

publication of the world zoroastrian organisation

# HAMAZOR

2

Issue 2008



# The

who commits  
injustice  
is ever made  
more wretched  
than he who  
suffers it.  
-Plato



Sept '08



Minoos Saher, carries the Olympic torch in Oman, p26

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## COVER

Painting titled "When more is less" by Jeroo Roy. An artist with a cause - the rights of women & children

## PHOTOGRAPHS

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

## WZO WEBSITE

[www.w-z-o.org](http://www.w-z-o.org)

**International Board Members**



**London, England**

**Mr Sam H  
Bhiwandiwalla**

Chairman  
E-mail:  
[sam@bhiwandi.demon.co.uk](mailto:sam@bhiwandi.demon.co.uk)

**Mr Darayus S Motivala**

President  
E-mail:  
[darayus@motivala.me.uk](mailto:darayus@motivala.me.uk)

**Mr Dinyar Modi**

Hon Secretary  
E-mail: [djm@djmodi.com](mailto:djm@djmodi.com)

**Mrs Khurshid B  
Kapadia**

Membership Secretary  
E-mail:  
[khurshid.kapadia@mottmac.com](mailto:khurshid.kapadia@mottmac.com)

**Dr Sam Kerr**

Unit 5, 'Agincourt'  
10 Larkin Street\  
Roseville  
New South Wales, 2069  
Australia

**Er Jehan Bagli**

Vice President  
Mississauga, Canada  
E-mail: [jbagli@rogers.com](mailto:jbagli@rogers.com)

**Mr Marzi Byramjee**

Oakbillie, Canada  
E-mail:  
[marzi@regalpresscanada.com](mailto:marzi@regalpresscanada.com)

**Mr Dadi B Engineer**

President, WZO India  
Mumbai, India  
E-mail:  
[dbengineer@crawfordbayley.com](mailto:dbengineer@crawfordbayley.com)

**Mr Dadi E Mistry**

New Delhi, India  
E-mail:  
[mistry@del2.vsnl.net.in](mailto:mistry@del2.vsnl.net.in)

**Mr Rustom Yeganegi**

233 Saadi Avenue  
Tehran, Iran

**Mr Darius Mistry**

Auckland  
New Zealand  
E-mail: [darius.mistry@imagetext.co.nz](mailto:darius.mistry@imagetext.co.nz)

**Mrs Toxy Cowasjee**

Karachi, Pakistan  
E-mail:  
[toxy39@attglobal.net](mailto:toxy39@attglobal.net)

**Mr Russi Ghadiali**

Singapore  
E-mail:  
[RGHADIA1@irf.com](mailto:RGHADIA1@irf.com)

**Mr Keki Bhote**

President, US Chapter  
Illinois, USA  
E-mail:  
[krbhote@sbcglobal.net](mailto:krbhote@sbcglobal.net)

Note: WZO's committee is extensive, these are just a few of the names given for member's convenience

**Volume XLIX - Issue 2 | 2008**

**Printed by:**

*A A Graphics  
1721/31 LAC No 2  
Karachi 75420  
Pakistan*

**Funded by:**

*World Zarathushtrian Trust Fund*

**Cover design by:**

*Tannaz Minwalla  
Karachi, Pakistan*

**Design & layout by:**

*Toxy Cowasjee  
Karachi, Pakistan*

## From the Editor



Issue 2/2008, contains a myriad of information ranging from topical news, success and adventure stories, religiosity, to the input of three medical students who have left the comfort of their homes to help in camps in less fortunate countries. The articles written by the two lady doctors, are graphic and though toned down by them may come as a shock to many readers. Horror, which is unfortunately rampant in this world, cannot be “moth-balled”, nor should it be.

One needs to admire the tenacity of so many of our youth, achieving and surmounting hurdles that come their way. It never fails to amaze me the number of emails that circulate about the “dying Parsi” race, the same thing said over and over again in yet another way, perhaps just to sensationalize, perhaps to make people aware. The Parsis are diminishing: and will be clans within a tribe. Zoroastrians of the world are here to prosper it and to progress. “Time waits for no man” is an axiom worth emulating, especially by individuals who hold position in our community in the sub continent, who are adamant to hold on to man-made rules under the guise of Zoroastrianism. The youth who are more dynamic and educated than previous generations, as is the case in life, certainly are losing patience with them. I have nothing but admiration for all they do, in their quiet and determined way to make a difference, all one has to do is read the pages in our publications, to realize we have nothing to fear for or from them.

Our religion is a benevolent one, a tolerant one, leaving the individuals to decide for themselves, what is right or wrong. Why is it then that, we the community cannot be tolerant and respect others who may differ in opinion? As Prof Higgins said, “Why can’t you be like me?” [not to be taken literally, please!]. No priestly law nor anjuman’s rule will stop people marrying whomsoever they wish, nor will they be able to stop them believing and practicing the religion of their choice, nor their preference of last rites. Is it then not time for the sub continent Parsis to accept what Zarathushtra preached or are we to pick and choose the points that give the “Authorities” to have power over the common man?

Why is more time not given in seeing that the mobeds of India are given better education, better taken care of, or Parsi beggars assisted in their needs, or the elderly and indigent have three meals on their table? [please note this is not prevalent in Pakistan, as we take care of all our community members]. Readers of Hamazor will have read the yearly appeal to feed 100 or so Parsis residing in Mumbai. Surely with 50,000 Zoroastrians living in India, this can be done with dignity, and without their loss of self-respect, without soliciting for donations from Zoroastrians living in other countries?

Life and circumstances cannot be perfect, nor does anyone visualize it can be, but there are areas where resources and energy can be diverted to make a difference even in the lowliest human being’s life.

To digress, readers will wonder why in this issue, three articles each are written by Farrokh Vajifdar and Soonu Engineer. As editor, when I come across interesting information, I try and find the correct person to write on the subject. Farrokh living in UK, and besides being eloquent in his writing is a scholar of our religion, who gallantly and willingly comes forward to assist. Similarly Soonu is now on the committee of WZO and being in London, has assisted me “as the man on the spot” to report or interview individuals living in UK. So folks, though they may not have realized it, they are now on my Hamazor team.

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



## WZO's Persian Extravaganza

Report from Chairman, Sammy Bhiwandiwalla

On 15<sup>th</sup> March St Luke's Church hall received the perfect makeover in the early hours of the morning. The beautiful gothic yet sombre interior was slowly transformed into a pleasure palace. Both Tehmi Patel and Armaity Engineer creatively festooned the hall with hanging silk banners, floral arrangements, colourful table settings and special treats for the young children.

A mainly young Iranian crowd entered into the spirit of bringing in the New Year with exchanges of Navruz Mubarak around the Ha'ft Seen table decorated with seven traditional items. The three musicians of ATESH entertained us with traditional Iranian music. Family and friends linked arms and danced to the rhythmic sounds of the Tombac in traditional circular motion, with both men and women showing their dexterity as dancers with their swaying arms and synchronised footwork.

The evening's entertainment commenced with an opening number in dramatic fashion with the delectable Shebbi performing her sensuous belly dance and enticing the men to join her on the floor. The men stayed firmly glued to their seats, too embarrassed to dance in front of their girlfriends and spouses until the Chairman foolishly broke ranks and decided to do the unthinkable. Shebbi, a professional dancer, entertained us throughout the evening and very generously waived her performance fees thereby helping us to collect more towards WZO's charitable activities. Our sincere thanks and appreciation to Shebbi.

Food, which is always on every one's mind, was again traditional Iranian. Yes, of course, the Parsis that were present made the ultimate sacrifice by missing out on *samusas* and chicken *farcha* followed by lamb or chicken curry, but it was after all meant to be an authentic Iranian celebration. The starters consisted of Panir Sabzi a colourful plate of Feta cheese,

walnuts and herbs, Borani a medley of deep eggplant, yoghurt, onion, garlic and herbs, Salad Olivieh, Mirza Ghasem, and Zeresh Polo. The main course included Chelo Kebab with a combination of juicy lamb with saffron rice and Khameh-Ghoush, lentils with pieces of tender lamb. To finish of the feast there was delicious Baklava.

A big thank you to all the helping hands throughout the day. They made this a truly entertaining and enjoyable Navruze for all our guests.



Report from Parvin Farid

روز پانزدهم مارچ جشن با شکوه

نوروزی نزدیکی لندن (ریچموند) بر پا گردید.

برای نخستین بار ایرانیان و پارسیان با هم در یک سالن بزرگ که از پیش بسیار زیبا آراسته شده بود، نوروز را به شیوه ایرانی جشن گرفتند و با خوراکی‌های خوشمزه و شیرینیهای ایرانی پذیرایی کردند سپس موزیک، آواز، دست افشانی و پاکوبی آغاز گردید وزن و مرد دست یک پارچه گی به یکدیگر دادند و پس از آن ارمغان‌های خوب از پیش در آنجا داشتند که پس از فروش بنیت بخت آزمایی، دوستان در این آزمون شاد و خنده دار چیزهای زیبایی به ارمغان گرفتند. من از سوی همه ایرانیان آرزو دارم که هر سال برنامه نوروزی به همین شیوه بر پا گردد.

بانو شهین بخردنیا یکی از زنان پرکار W. Z.O. ستون سنگین این گردهم‌آیی باشکوه بود و ما ایرانیان از بانو بخردنیا نازنین و دگر دست اندر کاران سپاس گزاریم.

پروین فرید



# Nowruz 2008

by soonu engineer

Norouz - Navroze - Norooz - Nawruz - Newroz - Nauruz - Nawroz - Noruz - Novruz - Navroj

**Nowruz** has never before attracted as much publicity as it has this year. Partly because, this year the 21st of March had to be shared with other celebrants: Easter, Eid-ul-Milad, Holi and Purim all fell on the same day and the occasion became a celebration of interfaith harmony and understanding. Partly because there is a race to get it officially registered with UNESCO as an 'intangible heritage', before the deadline of August 2008. Even the White House has got in on the act with its own haft-sin table. And as if all this were not enough, there is a plan to create a 'Nowruz Museum' in Tehran!

For those of us for whom this is traditionally a spiritual festival intrinsic to the Zoroastrian faith and calendar, this sudden, intense interest in Nowruz – from different and disparate quarters – is intriguing.

## More than a New Year

However, the struggle for the soul of Nowruz has a long history that is inextricably linked with the struggle for the survival of Iranian identity and culture since the early years of the Muslim conquest. The caliphs, it is said, felt obliged to recognise the centrality of Nowruz and accepted tributes on the day – in keeping with the traditions of the Persian rulers before them.

However, it was condemned as paganistic by Islamic jurists, including the great 11<sup>th</sup> century theologian, al-Ghazali. Gradually, with the decline of the Zoroastrian community, Nowruz lost its religious significance for the majority of Iranians while tenaciously maintaining its auspicious status against the competing claims of Islamic holy days and festivities.

When in the 1980s the Iranian regime tried to suppress Nowruz and its 13 days of ritual and merrymaking, by depicting it as an un-Islamic festival, Nowruz once again became a symbol of national resistance, both political and cultural. The regime eventually dropped

its opposition and Nowruz was restored to its rightful place.

In the new millennium, Nowruz has again revealed its subversive edge: those disillusioned with the Islamic foundations of the Iranian state have begun to explore the Zoroastrian roots of this festival and to take an interest in the religion itself.

Consequently, we have come full circle in 2008, with the Iranian government actively seeking (along with nine other countries), to 'patent' Nowruz as a cultural heritage and thereby perhaps establishing its own hegemony over this challenging reminder of Iran's pre-Islamic past. The President himself attended a ceremony to 'register' Nowruz as a National Day, unveiled a special stamp to commemorate the occasion and declared, "We can think of no other tradition in the whole world with as deeply spiritual an association as Nowruz."

## Universal Day of Celebration

Nowruz has come to be known as the Persian New Year because the Iranian calendar marks this as the first day of the solar year. However, throughout the northern hemisphere, the vernal equinox signifies a new day, a new dawn, light after a period of darkness, warmth after the cold, creation, rebirth, the onset of Spring and a call to rejoice and venerate nature and its creator. In that sense, it is a universal day of



celebration, across many cultures and many lands.



**Nowruz Round-up Across the Globe -**

*From the reports of celebrations sent to the Editor.*

**India**

All the chawls and baghs have their celebratory 'Navroze' events but Dadar, declared the Best Residential Colony in Mumbai by the Times of India, stole the show. There was a month-long build-up to the great event, with week-end competitions involving floral arrangements, creative arts, cookery, general knowledge, cycling, fancy dress competitions and quizzes. The 'Spring Festival' and Ghambar, at the Parsi Gymkhana, now in its 28<sup>th</sup> year, attracted more than 2500 Parsis. It is organised by the Mancherji Edulji Joshi Memorial Trust and enjoys impressive corporate sponsorship. Preparations start months in advance.

There is a 'Gara' raffle which raises enough to build a house for Gujarat farmers each year, through the WZO Trust, India.

The show this year had the theme of 'Song and Dance Through Time' and started with a musical number from the children's Dharmagnyan class and Awards for community service and outstanding achievements in business, sports and academia. Amongst the winners this year was Tanya Sam Balsara, who runs Mumbai's only computer institute for the visually impaired. A Special Award was given to Bachi Dinshaw Tamboly, "the tough lady with a soft heart" of the World Zoroastrian Organisation, for her dynamic, unsung work for fellow Zoroastrians in the interiors of Gujarat and her commitment to social welfare. 19 year old IT student, Firoza Aibara was recognised for her book,

'HTML for Beginners'.

Though Mumbai got the glamour

and publicity, all over India, wherever there are Parsis, Nowruz was celebrated with gusto.



**Pakistan**

There was a disco and dinner to bring in the New Year. Jamshedi Nowruz has traditionally been the occasion when Karachi Parsis have their Sports Day at Karachi Parsi Institute, which is held on 23 March. This year the teams represented the different chawls, colonies and baghs and each team consisted of people of all ages and both genders. This unique 'Hungama Sports Day' consisted of team challenges that involved swimming, relay, 3-legged and sack races, senior citizens' walk, cycling, eating competition and many other delights. This was followed by a Tambola, dinner and prize distribution.

In Chitral and other parts of northern Pakistan, Ismaili Muslims celebrated Eid-e-Nowruz.



**Iran**

Eid-e-Nowruz also marks the Baha'i New Year after the 19-day fast, up to March 20 in the last month of the Baha'i calendar. Zoroastrians celebrated along with the entire nation, over a period of 13 days. There are plans to set up a Museum of Nowruz, and other countries that celebrate Nowruz, namely, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan and India have been invited to participate.



Procession in Iran



**Canada**

There were festivities organised by the Zoroastrian community in each major city. In Toronto, there was a Jashan at the Darbe Meher with nine mobeds, no less, and speeches in English and Persian.



The Government of Ontario has agreed to designate the first day of spring as Nowruz.



## USA

Public celebrations of Nowruz in the US had a distinctly political tinge: they were inspired it seems by the Iranian-American community's need for 'recognition', both for

its 'seminal contribution' to American life and its pride in its social and cultural roots. For the first time, following years of lobbying by many prominent members of the community, there was a reception at the White House, hosted by Laura Bush. There was also a speech by the minority leader and Speaker of

the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, who promised a 'new beginning and a new direction', including continuing 'to question the administration's stance on torture and the war in Iraq.'

Rustom Kevala, President of FEZANA, requested all members to make it a point to raise awareness of the festival amongst non-Zoroastrians in their localities.

There were at least two Nowruz parades, one in New York and the other in San Jose. Here too, there seemed a need to 'overcome perceived notions' and use the parades as a 'platform'... to showcase to the world the cultural, humanitarian and literary contributions of the diverse ethnicities of the people of Iran.' The Persian Zoroastrian Organization of Northern California comprised the largest of 10 contingents in San Jose, all dressed in their T-shirts sporting, 'Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds.' They had a dance troupe and Ammoo Nowruz in their midst. The City of San Jose charged \$50,000 to its residents for the privilege of celebrating their new year in their own streets!

The 5<sup>th</sup> 'Persian Day' parade in New York's Madison Avenue attracted more than 25,000 spectators. It had floats and bands and dance troupes from Iran, Armenia, Azerbaijan and other central Asian countries. The Mayor invited the leaders of all these communities to a celebratory breakfast. The Zoroastrian community organised religious and social events over 10 days, including the celebration of Zarathushtra's birthday. FEZANA launched its proposal for a 'secular', seasonal calendar to enable the 'celebration of our festivities in harmony with the seasons'. The Philadelphia Museum of Art organised a day of workshops on Persian art and culture and invited families to take part. Similar events were held by other museums.



## New Zealand

There was a record gathering of 275 devotees at the Nowruz jashan held by the Zarathustrian Association of New Zealand in which 14 priests, young and old, took part. The Auckland community expressed great pride in the five young men, Jehan Bulsara, Riyasp Bhandari, Karan Bhandari, Darian Shalori and Navzad Chhor who had recently returned from Mumbai having completed their Navar ceremonies. The jashan was followed by a children's concert of devotional songs after which there was a screening of "The Keepers of the Flame", a reminder to the youth of their glorious Parsi heritage. There was an evening function of dinner/dance at a restaurant run by a Zoroastrian family.



## Israel

Iranian Jews settled in Israel have not forgotten this auspicious day and there were many celebrations, which were proudly publicised on the internet.



Nowruz at the White House

Novruz Bayramy in Azerbaijan



## Middle East & Central Asia

All the people of the Central Asian states, along with the Turks and the Kurds also celebrate Nowruz. A fact less known is that there is a tradition of celebrating Nowruz, with a family picnic, amongst many Arab nations, though it is not officially recognised by the Arab states.

**Azerbaijan:** Novruz Bayramy is the favourite holiday in Azerbaijan. It has a remarkable endurance and survival capacity, being of non Islamic origin it managed to retain its importance after the Arab conquest and in this century survived Soviet attempts to destroy it.

As implied by its timing and natural significance, trees are pruned, fields are cleared, families wash their rugs and draperies, clean and wax their furniture and often repaint the interior of their homes. An almost iconic tradition associated with Nowruz is when every person buys at least one set of new clothes and families visit elders and friends in their new attire. Several things are used to symbolize the occasion in Azerbaijan, sprouted wheat being a favourite.

The celebrations begin four weeks before the actual day of Novruz. These four weeks - actually four Tuesdays - are each devoted to one of the four elements and called Su Charhshanba (Water Tuesday), Odlu Charhshanba (Flame Tuesday), Torpaq Charhshanba (Earth Tuesday), Akhir Charhshanba (Last Tuesday). Tradition holds that the living are visited by the spirits of their ancestors on the last days of the year. Children symbolically re-enact the visits, jumping over bonfires and running through the streets.

Novruz is a family holiday. In the evening before the holiday the whole family gathers around the holiday table laid with various dishes to make the New Year rich. The menu varies from a great deal from region to region, but for Novruz abundant meals are prepared and ritually seven objects are laid on the tables.

While celebrating Novruz peasants defined what will be the year: dry or rainy,

productive or not. As per tradition the first day of Novruz was considered spring, the second day – summer, the third – autumn and the fourth – winter. If the first day was not rainy and not windy it was considered that the forthcoming spring will be good for agriculture, but if it was rainy or an overcast day, then the weather was foreseen thus.



## Russia

A cultural ceremony with a reception was held for Nowruz on 23 March, sponsored by the City Hall and the Regional Relations Committee in Moscow's Pushkin cultural center. Several music concerts were performed by the ensembles from Nowruz-celebrating nations. Foreign envoys to Russia were invited to attend the ceremony.



## UK

Nowruz was a bank holiday in the UK because of Easter. There was a packed gathering at the Zoroastrian Centre in London, for Nowruz lunch and disco, organised by the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe. A week earlier, there was a Persian dinner and dance, organised by the World Zoroastrian Organisation.



This round up of Nowruz celebrations 2008 is not comprehensive and we can be certain that hundreds of communities, all over the globe, joined in making this a memorable and joyous occasion.



Soonu Engineer's profile appears on p 66

## Iran's 2000-year-old fire temple

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=49647&sectionid=351020105> on 31 March 2008

**The** Rey fire temple located in the province of Tehran is 2,000 years old and is regarded as the country's oldest Zoroastrian temple.

Dating back to the Sasanid era, the fire temple is highly revered by Iranian Zoroastrians. It is known as the heart of the ancient city of Rey and has been mentioned in the Avesta as well as several other ancient Persian texts.

The fire temple is a brick and mortar structure and the main hall has two rows of square-based columns and two arches and entrances.

It has four vast arches with a height of 20 meters resting on three stands. However, two of the arches have been completely ruined and visitors can now only imagine the beauty of the original designs.

According to Tabari, a prominent Persian historian (838-923 AD), the temple housed the original sacred fire which was sent to other fire-temples.

It was believed that the sacred fire was sent to the earth from the sky and should therefore never be extinguished.

This year the temple attracted the largest number of visitors to date - between 500 and 800 people visiting daily.



Remnants of two large arches



A view of the Rey Fire Temple, near Tehran

## Global warming may douse Parsi holy fire

source: Times of India on 20 March 2008

**Just** as Parsi numbers are dwindling, the Iran Shah where the fire is kept at Udwada, is threatened by the forces of mother nature. Because of global warming, the rising Arabian Sea is threatening to drown the Iran Shah.

The waves, which rise as high as 12 metres in the monsoon, have already damaged some houses and hotels on the beach. Today, the distance between the damaged houses and Iran Shah is barely 200 metres.

According to the preliminary observations of a committee of M S University geologists headed by professor Nikhil Desai, seawater has moved inland by around 15 metres from Danti towards Umbergaon in the last decade. Danti in Valsad is worst affected with seawater moving inland by about 90 metres.

"The Gujarat government built the first protection wall to preserve Iran Shah but it was washed away. The second wall designed by Central Water and Power Research Station, incurring an expenditure of Rs 1.4 crore, is still unfinished but we don't have funds to complete it," says Temas Pandol of Udwada Bachao Samiti (UBS), that has taken up the challenge of protecting this heritage town.

Bioscientist and environmentalist Mino Parabia feels protection is not a permanent solution. "We have to think of a permanent solution like shifting the holy fire to a safer place. In the past, whenever there was a threat to it, the fire was shifted."

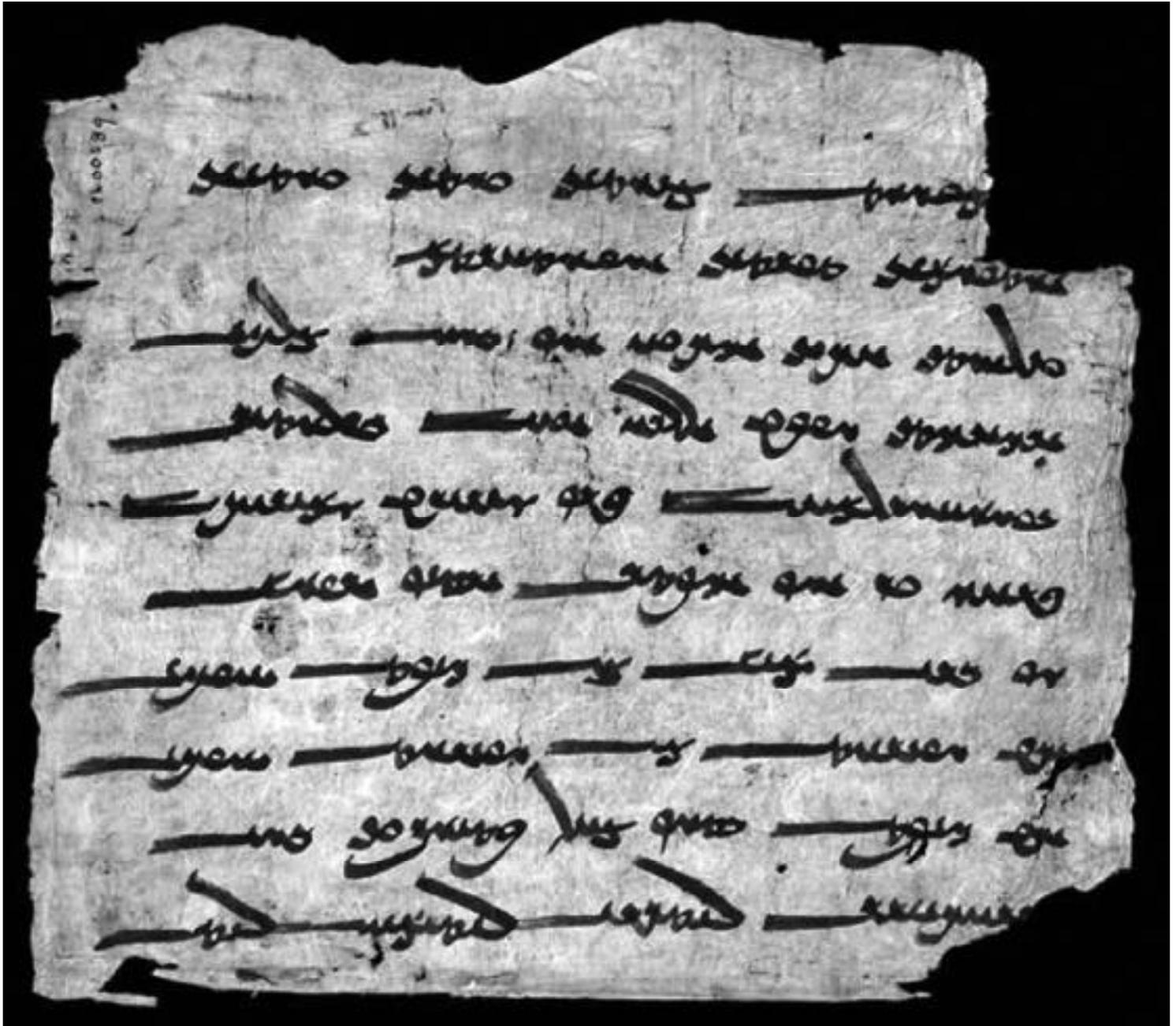
The fire was shifted from Sanjan in 1393 AD after Mahmood Ghaznavi had attacked India and descended on Sanjan. After a series of events, the fire was moved to Udwada in 1742.

Chairman of Gujarat Ecology Society, Hasmukh Shah says, "Because of global warming, there is an urgent need to be concerned about treasures all along Gujarat's coastline. Gujarat is looking at the coast for economic development and the agenda for protection of heritage properties, communities, fertile land should be part of the development agenda."

Latest on 7 June, TOI

... waters were not too far away from Iran Shah, where the Parsis have kept the Holy Fire at Udwada. ... 'The water has already reached near Dastoor Bag. One can see the water at the rear compound wall of Atash Behram. Generally this happens during the monsoon but this time, it has happened before the monsoon,' said local resident Shukkar Tandel at Udwada. ■■■

## Ashem Vohu prayer - 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century Sogdian manuscript



Zoroastrian prayer, the Ashem Vohu. Copyright © The British Library Board. All Rights Reserved. Or. 8212/84 (Ch.00289). Permission for reproduction given to Hamazor.

This 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century Sogdian manuscript from Dunhuang, China, contains a version of one of the holiest Zoroastrian prayers, the Ashem Vohu, composed originally in the Avestan (old Iranian) language. It is the oldest existing copy of a Zoroastrian scripture, written in Central Asia more than 300 years before any other surviving manuscript. All the others, such as the Avestan law book, the Videvdad, come from Iran and India and date from the end of the 13th century.

# The Jungalwalas of Gujarat

by sam kerr

**The** Second Annual Congress of the International AIDS Society was hosted by Sydney, Australia in July 2007. There was some sketchy and elementary news reported in the media, incomplete to my mind. Some of the unpleasant surprises in the news reports prompted me to probe into the present status of this subject matter. The data I was able to unearth was horrifying and this was only from the material I had gathered from countries that have a health service and/or a social infrastructure to assist patients suffering from this relentlessly progressive and potentially fatal disease - HIV AIDS. The plight of patients in countries, which have no organized and planned approach and no proper health service is a lot more than just horrifying - I am unable to find the appropriate word.

The disease **AIDS** became widely recognized as a new illness in early 1981. . The HIV blood test to confirm the disease was yet to be developed. When a laboratory test was made available the disease was renamed HIV AIDS. **HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)** is a 'retrovirus' - a single-stranded RNA virus that induces the formation of DNA using their own RNA as a template. The DNA is then incorporated into the genome of infected cells that often become cancer producing. Some viruses, such as the ones that cause the common cold or the flu, stay in the body only for a few days. The HIV stays on for life. When a person becomes infected with HIV, that person becomes "HIV positive" and will always remain HIV positive. After HIV enters the body, it holds on to the **white blood cells called 'CD4 lymphocytes' or 'T cells'** and works its way inside the cell. Once inside, the virus completely takes over the T cell and multiplies. The newly made viruses then leave the T cell and go on to infect and destroy other healthy T cells as they continue to multiply inside the body. After

the virus invades the T cells, they can no longer properly fight infections. Over time, the body is unable to fight off certain kinds of infections and cancers. In other words the body's immune system (which keeps it alive and healthy) is gradually eroded away.

With successful antiretroviral therapy, the body can remain healthy and fight off most viruses and bacteria. A reasonably healthy person usually has a CD4 count of between 600 and 1,200 (considered as a normal immune system). When the CD4 count drops below 200, a person's immune system is severely weakened. The patient exhibits severe symptoms of AIDS and is then diagnosed with **AIDS**, even if **the patient** has not become sick from other infections. **It can take up to 6 months to test positive for HIV after being exposed.** This is called the "window period." To be completely sure that one does not have HIV, one needs to be tested again in 6 months or twice 3 monthly, and continue to protect oneself. **AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)** is caused by the HIV. AIDS usually takes time to develop from the time a person acquires HIV. It can take weeks, months or years (in some cases 10 years or more) to develop AIDS after the HIV test becomes positive. Once a patient has been diagnosed with AIDS that patient will always be considered to have AIDS, even if the CD4 count goes up again and/or they recover from the disease that defined their AIDS diagnosis.

The names HIV and AIDS can be confusing because both terms describe the same disease. AIDS is really an advanced form of HIV disease. A person with AIDS has an immune system so weakened by the HIV virus that the person usually becomes sick from one of several **opportunistic infections or cancers** such as PCP (a type of pneumonia) or KS (Kaposi sarcoma), wasting syndrome (involuntary weight loss), memory impairment, or tuberculosis and

more recently a return of the old venereal diseases. If someone with HIV is diagnosed with one of these opportunistic infections (even if the CD4 count is above 200), he or she is said to have AIDS. At this time, there is no cure for HIV. But there is management available to help suppress the disease and prevent it or delay it from progressing to AIDS. Since this is the current reality, it is important that those people who are not infected with HIV stay negative and those living with HIV/AIDS stay healthy.

For people infected with HIV, drug development has helped to change the face of the disease. Whereas HIV infection once meant certain death, drug therapy has helped to prolong and improve the quality of life for many individuals. HIV is a retrovirus, so the medication used to negate the properties of the virus are called antiretroviral. There are many different types of Anti retroviral medications, but they all work by slowing the growth or inhibiting the multiplication of the virus. Although these drugs do not kill the virus, they effectively reduce the levels of HIV in the blood. Since there is currently no way to get rid of HIV from the body once someone is infected, most people with HIV will probably still have the virus when they die. It is possible to get HIV and live a normal, relatively healthy lifespan. HIV is often thought of as an incurable, fatal illness, and it certainly can be—especially once a person's immune system is weakened to the point symptoms of AIDS set in. Even without treatment, it can take up to 10 years for someone who gets HIV to develop AIDS. Some people get AIDS much more quickly, while others do not get it until much later.

Without supportive management, most people with HIV will eventually develop AIDS and die. In fact, most people with HIV in the world cannot afford the treatments that may allow them to stay healthy or live longer. Since 1996, improved medications for HIV have given many HIV-positive patients renewed hope. While the treatments are not a cure, they may help to keep people with HIV who are able to take them healthy for a long time. Some patients

may do well for many years. Others die in spite of full management. There is a great need for research to find new and better treatments for HIV, so that the disease will not threaten people's lives and cause so much suffering.

The first patients presented usually with a severe ulceration in his mouth, soreness in the throat and severe general debility. My first patient, a young staff member of our hospital was admitted urgently under me in early 1982. This patient showed extreme irritability and insisted I indicate to him what I thought was the diagnosis. During those early days, since the HIV Blood Test had not yet been developed it was difficult to arrive at the diagnosis with certainty. Whatever I knew about the disease at the time was from the media reports. The presence of multiple 'shotty' (ball-bearing like) neck lymph nodes, which could be felt was one observation from among many other diagnostic features, which he had. None of the blood tests and other pathology investigations pointed towards any known specific disease. In spite of all modern anti-infective treatment his condition deteriorated rapidly ending in a fatal outcome. Then, a series of such admissions into the Infectious Diseases Section of our University College Hospitals followed rapidly. They showed similar progress and outcome until equipment for the HIV test was available to help establish the diagnosis although the management of the disease remained the same - to give as much palliative relief as possible to allay the severity of the symptoms.

As I looked back at the problem of such relentlessly progressive infectious diseases during my undergraduate medical days more than 50 years ago I reflected on the plight of patients suffering from Syphilis, Gonorrhoea, Leprosy and other lesser ones - labeled collectively as Venereal Diseases. I realised that the management of their suffering was akin to that of the present HIV AIDS patients during their long, relentless and protracted course. There was only palliative symptomatic relief of some or most symptoms until the different

combination of medications slowly ceased to have their desirable effect or new medication and /or combinations were made available. The infective organisms learnt to become resistant to the chemical management at curbing the progress of the disease not unlike the present management of HIV AIDS with a cocktail of medication, which needs to be constantly monitored, updated, changed ... etc.

Here is where our entrepreneurial Zarathushtis possessing a working knowledge of chemical compounds and innovative skills stepped in. Recognizing the efficacy of a large number of chemical compounds and working through trial and error they embarked on the practice of allaying the suffering of these unfortunate patients. Since there was clearly no other alternative they were sought after as Specialist Physicians perhaps at some stage in the early 1900s or even earlier. They called themselves by their 'trade name' Jungalwala - pronounced 'Junglewala' incorrectly, the real pronunciation is Jungaal-wala. Our Professor of Gynae/Obstetrics, Dr Behram Jungalwala in my Medical College used to snap annoyingly when his name was mispronounced ("Don't call me Junglewala. I am not a Jungle").

They were highly successful Zarathushti practitioners (just like their counterparts, the Zarathushti 'Haadvaid's' - 'Bone Setters' were) in India who had 'taken up' the lucrative practice of medicine in the field of Venereal Diseases as specialist physicians. Their knowledge, clinical acumen and shrewd innovation of the trial of new compounds, was highly acclaimed. When resistant strains of the organisms were encountered (as in the case of the present HIV AIDS patients) they juggled with the various new compounds to try and overcome the hurdle. Their practice (again as that of the 'Haadvaid's') was passed on from father to son(s).

Like the present symptomatic management of HIV AIDS they helped suppress the disease symptoms and thus allay their patients' sufferings. The main scourge in

those days was from Syphilis and Gonorrhoea and also from other allied infectious diseases - Herpes, Leprosy etc. With subtle adjustments using a variety of chemical 'cocktails' to managed to make life bearable and even comfortable. Prior to the late 1800s and early 1900s Mercury Compounds were unsatisfactorily used. The improvement of the nasty symptoms was minimal or nil. They were replaced by, at first, Arsenic compounds. The Hindi word, Jungaal was initially limited to various Arsenic Compounds only. Initially, the Arsenic Compound dioxy-diamino-arsenobenzol-dihydro-chloride was used and claimed to be a specific for "syphilis". The new drug was called **Salvarsan**, since it was hoped it would prove the salvation of "syphilitics". An improvement helped create a better medication which was labeled **Neo-salvarsan**. This new Salvarsan was produced in an effort to avoid some of the disagreeable side actions of salvarsan. Two new ones - **arsphenamine** and **neo-arsphenamine** proved even better. **Fowler's solution** a patented remedy was a solution containing a 1% solution of potassium arsenite. Later, several other compounds of elements like Zinc, Bismuth ... etc were found to effective. The dosage, strength, combination of a number of these chemical medications and new additions were tried and their effect was constantly monitored with appreciable relief of symptoms in these grateful patients.

To the pessimists and the skeptics the axiom unfortunately persisted - "Once a syphilitic, always a syphilitic." However, with the ready availability of Penicillin after World War II Syphilis and Gonorrhoea were almost completely eradicated. Further, the chance discovery that Leprosy could be induced in the Mexican ant-eater, the Armadillo assisted research to make it possible to develop anti-leprosy medication. The development of effective and curative medication for Leprosy became a reality. The lucrative practice of the Jungalwalas, who helped sustain the quality of the lives of thousands of patients gradually waned and slowly fizzled away.

The tragedy now is that Syphilis and Gonorrhoea have come back with more vigour, mostly seen in patients in association with HIV AIDS. What is more the Penicillin and its broad spectrum derivatives and other modern antibiotics, which were once curative do not seem very effective against the above mentioned Venereal Disease even in those patients where the symptoms of the HIV AIDS with modern chemical drugs do improve. This observation is frightening, but there is always hope. If these patients can continue to survive with minimal symptoms perhaps one day an Alexander Fleming might well be born to present a treatment for cure.



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.

## Banaji Limji Agiary enters its 300th year

On 24 Apr 2008, Nauzer Bharucha wrote in the Times of India: For the past few centuries, they have been one of Mumbai's most important religious and architectural landmarks. On Thursday, the city's oldest Zoroastrian fire temple - the Banaji Limji agiary - enters its 300th year.

Tucked away in a side lane called Banaji Lane opposite the Akbarallys showroom, the ancient fire was consecrated in 1709 by Seth Banaji Limji, a prosperous Parsi businessman. "It is the oldest surviving agiary in Mumbai," said Parsi historian Marzban Giara. ...

Interestingly, the Banaji Limji fire temple came up almost three decades after the Towers of Silence at Malabar Hill - the resting place for the community's dead - were consecrated in 1672.

The fortress-like structure of the Limji agiary may be in the midst of the city's throbbing financial district, but the quiet lane in which it is located could give a faint glimpse of how the old Fort area may have looked like a few centuries ago.



## Paak Atash Behram Saheb of Navsari

Approximately two years ago a crack was discovered in the *gumbaj* (dome) of the Navasari Atashbehram. An architect was consulted, who suggested professional workers would have to be brought in to repair the dome. The Padshah would need to be shifted, having non Zoroastrians working in the area.

The Atash Padshah of an Atashbehram grade fire cannot be shifted as it breaks all the *Karsh* existent during consecration. Cyrus Siganporia and his team of Parsi volunteers were called from Mumbai to repair the *gumbaj* without shifting the Padshah or polluting it in any way. The work began under supervision of a Parsi architect. To everyone's amazement the crack filled up on its own! It is very likely that it could be due to the *bandagi* of a very pious priest of Navsari who stayed next to the Atashbehram having tremendous spiritual powers. [from the information sent by Afshad Mistri]

The Navsari Atashbehram is replete with many such incidences and Hamazor issue 3/08 hopes to carry some of these legends.



Iranshah fire temple at Udvada, 1909. Refer to page 10

## Mary Boyce Memorial Lecture: Professor Mary Boyce and the Quest for Zoroaster

A report by Farrokh Vajifdar

**Reflecting** its long association with Mary Boyce, late Professor Emerita of Iranian Studies at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies [SOAS], the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland [RAS] organized a Commemoration Lecture in respectful homage outlining her life and work. Held on March 13th 2008 in its lecture theatre at its new premises in Stephenson Way, NW1, the event was a befitting tribute.

The choice of speaker was in itself admirable and wholly appropriate: Francois de Blois, Fellow-in-Council of the RAS, Storey Fellow, and Lecturer in Middle Iranian languages at SOAS. It may be taken as read that, as one associated over the years with Professor Boyce, and in his own right a profound scholar with quietly challenging perspectives, de Blois was well grounded in his subject. A Cambridge resident himself, it was good to see several academics from that University town descend on the RAS to participate in this commemoration.

De Blois' well-constructed lecture was neatly spaced over the several aspects of Mary Boyce's engaging personality and prolific output. His was a balanced, authoritative and forthright presentation, satisfying in every way to the large appreciative audience. [A similar description would fit his lecture given at the WZO's June 2007 London Seminar on the Zoroastrian Calendar, in which study he has immersed himself over the years; those with long memories will also recall Mary Boyce's appearance at the 1984 WZO's London Congress with her paper, "The Gathas and the Tradition: Fidelity or Betrayal?"].

His lecture began with a brief account of Boyce's early life: born in Darjeeling, India (2nd August 1920), sent aged 2 to relatives in England, her early mentoring by Hector



Munro Chadwick, Professor of Anglo-Saxon Literature at Cambridge. There too she encountered Vladimir Minorsky, the aristocrat Russian professor of Persian Studies which no doubt explains her

early association with Iranian researches. She took her BA from Newnham College in Cambridge in 1943; in 1944, as Assistant Lecturer, she taught Anglo-Saxon Literature and Archaeology at the Royal Holloway College (University of London).

Her momentous meeting with Walter Bruno Henning, self-exiled from Germany with his Jewish wife Maria Polotsky, was to have the greatest repercussions on her academic life and love of Iranian languages and literature. Under Henning's strict supervision she embarked upon Manichean studies – Mani's system being an offshoot of Christianity imported by him into Iran at the coronation in 241 AD of Shapur I, and destined to infect and erode Sasanian Mazdaism and its new orthodoxy. [Curiously de Blois did not include Mazdaist, Buddhist, and very likely also Jainist, influences upon that widespread dualist religion].

De Blois devoted considerable space to Henning as Boyce's mentor, for he it was who urged her towards Manichean researches. Although superbly equipped for Zoroastrian studies, Henning, among the handful of brilliant students of the German savant F C Andreas, concentrated his

attention to the solution of several Iranian linguistic aspects, not least of which were provided by the finds of the several German/Prussian expeditions into Inner Asia during the first decade of the last century. Henning had before him the vast materials bequeathed him by Andreas who had died in 1930; he set to his task with his accustomed intellectual vigour, producing the three dauntingly difficult volumes titled *Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan*, ["Middle-Iranian Manichean materials from Chinese Turkestan"] published in 1932, 1933 and 1934.

Faced with the exacting standards of that demanding scholar who had taught Iranian Studies at SOAS, Boyce, who had been appointed Lecturer in Iranian Studies there, in turn enriched the world of Manichean studies with her thesis subject "The Manichaeic hymn-cycles in Parthian" (OUP, 1954). At Henning's suggestion, she prepared the famous Catalogue of the Iranian Manuscripts in Manichean Script in the German Turfan Collection (Berlin, 1960) which entailed several years of travel to Hamburg and Berlin to examine the originals at first hand and helping to identify and rearrange the precious fragments themselves. [This Catalogue was recently described to me as "forever invaluable" by Professor Werner Sundermann (Berlin) – himself a world-recognised authority on Manicheism]. In 1958 came her appointment as Reader in Iranian Studies at SOAS. Henning having moved in 1962 to Berkeley, California, Mary Boyce succeeded to the Professorship of Iranian Studies. Several illuminating articles on Persian and Parthian subjects followed, among which 'The Parthian gosan and Iranian minstrel tradition' (in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1957) holds pride of place for this reporter.

In 1975 appeared her Reader in Manichaeic Middle Persian and Parthian, with its companion Word-list ... volume (1977), indispensable for students and researchers alike. This writer well remembers attending some seminar sessions given by Francois de Blois at

SOAS where Boyce's work figured prominently.

Her great and abiding interest in Zoroastrianism had commenced some two decades before. In 1963-64 she stayed among the Zardushtis of Sharifabad on the Yazdi plain in central Iran, studying and recording the habits, customs and beliefs of these beleaguered groups of our hamdins. For the results of this remarkable research she was awarded the Richard Burton Gold Medal of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1972. In 1975 she gave the Ratanbai Katrak Lectures at Oxford based on her work in Iran; these were duly published in 1977 as *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, an engrossing study of that fading society from a time perhaps gone forever, supplemented by several articles on her observations there. De Blois stressed that Boyce herself made no claim to be an ethnographer.

Her most popular book was published in 1979: *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*. For newcomers to Zoroastrianism it may be rightly regarded as the best introduction to it in the English language, with its felicitously written chapters covering the entire history of the religion from its Founder to modern times. Her strange reasoning on Zarathushtra's date will no doubt continue to figure in the endless controversies surrounding it – the prophet himself was a product of the Stone Age (!), and one wonders just what he was supposed to have reformed. [In one of our occasional confrontations on such aspects, she could not clearly account for the wild swings in her dating estimates – anything from the sixth century BC to 1800, without giving any credible historical evidence for such shifts. At another time she persisted that all ritual could be traced back to the prophet himself – who was a dualist, and so on ...]

Despite this, Francois left the date question "very much open". Boyce's ideas on the Gathas were fairly examined by him in passing – they are situated in a historical vacuum and therefore have no historical context. Where it concerned dualism, of

which she had always been a strong proponent, her marginalisation of the Gathas and utilization of the Pahlavi sources led to her uncritical acceptance of some Iranian and Parsi formulations whose rituals were seen as coinciding with the Founder's teachings.

Mary Boyce's major work must be seen as the three substantial volumes of her History of Zoroastrianism (1975; 1982; 1991), with a fourth sadly uncompleted. Her vast energies here cannot be overstated, for every page is shot through with her personal commitment and enquiring attitudes of a truly great scholar. Yet this magnum opus is much under-utilized, and for all aspiring students and sharp-eyed researchers would well repay frequent consultation. [For our readers' information, her History was envisaged over seven volumes. She assured this writer that the good work would proceed under the very capable authorship of Professor Albert de Jong of Leiden University for whom she had the highest regard as scholar].

In the course of her researches she had made the acquaintance of and formed firm friendships with several Zardushtis, priest and lay, just as among the Parsis. Among the former was the greatly missed Jamshid Soroushian of Kerman (1914-1999) for whose commemoration volume *Atash-e dorun* she offered two articles, 'Some points of traditional observance and of change among the Zoroastrians of Kerman', and 'Preliminary note by Mary Boyce to Agha Humayoun Sanati's translation of her article "On the Calendar of Zoroastrian Feasts"'. As co-editor with Professor Carlo Cereti of that volume, the undersigned can vouch for the extreme responsibility with which she approached her writings. Her anxious 'phone calls and some post-mailed re-worked passages, careful annotations and amendments, all bear witness to a now vanishing breed of scholarship. De Blois remarked also on the fact that everything she wrote was in her own careful, elegant hand – she had no typewriter or word-processor, and her manuscripts were machined by a secretary. [My own lack of

computer know-how was put to the test, curiously, by Mary Boyce herself who was the first to introduce me to the term "web-site". Upon asking her what this was, she in turn asked "Don't you know what it is?" Hearing my confession of ignorance on all cyber-matters, she responded with "Oh Mr Vajifdar! I am so relieved to know that you do not know!" We had always retained formal modes of address, publicly or in camera.]

Professor Mary Boyce was a warm, friendly personality, ever ready to hear a differing view-point from hers with patience and disconcerting spells of silence before attempting reconciliation. I can vouch also, as did de Blois, for her open generosity and trust, and of course her pert, yet dignified humour. Herself sensitive and vulnerable to criticism, she could be scathing of others' opinions.

In closing, we must bring together Boyce and de Blois. Francois too had submitted an article for publication in the fore-mentioned Soroushian Volume: his excellent "The reform of the Zoroastrian Calendar in the year 375 of Yazdgird". Whilst discussing related matters, Mary Boyce declared it to me to be "a perfect gem of an article!" and its author to be "such a thoughtful man"! Who could have been better honoured with a nobler reference from such an edlere Frau?



### **Excerpt from CAIS - 10 April 2008**

What experts have warned and feared for the past few years about the humidity level at the world heritage site of Pasargadae after the inundation of Sivand dam, has now become a bitter reality as the humidity has risen to a dangerous level, and lichen funguses are growing over the body of the Cyrus the Great's Mausoleum.

Humidity which was previously unknown to the area is now easily felt. Members of the public and a number of associate members of various Friends of Cultural Heritage Societies who have visited Pasargadae and the Mausoleum during the Norouz holiday, said that the high humidity is apparent, and damp can be smelt for miles. ...

Currently some sections of the mausoleum which are in shade from the sun have crustose and foliose lichen funguses growing on them. Lichens when growing on stone surfaces slowly decomposes their structural property by chemically degrading them, ultimately contributing to a process that the stones gradually will turn into soil. ...

# Zoroastrianism: Rock, Paper & Spirituality - A ZAH Library Seminar

by magdalena rustomji

On April 12, 2008 the ZAH hosted a ZAH Library seminar titled, **Zoroastrianism: Rock, Paper and Spirituality** at the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center in Houston, Texas. The distinguished speakers for the event were Dr Almut Hintze, Dr Jennifer Rose and Dr Matthew Stolper. The event was made possible through the gracious financial support of FEZANA - Khorshed Jungalwala Lecture Series, the Zoroastrian Association of Houston, the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas and the Mehta Trust.

Aban Rustomji, Chair of the ZAH Library Committee gave the welcome message on Friday evening at a dinner honouring the speakers. Aban paid a tribute to Khorshed Jungalwala, an esteemed member of the Zoroastrian Community who died on May 12, 2007. FEZANA has established a lecture series to honour the memory and the exemplary life of Khorshed Jungalwala. Professor K D Irani was the first Khorshed Jungalwala Series Speaker in 2007 and Dr Almut Hintze is the Khorshed Jungalwala Series Speaker for 2008.

The Seminar, **Zoroastrianism: Rock, Paper, & Spirituality** began with Dr Almut Hintze presenting the session, **Zarathushtrótoma: Prophetic and Priestly Authority in Zoroastrianism**. Besides being the 2008 Khorshed Jungalwala Lecture Series Speaker, Dr Hintze was appointed the Zarthoshty Brothers Lecturer in Zoroastrianism. She is with the School of Oriental and Asian Studies at the University of London, UK. Almut Hintze is the daughter of a minister and it was her interest in languages and religions that led her to Zoroastrian studies.

Dr Hintze's first session was about Zarathustra's role as prophet, visionary and innovator. She spoke about Zoroastrianism as the religion revealed by God to a very special man, Zarathushtra. He came to know Ahura Mazda through the medium of good thought and the



Dr Almut Hintze

religion was revealed to him through his many consultations with Ahura Mazda. God afforded Zarathushtra good thought and through good thought, Zarathushtra was called into the service of Ahura Mazda.

Some concepts that Dr Hintze discussed in this session were:

- ◇ that Zarathushtra inaugurated a new religion and a Priestly tradition
- ◇ that Ahura Mazda created *all that is good*
- ◇ that lay followers may converse directly with God
- ◇ that women and children may be Priests (Dr Hintze stated that this is corroborated by archaeological findings)

Dr Hintze concluded by saying that the Priesthood is in an economic decline as well as a decline in the number of persons going into this tradition.



Dr Jennifer Rose

The second session, **Gods, Kings & Priests at the Crossroads - Rock Reliefs of Zoroastrian Iran** was presented by Dr Jennifer Rose. She is Associate

Professor, Claremont Graduate University and Visiting Associate Professor, Stanford University. Dr Rose began the session saying that the rock reliefs were in essence the carved stone billboards, a visual articulation of the time. Most of these rock reliefs were erected near ancient watering holes. Dr Jennifer Rose says that these reliefs “reach out to speak to us today” and that “These public proclamations can be seen as the *U Tubes* of yesterday”.

Dr Rose discussed some of the symbols, ideas, Principles carved in the stones, with a visual presentation:

**Symbols**

- ◇ Symbols of abundance
- ◇ Symbols of blessings as well as protection
- ◇ Examples of reciprocity (gift giving)
- ◇ Fish - symbol of life force
- ◇ Winged sky divinities
- ◇ Fire and fire holders

**Ideas and Principles expressed:**

- ◇ Respect for diversity of belief and purpose
- ◇ King as protector of all
- ◇ Victory over evil and enemies
- ◇ Expression of order
- ◇ Request for protection against famine and Request for *Divine* assistance
- ◇ Broad ethical perspectives such as request to defeat mortal enemies but also to defeat moral enemies such as, “*the lie*”
- ◇ Cardinal Principle of *ASHA*
- ◇ Defeat forces of chaos and destruction and establish social order (Ahura Mazda’s cosmic order)
- ◇ Combat with monsters (allegorical - forces of destruction); combat between forces of good/forces of evil
- ◇ Humanity is to: Drive out evil forces, Act straight, Do Good, and Behave with generosity

Some Rock Reliefs also have inscriptions such as,

*“A great God is Ahura Mazda  
who created the earth,  
who created yonder sky,  
who created humanity,*

*who created happiness for humanity  
and who made Darius King.”*



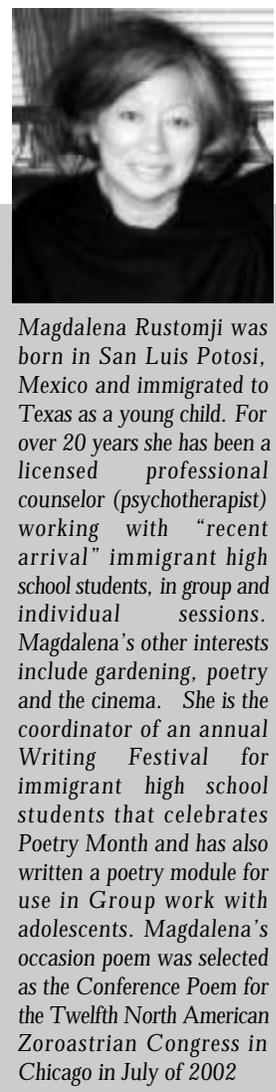
Dr Matthew Stolper

Dr Matthew Stolper, Professor of Assyriology and the John A Wilson Professor of Oriental Studies in the Oriental Institute presented the session, ***The Persepolis Fortification Archive Project: Steps in a Race to Record Unique Achaemenid Documents.***

In 1931 an expedition to Persepolis from the Oriental Institute

discovered tens of thousands of clay tablets and tablet fragments, near a fortification wall. In 1936, many of these tablets were brought to Chicago on loan for study. Dr Stolper and his team have spent decades studying the tablets and piecing together life in Achaemenid Iran. The tablets have been classified into four main kinds; Cuneiform in Pre-Iranian language, Aramaic, Miscellaneous (old Persian, coins), and broken fragments.

They include documents such as, records of storage, payment of food, an information system and inventories of poultry and wine. These clay information systems are “*Pieces of life*” and “have a depth reality of the ordinary” says Dr Stolper. They constitute the best contextualized form of information, names of Gods, imagery of worship. They are unique sources - isolated documents of this kind not only are a “spring of data, but are also an occasional source of complete surprises”. At this moment, they are so important because they are in peril of being seized and sold, and could then be lost forever. The Iranian government could also demand they be returned; either of these options could be catastrophic. Since the tablets are currently threatened in a complicated legal battle, it is important to learn as much as possible, about this treasure.



Magdalena Rustomji was born in San Luis Potosi, Mexico and immigrated to Texas as a young child. For over 20 years she has been a licensed professional counselor (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

Commenting on the status of the Project, Dr Stolper explained that the team is making notes, cataloguing, reproducing, labeling, tagging documents, and recording all the information. They also clean, preserve and conserve the tablets and find innovative ways of keeping photographic records. And finally, they make the information available on line. "The value of each piece is in the connection of all pieces," says Dr Stolper. The information gathered so far is very important. First of all, it appears that "life then was just as complicated as it is now," the clays help to see and study the historical condition of language, art, life of Princes as well as life of the workers. Also, he says, "language, literacy, ethnicity, identity were as just as important then as now." Dr Stolper says the tablets "are still talking to us" but because the integrity of the project is in peril, they are working under emergency conditions. Time and money are most important for the project, but also needed is a favourable court ruling to continue the work.

The Seminar's concluding session was ***Defeating Death: Eschatology in Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity*** delivered by Dr Almut Hintze. Eschatology is the doctrine of last things and deals with final events, both for individuals and for the universe. In this lecture, Dr Hintze shared from her research, how Zoroastrian ideas of eschatology were fully developed in Avesta and how they compare to those in Judaism and Christianity. This doctrine is important in Christianity, Islam, Jewish and the Zoroastrian religion. Before contact with the Persians, the concepts of *Judgment, Universe, Heaven/Hell, and the Redeemer* were not found in other religions.

Dr Hintze discussed some of the Basic Concepts in the Zoroastrian Religion:

- ✧ Ahura Mazda is the Creator of ALL that is GOOD and only that which is GOOD
- ✧ Ahura Mazda is the Creator of the Spiritual (truth, right mindedness, goodness) and the Material (wind, earth, sky)
- ✧ All evil is from an external source; it can only latch to the material, not the spiritual

- ✧ There are two types of *Thought*, there are two types of *Words*, there are two types of *Actions* and they are, the *BETTER* and the *evil*
- ✧ People are to choose that which is *GOOD*
- ✧ Human beings are Ahura Mazda's Co-Workers, supporters, friends, helpers and are equipped with moral and intellectual faculty
- ✧ Human beings can strengthen Ahura Mazda and *HIS* course
- ✧ When physical life is over, humans will either unite with Ahura Mazda in *House of Welcome* or else go to the *House of Deceit*
- ✧ At the end of time, there will be a final battle between the forces of good and evil; the World will be made fresher, more wonderful at the end of time

**Shared Components of the Eschatological Myths**(components are shared but each religion has different explanations, since the concept of God is different in each):

1. Arrival of Saviour
2. Resurrection
3. Judgment
4. Defeat of dragon, battle
5. New Life in Bliss (New World where there is freedom from evil, pain)

Dr Hintze said that these ideas in the *Doctrine of Eschatology* were not in isolation but filtered from one group through another in daily discourse, in their interactions, and were passed from one generation to the next. The Zoroastrian ideas would have spread and thereby would certainly have influenced the concepts in other religions.

The day long Seminar, *Zoroastrianism: Rock, Paper, & Spirituality* was presented to an audience of about one hundred twenty persons including the ZAH Community, members of the greater Houston Community and out of town guests. The Seminar was inspiring, edifying, and the speakers, each one from his/her perspective took the audience on a journey to the past. In the words of Alexis de Tocqueville,

**When the past no longer illuminates the future, the spirit walks in darkness.**



# Gathas to Governance

by kersi limithwalla

**How** often have we responded with a broad smile and a very willing nod when asked “Are you Parsi?” And how often have we considered with elation, why we are a preferred lot? – socially, culturally, businesswise, or otherwise. We could ascribe various reasons or may pass in the words of Moses “I am what I am”.

According to Zoroastrian philosophy the road to salvation winds through the market place and not through as asceticism. We belong to a religion of action or as understood in India, Karma Yog. Our religion has a grounding in righteous action or the path of Asha. *“May the good man, who shows us the righteous path which brings profit, whether in this world or the next, enjoy the greatest of good”.* (Yasna XLIII.3- Ushtavad Gatha).

It’s a religion that has given roots to modern day Corporate Governance - of fairness, accountability, transparency where work ethics play a central role. Our highly efficacious prayer Ahura Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo) gives a lot of emphasis to philosophy of work (Shyaothananam). It is on recitation of this word that the two front knots of the kusti are tied. Everyone works, but the manner in which we discharge it makes all the difference.

## PHILOSOPHY OF WORK

According to the *Visparad XV.1* “Industry and self help paves the way for a life of honour and self respect”. A closer look at the philosophy of work reveals that in order to do justice to the job on hand, one must first acquire the necessary skill, expertise and knowledge, otherwise the results could be disappointing. Having done that, one needs to back it with concentration and consistency. The impatience to reap the fruits before they have ripened is a common trait and needs to be guarded against. The dictum “you get, what you deserve” has to be always unquestionably respected. Socrates’ daily prayer was “O God give me whatever you think is good for me”. A simple approach of faith and surrender that can add so much meaning and value to philosophy of work.

A benevolent attitude makes work sacred, that is why we say, “Work is Worship”. To provide for yourself and your family is the beginning not the end of work. The obligation to pay back to society and the environment from which you have drawn so much needs to be remembered. This is

more often than not forgotten. A sense of gratitude and appreciation that your efforts could have been reduced to nought had it not been for the wonderful support system all around which functions with such precision and about which we remain totally oblivious - everything taken for granted. According to the well known Zoroastrian Scholar Jivanji Modi “Generating wealth out of honest labour is a legitimate desire and is welcome. There is a joy in generally this type of wealth. However generating wealth should not be the end purpose of all our work and industry. There has to be a higher and noble purpose behind one’s executions in life”. And finally not to forget an important lesson from history on the downfall of the Great King Jamsheed – to learn to handle success with humility.

## VALUE SYSTEM

Corporate Governance is all about conducting the affairs of a corporation in consonance with globally accepted business standards and work ethics that instill confidence, trust and a comfort level

to all who deal with the company – shareholders, customers, employees, creditors, statutory and non-statutory agencies and society at large. Since we do not stay in a utopia, regulatory measures in the form of reporting, disclosures and approval have become necessary for good governance. Innumerable committees have been set up over the years and periodic regulatory measures introduced but financial crisis strike the corporate world with disastrous effect like a periodic cyclone without any forewarning - the most recent being the subprime crisis in the US. After a lot of casualty new regulatory measures will again be introduced but like in the past it will blow over and soon forgotten till the next calamity.

So where does all this exercise for good corporate governance lead us to? Ultimately it is the inherent value systems and culture in the organization which sorts out the spotless diamond from the rest. That does not mean we do not have our dark spots. We have our share. But the rest that shine in the galaxy have created a brand equity of INTEGRITY which we proudly like to embrace. *“May good kings rule over us with wisdom. May bad kings never rule over us”* (Yasna X6 VIII.5- Spentomad Gatha).

When we refer to Corporate Governance what we are concerned about is governance per se, whether it be the state or a corporation or for that matter an Irani chai shop or an NGO. Although there are several definitions of ‘governance’, what has evolved is ethical management from an authoritative position. At the core of governance is an individual or a group of individuals. Regardless of our economic strata we all exercise some level of governance whether it be at a personal level, business, social or otherwise, from the position that we occupy, no matter how insignificant it may be. When governance stems from power, authority or position that we occupy, we may discharge it in a benevolent manner or abuse it. We may or may not be questioned for our manner of functioning or decision making. But that does not morally absolve us of our obligation.

## EXEMPLARY CONDUCT

So for effective and good governance the starting point is self. Before we start exercising our authority on anyone, we must impose it on our self. Be analytical and critical of ourself to the point of being harsh, if we are serious of instilling some self discipline.

*“Ahura Mazda, The Beneficent, created prosperity for the world and discipline for the righteous”* (Yasna XXVIII.7 Ahunavad Gatha). The best form of governance emanates from exemplary conduct. It is the strongest and most infallible mode of sending a message all around. We are respected for the manner in which we conduct our self because the manner in which we manage our organization then automatically follows. This is what management gurus call Inner Engineering. The necessity therefore, to recognize inner governance vis-à-vis the superfluous external governance for it is the inner governance which is responsible for the quality of external governance.

Ratan Tata does not feature in the often published Billionaires List. He is no where near the Ambanis and Mittals in terms of wealth. The size of his organization is smaller than international contemporaries, but his group has been rated the worlds third most accountable and transparent by Britain’s One World Trust after GE and Glaxo. This is what corporate governance is all about. No plethora of statutory regulation can instill the level of ethics and standards that a corporation voluntarily pursues. This indeed is the true wealth of a corporation which ultimately brings contentment and happiness. Some governments recognise and give priority to this new concept of Gross Domestic Happiness in addition to Gross Domestic Product where the quotient of contentment and happiness is at a premium to material prosperity.

*“O Ahura Mazda ! May I approach Thee through my good mind. Grant me, through righteousness, the gifts of both the worlds – the corporeal world and the spiritual world – gifts by which can be obtained the joy-giving*

*happiness” (Yasna XXVIII-2 Ahunavad Gatha).*

**DIVINE LAW**

We need to remember the words of Pierre Teilhard, a French philosopher that, *“We are not physical beings having spiritual experience but spiritual beings have physical experience”*. The Gathas are replete with standards and codes for self regulation. The path of righteousness, the benevolence of the good mind, the strength of selfless service, unflinching faith in Ahura’s law, pursuit of excellence and the immortality of the divine spirit in each one of us. If we could live by it, it would propel us to the pinnacle of any human endeavour. But we conveniently compartmentalize religion from day to day living. We restrict it to a daily mechanical ritual of anything between five minutes to an hour depending on our level of tolerance and quantum of reward sought and prefer to function in a totally different realm for the rest of the day. We do not realize that the message of the scriptures has to be lived round the clock. It is a full time awareness of truth, not a part time past time. That is why S T Colendge has said, *“of all mental exercise earnest prayer in the most severe”*.

The awareness and recognition of “Corporate Social Responsibility” is of recent origin but the moral obligation towards workers, society and environment have always been there. In 1902 Jamshedji Tata wrote from the US to his son Dorab who was looking after the Jamshedpur project, *“Be sure to lay wide streets planted with shady trees ... Be sure there is plenty of space for lawns and gardens ... Reserve large areas for football, hockey and parks. Earmark areas for Hindu temples, Mohammedan mosques and Christian churches.”* Such rendering cannot come from any regulatory stipulation but flows from selfless love for Ahura and His creation from a liberal interpretation of Zarathustra’s message.

*“May we be surely like those (of our predecessors), who made this world*

*prosperous. May the chosen leaders of Mazda be helpers and supporters (of the world)”*. (Yasna XXX.9 Ahunavad Gatha).

Note:

Quotes from the Gathas have been translated by Ervad Dr Ramyar Karanjia from the gujarati translation of K E Kanga.



*Kersi Limathwalla is a Senior Practicing Chartered Accountant. He is Vice-President of the International Board of the World Zarathusti Chamber of Commerce and on World Zoroastrian Organization’s International Board.*

**Recognition for Dr Morawala-Patell**

**Dr** Villoo Morawala-Patell was awarded the Officier de L’Ordre National du Merite on 23 April. The National Order of Merit is an Order of Chivalry awarded by the President of the French Republic.

The citation reads: “This award acknowledges your great merits as a prominent figure in the scientific field in the entrepreneurship of your country, as the creator of Avesthagen, a major company in India in the area of biotechnologies. It is also a tribute to your cooperation with French scientists, your numerous and fruitful partnerships with major French industrial firms, and to the affection you have on many occasions expressed for our country.”

Dr Patell is a combination of Scientist and Businesswoman. With the desire to drive the development of research in Life Sciences, she founded Avesthagen to promote a sustainable innovation platform for the Nation. [Hamazor highlighted her work in Issue 2/07 pp47-48 : Issue 1/08 p21]



## Rusi Gandhi



**Rusi** Gandhi received RE/MAX's 100% Club Circle of Excellence Award in the first quarter of 2008. Celebrations for the Award were held in February in Atlantic City. Real estate is developing as never before around the world and Rusi gives strong voice to this trend.

Gandhi offered prospects for global industry growth as he was inaugurated as a WZCC (World Chamber of Commerce) World Director in Mumbai's 2007 AGM meeting. Speaking to about 200 attendees, Rusi outlined six major initiatives for India's real estate industry. Subsequent to his remarks, young real estate entrepreneurs from across the world flocked to his kitchen table for a wise word or two about their dreams and ambitions.

Recently, Rusi concluded a seven-figure commercial property deal for acquisition of a thriving business and its real estate. Commercial deals remain more active at present than residential deals: a lively deal for a multi-million scientific testing laboratory is on Rusi's desk now.

Man of action, man of thought, Rusi confers with leading economic and financial thinkers. In a gathering addressed by the eminent economist John B Taylor, 2001-2005 US Treasury Under Secretary for International Affairs, Rusi discussed the state of America's housing market. He also discussed India's housing industry with a senior executive from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and developer of India's future exchanges.

Rusi is a member of the International Real Estate Federation, FIABCI, which allows him to buy and sell property in 62 foreign countries. His worldwide travel as a World Director for the WZCC helps in building North American and international associations. ■■■■

## Matthew Amroliwalla - BBCs anchorman

**Matthew** Amroliwalla's clean cut looks match his clean cut announcement of the Queen's English, every night on BBC News 24. Were it not for his telltale surname, we Parsis would not have an inkling that he is one of our own.

Born in Leeds in 1962, he is one of Fredoon and Coomie Amroliwalla's three children. While his career as a reporter has taken him to far off places, Matthew was no stranger to travel when he joined the BBC: Air Commodore Fredoon Amroliwalla's RAF career meant that the family travelled extensively.

Matthew ('Mehran' to his family) started his career as a free-lance journalist for the United Nations Journal, after graduating in Politics and Law from Caius College, Durham. He obtained a Diploma in TV & Radio Broadcasting from Falmouth and trained with BBC local radio and with BBC regional and national television.

He made documentaries on South Africa and on Asian Doctors in the NHS and won an Award as the most promising young journalist.

He reported from Ireland during the "troubles" and from Bosnia during the war. He was at the siege of WACO, Texas, and reported from several other crisis zones before settling as a studio-base newscaster more than a decade ago.

After reading the news on BBC's various channels including the World Service, he has settled as an Anchorman on BBC News 24 with a monthly appearance on BBC's 'Crimewatch' programme.

Married to Jackie Long Amroliwalla, also a journalist on BBC 2's Newsnight, they live in London and have four children. Once a very good cricketer, tennis and squash player, he now contents himself with more family based activities. ■■■■





## Parsi-Zoroastrian Olympic Games Torchbearer

**Minoo** Saher is currently the Group Chief Executive Officer of Mustafa Sultan Enterprises LLC, a leading Omani group and amongst other things represent Samsung who are the worldwide sponsors of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

Is Mr Saher the first Zoroastrian to be a torchbearer for the Olympic Games? We don't know the answer, but right now this is an achievement for our community.

Mr Saher shares with Hamazor his experience as being a Zoroastrian Olympic Games Torchbearer.

"I was singularly fortunate to be carrying the Olympic Torch in Oman. I was approached a few months back by Samsung, who are one of the sponsors, informing me that I was selected to be a Torchbearer in Oman and asked for my CV. Initially, I took it quite causally not fully realizing what a huge opportunity had presented itself to me. It was only with each passing stage of preparing for the relay that the magnitude of the event got to me and of course, the actual experience was even more profound.

What an uplifting experience it was! Considering that fire is the purest of all elements of nature, I had a personal experience of its unique quality of spreading harmony and peace around the world. I had heard of the spirit of the Olympic flame uniting the people of the world and I am glad to have experienced it when I was running with the Torch.

Oman is certainly Gulf's best kept secret in terms of its natural beauty, ecological cleanliness and genuine hospitality of the Omani people and this one event has probably, in a flash, put Oman on the world map for those who saw the coverage.

The Relay was held on 14th April and unlike many other countries that the Torch passed through having incidents emanating out of the Tibetan protests, the Oman leg was very



peaceful and saw many cheering crowds participate with enthusiasm and gaiety.

I am so glad that the Olympic Committee, as a gesture of goodwill gifted us the Torch we ran with - a prized possession for me and my family."

When asked what was the criteria for selection, Saher replied, "I am not very sure of the selection criterion that was applied, but of the six Torchbearers that Samsung selected, four were celebrities from across the Middle East and two of us were representing the Corporate world. In all, 80 Torchbearers covered a distance of 30 kms in Oman." ■■■■



The torch is 72 centimetres high, weighs 980 grams and is made of aluminium. It is of a curved surface form, with etching and anodizing being used during its production. A torch can usually keep burning for approx 15 minutes in conditions where the flame is 25 to 30 centimetres high. It has been produced to withstand winds of up to 65 kilometres per hour and to stay alight in rain up to 50mm an hour. The torch of the Beijing Olympic Games has a very strong Chinese flavour. It also conveys the message of a Green Olympics, a High-tech Olympics and the People's Olympics. The shape of the paper scroll and the lucky clouds graphic expresses the idea of harmony.

## International Women's Day

by dolly dastoor

**“It is not so much a woman’s duty to bring children into the world, as to see what sort of world she is bringing them into and what their contribution will be to it” - Nellie McClung, 1915**

**The** United Nations, in 1977 proclaimed March 8 as the International Women’s Day and it is an occasion marked by women’s groups around the world. Women on all continents, often divided by national boundaries and by ethnic, linguistic, cultural economic and political differences come together to celebrate their day. They can look back to a tradition that represents at least nine decades of struggle for equality, justice peace and development.

International Women’ Day is the story of ordinary women as makers of history. It is rooted in the centuries-old struggle of women to participate in society on an equal footing with men. In ancient Greece, Lysistrata initiated a sexual strike against men in order to end war, during the French Revolution, Parisian women calling for “liberty, equality, fraternity” marched on Versailles to demand women’s rights to vote.

The idea of an International Women’s Day first arose at the turn of the century, which in an industrialized world was a period of expansion in turbulence, booming population growth and radical ideologies. The first National Women’s day was established by a group of socialist women in the United States in 1908. This act inspired an international event.

In Canada the women did not have a right to vote till 1929 as women were “not considered persons”. They were considered to be persons only “in matters of pain and penalties but were not considered persons in matter of rights and privileges”. The British Privy Council on October 18, 1929 recognized women as “persons”



“No more, enough is enough” - painting by Jeroo Roy, shared by her with Hamazor especially for this article. Jeroo is an artist with a cause - fighting for the rights of women & children.

further stating "The exclusion of women from all public offices is a relic of days more barbarous than ours". This ruling gave women the right to be persons.

Today for most of us reading this we cannot even imagine those times. But for many, many women and girls across the world violence is a fact of life, violence only because of their gender. Rape and sexual assault has become a weapon of war, there has been no other time in history when there have been more widows as a result of armed conflict. HIV/AIDS now has a woman's face.

At the opening of the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Ban Ki-Moon, the Secretary General, launched a **global campaign** to end violence against women and said "I am counting on you - advocates from Government, civil society and the UN - to carry our message around the world. In this campaign, I will personally approach world leaders to spur action through national campaigns. I will urge all States to review applicable laws, and to revise them or enact new ones to ensure that violence against women is always criminalized. And I will call on all States to enforce their laws to end impunity.

"I will form a global network of male leaders to assist me in mobilizing men and boys – men in Government, men in the arts and sports, men in business, men in the religious sphere, men in every walk of life, who know what leadership truly means.

"There is no blanket approach to fighting violence against women. What works in one country may not lead to desired results in another. Each nation must devise its own strategy. But there is one universal truth, applicable to all countries, cultures and communities: **violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable.**

"Today's weapons of armed conflict include rape, sexual violence, and the abduction of children conscripted as soldiers or forced

into sexual slavery. On my visits to conflict-torn areas around the world, I have spoken with women who have endured horrific forms of violence. I will forever be haunted by their suffering - but equally, I will always be inspired by their courage. These mothers, sisters, daughters and friends are determined to reclaim their lives.

**"This is a campaign for them.** It is a campaign for the women and girls who have the right to live free of violence, today and in the future. It is a campaign to stop the untold cost that violence against women inflicts on all humankind."

He called on the Security Council to establish a mechanism dedicated to monitoring violence against women and girls, under the framework of resolution 1325, the landmark resolution on women, peace and security adopted by the Security Council seven years ago.

He ended by asking all in the Assembly to pledge with him: United We Shall Succeed.

**The International Women's day 2008 is dedicated to Investing in Women and Girls. "Achieving gender equality and empowering women is a goal in itself. When women are fully empowered and engaged all of society benefits. Only in this way can we successfully take on the enormous challenge confronting our world - from conflict resolution and peace building to fighting AIDS and reaching all the other Millennium Developmental Goals" - Ban-Ki-Moon UN, Secretary General.**



Dolly Dastoor PhD, Editor of FEZANA Journal, 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. She is currently the Governor, 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.



# Feisty Females and Fiery Foundations: the AIMZ - ARZ alliance

by farrokh vajifdar

[In this cyber-age when annoying acronyms are increasingly fashionable, all readers – pious folk, professionals, protestants and prim activists, are urged to especially make note of these two: AIMZ and ARZ, for they are assuming a major importance in our Zoroastrian affections world-wide].

**Out** of tragedies come forth crises, and crises concentrate minds. It took the tragic death in a car accident of a life-loving young married Zoroastrian mother to spark off crisis situations. And, given the facts of this extraordinary case, quite a few minds were stretched in its aftermath with revaluations and resolutions.

The bare facts were these: the young lady victim was Roxan Darshan Shah, the *navjote*-d daughter of professional Zoroastrian parents; she was outmarried – to a respected Hindu, by whom she had two children; her happy, healthy life was cut horribly short in her early twenties by a road-side catastrophe in 1990.

What developed was even more horrific. In pious Parsi fashion and wholly in keeping with Zoroastrian precepts, her remains were transported to the Mumbai *dakhma*-s for exposure, according to traditional requirements. Once there, it was roughly refused admittance by Tower authorities at Mumbai's Malabar Hill Doongerwadi on the instruction of the then Chairman of the Bombay (Mumbai) Parsi Panchayat [BPP], assuredly with the collusion of his fellow trustees.

The reasons given were obscure to the point of obfuscation. Indeed, darkness seemed to have informed the BPP in its irrational and clearly irreligious logic. For, they blustered, the deceased had in life been married to a non-Parsi, an act which automatically prohibited her from being a Zoroastrian, and through that default, from attending any or all Parsi religious institutions, festivities, and functions. [This is not the place to comment on what the

BPP considers to be Zoroastrianism, or on who can(not) be a Zoroastrian!]. Such arbitrary ban had earlier extended to her husband and her children.

Her marriage to her Hindu husband had been contracted under the Special Marriage Act (1952), and she had, additionally to her marriage vows, performed the traditional *Indian* ritual circuit of the *Saptapada* around the sacred fire (which in both Parsi and Hindu usage is symbolic of Truth and Order, construed as Openness and Constancy). Parsis call these circumambulations *fera*-s. May it be noted that *at no stage had she implicitly renounced her Zoroastrian faith*, neither by act of repudiation nor by public declaration. She had remained steadfastly Zoroastrian throughout her short life; from first *nahn* to her last. What we also conveniently forget is that our *ashirwad* (from the Hindu word for "benedictions") ceremonies are heavily imprinted with Hindu formulations and customs.

Enter the Parsi priest Firoze M P Kotwal, then incumbent to the *gadi* at the H B Wadia Atash-bahram, Mumbai. That prelate, professing the *Mazdayasno Zarathushtrish* – the Mazda-worshipping faith of Zarathushtra, decided to chime in with a felicitatory message (i.e., *not* a note of condolence!) to the Doongerwadi authorities that began with "*I was very happy ...*" (!) that Roxan's remains had been turned away from her religiously inculcated last resting-place. Furthermore, he adduced that as an out-married Parsi female, her status as Zoroastrian was nullified; out-married Parsi males, however, do not forfeit their religious status!

Let us be very clear on his blatant manipulation of Zarathushtra's religion: in

the teachings of our Mazda-worshipping Founder, specifically in his Gathic Yasna 46.10, he assures *both men and women*, that through their adherence to Mazda's precepts of Truth and Good Thought, he, Zarathushtra, will guide them all over the Bridge of the Separator – the *Chinvat peretu*. No authentic religious text ever countenanced gender difference, and once initiated into the faith, no one, neither priest nor preacher could divest him/her of their freely accepted faith and beliefs. Kotwal should also have taken note of the following stanza (Ys.46.11) which condemns the false priest and practitioner to the House of Deceit for all time!

Ambivalencies abound: Kotwal was elevated to the High-priestly *gadi* in a temple of the highest grade, one of whose trustees was known to be outmarried; In objecting to Roxan's religious status as Zoroastrian, he himself effectively participated in her denunciation whilst within a mixed-marriage driven institution; in the priest-composed *Vendidad/Vidaevodata*, the exhumed remains of men and dogs are to be exposed within *dakhma*-s, and by extension, the remains of all deceased persons, regardless of creed and colour; also in the *Vendidad*, it is enjoined that recourse to prostitutes is a punishable sin – Kotwal is on record as declaring that out-married women are prostitutes and adulteresses, and their children are born into bastardy, although nowhere in our texts do we find such a hate-filled farrago of unZoroastrian nonsense. Had he really studied the attitudes of his priestly ancestors, he would have known that when a Zoroastrian fathers a child illicitly on a woman of alien religion, he is responsible for educating and inducting the child into the Mazdayasnian faith. Kotwal had actively generated cold hatred and deep divisions among our dispersed communities, abetted by maverick preachers, ill-educated priests, and religiously illiterate lay people.

It is against this hate-filled background that our out-married Zoroastrian ladies formed their Association of Inter-married

Zoroastrians [AIMZ] to combat these discriminatory acts against their persons and families. They have thereby boldly asserted their inviolable birthright to pray at all religious institutions, attend all religious ceremonies and functions, and to secure similar rights for their children. Having recourse to the Law was their only lever against the deceivers and towards family cohesion and community solidarity. They sought the help of Parsi Zoroastrian legal luminaries. The names of the activists Mrs Freny Ponda, Meher Amersey, and Smita Crishna Godrej, to name but a few, together with the renowned jurists S R Vakil (who even suggested criminal proceedings be taken against Kotwal!), and Rustom Gagrut who arranged meetings of our feisty ladies with the BPP trustees, none of these should go unrecorded.

What was recorded was the abrasive, insult-laden atmosphere generated by the so-called bastions – more like betrayers! – of the faith and their acolytes. The petitioning ladies were brusquely told to build their own *dakhma*-s and *agya*-s; yet the meeting allowed that there were no bars against the admittance of out- or inter-married ladies to either Temple or Tower as their inalienable birthright. The AIMZ draft (on which this article is based for certain details) fulsomely acknowledges the impartial and knowledgeable help of the New York based Professor Kaikhosrov Irani. It resulted in that the Law of the Land prevailed with respect to out-married Zoroastrian ladies, and the fear-driven objections of the religious illiterates were exposed for what they really were!

Also gratefully acknowledged must be the singular endeavours of Messrs Rustom Gagrut, the lawyer-priest Berjis M. Desai, and Burzy Manekshaw in bringing out the formation of the AIMZ as an established ginger-group entity. Their success must be seen as the victory of Reason over Irrationality, not over the Religion, despite its wilful misrepresentation by those who were entrusted with its welfare and progress. Our Religion was in fact vindicated.

What was seen by the AIMZ as their breakthrough was that the remains of deceased out-marrieds could be consigned to the *chotra dakhma* after the necessary affidavits had been obtained from their surviving families, but without subvention from the Doongerwadi authorities. To this writer who, with sound religious reasons, objects to the Mumbai *dakhma*-s' continued use on grounds of unhygienic processes, this victory represents no less than the reassertion by either sex of one's Zoroastrian birthright, whether availing of it or not.

It however became equally clear that the deep-seated gender discrimination clauses persisted, for whereas affidavits for electoral candidacies were required of the ladies, none was deemed necessary for the (successful) out-married male! The gender prejudice it was that prevailed, and not so much the Law of the Land!

Acceptance of the children born to out-married Zoroastrian mothers, their subsequent *navjote*-s, and their full rights proved no less an obstacle. The BPP trustees when approached on this matter displayed their well-cultivated temporizing expertise (as indeed had those of an earlier generation over the Unified Calendar issue!) by suggesting settlement through Court appearances, knowing that there too would be foot-dragging and stalling tactics. The AIMZ's unselfish struggle was always to be frustratingly up-hill.

The gloom over this sorry state of things began to lift in 2006 with the Colaba Agyari trustee Byram Jeejeebhoy's permission for their *navjote* and wedding receptions, but not the actual ceremonies, to be held for the out-marrieds in its Bagh or open precinct.

The current year 2008 is firstly remarkable for the scientific *obiter dictum* of the Learned Judge Dr Radhakrishna's Court reflections, during the Universal Adult Franchise hearing, on the regressive attitudes of a supposedly progressive Parsi community with respect to their out-married ladies. The 23-chromosomic make-up of

each parent would, he recalled, in itself constitute a logical refutation of this absurd discrimination. It is reliably reported that the Counsel for the Defence, a Mr Tulzapurkar, unsurprisingly offered no meaningful rejoinder!

We now introduce yet another organization, the Association for the Revival of Zoroastrianism [ARZ]. Founded by two professional Parsi Zoroastrians, the brothers Kerssie and Vispy Wadia, it was augmented with four other like-minded Parsis to counter and ultimately banish the gremlins of Fear and Ignorance amongst the untutored sectors of our communities of Mumbai and elsewhere on the sub-continent. It has boldly proclaimed its broad-based agenda and has actively co-operated with the AIMZ programmes in establishing prayer venues for the "non-conformists". We hope to see many more such joint ventures in future.

There being no question of "conversion" but one of acceptance, the ARZ has widened its horizons to include out-married Zoroastrian spouses and their children at all ceremonies, now supervised by officiating priests who are broad-minded enough to show no objection against their presence on such occasions. Indeed they are in every sense true *Mazdayasno Zarathushtrish*, honouring their calling as priests of Ahura Mazda with pious purpose and spiritual integrity. They have extended their religious net over the many poor villages and hamlets of South Gujarat, securing for the faith their much needed provincial support.

The usual absurdly contradictory arguments have surfaced among the pretenders to orthodoxy (this writer prefers the realist term *dhongidoxxy*) who had initially urged the out-marrieds to worship at their separated fire-temples and get exposed on their own *dakhma*-s. Now that the former is becoming a reality through the munificent gift of 15,000 sq. ft. of land for a Unified Fire Temple at Goregaon, some kilometres north of Bombay island, their fury and derisory

**Persons desiring to contact these two associations, details are:**

AIMZ – Meher Amersey [President], Laburnum House, Laburnum Rd, Gamdevi, Mumbai 400 007, India.  
E m a i l : meharsh@vsnl.com or milton1@vsnl.net  
Tel:+91 22 23802549  
M o b : + 9 1 2 2 9820085910  
ARZ – Kerssie or Vispy Wadia, 4 Mahalaxmi Bldg, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Maruti Lane, Fort, Mumbai 400 001, India.  
Registered Charity under Sec. 80G of the Income Tax Act.  
E m a i l : arzmumbai@yahoo.com  
Tel: +91 22 22613288, +91 22 22626374 Fax: +91 22 22694199 Mob: 9 8 2 1 0 4 1 4 3 7 , 9821346601

reactions have burst their bounds, and doubtless a good few blood-vessels.

It would, however, be dangerous at this stage to relapse into some comfortable complacency, and it is to be hoped that AIMZ and ARZ will present a united front to combat the ever-present ill-will and counter-productivity of the *dhongi*-s who now see themselves deprived of their targets and their control-freakery. May these new organizations retain their vigour to fully attain to their objectives. One way is through structured study courses, seminars, and social get-togethers, keeping abreast with developments and apace with the times. (It was good to learn that our truly Zoroastrian activists Mrs Dina McIntyre and Dr Kersey Antia from the United States have visited the AIMZ-ARZ membership and given well-planned lectures and discussions – these are excellent starters!)

The approaching *hamazori* through good sense and pious purpose augurs well for the beleaguered out-marrieds. It would be best not to keep looking backwards but to build towards a bright and Light-filled



*Farrokh Vajifdar comes from a sensibly orthodox priestly family. Life-long student and independent researcher in Indo-Iranian cultures. Specializes in literature and languages of pre-Islamic Iran. Focuses on Zoroastrian religious beliefs and practices on which he writes, lectures, and broadcasts (radio and TV). He is referee and reviewer for (as Fellow of) the Royal Asiatic Society.*

**CAIS of 14 April informed:**

The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago has started collecting three-dimensional records of Achaemenid inscriptions.

The images will enable researchers to study the various inscriptions should they be lost or damaged in the future, said Dr Abdolmajid Arfaee, a prominent Iranian linguist and inscriptions expert.

There are thousands of inscriptions 5,000 of which have already been photographed, leaving over 10,000 to be photographed at a later time, Arfaee added.

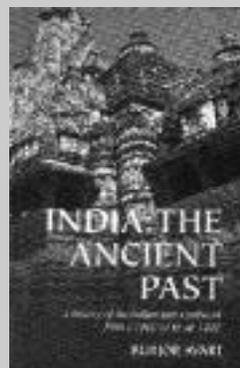
**Marker Orphanage & Complex reopened**

ZNA Digest of March 28, informed:

“On Ashoo Zartosht’s birthday (25 March 2008), in presence of more than 500 local Zarathushties, the Markar Orphanage and other parts of this complex was re-opened. The renovation works supervised by Mr Cyrus Khosravi and sponsored by Fereidoon Zardoshti and Mehraban Zartoshti took six years. Its new computer lab is equipped with six PCs and named after late Mirza Soroush Lohrasb (one of the key and prominent director of the complex in the past).

The lectures and reports were given by Mr Khosravi, Mr Bahram Demehri, Mr Daneshmand, Dr Ekhtiari (new Zoroastrians’ MP), Dr Kh Dabestani (ex MP).

Markar educational complexes in Yazd and Tehran have been originally sponsored and established by a great Parsi, Pestonji Dusabahi Markar of Mumbai.” [for full information see Hamazor Issue 1/08 pp 51-52]



Cover shows Lakshma temple at Khajuraho (from the Robert Harding Picture Library)

Burjor Avari MBE of Manchester Metropolitan University has produced a book on early Indian history — *India: The Ancient Past - A history of the Indian sub-continent from c 7000 BC to AD 1200*. It was published in early 2007 in durably bound paperback by Routledge (London and New York), pp.xviii. + 284. Its Preface, eleven chapters, and Afterword lay out the narrative at an unhurried pace, and has packed in a wealth of research-based knowledge. It has several plates, maps, and line drawings. Price : £16.99. The book will be reviewed in the next issue of Hamazor.

# An article in Verse<sup>1</sup>

by feroza seervai

This article in verse was published by the author in late 2003 in a collection brought out by her for private circulation. It is reproduced here with her copyright and permission. – Ed

Our priestly surgeons have been dreaming,  
thinking,  
Planning, preparing an original prescription for  
us,  
Unique and curious, but certain to succeed.

It is for our survival,  
A dying community; and in passing,  
For conserving our age-old prosperity.

We are the Parsi Zoroastrians,  
(in short now called Zeds)  
Pure of blood, Persian Parsis, so fair, so good, so  
select.

A claim has been made  
That if we decapitate (us)  
- Metaphorically speaking, of course –  
The whole will survive and be saved.

The community for sure must accept  
The programme to decapitate, (in pairs).  
Rejoice, celebrate; now we won't die.  
So long as we Zeds  
Of Undiluted blue blood  
Can keep ourselves alive into bite-less old age –  
Toothless, spineless, aimless, at last.

The surgical instruments  
On offer from six great holy men  
Are on world-wide display:  
Opinions and views, requests,  
Declarations; and some commandments  
To be intelligently deduced.

In their published letter  
They have claimed that their views  
Coincide with the community's.  
But I find no indications of how  
They arrived at the conclusion  
That the community are sharing  
Their special brand of thinking.  
Especially ex-communicating.

Let us carefully examine their Plan –  
The Alice-in-Wonderland Prescription.

With a tiny mathematical inversion  
We come upon a quixotic solution :  
Detect, reject, select for amputation,  
Limbs or parts that give offence  
To the purveyors of dreams  
And our Reverend High Priests;

The torso that is left  
May be regarded, they suggest,  
As a surviving, thriving  
Unevolving Whole, quite wholesome,  
Surely the best in the world.

In the “requests” to the men  
Holding the purse-strings – the custodians –  
Can be detected the holy commandments:

The holy men have declared that our  
community  
Is, and indeed can only be, made up  
Of folk living, breeding, dying with their  
Commandments in mind. Consequently,  
Great care must be taken  
If we intend to access  
Our properties, our ceremonies,  
Our places of worship and prayer,  
And those beautiful gardens,  
Where some of us go, when dead;  
Altho numbers are steadily decreasing.

In order that anyone may “enter”,  
He will have, perforce, to be  
A Card-holding Member of the Great  
Zoroastrian Party (G.Z.P)  
Furthermore  
He should be, should have been,  
Should confine himself to always being,  
A parent/a child, as the case may be,  
Of pure Persian blood to the last platelet,  
Besides being obedient to the holy decrees.

The most baffling of all is the matter,  
Of which six High Priests have rather  
Unexpectedly made a clean breast:  
Unhesitatingly, they have urged

Custodians of the Parsi Panchayat  
To follow their lead in treating  
As invalid, the marriage of couples  
Who may choose or have chosen

To wed by the law of the land!  
No matter if the couple be  
Dyed-in-the-wool Persian, that is, Parsi  
Zoroastrian.  
And they have "requested"  
Our respected Custodians  
To safeguard our Parsi property.  
Consequently  
Parsi Zoroastrians must take it  
That marriage by law is worse  
Than what globally prevails – the practice  
Of partners living together in bliss  
Rather than tying the knot.

Oh tremble, good Zoroastrians, tremble.  
Zoroastrian couples, pure and simple,  
Married by law tho they be  
Are soon to be disabled  
From bringing forth "legitimate" children  
Who could qualify for the Party's Card  
And the consequent benefits.

The law provides merely a contract  
Ashirwad makes marriage a sacrament  
And the self appointed Zoroastrian Court  
provides  
For the forfeiture of Cards and benefits  
The couple's pure blood notwithstanding.  
The edict has gone forth  
Do not marry by law –  
You will lose your Party Cards,  
You pure and faithful Zoroastrians.

How graciously they propose  
To decapitate and reduce  
Our number, so our  
Whole may not be lost to us.

Vah!

In our Zoroastrian diaspora, some Jeejeebhoy  
Tatas, Bhabhas, Wadias,  
Manekjis, Cursetjis, Godrejs  
Shall lose their positions of nobility,  
The scions of every distinguished family.

It makes us sad beyond measure,  
That the abhorrence openly declared

To the mixing of bloods in marriage  
Extends, Oh horrors!  
To the mixing of logic with thought.

Let us act with all speed,  
With our proverbial Parsi grit,  
To stall the holy remedies.

Holy men can afford  
To scoff at the civil law  
Including the Judgement in Bela.  
They may disregard their Lordships  
Who sit in wigs at the Hague  
To dispense an equal justice  
To the plaintiffs of every State.  
BUT

At the end of the day,  
When it comes to the test,  
Our Trustees must face the music  
Should they undertake to bell the cat:  
'Tis they who must pay  
(not from our funds, I should say)  
To compensate in heavy damages  
Ordered by Courts to set right  
Injuries done to people  
Who are brave and true and free.

**Note:**

1. Zoroastrian High Priests publicly declared that marriages by "ashirwad" alone conferred legitimacy on the marriage and consequently on the children of the marriage. They urged the Parsi Panchayat to note their view and to adopt it too. This article was occasioned by that public declaration.

1b. The High Priest of the Wadiaji's Atash Behram in Mumbai, is known to have gone public with his view that Parsis married to non Parsis are living in adultery. I am not aware of anyone having filed for defamation against him, which shows how much his view signifies.



*Feroza Seervai, obtained a 1<sup>st</sup> division in Philosophy in 1944 and was working for a MA, when she married H M Seervai, former Advocate General of Maharashtra. She co-founded the Purshotamdas Thakurdas Hostel for Working Women at Colaba, and the Bombay International School at Chowpatty, being their Chairman or Member of the Board. She has been vitally connected with many NGOs in Mumbai; has authored four books, and though 85 is still as vibrant as ever.*

## Parsi theatre group of Surat brought Shakespeare to India

**But** for Surat, The Bard of Avon may not have come to India. If Leo Tolstoy's 'A Coffee house in Surat' was evidence of how the great Russian novelist took note of Gujarat's fastest growing city, few know that the first Shakespeare play in India was staged in Surat in 1852.

The play 'The Taming of the Shrew' was adapted and performed in Gujarati and renamed 'Nathari firangan ne shi rite thekane aani' (How a bad-tempered European woman was tamed). It was performed by the Parsi theatre group in Surat.

This fascinating fact comes to light as you browse through 'India's Shakespeare: Translation, Interpretation and Performance, a collection of essays' by Poonam Trivedi and Dennis Bartholomeusz.

Shakespearean scholar Dr Poonam Trivedi says, 'This is the first noted performance of Shakespeare's play in the history of Indian theatre. Adaption of 'Taming of the Shrew' was performed at Andrews Library in November 1852.

This fact noted in book on Parsi theatre titled, 'Parsi Natak Takhta ni Tavarikh' by Dhanjibhai Patel. Well-known literary figure, 'Chanchi' Mehta wrote about it in an article 'Shakespeare in Gujarati stage' which was published in 'Indian literature journal, 1964'. Dr Trivedi says, 'In this play you understand how smartly they portray a firangee woman who had bad manners. They avoided portraying Gujarati or any local women in this manner and their central characters were largely European.' After this play, many more theatre companies performed Shakespeare's plays like 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Hamlet', 'Macbeth' and 'Othello' adapted as 'a khun e nahak, khoon ka khoon, bazhme fani' and so on.

Says Dr Trivedi, 'In Gujarati theatre, there are many dramatists who performed Shakespeare in the 19th century like Dosabhai, Kaikasaru Kabaru and Ranchhod Udairam. There was also an exclusive club for Shakespeare's plays called 'Shakespeare Natak Mandali' in those days. They adapted the plays so cleverly by adding local elements that nobody would realise these were translated from the works of a European writer'.



**Omission in mentioning captions for Prof Jenny Rose's article, Hamazor Issue 1/08, pp27-29 - through error on part of Editor, with apologies.**



Fig. 1. Ritual Sofreh set out for an ab zohr ceremony at the Parseshgah well, Yazd.  
Photo courtesy of Susan Varjavand.



Fig. 2. Bas relief from Persepolis of Persian courtier holding a flower.  
Photo: Jenny Rose



Fig. 3. Plaque depicting Female with Plant from Veshnaveh.  
Photo courtesy of Thomas Stollner



Fig. 4. Parsi women making the offering to the water on Aban Jashan.  
Photo courtesy of Sarah Stewart

## AGM 2008 : North American Mobed Council - some highlights

submitted by Er Jehan Bagli

**The** twenty-first AGM of the North American Mobed Council was held in Toronto, hosted by OZCF at 1187 Burnhamthorp Road in Oakville. There were thirteen Mobeds and one Mobedyar present, with three proxies.

At the outset we wish to felicitate the new executive team that was elected at the AGM. President: Ervad Kobad Zarolia, Vice-President : Ervad Noshir Mirza, Secretary: Ervad Nozer Kotwal, Treasurer: Ervad Gev Karkaria and Executive at Large: Ervad Gustad Panthaki. The new board appointed Ervad Soli Dastur as Director of NAMC Communications.

After a short invocation, most of the formalities such as, adopting the minutes of the last meeting, the financial statement, appointment of auditors etc. were taken care of. The meeting ensued with a discussion that centered around the topic 'Navjote of the Adopted Children' initiated by Ervad Brigadier Behram Panthaki. A prolonged discussion followed with several members expressing their personal experiences in this matter. After detail consideration of a child adopted by single parent and/or same sex parents a resolution was tabled by Ervad Panthaki. The motion will be included in the minutes to be studied by the Mobeds, to discuss and vote upon at the next meeting.

On the subject of using the NAMC funds for the educational purposes several items were suggested by Ervad Tehemton Mirza a member of the committee of three ( two other members are Ervads Gustad Panthaki

of Toronto and Farhad Panthaky of Boston) appointed to ponder over the matter. The discussion also touched on having a NAMC library and a possibility of accommodating it with FEZANA Resource Center. The deliberations ended in tabling a resolution, empowering NAMC to spend up to \$5000.00 a year, to assist young mobeds, to further their knowledge of religion and ritual performances. The resolution was passed unanimously.

In view of the enquiries from the community, regarding consideration of women for the training of Mobedyar, a discussion was initiated by Ervad Jehan Bagli to reconsider the criteria of qualification to be Mobedyar. After prolonged discussion it was unanimously decided to delete 'Zoroastrian males only' and keep the programme open to any interested Zoroastrian.

The Contemplation Session on the deliberation of five Gahs proceeded smoothly with the contributions from Ervads Jehna Bagli, Adi Unwalla (for Gev Karkaia), Behram Panthaki, Soli Dastur, Gustad Pantheki, and Cawas Desai. The ensuing discussion was both educational and beneficial to all present.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to all the OZCF volunteers who not only put in the labour of love, but also donated the food they provided. The dinner hosted by President of OZCF Niloufer Bhesania and her husband Mehernosh is also gratefully acknowledged.



Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villarigosa wearing a Faravahar next to Mobed Shahzadi.

This is an excellent exposure for Zoroastrians of Southern California.

Courtesy Arman Ariane



انجا که تاب و توان دارد به مردم بیاموزد که در راه اشا یا داد و راستی کوشا باشند. گات ها وظیفه اصل رهبر(رتو)را در اجرا عدالت میداند. رتو باید پاداش نیکوکاران و کیفر زیانکاران و کسانی را که گاهی نیکی وزمانی بدی می ورزند تعیین کند( یسنا ۳۳) در گاتها از قوانین خشک دینی و امر و نهی اثری نیست و تنها راهنمایی است برای زندگی بهتر.

قوانین بر حسب موقعیت زمان و مکان و نیاز اجتماع تامل و تعویض است ولی قوانین دینی چون جنبه الهی دارد تعبیر ناپذیر بوده و از اینرو در طول زمان غیر قابل اجرا ویا موجب ایستادگی جامعه می شود با اینحال زرتشت پیوسته مردم را نسبت به یک اصل کلی و ابدی هشدار میدهد. بر مبنای اشا یا قانون کنش و واکنش نتیجه اعمال شخص بخود او باز میگردد و حاصل بدکرداری بدی است و انعکاس نیکی بر مبنای اشا خوشبختی و برکت از آن کسی است که خواستار خوشبختی و شادمانی دیگران باشد. از سوی دیگر فرمانروایان خودکامه و بد اندیش قربانی قدرت فاسد خود شده و ساقط میشوند.

زرتشت به انسان های اسیر و افسرده نوید آزادی میدهد می گوید که روزی قدرتمندان را که از آنان سلب آزادی نموده اند شکست داده و آسایش و آزادی خود را بازیافته و به بهشت و نیک اندیشی دست خواهند یافت (یسنا ۳۳)



*Daryoush Jahanian MD, is a Graduate of Zoroastrian schools in Tehran. He graduated from the university of Tehran Medical School and specialized in Obstetrics & Gynecology in Washington University, St.Louis, Mo.*

*A founder and president of the Zoroastrian Youth Organization (Fravahar), a founder and President of The Zoroastrian Association of Kansas (ZAKA) and has been teaching in the religion classes. Served as a trustee of the Rustam Guiv Trust and Rustam Guiv Foundation and then as the president. He has been a speaker in Zoroastrian congresses and has been a guest speaker in the local schools and universities in Kansas city. He has authored several articles and a book, "The Zoroastrian doctrine and Biblical Connections".*



Members of the Zoroastrian community visiting Tenerife, Spain are invited to visit the Shroff Darb-e-Mehr located at the following address : Calle Cupido, Puerto de la Cruz, 38400 Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain. Phone number : 34-649-731091

مردم را به راه خداشناسی هدایت نموده و برای آنان که پیام من را در جهان گسترانند آرزوی خوشبختی میکنم. زرتشت همه مردم جهان را مورد خطاب قرار میدهد. بدون در نظر کشور قبیله و یا نژاد در پیام او مسئله ای بنام زن و مرد وجود ندارد زیرا که زن و مرد بطور مساوی خطاب میشوند و هر دو میتوانند با کوشش در راه پیشرفت جهان به خوشبختی کامل دست یابند. درگاتها زنان نخست خطاب می‌شوند. برای زرتشت فقط دو گروه انسان وجود دارد. راستکاران (اشونان) و دروغکاران (دروگوندان)

### ۳. خداشناسی

اهورمزدا آفریننده ی جان و خرد میباشد که خدایی جهانی و در هر جا هست فاقد جسم. او خرد کل سازنده جهان و منبع تمام نیکی هاست که فقط از روشن اندیشان می‌تواند بوجود او پی برند. اهورامزدا نور نورهاست از او پرتو های دیگر چون صفات اهورایی، خرد، راستی، توانایی، عشق، آرامش کمال و جاودان ساطع می‌شود (یسنا: ۷: ۳۱) او پیرترین (بی آغاز ابده) و جوانترین (بی پایان بی انجام) به عبارت ساده‌تر فاقد زایش و مرگ می‌باشد (یسنا: ۸: ۳۱) و همواره یکسان است (پیر نمی‌شود) یسنا (۷: ۳۱) هیچ قدرت منفی در برابر اهورا مزدا وجود ندارد باید توجه داشت که واژه انگره مینو (اهریمن) در گاتها نیامده و در کتیبه های هخامنشی نیز دیده نمی‌شود. از این نظر آموزشهای زرتشت با ثنویت یا دوگانه پرستی بیگانه است. باوجود این زرتشت از وجود شر یا بدی در جامعه انسانی آگاه است و آن را به صورت یک واقعیت مورد بررسی قرار میدهد. شر نتیجه بداندیشی انسان ها و گزینش راه نادرست میباشد. آنان که بدی برمیگزینند به خشم متوسل شده و زندگی مردم را نابود میسازند بنا به گفته زرتشت نازندگی میسازند.

اینان دیوانی هستند به رخت انسان. گاتها خشم و غم کینه و انتقام دروغ و ریا و بی عدالتی را تهدیدی برای جهان زنده و تکامل انسان میدانند به همان اندازه که زیان گزینش راه به غم و تیره روزی بی پایان است، برگزیدن راه راست شادمانی و خوشبختی ببار میآورد. از آنجا که هر شخص در انتخاب راه خود آزاد است بهشت و دوزخ را در درون وجدان خود می‌سازد. در گاتها بهشت معادل آرامش روان و دوزخ همان عذاب درونی میباشد مطالبی از تصاویر خیالی ارائه نمی‌شود.

### ۴. عدالت

پایه ی هر جامعه متمدن عدل و داد میباشد و این اصل در پیام زرتشت تاکید شده است. در بند اول یسنا ۲۸ زرتشت با دست های برافراشته بدرگاه اهورامزدا نماز می‌گزارد و خواستار آن است که تا

داریوش جهانیان

## آموزشهای زرتشت

یکی از آشنایان پس از خواندن گاتها چنان تحت تاثیر اندیشه های ژرف اشوزرتشت قرار گرفت که چنین اظهار نظر کرد: دین زرتشت کهن ترین و نوین ترین دین جهان است. در این نوشتار آنچه که زرتشت و آموزشهای او را متمایز می کند را مورد بحث و بررسی قرار می دهیم.

### ۱. شخصیت زرتشت

در سرتاسر گاتها زرتشت پیام اوری است که برای نو سازی جهان و مبارزه با خرافات و خدایان دروغین (دئیوها) در تلاش است. در این مسیر او با نیرومندان جامعه کاوی ها و کرپن ها در مبارزه است و با تمام سختی ها یک تنه براه خود ادامه می دهد.

او بهمان اندازه که به هدف خود ایمان دارد مبارزه ی مسالمت آمیز را به خشونت ترجیح می دهد. او می گوید خشم خود را باز دارید و هرگز اجازه ندهید که اندیشه های شما به خشونت و ستم گرایش یابد. هنگامی که در این مبارزه با دشواری روبرو می شود و نگران آن است که در کوشش خود با شکست روبرو خواهد شد، در اوج تنهایی خواستار مهاجرت به سرزمین دیگری است. تنها نیروی درونی و پشتیبان او عشق اهورامزدا می باشید.

دیگران برداشت می کنند که خداوند زرتشت را برگزیده است و مردم باید پیرو او باشند. بلکه اشوزرتشت اعلام میدارند که من در اندیشه ی خود اهورامزدا را دریافتم و آموزشهای او را برگزیده ام و هم اکنون این آموزش ها را به شما آشکار می سازم تا به اندیشه خود دریابید و هر یک راه راست برگزیده و به خوشبختی کامل نایل شوید.

زرتشت در گاتها جنبه الهی و فوق انسانی ندارد، او یک انسان واقعی است که گاهی از عدم موقت خود افسرده است و زمانی که عده بسیاری آموزشهای او را پذیرفته اند خرسند و شادمان است.

### ۲. پیام زرتشت

پیام زرتشت یک پیام جهانی است. او در یسنا ۳۸ خواستار آن است که اسرار آفرینش را دریافته و به جهانیان اعلام دارد. در یسنا ۳۱ اعلام میدارد که این آموزشها تازه است و آرزو دارم که همه

# Manouchehr Farhangi - 1926-2008

Hamazor celebrates the Life of Manouchehr Farhangi

**Philanthropist,** educator, entrepreneur, Manouchehr Farhangi was also a good and generous friend to thousands of people of all nationalities, faiths and walks of life. When he died tragically at his home in Spain on March 19, 2008 at the age of 82, many who knew him felt they had almost lost a father.

Despite a life in which he suffered a series of ups and downs in business and was exiled for 30 years from his beloved homeland following the Islamic revolution, Mr Farhangi always had a smile for everyone, a joke to share and, if needed, a loan or a gift to see someone through hard times.

He was born in Kerman in Iran in 1926. His family were Zoroastrian. He attended a local school until Grade 10 before moving to High School in Tehran. After compulsory military service he worked for a firm of accountants where he won rapid promotion. He then left this firm and went into partnership with his brothers to create a new import-export business.

In the late 1960's Mr Farhangi purchased a plot of land on the shores of the Caspian Sea and started building his next big venture, the building of a vast tourism complex called 'Dehkadeh Saheli'.

At the same time, again in partnership with his brothers, he opened a pharmaceutical factory which eventually became one of the largest manufacturers in Iran.

By 1979 the Caspian Sea resort had over 350 villas and 70 apartments built and sold with more under construction. But with the arrival of the new revolutionary regime, an immediate halt to the project was demanded because men and women were

not allowed to swim together in the sea. Mr Farhangi's offices were then taken over and his home, including his valuable library, was looted and destroyed. Later his companies and remaining possessions were confiscated without his being given any chance of defending himself in court.



In the face of this treatment Mr Farhangi decided to leave Iran. He accepted a mission with some teachers and parents from Iranzamin School in Tehran to re-establish the school in Spain under the name of International College Spain (ICS). He hired premises in Estepona on the Andalucian coast for the school and boarding students welcoming over a 100 refugee staff and students from Iran and more later. This was a hugely complicated legal, financial, educational and human operation, largely paid for by Mr Farhangi.

Three years later with an established school but dwindling student recruitment, Mr Farhangi sought and found new premises in a serious market in Madrid. 40 students and 14 staff started in the new school in La Moraleja in 1983. Today there are around 700 students and 130 staff. The College is accredited by ECIS and NEASC and has excellent academic results and records of university entrance. ICS was one of the first schools in the world with the International Baccalaureate programme being taught at every level from Kindergarten to Grade 12 and is now perhaps the most prestigious international school in the country. A successful and happy community consists of more than 50 different nationalities.

In 2007 Mr Farhangi received the award for the Promotion of International Educational from the European Council of International Schools. He chaired his last Board meeting;

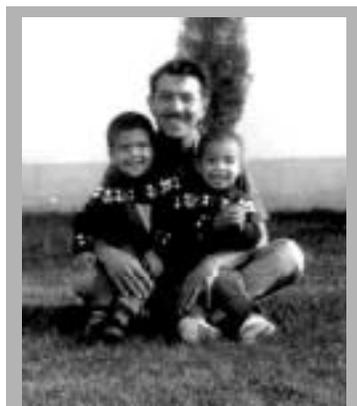


Manouchehr & Faranak with their dogs

having been the Chairman, Board of Trustees, International College Spain, 1980 – 2008, on Wednesday 12th March 2008, a week before his untimely death.

As an entrepreneur and businessman Manouchehr Farhangi was distinguished by his desire to build and offer products of high quality, by his desire to contribute positively to the wellbeing of society, by his determined energy, by his resourcefulness in identifying new opportunities and directions especially when he was faced by serious set-backs, and by his undefeatable spirit.

As a man Mr Farhangi was distinguished by his generosity in helping fellow Iranians in exile, colleagues and friends in need, young people seeking help. He also had a keen sense of humour, displayed idealism expressed in his support for international education and his enthusiastic interest in the preservation of ancient Persian culture which took him to Tajikistan several times. He found happiness in his family with Faranak, his wife since 1959, and his two sons, Ramin and Ramesh, together with his daughter-in-law, Fariba, and his two grandchildren. ■■■■



Manouchehr with his sons Ramin & Ramesh, as young children

A memorial was held to celebrate the life of Mr Manouchehr Farhangi on Sunday April 20, 2008 at California Zoroastrian Center.

It was expressly stated by Mr Farhangi that there should be no mourning when he died but a celebration.

The family had planned the event well, with a large attendance of Iranians, Zoroastrians, non-Zoroastrians, and members of Iranian media. The meeting started with the playing of the secular Iranian national anthem, Aey Iran followed by the Zoroastrian anthem Khan Ashem Vohu (Dr Pour Davoud's composition).

The newly arrived priest from Iran, Dr Rustom Vahidi recited selected verses from the Gathas, and translations in Farsi were given by Fariba Goshtasbi. The verses emphasized the importance of productive living and being progressive. The master of ceremony was Arman Ariane who gave a recount of Manouchehr Farhangi's life in English. Dr Farhang Mehr spoke, and his address was followed by a touching song in English, by Shahrooz Ash, on Ahura Mazda, Amertat and other Gathic principles.

#### **Some memories shared by the speakers :**

Dr Jafarey remembered the three Farhangi brothers from the '60s when he frequented the Tehran Zoroastrian Youth Association (Sazaman Faravahar). The second brother, Mehraban was very active in promoting this association, and the younger brother Manouchehr was also present, always smiling and very pleasant. His acquaintance with Manouchehr progressed to friendship after 1979 when one of his daughters who had to stay in a third country awaiting her US visa was greatly assisted by Manouchehr. Dr Jafarey spoke of Manouchehr's candor, straightforwardness, his disposition, and positive and helpful attributes. He recalled that Manouchehr called him once and asked him to send a Zarathustrian Assembly representative to Canada to perform sedreh pushi/novjote of a woman who wanted to become a Zoroastrian. Jafarey offered to do it himself, and Manouchehr said, "your accent and reading of the Avesta is not the most pleasant experience". Instead Fatane Farid was sent. When several months later, Farhangi called and

asked Jafarey to come to Spain and officiate the wedding of his son, Jafarey brought up his unpleasant accent issue, and Manouchehr said, "no for this purpose, you will do!"

Dr Mehr recalled how productive and forward thinking Manouchehr was, and how the three brothers were active philanthropists. Mehraban donated to WZO, Ardeshir was an active contributor to the building of Darb-e-Mehr, Westminster, California, and Manouchehr to all causes that promoted pure Iranian and Zoroastrian ideology. He also recalled what a sharp mind Manouchehr had, and how well read he was.

Rustam Kasravi who was recipient of Manouchehr's help in Spain while waiting for his brothers to facilitate immigration to the US for his family and himself, recalled the conversation he heard between Manouchehr and Timsar Shahriari, an Iranian Zoroastrian ex-General. Manouchehr reported he had heard Iranian refugees were spotted in one of the coastal towns in Spain in dire straits. The next day Timsar went to that coastal town on a rescue mission, and after a thorough search found the Iranian and his family living a homeless life under a bridge. The family was brought back to Madrid. It turned out the gentleman had been the head of the Department of Islamic Studies at Tehran University. Since there were a number of Arab students enrolled at the school, Manouchehr arranged for a course in Islamic studies to be instituted and the fleeing head of the university department was officially hired to teach the course, giving his dignity back and a chance for a new life.

Homer Abrahamian now living in Sydney, remembers how Manouchehr was providing support to many Iranian intellectuals in the diaspora who were involved with promotion of ancient Iranian values, by paying for their living expenses, publications, travels, etc. He mentioned three days before this tragic death, Manouchehr had called Homer, who was preparing for another lecture tour in Europe and North America, expressing his concern that Homer must be on the list of targets for assassination. Manouchehr asked Homer, what were his wishes which Manouchehr could fulfill,

should anything happen to him. Homer replied to Manouchehr saying, he may be on the list and very likely at the bottom, but Manouchehr was probably at the top.

Mehrdad Parsa, the Iranian TV personality, reported on how nationalistic and helpful Manouchehr was to all needy Iranians irrespective of their religion.

Dr Ardeshir Anoushiravani, whose wife Shida was Manouchehr's niece, shared Manouchehr's attitude on life that it had to be lived to the fullest, enjoyed for its every moment, and there was nothing to fear about death. When Anoushiravani asked him, do you really enjoy working this hard, Manouchehr retorted, "yes, every moment of it gives me satisfaction and reason to do more."

Dr Anoushiravani mentioned, one day when he and Manouchehr were talking, he said, "Anoushiravani all the scholarly work you do on the Gathas what does it do? Do you consider me who has very little knowledge of the Gathas, or who does not wear my sudreh and kushti, a Zartoshty or not?"

Anoushiravani replied, "let me ask you some questions by answering yours. Do you believe in living a productive live, do you respect other people irrespective of their difference with you, do you believe in a happy life or a life of mourning and sacrifice?"

Manouchehr replied, "I certainly enjoy being productive, promoting life, and having a happy life. I cannot understand people whose mindset is in celebrating grief, death and destruction. After all a healthy mind is in a happy body/ existence. Otherwise being steeped in mourning and having your holidays as days of one holy man's death after another, does not result in a healthy mind."

Our community has lost a man whose modest demeanour concealed a great heart and mind. Ravaan esh Shaad. ■■■■



## An account of Ardeshir Yeganegi's Life - by his family

Rostam Yeganegi, International Board Member of WZO writes, "Ardeshir Yeganegi Library in Tehran was named after my uncle Ardeshir Yeganegi. Below is the translation of his life sketch that was narrated to the audience during the opening ceremony after renovation by Kambiz, the younger son of Ardeshir."

The late Arbab Ardeshir Yeganegi was born in 1900 to Bahram and Morvarid (Mehrabani) Yeganegi. He spent his primary school years in Yazd and at the age of twelve, came to Tehran, where he lived with his aunt graduating from the then American College (present day Alborz). For a period of three years, he worked for his father at the Yeganegi company, where he employed himself in the business of imports from Europe and Russia, thereby becoming fluent in both English and Russian.

Arbab Ardeshir having an innovative and constructive spirit, independently purchased and drove a truck throughout Iran (a novelty for that time) which led him into the transport business. It did not take long before he acquired a considerable number of trucks and established a transport company. Having been convinced by Shahriar Farvardin, a friend and graduate in leather manufacturing to establish Iran's first modern leather production plant, in 1931 he founded the Hamadan Tannery.

In 1933, Arbab Ardeshir married Farangis, daughter of Arbab Keykhosrow Shahrokh. From this union were born three children, Firoozeh, Parviz, and Kambiz Yeganegi.

Arbab Ardeshir's constructive and entrepreneurial frame of mind once more became restless, and in 1935, on the heights above the Abbas Abad region of Hamadan, he built the first hydroelectric plant and established the then well-known Alvand Public Electricity

Company, of which the principal share holders were the citizens of Hamadan City.

Ardeshir Yeganegi Library of Tehran was re-opened after major renovation on 15th February 2008, informed the ZNA Digest of the 18<sup>th</sup>.

After recitals of prayers by Mobeds Mehraban Firouzgari and Ardeshir Mehrabani, Allahyar Daneshmand (head of Tehran Zoroastrian Anjoman), Kambiz Yeganegi (son of late Ardeshir Yeganegi), Mobed Kourosch Niknam (current Zoroastrian MP), Mr Ahmadi (a cleric, a member of Revolutionary Cultural Council, an MP and a member of Education Committee of Iran's Parliament), Noushin Faramarzian (librarian of this library) gave talks on this occasion.

The library holds 12,000 books on Ancient Persian Culture, Civilization and History and Zoroastrianism. The cost of renovation is about 30 million Tomans (about US\$35,000).

During World War II, on the request of the Allied Forces, Arbab Ardeshir became a contractor and builder of allied camps and in payment, received wheat, granulated sugar and tea. Due to the shortage of these items at the time, he gratuitously distributed them among the workers of the Hamadan Tannery and the Alvand Electricity plant. These plants provided the employees with many amenities, that were unparalleled at the time, such as modern dining rooms, dressingrooms with lockers, bath and other advantages that were quite exceptional in Iran.

When World War II ended and allied troops left Hamadan, the city's streets were left badly damaged, and having been asked by the Municipality of Hamadan to renovate the main streets, Arbab Ardeshir restored the two main streets - Ebne Sina and Abbas Abad. Motivated again by his creativity, with the purchase of various machinery and modern refrigeration plants from the Allies, he founded Iran's first beverage plant and ice cream factory, "Alaska-ye Iran".

In 1953, suffering from acute diabetes, Arbab Ardeshir passed away in France and as per his will, was buried in the city of Nice, France.

Today, the Hamadan Tannery has been converted into a students dormitory as part of Hamadan University's campus, as the Alvand hydro-electric plant also has been transformed into a pleasant public park on the heights above the city of Hamadan.

Ardeshir Yeganegi's fruitful, constructive, and innovative life was proverbial among all in our country. His humanitarian and benovolent spirit will eternally be remembered by the Yeganegi family, the Zoroastrians, the people of Hamadan and all our countrymen.

To honour the memory of this great man, his wife, Farangis Yeganegi (Keykhosrow Shahrokh) - herself one of Iran's exceptional ladies and a source of pride for the country and her fellow Zoroastrians, founded the Ardeshir Yeganegi Library in 1958 and donated it to the Tehran Zoroastrian Society, who in spite of many ups and downs, has been running it since.

In the year 2007, aided by Yeganegi family and the Tehran Zoroastrian Society (40 Anjuman) and through the endeavours of Nooshin Faramarzian, the library was renovated and is now open, with its valuable books ready for being used and, thus serves all our countrymen. ■■■■



## Against disinformation

by farrokh vajifdar

### Part III

**History** has strange ways of promoting and countering claims of the superiority of one religious system over another. The long and checkered story of Zoroastrianism in Iran is a case in point. It was not simply the geographical crossroads that determined the direction of its several creeds, their development and their evolution; it was the degrees of tolerance, of acceptance, and of ideological shifts brought about by the forces of history on the plateau which established the multi-religious setting of Iranshahr. The story is complex.

Spread across the eastern Mediterranean to Mesopotamia lay the lands of the Fertile Crescent, with ancient cultures and established civilizations that had over several millennia given birth to religious systems of a very different order to those developed to the east and north of the Iranian plateau. Broadly and apolitically described, the former with its Semitic origins constitute the Abrahamic group; the latter, with Indo-European roots, form the Aryan systems. Both have at various times displayed selective and yet universalist aspirations.

The fusion through direct borrowing and re-shaping took place in Iranian Mesopotamia where ancient Assyrian and Babylonian civilizations had set up fearsome, capricious gods who kept aloof from their worshippers. Yet they could inflict terrifying visitations as blatant displays of their awesome might and controlling power placated only through various temple cults mediated by priest-sacrificers. Their gory worship has been sharply categorized as "mutilation, maiming, and murder" with reference to their blood-thirsty sacrifices.

We cannot be definite as to the time and homeland of our Iranian preceptor Zarathushtra Spitama, other than vague

indications ranging from 1000 – 650 BC and eastern/north-eastern Iran. His self-description points to the Indo-Aryan origins of his vocation and his reform. Privy, as *vidva*, to an esoteric knowledge, he promotes this sacred teaching in versified precepts, the *afshman sengha*. He sees it his divinely-appointed function to bring purposeful peace to strife-torn humanity on a world scale – he is *ahum-bish*, the “healer of existence”. He is *manthran*, whose inspired declamations are evocations of a profoundly experienced revelation, and through his trained skills as *ereshi* (the Indic *rishi*), is a composer of sacred *manthra*-bearing verse. The Gathic *manthras*, as guide-lines for the well-disposed, should be sharply distinguished from the spells to which they had degenerated among the superstitious and the illiterate.

Zarathushtra’s *Gathas*, or sacred poetry, teach the virtues of Good Mind, Truth/Justice, Good Governance, and Right-mindedness, all being integral attributes of *Mazda*, “Wisdom” who alone is venerated as *Ahura*, “Supreme Master” or “Lordly Wisdom”. *Mazda* is All-Good, Omnipresent, Omniscient, and Omnipotent, and stands above and beyond the conflict of twin Primordial Cosmic Principles. One of these, wholly allied to *Mazda* – but *not identical* to him – chose to further the best things of Life; the other opted for a perverse, evil course of non-life or stagnation. These contrary dualisms, as *mainyus*, work good or evil in the mind of humans. *Mazda* who is all Light is worshipped symbolically through the Fire of Truth, strengthened through Good Thinking, Right Speech, and Beneficent Deeds: an ethical triad honoured more in breach than observance.

Three major facts emerge from Zarathushtra’s teachings:

(1) that the opposition is between Good and Evil, or Truth versus Deceit, of conflicting ethical principles operating as the duality of *Spenta* or Increase, and *Angra* or moral decline. Nowhere is there any suggestion of identity of *Mazda* and *Spenta mainyu*; the opposition is solely between that of the

contending *mainyus* operating the good or evil that exists in this world.

(2) The clear-cut duty of each Mazda-believer – both man and woman – is to distinguish between the two modes of existence, then exercising the right choice through free will, to work for the benefit of humankind and the world. In no other system do we see Man involved as co-worker (*hamkar*) with the Divinity towards the goal of this world’s Regeneration (the *Frashokereti*).

(3) The veneration of the physical fire as pure Primordial Element is a religious act symbolizing the worshipper’s *spiritual sacrifice* of truthful thoughts, right words, and selfless works. There is no indication of idolatrous reverence anywhere in the Gathas.

Yet, these are falsely made the cornerstones of Zoroastrian beliefs and practices by uninformed critics from the Semitic faiths. The libel of “two gods”, meant to injure the feelings of pious Zoroastrians, in fact boomerangs upon its Abrahamic originators. Innately meaningless, it nevertheless ruffles some sensitivities, and certainly should arouse no offence, but only pity for such closed-minded ignorance. Secondly, the slander of “Fire-worshipper” indicates to us the desire of the Semites to impute a kind of idol-worship as a cover-up for their own well-attested tendencies towards the primitive worship and propitiation of objects believed to be imbued with fearsome occult power. To foist their own darkly superstitious practices upon our enlightened Zoroastrian observances always seems easier for majority religions than to admit their own theological deficiencies and shortcomings. Fear is their key, scape-goating their method, with Zoroastrianism as their target.

In the Judaic system we see the emergence of *ha-Satan* (“the Adversary”, “the Accuser”) as *evil spirit* (!) alongside Jehovah/Yahweh who, for some capricious reason, sends this power to test his faithful servant Job with awful vexations. Another time, and in another situation, Yahweh twice sends this evil spirit to sow suspicion, envy and hatred

in the Israelite king Saul against the hero David who had given him his fealty! Simple logic tells us that Yahweh harbours both good and evil within himself, and dispenses these with equal abandon – absolute anathema to the monotheist Zoroastrian! Furthermore, this waywardness is put about as a sublime paradox, neither whose purpose nor profundity can be clearly discerned.

Christianity, in origin an offshoot of Judaism, started out as a political protest against the pagan Roman occupying power in Palestine. It too harbours its malevolent spirits – as the Devil or the *Diabolos* with innumerable cohorts, very likely inherited from its obscure Gnostic background. In the form of *diablerie* or diabolism, worship was accorded to various devils through witchcraft and sorcery whose parallel existences were sufficiently troubling to orthodox belief. Mediaeval witch-hunts, complete with persecutions, forced confessions, trials, tortures, and burnings attest to Christianity's running conflicts with Devil-worship. Inadequately answered questions on its "God-fearing" religion persist.

Why, in the first instance, was this evil spirit referred to as *Lucifer*, "Light-bearer" (!), when he was supposed to be the "Prince of Darkness"? Secondly, why was Christianity so quick to label Zoroastrianism as a dualism, when itself had to explain the Divine Power as a Trinity whose worship entails separate veneration of the three persons within his own? Thirdly, is it not the case with Christians that evil is reckoned co-eternal with good, and that believers are required to expiate their ever-present innate portion of Original Sin through an acknowledgement of guilt, practice of suffering, and subjection to penitence? It seems a very imperfect monotheism which constantly fears intrusion by evil spirits, frequently expelled through exorcisms, themselves productions of gloom.

Islam too cannot free itself from the accusation of dualism, since Allah who is all-knowing and merciful, yet finds himself

limited by a satanic power. Known as *Iblis* (derived from *diabolos*) or *Shaitan* (from the Semitic *sheda*) he is frequently present in its Holy Book. As total submission to the will of Allah, Islam suggests a rigid predeterminism where actions lose any moral basis. His innately guarded inscrutability, and capacity to inspire fear, results in purposelessness of human activity, since everything is pre-ordained. It was no accident of history that their Qur'an, containing the inviolable word of Allah throughout, yet displays built-in contradictions which are explained away through special revelations. Nor was it simply coincidental that in Iran where Arab believers had to confront the precepts of an earlier religion, the 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> centuries were taken up with theological controversies – the *Mutazilite* re-fashioning of Islam through a religiously tractable philosophy.

Modern day Parsiism has unthinkingly allowed infiltration of predeterminist concepts to contaminate its perceptions of Zoroastrianism. Where Zarathushtra had specifically inculcated an individual responsibility and accountability for one's thoughts, words and deeds, a directly opposed set of notions are now made to prevail. We have witnessed a slow, insidious seepage of Zurvanite concepts, being Iranian reflexes of Orphism – imported from Classical Greece, originating perhaps in India – whose pessimistic outlook suggested the futility of activity, and salvation through an unceasing series of rebirths until the advent of a saviour who would neutralize evil and regenerate the world. Add to this burden the corrosive inroads of maverick theosophies, and we witness the degenerative effects upon Zoroastrianism.

The Zurvanite contribution to this debilitating process is craftily promoted by irresponsible itinerant charlatans who openly repudiate Zarathushtra's clear teachings to substitute their insidious versions of saviour ideology. An explanation is warranted: the Zurvanite system bases itself on Zurvan, or the godhead of Time, which fosters two heresies simultaneously –

(1) the begetting by Zurvan, and sibling rivalry, of the twins Ohrmazd (Ahura Mazda) and Ahriman (Angra Mainyu) which these dualists shamelessly parade as Zarathushtra's teachings: they are in fact encroachments within Iran of Orphic concepts, and have nothing to do with our Founder; (2) the Saviour myth, even transferred to our Fravardin Yasht, whereby the Final Saviour, the Saoshyant, becomes the last of three millennial Saviours. These are fitted into the 12,000-year Zurvanite Cosmic Year, divided into four tri-millennial periods. Zarathushtra would have been outraged, not least because these aberrations, none of which are even hinted at in his Gathas, are impudently introduced in his name!

Let us be specific on these alien intruders.

Firstly, the deliberate concoction of the eternal opposition of Ohrmazd and Ahriman is emphatically absent from Zarathushtra's Gathas, and is a later dualistic simplification by the priesthood to explain the presence of Good and Evil in this world, doubtless to ensure themselves lucrative involvement in the removal of the latter. (Zarathushtra had made it very plain that no priestly intervention was at all necessary, and that it was the collective of an enlightened humanity which would achieve this world's revitalization through Beneficent Works).

Secondly, according to the 12,000-year Zurvanite schema, during the first 3000 years the world existed in a pure spiritual state. The second tri-millennium sees this world made material in physical purity. The third period witnesses the nefarious activity of Ahriman who introduces evil into this material existence which becomes corrupted. In the year 9001, the beginning of the fourth and last tri-millennium, Zarathushtra is born to combat the evil that by now has permeated Ohrmazds' original pure creation. A thousand years later the first Zurvanite Saviour is born from Zarathushtra's miraculously preserved seed – this character supposedly commences the first stage of purification. A second Saviour follows a thousand years after the first to accomplish the next stage of purification.

Lastly comes the final Saviour in this strange series to complete the purgation project and expel evil once and for all from this world which will then exist in unsullied Goodness for Eternity. The actual purification is to be processed in 57 years, a curious total comprised of – wait for it! – a year each for the 12 words in the *ashem vohu*, a year each for the 21 words of the *yatha ahu vairyo*, and a year each for the 24 words of the *airyema ishyo* formula. Thus do we see the workings of minds determined to reject Zarathushtra's luminous teachings, yet cloak their darkening propaganda under his august name!

“To which persons shall come the insights of  
Good Mind?

To those who will be the benefactors of the  
nations [saoshyanto dahyunam],  
Recognizing You [Ahura Mazda] with Good  
Mind,  
By actions befitting Your precepts of Truth:  
For those indeed are the expellers of evil!”  
[Yasna 48.11,12]

The 3-part series which have appeared in Issues 4/07, 1/08 & 2/08 were a combination of Farrokh Vajifdar's lecture in June 2007, at the WZO seminar held at London.



**From the Pahlavi Text - Menog-i Khrad ("The Spirit of Wisdom").**

The sage asked the Spirit of Wisdom thus:  
'Is wisdom good, or skill, or goodness?'

The Spirit of Wisdom answered thus:  
'Wisdom with which there is no goodness, is not to be considered as wisdom; and skill with which there is no wisdom, is not to be considered as skill.'

Farrokh Vajifdar's profile  
appears on p 32



## Parsis of Sind

The following is from an article published in the "Rast Gofar" Bombay, of 30 July 1893, on "Parsis of Sind", written in Gujarati by Kaikhoushrou N Kabraji. Translated by late Gool Behram Rustomji.

“

I notice that Englishmen living here do not speak well of the Parsis. While disagreeing with their opinion, I tell them frankly that Karachi should be proud of its Parsi citizens. Wherever I turn, I see Parsi leadership.

“The greatest business magnate here is a Parsi, whose business cannot be matched by the joint enterprises of anyone in the whole of Sind or the Punjab. In fact, it would not be wrong to say that even Bombay cannot boast of such an enterprise. The largest landowner here is a Parsi. The biggest shopkeeper is a Parsi. A Parsi runs the largest aerated waters factory. The first to open a bookshop here is a Parsi. Printers and publishers here are Parsis. The most successful photographer is a Parsi. In short wherever I turn my gaze, I find that Parsis have reached a high status due to their pioneering spirit. In spite of that I cannot understand why Englishmen speak ill of the Parsis.”

These heart warming words were uttered by a high ranking British Officer, when I went to visit him in Karachi. My own impressions of Sind during my brief visit can be contained in the words of this appreciative British gentleman.

In my previous article, I wrote about the Muslims of Sind. The Hindus of Sind filled another chapter. The Amils of Sind had special mention. Now the little that remains to be said is about the Parsis residing in Sind. Everything about them inspires joy and satisfaction. Wherever a Parsi has settled, he is happy – and in Sind, he is really happy.

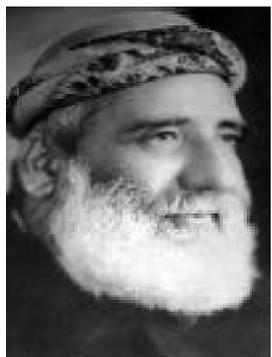
The city of Karachi seems like a reflection of Bombay. The Parsis have played a great role in the development of Karachi. Karachi is a miniature Bombay. Today's Karachi is larger than what the land of Bombay was,

previously. But because of its smallness in size, it is not going to remain small. Just as Bombay flourished within a short spell of time, Karachi is also progressing by leaps and bounds. Its port, its harbour, its railways, its business, its population, its industries, its defence projects, its boundaries and even its lighthouses are expanding. By investing millions in all these projects, it has gained untold returns. The people of Karachi boast that soon they will out do Bombay. This seems very unlikely, but I have no doubt that as time goes by, Karachi will prove a formidable competitor of the city of Bombay.

Bombay prospered as Surat fell into the background. Even so, some believe that Karachi may rise on the decline of Bombay. That is a far-fetched cry. It is more likely that with the rise of Bombay, Karachi may gain equal status in the near future. And, just as in Bombay, in the progress and prosperity of Karachi, the Parsis are lending a hand. Primarily, it was mainly the Parsis who came from Surat and with the development of Bombay, Parsis also prospered. Parsis have had a hand in the progress of Karachi from its very inception. Therefore with the future progress of Karachi, is interwoven the future prosperity of Parsis.

Everywhere in Sind can be witnessed the increasing status of the Parsis. In Hyderabad, Sukkur, Multan, Shikarpur or Quetta, Parsis occupy positions of honour or are pioneers in business or industry. Mr Pallonji the Headmaster of the High School in Karachi, is a Parsi of repute. Even the Headmaster of the High School in Hyderabad, Mr Khurshedji Nusserwanji Contractor, is a long standing resident of that city.

Karachi's Health Officer, Dr Kaka, is a Parsi. Even the Military doctor of Kotri, Dr Talati, is a Parsi. [Dr Pestonji Dorabjee Talati



Kaikhoushrou N Kabraji  
Photograph from A  
Zoroastrian Tapestry: Art,  
Religion & Culture by  
Mrs. Pheroza J. Godrej and  
Mrs. Firoza Punthakey  
Mistree. Publisher: Mapin  
Publishing Pvt. Ltd.,  
Ahmedabad, with  
permission.



Dr Pestonji Dorabjee Talati. Courtesy Maneck Talati



Edulji Dinshaw Dispensary, which is still functioning



Prof Burjorji Padshah - portrait displayed in KPIs Mavalvala Hall

according to a booklet printed on the Talati's of Sind and in the possession of Dr Gool Talati, was the vice president of the Municipality at Kotri and in his later years worked in the municipality dispensary, The Edulji Dinshaw Dispensary at Karachi - Ed]. The head Professor of the Sind College, Prof Padshah, is a Parsi. Mr Kharegat, the Sessions Judge of Shikarpur is also a Parsi. The Chief Officer of the Forest Department of Sind, Mr Desai, is a Parsi. The Executive Engineer of the Government Engineering Department of Hyderabad Division, Mr Pattick, is a Parsi. Similarly in every field, it is most gratifying to see the Parsis rising to high positions in Sind.

A stranger travelling in Sind may get the impression that all the enterprises covering not only the port of Karachi, but extending from Kotri to Sukkur and Multan, including the railways, refreshment rooms, ice factories, aerated water factories etc., have been monopolised by the Parsis.

The Hindus specialised in such trades as "halvas" of Nagarthatta, or "pandas" of Sukkur. They continue to do so. The hand embroidery of Hyderabad and the counterpane weaving of Shikarpur remain in the hands of the natives of those places. But new western styled factories of cotton, ice, aerated waters etc., have been initiated by the Parsis.

It seems, as if adventurous Parsi building contractors have transferred their skills to Sind, due to decreasing business in Bombay. The projects constructed by Parsis from Karachi to Quetta and the examples of wealth amassed by them by large military assignments given to Parsis are awe inspiring.

The hospitality, friendship and kindness extended by Parsis to their coreligionists knows no bounds. And yet, within their own small community, not only to disagreements about but blind jealousy and false pride cause chasms, as is proverbial about the Parsis.

I have witnessed with genuine joy the help and hospitality rendered to a Parsi traveller



Mooltan Railway Station. Handpainted postcard, early 20 century



Nusserwanjee & Co, manufacturers of aerated waters, floor tiles etc. Owing ice factory amongst other things. Postcard, sepia, dated 1901



Eduljee Dinshaw. Portrait hanging in Heerjibhoy J Behrana Parsi Fire Temple

at railway stations in Sind, either by a Parsi guard, a station master or a caterer. I acknowledge with special gratitude the assistance and refreshments given to me at the Kotri and Sukkur stations.

The adventurous spirit of the Parsis shines out more brilliantly in business rather than in service. It is heartening to see the success of the Parsis of Sind in business and industry. It is more so, as the Parsis of Bombay are being accused of forsaking their businesses. It appears that the Parsis of Sind are determined to stay clear of such an accusation.

At this end, some of the enterprises which are very prosperous, are quite an innovation. In Quetta, the flourishing businesses of the competitive Khan Bahadurs are reminiscent of the large shops of the Punthakies of Hyderabad, Nagpur and Jabbalpur or the concerns of the Jassawallas, which extend from Lahore to Peshawar. But nearing Karachi, this prosperity accrues from more ingenious projects.

From the commencement of the growth of the port of Karachi to this very day – ie. almost 35 – 40 years, the name of Mr Maneckji Colabawalla is being mentioned with respect and reverence. He was once the owner of large lands and properties in Karachi. With his wealth he had secured for himself a place of prestige amongst the Britishers. His orchards in Malir can still be seen as a vast jagir [area] by passengers journeying by train across that area.

Those orchards are today in the possession of his witty and humour loving son. Burjorji. It is said that the largest landowner today is Mr Eduljee Dinshaw who, from abject poverty has risen to be a successful military contractor only during the last Afghan War. Today, half of Karachi belongs to him.

The name of another famous Parsi is already known to your readers. He became

famous due to his business acumen and his spirit of adventure in different parts of the world. The stories of his travels are still prevalent in your records. This reference is to Mr Jehangir Hormusjee Kothari. He held a place of esteem in the hearts of the Britishers of Karachi.

As mentioned earlier, a British officer opined that the most successful photographer was a Parsi. I am doubtful whether any Parsi photographer of Bombay has attained, in so short a period, the success which this gentleman, Mr Jalbhoy of Karachi has



Jehangir Kothari

acquired in his business. There are other photographers in Karachi, but Mr Jalbhoy is well known, not only to the highest ranking British Officers but also the humblest citizens of Karachi. It is hardly possible that the picture of any renowned personage, past or present, could be absent from his studio. There must be some very special qualities in this Parsi businessman to be able to attract such a wide and varied British clientele.

But the mainspring of success of the Parsis of Karachi, is their influence amongst the Britishers, their popularity, their wide circulation, their friendliness, their acquaintanceship. The same was said of the Parsis of Bombay at one time.

Stories are still prevalent of how Parsi aristocrats of yore kept Governors and Councillors under their thumb. Today we have a semblance of some such thing in Karachi. The Britishers of Bombay are

willing to enroll Parsis as volunteers whereas in Karachi, they are more than willing to do so. This proves my point to some extent.

In Karachi today, the largest contingent of Volunteers is of Parsis. Their joining the forces has made some low grade Eurasians and Goans quite colour conscious and they have resigned from the Volunteer Corps. However, I have had the opportunity of talking to more than one true Englishman in Karachi who has rejoiced to let those Goans resign in favour of Parsis as Volunteers in their regiment. Mr Roberts, the Secretary of Sind Club, expressed that he preferred to stand in line with Parsi gentlemen in the Volunteer Corps rather than with cooks and others like them.

The greatest example of the success of Parsis of Sind remains to be quoted. That is of Mr Hormusjee Jamshedjee Rustomjee Ghadiali – well known by his British appellation Mr H J Rustomji.

Mr Hormusjee is the son of a poor Parsi watchmaker of Bombay who came to Karachi in the wake of its rise. His aged father is still alive and he still resides in the humble dwelling from where he rose to his present position of fame and prosperity. I cannot recollect any Parsi businessman who has achieved such renown and having attained it, retained it as Mr Hormusjee did, through his wide business contacts with Europe and America.

His Karachi office is a veritable palace. Its showroom is quite a museum. His godowns and storehouses occupy such a vast area that rails have been laid on which trollies ply in order to commute.

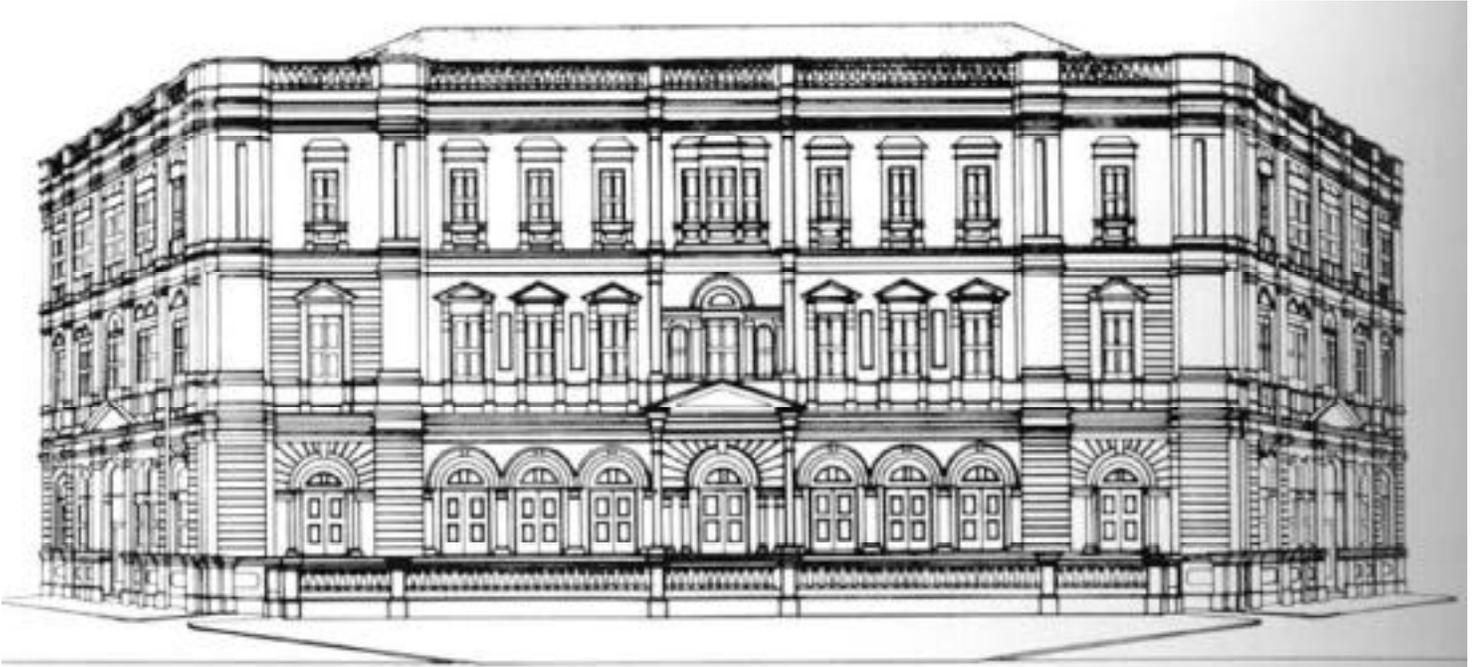
All the markets of Sind and the Punjab are open to him and he has the monopoly of all its trade. Many have tried unsuccessfully to compete with him. He destroys his competitor even at a personal loss, just to retain his influence with the West. I have no hesitation in stating that he is the only Parsi businessman who knows how to wield such tactics.



Photograph of Parsi volunteers digging a trench during the Camp of Exercise in 1915. The Karachi Zoroastrian Calendar - Jehangir F Punthakey, 1919



Hormusjee Jamshedjee Rustomjee Ghadiali - "HJ". Photograph taken for Queen Victoria's levy



The Rustomjee Building (1891). Karachi - The Dual City, Yasmeen Lari, with permission

Vast as his business is, his branches are widely spread all over Sind. Those who serve him carry on the business with the same precision and know how. A visit to his office gives a faint idea of his excellent organisation. Detailed arrangements have been made for cables and telephones, fire extinguishers and all necessary gadgets and equipment. The arrangement is so perfect that should the need arise to send a message or to sound a fire alarm, it could be executed within the flicker of an eyelid. Everything is so systematically organized that at a moment's notice, records are available of the earliest orders of cotton or wool, or a needle and thread, or glassware, ironware, crockery, paper, material soap etc.

In short, nowhere even in Bombay, which is the stronghold of industry, can be found such a training ground of how a real business magnate runs his trade and how he enhances his business. It can only be seen in the office of this Parsi businessman of Karachi. However much you may bemoan the downward trend of the prosperity of the Parsis of Bombay, there is no doubt that the prosperity of the Parsis of Sind is once again on the rise. ■■■

[Looking for a photograph in my cupboard last year, I found this type written translation given to me many years ago by my dear friend Behram Sohrab Hormusjee Jamshedjee Rustomjee, (he loved writing his full name!) grandson of the same HJ as known by the family, and husband of Gool. Both Behram and Gool were educationists in the true sense of the word, committed to teaching all their lives. HJ was my husband Cyrus' maternal great grandfather. For history buffs and Karachi-ites, this article is reproduced today. – Ed]



Gool Behram Rustomjee. Courtesy Soonamai Dessai, daughter

# Lady in the Rough Crowd - India's First Woman

## Photojournalist 1936 – 70

Soonu Engineer reports for Hamazor

**Always** dressed in a simple white sari and plain sandals, Homai Vyarawalla tried to be as inconspicuous as possible amongst the crowd of press photographers she worked with, during her career as a chronicler of the last decade of the Raj and the turbulent infancy of the Indian Republic. But being the only woman professional amongst them, she was singled out as 'the Lady in the rough crowd.'

Now at the grand old age of 95 ('I call myself 59', she quips), Homai set off for foreign shores for the first time in her life, at the invitation of Harvard University and the Northwest University, Chicago. She accompanied her chronicler, Sabeena Gadihoke, who presented Homai's work to academics and media students, setting it in its social and historical context. Sabeena and Homai were also invited to the UK by the University of Westminster on 16<sup>th</sup> May and after Sabeena's speech to a packed hall, Homai Vyarawalla took questions from the floor.

**Q** How did you become a photo-journalist?

**A** My husband was a professional photographer and taught me how to

use a camera and to develop pictures in the dark room. He was almost a pioneer in creating picture-stories of ordinary people's lives.

I didn't do studio pictures. Editors at the time wanted posed pictures so we had to re-educate the editors. I believed that either you take the picture spontaneously or you miss it. Our Prime Minister [Nehru], though, loved to be photographed – he could have been an actor.

I was very fortunate in being able to take photographs without being noticed. They [officials] usually thought I was just fooling around, so I would quietly take the picture and walk away. Once, a Newsreel cameraman was given the same assignment as me. It was to do with an 'iron lung' that had just been



Sabeena Gadihoke & Homai Vyarawalla at University of Westminster, London

invented and I got to the hospital where everyone was waiting for the shoot and no one took any notice of me. He too thought that I was there to

have fun. So I took the pictures and the next day they were in the Illustrated Weekly of India. After that he had me banned if he was going to do an assignment!

**Q** What do you think has changed since your time as a photographer?

**A** I believe in privacy and in not creating a bad impression of people – not to go against the dignity of the VIPs whom I photographed. I remember when the Russian, Marshall Zukov, a jolly man, came to meet the President of India and wanted to ride an elephant. The Maharajah of Mysore had given a huge elephant for the purpose and Zukov enjoyed his ride. When he was about to dismount, he misjudged, slid down the side of the elephant and I captured this on my camera. At the time there were many people who were against

Soonu Engineer's profile appears on p 66

the Russians and would have loved to have that photograph published. I never used the picture. It was only 50 years later that I allowed it to be shown at an exhibition.

**Q** Who was your favourite dignitary?

**A** Ho Chi Minh. It was the simplicity of the man. He was such a great writer and statesman but he took a genuine interest in people, talking to them and getting acquainted.

I remember the reception he attended at the Red Fort. On these occasions it was the usual practice to have two very grand chairs, for the President and the honoured guest. He looked at the chairs and asked why they were different from the rest. He refused to sit on them and had them removed.

He was presented with a carpet and unlike other dignitaries did not hand it over to his assistant but carried it up and down with him and over his shoulder. That made an impression on me.

Just before he was due to leave the country, he came over to me. We had never been introduced but he just walked up to me and said, 'my friend, my friend.' So I can't help liking him since he seemed to like me!

**Q** How did your husband react to you being in competition with him?

**A** Well, I learnt everything from my husband. We could only afford one Rolleiflex camera so we had to share it. I would rush up to him and take it when I needed it. We were a partnership. We did everything at the time: we took the pictures, developed and printed them and radioed them to the agencies. When he got a job in Delhi, I followed him with my son and mother-in-law. I started work in Delhi as a freelancer in 1951. It was a flexible arrangement.

Women were supposed to first look to the convenience of the household. The family would have to be looked after very well otherwise working outside the home would not be appreciated. I used to join the milk queue

at 4.30am. I had to look after my mother-in-law, cook and clean the house before leaving for work at 7a.m. The cooking had to be done on kerosene and coal, so it wasn't easy. After the day's work at the office, I went on photo assignments. I had to develop the frames at night and send them out in the morning.

It was all a question of love – love for the family and enjoyment of my professional life.

**Q** Is it true you were a trend-setter?

**A** I had lost a lot of hair after having my child, so I decided to cut it. I saw the 'feather cut' in Life magazine and copied it. I have, since then, always cut my own hair. As soon as Indira Gandhi saw me she wanted to copy the style as well.

**Q** Do you still drive?

**A** Why not? It's my body that is old – not me. I call myself 59 though I'm 95. I still drive the first car I had in 1955.

**Q** Where did you most enjoy working?

**A** Rural India is my favourite place. The atmosphere is nice and the people are so hospitable. I loved watching the women. They worked so hard. They used to be thrilled to see the pictures. 'Will you send them to us?' they asked. And we did, of course. They were beautiful, the women and men – the fisherwomen especially. Such sturdy people; such extraordinary work.

**Q** Did you feel you were capturing history for posterity?

**A** Not at all! There were always 20 to 30 other photographers around. Those working for the press were interested only in VIPs. I had a different practice. Of course, I would snap the VIPs but I would stay behind after everybody thought that the photographers had gone – *that's when* I took the best pictures.

**Q** Why did you suddenly stop working?

**A** It was the disrespect. During the 'Emergency' I was in Rajasthan. What I saw,

I didn't like. The police took over and thought they were masters of the city. This family-planning business with Sanjay Gandhi... giving quotas ... I felt so sorry for the people. Dishonest people tricked innocent villagers: they didn't realise what was being done to them.

It was the first time that I voted against the Congress Party – because of the Emergency.

I noticed at the time that photographers were behaving in ways I didn't approve and, in turn, the officials were getting rude and discourteous. After one such experience, I decided to pack up my camera and I never touched it again.

**Q** Didn't anyone ask you to take pictures [in Baroda] where you retired with your family?

**A** Nobody knew about me there and there was no demand for the kind of photographs I took.

[Sabeena took up the story] It was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence and people were searching for photographs and couldn't find them even in the Government of India library. In the 40s and 50s, the agencies never paid attention to the proper processing of the negatives. Several people took the same picture and the Press Information Bureau took away their negatives. There aren't too many photo archives either.

Homai took special care when processing her negatives and her British employers allowed her to keep them. So it was her conscientious back room work and her free lance position that meant that she had a unique store of archival material. She was traced to her home town and a treasure trove of photographs was discovered. Unfortunately, a suitcase full of her best negatives went astray in transit.

**Q** What advice would you give to amateur photographers?

**A** Be honest. Don't put your own thoughts in the picture. Don't manipulate photographs with technology. Respect other people's privacy.



Homai signing in Camera : Chronicles of Homai Vyrawalla by Sabeena Godihoke



Homai, Monica Baker who made a documentary on Homai about 10 years ago and Sabeena

Photographs courtesy of Sammy Bhiwandiwalla

The full story on Homai & her work appeared in Hamazor issue 2/07, pp 41-47

## Finding Old Friends, Making New Ones on the Web

by farishta dinshaw

**The** term diaspora or 'scattering of people from their homelands' aptly describes the dispersal of Zoroastrians from Iran, India and Pakistan to Australia, Europe, and North America in the last fifty years. Zoroastrian communities in the larger metropolitan areas of the 'new homelands' establish association to try and keep the community united, but due to widespread settlement in suburbs and smaller towns, many immigrants becoming increasingly isolated from the community. Where once people may have lived in housing complexes with over a 1000 Zoroastrians, they may now live a 1000 miles from the nearest Zoroastrian family. International, regional and national conferences provide infrequent opportunities for mingling, meeting and sharing information and ideas, and many community leaders share the concern that Zoroastrians, particularly the second generation youth, will assimilate into the larger populations and lose touch with their roots.

Not that the roots are flourishing. The original homelands may be in the same geographical region, but communication between the Zoroastrian communities in these three countries has been limited because of political tensions within and between the countries in the last thirty years. This has led to Zoroastrian communities in these countries to become contained within their own boundaries, rarely knowing the trends, issues and problems of co-religionists across the border. The difference in language and culture between the Iranian Zoroastrians and the Parsi Zoroastrians adds another dimension to the distancing.

Fortunately, the development of cyberspace technologies has given Zoroastrians a new lease of life. Individuals and groups can now share their day to day lives in real time despite being separated by geographical distances and time zones. Communication

does not require any physical movement other than typing on a keyboard. Cyberspace has allowed "deterritorialised" solidarity to grow amongst strangers who share a communal identity. This article showcases some cyberspace sites that forge bonds among Zoroastrians world wide.

### The Missing Parsi

URL: [www.themissingparsicom.com](http://www.themissingparsicom.com)  
Ader Gandhi, San Francisco, and Yazdi Tantra, Mumbai, started *TheMissingParsi.com* on 1 October 2005. The purpose of *TheMissingParsi.com* is to use the power of the Internet and the phenomenon of 'six degrees of separation' to help people connect with Parsi classmates, neighbours, colleagues that they have lost touch with. Users post a brief description of the person they are looking for including any dates, locations, nicknames that may provide a clue to the identity of the missing Parsi. The chances are that one of the browsers on the site will know the whereabouts of the missing Parsi and will respond to the website administrators or to the person directly. Currently, there are 90 searches listed, many of them resolved.

### Ushatebook

URL: [www.ushtatebook.com](http://www.ushtatebook.com)  
The brainchild of Montreal-based Leena Lakdawala and Aurelio Useche, this is a social networking site like Facebook, but limited only to those who identify as Zoroastrians. The idea is to provide a forum for far flung Zoroastrians to meet in one place. Uploaded in January 2008, so far the site has over 1,400 users from around the world, although not surprisingly the largest representation is from India. On the site, members have their own personal page on which they can stamp their personality with wallpapers, photographs, music, videos,

and blogs. Friends and potential friends can leave messages on each other's personal pages. The degree of privacy can be adjusted according to individual tastes to determine who can read the blog posts or flip through the photographs. In addition, members can participate in public discussions on topics ranging from age-old questions like "Why recite the Khordeh Avesta when you cannot understand it?" to more time-limited topics such as the Olympics, and the Clinton-Obama campaign. There are also more than 70 specialty groups for those interested in cooking, jewellery, travel, films, books, martial arts, wrestling, dream cars, even horses. A large number of Association and Federations have a place on the site to keep their members and the larger community apprised of their activities. An Events tab allows users to post information about upcoming occasions from Earth Day to birthday celebrations. Membership is through invitation only to maintain a safe, respectful site for all ages, and to avoid spamming, solicitations, and fake identities. Interested Zoroastrian can write to the Administrators at [info@zvsinvestments.com](mailto:info@zvsinvestments.com) to request an invitation.

### Zoroastrians.Net

URL: [www.zoroastrians.net](http://www.zoroastrians.net)  
Initiated on 5 September 2007, this website aims to be a clearinghouse of all things Zoroastrians. The self-proclaimed objective is to "bring the community under one roof" by providing a space where visitors can come to browse, leave a message, a link, or a comment, promote their business, or add just about anything that may be of interest to Zoroastrians (eg. baby names, recipes, Parsi authors). The alphabetized categories range from Agiaris and Atash Behrams to Zoroastrians Over the World. There is a feature under each post for other readers to leave a comment or ask a question.

Virasp Mehta, editor of the on-line Ushao, Journal of Informal Religious Meetings, expired on 2 June due to post-operative complications. Hamazor will be carrying a tribute to Virasp in the next issue.

## An Interview with Ader Gandhi

Ader Gandhi, born in Karachi, but now shuttling between Mumbai and San Francisco, is a former mortgage specialist who was one of the first Zoroastrians to understand the potential and power of the world wide web. In 2003, he created the website *TheParsiChronicle* which reportedly boasts 100,000 visitors to date. Since then he has created several other websites like *TheParsiMatch.com*, a soul mate search site for Zoroastrians; *TheParsiDirectory.com* in partnership with Yazdi Tantra in Mumbai, which has more than 50,000 Zoroastrians on it, and *TheParsiVideo.com*, a website on which Zoroastrians can upload and view videos about the community. Gandhi refers to it as an archive of our community's audiovisual history. However, one of his most interesting ideas is to host a sort of cyberspace lost and found site, except that instead of looking for lost briefcases, the website helps locate missing friends. In this interview with *Hamazor*, Gandhi talks about his pet project, *TheMissingParsi.com*.



**Q** How did you get the idea for The Missing Parsi?

**A** After I started [www.TheParsiChronicle.com](http://www.TheParsiChronicle.com) about once a week someone would write to me asking me if I knew the whereabouts of their missing uncle or their long lost cousin. I don't know why people thought I was such an authority on everything Parsi, but it made me realise that there was a void. It was these emails that I received that gave me the idea to form a website that would be geared exclusively to put people in touch with missing friends and family. The name *TheMissingParsi* occurred to me out of the blue, and I ran it by some friends who thought it was a great title particularly as I was in the process of branding my websites in partnership with Yazdi Tantra. We liked the notion of continuity given by the

**Who is the person you'd most like to meet?**

Probably Mahatma Gandhi.

**What food won't you touch?**

I am pretty adventurous. Just finished having goat's head in Paris, with tongue, ears, cheek and all.

**What three words would your friends use to describe you?**

Mind of his own.

**What music do you listen to?**

Singer song writers, ofcourse Tom Waits.

**What was the last book you read?**

Just finished one on Soutine.

**What are you passionate about?**

My independence, travel, appreciating beauty.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Convertibles, but don't feel too guilty :)

words "the" and "Parsi" in the titles. So now we have The Parsi Chronicle, The Parsi Video, The Missing Parsi, The Parsi Directory, and so on.

**Q** How much time do you spend on maintaining the site?

It doesn't take much time at all, perhaps 15 minutes a week. I deal with approximately a case a week, and there isn't much to the actual mechanics of it.

**Q** What has been the success rate?

**A** One in every two cases gets solved, which I think is fantastic. If you read some of the case histories it is really incredible to see people finding each other after 40 years! The site works because the idea is very simple, yet powerful, and because we are such a niche community. The online community created by the Internet helps too.

**Q** How do you publicize it?

**A** I used to publicize the website by buying Google ad words, but that started to get really costly, so now it is simply word of mouth. Many associations world wide have promoted the site to their members so the word gets out. It is amazing how many people know about it.

**Q** What has been the highlight of it for you?

**A** Oh, of all the Parsi/Zoroastrian websites I run, this has become my pet project. When I read some of the case histories it actually gives me goose bumps. My first case remains one of my favourites. The people had lost touch with each other in 1962 and over forty years later, a few days after I created the web site in 2005, the case was solved! How amazing is that? What are the odds? And then there was a case where someone was trying to find a Parsi pilot who lost his job with Indian Airlines for giving joy rides to poor people [Case #15]. That is a classic example. I mean, you can't make up these stories. I get a lot of blessing from people; it is immensely gratifying.

**Q** What are some of the challenges of managing a site like this?

**A** One of the challenges has been dealing with situations where people are upset with the information that is posted on the web site. For

example, you tell me you are looking for a long lost friend. I have no way to validate the veracity of your story so I post it on the website, and it turns out that he was actually your boy friend who is now happily married and has a new life and wife, and he is upset that I have been able to put you in touch with him. There is nothing I can do about these situations.

**Q** Any plans for changes, expansions in the future?

**A** I don't anticipate making it any more sophisticated, or making any changes to the process. The bottom line is that it works, and has brought some people together. For that, I am extremely grateful to Ahura Mazda.

**Note:**

Education and information websites like [www.vohuman.org](http://www.vohuman.org) or [www.parsikhabar.net](http://www.parsikhabar.net), and organization websites like [www.w-z-o.org](http://www.w-z-o.org) or [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org) have not been included because this article features a sample of interactive sites. If you are aware of other similar sites, please send the information to [toxy39@attglobal.com](mailto:toxy39@attglobal.com) for publication in future issues.

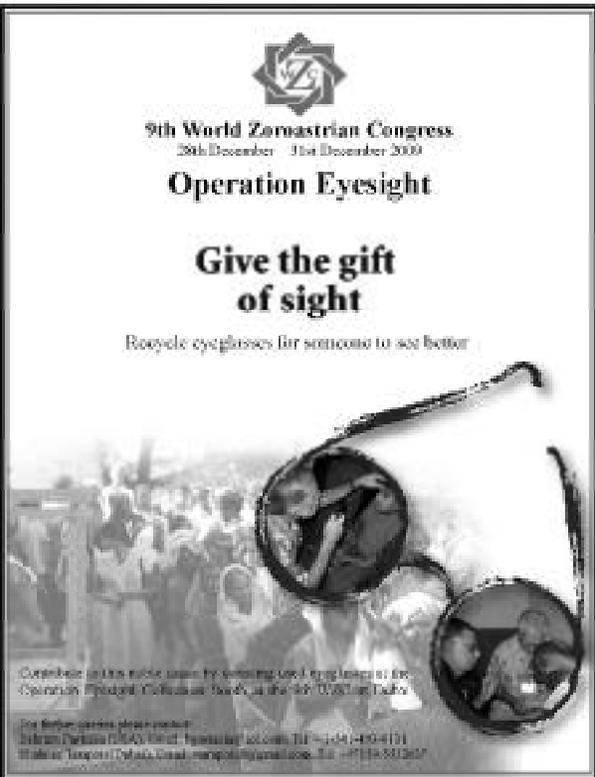


*Farishta Dinshaw has teaching in her genes. Currently she works as a Community Development Worker, Family Violence Initiative, supporting 11 ethno-cultural agencies in Toronto to raise awareness about violence against women, children & elders.*

*She has presented papers on various topics relevant to the Zoroastrian religion*

*and community at three international congresses. Farishta is also the author of the insightful story of a fictional boy befriended by Zarathushtra called "Discovering Ashavan".*

**From what we get, we can make a living; what we give, however, makes a life.** Arthur Ashe



Every day as the rising sun paints the world's horizons for all to enjoy there are many who do not share in this simple beauty of nature, their vision eclipsed by blindness. To step into this dark void and take action in making a difference in the lives of those around us, is the calling of **Operation Eyesight**.

**Global Need for Eyeglasses**

Refractive errors are easily diagnosed, measured and corrected with eyeglasses, yet millions of people worldwide do not have access to these basic services. Individuals and families are frequently pushed into a cycle of deepening poverty because of their inability to see well.

**The Goal of Operation Eyesight**

The goal of the programme is to meet the need for vision care - providing intended beneficiaries access to skilled personnel and properly calibrated lenses. Recycling used eyeglasses is a time tested, simple and effective way to accomplish this objective.

**A Zoroastrian Legacy**

As a Global Zoroastrian community we started on the journey of **Operation Eyesight** at the 7th World Zoroastrian Congress held in Houston, Texas at the turning of the present millenium. To continue with this legacy in coming

together to work together, our next milestone will be the 9th World Zoroastrian Congress in Dubai scheduled for December 2009. We have developed partnerships with Lions Clubs in North America, Africa and India who have taken ownership of the idea. Collaborations with individuals, institutions and organizations who care for those handicapped from low vision and disabilities are constantly being sought and enhanced.

**Collection Procedure**

Look through your desks, drawers and closets for used and usable eyeglasses (sun-glasses are not needed) and pack them with you when you come to Dubai for the 9thWZC. If you are not able to fly due to time constraints, health reasons or financial restraints, find a Zoroastrian in your community who plans to attend the World Congress and request the participant to pack the eyeglasses in his bag. He or she will be more than happy to be involved in a humanitarian endeavour. Between now and December 2009 there will be plenty of opportunities to collect eyeglasses by putting out a collection box with an appropriate poster when seasonal Zoroastrian celebrations such as Tirgan, Mehrgan, Norooz, gambhars and religious classes are held at the local Dar-e-Mehrs and local association community halls. Appropriately designed posters for collecting eyeglasses are available and can be sent electronically. Or you can create your own! These can be printed or converted into banners on site to get the word out. Children with parental support could make **Operation Eyesight** a leadership project in their school classrooms; the teachers will welcome such initiatives. The project is structured to include families who may be living in small towns, scattered in our worldwide Zoroastrian diaspora, not near any sizeable Zoroastrian community and yet who choose to remain connected with the global Zoroastrian community through cyberspace.

**Travel**

If you would like to be involved with a more hands-on approach, by travelling to a developing country, and participating in an eye-camp, opportunities are available. While costs for local stay are often provided by the local partnering charitable organization, the cost of travel to the eye-camp will be yours to bear.

Help us fulfill this vision by volunteering and sharing your ideas and resources so that we can give rise to a new day, a day when preventable blindness is all but eradicated. A day for all the world to see. ■■■

Contacts:  
 Shahnaz Tarapore  
 (Dubai)  
 starapore8@gmail.com  
 Behram Pastakia  
 (USA)  
 bpastakia@aol.com

# A Race around the World

by dinshaw avari

**Clipper** Ventures' Round the World Race is the only non-professional RTW ocean race currently. It started on September 16, 2007 from Liverpool and will return mid July 2008.

There are seven legs in the Race: Liverpool – La Rochelle (France) – Salvadore (Brazil); Salvadore – Durban (South Africa); Durban – Fremantle (Australia); Fremantle – Singapore – Qingdao; Qingdao – Hawaii – Santa Cruz (USA); Santa Cruz – Panama Canal – Jamaica; Jamaica – New York – Nova Scotia – Cork – Liverpool.

Ten ocean-going yachts, each with a professional Race Skipper participate – and each yacht is sponsored by a major city/country in the world. I was on Jamaica.

The yachts are all one design – 20.8 meters in length; 5.76 meter beam (widest part of the yacht); 3 meter draft (deepest part of keel from waterline); 27.6 meter mast height; 31 tons displacement; sleeps 18 people (in bunks); a galley, salon, navigation station and two heads (toilets).



Jamaica reefed

All eight sets of sails (not counting the main sail) are stored in their respective sail covers on the floors of our living quarters. So, getting in or out of your bunk entailed stepping on and going over one or more sails. The sails are tough – and not like dinghy sails – in fact, people used to sleep on the sails at times when their bunk was wet, or if it was cooler, on the sails rather than in their bunk.



Dinshaw at the helm - start of the race

There are two types of crew in these races - round the worlders (RTW) and the leggers. As the name implies, the RTW's were those that started and end with the race (10 months!) and the leggers were those – like me – who chose one or more legs to do. I signed on for Leg 4 - Fremantle to Singapore (race 1) and onwards to Qingdao (Race 2).

## Fremantle to Singapore

Leg 4 consisted of 13 crew (including me) and our Skipper- Simon. We started our race on

January 1, 2008 at 2pm (Perth/Fremantle time). Next stop – *Singapore!*

I was honoured by getting the starting helmsman position in this race. Our route was to be a direct North-Westerly route up the South Indian Ocean and through the Sunder Straits (Indonesia).

The first few days saw increasing winds and choppy seas and majority downwind sailing with the middle-weight spinnaker up. Racing 24 hours was a new and novel experience for most of us; sailing at night was even more exciting and at times, in those initial days of wind and chop, slightly intimidating. We had

sailed 24 hours in our training parts, but this was different – here we were not in sight of land, knowing we wouldn't be at our destination for a couple of weeks! In our red-eye shift on January 4<sup>th</sup>, while on the helm, I got smacked and I yelped in surprise – what a laugh we all had when we realized it was a flying fish that hit my cheek.

Soon, the wind and sea state died to almost a crawl for most of the journey to the Sunder Straits. Most of those days would be hot, cloudless and extremely light winds, when we

were not doing more than 5-6 knots of boat speed (1 knot = 1.15 mph). So much so, that in our off-watch, we'd actually sleep or relax on deck in the shade of the sails! On many days the clouds would be all around us but not over us – like sailing in a clear hole with the sun beating down on us - which reminded me of Indians circling a cowboy's caravan, just as we used to see on TV when we were kids! Eventually we were told that the recorded temperature in this race was as high as 45° C! UNBEARABLE.

We finally hit the Sunder Straits on January 12<sup>th</sup> – it was a milestone having crossed the South Indian Ocean! While it was still hot, due to better winds and cloudier skies, it was now at least bearable on deck. Going through Sunder, we saw the Rikkatoa volcano erupting. What a sight! For a short period after the Straits, we were up to 10-11 knots of speed with some surfing which felt exhilarating.

On January 16, around 3.35pm (Perth time), we crossed the equator from the Southern to the Northern hemisphere! There's a ceremony undertaken whenever people sail across the equator for the first time and, we too had to go through "Neptune's Crossing the Line Ceremony". These are traditional celebrations on an Equator crossing, where 'King Neptune' pays a visit and the uninitiated are 'judged' in his court. The other RTW's had already gone through a similar initiation when they crossed down to South America. Simon came up on deck dressed as "Neptune's Representative" in a black Jamaican wig, and a boat hook in his hand; and Ralph (a RTWer) read out the "charges" (which he had fabricated against each of us); while John (another RTWer) dished out slop onto each of us – with the balance (1/4 bucket) reserved and dished out on me! It was fun and enjoyable. Washing off the slop was not much fun, but the cool, seawater felt good. The slop prepared was basically oats and other fresh foodstuff put together – visually, it looked like something we all may have thrown up! At the end of the ceremony, Simon tipped over a small bottle of alcohol into the sea. Luckily this happened just a day before we were finishing, so I didn't mind the remains of the salt water on me.

We finished our race off Batam Island (Indonesia) in the afternoon of January 17<sup>th</sup> in ninth position and spent two days at Batam deep cleaning the boat. On January 19<sup>th</sup> we motored, in a flotilla, across to Singapore to a waiting crowd of spectators and VIPs, where my wife Dinaz surprised me. I had to actually take off my sunglasses to verify it really was her. What a lovely surprise!



Dinshaw being initiated on the Equator

**Singapore to Qingdao**

A week later we started our Qingdao race on Sunday, January 27, off Batam Island around 2:30pm (Singapore time). Once again, I was honoured to be the starting helmsman.



Arrival at Singapore. L to R: kneeling, Dinshaw 3<sup>rd</sup> from left

We had a fabulous start – crossing a few seconds after the starting gun – with only Qingdao on our weather. It was fantastic because the whole crew worked so well in unison and coordination. Unlike the Fremantle sector, we never faced light winds on this race. We averaged, I would think, 8 knots of boat speed through the three weeks. Initially, the first week was hot but the evenings and nights were very pleasant on the top decks (not below!).

Through most of the three weeks to Qingdao, we short tacked on either side of the rhumb line (the direct most line between two points), approximately every four hours. Throughout the race, we were beating (against the wind) unlike the earlier race where we generally were running or reaching (ie. wind behind or on our side).



Dinshaw attired with everything he had

Beginning of February, the waves and seas picked up but we continued to make good progress. Now and then we were getting freak waves which would spray the whole 70' deck! Good fun and exhilarating. By the time we hit the Taiwan Straits, we were in high seas (high chop), heavy and cold winds and a

continuous boat angle of 50°. Waves were regularly slamming over the boat and cockpit. Once Claire (a RTWer and my watch leader) was thrown out of her bunk hurting herself; on another occasion the same thing happened with Sara (a legger, also on my watch). By February 10<sup>th</sup>, we had not only reefed our main sail down completely but were on the Storm Jib in 3m waves! Those were the best helming days ever and I enjoyed every minute of it.

Very soon I was layered in multiple clothing - subsequently borrowing a pair of seal-skin socks from Ralph, which gave me some relief against the cold and wetness for two days. I had on a woolen cap which covered my ears plus a woolen ski cap; light wool socks, two pairs of heavy woolen socks; below my oilies two woolen vests, two thermal long johns, three cotton T-shirts, a light wool jacket and yachting mid-layers (salopettes and jacket). Since my boots were leaking, we were wearing plastic bags (in some cases two plastic bags) over our socks to stop the water soaking our feet, though, this did not stop the cold from getting in. Other than one pair of clean clothes which I had kept in reserve for Qingdao, I was wearing my entire kit.

Being a cold weather leg, there was condensation everywhere - on the ceiling, the walls, the sail covers, the floor. Nothing stayed dry. All my clothes were damp. One of the best investments made was to purchase an Ocean Sleepwear sleeping bag, which kept the condensation out. Due to the condensation, this would be damp from the outside but warm and

comfortable in the inside. I used to fold it up when not in use and let it lie on the bunk. When the shift finished, I'd put my clothes into another plastic bag otherwise in my four off-hours these would be wet. It was not pleasant wearing damp clothes in cold weather (learnt the hard way!).

Towards the end of this race, two of our crew suffered from cold exposure and had to be wrapped in thermal blankets. There were more chances of injuries below deck than up on top. We experienced one major storm off Taiwan and thought the worst was over - only to be hit two days later with a second storm. By this time there was no dry place on board (continuous condensation and moisture dripping off the ceilings, walls, floor and on sails).

Almost from day one of this race, we maintained 1<sup>st</sup> position. Then, due to a wrong tactic we lost out, within 24 hours, and were in 4<sup>th</sup>. We eventually finished in 5<sup>th</sup> position on February 14, with only a five minute difference with the 4<sup>th</sup> boat.

### Watch System

As we were only 13 people on board, Simon set us on a two-watch system of four hours "on" and four hours "off". Every second day we got two night shifts - and that was tough; but slowly your body adapted to these shifts!

On the warm leg from Fremantle to Singapore, one could get out of clothes and into the bunk pretty quickly (especially if you weren't wet from topside) - ensuring almost 3.5 hours sleep between watches. It was on the cold leg that I did not get the luxury of that time, due to number of clothes I wore. It took me almost 40 minutes to get ready for a shift and almost the same time to undress and into my bunk. This meant that my sleep time was reduced to just over 2.5 hours.

### Mother Watch

Mother watch is the domestic watch. The duties in this watch are shared by all the crew and are vital to the long-term efficiency and hygiene of the crew and yacht. These duties are:- breakfast, lunch, dinner with dessert, continuous beverages, bake bread &/or rolls, clean heads twice, clean living spaces, clean galley, empty bilges, empty grey tanks, bin rubbish in lazarette, check fruit and vegetables stowage.

Two mothers were always on duty – one from each watch – and over the course of the weeks, we generally had different partners. The same roster was used for both races. This meant, that at all times, on deck, each watch had one person less. In fact, at one point in one of the races, our watch was down to only three of us!

On our yacht, breakfast was scheduled for 8am, lunch 12 noon and dinner at 6pm. That meant that mothers were on duty from around 7am till 10pm. Long days! The only good thing was, on our yacht at least, mothers got to “sleep in” and not do night duties – for that matter, mothers coming on shift in the morning didn’t have to do the red-eye duty from 2am. Additionally, only mothers of the day got to wash their clothes and, more importantly, got one bowl of fresh water to bathe/sponge themselves with! That made up for all the hardships of being a mother.

Breakfast was an egg every second day, porridge or cereal; and of course tea/coffee/hot chocolate. Initially, at the start of each leg, we’d have milk from the carton but after had to be on milk powder (which I was not very good at mixing having mostly lumps for which everyone jumped on my back). My contribution towards cooking was 100% for breakfasts, as I used to make the eggs - I offered eggs to order on my duty, which I genuinely enjoyed.. Only in my last two mother watches (upto Qingdao), due to the rough seas, we stuck to scrambled eggs as the safest bet.

Lunches tended to be some sort of sandwich on freshly baked bread/rolls, soup or pasta. I was zero at baking and dinner was another that I put my hands up for. I can’t cook for Adam, but offset that by helping out in the prep work – peeling potatoes, cutting onions, tomatoes, deboning fish, etc – and in washing up after the meals. Dinner was canned foods which the mothers spiced up and made more interesting than what simply was in the can. All meals were on a weekly roster and after the week was up we’d revert back. Washing up was the most tiring part; and doing this on a heel (as we had to on our way to Qingdao) was even more so. Everything was washed in salt water first and then with a little fresh water. In between meals, we’d clean the heads, the salon and living quarters; with the galley left for the last at 10pm!

All waste items which were biodegradable went over the side - other items were double-bagged and stored in the lazarette (which was the storage area in the back) for disposal at the next port. As the days went by, we were more and more loathe to go into the lazarette due to the smell. In fact, every now and then the lazarette’s gas alarm went off due to the build-up and when that happened, we had to keep the hatches open during the day, to air out the compartment.



Dinshaw's hospital bunk - bed for 6 weeks

#### Life on Board

Basically, when you went off-watch at night, you hit the bunk. It was during the daylight hours, if you went off watch (normally during the afternoon watches) that I’d catch up with my emails from/to home and friends; joke around in the galley; maybe just sit in the bunk or salon and write up my daily diary; call home on the yacht’s satellite phone or listen to music. Once, Tim (a legger with me) brought a song from a Benny Hill poem which he and I sang to the others – what a fit we all were in.

Living in a calm sea was not a problem, the challenge arose, as it did in Race 2 of Leg 4, when one lived on a continuous heel (tilt/slant) of 45-50°. Add to that the “cold” element and you have the makings of what could possibly be a very unpleasant experience; but it’s just that ... an experience and how you take that experience is what counts. The body adapts – I couldn’t believe how my body and I (consciously or sub-consciously) adapted to living for almost three weeks on a continuous heel (on one tack and then the other) – you went to the head by bracing one leg up for support with one hand; you slept against the lee-cloth of the bunk (especially in the ‘hospital’ bunk in which I was), with the steel frame of the bunk against your spine; walking in the salon, the living areas, the galley, etc., with one or both hands grasping for support; sitting on the loo and praying you don’t get thrown through the cloth “door” by sheer

Dinshaw Avari holds LLB and MBA degrees, and his young career is replete with directorships in Spencer Pharma, Avari Travel Agencies & Avari International Hotels as well as holding chief executive and managerial positions. He is a keen member of various sports clubs and youth associations, having served in various capacities. Dinshaw's passion is sailing, having won two major events in 1979 and participated in six international events from 1981 to 2008. His other interests are water skiing, swimming, scuba diving, reading and movies.



gravity; being on mother duty and peeling potatoes or washing dishes or simply trying to make hot tea for seven other crew, or stirring a hot pot of curry and praying the boat does not lurch or bang down a wave thus burning you or spilling the food; trying to pump fresh water and fighting gravity because the tank you are pulling the water from lies on the side where the boat is heeled over; or simply sitting on the salon sofa opposite the heel and holding yourself physically back otherwise you'll find yourself head first the other side.

Even on deck, you slowly, subconsciously developed your "sea legs". When we first set out in Fremantle, I was falling all over the place; but slowly, as we walked the deck during the day and night, in calm or rough weather, I suddenly realized how much more comfortable and secure I felt.

Night time, especially in the southern hemisphere was terrific. We'd try to spy out the different stars and constellations. I saw, for the first time, the International Space Station (yellow light vs the stars, which were white); made out Orion; saw the Big Dipper (in the northern hemisphere); Cassius; etc. Helming at night also was an experience – and you didn't really need light to sail with, maybe only briefly when we needed to trim the sails or tack/gybe. Helming at night in heavy seas – in Race 2 – was an experience too; but by then I had got to know the yacht and was very comfortable with it. On a moonless night, all you could do basically is look at the compass and be guided by that. Especially when it was pitch black due to heavy weather, it was impossible to be guided by any stars or distant object. When you were tired, the red light of the compass was very disorienting and blinded your night vision.

Coming from the Sub-Continent, and that too from a religion only one person on board had briefly heard about, was quite intriguing to the others. I would explain about our religion; my life at home; the joint family system; living as a minority in a Muslim country and so on. They were quite intrigued with my life – and I think that before we even hit Singapore, they realized I was just "another guy" like them – only from another part of the world. Most of us were very open with our feelings on board – don't forget, we can't keep things within us living with 13 others continuously over 24 hours and five weeks! Living on a yacht for five weeks (not counting our week in Singapore) with 13 other people, there is no privacy – either in your bunk or in the salon,

on deck or in the galley; neither is the fact that you need to go to the toilet a private matter.

What is important is how you interact with the others on the boat. I interacted fully and openly. There were some who tended to stick to their own "circle"; and there was one who was a loner. Your level of interaction, I feel, dictates the amount of fun you have on board.

**Handling conflict** - There never was really any fight or such, but there were times if you were upset with someone on board, the only way to handle that was to confront the issue.

There were times when I would feel low or depressed – there's nothing you can do. Just roll with it and know that when you get on the next shift you'll feel better. A lot had to do with dehydration too and with tiredness; so I did get cycles of this.

**Mast duties** - were handled generally by only four of us. Between us also, only John and I went to the very top of the mast (28m up!). The glamour was quickly forgotten when the yacht was pitching or poling and you were trying to work on the very top with your hands and at the same time trying to stay steady for dear life. By the time you came down, other parts of your body were aching from the beating you got (being swung away from the mast and coming right back against it or some wire), or from simply trying to hold on with your legs and thighs. But what a view from up there ... you just can't beat it! Simon was extremely safety conscious – and over a certain wind strength or sea state would forbid us from going up.

**Toilet** - going to the head was an experience in itself for me. More so, when you consider that 14 of us were sharing two heads for five weeks. I only broke this psychological barrier on the race itself! That too, I stocked up before hand on seat covers (from airplanes) and brought along my camping soap and anti-bacterial spray.

I've finished this race and enjoyed coming home; but I know it's an experience I will cherish for the rest of my life. As Simon rightly put it in perspective to me, 'how many people can claim to have done what we did' - crossed the equator, the southern hemisphere to the Northern hemisphere, over two continents (Australia to Asia), a major Ocean (Indian), innumerable seas and straits, saw a live volcano, sailed 24 hours a day and had responsibility of 13 other people on board when on the helm.

# Perses Sethna - A Systems Engineer in the Community

by soonu engineer

**Perses** Sethna is an anomaly in today's corporate world where the successful business leader has several blue chip companies listed on their CV – he has just one, British Telecom. 'BT is so huge and diverse', he explains, 'that working across its many functions, national and global, gives you that breath of experience.'

Perses is the young and dynamic, Head of Global Propositions Development who is soon heading for an even bigger change-management role but in the same company. A graduate in Electrical Engineering from the elite science establishment, Imperial College, London, he has worked in engineering, sales, business consulting, marketing and commercial management. His current job is to ensure that BT's new products and services are developed and offered to customers in 120 countries, 'ensuring operational efficiency, a seamless service and low running cost.'

On a typical day, he might be working with cross-functional teams to 'create a roadmap of services for the year: prioritising investment, deciding on which services to target resources, and working with local and global teams on how to develop and deliver the products and services which customers need.'

Perses is one of the new breed of engineers whose management skills are as much valued as their technical expertise. He was among the first cohort of engineers to be awarded a bursary by the Sainsbury Management Fellows Society to study for an MBA in 1991. David Sainsbury (later Lord Sainsbury, Minister for Science in the Blair government) had identified a critical gap in British boardrooms where engineers were conspicuous by their absence. British engineers were handling multi-million pound projects and needed to develop commercial awareness and business acumen. Perses went to the INSEAD Business School in Fontainebleau, near Paris. Since then he has served on various Leadership Teams (previously known as Boards) within BT.

## Early Education

'My earliest education in management came from my experience of community work at Zoroastrian House,' he claims. 'I learnt to be comfortable in an environment where there were people of all ages, all backgrounds, from different areas and different countries. It set me up to understand the challenge of diversity and of getting the best out of people. Once you have a common cause and you identify the common goals, then everything about a team's behaviour is worked out from that point.'

Perses' parents, Cawas and Roshan Sethna, came to the UK when Perses was six years of age. Cawas Sethna had worked as an Aerospace Engineer to set up the first Indian rocket programmes in the Indian Air Force. The family settled in Hertfordshire where Cawas worked in the aerospace industry. Perses' mother, Roshan, worked in the civil service and was awarded an MBE in 1989 for meritorious service.

Young Perses, meanwhile, won a Hertfordshire County scholarship in 1973 to Berkhamsted Public School, a privileged world outside the normal state schooling system. This came at a cost: initially, he was the only non-white pupil in the school and experienced the name calling and discriminatory behaviour that was so common in UK schools in the 60s and 70s. His response to this is symptomatic of his general approach: 'I dealt with it in the best way I knew: to excel at studies, and particularly in the public school environment, to excel at sport.' He became the Captain of tennis and, despite his slim build, a member of the school rugby team (forward line).

## Service to the Community

Cawas and Roshan Sethna ensured that their children were well-integrated into the





Soonu Engineer is a freelance management and training consultant in UK, specialising in diversity management and conflict resolution. She has recently been coopted on the WZO committee.

Zoroastrian community. They brought them regularly to Zoroastrian House in West Hampstead, London and Cawas served as a Trustee of the Association for 7 years. He and the late Behroze Mody set up a nucleus for the young folk, running discos, camps and other social events. This eventually became the Young Zoroastrians (YZ) group and in 1987 Perses became its president.

Perses and his wife, Rukshana, met through the YZ – as did many other couples. They bring their three children – Natasha 8, Sam 5, and Carl 2 – to the Zoroastrian Centre, for the monthly children’s club. Though strong believers in maintaining the Zoroastrian traditions, they have given their children names which Perses says are ‘adaptable to both cultures’.

While building his career in BT, Perses also took a keen interest in community affairs and served as a member of the executive of ZTFE between 1993 and 1999. His way of handling the personality issues and conflicts prevalent in community organisations was to concentrate on projects and on getting things done. ‘I took my starting point as ‘working together in harmony.’ For example, to get consensus on the new premises project, we carried out a survey of what the members wanted. I tried to help the executive committee find a way of reaching agreement that took into account different points of view. You have to set tangible goals and if you do that, you can separate the personality conflicts from what are issues of substance.’ He was also part of the leadership teams which organised youth projects and the 1997 World Youth Congress in London.

**Engineering as a ‘people skill’**

Paradoxically, Perses believes that being an engineer places him in an advantageous position when it comes to working with people. ‘The original meaning of ‘engineer’, he enthuses, ‘is from the French, ‘ingeneur’, which is about finding ingenious solutions. As a Systems Engineer, I work with people – to change and grow the organisation.’

‘Take for example BT’s drive to develop new products and services. We aim to satisfy customers in 120 countries, which means we have to provide locally sensitive outputs. But to achieve economies of scale, we have to create a globally applicable solution. To make this happen, we work with local and global teams, sector-based and function-based teams and

help them all to see how they can work together towards a common objective. This requires people skills, communication skills, problem-solving - and these are engineering techniques. Once we have got diverse teams to agree an outcome, we have to work back to see how they can contribute to a solution.’

**Advice for our Youth**

Perses advises young people to be clear, first of all, about what interests them and whether they feel they can make a contribution in that field. ‘Once the interest is there plus the desire to contribute, then you will have the stamina to sustain your career and keep growing.’

‘There is a global war for talent and those who can make high level contributions will get high rewards. The jobs in the middle will get squeezed out as they are shifted to cheaper locations.’

‘To succeed in this environment, you also need to be geographically mobile and flexible in terms of your cultural mindset. This means understanding and adapting to different cultures and not thinking any one culture is better than another.’

Zoroastrian youth, he is convinced, ‘have a massive advantage – we are born to adapt. We have lived successfully in different cultural environments. We have no easy options of a national home culture and we can never be complacent. We come from a background of mobility. We can create a niche in terms of our knowledge.’

He warns that you cannot hope to continue working long-term in any job in the system because very soon it will be ‘stripped down and moved elsewhere. So you have got to work ‘on’ an organisation and not just ‘in’ it.’

Recently, Perses joined the committee of the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce – UK. The aim of this organisation is to encourage entrepreneurship and professional excellence within our community and, particularly, in our young people. ‘Business and professional success’, suggests Perses, ‘is the engine of growth for our community globally’.



## From fear to hope: learning with the “people of fear” in Central Mexico

by shekufeh zonji

- with input from Christine Wenman

**Save** for the light from the little lamp being used by the midwife, this tiny hut was almost pitch black. A shapeless figure shrouded in a somber shawl was at the centre of everyone’s attention in the hut. There were at least 14 people (mostly men) claustrophobically squeezed into this space, each one trying to dictate how she – the midwife or the mother-to-be - should do her work. The shawled woman (whose face I never saw that afternoon) was kept kneeling on the dirt floor, slightly leaning on her *esposo* who sat behind her with his heavy arms wrapped around her abdomen, being commanded by some of the voices in the crowd to squeeze her stomach harder. The voices also scolded her for being scared and not trying bravely enough. They tightened the cloth band above her abdomen and placed the end of her shawl in her mouth while barking some other indiscernible commands at her. That afternoon, hers was the only voice I did not hear – despite her being the one enduring the excruciating pain of childbirth.

This was the first birth I attended since my arrival as a volunteer in the village of Tlamacazapa (in central Mexico). It was the most stressful event I had endured throughout the entire year I spent there. I tried to blend in with the flimsy cornstalk walls and the low cardboard roof that sheltered this family of eight. I did not know what to do or how to help Victoria, the midwife attending the birth. The intense, contradictory emotions that raged through me evaded my sense of rationality. How was I to manage the anger I felt towards the *macho* men, the despair I felt for the faceless woman-object, the expected excitement I should have felt about witnessing my first birth – which kept being stubbornly replaced by fear, the shock towards the abysmal conditions this woman had to deliver and live in, the hope arising from Victoria’s fearlessness? I decided to just become a witness.

After what seemed like countless hours of existing in the tangle of family problems, centuries-old oppression from when the villagers fled into isolation from the invading Spanish Conquistadores, and the confusion created by their strong belief in superstitions like the evil eye, the fresh cry of a new life broke through. The tension in the room abated. Temporarily. The mother suddenly started to bleed profusely. Her placenta could not be delivered and the midwife lacked the necessary tools – her gloves, gauze and razor blade (to cut the cord) were insufficient. The government doctor was quickly called to the rescue. He came in pompously, dismissing the existence of the midwife – in fact blaming her for the misfortune. The rest of the family soon followed his lead, compelling Victoria to leave the hut – thanklessly. I quickly followed her outside.

When I expressed indignation to Victoria about how the family and the doctor had treated her – she dismissed my concerns by explaining how this was all normal. I could not accept that. This was my initiation into the complex reality of Tlamacazapa – which coincidentally means “people of fear” in their native language of Nahuatl.

I had arrived in Mexico a few weeks earlier for a 11-month unpaid internship as a Health Research Assistant for a small non-governmental organization called *Atzin* (previously called *Caminamos Juntos para Salud y Desarrollo* – Walking Together for Health and Development). From September 2006 to August 2007, I worked under the direction of Dr Susan Smith, a nurse practitioner with a PhD in community



Shekufeh Zonji with the only professionally educated midwife in Tlamacazapa, Noehmi besides an abnormal placenta to be sent to a pathologist. Photo Credit – Susan Smith



A typical house in Tlamacazapa made with tarpaper (thick cardboard) roof and cedar branches on rocky terrain isolated in the mountains in the state of Guerrero, Mexico. Photo Credit – Lucy Amis



Women and children carry about 20 L of water strapped to their heads several times a day for cooking, cleaning, bathing, drinking, dying palm, watering plants and feeding animals. Photo Credit – Susan Smith

health and development and a health consultant with experience throughout the world. Her compassion and courage seemed inhuman. I like to think that they come from having lived a life at the extreme edges of the Earth – from the unforgiving cold in the Arctic to the devastating famines in Ethiopia.

### Fear

Arriving as a 21 year old, without a university degree to my name (I was taking a year off between my third and fourth year of an Honours Biology & Psychology degree); I was the youngest member of the *Atzin* volunteer house. My co-workers were all in their late 20s and had a definite role – the Civil Engineer, the Teacher, the Social Worker, the Environmental Scientist, and the Dentist. I was also the only one that did not speak Spanish. I neither knew what my place was nor how I was expected to

contribute. I was given a mish-mash of projects to work on – like managing an income generation project for women, interviewing new mothers about their socio-economic situation, doing a literature review on a suspected bacteria in the village, and accompanying midwives to births – but I was not told how to do them. No one was assigning me grades or defining for me what was good and bad. I was to do that for myself. I started questioning my identity and why I was there. The more I entered the process, the more I felt I was walking on quick sand - that fear I felt was familiar. It was the same fear I felt in the darkness of that hut and imagined the faceless woman feeling. It was the same fear I would discover woven into the bleak reality of the “people of fear”.



Most villagers weave palm baskets that are later taken by boys and men to be sold on the streets of cities near and far. Thus leaving the woman at home with most of the responsibility but little decision-making power. Photo Credit – Susan Smith

I discovered that a long history of external manipulation, isolation and neglect had eroded the villager’s traditional Nahua culture since the Spanish conquest five hundred years ago. Most of its 6200 people earn a meagre living by weaving palm baskets. The village is characterized by acute poverty, toxic environmental contamination – like lead and arsenic in well waters, alcoholism amongst men, and domestic violence, amongst others. Power imbalances marginalize women and concentrate local power in the hands of only a few men. Economic poverty, insufficient or non-existent education and inadequate health services portend a dismal future for Tlama’s children and youth. Individuals tend to be consumed by fear, guilt, resentment, hopelessness, and dependency. Villagers react to their own insecurities by attacking another with violence or criticism so that most remain silent – the silence of oppression. Suspicion and mistrust prevail, preventing community cohesion. With these characteristics, poverty in Tlama is not only economic but also spiritual (do not read religious). Spiritual oppression is characterized by powerlessness that breed fear and silences neighbours who witness domestic abuse; low self-esteem expressed with ‘I can’t’ in response to a new challenge; guilt and depression that drive men to alcoholism in the face of unemployment and unfair, overwhelming macho expectations. Fear grips Tlamacazapa; it locks women in to corners of dark houses, into the asylum of their large shawls. The core work in Tlama is working with individuals so that they become increasingly able to overcome spiritual oppression, a slow and often frustrating process.

### Process

Many romanticize “community development” imagining a frenzy of giving and a harvest of gratitude. On the contrary, in Tlama you learn to say “no”. Doing the work of others or delivering on every desire will not help to empower them. Only by actively bettering their lives can people transform their reflex ‘I can’t’ into a daring “I’ll try.” If guilt, self-hatred, or peer pressure drives a man to the bottle, others providing

for his family will compound his shame. If a woman has fallen into hopelessness believing herself powerless, then constant handouts will perpetuate her dependency. Participation must be central to “community development” as “charity” alone maintains people as submissive recipients. Brazilian writer and education thinker, Paulo Freire, argues that such charity “offers no responsibility, no opportunity to make decisions, but only gestures and attitudes which encourage passivity.” (1990:16) In contrast, a developmental approach builds self-determination so that people can find their voices, ultimately enabling them to better their lives.

Atzin’s programmes are increasingly successful because they insist on active participation. Integrated programming in four areas – income generation, water and sanitation, health and healing, and community education and literacy – makes concrete advancements in living standards while addressing underlying spiritual needs.

**Hope**

Throughout that year, I meandered down endless dark alleys, becoming very familiar with fear within myself and within Tlama. But I also learned about fear’s antidote – hope. I recall one week when Alejandra, a 46 year old woman had passed away from a football-sized tumor she had neglected in her abdomen. That rainy Wednesday, I attended her open-body viewing with Victoria. On the Friday of that same week, Victoria came for me at 3:30 am, asking me to accompany her to a birth. It was the most serene and perfect birth I had witnessed. The fire crackling, children curled up on the floor, with the mother-to-be, also named Alejandra (coincidentally?), on her bed comforted by her mother on one side and her mother-in-law on the other. She delivered a tender little baby boy who I assessed and bathed. That week I learned that life is not linear or determined – that there is always renewal and new possibility. This truth, I believe, is what allows the work Atzin does to make sense. I learned that growth - mine and that of the villagers – is possible when we confront that fear that



A crowd of women draped in the typical shawl called rebozo at a seasonal festival. Photo Credit – Shekufeh Zonji

oppresses us. By constantly engaging in a process of learning and unlearning, action and reflection, we discover our potential and expand into more complete human beings. This journey is a long one, and I have chosen to work with the people of Tlamacazapa for another year because we have much more to share as we walk together and recognize our common humanity.



For more information:  
Please visit:  
[www.caminamosjuntos.org](http://www.caminamosjuntos.org)

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*Shekufeh Zonji has also attended the Commission on the Status of Women (2006 and 2007) at the UN headquarters in New York City as a member of the FEZANA delegation. If you have any questions or would like to support her work for this upcoming year, please email her at [szonji@gmail.com](mailto:szonji@gmail.com).*

*Christine Wenman was a Water and Sanitation Intern at Atzin from September 2005 – August 2007.*

# A medical elective in Boston, Azerbaijan and Iran

by farhad cooper

**Medical** students in the UK traditionally complete their course with a three month “elective”, a period of work or study in an area of their choice. My elective took me to Harvard and then onto Azerbaijan and Iran. As a doctor interested in Infectious Diseases, and the health of displaced populations, it was a very rewarding experience indeed.

Recently I gave a talk in London for ZTFE, about my time in Azerbaijan and about Zoroastrianism in this ancient land, where I followed a journey made almost one hundred years ago by Dr Sir Jivanji Modi.

I report on the rest of my elective below; I do hope it provides some inspiration to others who wish to push the boundaries of what they can do as medics, and to understand a little bit more about the determinants of health in this ever more unstable world.

## Harvard

I spent the first part of my elective taking a one month clerkship at Harvard University, in medical anthropology. It was led by Dr Paul Farmer. Paul Farmer is best known for setting up Partners in Health (PIH) and for his work in Haiti. I was privileged enough to meet both Paul, and his co-founding partner Jim Kim who had just been seconded to WHO.

The clerkship involved my attending lectures, research seminars and meetings, with a view to producing a paper. I decided to focus on “the influence of culture on the health of refugees”, looking in particular at the cultural intricacies that pertain to the ex-Soviet republic of Azerbaijan, which I was to visit next, to carry out my fieldwork.

This was an extremely rich month for me, I had excellent supervision and a rather extensive reading list, much of which was authored by the course leader himself!

Apart from work directly linked to my paper, I also attended teaching sessions at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, twice a week, in Ethics applied to medicine, as well as attending a course in Zoroastrianism at the school of Near Eastern Studies at Harvard.

During my time at Harvard, Jim Kim also gave an excellent talk about his time at

WHO, during which he successfully campaigned for the body to recognise the need for cheap drugs to treat Multi-drug resistant TB. It is thanks to the advocacy of PIH that MDR-TB is now seen as worthwhile to treat, whereas before it was simply deemed uneconomical.

Some of the most important things I learned during my elective were in fact from the reading list, which were tailored to train the student into thinking about the “right to health for all”. Paul Farmer calls it “a preferential option for the poor”, going one step further than those who advocate just equal access. Just because something is not deemed economical or practical does not mean that it should be dismissed.

I have been invited back to Harvard this summer by Heidi Behforouz, who works with PACT, to conduct some further research in the summer, and to finish my paper. PACT stands for the “Prevention and Action for Care and Treatment” and was the first arm of Partners in Health to be set up in the USA. The organisation works with HIV/AIDS sufferers in metropolitan Boston from the poorest communities, to provide them with treatment and support. Most of these individuals were refugees from Haiti and the Dominican Republic and I think this will be a most worthwhile project to take part in.



Study material

## Azerbaijan

**Note:** The terms “Internally Displaced Peoples” (IDPs) and “Refugee” have been used interchangeably, for the purposes of this report, however they are distinct entities.

It is mainly a question of rights that distinguishes the two – if a group of people are displaced across a national boundary they are given refugee status and have certain rights. If they do not, they are deemed to be IDPs. In the case of Azerbaijan however, where a territory is disputed, the Azeri government still believes that Nagorno Karabagh is a part of their territory, and it is in their National interest to do so, however this means that the displaced peoples are not eligible for the international aid that accompanies refugee status.

The next part of my elective was spent in the Caucasian republic of Azerbaijan. The country is an oil-rich nation still officially at war with neighbouring Armenia, over the territory of Nagorno-Karabagh. This region was previously a part of Azerbaijan, but had an Armenian majority living there. Soon after the breakdown of the USSR, it was occupied by the Armenians, and the two nations have been at war ever since.

As a result, almost one million ethnic Azeris have been displaced, and it is with this group that I decided to work, and focus my field-work.

I spent approximately three weeks, under the auspices of the Humar Charity Centre, set up in conjunction with the Leonard Cheshire Centre for conflict recovery in London.

The centre has been providing medical and surgical care for these internally displaced peoples, over the last eight years or so. Sadly, a short time prior to my arrival, funding had all but ceased for this most worthwhile cause. Ironically it meant that I spent more time talking to the community and trying to understand the intricacies of their culture and how it has impacted on their health.

The issue of their culture is a complex one and it would be impossible to do it justice.



Refugee camp clinic



Oil burning stove inside a refugee dwelling

Azerbaijan is a nation that found independence from the USSR after its breakdown. In fact, most Azeris live in Iran, where they form 24% of the population and they are often mocked by the Persian majority. Whilst ethnically identical to those in the Republic of Azerbaijan they could not be culturally more different. Azeris in Azerbaijan often drink alcohol, many speak Russian, and most identify with Europe and the West, at least in the capital city and its surrounding areas.

As was succinctly put by one Azeri I met, *“The Koran tells us not to drink wine. So let’s drink vodka!”*

As I learned during my time at Harvard, culture is intrinsically linked to health outcomes. It would not be unrealistic to say that it probably determines them, more than most other factors, and that it has been a largely unaddressed factor until the present day.

The paper I was working on looked at how Azeri culture has developed over time (one must remember that from an anthropological view, culture is dynamic and therefore the efforts of some to preserve culture are seen as a contradiction in terms), looking in particular at the ancient Zoroastrian roots of the people, to be followed by the Islamic and then Soviet cultures, which have now been replaced by a National Azeri culture. I then tried to inter-relate these factors with the current health problems that face the refugee community.

I was lucky enough to have Humar Rasulbayova, the founder of the Humar Charity Centre, as my guide, and Sevinj and Gehreman, two extremely warm-hearted individuals, who are both refugees from Nagorno-Karabagh and volunteers for the centre. It is thanks to them that I was able to interact and learn as much as I did about the plight of these refugees and their culture. They all opened up their homes to me, and whilst I was an outsider, I certainly was not made to feel like one.

During my time in Azerbaijan, I also visited the numerous camps that are dotted around the country, housing the refugees. I helped run clinics, but this was difficult and formed a small part of what I was there to do. Ethically, it was a dilemma, to run a clinic when you had no funds to treat people at that stage.

Most of all, I tried to interview as many refugees as possible about their health, and the problems that befall them. One of the most frequently heard complaints was dampness. Almost every refugee I met, and whose home I was invited into, had to live with terrible damp. As a result, rheumatic complaints are most common. Second, come dental problems – you simply can't get away from gold teeth in Azerbaijan.

Alcohol doesn't seem to be a problem on the surface, when I interviewed people, but I would like to delve deeper, as in a muslim country it is certainly a taboo subject. From my time in a Liberian refugee camp, I do recall the disproportionate part it played in refugees lives, and how it destructive it can be.

### Iran

The final part of my elective took me on my second trip to Iran. The country was amidst a "Nuclear crisis" at the time and I decided to leave the final decision whether to visit or not, until the last minute. Needless to say, I'm glad I did!

I spent two weeks touring the country, and two weeks working with and interviewing



Computer training facilities at Pourchista Foundation

Zoroastrians in the desert town of Yazd. I spent time with the Pourchista Foundation, which was set up to improve the confidence of Zoroastrian women, by providing classes such as computer skills/cooking etc to name but a few.<sup>1</sup>

I also interviewed Zoroastrians, in particular keepers of temples, who are often poor widows and widowers, who rarely see a doctor.

### Conclusion

My elective was one of the most memorable periods of my life, and I think that we are very fortunate indeed as medics to have this time to pursue our interests, whatever they may be, before entering the world of work.

Medicine can be rather all-absorbing and one can easily lose perspective; I think it is vital that you make the most of your interests and passions whenever you can, and remember that medicine is about humanity, and in order to be good at it, you need to have experienced humanity itself.

### Note:

1. WZO has been supporting Pourchista over many years. This year the Erach and Roshan Sadri Foundation, a UK based charity, has provided a substantial sum of £18,500 through the good offices of the World Zoroastrian Organisation towards the charitable activities of Pourchista Foundation. This includes the Women's Skill Centre and a Senior Citizens Day Centre which is planned for Yazd. - Ed



Farhad Cooper is a doctor working in Infectious Diseases in London. He is currently training in General Medicine, Infectious Diseases and HIV. He is also a keen linguist, traveller, and teaches religion for ZTFE's children's classes.

# The Cycle of Life

by anahita dua

Human beings are set apart from other life forms for their unique ability to think, process, and act. Across the world, compelling arguments are made for the death penalty, testing on animals, and even nuclear warfare because it is *assumed* that in making these decisions humans are not acting on instinct, a concept that is perceived to be inherently evil and selfish, but rather, acting on utilitarianistic deductions that are based in foundations of equality, humanity, and justice. As a result of this ability to “logically” think, human beings consider themselves to be a few tiers above the animal kingdom, and some claim, a representation of the likeness of God.

But what are we really? One flick of a button can turn on the TV and display brutal image after image of the atrocities plaguing our world. Of course there is the occasional tsunami, but the majority of suffering tearing apart our world is a product of the beings that inhabit it. War, whether government sponsored or self-declared, and the consequential economic meltdown, destabilization, and destitution that go with her are responsible for making the world what it is today and what it has been since humans took the reigns of this planet. But all is not lost, however, for as everything was created in a balance, there simply cannot be pure evil without pure good. Regardless of the horrors that have blanketed mother earth and smothered her children, the human race has not gone extinct because the human spirit is one of the more fierce entities ever to exist. The resolve that people display when faced with the more horrific circumstances is just so powerful and it is *this* quality, not our ability to supposedly “think” that truly sets humans apart from animals.

Just like everybody else, I have grown up with my daily dose of repulsion via the news, but unlike everybody else, I have had the unique opportunity to see that other side of humanity first hand. That self sacrificing, altruistic, compassionate side that we’ve all heard about,

but few truly witness and it is as just humbling and incredible as it is rumoured to be.

No one knows better than a medical professional just how similar humans are; as a medical student I know that all diseases are treated exactly the same in all people. There is no difference between an Indian and a Pakistani, no difference between a black man and a white man, and no difference between a poor, single mom and the queen of England. They are approached the same. So our job as medical representatives is very easy in that politics are irrelevant. The patient and his/her well-being are paramount and there are simply no ifs, ands, or buts about it. As a result, through each medical mission I have been able to work closely with all kinds of people, the perpetrators of war crimes and their victims, and have learned many things about the human condition that have changed my perception of the world. My medical missions have led me into rural Kenya, Palestine, India, the democratic republic of Congo (DRC) and Afghanistan. Since my medical focus is on war/refugee medicine, the following is a personal account of my experiences and the lessons they have taught me. It is important to note that while medical professionals never get involved in political agendas, part of negotiating the best for our patients is to note their environment and attempt to make the necessary changes for their overall good. If that sometimes involves voicing a serious concern about political issues then that is a duty we live up to.

## Palestine:

There is a common misconception that the problems in Palestine stem from Jewish versus Muslim sentiments. It could not be further from the truth; the truth is that the war is waged by the rich on the poor, and the Israeli government on the Palestinian people.

As a member of a cardio-thoracic surgical team, I went to Jerusalem, Gaza, and the West Bank to perform reconstructive surgery on children

Anahita Dua is a 4<sup>th</sup> year medical student who plans to work with refugee populations within war zones once qualified. Anahita is involved in volunteer activities in relation to her missions such as the Palestine Children Relief Fund, research projects dealing with international health (hydatid cysts), and teaching medical residents internationally. She will be attending the UNHRC conference for NGOs this June in Geneva and hopes to complete a medical mission in Darfur, Sudan by next year. Anahita received FEZANAs “Outstanding Young Zarathushti Student Award” in July 2007.



Anahita with her baby patient, post-operation



Anahita with a 10year old boy who was shot by soldiers

who have no access to medical care. These children had no access because there is not a single major hospital in all of Palestine. The s t r a t e g i c compartmentalization of Palestine into destitute Gaza and the neglected West Bank was a political play

to geographically divide the country and spread the sparse resources even more thinly. This resulted in a major victory for the state of Israel because they now control the border into Gaza and into the West Bank meaning that for "security reasons" no medical supplies, no food, and no water can enter Gaza. While in Palestine I did not meet a single Palestinian who lived in a house. One-

hundred percent of the population I met lived in refugee camps that were established in 1948 or 1967 and can be legally demolished without any warning by the Israelis. And they do demolish houses; every day a new camp is flattened the ground and hundreds of people left homeless, injured, or dead. Gaza is the most densely populated region in the world with 10,000 people living in one square kilometre (BBC). Daily shots are indiscriminately fired at the general public in Gaza and the weekly death toll is approximately 10 people just by "accidental gunfire." While working in the hospital, I vividly remember a little 10-year old boy who came in with two gun shot wounds to his leg from soldiers shooting at him point blank. He said he was throwing stones at the tank in Gaza with his friends and suddenly was in a rain of gunfire. His mother was, of course, witness to this event and it literally took days to calm her down. This little boy had to wait for hours to get the appropriate medical attention and, in the end, instead of being taken to one of the sophisticated

Israeli hospitals within miles of the area, he was dumped at our hospital's doorstep.

The doctors who worked in the hospital were fighting their own daily war as the majority of them lived in the West Bank and had to travel across the Israeli checkpoints daily to come to work. To start work at 8:00am, they had to be at the checkpoint by 5:00am and the majority of the doctors spent over three nights out of the week sleeping on the floor of the hospital so they would not have to make that journey.

The Palestinians have no right to education, no right to own property, no right to marry outside of the hideous, cold, gray walls that loom around their once beautiful country. Without exaggeration, the entire country is fuelled completely by the aid of the UN. All food and housing are in limited supply by the UN; if they were to withdraw, the entire population would be crippled within days. The UN currently serves four million Palestinian refugees according to the UNRWA ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org)). The population of Palestine according to the CIA factbook is four million with 2,460,492 living in the West Bank and the rest in Gaza. Palestinians cannot apply to go to universities nor can they apply to build new businesses. After working in Palestine, it became obvious to me that Israel had a clear plan to ethnically cleanse the Palestinians, whether they are Muslim, Christian, or Jewish. This statement always riles up people who claim that this could not possibly be the case. All I have to say is, a weekend stay in Palestine will change your mind.

The majority of our medical work concentrated on surgically correcting congenital heart defects. Within Israel there are six qualified paediatric cardio thoracic surgeons for the six million population, while there is not a single surgeon of this type to service the two million Palestinians, so every congenital defect results in the death of a child. While in Palestine I had the opportunity to visit my patients in their refugee camps and also make daily visits to the West Bank and Gaza to see the situation. I got to witness first hand the poverty, fear, and injustice that has forced a proud, cultural group of people into an existence that lacks hope. However, watching

families come together to support each other throughout the life-saving operation of their children with the same hope, fear, and happiness I witness everyday back home in the UK hospital just reminded me once again how strikingly similar all humans beings truly are and how strong the human spirit is.

**Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC):**

Every day, 10 new women and girls who have been raped show up at the Panzi hospital. Many have been so sadistically attacked from the inside out, butchered by bayonets and assaulted with chunks of wood, that their reproductive and digestive systems are beyond repair. While working as a medical volunteer at the Panzi hospital I was able to see the best and worst of humanity intertwined the most raw and blatant way.

The reason for the rapes remains unknown although clearly they exist to destroy the social structure of the Congolese community. Rapes of wives and mothers are always accompanied by the brutal execution of the husband and children in order to truly devastate the family.

John Holmes, the United Nations under secretary general for humanitarian affairs, stated that the sexual violence in the DRC is the worst in the world. The UN reported 27,000 sexual assaults in 2006 in South Kivu Province alone and, although war officially ended in the DRC almost a decade ago, systematic rapes and serious violence is on the rise. Although elections did take place, the justice system and the military still barely function, and UN officials say Congolese government troops are among the worst offenders when it comes to rape. Large swaths of the country, especially in the east, remain authority-free zones where civilians are at the mercy of heavily armed groups who have made warfare a livelihood and survive by raiding villages and abducting women for ransom.

According to victims, one of the newest groups to emerge is called the Rastas, a mysterious gang of dreadlocked fugitives who live deep in the forest, wear shiny tracksuits and Los Angeles Lakers jerseys and are notorious for

burning babies, kidnapping women and literally chopping up anybody who gets in their way.

One of my friends, Didien, a 17-year-old girl went home after her high school year to meet her mother for the summer and was kidnapped by rebel forces. She was taken deep into their campsite in the forest and kept in a cage in the middle of the campsite to be raped repeatedly by all for the next eight months. She fell pregnant and managed to run away only to now be faced with serious financial burdens and single-motherhood. Her story was echoed almost verbatim in the time I was there - I actually lost track of names. Another friend of mine, Sukela and her 9-year old daughter were walking home from the market when they were stopped by soldiers. Sukela was led off and gang raped, while her daughter, who was too tight to be penetrated, was held down and had sharp objects shoved into her vagina until her uterus perforated. All these women developed serious fistulas, holes between their urethra and vagina, vagina and rectum, or, in the worst cases, holes between all three passages causing constant leakage of urine and faeces.



Street children who run around outside the hospital. Orphans due to the violence



Villagers after a rebel attack who attacked the village for no reason and just butchered everyone with picks and spades from the farm land



I worked along the doctors at the Panzi hospital who work tirelessly to fix these women because if there is a hell on earth leaving a fistula is just that. However, to surgically fix these between three and six surgeries are often required each, with a three month wait time in order for healing to take place. Women are often divorced to severely mistreated by their husbands and living at Panzi while waiting for their surgery is a Godsend. Another woman who I grew quite close to was kidnapped by a group of men and gang raped while she was seven months pregnant. Her horror did not stop there as



Panzi hospital and some patients after rebel attacks



one of the men announced he would give a prize to the first man to snatch the baby out of her uterus with his bare hands. This led to three brutal days of violence but thankfully she did not miscarry and the baby is to be born within the next month. Her husband, however, now refers to her as “rebel prostitute” and will no longer allow her in the house.

At Panzi Hospital, where Dr Mukwege, the head of the hospital, performs as many as six rape-related surgeries a day, bed after bed is filled with women lying on their backs, staring at the ceiling, with colostomy bags hanging next to them because of all the internal damage. Few seem to be spared. Dr Mukwege said his oldest patient was 75, his youngest 3. While at Panzi the shocking stories seemed to be endless, but what was

undoubtedly even more astonishing was the resilience of these women. African women have seen decades of ill treatment and injustice similar to women in many other parts of the world. However, they still manage to wake up everyday, care for their children, and try to be contributing members to a society that seems to have forgotten them. Panzi hospital is a much-needed beacon of light for these destitute women and its work needs to be acknowledged and supported. My role and promise to these women was to make sure the world knows what is happening in the heart of Africa. Violence against women is always terrible and should be battled whenever it is come upon, but this type of extreme brutality has been occurring for ages without people even knowing it exists. The most important thing we can do as outsiders is to spread awareness of this issue and not tolerate its existence.

### Afghanistan:

This country has seen an entire generation exterminated through war and an economic spiral downward has pushed this once bustling country right back into the Stone Age. In the 1970's Afghanistan was the place to be with its modern ways and beautiful cultural heritage, but the tired people of Afghanistan all too soon were stripped of that serenity as the Taliban took over the country and shut the doors to progress. While in Kabul I came face to face with the women of Afghanistan and spoke to the girls who had been forced into marriage, pulled out of school, and stripped of their children through disease and famine. This medical mission was one of the most touching of all of them as it dealt with an issue very close to my heart: women's rights.

My medical mission in Afghanistan was different in that I got an opportunity to help with the actual rebuilding of the country instead of just dealing with the crisis directly for the first time. The hospital I was working at, CURE international hospital, is a non-government hospital that also has the most structured medical teaching programme in the country. The aim of the hospital is, of course, to treat patients, but also to train the Afghani people themselves to be able to treat and take care of their own. The hospital has a

programme in family practice, OB-GYN, surgery, and primary care. While at the hospital, I gave a series of lectures to the residents on how to conduct research, treat particular ailments that have new evidence based guidelines, and gave up-to-date talks on a variety of medical aspects. The medical side of work was much more touching for me, however.

Afghanistan currently has the second highest rate of maternal and infant mortality in the world. While there I spent my days convincing women who have severe medical comorbidities to stop having babies at home, marrying their young daughters, and putting up with the serious maltreatment from their in-laws and husbands. Another aspect of my work, involved the pre-natal unit, where I worked along side the medical residents to help premature infants, some as young as 27 weeks, try to survive. Optimising

medical care delivery was very difficult because coaxing the patients to follow the doctor's orders was quite trying as cultural practices are so deeply engrained in this community. One of my patients was the third wife of a man who insisted that unless her next child was a boy, he would take a fourth. They lived in a dirt floor hut and all her previous children have either been female or had died. She was pregnant with male twins this time and although we tried our hardest to convince her to have the babies at the hospital, she delivered alone on the dirt floor of her hut. As expected, both babies developed severe sepsis and one died within a few days. She finally pushed her husband out of the way and brought her second son to our unit. For the whole time I was there, the child had swinging fevers and was so close to the edge. But his mother never left his side, even when her husband set off to look for that fourth wife, and the baby did pull through in the end.



Anahita lecturing residents at CURE International Hospital



Premature infants, some as young as 27 weeks, try to survive

Although this was one success story, the bomb threats and overall violence that plagued Kabul and threatened our daily existence was also something that hindered our ability to truly reach out to the people. The Serena hotel, the place I spent Christmas evening in, was bombed about a week later and the hospital received bomb threats constantly. Even the doctors who worked there were under a constant threat.

Overall, my experiences in Palestine, the DRC, and Afghanistan all served to display the extremes of humanity. It is a very humbling experience because on one side it seemed no matter what we did the evil of the world would just not allow that country some peace, yet whenever we lost our faith and wanted to throw our hands up another person would be saved or another baby made it through prematurity and made the experience worth it all over again. And so the cycle continues. Bad things do happen and people do terrible things, but as long as there is the human spirit and a genuine goodness to the citizens of this planet, human beings will continue to thrive.



# On going projects in Northern Pakistan

## Omar Asghar Khan Development Foundation

### Chairman of OAKDF, Ali Ashgar Khan writes:

“The state of the people generally remains unchanged. Few government supported houses are complete. After almost three years people have generally had to sell land, cattle or take loans and build their own structures. The government supported housing process has proved to be too lengthy. It is those that are the poorest and have no source of alternative funds that have suffered the most.

80% of children are still studying in tents. Health facilities are still non functional. Water is such a serious issue and there are places which have to rely on rainfall to collect it. As far as the government is concerned, however, we are shown model projects as success stories while the problems of the vast majority are simply glossed over.

Talking of model projects, one model project is the temporary BHU [basic health unit] you [through donations received by Toxy on behalf of WZO] had provided in Dalola. (Its picture is also on the ERRA website!).

It is a success story, we got the district government to officially give it the status of the BHU and ask all staff to report to it. Caritas an International NGO began providing medical facilities and staff. We arranged a water and electric connection, took care of the bills, paid the salary for a caretaker, rented the land it was placed on and built a fence around it to give women privacy and almost three years later the facility is still functioning and functioning very well. The main BHU in Dalola is one of the few presently under construction and nearing completion. Until then this intervention has served the health needs of a population of around 30,000 people.

Gheri [already informed in Hamazor Issue 3/2007] and Khorikhetar are complete. The structure of the WFS Sirla is also almost complete and the finishing work has begun.”

### Report received mid May '08 from OAKDF:

#### Women Friendly Space in Village Sirla, Union Council Dalola, District Abbottabad

Since 2006, the Foundation has worked with local organizations of women and men in Sirla to provide a Women Friendly Space. The project includes the construction of a WFS. This is predicated on other critical interventions including strengthening local organizations through formal training, establishing a village-based management system, and specific activities to build skills of women entrepreneurs, provide healthcare, and access information.

Construction of WFS: Local community has provided land for the use of the WFS project. This is private land contributed for the project extended for the life of the project. As reported earlier, a contractor was selected in April 2007 through an open tender process. As the contractor backed out of the agreement, another process was initiated to award the assignment.

The second contractor selected in July 2007, began construction using indigenous material towards the end of August 2007. The delay in initiating construction was caused due to heavy monsoon rains. The construction process faced many hurdles. This included the scarcity of skilled labour, the lack of access to water needed for construction and other challenges such as the need for leveling the mountainous land and preparing for a retaining wall. By April 2008, more than half the construction was completed by the second contractor. This was achieved due to close supervision by the Foundation as most contractors in the area tend to leave after beginning some work. The Foundation also arranged a hand pump to provide water for construction.

Despite these measures, the Foundation was dissatisfied with the pace and quality of the

construction work. Additionally, the contractor began slipping on his agreed time schedule. Therefore, the Foundation cancelled the contract awarded to the contractor and have engaged the local community in finishing the project. Community discussions revealed that local people were keen to access the WFS for training purpose, and to hold meetings, and community get-togethers. As the need for a *hammam* had diminished, the WFS was redesigned to better respond to the community's emerging requirements. The WFS has generated much excitement within Sirla. The involvement of local people in completing its construction will enhance their ownership of the WFS. Its completion is expected shortly. The full cost of construction [part payment has been made] for the WFS will be paid from donations received by Toxy Cowasjee on behalf of WZO.

**Restoring access to drinking water for Village Khori Khetar, Union Council Nammal, District Abbottabad**

Khori Khetar and the adjoining small hamlet Bari consist of approximately 120 households. Khori Khetar's distribution network depended on a three kilometer main pipeline which was destroyed by the earthquake. Bari's source of water was natural springs which are prone to seasonal inconsistencies. In early 2007, the Foundation surveyed the area to design the rehabilitation of water supply. Technical feasibilities were developed which resulted in designing a scheme that would entail constructing a main pipeline from upstream Village of Majhoot that would run alongside Khori Khetar and its adjoining hamlets and finish at the downstream Village of Majuan. A distribution network would be constructed enabling Khori Khetar, Bari and other small hamlets to tap the main source. The total estimated cost of the entire scheme was Rs.1,700,000. The cost of the distribution network was around Rs.500,000.

The Foundation was able to find another donor for the main pipeline and its related storage tanks. The distribution network is funded by donations received by Toxy Cowasjee on behalf of WZO. Construction work began in February 2007 after negotiating a consensus among all related villages including Majhoot, Majuan, Khori Khetar and



Construction of WFS at Sirla



Distribution to Khori Khetar



Bari. This included managing conflict as village Majhoot from where the water was to be accessed was demanding a share in the scheme.

The entire scheme is complete up to Khori Khetar including distribution to this village and its adjoining hamlets.

[refer to Hamazor Issue 4/2007 pp 57 - 58 for previous information]

Report received from CHAL, mid May '08

Against WZO's contribution of Rs 300,000 made in October 2007 all nine kids were fitted with modular artificial limbs in February 2008. These limbs are lighter and more functional than the ones that had been provided to the children shortly after their injuries caused by collapsing buildings during the earthquake. In any case, the kids had outgrown their first prosthesis. Had timely action not been taken, these kids would have developed other malfunctions or would not have been able to pursue their education at schools in their areas. CARP Programme Coordinator, Ms Noor, has visited the areas, met the individual children, their parents or guardians and school teachers. Siraj Khan was away with his parents attending a marriage in a different town. He, however, is doing well and his progress will be provided in the next update.

[Please refer to Hamazor Issue 4/2007 pp56-57 for previous information]

A consciousness was raised in the above mentioned *Hamazor*, requesting individuals to come forward and "adopt" children enabling them to have ongoing prosthesis and education till they completed schooling, costing a one time Rs100,000. Seven children have benefitted through this appeal, six being supported by individuals and one child being sponsored by the Roshan Dehnugara Fund through the good offices of WZO.

Now a total of 60 children are being supported through individuals or NGOs. Many more require help. - Toxy Cowasjee

Haamid Jaffer who has been coordinating this project writes: "children adopted under CARP shall be provided with replacements of modular limbs till they reach adulthood and have completed their secondary schooling. Hopefully by then they will be in a position to meet the costs of replacements if not contribute to others in such need. We are thankful to you for your continued support."

The nine children who have been fitted with prosthesis from donations received for earthquake victims through WZO. Thanks to you - the generous donors - they can all lead a normal life now. I do have all the photographs of the fitting of prosthesis, etc, but due to lack of room, sharing all the children standing and ready to go. - Toxy Cowasjee



Adnan - 5 years



Dilnaz - 7 years



Mohsin - 9 years



Naureen - 11 years



Naveed - 6 years



Rabia - 8 years



Siraj Khan - 8 years



Sonia - 12 years



Munawar - 6 years



Seven children sponsored by individuals for replacements of modular limbs till they reach adulthood and have completed their secondary schooling.



Ain ul Hayyah - 4 years



Mishi Khan - 3 years



Nayab Ayaz - 7 years



Kafeel Ahmad - 6 years



Robina Bibi - 8 years



Sohail - 10 years



Zakir Khan - 6 years

## **Bombay Parsi Punchayet announces schedule for Trustees' election for seven candidates under the universal adult franchise scheme**

Pursuant to the Hon'ble Bombay High Court's Order dated 30-04-2008 elections for all the seven Trustees will be held as per the below-mentioned Election Schedule.

As per Clause No.14 of the Scheme for Election, any person who shall at the time of Election be a member of the Parsi Community, of not less than 30 years of age (this restriction of age does not apply to any Candidate who has attained the age of 25 years and whom a majority of not less than 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of the members of the Anjuman Committee desire to be so exempted, by a written requisition to the Trustees) and who shall have been Proposed and Seconded by members of the Anjuman Committee i.e. General member or Donor Member, are eligible to stand as Candidates.

Such candidates have to fill in the prescribed form (available from Bombay Parsi Punchayet's Office), accompanied by a cash deposit of Rs.5000/-. The deposit shall stand forfeited, if the Candidates fail to secure atleast 5% of the total votes cast at such an election.

All those members on the General Register and Donor Register, who have so far not collected their Certificates, are requested to collect their respective Certificates to be eligible to exercise their franchise.

If the Certificate has been lost or destroyed, members on the General Register and Donor Register can apply on or before October 1, 2008 for a duplicate certificate, application for which has to be filled in a prescribed form along with payment of a fee of Rs.10/-. As per the scheme in force, Members on the General Register and Donor Register will be allowed to vote only on production of their respective Certificates.

No duplicate Certificates will be issued and/or collection of original certificates permitted after October 1, 2008 including on the Election days at the Polling centres.

As per the scheme sanctioned by the Hon'ble High Court, only those Members whose names appear on the General Register and the Donor Register, as on 30-06-2008, will have voting right at the forthcoming Election. The registers will be frozen as on 30-06-2008 as per the sanctioned scheme.

If nominations are received from only seven duly qualified Candidates, in accordance with the sanctioned scheme, such Candidates will be declared duly elected.

In the event of their being more than seven candidates, election will be conducted as per schedule. [Schedule is not given in Hamazor due to lack of space]

It is further notified that the full list of registered members on the General and Donor Register eligible to vote for the forthcoming Trustees' Election is available on the Web and members can verify their enrollment or otherwise on the net address which is [www.bppvoterslist.org](http://www.bppvoterslist.org).

By order of the Trustees  
(M P Colah)  
Chief Executive  
Bombay Parsi Punchayet  
Sjd:csp/CSPanthaki.4/76 - 15-5-08

Note:  
Barring unforeseen circumstances, elections for all the seven seats for BPP Trustees will be held over three weekends viz. 4-5-11-12-18-19 October 2008.





# The World Zoroastrian Organisation

135 Tennison Road, South Norwood, London SE25 5NF

Registration No 1510380 Cardiff, England

A Company Limited by Guarantee

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 confirm that I am (Tick as appropriate):

- (a) person born into and confirmed into the Zoroastrian faith
- (b) non-Zoroastrian spouse married to a Zoroastrian
- (c) a child of marriage as described in (b) above

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 \_\_\_\_\_

PROFESSION/OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_

IF STUDENT DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS IN COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TEL: RES \_\_\_\_\_ OFF \_\_\_\_\_ MOBILE \_\_\_\_\_

**Proposed by** \_\_\_\_\_ **Seconded by** \_\_\_\_\_

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

### FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date	Amount Received	Date of Membership	Register of Members	Mailing List

It may be more convenient for you to apply for or renew your membership of WZO through our website, [www.w-z-o.org](http://www.w-z-o.org), and paying by a Credit or Debit card.

# 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 for 3 yrs	£ 30
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
Life Member	\$ 150	Ordinary Member for 3 yrs	\$45
Student	Gratis till 25 years of age		

Please send application form and cheque payable in US Dollars as "WZO US Region" to:

Mr Keki Bhote, 493 Woodlawn Ave., Glencoe, Illinois 60022. Tel: (847) 835 1984

## For Canadian residents

Permanent Assoc Member	C\$ 325	Ordinary Assoc Member	C\$ 30 pa
Life Member	C\$ 200	Ordinary Member for 3 yrs	C\$ 60
Student	Gratis till 25 years of age		

Please send application form and cheque payable in Candian Dollars as "OZCF, WZO Fees" to:

Mr Marzi Byramji, Regal Press, 3265 Wharton Way, Unit, Mississauga, Ontario L4X 2X9. Tel: (905) 238 8005

## For Pakistani residents

Grand Patron	Rs10,000	Patron	Rs5,000	Permanent Assoc Member	£ 150
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

## For New Zealand residents

Grand Patron	NZ\$1,500	Patron	NZ\$750	Life Member	NZ\$300
Ordinary for 3 yrs	NZ\$90	Student	Gratis till 25 years of age		

Please send application form with your cheque payable in NZ Dollars as "WZO, New Zealand", to:

Mr Darius Mistry, 134A Paritai Drive, Orakei, Auckland.

# “Mazda knows best what works

have been wrought by the followers of evil and  
by moral men; And He knows best what shall be  
wrought by them ever hereafter;  
The Lord Ahura is the discerning Judge;  
To us, let it be, as He shall will.”

Ha 29.4

*Dinshaw J. Irani translation*

