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HAMAZOR

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issue 2006

Karan Bilimoria
First Zoroastrian
appointed Peer
of the Realm





Enduring Legacy : Parsis of the 20th century, p34

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Houses of Parliament,
late 19 century painting
by George V Cole

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From the Editor

Controversies, indignations, seem to be on the high side, for the larger issues and for petty ones too, especially with the Parsi Zoroastrians. One wonders do we achieve in the end, or is it just words and more words. So few Zoroastrians and yet so many self-made problems. If each of us could be magnanimous and say "we are all correct, and allow us to choose what our vohu mana guides us", it may be a simplistic attitude to life, but who knows it may work. I read article after article written by scholars, learned persons, who all guide us by saying, our religion gives us the CHOICE, to do what we feel is right. Why is it that a whole community then has to be dictated to, for two major issues which continue to affect the majority - the disposal of the dead and to allow the children of mixed marriages into our faith. In the sub-continent, in some cities where Dokhmenashini continues to be practised even though the vultures have disappeared, many now prefer to be cremated or buried, but the controversy continues and is vocal in the press of Mumbai. Yet no solution is at hand. Why is it not possible for the BPP to give its approval, so that each may have the choice at the end of their journey, with our prayers being recited by the mobeds? The issue is only relevant for the communities in India and Pakistan and that to, in just a few cities, therefore isn't it high time people are given the privilege of CHOICE?



The question of women who marry out of the community and their children who wish to be Parsi Zoroastrians, continue, though as far back as 1882 the Parsis of India were more tolerant and forward thinking, to permit navjotes to be performed. I fail to comprehend how a woman who has married a non-Zoroastrian and has kept her own faith, through CHOICE, is not permitted into our agiaries. Is she less Parsi Zoroastrian than those who marry within the community, or is she suddenly less worthy in the eyes of the community. Do our men-folk (as it is they who are making rules, so far) not realise that it is primarily the women who bring up their children, who teach them the values which they will imbibe? Feeble excuses of the fear of Trust funds being misappropriated are believed by those who are not aware, the bottom line is only the Trustees can disseminate/ discriminate the use of the said funds. There is no problem here - just the problem of power and ego. We have to do right by our children, as, though we prefer them to marry within the community, it just is not going to be possible indefinitely. A person is as honourable and worthy as they have been brought up and not because they are born into a Parsi home. Just so that it is known, I am proud to be a Parsi, coming from a worthy lineage, all who have left their mark on society in Karachi.

This is my opinion as an individual, as thankfully in our family we have always been taught to stand up to our beliefs. There is no motive here except to have a solution for an individual - the right to CHOOSE for these two important issues.

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

Karan F Bilimoria CBE, DL

becomes first Zoroastrian Peer of the Realm

*k*aran Bilimoria became the first Zoroastrian in history to enter the House of Lords as announced by past president of Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, Dorab Mistry, on 3 May, 2006. A memorable and proud day not only for Karan and his family, but for all Zoroastrians across the globe.



At the website:

<http://www.lordsappointments.gov.uk/news/may2006.aspx>, an announcement appears "seven new non-party-political peers recommended by the House of Lords Appointments Commission were announced today.

"The new non-party-political peers are: Colin Low, the blind Chairman of the RNIB and campaigner for disability rights; David Rowe-Beddoe, a leading international businessman who has played an active role in economic and cultural development in Wales; Elizabeth Butler-Sloss, the first woman to become President of the Family Division of the High Court; Geoffrey Dear, previously HM Inspector of Constabulary, with particular experience in social problems in both urban and rural communities; Kamlesh Patel, an academic and government advisor on mental health, drugs and ethnicity; **Karan Bilimoria, a leading young entrepreneur; founder and Chief Executive of Cobra Beer;** Molly Meacher, an international expert in employment and welfare issues. These peers will sit on the crossbenches in the Upper House."

An explanation on the duties of the Appointments Commission follows: "The Appointments Commission is a non-statutory advisory body set up by the Prime Minister to make recommendations for non-party-political peerages. The Commission's remit is to find people of distinction who will bring authority and expertise to the House of

Lords. The Commission recommends individuals on merit and their ability to contribute effectively to the work of the House.”

The Chairman and members of World Zoroastrian Organisation, congratulate Lord Bilimoria on his appointment as a Peer of the Realm and may Karan continue to shine, contributing not only to his country (United Kingdom) but to his co-religionists as well.

We share with you a statement made by Lord Bilimoria: *“I am delighted to be appointed to the House of Lords. I look forward very much to contributing and participating in the work of the House, to working with my new colleagues and to serving my country as best as I can. I am enormously grateful to my family, my team at Cobra, and my friends and colleagues for all the support and encouragement I have received over the years. I am deeply humbled and greatly look forward to this tremendous honour and privilege.”*

Born in India, Karan came to the UK for his higher education as a 19-year-old. Having qualified as a Chartered Accountant with Ernst and Young, London, and graduated in Law from Cambridge University, Karan Bilimoria developed a less gassy, premium lager brewed to perfectly appeal to both ale drinkers and lager drinkers alike and to complement food.

Little more than fifteen years later, Cobra Beer is one of the fastest growing beer brands in the UK and one of the most innovative young companies in the country. The brand has a current retail value turnover of over £80 million, is sold in nearly 6,000 Indian restaurants, and is available to 6,000 bars, pubs and clubs and in over 12,000 branches of leading multiples, supermarkets and off-licenses throughout the UK. In 2005, Cobra Beer was awarded two Grand Gold Medals and nine Gold Medals at the 2005 Monde Selection, Brussels, World Selection of Quality Awards – more than any other beer in the world.

Although Karan started Cobra in 1990 when he was £20,000 in debt and up against all odds, Cobra has grown into an operation with

offices on four continents and exports to over 40 countries, with brewing operations in five countries. Karan is widely respected for his entrepreneurial spirit. He is the Representative Deputy Lieutenant of the London Borough of Hounslow and among many other positions serves as Chancellor of Thames Valley University – making him UK’s youngest university chancellor. Karan is also one of the first two Visiting Entrepreneurs ever appointed at Cambridge University and serves as National Champion of the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship. He sits on the Government’s National Employment Panel (NEP), and from 2001 to 2005 was Chairman of the NEP’s SME Board. Additionally, Karan serves as UK Chairman of the Indo British Partnership, and lectures extensively in the UK and abroad on entrepreneurship, business, education, and the Indo-British relationship.

Karan also directly supports a number of charities, serving as patron of the Thare Mache Starfish Initiative, patron of Rethink severe mental illness, and as chairman of the advisory board of the Shrimati Pushpa Wati Loomba Memorial Trust for the education of children of poor widows in India. He is Chairman of the Memorial Gates Committee.

Karan has won numerous awards in recognition of his business achievements and charitable work, including the RSA’s Albert Medal in the Society’s 250th anniversary year, 2004. He was named Entrepreneur of the Year 2003 and Business Person of the Year 2004 by the London Business Awards, Entrepreneur of the Year 2004 at the National Business Awards (London and South East of England) and London Entrepreneur of the Year 2003 (Consumer Products) by Ernst & Young. In 2005, Karan was honoured with the Award for Outstanding Achievement by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales in the Institute’s 125th anniversary year. He has been awarded honorary doctorates by Brunel University and Heriot-Watt University.

Bravo Lord Bilimoria!

(Hamazor Issue 1/03, pp13-14, had carried an article written by Karan entitled “The Spirit of Enterprise”)



The World Zoroastrian Organisation

135 TENNISON ROAD, SOUTH NORWOOD, LONDON SE25 5NF

Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II
Buckingham Palace
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20th April 2006

Your Majesty,

It gives me great pleasure to convey, on behalf of the World Zoroastrian Organisation, our sincere and heartfelt congratulations to you on your 80th birthday. We wish you and your family continued good health, joy and happiness for many years to come.

During the course of your reign spanning over 50 years, Zoroastrians have always remained loyal citizens of the nation, have held you in high esteem and have shown a great love and affection for the Royal family. The Zoroastrian community have settled in the United Kingdom for nearly two centuries and are one of the oldest established minorities outside of the Indian Sub-Continent and Iran. Indeed the first three Indian Members of Parliament were Parsee Zoroastrians.

I have the honour to remain Madam, Your Majesty's most humble and obedient servant.

Yours sincerely,

Sammy Bhiwandiwalla
Chairman
World Zoroastrian Organisation

Events that shaped our religion

by rustom j kevala

Part II - The Hellenistic Age

Introduction

Our knowledge of the earliest history of the Zoroastrian religion is based on archaeological findings, Indo-Iranian oral traditions, and the writings of early Greek historians. Naturally, there has been much debate as to exactly what Zarathushtra's role was in the development of the present Zoroastrian doctrine and liturgy; how religion influenced the actions of various Persian rulers; and what the practice of religion meant to the common people at different times. In this series of papers, I highlight the major turning points in history that have shaped present-day Zoroastrian religion and worldview.

Summary of Part I *(appeared in Hamazor Issue 1/06)*

Part I covered the major belief systems prevalent from the time of Zarathushtra (c 1300 BC) to the end of the Achaemenian Empire (4th Century BC). Zarathushtra's message spread from the Bactrian highlands to the western Indo-Iranian tribes in Choresmia, Parthia and Media, while the original Indic religion was propelled eastwards into the Indus Valley. By the 7th Century BC, the Magi had adapted Zarathushtrian principles into the existing mythic culture and beliefs. Purity rituals became a major factor in improving the health and thereby increasing the population and strength of the Persians.

Recorded history of Zoroastrian religion starts with Cyrus the Great, who seized the Median Empire in 558 BC and expanded it to cover almost the entire known world of the time. Cyrus exhibited great tolerance for all the local religions within his empire. His son Cambyses included Egyptian gods in his religion, probably for political expediency. Darius (581-486 BC) was the first Achaemenian ruler to leave detailed inscriptions declaring that he was a follower of Ahura Mazda. Darius's son Xerxes was deeply religious and was always accompanied by an entourage of Magis. Artaxerxes I supported the worship of Mithra. Artaxerxes II built temples to Anahita. By now, the Persians had ruled Greek Asia Minor and Ionia for over 100 years and had become adept at keeping the Greek city-states fighting each other to keep overall control.

Part II

Alexander

King Philip of Macedon had developed a new war maneuver called the phalanx. Each foot soldier had 16 ft long spears, which allowed them to reach over the horse and chariot to wound or kill the enemy. He succeeded in defeating and then uniting most of the Greek city-states against the Persians. But Philip was murdered by a disgruntled soldier (or slave) at his daughter's wedding in 336 BC. Alexander, son of Philip, now led the Greeks to liberate the Ionian Islands from Persian rule. After the battle of Granicus in 332 BC, the Persian Satrap of Ionia surrendered to Alexander.

Alexander next faced Darius III in Syria. The lightweight wicker armor of the Persian soldiers, effective against arrows, could not withstand the 16 foot spears of the Greek phalanx. When Darius retreated to regroup his army, most of the Greek mercenaries in Darius's army surrendered to Alexander. Alexander immediately ordered them to be executed for treason. Darius's mother was captured and sent to Macedonia as war booty.

The Persians were expert marksmen who could shoot facing backwards from horseback. This ability, called the Median maneuver, gave them great advantage



Rustum was born in Mumbai. He has served as the president of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, chair of the Information Receiving and Disseminating Committee, which publishes the FEZANA Journal; and most recently, as Treasurer of FEZANA. Today, like many of us, he is intrigued by the questions: "Why is our religion so little known or understood throughout the world? Why do we seem so powerless to resolve the issues facing us?" He firmly believes that the answers can be found by taking a dispassionate look at our history. Rustum lives near Tampa, Florida, with his wife, Yasmin.

when fighting in the open field. Darius therefore ordered a large area to be leveled at Gau Gamela to prepare to meet Alexander again. Alexander and Darius met in 331 BC. Alexander gained the upper hand by leading his cavalry through a gap between Darius's two battalions. Darius ordered a retreat; but in the confusion, he was assassinated by one of his generals. Alexander pursued and executed the general and took possession of Darius's body, which he buried with great fanfare to give himself legitimacy for the Persian throne.

Alexander's victory over the powerful Persians elevated him to the status of a demi-god. He wore a lion's scalp on his head in battle and considered himself to be the reincarnation of Achilles, the hero of the Trojan War. He entered Persepolis in 330 BC, which was burned to signify his victory over the Persians.

Immediately, Alexander set out to assert Greek power over the Persian lands to the east. He took his army across the Hindu Kush to Sogdiana, where he married the beautiful princess Roxana. Then he turned south into Afghanistan and crossed over into Hindustan to confront King Porus (Purushottam) in Punjab. He used his long spear to unseat Porus from his elephant. Porus gave Alexander 100 war elephants as booty. Finally, he was seriously wounded when he led his soldiers over the walls of the fortified city of Pattala. The Indians treated his wounds. Now his soldiers revolted because they had been fighting for six years and wanted to go home. He agreed to return home, along with his booty-laden elephants and camels, through the inhospitable desert of Southern Baluchistan.

Greek historians claim that Alexander wanted to establish unity between Greek and Persian cultures. He married Roxana so that his heir would be half-Persian; and is said to have ordered 80 of his top officers to marry Persian noblewomen in a mass wedding at Susa. On this occasion, he took a second wife, Barsine, the eldest daughter of the late king Darius. In 323 BC, he

established himself in Babylon and dressed and feasted as a Persian monarch. During one of these feasts, he died unexpectedly either by poisoning or a fever. Roxana was sent to Macedonia where she bore a son, who was murdered in 310 BC, ending Alexander's dynasty.

Alexander's generals took 12 years to divide up the conquered empire among them. Seleucus, who had married a Persian princess, became ruler of Syria and Persia in 311 BC.

Greek Religion

The Greeks were an Indo-European people who had settled in the Aegean basin prior to 1000 BC; thus they came in contact with the Minoan, Mycenaean and other advanced civilizations of the ancient Near East. Homer's Iliad and The Odyssey, composed in the 8th Century BC provide a detailed description of Greek religion. Twelve principal gods were recognized as living on Mount Olympus in the palace of Zeus. Hades, the god of death and his spouse Persephone lived in the underworld. The gods had human form; they were born, and might have sexual contacts with humans, but they were immortal. Compared with the gods, men were wretched, powerless, and subject to "fate". The warriors strived to attain immortal glory through heroic deeds, generally under the patronage of a tribal god. In a sense, Alexander was the last Greek hero, who achieved immortal glory through his victory over the Persians.

Religion was a social, practical, everyday thing. There was no religious organization, no church. Religious authority lay with the head of household, head of clan and ultimately with the ruler. Piety was expressed in acts of respect towards the gods. Ritual sacrifice of animals along with offerings of harvest and fruit were used to gain divine favor.

Starting the 5th Century BC, Plato, Aristotle, Socrates and other Greek philosophers began to question the existence of the

immortal gods. Aristotle (384-322 BC) was a tutor to Alexander for a short time, but he is reputed to have had very little impact on his illustrious pupil.

Hellenization

The Seleucids established over sixty "new" settlements from western Turkey to Iran, with Greek constitution and names. Each settlement was an oasis for Greek culture and religion. Susa was refounded as Seleucia, with a Greek constitution that endured for over 300 years, well into the Parthian period. The *gymnasion*, which promoted both physical and intellectual culture, was a central institution. By Greek custom, women were excluded and the men were required to exercise naked.

The Magi did not receive support from the Seleucids. The study of Avesta suffered. Many of the surviving written scriptures were lost since they were not replaced by the scribes. The priests made their living by reciting prayers from memory on behalf of the *behdins*. Religion now became pure rituals for propitiating divinities and warding off pollution and the demons. The divinities in turn were expected to provide boons and blessings to the householder who paid for the ritual.

In 212 BC, Euthydemus had established a Greek military state in Bactria, independent of the Seleucids. His son Demetrius reconquered the entire Indus Valley, c. 197 BC. The Greeks identified Indra with Zeus, Shiva with Dionysus, Krishna with Heracles, and the goddess Lakshmi with Artemis. Menander (c. 125-95 BC) became a lavish patron of Buddhism, and is known as Milinda in Buddhist texts. It is believed that Buddhism traveled east from Bactria (Afghanistan) to China and Japan over the Silk Road in 1st century BC.

When a *gymnasion* was set up in Jerusalem in 174 BC, some Jews gave up circumcision of their sons. Antiochus IV installed a Hellenized Jew as their head Rabbi; then

stripped the Temple of its treasures and ordered the Jews to give up their distinctive ways. The Jews rebelled. Conflict between Jews and Seleucids continued until the Jews gained their independence in 141 BC.



Coin portraits of Bactrian kings: (top) Antimachus (c185 BC), (right) Euratides I (c165-150 BC). Euratides is helmeted; Antimachus wears the Macedonian royal beret (*From Ref. 3*).

While the Seleucids were busy fighting the Romans and Jewish armies in Mesopotamia, Mehrdad (Mithradates), a Parthian prince of the Ashkani (Arsacid) tribe, established himself as the ruler of Pars province in 238 BC. Farhad II (Phraates), grandson of Mehrdad, defeated the Seleucid king Demetrius in 129 BC and established the Parthians as the rulers of all Persia.

The Parthians retained some Greek culture, but now faced the increasing power of Rome to the west. The Parthian dynasty began the task of reviving the Zoroastrian religion. This is covered in Part III, The Parthian Revival.



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We cannot direct the wind

But we can adjust the sails

Professor Mary Boyce

by john r hinnells

A celebration of a good life

Appeared in The Guardian on Tuesday April 11, 2006 and shared with Hamazor.

*M*ary Boyce died peacefully on 4th April 2006 in the Royal Free hospital, London, following a major deterioration in her health. She was a leading twentieth century scholar in the field of Iranian studies, especially in Zoroastrianism, the world's first monotheistic religion. She was a prolific writer and highly original scholar.

around the desert city of Yazd in central Iran. She was greatly amused that the Persians thought she was the daughter of Edward Browne, an earlier scholar who had embarked on a similar journey of discovery almost a century before.

She presented her research findings in her Ratanbai Katrak lectures at the University of Oxford in 1975 and published this as *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism* two years later. Her love for the people among whom she lived and worked shines forth in many of her publications. Through that deep bond of friendship she came to various radical reinterpretations of the standard books on Zoroastrianism and led her to question many common scholarly assumptions regarding the prophet Zoroaster and his followers.

First she came to appreciate the importance of ritual devotions and traced them back into the life and teaching of the prophet, indeed into pre-Zoroastrian times. Previously under the influence of studies of Christianity which contrasted 'faith and works' and by Protestant perspectives on the growth of Christianity, scholars had depicted Zoroaster's followers as falling away from the pure abstract philosophy of the founder returning to pre-Zoroastrian pagan practices under the superstitions of faithless priests. Who, she asked, was best able to interpret the teachings of the prophet, western scholars in the comfort of their studies, or the practitioners of the religion living in a remote region free from outside influences? She contended that in non-literate societies ancient practices are preserved with greater fidelity than are teachings in a literate society. She thereby constructed picture of the great continuity of Zoroastrianism, a continuity with the priestly

Her perspective on Zoroastrianism was transformed by a year of fieldwork among orthodox Zoroastrians in remote villages

tradition into which Zoroaster had been born and trained, and a continuity through the millennia so that the beliefs and practices of modern Iranian Zoroastrians, untainted by western and urbanized living, could be used to interpret ancient texts. I was fortunate to start my post-graduate studies at SOAS under her supervision within days of her return from Iran; it was an exciting time to be a student of a pioneering scholar as she began to think new thoughts, rejecting the received scholarly wisdom. The first book to present this dramatically revised history was her *Zoroastrians: their religious beliefs and practices* (Routledge 1979 repr with additions in 2000) which together with her anthology of texts from different Zoroastrian eras (*Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism*, 1984) became the standard works for students of Zoroastrianism around the world. Her magnum opus is a multi volumed *History of Zoroastrianism* (of which 3 volumes have appeared in 1975, 1982, 1991). Sadly she died before completing volume IV, though her work is to be continued by Dr Albert de Jong of Leiden. She was a pioneer in various branches of Iranian studies, not only Zoroastrianism. She contributed numerous articles to the scholarly *Encyclopaedia Iranica* and unlike many pioneering scholars was also happy to write articles and entries to books for the wider public.

Mary Boyce was born in Darjeeling in 1920. She studied English, Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge, and then taught Anglo-Saxon Literature and Archaeology at Royal Holloway College, London. Whilst doing this she also studied Persian at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. Under the inspiration of her mentor, Prof W B Henning, she began research in Manichaeism and in 1947 was appointed to a new lectureship in Iranian Studies at SOAS. In 1958 she was promoted to a readership and made professor at SOAS in 1962 where she served until her retirement. There she taught and inspired numerous students who went on to hold professorships in many countries. She could be a harsh critic – with tongue and

pen; students and fellow academics alike anticipated her criticisms of draft chapters or articles with some trepidation! But what few know is how generous she was to students facing difficulties either personal or financial. She was at once stern and demanding but also kindly and supportive. She continued her close ties with Zoroastrians not only Iranians but also Parsis from India. The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe long wanted to honour her, but she quietly declined any honours apart from the Royal Asiatic Society's Burton Memorial Medal (1972) for the work which lay behind her Katrak lectures and their publication and the Sir Percy Sykes Memorial medal of the Royal Society of Asian Affairs.

She was never married, being wedded - as she put it - to her academic work. She eschewed computers and television and wrote everything meticulously in her elegant copperplate hand in pencil as spinal problems forced her to work lying on her back. She was a very private person. Outside her academic and family concerns her great passion was gardening. Even in her later years, she enjoyed her garden through the window; plants and birds being one of her few non academic interests. She is survived by her brother Peter, with whom she spent much of each year in Somerset, and her nephew Geoffrey – and by countless grateful and devoted students.



(Prof Hinnells was to write a tribute especially for the *Hamazor*, but unfortunately has been unwell since early April. Rather than let us down, he has sent what was submitted to The Guardian. Prof Boyce was Hinnells' teacher/mentor since 1967 and were regularly in contact. - Ed)



Prof John Hinnells is one of the foremost scholars of Parsi and Zoroastrian studies. A scholar of comparative religions, he founded the department of the Study of Religions at the prestigious School of Oriental and African Studies. He has held several prestigious teaching posts and has had the unique distinction of starting either degrees or departments of Comparative Religion in five universities of the UK. He is the author of five books on Zoroastrianism and Parsis. His book, 'The Zoroastrian Diaspora' published by Clarendon Press, Oxford, will serve as a companion volume to his book, 'Zoroastrians in Britain', 1996, Clarendon Press, Oxford. He has co-authored several books on theology, Zoroastrianism, and Judaism in addition to editing such definitive works as 'A New Handbook of Living Religions' (1996/8, Blackwell/Pengion) and 'A New Dictionary of Religions' (1995/7, Blackwell/Penguin). Ashgate has published a selection of Hinnells' works and his papers have appeared in several edited volumes and journals.

Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe held a condolence meeting for late Prof Boyce on 8 April at 4:30pm at the Zartoshty Brothers Hall, Zoroastrian Centre, Harrow, UK. Our Chairman, Sammy Bhiwandiwalla was present. Messages of condolence were read out from a number of her past and present students, Dastur Kotwal, Dastur Jamasp Asa and Khojeste Mistree, to name a few.

Housing problems of rural Parsis

A proposal from Dinshaw Tamboly, Managing Trustee, WZO Trusts, India

Preamble

In the mid eighties, WZO London & Surat Parsi Punchayet had jointly commissioned a **sample (not census)** socio economic survey of the rural Zoroastrians of South Gujarat. The survey was conducted by Dr Cashmera P Bhaya. The report when released in 1988 sent shock waves through sections of the community who were concerned about the rural Zoroastrians.

687 families living in 209 villages of South Gujarat were reported to be living below the poverty line [which at that time (mid-eighties) was Rs18,000/- per annum per family]. This report triggered off a massive rehabilitation programme for the rural Zoroastrians, undertaken by WZO, by creating awareness and thereafter raising funds from Zoroastrians worldwide.

Present Position

There have been qualitative changes in the lives of more than 300 families as a result of the rehabilitation measures provided due to the generosity of donors. Many families have progressed from abject poverty to relative prosperity. In some instances, the hard work put in has been in vain due to harshness of nature by way of floods or famine.

During our frequent visits to the rural areas we have observed that providing decent housing to the Zoroastrian farmers is one area where assistance continues to be required. Most of the Zoroastrian farmers reside in mud huts, the walls of which crumble periodically and require frequent repairs and renovations.

Even most of those Zoroastrian farmers whose economic conditions have improved cannot afford to construct permanent brick

and mortar cottages, on account of the - for them - heavy expenditure involved.

Proposal

It is proposed that your goodselves may please consider providing financial support towards replacement of huts with cottages. We have over the years raised funds and have constructed 35 cottages in replacement of huts. However there is a great need to accelerate this process and provide decent housing to many families.

It is estimated that there would be at least 150 families or more living in huts that need to be replaced by cottages. The cost of replacing a hut with a modest cottage is at present Rs200,000/-

Each of the cottages that we construct has a basic configuration of two rooms in the front, two rooms in the rear and an attached toilet/bath attached to the cottage, abutting out at the rear.

Given the support required we estimate that it would take us around five years to carry out the replacement process for 150 families. This would entail an anticipated annual outlay of around Rs6,000,000/- each year over the next five years. **We seek your support in raising funds to the extent possible.**

Photographs

To enable the scale of the problem to be appreciated, we have prepared a small booklet in which we have highlighted some of the miserable and primitive conditions in which these poor Zoroastrian agrarians live in their mud huts.

Also featured are pictures of some of the cottages that have been constructed in

replacement of huts, creating decent living conditions and improving their quality of lives.

This proposal/project is very vital for the well being of the poor Zoroastrian farmers of South Gujarat; it is requested that the same be considered sympathetically.

We look forward to your support in creating a decent lifestyle for such very poor Zoroastrian agrarians.



Exterior of dilapated hut



Interior of dilapated hut

“Most of the Zoroastrian farmers reside in mud huts, the walls of which crumble periodically”



“Kitchen” in dilapated hut



One of the new cottages built by WZO Trust

Why is the truth about conversion not told?

by jamsheed kanga

*i*n a recent book, "Breaking the spell: Religion as a national phenomenon" the author Daniel C Dennett explains by an interesting analogy how religion can indoctrinate the mind. "An ant climbs a blade of grass over and over again, seemingly without seeking food or home because its brain has been taken over by a parasite, a lancet fluke which over the course of evolution, has found this to be a particularly efficient way to get into the stomach of grazing sheep or cows where it can flourish and reproduce. The ant is controlled by the worm, which equally unconscious of purpose, maneuvers the ant into place. This is how religion works. People will sacrifice their health, their reason, their family, all in the service of an idea that has lodged in their brain. That idea is like a virus or a worm and it inspires bizarre forms of behaviour in order to propagate itself. They do this in spite of evidence, and in thrall to biological and social forces they barely comprehend."

The belief that conversion is against the tenets of our religion has taken root in the minds of the average Parsi as the parasite has in the ants mind, and is being exploited by our preachers, so much so that even a discussion on whether conversion is permitted or not is considered heretical. This is similar to what happened to Galileo the famous Italian astronomer. When he discovered that the earth moved round the sun and not the other way round as the Catholic church claimed, he was threatened with dire consequences if he continued his heretical belief and made to publicly retract this theory, and any discussion was forbidden. Thus by doing so the Church prevented any scientific discussion on this issue for decades and the truth was suppressed and the science of astronomy suffered. Only when this ban was lifted that there was true research and progress in science of astronomy. By claiming that conversion is prohibited in our scriptures, and attacking those who hold a different

view, our clergy and the fundamentalist lobby has also prevented any debate on the important issue of our diminishing population as it is linked to the issue of conversion. Any one questioning this has been subjected to vile abuse by the rabid section of the Parsi press and some so called scholars.

The question of conversion tends to divide the community, to such an extent that even genuinely good Parsis, who are otherwise kind and loving are prepared to disown their sons or daughters if they get married outside the community, and are not prepared to do the navjote of their grandchildren, as they consider it as a conversion. When the question whether the Federation of Zoroastrian Anjumans should join the WZO was being debated at the Fed meeting in Ahmadabad, a bunch of rowdies supporting the views of Khojeste Mistree and his group threatened to physically strip a delegate from Madras who spoke of inter communal marriages taking place. Recently a new organization calling itself WAPIZ has been formed, to prevent any persons who are not pure Parsi Zoroastrians from the back door entry into the WZO! Their main aim is to retain the purity of the race and they believe that even if the community diminishes and becomes a small tribe, it must retain its pristine purity! Rowdy members are not allowing the smooth working of the Federation which they have joined as bogus representatives of small anjumans merely for this purpose.

Thus it is evident that this issue is the main reason for dividing the community and not allowing a true debate about our diminishing numbers. Hence getting the truth about conversion is vital for our future. Whether conversion is permitted or not is something that can only be prescribed in the scriptures which is the word of the prophet,

and can not be based on interpretations of vague portions of some scriptures, or unsubstantiated opinions. It is in the interest of the community to set this controversy at rest and to examine the original scriptures and find out what exactly is stated. Did prophet Zarathustra prohibit conversion explicitly, or is it permitted? What is his exact direction in the Gathas or other holy books? If there is nothing said about it then can it be deemed to be prohibited, or permitted. When our Vandidad even lays down rules for cutting toenails and hair is it not strange that there is no clear-cut direction about conversion? Or is the fact that there are no such directions being suppressed as it would remove the platform of such preachers and organizations whose existence and livelihood depends upon such conflict?

In recent Parsi history this issue has been examined both by eminent scholars and legally, and a lot of evidence was recorded, which is available. We merely need to examine it and call the bluff. When I examined the old records to see what the most eminent scholars of the 19th and 20th century have said and done, this is what I found:

1. In 1882 the great scholar and Shenshai High Priest, Dasturji Jamaspi Minochurji Jamas Asa, one of the two senior high priests of the Shenshai sect had himself done the navjote of nine children of inter communal parents, 5 females and 4 males after satisfying himself that they were the progeny of Parsi males by non Parsi females. These persons were not rich persons wielding influence, but poor dock workers in Mazgaon and they had petitioned the Parsi Punchayat, that they were of Parsi 'olad,' (seed) and were desirous of being formally admitted in the religion. About 200 leading Parsis collected a fund, and the eminent dasturji performed the ceremony, in the presence of a large gathering, not surreptitiously as is done now. Dastur Dr Jivanji Mody himself a learned scholar and priest, stated this in his evidence in the case 'Petit v/s Jeejibhoy' and is quoted in the judgement.

2. The same High Priest Dastur Jamaspi in 1906, in front of a large gathering in Bombay performed the navjote (conversion) of Madame Suzanne Briere, a French lady and her marriage with Mr R D Tata, (father of JRD Tata) by Zoroastrian rites. This is a clear case of conversion from Christianity to our religion, which the eminent dasturji obviously considered as permitted.

3. Another eminent Shenshai high priest, Dastur Peshotan Sanjana also supported the navjote of children of mixed marriages (with Parsi father). He also published a pamphlet prescribing all the ceremonies to be performed before admitting *juddins* into the Zoroastrian religion. (please note, he did not say that conversion itself was wrong!) The pamphlet is called, "Explanation of the ceremonies that should be performed for the admission of *juddins* to the Zoroastrian religion" and is in the K R Cama Library.

4. In order to determine whether the religion permitted conversion or not, at a meeting of the Samast Anjuman held at Albless Bagh in 1906, an expert committee was appointed consisting of 11 of the leading experts and scholars, and including one of the most eminent Avesta scholar of the day, Dr K R Cama and many others including the two high priests, to advise whether conversion was permitted in the scriptures and if so, what ceremonies were to be performed for this. After extensive research and deliberations the committee came to the unanimous conclusion "*that they did not find any thing in the scriptures to show conversions was prohibited but that it was actually enjoined.*" On the questions posed to the expert committee regarding the ceremonies that should be performed for conversion, to quote Justice Davar, "*We find that seven out of ten experts in the report relied upon by the plaintiffs, including both the high priests deliberately lay down that the three ceremonies including the burushunum are essential for the proper admission of a juddin to the Zoroastrian faith.*" Does this not lead to the undeniable conclusion that conversion after proper ceremonies is permitted?

5. In the famous case Petit v/s Jeejibhoy, filed by Sir Dinshaw Petit against the Parsi

Panchayat, claiming all the rights of a Parsi to a person converted to the religion, in this case Mrs R D Tata, the evidence of over 200 persons was painstakingly recorded and they were cross examined by the most eminent barristers of the day. These witnesses included the leading scholars and high priests of that time and, the eminent judges also concluded that conversion was not prohibited but enjoined in the Zoroastrian religion. Further more the judgement stated that Parsis ceased to practice conversion, after coming to India, in the interest of self preservation, not because it was prohibited in the scriptures, and except in the cases of children of Parsi fathers by non Parsi mothers, no conversions took place. However as there were no cases of children of Parsi mothers by non-Parsi fathers the question of their navjotes taking place did not arise.

This is clear from the evidence of high priest Dasturji Dorab P Sanjana who states, *"There was no conversion because at first there were difficulties in the way of the emigrants who found a safe refuge in India, as Jadav Rana gave them refuge under certain conditions. Those conditions were not favourable to converting his subjects, or anyone else in India ... it would have been ingratitude towards the Rana who had given them refuge to try to convert his subjects."* According to Justice Davar, *"If the truth is told, they made no attempt because they knew not only the utter hopelessness of any attempt, but they knew further that any such attempt would have been so seriously resented that it would have resulted in ruin to the community ..."* One can find a detailed account of the case and the various committees in a Gujrati book by Ervad Nadirsha Hormazdji Sukhia printed in 1905 which is at the K R C library.

6. When Mr R D Tata enquired if Mrs Tata could enter the Anjuman Atashbehram after her conversion, in reply to a query by Seth Rustomji Dosabhai Sethna the then vice chairman of the Anjuman Atash Behram a very clear exposition of this issue is given by Dr K R Cama one of the most learned and honourable scholars the community has ever known, as follows. *"In reply to your letter and the question asked therein, I take leave to*

briefly state that, if any juddin by his understanding, or being convinced by any Zarathusti, gets to know the deficiency of his own religion and, by his own free will admits this in public, and openly wants to be a Zarathustrian, and just for this gets his navjote done, and by his desire to be identified as one belonging to the Zoroastrian faith, and as a symbol thereof wants to wear a sudreh and kashti, there is no prohibition in admitting such a person to the Zoroastrian faith. Not only that but it is the duty of every true Zoroastrian to accept such person in the Zoroastrian faith, and thus to spread the Zoroastrian religion... Those who on their own appeal want to be Zoroastrians, if we cause delay in letting them be one, then it amounts to knowingly committing the sin or mistake of obstructing a person going astray on endeavouring to come to the right path..." (Quoted in H J M Desai's article in "Judgments")

I cannot find a more categorical statement about the permissibility of conversion, from any scholar and can not imagine how such a statement could have been made without there being evidence that conversion is permitted in our scriptures. These are a few of the examples where the most eminent scholars and dasturs have openly admitted that conversion is permitted and actually performed it, not selectively for rich persons (as in the case of Neville Wadia) only, but even for the dock worker of Mazgaon! I am sure there must be more examples, but the persons mentioned above were all without exception the most learned and revered scholars of Avesta of that day and are still held in veneration. Hence their actions and words are more relevant. To realize how learned these persons were see their brief biographies.

Dastur Jamaspi Muncherji Jamas

Asa (1830 -1889) came from a line of illustrious Bhagaria priests from Navsari. Appointed high priest of Shenshai sect in 1861. He was the President of the Society for the Promotion of Research in Zoroastrian religion for 23 years. A member of the Royal Asiatic Society, a fellow of Bombay University, and on whom the honour of a Doctor of Civil laws (DCL) honraris causa, was conferred by the

Oxford University. The trustees of the Bodleian Library in Oxford had commissioned his oil painting by a famous artist, which is on display at the library. Several fire temples were consecrated under his guidance. He published many books including a Pahlvi dictionary in four parts and laid the foundation for the Anjuman Atash Behram in 1897. Obviously he was held in high regard in his life time. The book "Zoroastrian Tapestry" edited by Phiroza Godrej and Firoza Mistree describes him as one of our illustrious scholar priests and has the above mentioned painting.

Dastur Shams-ul-Ulema Dr

Pestonjee B Sanjana the other high priest, was renowned in India and Europe for his efforts in spreading knowledge of Pahlvi by publishing books in Gujrati and English translations. After his death a memorial volume was published in his honour contributed by eminent Indian and European scholars. His son Dastur Dorab Sanjana was an equally distinguished scholar and succeeded him as high priest. In his pamphlet entitled "Explanation of the ceremonies to be performed for admission of juddins to the Zoroastrian religion" he explains all the ceremonies necessary to be done before a conversion can be deemed valid.

Dr K R Cama's reputation as an eminent scholar is well known. His biography has been written by the eminent scholar Sham-ul-Ulema Dr Jivanji Mody, himself an outstanding Avesta scholar who was his pupil, and also by Mr S M Edwards, a very famous historian of Bombay. Jivanji Mody wrote, *"I admire Mr Cama for his Iranian and other learning, for his services as a teacher, a preacher, and a reformer, and for his other public services in all directions, but I admire him more for his upright character, his good disposition, his affable manners which led him to behave well even with his enemies in the true spirit of the Zoroastrian benediction ... 'Behave well with your enemies'. He was one of the few leaders of thought in the community. In many questions affecting the good of the community, people liked to know the views of Mr Cama ... Though he was unpopular amongst*

the orthodox in his young days for his advanced views, as if he were a kind of heretic, those very gentlemen later on sought his views. We often come across great men but rare that we come across great and good men. Mr Cama was a great and good man ... His work both as a social and religious reformer was very useful ... He was a reformer of the constructive type and not of a destructive type" (Some of our present day so called scholars who believe in abuse and vilification of those who disagree with them could learn a lesson from him!). How many of our present day high priests and scholars boast of such credentials?

Can the fundamentalists explain this paradox of such distinguished scholars and learned high priests openly disregarding an express prohibition against conversion, in our scriptures, by performing conversions, and by writing pamphlets stating that conversion is permitted. Or an expert committee unanimously deciding to disregard an explicit injunction forbidding conversion. Is this not what is being implied by the present lot of high priests and pseudo scholars when they are stating that conversion is against the tenets of our religion, there by implying that these eminent persons have misled the community and done wrong. Are they prepared to produce the exact portions of our scriptures where such directions are given, by the prophet? Can they explain why when the *Vandidad* even advises when to cut hair and toe nails, there is no clear mention in any scripture against conversion, if so, why is it not produced? Is it in the Gathas which is the word of the prophet? Or are these later misinterpretations by priests who have no right to dictate any thing contrary to the scripture. To quote Justice Jal Vimadalal, an eminent scholar and jurist, unlike the Catholic church where the Pope can prescribe under cannon law, there is nothing like cannon law for us and hence no one can dictate their views as the only truth. Can we disregard the interpretations of persons of such eminence and reliability based on the true interpretation of our scriptures in favour of half-baked scholars, who are not even prepared to produce evidence? Have any new scriptures been

discovered recently in some caves in Iran (like the Dead Sea Scrolls) which say that conversion is barred? Gentlemen and ladies, I leave it to you to judge whose evidence is more reliable.

How can one explain that conversion was permitted and practiced by the most learned and eminent high priests and scholars in the past when Parsis were more orthodox and devout, and is forbidden in this more liberal era of today? It is my belief that while the priest and scholars of the 19th century were men of integrity, and were world renowned scholars like, K R Cama, knew that the scriptures did not prohibit conversion, and were not afraid to say so publicly, the lay public did want conversions to be permitted. They felt that the lower caste persons such as 'dubras' and 'lalias' would get converted to raise their own status as Parsis and grab the assets in Parsi trusts and their housing. My belief is that when the present lot of high priests and scholars realized that the lay public would object to the correct interpretation of the religion about the permissibility of conversion, they did not have the courage to go against the orthodoxy which is their logical constituency and the only way they could do this was by asserting that our scriptures prohibit conversion. Those who had the courage to openly state and practice conversion like Dastur Bode, were ridiculed and ostracised. Since the average Parsi cannot read the original scriptures, they accepted what the high priests and pseudo scholars told them. Taking advantage of this highly emotive issue, certain preachers who claim to be scholars have also used this to form their own cults and followers so as to exercise power. Witness the rowdy behavior in the federation meetings by followers of certain preachers.

It can be justifiably argued that we Parsis have preserved our separate racial identity over the centuries, and have distinguished ourselves in so many spheres that we are proud to be identified as Parsis. We should not allow our identity to be diluted or submerged in this vast country by allowing open conversion. This is a credible

argument and there will be many takers for this. The second fear is that if conversion is permitted openly, our communities' assets such as housing, funds etc will have to be shared with the new converts. While these arguments are worth considering, the fear that if conversion takes place, the new converts will be able to share our assets is totally misplaced and false. This issue was considered in great detail by Justice Davar in his judgment and this was his conclusion. *"For the reasons I have recorded above, I have come to the conclusion that even if an entire alien - a juddin is duly admitted to the Zoroastrian religion after satisfying all conditions, and undergoing all necessary ceremonies, he or she would not as a matter of right, be entitled to the use and benefit of the Funds and Institutions now under the defendants management and control; that these were founded and endowed only for the members of the Parsi community."* Thus it is clear that the fears that the community would be swamped by Africans and Brazilians as Khojeste's fertile imagination predicts is unfounded and there would be no sharing of our assets which are safe from converts.

Once that is clear that our religion does not prohibit conversion then the debate becomes one of the desirability for conversion from the social stand point. Even if it is permitted should we encourage it. This is a legitimate point of view and I would have more respect for our high priests if they had said that though permitted it should not be done for certain reasons which would display their honesty. To say that it is prohibited without producing any evidence is untrue and misleading. Now this issue needs to be examined from the pure social aspect, viz the issue of the survival of the community as its numbers are diminishing rapidly and hence what measures including selective conversion should be considered. The debate should be among sociologists and demographers and medical experts and not amongst priests and religious scholars, as it has been so far.

In my opinion there is a strong case for selective entry into the religion, starting with children of Parsi mothers, and their

spouses. This right cannot be denied to the children of Parsi mothers by the priests refusing to give them service but this can be debated from the social angle and not by barring it as against the tenets of our religion. A good beginning has been made by the ARZ by having a community hall where as per the true interpretation of our religion, children of Parsi women of mixed marriages as well as the spouses can participate in ceremonies. More Parsis should support them and eventually there should be consecrated agiaries for such functions.

My only intention in writing this piece and inviting the abuse of the fundamentalist is because I feel that as an intelligent community we should bring out in the open the question of conversion, and to encourage a healthy debate. We are a lazy lot and will not do our own research to discover the truth but believe what we are told. I am extremely happy that *Parsiana* have published a recent book, "Judgments" which covers the entire issue of conversion, by reproducing in full the judgments of Petit v/s Jeejibhoy (1906), and Bella v/s Saklat, (1915). It also has extracts from two relatively recent judgments on this issue viz Yazdiar v/s Yazdiar (1950) and Irani v/s Irani (1960). Thus in one slim volume all that one needs to know is now available, and I urge all my friends who are interested in the truth but did not have access to the true fact about conversion to read this book. As an educated and intelligent community let us therefore at least read what has been painstakingly assembled for our guidance on this subject in this book "Judgment". It is also necessary for intelligent Parsis to question our high priests and those who claim that conversion is against the tenets of our religion to produce hard evidence and to contradict the facts stated above. I would request that Parsis should stand up and demand that the truth is told, and the only way is to write letters to our press. Surely we have many courageous persons who will seek the truth as even our Gathas urge us to think for ourselves and not be misled by others.

"Listen well with your ears to my best teaching
Consider with enlightened mind all ye before
reaching
a decision on choice between two paths shown.
Each man to himself, ... The decision his own.
Well before the ushering-in of the great event
Wake ye all, and spread well this message I have
sent" (Yasna 30.1-2)

It is sad that an enlightened community cannot discuss and solve our differences in a civilized manner, since the truth cannot be hidden forever. The only persons to benefit from this are ambitious preachers and pseudo scholars who want to become leaders by preaching divisive ideologies, and claiming to save the religion! I would also urge the many eminent persons who have joined WAPIZ, to persuade its founders to try and emulate K R Cama and as stated above be constructive in your dialogue and do not indulge in abuse and vilification of those who do not agree with you and win them over. If despite the evidence quoted above, you wish to hold on to your views do so, but at least have the honesty to explain why you reject the evidence of such eminent scholars! A large number of Parsis are now living abroad. If they read this I would urge them to question our high priests to explain their interpretation before they view any actions by their children who marry non-Parsis as committing a wrong act. Please do not abandon your children for the sake of an unsubstantiated interpretation!

I feel that it is very necessary for the educated Parsis who realize how our community is declining in numbers to start to consider how we can go beyond the traditional remedies to slow down the decline in our population. Eminent sociologist and demographers like Dr Armaity Desai as well as fertility and medical experts and intelligent leaders should discuss the problem as a social and medical issue, not as a religious issue. It is not in our interest to allow the community to get wiped out just to satisfy the ego of bigots and false scholars. We need out, of box thinking, for our survival. Wake-up as it is already late, and try to save our community from extinction.

I would like to understand what is the role of the BPP in such a situation, where hundreds of poor Zoroastrian children are being denied a right conferred upon them by our prophet, based on what I consider a false interpretation of the scriptures. As the Akabars should they not seek the opinion of the high priests so that the true picture is known to the community, or will they continue to sit on the fence so as not to lose the votes of the orthodox? Surely the high priests will not dare to ignore their request to substantiate their interpretation. Or will they join the conspiracy of silence? I would urge Minoo Shroff who has provided mature leadership to the BPP to act for the sake of the community. I would also urge intelligent Parsis, especially those affected by this interpretation to demand the truth and write in the paper their views. Only a vigorous public opinion can bring out the truth. How long can an intelligent and progressive community be silent on such a vital issue?



Mr Kanga writes: *"Tell the readers to freely express their opinions and not keep quiet. I would also urge the BPP to ask the high priests to explain their stand as the issue affects hundreds of Parsis whose rights are being denied."*

On the same issue, in the *Parsiana* of May 7th '06, Readers' Forum, Mr Rustom Patel says: *"I am a devout Zoroastrian living in Canada. ... I was astounded to read that eminent scholars ... as well as high priests... have clearly and elaborately stated that conversion is not prohibited. ... my daughter Dolly married a nice Jewish Canadian boy, despite my objections ... and have opposed the navjote of my grandson Now my conscience is troubling me and I wonder if I have done the right thing. ... What really puzzles me is the total silence ... no rejoinder has come in any Parsi paper, (not) even the ultra orthodox. ... Mistree contradicting Cama would be akin to a science teacher from a village school in Bihar challenging Einstein's theory of relativity! ... I am a retired professor from a Canadian university and I believe that truth however unpalatable must be revealed!"*

It is up to us now, to stand and be counted, leaving the correct information for the future generations of our community to follow - Ed

Bombay Samachar *printed on 9 April '06*

*t*he Trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat have funded a major study on Parsi Demography, in connection with Sir Dorabji Tata Trust. The BPP has accurate figures, as 98% corpses are consigned to our Towers of Silence, Kemps Corner, Mumbai. The other 2% is believed to be cremated/buried, as ascertained from published obituaries.

However, the figures of births are not accurate for various reasons, leading to disparity between births and deaths. One of the ways to eliminate this is to get data about births, directly from the couples who bear children. The Board has felt that the data concerning births are vital for the purpose of not only the said study but as a useful tool in evolving community-wide population policy.

The Board has decided that it will congratulate every couple that bears a child by sending a congratulatory note and a cheque of Rs501 per child (for twins, it will be for Rs1,002).

The only stipulation, is that the intimation to the BPP should be supported by an authentic birth certificate from the Registrar of Births and Deaths BMC, Thane/Navi Mumbai.

The scheme is retrospectively applicable from 1.1.2006. The Board requests that authenticated data about births should be sent to:

Mr C S Panthaki, Sr Executive (Welfare),
Bombay Parsi Panchayat, 209 Dr D N
Road, Fort, Mumbai 400 001.
Telephonic intimations will not be entertained.



ZAGBA honours Khorshed & Firoze Jungalwala with Lifetime Achievement Award

Prof Farhang Mehr reports

Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area (ZAGBA) on March 25, 2006, honoured Mrs Khorshed Jungalwala and her husband Dr Firoze Jungalwala with Lifetime Achievement Award, for their services to Zoroastrian community locally, as well as internationally.

The evening began with a solemn and moving Jashan ceremony performed by Ervads Yazad Nalladaroo, Farhad Panthaky and Nauzer Vimadalal in the presence of

approximately 130 Zoroastrians of Indian and Iranian origin. After a brief intermission and enjoyment of snacks, Farrokh Lam, President of ZAGBA requested select fellow members of the Association to reminisce the activities of the Jungalwalas for the past 25 years.

Dilnawaz Shroff was the first speaker. Walking down memory lane, she explained how she and her husband Hoshang met the Jungalwalas in the latter's new residence in 1978. On that occasion several other Parsis were present when the hosts launched the idea of formation of a Zoroastrian Association in Boston. That meeting was

the precursor to the institution of the current association. Dilnawaz also elaborated on Jungalwalas other communal activities: organizing recreational as well as youth gatherings, initiating religious classes for children and adults, assisting Parsis in

finding suitable accommodation and medical help, encouraging fellow Zoroastrians to participate in fund-raising for charitable causes. Then Adi Guzdar, one of close fellow-associates of the

Jungalwalas

in ZAGBA, praised Khorshed's other qualities, her Parsi culinary prowess and being president of the Metro-West Musical Society of Framingham for several years and teaching piano and voice.

Professor Farhang Mehr spoke of personal interactions with the couple when his family arrived in the Boston area from Iran. Praising their sense of leadership, their interest in preservation of Zoroastrian identity, promotion of Zoroastrian culture, and the unity of Zoroastrian communities worldwide, Professor Mehr said that it was a great privilege for him and Parichehr to be invited to join the committee on drawing the



L to R: Farhang Mehr, Khorshed Jungalwala, Parichehr Mehr, Firoze Jungalwala

constitution of ZAGBA. He stated *"the Jungalwalas are some of the true and honest Zoroastrians whom Parichehr and I have met"*. He also listed various communal activities of Khorshed at national and international level, such as Chairperson of the FEZANA World Body Ad Hoc Committee, representing ZAGBA at various Zoroastrian Congresses, organizer of the First International Avesta Conference in Boston and Chairperson of the FEZANA Journal Publications Committee. Finally Professor Mehr thanked Adi Davar of Washington for reminding him of ZAGBA's duty to eulogize the Jungalwalas for their valuable and selfless services to the community and to Farrokh Lam and ZAGBA's Board for promptly responding to his request.

As the past president of ZAGBA, Dr Parastu Dubash remarked *"Khorshed has put ZAGBA on the national and international map and she brought national and international prominence to ZAGBA"*. Past President Dr Nasservan Dosabhoj described Khorshed's activities and relationships at the local level with Harvard University, with Professor Diana Eck, Director of the Pluralism Project for religious diversity, by giving talks on Zoroastrianism at their meetings. He also mentioned about conducting seminars on Zoroastrianism by inviting scholars at Harvard, in collaboration with Professor Prod Oktor Skejaervo, Agha Khan Professor of Iranian Studies, and Dr James Russell, Professor of Armenian Studies. Farrokh Lam also read a heartfelt message from his mother Dr Zareen Karani Araoz currently in India.

After several rounds of applause, Khorshed responded with gracious thanks to all for their kind words. She encouraged the younger generation to consider the importance of being involved in community affairs and to participate and take leadership in preserving the Zoroastrian religious, ethical and cultural identity for the future generations to come.

Finally, Firoze being the first president of ZAGBA, gave a brief history of the creation

of ZAGBA in 1983 and thanked several members of the community including Dr and Mrs Mehr and others, who helped him in developing the constitution of ZAGBA.

At the end, Khorshed and Firoze were presented with a plaque inscribed with the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area, in honour of their dedication and community service.

The evening came to a close with the traditional Parsi and Irani dinner followed by music and dancing in accordance with the Jamshidi Nowrooz.



Farhang Mehr is Professor Emeritus of International Relations at Boston University. A dedicated Zoroastrian he has spent all his life serving the cause of the Zoroastrian religion and the community including 16 years in Tehran Zartushty Anjuman, 12 years as its President. As an educator, lawyer and economist, he held high position in the Government, including Vice-Prime Minister, acting Minister of Finance, Governor for Iran in OPEC Board of Governors, President of Iran National Insurance Company, and President of Pahlavi (Shiraz) University. He has authored many books and articles, given interviews to several world and local radio and televisions. He is the co-editor of Bilingual Humata Journal published in USA. He is married to Parichehr and they have three children, Mehrdad, Mehran and Mitra.

It made me feel

When I was going through a very difficult time,
someone called me up and played piano music for me
on my answering machine. It made me feel very loved,
and I never discovered who did it.

(from "Random Acts of Kindness")

very loved

Possible law for non-Muslim's in Iran to wear insignia

On <http://www.canada.com/nationalpost/news/story.html?id=11bf4a8-282a-4d18-954f-546709b1240f&k=32073>, Chris Wattie, of the National Post writes on 19th May:

Human rights groups are raising alarms over a new law passed by the Iranian parliament that would require the country's Jews and Christians to wear coloured badges to identify them and other religious minorities as non-Muslims. ...

Iranian expatriates living in Canada yesterday confirmed reports that the Iranian parliament, called the Islamic Majlis, passed a law this week setting a dress code for all Iranians, requiring them to wear almost identical "standard Islamic garments." The law, which must still be approved by Iran's "Supreme Guide" Ali Khamenehi before being put into effect, also establishes special insignia to be worn by non-Muslims.

Iran's roughly 25,000 Jews would have to sew a yellow strip of cloth on the front of their clothes, while Christians would wear red badges and Zoroastrians would be forced to wear blue cloth.

"There's no reason to believe they won't pass this," said Rabbi Hier. "It will certainly pass unless there's some sort of international outcry over this." ...

Ali Behroozian, an Iranian exile living in Toronto, said the law could come into force as early as next year. It would make religious minorities immediately identifiable and allow Muslims to avoid contact with non-Muslims. ...

On 20 May, in the New York Post, online edition, Amir Taheri writes on similar lines: ... The law mandates the government to make sure that all Iranians wear "standard Islamic garments" designed to remove ethnic and class distinctions reflected in clothing, and to eliminate "the influence of the infidel" on the way Iranians, especially the young, dress.

It also envisages separate dress codes for religious minorities, Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians, who will have to adopt distinct color schemes to make them identifiable in public. The new codes would enable Muslims to instantly recognize non-Muslims so that they can avoid shaking hands with them by mistake, and thus becoming "najis" (unclean). ... It is not clear what will happen to followers of other religions, including Hindus, Bahais and Buddhists - not to mention plain agnostics and atheists, whose very existence is denied by the Islamic Republic. ...

parviz Varjavand, mentions at zoroastrians@yahoo.com also on 20 May: *"I just called Mr Kourosh Niknam the Zoroastrian deputy in the Iranian Parliament and he confirmed that this news was not true. There had been a talk in the parliament about designing a dress-code for all Iranians in order to distinguish Iranians from other nationalities and specially fixing a standard for how Iranian women should wear proper Islamic coverings, but the proposal was voted down and never came to pass. There had never been a talk about Iranian religious minorities having to wear different color patches in order to be distinguished from Moslems."*

Despite this assurance one wonders what is in store.



Harmony in Paradox

The Paradox of Service & Rule

by dina g mcintyre

Fifth and final in the series of 5 papers

[In the last issue, 1/06, it was mentioned erroneously as the final part of the series. The Paradox of Service & Rule now concludes the Harmony in Paradox series]

*n*o one knows for sure when Zarathustra lived. We have a lot of intelligent and educated speculation, but no direct evidence. Opinions range from 6,500 BC, to 1,700 BC, to 1,200 BC, to 1,000 BC, to 600 BC.

No one knows for sure where Zarathushtra lived. We have a lot of intelligent and educated speculation, but no direct evidence. Opinions range from Azerbaijan, to Afghanistan, to eastern Iran, to western Iran.

The Gathas of Zarathushtra are the only text that exists today in the Gathic language. And due to the passage of time, and the depredations of Alexander the Macedonian¹, it became an unknown language in terms of its grammar and vocabulary, for more than 1,000 years. What little knowledge the Sasanians retained of Gathic was further decimated by the Arab invasion of Iran.

So how do we know today what the Gathas say. Late in the 18th century, linguists accidentally discovered the similarity between Gathic and Vedic. This started the long, slow, process of decoding the Gathas, based on Vedic and other ancient languages, using the principles of philology — which includes the comparative analysis of languages, and ascertaining some common ways (rules) which underlie how they change from culture to culture, and generation to generation.

Today, there is approximately 80% agreement among linguists and philologists on translations of Gathic words and

grammar. Unfortunately, some of the most important words in the Gathas do not fall within this 80% on which there is agreement. *Aramaiti* is one of them.

We all agree that it is one of the *amesha spenta*, an attribute of Ahura Mazda himself, and (like the other *amesha spenta*) it is also an attribute of a good person. But there is substantial disagreement as to its meaning.

In Y30.7, Zarathushtra says:

“But to this world He came with the rule of good thinking and of truth, and (our) enduring [aramaiti] gave body and breath (to it). . .” Y30.7. ²

How does one give “body and breath” to the rule of truth and good thinking? One cannot do so with right-mindedness and good words alone. Good actions are required to make the rule of truth and good thinking real, give it “body and breath”, give it substance.

Similarly, Zarathushtra says “. . . *Through its actions, [aramaiti] gives substance to the truth [asha]. . .*” Y44.6, and he calls *aramaiti* “. . . *[aramaiti] of good actions. . .*” in Y45.4, indicating that actions are a part of the meaning of *aramaiti*, a view with which Professor K D Irani concurs.³

In Y51.21 Zarathushtra shows us the full spectrum of what is included within the meaning of *aramaiti*. It includes understanding (ie. thoughts), words, actions, and vision (another aspect of thought).

“Virtuous [spento] is the man of [aramaiti]. He is so by reason of his understanding, his words, his actions, his conception [daena]. . .” Y51.21.

If a man of aramaiti is spenta because of his understanding, his words, his actions, his vision [daena], then the meaning of aramaiti, of necessity, would have to include all these things.

It is interesting that Zarathushtra also teaches us that we serve and worship the Wise Lord with our thoughts, words and actions of truth, good thinking and good rule, in other words, with our aramaiti. So in a sense, piety and devotion are also included within the meaning of aramaiti.

"I who shall serve all of you, Wise Lord, with good thinking, . . ." Y28.2;

"Yes, praising, I shall always worship all of you, Wise Lord, with truth and the very best thinking and with their rule . . ." Y50.4;

"With hands outstretched, Wise One, I shall serve all of you . . . with truth . . . You, moreover, with the skillfulness of good thinking." Y50.8;

"I shall try to glorify Him for us with prayers of [aramaiti], . . ." Y45.10.

We see from these verses that the fragrance of a life well lived is an act of worship — a prayer of aramaiti in the temple of life.

To summarize:

The way in which Zarathushtra uses aramaiti in the Gathas, shows us that aramaiti means making truth/right (asha) a reality, giving it "body and breath", giving it substance, with our thoughts, words and actions of asha — the proverbial good thoughts, good words and good actions — a foundation of Zoroastrian belief.

This is how we serve the Wise Lord.

This is also how we serve all the living, and our world, because it is impossible to think a good thought, say a good word or do a good deed, without benefiting the people and the circumstances that are affected by such thoughts, words and actions.

It is difficult to find one word in English that captures the full meaning of aramaiti. "Service" to Mazda and to all the living, with our good thoughts, words and actions, comes close, based on a contextual analysis. But is this also linguistically valid? Well, although Professor Insler prefers "respect" as the correct translation of aramaiti, he has also expressed the following opinion in connection with the meaning of aramaiti. *"Vedic also frequently uses the expression aram kr 'to serve' whose underlying meaning was surely 'show respect'."*⁴

But how does translating aramaiti as service, square with the fact that it is one of the amesha spenta, and as such, is a characteristic of Mazda Himself.

A God who serves?

Some teachers of Zoroastrianism teach that Mazda transcends the conflict between good and evil in our world, that He does not act or involve Himself in our world. But the Gathas show us a very different view of Mazda. It is true that He does not interfere with our freedom to choose (*" . . . Him who left to our will (to choose between) the virtuous and the unvirtuous. . . "* Y45.9), but in His own way (a way perhaps not always clear to us), He actively works to promote the renovation of the world:

With His thoughts: (" . . . Thy (good) thinking, through whose actions one has nourished the truth. . . " Y46.7);

With His words: (" . . . Thou art the Lord by reason of Thy tongue (which is) in harmony with truth and by reason of Thy words stemming from good thinking . . . " Y51.3);

And with His actions: (" . . . the truthful [ashavanem] Lord, virtuous [spenta] in His actions. . . " Y46.9; "Yes, those things which Thou hast brought to realization, as well as those things which Thou hast reached by Thy actions . . . " Y50.10).

Just as He expects us to do. This is not a Ruler who expects anything of us that He is not prepared to do Himself.

Let us consider Rule

The conventional notion of rule and service, is that the Ruler rules, and his subjects serve. In one sense, this conventional notion is reflected in the Gathas, because we often see references to Mazda as Ruler and to xshathra as His rule (“...Wise Ruler...” Y28.7; “... the Wise Lord who rules at will...” Y43.1; “... Thy rule that is in accord with truth [asha]...” Y43.14; “... By your rule, Lord, Thou shalt truly heal this world...” Y34.15).

And we are told that our part is to serve (“... May there be aramaiti under the rule of Him who has the appearance of the sun...” Y43.16; “... fame is to serve Thee and the truth, Wise One, under Thy rule.” Y32.6).

But Zarathushtra’s thinking is often unconventional, and never one-dimensional. He also tells us:

That rule belongs to service, and that service gives rule (“... Grant thou [aramaiti] your rule of good thinking...” Y51.2);

That service gives power (“... Give thou, o [aramaiti] power to Vishtaspa and to me...” Y28.7);

And that to rule is to serve: (“Glorious Jamaspa Haugva (has displayed) this understanding of His power: ‘One chooses that rule of good thinking allied with truth in order to serve...’” Y51.18; “... He [referring to man] serves truth during his rule, with good word and good action...” Y31.22).

An interesting paradox. It makes us wonder: What is good rule? What does it consist of?

Good rule is frequently called “... the rule of truth [asha] and good thinking [vohu mano]...” Y29.10; “... the rule of good thinking and of truth...” Y30.7.

It is also called “... the rule of good thinking...” Y 30.8. Since good thinking (vohu mano) includes the comprehension of truth / right (asha), this is consistent with good rule being the rule of asha and vohu mano.

And it is also called the rule of aramaiti

(“... Grant thou [aramaiti] your rule of good thinking...” Y51.2). If aramaiti means giving asha substance with our thoughts, words and actions, then aramaiti’s rule would necessarily be the rule of asha and vohu mano. So all these descriptions of good rule are consistent.

It is amazing what a difference it makes to our quality of life, when those in authority use their power in a good way — be it in a corporation, or government, or academia, or a family, or an organization, or a committee, or any of the many large and small units of governance that exist in our society. How should those in authority exercise their power? With aramaiti: “Let those of good rule rule over us... with actions stemming from good understanding, and with [aramaiti]” Y48.5.

But the notion of vohu xshathra, good rule, is not only for those in authority. We all have power over each other, — power that we can use in a constructive or destructive way. If you can hurt someone, you have power over him. If you can help someone, you have power over him. We too need to exercise our power with aramaiti.

There is a lovely verse in Yasna 51, the Vohu Xshathra (Good Rule) Gatha, in which Zarathushtra, teaching through questions, spells out the components of good rule.

“Where shall there be protection instead of injury? Where shall mercy take place? Where truth [asha] which attains glory? Where [spenta aramaiti]? Where the very best thinking [mano vahishtem]? Where Wise One, through Thy rule?” Y51.4.

So we see that the paradox of service and rule resolves itself into the harmony of a beneficent existence.

Mazda’s rule offers protection instead of injury. It is a rule that is compassionate, a rule that gives substance to truth/right (asha) with His thoughts, words and actions. His rule is the rule of aramaiti.

As with Him, so with us. We too should serve asha (truth/right), each other, and our world, with protection instead of injury, with

compassion, with our thoughts, words and actions of asha, ie. with aramaiti. Such service is also how we worship Wisdom (Mazda). Such service creates good rule, (vohu xshathra) — the rule of aramaiti.

Such service is how Mazda and we, as partners, heal our world and bring to life the good vision [vanghui daena] — the vision of a world governed by truth and good thinking. The vision of a world governed by aramaiti.

“ . . . The Wise One in rule is Lord through [aramaiti]. ” Y47.1

Notes:

1. A late Pahlavi manuscript, the Arda Viraz Namag, has this to say about the destruction of texts wrought by Alexander the Macedonian: “And that Religion, namely all the Avesta and Zand, which had been written with golden ink on prepared cowhide, and deposited in the Staxr I Pabagan in the National Archives, was taken away and burnt by Alexander the Roman, resident of Egypt, and many religious authorities and judges and herbeds and mowbeds and upholders of the religion and skilled and wise men were killed.” And in the Denkard, another late Pahlavi text, it is written: “And after destruction had come from the notorious, wicked, (and) wrathful Alexander, (even) so much was not recovered from (the ruins) of what had existed, as would be possible to be kept (in memory) by a religious authority.” Both quotations are from Humbach, *The Gathas of Zarathushtra and Other Old Avestan Texts*, Heidelberg, 1991, Vol. 1, page 52. Words appearing in parentheses are words that Humbach has inserted into the text, to aid understanding.

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

to the discussion at hand enables us to focus on the strand of thought that is under discussion.

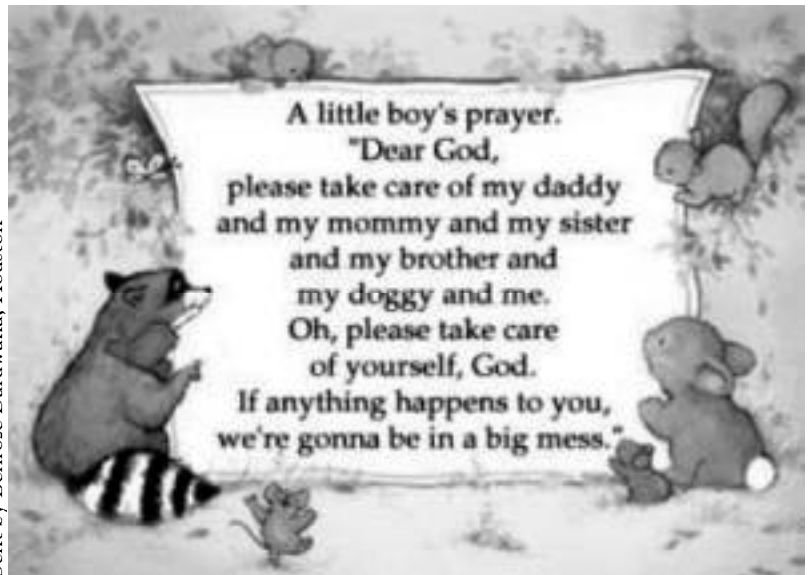
3. In his Introduction to his father’s translation of the Gathas, Professor K. D. Irani describes the concept of aramaiti as follows: “The inspiration that leads to action is Spenta Armaity, translated in the religious context as Piety or Devotion, and in the moral context as Benevolence or Right-Mindedness. This spirit is another aspect of Divinity, it inclines us to move from right conceptions to right actions. We thereby, with courage and confidence put our well-thought-out and well formulated intentions into action. This is called good-deed. Here we can crystallize the oft-repeated trilogy of Zoroastrianism: Good-thoughts, Good-words, and Good-deeds.” Irani, *The Gathas, the Hymns of Zarathushtra*, as edited by K.D. Irani, (1998).

4. See An Introduction to the Gathas of Zarathushtra, Issue # 4, McIntyre, “Making it Happen, Aramaiti”, footnote # 7. This publication may be viewed at www.zarathushtra.com.



Dina G McIntyre, is a Zoroastrian, born in India and came to USA in 1956. She earned a law degree from the University of Pittsburgh, School of Law and practiced law in the United States, since 1964. Prior to her retirement she was a member of the bar of all federal and state courts in Pennsylvania, and the United States Supreme Court. She has been a student of the teachings of Zarathushtra since the early 1980s, and was the Editor of a 12-lesson course on the Gathas called *An Introduction to the Gathas of Zarathushtra*, which she distributed world-wide in 1989-90. She has lectured on the teachings of Zarathushtra at various conferences and seminars in the US, Canada, England and India. Her writings on the teachings of Zarathushtra appear on these websites: www.vohuman.org and www.zarathushtra.com

Sent by Behroze Daruwalla, Houston



Waste management in India, 2006

by almitra patel

*The twilight frogs are silent.
Stray dogs, smoking waste ...
Oh, pity my poisoned land.*

My lifelong love of nature was nurtured in Devlali, during daily walks with my tree-loving father Pheroze Sidhwa and at Barnes School, on a plateau amid the Sahyadri hills. In 1922, Jamshed Nusserwanjee, the revered twelve-time Mayor of Karachi, then Asia's cleanest city, had inspired my father and his nephew Rustom Sidhwa to start 3-4 "Swaraj" industries, to make India independent of British imports. One of these was Bharat Tiles, known for its lovely carpet-patterned tiles that replaced Italian ceramic floors. In 1945, with cement requisitioned and no private construction, they switched to making ceramic grinding wheels for the war effort. So after a Chemistry-Botany BSc at Bombay, I went to MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology in USA) for a BS in General Engineering and MS in industrial ceramics.

I worked for 6 years in Grindwell Ltd, then for 25 years in its ancillary family firm developing an import substitute for induction furnace linings for melting iron and steel, where I enjoyed providing technical help to foundry customers to reduce waste and improve productivity. My Trouble-Shooting manual for them was translated by a Swedish firm into 5 languages for use in 80 countries.

I was also part-time Project Officer for the Bombay Natural History Society and Smithsonian Institution's Gir Project to save the habitat of lions in Saurashtra. In 1972 we moved to a farm four villages outside Bangalore, for our two little girls to enjoy nature as we did, and raised poultry for 30 years. I managed business and factory visits one week a month, and on retirement pursued new interests, like trying to save

1800 BC Iron-Age megaliths nearby and trying to do something about our village environment. Frogs sang at dusk on our scenic country road until 1991, when Bangalore City Corporation began daily dumping truckloads of city garbage on both sides of the road and into the marshes and stream banks "because there is nowhere else to dump it". Till that time, like most city folk, I never knew or thought about where city garbage eventually ended up, or how. I was determined not to take a NIMBY attitude ("Not In My Back Yard") and have it dumped somewhere else, where some other farmers would suffer, as we did, from the huge packs of street dogs that fed and multiplied on garbage. Without the need of a human touch to survive, they turned feral (back to their wild ways) and formed hunting packs at night that attacked many farms, including our poultry, sheep and pets.

It is because of this problem of no ownership and social contact with humans, that Indian animal lovers' efforts to sterilise and release such feral strays back onto city streets does not protect us from being chased and bitten while walking, jogging or riding two-wheelers. School-children are the worst sufferers, either on foot or by falling off pillions as two-wheeler pillions try to avoid a chasing pack. Painful and costly anti-rabies shots are a must, because it is impossible to punctually catch and vaccinate every street dog every year as required, and we cannot take chances with such a fatal disease. That is why the false sentiments of a few, like many Parsis in Mumbai, are so dangerous for others: those who feed biscuits to stray dogs, to help them survive outside a loving home, are encouraging a deadly menace to fellow-humans without any personal responsibility.

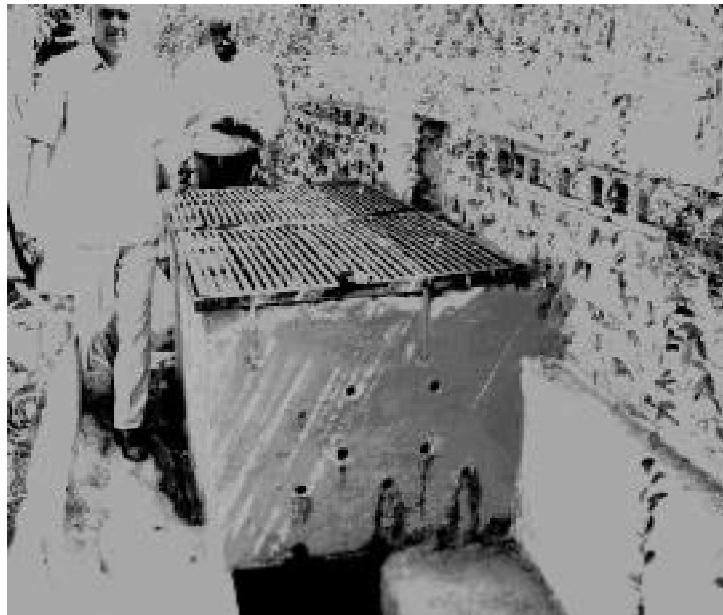
So to help city officials find suitable disposal sites, I chased their files up through the Government Revenue system for an incredible 2 1/2 years to get six sites officially Notified for such use. Another solution was to find hygienic ways of managing city waste. In Mumbai, Excel Industries had developed fast-acting bio-cultures of natural microbes from cowdung, wood-rot fungi and soil to control odours, especially during a municipal sweepers' strike, and to speed up the composting of waste. Composting has been done since Vedic times to return nutrients to the soil, dumping village waste in pits all year till the next monsoon. That is too slow for voluminous city waste, which if left to rot in an unturned heap, especially during rains, produces a highly-polluting coffee-coloured "leachate" that enters the soil and groundwater and makes it unfit to drink or use. But bio-cultures sprayed onto long heaps of waste called "wind-rows", turned weekly to provide enough air for odourless decomposition, converts the garbage turned into dark-brown crumbly compost in 45 to 60 days, full of all the "good" microbes, nutrients and micro-nutrients that plants need to grow well.

Capt J S Velu of Exnora, a Chennai NGO, provided an upstream solution. The best way to keep streets clean is not to dirty them in the first place. So Exnora got citizens to remove all street waste-bins (which are nuisance-points) and instead pay a rag-picker "Street Beautifier" for door-to-door collection of their "wet" food waste, and give their "dry" recyclable waste separately, unmixed. After garbage-blocked drains brought out rats and plague to flooded Surat, Capt Velu dreamed up a Clean India Campaign to spread the message of such hygienic waste collection and composting to 30 cities in 30 days. A friend and I joined him in our Maruti van covered with banners and eco-messages, spending 5 days in Surat on our way to Delhi and back via Nagpur-Hyderabad, learning and sharing.

We discovered that not just Bangalore but almost all Indian cities had nowhere to



One shift production of Mysore's centralized compost plant; heap of sieved saleable compost on the left, unwanted plastic on the right (larger heap). Highlights the unimagined problem of plastics in waste.



Decentralised composting in a Bio-bin, 6ft x 3ft x 3ft, which can replace a roadside waste container (which is lifted by dumper-placers) and can convert the door-to-door-collected kitchen waste of 125 households to compost for beautification of their road (and improvement of property values in the greened area). This one is from Diamond Garden, Chembur in Mumbai. There are thus Huge savings to the city in transportation costs.

dump their waste except all over the outskirts and approach roads. As Bangalore Convener of INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) I met Nargis Irani and Katy Rustom, fighting since 1986 through the Courts to preserve Dahanu's eco-sensitive horticultural ecology. They urged me to do the same for hygienic solid waste management (SWM) and their wonderful lawyer Kerban Anklesaria helped me file a Public Interest Litigation (PIL), WP888/96, against every State and Union Territory, the Government of India and the Central Pollution Control Board, citing the example of Surat, once the filthiest but today India's cleanest city thanks to S R Rao's 18 months as its Municipal Commissioner, which shows that one can do anything if one decides to. He

began by cleaning the filthiest slums, which all over India cooperate the most wonderfully if given a chance.

I asked the Supreme Court to order that India's 300 cities of population over 100,000 should follow Planning Commission guidelines for SWM and sought data from all Respondents on how long their disposal sites if any would last and how they were managed. Suddenly, top city officials who thought rubbish was a subject only for lower officials to deal with, had to answer the Court and pay attention to the subject. This has been the biggest positive outcome of the case, and improvements are slowly apparent. The March 1999 Report of a Supreme Court appointed Committee of 8 members, including myself, resulted in enactment of the Municipal Solid Waste (Management & Handling) Rules 2000, which makes it mandatory for all towns and cities over 20,000 population to follow door-to-door collection of segregated dry and wet waste, with biological stabilising of wet waste and encouragement of dry waste recycling by the informal sector.

Progress is slow but steady. Karnataka has recruited and trained Environment Officers for waste management in half its cities. Many State Governments have by now given suitable waste processing sites to their towns and cities, where action is yet to begin. Many have started door-to-door collection, though only Suryapet's Commissioner Khadar Saheb has achieved zero-dustbin zero-garbage status since 2003. Citizens are now empowered to, and do, demand good performance from those who run their cities. SAARC country delegates have recommended, at Dhaka in October 2004, a waste-management model similar to India's. Pakistan has started its first city-waste compost plant at Lahore on 31st March 2006, for which I was happily present, and hopefully many more will follow. Every SAARC country needs to soon pass similar Rules to accelerate progress in waste management. I will be delighted to help.



A wonderful person I met at Karachi, Nargis Latif, working since 30 years with the city's rag-pickers who get abuse, not the thanks they deserve, for minimizing by about 10% the waste to be transported to outlying dumps. The picture of above is in front of a very innovative structure constructed entirely of waste: her lightweight waterproof "Wastic Blocks" (waste plastic compacted into blocks and wrapped in silvery plastic sheeting). below, no waste in the background, only the Wastic-Block shed.



Decentralised composting of food waste in local "bio-bins" of 6ft x 3 ft x 3 ft, serving 125 middle-income homes or 1200 slum families, is also catching on slowly, to minimise waste needing transport over long distances to controversial rural sites. Pune and now also Mumbai, are beginning to make these mandatory for on-site composting of apartment wastes. Citizens can do their bit for clean cities by promoting or cooperating with door-to-door collection of wet wastes, keeping their dry recyclables for weekly or monthly donation to the nearest waste-picker. They can also promote good practices by ensuring that cities do not collect inerts (debris, drain silt, road dust and diggings) in the same trip as garbage, so that compost of good quality reaches our farmers. They should visit their

cities' waste dumps for a first-hand experience, and urge their cities to use non-recyclable thin-film plastics as an 8% additive or replacement for bitumen, as it gives very durable tar roads. Bangalore has 400 km of such urban roads, Tamil Nadu has 1200 km rural "plastic roads" in all districts, and both plan many more.

This case has had many side benefits. Property tax has been rationalised to improve city finances, which have now to follow accrual-based double-entry accounting practices for transparency and citizen oversight if desired. I have been invited to participate in framing E-waste rules for electronic waste. Next on my agenda in the Supreme Court, which may take a couple of years, are Eco-Friendly Packaging and Waste Minimisation Rules. After that, it will be up to civil society to enforce compliance with good practices.



The reason for asking Dr Patel to write this article, is to show what can be achieved if one is committed in improving one's city. So many of our cities' waste, both in India & Pakistan need to be addressed and we have Almitra who is willing to share her expertise. Contact almitrapatel@rediffmail.com - Ed



Almitra Patel is an engineer from MIT USA with a background in chemistry and botany and a love for the environment. After retirement she has become an expert in urban solid waste management, having visited 132 Indian municipalities and their dumpsites to date, plus 19 abroad. She is a member of India's Supreme Court

Committee for Solid Waste Management, and is interested in waste minimization, waste-water issues, slum housing and hygiene. Email: almitrapatel@rediffmail.com



The best haircut one can have, especially for a meeting!

Informing you . . .

The Zoroastrian Sports Committee (ZSC) announces:

What: The 2006 Zarathushti Games

When: July 1 - 4, 2006

Where: Los Angeles, CA; The Beautiful Loyola Marymount University.

For more information visit <http://zathletics.com/>

Zoroastrian Cricket Club Canada are embarking on a UK tour in July & August 2006. A one off, "Winner takes all" festival match has been arranged between the visitors and ZCC GB for 29th July 2006.

ZCC GB last played together approximately 10 years ago and this is a call for players old and new to come to the fore and take part in this memorable event. Please contact Kerman Jasavala on 07956 404 601 or kerman.jasavala@gmail.com

The Rustam Guiv Foundation announces a writing contest on "*What I have learned from the Gathas*".

- ✓ The participant's age should be between 15 and 30 years.
- ✓ Essays should not exceed two pages. They can be in English or Persian.
- ✓ Deadline is September 1, 2006
- ✓ Writers should separately write their brief biography not exceeding half a page.

The participant who receives the highest score will be awarded \$1000. So far they have received 30 essays from Iran. This has been very encouraging, therefore it was decided to add the second and third winning awards as well.

Essays should be mailed to:
Rustam Guiv Foundation
c/o Daryoush Jahanian, M.D
1835 North 78th Place
Kansas City, Kansas 66112
USA

New online journal dedicated to the History of Ancient Iran.

The site: <http://www.iranancienthistory.com/>

Nilufer Mama was recognized at an event hosted by the Toronto Board of Trade as being a leader in the business community.

To honour her achievement she was a distinguished guest at Meet the Champions - A Celebration of Business Excellence at the Toronto Board of Trade on March 8, 2006.

This event is an opportunity to celebrate with all of the winners of Business Excellence and Leadership Awards from the various boards of trade and chambers of commerce from across Ontario. Nilufer was nominated by the Canada Pakistan Business Council where she serves as a Director.

Parsi Websites : Ader Gandi and Yazdi Tantra have developed the following websites.

www.TheParsiChronicle.com in existence since two and a half years, now ranks as one of the top five websites in www.google.com, when one searches for the word Parsi. To date, this site has been visited by over 67,000 people.

www.TheParsiDirectory.com. Over 20,000 Parsis are registered on this site. One can search for any Parsi and chances are you will find them using this resource which is free.

www.TheMissingParsi.com. The idea behind this site is simple - use the power of the Internet to help fellow Parsis and Zoroastrians connect with people they have lost touch with.

www.TheParsiMatch.com. This is a free match making web site for our community.

The Fourth World Zoroastrian Youth Congress is being held on 27 December 2007 – 3 January 2008, with the slogan - "Back to the Future".

Another boring "TRADITIONAL" Zoroastrian Youth Congress? If you mean abiding by our ancient Zoroastrian precepts of Veracity, Integrity, Fidelity, Charity, Amity, Unity - The Very Spirit of Zoroastrianism - why then, yes!

If you mean, yet another as old as the Rockies, the Alps or the Himalayas kind of Congress – well then, no! The 4th WZYC2007 is not going to be exactly aping what the previous three WZYCs in America, Europe and Asia have done. They mean to be different and want to make sure a difference is made in the lives of all who choose to join in.

They are not going to be a mini-LA, a mimic of London or a maxi-Poona! They aim to be their own joyful, bright, lively and innovative Aussie personalities – different in devise, yet large-hearted as all outdoors; happy as Larry, yet honest as their summer day is long – as good as the gold they plan to go for all the way, yet as jolly as the gentle jumbuck, with whose wool is used to weave kustis worldwide!

The office bearers are: Shiraz J Mistry – Chairman : Delara C Misry – Vice Chair : Shirin J Mistry – Hon Secretary : Khushtrou N Patel – Financial Controller

Visit their website to keep updated: <http://www.4wzyc.org/>

Zubin Wadia informs about their website <http://www.parsiresourcegroup.org/forms.html> where registration forms for volunteers/job seekers/youth/mobeds etc are available. If you need any clarification contact him on gen_nex_parsis@yahoo.co.in

Aryan Culture Anniversary Conference and celebrations will be held this September at Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Please contact Dilshod Azimov for further information at zandguy@yahoo.com

To get up to date news about Parsi Zoroastrians read regularly Parsi World by going to www.parsiworld.com

Call for nominations to recognize excellence in Zarathushti Business, Entrepreneurship and Professions.

In order that excellence in business and profession is encouraged and recognised, the WZCC annually recognises individuals in three categories:

- ✓ Outstanding Zarathushti Entrepreneur
- ✓ Outstanding Zarathushti Professional
- ✓ Outstanding Young Zarathushti Entrepreneur/Professional

At this time, nominations are invited and all nominations received shall be judged by a panel of three judges. The selected candidates will be honoured at the upcoming Annual General Meeting of the WZCC in December 2006.

Nomination forms are available on the WZCC website www.wzcc.net or requested from Filli Madon, Director, WZCC-Australia pars09@yahoo.com



Corrigendum

With reference to the article appearing in *Hamazor* Issue 4/05, pp 22-25, *Zoroastrians in Pakistan's Armed Forces*, Colonel Fali Talati's sister, Mehru, who lives in England, took umbrage with Brig Rustom Darrah and myself, as we did "not make any attempt to reach his family" in finding a photograph of her late brother in uniform.

Now that we have the appropriate photograph, sent by Ms Talati, we make amends. - Editor



Update on Bactrian Camels

Article written by Sam Kerr in *Hamazor* Issue 1/06, pp 49-50 on the above subject, has found further information from the Internet.

"There are an estimated 900 wild Bactrian camels that survive in the world today. Located in China and Mongolia, these remnant herds are critically endangered due to ever-increasing threats from wolf-predation, hunting, illegal mining and cross-breeding with domestic camels. The Wild Camel Protection Foundation, WCPF, a UK registered charitable foundation, was established in 1997 in an attempt to do something about this dire situation. Working with both the governments of China and Mongolia, the WCPF has aided in establishing nature reserves and captive-breeding ...

There are some Bactrian, among the one-humped camels roaming in the Arizona Desert. They are remnants of eighty camels shipped from the Middle East to the US to form a desert Army Camel Corps. But the idea was abandoned. It is illegal to hunt a camel in Arizona." ■■■

Books & “all that Jazz”

Enduring Legacy : Parsis of the 20th century

Review by Sarosh Bana, for Business India and shared with Hamazor

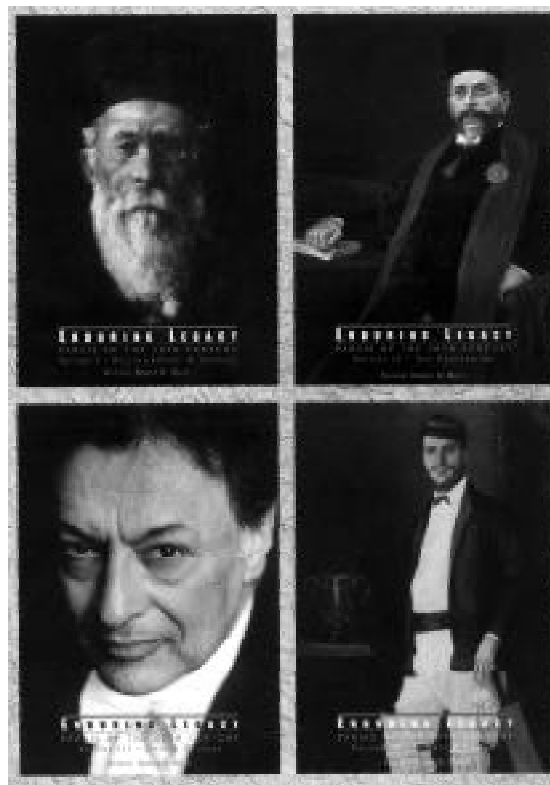
Since their arrival in India a millennium ago to flee the Muslim invasion of Iran, the Parsis have seldom exceeded a 100,000 in number. But despite their inconsequential minority among the multitudes of India, they have played a disproportionately prodigious role in almost all spheres of nation-building, entrepreneurship, industry, finance, politics, services, law and judiciary, medicine, philanthropy, arts and sport.

None other than Mahatma Gandhi had been moved enough to attest to this when he commented, “In numbers, Parsis are beneath contempt, but in contribution, beyond compare.”

Perhaps, the 1,168 pages of the four volumes of *Enduring Legacy: Parsis of the 20th century* are yet inadequate to chronicle the distinctive achievements of this enterprising community. But this seminal publication has 66 specialists, essayists and historians exploring some of the more illustrious of these stalwarts and the influence they wielded in their chosen vocations. Edited by the Parsi academician, Dr Nawaz B Mody, the work records the familiar wealth-creation and charities of the Tatas, Godrejs, Wadias, Jeejeebhoyas, Petits, Camas and Pallonjis. And who hasn't heard of India's first Field Marshal, Sam Manekshaw, who had led India to victory in just 14 days in 1971 against Pakistan? Besides it was India's great scientist and Nobel laureate, Dr C V Raman, who eulogised Dr Homi Bhabha – the acknowledged ‘father of India's nuclear programme’ – as “the modern equivalent of Leonardo da Vinci”.

Enduring Legacy, however, also details the less known accomplishments of other doyens, embellishing the writings with the Parsi brand of humour, insightful anecdotes, historical references, and commentaries on their personal life and on the influence these individuals wielded in their respective fields.

Few are perhaps aware that the first prime minister of Bombay Province (in 1937) was a Parsi – Sir Dhanjishah Bomanji Cooper – and its first public health and excise minister, also a Parsi, Dr Manchershah Dhunjibhoy Gilder, had introduced prohibition when his community is known for its fondness for the tippie. Besides, eminent criminal lawyer Dinshah Davar, who in 1906 became the first Parsi to be appointed as permanent judge of the Bombay High Court, had defended Bal Gangadhar Tilak in 1897. But presiding over Tilak's second trial in 1908, he earned the wrath of many



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nawazmody@hotmail.com
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when he convicted the legendary freedom fighter and sentenced him to six years' imprisonment. Then there was the popular surgeon-playwright, Dr Jehangir Ratanshah Wadia, whose hilarious parodies in the Parsis' borrowed Gujarati language were performed by him and fellow Parsi doctors and the tradition continued for decades after his death in 1957, all the gate receipts going towards Parsi medical charities.

Appropriately enough, the entire work is dedicated "to those members of the Parsi community who have enriched the lives of so many." While Volume I speaks of Parsis in trade and industry, Volume II discusses their role in the various professions, including medicine, law, administration, philanthropy, sciences, economics, education, journalism, police and armed forces. Volume III reflects on their contributions to the visual and performing arts, and the last Volume considers their achievements in sports. Meant to serve, in the words of the publishers, as a significant international tool of reference and record, *Enduring Legacy* is illustrated with a wealth of visual material from archives, family albums and private collections.

The publication, writes Mody, currently the Sir Pherozeshah Mehta professor of civics and politics, was an arduous and yet a fulfilling enterprise. The inspiration was, in fact, provided in 1999 by former Maharashtra governor P C Alexander, who, while releasing Mody's earlier book, *The Parsis in Western India: 1818 to 1920*, expressed the need for a comprehensive study on the contributions made by the community to India in the 20th century. A Fulbright alumnus from Cornell and former departmental head of Civics and Politics at the Bombay University, Mody notes that the volumes highlight the extent to which the Parsis identified with building a new post independent India, strong and self-reliant in every field.

Today, there are around 69,000 Parsis left in India. But going by their death rate, it is feared that by 2020, when India will have achieved the dubious distinction of being

the most populated country on earth with 1.2 billion people, Parsis will have reduced in numbers to just 23,000 or 0.0002 percent of the population. They will then cease to be recognised as a community, but rather a 'tribe' as with any ethnic group below the 30,000 count.

Hence, the release of *Enduring Legacy* - at the hands of eminent Parsi industrialist Ratan Tata at a function held in Mumbai (13 February) – comes at an opportune time, this fulsome tribute drawing on the legendary exploits of a community that now confronts a questionable future. ■■■■



Sarosh Bana is the Founder President of the Youth Wing of WZO, India, in 1997. Though he studied Bio-Dynamic Agriculture in Germany and Switzerland, he took to journalism. Starting his career with the "Indian Express" in Bombay in 1980, he was executive editor of the "Blitz Newsweekly", before joining the nationally circulated "Business India" fortnightly as Deputy Editor. He specializes in defence and security, infrastructure, politics and foreign affairs, and the environment. Under his stewardship, the Youth Wing has been pursuing

Project Udvada that is oriented towards the social and cultural rejuvenation of this pilgrim resort in south Gujarat.

"The Space Between Us"

*d*olly Dastoor says on ZWIN : "Thrity Umrigar's new book, *The Space Between Us* published by HarperCollins makes very interesting reading and a must for all indophiles, nay parsiphiles, living in the diaspora. Set in Bombay, it is a tale of two women, Bhima, an illiterate servant and Sera, an aristocratic Parsi widow, the two from very different backgrounds but whose life paths cross because of their gender and their shared life experiences. Most of us can relate to this, being brought up in Bombay with female domestic help all around us.



Dolly Dastoor, Editor in Chief, FEZANA Journal

The Space Between Us



But did we ever stop to think what was the life story behind, Mary or Tulsi or merely the generic name of “ganga” or “ayah”?

Thrity, a journalist of 17 years, goes beyond this, she shows how the lives of the rich and the poor are intrinsically connected yet vastly removed from each other and vividly captures how the bonds of womanhood are pitted against the divisions of class and culture.

Visit her website www.umrigar.com and read the excellent reviews from New York Times, The Economist, Washington Post, The Montreal Gazette, Financial Times, The Calcutta Telegraph.

A highly recommended book, makes excellent easy reading for all.

Boman Desai at Houston

*m*anashni of Zoroastrian Association of Houston said in its newsletter ...

“The author Boman Desai’s visit to Houston was the long-awaited Library event for April. He read from his book *Trio* before an eager audience of ZAH members. Interspersed with his readings from three different passages in the book, Boman gave a fascinating commentary on the lives of three main characters in *Trio* – the famous and talented composers Brahms and Schumann and the latter’s wife Clara, who was a much-acclaimed pianist in her own right. We were all impressed by the passion and commitment that Boman Desai brought to his research and writings that was apparent in the question and answer session that followed as well as in private conversations

with Boman Desai in the social afterwards.



Authors, Bapsi Sidhwa & Boman Desai

Earlier in the day, a book reading open to the public had been arranged for him at the River Oaks bookstore, as well as a half-hour interview on Saturday’s Open Forum radio program. Boman Desai has published

five books with varying settings and themes.”

Acclaimed writer Bapsi Sidhwa, is quoted in the India Herald, USA as saying: “Boman Desai is one of our most adept and prolific novelists. I doubt he’ll ever suffer from that dread thing called writer’s block. Confront him with a blank page – or a blank monitor – and he will turn it into a whopping 400 page novel.”

Born and raised in Mumbai, Desai has lived most of his adult life in Chicago and undertaken a variety of jobs to support his writing, ranging from bartending to auditing and teaching.

Desai’s other novels are *The Memory of Elephants*; *Asylum, USA*; *A Woman Madly in Love* and his latest available already in the sub continent, *Servant master mistress*, is highly recommended.

“Water” at Toronto

Michelle Mama reports

*b*apsi Sidhwa definitely had the hometown advantage when she touched

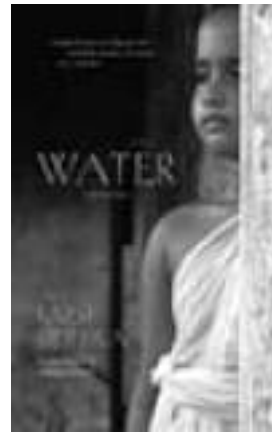
down in Toronto on April 4th to read from her new novel *Water*, based on the critically acclaimed film of the same name by Deepa Mehta. Toronto-based director Mehta was in attendance, along with her daughter Devyani Saltzman recent author her own book called *Shooting Water* about her experience on the set of the film.

The reading was held at Nicholas Hoare, a charming downtown bookstore, on cozy couches in front of a fireplace. An assortment of loyal fans were in attendance, including some local Parsis, and the stunning actress Lisa Ray, who plays the reluctant prostitute-widow Kalyani in the film.

Set in 1938, amidst the backdrop of colonial India, *Water* follows a young child widow named Chuyia as she is abandoned in an ashram, and casts light on the fates of these “untouchables”, and the treatment of them as they are cast out of society, and left to fend for themselves.

Attendees were treated to a lively reading by the ever-spry Sidhwa, followed by a generous and enlightening Q & A, and finally an autograph session. Sidhwa's book tour continues through Canada and the US this Spring and Summer.

Michelle Mama has been in the arts from tender age, producing a play with her first theatre company when she was 16. She studied Cinema Studies and English Literature at the University of Toronto, and currently works freelance through her company, meemama productions, as a producer of film and television and a magazine writer in Toronto, Canada. Email: m.mama@sympatico.ca



“Water” at Houston

Report from Ellen Goldberg



L to R: Noshir Sidhwa, Aban Rustomji having her books signed and Bapsi Sidhwa

*f*ive years of heartbreak caused by burned movie sets and death threats were replaced by love and admiration at Worldfest/Houston International Film Festival. On April 28, 2006, more than 400 moviegoers attended the screening of *Water*, the last of Deepa Mehta's trilogy.

Hunter Todd, Founder and Chairman for the annual event now in its 39th year, presented Deepa with a Lifetime Achievement Remi Award. She spoke of the hardships in making the controversial film—originally scheduled to be shot in India but moved to Sri Lanka due to safety concerns. The audience gave Deepa a standing ovation for her accomplishments.

On hand to help celebrate was Houston's Bapsi Sidhwa, collaborator on two of the projects. Their partnership began when the Canadian writer/director phoned, saying she wanted to use Bapsi's novel *Cracking India* as the basis for *Earth*. It was released in 1998. The Partition of India, seen through the eyes of Lenny, a young Parsi girl, was highly acclaimed as both a book and a film.

The sequence for *Water* was reversed. Deepa had first written the screenplay and directed the film, then called Bapsi to novelise it.



Deepa & Bapsi

"I had never done anything like that before and wasn't sure how to go about it. I usually write at a leisurely pace, but Deepa wanted the book written in just three months!"

At first Bapsi was hesitant to undertake the task, but after seeing the rough cut almost twenty times, she began to visualize what to do. Instead of extending the script, she wrote the book as a prologue.

The story concerns widows in India during the late 1930s when Mahatma Gandhi was coming to power. There were three choices for women whose husbands died: *Sati*—throwing themselves on their husband's funeral pyre —, marrying their brother-in-law, or spending the rest of their lives in a widow's ashram.

The main character, Chuyia, lives a life of innocence until her marriage at six to a forty-four year old man. She's allowed to stay with her parents until she comes of age, but two years after their wedding, the man whom she barely remembers, becomes ill and dies.

She accompanies her mother-in-law and father to the river where they take the body, then the bewildered but defiant child is deposited in the ashram, her new home. Her head is shaved, she's dressed in tight white clothing and she's abandoned to live among the other widows—many of them old and feeble.

Unlike Lenny in *Cracking India/Earth* who appears in almost every scene, Chuyia is a catalyst for the other women, including a beautiful young widow, portrayed by the actress Lisa Ray. Bapsi said this allowed her to explain the traditions, develop the characters more fully and give voice to the women who are silent on the screen.

"Having so little time was exhilarating. I wrote whole sentences in my sleep. The novel gave me an opportunity to explain the widows' backgrounds, motivation and what was in their minds. And I was given four months, not three, to finish the book."

At a reading for Houston's Asia Society, Bapsi explained that widows are considered jinxes. Of more than 34,000 of them in India today, some live uncloistered lives, and there are fewer child brides. Many of them, however, choose to live in an ashram to escape derision of people who think their karma is the reason for their husband's death.


Water, a novel, published by Milkweed, is being released simultaneously with the film which is well-acted and directed, has amazing cinematography and music by A R Rahman. It will be distributed by Fox Searchlight and will open in India in July.

Another book has been released, as well. It's very special, because the author is Deepa's daughter, Devyani Saltzman. Called *Shooting Water: A Memoir of Second Chances, Family and Filmmaking*, it relates the problems involved in getting the film made.

The next collaboration between the Canadian and Houstonian is Bapsi's earlier novel about Parsis, *The Crow Eaters*. Deepa is looking forward to doing the comedy after the stress of her more serious films. They've set the standard high, so we know this next project will be a huge success.



Ellen Goldberg is an entrepreneur and freelance photojournalist living in Texas. She is involved in international projects and serves as President of Sister Cities of Houston, the umbrella organization for sixteen associations partnered with municipalities around the world. In addition, she is the lyricist for Indian singer Sonu Nigam's first English language CD, *Spirit Unfolding*.

 another book review on page 70

“Zoroastrians Today”

From the information sent by Tenaz Dubash

*t*he film *Zoroastrians Today* has finally been completed as of May 2006, with filming in Chicago, Vancouver, New York, and Mumbai over the last four years.

She plans to find a sales agent who will get the film into festivals/markets, which will hopefully get the film a TV broadcast, which will then get the film an educational distributor and then finally one can have screenings for the Zoroastrian community and distribute individual DVDs.

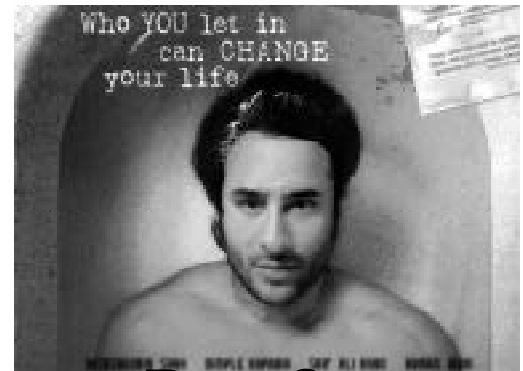
Since the goal is to inform the world about our rich history and heritage (not inform ourselves), they are taking this marketing and distribution plan very seriously. What they hope to do is to let the community know if the film will be playing at a film-festival in one of the major cities such as LA, Boston, Houston, Toronto, NYC, Chicago, DC, etc., enabling individuals to go. Tenaz is having a press screening in NYC in early June, and you can view the introduction to the film on www.tenazdubash.com

Clips from *In the Footsteps of our Forefathers* were recently shown at the United Nations and has been asked to show once again at a “Women in Religion” conference at the UN in October 2006.

Get Over It!

Tanaz Behrana comments

i did not join the heated debate via the email network about the bronze statue of Zarathushtra even though I felt the case was blown out of proportion because sentiments about your prophet can run deep and I did not want to hurt people’s feelings. However, this issue of the movie *Being Cyrus* has made me realize that once you give an inch to zealots, it is just a matter of time till they want a yard.



Being Cyrus

To give a background for people who are not familiar with Hindi cinema, *Being Cyrus* is a murder-mystery in which the central characters are Parsis. They are depicted as living in dirty homes, having affairs and plotting to kill their spouses. Some zealous Parsis have written an open letter to Homi Adajania, the screenplay writer and director, denouncing him for showing Parsis in a poor light. (The letter appears below). The letter asks, “Where is the need to show the man boring in his nose, or cooks climbing into frying pans in their sadra-lenghas? Do such things actually happen? And even if they do, the average Parsi may not know about it, let alone the non-Parsis.” This is hypocritical and racist. Parsis would happily watch a movie with Hindu or Christian families being depicted in the same manner and it would be considered fine. Idiosyncrasies exist in all of us, and Parsis are only human, so what makes us so different from the other races? Parsis have affairs, con people and yes, they even pick their noses in public. So get over it!

We call ourselves a “literate” community but that is seriously questionable because “literate” does not necessarily mean “educated” in the true sense. Where is the tolerance? Where are our

priorities? There are more important things to worry about than worrying about our “past glory” and showing Parsis only as illustrious and sophisticated people who attend charity events and win awards for science and sports. The reality is that there are thousands of Parsis in India who live in miserable conditions. They do not have adequate health care, live in crowded, unhygienic conditions and some even beg on the streets. People who are upset about the way Parsis are depicted in movies like *Being Cyrus* and *Such a Long Journey* should take a good, long look at their surroundings and do something concrete about raising the living standards of these families rather than complain that Parsis were shown in an unflattering way in some movie that everyone knows is fiction.

An open letter to Homi Adajania

Dear Homi,
So now you are a celebrity, and that too at the expense of our Parsi community. How very nice, for you!

Most people in India don't have a clue as to who we Parsis are. Your film may be their first, and possibly their last, association with anything Parsi. Now thousands will be leaving the cinema halls all over India, thinking, “What a weird bunch of people!” or, “My daughter's never going to marry a Parsi, if I can help it”, and so on.

I wonder why such films are made in the first place? What is the message supposed to be? Indeed, is there a message? Could the message be “Crime Pays”? And is that the message from a community, which has always prided itself on its integrity and uprightness. What are we trying to prove here after all? If anything, the film only succeeds in giving a very one-sided and, in my opinion, an entirely wrong impression of the Parsi community, which is extremely civilised, highly educated, cultured and sophisticated. At least that's how I know my community, having been there for the past 55 years.

Where is the need to show the man boring in his nose, or cooks climbing into frying pans in their sadra-lenghas? Do such things actually happen? And even if they do, the average Parsi may not know about it, let alone the non-Parsis. Why then

make it public, as if it's something that's happening every day?

Another view: By and large, Parsi women are an illustrious lot; most of them are very hard working, and have excellent careers. But even if they aren't working to earn a living, they keep themselves busy at home with all kinds of creative and useful activities, or else they are involved in social work. The Panchgani wife in your film does nothing of the sort, she is slovenly and even has a dirty house! How very unlike a true-blue Parsi woman. Now you tell me, what does anyone gain from degrading one's own community, showing it in a bad light? That is all I ask.

Artistically the film was very good, even the acting of the stars was commendable. That is to be expected, these days the competition is too great for you to make a shoddy film. But the subject was most inappropriate and handled badly. Of course people will like it. Non Parsis will most certainly have something to laugh about. It will reconfirm their view of the oddball Parsi, which has been cultivated by earlier Bollywood films. The damage has been done, there's no turning back. The only thing that's left to redeem the situation is to make another film about Parsis, in which they are shown as they really are: decent and honest and very, very clean. We will probably have to find a non-Parsi, to do that. Maybe Ashok Salian. (Aban Bana)

“Deliverance”

Shayan Italia says “I am the artist/songwriter for the forthcoming album ‘Deliverance’ releasing online 23 July 2006 in over 25 countries. I also happen to be the first Zoroastrian to ever release a mainstream music album on international waters since Freddie Mercury did over 25 years ago.

“To sample the album in full please visit www.shayanitalia.com - do see the music video for ‘Reflection’ as well. The recent 5-page ‘Hi-Blitz’ article which may prove useful reading, the link is: [http://www.shayanitalia.com/website/press/Hi Blitz 2.pdf](http://www.shayanitalia.com/website/press/Hi%20Blitz%20.pdf). Finally, do check out www.myspace.com/

shayanitalia, which I'm told by 'MySpace' is one of the fastest online growing profiles ever, acquiring 15,000 online fans in just 10 weeks pre-release.

"Now that my distribution network is setup I would like to ask if any of you can help get me out there, through magazines/publications and online websites that are circulated amongst the Zoroastrians worldwide. I do very much believe this project is going to go global in no time at all and wish for my fellow Zoroastrians to have the 'first piece', as they say. Your help on the above would be most appreciated."

Shayan sang at the World Congress, London last summer and was a hit. Contact him on shayan.italia@gmail.com

“Strictly Dance Fever”

Jennifer Mistri is competing once again this year in BBC1 Dance Show, *Strictly Dance Fever*, with her dance partner Mark, both being 18 years and the youngest couple. Jennifer's dancing talent enabled her to succeed in becoming a finalist from 80,000 applicants.

Nextbighit.com

Farita Khambatta has been featured again on Nextbighit.com and hopes to win once again. She is a great singer who you will be seeing in action during the 4th WZYC2007 in Australia.

Farobag Cooper conducts for fundraising

Farobag Cooper with the Chicago Philharmonia performed at the Chicago Cultural Center on 5 May to raise funds for the devastating earthquake which took place in Northern Pakistan, last October. The programme had Albert Wang, violinist, performing Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons", followed by Borodin's Nocturne and Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 composed by Bach. Farobag says "there are at least two others, (concerts) in Milwaukee as well as in Chicago."

Thus Spake -----

"It is disgusting to make a nude sculpture of any prophet in the name of art. I am sure our zarathushtee bretheren in Australia and across the world are already in action to stop this grave insult to our beloved Zarathushtra."

Another said, "The statue is neither a likeness (nor should it be) of the Great, all knowing Prophet but to depict Him nude is both disgusting to our sentiments and offensive."

"It would be sufficient to say you were inspired by his teaching but giving the sculpture his name is both disrespectful and blasphemous" said yet another.

March 26 all hell broke loose, with emails flying across the continents, to community members to protest, and of course to Peter Schipperheyn. Some protests were polite, others offensive. Peter who just about knew Zoroastrians existed, had a rude awakening

just prior to the unveiling of his sculpture, on 1 April, called "Thus Spake Zarathushtra", a four metre high figure in bronze, commissioned by the Dame Elizabeth Murdoch Sculpture Fund for the McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park, Langwarrin, Melbourne.

On 28 March, Peter Schipperheyn sent a message to the global Zoroastrian community explaining his reasoning why he had selected this name.

"...As an artist I have swum against the tide of Modernism and of Secularism. The ancient world has exerted a power over my imagination; these understanding came to me in good part via the sculpture of Ancient Greece who as an aside portrayed their Gods nude, and this sculptural language set for me a precedent. Even though I have called my sculpture a name, and that you have taken this as an intention by me to depict the Prophet Zarathustra, my sculpture is not an attempt to portray an individual, indeed my sculpture is not a depiction of the Prophet Zarathustra.

"It is rather my attempt to portray the essential drama of what it means to be human, of the struggle between good and evil, of light and dark, these are issues common to all peoples and of course there is a long a history, hence my reason for naming the sculpture as I have.

"In conclusion I apologize for the upset that I have inadvertently caused, however I am concerned that my intentions are being misconstrued and misread, this greatly concerns me. I have not worked so hard for so many years to simply upset people. I feel that I have a responsibility to the world and the beauty of creation to do good, to inspire, to live a purposeful life. ...



From the McClelland Gallery's website

"The Gallery ... has asked me to erase the name, I have agreed to this but I am saddened that this must be done. In my eyes the sculpture remains, but "he" will be stripped of something powerful that I think empowers the viewer, especially the western viewer. I have been so wound up in my own thoughts and excitement about the significance of what I am trying to do that I did not countenance that my artwork would stir up the opposite of what I hoped for. ..."



From the artist's website

“*Thus Spake Zarathushtra* _____”

Shirin J. Mistry writes for Hamazor

“My soul is tired” - Peter Schipperheyn

*i*t was yet another beautiful Melbourne autumn evening. Cool, clear and peaceful - a slight breeze blowing from the ocean just a few miles away! A perfect day for an unveiling of a work of art – a true gift to the world of art!

We, my family and I, had been invited to the unveiling of the largest bronze sculpture ever to have been commissioned and created in Australia - a magnificent masterpiece to the eternal glory of the sculptor's skill! Why me? Why ever not, me? Perhaps some recent history of the Zoroastrians in Australia might help solve that one. I happened to be Johnny-on-the-spot - I guess gratitude for the handling of the situation was appreciated and I landed up delightedly making a friend forever not only for myself but for all good Zoroastrians worldwide! As always, I did what I believe was the “right” thing to do and don't need to ask for anyone's permission to do it!

I realise that the Indian newspapers have already told the world of how gracefully the Zoroastrians (the Parsis of India) managed to handle a crisis that they perceived as having beset their religious sentiments in the knowledge, that shortly a colossal bronze statue initially entitled “Zarathustra” and then “Thus Spake Zarathustra”, by the eminent Australian sculptor, Peter Schipperheyn was to be unveiled by Dame Elizabeth Murdoch AC, DBE, at the McClelland Gallery & Sculpture Park at Langwarrin, a suburb of Melbourne, Australia.

“When Zarathustra was thirty years old he left his home and the lake of his home and went into the mountains” - THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA, Friedrich Nietzsche.

To replace a Balzac by Rodin, which was on loan to the Gallery, this splendid statue was commissioned to be permanently placed on an island in the lake there - so what else, could the sculptor name it but after the first lines of his original inspiration? This masterpiece shattered our peace and finally his own! Why were we all not elated with this sort of supreme recognition? Why did we not have the sense to be appreciative and even to applaud those involved? Why did we jump as if struck by a red-hot poker between the eyes? Why was Peter's ecstasy a cause of our agony and within moments his own as well, once the Zoroastrian world woke up to it?

Here was the world of culture, of art and sculpture, about to discover that not only was a monumental statue being named after an almost unheard of Persian of antiquity, but that he also happens to be the beloved Prophet of an equally unknown mini-minor-micro minority with the voluble voice and the nous to have it heard! Reeling in astonishment, even shock, from the verbal calls and the written words of entreaty bombarding Peter and, everybody else thought to be involved - sometimes interspersed with rather unfortunate loss of dignified approach aroused by ignorance of relevant knowledge, an enlightened world community got what it desired - with more poise than their demands warranted! We had no legal leg to stand on – and we still don't! Our true gratitude goes to Peter for the grace and graciousness of his giving in to those whom he never meant to insult by naming his finest work after their beloved Prophet! It was more than three years in the making and a twenty year old dream come true – but it took us less than a few moments to take away from it the adulation for the towering figure of Asho Zarathushtra in the History of World Religions, that had brought about its naming! Is the loss ours?

It would be like having to rename one's child to suit some strangers instead of being allowed to make one's own personal choice for one's own special creation! I am sure in Peter's mind it will ever remain what he had named it - but a most grateful Zoroastrian community will remember the magnanimity of his decision and the humility with which he had conceded to it! I admire not just his art but the valour shown to rename it to keep from hurting people he didn't even realise still existed, leave alone had ever met! I thank God for the honour not only to be invited to the unveiling but more for being allowed to literally extend my hand in friendship to a kindred soul! That he has grasped it without the slightest rancour speaks volumes! I'm proud to call him my friend – **our friend!**

Peter says, this is *"my attempt to portray the essential drama of what it means to be human"*; **the Eternal Struggle** between the forces of Good and evil – the difference between Light and darkness – Asha versus druj – they are all there – in the clenched fist in the open palm, the head thrown back in an agony of indecision, the arched back as if the struggle with spiritual choice were causing him physical pain - and Zoroastrianism's explanations of existence itself, is expressed via the medium of a unique artist's true talents as 'expressions of an extraordinary sensitivity for the human form' and display 'the grandeur and vision that aspire to the greatest European traditions' – but alas, we are Ancient Persians – who found it inappropriate to name a nude sculpture after our beloved Prophet! We failed to understand Peter's interpretations and fiercely defended our own – he was happy to embrace the best of the past and we claimed it as our very future! We felt insulted, we were appalled and some were even grossly out of line in expressing their angst! We took umbrage at what was being proffered in adulation! We failed to understand each other! 'What a man doesn't understand, he does not have!'

"The ancient world has exerted a power over my imagination; I feel he is also the young 'Zarathustra' who from an ancient

*land stands before time before all of creation, **he stands powerful and yet vulnerable**, in this beautiful mystery that we experience as life"* says Peter and continues, *"However the sheer poetry of this beautiful sounding name totally obsessed me, in my heart a mystique was enveloping the sculpture I was to make. In my opinion **the west needs a prophetic voice, needs a Zarathustra.**"* Peter was giving the world the best within himself – no one can do more - and we failed miserably to accept that! To us it was a misnamed nude, to him, the very essence of Zoroastrianism, from start to finish!

It is not the name that empowers the viewer - it's the fine art that created it! Peter's sculpture will speak for itself and does not need to guide the viewer via its name! "Thus Spake _____" will grace Australia for many years to come and ever remain a superb credit to the inner excellence of its creator, Peter the truly Good man – an Ashavan - and not just to the visible superiority of Peter Schipperheyn, the extraordinary sculptor – Australia's answer to an Italian called Angelo!

If ever a man's best intentions were misunderstood, we stand guilty of it! He had immediately asked for our pardon and we willingly gave it at once – for no offence should be taken where none was ever intended! Such strength of character as Peter displayed by rescinding its very name to please the religious sentiments of a microscopic community needs not just our exculpation but also our undying appreciation! As some of my co-religionists have asked for it, his forgiveness of us will be complete when he sculpts a real Zarathushtra, in bronze or marble, outshining the one that had his beloved name gouged out from it. We are not into idol worship and we do not consider Asho Zarathushtra as our God and so nobody will come to view this one with the intention of worshipping it, for Zarathushtra is revered but never worshipped. Even in the Zoroastrian scriptures, nowhere does the prophet desire that he be worshipped! So

we will come only to admire that God given talent of Peter's that is used to lead a life of Righteousness. *"I feel that I have a responsibility to the world and the beauty of creation to do good, to inspire, to live a purposeful life."*

Even as I salute you, Peter, I share your sadness and understand that shattering of your soul but the strength of the human spirit will transcend all these hurts, for your Manashni was always true and that will never fail you!

Happiness to him, who makes others happy!

[Shirin Mistry, was responsible for writing politely and wisely to Peter to refrain from using the title of "Zarathushtra" for his monumental sculpture for the sake of saving our community further angst - Ed]



of Ballarat, Victoria.

Shirin J Mistry is a Founding Member of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria, Australia and became the first female president in its fifth year. She has served on several ZAV committees, including the latest Constitutional Sub-committee. Shirin has been teaching at the Sunday School since its inception, seven years ago, and is presently the Honorary Secretary to the 4th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress, 2007, University

Date of Inundation of Islamic Regime' Sivand Dam

on 30th May 2006, the Cais Archaeological & Cultural News announced:

The final meeting on the inundation of Sivand Dam will be held on the last week of Spring 2006 with the presence of representatives from the Islamic Regime's Ministry of Energy and Iran, Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO) on behalf of the Iranian nation. ...

It is certain that inundation of the Sivand Dam will drown major parts of Bolaghi Valley and 147 of its historical sites including a section of the Achaemenid Imperial Road; however considering the distance between this dam and the mausoleum of Cyrus the Great in Pasargadae, flooding of the dam though will not submerge the Cyrus's mausoleum, but the humidity created by it will gradually destroy this revered ancient monument.

Sivand Dam is constructed by the Islamic Regime on the Sivand River in Bolaghi Valley historical site which is located 9 kilometres from the world heritage site of Pasargadae in Fars province. Following the news of the inundation of Sivand Dam by the Islamic regime, shocking news was spread around the world which raised concerns among the Iranian nation as well as the International

community of the cultural heritage enthusiasts that Pasargadae is in serious danger of being destroyed.

However, since Bolaghi Valley will submerge with all 147 historical sites once the dam is flooded, experts started their archaeological excavations there under a comprehensive salvation project in which archaeologists from all around the world take part. The project has led to some invaluable discoveries so far such as unearthing of the remains of the palace of Darius the Great, a village belonging to the Achaemenid dynastic era, and large numbers of ancient artifacts. Due to the pressure from within and outside the country, flooding of the dam is postponed until archaeologists announce that their excavations in Bolaghi Valley are finished.

The choice of location for contracting a dam by the Islamic regime, so close to Pasargadae, or construction of chemical factories in the vicinity of Bistun in Kermanshah as well as Naqsh-e Rostam in the Fars province, where the wind blows the poison gases and steams directly to the graves of the Darius the Great and Xerxes, has not been unintentional. ... (refer to *Hamazor* Issue 4/05, pp30 – 34)

Ardeshar Kotwal

by marzban j giara

Khansahab Ardeshar Dhanjisha Kotwal Bahadur, Parsi Chief of Police, Surat and the first President of Surat Parsi Panchayat. A tribute on his 150th death anniversary

Ardeshar Bahadur was born on 29th June 1796 who was the youngest son of Seth Dhanjishah Burjorji Behremankhan of Surat. After his father was killed in Bodhan in 1810 AD, Mr Crowe, Collector of Surat, employed him and his brother Pirojshaw as a clerk in the Court. In 1820, he was made the Kotwal of the suburbs of Surat and a year later appointed Kotwal of Surat City. His various attributes were: Warden General of Surat under the East India Company, Chief of Police and a magistrate of great renown, organised the citizens so as to fight off the depredations of Bhil dacoits and instituted the system of night watchmen known as *dandyas*. He held a court every morning to hear complaints and acted as arbitrator in several cases.

J R B Jeejeebhoy, noted historian and scholar in his introduction to Dr Ratan Marshall's book *Ardeshar Kotwal* (1946) wrote: "What Baron Haussman was to Paris, what Joseph Chamberlain was to Birmingham, what Pherozeshah Mehta was to Bombay, so Ardeshar Kotwal was to Surat. He fought against every obstacle that would have terrified a less enterprising

man to reclaim the city of his birth to law and order and improve the amenities of the place and at last succeeded in his mission. The lapse of years brings out in brighter lustre his devotion to duty, tact,

courage and the loftiness of his character. He won for himself a fame which has placed his name into the history of Gujarat. If ever there was a man to whom Surat and its suburbs owe a great debt of gratitude and who was unanimously enveloped by the enthusiastic love of the people that man was Ardeshar Kotwal."

Ardeshar was 6.5 ft tall and well built. He had a towering personality and keen intellect. His forehead was high and vast, eyes small and sharp, pointed nose, receding lower lip. He was very fair and his qualities showed up. He was himself a strong and skilled man. He excelled in all feats of strength and agility. He travelled about in a palanquin with 12 bearers, having 17 palanquins for his use. Some had a secret hole through which he could

see for some distance. He patrolled the streets at night and had 500 plain clothesmen who in disguise monitored the peace.

He was the first organiser of Surat Parsi Panchayat with the help of the first Sir



Marzban Jamshedji Giara is the author, publisher and distributor of books on Zoroastrian religion and Parsi history. He has authored the first-ever illustrated "Global Directory of Zoroastrian Fire Temples", "The Zoroastrian Pilgrim's Guide", "Parsi Statues" and a dozen other books. His father ingrained in him the idea, 'Son, be a creator and not a spectator in life. We must give back to society more than what we have received from it.'

Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy and was its first President from 1841 to 1856. He gave away Rs50 lakhs (Rs 5 million) in charity to help those rendered destitute by calamities.

During the vast floods of 1822 in Surat, he made great efforts for six days and nights and rescued thousands of people from drowning. On 9th October 1822, on the orders of the Government of Bombay, Judge Romer, held a *darbar* and presented him with a gift of dress and a decorated horse.

In 1825 he was appointed "Native Agent" of the Governor of Bombay for smaller states of Surat District. During his tenure as Kotwal, there was fear of incidents of tribal Bhils, dacoits and thieves which was completely relieved by his capability, smartness and courage. For his invaluable services the English Agent at Surat held a *darbar* on behalf of the Government on 18th January 1826 and presented him with a purse and a palanquin. On that occasion, a letter signed by 800 leading residents of Surat was received by the English Agent, expressing their satisfaction and joy on the honour conferred by the Government on their brave Kotwal for appreciating his services. In 1828 when the prince of Delhi, Mohammed Bahadurshah II visited Surat, he presented robes of a commander and a sword to Ardeshir. On the occasion of Sir John Malcolm, Governor of Bombay visit to Surat in 1829, on 22nd December, he held a public and grand *darbar* and presented him with a valuable robe of honour and title of "Bahadur" as well as a horse with a golden felt saddle, four villages yielding annual revenue of Rs3,000 which were Choryasi Taluka (Bhestan and Soneri), and Chikhli Taluka (Cambada and Boriach) and other property. On 14th December 1830, Mr James Sutherland, Judicial Commissioner of Surat on the orders of Governor, Sir John Malcolm, held a public *darbar* and presented him a gold medal. The gold medal was inscribed on either side in English and Gujarati :

"This medal is presented to Ardeshar Dhunjisha Bahadur, Kotwal of Surat, in token of the high sense entertained by the Bombay Government of the diligence and fidelity with which he has performed his public duties both as an officer of police and in other capacities. First January 1830."

The Mayor of Surat presented him a scroll of honour on behalf of the people on that occasion. From 1st July 1832 he was made the Native Principal Commissioner of Surat. During the tragic fire of 1837 in Surat, he rendered invaluable help to those who lost their belongings. In September 1838, the first ever library "Surat Native Library and Reading Room" adjacent to Dutch Bunder was founded under his leadership. In 1843, upon the death of his brother, Pirojshah Dhanjishah, he was given the post of Principal Sadar Amin of Surat. In 1844, Mr R D Loward, a newly appointed judge at Surat accused him of playing an undesirable role in a dispute involving succession to huge wealth and suspended him from his post on 14th February. The Government appointed Mr Remington, Assistant Resident of Baroda to investigate the case. He examined in detail and on 30th November 1844, absolved him of the accusation. Thereafter, on 28th June 1845, by order of the Government, Mr Andrews, Judge of Surat held a *darbar* and ceremoniously reinstalled him in his post. He was on that occasion presented a congratulatory scroll signed by thousands of residents. In October 1846, he quit his post and accepted his pension. In recognition of his valuable services of 35 years, on 12th February 1849, Mr Andrews, Judge of Surat, held a *darbar* in the Court building, and in an eulogizing speech, thanked him on behalf of the Government. Thereafter, he led a life of solitude.

Many special ballads have been composed and sung with pride in his honour.

He passed away at the age of 60 on Roz 23 Daepdin Mah 5 Amardad, 1225 Yezdezardi, 15th February 1856.



Source:

Parsee Prakash Vol I p.699
Ahevale Ardeshir
Kotwal Bahadur
by Dhunbai
Bamanji Wadia
1930
Ardeshar Kotwal
by Dr Ratan
Marshall 1946 and
1997

WZO Trust Funds, Navsari

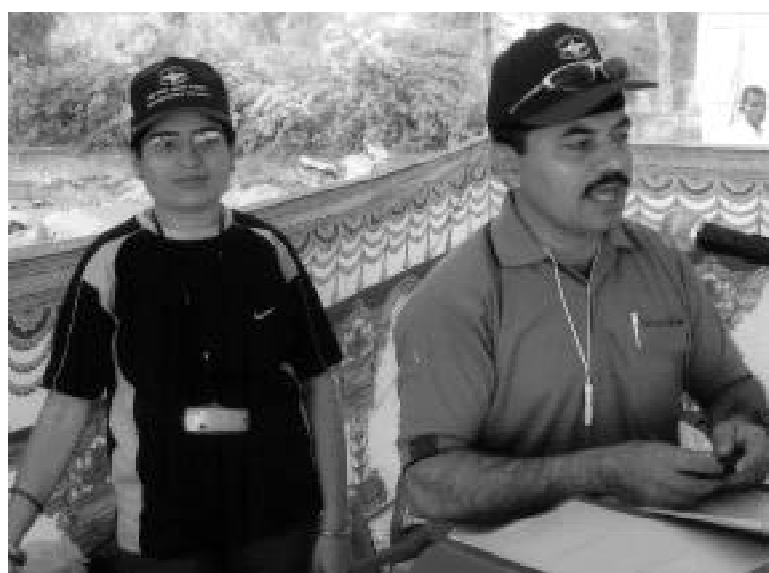


Winners with Pauruchisti Kadodwala & Trustee Dinshaw Tamboly



Winners with Pauruchisti Kadodwala & Bachi Tamboly

1st Athletic Meet 19th & 20th Nov 2005



Principal organisers - Pauruchisti Kadodwala & Bomy Jagirdar



Bachi Tamboly with the very young winners

venue - Luncikui Playground Navsari
organized by - The D K Tata High School & Sir Jamsetjee
Jejeebhoy Primary School : Gujarati medium



Winners with Vada Dastur Meherjirana

Susa withstood Alexander's invasion

On 9 April the Cais Archaeological & Cultural News announced:

*E*xcavations at Susa (Shush) indicate that Alexander, the Macedonian warlord could not seize the Apadana Throne when he invaded Iran.

Head of the excavation team, Mir Abedin Kaboli, told ISNA that the western historians' version about the seizure of Susa by Alexander should be corrected, because archaeological evidence indicates that Iranians did not surrender Susa to Alexander.

"The good condition of Apadana Palace, which was unearthed during recent excavations in Susa, indicated that Alexander could not get hold of the throne. The glory of the throne has prevailed and even tile decorations are untouched," he said.

He said part of the city's gate was destroyed during Alexander's invasion.

Kaboli noted that 160 artillery stone shells and 400 arrows were discovered from the area.

"The number of shells and arrows launched by Macedonian army indicates the brave manner in which the people withstood the invasion. And the safety of Apadana proves that Alexander could not seize Susa and only destroyed the city's gate," he said.

Kaboli said that during 11 phases of excavations at the western front of Apadana Palace since 1982, archaeologists have uncovered 380 meters of the western front where the gate, stairways and several towers have been unearthed.

(courtesy Mehrborzin Soroushian)



Kurush (Cyrus) the Great

Maneck Bhujwala gives a summary of the talk given by Cyrus Kar

*O*n Sunday, October 16, 2005, my wife and I attended a captivating and informative presentation by a young Iranian Zoroastrian film producer, Cyrus Kar, who is a US citizen and navy veteran. Mr Kar was doing research and filming a documentary on Kurush (Cyrus) the Great in various countries like Iran and Iraq, when he was detained for almost two months in Iraq but finally released and is now back in California, where he was interviewed on two consecutive days by Ted Koppel on ABC-TV's Nightline programme.

The event was organized at Balch auditorium, Scripps College, Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, California, by the Council of Zoroastrian Studies that is sponsoring Zoroastrian studies at that university.

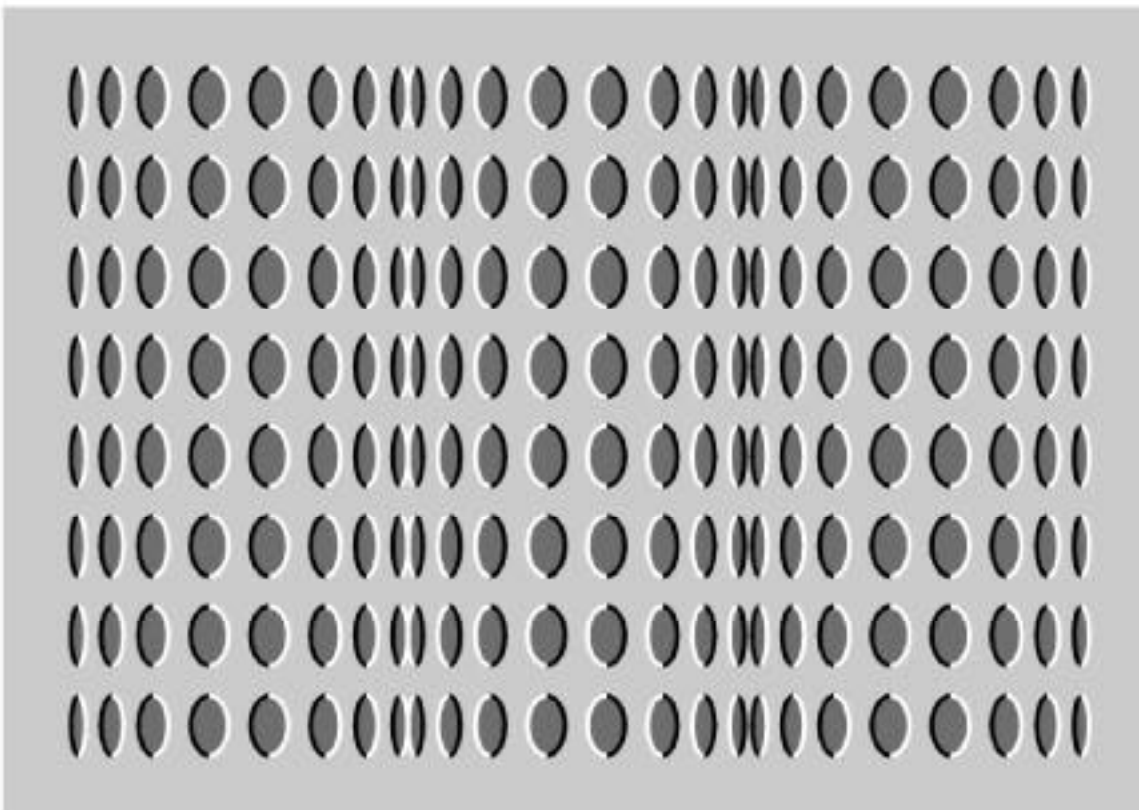
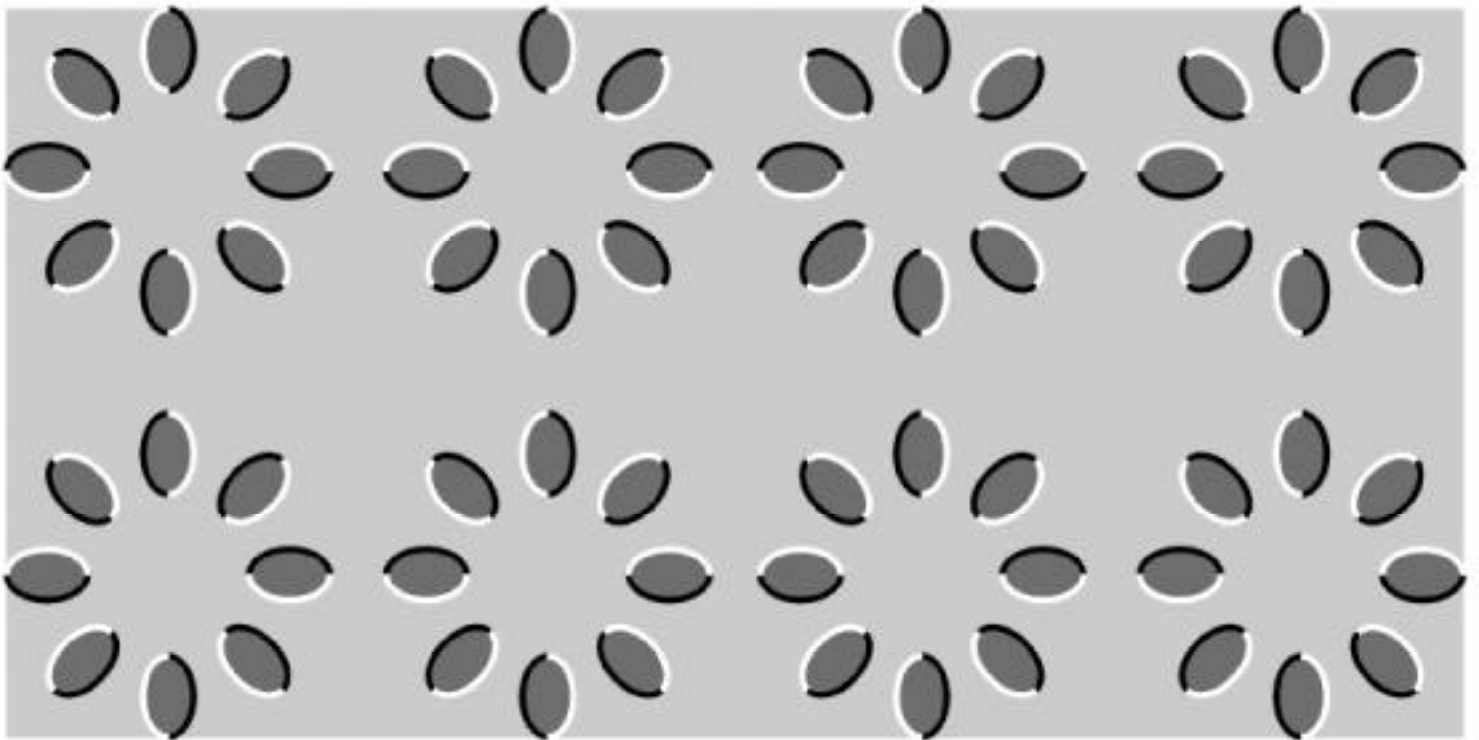
Following is a summary of notes I took at that event, with some personal observations and information I received after the event (in parentheses).

Summary of event

The event started with pictures of historical sites in Iran, some Persian music and songs, and a brief invocation in Avesta by a priest from the Zoroastrian Center of California. Then Cyrus introduced himself and using pictures of sites in Iran, discussed the many misconceptions about ancient Iran and world history that are prevalent especially in Western countries and history books, and the general lack of knowledge about our ancient history even among Zoroastrians and other Iranians.

For example, it is wrongly accepted that democracy was introduced by the Greeks. The fact is that Hamadan in Iran was probably the first place where democracy was practiced. A meeting of all tribesmen

Test yourself for stress



Are these items moving, or are they perfectly still?

One teacher said, "I felt like they were all moving ... but slowly. Kind of like, they were breathing."

These pictures are used to test the level of stress a person can handle. The slower the pictures move, the better your ability of handling stress. Alleged criminals that were tested to see them spinning around madly; however, senior citizens and kids see them standing still.

(courtesy Shahriar Shahriari)

(similar to a Senate meeting) was held in the province of Mada (Media).

Greek historians like Herodotus have used wildly exaggerated numbers for Persian armies that fought against Greek armies whose numbers were minimized. Scholars have confirmed that it would have been logistically impossible to move huge armies over long distances especially like Persia to Greece.

(After the event, I also read in the *Encyclopedia of Military History from 3500 BC to the present* by R Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N Dupuy, in which the authors point out the exaggeration of numbers of Persian soldiers by Greek historians. For example, "...Cyrus invaded Lydia and (early 546) approached Sardis with a large army (but certainly no more than one-quarter of the 200,000 men reported in Xenophon's *Cyropedia*)..." and in describing one of Darius the Great's expeditions against the Greeks and Scythians, the Encyclopedia authors state "...[the total strength was probably one-tenth the 700,000 attributed by Herodotus...]").

The origin of the word Caucasian used commonly for Europeans, comes from the Caucasus mountainous region (which lies between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea with Mt Elburz as its highest point). The Caspian Sea was considered in ancient times to be the center of the Aryan world. People migrated from that area to Europe, Iran and India. Today, Iran and Ireland are the only countries named as Land of the Aryans. The Nazi Germans misused the Aryan symbol of the swastika which is associated with good luck or well-being (from the Sanskrit word *swati*) to make it a symbol of the Nazis and their concepts of racial superiority. Some Greek historians used to call the Persians as barbarians, but unlike Greeks and others, the Persians did not own slaves. The lowest caste in the Persian society was made up of peasants. This is one of the reasons besides magnanimity towards the conquered people that helped maintain peace and even loyalty of mercenary soldiers in the Persian empire.

Like Hindus and Buddhists, Zoroastrianism is an enlightenment based religion.

Saraosha represents enlightenment. Ahura Mazda is Lord of Wisdom. Each deity of the ancient Persians was connected to some element in nature, such as the Sun (Mithra), waters (Anahita), etc. This is why Persians were particular about maintaining purity of the environment. Persians were tolerant of other religions. Women with characteristics of Amazon women inhabited the northern Caspian regions. There was a lot in common between pre-Islamic Iranians and Europeans - handshakes, chivalry, honour, respectful treatment of women, etc. Today, unfortunately, Iran is the opposite of what Iranian society stood for in ancient times. For example, a taxi driver in Iran said that he would not loan money to an Iranian, although he would loan money to Zoroastrians (who still uphold the good values of ancient Iran).

According to Greek historian Herodotus, Persian emperor, Cyrus (Kurush) once said "I would not fear people who cheat themselves" referring to the haggling in the markets of Greek lands. Today, people in Iran who do not haggle or cheat are considered simple-minded (Baboo). Today, Iran has pollution of the environment. Tange Bolaghi, near the plain of Pasargadae, which will be under water next year when the new dam is operative, was the site of Kurush (Cyrus) the Great's victory over the Medes in the province of Anshan. The fire in the temple in Yazd, is considered the oldest continuously burning sacred fire, that was taken with them by the Zoroastrian priests when Alexander came. Due to the death penalty, Iranians cannot go back to their old religion in Iran. Ancient cultures are being lost, but the youth of Iran express a longing for knowledge about their past. How many people know the name of Kurush (Cyrus) the Great's wife? What is the relation between Kurush (Cyrus) and Dariush (Darius)? One of the methods for preserving the knowledge of our ancient culture is through making documentary films which can be used to educate our own people and also the people of the world.

Scope of Documentary Film Project

Although Cyrus Kar has completed the filming work, and has spent about \$100,000 of his own money on the project, much post-production work remains to be done before the documentary movie can be ready and released. (That is, editing, sound, music score, and most expensively, animation.

Animation is to recreate one of Cyrus' battles still taught in US Military Academies today. Its called the Battle Thymbra or Thymbara and it was between Croesus, King of Lydia and Cyrus of Persia. To win this battle, Cyrus' military strategy was so ingenious that it is still the subject of college curricula. We want to recreate this battle through animation which costs about \$40,000. The total we need to raise is about \$100,000.)

Donation

Fellow Iranians (including Parsis) and friends of Iranian people who wish to preserve the giant status of Kurush (Cyrus) the Great in world history, and learn and educate others, can help raise the needed amount, by making their tax-deductible donation check to:

Filmmakers Alliance, (whose Tax ID is 95-444-9125, and whose directors are Jacques Thelemaque and Diane Gaudry) and mailed to: Cyrus Kar, P.O. Box 292303, Los Angeles, California, 90029, USA.

Mr Bhujwala's contact is:
maneck_bhujwala@mindspring.com



"Don't let the fear of the time it will take to accomplish something stand in the way of your doing it. The time will pass anyway; we might just as well put that passing time to the best possible use." Earl Nightingale

Ontario Zoroastrians Rejoice, Celebrate, and thank Ahura Mazda

Report from Nilufer Mama

Zoroastrian Society of Ontario – Building Capital Campaign

On April 8, 2006 our "Dream" came true! There was a magical quality about the evening at Grand Baccus Banquet Hall as 650 Zoroastrians and their friends, joined hands and gave generously from their heart.

The Dream Ball was a spectacular success and amidst an enjoyable evening, the fundraising ship came to shore after three years of sailing. Generous donors responded spontaneously to Dr Noria's call for cash donations and within a few minutes a total of CD\$238,000 raised! The crowd was jubilant with that announcement and celebration was in the air when Zoroastrians realized their dream would soon be a reality. Toronto Mayor David Miller was the Chief Guest. *"What an astonishing room!"* Miller said, overawed by the participation of not only the Zoroastrian community but also non-Zoroastrians. *"I have been to many fund raisers in my life but I have never seen one like this one. There's incredible enthusiasm here. Congratulations. I think the enthusiasm in the end comes as a result of leadership and I think it comes from the leadership of Dr Dhun Noria."*

In an interview with *India Abroad*, Mayor Miller called the Zoroastrian community *"a very vibrant community. It is a community that is justly proud of its accomplishments. They have leading doctors, leading business people, people who contribute to the betterment of Toronto. I am so impressed as to raise over CD\$2million for a relatively small community and so quickly is a tremendous achievement."*

Other distinguished guests included Mr Satish Mehta, Consul-General of India, Mr David Barrow, Acting Mayor of Richmond



Diamond Sponsors - Dr Dhun Noria, Mr Farokh Noria & Dr Sabrena Noria, with Mayor of Toronto, David Miller

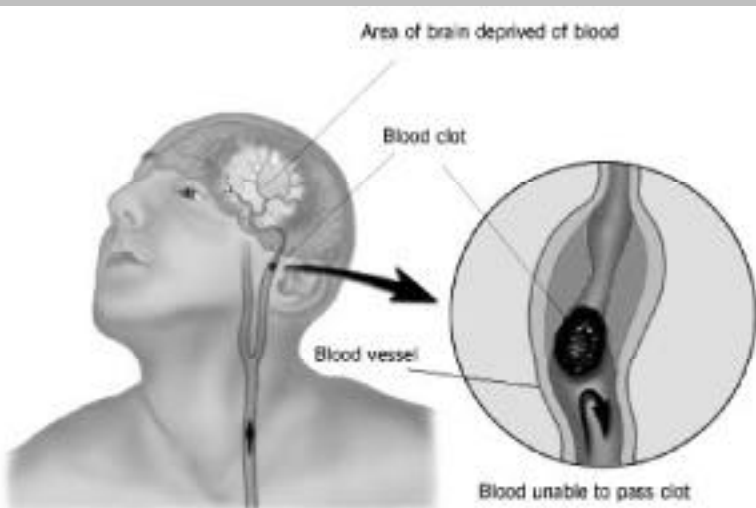
Hill and Regional Councillor of York Region; Chief Armand La-Barge, Chief of Police, York Region; Mr Mario Rocco, MPP Thornhill & Parliamentary Secretary to Ministry of Labour & City of Vaughan; Rohinton Mistry, famous Zoroastrian author and Dr Robert Bell, CEO of the University Health Network

The evening's entertainment included Marilyn Monroe and Lucille Ball whose performance brought excitement and laughter. Amanda and Mark, the young ballroom dancers thrilled the audience with their performance.

Mr Sam Vesuna, President of ZSO has formally requested Dr Dhun Noria to continue as Chair of the BCC and raise additional amounts to cover the inflation costs. After consulting with her event leaders, the committee unanimously and enthusiastically agreed to continue working towards this noble cause of Ontario Zoroastrians. As Chair of the BCC, Dhun Noria has built a "web of connections" that link people who give, people who serve and the organisation in need. All donors and volunteers are central players and the heart of this web.



Nilufer Mama lives in Toronto and is the President of Trade Wind Associates, a successful travel company. She is Vice-Chair for ZSO's Building Capital Campaign. She is actively involved in Toronto's business community and serves on the Board of several organizations. In 2000, Nilufer was selected as Business Woman of the Year under the auspices of the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce. She assists new Zoroastrian immigrants settle in Canada, is an avid reader and enjoys creative computer work.



Prompt identification of a stroke

Remember the first three letters S T R

Doctors say a bystander can recognise a stroke by asking three simple questions.

- S Ask the person to Smile
- T Ask the person to Talk – a simple sentence coherently
- R Ask the person to Raise both arms

Another sign of a stroke is : Ask the person to stick out their tongue. If it goes to one side or the other, that is another indication.

If any of the above cannot be accomplished, call 911 immediately and describe the symptoms. (Courtesy : Feroza Saran on ZWIN)

Dancing Feat

by dilshad patel

- an achievement of a youth



i was 19, depressed, and out of work - it was the summer of 1998. A concerned friend persuaded me to join a recreational Indo-Jazz dance class by the Shiamak Davar Institute for the Performing Arts (SDIPA) – India's foremost dance institute.

At the end of that summer, each group performed at the "Summer Funk" – the grand finale to SDIPA's summer workshop. There were 5000 students in all, performing at this event, 60 of whom would be short-listed for an audition to become a part of the SDIPA. To my amazement, I was chosen as one of the 60 dancers!

The 60 dancers were then trimmed to a final 12, and then 3. In the final audition, I made it!

That's when the real challenge began. There I was, five feet tall and about 20 pounds overweight, struggling to make it in India's finest professional dance company. I strongly believe I made it because Shiamak saw that I had a quiet determination in me. All he told me was "Dilshad, you think you are fat and ugly? You ARE! Don't cry, go DO something about it!"

Training sessions, rigorous practice, and no food to fuel my body (I was trying to diet), made me want to quit. I was regretting having been chosen. Then came the time to pack our bags and leave for New Delhi as we were performing at the Sansui Movie Awards with India's famous Bollywood movie stars in front of a 30,000 member audience. Even while standing in the last line, I felt like a star. After the performance, there was no turning back. I knew this is what I wanted to do for as long as I could.



1.



2.



3.

dancing feat project

Dancing Feat, a partnership between the Shiamak Daver's Institute for The Performing Arts (SDIPA), and the Corporate and Committed Communities Development Trust (CCDT), an NGO, it reaches out to 1500 children between the ages of 6-18 years at risk to HIV/AIDS across Mumbai, through nine other NGO partners. These children are at high risk of exposure to HIV/AIDS because of their impoverished backgrounds. They usually are either children of women in prostitution, or have been forced into sex work themselves at their tender ages.

The distinct feature of the project is its child friendly approach. Dancing Feat has adopted a unique strategy which combines dance as a medium of expression, with group counseling, and life skills education. Case studies of children have shown that project activities have enabled them to develop greater self-awareness and skills to cope with difficult life situations.

my involvement

I was also elected one of the instructors for the "Dancing Feat" project. While teaching dance to children with HIV, prostitute victims, orphans, juvenile delinquents I learned about the various challenges and rewards of aiding these youth with special needs. After some thought and research, I decided that becoming a Certified DanceTherapist would give me a training and education I needed to better assist these youth. Having seen a smile on every child's face and being able to spread happiness in their stressful lives gave me a huge sense of satisfaction. Having an instinctive mode of teaching wasn't enough. I believe if I had the education, I could be even more effective at helping children with special needs.

In order to enroll into a dance therapy programme the basic qualification required was a bachelor's degree. So I took a two year break from work to complete my

education. Getting back to studying was not an easy task. But I stayed focused and completed my education. After I completed my degree I headed to the US and began applying to various colleges that offered programmes in dance/movement therapy. My most recent work has included teaching fitness and movement therapy at the Happy Home blind school, to children ages 3-6. I am also a full-time personal fitness trainer. I have conducted workshops for BPO companys, such as WNS, Infosys Bangalore, the Chandigarh police force, the University of Houston, Texas (Voluntary workshop for inner city youth). I have travelled and performed for various stage shows nationally and internationally with the Shiamak Daver Dance Company. I have also taught kids and adults at various centres in Mumbai, Bangalore, Chandigarh, Delhi, Hyderabad and Toronto, Canada.

My goal is to practice counseling and therapy and carve a niche for myself as a leading dance/movement therapist. I look forward to working with various populations such as the police, juvenile delinquents, mentally and physically challenged individuals, oncology patients and almost anybody that requires therapy.

When I look back at my life, I am grateful for being given an opportunity to work with Shiamak's company. I learnt how to survive using dance as a medium. Experience has made me rich, and I want to share the power that dance gave me with people that need help.



An alert for all ladies

Some lipsticks contain lead, which causes cancer. Lipsticks which are reputed to stay on longer contain the most amount of lead. To test this for yourself, put some lipstick on your hand, rub it with a gold ring. If the colour changes to black you know the lipstick contains lead. Dioxin Carcinogens causes cancer, especially breast cancer.

(information circulated at Walter Reed Army Medical Center)

Captions for
photographs on
previous page :

1. A 100 children from the slum areas took part in the project "Come dance with me".
2. Cops dance to eliminate stress.
3. Slum children at Shaimuk's dance class at Chandigarh.

“Really? You’re joking” : Perceptions of spousal abuse

by farishta m dinshaw

In 1988, the Canadian government launched the Family Violence Initiative, a long-term federal commitment to a societal problem that has myriad social, justice, and health dimensions. I work under the umbrella of the federal Multiculturalism Program to promote public awareness of the risk factors of family violence (intimate partner violence, child abuse, and neglect and abuse of older adults) in ethnocultural and immigrant communities, specifically those that are not conversant in English or French. Like many other people, my work spills over into my non-office hours, and I find myself talking about issues I deal with at work with friends, many of whom are Parsi-Zoroastrians from Pakistan. To my self-confessed naivete, one point that consistently surprises me is their belief that the family abuse happens in “other” communities or that it occurs in Parsi families because of exigent factors such as mental illness or alcoholic rage. I am not sure whether this is a genuine belief in the power of education and affluent status as a protective shield, or whether it is merely an ostrich-like assertion. The fact remains that abuse and violence cut across all intersections of ability, age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. Parsis, despite delusions of ascendancy, are no exception.

Abuse is a pattern of behavior used to establish and maintain control over a family member. The behaviour may include violent acts, intimidation and threats, emotional blackmail and verbal taunts, and withholding of access to finances, in order to control the other person. Abuse may not always leave visible bruises or broken bones, but it always leaves emotional scars that bystanders may miss. The issue gets more complicated if you bring in four related criteria in understanding what is and what is not abuse:

☞ **Motivation** - is it abuse if the abuser means to “discipline” rather than harm?

☞ **Chronicity** - is it abuse if the husband only resorts to aggression when he “loses control” because he is drunk?

☞ **Injury** - is name calling abuse?

☞ **Perspective** - is it abuse if the survivor does not perceive it as abuse?

The issue of definition should not be taken lightly because if people do not perceive a behaviour as abusive, they may not seek help from family members or other more formal services. They may even believe that such behaviour is acceptable because it is the norm. In order to find out how Parsis viewed some behaviour patterns that are acknowledged by the family violence service sector as indicators of control and power imbalances, I asked 22 Parsis attending a *navjote* on 9 July 2004 in Toronto for their opinion. For the purpose of this informal survey, I restricted the issue to “spousal abuse”. I had a list of 15 actions and asked whether the action was abusive, not abusive or depended on the situation. I personally knew 21 of those I spoke to, while one respondent was a friend of a friend. I spoke to only one member per family, and most of the surveys were done one-on-one although some were conducted with others listening in. Of the 22 people I spoke to, 12 were women and 10 were men. The age ranges of the respondents were from one person under 18 years; three between 26-40 years; five over sixty years and the largest number (13) between 40-60. This is not a surprising statistic considering most of them were people I “hang out” with and were, therefore, close to my age. Educational backgrounds ranged from six respondents with high school education or less; 10 with Bachelor’s degrees; and five with graduate level or equivalent degrees. Again, the correlation between age and educational background was not surprising - those with less than high school education

included an elementary school student and four seniors.

I had chosen behaviours that corresponded to the major indicators of power and control issues, such as:

- ✓ Asserting superiority, such as “teasing” about hair loss or weight gain.
- ✓ Controlling behaviour, such as wanting details about personal conversations with family and friends, constantly calling on the cell phone to ask, “Where are you?” or dollar-by-dollar accounting of money spent. This kind of behaviour includes “helping” make decisions about clothes to wear or what to order at a restaurant.
- ✓ Intrusive behaviour, such as secretly going through partner’s wallet/purse, or secretly checking partner’s email.
- ✓ Isolation which includes cutting partner off from friends and family, and insisting on socializing only with “couple’s” friends.
- ✓ Threats of violence such as threatening to destroy a favourite possession.
- ✓ Physical violence or coercion such as hitting or breaking or striking objects during arguments.

One of the challenges of conducting a survey is that many respondents may, consciously or subconsciously, give answers that they think the researcher wants to hear. As a filter to see if people were objectively analyzing their responses, I inserted two behaviours that are not overtly negative - praising the partner to colleagues and friends, and washing dishes. An overwhelming majority (20 and 21 respondents respectively) considered these as non-abusive actions. Those who felt

these actions could be construed as abusive under certain circumstances gave reasons that brought out the complexity of the issue. One respondent felt that praising the partner in front of family and friends may be just an act. Another said that washing dishes could be considered controlling behaviour if the partner had already washed them.

Some of the findings of the survey hinged on degree to determine if people felt the behaviour was abusive. Not surprisingly, all 22 respondents said that hitting was abusive behaviour, but many people did not perceive breaking things during an argument as violent (12 Negatives, 7 Affirmatives and 3 Depends). Respondents were widely split on the other actions, and, in fact, the next-ranked behaviour that was considered abusive [*constantly calling on the cell phone to ask, “Where are you?”*] was deemed so by only 12 people, demonstrating that overt violence is recognised as abuse but emotional or psychological control often remains unacknowledged. Interestingly, less than half the group thought similar controlling actions, such as asking for detailed accounts or discouraging partners from wearing certain clothes, as abusive (10 and 8 respectively). One of the reasons for this may be social acceptance of traditional gender roles in which finances are a male domain. This is borne out by the fact that of the 10

people who thought asking for an account of every dollar spent was abusive, seven were women.

Intrusive behaviour, such as secretly checking partner’s emails or going through partner’s wallets or purses, was another issue which had more or less evenly divided responses in all three categories - Yes, No and Depends. There may be two aspects to this finding. One, the respondents may not have given weight to the qualifying adjective

“Space Between Us” (William Morrow, 2005), the new novel by Thrity Umrigar, tells the story about Sera, a Parsi woman whose ordinary day-to-day life in an upper-middle class household in Bombay hides the shame and disappointment of her abusive marriage. The novel has been described as “poignant and compelling, evocative and unforgettable”. Thrity Umrigar teaches creative writing at Case Western Reserve University and lives in Cleveland, Ohio. For more about Thrity Umrigar’s work, visit www.umrigar.com. Brief review on page 33 of this issue.



Farishta Dinshaw has teaching in her genes. Currently she works as a Community Development Worker, Family Violence Initiative, supporting 11 ethno-cultural agencies in Toronto to raise awareness about violence against women, children & elders. She has presented papers on various topics relevant to the Zoroastrian religion and community at three international congresses. Farishta is also the author of the insightful story of a fictional boy befriended by Zarathushtra called “Discovering Ashavan”.

“secretly” before replying thus not associating mistrust issues with this action. Another reason may be that these actions are considered intrusive according to Western norms which endorse individual identities even within partnerships, and may not apply to other cultures which see the husband and wife as a unit. This may also be the underlying reason why wanting to socialize only with “couple’s” friends may be seen as isolating and repressive according to Western norms, but acceptable as social practice in other “we” societies. This underlines larger systemic issue of Euro-centric norms dictating policy, legislation and provision of services without regard for other world views, and pathologising violence in some communities as a cultural, phenomenon resulting from oppressive patriarchal, intergenerational, and religious beliefs.

Current academic debate on this issue aside, it will certainly not impair Parsis to re-evaluate their practices, values and norms against a higher standard of behaviour. Respect is a component of a healthy relationship between husbands and wives and perhaps it is time to come up with new parameters of respectful behaviour. For instance, 17 people said that they did not consider teasing a partner about gaining weight or loss of hair as abusive. In fact, one person who was listening to the questions (but did not participate) said, “Really? You’re joking”. Although we can choose to dismiss this with, “Come on, now you’re getting carried away”, which was another response, we know from countless studies on the correlation between body image and self-esteem that remarks about weight gain or hair loss, even affectionate teasing ones from a partner that one knows loves them, affects the way people feel about themselves. Constant teasing, especially in front of others, may make them feel unattractive, and one would imagine that people want their spouses to find them appealing. It is not such a great leap of logic, therefore, to see that words that have the power to hurt someone can be considered abusive. *Hukhta*, after all, is more than the middle word in the holy trio of good thoughts, good words and good deeds. ■■■

School for the handicapped needs a boost

by mehernosh p shroff

S P J Sadhana School needs your help in building a brighter and happier tomorrow for developmentally handicapped Parsi Zoroastrians.

*m*y earliest memory, going back in time, is that of age three. I remember gong out in the evenings with my sisters, cousins, mother, and grand-dad, Jamjetji. The ‘outings’ as we considered them, were frequent trips to the Banaji Atashbehrām. And they do say that ‘the family that prays together, stays together’. *Mamavaji*, after his prayers, would hand out coins to each of his grand children, to be dropped into each of the many boxes that were kept on the ready to receive whatever metal or paper that came their way through their slots.

Prayer time being over, we children would then hover around grandpa’s wheelchair in eager anticipation of the inevitable Cadbury chocolate that never failed to delight us.

Piety, generosity and charity were the continuous lessons that we thus learnt commencing at a very young age. My father Pirojsha further exemplified these traits as I recall, by distributing vitamin tablets and Durabolin injections (for general health and muscle strength) that his company manufactured, to those whom he felt would derive benefit from these. My father did not give up this practice even when he lost most of his funds after the 1969 crash of the stock market, when we were no longer counted amongst ‘the rich’. I remember him telling me at one of those father-to-son talks that the hallmark of Parsi character would ever be the pursuit of truth, charity and selflessness.

Having grown into parenthood, and wanting to pass on the simple pleasures of life and good living on to my progeny, I found myself

Mehernosh P H Shroff is the father of a wonderful talented child Nicole who is his greatest friend and buddy. He comes from the Mani Wadia family of Bombay who are still active in shipbuilding, marine manning, sale of ship spares. He is a Chief Engineer and fellow of the institute of Marine Engineers; Founder and CEO of Sea Worthy, Growmor and MRM Mumbai Marine Manning companies. He is also the founder of Ahimsa warships and Ecosense movement, and has built the world's first teak wood houseboat at sea, M L Darya Mahal Sea King.

in great remorse when I discovered that our daughter was an autistic individual, though since age two she had been on board wooden dhows with me. This article aims to bring to light the transformation that has come over my daughter and the other students of the little known S P J Sadhana School for the mentally handicapped, housed in the Sophia College campus at Breach Candy in south Mumbai.

This institution has cured, or at least healed, 40 to 50 Parsi Zoroastrians and about 50 other children who were autistic, hyperactive or mentally challenged. The turnaround they have achieved is unbelievable! A *renaissance* is perceived to have occurred; they are now able to exhibit their talents and have become achievers.

A visit to their school reveals that the children of the junior classes eagerly shake your hand and/or give you a hug, and even make you think, "I am in heaven with these little angels who give me such unconditional love", which is in stark contrast to the uncaring competitive world that we are forced to live in, outside the walls of this school.

The seniors appear self-confident as their caretakers constantly exploit their talents; few would realize that these self-assured and polite youngsters, at one stage of their lives, could not speak coherently, talk sense, or even walk.

The S J P Sadhana School has indeed given them wings!

Who is responsible for this magnificent transformation? Every time I visit the School, I am amazed at the service put in by Sister Gaitonde, the Principal, Radhika Khanna, Rajshri, the swimming teacher and the class teachers. Helpers like Lila *behn*, and the other volunteers too have no small role to play on this stage, for in the earlier years, the children are very difficult to handle. The

hard work and sacrifices of the benefactors have enabled these special children to win prizes in swimming, arts and crafts, etc, even on all-India basis.

The hell that the workers go through has been very aptly reflected in the film 'Black', directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, starring Rani Mukherji and Ayesha Kapoor, wherein Amitabh Bhacchan has taken on the role of a dedicated teacher. And anyone interested in seeing several such Amitabhs off the screen are invited to come with me to witness 'real life' at S P J Sadhana.

A glaring shortcoming at Sadhana is the financial resource. The school functions with six teachers short of their minimal needs, and even those that do work here, do not get the market price for such teachers. The very repair of toilets is kept in abeyance because of funds shortage. Deflation in interest rates have not helped matters, and now we learn that their corpus, which is being eaten away by everyday bills and huge expenses for their day-to-day activities, needs a boost of 80 million rupees!

Last year there were so many Parsi children that I felt they were the only ones there, but I was amazed to see just 10 of them at present! The parents of most of the children are poor and suffer from a social stigma, and with no help from relatives or the community, can barely pay for their children's necessities of special care at home, and special transport to and from school. Their travel in the regular public transport is quite out of the question as there have been several cases of cruel teasing and molestation.

With no help in sight from even a single Parsi Trust or individual, S P J Sadhana stands in danger of being closed down! So parents have now been asked to appeal for help from worldwide charitable institutions.

In responding to the e-mails I sent out for help, the first person who sent me a cheque, was Ms Aloo Bhatena who reacted



within an hour of receiving my message. Through these pages I thank her, and send an appeal to others of my community in the global village that we live in, for any kind of donation – large or small, to help needy children live the new 'liberated' life that my daughter now enjoys.

Even if she missed out on the childhood pleasures that I enjoyed all those years ago, S P J Sadhana has more than made up for the loss. The transformation in my girl brings to mind Audrey Hepburn of *My Fair Lady*. My daughter is now a talented singer, has won awards for her paintings, and silver and bronze medals in swimming. At age 12, she cooks her own breakfast, albeit a simple one of chips-and-eggs or the likes of it. She has turned into a witty little being even cracking jokes (but never sick ones!). *Filmfare* and *Midday* are her choice reading materials. What she can do with a square piece of textile fabric, is amazing – transforming it into near designer clothing! She has also turned into a wonderful sailor: brave and fearless in storms. She shoots short film clips on video and does remixes. And all this is thanks to the loving and nurturing care of Sadhana.

So far, what she hasn't acquired are social skills – she hates to shake hands or make small talk. She is bluntly honest and hates lies. If at all you have the good fortune of meeting this girl of mine, be prepared to meet a sweet young thing who is proud to be just herself.

Now let us pledge to get together to churn out other equally proud individuals full of self-esteem and self-respect, by putting our generous hands in our pockets.

Make your donations in the name of "S P J Sadhana School" of Mumbai, and check out their web site: www.yougivemewings.org, if you are so inclined.



Dyslexia : A first hand perspective

by sohrab anklesaria

*d*yslexia in general is not a disease but a syndrome classified as a learning disability. For some the left side of the brain is not as strong as the right. People who are creative, observant seeing things from a different perspective, but are terrible in spellings, grammar and storing large amounts of information is a good description of one who is dyslexic. It is quite funny that the complicated term "dyslexia" is used for those who would spell it 'dislecseea'.

But like any disability such as being lame or blind; children and adults who are dyslexic can work not only around it but can work with it as well. People such as Albert Einstein, Issac Newton and many talented and imaginative writers had (and have) it, but as we have seen dyslexia is in no way a set back to brilliance. With appropriate professional intervention, a child could do extremely well in their academics and in life.

Then again, life isn't only based on a text book filled with long explanations and big perplexing words which possess spellings that defy the laws of common sense simply to confuse us. Dyslexia does not limit your abilities; it just makes life harder to achieve some of them. Now many schools have become aware of these learning differences and so are making (if you ask me, meager or paltry) attempts to aid dyslexic children. In "O Level" exams a child is given an extra thirty minutes to finish his/her paper (in my opinion that is just prolonging the torture and there should be an entirely different paper forged to suit their needs).

Alas, sometimes, (more now than in the past) some parents, teachers and others associated academically with a child, are understanding about dyslexia. Many

teachers say a student is slow or retarded because their learning quality or speed is not that of the majority of the pupils. But not to worry, for it is simpler for an ignorant teacher to say you are dumb than for her to see the problem and help you through it. (yes, based on personal experience)

Parents are sometimes ashamed of their child having these differences and choose to conceal it as laziness or lack of attention paid in class. But it should be highlighted that no disability is one to be ashamed of, but shame must be felt in suppressing a child's potentials due to blind and convenient ignorance. It is not the child's fault if he is dyslexic, it is the parent or teacher's fault for being ignorant of the child's needs.

All my life I have dealt with dyslexia. Before anyone knew I had it, I had the pleasure of hearing the most arcane excuses for my poor marks. *"He can't see the blackboard, maybe he needs glasses"*; *"He doesn't have the appropriate study techniques"*; *"Maybe he isn't trying hard enough"*. Teachers in my school who now claim to understand this problem gave my parents these silly remarks and so in the third grade came the saviour; a specialist in dyslexia, Mrs Majabeen Sadik, a teacher who came to our school and helped children like me to manage this minor setback in my learning progress.

All the basics of English language, through flash cards, handwriting and the use of *"the quick brown fox"*, we were made to understand not just learn. It has been about nine years and I still recall the tiring and monotonous – *"O, says /O/ as in octopus"*. Little did I know that this was the start to my gradual and slow training to master this language. I also remember frustrating hours Jabeen aunty would keep me back till I had finished my work, how I would mutter and breathe sighs of utter contempt and impatience. I would be lying if I said *"Ah, good times"*. All through this time I bore the intense humiliation of kids looking inside the class room of the kindergarten section as I toiled with my extra classes. If it weren't for

Jabeen and my mother's tireless attempts to push me forward I wouldn't have had the strength nor the attention span to deal with such a torturous procedure. Constant checking of my essay's corrections, to spellings and sentences, left, right and center, always telling me to put my "lazy" (left) hand: on the paper as I wrote, and to stop staring into space in the middle of a dictation. (come to think of it, some habits never die!)

From the third to the sixth grade this went on and on and on to be quite honest, but finally improvement was seen in my language and literature classes. I was doing well and so this encouraged me to press on in doing better and better; writing longer, more descriptive essays, and being able to analyse the text in English Literature to form satisfactory answers.

And, just last year I received a commendation for the essay I wrote for the Commonwealth Essay Competition – "Write around the World".

So you see, dyslexia doesn't have to be a problem if you don't want it to be and never think any less of yourself if you do, because it's not that you can't see things the 'normal way around', you just do things the way you know best - your way.

As Geoffrey Shepherd said, "the mind manufactures it's own intellectual species".



16-year old Sohrab is studying for his GCE "O levels" at the Karachi Grammar School. He loves the English language, wrote poetry till a couple of years ago whenever he felt he couldn't cope, and enjoys singing. He is now trying his hand in writing lyrics.

Readers may wonder how can a person who is dyslexic write like this? Sohrab is my grandson, and when I requested him to write on the subject so that others who have similar problems may be encouraged, I thought he may refuse. To my utter joy he readily agreed and without any assistance, this is what he has produced. With encouragement, motivation and perseverance, what seems impossible becomes possible. He is a brave young man who has cared enough to share his disability - Ed

Finding light at the end of the Academic Tunnel

by mahjabeen sadik

When smart kids fail in academic settings they usually start to war the label of “dyslexia”. The term brings many negative connotations to parents, teachers and those afflicted with the condition. Being part of the league I can very well relate to all those associated fears but as a specialist in this field I have evolved and think otherwise. After encountering many unique minds with ingenious qualities, I can confidently conclude that the “gifts” of dyslexia are well worth any amount of labour required to teach literacy skills. History is filled with examples of great minds that had to struggle with acquiring language skills, but they have given valuable contributions in the form of inventions. This could only have been the result of their creative approach to problem-solving, since dyslexics encounter enough brick walls that force them to learn how to go around them.

I believe professional support is critical for dyslexic students, so that their scholastic achievements can correspond with their average to above average intelligence. If ignored these students drop out of school, developing frustration, low self-esteem, behaviour problems and some eventually become juvenile delinquents. Their intelligence and often their exceptional abilities are wasted and the society pays the cost of putting up with maladjusted individuals.

Educational therapy provides the link and fills in the gap of learning that the dyslexic learners have missed through the ages. An individualised tailor-made remedial programme to suit the specific learning style of the learner is cardinal. The teaching approach should be multi-sensory pathways [ie. eyes (visual), ears (auditory), muscles (kinesthetic) and feel (tactile)], to reinforce weak memory patterns and to strengthen each other for optimal learning. In addition, the programme needs to be structured, sequential and cumulative as each step is based on prior learning. Since it is concept based teaching, it teaches to intelligence, forming a sound foundation for advanced learning.

Sohrab Anklesaria found himself struggling with language acquisition in his early years of formal education. With early intervention and appropriate use of strategies/techniques, he has undoubtedly proven to be a legitimate learner. His hard work, dedication and motivation have turned his weakness of writing into one of his invaluable assets through which he is ready to absorb the future challenges of academia. Sohrab’s accomplishments make me a proud practitioner.



Mahjabeen Sadik is a M Ed from Cambridge College, Mass, USA and specialises in the use of the Orton-Gillingham therapeutic teaching technique; a Fellow of the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators, USA and an Associate Member of British Dyslexia Assoc, UK. She has been using her expertise since the past 19 years and is the founder and director of the Center for Assessment and Remedial Education (CARE). Her services include Psychoeducational/Educational Assessments, specialised teacher training, tutoring students with learning differences and counseling parents and teachers.

Teachers make every other profession possible

shared by Nina Sethna – a dedicated teacher

The dinner guests were sitting around the table discussing life. A CEO, decided to explain the problem with education. He argued, “What’s a kid going to learn from someone who decided his best option in life was to become a teacher?” He reminded the other dinner guests what they say about teachers: “Those who can, do. Those who can’t, teach.” To stress his point he said to another guest; “You’re a teacher, Susan. Be honest. What do you make?”

Susan replied, “You want to know what I make? I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could. I make a C+ feel like the winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor. I make kids sit through 40 minutes of study hall in absolute silence. I make kids wonder. I make them question. I make them criticise. I make them apologise and mean it. I make them write. I make them read, read, read. I make them show all their work in math and perfect their final drafts in English. I make them understand that if you have the brains, and follow your heart, if someone ever tries to judge you by what you make, you must pay no attention because they just didn’t learn.” Susan paused and then continued. “You want to know what I make? ‘I MAKE A DIFFERENCE.’ What do you make?” (source unknown)

سالها پس از بازگشت دستورجاماسب به ایران، یک فرانسوی بنام "انکوئیل دوپرن" به شهر "سورت" در هندوستان می‌رود و زبان اوستایی را نزد دستور داراب شاگرد برجسته دستورجاماسب می‌آموزد و پس از برگشت به فرانسه برگردان نسکهای اوستایی را به فرانسه راه می‌اندازد. از آن تاریخ آموزش و گسترش زبان اوستایی در اروپا آغاز می‌شود. (سده ۱۸ نرسایی) و کم کم اروپاییها برگردان سنگ نوشته های بیستون و میان دو رود (بین النهرین) را برای ما فراهم می‌کنند.

به زودی در دانشگاه کرمان (باهنر) ساختمانی بپاد دستورجاماسب بنام "پژوهشکده فرهنگ و زبانهای ایرانی" گشایش خواهد یافت. در این پژوهشکده یک کتابخانه ویژه که درجه حرارت و رطوبت ثابت دارد برای نگهداری نسکهای دست‌نویس باستانی برگزار خواهد شد. سرافرازی اینجاست که این پژوهشکده به پیشنهاد و هزینه نویسنده به یاد بود نیای خود برپا می‌شود. دانشجویانی که داری لیسانس باشند می‌توانند برای درجه مافوق لیسانس و دکترا نام نویسی کنند. پارسیان، دستور دانشمند را، بنام جاماسب ولایتی کرمانی می‌شناسند. گویا برای این که نام پدرش بهمن بوده او را در ایران جاماسب و هومنی (نیک اندیش) می‌نامیده‌اند. جاماسب پایه گزار و گسترش دهنده زبانهای اوستایی در اروپا می‌باشد.

شاهرخ وفاداری لندن بهار ۳۷۴۴ باستانی.



Shahrokh Vafadari was born in Kerman, Iran in 1932 into a Zoroastrian priestly family. He received his early education in Kerman and Alborz College, Tehran. Shahrokh is a graduate of the University of London, a chartered engineer with postgraduate studies in business management. He has worked as a petroleum consultant. In 1975 in recognition of his contribution to education he was made a life Freeman of the City of London. Shahrokh is now living in London with his family. He is devoting his time to strengthen the chair established in the University of Kerman in honour of his ancestor Dastoor Jamasb Velayeti.

یکی از پیشوایان دینی زرتشتیان بنام دستور (موبد بزرگ) جاماسب که موبدی وارسته و دانشمند بود همسر خود را در این شییخون از دست می‌دهد. دستور جاماسب برای آگاه کردن هم دینان و هم میهنان با پسر جوان خود و مرد دیگری از راه کویر بسوی یزد روانه می‌شود. در آن زمان زرتشتیان یزد در دهکده های گوناگون مانند چم، مبارکه، مریم آباد، شریف آباد و دیگر دهکدها در بیرون شهر یزد زندگی می‌کردند. دستور جاماسب و پسرش و مرد سوم پس از یکفته با دشواری فراوان به یکی از این دهکده ها می‌رسند و آگهی تاخت و تاز محمود و سواران را بهم دینان و هم میهنان خود می‌رسانند و هشدار می‌دهند که محمود از چپاول نخستین بسیار شادمان می‌باشد و در سر می‌پروراند که به شهر های دگر چون یزد و شیراز و اصفهان نیز یورش آورد. با این آگاهی یزدیها اندازهای خود را برای یورش محمود آماده می‌کنند.

در این زمان پارسیان هندوستان از پیشوایان دینی ایرانی درخواست می‌کنند که از ایران موبدی دانشمند برای کار داوری به هندوستان فرستاده شود تا دشواریهای دینی آنها را برکنار کند. پیشوایان دینی زرتشتیان ایران به پاس و گرمی داشت، دستور جاماسب را از میان خود برای این کار برگزیده و روانه هندوستان می‌کنند. پس از ورود به بمبی، دستور جاماسب به " سورت " می‌رود و دشواریهای دینی را برکنار می‌کند. در این زمان آگاهی از ایران می‌رسد که محمود و سوارانش به اصفهان پایتخت یورش آورده و شاه سلطان حسین مست و خرافاتی، که بدون رمل و اسطرلاب دست به هیچ کاری نمی‌زد، تاج کشور را به محمود افغان بخشیده است.

دستور جاماسب با این که بسیار نگران فرزندان جوانش در ایران بود در هندوستان می‌ماند و به آموزش زبان اوستایی می‌پردازد. یکی از شاگردان برجسته او دستور داراب پارسی می‌باشد. پس از چند سال دوری، دستور جاماسب به کرمان برمی‌گردد و از زرتشتیان می‌خواهد که به سپاه نادرشاه افشار پیوسته و به قندهار و هرات و کابل بروند و در پایان از هندوستان سردرمی‌آورند.

هوای خشک و بلندی پیرامون ۱۷۰۰ متر از دریا، آسمان بی‌همتایی برای ستاره‌شناسی در کرمان فراهم می‌کند. کم و بیش همه کرمانیها دلباخته ستاره‌شناسی می‌باشند. دستور جاماسب از دلباختگی گامی جلو تر گذاشته و از دانش ستاره‌شناسی بهره فراوان داشت و به گاه‌شماری خورشیدی و پایه اختر شناسی آن به خوبی وارد بود. در هندوستان دریافت که پارسیان جشن نوروز را میان تابستان می‌گیرند و تاریخ خود را که درست برابر باروز شماری ایران است " شاهنشاهی " می‌نامند. پس از بررسی درست دریافت که پارسیان تا آن زمان (۱۷۲۰ ترسایی) پیرامون هشت صد سال در

هندوستان زندگی کرده‌اند و در این سده های پی‌در پی یکبار " ابرداد " انجام داده‌اند (افزودن یک ماه کیسه به شیوه ساسانیان در هر ۱۲۰ سال) و برای این فراموش‌کاری جشن نوروز پیرامون شش ماه به جلو و در میان تابستان افتاده است.

دستور جاماسب کرمانی کی بود و چه خدمتی کرد؟

یک صد سال پیش ایرانیان بزبان کتونی فارسی، برگردان (ترجمه) درستی از سرودهای زرتشت (گاتها) را نداشتند. برای نخستین بار استاد ابراهیم پورداود برگردان آن را از اوستایی برای ما فراهم کرد. شادروان پورداود نزد "بارتولومه" زبان شناس آلمانی اوستایی را آموخته بود و پس از آن به برگردان دیگر نسخه‌های اوستا نیز دست زد.

برداشت شیوه کار او مانند استادش نزدیک به برگردان "بارتولومه" از اوستایی به آلمانی می باشد. جای شکفت اینجاست که اروپاییها پیش از ما ایرانیان نوشته های اوستایی را بزبانهای خود برگردان کرده بودند و ما ایرانیان اوستا را می خواندیم و کمتر کسی بود که معنی آن را دریافت می کرد و تا زمان پورداود شیوه درستی برای یاد گرفتن اوستایی نداشتیم.

امید وارم با این گفتار که یاد آوری از کم بود دلباختگی و ارزشمندی هم میهنان از باز مانده های باستانی می باشد، خواننده را آزرده نکرده باشم. بیگمان در شناسایی ایران باستان ما ایرانیان بسیار به اروپاییها بدهکار می باشیم. تخت جمشید را آنها از زیر ابرهای تاریک تاریخ در آوردند و خط هخامنشیان (میخی) را بیگانگان برای ما خواندند. ما ایرانیان بدست خود تیشه به ریشه خود می زنیم و نمونه آن ساختمان سدسیون در دشت مرغاب (مرودشت) نزدیکی بازارگارد است که بسیار بازمانده های تاریخی با شکوه ایران را زیر آب خواهد برد. کسی که به بررسی تاریخی نیاکان خود نپردازد و از آن دوری جوید مانند فرزندی بی هویت و به اصطلاح "بی پدر و مادر" بایستی زندگی کند.

در زمان شاه سلطان حسین صفوی، محمود افغان و سوارانش به ایران یورش آوردند و خاندان صفوی را از کار برکنار کردند. البته بیشتر خاک افغانستان در زمانهای باستان پارمائی از ایران بود، اما پادشاهان گورکانی هندوستان گاه گاهی دستبرد زده و بخشی از افغانستان را به زیر فرمانروایی خود درمی آوردند به ویژه اینکه بیشتر مردم افغانستان مسلمان سنی بودند و با شیعه صفوی نمی ساختند.

محمود افغان در سال ۱۷۲۰ ترسائی از راه نرماشیر به شهر کرمان بی درنگ یورش آورد. در آن زمان زرتشتیان کرمان می بایستی بیرون از شهر کرمان، پشت دیوار دور شهر، زندگی کنند. محمود و سواران چپاول گرش برای نخستین بار با ایستادگی ایرانیان در گیر محله با زرتشتیان رویرو شدند. این شیخون کشته و چپاول فراوان بیار آورد و یورش آوران بدون هیچ ایستادگی از سوی دروازه بانان از راه دروازه گشوده ناصریه (نام گزاری در زمان ناصرالدین شاه می باشد) وارد کرمان شده و به تاراج پرداختند.

Revival of Parsi embroidery - a PARZOR venture

by ava khullar

What could be more pleasing to the aesthetic eye than a Parsi lady dressed in an enchanting, fully embroidered *gara* sari. But surely there is more to it than the *gara* being a beautiful and precious heirloom to be proudly worn on festive occasions. The story of this Parsi heritage needs telling. This lacuna is sought to be filled by the Parzor Foundation's study of Parsi embroidery.

As these pieces were a result of the trade between China and the wealthy Parsi traders, trading initially in opium and later in cotton and spices with China, there appeared to be a simplistic comprehension of these garments as textiles ordered by Parsis, made in China and worn by Parsis in India. No serious work had been undertaken to understand the origin, significance or meaning of the various motives that cover the *gara* designs from the floral to creatures, both four-legged and winged, real and mythological such as the phoenix, unicorn, bird of paradise etc, to aquatic life, butterflies and even bats.

The result of the initial foray into this study by a student of the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad was a draft of the report entitled "Painting with a Needle". The study went into the history of these textiles and documented many, many finely embroidered specimens of *garas*, *jhablas*, (a loose straight garment, worn by children) *kors* (borders) found in the wardrobes of Parsi ladies. It analysed the stitches, designs, individual motives, their placement and formations. It also studied the fabrics used for Parsi textiles. This proved to be a happy hunting ground for our non-Parsi researchers who had never been confronted with such exquisite workmanship and beautiful textiles. It has also given to the Parzor archives a comprehensive record of these unmatched textiles. When with time these fabrics, now over a 100 or



Craftswomen from Kutch



Border in aari embroidery (above); satin stitch embroidery (right)



Illustrations courtesy of PARZOR



Research on the divine fungus

130 years old ultimately disintegrate, or are lost to this country as foreign buyers are picking them up, there will remain this one comprehensive record of their existence for posterity.

As the research progressed it became clearer that there were strong cross cultural links between the Chinese design tradition, the

European tradition and the Persian Zoroastrian tradition which the present day Parsis are privy to. The trade that flourished between these three peoples through the Silk Route, mainly during the period of the Sasanian dynasty (226 - 661 AD) and the Tang dynasty (618 - 907AD) in China, had created an amalgam of their embroidery traditions. The linkages were becoming more closely woven and we recognised the need to go deeper into this research efforts to truly understand Parsi textiles as a unique, original and significant contribution to the textile heritage of India.

While research and documentation was necessary, the Government of India was more interested in the revival of what was considered a languishing craft, as well as giving a new skill and thereby employment to *karigars* (craftsmen). Thus started a programme of workshops with GOI support. The aim of the workshop was threefold:

✧ To train craft persons into the techniques and nuances of Parsi embroidery and give them a skill that could enhance their means of livelihood;

✧ To create awareness and sensitize the Parsi community and create a sense of pride in this wonderful heritage and to help Parsis, especially the women, learn this craft and thus understand the significance of their precious heirlooms;

✧ To make these workshops as tools for empowering women, Parsis and non Parsis, and help them become independent economically.

Three workshops, in Ahmedabad in August 2005, Navsari in January 2006 and Mumbai in April 2006 have so far been conducted. Each of these have progressively been learning experiences.

Our initial efforts are to adapt and contemporise; we realized that we do not have the resources nor are we in competition with the ladies who are into making *garas*. Initially our effort will be to keep the tradition alive by concentrating on smaller items, accessories, household linen, furnishings etc, which would not only provide employment but have a ready market. We have thus helped the SEWA workers who do the 'ari' stitch with a *moochi's* (cobbler's) needle or the 'pako' stitch the Muslim *karigars* who do satin stitch, to adapt their skill to Parsi designs by teaching them the finer nuances which distinguish Parsi embroidery. We had a surprise bonanza when the Muslim *karigars* were able to authentically duplicate the 'khakho' stitch, which no one was able to do, with a variation of the *ari* stitch. We would at a later stage, simultaneously hope to guide master craftsmen into creating larger pieces, even *garas*.

Our efforts continue. However the greatest constraint is how to sustain this training process between workshops. For the *karigar* time is money and he cannot give his time to perfect a new skill unless the resulting product can fetch a price. We need continual foundational support to make this effort at revival come alive and Parsi embroidery enter the Indian and export market as a valued product. It is our dream to set up a special School of Embroidery on the lines of the famous schools of China to maintain a sustained programme of training and make Parsi embroidery revival a force to reckon with.



Ava Khullar is a social scientist and has been researching various aspects of the Parsi community for over three decades. She also has a special interest in Parsi embroidery which she has been trying to revive for many years.

UNESCO
PARZOR
Foundation's

"Painting with a
Needle"

Symposium &
Exhibition on 25
April.

A Workshop on
Parsi Embroidery
from 26 - 30 April,
gratis

Relief for the earthquake victims continues

Toxy Cowasjee reports



Dalola is just west of Muzaffarabad and south of Garhi Habibullah

From Rs8,834,917.99p we have dispersed Rs6,828,815.

The expenses incurred since 3 February have been, payment to two individuals, on the request of the donor residing in USA amounting to Rs59,674, enabling them to rebuild their homes.

We are now in the process of a pilot project with the Omar Asghar Khan Development Foundation, a Safe House for Women, at Dalola, which is close to Garhi Habibullah. The full cost for construction with fixtures, running costs with salaries for a year is amounting to Rs1,775,000. The construction is earthquake proof and will be carried out by masons, carpenters and steel fixers who have been trained by UN Habitat. OAKDF hopes the community themselves will be running this centre after a year as it is their policy to make those they assist self sufficient, a view endorsed by WZO.

This Safe House will be available for about 1,200 women with their young children who will be able to come, converse, discuss their rights, have counseling, receive health education, have the use of kitchens for their cooking and hamams for bathing. The construction should be ready in three months.

We have sent Rs1,000,000 on 17 April 2006 as an advance for the building whose total cost with fixtures and boundary wall is Rs965,000. The operation cost for one year is estimated at Rs378,000 and the wages for personnel is Rs432,000.

The French Women's Club at Karachi, having heard of this project joined in and donated Rs150,000 which will be used towards the operation cost. Therefore, we will be giving OAKDF a total of Rs1,625,000 for this project.

We share with you what has transpired since the last reports printed in Hamazor Issue 4/05 pp 66-69 and Issue 1/06 pp 60-66.

We have now received till 31 May 2006, a total sum of Rs8,834,917.99p. This amount is made up of donations received from individuals, Zoroastrian Associations and like-minded friends from all over the world. The list of these is mentioned on page 70 of Issue 4/05 and since then the following bodies have contributed.

St Elizabeth's Epocostal Church, Knoxville, USA - \$1000

The Dulwich Quilters, UK, through the sale of their quilt - £2000

Donations received by WZO UK - £1000 including,

All Saint's Church, Rome, Italy - £350
Australian Zoroastrian Association of NSW – AUS\$250,

and from their members – AUS\$1,350 which form part of the total figure.

You may wonder why nothing was done since February, but negotiations have been on the table with OAKDF since January for the above project.

It may be of general interest, OAKDF are also setting up a skilled labour training centre near the Safe House and supervising the construction of around 3000 houses at Dalola. You may recall we had sent two converted containers to be used as a Basic Health Unit also at Dalola, which is now proving to be insufficient. OAKDF are setting up a hospital tent adjacent to this to enlarge the existing facility.

There is a balance in this fund of Rs1,381,102.99, after final payment for SHW, which may be used either for providing water supply which is a high priority, or given towards building of a school. Initially building of schools were quoted as Rs2.5 million, which we had available, but when the time came to commence rebuilding, the cost quoted was Rs9+ million, a sum we do not have nor hope to receive.



Review of Arthur and George

Aban Rustomji, Houston, TX

From one of England's most esteemed novelists comes an utter delight that captures an era through two lives – one life celebrated internationally and another entirely forgotten. Jules Barnes latest novel, *Arthur and George*, is a story that can be summarized without too much betrayal: it tells the story of a once famous miscarriage of justice, suffered by George Edalji, a solicitor in England in 1903, overturned thanks in large by the efforts of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Arthur and George is based on a complicated set of true events. George Edalji, an obscure young lawyer of mixed Scottish and Parsi parentage, was the object of a long campaign of harassment and intimidation by local bigots in English Midlands. He was eventually framed for a series of bizarre incidents and subsequently jailed. The injustice was later brought to the attention of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle who took up the case with a passion.

The novel's two main characters don't even meet till page 227. The book alternates between their life stories, and it begins right at the beginning — with their first memories. Arthur's are of being left alone in an Edinburgh room with his grandmother's corpse. George has no significant memories except growing up as a shy, earnest boy, acute of sensing the expectations of others.

Arthur is portrayed as ambitious, physically robust and a fine sportsman, but George's path through life is harder. His father Shapurji is a Parsi, born in Bombay and converted to the Church of England in his youth.

He was ordained as a priest, and married Charlotte whose uncle was a parish priest. Upon the uncle's death, Shapurji was made priest of Wyrley, a small village in Staffordshire. George's parents are kind, but they are utterly clueless of the modern world or how hard it was for George to be accepted at school. And so the reader becomes totally engrossed in a situation which we would now term as racial profiling.

As Barnes points out, the case was the English equivalent to the Dreyfus affair, another gross miscarriage of injustice. George Edalji is a bit of a "dry stick", but he is intelligent and honorable. There are moving passages that show George in the courtroom and in jail, struggling to understand the nightmare of a once promising life. He almost manages to persuade himself that he enjoys spending days in his cell "plaiting nose-bags" and reading the classics. He has deep trust that the English law would save him. Nevertheless he is stoic when sentenced for seven years. Three years without apology or an explanation, he is released. He then begins a campaign to clear his name and gets in touch with Arthur Conan Doyle.

New York Review of Books featured a book review by John Lancaster who mentions, "Edalji case is so little known, except by Parsees and lawyers... and the case did not cause an ideological polarization but instead led to a typically practical, empirical outcome: the founding of the Court of Appeal".

The story also talks about Doyle's interest in the world of "spirit bodies". True to that era, and now a bit hard to understand, is how an enlightened empiricist like Doyle fell for the Victorian seance world, but that he did.

There is a great deal of factual interest blended with fully imagined inner world of fiction. The novel is an experience resounding with issues, no less relevant today, of crime and spirituality, of identity and nationality, of what we think, what we believe and what we can prove.





The World Zoroastrian Organisation

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

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

Yours truly,

Signature

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Please send application form to: The World Zoroastrian Organisation (India) to Union Press,
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Houses of Parliament,
late 19 century painting
by George V Cole

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From the Editor

Controversies, indignations, seem to be on the high side, for the larger issues and for petty ones too, especially with the Parsi Zoroastrians. One wonders do we achieve in the end, or is it just words and more words. So few Zoroastrians and yet so many self-made problems. If each of us could be magnanimous and say "we are all correct, and allow us to choose what our vohu mana guides us", it may be a simplistic attitude to life, but who knows it may work. I read article after article written by scholars, learned persons, who all guide us by saying, our religion gives us the CHOICE, to do what we feel is right. Why is it that a whole community then has to be dictated to, for two major issues which continue to affect the majority - the disposal of the dead and to allow the children of mixed marriages into our faith. In the sub-continent, in some cities where Dokhmenashini continues to be practised even though the vultures have disappeared, many now prefer to be cremated or buried, but the controversy continues and is vocal in the press of Mumbai. Yet no solution is at hand. Why is it not possible for the BPP to give its approval, so that each may have the choice at the end of their journey, with our prayers being recited by the mobeds? The issue is only relevant for the communities in India and Pakistan and that to, in just a few cities, therefore isn't it high time people are given the privilege of CHOICE?



The question of women who marry out of the community and their children who wish to be Parsi Zoroastrians, continue, though as far back as 1882 the Parsis of India were more tolerant and forward thinking, to permit navjotes to be performed. I fail to comprehend how a woman who has married a non-Zoroastrian and has kept her own faith, through CHOICE, is not permitted into our agiaries. Is she less Parsi Zoroastrian than those who marry within the community, or is she suddenly less worthy in the eyes of the community. Do our men-folk (as it is they who are making rules, so far) not realise that it is primarily the women who bring up their children, who teach them the values which they will imbibe? Feeble excuses of the fear of Trust funds being misappropriated are believed by those who are not aware, the bottom line is only the Trustees can disseminate/ discriminate the use of the said funds. There is no problem here - just the problem of power and ego. We have to do right by our children, as, though we prefer them to marry within the community, it just is not going to be possible indefinitely. A person is as honourable and worthy as they have been brought up and not because they are born into a Parsi home. Just so that it is known, I am proud to be a Parsi, coming from a worthy lineage, all who have left their mark on society in Karachi.

This is my opinion as an individual, as thankfully in our family we have always been taught to stand up to our beliefs. There is no motive here except to have a solution for an individual - the right to CHOOSE for these two important issues.

Toxy Cowasjee

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

Karan F Bilimoria CBE, DL

becomes first Zoroastrian Peer of the Realm

*k*aran Bilimoria became the first Zoroastrian in history to enter the House of Lords as announced by past president of Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, Dorab Mistry, on 3 May, 2006. A memorable and proud day not only for Karan and his family, but for all Zoroastrians across the globe.



At the website:

<http://www.lordsappointments.gov.uk/news/may2006.aspx>, an announcement appears "seven new non-party-political peers recommended by the House of Lords Appointments Commission were announced today.

"The new non-party-political peers are: Colin Low, the blind Chairman of the RNIB and campaigner for disability rights; David Rowe-Beddoe, a leading international businessman who has played an active role in economic and cultural development in Wales; Elizabeth Butler-Sloss, the first woman to become President of the Family Division of the High Court; Geoffrey Dear, previously HM Inspector of Constabulary, with particular experience in social problems in both urban and rural communities; Kamlesh Patel, an academic and government advisor on mental health, drugs and ethnicity; **Karan Bilimoria, a leading young entrepreneur; founder and Chief Executive of Cobra Beer;** Molly Meacher, an international expert in employment and welfare issues. These peers will sit on the crossbenches in the Upper House."

An explanation on the duties of the Appointments Commission follows: "The Appointments Commission is a non-statutory advisory body set up by the Prime Minister to make recommendations for non-party-political peerages. The Commission's remit is to find people of distinction who will bring authority and expertise to the House of

Lords. The Commission recommends individuals on merit and their ability to contribute effectively to the work of the House.”

The Chairman and members of World Zoroastrian Organisation, congratulate Lord Bilimoria on his appointment as a Peer of the Realm and may Karan continue to shine, contributing not only to his country (United Kingdom) but to his co-religionists as well.

We share with you a statement made by Lord Bilimoria: *“I am delighted to be appointed to the House of Lords. I look forward very much to contributing and participating in the work of the House, to working with my new colleagues and to serving my country as best as I can. I am enormously grateful to my family, my team at Cobra, and my friends and colleagues for all the support and encouragement I have received over the years. I am deeply humbled and greatly look forward to this tremendous honour and privilege.”*

Born in India, Karan came to the UK for his higher education as a 19-year-old. Having qualified as a Chartered Accountant with Ernst and Young, London, and graduated in Law from Cambridge University, Karan Bilimoria developed a less gassy, premium lager brewed to perfectly appeal to both ale drinkers and lager drinkers alike and to complement food.

Little more than fifteen years later, Cobra Beer is one of the fastest growing beer brands in the UK and one of the most innovative young companies in the country. The brand has a current retail value turnover of over £80 million, is sold in nearly 6,000 Indian restaurants, and is available to 6,000 bars, pubs and clubs and in over 12,000 branches of leading multiples, supermarkets and off-licenses throughout the UK. In 2005, Cobra Beer was awarded two Grand Gold Medals and nine Gold Medals at the 2005 Monde Selection, Brussels, World Selection of Quality Awards – more than any other beer in the world.

Although Karan started Cobra in 1990 when he was £20,000 in debt and up against all odds, Cobra has grown into an operation with

offices on four continents and exports to over 40 countries, with brewing operations in five countries. Karan is widely respected for his entrepreneurial spirit. He is the Representative Deputy Lieutenant of the London Borough of Hounslow and among many other positions serves as Chancellor of Thames Valley University – making him UK’s youngest university chancellor. Karan is also one of the first two Visiting Entrepreneurs ever appointed at Cambridge University and serves as National Champion of the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship. He sits on the Government’s National Employment Panel (NEP), and from 2001 to 2005 was Chairman of the NEP’s SME Board. Additionally, Karan serves as UK Chairman of the Indo British Partnership, and lectures extensively in the UK and abroad on entrepreneurship, business, education, and the Indo-British relationship.

Karan also directly supports a number of charities, serving as patron of the Thare Mache Starfish Initiative, patron of Rethink severe mental illness, and as chairman of the advisory board of the Shrimati Pushpa Wati Loomba Memorial Trust for the education of children of poor widows in India. He is Chairman of the Memorial Gates Committee.

Karan has won numerous awards in recognition of his business achievements and charitable work, including the RSA’s Albert Medal in the Society’s 250th anniversary year, 2004. He was named Entrepreneur of the Year 2003 and Business Person of the Year 2004 by the London Business Awards, Entrepreneur of the Year 2004 at the National Business Awards (London and South East of England) and London Entrepreneur of the Year 2003 (Consumer Products) by Ernst & Young. In 2005, Karan was honoured with the Award for Outstanding Achievement by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales in the Institute’s 125th anniversary year. He has been awarded honorary doctorates by Brunel University and Heriot-Watt University.

Bravo Lord Bilimoria!

(Hamazor Issue 1/03, pp13-14, had carried an article written by Karan entitled “The Spirit of Enterprise”)



The World Zoroastrian Organisation

135 TENNISON ROAD, SOUTH NORWOOD, LONDON SE25 5NF

Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II
Buckingham Palace
London
SW1A 1AA

20th April 2006

Your Majesty,

It gives me great pleasure to convey, on behalf of the World Zoroastrian Organisation, our sincere and heartfelt congratulations to you on your 80th birthday. We wish you and your family continued good health, joy and happiness for many years to come.

During the course of your reign spanning over 50 years, Zoroastrians have always remained loyal citizens of the nation, have held you in high esteem and have shown a great love and affection for the Royal family. The Zoroastrian community have settled in the United Kingdom for nearly two centuries and are one of the oldest established minorities outside of the Indian Sub-Continent and Iran. Indeed the first three Indian Members of Parliament were Parsee Zoroastrians.

I have the honour to remain Madam, Your Majesty's most humble and obedient servant.

Yours sincerely,

Sammy Bhiwandiwalla
Chairman
World Zoroastrian Organisation

Events that shaped our religion

by rustom j kevala

Part II - The Hellenistic Age

Introduction

Our knowledge of the earliest history of the Zoroastrian religion is based on archaeological findings, Indo-Iranian oral traditions, and the writings of early Greek historians. Naturally, there has been much debate as to exactly what Zarathushtra's role was in the development of the present Zoroastrian doctrine and liturgy; how religion influenced the actions of various Persian rulers; and what the practice of religion meant to the common people at different times. In this series of papers, I highlight the major turning points in history that have shaped present-day Zoroastrian religion and worldview.

Summary of Part I *(appeared in Hamazor Issue 1/06)*

Part I covered the major belief systems prevalent from the time of Zarathushtra (c 1300 BC) to the end of the Achaemenian Empire (4th Century BC). Zarathushtra's message spread from the Bactrian highlands to the western Indo-Iranian tribes in Choresmia, Parthia and Media, while the original Indic religion was propelled eastwards into the Indus Valley. By the 7th Century BC, the Magi had adapted Zarathushtrian principles into the existing mythic culture and beliefs. Purity rituals became a major factor in improving the health and thereby increasing the population and strength of the Persians.

Recorded history of Zoroastrian religion starts with Cyrus the Great, who seized the Median Empire in 558 BC and expanded it to cover almost the entire known world of the time. Cyrus exhibited great tolerance for all the local religions within his empire. His son Cambyses included Egyptian gods in his religion, probably for political expediency. Darius (581-486 BC) was the first Achaemenian ruler to leave detailed inscriptions declaring that he was a follower of Ahura Mazda. Darius's son Xerxes was deeply religious and was always accompanied by an entourage of Magis. Artaxerxes I supported the worship of Mithra. Artaxerxes II built temples to Anahita. By now, the Persians had ruled Greek Asia Minor and Ionia for over 100 years and had become adept at keeping the Greek city-states fighting each other to keep overall control.

Part II

Alexander

King Philip of Macedon had developed a new war maneuver called the phalanx. Each foot soldier had 16 ft long spears, which allowed them to reach over the horse and chariot to wound or kill the enemy. He succeeded in defeating and then uniting most of the Greek city-states against the Persians. But Philip was murdered by a disgruntled soldier (or slave) at his daughter's wedding in 336 BC. Alexander, son of Philip, now led the Greeks to liberate the Ionian Islands from Persian rule. After the battle of Granicus in 332 BC, the Persian Satrap of Ionia surrendered to Alexander.

Alexander next faced Darius III in Syria. The lightweight wicker armor of the Persian soldiers, effective against arrows, could not withstand the 16 foot spears of the Greek phalanx. When Darius retreated to regroup his army, most of the Greek mercenaries in Darius's army surrendered to Alexander. Alexander immediately ordered them to be executed for treason. Darius's mother was captured and sent to Macedonia as war booty.

The Persians were expert marksmen who could shoot facing backwards from horseback. This ability, called the Median maneuver, gave them great advantage



Rustum was born in Mumbai. He has served as the president of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, chair of the Information Receiving and Disseminating Committee, which publishes the FEZANA Journal; and most recently, as Treasurer of FEZANA. Today, like many of us, he is intrigued by the questions: "Why is our religion so little known or understood throughout the world? Why do we seem so powerless to resolve the issues facing us?" He firmly believes that the answers can be found by taking a dispassionate look at our history. Rustum lives near Tampa, Florida, with his wife, Yasmin.

when fighting in the open field. Darius therefore ordered a large area to be leveled at Gau Gamela to prepare to meet Alexander again. Alexander and Darius met in 331 BC. Alexander gained the upper hand by leading his cavalry through a gap between Darius's two battalions. Darius ordered a retreat; but in the confusion, he was assassinated by one of his generals. Alexander pursued and executed the general and took possession of Darius's body, which he buried with great fanfare to give himself legitimacy for the Persian throne.

Alexander's victory over the powerful Persians elevated him to the status of a demi-god. He wore a lion's scalp on his head in battle and considered himself to be the reincarnation of Achilles, the hero of the Trojan War. He entered Persepolis in 330 BC, which was burned to signify his victory over the Persians.

Immediately, Alexander set out to assert Greek power over the Persian lands to the east. He took his army across the Hindu Kush to Sogdiana, where he married the beautiful princess Roxana. Then he turned south into Afghanistan and crossed over into Hindustan to confront King Porus (Purushottam) in Punjab. He used his long spear to unseat Porus from his elephant. Porus gave Alexander 100 war elephants as booty. Finally, he was seriously wounded when he led his soldiers over the walls of the fortified city of Pattala. The Indians treated his wounds. Now his soldiers revolted because they had been fighting for six years and wanted to go home. He agreed to return home, along with his booty-laden elephants and camels, through the inhospitable desert of Southern Baluchistan.

Greek historians claim that Alexander wanted to establish unity between Greek and Persian cultures. He married Roxana so that his heir would be half-Persian; and is said to have ordered 80 of his top officers to marry Persian noblewomen in a mass wedding at Susa. On this occasion, he took a second wife, Barsine, the eldest daughter of the late king Darius. In 323 BC, he

established himself in Babylon and dressed and feasted as a Persian monarch. During one of these feasts, he died unexpectedly either by poisoning or a fever. Roxana was sent to Macedonia where she bore a son, who was murdered in 310 BC, ending Alexander's dynasty.

Alexander's generals took 12 years to divide up the conquered empire among them. Seleucus, who had married a Persian princess, became ruler of Syria and Persia in 311 BC.

Greek Religion

The Greeks were an Indo-European people who had settled in the Aegean basin prior to 1000 BC; thus they came in contact with the Minoan, Mycenaean and other advanced civilizations of the ancient Near East. Homer's Iliad and The Odyssey, composed in the 8th Century BC provide a detailed description of Greek religion. Twelve principal gods were recognized as living on Mount Olympus in the palace of Zeus. Hades, the god of death and his spouse Persephone lived in the underworld. The gods had human form; they were born, and might have sexual contacts with humans, but they were immortal. Compared with the gods, men were wretched, powerless, and subject to "fate". The warriors strived to attain immortal glory through heroic deeds, generally under the patronage of a tribal god. In a sense, Alexander was the last Greek hero, who achieved immortal glory through his victory over the Persians.

Religion was a social, practical, everyday thing. There was no religious organization, no church. Religious authority lay with the head of household, head of clan and ultimately with the ruler. Piety was expressed in acts of respect towards the gods. Ritual sacrifice of animals along with offerings of harvest and fruit were used to gain divine favor.

Starting the 5th Century BC, Plato, Aristotle, Socrates and other Greek philosophers began to question the existence of the

immortal gods. Aristotle (384-322 BC) was a tutor to Alexander for a short time, but he is reputed to have had very little impact on his illustrious pupil.

Hellenization

The Seleucids established over sixty "new" settlements from western Turkey to Iran, with Greek constitution and names. Each settlement was an oasis for Greek culture and religion. Susa was refounded as Seleucia, with a Greek constitution that endured for over 300 years, well into the Parthian period. The *gymnasion*, which promoted both physical and intellectual culture, was a central institution. By Greek custom, women were excluded and the men were required to exercise naked.

The Magi did not receive support from the Seleucids. The study of Avesta suffered. Many of the surviving written scriptures were lost since they were not replaced by the scribes. The priests made their living by reciting prayers from memory on behalf of the *behdins*. Religion now became pure rituals for propitiating divinities and warding off pollution and the demons. The divinities in turn were expected to provide boons and blessings to the householder who paid for the ritual.

In 212 BC, Euthydemus had established a Greek military state in Bactria, independent of the Seleucids. His son Demetrius reconquered the entire Indus Valley, c. 197 BC. The Greeks identified Indra with Zeus, Shiva with Dionysus, Krishna with Heracles, and the goddess Lakshmi with Artemis. Menander (c. 125-95 BC) became a lavish patron of Buddhism, and is known as Milinda in Buddhist texts. It is believed that Buddhism traveled east from Bactria (Afghanistan) to China and Japan over the Silk Road in 1st century BC.

When a *gymnasion* was set up in Jerusalem in 174 BC, some Jews gave up circumcision of their sons. Antiochus IV installed a Hellenized Jew as their head Rabbi; then

stripped the Temple of its treasures and ordered the Jews to give up their distinctive ways. The Jews rebelled. Conflict between Jews and Seleucids continued until the Jews gained their independence in 141 BC.



Coin portraits of Bactrian kings: (top) Antimachus (c185 BC), (right) Euratides I (c165-150 BC). Euratides is helmeted; Antimachus wears the Macedonian royal beret (*From Ref. 3*).

While the Seleucids were busy fighting the Romans and Jewish armies in Mesopotamia, Mehrdad (Mithradates), a Parthian prince of the Ashkani (Arsacid) tribe, established himself as the ruler of Pars province in 238 BC. Farhad II (Phraates), grandson of Mehrdad, defeated the Seleucid king Demetrius in 129 BC and established the Parthians as the rulers of all Persia.

The Parthians retained some Greek culture, but now faced the increasing power of Rome to the west. The Parthian dynasty began the task of reviving the Zoroastrian religion. This is covered in Part III, The Parthian Revival.



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We cannot direct the wind

But we can adjust the sails

Professor Mary Boyce

by john r hinnells

A celebration of a good life

Appeared in The Guardian on Tuesday April 11, 2006 and shared with Hamazor.

*M*ary Boyce died peacefully on 4th April 2006 in the Royal Free hospital, London, following a major deterioration in her health. She was a leading twentieth century scholar in the field of Iranian studies, especially in Zoroastrianism, the world's first monotheistic religion. She was a prolific writer and highly original scholar.

around the desert city of Yazd in central Iran. She was greatly amused that the Persians thought she was the daughter of Edward Browne, an earlier scholar who had embarked on a similar journey of discovery almost a century before.

She presented her research findings in her Ratanbai Katrak lectures at the University of Oxford in 1975 and published this as *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism* two years later. Her love for the people among whom she lived and worked shines forth in many of her publications. Through that deep bond of friendship she came to various radical reinterpretations of the standard books on Zoroastrianism and led her to question many common scholarly assumptions regarding the prophet Zoroaster and his followers.

First she came to appreciate the importance of ritual devotions and traced them back into the life and teaching of the prophet, indeed into pre-Zoroastrian times. Previously under the influence of studies of Christianity which contrasted 'faith and works' and by Protestant perspectives on the growth of Christianity, scholars had depicted Zoroaster's followers as falling away from the pure abstract philosophy of the founder returning to pre-Zoroastrian pagan practices under the superstitions of faithless priests. Who, she asked, was best able to interpret the teachings of the prophet, western scholars in the comfort of their studies, or the practitioners of the religion living in a remote region free from outside influences? She contended that in non-literate societies ancient practices are preserved with greater fidelity than are teachings in a literate society. She thereby constructed picture of the great continuity of Zoroastrianism, a continuity with the priestly

Her perspective on Zoroastrianism was transformed by a year of fieldwork among orthodox Zoroastrians in remote villages

tradition into which Zoroaster had been born and trained, and a continuity through the millennia so that the beliefs and practices of modern Iranian Zoroastrians, untainted by western and urbanized living, could be used to interpret ancient texts. I was fortunate to start my post-graduate studies at SOAS under her supervision within days of her return from Iran; it was an exciting time to be a student of a pioneering scholar as she began to think new thoughts, rejecting the received scholarly wisdom. The first book to present this dramatically revised history was her *Zoroastrians: their religious beliefs and practices* (Routledge 1979 repr with additions in 2000) which together with her anthology of texts from different Zoroastrian eras (*Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism*, 1984) became the standard works for students of Zoroastrianism around the world. Her magnum opus is a multi volumed *History of Zoroastrianism* (of which 3 volumes have appeared in 1975, 1982, 1991). Sadly she died before completing volume IV, though her work is to be continued by Dr Albert de Jong of Leiden. She was a pioneer in various branches of Iranian studies, not only Zoroastrianism. She contributed numerous articles to the scholarly *Encyclopaedia Iranica* and unlike many pioneering scholars was also happy to write articles and entries to books for the wider public.

Mary Boyce was born in Darjeeling in 1920. She studied English, Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge, and then taught Anglo-Saxon Literature and Archaeology at Royal Holloway College, London. Whilst doing this she also studied Persian at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. Under the inspiration of her mentor, Prof W B Henning, she began research in Manichaeism and in 1947 was appointed to a new lectureship in Iranian Studies at SOAS. In 1958 she was promoted to a readership and made professor at SOAS in 1962 where she served until her retirement. There she taught and inspired numerous students who went on to hold professorships in many countries. She could be a harsh critic – with tongue and

pen; students and fellow academics alike anticipated her criticisms of draft chapters or articles with some trepidation! But what few know is how generous she was to students facing difficulties either personal or financial. She was at once stern and demanding but also kindly and supportive. She continued her close ties with Zoroastrians not only Iranians but also Parsis from India. The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe long wanted to honour her, but she quietly declined any honours apart from the Royal Asiatic Society's Burton Memorial Medal (1972) for the work which lay behind her Katrak lectures and their publication and the Sir Percy Sykes Memorial medal of the Royal Society of Asian Affairs.

She was never married, being wedded - as she put it - to her academic work. She eschewed computers and television and wrote everything meticulously in her elegant copperplate hand in pencil as spinal problems forced her to work lying on her back. She was a very private person. Outside her academic and family concerns her great passion was gardening. Even in her later years, she enjoyed her garden through the window; plants and birds being one of her few non academic interests. She is survived by her brother Peter, with whom she spent much of each year in Somerset, and her nephew Geoffrey – and by countless grateful and devoted students.



(Prof Hinnells was to write a tribute especially for the *Hamazor*, but unfortunately has been unwell since early April. Rather than let us down, he has sent what was submitted to The Guardian. Prof Boyce was Hinnells' teacher/mentor since 1967 and were regularly in contact. - Ed)



Prof John Hinnells is one of the foremost scholars of Parsi and Zoroastrian studies. A scholar of comparative religions, he founded the department of the Study of Religions at the prestigious School of Oriental and African Studies. He has held several prestigious teaching posts and has had the unique distinction of starting either degrees or departments of Comparative Religion in five universities of the UK. He is the author of five books on Zoroastrianism and Parsis. His book, 'The Zoroastrian Diaspora' published by Clarendon Press, Oxford, will serve as a companion volume to his book, 'Zoroastrians in Britain', 1996, Clarendon Press, Oxford. He has co-authored several books on theology, Zoroastrianism, and Judaism in addition to editing such definitive works as 'A New Handbook of Living Religions' (1996/8, Blackwell/Pengion) and 'A New Dictionary of Religions' (1995/7, Blackwell/Penguin). Ashgate has published a selection of Hinnells' works and his papers have appeared in several edited volumes and journals.

Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe held a condolence meeting for late Prof Boyce on 8 April at 4:30pm at the Zartoshty Brothers Hall, Zoroastrian Centre, Harrow, UK. Our Chairman, Sammy Bhiwandiwalla was present. Messages of condolence were read out from a number of her past and present students, Dastur Kotwal, Dastur Jamasp Asa and Khojeste Mistree, to name a few.

Housing problems of rural Parsis

A proposal from Dinshaw Tamboly, Managing Trustee, WZO Trusts, India

Preamble

In the mid eighties, WZO London & Surat Parsi Punchayet had jointly commissioned a **sample (not census)** socio economic survey of the rural Zoroastrians of South Gujarat. The survey was conducted by Dr Cashmera P Bhaya. The report when released in 1988 sent shock waves through sections of the community who were concerned about the rural Zoroastrians.

687 families living in 209 villages of South Gujarat were reported to be living below the poverty line [which at that time (mid-eighties) was Rs18,000/- per annum per family]. This report triggered off a massive rehabilitation programme for the rural Zoroastrians, undertaken by WZO, by creating awareness and thereafter raising funds from Zoroastrians worldwide.

Present Position

There have been qualitative changes in the lives of more than 300 families as a result of the rehabilitation measures provided due to the generosity of donors. Many families have progressed from abject poverty to relative prosperity. In some instances, the hard work put in has been in vain due to harshness of nature by way of floods or famine.

During our frequent visits to the rural areas we have observed that providing decent housing to the Zoroastrian farmers is one area where assistance continues to be required. Most of the Zoroastrian farmers reside in mud huts, the walls of which crumble periodically and require frequent repairs and renovations.

Even most of those Zoroastrian farmers whose economic conditions have improved cannot afford to construct permanent brick

and mortar cottages, on account of the - for them - heavy expenditure involved.

Proposal

It is proposed that your goodselves may please consider providing financial support towards replacement of huts with cottages. We have over the years raised funds and have constructed 35 cottages in replacement of huts. However there is a great need to accelerate this process and provide decent housing to many families.

It is estimated that there would be at least 150 families or more living in huts that need to be replaced by cottages. The cost of replacing a hut with a modest cottage is at present Rs200,000/-

Each of the cottages that we construct has a basic configuration of two rooms in the front, two rooms in the rear and an attached toilet/bath attached to the cottage, abutting out at the rear.

Given the support required we estimate that it would take us around five years to carry out the replacement process for 150 families. This would entail an anticipated annual outlay of around Rs6,000,000/- each year over the next five years. **We seek your support in raising funds to the extent possible.**

Photographs

To enable the scale of the problem to be appreciated, we have prepared a small booklet in which we have highlighted some of the miserable and primitive conditions in which these poor Zoroastrian agrarians live in their mud huts.

Also featured are pictures of some of the cottages that have been constructed in

replacement of huts, creating decent living conditions and improving their quality of lives.

This proposal/project is very vital for the well being of the poor Zoroastrian farmers of South Gujarat; it is requested that the same be considered sympathetically.

We look forward to your support in creating a decent lifestyle for such very poor Zoroastrian agrarians.



Exterior of dilapated hut



Interior of dilapated hut

“Most of the Zoroastrian farmers reside in mud huts, the walls of which crumble periodically”



“Kitchen” in dilapated hut



One of the new cottages built by WZO Trust

Why is the truth about conversion not told?

by jamsheed kanga

*i*n a recent book, "Breaking the spell: Religion as a national phenomenon" the author Daniel C Dennett explains by an interesting analogy how religion can indoctrinate the mind. "An ant climbs a blade of grass over and over again, seemingly without seeking food or home because its brain has been taken over by a parasite, a lancet fluke which over the course of evolution, has found this to be a particularly efficient way to get into the stomach of grazing sheep or cows where it can flourish and reproduce. The ant is controlled by the worm, which equally unconscious of purpose, maneuvers the ant into place. This is how religion works. People will sacrifice their health, their reason, their family, all in the service of an idea that has lodged in their brain. That idea is like a virus or a worm and it inspires bizarre forms of behaviour in order to propagate itself. They do this in spite of evidence, and in thrall to biological and social forces they barely comprehend."

The belief that conversion is against the tenets of our religion has taken root in the minds of the average Parsi as the parasite has in the ants mind, and is being exploited by our preachers, so much so that even a discussion on whether conversion is permitted or not is considered heretical. This is similar to what happened to Galileo the famous Italian astronomer. When he discovered that the earth moved round the sun and not the other way round as the Catholic church claimed, he was threatened with dire consequences if he continued his heretical belief and made to publicly retract this theory, and any discussion was forbidden. Thus by doing so the Church prevented any scientific discussion on this issue for decades and the truth was suppressed and the science of astronomy suffered. Only when this ban was lifted that there was true research and progress in science of astronomy. By claiming that conversion is prohibited in our scriptures, and attacking those who hold a different

view, our clergy and the fundamentalist lobby has also prevented any debate on the important issue of our diminishing population as it is linked to the issue of conversion. Any one questioning this has been subjected to vile abuse by the rabid section of the Parsi press and some so called scholars.

The question of conversion tends to divide the community, to such an extent that even genuinely good Parsis, who are otherwise kind and loving are prepared to disown their sons or daughters if they get married outside the community, and are not prepared to do the navjote of their grandchildren, as they consider it as a conversion. When the question whether the Federation of Zoroastrian Anjumans should join the WZO was being debated at the Fed meeting in Ahmadabad, a bunch of rowdies supporting the views of Khojeste Mistree and his group threatened to physically strip a delegate from Madras who spoke of inter communal marriages taking place. Recently a new organization calling itself WAPIZ has been formed, to prevent any persons who are not pure Parsi Zoroastrians from the back door entry into the WZO! Their main aim is to retain the purity of the race and they believe that even if the community diminishes and becomes a small tribe, it must retain its pristine purity! Rowdy members are not allowing the smooth working of the Federation which they have joined as bogus representatives of small anjumans merely for this purpose.

Thus it is evident that this issue is the main reason for dividing the community and not allowing a true debate about our diminishing numbers. Hence getting the truth about conversion is vital for our future. Whether conversion is permitted or not is something that can only be prescribed in the scriptures which is the word of the prophet,

and can not be based on interpretations of vague portions of some scriptures, or unsubstantiated opinions. It is in the interest of the community to set this controversy at rest and to examine the original scriptures and find out what exactly is stated. Did prophet Zarathustra prohibit conversion explicitly, or is it permitted? What is his exact direction in the Gathas or other holy books? If there is nothing said about it then can it be deemed to be prohibited, or permitted. When our Vandidad even lays down rules for cutting toenails and hair is it not strange that there is no clear-cut direction about conversion? Or is the fact that there are no such directions being suppressed as it would remove the platform of such preachers and organizations whose existence and livelihood depends upon such conflict?

In recent Parsi history this issue has been examined both by eminent scholars and legally, and a lot of evidence was recorded, which is available. We merely need to examine it and call the bluff. When I examined the old records to see what the most eminent scholars of the 19th and 20th century have said and done, this is what I found:

1. In 1882 the great scholar and Shenshai High Priest, Dasturji Jamaspi Minochurji Jamas Asa, one of the two senior high priests of the Shenshai sect had himself done the navjote of nine children of inter communal parents, 5 females and 4 males after satisfying himself that they were the progeny of Parsi males by non Parsi females. These persons were not rich persons wielding influence, but poor dock workers in Mazgaon and they had petitioned the Parsi Punchayat, that they were of Parsi 'olad,' (seed) and were desirous of being formally admitted in the religion. About 200 leading Parsis collected a fund, and the eminent dasturji performed the ceremony, in the presence of a large gathering, not surreptitiously as is done now. Dastur Dr Jivanji Mody himself a learned scholar and priest, stated this in his evidence in the case 'Petit v/s Jeejibhoy' and is quoted in the judgement.

2. The same High Priest Dastur Jamaspi in 1906, in front of a large gathering in Bombay performed the navjote (conversion) of Madame Suzanne Briere, a French lady and her marriage with Mr R D Tata, (father of JRD Tata) by Zoroastrian rites. This is a clear case of conversion from Christianity to our religion, which the eminent dasturji obviously considered as permitted.

3. Another eminent Shenshai high priest, Dastur Peshotan Sanjana also supported the navjote of children of mixed marriages (with Parsi father). He also published a pamphlet prescribing all the ceremonies to be performed before admitting *juddins* into the Zoroastrian religion. (please note, he did not say that conversion itself was wrong!) The pamphlet is called, "Explanation of the ceremonies that should be performed for the admission of *juddins* to the Zoroastrian religion" and is in the K R Cama Library.

4. In order to determine whether the religion permitted conversion or not, at a meeting of the Samast Anjuman held at Albless Bagh in 1906, an expert committee was appointed consisting of 11 of the leading experts and scholars, and including one of the most eminent Avesta scholar of the day, Dr K R Cama and many others including the two high priests, to advise whether conversion was permitted in the scriptures and if so, what ceremonies were to be performed for this. After extensive research and deliberations the committee came to the unanimous conclusion "*that they did not find any thing in the scriptures to show conversions was prohibited but that it was actually enjoined.*" On the questions posed to the expert committee regarding the ceremonies that should be performed for conversion, to quote Justice Davar, "*We find that seven out of ten experts in the report relied upon by the plaintiffs, including both the high priests deliberately lay down that the three ceremonies including the burushunum are essential for the proper admission of a juddin to the Zoroastrian faith.*" Does this not lead to the undeniable conclusion that conversion after proper ceremonies is permitted?

5. In the famous case Petit v/s Jeejibhoy, filed by Sir Dinshaw Petit against the Parsi

Panchayat, claiming all the rights of a Parsi to a person converted to the religion, in this case Mrs R D Tata, the evidence of over 200 persons was painstakingly recorded and they were cross examined by the most eminent barristers of the day. These witnesses included the leading scholars and high priests of that time and, the eminent judges also concluded that conversion was not prohibited but enjoined in the Zoroastrian religion. Further more the judgement stated that Parsis ceased to practice conversion, after coming to India, in the interest of self preservation, not because it was prohibited in the scriptures, and except in the cases of children of Parsi fathers by non Parsi mothers, no conversions took place. However as there were no cases of children of Parsi mothers by non-Parsi fathers the question of their navjotes taking place did not arise.

This is clear from the evidence of high priest Dasturji Dorab P Sanjana who states,

"There was no conversion because at first there were difficulties in the way of the emigrants who found a safe refuge in India, as Jadav Rana gave them refuge under certain conditions. Those conditions were not favourable to converting his subjects, or anyone else in India ... it would have been ingratitude towards the Rana who had given them refuge to try to convert his subjects."

According to Justice Davar, *"If the truth is told, they made no attempt because they knew not only the utter hopelessness of any attempt, but they knew further that any such attempt would have been so seriously resented that it would have resulted in ruin to the community ..."* One can find a detailed account of the case and the various committees in a Gujrati book by Ervad Nadirsha Hormazdji Sukhia printed in 1905 which is at the K R C library.

6. When Mr R D Tata enquired if Mrs Tata could enter the Anjuman Atashbehram after her conversion, in reply to a query by Seth Rustomji Dosabhai Sethna the then vice chairman of the Anjuman Atash Behram a very clear exposition of this issue is given by Dr K R Cama one of the most learned and honourable scholars the community has ever known, as follows. *"In reply to your letter and the question asked therein, I take leave to*

briefly state that, if any juddin by his understanding, or being convinced by any Zarathusti, gets to know the deficiency of his own religion and, by his own free will admits this in public, and openly wants to be a Zarathustrian, and just for this gets his navjote done, and by his desire to be identified as one belonging to the Zoroastrian faith, and as a symbol thereof wants to wear a sudreh and kashti, there is no prohibition in admitting such a person to the Zoroastrian faith. Not only that but it is the duty of every true Zoroastrian to accept such person in the Zoroastrian faith, and thus to spread the Zoroastrian religion... Those who on their own appeal want to be Zoroastrians, if we cause delay in letting them be one, then it amounts to knowingly committing the sin or mistake of obstructing a person going astray on endeavouring to come to the right path..."

(Quoted in H J M Desai's article in "Judgments")

I cannot find a more categorical statement about the permissibility of conversion, from any scholar and can not imagine how such a statement could have been made without there being evidence that conversion is permitted in our scriptures. These are a few of the examples where the most eminent scholars and dasturs have openly admitted that conversion is permitted and actually performed it, not selectively for rich persons (as in the case of Neville Wadia) only, but even for the dock worker of Mazgaon! I am sure there must be more examples, but the persons mentioned above were all without exception the most learned and revered scholars of Avesta of that day and are still held in veneration. Hence their actions and words are more relevant. To realize how learned these persons were see their brief biographies.

Dastur Jamaspi Muncherji Jamas

Asa (1830 -1889) came from a line of illustrious Bhagaria priests from Navsari. Appointed high priest of Shenshai sect in 1861. He was the President of the Society for the Promotion of Research in Zoroastrian religion for 23 years. A member of the Royal Asiatic Society, a fellow of Bombay University, and on whom the honour of a Doctor of Civil laws (DCL) *honoris causa*, was conferred by the

Oxford University. The trustees of the Bodleian Library in Oxford had commissioned his oil painting by a famous artist, which is on display at the library. Several fire temples were consecrated under his guidance. He published many books including a Pahlvi dictionary in four parts and laid the foundation for the Anjuman Atash Behram in 1897. Obviously he was held in high regard in his life time. The book "Zoroastrian Tapestry" edited by Phiroza Godrej and Firoza Mistree describes him as one of our illustrious scholar priests and has the above mentioned painting.

Dastur Shams-ul-Ulema Dr

Pestonjee B Sanjana the other high priest, was renowned in India and Europe for his efforts in spreading knowledge of Pahlvi by publishing books in Gujarati and English translations. After his death a memorial volume was published in his honour contributed by eminent Indian and European scholars. His son Dastur Dorab Sanjana was an equally distinguished scholar and succeeded him as high priest. In his pamphlet entitled "Explanation of the ceremonies to be performed for admission of juddins to the Zoroastrian religion" he explains all the ceremonies necessary to be done before a conversion can be deemed valid.

Dr K R Cama's reputation as an eminent scholar is well known. His biography has been written by the eminent scholar Sham-ul-Ulema Dr Jivanji Mody, himself an outstanding Avesta scholar who was his pupil, and also by Mr S M Edwards, a very famous historian of Bombay. Jivanji Mody wrote, "*I admire Mr Cama for his Iranian and other learning, for his services as a teacher, a preacher, and a reformer, and for his other public services in all directions, but I admire him more for his upright character, his good disposition, his affable manners which led him to behave well even with his enemies in the true spirit of the Zoroastrian benediction ... 'Behave well with your enemies'. He was one of the few leaders of thought in the community. In many questions affecting the good of the community, people liked to know the views of Mr Cama ... Though he was unpopular amongst*

the orthodox in his young days for his advanced views, as if he were a kind of heretic, those very gentlemen later on sought his views. We often come across great men but rare that we come across great and good men. Mr Cama was a great and good man ... His work both as a social and religious reformer was very useful ... He was a reformer of the constructive type and not of a destructive type" (Some of our present day so called scholars who believe in abuse and vilification of those who disagree with them could learn a lesson from him!). How many of our present day high priests and scholars boast of such credentials?

Can the fundamentalists explain this paradox of such distinguished scholars and learned high priests openly disregarding an express prohibition against conversion, in our scriptures, by performing conversions, and by writing pamphlets stating that conversion is permitted. Or an expert committee unanimously deciding to disregard an explicit injunction forbidding conversion. Is this not what is being implied by the present lot of high priests and pseudo scholars when they are stating that conversion is against the tenets of our religion, there by implying that these eminent persons have misled the community and done wrong. Are they prepared to produce the exact portions of our scriptures where such directions are given, by the prophet? Can they explain why when the *Vandidad* even advises when to cut hair and toe nails, there is no clear mention in any scripture against conversion, if so, why is it not produced? Is it in the Gathas which is the word of the prophet? Or are these later misinterpretations by priests who have no right to dictate any thing contrary to the scripture. To quote Justice Jal Vimadlal, an eminent scholar and jurist, unlike the Catholic church where the Pope can prescribe under cannon law, there is nothing like cannon law for us and hence no one can dictate their views as the only truth. Can we disregard the interpretations of persons of such eminence and reliability based on the true interpretation of our scriptures in favour of half-baked scholars, who are not even prepared to produce evidence? Have any new scriptures been

discovered recently in some caves in Iran (like the Dead Sea Scrolls) which say that conversion is barred? Gentlemen and ladies, I leave it to you to judge whose evidence is more reliable.

How can one explain that conversion was permitted and practiced by the most learned and eminent high priests and scholars in the past when Parsis were more orthodox and devout, and is forbidden in this more liberal era of today? It is my belief that while the priest and scholars of the 19th century were men of integrity, and were world renowned scholars like, K R Cama, knew that the scriptures did not prohibit conversion, and were not afraid to say so publicly, the lay public did want conversions to be permitted. They felt that the lower caste persons such as 'dubras' and 'lalias' would get converted to raise their own status as Parsis and grab the assets in Parsi trusts and their housing. My belief is that when the present lot of high priests and scholars realized that the lay public would object to the correct interpretation of the religion about the permissibility of conversion, they did not have the courage to go against the orthodoxy which is their logical constituency and the only way they could do this was by asserting that our scriptures prohibit conversion. Those who had the courage to openly state and practice conversion like Dastur Bode, were ridiculed and ostracised. Since the average Parsi cannot read the original scriptures, they accepted what the high priests and pseudo scholars told them. Taking advantage of this highly emotive issue, certain preachers who claim to be scholars have also used this to form their own cults and followers so as to exercise power. Witness the rowdy behavior in the federation meetings by followers of certain preachers.

It can be justifiably argued that we Parsis have preserved our separate racial identity over the centuries, and have distinguished ourselves in so many spheres that we are proud to be identified as Parsis. We should not allow our identity to be diluted or submerged in this vast country by allowing open conversion. This is a credible

argument and there will be many takers for this. The second fear is that if conversion is permitted openly, our communities' assets such as housing, funds etc will have to be shared with the new converts. While these arguments are worth considering, the fear that if conversion takes place, the new converts will be able to share our assets is totally misplaced and false. This issue was considered in great detail by Justice Davar in his judgment and this was his conclusion. *"For the reasons I have recorded above, I have come to the conclusion that even if an entire alien - a juddin is duly admitted to the Zoroastrian religion after satisfying all conditions, and undergoing all necessary ceremonies, he or she would not as a matter of right, be entitled to the use and benefit of the Funds and Institutions now under the defendants management and control; that these were founded and endowed only for the members of the Parsi community."* Thus it is clear that the fears that the community would be swamped by Africans and Brazilians as Khojeste's fertile imagination predicts is unfounded and there would be no sharing of our assets which are safe from converts.

Once that is clear that our religion does not prohibit conversion then the debate becomes one of the desirability for conversion from the social stand point. Even if it is permitted should we encourage it. This is a legitimate point of view and I would have more respect for our high priests if they had said that though permitted it should not be done for certain reasons which would display their honesty. To say that it is prohibited without producing any evidence is untrue and misleading. Now this issue needs to be examined from the pure social aspect, viz the issue of the survival of the community as its numbers are diminishing rapidly and hence what measures including selective conversion should be considered. The debate should be among sociologists and demographers and medical experts and not amongst priests and religious scholars, as it has been so far.

In my opinion there is a strong case for selective entry into the religion, starting with children of Parsi mothers, and their

spouses. This right cannot be denied to the children of Parsi mothers by the priests refusing to give them service but this can be debated from the social angle and not by barring it as against the tenets of our religion. A good beginning has been made by the ARZ by having a community hall where as per the true interpretation of our religion, children of Parsi women of mixed marriages as well as the spouses can participate in ceremonies. More Parsis should support them and eventually there should be consecrated agiaries for such functions.

My only intention in writing this piece and inviting the abuse of the fundamentalist is because I feel that as an intelligent community we should bring out in the open the question of conversion, and to encourage a healthy debate. We are a lazy lot and will not do our own research to discover the truth but believe what we are told. I am extremely happy that *Parsiana* have published a recent book, "Judgments" which covers the entire issue of conversion, by reproducing in full the judgments of Petit v/s Jeejibhoy (1906), and Bella v/s Saklat, (1915). It also has extracts from two relatively recent judgments on this issue viz Yazdiar v/s Yazdiar (1950) and Irani v/s Irani (1960). Thus in one slim volume all that one needs to know is now available, and I urge all my friends who are interested in the truth but did not have access to the true fact about conversion to read this book. As an educated and intelligent community let us therefore at least read what has been painstakingly assembled for our guidance on this subject in this book "Judgment". It is also necessary for intelligent Parsis to question our high priests and those who claim that conversion is against the tenets of our religion to produce hard evidence and to contradict the facts stated above. I would request that Parsis should stand up and demand that the truth is told, and the only way is to write letters to our press. Surely we have many courageous persons who will seek the truth as even our Gathas urge us to think for ourselves and not be misled by others.

"Listen well with your ears to my best teaching
Consider with enlightened mind all ye before
reaching
a decision on choice between two paths shown.
Each man to himself, ... The decision his own.
Well before the ushering-in of the great event
Wake ye all, and spread well this message I have
sent" (Yasna 30.1-2)

It is sad that an enlightened community cannot discuss and solve our differences in a civilized manner, since the truth cannot be hidden forever. The only persons to benefit from this are ambitious preachers and pseudo scholars who want to become leaders by preaching divisive ideologies, and claiming to save the religion! I would also urge the many eminent persons who have joined WAPIZ, to persuade its founders to try and emulate K R Cama and as stated above be constructive in your dialogue and do not indulge in abuse and vilification of those who do not agree with you and win them over. If despite the evidence quoted above, you wish to hold on to your views do so, but at least have the honesty to explain why you reject the evidence of such eminent scholars! A large number of Parsis are now living abroad. If they read this I would urge them to question our high priests to explain their interpretation before they view any actions by their children who marry non-Parsis as committing a wrong act. Please do not abandon your children for the sake of an unsubstantiated interpretation!

I feel that it is very necessary for the educated Parsis who realize how our community is declining in numbers to start to consider how we can go beyond the traditional remedies to slow down the decline in our population. Eminent sociologist and demographers like Dr Armaity Desai as well as fertility and medical experts and intelligent leaders should discuss the problem as a social and medical issue, not as a religious issue. It is not in our interest to allow the community to get wiped out just to satisfy the ego of bigots and false scholars. We need out, of box thinking, for our survival. Wake-up as it is already late, and try to save our community from extinction.

I would like to understand what is the role of the BPP in such a situation, where hundreds of poor Zoroastrian children are being denied a right conferred upon them by our prophet, based on what I consider a false interpretation of the scriptures. As the Akabars should they not seek the opinion of the high priests so that the true picture is known to the community, or will they continue to sit on the fence so as not to lose the votes of the orthodox? Surely the high priests will not dare to ignore their request to substantiate their interpretation. Or will they join the conspiracy of silence? I would urge Minoo Shroff who has provided mature leadership to the BPP to act for the sake of the community. I would also urge intelligent Parsis, especially those affected by this interpretation to demand the truth and write in the paper their views. Only a vigorous public opinion can bring out the truth. How long can an intelligent and progressive community be silent on such a vital issue?



Mr Kanga writes: *"Tell the readers to freely express their opinions and not keep quiet. I would also urge the BPP to ask the high priests to explain their stand as the issue affects hundreds of Parsis whose rights are being denied."*

On the same issue, in the *Parsiana* of May 7th '06, Readers' Forum, Mr Rustom Patel says: *"I am a devout Zoroastrian living in Canada. ... I was astounded to read that eminent scholars ... as well as high priests... have clearly and elaborately stated that conversion is not prohibited. ... my daughter Dolly married a nice Jewish Canadian boy, despite my objections ... and have opposed the navjote of my grandson Now my conscience is troubling me and I wonder if I have done the right thing. ... What really puzzles me is the total silence ... no rejoinder has come in any Parsi paper, (not) even the ultra orthodox. ... Mistree contradicting Cama would be akin to a science teacher from a village school in Bihar challenging Einstein's theory of relativity! ... I am a retired professor from a Canadian university and I believe that truth however unpalatable must be revealed!"*

It is up to us now, to stand and be counted, leaving the correct information for the future generations of our community to follow - Ed

Bombay Samachar *printed on 9 April '06*

*t*he Trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat have funded a major study on Parsi Demography, in connection with Sir Dorabji Tata Trust. The BPP has accurate figures, as 98% corpses are consigned to our Towers of Silence, Kemps Corner, Mumbai. The other 2% is believed to be cremated/buried, as ascertained from published obituaries.

However, the figures of births are not accurate for various reasons, leading to disparity between births and deaths. One of the ways to eliminate this is to get data about births, directly from the couples who bear children. The Board has felt that the data concerning births are vital for the purpose of not only the said study but as a useful tool in evolving community-wide population policy.

The Board has decided that it will congratulate every couple that bears a child by sending a congratulatory note and a cheque of Rs501 per child (for twins, it will be for Rs1,002).

The only stipulation, is that the intimation to the BPP should be supported by an authentic birth certificate from the Registrar of Births and Deaths BMC, Thane/Navi Mumbai.

The scheme is retrospectively applicable from 1.1.2006. The Board requests that authenticated data about births should be sent to:

Mr C S Panthaki, Sr Executive (Welfare),
Bombay Parsi Panchayat, 209 Dr D N
Road, Fort, Mumbai 400 001.
Telephonic intimations will not be entertained.



ZAGBA honours Khorshed & Firoze Jungalwala with Lifetime Achievement Award

Prof Farhang Mehr reports

Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area (ZAGBA) on March 25, 2006, honoured Mrs Khorshed Jungalwala and her husband Dr Firoze Jungalwala with Lifetime Achievement Award, for their services to Zoroastrian community locally, as well as internationally.

The evening began with a solemn and moving Jashan ceremony performed by Ervads Yazad Nalladaroo, Farhad Panthaky and Nauzer Vimadalal in the presence of

approximately 130 Zoroastrians of Indian and Iranian origin. After a brief intermission and enjoyment of snacks, Farrokh Lam, President of ZAGBA requested select fellow members of the Association to reminisce the activities of the Jungalwalas for the past 25 years.

Dilnawaz Shroff was the first speaker. Walking down memory lane, she explained how she and her husband Hoshang met the Jungalwalas in the latter's new residence in 1978. On that occasion several other Parsis were present when the hosts launched the idea of formation of a Zoroastrian Association in Boston. That meeting was

the precursor to the institution of the current association. Dilnawaz also elaborated on Jungalwalas other communal activities: organizing recreational as well as youth gatherings, initiating religious classes for children and adults, assisting Parsis in

finding suitable accommodation and medical help, encouraging fellow Zoroastrians to participate in fund-raising for charitable causes. Then Adi Guzdar, one of close fellow-associates of the

Jungalwalas

in ZAGBA, praised Khorshed's other qualities, her Parsi culinary prowess and being president of the Metro-West Musical Society of Framingham for several years and teaching piano and voice.

Professor Farhang Mehr spoke of personal interactions with the couple when his family arrived in the Boston area from Iran. Praising their sense of leadership, their interest in preservation of Zoroastrian identity, promotion of Zoroastrian culture, and the unity of Zoroastrian communities worldwide, Professor Mehr said that it was a great privilege for him and Parichehr to be invited to join the committee on drawing the



L to R: Farhang Mehr, Khorshed Jungalwala, Parichehr Mehr, Firoze Jungalwala

constitution of ZAGBA. He stated *"the Jungalwalas are some of the true and honest Zoroastrians whom Parichehr and I have met"*. He also listed various communal activities of Khorshed at national and international level, such as Chairperson of the FEZANA World Body Ad Hoc Committee, representing ZAGBA at various Zoroastrian Congresses, organizer of the First International Avesta Conference in Boston and Chairperson of the FEZANA Journal Publications Committee. Finally Professor Mehr thanked Adi Davar of Washington for reminding him of ZAGBA's duty to eulogize the Jungalwalas for their valuable and selfless services to the community and to Farrokh Lam and ZAGBA's Board for promptly responding to his request.

As the past president of ZAGBA, Dr Parastu Dubash remarked *"Khorshed has put ZAGBA on the national and international map and she brought national and international prominence to ZAGBA"*. Past President Dr Nasservan Dosabhoj described Khorshed's activities and relationships at the local level with Harvard University, with Professor Diana Eck, Director of the Pluralism Project for religious diversity, by giving talks on Zoroastrianism at their meetings. He also mentioned about conducting seminars on Zoroastrianism by inviting scholars at Harvard, in collaboration with Professor Prod Oktor Skejaervo, Agha Khan Professor of Iranian Studies, and Dr James Russell, Professor of Armenian Studies. Farrokh Lam also read a heartfelt message from his mother Dr Zareen Karani Araoz currently in India.

After several rounds of applause, Khorshed responded with gracious thanks to all for their kind words. She encouraged the younger generation to consider the importance of being involved in community affairs and to participate and take leadership in preserving the Zoroastrian religious, ethical and cultural identity for the future generations to come.

Finally, Firoze being the first president of ZAGBA, gave a brief history of the creation

of ZAGBA in 1983 and thanked several members of the community including Dr and Mrs Mehr and others, who helped him in developing the constitution of ZAGBA.

At the end, Khorshed and Firoze were presented with a plaque inscribed with the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area, in honour of their dedication and community service.

The evening came to a close with the traditional Parsi and Irani dinner followed by music and dancing in accordance with the Jamshidi Nowrooz.



Farhang Mehr is Professor Emeritus of International Relations at Boston University. A dedicated Zoroastrian he has spent all his life serving the cause of the Zoroastrian religion and the community including 16 years in Tehran Zartushty Anjuman, 12 years as its President. As an educator, lawyer and economist, he held high position in the Government, including Vice-Prime Minister, acting Minister of Finance, Governor for Iran in OPEC Board of Governors, President of Iran National Insurance Company, and President of Pahlavi (Shiraz) University. He has authored many books and articles, given interviews to several world and local radio and televisions. He is the co-editor of Bilingual Humata Journal published in USA. He is married to Parichehr and they have three children, Mehrdad, Mehran and Mitra.

It made me feel

When I was going through a very difficult time,
someone called me up and played piano music for me
on my answering machine. It made me feel very loved,
and I never discovered who did it.

(from "Random Acts of Kindness")

very loved

Possible law for non-Muslim's in Iran to wear insignia

On <http://www.canada.com/nationalpost/news/story.html?id=11fbf4a8-282a-4d18-954f-546709b1240f&k=32073>, Chris Wattie, of the National Post writes on 19th May:

Human rights groups are raising alarms over a new law passed by the Iranian parliament that would require the country's Jews and Christians to wear coloured badges to identify them and other religious minorities as non-Muslims. ...

Iranian expatriates living in Canada yesterday confirmed reports that the Iranian parliament, called the Islamic Majlis, passed a law this week setting a dress code for all Iranians, requiring them to wear almost identical "standard Islamic garments." The law, which must still be approved by Iran's "Supreme Guide" Ali Khamenehi before being put into effect, also establishes special insignia to be worn by non-Muslims.

Iran's roughly 25,000 Jews would have to sew a yellow strip of cloth on the front of their clothes, while Christians would wear red badges and Zoroastrians would be forced to wear blue cloth.

"There's no reason to believe they won't pass this," said Rabbi Hier. "It will certainly pass unless there's some sort of international outcry over this." ...

Ali Behroozian, an Iranian exile living in Toronto, said the law could come into force as early as next year. It would make religious minorities immediately identifiable and allow Muslims to avoid contact with non-Muslims. ...

On 20 May, in the New York Post, online edition, Amir Taheri writes on similar lines: ... The law mandates the government to make sure that all Iranians wear "standard Islamic garments" designed to remove ethnic and class distinctions reflected in clothing, and to eliminate "the influence of the infidel" on the way Iranians, especially the young, dress.

It also envisages separate dress codes for religious minorities, Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians, who will have to adopt distinct color schemes to make them identifiable in public. The new codes would enable Muslims to instantly recognize non-Muslims so that they can avoid shaking hands with them by mistake, and thus becoming "najis" (unclean). ... It is not clear what will happen to followers of other religions, including Hindus, Bahais and Buddhists - not to mention plain agnostics and atheists, whose very existence is denied by the Islamic Republic. ...

parviz Varjavand, mentions at zoroastrians@yahoo.com also on 20 May: *"I just called Mr Kourosh Niknam the Zoroastrian deputy in the Iranian Parliament and he confirmed that this news was not true. There had been a talk in the parliament about designing a dress-code for all Iranians in order to distinguish Iranians from other nationalities and specially fixing a standard for how Iranian women should wear proper Islamic coverings, but the proposal was voted down and never came to pass. There had never been a talk about Iranian religious minorities having to wear different color patches in order to be distinguished from Moslems."*

Despite this assurance one wonders what is in store.



Harmony in Paradox

The Paradox of Service & Rule

by dina g mcintyre

Fifth and final in the series of 5 papers

[In the last issue, 1/06, it was mentioned erroneously as the final part of the series. The Paradox of Service & Rule now concludes the Harmony in Paradox series]

*n*o one knows for sure when Zarathustra lived. We have a lot of intelligent and educated speculation, but no direct evidence. Opinions range from 6,500 BC, to 1,700 BC, to 1,200 BC, to 1,000 BC, to 600 BC.

No one knows for sure where Zarathushtra lived. We have a lot of intelligent and educated speculation, but no direct evidence. Opinions range from Azerbaijan, to Afghanistan, to eastern Iran, to western Iran.

The Gathas of Zarathushtra are the only text that exists today in the Gathic language. And due to the passage of time, and the depredations of Alexander the Macedonian¹, it became an unknown language in terms of its grammar and vocabulary, for more than 1,000 years. What little knowledge the Sasanians retained of Gathic was further decimated by the Arab invasion of Iran.

So how do we know today what the Gathas say. Late in the 18th century, linguists accidentally discovered the similarity between Gathic and Vedic. This started the long, slow, process of decoding the Gathas, based on Vedic and other ancient languages, using the principles of philology — which includes the comparative analysis of languages, and ascertaining some common ways (rules) which underlie how they change from culture to culture, and generation to generation.

Today, there is approximately 80% agreement among linguists and philologists on translations of Gathic words and

grammar. Unfortunately, some of the most important words in the Gathas do not fall within this 80% on which there is agreement. *Aramaiti* is one of them.

We all agree that it is one of the *amesha spenta*, an attribute of Ahura Mazda himself, and (like the other *amesha spenta*) it is also an attribute of a good person. But there is substantial disagreement as to its meaning.

In Y30.7, Zarathushtra says:

“But to this world He came with the rule of good thinking and of truth, and (our) enduring [aramaiti] gave body and breath (to it). . .” Y30.7. ²

How does one give “body and breath” to the rule of truth and good thinking? One cannot do so with right-mindedness and good words alone. Good actions are required to make the rule of truth and good thinking real, give it “body and breath”, give it substance.

Similarly, Zarathushtra says “. . . *Through its actions, [aramaiti] gives substance to the truth [asha]. . .*” Y44.6, and he calls *aramaiti* “. . . *[aramaiti] of good actions. . .*” in Y45.4, indicating that actions are a part of the meaning of *aramaiti*, a view with which Professor K D Irani concurs.³

In Y51.21 Zarathushtra shows us the full spectrum of what is included within the meaning of *aramaiti*. It includes understanding (ie. thoughts), words, actions, and vision (another aspect of thought).

“Virtuous [spento] is the man of [aramaiti]. He is so by reason of his understanding, his words, his actions, his conception [daena]. . .” Y51.21.

If a man of aramaiti is spenta because of his understanding, his words, his actions, his vision [daena], then the meaning of aramaiti, of necessity, would have to include all these things.

It is interesting that Zarathushtra also teaches us that we serve and worship the Wise Lord with our thoughts, words and actions of truth, good thinking and good rule, in other words, with our aramaiti. So in a sense, piety and devotion are also included within the meaning of aramaiti.

"I who shall serve all of you, Wise Lord, with good thinking, . . ." Y28.2;

"Yes, praising, I shall always worship all of you, Wise Lord, with truth and the very best thinking and with their rule . . ." Y50.4;

"With hands outstretched, Wise One, I shall serve all of you . . . with truth . . . You, moreover, with the skillfulness of good thinking." Y50.8;

"I shall try to glorify Him for us with prayers of [aramaiti], . . ." Y45.10.

We see from these verses that the fragrance of a life well lived is an act of worship — a prayer of aramaiti in the temple of life.

To summarize:

The way in which Zarathushtra uses aramaiti in the Gathas, shows us that aramaiti means making truth/right (asha) a reality, giving it "body and breath", giving it substance, with our thoughts, words and actions of asha — the proverbial good thoughts, good words and good actions — a foundation of Zoroastrian belief.

This is how we serve the Wise Lord.

This is also how we serve all the living, and our world, because it is impossible to think a good thought, say a good word or do a good deed, without benefiting the people and the circumstances that are affected by such thoughts, words and actions.

It is difficult to find one word in English that captures the full meaning of aramaiti. "Service" to Mazda and to all the living, with our good thoughts, words and actions, comes close, based on a contextual analysis. But is this also linguistically valid? Well, although Professor Insler prefers "respect" as the correct translation of aramaiti, he has also expressed the following opinion in connection with the meaning of aramaiti. *"Vedic also frequently uses the expression aram kr 'to serve' whose underlying meaning was surely 'show respect'."*⁴

But how does translating aramaiti as service, square with the fact that it is one of the amesha spenta, and as such, is a characteristic of Mazda Himself.

A God who serves?

Some teachers of Zoroastrianism teach that Mazda transcends the conflict between good and evil in our world, that He does not act or involve Himself in our world. But the Gathas show us a very different view of Mazda. It is true that He does not interfere with our freedom to choose (*" . . . Him who left to our will (to choose between) the virtuous and the unvirtuous. . . "* Y45.9), but in His own way (a way perhaps not always clear to us), He actively works to promote the renovation of the world:

With His thoughts: (" . . . Thy (good) thinking, through whose actions one has nourished the truth. . . " Y46.7);

With His words: (" . . . Thou art the Lord by reason of Thy tongue (which is) in harmony with truth and by reason of Thy words stemming from good thinking . . . " Y51.3);

And with His actions: (" . . . the truthful [ashavanem] Lord, virtuous [spenta] in His actions. . . " Y46.9; "Yes, those things which Thou hast brought to realization, as well as those things which Thou hast reached by Thy actions . . . " Y50.10).

Just as He expects us to do. This is not a Ruler who expects anything of us that He is not prepared to do Himself.

Let us consider Rule

The conventional notion of rule and service, is that the Ruler rules, and his subjects serve. In one sense, this conventional notion is reflected in the Gathas, because we often see references to Mazda as Ruler and to xshathra as His rule (“...Wise Ruler...” Y28.7; “...the Wise Lord who rules at will...” Y43.1; “...Thy rule that is in accord with truth [asha]...” Y43.14; “...By your rule, Lord, Thou shalt truly heal this world...” Y34.15).

And we are told that our part is to serve (“...May there be aramaiti under the rule of Him who has the appearance of the sun...” Y43.16; “...fame is to serve Thee and the truth, Wise One, under Thy rule.” Y32.6).

But Zarathushtra’s thinking is often unconventional, and never one-dimensional. He also tells us:

That rule belongs to service, and that service gives rule (“...Grant thou [aramaiti] your rule of good thinking...” Y51.2);

That service gives power (“...Give thou, o [aramaiti] power to Vishtaspa and to me...” Y28.7);

And that to rule is to serve: (“Glorious Jamaspa Haugva (has displayed) this understanding of His power: ‘One chooses that rule of good thinking allied with truth in order to serve...’” Y51.18; “...He [referring to man] serves truth during his rule, with good word and good action...” Y31.22).

An interesting paradox. It makes us wonder: What is good rule? What does it consist of?

Good rule is frequently called “...the rule of truth [asha] and good thinking [vohu mano]...” Y29.10; “...the rule of good thinking and of truth...” Y30.7.

It is also called “...the rule of good thinking...” Y 30.8. Since good thinking (vohu mano) includes the comprehension of truth / right (asha), this is consistent with good rule being the rule of asha and vohu mano.

And it is also called the rule of aramaiti

(“...Grant thou [aramaiti] your rule of good thinking...” Y51.2). If aramaiti means giving asha substance with our thoughts, words and actions, then aramaiti’s rule would necessarily be the rule of asha and vohu mano. So all these descriptions of good rule are consistent.

It is amazing what a difference it makes to our quality of life, when those in authority use their power in a good way — be it in a corporation, or government, or academia, or a family, or an organization, or a committee, or any of the many large and small units of governance that exist in our society. How should those in authority exercise their power? With aramaiti: “Let those of good rule rule over us...with actions stemming from good understanding, and with [aramaiti]” Y48.5.

But the notion of vohu xshathra, good rule, is not only for those in authority. We all have power over each other, — power that we can use in a constructive or destructive way. If you can hurt someone, you have power over him. If you can help someone, you have power over him. We too need to exercise our power with aramaiti.

There is a lovely verse in Yasna 51, the Vohu Xshathra (Good Rule) Gatha, in which Zarathushtra, teaching through questions, spells out the components of good rule.

“Where shall there be protection instead of injury? Where shall mercy take place? Where truth [asha] which attains glory? Where [spenta aramaiti]? Where the very best thinking [mano vahishtem]? Where Wise One, through Thy rule?” Y51.4.

So we see that the paradox of service and rule resolves itself into the harmony of a beneficent existence.

Mazda’s rule offers protection instead of injury. It is a rule that is compassionate, a rule that gives substance to truth/right (asha) with His thoughts, words and actions. His rule is the rule of aramaiti.

As with Him, so with us. We too should serve asha (truth/right), each other, and our world, with protection instead of injury, with

compassion, with our thoughts, words and actions of asha, ie. with aramaiti. Such service is also how we worship Wisdom (Mazda). Such service creates good rule, (vohu xshathra) — the rule of aramaiti.

Such service is how Mazda and we, as partners, heal our world and bring to life the good vision [vanghui daena] — the vision of a world governed by truth and good thinking. The vision of a world governed by aramaiti.

“ . . . *The Wise One in rule is Lord through [aramaiti].*” Y47.1

Notes:

1. A late Pahlavi manuscript, the Arda Viraz Namag, has this to say about the destruction of texts wrought by Alexander the Macedonian: “And that Religion, namely all the Avesta and Zand, which had been written with golden ink on prepared cowhide, and deposited in the Staxr I Pabagan in the National Archives, was taken away and burnt by Alexander the Roman, resident of Egypt, and many religious authorities and judges and herbeds and mowbeds and upholders of the religion and skilled and wise men were killed.” And in the Denkard, another late Pahlavi text, it is written: “And after destruction had come from the notorious, wicked, (and) wrathful Alexander, (even) so much was not recovered from (the ruins) of what had existed, as would be possible to be kept (in memory) by a religious authority.” Both quotations are from Humbach, *The Gathas of Zarathushtra and Other Old Avestan Texts*, Heidelberg, 1991, Vol. 1, page 52. Words appearing in parentheses are words that Humbach has inserted into the text, to aid understanding.

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

to the discussion at hand enables us to focus on the strand of thought that is under discussion.

3. In his Introduction to his father’s translation of the Gathas, Professor K. D. Irani describes the concept of aramaiti as follows: “The inspiration that leads to action is Spenta Armaity, translated in the religious context as Piety or Devotion, and in the moral context as Benevolence or Right-Mindedness. This spirit is another aspect of Divinity, it inclines us to move from right conceptions to right actions. We thereby, with courage and confidence put our well-thought-out and well formulated intentions into action. This is called good-deed. Here we can crystallize the oft-repeated trilogy of Zoroastrianism: Good-thoughts, Good-words, and Good-deeds.” Irani, *The Gathas, the Hymns of Zarathushtra*, as edited by K.D. Irani, (1998).

4. See An Introduction to the Gathas of Zarathushtra, Issue # 4, McIntyre, “Making it Happen, Aramaiti”, footnote # 7. This publication may be viewed at www.zarathushtra.com.



Dina G McIntyre, is a Zoroastrian, born in India and came to USA in 1956. She earned a law degree from the University of Pittsburgh, School of Law and practiced law in the United States, since 1964. Prior to her retirement she was a member of the bar of all federal and state courts in Pennsylvania, and the United States Supreme Court. She has been a student of the teachings of Zarathushtra since the early 1980s, and was the Editor of a 12-lesson course on the Gathas called *An Introduction to the Gathas of Zarathushtra*, which she distributed world-wide in 1989-90. She has lectured on the teachings of Zarathushtra at various conferences and seminars in the US, Canada, England and India. Her writings on the teachings of Zarathushtra appear on these websites: www.vohuman.org and www.zarathushtra.com

Sent by Behroze Daruwalla, Houston



Waste management in India, 2006

by almitra patel

*The twilight frogs are silent.
Stray dogs, smoking waste ...
Oh, pity my poisoned land.*

My lifelong love of nature was nurtured in Devlali, during daily walks with my tree-loving father Pheroze Sidhwa and at Barnes School, on a plateau amid the Sahyadri hills. In 1922, Jamshed Nusserwanjee, the revered twelve-time Mayor of Karachi, then Asia's cleanest city, had inspired my father and his nephew Rustom Sidhwa to start 3-4 "Swaraj" industries, to make India independent of British imports. One of these was Bharat Tiles, known for its lovely carpet-patterned tiles that replaced Italian ceramic floors. In 1945, with cement requisitioned and no private construction, they switched to making ceramic grinding wheels for the war effort. So after a Chemistry-Botany BSc at Bombay, I went to MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology in USA) for a BS in General Engineering and MS in industrial ceramics.

I worked for 6 years in Grindwell Ltd, then for 25 years in its ancillary family firm developing an import substitute for induction furnace linings for melting iron and steel, where I enjoyed providing technical help to foundry customers to reduce waste and improve productivity. My Trouble-Shooting manual for them was translated by a Swedish firm into 5 languages for use in 80 countries.

I was also part-time Project Officer for the Bombay Natural History Society and Smithsonian Institution's Gir Project to save the habitat of lions in Saurashtra. In 1972 we moved to a farm four villages outside Bangalore, for our two little girls to enjoy nature as we did, and raised poultry for 30 years. I managed business and factory visits one week a month, and on retirement pursued new interests, like trying to save

1800 BC Iron-Age megaliths nearby and trying to do something about our village environment. Frogs sang at dusk on our scenic country road until 1991, when Bangalore City Corporation began daily dumping truckloads of city garbage on both sides of the road and into the marshes and stream banks "because there is nowhere else to dump it". Till that time, like most city folk, I never knew or thought about where city garbage eventually ended up, or how. I was determined not to take a NIMBY attitude ("Not In My Back Yard") and have it dumped somewhere else, where some other farmers would suffer, as we did, from the huge packs of street dogs that fed and multiplied on garbage. Without the need of a human touch to survive, they turned feral (back to their wild ways) and formed hunting packs at night that attacked many farms, including our poultry, sheep and pets.

It is because of this problem of no ownership and social contact with humans, that Indian animal lovers' efforts to sterilise and release such feral strays back onto city streets does not protect us from being chased and bitten while walking, jogging or riding two-wheelers. School-children are the worst sufferers, either on foot or by falling off pillions as two-wheeler pillions try to avoid a chasing pack. Painful and costly anti-rabies shots are a must, because it is impossible to punctually catch and vaccinate every street dog every year as required, and we cannot take chances with such a fatal disease. That is why the false sentiments of a few, like many Parsis in Mumbai, are so dangerous for others: those who feed biscuits to stray dogs, to help them survive outside a loving home, are encouraging a deadly menace to fellow-humans without any personal responsibility.

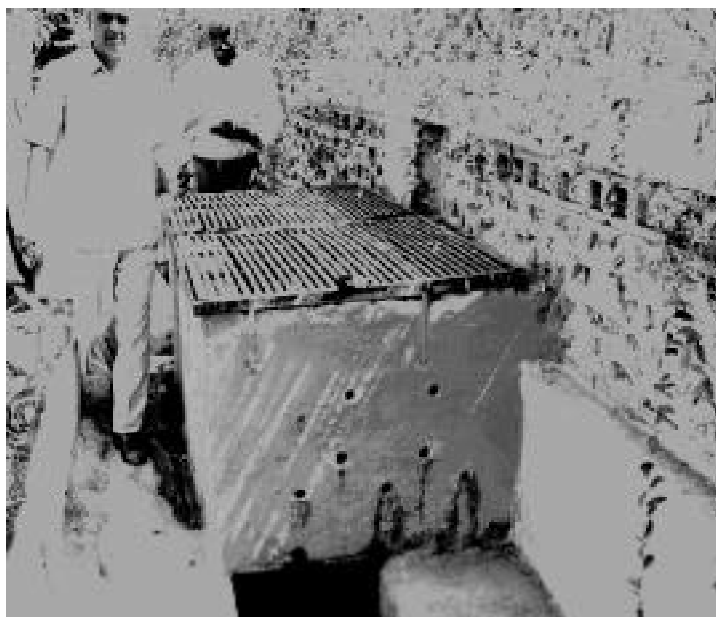
So to help city officials find suitable disposal sites, I chased their files up through the Government Revenue system for an incredible 2 1/2 years to get six sites officially Notified for such use. Another solution was to find hygienic ways of managing city waste. In Mumbai, Excel Industries had developed fast-acting bio-cultures of natural microbes from cowdung, wood-rot fungi and soil to control odours, especially during a municipal sweepers' strike, and to speed up the composting of waste. Composting has been done since Vedic times to return nutrients to the soil, dumping village waste in pits all year till the next monsoon. That is too slow for voluminous city waste, which if left to rot in an unturned heap, especially during rains, produces a highly-polluting coffee-coloured "leachate" that enters the soil and groundwater and makes it unfit to drink or use. But bio-cultures sprayed onto long heaps of waste called "wind-rows", turned weekly to provide enough air for odourless decomposition, converts the garbage turned into dark-brown crumbly compost in 45 to 60 days, full of all the "good" microbes, nutrients and micro-nutrients that plants need to grow well.

Capt J S Velu of Exnora, a Chennai NGO, provided an upstream solution. The best way to keep streets clean is not to dirty them in the first place. So Exnora got citizens to remove all street waste-bins (which are nuisance-points) and instead pay a rag-picker "Street Beautifier" for door-to-door collection of their "wet" food waste, and give their "dry" recyclable waste separately, unmixed. After garbage-blocked drains brought out rats and plague to flooded Surat, Capt Velu dreamed up a Clean India Campaign to spread the message of such hygienic waste collection and composting to 30 cities in 30 days. A friend and I joined him in our Maruti van covered with banners and eco-messages, spending 5 days in Surat on our way to Delhi and back via Nagpur-Hyderabad, learning and sharing.

We discovered that not just Bangalore but almost all Indian cities had nowhere to



One shift production of Mysore's centralized compost plant; heap of sieved saleable compost on the left, unwanted plastic on the right (larger heap). Highlights the unimagined problem of plastics in waste.



Decentralised composting in a Bio-bin, 6ft x 3ft x 3ft, which can replace a roadside waste container (which is lifted by dumper-placers) and can convert the door-to-door-collected kitchen waste of 125 households to compost for beautification of their road (and improvement of property values in the greened area). This one is from Diamond Garden, Chembur in Mumbai. There are thus Huge savings to the city in transportation costs.

dump their waste except all over the outskirts and approach roads. As Bangalore Convener of INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) I met Nargis Irani and Katy Rustom, fighting since 1986 through the Courts to preserve Dahanu's eco-sensitive horticultural ecology. They urged me to do the same for hygienic solid waste management (SWM) and their wonderful lawyer Kerban Anklesaria helped me file a Public Interest Litigation (PIL), WP888/96, against every State and Union Territory, the Government of India and the Central Pollution Control Board, citing the example of Surat, once the filthiest but today India's cleanest city thanks to S R Rao's 18 months as its Municipal Commissioner, which shows that one can do anything if one decides to. He

began by cleaning the filthiest slums, which all over India cooperate the most wonderfully if given a chance.

I asked the Supreme Court to order that India's 300 cities of population over 100,000 should follow Planning Commission guidelines for SWM and sought data from all Respondents on how long their disposal sites if any would last and how they were managed. Suddenly, top city officials who thought rubbish was a subject only for lower officials to deal with, had to answer the Court and pay attention to the subject. This has been the biggest positive outcome of the case, and improvements are slowly apparent. The March 1999 Report of a Supreme Court appointed Committee of 8 members, including myself, resulted in enactment of the Municipal Solid Waste (Management & Handling) Rules 2000, which makes it mandatory for all towns and cities over 20,000 population to follow door-to-door collection of segregated dry and wet waste, with biological stabilising of wet waste and encouragement of dry waste recycling by the informal sector.

Progress is slow but steady. Karnataka has recruited and trained Environment Officers for waste management in half its cities. Many State Governments have by now given suitable waste processing sites to their towns and cities, where action is yet to begin. Many have started door-to-door collection, though only Suryapet's Commissioner Khadar Saheb has achieved zero-dustbin zero-garbage status since 2003. Citizens are now empowered to, and do, demand good performance from those who run their cities. SAARC country delegates have recommended, at Dhaka in October 2004, a waste-management model similar to India's. Pakistan has started its first city-waste compost plant at Lahore on 31st March 2006, for which I was happily present, and hopefully many more will follow. Every SAARC country needs to soon pass similar Rules to accelerate progress in waste management. I will be delighted to help.



A wonderful person I met at Karachi, Nargis Latif, working since 30 years with the city's rag-pickers who get abuse, not the thanks they deserve, for minimizing by about 10% the waste to be transported to outlying dumps. The picture of above is in front of a very innovative structure constructed entirely of waste: her lightweight waterproof "Wastic Blocks" (waste plastic compacted into blocks and wrapped in silvery plastic sheeting). below, no waste in the background, only the Wastic-Block shed.



Decentralised composting of food waste in local "bio-bins" of 6ft x 3 ft x 3 ft, serving 125 middle-income homes or 1200 slum families, is also catching on slowly, to minimise waste needing transport over long distances to controversial rural sites. Pune and now also Mumbai, are beginning to make these mandatory for on-site composting of apartment wastes. Citizens can do their bit for clean cities by promoting or cooperating with door-to-door collection of wet wastes, keeping their dry recyclables for weekly or monthly donation to the nearest waste-picker. They can also promote good practices by ensuring that cities do not collect inerts (debris, drain silt, road dust and diggings) in the same trip as garbage, so that compost of good quality reaches our farmers. They should visit their

cities' waste dumps for a first-hand experience, and urge their cities to use non-recyclable thin-film plastics as an 8% additive or replacement for bitumen, as it gives very durable tar roads. Bangalore has 400 km of such urban roads, Tamil Nadu has 1200 km rural "plastic roads" in all districts, and both plan many more.

This case has had many side benefits. Property tax has been rationalised to improve city finances, which have now to follow accrual-based double-entry accounting practices for transparency and citizen oversight if desired. I have been invited to participate in framing E-waste rules for electronic waste. Next on my agenda in the Supreme Court, which may take a couple of years, are Eco-Friendly Packaging and Waste Minimisation Rules. After that, it will be up to civil society to enforce compliance with good practices.



The reason for asking Dr Patel to write this article, is to show what can be achieved if one is committed in improving one's city. So many of our cities' waste, both in India & Pakistan need to be addressed and we have Almitra who is willing to share her expertise. Contact almitrapatel@rediffmail.com - Ed



Almitra Patel is an engineer from MIT USA with a background in chemistry and botany and a love for the environment. After retirement she has become an expert in urban solid waste management, having visited 132 Indian municipalities and their dumpsites to date, plus 19 abroad. She is a member of India's Supreme Court

Committee for Solid Waste Management, and is interested in waste minimization, waste-water issues, slum housing and hygiene. Email: almitrapatel@rediffmail.com



The best haircut one can have, especially for a meeting!

Informing you . . .

The Zoroastrian Sports Committee (ZSC) announces:

What: The 2006 Zarathushti Games

When: July 1 - 4, 2006

Where: Los Angeles, CA; The Beautiful Loyola Marymount University.

For more information visit <http://zathletics.com/>

Zoroastrian Cricket Club Canada are embarking on a UK tour in July & August 2006. A one off, "Winner takes all" festival match has been arranged between the visitors and ZCC GB for 29th July 2006.

ZCC GB last played together approximately 10 years ago and this is a call for players old and new to come to the fore and take part in this memorable event. Please contact Kerman Jasavala on 07956 404 601 or kerman.jasavala@gmail.com

The Rustam Guiv Foundation announces a writing contest on "*What I have learned from the Gathas*".

- ✓ The participant's age should be between 15 and 30 years.
- ✓ Essays should not exceed two pages. They can be in English or Persian.
- ✓ Deadline is September 1, 2006
- ✓ Writers should separately write their brief biography not exceeding half a page.

The participant who receives the highest score will be awarded \$1000. So far they have received 30 essays from Iran. This has been very encouraging, therefore it was decided to add the second and third winning awards as well.

Essays should be mailed to:
Rustam Guiv Foundation
c/o Daryoush Jahanian, M.D
1835 North 78th Place
Kansas City, Kansas 66112
USA

New online journal dedicated to the History of Ancient Iran.

The site: <http://www.iranancienthistory.com/>

Nilufer Mama was recognized at an event hosted by the Toronto Board of Trade as being a leader in the business community.

To honour her achievement she was a distinguished guest at Meet the Champions - A Celebration of Business Excellence at the Toronto Board of Trade on March 8, 2006.

This event is an opportunity to celebrate with all of the winners of Business Excellence and Leadership Awards from the various boards of trade and chambers of commerce from across Ontario. Nilufer was nominated by the Canada Pakistan Business Council where she serves as a Director.

Parsi Websites : Ader Gandi and Yazdi Tantra have developed the following websites.

www.TheParsiChronicle.com in existence since two and a half years, now ranks as one of the top five websites in www.google.com, when one searches for the word Parsi. To date, this site has been visited by over 67,000 people.

www.TheParsiDirectory.com. Over 20,000 Parsis are registered on this site. One can search for any Parsi and chances are you will find them using this resource which is free.

www.TheMissingParsi.com. The idea behind this site is simple - use the power of the Internet to help fellow Parsis and Zoroastrians connect with people they have lost touch with.

www.TheParsiMatch.com. This is a free match making web site for our community.

The Fourth World Zoroastrian Youth Congress is being held on 27 December 2007 – 3 January 2008, with the slogan - "Back to the Future".

Another boring "TRADITIONAL" Zoroastrian Youth Congress? If you mean abiding by our ancient Zoroastrian precepts of Veracity, Integrity, Fidelity, Charity, Amity, Unity - The Very Spirit of Zoroastrianism - why then, yes!

If you mean, yet another as old as the Rockies, the Alps or the Himalayas kind of Congress – well then, no! The 4th WZYC2007 is not going to be exactly aping what the previous three WZYCs in America, Europe and Asia have done. They mean to be different and want to make sure a difference is made in the lives of all who choose to join in.

They are not going to be a mini-LA, a mimic of London or a maxi-Poona! They aim to be their own joyful, bright, lively and innovative Aussie personalities – different in devise, yet large-hearted as all outdoors; happy as Larry, yet honest as their summer day is long – as good as the gold they plan to go for all the way, yet as jolly as the gentle jumbuck, with whose wool is used to weave kustis worldwide!

The office bearers are: Shiraz J Mistry – Chairman : Delara C Misry – Vice Chair : Shirin J Mistry – Hon Secretary : Khushtroo N Patel – Financial Controller

Visit their website to keep updated: <http://www.4wzyc.org/>

Zubin Wadia informs about their website <http://www.parsiresourcegroup.org/forms.html> where registration forms for volunteers/job seekers/youth/mobeds etc are available. If you need any clarification contact him on gen_nex_parsis@yahoo.co.in

Aryan Culture Anniversary Conference and celebrations will be held this September at Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Please contact Dilshod Azimov for further information at zandguy@yahoo.com

To get up to date news about Parsi Zoroastrians read regularly Parsi World by going to www.parsiworld.com

Call for nominations to recognize excellence in Zarathushti Business, Entrepreneurship and Professions.

In order that excellence in business and profession is encouraged and recognised, the WZCC annually recognises individuals in three categories:

- ✓ Outstanding Zarathushti Entrepreneur
- ✓ Outstanding Zarathushti Professional
- ✓ Outstanding Young Zarathushti Entrepreneur/Professional

At this time, nominations are invited and all nominations received shall be judged by a panel of three judges. The selected candidates will be honoured at the upcoming Annual General Meeting of the WZCC in December 2006.

Nomination forms are available on the WZCC website www.wzcc.net or requested from Filli Madon, Director, WZCC-Australia pars09@yahoo.com



Corrigendum

With reference to the article appearing in *Hamazor* Issue 4/05, pp 22-25, *Zoroastrians in Pakistan's Armed Forces*, Colonel Fali Talati's sister, Mehru, who lives in England, took umbrage with Brig Rustom Darrah and myself, as we did "not make any attempt to reach his family" in finding a photograph of her late brother in uniform.

Now that we have the appropriate photograph, sent by Ms Talati, we make amends. -
Editor



Update on Bactrian Camels

Article written by Sam Kerr in *Hamazor* Issue 1/06, pp 49-50 on the above subject, has found further information from the Internet.

"There are an estimated 900 wild Bactrian camels that survive in the world today. Located in China and Mongolia, these remnant herds are critically endangered due to ever-increasing threats from wolf-predation, hunting, illegal mining and cross-breeding with domestic camels. The Wild Camel Protection Foundation, WCPF, a UK registered charitable foundation, was established in 1997 in an attempt to do something about this dire situation. Working with both the governments of China and Mongolia, the WCPF has aided in establishing nature reserves and captive-breeding ...

There are some Bactrian, among the one-humped camels roaming in the Arizona Desert. They are remnants of eighty camels shipped from the Middle East to the US to form a desert Army Camel Corps. But the idea was abandoned. It is illegal to hunt a camel in Arizona." ■■■

Books & “all that Jazz”

Enduring Legacy : Parsis of the 20th century

Review by Sarosh Bana, for Business India and shared with Hamazor

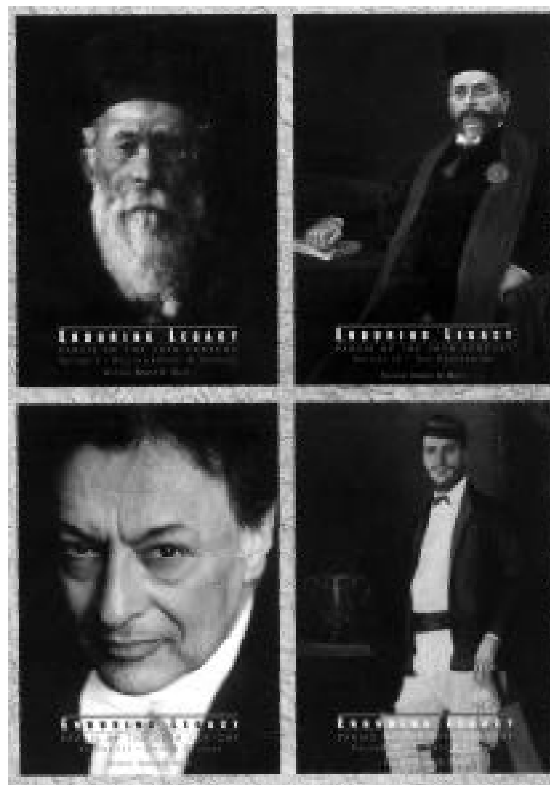
Since their arrival in India a millennium ago to flee the Muslim invasion of Iran, the Parsis have seldom exceeded a 100,000 in number. But despite their inconsequential minority among the multitudes of India, they have played a disproportionately prodigious role in almost all spheres of nation-building, entrepreneurship, industry, finance, politics, services, law and judiciary, medicine, philanthropy, arts and sport.

None other than Mahatma Gandhi had been moved enough to attest to this when he commented, “In numbers, Parsis are beneath contempt, but in contribution, beyond compare.”

Perhaps, the 1,168 pages of the four volumes of *Enduring Legacy: Parsis of the 20th century* are yet inadequate to chronicle the distinctive achievements of this enterprising community. But this seminal publication has 66 specialists, essayists and historians exploring some of the more illustrious of these stalwarts and the influence they wielded in their chosen vocations. Edited by the Parsi academician, Dr Nawaz B Mody, the work records the familiar wealth-creation and charities of the Tatas, Godrejs, Wadias, Jeejeebhoyas, Petits, Camas and Pallonjis. And who hasn't heard of India's first Field Marshal, Sam Manekshaw, who had led India to victory in just 14 days in 1971 against Pakistan? Besides it was India's great scientist and Nobel laureate, Dr C V Raman, who eulogised Dr Homi Bhabha – the acknowledged ‘father of India's nuclear programme’ – as “the modern equivalent of Leonardo da Vinci”.

Enduring Legacy, however, also details the less known accomplishments of other doyens, embellishing the writings with the Parsi brand of humour, insightful anecdotes, historical references, and commentaries on their personal life and on the influence these individuals wielded in their respective fields.

Few are perhaps aware that the first prime minister of Bombay Province (in 1937) was a Parsi – Sir Dhanjishah Bomanji Cooper – and its first public health and excise minister, also a Parsi, Dr Manchershah Dhunjibhoy Gilder, had introduced prohibition when his community is known for its fondness for the tippie. Besides, eminent criminal lawyer Dinshah Davar, who in 1906 became the first Parsi to be appointed as permanent judge of the Bombay High Court, had defended Bal Gangadhar Tilak in 1897. But presiding over Tilak's second trial in 1908, he earned the wrath of many



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when he convicted the legendary freedom fighter and sentenced him to six years' imprisonment. Then there was the popular surgeon-playwright, Dr Jehangir Ratanshah Wadia, whose hilarious parodies in the Parsis' borrowed Gujarati language were performed by him and fellow Parsi doctors and the tradition continued for decades after his death in 1957, all the gate receipts going towards Parsi medical charities.

Appropriately enough, the entire work is dedicated "to those members of the Parsi community who have enriched the lives of so many." While Volume I speaks of Parsis in trade and industry, Volume II discusses their role in the various professions, including medicine, law, administration, philanthropy, sciences, economics, education, journalism, police and armed forces. Volume III reflects on their contributions to the visual and performing arts, and the last Volume considers their achievements in sports. Meant to serve, in the words of the publishers, as a significant international tool of reference and record, *Enduring Legacy* is illustrated with a wealth of visual material from archives, family albums and private collections.

The publication, writes Mody, currently the Sir Pherozeshah Mehta professor of civics and politics, was an arduous and yet a fulfilling enterprise. The inspiration was, in fact, provided in 1999 by former Maharashtra governor P C Alexander, who, while releasing Mody's earlier book, *The Parsis in Western India: 1818 to 1920*, expressed the need for a comprehensive study on the contributions made by the community to India in the 20th century. A Fulbright alumnus from Cornell and former departmental head of Civics and Politics at the Bombay University, Mody notes that the volumes highlight the extent to which the Parsis identified with building a new post independent India, strong and self-reliant in every field.

Today, there are around 69,000 Parsis left in India. But going by their death rate, it is feared that by 2020, when India will have achieved the dubious distinction of being

the most populated country on earth with 1.2 billion people, Parsis will have reduced in numbers to just 23,000 or 0.0002 percent of the population. They will then cease to be recognised as a community, but rather a 'tribe' as with any ethnic group below the 30,000 count.

Hence, the release of *Enduring Legacy* - at the hands of eminent Parsi industrialist Ratan Tata at a function held in Mumbai (13 February) – comes at an opportune time, this fulsome tribute drawing on the legendary exploits of a community that now confronts a questionable future. ■■■■



Sarosh Bana is the Founder President of the Youth Wing of WZO, India, in 1997. Though he studied Bio-Dynamic Agriculture in Germany and Switzerland, he took to journalism. Starting his career with the "Indian Express" in Bombay in 1980, he was executive editor of the "Blitz Newsweekly", before joining the nationally circulated "Business India" fortnightly as Deputy Editor. He specializes in defence and security, infrastructure, politics and foreign affairs, and the environment. Under his stewardship, the Youth Wing has been pursuing

Project Udvada that is oriented towards the social and cultural rejuvenation of this pilgrim resort in south Gujarat.

"The Space Between Us"

*d*olly Dastoor says on ZWIN : "Thrity Umrigar's new book, *The Space Between Us* published by HarperCollins makes very interesting reading and a must for all indophiles, nay parsiphiles, living in the diaspora. Set in Bombay, it is a tale of two women, Bhima, an illiterate servant and Sera, an aristocratic Parsi widow, the two from very different backgrounds but whose life paths cross because of their gender and their shared life experiences. Most of us can relate to this, being brought up in Bombay with female domestic help all around us.



Dolly Dastoor, Editor in Chief, FEZANA Journal

The Space Between Us



But did we ever stop to think what was the life story behind, Mary or Tulsi or merely the generic name of “ganga” or “ayah”?

Thrity, a journalist of 17 years, goes beyond this, she shows how the lives of the rich and the poor are intrinsically connected yet vastly removed from each other and vividly captures how the bonds of womanhood are pitted against the divisions of class and culture.

Visit her website www.umrigar.com and read the excellent reviews from New York Times, The Economist, Washington Post, The Montreal Gazette, Financial Times, The Calcutta Telegraph.

A highly recommended book, makes excellent easy reading for all.

Boman Desai at Houston

*m*anashni of Zoroastrian Association of Houston said in its newsletter ...

“The author Boman Desai’s visit to Houston was the long-awaited Library event for April. He read from his book *Trio* before an eager audience of ZAH members. Interspersed with his readings from three different passages in the book, Boman gave a fascinating commentary on the lives of three main characters in *Trio* – the famous and talented composers Brahms and Schumann and the latter’s wife Clara, who was a much-acclaimed pianist in her own right. We were all impressed by the passion and commitment that Boman Desai brought to his research and writings that was apparent in the question and answer session that followed as well as in private conversations

with Boman Desai in the social afterwards.



Authors, Bapsi Sidhwa & Boman Desai

Earlier in the day, a book reading open to the public had been arranged for him at the River Oaks bookstore, as well as a half-hour interview on Saturday’s Open Forum radio program.

Boman Desai has published

five books with varying settings and themes.”

Acclaimed writer Bapsi Sidhwa, is quoted in the India Herald, USA as saying: “Boman Desai is one of our most adept and prolific novelists. I doubt he’ll ever suffer from that dread thing called writer’s block. Confront him with a blank page – or a blank monitor – and he will turn it into a whopping 400 page novel.”

Born and raised in Mumbai, Desai has lived most of his adult life in Chicago and undertaken a variety of jobs to support his writing, ranging from bartending to auditing and teaching.

Desai’s other novels are *The Memory of Elephants*; *Asylum, USA*; *A Woman Madly in Love* and his latest available already in the sub continent, *Servant master mistress*, is highly recommended.

“Water” at Toronto

Michelle Mama reports

*b*apsi Sidhwa definitely had the hometown advantage when she touched

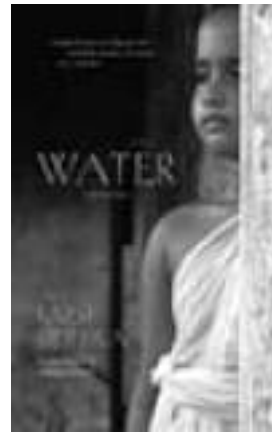
down in Toronto on April 4th to read from her new novel *Water*, based on the critically acclaimed film of the same name by Deepa Mehta. Toronto-based director Mehta was in attendance, along with her daughter Devyani Saltzman recent author her own book called *Shooting Water* about her experience on the set of the film.

The reading was held at Nicholas Hoare, a charming downtown bookstore, on cozy couches in front of a fireplace. An assortment of loyal fans were in attendance, including some local Parsis, and the stunning actress Lisa Ray, who plays the reluctant prostitute-widow Kalyani in the film.

Set in 1938, amidst the backdrop of colonial India, *Water* follows a young child widow named Chuyia as she is abandoned in an ashram, and casts light on the fates of these “untouchables”, and the treatment of them as they are cast out of society, and left to fend for themselves.

Attendees were treated to a lively reading by the ever-spry Sidhwa, followed by a generous and enlightening Q & A, and finally an autograph session. Sidhwa's book tour continues through Canada and the US this Spring and Summer.

Michelle Mama has been in the arts from tender age, producing a play with her first theatre company when she was 16. She studied Cinema Studies and English Literature at the University of Toronto, and currently works freelance through her company, meemama productions, as a producer of film and television and a magazine writer in Toronto, Canada. Email: m.mama@sympatico.ca



“Water” at Houston

Report from Ellen Goldberg



L to R: Noshir Sidhwa, Aban Rustomji having her books signed and Bapsi Sidhwa

Five years of heartbreak caused by burned movie sets and death threats were replaced by love and admiration at Worldfest/Houston International Film Festival. On April 28, 2006, more than 400 moviegoers attended the screening of *Water*, the last of Deepa Mehta's trilogy.

Hunter Todd, Founder and Chairman for the annual event now in its 39th year, presented Deepa with a Lifetime Achievement Remi Award. She spoke of the hardships in making the controversial film—originally scheduled to be shot in India but moved to Sri Lanka due to safety concerns. The audience gave Deepa a standing ovation for her accomplishments.

On hand to help celebrate was Houston's Bapsi Sidhwa, collaborator on two of the projects. Their partnership began when the Canadian writer/director phoned, saying she wanted to use Bapsi's novel *Cracking India* as the basis for *Earth*. It was released in 1998. The Partition of India, seen through the eyes of Lenny, a young Parsi girl, was highly acclaimed as both a book and a film.

The sequence for *Water* was reversed. Deepa had first written the screenplay and directed the film, then called Bapsi to novelise it.



Deepa & Bapsi

"I had never done anything like that before and wasn't sure how to go about it. I usually write at a leisurely pace, but Deepa wanted the book written in just three months!"

At first Bapsi was hesitant to undertake the task, but after seeing the rough cut almost twenty times, she began to visualize what to do. Instead of extending the script, she wrote the book as a prologue.

The story concerns widows in India during the late 1930s when Mahatma Gandhi was coming to power. There were three choices for women whose husbands died: *Sati*—throwing themselves on their husband's funeral pyre —, marrying their brother-in-law, or spending the rest of their lives in a widow's ashram.

The main character, Chuyia, lives a life of innocence until her marriage at six to a forty-four year old man. She's allowed to stay with her parents until she comes of age, but two years after their wedding, the man whom she barely remembers, becomes ill and dies.

She accompanies her mother-in-law and father to the river where they take the body, then the bewildered but defiant child is deposited in the ashram, her new home. Her head is shaved, she's dressed in tight white clothing and she's abandoned to live among the other widows—many of them old and feeble.

Unlike Lenny in *Cracking India/Earth* who appears in almost every scene, Chuyia is a catalyst for the other women, including a beautiful young widow, portrayed by the actress Lisa Ray. Bapsi said this allowed her to explain the traditions, develop the characters more fully and give voice to the women who are silent on the screen.

"Having so little time was exhilarating. I wrote whole sentences in my sleep. The novel gave me an opportunity to explain the widows' backgrounds, motivation and what was in their minds. And I was given four months, not three, to finish the book."

At a reading for Houston's Asia Society, Bapsi explained that widows are considered jinxes. Of more than 34,000 of them in India today, some live uncloistered lives, and there are fewer child brides. Many of them, however, choose to live in an ashram to escape derision of people who think their karma is the reason for their husband's death.


Water, a novel, published by Milkweed, is being released simultaneously with the film which is well-acted and directed, has amazing cinematography and music by A R Rahman. It will be distributed by Fox Searchlight and will open in India in July.

Another book has been released, as well. It's very special, because the author is Deepa's daughter, Devyani Saltzman. Called *Shooting Water: A Memoir of Second Chances, Family and Filmmaking*, it relates the problems involved in getting the film made.

The next collaboration between the Canadian and Houstonian is Bapsi's earlier novel about Parsis, *The Crow Eaters*. Deepa is looking forward to doing the comedy after the stress of her more serious films. They've set the standard high, so we know this next project will be a huge success.



Ellen Goldberg is an entrepreneur and freelance photojournalist living in Texas. She is involved in international projects and serves as President of Sister Cities of Houston, the umbrella organization for sixteen associations partnered with municipalities around the world. In addition, she is the lyricist for Indian singer Sonu Nigam's first English language CD, *Spirit Unfolding*.

 another book review on page 70

“Zoroastrians Today”

From the information sent by Tenaz Dubash

*t*he film *Zoroastrians Today* has finally been completed as of May 2006, with filming in Chicago, Vancouver, New York, and Mumbai over the last four years.

She plans to find a sales agent who will get the film into festivals/markets, which will hopefully get the film a TV broadcast, which will then get the film an educational distributor and then finally one can have screenings for the Zoroastrian community and distribute individual DVDs.

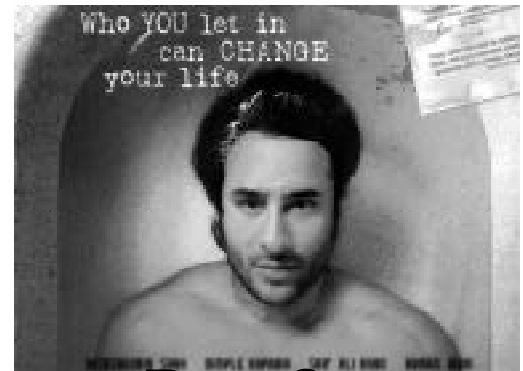
Since the goal is to inform the world about our rich history and heritage (not inform ourselves), they are taking this marketing and distribution plan very seriously. What they hope to do is to let the community know if the film will be playing at a film-festival in one of the major cities such as LA, Boston, Houston, Toronto, NYC, Chicago, DC, etc., enabling individuals to go. Tenaz is having a press screening in NYC in early June, and you can view the introduction to the film on www.tenazdubash.com

Clips from *In the Footsteps of our Forefathers* were recently shown at the United Nations and has been asked to show once again at a “Women in Religion” conference at the UN in October 2006.

Get Over It!

Tanaz Behrana comments

i did not join the heated debate via the email network about the bronze statue of Zarathushtra even though I felt the case was blown out of proportion because sentiments about your prophet can run deep and I did not want to hurt people’s feelings. However, this issue of the movie *Being Cyrus* has made me realize that once you give an inch to zealots, it is just a matter of time till they want a yard.



Being Cyrus

To give a background for people who are not familiar with Hindi cinema, *Being Cyrus* is a murder-mystery in which the central characters are Parsis. They are depicted as living in dirty homes, having affairs and plotting to kill their spouses. Some zealous Parsis have written an open letter to Homi Adajania, the screenplay writer and director, denouncing him for showing Parsis in a poor light. (The letter appears below). The letter asks, “Where is the need to show the man boring in his nose, or cooks climbing into frying pans in their sadra-lenghas? Do such things actually happen? And even if they do, the average Parsi may not know about it, let alone the non-Parsis.” This is hypocritical and racist. Parsis would happily watch a movie with Hindu or Christian families being depicted in the same manner and it would be considered fine. Idiosyncrasies exist in all of us, and Parsis are only human, so what makes us so different from the other races? Parsis have affairs, con people and yes, they even pick their noses in public. So get over it!

We call ourselves a “literate” community but that is seriously questionable because “literate” does not necessarily mean “educated” in the true sense. Where is the tolerance? Where are our

priorities? There are more important things to worry about than worrying about our “past glory” and showing Parsis only as illustrious and sophisticated people who attend charity events and win awards for science and sports. The reality is that there are thousands of Parsis in India who live in miserable conditions. They do not have adequate health care, live in crowded, unhygienic conditions and some even beg on the streets. People who are upset about the way Parsis are depicted in movies like *Being Cyrus* and *Such a Long Journey* should take a good, long look at their surroundings and do something concrete about raising the living standards of these families rather than complain that Parsis were shown in an unflattering way in some movie that everyone knows is fiction.

An open letter to Homi Adajania

Dear Homi,
So now you are a celebrity, and that too at the expense of our Parsi community. How very nice, for you!

Most people in India don't have a clue as to who we Parsis are. Your film may be their first, and possibly their last, association with anything Parsi. Now thousands will be leaving the cinema halls all over India, thinking, “What a weird bunch of people!” or, “My daughter's never going to marry a Parsi, if I can help it”, and so on.

I wonder why such films are made in the first place? What is the message supposed to be? Indeed, is there a message? Could the message be “Crime Pays”? And is that the message from a community, which has always prided itself on its integrity and uprightness. What are we trying to prove here after all? If anything, the film only succeeds in giving a very one-sided and, in my opinion, an entirely wrong impression of the Parsi community, which is extremely civilised, highly educated, cultured and sophisticated. At least that's how I know my community, having been there for the past 55 years.

Where is the need to show the man boring in his nose, or cooks climbing into frying pans in their sadra-lenghas? Do such things actually happen? And even if they do, the average Parsi may not know about it, let alone the non-Parsis. Why then

make it public, as if it's something that's happening every day?

Another view: By and large, Parsi women are an illustrious lot; most of them are very hard working, and have excellent careers. But even if they aren't working to earn a living, they keep themselves busy at home with all kinds of creative and useful activities, or else they are involved in social work. The Panchgani wife in your film does nothing of the sort, she is slovenly and even has a dirty house! How very unlike a true-blue Parsi woman. Now you tell me, what does anyone gain from degrading one's own community, showing it in a bad light? That is all I ask.

Artistically the film was very good, even the acting of the stars was commendable. That is to be expected, these days the competition is too great for you to make a shoddy film. But the subject was most inappropriate and handled badly. Of course people will like it. Non Parsis will most certainly have something to laugh about. It will reconfirm their view of the oddball Parsi, which has been cultivated by earlier Bollywood films. The damage has been done, there's no turning back. The only thing that's left to redeem the situation is to make another film about Parsis, in which they are shown as they really are: decent and honest and very, very clean. We will probably have to find a non-Parsi, to do that. Maybe Ashok Salian. (Aban Bana)

“Deliverance”

Shayan Italia says “I am the artist/songwriter for the forthcoming album ‘Deliverance’ releasing online 23 July 2006 in over 25 countries. I also happen to be the first Zoroastrian to ever release a mainstream music album on international waters since Freddie Mercury did over 25 years ago.

“To sample the album in full please visit www.shayanitalia.com - do see the music video for ‘Reflection’ as well. The recent 5-page ‘Hi-Blitz’ article which may prove useful reading, the link is: [http://www.shayanitalia.com/website/press/Hi Blitz 2 .pdf](http://www.shayanitalia.com/website/press/Hi%20Blitz%20.pdf). Finally, do check out www.myspace.com/

shayanitalia, which I'm told by 'MySpace' is one of the fastest online growing profiles ever, acquiring 15,000 online fans in just 10 weeks pre-release.

"Now that my distribution network is setup I would like to ask if any of you can help get me out there, through magazines/publications and online websites that are circulated amongst the Zoroastrians worldwide. I do very much believe this project is going to go global in no time at all and wish for my fellow Zoroastrians to have the 'first piece', as they say. Your help on the above would be most appreciated."

Shayan sang at the World Congress, London last summer and was a hit. Contact him on shayan.italia@gmail.com

“Strictly Dance Fever”

Jennifer Mistri is competing once again this year in BBC1 Dance Show, *Strictly Dance Fever*, with her dance partner Mark, both being 18 years and the youngest couple. Jennifer's dancing talent enabled her to succeed in becoming a finalist from 80,000 applicants.

Nextbighit.com

Farita Khambatta has been featured again on Nextbighit.com and hopes to win once again. She is a great singer who you will be seeing in action during the 4th WZYC2007 in Australia.

Farobag Cooper conducts for fundraising

Farobag Cooper with the Chicago Philharmonia performed at the Chicago Cultural Center on 5 May to raise funds for the devastating earthquake which took place in Northern Pakistan, last October. The programme had Albert Wang, violinist, performing Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons", followed by Borodin's Nocturne and Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 composed by Bach. Farobag says "there are at least two others, (concerts) in Milwaukee as well as in Chicago."

Thus Spake -----

"It is disgusting to make a nude sculpture of any prophet in the name of art. I am sure our zarathushtee bretheren in Australia and across the world are already in action to stop this grave insult to our beloved Zarathushtra."

Another said, "The statue is neither a likeness (nor should it be) of the Great, all knowing Prophet but to depict Him nude is both disgusting to our sentiments and offensive."

"It would be sufficient to say you were inspired by his teaching but giving the sculpture his name is both disrespectful and blasphemous" said yet another.

March 26 all hell broke loose, with emails flying across the continents, to community members to protest, and of course to Peter Schipperheyn. Some protests were polite, others offensive. Peter who just about knew Zoroastrians existed, had a rude awakening

just prior to the unveiling of his sculpture, on 1 April, called "Thus Spake Zarathushtra", a four metre high figure in bronze, commissioned by the Dame Elizabeth Murdoch Sculpture Fund for the McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park, Langwarrin, Melbourne.

On 28 March, Peter Schipperheyn sent a message to the global Zoroastrian community explaining his reasoning why he had selected this name.

"...As an artist I have swum against the tide of Modernism and of Secularism. The ancient world has exerted a power over my imagination; these understanding came to me in good part via the sculpture of Ancient Greece who as an aside portrayed their Gods nude, and this sculptural language set for me a precedent. Even though I have called my sculpture a name, and that you have taken this as an intention by me to depict the Prophet Zarathustra, my sculpture is not an attempt to portray an individual, indeed my sculpture is not a depiction of the Prophet Zarathustra.

"It is rather my attempt to portray the essential drama of what it means to be human, of the struggle between good and evil, of light and dark, these are issues common to all peoples and of course there is a long a history, hence my reason for naming the sculpture as I have.

"In conclusion I apologize for the upset that I have inadvertantly caused, however I am concerned that my intentions are being misconstrued and misread, this greatly concerns me. I have not worked so hard for so many years to simply upset people. I feel that I have a responsibility to the world and the beauty of creation to do good, to inspire, to live a purposeful life. ...



From the McClelland Gallery's website

"The Gallery ... has asked me to erase the name, I have agreed to this but I am saddened that this must be done. In my eyes the sculpture remains, but "he" will be stripped of something powerful that I think empowers the viewer, especially the western viewer. I have been so wound up in my own thoughts and excitement about the significance of what I am trying to do that I did not countenance that my artwork would stir up the opposite of what I hoped for. ..."



From the artist's website

“*Thus Spake Zarathushtra* _____”

Shirin J. Mistry writes for Hamazor

“My soul is tired” - Peter Schipperheyn

*i*t was yet another beautiful Melbourne autumn evening. Cool, clear and peaceful - a slight breeze blowing from the ocean just a few miles away! A perfect day for an unveiling of a work of art – a true gift to the world of art!

We, my family and I, had been invited to the unveiling of the largest bronze sculpture ever to have been commissioned and created in Australia - a magnificent masterpiece to the eternal glory of the sculptor's skill! Why me? Why ever not, me? Perhaps some recent history of the Zoroastrians in Australia might help solve that one. I happened to be Johnny-on-the-spot - I guess gratitude for the handling of the situation was appreciated and I landed up delightedly making a friend forever not only for myself but for all good Zoroastrians worldwide! As always, I did what I believe was the “right” thing to do and don’t need to ask for anyone’s permission to do it!

I realise that the Indian newspapers have already told the world of how gracefully the Zoroastrians (the Parsis of India) managed to handle a crisis that they perceived as having beset their religious sentiments in the knowledge, that shortly a colossal bronze statue initially entitled “Zarathustra” and then “Thus Spake Zarathustra”, by the eminent Australian sculptor, Peter Schipperheyn was to be unveiled by Dame Elizabeth Murdoch AC, DBE, at the McClelland Gallery & Sculpture Park at Langwarrin, a suburb of Melbourne, Australia.

“When Zarathustra was thirty years old he left his home and the lake of his home and went into the mountains” - THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA, Friedrich Nietzsche.

To replace a Balzac by Rodin, which was on loan to the Gallery, this splendid statue was commissioned to be permanently placed on an island in the lake there - so what else, could the sculptor name it but after the first lines of his original inspiration? This masterpiece shattered our peace and finally his own! Why were we all not elated with this sort of supreme recognition? Why did we not have the sense to be appreciative and even to applaud those involved? Why did we jump as if struck by a red-hot poker between the eyes? Why was Peter’s ecstasy a cause of our agony and within moments his own as well, once the Zoroastrian world woke up to it?

Here was the world of culture, of art and sculpture, about to discover that not only was a monumental statue being named after an almost unheard of Persian of antiquity, but that he also happens to be the beloved Prophet of an equally unknown mini-minor-micro minority with the voluble voice and the nous to have it heard! Reeling in astonishment, even shock, from the verbal calls and the written words of entreaty bombarding Peter and, everybody else thought to be involved - sometimes interspersed with rather unfortunate loss of dignified approach aroused by ignorance of relevant knowledge, an enlightened world community got what it desired - with more poise than their demands warranted! We had no legal leg to stand on – and we still don’t! Our true gratitude goes to Peter for the grace and graciousness of his giving in to those whom he never meant to insult by naming his finest work after their beloved Prophet! It was more than three years in the making and a twenty year old dream come true – but it took us less than a few moments to take away from it the adulation for the towering figure of Asho Zarathushtra in the History of World Religions, that had brought about its naming! Is the loss ours?

It would be like having to rename one's child to suit some strangers instead of being allowed to make one's own personal choice for one's own special creation! I am sure in Peter's mind it will ever remain what he had named it - but a most grateful Zoroastrian community will remember the magnanimity of his decision and the humility with which he had conceded to it! I admire not just his art but the valour shown to rename it to keep from hurting people he didn't even realise still existed, leave alone had ever met! I thank God for the honour not only to be invited to the unveiling but more for being allowed to literally extend my hand in friendship to a kindred soul! That he has grasped it without the slightest rancour speaks volumes! I'm proud to call him my friend – **our friend!**

Peter says, this is *"my attempt to portray the essential drama of what it means to be human"*; **the Eternal Struggle** between the forces of Good and evil – the difference between Light and darkness – Asha versus druj – they are all there – in the clenched fist in the open palm, the head thrown back in an agony of indecision, the arched back as if the struggle with spiritual choice were causing him physical pain - and Zoroastrianism's explanations of existence itself, is expressed via the medium of a unique artist's true talents as 'expressions of an extraordinary sensitivity for the human form' and display 'the grandeur and vision that aspire to the greatest European traditions' – but alas, we are Ancient Persians – who found it inappropriate to name a nude sculpture after our beloved Prophet! We failed to understand Peter's interpretations and fiercely defended our own – he was happy to embrace the best of the past and we claimed it as our very future! We felt insulted, we were appalled and some were even grossly out of line in expressing their angst! We took umbrage at what was being proffered in adulation! We failed to understand each other! 'What a man doesn't understand, he does not have!'

"The ancient world has exerted a power over my imagination; I feel he is also the young 'Zarathustra' who from an ancient

*land stands before time before all of creation, **he stands powerful and yet vulnerable**, in this beautiful mystery that we experience as life"* says Peter and continues, *"However the sheer poetry of this beautiful sounding name totally obsessed me, in my heart a mystique was enveloping the sculpture I was to make. In my opinion **the west needs a prophetic voice, needs a Zarathustra.**"* Peter was giving the world the best within himself – no one can do more - and we failed miserably to accept that! To us it was a misnamed nude, to him, the very essence of Zoroastrianism, from start to finish!

It is not the name that empowers the viewer - it's the fine art that created it! Peter's sculpture will speak for itself and does not need to guide the viewer via its name! "Thus Spake _____" will grace Australia for many years to come and ever remain a superb credit to the inner excellence of its creator, Peter the truly Good man – an Ashavan - and not just to the visible superiority of Peter Schipperheyn, the extraordinary sculptor – Australia's answer to an Italian called Angelo!

If ever a man's best intentions were misunderstood, we stand guilty of it! He had immediately asked for our pardon and we willingly gave it at once – for no offence should be taken where none was ever intended! Such strength of character as Peter displayed by rescinding its very name to please the religious sentiments of a microscopic community needs not just our exculpation but also our undying appreciation! As some of my co-religionists have asked for it, his forgiveness of us will be complete when he sculpts a real Zarathushtra, in bronze or marble, outshining the one that had his beloved name gouged out from it. We are not into idol worship and we do not consider Asho Zarathushtra as our God and so nobody will come to view this one with the intention of worshipping it, for Zarathushtra is revered but never worshipped. Even in the Zoroastrian scriptures, nowhere does the prophet desire that he be worshipped! So

we will come only to admire that God given talent of Peter's that is used to lead a life of Righteousness. *"I feel that I have a responsibility to the world and the beauty of creation to do good, to inspire, to live a purposeful life."*

Even as I salute you, Peter, I share your sadness and understand that shattering of your soul but the strength of the human spirit will transcend all these hurts, for your Manashni was always true and that will never fail you!

Happiness to him, who makes others happy!

[Shirin Mistry, was responsible for writing politely and wisely to Peter to refrain from using the title of "Zarathushtra" for his monumental sculpture for the sake of saving our community further angst - Ed]



of Ballarat, Victoria.

Shirin J Mistry is a Founding Member of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria, Australia and became the first female president in its fifth year. She has served on several ZAV committees, including the latest Constitutional Sub-committee. Shirin has been teaching at the Sunday School since its inception, seven years ago, and is presently the Honorary Secretary to the 4th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress, 2007, University

Date of Inundation of Islamic Regime' Sivand Dam

on 30th May 2006, the Cais Archaeological & Cultural News announced:

The final meeting on the inundation of Sivand Dam will be held on the last week of Spring 2006 with the presence of representatives from the Islamic Regime's Ministry of Energy and Iran, Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO) on behalf of the Iranian nation. ...

It is certain that inundation of the Sivand Dam will drown major parts of Bolaghi Valley and 147 of its historical sites including a section of the Achaemenid Imperial Road; however considering the distance between this dam and the mausoleum of Cyrus the Great in Pasargadae, flooding of the dam though will not submerge the Cyrus's mausoleum, but the humidity created by it will gradually destroy this revered ancient monument.

Sivand Dam is constructed by the Islamic Regime on the Sivand River in Bolaghi Valley historical site which is located 9 kilometres from the world heritage site of Pasargadae in Fars province. Following the news of the inundation of Sivand Dam by the Islamic regime, shocking news was spread around the world which raised concerns among the Iranian nation as well as the International

community of the cultural heritage enthusiasts that Pasargadae is in serious danger of being destroyed.

However, since Bolaghi Valley will submerge with all 147 historical sites once the dam is flooded, experts started their archaeological excavations there under a comprehensive salvation project in which archaeologists from all around the world take part. The project has led to some invaluable discoveries so far such as unearthing of the remains of the palace of Darius the Great, a village belonging to the Achaemenid dynastic era, and large numbers of ancient artifacts. Due to the pressure from within and outside the country, flooding of the dam is postponed until archaeologists announce that their excavations in Bolaghi Valley are finished.

The choice of location for contracting a dam by the Islamic regime, so close to Pasargadae, or construction of chemical factories in the vicinity of Bistun in Kermanshah as well as Naqsh-e Rostam in the Fars province, where the wind blows the poison gases and steams directly to the graves of the Darius the Great and Xerxes, has not been unintentional. ... (refer to *Hamazor* Issue 4/05, pp30 – 34)

Ardeshar Kotwal

by marzban j giara

Khansahab Ardeshar Dhanjisha Kotwal Bahadur, Parsi Chief of Police, Surat and the first President of Surat Parsi Panchayat. A tribute on his 150th death anniversary

Ardeshar Bahadur was born on 29th June 1796 who was the youngest son of Seth Dhanjishah Burjorji Behremankhan of Surat. After his father was killed in Bodhan in 1810 AD, Mr Crowe, Collector of Surat, employed him and his brother Pirojshaw as a clerk in the Court. In 1820, he was made the Kotwal of the suburbs of Surat and a year later appointed Kotwal of Surat City. His various attributes were: Warden General of Surat under the East India Company, Chief of Police and a magistrate of great renown, organised the citizens so as to fight off the depredations of Bhil dacoits and instituted the system of night watchmen known as *dandyas*. He held a court every morning to hear complaints and acted as arbitrator in several cases.

J R B Jeejeebhoy, noted historian and scholar in his introduction to Dr Ratan Marshall's book *Ardeshar Kotwal* (1946) wrote: "What Baron Haussman was to Paris, what Joseph Chamberlain was to Birmingham, what Pherozeshah Mehta was to Bombay, so Ardeshar Kotwal was to Surat. He fought against every obstacle that would have terrified a less enterprising

man to reclaim the city of his birth to law and order and improve the amenities of the place and at last succeeded in his mission. The lapse of years brings out in brighter lustre his devotion to duty, tact,

courage and the loftiness of his character. He won for himself a fame which has placed his name into the history of Gujarat. If ever there was a man to whom Surat and its suburbs owe a great debt of gratitude and who was unanimously enveloped by the enthusiastic love of the people that man was Ardeshar Kotwal."

Ardeshar was 6.5 ft tall and well built. He had a towering personality and keen intellect. His forehead was high and vast, eyes small and sharp, pointed nose, receding lower lip. He was very fair and his qualities showed up. He was himself a strong and skilled man. He excelled in all feats of strength and agility. He travelled about in a palanquin with 12 bearers, having 17 palanquins for his use. Some had a secret hole through which he could

see for some distance. He patrolled the streets at night and had 500 plain clothesmen who in disguise monitored the peace.

He was the first organiser of Surat Parsi Panchayat with the help of the first Sir



Marzban Jamshedji Giara is the author, publisher and distributor of books on Zoroastrian religion and Parsi history. He has authored the first-ever illustrated "Global Directory of Zoroastrian Fire Temples", "The Zoroastrian Pilgrim's Guide", "Parsi Statues" and a dozen other books. His father ingrained in him the idea, 'Son, be a creator and not a spectator in life. We must give back to society more than what we have received from it.'

Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy and was its first President from 1841 to 1856. He gave away Rs50 lakhs (Rs 5 million) in charity to help those rendered destitute by calamities.

During the vast floods of 1822 in Surat, he made great efforts for six days and nights and rescued thousands of people from drowning. On 9th October 1822, on the orders of the Government of Bombay, Judge Romer, held a *darbar* and presented him with a gift of dress and a decorated horse.

In 1825 he was appointed "Native Agent" of the Governor of Bombay for smaller states of Surat District. During his tenure as Kotwal, there was fear of incidents of tribal Bhils, dacoits and thieves which was completely relieved by his capability, smartness and courage. For his invaluable services the English Agent at Surat held a *darbar* on behalf of the Government on 18th January 1826 and presented him with a purse and a palanquin. On that occasion, a letter signed by 800 leading residents of Surat was received by the English Agent, expressing their satisfaction and joy on the honour conferred by the Government on their brave Kotwal for appreciating his services. In 1828 when the prince of Delhi, Mohammed Bahadurshah II visited Surat, he presented robes of a commander and a sword to Ardeshir. On the occasion of Sir John Malcolm, Governor of Bombay visit to Surat in 1829, on 22nd December, he held a public and grand *darbar* and presented him with a valuable robe of honour and title of "Bahadur" as well as a horse with a golden felt saddle, four villages yielding annual revenue of Rs3,000 which were Choryasi Taluka (Bhestan and Soneri), and Chikhli Taluka (Cambada and Boriach) and other property. On 14th December 1830, Mr James Sutherland, Judicial Commissioner of Surat on the orders of Governor, Sir John Malcolm, held a public *darbar* and presented him a gold medal. The gold medal was inscribed on either side in English and Gujarati :

"This medal is presented to Ardeshar Dhunjisha Bahadur, Kotwal of Surat, in token of the high sense entertained by the Bombay Government of the diligence and fidelity with which he has performed his public duties both as an officer of police and in other capacities. First January 1830."

The Mayor of Surat presented him a scroll of honour on behalf of the people on that occasion. From 1st July 1832 he was made the Native Principal Commissioner of Surat. During the tragic fire of 1837 in Surat, he rendered invaluable help to those who lost their belongings. In September 1838, the first ever library "Surat Native Library and Reading Room" adjacent to Dutch Bunder was founded under his leadership. In 1843, upon the death of his brother, Pirojshah Dhanjishah, he was given the post of Principal Sadar Amin of Surat. In 1844, Mr R D Loward, a newly appointed judge at Surat accused him of playing an undesirable role in a dispute involving succession to huge wealth and suspended him from his post on 14th February. The Government appointed Mr Remington, Assistant Resident of Baroda to investigate the case. He examined in detail and on 30th November 1844, absolved him of the accusation. Thereafter, on 28th June 1845, by order of the Government, Mr Andrews, Judge of Surat held a *darbar* and ceremoniously reinstalled him in his post. He was on that occasion presented a congratulatory scroll signed by thousands of residents. In October 1846, he quit his post and accepted his pension. In recognition of his valuable services of 35 years, on 12th February 1849, Mr Andrews, Judge of Surat, held a *darbar* in the Court building, and in an eulogizing speech, thanked him on behalf of the Government. Thereafter, he led a life of solitude.

Many special ballads have been composed and sung with pride in his honour.

He passed away at the age of 60 on Roz 23 Daepdin Mah 5 Amardad, 1225 Yezdezardi, 15th February 1856.



Source:

Parsee Prakash Vol I p.699
Ahevale Ardeshir
Kotwal Bahadur
by Dhunbai
Bamanji Wadia
1930
Ardeshar Kotwal
by Dr Ratan
Marshall 1946 and
1997

WZO Trust Funds, Navsari

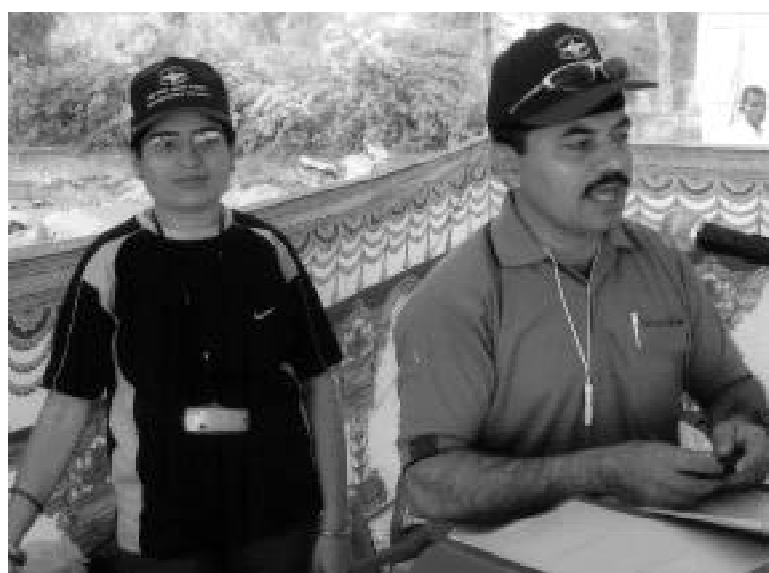


Winners with Pauruchisti Kadodwala & Trustee Dinshaw Tamboly



Winners with Pauruchisti Kadodwala & Bachi Tamboly

1st Athletic Meet 19th & 20th Nov 2005



Principal organisers - Pauruchisti Kadodwala & Bomy Jagirdar



Bachi Tamboly with the very young winners

venue - Luncikui Playground Navsari
organized by - The D K Tata High School & Sir Jamsetjee
Jejeebhoy Primary School : Gujarati medium



Winners with Vada Dastur Meherjirana

Susa withstood Alexander's invasion

On 9 April the Cais Archaeological & Cultural News announced:

*E*xcavations at Susa (Shush) indicate that Alexander, the Macedonian warlord could not seize the Apadana Throne when he invaded Iran.

Head of the excavation team, Mir Abedin Kaboli, told ISNA that the western historians' version about the seizure of Susa by Alexander should be corrected, because archaeological evidence indicates that Iranians did not surrender Susa to Alexander.

"The good condition of Apadana Palace, which was unearthed during recent excavations in Susa, indicated that Alexander could not get hold of the throne. The glory of the throne has prevailed and even tile decorations are untouched," he said.

He said part of the city's gate was destroyed during Alexander's invasion.

Kaboli noted that 160 artillery stone shells and 400 arrows were discovered from the area.

"The number of shells and arrows launched by Macedonian army indicates the brave manner in which the people withstood the invasion. And the safety of Apadana proves that Alexander could not seize Susa and only destroyed the city's gate," he said.

Kaboli said that during 11 phases of excavations at the western front of Apadana Palace since 1982, archaeologists have uncovered 380 meters of the western front where the gate, stairways and several towers have been unearthed.

(courtesy Mehrborzin Soroushian)



Kurush (Cyrus) the Great

Maneck Bhujwala gives a summary of the talk given by Cyrus Kar

*O*n Sunday, October 16, 2005, my wife and I attended a captivating and informative presentation by a young Iranian Zoroastrian film producer, Cyrus Kar, who is a US citizen and navy veteran. Mr Kar was doing research and filming a documentary on Kurush (Cyrus) the Great in various countries like Iran and Iraq, when he was detained for almost two months in Iraq but finally released and is now back in California, where he was interviewed on two consecutive days by Ted Koppel on ABC-TV's Nightline programme.

The event was organized at Balch auditorium, Scripps College, Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, California, by the Council of Zoroastrian Studies that is sponsoring Zoroastrian studies at that university.

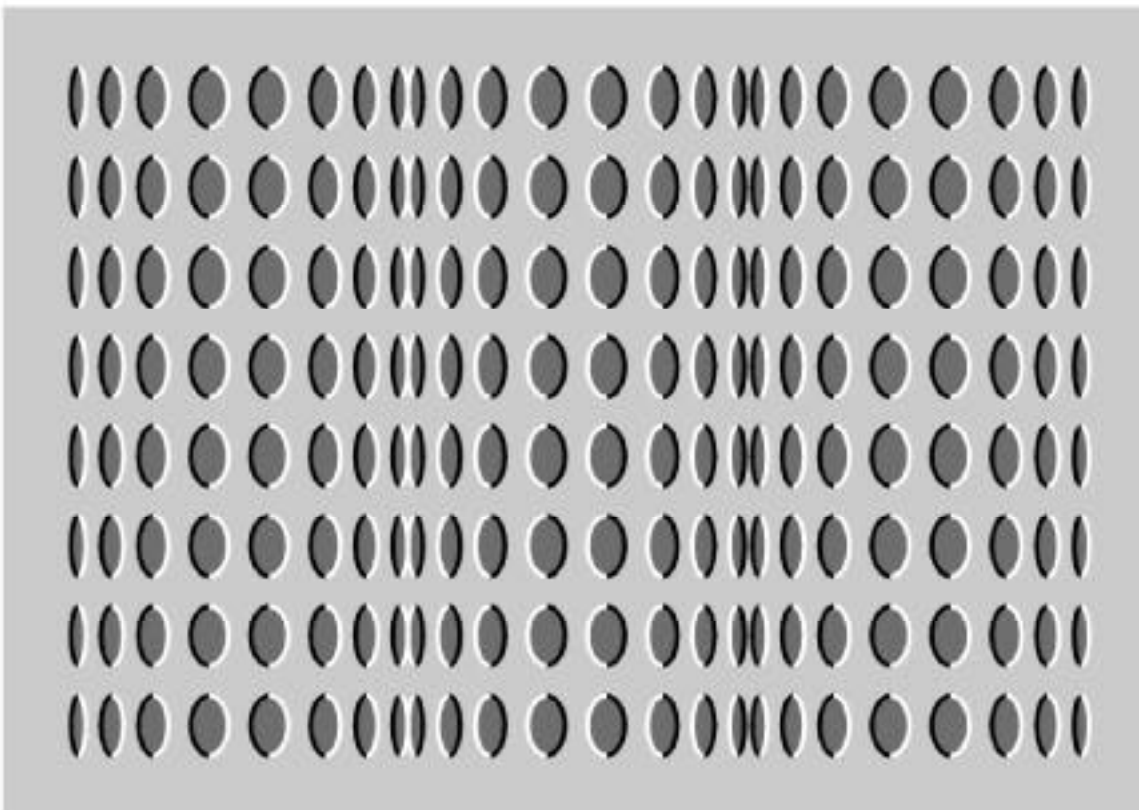
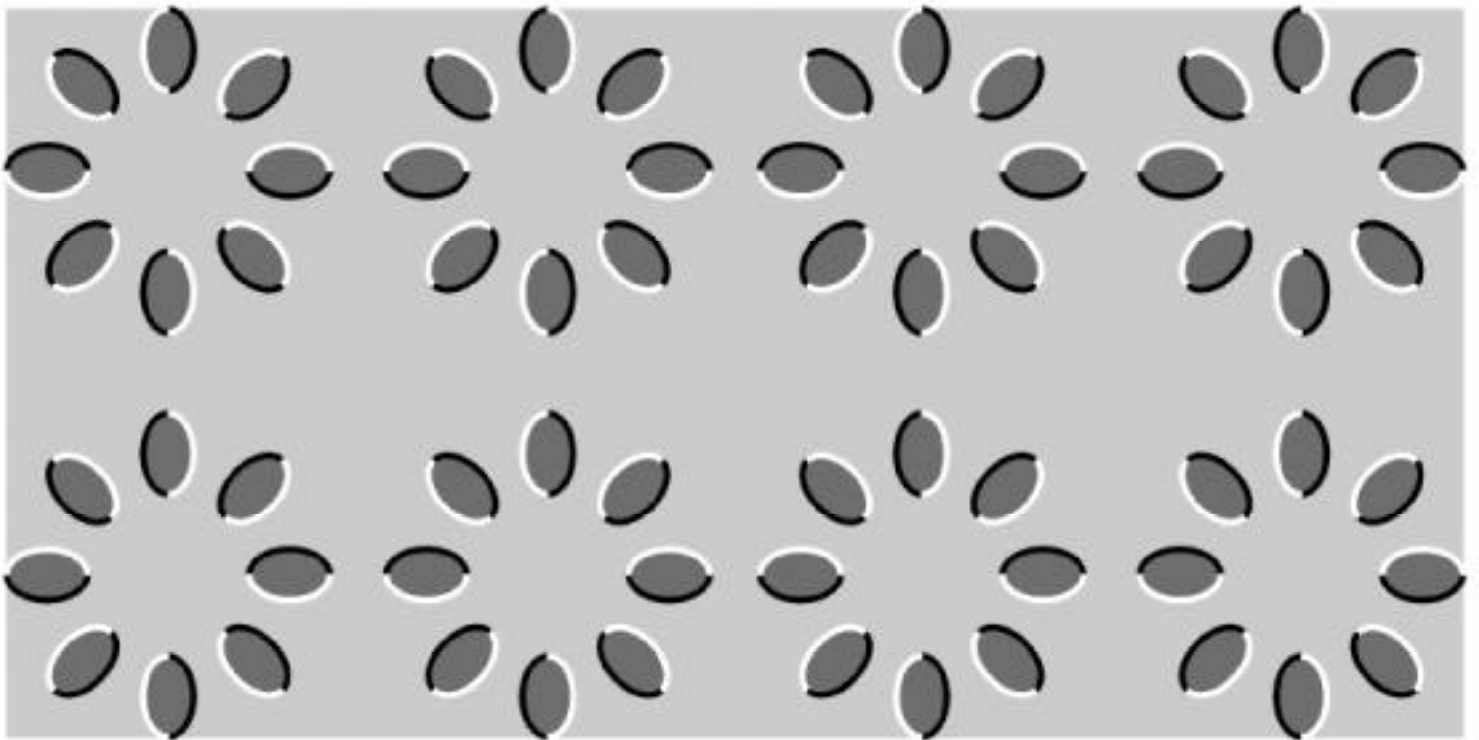
Following is a summary of notes I took at that event, with some personal observations and information I received after the event (in parentheses).

Summary of event

The event started with pictures of historical sites in Iran, some Persian music and songs, and a brief invocation in Avesta by a priest from the Zoroastrian Center of California. Then Cyrus introduced himself and using pictures of sites in Iran, discussed the many misconceptions about ancient Iran and world history that are prevalent especially in Western countries and history books, and the general lack of knowledge about our ancient history even among Zoroastrians and other Iranians.

For example, it is wrongly accepted that democracy was introduced by the Greeks. The fact is that Hamadan in Iran was probably the first place where democracy was practiced. A meeting of all tribesmen

Test yourself for stress



Are these items moving, or are they perfectly still?

One teacher said, "I felt like they were all moving ... but slowly. Kind of like, they were breathing."

These pictures are used to test the level of stress a person can handle. The slower the pictures move, the better your ability of handling stress. Alleged criminals that were tested to see them spinning around madly; however, senior citizens and kids see them standing still.

(courtesy Shahriar Shahriari)

(similar to a Senate meeting) was held in the province of Mada (Media).

Greek historians like Herodotus have used wildly exaggerated numbers for Persian armies that fought against Greek armies whose numbers were minimized. Scholars have confirmed that it would have been logistically impossible to move huge armies over long distances especially like Persia to Greece.

(After the event, I also read in the *Encyclopedia of Military History from 3500 BC to the present* by R Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N Dupuy, in which the authors point out the exaggeration of numbers of Persian soldiers by Greek historians. For example, "...Cyrus invaded Lydia and (early 546) approached Sardis with a large army (but certainly no more than one-quarter of the 200,000 men reported in Xenophon's *Cyropedia*)..." and in describing one of Darius the Great's expeditions against the Greeks and Scythians, the Encyclopedia authors state "...[the total strength was probably one-tenth the 700,000 attributed by Herodotus...]").

The origin of the word Caucasian used commonly for Europeans, comes from the Caucasus mountainous region (which lies between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea with Mt Elburz as its highest point). The Caspian Sea was considered in ancient times to be the center of the Aryan world. People migrated from that area to Europe, Iran and India. Today, Iran and Ireland are the only countries named as Land of the Aryans. The Nazi Germans misused the Aryan symbol of the swastika which is associated with good luck or well-being (from the Sanskrit word *swati*) to make it a symbol of the Nazis and their concepts of racial superiority. Some Greek historians used to call the Persians as barbarians, but unlike Greeks and others, the Persians did not own slaves. The lowest caste in the Persian society was made up of peasants. This is one of the reasons besides magnanimity towards the conquered people that helped maintain peace and even loyalty of mercenary soldiers in the Persian empire.

Like Hindus and Buddhists, Zoroastrianism is an enlightenment based religion.

Saraosha represents enlightenment. Ahura Mazda is Lord of Wisdom. Each deity of the ancient Persians was connected to some element in nature, such as the Sun (Mithra), waters (Anahita), etc. This is why Persians were particular about maintaining purity of the environment. Persians were tolerant of other religions. Women with characteristics of Amazon women inhabited the northern Caspian regions. There was a lot in common between pre-Islamic Iranians and Europeans - handshakes, chivalry, honour, respectful treatment of women, etc. Today, unfortunately, Iran is the opposite of what Iranian society stood for in ancient times. For example, a taxi driver in Iran said that he would not loan money to an Iranian, although he would loan money to Zoroastrians (who still uphold the good values of ancient Iran).

According to Greek historian Herodotus, Persian emperor, Cyrus (Kurush) once said "I would not fear people who cheat themselves" referring to the haggling in the markets of Greek lands. Today, people in Iran who do not haggle or cheat are considered simple-minded (Baboo). Today, Iran has pollution of the environment. Tange Bolaghi, near the plain of Pasargadae, which will be under water next year when the new dam is operative, was the site of Kurush (Cyrus) the Great's victory over the Medes in the province of Anshan. The fire in the temple in Yazd, is considered the oldest continuously burning sacred fire, that was taken with them by the Zoroastrian priests when Alexander came. Due to the death penalty, Iranians cannot go back to their old religion in Iran. Ancient cultures are being lost, but the youth of Iran express a longing for knowledge about their past. How many people know the name of Kurush (Cyrus) the Great's wife? What is the relation between Kurush (Cyrus) and Dariush (Darius)? One of the methods for preserving the knowledge of our ancient culture is through making documentary films which can be used to educate our own people and also the people of the world.

Scope of Documentary Film Project

Although Cyrus Kar has completed the filming work, and has spent about \$100,000 of his own money on the project, much post-production work remains to be done before the documentary movie can be ready and released. (That is, editing, sound, music score, and most expensively, animation.

Animation is to recreate one of Cyrus' battles still taught in US Military Academies today. Its called the Battle Thymbra or Thymbara and it was between Croesus, King of Lydia and Cyrus of Persia. To win this battle, Cyrus' military strategy was so ingenious that it is still the subject of college curricula. We want to recreate this battle through animation which costs about \$40,000. The total we need to raise is about \$100,000.)

Donation

Fellow Iranians (including Parsis) and friends of Iranian people who wish to preserve the giant status of Kurush (Cyrus) the Great in world history, and learn and educate others, can help raise the needed amount, by making their tax-deductible donation check to:

Filmmakers Alliance, (whose Tax ID is 95-444-9125, and whose directors are Jacques Thelemaque and Diane Gaudry) and mailed to: Cyrus Kar, P.O. Box 292303, Los Angeles, California, 90029, USA.

Mr Bhujwala's contact is:
maneck_bhujwala@mindspring.com



"Don't let the fear of the time it will take to accomplish something stand in the way of your doing it. The time will pass anyway; we might just as well put that passing time to the best possible use." Earl Nightingale

Ontario Zoroastrians Rejoice, Celebrate, and thank Ahura Mazda

Report from Nilufer Mama

Zoroastrian Society of Ontario – Building Capital Campaign

On April 8, 2006 our "Dream" came true! There was a magical quality about the evening at Grand Baccus Banquet Hall as 650 Zoroastrians and their friends, joined hands and gave generously from their heart.

The Dream Ball was a spectacular success and amidst an enjoyable evening, the fundraising ship came to shore after three years of sailing. Generous donors responded spontaneously to Dr Noria's call for cash donations and within a few minutes a total of CD\$238,000 raised! The crowd was jubilant with that announcement and celebration was in the air when Zoroastrians realized their dream would soon be a reality. Toronto Mayor David Miller was the Chief Guest. *"What an astonishing room!"* Miller said, overawed by the participation of not only the Zoroastrian community but also non-Zoroastrians. *"I have been to many fund raisers in my life but I have never seen one like this one. There's incredible enthusiasm here. Congratulations. I think the enthusiasm in the end comes as a result of leadership and I think it comes from the leadership of Dr Dhun Noria."*

In an interview with *India Abroad*, Mayor Miller called the Zoroastrian community *"a very vibrant community. It is a community that is justly proud of its accomplishments. They have leading doctors, leading business people, people who contribute to the betterment of Toronto. I am so impressed as to raise over CD\$2million for a relatively small community and so quickly is a tremendous achievement."*

Other distinguished guests included Mr Satish Mehta, Consul-General of India, Mr David Barrow, Acting Mayor of Richmond



Diamond Sponsors - Dr Dhun Noria, Mr Farokh Noria & Dr Sabrena Noria, with Mayor of Toronto, David Miller

Hill and Regional Councillor of York Region; Chief Armand La-Barge, Chief of Police, York Region; Mr Mario Rocco, MPP Thornhill & Parliamentary Secretary to Ministry of Labour & City of Vaughan; Rohinton Mistry, famous Zoroastrian author and Dr Robert Bell, CEO of the University Health Network

The evening's entertainment included Marilyn Monroe and Lucille Ball whose performance brought excitement and laughter. Amanda and Mark, the young ballroom dancers thrilled the audience with their performance.

Mr Sam Vesuna, President of ZSO has formally requested Dr Dhun Noria to continue as Chair of the BCC and raise additional amounts to cover the inflation costs. After consulting with her event leaders, the committee unanimously and enthusiastically agreed to continue working towards this noble cause of Ontario Zoroastrians. As Chair of the BCC, Dhun Noria has built a "web of connections" that link people who give, people who serve and the organisation in need. All donors and volunteers are central players and the heart of this web.



Nilufer Mama lives in Toronto and is the President of Trade Wind Associates, a successful travel company. She is Vice-Chair for ZSO's Building Capital Campaign. She is actively involved in Toronto's business community and serves on the Board of several organizations. In 2000, Nilufer was selected as Business Woman of the Year under the auspices of the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce. She assists new Zoroastrian immigrants settle in Canada, is an avid reader and enjoys creative computer work.

Prompt identification of a stroke

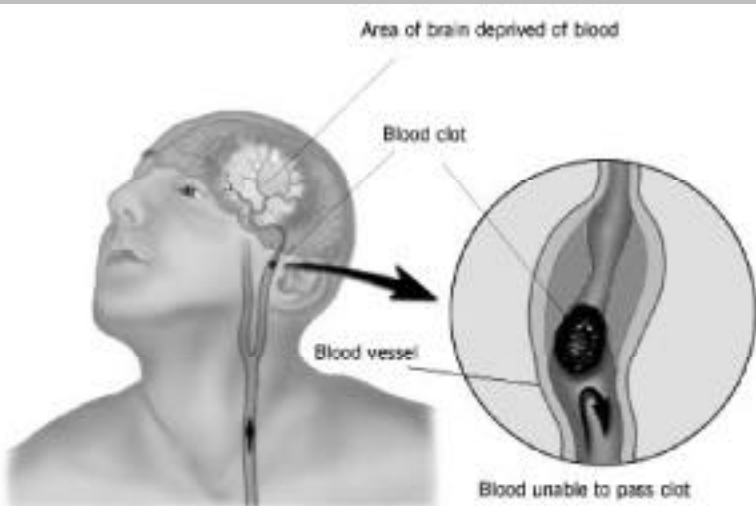
Remember the first three letters S T R

Doctors say a bystander can recognise a stroke by asking three simple questions.

- S Ask the person to Smile
- T Ask the person to Talk – a simple sentence coherently
- R Ask the person to Raise both arms

Another sign of a stroke is : Ask the person to stick out their tongue. If it goes to one side or the other, that is another indication.

If any of the above cannot be accomplished, call 911 immediately and describe the symptoms. (Courtesy : Feroza Saran on ZWIN)



Dancing Feat

by dilshad patel

- an achievement of a youth



i was 19, depressed, and out of work - it was the summer of 1998. A concerned friend persuaded me to join a recreational Indo-Jazz dance class by the Shiamak Davar Institute for the Performing Arts (SDIPA) – India's foremost dance institute.

At the end of that summer, each group performed at the "Summer Funk" – the grand finale to SDIPA's summer workshop. There were 5000 students in all, performing at this event, 60 of whom would be short-listed for an audition to become a part of the SDIPA. To my amazement, I was chosen as one of the 60 dancers!

The 60 dancers were then trimmed to a final 12, and then 3. In the final audition, I made it!

That's when the real challenge began. There I was, five feet tall and about 20 pounds overweight, struggling to make it in India's finest professional dance company. I strongly believe I made it because Shiamak saw that I had a quiet determination in me. All he told me was "Dilshad, you think you are fat and ugly? You ARE! Don't cry, go DO something about it!"

Training sessions, rigorous practice, and no food to fuel my body (I was trying to diet), made me want to quit. I was regretting having been chosen. Then came the time to pack our bags and leave for New Delhi as we were performing at the Sansui Movie Awards with India's famous Bollywood movie stars in front of a 30,000 member audience. Even while standing in the last line, I felt like a star. After the performance, there was no turning back. I knew this is what I wanted to do for as long as I could.



1.



2.



3.

dancing feat project

Dancing Feat, a partnership between the Shiamak Daver's Institute for The Performing Arts (SDIPA), and the Corporate and Committed Communities Development Trust (CCDT), an NGO, it reaches out to 1500 children between the ages of 6-18 years at risk to HIV/AIDS across Mumbai, through nine other NGO partners. These children are at high risk of exposure to HIV/AIDS because of their impoverished backgrounds. They usually are either children of women in prostitution, or have been forced into sex work themselves at their tender ages.

The distinct feature of the project is its child friendly approach. Dancing Feat has adopted a unique strategy which combines dance as a medium of expression, with group counseling, and life skills education. Case studies of children have shown that project activities have enabled them to develop greater self-awareness and skills to cope with difficult life situations.

my involvement

I was also elected one of the instructors for the "Dancing Feat" project. While teaching dance to children with HIV, prostitute victims, orphans, juvenile delinquents I learned about the various challenges and rewards of aiding these youth with special needs. After some thought and research, I decided that becoming a Certified DanceTherapist would give me a training and education I needed to better assist these youth. Having seen a smile on every child's face and being able to spread happiness in their stressful lives gave me a huge sense of satisfaction. Having an instinctive mode of teaching wasn't enough. I believe if I had the education, I could be even more effective at helping children with special needs.

In order to enroll into a dance therapy programme the basic qualification required was a bachelor's degree. So I took a two year break from work to complete my

education. Getting back to studying was not an easy task. But I stayed focused and completed my education. After I completed my degree I headed to the US and began applying to various colleges that offered programmes in dance/movement therapy. My most recent work has included teaching fitness and movement therapy at the Happy Home blind school, to children ages 3-6. I am also a full-time personal fitness trainer. I have conducted workshops for BPO companys, such as WNS, Infosys Bangalore, the Chandigarh police force, the University of Houston, Texas (Voluntary workshop for inner city youth). I have travelled and performed for various stage shows nationally and internationally with the Shiamak Daver Dance Company. I have also taught kids and adults at various centres in Mumbai, Bangalore, Chandigarh, Delhi, Hyderabad and Toronto, Canada.

My goal is to practice counseling and therapy and carve a niche for myself as a leading dance/movement therapist. I look forward to working with various populations such as the police, juvenile delinquents, mentally and physically challenged individuals, oncology patients and almost anybody that requires therapy.

When I look back at my life, I am grateful for being given an opportunity to work with Shiamak's company. I learnt how to survive using dance as a medium. Experience has made me rich, and I want to share the power that dance gave me with people that need help.



An alert for all ladies

Some lipsticks contain lead, which causes cancer. Lipsticks which are reputed to stay on longer contain the most amount of lead. To test this for yourself, put some lipstick on your hand, rub it with a gold ring. If the colour changes to black you know the lipstick contains lead. Dioxin Carcinogens causes cancer, especially breast cancer.

(information circulated at Walter Reed Army Medical Center)

Captions for
photographs on
previous page :

1. A 100 children from the slum areas took part in the project "Come dance with me".
2. Cops dance to eliminate stress.
3. Slum children at Shaimuk's dance class at Chandigarh.

“Really? You’re joking” : Perceptions of spousal abuse

by farishta m dinshaw

In 1988, the Canadian government launched the Family Violence Initiative, a long-term federal commitment to a societal problem that has myriad social, justice, and health dimensions. I work under the umbrella of the federal Multiculturalism Program to promote public awareness of the risk factors of family violence (intimate partner violence, child abuse, and neglect and abuse of older adults) in ethnocultural and immigrant communities, specifically those that are not conversant in English or French. Like many other people, my work spills over into my non-office hours, and I find myself talking about issues I deal with at work with friends, many of whom are Parsi-Zoroastrians from Pakistan. To my self-confessed naivete, one point that consistently surprises me is their belief that the family abuse happens in “other” communities or that it occurs in Parsi families because of exigent factors such as mental illness or alcoholic rage. I am not sure whether this is a genuine belief in the power of education and affluent status as a protective shield, or whether it is merely an ostrich-like assertion. The fact remains that abuse and violence cut across all intersections of ability, age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. Parsis, despite delusions of ascendancy, are no exception.

Abuse is a pattern of behavior used to establish and maintain control over a family member. The behaviour may include violent acts, intimidation and threats, emotional blackmail and verbal taunts, and withholding of access to finances, in order to control the other person. Abuse may not always leave visible bruises or broken bones, but it always leaves emotional scars that bystanders may miss. The issue gets more complicated if you bring in four related criteria in understanding what is and what is not abuse:

☞ **Motivation** - is it abuse if the abuser means to “discipline” rather than harm?

☞ **Chronicity** - is it abuse if the husband only resorts to aggression when he “loses control” because he is drunk?

☞ **Injury** - is name calling abuse?

☞ **Perspective** - is it abuse if the survivor does not perceive it as abuse?

The issue of definition should not be taken lightly because if people do not perceive a behaviour as abusive, they may not seek help from family members or other more formal services. They may even believe that such behaviour is acceptable because it is the norm. In order to find out how Parsis viewed some behaviour patterns that are acknowledged by the family violence service sector as indicators of control and power imbalances, I asked 22 Parsis attending a *navjote* on 9 July 2004 in Toronto for their opinion. For the purpose of this informal survey, I restricted the issue to “spousal abuse”. I had a list of 15 actions and asked whether the action was abusive, not abusive or depended on the situation. I personally knew 21 of those I spoke to, while one respondent was a friend of a friend. I spoke to only one member per family, and most of the surveys were done one-on-one although some were conducted with others listening in. Of the 22 people I spoke to, 12 were women and 10 were men. The age ranges of the respondents were from one person under 18 years; three between 26-40 years; five over sixty years and the largest number (13) between 40-60. This is not a surprising statistic considering most of them were people I “hang out” with and were, therefore, close to my age. Educational backgrounds ranged from six respondents with high school education or less; 10 with Bachelor’s degrees; and five with graduate level or equivalent degrees. Again, the correlation between age and educational background was not surprising - those with less than high school education

included an elementary school student and four seniors.

I had chosen behaviours that corresponded to the major indicators of power and control issues, such as:

- ✓ Asserting superiority, such as “teasing” about hair loss or weight gain.
- ✓ Controlling behaviour, such as wanting details about personal conversations with family and friends, constantly calling on the cell phone to ask, “Where are you?” or dollar-by-dollar accounting of money spent. This kind of behaviour includes “helping” make decisions about clothes to wear or what to order at a restaurant.
- ✓ Intrusive behaviour, such as secretly going through partner’s wallet/purse, or secretly checking partner’s email.
- ✓ Isolation which includes cutting partner off from friends and family, and insisting on socializing only with “couple’s” friends.
- ✓ Threats of violence such as threatening to destroy a favourite possession.
- ✓ Physical violence or coercion such as hitting or breaking or striking objects during arguments.

One of the challenges of conducting a survey is that many respondents may, consciously or subconsciously, give answers that they think the researcher wants to hear. As a filter to see if people were objectively analyzing their responses, I inserted two behaviours that are not overtly negative - praising the partner to colleagues and friends, and washing dishes. An overwhelming majority (20 and 21 respondents respectively) considered these as non-abusive actions. Those who felt

these actions could be construed as abusive under certain circumstances gave reasons that brought out the complexity of the issue. One respondent felt that praising the partner in front of family and friends may be just an act. Another said that washing dishes could be considered controlling behaviour if the partner had already washed them.

Some of the findings of the survey hinged on degree to determine if people felt the behaviour was abusive. Not surprisingly, all 22 respondents said that hitting was abusive behaviour, but many people did not perceive breaking things during an argument as violent (12 Negatives, 7 Affirmatives and 3 Depends). Respondents were widely split on the other actions, and, in fact, the next-ranked behaviour that was considered abusive [*constantly calling on the cell phone to ask, “Where are you?”*] was deemed so by only 12 people, demonstrating that overt violence is recognised as abuse but emotional or psychological control often remains unacknowledged. Interestingly, less than half the group thought similar controlling actions, such as asking for detailed accounts or discouraging partners from wearing certain clothes, as abusive (10 and 8 respectively). One of the reasons for this may be social acceptance of traditional gender roles in which finances are a male domain. This is borne out by the fact that of the 10

people who thought asking for an account of every dollar spent was abusive, seven were women.

Intrusive behaviour, such as secretly checking partner’s emails or going through partner’s wallets or purses, was another issue which had more or less evenly divided responses in all three categories - Yes, No and Depends. There may be two aspects to this finding. One, the respondents may not have given weight to the qualifying adjective

“Space Between Us” (William Morrow, 2005), the new novel by Thrity Umrigar, tells the story about Sera, a Parsi woman whose ordinary day-to-day life in an upper-middle class household in Bombay hides the shame and disappointment of her abusive marriage. The novel has been described as “poignant and compelling, evocative and unforgettable”. Thrity Umrigar teaches creative writing at Case Western Reserve University and lives in Cleveland, Ohio. For more about Thrity Umrigar’s work, visit www.umrigar.com. Brief review on page 33 of this issue.



Farishta Dinshaw has teaching in her genes. Currently she works as a Community Development Worker, Family Violence Initiative, supporting 11 ethno-cultural agencies in Toronto to raise awareness about violence against women, children & elders. She has presented papers on various topics relevant to the Zoroastrian religion and community at three international congresses. Farishta is also the author of the insightful story of a fictional boy befriended by Zarathushtra called “Discovering Ashavan”.

“secretly” before replying thus not associating mistrust issues with this action. Another reason may be that these actions are considered intrusive according to Western norms which endorse individual identities even within partnerships, and may not apply to other cultures which see the husband and wife as a unit. This may also be the underlying reason why wanting to socialize only with “couple’s” friends may be seen as isolating and repressive according to Western norms, but acceptable as social practice in other “we” societies. This underlines larger systemic issue of Euro-centric norms dictating policy, legislation and provision of services without regard for other world views, and pathologising violence in some communities as a cultural, phenomenon resulting from oppressive patriarchal, intergenerational, and religious beliefs.

Current academic debate on this issue aside, it will certainly not impair Parsis to re-evaluate their practices, values and norms against a higher standard of behaviour. Respect is a component of a healthy relationship between husbands and wives and perhaps it is time to come up with new parameters of respectful behaviour. For instance, 17 people said that they did not consider teasing a partner about gaining weight or loss of hair as abusive. In fact, one person who was listening to the questions (but did not participate) said, “Really? You’re joking”. Although we can choose to dismiss this with, “Come on, now you’re getting carried away”, which was another response, we know from countless studies on the correlation between body image and self-esteem that remarks about weight gain or hair loss, even affectionate teasing ones from a partner that one knows loves them, affects the way people feel about themselves. Constant teasing, especially in front of others, may make them feel unattractive, and one would imagine that people want their spouses to find them appealing. It is not such a great leap of logic, therefore, to see that words that have the power to hurt someone can be considered abusive. *Hukhta*, after all, is more than the middle word in the holy trio of good thoughts, good words and good deeds. ■■■

School for the handicapped needs a boost

by mehernosh p shroff

S P J Sadhana School needs your help in building a brighter and happier tomorrow for developmentally handicapped Parsi Zoroastrians.

My earliest memory, going back in time, is that of age three. I remember gong out in the evenings with my sisters, cousins, mother, and grand-dad, Jamjetji. The ‘outings’ as we considered them, were frequent trips to the Banaji Atashbehrām. And they do say that ‘the family that prays together, stays together’. *Mamavaji*, after his prayers, would hand out coins to each of his grand children, to be dropped into each of the many boxes that were kept on the ready to receive whatever metal or paper that came their way through their slots.

Prayer time being over, we children would then hover around grandpa’s wheelchair in eager anticipation of the inevitable Cadbury chocolate that never failed to delight us.

Piety, generosity and charity were the continuous lessons that we thus learnt commencing at a very young age. My father Pirojsha further exemplified these traits as I recall, by distributing vitamin tablets and Durabolin injections (for general health and muscle strength) that his company manufactured, to those whom he felt would derive benefit from these. My father did not give up this practice even when he lost most of his funds after the 1969 crash of the stock market, when we were no longer counted amongst ‘the rich’. I remember him telling me at one of those father-to-son talks that the hallmark of Parsi character would ever be the pursuit of truth, charity and selflessness.

Having grown into parenthood, and wanting to pass on the simple pleasures of life and good living on to my progeny, I found myself

Mehernosh P H Shroff is the father of a wonderful talented child Nicole who is his greatest friend and buddy. He comes from the Mani Wadia family of Bombay who are still active in shipbuilding, marine manning, sale of ship spares. He is a Chief Engineer and fellow of the institute of Marine Engineers; Founder and CEO of Sea Worthy, Growmor and MRM Mumbai Marine Manning companies. He is also the founder of Ahimsa warships and Ecosense movement, and has built the world's first teak wood houseboat at sea, M L Darya Mahal Sea King.

in great remorse when I discovered that our daughter was an autistic individual, though since age two she had been on board wooden dhows with me. This article aims to bring to light the transformation that has come over my daughter and the other students of the little known S P J Sadhana School for the mentally handicapped, housed in the Sophia College campus at Breach Candy in south Mumbai.

This institution has cured, or at least healed, 40 to 50 Parsi Zoroastrians and about 50 other children who were autistic, hyperactive or mentally challenged. The turnaround they have achieved is unbelievable! A *renaissance* is perceived to have occurred; they are now able to exhibit their talents and have become achievers.

A visit to their school reveals that the children of the junior classes eagerly shake your hand and/or give you a hug, and even make you think, "I am in heaven with these little angels who give me such unconditional love", which is in stark contrast to the uncaring competitive world that we are forced to live in, outside the walls of this school.

The seniors appear self-confident as their caretakers constantly exploit their talents; few would realize that these self-assured and polite youngsters, at one stage of their lives, could not speak coherently, talk sense, or even walk.

The S J P Sadhana School has indeed given them wings!

Who is responsible for this magnificent transformation? Every time I visit the School, I am amazed at the service put in by Sister Gaitonde, the Principal, Radhika Khanna, Rajshri, the swimming teacher and the class teachers. Helpers like Lila *behn*, and the other volunteers too have no small role to play on this stage, for in the earlier years, the children are very difficult to handle. The

hard work and sacrifices of the benefactors have enabled these special children to win prizes in swimming, arts and crafts, etc, even on all-India basis.

The hell that the workers go through has been very aptly reflected in the film 'Black', directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, starring Rani Mukherji and Ayesha Kapoor, wherein Amitabh Bhacchan has taken on the role of a dedicated teacher. And anyone interested in seeing several such Amitabhs off the screen are invited to come with me to witness 'real life' at S P J Sadhana.

A glaring shortcoming at Sadhana is the financial resource. The school functions with six teachers short of their minimal needs, and even those that do work here, do not get the market price for such teachers. The very repair of toilets is kept in abeyance because of funds shortage. Deflation in interest rates have not helped matters, and now we learn that their corpus, which is being eaten away by everyday bills and huge expenses for their day-to-day activities, needs a boost of 80 million rupees!

Last year there were so many Parsi children that I felt they were the only ones there, but I was amazed to see just 10 of them at present! The parents of most of the children are poor and suffer from a social stigma, and with no help from relatives or the community, can barely pay for their children's necessities of special care at home, and special transport to and from school. Their travel in the regular public transport is quite out of the question as there have been several cases of cruel teasing and molestation.

With no help in sight from even a single Parsi Trust or individual, S P J Sadhana stands in danger of being closed down! So parents have now been asked to appeal for help from worldwide charitable institutions.

In responding to the e-mails I sent out for help, the first person who sent me a cheque, was Ms Aloo Bhatena who reacted



within an hour of receiving my message. Through these pages I thank her, and send an appeal to others of my community in the global village that we live in, for any kind of donation – large or small, to help needy children live the new 'liberated' life that my daughter now enjoys.

Even if she missed out on the childhood pleasures that I enjoyed all those years ago, S P J Sadhana has more than made up for the loss. The transformation in my girl brings to mind Audrey Hepburn of *My Fair Lady*. My daughter is now a talented singer, has won awards for her paintings, and silver and bronze medals in swimming. At age 12, she cooks her own breakfast, albeit a simple one of chips-and-eggs or the likes of it. She has turned into a witty little being even cracking jokes (but never sick ones!). *Filmfare* and *Midday* are her choice reading materials. What she can do with a square piece of textile fabric, is amazing – transforming it into near designer clothing! She has also turned into a wonderful sailor: brave and fearless in storms. She shoots short film clips on video and does remixes. And all this is thanks to the loving and nurturing care of Sadhana.

So far, what she hasn't acquired are social skills – she hates to shake hands or make small talk. She is bluntly honest and hates lies. If at all you have the good fortune of meeting this girl of mine, be prepared to meet a sweet young thing who is proud to be just herself.

Now let us pledge to get together to churn out other equally proud individuals full of self-esteem and self-respect, by putting our generous hands in our pockets.

Make your donations in the name of "S P J Sadhana School" of Mumbai, and check out their web site: www.yougivemewings.org, if you are so inclined.



Dyslexia : A first hand perspective

by sohrab anklesaria

*d*yslexia in general is not a disease but a syndrome classified as a learning disability. For some the left side of the brain is not as strong as the right. People who are creative, observant seeing things from a different perspective, but are terrible in spellings, grammar and storing large amounts of information is a good description of one who is dyslexic. It is quite funny that the complicated term "dyslexia" is used for those who would spell it 'dislecseea'.

But like any disability such as being lame or blind; children and adults who are dyslexic can work not only around it but can work with it as well. People such as Albert Einstein, Issac Newton and many talented and imaginative writers had (and have) it, but as we have seen dyslexia is in no way a set back to brilliance. With appropriate professional intervention, a child could do extremely well in their academics and in life.

Then again, life isn't only based on a text book filled with long explanations and big perplexing words which possess spellings that defy the laws of common sense simply to confuse us. Dyslexia does not limit your abilities; it just makes life harder to achieve some of them. Now many schools have become aware of these learning differences and so are making (if you ask me, meager or paltry) attempts to aid dyslexic children. In "O Level" exams a child is given an extra thirty minutes to finish his/her paper (in my opinion that is just prolonging the torture and there should be an entirely different paper forged to suit their needs).

Alas, sometimes, (more now than in the past) some parents, teachers and others associated academically with a child, are understanding about dyslexia. Many

teachers say a student is slow or retarded because their learning quality or speed is not that of the majority of the pupils. But not to worry, for it is simpler for an ignorant teacher to say you are dumb than for her to see the problem and help you through it. (yes, based on personal experience)

Parents are sometimes ashamed of their child having these differences and choose to conceal it as laziness or lack of attention paid in class. But it should be highlighted that no disability is one to be ashamed of, but shame must be felt in suppressing a child's potentials due to blind and convenient ignorance. It is not the child's fault if he is dyslexic, it is the parent or teacher's fault for being ignorant of the child's needs.

All my life I have dealt with dyslexia. Before anyone knew I had it, I had the pleasure of hearing the most arcane excuses for my poor marks. *"He can't see the blackboard, maybe he needs glasses"*; *"He doesn't have the appropriate study techniques"*; *"Maybe he isn't trying hard enough"*. Teachers in my school who now claim to understand this problem gave my parents these silly remarks and so in the third grade came the saviour; a specialist in dyslexia, Mrs Majabeen Sadik, a teacher who came to our school and helped children like me to manage this minor setback in my learning progress.

All the basics of English language, through flash cards, handwriting and the use of *"the quick brown fox"*, we were made to understand not just learn. It has been about nine years and I still recall the tiring and monotonous – *"O, says /O/ as in octopus"*. Little did I know that this was the start to my gradual and slow training to master this language. I also remember frustrating hours Jabeen aunty would keep me back till I had finished my work, how I would mutter and breathe sighs of utter contempt and impatience. I would be lying if I said *"Ah, good times"*. All through this time I bore the intense humiliation of kids looking inside the class room of the kindergarten section as I toiled with my extra classes. If it weren't for

Jabeen and my mother's tireless attempts to push me forward I wouldn't have had the strength nor the attention span to deal with such a torturous procedure. Constant checking of my essay's corrections, to spellings and sentences, left, right and center, always telling me to put my "lazy" (left) hand: on the paper as I wrote, and to stop staring into space in the middle of a dictation. (come to think of it, some habits never die!)

From the third to the sixth grade this went on and on and on to be quite honest, but finally improvement was seen in my language and literature classes. I was doing well and so this encouraged me to press on in doing better and better; writing longer, more descriptive essays, and being able to analyse the text in English Literature to form satisfactory answers.

And, just last year I received a commendation for the essay I wrote for the Commonwealth Essay Competition – "Write around the World".

So you see, dyslexia doesn't have to be a problem if you don't want it to be and never think any less of yourself if you do, because it's not that you can't see things the 'normal way around', you just do things the way you know best - your way.

As Geoffrey Shepherd said, "the mind manufactures it's own intellectual species".



16-year old Sohrab is studying for his GCE "O levels" at the Karachi Grammar School. He loves the English language, wrote poetry till a couple of years ago whenever he felt he couldn't cope, and enjoys singing. He is now trying his hand in writing lyrics.

Readers may wonder how can a person who is dyslexic write like this? Sohrab is my grandson, and when I requested him to write on the subject so that others who have similar problems may be encouraged, I thought he may refuse. To my utter joy he readily agreed and without any assistance, this is what he has produced. With encouragement, motivation and perseverance, what seems impossible becomes possible. He is a brave young man who has cared enough to share his disability - Ed

Finding light at the end of the Academic Tunnel

by mahjabeen sadik

When smart kids fail in academic settings they usually start to war the label of “dyslexia”. The term brings many negative connotations to parents, teachers and those afflicted with the condition. Being part of the league I can very well relate to all those associated fears but as a specialist in this field I have evolved and think otherwise. After encountering many unique minds with ingenious qualities, I can confidently conclude that the “gifts” of dyslexia are well worth any amount of labour required to teach literacy skills. History is filled with examples of great minds that had to struggle with acquiring language skills, but they have given valuable contributions in the form of inventions. This could only have been the result of their creative approach to problem-solving, since dyslexics encounter enough brick walls that force them to learn how to go around them.

I believe professional support is critical for dyslexic students, so that their scholastic achievements can correspond with their average to above average intelligence. If ignored these students drop out of school, developing frustration, low self-esteem, behaviour problems and some eventually become juvenile delinquents. Their intelligence and often their exceptional abilities are wasted and the society pays the cost of putting up with maladjusted individuals.

Educational therapy provides the link and fills in the gap of learning that the dyslexic learners have missed through the ages. An individualised tailor-made remedial programme to suit the specific learning style of the learner is cardinal. The teaching approach should be multi-sensory pathways [ie. eyes (visual), ears (auditory), muscles (kinesthetic) and feel (tactile)], to reinforce weak memory patterns and to strengthen each other for optimal learning. In addition, the programme needs to be structured, sequential and cumulative as each step is based on prior learning. Since it is concept based teaching, it teaches to intelligence, forming a sound foundation for advanced learning.

Sohrab Anklesaria found himself struggling with language acquisition in his early years of formal education. With early intervention and appropriate use of strategies/techniques, he has undoubtedly proven to be a legitimate learner. His hard work, dedication and motivation have turned his weakness of writing into one of his invaluable assets through which he is ready to absorb the future challenges of academia. Sohrab's accomplishments make me a proud practitioner.



Mahjabeen Sadik is a M Ed from Cambridge College, Mass, USA and specialises in the use of the Orton-Gillingham therapeutic teaching technique; a Fellow of the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators, USA and an Associate Member of British Dyslexia Assoc, UK. She has been using her expertise since the past 19 years and is the founder and director of the Center for Assessment and Remedial Education (CARE). Her services include Psychoeducational/Educational Assessments, specialised teacher training, tutoring students with learning differences and counseling parents and teachers.

Teachers make every other profession possible

shared by Nina Sethna – a dedicated teacher

The dinner guests were sitting around the table discussing life. A CEO, decided to explain the problem with education. He argued, “What’s a kid going to learn from someone who decided his best option in life was to become a teacher?” He reminded the other dinner guests what they say about teachers: “Those who can, do. Those who can’t, teach.” To stress his point he said to another guest; “You’re a teacher, Susan. Be honest. What do you make?”

Susan replied, “You want to know what I make? I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could. I make a C+ feel like the winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor. I make kids sit through 40 minutes of study hall in absolute silence. I make kids wonder. I make them question. I make them criticise. I make them apologise and mean it. I make them write. I make them read, read, read. I make them show all their work in math and perfect their final drafts in English. I make them understand that if you have the brains, and follow your heart, if someone ever tries to judge you by what you make, you must pay no attention because they just didn’t learn.” Susan paused and then continued. “You want to know what I make? ‘I MAKE A DIFFERENCE.’ What do you make?” (source unknown)

سالها پس از بازگشت دستورجاماسب به ایران، یک فرانسوی بنام "انکویتل دوپرن" به شهر "سورت" در هندوستان می‌رود و زبان اوستایی را نزد دستور داراب شاگرد برجسته دستورجاماسب می‌آموزد و پس از برگشت به فرانسه برگردان نسکهای اوستایی را به فرانسه راه می‌اندازد. از آن تاریخ آموزش و گسترش زبان اوستایی در اروپا آغاز می‌شود. (سده ۱۸ نرسایی) و کم کم اروپاییها برگردان سنگ نوشته های بیستون و میان دو رود (بین النهرین) را برای ما فراهم می‌کنند.

به زودی در دانشگاه کرمان (باهنر) ساختمانی بپاد دستورجاماسب بنام "پژوهشکده فرهنگ و زبانهای ایرانی" گشایش خواهد یافت. در این پژوهشکده یک کتابخانه ویژه که درجه حرارت و رطوبت ثابت دارد برای نگهداری نسکهای دست‌نویس باستانی برگزار خواهد شد. سرافرازی اینجاست که این پژوهشکده به پیشنهاد و هزینه نویسنده به یاد بود نیای خود برپا می‌شود. دانشجویانی که داری لیسانس باشند می‌توانند برای درجه مافوق لیسانس و دکترا نام نویسی کنند. پارسیان، دستور دانشمند را، بنام جاماسب ولایتی کرمانی می‌شناسند. گویا برای این که نام پدرش بهمن بوده او را در ایران جاماسب و هومنی (نیک اندیش) می‌نامیده‌اند. جاماسب پایه گزار و گسترش دهنده زبانهای اوستایی در اروپا می‌باشد.

شاهرخ وفاداری لندن بهار ۳۷۴۴ باستانی.



Shahrokh Vafadari was born in Kerman, Iran in 1932 into a Zoroastrian priestly family. He received his early education in Kerman and Alborz College, Tehran. Shahrokh is a graduate of the University of London, a chartered engineer with postgraduate studies in business management. He has worked as a petroleum consultant. In 1975 in recognition of his contribution to education he was made a life Freeman of the City of London. Shahrokh is now living in London with his family. He is devoting his time to strengthen the chair established in the University of Kerman in honour of his ancestor Dastoor Jamasb Velayeti.

یکی از پیشوایان دینی زرتشتیان بنام دستور (موبد بزرگ) جاماسب که موبدی وارسته و دانشمند بود همسر خود را در این شیبخون از دست می‌دهد. دستور جاماسب برای آگاه کردن هم دینان و هم میهنان با پسر جوان خود و مرد دیگری از راه کویر بسوی یزد روانه می‌شود. در آن زمان زرتشتیان یزد در دهکده های گوناگون مانند چم، مبارکه، مریم آباد، شریف آباد و دیگر دهکدها در بیرون شهر یزد زندگی می‌کردند. دستور جاماسب و پسرش و مرد سوم پس از یکفته با دشواری فراوان به یکی از این دهکده ها می‌رسند و آگهی تاخت و تاز محمود و سواران را بهم دینان و هم میهنان خود می‌رسانند و هشدار می‌دهند که محمود از چپاول نخستین بسیار شادمان می‌باشد و در سر می‌پروراند که به شهر های دگر چون یزد و شیراز و اصفهان نیز یورش آورد. با این آگاهی یزدیها اندازهای خود را برای یورش محمود آماده می‌کنند.

در این زمان پارسیان هندوستان از پیشوایان دینی ایرانی درخواست می‌کنند که از ایران موبدی دانشمند برای کار داوری به هندوستان فرستاده شود تا دشواریهای دینی آنها را برکنار کند. پیشوایان دینی زرتشتیان ایران به پاس و گرمی داشت، دستور جاماسب را از میان خود برای این کار برگزیده و روانه هندوستان می‌کنند. پس از ورود به بمبی، دستور جاماسب به " سورت " می‌رود و دشواریهای دینی را برکنار می‌کند. در این زمان آگاهی از ایران می‌رسد که محمود و سوارانش به اصفهان پایتخت یورش آورده و شاه سلطان حسین مست و خرافاتی، که بدون رمل و اسطرلاب دست به هیچ کاری نمی‌زد، تاج کشور را به محمود افغان بخشیده است.

دستور جاماسب با این که بسیار نگران فرزندان جوانش در ایران بود در هندوستان می‌ماند و به آموزش زبان اوستایی می‌پردازد. یکی از شاگردان برجسته او دستور داراب پارسی می‌باشد. پس از چند سال دوری، دستور جاماسب به کرمان برمی‌گردد و از زرتشتیان می‌خواهد که به سپاه نادرشاه افشار پیوسته و به قندهار و هرات و کابل بروند و در پایان از هندوستان سردرمی‌آورند.

هوای خشک و بلندی پیرامون ۱۷۰۰ متر از دریا، آسمان بی‌همتایی برای ستاره‌شناسی در کرمان فراهم می‌کند. کم و بیش همه کرمانیها دلباخته ستاره‌شناسی می‌باشند. دستور جاماسب از دلباختگی گامی جلو تر گذاشته و از دانش ستاره‌شناسی بهره فراوان داشت و به گاه‌شماری خورشیدی و پایه اختر شناسی آن به خوبی وارد بود. در هندوستان دریافت که پارسیان جشن نوروز را میان تابستان می‌گیرند و تاریخ خود را که درست برابر باروز شماری ایران است " شاهنشاهی " می‌نامند. پس از بررسی درست دریافت که پارسیان تا آن زمان (۱۷۲۰ ترسایی) پیرامون هشت صد سال در

هندوستان زندگی کرده‌اند و در این سده های پی‌در پی یکبار "ابرداد" انجام داده‌اند (افزودن یک ماه کیسه به شیوه ساسانیان در هر ۱۲۰ سال) و برای این فراموش‌کاری جشن نوروز پیرامون شش ماه به جلو و در میان تابستان افتاده است.

دستور جاماسب کرمانی کی بود و چه خدمتی کرد؟

یک صد سال پیش ایرانیان بزبان کتونی فارسی، برگردان (ترجمه) درستی از سرودهای زرتشت (گاتها) را نداشتند. برای نخستین بار استاد ابراهیم پورداود برگردان آن را از اوستایی برای ما فراهم کرد. شادروان پورداود نزد "بارتولومه" زبان شناس آلمانی اوستایی را آموخته بود و پس از آن به برگردان دیگر نسخهای اوستا نیز دست زد.

برداشت شیوه کار او مانند استادش نزدیک به برگردان "بارتولومه" از اوستایی به آلمانی می باشد. جای شکفت اینجاست که اروپاییها پیش از ما ایرانیان نوشته های اوستایی را بزبانهای خود برگردان کرده بودند و ما ایرانیان اوستا را می خواندیم و کمتر کسی بود که معنی آن را دریافت می کرد و تا زمان پورداود شیوه درستی برای یاد گرفتن اوستایی نداشتیم.

امید وارم با این گفتار که یاد آوری از کم بود دلباختگی و ارزشمندی هم میهنان از باز مانده های باستانی می باشد، خواننده را آزرده نکرده باشم. بیگمان در شناسایی ایران باستان ما ایرانیان بسیار به اروپاییها بدهکار می باشیم. تخت جمشید را آنها از زیر ابرهای تاریک تاریخ در آوردند و خط هخامنشیان (میخی) را بیگانگان برای ما خواندند. ما ایرانیان بدست خود تیشه به ریشه خود می زنیم و نمونه آن ساختمان سدسیون در دشت مرغاب (مرودشت) نزدیکی بازارگارد است که بسیار بازمانده های تاریخی با شکوه ایران را زیر آب خواهد برد. کسی که به بررسی تاریخی نیاکان خود نپردازد و از آن دوری جوید مانند فرزندی بی هویت و به اصطلاح "بی پدر و مادر" بایستی زندگی کند.

در زمان شاه سلطان حسین صفوی، محمود افغان و سوارانش به ایران یورش آوردند و خاندان صفوی را از کار برکنار کردند. البته بیشتر خاک افغانستان در زمانهای باستان پارمائی از ایران بود، اما پادشاهان گورکانی هندوستان گاه گاهی دستبرد زده و بخشی از افغانستان را به زیر فرمانروایی خود درمی آوردند به ویژه اینکه بیشتر مردم افغانستان مسلمان سنی بودند و با شیعه صفوی نمی ساختند.

محمود افغان در سال ۱۷۲۰ ترسائی از راه نرماشیر به شهر کرمان بی درنگ یورش آورد. در آن زمان زرتشتیان کرمان می بایستی بیرون از شهر کرمان، پشت دیوار دور شهر، زندگی کنند. محمود و سواران چپاول گرش برای نخستین بار با ایستادگی ایرانیان در گیر محله با زرتشتیان رویرو شدند. این شیخون کشته و چپاول فراوان بیار آورد و یورش آوران بدون هیچ ایستادگی از سوی دروازه بانان از راه دروازه گشوده ناصریه (نام گزاری در زمان ناصرالدین شاه می باشد) وارد کرمان شده و به تاراج پرداختند.

Revival of Parsi embroidery - a PARZOR venture

by ava khullar

What could be more pleasing to the aesthetic eye than a Parsi lady dressed in an enchanting, fully embroidered *gara* sari. But surely there is more to it than the *gara* being a beautiful and precious heirloom to be proudly worn on festive occasions. The story of this Parsi heritage needs telling. This lacuna is sought to be filled by the Parzor Foundation's study of Parsi embroidery.

As these pieces were a result of the trade between China and the wealthy Parsi traders, trading initially in opium and later in cotton and spices with China, there appeared to be a simplistic comprehension of these garments as textiles ordered by Parsis, made in China and worn by Parsis in India. No serious work had been undertaken to understand the origin, significance or meaning of the various motives that cover the *gara* designs from the floral to creatures, both four-legged and winged, real and mythological such as the phoenix, unicorn, bird of paradise etc, to aquatic life, butterflies and even bats.

The result of the initial foray into this study by a student of the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad was a draft of the report entitled "Painting with a Needle". The study went into the history of these textiles and documented many, many finely embroidered specimens of *garas*, *jhablas*, (a loose straight garment, worn by children) *kors* (borders) found in the wardrobes of Parsi ladies. It analysed the stitches, designs, individual motives, their placement and formations. It also studied the fabrics used for Parsi textiles. This proved to be a happy hunting ground for our non-Parsi researchers who had never been confronted with such exquisite workmanship and beautiful textiles. It has also given to the Parzor archives a comprehensive record of these unmatched textiles. When with time these fabrics, now over a 100 or



Craftswomen from Kutch



Border in aari embroidery (above); satin stitch embroidery (right)



Illustrations courtesy of PARZOR



Research on the divine fungus

130 years old ultimately disintegrate, or are lost to this country as foreign buyers are picking them up, there will remain this one comprehensive record of their existence for posterity.

As the research progressed it became clearer that there were strong cross cultural links between the Chinese design tradition, the

European tradition and the Persian Zoroastrian tradition which the present day Parsis are privy to. The trade that flourished between these three peoples through the Silk Route, mainly during the period of the Sasanian dynasty (226 - 661 AD) and the Tang dynasty (618 - 907AD) in China, had created an amalgam of their embroidery traditions. The linkages were becoming more closely woven and we recognised the need to go deeper into this research efforts to truly understand Parsi textiles as a unique, original and significant contribution to the textile heritage of India.

While research and documentation was necessary, the Government of India was more interested in the revival of what was considered a languishing craft, as well as giving a new skill and thereby employment to *karigars* (craftsmen). Thus started a programme of workshops with GOI support. The aim of the workshop was threefold:

✧ To train craft persons into the techniques and nuances of Parsi embroidery and give them a skill that could enhance their means of livelihood;

✧ To create awareness and sensitize the Parsi community and create a sense of pride in this wonderful heritage and to help Parsis, especially the women, learn this craft and thus understand the significance of their precious heirlooms;

✧ To make these workshops as tools for empowering women, Parsis and non Parsis, and help them become independent economically.

Three workshops, in Ahmedabad in August 2005, Navsari in January 2006 and Mumbai in April 2006 have so far been conducted. Each of these have progressively been learning experiences.

Our initial efforts are to adapt and contemporise; we realized that we do not have the resources nor are we in competition with the ladies who are into making *garas*. Initially our effort will be to keep the tradition alive by concentrating on smaller items, accessories, household linen, furnishings etc, which would not only provide employment but have a ready market. We have thus helped the SEWA workers who do the 'ari' stitch with a *moochi's* (cobbler's) needle or the 'pako' stitch the Muslim *karigars* who do satin stitch, to adapt their skill to Parsi designs by teaching them the finer nuances which distinguish Parsi embroidery. We had a surprise bonanza when the Muslim *karigars* were able to authentically duplicate the 'khakho' stitch, which no one was able to do, with a variation of the *ari* stitch. We would at a later stage, simultaneously hope to guide master craftsmen into creating larger pieces, even *garas*.

Our efforts continue. However the greatest constraint is how to sustain this training process between workshops. For the *karigar* time is money and he cannot give his time to perfect a new skill unless the resulting product can fetch a price. We need continual foundational support to make this effort at revival come alive and Parsi embroidery enter the Indian and export market as a valued product. It is our dream to set up a special School of Embroidery on the lines of the famous schools of China to maintain a sustained programme of training and make Parsi embroidery revival a force to reckon with.



Ava Khullar is a social scientist and has been researching various aspects of the Parsi community for over three decades. She also has a special interest in Parsi embroidery which she has been trying to revive for many years.

UNESCO
PARZOR
Foundation's

"Painting with a
Needle"

Symposium &
Exhibition on 25
April.

A Workshop on
Parsi Embroidery
from 26 - 30 April,
gratis

Relief for the earthquake victims continues

Toxy Cowasjee reports



Dalola is just west of Muzaffarabad and south of Garhi Habibullah

From Rs8,834,917.99p we have dispersed Rs6,828,815.

The expenses incurred since 3 February have been, payment to two individuals, on the request of the donor residing in USA amounting to Rs59,674, enabling them to rebuild their homes.

We are now in the process of a pilot project with the Omar Asghar Khan Development Foundation, a Safe House for Women, at Dalola, which is close to Garhi Habibullah. The full cost for construction with fixtures, running costs with salaries for a year is amounting to Rs1,775,000. The construction is earthquake proof and will be carried out by masons, carpenters and steel fixers who have been trained by UN Habitat. OAKDF hopes the community themselves will be running this centre after a year as it is their policy to make those they assist self sufficient, a view endorsed by WZO.

This Safe House will be available for about 1,200 women with their young children who will be able to come, converse, discuss their rights, have counseling, receive health education, have the use of kitchens for their cooking and hamams for bathing. The construction should be ready in three months.

We have sent Rs1,000,000 on 17 April 2006 as an advance for the building whose total cost with fixtures and boundary wall is Rs965,000. The operation cost for one year is estimated at Rs378,000 and the wages for personnel is Rs432,000.

The French Women's Club at Karachi, having heard of this project joined in and donated Rs150,000 which will be used towards the operation cost. Therefore, we will be giving OAKDF a total of Rs1,625,000 for this project.

We share with you what has transpired since the last reports printed in Hamazor Issue 4/05 pp 66-69 and Issue 1/06 pp 60-66.

We have now received till 31 May 2006, a total sum of Rs8,834,917.99p. This amount is made up of donations received from individuals, Zoroastrian Associations and like-minded friends from all over the world. The list of these is mentioned on page 70 of Issue 4/05 and since then the following bodies have contributed.

St Elizabeth's Epocostal Church, Knoxville, USA - \$1000

The Dulwich Quilters, UK, through the sale of their quilt - £2000

Donations received by WZO UK - £1000 including,

All Saint's Church, Rome, Italy - £350
Australian Zoroastrian Association of NSW – AUS\$250,

and from their members – AUS\$1,350 which form part of the total figure.

You may wonder why nothing was done since February, but negotiations have been on the table with OAKDF since January for the above project.

It may be of general interest, OAKDF are also setting up a skilled labour training centre near the Safe House and supervising the construction of around 3000 houses at Dalola. You may recall we had sent two converted containers to be used as a Basic Health Unit also at Dalola, which is now proving to be insufficient. OAKDF are setting up a hospital tent adjacent to this to enlarge the existing facility.

There is a balance in this fund of Rs1,381,102.99, after final payment for SHW, which may be used either for providing water supply which is a high priority, or given towards building of a school. Initially building of schools were quoted as Rs2.5 million, which we had available, but when the time came to commence rebuilding, the cost quoted was Rs9+ million, a sum we do not have nor hope to receive.



Review of Arthur and George

Aban Rustomji, Houston, TX

From one of England's most esteemed novelists comes an utter delight that captures an era through two lives – one life celebrated internationally and another entirely forgotten. Jules Barnes latest novel, *Arthur and George*, is a story that can be summarized without too much betrayal: it tells the story of a once famous miscarriage of justice, suffered by George Edalji, a solicitor in England in 1903, overturned thanks in large by the efforts of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Arthur and George is based on a complicated set of true events. George Edalji, an obscure young lawyer of mixed Scottish and Parsi parentage, was the object of a long campaign of harassment and intimidation by local bigots in English Midlands. He was eventually framed for a series of bizarre incidents and subsequently jailed. The injustice was later brought to the attention of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle who took up the case with a passion.

The novel's two main characters don't even meet till page 227. The book alternates between their life stories, and it begins right at the beginning — with their first memories. Arthur's are of being left alone in an Edinburgh room with his grandmother's corpse. George has no significant memories except growing up as a shy, earnest boy, acute of sensing the expectations of others.

Arthur is portrayed as ambitious, physically robust and a fine sportsman, but George's path through life is harder. His father Shapurji is a Parsi, born in Bombay and converted to the Church of England in his youth.

He was ordained as a priest, and married Charlotte whose uncle was a parish priest. Upon the uncle's death, Shapurji was made priest of Wyrley, a small village in Staffordshire. George's parents are kind, but they are utterly clueless of the modern world or how hard it was for George to be accepted at school. And so the reader becomes totally engrossed in a situation which we would now term as racial profiling.

As Barnes points out, the case was the English equivalent to the Dreyfus affair, another gross miscarriage of injustice. George Edalji is a bit of a "dry stick", but he is intelligent and honorable. There are moving passages that show George in the courtroom and in jail, struggling to understand the nightmare of a once promising life. He almost manages to persuade himself that he enjoys spending days in his cell "plaiting nose-bags" and reading the classics. He has deep trust that the English law would save him. Nevertheless he is stoic when sentenced for seven years. Three years without apology or an explanation, he is released. He then begins a campaign to clear his name and gets in touch with Arthur Conan Doyle.

New York Review of Books featured a book review by John Lancaster who mentions, "Edalji case is so little known, except by Parsees and lawyers... and the case did not cause an ideological polarization but instead led to a typically practical, empirical outcome: the founding of the Court of Appeal".

The story also talks about Doyle's interest in the world of "spirit bodies". True to that era, and now a bit hard to understand, is how an enlightened empiricist like Doyle fell for the Victorian seance world, but that he did.

There is a great deal of factual interest blended with fully imagined inner world of fiction. The novel is an experience resounding with issues, no less relevant today, of crime and spirituality, of identity and nationality, of what we think, what we believe and what we can prove.





The World Zoroastrian Organisation

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APPLICATION FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP

The Joint Honorary Secretaries
The World Zoroastrian Organisation

_____ 20 _____

Dear Sirs,

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

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

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

Yours truly,

Signature

Block Capitals please FULL NAME _____

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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

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

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Ordinary	NZ\$30	Student	Gratis till 25 years of age		

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

Mrs Farah Unwala, 39 Buckingham St, Whakatu, Hawkes Bay 4250. Tel: +64 6 870 1171

“...I who shall

serve all of you, Wise Lord,
with good thinking, ... ”

yasna 28.2

Insler translation

