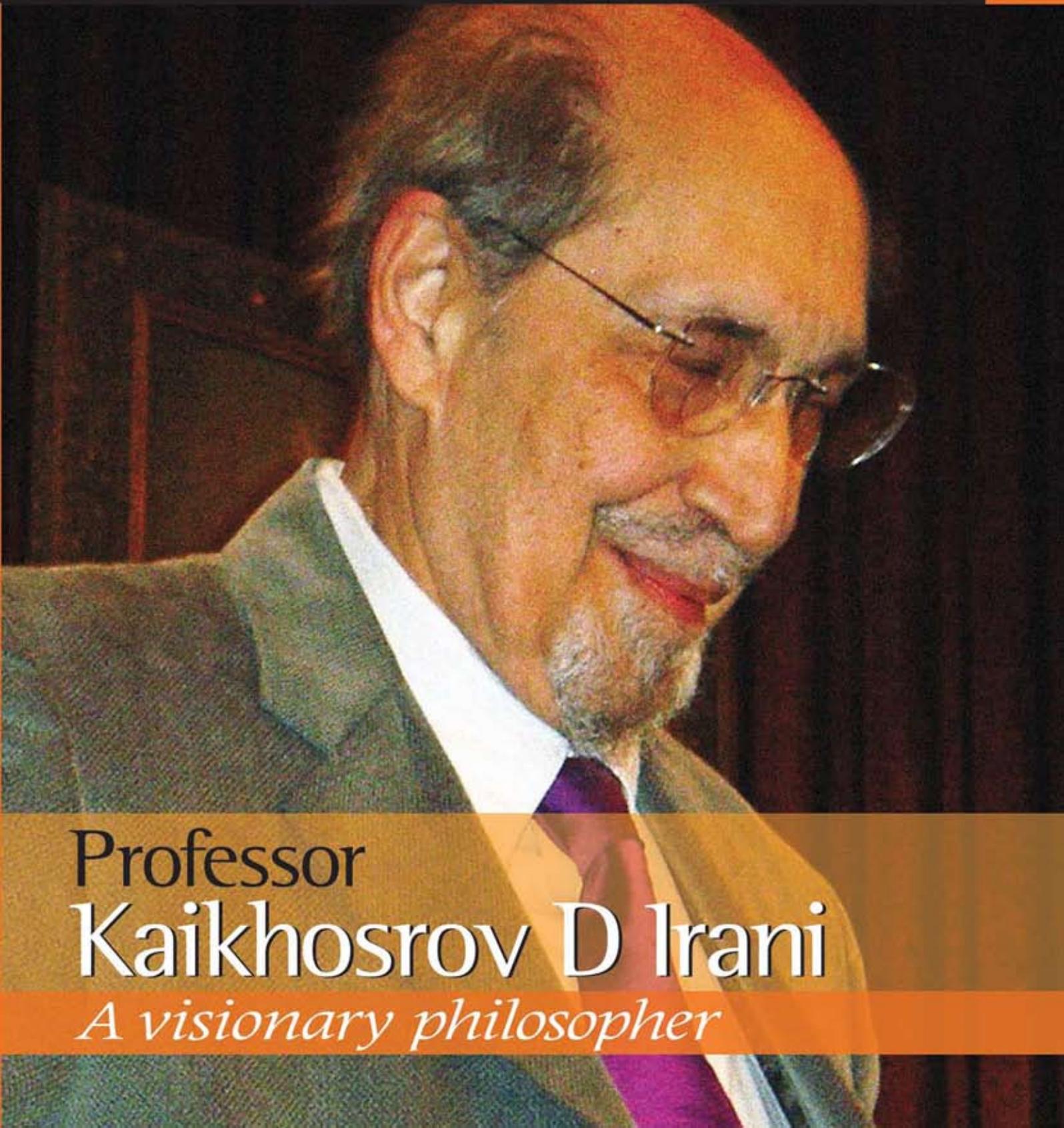


publication of the world zoroastrian organisation

HAMAZOR

2
Issue 2013



Professor
Kaikhosrov D Irani
A visionary philosopher



The World Zoroastrian Organisation

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Hamazor's Future – Transition from Print to Digital

Dear Member,

This is a bittersweet moment in Hamazor's immensely proud history. The members of WZO's Managing Committee have consulted widely and debated this issue passionately. The free publication will go all-digital in 2015. The fourth issue of Hamazor in 2014 will be its last as a free print magazine.

Bittersweet, we say. Bitter, because we'd be lying if we didn't confess to a bruised and heavy heart. Like all people, we love print: always have, always will do. Sweet, because we are rising spiritedly to a challenge, not wringing our hands in impotent despair over the way modern life — and modern reading habits — will increasingly render our print edition unviable.

In our judgment, we have reached a tipping point at which we can most efficiently and effectively reach our readers in all-digital format. This was not the case just two years ago. It will increasingly be the case in the years ahead.

This decision is not about the quality of the brand or the writing - that is as powerful as ever. It is about the challenging economics of print publishing and distribution. Hamazor is produced by our executive editor Toxy Cowasjee, who has been offering an excellent production consistently since 2002. We will continue to build on Hamazor's success and ensure your, its readers' engagement.

Exiting print is an extremely difficult moment for all of us who love the romance of print and the unique experience of producing, receiving and reading it. But as we head for the 12th anniversary of Hamazor in 2013 we must sustain the writing, the focus and the value that gives the publication its purpose - and embrace the all-digital future.

We are transitioning Hamazor, not saying goodbye to it. Far from it. We are determined to ensure that our readers' experience continues to be good, but we plan to enhance it using a powerful multi-media and interactive platform.

Our decision is driven by our optimism, our belief in ourselves — and our belief, above all, in our membership and our readers. You have increasingly adopted digital and, in effect, we are following you. Hamazor, as the new, predominantly all-digital publication, will continue to be produced for a restless, news-hungry, knowledge-hungry audience that pays keen attention to all events in the world of our religion.

Just like the print publication, the new electronic version will be free to members. It will in time be available for tablet, Web, and mobile devices. By its very nature, the digital version will be a lot richer as it will contain links to other sites for up-to-date news, events and views, including specific projects, photos and films. We will also be able to send out regular e-mail updates and use our new WZO web-site to create discussion forums on the articles in the magazine. We believe that with your help and support, we can enhance your Hamazor experience.

However, when it comes to print, some realities cannot be ignored. It currently costs £10,000 (USD 16,000; INR 8 lakhs) a year to print, distribute, and manage the circulation of Hamazor and that excludes the composition, graphics, design and artwork that has so far been provided gratis to WZO thanks to Toxy Cowasjee.



The World Zoroastrian Organisation

Is that any longer the wise use of scarce resources, we had to ask ourselves – given our increasing membership, the restrictions of print in the ever more pervasive world of on-line news and knowledge-sharing, not to mention the ever rising costs of printing and postage. After all, an electronic Hamazor could be delivered swiftly and economically to millions. An increasing number of people are reading newspapers and magazines on computers and mobile devices. These readers, and there are more and more of them every day, simply bypass print.

Exiting print is painful, and poignant, for all of us who love the romance of print and the unique quarterly camaraderie of those hectic hours before the magazine's "close" on Friday night. But if there's one thing that WZO has never shied away from is innovation – we are not afraid to embrace change, be different and adapt to the realities of the modern world.

WZO and Hamazor are trendsetters, not followers in others' footsteps. Very shortly after its founding, Hamazor became the first magazine of its type to present a balanced view in its articles and attract a cadre of world renowned Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrian scholars, writers and contributors to lift the level of journalism to new heights.

As we head for the 12th anniversary of Hamazor in 2013 under the editorship of Toxy, we promise to sustain all that drives this great magazine — and to embrace with passion its all-digital future. However, we cannot do so without your help and support.

If you wish to help us reduce costs then please email to the Membership Secretary, membership@w-z-o.org your email id where you would like to receive an electronic copy of the Hamazor. **PLEASE DO THIS AS SOON AS YOU CAN.**

We will also provide you with a link on our website from where you can download Hamazor if you wish. For this you will need a Username and Password to download the Hamazor, of which we have informed you in the past. If you are not sure, please do ask the Membership Secretary to email you these details. You can change your Password at any time after you have logged in.

Please do not ignore this letter as we need you to respond, otherwise you may not receive the Hamazor in the future.

Thank you and kind regards,

Sammy Bhiwandiwalla
President
president@w-z-o.org



Kaikhosrov & Piroja Irani, p 40

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COVER

Photograph taken on 20 Nov 2004, when ZAGNY honoured KD for his services to his community.

PHOTOGRAPHS

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

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From the Editor



WZO & Hamazor wish to congratulate our long-standing committee member from December 1982, Professor Kaikhosrov Irani, in reaching the youthful but judicious age of 90 years. What Kaikhosrov has shared with his countless students over the past six decades with his unstinted tutelage and sharing of knowledge, possibly very few may have achieved. Similarly he has given all of us Zoroastrians, through his writings, lectures and teachings, a legacy to cherish. You have achieved Sir in your lifetime, the respect and admiration of not only your community but all who have come your way.

Many a time great men are too busy for ordinary mortals, but from personal dealings with Kaikhosrov, I can relate, he has never made one feel 'insignificant' but in fact the total reverse. Many years ago, when I was quite new to WZO, I met Kaikhosrov for the first time at the Gatha Colloquim held in London. His talk was so fluid and easy to understand, one wanted to listen to what was being said. Needless to say I was overawed when I did meet Piroja and Kaikhosrov during one of the session breaks but since then we have been friends. A few years later during my tenure as VCh of Zoroastrian Association of Pakistan, which no longer exists, to give our Karachi community something worthwhile, I requested Kaikhosrov to visit us for a few days with Piroja on his way to India. Without hesitating for a moment he readily agreed and not only did he speak to the community but gave special sessions for the Parsi children and teachers at The Mama School. I do know I managed to exhaust him, but am sure many people remember him in Karachi with great fondness.

Kaikhosrov has written many a time during my tenure as editor in the Hamazor even though he has to write the essay by hand and then fax the same to me. The last time I requested him to write was for our 30th anniversary issue in 2010 little realising he no longer had the facility of the fax machine. But Kaikhosrov assured me it was no problem, he would walk to the post office and send it to me in time – this was cold and windy February in New York. No amount of persuasion on my part not to do this, was acceptable to him. For me it has been a privilege to know Kaikhosrov and consider myself so very fortunate.

WZO thanks you for being our committee member – always wearing our tie with pride and dignity – and wish you well Sir. May you continue enlightening us with your wisdom and gentle humour.

This issue of the Hamazor has been sponsored by Rostam & Bahram Yeganegi, brothers, who originally hail from Iran but now live in Vancouver. They have donated not only for the printing of the Hamazor but postage world wide. Our sincere thanks go to them.

An addendum to my last Editorial where I stated that this issue will carry a profile on the mystery Mr Mistry, regrettably he remains an enigma till such time he is willing.

The BPP are now heads down in fine-tuning the programme for the World Congress at Mumbai at the end of December which will be shared with you in the following Hamazor.

Levy Curajie

In loving memory of our mother Morvarid Zartoshty



The World Zoroastrian Organisation

WZO Trust Report for 2012

from dinshaw tamboly

Apart from the donations that were received, a good number of individuals have come forward to volunteer their support in diverse areas from their base at North America as well as make actual field trips in India.

Farmers Rehabilitation :

During the year 2012, from funds raised by way of donations, we undertook the rehabilitation of 14 Zoroastrian farmers spread over 5 villages; support provided was by way of sinking bore wells, providing submersible pump sets, levelling fields, providing pipelines, seeds and fertilisers, establishing a poultry farm and a brick kiln, expending Rs3,566,895 in the process. Ever since we undertook this project in 1991, we have participated in the process of rehabilitating 450 Zoroastrian farmers in 179 villages, expending Rs59,930,546.

powder concentrate, manufacturing school uniforms, setting up a travel agency office, workshop for repairs to mixers, grinders cookers, a service station for trucks, a railway tickets collection centre, auto-rickshaws, taxis and tempos for commercial use and so on.

Over a period of 17 years (1995 to 2012) we have assisted 827 Zoroastrians by way of interest free loans spread over 105 locations in their endeavour to be self employed. Total amount expended has been Rs129,057,543.

Educational Support & Youth Activities :

During the year under review we raised funds through donations to support 83 students in their pursuit of education. The total amount disbursed was Rs5,239,884. We also encourage students doing well in their academics by publicly felicitating them at an annual function at Navsari. Zoroastrian teachers who have been in the

Rural Housing :

In 2012 we raised donations that enabled us to replace 28 huts into cottages. We have so far replaced 199 huts into cottages. The cost of replacing a hut into a cottage presently

costs Rs350,000.

Self Employment / Microcredit :

During 2011, 40 Zoroastrians located at 11 different locations all over India were extended interest free financial support to start their own businesses in diverse disciplines such as setting up graphic design studio, manufacturing soft drink



Vegetables grown at village Dharampuri by a Zoroastrian farmer.



Tanker Service Station set up at village Naldhari near Ankleshwar

profession for 25 years and more are also periodically felicitated at these functions.

To encourage our youth, especially those in South Gujarat to excel in sports, we organize an annual athletic meet at Navsari. We have also over the years been sponsoring a cricket team of youth from Navsari and encourage them to participate in various tournaments in Gujarat and Mumbai. Whilst the cricket team has already won quite a few trophies, it has been satisfying to view the consistent improvement in the performance of the athletes from South Gujarat.

We have now introduced the concept of holding a week long 'summer camp' at Navsari in which young children are taught constructive hobbies, yoga, personality development, taken on day trips and generally made to have a fun time. The response and enthusiasm has been overwhelming; the 'summer camp' is now a regular part of our agenda of events.

Medical Aid :

During the year 2012 we raised funds through donations to support 341 individuals to the tune of Rs.17,838,686 in support of meeting their medical and hospitalisation expenses.

Relief from Poverty :

During the course of the year 2012 we raised funds to support 373 elderly / indigent Zoroastrians expending Rs12,076,766 (\$232,245; £140,427) in the process. From time to time we also raise funds to distribute food grains and other essential items to around 120 to 150 poor Zoroastrian families residing in the rural areas of Gujarat.

Religious Activity :

a) To encourage and motivate young members from Athornan families to take up Mobedi as a full time vocation the 'Athornan Mandal – WZO' scheme was launched in 1996. We initially raised an amount of Rs10,000,000 as a corpus amount, the

interest of which is presently disbursed amongst 49 young full time Mobeds practicing at 13 different locations in India. Donations continue to be received for this project. Rs650,000 has been received during the period under review.

b) In addition, funds were raised and financial support extended to 38 elderly full time Mobeds who having retired or being near to retirement were living in conditions of penury.

c) Financial support amounting to Rs1,200,000 was raised and passed on towards repairs of 2 Agyaries – Bardoli Jarthosti Anjuman Agyari at Bardoli and Patel Agyari at Mazgaon, Mumbai.

Economy Housing at Navsari :

Our 8th building at Navsari was completed in April 2011 on the ancestral property of Kersi & Zenobia Aspar of Japan, gifted to us and an apartment building constructed from funds made available by the generous Trustees of Bai Maneckbai P B Jeejeebhoy Deed of Settlement Fund. Cost of this project was Rs8,600,000.

Construction of our 9th residential building at Navsari is now underway on the ancestral property at Navsari belonging to late Pesi, Perin & Dara Deboo, donated as per their wishes to WZO Trust Funds by Mrs Silloo Dara Deboo. The cost of construction is being borne by the generous Trustees of Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton & Macao.

Our 10th building is also in the planning stage and will be constructed from the donations received by Executors of the Estate of Dina Burjor Kavarana for the construction and Executors of the Estate of Jehangir Burjor Marshall for purchase of the property.

Senior Citizen Centres at Navsari:

Our Bai Maneckbai P B Jeejeebhoy Senior Citizens Centre and Dolat & Hormusji Vandrewala Senior Citizens Centre became operational at Navsari in January 1998 and December 2005 respectively. ■■■■



Dinshaw K Tamboly lives in Mumbai and is currently providing consultancy service in management and marketing. He is Chairman of WZO Trust Funds of India. He is also a Trustee of various hospitals, and charity trusts and foundations. Till September 2004 he was a Member of the International Board of WZO.

IN MEMORIAM

Ervad Jalbhai Keikobad Karkaria

It is with deep sadness that we have to inform you of the passing away of our beloved Ervad Jalbhai Keikobad Karkaria. Ervad Jalbhai was born on 17th August 1921 and had served the community in the UK since 1967, a period of some 45 years.



Jalbhai hailed from Mombasa where he was a serving priest and later carried out his priestly duties in the UK and Europe. During his 45 years in the UK, it is recorded that Ervad Jalbhai had performed over 400 navjotes, 200 weddings, 500 death ceremonies and over 2000 jashans. In honour of his exemplary services for the community, on 2nd October 2005, Ervad Jalbhai was made an Honorary Life Member of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe.

A quiet affable man and immensely courteous he will also be remembered with great fondness for being one of the few priests who served the community in the presence of non-Zoroastrian families and friends at a time when great restrictions/barriers were placed on the priesthood.

It was in 2003 that Jalbhai first approached Sammy Bhiwandiwalla and inquired why he had stopped receiving the annual notice for the privately held United Farvardegan prayers at Brookwood Cemetery, first started by the Late Noshirwan Cowasjee. Sammy explained that he was not aware of all the individuals who received the notice from Noshirwan and agreed to continue mailing him in future. It was quite clear by the sentiments expressed by Jalbhai that in his heart of hearts he believed that the Zoroastrian community should remain united and look after each other without rancour.

In 2007 in the absence of any other priests willing to do so, Sammy requested Jalbhai to officiate at the Farvardegan prayers held on Sunday, 9th September 2007. Much to our delight he agreed to do so and ever since then he continued to offer his services to those who attended at Brookwood. We would also like to thank his wife Naju who was of immense support and guidance during all these meetings over the years.

Ervad Jalbhai will be greatly missed by all within the community and more so by all those who attended the United Farvardegan prayers each year.

The Committee of the World Zoroastrian Organisation offer their most profound condolences to his dear wife Naju, daughter Shernaz, son Darius and their respective families.

May the fravashi of the dear departed Jalbhai rest in eternal peace in Garothman Behest, and may Ahura Mazda grant his wife and family strength to bear their sad loss. ■■■

Ethnicity, Religiosity and Spirituality : A Zarathushtrian Perspective

A

Ask any Parsi /Irani Zarathushti what is your religion? The answer is simple and straightforward – Zarathushti. Ask them about their ethnic identity? The obvious answer would be a Parsi or a Persian or an Iranian ancestry. If now we ask the individual how does their ethnic identity influence or determine their religious identity the response could be diverse depending on the extent to which the person has pondered along this line of thinking.

Both ethnicity and religion are associated with beliefs of a group of people. An ethnic group is like a “tribe” in that its members believe themselves to be related and evolve customs to express their beliefs. They owe their loyalty to history and symbols of the larger group.

by jehan bagli

Ethnicity

What is ethnicity? The term ethnicity arises out of the Greek word *ethnos* normally translated as a ‘nation’. The modern usage of the term ‘ethnic group’ varies with the encounter one has with external groups. For example a country dealing with external group refers to outsiders as ‘immigrants’ versus the ‘indigenous’ population of the location. Ethnicity thus have come to refer to people with distinct cultural identities who, through migration had become the subject to a state with a different cultural mainstream. Parsi/Iranis in India unequivocally fit the definition of an ethnic group.

Culture is a cluster of customs and practices to which a particular group is attached. These practices vary depending on the circumstances the group is immersed in. People sometimes tend to associate some of these practices to the Divine through their limited comprehension. One can easily adjust and adapt to another culture however that in no way affects or alters one’s ethnicity. While some sort of blood relationship through DNA and chromosomal markers is a presupposition

for ethnicity such a biological link is not a prerequisite to belong to a culture.

While an ethnic group is conventionally made up of a tribe, historically a tribe is viewed to consist of an under developed social group of people. It generally reflects a way of life that predates modernity and is more synchronous with nature. In its habitat they are found in geographically isolated places such as in deserts, hill and forest region or on an island rather than in urban well developed cities. There are tribal groups of Native Indian in North America who live on secluded reservation. Socially members of a tribe belong to low-income group of unskilled workers with poor literacy level and are beset with issues of alcohol and drug abuse.

Parsi/Iranis of 21st century community that has produced Chief Justice of supreme court, Attorney General of India, doctors, professors, scientists and entrepreneurs of international caliber and other professionals in the fields of arts and sciences, would hardly fit the conventional character of a tribe. Nevertheless one has to concede that, exceptional as our community is, in the classical sense, it is still an ethnic group.

Religiocity

What is a religion? A religion is a belief system in the Divine and devotion to God, or a set of beliefs concerning the origin and purpose of the universe and life. All religions have at their core the worship of a Divinity, which may differ in name and comprehension, but the Ultimate Reality remains the same. Most major religions can be classed as Universal in their character, and are trans-cultural, trans-national, and most importantly trans-ethnic. In contrast we have the Ethnic faiths that are largely tribal in nature and one belongs to them by virtue of the fact that an individual is born into it. Ethnicity and religion are inextricably linked in all the tribal faiths. Often the tribal customs and practices become a part of their religious beliefs and activities.

With this as background, what is the fitting position for the religion of Zarathushtra? There is ample scriptural evidence to support the fact that religion of Asho Zarathusht is a Universal Faith. For he not only directs his message to man and woman but also to entire humanity. Furthermore the Universality of Zarathustrian faith is traditionally accepted and is an important element of Zarathushtrian history. Literary research of Sir J Coyaji and Iranian scholar Foroughy¹ describe Zoroastrian writings in Chinese books that span from 571 BC to 1000 AD. This is largely supported by the close connection of Peroz the son of Yazdegard III with China after the demise of the Sasanians. However, it is not inconceivable that over time, due to limited understanding of the adherents, even a revealed universal religion can assume localized character and in a sense will revert to an ethnic religion.

This is precisely what has happened to the faith of Zarathushtra as it was disseminated across the Iranian plateau from East to West over the vast Achaemenian empire. According to the late Professor Boyce² (pg 47) we have no record of "How and when the religion reached western Iran, where it first enters recorded history ... by the time it did so, Zoroaster's **great vision of a world**

religion has been largely lost, and his religion had come to be regarded as specifically that of the Iranian people."

She further elaborates that "these considerations must have been reinforced by inherent pride of race which was naturally strengthened in the case of a conquering people. To Iranians (of that era) in general the non-Iranian, - the 'anarya' - was as much a creature to be despised and disregarded as was barbarians to the Greeks As the Iranian people were brought to accept Zoroaster's teachings, they came to regard these as part of their own racial heritage, to be treasured accordingly, rather than the **Universal message of salvation for all mankind**".

In the above quote the late professor clearly reflects the vision of Asho Zarathusht as one, to bring the entire humanity under a single banner of spiritual union. It is important to acknowledge that not only the religious teachings of Zarathushtra were universal, but directly or indirectly they are responsible for inseminating a fresh breath of Monotheism into Judaism, another Major faith.

It is a well known historical fact that Cyrus was the instrument that set the Israelites free from Babylon. However, it was the writings of prophets Ezekiel³ and the prophecies for the post-exilic era in the book of Second Isaiah⁴ that brought home for the Jews the concept of monotheism and later the universality of the faith in that era of liberation. Furthermore it was through Judaism that religion of Zarathushtra impacted other major faiths. This clearly resonates in the words of the late professor Boyce⁵ who says, "So it was out of a Judaism enriched by five centuries of contact with Zoroastrianism that Christianity arose ... a new religion with roots thus in two ancient faith, one Semitic and the other Iranian."

Based on the above, it is incumbent upon all Zarathushtis to make an extra-ordinary effort to revert the faith of Zarathushtra back to its rightful place as the first revealed Universal religion in the history of mankind – a vision of our beloved Prophet. Attempt

by anyone – be it a community leader or a lay Zarathushti – to reduce Zoroastrianism to an ethnic faith would tantamount to a criminal assault on a way of life so profound and so sublime that it would border on blasphemy. Such an act of degradation of a religion that has so richly impinged on the history of other major faiths that followed can only be regarded as irreligious and far from honest.

It is important to understand that in antiquity, religion was a defining factor of ethnicity, languages, customs, and the Zarathushtrian faith may have been no exception. However, it is common knowledge today, that tribal/ethnic religions are characterized as having no religious message for all of humanity, they do not offer any means of individual or universal salvation and have no unique insight into the Will of God. Taking into consideration the established fact that the major faiths such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam has significantly imbibed some of these basic concepts of Zoroastrianism, to marginalize the religion of Zarathushtra as an ethnic faith would be height of mockery and ludicrous.

It is however well recognized that ethnicity of belonging deeply to 'group' is often constructed and manipulated by a variety of political and economic forces to satisfy an agenda. Thus an ethnic consciousness emerges among a group of people who may or may not be uniquely related. Despite the claim of primordial social nature of a group, it can only be a construction of a particular time and place.

There is no question about the fact that the Parsi/Irani ethnic group has the inalienable right to the practice of Zarathushtrian faith and have been the guardians of the faith since migration for over nearly 1300 years. However, to inextricably intertwine ethnicity of the Parsi/Irani tribe with Zoroastrianism is a clear distortion, to embezzle the profound teachings of Asho Zarathusht off its **True status of a major universal faith.**

No matter how long the attachment of customs and practices of an ethnic group, and no matter how strong the ethnic bond,

to monopolize a Sublime Universal Faith by any group, is a direct **breach of the Prophetic message** itself and a violation Zarathushtrian ethical code. Such actions are an infringement of the basic Human Rights to the Free practice of Spiritual fulfillment through the concept of *Asha*. That is offensive not only to those who wish to practice the Faith of their own Freewill, but also to the religion of Zarathushtra to deny such sincere practice.

Spirituality

All religions are based on the concept that a Divine Force sustains an ordered existence. Religions despite being pathways to fulfill the Divine needs of people are burdened with borders and limitations that separate groups of people. Spirituality in contrast is without borders. To be spiritual is to be conscious of the Spirit that is responsible for Creation of the universe and which pervades through it. This Divine 'Substance of God' permeates the entire human race and through all the religious traditions including Zoroastrianism⁶. To worship Ahura Mazda is to be a religious Zoroastrian, but to worship God is to be spiritual.

God is addressed using diverse epithet in various religions such as Ahura Mazda for Zarathushtrians, Krishna for Hindus, Allah for Islam, and Yahweh for Jews. Even though religions compartmentalize humanity, and address God by different appellations the creating 'Ultimate Reality' uniquely singular in its unity. This we acknowledge in several of our Zarathushti liturgies⁷ when we pray 'Ahura Mazda, benefactor of mankind and of all races of mankind ...'. Ahura Mazda did not just create the Zarathushtis, neither did Krishna create the Hindus or Yahweh create the Jews. It is the people who in the isolation of antiquity, generated diverse designations for One and only God – the same Ultimate Reality.

Hindu scriptures of Bhagvad Gita asserts to the concept of "*Vasudeva Kutambam*" implying humanity as a family within its Oneness. Spirituality is the recognition that the Spirit or Energy of the Divine in all the

members of human brotherhood, establishing an intimate relationship among humanity. Spirituality is an expression that reflects each person as a part of the Whole Brotherhood as well as the Creation. In other words, there is part of us that owes its allegiance to creation as a whole. We are thus a part of all that we encounter, and all that we encounter is a part of us. Spirituality is therefore, the way we are with ourselves, the way we are with others around us, and this attribute is a consequence of the way we are with our God within.

The Golden Rule of treatment of others, as we expect others to treat us, is a basic Human Right and a Spiritual axiom enshrined in social justice and entrenched in all religious traditions including Zarathushtrian faith^{8,9,10}. You are what you think, you are what you speak and you are what you do. If human beings irrespective of their allegiance to religious tradition can pursue the practice of the Golden Rule, we can evolve a *Better* human race. By following the practice of this principle Zarathushtis can actualize the concept of *Asha* in their actions, to infuse the relationship of Oneness among humanity and to attain the same with the Divine. Spirituality therefore, is the fountain of the strength and courage that permits us, to share the joy of happiness of others, and the pain and grief of sadness, of those who are victimized by unfortunate events.

As the famous Iranian poet Sa'adi Shiasi writes in one of his poems:

‡Human beings are members whole
In creation one essence & soul
If one member is afflicted with pain
Other members uneasy remain
If you have no sympathy for human pain
The name of human you cannot retain.

In conclusion the spirituality vested in the Universal teachings of Asho Zarathosht demands that humanity strive to transform all injustice, disharmony and suffering in this world to bring it in consonance with Righteous order –*Asha* – through Truth and Good thinking. This can only happen by

permitting the teachings of Zarathusht to bloom as a Universal Faith as per the vision of the revered *Manthran*. This implies that a human being can follow any religious tradition of their choice as long as they spiritually adhere to the Righteous path (*Asha*) and thinking through Good Mind (*Vohu Manah*). Associating our Noble Faith with ethnic identity to limit it to a tribe would truly be un-Zoroastrian and a violation of the vision of the founder. Degrading the Glorious faith of Asho Zarathusht to ethnic level is to deprive the humanity off its Divine Oneness and to target the decline and decadence of a most profound way of life.

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6. Ys 26.4; 55.1
7. Ending Khshnuman in all Neyayesh and Yashts
8. Shayast-na-Shayast Ch.13.29
9. Dadistan-e-Dinik Ch.94.5
10. Sad Dar 65.12



Ervad Dr Jehan Bagli retired as Distinguished Research Fellow from Wyeth Research. Presently he is chairperson of Research and Preservation committee of FEZANA, immediate past president of North American Mobed Council, Director on International Board of WZO and President of the Canadian WZO Chapter. Jehan is actively involved in Interfaith work, with Ontario Multifaith Council, Toronto Area Interfaith Council, and Mosaic. He was the invited speaker at the World Interfaith Harmony Week in Toronto, representing Zoroastrianism. He is author/coauthor of five books: Understanding and Practice of - Jashan Ceremony, - Obsequies, - Navjote and Wedding, Congregational prayers, and Religion of Asho Zarathusht and Influence through the Ages.

Bombay Parsi Punchayet's Mobed Amelioration Scheme

HAMAZOR has received for publication a press note from BPP announcing the launching of their above scheme. Due to space constraints this has been suitably edited.



To meet the growing shortage of Priests in the community, particularly in India and to develop a cadre that would perform high rituals, Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) has announced a scheme that endeavours to meet these objectives.

BPP writes that the lament of the laity is that the priests do not give good service and are unable to answer religious questions when asked by the laity whereby the laity often feels that the priests do not deserve a higher salary in order to maintain a better standard of living. Due to this unwritten struggle between the priesthood and laity, bright boys who come from the priestly class have moved into secular careers and done brilliantly for themselves. In earlier days, the brightest boys from Athornan families were inducted into the priesthood and the other brothers worked in other secular fields.

Today, it is exactly the opposite, the bright ones avail themselves of a Madressa education and then move on to becoming professionals like lawyers, doctors and engineers, whilst those not so bright, end up being priest, with of course a few exceptions.

Keeping this in mind, the Trustees of the BPP have announced its Mobed Amelioration Scheme (MAS), which has as its aims:

1. To make mobedi a more attractive profession,
2. To encourage boys from Athornan families to study in either of the two madressas, in Mumbai,
3. To encourage qualified priests to work as fulltime mobed sahebs,
4. To help the mobed sahebs improve their educational and social standing in society.

This scheme will be implemented as follows:

First Phase (commencing 1st April, 2013).
BPP Trustees have decided to cater to the needs, first, for the following five categories of Mobed Sahebs:-

- a) Students from either of the two madressas, in Mumbai.
- b) Pav mahal kriya karnar mobed sahebs including Atash Bahram boiwallas.
- c) Retired mobed sahebs who have worked as full time priests throughout their lives.
- d) Mobed sahebs working as full time priests in agiaries employing just one or two mobeds with no other secular work having been undertaken, in the past.
- e) Doongerwadi bhoi bhantar full time mobed sahebs with no other secular work having been undertaken, in the past.

To identify the above categories of mobed sahebs a detailed analysis has been done to categorize fire temples all over India into five categories. The first category comprises the eight Atash Bahrams, the second of agiaries with over six mobeds; the third are agiaries with three to five mobeds, the fourth are agiaries with two mobeds and the fifth category are agiaries with only one mobed.

Each of the above mobed sahebs in categories a, b, c, d and e is proposed to be given a subsidy of Rs10,000 per month leading to an outflow of well over

In loving memory of our mother Morvarid Zartoshty

Rs2 crores per annum from BPP funds. It is hoped that other donors will also contribute towards the economic and educational upliftment of the clergy once this scheme begins, in order to improve the standard of living of our priests.

Young Students / Madressa Scheme:

Students of the Dadar Athornan Madressa and the M F Cama Institute who agree to undertake fulltime Sampurna Mobedi training will be given financial incentives as under:-

- a. From 1st April 2013 onwards each student will receive in their bank account Rs2,500 per month and his parents will receive Rs7,500 per month, so long as the student continues to study in either of the two aforesaid institutions.
- b. From 1st April, 2013 onwards, all such students having undergone the full Navar ceremony ie. who qualify as a Samporna Navar, will be given a one time gift of Rs50,000 and on completing the Martab ceremony, will be given another appreciation reward of Rs100,000 upon qualifying as a fully trained Samporna Martab.
- c. If a young madressa educated boy, wishes to study Avesta, Pahlavi and / or Zoroastrianism at University level, then greater financial incentives will be provided to him, as the Trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet wish to encourage bright young boys to pursue their academic studies in any field of Zoroastrianism in order to make them enlightened priests.
- d. The boy upon becoming a full time Mobed Saheb after ten years, it is envisaged will receive an accumulated sum of monies with accumulated interest amounting to a tentative sum of over Rs15 lakhs, at the end of ten years.

Pav Mahal Kriya Karnar Mobed Sahebs and Atash Bahram Boiwallas:

All mobed sahebs qualified to perform the Pav Mahal Kriyas as well as the Boiwallas of the Atash Bahrams will be given a monthly subsidy of Rs10,000 from 1st April 2013.

Retired Mobed Sahebs:

Retired mobed sahebs who have been in fulltime service as priests throughout their lives will be given a monthly subsidy of Rs10,000, from 1st April 2013. Mobeds who were doing life time mobedi and completed 70 years of age would be considered as retired mobeds. On unfortunate demise of a retired mobed his widow if eligible will be entitled to the similar subsidy.

Mobeds working in Agiaries employing just one or two Mobed sahebs:

These full time serving mobeds will also be given a monthly subsidy of Rs10,000/ from 1st April 2013.

Based upon the number of mobed sahebs who have responded to the questionnaire sent out earlier by the BPP, the implementation of Phase I is likely to entail an annual financial outlay of over Rs2.5 crores from BPP funds. In spite of its commitment to cater to the various and multifarious needs of the whole Parsi community at large, the Trustees have decided to set aside Rs2 to Rs2.5 crores every year for the Mobed Amelioration Scheme. Donations from philanthropists, charitable trusts and well-wishers will enable us to go further to include all mobeds.

Trustees of the BPP intend to implement Phase II by supporting all mobeds working full time in all agiaries in India, **including** some 200 approximate mobed sahebs who are now working as fulltime priests in agiaries, but who earlier had worked in non-priestly jobs and services.

Additional financial incentives will be considered for students and their parents who are enrolled in the two Madressas as well as Pav Mahal Karnara mobed sahebs, in order to increase the performance of high inner ceremonies like the Nirangdin, Vendidad, Baj and other high liturgies. BPP Trustees also propose to raise the standard of living of full time chasniwallas who continue to work in all the ancillary services involved in running an agiary.

BPP looks forward to generous contributions from members of the community, well wishers and other charitable trusts, to build a huge corpus in order to further expand the Mobed Amelioration Scheme to include the above categories for which they estimate the outflow to be Rs60,000,000 every year.

The BPP note also mentions that a system is in place to monitor the project. It also mentions that full time priests will be eligible for housing on a priority basis and have requested for financial support from the community at large to bring the project to fruition, for which they have made a commitment to infuse Rs25,000,000 every year. Those wishing to help can send their cheques in the name of "Parsi Punchayet Bombay" directly to their office at 209 Dr D N Road, Fort, Mumbai 400 001 marked for the attention of Mr Cawas Panthaki.



Celebrating a Treasure : 140 years at the First Dastoor Meherji Rana Library - on 12 - 15 January 2013

by **ava khullar**

About ten years ago when the Parzor Project commenced with a field tour of the towns of Gujarat, the heartland of the Parsi Zoroastrians, to record oral tradition before the old folks whose memories could be tapped passed into history, Lt Gen Adi Sethna and his daughter Dr Shernaz Cama, Chairman and Director respectively of Parzor, came across a dusty scroll tucked into a table drawer in Navsari 's Meherjrana Library (MRL) which turned out to be a farman from Emperor Akbar with his official seal gifting a piece of land to Dasturji Meherjirana. This opened their eyes to the wealth of priceless manuscripts on Zoroastrianism housed in this 130 year old Library, badly needing restoration and revival. This visit started a process, jointly undertaken by the devoted members of the Library's Board of Trustees headed by Ms Katy Antia along with the Librarian Bharati

Emperor Akbar's farman





Meherjirana's Library

Gandhi and Parzor; to restore the Library's manuscripts and build an annexe with donations from Sir Dorab Tata Trust. This annexe

houses an air-conditioned room with digital presentation facilities, rooms for out station scholars to stay while working in the library, space for students to work, as well as one floor as a laboratory where restoration of manuscripts is going on.



Restored manuscripts on display

The restored First Dastoor Meherji Rana Library (MRL) in Navsari completed 140 years in November 2012. To

honour the international recognition this institution now has, Parzor and the Trustees of the MRL came together and solemnized it with an international conference entitled "Celebrating a Treasure - 140 years at the First Meherji Rana Library" in January 2013. The Conference concentrated on Zoroastrian and Parsi studies.

The MRL is a unique institution in many ways. It is named after Meherji Rana, priest of Navsari renowned for his piety and learning who was invited to the court of Emperor Akbar to explain the Zoroastrian faith to the king. His presence in the Mughal court was a great historical event for the Parsi community and when he returned to Navsari he was accepted as the head of the Navsari priests, becoming the First Dastoor

Meherji Rana, beginning a priestly lineage that continues till today.

The Library houses a magnificent collection of over six hundred Zoroastrian manuscripts, some more than 500 years old, written by hand in Sanskrit, Persian, Avesta, Pahlavi, and old Gujarati languages. This treasure house of knowledge has been used by generations of foreign scholars for their higher research into the Zoroastrian religion.

As mentioned, restoration of the manuscripts is underway and is being handled by professional paper conservationists from the Indian Conservation Institute. 500 manuscripts have already been restored. All these efforts have made it a world renowned institution of Zoroastrian learning. An exhibition showing the restored manuscripts along with traditional Parsi embroidered pieces as well a plan for restoration of the Parsi heritage vads¹ and buildings of Navsari evoked keen interest from those present.

Holding the conference was an idea of several renowned foreign scholars of Zoroastrianism associated with the MRL, as an effort to interact with Zoroastrian scholars in India as well as familiarize a larger number of international scholars working on Zoroastrian studies with the resources of the Library. It was also an effort to promote interaction between these scholars and the local Navsari Parsi community, which has been the cradle of so much Parsi tradition and history over the centuries. Navsari is known as the "*dharam ni tekri*" [the pinnacle of religion]. Special arrangements had been made out side the Conference hall, which could only accommodate a limited audience, so that the Navsari folks could also view the proceedings. This was the unique and thoughtful aspect of the Conference and the enthusiastic cooperation and participation of the local Parsis gave the event a delightful Parsi flavour.

Internationally known scholars who presented papers included Almut Hintze,

Leon Goldman and Sarah Stewart from the School for Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London; Alberto Cantera from the University of Salamanca in Spain; Gotz Konig, Iris Colditz, Davis Buyaner and Miguel-Angel Andres Toledo from Free University of Berlin; Kianoosh Rezania and Shervin Farridnejad from Georg-August University of Gottingen; Takeshi Aoki from Waseda University, Tokyo; Dinyar Patel and Sadaf Jaffer from Harvard University; Dan Sheffield from Princeton University; Anton Zykov from Oxford University and Reza Hosseini from JNU, Delhi.

Among the national scholars including our priests and lay persons were Dasturji Dr Firoze M Kotwal, Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor, Ervard Ramiyar Karanjia, Shernaz Cama, Ervard Parvez Bajan and Ervard Rohinteen Peer, Dasturji Cyrus Dastoor, Amitav Ghosh, Murali Ranganathan, Khojeste Mistree, Simin Patel and Marazban Giara.

A congregation that brought together so many international scholars of repute with Zoroastrian scholar priests and Parsi and non-Parsi researchers including a well known author turned out to be a memorable event. The enthusiastic participation of the local residents and discussions that followed, and the openness, frankness and considerable mutual respect that marked the proceedings throughout made one participant write afterwards that attending the Navsari meeting "was an intellectually, emotionally and spiritually enriching experience."

The Conference, spread over four days (12 - 15 January, 2013) had a full schedule. The areas covered could be divided into two major sections;

- a) research done on the Zoroastrian religion
- b) the chronicles of the Parsis in India, touching on important events that marked the community's history and the prominent Parsis who contributed to the shaping of Parsi modernity.

The Sir Dorab Tata Annexe where the conference was held had a festive look for



Foreign delegates: I to R: Alberto Cantera, Miguel Angel Andres- Toledo, Leon Goldman, David Buyaner, Iris Colditz and Almut Hintze.

the inauguration with floral torans and garlands adorning the doorways; ladies dressed in traditional garas and Parsi border saris, all gathered in the conference hall to hear the inaugural address by Dasturji Kotwal on *A Historical Overview of the Parsi settlement in Navsari and its Rise as the Bastion of Zoroastrianism*. This day happened to be the Dasturji's birthday and a cake to feed a hundred guests donated by the Dotiwala's of Surat was cut in celebration.

Covered under research on the religion were presentations on *Approaches to the Study of Zoroastrian Manuscripts*. An interesting insight was given by Leon Goldman on a 12th century Sanskrit translation of the *Yasna by Mobed Naryosangh Dhaval* which was not based on the original Avestan version but on the Middle Persian translation and commentary of it which was produced in Iran during the first millennium AD. As such, it afforded unique insights into the development of Zoroastrian ideas, showing how the base text came to be interpreted in two different historical and cultural contexts.

There were several such nuggets of revelations such as on *Zoroastrian Persian*

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The audience in prayer

Manuscripts on Zurvanism in Iran and India by Takeshi Aoki, *Penance of Sins in the Avesta and Pahlavi Literature* by David Buyaner, *The Performance of the Baj-dharna in Zoroastrian ritual* by Ervard Ramiyar Karanjia, *Transmission, Propagation and Preservation of Avestan-Pahlavi*

Literature through Manuscript Tradition by Ervard Parvez Bajan, *the Recital of the Namgrahan and the Preservation of the Bahagria Fehrist system* by Khojeste Mistree, and *the Nawroz Festival in the Delhi Sultanate: an Issue of Convergence in Heterogeneous Courts of Sultans* by Reza Hosseini.

Efforts are on at SOAS to bring out a new edition of the *Yasna*, revealed Almut Hintze. Mainly due to the efforts of Alberto Cantera and his team, considerable number of new Avestan manuscripts in both India and Iran, including the MRL have come to light and are now available in electronic form on the Avestan Digital Archive website which demonstrates that the Avestan edition of Karl Friedrich Geldner, now a hundred years old is no longer satisfactory. Furthermore a variety of sophisticated technologies and tools for encoding, genealogically analyzing and text editing manuscripts will provide all the different texts being studied to create a complete Avesta in the way that over 400 years ago the Council of Trent codified and made available the Christian Bible.

The panels covering the history of the Parsis was highlighted by an enlightening audio visual talk by author Amitav Ghosh whose work the *River of Smoke*, is the second book of his Iris Trilogy. It deals with the period of Indian history which was dominated by the China Trade and which both the British and the Parsis have blacked out of history books as it dealt with opium export, nay smuggling of narcotics to China. However, ironically it was the wealth

accumulated by the Parsi sethias through this trade that Parsi charities of public institutions, - hospitals, libraries, educational institutions, housing colonies for the poor and the making of Mumbai was made possible. Questionable means for honorable ends one may conclude. Ghosh's talk centered around the life of the Parsi traders from Canton the only city from where all foreign traders were allowed to function.

Marazban Giara talked about the *Parsi Prakash* as a chronicler of important events in the growth of the Parsi community in western India, while Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor talked on the *Historical Chronology of Kisseh- i- Sanjan* leading up to the installation of the Atash Padshah in the Iranshah Atashbehram in Udvada. Rukshana Nanji, gave an audio visual presentation show casing the archaeological excavation work at Sanjan bringing to light a large and prosperous port settlement which had played a crucial role in the trans-oceanic trade of the Indian Ocean during Early Medieval period.

Shernaz Cama in her paper on *Intersecting Narratives in the Contemporary World* voiced her apprehensions regarding the loss of Parsi cultural memory and thus cultural identity due to globalization. This identity nurtured by oral traditions, material and intangible traditions engrained from childhood in the family and the Parsi-Gujarati dialect adopted by the Parsis, is fading. Cama urged that this loss needs to be addressed by studies from culture specialists and those interested in history to document as well as stem this decline.

Among prominent Parsis, the role of Dinshaw Irani in the revival of Zoroastrianism in Iran in collaboration with Iranian intellectuals; the role of the Banaji and Metha families of Calcutta in forging the Parsi community in Western India, were presented by Afshin Marashi and Dinyar Patel respectively. Sadaf Jaffer explained Dastur Dhalla's transformation from an orthodox Zoroastrian priest of Karachi who came to the conclusion that ritual practice is not as important as an ethical understanding of the religion. Not to be left out the role of the Nasusalars, the equivalent to the untouchables in the community, was dealt with by Anton Zykov.

Space does not permit a coverage of all the papers presented. There were in all nine panels with three to four subjects covered in each.



Ava Khullar has been involved in research on the Parsi community, especially concentrating on its demographic and socio-economic situation. She is an active member of the Parzor Foundation and is currently associated with its Craft Module which is trying to revive Parsi embroidery.

Conclusion

What came out forcefully at this gathering was the extreme care and attention given in planning a conference of this size in a small town like Navsari by interested scholars, with a special mention here of the efforts put in by Dan Sheffield and Dinyar Patel and supported by Parzor along with a highly dedicated group of trustees.

Comfortable accommodation for all, a successful blend of food for the mind and the stomach, evenings showcasing Parsi theatre and traditional craft demonstrations of kusti weaving and toran making, and

with all, guided us in shopping for Parsi artifacts and traditional food items, and made their spirit infectious for most of us.

A walking tour of the Parsi dominated areas of old Navsari rounded off the conference. Homes showing grave deprivation and others showing prosperity, as younger members stepped out to greener pastures in India and abroad bringing comforts of modern appliances to the family, as evidenced by the fancy TVs and refrigerators in some homes, all had their inmates welcoming the walking delegates. It was sad to see many of the old Parsi vads



Navsari participants

above all the bonhomie evident throughout the four days made this one of the most satisfying conferences one has participated in. It was gratifying to see the priests and scholars exchanging ideas and answering queries with great respect and dignity for all. Two young priests from Surat took leave to attend, suggesting that such initiatives enthuse interest in learning more about the religion and community, a healthy trend hitherto sadly missing among the Zoroastrian priesthood in India. And the enthusiasm of the volunteers, some of whom had also taken leave and come from Surat, several of them school teachers and one lady even the vice-Principal of a college, was simply a delight. They ferried the delegates from their place of residences to the MRL and to Jamsheed Bagh for meals in their own vehicles, mixed freely

in a state of ruin and others now taken over by other communities as our Parsi clan declines. On the one side it was showing a culture and life style now in decline and on the other the conference itself signaling a renewed interest in Zoroastrian studies and efforts to save a culture and its traditions from extinction.

Above all the conference announced emphatically that Parsi/Zoroastrian scholars can be proud of a library in their own home ground housing valuable material for scholars of Zoroastrian religion, which can compare favorably with the famous collections in the libraries and universities of Europe. ■■■■

1. Vads is a group of housing for a particular section of the Parsis. We have Antia Vad, Dastoor Vad or Kanga Vad where families related to each other and having the same surname reside on the same street. It is not like a gated community, the bagh, but are streets where members of the same family resided.

In loving memory of our mother Morvarid Zartoshty

Chhaiye Hame Jarthosti - Origins and Associations

A

As a child in Karachi I often wondered what the origins of *Chhaiye Hame Jarthosti* were and the circumstances which had given birth to it, so palpable was the communal pride radiating from lusty renditions of the song at community events. Marzban Giara's article in *Hamazor* January 2013 (commemorating Firoz Rustomji Batliwalla and admirably interspersed with information provided by the late Virasp Mehta to Toxy Cowasjee) provided the answer I'd sought many years ago. Batliwalla's arrangement of *Chhaiye Hame Jarthosti* was originally performed as part of a *natak*, instantly taken to heart by the community and quickly became the *de facto* anthem of the Parsi community of India. A century later it continues to enthuse Parsis, providing the miniscule community now scattered across the globe with a sense of shared identity.

by jubin mama



Shortly after the *Hamazor* article was published in Issue 1/2013 pp 59-60, reports emerged of an email circulating amongst the community which alleged that *Chhaiye Hame Jarthosti* was directly derived from a Nazi propagandea song *Deutschland du Land der Treue* – to the consternation to some within our community.

‡Did you know the origins of our Chhayye Hame Zarthosti? No? Then open the link below and be prepared to be shocked!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qtr4IXzNtN4&feature=share&list=PLEEADE35D4B63858E>

The genesis of this article lies in the scenario above. There was never any doubt that the central allegation of the email could have any basis in truth – the facts speak for themselves. The *Hamazor* article of January explicitly states that Batliwalla was the author of *Chhaiye* and set his arrangement to the music of an American Theodore Morse, the *Blue Bell March* which Morse had composed in 1904. Further, since Batliwalla died in 1912, self-evidently *Chhaiye* would have had to have been completed before then and was in all probability firmly entrenched in the collective Parsi consciousness by then.

The National Socialists (the Nazis) on the other hand came to prominence significantly

later, in the hubris which engulfed Germany after its defeat in the First World War, during the short-lived and ill-fated Weimar Republic. (Whilst the Republic encompassed a particularly turbulent period of German politics, social progressiveness and tolerance



were achieved during the same period as well as cultural creativity and innovation. Poignantly, given its later tragic fate, German Jewry was in the vanguard of many of these progressive movements).

It wasn't until 1933 (nearly 30 years after the composition of the original *Blue Bell March* – as well as *Chhaiye* which derives from it) that the Nazis engineered their rise to power in Germany and consolidated their stranglehold on it. It was during the period that followed, when militant National Socialism led inexorably to the conflagration of World War II that military marches like *Deutschland du Land der Treue* emerged. The Nazis borrowed the music of the *Blue Bell March* (and by extension, of *Chhaiye*) and set it to lyrics which promoted their own agenda.

Zane Dalal, Resident Conductor of the Symphony Orchestra of India, and well-placed to comment on the matter offers this perspective on the issue: "Hitler's Reich adopted this and many other songs from the 1920s onwards right up to the establishment of German National Socialism in 1933. Unfortunately for us and our Chhaiye Hame, Morse's March got a heavy rewrite, not in music, but in words and usage. Germans described Morse's March as the *Krieger Abschied*, the exit march of the soldiers. *Deutschland du Land der Treue*, known as *Heil Deutschland* refers to the Germany of Hitler's dream ... is about total allegiance to him and was much used at Nuremberg".

(The Nuremberg Rallies were gatherings of hundreds of thousands of Nazi supporters, and their primary purpose was to strengthen the personality cult of Hitler, portraying him as Germany's saviour chosen by providence. The gathered masses listened to his speeches, swore loyalty and marched before him).

Dalal goes on to say "If a tune is good enough it will be used again and again by any who want to. Bach and Vivaldi shared tunes; Mozart's end up in Beethoven".

There was therefore an established precedent and the Nazis' adoption of Morse's *March* for their purposes was not in itself distinctive or unknown; indeed, Batliwalla had done the same when using the melody for *Chhaiye Hame Jarhosti*.

The original sheet music for the *Blue Bell March Song and Chorus* (the template for *Chhaiye Hame Jarhosti*) is located in the *Historic American Sheet Music Archive* of Duke University in North Carolina, USA. The *Blue Bell March Song and Chorus* was composed

by Theodore F Morse with lyrics by Edward Madden and was published in 1904 by the F B Haviland Company, New York City. The instrumentation is for voice and piano and the piece was first performed by Irene Jermon.

The *Blue Bell March Song and Chorus* is of the *Tin Pan Alley* genre. The *Tin Pan Alley* was a collection of New York City songwriters and music publishers who dominated popular American music in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Morse and Madden were amongst the leading lights of the *Tin Pan Alley* which also included luminaries like Irving Berlin, Ira and George Gershwin, Scott Joplin and Cole Porter.

The cover sheet of the *Blue Bell March* which accompanies this article is evocative of the American Civil War period, depicting as it does a Civil War soldier taking leave of his sweetheart (possibly his Southern belle?). It was around this time that the *Tin Pan Alley* musicians and lyricists began to capitalise on Northerners' fascination with this mythological South. The *Blue Bell March* tied into the American public's ongoing interest in and romanticizing of the Civil War and the process of reconciliation between the North and South, particularly as the 50th anniversary of the War approached. (Madden and Morse also collaborated on another song with a Civil War theme, *Two Little Boys*). The *March* is therefore about the American Civil War from the perspective of someone looking back on it 40 years later.

The song appeared again in 1946 in the Columbia Pictures film *The Jolson Story*, proving its enduring appeal.

In light of the information presented above, the email claiming that *Chhaiye Hame Jarhosti* is derived from Nazi propaganda is patently untrue – the facts speak for themselves.



Note: The input to the article of Zane Dalal, Resident Conductor, Symphony Orchestra of India, and of Kate Collins, Research Services Librarian, David Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, North Carolina is acknowledged with appreciation.



Nowruz

For some years, and particularly after spending Nowruz in Tajikistan a couple of times (and of course having spent it in Iran also much earlier), I had been wondering why all Iranian peoples including Afghans and Kurds celebrate this festival in a very similar way, with a special table decked out at home with significant Nowruz specific items and yet the Parsees, our co-religionists, do not.

It is widely noticed among Iranians who socialise with Parsees that this best loved of all Zoroastrian festivals is strangely absent in the homes of Parsees and all that seems to happen for those who have no Iranian cultural ties, but merely those of religion, is a quick visit to a fire temple, followed by communal meal and/or a dinner-dance.

by shahin bekhradnia

And yet, there is no more important festival in the Zoroastrian calendar than Nowruz and anyone who has not yet realised this, has missed the deepest understanding of our beautiful religion. And if anyone has failed to realise that Nowruz **MUST** occur in the Spring at the time of the equinox and at no other time, has also failed to understand some of the key principles of our wonderful philosophy. At the core of our religion stands the reverence and respect for the creation of the creative spirit, Ahura Mazda. All our festivals celebrate different aspects of the natural world and none is more important than that of the return of spring, and the hope for renewed life that it brings – and this occurs at the equinox which marks the official start of the new season of fresh life and aspiration.

The deep attachment peoples of Iranian cultural origin all have towards Nowruz is indicative of the emotional response of joy which we instinctively feel towards the festival. It is an ancient celebration of the revival of spring, and dates back to at least the Achaemenian period and attributed to Zoroaster himself by some writers.

It seems to me that one of the main explanations for the absence of the same

sentimentality or nostalgia for Nowruz amongst those living on the Indian sub-continent lies with the geography and climate of the Iranian plateau which shares similar traits with those found in Europe and North America and is therefore very different from the sub-tropical climate with monsoons that is found on the subcontinent. The Iranian plateau and the other areas which are not subtropical really do experience a very cold winter with snow and long winter nights and the effect of this can be quite demotivating and debilitating. The condition called SAD (sunlight deficiency syndrome) is a real phenomenon and recognized by psychotherapists as genuine. Therefore the socio-religious calendar is punctuated with celebrations which offer moments of hope and countdowns to the arrival of spring and the return to those aspects of the climate and the position of the sun which are conducive to light, re-birth and new growth. This is why the celebration of the longest night is of significance (Shab e Yalda) as is the mid winter festival after this, of Jashn e Sadeh whose meaning is widely accepted as heralding the imminent of arrival of Nowruz.

Unless you have experienced the miraculous and visible return of spring and

new life to the world which Nowruz brings in its wake, it is perhaps difficult to have the emotional response to the festival which then merely becomes yet another date on the calendar but which is not really experienced. When the earth has been frozen and all life has been in hibernation during the winter months, it is indeed joyous to suddenly notice the first signs of plant life awakening, with the opening up of narcissus, daffodils, hyacinths and tulips – all real phenomenon in Iran whose mountainsides and desert plateaux burst into colour as if to cue on Nowruz day. Similarly you will become aware of the first arrival of lambs, of birds nesting and singing and even of the movement of lizards and snakes. All this sounds too good to be true to those who have not experienced the climate of Iran and its nearby countries, but it is not only true but consistently repeated.

For this reason, I believe that the deep love for Nowruz which is common to Iranian peoples is not experienced by those who do not live in an environment where nature goes to sleep for a long period of time. The climate of the sub-continent of India is blessed with heat and fertility around the year, so the experience of close down and the yearning for the subsequent return of spring is not experienced and not emotionally felt.

The special table we prepare is a beautiful link with the return of spring and is the aspect of Nowruz that I find most aesthetically pleasing. And then knowing that this festival has been celebrated in pretty much the same way for 2500 years at least (with certain concessions to Islam such as the substitute for wine with vinegar) I get a terrific sense of continuity.

My parents explained that for them in Yazd, in modest (usually rural) homes, you might find 7 sprouting pulses whereas in the better off households within the community they would have 7 things beginning with SH. Seven is a significant number in Zoroastrianism as there are 7 Amesha Spenta or Holy Immortals mentioned in our texts as representing Ahura Mazda and the

attributes associated with the concept of life and divinity, both moral and physical. Once in the UK, my father insisted that we should have the seven SH to put out on our Nowruz table (to distinguish us from our Muslim compatriots who put out seven S items): *Shesheh* (sprouting wheat), *shir* (milk), *shiluneh* (oleaster berries) *shirini* (sweets), *sharbat* (flavoured sweet cordial), *shisheh* (mirror), *sharab* (wine) and *sham* (candles) although the latter two words are of course of Arabic derivation which has given rise to questioning whether the spread really was seven sh/s or simply seven something else; for example in Afghanistan they still put out 7 miweh (or 7 fruits) which shows that even if the items on the spread have changed, they still are seven in number and represent aspects of nature's bounty. In Kurdistan they put out *Haft Rang* (items of seven different colours): the purpose of the spread is to remind us of our close dependency on nature and the retention of seven is a clear reference back to the Zoroastrian past.

Looking at our beautiful seven Sh table, we can understand that our pleasure in life is provided by the beauty and scent of the flowers (often hyacinths), and the rosewater which rose petals provide. The wine and the oleaster berries represent the medicinal qualities of these items and the sweets and sharbat represent the pleasure in taste. Of course wine is also the source of inspiration for poetry, music and art, and joyful fun. Life itself is sustained by water (in the sharbat) and the food we eat hence the sprouting wheat.

On our table we also put out bread, and herbs such as *obshan* (often in a bowl of water) which is used on auspicious occasions, and edible herbs such as mint or coriander. We also put out cheese as well as the milk as our dependency on the animal kingdom is represented in this way. The presence of coins tells us that it is good to toil and earn and then to use our rewards to do service to others.

As far as the seven Amesha Spentas are concerned they are present through fire

 turn to p64 please

Zarthushti Marriage Ceremony as performed in Iran

I

In the wedding ceremony a priest sits in front of the couple to be wed, surrounded by their parents on either side. The priest begins with -

On the auspicious day of ... , at this auspicious ceremony, wherein the present gathering (Anjoman), having gathered so as to witness a wedlock, to be performed according to the rites of the Good Religion of Mazdayasni, I Mobed ... take the Glorious and Righteous Ahura Mazda, the victorious Amesha Spentas, the Yazatas Mehr, Sraosha, and Rashna – the Truthful, the Fravashi of Asho Zarathushtra Spitaman and each and every one present, in this gathering, as witness to ask you (name of bride) daughter of ... (mother) and ... (father) whether you are prepared and do agree to choose ... son of ... (mother) and ... (father) to be your partner in body and soul and as per the rules of the Good Religion of Mazdyasni? (The bride, normally, says yes after the third repetition of the above question, thereby giving her ample time and opportunity to ponder upon and give a decisive commitment of fidelity until death do them apart). Then facing the groom the priest puts, to him, a similar question upon which he, as if jumping to the opportunity gives his consent soon upon the first asking.

by mehraban firouzgary

Facing the couple the priest continues -

“Congratulations on such an auspicious and happy occasion. All those present join me in praying to Ahura Mazda to bestow upon this union, in marriage, durability and steadfastness, love, happiness and success, with several good children and wealth earned through righteous means as well as a happy ending after a long life together. Amen.

“And now, after invoking the blessings of Ahura Mazda and congratulating you newly weds, once again, I will pass on to you certain religious advice, which I trust you will remember and follow throughout your life and, thereby derive benefit from them.

“Prime and foremost is that you must constantly remember and pray to Ahura Mazda for providing us human beings, with all His boons and the best advantages over His vast creation, including the powers of speech and intelligence. Bear in mind always,

that He is the Supreme Lord and make sure to pray to Him as per the rules of our Good Religion.

“Remain steadfast to the Good Religion of Mazdayasni and to it’s Prophet Asho Zarathushtra. At all times follow the path of Asha and make sure to maintain the principles of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

“Do not take even one step without Sadreh and Kushty and make sure to adorn your children with the Sadreh and Kushty no sooner they grow to an age of self realisation, definitely before the age of fifteen.

“Make sure to observe and carry out all the required religious ceremonies for your dead relatives. Make sure to arrange for the best possible facilities and requirements of Myazd¹ and prayers etc., within your means, especially during the Gahanbars and the

Farvardingan periods, so as to ensure the blessings of the All Souls, as well.

“Be ever grateful to your parents and equally to your teacher. Remember that the satisfaction of these three will invoke the pleasure of Ahura Mazda.

“Always remember God and be benevolent. In spite of that choose one particular day of our month and every month, on that roj, try to allow more time in prayers and give more than usual in charities. Please choose that day and announce it, to me, now.”

At this time the couple have a short and whispered consultation. The groom announces the mutually chosen roj [a day] from our Zoroastrian calendar which they would wish to remember and celebrate the most each month such as the day of their marriage, or engagement or one of their birthdays etc.

“You should choose a wise counselor and guide, in order to consult at a time when an important decision is to be made. Remember that knowledge is diverse and success is achieved better through consultations. Please announce your chosen council.” Both the bride and bridegroom, individually, announce their choice of councillor/s, persons to whom each may approach for consultations in times of difficulties.

“The almighty Ahura Mazda, who has bestowed human beings with the powers of speech, conscience and intelligence calls for kindness towards humans. Do not harm anyone in any way, neither in thought, nor in speech or in deeds. Give food and shelter to strangers, and relieve sufferers from hunger, thirst, cold and heat. Be kind to your subordinates and respect your seniors. In general follow in the path of the Amesha Spentas who represent the main aspects of Ahura Mazda.

“The path of Vohu Manu Amesha Spenta (AM) call for the practice of good thoughts and peace making. Do not be revengeful or quarrelsome. Be benevolent and of a good disposition. Avoid doing bad deeds and try to advise the ignorant and evil doers. Acquire

knowledge and practice wisdom. Spread good culture and destroy evil. Be just to your enemies. Be good to your friends. Be kind to animals.

“The path of Ardibehesht (AM) calls for truth and virtue. Be clean in body and in conscience. Avoid lies and filth. Praise the path of Asha and tread in that path, for there is only one path and that is of Asha. Think good when thinking, speak good when talking and do good in your actions. Be, always, truthful and honest with each other and avoid falsehood, lies and perjury. The light emitting fire, that represents love and loyalty, should be revered and never polluted.

“The path of Shahrevar (AM) calls for acquiring self esteem and strength of character. Do your best to acquire wealth and fame. Avoid a life of mere leisure and idleness. Make sure your income is from honest sources. Do not envy another richer than you and never attempt to take undue advantage of their riches. Sympathise with your poor relatives / friends and help them in such a way as not to belittle them. Protect metals from rusting and erosion.

“The path of Spentarmazd (AM) calls for modesty and kindness. Be humble and noble in this world. Be broadminded and friendly, to each other and to others. Never be proud or selfish. Remain chaste in your deeds and in your outlook. Contribute to building places of public benefit. Be beneficial and reproductive as the Mother Earth. Keep earth clean and fertile.

“The path of Khordad (AM) calls for acquiring prosperity and perfection. Maintain a happy heart and clean disposition. Do not grumble or be ungrateful with what you have. Never feel depressed. Be optimistic and ever grateful to Ahura Mazda. Spread happiness. Keep water clean and do not waste water meant for public use.

“The path of Amordad (AM) calls for efforts to extend longevity and to acquire good health. Make sure to practice all that is recommended for the maintenance of good health and body strength. Keep your clothes and abode clean. Stay away from filth and Droj. Give medical



Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary was born in Yazd, Iran. In 1947 he was taken to India at the age of 12 with the idea of admitting him to the Cama Athornan Mandal, at Andheri, for graduating in Religious studies but was not admitted due to age and lack of Gujarati. He studied till the first year Science and simultaneously learnt Avesta. He was sent back to Iran for a strict Navar initiation and then returned to India to follow up his academic studies in Electronics & Radio Engineering. He worked for ten years in India and then went back to Iran when he retired as a joint project manager for building six hollow glassware manufacturing plants. Though he retired in 1998 he continued working part time in the last factory he was involved with. With regard to religious and community duties he has been elected, continuously, for the last 35 years as a member of the managing board of executives of the Tehran Anjuman e Moobedan (Kankaash e Moobedan). For the last 38 years, even though not working as a full time mobed always carried out community religious functions or those relating to friends or close relatives. Since April 2003 he has been authorised by the Justice Ministry of the Iran as the sole Zoroastrian marriage license issuing authority in Tehran.

In loving memory of our mother Morvarid Zartoshty

care to the needy and nurse the sick. Spread agriculture and tree planting. Do not cut young trees or pick unripe fruits.

"I sincerely hope that you will follow this advice carefully and in your actions try to outdo each other in kindness and good deeds. These will ensure you a happy life."

Here the couple is asked to join in for praying a portion of the Patet Pashemani followed by two Yatha Ahoo and a portion of Sraosh Vaaj prayers.

The bride and the bridegroom are asked once again to confirm their choice as final acceptance of each other, as before, but this time stressing on the words 'Of your own free will' and they respond with the first asking. The priest then continues praying portions of the Hormazd Yasht and various portions of Yasna (Has 8 and 52), followed by Tandarosti, and after completion, continues -

"While declaring you formally as man and wife, I once again congratulate you and the families of both sides on this auspicious union. While stressing once again, that you follow the religious recommendations already advised and to do all you can to be a good Zartoshti, especially in outdoing one another in being kind and loving, I would also like to bring to your attention the philosophy and significance behind some of the items that are customarily placed on this ceremonial table, hoping that you will further learn and benefit from these as well.

"One of these is a pair of scissors which is formed by the joining together of two blades and will cut effectively only if the two blades move in unison. Starting from today you two are also joined in wedlock together, symbolically the same as the blades of this pair of scissors. In order to cut successfully through the problems and objectives of your life, that is in other words, so as to achieve success, make sure that all your actions and plannings throughout your married life are in unison.

"The needle and thread kept here are normally tools for darning. As in the course of any



Engagement : The bride-to-be wears white, as it is considered a good omen besides a religious connotation due to its colour of showing any 'dirt'. White has been written in our scriptures as the colour of a Zartoshti.



The colour green is a symbol of long life (the expression 'evergreen' used for a person who retains their youth). The photograph shows, a green table cover, a sugar cone covered with green wrapping and branches of evergreen trees, which are exchanged and displayed as ceremonial items. The shape of the cone could be a symbol for storing astral energy. Parsis use the same conical shape in their 'saes' but in silver. The sugar symbolises a sweet life and the green wrapping is for continued youth and a long life.

married life occasions may arise, generally due to misunderstandings or other related problems, that a slight "cut" may appear in your relations. Immediately, in such cases make use of the philosophical "needle and thread" which is simply looking at the problem logically and through modesty and forgiveness. Make use of your mutual love and

affection and any other conceivable remedy to make sure to “darn” the “cut” and cover it up so well so as to make it disappear but never deepen.

“The egg – considering that an egg nurtures the embryo within itself and prepares it for the life outside it’s shell it has come to be considered the symbol of the rights of parents over their children. By giving away this egg after this ceremony the parents make it understood between themselves that from this day they have given out their children with the understanding that they are capable of maintaining an independent and a self-established life. As from today between these three families nothing beyond mutual love, respect and advice and consultation should be expected.

“The prayer book and Kusti is to remind you of your pledge to the Good Religion of Mazdyasni and adherence to the practice of good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

“The green wrapped sugar cone represents long life and sweet happiness. I pray that you enjoy both.

“Pomegranate, signifies riches and childbearing. I pray that Ahura Mazda bestow upon you with much honestly earned riches and several well behaving children. Amen.”

After this the priest comes away from the dais and the couple exchange several customary rites – sipping sherbat from one another’s glasses and tasting sweets from each others hands and much more, amongst joyful shouting of *Hobiro Shaad baash* which means ‘Oh you go and stay happy’ and loud music. The couple then come down to sign a written declaration of their marriage, along with seven other close relatives as witnesses, on a form printed with all the advice given and reiteration of their commitments to each other for a full life of fidelity and sacrifice. Soon thereafter they are taken to the adjoining Fire Temple where they offer their thanks and renew their pledges in front of the Holy Fire.²



The traditional clothes the bride formally wore were the Maknaa and Shawaal, treasured items handed down from mother to daughter now having been replaced by the western wedding dress usually hired for the occasion. Similarly the groom’s light coloured suit and shirt has been replaced to a very dark or black suit. Before the priest begins the ceremony, the mother of the bride is requested by the groom’s mother to go on the stage and don her future son in law with her family’s gift of the green shawl over his right shoulder and the green prayer cap on his head; a confirmation of her family’s approval. The shawl and cap are preserved and used when going on pilgrimage or for very special occasions.

The young man standing with a tray behind the couple, is normally a close relative of the family and a bachelor. The tray contains symbolic items, scissor, needle and thread, an egg, the prayer book, the coiled kusti and a pomegranate. Probably, a bachelor is selected, so that he too may be

blessed and a future marriage foreseeable. After the marriage ceremony unmarried girls belonging to the family bring sweets and sherbat to the six persons seated on the stage. Such assignments could also promote their chances of attracting suitors from the audience!

Notes:

1. Myazd, when referred to ceremonies is the set of solid foods that are kept on prayer tables such as halvas, sirog (fried bread). They form samples of some of the food items which are cooked for being served after the prayers. In sanctifying these portions the entire menu to be served to the guest are considered to be blessed. The Myazd includes the ‘Chom e Sva’ or the dog’s bite or ‘kootra no bhook’ as well. That comes out from the best portion of the food and served as the first food serving to a dog. Along with the Myazd liquid items like milk, sherbat/fruit juice and even wine is placed at the ceremonial table. These are referred to as “Zaur” items.

Myazd is used in poetic terms, in Yashts and even in the Doa Tandorosti, to refer to well earned riches, mainly agricultural and animal riches. The Farsi word meez or a table and meezbaan or a host (one who “spreads the table”) are synonymous.

2. After the wedding festivities, the crowd leads the couple to their new place of living. Here the relatives and friends of the bride rush to the door and push off ceremoniously, and with much pomp, the bride or anyone of her family / friends from entering the new abode, declaring the bride is precious and is not to be given away free; and open a big pouch that is tied around the waist for the price demanded. Every time a gift or a sum of money is placed into the pouch much bargaining goes on, that it is not enough. The bride who is held at bay is allowed one step nearer and the bargaining keeps repeating until the bride is formally allowed into the house where the merriment and offerings of sweet drinks continue with much more shouting and teasing when the couple are at last pushed into their bedroom, before every one leaves.

Parsi Adoptions: Time to re-ignite our religious & customary traditions?

T

The Indian statute on adoptions bars Parsis from adopting children in India. There is evidence, however, that Parsis have a long developed custom of adopting children in various circumstances. While recent Indian cases have not granted legal recognition to such adoptions, there is still room for claiming that customary adoptions should be legally recognized, despite the statutory bar. Parsi religious scholars have pronounced customary adoptions as being valid.

At the same time, attempts have been made to enact a new adoption statute to be made applicable to all communities in India. Along with Muslims, a "section of Parsis" is said to be opposed to the lifting of the ban on adoptions.

by kersi shroff

A Zoroastrian couple in the USA received an early Valentine's Day present last January. After a long struggle, Shireen and KC Abadian of Virginia, were able to welcome into their home an adopted girl from an orphanage in Vladivostok, Russia. Lyly Ksenia Abadian, age 23 months, was one of the last children to be adopted before a Russian law banning adoptions by American parents took effect. Rather than suffering the "adoption woes" described by Mr Noshir Dadrawala in the previous issue of Hamazor,¹ the Abadians are now experiencing the joy of having a new daughter and a sister for their first child, also adopted from Russia. In an interview with a local television station, Shireen Abadian said of her new daughter, "she deserves a mommy and a daddy, and a big sister," and, referring to the Russian ban, she "truly hope[d] they would reconsider."²

If Shireen Abadian were instead to refer to the Indian ban on Parsi adoptions, there would not be much hope for reconsideration. As Mr Dadrawala has declared in bold: "It is clear ... that HAMA [the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act 1956] is NOT applicable to Parsis."³ Thus,

from the point of view of a Zoroastrian couple living in the United States who may wish to adopt a Parsi child in India, this would starkly translate into a denial of entry of the child into their country.

The Indian ban on Parsi adoptions has resulted in the United States Immigration & Naturalization Service (INS), (now the US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS)), denying entry into the country of adopted Parsi children. In one such case, *Matter of Irani*,⁴ the Board of Immigration Appeals looked to "the provisions of the Hindu law" without noting that the parties involved were all Parsis and the adoption took place prior to the enactment of HAMA. The judge even acknowledged that an adoption declaration was made by a Homai Irani, the natural mother of the child, who stated that the adoption was carried out in Bombay in 1954, and that the child was thereafter educated and looked after by the adopter.

An opportunity to challenge this questionable decision occurred in 1987 when the US agency in charge of providing advisory opinions to INS on international,

comparative and foreign law matters, received a request in the case of: "RE: Parsi Adoptions in India V-[XXX] # [XXX]." The letter stated that "the Consul in Bombay contends that Parsi adoptions are legally recognized in India" and sought a review of enclosed material relating to Parsi adoptions in order to reach "conclusions with respect to the interpretation advanced by the Consul General in Bombay."⁵ The materials enclosed with the letter presented rich pickings in support of the legality of Parsi adoptions for the purposes, at least, of their acceptance by INS. Among the documents were copies of:

- An "Opinion With Regard To Adoption Amongst Parsi Zoroastrians", signed by Dastur Dr Firoze M Kotwal, MA., PhD., High-Priest, Wadiaji Atash Behram, dated Feb 15, 1982.
- A letter signed by Mr Khojeste Mistree, MA. (oxon) FCA, Director, Zoroastrian Studies, dated May 3, 1980, addressed to the Visa Officer, American Consulate General, Bombay.

Dastur Dr Kotwal's Opinion deserves to be reproduced in full:

‡In the living Zoroastrianism adoption is encouraged in order to perpetuate the lineage of the adoptive father. The adoptive son is instructed in the presence of the congregation assembled on the third day of the demise of the adoptive father to take a vow to perform the obsequial ceremonies of his departed father. In all ceremonies performed in honour of the adoptive father the name of the adopted son is remembered together with the departed father. Such a step on the part of the father pleases his soul at the bridge of the Separator (Chinwad Puhl), giving him comfort and solace in the next world. This is the concept of adoption as practiced by the devout Parsis since centuries.

It is also a long-cherished tradition among the Parsis in India that they can adopt as his son male member

of their own community even when they are alive.

A document dated 4th June 1676 AD made by the entire Anjuman (Congregation) of Navsari, the stronghold of Parsiism in religious matters, asserts that inheritance should go to the adopted son and whosoever deprives the adopted son of his rightful patrimony will be responsible and answerable to the whole Anjuman and to the Religion. The same document further lays down that a Parsi can adopt another Parsi of his own choice during ... his life-time.

The above opinion is based on documents preserved in the First Dastur Meherji-Rana Library of Navsari and published in the year 1933 by the Bombay Parsi Panchayet. Also the criticism on this document by Ervad Dara S Dastur Meherji-Rana published by the Bombay Parsi Panchayet in the year 1939.

(Signed) (F M Kotwal)"

The letter from Zoroastrian Studies also provides sterling support for the legal recognition of adoption amongst Zoroastrians. Referring to "guardianship, which is the Zoroastrian equivalent of legal adoption," it concluded:

‡In our opinion therefore, Mr. and Mrs. [XXX] have complied with the necessary requirements for [XXX] to be their adopted son. His adoption is sanctified by religious law and therefore no secular decree of adoption is necessary or required. Mr. [XXX] has a letter confirming the religious adoption of [XXX] from none other than the Head Priest Dr. Mirza, who within the Zoroastrian ecclesiastical hierarchy is equal to a Christian Pope or Archbishop.

Mr Mistree also quoted a supporting passage from 'The Persian Rivayat of Hormazyar Framarz' translated by Bomanji Nusserwanji Dhabhar.

The strong grounds given in the supporting documents for recognizing Parsi adoptions,



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*however, did not deter the attorney assigned the case from rendering a simple interpretation that since HAMA had specifically excluded Parsis from its application, it appears that Parsis do not have a legal right of adoption and a de facto adoption, in their case, does not lead to a parent-child relationship. In consequence, these adoptions in this matter appear to be invalid.*⁶

Fortunately, after reviewing the draft opinion, the attorney's supervisor managed to convey to INS that "Due to the scarcity of definitive source material on the question, I should caution you that the status of a Parsi customary law on adoption is not clear."⁷

By placing a limitation on the advisory opinion, the supervisor was endorsing the concept of "customary adoptions", which arise when statutory laws do not make provisions for adoptions to be carried out. This is the case in a number of countries, as it is in India for Christians, Jews, Muslims or Parsis. The eventual recognition over time of the legality of established customs and traditions is an accepted concept, particularly in countries that have adopted the English common law system. The supervisor was thus trying to signal to INS that Parsi customary adoptions may have reached the level of legal recognition, as was acknowledged in a previous case relating to Chinese customary adoptions. *In Matter of Kwok*,⁸ the INS recognized the Chinese custom because its legal system treats customarily adopted children as having rights equal in all respects to natural children.

Regrettably, INS did not take the supervisor's hint and in denying the permanent stay of a Parsi young man in the United States it probably agreed with the position dictated in an earlier U.S. State Department Memorandum in the same case that "Parsi personal law does not recognize or provide for adoption and as India law only recognizes adoptions effected under the personal law of a particular religion, there can be no Parsi religious "adoption" which could be valid for INA [Immigration and Nationality Act] purposes."⁹

So, should one still argue about the prevalence of customary adoptions among Parsis? A number of recent Indian court cases record the continuation of the practice, although none has recognized the legality of the claimed adoptions. Most of these cases have arisen under Bombay's arcane landlord and tenant laws. The tenancy of property is claimed to continue after the death of the tenant on grounds that the deceased had adopted a son or daughter to whom the tenancy rights were then bequeathed, as allowed in the law.¹⁰

I am not qualified to provide an expert opinion on Indian laws, but having kept the matter in view over several years, I believe that the issue of customary adoptions has become clouded because of the high financial stakes involved in issues of succession to immovable property in India. I have arrived at this view while questioning the validity of my former colleague's advisory opinion in the 1987 case. The strongly expressed opinions of Dastur Dr Kotwal and Mr Mistree also give me hope that prospective adopters in the United States will one day convince the present US immigration authority that a Parsi child adopted in India under Parsi customs may legitimately be admitted into the United States as the child of the adopting parents.

I have also read analyses by legal scholars of the issue. Mr Fali Nariman, the eminent Parsi lawyer, is reported to have stated that "There did prevail at one time a custom among Parsis of taking a Palak (son) but this custom became extinct after a decision of the Bombay High Court in 1929 that taking a Palak – son would not be recognized in British India in respect of succession to immovable property in British India."¹¹

Mr Nariman cited the 1929 decision in a previous lecture on January 9, 2000,¹² as *Kershaji Dhanjibhai v. Kaikhusru Kolhabhai*,¹³ in which the Court stated:

It [T]he lower court found . . . that in the Baroda State [of domicile] the custom of adoption did prevail among the Parsis, yet it is also held that this custom would not prevail in British

India as regards immoveable property ... land in British India is governed by ... the lex loci ... and not the law of the domicile ... It follows therefore that having regard to ... the statutory provisions which govern succession among Parsis ... there is no room in the law of British India for such a custom amongst the Parsis.

In trying to understand the application of this decision, I continue to be of the view that the case should be narrowly read to apply only to issues of succession to immoveable property, but should not be considered to completely vitiate the practice of adoption among Parsis.

It is also during the period of the British presence in India that I find other cases accepting the custom of adoption among Parsis. I consider them to be still persuasive on the issue. Thus, in *Faridoonjee Shapoorji v Jamshedjee Noshirwanjee*¹⁴ the court upheld an arbitration award of the High Priest of Parsis holding that an adopted son is entitled to two shares of property, one from the biological father and another from the person who adopted him.

In *Homabee v Punjeabhaee Dosabhaee*,¹⁵ the Privy Council upheld the adoption of a son by a Parsi as being “clearly a valid and legal adoption to all intents and purposes.” This decision was given after the promulgation of Regulation IV in 1827 providing that in the absence of Acts or Regulations the law to be applied at trials would be based on usage (ie. customary law). Another Parsi legal scholar, Dr Phiroze Irani, noted this in an extensive analysis of the history of the “Personal Laws of the Parsis of India”.¹⁶

The consequences of a Parsi adoption were accepted even in a case in which an English judge egregiously characterized Parsi ceremonies to be the same as that of Hindus and that “in little else but their faith will they be found to differ materially from Hindoos, and they may safely be pronounced to have no ‘law’”.¹⁷

Adoption was also an underlying issue in the controversial case of *Saklat v Bella*, 1914-25.¹⁸ Young Bella was an Indian orphan adopted by Parsis in Rangoon, initiated into the Zoroastrian religion, and taken into the Rangoon fire temple. A Dastur Kaikobad was brought in from Poona to perform Bella’s Navjot. Bella was adopted at age seven through an ‘ear-boring’ ceremony recognized in Burmese law. The legal issues in the case related to Bella 1) being a trespasser in the fire temple, 2) violating the rights of others to worship with their own kind, and 3) being outside the class of beneficiaries of the trusts governing the fire temple on the basis of her identity. Unlike the more famous Tata case of *Petit v Jijibhoy*, Bella’s case went up to the Privy Council in London. The Privy Council rejected the first two issues, but accepted the last. The issue of the validity of the adoption was not brought up before the Privy Council; in this author’s view the parties involved appeared to have accepted its validity.

Furthermore, apart from the points made in the learned opinions of Dastur Dr Kotwal and Mr Mistree, how about relying on our other scriptures that we are prone to overlook? Even a casual and unstructured reading of Pahlavi Texts reveals to me that the practice of adoption is an accepted and approved act among Zoroastrians. Thus, in “Dina-i Mainog-I Khirad” translated as ‘Opinions of the Spirit of Wisdom,’ Chapter XXXVI, it is stated in answers to the question ‘Which Sin is the more heinous?’: “8. The fifth who destroys the arrangement of an adopted son (*sator*).”¹⁹ A further reference is made to a *sator* in “Shayast La-Shahyast,” an old Pahlavi Rivayat.²⁰

In the ‘Dadistan-i-Dinik’ it is stated:

‡2. *The adopted-sonship is thus. It is requisite whenever a man of the good religion is passing away while he is a complete ruler of a numerous household, who has no wife and child that may be privileged and acknowledged, nor associating brother, nor son by adoption, and his property is sixtystirs of income. 3. The controlling (khudayinag) of the*

*property is to be publicly provided out of the kindred of the deceased, and is called the adopted-sonship; and he is to be appointed to it who is the nearest of the same lineage (min ham-nafan), who will manage and keep the property united in its entirety.*²¹

Thus, even from the standpoint of succession to property, the religious texts support the recognition of adoptions.

Turning to the general issue of the Indian legal system's enactment of separate personal laws for religious communities, this practice has well served the country's diverse population. Parsis have their own laws on marriages, divorce, etc. In matters of adoption, Muslims have thus managed to keep out a general law on adoptions applicable to all citizens because adoptions are supposedly abjured in the Quran. As Mr Dadrawala notes, there has been recent legislation which includes adoption in its ambit as a remedy for the rehabilitation and social re-integration of children, but "this is still not an all-in-all adoption law."²²

HAMA has come under criticism for its "patriarchal character" and for being "parent-oriented with religious colour."²³ Dr Subh'ash Chandra Singh decries the fact that attempts to pass a uniform and secular law on adoptions for the whole country have met strong objections "from Muslims and a section of the Parsis." The author points out a further drawback of HAMA, that it does not allow illegitimate children to be adopted, although illegitimacy is a serious problem in Indian society "as millions of our children are illegitimate."

To the "section of the Parsis" who apparently oppose a general law of adoption, I humbly suggest a close reading of Dr Subh'ash Chandra Singh's law review article to learn of the great hardships that are visited on children because of HAMA. More parochially, young Parsi children who may be available for adoption are denied an improvement of their welfare and, in some cases, the chance to be adopted by a Parsi family living outside India. I ask them

further: What about the religious basis for Parsi adoptions, so forthrightly supported by Dastur Dr Kotwal and Mr Mistree? Should property rights be so paramount as to continue to affect the recognition of a long-practiced custom of adoptions?

In 2002, an Indian Member of Parliament said in a debate on the enactment of an adoption bill that "When India became independent, all the Parsis were asked as to whether they want to have a separate law for themselves. They said that they did not want to have a separate law."²⁴ The Christians, too, did not want a separate law, the MP noted. Turning to Muslims, he asked why it was that only one community wanted to have a separate law for themselves and noted: "Moreover, it is not the question of the whole community. It is only some members of the community who want to have a separate law so as to have control over the community?" Could this allegation perhaps also apply to the Parsi community? I sincerely hope not.

On reading Dr Mitra Sharafi's incisive dissertation on the Bella case and Parsi identity, I was struck by a brief note she made about Parsis and the Indian legal system. She refers to Parsis as: "A colonized community that forged its identity through litigation and ensured legal pluralism – namely, a Zoroastrian body of law – by flooding the legal profession."²⁵ She meticulously counted that "in the early 20th century Parsis were only six percent of the population of Bombay, but were parties to a fifth of the officially reported cases in the Bombay High Court originating in the city of Bombay."²⁶

Could it not be asked of our present legal luminaries - there are many leading jurists and lawyers among the Parsis - to again forge, either the emergence of a fresh body of Zoroastrian law by "flooding" the Indian courts with public interest law suits seeking the legal recognition of the Zoroastrian custom of adoptions, or the enactment of a full-blown adoption law applicable to all religious communities in India?



Notes:

1. Noshir H. Dadrawala, "Adoption Woes," Hamazor, Issue 1, 2013, pp. 61-63.
2. "Va. Couple on Adopted Russian Child: ...I Truly Hope She's Not The Last One" available at www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/Va-Couple-190517121.html. At least one other Zoroastrian family in the Washington Metropolitan area has also adopted children from overseas – this time from China.
3. Noshir Dadrawala, *supra* note 1, at 61.
4. I&N Decision #2468, decided by the Board of Immigration Appeals, February 4, 1976.
5. Dated September 3, 1987, the letter was addressed to the American-British Law Division of the Library of Congress, by the Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Adjudications, of the U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service. The names of the family members involved in the case are suppressed.
6. Prepared by Mr. Krishan S. Nehra, Senior Legal Specialist, January 1988.
7. Letter dated February 26, 1988, from Carleton W. Kenyon.
8. 14 I&N Decisions, 127 (BIA, 1972).
9. Cable addressed to U.S. Consulate General, Bombay, dated August 2, 1985. The decision in the case does not appear to have been published.
10. Among those cases are: Laxmidas Morarji and Jamshed Nusserwanji Guzder v. Jehangir Dinshaw Bamji, 1998(2)ALLMR724, 1998(1)BomCR712 (Source: www.Manupatra.com); Laxmidas Morarji v. Behrose Darab Madan, Supreme Court of India, Civil Appeal No. 5786/7 of 2002 (Source: www.indiankanoon.org); Fareedoon Maneckji Dalal v. Phiroz Boman Javeri, 1995(3)BomCR112 (Source: www.indiankanoon.org).
11. Ava G. Khullar, "Platinum Jubilee Celebrations", Fed Newsletter, No. 199, May 2000, pg. 3, under "Fali Nariman on Parsi Law".
12. Fali S. Nariman, "Parsi Law – Its Effect on Parsi Society," in Delhi Parsi Anjuman, 75th Anniversary Celebrations, 8th-9th January 2000, 19-29.
13. 1929 A.I.R. Bombay 478; 31 Bombay L. R. (Bom. H.C. 1929) (emphasis added).
14. 1 Bombay Sudur Adalat Reports 23 (1811),
15. 1 Sutherland's Judgments from the Privy Council 68, 70 (1835).
16. Family Law in Asia and Africa, Editor J.N.D. Anderson, pp. 273-301, 278. At the time of writing, Dr. Phiroze Irani, was a member of a Parsi Law Reform Committee which was "considering the desirability of legalizing adoption among Parsis," at pg. 299, f.n. 3.
17. Nawee Buhoo, Widow, and Shapoor, adopted Son, of Veerjee Bomanjee, deceased v. Peshtunjee Loola Bhaee, styling himself Peshtunjee Veerji, 1 Borradaile 1 (Bombay (Presidency) Sadr Diwani Adalat 1802), fn 1.
18. Mitra Sharafi, "Bella's Case: Parsi Identity and the Law in Colonial Rangoon, Bombay and London, 1887-1925, a dissertation presented to the faculty of Princeton University in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (2006), available at: www.academia.edu/1103472/Bellas_case_Parsi-. I have relied on Dr. Sharafi's scholarly account of the deep and interesting ramifications of the case.
19. "Sacred Books of the East" Editor Max Muller, Vol 24, Pahalvi Texts, Part III, pp. xv, 71 (Reprint, Delhi, 1987).
20. *Id.*, Vol. 5, at 44.
21. *Id.*, Vol. 18, at 188.
22. Noshir Dadrawala, *supra* note 1, at 62.
23. Dr. Subh'ash Chandra Singh, "Adoption Law in India: Need for a Fresh Look," 2002 Central India Law Quarterly, pg. 2, available at <http://indiankanoon.org/doc/966527/>
24. Shri Kharabela Swain, MP, in Lok Sabha Debate on Further Consideration of the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 1999, Nov. 22, 2002, available at: www.indiankanoon.org/doc/147676/
25. Mitra Sharafi, *supra* note xviii, at 1.
26. *Id.* at 2.

Sooni Taraporevala shares her images with Hamazor

My photography exhibition that is currently on at Chemould Prescott Road – PARSIS – presents familiar images from my book, but also shows as yet unseen work. Though many of these photographs have been viewed across the world, amazingly this is their first exhibition in my beloved city of inspiration, Bombay.

Though I grew up surrounded by images in a family of avid amateur photographers, I only began photographing in 1977, when as an undergraduate at Harvard University, I borrowed money from my roommate to buy my first camera – a Nikkormat. My foray into the world of photography was largely self-taught; the photographer I most admired and still do is Henri Cartier Bresson.

In 1982 I met photographer Raghubir Singh, who saw amongst my eclectic collection of photographs the subject that had been staring me in the face, but that I had failed to see: a photographic study of the community to which I belonged. What had begun as a nostalgic and personal journey then grew into a more objective project that encompassed a world larger than my immediate family. Encouraged by Singh, a maestro of colour photography, I began to shoot in colour.

These selection of photographs from the exhibition for Hamazor are my tribute to some of Parsi women I have been fortunate to photograph – they are intimate portraits of friends, family, teachers, in ordinary, daily routines – chatting at home or on the streets, in their cars and on their balconies. ■■■



Ayesha Billimoria, Oval Maidan, Bombay 2013



Sooni Taraporevala

Daji Lane, Bombay 1984



Together Forever, Bombay 1985



Evening Sun, Bombay 2005



Sooni Taraporevala

Gandhy family at Kেকে Manzil, Bombay, 2000



Yasmin Haradhvala and Miss Boyce, Bombay 1986



Monsoon drive, Bombay 1986



Best English Teacher in the World, Rati Wadia, Bombay, 2004



Yasmin Irani studying, Bombay 1980



Sooni by Sooni

Sooni Taraporevala, award-winning screenwriter (*Salaam Bombay!*, *Mississippi Masala*, *Such A Long Journey*, *The Namesake*) and filmmaker (*Little Zizou*) was first a photographer. She is the author of a book of photographs *PARSIS A Photographic Journey* (2000, 2004). Photographs from *PARSIS* were included in *Tate Modern*, *Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis*, London 2001, *Lille 3000*, France 2006, *India Moderna at the Institut Valencia d*, *Art Modern*, Spain 2008, *Photoquai*, *Musee de Quai Branly*, Paris 2009. She was honoured with solo shows at Harvard University, *s Sert Gallery in Cambridge USA in October 2012* and at *Chemould Prescott Road in Mumbai, in March-April 2013*.

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WZO through Hamazor pays Tribute to Kaikhosrov

Wisdom of the Father and the Son

Growing up in Kerman in the decade of the 1960s, I had heard the name of Dinshah Irani, Solicitor mentioned several times by my father, Jamshid Soroushian who, following in his father's and grand father's footsteps served as the president of the Zoroastrian Association of Kerman for several terms. Besides, as a life long student of Zoroastrian studies, he was in close contact with many of the leading scholars of Zoroastrian studies of that era, including the late Professor Ibrahim Pour-davoud. Pour-davoud had met Dinshah Irani on a number of occasions relative to their mutual interest in Zoroastrian studies. As such my father's references to Dinshah was relative to various aspects of Dinshah's contributions to Zoroastrianism.

by mehrborzin soroushian

The significance of what Dinshah Irani had done commensurate with the recognition given to him, was not fully evident to me at that young age. Farsi language rendition of his writings appearing in two volumes "*Farhang-e Iran-e bastan*" (Culture of Ancient Iran), and "*Akhlagh-e Iran-e bastan*" (Moral Philosophy of Ancient Iran) was mentioned frequently. It would be years later and by then under different set of geopolitical circumstances for the Zoroastrians that I would gain a better appreciation of the person and the significance of the deeds he had carried out half a century earlier.

In final years of 1960, I left my birth city for England culminating in completion of my undergraduate studies at the University of London (UCL), and then in mid 70s onwards to the United States for graduate studies. By 1979 having completed my Doctorate studies from University of California (UCLA), my plans to return home were put on hold in view of the unfolding political upheavals in Iran. What meant to

be a temporary extension of my stay gained more permanency. By mid 80s, married, my career path took me and my family to the East coast of the USA and Central Jersey. My wife Mehrbanou, and I eager for our two young sons, Vishtasp and Viraf to get a good grounding in our ancient heritage while in their formative teen years, would take advantage of the religion educational opportunity offered to the Zoroastrian community in the greater NY area by the volunteer teachers of ZAGNY (Zoroastrian Association Greater NY) led by Dr Lovji Cama. I soon learnt that while the classes for the youth were in session at NY Darbe-Mehr in New Rochelle, an adult education session in the library room was conducted by Professor Kaikhosrov Irani with his graceful wife, Piroja by his side. Eager to gain a deeper appreciation of the Zoroastrian religion/heritage, I was drawn to those monthly classes and found them to be extremely learning and insightful, for which I am grateful to professor Kaikhosrov Dinshah Irani. Those discussions followed

their Colleague & Committee Member - Dinshah Irani

by additional reading proved to be the education of a life time to draw upon.

My re-acquaintance with the famed Irani family of Bombay was now on an up-close and personal basis, having come to know the son of the legendary Dinshah, and to hear from Kaikhosrov about his father. Kaikhosrov, professor emeritus of philosophy at City College of New York was active on many fronts all critical to the establishment of a viable North American Zoroastrian presence in the context of the 21st century.

To gain insight into the contribution of the Irani father and son to the evolution on the Zoroastrian community world-wide, a historical perspective is needed. As the 19th century rolled in, the fortunes of the small community of Zoroastrians in India (Parsis), a few hundred thousands strong – concentrated mainly around the Western port of Bombay - was on the rise of the context of that Jewel of the British colonies - British Raj. At the same time the prospects for the Zoroastrians in their ancestral land of Iran was dimming under the rule of the Qajars with their numbers shrinking to around 6000 concentrated in Southern cities of Kerman, Yazd and surrounding villages. Subjected to ongoing persecution at the hands of the Islamic zealots, an increasing number were taking their chances with the underground railroad to flee Eastwards towards Bombay.

For the fortunate ones who would survive the ordeal and arrive in Bombay, there was not always a welcoming hand awaiting them. They were on their own to struggle and survive, absent the religious persecution. Missing badly was an advocacy entity to help the new arrivals.

Amongst those safely arriving in Bombay in the mid 19th century was Dinshah's grand father with his enfant son (later named Jeejeebhoy).¹ Hoping to make a better life, most refugees would instill a sense of identify and purpose in their next generation.

Dinshah, born in Bombay on November 4th, 1889 carried himself through life with a great sense of a mission to improve the prospect for the Zoroastrians and to ameliorate the conditions of the Iranian Zartoshties. In time, he was a well established attorney associated with the prestigious law firm of Mullah and Mullah of Bombay. At the same time, he became an accomplished linguist, well versed in ancient Iranian languages so that he produced a translation of the Gathas of Zarathushtra into English², as well as numerous other publications. He was also well versed in modern Persian (Farsi) and taught Farsi at Bombay's famed St Xavier University.



K.D. Irani - courtesy Lovji Cama

Furthermore, Dinshah was a founding member of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman of Bombay (1918) and the Iran League in 1922.³ These institutions came to fill in a great void that had existed before, and provided support to new arrivals from Iran. The Iranian Anjuman of Bombay went further to appeal with the Iranian government on behalf of the individual Zoroastrians in Iran whose rights were violated or were subject of kidnapping.

Dinshah's residence was a bustling quarter in Bombay with a variety of guests from renown world scholars of Zoroastrianism to community leaders, activists and intellectuals visiting. This was the uplifting

environment in which Kaikhosrov and his young brother Furrokh were raised.

As the 19th century drew to an end in the waning years of the Qajars, the prospect for the Zoroastrians in Iran was improving. Prominent amongst the factors for the improvements was the mission undertaken by Maneckji Hatavia in mid 18th century. However, the flow of refugees was still Eastwards, and would continue for several more decades. Although, in 1925 with the investiture of Reza Shah Pahlavi, the founder of modern Iran, the environment for Zoroastrians and other minorities would improve drastically relative to the preceding twelve centuries in the wake of fall of Sasanians and the rise of Islam. Iran's modern institutions were being built. A number of Iranian intellectuals would emerge in this period keen on reintroduction of the Iranian nation to its ancient roots. Dinshah Irani seems to have had contact with most of them, and was likely a good influence on all of them. In 1932, at the invitation of the government of Iran, Dinshah led a delegation of prominent Parsis to Iran and was given an audience with Reza Shah on May 2nd, 1934. Dinshah was bestowed the highest literary award of Iran "Neshan-e-Elmi". Accompanying him on his trip was also the famed Indian philosopher, Rabindranath Tagore.

Dinshah would take a few other trips to Europe all sea-bound. Kaikhosrov recalls the first trip he accompanied his father was at age 13 destined for London. There Dinshah was appealing the case of a client, an Iranian Zoroastrian whose property had been annexed in India. The lower courts in India had ruled against Dinshah's client. Dinshah intent to seek justices for his client was appealing the case to the highest court of the British Raj, the Privy Council in London. The client unable to bear the expenses of that trip was willing to forgo his land. Dinshah would pay for the expenses of the three travelers to London. After the highest court over-ruled the decision of the lower courts, Dinshah's client offered to compensate Dinshah by giving him half of

the land recovered. Dinshah instructed him to donate the land to the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman instead.

Moving on into the rest of the 20th century marred by the first and second world wars ravaging Europe, Asia, North Africa and the promise of the future gravitating to the new world, the young Kaikhosrov would arrive in the USA in 1946 aboard a ship sailing from Calcutta to San Francisco to pursue his studies. It was at the Institute for Advanced Research in Princeton, New Jersey, that Kaikhosrov would cross path with Albert Einstein. His investiture as a professor of Philosophy at City College of New York would take him to New York City.

Kaikhosrov was amongst the first wave of young Zoroastrians to arrive in the new world and make America their home. With Metropolitan New York being the site of one of the first Zoroastrian communities congregating in North America, Kaikhosrov was there and active as institutions to meet the needs of the growing community in North America were being conceived of and formed.

The promise of America also posed challenges to the followers of world's oldest religion now on its shores. Questions of assimilation into the melting pot of America, and acceptance into the faith of individuals not of Zoroastrian ancestry were hotly debated as though individual's freedom of choice could be controlled the same way as it was done in the old countries.

Acceptance of non-Zoroastrian into the faith not being an option in Iran, India or Pakistan where the Zoroastrians were coming from, the natural instinct wired in the mind of most new arrivals would have been against it. Kaikhosrov stood with those advocating the freedom of faith more reminiscent of much earlier times.

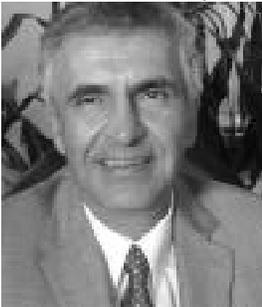
From his community activism to excellence in academic pursuit shedding clarity on Zarathushtra's message, Kaikhosrov has seized the moment in the context of his time, as did Dinshah in his.

The story of Dinshah and Kaikhosrov Irani showcases the best of the Zoroastrians and the evolution of the same in light of changing geopolitics of the last two centuries. True to the values of the faith, of being progressive and working towards betterment of humanity, they soldiered on with clairvoyance of what needs to be done. From their humble beginning as the descendent of refugees fleeing religious persecution to prominence within the span of a few generations their example is one to draw from and to be inspired by.



Notes:

1. Based on Kaikhosrov's recollection, Dinshah's grand mother arrived later with another group of refugees.
2. "The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra" was a poetic version in English of selections from the Gathas with a foreword from Rabindranath Tagore.
3. Coyajee, Sir Jehangir C., "A Brief Life Sketch of the Late Mr Dinshah Jeejeebhoy Irani" featured in Dinshah Irani Memorial Volume, Bombay 1948.



Mehrborzin Soroushian hails from Kerman, Iran, and studied at Kerman's Kaviani and Iranshahr Zoroastrian schools for boys. He continued his undergraduate and graduate studies at the University of London, University of California and Cornell University. Currently, he resides in San Diego, Southern California with his wife Mehrbanou, and is active in telecommunication engineering work. He has taken an active interest in Zoroastrian studies through his life.

A Tribute to Professor Kaikhosrov D Irani

If we are lucky, at a pivotal time in our lives, as if ordained by the Supreme Wisdom, out of nowhere, a guide appears and points us in the right direction. It is as if a divine conspiracy wishes to nudge us along the Right path.

In my mid-twenties, when I was eagerly searching for the answers to the existential questions of life, out of nowhere Kaikhosrov walked into my life. To Professor Kaikhosrov Dinshah Irani, I was just another attendee among the many who had come to listen to his lecture on Amesha Spentas. To me however, Kaikhosrov was the desperately needed guide who put me on the defining path of the next decade of my life. Kaikhosrov showed me the answers I was seeking were all available at home, in Zarathushtra's teachings. All I needed to do was to develop the eyes to see them.

We all know that Kaikhosrov has been teaching at City College of New York for over six decades. But few would know that at a point in his career, a disgruntled and disturbed student armed with a knife walked into his office, intending to stab him. We can't be faulted for thinking that Kaikhosrov may have called college security or even the police to apprehend the attacker. But as a true philosopher, while still sitting behind his desk, in a loud voice, Kaikhosrov shouted at the student demanding him to "THINK!" before he acted irrationally.

In loving memory of our mother Morvarid Zartoshty

Perhaps it was this uncommon response that startled the student and moved him to give up. Or perhaps it was Kaikhosrov's appeal to the nobler faculties of human spirit that brought this man to his senses. Either way, only Kaikhosrov can face a potentially life-threatening attack with a philosophical response.

Of course we cannot talk about Kaikhosrov without mentioning the late Piroja. During World War II, while waiting for restrictions on the importation of high-tech equipment to be lifted so he could continue with his studies, Kaikhosrov made a diversion into the study of Law. After completing his law degree, Kaikhosrov joined the firm where his late father had been a partner, and practiced for a brief time. It was there that he met Piroja, and shortly after, they formed their life-long bond.

I don't know if the world operates purely on "free will" or if there is a pre-ordained "destiny". Nevertheless, looking back on this period of Kaikhosrov's life, it seems that the sole purpose of this stint was to have had the opportunity to meet his future wife. Kaikhosrov very casually mentioned that after practicing law for a little while, at some point "*I suddenly found myself uninterested, so I sort of walked away*". And that was the end of that.

Piroja always remained in the background and played a support role to Kaikhosrov. Even though I had scheduled to spend some time interviewing Piroja, on the appointed day, she was taken down with some illness. To this day, I suspect the cause of her illness was some unconscious desire to remain in the background. Regardless, it is no exaggeration to claim that if Kaikhosrov is a lighthouse, Piroja was the rock upon which it stood.

Kaikhosrov's grasp of the deepest nuances of Zarathushtra's teachings were inspiring. During my 4-day interview with him, I recall clearly that several times the light was turned on in my head. One moment of insight and clarity came during our conversation on good thoughts, words and

deeds. To clarify some minor point, he simply explained, "*Good Words is not just uttering them, it is also listening to them.*" Wow, how limited my perspective was prior to this simple explanation!

Another occasion was when he was paraphrasing some ancient Zoroastrian priests about the nature of evil. "*The evil spirit is not just falsehood – it is the deceptive power which hides the falsity of falsehood.*" Now, I was well aware of Zoroastrian spirit of benevolence and kindness, yet for me, it was this enlightening comment that shed light on the depth of Zoroastrian compassion.

Kaikhosrov is a well concealed source of light – a hidden gem in our community, and I consider myself blessed to have had him as a mentor, teacher and guide. It is with profound respect and deep love that I say Thank You Kaikhosrov.

Shahriar Shahriari

Shahriar Shahriari was born in Iran, educated in England and Canada, and currently lives with his wife and son in Los Angeles, California. He is the author of †Thus Spake the Real Zarathushtra, creator of Zarathushtra.com, and producer of the DVD, †Domains of Belief fi an interview with Professor K.D.Irani. For more information, visit www.KDIrani.com



Kaikhosrov with his beloved Piroja. courtesy Framroze K Patel



At the North American Congress, Canada - June 2007

K.D. Irani



The World Zoroastrian Organisation



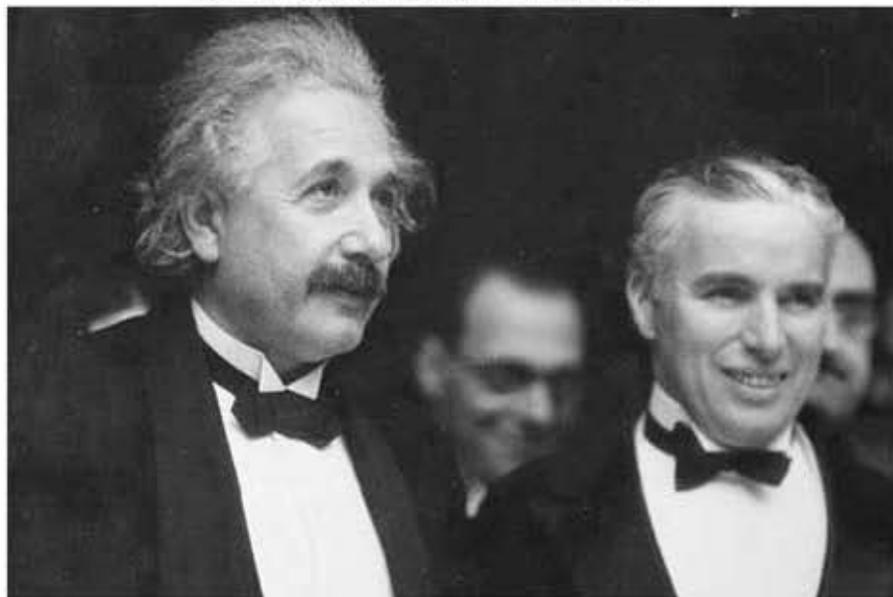
At London



1st Gatha Colloquim, London November 1993



1982



For your amusement Prof - from the Ed.

Meeting between Chaplin and Einstein : "What I admire most about your art",
 Albert Einstein said, "is its universality. You do not say a word, and yet, the world understands you."
 - "It's true", replies Chaplin. "But your fame is even greater: the world admires you, when nobody understands you."



Professors Stanley Insler & Kaikhosrov Irani, at London.
 Millennium Lectures 2000

Professor K D Irani

On June 13th, 2012, Professor Kaikhosrov Dinshaw Irani was honoured at his 90th birthday by the City College of New York with a Faculty Service Award for his incredible career spanning six decades and for touching and inspiring generations of students during that time.



Prof Irani was Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the City College of New York till last year, after teaching there for 41 years. He was Chairman of the Department for nine years; and the Director, and Executive Director of the Programme for the History and Philosophy of Science and was responsible for the development of the Programme and its execution and teaching. He was also the Director of the Academy of Humanities and Sciences for 12 years. His original field of teaching and research, was Philosophy of Science.

Prof Irani is one of those rare individuals whose unique background and interests allows him to understand the works of both Albert Einstein and Emanuel Kant and to successfully apply this kind of knowledge to his chosen field of the Philosophy of Science. His research and publications have been in two areas: Conditions of Acceptance in Scientific Theories; and The Reality Problem in Quantum Mechanics. In the last twenty five years he has worked in the area of History and Philosophy of Ancient Thought – Religious, Moral, Mythic, and Technological. Towards the end of these years, he formulated what he calls his “original contribution to philosophy” – namely, the theory of “Domains of Belief”.

Among the awards he has received are: The City College citation for distinguished teaching in 1960, the Outstanding Teachers Award in 1984, the Award of the Society of Indian Academics in America in 1991, for service to the cause of Education. He also received the award for service to the cause of Zoroastrianism from the World Zoroastrian Organization in 1991. The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America Lifetime Achievement Award, 1994.

He was singularly honored by the establishment of the K D Irani Chair of Philosophy, at The City College of New York, through an anonymous contribution of \$2,000,000, by one of his students, in 1999.

As a philosopher one may expect him to be an ivory tower type. Far from this, and greatly influenced by his father, he has involved himself in the life of the Zoroastrian community. During 1993-95 Prof Irani served as the President of ZAGNY (Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York) and has been on numerous Boards of ZAGNY and has arranged seminars and conferences under the ZAGNY umbrella. He has also arranged the first and second Gatha Conferences held in the UK and Los Angeles and the first Yasht Conference in New Rochelle, NY. From the time of the inception of the Zoroastrian temple in New York, Prof Irani has conducted classes for adults on the subject of Zoroastrianism. His common sense and ethical approach to problems has helped him shed light on many complex problems that arise within the North American Zoroastrian community.

Kaikhosrov Dinshaw Irani was born on May 1, 1922 in Bombay, India. He was the elder of two sons to Dinshaw Jijibhoy Irani and Banu Mithibai Sethna. He studied Chemistry, then Physical Chemistry and then Physics. During the war years, he studied Law and briefly practiced at his father’s old law firm.

At the law firm where he was practicing, he met another young lawyer named Piroja – who was to become his wife in 1953. The couple resided in New York ever since. Unfortunately Piroja passed away at the end of last year.

In 1947 he moved to the United States to continue his studies in Princeton University, where he was taught by Albert Einstein. It was Einstein’s letter of recommendation that led him to get appointed at City College of New York in 1950, where he taught philosophy for the following 41 years. Prof Irani completed his final class at CCNY in the spring of 2012. The Faculty Service Award from the Alumni Association was a fitting close to his historic career.

Maestro Homi Kanga

M

My first encounter with violinist Homi Kanga was on a weekend afternoon in April 1998. I was transiting through London on my way from Cambridge to Manchester. I had just picked up a new violin from maker David Rubio that morning and was eager to test it. The opportunity to do so would come in London itself. Through the introduction from mutual friends in India and England, I had arranged to meet Homi Kanga at his home that weekend in London.

by jamshed turel

Everyone in England's orchestral scene knew Kanga. A legend in his own way, Kanga had played with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra for almost two decades, serving frequently as the latter's concertmaster. He was renowned for his professionalism, tremendous work ethic, and love for the violin. His orchestral career was complemented with an impressive solo career, spanning almost five decades and included several of England's most prestigious venues.

As I took the Tube from Liverpool Street Station to Kanga's home that day, I wondered what he had in mind for our meeting. We had spoken on the phone a couple of times earlier in the year, and he invited me to meet him in London, but he never specified if he wanted me to play for him. In a way, it was daunting. What do you play for a man who has performed several times at Wigmore Hall, Festival Hall, Royal Albert Hall and alongside such great violinists as Yehudi Menuhin, Jascha Heifetz, Nathan Milstein to name a few?

I knocked on his front door and this polite, elderly gentleman answered the door. I was at first taken aback; I had not seen an image of Kanga, and though I knew Kanga had already had an extensive career, speaking with him on the phone, he spoke with such enthusiasm and passion for music

and the violin that it made me think of a vibrant young man, enthusiastically embarking on his career. His experience, however, was anything but callow. Kanga warmly greeted me with some tea and started sharing some of his memorable stories, from tours with Frank Sinatra and Freddie Mercury, to the now infamous story of his stopover at Bombay Airport while on tour with conductor Sir Malcolm Sargent and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. As Kanga recalled, several people had gathered with garlands and sweets at the arrivals hall in the airport. When the orchestra appeared with Sargent, the conductor courteously acknowledged the chanting crowd, assuming they had assembled for him, but the group ran right past Sargent, garlanding and hailing Kanga instead. It turned out they were all relatives and family friends of Kanga who had come to greet the returning maestro.

After almost two hours of stories, Kanga turned to me and asked if I wanted to play for him? "Sure," I replied, picking up my new violin with excitement, and then started performing the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto. He listened through the entire first movement, smiling at times and even occasionally playing the orchestral parts. Kanga may have been in his 70s, but he had a remarkable memory, switching between various orchestral parts of the concerto effortlessly on his violin.

In loving memory of our mother Morvarid Zartoshty



Young Homi Kanga

I do not recall everything from our first meeting, but I remember thinking how privileged I felt to play alongside Homi Kanga in his home. Here was a man with an incredible career, spanning several decades and two continents, giving someone he barely knows, an opportunity to play with him. That was Kanga's humility. In the short time that I spent with Kanga I found he had a wonderful humanity in his approach to his music making and interaction with people. Kanga was proud of what he had achieved, and he had every right to be, but he also did not believe that he was above others. He took as much care teaching a then rather audacious 17-year old boy as he did performing with well-established musicians.

Kanga's humility can perhaps best be understood through his progression to becoming a professional violinist. Kanga initially began his work life as a civil engineer in Bombay. His love for music and enormous talent on violin, however, made him simultaneously try and keep his foot in a musical door. He taught private violin students in the morning before going to work, during his lunch break he would play at the Taj Mahal Hotel with a trio that he formed, and then sometimes return to the hotel in the evening after he finished the day at his engineering job. He also played on All-India Radio a few times a week and gave several solo recitals.

Deciding to pursue a full-time career in music, Kanga moved to France to study in 1948 and then England in 1949, where he began in a rank-and-file position in the London Philharmonic Orchestra second violin section. Over time he moved up the chain, earning the respect of his peers.

Kanga never rested on his laurels. Simultaneously with his post at the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Kanga formed chamber music groups to perform concerts, gave solo recitals, led summer music festivals, and was even a prizewinner at the

prestigious International Wieniawski Violin Competition in 1952. Kanga was a model of how hard work, determination, and making opportunities, however small they may seem, can lead to a fulfilling career in music. In an interview in 1982 for *Strad Magazine*, Kanga mentioned that doing all these concerts, from background music at hotels, to solo recitals at Wigmore Hall, made him a well-rounded musician. Irrespective of the job, he always strived to function at his highest level. For Kanga, this enabled him to improve from every situation, and gave him a versatility that allowed him to perform almost every kind of music.

After I finished the Mendelssohn Concerto, Kanga asked if I had any solo Bach to play. I replied that I had a couple of movements but they were not ready for performance. "Never mind, play me what you have," he said. So I played two movements from the B minor Solo Partita. After I finished, he picked up his violin, came to me and said: "You need to learn all the Solo Bach Sonatas and Partitas; they are a staple of any violinist's repertoire."

The phrase stuck with me because I soon discovered that Homi Kanga was a man who practiced what he preached. Kanga had performed all the Bach Solo Sonatas and Partitas to much critical acclaim in Wigmore Hall twice in the 1970s. Few violinists can manage such a mammoth undertaking; the pieces are among the most technically and musically difficult in violin repertoire, demanding extreme stamina, concentration and commitment from a violinist. Kanga, now in his 70s, still had the energy and complete technical mastery to play these works flawlessly from memory.

How was Kanga still so vibrant this late in his career? Part of it was from a solid technique. As a child, Kanga studied violin in Bombay with Mehli Mehta, father of celebrated conductor Zubin Mehta. Under Mehta's disciplined guidance, Kanga developed a methodical approach to violin playing, rooted in an attitude to violin technique that favoured various pattern exercises and scales. Later, Kanga would leave India to

study with Gabriel Bouillon at the *Conservatoire de Paris*, where he could further his understanding of violin technique.

Having such a well-established technical foundation would certainly have aided Kanga in maintaining his career well into his 80s, but he did not solely rely on technique. Kanga also believed that a healthy body was important to support one's aptitude and improve the mind. At the time that I knew him Kanga followed a macrobiotic diet and regularly played tennis at the Queen's Club in London. Not one to miss an opportunity to praise himself, he did on occasion tell me that were he not a violinist, he could probably have pursued a career as a tennis pro.

Our meeting had now changed from a performance to a free lesson. Kanga was giving me musical ideas to try, technical exercises that I should do, and even future repertoire suggestions. After an hour of working together, he asked if I would be interested in studying with him. Jumping on the invitation, I let him know that during the upcoming summer I could arrange to take time off and work with him.

That summer I moved to London for a couple of months to study with Kanga. We would have lessons typically twice a week. Though our lessons were supposed to be one hour, Kanga never looked at the time, with our sessions sometimes running three or even four hours. As he told me at our first meeting, learning the violin cannot be constrained by a clock; you must go till you have accomplished what you need to do.

Like Kanga's formation on the violin, much of our lesson time was spent working on technical exercises. Kanga patiently worked on each exercise till everything was exactly as it should be. He had a kind but firm



Homi's violin made by Gasparo da Salo. Courtesy Colin Wills

approach; never yelling or getting angry but always insisting on nothing less than perfection. When I needed some extra motivation, he would pick up either his seventeenth-century Gasparo da Salo or modern Sergio Peresson violin and show, in what was an almost effortless motion, how he expected it to be done.

At the same time, Kanga was careful not to solely focus on technique or be rigid in his approach. This is what made studying with Kanga so special. He was ultimately guided by the sound, and technique – tone, rhythm and intonation – all had to serve the sound. He did not believe there was only one way to hold the violin, or draw the bow across the string; since we all have different shaped hands and different body-types we must adapt technique to our physical situation. The result was eye opening because Kanga was fostering a way for me to self-evaluate my playing. Kanga did not want me to simply duplicate his way of playing as so many teachers do; that, to him, was futile. Instead he wanted me to develop a level of self-critical thinking, like he had, that I could use to always improve my playing in whatever path my career may follow, and a solid technical ability on which to rely.

Technique was one element of critical thinking. The other, for Kanga, was musical knowledge. Kanga had an extraordinary fascination and comprehension of music theory. Before even playing a piece, Kanga would memorize it, analyzing its harmonies, melodic ideas, patterns, and rhythms, and he taught the same way. As we worked through a Solo Bach Sonata, Kanga would constantly ask me about how the music was composed, even assign me to do a harmonic analysis before the next lesson. I often wondered if this fascination with music theory came from his education with Mehta and Bouillon, both of whom were highly

Readers may well wonder why such a late coverage on Late Homi Kanga. Its been an exciting and rewarding bit of researching all commencing with a email from Niloufer Mavalwalla saying did I know Homi Kanga's violin was for sale. This was not discovered but thanks to the Google search engine, I read the obit by The Guardian, and Gasparo da Salo and his violins. Niloufer then found Colin Wills who has been so generous with his information to me. He has been making violins, violas and cellos since 1976 in Exmoor, UK.

In his various emails to me, he writes *his [Homi] violin - that was done by Gasparo da Salo in Brescia in the 17th century! However I did measure and photograph his violin in order to make a copy in 1982/3, as I was interested in the work of Gasparo da Salo. I don't know what happened to his violin, but it would have been worth a considerable amount. I am sure it is the one featured on the cover of the Strad magazine in January 1969. I would guess that Homi bought the instrument from Ealing Strings at this time. As you have probably discovered, surviving violins by Gasparo da Salo are exceedingly rare. He is better known for violas, which he seems to have made in two distinct size ranges, alto and tenor, probably originally to double those voices in choral works. The tenor ones tended to survive as they were very large and difficult to play, fell out of favour when string quartets and classical orchestras became the fashion, and survived in*

In loving memory of our mother Morvarid Zartoshty

theoretically knowledgeable, or perhaps his curious “engineering” mindset, or maybe even both. In any case, it ended up having a profound impact on my approach to music and left me with a deep love and appreciation for music theory and history.

Our lessons covered far more than just violin playing and music. Kanga would frequently talk to me about health, asking me what I was eating and what I did for exercise (though, despite his best efforts, he never converted me to a tennis player). When I got tired he would put a recording on his LP player, sometimes of himself, or sometimes of a violinist he admired, and tell stories about that particular performance. He had a tremendous fondness for violinists of the early twentieth-century, commenting on their individuality and how music was not a profession but an obsession for them. I think Kanga lived that way too; music was always a passion. He would take me to concerts with him and spend the evening afterwards talking in detail about everything that we just heard till the early hours of the morning.

After the summer, Kanga and I stayed in touch for a few years. Kanga continued to publically perform, putting on a special 80th Birthday Concert in 2002 at the Southbank Centre. He passed away two years later, in December 2004, aged 82.

Kanga’s wide-ranging career was hallmarked by several remarkable

musical and social achievements; he was the first Indian musician to perform with a major British orchestra and the first to play a solo classical recital on BBC radio. His genial and positive personality inevitably had an impact on his colleagues and students, many of whom have gone on to have successful careers in the UK and abroad. His daughter, Skaila Kanga, is an internationally renowned harpist and is Professor Emerita of Harp at the Royal Academy of Music in London. The Royal Academy of Music has also set up a Homi Kanga Memorial Award, bestowed to an outstanding violinist in its programme. An extraordinary legacy from someone whose career began not in music, but as a civil engineer in Mumbai in the 1940s, and risked it all to move to Paris and then London in a life-long pursuit of excellence in music.



Homi Kanga’s Violins

Homi Kanga owned two exceptional violins: an extremely rare Gasparo da Salo violin, dated 1560, and a modern Sergio Peresson violin made for him in 1973. Kanga’s Gasparo da Salo has over the years attracted much attention and envy from fellow-musicians and collectors all over the world. Despite being over four centuries old, Kanga frequently commented that the violin played remarkably well and showed no sign of deteriorating.

Gasparo da Salo was the name used by Gasparo Bertolotti (1542-1609), a 16th-century luthier from Brescia, Italy, whose violins represent some of the earliest examples of the modern shape violins currently adopt. They are renowned for their sweet, mellow sound, quick response and projecting tone. A founder of the Brescian school of violin makers, it is believed that Gasparo’s violins may have been influential on the next generation of Cremonese violin makers, which would include Antonio Stradivari, Bartolomeo Giuseppe Guarneri, and Francesco Ruggieri. Coincidentally, the new violin I got from Cambridge that I showed Kanga in 1998 was a replica of a Guarneri del Gesu (“Vieuxtemps”, 1741), whose arching would a few years later be proven to have been very strictly copied from Gasparo.

Kanga was also immensely fond of his Peresson violin. Born in Italy though spending most of his violin making years in the US, Peresson (1913-1991) was one of the most respected modern luthiers, with instruments used by soloists such as Yehudi Menuhin, Pinchas Zukerman, Isaac Stern, Jacqueline du Pre, and Mstislav Rostropovich. Kanga would often go back and forth between the instruments, and often commented that most people could not even tell if he was playing the Gasparo or the Peresson! - JT

Jamshed Turel has a diverse career as an internationally renowned violinist, academic scholar and film-music composer, with clients such as Disney, Cartoon Network, and National Geographic. An avid orchestral musician, he has led orchestras in New York, Toronto, Montreal, London, Mumbai and Dubai, and currently teaches at Mohawk College in Canada, where he is also developing a music technology curriculum.



The Grand Old Man & his miscellanea

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<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-grand-old-man-his-miscellanea/article4013775.ece#comments> - 20 October 2012



The paper trail leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji have left behind offers a rich insight into the lives of early Indian nationalists and our understanding of them.

The spring of 1901 was a moment of despair for Dadabhai Naoroji, then in residence in London. While struggling to secure a new constituency from where he could attempt to re-enter the British Parliament, the Grand Old Man had to contend with increasingly retrogressive Tory policies toward India and flagging spirits within the Indian National Congress. But on 24 April, Naoroji received news of a different yet equally troubling variety: his toilet was malfunctioning. "The plumber has done what he can to rectify the defects of the water waste preventer, & we regret that it is not now satisfactory," F W Ellis, builder and estate agent in Upper Norwood, London, grimly informed him by post.

by dinyar patel

Amidst the reams of important correspondence in the Dadabhai Naoroji Papers - a collection of some 30,000 documents held at the National Archives of India in Delhi – one regularly comes across unexpected material such as Ellis' note. The Naoroji Papers, which I have consulted for over the past 20 months, provide stunning new insight into early Indian nationalism. Additionally, they paint an extraordinarily detailed picture of the life of one of India's greatest leaders in the pre-independence era. Naoroji, it appears, decided to keep all of his correspondence for posterity. As a result, letters from Indian and British political luminaries jostle alongside everyday receipts, prescriptions, random newspaper clippings, and the 19th century equivalent of junk mail. Such minutiae are easy to dismiss at first. Yet, taken together, they help us reconstruct the careers of Naoroji and other Indians who lived and worked in the United Kingdom, telling us how they navigated life in a strange and foreign society.

From the Papers, we know a smattering of what is, on the surface, completely trivial information about the Grand Old Man. A receipt, for example, indicates that on 9 January 1897 he purchased hand-made boots from a cobbler in southwest London that cost him precisely one pound and one shilling. We know that his family servant in Bombay was named Baloo. Naoroji might have invested in a company developing the tram system in Buenos Aires, Argentina, as well as the first garden city in England: I located share fliers for both ventures early in my research. A newspaper cutting from the early 1900s suggests he took an interest in the llama, the resourceful South American pack animal. And several months ago, I stumbled across his eyeglass prescription from 1894 (a friend of mine, a doctor at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary, diagnoses Naoroji as being far-sighted).

Digging a little deeper, it is possible to piece together greater significance from such

random and bizarre information. Investments in South America, the United Kingdom, and India show that Naoroji adopted a very international outlook in his personal finances – finances that he put to productive use by funding nationalist activity. Even his malfunctioning toilet tells us that Naoroji was privy to some of the latest available technology: the waste water preventer was a relatively new invention that was revolutionising sanitation in Victorian England.

Since Naoroji was the senior-most Indian resident in the United Kingdom, he was regularly consulted by his countrymen who travelled to the imperial metropole for study, work, or pleasure. There are literally thousands of letters in the Naoroji Papers from such Indians - documenting incidents of racism, financial trouble, or plain homesickness – and nearly all of them received a prompt and detailed reply from the Grand Old Man. Naoroji functioned as a guardian of sorts for many Indians in Britain. Around 1am on 2

January 1891, for example, he was awakened by a telegram from a London police constable informing him that a 'Mr C K Desai' was under arrest for public drunkenness and wanted Naoroji to bail him out of jail. Aside from such correspondence, there are reams of letters from concerned parents in India who asked Naoroji to keep tabs on their sons (and, increasingly, daughters), making sure that they were being financially prudent and not consorting with Englishwomen.

The Papers also provide an insight into how Naoroji and his fellow nationalists in London adapted and reacted to life abroad. In

addition to collaborating on the formulation of various economic critiques of the Raj, Romesh Chunder Dutt used Naoroji as a character reference for securing his flat in Forest Hill in 1898. While Dutt eventually returned to India in 1903, his fellow Bengali, W C Bonnerji, the first president of the Congress, took to London so much that he and his family put down permanent roots there, purchasing a house in Croydon that

they christened Kidderpore. The extent of their Anglicisation was evident when Naoroji in January 1893 invited the Bonnerjis to attend, in Indian attire, a function held in Central Finsbury to celebrate his election to the House of Commons. "I am extremely sorry to say that we have not an Indian dress in the house," a family member responded.

Others dearly missed the staples of Indian life while in England. In January 1906, the radical nationalist

Madame Bhikaiji Cama – staying with a family member in North Kensington – invited Naoroji and his grandchildren over for a Sunday 'Parsee lunch,' an offer the Grand Old Man must have leapt at given the boiled and bland fare otherwise on offer in London. Some cultural adjustments were easier. Although in his sixties and seventies, Naoroji appears to have taken a fancy to English sports. He was the president of the football club in his parliamentary constituency, Central Finsbury, and the vice-president of a north London cricket club. A tantalising clue about Naoroji's affinity for the gentleman's game is offered by his campaign secretary, who in 1895

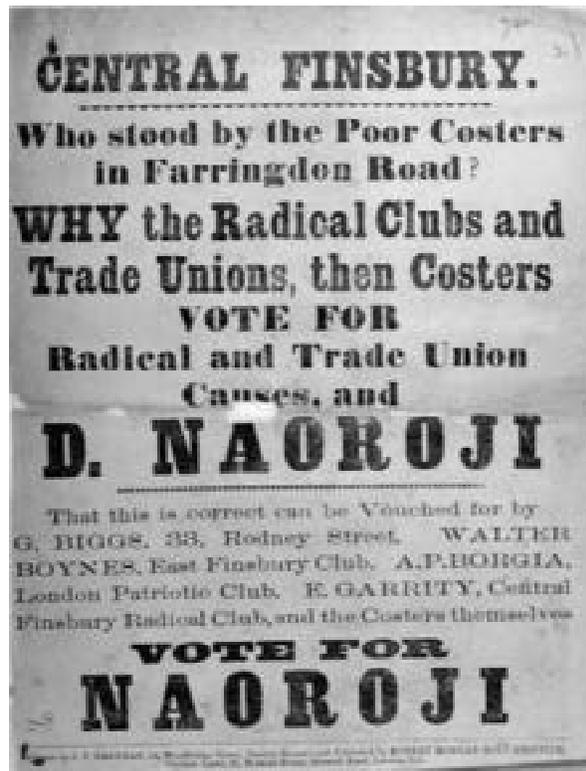


Photo courtesy: National Archives of India

wrote to Naoroji that, “One would really imagine you to be a God of Cricket.”

But there was one great cultural challenge in Britain that Naoroji had great difficulty in surmounting: people just could not spell his name correctly. In newspapers, posters, and his incoming mail, the Grand Old Man was addressed by creative variants such as Dedabhan Naorji, Devan Novoriji, and Dadabhai Nowraggie. Matters improved slightly once his campaign secretary suggested that he simply go by ‘D Naoroji.’ After he won election to Parliament by a mere five votes, he was frequently referred to as ‘Dadabhai Narrow-Majority,’ which was presumably easier to remember and spell.

Naoroji and his fellow nationalists, however, were guilty of their own spelling bloopers. The Grand Old Man regularly ended his letters with the valediction “Your’s truly,” adding an unnecessary apostrophe. When the Bengali painter, Sasi Kumar Hesh, visited London in 1899, Romesh Chunder Dutt wrote excitedly of the various ‘pourtraits’ the artist intended to undertake. Madame Cama loved semi-colons; her letters to Naoroji are simply replete with them. What is particularly striking is how so many of Naoroji’s correspondents chose to communicate in broken English rather than in languages where they had a shared greater proficiency, such as Gujarati or Hindustani. But English, even bad English, was a status symbol then, as it remains today. The surprisingly few Gujarati letters in the Naoroji Papers are mostly from his family members.

Common headache

While mastery of English was a challenge to some upwardly-mobile Indians, deciphering one another’s handwriting was a headache shared by all. I have probably done serious damage to my own eyesight by trying to make sense of the scribbles found in the Naoroji Papers. Understanding them was evidently a challenge to the original recipients over a century ago. Naoroji occasionally admonished Behramji Malabari, the prominent Parsi journalist

and social reformer, to write neatly. William Wedderburn, one of the British stalwarts in the early Congress, grumbled to Naoroji in August 1891 that he could not read letters from Dinsha Wacha, the longtime Congress general secretary (“But you must not tell him this,” he added). And Allan Octavian Hume, while attempting to go through a draft of Naoroji’s presidential address to the 1893 Lahore Congress, confessed to Naoroji that “your handwriting is rather hard to read.” Perhaps it is appropriate that, toward the end of his life, Naoroji helped fund a bright Maharashtrian inventor, Shankar Abaji Bhise, who was working on new models of typewriters.

Encountering such unexpected miscellanea is a treat to the historian, providing a moment of levity while sifting through otherwise heavy and complex matter. But these miscellanea also perform an important role in our understanding of early Indian nationalists. Individuals such as Naoroji, Dutt, Ranade, and Gokhale have – in both scholarship and our popular conceptions of history – too often been cast as staid, unapproachable, and even downright dull people. The paper trail they left behind tells us quite a different story: it exposes us to the particularities of their lives, their complex characters, their foibles, habits, and everyday routines. It humanises these leaders. Maybe this is one reason why Dadabhai Naoroji, while organising his personal papers during his retirement in Versova, chose to preserve his prescriptions, receipts, and correspondence with his London plumber.



*Dinyar Patel is a PhD candidate in History at Harvard University. Some of the material quoted here will be published in the forthcoming volume, *The Grand Old Man of India: Selections from the Dadabhai Naoroji Papers* (Oxford University Press), which he is co-editing with S R Mehrotra.*

In loving memory of our mother Morvarid Zartoshty

Bachi Karkaria interviews Sudha Shah, author of the King in Exile

Readers will wonder where the Zoroastrian connection lies. It was felt that a few of us have a connection with Burma, having had our families originating from that country till they had to leave. Besides this book is a worth while read. Today Myanmar has opened up to the world once again and more people are likely to visit this charming and unspoilt country.

BK: A SoBo [South Bombay] corporate wife looking for something to do doesn't normally take on a major research project into an inaccessible subject. Did you not realise then how much you had bitten off, or that it would take seven years?

SS: I wasn't really looking for something else to do. I was working on a business that wasn't going anywhere, so I had the time to research a subject that piqued my interest.

I had no intention of writing a book to begin with. My intention was just to find out what happened to the family. It was actually the story of the four princesses that I wanted to unearth – girls who grew up in a culturally alien environment, with virtually no education, and with almost no social interaction with the outside world. I was curious how their lives panned out. However, the more I delved the more fascinated I became with other family members and other aspects of the story. The whole thing snowballed; I certainly had no idea it would, or that it would take me seven years! That would have been very daunting to know at the start.

You've said that you were fascinated by the exiled king of Burma after reading Amitav Ghosh's *Glass Palace*. Did you correspond with him, decide at the start how the course of your book was different?

I only touched base with Amitav Ghosh when my manuscript was almost ready—to request him to read it and to give me his feedback. It means a lot to me that he thinks well of my book, because I truly respect him as a writer—I think he's one of the best. The *Glass Palace* was the inspiration for my book. I didn't re-read it while writing my book, because I did not want it to influence me more than it already had. I decided I'd reward myself with re-reading it once my book was published!

Amitav's book is a work of fiction, based of course on very thorough research. Mine is narrative non-fiction, a family biography.

Was the very exotic-ness and isolation of Burma a 'dangerous attraction'? Or the contrast between the opulence of the royal court and obscurity in Ratnagiri, a planet away?

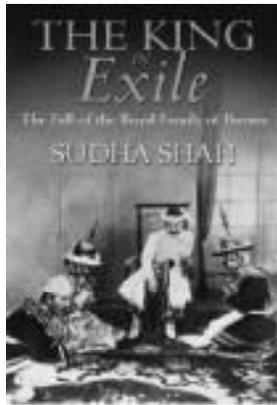
Burma, or Myanmar as it is now called, was not what particularly attracted me initially; it was later that I fell in love with the country. It was the human-interest angle of the story that was the attraction. Initially I wanted to know more about the princesses, but eventually the *raison d'être* of the book was to provide a fascinating insight into, first, how an all-powerful and very wealthy family coped with forced isolation and separation from all that they had once known and cherished; and, second, how the exile continued to echo in the life of the family in a myriad ways well after it ended.

Tracking down sources, hampered by the fact that many of them spoke only Burmese, a geographical sweep from the Maharashtra archives to London's India Office Library. This is all quite mind-boggling.

One source very often led to the next. And perseverance, as we all know, tends to pay off. The four grandchildren of King Thibaw, whom I interviewed extensively, all spoke fluent English—so that was not an issue. It was numerous books and articles in Burmese that I had to get translated.

Much of your book is based on memories, an unreliable interlocutor at best. Were you comfortable with that?

I tried, as often as possible, to verify from multiple sources whatever I could. But that was not always possible. Sometimes I had to take a



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Cover shows King Thibaw
in exile



Sudha Shah

judgement call—what sounded in character and what didn't and if it didn't sound likely, I spent more time working out how to question the person from a different angle to re assess the likelihood of the occurrence/information. I sometimes indicated that it sounded unreal to me, and at times the justification offered by the person suddenly put it in context, and made it possible. But if a bit of information continued to sound unreal to me, I either excluded it, or qualified it as probably apocryphal.

Could you take us through that journey?

I really did enjoy both the research and writing process. I felt like a detective on a trail. Tracking down a variety of sources and accessing new information, however insignificant, was always very exciting! It was the details that helped bring the protagonists alive for me, and enabled me, while writing, to try to colour the story and give it dimension. I looked for a publisher only when I had written two thirds of the book, so I had the luxury of time, and was not pressured.

How did the King end up in Ratnagiri of all places?

After they defeated King Thibaw in war, the British wanted him off the shores of Burma as soon as possible because of the god-like reverence with which his people regarded him. India was part of the British Empire at that time and a neighbouring country, so it was the logical choice. In India, they did not want him in an important centre. Ratnagiri was selected because it was a small district headquarters with some infrastructure and a British collector (who could keep an eye on the king), and it was remote. I realised in the course of my book that Ratnagiri was connected by rail to the rest of the country only in 1996.

What fascinated you most about Queen Supayalat, the real power-base?

The various aspects that made up her personality—her tremendous strength of character and ruthlessness contrasted with her magnetic charm and abiding love for her husband.

How much of the research had to be in Burma when still closed and under a military

dictatorship when you started. How did you penetrate the bamboo/ barbed wire curtain?

Much of the research was in Myanmar, but the fact that it was under military dictatorship was not a major impediment. I was researching parts of the country's history that were not of any threat to the regime. What made the access difficult was the lack of infrastructure – limited and erratic phone and email access. With many, the interaction had to either be in person or by exchange of letters.



King Thibaw and his two queens. Lithograph, The Graphic, 16 January 1886

How did you track down the royal descendants and get them to reveal their fallen fortunes to a stranger, win their trust?

When I began my research, one of the places I sent for books from was Myanmar Book Centre in Yangon. Some months later, I sent an email to Dr Thant Thaw Kaung, the chairman of the Centre, requesting for his help to trace descendants. He kindly introduced me to one of the descendants; that descendant introduced me to the others.

It takes time to build trust, and I had the time. Although all the descendants were polite and

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helpful right from the beginning, certainly as the rapport grew and the relationship deepened, more personal and sensitive information was entrusted to me.



Only known picture in existence of the four princesses, showing left to right: the Fourth Princess, the First Princess, the Third Princess, and the Second Princess. 1914.

Could you tell us some of the conflict you may have felt about crossing the line between the intensely personal and the need to put out your story.

I had to ask intensely personal questions to write the story as completely and meaningfully as possible, and I don't remember ever either feeling conflicted about it, or avoiding the question. The family sensed fairly early on that I empathized with them, that I cared, and that helped. And I put a lot of effort into framing my questions as sensitively as I could—sometimes with long preambles in an attempt to justify them!

Which of the family or sources fascinated you the most. In different ways? And why? Do you have a favourite 'character'?

The person who evoked the greatest emotion in me was the First Princess. A trusting and kind human being, with no knowledge of the world, she was cruelly betrayed by everyone. It was also the most challenging to get authentic information about her (from the time the exile ended)—there is a lot of misinformation floating around, even in printed media. I relied on multiple sources for most of my information, and on some archival material.

I am fond of many members of the family, but it is with Prince Taw Phaya that I have the strongest rapport—he is really a warm and generous human being, with great charm and an irreverent sense of humour.

This is an extremely textured subject weaving in near-divine entitlement to very mortal misfortune. It's about a country's history and a family's pride, prejudices and frustrations. How did you choose to separate these threads? And how tough was it?

It was weaving the multiple threads together into a strong story-line that took time and effort. What to include and to exclude gave me much pause for thought. One wanted a strong story-line, but at the same time the detailing was very important too. I structured the book in three parts, wrote some bits to flow chronologically and some not, in an attempt to tell a complex story as lucidly as possible.

Myanmar is itself now emerging from its self-imposed exile. Will it make a difference to the descendants of the family? Would they be officially welcomed back? Does the present generation of citizenry have any reverence or feeling of any kind for a king once worshipped as a god?

I personally believe that the change in the form of government in Myanmar, and its reintegration with the rest of the world, will have no more or no less impact on the descendants of the royal family than on any other Myanmar citizen. Hopefully changes in the country, coupled with foreign participation,

Images courtesy of
Sudha Shah

will significantly improve conditions for everyone.

What the descendants of the royal family in Myanmar have been lobbying hard for, and what I'm happy to see the present government taking interest in, is to initiate talks with the Government of India to allow the remains of King Thibaw, Queen Supayagalae and the First Princess, that still lie in Ratnagiri, to be brought to Myanmar. I believe the issue has been discussed in the Myanmar Parliament, perhaps an informal approach has already been made to the Government of India, and in December 2012 President Thein Sein became the first Myanmar head of state ever to visit King Thibaw's tomb. In Ratnagiri, although protected monuments, the tombs are largely ignored and hardly ever visited; in Mandalay, they will have some importance. And for the family there will be some closure to a painful part of their history.

All the descendants in India today are the First Princess's. The Second Princess's son had no children. The Third and Fourth Princess's descendants live in Myanmar, and are predictably much more conscious of their ancestry than their Indian counterparts. But almost 127 years have passed since King Thibaw's crown was taken from him, and the family stripped of all its power and most of its wealth. According to Prince Taw Phaya (King Thibaw's only living grandson), although there is still lingering respect for its royal family in Myanmar, no descendant today can afford to spend too much time dwelling either on his lineage or on the family's lost heritage.



Queen Supayalat and King Thibaw in court dress. Lithograph, *The Graphic*, 27 February 1886.



The Royal Family

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.



Dilshad Patel soars to the Sky

- In an interview with Hamazor

In a middle class Zoroastrian family of Mumbai, a little girl had a dream – a dream of flying planes. She thought to become a pilot one had to only fly planes and not study like a doctor or an engineer. Little did she realise there would be a continuous learning curve throughout her lifetime.

She is none other than Captain Dilshad Patel, Commander in Jet Airways.

Who was your inspiration that made you select this profession?

DP: I was inspired by my late uncle Capt Kurush Vimadlal during my teen years but always dreamt of flying planes.

A woman flying a commercial aircraft in India, would not be an easy journey. Can you tell us a little about this?

It was not easy as my parents were employed in a nationalized bank and to finance my studies proved to be a Herculean task for them. The profession I wished to take up was rather frowned upon, as it was not the norm for a girl, and I was discouraged by both family and friends. It was only because of my mother's unconditional support and encouragement that I was able to fulfill my dream. My parents had to approach various Trusts to finance my studies and it is thanks to them I was able to go ahead.

Where did you train?

I did my ground school from Mumbai in private classes where one can study from, and subsequently for the first flying hours which were 50, these were done from the Orient Flight School in Pondicherry, Tamil Nadu. The remaining 200 hours were from Gujarat Flying School, Baroda.

How many years does it take to get a commercial pilot's license?

When I was taking the training it took many years. I completed my training in three years. I obtained my Commercial Pilot License (CPL) in 1999 but this was just the beginning and the first step on the ladder. Recession in the airline industry made

things worse which had a severe impact on employment.

How did you manage?

To keep myself in funds, I worked in a toy-shop as a manager for five years as well as did some odd jobs. I even worked on the ground with one of the airlines as a flight dispatcher and in the stock exchange manning a computer! Finally after this period of obtaining my CPL, I was selected by Jet Airways as a trainee pilot. This was the start of better things to come. Though I had always detested studying, I was determined to achieve in becoming a Commander which could only happen through grit and hard work.

The seven years after you joined Jet Airways as a trainee pilot till you became a Commander in 2012 what was happening?

I got my job as a trainee in 2005 which took a year to complete and become a first officer. Once again more examinations, and 3000 hours of flying to get my Airline Transport Pilot License (ATPL) and then finally, training for my command.

What was the first aircraft you had command off?

I got my solo flying on Cessna 152, that's the two-seater aircraft on which you do your initial 250 hours of flying and then I got my command on B737 multi engine aircraft.

What aircraft are you flying at present and what is the capacity of passengers?

I fly Boeing 737-700/800/900 series of aircraft and its capacity varies from 112 to 180 seats.

What sector are you flying?

I fly all the sectors from Mumbai. All over India, Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Would you know how many female pilots there are in India and if there are any Zoroastrians amongst them?

Am really sorry but I don't have a clue on the number of lady pilots in India. There are a few first officers in India who are Parsi but as far as I know there is no Parsi Commander apart from myself.

Now that you have achieved your dream by the age of 36 what next?

I feel very satisfied and content with my life. I am ever ready for the call of duty – be it day or night – and love returning home to my warm and fun-filled nephews, Varzan and Jehan. I live with my parents, elder brother and his family.

Do you wish to share a message for the youth of our community?

Never give up – follow your dreams through hard work, determination and dedication to get where you want to see yourself.

Any special man in your life?

I am getting married on 16th March this year to Jimmy Vatcha who has his own car rental business!

Dilshad thank you for sharing your dream with us and we wish you scale even greater heights.



Mind Walking -

A play written by Tanika Gupta, directed by Philippa Vafadari, performed by BandBazi Company, UK.

reviewed by shahin bekhradnia

I was initially somewhat diffident when I went to see this play in Oxford because I had persuaded 20 local friends to come with me. However, I had no idea whether the play and the performers would live up to the responsibility I had taken in persuading such a big party to give up their evening. Fortunately we all came out absolutely thrilled with the transformative experience we had gone through by the end. And since this play has deservedly been put back on tour once more, it is with no hesitation whatsoever that I feel I can recommend it as good viewing.

This is a skillfully crafted play which has four characters, the leading role being that of a Parsi doctor, Bobby (Sorabji), who came to England many years earlier for his medical specialisation. His role is played very convincingly by Peter D'Souza. We gradually piece together his story through the artful use of memory flashbacks, which occur through the use of a cerceau or trapeze hoop. When a character steps through it, the audience understands that a flashback is taking place. The use of the trapeze hoop certainly adds a little of the unexpected to the overall production.

What makes the play particularly interesting is the contributions of Bobby's English wife, his daughter and her son, (his grandson) through whom it becomes apparent that quite a lot of the Parsi story has been suppressed for reasons that later become apparent.

A further dimension which enriches the play considerably is the subject of Alzheimer's, a condition which is increasingly impinging on the lives of people these days, and which is

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introduced from the opening scene of the play. It quickly becomes clear that Bobby is suffering from this illness when his wife Moira, a loving and good natured woman visits him in a nursing home as the play starts. Bobby still has his pyjama bottoms on even though he is about to go out for a walk and he gets upset that he can't remember how to put on his tie.

Bobby has occasional moments of recollection and lucidity when he is able to articulate that he feels he is being sucked into a black hole. He describes his head as full of labyrinthine corridors, with some rooms full of light, and some rooms full of empty echoey caves. And he states that he knows he has Alzheimer's as he has seen it hundreds of times in his patients.

While his wife is able to accept and understand his condition, painful though it is (*"The man I've loved for fifty years suddenly transformed into a different person. I can't even look after him anymore, cant do it, cant manage him ..., sometimes he becomes a complete stranger"*), it is evident that his daughter Rosa is having more difficulties while his 16 year old grandson is surprisingly empathetic with and interested in his grandpa's ramblings.

One vivid moment Bobby relives as he steps through the hoop is his navjote ceremony, learning his prayers and repeating what the priest teaches him. Then in a moment of confusion for himself and those close to him, he forgets his name, and having suddenly remembered it, we learn that he has raised his family unaware of his real family name, instead of which he had adopted the name De Souza to cover his Parsi roots. Grandson Matty shows a

real interest, wants to know more about his background, and it is clear that he is elated to discover his exotic origin whereas Rosa feels cheated and bewildered.

These three elements that form the threads of the story within the play, continue to draw us in while weaving an overlapping tissue that eventually makes up the full backcloth from which we can make sense of what is happening before our eyes and understand why such a long-lived deception has been maintained.

There are poignant as well as dramatic moments, many of which delve into prejudices applying equally well to British and Parsi parents (sometimes with struggles of loyalty for their children) such as a sense of racial superiority and the feeling of rejection.

The mixture of the many dramatic techniques to tease out the story of Bobby, made possible through his memory flashbacks and a degree of dramatic irony, provides the spectator with a

satisfying sense of comprehension and a rare insight into a little known religious culture, while also engaging in a very humane depiction of a life changing illness.



Cast

Bobby – Peter D'Souza
Moira – Kate Dyson
Rosa – Philippa Vafadari
Matty – Dylan Kennedy

Visit
www.bandbazi.co.uk
for information on
performance dates.



Shahin Bekhradnia, a Zoroastrian of the Iranian tradition, is a teacher of ancient history and classical civilisation, a Justice of the Peace and a legal consultant. She has written and published on Zoroastrianism, including a postgraduate thesis in anthropology on issues of Zoroastrian identity in the 20th century, and is active in inter-faith movements and organisations. She is the Jt Secretary of WZO.

The Magic Kingdom

W

While approaching Sawai Madhopur, a busy railway junction in east Rajasthan, there is nothing at all that can give anyone a foretaste of what they can expect from a visit to the Ranthambhore National Park (RNP). The surroundings are flat and mostly arid, with patches of agriculture, and a range of hills on the horizon. One would never imagine that just twelve kilometres out of the town, one is about to enter a different world: dramatic topography and a vibrant, living forest filled with hundreds of species of flora and fauna, a feast for the eyes and ears.

by soonoo taraporewala

The area occupied by the RNP was once the hunting preserve of the maharajas of Jaipur, the ironical reason for the preservation of the forest in a region surrounded by a burgeoning human population with all its livestock, busy denuding the landscape of any vegetation, used either for fuel or fodder. Within the area occupied by the park, there used to be sixteen villages, with no roads connecting any of them, where people subsisted with their cattle, with barely any facilities for healthcare or education. However, the area was known to harbour wild animals, including tigers, leopards, bears, hyenas, and several kinds of herbivores. When the princely states such as Rajputana merged with the Republic of India, many of the maharajas turned to tourism as a source of income. Their idea of tourism was to organize tiger hunts for visitors.

By the early 1970s the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, came to realize that many species of Indian wildlife were in danger of extinction because of indiscriminate hunting. Hunting was banned forthwith, and an initiative called Project Tiger was set up to try to restore the population of wild animals. Ranthambhore, still undeveloped, but showing great potential, was selected as one of the first nine parks to be protected under Project Tiger. Since the tiger is at the apex of animal species in any forest in

India, protecting it ensured that its habitat and prey would be protected as well. A young forest officer called Fateh Singh Rathore was handpicked to restore the habitat. In those early days the only evidence of the presence of tigers was a few of their pugmarks on the ground, and most of the other animals were nocturnal too, venturing out only when people were asleep at night. Fateh Singh realized that his first and most important task would be to relocate the villages outside the protected area of the park. He set about building roads around the periphery, gradually increasing the network, and went from village to village to try and persuade the people to leave. Most of them were understandably reluctant to move away from the only world they had ever known, and it took months of patient perseverance and coaxing on Fateh Singh's part to convince them. Eventually one village agreed, followed by most of the others, and they were provided with an entirely new village, complete with a health care centre and a school. Every adult male was given good agricultural land, and most of the villagers have since prospered.

Without human intervention, the forest began to regenerate. Lopped trees started to flourish, streams flowed once more, some of the agricultural fields were deepened to form the famous lakes of

Ranthambhore: Padam Talao, Raj Bagh and Malik Talao, fed by perennial streams. And miraculously, animals started appearing during the day, occupying the lakes where the sambar, in particular, love to browse. Tigers were still elusive until Fateh Singh, patrolling one night in 1976, saw a tigress run across the path in front of his jeep, followed by five cubs. They were gone in a flash, but he

was determined to see them again, and kept a watch out for them. Soon enough, a lame buffalo that had been left behind by the villagers was found killed and partly eaten, so Fateh Singh decided to climb a tree near that spot, knowing the tigress would be back to finish her kill. He was elated to find

that she came to the kill along with her cubs, and although she was wary of him at first, she soon relaxed. He took photos with trembling hands, each click of the camera drawing the response of a snarl from the tigress. At one point he could not see the cubs until he happened to look straight down, and was startled to find them sitting directly under him, looking up at him. There was no way he could get off the tree while the tigers were there, and sat there with his legs growing numb until they went away. He was so nervous and so excited that he was unable to whistle for his driver to come and fetch him, but luckily the driver came on his

own, wondering what had happened to him. Fateh Singh named the tigress Padmini after his elder daughter, and from then on, he followed her as often as he could, learning a great deal about tiger behaviour in the process. His genuine love and passion for tigers turned him into one of India's leading experts on wild tigers, with



knowledge gained from the field rather than from textbooks.

After this, many more tigers were seen and studied, and the forest flourished into one of the most beautiful and evocative places in the world. Along with its natural biodiversity, Ranthambhore has had a long history, with a mighty eleventh-century fort dominating its landscape near the lakes. Several ancient monuments such as cenotaphs, shrines and mosques, can be found there, all now taken over by the animals. Ranthambhore, not far from the Keoladeo Ghana National Park at Bharatpur, has

nearly three hundred species of birds, including many migratory species that come from all over the world to winter there. And located at the spot where the Aravalli range of mountains meets the Vindhya range, the topography ranges from gentle rolling hills to dramatic escarpments, deep thickly wooded gorges where tigers like to sleep in the heat of summer, high plateaus with short blond grass where we sometimes see the chinkara or Indian gazelle pronging about, and open meadows where deer graze in peace, but with a wary eye out for the presence of a predator. Several books and television documentaries have been made about Ranthambhore, and many of the tiger images seen around the world are of tigers from there. As a result of this, tourism has boomed, almost beyond the carrying capacity of the park, affording visitors the extraordinary serendipity of chancing on a tiger while driving around on a safari.

Each season in Ranthambhore has its own special beauty.

Winters are crisp and incredibly chilly in the early morning, but with bright sunshine to temper the chill, and the animals look their best, with glossy, glowing coats. Spring brings with it a brief season when the flame of the forest comes into bloom, when the monkeys and parakeets gorge on the brilliant red flowers, traditionally used during the holi festival. As the weather warms, many of the trees shed their leaves, particularly the dominant dhok trees, forming a filigree pattern of bare grey branches against the sky. But that is when the amaltas or Indian laburnum comes into bloom, the colour of its flowers matched

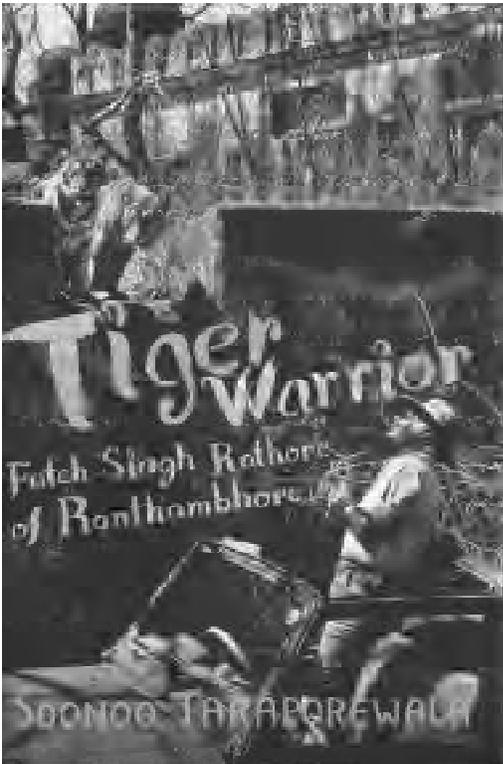
perfectly with the bright yellow of the visiting golden oriole. Another great compensation for the almost unbearable dry heat of summer is the fact that the peacocks' tails are at their longest then, and one often sees them spread those tails in dance. Summer is also the best time for tiger sightings: as water within the forest dries up, the tigers and other animals frequent the lakes and



waterholes. And during the monsoon, when the park is closed, everything turns lush green, streams appear where nobody could have imagined there would be any, and the deer grow fat on the fresh grass. In any season, it is always a delight just to drive around without any expectation, taking whatever the park offers in its bounty. This could be the sight of a chital hind with its fawn; or a group of langurs admiring a new baby in the flock; a pair of partridges followed by a string of babies – a herd of wild pigs, or a sloth bear lumbering along – and then one may suddenly see a tiger walking along, or sitting by the side of the

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road, or even more rarely, a leopard lying along the branch of a tree. And all these sights are constantly accompanied by an orchestra of bird calls, sharp alarm calls from deer and monkeys, or the calls of rutting deer, or best of all, the melancholy moan of a tigress in heat.



I first visited Ranthambhore thirty years ago, when very few people had heard about it. And although my experiences during the early years were unparalleled in the delight they gave me, I know I can never stop visiting this park. I've been to several other parks in India, each one beautiful and unique in its own way, but none has caught my heart in quite the same way. I've seen the best and worst of Ranthambhore – the worst was in the 1990s when Fateh Singh, no longer in charge there, found that many of the tigers he had known

had been poached. The Chinese demand for tiger parts allegedly for medicinal use meant that after they had depleted their own tiger populations, they turned to India for their supplies. Nobody believed him at first, until a man was caught trying to smuggle a huge tiger skin out of the town. Fateh Singh retired from the forest service in 1996, and set up his own NGO called Tiger Watch, which has now managed to stem the flood of poaching in Ranthambhore, helping the police by preempting poaching raids, confiscating weapons, and now trying to rehabilitate the hunter-gatherer tribes who go out to kill animals by educating their children. He remained utterly dedicated to 'his' park until the end of his life. He passed away on 1 March 2011, stricken by cancer which was detected too late. Even while he lay ill in bed, he would ask Dharmendra

Khandal, the Field Biologist with Tiger Watch, to check the safety of a tigress that had moved out of the park with her two cubs. And the day after he passed away, a tiger wandered out of the forest onto the road behind his house, and uttered three calls at four in the morning, almost as though in tribute to the one who had protected him. ■■■■



Fateh Singh Rathore & Soonoo

Soonoo Taraporewala is a librarian by profession, a confirmed book worm with a deep love for classical music. Among her other interests are wildlife conservation and travel photography. Getting to know and love a place like Ranthambhore has given her a better understanding of the world around her, and a greater appreciation for the endless struggle to save the natural world. She tries, in an informal way, to convey that understanding to others. She has recently published a biography of Fateh Singh Rathore called *Tiger Warrior*, published by Penguin Books India.

Intrepid Bawa Bikers ride to the three Highest Motorable Villages of the World

Only those willing to risk going too far can possibly know how far they can go.

It all started as usually does with us Zarthostis over a few pegs of *chato paani* on a routine Saturday night when the expedition to Lahul and Spiti Valley evolved.

Father and son duo of Behram and Hormazd Siganporia, Capt Porus P Dalal, Dr Rustom Jesia and brothers Sarosh and Burgess S Cooper set off on 9th October for this extravaganza spanning over 1500 kms, traversing through hill stations of Shimla, Thanedar (the region which grew India's first apples) and Manali, villages of Chitkul, Tabo, Kaza and deep into the Sangla, Bispa and Lahul Spiti valleys.

by hormazd siganporia

So what's the big deal about a bunch of crazy adventurers (age band width from 22 to 51 years) riding up into the wild yonder?

For one, this route is considered by many (including the famous Lonely Planet) as one of the fifteen toughest rides in the world. Besides riding enroute to the highest motorable villages all situated in the spectacular Spiti Valley which is above 14,000 feet, the team's journey also took them across various high mountain passes including the dreaded Kumzum La, at 4551m. We visited the renowned Kye Monastery (the largest in the region) and the Lundup Chhemo Gompa (probably the highest in the world) when the elusive and endangered Red Fox crossed the road right in front of us.

As recent as last year, Kibber (4100m) was acknowledged as the highest motorable village but has now been seeded by villages of Lanza (4300m) and Komic (4513m). Though temperatures plummet to -40°C during winter in this region (with over 11ft of snow), since it was just the onset of winter

we were spared and rode at a **pleasant 6°C!**

At Kibber, all performed kusti prayers and sang in unison *Chhaiya Hame Zarthoshti* in true Zoroastrian spirit.

The dedication, determination, courage, planning and excellent team work coupled with formation riding, finally triumphed over all the arduous challenges, namely lack of oxygen, rugged terrain, snow fall, melting snow, raging rivers and humongous landslides.

The entire expedition was meticulously planned and executed by Burgess Cooper and the team was accompanied by renowned photographer Hitesh and 'Man-Friday' Monnu. ■■■

**photographs
overleaf**



Hormazd Behram Siganporia is 22 years old and resident of Dadar Parsi Colony. He has just completed his education in automobile engineering. He hopes to pursue a carrier in Adventure Sport Journalism.

In loving memory of our mother Morvarid Zartoshty



Chandigarh airport



Altimeter



Singing Chhaye hame Zarthoshti



Manali



Performing kusti

Conti from p21

(candles) for Asha Vahista (Ardibehesht) = purity, truth, order; milk/cheese = cattle for Vohu Manah (Bahman) = good thinking or purpose; plants for Ameretat (amordad) = long life/immortality; the earth (in the flower pot) for Spenta Armaiti (Sependarmežd) = Piety, devotion; water for Haurvetat (Khordad) = health & wholeness; metal coins for Khshathra (shahrivar) = power, control; the just man/priest (the prayer book) for Spenta Mainyu = the holy spirit of Ahura Mazda (Ormežd).

It is a salutary reminder that we are not bigger than nature and unless we respect the elements and maintain harmony within it, we will not survive. It is also a beautiful reminder of the interconnected relationship between the elements with the light and heat of the spring sunshine, interacting with the water and earth to give forth all the plants on which our food, animals and pleasures depend. The Zoroastrians have been regularly singled out by European commentators throughout the ages for their particular skills in creating beautiful gardens in the arid landscape of Iran – it is surely because they have tried to follow their tradition of understanding how to work with nature rather than against it.

The fact that the ancient Iranians were sophisticated enough to be able to calculate accurately when the equinox would occur is impressive though not unique in ancient history. But what is particularly inspiring to me is the fact that it is indeed a reason to celebrate. After the gloom of early nights and late mornings that characterise the winter, and the cold that these bring, what could be more wonderful than the confident knowledge that spring brings life back to the dormant world and for all sorts of plants and creatures life starts afresh, with the sap rising in flowers and trees and the birds and sheep producing offspring. The equinox does indeed mark New Light (Nava Raocha) or a New Day of a New Year and is the chance for a new start and an opportunity for hope.

If you are interested in checking the sources for the references that refer to Nowruz as a

well attested pre-Islamic Iranian festival, one of the easiest and fullest compilations to consult is the Wikipedia entry.

I feel I should draw attention to the fact that in the Shahnameh we have a detailed description of how the Zoroastrian kings used to celebrate Nowruz, and there is also a work known as the Nowruz Nameh often ascribed to Omar Khayam which gives an account of the celebration in the past. Some claim that the frieze sculptures at Persepolis depict the Nowruz gift bearers of subject states to the kings. It is also of some interest to note that the UN's General Assembly in 2010 recognized the International Day of Nowruz, describing it as a spring festival of Persian origin which has been celebrated for over 3,000 years. During the meeting of *The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage of the United Nations*, held between 28 September – 2 October 2009 in Abu Dhabi, Nowruz was officially registered on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. ■■■■

Shahin Bekhradnia's profile appears on p56



Shahin's Nowruz table



Table with traditional Nowruz celebration items from Azerbaijan displayed at Dublin's City Hall.

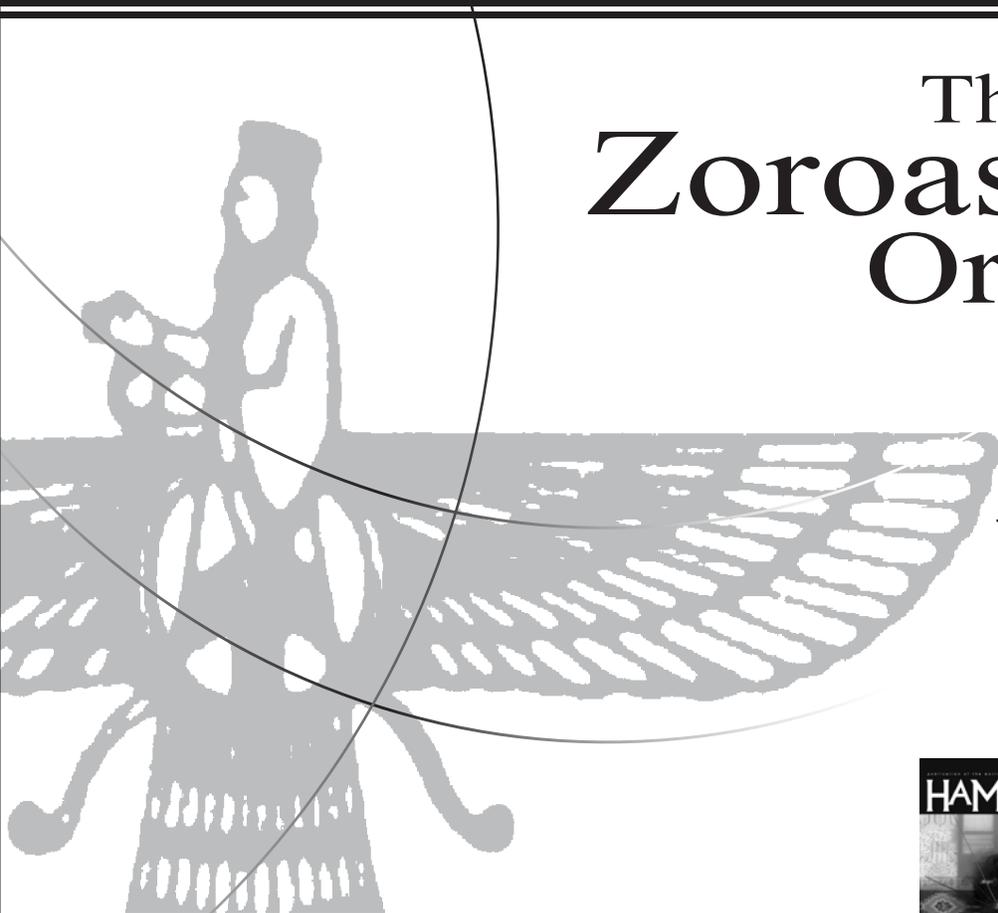


Nowruz table in Tajikistan

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invites you to join us in uniting and supporting the global Zoroastrian community

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Mr Kayomarsh Mehta, 6943 Fieldstone Drive, Burr Ridge, Illinois IL60527-5295, USA.

Canadian residents - application form and cheque payable in Canadian Dollars as "ZSO" and **marked WZO fees** to:

The Treasurer, ZSO, 3590 Bayview Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M2M 3S6, Canada. Ph: (416) 733 4586.

New Zealand residents - application form with your cheque payable in NZ Dollars as "World Zoroastrian Organisation, to:

Mr Darius Mistry, 134A Paritai Drive, Orakei, Auckland, New Zealand

“ O Benevolent, Omniscient Mazda!

To the man understanding Thy message

Thou dost bestow the profound treasure of Thy teaching,

That which Thou hast established through Truth

With an intelligence inspired by the Good Mind!”

Ha 48.3 – Dinshaw J Irani

