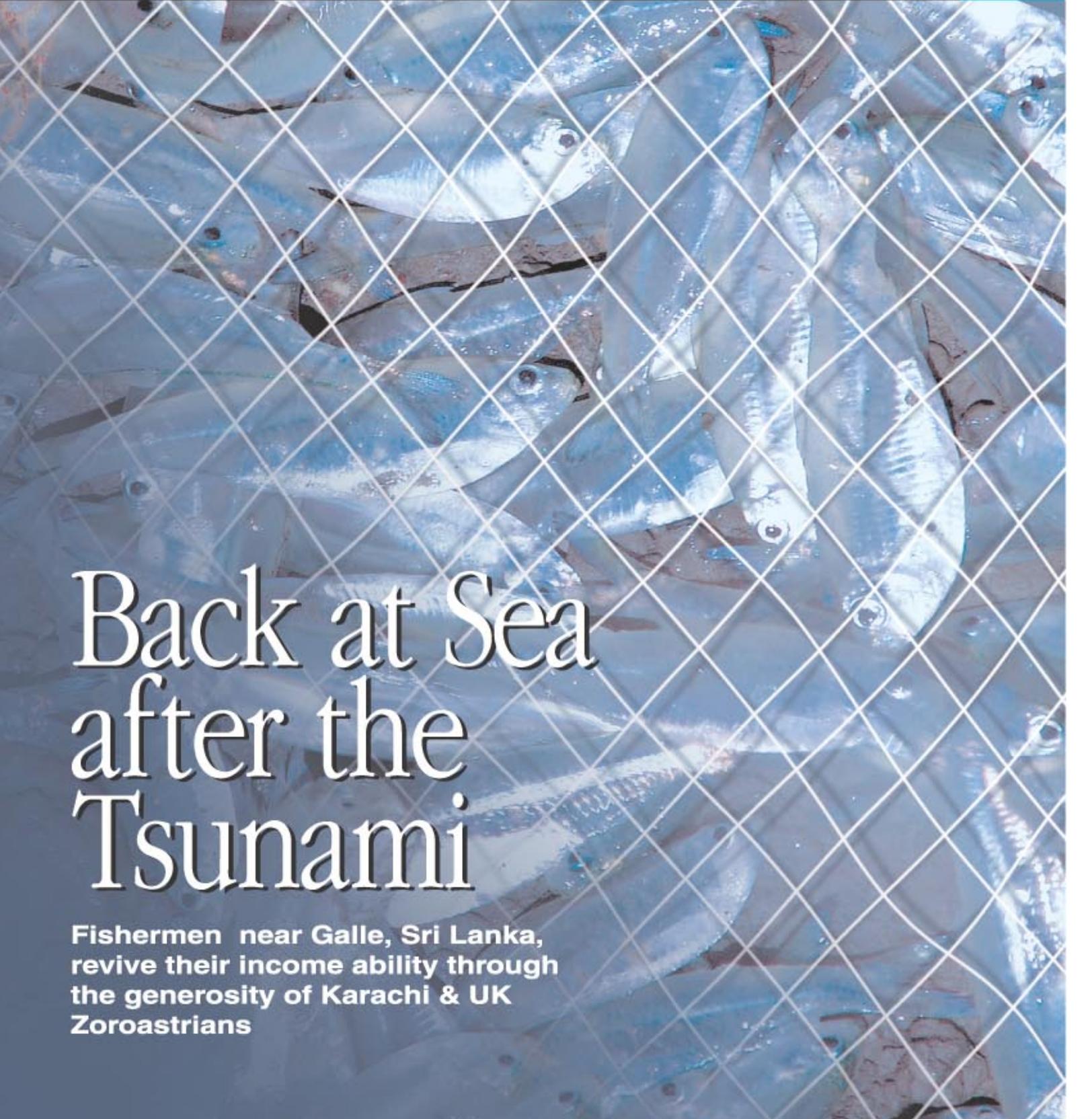


publication of the world zoroastrian organisation

HAMAZOR

Issue 2005



Back at Sea after the Tsunami

Fishermen near Galle, Sri Lanka,
revive their income ability through
the generosity of Karachi & UK
Zoroastrians



The fishing boats named after the donors, as a tribute of thanks - p 67

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Courtesy of individuals whose articles appear in the magazine or as mentioned

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From the Editor

We are back again after a respite of five months. As announced in our issue 1/05, there was to be no second publication this year due to the extensive one sent to you in April.

At the outset an apology is due to the office bearers of the WZO India's Youth Wing which functioned under the able guidance of Sarosh Bana, for inadvertently forgetting to mention them in our 25th anniversary issue. The Youth Wing, which now no longer operates, had members who were Zoroastrians under the age of 40 years, carrying out pleasurable activities for themselves as well as lending a helpful hand to the less fortunate. Their activities are available on WZO's website.



There are three major issues which need to be addressed quickly by our community leaders, as they have been an ongoing one since some years now. The formation of ONE world body that represents all, whether they are traditionalists, main-stream or progressive. We cannot afford to consider having three or even two world bodies when we are at the stage of Parsis being relegated as a 'lost tribe' - not Zoroastrians but Parsis. Many pages in this issue give the various view points of leaders and it is up to us the individuals, who after all are the people who make the numbers, to rise up and say what we want.

The second is acceptance of non Zoroastrian spouses and their children, as whether we approve or not, community youth are marrying out of the fold.

The third, is the very sad, but apparant issue of the high percentage of the aged and lonely, due to the young having emigrated to improve their careers and lives. We at least in the sub-continent still have a relative support system - individuals who care enough for their neighbours, but today this is not the answer. What we need is professional centres both day-care and with residence facilities. Soon there will be this same need for our community in the West and more so, to have their own centres, as family members will not have the time to look after the elderly.

Now is the time to put aside egos and petty greivences and to address these issues upfront, with 'broad, strong shoulders' before it is too late.

Toxy Cowasjee

Toxy Cowasjee, 2A Mary Road, Bath Island, Karachi 75530, Pakistan

Roda K Patel MD & Gram Seva Trust

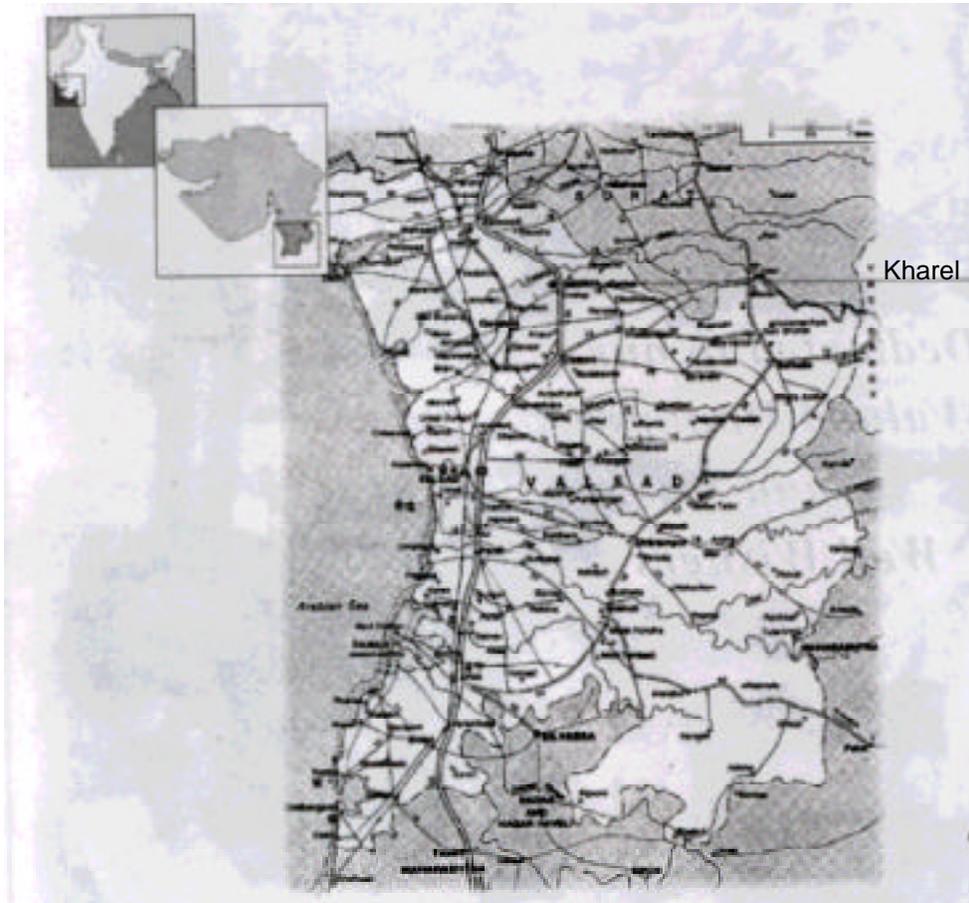
by aban rustomji

Ever met anyone whose belief for a cause is so great that they would pay any price, make any sacrifice, undergo any hardship? There is one amongst us who is a strong link in the golden chain to help others. This remarkable lady chooses to pursue her career as a volunteer to serve the needs of children in a Gujarat village.

Featuring Dr Roda Patel and her chosen line of work.

Daughter of Dastur Rustamji and Tehmina Mulla, Roda grew up in Navsari. Her father was a strong role model who encouraged her spirit of independence and adventure. Education was high on her list of priorities and she chose to pursue the medical field. She graduated from Bombay University with a degree in pediatrics. In 1963 Roda migrated to the US with her husband Dr Khushru Patel, a cardiovascular surgeon, and had a flourishing pediatric practice in Northbrook, Illinois.

On an annual visit to Navsari, Roda came across The Gram Seva Trust. Located in Kharel, a small village on National Highway 8 in Navsari, India, she met a dedicated couple Dr Ashwin and Dr Harsha Shah, who had turned an abandoned hospital into a centre for community care. This was the turning point in Roda's life. She stayed on for nine



months in Kharel, eventually establishing a pediatric center at the hospital.

Roda then decided to close down her practice in the US to dedicate time and attention to impoverished children in Kharel, Gujrat. The 71-year old claims it is another day at work. But her work is no ordinary task as she has devoted herself to the Gram Seva Trust for the last ten years where she is the honorary director for child health.

The most pressing problem for children in this village of Kharel is what UNICEF terms

as “A Silent Emergency” - Malnutrition. Malnutrition retards not only physical growth but mental and emotional development and children are highly susceptible to infectious diseases that heightens the mortality rate.

About 65 percent of the population of Kharel consists of tribal, and mostly landless labourers with minimum wages. Other inhabitants include sugar cane and paddy farmers. Literacy rate is extremely low and higher education facilities are available in cities 20-50 kilometers away.

In the initial stages the hospital was plagued with a lack of infra structure. It is now a 50-bed hospital with an emergency room, laboratory services, facilities for radiology, operating theatre, a labour and delivery room, a neonatal care facility.

The Gram Seva Trust programme has grown from a total care of 0-5 years old children to empowering adolescent girls with emphasis on health, hygiene and social issues to increasing community awareness through audio-visual programmes on maternal and child health, freedom from superstition, management of addiction and prevention of disease.

In 2004, the child health sector alone, Roda Patel reports that 3,372 children were treated. The cases range from severe malnutrition to congenital heart disease and low birth weight, a few babies with severe mental retardation. The children were treated with anti-TB vaccines, sickle cell disease, blood transfusion, and other surgical needs were fulfilled. Currently, the focus is also on prevention. “Much still needs to be done”, says Roda.

“If I can stop one
hear from
breaking,
I shall not live in
vain.

If I can ease one
life the aching, or
cool one pain, or
help one fainting
robin into its nest
again,
I shall not live in
vain.” Emily
Dickinson



Gram Seva Trust Hospital 1995. Photographs are from the GST Powerpoint presentation.



Gram Seva Trust Hospital after 2003



Roda checking her patients

Roda's quiet labours were encouraged and supported by her husband, Khushru. The Patels along with their friends have

established the Gram Seva Foundation where American donors can benefit from tax exempt donations. Their enthusiasm has proved infectious. Roda's grandchildren she proudly said, *"donate their piggy bank to her project"*.

Hard as Roda works, she finds time to enjoy her family where everybody hangs out to laugh and joke a lot. In 1977 Roda was diagnosed with breast cancer and the doctors grimly told her that her days were numbered. Instead she overcame all obstacles and recovered. It was during this time her family decided to gift her with art lessons. She developed this talent and presently

holds art exhibitions and the total proceeds of her work goes towards the Gram Seva Foundation.

"One of the major lessons is to enjoy the journey of life, not just the destination. When you intend to pursue something in life – a career, marriage or any other endeavour- you can make it happen if you give it everything you've got", says Roda Patel.

Roda Patel is an extraordinary lady.

For more information on Gram Seva Foundation email rodak@aol.com or visit their website www.gramseva.org. ■■■■

Aban Rustomji, a high school media specialist, lives in Houston where she is the recipient of several educational awards. An advocate for education and libraries, Aban is currently involved in opening a library that will house books on Zoroastrian religion, history, literature and culture at the Zoroastrian Association of Houston. An avid reader and traveller, Aban visits Afghan refugee camps in Quetta, Pakistan. As a result of these visits she has been invited to work on an US AID project in Pakistan. Aban is also a team member of the creatingawareness@yahoo.com user group and values her connection with people on the cyber net world.

WZO's Annual BBQ - 2005

Reported by Sammy Bhiwandiwalla

Our sincere thanks to Ronnie and Perviz Irani for their immense kindness and generosity in making their home and garden available on Sunday 10th July for WZO's Annual BBQ.

Rohinton who by nature is a showman and a performer bringing his own style of charm, cheek and humour to any occasion, soon disarmed the audience and encouraged them to part with their money for a very good cause helping to raise over £6,300 for WZO. With nearly 200 people in attendance, through Rohinton's and Perviz's concerted efforts, the funds raised exceeded our wildest dreams. Every item of food and drink had been donated, accompanied with sponsorship and donations of prizes from air tickets to hotel accommodation and meals, car servicing etc. Everyone complimented the delicious food, not to mention the quantity that was served, and it should be an enduring memory in many people's minds for some time to come. The Lebanese style stuffed lamb with rice that every one raved about was just out of this world.

On a truly hot Indian summer's day with live music from a duo playing music to sing and dance to, there was a real party mood much enjoyed by both the young and the not so young. With plenty to occupy the younger participants from snooker to table tennis, the adjoining games room was packed to capacity.

WZO would also like to convey its sincere thanks to Rohinton's son Saroosh, daughter Mondana and her husband Mark and many, many others for all the help in getting the BBQ's operational and for the subsequent clearing up. They all worked very hard removing the mess which always amounts to a sizable mountain.



"Mamam Urmanam Tasavvud"
I become as one with my Soul.
Roda's Shenshai Navroze card



WZO would like to acknowledge its gratitude to all the organisations and individuals who so generously donated substantial prizes for auction at this event. Our thanks also to all those who supported this event by bidding for the fabulous prizes on offer, in support of the many charitable and community causes. Thankfully all the funds collected will go towards alleviating poverty and sickness within the community and provide much needed relief in many people's lives.

As a small token of our appreciation WZO presented a vase and floral bouquet to Rohinton, Perviz and their family for supporting WZO in its multifarious activities. May they always be showered with blessings of success, health and happiness.



Rohinton conducting the auction



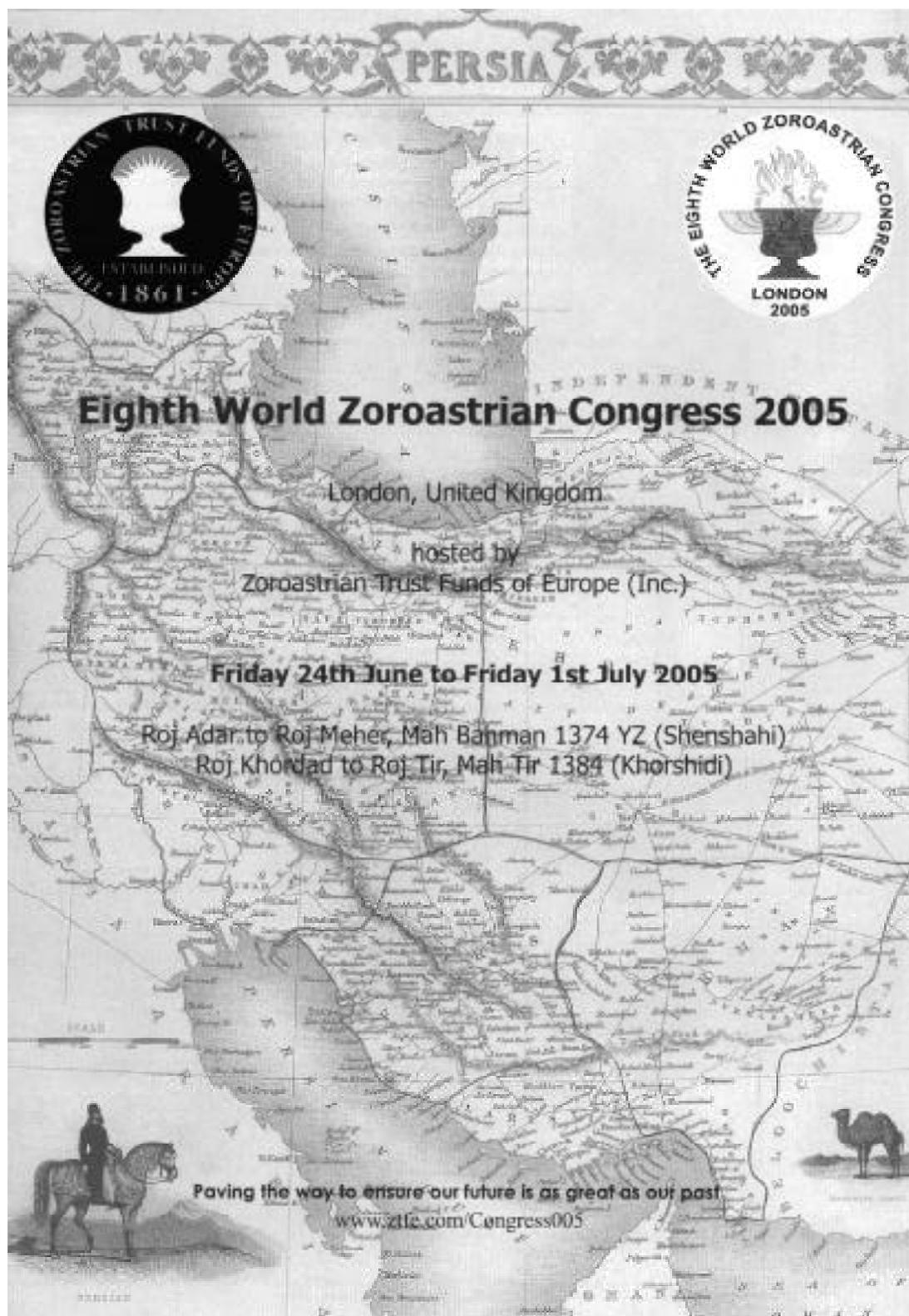
Perviz & Rohinton Irani with Sammy, the head chef!



Darayus Motivala conducting the raffle



8th World Zoroastrian Congress, London



Report by Shahin Bekhradnia
Photographs by Sammy Bhiwandiwalla

Programme

Date	Start	End	Description	Location
Fri 24th June				
	08:30	10:30	Registration	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
	11:00	13:00	Opening Ceremony	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
	13:00	14:00	Lunch	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
	14:00	17:00	Zoroastrians of Iran: From Empire builders to an obscure minority	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
	19:00	21:00	Parsee Nite - Dinner	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
	21:00	23:00	Parsee Nite - Variety Performance Show	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
Sat 25th June				
	10:00	17:00	Multiple parallel sessions	Wembley Conference Centre
	19:00	23:00	Family Nite "The Far Pavillions" Drama (additional charge)	West End Theatre
	19:30	late	"Inferno" - Youth Nite - Dinner & Dance (additional charge) (No dinner provided on this day)	Millenium Hotel, Mayfair
Sun 26th June				
	10:00	17:00	Multiple parallel sessions	Wembley Conference Centre
	19:00	21:00	Persian Nite - Dinner	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
	21:00	23:00	Persian Nite - Variety Performance Show	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
Mon 27th June				
	10:00	12:00	Open House	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
	13:00	17:00	Sessions with speaker panel	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
	17:00	20:00	Meet and mingle - informal evening (No dinner provided on this day)	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
Tue 28th June				
	09:00	17:00	Trip to Cambridge (additional charge)	Cambridge
	14:00	17:00	Sessions with speaker panel	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
	18:00	20:00	Trip to British Library	British Library
	19:00	21:00	Dinner, meet and mingle	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
Wed 29th June				
	10:00	17:00	Sessions on World Zarthushti Chamber of Commerce	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
	18:00	20:00	Trip to British Museum	British Museum
	19:00	20:00	Dinner	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
	20:00	22:00	Musical Nite: Orchestra, Piano Recital	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
Thu 30th June				
	10:00	17:00	Sessions on World Body & Coming Together	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
	19:00	21:00	Dinner, meet and mingle	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
Fri 1st July				
	14:00	17:00	Sessions with speaker panel	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
	17:00	18:15	Jashan-e-Tirgan Jashan	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
	18:15	20:00	Closing Ceremony - Passing the torch	Zartoshty Brothers Hall
	20:00	21:00	Farewell dinner & dance	Zartoshty Brothers Hall

Report on 8th WZC

The Eighth World Congress was a cosy intimate affair compared to the last one in 2000 at Houston five years ago. Apart from the first weekend, all the sessions and receptions took place at the newly established home of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, the Zartoshty Brothers Hall, a beautifully restored Art Deco cinema, now serving as the cultural and religious centre for the UK community.



Photo courtesy ZTFE

Registration continued throughout the day and there were approximately 350 participants who were expected to arrive for the congress. Notable among these was the sizeable delegation from Iran (including four mobeds) whose participation and visa procurement had been eased by the cooperation of the UK Home Office and Foreign Office. North American delegates also came in strength but with disappointingly few from both India and Pakistan. It was noteworthy that the home delegates only represented 35% of the

overall figure, thus making this congress the most truly international ever hosted.

Nearby hotels in Wembley from which transport shuttles were laid on to the venues offered a convenient and inexpensive base for overseas visitors who were not staying with friends or relatives.

The opening day's ceremonies on Friday 24th June were introduced by Dorab Mistry, the president of ZTFE and consisted of presentations of souvenir medals to some

eminent Zoroastrian visitors including benefactor Arbab Mehraban Zartoshty and his nieces representing his deceased brother. On the podium there were also gathered UK guests such as a minister from the UK Home Office, and the local mayor and councillors, as well as representatives from the academic institutions specialising on Zoroastrianism. Dolly Dastoor who co-chaired over the last congress presented a book containing transcripts of the talks given at the previous congress to Dorab Mistry. From Iran the Zoroastrian MP, Mobed Dr Niknam read a message from the government. After speeches of appreciation by all concerned there was a break for lunch.

The afternoon marked the beginning of the talks which gave a foretaste of the speeches yet to take place during the weekend at the nearby Wembley Conference Centre. The first day's meeting closed around 4pm and there was a break in proceedings to prepare the hall for the evening reception, which for many I suspect was more thrilling than the talks of the daytime session.

This first evening reception, Parsi Nite, was replicated on Sunday evening with a Persian Nite and on each occasion, there were many more applicants than there were places. The hall used every single feasible space to set up dinner tables and traditional Parsi dishes and delicious Persian specialities were served on the respective nights. In addition to the display of the talents of each community within the UK, each community had an original entertainment programme and a young Parsi teenager, Shayan, with his first hit in the UK pop industry brought a contemporary flavour to the Parsi evening. A female comedienne of some fame flown over from India, Mahbanoo Mody Kotwal and Shabparak Khorsandi a bi-lingual stand up artiste (daughter of Hadi) offered their particular brand of humour to foster the cordial atmosphere that reigned. The arrival of Hadi Khorsandi, the much loved Iranian satirist for a short spell added an extra excitement to the evening. The

Persian community greeted all comers with a traditional welcome of Golab and Aineh by girls and ladies in their bright costumes and as soon as the Persian group Gerard, struck up their first chords of music, everyone was up and dancing at their tables and around the room, much to the surprised delight of Parsi guests.

Wembley Conference Centre was the venue for the 60 or so talks on both Saturday and Sunday and at most times of the day there were three simultaneous sessions while the youth sessions taking place offered a

fourth choice of subject matter. Some of these sessions were solely in Farsi but it was a matter for comment that translations facilities were not available to make all the sessions accessible to all delegates. The subjects being treated covered historical, literary, social and linguistic aspects of Zoroastrianism and each session was subject to strict chairmanship to try and control timing. The subject matter chosen by speakers was enormously varied and frank exchanges took place at times between audience and speakers. The majority of talks were interesting but inevitably some were poorly attended if they clashed with the more popular speakers/themes who attracted a greater number to their sessions.

The poor delivery of some of the speakers or the shallow content of some their talks left me wishing that some system of vetting existed beyond a collection of committee members who may not be aware of the calibre of person they were deciding about.



Wembley Conference Centre - photo courtesy ZTFE

Yet one of the virtues of such a gathering is that it is democratic allowing all to have a platform, while the audience decide who to listen to.

As is usual at such congresses, the opportunity to meet up with old friends, make new ones and network with those who had similar interests was one of the most valuable aspects of attendance at the congress and many young people interviewed for the film made throughout the sessions expressed such views.

The congress organisers were considerate in their planning and after the intensive weekend, allowed a measure of sightseeing opportunities for the overseas delegates. Within their programming, there was a chance to visit Cambridge, and the renowned Harrow School and additionally some VIP delegates were invited to visit the UK parliament at Westminster and attend a reception at London University's SOAS.

Later sessions in the week included discussions on the progress of the world body by all interested parties and also exchanges of ideas about the location of the next world congress to follow in 5 years time.

The final day which coincidentally celebrated Jashn e Tirgan (a celebration of water) consisted of closing remarks and an excellent evening dinner during which farewells and exchanges were made. There is no doubt that enormous effort and time went into making this 8th World Congress a success and those involved are to be congratulated for pulling it off. However there are always improvements to be made so if Dubai is to be the next venue, then let's hope that those involved will take some lessons home with them. ■■■■

Shahin Bekhradnia, grand-daughter of a renowned Yazdi priest/poet did her undergraduate studies at Oxford university in modern languages and then anthropology, focusing on 20th century Iranian Zoroastrian identity. She has published and lectured on Zoroastrian matters regularly. In her day to day life, she teaches, interprets for the immigration appellate, is a legal consultant for a tour operator, and sits as a magistrate. She has set up the Pourchista Foundation in Yazd to teach skills to young Zoroastrians so that they can earn a living.

Day One



Opening ceremony - photo courtesy ZTFE



Patron Mobed Mehraban Zartoshty and the lighting of the ceremonial diyo



Fashion Show in the evening which was part of the entertainment



Left of the steps, Mehraban Zartoshty, right Dastur Khurshed Kaikobad Dastoor of Iranshah, Udvada



Day Two



Dr Almut Hintz, Key Speaker from Germany

Day Three



L to R: Keki Bhote, VP of WZO, - USA & Dr Homi Dhalla - India



Mandana Moavenat studying in SOAS - Persian Night

Below: Three scenes from the Persian Night



Farrokh Vajifdar, researcher & scholar of UK



L to R: Minoos Shroff - BPP, Dolly Dastoor of Canada & Shahin Bekhradnia of UK

World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce Day - 29th June



Zarine Karani Araoz at the podium



Some members of the WZCC



L to R: Rohinton Rivetna, Xerxes Wania, Cyrus Todiwala, Dadi Mistry, Karan Bilimoria & Mino Shroff



Xerxes Wania, Cyrus Todiwala, Dadi Mistry, Karan Bilimoria & Mino Shroff



Closing Ceremony - 1st July





“Coming together,, - 28 June

An Invitation Letter was sent by Rohinton Rivetna in June to various persons all over the world to attend a round table session at the WZC, Zoroastrian Centre, London, on 28 June from 11am till 5pm which would be open for all Congress delegates as it was part of the programme.

He wrote: “I am writing to you on the eve of the Eighth World Congress . . . It is a joyous occasion for all of us worldwide because it promises togetherness, good fellowship, cementing old friendships and creating new friendships, in fact in a word it promises ‘*Hamazori*.’ Our history informs us and our tradition teaches us that when we come together and work together there is no equal in strength and glory . . . We can conquer all. Knowing this the Congress organizers in their wisdom have set aside June 28 as “Coming Together Day.”

In the past half century, we find ourselves flung far and wide in all corners of the world. We are all products of our environment, we may exhibit some differences in thought and word, but we are all brothers and sisters under the skin. We sometimes fail to recognize that we, Zoroastrians, are a very unique fraternity, a veritable “Worldwide Community without Borders” blessed with instant bonding and *Hamazori* wherever we may happen to be.

We must also understand the phenomenon that the community of humankind, from earliest times, has organized itself in groupings which are universal, known as the “Institutions of Humankind.” These are: governance, socio-economic-welfare, religion, business and commerce, arts and culture, education ... This has been the fundamental basis of our society, and planned or unplanned, sooner or later, like a kaliedoscope, a community falls into such groupings. We are witnessing that in our worldwide Zoroastrian community today.

This World Congress offers all of us a golden opportunity to “Come Together.”

GOAL OF THE SESSION -

The goal of the session is for the leadership of our world wide community as well as our world level organizations, to come together for discourse and dialogue towards a better understanding and begin the process of working together in *Hamazori* towards our common goals.

A list of pressing issues and concerns, and opportunities for cooperation with others, shall be developed; and persons/organizations responsible for follow up shall be identified.

The fundamental idea, of course, is to support and build connections and strengthen the bonds, between and among the diaspora and homeland communities, knowing that in *Hamazori* lies our strength.”

AGENDA -

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 11:00 | Benediction and Devotional Song
Hamazori - Rohinton Rivetna |
| 11:15 - 1:15 | Presentations from Regions (5-7 minutes each).
Africa - Message from Solly Shapurji
Hong Kong - Message from president Jal Shroff
Singapore - Nelly Doctor for president Russi Ghadially
New Zealand - Message from ZANZ past-president Tehmus Mistry
New Zealand - TMZANZ president Zahrina Kolah
Australia - Message from ZAV president Perviz Dubash
- Aban Contractor for AZA president Tim Desai
- Message from Sam Kerr, Sydney |

Middle East - Meher Bhesania
 Pakistan - Message from Karachi Anjuman president Behram Avari
 UK - ZTFE president Dorab Mistry
 North America - FEZANA president Firdosh Mehta
 India - FPZAI/BPP president Minoo Shroff
 - FPZAI secretary Keki Gandhi
 Iran - Message from Tehran Anjuman president Alayar Daneshmand
 - Mr Rostam Abadian; Mobed Koorosh Niknam, MP.
 WZO - President Sammy Bhiwandiwalla
 LUNCH
 1:15 - 2:00 Presentations from Global "Institutions" (5-7 mins each)
 2:00 - 4:00 High Priests of India - Message from Dasturji Kotwal
 - Er. Dr. Ramiyar Karanjia
 Athornan Mandal - Message from Er. Nader Modi
 Mobeds Council of Iran - president Dr Ardeshiri Khorshidian
 - Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary
 North American Mobeds Council - Er Dr Jehan Bagli
 World Alliance of Parsi Irani Zoroastrians - WAPIZ president Khojeste Mistree
 World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation - WZCF president Homi Dhalla
 Zoroastrian Women International Network - Zareen Karani Araoz-network director
 World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce - Secry Edul Daver
 - Kaemarz Dotiwalla for VP Homi Davier
 Zoroastrian press - Arnavaz Mama for Parsiana
 Interfaith - Jehangir Sarosh, WCRP
 4:00 - 4:30 Recap - Issues/Concerns/Challenges and Cooperative Projects
 4:30 - 5:00 Recap - "Towards that Vision" - Rohinton Rivetna
 5:00 "Hamazor Zor Hama Asho Bed" handclasp

ACHIEVED & IN THE PIPELINE -

"At the end of the day, we collected about 65 'challenges/co-operative-projects' which Zareen Araoz and Roshan Rivetna are grouping and compiling into a managable list, and we will do what we can to get some followup actions undertaken."



Zareen Karani Araoz of ZWIN as the co-ordinator of the "Coming Together" session

Address by Sammy Bhiwandiwalla, Chairman WZO, at “Coming Together” session



“Some 25 years ago WZO was created by individuals of immense foresight for the benefit of Zoroastrians Internationally. Its International Board comprises some of the most highly respected individuals in the community and with their knowledge, commitment and integrity created an institution that is held in high esteem all around the world. Present amongst us here today, we have past and present board members, Mehraban Zarthoshty, Shahrokh Shahrokh, Farhang Mehr, Dinshaw Tamboly, Jehan Bagli, Dadi Mistry, Mani Clubwala and Tehmi Patel.

Institutions like WZO should be supported, protected, nurtured and strengthened. No one can deny that during its short history many hundreds of individuals and organisations have benefited through timely intervention by WZO.

From assisting the first wave of displaced Iranian Zoroastrians to the continuing call from asylum seekers even today, to the farmers of Gujarat, housing at Navsari, Sanatorium in Sanjan, Senior Citizens Centre in Navsari, medical assistance through the Medical Benevolent Fund, Educational grants and loans. The Mobed Welfare scheme which encourages young mobeds to take up mobedi as a full time profession and financial assistance to mobeds to sustain their standard of living. All this has been of immense benefit to the Parsi/Irani Zoroastrians around the world.

WZO has been extensively engaged in the furtherance of Zoroastrian Religion, History and Culture through annual seminars and publications and has participated and assisted in organising them internationally.

For this, WZO owes an insurmountable gratitude to the Trustees of all the Charitable Trusts and many individuals, Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrian across the world for their trust, moral support and generosity.

WZO is a multifaceted organisation. It has many roles to play. UNESCO had designated 2003 as the year for Zarathushtra in celebration of 3000 years of Zoroastrian Culture. This decision was taken through the efforts of the government of Tajikistan and we should thank them for this. This acknowledgement by UNESCO was sent and published in Hamazor. The Zoroastrian world, from India, North America, UK, Singapore and elsewhere held celebrations to mark this historic event.

Only this month we wrote to UNESCO to inform them that Nowruz was a Zoroastrian festival and not an Islamic one as claimed by some Islamic nations in an attempt to give it special status. Indeed Nawroz was seen as anti-Islamic by Ayatollah Khomeini who therefore tried to ban it in Iran, but failed because of its entrenched popularity.

So what are our concerns? WZO reflects the state of the community and our deepest concern is the decline in the Parsi/Irani Zoroastrian population. It is at the teen age and higher education periods that we risk losing their interest in our community life. And yet many of our young Zoroastrians do still look for a Zoroastrian partner - either through friends, relatives or match makers etc.

Many parents see their children's new formed relationships outside the community as damaging and intrusive to our survival. Our inability to deal with these difficulties is resulting in a complete turn off amongst many of the young and as more leave we see erosion in numbers which has become self perpetuating.

Weddings - more and more are marrying outside the community - we can all see that - although majority of the parents prefer marriages in the community they do not object when they marry outside - they prefer

to see their children happy with the partner of their choice.

Merely saying we have no objections to non-Zoroastrians participating in our social life but still excluding them from many religious ceremonies will never work. In other words there has to be complete inclusion of a willing non-Zoroastrian spouse at marriage, moving on to the off spring regardless of whether the non-Zoroastrian spouse is male or female.

WZO in response to the changing patterns of Zoroastrian family life across the globe called a Special General Meeting on 25th April 1993 thereby accepting non-Zoroastrian spouses and their off spring as an integral part of our community, to be treated as equals, without the hideous sanctions heaped on them in the past. This was indeed a milestone and we have gone on to recognise that given the chance, the contribution made by non-Zoroastrian spouses in our religious, social and cultural life will create a more balanced Zoroastrian society.

We cherish our independence but we have extended our hand in co-operation to all the global Associations and Anjumans. Since we have gathered here today to formulate and implement long over due fundamental changes, let us have the will to succeed. How many more world conferences will it take before we can say with our hands on our heart that we believe and practice *Hamazori?* Thank you."



Sammy Bhiwandiwalla since arriving in the UK was in employment and in 1970, formed his own company together with his wife Ursula, trading in chemical products for the foundry and model making industry. After 35 years they hope to call it a day soon, with four grand children to occupy them in the future.

Ursula and Sammy 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 was requested to join the WZO Board and in 1988 was elected as Community Relations Officer. Later he was elected as the Hon Treasurer, followed as the Jt Hon Secretary and since 2004 the Chairman.

Presentation by Jehan Bagli, as President of North American Mobeds Council during the "Coming together" session

“NAMC was formed some 18 years ago and presently has around 60 members. However this does not imply that there are 60 mobeds in North America, since all the Mobeds are not member of NAMC.

The prime objective of the organization is to preserve and perpetuate Zarathushti Ritual Tradition to the best of our ability, within the socio-cultural environment in which we live. Consequently we strive to generate and maintain a cadre of Priesthood sustainable into the next generation to 2035 and that can satisfy the spiritual needs of the community.

Young boys who go to India for ordainment into priesthood have no notion of how to perform outer liturgical ceremonies. As a result our main focus is their education and dissemination of knowledge to train them. We have attempted to do that through seminars, workshops, and publication of books.

In 2003 we held a seminar on “Zarathushti Rituals” to which several academicians including Prof Almut Hintz were invited. We have also held workshops to impart hands on knowledge of ritual enactments to young Mobeds. In the year 2000 we published a book entitled ‘Understanding and Practice of Jashan Ceremony’. Just before I left, the manuscript of the second book in this series called ‘Understanding and practice of Obsequies’ was submitted for publication.

In the process of preparing these books we have quietly and without fanfare initiated what can be construed as modern day Rivayets analogous to those of early era. The manuscript of these books were taken

to India by the Mobed involved, and discussed with Dastur Dr Firoze Kotwal. His suggestions were incorporated and he was kind enough to write a foreword for both the books.

In order to alleviate the problem of shortage of priest, we have initiated the programme of training of Mobedyar – assistant to priests - from the lay community, to perform certain outer liturgical ceremonies. To this day I am happy to say we have five NAMC certified Mobedyars. For this purpose, we have developed a curriculum and a member of NAMC is charged with the responsibility to train the laity. After the training the candidate undergoes an ordainment ceremony, performs a Jashan as a Zaoatar, and receives a certificate from NAMC.

Within the membership of NAMC we have individuals with diverse views on various aspects. We have discussed our difference but we soon concluded not to dwell on them. We have been able to achieve this modest success only because we have concentrated our efforts on working on our commonalities. It is through our commonalities that we can generate connectedness or oneness among ourselves.

What do I mean by connectedness or oneness? We must recognize that each one of us has within us, in addition to the physical, a Spiritual or Divine component. Zarathushtrian theology recognizes that in Older as well as Younger Avesta, by various names. The laity commonly identifies that state as Fravashi. It is much more than a mark of identity, to be worn around the neck or to put on a tie. It is something we should be resolutely conscious of, while making our choices in our day to day living. It is only through harmony and oneness between the physical and the spiritual within; that we can achieve the same connectedness and relate to the divinity without, among other members of the humanity.

This is a state of being in unison with the Divinity, that is the true state of Haurvatat as identified by Zarathushtra. The challenge

that we face today is to establish that oneness, that connectedness among the Mobed community around the world.



Ervad Dr Jehan Bagli retired as Distinguished Research Fellow from Wyeth Research. He has PhD in Medicinal Chemistry and is an ordained priest through Navar and Martab ceremonies. He was the founding president of ZAQ, and editor of North American periodical Gavashni for 16 years. Presently he is chairperson of Research and Preservation committee of FEZANA, and president of North American Mobed Council. Jehan is a recipient of FEZANA excellence in

Profession/business award, and author/coauthor of two books: Understand and Practice of Jashan Ceremony and Religion of Asho Zarathusht and Influence through the Ages.

A message from WZO International Board Member, Sam Kerr, at the “Coming Together” session

“**P**lease accept my apology at being unable to attend. I broke my foot and I am still limping. I am writing this message only because I have been asked to send one expressing my heartfelt concern.

There is a certain divine guiding principle in our lives, which helps us to understand our universe in her exquisite majesty and beauty. It does not at all appear sensible to my simple Zarathushti mind to even believe that this same magnificent principle would not be having an influence on our way of thinking.

To all seriously thinking Zarathushtis a bland reality is staring at them. Reality is comprised of experiences in our lives which have been appreciated or suffered and



which are radiated by our smiles or veiled by our sadness.

I am a so-called 'born Zarathushti' (if you will allow me to use this phrase). I am proud of both my 'Zarathushti-hood' and my 'Parsi-panu'. But, the joyful experience of both these states of living continues to remain 'veiled with sadness' now, in my aging mind.

I would prefer, here, to limit my grave concerns about the profound sadness of this reality - a reality of an impending extinction of the Parsis of the Subcontinent and, with this total disappearance, the extinction of their much-loved 'Parsi-panu' and all that has been worked for diligently for nearly 1400 years.

Do you really want to continue to despise the children of Parsi to non-Parsi marriages and label them non-Zarathushtis or non-Parsis on the Subcontinent? Paradoxically, do you want them to become the legitimate beneficiaries ultimately, only by default?

It appears (to the scientific world) that if no solution whatsoever is deemed an urgent necessity on this issue the substantial loss of numbers, which is directly related to the continuing recognition of intense inbreeding (Parsi to Parsi marriages only), the next World Zoroastrian Congress (and other lesser Congresses) will certainly be faced with having to face a bigger dilemma.

Please pardon me if I have, inadvertently, 'veiled in sadness' your own individualistic psyche or upset your pious beliefs." ■■■■



Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine (London) and of several Colleges of Surgery, Sam Kerr was Surgeon/Lecturer, the University of NSW and College Hospitals, Sydney from 1968 to 2003. He is now Emeritus Surgeon at the University and Hospitals. He has initiated/ been a founding member - AZA of NSW,

Sydney. In addition to his professional writing he has lectured/published on the social, cultural, historical and scriptural aspects of the religion of Zarathushtra.

Please note, Hamazor is publishing presentations made by WZO's Board Members only, due to lack of space. - Editor

8th WZC World Body Day - 30th June

The Congress Committee had dedicated 30th June as the World Body day where a platform was made available to voice the concerns of our leaders on this very important, but an on going burning issue, of forming a Zoroastrian World Body. An appropriate decision on the part of the organisers, as people from all walks of life and from the four corners of the world, were present under one roof, to hear and make their own judgement.

Khoshed Jungalwala and Farrokh Mistree were the coordinators who gave an overview of the world body concept together with other members of their group and this was followed by a slide show by Rohinton and Roshan Rivetna.

The speakers were Firdosh Mehta - President FEZANA, Rustam S Dubash - President WZO, Minoo Shroff - Chairman BPP, Dorab Mistry - President ZTFE, Koorosh Niknam - MP Iranian Majlis & Khojeste Mistree - WAPIZ.

Once again due to constraints of space, we are able to share with you only three of the presentations made. - Ed

Presentation by Rustam Dubash, President, WZO

“The concept of a world body has been with us now for over two decades. Soon after the formation of the WZO, there were discussions with the BPP, Iranian Anjuman and certain individuals from North America on how they could work under the umbrella of the WZO. For various reasons, this concept appeared unworkable. However, efforts continued from all sides to try and reach some sort of agreement on a world body.

I have myself been personally involved in this project for about six to seven years.

Following various discussions with mainly board members of FEZANA, BPP and ZTFE, Rumi Sethna and I sat down with two wise heads, Dr Farhang Mehr and Adi Davar (to both of whom I owe a debt of gratitude) and prepared in 2000, a draft constitution for a world body which incorporated a Council of Individuals (COI) and a Council of Federations (COF) – we gave it a working title - WZO 2000. The constitution set out in great detail all the activities that would be covered including political activities. Since this world body was to be incorporated in the UK, I took advice from the UK Charity Commission, since it was important for a world body to have charitable status, which gives tax advantages in relation to the donations received. The Charity Commission advised us that the draft constitution as set out could not be registered as a charity, but advised that a separate charitable trust – WZO Trust be formed, from which the donations could flow. I put this concept to board members of FEZANA at a meeting in New York in April 2001. Rumi Sethna, Dinshaw Tamboly and myself attended on behalf of the WZO. This concept was not universally recognised which I accepted, but was surprised and I have to say infuriated when it was suggested that we had invented this WZO Trust to circumvent the law.

The WZO 2000 constitution met opposition on other issues, most notably on voting rights where the COF wanted more than a 50% share of the voting at both board level and at meetings of the company. Whilst Rumi and myself were willing to give the COF 60% of voting rights on the board, we were not willing to concede on voting at general meetings of the company. This was effectively a deal breaker and this concept was also put to bed.

Rumi and I could have closed the book but we went back to the drawing board again with the same wise heads and came up with the IZO/WZOF/WZOI concept. This gave

the Federations autonomy (which they wanted) in dealing with themselves without any interference from WZOI.

IZO was introduced to give the two bodies one voice mainly on the world stage, and my idea was to keep it simple. WZOF and WZOI could at anytime decide how much or how little power they wanted to give IZO. As it was to be a non profit organisation based in the USA, it needed to have shareholders and so, the two shareholders would be WZOF and WZOI, each holding one share and each of them would have one vote. There would be four directors, two each from WZOF and WZOI, with a rotation of the office bearers' roles. I saw IZO as speaking with one voice for the community and acting as an advisory body for WZOF and WZOI. Unfortunately, politics has come into the picture and to appease various individuals and diverse groups, the IZO draft constitution has some notwithstanding clauses, which to my mind could dilute the effectiveness of IZO, but I am prepared to stand behind the provisions of the IZO to achieve our purpose.

Some arguments have again arisen as to why WZOF and WZOI have equal voting rights in IZO. We need to put egos to one side and work for the global good of the Zoroastrians. My hope is that we can still keep IZO simple, but effective.

The WZOI constitution was discussed with all its international board members at a two day meeting in September 2002. The constitution was discussed clause by clause and various amendments made to it. The board finally approved it.

It is fair to say that the WZOI constitution has received a battering from several quarters, mainly on its membership clause, which allows those professing the Zoroastrian faith and spouses of Zoroastrians to become members. However, as set out in the constitution

(clause 8 of AA), the individual proposed for membership “shall be acceptable to that Individual’s region in accordance with that regions commonly acceptable practices.”

The question has been asked - if a “convert” who becomes a member can he/she stand for election to the board, the short answer is yes. Whether or not he/she gets elected is another matter.

The IZO draft has now inserted a clause whereby only a Parsi/Irani Zoroastrian can become a board member and therefore if you like at the apex body only Parsi/Irani Zoroastrians can be elected.

Our critics grabbing this membership clause have painted a picture, so horrendous to the Parsi/Irani population in India that it is almost laughable, but sad that they need to resort to such tactics.

The scenario is of hundreds, nay thousands of converted Zoroastrians becoming members of WZOI, going in planeloads from the four corners of the earth to Mumbai and sitting outside the offices of large trusts and demanding housing and other social benefits and thus depriving Zoroastrians living in India, from receiving the benefits that are due to them.

Let us take a back step and look at this logically and with a sense of realism. Nothing is there to stop converts going to India now, but they have not done so. Secondly, if they want to live in India, they would have to get past the Indian immigration controls and regulations; thirdly, charitable trusts have a discretion as to who should receive funds. Even today, a person of good Zoroastrian stock has to apply to the Trust for funds and can be refused without the Trust providing a reason. Having a membership card of WZOI will somehow open doors is plainly untrue. Membership of WZOI does not give its members automatic rights in any other

organisation, trust etc. Even today, a member of WZO cannot have any rights in ZTFE, unless he/she is a member of ZTFE. Therefore, the scenario being enacted by our critics is nothing more than scare mongering and they need to look deep into their own conscience to see if their tactic matches the Zoroastrian credo of good thoughts, words and deeds.

WZOI will not be forcing anyone to join it. Every individual has a choice. One of the founders of WAPIZ has in their brochure referred to giving our people choice, and I agree with that. Therefore, those who oppose WZOI should not join it.

We do not live in a perfect world and any concept will have its flaws. I would say to my fellow Zoroastrians at WZOF that to debate every single point to distraction is not the way forward. Improvements can and will be made after the formation of the three bodies. I therefore urge all those involved in the IZO/WZOF/WZOI concept to decisively move forward, to have the courage of their convictions and the moral fibre to form the three bodies.

The time for talking is over, the time for action is now, otherwise, I fear we may have lost the opportunity to create something that the future generations of Zoroastrians can be proud of.

Thank you.”



Rustam Dubash was born in 1956 and studied at Champion School. He obtained a BCom from Sydenham College and LLB law from Government Law College, both of the University of Bombay. Rustam then went on to practise as a advocate in his father’s law firm Smetham Bryne Lambert & Dubash for a year before coming to the UK in 1979 to train as a solicitor. He is currently a partner at Penningtons Solicitors LLP which is a 67 partner law firm in the UK, specialising in dispute resolution, commercial litigation and contentious banking work.



Report presented by FEZANA President, Firdosh Mehta on World Body day

“**R**espected Mobed Sahebs,
Community Elders, Honoured Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We look at FEZANA as a two country-united body to represent the interests of mainstream Zarathushtis at a national level. Hence, to act as an umbrella for its 24 Member Associations from USA & Canada.

FEZANA and the ONE WORLD BODY we envisage, is not an edictive or pontificating Body on Zoroastrian religion. It does not promote or promulgate any one particular school of thought. It does not get involved in deciding who can or cannot be a Zarathushti. This requirement of religious authority is left to The Mobed Councils; hence no definition of a Zarathushti is included and the acceptance of Zarathushtis of various schools of thought is left to the Member Associations on principle of religious autonomy. FEZANA has not been a deciding factor in any Navjotes. This stance has served us well so far; we hope future FEZANA leaders will continue to do so.

FEZANA, therefore, is primarily a welfare, harmonizing and community service organization at a NATIONAL PLAIN.

We are now trying to extrapolate this successful formula to the global level. Understanding that at the global level there would be different group dynamics, we the group of elected leaders of different existing organizations came together to create the platform for such an organization.

However, we did recognize the lacunae of such a concept of Body of Bodies, which did not have an avenue of recognition at the individual level. WZO being there in existence at the time was recognized as a

good available avenue to include the individual component.

Hence the tripartite vehicle of IZO/WZOI/WZOF was conceived. FEZANA MEMBERS HAVE EXPRESSED THE NEED FOR ONE WORLD BODY, and accepted this tripartite model. This tripartite organization would NOT be a religiously doctrinal and theologically pontificating body. It honors and respects the independence of every Member Association's region to define and establish their meaning of the term "Zoroastrian". This is ensured by many clauses included in the drafts of the Constitutions of The ONE World Body in IZO/WZOI/WZOF. It will not be proselytizing body, nor will it be a dictating or edictive body on religious matters.

The protection of infrastructure and property of each region is enshrined in the documents. Zarathushtis without parental lineage cannot become its office bearers.

We thank the Vada Dastoorjis and all the people who have given us their feedback, which has enabled us to refine the documents to include clauses to cater to those concerns of community infrastructure protection.

Under these conditions of Autonomy of religious expression, we are in favor of creating a World Body that is primarily a community SERVICE organization to make the life of mainstream Zoroastrians, a more happy and productive life.

We, as the leaders of the community, elected from different regions, seek your trust and support to come up with this set of documents which we promise to uphold, and commit to have them reviewed by the



community, before you ALL make up your minds finally.

At this point we ask for your patience and trust to allow us to come up with a set of documents that we the G-12 are satisfied with, to present to you for your final YES or NO.

We are very pleased to include 2 of the community leaders from IRAN, making us a Group of 12 elected leaders.

I thank you for this opportunity to make this presentation to you. If any of you has any questions, you are absolutely most welcome to ask me, so that I may get an opportunity to explain in further detail.

Thank you."

[Further explanation of the "NOTWITHSTANDING CLAUSE" was given as an opposite to VETO provision, for further protection of a Member who may opt out of participation of a majority decision, that may be detrimental to the Member, however, allowing the majority to proceed with such decision.]



Firdosh Mehta, Founding member and current President of FEZANA, was also the past President of Zoroastrian Association of Alberta. He is a board

member of various organisations and Vice-President of Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action. He has a B.Eng from India and a MSc from Massachusetts in Mechanical/Industrial Engineering. He is the Chairman & Treasurer of the Edmonton Chapter of Welding Institute of Canada as well as that of the Northern Alberta Section, receiving the R J Jacobson Award in 1993. Recently Firdosh and Rashna have moved to Texas, USA.

WAPIZ – A Voice for the Zoroastrian Community

by kaemerz dotiwala

The 8th World Zoroastrian Congress in London, where some 450 delegates came from the Diaspora participated is part of history and joins the list of other successful congresses that preceded it. The Iranian Zoroastrian contingent was the most conspicuous due to its 90 odd members; they came to the UK as they were granted visas by the government of the United Kingdom to attend the World Congress.



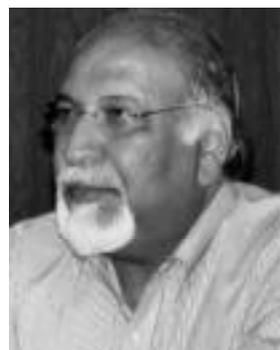
Khojeste Mistree, photo courtesy Roshan Rivetna

Congresses are basically talk shops where Zoroastrians meet and catch up with news of families and friends. It is also a place where new friendships are made and one could see that happen, particularly amongst the younger generation. The youngsters had their sessions in which they expressed their views and confidence. Interestingly, change and reform were not their "mantras", as indeed one would have expected. The Zoroastrian youth want to be guided with the right information by those who know, rather than by those who have little knowledge and a set agenda of conversion and reform.

The day scheduled for the World Body discussion, was perhaps the most poignant. The membership issue and its relevant definition as to who is a Zoroastrian, could not be agreed upon, more so as a new powerful player has come into the political arena.

Khojeste Mistree, who is one of its founding members, informed the congress delegates of the launching of the World Alliance of Parsi Irani Zarthoshtis – WAPIZ.

Mistree was given two slots to speak about the recently established Zoroastrian World Body, which was launched in Mumbai, on the 28th of May 2005.



Kaemerz Dotiwala

He and his supporters freely distributed a sleek brochure. Photographs of a *jashan* in which 215 mobeds in the presence of five High Priests participated were printed in the brochure. What a wonderful endorsement from the clergy and the Vada Dasturji Sahebs. Other photographs showed a vast number of invitees who attended the actual launch itself, on the grounds of the Royal Western India Turf Club (RWITC). A cross section of some 2500 people came for the launch and thereafter they were treated to a sumptuous dinner, organized by the WAPIZ team. Some of the messages of support were also printed in this brochure with a special message from the WAPIZ Chairman Mr Areez Khambatta, a well-known industrialist of "Rasna" fame. Mr Khambatta made a munificent donation of Rs10 million at the launch in order to support and uphold the voice of tradition through the activities of WAPIZ.

Khojeste Mistree in a short lucid introduction highlighted to the congress delegates, why he and his trustees felt the need to create a world body of Parsi Irani Zoroastrians only.

He outlined that over the last 25 years there has been a growing feeling amongst a large number of Zoroastrians that the voice of tradition has systematically been muzzled and marginalized across the globe by the present generation of Zoroastrian leadership. He mentioned that the concern shown by the High Priests appertaining to the erosion of traditional Parsi Irani beliefs was being flouted in India by the present leadership. He declared that the voice of the High Priests in India with regard to not permitting conversion and not wanting to create a cosmopolitan world body, comprising converts from across the world appears to have been rejected, by the BPP leadership. Similar concerns were expressed by 50 of the 56 other Anjumans as well as by the majority of the rank and file of Parsi Irani Zoroastrians in India. Mistree declared that despite this democratic opposition in India the BPP leadership was arrogantly planning to go ahead with the creation of a cosmopolitan

World Body in which the Parsi Irani Zoroastrians of India will be totally marginalized and have the greatest to loose, in terms of voting rights as outlined in the draft constitution. The membership clause in the draft constitution of the world body has intentionally been kept open and woolly in terms of whomsoever "professes to be a Zoroastrian" can become a member. In other words, the Parsi Irani ethnic identity for the first time in our history has been de-linked from that of being a Zoroastrian in the draft constitution of the proposed world body.

Mistree declared "WAPIZ has been created to give our people a viable traditional option for those who want to uphold the beliefs and practices over the millennia; he said that WAPIZ was an institution, a mere 31 days old which beckons traditional Zoroastrians to re-discover their roots and identity and feel un-ashamedly proud of it".

He categorically stated "WAPIZ is the only Parsi Irani Zoroastrian World Body of individuals which has been created to unite, preserve and promote traditional Zoroastrian beliefs and practices fused to a Parsi Irani identity. This identity is anchored in scholarship and blessed by our High priests, with the support of the rank and file of our community in India, Pakistan and (indeed over a period of time), globally".

He continued to state that "WAPIZ does not encourage or promote conversion and/nor inter-marriage amongst its members and this has been enshrined into the WAPIZ constitution. We believe that conversion will weaken our ethno religious identity". Mistree went on to state, "WAPIZ has been created to give our people the choice of wanting to join a traditional world body or Parsi Irani Zoroastrians as versus a cosmopolitan world body whose membership is open to non-Zoroastrian spouses and converts. Khojeste categorically stated, WAPIZ is not splitting the community as alleged, but it offers a viable option for all those Zoroastrians who want to uphold the voices of reason and tradition. We are friends to all and I have

personally worked with projects connected to FEZANA, the WZO Youth Wing and of course our own BPP, in India. We in WAPIZ believe in transparency and accountability, which have been sorely lacking in our community leadership. We are in the process of formulating our plan of action so that when a social audit is done in say 24 months, we in WAPIZ will have much to share by way of achievements to our critics and indeed to our well-wishers. He declared "WAPIZ will be headquartered in Mumbai, with advisory councils of High Priests and the majority of Anjumans guiding them.

In conclusion WAPIZ, he said, "will usher in a new era of religious cultural pride among our Parsi Irani Zoroastrians and will give a proper forum to all the traditionalists to work together to preserve our unique religious and ethnic identity in the face of all other adversities and challenges. Join us as individual members and help us preserve and perpetuate our Parsi Irani Zoroastrian heritage in India, Iran and in all parts of the world", Mistree extolled.

Mistree presented the WAPIZ case with oratory and professionalism, which won him a great deal of support and praise as a religious leader whose voice is one of moderation and clear thinking. He certainly appealed to a number of those including the youth, who attended the 8th World Zoroastrian Congress. Mistree did not come across as being a person who has often been accused of being a firebrand rabble-rousing preacher with a foreign accent. He is articulate and forthright in his observations based upon 25 years of religious and community work. WAPIZ is already a powerful institution to reckon with as its membership continues to grow, steadily. Clearly the voice of tradition as expressed by the rank and file of the community can hardly be ignored or disregarded in view of what one might say is the "WAPIZ phenomena".



A statement from BPP Trustees on the proposed World Body

Some individuals opposed to the creation of a World Body of Zoroastrians are propagating their misplaced perception that only two Trustees of BPP are in favour of forming a truly representative World Body of Zoroastrians.

It may be clarified that all seven Trustees of BPP are of the unanimous view that a World Body of Zoroastrians is a need of the times. Hence they are working towards the creation of such an organisation, all of whose office bearers would at all times be Parsi/Irani Zoroastrians only. Besides, India with the largest number of Zoroastrians in the world would have adequate weightage which would enable it to play a leading role in the affairs and management of the Body when established.

It is also to be clarified that the proposed World Body is not intended to be a religious Body, and will not interfere in the religious practises followed by Zoroastrians, residing in various parts of the world. Each region will be autonomous in pursuing our religious customs, traditions, rites, rituals without any interference from other regions. The World Body of Zoroastrians is envisaged to be a social, economic and political organisation.

This statement has been necessitated to place the issue in its proper perspective and lay to rest unnecessary speculation in the matter.

Thanking you,

Yours truly,
For & on behalf of
The Board of Trustees,
Minoo R Shroff
Chairman



Minoo Shroff, Chairman, BPP



As I do not have the paper read at the Congress - World Body Day, the statement issued by the BPP, just prior to the Congress is placed for your information. - Ed



L to R: Minoos Shroff - BPP Chairman & FPZAI President, Kurush Niknam - MP Iranian Majlis, translator (behind him) Dorab Mistry - ZTFE President, Firdosh Mehta - FEZANA President & Rustam Dubash - WZO President



L to R: Kurush Niknam, translator, Dorab Mistry



Sammy Bhiwandiwalla, sitting in the centre, on the right Mani Clubwalla, standing between them, Rustam Dubash



Farhang Mehr



Khorshed Jungalwala, coordinator, on the left



Roshan Rivetna presenting the slides, seated Farrokh Mistree & Khorshed Jungalwala

World Body Day - 30 June 2005

- London



Minoos Shroff



Khojeste Mistree

Why the BPP should join the world body of Zoroastrians

by homi dhalla

- An appeal to the intelligentsia

“You can clutch the past so tightly to your chest that it leaves your arms too full to embrace the present” Jan Glidewell

Why is a World Body of Zoroastrians imperative and what can it achieve.

In the last few decades, the face of the planet has changed drastically due to the march of science and technology. The revolution in travel and communications has resulted in transforming our world into a global village. At a dramatic rate, the world's religions and cultures are opening up their horizons to becoming multi-cultural and multi-religious. And Zoroastrians too have been contributing to this changed landscape, both at the local and international levels by participating in this dialogue of religions and civilizations.

Today, when we are forging relationships with men of other faiths at various international fora, it is unfortunate and strange that we as an educated community do not have a World Body of Zoroastrians (WBZ). The fresh challenges of the 21st century demands that we transcend national boundaries. Do we not need a common vision, a growing friendship and a strategic partnership, which will affect Zoroastrians living in the far corners of the globe? This will open a new window of opportunity to the community worldwide in so many different spheres:

1. Establish global contacts and have a representation at the United Nations
2. Represent Zoroastrian's in any region of the world in times of crisis, e.g. at the time of the Iranian Revolution or during natural calamities when our brothers and sisters may be affected

3. Foster cultural links between Zoroastrians worldwide
4. Encourage historical, archaeological and anthropological research and publish these findings
5. Promote an educated and enlightened priestly class, which can guide, discuss, lecture and lead the community in religious matters
6. Work towards the conservation and preservation of the Bahrot Caves (Where the Iran Shah was kept for 12 years), Udvada which is the Mecca for all Zoroastrians, as well as other religious sites in Iran and elsewhere
7. Encourage youth exchange programmes
8. Promote educational opportunities worldwide
9. Open up employment opportunities
10. Work for the alleviation of poverty for our less fortunate brothers
11. Forge business and industrial links
12. Assist in organizing World Congresses and other religious conferences
13. The WBZ, which shall act as a hub or nerve centre of the world community, will disseminate information on matters of common concern

Further Clarification about the WBZ

The Chairman of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet (BPP) together with other Trustees have publicly declared that:

1. "The WBZ shall act as a bridge for Zoroastrians residing in many countries of the world and provide a political safety net in times of need.
2. "Each region would be autonomous, respecting the views professed and systems followed by other regions and would not seek to interfere in the affairs of other regions
3. "We have made it abundantly clear from day one that the proposed WBZ is not intended to be a Religious Body and will not interfere in the religious practices followed by Zoroastrians residing in various parts of the world and the WBZ is envisaged to be a social, economic and political organization of Zoroastrians.
4. "That by creating and joining a WBZ, none of our community institutions would be threatened nor would their autonomous status be compromised in any manner
5. "We firmly believe that the community in India will only isolate itself if it retracts from the ongoing efforts to form the WBZ. Can there be a really representative WBZ without India? As an apex body of the community, should we take the lead or be passive bystanders?" (*Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly*, March 13, 2005)
6. Recently all the seven Trustees made a public statement clarifying that all of them are of the unanimous view that a WBZ is a need of the times and hence are working towards the creation of such an organization. (*Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly*, April 3, 2005)

Viewpoint of the Opposition

Preliminary discussions about the WBZ were initiated at the first world Zoroastrian Congress held in Tehran in 1961. Besides

this, the matter has been put on the agenda of subsequent Congresses and has been discussed at different forums all over the world during the last four decades.

Presently a group of 10 persons (G-10) comprising of duly elected representatives from various regions are working on a Constitution.

Whilst these efforts were progressing positively, there was a dramatic turn of events. The most concerted effort of the detractors took place at the meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India (FPZAI) held at Ahmedabad on December 18-19, 2004. This was executed by disrupting the meeting and by resorting to hooliganism, using foul language and preventing persons with a different viewpoint from even speaking. Of course, this was orchestrated by a few individuals. The next day this unfortunate incident was reported in the national press, thus tarnishing the image of the community.

In the first place, many of these self-appointed saviours are **NOT** elected representatives. They continue their tirade by pressurizing the Federation of Anjumans and the BPP against joining the WBZ. Some of these Anjumans who had earlier expressed their willingness to join the WBZ, have now declined to do so. Their main objectives may be briefly stated here with a rejoinder:

Raising the bogey of religion being in danger, they are trying to mislead the gullible. They falsely claim that the creation of a World Body would lead to the dilution in India of the Zoroastrian identity and ethnicity. This would ultimately result in the basic tenets of our faith being compromised and converts to our faith claiming entry as a matter of right, into our fire temples, be consigned to the Towers of Silence, become beneficiaries of our charitable Trusts and lay claim to our housing colonies. These misrepresentations ought not to go unchallenged.

Although the Trustees of the BPP have publicly debunked these claims, it may be appropriate to consider the opinion of an

eminent solicitor, Mr Eruch Desai. He had not only been the erstwhile Chairman and Trustee of the BPP but had also participated in the World Body discussions for a long time. He opines that:

“However, fear is expressed that by associating with the Zoroastrians abroad, we will be placing into danger our Community’s traditions and institutions. In India itself, we are a miniscule minority in a vast sea of humanity comprised of different faiths. The other communities have always respected our traditions and customs. They have not insisted upon any right to share the facilities enjoyed by us. They have not demanded entry into our fire temples or other institutions. If there is no danger from near, how then can there be a danger from afar? But still, there are doubting Thomases who apprehend that by associating with the World Body of Zoroastrians, which may include non-Parsis, a demand can come from some quarter far away, that they have a right to make use of our institutions, like the doongerwadi or the baugs or the fire temples. One should know that once a property is settled upon trust for a particular objective and confined to a particular class of beneficiaries, no other can avail of such right, unless by due process of law, and that too if it is permissible, amendments are carried out in the Trust.

Some say that the constitution of the BPP or the Federation of the Zoroastrian Anjumans is confined only to the Parsis and as such, it is not permissible to associate outside India with Zoroastrians who are non-Parsis. That is not a correct approach. By associating with such non-Parsi Zoroastrians, the constitution or character of a Parsi institution does not change or runs any risk of the nature above. They remain the same. All such non-Parsi Zoroastrians can never be entitled to become members of such entities in India.

But on reading the newspaper reports of recent times that there have been many new converts to Zoroastrianism outside India, the Parsi institutions and individuals who are the pillars of Zoroastrianism,

cannot take a back seat in such a representative body. They should have a predominant position and a major say in all important matters of the Community”.
(*Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly*, [Jamshedi Navroze Special], March 20, 2005, p.68)

Parsis do not have a monopoly over the message of Prophet Zarathushtra

Today, we live in a world of complex diversity, displaying a kaleidoscope of religions. Furthermore, every religion may be compared to a rainbow exhibiting numerous and valid expressions of that tradition. In 1982, David Barrett had gathered statistics about the Christian community worldwide.(1) He refers to seven major Christian blocks and a staggering estimate of 20,870 distinct and independent Christian denominations. In an interview with His Highness the Aga Khan in New Delhi (November 2004), he states, “*The Muslim world is vigorously pluralistic, and it has been so, practically since the Revelation of Islam. There is not ‘one Muslim world,’ there are enormous variations of interpretations, of history, of language or statehood.*” (2)

Buddhism too, is an enormous tree with several valid branches. Some scholars refer to Los Angeles, as “the most complex Buddhist city in the entire world”. The spectrum of Buddhists you find are Tibetans, Burmese and Thai wats. There are Vietnamese, Cambodian, Japanese, Korean and Sri Lankan communities. And of course, we find the Euro American Buddhists who are sometimes referred to as the “new Buddhists”. All these denominations have their own interpretation of Buddhism. As far as Hinduism is concerned, we are all aware that there are thousands of castes worshipping various deities. They are all recognized and accepted as aspects of the Hindu tradition.

Today there are pockets of Zoroastrians in Tajikistan, Kurdistan, Russia and elsewhere who claim to have Zoroastrian roots and wish to follow the religion of Prophet

Zarathushtra. Do we Parsis have the right to say that only we have the monopoly over Zoroastrianism and we are the sole interpreters of the faith? They do not require our permission to follow the religion of the Prophet, which has a universal message.

Those who are spearheading the movement against the formation of the WBZ, disdainfully dismisses those in the diaspora and the neo-Zoroastrians as "altoof-faltoo (worthless) Zoroastrians".(3) This is most demeaning, parochial and hurtful. Because they may follow a different interpretation of Zoroastrianism certainly does not make them worthless. We have to realize that the religious landscape of Zoroastrianism has been changing and shall change further with more neo-Zoroastrians appearing on the horizon.

In light of the above examples of diversity among Christians, Muslims and Buddhists, we ought to realize that those in the diaspora and the neo-Zoroastrians are our brothers and sisters and ought to be respected even if their interpretation and practise of Zoroastrianism varies from ours. We ought to engage in creative dialogue with them in a spirit of mutual trust.

Although the neo-Zoroastrians have been around for some decades now, there has not been a single instance of their applying to the BPP for any sort of assistance whatsoever. In the WBZ, if every region is autonomous, there would be no scope for any interference in Parsi Trusts. In fact while neo Zoroastrians have been around for decades, there is not a single reported case of anyone approaching the FPZAI or BPP for assistance. Moreover, Parsis only shall remain Trustees even in the future and the Trust deeds will also remain for the benefit of Parsis alone.

An appeal to the intelligentsia

Traveling back in time, the BPP, which has a history of about 335 years, has been the global epicentre of the community.

Formation of the WBZ shall be an important landmark in our history. We as responsible and enlightened members of the community should stand by and encourage the BPP to join the WBZ. This august body cannot remain a silent spectator but be very much a part of the decision-making process. Comprehending the fast changing ground realities it should play a pro-active role on the world Zoroastrian stage. Let it not be pressurized by the unbending rigidity of a few persons who have become self-appointed saviours of the community. Let not future generations say that we spoke much and did little in forming the WBZ.



Dr Homi Dhalla has an MA from Harvard University in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures and a PhD from Mumbai University from the Department of Avesta-Pahlavi. He taught as Assistant Professor at the Asia Institute, Shiraz University, Iran for two years. He has been conducting research in Zoroastrian Studies and Parsi History for many years.

He has represented the Parsi community at various international conferences focusing on the Zoroastrian view of peace, ecology, human rights, interreligious dialogue, etc. Besides this, he has been very active in the interfaith movement both at the local as well as the international level. He is the Zoroastrian representative of the Presiding Council of the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace, New York as well as an International Consultant to the International Interfaith Centre, Oxford. He is in charge of the Mumbai Co-operation Circle of the United Religions Initiative. In early 1998, he founded the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation in Mumbai. As it's President, he has launched a number of cultural projects for the Parsi community including the excavations at Sanjan and the preservation of the Bahrot caves. Due to the scarcity of the vultures at the Towers of Silence, he introduced the Solar Concentrator, which has once again strengthened the system of Dokhmenishini. He has played a vital role in the formation of the organization, Foundation for Unity of Religions and Enlightened Citizenship" which was launched by the President of India in 2004.

References:

1. *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Study of Churches and Religions in the Modern World A.D. 1900-2000*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1982.
2. *Sunday Hindustan Times*, November 28, 2004.
3. *Parsiana*, November 2004, p.41.

Aban Rustomji of Houston comments ...

"Viewing our own Zoroastrian world I have a comment I'd like to share:

On a personal level through meditation or close examination of our own beliefs one can transcend ego and power and bigotry in our lives.

What is it that our leaders can do to transcend the issues of ego and bigotry that make them turn the people of differing views of one religion against each other?

The Dalai Lama said, ' There are three things we must do.

Read the scholars of each other's religions.

Talk to the enlightened beings in each other's religions.

Finally, do pilgrimage of each others religions.'

Are we ready to listen to each other?"

courtesy Creatingawareness.com

The declining youth involvement in the Zoroastrian religion: do we finally have an answer?

by nikan h khatibi

- a youth's perspective

Take a careful look at the following numbers. Right now, nearly two-thirds of Americans (67%) call religion very important. Fully nine-in-ten pray at least once a week and the overwhelming majority of individuals who pray describe God in very personal terms. However, only about half (54%) of college graduates consider religion very important, compared to two-thirds (67%) of high school graduates and three-quarters (75%) of those who have not finished high school. Why such the gloomy numbers for youth as they get more educated?

I read a study that stated that 50% of youth indicated that they just needed a good reason to get involved. Young people's individual religious choices are a product of their upbringing and the availability of religious options. The most important factor, however, is the youths' own spiritual preferences and agency. Youths' style of attachment to parents determines how likely they are to follow in their parents' religious footsteps. Securely attached youth are likely to adopt the faith (or lack of faith) of their parents. On the other hand, those youth that are not as close to their parents are likely to distance themselves from their parents either by curtailing religious attendance or by joining a different religious organization and seeking attachment and family. Youth also change their pattern of religious involvement because of peer invitation or to avoid cliques, but peers do not have a strong influence on youths' deeply held spiritual beliefs. When motivated to change religious affiliation, youth generally switch to similar organizations they can find that have the desired characteristics that were missing in the ones they leave behind.

This characterization of youths' religious involvement as mainly a matter of their **own choice** and agency is at considerable variance with that of traditional social and psychological theory. Traditional perspectives assume that young people's religiosity is mainly a function of the strength of societal pressures around them and youths' own pliability to them. Empirical evidence has proven this false. Rather than being dull and compliant to the wishes of adults, young people seriously seeking spiritual growth and commitment tend to avoid religious contexts that are adult-oriented and paternalistic. Ask any youth and they will tell you that a youth-oriented event such as a church camp or local trip was more important in their spiritual development rather than a more adult oriented event such as a Shah Nameh reading or historical discussion. Many who have been through these rituals perceive them as adult-oriented and unassociated with any real change in status. **Religious organizations that successfully foster youth involvement offer youth-oriented contexts of spiritual development**, but also provide youth with a role in the larger religious community that is consistent with their almost-adult status. Interesting thus far ... don't you think?

On a personal basis, I have found that younger people - 18 to 35 year olds - are looking for more spiritual meaning in their lives. They're faced with the ultimate questions, such as what they're supposed to be living for or questions in regards to their social patterns. These are questions that the Zoroastrian religion can be applied to in its own contexts. It seems that we focus so heavily on discussing the past history of our religion (which is great), but

we all tend to forget the importance of discussing current and future situations that our religion faces. We need to step into today's world and apply the theories and beliefs of the past, today.

What can parents do?

Poor parents – it always seems to come back on their shoulders. With this, I continue to feel strongly that the appropriate role of concerned adults is to serve as a resource and facilitate a process over which youth themselves have ultimate control. If parents compel religious attendance strongly enough to damage the youth-parent relationship, it will likely have the opposite effect to the one intended. The strength and stability of youths' relationships to religious parents, other involved adults, and peers motivates them to invest in those relationships via religious participation. This helps them to begin or strengthen an existing personal relationship to God and higher powers to which they are introduced through religious attendance. Should they develop such a relationship, it usually becomes their main motivation for religious participation.

I feel especially compelled with this relationship because if the goal is to ensure that the youth of tomorrow will remain involved in religion and continue to receive its benefits across major life transitions, such as going to college, they must find their connection themselves. I made that point earlier when I stated the decline in percentage of youth who think religion is important between the time they enter college and leave – probably because college is where pre-existing personal ties can no longer hold them to a religious affiliation on their own.

So finally ... what's the answer?

As wishful as I am, there is no simple answer. Just like there is no simple answer on how to raise your child successfully there is no set of plans that can tell you how to make your child involved in the Zoroastrian

religion. But what both youth and parents can do is work together to make it work. Right off the bat, parents can encourage, not force, their children to get involved in the community, dar-e-mehr activities, online discussions and so forth. In addition, in order for the youth to overcome the initial barrier of involvement, it would be incumbent upon the association leaders to create exceptional programmes that deal directly with issues and activities that youth are interested in. Sunday school is a great activity, but that may not be the only way to attract youth involvement. Other activities must be organized that pertain to youth interests, such as discussions on friendships, dating, politics, and so forth. From there, youth will develop their connection with Ahura Mazda and the need for self-religious education.

I truly feel that once we are able to really grasp the interest of a generation of youth, they will continue to use our template of exceptional programmes and youthful activities to continue and expand with the youth programmes. ■■■■



Trusted experience, proven leadership, and a dedication to improve the quality of life - that is what Nikan H Khatibi is all about.

Graduating from the University of California, Irvine with a Bachelor in Science (B.S) in 2004 and then spending a year earning his Masters in Business Administration (MBA), Nikan will be pursuing a career as physician by starting medical school in the fall of 2005. Glancing at the future, Nikan envisions himself practicing medicine for some years before sustaining a position as a member of the United States Congress.

At the age of 23, he is the youngest director in history for the California Chamber of Commerce and Holiday Parade Commission, and is the founding director of Students for Success. Moreover, Nikan is an editor for the Youthfully Speaking section of the Fezana Journal and is past president of the Youth of the California Zoroastrian Center. He has spoken at many congresses around the world and takes great pleasure in seeing this community prosper.

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Harmony in Paradox

The Paradox of the Individual of the Community

by dina g mcintyre

Second in the series of 4 papers

One of the unique things about Zarathushtra's theology is that he does not give us fact specific answers. Instead, he gives us a system, a method, a way of living and solving our problems. I would like to show you how this system plays out in one of the many paradoxes of the Gathas. The paradox of the individual and the community.

We all know that a core teaching of Zarathushtra is individual responsibility. Have you ever wondered how this affects community well being? Is there a conflict here? Let us consider first, the Individual aspect of this paradox.

Zarathushtra's notion of individual responsibility includes five components.

First, we must think. This is unusual. Most religious authorities consider obedience to be a higher priority. But not Zarathushtra. His priority is that we think. In fact, he considers good thinking (*vohu mano*) to be an attribute of the Divine, that man can also attain.

Second, he tells us we must think individually – each person for himself. This also is unusual. Most religions require obedience to some central, human authority. But not Zarathushtra. He tells us

“... Reflect with a clear mind – man by man for himself ...” Y30.2.¹

Does this mean that Zarathushtra is indifferent to community well-being? Not at all, as we shall see. His notion of how to nurture and create community is just different from the authoritarian view.

One of the challenges for our Zoroastrian community today, surely, is to find a way of implementing this teaching of independent thought, within the institutional framework of our religion. In so doing, we need to be aware that obeying some central human authority does not necessarily create community. It simply substitutes another human being's thinking for our own.

The concept of “obedience” does indeed exist in Zarathushtra's thought – “*sraosha*”. But this is not a blind obedience. It is a thinking obedience. When applying it to human authority, Zarathushtra says:

“... As world-healer, promise us a judge [*ratum* ²], and let obedience to him come **through good thinking** ...” Y44.16.

Even obedience to the Wise Lord is a thinking obedience. In fact, Zarathushtra suggests that the Wise Lord instructs, helps, and promotes the desired end, through good thinking – His mind to ours.

“... **instruct through good thinking** (the course) of my direction, in order to be the charioteer of my will and my tongue.” Y50.6.

“... What **help by good thinking** hast Thou for me? ...” Y49.12.

“... **Through good thinking** the Creator of existence shall promote the true realization of what is most healing according to our wish.” Y50.11.

The third component of Zarathushtra's notion of individual responsibility is the

freedom to choose. Each thought, word and action involves making a choice. Even the failure to choose is a choice.³

The fourth component involves how we make our choices. The Zoroastrian commitment is to choose what is true and right (*asha*), for its own sake, as the Gathas and our *Ashem vohu* prayer tell us. Not out of fear of punishment like the conventional notion of hell. And not because we want a reward like the conventional notion of heaven. But to bring about what is true and right, (*asha*), for its own sake. When we do so, we bring ourselves, and our world, our communities, into harmony with *asha*, with what is true and right, with the ideal order of things.

Look at any human endeavor – medicine, technology, science, literature, law, whatever – and you see the validity of Zarathushtra's thought. It is the creative diversity and intelligence of individuals, free to think for themselves, that generate the solutions to the many problems that form a natural part of our reality. It is the many good choices, made by many individuals, that generate community well being.

How often do we hear the seductive voice of false arguments which seek to persuade us to give up our freedom to think for ourselves, and make our own choices, for the so-called good of the community.

Imagine yourself as an auditor for Enron, in the last few years of Enron's existence, being told: "you cannot expose the financial wrongdoings of management – it would destroy the company, throw thousands of people out of work, destroy the savings of hundreds of thousands of shareholders, to say nothing of losing us our biggest client." Did covering up for Enron's management save jobs, or save its shareholders, or keep the auditing company from losing its biggest client? We all know it did not. But if the auditors had refused to give their seal of approval to the wrongdoing, right at the beginning, it would not have grown to such huge proportions, and it might have saved

the employees, the shareholders, the company itself, and its auditors.

In the same way, in the Zoroastrian community, sometimes community leaders issue edicts that we believe to be wrong. And there are those in the community who tell us that we have an obligation to obey these edicts "for the good of the community". But can it ever benefit a community to perpetuate what is wrong?

I don't ask you to take my word for it. I ask only that you think about it. Do you believe in Zarathushtra's system? Does it make sense to you? Is it validated by experience?

Finally, the fifth component of individual responsibility is the law of consequences, that we experience the consequences our choices, that what we do comes back to us – the good choices and the bad choices – all come back to us, not for punishment, but as a learning mechanism, to increase our understanding. If we make choices that turn out to be mistakes, that is a normal part of the learning process. The lessons are sometimes painful. But they increase understanding (*vohu mano*).

To summarize: Zarathushtra's system of individual responsibility and community well being involves thinking for ourselves, using our minds to figure out what is true and right, making good choices with each thought, word and action, and experiencing the consequences for our choices, as an on-going learning process, which makes us grow as individuals. And by the same token, it is impossible to think a good thought, speak good word or do a good action without benefiting the people and circumstances that are affected by them'— our communities, our world.

There is another dimension to this paradox of the Individual and the Community, which I would like to touch upon.

We are all familiar with the teaching of the immanence of the Wise Lord in all things. In other words, that His Life Force exists in

all things. This is implied throughout the Gathas, and is expressed in the later texts using the metaphor of fire. For example, the unknown author of Yasna 17, (a later Avestan text), refers to fire metaphorically, expressing the belief that everything has the divine fire within it – man, animals, trees, plants, the clouds, the world itself. An idea that we also find in the Bundahishn. This is a poetic way of expressing the idea that His Life Force is immanent, (present), in all things.

The Gathas show us this thought in multi-dimensional perspectives, one of which is the concept of *haurvatat* – completeness, perfection.

Completeness (*haurvatat*) is an attribute of the Wise Lord Himself. Zarathushtra speaks of:

“... His completeness [*haurvatat*]
...” Y31.6.

Yet it is something that we can earn. He says:

“... Those of you who shall give obedience [*seraoshem*] and regard to this (Lord) of mine, they shall reach completeness ...” Y45:5.

The Wise Lord gives completeness to us:

“... grant Thou to me ... completeness,
...” Y51.7.

And, most interesting of all, we give completeness to the Wise Lord:

“Yes, both completeness and immortality are for Thy sustenance. Together with the rule of good thinking allied with truth, (our) [*aramaiti*] has increased these two enduring powers (for Thee). ...” Y34.11.

You well may ask: how could we possibly give completeness to the Wise Lord? How do we complete what is already complete? Isn't He above needing anything that we

can give Him? No indeed. This too is a beautiful part of Zarathushtra's thought – a mutual benefiting, a mutual completing, of man and “God”, and man and man, and all the living. For if He is immanent (present) in all things, then although at an individual level, He is complete, perfect, He cannot attain ultimate completeness until everything of which He is a part has attained that same state of completeness, perfection.

Thus we see that “completeness” (*haurvatat*) is attained both at an individual, and eventually, at a collective level. The ultimate paradox; giving an added dimension to the meaning of community, in that an individual is not truly complete, until all the living arrive at that same state of being.

Once we understand this thought, it becomes apparent that although a given individual may perfect himself or herself, we cannot reach ultimate completeness until everyone does. It makes us appreciate that it is not enough for an individual to attain *haurvatat* for himself. We have to help each other make it. If I don't make it, you don't make it. If you are diminished, I am diminished. If any part of this whole is trashed, we are all trashed.

It is a paradox indeed, that in searching for God, Zarathushtra discovers the brotherhood of man, and the unity of all things.

If we keep this understanding in our minds when making our choices, and if we implement this understanding in our communities, it will enable us to meet the challenge of being true to Zarathushtra's teaching of individual responsibility, in a way that builds well-being in the many communities of which we are a part.

Thus we see the paradox of the individual and the community resolve itself into the harmony of a beneficent existence.



Notes:

¹ All quotations from the Gathas in this paper are from the translation of Professor Insler in *The Gathas of Zarathushtra*, (Brill 1975), unless otherwise indicated, although Professor Insler may or may not agree with the inferences I draw from his translation. Round brackets () appearing in a quotation are in the original and indicate an insertion by Professor Insler, indicating his understanding. Square brackets [] indicate an insertion by me. Such insertions by me are provided to show you applicable Gathic words (although not with their grammatical variations) or by way of explanation. A string of dots in a quotation indicates a deletion from the original. Often a verse contains many strands of thought. Deleting from a quotation those strands of thought that are not relevant to the discussion at hand enables us to focus on the strand of thought under discussion.

² Insler translates "ratum" as "judge". Taraporewala translates the word as "Teacher". See *The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra*, by I J S Taraporewala, p 513.

³ As James K Lovelace pointed out in his essay: *Reality and Response*, which appears in *An Introduction to the Gathas of Zarathushtra*, Issue No 10, and which may be viewed on Shahrar Shahriari's website www.zarathushtra.com



Dina G McIntyre, is a Zoroastrian, born in India and came to USA in 1956. She earned a law degree from the University of Pittsburgh, School of Law, has practiced law in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, since 1963, is a member of the bar of all federal and state courts in Pennsylvania, and the United States Supreme Court. She has been a student of the teachings of Zarathushtra since the early 1980s, and was the Editor of a 12 lesson course on the Gathas called *An Introduction to the Gathas of Zarathushtra*, which she distributed world-wide in 1989-90. She has lectured on the teachings of Zarathushtra at various conferences and seminars in the US, Canada, England and India. Her writings on the teachings of Zarathushtra appear on these websites: www.vohuman.org and www.zarathushtra.com

WZO's Calendar of Events for September & October

Saturday 10 September from 7:00pm

Shahenshahi Navroze Dinner Dance at the St Luke in the Avenue Hall, The Avenue, Richmond, Surrey. The hall is a five minutes' walk from Kew Underground station. Light snacks will be served from 7:15pm, followed by dinner at 7:45pm. On this evening there is a very special entertainment which will be after dinner and before the dancing commences to the music of the *Velvet Touch*.

Rate: £12.50 adults and £8.50 children 5 - 12 years.

Sunday 18 September from 4:00pm - 6:00pm

Annual General Meeting. The AGM will be held at the International Students House, 229 Gt Portland St, London. The nearest Underground station is Gt Portland Street.

Saturday 22 October

Gala Dinner Dance in aid of the WZO Gujarat Fund

Wednesday 26 October

Mehraban Farhangi's Death Anniversary Through the courtesy of Mr & Mrs Sam Bhiwandiwala at 11 Beeches Wood, Kingswood, Surrey. Members and non-members are equally welcome.

UK TV Channel 5

Dorab Mistry, President, ZTFE, informs, Channel 5 are running a new series of their much-acclaimed programme "Rooted" which depicts the life and experiences of a young person born in the UK in a family practising an ethnic religion. After the success of the previous series, Channel 5 decided to include Zoroastrianism also in the new one. Jessica Todiwala was selected for the Zoroastrian programme. The film was shot on location in India as well as here in the UK.

It is matter of some pride that Channel 5 are going to screen the film on Zoroastrianism, featuring Jessica Todiwala, as its first programme in this series on Sunday 21st August at midday.

Jessica has also been interviewed by Mixz magazine in its current issue. Her interview with the Sunday Times is also likely to appear in the Sunday's magazine section.

ZAH Library special event : Honouring Jimmy Engineer

by magdalena rustomji

Jimmy Engineer, artist and social crusader, visited North America from February through April of 2005

On February 11, 2005, the ZAH Library held the first of its special events of 2005, at the Zarthushti Heritage & Cultural Center. This event honoured visiting artist, advocate and humanitarian, Jimmy Engineer from Pakistan, and was sponsored by Kersi and Thrity Engineer. About 160 people, including Jimmy's parents, Fali and Perin Engineer, his sister, Nina Challa and her family, his brother, Kersi Engineer and family were present. Persons representing various groups in the Houston Community were present as well. Aban Rustomji introduced Jimmy, highlighting some of the activities in his life that are renowned; particularly, his high status in the international art community.

Jimmy's artwork, while only a small representation of the great volume of art he has produced was displayed in the various lectures which he gave, including some work of the "mood series," and architectural and cultural collections and abstracts. Jimmy presented the ZAH Library with a print of one of his most famous murals depicting the horrors of the exodus of Hindus and Muslims at the time of Partition.

Jimmy told his story to various audiences in the United States. He was born in Loralai Baluchistan. At five years, he picked up crayons and began to draw. At six years of age, he fell ill and the doctors gave the parents the sad news that Jimmy was very ill with kidney failure and had only a short time to live. When he began to heal, the doctors could only explain that the kidneys

he had, were not the same as when diagnosed. There were no organ

transplantations at that time, so according to Jimmy, his kidneys had been replaced by nature. Thus was born his love and respect of nature.



Jimmy, artist & social crusader

Apart from his artistic creations, Jimmy has another passion, which is his "WALK," to raise social consciousness about the plight of the poor and victimized humans. In 1994 for one entire year, he walked and he met people along the way and listened and spoke to them. Walks are a way by which he creates publicity for persons who have no food, no water, no hospital, and no hope. He has walked for leprosy, cancer, law

and order, human rights and very importantly, for PEACE. His very significant walk was for peace between India and Pakistan in November of 2001.

Jimmy has brought awareness about the plight of handicapped children, he has taken them to five star restaurants to eat and be entertained. He has taken children to the cinema. A blind child asked him, "Why do you not take us to the cinema? We are able to watch the movie with our heart". So, he hired out a theatre to show a film to 300 blind children. He reminds us that the Tsunami has given us 20,000 orphans.

Besides Houston, Jimmy Engineer made visits to other cities in the United States, including Washington DC and he spoke to

various audiences, such as the Asia Society. Wherever he goes, his message of good will is appreciated.

Jimmy's philosophy

About his Way of Art:

As an artist Jimmy is an idealist, by his own admission. His art includes landscapes, calligraphy, mood series and now, architectural compositions whereby he hopes to bring countries together. Through his art, he brings about social consciousness and from the proceedings from the sale of his art, he funds many worthwhile causes. His special purpose in his life, to give, to feel, to share, to live with others and find out for himself - how they live, and to try to take on some of their suffering.

About his Way of Walking:

As a peace activist, Jimmy walks in the footsteps of nature, not do it to set an example, but because he feels that he should. Jimmy says that he walks with his mind; he is so involved in the cause of the walk that he does not feel the tiredness. In his walks, Jimmy listens to and learns with nature, for he feels that nature shows us how we can help. It is such a great privilege to walk and Jimmy has taken this privilege of walking, and through it is creating awareness of and for, many causes, among them, human rights and PEACE. Keep walking, keep moving, keep helping. Jimmy's philosophy seems to be echoed by another peace activist, Thich Nhat Hanh:

“ To have peace, you can begin by walking peacefully. Everything depends on your steps . . . Walking mindfully on the earth can restore our peace and harmony, and it can restore the earth's peace and harmony as well. . . ”

Yezdi Rustomji says about Jimmy, *“It is not that Society produces the people it deserves, it produces the people that it*

needs. And, so, the rest of us simply do go about, daily, fulfilling our expected and predictable roles-as needed. Jimmy Engineer, however, lives his life as it is deserved by humanity: He certainly lives his life personifying the three Zarathushtrian tenets - Humahdah, Hukhtah, Hvereshtah- that is, being of critical mind, of truthful words, and purposeful action.” ■■■



Magdalena Rustomji was born in San Luis Potosi, Mexico and immigrated to Texas as a young child. For the past 20 years she has been a licensed professional counsellor (psychotherapist) working with “recent arrival” immigrant high school students, in group and individual sessions. Magdalena's other interests include gardening, poetry and the cinema. She is the coordinator of an annual Writing Festival for immigrant high school students that celebrates Poetry Month and has also written a poetry module for use in Group work with adolescents. Magdalena's occasion poem was selected as the Conference Poem for the Twelfth

North American Zoroastrian Congress in Chicago in July of 2002



Above: Jimmy addressing the audience with Aban Rustomji, Chair ZAH Library. Left: Jimmy's art on display

WZO welcomes Jimmy Engineer : a true son of Pakistan

Report by Sammy Bhiwandiwalla

Having completed a successful tour of the States and being honoured by the Zoroastrian Association of Houston, Texas on February 11, 2005, Jimmy Engineer, Pakistan's renowned artist, humanitarian and social worker, was welcomed to our island community in the UK with the combined endeavours of Sammy Bhiwandiwalla (Chairman of WZO) and Roshan Mistry, Chairman of Zoroastrians of South London, at the ATC Hall in South Wimbledon on Sunday 8th May 2005.

Jimmy Engineer seemed to have brought his own sunshine from America, as the day was a bright and sunny one. The congregation of some 70 people assembled with much interest to hear Jimmy speak about his life and to take the opportunity to see prints of his magnificent paintings as well as his Social and Humanitarian paths of life.

On arrival there were a few tables set aside for a display of his prints numbering over 200 and most of the audience wanted

to keep a copy or even buy one but as they were purely for display Jimmy did suggest in his speech that anyone would be welcome to download his paintings and make copies for themselves - www.jimmyengineer.com - being his personal website.

Jimmy has painted over 2,000 originals, 1,000 calligraphies and over 20,000 prints, which are in private collections in 50 countries. On two occasions the Government of Pakistan has brought out 1st Day Stamp Covers using Jimmy's work.

Sammy and Roshan jointly chaired the session with Jimmy as the Guest of Honour,

and Sammy offering an impromptu introduction. Jimmy then spoke at length about his life and works and all the interesting avenues life had taken him to. He is a dedicated artist who is working on some 60 new canvases of different eastern architectural paintings for his next exhibition and at the same time he is a devoted example of practical help to the needy, disabled children of Pakistan, his home country, whose national attire he proudly wears.

While he spoke at length about his life's works, the audience was in awe of all that he had achieved up-to-date. One lady said *"our little effort of walks for charity seem nothing compared to that of Jimmy's"*.

This was followed by a power-point visual slide show of many of Jimmy's paintings, peace walks and aid works, followed by a short thank you from Roshan and also Shahpur Captain, who honoured Jimmy's parents for the part they played in his life and the support they provide so lovingly.

The floor was open to discussion and many people had some interesting questions to ask, ie *"Why did he choose to help children*



L to R: Sammy, Jimmy & Roshan

of other communities”, to which Jimmy replied: “He looked for where the need was greatest and tried to set up ways and means to help best”, as he is a believer of all good religions, although very proud and happy to be a Zoroastrian by birth.

Some people were interested in buying his original paintings, to which he replied that he did sell to large corporations, societies and embassies to make maximum returns which facilitated his social aid work within the country.

He was also questioned on his attire of *shalwar kameez* to which he replied that he wore it being a very comfortable garment and secondly in respect to his home country of Pakistan.

After exchanges of several other question and answers Sammy thanked Jimmy and offered him a gift box of chocolates and the recent issue of *Hamazor*, which already had a half page article on Jimmy, and said the next *Hamazor* issue would carry a “full page” of the day’s event. He also gave Jimmy a disc of the WZO charity work in India, and Jimmy thanked them all in return.

The evening ended with snacks, prepared by caterers Armin and Yasdi Dastoor, which everyone enjoyed.

The following week Jimmy commenced his European trip starting from Rome and ending in Germany, returning back to the UK on 3rd June for a week, before heading home to Karachi. ■■■■



Hamazor to Mobed Zarrir Bhandara

by meher d amalsad

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Author of Bread For The Head™

“Appreciating the efforts of human beings in their lifetime is so much more appropriate rather than ‘singing praises’ after one is gone.” says Toxy Cowasjee – Past President of Karachi Zarthosti Banu Mandal. This sentiment is not only in harmony with Zarathushtra’s philosophy of venerating people promoting righteousness during their lifetime but also the cornerstone of honouring Mobed Zarrir Bhandara for his 33-years of selfless religious and spiritual services to our Zoroastrian community on April 16, 2005 at the California Zoroastrian Center – a function that was well attended by about 20-representing delegates and 250 members of our Southern California Zoroastrian community.

The commemorative plaque presented to him reads:

“Under the guidance of Ahura Mazda with Good Thoughts, Good Words, & Good Deeds, the Southern California Zarathushti Community honors Mobed Zarrir Bhandara in recognition for 33-Years of Outstanding Dedication, Commitment & Service to our Zarathushti Community.”

This special function was graced with felicitations and salutations from High Priests, North American and Global Zoroastrian Leaders. From the forefronts of North America we have the following:

“On behalf of FEZANA and the Zarathushti community of USA & Canada, we are pleased to join the California Zoroastrian Center, The Zoroastrian Association of California and the North American Mobeds Council to honor

Mobed Bhandara and show our gratitude for his selfless service, priestly dignity and deep sense of religiosity,” says Firdosh Mehta – President, Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America.

From the forefronts of the North American Mobeds Council we have the following felicitation:

“On behalf of the North American Mobeds Council it is my pleasure to convey our felicitations and

good wishes to Mobed Zarrir Bhandara for rendering over 33-years of selfless service to the Zarathushti community in India and North America. It is gratifying to see that his services in creating heightened awareness of Zarathushti religion are duly recognized by the

community members. May Zarrir be blessed with a peaceful, blissful and long life of happiness and success through the Grace and Guidance of Ahura Mazda,” says Dr Jehan Bagli – President, North American Mobeds Council.

From the forefronts of Asian & European Continents we have the following salutations:

“No community can survive without a strong religious foundation. At the same time no religion can survive without an enlightened clergy. The success and survival of our Zoroastrian community is directly linked to our religion and our Mobeds. For his sterling contribution towards satiating the spiritual needs of Zoroastrians for over 33 years, I wish Mobed Zarrir Bhandara good health and a long and happy life with his loved ones, and pray that other Mobeds will emerge on the scene to

follow in the footsteps of Mobed Zarrir Bhandara,” says Dinshaw K Tamboly – Chairman, WZO Trust Funds & Trustee, Bombay Parsi Punchayet.

“In the western world, where we have few mobeds and the system of full-time mobeds does not exist, we depend on priests like Mobed Zarrir Bhandara to fulfill the religious and social needs of our community. We at ZTFE would like to join hands with FEZANA, NAMC, ZAC & CZC in recognizing the silent and honorary services of

religious nature rendered by Mobed Bhandara and congratulate him for his 33-years of service to the Zarathushti community in India and Southern California,” says Dorab Mistry – President, Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe Inc., United Kingdom.



Tenaaz & Zarrir, were both honoured at this function

This was an occasion not only for Mobed Zarrir Bhandara but also for all those who over the years stood beside him and for every Zoroastrian priest across the globe who now have a chance to be honored in the future because a special door has been opened for all of them. Mobed Bhandara felt honored to be the first one in pioneering this special trend. We hope that it will ignite a spark of appreciation for all our mobeds and create a model of inspiration to emulate a future tradition that will encourage our Zoroastrian youth to take on the initiative for becoming future religious leaders of our community.

Even though Zarrir was born in a priestly family, his father was not an ordained priest. It was kind of destined for him to be initiated into priesthood, because from his early childhood, he has been a clairvoyant and a healer.

I believe that priests can promote healing but to me healing starts from within. With that sentiment, I now want to talk about one of Zarrir's accomplishments that touched my heart and spirit because to me, he is truly a walking, talking miracle.

In October of 1994, Zarrir was involved in a major motorcycle accident in which his left leg was sandwiched between a speeding car and the centre divider of the freeway. By the time he was rushed to the ICU he had lost so much blood that the attending physicians were not sure if he would survive and asked him for his last wish. But he survived.

The next day the attending orthopedic surgeon told Zarrir that: *"Seldom people walk after this kind of injury. You will never be able to walk."*

But not only did Zarrir walk after one month but he also travelled to India after three months. It was because he was able to invoke the spirit of self-healing through prayers, meditation and a positive mental attitude.

Mobed Bhandara believes that a priest should be a living witness, reflecting a life of a true Zoroastrian and taking care of all living beings, as Zarathushtra did. Their lives need to attract and inspire everybody they meet. We know that Mobed Bhandara lives what he believes. It is because in his love of truth he has demonstrated the truth of love and instead of the love of power he has always focused on the power of love for which we salute him with the following blessings from Dasturji Dr Firoze Kotwal – High Priest, Mumbai, India. "I wish all success on this auspicious occasion and pray to Ahura Mazda to bestow his divine blessings on Zarrir till the last breath of his life."

And Mobed Bahram Shahzadi – Head Priest, California Zoroastrian Center, "Mobed Zarrir Bhandara, I wish you a life blessed in the service of Ahura Mazda and pray that you will continue to inspire our future generation to serve our community by keeping the flame alive."



Meher Amalsad was born and raised in Karachi, Pakistan. In 1985, he came to the US for higher education and since then has been actively involved in the North American & Global Zoroastrian community, especially the youth. He has served as the Founding Chairperson of the First North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress, 1987, as well as the First World Zoroastrian Youth Congress. Both events being his brain child were hosted in Westminster, Southern California. Meher is the author of "Bread For The Head™" and his work has been endorsed by world psychological masters such as Dr Denis Waitley, Brian Tracy, Arun Gandhi and many others. His message, 'Honoring unity within diversity in humanity' has been broadcasted on numerous radio, cable, satellite and TV talk shows nationwide and Meher has been listed in the "Who's Who in the World" since 2000 till the present time. He lives in Westminster, California, with his wife and daughter.



Armita Dalal presents the plaque to Mobed Bhandara



Anahita Amalsad, representing the youth, honours Mobed Bhandara



Tenaaz & Zarrir with their daughter & son



Audience reflection on meditation, purpose being to demonstrate the use of asha to reach out instead of pointing out.



Bollywood culture is jhatka: Bapsi

by bachi karkaria

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She's the Grand Dame of South Asian Anglophone writing; if Rushdie is *Midnight*, then **Bapsi Sidhwa** is *9 pm. Her Crow Eaters (1978)* was published three years before Salman's 'Children'. But, she has also suffered the path-breaker's bruised knees. Her books straddle the cultures

of her native Lahore, her racial 'home' Mumbai, and her present American address. She is currently editing an Anthology of prose and poetry on Lahore. She spoke to **Bachi Karkaria** on subjects ranging from displacement to dhansak.

Who are you really?

I'm a Parsi first, then a Pakistani, specifically a Punjabi. I'm a woman simply by gender. I don't feel American at all. My consolidated 3P identity has enriched my writing.

But remember, I also grew up in isolation. Because of my polio, I wasn't sent to school. I missed being with other children. But my Anglo-Indian governess introduced me to *Little Women*, - it opened up another world.

I began to dwell in a fantasy, within these books. My role model was the shy Victorian woman!

Are the person and the writer interchangeable?

Our interests overlap of course, but I'm a very different person from my books. When I sit down to write, I shift gears, inhabit the

world of that particular book. I behave like an *afini*, addict.

People expect to meet a vivacious, funny, even bawdy person. But I'm shy, even timid. Yet (wicked laugh) when I'm in front of an uptight, hypocritical audience, I really set about embarrassing them with great glee.

I was addressing a huge expatriate conference in San Jose, and read out the passage from *Ice-Candy-Man* about the boy showing his hernia scars to the girl. Half the hall emptied out, mothers hustling out their hulking daughters. Ha! Those girls probably knew more about sex than I ever will.

Does repression hone creativity?

In Pakistan, a woman is constantly under scrutiny; she can't be wholly natural. Then, politics makes one very impassionate. That too builds up pressure.

The need to communicate is very strong. If I'd always lived in Mumbai and gone to dances every evening, I may not have felt the need to live in a literary world so different than my own.

Did the 'land of the free' change this?

For me displacement is a way of life. I've always felt un-rooted, except those Mumbai years, where being a Parsi among Parsis gave me a huge sense of freedom.

What does displacement bring to the literary table?

It gives you the necessary distance. It takes away some of the inhibition you'd have if you were part of the gossip circle. Distance spares you from the guilt of literary incest.

You aren't in any danger of becoming an American Brat ?

No chance. I'm still totally rooted in the subcontinent. I love Urdu poetry. Listening to Punjabi just lifts my spirits (she sits rapt later that evening as Khushwant Singh reels off a poet's epitaph in Lahore's Hindu-Muslim graveyard).

And I adore our *kohila*, corny, Parsi jokes. Yes, America is a nice new place, but I'm not awed. It's our young in the US who don't have that confidence of identity.

They think Bollywood is the real India, that Indian culture is all that *jhatka*.

What don't you like about the US?

Their waste and their sense of entitlement. The rest of the world is discounted, disposable. The might and power they have is unprecedented, so their arrogance is untempered.

They think their democracy is the best on earth, when it is deeply flawed. Corruption? The Iraq war and Halliburton are joined at the hip! They are racist, but, no, they aren't class conscious.

What else is good?

The individual American is really considerate, caring and overwhelmingly generous.

As a newcomer I was so warmly welcomed and helped along by the local literary community - largely Jewish. I admire the US as a disciplined nation. They are a deeply moral people.

Paradoxically, America has taught me humility. In fact, I have come to believe that one is born to learn humility at every stage. Whenever I get uppity, *phut*, I am taught a lesson.

How important is a diaspora?

Very. For both cultures. Indians have become such a beautiful part of the diaspora, whether in business or writing. Muslims have wanted to go back after the backlash, but I tell them to stay and show that Islam is not what Americans think it to be. The world is too dangerous for any one country or people to isolate itself.

What about the threat to the immigrant's identity?

Look, people have been in America for generations, but they never lose the hyphen. They are always Jewish-American or German-American... You couldn't lose your identity even if you wanted to.

You are bound to it by food, name, genetics, the way you interact within the family and outside it.

Haven't you cashed in on the 'exotic-eccentric' Parsi connection?

I wish I could. But who knows of them outside? I'm told, 'Look, I have trouble enough understanding you as a Pakistani or Indian. Then you bring in this Zoroastrian thing. Why are you freaking me out?'

What do you enjoy most about the creative process? The craft? The catharsis?

Neither. It's like meditation. It leaves me with a great sense of peace. Without it, I am unfocussed, impossible.

And what annoys you?

The title of *Ice-Candy-Man* has been translated as *Burf ka gola* !

Bapsi Sidhwa honoured by the City of Houston

Mayor Bill White, City of Houston & Houston City Council recognized Bapsi Sidhwa on her remarkable literary achievement on 26th July 2005, at the Houston City Council Chambers.

Her play "An American Brat" will be produced in Houston by Stages Repertory Theater during the Fall of 2006. It is the first time a major theatre company in Houston is developing and producing a full length play by a South Asian playwright.



Bachi Karkaria is National Metro Editor of *The Times of India*. She is the first Indian on the board of the World Editors Forum; she also sits on the Board of the India AIDS Initiative of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

She is popular columnist, an authority on urbanisation and AIDS, and recipient of the international Mary Morgan-Hewitt Award for Lifetime Achievement. She is the author of 'Dare To Dream' (Viking-Penguin), the best-selling biography of M S Oberoi, as well as two collections, "Erratica" and "Your Flip Is Showing". She has adapted "The Rummy Game", a play which has been successfully staged in India, Europe and the USA.



Three women on their writing machines¹

by dolly dastoor

Many Zoroastrians living in the diaspora receive three different magazines *Hamazor*, published by the World Zoroastrian Organization, *Parsiana*, published by Jehangir Patel in Mumbai and *FEZANA Journal* published by Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America.

If you are like me, you will go through each of the issues from cover to cover, to see what interesting and exciting articles they contain and make a mental note to go back and read them again, and if you are like me then you will collect each of the issues as archival material for they always contain information on varied subjects which you want to keep as a reference.

Over the past decades there have been some outstanding Zoroastrian journalists and publishers, men and women who have left their mark in the communities they live in, but today I pay special tribute to three women, high achievers whom I admire immensely, three women who have devoted a good part of their lives to provide the community with quality and well researched material and who in their own way have raised the awareness of the community towards some of the burning and pertinent issues of our day. They have given us well researched articles of our past heritage and shaped the views of the Zoroastrian reader over the decades. They are none other than Toxy Cowasjee, editor of *Hamazor*, Roshan Rivetna, editor-in-chief of *FEZANA Journal* and Arnavaz Mama, journalist of *Parsiana*.

Toxy, Roshan and Arnavaz, are distinct personalities and yet they have one thing in common their desire to serve the community and to make a difference. Women with a mission and a vision of keeping the community connected.

Toxy was born in Karachi and had her early schooling at the Karachi Grammar School

before going to Roedean, a boarding school in England where she was subjected to the “highest form of discipline and regimentation” and “molded her character to face storms which would prepare her in life

for whatever was in store.” The love of the arts and all things artistic was cultivated in the boarding school. Reluctantly abandoning her first desire to become an interior designer, she settled on working for her father as a professional secretary. On returning to Karachi she fell in love with her cousin Cyrus and married him in 1962. They have two children, and four grandchildren.

In 1971 being challenged by a friend to contribute to the welfare of the community, she immersed herself in working tirelessly for the Karachi Zarhosti Banu Mandal, (KZBM) established in 1912, and she has never looked back. In 1981 she was elected Jt Hon Secretary and in 1995 President, a post she held till end 2001. Ever ready to accept new challenges to satisfy her creative juices she produced, compiled and edited *Manna of the Angels* a coffee table book on traditional Parsi cooking. 2000 copies have been sold with all proceeds given to KZBM.

Once Toxy realized what her artistic talents were capable of creating she gave birth to



Toxy in her workspace, a corner of their family room

the monthly newsletter of KZBM - *What's on*. She then went on to edit and compile the 100-year history of the Karachi Parsi Institute and a commemorative book on the life of Dr Maneck Pithawala, the Principal of the BVS Parsi High School.

Toxy was heavily involved in the conceptualization, production and coordination of the *Daughters of Mashyani* event for the WZC2000. Her penchant for perfectionism added pizzaz to the Congress. And now she has added the same to the production of the *Proceedings of WZC2000*.

But her biggest challenge came in 2001 when Rumi Sethna, former Chairman, WZO requested her to take on the editorship of HAMAZOR, a quarterly publication of WZO. Apart from help by a professional graphic designer Tannaz Minwalla, for the design of the cover, and for printing and mailing, the complete issue of *Hamazor* is produced by Toxy single handedly. From conceptualization to layout, to proof reading, to getting it camera ready on a CD, to sending to the printer with a dummy. This whole process from start to finish takes about ten weeks. The printing and distribution is done world wide from Pakistan, except India, which is done at Mumbai. And once the 4500 copies are out of the way, the process starts all over again. She is grateful to people who feed her information which could be developed into newsworthy stories.

To date she has produced 12 publications and each one gives her jitters wondering whether she will be able to deliver what is expected. *"I can happily say my life is full, with never a dull moment"* says Toxy.

Toxy continues to serve on two committees of KZBM: she is a board member of WZO as well as the representative for WZO in Pakistan. And in the 110 year old history of Karachi Parsi Institute, there is a woman President who is none other than Toxy Cowasjee.

Arnavaz Mama was born in Mumbai, and being the youngest of three older siblings she spent most of her time reading. She schooled at the Alexandra Girls' English Institution and later at St Xavier's College graduating with an honours degree in English and French. She had ambitions to be in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) but joined the *Onlooker Magazine* instead. During the seven years she was at *Onlooker* she worked on an annual economic journal which whetted her appetite for economics. She resigned her position, went back to school to obtain a second degree in Economics. Arnavaz got married just before her final exams, raised her daughters for the next ten years before joining Jehangir Patel at *Parsiana* as a journalist.

Arnavaz's involvement in community journalism was purely accidental, but now that she is in it, she enjoys covering events which are political and controversial, and being in the business for a fairly long time she feels a kind of d'Éja vu of controversies repeating themselves. She tries to understand the subject before writing about it, tries to present the whole story with a balanced perspective. Her goal is to write simply with journalistic jargon to ensure that the message is delivered and understood. Even though *Parsiana* has a firm policy of not editorializing in its reports, both the magazine and she have taken a stand on several issues, e.g. the Roxan Shah episode, the decision to publish data on interfaith marriages, the data on births and deaths being published since mid 1980s. These are issues which the community has a right to know if any action has to be taken but at the time they caused a lot of grief to the publisher Jehangir Patel, by way of cancelled subscriptions, cancelled advertisements, and irate letters to the editor. As a journalist she has travelled extensively in India and abroad covering different events and meetings, and interviewing people. She enjoys meeting high achievers and reflecting their



Arnavaz, the journalist who covers all our major events & issues

achievements. She travelled to Houston to cover the World Congress.



Roshan, Editor-in-Chief at her desk

Roshan Rivetna born in Mumbai was educated at Queen Mary High School, and graduated from Elphinstone College with a BSc in Physics and Math, and a Masters in Nuclear Physics from the University of Pittsburgh. She then worked at the Atomic Energy Establishment, Mumbai; The Tata

Institute of Fundamental Sciences, Mumbai; Argonne National Laboratories, Chicago and AT & T Bell Laboratories (Lucent Tech), retiring in 2001.

Her background as a nuclear physicist is a far cry from being Editor-in-Chief of the premier community journal of North America. Growing up in Mumbai in a very comfortable secure traditional Zoroastrian family, Roshan says *"I had no interest or thought of what 'Z community work' was"*.

Roshan came to USA in January 1966 a week after she got married to Rohinton Rivetna. Feeling the necessity to connect with other Zoroastrians in North America, and fearing the lack of a Z environment, the Rivetnas plunged into community building, first with the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, then with the building of the Chicago Darbe Mehr and finally with FEZANA. In the early days of FEZANA's history, a small *Journal* was being published with Dr Ervad Jehan Bagli as editor. In 1991 Roshan was appointed editor of the *Journal* and in 1996 editor-in-chief by then FEZANA president Dolly Dastoor, a title she has carried most admirably with a great sense of responsibility.

Roshan works with a passion, devoting over 15 hours a day to the *Journal*. From conceptualizing the theme of each issue, to gathering all the materials, to design, layout and production, to mailing and distribution, takes her all of three months, full-time. *"Mailing Day is the fun part,"* says Roshan, when 20-30 friends, many seniors, show up at their house on a Sunday, to do inserting

(manually taping in letters/forms, etc), sorting, labeling, and bundling of the packages. The men-folk mostly, put the bundles of 1600 copies into mailing bags, labeled for each destination and load them into the Rivetna's two station-wagons for delivery to the PO the next day. *"Besides working, we have a lot of chai and food and fun all day. Each time someone does a demo of making a Parsi dish like Sooterfani, mehsoor, dodhi-halva"* says Roshan, *"And of course we catch up on the gossip."*

She is driven by the goal of making the whole series of *Journals* a compendium and an archive of the Zoroastrian religion and community. She hopes that the *Journal* provides a forum for networking between our dispersed people in the diaspora and the homelands, and also provides a vehicle for perpetuating our culture, customs and traditions among our future generations and for posterity. FEZANA *Journal* is unique in that, besides community news, each edition covers in depth, a specific topic related to Zoroastrian history, religion, traditions, the community, etc. She would like the whole archival set to be placed as reference material on the web, and in Zoroastrian and University libraries. The book *Legacy of Zarathustra* edited by Roshan is invaluable for showcasing our religion and community and is being used as a text in several schools/universities. Roshan you are a valuable resource to our community.

The *Journal* is the Voice of FEZANA and it prides itself on being a forum for all diverse opinions and ideologies. The creditability of the *Journal* is in large measure due to the *Journal* team's vigilance and integrity to maintain a balanced perspective, which is spearheaded by Roshan. However when Roshan has strong opinions on certain issues, she expresses herself in an editorial like the well-worded one in the Winter 2004 issue on the flurry of attacks against the birth of the world body. Sometimes her editorials bring forth nasty and unjustified accusations which she sleeps over and responds to later in more sober moments with a short and courteous response.

When Dolly Dastoor wrote this article, she nor any of us were aware that Roshan Rivetna would step down from being Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal*. Roshan has been a pillar of the North American Society, quietly working for the betterment of our community, who assisted her husband Rohinton to establish FEZANA and between them have left a legacy. Roshan went on to make the *Journal* into a professional, well researched quarterly publication and though she will not head her team, will of course be there for guidance and assistance. Under her leadership the Winter issue of 2005 will be the final *Journal*. Thereafter we welcome Dolly Dastoor as the Editor-in-Chief, another dynamic lady.
- Toxy Cowasjee

Toxy, Roshan and Arnavaz have lives outside the magazines they devote so much time to. Toxy and Roshan are both avid photographers, devoted grandmothers, and involved in several community projects, Arnavaz enjoys cooking, getting her hands dirty with potted plants, walking her pets, and reading authors like Neale Donald Walsch and Paulo Coelho.

So the next time you pick up the HAMAZOR or the FEZANA Journal or the PARSIANA think of the hours of toil these women have put in freely and willingly, think of their creativity and their energy to produce magazines which are the show-pieces of the community.

Thank you, Toxy, Roshan and Arnavaz, as editors and journalist you have kept us connected, well informed and presented us with issues at hand that need to be addressed, the community owes a huge debt of gratitude to you. I hope for you, the exhilaration at the end of the day triumphs over the exhaustion with all the tasks you undertake to reach out and create an awareness among us.



Note

¹ The women are in alphabetical order. This article will be published simultaneously by all three publications, Hamazor, Parsiana & FEZANA Journal



Dolly Dastoor PhD, President of FEZANA 1994-1998, and co-chair of the 7th World Zoroastrian Congress. She has attended and presented papers at the World Zoroastrian Congress in India and Iran and in North American conferences; at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago and in Capetown; Governor, 2002-2004, District 2, ZONTA

International, a service organization promoting the status of women. Clinical psychologist by profession, Dolly is the Co-Director of Programme in Dementia, Douglas Hospital, McGill University and lives in Montreal, Canada.

Leaving parents behind : migration and the impact on older people in India

by jehangir mehta

Fifty years ago living alone was uncommon for the elderly Zoroastrians in India. Living arrangements always reflected high level of family care-giving for the elderly and a higher degree of continuity of parent child co-residence over the life course. This form of family structure was a social norm and it also stemmed from the lack of institutional coverage for the poor and elderly, the absence of a pension scheme or health insurance, total lack of structural policy for the aged and little private savings.

Interestingly in Africa this traditional pattern of support is given as a reason for the high fertility rates in the region – “old age security is found in having many children.” Indeed this pattern of extended family support for the elderly has been documented throughout the colonial period in Africa.

We have clearly seen how migration of adult children has greatly influenced the chances of elderly people living alone. First wave of interstate migration began in the rural towns of Gujerat. From my earlier memories as a young lad holidaying every summer vacation in Navsari, until my recent visits to Udwada, I have seen the steady decline of younger population and a sad reminder of the lonely and despair state of some of the aged population.

Social and economic changes are key to understanding shifts in household and family structure. Social change arising from urbanization, industrialization and migration alters traditional patterns of household formation. Inflation, falling wages and economic instability saw some steep rise in demographic change resulting in more and

more people living on their own in the later half of the last century. In some cases those who can afford it increasingly choose independent living over extended family unit. We saw the extraordinary migration of adult children to cities like Mumbai and other towns taking place to generate more income. We have also seen the problem being compounded further by the next wave of international migration taking place and with lower fertility rates, and many unmarried children, the older population is facing an even more lonelier prospect. This problem is a global issue happening in all the developing countries like India, Asia, and Africa. In Latin America the migration pattern is towards USA.

A paper published in March 2001 by the Chairman of National Intelligence Council - USA "Growing Global Migration and its implications for the United States" gives some interesting key findings :-

- During the next 15 years, globalization, demographic imbalances between OECD and developing countries and interstate and civil conflicts will fuel increasing international migration, of which China and India will be the source of growing regional and global migration flows.

- Some 45 million people in developing countries will enter the job market each year - through 2015, many will fail to find work and some will emigrate.

- Violent conflicts, economic crisis and natural disasters in developing countries will often trigger mass migrations.

While it is not the intention of this article to go into analysis and research on migration trends, we must realize that migration is an evolving process and has been since ancient times. History has indicated how the Aryans migrated to Iran from Central Asia, researchers have studied the migration patterns in Northern Chile's Atacama Desert, we also know of the Hebrew Exodus out of the land of Egypt and the early wanderings of the Israelite tribe. Migration is now just a

refined process from the early days when "walking" was the most basic way of movement for human beings.

What prompted me to write this article was our own personal dilemma and the flow on effects such a situation placed on my late mother in law and her family living overseas. Lack of proper health care and aged care housing, lesser dependence on servants, and erosion of family support is turning this issue into a social problem. In Western developed countries, growing old independently is a norm because of the infrastructure and the aged care policies laid out in the constitution. We also have a National strategy for an Ageing Australia as laid out by the commonwealth Government. We have also seen a dramatic rise in aged care housing and retirement villages including in-house nursing care in Australia.

While all this highly defined and sophisticated system of social services works well for the ageing population of the West, it is still a far cry for the old age homes in India, especially in Mumbai. The very word "HOME" brings disdain and sense of discomfort - that you are about to be put away in an institution where neglect, unforgiving environment, lack of care, loss of love and well being will play out the remainder of your dying days. It is more a social stigma and less of the truth, although lack of funds and resources does impact on the quality of services.

All this is changing and a social change is gathering momentum for the ageing population in Mumbai and other rural towns. One such institution which has brought back pride and dignity to the elderly is the WZO Trust Funds, Bai Maneckbai P B Jeejeebhoy Senior Citizens Centre in Navsari. The underlying philosophy on which the centre was conceived and developed has been to ensure that the residents pass their lives in a happy and meaningful way - free from stress and worries associated with age. Founded in 1998 the wheels of senior citizen centre have clocked many milestones, leaving behind a stream of happy memories. What

makes such a centre run so efficiently is the dedicated team of men and women behind the scenes – people who are involved in the day to day running of the centre, organizing annual outings for the residents, encouraging residents to vent their creative talents, organizing entertainment evenings, and other scores of activity. The centre also has an effective network of services for medical, hospitalization, nursing care and other needs. As we say in Australia its like a ONE STOP SHOP.

Most importantly the senior citizens centre replicates an environment of an extended family that allows residents to live together in harmony and goodwill, each caring for and loving another. It gives them a purpose of growing old gracefully. As in Victor Hugo's words *"When grace is joined with wrinkles, it is adorable. There is an unspeakable dawn in happy old age."*

We, who have taken giant leaps in migrating to greener pastures across the world, should also take a step back and reflect on the needs of old and aged back home. At the same time that there is much to worry about the plight of the old and lonely, there is also a positive change happening. With full occupancy at the centre and plans to construct another centre in Navsari, I am of the opinion that we may have turned the tide in the social outlook towards ageing population. That it may well become a social norm for the ageing Zoroastrians to live more independently in India.

In my conclusion I would also like to salute some of the unsung heroes and scores of volunteers at other aged homes in Mumbai - the value of the services provided by volunteers, both financial and personal is immense. Be it supplying meals on wheels (I have personally seen sumptuous food donations at Parsi ward in J J Hospital), or someone playing a guitar or reading a newspaper or even just chatting a few gossips, each of these acts of kindness provides improved quality of life for many of our older citizens. Even the smallest gesture can reduce the loneliness and

isolation some elderly people feel, improving their self-esteem and helping them maintain their independence.



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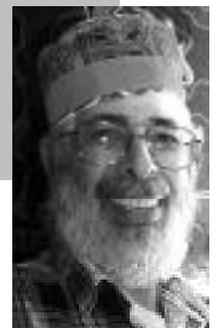


Jehangir Mehta, with his wife Phyrooza lives in Perth, Western Australia.

Parsi Presence in Kenya

The JBJS Publishing has undertaken the production of a CD of the "Parsi Presence in Kenya", by Kersi Rustomji. The work has 78 pages and contains many photographs of the persons mentioned in the text as well as a list of Parsis currently living in Mombassa and Nairobi. It is presented in an easy manner and makes pleasant reading. It has potential record events for the Kenya Parsis, eg. the first and only Kenyan Parsi to climb a peak in the Himalayas.

The author Kersi Rustomji, has instructed that the CD is for sale to all Zoroastrian bodies, families, or individuals, only, at production and labour costs, with no profit attached, for Aus\$60.00, which includes handling and postage. Payment made to: Swift Code: ASLLAU2C BSB: 640000 HUME BUILDING SOCIETY, Members Account: # 381289510, Account Name: Kersi Rustomji. Postal address to be emailed to: rustomji@bigpond.net.au



Are we amiss in remembering ?

by j e h a n g i r s p o c h a

I was tucking into a meal of berry pulau at the antique Britannia restaurant near Ballard Pier during a short trip to Mumbai recently when my mother called me.

“Jehangir,” she said quietly, “Shirin aunty has passed dear.”

Just the day before, my partner, Mary Kay, and I had gone to see my 94-year-old grand aunt as she lay semi-comatose in her graceful Cuffe Parade apartment, where the hoots from the traffic 24 floors below always seemed distant enough to give the place a suburban feel. It had been disconcerting to see the face that always beamed when it saw me remain unchanged when we entered the room. But when I took her still soft hand in mine I was comforted by its familiar and loving touch.

We had said our goodbyes on the phone about a month earlier. I had been stuck in San Francisco, waiting to become a US citizen, when Shirin, who had recently taken to dropping the ‘aunty’ suffix when signing my *peramni*’s in silent acknowledgement of my own graying temples, had first told our family quite calmly that she was terminally ill and wished to do nothing about it.

I had called her, feeling the gesture was hopelessly inadequate for a person who had shaped so much of my life for so long. Yet, she’d been gracious in accommodating my awkwardness, and even chuffed me gently when I promised to see her in Mumbai soon.

Later that night when I randomly opened a book of poetry Mary Kay had given me before I left Beijing where we live, the page had a passage by Chuang Tzu:

“The ancient Masters slept without dreams and awoke without worries. Their food was plain.

Their breath came from deep inside them. They didn’t cling to life, weren’t anxious about death. They emerged without desire and reentered without resistance. They came easily; they went easily. They didn’t forget where they were from; they didn’t ask where they were going. They took everything as it came, gladly, and walked into death without fear. They accepted life as a gift, and they handed it back gracefully.”

I had included the stanza in a letter I had sent to Shirin, and sitting by her bedside feeling the warmth radiate out of her otherwise still body poised to enter another world I hoped she had read it.

Within just weeks of our last silent goodbye, I watched the life of Shirin Engineer, nee Davar, dissolve into history. Her neatly arranged rooms were emptied as her children and family took mementos of her life. Someone chose a book, someone else a painting, I the small picture of Zarathusthra that had been at her bedside in the final days. Her elegant carved furniture that I’d grown up around was soon sold off to a *jaripurawalla*. No one had the room to keep it, my mother explained.

Now when I go by the building I’d always thought of as Shirin aunty’s I only see a rather clunky piece of concrete, the life that used to live within it forgotten.

I wonder how many times even those close to her think about her. Or her sister Tehmi, my grandmother, who was a doctor when most women in India didn’t go to school and who saw healing as a calling not a profession, or her brother, Pesi, who was a role-model long before the term was invented, and her older sister, Mitha, who was four Shakespearean characters all rolled into one.

Sometimes, I try to talk to my friends about them. I start with the accessible, the

socially favoured measure of a person, and talk about their accomplishments - like how Shirin was one of the first women chartered accountants in Bombay, of how she knew more about the stock market and human nature than I did. My best friends allow me to go on until I get to the more personal parts. About how she faced all travails with a demeanor that would have pleased the pope, about her innate decency, her thoughtfulness, and her warmth. Then they too nod the polite nods so many others do so much earlier, signaling that now they're listening only because I'm going on talking.

Some tell me this is the way it's supposed to be. But I wonder if we say that in our own defense against knowing we are amiss in remembering Shirin and her grand generation. Born at the turn of the last century, they lived through the age of the horse carriage and the invention of nanotechnology. They articulated and participated in the drive for India's independence, lived through world wars, revolutions and political experiments, wrestled with social upheavals, embraced modernity and acted as a bulwark against a crumbling South Asia for at least two succeeding generations - all with a gentle dignity, sincerity, courage and of course eccentricity, that endeared them to almost anyone who knew them.

For me, my grandmother, Shirin, and those around them defined what it means to be a Parsi and a Zoroastrian more than any book. Truth be told, I've barely read a prayer book in all my life, and to me being a Parsi has essentially meant acceding to a certain way of life - one defined by the lives of people from this grand generation.

Why then are we forgetting this remarkable generation that shaped our modern community? Even in an America much-maligned for its obsession with youth and modernity, network TV anchors such as Tim Russert are choosing to write about America's 'Greatest Generation'.

"Because if we don't remember what they did, how they shaped our lives then we

won't know what we value today, what is worth fighting for," Russert recently said.

So lately, when I've been submerged under the torrent of self-righteousness emanating from self-described conservatives and modernists alike on the meaning and future of our faith, I must say I find my mind wandering. The fact is these arguments make some intellectual impressions on me, but they fail to give me a sense of faith, a feel for our community. Some people tell me we must accept converts because the size of the Parsi community in India is set to decrease so rapidly that it will soon reach 20,000 and the census list us as a tribe. And others warn that taking converts to save ourselves is blasphemy and that *parjat* blood will lead us to lose our ritual purity. But what I really miss in my community has nothing to do with numbers - its that generosity of spirit, mirth, and dignity that seemed to emanate not only from those of the grand generation in my family, but from every one of their friends.

A community is not its arguments. Its soul cannot be determined by doctrine. More than a concern with how big our community will be, lately I've begun to wonder if anyone is interested in what kind of community it will be, and whether it will have any of the traits that distinguished previous generations of Parsis.

For all the clever debates and intense concerns about preserving and shaping our community in the future we will be nothing if we lose the essence of what we are as people.

A non-Parsi friend of mine who is often treated a healthy dose of what I'm come to call Parsi paranoia, is mostly baffled by the arguments reverberating within our community. But after the one evening she spent with Mitha aunty, Shirin's Shakespearean older sister, she said *"I think I know what it means to be a Parsi."*

It's my little fantasy that if we reacquire ourselves with the memory of the people that live within us, we might be able to

recapture at least some of the spirit of our community.

To some, it may seem a bit foolish, and it may even reek of that common Parsi illness - an obsession with the past - to try and turn our gaze backwards when everything around us seems to be telling us to let it go and make a new world. After all, these are times of an obsession with the future and possibility. On the subcontinent, for the first time in hundreds of years people are actually being able to lead good lives and their desire to pursue their media - transplanted American dreams leave little time for the consideration of the more ineffable aspects of life. Like many fellow Mumbai-ites who are so tired of living in a derelict city that they don't care if other people's homes and architectural landmarks are sacrificed at the altar of city planning, many Parsis focused on shaping our community for the future seem to be overlooking what really shaped and made them in the first place.

The truth is that preservation is integral to any community. A lot of that is accomplished by the physical protection of things from the past. For a city it is buildings and for families and communities it can be possessions and practices. But there is also need for the preservation of memories. Not to feed some detached romanticism or self-congratulatory interpretation of history. But to commemorate the things and people that shaped us, and which, if remembered well, could also give meaning to our present.

Books such as Rohinton Mistri's and Bapsy Sidhwa's loving recollections of other times or Sooni Taraporewalla's collection of photographs are great community memory nets. And I hope the Parsi Panchayat will find it meaningful to spend a portion of its resources on recognizing our grand generation and finding ways in which the story of their lives could be preserved for younger generations. There are several simple and effective tools for this, like the creation of spoken histories, the archiving of personal effects, such as diary's and letters,

and the setting up small museums that preserve traditional homes and buildings. For example, it's a shame that even the homes of prominent Parsis, such as J R D Tata, have not been preserved.

But the most important work is in our own families. So I've become an unabashed preserver of memories, and on a rainy day I sift through the mental or physical artifacts I keep of those I knew from that grand generation.

An old *agarbatti* holder reminds me of how my dad's mother, Hilla Pocha, used to walk around our apartment with incense sticks, partly to ward off evil and partly to perfume the place. A frayed diary my grandfather, Behram Mehta, kept of his work with India's tribals and 'untouchables' reminds me of his many qualities of head and heart. My father Sorab's old pens still remind me of his love of literature and music. Recalling my grandmother Tehmi's smile reminds me how her warmth was half the tonic that revived her patients. And Shirin's picture of Zarathustra always reminds me of how she and those around her lived their religion, and I renew my pledge to myself to try to do the same.

If I can pass even a little of that memory and resolve on to my unborn children or my nephew and niece, my heart will be much more at ease than knowing we've avoided being labeled a tribe.



Jehangir Pocha, who is originally from Bombay, is a Beijing-based correspondent for The Boston Globe. His articles have also appeared in The Philadelphia Inquirer, San Francisco Chronicle, Chicago Tribune, India Today, Boston Review and Businessworld.

Sam Tata : photographer of repute

by sam kanga

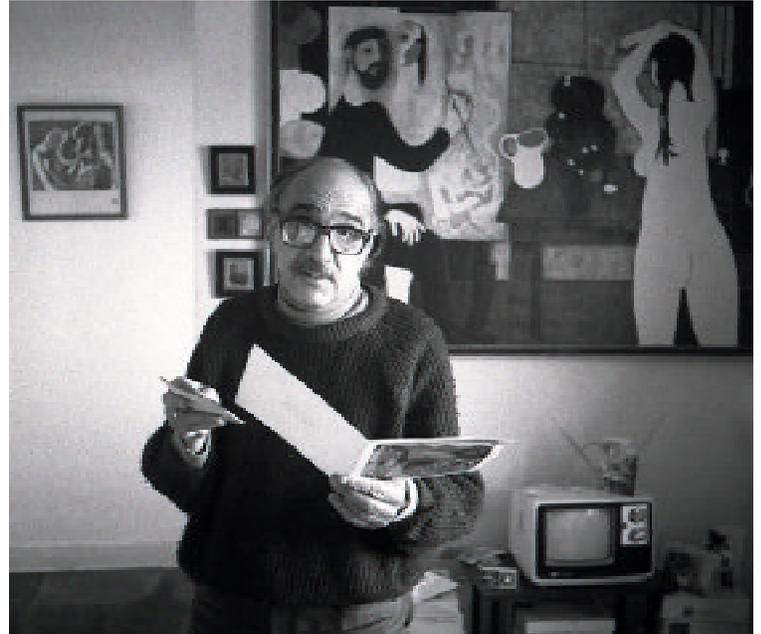
1911 - 2005

Sam Tata, a Parsi born in Shanghai, became a highly respected photographer and much adored artist, raconteur and friend to many in his adopted country, Canada. He was witness to the last years of British rule in India as well as the Communist Revolution in Shanghai. Among his greatest contributions is a marvellous collection of portraits of Canadian and international artists.

His father, Bejan, managed two textile mills in Shanghai for the Tata empire, and the late J R D Tata was considered to be a friend of the family. Although he studied business, Sam showed little interest in managing the mills. In the late 1930s he would become interested in photography, and became adept at using a large format camera and the complex studio lighting style popular at the time.

His first visit to India from 1946 to 1948 was pivotal in many ways. The country was in upheaval, the transition from colonial rule to independence had been traumatic, and in 1948 Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated. It was in India that Sam Tata's attitude toward photography underwent its own revolution. His friend Keku Gandhi insisted he see an exhibition in Bombay by the great French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson. The influence of Cartier-Bresson was absolute. His method of photographing - quickly, decisively, and with sensitivity toward his subject appealed immediately to Sam and he soon dispensed with his lights, large cameras, and academic studio techniques. He had found his style.

In 1949 he was back in Shanghai photographing the fall of the



Sam Tata - 1980 - copyright Sam Kanga

Kuomintang and the take over of the city by Chairman Mao's communist revolutionaries. The photographs, published in the book *Shanghai 1949: The End of an Era*, are an invaluable portrayal of that historic event and also of the ancient city that is now a modern economic power.

Montreal became the new home to Sam Tata and his family in 1956. After the initial culture shock, (even the "Paris of North America" could not match the chaotic energy of Bombay and Shanghai), he began connecting with Montreal's artistic community. Many artists became good friends, and his sensitive portraits of them are an important part of his legacy. Fifty portraits were published in the 1983 book *A Certain Identity*.

Being a Parsi, he was also involved with the Zoroastrian Association of

*The
Montreal
Gazette of
Friday July
15, 2005
gave a write
up on Sam
Tata praising
his life's
achievement
in
photography*

Quebec, and often initiated discussions about the future of the Parsi community worldwide. It is because of Sam Tata, that a photograph of a navjote ceremony is in the permanent collection of the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography.

It is my opinion that Sam Tata did not receive the recognition he fully deserved. He was a gentle man not inclined to self promotion, who demonstrated a rare subtlety as a photojournalist and portrait photographer.

Notable honours include:

- A Lifetime Achievement Award from CAPIC (Canadian Association of Photographers and Illustrators in Communications).
- An Honorary Doctorate from Concordia University in Montreal.
- An important retrospective in 1990 called "The Tata Era", mounted by The Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, which toured Canada.

Sam Tata was a family friend and one of my greatest influences. He often obliged me by critiquing my photographs, although we would always end up talking about anything but photography. His greatest advice to me was;

"If you want to be a good photographer, not only must you know what's going on in the world, but you should know about painting, music, poetry and literature."

Sage advice indeed.



Coolie Woman, 1948 monsoon, Bombay, India



Navjote, 1969, Montreal, Canada (Sam Kanga and his younger brother, Farokh)

Sam Kanga is a Senior Account Director with an advertising, communications and marketing company in Toronto and also a photographer. He is married with two children. Born in Bombay in 1959, he came to Montreal in the mid-sixties with his family. He became interested in photography at the age of 12 and was drawn to the philosophy and photographs of Henri Cartier-Bresson. When his father heard this he said "Don't you know we have Sam Tata right here in our community!" Kanga became a photographer based in Toronto, and has a portfolio of writers, as well as from his trips to India & Europe. Currently he is in contact with the Tata family regarding the negatives and prints of Sam Tata. Having a very good knowledge of Tata's approach to photography, and the stories behind many of his photographs, Kanga hopes to preserve this legacy and have these prints on sale.



The legendary Rose of Iran

by sam kerr

Deeply rooted in age-old tradition and culture ... the inimitable habit of the 'scattering of rose petals' and 'sprinkling of rose water', widening the aura of fragrance, as it were, as a sign of goodwill and welcome, has, to this day, remained typically Iranian.

A member of the botanical family Rosaceae and the Genus Rosa, it has been identified as a wild flower even in fossil form. The original 'true' rose looks quite different from the multi-layered cultivated rose we are so used to admiring in modern times. The bulky ovary, the "rose hip" has on its rim five sepals, which alternate with five petals. This arrangement of a single row of petals remains a common arrangement. In its early young stage the single layer of delicate petals are well laid out in a circular row but in a fully mature rose the petals become thick and broadened, thus overlapping each other (as in the photo). In many varieties of 'cultivated' roses the stamens in the middle of the flower become petal-like, too, creating multiple layers.



Courtesy, "Gardens of Persia" by Penelope Hobhouse, San Diego, 2003; photo by Jerry Harpur

Our ancient Airyanic roots:

The rose plant in Indo-European languages has its origin in Avestan 'Varedha' - a sweet smelling fragrant flower plant. In modern Persian the rose is 'Vard' [Arabic 'Vard Juri' - 'Jur', Sasanian Firuzabad was famous for rose scent in the air]. In Sappho's Aeolic Greek dialect it was 'Wrodon', in Etruscan Greek 'Rhodian' (from the island of

Rhodes). Thence, Latin and old Normandy derivative 'Rosa' flowed into the English word, Rose. A fragrant flower being 'Gool' in Persian, the courtesy was also extended to the rose. 'Goolistan', then, became a 'Rose Garden'.

For over 5,000 years China and Persia had remained the documented habitat of the naturally fragrant varieties freely recurrent in bloom and the only ones that bore yellow flowers. The first documented reference to the aesthetics of Asiatic roses is by the Indo-Aryan Sumerians c.4000 BC. Later, clay tablets record Sargon I of Akkad (2684-2630 BC) as having 'brought

vines, figs and rose trees from beyond the River Tigris' - Iran and further East. Thence, they were carried to Egypt, Greece, Rome and further west. In medieval times the Crusaders took the choicest varieties to the west. The Asiatic Queen of Flowers, the rose has been glorified in art, architecture and verse for ages. Initially, the King of flowers in Greece 'basileus ton antheon' it became the 'Queen of flowers' 600 BC in Sappho's 'Ode to the Rose'.

The elegant single layered Iranian rose growing in the rose fields of Qasmar, near

Kashan, possesses such an exquisite and heavenly perfume it is nurtured and grown entirely for its nectar. Such was the legendary resplendence of the fragrance of the rose water - *Gool Ab* that the nectar (the rose water) itself, by its very name, became the rose. Indeed, the time-honoured extraction from the blossoms in these rose fields in mid-Spring is witnessed by thousands of tourists. Even the harvesting of the flowers is a delicate process done before sunrise to obtain the most exquisite aroma in the maximum quantity. The photo shows all three colours in the same rose - deep red, bright pink and pure white, although commonly found in the fields are also roses exclusively red (*gool-e-sorkh*), pink (*gool-e-surati*) or white (*gool-e-sefid*).

The velvety texture of the undulating petals in these shades of white to pink to red is likened to a rosy cheeked blushing complexion of a beautiful Iranian lady. Many a bard has likened the blooms to signify deep admiration, amorous joy, bashfulness, embarrassment ..., indeed, the very symbol of life. Its allure represents the passion of living and the thorns, the difficulties one has to endure to reach that state. Such aesthetic tastes glorified in poetic couplets were posted on the palace gates of the Sasanian Emperor, Khusru the Great (531-579 BC) at a time when Europe was still subservient to the Roman occupation. English history as taught in schools and universities had not yet 'begun' and the Renaissance in Europe was still to occur 1,000 years later.

A Sasanian portrait would be deemed inadequate without a rose held delicately between index finger and thumb. Of significance, too, is a lone single layered rosette carved in the gable end of the entrance, the only decoration on the tomb of Cyrus the Great (599-529 BC) shown in a sketch executed by the visiting envoys of Queen Christina of Sweden in 1638. Now, only the lower end of the rosette remains as the trace. The Iranian tradition of rose water mixed with saffron as ink is still commonly used for writing charms and romantic verse.

'...the twist, the turn of thy hair - tell me, what be the reason?
thy inebriated eyes' distant stare - tell me, what be the reason?
...though rose petals have not been scattered ...
... thy rose scented aura - tell me, what be the reason?' - *Jalal ud din Rumi*

The legendary rose of Iran:

The elegant '*Gool-e-sorkh/Gool-e-surati*' had been nominated a '*National Treasure of Persia*' ages before any nation deemed any other variety of rose to be a national emblem. English history had still not 'begun' and the Renaissance in Europe was to occur 1000 years later.

Our Avestan emphasis on fragrance:

Deeply rooted in age-old tradition Iranian perfumes, oils and creams in medication and essence in food were extracts of fragrant roses long before this was ever done outside Asia. '*Scattering of rose petals*' and '*sprinkling of rose water*' signs of goodwill and welcome, have, to this day, remained typically Iranian. Stone reliefs of Darius I (521-486 BC) show him seated with scent bottles and incense cones with Xerxes (486-465 BC) behind him holding flowers. Such is the emphasis on *sweet scented-ness being perceived synonymous with virtue* that a newly-wedded Zoroastrian couple is showered with a basketful of rose-petals with the incantation - '*may you remain ever so virtuous in your togetherness*'. Zoroastrian homes are traditionally refreshed in every sense at sunrise with garlands of roses and flowers and at sunset with fuming sandalwood, frankincense and myrrh.

Ashi(sh)-svang Yasht XVII.6: Perfumed sweet scented-ness pervades the house, where kinship of long duration has endured and where courage, purity and righteousness has been established.
... carried through from Peshdadian and Keyanian times.

Hadokht Nask XXII.7: At the end of the third night when dawn breaks the soul of the righteous is sustained by fragrance released to the winds from plants bearing perfume.

A sweet-scented person is deemed to 'possess integrity, credibility, righteousness and an aura of impeccable conscience.' On Chinvat bridge the soul's conscience appearing as a maiden says: -

Hadokht Nask XXII.11: "... thou art good, of lofty character, fair in dealings, sweet scented, of fearless strength and free from spite ... such as I, thy own Conscience, appear to thee."

The inimitable Iranian pleasure of the spirit and the delight of the senses has prompted many a poet in his lament the fading away of the rose as it withered with time to the absence of the nightingale's breathless rapture.

'The red roses have blossomed; the nightingale's gone into a stupor. Everywhere ... the hue and cry of ecstasy' - *Hafiz*

'When the rose is faded and its garden gone thou wilt no longer hear the nightingale sing ... the suitor has left a bird without care ...' - *Jalal ud din Rumi*

...'alas, that Spring too should vanish with the Rose That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!' - *Khayyam*

It was as if everything one hoped would remain enduring had to end in its own perfect time. The timing of the fading away of the rose seemed to be perfection - a distinct privilege, clearly denied to the thorns, which had no chance to fade. Indeed, they became more menacing as they dried.

Its chemistry:

So delicately poised is the chemistry that the emanations respond significantly to the surroundings. Since they *diminish in sunlight* the picking needs to be completed before sunrise to obtain the choicest fragrance. Even *human presence and colourful clothing* - merely walking past the blossoms will create a profound effect upon their emanations.

When asked "What gift hast thou brought us from the Goolistan?" the poet replies

'I intended to fill the folds of my robe with roses as presents for my friends. But when I approached the rose bush the exhilarating fragrance of the roses hastily transcended my desire to pluck. I could not but let go the hold of my robe - *Sa'adi*

The consonance of appreciable temple *harmonies of voice and music*, too, are known to promote the finest flowers in India.

Its late appreciation in Europe:

Greeks and Romans associated roses with pain, suffering and death, decorating tombs to appease the spirits of the dead and carving them on ceilings to signify all conversation be held secret (*sub-rosa*). They used a *rosary* of rolled petals in cult practices. The Romans forced peasants to grow roses instead of food crops for their orgies. No wonder the early Christians associated roses with symbols of orgy. Slowly, the Church changed them into Christian symbols of the Virgin Mary - *Rosa mystica* and *Rosa sine spina* and the State as royal emblems. From deep red '*Gool-e-sorkh*', to pinkish-red '*Gool-e-surati*', to pure white '*Gul-e-sefid*' it was the yellow rose '*Gool-e-saarg*' which signified the highest symbolism in western culture. The aesthetic, culinary and medicinal values came much later.

National flower of the nations:

Now, the rose is the '*national flower*' also of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, England, Iraq and the Maldives and the '*official flower*' of the States of New York, Iowa and North Dakota, the *Cherokee Rose* in Georgia, the Province of Alberta, Canada and the prefectures of Hokkaido and Ibaraki, Japan. A rose garden was first established in the White House grounds in 1913 and June was nominated '*National Rose month*' in 1969. It became '*National Floral emblem*' in 1986 when President Reagan signed Proclamation 5574. ■■■■

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Khordeh Avesta translations of Kavasji Edulji Kanga and Tehmurasp Rustomji Sethna

Sam Kerr's profile may be read on page 21.

One-man theatre piece by Asian American writer/performer Zaraawar Mistry.

Zaraawar Mistry's play *Sohrab and Rustum* was a gift to the Houston audiences, both Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrians at the Asia Society. The success of the play could be measured by the thunderous applause and the dynamic discussion afterwards. The play was introduced by Khurshid Rudina who discussed Parsi religious traditions. The entire play was also accompanied by percussionist Tim O'Keefe and Persian vocalist Maryam Yusefzadeh.

The play was a nostalgic remembrance of a familiar childhood story for all of us. Interspersed with the *Shahname* tale was another story of a Bombay Parsi gentleman named Rustomji. The trials of Rustomji the father who was embittered by being abandoned by his immigrant son Sohrab was brilliantly interwoven with the tragic story of the warrior Rustum and his son Sohrab. The title of the play *Sohrab and Rustum* signaled that the meaning of the play was not limited by the *Shahname* tale Rustom and Sohrab. At the end of the play, it is the son who survives and mourns and not the father. The tremendous piece tied the past and the present and left the audience with the reality of facing the truth with a dose of down home humour. It was loaded with the painful universal truths of life. With incredible energy and versatility Zaraawar Mistry electrified audiences and beautifully portrayed the multiple characters in his solo performance. The staging of Sohrab's battle with Rustum was brilliant - a simple German silver *thali* and a spear and a voice that spoke volumes.

(A report from Aban Rustomji, Houston TX, on creatingawareness.com)

The House Of Song

by raiond mirza

Part 1 of a 3-part essay

During my undergraduate studies I was introduced to the music of the European Renaissance and one day while listening to a mass by the 15th century composer Josquin Despres, I was struck by how the soaring, intertwined voices seemed designed to lift the listener's spirits. It felt as if the music was touching the soul in way that a sermon filled with liturgical rules never could. I wondered if it was the composer's intention to make his audience mindful of God simply by making beautiful music. I considered what it must have been like to have received this music as part of a weekly ritual and thought "Imagine walking into a Church and hearing *that!*" My very next thought was of all the *jashans*, *gahambars*, and wedding and funeral prayers I'd ever attended and it was at this point that the question that was to lead to my graduate research popped into my head — where was the music in Zoroastrian ritual?

At first this was no more than an idle curiosity for which I assumed there was a simple explanation. However, as time went by the answer only got more elusive. Nobody that I spoke to in casual conversations had an answer. Many Zoroastrians would, when asked about music, remember folk songs but this was not what I sought. I was looking for music that was specifically intended to be used in ritual. The first conclusion that I came to was that perhaps unlike other religions Zoroastrianism had no music in worship. My reaction as an emerging composer was to view this as a great compositional opportunity. There was no repertory so I would compose one. I recalled Stravinsky saying of Latin that it was a beautiful language, meant to be sung more than spoken and I felt that exactly the same could be said of Avestan. This was the initial intention of my graduate studies. I would

first conduct a basic research of music associated with Zoroastrianism, and then I would set the Gathas to music.

When I began my graduate work and started to come to grips with music and religious history on a global scale I realised very quickly that my initial premise, that Zoroastrianism simply had no music in worship, was extremely unlikely. It became obvious that all religions had music in ritual. It was true that some sects of certain religions such as Islam had proscriptions against music in prayer but even this was a semantic issue of definition. If a singer performed a particular melody surrounded by wine, women and song this was considered "musiqi" and was forbidden within the context of prayer. If, however, an Imam imported that exact same melody or pitch sequence into Qu'ranic cantillation as done in a Mosque at weekly prayer, it was not only permitted but looked on favourably. Put another way, the sound made by the performer was the same but its label changed according to where it was performed. As I surveyed the religions of the world from Buddhism in Asia to aboriginal animism and trance in Africa, to the Inuit far up North, it became apparent that if one included atheism as a system of belief, it was easier to find a religion without God than one without music.

It followed therefore that if all religions had music in worship it would be very odd if Zoroastrianism alone did not. This became even more evident when considering the religion's place in history. This was not the faith of an isolated culture cut off entirely from the rest of humanity. Had this been so, then it could have been possible that Zoroastrians, as a small, unique tribe of people undisturbed by contact with other traditions could have evolved differently to anyone else on earth. However, this is the polar opposite of Zoroastrian history.

This was the state religion of a series of Persian empires that spanned over 1000 years (broadly 500 BC – 637 AD) and whose reach once stretched from India to Egypt. The evolving culture of Persia during

this vast period was enriched by over 1000 tribes that flowed through it. The Mesopotamian civilisations that preceded it had abundant records of music, religious as well as secular. The Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) with which Zoroastrianism had close contact all had music in worship, as did the Greeks, Egyptians and many others. The more I studied Zoroastrian history the more I realised just how closely my religion was connected to the faiths and cultures of its historic neighbours and contemporaries.

There was also some internal evidence to suggest the existence of music in our religion. To begin, the word Gathas (the central texts of our liturgy whose composition is attributed to Zarathushtra) is a term usually translated as hymns. The explicitly musical nature of the word 'hymn' could itself lead to such labels as "singing" and "songs" when describing our prayers and what priests are supposed to do when performing them. Also of note, within the Gathas themselves is the expression "the House of Song", a metaphor for heaven. *"I shall try to turn Him hither to us by praises of reverence, for I have just now, knowingly through truth, seen the Wise One in a vision to be Lord of the word and deed stemming from good spirit. Yes, let us set down His glories in the House of Song."* Yasna 45.8 (Insler 1975: 77).

Furthermore, the verbal root *ga*, 'to sing' from which the Avestan noun Gatha is derived, is also a compelling indicator of the presence of music in the liturgy. *Ga* also reappears in *fragathra*, 'the singing of prayers', in Yasna 19.21 and 55.7 (Hintze 2002: 143-144).

We also have the observations of the Greek Historian Herodotus, the geographer Strabo and the traveller Pausanius who all provide first hand accounts of Zoroastrian rituals between the 5th century BC to the 2nd century AD and who all describe what they saw as singing. The fact that the original Greek and Avestan words used to describe our prayers are unambiguously rooted in words which mean "sing" (*aeidein* and *ga*) is surely significant.



Dr Raiomond Mirza, composer and writer, received his PhD from the School For Oriental And African Studies (SOAS) - University of London in 2004. His historical research and contemporary field work uncovered a previously unknown side of Zoroastrian prayer and identified music which is more than 1000 years old. His thesis, "The House Of Song" is currently being considered for publication. He has lectured at Cambridge - The Ancient India And Iran Trust, SOAS, and for The Temenos Academy.

He has composed numerous scores for film, TV, theatre and radio including the award winning "A Suitable Boy" and the current BBC Radio 4 nine hour dramatisation of "The Raj Quartet". His music for the Nigerian drama Voices was performed for the Queen on her last African tour and he won the public vote for his composition "Viderunt Emmanuel" in the BBC national new talent competition.

Even more tantalizing were the occasional claims from usually reliable sources that we did once have a rich tradition of religious music. For example, the noted ethnomusicologist Jean During wrote that for the Achaemenids (early Zoroastrian empire) music was important in worship as well as in the imperial court (During 1991; 59). His evidence, however was the bas-reliefs of Taq-e-bustan which depict court music, not ritual worship. Another false hope was raised by the distinguished author Amnon Shiloah who wrote that there was rich information about the music of the Sasanian (late Zoroastrian empire) state church at Al-Hira (Shiloah 1995: 7,8). Unfortunately further investigation revealed that the sources for this information were various authors of the 8th – 10th centuries AD (two to three hundred years after the Sasanian empire) whose references said nothing about music in prayer.

It was at this point in my research, after having trawled back and forth through history and geography, that a picture began to emerge. If I drew a musical map of the world and stretched it out over time, a gaping hole would be revealed over Zoroastrianism from its birth in Persia up to the present.

What I had initially thought was a leaping off point for a great set of compositions was proving to be a conceptual road block. The central idea that had spurred me on from the outset upon hearing the mass of Josquin Despres was that Christians and every other faith had music in worship, but Zoroastrians did not. Surely, I thought, the sounds of worship I had grown up with—priests droning monotone for hours, this could not be music. My logic at that point was: We don't have music now and there is no historical record of music ever existing, therefore we've never had it at all. The facts should have made this conclusion easy to accept but my instincts and Zoroastrianism's place in history compelled me to believe that this could not be possible, and here was my problem: if we did once have music in worship what happened to it? What was it like? What

were its rules? Had it been preserved somewhere or did it disappear completely?

However compelling my questions were, there was no further evidence to suggest that any more research could be conducted. All that I had at this point were a few linguistic clues and a hunch that Zoroastrian history wasn't quite adding up. This left me in a considerable research bind. The hunt through antiquity had come up against dead ends and yet I knew that I couldn't leave my questions unanswered. As a composer and a Zoroastrian I felt that I was uniquely placed to do this work. Nonetheless, as my supervisors pointed out to me (with increasing impatience) *"You cannot write about what is not there!"*.

There was, however, something there. I just hadn't seen it yet. Neither had anybody else in recorded history. When I did find it, I was stunned to realise how close I'd been all the time.

(to be continued in the next issue of Hamazor)



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Fereidoon Demehri of O'Shihin Cultural Organization, Vancouver, has released a new CD of Zoroastrian prayers called Namaj. This CD covers some of the best parts of our prayers in brief and with the correct pronunciation, accompanied with a translation and music. At the moment it is in Persian but in future, releases will be in English, Spanish, French etc. Available at present on www.oshihan.org/namaj.swf - the CD will be available in the Fall of this year.



Mehraban Firouzgary was born in Yazd, Iran. In 1947 he was taken to India at the age of 12 with the idea of admitting him to the Cama Athornan Mandal, at Andheri, for graduating in Religious studies but was not admitted due to age and lack of Gujarati. He studied till the first year Science and simultaneously learnt Avesta. He was sent back to Iran for a strict Navar initiation and then returned to India to follow up his academic studies in Electronics & Radio Engineering. He worked for ten years in India and then went back to Iran when he retired as a joint project manager for building six hollow glassware manufacturing plants. Though he retired in 1998 he continued working part time in the last factory he was involved with.

With regard to religious and community duties he has been elected, continuously, for the last 27 years as a member of the managing board of executives of the Tehran Anjuman e Moobedan (Kankaash e Moobedan). For the last 30 years, even though not working as a full time mobed always carried out community religious functions or those relating to friends or close relatives. Since April 2003 he has been authorised by the Justice Ministry of the Iran as the sole Zoroastrian marriage license issuing authority in Tehran.

از این پس نیز خویش کاری پدر و مادر ادامه می یابد و باید به پرورش جسم و جان کودک و آموزش و پرورش وی بپردازند تا او را با اندیشه و گفتار و کردار نیک آشنا سازند و بدانند که فرزند آینده ای از رفتار والدین خویش است. بایستی با تغذیه خوب و ورزش و با تربیت درست جسم و جان و روح او را با قانون اشا (هنجار هستی) هماهنگ سازند. و فره ایزدی موجود در وجود کودک را هماهنگ با هنجار هستی نموده از فرهنگ والای انسانی برخوردار نمایند. تا طفل به سن خرد گرایی و بلوغ فکری برسد و انسانی شایسته نیکو زیستن پدیدار گردد.

در چنین شرایطی جوانان از اندیشه و گفتار و کردار نیک برخوردار خواهند بود و با پیروی از راه اشا یا راستی، غرور و خودپسندی و تبعیض دینی و نژادی را از خویششان و از جهان خاکی دور خواهند نمود و صرفاً به انسانیت انسان و اهورا منشی و فروغ مندی اندیشه نموده در راه پیشبرد و تازه گرداندن جهان و درک هرچه بیشتر سود و آسایش آفریدگان اهورامزدا خواهند کوشید.

از میان پنج نیروی اهورا داده، روان و فره وشی نیروی معنوی هستند و به سه نیروی دیگر که از آن گیتی هستند، یاری میرسانند. از این روی انسان همواره به راه راست هدایت می شود و به پارسایی و رسایی میرسد. ولی باید دانست که هیچگاه اهورامزدا در آزادی انسان که برای انتخاب و پرورش درست جان و خود و وجدان اوست، کوچکترین دخالتی نمی کند و این هنجار جهان است که نتیجه رفتار و کردار هر کس را برایش به بار می آورد. میوه نیک برای نیکی و بار تلخ برای بدی. بدینسان نیروهای مادی و مینوی انسان با تکمیل یکدیگر، یکی از شگفت انگیزترین موجودات جهان خاکی یعنی انسان را شکل می دهند و با آموزشهای دین زرتشتی که عقل سالم را در بدن سالم می داند، ایمان و وجدان سازنده در انسانهایی پدیدار میشود که جسم و جان خود را با سلامتی و شادابی پرورش می دهند.

برابر سرود اوستایی پنجاه هتام:

از میان باشندگان، هر کس که برابر با راستی ستایشش آتش بهتر است، مزدا اهورا از آن آگاه می باشد. این مردان و زنان را ما می ستاییم. > هفت هات <

آنچه از آموزشهای پیامبر زرتشت و پیروان نخستین وی الهام گرفته می شود این است که زن و مرد برابر هستند و در هفت کشور زمین همه انسانها با یکدیگر برابر و یکسان می باشند و خوشبختی برای کسی پدیدار می ماند که خوشبختی خود را در خوشبختی دیگران جستجو می کند.

خوشبختی برای کسی است که خوشبختی را به دیگران بدهد. بخشش مزدا اهورا برای پیشرفت زندگی، و نندرسنی و توانایی را از تو خواستارم، با نگهداری آئین راستی ای آرمیتی، رادی و زندگی نیک منشی را آرزو دارم. > اشنود گاتها <

جوانانی که بر پایه آئین زرتشتی به بلوغ جسمی و رشد روانی میرسند توانایی را در پارسایی و پهلوانی را در عشق و مهر و دوستی می یابند. آنان پدیده های زیبا و نمایندگان خردمند اهورامزدا در روی زمین هستند. این جوانان چه پسر و چه دختر بر پایه قانون راستی یا هنجار جهان، شالوده یک زندگی راستین و همراه با دانش و ورزش و ایمان را در نهاد خویش همراه دارند و این شالوده توانمند، کوشش و مبارزه همیشگی آنان را برای پیشرفت و رشد جهان به دنبال دارد. پیشرفت و رشد با آزادی و آزادگی کامل. در سرودهای اشو زرتشت که در آتش نیایش نیز تکرار شده است چنین می خوانیم:

بر آری در من ای اهورا، و بوسپله پارسایی و مهر، به من توانایی بده.

و بوسپله مینوی پاک و نماز راستین خیروی راستی،

و بوسپله نیک اندیشی، مهر به همه جهانیان را ارزانی دار. > اهنود گاتها <

انسان و انسانیت از دیدگاه ایشور زرتشت و زرتشتیان

موبد مهربان فیروز گری - جشن خردادگان 2743 دینی 1373 یزدگردی

ای مزدا هنگامی که در روز نخست، جهان ها و وجدان را آفریدی، و از منش و خرد خویش،
به جسم جان بخشیدی تا هر کس با کردارها و آموزش ها، هر باوری که می خواهد برگزیند.
داهنود گاتها»

بر اساس آموزشهای ایشور زرتشت زرتشتیان بر این باورند که اهورامزدا انسان ها را یکسان آفریده
است و به هر فرزندی که بدنیا می آید، از زمانی که نطفه اش بسته می شود، چه پسر و چه دختر
و از هر نژاد و طبقه ای که باشد به یک اندازه تیره ای از جان و خرد و وجدان و روان و فره وشی
(فره ایزدی) می بخشد و هر یک از آفریدگان را برابر قانون کاستی ناپذیر اشا (هنجار هستی) در
جهان خاکی با دیگر اجزای آفرینش آزادی میدهد تا رشد نماید و رفته رفته مسیر زندگی خود را
انتخاب نماید و سرنوشت خود را بسازد.

کودک تا هنگام زایش و در سنین طفولیت از سلامتی و خرد و وجدان پدر و مادر و دیگر کسانی
چون پزشک بهره می برد و چنانکه ناسالم به دنیا بیاید، و یا در دوران کودکی بیمار گردد، والدین
و اطرافیان وابسته مسئول ظلمت نموده اند و نمی توان فن را به حساب عواملی چون کار خداوند
(البته مانند هر قوانین دیگر استثنا وجود دارد چون تا بحال هیچکس به نهایت حکمت و تدابیر اهورا
مزدا پی نبرده است)، قضا و قدر و یا قسمت و تقسیم و کیفر گناهان پدر و مادر و یا حتی گناه خود
کودک در دوران زندگی قبلی یعنی عذاب روح انسان دیگری که دوباره جان گرفته است (تباسخ)
گذاشت.

اینگونه باورها که ممکن است در برخی از ادیان آمده باشد، غیر اهورایی و هرگز نباید
حتی به صورت وهم و پندار نیز در اندیشه پیروان دین زرتشتی راه یابد.
بر پایه آموزشهای ایشور زرتشت انسان میتواند با برخورداری از خرد همه بدیها را به نیکی و همه
منفی ها و نا رسانیهها را به مثبت و رسانی تبدیل کند. بنابراین والدین بایست جسم و روح و جان و
خرد و وجدان اهورا داده خود و فرزندانشان را چنان عالی پرورش دهند که در هر مرحله - از تولد
مثل گرفته تا پایان زندگی - بهترین مراقبت ها را بنمایند. بر پایه دین زرتشتی هر زن و مرد بایستی
جسم و جان و خرد و وجدان اهورا داده خویش را چنان عالی پرورش دهند تا در هر مرحله از زندگی
و هنگام زناشویی کلیه امکانات دنیای هنجارمند و علم و دانش موجود - که همه برگرفته از خرد
اهورایی است را فرا راه خویش قرار دهند و با انجام آزمایش های مربوطه و حتی ژنتیکی و دیگر
انواع آن، وضعیت روحی و جسمی خود را از نظر سلامت جسم و روح و متناسب بودن عوامل تنی
و روانی یکدیگر از دواج تعیین نمایند. پس از ازدواج و فرزند زایی نیز به رعایت نکات پزشکی
پایبند باشند و در این صورت است که انسان آفریده اهورامزدا میتواند فرزندی سالم و نیکو خصال
داشته باشد و کوشش نماید تا طفل ناقص و معنول به جهان خاکی نیاید. بنا بر این اصل، همه
نوزادان این جهان چه پسر و چه دختر و از هر نژاد و طبقه یکسان به دنیا می آیند و با نهادن نام
نیک انسان بر آنها، در جهان می بالند و رشد می کنند.

Tsunami Relief in Sri Lanka

A report from Dr Suranjith P F Senaratne

The purpose of this report is to express the gratitude of the Coastal Fisheries and Industries Trust (COFIT) of Sri Lanka for the generous assistance it has received from the Karachi and UK branches of the World Zoroastrian Organization.

Dodanduwa is located on Sri Lanka's south-west coast, 100 km south of Colombo and 10 km north of Galle. Our interest in this township derives from the fact that my wife owns a beachland in Dodanduwa. On 26 December, when the tsunami devastated the coastal region of Sri Lanka, we were desperate to contact our caretakers and neighbours. Two days after the tsunami we learnt that they were alive; that loss of life had been relatively small in Dodanduwa; but that there were many who were starving since the relief convoys were heading for the large towns such as Galle and Matara.

From 30 December through January we concentrated, then, on the distribution of dry goods and medical supplies, as well as of school books which were greatly in demand since this is a literate community with a great thirst for education.

The extent of the misery all around us and the desperate straits to which this community had been reduced compelled us to put our own affairs on hold, set up a temporary office on my wife's land, and travel down from Colombo, devoting three to four days each week to our tsunami relief work.

With the destruction, almost total, of the fishing fleet, the economy of this community had been shattered: the "High Street" micro and mini-businesses, the crafts such as welding and carpentry, and the cottage industries such as rope-making and food-retailing, had survived and flourished, all of them dependent on this one activity - fishing.



Two of the new fishing boats named after the donors by Sunari Senaratne

Our long-term goal, it was clear, had to be the resuscitation of the fishing industry combined with the regeneration of complementary livelihoods. Accordingly, my daughter and I, as the development specialists, devoted our energies to the restoration of boats, equipment and nets. My wife set up a "clinic", issuing numbers and working round the clock, in order to see as many as possible, mainly women, who besieged our offices and thronged outside the gates.

Initially, the funding had come from, largely, "personal" sources. Once these were exhausted, COFIT had to look for institutional funding. We approached a few

international organizations, including FAO. An FAO official in the Colombo office, who was strongly supportive of our work, had learnt that another donor, WZO in Karachi, in fact, was looking for a reputable donee organization. The official felt that we had the necessary credentials. So, with a welcome, and now quite unusual, absence of red tape, WZO - first at Karachi, and then in the UK, - became COFIT's benefactors.

Since mid-April 2005 COFIT's work on the improvement of livelihoods has been supported by two organizations, the principal one of which has been WZO. COFIT has received US\$15,970 from the Karachi branch of the WZO and UK£3,432 together with US\$1000 from the UK branch. This has amounted to Sri Lankan Rupees 2,299,625. This money has been spent, as stipulated, on the project on livelihoods: COFIT's expenses, including, inter alia, weekly lodging and transport, amounting to around 15%, has been met by Focus 21, an organization established in 2002 by my wife at a time when Sri Lanka was devastated by floods.

More than 70% of the money received from WZO has now been spent and almost the whole of the balance pledged for disbursement, once the local monitors of the Project have completed their enquiries. WZO funds have been utilized in the following areas.

Fisheries

Outboard motors and hulls of "wallam" - the main type of fishing craft used on the south-west coast of Sri Lanka - have been repaired. River nets destroyed by the tsunami have been replaced. Canoes have been provided for inshore fishing during the period of rough seas. Outrigger repairs for both canoes and the larger boats have been assisted.

The Coir Industry

Rope-making has been a supplementary source of income for over a 100 years. In a

slow, arduous, often nauseous process, coconut husks were "retted" by the women, ie, rotted for 6 months in pits, manually pounded for extraction of fibre and turned into rope, manually, or by wooden machines, with three women to a machine. The retting pits were washed away in the tsunami and rope-making had come to a virtual standstill.

The women had to be persuaded to use "milled" fibre rather than their traditional "retted" fibre. My wife's attempts to get supplies of "milled" fibre were blocked by the ubiquitous middlemen whose aim was to supply the fibre themselves and keep the rope-makers down to a mere pittance for their labour. Gradually, now, with locals roped in to organize the distribution of fibre and collection of the rope, the obstacles are being surmounted: a regular and reliable supplier has been located; with incentives such as a prize for the highest output, thirty teams, ie, nearly 100 women, are making rope which, according to one buyer, is the best along the coastline. Interestingly, too, some of this rope is being exported to countries where it is used in a technology for preventing landslides.

Micro-Businesses

About a 100 micro-businesses in the "High Street", which had been severely damaged by the tsunami, have been provided with capital for repairs or equipment and helped to re-start. The miscellany includes: fish retail businesses; communication centres; grocery shops and dry goods stores; a gas supplier; garment retailers; 'fast food' outlets; house & sign painters; a grinding mill; carpentry and masonry workshops; a beauty salon cum music centre; itinerant vendors of firewood, coconut, cinnamon, peanuts & vegetables; hardware, welding, oil and fishing industry supply businesses; a printing press; and 3-wheeler transport businesses.

Infrastructure Development

Encouraged by COFIT, nearly 40 "High Street" businesses have organized

themselves into a Trade Association. They were helped to link up with the national Federation of Chambers of Commerce which led to a one-day seminar (as well as plans for future seminars) conducted at the premises of the Trust and co-funded by the Shell Live Wire Programme, which led, in turn, to an expression of interest in this Association, by the Asia Foundation which had sent its observers. The members have been sensitized to the advantages of banking and insurance and 30 of them have been funded and enabled to insure against tsunami and flood for Rs100,000 per head.

Raw materials are being provided, and markets investigated, for handicraft producers such as crochet, "pillow lace" and embroidery workers, coir mat weavers; and fabric painters, as well as for "jadi" producers (a salted, spiced fish for which the region is famed) and sweetmeats special to the region.

Conclusion

Even to anthropologists such as myself and my daughter whose day to day work involves the description and analysis of poverty, the transformation that took place in relatively affluent Dodanduwa households, as a result of the tsunami, is quite staggering. The penury to which they have been reduced has shattered them in a way that the outsider cannot easily apprehend.

In our work during the last eight months our approach has been not merely to make good the losses which have been incurred through the tsunami, but to establish a foundation which can provide a basis for future activity. To this end, we have concentrated on a small geographical area and on the problems of each category of household, using anthropological insights to devise an appropriate methodology.

The people for whom and on whose behalf we have worked are suffering from shock. The sense that life is very insecure, which has been generated by the tsunami, has

been underlined, by the aid and assistance which state agencies, well-intentioned NGOs and visiting foreigners, have thrown in the direction of the township. Though often very generous, the indiscriminate nature of these donations has engendered in the community the dangerous belief that there is for them an easy way out, namely, reliance on hand-outs from someone, somewhere.

The assistance provided by COFIT has, on the other hand, been closely monitored and deployed with discrimination. There is, however, much left to be done, specifically in the area of disaster-preparedness, and the dispersal of a sense of lassitude and apathy which still afflicts many in the community. ■■■■



Dr Suranjith P F Senaratne, MA Cantab, BSc Hons, PhD (London) - a Consultant Anthropologist and Sri Lanka's pioneer in Development Anthropology, set up The Coastal Fisheries and Industries Trust (COFIT), in Sri Lanka with his wife Lalitha who is Barrister of the Inner Temple, and Attorney-at-law, Sri Lanka, and their daughter Sunari who has a BA Hons. (Sussex) and MSc (Lond.), and is a doctoral student in Anthropology. COFIT's programme of work has been planned by the three of them and has been implemented as a project at Dodanduwa, Sri Lanka.

WZO London informs its members ...

We are pleased to provide a brief outline of the sums collected and disbursed in India, Pakistan and the UK. Further funds as and when received will be dealt with on a similar basis.

Zoroastrians of Karachi through the efforts of our Board member Toxy Cowasjee raised a magnificent US\$16,000. The funds were forwarded to The Coastal Fisheries and Industries Trust, Sri Lanka by her. This sum included a contribution of Pak Rs 60,000 from a Muslim gentleman based on the mutual trust of like minded people wishing to assist in a humanitarian cause.

WZO UK - Total funds collected to date through our UK offices amounted to £3432 + US\$ 1000, also forwarded to COFIT.

WZO Trust in India through the efforts of Dinshaw and Bachi Tamboly raised and disbursed the following funds. South Indian Federation of Fisherman's Societies (SIFFS). IRs. 250,000. Khareghat Colony Youth Association IRs 150,000 for mounting a rescue mission to the affected areas. Lions Club IRs. 50,000 to add to their own Tsunami Appeal funds. Times of India, IRs. 428,912. Times of India had pledged to give an amount matching what they had received.

Our sincere thanks to all the donors for their spontaneous response to our Tsunami appeal.

Mumbai Mirror's Manoj Nair reports

Hot of the press just before Hamazor goes to print ...

The Association for Revival of Zoroastrianism (ARZ), which has decided to start a 'universal' fire temple that will be open to all Zoroastrians, including non-Parsi spouses of Parsis who have converted to the religion and their children, held its first prayer meeting at Colaba on Thursday. *"It is perhaps the first time a Parsi organisation has openly supported women married outside the community,"* said Gamdevi resident Meher Amersey, who was among the 100-plus Zoroastrians who attended the Jashan and Hum Bandagi prayers at the meeting.

Amersey, married to a non-Parsi, is part of a group called Association of Inter-Married Zoroastrians representing Parsi women who have married outside the community. They have been demanding for their children, rights like entry into fire temples and the freedom to perform Navjots or initiation ceremonies. The ARZ has been formed by Parsis who feel children of Parsi women married outside the community should be accepted into the Zoroastrian faith. However, unlike other groups promoting the idea, ARZ has been formed by Parsis who have married within their community: all six trustees of the organisation are married within the community. *"It is a good beginning for us. It makes a difference that the organisation is supported by community members who have not married outside,"* said Amersey. Kersee Wadia, a trustee of ARZ, said more than 30 Zoroastrian Anjumans (associations) in villages and small towns in Maharashtra and Gujarat are defunct because there are no Zoroastrians left there. *"What happened there could happen elsewhere in the next 20 years. Parsi agiaries and baugs are eventually and inevitably going to be occupied by others. It therefore makes sense to allow and accept children and spouses of inter-married Zoroastrians into the faith rather than submit religious institutions and properties to people who have no connection with the religion. This association has been established to ensure our religion does not die out,"* said Wadia.

For Smita Crishna of the Godrej family who too is married to a non-Parsi, the formation of the new association was something she was looking forward too. *"We were waiting for this to happen. What they are doing is taking the religion forward,"* she said. According to her, the Zoroastrian religion allows freedom. *"It is a religion of choice. There is no compulsion to visit a fire temple. My children have always been welcomed at religious functions in the Godrej family, but they have always practised the three tenets of the religion: good thoughts, good words and good deeds,"* said Crishna. Sharu Anjirbag, a Punjabi married to Malcolm, a marine engineer, said she was there to support Parsi women who were demanding equal rights for their children.

"My daughter who had married a non-Parsi was upset when she was denied entrance to a fire temple once after her marriage. She believes in the Zoroastrian religion. Denying religious rights to women who have married outside their faith and their children is discrimination"— **S Naval, South Mumbai resident**

"Non-Parsi spouses and children of such couples should be initiated into the Zoroastrian religion if they want to. There should be a freedom of choice. Zoroastrianism is a religion that gives freedom of choice"— **Bapu Malcolm, sports writer**

"The formation of a group like this will hopefully take the religion forward"— **Smita Crishna, member of the Godrej family.**



S Naval

Bapu Malcolm

Smita Crishna



The World Zoroastrian Organisation

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Incorporated 1980

APPLICATION FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP

_____ 20 _____

The Joint Honorary Secretaries
The World Zoroastrian Organisation

Dear Sirs,

As I desire to become Grand Patron / Patron / Life Member / Ordinary Member / Student (delete as appropriate), I request you to submit this application to your Committee.

I am born of Zoroastrian parents / Non-Zoroastrian spouse of a Zoroastrian (delete as appropriate), I agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles and Rules and Regulations so long as I remain a member of The World Zoroastrian Organisation.

I note that the annual subscription for Ordinary Membership is payable on 1st January of each year. In case of arrears, I understand that my membership will be terminated after three months of sending the reminder.

Yours truly,

Signature

Block Capitals please FULL NAME _____

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Note: The Proposer and Secunder must be WZO members. For subscription fees please check overleaf.

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Membership Fees

For Indian residents

Grand Patron	Rs10,000	Patron	Rs5,000	Permanent Assoc Member	£ 150
Ordinary Assoc Member	£10 pa	Life Member	Rs2,500	Student	Gratis
Ordinary Member	Rs450 for 3 years				till 21 years of age

Please send application form to: The World Zoroastrian Organisation (India) to Union Press, 13 Homji St, Fort, Mumbai 400 001. Tel: (022) 2660357 or 2665526

For UK residents & other countries

Grand Patron	£ 500	Patron	£ 250	Permanent Assoc Member	£ 150
Ordinary Assoc Member	£10 pa	Life Member	£ 100	Ordinary Member	£ 10 pa
Student	Gratis till 25 years of age				

Please send application form and cheque payable in Sterling to WZO, London to: Mrs Khurshid Kapadia, 217 Pickhurst Rise, West Wickham, Kent BR4 0AQ. Tel +44 020 8777 5778

For USA residents

Permanent Assoc Member	\$ 225	Ordinary Assoc Member	\$ 25 pa
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Please send application form and cheque payable in Candian Dollars as "ZAA, WZO Fees" to: Mr Firdosh Mehta, 73 Douglas Woods Manor, SE, Calgary, AL T2Z 2E8. Tel: (403) 203-2722

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Ordinary Assoc Member	£10 pa	Life Member	Rs2,500	Student	Gratis till 25 years of age

Please send application form and cheque payable in Pak Rupees as "WZO" to: Mrs Toxy Cowasjee, 2 A Mary Road, Bath Island, Karachi 75530. Tel: (021) 5867088

“... Through good thinking
the Creator of existence shall promote the
true realization of what is most healing
according to our wish.”

yasna 50.11
Inslar translation

