

publication of the world zoroastrian organisation

HAMAZOR

3
issue 2010

Forester *and* Conservator



Firoj M.
Panthaky

WZO Trust, India



WZO's Managing Committee who were present for the 30th anniversary celebration on 5 June, p11.

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COVER

Firoz M Panthaky, synonymous with trees and the benefits of planting these which the Farmers of Gujarat are today beholden for.

PHOTOGRAPHS

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

WZO WEBSITE

www.w-z-o.org

Remembering Nariman Kaikhushroo Irani

Members of the Managing Committee



London, England

Mr Darayus S Motivala
Chairman
E-mail: chairman@w-z-o.org

Mr Sam H Bhiwandiwalla
President
E-mail: president@w-z-o.org

Mr Dinyar Modi
Hon Secretary
E-mail: secretary@w-z-o.org

Mrs Khurshid B Kapadia
Membership Secretary
E-mail: membership@w-z-o.org

Er Jehan Bagli
Mississauga, Canada
E-mail: wzo_canada@w-z-o.org

Mr Dadi B Engineer
President, WZO India
Mumbai, India
E-mail: president_india@w-z-o.org

Mr Dadi E Mistry
New Delhi, India
E-mail: dadi_mistry@w-z-o.org

Mrs Meher Amersey
Mumbai, India
Email: meher.amersey@w-z-o.org

Mr Rustom Yeganegi
Tehran, Iran
Email: Rostam.yegagnegi@w-z-o.org

Mr Darius Mistry
Auckland
New Zealand
E-mail: wzo_nz@w-z-o.org

Mrs Toxy Cowasjee
Vice President
Karachi, Pakistan
E-mail: wzo_pakistan@w-z-o.org

Mr Russi Ghadiali
Singapore
E-mail: wzo_singapore@w-z-o.org

Mr Keki Bhothe
President, US Chapter
Illinois, USA
E-mail: wzo_usa@w-z-o.org

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

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Toxy Cowasjee
Karachi, Pakistan

From the Editor

During this three month period between our Hamazors, WZO has been going through a number of mixed feelings - jubilation, satisfaction, frustration and disappointment. But that is life and we have to take the good with the bad in our stride.

The main thing is to move forward, keep our thinking open and view all sides of the equation. And we have tried to do just that.



After a happy and successful 30th celebration held on 5th June in London, a brain storming session lasting quite a few hours deliberating how best to move forward, was held on Monday 7th, after working hours, enabling all members of the WZO committee residing in England, to attend. Dr Jehan Bagli and myself, immediate past vice president and present VP, Rumi Sethna past Chairman, on invitation, were also present. Unfortunately Dastur Kersey Antia being unwell in USA and Dadi Mistry of India, due to travel problems, were unable to attend at the last moment. The suggestions sent by individuals and published in the previous Hamazor Issue 2/2010, had been circulated prior to the meeting enabling attendees to come prepared with their viewpoints. We feel this meeting was a constructive one having now formed a strategy for the next three years.

We as individuals can only do so much, and for this reason we ask you, our members, to come forward, voice your concerns, appreciate us when its due, and generally help us be there for the whole Zoroastrian community. We have nothing to gain for ourselves, certainly not popularity but hopefully some respect along the way.

Our religion is an all-inclusive one and we at WZO intend to follow that path. We are here for all our co-religionists and accept that there are a myriad of views how Zoroastrian-din should be followed BUT religion is a private affair between the Almighty and oneself and therefore not the right of any one person to dictate their views on the other. How can any individual or 'body' tell you 'don't follow Zarathushtra's message because you have a non-Zoroastrian father'? And if someone is born into their faith, just because they marry another, why on earth is it they are no longer a Zoroastrian, if they choose to continue believing? Are we not all children of one universe? Simplistic, but so easy if one rationalises without bitterness or worry about bruised egos. We are just too few who think with this narrow-minded vision – the silent majority do not. Give families of mixed marriages a chance to be accepted, don't exclude them please. Life has enough problems, why invent more. I have said it many a time and feel proud to say it again, that we in Karachi have never shunned our people – very possibly the blessing of our beloved Dastur Dhalla who taught us to be tolerant.

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

Hamazor's Patron - Nariman Kaikhushroo Irani



Nariman Kaikhushroo Irani of Karachi, Pakistan, was a reader of the Hamazor, though not a member of WZO himself. His wife Franey, better known as Dolly to all, is our Life Member since several years. Nariman, on reading my Editorial in the 3/2009 Issue, requesting for sponsorship of Hamazor, promptly phoned me to say Dolly and he would sponsor the printing of the Hamazor for a full year (4 issues), and that I was not to worry. He even went further in his enthusiasm to say the offer was open till such time that WZO could manage funding itself, as long as I was the Editor!

Dumbstruck! Here was a friend coming forward to help another without being approached, which made the gesture that much more special. His only condition was that it should remain anonymous, which it was till now. As there was to be no fourth issue in 2009, Issue 1/2010 was sponsored by Mr & Mrs Nariman K Irani.

To give an insight into Nariman's nature, he phoned early January to remind me of my lapse in approaching him for the payment, and to say he would be out of town on work, how would I manage, etc. After much persuasion he was finally convinced I was unable to ask for the payment till the Hamazor had been printed and the bill presented. That was Nariman.

One never knows what life will dish out. Prematurely and unexpectedly, after suffering a severe stroke on 10th March of this year, Nariman left this world for his heavenly abode a few days later on the 23rd never having regained consciousness from the moment he left his home for the hospital; a blessing for Nariman. His entire family flew from all parts of the world to be with him and Dolly, throughout this period of hospitalization and the sad outcome. We just knew he would be with us in spirit at least for Jamshedi Nowruz, as this was a special day always at Dolly & Nariman's residence and true to form he did, leaving us quietly two days later from his own home.

Nariman was born and bred in Bombay which he loved dearly; he would proudly tell us that he went to the kindergarten of J B Petit School for Girls, then to St Xavier's School and College where he graduated with BSc Hons in Chemistry following which he went to Tokyo University to study Fisheries and Deep Sea Navigation attaining a

BFish. Why fisheries, I cannot remember though he must have told us, as Nariman was a person who was full of stories about himself, his friends and everyone who came his way. Dolly visited Japan with her parents and sisters, and Nariman was the appointed “guide” to show his adopted country to her family. They fell in love, married in 1963 at Karachi and Nariman who was truly a Japanese Zarathushti having a mama and papa san to boot, started a new life with his bride in our city.

He changed professions and joined his father-in-law, Godrej Kandawalla in Kandawalla Industries manufacturing and assembling vehicles of Kaiser Jeep, Fiat, Morris and Leyland for the Pakistan market, till Mr Bhutto’s government decided to nationalize several sectors of the industries overnight on 2nd January 1972. Some emigrated, some moaned and some just restarted their lives once again. Nariman and Dolly were the latter. Together, they started Fran International (Pvt) Ltd., which grew into a flourishing and successful venture with perseverance and hard work.

Nariman was a complex man; highly sensitive yet never hesitating to speak his mind. A born entrepreneur, punctual to the extent that he had to arrive earlier than invited claiming it was bad manners to be any later than five minutes before the appointed time. He could never resist bargaining, even at Gucci’s and Harrods in London, and got away with it, much to the embarrassment of all who were with him; generous to a fault especially to his friends and family, a large man but most tender of heart. He loved Indian movies and music, sang and played the tabla, a pain to go to the movies with as he spoke the dialogue before it happened and happily cried when it was required; he performed in several Japanese movies during his student days; and with an extraordinary memory, he claimed he knew everyone, saying he was in school or college with the person, and invariably, he would find some connection that would link him to the person he was meeting at that moment.

That was our Nariman!

He leaves behind his beloved wife, Dolls, his lovely daughter Vica, a brilliant solicitor in London who recently married Stephen, his family and a host of good friends all around the world.

- Toxy Cowasjee



The Chairman's Message



My dear Members,

It is almost three months since the last issue of Hamazor. During this period, WZO has had some highs and lows and I would like to update you with these.

You will see from the reports in this issue that we had an absolutely wonderful 30th Anniversary celebratory event on 5th June at the Hilton, London Paddington. It was an evening to remember and my thanks go to all my colleagues who went that extra mile to ensure its success. Our thanks also go to all our sponsors, advertisers and supporters who donated so generously to ensure that we covered all our costs for the evening. In addition, we received further donations on the evening which we will use towards our charitable activities. This was definitely a high point in our calendar of events.

Whilst preparing for the event and soon afterwards, we have had to manage the situation with WZO (India) committee members who are determined to wreck the plans of WZO moving forward. They held a public meeting of their members with a meal, paid for from their charitable funds, and promoted adverse publicity for the two organisations. At this meeting on 11th June, they made false statements and urged those present to censure the managing committee of WZO. They reluctantly agreed to their President, Dadi Engineer, reading a statement prepared by us for the meeting. At the heart of the matter is that whilst WZO does not wish to enforce their beliefs on any Zoroastrian community including India, the WZO (India) committee wishes to enforce their practises and beliefs on all Zoroastrian communities, within and outside of India. The WZO (India) committee has ignored all our overtures for an amicable reconciliation. Therefore with deep regret, WZO has decided that we have no choice but to inform them that we are forced to break all ties with the WZO (India) committee. A public statement on this is printed in this issue of Hamazor.

To end on a high note, I am pleased to inform you that we have been applauded for our stance from a number of Zoroastrians in India and made new friends. We sense that there is an awakening of the silent majority, particularly in India, who feel that the vociferous minority have just gone too far in forcing their views on others without any authority or religious knowledge.

I hope that you enjoy reading this issue of Hamazor, and I look forward to updating you on WZO in the next issue.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D S Motivala', written in a cursive style.

Darayus S Motivala
Chairman
chairman@w-z-o.org

World Zoroastrian Organisation celebrates with style



W

WZO marked its 30th Anniversary celebrations with flourish and style at the Hilton, London Paddington on 5th June 2010. The theme of the evening was to acknowledge the dedicated service and honour the good work carried out by our members for the association and the community at large over the past thirty years.

The evening commenced with a welcome reception by Master of Ceremonies, Richard Birtchnell followed with socialising and cocktails.

monax dalal reports

The Chairman, Darayus S Motivala in his opening speech welcomed the Guest of Honour, former Attorney General of India, Padma Vibhushan Mr Soli Sorabjee, Mr Jitendra Kumar, First Secretary for Consular and Community Affairs at the High Commission of India, WZO past Chairmen - Ruby Contractor, Shahpur Captain, Rumi Sethna, Sammy Bhiwandiwalla, past President Rustam Dubash, the Managing Committee, WZO members and friends. The evening was well attended with 247 persons, being the full capacity for the room.

Those who could not attend the event, sent their best wishes to the Chairman, which were printed in a souvenir brochure. The cost of the entire evening was covered through advertisements and sponsorships.

Her Majesty, The Queen forwarded her warm good wishes. A message of goodwill was received from Mr Nick Clegg, Leader of the Liberal Democrats and now the Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in the present coalition. His Excellency, Mr Nalin Surie, the High Commissioner of India in his message wished WZO success in its future endeavours and MP Mr Shahid Malik, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Department for Communities and Local Government) sent his best wishes.

Mr Motivala in his speech outlined the charitable work undertaken by WZO since it first started its operations in 1980. WZO is well known for its Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrian charitable activities in India, in Iran and elsewhere in the world. In India, in conjunction with the WZO Trusts which are managed by Dinshaw & Bachi Tamboly, WZO has disbursed over INR51M (£750,000) to farmers in Gujarat to help build 118 cottages, improve farming practice, micro credit to 700 rural Zarathustis. WZO has also endeavored to support 120 students and 360 elderly people. Last year WZO disbursed INR18.5M (£250,000) in medical expenses and INR 750,000 (£11,000) to support priests. WZO runs two senior citizen homes, a sanatorium in Sanjan and is now constructing the eighth building offering low cost housing at Navsari.

In conjunction with the Dennis William Richards Will Trust, WZO disbursed £220,000 to non-Zoroastrian charities in India. It also supports and funds the Pourchista Foundation for the Zoroastrian youth education and senior citizens' project in Iran.

To get a complete overview of the charitable work done by WZO and its journey over the last 30 years please visit the WZO website: <http://www.w-z-o.org/>



Monax Dalal is an Independent Mortgage and Protection Adviser in UK and is currently pursuing her Certificate in Financial Advisory (CeFA) from the Institute of Financial Services, London. She has done her Masters in Commerce from Mumbai University and a Diploma in Human Resources from Wellingkar Institute of Management, Mumbai. At present she serves on WZO's committee as an observer.



Remembering Nariman Kaikhushroo Irani

In 1993, the membership of WZO was opened to non-Zoroastrian spouses and to the children of mixed parentage. Currently anyone falling outside its criteria may register as a non-voting **“Friend of WZO”**.

The Committee invited Mr Jitendra Kumar, who represented His Excellency Mr Nalin Surie, the High Commissioner for India. Mr Kumar expressed his pleasure to be at WZO's 30th Anniversary Celebration and praised the Zoroastrian community for its constructive and moral growth in the society. He mentioned how the community had adapted well with the Indian society and its contribution in the Indian Freedom Struggle. Mr Kumar also expressed that the Zoroastrian community was a visible bridge between India and the overseas, especially UK. Further, that Zarathustra's teachings contributed to prevention of conflicts from which a framework of co-operation can be drawn for the betterment of mankind and society at large. He ended his extempore address by saying he wished to join as a “Friend of WZO”.

Mr Soli Sorabjee, Guest of Honour for this evening was invited to the stage to present the awards. Mr Sorabjee is a well known figure in India having held the position of Solicitor General and later Attorney General which he gave up after six years. But he is also known internationally for his work in human rights and greatly respected by all for his integrity and uncompromising forthrightness. He was awarded the *Padma Vibhushan* for his defence of the freedom of expression and the protection of human rights. He is much in demand as an advocate where his reputation for incorruptibility and for clear headedness ensures a full diary.

Mr Shahpur F Captain read the citation for Dastur Dr Kersey Antia. Dr Antia is a founder member of WZO. He is also the High Priest of Chicago, Illinois, USA, a position he has held since 1977. Not only is he an ordained priest of some 60 years standing but a scholar and educator, much revered for his interpretations of doctrinal and



Kersey Antia



L to R: Soli Sorabjee, Jehan Bagli, Darayus Motivala



Soli Sorabjee with Ruby Contractor



Soli Sorabjee, Toxy Cowasjee, Darayus Motivala



Soli Sorabjee, Darayus Motivala, Rustam Dubash

spiritual aspects of Zoroastrianism. Dr Antia is particularly responsible for bringing the principles and practice of the Zoroastrian faith into the 21st century. Mrs Ursula Bhiwandiwalla received the award on Dr Antia's behalf as he was unable to attend the event due to ill health.

Ms Shahin Bekhradnia read the citation for Ervad Dr Jehan Bagli. Ervad Bagli is the past Vice-President of WZO, founding President of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec and past President of the Mobed Council of North America. He is a past J N Tata Endowment Scholar, bestowed upon The Distinguished Research Fellow by Wyet/Ayerst and a Fellow of numerous nationally recognized research organizations in Canada and USA.

Mrs Ruby N Contractor was next for receiving her award. Her citation was read by Mr Captain. Ruby served on the committee of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe until she reached the position of Vice President. She is one of the longest serving Board Members, Founder Member and Past Chairman of WZO. During her time as Chairman, WZO held its first Gatha Colloquium which brought scholars to London from all over the world.

Mrs Toxy C Cowasjee, currently the editor of Hamazor, followed to receive the award. Her citation was read by Mr Sammy Bhiwandiwalla. She is the past President of the Karachi Zarhosti Banu Mandal, and has served this institution over a period of 40 years and is the past President of the Karachi Parsi Institute, being the first woman to be elected to this post, to date, in its 117 years. Toxy is presently WZO's Vice-President and representative in Pakistan since 1992. She has devoted many years towards the wellbeing of Zoroastrians in Pakistan and is a prolific fundraiser for numerous Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrian good causes.

Shahin Bekhradnia read the citation for Mr Rustam Soli Dubash. Rustam is a past President of WZO and served on the Board for a period of 14 years of which four years

were devoted by him towards intensive negotiations with various global associations on all legal matters relating to the formation of a new world body for Zoroastrians. He still continues to act as the first port of call in an ex-officio manner for WZO.

Mr Rohinton Irani was the next to receive the award. His citation was read by Mr Mac Dubash. Rohinton has always refused to join any committee, steadfastly believing that one does not need the title of any high office to fulfill one's fundamental duty of service for the common good of our community and its institutions. He and his wife Perviz have year in year made available their home and garden to both WZO and ZTFE for fund raising events, raising tens of thousands of pounds towards charitable causes.

Ms Bekhradnia read the citation for Mrs Tehmi N Patel. Tehmi is a forthright supporter of WZO serving on the Board from 1989 to 2008 and fulfilled her role as Social Secretary with flair, panache and style. She wishes to see WZO as a well-recognised worldwide organisation and with her creative and fundraising skills has helped towards various charitable causes both within and outside the community. She is presently involved in fundraising for the Shooting Star Hospice for life limited children.

Sammy Bhiwandiwalla read the citation for Rumi and Hilda Sethna. Rumi is past Chairman of WZO who has given devoted service to the community over a period of 30 or more years. With his wife Hilda, he spearheaded the worldwide awareness of the Gujarat Farmers Project through foreign visits over a period of 10 years. Both Rumi and Hilda are truly dedicated to the wellbeing of WZO as they continue to support WZO personally and through their annual fundraising events which have raised hundreds of thousands of pounds to date.



Rohinton Irani



Tehmi Patel



Hilda & Rumi Sethna

Remembering Nariman Kaikhushroo Irani

After accepting their award from Mr Sorabjee, Rumi Sethna took the opportunity to thank WZO for felicitating him and his wife Hilda and mentioned that none of the awardees that evening had served WZO with any intention of an award, but their efforts and dedication towards this institution were purely because they believed in the cause. He also mentioned that youth members should come forward and serve WZO with the same dedication and zest that the past members have.

Only when the award ceremony seemed to come to an end, Darayus Motivala came on stage and announced that there was yet another award to be presented that evening. It was to felicitate Mr Sammy Bhiwandiwalla, past Chairman and currently the President of WZO. The 30th Anniversary Celebration of WZO was in fact the brainchild of Sammy. Darayus read out Sammy's citation. Sammy joined the WZO committee in 1992 before becoming the Hon Treasurer in 1993, a post he held for 10 years. He later became one of the Joint Secretaries before being elected in 2004 as the WZO Chairman where he made a profound and lasting impression. He has strengthened relationships with Zoroastrian Associations in India, US and in Europe to the betterment of WZO. He has ensured that WZO gave Iranian members and their concerns more attention and focus, thereby making WZO more inclusive. Sammy and his wife Ursula are an extremely hospitable couple, who have hosted a number of WZO meetings and social gatherings at their home.



L to R: Soli Sorabjee, Ursula & Sammy Bhiwandiwalla, Armaity Engineer

As the awards ceremony came to an end, in a short speech which enthralled the audience, Mr Soli Sorabjee wished a very happy 30th birthday to WZO. He mentioned that Institutions do not grow without the dedicated efforts of its members and that celebrations such as these give them the perseverance to go ahead. He extended his full support and offered his services to WZO and said the Chairman was welcome to call on him anytime for any support that the organization required.

Jessica Mistry playing the Bansuri



All photographs are courtesy
of Sammy Bhiwandiwalla

Jitendra Kumar, First Secretary for
Consular and Community Affairs

Mr Darayus Motivala in his closing remarks thanked everyone present that evening, for being a part of the celebrations. He thanked Mr Soli Sorabjee for gracing the occasion and Mr Jitendra Kumar for representing His Excellency Mr Nalin Surie. He thanked the sponsors, advertisers and supporters for their generosity in covering the entire cost of the evening and in particular Mrs Armaity Engineer and Mr Sammy Bhiwandiwalla who organized the event, asking them to come forward and receive a small token of appreciation from his wife, Arnawaz. He also thanked his fellow colleagues on the managing committee for their efforts in making the evening a special one. The Banquet Manager, Mr Salesh Kumar and the Head Chef, Mr Rajiv Erinjery were also given a small token of appreciation on behalf of WZO.

Dinner followed soon thereafter and subsequently a Bansuri recital given by Jessica Mistry, a highly acclaimed young player and a member of the London Sitar Ensemble. Dancing to the music of Black Velvet was the finale of the evening.

World Zoroastrian Organisation

A journey well begun, a journey travelled without shortcuts, a journey to move forward ... A never ending journey.

“From where I started to where I am today
The journey has just begun
From nothing to something I am today
It’s not been an easy journey.
Walking on the path with guts and determination
I want to continue the journey
A journey where people would remember me
As the man who won million hearts.”

adapted from the poem written by Vijay Sherigar which appears on <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/journey-41/>



Front row: l to r - Jubin Mama, Toxy Cowasjee, Jehan Bagli, Shahpur Captain, Soonu Engineer, Noshir Umrigar, Armaity Engineer, Farangiz Kavyani, Godafreed Irani, Khurshid Kapadia, Rumi Sethna. Back row: Darayus Motivala, Framroze Joshi, Benafsha Engineer, Tehmi Patel, Shahin Bekhradnia (hidden) Sammy Bhiwandiwalla, Monaz Dalal. [WZO Managing Committee who were still present for the photo shoot]



T

The Dasturji Kutar annual lecture put on by collaboration of WZO with SOAS this year on 6th May, was given by Professor Stanley Insler, a linguistic scholar of international renown and many would say the most outstanding translator of the Gathas.

His talk concerned the Zoroastrian calendar in which he developed his theory that there could have very probably existed an Old Iranian calendar preceding the Avestan calendar in use in the Achaemenian world.

shahin bekhradnia reports



Prof Stanley Insler

His argument was persuasive: just as there was an Old Vedic calendar structured to meet the needs of the Vedic texts, so there may have been a similar situation for the Iranians. However in the absence of any proof, Professor Insler sought to look for evidence of this in the Avesta itself. To clarify his point, he used the analogy of the English month names which allow an interesting history of their development to be construed: they use numbers (September, October, November, December) or names (July, August) or Roman gods (January, March, June). Similarly English weekday names are a mixture of Germanic gods (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) and celestial bodies (Saturday, Sunday, Monday). These different naming patterns suggest historical substitution.

Apparently the Egyptians had two parallel calendars: a 365-day one for civil use and a lunar one for priestly use. Numbers alone were used to denote the progress of time until names were given in the Middle Kingdom period perhaps borrowing from the Babylonian period and in which names were given to honour the deities.

Prof Insler acknowledged that there was some mileage in the notion that aspects of the Zoroastrian tradition hinted at a lunar calculation (lunation) and that the development of the 12 x 30 days system

may have been a parallel one with five intercalary days. He also considered the position of the festival days either at the mid point or at the end of the months and concluded that it is highly likely that the older priestly calendar was adapted and subjected to a Persian civic overlay. The critical passages which led to this view are found in a passage from Afrinagan and also some inconsistencies in the Siroja prayers and the regular mention of other deities in the older Yashts whose names disappear out from later prayers.

Sunday 6 June

The 2010 WZO annual seminar theme of "transformation within practices" benefitted from speakers giving entirely different responses.

In the first of the talks, Farrokh Vajifdar explained how Zoroastrian ideas changed the world view of some well known European thinkers. It is no coincidence that they all came from Greek backgrounds as this was the most respected intellectual tradition in Europe. And in turn the Greek intellectuals in the classical period drew heavily from their proximity to the flourishing Persian/Zoroastrian civilisation that was available in Ionia and the Levant.

Pythagoras and Plato (6th & 4th centuries BC) led the way in incorporating Zoroastrian



Dhummai Dalal introduced Farrokh Vajifdar

concepts, and Plotinus and Plethon (3rd & 15th centuries AD) continued to propagate such philosophy centuries later. In support of his point of view the respected historian of Greek religion, Martin P Nilsson concluded: *"The influences of Persian ideas on the Greeks had been great, but their ways were obscure and circuitous; often it was not directly exercised, but through other peoples who themselves had grasped the power of Iranian thought"*. These leading figures founded schools of thought (mainly associated with Platonism or Neo-Platonism) through which some Zoroastrian principles took root and spread into mainstream thought. Even where there was no overt acknowledgement of the source of the ideas, quite a few fellow sympathisers fell victim to bigoted potentates who accused them of promoting Paganism! Thanks to Farrokh's presentation, we learned about Plotinus, an important NeoPlatonist who travelled to Persia in the 3rd century AD (with the Roman army against Shahpur I) in the hope of deepening his insights from the land that inspired his thinking. Another revelation offered to us by Farrokh was to discover that as late as the 15th century a native of Byzantium - Plethon (originally Georgios Gemistos) successfully attempted to introduce Zoroastrian ideas via Platonism to Florence's Cosimo de Medici who founded the Platonic Academy there. Plethon is said to have stated to his Greek Orthodox critic (Scholarios) that *"Plato's philosophy came down to him from Zoroaster by way of the Pythagoreans"*. It is a quirk of chance that all these leading names should have begun with the same letter, P, called Pi in Greek, hence Farrokh's choice of title: *A succession of Pi-es!*

Our next speaker Rastin Mehri is just completing his doctoral thesis in London and he presented sections of his in-depth study of the Iranian Zoroastrian community of British Columbia, Canada. He provided a historical overview of the migration patterns into BC demonstrating that the Iranian community was one of the latest to arrive but also showing its numerical significance and its socio-economic position in contemporary BC society. The initial choice of an up market neighbourhood for the location of a place of worship, close to the favoured residential area of community members, was subject to some disappointing objections by earlier migrants, based on inaccurate stereotyping and fears. This led to the decision to find suitable premises in a more tolerant neighbourhood of Vancouver.



Soonu Engineer introduced Rastin Mehri



Rastin also observed that although an approximately equal number of Parsis live in the area, and in principle all get on well with each other on an individual basis, the Iranians do not share many common religious or social events with their fellow co-religionists. He attributed this to their reluctance to compromise in their desire to speak their own language, eat Persian food and maintain practices, an attitude which is constantly being reinforced with the arrival of new settlers. Rightly proud of their cultural and religious heritage they feel they need to provide occasions to their offspring born far from the homeland to experience an Iranian cultural community.

Our third speaker, Mr Soli Sorabjee, the celebrated former attorney general of India deliberately moved away from the theme and in so doing allowed a little levity during an afternoon of serious discussions. He gave his personal take on some of the outstanding Parsi figures that he has known during his lifetime. Known for his wit and



Remembering Nariman Kaikhushroo Irani



Some years after her first degree from Oxford university in MFL, her Iranian priestly background inspired her to do post graduate studies in anthropology again at Oxford university. She writes articles and is regularly invited to speak to academic audiences about Zoroastrianism, but also takes part in Interfaith activities to promote understanding and knowledge about our religion. She has also been invited by radio and TV channels to speak on the subject which she does with passion. She has many times acted as expert witness in asylum appeal cases on behalf of Iranian Zoroastrians in the UK and in Europe. As the WZO religious affairs spokesperson she answers email queries on behalf of WZO and organises their annual seminar.

In the last 10 years she has raised funding and set up the Pouchista Foundation in Yazd which runs a skills academy for females, a senior citizens' day centre and is hoping to start a kindergarten for the few Zoroastrian children who are still left in Yazd. Items such as sedreh and koshti made by the young ladies of Yazd are available for sale via Shahin.

turn of phrase, he related some amusing anecdotes about them and provided some passing insights into a few of his own personal experiences.

Ervad Dr Kersi Antia, our final speaker was unfortunately prevented from attending because of doctor's orders but he submitted his paper which was read by Shahin Bekhradnia on his behalf. As an eminent priest, serving the community around Chicago, his observations were profound and thought provoking. He lamented the unwillingness of many to consider our religion as it really is – a dynamic and adaptive teaching relevant for modern times as well as for a past era.

He made it clear that he did not believe in the necessity to merely maintain a tradition for the sake of the tradition. Indeed Dr Antia held up the Iranian Zoroastrian community as an example of how a community can adapt its practices to the reality within which they exist without compromising the spirit and ethics of the founder.

He summed up the present situation of our community in a nutshell with these words: *"While the Arabs did not succeed in totally annihilating us, modernity, conspired with our rigidity and ostrich-like attitude, has a fair chance of doing so. But it is all up to us; we can avoid it if we follow Zarathushtraism"*. Much of his talk was to point out what aspects of our thinking and practices are truly based on the teaching of our inspired prophet Zarathushtra, and which are not. As he said *"Some practices that have not come down to us from the prophet himself but stem from later times need to be examined from the point-of-view of how they follow or deviate from Zarathushtraism. The message of Zarathushtra represents eternal truth and let us be guided by that and nothing else ... adhering to Zarathushtraism and eternal precepts of Asho Zarathushtra rather than Zoroastrianism which represents all that was composed and preached under the name of Zarathushtra through millennia and may or may not be consonant with the prophet's teachings The best way to*



Dinyar Modi introduced Soli Sorabjee

safeguard Zoroastrianism is by ensuring that it reflects Zarathushtraism by representing our practices in terms of what Zarathushtra himself actually preached instead of what has been passed on in his name which has today come to be known as Zoroastrianism. If Zarathushtra were to come to earth today, he would be aghast at some of our practices and beliefs."

Can we hope that his reasoned and informed perspective might waken up the unthinking followers of tradition?



Question & answer session with the panel. As Kersey Antia was not present, Jehan Bagli kindly took his place for this session



All photographs are courtesy of Sammy Bhiwandiwalla



Synopsis of WZO Managing Committee's brain storming

On the evening of 7th June, a Board meeting of WZO's Managing Committee took place in London, bringing together colleagues attending the 30th anniversary celebrations from the countries represented on the body of trustees and who rarely have a chance to gather together.

The principal purpose of the meeting was to establish through consensus how WZO should expend its energy and resources. In order to do this, Chairman Darayus S Motivala invited some brain storming from those present, in order to collate suggestions about the different objectives via which members felt WZO could serve its own community.

After a short discussion of the agenda for the evening which included a short assessment of the 30th anniversary event (declared a success), as well as a summary of the implications of WZO (India)'s secession from WZO, members spent much energy in pursuing and discussing the activities of WZO.

By the end of the evening session, board members had formulated an overarching strategic objective:

Promoting WZO Worldwide and Raising the Organisation's Profile through Networking, Multi Media Exposure and Input

(i.e. contributions to publications, via the new media and developing the WZO website)

Organisational Leads: Darayus S Motivala, Chairman; & Sam Bhiwandiwalla, President

Members were also invited to come up with what might be an appropriate mission statement for future consideration and adoption. In order to formulate such a statement, members were invited to respond to the question "What does WZO stand for?"

Following deliberation on the various objectives which should be pursued by WZO, members of the Board took a free vote to decide WZO's top priorities for the coming three years, concluding with three prioritised objectives and the establishment of the following work streams:

1. Engaging with Zoroastrian Youth

Lead: Monaz Dalal, supported by Benafsha Engineer and Jubin Mama

2. Supporting Equal Rights for all Zoroastrians

Lead: Shahin Bekhradnia, supported by Farangiz Kavyani, Soonu Engineer and Sammy Bhiwandiwalla

3. Increasing WZO's Global Membership

Lead: Khurshid Kapadia, supporting members TBC

Team Leaders were invited to explore as widely as possible and feedback from all work streams was requested by the Chair at the Board's meeting of September 2010.

These objectives would be in addition to WZO's charitable activities and its continued support for the WZO Trusts in India, managed by Bachi and Dinshaw Tamboly.





World Zoroastrian Organisation

PRESS RELEASE

dated, 19 July 2010

With deep regret, the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) wishes to announce that it can no longer be associated with WZO (India). This decision was taken after very careful consideration of the actions of the committee of WZO (India) which has taken such a divergent path that they no longer share the same aims and objectives, membership criteria, activities or ethos of WZO. In fact we are now two very different organisations with contrasting views because of the choices made by WZO (India): WZO is an inclusive and forward-looking organisation, committed to promoting and safeguarding the Zoroastrian faith and looking after the interests of Zoroastrians world-wide; in contrast, WZO (India) has chosen to remain inward-looking with its focus on social activities.

WZO (India) was set up by WZO to represent and further its interests in India. It had a similar constitution, the same membership criteria as WZO and was engaged in parallel charitable activities. This arrangement worked well and was beneficial to both organisations: However, since the late nineties, the committee of WZO (India) chose to take a divergent path, contrary to the original objectives.

From around 1997, the WZO (India) committee decided not to keep WZO informed about their activities, their annual accounts and their membership. This is despite WZO continuing to send all information to WZO (India).

Last year, we found that WZO (India), without any prior discussions, had altered its membership application forms in 2002 so that only those Zoroastrians born of both Zoroastrian parents could qualify as members - which is contrary to the membership criteria of WZO. It is also very clear that WZO (India)'s emphasis now is more on social activities rather than charitable ones, which is again a change of priorities and inconsistent with the ethos of WZO.

Since the middle of last year, some of the WZO (India) committee members have shared information confidential to WZO with others not connected with WZO or with WZO (India). They have also chosen to renege on previously agreed proposals to move WZO forward, in order to meet the needs of Zoroastrians worldwide, despite securing the safeguards they sought. Whilst WZO has sought to accommodate them in their beliefs, WZO (India) have chosen to force their beliefs on Zoroastrians worldwide.

WZO wishes to state unequivocally that WZO (India) is no longer permitted to use our registered address and UK charity number in any of its correspondence and publicity materials. Any person wishing to join WZO from India can do so by contacting us through our website, www.w-z-o.org or by post at our headquarters in the UK. In time, we will set up new local contact addresses in India.

We are disappointed that all our overtures for reconciliation with the committee of WZO (India) have fallen on deaf ears and may have been misinterpreted by them as a sign of weakness on our part.

We are very appreciative of the support given by WZO (India)'s President, Mr Dadi Engineer, through the years and of his efforts to convince his committee to seek a path of reconciliation. He will continue to enjoy our full confidence along with the other members (Mr Dadi Mistry, Delhi; Mrs Mani Clubwala, Chennai; Mrs Meher Amersey, Mumbai and Mr Homi Khusrokhana, Mumbai) of WZO's Managing Committee.

WZO wishes to make it clear that the WZO Trusts in India, managed by Dinshaw and Bachi Tamboly, are not connected with WZO (India). They have and will continue to have our admiration and support.



Darayus S Motivala
Chairman WZO

World Zoroastrian Organisation is a registered charity, with its headquarters in the United Kingdom, which supports Zoroastrians globally through its charitable and social activities and advances the knowledge of the universal religion of Zarathushtra. WZO has a Managing Committee with representatives from around the world and enjoys charitable status in the UK, USA and New Zealand.

For further information on this news item or on the World Zoroastrian Organisation, please contact Darayus S Motivala, Chairman of WZO

Telephone: +44 (0)1844 352887

Mobile: +44 (0)7944 488318

Email: chairman@w-z-o.org



Press release sent to the following publications and community newspapers
Bombay Samachar - published
Jame Jamshed - published
Parsiana
FEZANA Journal
ZNA Digest - printed through courtesy of forward by an individual

سی سال بی خبری از آنچه به دنبالش بودیم (هستیم!)



WZO



جامعه زرتشتی با شمار اندک و پراکندگی بسیار در سطح جهان، دیرزمانی است که نیاز به سازمانی جهانی را احساس کرده. این نیاز برای نخستین بار در سال 1962 میلادی در اولین "کنگره جهانی زرتشتیان" به وسیله "انجمن زرتشتیان اروپا" مطرح شد و مورد استقبال و پذیرش قرار گرفت ولی در عمل هیچ اتفاقی نیفتاد. در کنگره های دوم و سوم هم در این باره گفتگو و توافق شد و سپس از آن همه ارگانها و سازمانهای زرتشتی جهان خواسته شد تا برای تشکیل شورای بنیانگذار "سازمان زرتشتیان جهان" هر کدام دونهامنده بفرستند. در طی 16 سال این تنها نتیجه و پیامد سه کنگره ای بود که با ذوق و شوق فراوان تشکیل پایگاهی جهانی را به عنوان بدنه ای مرکزی پذیرفته بودند.

با تغییرات سیاسی و وضعیت متزلزل آفریقای شرقی و خاور میانه به ویژه ایران، روند افزایش جمعیت در غرب به خصوص "بریتانیا" شدت گرفت و لازم بود که هر چه زودتر تلاشی هماهنگ صورت گیرد تا چنین پایگاهی خیلی سریع ایجاد شود. بنابراین "انجمن زرتشتیان اروپا" که اینک به نام "سندیکای مالی زرتشتیان در اروپا" شناخته می شود دست به کار شد و پس از تلاش و کوشش فراوان توانست موافقت نمایندگان را به دست آورد و سرانجام در ژانویه سال 1980 میلادی "سازمان زرتشتیان جهان" را با اختیارات مناسب در "بریتانیا" به ثبت برساند.

نماد "فروهر" و شعار "یکتایی جهانی زرتشتیان" که بیانگر اهداف و ارمان این سازمان است در جلسه افتتاحیه کمیته برگزیده شد. سازمان به وسیله (هیات مدیره) کمیته ای 35 نفره از همکیشان سراسر دنیا اداره می شود که 6 نفر از آنها (هیات رئیسه) نمایندگان رسمی هستند. مرکز آن در "لندن" قرار دارد و همه زرتشتیان و سازمانهای زرتشتی واجد شرایط در سراسر جهان می توانند با پرداخت حق عضویت به آن بپیوندند.

کار و تلاش پیوسته و مداوم همراه با فداکاری و از خود گذشتگی گروهی از زنان و مردان با ایمان سبب شد علی رغم همه مشکلات و کمبودها "دبلیو-زد - او" پس از ده سال به خوبی پا بگیرد و جایگاه مناسبی پیدا کند. سپس هیات مدیره تصمیم گرفت برای تماس با جامعه زرتشتی و سازمانها به جای جای دنیا سفر کند، تا در این دیدارها گفتگو و اطلاع رسانی نماید. این تماسها نه تنها با جامعه زرتشتی، که با سازمانها و نهادهای بین المللی چون "یونسکو" و سران و دولتمردان و سفیرای کشورهای گوناگون و همه کسانی که به نوعی می توانستند "دبلیو-زد - او" را در رسیدن به اهدافش یاری دهند، صورت می گرفت.

حاصل این تلاشها کارنامه ای است درخشان که امروز پس از گذشت سه دهه، بنیانگذاران، هموندان، دشمنان و یاوران "دبلیو-زد-او" می توانند به آن افتخار کنند (هر چند که برخی از آن بزرگان دیگر در میان مان نیستند ولی نامشان برای همیشه ماندگار است). سالها خدمات ارزنده و انسان دوستانه، این سازمان را به عنوان سازمانی معتبر و خوشنام در سطح جهان مطرح ساخت و پنجم ژوئن امسال (2010) در حالی سی امین سالگرد تاسیس خود را جشن گرفت که، در یافت پیامهای شادباش و تبریک از سوی سازمانها و ارگانهای رسمی کشورهای گوناگون بیانگر این اعتبار بود.

سازمان مستقلی که کار خود را با کمک به مهاجرین و دریافت اجازه اقامت برای آنها آغاز کرد، اینک سابقه سی سال خدمات ارزشمند و موثر در زمینه های اقتصادی، اجتماعی، پزشکی، آموزشی، فرهنگی و دینی را به همراه دارد (چه بسا برخی از ما از این کمکها بهره مند شده ایم بدون اینکه شناخت چندانی از گذشته و فعالیتهای این سازمان داشته باشیم) فصل نامه "همازور" نشریه این سازمان و سایت:

www.w-z-o.org

سایتی است که می توان اطلاعات بیشتری را در آن پیدا کرد. انجام همه این کارها بدون پشتیبانی و دهنش بزرگان و دهشمندان دلسوز جامعه هرگز عملی نبود، با درود فراوان به این خیر اندیشان نیک منش که همواره یاریگر جامعه بوده اند، ما نیز با پیوستن و پشتیبانی خود نشان دهیم که جهانی می اندیشیم و کمک کنیم که تواناییها و سرمایه های فکری، مالی، تخصصی، علمی و... زرتشتیان در سراسر گیتی متمرکز شود و همه از آن بهره مند گردیم.

*در این نوشتار از هیچ کدام از بزرگانی که در طی سالها از آغاز تا به امروز برای برپایی، تشکیل و ماندگاری این سازمان تلاش کرده و برای بهبود وضعیت زرتشتیان و گسترش نیکی در جهان کوشیده اند نام برده نشده است! چرا که هدف از نوشتن این مقاله تنها دادن آگاهی و اطلاعات به همکیشان داخل ایران و فارسی زبان است که بیشتر آنها از وجود "سازمان زرتشتیان جهان" بی خبرند و گروهی دیگر این سازمان را سازمانی مختص پارسیان هند می دانند و به داندوبه دام کسانی می افتند که به دنبال ایجاد تفرقه و جدایی بین زرتشتیان ایران و هند می باشند.

پرنیان تهمتی

Some general information about World Zoroastrian Organisation written in Farsi for our Zoroastrian community in Iran - Ed.



Behistun

An Oak Falls - Tribute to a friend & colleague, Firoj M Panthaky

My dear friend and colleague Trustee on the Boards of World Zoroastrian Organisation Trust, WZO Trust for Women & Children & WZO Trust Funds fulfilled his destiny and departed to meet his creator on April 16, 2010. He was around 80 years of age; having lived life to the full, a good enough time to call it a day.

I first came into contact with Firoj sometime in 1988. He had then recently retired as Deputy Conservator of Forests, South Gujarat. World Zoroastrian Organisation, London had at that time just received the startling Socio Economic Survey report of Zoroastrians residing in the rural areas of South Gujarat, conducted on their behalf by Dr (Mrs) Cashmera P Bhaya, in which, by way of a sample (not census) survey, she had identified 687 families to be living below the poverty line in 209 villages.

Being a member of the International Board of WZO at that time, having a base at Navsari, I volunteered to oversee the proposed project to rehabilitate the poor agrarian Zoroastrians of rural South Gujarat. My first priority was to put together and form a small but dynamic team of likeminded individuals who would be willing to give of their time and talent in the rehabilitation process.

I was singularly fortunate to be approached by two very talented individuals – Firoj Panthaky and Farrokh Kasad. Firoj, an acknowledged authority in forestry and conservation; Farrokh, an expert in

agriculture whose family had recently disposed off most of their vast land holding. Both Firoj and Farrokh were very keen to be involved in the mega rehabilitation exercise that was contemplated. Thus was formed the core team – Firoj Panthaky, Farrokh Kasad, my wife Bachi and I, who would undertake this mammoth project.

Firoj was a hands on no nonsense person, one who would call a spade a spade without mincing words. He was loath to suffer sloth or tolerate a laid back attitude from any of the beneficiaries. Those unwilling to learn quickly or were casual in their approach, had to endure

his verbal lashings many a time. Today, these very beneficiaries, most of who have progressed from abject poverty to relative prosperity and an improved life style, recall with gratitude the sharpening of their skills through the tough training their hard taskmaster Firoj subjected them to.

With his expertise in forestry, Firoj honed the skills of Zoroastrian agrarians in many diverse areas of forestry plantation. One was the cultivation of teak nurseries, something the Zoroastrian agrarians had never even dreamt of, let alone cultivated or earned from them.

Another such initiative that emanated from Firoj was teaching beneficiaries the art of optimum planting of Casuarina trees in one acre of land. Agrarians earlier used to plant around 600 Casuarina trees in one acre of land, the income from which was not commensurate with the area under



plantation. Firoj taught the farmers to plant 1000 of these trees in every acre of land, positioned in line with the path traversed by the sun, east to west. This resulted in a healthier yield and enhanced income for the beneficiaries.

In fields, some parts of which were fallow, Firoj introduced Zoroastrians to the concept of 'fish farming' which yielded good income for them from the areas that were hitherto unproductive.

Firoj willingly imparted his expertise and knowhow to beneficiaries of WZO Trust, who on account of his mentoring coupled with their hard work have been lifted from the morass of abject poverty into the mainstream of society.

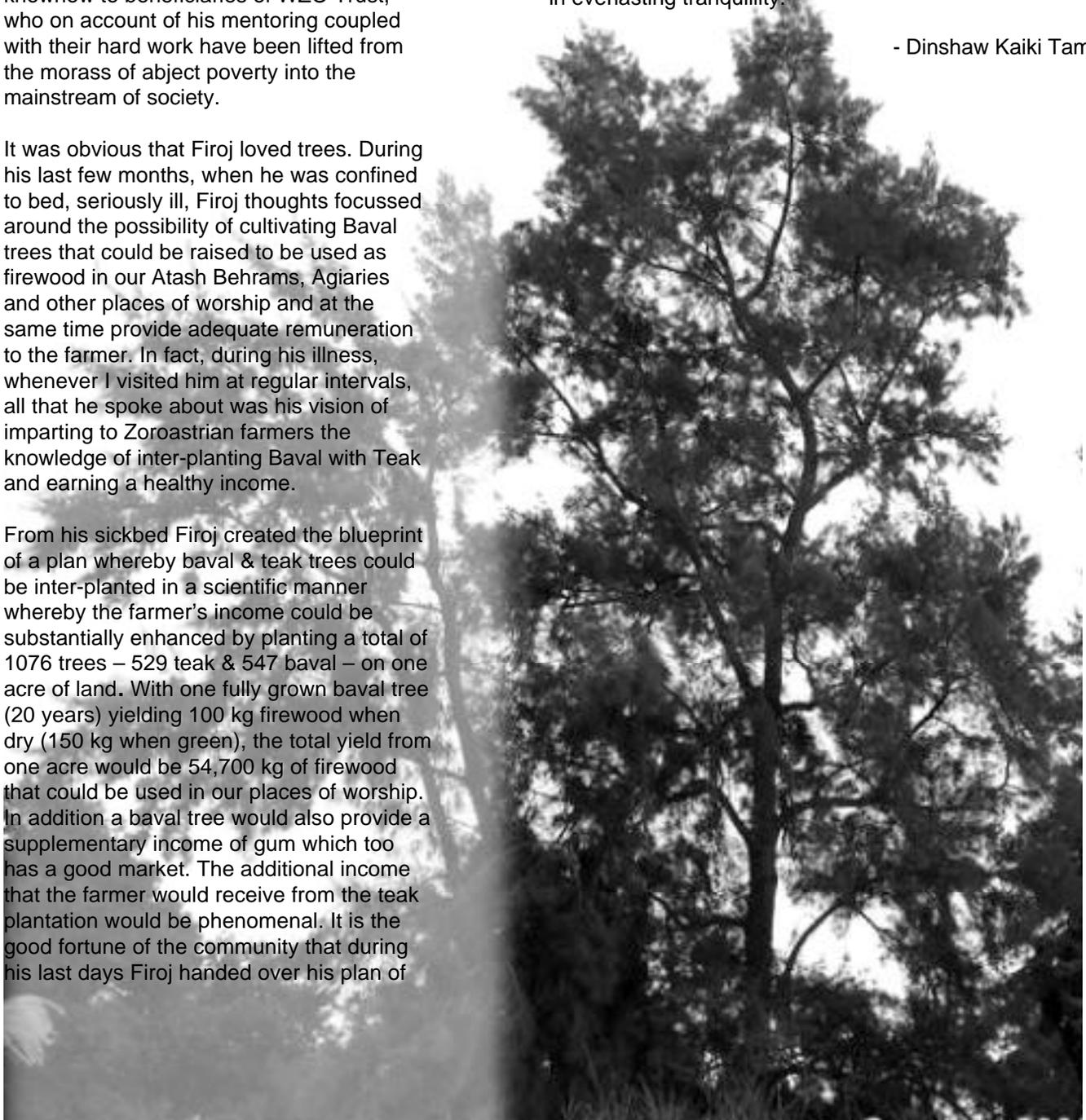
It was obvious that Firoj loved trees. During his last few months, when he was confined to bed, seriously ill, Firoj thoughts focussed around the possibility of cultivating Baval trees that could be raised to be used as firewood in our Atash Behrams, Agiaris and other places of worship and at the same time provide adequate remuneration to the farmer. In fact, during his illness, whenever I visited him at regular intervals, all that he spoke about was his vision of imparting to Zoroastrian farmers the knowledge of inter-planting Baval with Teak and earning a healthy income.

From his sickbed Firoj created the blueprint of a plan whereby baval & teak trees could be inter-planted in a scientific manner whereby the farmer's income could be substantially enhanced by planting a total of 1076 trees – 529 teak & 547 baval – on one acre of land. With one fully grown baval tree (20 years) yielding 100 kg firewood when dry (150 kg when green), the total yield from one acre would be 54,700 kg of firewood that could be used in our places of worship. In addition a baval tree would also provide a supplementary income of gum which too has a good market. The additional income that the farmer would receive from the teak plantation would be phenomenal. It is the good fortune of the community that during his last days Firoj handed over his plan of

developing such a plantation. It however remains to be seen how many of our agrarians will venture to undertake such an exercise without the hawk eyes of the forestry genius present to guide them.

For WZO Trust/s, Farrokh Kasad, Bachi and myself, Firoj was a caring friend, a dedicated taskmaster, a committed worker and a good human being. Firoj Panthaky fulfilled his responsibilities towards his family (his wife Rati who predeceased him by two years), did his duty towards the needy of the community, and now reposes in everlasting tranquillity.

- Dinshaw Kaiki Tamboly -



Raising Babul [Baval] Trees - A WZO initiative

B

Babul when planted should be 100 feet away from the highest flood / tide level of the sea. Babul will not grow in sandy soil.

Babul can grow in South or Central Gujarat – it can grow up to heights of 50 feet; it has profuse branches with the main stem (trunk) of 40 inches girth, if planted at a distance of 10 feet from another babul plant.

A babul tree will yield a supplementary income of gum which has a reasonably good market.

prepared by late firoz panthaky



A fully grown babul tree (20 years growth) will provide up to 150 kg of firewood when green and up to 100 kg when dried.

One acre of land planted with 547 babul trees at distances of 10 feet from one another should yield approximately 54,700 kg of firewood.

Babul being a hardy species would not require artificial irrigation but would be dependent on monsoon for its source of water from the **4th year onwards.**

Babul trees after they are harvested have to be replanted again for another 20 year cycle.

Planting babul with the space between 2 plants being 10 feet x 10 feet will allow inter-planting of teak plants also at 10 feet x 10 feet.

To augment income teak can be planted five feet away from each babul plant; the space between two teak plants and two babul plants will still remain 10 feet apart.

Babul if raised at 5 feet x 5 feet space between two trees will grow so dense and short that it will not be possible for

any person to wield an axe for cutting. It is essential that the space between two babul trees should be 10 feet x 10 feet.

TEAK

The coppicing (wood) capacity of a teak tree from its cut base stool can yield marketable wood every 11 years (thrice in its life span of 40 years). Thus teak inter-planted with babul can yield substantial income from the 11th year onwards over a total span of 40 years.

One teak tree would require water as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 st year – 2 litres | 5 th year – 10 litres |
| 2 nd year – 4 litres | 6 th year – 12 litres |
| 3 rd year – 6 litres | 7 th year – 14 litres |
| 4 th year – 8 litres | 8 th year – 16 litres |
| | 9 th year – 18 litres |

In the 10th year it would depend on the monsoon (one year prior to its first harvesting).



*WZO – Manufacturing Confidence, Changing Lives,
Creating a Strong Community*

“Iran - Tracing Footprints Through Time”



They say, books are the carriers of civilization. Without books, history is silent, literature dumb, science crippled and thought at a standstill. Indeed, in books lie the soul and the articulate audible voice of the past. “Iran – Tracing Footprints Through Time” is an amazingly crisp, abundantly informative and awe inspiring travelogue written by Natasha Viraf Deboo. For the 19-year-old author it has been a labour of love but for the reader it is a work of art both in terms of content and aesthetic value.

reviewed by noshir dadrawalla

For Zoroastrians, Iran is a spiritual motherland. The author has captured within less than 90 pages the essence of her experience in this wonderful country during the year 2006. She writes with the verve and breezy style of a teenager but tempered with profound depth, accuracy and maturity especially when dealing with facts of history and culture.

She virtually makes the landscapes and monuments of this beautiful country spring alive. The author very ably breathes life into legends and history and with great felicity keeps the reader, whether young or old, enthralled and not wanting to put the book away till the very last page is turned and read.

From the dizzying heights of the Albrouz mountains to the shores of the Caspian Sea, the author meticulously glides readers across the salt deserts and makes every column of Persepolis speak of a culture that is seeped with richness that has not been eroded despite the vicissitudes of time.

Rightly does Justice Sam Variava who has also been to Iran with the SVG Group in the year 2007 states in his Foreword: “Natasha has very successfully managed to capture, and describe, the warmth and beauty, not just of the countryside, but also of the

people of Iran. I feel that a visit to Iran is a must, but if one has not the time or cannot visit Iran, then one can get the flavour of Iran by reading Natasha’s book. Her detailed descriptions of the places and the feelings they evoke is so vivid and accurate that it transports one back (of course only in memory) to those places, and through Natasha’s eyes one lives the memories”.

Union Press has done remarkably well in printing this book with quality art paper and matching 13 chapters with as many as 68 eye-catching coloured photographs which have mostly been shot by the author. Doubtlessly, the book is both an intellectual as well as a visual feast.

Bertrand Russell once said, “There are two motives for reading a book: one, that you enjoy it; the other, that you can boast about it”. Natasha’s travelogue panders to both motives.

Published by WZO Trust, India, it is priced at a subsidized rate of Rs150/-.

The book is available at:

Union Press, Fort, Mumbai Tel: 22660357
Noshir H Dadrawala, Mumbai Tel: 22846534
Kadmi-Shahenshahi (Komda) Agiyari, Pune
C P Mehta, Pune Tel: +919422035855
Viraf B Deboo, Pune Tel: (020) 26133018
Globe Hotel, Udwarda



Noshir H Dadrawala is CEO, Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy. He is also Director of Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium and Coordinating Committee Member of Worldwide Initiatives & Network of Grant-makers, Fellow of the Centre for Study of Philanthropy (New York) and member of the advisory council of the International Centre for Not-for-profit Law. He has written several resource books and is a trustee of several leading NGOs in India. He is guest faculty at two business schools in Mumbai.



Will BPP address this issue?

Camille & Zeenia Framroze of Mumbai sent out a petition in early July 2010, as feeling strongly about the treatment of the two mobeds - Madon & Mirza - and reading the article appearing in the Mumbai Mirror dated 9th July 2010, they felt they should do something to support the petitioners - Homi Khushrookhan, Jamshed Kanga and others. They felt the best way to make people and in particular the youth aware, was to have an online petition which they have achieved. - Ed.

“Two of our dasturs, Khushroo Madon and Faramroz Mirza, have been restrained from praying at the fire temples controlled by the Panchayet. Their only crime has been the performance of the navjote ceremony and after-death prayers for children of mixed marriages. Prominent members of our community have chosen to defend these two priests and what they stand for. Although we are in no way associated or affiliated with them, we support their stance.

We are two 17 and 20-year-old Parsi girls and we find the stance of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet unacceptable. Not for personal or selfish reasons – we are the daughters of two Parsi parents. But we are offended by this exclusive attitude and rigid intolerance. We believe that if either parent is Parsi, the children have the right to be inducted and accepted into our religion.

This is a petition to show our support for the fight against ultra-orthodoxy and inequality within our community. If you are in agreement, please sign your name to the petition below and invite other members of the community to this group. We will be forwarding this to the Panchayet and to the 5 petitioners of the case. Join us, and let's make ourselves heard.”

<http://petitiononline.com/pingping/petition.html>

[2385 signatories as on 6 August 2010, midday]

A rejoinder petition was sent out by Jimmy Doctor on 21 July, but as there was no email address of the gentleman, and as I do not know where he lives, no further information can be given except to include his request to the community. - Ed.

“Dear fellow Zarthustis,

There is a petition that is gaining steam on the web. This petition is ‘Against Parsi Conservatism’, or in other words, it is promoting reformist ideology. It has got over 1900 signatures as I write this and it is barely a couple of weeks old. This petition has been circulated in the media and social networking sites and is signed by various non-Parsis. They plan on sending this petition to the BPP and the media as a means to convince them that the Orthodox doctrine is outdated and not supported by the general Parsi/Zoroastrian population. In order to counter this I have created another petition which bolsters our conservative position. It is meant to show solidarity between the Traditional Zoroastrians and give them an outlet to voice their thoughts. I really would like each one of you to take a couple of seconds to sign it, and forward it to those who would also be interested. Don't forget your immediate family members. Together we can show them that we are not going to give in when it comes to our religion. You may think that this petition is meaningless and as long as you observe the proper tenets in your own house, that is all that is needed. I urge you to reconsider this mindset. By not speaking up we are implicitly showing the world that Traditionalism is a thing of the past. Lastly, there is a comments section. I *highly* encourage you all to leave a small but meaningful comment to show the validity of your signature. Please think twice about what you put there, as it will reflect upon us as Traditionals. Keep it to the point and non-inflammatory, and encourage others who you send this to comment in a similar manner.”

Link to the petition: <http://www.petitiononline.com/TradZ/petition.html>

[411 signatories as on 6 August 2010, midday]



Smaller, smarter, nimbler: Calcutta Parsis could teach a thing or two to Mumbai HQ



The Parsis seem to have made a habit of getting into the national news for the wrong reasons. Most recently, they were named in Pranab Mukherjee's pioneering one-crore rupees budgetary allocation for 'threatened communities'. How dare he equate this self-anointed custodian of sophistication with some Onge aboriginal? The very suggestion was enough to fray the heirloom *gara*, curdle the *saas*, and freeze Daisy and Dinsu in mid-Dance. But the demographic decline is as inescapable as the Catch-22 situation. Every census has shown a 10% decline, and the next one could see the Parsis in India down to 60,000, and still dwindling. If we keep our fiercely protected racial purity, we lose the numbers essential to viability. Pump up the numbers with conversion or intermarriage, and we must kiss our distinctive identity good-bye.

by bachi karkaria

The epic tragedy of India's Parsis is that, a millennium after our persecuted ancestors fled here, and lived in fearful isolation for a long period, we find ourselves in the same paranoia trap. This is less evident in Kolkata, but it is a creeping, degenerative reality in Mumbai. Unfortunately since that is the community HQ, it could force its contagion to other parts.

Paranoia is notoriously cannibalistic. It has fed on its own fears and emaciated an exemplary people. The locks which the community has put on its membership are but symptoms of a deeper malaise – the shutting down of a once-inspiring mind. Indeed, if Parsis are so dangerously on the brink, not just in numbers but on all indices of viability, it is because we have become the exact opposite of everything that once made our community iconic.

Physically and mentally, we were once globally adventurous; today we have barricaded ourselves in our colonies where the ghettos of the mind so easily flourish and fester. Our sense of humour was legendary, and a major factor of our lovability quotient; today our grim inability to laugh at ourselves is as much the cause as

the effect of a loss of self-confidence. Worst of all, the community's crimes against its women have brought the vultures home to roost. Educated, empowered, equal in letter and spirit, our women were our most distinctive strength. Today they are painted as Villain No.1 – for marrying outside the community and therefore precipitating the decline. They are emotionally blackmailed into submission and end up on the sad, lonely and embittered shelf. The defiant are treated as outcasts by the orthodoxy and even by some stone-hearted parents.

The obvious and immediate solution to the depleting numbers would be to welcome their progeny into the fold in the same way that children of intermarried men routinely are. Those of us who have championed this logic have been stunned into silence by the counter-attack: "So, you want us to be evenhanded? Fine. We will ostracize the children of the men as well." Indeed intermarriage has become an obsessive compulsive disorder, blinding out the real problems.

When I see this suicidal pigheadedness, all around me in Mumbai, I think of Kolkata which has continued the traditions which

Remembering Nariman Kaikhushroo Irani

made me so proud to be a Parsi in my growing up years there. Our tiny community reveled in its unique institutions – the Parsee Club, Scouts & Guides, Youth League, Stree Mandal, the annual natak and not forgetting the ‘Navroz’, devotedly edited by my parents – but there was never a whiff of communal superiority. I would like to believe that this came from choice, not compulsion. If there were intermarriages, no stones were thrown, only ashirwad bestowed, if requested, by our beloved Priest, Bapuji, a wise religious shepherd. Fortunately, it continues to be as fortunate in its secular leaders, progressive educated trustees who don’t need to use fear to keep a community captive, and have no use for the latter either.

I saw this seamless meld again in Delhi where I lived for two years more recently, a philosophy articulated by the gentle Piloo Jungalwala: “Our Delhi Parsi community is close but not closed.” Here too there has been no loss of identity, only greater unity, happiness – and respect from the larger populace..

Way to go. Make the right propitiating noises to the Mumbai juggernaut, but refuse to get crushed under it.

Shared by Ms Karkaria with Hamazor. Previously published in the Calcutta Gavashni, Jan-Mar 2010



Conventional religion loses its pristine purity

Religion is the way of life that the soul has to live upon earth. It is the ascending effort of man towards perfection. In its pristine purity it is the most effective cohesive force for mankind. It aims at building a world fellowship of men and women on the spiritual foundation.

Religion in its origin, embraces all alike and works for the unity. Institutional religion founded upon rituals and sacrifices raises barriers of socio-religious exclusiveness between man and man and becomes exclusive and divisive. Dogmas and doctrines founded on primitive usages and customs, animistic practices and observances become religion where truth alone should be religion.

Orthodoxy is wedded to fixity. Earnest piety of the orthodox has done incalculable harm in the name of religion all throughout history. Infatuation for formalism is mistaken for genuine religion. It is easier to follow outward observance and ceremonial practices that have acquired pseudo-religious importance and to revel in ritualistic performances, than to act according to the inward promptings of conscience. When emotions are uncontrolled by intellect, sentiment smothers judgement. Dogmatists think not with their brains. They assert with vehemence what their hearts aver and lose

the substance in their eager pursuit of the shadow of religion.

Sectarian bigotry believes there is no truth outside its own belief. We quarrel with bitter acrimony over socio-religious ‘practices, rituals and customs’. Emotions are roused to fever heat. We fly into great tempers. Bitter polemics stir the community to its depths. Endless dissensions and acrimonious disputations daily eat into the life of our dear community.

The soul feasts with joyous ecstasy upon the sweet memories of the pious life that it has lived upon the earth and not upon the rich repasts consecrated by the living on its behalf. In the world of the dead, merits alone counts, worth alone wins. Rich rituals and burnt offerings brighten not the path to paradise.

Give us wisdom, Ahura Mazda, to see that the world our fathers lived in is not the same world that we live in today. It has moved onwards and progressed and changed. Its problems have changed, and its mode of life has changed beyond recognition. The world of infant humanity has blossomed into blooming youth. Lead us, O Lord, to see that true religion is based upon human heart and Asha’s righteousness alone is that true religion.

Dastur Maneck N Dhalla, High Priest of the Parsis, Karachi, India. [Pre Partition]

Reprinted in the Mahila Weekly (a ladies magazine read in Mumbai & Gujarat) dated 25th March 2010



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

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



A Treasury of Zoroastrian Manuscripts:

The First Dastoor Meherjirana Library, Navsari

N

Nestled within the winding streets of Navsari's Tarota Bazaar resides one of the world's most important archives of Zoroastrian history. Guarding centuries of Zoroastrian lore, the First Dastoor Meherjirana Library in Navsari has been continuously serving the scholarly and Parsi community for one hundred and thirty seven years. The library is home to more than six hundred handwritten manuscripts in the historic and contemporary languages of the Zoroastrian community, including Avestan, Pahlavi, Pazand, Persian, and Gujarati. The oldest of these manuscripts, manuscript G-18, a copy of an Avestan text known as the *Vishtasp Yasht*, was written in Iran in the year 1323 AD and sent to India in the 17th century. In addition to storing and preserving its more ancient treasures, the library also serves the local Navsari community through its extensive collections of popular and specialized books in Gujarati, English, and Hindi.

by daniel j sheffield

In September 2009, through a very generous donation from the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, the Meherjirana Library entered into a new era in its history with the addition of a new four-story building equipped with a new reading room for students, a conference hall with digital projection facilities, fully furnished apartments for visiting scholars, and a conservation lab for technicians working to preserve the library's collections. In addition, a website for the library has recently been initiated at <http://www.meherjiranalibrary.com/> which has already attracted visitors from around the world.

During the 2008-9 academic year, I had the good fortune to spend four months in Navsari working in the Meherjirana Library as well as five months in Bombay working at the K R Cama Oriental Institute as part of a US Department of Education Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Award. As a graduate student at Harvard University working on Zoroastrian religious history, I had spent much of the previous five years of my study in libraries. My dissertation research had brought me to the

national libraries of Britain, France, and Denmark, all of which have extensive collections of Zoroastrian manuscripts. But though I knew that the bulk of my research awaited me in the libraries of Navsari and Bombay, I had little idea what to expect. The last published catalogue of the Meherjirana's manuscript collection was printed in 1923. Wondering what changes the last 85 years had brought to the library, I contacted Dr Shernaz Cama from the UNESCO Parsi Zoroastrian project (PARZOR) in Delhi about the possibility of working in Navsari. Dr Cama put me in touch with the librarian, Smt Bharti K Gandhi and arranged for my room and board with the family of (Marhum) Minoo Suraliwala. After the long journey from Boston to Navsari, my trepidations about living in a small Gujarat town were immediately assuaged as soon as I arrived at Navsari station. Behzad, my host's son, was waiting with Bharti the librarian, both smiling warmly as we crammed my luggage into an autorickshaw. When we reached home, Behzad asked me "*Parsi bhonu gamech ke?*" "*Haa, khoob gamech*".



I responded, beginning four of the most unforgettable months of my life, filled with warm memories of *dhansak* and *bheeda par eeda*, sitting in the alleys with friends, copiously consuming ice cream and raspberry sodas at Kolaahji's, and making incredible discoveries at the library. But all the while, I realized that I was living in a city that was of great historical importance to the Parsi community, a city that has managed to keep preserving its traditions while still adapting successfully to always-changing historical circumstances.

A brief history of Navsari

The city of Navsari, located in what is today the southern part of the state of Gujarat, was probably first settled by Parsi migrants around the year 1275 AD, and by the end of the fourteenth century, the city could boast of a considerable Parsi population. The town of Navsari was home to the Bhagaria *panthak* of priests, and according to tradition, the oldest fire temple of Navsari, the Vadi Dar-e Meher was inaugurated at this time. Shortly after the fall of Sanjan, ca. 1465 AD, to the armies of Sultan Mahmud Begada, ruler of the Gujarat sultanate, a wealthy Navsari layperson by the name of Changa Asha, began an initiative to bring the sacred Iranshah Atash Behram to Navsari, which had previously been evacuated from Sanjan due to the invasions. After the transfer of the Atash Behram to Navsari, the city became home to even more priestly families, members of the Sanjana *panthak* who accompanied the fire.

During the centuries in which the Atash Behram resided in Navsari, the importance of the city rose considerably for the Parsi community. The first Dastur Mehejirana, for whom the library is named, lived from 905 to 960 AY (1535 to 1591 AD). According to a Persian biography of the Dastur Meherjirana in the possession of the library called the *Mahyarnama* (MS F-81), Dastur Meherjirana, who was renowned for his piety, was chosen by the Mughal governor at Surat to have an audience with the Emperor Akbar. At the court, Dasturji

Meherjirana impressed the emperor so much that according to the Mughal court historian Abdu'l-Qadir al-Bada'uni, the emperor ordered his vizier Abu'l-Fazl to keep a fire burning day and night at the court. According to the traditional account found in the *Mahyarnama*, Dastur Meherjirana thwarted the sorcery of a Hindu priest called Jagatguru, who, according to the story, had caused a shining plate to levitate into the sky appearing like a second sun. Before Dastur Meherjirana left the court, he was granted a *jagir* or land grant by the emperor, and when his son Kayqobad later came to court, he was granted the right to collect the tax revenues of Navsari. Whatever the truth of these stories, the fact that the first Dastur Meherji Rana had visited the court of Akbar, and that his son, Kayqobad, later visited the courts of Akbar and Jahangir is made clear by several Mughal documents preserved in the collections of the library.

The first Dastur Meherjirana was chosen by the Bhagarsath Anjoman of Navsari as its high priest, and as such the Meherjirana line, which has recently installed its 17th high priest, Dasturji K N Dastoor, is the oldest high priesthood in India. Navsari was also the home of other important priestly figures, including Darab Pahlan, born ca. 1668, who was an important scribe and the author of the Persian *Farziyat-nama* and the *Khulasa-i Dini*, as well as the learned first Dasturji Jamasp Asa, born in 1693. Dasturji Jamasp Asa studied with Dastur Jamasp Velayati who had come from Iran to Surat in 1721, and amassed a considerable library of manuscripts. Darab Hormazdyar, the most famous compiler of the Persian Rivayats, belonged to a prominent lineage in the Sanjana *panthak* living in Navsari.

Beginning in the late 17th century, the area of south Gujarat faced increasing Maratha presence from the south. Because of this, along with the increasing presence of the British, Mughal rule in Gujarat declined, and Navsari eventually came to be incorporated into the princely state of Baroda, under the rule of the Gaekwad. The reign of the Gaekwad continued up until Indian

independence in 1947. Disputes between the Bhagaria and Sanjana priests escalated when some Navsari *behdins* requested that Sanjana priests perform their family rituals, and eventually the Iranshah Atash Behram was moved out of Navsari in 1740 and finally installed in Udvada in 1742. After the transfer of Iranshah, an initiative was begun to consecrate a new Atash Behram in Navsari, the story of which is told in the Persian *Qissa-i Zartushtiyān-i Hindustān va bāna kardan-i Atash Behram-i Navsari*. The fire, which is the second oldest Atash Behram in India, was installed in 1765. By the 19th century, Navsari was an established center of priestly learning, and all priests of the Bhagaria *panthak*, no matter where in India they lived, had to have their *navar* initiation ceremonies performed at the Vadi Dar-e Meher in Navsari until Dasturji Edalji Dorabji Sanjana controversially broke with tradition and began to perform these ceremonies at the Wadia Atash Behram in Bombay. The importance of Navsari as a center of learning was so great that the author of the Gujarati *Tavarikh-e Navsari* likened the city to Oxford, England. In 1856, the Navsari Zartoshti Madressa was inaugurated where it is still operating today.

The Library and its Facilities

In 1872, the First Dastoor Meherjirana Library was inaugurated and quickly attracted prominent visitors. The guestbook of the library reads like a “who’s who” in Zoroastrian Studies. The very first entry in the guestbook was written by the renowned translator of the Avesta, James Darmesteter, who wrote in January of 1887, “I never saw such a fine collection in a small town, and it does honour to the generosity of the donors and to the zeal for instruction of the Parsi population at Navsari. This visit will remain one of the best remembrances of my short occasion in the Parsi mofussil.”

The manuscript collection of the First Dastoor Meherjirana Library was donated by a number of different people. Many of the original donations of manuscripts came



The exterior of the First Dastoor Meherjirana Library, showing the old buildings on the right as well as the new annexe on the left



The reading room of the old library building

from the Meherjirana family itself, principally from Dasturs Jamsetji Sorabji and Framji Sorabji Meherjirana, Rustomji Kekobadji Meherjirana, and Edalji Navroji Meherjirana, but the greatest number of manuscripts was donated by Dastur Erachji Sorabji

Remembering Nariman Kaikhushroo Irani

Meherjirana, who was a prolific scribe and an accomplished scholar. Later manuscript donations to the First Dastoor Meherjirana Library have come from several sources. Extensive collections from Jamshedji Maneckji Unvala and Meherji Navroji Kutar were both generously given to the library sometime after Ervad B N Dhabhar's 1923 Catalogue was published. More recent donations have come from various families in Navsari, as well as from Dasturji Kotwal, and it is hoped that the library's collection will continue to be enriched in the years to come.

In addition to its extensive manuscript collections, the First Dastoor Meherjirana Library has a very important collection of printed books. The library is extremely rich in terms of published books about Zoroastrianism, particularly books published during the 19th century and books published in India. The library has one of the richest collections of Parsi books in the world, and possesses an extensive collection of Gujarati books dating back to the very dawn of Gujarati printing in the early 19th century.

Today, the printed collections of the First Dastoor Meherjirana Library, are digitally catalogued thanks to the indefatigable efforts of the present librarian Smt Bharti K Gandhi, who has been diligently working at the library for 34 years and who has spearheaded the recent expansions of the library in cooperation with the Board of Trustees and its chairperson, Miss Katy K Antia. Recently, the library has been engaged in many long-term projects. More than 90,000 pages of the library's manuscripts have been preserved on microfilm thanks to the assistance of the PARZOR (<http://www.unescoparzor.com/index.php?&view=article&id=15>). Additionally, several manuscripts have been digitalized by Professor Alberto Cantera and his students for the Avesta Digital Archive Project (<http://ada.usal.es/>). Thanks to generous grants from the F E Dinshaw Trust through the good offices of its chairman, Mr Nusli Wadia, the library is



Preserved page of an early 19th century Gujarati Jamaspi manuscript

currently in the process of conserving and restoring all of its manuscripts so that future generations of community members and scholars will be able to take advantage of these treasures.

The library complex consists of three parts. The old building, dedicated to the memory of Maneckbai Maneckji Jamshedji Dastur Meherjirana, is two stories tall and contains most of the library's printed books and periodicals, as well as reading tables for the general public. An annex to this building was built in honour of Seth Hormasji Framji Kolah in 1966, housing additional books, as well as the head librarian's office, where a microfilm reader and microfilms of almost all of the manuscripts are kept. Most recently, the new four-story annexe has been constructed adjoining to the library through a generous donation by the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and furnished with help from the



Librarian Bharti K Gandhi

Pirojshah Godrej Foundation. This building has a fully equipped conservation laboratory, a computer room for the use of students, a climate-controlled conference hall in which the manuscripts are kept, and three furnished apartments for visiting scholars. It is hoped that such arrangements will bring many scholars both from India and from abroad to Navsari to visit the library in order to facilitate their research, and the library is planning to host its first international conference of scholars of Zoroastrianism in the near future. During my stay in Navsari, I was delighted to find that the manuscripts which had been catalogued in 1923 were being preserved and were still easily accessible, providing me with extensive new material for my dissertation. But during the last eighty years, the library had acquired another 157 manuscripts which were waiting to be explored. Working from extensive notes by Dasturji Firoze M Kotwal, Bharti and I prepared a preliminary catalogue of these manuscripts which is now freely available to any interested scholar on the web. But most importantly, during my time in Navsari and at the Meherjirana Library, I was able to form lifelong friendships with the people of Navsari. As the French scholar James Darmesteter once said about the city, *“One finds there a sentiment of reality which dead texts cannot offer.”*

As I hope to have conveyed, the First Dastoor Meherjirana Library is an extremely rich resource for scholars of Zoroastrianism. Now in its one-hundred thirty-seventh year of operation, the library has served generations of scholars, priests, and community members, and it is hoped that it will continue to do so for a very long time. The construction of a new building at the library, with its housing for scholars, conservation laboratory, conference hall and climate-controlled room for the storage of manuscripts has made it easier than ever for scholars like myself to come to Navsari and utilize the resources of the library. Thus, I, as well as the librarian and the trustees of the Library, take great pride in the inauguration of this new building, and



The library lit up at the inauguration celebration



A sign from the inauguration

ardently hope that the First Dastoor Meherjirana Library will still be serving the Parsi, Indian, and international scholarly community for many, many years to come.



Daniel Sheffield is a PhD Candidate in Iranian and Persian Studies at Harvard University. He arrived at Harvard from Kentucky as an undergraduate, where he became interested in the Zoroastrian religion. He is currently writing his dissertation entitled *In the Path of the Prophet: Sacred Biographies of Zarathustra in Medieval and Early Modern Zoroastrianism*. During the 2008-9 academic year, he lived in Navsari and Bombay as part of a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Award.

A Unique Bas-Relief at Pasargadae

I

In 2002, *Hamazor* launched its new edition from Karachi, under the editorship of Toxy Cowasjee. In that year, I was asked to contribute an article dealing with early Persian art, a subject in which I had previously undertaken academic research. Hence, the *Hamazor* issue of 2002 – 2ⁱ carried my illustrated article entitled: *Pasargadae – The Four-Winged Genius at the Gate*, a controversial bas-relief of the time of Cyrus II, The Great (559 – 530 BC).

This period of early Persian art was of considerable interest, both to the art historian and, to the serious reader investigating various topics in Persian history, under the aegis of Cyrus the Great. It is therefore rather surprising that a subsequent article on this important and controversial bas-relief from Pasargadae was only revived in *Hamazor*ⁱⁱ in the January issue of 2010, after a lapse of nearly eight years!

by vera s katrak

Possibly, many current readers of *Hamazor* do not have early issues of this publication in their collection. What follows, is both a review of my former *Hamazor* article of 2002, as well as an assessment of this recent article in *Hamazor* on the same subject, authored by Dr Sam Kerr, residing in Australia.ⁱⁱⁱ

Pasargadae, the capital of Cyrus the Great, was not built in the manner of ancient Near Eastern citadels. No major wall fortified this site; its free-standing buildings stood, as revealed by excavations^{iv}, within a royal park or 'paradise', probably the first of such gardens for which Persia became famous in antiquity. The Avestan *pairidaeza*, referred to such verdant surroundings.

Pasargadae continued to be regarded as a sacred site and, the capital of the founding father of the Achaemenids, Cyrus II. It suffered much damage by weathering over the years, but no destruction was ever wrought by human hands to its surviving remains. One is greatly handicapped in making a comprehensive study of the early

phase of Achaemenian art at Pasargadae, as few sculptured reliefs have been recovered so far. Of these, all but one stand in a fragmentary condition. In the structure known as the Gate House of the palace area, one extant door jamb bears a relief of extraordinary interest which finds no parallel in any other period of early Iranian art.

Executed in locally quarried grey limestone and, facing north-north-east, almost the entire surface of the door jamb is covered by a bas-relief of a crowned, four-winged single male figure. The dimensions of this door jamb are as follows:^v the original height of the jamb was 3.50m. and, the height of the carved bas-relief measured 2.90m. The width was 1.58m. and the thickness of the stone equaled 1m. Represented at full length and, in profile, the right side of the figure is portrayed. Standing in the symbolic pose of reverence, the head faces the inside of the building area.

Carved in minute detail, this sculptured relief reveals full command over the stone



1. The crowned four-winged genius at Pasargadae [photo: R Ghirshman]



2. Line drawing of 1. [photo: D Stronach]

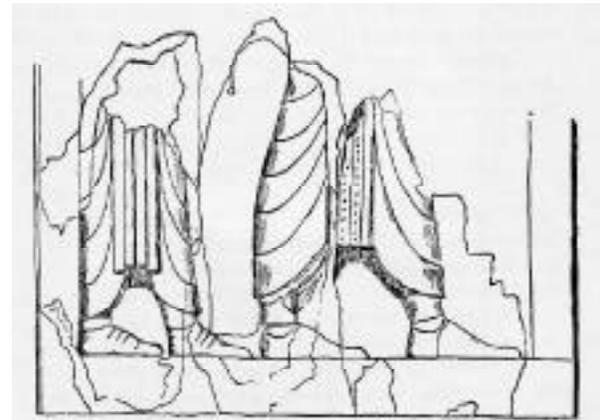
surface. Though the head of the winged figure is shown in profile, the eye is represented in a frontal position, a convention commonly used in ancient art. The face is bearded in the early Persian style, with a growth of short round curls; clearly this is not in the manner of a royal ceremonial beard, adopted by the Achaemenid kings in imitation of Assyrian royals. The four wings, all of which emerge from the left shoulder, are portrayed full face. Widespread, and exceeding in size the total height of the figure, they are Assyrian in inspiration and style. The feathers are carved intricately, almost in embroidered detail within the wing-span.

The costume depicted is in imitation of a royal robe of Elamite kings. A long close-fitted garment, it is ornamented by a heavy fringe and a border of single rosettes, both clearly visible in the relief. That an important bas-relief from Pasargadae should exclusively illustrate an Elamite royal robe is not really incongruous, as Cyrus the Great was also King over Anshan, an important part of Elam. Probably the use of this style of garment was meant to emphasize the Anshanite element in the ancestry of Cyrus II. Perhaps this style of royal attire was also in use for some time before his reign, both in Persia and in Elam, during the mid seventh century BC.



3. Pasargadae : fragmentary relief and line drawing showing a felt shoe in late Elamite fashion [Ali-Sami]

In his description of this bas-relief from Pasargadae, Professor Olmstead^{vi} points out an interesting detail: "... the feet were shod in the late Elamite fashion." This tight-fitted style of a thick felt, seamless shoe, wrongly gives the impression of a bare-footed four-winged figure. A fragmentary relief from Pasargadae



clarifies this point beyond doubt.^{vii} Hence, Dr Sam Kerr's interpretation of 'bare feet' needs to be rectified,^{viii} by reference to this concrete example.

The feature of greatest interest in this relief and, one which has led to much controversy among art historians, is the crown worn by the four-winged figure. It is known as the Egyptian triple *atef* or *hemhem* crown. The earliest known example is from the time of Akhenaton (1353 -1335 BC), in the late eighteenth dynasty. However, here it is a single *atef* crown, unlike the example under discussion. The basic elements contained in the example from Pasargadae, are three bundles of reeds alternating with ostrich feathers. Each bundle is topped by a sun-disk. The base of the crown is composed of a pair of horizontally twisted horns and, above each of these is the uraeus terminating in a sun-disk. The crown emerges from the centre of either a cap, or a closely-fitted short wig worn by the winged figure in the relief.

It would be appropriate at this juncture to establish the fact, that the *atef* crown under discussion is strictly Egyptian in origin and style. Suggestions of a Biblical or Koranic connotation seem quite far-fetched, and out of context!^{ix}

The crown under discussion may have been copied from imported Egyptian bronzes of the boy-god Harpocrates,¹⁰ 'the youthful Horus'. He became a cult figure of great popularity and, bronze Harpocrates statuettes adorned with the triple *atef* crown were often imported into Western Asia. However, it is feasible that this crown in the relief at Pasargadae may equally have been copied directly from Egyptian artefacts. Persian sculptors must have acquired sufficient first-hand knowledge of similar examples during their sojourn in Egypt in Cambyses' retinue, after the Persian conquest in 525^{xi} BC.

Orientalists owe a great debt to early European travellers to the East, for the records left behind by them for future generations. Their printed word and, the

accompanying imagery have proved invaluable to both the student, as also to the lay reader.

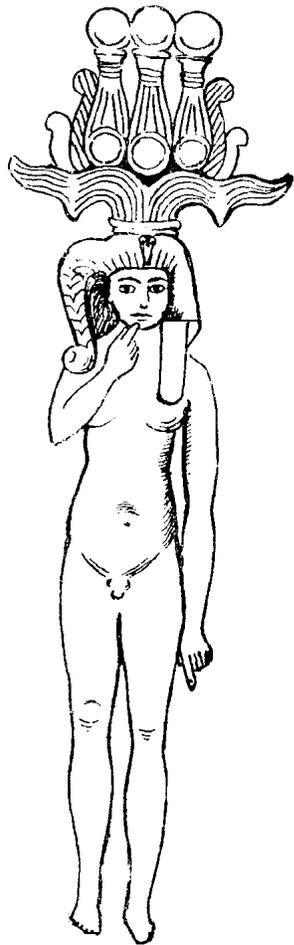
In 1818, Sir Robert Ker Porter was drawn to the ancient site of Pasargadae. He executed a detailed watercolour of the bas-relief under discussion; this painting was later housed in The British Library manuscript collection in London. Ker Porter inserted a tri-lingual inscription, which apparently once stood above the four-winged figure. This was in Old Persian, Elamite and Babylonian, and read:

"I, Cyrus, the king,
an Achaemenian".

Towards the end of the 19th century, the stone block bearing this inscription came adrift, leaving behind a clearly visible line of breakage. However, no part of this inscribed stone slab has ever been recovered in subsequent excavations at Pasargadae^{xii}.

This tri-lingual inscription indicated that it was in the style of a 'building inscription'. Though found in conjunction with the crowned four-winged figure, the latter cannot possibly be identified as a portrait of King Cyrus the Great himself! The essential attributes with which an Achaemenid king is generally represented in the art of this period, are absent in this bas-relief: the scepter, *cidaris*, *candys*, lotus and the ceremonial beard, are all entirely omitted here. Moreover in Achaemenian art, the king is never represented with wings, divine attributes exclusively reserved for the Ahura Mazda symbol.^{xiii}

If it is to be assumed that this relief is of the same period as its accompanying inscription of Cyrus II, then certain historical problems have to be overcome. Persia established contact with Egypt only after Cambyses' conquest, when the satrapy of Mudraya was established in 525 BC. If the triple *atef* crown is to be regarded as a copy of those on imported Harpocrates bronzes of earlier date from Egypt, then its contemporaneity with Cyrus II's reign seems possible. On the other hand, the crown in



4. Egyptian bronze figure of boy-god Harpocrates [Ali-Sami]

the relief may equally be the result of a direct copy made of earlier Egyptian prototypes; in this event, the relief could only have been executed after Cambyses' conquest of Egypt in 525 BC.

After the death of Cyrus the Great, Pasargadae must have nominally continued as the capital of his heir, despite Cambyses' early departure for Egypt. The work on the palaces must have continue uninterrupted and, the figure in the four-winged relief, started under Cyrus II, may well have been completed during Cambyses' short reign. The triple *atef* crown was perhaps not part of the original composition of the four-winged figure, but a later addition to the relief. With the establishment of yet another satrapy, an Egyptian *atef* crown would appear to be a most appropriate addition to a bas-relief that dominated the entrance to the royal site. This fact appears to be more likely, as it has not been possible to trace any other Egyptian element in the composition of this unique Pasargadaean relief. A technical detail further supports this theory. It was customary for Achaemenian sculptors to carve figures in relief after placing the stone slabs in position. According to Dr Ali-Sami^{xiv}, there are several examples of this technique used in Persepolitan structures. Pasargadae may well have pioneered this early Persian method of carving in stone!

In the final analysis, what then is the significance of this crowned, four-winged genius, carved on the Gate House of Cyrus the Great's imperial capital? More eclectic in style than any other example of early Achaemenian figural art, it dominates a site of tremendous significance in the ancient world. Clearly inspired by earlier Assyrian prototypes, this apotropaic winged figure at Pasargadae, holds a similar magical function. Standing in splendid isolation, this protective genius far surpasses in essence and artistry, its many eloquent predecessors from the realm of Western Asiatic antiquity, so often the source of inspiration in early Achaemenian art.

Reference:

i Hamazor, 2002 – 2, pp 6-9.



5. Four-winged genius from the palace of Sargon II of Assyria, Khorsabad. c.710-705 BC. [photo D Stronach]

- ii Hamazor, 2010 – 1, pp 50-51
- iii Ibid
- iv Stronach, D. Anshan and Parsa, British Museum Press, 1997 – p 50.
- v Dr Ali-Sami, Pasargadae, The Oldest Imperial Capital of Iran. Shiraz, 1958 – p 64.
- vi Olmstead, A. T. History of the Persian Empire. University of Chicago Press, 1948, p 62.
- vii Dr Ali-Sami, op.cit. (Fragmentary relief and line drawing.) pp 56 – 57 & pp 60 -61.
- viii Hamazor, 2010 – 1. p 51.
- ix Ibid
- x For illustration, see Fig. 4
- xi [Dating to be discussed later in the article]
- xii Dr Ali-Sami, op.cit., p 64.
- xiii Ktrak, V. S. FEZANA Journal, Summer, 2001, p18.
- xiv Dr Ali-Sami, op.cit., p 67.



Vera S Ktrak holds a PhD degree from the Institute of Archaeology, University of London. Her doctoral thesis is entitled: "Analysis of Achaemenian Art and Architecture, with reference to Origins, Influences and Development." She conducted her research under the supervision of Sir Max Mallowan, renowned for his work at the site of Nimrud, in Mesopotamia. She also has a BA degree in English Literature, from the University of Bombay. On completing her academic pursuits, she returned to resettle in Karachi, her birthplace.

Arab conquest of Persian Iraq

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We in the West know so little about how Iraq became an entirely Arab territory and how the Persian rulers and citizens living in Iraq fared after the Arab conquest of Iraq. As little is known and researched about this subject it will be worthwhile to succinctly review this unique event, heretofore never experienced in the history of the world, when a previously primitive nation was by brutal force able to completely wipe out the culture and religion of a very ancient, civilized nation so as to transform it in its own image for ever. As there is little well-documented research available on this subject, I have relied on the exceptional work of Michael G Morony (Iraq after the Moslem Conquest, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1984), though it is not practical to include all the sources Morony provides in Arabic, Persian and other languages in this paper.

by kersey antia

Distribution and social structure of Persians in Iraq

While Persians were always a minority in Iraq, up to the Islamic conquest they were, however, a ruling minority. Persian immigration into Iraq began with the rise of the Sasanian power in Persia in the third century AD in order to meet the military, administrative, and economic requirements of the Sasanians. In the absence of reliable data, we could gauge the demographic change by comparing settlement patterns and the shifts in Persian population. Sasanians established an ethnic Persian presence in the western Iraq by transfers of population. Persian soldiers were stationed along the outer-edges of southern and western Iraq as permanent frontier garrisons such as at Hera and Anbar. Aristocratic Persians in the major cities of Iraq and Persian peasants were settled in the villages of the Sawad. Twelve thousand upper-class Persian families from Istakhr and Isfahan were settled at Nasibin when that city was taken from the Romans in AD 363.

Kobad I settled people from other regions in upper and lower Iraq. By the end of the

Sasanian period, there was a belt of defensive Persian settlements in the outposts of Iraq, and in the garrison towns of Hira, Anbar, and Sinjar. There were also significant numbers of Persians in Nasibin, Takrit, Mada'in, Irbil and Kirkuk.

Persian society in the Sasanian period was internally subdivided, at least theoretically, into four-class system organized for the separate performance of military, religious, administrative, or economic responsibilities. The priesthood comprised of an elaborate hierarchy. Soldiers were divided into cavalry and infantry and were distinguished by rank. The bureaucratic class included correspondence secretaries, accountants, court clerks, and official historians, as well as physicians, poets and astrologers who served the King. The fourth estate consisted of farmers, herdsmen, artisans, and merchants-the vast majority of the productive, tax-paying public. Each class was governed by a separate code decreed and registered by the state in order to preserve the integrity and usefulness of each by preventing anyone from altering his

occupation and by requiring special clothing to be worn for easy identification.

Movement from one class to another was rare and supposedly required the King's approval.

However, this structure represents rather a religious, generalized ideal and it is hard to find such a society in actual operation. Although these professions existed even in pre-Sasanian Iran, they are not a valid reflection of the long-term realities of Sasanian Iran. At best it may represent a formal theory of the state. A letter ascribed to Ardashir I represents this ideology: *"To the secretaries who are in charge of the administration of affairs, to the priests who are the preservers of religion, to the cavalymen who are the defenders of the state, to the labourers who make the state prosperous."* The success of the state rested on the performance by each class of its responsibilities, as expressed in the classic Sasanian formulation of the "circle of power": there is no ruler without men, no men without money, no money without prosperity, and no prosperity without justice and good administration. In real life these classes overlapped quite often. For instance, peasants often served in the army as infantry. Bureaucrats generally wore the clothing of their class in town, but while accompanying the king on campaign they wore the clothing assigned to soldiers. The members of the first three estates could intermarry resulting however into confusion over the profession of the children.

Morony cites many cases of Iranians changing their profession or intermarrying across class lines, including priestly class. The "decadence of rank" and mixing of classes, denounced by the Letter of Tansar, depicts the society as very fluid. While the traditions of hierarchy among Magians were quite familiar in Iraq, Persian merchants and partisans were rare there. A noble who married a commoner was disinherited. Commoners were not entitled to buy the household and other possessions of nobles. Above all, the members of the royal family, the nobles, priests, soldiers, secretaries, and those in royal service were all exempt

from the poll tax. At the top of this hierarchy was the Sasanian royal family itself, supported by their domain lands scattered throughout the Sawad. The most prominent royal family with lands in lower Iraq was the house of Narsi the first cousin of Khusraw II Parviz. He had been assigned the entire crown province of Kaskar in about 624 as a land grant. The special property assigned for his support was at Nirsiyan, provided with storehouses and protected by a stronghold, which was called a preserve. At the time of the Islamic conquest, this stronghold was in the possession of Narsi's daughter and her husband.

Directly below the royal family were nobles who descended from the vassal kings of the Parthian era. They retained the rank of "kings" and the right to wear a crown because their ancestors had been the equals of the Sasanians. They also wore the Yarqan (torque), golden belts, and armbands. Traditionally, only seven families enjoyed these privileges, the most visible of which was the right to wear a tall, conical hat worth one hundred thousand Dirhams. Other elites in Iraq at the time of conquest were the Sasanian generals Jalinius and Jaban, both of whom were called "kings." Rustam, the Sasanian general at Qadisiyya, was also an aristocratic elite who possessed a Qalansuwwa worth one hundred thousand Dirhams. The involvement of this high nobility in the defense of Iraq was to defend their estates. Next in rank were the officials in charge of a province. Ispahbadhs and Marzbans as governors of provinces, also shared this rank. The best representative of this class is Azadhbih who was Marzban of Hira from 613 to 630. He achieved a position of "half nobility" and the right to wear a Qalansuwwa worth fifty thousand Dirhams. He secured the marriage of his daughter to one of his social superiors. The land owners in villages (Deh) known as Dehkan stood next in line. They were further divided into five grades, each distinguished by its clothing, but there is no information available about these distinctions. All we know is there was an important distinction



between those Dehkans who lived in towns as absentee landlords and those who lived and managed their estates in the countryside.

Dahaqins of lower status lived in the rural areas under their control. The village chiefs of upper Iraq were also Persian, but those below their rank were mostly Aramaean and Arab.

Persian peasants also settled in Iraq in late Sasanian period. The district of Adiabene in upper Iraq served as a Persian stronghold. The area near Nineveh was stratified into nobles, Dihqans, and freemen in the late sixth century. In lower Iraq, peasants of Persian origin had been settled as imported labor for the agricultural development projects of the late Sasanian period. Imported Persian peasants were quite widespread along the lower Tigris in Kaskar and Maysan.

Towards the end of the Sasanian Empire Persians also lived as garrison troops as well as in all the major cities and towns as administrators and absentee landlords, and in the countryside from Anbar to Furat and from Hulwan to Hira as minor landed notables.

Devastations & Dislodgement following the Arab Conquest: death and departures of Persians

The Islamic conquest drastically reduced the extent and significance of the Persian presence in Iraq. The depopulation of the districts east of the Tigris, however, began before the conquest as a result of the Byzantine-Persian war in the reign of Khusraw II Parviz.

The Islamic conquest reduced the number of Persians in Iraq due to death, captivity, conversion, dislocations, transfers of captives to Madina, enslavement, defection and migration, physical disappearance, either through death on the battlefield or by flight, of large numbers of Persian soldiers, aristocrats, and the royal family itself.

Unfortunately, however, the Arabic accounts are highly inflated and reflect only the extent of the dislocation. According to Arabic sources the initial assault was made by Khaled from the Yamama and took the lives of seventy thousand people at Ullays, most of whom were from Amghishiya. Amghishiya itself was later devastated and its remaining population took shelter in the countryside. At the battle of Hira, the Persian cavalry leader Farrukbandadh, was killed and his forces fled. At Ayn Tamr, the main Persian force led by Mihran, son of Bahram Chubin, fled after their Arab auxiliaries were defeated by Khalid when its citadel fell and all of the remaining defenders were killed. At Anbar, after a confrontation outside the city, the soldiers of the garrison under Shirzadh were allowed to withdraw, after agreeing to leave all of their possessions behind. Along the Syrian border, the three Persian strongholds of Husayd, Khanafis, and Musayyakh were conquered. At Husayd, large numbers of Persians were killed, along with the two commanders Zarmihr and Ruzbih, while at Musayyakh the entire garrison under Mahbudhan was killed in a surprise attack at dawn. On the other hand, Anosshagan, son of Gushnaspmah, made terms with Khalid for the people in his stronghold near Kaskar.

A Persian counterattack followed in the Sawad. Many of the temporary arrangements made by the local Persian authorities with the Arabs were declared annulled by the Persians, who tried to restore order and rally their forces for the defense of the Sawad. Narsi was entrusted with the task of protecting the royal family in lower Iraq. There, along with his cousins, the sons of Bistam, the uncle of King Khushro Parviz, he organized local resistance to safeguard Kaskar from Arab raids. The Persian attacks were remarkably successful at the Battle of the Bridge, where the Arab army under Abu Ubayd was severely trounced and Abu Ubayd himself was killed. Thereafter, the leadership of the Arab forces passed to a local leader, Arab Muthanna ibn Haritha, who tried to weaken the Persians by constant raids before

defeating them at the Battle of Buwayb. Only then the remaining Persian border posts along the desert frontier fell to the Arabs. The conflict in the Euphrates region was decided by the Battle of Qadisiyya, a great military disaster for the Persians in which the general Rustam, fell on the battlefield and the Persian army was routed. The rest of the army was pursued by the Arab captains who killed them in every village, reed thicket, and river bank, according to Tabari. The remnants of the Persian army gathered at Babil to confront the Arabs. Fayruzan was chosen as the leaders by them, but they were defeated soundly by the Arab vanguard under Zuhra. Fayruzan went off to Nihawand, where he seized the royal treasures. Zuhra's force pursued the Persians fleeing towards the capital, and when he drove them out of Sura, two more noblemen were killed, along with Dihqans encountered on the way.

As the main Arab army under Sa'd approached the capital, the Persians attempted once more to face the enemy. At Sabat entire squadrons of soldiers who had sworn that they would not outlive the Persian state, were defeated. After a brief attempt to defend Behrasir, that city was evacuated by Persians who retired to the east bank of the Tigris with their garrison after cutting off the floating bridge behind them. Across the river, the eastern half of Mada'in was besieged by Sa'd for six weeks before the Persians again evacuated it. This time it was not only the garrison that fled, but led by Yazdagerd III and the royal family, the entire aristocratic population of the city as well. While Farrukhzadh is said to have been left behind in charge at Mada'in, Mihran and Nakhirjan were made responsible for the evacuation of the royal treasure. The road from Mada'in to Hulwan now became jammed with refugees and soldiers while the Arabs pursued them in the rear, cut off stragglers and collected their weapons and other possessions as booty. Half-way to Hulwan, the Persian rear guard tried to cover the retreat. While baggage and dependents were kept at Khaniqin, under Khurrazad, the brother of Rustam, they met a Arab force of twelve

thousand at Jalula'. The Arabic writers claim that the Persians suffered one hundred thousand casualties at Jalula'. In any case, it was a second major disaster and left their dependents and property all but unprotected at Khaniqin. While Hashim stayed at Jalula', a major Arab force followed the survivors to Khaniqin, where every fighting man who could be caught was killed. When Yazdagerd learned of this he left Hulwan for Rayy, leaving the troops of Hulwan under Khusrawshunum. The last major engagement in this campaign was that fought at Qasr-I Shirin in which the Persians were again defeated and Khusrawshunum fled away. When Sa'd campaigned through central Iraq, another expedition under 'Utba dislocated the Persian garrison troops and local nobles, in southeastern Iraq. All four thousand horsemen with whom chief of Furat attacked 'Utba at the site of Basra, were killed and the lord of Furat was taken captive. The Marzban (governor) of Dast-I Maysan was captured and killed by 'Utba, and at Madhar a Persian force suffered thirty thousand casualties and its Marzban was captured and beheaded.

Captivity, Dislocations and Displacements Due to the Defeat

The location of Persians in Iraq was also altered through the capture by Arabs of the noncombatants and dependents of the Persian soldiers and administrators, peasants and artisans were generally not harmed if they did not resist. Arabs were mainly interested in taking captive the sons of military men who knew Persian methods and procedures. A Marzban was captured in upper Iraq and put to death while his children were spared. In another case, during a rising at Nahr Tira on the border between the Sawad of Basra and Ahwaz in 644, sixty sons of Dahaqin were taken captive but they were ransomed and the booty was divided among the Arabs.

The immediate consequence of the defeat was the physical removal of a large number of Persian women and children from Iraq,

Remembering Nariman Kaikhushroo Irani

most of whom were sent off by Arabs to Madina with the other booty. At Ullays, captives are said to have been taken as never before. It was during this raid that the procession carrying the daughter of Azadhbih to her new husband at Sinnin was raided and she was captured along with thirty women of Dahaqin and their one hundred attendants. At Ayn Tamr, after the entire garrison was slaughtered, all of the noncombatants in the fortress were taken captive. More and more captives were taken at almost every turn. The longer the Arabs remained in Iraq, less and less captives were sent back to Medina. As successful campaigns led to permanent occupation, Muslims replaced the Persian population in Iraq. The dependants of the Persian army that was defeated at Jalula' were taken captive at Khaniqin, which is said to include a daughter or granddaughter of Khusraw II Parviz, named Manjana. Since their captors returned to Mada'in but ultimately settled in Kufa, a good number of captive Persian women and children must have also settled at Kufa. Some of the Arab veterans of Qadisiyya also settled in Basra, and hence some of these captives may have been taken there also. Freeborn Persian women who were taken captive at Jalula' became a significant element in the social history of the Islamic garrison cities in Iraq, especially at Kufa. Enslaved by their captors, their children grew up to be the largest group of Mawali of Persian origin at Kufa. Twenty years later their sons were of fighting age. Ali had eight thousand Mawali and slaves of the Arab clans registered in the military Diwan at Kufa in 657, and the sons of these women captured at Jalula' fought for the Arabs at the battle of Siffin.

The redistribution of the Persian population of Iraq due to captive women and children carried off to the Hijaz or by resettling them in the new Islamic garrison towns of Basra and Kufa led to the depopulation of the districts east of the Tigris and added to the new concentration of population in lower Iraq, which was augmented still further by those who returned from the Hijaz and by new Persian captives brought from Iran

itself. A number of the captives taken to the Hijaz, or their children eventually returned to Iraq. Among the captives taken in Maysan in 635 was a certain Artaban, who converted to Islam and ultimately settled in Basra as a Mawla. Most of the prisoners captured by the Arab armies that conquered the Iranian plateau were sold in the slave markets in Basra or Kufa and redistributed from there, which led to the initial ethnic dislocation produced by the killing or flight of large numbers of Persians in the course of the conquest. It was, however, offset by a new, forced Persian immigration to the cities of lower Iraq. The best known example of this is a case of Salih whose parents were taken captive near Zaranj in Sistan in 650-651 and were sold in the slave market in Basra. ■■■■

[This article is only a part of the indepth analysis written by Dr Antia - Ed]



Dastur Dr Kersey Antia is a clinical psychologist in full-time private practice in Chicago for many years. He is affiliated with many private hospitals in his area, published numerous research articles in his field and is listed in many Who's Who publications. He has received international honours and recognition and is the high priest for the

Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, which he has served over 30 years. Kersey is happily married to Dilshad for the last 42 years, and has three children, Anahita, Ervad Mazda, and Ervad Jimmy.

Jimmy Madon is an ordained priest from Mumbai living in London at present. He performs all religious ceremonies as a mobed such as jashans, navjotes, weddings, four days after-death ceremonies like Geh sarnu (funeral), Uthamna, Sarjosh na karda, Chahrum Afargan, Farokshi, Baj, Satum, etc. He can also perform the boi ceremony for the fire in Agiari or prayer hall along with machi.

Jimmy performs the navjote of children from a Parsi mother and non-Parsi father as also the Ashirwad (wedding) of a couple whose one spouse is a Parsi. Non-Parsi persons are welcome to attend all religious ceremonies and their names will be said in the jashan and tandarosti prayers.

Contact details: Mobile: 07405363176 or
email: jimmymadon@gmail.com

The Pahlavis of Iran

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This article is about the two Pahlavi Shahs who ruled Iran from 1925 to 1979. In addition to restoring basic civic rights of all minorities including the persecuted Zarathushtis of Iran, the Pahlavi Shahs revived the ancient glory of Iran, helping all Iranians feel proud of their rich heritage. Both Shahs had admired the achievements of the Parsi community in India and encouraged them to return to their motherland and help build "their" country; and, the Parsis of the Indian subcontinent in turn, admired the Shahs for their accomplishments. This is my reflection on historical and political events of the time and some interesting connections between Parsis and these two monarchs of Iran.

by shahrokh mehta

A brief history of Zarathushti persecutions:

Since the fall of the Sasanian Empire, Zarathushtis in Iran had been persecuted. This is especially well documented during the 425 years rule (1500 to 1925) of the *Safavids/Afsharids/Zands* and *Qajars*. These persecutions, atrocities, and the almost annihilation of the Zarathushtis, were committed by zealot Muslim compatriots. It is alarming that the Zarathushti population in millions, prior to the invasion of the Khans/Mongols in the 13th century (almost 600 years after the Arab conquest) was reduced to less than 10,000 at the time of the Qajar era. The number killed during this treacherous period may far exceed the numbers of Zarathushtis killed during and immediately following the conquest of Iran by the Arabs in the 7th century. Simply put, it may have been one of the largest genocides of its time, perpetrated by its own people on an unarmed civilian population.

The Arrival of the Pahlavi Shahs:

After nearly 1400 years of humiliations, oppressions, murders and all forms of unimaginable social atrocities endured by Zarathushtis, the Pahlavi Shahs brought about a relatively safe environment for all minorities including the Zarathushtis.

During the 54 years of their respective reigns (1925 to 1979), the lives of Zarathushtis changed from one of the most persecuted minorities to that of rightful citizens of the Iranian society, with all its civic rights and privileges (Zarathushtis were officially recognized in the 1906 Iranian Constitution and one seat was allocated in the Iranian *Majlis* [parliament].)

The surname 'Pahlavi' was adopted by Reza Shah from the name of the language used during the last Zarathushti Empire of the Sasanians. This in itself was a huge step towards acknowledging the rich heritage of the ancient Persian Empire, by a Moslem Shah.

Both Pahlavi Shahs began their respective reigns (in 1925 and in 1941) with strong convictions of nationalism, modernization, secularism, and independence from foreign powers. They both had the genuine interests of Iran and its people in their hearts; they both strived to reduce the "foreign influence" as well as combating the spiritual (but powerful) "local influence" of the Shia clergy (the mullahs). Both Shahs worked to transform the natural wealth of the country into the national wealth and execute major reforms.



Remembering Nariman Kaikhushroo Irani

Under Reza Shah, the Trans-Iranian railways were built, a modern education system was introduced, and Tehran University was established in 1934. Reza Shah banned Islamic dress and *chadors* in favour of western dress. He forced women to disregard *hijab*. On March 21, 1935 he formally changed the name Persia to Iran - *the land of the Aryans*.

During the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, oil was nationalized; suffrage was extended to women, and made major strides in education, health, infrastructure and cultural progress. The Aryamehr University of Technology was established in 1965.

Parsis of India and their connections with Iran:

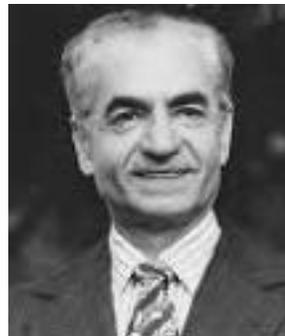
For most if not all Parsis/Iranis in India and Pakistan, Iran is their spiritual homeland. They identify their heritage and connect their religion, culture, and tradition with this ancient land. It is a solemn wish of Parsis to visit Iran at least once in their lifetime to see and experience for themselves, the ancient land of their ancestors. Walking through the ruins of Persepolis or reciting a prayer at the tomb of Cyrus the Great, Parsis truly feel a sense of connection to the once mighty Persian Empire.

It was during the Iran of the Qajars (the regime immediately preceding the Pahlavi period), that the Parsis of India with the help of the British, formally made some headway to improve the conditions of Zarathushtis in Iran. The admirable work of improving the lives and welfare of Zarathushtis in Iran by Maneckji Hataria of India, representing the 'Amelioration Society' during the 1850s is well known and documented including Hataria's face-to-face meeting with Qajar King Nasir al-Din Shah and their discussions on fundamentals of the Zarathushti religion, as well as the unfair *jizya tax* on local Zarathushti population.

During the Reza Shah years, Ardeshir Reporter of India continued the fine work started by Hataria. (Both Hataria and Reporter were under the protection of British sovereignty during their stay in Iran.)



Reza Shah Pahlavi



Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi

In 1921, Dastur Dr Maneckji Dhalla, high priest of Parsi community in Karachi (then India) travelled to Iran with his wife Cooverbai for a period of four months. This was when the coup d'etat in Iran had taken place and Reza Khan held the positions of Commander of the Army as well as Minister of Defense, under the outgoing Qajars. The Dhallas met Reza Khan and were impressed with this 'brave warrior' as described in Cooverbai Dhalla's book titled '*My Travels in Iraq and Iran*.' Reza Khan, after becoming the Shah, extended invitations to a visiting delegation led by Sir Jivanji Mody and others, for Parsis to come back to their motherland and help enhance its economy. Later visits to Iran by notable Parsis like Sir Rustom Masani and Dinshah Irani in 1932 and their meeting with Reza Shah, have been written about as well. Generous donations

were made by Indian philanthropists such as Pestonji Marker to begin a girls and boys school (instead of co-educational school) as well as an orphanage in Yazd, and by Behramji Bikaji in the mid 1940s to establish 'Firoze Behram High School' in Tehran, named after his deceased son.

(Interestingly, this high school had later Prime Ministers Ali Mansur and Abbas Hoveida as their alumni). Many other Parsi philanthropists also helped Zarathushtis in Iran.



Cooverbai Dhalla in Iran (courtesy Toxy Cowasjee)

During the Pahlavi period, Zarathushtis began to feel relatively safe and started leading comparatively normal, productive and prosperous lives. Their co-religionists the Parsis/Iranis in India were pleased with the news of relative prosperity and lesser discriminations which led them to acknowledge and respect the Shahs as protectors of their faith and heritage. The Shahs became "Aapro Shah" - our Shah.

The oil connection:

Oil has been a 'curse' and a 'blessing' for Iran. Ever since oil was discovered in 1908 by William Knox D'Arcy, the country has been at the center of 'influence' first by the British and the Soviets and later joined by the Germans and the Americans. The rise, the reign, and the fall of the "Pahlavi" Shahs can be directly attributed to the foreign powers. Their undermining efforts and undue influences in meddling in the domestic politics (eg., *the overthrow of the elected government of Prime Minister Mosaddeq in 1953*) and national policies, directly or through their respective surrogates, ultimately brought about the downfall of the Pahlavi Shahs.

The World War II period:

Although Iran was never "colonized" and had declared its neutrality during WWII, its neutrality was blatantly violated. Without warning, the British forces in the south and Soviet forces in the north invaded Iran with massive air, land, and naval assaults. Reza Shah was forced to abdicate - a national tragedy and humiliations followed. It is known that Nazi Germany was Iran's largest commercial trading partner at the time, helping to set up factories, building roads, airports, railroads, bridges and the country's infrastructure. Iran was also strategically and economically too crucial for the Allied forces, to agree to leave this petro-rich country, neutral. Besides, Iran was to become in words of Winston Churchill, *'The Bridge of Victory'* - the transport corridor for the British to train, supply, and ship arms to the Soviet Union to fight Nazi Germany. (After the war, Iran could have become an



Tehran - mid 1960s: Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi meeting the president of Irani Zoroastrian Anjuman (IZA), Mr Dinshaw Irani. Behind the Shah is past prime minister Asadollah Alam and current prime minister Amir Abbas Hoveida.



Tehran - mid 1960s: Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi meeting the Zarathushti delegation from India. R to L: Cawas Adenwala; Mr. Dinshaw Irani; Kaikhusroo Fitter, secretary of IZA; Nuserwanjee Adenwala. On the left of the Shah is Arbab Rustom Guiv. (both photographs courtesy Mr Behram Irani, Geneva, Switzerland)

Remembering Nariman Kaikhushroo Irani

Anglo-Russian colony, if it were not for US President Truman's warning, especially to the Soviet Union to leave Iran within six months of end of the war.)

The people of Iran and especially the Zarathushtis (including the Irani/Parsis in India) who admired Reza Shah for his 'law and order' and 'discipline', were angry at the British for their humiliating treatment of the Shah. En route to his final exile destination in Johannesburg, it is believed that the ship carrying Reza Shah was to stop in Bombay and the Irani Zarathushtis had made plans to welcome him. Fearing an



L to R sitting: General Ayub Khan (Commander in Chief), Fatima Jinnah, Shah of Iran, Liaquat Ali Khan (PM of Pakistan). Standing, 3rd from left is Cyrus Minwalla owner of Metropole Hotel, Karachi, where the banquet was held in 1950 & opened for the first time.



L to R: Mehra Minwalla, son Happy Minwalla, daughter Mithoo Minwalla presenting the bouquet to the Shah. Right of the Shah is Sir Khawaja Nizamuddin, Governor General of Pakistan. (1950). (Both photographs courtesy Dossu Minwalla, Karachi, Pakistan)

outpouring of support and possible disruptions, the British Viceroy Lord Linlithgow, reevaluated the situation and transported the Shah onto another ship offshore Bombay and sent him to the British territories of Mauritius, Durban, and finally to Johannesburg, South Africa.

Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi invites Parsis to Iran:

In the decades that followed, when Mohammad Reza Shah visited India and Pakistan on many of his official state visits during the 1950s to early 1970s, special "audiences" were arranged for the Parsis. It was during one such historic visit to India in the late sixties, that Mohammad Reza Shah once again and this time formally, extended the invitation to all Parsi professionals in India and Pakistan to return to Iran and contribute in its phenomenal economic growth, made possible by the influx of petrodollars. Special concessions were given to Parsis to receive Iranian citizenships and exemption from serving in the military. Some 1000 plus Parsis worked in Iran during the period from 1970 to 1980. Most of them worked in oil, shipping, banking, manufacturing, and service industries throughout Iran, with the majority in Tehran. Most left Iran during the Islamic revolution of 1979 and the years that followed.

The Gradual Downfall of the Pahlavi Shahs:

It is sad to note that the Pahlavi rulers who began their respective monarchies with great vision and initiated several landmark reforms, became victims of the politics and environment of the time. Beginning 1935 & 1955 of their respective reigns, both Pahlavis became autocratic in their rule and heavily depended on the army to essentially keep them in power. Both monarchs dealt with political opponents and democratic reforms harshly. All forms of political opposition and dissidence were severely dealt with by SAVAK - the country's intelligence and secret police. The political environment of nepotism, institutionalised corruption, censorship, reprisals, assassinations and state propaganda



The Shah of Iran being greeted by Mrs Jerbai Kandawalla, at Karachi airport when he visited in approx. 1958. (courtesy Franey Irani nee Kandawalla, Karachi)

became increasingly prevalent, during the final years of their respective regimes.

These two visionary Shahs, who initially were determined to bring Iran rapidly into 20th century modernization, met with oppositions and confrontations, both domestically (the mullahs) and internationally (western nations with devious interests). The 'change' from hundreds of years of medieval thinking, coupled with the mullahs constantly stirring the passions of a predominantly feudal society, was too much for the common people of Iran to absorb and accept. And with that the dream of bringing back the ancient glory and pride of Iran to the 20th century context, was shattered and/or temporarily put on hold.

The Zarathushti-Iranian connections for the author as a Parsi youth in Karachi:

I was born in Karachi and like most Parsi boys, went to the BVS Parsi High School.

Remembering Nariman Kaikhushroo Irani

Generations of Parsi boys from the beginning of the 20th century until about the time of partition of India learned Persian as a second language and my two school principals, Pithawalla and Rustomji, spoke Persian. At BVS, all students were placed in 'houses', created in order to compete in academics, sports and other extracurricular activities. One of the houses was named 'Reza Shah Pahlavi'. Along with the British national anthem, we also learned to sing the Iranian (*Shahenshahi*) national anthem at our school events and special occasions.

The Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan was one of the most frequent dignitaries visiting the BVS in the 1950s.

The Iranian 'connections' at school and with the community were numerous, showing solidarity with the Shah and especially with co-religionists in Iran.

Mohammad Reza Shah was the first head of state to visit Pakistan after its Independence, and the Shah maintained a special relationship



Delhi, early 1970s; The Shah with Empress Farah on left and Dr Farhang Mehr on far right, meeting the President of Delhi Parsi Anjuman, Mr Shivax Nargolwala and his wife Nergish Nargolwala - presenting the scroll.



Delhi, early 1970s: The Shah with Empress Farah meeting members of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman. Included in the picture are - Shivax Nargolwala; Nergish Nargolwala; Khorshed Nusserwanji; Dhun Bugli; Aloo Dubash; Dastur Bugli; Noshir Cptain; Hilla Sidhwa; Dadi Mistry & Aban Havewala. (both photographs courtesy of Rinchen Adil Nargolwalla of Dehli Parsi Anjuman)

with the various elected as well as military governments in Pakistan, including extending soft financial loans. Iran leaned towards Pakistan, during the 1967 war with India and supplied free oil to its fighter planes.

I remember well as a high school student during the period 1951 to 1955, listening to the interesting weekly talks given by our Dastur Dhalla on religion in general, but particularly the humorous stories about his travels to the heartland of Iran. Little did I know, that within just ten years, I would be living, working and visiting the sites in Iran, that he so often talked about and had visited some 45 years earlier.

Zarathushti connections in Iran and beyond:

Today, 31 years after the Islamic revolution and establishment of an Islamic theocratic society, the Zarathushti population is almost half of the pre-1979 numbers of 50,000+. In addition, over a million Iranians have settled all over the world. Mohammad Reza Shah had attempted to restore the pride and glory of the ancient Iranian traditions and culture during his reign, some twenty-five years later, a new awakening and resurgence, revering the rich ancient Iranian culture and heritage has begun in Iran and the Diaspora. Most non-Zarathushti Iranians living outside Iran and many within, associate themselves with Cyrus the *Hakhamanesh*; the first ever human rights declaration; and the rich Iranian traditions surrounding NoRooz and other Zarathushti traditions and festivals.

In her acceptance speech, Shirin Ebadi, the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize recipient said, *"I am an Iranian. A descendent of Cyrus the Great. The very emperor who proclaimed at the pinnacle of power 2500 years ago that '.. he would not reign over the people if they did not wish it.' And [he] promised not to force any person to change his religion and faith and guaranteed freedom for all. The Charter of Cyrus The Great is one of the most important documents that should be studied in the history of human rights."*

Interestingly, in 1971, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, at the tomb of Cyrus the Great, celebrating the 2500 years Persian Monarchy at Pasargadae, had said, *"We are here to acclaim Cyrus, the Great, the immortal of Iran, the founder of the most ancient empire of the World; to praise Cyrus, the extraordinary emancipator of History; and to declare that he was one of the most noble sons of Humanity ... Cyrus, we gather today around the tomb in which you eternally rest to tell you: Rest in Peace, for we are well awake and will always be alert in order to preserve your proud legacy."*

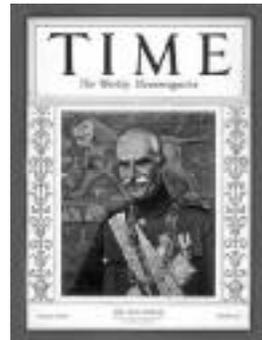
Historians will certainly judge the reign of the Pahlavi Shahs. Most Zarathushtis of Iran and Parsis of India and Pakistan have already made that judgment. Here were two monarchs, Reza and Mohammad, who although they were staunch Shia Muslims and believers of the 12 Imams, recognized and respected Zarathushtis and gave them their rightful place in the Iranian society and made all Iranians aware of their glorious Zarathushti heritage.

Rest in peace the Pahlavis, for you have forever awakened the glory of ancient Persia, not only among the people of Iran, but among the people all over the world.



Source:

Vohuman.org – (a) Islamic era history of Zoroastrians
 (b) Historical perspective on Zoroastrianism (c) Hataria
 (d) With Dinshaw Irani in New Iran
 Google - William Knox D'Arcy and the history of Irani oil
 Wikipedia - Reza Shah & Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi Zoroastrians in Iran - @allexperts.com
 Avesta.org - Dhalla (An introduction to Iran and Iraq)
 Wikipedia - Firoze Behram High School / German-Iranian relations
 The Shah's Story - an autobiography
http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2003/ebadi-lecture-e.html
<http://www.angelfire.com/empire/imperialiran/persepolis2.html>



24 April 1938



12 September 1960
 [both covers from google.com]



Shahrokh Mehta was born in Karachi and attended BVS Parsi High School. He lived and worked in Tehran, Iran from 1965 to 1980. He experienced first-hand many important geopolitical events of that time including the 1967 coronation of the shah, formation of the autocratic Rastakhiz [Resurrection] party, quadruple increases in oil revenues and the construction boom, the 2500 years of Iranian monarchy celebrations, the chaotic events leading to the 1979 revolution, the establishment of Islamic [theocratic] Republic, and finally the dissolution of the 2500 years of Persian monarchy.

Justice Sarosh Homi Kapadia - Chief Justice of India

Justice Sarosh Homi Kapadia, the senior most judge of the Supreme Court, was sworn in as the 38th Chief Justice of India by President Pratibha Patil on 12 May 2010.

The swearing-in of 62-year-old Justice Kapadia at Rashtrapati Bhawan was attended by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, his cabinet colleagues, outgoing Chief Justice K G Balakrishnan and other dignitaries.



Justice Kapadia, who wants all judges to keep themselves abreast with commercial laws, would remain at the helm of Indian Judiciary till September 29, 2012. He was associated with a historical judgment in which a five-judge Constitutional Bench had held that the law put in the Ninth Schedule was open for judicial review. His deep knowledge on wide ranging issues, particularly tax laws, has earned him accolades from the bench and the bar in equal measure.

The judge, who is known for maintaining strict judicial discipline, assumes the office at a crucial time when Indian judiciary is hit by a corruption controversy and perceived failure of in-house mechanism on appointment and elevation of judges.

In a letter to former Supreme Court Judge V R Krishna Iyer on May 3, Justice Kapadia had said the only asset he possesses is integrity and hoped to fulfill the Constitutional obligations to achieve the goal of “inclusive growth.”

“I come from a poor family. I started my career as a class IV employee and the only asset I possess is integrity”, he wrote. ... “Even as a judge of the Supreme Court, I have used my knowledge of accounts and economics for the welfare of the downtrodden including tribals and workmen... .I hope to fulfil my obligation to the Constitution in the matter of achieving the goal

of inclusive growth”, replying to a congratulatory message from Justice Iyer following his new appointment as CJI.



On this landmark occasion, Dinshaw Tamboly, Chairman of World Zoroastrian Organisation Trust, India, sent a congratulatory letter to the Chief Justice on his appointment on behalf of WZO Trust on 14th May of this year. – Ed.

Note: Justice Sam Bharucha had the distinction of being elected Chief Justice of India as well.

Inauguration of ASHA Centre

A memorable day indeed! My wife and I were privileged to be invited on 11 May 2010 to the inauguration of the ASHA Centre in the beautiful Royal Forest of Dean and the 60th birthday celebrations of its Founding Director, Zerbanoo Gifford. We were with 250 invited guests; leaders of religious, spiritual and charitable organisations, diplomats, local dignitaries, politicians, Trustees and Patrons of the ASHA Foundation and friends.

The Centre is designed to give its guests a more meditative and spiritual experience. The estate of over five acres, right on the edge of the Royal Forest of Dean is the most beautiful and tranquil environment in which guests can relax and seek relief from the day-to-day stresses of life. I would thoroughly recommend it to our readers.

by darayus motivala

It was an all day event in the theme of the ASHA Centre which promotes spiritualism and inter-faith. Zoroastrians were well represented in numbers and in events. Zerbanoo and other Trustees greeted every guest as they arrived. Physically challenged guests like my wife, were made particularly welcome and were given special considerations for parking and using the amenities of the Centre.

The day started with Zoroastrian prayers by Ervads Jal Karkaia and Rusi Bhedwar, who lit the fire in an afarghan in front of the ASHA Centre. The welcome speech was given by Dr Kusoom Vadgama, an ASHA Trustee. Dr Rashna Writer, a lecturer at SOAS in London then went on to explain the meaning of ASHA, which comes from the Sanskrit word meaning 'eternal law, the inherent nature of existence'.

Just prior to unveiling the plaque and the official inauguration of the Centre, Zerbanoo gave a brief talk on her motivations that inspired her to build this centre. She wants it to be a place where all faiths and cultures come together. The ribbon was cut by The Marquess of Bath, a Patron of the Centre. The Bishop of Tewkesbury, Right Reverend

John Went, unveiled the Celtic Cross which was specially commissioned and crafted for Zerbanoo's birthday by the local sculpture, David Lovemore.

We were later taken to the Peace Grove where Rev Christopher Marcus asked a leading member of each faith to a go to a specific tree representing their religion or



Remembering Nariman Kaikhushroo Irani



faith movement and reciting a prayer from its scriptures. They were then asked to take a small bundle of wood to the newly created fire pit.

Satish Kumar, the celebrated Jain pilgrim and editor of the Resurgence magazine opened the Golden Tiger Eco Lodge where guests to the Centre can meditate whilst observing nature in idyllic surroundings. Just before lunch we were given a brief tour of the grounds.

In keeping with the Centre's eco friendly ethos, guests were served a wonderful banquet in plates and cutlery made from banana leaves which were later recycled in the centre's compost heap, especially made for the occasion in England.

After lunch tributes were paid to Zerbanoo by her family and friends, who shared stories of her and how she had touched their lives in so many positive ways. Whilst their stories were very different there was a common theme of love and admiration for her. We could sense that here was a lady full of energy, compassion and generosity. Zerbanoo offered friendship to all she met and treated them as equals. She is noted for her boldness, leadership and courage, in fact an individual, who can and does make a positive difference to the lives of those around her. Zerbanoo is the daughter of WZO's founder President, Bailey Irani and



Satish Kumar opening Eco Lodge



Zerbanoo greeting the Marquess of Bath



Faith representatives with their bundles of wood

we are proud to have her as our Life member.

Typical of Zerbanoo's character, she ensured that along with her birthday, we should also celebrate the 80th birthday of Shauna Crockett-Burrows and the Ruby Wedding Anniversary of Lila and Firoz Poonawala, who have done so much for the lives of children in India.

The event finished with an astrological dance based on the position of the planets choreographed for the day by Caroline



Fire Pit, with members of all faiths reciting a prayer. Our two mobeds - Ervads Jal Karkaia and Rusi Bhedwar are prominent.



Zerbanoo with some of her guests

Liljestrom. The planets and the signs of the Zodiac were played by 22 of her family and friends with Zerbanoo in the centre.

As chairman of WZO, I feel honoured to have been invited to this event and my wife and I felt spiritually uplifted on our way home from all the experiences of the day. What an encounter it would be to spend a weekend there! ■■■■

Darayus Motivala was born in Bombay and moved to the UK in 1961 as a teenager. He graduated in IT in 1972, worked in the industry for 35 years and then another five years in the hospitality sector before taking early retirement to concentrate on WZO. He has been a committee member of WZO for 16 years as Jt Hon Secretary, President and became its Chairman at the end of last year. Married to Arnawaz who is wheelchair bound due to Multiple Sclerosis, they have a daughter in her early 30's living in the same village as them in Oxfordshire.



Zoroastrian Day in Birmingham

Saturday 3rd July 2010 was an unusual first in Birmingham at the Council House. Though only a handful of Zoroastrians live in the city, it was hosting a multi-faith event titled “A Zoroastrian Day in Birmingham” in partnership with Birmingham Council of Faiths.

This was a day long conference that provided a comparative perspective between Zoroastrian and Hinduism. The occasion was held with members of nearly every faith group in attendance and in the presence of the Deputy Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, Councillor Michael Wilkes and Mrs Vivienne Wilkes.

jimmy suratia reports

The Presidents, Chairpersons, Trustees and members of all three Zoroastrian organisations in the United Kingdom were in attendance – the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, the World Zoroastrian Organisation and the North West Zoroastrian Community. They were joined by the President of the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK).

Jimmy Suratia, the Chairman of the city’s Council of Faiths and a Zoroastrian welcomed the delegates before handing over to the Deputy Lord Mayor for the opening address.

The morning lecture was chaired by Dr Kiran Vaja, an Executive Member of the Birmingham Council of Faiths who introduced Dr Shaunaka Rishi Das. Originally from Ireland, Shaunaka, is now Director of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies.

Shaunaka’s theme was “The Common Grounds of the Dharmic and Zoroastrian faiths”. This deeply academic subject was delivered with an easy style and he managed to humanise complex philosophical and religious ideas. Shaunaka is one of the world’s great communicators and the delegates were clearly delighted.

Before lunch, Jimmy Suratia took the vote of thanks for the Deputy Lord and Lady Mayoress and mentioned how they had earned a special place in the hearts of Zoroastrians nationally.

A tour of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery was scheduled during lunch and was guided by the Deputy Lady Mayoress to view three Persian artefacts. First was a painting by Holman Hunt titled “May Morning on Magdalen Tower” which depicts a Zoroastrian scholar. Next was a picture of a Persian youth, by Gabriel Dante Rossetti. Finally the delegates were shown a carving from a palace in Persepolis dating from Achaemenid times.

The first of the afternoon sessions was chaired by Yann Lovelock, a member of Birmingham Council of Faiths.

Yann introduced Professor Almut Hintze, the recently created Zarthoshty Brothers Professor in Zoroastrianism at the School of Oriental and African Studies. Professor Hintze’s subject was “Indo-European and Indo-Aryan Periods of History”. Her detailed paper was met with questions that



L to R: Burjor Avari MBE, Jimmy Suratia at the podium welcoming the delegates, Deputy Lord Mayor, Deputy Lady Mayoress, Dr Shaunaka Rishi Das, Dr Kiran Vaja



“May Morning on Magdalen Tower” which depicts a Zoroastrian scholar amongst the Oxford celebrants of the ritual, painted by Holman Hunt.

demonstrated an intellectual understanding by the delegates worthy of this internationally distinguished scholar.

The second session of the afternoon was titled “Pulling the Threads Together” and was chaired by Burjor Avari MBE. Burjor is an Associate Lecturer at Manchester Metropolitan University. This was an open session for the benefit of the delegates. Several Hindu delegates were generous in their praise of Zoroastrian achievements.

Jimmy Suratia, provided the closing address and mentioned that if he assessed the day’s success by its learning content then the day felt like Christmas, Diwali and Navrouz combined.



Archaeologist & Chef par Excellence - Katy Dalal

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With the passing away of Katy Dalal, the Zoroastrian community has lost an archaeologist of distinction and a caterer of repute.

Having won the Wordsworth scholarship and a Gold Medal for obtaining the highest marks at the Inter Arts Examination at the Bombay University, Katy went on to obtain a PhD from Poona University and was a specialist on Pre-Harappan pottery industry – her site Binjor I being one of the earliest chalcolithic sites in India. She taught ancient Indian culture in various colleges of Mumbai and wrote numerous articles on this subject. She was also an erudite speaker having delivered lectures with slides from various platforms on historical and archaeological topics apart from participating in National and International Congresses.

by homai n modi



Homai N Modi is Trustee and Jt Hon Secretary of K R Cama Oriental Institute at Mumbai, Hon Secretary of the Indian Red Cross Society in Maharashtra State and member of the National Managing Body; Convener at the Temple of Understanding of the Mumbai Chapter. She has been appointed by the Governor of Maharashtra as Chairperson of the Countess of Dufferin Fund and co-President of the Council of World Religions for Peace, New York. For the World Zoroastrian Congresses held in India, Homai was the Hon Secretary for the 4th & 5th and rep for India for the 6th WZC held at Tehran.

My association with Katy began in the early 80's at the K R Cama Oriental Institute (KRCOI) when I was the Jt Hon Secretary and it was as an archaeologist that I first knew her. She participated in the Institute's International and National Congresses and her topics varied greatly eg. *Cambyses the Achaemenid and the Story of Apis Bull – A Vindication*, to *The Sacred White Bull – Varasyaji and His Position in Life of Every Parsi Zoroastrian*, to her favourite subject Alexander the Macedonian.

Her generosity to KRCOI spilled over in the shape of catering for every function, reducing costs and yet adding generously to the portions she served. She even hosted a dinner during an International Congress.

A true orator is one who says what he thinks but feels what he says and that aptly described Katy but not just as an orator. Whatever she did, it was with passion and excellence, for excellence after all is just doing "ordinary things extraordinarily well".

The community best knew Katy as a caterer for whom she left her legacy in the shape of six cookery books which will endure and inspire future generations of chefs, because for her, catering was much more than just a

business. These cookery books are a valuable storehouse of information for passing on to future generations and reveal her wide range of interests.

It was her husband Pheroze who first introduced Katy to diverse culinary delights while her three children Kurush, Darius and Freny shared in these activities.

I was privileged to be the Chief Guest for the release of *Palavs & Biryanis* in 2002 and the compere for three other book releases which bonded our growing friendship further. Her six books included: *Jamva Chalaji Book 1* – 1998; *Delicious Encounters* – 1999; *Jamwa Chalaji – Book 2* – 2000; *Pulaos & Biryanis* – 2002; *Vitality Cook Book* – 2005 and *Seafood Fiesta* – 2006.

These books reveal much of her character and knowledge. A revival of long forgotten tasty dishes, these books increase our knowledge of health, history (both national and international) and religion which is closely knit with good eating habits. Did you know that Napoleon Bonaparte first realized the need to preserve food and that sardine was the first fish to be preserved in oil and tomato sauce? Did you know that squid and

octopus have the largest brain of any invertebrates and that fish is brain food and sea food is heart food?

Her books take you down 'history' lane through the small town of Navsari and the state of Gujarat as both were in her great grandparents time, thus revealing her strong family ties. A staunch Zoroastrian, she enlightens one on Zoroastrian festivals and the food cooked to celebrate them, not even forgetting the Muktdas. (Some of these festivals have been forgotten through the annals of time or are impossible to enact in the hurly burly of modern city life.)

Always ready to give due credit and recognition which is the outcome of a generous heart, she named the recipes of yester-years after those who made them, so that they became an integral part of the cuisine of the day. Thus we have examples of recipes such as, Navajbhai Fitter-na-kopra-na-kavab; Allamai Kattrak-ni-pakki-keri-ma-gos and Meherbai Wadia-ni-kharia-ni-jelly.

Pullavs & Biryanis – A Tribute to Indian Cuisine, propels you into the Moghul courts where cooking became an art form, not only in its content but also its presentation. Imagine flower petals, essences, wispy sheets of beaten silver and gold and succulent displays of opulent roasted peacocks with their feathers decorating gold and silver salvers. Then we are taken to the courts of Lucknow, Awadh and Hyderabad where chefs vied with each other to produce original recipes. The influences on Hyderabadi food by the Arabs, Egyptians, Europeans and Negroes who formed a part of the Nizam's security guard are stated. We are further taken down 'history' lane and enlightened on Moghlai, Kashmiri, Konkan, Parsi, Bengali, Coorji, Keralite and Karnataka cuisines.

In *Delicious Encounters*, a section is devoted to "An English Tea in your Rose Garden" where one is transported to those slumberous, leisurely and lovely days spent under a sun umbrella with the air redolent with the aroma of flowers, cakes and pies.



photo, courtesy of Family

1st January, 1942 - 18th March, 2010

In fact you can travel the world and taste the most select of tea menus through Katy's book by sitting in her rose garden. One just has to open that garden gate and step into the forgotten world of courtesy and graciousness.

I have been most fortunate and privileged in having had Katy as a friend. Not only was I the recipient of her generosity but that same generosity often spilled over to others and especially those less fortunate, who, were blessed to have regular meals supplied by her at no charge. For Katy, there were no speed limits on the road to generosity. She was a woman who in Kipling's words filled "the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds worth of distance run". Come hail or shine and in failing health, she plodded on with that sparkle in her eyes. Her passion was to complete her book on Alexander the Great a subject close to her heart, which unfortunately remains incomplete.

It is only when one witnesses suffering or experiences loss, that one takes 'time out' from ones stressful and overcrowded life to reflect upon the Universe of the Great Designer. While I continue to reflect, I know that Katy will be remembered by us all as a committed Zoroastrian, archaeologist and a brilliant chef whose recipes will remain a fitting legacy for her community. ■■■■



Remembering Nariman Kaikushroo Irani

“Zoroastrians in Crisis”

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Young Zarathushti film maker Tenaz Dubash of New York, travelled to California in June to show her film entitled “ Zoroastrians in Crisis” to members of the community in both Los Angeles and the San Francisco bay area.

Her talk and visit was sponsored by the three associations in California - CZC, ZAC-LA and ZANC. Over 150 people showed up at each of the venues.

nazneen spliet reports

Tenaz showed part of the film and then opened the session scenes from her first film “In the Footsteps of our Fore- in Iran following a group of young Parsis from North who were visiting Iran. This present film followed a few of the topics of importance to her as a film maker.

There were interviews and comments from people holding both liberal and conservative views, the younger generation as well as scholars, such as Khojeste Mistri and Dr Jehan Bagli. Interviewed were members of mixed marriages and their families and the impact acceptance or non-acceptance has had on their lives. A family in Vancouver, who had the navjote ceremony of children of a multi-faith family was interviewed as well as a navjote ceremony of a ‘spouse-to-be’ of a Zarathushti girl was filmed.

People with liberal views on the Zarathushti faith loved the film, others of the conservative bent of mind did not enjoy it as much. The film did not make ‘believers’ of either camp and no conclusions were reached, or suggestions offered.

It was a good forum for discussion and a platform for an aspiring film-maker, who the community needs to support.

Note: the DVD is available for sale from the film-maker: tdubash@gmail.com for \$25.00. ■■■

for questions. The film opened with fathers”, which was filmed America



L to R: Tenaz & Nazneen



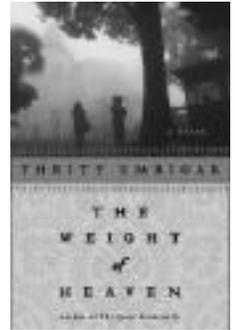
New novels for your reading pleasure

The Weight of Heaven

by Thrity Umrigar

Ohio-based author Umrigar's newest novel, a "sweepingly cinematic story" earning massively positive reviews by Publishers Weekly, Marie Claire and many others - an alternative to the highly popular EAT, PRAY, LOVE. A departure from the Parsi Zoroastrian characters of her first three novels, she follows a Midwestern couple who come to India expecting healing after their 7-year-old dies. A powerful story about grief, hope, obsession, and healing – along with indigenous people's rights, class struggle, and American capitalism's impact on developing nations. With this her fifth novel, Umrigar is a fast-rising, highly praised author.

Author site: <http://www.umrigar.com>



A Little Distillery in Nowgong

by Ashok Mathur

British Columbia-based Mathur's new novel is narrated by an unborn Parsi Zoroastrian child. Tracing three generations of Parsis through India, UK, & Canada, his story humanizes politics of ethnicity, culture, & colonial rule. The novel – and related art installation – many years in the making, is based on his beloved mother Perin's family story. Mathur, a Commonwealth Writers' Prize finalist, directs the Centre for innovation in Culture and the Arts in Canada (CiCAC). Published in Canada/US but available worldwide with a brief wait from online booksellers or shops.

Book site: <http://www.littledistillery.com/>



Alexa-Alessandra: A Story of Love

by Anita Sumariwalla

Romantic novel fanatics and book enthusiasts are in for a captivating read as author Anita Sumariwalla presents *Alexa-Alessandra: A Story of Love* - a two-part volume - a first time writer. Filled with a perfect blend of characters and intense emotions in a splendid setting, this book will absolutely capture the hearts of the readers and will take them on a journey from Rome to England to find out if the love story of two individuals will have a happy-ever-after ending.

For more information on *Alexa-Alessandra*, log on to www.Xlibris.com

Introducing the author: Anita Sumariwalla was born near Geneva, Switzerland. After finishing schools, she lived in France, Italy and England. In 1961, she immigrated to USA. She is married to Russy Sumariwalla. She worked for Peace Corps and taught at several schools in Massachusetts and California. After moving with her husband to Virginia, Anita took up art and concentrated on painting. She has held several exhibitions of her work. Anita lives now in Medford, Oregon and enjoys writing. She hopes to have many more years to give life to the characters and stories in her mind and heart.



Thrity Umrigar



Ashok Mathur



Anita Sumariwalla

Free Will as Zarathushtra's unique contribution



The more I deliberate upon the Gathic insistence on Free Will, the more I see it not only as a unique concept so relevant to our own times but also as a concept integral and pivotal to the theoretical and theological framework of the Gathas. It is commonly acknowledged that Zarathushtra's Gathic teachings set him apart from the Indo-Iranian beliefs he had inherited and they paved the way for what we now know as Judeo-Christian traditions by emphasizing the belief in One God, strong ethics, individual responsibility, equality of men and women, afterlife in heaven and hell, messiah to come, resurrection and complete eradication of evil from the world. It is not surprising, therefore, that the late Dr Oxtoby told me he had placed Zoroastrianism under the Judeo-Christian tradition in his book on world religions.

by kersey antia

Dr Antia's
profile
appears on
p40.

Adherence to these beliefs requires Free Will. Even today when many philosophers do not accept the principle of Free Will, Zarathushtra solemnly weaves it into his theology as a major thread running throughout the Gathas, thus making it the very basis of his theology. Remove Free Will, and the very fabric of Gathic thought dwindles away. In my presentation at the Second Gatha Conference held in Los Angeles in 1992, I had dealt with "Philosophical Justification of the Concept of Free Will As Taught by Zarathushtra." Zarathushtra, who was the first known prophet of an ethical monotheism, made Free Will and individual responsibility the conceptual underpinning for this theology. Zarathushtra is not only the earliest but also one of the greatest proponents of Free Will ever. In contrast to the moral visions prevalent in his times, Zarathushtra's emphasis on Free Will as crucial to morality is really phenomenal. Even Socrates, who followed Zarathushtra after a millennium or so, perceives morality as a happy harmony within the soul as well as between the soul and society. Aristotle is not the least to forward an ethics in which moral action is particularly introspective. Only Zarathushtra expressly emphasizes morality as matter of adequate thought and right choice. By so doing, Zarathushtra offered a concept of morality that is today propounded by most of the philosophers of Free Will, as already depicted by me in the 1992 paper.

Zarathushtra offered a concept of Free Will in prehistoric times that can contend or even surpass modern day repudiators and advocates of determinism. The apparent determinism of science, following Newton and immense success of predictable science/scientific law often led to the theory of determinism which holds that there is at any instant exactly one physically possible future. Determinism even spilled over in the field of human behaviour and psychology with Skinner and the behaviorist school, though they are fast losing ground now. By emphasizing Free Will as the bedrock of foundation of moral responsibility at the very dawn of history, Zarathushtra expounded what the contemporary philosophy generally holds about Free Will. Thus, it is a unique phenomenon in which philosophers of our times mostly mirror and repeat to us what Zarathushtra taught us long ago.



As the final page of this issue of Hamazor, we share with you a short, but thought provoking message given by Zarathushtra, - the privilege of "Free Will". If only we mortals remembered -
Ed



The World Zoroastrian Organisation

135 Tennyson Road, South Norwood, London SE25 5NF

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APPLICATION FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP

To The Joint Honorary Secretaries
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Dear Sirs,

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

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“How might I deliver deceit into
the hands of truth,
in order to destroy it in accord with the
precepts of Thy teaching ...?”

Yasna 44.14

Inslar translation

