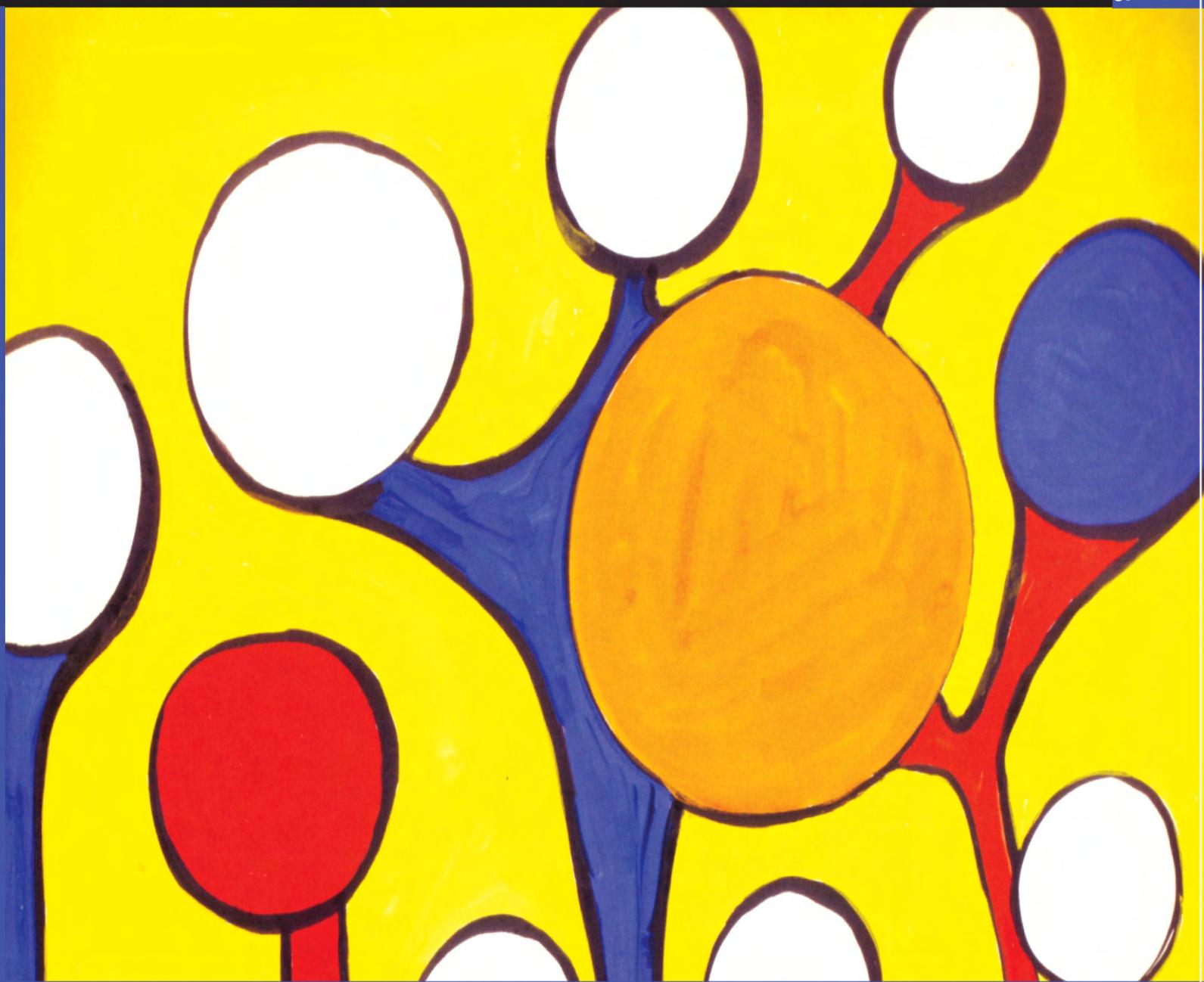


publication of the world zoroastrian organisation

# HAMAZOR

Issue 2008



**“Bigotry stifles reason** and the bigot, in his frenzy, is out to force all to believe what he believes. All religions come from one and the only God, who makes himself known by many a name.”

- Dastur Maneckji Dhalla



The Mama School - p 62

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## COVER

Composition from Alexander Calder’s work. [For us, it symbolises people making their voice heard.]

## PHOTOGRAPHS

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

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## From the Editor



In this issue we are giving prominence to a contribution on the current controversies, especially amongst the Parsis of Mumbai, concerning how the community should relate to co-religionists who have married outside the community and to their spouses and children.

The author, who is a member of the WZO committee, argues that ordinary members of the community have already taken the lead and begun the process of adjustment to the many challenges presented to us by these developments; while those who have cast themselves as 'orthodox leaders' have become preoccupied with the subject of 'conversion' - a distraction from the real issues that face Parsis today.

The prime motivation for the inclusive approach demonstrated by many in our community is to preserve the bond of our love for family, faith and community. Inclusion of our near and dear ones and their families is imperative and its focus and urgency is obfuscated by framing it in terms of the 'conversion' of unknown others.

The views and sentiments expressed below are not new and reflect the position taken by many of us in WZO. We therefore publish it with the endorsement of the Chairman, President and Vice President of WZO.

**"You can muffle the drum, and you can loosen the strings of the lyre, but who shall command the skylark not to sing?"** Kahlil Gibran

### **'Conversion' is a distraction from the real issues facing Parsis**

At a well-attended meeting in Mumbai last month, with some *vada dastoorjies* present, resolutions were passed condemning 'conversion.' This should surprise no one: this is the traditional view. In any case, in the Parsi context, 'conversion' is a bogus issue. There are no 'missionaries' amongst us nor missionary zeal; and no one is waiting at the gates of our colonies or at the doors of our temples for 'conversion.'

The challenge presented by the social and demographic forces facing Parsis, especially after the significant migrations to the West, is altogether a different one. Having established matrimonial relationships with those of other faiths, many are looking for some way of keeping within the fold of family and community. It is worth reminding ourselves that those who 'marry out' do not automatically lose their religion - since the avowal of the Zoroastrian faith is a matter of individual choice - but they can lose access to the community.

This is why there is need to relax the exclusivity of the Parsis as evinced by the 'blessings' done by mobeds for interfaith marriages; the many navjotes of children of mixed marriages; by the way parents

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

accommodate to the children who marry 'out' so that they do not lose their children altogether; and by the actions of community associations that welcome these spouses and children. In this they are generally supported by friends and family and by sections of the clergy. Parsi ideology has not changed radically: what has changed is the practice, through informal adaptations and initiatives.

It is often the case, especially where there is a failure of far-sighted leadership, that the formal recognition of such changes comes after the informal adaptation has become commonplace. The leaders follow where the members have already furrowed a path.

Even as Parsis make adjustments in their family relationships and religious sensibilities, they usually do so without wanting to deliberately antagonise those who wish to maintain the status quo. Equally, those with strong reservations do make compromises and generally avoid creating conflict and divisions within the family. So far, the majority of our people have wisely assumed a 'live and let live' stance. Only a few have vented their fury against the inevitability of change. In general, there is tacit agreement that we are changing because the world is changing around us and not merely for the sake of change.

Put simply, those who profess a more open-minded and positive approach to the outside world are motivated by nothing less than love: love for their children, grandchildren, for the wider family and, in deed, the community. Underlying this is the love and pride for a wise and ethical religion. It is love that prompts each one to find an acceptable accommodation with the world outside in order to preserve the bonds of family, faith and community.

If we can empathise with this desire to cherish and preserve what we value, within a changing world, then it becomes clear that the current debate over 'conversion' is a distraction from the real choices facing Parsis.

This is not to say that 'conversion' is not an issue of both theological interest and of some immediate relevance to those in Iran and amongst Iranians and others abroad who wish to revert to their ancestral faith. The current controversy, it must be noted, is coloured by the notions of 'conversion' associated with the Abrahamaic and other religious traditions and shows little understanding of the central Zoroastrian precept of self-discovery and self-affirmation of faith which requires neither persuasion nor validation from a third party.

The so-called debate on 'conversion' also questions the legitimacy of performing the navjote ceremony of children from interfaith marriages. Yet the acceptance of children of interfaith marriages, into the Zoroastrian fold, is a long-established tradition. Any opposition to it is purely on the basis of gender, since if the man is the Zoroastrian parent, then a navjote is deemed to be acceptable. Thus the current bias is cultural and gender-specific and not based on religious tenets. Moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires that we revert to the ancient Zoroastrian teaching that both man and woman are equally responsible for their actions before Ahura Mazda.

Conversion of the 'alien other' is a bogus issue in the current Parsi context. This is about our own flesh and blood - whether we continue to cast out those who want to remain within the community. Ex-communication is the Damocles sword that has lost its edge: successive generations, since the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, have not been deterred by it. The real issue, then, is whether we have it in our hearts to open the doors of our community to the partners of the children we love and to their progeny, or do we turn our backs on them and thereby on our own brothers and sisters, children and grandchildren.



# WZOs Calendar of events for 2008



Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2008  
Dinner 7:00pm for 7:45pm  
At St Luke, Richmond

Nowruz Dinner/Dance with a Persian theme  
[Persian cuisine with a belly dancer and live music]

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May  
Starts at 6:00pm at SOAS  
Main building, London

The Eleventh Dasturji Dr Kutar Memorial Lecture  
given by Professor A D H Bivar, (SOAS) on  
*Mithraism & Zoroastrianism: some thoughts on  
prehistory of the religion*

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June  
Registration at 10:00am

Seminar on Zoroastrian History, Religion & Culture

Mr Shahpour Suren Pahlavi is an archaeologist  
from SOAS who will speak about the conversion of  
Zoroastrian shrines and temples in Iran to Islamic  
ones

Mr Kejia Yan is a Director & Senior Research  
Fellow at the Institute of Religious Studies,  
Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences in China  
and Mr Takeshi Aoki is a Lecturer at the Institute of  
Oriental Culture at Tokyo University. They will  
jointly be discussing presence of Zoroastrianism in  
China after the fall of the Sasanian monarchy.

Prof Stanley Insler a well-known scholar with his  
in-depth knowledge of the Gathas. The title of his  
talk will be *Truth or Consequences: Zarathushtra's  
Views on Personal Choice & Commitment*

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> August  
Dinner 7:00pm for 7:45pm

Shahenshahi Nowruz Dinner/Dance

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> September  
From 4:00pm to 6:00pm

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November  
Evening starts at 7:00pm

Gala Dinner Dance in aid of the WZO Gujarat  
Fund at the Gatwick Hilton Hotel



## WZO-ERSF supports California Zoroastrian Center in awarding four outstanding students

Dhunmai Dalal, Committee Member of WZO, reports ...

**Y**alda, the longest night of the year was celebrated a week earlier on December 15<sup>th</sup> 2007 by the California Zoroastrian Center with music, poetry, anecdotes and a traditional dinner. A large arrangement of fruit was offered to all the guests.

The Massiah Foundation founded by Dr Maseeh, a world celebrity in Nano Technology and founder of MEMS science at MIT was present for the Award Ceremony. A four member panel headed by Professor Nasrin Rahimieh chose the winners and she introduced them to the audience.

Appropriately on this occasion, the committee and the Board of Trustees of CZC arranged the Award Ceremony for four talented scholars who were awarded prizes donated by the Massiah Foundation and the Erach and Roshan Sadri Foundation.

The Erach and Roshan Sadri Foundation, a charity based in the United Kingdom, is primarily dedicated to giving to third world countries. However, on the urging and persuasion of the World Zoroastrian Organisation, and having noted WZO's competence in other fields of charity, gave a matching grant of US\$10,000. This was ERSF's first in the USA and one of their first donations towards higher education.

Mr Maseeh, a philanthropist, presented the awards to two Parsi students, Shireen Cama

and Natasha Demehri for their achievements. Dhunmai Dalal representing the WZO, presented the awards to two of the Iranian students, Venus Vakhshoori and Neekaan Oshidary for their accomplishments.

### Ms Shireen Farhad Cama

*Harvard University medical school, Yale University; BA with honors. Federation of Zoroastrian Association of North America scholar. Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York scholar. Paul Dudley White Traveling Fellowship and seminar in Global Health Equity, Share and Care Foundation Fellowship, Richter Fellowship, Heinz Family Scholarship, Yale Club of Pittsburgh Scholarship.*

### Ms Natasha Irani Demehri

*University of Florida, Biological Sciences, Director of health policy for American Medical Student Association, Work of Heart award; UF collegiate organization of the year, Golden key international honors society, 1st place; Orange county regional science & engineering fair.*

### Ms Venus Vakhshoori

*El Camino Real High School, 1st place US Academic Decathlon Division 1. Nation's highest scoring student. Honors; overall US Academic scholarship winner. Honors; overall Hilton scholarship.*

### Mr Neekaan Oshidary

*Stanford psychophysiology and clinical immunology, the Stephen Gerry memorial science award winner for outstanding performance in Chemistry. Honors; Saint Francis academic achievement. Elks national foundation, most valuable student scholarship award.*

Dhunmai spoke for the WZO and the ERSF on this evening, thanking the CZC for hosting the event. She showed her appreciation to the Massiah Foundation for their generosity and introduced the ERSF who contributed generously through the auspices of the WZO and to the joint donation to this scholarship award. She also gave a brief history of the WZO – its formation during the Iranian Revolution for emergency aid to Zoroastrians and its transition into a world organization for charitable work and timely aid in the areas of education, poor relief, healthcare, construction, maintenances, housing and emergency relief in the case of natural disasters. She appealed to the gathering for their continued support and donations.

Dhunmai congratulated the awardees and wished them well in the future. She concluded by showing her appreciation to Mr Mehrfar, Dr Salamati and members of the committee for inviting her and for their warm welcome.

The occasion was well planned, well attended and enjoyed by all.





L to R: Shireen Cama, Neekaan Oshidary & Venus Vakshoori



L to R: Natasha Demehri [the 4th recipient of the award], Dr Fariborz Maseeh and Prof Nasrin Rahimieh (photo courtesy Behram Deboo)



L to R : Prof Nasrin Rahimieh (Director of Jordan Center for Persian Studies at UC, Irvine), Mrs Shirin Sorooshian & Dr Fariborz Maseeh (Founder of Jordan Center and sponsor of Massiah Foundation)



Mrs Maseeh



Table of fruits for Yalda



Dhunmai Dalal

Photos courtesy of Phiroze Dalal



The World Zoroastrian Organisation  
135 Tennyson Road, South Norwood, London DE25 5NF  
Website [www.w-z-o.org](http://www.w-z-o.org)  
Charity No 1023334

## The Trustees of ERSF entrusts WZO with the largest donation to date

The World Zoroastrian Organisation is pleased to announce that the Trustees of the Erach and Roshan Sadri Foundation have entrusted WZO with further funds for three deserving projects in Iran and India.

The first project is with the Pourchista Foundation based in the UK and Yazd, Iran. £18,500 has been allocated towards the establishment of a Skills Centre and Senior Citizens Day Centre in Yazd, Iran. WZO has been supporting the Pourchista Foundation for many years with their Skills Centre. Approximately half the sum will be used to equip the new Senior Citizens Day Centre which is located in a magnificent house donated by the Zoroastrian philanthropist, Mehraban Zarthosthy.



Erach Sadri



Roshan Sadri

Following ERSF's donation last year, they have donated a further £37,000 for the Gujarat Farmers Project in India. This sum will be used towards the replacement of a further 10 mud and cow dung homes with brick built cottages for the poor rural Zoroastrian community.

ERSF have once again shown their confidence in WZO by providing financial support to set up the Erach and Roshan Sadri Foundation Academic Scholarship Grants, which will be administered by WZO. These grants are open to needy Zoroastrian students pursuing 1st degree/undergraduate and vocational studies in selected disciplines. They must also be residents of India, Pakistan or Iran and must pursue their higher education in their country of residence.

Selection for these grants will be based on financial need, academic records of educational achievements, extracurricular activities and their involvement in community service and affairs. The selection committee may request any information, which in its opinion is necessary for the processing of the applications. The decision of the committee for awarding the grants will be final.

These grants will be available from the start of the Academic year in the summer of 2008. Application forms can be downloaded from WZO's website. [www.w-z-o.org](http://www.w-z-o.org).

Applications for India should be forwarded to WZO Trust Funds at SHANTI, 5th Floor, 6 Banaji Street, Fort, Mumbai 400 001. India or email to [beedee@vsnl.com](mailto:beedee@vsnl.com)

Applications for Pakistan should be forwarded to Toxy Cowasjee at WZO Pakistan at 2A Mary Road, Bath Island, Karachi 75530, Pakistan or email [toxy39@attglobal.net](mailto:toxy39@attglobal.net)

Applications for Iran should be forwarded to World Zoroastrian Organisation at 135 Tennyson Road, London SE25 5NF. UK or email to [ersf\\_scholarship@w-z-o.org](mailto:ersf_scholarship@w-z-o.org).

**Darayus S Motivala**  
President, WZO

**26 February 2008**

World Zoroastrian Organisation is a registered charity, headquartered in the United Kingdom, which aims to assist Zoroastrians globally and to inform others about this great religion through its charitable, social and political activities. WZO has an International Board with representatives from around the world and enjoys charitable status in the UK, USA, India and New Zealand.

For further information on the World Zoroastrian Organisation,  
Please contact Mr Sam Bhiwandiwala, Chairman of WZO  
Telephone: +44 (0)1737 833 335  
Email: [Chairman@w-z-o.org](mailto:Chairman@w-z-o.org)



## WZO's UK committee member takes prompt action

Soonu Engineer a committee member, contacted the full committee, President of ZTFE and friends all over the world urging them to write promptly to BBC so as to make them aware of their error. - Ed.

*h*ere's a happy tale involving the BBC and lots of proactive Zoroastrians. For those of you who are into World Music, you probably follow the World Routes programme on Saturdays: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/worldmusic/>

In February, there was a two-part programme on Azerbaijani music. It was excellent, barring a brief mention of the Zarathushtrian era which the presenter, Lucy Duran, associated with the 'worship of fire.' One of us [Soonu] heard it and immediately rang the BBC.

As most of us know, we worship Ahura Mazda. We do not worship the fire; we worship before it. In the ritual context, the sacred fire transcends its physical existence and signifies, for the worshipper, the presence and the awareness of Ahura Mazda.

The charge of 'fire-worship' arises from a common misunderstanding which is sometimes a mere irritant but at other times, in more hostile lands, can be the pretext for harassment and worse. So an SOS was sent out and lots of people rang, emailed and even sent postal comments from all over the world. The idea was to stop anything else being broadcast along these lines the following Saturday and to ask the BBC to retract the statement. A letter was sent by the President of the WZO. Others were more informal, such as the one sent by my friend, Pheroza:

*'Hi Lucy Duran. Although you produce a good program, I wish to bring to your attention one major error which perhaps could have been avoided with in depth research. The ancient religion of the prophet Zarthusstra brought the idea of ONE God to humanity. The followers do NOT worship anyone or anything other than Ahura Mazda, the supreme being. Fire is symbolic, it purifies and sheds light thereby eradicating darkness...darkness symbolises ignorance and light, knowledge. You would be doing us Zoroastrians a service if on your program next, you were to clarify this. Thanks. Regards, Pheroza Sethna.'*

The campaign was a resounding success. The Director of the programme, Roger Short, sent this email to all who contacted him:

*'Many thanks for your e-mail to World Routes concerning Zoroastrians and Lucy Duran's comments about fire-worshipping. On behalf of the programme, I'd like to apologise for any offence caused by Lucy's comments and for the research that perhaps was not as thorough as it could have been.*

*As both these programmes are pre-recorded, it is not possible for Lucy to make an on-air apology, but I can assure you that the second programme has been double-checked and in fact edited to avoid this mistake being repeated.*

*Thank you for taking the time to write to us, and once again, apologies for any offence caused.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Roger*

*Senior Producer, BBC Radio 3*

*(World Routes, Charlie Gillett, Mary Ann Kennedy, Late Junction) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/>*

The Director General of the BBC, Mark Thompson replied to Darayus Motivala, President WZO, which is reproduced overleaf. Further the BBC had specifically corrected the misrepresentation by noting on its website that **'Zoroastrians are not fire-worshippers, as some Westerners wrongly believe.'**





From the Director-General

20 February 2008

Danyus Motivala  
President  
The World Zoroastrian Organisation  
135 Tetakson Road  
South Norwood  
London  
SE25 5NF

Dear Danyus

Thanks for your letter of 10 February regarding a recent edition of BBC Radio 3's *World Routes on Azerbaijan* which referred, briefly, to Zoroastrianism.

I have raised this matter with senior colleagues in Radio 3. While they note that the remark made by the presenter of the programme, Lucy Duran, was brief, and that that the programme was musical rather than theological in nature, they do appreciate that the comment did not accurately reflect the true nature of Zoroastrianism. They regret this over-simplification and assure you that they have taken note of your comments – which will certainly be borne in mind should the subject come up in any future programmes. Your letter has also been passed to the responsible editor and to the Head of Speech for Radio 3, for future reference.

As you may be aware, Zoroastrianism has been covered in greater depth across the BBC's outlets, including on [Radio 4](#) and on [BBC Online](#), which specifically corrects the misrepresentation referred to in your letter:

*Zoroastrians are not fire-worshippers, as some Westerners wrongly believe.*

Thank you for writing to me. I hope that my response has assured you of the BBC's commitment to the fair and accurate portrayal of all faiths in our programming.

Best wishes,

  
Mark Thompson





## An evening with Dr Jehan Bagli

Noshir J Umrigar, WZO UK Board member reports

**O**n 28<sup>th</sup> January the members of WZO UK Board and their spouses gathered together at the residence of Chairman Mr Sam Bhiwandiwalla for an informal discussion with Dr Jehan Bagli and his wife Freny. Dr Bagli was on his way back to Canada from India and made a special effort to break his journey, so he could meet us all and enlighten us with his wisdom.

Sammy introduced Dr Bagli in eloquent terms and spoke briefly about his illustrious career. Sammy stated that Dr Bagli has been a WZO Board member for a few years and currently holds the prestigious position of President of NAMC (North American Mobed Council). He is intimately involved with his local Zoroastrian Association in Ontario and also FEZANA. He is an ordained Zoroastrian priest and has been singularly instrumental in formulating and sustaining the widespread mobed community throughout North America. Furthermore he is a distinguished Research Fellow and consultant in the field of pharmaceuticals.

A humble and soft spoken Athornan, Dr Bagli's views on current problems facing the community were realistic. Dr Bagli emphasised the need for mobeds to come forward and assist the community by educating the younger generation (and also others) who are willing to perform some of the day to day formalities (Tarikat) of our Zoroastrian religion. This would not only prove beneficial at times of emergencies but would also give opportunity to laymen/ women to better understand the complexity of Mobedi and assist the priests to diligently focus on broader issues which need to be resolved if we are to survive in the western context. Currently there were five lay persons acting as Mobedyars in N America who have received training in the performance of Tarikats, serving the community where no mobeds are available.



Freny & Jehan Bagli

A booklet explaining this interaction is shortly to be published by NAMC and we eagerly await its release.

With a membership of over 100 mobeds in the North America Mobed Council, Dr Bagli in his sincerity and wisdom is attempting to anticipate the needs of the Zoroastrians in western societies through mobeds who are aware of the requirements of modern times, interact with common men and women and guide them through the complexity of life, without sacrificing the fundamental principles of our Zoroastrian religion.

The meeting ended with a scrumptious dinner prepared by Armaity Engineer and Ursula Bhiwandiwalla for which we were all most grateful.

We thank Sammy and Ursula for their ever generous hospitality and Dr Bagli and his dear wife Freny for all the trouble undertaken to enlighten us on a highly sensitive subject.





# WZO's Chairman, Sam Bhiwandiwalla & Mrs Bhiwandiwalla visit Karachi

Sammy Bhiwandiwalla shares his experience with the readers of Hamazor

**m**y decision to travel to Karachi last December promptly attracted hostility from various quarters including family, friends and strangely even the visa section of the Pakistan Embassy. "You're going to Karachi for what?" A holiday and to attend a wedding I replied. "Show me the wedding invitation" he retorted. Sorry but I didn't think I had to produce a wedding invitation to go to Karachi, came my answer. "Well then go one floor up and see the inspector. If he passes application you can go." Thankfully the inspector did pass our application gravely warning me that in future if I should go I must have proof of a wedding invitation. Even if I didn't have a wedding invitation don't people ever go to Karachi for a holiday?

Dire warnings followed from other quarters "you must be mad to go there with the political situation as it is". And so bravely or foolishly depending upon ones point of view we took of on 13<sup>th</sup> December.

enormous reception areas, indoor sports facilities, a gym and an open air swimming pool within its vast grounds. Sadly, with



The Pavillion and open air swimming pool

declining numbers of Zoroastrians and under utilisation it is now a shadow of its glorious past. Karachi like Mumbai owes a lot to generations of Parsis who set up some of the finest academic and community institutes, Baugs for housing and successful businesses and industries.

In the evening Toxy & Cyrus Cowasjee had graciously hosted a cocktail party at the KPI so Ursula and I could meet a cross section of the community. This was followed by a power point presentation, reflecting 28 years of service to the Zoroastrian community by WZO. The venue was the perfect occasion for us to declare our gratitude and sincere thanks for the constant support WZO receives from the community in Pakistan and also for us to thank Toxy on her home ground for her efforts in looking after the community's interests and her dedication and commitment to WZO since 1994.

The following day we were transported to two of Karachi's premier educational seats of learning, The Mama Parsi Girls' Secondary School and the Bai Virbaijee Soparivala Parsi High School both built by the Parsis. Each fulfils the education needs



KPI - the main building

Barely had I set foot on terra firma when I was whisked away to the Karachi Parsi Institute a grand building where the first Jamsedi Navroze function was held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1894. This institute has served as a community centre for generations with its

of 1963 girls (in two shifts) and 1012 boys but today there are merely 48 girls and 16 boys being Zoroastrian children, attending in both these schools. Some Parsi children do attend a number of private schools offering GCE Cambridge Examinations but the numbers are still quite small.

This year Mama School (est 1918) will celebrate its 90<sup>th</sup> year of existence. The School motto, "Let Humility, Charity, Faith and Labour, Light our Path" seems so relevant in these troubled times. Some 160 students pass through its portals each year. Primary and Secondary education to Matriculation or Cambridge levels is provided by this outstanding school. The Principal, Zarine T Mavalvala together with Roda Boatwalla guided us through the various classes with displays of students creative skills over the years. The school curriculum embraces the arts and languages to physics, chemistry, biology and computer studies etc. Barely a subject of interest to young creative minds is missing. Indeed a group of XI graders had prepared a set of experiments in the Chemistry lab and each one individually demonstrated various chemical reactions and their results with total confidence and joy.

My sincere appreciation of Zarine and all her staff for their total commitment and devotion towards providing an education to the wider community in such elegant and historical surroundings.

Bai Virbaijee Soparivala Parsi High School (BVS) was established in 1859 and is the precursor to the Mama Parsi Girls School where once both boys and girls were admitted. The school motto, "Towards That Best Light" keeps the flame of achievement and motivation burning in each generation of students that clamour to join the school. Sadly the number of Parsi children at the school is only 16.



The Mama Parsi Girls' Secondary School

The Principal Mrs Kermin Parekh bubbles with commitment having just taken over the overwhelming task of improving discipline and engaging young minds towards higher academic achievement. There are also plans to have a new block of classes



Bai Virbaijee Soparivala Parsi High School

adjacent to the main school building thereby extending the schools facilities. According to Kermin the large library is in urgent need of additional reading material as it is somewhat bereft of adequate books. With education levels to Matriculation and the recently introduced 'O' Level Cambridge section great strides are being taken to improve academic performance. My sincere thanks Kermin for showing us around the excellent facilities at BVS and we wish her and her teaching staff continued success for the future.

Before our departure to London we had the opportunity of meeting Mr Byram Avari, Chairman of the Karachi Parsi Anjuman Trust Fund, who so kindly arranged to entertain us in his absence at the superb Dynasty Chinese restaurant in Avari Towers. Behram and I briefly discussed WZO and community matters. My sincere thanks to Byram for a cordial reception and finding the time to meet Ursula and me in spite of his busy schedule.

My grateful thanks to Cyrus and Toxy Cowasjee who spent an inordinate amount of time showing us around Karachi and entertaining us at some of the finest restaurants in town.

To cap it all we were treated to traditional turkey with all the additions, polishing it of with chocolate mouse and their daughter Cyra's mouth watering bread and butter pudding on Christmas day at their lovely home. Apart from the wedding which was three days of enjoyment and gluttony, the rest of our stay was spent similarly.

My thanks also to Dolly and Filly Wania for silently tolerating our stay with them and maintaining a ready supply of Imodium, Nergish and Sam Jamasji, Ardeshir Cowasjee, Farida and Kelly Patel, Spenta and Darius Kandawalla, and many others who made our stay a truly memorable one.



## Obituary of the late Mr Common Sense

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape.

He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as: Knowing when to come in out of the rain; why the early bird gets the worm; Life isn't always fair; and maybe it was my fault. Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6 year old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition. Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children.

It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an Elastoplasts to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion. Common Sense lost the will to live as the Ten Commandments became contraband; churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims. Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault. Common Sense finally gave up the will to live, after a woman failed to realise that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents, Truth and Trust; his wife, Discretion; his daughter, Responsibility; and his son, Reason. He is survived by his 4 stepbrothers; I Know My Rights, I Want It Now, Someone Else Is To Blame, and I'm A Victim.

Not many attended his funeral because so few realised he was gone. ■■■

[sent to me by my son Nader who shares whatever he feels will interest me. The "obituary" so significant today, appeared in the London Times, date unknown, possibly 31 Dec 2007. - Ed]



## The real Nou Rouz of 2008 (3746) in Brussels & Paris 2009 in Chicago & Louisville Kentucky

by fariborz rahnamoon

**n**ou Rouz is one of the only scientific New Year celebrated in the world today. Ferdowsi in the Shahnameh tells us that Shah Jamshid celebrated the first New Year (Sal-e-Nou) on the first day of spring after the Ice Age on the day called Ormazd in the month of Farvardin.

“SAR E SAL E NOU ORMAZD O FARVADIN” : 3733 years ago Zarathushtra the sage of ancient Iran coined the word “Nou Rouz” which means the “New Day” as against ‘Sal e Nou’ which means “New Year”. It was to record the phenomenon that occurred on the New Year of 1725 BC in Sistan where Zarathushtra had his planetarium.

In 1725 BC the vernal equinox coincided with sunrise at Sistan whereby the New Year and the New Day began at the same time. This phenomenon happens every year at different point on earth but repeats at about the same longitude once in about a millennium.

According to recorded history on the spring equinox of 487 BC Nou Rouz was celebrated at Takth-e-Jamshid (Persepolis), when the first rays of the rising sun lighted the square stone set in the central hall of the Apadana palace. This celebration was no coincidence, the Persians scholars and astronomers had pre calculated this event and Darius the Great had designed the Apadana for this great event.

After the fall of the Sasanian Empire the Arab invaders enforced their lunar calendar upon the Iranians; they destroyed libraries and burnt books, they killed the learned and cut the finger and hands of Persian scholars who attempted to write.<sup>1</sup> The ancient knowledge was lost and today Nou Rouz (New Day) has become synonymous with Sal e Nou (New Year).

The fact is that Nou Rouz or the coinciding of the sunrise with the equinox happens every year at a different location on earth and the ancient followers of Zarathushtra celebrated it as a special event whenever it occurred in their kingdom.

Today with Persians spread all over the world it is time to revive the ancient festival with new vigour and introduce it to the world. This coming Nou Rouz on 20 March 2008, the equinox will coincide with sunrise in Europe. At the time of the equinox the sun will rise at about 4 degrees longitude. This happens to be close to Brussels and Paris. The equinox will be at 05:48:19 hours GMT/UTC while the sun will rise in Brussels at 05:45 and in Paris at 05:53 GMT/UTC.

The Nou Rouz of 2009 will happen on the North American continent where the sun will rise at about 86 degrees longitude at the time of the equinox (11:43 GMT/UTC). This happens to pass close to Chicago where the sun will rise at 11:54GMT/UTC and Louisville Kentucky where the sun will rise at 11:46GMT/UTC.

Nou Rouz of 2010 will happen in the ocean and 2011 in Mongolia and China so let us come together and revive Nou Rouz in its true colours for the next two years for it occurs where our communities reside. Thus reviving the ancient knowledge and showcasing the wisdom of the great sage Zarathushtra, with the hope that knowledge and wisdom prevail over superstition and that peace and love reigns over upheaval and hatred.

For the skeptics, there is further proof of the ancient wisdom of the Iranians. Zarathushtra had also calculated the first meridian and called it “Nim Rouz”, which means “Mid Day”. The Meridian of Zarathushtra was located in ancient Sistan at 62 degrees longitude. Even today that location in Afghanistan is called the Nimruz Province.

When it is mid day at the Meridian of Zarathushtra (62 degrees longitude) there is sunshine from Japan the land of the rising sun to the western tip of Africa. What better location can there be for an intellectual and scientific meridian.<sup>2</sup>

### Notes

1. “Genocide of the Zarathushties” at <http://www.ancientiran.com>
2. To see this natural phenomena live on the internet at 12 noon Afghanistan time check <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/sunearth.html>

# The 4<sup>th</sup> World Zoroastrian Youth Congress – 27<sup>th</sup> December 2007 to 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2008, Australia

by zane byramji

## A diary of the happenings

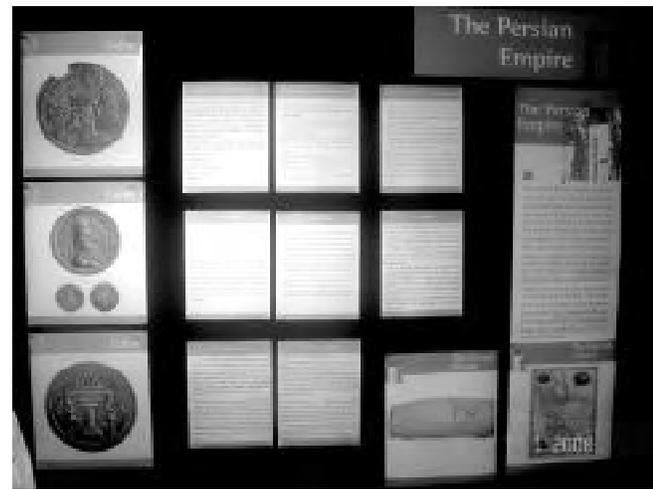
**Day 1:** We arrived at Melbourne airport looking around for a group of loud Parsis to take the bus with the University of Ballarat which is an hour and a half away from Melbourne. When we arrived at the University, we were greeted by a group of

volunteers and were given a bag full of congress goodies and souvenirs. There were numerous cottages (units) all over campus which consisted

of ten bedrooms, a living room, kitchen, bathrooms and a laundry room. We were assigned to units and rooms where we dumped our luggage and then headed over to the dining hall for *dar chaval* and *patia*. After lunch we started mingling and getting to know each other before attending the Jashan ceremony followed by fish and chips for dinner. For the first few days we usually ran short of food since the organizers underestimated Parsi appetites, it was also difficult for one man to cope when cooking for over 300 people.

On our first night Zoroastrians from all over the world performed dances and skits for us ending with a hilarious video put together by the Sydney community. The video was a impersonation of Steve Irwin (The Crocodile Hunter aka The Zoroastrian Hunter) who spotted some Zoroastrians in the wild going about their everyday lives. He then

manages to tackle one of them, pin them to the ground and describe their ceremonial outfits and facial features focusing mainly on the Parsi nose. He also spotted



Rovina's art work

some Parsi mothers over-nurturing their sons even at the age of 30, which is why they never leave their parents house! All this was topped by Australia's best



Zoroastrian Expo

female solo artist – Farita, who wrote and sang the official theme song for the congress, *The Light*.

**Day 2:** In the mornings we would have breakfast in our units and then attend various lectures and presentations held by guest speakers from all over the world and congress delegates. On our second day the Zoroastrian Expo was launched by Firoza Mistree, and the designing of the prints/posters/banners that were used was executed by Rovina Ghadially. Her work was praised and appreciated by everyone. The Congress Olympics took place throughout the day which was followed by some Salsa dancing lessons to help digest our food. There was also a boomerang painting competition and some ice breakers (getting-to-know people games). A Bush Dance party followed the BBQ dinner, where the Australian DJ soon realized that Parsis somehow seemed to enjoy the 80's music that is usually played at lagan/navjotes ... I wonder why!

**Day 3:** Started off with lectures on various topics pertaining to our religion, tradition, culture and the reasons behind a number of religious rituals and practices. These lectures were usually carried out by Khojeste Mistree and James Russell (a scholar from Harvard University). Lunch was delicious prawn curry-chaval in the sweltering heat of close to 40 degrees, but we didn't really care since the food was amazing and we were heading off to the beach. After an hour of bus ride, which was the highlight of the congress for me, due to the constant source of laughter and entertainment provided by the Sydney Parsis; we arrived at the beach not realizing that the weather had drastically changed. It was 16 degrees and no one had brought along any warm clothing. I have never shivered for as long as I did that day, as there was no shelter from the chilly winds. The highlight was when the food (Pizza's and KFC) arrived and we all huddled up in line waiting to grab a slice of pizza or a leg of chicken.

**Day 4:** At the animal sanctuary we fed the kangaroos, wallabies and koalas. After that we headed over to Sovereign Hill, a gold mine which has a rich history and is the reason why the town of Ballarat exists. We

were discovering the place for five hours and then ended our day with a sound and light show which was not too impressive putting everyone to sleep. On our way back to the university campus our bus driver was kind enough to take us through the small town of Ballarat which was filled with old buildings and architecture.



Sovereign Hill Gold Mine

**Day 5:** Started off with a cooking competition for the



Rovina Ghadially & Zane Byramji discuss community issues and solutions along with other congress delegates, courtesy Hoshedar J Cooper

boys followed by a chalk/rangoli competition for the girls. Rovina Ghadially decided to take part with a girl from India and to no surprise at all, she won! The Youth Yakka sessions took place that afternoon were discussion sessions and presentations held by Zoroastrian youth (delegates). The patrons (people older than 40) were allowed to attend these sessions but could not take part in the discussions or ask questions. This was followed by many lectures and an interesting powerpoint presentation by Feroza Mistree about Persepolis and Ancient Persia. We ended off with group sessions where the youth were divided into ten groups and each group was given a separate question along with 30 minutes to come up with a solution to particular issues faced by Zoroastrian communities all over the world. Our opinions were then presented to the audience followed by a question and answer session.



Rovina's winning chalk work

It was New Years Eve and everyone was preparing to look glamorous for an evening of 'lagan nu bhonu', musical performances and dancing. Kobad Bhavnagiri (Steve Irwin) sang 'New York, New York' for us with the talented Yuhan Reporter on the clarinet. This was followed by a performance by Farita, who had been slaving away to decorate the hall for all the functions.

**Day 6:** Many Zoroastrians from all over the world spoke about their lives in different countries and how they view our religion. Mehernosh Bhada from Karachi was also present and he spoke with great confidence. Youth Yakka sessions took place in the morning followed by a Ghambar. We had a BBQ dinner followed by a Persian/Traditional Night where many Irani Zoroastrians wore their traditional outfits; Parsi women were in their saris and a number of men arrived in their sudra/kusti or in drag wearing their mothers' garas.

**Day 7 & 8:** Being our last day, we ended off with a lecture by a prominent Australian sculptor who created and named a very famous statue in Melbourne, *Zoroaster*.



Iranian delegates dressed in traditional Iranian clothing. This congress saw the largest, over 40 delegates, number of youth attending from Iran. Courtesy Hoshedar J Cooper

[Peter Schipperheyn - Hamazor Issue 2/2006 pp 41-45]. That night there was a costume party followed by dinner and like every other night we had our last get-together at one of our units. The next morning after the farewell ceremony, Rovina and I, headed over to Melbourne for a few days.

**My impressions:** A few days before attending the Congress I was not looking forward to it at all. I was expecting too many dry religious discussions and boring social events. To my surprise things were quite the opposite. I actually enjoyed spending most of my day attending Youth Yakka sessions and lectures held by guest speakers from all

over the world. There were many things about our religion that I was not aware of; these sessions gave me great insight into numerous religious topics and subjects that may seem taboo in our local community. I feel that Karachi lacks resources which could help us acquire a deeper understanding of our religion and that there are no formal channels for discussion between the youth and our community elders regarding numerous community issues.

This was the first time a World Youth Congress had been organized by an individual and not a Zoroastrian Society/Committee. Most people were quite disappointed with the fact that the food always ran out and the implementation of plans or sticking to a timetable seemed close to impossible. It was only when volunteer delegates decided to help out and dedicate all their time and effort towards assisting the organizers that things finally fell into place. All in all, these complications did not really affect my "congress experience" since I became close to so many interesting people in a matter of days and returned home with a bag full of fond memories.

I'm sure majority of the people were Parsi but this congress had the highest number of Zoroastrians directly from Iran than any other congress.

The next Youth Congress is in Vancouver, Canada, in 2009 and I would highly recommend it to the youth since there is no better way to interact with other Zoroastrians and make friends from all over the world. Without a doubt, I can safely say that this was the best vacation I have ever had!

Glimpses of the Congress available on [http://youtube.com/watch?v=d2uYKYWh\\_o0](http://youtube.com/watch?v=d2uYKYWh_o0)



Zane Byramji is 25 years old and currently resides in Karachi with his family. He has a keen interest in organizing social events and is an active member of the Parsi Pakistan Collegiate Association. He graduated with a degree in Finance and Economics from the University of Toronto in 2006, and is currently working as a Business Consultant with a local firm. In his spare time, Zane pursues his love for outdoor activities, sports and most recently a desire to travel the world.

# WZCC Global AGM in Pune



An official report from <http://www.wzcc.net>

The Zarathushti community has been at the forefront of pioneering entrepreneurship in India for over 200 years. Sir Jamshedji Jeejeebhoy was called the Merchant Prince of Mumbai, the Wadias were the first shipbuilders, and Jamsetji Tata started making steel despite being ridiculed by the British. Today, we're celebrating the launch of the Nano by Ratan Tata! Not just business, but the Zarathushti spirit of enterprise has touched all of society's concerns – medical, educational, social, cultural – with a host of public service institutions.

The **World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC)**, a global body for entrepreneurs and professionals, started in 2000, hosted a two-day event in Pune (Jan 12/13, 2008), to celebrate the Zarathushti spirit of enterprise.

Flagging off the event was a factory visit to **Tata Motors**, where the sophisticated manufacturing process, complimented with superlative arrangements, made it a morning to remember.

A Gala Night was held on Saturday at the Ladies' Club, where the WZCC's Honorary Membership was conferred upon

**Dr J J Irani**, former Tata Steel MD and Director, Tata Sons. In his keynote address, Dr Irani stressed, "Vision without action is a mere dream, action without vision is a waste of time, but vision with action can change the world."

At the start of the evening, **Adi Engineer**, Pune Chapter Chair, asserted, "Enterprise is the soul of growth for the community and country. This is a wonderful time for Zarathushti youth to come to the forefront of enterprise and fulfill the promise made by our forefathers of enriching society like the proverbial pinch of sugar in the glass of milk!" **Bomy Boyce**, WZCC President, said the WZCC has become a conduit for

"opportunities unlimited". He elaborated, "Every time I talk to someone, a new idea crops up. The pool of ideas is so rich that we're sitting on a pot of gold." **Rohinton Rivetna**, Immediate Past President, cautioned: "The Zarathushti spirit of enterprise is in a state of slumber. We need to awaken the giant." **Minoo Shroff**, President of the India Chamber, urged budding entrepreneurs to break out of their shell. "After all, everybody began small," he explained.

**Dr K B Grant**, one of the country's most eminent doctors, was awarded the WZCC's Lifetime Achievement Award. He revealed the secret of his success: "Nothing is impossible. Why are we pessimistic about our community? We still have the fire in us!"

**Phil Madon**, Australia Chapter Chair, while outlining the process for the WZCC Annual Recognition Awards, reiterated: "No dreamer is ever too small – no dream is ever too big." The Annual Recognition Awards were conferred upon Dr Roshan Bhappu (Outstanding Zarathushti Professional), Khodi Irani (Outstanding Zarathushti Entrepreneur) and Shayan Italia. Originally from Pune, **Khodi Irani**, now settled in the US with his own thriving engineering business, was delighted to have come down to personally accept the honour. He confessed: "Entrepreneurship is a way of life and a cocktail of belief, confidence, a great idea, lack of resources, and many sleepless nights! The evolution of Zarathushti enterprise comes from Zarathushti philanthropy. Years ago, the late Jehangir Daruwalla donated money for engineering seats at Sangli and countless Zarathushti engineers like me owe our careers to him."

Adding a touch of entertainment was actor **Bomi Dotala** of 'Munnabhai ...' fame, with his lovely wife, **Dolly**, and their talented team, bringing the house down with their Adi Marazban-inspired skits. A sumptuous buffet dinner followed.

The next morning, January 13, saw the WZCC's daylong conclave of businesspersons and professionals with interactive sessions, networking and interest group discussions, at the spanking Ruby Hall Clinic conference facility, with CEO **Bomi Bhote** welcoming the WZCC delegates.

An inspired session on entrepreneurship was presided over by WZCC Vice President **Kersi Limathwalla**, India Director **Dadi Mistry**, Pune Chapter Chair **Adi Engineer** and North Texas Chapter Chair **Firdosh Mehta**. Post-lunch, dynamic group interactions across varied interest groups like manufacturing, services, finance, and so on, moderated by **Zareen Karani Aroz**, saw several business connections being explored by WZCC members.

**Zarine Commissariat** ably compered the event on both days, and WZCC's Directors, along with several participating Chapter Chairs and delegates from all over the world, pitched in with their inputs. However, the resounding success of the event was thanks to the untiring efforts of the committed team of the Pune Chapter, with several young members volunteering their time and talent.

Commending the WZCC for its efforts in organizing the Global AGM in Pune, and applauding the Zarathushti spirit of enterprise, **Sonia Gandhi**, in an officially released statement, said: "Businesses run by Zoroastrians stand out for their generous philanthropy, their strong sense of social responsibility, and their desire to be involved in nation building." Congratulatory messages were also received from **Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's** office and from Industry Minister, **Kamal Nath**.



*"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high  
Where knowledge is free and the world has not been broken  
up into fragments by narrow domestic walls  
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way  
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit  
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country  
awake."* Rabindranath Tagore

## “Coming Together to Work Together Roundtable”

January 15, 2008, at Mancherji Joshi Hall of the Athornan Madressa, Dadar, Mumbai

[Dolly Dastoor, Editor FEZANA *Journal* shares with *Hamazor* what she writes for the Spring 2008 issue of the *Journal*]

**O**n January 15, 2008, over 50 people from USA/Canada, UK, Iran, Australia, and India came together at the third round table in Mumbai, at the Mancherji Joshi Hall, Dadar for discourse and action for a better tomorrow for our worldwide community. Remembering the lesson of the “Barsom” twigs from our Yasna rituals (denoting strength in togetherness), we know we can accomplish much by working together.

The first “Coming Together Roundtable” [FEZANA *Journal*, Fall 2005/Hamazor Issue 3/05 pp 16-17] was held in London on June 28, 2005, at the Seventh World Congress. At this Roundtable, leaders of Zarathushti organizations collectively developed a vision, and a list of “Issues, Challenges and Projects”. The Second Roundtable was held in Mumbai on January 8, 2007 [FEZANA *Journal*, Spring 2007, Hamazor Issue 1/07 pp14-17 & Parsiana, August 21, 2007] to follow up on these and other items affecting our global community. At Roundtable 2008, the outcomes of Roundtable 2007, were discussed, new issues/projects, were discussed and action items and assignments were developed.

The purpose of these Roundtables is to “Come Together and Work Together” in the spirit of Hamazori. As a “Community Without Borders” in today's shrinking world, ease of travel and communication afford us opportunities to Come Together which were un-thought of in earlier ages.

The day opened with a Benediction and presentation on “Hamazori” by Er Dr Ramiyar Karanjia followed by opening

remarks and background to the Coming Together and Working Together Roundtables by Rohinton Rivetna.

The following points, were discussed at the meeting:

- Self-Introductions and General Comments by Participants
- Global networking - Yazdi Tantra
- World Congress RFP - Rustom Kevala
- Interfaith and UN programs - Behram Pastakia
- Coordination of Welfare Program - Dinshaw Tamboly
- World wide Service Program - Behram Pastakia
- Follow up and coordination – Parsi Resource Group and Freyaz Shroff
- Cultural Projects - Homi Dhalla
- Zarathushti Pravasis, Duties, Rights and Privileges- Behram Pastakia
- Network of Mobeds – Parsi Resource Group (PRG)
- Network of Youth /Passing the Torch to the Next Generation - PRG
- Infrastructure Breakdown/Rebuild - PRG
- Interfaith Marriages
- Cultivation of Ethic of Collective Giving
- Code of Civil Conduct/Civility
- Establishing local mandals in Mumbai

Significant strides were made:

Commitments were made from among the participants of the Roundtable, to fund one administrative staff person to handle Roundtable follow up work. With matching sponsorship from Minoo Shroff, Chair BPP, enough funds were pledged to support one staff person for two years, to work on Roundtable and WZCC work. Yazdi Tantra (of On-Lyne Systems, Mumbai) has offered to set up a link to “Coming Together Roundtable” at [www.zoroastrians.net](http://www.zoroastrians.net) website, which he hosts.

It was gratifying to see the sense of cooperation expressed by all the participants. Thanks were expressed to Er Dr Ramiyar Karanjia and trustees of the Mancherji Joshi Hall of the Dadar Athornan Madressa for providing the excellent

facilities of the Madressa, to Jimmy Mistry and his volunteers from PRG - for their administrative help and for taking notes. [Source: Rohinton Rivetna]



## Decoding the longevity DNA of Parsis – an Avestagenome Project

*Business Line*, Mumbai, 24 February 2008 carries this news ...

The Avestagenome project, that seeks to plot the genetic and medical database of the Parsi community, expects to start its Mumbai-leg of the study this April.

The project would open a base in Mumbai, the centre with the largest Parsi population, for voluntary collection of blood samples from the community, said Dr Viloo Morawala Patell, Founder and Managing Director of Bangalore-based Avesthagen, the biotechnology company that embarked on this five-year, Rs 125-crore project last March. About 2,500 blood samples have been collected from Hyderabad, Navsari and Surat, Dr Patell told *Business Line*. The company has been in touch with the Parsi Panchayat, besides exploring other alternatives to set up a base that would be close to the community, as it proceeds with the project. The aim is to collect up to 10,000 samples by the year-end from Mumbai and other cities, she said.

With Parsis showing high levels of longevity, the project seeks to undertake genetic studies to examine the basis of the longevity, besides identifying genes that may be linked to age-related neurological conditions such as Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s. The study will also focus on two cancers, including breast cancer, she said. The aim is to come out with personalised healthcare for the community, that could also give health-related indicators for other communities, she explained.

[Hamazor highlighted the work of Dr Patell and the Avestagenome project in Issue 2/07 pp47-48]





## WZCC Seminar on Leadership in Negotiation & Bargaining on 26 January 2008

From the Chair of WZCC, UK – Shernaz Engineer

Professor Madan M Pillutla holds the Chair of the Department of Organisational Behaviour at the London Business School. For one day, at the Zoroastrian Centre, members of the WZCC were privileged to be taken through the fundamental principles of negotiation and bargaining by the Professor, who is one of the leading authorities on the subject. Those present were impressed by the simplicity and clarity of the exposition and the interactive method used by Madan (this is what he asked us to call him) to keep us engaged and focused. The purpose of this article is to set out the key learning points gained rather than describe the interesting and interactive process through which we absorbed the messages and practiced some of the skills.

Negotiation is a life skill – something we need to acquire whether we are in the business world or not. It is about getting the other person to see your point of view and to be able to have an influence on their thinking or action. However, there has to be reciprocity and the process of negotiation involves a search for a common value.

The best negotiating style one can adopt is to be oneself. This is both about being authentic and being comfortable about ones behaviour. You do not have to assume a particular style or emulate someone known to be a successful persuader. You want to be yourself – but with more skills at your disposal.

The best negotiating outcomes are achieved by those who are prepared before they go to the negotiating table. So the pre-negotiation stage is a vital one. The first thing you need to be clear about is what you want, what the benefit is that you are looking for and what your alternatives are. The best alternative you have is your

‘bottom line’ – anything less than that and you can walk away.

Preparation also requires that you are aware of all the parties involved or affected by the decisions you may reach. You also need to understand the value you can offer the other party and what they can get elsewhere: you should be aware of the other party’s alternatives and ‘bottom line’. Getting this information is the hard part. During negotiations, this requires the ability to probe and ask questions in a structured manner. Asking the right questions and in the right way is a skill. So is careful listening. This also helps you to gauge the right moment to make an intervention.

There is a distinction between ‘distributive negotiations’ and ‘integrative negotiation’. With the former, there is a fixed prize or amount and each party tries to maximise their gain. Inevitably, one party gains and the other loses. Madan urged that we engage in ‘integrative’ negotiations where ‘parties can increase the benefits available to each side by capitalising on differences in the parties’ preferences.’

People concentrate on getting a good outcome for themselves and conflate this with reaching an agreement. The two are not always the same. However, it is important to consider how the outcome might affect relationships because if the other party goes away unhappy, you won’t have a relationship and that will mean difficulties in implementing what has been negotiated. We need also to be clear in advance how important it is for us to maintain a relationship and how much we are willing to give up in the bargaining process to maintain or get the relationship we want.

The process of negotiation is as much a contributory factor to the sense of

satisfaction derived by the parties involved as is the nature of the final outcome. The process must therefore be one which shows due regard for the sensitivities and interests of the other party. This involves knowing the norms of the interaction, i.e. how business is normally done in that environment. This could mean not raising some issues explicitly in the first instance or being aware of who normally makes the first proposal. Handling relationships with care also requires that you learn about socio-cultural issues. Negotiating with those who are from a different culture does not require that you be like them but some cultural-awareness is essential.

Following an exercise where the buyer and seller tried to get the best deal for their company, people were surprised to learn that the first offer you make (in this case a price) is going to have a significant impact on the final settlement. The first offer, or 'first anchor' in the jargon, is crucial. Of course, a ridiculous or unreasonable first offer may result in putting an end to negotiations but it is not rash, say as a seller, to ask for a high offer. 'People make estimates by starting from an initial anchor value and adjusting from there to yield a final answer.' Where you start from, ie. the power of your first offer, is going to determine where you will eventually land! Trying to be reasonable with an initially modest asking price will result in something much less than what you could have got.

The session on the psychology of influencing was complex and we cannot do justice to it here. There were some useful, practical lessons to be gained from it. To influence others we need to think carefully about how we structure the message; how we construct relationships with those we seek to influence; how we create a context for those messages and win commitment to our position.

When building relationships, we tend to identify with those with whom we share 'superficial markers of similarity'. This is our 'ego-centric bias' which makes us more responsive to praise and flattery than to

criticism. We also tend to like or favour those who appear to us as being attractive or successful. Of course, we are not aware of this bias which can be picked up in 'Implicit Attitude Tests'.

In trying to persuade, we need to frame our information in ways that are memorable. If your message triggers an emotion, it will be better remembered; as is also the case if it is conveyed through pictures, stories and the promise of minimising losses.

The context we have to set for the winning argument or product is the 'social proof' that we have already convinced others. There is the 'power of conformity' that attracts more conformity! It also helps – and can be the vital factor – if an influential person can endorse it.

The day ended with an analysis of how Henry Fonda, in the 1957 classic, 'Twelve Angry Men', persuaded the jury not to convict the defendant. We learnt about the tactics and strategy of negotiation through the interactions in the jury room. If all learning could be imparted in this entertaining way, we wouldn't have school and college drop-outs. Perhaps Professor Madan should persuade the educators.



*Shernaz Engineer is Managing Director of the Verity Group. Born in Karachi, Pakistan, came to the UK in 1966 and began her career in the recruitment industry at 19. Rising as a director, in 1993 she established her own legal recruitment consultancy. While networking with fellow professionals, she identified a means of diversification in the education sector. Verity Education began to offer supply teachers to schools in and around London in 1995, growing larger in 2004 when another agency was absorbed.*

*Shernaz is active in the Zoroastrian community in the UK, and is Chair of the Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce-UK Chapter. She is a trustee of 'Learning for Life', a charity, promoting primary education for girls in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, and is board member for a number of organisations.*

*Her latest venture is a legal transcription service, based in India, to serve her UK clients. Her entrepreneurial skills were recognised when she was a finalist for the 'Asian Women of Achievements Award' and was awarded the 'London Day Business Award' by Ken Livingstone for making a difference to life in London.*





## FEZANAs Zarathushti Team at the United Nations: 52nd Commission on the Status of Women

by farah minwalla

**O**n February 29, 2008 Zoroastrian delegates representing FEZANA, the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, participated in the 52<sup>nd</sup> Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, USA. Representing FEZANA was Mantreh Atashband, Afreed Mistry and Shekufeh Zonji (all from Toronto, Canada) who lead in a group discussion titled, *“Technology and Private Sector bringing solution in Financing to Impoverished Communities”*. The panel spoke on concrete ideas concerning developmental work and demonstrated how certain NGOs and the private sector, particularly microfinancing, can work together to bring financial services to rural communities. The panel highlighted the success of the ICICI Bank in India and how such forms of technology such as cell phones play a role in poverty alleviation and the limitations inherent in such interventions.

Speaker Mantreh Atashband, spoke on the magnitude an NGO in a rural community, HIV/AIDS, violence against women, and gender equity. In her presentation, she highlighted how effective microfinancing and community programming resulted in a dramatic reduction in rates of violence against women. Speaker Afreed Mistry discussed the various ways in which internet technology is being used in the rural villages of India. Mistry also spoke on India’s largest private sector bank, ICICI, who has contributed to alleviating poverty by providing small loans to the rural women, empowering them to lift themselves out of poverty. Speaker Shekufeh Zonji, addressed her case studies from a village in Mexico and painted a vivid picture on the importance of understanding a woman’s context when participating in any form of intervention. She



L to R: Shekufeh Zonji, Homi Gandhi, Mantreh Atashband, Gautam Ivatury, an expert on microfinance [from The Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP)], Farah Minwalla and Afreed Mistry

showed how women in this Mexican village are caught in a complex web of internal and external oppression characterized by acute poverty, domestic violence, and high illiteracy.

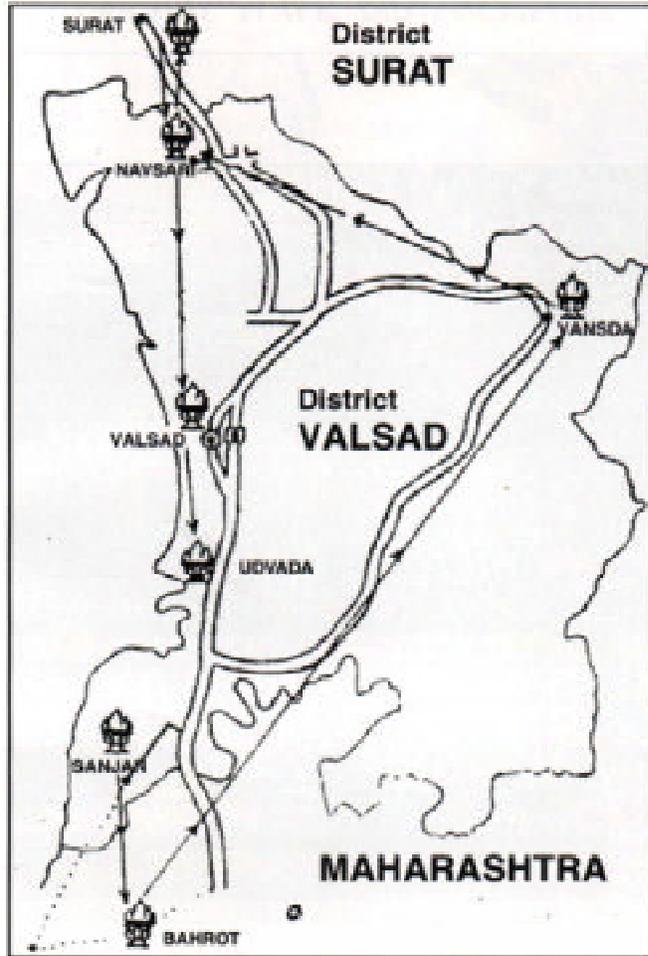
Powerful examples from across the world were presented by the panelists who discussed innovative ways in which empowering financial services have been and can be provided to rural communities. ■■■■

Having been a ‘Youthfully Speaking’ columnist for the FEZANA Journal for the past three years, Farah Minwalla is a college freshman in New York City pursuing a degree in Journalism. Farah writes for three different magazines on the state, national, and international levels. Farah writes on a broad range of subjects for national magazines and continues to progress her passion for writing and enthusiasm for reporting the news. In the future, she sees herself writing for Newsweek and Vibe Magazine and hopes to emphasize community service and faith throughout her articles. One day Farah aspires to work for the United Nations as a humanitarian worker and build schools for children in rural parts of India and Africa. She hopes to see the Zoroastrian



community grow in all parts of the world through good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.

SHREE IRANSHAH'S JOURNEY



Sanjan..... to ..... Udvada

Sanjan	669 years
Bahrot Caves	12 years (1393 - 1405 AD)
Vansda Forest	14 years (1405 - 1418 AD)
Navsari	313 years (1419 - 1732 AD)
Surat	3 years (1733 - 1736 AD)
Navsari	5 years (1736 - 1741 AD)
Valsad	1 year (1741 - 1742 AD)
Udvada	265 years (28.10.1742 to date)

Illustration from *The History of Holy Fire Iranshah* by Ervad Faramroze Phiroz Mirza, translated from Gujarati into English by Marzban Jamshedji Giara, Mumbai November 1999, p89.

Er Soli Dastur of Florida writes: "my nephew Er Dr Cyrus P Dastoor, has been producing the first teleserial of its kind in India on our Parsi/Zarathushtri Religion, History, Social Customs, etc. since 1999, as Humata Hukhta Hvarshtha serial broadcasted every Sunday on Indian TV Channels. Two of these episodes were on the History of Holy Iranshah, narrated by Dastoorji Khurshed Dastoor Kaikobad, one of the Vada Dastoorji of Udwada in Gujarati. Er Dr Jehan Bagli, President of North American Mobed Council, requested me to see if we could dub these episodes in English which my nephew Cyrus did and these episodes were presented to the last NAMC AGM in New Jersey, May 2007. I have these two episodes in Gujarati and in English and if anyone wants to have a copy of them, I would be happy to provide them." Soli P. Dastur email: dastur@comcast.net

## Women's Offering to the Waters in Promotion of the Zoroastrian Purpose

by jenny rose

This article includes materials from a paper presented at a one-day seminar on "Images and Lives of Women in Ancient Iran" held at the Bowers Museum, California, in April 2007. The proceedings will be published in a forthcoming edition of the *Journal of Indo-European Studies*.

My research into this topic was prompted by an e-mail from Dr Philip Kreyenbroek, of the University of Goettingen, in which he mentioned that a joint field research team of German and Iranian archaeologists had made some intriguing discoveries whilst exploring a Bronze Age mine at Veshnaveh, south of Qum. Dr Thomas Stoellner of the Bochum Museum of Mining described what the explorers found in an isolated cavern of the Chal-e Ghar mine.<sup>1</sup> In the silt of some of the original trenches, which flood each spring, they came across clay pots from the Parthian period, some containing fruit stones, grain, and locally-cultivated nuts; Sasanian glassware, beads and women's jewelry; and coins from the Islamic period.

This was exciting news! The discovery of such items, which had been intentionally placed over such a long period of time, indicate that long after mining activity had ceased, the site had functioned as a place of lay worship! That this was a place of lay ritual, rather than priestly, is suggested by the fact that access to the cave involves squeezing through a narrow opening – not a path that a ritually-clean priest would take. The predominance of female ornamentation in the Sasanian stratum – finger rings, earrings, hair and clothing ornamentation of gold, silver, bronze and semi-precious stones - implies an act of offering relating specifically to women. Interestingly, in the *Aban Yast* (Yt. 5.127) the female *yazata*, Anahita, a hypostatized representation of the benevolent waters, is described as wearing such adornments.

It occurred to me that perhaps at Veshnaveh, we have an example of a continuity of lay offerings to the waters that had existed since the early period: an *ab zohr* that was less ritually circumscribed than the ancient priestly oblation to water at the end of the *Yasna* ceremony. I decided to explore the possibility that examples of such lay worship, particularly by women, exist in some of the texts and iconography from the Achaemenid period onwards, and continue to find expression in actions of the Zoroastrian laity today.

The earliest textual reference to an act of veneration of the waters is indicated in the oldest Zoroastrian liturgical text, the *Yasna Haptanhaiti* (YH 38.3), with the formulaic *apo at yazamaide* - "we worship the waters." In the *Videvdad*, worship of the good waters is considered an essential element of Zoroastrian practice, alongside the recitation of the *Gathas* and the wearing of the *kusti* (Vd. 18.8f): these activities are believed to decrease the power of death, and to abandon them leads to its increase.

### Priestly *ab zohr*

The preparation and consecration of a ritual libation to the waters, the *ab zohr*, is at the center of the *Yasna Haptanhaiti*, which is itself at the core of the daily *Yasna* liturgy conducted by priests, and which seems to have been part of Zoroastrian ritual by Achaemenid times. When the officiating priest pours the offering into the well at the end of the ceremony, he praises the health-giving waters and asks that through the *Yasna* just performed there may be an increase in benefit, order and healing for the whole of creation (Y. 65.1, 68.2).

One passage in the *Nerangestan* indicates that the *ab zohr* ritual could be performed on its own as a separate ceremony.<sup>2</sup> An early example of such a separate ceremony may be found in an unpublished Persepolis

Fortification Text,<sup>3</sup> which mentions rations for “libation services” (Elam., *daushiyam*) to “water” that include grain (representing the plant world), and eight jugs of wine. A separate *ab zohr* ritual for the sustenance of individuals or the community remains part of Iranian Zoroastrian practice today. Although the offering is presided over by a *mobed*, it is prepared by a member of the laity, usually a woman. It is performed for lay households in the months of *Ardibehesht* and *Adar*, and sometimes on *Aban Ruz*, but also as part of the marriage ceremony, or on behalf of a person, living or deceased, who has polluted the waters. A *mobed* recites the *Aban Niyayes* and other Avestan texts, and then pours an offering of milk and two plants (usually rose petals and wild marjoram leaves or oleaster fruit) into a well or river.

#### Lay ab zohr

The separate *ab zohr* ritual was not, however, confined to priests: the *Nerangestan* states that *any* devout person – man, woman or child, who is able to recite the liturgy correctly - could offer the *ab zohr*:<sup>4</sup> Iranian Zoroastrian women perform this offering to the waters on a regular basis without a *mobed* present, pouring the libation into streams or the village well, whilst reciting some Avesta from their daily prayers (Fig 1). The offering is often undertaken in fulfillment of a vow, such as for the health or recovery of a member of the family.

This form of worship is, and I would suggest, has always been, of particular importance to women, due to the identification of the waters with health, fertility and increase, leading to continuity of life. This association derives from the *Gathas*, where the waters are mentioned in a paired correspondence with plants as having the attributes of “health” or “wholeness” (Av. *haurvatat*), and its correlate “continuity of life” (Av. *Ameretat*) respectively. Together, these two qualities represent the ultimate goal of all existence for Zoroastrians: the state of completion and imperishability that occurs with the

perfection of creation (Av. *fraso-kereti*) at the end of time. The *Gathas* enjoin all men and women to aspire to this state (cf. Y. 45.5, 47.1, 51.7)

Evidence of lay offering to the waters in Achaemenid times may be found in depictions on dedicatory plaques of women and men carrying either flowers (perhaps pomegranates or lotuses) or *barsom* (also representing the plant world) in what seems to be some kind of ritual activity. It is not known whether the offering of the plaques was expiatory, petitionary, votive, or just an expression of piety. Several of the plaques have a narrow ribbon of gold attached to them, and it could be that this was used to wrap around the plants or twigs illustrated on the plaque.



Fig. 1

Two passages in the *Videvdad* advocate the tying and consecrating of a thousand bundles of *barsom* as one of the acts of general penance for pollution alongside the *ab zohr* (Vd. 18.72, 14.4). Although no rituals today involve laity holding *barsom*, let alone tying it in bundles, there is an annual offering of vegetation to the waters by Iranian Zoroastrian women, which takes place each New Year. On *sizdeh bedar*, it is customary for young, single women to tie in a bundle the sprouted green leaves of the *sabzeh* grown for the *haft sin* table. In popular lore, this action of “tying the knot” symbolizes a desire to be married within the year. The girls then throw the *sabzeh* into flowing water as they whisper: “*sizdeh bedar, sale digar, khooneh shohar*” - “*sizdeh bedar, next year, in the husband’s home.*” These words echo those of the ancient *Aban Yast*, the “Hymn to the Waters” dedicated to Anahita. In this hymn, Anahita is said to always hold the *barsom*, and her beneficent action is invoked in the desire for a strong husband (Yt. 5.127, 87).



Fig 2

Clasping a piece of foliage in the hand is a motif that recurs on seals and bas-reliefs at Persepolis (Fig 2). This image has a direct counterpart in the action of the priest during the *aftrinagan* ceremony, which forms the primary liturgy of the *jashan*, an “outer” ritual inviting the blessings of Ahura Mazda upon individuals, departed or living, and on the whole of creation. The *jashan* is not restricted to the fire temple, but may be celebrated at any appropriate place where Zoroastrians meet. After the *jashan*, lay Parsis sometimes drink the milk and wine used in the ceremony, but

will always pour the water onto plants outside and discard the flowers. In Iran, however, it is customary for a member of the laity to combine the milk, wine and water from the ritual *sofreh* with some *senjed* and bread to offer as a libation to the waters, along with a recitation from the Avesta. *Nerangestan* 49.11 refers to such an *ab zohr as com-i mahi*, “meal for the fishes,”<sup>5</sup> which is how this votive offering to the waters is still referred to in Iran.

#### Toreutic offerings to the water

The finding of a coin of Shapur II (309-379) at Veshnaveh indicates that toreutic offerings to water occurred there during or shortly after his reign, and Islamic coins found in a later deposit suggests continuity of such practice into the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. Excavations in 2002 uncovered several gold and silver plaques, similar to those from Achaemenid times. The iconography on these includes a blooming plant, and a representation of a female standing next to a plant (Fig 3). The plant motif may, again, indicate a direct offering of a plant to the waters. That these plaques were found in water is a reminder that toreutic offerings were an ancient element of lay oblation. Dedicatory plaques, jewelry, and ornamental vessels do not mingle with the water, but are preserved intact and individualized. Perhaps women who offered such precious, personal objects sought to



Fig 3

provide material gifts to the waters in return for specific blessings relating to the health and longevity of their families, or their own successful marriage or childbirth?

A toreutic offering to the waters still takes place amongst Zoroastrian laity in Iran during the summertime festival of Tirgan, in a ritual performed exclusively by women that is intended to dispel drought and disease, and to bring health and life. In the *Chak-o-duleh* (“pot of fate”) or *moraduleh* (“bead pot”) ritual, the women of the household place a small personal object of non-porous material, such as a bead, a ring or bracelet into a ceramic jar or large pot holding water. The vessel is covered with a cloth and placed under a pomegranate tree for the night. The next afternoon, the women sit together, and one of them retrieves each object from the water while verses of poetry relating to its owner are recited.

This summertime practice has an Armenian Christian parallel, when, on the eve of Ascension Day, girls immerse *hawrot-mawrot* flowers or other greenery in a bowl of water, then place personal items in the bowl and follow a similar ritual to that of the Zoroastrians.<sup>6</sup> The name “*hawrot-mawrot*” seems to derive from the Iranian *Haurvatat* and *Ameretat*,<sup>7</sup> and the function from the *chak-o-duleh* ritual.

#### Worship at shrines

Zoroastrian oblation at a natural sanctuary has continued in Iran from the early period to the present day.<sup>8</sup> One contemporary example is the pilgrimage to the mountain shrine at Pir-e Sabz in Yazd at the end of the month of Tir, dedicated to Tistrya, who is associated with the waters, and with increase and blessing (cf. Yt. 8.4). Pilgrims to the shrine celebrate with prayer, food and music: they also drink the water which falls into a pool in the grotto, and which they regard as having purifying powers. Parsis often take cans of the water back to India for sick relatives.

Another example of an act of reverence at a natural water source is the Parsi lay offering

on *Aban Ruz Aban Mah*. At this festival of *Aban Jashan*, the laity gathers at the ocean, or by a river or well, to recite the *Aban Niyayes*, seeking the benefit that the waters bring, perhaps in the form of a resolution of a problem. The offering on *Aban Jashan* is a ritual particularly observed by women, perhaps because of its connection with the waters and their *yazata*, Anahita, who brings fertility, "purifying the seed of males and the wombs of females," and "who gives an easy childbirth" (Yt. 5.3). After saying their *kusti* prayers, the women take *Dar-ni-Pori* (a sweetened lentil mixture in pastry), flower petals, milk, sugar crystals, rice, and a coconut, to offer to the waters (Fig 4). Until recently, whenever families crossed over water by car or by train, they would make a similar offering of a few grains of rice, a bottle of milk, flowers, and a few coins into the river below as they traversed the bridge.



Fig 4

Bergbaugebiet von Veshnavah, Iran," *Antike Welt, Zeitschrift für Archaeologie und Kulturgeschichte* 34 (2003): 505-516

In both Iran and India, the laity may still recite *Aban Yast* in front of flowing water during the three daylight periods, and intone the *Aban Niyayes* on the five days of the month that are associated with water. Such devotional practices appear to be based on an ancient Zoroastrian understanding of the waters as the material affirmation of the possibility of completeness or wholeness – a state of existence that leads to continuity of life. The fact that women have remained particularly associated with such activity indicates not only an enduring connection of the waters with traditional feminine attributes and aspirations, but also a devotional practice that has remained accessible and directly significant to them in their furtherance of the good religion.



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#### Notes

1. Th. Stollner and M. Mireskanderi (2003).
2. *Ner.* 30: see Kotwal & Kreyenbroek (2003), p. 129. n. 503.
3. PF-NN 1064 (K2). I am grateful to Shahrokh Razmjou for this reference.
4. *Ner.* 22: See Kotwal and Kreyenbroek (1995), pp. 19, 121.
5. Kotwal and Kreyenbroek (2003), p. 223.
6. Russell (1987), p. 329, 376f.
7. Russell (1990), p. 39.
8. Boyce (1967) alludes particularly to the ancient site at Ray.

*Jenny Rose is a historian of religion, with a particular interest in Zoroastrian Studies. She has an MA in Religious Studies from the University of London, where she studied with the late Prof Mary Boyce. The focus of her MA thesis was the role of women in the Indian and Iranian Zoroastrian communities.*

*Jenny's work as an Advisory Teacher to the Inner London Education Authority was instrumental in introducing a component on the Zoroastrian Religion into the new Agreed Religious Education Syllabus for London, and she continues to produce educational materials about the religion for use in British schools. Jenny currently teaches classes on the Zoroastrian tradition in the Religious Studies departments at both Stanford University and Claremont Graduate University.*



*In 1993, Jenny received her PhD from Columbia University. An abbreviated version of her dissertation was published in 2000 under the title *The Image of Zoroaster: The Persian Mage Through European Eyes.**

# Against Zarathushtra?

by farrokh vajifdar

## Part II

In the Qisse-ye Sanjan [QyS], dated 1599 AD, its composer Bahman Kaikobad Hormazdyar Sanjana laments, **“In those days there were people deeply versed in spiritual matters, and were able to observe religious precepts with wisdom. In our age God alone knows what True Religion is, for men do not”**. Learning and wisdom! ...

The date of the Sanjan landing was 716; the QyS was put together over 880 years after that event – a momentous one for the storm-tossed group of refugees from which, it is piously but implausibly claimed, all the Parsis of India are descended. To draw the distinction, and in an attempt to explain the differences between the Zardushtis of Iran and the Jarthostis of India, it was further believed that the ancestors of the latter hailed from Khorasan. But what was the religious downturn troubling Bahman Kaikobad so?

An earlier dating would, however, explain more than just the exile from our ancestral homeland. Sasanian Iran fell to the Arabs in 642; with the murder of the last Mazdayasnian king – His Majesty Yazdgerd III Shahryar – some ten years later, the fate of Zoroastrianism as State religion was sealed. Contrary to uninformed popular belief, Zoroastrian Iran was not forcibly converted *en masse* to the Arab religion. The process of Islamization took nearly four centuries to achieve, and during that time Islam itself was becoming steadily Iranized. The change was brought about by former Zoroastrians – both priests and lay people – for whom the ever-increasing ritual demands of their original faith were becoming burdensome and unsustainable.

We cannot repeat often enough that Zarathushtra’s Gathic precepts reject both ritualism and superstition. Additionally, where it concerns the good governance and self-regulation of societies, it is his Gathas that show the way: *“May those having good*

*empowerment – not those of bad power – govern us with deeds performed through good insight and rightmindedness ...”*. Vishtaspa, blest by Zarathushtra for acquiring rulership through Good Thought and Truth, was the first among such leaders.

During the times of Khusro II Parvez (590 – 628), a monarch of vast ambitions who has been described as “a flashy and deplorable monarch”, complicit in the murder of his father Hormizd IV (579 – 590), the religion of Mazdayasna took yet another turn into intolerance. Under Hormizd, a monarch of great culture and genuine care for the poor and the weak, the nobility for whom there was a mutual dislike had been kept in check. Khusro, who was addicted to every kind of superstition, was in the grip of astrologers and soothsayers. He, contrary to Zarathushtra’s open vision and forthright teachings against base beliefs and magical practices, burdened with religious doubts and ever susceptible to priest induced fears, had 353 new fire-temples set up with some 12,000 officiating *herbadhs* (ervads). He sought out other faith beliefs, especially Christian ones.

It is not surprising that, with State sanction, the priesthood imposing the Mazdayasnian variety that best suited its caste mentality, became less and less inclined to follow Sasanian orthodoxy in its essentials, but instead in its peripherals. Under the great Khusro I Anushirwan, the priests had confined religious knowledge to textual memorization of the Avesta, with close

restriction on those permitted to study the all-important commentaries – the Pahlavi *zand* – which would have kept learning apace with the times and against injurious foreign cults. By the times of his grandson Khosro II Parvez, this had resulted in a dangerous laxity, doctrinal disunity, and degradation of the established orthodoxy. Such spirituality as had existed was overtaken by a superficial religiosity, empty pomp and an unbridled luxury. Khosro Parvez was imprisoned and later murdered by his son Shiroy who had been overlooked for the succession by the ageing king in favour of another brother who also was duly killed. The seeds of religious and political decline had been firmly implanted.

Seen against the socio-political background of the turbulent early 7<sup>th</sup> century, the Mazdayasnian religion, such as it had become, had failed to influence events for the betterment of the Iranian State. Between the death of Khosro II (628) and the accession of Yazdgird III Shahryar (632) no less than twelve persons ruled Iran. With palace conspiracies went temple intrigues: both foundations became fragmented, and despite belated efforts at reunion and solidarity, the weakened State found itself powerless against the invading Arabs. Primarily in quest of land and loot, the Arabs did not initially interfere with the Mazdayasnian religious institutions, but instead relied on the overthrown Sasanian State's administrative apparatus to help them control their newly conquered territories.

With the imposition of increasing civic disabilities, several rebellions broke out; they were suppressed by the Arabs with the utmost brutality. The Iranian nobility who had always considered themselves as rulers, found their weakened religious links to their disadvantage, and abandoned Mazda for Allah. Many soldiers and labourers, treated as inferiors by the priesthood because of non-conformity to its purity laws, found the transition to Islam as more open and egalitarian towards their lowly-regarded vocations. Mazdaism, through lack of foresight and an excess of

intolerance, was becoming paralyzed through its internal shortcomings and an intransigent priesthood.

The steadily diminishing Mazdean populations found themselves compelled to leave their houses and lands to resettle in the remoter parts of central Iran, clinging to their ancient faith which they considered truly superior to all others which had infiltrated their beloved Fatherland. Through the guidance of a few learned priests – who were always kept under the watchful eyes of the conquerors and the converts, for learning could be a dangerous thing! – they maintained their often precarious existence against tremendous difficulties. Whatever could be rescued of their ancient literature, both sacred and secular, was carefully assembled, replicated and prudently transmitted by the elders. Most manuscripts which we possess today had originated in their oasis refuges. They had, against all odds, kept alive the flame of our Religion of Light.

Rather different was the picture developing in Khorasan to the east. There the Arabs with their military hordes had settled amidst the nomadic Turkic tribes; the region was garrisoned and its resources poured into the Arab expansionist thrust into Central Asia. The situation for the Mazdeans there became untenable, being denied means for their very survival – their homes and lands being either destroyed or confiscated by these desert barbarians. It was then that groups of Mazdeans fled the region and made their way eastwards into Chinese Turkestan and further into the Chin Empire itself where they became established as merchants and brokers along the busy trade routes. There they also set up fire-temples and maintained their ancient values as best they could.

Some Khorasani groups moved south into Kohistan and east into the Indus valley, settling along the Panjab river lands. Others made their way southwards from there to the Kathiawar peninsula; yet others arrived by the sea route. The QyS has a bare recollection of a 19-year sojourn around

Diu, until the Arab land and sea invasions of Sind, whereupon an astrologer-priest prudently advised on leaving the area. The Sanjan dating of 716 makes sense, therefore, when it is recalled that Arab expeditions entered Sind variously between 711 and 714. The Indus valley had been settled by Iranians since early Sasanian times, however, and Mazdeans certainly were no strangers to that region.

When the QyS, some nine hundred years later, suggests that the Rana (petty ruler) of Sanjan, Jadi/Jaydev Rana, looked on the refugees with awe and curiosity, and promptly imposed the strange five conditions for their continued stay within his territory, then we must bring our critical faculties into play. Just how credible is Bahman Kaikobad's Sanjan saga?

The early 8<sup>th</sup> century Mazdean refugees appeared to have little knowledge of their religious literature. Even the *Vendidad* was unknown to them until the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Whatever the priests had brought along with them was ritually derived, and the Rana's curiosity seemed fixed on this. What could they possibly have told him about Zarathushtra? The remaining four naive conditions are Bahman Kaikobad's attempts to placate the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century Muslim governors of Gujarat under Moghal rule, whilst endeavouring to explain Mazdean and Hindu co-existence and similarities along social lines. His own sparsity of religious knowledge is glaringly evident.

His knowledge of history is just as insecure, and shows a shrewd bias. Rightly he mentions Changa Asa (or Changashah) but in connexion only with the removal and reinstallation of the Iranshah Fire. Nowhere do we find mention of the emissary to Iran, Nariman Hoshang, who visited the Fatherland and returned with replies to questions on rituals and traditions – the famous *Rivayats*. It was around that time, 1478, that Sanjan was sacked by marauding Musulman troops. Bahman gives a gung-ho account of the intense fighting and bravery of the Parsis, and of single combat between the victorious *behdin*

Ardashir and the Muslim champion Alaf Khan. So far, so good!

But where are Naryosang Dhaval, the scholar-priest, expert in Pahlavi and Sanskrit, who did so much for the preservation of our faith in India, and the Navsari Dastur Meherji Rana the fanfare of whose acclaimed visit to Akbar's court barely a decade before the QyS composition must still have resounded in Parsi ears? Bahman claims tradition at the basis of his account – but whose tradition?

Equally frustrating are Bahman's vague chronological indications: 300 years after the installation of the first fire-temple in Sanjan, the Parsis dispersed northwards; 700 years (from when?) on, the Parsis multiplied (and divided!) in their south Gujarat colonies; 500 years of Islam in India takes us to Sultan Mahmud Begada and his vizir (!) Alaf Khan – the very one toppled by Ardashir at the rout of Sanjan. Should we infer from these that the Parsis' landfall was, after all, in 936?

The still-remembered Changa Asa had, around 1420, equitably settled priestly disputes between the Sanjanas (Bahman was a Sanjana priest) and the Bhagarias. It may be, therefore, that Bahman's selective pseudo-history – which is what the QyS turns to be! – was to suppress the Bhagaria Meherji Rana advent and advance the cause of the Sanjanas. Either way, Zarathushtra is nowhere to be seen in the course of his narrative, and his lament over the loss of spirituality could well have been occasioned by vagaries of the "five conditions" and the over-insistence on ritualistic customs and his own traditions.

Disillusioned Parsis in quest of spiritual guidance were then beginning to veer towards the mystical clap-trap dished out by the Patna schools. These irreligious, indeed anti-Zarathushtrian, formulations made serious inroads into Parsi affections. To this day the misbegotten descendants of these 17<sup>th</sup> century heterodoxies continue to contaminate the pure well-springs of Gathic teachings.

Theosophy has ever since been deeply entrenched among religiously illiterate Parsis, where anything goes: from mysterious powers and hidden masters whose esoteric knowledge (read: abracadabra) is secretly conveyed only to a chosen few attuned to these ethereal forces. And so on ...

All this begs the question: why are our priests, who claim to be *mazdayasno zarathushtrish*, so very silent over these anti-Zarathushtrian declarations, and instead most vociferous over matters concerning conversion, intermarriage, and most of all on who can(not) be a Zoroastrian. Against Zarathushtra? Indeed yes!

Our race-haunted and religiously muddled high-priests are very quick to claim descent from Naryosang Dhaval. Apart from the embarrassing fact that they cannot even place this revered scholar-priest in actual history, they appear to have quietly forgotten that great man's axiom:

**“Wisdom which is without learning is poor;  
learning which is without wisdom is helpless!”**

Part III will continue in the next issue Hamazor 2/2008.



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**"Human beings are like parts of a body, created from the same essence.**

**When one part is hurt and in pain, the others cannot remain in peace and be quiet." - author unknown**

# The Yatha Ahu Vairyo Prayer

by dina mcintyre

## Part 2

In Part 1 we saw that the Ahuna Vairya (the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer) was regarded, in the later texts, as a talisman of great power, which enables us to transcend our mortality and defeat evil (evil in the Gathas being described as the product of wrongful choices). We also discussed that the Ahuna Vairyo specifies three things that are to be chosen: the lord [ahu], the judgment [ratush], and the rule [xshathra]. Let us consider these three choices of the Ahuna Vairyo prayer, and how they generate its talismanic powers.

**The First Choice** What does Zarathushtra mean by choosing the Lord (ahu) in accord with truth? To understand the significance of this choice, we have to think back to Zarathushtra's time period. Today, we are used to thinking in terms of a benevolent monotheism. But the situation was very different for Zarathushtra. We know from the Gathas that the society in which he lived was violent, corrupt and cruel. He complains of greedy princes, a thieving aristocracy, and pleasure loving priests who, seduced by power and wealth,

“... chose the rule of tyrants and deceit rather than truth [asha].” Y32.12.

These tyrants used fear to promote the worship of many gods, some of whom Zarathushtra describes as “fierce”<sup>1</sup> and their actions as “hateful”<sup>2</sup>. And Zarathushtra made a choice. He concluded that deities who were cruel and tyrannical were not worthy of worship. He not only spoke out against them, he demoted them from godhood. Imagine the guts that took!

Having rejected the “godhood”, of these violent and cruel local gods, Zarathushtra found himself re-thinking the whole notion of divinity. If the divine could not be evil, neither could it, logically, be a mixture of good and evil. It could only be all good, the spenta way of being (spenta mainyu), a way of being that is in accord with truth [asha].

He therefore concluded that only pure goodness, pure wisdom, could lay claim to

divinity, could be worthy of worship. He described the attributes of divinity (later called the amesha spenta) as:

**Truth (asha)**

**Its comprehension through good thinking (vohu mano)**

**Its realization in thought, word and action (aramaiti)**

**Its good rule (vohu xshathra), the rule of truth and good thinking, the rule of aramaiti**

**Its complete and undying personification (haurvatat, ameretat)**

**All of which comprise the benevolent way of being (spenta mainyu)**

**And all of which comprise Wisdom personified (Mazda).**

In other words, the first choice of the Ahuna Vairya requires that we choose the object of our worship (the lord — ahu), in accordance with truth, asha. Zarathushtra's conception of the Divine moved away from one that was fear-based, (requiring the worshipper to accept whatever cruelty or violence was dished out by a deity who had to be appeased with bribes and sacrifices) to one that is pure goodness, Wisdom personified, and therefore worthy of worship.

A significant step in man's quest for the Divine.

Although the pantheon of local gods with whom Zarathushtra had to contend, are not around today, the first choice of the Ahuna Vairya is still relevant to us. Like our ancient ancestors, we too tend to worship many gods, just different ones — wealth, power, prestige, appearances, position. By Zarathushtra's standards, such gods are not worthy of worship. We need to choose what we worship "in accordance with truth [asha]." It is sobering to think how many people in the world live under dictatorships — without choice, without basic human rights. According to the Ahuna Vairya prayer, if even the object of our worship is to be chosen in accord with asha, logically then, we should also choose our temporal rulers in accordance with asha. If this idea of Zarathushtra were to be believed and held, worldwide, it would solve not only the problems of dictatorship, but also those of democracy.

**The Second Choice** of the Ahuna Vairya prayer, is "the judgment in accord with truth".

What is "the judgment in accord with truth"? It is vohu mano — good thinking, understanding asha, and making our choices in accordance with that understanding. Good thinking is the key to accessing the factual truths of our universe. It is the key to understanding the truths of mind and spirit. It is the key to accessing asha — the key to accessing the divine.<sup>3</sup> And good thinking, according to Zarathushtra, requires that we think for ourselves — not blindly accept what others may tell us.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, even when asking for Mazda's guidance, Zarathushtra asks that it be given through good thinking, not by fact-specific rules that must be blindly obeyed. He says:

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

**The Third Choice** of the Ahuna Vairya prayer is choosing to establish, or bring to life, "the rule [xshathra] of actions stemming from an existence of good thinking" which, in my view, is the concept of aramaiti, although not mentioned by name ("... Grant thou, [aramaiti], your rule [xshathra] of good thinking ..." Y51.2).

The importance of this third choice — actions stemming from an existence of good thinking — is reflected in Zarathushtra's view of what it takes to be a saoshyant — a savior. In the later texts, the concept of a saoshyant became greatly embroidered and exaggerated to the point of elevating saoshyant to the status of a miraculous messiah of great power who will be victorious over evil, and make everything all right. We are not much different today. Whether it is Superman, or Yoda, or other omniscient aliens with miraculous powers from another star system, we too hunger for a leader with magical powers who will make everything turn out all right.

This view of the saoshyant you will not find in the Gathas. There is no one saviour (or two or three) with magical powers who will come to fix things for us. We have to fix things for ourselves, with Mazda's help, and

with the help of each other. According to Zarathushta, each individual is a potential saoshyant — a potential savior. In the Gathas he says:

“... which men shall stop the cruelty (caused) by the violent deceitful persons? To which man shall come the understanding stemming from good thinking? Y48.11

And he concludes:

“Yes, those men shall be the saviors [saoshyant] of the lands, namely, those who shall follow their knowledge of Thy teaching with actions in harmony with good thinking and with truth [asha], Wise One. These indeed have been fated to be the expellers of fury.” Y48.12.

The “actions in harmony with good thinking and with truth [asha],” of this Gathic verse, Y48.12, is the same thought as the “actions stemming from an existence of good thinking” of the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer — actions which bring the divine to life, not only in our spirits, but also in our world and so establish good rule (vohu xshathra). To Zarathushtra, the material and the spiritual are inextricably linked — each necessary to bring about the desired end. Thoughts, words and actions of asha (the material embodying the spiritual) are the means by which we achieve the desired end (the best asha, the best thinking — a spiritual state of being), as well as a good society, a better world. Thus the purpose of life — to realize, or make real, the divine — is achieved in both existences, in the existence of mind and spirit, as well as in the existence of matter, our material world. If we follow this formula, this world would indeed be heaven on earth, and the suffering caused by wrongful choices would cease to exist.

We can summarize the talismanic virtues of the Ahuna Vairya as a formula for defeating evil and the suffering it causes, quite simply: When we create light, the darkness ceases to exist. We create light by bringing the divine to life with our choices — our choices of who and what we worship, our choices in thought, word and action stemming from an understanding of asha. When we stop

choosing evil, we deprive it of substance. It becomes impotent, unable to cause harm and suffering, as the Bundahishn tells us.

But what of the promise of Yasna 19, that if we learn the Ahuna Vairya, and learning, hold fast to it, we will transcend our mortality.

In Zoroastrian lore, which is highly metaphoric, we are told that the Chinvat Bridge (the Bridge of the Separator, or the Bridge of the Judge), stretches from the material to the spiritual. I take the imagery of the bridge to represent (metaphorically) a transition from the material to the spiritual. In the Gathas, Zarathushtra tells Ahura Mazda that he will cross over this bridge, in the company of the divine attributes (“... in the glory of your kind ...”) with each man and woman who gives him “... truth for the truth, and the rule of good thinking ...” Y46.10.

This Gathic verse echoes the Ahuna Vairya formula that we must choose the divine in our understanding, in our words and actions. When we do so, it becomes a part of us (or we become a part of it), and we make the transition (we cross over the bridge) from mortality to the good spiritual state where the reason for mortality no longer exists (non-deathness ameretat), or as the author of the later Yasna 19 puts it, we are redeemed from our mortality.

This brings us to the last part of the Ahuna Vairya, which says that we establish the rule of actions stemming from an existence of good thinking, “... for the Wise One [mazda] and for the lord [ahura] whom they established as pastor for the needy-dependents.”

In the last verse of the last Gatha, Mazda is described as the one who grants what is very good to his needy dependent who lives honestly. In the second Gatha, Yasna 29 verse 2, “ahura” refers to a person, a human being,<sup>5</sup> who would nurture Mazda’s good vision (the vision of a world governed by truth and good thinking) and Zarathushtra is chosen by Mazda and his divine aspects, to bring Mazda’s teachings to mortals, and be a pastor or nurturer to them and to Mazda’s good vision.



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The last line of the Ahuna Vairya seems to combine these two thoughts when it says "... for (the sake of) the Wise One [mazda] and for the lord [ahura] whom they [the divine aspects] established as pastor for the needy-dependents". At one level, mazda may refer to God, and ahura to Zarathushtra, the enlightened man who has attained, or acquired lordship over, the attributes of divinity, truth, good thinking, et cetera. At another level, mazda and ahura may refer to two parts of the same Whole.

So the last line of the Ahuna Vairya says that we establish the rule of the divine (i.e. actions stemming from an existence of good thinking) for the sake of the divine (mazda and ahura) who in turn nurture (are the pastor for) those who have not yet made it — the needy-dependents. That is how we defeat evil. That is how we (individually and collectively) transcend our mortality.

One last thought. The last part of the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer exquisitely complements the last part of the Ashem Vohu prayer.

In the Ashem Vohu, we desire the divine (asha) for the sake of the divine as concept — the best asha (vahishtai ashem).

In the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer, by our choices, we realize or make real, the divine (through actions stemming from a comprehension of asha), for the sake of the divine as being — mazda and ahura.



#### Notes

1. "... fierce gods ..." Y34.5.
2. "But ye gods ..... are of the offspring stemming from evil thinking, deceit and disrespect. Hateful too are your actions ..." 32.3.
3. Which is the message of Y29, and also of a story from a later text, Selections from Zadsparam, see Buried Treasure, which appears on [www.vohuman.org](http://www.vohuman.org).
4. "Listen with your ears to the best things. Reflect with a clear mind — man by man for himself ....." Y30.2;  
"... as long as I shall be able and be strong, so long shall I look in quest of truth. Truth, shall I see thee as I continue to acquire both good thinking and the way to the Lord? ..." Y28.4 — 5.

5. The word "cow" in Yasna 29 and elsewhere in the Gathas, has been interpreted by some as an allegory or metaphor for the "world". Professor Insler (and later, others) have interpreted it as an allegory or metaphor for Mazda's good vision. I think that Zarathushtra, with double entendre, uses "cow" as a metaphor for the good vision on earth — the vision of a world governed by truth and good thinking. In Yasna 29, a complaint is made to Mazda and his attributes (who also are treated-allegorically in this Yasna) — truth, good thinking and his benevolent spirit (identified as the "fashioner of the cow"). This complaint is made to them by the allegorical cow (the good vision on earth) as follows:  
"... For whom did ye fashion me? Who fashioned me? (For) the cruelty of fury and violence, of bondage and might, holds me in captivity. I have no pastor other than you. Therefore appear to me with good pasturage." Y29.1.

The benevolent spirit of the Wise Lord — spenta mainyu — is troubled by this state of affairs, and referring to the allegorical good vision on earth (the cow) asks the Wise Lord and His other attributes:  
"... Whom do ye wish to be her master [ahurem], one who might destroy the fury (caused) by the deceitful?" Y29.2.

Mazda turns to good thinking for the solution, and good thinking replies that it has found Zarathushtra (a man of understanding) who has given ear to Mazda's teachings, who will give Mazda's teachings to mortals, and who will be a pastor, i.e. nurture them, and Mazda's good vision on earth. Y29.7 and 8. Thus we see that "ahura" in Y29.2 refers to an enlightened human being — Zarathushtra.

**An apology to Dina from the Editor for the error in the format to read the quotation of the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer appearing in Issue 4/2007 p 28. It should read thus:**

**yatha ahu vairyo  
atha ratush ashat chit hacha  
vangheush dazda manangho  
shyaothananam angheush mazdai  
xshathremcha ahurai.a  
yim dregubyo dadat vastarem**

# The Solution

by naomi bhappu

ZAH Library, Houston, held an Essay Competition end of last year, winner to be awarded free registration, accommodation, and a round-trip air ticket to attend the 4<sup>th</sup> World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in Australia, December 2007. Eight excellent candidates submitted essays which were judged by a panel consisting of William Malendra, Sarosh Manekshaw and Nerina Rustomji, the winner being Naomi Bhappu whose essay is shared with the readers of Hamazor.

Theodore Rubin once said, **“The problem is not that there are problems. The problem is expecting otherwise and thinking that having problems is a problem.”**<sup>1</sup> There are currently many major issues that affect the world, and although there is plenty of talk about these issues, there is not enough talk of the solutions. Stating that there is a problem is only the first step towards fixing it. According to *The Good Life*, the principles of the Amesha Spentas “can be incorporated into our lives,” and can be “viewed as ideals which may be realized by the actions of right-thinking humans.”<sup>2</sup> When it comes to dealing with major global issues such as the genocide in Darfur, the question should not be who is to blame, but more importantly, how is the problem going to be resolved?

One of today’s global issues that has been discussed at great length without significant action has been genocide. In 1948 *The UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* stated that **“genocide is a crime under international law”** and recognized **“that at all periods of history genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity, and being convinced that, in order to liberate mankind from such an odious scourge, international co-operation is required.”**<sup>3</sup> On January 21 2007, the UN General Assembly held the first memorial of the freedom of the Nazi death camps on its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. At this convention Secretary General Kofi Annan brought up the crisis in Darfur and advised the UN members to act against the war criminals in Sudan. After addressing the recent mass killings in

Cambodia, Rwanda and Yugoslavia, Annan stated, **“Since the Holocaust, the world has, to its shame, failed more than once to prevent or halt genocide.”** Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Elie Wiesel said, **“The Jewish witness that I am ... sounds the alarm to prevent these tragedies from being done to others. And yes, I am convinced if the world had listened to those of us who tried to speak, we may have prevented Darfur, Cambodia, Bosnia and Rwanda.”**<sup>4</sup> While these prominent world leaders are addressing the problem, few are giving solutions. “I must do something’ always solves more problems than ‘Something must be done.’” The author of this quote is unknown, but the words hit home when discussing the struggle in Darfur. The US has started an activist coalition called Save Darfur and they beckon the call so often said at a time of crisis: *“something must be done.”*

If only Kofi Annan was a Zoroastrian and had sat in the Sunday school class of Sarosh Collector once or twice, he would have known seven steps one can take in order to make a decision, or in this case, solve a problem: The Amesha Spentas.

First and foremost someone must step up to the plate, and that someone is you, or Spenta Mainyu, the start of the solution. The next four steps in this journey are actions steps, literal things that can be done to achieve your goal. The last two are the results, the figurative outcomes of your efforts.

Second as with any problem in life you must think positively, go in with a good attitude and a good mind, Vohu Mano. In the situation in Darfur, there isn't much to be positive about, but we must use our good mind to be proactive and start brainstorming solutions rather than restating the problem.

Then comes Asha Vahishta. We must seek to understand what it is the Sudanese government wants, and try to work with, rather than against them, the Janjaweed, and all other parties involved. Only after you know what the actual problem is, can you begin to come up with an effective solution. Asha Vahishta represents truth and righteousness and ultimately the fundamental ethics upon which the basic tenets of Zoroastrianism are based: Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds.

The fourth step is passion. Whatever it is your goal is, you must be committed to fulfilling it and you must know what you want to achieve. Kshatra Vairya represents desire, or the passion that you need to dedicate yourself to the cause. Throughout history, and all the genocides that we have witnessed, once people became aware of the gravity of the situation and the masses upon masses of people that died, it aroused strong emotion or passion. The world must recognize that it is not as simple as placing troops in Sudan, for that would just cause more deaths and not solve anything. We must look at the circumstances with an open mind and an open heart, and think long term with the end in mind.

The fifth step, and the last of the "action steps" is devotion to that which is good and just, or Spenta Armaiti. While there are many other global issues right now, someone must be dedicated to dealing with Darfur, whether it is the US or the UN, *it must be done*.

The last two steps, are the result of the first five, and are almost always discussed together. Haurvatat and Ameretat are known as the twin blessings, bestowed upon the man who desires and attempts to embody the other characteristics of Ahura

Mazda. Haurvatat, stands for perfection. If you complete the first five steps, ideally you will reach your goal, and what is your goal if it is not perfection? Ameretat is the final step, and represents the spirit of immortality. Theoretically, if you have achieved your goal or solved your problem, your idea or solution is eternal, and is therefore immortal.

In 1932 Franklin Delano Roosevelt said, "It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something."<sup>5</sup> However, by the looks of the world today, I don't think many people heard what he had to say. Many speak of change; however, few speak of how the change will be brought about. In the circumstances in Sudan, nothing is going to change overnight; the ending of this horrific genocide is going to be a long process, which will take time. However, the predicament we face is not that the process of ending these awful mass murders will take time; it is that we have not even yet begun. If everyone knew about the Amesha Spentas and their principles, they could apply these teachings to try and do away with genocide.

The Amesha Spentas are essential parts of the Zoroastrian religion and while not everyone knows what they are, the principles that they embody can be used in everyone's life.



#### Notes

1. [http://thinkexist.com/quotes/theodore\\_isaac\\_rubin/](http://thinkexist.com/quotes/theodore_isaac_rubin/)
2. The Good Life: An Introduction to the Religion of Zarathushtra. 2nd. Woodbridge, NJ: Stone Mountain Printing, 2002. (38)
3. Lynch, Colum. "Annan Urges Action on Darfur at U.N. Commemoration of Holocaust." Washington Post 25 01 2007 A08. 20 June 2007 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A33105-2005Jan24.html>
4. Lynch, Colum. "Annan Urges Action on Darfur at U.N. Commemoration of Holocaust." Washington Post 25 01 2007 A08. 20 June 2007 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A33105-2005Jan24.html>
5. <http://quotations.about.com/cs/inspirationquotes/a/Action1.html>



Naomi Bhappu, a vibrant and effervescent 16 year old Zoroastrian from Houston, Texas, is a junior at the Cypress Falls High School. She is the Vice-President of her school Student Council for the third consecutive year, the Treasurer of the Fortune Business Leaders of America, the Secretary of the Houston Zoroastrian Youth Group, as well as a member of Key Club (a volunteer organization). She has a passion for volleyball and community service. She plans on attending the University of Texas, to pursue a career in architecture.

## Jame interviews the Wadia Brothers of ARZ

[due to lack of space extraneous words have been omitted – Ed]

The Association for Revival of Zoroastrianism (ARZ) has been around for the last couple of years. It has been the only organization which is bold, pragmatic and direct in their thinking and actions. They believe in their cause and are progressing steadily with steely resolve. They practice what they preach. Their clear thinking and eye on the cause of Zoroastrianism has set them apart.



Kerssie Wadia

However, their thinking and agenda has also in certain orthodox quarters caused some heartburn, raised apprehensions and doubts / bogeys (some imaginary, some real & some politically motivated). Our correspondent therefore approached the two of the founder trustees of ARZ, the Wadia Brothers, as they are known in the community today. Armed with questions & queries, we interviewed Kerssie N Wadia & Vispi N Wadia. The hard hitting candid replies given by these two brothers are given herein below for our readers:

**Jame:** What has been the kind of support to the ARZ's movement?

**ARZ:** Phenomenal. ARZ has received tremendous support all around for its epoch-making action and plans. ARZ serves the long overdue legitimate demand of the intermarried Zoroastrians and their families, who were denied their legitimate right to follow Zoroastrianism and who were being virtually forced to follow some other religion. Today about every family in our community has someone or the other who is intermarried. They all are our natural supporters. When 4 out of 10 Parsis intermarry, you may please calculate the extent of support that we have. Moreover even those who are not intermarried, are also beginning to realize and appreciate the Universality of our splendid Zoroastrian religion and are becoming our members in large numbers.

**Jame:** Can childless Parsi couples adopt a child and raise him/her as a Zoroastrian?

**ARZ:** Childless Parsi couples can certainly and legally adopt children and raise them as Zoroastrians. We would like to draw the attention of the people who oppose the act of adoption, to try and understand the pain and the feelings of childless Parsi couples. ...

Why deny a right to childless Parsi couples to have a complete family? Does Ahura Mazda prohibit it? Did our Prophet Zarathushtra preach against adoption? Do any of our holy scriptures talk against adoption? All our holy



Vispi Wadia

scriptures Avesta, Yashts, Gathas, Vendidad, etc. are very clear and candid that our religion is for all mankind. There is simply no Zoroastrian injunction against adoption. Infact adoption and initiating a child into Zoroastrianism is one of the best deeds one can perform in ones lifetime. ...

The proportion of childless couples in our Parsi community is very high and is infact the highest compared to other communities. ...

**Jame:** Isn't converting a spouse out right conversion?

**ARZ:** 'One Family, One Religion'. If the spouse is good enough to be your wife/husband, and fit enough to be the mother/father of your child, then she/he is fit enough to be in the religion. All that we say is, that the spouse should not be stopped from following the Zoroastrian religion if she/he so desires.

**Jame:** Certain orthodox say this tis against our religious tenets.

**ARZ:** Zoroastrianism is a Universal Religion. ... We challenge the so-called orthodox to quote from any of the ... holy scriptures. We are ready for an open debate too. The more we study and understand our scriptures, the more we are convinced that our religion is for all mankind. ...

**Jame:** Will this move not encourage intercaste marriages?

**ARZ:** No, it will not. Ideally we would like all to marry within the community. But one has

to accept reality. We are facing the problem of intercaste marriages for more than a century and for the last 100 years we have been throwing out people. This has not solved the problem and has certainly not deterred people from marrying out. The problem has only aggravated over the years. Today nearly 40% of our marriages are outside the community and will only rise in the future as we decrease in numbers. ...

**Jame:** The apprehension that our 'racial-purity' will be endangered and compromised. Your comments thereon.

**ARZ:** Zoroastrianism is a universal religion for all mankind. All our holy scriptures say so. Zoroastrianism at its height of glory was practiced from the borders of China to the borders of Europe. Such a big geographical area had many nationalities, ethnic tribes and communities following Zoroastrianism. Therefore it is absurd to say that Zoroastrianism and the message of the Prophet was meant for an exclusive race, which today is a meagre 69,000 only. ... The 'Parsi Purity' remains and will remain intact because the inter-married Zoroastrians are in any case being thrown out of the 'Parsi' community. They identify themselves as 'Zoroastrians' and not as 'Parsis'. Today the scenario with Parsi community is similar to that of a leaky water bucket. Precious water drains out by way of throwing out the inter-married Parsis and their families. The precious water leaks and falls into either a Hindu, Christian or a Muslim bucket. What we at ARZ are doing is offering such people a 'Zoroastrian' bucket, which is different from a 'Parsi' bucket. What grievances can the so-called orthodox have against this? Coming back to 'racial purity'. Why have double standards? Let us have a look at our humdins who work at the dokhmas, agiyaries and atashbehrams. Our holy consecrated fires are enthroned at these places, we all know. The Parsi community should be grateful to all these people for the wonderful job they have been carrying out. Most of these people are children of inter-married Parsis. Our so-called orthodox groups and priests do not object to this because no other so-called 'Pure Parsi'

will be ready to work in dokhmas and/or clean and mop agyaries and atashbehrams. Please note we are not against these noble souls, we are for them. It is because of these Parsis that our atashbehrams, agiyaries and dokhmas are being served, as no other so-called 'Pure Parsi' is ready to work there as *chasniwalla* or as a *nasesallar*. Why this hypocrisy? Which religious scripture of ours justify these double standards of take them in when required and throw them out when not?

**Jame:** Can 'they' be called and identified as Parsis?

**ARZ:** No, they are not 'Parsis' but they surely are Zoroastrians. 'Parsi' is an ethnic term for a particular race. 'Parsi' is not a religion. Zoroastrianism is the religion. One can be a Parsi only by birth. As per law, a Parsi has to be born of a Parsi father. The non-Parsi spouse and their children can follow Zoroastrianism. Therefore, they are identified as 'Zoroastrians', and not as 'Parsi Zoroastrians'. ...

**Jame:** The orthodox groups doubt that 'they' will occupy our baugs and enter Parsi agyaries, dokhmas, etc.

**ARZ:** Impossible. All Parsi institutions like agyaries, baugs, dokhmas, etc. are governed by their respective trust deeds which clearly specify that these are meant only for Parsi Zoroastrians. Therefore, any other Zoroastrian can have no right or claim over these institutions. ...

**Jame:** Why are you all doing this, you all are not inter-married?

**ARZ:** We love our religion. We want our religion to survive in our country. All the trustees at ARZ are married within the community. We are proud to be Parsis and want Parsis to survive in India but to us our religion Zoroastrianism is paramount. The 'Zoroastrian' religion is above the 'Parsi' race. We just cannot be mute spectators to the sacrifice of our dear 'Zoroastrian' religion at the altar of the 'Parsi' race.

**Jame:** Will you convert all and sundry?

**ARZ:** We are not into missionary/proselytizing activities. All we believe in is 'One family, One religion'. Because when there is only one religion in a family the children would be exposed only to the Zoroastrian way of life. We want to restore the legitimate right of the inter-married Zoroastrians, childless Parsi couples and their children (biological & adopted), to practice and follow Zoroastrianism without any discrimination.

**Jame:** What made you think of setting up a separate Fire Temple for Zoroastrians and when will it be ready?

**ARZ:** Over the years it was repeatedly suggested by the so-called orthodox groups, that the liberals should set up their separate places of worship. As a matter of fact ARZ is executing and meeting the demands of these orthodox groups. With the grace of Ahura Mazda, the Zoroastrian Fire Temple which will be open to all Zoroastrians without any discrimination, should be ready in the next couple of years. Khshnaothra Ahurahe Mazdao.

**Jame:** What is your stand on spread/revival of Zoroastrianism in other parts of the world?

**ARZ:** There are over 2 million Zoroastrians in the world today, and that is great news. Revival/spread of Zoroastrianism in different parts of the world is for various reasons. In places like Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Central Asia people are reverting back to their ancient faith / roots, while in countries like Brazil, South America, people are accepting Zoroastrianism out of their free will. At the micro-level, Parsis, Iranis & other Zoroastrians may have differences on some issues of Zoroastrianism but at the macro-level we all are Zoroastrians. All Zoroastrians are humdins.

**Jame:** A number of liberals refuse to refer to the Vendidad for religious guidance. What is your stand?

**ARZ:** Vendidad was written by the Zoroastrian clergy a few hundred years after the Prophet. We however refer to all our religious books including Vendidad, for guidance. We do firmly believe that our Holy Gathas truly represent Prophet Zarathushtra's teachings.

**Jame:** Tell us something about your personal religious beliefs?

**ARZ:** We pray daily at our homes and quite regularly at the Atash Behrams & Agiaries. We do not visit any mandir, dargah, church or any other shrine of any other religion. We are staunch Zoroastrians. Whether people refer to us as 'liberals' or as 'orthodox' ... is of supreme indifference to us.

**Jame:** Any concluding remarks?

**ARZ:** We appeal to some of the orthodox groups in the community to see reason and drop this 'Perpetual Paranoid Parsi' syndrome and agenda. It is a sad irony in our community that the so-called orthodox will keep quiet when a masjid comes up at Udvada but will create all sorts of hurdles and go all the way to the Supreme Court (on some flimsy ground and lose) when the Pundole Agiary was set up at Udvada. ...

The intermarried Zoroastrians, their spouse and their children have an equal right to follow and worship Zoroastrianism without infringing or violating the existing rules and regulations of Parsi Zoroastrian institutions, and by building their own institutions and place of worship for Zoroastrians.



## **ARZ** launches South Gujarat Chapter

The South Gujarat Chapter of ARZ was opened last week [3<sup>rd</sup> week February], at Village Nargol, under the able leadership of Capt Keyk R Mistry.

In addition to the ARZ Head Quarters at Mumbai, the South Gujarat Chapter at Nargol is the fourth, after Pune, Bangalore and Delhi.

Commenting on the approach of the so-called Orthodox, ARZ trustee Keressie N Wadia said, "They have made a mockery of the Zoroastrian religion. They readily welcome the children of inter-married Parsi men into Zoroastrianism, but they do not want children of inter-married Parsi women to follow Zoroastrianism. This is nonsensical and is a direct affront to the exalted teachings of our Holy Prophet Zarathushtra."

"We will continue to have a pro-active approach, with malice towards none ... and the launch of the South Gujarat Chapter is a step in that direction", he added.

"This Chapter will cater to the religious needs and requirements of the inter-married Parsi families in and around the towns and villages around Navsari, Surat, Valsad, Vapi, and Dahanu ", he emphasized.

## Antia in Mumbai - "Acceptance in Zoroastrianism"



Dr Kersey Antia, High Priest of North America, was invited by Association for Revival of Zoroastrianism [ARZ] & Association of Inter-Married Zoroastrians [AIMZ] to address the Zoroastrian community of Mumbai on Saturday 2 February at the Y B Chavan Centre.

Needless to say this lecture has created a furor and below are excerpts from various sources.

### Advocate Bapoo Malcolm in the Jame of 17 February

"... a pleasant surprise to see various VIPs, dignitaries, and senior citizens sitting and standing in the aisle and steps of the auditorium to listen to the learned exposition for over three hours. Special arrangements of audio speakers were made for hundreds of people waiting in the foyer and lobby of the auditorium by the organizers. Quite a few people had to return home as they could not be accommodated in to the already overflowing auditorium.

"... 'What is the justification for having one set of rules for the inter-married Parsi males and another for the inter-married Parsi women?', thundered the Dasturji.

"However and as predicted, handful of hooligans (about 30 miscreants in the audience of 1400), who call themselves 'orthodox', unsuccessfully tried to disrupt this mammoth meeting during the question/answer session. When the Dasturji stood up to answer questions posed to him after his lecture, the hooligans tried not to let him talk.

"The Police and the Security personnel of M/s Zest Security Services, promptly intervened and evicted the handful of trouble makers out of the auditorium.

"... A similar lecture meet of Dasturji Dr Kersey Antia was also organized and held in Pune on 6th February 2008, by The Gatha Study Group, Pune, which was attended by most of the well known names in Pune city. Dasturji's speech was given a thunderous applause at the end of the meeting."

### Also in the Jame of the 17<sup>th</sup>, the Editor writes ...

"Jamshed Falhazadeh's letter [President, All Iranian Zoroastrian Front], if true in content, lays bare the champion of orthodoxy, Er K N Dastoor. ... We have been given to understand that both, son and daughter of K N Dastoor have married outside the fold and he has himself allegedly performed the navjote ceremonies of his grandchildren. And, this very same torch-bearer of orthodoxy spews venom at those who he believes are non-conformists. Such are the champions of Parsee orthodoxy. ..."

### Mumbai Samachar of 10 February 08. Header reads, "Parsis are ready for acceptance"

"We were a little late to reach the venue of the ARZ-AIMZ sponsored talk by Dr Kersey Antia. We were simply flabbergasted to see the auditorium packed like sardines. We tried every possible entrance but just could not succeed in getting in. ... and had to ultimately request one of the organizers to let us in.

"... With due respect, the talk was nothing to write home about. ... We observed that the audience was simply lapping it all up although the speaker was not exactly saying anything new. We are more than convinced that our community is ready for acceptance, which was the central theme of Dr Antia's talk.

"... What we mean by acceptance is that the community, at least substantially, is ready for a couple of important reforms namely, (a) acceptance of the children of Parsi mothers and non-Parsi fathers and

for ending the gender discrimination which presently prevails, and (b) for permitting prayers to be recited for Parsis opting to be cremated or buried, at the Towers of Silence itself.

“... As reported earlier, WAPIZ tried its level best to sabotage this meeting. They addressed a letter to the police and to the management of the auditorium fearing a law and order problem. This only resulted in extra police protection and when a few hecklers who were obviously WAPIZ supporters tried to create a nuisance, they were promptly removed by the police.

“... The message is loud and clear. If WAPIZ tries to contest the forthcoming elections of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat on the plank of religious fundamentalism, they shall be massacred. This is not an empty boast or wishful thinking by a reformist. This is a dispassionate observation of where the wind is blowing.

“The majority of the voters shall be those residing in our colonies and Baugs. A majority shall also be practising and worshipping Zoroastrians.

“... The community is increasingly of one view that the gender discrimination between the children of intermarried Parsi men and women must end and they be treated equally. Any candidate opposing this, even though otherwise fit to be trustee material, is unlikely to win. Simultaneously, any candidate opposing the right of Parsis opting to be cremated to be prayed for in the Towers of Silence will also suffer heavily. As a matter of fact we also believe that the community increasingly believes that the Dokhmanashini system is failing and sooner or later we shall have to install a crematorium at the Doongerwadi. Many of the elderly think they would be far happier being cremated at Doongerwadi rather than at a public municipal crematorium.

“... Dr Antias meeting was an eye opener and we have to thank the Wadia brothers of ARZ and the ladies of AIMZ for this experience.”

#### **Berjis Desai in the Mumbai Samachar, 17 February, - Parsi tari Arsi -**

**Acceptance is the Buzz Word** says the header. In his short viewpoint he mentions referring to the meeting arranged by the orthodox – “Thus, a public debate has commenced. Any debate is a good thing. ... Particularly if the debate is on the precise issue of the survival of the community. Unlike the ARZ meeting, which patiently permitted the hecklers to disturb the speaker, it is very unlikely that any liberal will bother ... This fight and debate is certainly not about the future of Zoroastrianism, which is well and alive with nearly three million adherents all across the globe. It is about the survival of the Parsi community, which happens to also follow the same religion.”

#### **Times of India, Mumbai 3 February 08**

“... The controversy over acceptance of Parsis from mixed marriages into the Zoroastrian fold blew up on Saturday as the orthodox sections of the community disrupted and heckled a talk by Kersey Antia.

“... Orthodox Zoroastrians called up the management of the Y B Chavan Centre last week demanding that they withdraw permission for the talk. However, when their demands were not met, they registered a complaint against Antia at the Cuffe Parade police station stating that his speech would be inflammatory.

“... In fact, an hour before Antia made his speech, senior Parsi priests held a press conference at Colaba to repudiate the acceptance issue. Vada Dasturji Kaikhushroo M Jamasp Asa, Vada Dasturji Dr Peshotan H Mirza, Ervad Ramiyar P Karanjia, Ervad Rooyintan Peer and Ervad Parvez Bajan spoke out for the preservation of religion and race.”

**From Minoo Dumasia** [Mr Dumasia is not known to the Editor but has received his email]

“The recent events and the shameful behaviour of the orthodox Parsis in Mumbai, led by the self-proclaimed leaders and keepers of the faith, made it to the news on NDTV.

“... None of us alive today (including the Zoroastrian diaspora) can say ‘yes we know what the Prophet Zarathushtra has decreed’. We only have old scriptures written in Ancient texts and we have no authoritative translations for any of them. Most translations of ancient religious texts and prayers are subjective or consensual.

“... I believe that ‘Religion’ or ‘Faith in God of a particular denomination’ is a personal thing. If I convert myself into a Christian, Muslim, Hindu or Jew it is only because I choose to do so, not because I am being forcibly converted. Similarly the progressive Parsis are not asking for forcible conversion of other races to Zoroastrianism. The title or subject of Dr Kersi Antia’s speech was *Acceptance in Zoroastrianism*. He was only saying why should being a Zarthushti be either born to both Parsi parents or a **patriarchal inheritance**. What about womens rights. Why do we insist on rights for women to have equality, be politicians, entrepreneurs or leaders, have equal pay etc. We openly proclaim our disagreements with the mal-treatment of women in other societies and religions and yet these hypocrites do this to our own sisters and daughters and claim it is a religious decree.”

**NDTV.com - 2 February 08**

“Parsis community is caught in a contradiction, a community whose numbers are fast dwindling but is adamant on shutting its doors on the children of mixed marriages. It is an old debate that has resurfaced with a group of liberals trying yet again to coax orthodox Parsis to allow the children of intermarriages to practice the Zoroastrian religion.

“... ‘I don’t think inter-caste marriage is the answer to decreasing numbers. In fact I feel that it would lead to loss of ethnicity of the religion,’ said Noshir H Darawala, Executive Secretary, Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy.”

**H M Mistry** [Mr Mistry is not known to the Editor but has received his email]

“ARZ’s and AIMZ’s much publicised lecture at Y B Chavan Hall with Dr Kersey Antia as its star attraction turned out to be a ‘Flop Show’. From the police *bandhobast*, it was obvious that the organisers were SCARED of a community backlash.

“... At the outset itself, the compere informed the audience that if any one found the contents of Antia’s talk objectionable they were free to leave the venue or hold their peace. Questions would be taken after the programme. Antia rambled on for about 30 minutes spouting complete unscholarly tripe. Even people with limited religious knowledge like me were able to realise that Antia was talking nonsense.

“... The man knew he had met his match in the handful of spirited orthodox who had decided to make a stand. He was so badly shaken that he was seen mopping the sweat from his face with a kerchief and even from afar we noticed his hand shivering. Throughout all this commotion, the Trustees of ARZ and AIMZ were strangely silent. It looked as though they had thrown their Speaker to the wolves.”

**And Mehernosh Fitter had sent out an appeal on behalf of TMZL**

“Our dear Vada Dasturjis and Ervad Sahebs from Mumbai have taken upon themselves the noble task to guide our community on religious issues. They will be doing so in a few days time in Mumbai and explaining to our community brethren that ‘Acceptance’, ‘Conversion’ and other such mis-truths propounded by ARZ and Kersey Antia have no place in our wonderful Zoroastrian religion.

“... Please attend in large numbers to not only support our community against misguided people like ARZ, but to also learn much about the inner details of our religion.”



As Editor of *Hamazor*, I have quoted fairly the view points on the recent lecture “Acceptance in Zoroastrianism”, from the material received. – Toxy Cowasjee

## Acceptance / Conversion Allowed in Zoroastrianism

Learned religious opinion of Vada Dasturji Kaikhusroo Jamaspji JamaspAsa of Anjuman Atash Behram, (Grandfather of the current Vada Dasturji K. M. JamaspAsa), who had performed the Navjote of a French lady and also solemnized her marriage with Ratanji Dadabhoy Tata (parents of JRD Tata), as per the Zoroastrian rites in 1903.

Bombay  
5<sup>th</sup> Gatha 1272 Y.Z.  
14<sup>th</sup> September 1903

Dear Shams-Ulema Ervad Jivanji Jamshedji Modi  
Secretary of the B.P.P.

Dear Sir,

You have requested me to give my opinion on whether or not to allow non-Zoroastrians to convert to Zoroastrianism.

In reply, I have to state that there is no bar in our religion, to accept non-Zoroastrian converts. Every Zoroastrian reciting his obligatory daily prayers, such as Khorshed & Meher Yashts, prays that our Mazdayasni religion may spread to all the *Haftekeshwar Zamin*. (i.e. the seven regions of the world).

The athornans of days gone by did not just sit around wishing this (spread of religion) to come true, but travelled to distant lands to spread the Zoroastrian religion (Refer to Yasna 41.6). Such athornans met with opposition from many people (see Yasna 9.24). We have referred to only two passages from the innumerable in the Zoroastrian Scriptures confirming that the conversion of *juddins* to Zoroastrianism is permitted.

**The second edition of Ervad Tehmurasp Dinshahji Anklesaria's "Treatise on the Conversion of Juddins into Mazdayasni Religion" has just been published, in which this able Ervad Saheb has quoted examples from Avesta, Pahlavi, & Persian Texts and we totally agree with quotation / examples. In the second edition of "Passoxi Nirangi Javit Dinan" published in 1252 Y.Z. (1883 A.D) by our dear departed Dastur Jamaspji, further examples / quotations have been given concerning the conversion / acceptance of juddins into the Zoroastrian religion.**

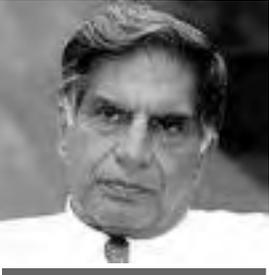
From the writings of Ervad Tehmurasp Anklesaria and our departed Dastur Jamaspji, it can be said that there is hardly any material left on this matter for further research by any scholar. Therefore rather than state more quotations / examples it is best that we give to your Sub-Committee these books referred to above.

Yours Sincerely,  
Dastur Kaikhushroo Jamaspji JamaspAsa

Reproduction of letter forwarded by Kerssie & Vispy N Wadia, Trustees, Association for Revival of Zoroastrianism (ARZ) to Dasturs K. M. JamaspAsa & Firoze Kotwal with their views and comments on this issue.

## Awards & Recognitions

### The Carnegie Medal of Honour for Philanthropy



On 24 December 2007, four great and renowned families received honour for Philanthropy, with the Tata family being the second. Ratan Tata was given the Medal on behalf of his family who spoke of the contribution his family has made by establishing many charitable foundations in India. A former Indian President spoke briefly of the Tata contributions among them of Jamshed Tata's early flight from Karachi to Bombay via Ahmedabad in 1932 and the start of Air India. The other three recipients were the Mellon family, the Heinz family and the Broad family. [source Dhunmai Dalal – Los Angeles]

### Lord Bilimoria recipient of Indian national award



Lord Karan Bilimoria, founder and Chairman of Cobra Beer has been announced as one of this year's winners of India's renowned Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Award.

President Pratibha Patil presented the awards to the selected thirteen recipients on the closing night of the Annual Pravasi Bhartiya Divas conference which was held in New Delhi from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> January. The Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Award, now in its 6<sup>th</sup> year, is given to notable overseas Indians who have made a significant impact in their respective fields and recognises their international achievement and contributions towards strengthening India's foreign relations.

Lord Bilimoria said, *"I am honoured and delighted to receive this award. The list of past winners speaks for itself; they are the best of the best, and proof of something I have been saying for a long time that the Indian diaspora is an amazing success story, with Indians reaching the top in virtually every field around the world."*

### Three Parsis were the recipients for India's Republic Day Civilian awards on 26 January



Ratan Naval Tata - Padma Vibhushan for Trade & Industry being the highest award this year. Undoubtedly our most eminent industrialist.

Kekoo M Gandhi - Padma Shri for Art. Octogenarian and owner of Chemould Art Gallery.

Dr Keiki R Mehta - Padma Shri for Medicine. Noted Ophthalmic surgeon, not only in India but across the world.

### President Bush names Mumbai-born Jamshed Choksy to Humanities Council



A professor of liberal arts at Indiana University was nominated by President George W Bush to the prestigious National Council on the Humanities for a six-year period beginning January 27.

The Council, is part of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The nominations of Choksy and other members to the 26-member body await Senate confirmation.

*'It is an honour to have been nominated by the President,'* Professor Choksy said. *'If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to serving this great nation and ensuring the vibrancy of the humanities in our society. There's always a need to keep reinvigorating the humanities, because they provide the foundation that glues our society together,'* he added.

Professor Choksy grew up in Colombo, Sri Lanka, before coming to the United States to attend Columbia University and Harvard University. [source Aban Rustomji – Houston]



Jamshed Choksy

**Recognition to Shayan Italia**

More than being the first unestablished music artist to be recently interviewed by the legendary Sir David Frost, Shayan Italia, also became the first to inaugurate a live performance on Sir David Frost's world famous show "Frost Over The World".

Shayan believes, "If someone tells you something cannot be done, it's just their way of saying they cannot do it."



**Cyrus Bahrassa brings crowd of 2000 to their feet**

17-year old Cyrus Bahrassa, a Senior and the Student Body President of the Little Rock Central High School, delivered a powerful speech at the commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the integration of the Central High in Little Rock, opening and dedication of the new Central High School National Historic Site Museum and Visitor Center, and that speech drew a standing ovation from nearly 2,000 people.

Cyrus Bahrassa said, "Hate was hate, hate is hate, hate will be hate. It is not a solution to pass hate on."

Fifty years ago, on September 25th, 1957, President Dwight Eisenhower ordered troops of the 101st Airborne Division to escort nine black students into Little Rock Central High School and protect them for their full day in class. Among the dignitaries that attended the commemoration ceremony were former President Bill Clinton and his wife Sen Hillary Clinton (both of whom embraced Cyrus at the ceremony after the speech), President Eisenhower's granddaughter Susan Eisenhower, the Rev Jesse Jackson, Arkansas Gov Mike Beebe, and several other officials. [source Aban Rustomji - Houston]



**Pianist Soheil Nasser**

"Local boy does pretty good" read the header in the Washington Post. Soheil Nasser, 29, is a classical pianist who has given a number of ambitious solo recitals in New York, to some favourable reviews. He played at the Kennedy Center on Saturday night [23 February] with a programme he will be taking on the road to Berlin and his London debut. Nasser attended Richard Montgomery High School until he dropped out at 16 to pursue his piano studies, and the story line he would have liked to promote about the weekend's concert is "Local Boy Makes Good." The Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington presented this concert at the Kennedy Center. [source Behram Pastakia - Washington]



**Zarathushti Heritage & Cultural Center, Houston, celebrates 10 years of pride**

- 02 February Jashan e Sadeh
- 10 February Car Rally
- 09 March Sports day
- 16 March Pori-bakeathon
- 21 March Jashan & Navroze festivities
- 12 April Religious Education Seminar with four speakers
- 13 April Mela/Meals on wheels
- 23 May Persian night
- 24 May Jashan



25 May

- Treasures Exhibit - Community Picture - lunch.
- ZAH Gala night with awards, entertainment, "Honoring our Own" followed by dinner & dance.
- WZCC - Houston Chapter, two sessions followed by lunch.
- "Lay all your love on me" - a 2-act comedy play.

## “The Tweed” - the Zoroastrian connection

The burning of the ship *Cutty Sark* in England [21 May 2007] has been prominently covered in the news media. [some additional information in the endnote]. However, not many Zoroastrians may know that there is an interesting story connected with the owner of the *Cutty Sark*, John Willis and the famous Parsi shipbuilders, the Wadias.

purchased by John Willis the clipper owner of the famous *Cutty Sark*, who converted them to sailing vessels. The *Punjaub* was renamed the *Tweed* and given a fine new figurehead representing Tam O'Shanter and placed under the command of Willis's favourite, Captain W Stuart, who commanded her from 1863 to 1877. Both



The Tweed ex Punjab. Date of creation between 1885 and 1946, postcard 8.5 x 13.5 cm approx. Credit: Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria, reproduced with permission given to Hamazor

In 1852, Cursetjee Rustomjee Wadia, the fifth Master Builder, laid down the measurements of two ships, the *Assaye* and the *Punjaub* which were launched on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 1854 and 21<sup>st</sup> of April 1854 respectively. The *Punjaub* successfully weathered the great hurricane of November 1854 at Bombay and was also involved in taking the 19<sup>th</sup> hussars to Calcutta during the mutiny of 1857. Both the ships were sent to London for conversion to screw steamers in 1862. But instead they were

vessels assisted in the laying of the Indo-European Cable and the *Tweed* made a record passage to Bombay in 77 days.

The *Tweed*, affectionately known as Willis's Wonder, made many trips to Australia and China and on her first passage to Melbourne made the trip in 83 days, a record which has not been improved upon even by such classical fast sailing as the *Cutty Sark*. During this voyage she logged as much as 300 miles in a day and on other

voyages logged 360 odd miles in a day, an average of 15 knots per hour.

Basil Lubbock, in his book *The Blackwall Frigates* writes of the *Tweed*:

“Some ships seem to have the finger of God in their design, the supreme of man’s craftsmanship in their building and the touch of genius in their character, such ships stand out above all their contemporaries. Old seamen speak of them with affection of lovers. Poets sing of them. Shantey men glorify their qualities and their deeds in hundreds of verses. Journalists pigeon-hole the pages of their log books as if they were public men. And those who have sailed in them lord regally over their fellows and begin every yarn with the stock phrase. ‘When I was in the old so and so’. ...”

In 1877, Captain Boyce took command of the *Tweed* when she did the trip to Sydney in 81 days. In 1855, Captain Moore left the *Cutty Sark* to take command of the *Tweed* which was dismantled in 1888 off Algoa Bay and was afterwards broken up there. Her frames and timber may still be seen forming the roof of a church at Port Elizabeth. Algoa Bay is a large inlet of the Indian Ocean, in southern South Africa. On the western side is Port Elizabeth, one of the principal seaports of South Africa. In the early 16<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese navigators stopped at the bay on the way to Goa, in India. In 1820 it was the landing place of early British immigrants to South Africa. In addition to the ships referred to above, *HMS Cornwallis*, which was the flagship of the British in Canadian waters during the 1812 war, was also built by the Wadias at the Bombay dockyard. The Naval Canteen near the Gateway of India also bears the same name. The *Minden* also built by the Wadias, was the ship on which Francis Scott Key composed the American National anthem and it was also on board this ship that the Treaty of Nanking conceding the territory of Hong Kong to the British was signed – [which expired a few years ago, relinquishing Hong Kong back to the Chinese].

(Excerpt from the *Bombay Dockyard and The Wadia Master Builders* by R A Wadia)

[Previously printed in *Ushao, Journal of Informal Religious Meetings*, Vol VIII No 7, under the heading of *Sailing Ship “Cutty Sark”*, with permission]

**Endnote:**

The Times Online of May 21, 2007, mentions “Conservation experts pledged today that the Cutty Sark will rise from the ashes of this morning’s catastrophic fire that engulfed the 19th century tea clipper.

... The Cutty

Sark is the last remaining tea-clipper, one of hundreds of ships that would sail to China carrying manufactured goods and return to the UK laden with tea from Shanghai.

First launched in 1869, the Cutty Sark was built for Jock Willis, known as ‘White Hat Willis’ for his trademark white top hat. He named the ship after the Scots phrase for a short petticoat, worn by a fleet-footed witch in Robert Burns’ poem Tam O’Shanter.”



A photograph of the Cutty Sark under sail taken by Captain Richard Woodget, her best known master, in the 1890s. [Google.com]

**Shipbuilding & Shipping**

From the chapter “Colonial Trade and Parsi Entrepreneurs” by Rusheed R Wadia pp 447 – 448 appearing in *A Zoroastrian Tapestry: Art, Religion & Culture*, edited by Pheroza J Godrej & Firoza Punthakey Mistree, with permission, an excerpt.

The most distinguished names in shipbuilding in Bombay in the early eighteenth century were those of Lowjee Nusserwanjee Wadia and his family. Their remarkable story begins in 1736 when Lowjee Nusserwanjee, a foreman carpenter from Surat, was invited by the East India Company to come to Bombay with his team of ten Parsi carpenters, five of whom were Wadias. He was succeeded by his sons Maneckjee and Bomanjee, who took over the shipyard’s activities. This was at a time when the shipbuilding industry in England was facing a crisis due to a shortage of

good quality oak. Built from Malabar teak which was superior to English oak, the ships built in the Bombay Dockyard by the Wadias not only cost less but were also more durable than those built in England. While the average life of an English vessel was twelve years, a Wadia built ship would last for thirty. They were also far superior in handling and stronger than British ships of that time. ...

The Wadias were to build around three hundred and thirty-five ships over a period of one hundred and fifty years. This included sixteen warships for the British Navy. Though the ships were built in the traditional fashion they incorporated useful features of European vessels. For instance, as early as 1795, copper-sheathing, a practice universally accepted by European navies, was employed to make merchant vessels in the Bombay shipyard. So high was its reputation that after 1800, under the pressure of the French and

Napoleonic Wars, the British Navy commissioned construction of its warships at the Bombay Dockyards,, giving a fillip to the shipbuilding industry in Bombay.

Under the Wadia shipbuilders, the Bombay Dockyard became a repository of skilled Indian artisans, unlike the Calcutta Dockyard where they were dependant on imported European skills. In 1829, Nowrojee Jamsetjee Wadia assembled the four hundred and eleven ton steam sloop Hugh Lindsay for the English East India Company. The year 1833 saw Ardaseer Cursetjee Wadia assemble a sixty ton steam boat. He trained in England and in 1841 became the first Indian Fellow of the Royal Society, London. Besides him, Jehangir Naorojee Wadia were among those sent to England for training in shipbuilding techniques. Another example of excellence was Dhunjibhoy Rustomjee Wadia. Those famous shipwright joined the Bombay Dockyard as an employee. He was to later build fast clippers at Rustomjee Cowasjee Banaji's dockyard in Calcutta.

In spite of such matchless accumulation of skill and technical prowess, the Wadia shipbuilders failed to emerge as independent shipbuilding entrepreneurs in their own right. This was due to the economic organisation of the Bombay Dockyard and its position in the larger design of the English East India Company. The docks where the Wadia brothers built their ships were the property of the English East India Company. While the actual manufacturing of the hull and its fitting out were the work of the master builders, the overall control of the yard was exercised by the Company.

... Jamsetjee Dhunjeebhoy Wadia was the last member of this distinguished family to be Master Builder of the Bombay Dockyard. When he retired on January 1, 1885, a one hundred and fifty year old association of the Lowjee Wadia family with the dockyard came to an end. ...

### A Unique Resource - [www.zoroastrians.net](http://www.zoroastrians.net)

For the Zoroastrian community, the net is a great place to come together, share ideas, and foster bonds, says Yazdi Tantra, webmaster of these resources.

After the runaway success of [www.theparsidirectory.com](http://www.theparsidirectory.com), where more than 63,000 Parsis/Iranis globally have already registered themselves, the promoters have now launched another most useful website, [www.zoroastrians.net](http://www.zoroastrians.net)

This new website is unique in the sense that it covers everything related to the Parsis/Iranis, plus you can post your comments on improvements/additions/deletions for each covered topic if you feel such a change should be effected in any of the sections.

**Creating Links :** You can also include your own website about your area of interest under the appropriate topics covered by [www.zoroastrians.net](http://www.zoroastrians.net) to enable you reach out globally to all those who are interested in Zoroastrians and Zoroastrianism.

Please take some time to visit [www.zoroastrians.net](http://www.zoroastrians.net) and post your comments/views therein. Consider it your own playground and share your views on how it can be improved further still.

Above all else, be part of the World Wide Web movement that is linking the community and creating value by offering all kinds of common interest areas and avenues to enhance interaction. ■■■■



Senior statesman of Pakistani diplomacy, Jamsheed Marker is a man of varied interests and multiple achievements. He served in the Royal Indian Navy in World War II and subsequently joined the family business in Quetta and Karachi. Marker's distinguished diplomatic career began in 1965, when he was appointed Ambassador of Pakistan. He has since served continuously in that capacity in 15 countries, including Ghana, Romania, the former USSR, Canada, the German Democratic Republic, Japan, France and USA. From 1990-95, he served as Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations in New York. Marker was the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, United Nations, for East Timor, with the rank of Under Secretary-General. During his tenure in Washington DC, US State Department officials described him as "tough, shrewd and cultivated". In short, the ultimate diplomat.

## Mr Peshotan Dosabhoy Marker of 5<sup>th</sup> Khetwadi Lane, Bombay, India & Markerabad, Yazd, Iran

by jamsheed marker

My grand uncle, Peshotan Dosabhoy Marker, was a bachelor, and a businessman of modest means and ability, who lived in the ancestral joint family flat on the third floor (or was it the fourth?) of a typical urban building similar to all the other middle class dwellings that spread over Bombay in the first half of the Twentieth Century. The houses in Khetwadi Lane, 1 to 7, were occupied by tenants or owners who were in the process of making the social transition from lower to upper middle class, as was the locality itself, which exuded an honest nine to five day work in offices and other places of business. My earliest recollection of grand uncle Pestonjee, and one that never changed, was of an earnest, kindly old Parsi gentleman, impeccably dressed in a buttoned up dagla or frock coat, coupled with a grey fainta placed with geometric precision on the dead centre of a white haired head. The image persists to this day, as "Pestonjee Kaka" never seemed to get either older or younger. I have no recollection of what Uncle Pestonjee did for a living, though he obviously had enough to keep him in comfort, but he did "go to office" every day, and one heard of an occasional foray into the "share bazaar". However, no such uncertainty surrounded his main interest and occupation in life. It was Iran in general and the fate of the somewhat impoverished Iranian Zoroastrians in particular. I am unaware of when or what originally sparked this interest, but the fate of the Iranian Zoroastrians clearly evoked his concern, and though he had always lived a simple



courtesy of www.vohuman.org

and frugal life, he began to spend more on his charity and less on himself. Thus, when I first knew him, he was already passionately committed to this cause, and to me as to many others, Uncle Pestonjee's name appeared to have been automatically hyphenated with Yazd.

During the 1920s and 1930s there were a number of Iranian Zoroastrians in Bombay, many of whom were employed by the affluent Parsis as domestic staff – cooks, drivers, housemaids, and sometimes even as a major domo. They were instantly recognizable, partly by their somewhat wayward behaviour, but mostly by their accents, and provided the role of the comic in the various Parsi Theatricals and Nataks, which were a regular component of Parsi life in Bombay at that time. The more well to do Iranians set up their own business, and the Irani Cafe, in particular, became a standard fixture in the urban and suburban environment of the city. Their names bore the unmistakable stamp of British colonial fealty: Cafe Victoria, Cafe George, Cafe Albert, Cafe Edward, Britannia Cafe and Restaurant, Prince of Wales Restaurant: and the fare served as a delicious and substantial reflection of the royal opulence of the nomenclature of the establishments. Service and transaction in the cafe was almost entirely aural, no orders noted on slips of paper and bills presented. At the end of the meal the waiter, usually an Irani, would shout to the owner, the Irani boss seated at the "gulla" at the entrance, the items consumed by the customer and its cost, which was duly collected as the client left the restaurant.

*"One cup chai, doe chicket patty, aht anna"* or *"ek faluda, ek palate gosht curry chaval, ek rupial aht anna"*. A well known, but acrophical was *"Khaya nhain, piya nahin, ek glass tora, char anna"* [Did not eat, did not drink, broke a glass, 4 annas].

Uncle Pestonjee's midday repasts were invariably taken at these cafes, and it was with the owners and workers of these establishments that he developed a rapport, and with them to their kith and kin in the homeland at Yazd. For his annual visit to Iran he took a second class cabin on the British India Steam Navigation vessels (*"Vita"*, *"Vasna"*, *"Elora"*) from Bombay to

either Bander Abbas or Basra, and then took a bus to his beloved Yazd. In this small, dusty Iranian city Peshotan Dosabhoj Marker composed and fulfilled his life's magnum opus. He started an orphanage for improverished Zoroastrian children, and developed it

into a full fledged school, which in due course grew in size and sophistication and took in children of all faiths. I was unaware of the importance and outreach of the

Peshotan Marker school in Yazd until, during my diplomatic career in the 1970s I came across, at two different posts, Iranian ambassadors who were my colleagues and had been to the Peshotan Marker School in Yazd. As the school developed and expanded, the area became to be known as "Markerabad", and the edifice was embellished with a clock tower donated by my grandfather, Ardeshir Dosabhoj Marker. Parsis of the Victorian era possessed a curious affinity for clocks and timepieces.

After the Islamic Revolution, the government nationalized the school and requisitioned the property, which by now had appreciated considerably in value. We thought that this would be the invertible end of the institution and the memory of Uncle

Pestonjee in Yazd. To our considerable surprise and gratification we heard that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran had made a generous compensation by creating a large and beautiful park in the city, and named it Peshotan Marker Park. To compound this spontaneous act of generosity, the park was



4. Land compensated by the Government for developing Peshotan Marker Park



1. Sign above entrance to school



2. Main school building



3. Marker Clock Tower

inaugurated by no less a personality than the Grand Ayatollah Khomeini, the supreme figure in Iran. This is a turn of events which, I am sure, would bring a smile of quiet satisfaction to dear Uncle Pestonjee.

But there was also an association with the family that greatly gladdened the heart of Uncle Pestonjee during his lifetime. Most important was the commitment and substantial support and encouragement that he received from his brother Ardeshir D Marker, who was also my grandfather. Between the brothers Ardeshir and Pestonjee there was a bond and understanding that was deep and profound, and extended even to their similarity in physical appearance, and incidentally sartorial choice – like Pestonjee, Grandfather Ardeshir always wore dagla and fainta, and never dressed in western style suits. Ardeshir's encouragement of

## Tata's Nano

### What the Papers say ...

**The Times - 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2008**

Tata Nano - world's cheapest new car is unveiled in India [at Delhi on 10<sup>th</sup> January]. The "People's Car" is the cheapest in the world at 100,000 rupees (£1,300) – the same price as the DVD player in a Lexus. The Nano, from Tata, the Indian conglomerate bidding for Jaguar and Land Rover, was unveiled at the Delhi Auto Expo yesterday to music from 2001: A Space Odyssey. Ratan Tata, the company chairman, harked back to the first flight by the Wright Brothers and the Moon landing as he revealed the cute, snub-nosed hatchback that will allow millions in India's emerging middle classes to buy a car for the first time. "I hope this changes the way people travel in rural India. We are a country of a billion and most are denied connectivity," he said. "This is a car that is affordable and provides all-weather transport for the family."

... Because of its size, it uses less sheet metal, has a smaller and lighter engine than other cars, smaller tube-less tyres and a no-frills interior. ... "We shrunk it, made the engine smaller and used fewer materials but we haven't taken any shortcuts in term of safety or emissions," Mr Tata said.

... As Greenpeace activists outside the show held banners demanding "Cut CO2 emissions", Mr Tata dismissed environmental concerns. He said that his car, which does 50 miles to the gallon, would conform to all emission standards in India and Europe. "We need to think of our masses. Should they be denied the right to an individual form of transport?" he asked.

**The Telegraph - 11 January**

The basic Nano is aimed at people in India and China looking to buy their first car - the kind of people who previously climbed on a battered scooter, along with their entire family, a pig and a few geese. It's called the low-cost car market and with the developed world's car markets stagnant or declining,

Pestonjee's work in Yazd included a regular and substantial financial contribution of lakhs of rupees, at a time when a lakh was alifetime inheritance, and when there were no deductions for charity. Then, in 1933/34 Pestonjee's nephew, and my father, Kekobad Ardeshir Marker, was

appointed as the Honorary Consul General for Iran in Quetta. My father's standing in the community, coupled with his fluency in Farsi, were probably the reason for this distinguished appointment, the perks of which included an Iranian flag at our residence and on our car. This time Uncle Pestonjee decided to make his journey to Iran by land, and I well remember the emotional, child like delight and tearful gaze that lit his eyes when he saw the Iranian flag fluttering in the garden of our residence.

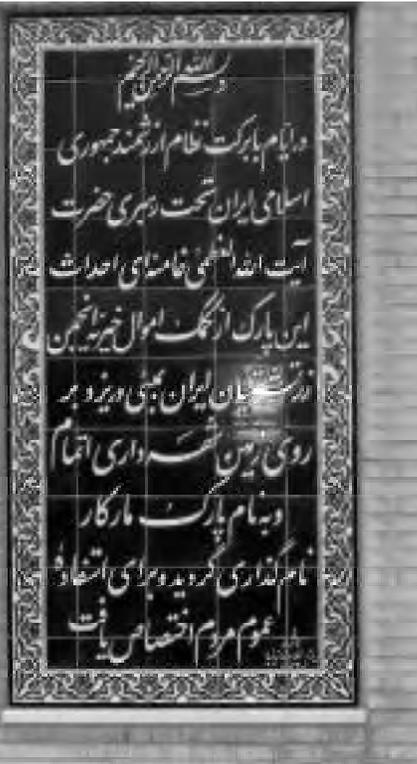
Such are the nostalgic memories of events and personalities of an era long ago. They made a slight, fleeting presence in the kaleidoscope of the varied events of the subcontinent, and then disappeared into the mists of history.



#### Acknowledgements:

Photographs 1 - 3: courtesy Er Soli Dastur, USA

4 & 5: courtesy Fariborz Rahnamoon, Canada



5. Plaque of dedication at the Marker Park

THE FIRST NANO JOKE

There was a Japanese man who went to India for sightseeing. On the last day, he hailed a brand new Nano cab and told the driver to drive to the airport.

During the journey, a Honda drove past the taxi. Thereupon, the man leaned out of the window excitedly and yelled, "Honda, very fast! Made in Japan!"

After a while, a Toyota sped past the taxi. Again, the Japanese man leaned out of the window and yelled, "Toyota, very fast! Made in Japan!"

And then a Mitsubishi sped past the taxi. For the third time, the Japanese leaned out of the window and yelled, "Mitsubishi, very fast! Made in Japan!"

The sardarji driver was a little angry, but he kept quiet. And this went on for quite a number of cars. Finally, the taxi came to the airport.

The fare was 5000 rupees. The Japanese exclaimed, "Wah ... so expensive!"

There upon, the driver yelled back, "Meter, very fast! Made in Japan!"

there's not a motor manufacturer on earth that isn't looking closely at making cars for India, China and in some cases Africa.

... The Nano also reopens a long cherished idea of the completely recyclable, throwaway car as an attainable reality. Using battery or hybrid power, cars such as this could become a shared resource, available to hire for hours or even minutes on urban streets. Current thinking is that they would have a two-year life before being brought back into the factory for refurbishment or recycling.

**Economic Times, India on 19 Dec 2007**

Mr Mashelkar [former CSIR director general] also revealed how the small car concept first struck Ratan Tata, who's now in the race to acquire two iconic British brands - Jaguar and Land Rover. "You know how 'Ratan' thought about this small car. He talked to me on several things. One day, he was going on the road and saw a family of four getting soaked in the rain. That was when he decided to create a small car for all," he said. ... "I sat in that car by the way, and it was amazing, ... "I am a six footer and it's spacious both in the front and in the rear. In terms of acceleration, it is equivalent to a Maruti 800 and has an incredible design finished by indigenous Tata Motors' engineers," Mr Mashelkar added.

**Edmunds Inside Line [an online paper] on 10 October 2007**

Ratan Tata may be remembered as the Henry Ford of India or perhaps the Preston Tucker. But already his influence is being felt by such global auto titans as Carlos Ghosn and Ferdinand Piech, despite the fact that tiny Tata Motors doesn't even seem to have surfaced on Detroit's murky radar screens. ■■■■



**Chronology of the Tata Group, India's largest and oldest conglomerate**

1868: Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata, son of a Parsi priest, starts a private trading firm, laying the foundation of the group.

1874: First textile plant in central India established.

1902: Opening of India's first luxury hotel, the Taj Mahal Palace and Tower in Mumbai.

1907: Tata Iron and Steel Company, later renamed Tata Steel, founded. Production starts in 1912.

1932: Sets up Tata Airlines, present-day Air India, which was later transferred to government control.

1939: Tata Chemicals founded.

1945: Tata Electric and Locomotive Company, now Tata Motors, established.

1954: Enters consumer electronics, sets up Voltas, a maker of air conditioners and refrigerators.

1968: Tata Consultancy Services, what has now become India's top outsourcing company, incorporated.

1996: IPO of Tata Teleservices to cash in on the fast growing telecom sector.

1998: Tata Motors rolls out the first fully-Indian car, the Indica.

2000: Buys Britain's Tetley Tea for 270 million pounds.

2004: Acquires truck unit of South Korea's Daewoo Motors

2005: Takes over undersea cable network of US-based Tyco International, Singapore's Natsteel, Thai company Millennium Steel, New York's Pierre hotel, Britain's Brunner Mond Group

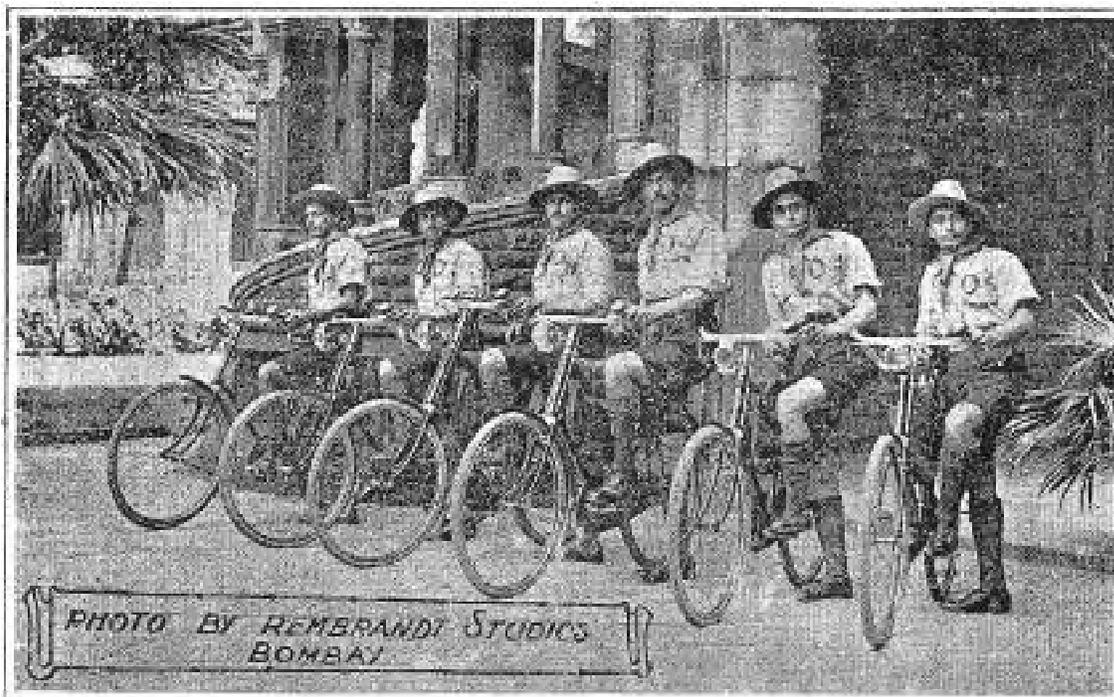
2006: Buys Eight O'Clock coffee in the United States.

2007: Tata Steel wins bidding war for British steelmaker Corus; snaps up mining right across Asia and Africa.

2008: Ford Motor Co. picks Tata Motors as preferred bidder for Jaguar and Land Rover businesses; Tata Motors unveils the world's cheapest car, the Tata Nano, costing \$2,500.

## Parsi cyclists peddle across the world in 1923 & 1933

**I**n my collection of old postcards, I have this wonderful card of Parsis who cycled across the world in 1923. To find out more about this, the obvious person to ask whom I knew, was Homai Modi of K R Cama Institute. Books were recommended which were not available to me, so the resourceful Noshir Dadrawalla was next contacted, requesting if he would write about these adventurous men. Promptly came his reply with a "yeah" but soon had to be abandoned, as there was hardly any material BUT, said he had previously researched about a group who went in 1933 which he now kindly shares with the readers. - Ed



"Round the World on Bicycles  
J.P. Bapasola, K.D. Pochkhanawalla,  
N.B. Kapadia, R.J. Bhamgara, G.M.  
Hathiram, A.B. Hakim (A.F.I)  
members of the 11th Battalion 2nd  
Bombay Pioneers also member of the  
Bombay Weight Lifting Club.

Starting on the 15th October 1923 we  
intend cycling round the world  
passing through India, Persia,  
Mesopotamia, Palestine, Egypt, Italy,  
Switzerland, Hungary, Austria,  
Czecho-Slovakia, Germany, Holland,  
Belgium, France, Great Britain, USA,  
Japan, China, Burma and back to  
India.

We meet our expenses by the sale of  
these cards and by our own exertions.  
Anything that you will give us for  
these cards will be greatly appreciated.

Benson cycles used on this Tour -  
Messrs Dunlop have supplied tyres &  
tubes gratis." [thus reads the reverse]

### Peddle-pushing across the globe

by noshir dadrawalla

Noshir Dadrawalla wrote this article for the Bharda New High School Centenary volume in 1991.

**T**he pursuit of excellence has been the hallmark of Bharda-ites throughout the century. It is this same spirit which took three young men, Keki J Kharas – 28 years, Ratan D Shroff – 18, and Rustom E Gandhi – 18, on a world tour on the Royal Enfield bicycles in 1933.

The journey which began on April 30 1933 in Bombay ended on January 29 1942 when the three heroes returned to the city from their journey of five continents registering a total distance of 52,000 miles on their speedometer.



Noshir H Dadrawala has authored books, researched papers, given talks and conducted seminars at national and international level. He is also a trustee of various foundations/councils. Professionally he is an Executive Secretary at the Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy.

His research projects have been for John Hopkins and Harvard Universities as well as for the London School of Economics. He has travelled extensively and earned fellowship/membership of international bodies. He is editor of a few publications.

The journey, recalls Kharas, now in his late eighties, [in 1991] took us through Delhi, Kashmir, Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Persia, Turkey, Bulgaria, England, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Belgium, Cairo, Capetown, then a short journey by boat to Buenos Aires (South America) and again on bicycle to Rio, Mexico, New York, Washington DC and other parts of the US, Japan, China, HongKong, Java, Sumatra, Australia, New Zealand, Rangoon, and finally back to Bombay via Madras.

The object of the tour says Kharas was education and sports. "It was a whole new experience in meeting different people from different cultures and understanding them as no text book can explain." "In jungles" Kharas continued, "we took turns in being night guards and frightening tigers with spoons and tin plates. In Iran we were taken prisoners since we unknowingly crossed the military zone. We were about to be executed when on searching our baggage the authorities found a recommendation letter from King Nadirsha of Afghanistan explaining our mission. Like in the movies we were saved by the skin of our teeth. Incidentally in Afghanistan we were the Royal guests of the King."

Kharas also remembers that when they began the journey from Bombay they had Rs1,000 in their pockets. By the time they reached England they had only £3 left with them. Timely assistance from Lord Wakefield and some Parsis in England put them back on the road.

Thumbing through the album still maintained in excellent condition by Kharas, one embarks on an exciting journey through the lens eye. There are pictures of well known and little known monuments of the world, dignitaries, tribes, postal stamps of the world, signatures of Kings and diplomats and other exhibits. [a wonderful piece of history hopefully not lost – Ed]

Inspired by the journey Kharas also wrote two books *Through the Afghan Wilds* and *Across the Highways of the World*.

This journey across the globe on bicycles was a world record in its own right at that

time. "those were the days when the skies were less crowded and people in places like Afghanistan had not even seen a bicycle", says Kharas.

Today [1991] when the school celebrates its centenary we remember with pride the names of Ratan Shroff, Rustom Gandhi and Keki Kharas all three being former students of the school and World Record holders. May their names ever be remembered by those with the spirit of adventure in their hearts.

[The adventure of 1933 was narrated to Dadrawalla by Keki Kharas in 1991]



From Parsis & Sports by H D Darukhanawala, chapter titled Cycling Around the World, possibly the first group of 1923, as according to the report on the facing page only three of the cyclists completed the full tour. - Ed.



Scouter F J Davar & Gustar Sztavajanik. P372, Parsis & Sports by H D Darukhanawala

## Cycling

The Parsis were pioneers in popularizing the sport of cycling in Bombay in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The pioneers of long distance cycling were the trio of Jehangir Bam, Cawas Mehta and Jal Pochkhanawalla. In 1910, they cycled along the route of India's most prestigious train, the Frontier Mail, from Bombay to Peshawar and back. They got no financial aid or sponsorship and they travelled light, without any bedding. They left Peshawar on November 16, 1910, on ordinary push-bikes and completed the journey of 1,556 miles in twenty-one days, reaching Bombay on December 7. They survived several moments of crises including an unusual mishap, when Jehangir Bam was hurled off his machine over a low bridge, by an angry, snorting bull.

On October 15, 1923, six Bombay Parsi cyclists began a round-the-world trip from Bombay on push-bikes. Their arduous journey included crossing the four great deserts of Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Sinai. Three of the cyclists returned home midway through

the tour. However, three of the boys, Rustom J Bhumgara, Jal D Bapasola and Adi B Hakim, did not falter, and continued their quest to cycle round the globe. They finished their circular journey in four years, five months and three days and after touring South India returned to Bombay on Sunday, March 18, 1928.

Inspired by the bold feats of Bhumgara, Bapasola and Hakim, Framroze embarked on a solo round-the-world trip on January 21, 1924. The highlight of his trip was crossing the Sahara Desert, a distance of 2,600 miles, in five months and twelve days, encountering eight sandstorms. He also crossed the Andes Mountains at a height of 12,000-17,000 ft and got caught in a blizzard.

Endurance cycling was a rage amongst the Parsis during the 1920s and 1930s. Coover S Patel set a World Record in non-stop cycling for 36 hours and 30 minutes, which was established in Bombay in June 1929. On February 14, 1930, he broke his own world record, cycling without a break for 50 hours and 45 minutes. ...

The greatest and most accomplished Parsi cyclist of all time is the legendary Adi R Havewalla, Olympian and National Champion and participant in the World Championships. ... Adi was born in 1914, the eighth child of a poor landlord's family. His childhood was full of privations and hardships. Often the family had to be content with just one meal a day. For him, purchasing a bicycle was a dream. The first cycle race in which he took part was of the Boy Scouts in which he used a bicycle borrowed from a friend. ... "the gear ratio of that cycle was so high, that by the time I could reach the normal speed, the other competitors had already left me far behind. But the race was long and with my steady speed and determination I was able to catch all of them but one."

Adi stood second in the heats. His other wealthy friends felt ashamed that they had not offered him their cycles. In the finals, at least five of them offered, out of which Adi selected one gracefully and won the cycle race. Thus, began the career of a modest Olympian.

From  
A Sporting Tradition  
Winning Accolades  
by Novy Kapadia  
pp 987 & 989 :

Enduring Legacy, Parsis of  
the Twentieth Century,  
Volume IV – Sports &  
Cricket.

Editor : Nawaz B Mody

The author of this article,  
[from which this is an  
extract] Novy Kapadia,  
played football for Delhi  
XI, Delhi University and  
the First Division League  
Football in Delhi for two  
decades. However, he has  
achieved more fame as an  
i n t e r n a t i o n a l  
commentator on football  
for television and radio  
and as a football writer.

With permission &  
courtesy of Dr Nawaz  
B Mody

# The Mama Parsi Girls' School Karachi - 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

by jubin mama



## The Mama Parsi Girls' School's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations

- Tuesday 01st April - Jashan/Milad/Party
- Thursday 09<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October - Grand Exhibition involving not only academic subjects but co-curricular activities as well.
- Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December - Grand Concert
- The past Mamaians are planning a Grand Reunion at Houston, USA, over the weekend of 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> October of this year, with their main Reunion Night being on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> October.
- If you are an alumni of Mama School, please send us your present name, telephone numbers and address, and also your maiden name (surname prior to marriage) and graduating year, to the following email:

msalumni\_na@sbcglobal.net

# 1<sup>st</sup>

April 2008 marks the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Mama Parsi Girls Secondary School in Karachi, Pakistan. The school's history and development reflects the contribution of the Parsi community to the city's civic life, offering a paradigm of community spirit in action.

In the nineteenth century Parsis began to arrive in Karachi, then developing into one of British India's foremost ports, providing unrivalled opportunities for advancement. The Parsi community's earliest priorities were establishing the Tower of Silence in 1847 and the Hirjikaka Dare Meher in 1848 to preserve its religious traditions. The child population grew steadily and ten years after the opening of the Dare Meher the Parsi Balak Shala was established in 1858, imparting religious education and knowledge of Gujarati to Parsi children.

The nucleus of The Mama School lay in this community project established by the community for the community through public subscription. In 1870 Shahpurji Hormusji Soparivala donated his home to the community in memory of his late wife Virbaiji to house a co-educational vernacular school. The Balak Shala moved into these premises, becoming the Parsi Virbaiji School (PVS). In 1875 English was introduced in the higher classes and the PVS became the Bai Virbaiji Soparivala Parsi Anglo-Vernacular School.

The community's rapid development and the reform and liberal thought accompanying it led to more and more Parsi families wishing to educate their daughters. With increasing numbers of girls to educate and in keeping with prevailing social mores the establishment of a separate girls' school became increasingly important to the community and its elders.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century an enlightened Karachi Parsi, Seth Nawrojee Nusserwanjee Pochaji bequeathed a

considerable sum to the community for the express purpose of female education. To his mind it was logical that future mothers of the community responsible for instilling moral values in their children be provided a fitting education to play this role. Other stalwarts of the community also shared his vision and stepped up to the challenge of translating these shared aspirations into the reality that later became The Mama School – an institution which today has endured and flourished for 90 years, a fitting testament to their vision, strength of purpose and philanthropy.

Seth Edulji Dinshaw first proposed the establishment of a High School for Parsi girls in 1903. Insufficient funds raised for the project prevented it succeeding on this occasion. In 1911 Seth Dinshaw generously offered the community Rs 50,000 from his personal funds for the girls' school. On this occasion the proposal became mired in legal difficulties, preventing it from reaching fruition.

The separate girls' school was finally established in 1918, when, with acumen and foresight Jamshed Nusserwanji Mehta brought together the community-minded spirit and philanthropy of Khan Bahadur Ardeshir Hormusjee Mama, Khan Bahadur Nusserwanji Mehta (sole trustee of Seth Pochaji's estate) and Nadirshaw Edulji Dinshaw, son of Seth Edulji Dinshaw who had passed away in 1914. Another public-spirited Parsi citizen of Karachi, Khan Bahadur Sheriarji Contractor, Deputy Director of Public Instruction Bombay Presidency also played a key role by providing expert guidance to enable the

project to be realised. Khan Bahadur Mama was the largest donor to the school, followed by Seth Pochaji's estate and Seth Nadirshaw Edulji Dinshaw.

The Imperial Gazetteer 1920, an account of the British Empire in India gives descriptions of prominent Karachi citizens, including Ardeshir Mama and Edulji Dinshaw, offering us a contemporary perspective on these two men and the high esteem in which they were held by the wider community in Karachi.

"Mr Ardeshir has identified himself with numerous projects launched for the general improvement of the city, and one of his first notable public acts was to manifest his interest in the subject of female education by an expenditure of Rs 3,00,000 for the erection of a school for girls in Karachi. This school has been named after the name of the family, namely, the Mama Parsi Girls School. It is impossible to refer in detail to his charitable gifts to various institutions, such as the Lady Dufferin Hospital, the YWCA, the Parsi Virbaiji

School, the Lepers' Asylum, and the Anglo Indian Club at Karachi; the Victoria Memorial School for the Blind, the Parsi Girls' School Association, and Zoroastrian Jashan Committee, Bombay; St Dunstan's Home for the Blind in England; as well as to various war funds and private individuals, but they have amounted to several hundreds of thousands of rupees in value, and he is the same large-hearted citizen, always ready to lend a helping hand in deserving cases." (The Imperial Gazetteer 1920: Ardeshir Hormusjee Mama – c 1914)

"The late Mr Eduljee Dinshaw was an exceedingly benevolent man, but what is more to the point is the fact that in dispensing his innumerable charities he was never influenced by any narrow sectarian spirit, his sole object being to help needy or suffering persons of any caste or creed. Chief among his gifts to the city of Karachi were three large free dispensaries for all classes of people and the Lady Dufferin Hospital, the latter being equipped with medical and surgical appliances and all necessary furniture by Mr Nadirshaw Dinshaw." (The Imperial Gazetteer 1920: Eduljee Dinshaw – 1878)

The new girls' school was established on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1918 by restructuring the BVS Parsi Anglo-Vernacular School. (The latter eventually became the BVS Parsi Boys High School). The fledgling girls' institution was named The Mama Parsi Girls High School in memory of KB Mama's parents, Khan Sahib Hormusjee Mama and Bai Homlibai Mama. In its first year the School functioned from the BVS School premises, moving in June 1919 to Mama Mansions, a residential and office complex owned by KB Mama.

Mama Mansions



Khan Bahadur Ardeshir Mama



Seth Nowroji N Pochaji



Seth Nadirshaw Edulji Dinshaw



Construction of a permanent home for The Mama School began in January 1920, culminating five years later in the fine sandstone edifice that houses the School today on M A Jinnah Road. The building was designed by Anderson and Assarpota, Chartered Architects, later responsible for the Sind Assembly Buildings and was



The Mama School as in 1925

intended to accommodate 250 girls. It included an assembly hall dedicated to Seth N N Pochaji, and the Edulji Dinshaw Hostel for girls whose parents were in Government service (and consequently often on the move) or whose families couldn't afford to educate them. On 1<sup>st</sup> April 1925 the student body of 70 girls moved from Mama Mansions into the School's purpose-built premises.



The Hostel's dining room

The Mama School's first Management Committee met in January 1923 where KB Mama was elected Chairman. The

Committee also included Jamshed Nusserwanji Mehta and KB Contractor, both key individuals involved in the School's establishment. The first Principal was Cowashah Anklesaria, relinquishing his post



Jamshed Nusserwanji Mehta

when an appropriate lady was recruited to it. Miss Mary Boardman, Principal from 1919 to 1932 nurtured the nascent institution, setting standards for the future. On her departure Anklesaria again stepped in as Principal, retiring in



Khan Bhadur Sheriarji Contractor

1941 after serving the cause of Parsi education for over 40 years.

From 1941 onwards the post of Principal has been held by home-grown Mama School talent. Whilst each individual has brought unique qualities to the post, the hallmark of all their regimes has been dedicated service and the advancement of the School. Iris Thompson, Principal from 1941 – 1969, originally started as a teacher at the School in 1923. Her successor Goola Shroff, Principal from 1969 – 1974, had been with the School since 1927. Mani Contractor (daughter of KB Contractor) who became Principal after Goola Shroff in 1975, retired in 1991 after 55 years of service to the School. The present incumbent, Zarine Mavalvala



Cowashah Edulji Anklesaria



Miss Mary B Boardman

was educated at The Mama School herself and has taught there since 1963 – with a period of absence during the 1980s – an association of nearly 45 years. (from 1981-86 the School was fortunate in securing the services of Rustom Divecha, retired Chairman, Board of Secondary Education Karachi Region who stepped in as Administrator).

The School's student population rose steadily over the first 25 years of its existence, approximating 200 girls in 1943. That same year the House system was adopted to honour the School's founders, creating Mama, Pochaji, Dinshaw, and Contractor Houses. From the beginning there was a strong sense of identity among the School's pupils and deep ties of loyalty and affection binding them together: the Old Girls' Association was established in 1925 to accommodate the many alumni wishing to maintain ties with their alma mater.

In keeping with the best traditions of Parsi philanthropy the School began to admit students from other communities in 1943, for them to benefit from the broad curriculum it offered. With the creation of Pakistan in 1947, at Mohamed Ali Jinnah's request The Mama School gave up parochial status and admitted pupils purely on merit irrespective of religious or communal background, a practice that continues today.

By 1964 the student body numbered 500 and it was clear the premises needed to be extended both to accommodate increased numbers and to update facilities. A second floor was added to the school building (without compromising Anderson and Assarpota's



Iris Thompson



Goola Shroff



Mani Contractor



Zarine T Mavalvala

original design), developing the School's facilities to include modern, fully-equipped Science laboratories. As in the past, the Parsis of Karachi rose to the occasion and contributed generously to the building's extension.

The following decade saw the establishment of the Afternoon Shift in 1975. This increased the School's capacity and enabled access to high quality education to students who otherwise would not have been able to benefit from it. In 1976, responding to the changing professional aspirations of women and to give students a greater choice of options the School introduced a Commerce curriculum in addition to its established Science and Humanities curricula.

The Cambridge International Examinations system ('O' Levels) was introduced in 1985, giving students the chance to acquire a prestigious international school-leaving qualification, enhancing their opportunities for further study. The Cambridge system operates alongside the local School Leaving system (SSC) and is a popular choice for students planning on a university education outside Pakistan. A 100% pass rate was achieved by all students in the School's first 'O' Level batch which has since been sustained, matching the School's track record of similar success in the local SSC system.

1991 saw still further expansion with the construction of the New Wing, financed by all sections of the Karachi Parsi community through donations large and small, in many cases anonymous. The philanthropy of



The Mama School with the added 2nd floor in 1964

three prominent Parsi families and individuals played a major role in this expansion. The Cowasjee Foundation, silent benefactors of the School and champions of the cause of female education in Pakistan financed an entire floor of the



The new wing constructed in 1991, at the rear of the main building, seen partially here

Wing, followed closely by the Jehangir Rajkotwala Trust. Dr Burjor Anklesaria financed the construction of the Anklesaria Hall in memory of Cowashah Edulji Anklesaria,

The Mama School's first Principal and unsung hero of the cause of Parsi education in Karachi. Significant contributions were received from the Nusserwanji Mehta and the Edulji Dinshaw family trusts to commemorate their families' involvement in establishing the School in 1918. In tribute to KB Ardeshir Mama's founding philanthropic spirit, his grandson Noshir Zubin Mama and wife Banoo nominally matched their forebear's 1918 donation. Fittingly, the Old Girls' Association donated generously to the School's expansion.

IT and Computer Studies were made compulsory curriculum subjects throughout the School in 1998, equipping students with

the skills necessary to succeed in today's IT-driven global environment. In its 85<sup>th</sup> year in 2003 the School established itself on the World Wide Web, keeping pace with modernity.

Since its inception the School's Management Committee has been chaired by a member of KB Ardeshir Mama's family, and a member of the KPATF (Karachi Parsi Anjuman Trust Funds) as Trustee. Throughout its existence the Management Committee has been fortunate in securing the talents of many public spirited Karachi Parsis who have given generously of their time and expertise as Honorary Treasurers, Secretaries, Legal Advisors and Members, providing vision and leadership for the school's development and establishing robust systems of governance that have served it well and will continue to do so in the future.

Past Chairs of The Mama School



Ardeshir Mama



Mehra & Zubin Mama



Noshir Mama



Banoo N Mama, present Chair

The Mama School has been a collective community venture throughout its existence and the Parsis of Karachi can take collective pride in its achievements on its 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Significant challenges lie ahead for the School as it moves towards

its centenary and beyond, including the question of its stewardship by declining numbers of Parsis in Karachi. At this juncture it would serve all stakeholders of the institution to remember both the catholic nature of the philanthropy of the School's founders (eloquently highlighted in *The Imperial Gazetteer 1920*) as well as the ethos of community and public service that governed their lives. The Mama School today is a resource for the wider Karachi community, and whilst integrity, vision and far-sightedness are defining Parsi characteristics and part of our proud heritage, they are not our exclusive preserve. Men and women with vision and integrity, Parsi and non-Parsi alike exist within present-day Karachi's citizenry. It is the author's sincere conviction that we would do well to entrust the future stewardship of the School to such individuals to ensure that it continues to thrive and flourish in the years to come.



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#### Photographs are courtesy of:

The Mama School archives, through Zarine Mavalvala, Principal  
 Banoo Mama  
 Delera Mavalvala  
 Sammy Bhiwandiwalla

#### Note from the Ed:

**Ardeshir & Soonamai Mama had 21 children, but 7 daughters & 3 sons, reached maturity. Zubin was the youngest sibling and living in Karachi would have been selected as the next Chair of the school. Instead he proposed his wife Mehra. Zubin & Mehra had a son & daughter, Noshir, who followed his mother as Chairman and today his wife Banoo heads The Mama School. The author of this article, Jubin, is their son.**



*Jubin Noshir Mama is Khan Bahadur Ardeshir Mama's great-grandson. He has deep regard for his forebear's contribution to Karachi's civic life and his philanthropy. Born and raised in Karachi, Jubin has lived in London for many years and made that city his home. His job as a public health Policy and Research Officer allows him sufficient time to more fully experience and appreciate London life, and pursue cultural interests. He is proud of his heritage and maintains close ties with Karachi.*

#### In Memoriam

**The Chairperson, Members of the Managing Committee, the Principal, Staff, Students past and present of The Mama Parsi Girls' Secondary School pay tribute to Miss Mani Sheriarjee Contractor who served the school with unerving dedication for 55 long years. Miss Contractor joined the school in 1936 as a teacher and took over as the Principal in 1974. The Mama School was her whole life.**

**She guided the school through both difficult and happy times as the school is a better institution for her keen judgement and far sight. She is fondly remembered by scores of Mamaians the world over.**

*[Miss Contractor expired on Wednesday 27 February '08.]*

Nancy Yazdani, Mamaian, requests input from fellow alumnus for recipes which will also serve as an alumni directory. These books will be sold for US\$10 and any surplus will be donated from the Alumni of North America to the Mama School. On the right side of the recipe please write your present name followed by your maiden name and graduating year. Mail or email to Zeenia Fernandes, 303-840 Broughton Street, Vancouver, BC. V6G 2A1, Canada. Tel: 604-631-6060 work. 778-227-1984 cell. Email : ZFernandes@cds.ca

Another project will be the display of old photographs pertaining to your school days. Write your full name on the reverse, which will be returned after the reunion gala night at Houston. Photographs to be sent to Vahishta Canteenwalla, 3 Cedarwood Court, Kirkland, Qc H9J 2Z5, Canada. Tel: 514-694-8698 (home) 514-697-6254 (work). Email : vahishtac@hotmail.com

Any queries contact Nancy who lives in Dallas, on +214-384-1662 or email: msalumni\_na@sbcglobal.net

مقدمه و بداند بر اند داشت تا تحصیلات حقوقی و تهرانش در که زنانی است شده بی ان چنین اند داشت تا دست در را مهمی های غلب استان ایران در زن گشود گفت بای دی بودن د است بوده گشوردار خزان دخت ارتان امبه زنی اشگان ی چه دارم اردوان زمان در جمله از

### باستان ایران در زنان آرایشی و لباس

سردنیک ی شه اند در که زنی اند بوده خواستار اینگون را زن کلباستان ایران در کدبان و پیش با اموخته خوبش با امسر نی ککردار دروس برآمد نی ک گفتار در آمد پس اکو و بلن دجام بهار لبانوان نی اس ا دربار زن ان شده حجاری نقوش در پاشد خان ه س اس او دخ امش ی ان زمان در که می رسد نظربه این گون ه و اند داده نش ان سر بر گل های ایران در نوی س انتاری خ. است بوده ای قی هوه و زرد رنگ به بی ش تری بانوان لباس نی ان و گشای ی چ هان و زمان داری روش و ها گشای ی گش و رو دا چنگ مورد در بی ش تری بانوان زن دگی و جامعه چتماعی مس ای لگم تری به خیل ی و اند می پرداخته گشور اداره طرز

بر امر این به است امش ان امه در که یی ه اواره در ام. اند اس به و ج و ح و ادی پوشش و نبودن د عری ان باستان ایران در زنان ی عنی ((روی ان پوشیده)) که می خوریم می چنین این من ی زده رس تم نزد من ی زده امن در: مثل برای . اند داشت ه را خود مخصوص در که نقرم ای ی دفراموش اما اقتاب تن من دی ده برهنه ب افراس ی دخت من م من ی زده ی دستن باط اخلاقی و دینی های زن امه ر اند و زرتشت ی ان ما دینی کتاپ های دی گرو اوستا ی رس دین ظرو است نبوده دینی دستور و تکلیف زمان هی چ در حج اب رعای تشود می بتدری ج ان رعای تکه بود ص ن تی و اخلاقی وظیفه ی ک روی پوش ی د باستان ایران این بر عل او ه. است مان دپای دار و افتاده ج ایران ی ان ما اخلاقی وظیفه و ملی سن ت جز ی طرز که بوده استوار این بر هم ی ش باستان ایران در خان و ادگی زندگی پاید ملی سن ت خارجی زندگی در ها زن کلو است بوده ان درونی و بیرونی بصورت ها خان ه در زندگی مهم ترین از زن اشوی ی و خان واده تشکیلی باستان ایران در کردن د ن می ش رکت مرده و بودن د ال ای ش بی بس ی اروپا ک خوبی دارای ایران ی ان. است بوده ایران ی در وظیفه به تشویق را خود فرزند ان و می دادن دفران اهم ی تشویق ی زن ابه ت چربا پی ک ارب برای در زرتشت . می دان سن ت د خود دینی قسرایض از رشوی ی زن ک حدیثا می نمودن د ازدواج شو در وظیفه . می نماید س فالش را خان و اد سر پرستی و شوی ی زن ا خود سن خان نظ باستان ایران در باشد می خان و ادن امان آوردن فرام و فرزند ان و زن از پرس تاری ای و گن د شوی دختران ای)). است ده می گر حکومت هم ی ش پارس ای ی و پره ی زنگاری دل دابه وی د بند نقش خویش بخاطر اپن دهن ازم آگاهت ان و بی اموزم این ک نام ادان و کردار در بای ش ما از یک در بکوشید من ش پاک زندگان ی پی از غیرت با و بس پارید خرم و خوش را خود زندگان ی رو این از و جوی د س بقت دی گری بر نی ک اندیش ه و گفتار

33 هات-ی سن- زرتشتنگات های (پن ازد مردان با زندگی ش یی و ن تمام ی در و اند بوده ارج چند می حق ا دارای باستان ایران در بانوان باش ی د تن در ست شاد . ان کرده می برابری پاک ای دون



Fereshteh Yazdani-Khatibi was a native of Tehran, Iran where she was a high school principal. In the US, she went back to school and attained her teaching and administrative credentials and two masters degree in education. Currently, Mrs Khatibi holds an administrative position for a public school district in California. In addition to her career, she has a world-wide television programme that is aired twice a week as well as writes quarterly articles in the Fezana Journal. She has been the past president of the California Zoroastrian Center and programme co-chair for the World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston. She resides in Orange County, California with her husband and three children Artimis, Parmis, and Nikan Khatibi.

## بایستاتان ایرانی زرتشتی ایمن در زن مقام

و زن زندگی‌ش یون تمام و در است بوده دارا ارجمن دی و بی‌الا مقام زن بایستاتان ایران در است داشته قرار ردیف یک در مرد و زن نامچه همه و مستأ در . ان کرده می برابری همیا مرد سن بایستاتان ایران در . رسیدن پادشاهی به اذرم یدخت و پوران دخت و همای مانند زن انی . نکر مرد و زن حقی برابری چه است تمام در اوستا در و بوده یکسان مردان و زن ان بلوغ است شده .

## بایستاتان ایران در زن دل‌آوری و شجاعت

امر این بی‌باید . است داشت هراوان ادمی بایستاتان ایران در شجاعت و دل‌یری صفت واردی در و بوده مردان مهمای دل‌یری و شجاعت در بایستاتان ایران در زن ان که نام ای می توجه بارزم در بایستاتان ایران در که دل‌آوری و شجاعت زن ان از یکی . ان کرده می شرکت ها جنگ در فردوس بنان امده درق مردان این از می باشد دیگر دافری است نمود هراوان دل‌آوری براب بود هرن گیس شجاعت و دل‌آوری و زرتشتی زن ان از دیگری . است شده اند مفصلا شرکت زمینی توران مردان و پیران با چنگ درگی و و گی خسرو با همرا هرن گیس . است کرد

## اند رس‌ی نض‌اهی پادب که ه ستانها ایران زن ان

### پوران دخت پادشاهی

از بعضی یکه‌ند رس‌ی پادشاهی ب که می باشند نفر 35 حدود نوب اس‌انی پادشاهان این می ان درن نمودن نسل طنت ماه چند نفی طبرخی و طول انی تی مد ان دا بر نی اذرم یدخت و پوران دختی بن اس‌ادهای خان ش‌انزاده اثرن نو نبین اس‌ان پادشاهان تن چند مانند انان زیرا نبود دوام پیر انان فرم ان روای می مدت ولی نش‌س تن نسل طنت تخت که خسرو پرویز پذیرش ان از که بودن نه‌های نظم‌ی بی‌وارث نبین اس‌ان پادشاهان از دیگری در پوران دخت اگرند امده گرفتار بودن نموده ای ج‌انتدب‌یر عدم و حد از بیش غرور ب‌علت و دهد نش‌ان بیش تری درایت و کف‌ای ت‌توان ست می می رس‌ی پادشاهی دی‌گرب‌ه زم‌انی در که رس‌ی نسل طنت تب‌ه زم‌انی پوران دخت تب‌ه ان باقی نسل طنت تخت بر بیش تری زم‌ان ماه چند مدت برای فقط ان‌ها از بعضی یکه‌ند رس‌ی نسل طنت تب‌ه نفر 2 بل‌ال 4 مدت رع‌ای اب‌ه و بودن یرت نی‌ک و ع‌ادل و ع‌اقل زن‌ی پوران دخت گوی‌ند می نمودن نسل طنت . نش‌س تن نسل طنت تخت بر چه امده و یکی سال مدت فقط او اید می بنظر نمود هراوان کمک

### اذرم یدخت پادشاهی

م‌های چند و دن هس بر برای نسل طنت تاج تی س‌فون در و بود پوران دخت خواهر اذرم یدخت ازوش نسل طنت مدعی هر مزد فرخ‌به موسوم س‌پ‌ه‌دان از یکی . ن نمودن نسل طنت بیش وس‌ایل نم‌اید م‌خالفت توان ست نم‌ی اذرم یدخت چون بگرد او همسر که خواست اذرم یدخت پایتخت و رانند پیش خود س‌پ‌ه‌با او پس هر مزد فرخ‌فوت از پس . اورن فرام‌ها او قتل درگذشت کسی‌فایت از کسی و نمودن کور را او و خل ع‌بادش‌های ازرا اذرم یدخت و فته گ‌را نیست آگاه او

## ن‌س‌ت‌اب‌ا ایران درن زن او دختران علم‌ی ت‌حص‌ی‌لات

گ‌های مهم از ه‌ای خان‌واده زن‌ان و است داشته رواچ اس‌انی دوره زن‌ان می ان در علم‌ی ت‌رب‌ی ت‌عل‌ی‌مات اوقات

می ان در حقی و علم‌ی ت‌حص‌ی‌ل حتی و اند می کرده ت‌حص‌ی‌ل علوم در طول انی و عم‌ی قی بس‌ی‌از حقی ر‌شته در کرده ت‌حص‌ی‌ل زن‌ان از ای‌ی ع‌ده و است داشته رواج نبین اس‌ا عصر زن‌ان است مانده انگار ب که ه‌ای نویخته در حتی . ان داشته اش‌ت‌غال قیض اوتش غلبه

## Veteran journalist R K Karanjia



Veteran journalist, war correspondent and former editor of the *Blitz* weekly, Russi K Karanjia died in Mumbai on Friday 1 February. He was 95.

Born in 1912, Karanjia introduced an aggressive brand of journalism through his popular weekly tabloid, *Blitz*, launched in the early 1940s. He started writing while he was still in college and also worked briefly as an assistant editor for the *Times of India* in Mumbai. After launching his own newspaper, his aggressive style of writing earned him the admiration of thousands of readers in India and abroad.

During World War II, he functioned for some time as a war correspondent, reporting from the action lines in Burma (now Myanmar) and Assam regions. In 1945, he shot into the limelight by publishing exclusive photographs of late Indian revolutionary leader Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and his Indian National Army. Later, he launched a campaign and successfully raised a sum of Rs125,000 for the treatment, relief and rehabilitation of Indian soldiers at the British General Hospital, Pune. During the historic Quit India Movement, Karanjia launched a *Blitz* campaign to release former Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru from jail. For this, he was fined Rs3,000 by the British rulers of India.

Karanjia interviewed former British prime minister Winston Churchill and former French president Charles De Gaulle. He also interviewed world leaders like Nehru, Nasser of Egypt, Khrushchev, Fidel Castro, Zhou En Lai and Yasser Arafat.

Along with Feroz Gandhi, former prime minister Indira Gandhi's husband, Karanjia had exposed a financial scam involving noted industrialist Haridas Mundhra.

In June 1965, Nasser decorated Karanjia with Egypt's top civilian honour, Republican Order of Merit Grade I.

Karanjia, is survived by his daughter Rita, also a journalist.  
[ source *Hindustan Times* ]

## Lt Col (Retired) Maneck P Soparivala

Brig (Retired) Rustom Darrah of Karachi informs -

Born at Rajpipla on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1918. The only son of Pestonji Jamshedji Soparivala and great grandson of Seth Shapurji Soparivala.

Did his schooling at the BVS Parsi High School. Joined the British Indian Army and did his cadet service from 2 November 1941 to May 1942. After which he was posted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, (Queen Mary's Own) 10<sup>th</sup> Baluch Regiment. He joined the unit in North Africa and served with the battalion in the North African campaign under General Auchinleck and Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery. Fought at El-Alemain. Subsequently, he served with the battalion in Sicily, Italy and Greece and fought in the famous campaigns of the Second World War. Was wounded twice during the War.

On partition, the battalion became part of the Pakistan Army and he served at various stations. He had the rare distinction of presenting a Guard of Honour to the Quaid – i – Azam in February 1948. The photograph shows The Quaid reviewing the Guard of Honour with Maneck behind him.

During the 1965 war, he fought in the Bhawalnagar Sector and was awarded the Imtiaz-i-Sanad for meritorious services. He is the only Pakistani officer to have commanded a battalion for eight years. He retired as a Lieutenant Colonel on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1968. Expired on Tuesday 29 March 2005. ■■■■





# The World Zoroastrian Organisation

135 Tennison Road, South Norwood, London SE25 5NF

Registration No 1510380 Cardiff, England

A Company Limited by Guarantee

Incorporated 1980

## APPLICATION FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP

\_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_

The Joint Honorary Secretaries  
The World Zoroastrian Organisation

Dear Sirs,

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

I confirm that I am (Tick as appropriate):

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

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

Yours truly,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**Block Capitals please** FULL NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

### FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date	Amount Received	Date of Membership	Register of Members	Mailing List

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

# Membership Fees

## For Indian residents

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

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

## For UK residents & other countries

Grand Patron	£ 500	Patron	£ 250	Permanent Assoc Member	£ 150
Ordinary Assoc Member	£10 pa	Life Member	£ 100	Ordinary Member for 3 yrs	£ 30
Student	Gratis till 25 years of age				

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

## For USA residents

Permanent Assoc Member	\$ 225	Ordinary Assoc Member	\$ 25 pa
Life Member	\$ 150	Ordinary Member for 3 yrs	\$45
Student	Gratis till 25 years of age		

Please send application form and cheque payable in US Dollars as "WZO US Region" to: Mr Keki Bhote, 493 Woodlawn Ave., Glencoe, Illinois 60022. Tel: (847) 835 1984

## For Canadian residents

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

Please send application form and cheque payable in Candian Dollars as "OZCF, WZO Fees" to: Mr Marzi Byramji, Regal Press, 3265 Wharton Way, Unit, Mississauga, Ontario L4X 2X9. Tel: (905) 238 8005

## For Pakistani residents

Grand Patron	Rs10,000	Patron	Rs5,000	Permanent Assoc Member	£ 150
Ordinary Assoc Member	£10 pa	Life Member	Rs2,500	Student	Gratis till 25 years of age

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

## For New Zealand residents

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

Please send application form with your cheque payable in NZ Dollars as "WZO, New Zealand", to: Mr Darius Mistry, 134A Paritai Drive, Orakei, Auckland.

“ ... as long as I shall be able  
and be strong, so long shall I look in quest of truth...”

yasna 28.4

*Inslar translation*

