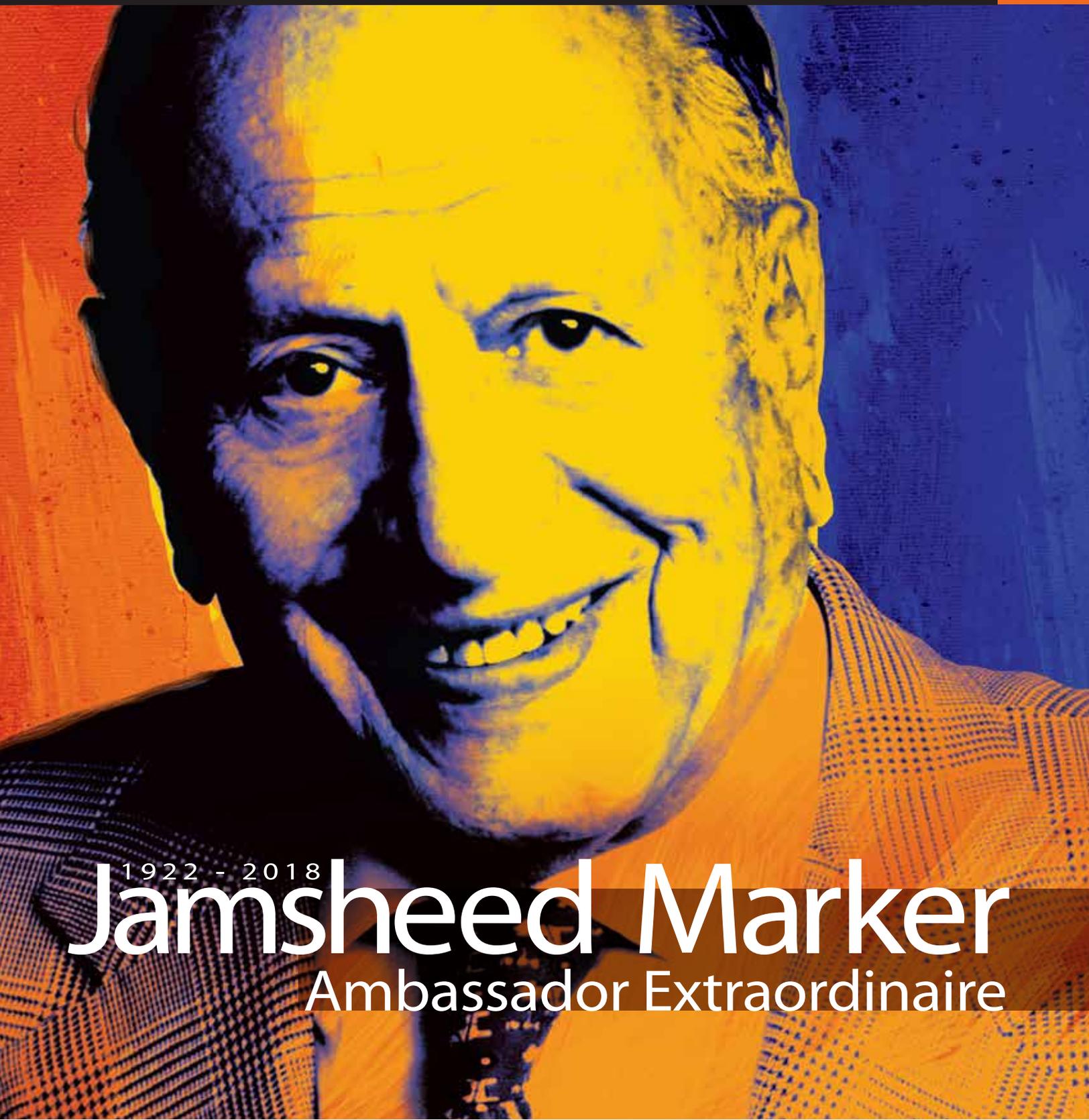


publication of the world zoroastrian organisation

HAMAZOR

3
Issue 2018



1922 - 2018
Jamsheed Marker
Ambassador Extraordinaire



The award presented to Astad by very well known dance critic Leela Venkatraman, p 51.

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A m b a s s a d o r
Jamsheed Marker

PHOTOGRAPHS

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From the Editor

During the last quarter WZO has lost once again a good friend, an outstanding diplomat and a remarkable human being. Jamsheed Marker was our Grand Patron member; an individual who came forward with a smile whenever asked for any assistance, whether it was to get a special message from past Secretary General Kofi Annan or to elucidate our readers by writing in the Hamazor, which he did many a time. Respected and admired by Heads of State, politicians, friends and associates, and the humble man – Jamsheed has left his footprint for all time. Rest in peace friend!



Very recently, Dr Parvez Grant informed, Dr Cyrus Poonawalla has been nominated from India for the Nobel Prize. He was recently conferred an honorary 'Doctor of Humane Letters' degree by the Massachusetts Medical School at Boston for his unparalleled work in the field of immunisation at a global level. Dr Poonawalla is the founder of the world's largest vaccine manufacturer, the Serum Institute of India. We hope Dr Poonawalla is awarded the Nobel Prize, bringing home fame both for India and Zarathushtis worldwide.

19-year-old Jehan Daruvala became the first Indian driver to win the FIA Formula 3 European Championship, in the junior level. He had won the New Zealand Grand Prix in February of last year making history of being the first and only Indian to have ever won. Formula 1 stage is the aim no doubt!

'Apro Freddie', a legend in music, is being immortalised in the Bohemian Rhapsody, a full length film to be released on 2 November of this year. A man who could sing opera arias to the 'Queen' of rock, promises to be a film worth waiting for.

Another World Zoroastrian Congress has been finished recently at Perth albeit small in numbers but by all reports a successful one.

Sadly we continue to mention the 'wake up call' has been ringing for Parsis of India to move forward in their thinking. Much has been said – controversies since more than a century have carried on and once again highlighted at the recent Congress. In the recent years, researches conducted by professionals and supported by facts have been shared, but isn't it time to bite the bullet and do something constructive and positive, so that the Parsi race survives before its all too late? Many a race has been designated to the history book. Let us not add to the list.

Hamazor wishes its readers a happy Shahenshahi Navroze.

Zoya Contractor

A Man for all Seasons - Jamsheed Marker

by ardeshir marker



When I was asked to write a tribute about my Uncle Jamsheed for the Hamazor, my first response was one of uncertainty and trepidation. How could one possibly do justice to someone whose career has covered the Second World War, cricket commentary, business and shipping as well as a diplomatic career that is well documented already? But then, I recalled, as usual, one of his quotes: “If you write from the heart, your words ring true ...”. So this is a personal insight into a fascinating personality that I grew to admire and respect.

Uncle Jamsheed was a patron and lover of the Arts, Music and Literature. This was amply demonstrated by his many paintings of Sadequain and Anwar Maqsood, amongst others, artists whom he promoted in their careers right from the 1950’s and who were always grateful for his support and patronage.

I was privileged to visit Uncle Jamsheed and to stay with him in embassies and missions when he was possibly at the peak of his career: Paris, Washington DC and New York. As a student, I recall experiences as varied as picking up Uncle Jamsheed from the State Department in Washington, to being given a personal tour of the United Nations Building by him during a break in the General Assembly Session! I recall standing with him in front of the famous ‘Cyrus Cylinder’ at the UN, and him saying, “remember, we are privileged and blessed to come from such an enlightened and educated community, whose principles of justice and equality, in some small measure, underpin the UN...”.

In Paris, I recall attending classical music concerts conducted by Zubin Metha, Daniel Barenboim and Vladimir Ashkenazy, all of whom regarded Uncle Jamsheed as a close and personal friend. (So close, in fact, that I

remember being sent with the driver in Paris to the hotel where Zubin Metha was staying, to deliver his favourite *dhan-sak* and *patra-ni-machi* cooked by the embassy cook!). Uncle Jamsheed’s love of classical music and opera was well known, and I also recall the numerous occasions of waking up in the Embassy to the strains of Beethoven or Mozart or some opera singer’s melodious voice while getting ready for breakfast! The only time I recall Uncle Jamsheed being really upset was when we were stuck in a traffic jam in Paris on our way to a concert and he was worried that he would miss the opening concerto. Music was more than a passion for him, it was his life-blood.

Then there was Literature of course. Uncle Jamsheed was fluent in English, Urdu, Gujarati, French, German and Russian. And by fluent, I mean that he could read and write in every single one of the mentioned languages. His library had a mixture of books in all these languages. I vividly recall one evening, when he had a copy of Dostoevsky’s novel in his hand (I don’t recall the title as it was in Russian!) and him saying that he was unable to read the novel as easily as he could previously, and that meant that he was losing his fluency in Russian, and that was upsetting him. When I asked why, he said “to truly understand and appreciate great literature, it is best to read it in its native language ... this is particularly true for the Russian Classics.” I myself speak a bit of German, and I recall the occasional witty remarks he would make to me in German, as an aside, during our dinner conversations while others were present, which would make me start in surprise and then smile.

There was his love for cricket, and his pioneering role in English Cricket Commentary in Pakistan on the radio with Omar Kureishi. He always said that he was told to “describe the game as if he were

describing it to a blind man.” His stories and his numerous anecdotes of so many cricketers are far too many to list here, but I would take pleasure in grilling him on who was the greatest Pakistani batsman he had ever seen (Hanif Mohammad of course), the fastest bowler (Wes Hall of the West Indies) and the greatest all-rounder ... surely in modern times Botham or Imran were comparable to the Greats of his time? I would never forget the glare that question always provoked, and the vehemence with which the name was uttered in one word: “Sobers”. On occasion, he would admit that Viv Richards, Sachin Tendulker and Brian Lara were close to Denis Compton or the Three W’s of the West Indies, but it was difficult to compare you see because in the modern game, there was so much protection. The equipment and the helmets, I said? Yes, he would say, and, after a pause, he would say, somewhat sadly, “and don’t forget the money ...”.

There was his love for adventure and his quest for justice. He joined what was at the time the Royal Indian Navy and was a captain on one of the first ships to travel up the Irrawaddy river and reach Rangoon in Burma during 1945. Whenever I would ask him, what was his toughest assignment, or period in his life, he would reply “Burma. It was the hardest and most difficult time, because you saw human nature in its most brutal and uncivilized form”. It was always noticed by me that this was a period he would not talk about much. When I asked him once to mention his war time experiences in his memoirs, he said that “World War experiences have been written about by so many people already ...”.

There was, of course, his love for Diplomacy and his yearning to portray the best that Pakistan had to offer. Throughout his diplomatic career, Uncle Jamsheed had met and interacted with US Presidents such as Ronald Reagan and George Bush, personalities ranging from one extreme to the other, from Nelson Mandela to Saddam Hussain and diplomats and strategists such as ex-President Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger from the USA to Gromyko and

Kosygin in the former USSR. A wealth of knowledge and experiences were what made him so unique and so special to so many people.

He learnt the quickest, and in some ways, the most, he would say, during his very first posting in Ghana, in Africa. And his most difficult posting, in terms of cultural adjustment, was in Japan: “the rigid formality, the way the Japanese worked, the intricate rules involving etiquette took a while to get used to ...”.

He mentioned that his toughest Diplomatic assignment was most probably in Moscow in 1971, during the East Pakistan Crisis. But my favourite story from that time was when he met Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw at the Bolshoi Opera in Moscow in 1971. As described in his memoirs, they both knew each other well and embraced and started talking in Gujarati. He always laughed as he described the look of panic on the Russian and the Indian and Pakistani interpreters faces, and the pleas from the interpreters to speak in English, Russian, Hindi or Urdu! His most enjoyable assignment was when he was posted to Paris, France, for “Paris had some of the best food, music and art that life has to offer”. His most demanding postings were in Geneva, during the Afghan Peace Accords, and in Washington DC, and in New York, when heading the Security Council. Then there was his appointment by Kofi Annan as UN Special Representative to East Timor, which he described as “stretching his diplomatic and professional skills to the maximum.”

Closer to home, he always described Pakistan as a country with terrific people who had been let down by their leaders. He always spoke with pride of our resilience as a nation, and with frustration over our missed opportunities. Our greatest leaders were Jinnah and Liaquat, and to an extent, Ayub. “It was all sort of downhill from there ...”. When each new government, whether civilian or military, came to power in Pakistan, he would dutifully resign his post. And yet, “to my amazement and

astonishment, every time, they would re-appoint me, or ask me to stay on ... so I did, I did it for Pakistan”.

Amongst many tributes that one has heard after his demise, the ones that remain the most poignant for me are those of local Pakistani artists and musicians, who remembered Mr Marker in particular, for inviting them to display their work or to perform at numerous embassies where he was appointed. And also, the number of Pakistani students studying abroad, who recall being invited to the Embassy Open House on Independence Day, or 23rd March, and being at first bemused and then honoured at the invitation! I recall when one of my friends in the USA was invited to the Washington Embassy on Independence Day. When I mentioned to Uncle Jamsheed how surprised and pleased my friend was, he asked me in his typically wry and droll manner, “Why? Wasn’t he Pakistani?”

And there we have it: the essence of the man was Pakistan. Whether cricket, diplomacy or culture, his interests and his core beliefs stemmed from the roots of his country that he strove to represent so fondly and so well.

In addition, his personality and his varied interests and pursuits were multi-faceted and revealed above all, a love and a zest for life and all that life had to offer.

And last but not least, there was his love and his pride for his family, and also, for dogs, like any good Parsis. After his retirement and return to Pakistan, Uncle Jamsheed lived with us, and we were indeed blessed and fortunate to have him here. I shall miss the many long and wonderful times that we spent with him.

My favorite memory remains of Uncle Jamsheed sitting in our garden, a drink in his hand, a book by his side, and the dogs at his feet. As I approached him, I would always be curious to know “what he was reading?” He would order me a drink, describe the latest chapter in his book as

boring or enthralling, and then, with a smile ask me, “So, Ardeshir, what’s the latest? Tell me, what news?”

Rest in Peace Uncle Jamsheed, and thank you.



Milestones in JMs life

- *Born on 24 November, 1922, Hyderabad, Deccan.
- *Lived in Quetta in his youth.
- *Education : The Doon School in India. Forman Christian College in Lahore.
- *World War II, Captain of minesweeper in the Burmese theatre, 1942-45.
- *Married Diana nee Dinshaw in 1948 (deceased 1979).
- *Two daughters Niloufer & Feroza, (Feroza deceased 2001).
- *Cricket Commentator.
- *In family business of Pharmaceuticals and Shipping after 1946.
- *Ambassador of Pakistan.
- *Married Arnaz nee Minwalla in 1980.

Diplomatic Career:

- *Ambassador from 1965, for 30 years, in 11 capitals with nine further concurrent accreditations.
- *Listed in the Guinness Book of Records as being “ambassador to more countries than any other person”.
- *As ambassador to the US in 1986, “negotiated” the Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan.





Jamsheed, Diana & their spaniel Simeon



Nilufer, Jamsheed & Feroza, at Meher Marker's wedding, KPI, Karachi.



Jamsheed & Arnaz

*President Of the UN Security Council, 1993-94.

*At the United Nations, he served as Chair of the UN Security Council, as Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, and as UN's Special Envoy to East Timor in 1999. He played a significant role in bringing about the resolution of the East Timor conflict and its subsequent independence.

*Ambassador at Large, Government of Pakistan, September 2004 to December 2007.

Teaching career:

*From 1995 – 2005 at Eckerd College, St Petersburg, Florida, taught Diplomacy in International Relations.

Civil Awards:

*Honorary doctorate from Forman Christian College University, Lahore, 2011.

*FEZANA's Lifetime Achievement Award, 2007.

*Hilal-e-Imtiaz, Pakistan, 2004.

*Grand Cross of the Order of San Carlos, Republic of Colombia, 1993.

*Grand Officier de l'Ordre du Merite, France, 1986.

*Sitara-e-Quaid-e-Azam, Pakistan 1971.

*The Madaski Konnik, Republic of Bulgaria, 1969.

Service Awards:

*Star, Burma Star, War Service Medal, 1939-45.

*Victory Medal, for services in World War II.

Published works:

*Co-author with Roedad Khan, The American Papers. Secret and Confidential India-Pakistan-Bangladesh Documents 1965-1973. (1999)

*East Timor (2003)

*Quiet Diplomacy (2010)

*Cover Point (2015)



Spencer giving 'high five' to Jamsheed



Jamsheed receiving Sitara-e-Quaid-i-Azam from President Yahya Khan, 1971. Diana in the background.



Receiving Hilal-e-Imtiaz from President Pervez Musharraf, 2004.



In Memoriam:
 *The Jamsheed Marker Conference Hall at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs opened on Monday 2 July 2018, Islamabad. [Milestones compiled by TC. Any errors regretted.]



United Nations, New York, 30 April 1997
 Secretary General Kofi Annan (left) meets with Jamsheed Marker (Pakistan), Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for East Timor.
 Photo credit: UN/DPI Milton Grant.



*To His Excellency Jamsheed K A. Marker
 Ambassador of Pakistan
 With best wishes, Ronald Reagan*

At Xanana Gusmao's house of detention in Jakarta, who later became President of East Timor in 2002.

Presenting credentials to Ronald Reagan, 24 Nov 1986. 'Happy birthday, Mr Ambassador'.



Nelson Mandela autographs JM's book, Pretoria, SA, Aug 1997

Left : Charlie Wilson and his war. Inscription on photo: 'To Arnaz and Jamsheed, from their friend and friends'- Charlie'.

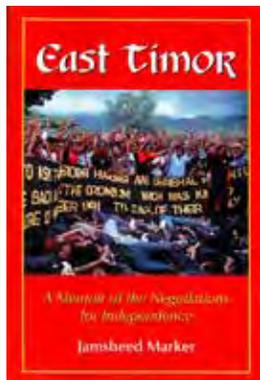
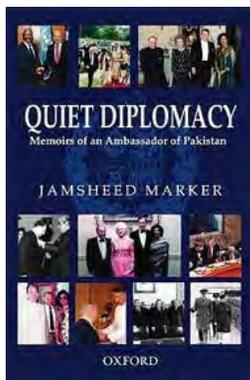
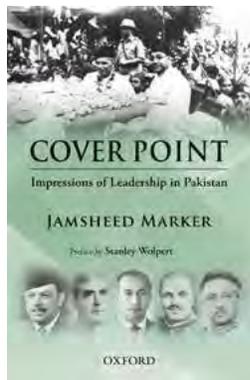


Pretoria : South African President Nelson Mandela shakes hands with Jamsheed Marker, the UN special envoy for East Timor 26 August after their meeting where president Mandela offered to host talks in this country to help solve political problems of the troubled territory of East Timor. AFP photo.

[JM had shared this with TC when Mandela died] During my talk with Mandela, which went something like this, I said “Mr. President, you must have been asked this question many times before. When you were released from prison, did you not feel a sense of intense bitterness towards those who had deprived you of so many years of your life?”. Mandela’s response was, “as I walked out of Roben Island I did have the bitterest feelings and anger. But then I turned around and looked at the gates of the prison and said to myself that I may be out of jail, but as long as I have these feelings of anger I shall always be their prisoner. I need to shake off this anger if I want to be really free”.



Jamsheed told his colleague Nancy, who never doubted his abilities, “if I can do that I’ll throw this hat out of the window.” And he did. [In NY whilst at UN. Related by Niloufer]



Jamsheed’s publications



Cover of Newsweek, Pakistan. June 23-30 2018



Ardeshir Khursheed Marker is an MSc. graduate from the London School of Economics. An economist by training, and a businessman by profession, he is currently busy promoting his latest business, selling roasted coffee beans via his new venture, the Green Bean Coffee Company. Based in Karachi, and married with three children, his interests include music, travel and reading.

All images shared by Niloufer Marker-Reifler from her father Jamsheed’s vast collection.

Tribute to Professor John Russell Hinnells - Scholar & Friend of Zarathushties Worldwide 27 August 1941 – 3 May 2018



Photo : Hamazor archives

In Professor John Russell Hinnells, Zarathushti communities worldwide had a learned champion and friend. He reminded us, with affection and some urgency, that the faith needed to be protected, cherished and nurtured. John R Hinnells devoted a substantial part of his scholarly life to the study of the Zarathushti religion and its contemporary expression in the diaspora, particularly in Britain, and in this way has made an enormous contribution to raising both the profile of the

religion and of the community internationally. It is with sadness that we record the passing away of this great man; and it is with gratitude that we pay tribute to his life and work.

John R Hinnells was Professor of Comparative Religion at the University of Manchester and later at the School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS), Durham University and Liverpool Hope University. His fascination with the religion of Zarathushtra began when he was researching the influence of Zarathushti precepts on Judeo-Christian thought for his doctoral thesis.

The result was that in addition to a number of books on world religions, Hinnells wrote extensively on various aspects of Parsi history and culture. He published *The Parsis and the British* (1978); then an extensive bibliographical survey of the Parsis (1980); a small but influential booklet

entitled, *Zoroastrianism and the Parsis* (1981, reprinted 1996); as well as a collection of his own articles on Parsi history, culture and beliefs in, *Zoroastrian and Parsi Studies: Selected Works of John R Hinnells* (2000). He thus contributed significantly to what became known as 'Parsi Studies'.

In 1996, he published a seminal work on the history and sociology of the Zarathushti community in Britain. Hinnells felt that the findings of his study, *Zoroastrians in Britain*, had much wider implications because the Zarathushti community was a "microcosm of the macrocosm of South Asian migration", as the Zarathushtis came from both rural and urban India, Pakistan, East Africa, and later from Iran.

This study was followed by another outstanding contribution - the culmination of 30 years' archival research and fieldwork of diaspora communities in 11 countries - with the publication in 2005 of *The Zoroastrian Diaspora: Religion and Migration*. For this he was acknowledged as a 'pioneer student of religious diaspora'. 1,840 people completed a lengthy survey questionnaire that yielded a detailed picture of communities living in and adjusting to different circumstances; the degree of assimilation of different groups characterised by gender and the level and type of education; and the differences in religious beliefs and practices between generations and between people from rural and urban backgrounds.

As though this were not enough, we owe another debt to John Russell Hinnells: for spearheading the project to establish a Chair for Zoroastrian Studies at SOAS, in co-operation with his mentor, Professor Mary Boyce. His academic credentials and commitment were no doubt instrumental in

convincing Mobed Mehraban Zartoshty and his brother Faridoon to financially support his vision. In appreciation of his scholarly and pioneering work, he was awarded the status of 'Honoured Friend' in 2007, by the UK community association, ZTFE. In his speech at the felicitation ceremony, he observed that, "whereas some of my colleagues, specialising in other religions, have received death threats, I and other academics specialising in Zoroastrian history, have received nothing but support. It is a matter of great pride that, with the support of the Zartoshty Brothers, funds have been raised to establish a full-time post in Zoroastrian Studies at SOAS – the first such dedicated post in the world."

His Early Life

John Russell Hinnells faced many challenges in his early life that made his achievements even more remarkable. This scholar of comparative religion, pioneer of diaspora studies and academic entrepreneur left school with the equivalent of just three 'O' levels. His father was a Derbyshire miner and his mother worked as a cook. From the age of six, when he contracted tuberculosis, he spent seven years of his childhood in hospitals. In those days, children shared the ward with adults and John's parents were not allowed to visit him there except on Saturdays. John Russell also suffered from one leg being shorter than the other. Taunted by the boys in his school, he pluckily tripped up the bullies with his crutches and was once temporarily suspended from school for standing up to his tormentors. Having missed years of formal schooling, his subsequent academic success is a tribute to his perseverance and courage.

After leaving school, he took a Diploma in Art and taught Art for a couple of years. He then decided to train as a priest and later entered Mirfield Monastery, near Leeds, to pursue a life of renunciation and service with the Anglican Community of the Resurrection. His resolve melted the day he met a lady who was visiting her cousin at the monastery. Within 24 hours of meeting, John Hinnells and Marianne Bushell

decided to tie the knot! John Russell left his life of seclusion and took a degree in Divinity at King's College, London, in 1964.

His Academic Career

Hinnells began his academic career as lecturer at Newcastle University. In 1970 he went to Manchester University where he eventually became Professor of Comparative Religion and in 1993 he was offered the Chair of Comparative Religion at SOAS. In 1998 he spent a year as Visiting Fellow at Clare Hall, Cambridge and left to become Research Professor of Comparative Religion at Derby University and then Professor of Comparative Religion at Liverpool Hope University in 2002 until his retirement. He was also Senior Member at Robinson College, Cambridge, during this period.

He travelled extensively and became familiar with Zarathushti communities worldwide. "I have not come to teach," he said, in an interview with 'Parsiana' in December 1973. "I have come to learn ... I study Zoroastrianism and the Parsis because I have terrific respect for the faith ... (for) its integrity ..." Asked what he admired about the faith, John Russell Hinnells focused on the ethics of the religion. He identified its emphasis on individual moral responsibility as the key to linking the material with the spiritual world: "I greatly respect Zoroastrianism," he said, "for what seems to me to be a very wholesome attitude to life and the way to live. Parsi charity, benevolence, social concern and educational concern goes with this fundamental religious attitude to the world."

To mark his 75th birthday, a **Festschrift** was published in honour of John Russell Hinnells, sponsored by ZTFE and the Faridoon and Mehraban Zartoshty Fund. This is a volume of writings by different authors, entitled, *Holy Wealth: Accounting for This World and The Next in Religious Belief and Practice* (2017), and is edited by Professors Almut Hintze and Alan Williams. The Festschrift contains historical case studies "exploring the concepts, attitudes

and practices that account for the benevolent power of religion in the individual and society”.

Dr Hintze states, in her very informative tribute in the Festschrift, that “his academic work is particularly significant in four major areas: the question of Zoroastrian influence on Christianity, Mithraism, the Zoroastrian diaspora and the study of religions in general”.

Dr Williams observed that the articles in the Festschrift exceeded the scope and range of the title and that “this reflects, as it happens, the multi-faceted nature of the mind of the man to whom the book is offered, as he has ranged far beyond Iran, beyond religion, and beyond ivory-towered academe.”

Burjor Avari of the Manchester based, North West Zoroastrian Community, confirms this assessment. “It was John who first encouraged and persuaded us to form our Association, however small it was,” he said, “because he believed in establishing a network of Zoroastrian communities all over the world.” Perhaps this is why he was so supportive of the Hamazor as a cultural link between the communities of the diaspora and was always willing to pen an article whenever requested to do so.

John Russell Hinnells was, according to all who knew him, a warm-hearted family man. His wife, Marianne, passed away in 1996. He is survived by his sons, Mark and Duncan, and four grandchildren. He will be fondly remembered by those who knew him, and he will remain a cherished and respected figure in the communal memory of the Zarthoshti community worldwide.



WZO Annual Seminar on Zoroastrian History & Culture - 17 June 2018

by soonu engineer

WZO's Zoroastrian Religion, History and Culture Seminar is a unique event that takes place once a year in London, offering a heady dose of scholarly information to ordinary members of the community. This year there were three presentations: an account of how translators of Avestan into Pahlavi grappled with the task of understanding the meaning of the Gathas and what that tells us about their own religious preoccupations; how the great Kings of ancient Persia promoted and managed their imperial branding and public relations; and a reflection on what it means to be a Zarthoshti in modern times.

Who says what in the ‘Lament of the Cow’?

Benedikt Peschl, a PhD student at SOAS, gave us a fascinating glimpse of the challenges faced by both Pahlavi and modern translators of the Avestan texts of the Gathas. He took as an example some verses from the Ahunavaiti Gatha, called the ‘Lament of the Soul of the Cow’, a conversation between Ahuramazda, Gosh Urvan (soul of the cow), Zarathushtra, Asha and, possibly, other divine beings. The Pahlavi translators, unlike today's scholars, did not have recourse to Sanskrit and other languages related to Avestan to help them in this task and so, at times, they got it wrong. On the other hand, since they were from the same tradition from which the Gathas had originated centuries before, their intuitively correct understanding of many passages is not surprising.

Their translations and commentary not only help to elucidate aspects of the Gathas that are difficult for modern scholars to understand, but they also provide a ‘tool for understanding Sasanian theology based on the Gathas’. For example, spirituality or the



spiritual world was best expressed for the Sasanians in the texts of the Gathas rather than in other texts of the Pahlavi sacred canon. They also believed that Vohu Mana or Behman embodied 'innate wisdom' – rather than 'acquired wisdom' – which helped the followers of Zarathushtra to distinguish between right and wrong.

Benedikt concluded with a cautionary reminder that the Pahlavi commentaries on the Gathas constitute various approaches to interpreting them and therefore 'they do not add up to a coherent picture' of what is contained in Zarathushtra's poetic contemplations. In response to a question, Benedikt confirmed that there is very little in the Gathas that amount to eschatology yet some Pahlavi commentators, concerned with 'end of life' matters, sought to interpret the Gathas partly or wholly from that perspective.

King & Kingship in Ancient Iran (559 - 331 BCE)

Professor Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, Chair in Ancient History at Cardiff University, examined the iconography of the great monuments of the Achaemenid period to decipher the imperial messages conveyed through them. The rulers of the Persian Empire projected their earthly power, imperial legitimacy and scope, and their ethical values, not so much through the written word as through the grand images carved on their palaces, temples and mausoleums. The importance of kingship was emphasised by placing the ruler at the centre of massive, carved tableaux depicting the peoples of the Empire paying homage to their King; by exaggerating his size in relation to his subjects; and modelling his physical form to mirror that of the deity hovering above him, bestowing divine authority to his earthly sovereignty. These images and accompanying inscriptions of Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes and their heirs have one clear message for their subjects: that their rule is divinely ordained and brings together, 'in cosmic harmony', all the peoples of the Empire. Moreover, they are persuaded that 'the people are not crushed but lifted up.' Hence, the people

owe tribute to the King and through him to Ahura Mazda and to 'all the gods'. [The Achaemenes were not Zoroastrians, at least in the earlier period of their reign, and they incorporated local and regional gods into official iconography as a matter of public policy.]

Rarely is the King shown in battle with his subjects. Though the King wielded absolute power, his authority was maintained through co-opting local rulers. His image, on sculptures and on seals, is that of the Just King, upholder of the Truth, slayer of Lies and bringer of Harmony; the King as Hero and Protector; as the Viceroy of God, ruling 'because of God'. The winged figure of the Farohar, symbol of the divinely bestowed royal power, is always close to and above the figure of the King.

It seems that the ancient Persian Kings were as adept at mass communication and mass persuasion as the 'hidden persuaders' of modern times. Their art, according to Professor Llewellyn-Jones, 'did not tell the whole truth': its aim was not information but persuasion.

Ancient Zoroastrian Thought in our Modern Moment

Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina, Associate Professor at the Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, posed the question, 'how can one live a rich and meaningful life in modern times?' He did not supply us with any answers; rather, he identified some challenges besetting the Zoroastrian individual as well as the community and some philosophical categories that might guide their actions.

For '33 out of 35 centuries', he said, it is the priesthood that has defined the 'thought-world' of Zoroastrians but these men were drawn from a narrow stratum of society, constituting perhaps just 10% of the population. We do not have much, if any, surviving information on the opinions of ordinary or 'secular' people, especially women. Modern life has brought many changes and science provides information on a lot of areas that were previously the

province of religion. While science has not replaced religion, new forms of religious beliefs and observance have emerged and they 'compete with religious explanations of reality'.

Is there 'one true way of viewing the world' which we could call our faith, religion or world-view? Can the philosophical principles that guided the sages of old serve us today to 're-enact the will of Ahura Mazda'? We were urged to study the available academic and scholarly literature, as 'religion cannot be learned by cultural osmosis alone, especially by diaspora communities'. I'm not sure whether one should be alarmed, as most modern Parsis have absorbed their values and beliefs through the ethos of the lived community experience. However, as we migrate to larger societies that do not understand Zoroastrian or Parsi heritage, values or practices, the challenges will be enormous.

And so another symposium has been successfully delivered by the WZO in London, attended this year by less than the usual 100 or so loyal members and / or enthusiasts. And, as usual, it was a worthwhile event, a rare intellectual offering to ordinary followers of the faith.



S o o n u Engineer is Associate Director of The Centre for Inclusive Leadership. She is Trustee of a leading UK charity that is dedicated to supporting families; volunteers for a Help Line; and is an

active campaigner to stop the creeping privatisation of the National Health Service.

We have provided a summary of the three talks below, shared by the speakers themselves. - Ed

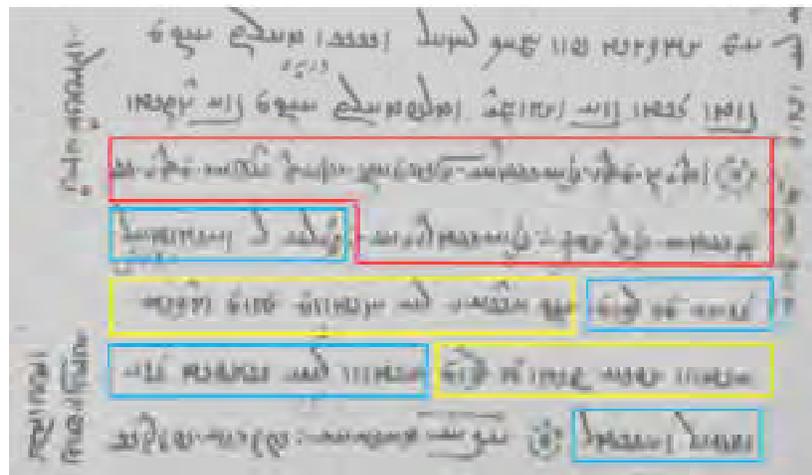


Who said What in the 'Lament of the Cow'?

Benedikt T Peschl

The Pahlavi version of the Gathas reflects the way the Gths (Old Avestan, late 2nd millenium BCE) were read by Zoroastrian scholar-priests in Sasanian and early Islamic times (approx. 4th - 9th c. CE). It

consists of an almost word-by-word translation of the Avestan Gathas, complemented by various comments which clarify or expand on the translation. The illustration below is an excerpt from the Pahlavi version of Yasna 29, taken from the manuscript "Pt4". The Avestan version is framed in red, followed by the Pahlavi translation framed in blue into which a comment is inserted, framed in yellow.



(script is read from right to left)

The Pahlavi **translation** was finalised at a time when thorough knowledge of Avestan had become a thing of the distant past. Therefore, the translation is often erroneous. Nevertheless, the basic sense of entire stanzas is often rendered quite

adequately, suggesting that the translator had at least a rough idea of Avestan grammar; and that the Pahlavi translation is built upon an old exegetical tradition, going back to a time when the Avestan text was still much better understood.

The **comments** may be classified into distinct categories, the most interesting being those that suggest a specific *interpretation* of a given passage. For instance, meaning is sometimes drawn from the text by interpreting it in the light of Zoroastrian eschatology (doctrines about the end of the world). It is important to note that only rudimentary features of the complex eschatology of later Zoroastrianism are found in the Gathas themselves. Hence, the frequent appearance of eschatological motives in the Pahlavi comments is a sign of the central importance of eschatology in the theological framework in which the commentator was operating.

The under-studied “**marginal headings**”, too, should be regarded as part of the Pahlavi version of the Gathas. Their apparent function is to indicate the structure of the text. In the dialogic hymn of Yasna 29, ‘The lament of the cow’, the headings attribute each section of the text to a particular speaker. In the picture above, the heading in the upper part of the left margin identifies Gosurun (the Soul of the Cow) as the speaker of the Avestan text in red.

Yasna 29 consists of a discussion between several divine beings (Ahura Mazda, Aa#a, the Soul of the Cow and others) about the fate of the Soul of the Cow in the world. In casting the contents of this hymn in dialogue form, the poet artfully combines an ancient Indo-Iranian poetic genre - the “divine interlocution” - with innovative conceptions.

However, the Avestan text does not always make explicit who the speaker of a given passage is. Here the marginal headings at least provide us with clues as to the Pahlavi exegetes’ solution to this problem. In line 3 of stanza 4 for instance, the Avestan text states, with reference to Ahura Mazda: “it shall be so for us as he may wish”. Nothing in the Avestan text indicates that the

speaker of this line is different from that of the preceding lines. But whereas a marginal heading attributes the preceding lines to Zarathustra, another heading next to line 3 indicates that the Pahlavi exegetes regarded this part as being spoken by Asa, not Zarathustra. Thus, according to them, the statement does not refer to humanity’s acceptance of Ahura Mazda’s will, as modern readers would be inclined to think. Instead it is an expression of the self-subordination of Asa and the other Amahraspands to Ahura Mazda.

The Pahlavi version of the Gths is above all a fascinating document of how later exegetes engaged with the ancient Avestan text in the context of the theological discourse of their time.



**Professor Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones
King & Kingship in
Ancient Iran (559 -331
BCE)**

Three key features identified kingship in ancient Iran:
First and foremost was the fact that Persian monarchy belonged to heaven and that earthly

kingship was vested in the gods so that the men who ruled on earth did so as mediators and intercessors of a divine agency. Second, but as an extension of this god-given gift, Persian kings had a judicial responsibility to guard and protect their subjects from war, want, and terror. Third, kingship was sacred, and ceremonies like the royal investiture often involved a ritual humiliation and reinstatement as an expression of the regeneration of cosmic order encoded within the monarch’s being.

There was no doubt in the Persian mind that the universe was divinely ordered and that kings and their appointed courtiers were the mundane earthly reflections of a heavenly hierarchical ideal. On earth, the

reality was that kings were confronted by all sorts of political upheavals ranging from succession challenges to international rebellions. But the ideological picture of kingship, created and promoted by king and court, was one of cosmic harmony maintained only through the centralized position of the throne. Rituals of monarchy and the royal ideologies from which they emerged were designed to articulate the complex interconnection between the cosmological and earthly aspects of rulership.

It is clear that Ahuramazda was conceived of as the king's god par excellence and the intimate relationship between the two is reiterated repeatedly; the king was expected, under the auspices of the Magi, to carry out the prayers and rituals in Ahuramazda's honour, or to tend to the god's sacred fire.

In the early Achaemenid royal inscriptions, Ahuramazda alone is named, although occasionally he is mentioned alongside 'all the gods' or as the 'greatest of the gods'. On one of the Elamite tablets from Persepolis he appears with 'Mithra-(and)-the Baga' and at the end of the Achaemenid period Artaxerxes III again makes this solicitation. The Persepolis texts amply testify to the presence of 'the other gods who are' and show how the royal administration supplied cultic necessities for the worship of numerous Iranian, Elamite, and Babylonian deities.

It is clear from Achaemenid royal iconography that just as the king and the god share close intimacy of space (in the Bisitun relief, for instance), so they share a physical form. The Great King encodes in his appearance the best physical attributes of the anthropomorphic divinity, Ahuramazda; the Great King is the deity's doppelganger. They adopt the same hair-style and beard-shape, the same crown, the same garment-type, and they 'emit' the same xvarnah or 'brilliance' (in terms of luminosity or glory). The iconography stresses that reciprocity between king and god is guaranteed, and thus in an

inscription from Susa, Darius can state with confidence that, 'Ahuramazda is mine; I am Ahuramazda's'. Even if Persian kings were not gods, they could be understood only in their intimate relationships with the divine.



Ancient Zoroastrian Thought in our Modern Moment

Dr Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina



How does one live a rich and meaningful life in the "modern" world as a Zoroastrian? How does one successfully navigate the often treacherous waters of "modernity", "change", and "progress" in the

information-saturated age we live in, with an inherited religious, ethnic, and social identity that is, with no exaggeration, one of the oldest in the world?

This talk provided a sense of historical perspective about the Zoroastrian past and showcased some of the ways in which the *ancients* philosophically grappled with some of the existential challenges that we all still face as *moderns*. The term "Zoroastrianism" means different things to different people often encompassing such diverse concepts as religion, tradition, identity, ethnicity, heritage, philosophy, and/or worldview with some of these seven "power terms" being mutually overlapping or, in some cases, even contrastive. Yet, all three temporal modalities - our pasts, presents, and futures - are both acted upon and understood by us through our modern sensibilities, beliefs, and values.

All the social functions that are now held by politics, civil society or science were once the largely exclusive province of religion. This talk showcased voices from the past regarding the practical philosophies of the Zoroastrian priests of a millennium ago and how they grappled with questions related to

the five major branches of philosophy: metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, politics, and aesthetics. Basically, a brief survey of how the Zoroastrian priests understood human existence and their lived social realities; their ideas on the acquisition of true and accurate knowledge; their views of human nature and living correctly; their questions related to the ordering of a just and stable society; and, last but not least, their understanding of the nature of art and standards of beauty.

This talk attempted to provide a rich and nuanced account of the inherent complexity of Zoroastrians' diverse and complex lives as moderns living with an antique past often shrouded in mystery but one that is nonetheless rich in philosophical and cultural value. As the Pahlavi theologians stated: "The substance of religion is like a mirror; when a person looks at it they see themselves in it ... a person who looks sees all goodness and evil in it".



A Quaint Tradition

Reprinted with permission from the Editor, Anahita Subedar, Parsi Times

Most cultures have a distinct way of pleasing the Rain Gods to ensure a healthy monsoon. Navsari keeps the Zoroastrian tradition of pleasing the Rain God by having young Zoroastrian boys going around town, collecting uncooked rice, dal, oil, ghee and water from residents. This collection is done while simultaneously reciting: "Ghee khichri no paiso, Doriyaa no rupiyo, Varsaadji toha ayega, Dumrisher layega, Dumritaari oat maa, Kharapaani pet maa, Ott iKe chotti, Chal li choti, Relavai motti, Ahuragocal, Paani mokal, Varsaadji nu paani, Toh mitthu ne mitthu!"

Once collected, the ingredients are put together and cooked into a delicious 'Khichdi' which is then served to the poor, birds, animals and all present. This tradition is practiced every year, particularly on 'Bahman Mahino' and 'Bahman Roj'. This year too, the tradition was performed in its true essence. Speaking with Parsi Times, Marazban E Wadia said, "It is heart-warming to see young boys participate so enthusiastically in keeping this age old tradition alive".

Images of sharing, courtesy Sheroy Irani, Melbourne



Sponsored by Hilda & Rumi Sethna

The Inauguration of The SOAS Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrian Studies

by **sammy bhiwandiwalla**

On Wednesday 27th June, SOAS launched the Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrian Studies to an audience of family members consisting of Mr Shapoor Mistry and his son Pallon, Executive Director Kekoo Colah of Shapoorji Pallonji and Company, lecturers and students of the Faculty of Zoroastrian Studies and members of the Zoroastrian community from London.

The reception held in the Brunei Gallery was a stunning event by all accounts with students and staff looking after all the guests who were excited by this new initiative funded by the Shapoorji Pallonji Company, an industrial conglomerate and philanthropic organisation, in co-operation with SOAS.



Dastur Dr Kaikhusroo Minocher JamaspAsa

The event commenced with the recitation of a short Avestan prayer by Dastur Dr Kaikhusroo Minocher JamaspAsa, a High Priest from India.

Baroness Valerie Amos a Director of SOAS since 2015, and the first black woman to serve as a Minister in the British cabinet and in the House

of Lords, commenced with the inauguration and welcomed the guests. Throughout her political life she has consistently sustained an interest in, and a commitment to, development issues and to equality and human rights and was Chief Executive of the Equal Opportunities Commission between 1989 and 1994.



Baroness Valerie Amos

Baroness Amos gave her personal thanks to Mr Mistry and said that without the “transformational gift” this new institute would not have been possible.



Mr Shapoor P Mistry

Mr Shapoor P Mistry, Chairman and Managing Director of Shapoorji Pallonji and Company was invited to take centre stage. In his speech he expressed his delight and joy in having such a prestigious institute as SOAS to launch the SOAS Shapoorji Pallonji

Institute of Zoroastrian Studies.

He felt that the project was in good hands and that the launch of the institute filled him with great pride, describing it as a “great journey that we are about to begin.”

“These are the first baby steps that we take to protect our culture and religion [and] I’m sure that this initiative is the right initiative and the only way forward is with SOAS.

“Through the creation of the Institute, Lectureship and Scholarships, this donation will ensure that SOAS continues to develop as the world’s leading centre of Zoroastrian Studies, advancing in perpetuity the

understanding and appreciation of this ancient religion and its history, culture, languages and peoples.”



Dr Sarah Stewart gave an insight into the combined efforts

Dr Sarah Stewart

in creating the Everlasting Flame Exhibition that was held in the Brunei Gallery in 2013, which was made possible through the support of ZTFE in London and Mr Cyrus Poonawalla in India among many others. Also involved were institutional partners, the British Library and British Museum as well as SOAS's curatorial team especially Dr Vests Curtis and Ursula Sims-Williams.

Thanks to the efforts of Dr Shernaz Cama, the exhibition went to Delhi fully funded by the Indian Government. For many visitors, the visual narrative of 3000 years of Zoroastrian history and culture brought the subject to life. Both Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians alike could engage with the way in which texts were transmitted, rituals performed, the brilliance as well the suffering encountered by Zoroastrians in their long journey from the ancient world to modernity. There is no doubt that exhibitions are an ideal way of disseminating knowledge about Zoroastrianism to a wider than purely academic audience and also to engage with the general public and the Zoroastrian community.

While the exhibition had been a catalyst for plans to establish an Institute of Zoroastrian Studies it also encouraged reflection about SOAS's teaching programmes and how it could be made more attractive to students. The VR technology that Almut Hintze introduced to the study of ritual is a good example of how one can transmit knowledge more effectively in the classroom.

SOAS have a remit to increase their student numbers, bearing in mind that students today consider employment opportunities when making their degree choices. Here again, thanks to the foresight of Mr Mistry, SOAS has the significant advantage of a generous endowment in perpetuity for scholarships.

So, putting all these elements together, there is now a real opportunity to expand the reach of Zoroastrian studies. Zoroastrianism is of course a living faith,

but it is also a prime example, albeit a neglected one, of migration and diaspora – a field of increasing interest and importance in these most challenging times.

Zoroastrianism's religious texts, orally transmitted over centuries, should be a paradigm case within the now well-established but still growing field of orality and oral studies. Wherever Zoroastrians live today they belong to a religious or an ethnic and religious minority and so Zoroastrianism has much to contribute to the field of minority studies. More widely still, the much-loved poetry and literature of classical Persia has pre-Islamic, that is to say, Zoroastrian roots. Modern Persian is a direct descendent of Pahlavi or Middle Persian, the language of Zoroastrian Iran prior to the Arab conquest.

Zoroastrianism, in short, can and should inform a wide range of subjects and programmes.

"Thanks to the generous support of Shapoor Mistry, we can begin to enhance their teaching and outreach capacity.

"I hope that many of you – colleagues at SOAS and members of the Zoroastrian community – will help us to shape the future of the Institute, and to

make it the success that Shapoor Mistry and his family wish for and so richly deserve," said Dr Stewart.

Professor Almut Hintze, FBA spoke of research on Zoroastrianism at SOAS. "Teaching and research in Iranian and Zoroastrian Studies at SOAS started in 1929 with the 'Parsee Community's Lectureship in Iranian Studies'.



Pallon Mistry



Professor Almut Hintze

Its first holder, the distinguished expert of Iranian languages, Sir Harold Bailey, was followed by Walter Bruno Henning and then by an uninterrupted line of more world-renowned scholars in Iranian and Zoroastrian Studies, including ADH Bivar, Philip Kreyenbroek, Mary Boyce, John Hinnells and Nicholas Sims-Williams. The funds for the lectureship of the Parsee Community were raised on an annual basis from within the Bombay Parsi community, and it lapsed in 1947. In the 1990s, John Hinnells and Mary Boyce recognized that a post needed to be endowed, rather than funded on an annual basis in order to ensure that it continued in perpetuity. It was this idea which formed the seed-corn of the Zartoshty Brothers Chair in Zoroastrianism at SOAS, eventually endowed in 2011 thanks to the generosity of the Zartoshty family and Professor Mary Boyce herself. The SOAS Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrian Studies not only cements the provision of teaching and research of Zoroastrianism at SOAS but also brings it on a different, to date unprecedented level of security and sustainability. It does so by providing

Their research encompasses the whole of the Zoroastrian tradition, from its prehistoric beginnings sometime in the second millennium BCE, up to the present day.

Dr Sarah Stewart has always had a great interest in the devotional tradition of the



Teaser of the VR film was available where MUYA postdocs and PhD students were ready to assist.

Zoroastrian laity. Having worked with Philip Kreyenbroek and Shernaz Munshi on the Zoroastrians of India, she subsequently applied the methodology to the Zoroastrians of Iran, following in the footsteps of her teacher, Mary Boyce. Dr Stewart has collected over 300 oral testimonies of Iranian Zoroastrians, many of them speaking in the Zoroastrian Persian dialect of Dari, which is an endangered language.

The recordings have been digitised and are already available in the collections of the Endangered Languages Archive at SOAS. Dr Stewart's eagerly awaited work is expected to be published this autumn.

Prof Hintze explained that her research has been chiefly concerned with the Avesta and its Pahlavi version, particularly with the performance and written tradition of the Yasna ritual, the core ritual of the Zoroastrians. In November last year the team of the Multimedia Yasna or MUYA project, funded by the European Research



L to R: Dr Sarah Stewart, Baroness Amos, Mr Shapoor Mistry, Dr Almut Hintze

endowed funds for scholarships, outreach activities and a second post in Zoroastrianism.”

Sarah Stewart and Almut Hintze will serve as the first Co-Chair of the new Institute.

Council from 2016 to 2021, filmed a complete Yasna performance in Mumbai, both in two-dimensional format and in Virtual Reality. A teaser of the VR film was available for testing, where MUVA postdocs and PhD students assisted those wishing to view. In collaboration with IT experts in Trier and Birmingham, MUVA also develops electronic tools for producing text-critical editions.

Another important part of the project is the digitisation of manuscripts. On their last trip to India they catalogued and photographed collections at the Cama Athornan Institute in Mumbai, and have plans to digitise more collections in Mumbai and other centres of the Zoroastrian community, particularly at the Alpaiwalla Museum at Udwada and Navsari, Bharuch and Surat. They are also hoping to establish a collaboration with the Cama Oriental Institute, if at all possible. All the digital data produced by Dr Stewart and Professor Almut Hintze and their research teams will be made available in the Digital Collections of the SOAS Shapoorji Pallonji Institute. The page has already been set up and is waiting to be populated with the help of Erich Kesse, SOAS's Digital Library Project Officer.

Professor Almut Hintze was elated by the five million pounds endowment of the Shapoorji Pallonji Institute and stated it was mind-blowing. "It opens up possibilities for research, teaching and outreach in Zoroastrian Studies we could not even have dreamt of. The fact that the Institute is endowed means that it will be there in perpetuity. It is an immense privilege to be part of this enterprise, and I can already see us going from strength to strength in promoting the Study of Zoroastrianism both here at SOAS and world-wide".

The evening concluded with the presentation of a ceremonial shawl and memento to Mr Shapoor P Mistry as a mark of respect and affection, by members of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe on behalf of all those present.



Dastur JamaspAsa with his family, Almut Hintze & Duncan Hinnells, son of Prof John Hinnells



Presentation of shawl to Mr Shapoor Mistry by members of ZTFE on behalf of all present



Sammy Bhiwandiwalla together with his wife Ursula started their own company in 1970 and after 35 years in business they decided to call it a day.

Both have always taken an active interest in community matters in the UK and were greatly influenced by the actions and sincere beliefs of individuals such as Noshirwan Cowasjee, Shirinbanoo Kutar, Shahpur Captain and many others, that in a changing world it was necessary to create a more balanced and equitable community within the UK. He joined the WZO Board in 1988 and since then has served in various capacities including Chairman of WZO, presently serving as President.

Images, courtesy Prof Almut Hintze



Official Religion in the Achaemenid Heartland: A View from Persepolis

by kersi shroff

In the magnificent “Cyrus Cylinder” it is related that “Cyrus called upon [the god] Marduk, when arguing his legitimate right to the Babylonian throne.” Due to the reference to a Babylonian deity, during the round of events marking the exhibition of the Cylinder in the West, it was outrightly claimed by some that Achaemenians were not solely Zoroastrians. It is to Darius that scholars now confidently attribute “a religious reform towards Mazdaism” based on his later inscriptions honoring Ahura Mazda. Later, Xerxes I declared in an inscription that “he destroyed a *daivadana*, purified the site, and sacrificed there to Auramazda.”

This “Zoroastrian question” has vexed Achaemenid studies for long. Did the Achaemenians adopt Zoroastrianism, as indicated in inscriptions paying homage to Ahura Mazda, even though no known document makes a direct reference to any Avestan text? Jean Kellens, a leading scholar, has sought to shift the tenor of the debate to an examination of the underlying ritual behavior during the time, rather than whether Zoroastrianism was their creedal faith.

Wouter Henkelman, Associate Professor of Elamite and Achaemenid Studies at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, has closely studied the question, and produced a milestone publication on rituals of Achaemenian religion. He has later noted that although “Auramazda ... may have been of central importance in [Darius'] ideology, but he was less so in the reality of the Achaemenid heartland”.

As the featured speaker at the 4th Annual Kamran Seminar* Professor Henkelman presented his thesis of the syncretic faith of Achaemenians. He examined the question mainly from the perspective of what are

known as the Persepolis Fortification Archives (PFA), that show homage also paid to gods other than Ahura Mazda. The PFA are a collection of thousands of ancient clay documents, a large majority of which have seal impressions in the Elamite script, a few in Aramaic, and the remainder are uninscribed. The tablets provide an administrative account of the intake, storage and redistribution of commodities for fodder, rations, wages, and ritual offerings. They cover the period, 509 BCE (Before the Common Era) to 493 BCE, incorporating years 13 -28 of Darius' reign.

The Elamite script impressed on the tablets was the language of the ancient kingdom of Elam, in south west Iran, on the border of Mesopotamia. Elamites were incorporated in the Median Empire and later came under Achaemenian rule. Elamite culture had a significant impact and Persians are considered to have held on to it for some time.

At first, Professor Henkelman discussed the rock carvings in Bisotun, Iran, depicting the victory of Darius over Gaumata. The cuneiform writing is again multilingual in Elamite, Babylonian and Old Persian, and includes the figure of a winged disc considered to grant divine authority to the King. He noted that the rock on which the carvings were made has an opening for water, showing traces of a waterfall, signifying the importance of water in Persian beliefs, and making an association between the human and the divine. In keeping with the syncretic theme, Professor Henkelman has previously written that “the Babylon version of the Bisotun inscription exalts Bel (-Marduk) – not Auramazda! – as the supreme god guiding Darius to his many victories.”

Several tablets from the PFA were shown in slides and their meanings explained. They

offer a graphic account of the commodities needed for rituals offerings and refer to 'temples', despite the general belief that the Achaemenians had no temples. Other tablets show textile production and refer to women and their names. A reference was made to Ali-Sami's "Persepolis" (1972), in which the author summarizes important points regarding the Elamite tablets:

- 1) Achaemenian kings paid appropriate wages based on the experience, competence and age of skilled workers and laborers - men, women, boys, and girls - engaged in building operations at Persepolis.
- 2) The nationality of the workers was varied.
- 3) The wages were paid in silver, while flour, meat, and wine were also given in lieu of silver. The payments were made under a set schedule.

In the view of the writer, Professor Henkelman's presentation should be coupled with his writings** to capture the full scope of his thesis. Among the religious rituals illustrated in the PFA are what are referred to as the *lan* ceremony, the most frequent type of ritual documented in the PFA. *Lan* is built around the root *la*, meaning "to send, to offer." Professor Henkelman has noted that although no texts were identified in which the *lan* ritual explicitly mentioned a named divine beneficiary, it was theoretically possible to consider it to be the exclusive rite for Ahura Mazda. "[E]xplicit evidence linking *lan* to a god other than Auramazda was hitherto lacking," he has written, but the text of a PFA, identified as Fort. 1316-101, "offers this and more". The tablet "falsifies the claim of an exclusive rite for Auramazda" by ascribing the ceremony for the cult of Napirisa, an old Elamite god.

Henkelman points to a comparison made by another scholar, Kreyenbroek, of the *lan* to what we know as the *baj* ceremony, intended for Auramazda, suggesting "a degree of integration of Elamite elements into Zoroastrianism." To Henkelman, the view that is increasingly accepted is that there was a "convergence or acculturation of Elamite and Indo-Iranian traditions."

Henkelman also submits that the PFA represent "a shop-floor perspective in which, apparently, the cult of all kinds of other gods thrived." The pragmatic Achaemenid kings abstained from enforcing their own views but guaranteed "an overall system of Zoroastrian inspiration in which, for example, animal sacrifices were anathema."

In another presentation in Berlin in 2013, Henkelman also noted that "the archive challenges the idea of religious, Zoroastrian or Mazdaic, orthodoxy and simultaneously forcefully underlines the importance of Elamite traditions alongside the Indo-Iranian heritage."

In "Humban ... Auramazda" Henkelman concludes: "Fort. 1316-101:14... liberates us from attempts to 'save' the position of Auramazda in PFA in agreement with his perceived role in the inscriptions. The observation that the tablets undeniably assign him a non-exclusive position, opens the way to a fresh appreciation of his status in the inscriptions and, by extension, in the empire."

The PFA were sent in 1937 to the Oriental Institute in Chicago on a long-term loan, where they have been studied by scholars, including Henkelman. Until late, their overdue return to Iran was tied up in a legal dispute brought before US courts. In February 2018, the US Supreme Court decided that the Persepolis artifacts cannot be seized to satisfy a judgment in favour of Americans who were injured in a 1997 suicide bombing in Jerusalem. As and when the PFA are handed back, according to Henkelman, what is also likely to travel with them is the finding of new evidence that "eloquently demonstrates ... the most important trait of Persian culture: the ability to reach synthesis."

At the start of the Seminar, a moving tribute was made to Dr Farhang Mehr, in the honoured presence of Mrs Parichehr Mehr, by Mr Adi Daver, the founding-President of ZAMWI. It was followed by a roundtable interview with Professor Henkelman.



Kersi B Shroff, lives and cogitates in Derwood, Maryland, USA.

* Held at the Kamran Dar-e Mehr and Zoroastrian Center (KDM&ZC) in Boyds, Maryland, USA. The Kamran Seminar is organized independently of the Anjuman of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington (ZAMWI), which manages the KDM&ZC under a lease granted by the Kamran Foundation. The Kamran Seminars are organized by Anne & Zarir Khademian, Morvarid Behziz and Mehraban Manoochehri. The KDM&ZC was generously endowed to the Zoroastrian community by the late Mr Khodamorad Kamran and his Family.

** Principally his recent chapter, "Humban ... Auramazda: royal gods in a Persian landscape" In "Persian Religion in the Achaemenid Period" (2017). Interestingly, the editors note that the publication of the volume met a number of difficulties, "all of which we overcame by the grace of Auramazda, and named others."

[Those who may be interested, video is available at <http://thekamranseminar.com/#portfolioModal1>]



Mr Shroff shares this news:

I'm pleased to share with you a DIPNOTE (US. Dept. of State Official Blog) authored by Dr Sousan Abadian, Policy Advisor, Office of International Religious Freedom, US. Department of State.

The note was published at the start of a 3-day Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom, held in Washington DC., July 24-26, 2018. The event was attended by Ministers and Delegates from over 80 countries, and nearly 400 representatives of faith communities and civil society organizations.

<https://blogs.state.gov/stories/2018/07/23/en/eternal-flame-universality-freedom-religion-or-belief>

At the conclusion of the Ministerial, the Department of State issued the following letter:

Colleagues,

We successfully concluded the first-ever Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom. Over 80 countries participated, with close to 400 representatives of faith communities and civil society groups attending. We welcome and appreciate the robust participation. Both the Vice President and the Secretary addressed the Ministerial, as did other senior US. government officials.

At the conclusion of the Ministerial, the Secretary released the [Potomac Declaration](#) and [Plan of Action](#). The Potomac Declaration reflects the importance the United States government places on promoting religious freedom, a universal human right, as a means to ensuring greater peace and stability within and among nations.

The Potomac Plan of Action provides a comprehensive framework of activities the international community can pursue to promote religious freedom and to respond to persecution on account of religion, belief, or non-belief. The Plan of Action has six chapters:

Defending the Human Right of Freedom of Religion or Belief / Confronting Legal Limitations / Advocating for Equal Rights and Protections for All, Including Members of Religious Minorities / Responding to Genocide and other Mass Atrocities / Preserving Cultural Heritage and Strengthening the Response.

In addition, participating delegations endorsed three country statements (Burma, China, Iran) and three thematic statements (Blasphemy/Apostasy Laws; Counterterrorism; and Repression by Non-State Actors). You can find them [here](#).

Regards, Knox Thames, Special Advisor for Religious Minorities, US. Department of State



The Three Testaments' - Torah, Gospel, and Quran

Kersi B Shroff informs ...

The Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington Inc. (ZAMWI) was recently presented with a book which describes itself as “revolutionary” in making connections between Zoroastrianism and the three Scriptures named in the title.

In the Foreword, Amir Hussain, one of eight contributors, states that a “possible exposure to Zoroastrianism may have been a revelation to Jesus about his messianic destiny, ... to be the ‘Redeemer’ or Savior of the whole world - a distinctly Zoroastrian concept.” (pp. ix-xi).

Another author “commends the Quran as confirming many other scriptures, including Zoroastrianism.” The book “also opens up one final intriguing insight ... [T]he scriptures of Judaism, Christianity and Islam ... all contain revelations received earlier in some form by Zoroaster, ... [and] his spiritual insights influenced [them profoundly]. This realization is a ‘game-changer’ for interfaith studies.” (Id.)

The Prologue written by lead author Brian Arthur Brown claims:

“If any or all of these religions actually do have an “Old Testament,” it might be the Zoroastrian scriptures, known as the Avesta, which is something of a subtext in the contextual background chapters of this volume... [Words and phrases] first seen in the Zoroastrian Avesta can now be correlated with similar or identical words, phrases and verses in the Torah, the Gospel and the Quran, a phenomenon we designate as “the Z factor.” (pg. 5).

This correlation appears to have been done by computer-generated analyses.

Brian Brown continues: “[T]he key to our understanding, and a principal feature of this compendium, is the current ‘unearthing’ of lost material from the Zoroastrian Avesta, long buried between the lines in the Quran.” (Id.)

An editorial review of the book, states: “Brian Brown’s ‘message’ – his proposal for seeing the Zoroastrian tradition as having set the context for new Revelations in Judaism, Christianity and Islam – may open us up to fuller spiritual and religious explorations (Rabbi Arthur Waskow, author of *The Tent of Abraham*; director, The Shalom Center).”

Four separate chapters in the book relate to Zoroastrianism:

Chapter 1, “Also Sprach Zarathushtra”

Chapter 2, “Monotheism”

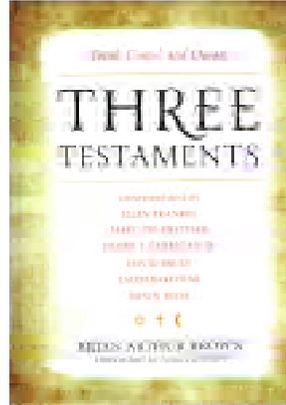
Chapter 9, “Zoroastrians in the Quran”, and

Chapter 12, “Avesta in the Quran”.

A creatively designed “Diagram of Previous Revelations from God Confirmed in the Quran” incorporates multiple designations to the “Zoroastrian Avesta”. (pg. 415)

In view of the extensive discussion of the Avesta, including translations of several verses from the Gathas (pp. 407 - 411), the book could have more appropriately been titled “The Four Scriptures, Avesta, Torah, Gospel, and Quran”.

The book was presented to ZAMWI by Rabbi David Shneyer, a member of the Executive Committee of Montgomery County’s Interfaith Council. It is available for reference at the Kamran Dar-e Mehr and Zoroastrian Center in Boyds, MD.



Empowering Mobeds

from the coordinator binaifer sahukar

THEN :

The advocacy wing of Jiyo Parsi conducted mental health programmes for various demographic segments such as parents, teenagers and priests to spread the word about the scheme. The first two programmes were held at Masina hospital and Sir H N Reliance hospital with psychiatrists and counsellors imparting soft skills training and a brief introduction to counselling.

NOW :

To avoid any sense of entitlement from stakeholders dictating terms about how to run the programme diametrically different from the vision, it was decided to break away from Jiyo Parsi. Our vision is to develop leadership skills and increase the laity-priests connect. A conscious decision has been taken by behdin trainers to steer clear from religious education, as we believe that imparting religious training is the sole domain of the Athornan Mandal. Empowering Mobeds now runs under the umbrella of the Athornan Mandal and WZO Trust Funds Mobed Welfare. Who better than the main governing body of priests run by able leader Dastur Khurshed Dastur? Who better than Dinshaw Tamboly, heading WZO trust funds, involved in helping priests consistently, since 1996.

GOING DIGITAL :

This year the training theme was "Mobeds moving online" to connect with the community, Pan India and globally. Our mobeds, as old as 80 years or living in distant places like Mandvi, Gujarat and Neemuch, Madhya Pradesh are on digital media. In order to make our already tech savvy mobeds savvier, a motley group of professionals lent their expertise. The audience comprised of mobeds, their

spouses and fresh Navarias. Psychiatrist Dr Kersi Chavda and Neurosurgeon Er Dr Mazda Turel talked about the cognitive and affective impact of words. IT expert Berjes Shroff gave tips on cyber safety, while advertising genius Rayomand Patell talked about presenting the message creatively on multiple social media platforms. The Jame editor encouraged mobeds to spread religious knowledge through print and social media. Dasturji Khurshed Dastur and young Ervads Cyrus Darbari, Hormuz Dadachanji, Sheherezad Pavri, Firdaus Pavri, Darayesh Katrak, Khushroo Makihatana and Jehan Darbari shared their personal experiences with social media. Post lunch head of learning and development, Delphi Wadia conducted a workshop on effective communication.

A month later a smaller focus group of 18 were trained by communication experts Delphi Wadia, Farrokh Jijina, Freyaz Shroff and Hemin Bharucha on the power of networking corporate style. A great example of networking is the manager of Rustomframna agiary, Er Kaizad Karkaria who is fabulous with resource mobilization. Similarly, 25 year old Er Jamsheed Sidhwa, boiwalla Iranshah and official videographer Sarosh Daruwalla understand the pulse of the youth and are the guiding light for programme strategy.

TRAINING OUTCOMES :

Er Hormuz Dadachanji, Punthak Mithaiwalla agiary has started a whatsapp group for his worshippers to apprise them of agiary events like jashans and salgarehs. A prayer box for wish requests has been set up in which cute appreciation notes are left for the mobeds by grateful worshippers. Volunteers were easily gathered for agiary clean up.

Er Firdaus Pavri, Punthak of Godavara agiary had barely any viewer traffic on his

agiary facebook page. However after the training programme the viewership has spiked.

Skilled orators Er Jehan Darbari and Er Darayesh Katrak have held the audience spell bound at Bhika Behram *kua* (well) monthly humbandagi organized by Hoshang Gotla. Whilst Er Katrak is a seasoned speaker, 25 year old Jehan used to be a nervous speaker. With repeated exposures in the training programmes, he now speaks like a pro.

FUTURE PROGRAMMES :

July 22nd Dasturji Firoz Kotwal will talk[ed] about the “Significance of Mukta ceremony and prayers”. Dastur Khurshed Dastur, Er Dadachanji and other young grass root level workers will share their experiences in crowd management and keeping calm during this stressful period.

In August, our core team members will split up into geographical zones and reach out to about 500 XYZ kids to teach Zoroastrianism through fun and games, across Bombay from town to the distant suburbs.

A residential leadership training programme is also on the anvil.

Along with increasing our population numbers, it is imperative to also enhance the quality. Our trained mobeds will identify red flag areas like depression, suicidal ideation, abuse etc and direct people to the right source for help. Through the lessons learnt from handling difficult conversations laden with anger and tears, our priests will soothingly infuse hope and spiritual succour to distressed souls. In a community fragmented with discordant voices, these priests as leaders will break walls and build bridges.



A part of the audience beaming happily



Post-lunch fun workshop activities



The opening session of our core team mobeds with our backbone Dinshawji



Binaifer Sahukar in her psycho-therapeutic practice has been told by clients how much lighter and stronger they feel with an active ear untangling their knotted thoughts. A team of mental health professionals and mobeds are working towards developing mobeds as compassionate future leaders who will increase worshipper footfalls and build a happy cohesive community.

Fire & Faith in Tibilisi, Georgia

by **shermeen kaikobad**

Kashanathrao Ahureh Mazdao - Glory Be to His most blessed and exalted name!

The Eid holidays [June] in Muscat were arriving upon us and both my husband and I started deliberating upon an interesting destination to visit during this period. After much pondering we decided upon Tibilisi the capital city of Georgia, being attracted to the exotic, almost a mysterious air being associated with it. War-torn and reduced, yet ready to embrace an independent future, chasing the big EU dream.

Whilst researching for our mini vacation in the offing I came across, that too entirely by default, the existence of an ancient Atashgah / Atash Dadgah tucked away in a not so frequented corner of Tibilisi. My curiosity was instantly aroused and what I learnt was that the centuries old fire temple was constructed during the Sasanian era (224-651 AD), when Georgia fell under the domain of the mighty Persian Empire. Unfortunately the information provided on the net failed to provide a complete picture of this fascinating place of worship and I kept wondering for days on end as to what was to be in store for us. Nevertheless, I was glad that we had chosen Georgia over other more accessible destinations as the Atashgah had by then held our captive imaginations.

As Pakistanis, a visa endorsement on our passports was not a prerequisite and granted on arrival. What angered me was that some Indian nationals who had travelled with us from Muscat were out of immigration within seconds, whereas we were led into a separate room and our passports taken away from us. After an hour long wait we were directed towards the immigration queue. Our US / Schengen / Omani Resident Visa endorsements must have satisfied the staff on duty and we reached our hotel at 4:00 am, with the issuance of the necessary Georgian visa in order!

My first question to the receptionist at our hotel was one regarding the whereabouts of the Atash Dadgah. All I got in return was a blank stare with an assurance of assistance from the Manager. After breakfast, when I was introduced to the latter, the exact location of the temple - Old Town, Gomi Street 3, parallel to Bethlehem Street, 100 metres east to the Church of Bethlehem, perched on the slopes facing the Mother Georgia statue to the north-east – was written out for me in Georgian script.

Unfortunately few people in Tibilisi converse in English and without a proper guide it is almost impossible to locate a particular place. We hired a local taxi to drive us to the location of the Atash Dadgah, with the manager's instructions. After driving around for nearly an hour, we were simply not able to trace out the fire temple, in spite of the road sign and arrow reading 'Atashgah'.

The taxi driver made frantic calls asking for help but nothing worked. We asked and enquired from several passers-by but they too claimed ignorance. The roads were steep and narrow with brick houses and tiny shops on each side of the lane. 'So near and yet so far!' The driver was losing his patience and so was my husband and we drove back to our hotel dejected.

A small voice within my heart kept on

reminding me to 'chin up', that all was not lost and that I was destined to see the ancient fire-temple, against all odds. On the following day, after a hectic day of sightseeing, I met a lovely



Shermeen & Ruska

Georgian girl by the name of Rusudan (Ruska), near the bus stand of the Freedom Square, who agreed to drive us to a couple of places of interest with her friend. It was a memorable Sunday with Ruska taking the lead. Towards evening a heavy downpour had just started, when I asked Ruska if she would take us to the fire-temple and to our amazement we were at the venue without any hassle! The driver stationed his vehicle in the parking lot and we walked up the ancient stone paved roads flanked on each side by narrow footpaths, bridleways and small drainage ditches. As the path got steeper and the rain descended even more heavily, my husband gave up halfway. Ruska's efforts and my steely determination was however destined to lead me to the blessed temple. We chanced upon an eight year old boy playing in the rain and upon Ruska's enquiry, pointed even more further up on the hill, asking us to knock on a wooden door. We trudged along and finally stood before a board sign which read Atashgah.

Ruska and I, both exhausted and rain drenched, climbed even higher up and knocked on the wooden door. A Georgian girl answered and led us into a rectangular shaped room, furniture of which comprised of a long, low table, and sofas. A few elderly people who happened to be there got up from their seats and greeted me affably. Ruska, explained to them as to why I was at the Atashgah and a gentleman stood up thereafter. It was Dr David Sagaradze, who happily provided explanations and took me around the site.

The good Dr Sagaradze mentioned that the Atashgah had been preserved since a long time but being remotely located and almost hidden from public eye, in the city of Tbilisi not many were aware of its existence. Besides there prevailed a reluctance to acknowledge its significance, from those in the know-how, due to the bitter wars in the past with the Persians. The site however has been granted official World Heritage status / protection from the UNESCO as an ancient Fire-temple of the Zoroastrians. It's origins nevertheless remain shrouded in



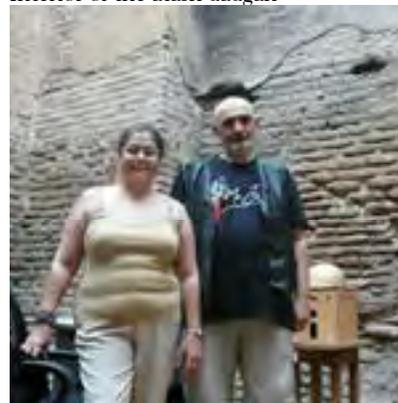
Steps leading up to the entrance door



Interior of the atash dadgah



Left : With Dr David Sagaradze. Right : Entrance from the slopes leading further up the steps to main wooden door.



Inside of the atash dadgah at Tbilisi

mystery and even conflicting versions. In 2007 the Georgian National Committee of International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) with the support of Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNESCO Cultural Heritage respectively, reconstructed the Atashgah as part of the Bethlemi Quarter Revitalisation Project. This I gathered from Dr David himself, who happens to be a good friend of conductor Zubin Mehta!

Dr David, also showed me his interesting computer presentations. He holds special classes for those Georgians who want to familiarise themselves with Zoroastrianism. At the site itself, a miniature wooden replica

of the Atashgah has been made, under his guidance. His students gather around his presentations every evening, keen to learn and grasp. I too helped him with certain words such as 'Humata, Hukhta, Huvershta' – Good thoughts, Good words and Good deeds – the essential tenants of our noble faith.

At the site is an arch enclosed by a worn down red brick wall with a slightly blackish patch. During the 2007 restorations the ancient brickwork was partially cleaned with repairs carried out wherever necessary but largely left the way it was previously. The blackish fire related patch is still evident and is proof of the authenticity of our ancient Zoroastrian fire temple. The centuries old brick building

with a curved protective perspex roof has also been restored to protect it from Tibilisi's harsh weather conditions.

Zoroastrianism had gained popularity in Tibilisi during the reign of King Vakhtang Gorgasali, the founder of the city during the second half of the 5th century. Our faith was

tolerated during his regime, with the protection of the Christian Bishop at his royal court. There was also a 'High Magus' in the Georgian Historical Source called the 'Persian Bishop'. The Persian Magi were granted official recognition, thereby being allowed to propagate their faith in Kartli. Presumably the Tibilisi-Atashgah was also built during the reign of King Vakhtang Gorgasali. Quite a bit of this information was gathered on my visit to the National Museum of Georgia.

Dr David's aim is to create a global awareness among Zoroastrians of the ancient Tibilisi-Atashgah. His love and enthusiasm for our faith is strong, selfless and inspirational. He wishes to continue with the same, discreetly as it might be, in Georgia. Seeing the brilliance of the man, his dedication, discipline and commitment at the Atashgah, made my trip to Tibilisi even more worthwhile. Glory be to our faith, our beloved prophet Aho Zarathustra and to Ahura Mazda our Creator.

Dr David Sagaradze may be contacted by email : dr.dato@gmail.com, mobile : +995 598 520744 Postal address : 2/19/70 Digomi Massiv, 0159 Tibilisi, Georgia.



Dr David Sagaradze sharing his slide presentations



Shermeen Jal (Khambatta) Kaikobad, a Pakistani living in Muscat since the past 30 years. A teacher by profession, has worked both in Karachi and Muscat. She presently tutors foreign students privately besides helping special, disabled and autistic children develop linguistic, behavioural and communication skills. Apart from travel, has a leaning towards spirituality, enlightenment

and inner awakening.

Together Towards Tomorrow - 11th World Zoroastrian Congress

by behroze clubwala

Chhaiye Hameh Zarathushti” ... was the united chant at the 11th World Zoroastrian Congress (11WZC), in Perth, Australia. About 325 delegates attended. The opening ceremony began with flag bearers of each country, entering the Astral Room, Crown Complex, on June 1, 2018. The audience, most wore garas and daglis, was excited as the flags were planted in flower pots that lined the dais and national anthems were played. The words of our Avesta filled the room at the opening Jashan setting the spiritual tone. The Jashan was led by Ervad Dadachanji, from Mumbai with mobeds from Perth, Sydney, France and USA, and a mobedyar from USA and Iran (female). Malido, chasni fruits, sev and ravo were enjoyed tremendously.

The native indigenous people of the Wadumbah nation welcomed us with a traditional dance and their didgeridoo – an Australian aboriginal tube wind instrument, made from a hollow branch. Well entertained, throughout the Congress, with superb dances, excellent songs by Feritta and, great music from the Z Band, Houston, USA the tone was happy.

Amit Mishra, India CG, Perth described Zoroastrians in India as “the most successful and entrepreneurial community.” He said, “Starting with Dadabhai Navroji, Parsis have topped the list of achievers. They became a blessing for India. Thank you for enriching India.” He added forcefully, “But you cannot be allowed to fade into history.” It is an “obligation and duty” for the community to address. He concluded: “Being role models for other communities is critical. The world would be more peaceful if we adopted Zoroastrian values.”

Homi Gandhi, President of Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA), welcomed the participants and

noted, “We are proud that a small group has taken up the torch and that we are here today.”

Mark McGowan, Premier, Western Australia (WA) noted: “We are honored to be your hosts in Perth.” He called the Zoroastrians in Perth “a very exclusive community.” He thanked us for Mubaraki, the first Zarathushti Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), and noted that “his traits of goodness and kindness are unlike his colleagues” alluding to his strong traditional values.



(l to r) Yaz Mubaraki, MLA, Perth; Premier of Western Australia Mark McGowan, Neville Shroff, President Zoroastrian Charity Funds, Hongkong, Firoz and Mahrukh Pestonji, BAWAZ, Perth.

Meher Bhesania, Dubai launched a new book, “Zarathustra and the Origins of Zoroastrianism”, specially created for the Congress, and a short film, “Life and Times of Zarathustra.”



Organization of 11WZC :

Congratulations to Firoz Pestonji, Chair and President, Business Association of Western Australian Zoroastrians (BAWAZ) and the superb organizing team for hosting a

successful Congress, in spite of reservations within the Perth community. A diverse group of participants were present, a good representation of youth and many Congress regulars. For a World Congress the overall representation was small, many panel members and speakers were the Congress regulars.

The days began with beautiful renderings of Monajats by Mani Rao and songs from the Gathas by Mobediyar Rashin Jehangiri, Iran. The excellent souvenir book contains important messages from eminent personalities from around the world, particularly a message from Dr Hassan Rouhani, President, Islamic Republic of Iran.

Masters of Ceremonies, Zarine Commissariat, Afreed Mistry, and Farzana Khambatta managed the programme and speakers with finesse and chutzpah.



Yaz Mubarakai

Yazdi Mubarakai, first Zarathushti MLA started with a traditional greeting “paying respects to the local indigenous people as the traditional custodians of this land ...”. He reminisced about his journey from Gujarat, India to his role today. Yaz, dynamic and charismatic, elected in 2017 was clear. We must focus and align to the century’s next challenges; we need modern governance; we must mentor our youth for strong engagement; we could duplicate the Israeli youth programme where 16 and 17 year olds are given positions with authority and power; and there is a need to act now.”



L to R: Edul Davar, Dr Ekhtiyari, Rohinton Rivetna

Dr Ekthihari, Iranian Zoroastrian Member of Parliament, Islamic Republic of Iran, speaking in Dari, stated, “My message is from the birthplace of Ashu Zarathustra, the first messenger of monotheism.

Iran is the motherland of Zoroastrians.” He urged us to focus on our youth and “utilize the capacities of *all* Zoroastrians globally”.

Ms Awat Darya, first official Representative of the Kurdish Zoroastrians, Iraq spoke of President Barzani signing into law, 17 May 2015, Article 5, Freedom of Religion including the Zoroastrian religion. The local Yasna Organization, is strategically effective in supporting the growth of Zoroastrianism. The challenges of living in a war-torn country make it difficult for them to meet. She called for translators from English / Farsi / Kurdish / Arabic. There is a growing vibrant Zarathushti community and she invited visitors to Kurdistan to support them.



Awat Darya, (second from left)

Noteworthy presentations :

I’ve highlighted below new messages and speakers that impact our Zarathushti journey “... Towards Tomorrow” rather than the drumbeat of the tried and tested messages heard earlier.

Zoroastrian Return to Roots (RTR):

Arzan Wadia, VP, FEZANA and Kayras Irani described the impactful journey that takes individuals, 22 to 35 years, to India (hopefully Iran in the future) for 14 days to foster a sense of community and to create a

vibrant youth community. The theme of return, reconnect, revive is fostered as they visit Sanjan, where we first landed in India, Udvada, Navsari, Surat, Mumbai, New Delhi etc. They witness Zarathushti rituals, customs and traditions, visit Atash Behrams, and meet with legendary Parsis like Ratan Tata. The strong network created will build the next generation of global leaders. Zoroastrian Associations globally are urged to invest in RTR and encourage their youth to join. Sign up at <http://www.zororoots.org>. The next trip starts on 19 December 2018.

Moving into the 21st Century – The Zarathushti Women, the Power unleashed :

The panel shared interesting stories with Behroze Daruwalla, Moderator and Panelists Tanya Bulsara, Dolly Dastur, Delara Javat, Katayun Kapadia and Farzana Khambatta. Their messages were loud and clear: “Ensure growth, pursue the careers that you care deeply about, be mentors, show resilience, don’t feel personally discriminated, find the right balance in a very male-dominated area of work; speak up, but make sure it is valuable, don’t let being a woman stop you; and grab the opportunity, because if you don’t, somebody else will.”

Tanya Bulsara’s story was inspirational. Tanya was born with an eye disorder that impairs her vision. Undeterred, Tanya created and manages a Computer Center in Mumbai where she offers basic computer training for the visually impaired. She is successful; conquered her challenges, her parents mentored her, her Zarathushti family values supported her and today she is ready to launch other centers. She eloquently concluded: “We are not different, we just do things differently.” [Refer to Hamazor Issue 3/ 2016 pp35-37 for further insight]

“Intelligent Conservatism” can improve Parsi Survival Prospects:

Berjis Desai, a private lawyer, Mumbai, advocated “Intelligent Conservatism”(IC).

Noting that “the Zoroastrian faith is not in any imminent danger of dying, but as a group we face an existential threat.” He asked: “How can we diminish this threat? Issues dividing the community need to be intelligently resolved. This applies predominantly to Parsis in Mumbai. We have a demographic decline rate of 12% per decade, one of the highest in the world.”

IC means “avoiding extreme views on either side of the socio-religious spectrum and capturing the middle ground. It may not always be politically correct or doctrinally pure. It is simply pragmatic. Its sole objective is to increase our numbers without losing our uniqueness.” [His speech in full appears in this issue - pp 38-42].

The Prayers of Creation and Truth: Yatha and Ashem :

Khojeste Mistree educated us. “The Yatha Ahu Vairyo (Ahunavar) and Ashem Vohu are the most important prayers of Creation. There is no ritual in Zoroastrianism without these prayers which were revealed by Ohrmazd (Ahura Mazda)” said Mistree.

Ohrmazd recited Ahunavars when creating the world to diminish evil spirits and as his spiritual fuel. He created the seven Amesha Spentas and the earth, skies, waters, plants, animals, fire and man. Mistree explains that the Ahunavar, when intoned aloud, is the most powerful prayer of our religion, energizing the world positively and weakening evil. Hence the expression: “Yatha tari Madad.”

You can also recite it aloud a certain number of times for different reasons: Once when you start your day; Twice to give blessings; Six for a young person getting married; Ten to seek a spouse; Twenty-one for a long journey. It can be recited as a sub-prayer for many other prayers as well, eg. For the Ohrmazd Yasht, 103 Yathas and 10 Ashems.

The Ashem Vohu, is very powerful, comprised of 12 words, it describes the role of a Zarathushti. It reminds us that we must spread happiness and harmony by upholding the Truth.

Youth Sessions - From Now to 2022:

Moderated by Arzan Wadia, the panelists Bahrom Firozgari, Farhad Malegam, Viraf Mehta, Maher Dhamodiwala, Alicia Shroff and Jehan Kotwal debated: "Why are we looking at ourselves through a keyhole, We need to embrace universality; Change must be allowed to happen; Identity is important; It does not have to be religion versus culture; We need to keep people in the religion; We must add meaning to our prayers; How can we make it more encouraging for youth to participate; How can we encourage youth to speak up; It is important for elders to consider how to deal with youth; We must create an inclusive environment for all, including the youth; We had a glorious past, we must focus on giving back to the community; Entrepreneurship is missing and must be rekindled and finally, youth must be involved in community work."

"What do you want to *Start, Stop and Continue* doing", asked Arzan.

Start: expanding horizons; teaching our culture; connecting with the older generation to move forward; encouraging youth to be in politics; serve on community organizations; and think like entrepreneurs.
Stop: treating Zoroastrianism as a dogmatic religion, it is a way of life that encourages you to use your mind; whining on why you can't do something; being fearful; being passive; and promoting negativity and controversy.

Continue: learning and being honest, organizing events where youth can participate freely; and encouraging change.

Zoroastrian Youth Workshop: Two paths, One Community :

Moderated by Farrokh Mistree, Professor, Oklahoma, the debate was excellent. Mistree presented four propositions, and the panelists, Kayras Irani, Delara Javat, Hanoz Kapadia and Zenia Sunavala presented pros and cons.

1. Gathas plus underplay rituals and work towards removing them.

2. Gathas plus some rituals, reject middle Persian texts, reject the later Parsi / Irani traditions.

3. Gathas plus accept the middle Persian texts, precepts and practices, accept the later Parsi / Iranian traditions.

4. Gathas plus aim to syncretize and mystify the precepts and practices of the religion. They narrowed down to the following: For those who wish our religion to evolve within the established framework:

1. Gathas together with other religious text and rituals form the core of the religion. Here rituals will enhance understanding through spiritual development. For those who promote the central philosophical realization of Zoroastrianism without rituals, traditions and community practices:

2. The Gathas alone represent the core of the religion. The role of the ritual is to enhance understanding the religion. Mistree summarized that two models, two paths, one community construct will possibly ensure the survival of Zoroastrianism. If the progressive structure collapses, then the traditional structure will survive. If the traditional structure breaks down, then the new progressive model will be there for Zoroastrians. They concluded noting that "According to Yasna 30.2, YOU in this room are motivated to observe, reflect and discover our faith and promote harmony in our community."

Using Marketing and Media to build the Global Zoroastrian Community :

Sam Bulsara, Chairman Madison World, marketing and media guru, Mumbai gave us a brilliant perspective. He noted that "we should look upon the Zoroastrian Community as a



Sam Bulsara

valuable brand". He cited endless advantages and discussed the questions to ask ourselves. Who are we? According to Gandhiji, "Numbers beneath contempt, but contributions beyond compare." In the words of Narayan Murthy, founder of Infosys India, "I have never met a bad Parsi." What are we known for? He cited our qualities of honesty, integrity, entrepreneurship, intelligence, hard work and philanthropy with some "Parsipanu." Where do we want to be? How do we do this? First, we need to ensure that all is well within the community. Bulsara recommends a blueprint with specific actions in the areas of religion, demography, supporting and equipping the poor, entrepreneurship, health, youth and community organizations, implementable in a decade. The onus he says is on "YOU". He recommends appointing a "Brand Manager" and a "Brand Ambassador" – who has the time and disposition to be visible to society with talks, lectures, etc. and a Public Relations Agency, all working on a pro bono basis.

He concludes saying: "We can no longer live to the old tune: "Que Sera, Sera, Whatever will be will be." Instead he suggests: "The future you must plan for yourself, you see". "We all know we had a glorious past. We should draw inspiration from it, but each one of us should take personal responsibility to further build on the brand equity of the Zoroastrian Community" he advised.

The Importance of Preserving Heritage:

Alison Betts currently Archeologist of Zoroastrian Sites, University of Sydney, took us on a fascinating pictorial journey of the discovery of Zoroastrian traditions in Ancient Chorasmia, in northwestern Uzbekistan. It has revealed a new story about the early history of Zoroastrianism beyond the Iranian heartland. Chorasmia formed a part of the Achaemenid Empire until around the 5th century BCE. As a part of its Persian inheritance, Chorasmia was rich in Zoroastrian traditions. In Akchakhan-kala which was a royal seat, many of the walls have magnificent murals and the rear wall of the main royal audience hall had

massive murals of Avestan deities. All her pictures lend themselves to the practice of Zoroastrianism thousands of years ago.

David Adams, an Australian photojournalist, and famed documentary filmmaker, talked about his travels to Bactria / Zariaspa, Ahanoom and much more, a center of Zoroastrianism. We hope a series documenting this travels and explorations follows.

Health:

Dr Farhad Contractor, California brilliantly discussed his extensive knowledge on Breast Cancer. For Zoroastrian women, the risk for breast cancer was four to five times higher than others. He advocates: "Early detection saves lives, be aware of tools for screening, diagnosis, treatment options and the prognosis. We must be aware, proactive and use screening tools. Be mindful of family history, a previous high-risk biopsy, your own personal history of breast cancer, history of chest wall radiation and genetic history, namely BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations".

Dr Keki Turel, Neurosurgeon from Mumbai, discussed the "Enigmatic Brain" Cerebrospinal fluid, two hemispheres of the brain, the Hypothalamus, Brain Stem, Cerebellum and the Limbic and Ventricular Systems. It was clear to see his passion and knowledge of the brain and his 30 years of experience of doing microsurgery and innovating many techniques for brain surgery. Three times he has been in surgery for 27 hours continuously and has removed the largest brain tumor weighing 0.5 kilograms. He passionately described the great satisfaction he gets in healing, serving the poor and his community.

Pay-it-Forward :

There was a call to action for www.payitforward.co.in. The Zoroastrian community has a long heritage of commerce with integrity. Pay it forward is a Zoroastrian community web effort to bring together and showcase the community

Sponsored by Hilda & Rumi Sethna

member's products and services. You can also volunteer your professional services at volunteer@payitforward.co.in.



Flags of participating countries

Business and Entrepreneurship:

The call was loud and clear ... we need to revive "entrepreneurship" among the community. Valuable sessions focused on how to enable and encourage this within the community. The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) Youth Power Networking session created "an opportunity to expand their professional and business horizons." The youth wing of the WZCC stands on five pillars: networking, mentoring, industry experience, knowledge sharing and incubation.

Australian Federation of Zoroastrian Associations:

The Australian Federation of Zoroastrian Associations (AFZA) was created with the Australian Zoroastrian Association (AZA), Sydney, and BAWAZ from Perth, Zoroastrian Association of Western Australia (ZAWA), Perth, the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria (ZAV), Melbourne, and the Zoroastrian Association of New Zealand (ZANZ).

Awards:

The Global Working Group which meets concurrently on the first morning of the Congress, announced awards:

Zoroastrian Icon Award: Dinshaw Tamboly

Community Service Award: Meher Medora

Science and Medicine Award: Dr Keki Turel

Social Entrepreneur Award: Khushroo Poacha

A Woman of Distinction: Pheroza Godrej

Outstanding young Zoroastrian: Ziba Colah

A special award for Outstanding Service to the Zoroastrian Community was presented to, thrice elected, Dr Ekthihari, first Zoroastrian Member of Parliament in Iran.



Dinshaw Tamboly



Meher Medora



Dr Keki Turel



Khushroo Poacha



Pheroza Godrej



Ziba Colah



Dr Ekthihari

While social media is a great medium for connecting and being informed, it was unfortunately ill-used by some with wrong factual information to malign.

Handing over :

11 WZC concluded with Astad Clubwala, President, Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) receiving the World Congress trophy, together with Homi Gandhi, President of FEZANA for the next Congress in New York in the summer of 2022.

Note: link to souvenir book of the Congress, courtesy of Firoz Pestonji, is available at: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1n88nGYDP3unYfauPLMCgDm11u01Ncio> or <https://www.11wzcpertth.com.au/>



World Congress Trophy being received by Astad Clubwala (left) President of ZAGNY and Homi Gandhi (second from left) President FEZANA for the 12th WZC in NY.



Ladies & gentlemen in their traditional attire of garas and daglis



Behroze Clubwala, resides in Hawthorne, New Jersey and is an active member of the local ZAGNY community. She retired as a Human Resources Advisor from the United Nations Development Programme after a 30+ year career with them.

Images courtesy : Arzan Wadia & Congress Official Photo file

Intelligent Conservatism Can Improve Parsi Survival Prospects

talk given by berjis desai at the 11th world zoroastrian congress, perth, australia, reproduced with the speaker's permission.



1. WHAT IS INTELLIGENT CONSERVATISM?



1.1. While the Zoroastrian faith is not in any imminent danger of dying, the Parsis, as a racial group, face an existential threat. This presentation sets out as to how this threat can be diminished, if issues, dividing the community, are intelligently resolved. This applies predominantly to the Parsis in Mumbai and other parts of India, and to a limited extent, to the diasporas around the world.

1.2. These issues are: racial identity including adoption and

conversion, admission into places of worship; disposal of the dead, dealing with non-Parsi Zoroastrians, managing community and philanthropy institutions and combating Indifference.

1.3. For those denying that Parsis face an existential threat, the following three statements are adequate. Our fertility rate is one of the lowest in the world. We have the highest number of bachelors and spinsters in the world. Our demographic decline rate of 12% per decade is one of the highest in the world. The existential threat, is, therefore, real and accelerating.

1.4. For more than four decades, I have been one of those arguing for a more 'open

door' approach. However, we have now reached an inflection point in the struggle to survive. Preserving our uniqueness is critical. Maintaining our distinct identity is critical. We no longer have the luxury to fight each other. Intelligent conservatism is, therefore, the need of the hour.

1.5. What then is Intelligent conservatism? Avoiding extreme views on either side of the socio- religious spectrum; capturing the common middle ground upon which all but a few agree – that is, Intelligent conservatism. Intelligent conservatism may not always be politically correct or doctrinally pure. It is simply pragmatic. Its sole objective is to increase our numbers without losing our uniqueness. We must avoid offending the sensibilities of a large number of Parsis, and thereby, minimise the differences within the community. If we achieve this, we have a decent chance to survive. This presentation explores as to how we can make Intelligent conservatism, the consensus view.

2. RACIAL IDENTITY

2.1. Around 1900 onwards, the great religious controversies began. The Bombay High Court delivered its judgement in November, 1908 in *Petit V Jeejeebhoy*, and the Privy Council in 1925 in *Bella V Saklat*. Stripped of legalese, these cases dealt with the issue of who was to be regarded as a Parsi, in situations involving conversion, interfaith marriage and adoption. Neither judgement conclusively settled this prime controversy, and 110 years later, this continues to agitate minds.

2.2. The undisputed legal position is that (1) the child of a non-Parsi father and a Parsi mother is not a Parsi; (2) A non- Parsi cannot be converted to be a Parsi; and (3)

adoption of a non Parsi child by Parsi parents does not make such child a Parsi. The reformists grudgingly accept the above legal position but are increasingly making efforts to change it.

Interfaith married women

2.3. It is beyond any doubt that a Parsi woman, who marries a non-Parsi, continues to be a Parsi Zoroastrian; unless it can be conclusively established that she has undergone conversion to her husband's faith. If such a woman asserts that she continues to be a Zoroastrian, the mere fact that she is known by a different name after marriage (as is the custom amongst many Hindus) or that she is a part of her husband's Hindu Undivided Family for taxation purposes, does not imply that she has forsaken her religion. Hence, the Goolrukh Gupta case is precisely the kind of litigation, which is damaging and unnecessary. Cash starved community charities can ill afford legal costs; rights of a woman being violated makes for bad publicity in the secular press and diminishes community goodwill; more importantly, it creates bitterness and increases the divide in the community. Let us therefore not agitate any such well-established legal position.

2.4. On the other hand, as the Fiddler on the Roof would put it, the litigation recently filed in the Calcutta High Court to assert that a navjoted child of a Parsi mother and a non-Parsi father, is, a Parsi, is to be welcomed for the following reasons.

2.5. Liberals are confident that post the Constitution of India with Article 14 guaranteeing equality between the sexes as a fundamental right, Petit and Bela are bound to be overturned. The traditionalists are equally sanguine that the Courts will regard the intention of the founder of a fire temple trust as paramount; and no such founder, a hundred years ago or more, would have ever wanted his Agiyari to be open to children of non-Parsi fathers. Constitution of India and Declaration of Human Rights are irrelevant; ultimately what matters is the interpretation of the

Agiyari trust deed. The right to religious freedom is also a fundamental right and every religious minority has the right to regulate the entry of outsiders into their places of worship. There is considerable merit in both sides of the argument. However, we require a conclusive determination of this issue by the Supreme Court. It is highly likely that the Calcutta case will ultimately provide this determination. Both sides must accept such determination gracefully and then bury this controversy, once and for all.

2.6. Purely from the perspective of Intelligent Conservatism and regardless of one's views on ethnic purity and the like, we must hope that the liberal view is upheld. It will not result in every such child becoming a Parsi. However, it will certainly prevent the loss of many Parsis. Presently, too many Parsis are being lost, on this account. Unable to bring up their children as Parsis, interfaith married Parsi mothers become indifferent to their religious and communal identity. Many young Parsis are also repulsed by what they regard as unjustified discrimination; and start disregarding themselves as Parsis. In this battle, we cannot afford to lose a single Parsi. Every person who is thus lost also forecloses the possibility of his child being brought up as a Parsi. We require warriors in this battle. A liberal interpretation will result in the addition of many such invigorated and enthused warriors. Considering that the trend of Parsi women marrying interfaith is dramatically accelerating, this is the single biggest threat to our survival. The only way to eliminate it, is, to regard such children as Parsis.

3. OUTRIGHT CONVERSION

Will this open the flood gates for non-Parsis to swamp us? Will this encourage the heretics to indulge in outright conversion – even if neither parent is a Parsi? The answer is an emphatic No. It is almost impossible to contemplate any Court in India upholding the validity of any such naked conversion. Intelligent conservatism dictates that we do not require any Joseph

Petersons or Russians being ordained as priests. The Prophet may have 'enjoined conversion', as the Court observed. However, in the present situation, it is suicidal to advocate or encourage outright conversion. The image of marauding hordes annihilating our unique identity is a nightmare, which we cannot even contemplate. Custom of over a thousand years has now sanctified into law, that Parsis do not, cannot, and will not, convert.

4. ADOPTION

What one cannot do directly, cannot be done indirectly. Therefore, it follows that Parsis adopting a non-Parsi child will not make such a child a Parsi. Presently, there is no legislation which enables Parsis to adopt. A Parsi is, therefore, presently unable to legally adopt. We should therefore, work towards enacting a law which permits Parsis to validly adopt a Parsi child; but not a non-Parsi child. This may, at first blush, sound politically incorrect and offensive. However, adoption cannot be used as a device for outright conversion. If a Parsi is permitted to adopt a non-Parsi child, over a period of time, evidence will blur about whether such a child was born a Parsi or not; and result in indirect conversion, by the backdoor. Liberals may contend that such adoption will be rare and ought to be permitted. However, history is replete with instances where the entry of a single finger has managed to bring down a giant barricade. If we cannot afford outright conversion, we also cannot have adoption of a non-Parsi child.

5. ENTRY INTO PLACES OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP

5.1. A similar balanced approach is required on the issue of non-Parsis entering a place of religious worship.

5.2. It is gravely offensive to prohibit non-Parsis from viewing the face of our dead. This is neither a religious dictate nor any time sanctified custom. Only in the last 150 years or so, this practice arose in the

aftermath of Parsi Muslim riots in Bombay. Obviously, the justification is long gone. It is emotionally disturbing to the Kith and Kin of the deceased and also results in a loss of goodwill among fellow communities. Many opt to be cremated for this reason. It is time that we discontinue this obnoxious practice.

5.3. At the same time, we ought to banish the thought in some liberal minds, which wants free entry of non-Parsis into our fire temples. Firstly, it would be going against the express wishes of the founder of the fire temple to restrict entry only to Parsis; and is unlikely to be upheld by a Court of law. In any event, it would be disastrous to even flirt with this idea. Can you imagine a serpentine queue from the Western Express Highway upto Udvada village to worship the Iranshah? The turmoil and damage it would unleash is simply unthinkable. A majority of practicing Zoroastrians do believe that the entry of a non Parsi into a consecrated fire temple is against the Scriptures and will diminish the protective power of the enthroned Fire. Once again, Intelligent conservatism demands that we preserve and cherish the environs of our fire temples. Reasons of expediency, hurting religious sentiment, fear of being overrun and ritualistic purity – all demand that we reserve our fire temples only for Parsis. Prayer halls housing a non-consecrated fire is not an Agiyary. Such halls being open to all, is, therefore, a non-issue.

6. DISPOSAL OF THE DEAD

6.1. Alternative modes of disposal other than Dokhmenashini are now freely available. However, the dilemma persists in the mind of many a practising Zoroastrian, who prefers to be cremated but yet wants to exit from the serene, soothing and soul satisfying environs of the Towers of Silence. It is enormously difficult to recreate the ambience and facilities of the Towers, in any prayer hall. Is a modus vivendi possible? Installing a crematoria or a burial ground in the Towers is presently not a feasible option. Apart from serious legal and environmental difficulties, such a move will stir a hornet's nest; and, therefore, has to be shelved.

6.2. Since it is virtually impossible to revive the vultures, it is time to abandon hare brained schemes to create an aviary for breeding vultures; and instead focus on technologically improving the efficiency of solar panels, to prevent undisposed remains for a long time and its consequent ill-effects.

6.3. So far as post-funeral prayers are concerned, we must establish a level playing field, to the extent practicable, whether the disposal is by cremation, burial or the Towers. Since permitting prayers in the Towers itself for those being cremated. Is a contentious issue, let us stop agitating it. However, so far as the fire temples are concerned, even presently, most permit prayers for the crematees barring the first four days. There is no justification for carving out such a period. Eliminating such minor sore points will help us focus our energies on critical issues. It will also generate a 'feel good' factor in the community.

7. HARNESSING NON-PARSI ZOROASTRIANS

As an alternative to other strategies for survival, non-Parsi Zoroastrians (NPZ) are our Plan B. In keeping with the principles of Intelligent Conservatism, NPZ cannot enjoy the same rights as Parsis. However, as our co-religionists, it is imperative that we have sustained interaction with them. An occasional World Congress is obviously not sufficient. Large charities have to take a lead, and finance youth exchange programmes between Parsis and the NPZ. This will result in understanding each other's cultural ecosystems. The rapidly accelerating trend of interfaith marriages is unlikely to reverse. Isn't it better, therefore, if there are same faith marriages between Parsis and the NPZ? The children of such marriages would be regarded as Parsis (assuming parity between the sexes is achieved in the near future). Let us not forget that NPZ are our co-religionists. Gradually, letting them enter our fold, through marriages, will be a tremendous booster – demographically,

culturally and even from a viewpoint of genetics. It may be reiterated that one is not advocating conversion of the NPZ as Parsis, but a gradual and slow assimilation through marriages.

8. MANAGING COMMUNITY & CHARITY RESOURCES

8.1. We do not even recognize that we are facing a grave existential crisis. Instead of optimizing our vast financial and intellectual resources to evolve a strategy to survive; we are behaving like crabs, viciously trying to bring each other down. Give us 9 Parsis and there will be 10 opinions now sounds like a sick joke. In most places, our so-called leadership is intellectually bankrupt. A handful of people control community institutions, as if it was their backyard. In recent times, dialogue and debate have degenerated into diatribe. Differences are mostly personality based and not issue based. This attitude has to be reversed.

8.2. It is incorrect to blame the method by which these leaders are elected to office. Any method will throw up the same circus and the same bunch of not so comic performers. We can no longer afford to dismiss vicious internal dynamics by benignly terming it as usual Parsi politics. Repulsed by this infighting, and not being able to co-exist with nasty street fighters, the honest and the good, who wish to serve the community, shy away.

8.3. We must consider it our sacred duty to wisely select our leaders. We must not think in terms of loyalty' or affiliation to a particular group or dominant individual but focus exclusively on the merits of the candidate – track record of service, integrity and ability to work harmoniously with others.

8.4. Another reason for this state of affairs is Indifference. An overwhelming number of Parsis are disinterested or totally indifferent to community affairs. Indifference is a deadly killer. It is a cancer on our community's survival prospects. How do we combat this indifference? On this, hinges our survival.

9. COMBATING INDIFFERENCE

9.1. Firstly, let us bring down the tone of the debate and discussion on any dividing issue. We can no longer afford to be strident in our religious views or indulge in name calling. Strangely, both the traditionalists and the reformists are actually comrades in arms. They are both willing to contribute time and resources, as they are both interested in their community and in the Faith. The problem lies with the silent majority of Indifferents – whose only interest is availing benefits of community housing and community charity, and lining up, once in a while, to vote for a candidate propped up by one group or another. These Indifferents have to be convinced as to why it is their sacred duty to join as a soldier in this struggle.

9.2. We feel momentarily misty eyed when 'Chhaiye Hume Zarhosti' is played. We must feel misty eyed, every day, remembering the Herculean struggle to save the Holy Fire from being extinguished; the insurmountable odds against which we have not only survived but prospered; the aura of protection being constantly accorded by hundreds of Holy Fires around the world. Each of us has to be convinced that it is worthwhile to preserve and save Parsi culture – as an anthropological rarity, if nothing else. We have to stop feeling like a community. We have to start feeling like a Nation -develop legitimate pride in our unique value systems, beliefs and the way of life. Israel is the best example to emulate. In practical terms, it also means fending for each other, to the extent possible. If someone dubs it as communal bias, so be it. It is badly required. A few days ago, traditionalists and liberals joined forces to prevent the Mumbai Metro Project from structurally and spiritually injuring two of our Atash Behrams. Such episodes are galvanizing points to fire the imagination of the entire community and give a feeling of being unified. Increasingly, we will have to be alert and vigilant to fight for our community's rights.

10. CONCLUSION

Intelligent Conservatism requires a change of mindset, all around. We have to get rid of our labels – orthodox or reformist; traditionalist or modernist; progressive or isolationist. We have to all become Conservationists with the single minded objective of ensuring survival without losing our unique identity. We must ignore our doctrinal differences and regard each other as a part of a crusading army, determined to wake up the Indifferents, from their slumber. As Time ticks away inexorably, we have to give up our 'isms' and our egos and even political correctness and adopt a pragmatic, sensible approach to forge a consensus on contentious issues.



Bergis M Desai is a lawyer in private practice, a journalist and columnist residing in Mumbai India. He considers himself an unsuccessful community activist.

Tata's Dream Institution in Bengaluru

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<http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/bengaluru/2018/may/30/tatas-dream-institution-in-bengaluru-1821595.html>

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by sharath ahuja

The country's premier research institute, the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), that came into being on the issuance of the Vesting Order on May 27, 1909, turned 109 recently.

The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, popularly called TATA Institute, was conceived as a 'research institute' or 'university of research' by the visionary Parsi businessman Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata, towards the end of the 19th century.

The early history of the institute is a fascinating chapter in the story of higher education and scientific research in India, which led to the establishment of the institute. The key figures include the founder – Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata, a far-sighted visionary; Swami Vivekananda; Nalavadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar, the then Maharaja of Princely Mysore and his mother Her Highness Kempananjamani Vanivilasa Sannidhana, then Queen Regent; Lord Curzon, former Viceroy of India; and Burjorji J Padshah, Tata's right hand man.

The institute came into being on the issuance of the Vesting Order on May 27, 1909, by the British government after a long gestation period of thirteen years, since it was first conceived in 1896. The 400-acre land for the institute was generously donated by the Maharaja of Mysore in March 1907. The contribution from the princely state of Mysuru was one of the decisive factors in determining the location of Tata's proposed institute in Bengaluru. Mention must be made of the contribution by Dewan K Seshadri Iyer, who ably assisted the Maharaja on this issue. Among the many factors that favoured Bengaluru

for the establishment of the institute were its salubrious climate, availability of abundant natural mineral resources and unlimited power from the Shivasamudram Power Station.



IISc on a 400-acre land on CV Raman Road

Tata did not want his name to be associated with the institute, his dream was to create an institution that would contribute to the development of India. Nevertheless, over the years, the locals have fondly call IISc, the TATA Institute, in honour of its founder. A silken connection to Bengaluru and IISc was established early in its history when the elder son of Tata, Dorab married a Bengalurean Meherbai, the daughter of H J Bhabha, the then inspector general of education for Mysuru and Coorg.

The Institute began with two departments - the general and applied chemistry department and the electro-technology department - and the first batch of students were admitted into the institute in 1911-1912. Soon, the departments of organic chemistry and biochemistry were added. Early research work in these departments focused on several local industrial

problems, such as sandalwood oil extraction and lac and acetone manufacturing processes. Records available at the IISc Archives and Publications Cell show that the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewage System (BWSSB) was the outcome of research work carried out in the 1920s by Professor Gilbert J Fowler of the biochemistry department. The department of physics came into being in 1933 when Professor CV Raman became the first Indian director of IISc.

The institute is today ranked as the number one institute in the country. Several new areas of research have been established. The institute's departments, in fields ranging from aerospace engineering and high voltage engineering, biochemistry and many more, have served to nucleate several organisations / institutions in both the public and private sectors in the country. The faculty and alumni of the institute have been at the forefront of establishing and spearheading many new institutions and programmes across India. Homi Bhaba conceived the idea of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) while working at IISc. Vikram Sarabhai, the founder of India's Space Programme, collaborated with CV Raman at IISc. The Central Power Research Institute (CPRI), Bengaluru; the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL); the National Aerospace Laboratory (NAL); the Central Food and Technological Institute (CFTRI-Mysore); the Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Limited are some of the other organisations that owe their origin to the institute.

Professor P Balaram, the former director of IISc, had written in the journal Current Science (Vol 94, No, 10 Jan 2008) and was quoted in editorial, 'The Birth of the Indian Institute of Science' reading, "The story of IISc and the men who built it is yet to be written. If the right scribe is found, it should be a tale worth reading."



Images top to bottom : The building was built in neo-colonial style of architecture : The inorganics and physical chemistry department : Plaque, commemorating the centenary year.

Prominent personalities who served IISc

Over the past 100 years, several prominent citizens of the city have served in an official capacity as IISc's governing bodies. They include Dewan's – T Anand Rao, VP Madhava Rao, Sir Mirza Ismail and Sir M Vishveswaraya. Many of India's most distinguished scientists have been associated with IISc. Notable among them are GN Ramachandran, Harish Chandra, Satish Dhawan, Arcot Ramachandran, Roddam Narasimha and CNR Rao.

New academic programmes

In the last decade, IISc has initiated many new academic programmes such as the interdisciplinary PhD programmes in mathematical sciences, chemical biology, earth and nano science and technology. An M Tech programme in climate sciences and climate change has also been established.



Top : A corridor with Victorian style doors. Below The institute is a home to 112 species of trees.



The author is a technical officer, retired, Archives and Publications Cell, IISc.

Microsoft Year in Review Data Journalism Contest

Narius Patel is a Business Intelligence (BI) consultant based north of London in Milton Keynes, UK. As a BI specialist he regularly works with a wide variety of business data, so when the opportunity to enter a Microsoft competition aimed at promoting data driven journalism came along, he submitted his entry just in time.

The competition aimed to promote the use of Microsoft's BI software (Power BI) as a tool to assist news organisations with analysing publicly available data in order to drive news articles. Narius' entry utilised data from the Missing Migrants Project, an agency that collects data on fatalities and disappearances related to human migration particularly along the main migratory routes. The entry focused on three of these routes, the North Africa to Europe route across the Mediterranean, the Mexico / US border and the Middle East primarily the Iran and Afghanistan border.

The entry was singled out for a joint second place with one of the judges, Troy Thibodeaux (Interactive Newsroom Technology and Data Journalism Team Editor at The Associated Press) saying:

"This report has one of the most pleasing designs in the competition. The integrated chart and map displays offer a compelling combination of narrative and analysis, and the design choices there are harmonious, as well. ... I like the consistent design with variation in thematic topline statistics. The combination shows that the crisis is worldwide while recognizing differences in the individual regional constituent crises."

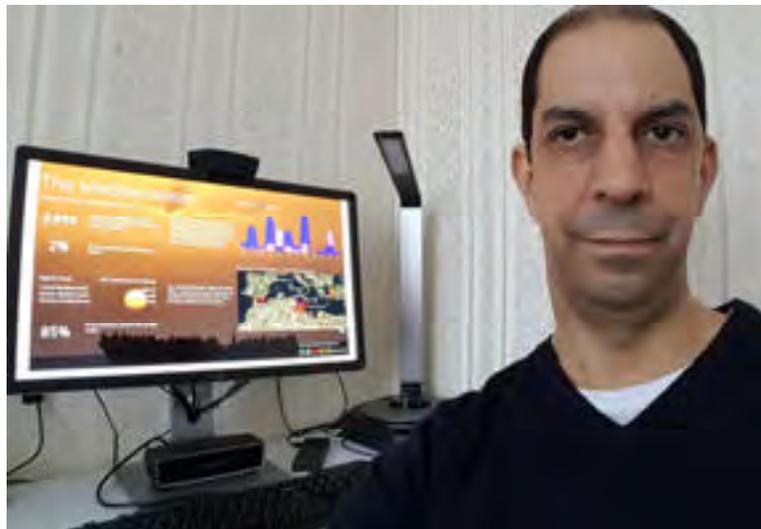
Narius says the publicity derived from the competition winners announcement, which was published on the official Microsoft Power BI Blog page, made it worth entering the competition even though he came second. His entry remains a featured item on the Microsoft Power BI Data Stories gallery.

The competition winners announcement can be seen here:

<https://powerbi.microsoft.com/en-us/blog/year-in-review-contest-winner-2017/>

Narius's competition entry can be seen here:

<https://community.powerbi.com/t5/Data-Stories-Gallery/Missing-Migrants-Tracking-Deaths-Along-Migratory-Routes/m-p/342271>



The Stories We Tell Ourselves

by danny khursigara

“We can either focus on what’s working in our lives or on what’s not working. There’s evidence for both in everybody’s life. If we focus on what’s not working we’re going to feel less confident and optimistic. If we focus on what is working that’s just great, great gift and it’s available to us right now” ~ Ariana Huffington.

I have observed time and again that we create what we choose to focus on. Spending over 18 years as COO/CFO in international organizations across number of culturally distinct geographies and over the recent years as founder of FreedomOne International, and having coached intimately the CEOs of global brands from LVMH, Fendi, Givenchy and Gucci to financial institutions and private equity firms and other VIPs, the thing I find is common among high achievers, pioneers and change makers is the ‘stories’ they tell themselves of what is possible and what isn’t. What they can do and what they **won’t** (not can’t) do.

Their stories either empower them to grow and contribute or disempower them into blaming and complaining and giving their power away.

Our success, happiness and fulfillment is closely connected to the stories we tell ourselves about who we are, what we’re capable of and also what our fears and excuses are, unfortunately. At a deeper level, the story we tell ourselves is where we live – period. Be it emotionally, mentally and at times even physically. It can be the wind beneath our wings or the anchor that pulls us down.

Our choice, entirely.

In my latest bestselling book on Kindle, *Inside/Out – 8 Success Keys to Help Millennials Thrive* that was dedicated to my late dad (Chum Khursigara), I have referred to this as tapping into your inner world, which is primarily your thoughts and feelings, to determine your external reality. I, myself, have stood on the precipice of breakdown, fear and doubt more than I like

to admit, only to realize that the story that I chose to believe about myself didn’t empower me and was a misconstrued reflection of my own potential.

I have coached quite a few senior executives who suddenly lost their jobs and threw themselves over the edge into despair, lack of self-esteem and hopelessness when the going got tough. A notable one is the ex-CEO of the renowned brand, Burberry. Having lost his job unexpectedly over a technicality and internal politics, led him to experience a deep sense of failure, rejection and loss of confidence. And over time those thoughts and feelings were magnified and kept getting worse.

What story about himself was he starting to believe? ‘I’m in my late 40s, the market is looking for younger talent. My job has come to an abrupt end that is beyond my control. There’s a possibility that I won’t be able to support my family as months go by. I am being discriminated against and I might never find gainful employment again. I always have to settle for less. I never felt good enough since I was a child. My glory days as an expat are over and I’ll have to keep my expectations low. I guess this is a youth based society and I have achieved as much as I could and now I must prepare to face a different reality. At least I know that I did my best’. So on and so forth ...

This story isn’t that bad, is it? It’s actually horrific! It made him feel depressed, loss of self worth and that his best days were suddenly behind him. He told himself this story so often that it started to become his reality. He said it so many times subconsciously that he actually started believing it as fact.



Danny Khursigara is the Founder of FreedomONE International that specializes in Executive Coaching and Business Transformation. His goal is to impact 50,000 people in five years. He is a Partner at Owlpha-Omega, UK as well as the Advisory board member to SENsational Consultancy – that specialises in providing employment for individuals with disability; recently founded the ‘Hong Kong Make a Change Foundation’ to help improve the happiness index which is at an all time low, for the local population. He loves to travel, listens to music, meditates and enjoys a good work out. Danny presently lives with his wife and three daughters in Hong Kong.

Your emotions, your thoughts and your 'story' are your life. He read my work, searched me up and reached out to me and soon we started working together. Slowly but surely he exposed his story as a lie. He started turning his inner critic into an inner coach. He realized that if he changed his story, he could change his present and future. And that's exactly what he did!

He began telling himself a brand new story, one that started to transform his life, his family and the future in front of him.

'I created amazing results in my career for world renowned organisations. People or age doesn't limit us. It empowers us to do better, to use my wisdom and experience to act smarter and faster. Each challenge helps me grow and makes me want to do even better and learn from my mistakes. It helps me see my true potential beyond the egoic mind. It makes me a better man – at home and at work. I have so many amazing gifts and things to be grateful for. I intend to acknowledge it, use them'.

How did that sound? A little different from the man thinking his glory days were behind him and it was time to fade away.

With an empowering attitude and a body language to support it, his 'energetic' made a turnaround. He was out of a job for nearly a year but as soon as he changed his story and started believing a better version of himself, in no time his external reality started to shift as well.

Sure enough, through a synchronistic casual conversation in NYC, he was appointed as Head of a high street fashion brand with an exciting mandate. This all happened fairly quickly and with grace and ease.

Change your story and you will change your life.

"Through a series of life experiences that help connect the dots, you begin to realize that life isn't happening to you, but for you. If we exist

in fear or isolate ourselves and are overwhelmed, it creates more fear.

*Remember—fear leads to fewer options and love offers endless possibilities. There are infinite possibilities when we get into alignment with the vibration of love and joy. You do these things by following your curiosities. I view creativity, personal power, and communication as more than just life skills, but life-changing practices". ~ Sara Landon, interviewed by Danny Khursigara for *Inside/Out – 8 Success Keys to Help Millennials Thrive.**

It's time to shift your story.

Moving away from moaning, whining, blaming and complaining and stepping into your power. Not always the simplest of journeys but I invite you to give it a try, I guarantee it will be worthwhile. As my friend Dean Graziosi would say, imagine you're in a house full of old memories from your life and some are good memories, but others are those negative stories that remind of the pain of bad things that happened. Now imagine that the house is on fire and you have a tiny suitcase in your hands and only a minute to save some of those memories. In order to reach the next level of success and fulfillment in life, you must choose to pack only the memories and stories that serve you going forward. If it's a negative memory that weighs on your heart and mind, let it burn up in the fire. Remember, the past only lives inside you. If it haunts you and doesn't serve your grander future, then let it burn up in the fire.

You can learn so much about yourself and your state of being by the results you're presently creating. If you don't like the results you're creating time and time again, it's time to change your story. Unleash the hero that lives inside of you and attain the wealth and happiness you deserve.

*I'm grateful for every risk I took and for having the ability to define my path, not allowing it to be defined for me. ~ Nick Nanton, Five Time Emmy award winning Director interviewed by Danny Khursigara for *Inside/Out – 8 Success Keys to Help Millennials Thrive.**

Let's take a moment to compare the two stories – the old and new version. Can you see how radically different they are? Can you see how radically different the results of your life will be by hanging on to the old version of you? I can understand that it takes time to erase the stories we've told ourselves for decades, from your subconscious. The beliefs imposed by society, authority figures, cultural orientation and our own repetitive and limited thinking pattern. But I urge you to hang in there – practice persistence with patience! Make a commitment to affirming this new dialogue with self once every morning and once every night. Meditate on it and then let it go.

Eventually, the old story will no longer hold water or drown you in despair, fear or hopelessness. Remember, fear is merely a (FEAR) Fantasized Experience Appearing Real. Once the ego mind loses its grip over you, it instantly loses its power to control and influence your thoughts and behaviors. This is true freedom! And from that place of 'giving yourself permission', imagination and possibility you can co-create a brighter and happier future for yourself. You deserve it so don't let anyone tell you different, no matter at which stage in life you are just now!

Possibility is contagious. If you show yourself that something is possible in your life that you once thought was not, it will fuel your confidence throughout life.

"When I discover who I am, I'll be free." ~ Ralph Ellison (from *Inside/Out – 8 Success Keys to Help Millennials Thrive*).

Changing people's lives is my obsession, a calling, a soul purpose. At the same time, I want to serve my own growth as well. That's the reason why I work closely with renowned coaches and mentors who constantly challenge me and push my boundaries and making things happen that I once only read about in a book or watched it in a movie. I finally realized that we make our own movie, we choose our own audience and we get to decide whether it will be a blockbuster or not!

You cannot have what you are not willing to become in consciousness. ~ Danny Khursigara (from *Inside/Out – 8 Success Keys to Help Millennials Thrive*).

One of my mentors, and #1 NY Times bestselling author of *Conversations with God*, Neale Donald Walsh said in that *"everything you want is just outside your comfort zone"*. The foundational teachings that Zoroastrianism provides us are simple and beautiful and we need to keep building on that knowledge and awareness and not get too hung up on the mistakes we make along the way.

Few years ago, someone shared with me the results of a study an Australian nurse and counselor who was a caregiver for terminally ill people, most of them had less than two months or so to live. As part of her therapy, she would ask patients if there was anything they would do differently if they were given a second chance. The five most common replies were:

- They wish they had pursued their dreams and not the life others expected of them.
- They wished they didn't have to work so hard.
- They wished they had the courage to express their feelings and speak their mind.
- They wished they had stayed in touch with their friends.
- They wish they had let themselves be happier.

A simple yet valuable insight helping us look deeper.

I encourage you to question the story you're telling yourself if you're feeling stuck, depressed or disempowered. Find a mentor, reach out to a coach, look for someone you admire and who can help you rewrite that amazing blockbuster, the story we call – life!



[Danny was profiled in Hamazor Issue 2/2017 pp46-49 & Issue 2/2018 pp 55-56.]

Inside / Out 8 Success Keys to Help Millennials Thrive is now available on Kindle and Amazon.

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An Interview with Astad Deboo

Astad Deboo, a septuagenarian and a veteran artiste, was conferred with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Yagnaraman July Fest 2018. At this Fest he presented a dance recital incorporating five decades of his magic on stage at the Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai.

Deboo mentions the award goes a long way to show change. "When I started off (in the 1970s), 'contemporary' was a word not to be used, it was a strict no-no," he recalls. "Today, you say contemporary, and it's 'yes, yes, yes'."

The Hindu of 5 July 2018, Rupa Srikanth writes on Astad receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award ending with, "The last piece, 'Every fragment ...' inspired by Rabindranath Tagore's work with haunting music by Yoichiro Yoshikawa, had a spiritual leaning. He used symbolism in the context of plucking flowers and making a garland but the path to awakening was made in twirls; I counted 112 and Lalitha Venkat, Narthaki.com, 131. Physically it was certainly a feat, but the path also had an emotional overtone as it went through moments of happiness, seeking, pleading, praying, confusion and finally peace. Vintage Astad was a treat."

Astad Deboo is also the proud recipient of the Padma Shri in 2007 and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1996.

Chatting with Astad, after the Award was received, the Editor of Hamazor asked ...

What does it mean to you to be recognised even at this late stage of your career?

Yes it's an award given by one of the most prestigious and powerful Indian Classical Dance and Music Foundation in Chennai.

For them to give me an award and Contemporary Dance speaks highly of them to felicitate me with this award; and now I am in the August company of great scholars, musicians and dancers.

To answer your question, not in my wildest dreams did I think that I would be given the Yagnaraman Living Legend Award by the Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, one of the most powerful and respected Sabhas Chennai who are the gate keepers of the Indian Classical Music and Dance. For them to give me this award is path breaking and also for Contemporary Dance.

Please tell us how you started, when and why dance appealed to you, after all 50 odd years

ago I don't think there were many Indian professional dancers, certainly not Parsis.

I started studying dance from the age of six in the city of Jamshedpur. It's thanks to my parents who saw the talent in me and sent me to study but they did make me stop after I finished high school. I was sent to study in Mumbai graduating with a Commerce and Economic Degree. After graduating I still wanted to dance and study and I was really blessed that they allowed me. The rest is history.



I never realised that for the last 40 years I have such a varied body of work which I have created, collaborated with dancers, musicians, theatre directors, street children, puppeteers, hearing impaired people and Bollywood.

I am still working on very different projects with Indian classical musicians creating new work with street children, and my on going work with the drummers of Manipur which is touring.

In reply about Parsis half a century ago who have studied dance and performed – there were some but nobody has had such a long inning like yours truly and I am blessed. Also to survive in this vicious world of dance is another thing.

This Lifetime Legend Award, I presume it is an Indian Award. Is this given yearly or rarely, which would make more sense, as then only it would be something special.

The Krishna Gana Sabha does give an award every year to Legends who are living and still performing and another award given to young performers who are excellent in their art either music or dance.

The community is proud of your achievements and wish you many more years of dance.



The award presented to Astad by very well known dance critic Leela Venkatraman. The gentleman on the right of Astad is Dr Nalli.

photo credit : Amit Kumar

The Parsi Dr Hannibal Lecter

by zameer palamkote

I was pleasantly surprised to read Zerbano Gifford's article in the Hamazor – Issue 2 of 2017 pp 26-28. Dr Buck Ruxton's case has intrigued me ever since I was a child. A story of the Parsi Dr Hannibal Lecter, the only difference being that Lecter was a fictional character by novelist Thomas Harris, while this Parsi version is a true to life story.

Dr Buck Ruxton, a doctor and murderer, involved in one of United Kingdom's most publicised murder case of the 1930's and recorded as the biggest murder trial of the century. It gripped England at the time and was also known as the "Jigsaw Murders". The case is remembered now not only for being "Britain's Goriest Murder Case" but also for the innovative forensic techniques employed at the time, in solving it.

Here are a few facts that only a handful of people alive, would know of.

On 7th May 1925 Dr Bukhtyar Rustomji Ratanji Hakim aka Dr Buck Ruxton married a girl called Miss Motha Jehengir Ghadially, who was from an affluent Parsi family in Bombay. Dr Hakim wooed Miss Ghadially while he was a guest at the Ghadially family home "Sunny Villa" at Huges Road off Kemp's Corner, Bombay. Miss Ghadially at the time was engaged, to be married and despite her families' objections, broke her engagement with her suitor and married Dr Hakim. Dr Hakim went on to become a Medical Officer in the Indian Medical Service appointed to the Malaria Commission and served a posting in Basra, Iraq, where it is alleged he converted to the faith of Islam (so as to easily abdicate his marriage in India). He was possibly known as Dr Gabriel Hakim. Their marriage was short lived and he abandoned her and came to England in 1927 on the pretext of higher education and promised his naive wife a future in England.

At the end of an 11-day trial on 13th March 1936, the all male jury walked in and unanimously found Dr Ruxton guilty of the double murders. After they had brought in a verdict of guilty in Manchester Assizes (High Court), a horror-struck jury comprising of townsfolk and farmers were rewarded in a manner almost unprecedented in the annals of British justice. Cried presiding Justice Singleton: *"I excuse you all from jury service for the rest of your lives, because of the dreadful and gruesome details you have been forced to hear."* Justice Singleton donned the black cap, which in Britain means that sentence of death is to be pronounced. *"The law knows but one sentence, for the terrible crime you have committed!"* he cried, *"To hang by the neck, until dead"*. Dr Ruxton seemed stunned at first. Then suddenly came to himself and without jittering or trembling, outstretched his arm and gave his judge an open hand salute of oriental warriors. As the two wardens came to lead him from the prisoner's dock, he gave the same cold salute to the uncomfortable and astonished jury.

Ten years later in 1946 at the historic Nuremberg trials, three of the councils in the Ruxton case went on to play a very significant role. The two who prosecuted Dr Ruxton, Hartley Shawcross and David Maxwell Fyfe were part of the British lawyers on the team that led the prosecution against the Nazi Germans, while Ruxton's defence council Norman Birkett, was one of the eight judges.

The trial caught the attention of the public; not just for the horrible deaths at 2 Dalton Square but also for the forensic techniques used to expose the murderer; early fingerprinting, x-ray technology and even forensic entomology were used for the first time. The world of forensic science even today draws inspiration from this historic case and the pioneering achievement of the

forensic experts involved. It was the first case where the use of Forensic Science had secured a conviction. A book co-written by the two forensic doctors John Glaister and James Couper Brash 'Medico-Legal Aspects of Ruxton Case', is till date used as a reference in forensic studies and investigations.

It is true that we Parsis have always been pioneers and left a mark in all walks of life, including crime. Guess this was the Parsi contribution towards modern Crime Scene Investigation and Forensic Science.

Could this have been "The Perfect Murder"? Despite the verdict a few facts still remain unanswered, since there was neither a confession recorded nor an eyewitness to the murders:

1. What was the exact date and time of murder?
2. Was the murder premeditated or an act of spontaneous rage?
3. Some allege that it was the Doctor that had another affair and falsely accused his wife of adultery in order to end the marriage.
4. The investigators did not find a single trace of blood in Dr Ruxton's car. Considering the distance he would have traveled to dispose the body parts, this seemed almost impossible.
5. The reason for Mary Jane Rogerson's murder? Was she an eyewitness to the crime or as some investigators suspect, that she was killed to prove the Doctor's statement that Mrs Ruxton had run off with her lover? Possibly one of the reasons the body of Miss Rogerson was dismembered beyond recognition and the torso was missing. Maybe the Doctor tried to hide the sex of his second victim? Since the anatomical report of Dr James Brash initially mentions "probably female".
6. Did the Doctor dispose the body parts all at the same time or over a period of days? Were there other sites where the body parts were disposed, since a lot of the parts were never found?
7. How long did it take the Doctor to dissect the two bodies? Was it done at a stretch or over a few days?

8. Was Dr Ruxton framed?

9. Did the Doctor write the confession letter himself or was it a media hoax? Or did the Doctor do so for the £3,000 offered to him by News of the World, which he used to hire his legal council.

10. In his final hours, he penned a letter to his lawyer Norman Birkett, thanking him for representing him in his defense and commending his efforts. He concluded his letter with the sentence: *"I know that in a few hours I shall be going to meet my Maker, but I say to you, sir, that I am entirely innocent of this crime"*.

I am sure by now you are wondering why am I so interested in this particular case?

Before you know why, I need to narrate an interesting episode on my first trip to the UK back in June of 1997. On my visit to the Madame Tussauds Wax Museum, I asked the curator of the house of horrors about the wax bust of Dr Buck Ruxton. He informed me that it was not part of this years display, as they keep on changing it from time to time. He was surprised and asked me how I knew about the case of Dr Buck Ruxton, considering it was so old and almost forgotten. When I told him the reason he was shocked and took me to a restricted area in the basement, where the Doctor's bust was kept along with many others and showed it to me. He told me that he shall always remember this meeting of ours and he even introduced me to his colleagues, who were all in disbelief. They said that in all their years of working at the museum, this was the first time someone had given such an explanation to see an exhibit, especially one in the House of Horrors. They said this type of situation usually happens only with the statues and busts of famous personalities in the main exhibit.

Now here's the reason why this particular case intrigued me from a very young age.

Mrs Motha Bukhtyar Hakim nee Motha Jehengir Ghadijally who Dr Buck Ruxton married in India and later abandoned, was the sister of my Great Grandfather Mr Cursetji Jehengir Ghadijally. Which makes



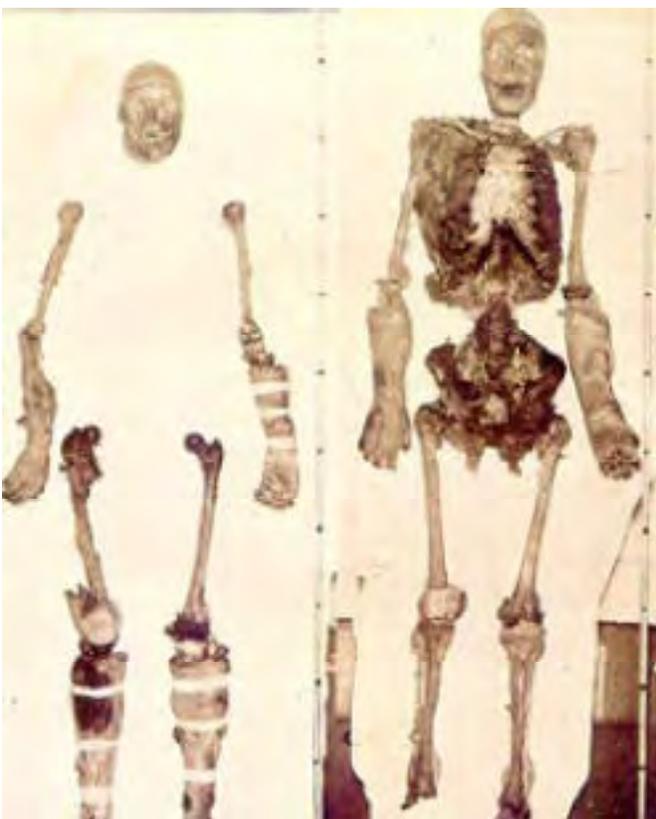
Dr Buck Ruxton



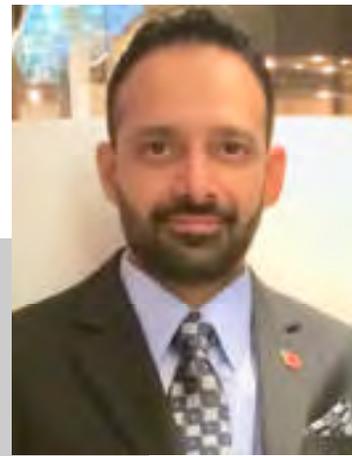
Mr Jangoo Cursetji Ghadially



Mrs Behroze Homi Palamkote nee Behroze Cursetji Ghadially



The two bodies reconstructed by investigators of Miss Mary Jane Rogerson (L) & Mrs Isabella Ruxton (R)



Born and bred in Bombay, Zameer Cyrus Palamkote aged 43 is an active member of the local community in Bombay's western suburb of Bandra. Along with a passion to work on projects related to civic enhancement, Zameer dedicates his free time towards safeguarding the interests of Zoroastrian institutions.

Dr Buck Ruxton my Great Grand Uncle. The oldest surviving members of the Ghadially family are my Grandmother Mrs Behroze Homi Palamkote and her brother Mr Jangoo Cursetji Ghadially, both whom live in Bombay. They have been my source of information and the only link to Motha Jehengir Ghadially or Motha fui as she was fondly known. Both my parents as kids would visit Motha fui's house in Cuff Parade Bombay and recall her as a pretty and stately lady of a very gentle nature.

I have some amazing stories to share about my family members, whose history I have traced way back to 1757. War veterans and POWs having served the I & II World Wars, one of them being mentioned twice in the Kings dispatches, aficionados in the field of Music, Art and Literature and even men who have laid down their lives in the service of the Nation. Yet the topic of my fascination was this person who was merely related to me by law and not even by blood. Here's what made me spend years gathering information on this case not only from the internet but also through various books, visiting government archives in London, trips to various parts of the UK and making notes from family members.

Life is like a great big supermarket; we continuously walk through its aisles making our choices along the way. It is at deaths' checkout counter, that we take stock of our baskets filled with the choices we've made. For some of us our baskets seem teeming, while for others they are empty; some of the lighter baskets are priceless, while some heavier ones of no value. At the end of this great shopping spree, we have no one to blame for the choices we made in life but ourselves. Every step of our conscious life there is a choice that we must make and that is the challenge of our very existence.

However, there is just this one item in life, which The Great Store Keeper places in all our baskets, before we start this journey of eternal shopping. This is the one and only aspect of our lives, which we do not have a choice of. Our Family ...

You love yours or hate it; it's always there. You're proud of it or ashamed; you've got to accept it. It's big or small; you've got to live with it. Whether your family approves of you or disowns you; it's still yours. Even abandoned children and orphans, left all alone in this world have one; it's just that they are unaware of theirs.

A Family is like a bunch of apples put in our shopping basket. Some are rosy and sweet, while others rotten and sour. We often take the easy way out by ignoring or forgetting about the rotten ones and blame fate for putting them in our baskets. It takes courage to accept what life has put in our baskets, to take onus and accept them no matter what.

It is often at the passing of a generation that an urge to delve into your family roots is enkindled. Well, that is exactly what made me climb up my family tree, to track the antecedents of the apples in my basket. In this interesting odyssey I discovered that my ancestors had accomplished some very inspiring and remarkably proud achievements. Some might even call it eccentric but I was almost spontaneously intrigued by the most putrid apple in my basket.

You ask if I am proud of this felonious deed being a part of my family history? Well the answer is NO.

Yet, whether I like it or not, this loathsome narrative will always be an immutable chapter of my ancestral legacy and I've got to live with.

Look at the bright side of it; at least I have this enthralling story to tell you all.



Harnessing the Power of Social Media to Drive Small Business Entrepreneurship

by vera dinshaw springett

Social media has changed everything. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and various other channels have been transforming the way we communicate, share news and stories — and even the way businesses and brands, large or small, operate and build experiences for their social-media-savvy customers.

What started as a small Facebook group with informal intentions to share recipes and farm ideas amongst close friends and acquaintances, has exploded into a full-scale platform for promoting small food and catering businesses, especially in Parsi-food loving communities across the globe.

This group, Parsis Exchange Recipes, fondly referred to as PER, is one of the few, if not the only Zoroastrian group to make it one of its main goals to allow small entrepreneurs and caterers to advertise their businesses, blogs and services for free within the group. What's more interesting though, is how the founders of PER are actively seeking to help them thrive.

As a founding member of PER, alongside my co-founder and partner Arbez Shroff Patel, we could've never imagined what this one small gesture on our part to allow complimentary advertising, could do to revive, build confidence and drive sales for caterers, especially Parsi ones, worldwide.

So where did it all begin and how has it been fruitful? Membership numbers were growing steadily within the group, from hundreds to thousands of Parsi and non-Parsi joining on a daily basis. Every now and then, a member who also happened to be a caterer, would bravely share within posts and comments about their business. Casually mentioning whether they were selling the highly sought-after *bhakras* or *batasas*, *lagun nu acchar* or *murabba*.



This led to other members perking up and sharing recipes from their blogs or websites, some also announcing they catered or sold snacks and pickled favorites. But they all tread cautiously, lest group members smacked them down for daring to promote their business, for free nonetheless, in a Parsi-run foodie group. Apparently this was occurring in other popular Parsi groups, which is why they ventured gingerly into PER.

Oh, the excitement it built for so many Parsis abroad who crave these Parsi delicacies, or a simple taste of home. While some members decided to take the liberty to respond for Arbez and me, berating them for promoting their business, others expressed sheer joy, realizing they could finally order the home-cooked snacks they had missed so much. But better yet, now they had a variety of caterers to choose from, be it from their home base or other parts of the world. The flood-gates opened with cautious optimism for these business owners.

For Arbez and me, it was a no-brainer. If these entrepreneurs were supporting PER then why in the world wouldn't we



Arbez Shroff Patel

reciprocate our support for them? Overnight, it became our mission to crack down on the naysayers, immediately allowing these businesses to advertise for free and to boldly go where no Parsi Facebook foodie group had gone before: we openly announced we wanted people to share their businesses unabashedly on PER. Go for it, we said. And the rest is history.

We've received so many personal notes of thanks and appreciation from small caterers ever since. It's been heartwarming to read their messages of hope. We actually feel their joy and appreciation.

The question that really puzzled both Arbez and myself was, why wouldn't anyone let these hardworking folks share their business ventures? It's not "annoying," despite what some think. It's not taking advantage of anything or anyone either. It's helping our own community members do what they do best. It was simply the Zoroastrian thing to do.

As a small and dwindling community, it is increasingly in our best interest to look out for one another, support and uplift each other. Not tear each other down, or belittle the talents of community members who are so gifted to be able to build a business from scratch in the challenging and competitive culinary field, nonetheless.

Catering or selling food is a tough business with tough critics. Let's be honest, Parsis are no strangers to that. *Dikra, jara aye kum hatoo. Or, aye jara jasti nakhtay.* [Dear, it was a little less or, you should have put a little more of this]. The criticism is often endless — and relentless. After all, Parsis know their food. Or so they say. But for caterers who put their blood, sweat and tears into carefully selecting each ingredient for you, cooking or baking the product to precision, then packaging and mailing it to you, quite frankly, it all takes time, effort and money. And all they crave is a little thanks, appreciation and timely payment.

Shelley Daroga Subawalla, PER member and famed masala-maker of *Zarin's Secrets*

in Mumbai, India, knows that feeling all too well. Thanks to PER, her business has been growing steadily ever since she began promoting it within the group a few months ago. It's helped her drum up business from her hometown, as well as all over the world.

"It has definitely helped me," says Shelley. "It widely increased my brand exposure as well as opened me up to a lot of international clientele."

PER gave Shelley the courage to finally take the leap and start mailing her highly sought-after masalas abroad to the US, and now Canada. She offers a fair price for the excellent quantity and quality of masalas she mails overseas to offset the mailing cost the buyer also incurs. And it has all worked out fabulously.

"It has been a huge boost for me," says Shelley. "The group's open policy regarding advertising one's ventures is a wonderful change from all the other usual food groups who have a strict 'no advertising/promotion' policy."

Shelley experienced a slight hiccup with a payment one time, but it hasn't stopped her from succeeding, and has instead turned it into a learning experience.

Personally, PER encouraged myself and a small group of friends to start a home-based *batasa* business in the US and Canada. It's called *Batasa Babes*, inspired by my very dear and long-time friend, Spenta Behrana of Phoenix, AZ.

A life-long friend I have made via PER, Charis Wania of Toronto, Canada shared a wonderful *batasa* recipe she found on PER, posted by Persis Cooper also of Calgary, Canada, originally from India. Charis encouraged me to try it, and the *batasas* were beyond my expectations.

With a few small tweaks to the recipe under the guidance of my dear friend and famed



Parsi chef and author, Niloufer Mavalvala, I perfected the recipe to my liking. I shared it with Charis and Persis, and before we knew it, we were creating a logo that would modernize the traditional *batasa*. Next, we launched our *batasa* business just in time for the 2017 Christmas holiday season. It was a fun, exciting and exhausting time for us ladies, with orders flying out the door just in time for holiday family gatherings in Parsi homes throughout the US and Canada.

So how did we get the word out about *Batasa Babes*? Easy. We took it to PER, debuting our awesome logo and pictures of almond, caraway seeds and cheese *batasas*, along with a special holiday promo price. It worked, helping us kick off what has now been 8 months of wonderful aromas of flavored *batasas* permeating our homes as we take order after order.

Admittedly, I work full-time. And despite having a *batasa*-loving toddler, unfortunately I don't have as much time to devote to the business, and simply do it as a hobby. But with PER as a business-promoting platform, I know I can easily build my *batasa* empire in the future, and as time permits. That's the beauty of social media. For Charis and Persis though, business is soaring. And I couldn't be happier for them and their hard work.

From India, Pakistan and Dubai to Canada, Australia, the UK and USA, some caterers are experiencing growth in an already successful business thanks to PER, while others are filled with hope for the future of their business. Either way, Arbez and I are proud to be along for the ride and are rooting for their success every step of the way.



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

FEZANA's Zoroastrianism Awareness Project

To celebrate Navroze in 2017, I participated in the FEZANA's Zoroastrianism Awareness Project. I delivered mason jars full of delicious homemade ravo, layered with toasted almonds and golden raisins, to six neighbouring families. Each family member received their own mason jar along with a short description about Navroze and the significance of ravo on this auspicious occasion. It was very well received and my neighbours had all kinds of questions from how do you pronounce this to when can I eat this. They loved it and my neighbours now wait for Navroze so I can share ravo with them.

This is a lovely project promoted by FEZANA, and I encourage every Zoroastrian to participate in the years to come.

To learn more about this project, please visit: <https://fezana.org/celebrating-navroz-with-our-neighbors-and-friends/>



The Widows of Malabar Hill

reviewed by zehra bharucha

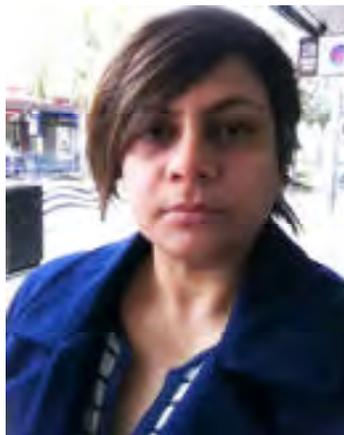
Set in 1920s India, *The Widows of Malabar Hill* introduces the reader to Pervin Mistry, 'the only woman solicitor in Bombay'. Pervin works in her father's legal firm and advises clients even though she cannot actually appear in court. Along with a degree from Oxford and an unshakeable belief in her own ability Pervin is also a woman with a tragic personal history which makes her a passionate advocate of women's rights. Her father has been appointed as executor of the will of a wealthy Muslim business man who has left three wives. But as the capable and fiercely independent Pervin delves further into the paperwork she realises that something seems very wrong. All three widows have signed their inheritances over to a charitable trust overseen by their husbands' household agent and Pervin suspects the worst. But the widows are in purdah, a strict seclusion that makes it impossible for them to see or talk to any man. Pervin decides to investigate and manages to enter the closed world of the zenana or women's chambers as an unofficial detective.

Entering the cloistered world of the mansion on Malabar Hill Pervin finds an atmosphere of luxury and comfort but also of tension and secrets. Trying to find a balance between helping the women and devoting time to her British school friend Alice Hobson-Jones, she finds herself drawn deeper into the lives of the three women and begins to feel a sense of responsibility for them. When the worst happens and a murder is committed Pervin knows that she is in the best position to solve the mystery of what really happened that day.

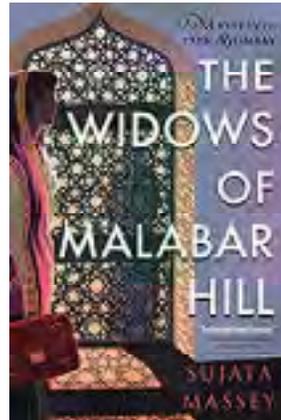
Interwoven with the story of the women is the story of Pervin's own tragic past and the events that have shaped her. The author's technique of intercutting the tale of Pervin's romantic courtship and escape from her ill-fated marriage with her quest to find fair

treatment for the widows brings to the forefront the complexity of the divisions between people struggling to hold on to the old ways and those who wish to modernise. The religious, social and legal complexities of the various people who made up India in the 1920s are laid bare for the reader. This is a lushly described period piece describing the treatment of women at the time, the quirks of the British colonial powers and the diversity of this vast land. With a sympathetic and strong female lead, impeccable plot, lushly gorgeous prose and a wealth of historical detail, this novel (the first in a new series) comes at a time when the treatment of women and the dynamics of power are hot topics in today's mainstream media. It is sure to resonate with readers who want an intelligent, well plotted story.

Readers might also be interested to note that the character of Pervin Mistry is based in part on that of Cornelia Sorabji, a leading barrister with a special interest in women's rights. She was a vocal supporter and leading light of a campaign to persuade India's government that women living in seclusion—purdahnashins—were suffering from lack of access to legal representation.



Originally from Karachi, Zehra Bharucha has lived in Sydney, Australia for the last 17 years. When not working as an editor in the legal publishing business she can usually be found reading or cooking elaborate banquet style feasts for family and friends.



The Widows of Malabar Hill
By : Sujata Massey.
Publisher : Soho Crime, 400 pages,
Kindle Edition : £1.82
Paperback : £8.99

Bombay's Riot over Dogs

by aditi shah

<https://www.livehistoryindia.com/snapshort-histories/2018/05/09/bombays-riot-over-dogs>

It is hard to believe, but the first known riots in Bombay (now Mumbai) when locals went on the streets against the British authorities was led by the otherwise genteel Parsis, who took up arms for their dogs!

The 'Dog Riots of 1832' as it is called, were unlike anything that you would have come across anywhere in the world, but it was a battle worth fighting for.

In May 1832, the Magistrates of Police (Bombay) decided to extend a regulation issued in 1813, that mandated the Indian pariah dogs within public and government properties to be killed every year between April to May and September to October. This was to control the growing menace of stray and rabid dogs in a port city that was rapidly growing. The extension went through and special dog killers were appointed who were paid eight annas for killing each stray dog. Excited by the monetary incentive, many of these dog catchers began to eye dogs that were neither loose nor dangerous. Justifiably this created a furor.

But the situation became tense on 6th July 1832, a holy day for the Parsis. The teaching of 'Ehtiram-i-sag' or great respect for the dog is found in the Zoroastrian religious scriptures. The dogs are said to be the gatekeepers of the heavens and gaze of the dog is said to ward off evil. The Parsi religious text Avesta, also has detailed commentary on the virtues of dogs and how they must be taken care of. Despite warnings, the police officers in the Fort area of Bombay did not stop the rounding up of dogs. As a result, the Parsis were outraged. The British, didn't have a clue. On the afternoon of June 6 when the police began to round up dogs within city's Fort area, they received warnings that the Parsi residents were getting restless. Soon a

crowd of about 200 Parsis (a considerable number at the time) came out to the streets to mark their protest. In the flurry two constables were attacked. The police came down in full force and as tensions rose the central business and commercial area within the Bombay Fort area came to a standstill. Shops were closed down and work on the docks ceased. By next day, preparations for a full-scale strike were taking shape. Palanquins carrying the British were stopped and pelted with stones. Soon, the Parsis were joined by other communities like the Hindus, Jains and Muslims, the protestors now inched close to 500.

Despite all the rioting and protests, there was hardly any causality in the riot, except for two Englishmen who died due to excessive heat. The British were embarrassed by what had happened and the regulation in question was withdrawn. A deputation led by Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, the Baronet, further asked the British not kill any dogs, but rather just capture them. This too was accepted.

Few remember the 'Dog Riot' today but it did have an important impact. It was after this incident that the British decided to bring in many more diverse communities into Bombay. Till then, the Bombay town was dominated by the Parsi residents, but the paranoid British saw the riots as a 'Parsi conspiracy'. As a result it encourage other communities to migrate to Bombay and settle there. ■■■



“...For I know that words
deriving from good purpose
and from love are not to be left
wanting by you.”

Yasna 28.10

Inslar translation



The World Zoroastrian Organisation