for Forbes & Co., the first mercantile house in India.

The Wadias would shape a new chapter in Parsi success. In 1735, Lowji Nusserwanji Wadia came to Bombay from Surat by invitation as shipbuilder and later master builder to the British. Lowji and his brother Sorabji assisted in building the Bombay dry-dock, the first dry-dock in Asia in 1750. Some seven generations of Wadias were involved with Bombay dry dock to 1913, building some

400 ships of all sizes for local and international trade and warfare. The Wadia shipbuilders introduced entrepreneurial, managerial, design and industrial changes under British encouragement and patronage that led to the development of large-scale manufacturing and labour organization in Bombay, and the travel of Parsis across the globe. Parsi technical innovation formed another aspect of the Parsi ability to adapt for the preservation of identity.

By the 19th century, Parsi merchants controlled an extensive commercial enterprise in Bombay and western India. Bombay was a major centre of Parsi weaving, shipbuilding, and commercial trade on the west coast of India. Moreover, Parsis were involved in regional and international trade with the Malabar and Coromandel Coast, Bengal, the Middle East, and China. The manifests of ships associated with Parsi traders reflects the trade in goods such as mull mull cotton, timber, spices, and rice.

China Trade and Global Horizons

Bombay also became the centre of a considerable private trade for Indians who were forbidden from directly trading with Europe up to the 1830s; and part of the private trade included the Parsis' trade with China. The development of trade with China was an essential to the commercial value of India for Europeans, and opened a new chapter in Asian globalization. Parsis were some of the first Indians part of the 'country trade' transshipping goods between India and China. Great Parsi wealth emerged from the China trade, principally in cotton, timber, silk, and opium from the middle of the 18th to the first half of the 19th century.

The Parsi involvement in the opium trade is an important component in the rise of Western capital in Asia and a spur to the development of the Indian and imperial economies. At the same time, the Parsi involvement in drugs served internal Parsi requirements to safeguard identity, adapt to historical circumstances, and shaped Parsi global ambitions. Indian opium provided an excellent medium of economic exchange rather than

expensive British silver bullion for the British desire for Chinese tea. The opium trade by Indians financed much of British firms' tea purchases in China. A diverse body of Indian merchants was involved in the early China and opium trades among which included Armenians, Indian Jews, and Parsis. These 'trade diasporas' of minority trading groups utilized their commercial expertise, community connections, and other advantages to dominate commerce in a host society.

The Parsis grew dominant in the trade, conducting the China trade from the principal Indian ports of Bombay, Daman, Karachi, and Calcutta. The Parsis were part of the emergence of a new world trading pattern that linked Asia and Europe together; and one of the first significant new Asian trading entities to emerge in the period of colonialism. Parsis owned their own opium and consigned it to or became business partners with notable European firms that handled the transactions of goods such as Magniac & Co., Jardine Matheson & Co., Forbes & Co., Remington & Co. and Russell & Co. Hirji Jivanji and his brother Maneckji are acknowledged to be the first Parsis to go to China in 1756 and establish a firm in Canton. The Jivanjis owned seven ships, half of which were for the China trade. The Jivanjis' China trade proved so profitable that the family took the surname of Readymoney. The Wadias, Banajis, Rustomjis, and Jejeebhoyas owned over 50 vessels involved in the China trade in the first half of the 19th century, which constituted a third of the ships in the trade. The Patels, Banajis, Bhardas or Damanwallas, Camas, and Tatas, to name only the most well known were all involved in the China trade up to the late 19th century. Jamsetji Jejeebhoy was the premier Parsi China trader, making five personal trips to China up to 1807, and establishing a shipping and commercial family business empire from the trade.

Parsi traders were some of the first Indians to sense the value of the early opium and China trades. They treated the opium trade as a lucrative enterprise alongside the trade in other commodities, and benefited from the opium wars between Britain and China. At the same time, they had to rely on the volume,

quality, and efficient conduct of their trade to realize profits. They also bore the risks associated with an overseas trade including the loss of shipments, the costs of consignments, delays in credit remittance, price fluctuations, and detainment by the Chinese authorities. The Parsis and other non-Europeans' involvement in it evinces the complexity of the opium trade in Asia, to which Asians and Europeans were parties that both benefited. From the mid-19th century, the majority of Parsi opium traders had begun to leave the opium trade and diversify their business interests. The adaptable Parsis gauged the new economic opportunities and moral realities. The China trade, however, was essential in the commercial rise of individual Parsis and the Parsi community to prominence.

Material Culture and Eastern Diasporas

The China trade also shaped aspects of Parsi culture. The Prince of Wales Museum in Mumbai is replete with the China ware and other trinkets the Parsis brought back to India with them. The famous Parsi textile weaving process of *tanchoi*, *garo*, and *jari*, uniquely associated with the Parsis, was adapted from the Chinese. The *tanchoi* utilized Chinese satin, twill, gauze, and embroidery for saris of various colours renowned for their multitudinous twill patterns that included paisleys, vines, leaves, flowers, and even flowering spices such as coriander florets.

The China and opium trade also forms part of the history of globalization, including the contact between Eastern cultures. The China trade would see the first modern Parsi diaspora outside India take shape in East Asia. Between 1828 and 1848, Chinese records list 40 to 45 Parsi residents of Canton. In the 1830s, Parsi communities appear in Canton, Amoy, and Shanghai; and the first Parsi burial ground outside India appeared in Macao in 1829 at 'Estrada Dos Parses' or 'Parsi Road'. In 1845, an *anjuman* or Zoroastrian community association was founded in Canton to set up burial grounds,

arrange community meetings, and provide assistance to community members in the China centres. In 1845, 1847, and 1854 Parsi cemeteries were established in Hong Kong, Whampoa, and Shanghai respectively. The earliest of Parsis maintained their Parsi dress and came to be known by the locals as 'white heads' for their white turbans of *pugdīs*.

The Parsis also shaped the life of Hong Kong. In 1841 Dadabhoy Rustomji, known as 'Daddy Boy' to his fellow businessmen, purchased land in Hong Kong and built the Hong Kong Hotel, the colony's first major hotel. Dorabji Naoroji went to Hong Kong in 1852 and soon owned a bakery, warehouses, and the Victoria, King Edward and Kowloon Hotels, and established the Kowloon Ferry. He noted "the beauty of Hong Kong, so like Bombay in lifestyle yet more frenetic and fast paced". The Tatas made Hong Kong a major centre of Indian business. From the 1880s, the firm of Tata & Co. later to be Tata Sons & Co. conducted an export trade in manufactured goods between India and China, and established the Tata Lines shipping company in collaboration with Japan's Nippon Yusen Kaisha to 1895. H N Mody who arrived in Hong Kong in 1858 to trade in opium became one of Hong Kong's great Indian *taipans*. Mody contributed to the erection of many of the early buildings of the University of Hong Kong, which was inaugurated in 1910, a year before his death. Mody's conspicuous charity was a measure of his confidence in the long-term development of Hong Kong, and inspired others to contribute to the civic improvement of the city, earning him a knighthood for his charity.

Travelogues of Indians

By the middle of the 19th century, then, Parsis were active on a global stage. Select Parsis were also noting their perceptions of their travels. Chief among the earliest of Parsi travelogues is that of Jehangeer Nowrojee and Hirjeebhoy Merwanjee Wadia, and their cousin Ardaseer Cursetjee. Their respective diaries of their travels to England, written prior to the great beginnings of Indians coming to Europe reveal their first-hand outlooks, and perceptions of their place in empire.

The reasons for the Wadias to travel to England were logical: seeking education to further their naval engineering; and they were anglophile Parsis with extensive British contacts. The travelogues represent the Parsis as simultaneously travellers, students and educators: they come as travellers and students to learn engineering, while at the same time they assume the responsibility to be educators for future Indians travellers to England, reflecting the Parsi sense of advancement and leadership. Ardaseer Cursetjee summed up his sense of responsibility to "impart to their countrymen the benefit of their researches and other experiences in England" (AC, p. v).

In 1838, Merwanjee (21) and Nowrojee (17) accompanied by their older friend Dorabjee Muncherjee Navjivora and two servants first went to England. They stayed in Egham, near Windsor to learn the English language and mathematics under Rev George Hopkins, before proceeding to Chatham for their naval education. They travelled extensively in England and took in all the major sites in London. Their technical education is a story in itself; though their personal perceptions of England truly mark out their diary. The travel details take precedence over their engineering vocational information, suggesting the importance the cousins placed on their role as intermediaries between cultures. At one point they offer wise advice on the English weather to never stand in open air after a long walk, or after you have perspired, and to safeguard one's health at all times.

Ardaseer Cursetjee is probably one of the most unique Parsis in this period. He won a covenanted appointment at Bombay dockyard. He introduced one of the first steam-powered model steam ships in India; and gas light in Bombay. Ardaseer 31, married with two children, journeyed to England in 1839 and interned in the London factory of John and Samuel Seawards, marine steam-engine builders. His diary while a somewhat rapidly-paced and dry compendium of daily events reveals much about him. His fascination remained with technical and scientific details reflecting the *raison d'être* of his visit to England: he is fascinated to visit factories and foundries, and the printing press

of *The Times* newspaper, and the bank note press of Bank of England.

Other details of the diaries reveal the important place early Parsis enjoyed under colonialism. All three of the cousins had impeccable British contacts in England that included British officials of the East India Company, British officialdom, and society. The highlight of all three of their visits was meeting HMQ Victoria and Prince Albert respectively.

Parsiness, Social Class, and Race

It is clear that all three cousins identify as Eastern, British-friendly, and above all as Parsis. The Parsis refer to themselves as 'natives' of India. The early Parsi travellers have not yet become highly Anglicized reminiscent of more post-mid-19th century Parsis. The Wadias continue to refer to themselves above all else as Parsis: comfortable in their self-identification and operation in Indian and English society. They dress in Parsi garb of muslin *jama* and *pichori*. They are orthodox Parsis and they observe rules of Parsi commensality, refusing to have their meals cooked by non-Parsis; and Ardaseer Cursetjee repeatedly notes he could not dine with even his closest British friends "on account of my religion" (AC p. 48). Indeed, one gets a very Parsi sense of their uniqueness. The Wadias delight and are bemused by the British inability to make out their ethnicity and nationality: "It was amusing to hear one call us Chinese, they are Turks says another; no they are Spanish, vociferates a third; thus they were laboring under mistakes, and taking inhabitants of British India for natives of Europe" (JN and HM, p. 34).

The Parsis also evinced a growing sense of Parsi uniqueness as regards, social class. Little is mentioned of other everyday Indians who had started to come to England: seamen, servants, nannies – and the Parsis concentrate on mentioning Indian elites, like princes and dignitaries. The Parsis mention the important British officials and others who welcomed them and with whom they intercourse. JN and HM also looked favourably on British rule in India as in the interests of the countless millions of Indians.

The Parsis were also less concerned with British racial prejudice than other Indians. At times they take a naïve view, believing Indians to be judged on merits alone by the British. Ardaseer Cursetjee took a more nuanced outlook recognizing that British race prejudice persisted in India; though blamed this on the lack of intercourse between British and everyday Indians. Ultimately, their visits to Britain are deemed a success for the knowledge they have gained and will be able to impart. JN and HM sum up their perceptions noting how: "The English are decidedly a wonderful people."

The movement of Parsi traders and travellers, then, reveals much about Parsi identity in the age of empire. They travelled the world and made contacts and connections that aimed to benefit individual Parsis and the community. At the same time, they maintained an orthodox defence of their religious and social customs, as Zarthoshti and Parsis. Equally, the Parsis sought to carve out a place for themselves between Indian and British cultures: representative of both, yet uniquely separate also. Their strategies and social outlooks gave them confidence in an ever-changing world, and they managed to set the terms of Parsi self-identification.

See :

Jehangeer Nowrojee and Hirjeebhoy Merwanjee Wadia,
Journal of a Residence of Two Years and A Half In Great Britain. London: W.H. Allen and Co., 1841.

Ardaseer Cursetjee Wadia,
Diary of an Overland Journey from Bombay to England, and of a Year's Residence in Great Britain. London: Henington and Galabin, 1840.



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“Like Sugar in Milk”: reconstructing the genetic history of the Parsi population

Full details are on : <https://genomebiology.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13059-017-1244-9>

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Abstract

Background

The Parsis are one of the smallest religious communities in the world. To understand the population structure and demographic history of this group in detail, we analyzed Indian and Pakistani Parsi populations using high-resolution genetic variation data on autosomal and uniparental loci (Y-chromosomal and mitochondrial DNA). Additionally, we also assayed mitochondrial DNA polymorphisms among ancient Parsi DNA samples excavated from Sanjan, in present day Gujarat, the place of their original settlement in India.

Results

Among present-day populations, the Parsis are genetically closest to Iranian and the Caucasus populations rather than their South Asian neighbours. They also share the highest number of haplotypes with present-day Iranians and we estimate that the admixture of the Parsis with Indian populations occurred ~1,200 years ago. Enriched homozygosity in the Parsi reflects their recent isolation and inbreeding. We also observed 48% South-Asian-specific mitochondrial lineages among the ancient samples, which might have resulted from the assimilation of local females during the initial settlement. Finally, we show that Parsis are genetically closer to Neolithic Iranians than to modern Iranians, who have witnessed a more recent wave of admixture from the Near East.

Genome
Biology



BioMed Central
The Open Access Publisher

Conclusions

Our results are consistent with the historically-recorded migration of the Parsi populations to South Asia in the 7th century and in agreement with their assimilation into the Indian sub-continent's population and cultural milieu “like sugar in milk”. Moreover, in a wider context our results support a major demographic transition in West Asia due to the Islamic conquest.



The Deccan Chronicle carried an article on 9th June 2017, available at : <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/science/science/090617/dna-proves-parsis-link-to-iran.html>

The little-known history of how Zoroastrian merchants helped create the old Silk Route

by anvar alikhan



Parsi merchants, circa 19th century

China's designs to build a massive network of land and sea links connecting four continents have revived popular interest in the old Silk Route, whose success was in small part owed to Zoroastrian merchants carrying goods from China across Central Asia and, often, all the way to Europe.

A recent article in the Hong Kong newspaper South China Morning Post talked about how Zoroastrian merchants had been trading with China in the 12th century – and possibly even earlier. Records of fire temples in Chinese cities along the Silk Route have apparently been found in official records dating back to the 12th century and, from these, historians have pieced together the fact that Chinese emperors had encouraged Zoroastrian merchants to come and trade in the country and, in order to attract them, they allowed them to build their own fire temples to

worship in. The ancient Chinese even had their own special name for the Zoroastrian religion: Ao Jiao.

This is fascinating, because the history of enterprising Parsi merchants in the China Seas from the 18th century onwards is well known, but the idea that the Zoroastrian-Chinese connection goes back at least six centuries earlier is less recognised. Unfortunately, the South China Morning Post story doesn't give much more detail on the subject, so we have to turn to other sources.

Chinese historical texts tell us that the first official contact between China and Po-ssu – the ancient Chinese name for Persia – was as far back as the 2nd century BCE, when the Qin ruler sent an envoy to seek an alliance. But it was during the 5th century CE that regular diplomatic relations were formed between the Sasanid emperors,

who led the Zoroastrian revival in Persia, and the Six Dynasties of China. Embassies were exchanged, and this led to a flourishing of trade, overland along the Silk Route.

The most important Chinese commodity was, of course, silk, and Zoroastrian merchants were the middlemen who carried it along the Silk Route across Central Asia. In addition, this westward flow of trade included paper, rice wine, camphor, perfumes and drugs. The eastward flow, meanwhile, comprised Persian carpets, textiles, furniture, leather, pearls and gourmet delicacies, as well as Persian music and dance forms. The exchange of trade thus, as always, led ultimately, to an exchange of ideas.



The ruins of a Chinese watchtower along the Silk Route. Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons [Licensed under Creative Commons by 2.0]

Branded Sassanid products

It was a sophisticated system: Both the Sasanid and Chinese empires realised that they benefited from the trade and cooperated in policing the trade routes to protect caravans from bandits. Private entrepreneurs were organised into merchant companies, and archeological evidence shows that the Sasanid merchants pioneered an ingenious system of branding their products to indicate their quality.

Large quantities of Sasanid Persian coins have been discovered in China – not only along the Silk Route, but in central Chinese cities, thus indicating the extent of Zoroastrian contact. These coins date from the rule of Shapur II (4th century CE) to the last Sassanid emperor, Yazdegird III (7th century CE). In time, the overland Silk Route was supplemented by a sea route via Ceylon, and Persian ships carried cargoes to China and back. There are reports of Persian merchants having settled in ports like Canton and Hanoi, which are supported by discoveries of more Sassanid coins along the southern coast.

In 651 CE, however, Yazdegird III was defeated by the Arabs, and his family sought refuge with the T'ang emperor of China. A community of Zoroastrians accompanied them, and flourished for a century or so. But then in the 9th century CE Emperor Wuzong began his purge of Buddhism and, as a result of his bigotry, Zoroastrianism in China, too, went into decline, until all mention of it in Chinese texts finally disappeared.

However, Zoroastrians from Persia continued to trade with China until at least the 12th century CE, as we can tell from the Chinese records of their fire temples. They may have continued even after that, though it is not certain.

Flash forward to the 1750s

From here we must flash forward six hundred years to the 1750s. By then, of course, a community of Zoroastrians – the Parsis – had settled in India. And when the city of Bombay was founded in the 1680s, the Parsis, with their business acumen and their open worldview, played an important part, becoming brokers and supply agents to the British. Shortly after, in the 18th century, India emerged as the hub of a triangular trade with China and Britain – shipping opium to China, and shipping tea back to Britain – and the Parsis, quite naturally, became a key piece of this trading network.

In 1756, Hirji Jivanji Readymoney was the first Parsi merchant to set sail for China,

and he was also the first to set up a trading firm in Canton. He was followed by other pioneering Parsi trading families like the Banajis, Wadias, Camas, Vikajis and Parakhs – but the most remarkable story of them all was, perhaps, that of Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy. As a young trader, Jeejeebhoy was once captured by the French, along with a young Scottish ship's doctor named William Jardine. The two of them became friends and business partners.



Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy.
Image credit: Wikimedia Commons.

Later, Jeejeebhoy set up Sir JJ & Co, and Jardine set up Jardine Matheson, one of Hong Kong's original hong (and became the model for Dirk Struan in James Clavell's novel, *Tai Pan*). But the association between the two men was lifelong: Jeejeebhoy was appointed as the only Asian director of Jardine Matheson, and his portrait still hangs at the

company's headquarters. Later, when the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank was set up in 1864, two of its founding directors, Pallonjee Framjee and Rustomjee Dhunjeeshaw, were Parsis, and the only reason Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy II was not invited to be a director was probably because he was considered too closely linked with Jardine Matheson.

From Kotewall Road to Ruttonjee Hospital
When the Treaty of Nanking was signed in 1842, ceding Hong Kong to the British, it was significant that it was signed on a ship

named the Cornwallis, which was built by Parsi shipbuilders in Bombay. The Parsi community went on to play an important role in the history of Hong Kong. HN Mody, for example, helped set up the Hong Kong Stock Exchange as well as Hong Kong University. Dorabjee Mithaiwala set up the iconic Star Ferry Company between Hong Kong and Kowloon. Other Parsi families like the Ruttonjees, Shroffs, Parekhs and Powrees contributed to the building of Hong Kong in other ways.

Meanwhile, through the 19th century, an entire community of enterprising Parsi traders, clerks and bookkeepers settled in other trading centres across South East Asian, such as Canton, Penang, Singapore, Batavia, Macao and Amoy (some of them taking the name Chinai – or the more anglicised Chinoy – to indicate their China connection). The spirit of this age has been wonderfully captured by Amitav Ghosh in his *Ibis Trilogy*, which tells the saga of the Parsi merchant Bahram Modi and, after him, his intrepid widow, Shireen.

In Hong Kong today, one can see reminders of this rich Parsi history everywhere: there's a Mody Road, Kotewall Road, Bisney Road, Parekh House and even an impressive Ruttonjee Hospital. The fact that the latter is called Leuht-deun-jih Hospital, in the Chinese manner, shows how much a part of Hong Kong life the Parsis have become. The ancient Persian Emperor Shapur II, in whose time trade with China first began, would, no doubt, have been suitably impressed.



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Please turn to p62 for the profile of the author

Palaces of Ancient Persia Were Built with ‘Fire Temple’ Wood

by charles q choi

Shared by Malcolm Deboo, President, ZTFE, London.

Cypress wood might have been used in ancient palaces in Persia partly because of its sacred value in a religion known for its “fire temples,” a new study finds.

Scientists examined ruins from the Sasanian Empire, which lasted from AD 224 to 651 and constituted the last imperial dynasty in Persia — what is now Iran. It was the most powerful political and economic rival of the Roman Empire for nearly half a millennium, said study lead author Morteza Djamali, a paleoecologist at the Mediterranean Institute of Biodiversity and Ecology in Aix-en-Provence, France.

“Sasanians repeatedly defeated the Romans in different battles and were the absolute masters of southwest Asia,” Djamali said. [10 Epic Battles That Changed History].

The Sasanian “Kings of Kings” built a number of palaces and forts, as well as Zoroastrian fire temples. Followers of Zoroastrianism, one of the world’s oldest active religions, believe in an epic struggle between good and evil; they worship in temples where fires burn as symbols of divine light.

Dating wood

The scientists examined cypress wood taken from the Palace of Ardashir I, who established the Sasanian Empire. They also looked at wood from the fort known as Qal’a-ye Dokhtar, which previous research suggested was constructed near the beginning of the Sasanian Empire, as well as the Palace of Sarvistan (also spelled



Ruins of a Zoroastrian fire temple in Esfahan, Iran. Photo credit : aaabbbccc/Shutterstock

Sarvestan), a building of uncertain function built either during the end of the Sasanian Empire or the rise of Islam in Persia. All of these sites are located in Persis, what is now the province of Fars in southwestern Iran, where the Sasanians first rose to power.

The researchers carbon-dated five fragments of timber preserved in the walls from the three sites. This is the first time scientists have such dates for Sasanian monuments in Persis; until now, the precise ages of these structures were uncertain.

As expected, carbon dating revealed that the Palace of Ardashir I dated back, at the very latest, to the beginning of Sasanian rule. The findings also suggested that Qal’a-ye Dokhtar was constructed when Ardashir I was battling for supremacy of Persia.

In addition, the Palace of Sarvistan dated to about the seventh century AD, which was the end of the Sasanian Empire. It also appeared to have been used for centuries

during the beginning of Islamic domination over Iran, the researchers said. Intriguingly, a Zoroastrian fire temple at this site might have been used for several centuries after the Muslim conquest, they added.

“The Zoroastrians, followers of the oldest monotheistic religion in the Middle East, were not suddenly persecuted and slaughtered by Arabs, but most probably continued to practice their religion and maintain their fire temples for several centuries,” Djamali told Live Science.

ancient Persians during battles with the Roman Empire might have recommended the use of cypress as a building material. In fact, Roman prisoners of war helped to construct many bridges, dams, drainage systems and irrigation canals in Sasanian cities, the researchers noted.

However, it’s possible that Persians used cypress wood as timber long before their first contact with the Romans, given the tree’s sacred status in Zoroastrianism, the researchers added. “We think that the

frequent use of cypress tree in the Persis region, the homeland of Persian civilization, is an indication of massive cultivation of the tree,” Djamali said.

Future research will examine ancient pollen grains trapped in lake sediments to see what other plants grew in Persian gardens, Djamali said. In addition, the scientists will analyze wood in other Sasanian

monuments “to determine their exact ages,” Djamali said. “This will help us better know this forgotten empire.”

Djamali and his colleagues detailed their findings online January 30 in the Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports.

Original article on Live Science
Cypress Wood Provides Dates for Iran’s Sasanian Empire Sites

<http://www.livescience.com/58032-ancient-persia-palaces-fire-temple-wood.html>

Profile of Charles Q Choi is overleaf



Cypress wood samples from the Palace of Sarvestan. Photo credit: M. Djamali et al./Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports.

Sacred wood

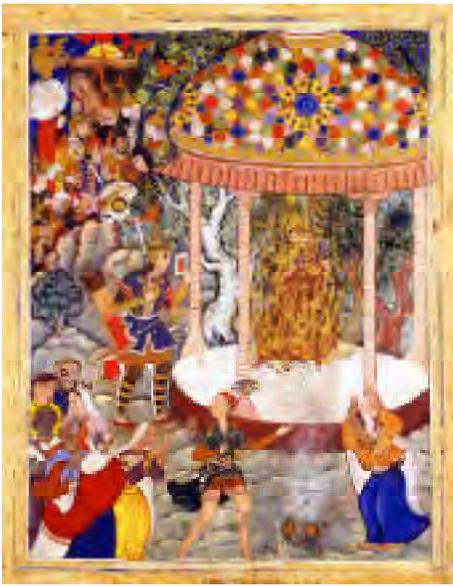
All of the wood fragments that the scientists examined were cypress, an evergreen tree that held cosmic significance to followers of Zoroastrianism. For instance, according to legend, the founder of the religion, the prophet Zoroaster — also known as Zarathustra — planted a cypress he received directly from heaven in front of the fire temple at the city of Kashmar, the researchers said. They noted that cypress continues to be an essential element of Persian gardens even today.

Cypress wood was known in the ancient world for its durability, insect-repelling properties, resistance to humidity and seawater, and fragrant scent, the researchers said. The ancient Greeks used it to build temple doors, and the ancient Romans used it to construct villas and ships, the scientists added.

The researchers suggested that ancient Roman workers and engineers captured by

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, FRANCE—[Live Science](http://www.livescience.com) reports that paleoecologist Morteza Djamali of the Mediterranean Institute of Biodiversity and Ecology led a team that carbon dated five fragments of cypress wood recovered from palaces, forts, and Zoroastrian fire temples dating to the Sasanian Empire, which ruled Persia from





conquest.

AD 224 to 651. All of the sites are located in Persis, in what is now southwestern Iran. The wood of the evergreen cypress tree was prized across the ancient world for its strength and scent, and was sacred to the Zoroastrians. The test results provided precise dates for the Sasanian structures, and suggest that a Zoroastrian fire temple at the Palace of Sarvistan may have been used for several hundred years after the Muslim



Mesopotamian Accounts Receivable
By Samir S Patel
Courtesy of the Oriental Institute

It was surely hard to keep accurate accounts before writing was developed, but Mesopotamian merchants found a way in the form of clay balls that researchers call “envelopes,” filled with tokens and impressed with seals. Dozens of these envelopes have been found, but deciphering their meaning is problematic — broken ones are difficult to reconstruct accurately and, until recently, intact ones could not be studied without first breaking them.

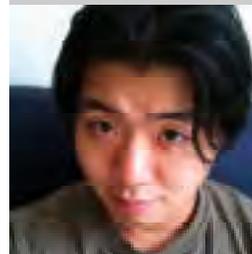
Sumerologist Christopher Woods and his team from the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago are now using CT scans to peer inside 18 intact envelopes that date to more than 5,000 years ago, excavated from Choga Mish in Iran in the 1960s and 1970s. The team observed that the tokens come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and sometimes have surface incisions, all of which could represent different commodities or amounts. “If the contents [of a transaction] were contested,” Woods writes, “the envelope could be

broken open and the tokens verified.” The balls also have seal impressions around the middle and on each end, which might represent the identities of buyers, sellers, or witnesses to a transaction. More scans will help researchers build a corpus of envelopes that can be deciphered. “We are now at a point in terms of technology where we can collect more and better data using nondestructive methods than we could if we physically opened the balls,” according to Woods.



Photo credit : Anna R Ressman

<http://www.archaeology.org/issues/125-1403/trenches/1799-mesopotamian-clay-ball-tokens>



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Oil Tanker Zoroaster - Nostalgia

A tribute to the Pioneers and Ship Builders in the development of Modern Oil Tankers.

by jehangir mehta

*P*ersia was arguably the World's first super power and as a Zarathushti, we have this nostalgia of Ancient Persia which now is modern day Iran. I am proud of my Persian ancestry / culture. One tends to take pride in one's heritage because we draw our identity from our birth religion. Culture and heritage is uniquely human and diversity and heritage is equally human. And just as the Persian Empire contributed immensely and had its many firsts, we should also remember that every other civilization, country and nation had its turn in leading the world.

Persia was among the first human civilization ahead of Egypt, India, and China and considered the mother of all civilizations. Main religion of ancient Persia was Zoroastrianism and Zoroaster or Zarathushtra was the prophet. Persian Empire stretched from Ethiopia to India, from the Indus River to the Danube in Europe and up to the Nile River in Africa, covering present day Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Macedonia, Cyprus, to the borders of Greece. There are a lot of firsts that Persia gave to the world at large. Insurance by Government was started during Cyrus the Great, weight, money and measurements were standardized in Persia. First brick invention, architecture of castles and the engineering invention of the wheel were among the other firsts from the Persian Empire. We couldn't imagine the World without a wheel. We couldn't imagine a world without the first human rights charter which the Persian King Cyrus the Great wrote, and which pioneered the freedom of religion and culture of the minorities in the world.

As though the nostalgia of the above is not enough to fill our pride of identity, I couldn't

contain my curiosity about the article on oil tanker *Zoroaster* which has been making rounds on social media for some time. As a Master Mariner and serving on oil tankers, the history of oil and the oil transportation formed part of the tanker safety curriculum, and even then I had no knowledge of an oil tanker named *Zoroaster*. I knew that the first oil well drilled was back in 1859 at Titusville Pennsylvania, initially producing 10 barrels per day which then increased to 3000 barrels per day. However what I learnt in my maritime days was a drop in the ocean as far as the chronology of the history of oil. I have used some references for research which I have mentioned at the end of the article. Mankind's search for oil is phenomenal. Although major modern oil discoveries occurred during the 19th and 20th century in Siberia, Azerbaijan, China, Burma and America, this search for oil dates back to many millennia before Christ.

In 450 BC Greek Historian Herodotus described oil and salt product from springs and wells in Persia. In 211 BC natural gas was discovered in Szchehuan province in China, used for heat and light. In 642 AD Byzantine emperor Heraclitus destroyed a number of temples near Baku where locals worshipped before burning gas wells. In 1298 Marco Polo observed the exploitation of oil from surface seeped on the Abseron peninsula in Azerbaijan and he noted that the oil was used for fuel and medicinal purposes and transported on camels. In 1636 German diplomat Adam Oleari observed 30 oil wells in the Baku Azerbaijan region and some of them were gushers. In 1806 salt well drilled in western Virginia and struck oil instead. In 1827 British geologist John Crawford investigated the Yenangyaung oil field in Burma – hand dug



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wells. In 1858-59 successful oil wells were drilled in West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

While the chronology of the oil discovery that I have included in this article is very brief and by no means complete, it takes us to a point in the middle of the 19th century where transportation of the oil became important due to increased production of oil.

Break-bulk boats and barges were originally used to transport Pennsylvania oil and the Baku region oils in 40-US-gallon wooden barrels. But transport by barrel had several problems including weight of the barrel itself, leaky barrels and expensive to make barrels. For example, in the early years of the Russian oil industry in 19th century, barrels accounted for half the cost of petroleum production. There is very little information that I could find on the very early days of oil transportation on sail-driven tankers. The *A to Z of Petroleum Industry* publication by M S Vassiliou (google books) briefly mentions sailing vessel brig *Elizabeth Watts* carrying a commercial quantity of 224 tons of oil from United States to England across the Atlantic in 1861. Reference to other publications indicates the first oil tankers were two sail driven tankers that were built in 1863 on England's river Tyne.

This then brings us to the modern oil tanker which were steamships. This is where the term first oil tanker really becomes a point of discussion. Many consider Nobel's *Zoroaster*, built in 1878 as the world's first successful oil tanker, while others point to the *Gluckauf* (1886) as being the first modern oil tanker which was explicitly an ocean-going vessel meant to cross the Atlantic. The modern oil tanker development occurred in the period from 1877 to 1886. In 1876 Ludvig and Robert Nobel, brothers of Alfred Nobel founded Branobel (short of Brothers Nobel) in Baku Azerbaijan, one of the largest oil shipping companies in the world. Ludvig Nobel especially pioneered the development of oil tankers. He designed *Zoroaster* in Gothenburg, Sweden. It burned fuel oil to power its steam engine. It made



Zoroaster delivered to the Nobel brothers in Russia

its first run from Baku to Astrakhan in the Caspian Sea. *Zoroaster* carried its 242 tons of kerosene cargo in two iron tanks. One tank was forward of the midship's engine room and the other was aft. The ship also featured a set of 21 vertical watertight compartments for extra buoyancy. The ship's overall length was 184 feet (56m), a beam of 27 feet (8.2 m) and a draft of 9 feet (2.7m). Beyond this I could not find the fate of tanker *Zoroaster* – how long it lasted, what happened, how long it was in use, other than the fact that Nobel began to adopt a single-hull design where the ship's hull forms part of its tank structure. In 1881 *Zoroaster's* sister ship *Nordenskjold* exploded in Baku killing half the crew.

In 1883, British engineer Colonel Henry Swan designed a set of three Nobel tankers at Newcastle upon Tyne in Britain and this design took a large step forward in the tanker design. Instead of one or two large holds like on *Zoroaster*, Swans design used several holds which spanned the width or beam of the ship. These holds were further subdivided into port and starboard sections by a longitudinal bulkhead. Earlier designs like *Zoroaster* suffered from stability problems caused by the free surface effect, where oil sloshing from side to side could cause a ship to capsize. 2700-ton tanker *Gluckauf* built in 1886 was the first dedicated steam-driven ocean going tanker in the world. *Gluckauf* was in use for the Standard Oil Company of America till 1893 when it ran aground at Fire Island, New York. The wreck of *Gluckauf* now lies 75-100 feet offshore in 25 feet of water. History



Glauckauf grounded in heavy fog on Fire Island

may not have recorded fully, other efforts of Norwegians and French merchants about their sailing ships in 1870s, which were rebuilt for transportation

of oil in bulk by lining the wooden hull with cement or felt. Many of these vessels grounded and sank, never to be seen again. This article allows you to understand that it is not important to wallow in the glory of the first achievements, but rather admire the tenacity of the pioneers and their ships to develop and transform the oil transportation industry from the sailing ship days to modern steamers.

Neither did the story of oil transportation end with tankers *Zoroaster* or *Gluckauf*. After World War II, oil production in Middle East ramped up and the dominance of product tankers was replaced by crude oil tankers. Panamax tankers were built to pass through Panama Canal, followed by Aframax and Suezmax tankers because of economics of trade and the areas that tankers traded. I sailed on Niarchos' tankers in the late seventies, early eighties and both Onassis and Stavros Niarchos claimed to be the largest tanker owners in the world. Sadly all that is history and Greek shipping is on the decline. Modern ultra large crude carriers (ULCC) have a capacity of 500,000 DWT and can be 400 m long. The world's largest supertanker *Seawise Giant* was built for Tung Chao Yung of Hongkong in 1979 at the Sumitomo shipyard Japan. *Seawise Giant* was later renamed *Jahre Viking* in 1991. The Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989 inside Alaska's Prince William Sound brought tougher legislation requiring tankers to have a double hull, where a double hull should minimize the consequences after a grounding or collision.

There's more than one view point on where the technology for oil tankers originated. Some say the first proper modern day oil tanker was the 2700-ton *Gluckauf* built in 1886, others say the first real oil tanker was the *Zoroaster* built in 1878. The answer to

who was first depends on your definition of a true modern day oil tanker. The oil tanker has evolved from a basic tanker like *Zoroaster* to a behemoth of the sea, able to carry vast amounts of liquid cargoes in the most efficient manner. Technology incorporated into tankers is increasing in leaps and bounds. Global demand for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and LPG has seen a large scale expansion of LNG tankers.

The research allowed me to browse through the oil tanker history which brings back memories of my sailing days on tankers. Those long sea passages around the Cape of Good

Hope when the Suez Canal was closed until 1975 due to six-day war with Israel in 1967, the Iran / Iraq war in 1987 when tankers were taking direct Exocet missile attacks and had to pass in convoy at night in the Straits of Hormuz – Persian Gulf, sailing as second mate on India's first Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC) *MT Kanchenjunga* in 1977, and the bizarre incident of stowaways hiding inside the rudder stock transom space from Vietnam to Singapore on a ballast voyage. I am also glad that the Nobel brothers felt the need to honour our Holy, benevolent and universal Prophet Asho Zarathushtra by naming the tanker *Zoroaster*. I would like to express my thanks to the Editor of Hamazor for giving me the opportunity to write this article.

References and notes

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Brig - means a sailing vessel with two square rigged masts; used both as naval vessel and merchant vessel

1 cubic meter = 6.293 US barrels.

The *Zoroaster* was constructed with steel (Bessemer variance) while its oil storage tanks were made out of iron.



On board a modern tanker



Launch of the Bicentenary of HMS Trincomalee

from the report sent by malcolm deboo

Vada Dasturji Khurshed K Dastoor, High Priest of Iranshah Atash Behram, Udvada, ZTFE patron Lord Karan F Bilimoria CBE DL and ZTFE President Malcolm M Deboo led the ZTFE delegation on board the Indian Navy ship Tarkash, for the launch of the bicentenary commemorations of HMS Trincomalee and Make in India, on Tuesday 9th May 2017.

The host of the event were, The Commanding Officer Captain Ritu Raj Sahu, officers and men of INS Tarkash, in collaboration with the National Museum of the Royal Navy and HMS Trincomalee Trust. The INS Tarkash was docked at Thames Quay, West India Dock, London.

HMS Trincomalee is not only the oldest ship afloat in the Royal Navy, but it is the oldest warship ship afloat in the world. It was built by Jamsetji Bomanji Wadia, the great Parsi Zoroastrian Master Ship Builder of the legendary Wadia family at Bombay Dockyard for the British Admiralty in 1817.

Dastur Khurshed recited a short prayer invoking the fravashis of the Wadia Master Ship Builders; Lovji Nusserwanji, Maneckji Lovji, Bomanji Lovji, Framji Maneckji and Jamsetji Bomanji.

The Dastur also remembered, revering and praising the heroic beneficent souls of the armed forces, rulers and righteous people who have served and sacrificed their lives defending the freedom in India and the United Kingdom from their adversaries.

In front of the First Sea Lord of the Royal Navy, the immediate former First Sea Lord, Officers in the RN, Army and RAF, the Defense Minister of the United Kingdom, the Commander and Officers of INS Tarkash, the Indian Naval Attache in London and the Indian High Commissioner, Vada Dasturji concluded with a benedictory prayer requesting Ahura Mazda to protect

all those who sail on the INS Tarkash defending the borders of India and conducting its international maritime duties and for the HMS Trincomalee to continue to be afloat for another 200 years.

Since India is a secular country, it is extremely rare for a prayer to be recited publicly on board an Indian navy ship therefore special permission had to be obtained for the Dasturji to pray on INS Tarkash.

ZTFE presented their Sesquicentennial Medallions to:

Captain Ritu Raj Sahu, Commanding Officer, INS Tarkash.

Admiral Sir Philip Jones KCB, ADC, First Sea Lord, Royal Navy.

Admiral Sir Jonathon Band GCB, DL, Chairman National Museum of the Royal Navy and former First Sea Lord.

Colonel Euan Houston OBE, Chairman HMS Trincomalee Trust.

Commodore Sameer Saxena, Naval Adviser, High Commission of India

His Excellency Yasvant K Sinha, High Commissioner of India.



Commodore Sameer Saxena, Malcolm M Deboo, Ashok Kumar Chauhan MBE, C B Patel, Lord Karan F Bilmoria CBE DL, Captain Ritu Raj Sahu, Commanding Officer, Indian Naval Ship Tarkash, Vada Dasturji Khurshed K Dastoor, Rohinton F Munshi, Noshir J Avari, Behram R Kapadia (behind Noshir), Dr Firoze R Munshi.

HMS Trincomalee

HMS *Trincomalee* is a Royal Navy *Leda-class* sailing frigate built shortly after the end of the Napoleonic Wars. She is now restored as a museum ship in Hartlepool, England.

The *Trincomalee* after being ordered on 30 October 1812, was built in Bombay, India by the Wadia family of shipwrights in teak, due to oak shortages in Britain as a result of shipbuilding drives for the Napoleonic Wars. The ship was named after the 1782 Battle of Trincomalee off the Ceylon (Sri Lanka) port of that name.

With a construction cost of £23,000, *Trincomalee* was launched on 12 October 1817. Captain Philip Henry sailed her to Portsmouth Dockyard where she arrived on 30 April 1819. During the maiden voyage the ship arrived at Saint Helena on 24 January 1819 where she stayed for six days, leaving with an additional passenger, a surgeon who had attended Napoleon at Longwood House on the island, Mr John Stokoe. After being fitted out at a further cost, *Trincomalee* was placed in reserve until 1845, when she was re-armed with fewer guns giving greater firepower, had her stern reshaped and was reclassified as a sixth-rate spar-decked corvette.

Trincomalee departed from Portsmouth in 1847 and remained in service for ten years, serving on the North American and West Indies station. During her time, she was to help quell riots in Haiti and stop a threatened invasion of Cuba, and serve on anti-slavery patrol. In 1849, she was despatched to Newfoundland and Labrador before being recalled to Britain in 1850. In 1852 she sailed to join the Pacific Squadron on the west coast of America.

Trincomalee finished her Royal Navy service as a training ship, but was placed in reserve again in 1895 and sold for scrap two years later on 19 May 1897. She was then purchased by entrepreneur George Wheatley Cobb, restored, and renamed *Foudroyant* in honour of HMS *Foudroyant*, his earlier ship that had been wrecked in 1897. She was used in conjunction with HMS *Implacable* as an accommodation ship, a training ship, and a holiday ship based in Falmouth then Portsmouth. She remained in service until 1986, after which she was again restored and renamed back to *Trincomalee* in 1992.

Now listed as part of the National Historic Fleet, following her recent restoration *Trincomalee* has become the centrepiece of the historic dockyard museum in Hartlepool.

Trincomalee holds the distinction of being the oldest British warship still afloat - Source - Wikipedia



Lord Karan F Bilmoria CBE DL, presenting ZTFE Sesquicentennial Gold Medallion to Admiral Sir Philip Jones KCB, ADC, First Sea Lord, Royal Navy



Captain Ritu Raj Sahu, Commanding Officer, Indian Naval Ship *Tarkash*, Lord Karan F Bilmoria CBE DL, Patron, ZTFE, Vada Dasturji Khurshed K Dastoor, High Priest, Iranshah AtashBehram, Udvada, Admiral Sir Philip Jones KCB, ADC, First Sea Lord, Royal Navy, Malcolm M Deboo, President, ZTFE, Behram R Kapadia, Vice President & Social Secretary, ZTFE.



Vada Dasturji Khurshed K Dastoor, invoking the fravashis of the Wadia Master Shipbuilders and benedictory prayers for all who sail on the INS *Tarkash*.



Are We Missing the Woods for the Trees?

by anahita subedar

As Indian Zoroastrians or Parsis, we live in interesting times, having become an endangered community, pretty much on the verge of extinction. Parsis are cherished, respected and hailed by India as an educated, cultured, progressive and peace-loving community – with good reason. Our forefathers made gigantic contributions in industry and society. We have done well for ourselves. But we need to get real and arrest our dwindling population – our priority, (bio)logically and otherwise, should be the survival of our tribe. But a closer look at the widening gap, between the current state of our community and the current urgent need of our community, makes one wonder – are we missing the woods for the trees?

We are distressed about our impending disappearance and even more disappointed at the slow pace of well-meaning initiatives and solutions. Even so, for reasons that fail reason, we have chosen to prioritise other issues which plague our community – under the veil of ‘preserving religious sanctity’ and ‘maintaining our inviolable bloodline’ – there’s the constant orthodox-liberal divide; lack of the entrepreneurial spirit which we were once known for, scarcity of Mobeds / caretakers for our Agiaries, corruption within the community and its elected caretakers, paucity of modern-day heroes/role models for our youth, etc.

We forget, that to resolve any of these issues – including the key issue of our very survival – we need to put all differences aside and be single-mindedly committed to unity ... but in keeping with the state of the Parsi community today, that looks like a very distant possibility. Distant, not impossible. Not yet. We have to get around to understanding the futility of the divide caused by the opposing orthodox-liberal believers, and the surreal hypocrisy it births and nurtures. And we need to change our vitiating mindset and attitude about the toxic

sense of entitlement which has arrested and regressed our legacy of greatness, left to us by our celebrated predecessors ...

The Orthodox-Liberal Divide and the Hypocrisy

Even for a people as educated as us, the adage ‘agree to disagree, without disrespect’ escapes us when it comes to figuring out a common solution that’s increasingly eating away at our sense and sensibility – the Orthodox-Liberal divide. How ironic that the community known to be most ‘progressive’, allows this anomaly to give birth to illogicality and sexism! One such area is the forbidden inter-caste marriage where the rules are skewed in favour of the Parsi man who marries a non-Parsi woman – he’s allowed to continue practicing his religion and can gain entrance into our agyaries, unlike the Parsi woman married to a non-Parsi man – in spite of being married under the Special Marriage Act which legalizes her right to continue practicing our religion as a Zoroastrian. Similarly, the navjote ceremony of a mixed-parentage child fathered by a Parsi is far more acceptable than one mothered by a Parsi. The question remains – if we do not have an issue admitting into our temples a child who is born half Parsi (fathered by a Parsi), then why do we create a storm when it comes to admitting a Parsi woman born of both Parsi parents and is married to a non-Parsi under the Special Marriage Act? And speaking of hypocrisy, it may be amusing to note that priests who perform the navjote of a half-Parsi child are maligned in our community as non-traditional or ‘renegades’. However, when the same child grows up and marries a Parsi, then his/her wedding ceremony is performed very acceptably by even a High Priest! There are numerous such incongruities that need resolving, including the methodology of dealing with our dearly departed ones – cremation versus dokhmanishini. But the

real issue isn't about who's right and who's wrong – it's about our inability and unwillingness to unite and find a mutual solution.

One of the biggest trending evils, which adds to this distasteful situation, is when some of us, instead of focusing on resolving the issues within the community, believe that greater prudence lies in sharing the undesirable details of our community's disagreements and politics with the mainline media, undoing centuries of struggle and sacrifice by our forefathers, who built an impeccable image for our community in India and the world over. Unabashed and unrelenting 'Social-Media-Shaming' is yet another fast-growing community sport ...

This Toxic Sense of Entitlement

As Parsis in India, we are a privileged lot – our forefathers left us more than just legacies of greatness – they left us material benefits like housing and funds, in the hope that we would be saved of the tribulations faced by the rest of the populace – like dealing with EMIs and paucity of funds, and this relief would catalyse our efforts in further consolidating their achievements, and add to the pride of our glorious community. Alas! Instead of appreciating these privileges with humility and a sense of gratitude, we have become arrogantly demanding! Instead of using this cushy platform as a launch-pad to help us soar further, towards what should have been our quest for greater achievements or excellence, we seem to have perfected the fine art of being couch-potatoes – mentally and physically – converting an inspiring advantage into an appalling handicap!

This 'entitlement behaviour' is rife in our community. Most of us have failed our own sense of privilege, and our community. We've chosen to use these privileges as an excuse to sit back and achieve close-to-nothing really! Where's the need? We have institutions like the BPP telling us they will cater to us 'From The Womb To The Tomb', and they do that, for the most part. We have grants for numerous facilities. We have

doles. We may be rich enough to possess multiple vehicles but how dare we be told to pay for a small increase in the parking surcharge! We may enjoy the good quality of life offered in the Baugs (undeniably way better than that outside of the Baugs) but we are enraged when asked to undertake our own repairs by ourselves, or worse, belt out a slight increase in the rents – even when the sum is laughable, compared to the real market rates of rent outside! And this, inspite of the provision that those who are genuinely unable to afford the increase, will be given a waiver! Ever wonder how crestfallen our forefathers would be to see what unfortunate scroungers we have reduced ourselves to, using the very privileges they extended to us, hoping we would do them proud and perhaps even out-perform them!

Every week I receive correspondence about how certain authorities are not 'doing their bit' to keep these freebies (because that's how we treat privileges) going. And maybe this is the malaise affecting our community. We are so used to our privileges, we have forgotten we could be of use too! This is the poison within our community – this toxic sense of entitlement. Most of our youth today are so 'okay' doing not much, 'okay' without high aspirations, 'okay' to be stuck in mundane jobs which do not justify their talents or passions. The proverbial 'fire in their belly' gets doused when they drink at this watering hole of entitlements. We need to face up to the fact that these entitlements is not the watering hole, it is the crocodile at the watering hole.

Abraham Lincoln said, "You have to do your own growing, no matter how tall your grandfather was." Resting on the laurels, privileges and achievements of our forefathers, without so much as a fleeting intent or effort to consolidate or give back to our legacy, is a brazen level of shamelessness that has steadily crept into us over time, all thanks to this sense of entitlement we thrive on, making this deadly lethargy 'okay'. We need to break out of this selfish cocoon, which is yet another aftermath of this sense of entitlement, and

start thinking about the legacy we will leave behind for our future generations. It's time to start asking ourselves what we can do for our community, instead.

Greatness Must Beget Greatness

Greatness is a choice made consciously, when you awaken every single day to the resolute aim of demanding a higher standard from yourself, in order to deliver a cause greater than yourself. 30th June, 2017 marks a hundred years since the passing of a man who epitomised such greatness – a man reckoned globally for his fierce patriotism; saluted by the nation for his fearless stance towards liberating India from the British Raj; and hailed as the unparalleled cynosure of the Parsi community – the great Dadabhai Naoroji.

A leading proponent of India's freedom struggle, he understood that India's emancipation was a function of the unity of her citizens. Ever wonder how he would react to see the unfortunate state of his own community today, dwindling into its imminent extinction, yet unable to unite on a solution for its very survival; ... or to see his belief in unity itself undermined by his own community which is up in arms against each other at the slightest provocation; ... or to see the greatness of his legacy compromised by the community which was supposed to be inspired into further greatness following in his footsteps, instead of slouching into a lackadaisical lull of most, who seem content in resting on the laurels of our past heroes, marinating in mediocrity born out of a lack of will, necessity and purpose.

Wasn't greatness meant to beget greatness? As a community, we are grateful and proud to have birthed many great men – Dadabhai Naoroji surely leads that valiant band, having united a nation of millions into freedom. They say great leaders can see the greatness in those who are unable to see it themselves, and lead them to their own highest, unknown potentials. Why then, are some in our community, intent on blowing off others' candles to make their

own shine brighter? It's time we looked inwards and asked ourselves why we haven't been able to deliver unity or greatness, in its true sense, as a community. And why are we unable to initiate or attach ourselves to a cause greater than our own?

It's been a while since we birthed greats and greatness. Perhaps the answer to these questions can be found in the words of Dadabhai Naoroji himself – "Be united, persevere, and achieve ..."



Bombay-based Editor of the leading community weekly, Parsi Times, Anahita Subedar is a seasoned media professional with over 18 years of experience in Media and Communications. A Commerce graduate with an MBA in Marketing, she completed her Masters in Communications from the reputed Xavier College of

Communications and shares her expertise as a journalist, Public Relations Consultant and educator. She loves music and animals, especially dogs.

Image with reference to page 43 ↓



Bollywood actor Amir Khan admires our Cycle E-Rickshaw

The Right Honourable Judge Firdaus Dordi

From Balaram Street to the Bench: The Right Honourable Judge Firdaus Dordi in his own words.

interviewed by teenaz javat

I have never been requested to interview a lawyer, let alone a judge.

So when I was offered this assignment, I took it up as a challenge and immediately got cold feet.

In the performance of my trade I would usually approach lawyers for feed back or clips on cases they have worked on, or as experts on constitutional law, or just their take on the 'story of the day'.

Judges are totally out of bounds.

In my email interview with the Honourable Judge Firdaus Dordi, I was pleasantly surprised at his candid answers to some of my questions. As well, the judge preferred to not answer a couple of questions. He didn't fudge any nor was he evasive.

I present in here excerpts from my interview of a son of India, whose rise from the grit of Balaram Street to the Los Angeles Superior Court.

TJ: Paint for me a picture of the India you left and the America you came to. How different is it now?

FD: I was born in Mumbai (Bombay), India in 1970. Both my parents worked for Air

India, that is how they met. At the age of 15, my father had to support his parents, as my grandfather lost his job. We lived in what many may consider a tough, lower working-class neighbourhood near Grant Road Station. Our home in India consisted of two bedrooms; each about twelve feet by twelve feet in size. My paternal grandparents



occupied one bedroom, and my parents, my older brother and I occupied the other. Most of the space in our room was taken up by my parents' full bed and the bunk beds where my brother and I slept. In one corner of the room was an open enclosure with a drain where we showered called a *mori*. We only had running water for roughly an hour each morning. My grandmother would have to wake up before dawn and fill the tank to ensure we had enough water to last the day. Every morning, my parents would bring a bucket of boiling water to the *mori* where we would mix it

with cold water to shower before we went to school. Our toilet was outside our apartment, down a common corridor, at the very back of the building. Although it may not seem like we had much, we had more than anyone else in our neighbourhood, and my parents constantly reminded us of how fortunate we were.

When I was six, my father received a promotion and was posted to New York City. My parents moved to New York and placed

my brother and me in an English speaking, Catholic boarding school in India for one year. In 1978, we moved to New York City, where the four of us lived in a one bedroom apartment in Queens. The apartment seemed enormous compared to our living situation in Mumbai. I attended public school in Queens. Although I spoke a fair amount of English, my accent was so heavy that no one understood what I was saying for much of that year. Fortunately, I was (and am) a very social person and made friends quite easily despite the cultural and language obstacles. I also was ahead of my class in math and did well academically. Like the children of many immigrants, I assimilated and, within a short time, lost my accent from watching television and playing with friends.

TJ: Most South Asian immigrants have a 'work hard and you will succeed' ethic. Was yours any different?

FD: In the summer of 1979, we moved to Los Angeles. Shortly thereafter, my parents bought their first home. It was a very exciting time. To my parents, my brother and my education were of the utmost importance, and they wanted a neighbourhood with good schools. Our house was literally the last house in the area that covered my elementary school. The house backed into a gas station. One morning, I went to the driveway to get the paper. When I was returning to the front door, I noticed that someone had spray painted "GO HOME F'ING IRANIANS" across our garage door. When my father saw this, he simply had the garage door repainted. I don't think he even reported it to the police. He saw it as a small price to pay for the opportunities this country had given him. My parents reminded us about our Sikh friends, who were suffering discrimination daily during this time, because they wore turbans. My parents told us that people are good, but they are angry and not thinking straight right now. They told us that this sentiment would pass, and it did. History has shown us, in tough economic times, immigrants are easy to scapegoat.

TJ: Can you throw some light on this statement you made in Indiawest earlier this year: 'As an immigrant, I have always felt very fortunate in what my family and I have been given by this country.' How fortunate do you feel and what has this country given you that your home country could not?

FD: In 1984, my father received a promotion, but it required him to return to India. At the time, my father had completed 25 years of service with Air India. That same year, my brother graduated high school and was accepted into UCLA. My parents had a very difficult decision to make, either return to India and continue a very promising career or remain in the US, leave Air India, and start anew. They knew the latter option would be a significant struggle, but they opted for it nonetheless so that their children could pursue the educational and career opportunities this country presented. They started a travel agency where my parents and brother still work today, 33 years later. I would like to think that some of their courage, selflessness, compassion, optimism, work ethic, and resilience have seeped into me through decades of observation, admiration, and association.

TJ: You have done a lot of pro-bono work in your career. Any one case that will stick with you forever?

FD: The Narinder Virk case. It is a pro bono case that I worked on for over 15 years. It is undoubtedly the one pro bono case that will 'stick with me forever.' From 2000 to 2015, I assisted the Ventura County Public Defender's Office in the case of People v. Narinder Virk, Case No. CR47981. I did not appear for Ms Virk and was not a counsel of record for her. I assisted with her case on my own time. Ms Virk was charged with the attempted murder of her two children in Port Hueneme. In the middle of the night she pushed her children off the pier at Port Hueneme and then jumped off herself. She did not know how to swim. She had a third-grade education and was brought to the United States by her husband, who subjected her to severe physical and mental

abuse. He wanted out of the relationship and was making life unbearable for Ms Virk both physically and mentally. I helped organize the South Asian community and with raising the collateral and premium for her \$500,000 bail. I also helped arrange free mental health counselling and therapy for Ms Virk from a South Asian therapist who spoke Ms Virk's native language, Punjabi. As trial neared, I helped Deputy Public Defender Cynthia Ellington brainstorm and strategize the case. Ms Virk was found not guilty by reason of insanity. She spent three years at Patton State Hospital. I continued to visit Ms Virk and assist the Ventura County Public Defender's Office in obtaining her release from Patton State Hospital. I also helped Ms Virk renew her green card and obtain her California identification. In 2015, Ms Virk was determined to be restored to sanity and the charges were terminated. Ms Virk has since been reunited with her children, who are now adults.

TJ: It is not how high we go, but where we come from, that informs our choices. Where do you see yourself in the next ten years viz-a-viz where you were 10 years ago?

FD: In the next ten years, I hope to continue to serve my community and improve as a judicial officer both in my command and mastery of the law and my ability to communicate and help parties resolve their disputes. I would also like to oversee outreach programmes in the United States and abroad to encourage socially and economically disadvantaged children pursue careers in social justice. Finally, I would also like to create more avenues for restorative justice in our criminal justice system. History has taught us that an independent judiciary is instrumental to the forward movement of our democracy. In the words of Dr King, 'Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.' The pursuit of human progress and the quest for justice have

been ingrained in my very fibre not just as a function of my western, legal education, but as part of my Zoroastrian faith, in having to make a daily choice to think good thoughts, speak good words, and perform good deeds. In a time when immigrants and our judiciary are under constant assault, I hope to serve as one of many shining examples of what makes America truly great, its grit, its diversity, and its intrinsic desire to always want to be better.



Teenaz Javat works as a senior writer at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

She writes headlines for a living and on occasion produces for Toronto's flagship radio programme Metro Morning. She is also a story teller, who as part of The Shoe Project, tells and writes immigration stories through the lens of

shoes. As part of the Shoe Project outreach Teenaz leads a writing workshop at Literature for Life for at-risk teen mothers in Toronto's priority neighbourhoods. Teenaz lives in Mississauga, Ontario with her husband and almost adult children.

Prior to the appointment as a Judge, Firdaus was a public defender and co-founder of the Dordi, Williams, Cohen law firm. In January of this year, 46 year old Firdaus became the First Parsi Judge appointed to Los Angeles Superior Court. - Ed.

In Conversation with Hu

by dinsha mistree

Huban A Gowadia is currently the Acting Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration in the United States' Department of Homeland Security, where she oversees approximately 60,000 employees and annual budget of more than \$7 billion USD. Dr Gowadia joined the federal government in 2000. She holds a BS in Aerospace Engineering from the University of Alabama and earned a PhD in Mechanical Engineering from Pennsylvania State University. She agreed to speak with *Hamazor* in a wide-ranging interview about her life.

Dinsha Mistree: Thanks for taking the time out of your very busy schedule to speak with me. Actually your busy schedule is a great place to start. What does a day in your life look like?

Dr Gowadia: It is a pleasure to join you. I am up at 0400, when I begin to review overnight world events, news, and emails. I get to my office desk around 0600. Usually my day is packed with meetings, so I need end-of-day catch-up time at my desk before returning home. And then – and this is the “aspirational” part – I try to leave the office by 1800 or so to squeeze in a little exercise and reading before getting to bed by 2100.

Wow, that sounds quite intense. Do you also travel?

Yes, I do. I get to travel for work both domestically and internationally. And when I am able, I enjoy travel in my personal capacity as well. This bug was instilled by my parents, and by my father in particular. His work took him around the world and he made every effort to afford us opportunities to see and learn from and about different people and cultures. While our parents gave my brother and me access to good schools around the world, I firmly believe that our best education came through these travels and time with our parents.

Did you always want to work in government?

My graduate research introduced me to national security, and my first job brought me to government. There was no specific ‘aha’ moment,

but when I look back, it occurs to me that I would have found a way to serve. Today, I cannot imagine doing something that doesn't involve national service.

So then how did you decide to join government instead of doing something else such as joining a corporation or going into academia?

Candidly, after I graduated I looked across the board. There were a few academic offers, but I wasn't much interested in pursuing them at that point in my life. I applied for positions at various corporations and with some national labs, but it was the year before 9/11, and no one seemed interested in someone who had done research on explosives detection! Then I got the opportunity to work for the Federal Aviation Administration's Aviation Security Lab, to work on threat detection technologies. It was a no-brainer. It has been a true blessing to almost stumble into government service.



Do you have any advice for younger people who might be considering careers in government?

Just do it! At least for some portion of your professional life, spend time in service of your nation. There is no better feeling than knowing you are contributing to the greater good. Yes, you can do that from the outside through industry and academia – you can volunteer in your communities – but don't dismiss civil service.

One of the reasons why young people are sometimes hesitant to join government is because they doubt if things ever get done. After all, 'bureaucracy' is often considered a dirty word. Is bureaucracy really as dysfunctional as it seems from the outside, or would you say that government gets a bad rap?

Fundamentally, I believe every society has a need for bureaucracies because they are meant to provide frameworks and structures for coordinated effort in service of wider constituencies. Ideally, a bureaucracy would operate much as President Kennedy outlined in his speech at Rice when he gave the nation the goal "to go to the moon in this decade." The bureaucracy would facilitate such goals by providing the means "to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills."

Now bureaucracies are not limited to government. Private industry has its own bureaucracies as well. Agencies need a means to ensure efficient execution of their missions and provide some rules / regulations that govern those who participate in the enterprise. In every agency – private or public – there will be those who use the full "space" offered within that framework to be entrepreneurial and innovative. And conversely, in every agency – private or public – there will be those who will ascribe the narrowest definition to the framework.

There is a perception that government is steeped with bureaucrats of the latter persuasion, while the private sector has

many more of the former. I would posit that if you've ever been on a call with a customer service representative for a "name-a-service" provider, you've experienced just as much frustration with bureaucracy as you did when you were in line at the Department of Motor Vehicles. Yet, I have had pleasant experiences with both and frustration with both.

Generally speaking, the government gets more grief in this regard. Now remember, it was the government bureaucracy that took us to the moon within a decade, and it was government innovation that gave us the Internet and GPS. Federal investments and federal bureaucrats support the development of drugs and vaccines, new techniques and technologies to counter diseases such as cancer, and even lactose-free milk! So yes, government does get a bad rap.

And it is likely because in many ways, when the general populous interacts with the government, it is typically for services. TSA is a great example. We are essentially the retail face of government for the traveling public. At US airports, we see more than two million people every day and the overwhelming majority of those interactions begin and end with no issue. But sometimes in very, very few cases there will be an interaction that does not go as both the Officer or the passenger would like. And often, there is a rush to assume that the Officer was in the wrong. After all, it is easy to malign the civil servant because his or her service is tagged with the negative connotations associated with "bureaucracy."

But I have found that even through those difficult engagements, our Officers maintain their dignity and professionalism – you cannot know how proud I am to have the opportunity to work with them. Men and women from all walks of life, who get up every day with the intention of serving and protecting the traveling public. We strive hard to keep the traveling public safe.

How do you see the TSA evolving in the future?

You know, I started my career in aviation security – and was here when TSA was started after 9/11. I came back to TSA as the Deputy Administrator last May, and must say that I could not have picked a better time to come home. And that’s because today, we are an agency that is fundamentally transforming. And we must – the terrorist threat is constantly evolving. Today, we are faced with a shifting threat environment that is in many ways more dynamic, profound, and complex than ever before, and certainly more so than the one we faced when TSA was established. Our enemies are entrepreneurial, exceptionally adaptable, and creative. To defeat them, we too must be more than ever entrepreneurial, adaptable, and creative.

And so, TSA is undergoing a fundamental change. We are focusing on vital partnerships: across federal, state and local governments and law enforcement, with industry partners – airlines, airports, vendors, with academia, and also with the traveling public. It may be a cliché – but we are actively encouraging “out of the box” thinking at all levels in the agency. We have stood up an Innovation Task Force that allows us to trial next-generation technologies and forward leaning operational protocols. Dinsha, can you envision a day where your face is your boarding pass? We can!

Ultimately, our aim is to be the “employer of choice” in the federal government. We want to attract the best of the best to come serve our country, right here at TSA. And it all begins with changing the perception and morale of our workforce. And perhaps I can ask for your readers’ help in this regard. Please may I request that the next time you encounter a Transportation Security Officer, please would you say “thank you” for his/her service and efforts to keep you safe? It would mean a lot to us if you did!

You are quite inspiring. Have you ever contemplated running for political office?

Oh no! I am a self-professed nerd. Politics are not in my wheelhouse!

What is one of your proudest achievements during your career so far?

Well, it was a team achievement. Based on the 2014 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, my previous agency, the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) was rated #11 in the Best Places to Work in Government Sub-Agency Rankings. Agencies within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) are routinely rated at the lowest levels – so this was quite an outlier. When I took over as Acting Director in 2012, DNDO was not even the highest rated sub-agency within DHS, so to get to #11 across the government in two years was a tremendous achievement. And again, I must emphasize that this was a team achievement. I was blessed to work with yet another incredible cadre of civil servants on a mission of great importance – and we overcame many hurdles to move from an agency that was “relevant” in the US government’s nuclear counterterrorism enterprise to one that is now “indispensable.” In doing so, we individually and collectively made significant contributions to the enterprise – it’s no wonder our morale was raised.

Just to switch it up a little bit, it would be great to know a little bit more about your family and your upbringing. What do your parents do?

I was born and raised in India. Actually I grew up in Pune. Mom worked in the bank and Dad worked in steam engineering systems for a Parsi-owned business. The parent company is based in the UK and they subsequently asked him to work for them in East Africa and the US. When he retired, he had worked for the same firm for more years than he had been married to our Mom! When they moved to Kenya, Mom retired and took up a new passion – volunteering and philanthropy. You’d be hard pressed to meet a kinder, gentler soul. My brother and I get our competitive spirit from Dad, we get our constant drive to find good in all people from Mom, and we get our commitment to family and community from them both.

You mentioned your brother. Would you like to share more about him?

The best gift my parents ever gave me was my brother. He hates when I say that, but it's true. Just the two of us siblings. He is now married to an incredible lady and the best gifts they ever gave me were two darling nephews.

My brother and I both went to Catholic schools in Pune. We both spent a lot of time in serious athletic pursuits. My brother was very driven, serious about, and focused on cricket. One of my favorite memories is keeping score for his team. Our time as a family – traditions, routines, travels – ensured we had the happiest of childhoods. We both went on to the University of Alabama, and then I went on to Penn State for graduate school. When he graduated, he went to work for a while, then on to graduate studies in the UK, and now is a tremendously successful executive in private industry. We both wish we had more time for golf – especially with our Dad.

Who do you look up to?

At 5' 1", pretty much everyone. No seriously, throughout my life I have been blessed to have teachers – true gurujis, guides, friends, and family that brought me under their wings and allowed me to learn and grow from their experiences and knowledge. The shoulders upon which I could and did stand were formidable. I was afforded every opportunity to succeed. The list is long, Dinsha. It took a very large village to raise me!

Do you ever encounter other Zoroastrians in your line of work?

Every so often, I do. And it is always lovely when we find each other. ■■■■



Dinsha Mistree is a Research Fellow and Lecturer in the Rule of Law Program at Stanford Law School, where he focuses on governance and public administration in the developing world. In his spare time, Dinsha is involved in several Zoroastrian community initiatives.

The Girl from Matunga

by roeinton khambatta

*T*here was no Joshua to blow his trumpet so that the walls of Jericho came tumbling down. The order was issued by the then Governor of Bombay that the walls of the Fort which protected Bombay's harbour, were no longer considered necessary. Some of the walls of the old Fort are replaced by areas called Rampart Row. The walls came down; Bombay was to begin its march to become one of the great commercial and industrial cities of the world. The few mud-spattered islands, received as a dowry by King Charles II, when he married Catherine of Braganza, daughter of the King of Portugal and then sold to the East India Company, had its shackles removed.

The Parsis, who had come from Gujarat and had been crowded in the Fort, now found release for their genetically-disposed "foot-loose bug" and moved westwards to the Arabian Sea via Central Bombay with its abodes being built at Grant Road, Sleater Road, Kalbadevi and enjoying the warm, tropical breeze on the Esplanade. There, this small community, happy to have minor diversities in its beliefs ensconced themselves, and of course, dedicating their temples of worship – for the Shahenshahi's (Wadia & Anjuman); for the Kadmi's (Banaji and Dadyseths). The Parsis dominated this new area.

But Bombay continued to grow with the BB & CI Railway on its West Coast and the GIP on its East Coast. Higher-learning colleges – Elphinstone on Rampart Row (and in later years, the Royal Institute of Science), Wilson at Chowpatty and St Xavier's in between these two. The Sydenham College of Commerce in town, and the Grant Medical College (with the Sir J J Hospital) in Byculla and the G S Medical College (with the King Edward Memorial Hospital) at Parel made Bombay one of the great seats of learning and the University of Bombay

was established. The Parsi contribution in the Learned and the Learning was out of proportion to their small numbers. However, Bombay now had cotton mills on the upper reaches of its mighty harbour, and other industries, including ship-building and ship-repairs, demanded an influx of workers from surrounding areas. The Parsis played a major share in this development as well – the Petits, Jeejeebhoy, Wadias, Tatas were concentrating their factories and mills in North Bombay and the move started to build a Parsi Colony – the famous one at Dadar. But, aspiration and achievement had become Parsi watchwords and beyond Kings Circle at Dadar, a new town was visualised – with broad roads, lined with leafy trees, clean and tidy and the Parsis who aspired more than Dadar, started moving to Matunga. It was served at Wadala Station in the Harbour, with the great Victoria Terminus in Central Bombay. Many were the families to grow out of their 'shells' and aspire for higher things in business, education, medicine, commerce. This heady mixture was being boiled over and over again, and was a perfect medium in which young Parsi men and women would dream of a better world. But higher education was imperative.

There was a wise father, who moved his family to Matunga and started a business called Wansons, which one day would grow into a giant. One can picture his daughter, daily catching the suburban train to Central Bombay and either taking a bus or walking to her Alma Mater, St Xavier's College. Somehow, it was this College, out of the three mentioned earlier, that was always a magnet for Parsis. There she took up the study of Economics and a social conscience started developing. On graduation, this had to be nurtured further. A Postgraduate degree at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences beckoned. There she did so well that she was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study in America. On her return, she found that her elder brother had joined the father in the business. He introduced her to his best friend, a graduate from Cambridge. Love spawned and soon she was married to this

fine young man. Love brings many obligations, chief of which is procreation, and a son and a daughter were born and our friend busied herself with her young family.

The business continued to grow. Wanson had changed its name and had moved to Poona (now Pune). Here, the young family lived happily in the beautiful and clean city of Poona.

A true test of character was menacing and struck. In quick succession, she lost father, a beloved grandmother, and her brother. However, she had been moulded by the enterprising spirit of Matunga, the learning and courage she had acquired at St Xavier's, the social conscience at the Tata Institute. Fortified by her antecedents, she bravely accepted God's will.

Further tests awaited – she lost her son in an accident, and her young husband (who was managing a stupendously growing business) of a heart attack.

After only a slight hesitation, this young lady took over the business (of which she had not been any part), educated her daughter at Imperial College, London, who happily married a fine young man – scion of two of Poona's oldest Parsi families. She developed the business, producing turnover of millions. Contrary to what happens in most families, her daughter became the Chairman and she retired.

Now, in spite of the tragedies in her life, she embarked on social work, promoting school education for underprivileged children, the real inheritors of a new India. She always used the word 'Philanthropy'. She never talked of 'Charity'.

Intrigued, I went back to the fount of all knowledge – the OED (Oxford English Dictionary).

Charity is defined as "Christian love, God's love to Man, Man's love of God and of his neighbours". **Philanthropy** is "active effort to promote the happiness and well-being of one's fellow-men".

These are active efforts. But, there has to be a “feeling” called “**Benevolence**” – disposition to do good, desire to promote happiness of others, “kindness, generosity”. No wonder she not just spoke of Philanthropy, but, from her newly-acquired personal wealth gave a share to promote these ideals.

No wonder, the Government of India nominated her to be a member of the Rajya Sabha (the Upper House of Parliament). She is a quiet, thinking person. Not at all conscious of her wealth, when she comes to London, she travels by London Transport, goes out to a small Italian restaurant with Phiroze’s (her son in law) family. There are no outward shows of wealth.

I first met her, when my late wife and I were staying with her daughter’s in-laws, in Poona, and when introduced to her by my old friend, (a doctor in Poona), I thought she was his wife. His reply to me was “No. But she would make a great wife because she is a great woman”.

Let us end on this note wishing her all happiness and all success in the wonderful work that this humble lady is doing.

Disclaimer: I find I have not mentioned her name. Whenever she comes to London, she brings me a dish of good old fashioned Parsi food, cooked by herself – again her kindness.

Mrs Edith Roosevelt, wife of that great American President, Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt had said:

“A lady’s name should appear in print only three times – at her birth, marriage and death”.

I intend to break this rule and tell Hamazor’s readers that I have been writing about that “Girl from Matunga” ... (on page 68) ■■■■



Rointon Khambatta is a retired cardiologist and with a good deal of spare time, indulges in writing vignettes about people’s lives. For 25 years he worked in London. Having graduated from the Grant Medical College in Bombay (1946), and being brought up in the happy atmosphere of Karachi, and the wisdom of Dasturji Maneckji Nusserwanjee Dhalla, he has, he feels a good appreciation of the Parsi Community.

The Bambusa Bike

by vijay chrishna

Lawkim Motors Group is a division of Godrej & Boyce, the 120 year-old Indian company that manufactures everything from locks to washing machines and office furniture all the way to sophisticated parts for the country’s cryogenic engines propelling the rockets of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) into outer space. Lawkim has manufactured specialized electric motors since 1961, first in a suburb outside Mumbai city, and then in a new factory 55 kms outside Pune city which was established in 1991. I’ve run this company since 1977.

Our Lawkim team, which has been together in the best Godrej traditions for many years, has always tried to anticipate changes in technology to remain at the forefront of manufacturing techniques in general, and technology in particular. We do this by attending international Fairs and creating a set of international contacts, many of them experts in motor making technology. In addition, we conduct various exercises led by experts for our teams of engineers and workmen. One of these a few years ago involved the use of alternate materials for use in our motors. We call this ‘lateral thinking!’

This particular exercise threw up the possibility of using bamboo, which grows quite plentifully on our factory site as well as in outlying areas around us. Coincidentally, just at this time I happened to travel to the Antarctic in 2012 at the invitation of Sir Robert Swan, the first explorer to walk to both Poles unaided, who organizes these trips to introduce young people to the uncertainties of climate change. The term ‘unaided’ refers to being out of all touch with external sources while on the Expedition. On our trip, while we were waiting to sail off from Ushuaia, the southernmost town in South America, we were joined by two young Dutch friends who had cycled all the way from Deadhorse, Alaska, all the way

down to Ushuaia. Doing projects with villages along the way related to water conservation, they had pedalled nearly 30,000 kms on these bicycles made for them by an American bike-maker in San Francisco called Craig Calfee. I was immensely inspired by not only the spirit of these young Dutchmen doing water related projects over nearly two years and, by the robust design of the bikes themselves which had obviously been built to last on such a rigorous journey.

As soon as I got back to India I made a presentation to our teams about these young Dutchmen and exhorted them to consider building such bikes since the bamboo to make them was right at hand.

Well, the long and short of it was that while good intentions are fine, it took us several months to discover that it takes a lot more than that to put a strong bike together!

Fortunately, we had created a research wing in our company dedicated to conserving and propagating endangered species of medicinal plants endemic to the western ghats, called the Naoroji Godrej Centre for Plant Research (NGCPR). And through the NGCPR, as we term it, we found that the particular variety of bamboo best suited for making frames grew right there in our company and in its vicinity - "*Pseudo-Oxytenanthera stocksii*" (earlier called *Dendrocalamus*). Bamboo, as we know, is a grass that grows entirely naturally and because it is natural and not man-made, lends itself beautifully to creating products out of it. Due to the carbon footprint required to put together a frame is much lower than those used on conventional bicycles, no fossil fuel energy is being utilized to manufacture the frames.

When we realized that there was obviously something missing in how we were creating the frames we decided to ask the help of Craig Calfee who had created the bikes I had admired so much. On the internet we made contact with him, to try and set us right on the processes to use that worked

so well for him on the bikes that he made for the young Dutchmen who had pedaled all those 30,000 kms down the length of the Americas. Craig also said that he sometimes visited Africa where he had set up projects for local communities to manufacture bamboo bikes in Ghana and could possibly visit us next time he visited Africa. Obviously we needed no second bidding and invited him to do just that. He found time to visit us and spent two weeks at our factory in September 2015. His visit totally altered the way we had approached this project, and we professionalized our approach totally with his help, bringing a step-by-step process rigor into the whole operation. Thanks to him we were able to take frame-making to an entirely new level ensuring that each process was adhered to in great detail.

Now we needed to test each aspect of what we had built. First we made sure that our frame-making adhered to ISO 4210 standards. Then we decided to devise a really exacting road test for the bikes which would put every aspect of our frame-making to the extreme test. We spoke to biking enthusiasts and came up with the idea of a cycle expedition that would go all the way up from the tip of south India at Kanyakumari to Khardung La, 4,400 kms away in Ladakh. Khardung La is of course the highest motorable road in the world, so we could not have aimed for a more iconic end to our bike ride. We then enthused two highly experienced young cyclists from Mumbai who'd made long biking journeys before, to join us in this endeavor. They jumped aboard enthusiastically. The trip began on 14th July 2016 and finished on 21st September 2016, which would entail the duo having to ride through the monsoon rains for most of the journey. The youngsters not only survived the rains and the ride in great style but also discovered that bamboo's unique tensile strength being four times as absorbent as carbon fibre gave them a smoother ride on some of the worst roads in the country. An extra icing on the cake was that we made the ride in aid of Girl Child Education in India, raising in the process a sum of over Rs41 lakhs.

The Godrej Family themselves contributed significantly, and it was a great motivating force to all of us at Godrej and particularly for the young cyclists themselves to be part of such a worthy cause.

The bikes have just been released online last month (May) and we are also sending five bikes to Amsterdam where people commonly ride to work on bicycles each day.

We have also been able to demonstrate that what Craig taught us can be used to make a variety of bamboo-frame vehicles for very different purposes, as are shown.

The exercise has been very fruitful in terms of how we have come to ideate products, taught us the rigor of process that needs to be adhered to when making a great product and has brought our teams together in a way that we could not have imagined that this exercise would do.

A great learning process and one from which we hope to benefit from in the times ahead.



Bambusa Bikes will be available in different variants like Bambusa urban, Bambusa Sports, Bambusa Kids. For more information on our product & project one can visit our website:

www.godrejambusabike.com

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The Bambussa bike



Bambusa vehicle for use with an Automatic Guided Vehicle



Bambusa Electric wheelchair for the physically handicapped

Another image is shown on page 33



Vijay Krishna worked in Shipping and Tea in Kolkata and then Bombay from 1972. He joined Lawkim Ltd, a bankrupt company at the behest of Shri N P Godrej in 1977, helped turn it around and today is its Executive Director.

He has been involved very actively with acting and directing in theatre, over 100 theatre productions since 1965 in Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai. He sometimes finds time to perform tiny roles in the films, and a few TV serials.

History of Murree Brewery Polo Cup Tournament

by isphanyar bhandara

The final of the 113th Bhandara Memorial Polo Cup was held on April 30, 2017. It was won by the Dominion team with a score of five goals against their rivals, Ten Corps, who only managed two. The match was held at the Polo Ground, Rawalpindi, and attracted a great deal of interest. A large crowd was present to watch the Chief Guest, British High Commissioner Thomas Drew, award the prizes. Also present were MNA Malik Abrar Ahmed, Station Commander Rawalpindi Syed Hassan Raza and the CEO of Murree Brewery Ltd, Mr Isfandyar Bhandara.

It is a singular honour for the Murree Brewery Company to organize and support a sport commonly referred to as the "Game of Kings". Since 1904, Murree Brewery has taken great pride in its patronage and support of the game. This constant support for the game of polo has resulted in a renewed sense of interest in the game, both from members of the public and from the corporate sector. Polo is an expensive sport to play and the reality is that without corporate support it would not be possible to fund events such as this.

The sport of polo in Pakistan is organized and regulated under the Pakistan Polo Association which came into being after Pakistan gained independence in 1947. The Association is responsible for supporting and promoting the game of polo and also

for coordinating all polo related activities in Pakistan.

The game of Polo has a very interesting history. It is quite possible the oldest recorded team sport in known history, with the first matches being played in Persia over 2500 years ago. A team sport played on horseback, its objective is to score goals against an opposing team. Four riders on each side score by driving a white wooden or plastic ball into the opposing teams' goal using a long handled mallet. Goals are only valid if the scoring rider is mounted. The rules of the game remain unchanged to the present day. Initially thought to have been created by competing tribes of Central Asia, it was quickly taken up as a training method for the King's elite cavalry. These early

matches often resembled battles, with up to 100 men to a side.



The Murree Brewery Polo Cup
since 1904

The Oldest Polo Tournament of Pakistan

As mounted armies swept back and forth across our part of the world, conquering and re-conquering, polo was adopted as the most noble of pastimes by the Kings and Emperors, Shahs and Sultans, Khans and Caliphs of the ancient Persians, Arabs, Mughals, Mongols and Chinese. It was for this reason that it became known as “the game of Kings”.

During the age of the British Raj, especially in the years the British Empire and its armies were at peace with the general situation existing in the sub-continent, the British high command concentrated on creating a homely atmosphere for the troops. It was at this stage that the decision was taken to establish a Brewery at Murree Hills Ghora Gali to provide fresh beer to its troops. The Eastern Command Headquarters was located at Rawalpindi and between 1885 and 1890 the Murree Brewery was re-located from Ghora Gali to its present location at Rawalpindi. At the time it was the only industrial set up of its kind at Rawalpindi. The British Army General Headquarters at Rawalpindi initiated sports activities for its officers at which the game of polo took centre stage. Initially it was played between the regimental teams only.

The sport was also introduced into England in 1869 and seven years later sportsman James Gordon Bennett imported it into the United States. After 1886, English and American teams occasionally met for the International Polo Challenge Cup. Polo was also played at several Olympic Games, but has not been an Olympic sport since 1936.

The Murree Brewery Company first was asked to sponsor a Polo tournament for the British Army Regiments located in the northern Command in 1904. The First Murree Brewery Polo Cup was played at the same polo ground in Rawalpindi which is still being used in 2017. Till 1947, The Murree Brewery Polo cup was played amongst the British Army Regimental teams. The original trophy, if observed closely, bears small silver plaques of the winning teams of the British Army Regiments.

The Murree Brewery Polo Cup (now renamed The M.P. Bhandara Memorial Polo Cup) continues as it has done for so long to represent this pinnacle of sport. By its continued presence in this arena it reaffirms its special bond and historical commitment to the sport, continuing to sponsor one of the most well attended and colourful Polo events of the year in the Garrison city of Rawalpindi. ■■■■



1975 : winning team with Gen Sher Ali



2017 : 113th M. P. Bhandara Memorial Murree Brewery Polo Cup. Winning team with Chief Guest British High Commissioner, H.E. Mr Thomas Drew, MNA Malif Abrar Ahmed, Station Commander Rawalpindi Syed Hassan Raza, Chief Executive of Murree Brewery Co Ltd Isphanyar Bhandara, Ambassadors of Denmark, Bulgaria, Cuba, Sri Lanka, Portugal, Nepal and Mauritius.

FEZANA Celebrates 30th

Spotlight on Houston: FIRES, FEZANA AGM, & an Atash Kadeh

compiled by yasmin pavri

The Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) was very excited to host the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) Annual General Meeting (AGM) from April 28-30, 2017. It was FEZANA's 30th anniversary and in the true spirit of Houston there were extravaganzas planned for both Pre and Post AGM events.

For the first Pre-AGM event on Thursday April 27, the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) had organized a site visit to Coating Industries Inc., a local Zarathushti-owned business, followed by a meeting of the WZCC.

An Evening with FIRES

Later in the evening FEZANA Information Research Education System (FIRES), which is based in Houston, had invited guest speaker Aban Marker Kabraji. The programme also included an exhibit to showcase the library collection, and to highlight the mission, the history, and future plans for FIRES.

It was truly an evening to remember. The programme started with the inauguration of the new Purvez S Rustomji Room, donated by Aban Rustomji in memory of her husband. At the ribbon cutting by Aban, assisted by her son Arish, daughter Nerina, and grandson Aaryan, there were many smiling faces and a few wistful tears.

After the joyous opening, the audience filed into the new room for the formal programme. Choreographed by Vehishta Kaikobad, the youngest group of Sunday school children walked down the aisle, carrying traditional artifacts like a ses, a jabla, and a replica of the Cyrus Cylinder. They sang the beautiful Khan Ashem Vohu prayer and the crowd was encouraged to

join in. Zubeen Mehta of ZAH remarked: "the talented and most endearing Sunday school kids processed into the Rustomji Room from the Library carrying objects of significance to us as Zarathuhstis. It was impossible not to be cognizant of the fact that we were witnessing a momentous event. Here before our eyes in a brand new room, itself a testament to our community, philanthropy and faith, was the shiny, new generation providing tangible and full-throated evidence to all present that our faith is alive and kicking, and that it will march on!"

The children's performance ended with the official opening of the very well received exhibit set up in the newly renovated library. The library looked impressive, as it was set up to display many interesting exhibits. Beautiful garas, two rare hand-painted versions of the Shahnameh with pages etched in gold, a silver "paro" with Chinese engravings on it, an old gold pocket watch, and unusual gold necklaces, medals, and stamps honoring Zoroastrians were all displayed artfully with books from the collection matching the artifacts. The attendees went around the room to admire the artifacts as well as the Wall of Ancestors, a permanent photo exhibit, linking Houston Zarathushtis to their ancestors. All donors, big and small, were acknowledged. Of special note was the donation of the late Shapur K Irani who donated his entire collection to FIRES in memory of his beloved parents. A very special permanent exhibit is the memorabilia of Dr Dastur M Dhalla, a collection donated by the Dhalla family to the Zoroastrian Association of Houston Library, and is being held as the Dhalla Trust in Houston.

Aban Marker Kabraji, the guest speaker for the event, is a biologist and scientist and is

currently the Regional Director of the Asia Regional Office of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Her talk "Memory and Identity" resonated with the audience. She observed that for Zoroastrians in the diaspora, the ethos of their homelands (India, Pakistan, or Iran) permeates their lives and work, even though they are outwardly Western. Aban Kabraji maintained that the events of 9/11 and the resurgent Islam movement, has made many religions and communities around the world question their place in the social fabric. So how do Zoroastrians in the diaspora define identity? Drawing interesting distinctions between "home" and sense of "belonging", Ms Kabraji proposed that communities are important to convey a sense of belonging. They help you understand who you are. Unlike the Jews, Armenians or Filipinos, Zoroastrians "are not tied to a physical land or country to define their identity". However, "in order to belong, you must know the country, be visible, recognized and embraced by the entity to which you belong. Our youth today have assimilated into their new diaspora; but they want to be connected with each other to feel a sense of belonging." In a way, she said the Return to Roots (RTR) programme, of which she is a co-chair, ensured that youth "return, reconnect and revive." Wherever they may be, Zoroastrians seek out and form bonds with other Zoroastrians. Zoroastrian Centers (like ZAH) have become a substitute for the baghs they grew up in. She applauded the FIRES collection as it would "allow the connection of shared memories, availing an opportunity to learn about our history, culture and religion". The evening ended with a delicious dinner of dhan-dar-patio, and Parsi stew followed by lagan-nu-custard that was enjoyed by all.

The FEZANA AGM

On April 28, 2017, Homi Gandhi, President of FEZANA, inaugurated the FEZANA AGM and welcomed all member associations, past presidents, committee chairs, and Zarathushtis attending in the audience. The AGM was attended by all five of the current executive officers of FEZANA, all seven of

the past presidents of FEZANA, 18 of FEZANA's 26 member associations representing 53 out of a total of 66 eligible votes, and 22 out of 26 FEZANA committees. Sister organizations such as the North American Mobed Council and World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce were also represented. The AGM report, in electronic format for the first time was previously sent to members.

In his opening address Homi Gandhi lauded the achievements of the past years with special mention of the three new Atash Kadeh's: the Arbab Guiv Dar-e-Mehr in New York, the Atash Kadeh in Orange, California, and a new Dar-e-Mehr in Sacramento, California, which attests to the fact that "the best of our community is yet to come". He added: "As a new diaspora, we are building our own institutions, we are defining our own identities, and we are creating our own programmes to lead a group of Zarathushtis on this North American continent with the same values for which our Zarathushti faith has stood for over three millenniums. We want our community members, especially our children and grandchildren, to be proud of their Zarathushti identity.

Vice President ArZan Wadia urged members to "harness the energy and enthusiasm in the room to put the Zarathushti community on the path to growth in North America". He applauded the "work, passion and time" of the many volunteers in the room. He said: "a strong showing by FEZANA at the Global Working Group Meeting in Hong Kong reinforced FEZANA's standing as representative of the second largest geographical group of Zoroastrians in the world".

The sessions started every morning with a benediction led by various Ervads present at the meeting. A particularly uplifting Boi ceremony was performed in the prayer room of Houston's Zarathushti Heritage & Cultural Center (ZHCC) on the morning of Sunday, April 30th with all attendees joining hands together in prayer.

In addition to the FIRES and Return to Roots committees, FEZANA has several

active committees and each committee gave a brief report. The Unity and Welfare Committee provides help with financial and other assistance. Their beneficiaries trust them to maintain the highest level of confidentiality. Dolly Dastoor, Chair of the Scholarship Committee stated that scholarships were the most sought after resources. Due to the high demand, only one third of the applicants were granted scholarships but they totaled a generous \$35,000 in 2016. Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA) is looking to mentor high school students applying to universities. Behram Pastakia, Chair of the Zarathushti Youth Without Borders, spoke with great pride of Garshasb Soroosh who, with his two classmates, will send a microbiology experiment they devised to the international Space Station. The experiment will test the effects of weightlessness on microbe gene expressions. The UN-NGO Committee's Co-chair Afreed Mistry, a member of the younger generation, strives to bring youth participation at UN events. This year four youths will have participated in the "Preservation of the Oceans" conference on June 4, 2017 at the UN Headquarters.

After another sumptuous dinner of Texas barbecue and Tex-Mex cuisine, the ZAH elementary school children gave an entertaining programme titled *From Zal to Rustom*, based very loosely on the Shahnameh. This was followed by presentations of the attending member associations.

On the evening of April 29th, at a glittering 30th Anniversary Gala event, FEZANA bestowed the FEZANA Lifetime Achievement Award to Ervad (Dr) Jehan Bagli, who has faithfully served the North American Zarathushti community for many years. The gala, hosted by the ZAH, also celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the Legacy Awards that were set up by ZAH from the proceeds of the World Zoroastrian Congress in 2000.

The award to Dr Bagli recognized his decades of service to the community as a

priest, a scholar, a writer and a speaker. There are few Zarathustis in North America who have not heard of Dr Bagli's scholarship and commitment. In his acceptance speech, Dr Bagli recognized his wife Freny, their son Darius and spoke movingly of their late daughter Shiraz.

Dr Bagli, along with the current and all seven past presidents of FEZANA, inaugurated a special 30th Anniversary Issue of the FEZANA Journal titled *Voices of the Future*. The Journal's chief editor, Dolly Dastoor, said that it was a befitting moment that the Journal's very first editor should inaugurate this 30th anniversary issue.

ArZan Wadia, unveiled the new FEZANA logo, designed by Zara Contractor of Karachi, which identified the accentuating elements of air, earth, fire, and water and strong Zoroastrian identity. He presented a retrospective of FEZANA's work over the past few years.

The evening programme included entertainment by ZAH Youth and Rhythm India. ZAH awarded scholarships to four of its youth heading off to college for the first time, while a new needs-based scholarship, the *Mike Engineer Scholarship*, was unveiled and awarded for the first time. ZAH also gave a lifetime service award to Sarosh Collector, a founding member of ZAH.

Several upcoming events were highlighted:

- The 11th World Zoroastrian Congress in Perth, planned for 2018, which is the first World Congress to be held in Australia; its theme will be "Together Towards Tomorrow".
- The Seventh World Youth Zoroastrian Congress to be hosted in Southern California in Summer 2019 by the California Zoroastrian Center.
- The North American Zoroastrian Congress in December 2020.
- A bid for the 12th World Zoroastrian Congress in 2022, by New York, whose theme will be "Bridging the Global Zarathushti Existence".

The next FEZANA AGM will be hosted by the California Zoroastrian Center.

Post AGM activities included a visit to the Museum of Fine Arts with a special tour directed by Vehishta Kaikobad who is a docent there.

Pictures of the 30th FEZANA AGM may be downloaded at the following link, courtesy of Yezdi Engineer, ZAH: <https://goo.gl/photos/uPifCTonbQeQfmhJ6>.

Atash Kadeh:

Houston is a dynamic and successful Zoroastrian community. We now have a diverse group of approximately 600 Zarathushtis from India, Pakistan, Iran, and a few from the Middle East, Africa and Australia. ZAH members overwhelmingly voted to have an Atash Kadeh, one that is open to all Zoroastrians, their spouses and children. Just prior to the FEZANA AGM, ZAH received the building permit for a new stand-alone building to be erected on land already owned by ZAH, across the parking lot from the current ZHCC. Feroze and Shernaz Bhandara have very generously agreed to fund the entire cost of construction.

The process of building the Atash Kadeh has been carefully planned. ZAH established a design team that worked with architect Cyrus Rivetna to come up with a design that is a blend of traditional and modern architecture. The floor plan of the Atashkadeh follows all the traditional elements of the agiaries of India / Pakistan and Iran and uses the guidelines suggested by the North American Mobed Council. The exterior is a classic timeless design, with very traditional elements, that will easily identify it as a Zoroastrian building, but uses modern materials and finishes to create an elegant building.

The design consists of two halls, the Prayer hall, which contains the Atash Gah, and the Jashan / Muktaḍ hall with the Urvishgah attached to it. The Prayer hall is very traditional, complete with the raised floor, with the ritual Pavi, for the Atashgah (Kebla) and a Ghumbad tower to vent the smoke. It will be large enough to hold 100 people, standing. The Muktaḍ hall will seat 120. The

wall between the two halls is separated by doors that can be opened, so that for large gatherings everyone can see, hear, and feel all the prayers and ceremonies within the Atashgah. The two rooms are separated so that during a Jashan, people can use the prayer room for their individual prayers. Also, when higher liturgy ceremonies are performed, non-priests can sit in the Jashan Hall and participate in the ceremonies.

We hope that this Atashkadeh will be among the first Navar training centers in North America. It has two bedrooms, a kitchen and Nahn (ritual bath). The Atashkadeh will also have the traditional quiet garden for outdoor prayers, and the ritual stones used during the Navar ceremony.

ZAH has started an Atashkadeh Operations and Maintenance fund, and would like to encourage donations (large and small) to this fund.

The ZHCC has been an integral part of our lives; this addition will truly be something to celebrate.



Authors: Article compiled by Yasmin Pavri with Jangoo Mistry (FIRES), Percy Master (AGM) and Aderbad Tamboli (Atash Kadeh).

- Jangoo Mistry moved to Houston several years ago after retiring from Ford Motor Company. He is currently on the ZAH Executive Committee and is also on the ZAH Library Committee.
- Percy Master serves as the Secretary of both the ZAH Executive Committee and the FEZANA Administrative Board.
- Aderbad Tamboli is the current Chair of the ZAH Executive Committee and has worked on design and construction of the Atash Kadeh.



Yasmin Pavri is a long time resident of Houston. She has been active in ZAH activities including stints on the Executive Committee. She is now on the Library Committee that administers FIRES.

Sponsored by The Firoz Madon Foundation



Visit to Coating Industries



Aban Rustomji centre with her children Arish & Nerina, grandson Aaryan



The young children who did a special performance for the opening of the Purvez S. Rustomji Room with Aban on the left and Vehishta on the far right



The renovated library



Aban Rustomji introducing Aban Marker Kabraji



Lifetime Service Award to Sarosh Collector from ZAH





From Zal to Rustom, presented by the Sunday School children

FEZANA's Presidents. L to R – Rohinton Rivetna, Dolly Dastoor, Framroze Patel, Firdosh Mehta, Rustom Kevala, Bomi Patel, Katayun Kapadia & current president Homi D Gandhi.



All photographs courtesy Yezdi Engineer

The new logo designed by Zara Contractor, image shared by her

FEZANA Lifetime Achievement Award to Ervad (Dr) Jehan Bagli



The new Atashkadeh to be built

The 11th Zoroastrian Congress, Perth. 1 – 4 June 2018

firoz pestonji – congress chair

The 11th Zoroastrian Congress is being held in Perth, Western Australia, one of the world's most beautiful and clean cities. The Congress since its inception in 1960 has never been to the southern hemisphere and we are honored and pleased to have it in Perth.

The congress theme is – **Together Towards Tomorrow.** Together the Zoroastrian community worldwide to progress towards a brighter future for all members and the world environment.

The Global working group awarded Perth the Congress at the Iranshah Utsav in Udvada on 25 December 2015, after considerable communication and a presentation given by BAWAZ to them. The worldwide support from our peers was extraordinary receiving many ideas and information.

The Congress team started at the ground levels and approached the general people for their thoughts and views on what they would like to see at the Congress.

Fortunately from the lay person to scholars, priests and business people, all have contributed to ideas, views and their thoughts on what they would like to see at

the Congress. 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 and seniors.
- Increase Hamazori amongst delegates and network to foster friendship and bonding
- A highly interpretive website already re-launched on 1 June 2017 highlighting main features for Congress. Please browse at : www.11wzperth.com.au
- Globally



requesting people to add their request of interest and voice their views.

A few days of Congress not much can be decided on various topics. So to overcome this, we have launched it digitally on our website. Anyone can add in their views, concerns and ideas which will be read and reviewed by people from all parts of the world.

Its not just the 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 the Congress only may do so, with optional tours to join in if desired.
- Pre and post congress tours are available in our region. Delegates can enjoy sightseeing in Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, Gold Coast, Adelaide as well as New Zealand.
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 and the business community to highlight their success stories and struggles.
- Arrange to have site visits to engineering factories, hospitals, educational institutions etc, if required by our foreign delegates to network with their local counterparts.

We have released **Stage One** of the Congress on the website and it has been positively received by all. It showcases main points of interest to people. We have tried to highlight the major events leading to the Congress. A very brief idea on programmes during the 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 may make their own choices on line or visit their trusted travel agents locally to book the Congress and tours.



Bombastic Bollywood - Looking Back with Pride

by **tehnaz bahadurji**

Part II - The Moderns

In Part II, I'm going to shine a light on some of the current bigwigs of Bollywood. People whose contribution has been made in the last few decades, and whose names are more familiar to most of us. They continue to bring a freshness to this constantly evolving industry. New themes, new principles, new viewpoints and new techniques. Many of them have won national and international awards for their films and for their contribution to film-making. I should reiterate that this list is by no means comprehensive. It is too long a one to be addressed in its entirety. Some of your favourites may indeed have been left out, and the coals for that must be heaped on my head.

Let me start with the gorgeous and beautiful **Persis Khambatta** who holds a distinct place of her own in Parsi film history. She started as a model for Rexona soap at age 13, flowered into a beauty who won the Femina Miss India, and Miss Photogenic at the Miss Universe the same year. She immediately got her Bollywood debut, but her most memorable role was in Hollywood – that of Lieutenant Aliea in Star Trek the Motion Picture, in which her bald look was a brilliant statement of beauty and boldness. She became an icon in a world of wannabes. She was also the first Indian to present an Oscar award, even though she never earned one herself.



Another actress who gets an honourable mention despite her lack of Bollywood success, is **Katy Mirza**. Her one major film hit political choppy waters and was derailed at the station itself. But she was best known for her magnificent twin assets, and she hit stratospheric levels of fame and popularity when it came to be known that she had actually had them reduced by an incredible 10 inches! Even in this reduced state, they facilitated her entry into the famous Playboy Club as a Bunny, which



added further gloss to her reputation, and must be chalked up as a Parsi First.



Farooq Sheikh, whose mother was a Parsi, was a relevant player in the meaningful cinema trend known as Art films or Parallel Cinema. His route to cinema was through TV, where he got noticed as a quizmaster on Doordarshan. He filmed with Indian film greats like Satyajit Ray, Hrishikesh Mukherjee, Shabana Azmi and Rekha, and even won a Best Supporting Actor Award. He once rued that though he had never received proposals written in blood or any such fantastic thing, it was not that aspect of super-stardom that he missed. It was not being able to command the kind of work he wanted. He was a sensitive soul in a beating drum industry.



Aruna Irani started her Bollywood career as a child artist, aged only nine years. She was the eldest of eight siblings, and gave up studies in the sixth standard to help provide financial support for schooling for the younger ones. With her alluring facial mole and her seductive gyrations, she danced her way into many a heart. She went on to get as many as 10 nominations for Best Supporting Actor, yet she never made it to the Super League. In her later years, she changed her focus to television, but the film fraternity finally acknowledged her contribution by awarding her a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2012.



Mickey Contractor is one who made it to the top in a distinctive Bollywood field. He's the topmost make-up and hair artist in the industry. Though he had to fight every step of the way up in the early days, he's now in a commanding position and can dictate whom he will or will not work with. International fashion magazines like Vogue bow before him, and he's a star and celebrity in his own right, with a Mickey Contractor line of MAC cosmetics specially formulated for Indian skin and weather. In an unusual twist, men were not seen as fit candidates for this line of work. It was considered a women's specialty for skill and finesse. Mickey proved himself a Bollywood Great in a hostile environment and created

a name and reputation for himself, picking up many awards along the way.

Sooni Taraporevala is a multiple award-winning screenwriter, though not an Oscar winner yet. She's also a photographer of some repute having shown her exhibit of Parsi family photos in galleries around the world, including the Tate Modern. She's turned her hand to directing too, and is also the author of a few books connected with Parsis and Parsipanu. *Little Zizou*, a film she both wrote and directed, and in which her two children played important roles, is a charming little family drama which won an Indian National Award for Best Film on Family Values and as many as ten international awards. She's a recipient of the Padma Shri, a high level civilian honour in India, which she treats with typical modesty, saying irreverently that the only thing it has changed for her is that she's been informed that if she ever goes to jail, the award will get her a better class of cell!



Sooni by Sooni. Hamazor archives

Shernaz Patel has been in the film industry for three decades now and worked with many of the big names in acting and direction. She is acknowledged as a sensitive performer who carries a bright internal light, and has shone in many a niche with memorable roles. She likes to keep challenging herself with a variety of roles and performance media.



Astad Deboo is renowned as the Father of Contemporary Dance in India. He's danced before more kings and queens and presidents all over the world than one can



shake a stick at. And he's extremely inclusive in his choreography, working with many groups of differently abled kids, and teaching them skills that often lead to viable careers for them. India has recognised his achievements in contemporary dance at home and abroad by decorating him with the Padma Shri. However, his choreographic interaction with Bollywood has been only a few movies, one directed by the renowned painter M F Hussain.

Penaz Masani's golden voice has also carried her all the way to the Padma Shri. She's a classically trained singer, who has sung playback for more than 50 Bollywood films. She is from a musical family and was a child prodigy, releasing her first professional album at age 12. She made her mark as a singer of Ghazals, traditionally a male-dominated field. With her petite appearance, her halo of dark curls and her ethereal voice, she has mesmerised audiences across the world.



John Abraham, also with a Parsi mum, entered Bollywood through modelling, and immediately got himself a Best Debut nomination. But John is most recognised for his smoking hot bod, his love of motorbikes, and his long-standing relationship with Bipasha Basu that always seemed on the lip of marriage but never actually got there. His first film production was a hilarious movie set in the sperm donor industry, and brought the otherwise taboo topic into middle class living rooms across India, for which the film won an award for Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment.



Cyrus Broacha did his first Hindi film at age 12 and his first professional play the

next year and was immediately hailed as a child prodigy actor. But his fame and popularity have really been in TV with the MTV Bakra show and now *The Week that Wasn't*, a political satire that fearlessly takes on and mocks political and other pashas. This irreverent insouciance has been quite path-breaking in India. He's hyperactive, and his wheels are always spinning, spinning, spinning across TV, theatre, podcasts, radio and even a book. But he does have a serious wish-list – "a unibrow, a large mole, a third nipple or an extra finger... it would give a distinct edge to my appearance." Inspirational stuff! And that too, on a Proust questionnaire. Oh, but he loves dogs, which cancels and overrides all idiosyncrasies.



Shiamak Davar, nephew of Homi and JBH Wadia, is renowned as the Guru of contemporary Bollywood dance. He modernised and radically transformed the Bollywood dance scene. His sleek, stylish and sexy background dancers and zany choreography replaced the clunky stuff of yore, and the man in the street was heard wistfully asking – "who's the girl behind Katrina? I want *her* phone number." Many Bollywood actors got their entry into films through his dance classes. He's the Indian Government's go-to guy for any contemporary dance showcasing, and has won innumerable Indian and international awards. He's performed with international greats like Sting and Bryan Adams and John Travolta. He says he was a legend in his living room before he made it anywhere else, and now runs a foundation to give underprivileged and handicapped kids the same opportunity. For all his achievements, his mad Bawa-ness reveals itself in his sincere claims to have seen UFOs. He's not the first name you'd think of, but he really is one of the modern Bollywood Greats.



Boman Irani is a well-loved and respected actor in Bollywood today. He came to Bollywood almost in middle age,



via a family chip shop, photography and a very supportive mother. He likes to sing and is handy with a guitar, and is personally an extremely charming chap. His true calling is comedy and villainy, and he has had some major film successes here. And while he can run with the boys like any true blooded Parsi, he is a gentleman at heart, with a whacky sense of humour, but also a kind and considerate nature. He credits his mum for her perseverance and patience with him, and Shiamak Davar for pointing him in the direction of films.



Ronnie Screwvala is the founder of UTV, which was subsequently taken over by The Walt Disney Company India, and Ronnie is a path-breaking film producer. He effectively changed the formula for Bollywood films – great content, but also packaged well enough to do top dollar commercially. High-level script and production work, resulting in a slick, smooth product. And huge success has attended his films. Having made his buck, he re-invented himself as a major player in the field of philanthropy where he and his wife are India's version of the Gateses. He's a best selling author, frankly describing his route to success via many failures. And like Boman, he's popular in the film fraternity and well-liked.



Farah and Sajid Khan are the daughter and son of Menaka, elder sister to Honey and Daisy Irani. Sajid has had some directorial success, but Farah is the Big Cheese! She started off in Bollywood as a choreographer, at which she was an outstanding success, winning the Filmfare Award a sensational six times! Her directorial debut was with her best buddy Shahrukh Khan, and was the first of many grand successes in that arena too. Then a successful acting debut and several celebrity performances on TV, where she is extremely popular for her



very Parsi candour and willingness to answer all questions, fair or foul. Her Bollywood career has been one of many excesses, so trust her to carry that into her private life as well – she's the mother of triplets!

Farhan and Zoya Akhtar, cousins to Farah and Sajid, are the children of Honey Irani and Javed Akhtar. Their careers are still flowering and what heights they will reach are as yet unknown, but both have given early promise and received notable national and international awards. Zoya is bold and contemporary in her scriptwriting and filmmaking, and has already been dubbed one of the most influential directors of the generation. She has a feminist bent and promotes strong female lead characters, reflecting the times we live in. Farhan is more multifaceted, being actor, director, singer, producer and writer, and is credited with starting a New Wave in Indian cinema. Audiences love his gorgeous looks, and he has an Elvis effect on them with his sensitive, soulful performances – making girls scream, cry and swoon with delight. And all this shining star career started because he was a layabout, and his mum, Honey, threatened to throw him out of the house if he didn't do anything with his life. He's a man with a heart, actively involved in AIDS awareness and the founder of Men Against Rape and Discrimination. But, we are reliably informed, he is afraid of cockroaches!



Sanober Pardiwala is a young woman engaged in one of Bollywood's few really

dangerous occupations. This bold fitness expert is a professional stuntwoman, one of only five or six in the industry, compared to 5-600 stuntmen. She's had to fall through glass panes, and down 300-foot waterfalls, and off



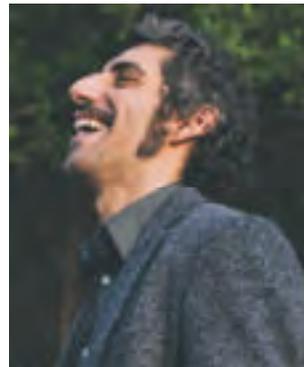
16-storey buildings. She's done fire stunts and bike stunts and sword fighting and martial arts for all the modern big name female stars. She's continuously extending her repertoire by skydiving, bungee jumping, learning different martial arts, and is quite unique in this aspect. She usually accepts all offers, except when the security arrangements are insufficient, as in such a daredevil occupation, accidents are bound to happen even with every safety concern addressed. She says it's a source of pride to her to excel in this male-dominated field. Her Parsi predecessor in this uncommon profession was **John Cawas**, a professional body builder who transferred into Bollywood as stuntman in Hunterwali and actor in many Tarzan movies made by the Wadia brothers.



Jim Sarbh is a young actor who's made a stellar performance as a terrorist in a recent hit film, and has been marked out as having promise. **Amyra Dastur** is also considered an actor of talent, one to look out for, winning a debut award in Tamil cinema. **Diana Penty** is described as having a refreshing loveliness, and received kudos for her debut performance. In the directorial field, **Homi Adajania** has made some sensitive and successful films which have received both audience and

critical acclaim. **Darius Chinoy** has a day job as a director, of the business kind, and an alternative career as a screenwriter and director of the movie kind. **Kaizad Gustad** has also made a few excellent films directing actors like Naseeruddin Shah, Amitabh Bachchan and Zeenat Aman. We'll have to watch to see where all these fledgling careers take off to in Bollywood.

These are just some of the big Parsi names of Bollywood – people who are making an impact in modern times. A few films were made about the Parsi community, none of which were either authentic or successful, and the silver screen Parsi often found himself trapped in a sola topi and dagli, cleaning his old car or being a bit of a fool. But the real Parsis of Bollywood, male and female, have been quite popular, one would almost say loved. They've mostly been sincere in their work ethic, dedicated to their craft, diligent in their role and yet fun to hang out with. Looking back on this long liturgy, one realises how magnificent their contribution to Bollywood has been, considering the community's small numbers. One cannot help but feel quite proud. ■■■■



Jim Sarbh.Harmazor archives



Amyra Dastur



Diana Penty



Homi Adajania



Darius Chinoy



Kaizad Gustad

Tehnaz Bahadurji is convinced that lifelong learning is a window through which one looks upon the world. Believe that one should keep an open mind, but not so open that one's brains fall out. Agree with Shakespeare that there is nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so, and with Picasso that art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life. Love to read, travel, help and empower people, and to rejoice in family, friendship and the many splendours that life has to offer.



A Personal Memoir

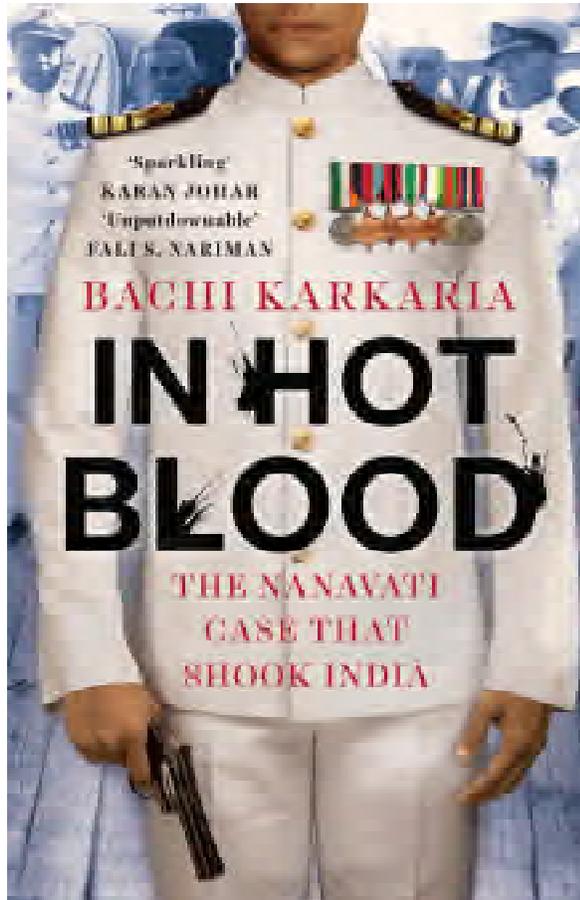
by bapsi sidhwa

Kawas Nanavati was my first cousin – our mothers were sisters. He was sixteen years older to me and I barely knew him.

At the time I was newly married and was living in Bombay. On that fateful day of April 27, 1959, my mother-in-law showed me a small paragraph in the Times of India saying that Kawas Nanavati had shot Mr Prem Ahuja, the presumed lover of his wife Sylvia. My mother-in law suggested that I should visit my aunt. The car was ready for me and I went straight to my aunt's house in Colaba.

Sylvia had moved into her in-law's home. She and my aunt were in the kitchen. Sylvia was busy conveying food to her three children in the next room. Mehra Aunty was cooking. There was nothing to indicate that the news had affected their relationship.

The driver suggested we go to the Flora Fountain. The large square, surrounded by commercial banks and high-end shopping stores, was filled with Gujrati men in white dhotis carrying platters of sweet ladoos and barfi – fudge. An elderly man popped a bit of a ladoo into my mouth. The air of jubilation was palpable. Commander Nanavati was their hero – he had killed a Sindhi – a member of a hated migrant community from Pakistan. The Gujratis were accustomed to do billions of rupees worth of business by word of mouth, but after the influx of Sindhi refugees they felt



compelled to draw up official documents.

For the next few days we were glued to the newspapers, and photographs. Nanavati stood in his gleaming white uniform, in an open Jeep led by a covey of naval motorcycles followed by an escort of black limousines. It was a glamorous spectacle – until the presiding judge put a stop to it saying, “This is not a Hollywood parade!”

Kawas was showered with hundred rupee notes with imprints of lipsticks sent by his doting women fans. Bachi Karkaria, a respected journalist

and popular columnist of the Times of India, writes with a flair and zest that draws out all the dramatic possibilities of the incident. She gives a blow by blow account of the court case, which is captivating to read even by a lay person like myself.

I barely knew Sylvia or Kawas because they were so much older to me and lived in a rarified atmosphere at the topmost crust of society. India's Prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru took a personal interest in the case at the behest of the Admiral of the Navy. As did the famous Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Nehru's sister, who was as avid a fan as the women who showered Nanavati with lipstick – stained notes. After the trial ended the Nanavati family migrated to Canada.

The few times that I saw Sylvia in Bombay, I was taken by her fresh English beauty. Her

All images and excerpt from the book, courtesy of the publishers - Juggernaut, India.

skin glowed and her perfect features were framed by a fall of her golden blonde hair. Although the Nanavatis were not known intimately by anyone in our vast family of aunts, uncles and cousins, Sylvia was well liked by all of us. She was considered to be a good wife and a mother who even taught her children the Parsi prayers, written in the antiquated Avestan language.

You will have to read the book to get the full flavor of the incident that not only made the headlines of every newspaper and magazine in Asia but was also featured in the American Time magazine. A couple of movies based on it were made immediately after the event. The latest movie 'Rustom' starring the actor Akshay Kumar quite a success. It gave its own slant to the dramatic incident.

Some years later I met Kawas and Sylvia frequently in Toronto. They were living comfortably together and their past notoriety made them frequent guests at dinner parties. I traveled to Toronto often to visit Deepa Mehta, who was working on the film script of my book 'Cracking India' to make the film 'Earth' which was the second in her trilogy, Fire, Earth and Water.

My cousin Kawas passed away several years ago but Sylvia, surrounded by her children and grandchildren, is still living.



The Nanavatis (c. 1915): Standing (top row): Dhunjishaw (extreme left) and Sohrab (extreme right). Sitting (middle row) from left: Kawas's grandparents, Manekshaw, and Nusserwanji. The little child standing in the middle, between Kawas's grandmother and Manekshaw, is Rustom Nanavati.



Sylvia and Kawas Nanavati, shortly after they got married in 1949.



Bapsi Sidhwa migrated from Pakistan to Houston in 1991. She has written novels, short stories and plays. Among her awards, Sidhwa received the Sitara-i-Imtiaz, the Bunting Fellowship, Premio Mondello, and The Lila Wallace Award. Sidhwa, who taught at Columbia, Mt. Holyoke and Brandies, was on the advisory committee to Benazir Bhutto. She worked with Deepa Mehta on the film 'Earth 1947 and Water'.



The Nanavatis at a family reunion in Bombay (late 1960s/ early 1970s): Top row, third from left: Kawas Nanavati. Second row from the bottom: Sylvia (extreme left), Kawas's mother Mehra (second from left) and Kawas's father Manekshaw (extreme right). Bottom row: Pheroze Nanavati (left) and Tannaz (right).

Three shots rang out from the bedroom. And then ...

A review of In Hot Blood by Bachi Karkaria

by anvar alikhan

*I*t's spooky. Every year on the 27th April I find myself thinking, "This was the day." What I'm remembering is a murder that took place when I was seven years old, nearly half a century ago. And the strange part is it had absolutely nothing to do with me personally.

I'm evidently not the only one of my generation on whom the Nanavati murder case had such a deep impact. Other contemporaries of mine, who were probably as young as five and six at the time, also remember it vividly. One of them recalls how he made his mother buy him a little sailor suit, and used to strut up and down wearing it and pretending to be Commander Nanavati. Other little boys – now in their sixties – tell me how they used to heatedly debate over whether Nanavati was innocent or not, debates that often ended up in schoolboy scuffles.

Another little boy at the time was Salman Rushdie, and when he wrote *Midnight's Children*, based on the Bombay of his childhood, the Nanavati murder case inevitably found its way into the plot. Rushdie turned Commander Nanavati into 'Commander Sabarmati', and Sylvia Nanavati and Prem Ahuja into 'Lila Sabarmati' and 'Homi Catrack', respectively. His famously magical imagination then proceeded to interweave fact and fiction, so that it is the book's protagonist, little Saleem Sinai, whose machinations turn out to be the trigger for the murder.

When kids as young as five remember a long ago murder so powerfully, you really know how deeply it has impacted the psyche of the society. The reason, perhaps, is that it involved mythical story-telling archetypes and themes that the human brain is hard-wired to light up for:

the heroic, honourable husband; the exotic foreign wife who has been led astray; the sleazy, wealthy, hard-drinking seducer, aided and abetted by his scheming sister; the conflict between the realms of sordid commerce and the noble Armed Forces, the upright Parsi community and the supposedly devious Sindhi community. It's surprising that nobody has written a book about the case until now – although it has inspired a PhD thesis and three Bollywood movies, as well as two works of fiction, *Midnight's Children* and *The Death of Mr Love* by Indra Sinha. But now Bachi Karkaria has set the record straight with her wonderfully researched *In Hot Blood*.

Karkaria has done a great job of putting together a detailed narrative of the case, as well as the cultural factors that formed its backdrop, for the very first time. She explains, for example, the case's great legal significance, involving a battle of wits between some of India's greatest legal brains of the time, and ultimately resulting in the dismantling of the jury system in India. She also explains how the case was distorted by a rare degree of interference from the media, as well as from the highest political quarters.

It was obviously a daunting task for Karkaria to collect all the material for this book after nearly sixty years had passed, because most of the first-hand sources were now dead. Indeed, it is instructive to learn what a large part serendipity played in Karkaria's research process. For example, in order to learn more about the real Prem Ahuja, she apparently spread her net wide among the Sindhi community, especially among the 80+ age group, but drew a blank. And then one day she went to interview social activist Gerson DaCunha on the subject

of the social milieu of Mumbai in the 1950s – and discovered to her delight that DaCunha had been a good friend of Prem Ahuja's, and remembered him very well. In another instance, a navy source of Karkaria's wrote an article about the film *Rustom* that had just been released, resulting in a friend telling him he enjoyed reading it, and then adding, "Oh, by the way, a lady in our colony used to be Prem Ahuja's secretary".

An old lady who Karkaria bumped into by chance at a memorial lunch turned out to have been a friend of Prem Ahuja's sister, Mamie, who had dropped tantalizingly out of sight after the murder. A promising sounding navy lead that took Karkaria to Delhi, but then turned out to be a dud, resulted in her catching up with a long-lost Delhi friend, who suddenly remembered, mid-conversation, that someone he knew somebody had written a research paper on the Nanavati case. A random visit by Karkaria to Gallery Chemould to get some pictures framed resulted in the proprietor reminiscing to her about the Nanavati family, and how they used to spend the summer holidays in his family's bungalow in Matheran.

The central thesis of *In Hot Blood* appears to be that while the case has always been presented in dramatic tones of black-and-white moral certainty – Nanavati, the heroic, honourable navy officer, with a stellar career; Ahuja, the decadent, sleazy businessman playboy; Sylvia, the deceived, and betrayed, woman – the reality was perhaps rather different. Ahuja was, in fact, a very charming and nice guy; Sylvia was a truly unhappy wife, who was genuinely in love with Ahuja; Nanavati was perhaps a neglectful, self-centred and insensitive husband. And the murder itself was probably motivated largely by Nanavati's false sense of entitlement – and outrage at the encroachment of that entitlement by a perceived social inferior like Ahuja. Thus Karkaria seems to seek to put right the distortions of the facts of the case, largely perpetrated by Rusi Karanjia,



Kawas Nanavati when he was a midshipman in the UK (1942-43).



Kawas Nanavati (centre) with John Pereira (left) and another friend at Dartmouth.



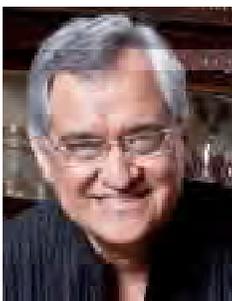
From left to right: Sylvia Nanavati, Lt Commander John Pereira, Lt Commander Kawas Nanavati and Joyce Pereira at the Pigalle Club in Piccadilly in London (1952).

Editor of the Bombay weekly *Blitz*, who played a shockingly partisan role in his coverage of the trial. If the book has a flaw it is that Karkaria tends to judge the *dramatis personae* by the liberal values of our own times, rather than the strait-laced values of the long-ago 1950s.

Reading the book, one would think that Karkaria's presentation of the scandal might ruffle Parsi feathers, and please the Sindhi community, by presenting the *dramatis personae* – especially Prem Ahuja – in a rather different new light. But, ironically, the person whose feathers seem to have been majorly ruffled is Ram Jethmalani, the leading Sindhi lawyer who played a key role in the trial, who has accused Karkaria of being 'anti-Sindhi' in her point of view. It is a reminder, perhaps, of how very sensitive our cultural identities have become in today's contentious world.

So what happened to Commander Nanavati finally? That is a question many people have wondered about. Karkaria tells us that he was pardoned in a deal deftly brokered by the Indian Government with Ahuja's family (and the Sindhi community). He then migrated with his family to Canada, where he became a successful insurance salesman. A curious destiny for someone who would almost certainly have become India's Chief of Naval Staff in the late 1970s.

The Nanavati case has inspired no less than three Bollywood films over the years – *Yeh Raaste Hain Pyar Ke*, *Achanak* and, more recently, *Rustom* – all of them typical masala movies. Some time ago the very talented Sooni Taraporevala was said to be working on a film on the subject, but the project was put aside for some reason. One hopes that Bachi Karkaria's book will now make her reconsider, and take up that project once again. ■■■



Anvar Alikhan is an advertising professional and social historian

An excerpt from the book ...

From the time he reported the incident to Deputy Commissioner Lobo on 27 April 1959 till the Supreme Court sorted out the limits of the powers of executive and judiciary on 5 September 1960, Kawas Nanavati had remained in the comparative comforts of naval custody.

When, finally, the long arm of civil incarceration caught up with him, it too wore the kid gloves ordered by his friends in high places.

At Arthur Road Jail, he was assigned a special cell, and allowed several concessions such as food from home. All things considered, this was not exceptional. Neither was the special treatment he was given when – like all celeb prisoners – he needed to be hospitalized. Friends remembered it as a fancier 'chest pains'. *Blitz*, which claimed to be answering the 'hundreds of queries' sent to the paper, put it down to the lowlier 'piles', brought on by his 'anxieties over his own future, that of his family and his concern for his aged parents'.

At JJ Hospital, he was attended to by Dr Jamshed 'Jissa' Moos. He was the one who had firmly forbidden his wife from joining the frenzied throng of Parsi women at the sessions trial in 1959. Jissa and Jean had first met Kawas and Sylvia at an infant's funeral in London way back in 1953.

Now at ninety-two, Jean's sight is seriously impaired, but her bearing remains stately, her voice strong and her memory sharp. She sits in an elegant kaftan in her leafy flat off Mumbai's swish Pedder Road, embraced in the warmth of family photographs in silver frames. She recalls that poignant gathering: 'The striking Kawas was the centre of attention, while Sylvia, somewhat mousey, kept quietly to herself.'

Her maid, in a considerably less stylish kaftan, serves tuna canapes with litchi squash while Jean describes the second closer encounter which had put the distinguished Dr Moos in a bit of a spot. 'My husband was an honorary physician at JJ Hospital, and Kawas was brought there from prison. I don't know for what because Jissa never discussed his patients with me. What I did learn was that he decided to keep Kawas in a small anteroom because conditions in the ward were terrible, with patients sometimes having to be accommodated on mattresses on the floor. Besides, Kawas, by then, was a very familiar figure, and would attract untoward curiosity.

'The room had no fan, so my husband asked if one could be installed. When the authorities refused, he got a friend to donate one – permanently. I don't know if Jissa kept him longer than he should have. There was some backbiting that these special concessions were being made Parsi to Parsi. But the hospital didn't object. And these facilities were a kind gesture.' ...

Parzor - TISS Book Launch: *The Parsis of India - Continuing at the Cross-Roads*

by binaifer sahuakar

Parzor in collaboration with TISS (Tata Institute of Social Studies) recently released a 4-volume series **Parsis of India: Continuing at the Cross-Roads** at the Max Mueller Bhavan, Mumbai.

Max Mueller Bhavan director, Dr Martin Walde, in his warm welcome to the audience noted the enduring value of the Zoroastrian dictum Good Thoughts, Words and Deeds. Welcoming the Minister for Minority Affairs, Mr Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, who had travelled from Delhi, especially for the Launch, TISS Director Dr Parsuraman praised the contribution of Parsis globally and their presence in every field while mentioning that several Parsi students, from generations of TISS, were seated in the audience.

The Honourable Minister of Minority Affairs, Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, who released the books said that the four volumes will serve as a credible source of information on the Parsis. Emphasizing that the decline in Parsi population was a matter of concern for the Government of India, he said, *"In the contribution to the country, the Parsis are ahead, they now need to move ahead in their demographic figures too."* And he promised the community his government's continued support and pledged an increase in the scope of the Jiyo Parsi Programme.

The Chief Guest, Art Historian and Curator, Dr Pheroza Godrej, lauded the research, as very informative with lots of intellectual and religious points which the community must pay heed to. She pointed out how the Parsi quality of being self-critical is vital for self-growth and acknowledged the presence of Ervad Dr Parvez Bajan, Advisor for Avestan studies at Bombay University, and Dr Rustom Soonawalla eminent gynaecologist who has been an Advisor to the Parzor-TISS Demographic Module.

Professor Armaity Desai, Advisor to the Parzor Demographic Project and co-editor

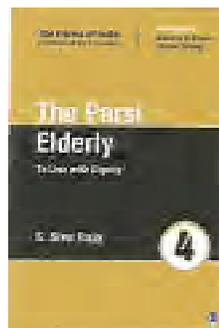
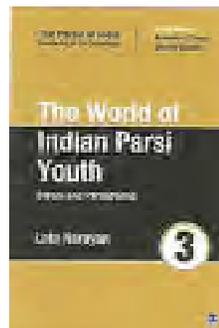
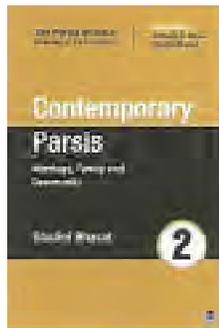
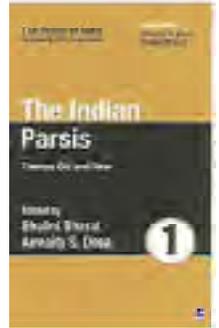
of the Series was unable to attend and her message read out by Dr Shalini Bharat stated:

"The release of the four volumes on 'The Parsis of India - Continuing at the Cross Roads' has had a long journey, starting almost one and a half decades ago. Dr Shernaz Cama, of PARZOR Foundation, in her work on the preservation of the tangible and intangible heritage of the Parsis, realised that the loss of the heritage was closely related to the demographic decline of the community, which also needed to be studied. The focus of these studies was to explore the reasons for the decline by understanding the implications of the psycho-social and economic factors reflected in the responses of the participants of the study. In the process, four volumes have emerged. All the studies covered Parsis living in various areas of Maharashtra and Gujarat as well as some of the more Parsi populated locations in other parts of India."

The four volumes cover the flash points that have preoccupied the Parsi community over the years :

1. **The Parsis of India: Continuing at the Crossroads - The Indian Parsis: Themes Old and New** edited Shalini Bharat & Armaity S. Desai.
2. **Contemporary Parsis: Marriage, Family and Community** edited Shalini Bharat.
3. **The World of Indian Parsi Youth: Status and Perceptions** edited Lata Narayan.
4. **The Parsi Elderly: To Live with Dignity** edited S. Siva Raju.

The topics ranging from family, marriage and geriatric population data gathered by interviewing samples across India led Prof Desai to state that: **"The data that emerged on common themes of the studies showed that some of the opinions current in the community were, in fact, myths and the reality was**



different as evidenced by the data. It also brought to the fore current issues in the community.

The four National Studies have covered both urban and semi urban areas, while the Family Study also covered rural villages in Gujarat. Desai mentioned that several myths were exposed:

“One myth which has been affecting our youth is that girls do better educationally than boys. Even in the youth study focus group discussion, this view was voiced. However, the survey data showed otherwise. Boys were more apt to go for professional courses in medicine, engineering, law, chartered accountancy, while girls were more apt to proceed to post-graduate studies in the humanities and the social science disciplines, but science was less favoured by both. A large number desired to study further, an aspiration which belies the myth that Parsi youth are not serious about their academics.

Another myth has been that Parsis are laid back and tend to go for white collar, clerical jobs. However, the data do not support this myth. The largest percentages were working in the professions, followed by entrepreneurs and the least were in administration or clerical jobs.”

Another significant find according to Desai was that *“not all Parsis wished to live in baugs. Men and the youth preferred to live in cosmopolitan neighbourhoods while it was older persons and women who preferred baugs, perhaps, being viewed as safer places to live.*

A significant number wanted to own their own homes and outside of Mumbai many were home owners. The demand for Parsi baugs was more in Mumbai (56%) where housing is a challenge. Some in Gujarat villages also looked for housing to be provided.

Interestingly, it was also found that while living in a baug helped perpetuate the Parsi culture and observance of religious festivities, in fact, it was not a means for promoting marriage within the community.

Moreover, while the myth that more housing is needed was reflected in some focus group discussions, in fact, not a single respondent in all three studies said they postponed marriage or did not marry due to lack of housing. Rather, several did not marry in order to look after their aged parents.”

About the questions of Identity, it was seen *“While expressing that they were Indians first and Parsis next, they were also very proud to be Parsis. While most youth proclaimed that Zoroastrianism was a religion that showed the right path to living in its dictum of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, most were apt to downplay rituals.”*

For most, the navjote ceremony was a social or a socio-religious function rather than a religious function. The criticism found in all the studies was that *“Priests played little or no role in teaching the religion and that though they could teach prayers, they could not explain them.”*

In the Panel Discussion Dr Shernaz Cama, explained that it was precisely for this reason, a programme with priests was initiated by Jiyo Parsi at the Masina hospital on 13th May 2017, with a team of mental health experts to orient our Mobeds to the Jiyo Parsi scheme, develop leadership skills and impart family life education and to train them to become like pastoral counsellors, initiating dialogues with the laity in need of emotional and spiritual succour. In the Presentations it was seen that a sizeable portion of respondents were strictly against conversion but at the same time most did express the need for gender equality.

Balancing multiple identities like Indian, Parsi and work designation is a norm. The youth are comfortable balancing different facets of these identities, as there is greater porosity seeping into personal boundaries. As Prof Desai noted *“Most said they would rather prefer to marry within the community if they found a suitable partner for which the most important attributes were companionship and compatibility. However, 45% said that if they did not find a suitable*

partner within the community, they would marry out of the community.”

It was also noted that although there was general recognition that the population is in severe decline but general conversion was not favoured “at all”.

Among the elderly, loneliness and depression were two strong reasons for Dr Shalini Bharat to advocate that single men and women should also be provided with parenting opportunities. This has become possible with the introduction of ART, (Artificial Reproductive Techniques), now available. But as Prof Bharat stated, at the time of youth, *“Messages to marry early and procreate are resented by single youth”.*

Prof Desai noted that the Elderly felt that *“Services for the elderly at their doorstep is a requirement in an expanding elderly population that cannot be catered to by building institutions which should primarily be for disabled, bed-ridden or very elderly persons. Others could be served at home through services such as help who come in to give personal care for bath and dressing, para-medical and medical help, food pertinent to their requirements, assistance with finance and income tax etc. Younger retired elderly, who are looking for activity, could be drafted as volunteers. Day care centres for the elderly are also required as boredom is a problem with them. If situated at the same site as for children, each would receive stimulation from the other.”*

Dr Lata Narayan who conducted the Study on Youth, felt that loneliness and unhappiness in old age with no children was only understood at a stage too late to change matters and added that the message of marriage at the right age needed to be given in a supportive and non-directive way.

It is an important finding that while 70% respondents desired children but only 55% actually had them. The economics of one child versus two was the reason cited for small family size of just three. The respondents, while concerned about

demographic decline, did not let it influence their decisions, if it was not in alignment with their personal growth and aspirations. Desai noted that *“at least 12% had expressed a need for creches and several had said that couples did not have elderly members of the family living with them to oversee child care while mothers worked. Hence, developing a chain of day-care centres for babies and under sixes is necessary with some parents requiring care of their primary school child before and after school.”*

Desai added that *“Medical and IVF services are necessary to augment the population as a substantial number of women were unable to conceive or had miscarriages. Expansion of population is more possible through bringing in couples with primary or secondary fertility problems than trying to get couples to increase the number of children.”*

Specialising in geriatric demographic segments of the Indian population of Parsis, Dr Siva Raju found that an unbelievable, 31% of the Parsis, perhaps the highest such percentage of aged in the world, are in the 60 plus percentile. From the samples assessed, in the five Parsi Old Age Homes as well as in the larger population, the respondents, even many decades ago, had only two children in their reproductive years.

Raju's study reported that whilst the community provided good quality of life in institutional care, home based support was the best. Low quality of life among the aged was associated with loss of confidence as well as loss of income and he stressed the need for elderly day care programmes, recreation and for medical, paramedical and financial assistance.

Prof Desai noted *“State intervention is necessary to assist all communities in India which are in danger of facing extinction, which is today only for certain tribal communities. The Jiyo Parsi Scheme of the Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India, is an excellent example of state intervention in increasing the Parsi*

population. Giving a tax rebate on every child born in such communities would be more welcome than charity funds for additional children.”

Prof Desai ended on a personal note “The four volumes have yielded very rich data that need to be studied not only by academicians and researchers but by the leaders of the community, and the realities of the current perceptions of the Parsi community taken into account for a more informed decision-making process.” She stated that her “late father, Sapur F Desai, wrote the ‘Community at the Cross-Road’ in 1948 when little was known of the demographic decline. The leadership failed to reach out and take necessary action. As a result, the Parsis are in a worse situation today than in 1948.

“Solution for today’s problem of diminishing numbers has to be in the context of the lifestyle of Parsis in the 21st century. There is no reason why Parsis, an educated community, cannot move forward to save themselves from extinction. There is ample evidence in the studies that change is taking place in the thinking of the Parsis who are not its spokespersons or leaders. It is necessary to recognise this change that is taking place and evolve a positive dialogue to address the differences. These four volumes dedicated to the community are for serious study and follow up of a way forward in the next several decades of the 21st century.”

In the Panel Discussion, demographer Leela Visaria spoke of a steady decline of Parsis and referring to Sapur Desai’s Study, she noted that even in 1949 there was a declining trend. Visaria projected that by 2030 Parsis would drop to 40,000 and they therefore, needed to plan quality care for the population. **However, extinction she felt was out of question. At the most critical decline, the Parsi status will change “from a community to a tribe”. A point to be noted from her statement was, “that opening the doors, as suggested by previous speakers, will not have any significant difference in numbers.”**

Shernaz Cama, of PARZOR corroborated the points made by Visaria. **She pointed out that in three decades of the Parzor FUREC Study of Parsis in Delhi, only 5% of mixed-marriage progeny come back into the fold.** Commenting on the Jiyo Parsi Scheme which has produced almost 100 babies, she talked about an attitudinal change, gradually seeping into Parsi consciousness, through media and mental health and Counselling Programmes. Pointing out to Sam Balsara, CEO, Madison Advertising, in the audience she announced that a second wave of print advertisements of Jiyo Parsi would be released and she invited one of the Jiyo Parsi Facebook page editors, Binaifer Sahukar to share her experience.

Binaifer Sahukar took the audience through the genesis of the Facebook Page, which was resorted to as a medium used for free publicity. Celebrities, scholars and others have shared a slice of their life on this Page. She said that there has deliberately never been a face associated with the campaign, as “Jiyo Parsi belongs to each one of us” she said. “Eight months ago the editors had to chase people and beg them for stories. Today, people are leaving their stories of achievements and celebrations for birth announcements, love stories and anniversaries with family photos to be uploaded from the message box.” The session ended with a vote of thanks followed by high tea. ■■■■



Binaifer Sahukar has post graduate degrees in Psychology and Social Work. She is a Counsellor at Prafulta Clinic, Viacom 18, Khalsa College, and J B Vachcha School. She is a part of the Jiyo Parsi team.



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“The Girl from Matunga” is Anu Aga.

“I shall take the awakened
soul to the exalted above
with the help of the Good-Mind;

Knowing the blissful rewards of
the Wise Lord for righteous deeds;
As long as I have power and
strength I shall teach all to seek
for Truth and Right.”

Ha 28.4
Dinshaw J Irani

