

publication of the world zoroastrian organisation

# HAMAZOR

3  
issue 2008



**'The  
Magnificent  
Seven'  
-who will they be?**



Zarin Patel - business brain at the BBC, p 44

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## From the Editor

Hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes, suicide bombings, high inflation - we have it all, right at our doorstep and as the Hamazor goes to press, we have the much publicised BPP elections which for the first time in its history of 350 years and more, is now going to experience election by democratic process of Universal Adult Franchise.



As much as desired and not for want of trying, I had hoped to carry a fair report of the pre-election scenario, but this was not possible. Thirty-two candidates are vying for seven seats on the BPP Trustee Board. The atmosphere has been similar to politicians seeking election for Parliament, canvassing amongst the constituents not always, as one would desire. I can only speak from what I have received and read. There are two distinct 'teams' competing for trusteeship - the Adult Franchise for Progress [AFP] having eight members and the four-member panel of WAPIZ [World Alliance of Parsi Irani Zarthoshtis] along with a few independant candidates who are the forerunners. Jehangir Patel in his Editorial of Parsiana writes, "should the AFP panel and Mistry succeed, it would imply the community has opted for the traditional ..." [though detractors claim the panel is liberal]. "if WAPIZ and Mehta win, that means the community is still orthodox in outlook ...". Time alone will tell.

The election this time and for the first time, is in the hand of the voters - the community - and the Parsis of India will get what they choose or in other words 'what they deserve'. We the rest of the world are by-standers and can only hope for a team who will govern wisely and fairly, as indirectly we are all involved.

There will be no 4th issue of the Hamazor this year, as Issue 2 was a hefty one costing WZO double postage. As Hamazor is distributed gratis to all its members through the courtesy and generosity of the World Zarathushtrian Trust Fund, a time has come when this is proving to be virtually impossible. We need your monetary assistance either from Trusts or individuals, if Hamazor is to continue.

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## WZOs Annual Seminar -

Sunday 1<sup>ST</sup> June 2008

Shahin Bekhradnia reports -

***Every year at the beginning*** of Summer, WZO organises a seminar day in the centre of London which is free of charge to anyone who wishes to attend. We do our best to provide a varied programme either with a unified theme, or with topics and speakers to reflect new or little known aspects of Zoroastrianism. We also aim to have a balance of genders, and to include at least one Zoroastrian. This year, we certainly managed to come up with original issues even though the speakers were sadly all male but happily did include a Zoroastrian.

Judging from the size of the audience, which was possibly the largest ever attending our annual seminar with more than 90 present throughout the day, and reflecting the several comments which were specifically made, it seems that the arrangements, subject matter and the quality of the speakers was reckoned to be one of the best ever organised. Lively and challenging questions from the audience demonstrated the engagement of those who gave their time to attend this seminar day. Feedback of this positive nature is certainly an incentive to keep up our efforts and the plans for 2009 are already well in hand.

This year Shapour Suren Pahlavi, an Iranian Zoroastrian archaeologist (who obtained his Masters degree from London University's SOAS) gave the first presentation of the day. He used selected slides from his vast library of images to demonstrate how in Iran a large number of formerly Zoroastrian tombs, shrines and temples had been transformed into Islamic centres of pilgrimage and worship. While it is understandable that the initial reaction of most Zoroastrians is one of indignation and outrage, Shapour was able to show that in some ways it might have been preferable to have these buildings preserved albeit under

the guise of Islam, rather than suffer the all-too-frequent fate of others which were simply destroyed. He showed some of the archaeological hallmarks of these transformed sites which betrayed their Zoroastrian origins. It was also remarked that in some cases, "Islamic" sites which had been undergoing excavations prior to the Islamic Revolution to reveal their earlier origins, such as the Jomeh Mosque in Isfahan's bazaar area, had been subjected to covering up and in-filling to conceal such information once the Islamic regime had become installed. Shapour hopes to document every possible transformed site in Iran, in due course, funds permitting!

Our second speaker, a good friend to WZO and recipient of a Certificate of Recognition for his Services to Zoroastrianism was Professor Stanley Insler from Yale University. Without doubt, Stanley Insler's translation of the Gathas, (the divine songs of our prophet), stand out as the most widely accepted accurate interpretation of the message of Zoroaster. There has been and will undoubtedly continue to exist controversy and debate about what is the correct reading of the Gathas, but no one can argue that Prof Insler lacks the academic philological expertise to offer an understanding of this complicated text. In the talk that he delivered, Stanley Insler clarified what indeed was the message that Zoroaster was trying to pass on to those who were prepared to listen to him. He explained the historical background in which Zoroaster lived and why his emphasis on the individual's freedom to choose (or reject) the path of Asha based on correct thinking



was at that time and still today remains so radical. He also stressed the role of personal responsibility for the choice we make with no place for pre-destination in the philosophy. The emphasis lies in personal development of knowledge and understanding – how to recognise and understand the cause and effects of bad and good deeds. According to Prof Insler the Gathas underscore the importance of good thinking (Vohu Manah), the respect for the authority (Armaiti) of the laws of Ahura Mazda, ie. the rule of Truth.

Our afternoon presentation dealt with Zoroastrianism in the Far East and was delivered in two parts: the first speaker was Dr Takeshi Aoki from Tokyo University who gave handouts and spoke about the fate of the Sasanian royal family and court when it fled from the advancing Arabs into Central Asia. They eventually crossed over the Eastern borders of the Persian Empire into China and arrived in the largest Chinese Tang dynasty city of the time, if not of the world, Changan. Chinese documents recount that the Chinese emperor provided help and support for attempts by Peroz and Narseh (surviving son and grandson of the defeated Yazdgerd III) to retake territories inside the Persian empire but ultimately these efforts were shortlived. Merchants of Sogdian Zoroastrian origin (a little different to Persian) also had a presence in China and during the Tang period (618-907) there were Zoroastrian temples not only among the settled Persian and Sogdian colonies in northern China but others were also located in central China. During the later Song period (960-1279) Zoroastrian temples and beliefs of both Persian and Sogdian origin were absorbed into the indigenous culture referred to by Dr Aoki as thus becoming Sinolized Zoroastrianism. Eventually all traces of Zoroastrianism per se were lost in China.

The second presentation on the topic of Zoroastrianism in the Far East was given by Professor Kejia Yan, Director of the Institute of Religious Studies, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. Prof Yan gave a very stimulating talk about the presence of

Parsis, mainly in Shanghai but also Canton and also referred to people coming to Shanghai from Japan to perform their Navjotes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He explained the presence of Parsis as linked into the British opium trade and subsequent war and was able to give source based references to eight Parsi business firms alongside 27 British firms by 1834. In 1866 a fire temple/

prayer hall was in existence and celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary with renovations in 1932 which would suggest a founding date of 1852. Today it is the site of Blue Lotus Tea House. He mentioned that Trust Funds were registered in 1872 with an interest in land on Foochow Rd, which was the centre of the British concession and

that a Parsi cemetery was established. Prof Yan also told us that sources indicated the presence of Parsi women prior to 1842 and that Sam Tata (a Parsi) was one of the prominent photographers of pre-war Shanghai. Prof Yan recounted that he had managed to track down a Parsi mobed by the name of Jal Kuka living in Shanghai from 1931-45 and had interviewed him in India as well as interviewing a former (catholic) employee of the Parsi mobed, recording some facts and perceptions of the practices by Chinese outsiders. After 1945 the British and Parsis withdrew from China and in 1966 the library/prayer hall burnt down and the site was taken over by revolutionary guards in 1967 making the place into a community facility. When asked about the presence of Parsis in Japan, Prof Yan asked Dr Aoki to respond who added that even now in Kobe there were a number of Parsis alive.



Professor Kejia Yan



Dr Takeshi Aoki

From this presentation, it is clear that if anyone is looking for a research topic, there is plenty of scope in this hitherto untapped area.

The day finished with a panel of all four speakers answering questions from the audience at the end of which our gratitude and pleasure was expressed to each participant. WZO is grateful to those who ably chaired each session and also to those who helped with the many aspects of organisation of the day behind the scenes.



Shahin, centre, is on the Board of WZO taking care of Religious Affairs, with the panel of speakers.

## Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2008

Farrokh Vajifdar reports -

**Shrewley Village Hall** is unlikely to figure prominently on anyone's list of international conference venues; yet on Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2008, it had its day of glory when providing laid-back full facilities for the WZO's first venture into Shakespeare country. It was a happy tie-in for the London-based WZO with the Midlands Zoroastrians and several from the North-West Zoroastrian Community [NWZC] who, from near and far, made up its Seminar's attendance tally.

Some fifty ticketed enthusiasts, the curious and the eager, had journeyed to this quaint village setting to hear and harangue two

WZO-selected speakers – one, the Gatha expert Professor Stanley Insler; the other, the undersigned Farrokh Vajifdar, independent researcher into Zoroastrian matters. A word, firstly, about the audience: it has often been remarked how much friendlier and freer of religiosity the Midlander and Northern Parsis are than their London and Home Counties counterparts. To these happy qualities must be added their open hospitality and heart-warming affability, undoubtedly greatly contributing to the easy-going and good-humoured atmosphere. If only more Seminars began and ended on such light-hearted notes ...

Thereafter, some heavier notes on the two speakers; Professor Stanley Insler is Salisbury Professor of Sanskrit and Comparative Philology at Yale University where he has taught Vedic and Avestan since 1963. Of greatest interest to us is his deep involvement with Avestan – specifically Gathic Avestan – culminating in his magisterial translation of all 17 sacred poems, published in 1975 as *The Gathas of Zarathustra* ('Acta Iranica', 8, Brill, Leiden). He has contributed articles to the WZO's quarterly *Hamazor* which frequently utilizes banner quotes from his work; it is good to know that his thinking remains ever fresh and progressive.

Farrokh Vajifdar is a life-long student of Indo-Iranian cultures, focusing on the history and content of Zoroastrianism, and to a lesser degree on Parsiism which he sharply distinguishes from Zarathushtra's authentic teachings. He feels very strongly about the visible neglect among our youth of their true heritage.

The good Professor read two papers – the first, *Zarathustra: the Man and the Message*, was repeated from his London lecture of 1<sup>st</sup> June for the benefit of an almost new audience many of whom had never been exposed to his work and his words. The surest test of the success of a lecture upon its listeners is the quality and thrust of ensuing questions and comments, and following his first paper, it became

brilliantly evident that his audience was deeply engaged throughout with the contents and direction of his speech.

His second lecture dealt with *Zarathustra's Teachings: their Universality*, whose chief theme was founded on Mazda's specific aspects or agencies (later collectivized as the *Amesha Spentas*), their relationship and interactive status in this great philosopher's complex thought. This paper merits an extended review, not least because of Insler's unusual and lengthy preamble centred, quite logically, on Erno Rubik's cube! Better known to school-goers of an earlier generation, this mind-bending invention depends on the rotatability of eight cubes arranged about a central one, such that the four faces show the same colour. It was this Hungarian mathematician's triumph which Professor Insler seized upon to illustrate the crux of his paper – the interdependency and interactivity of the attributes of Ahura Mazda for our understanding of this Creator divinity who transcends his creation and yet is immanent throughout.

It is useful here to recall that Stanley Insler had, at one time, explained Zarathushtra's grasp, as a systems engineer (!), of Mazda's relationship to his creation and towards humankind. On another occasion he had utilized the DNA decryption (!) to illustrate Zarathushtra's complex discourse on Mazda and his Amesha Spentas. At the Seminar under review, it seemed at first to the undersigned that this adventurous Professor had perhaps launched forth with a wholly puzzling analogy which, despite its careful unfolding, would have baffled the audience. Not a bit of it!

To explain the Macrocosmic-microcosmic tension, and how a grandly abstract conception could fit in with the perceptions of mankind, he painstakingly defined the abstract entities which surrounded Ahura Mazda and yet were part of his "personality". Thereafter, with the aid of two diagrammatic charts, he eased us into the worlds of Truth and Deceit, Good and Evil, and how they benefited and/or afflicted the

life of the rightly-living pastoralist. This was where the choice and preferences of the individual would affect his/her thoughts, words and works for either the betterment or worsening of life. It was good to hear a 21<sup>st</sup> century Professor quote an axiom of that remarkable 19<sup>th</sup>



L to R: Stanley Insler & Farrokh Vajifdar

century French savant, James Darmesteter: *"First, that there is a law in nature, and, secondly, that there is a war in nature"*. A precious meeting of scholarly minds across Space and Time!

An enthused audience attentively sat through both Insler papers – difficult subjects delivered in a relaxed and easy manner. Again, there was the test of questions and comments, and, to be sure, the Professor had carried and enthralled his audience. The organizers, however, had thought to ease the atmosphere and level of audience participation by introducing a novelty into the proceedings. This took the form of a quiz of fifteen questions, only one of whose three answers provided for each were the correct ones. The audience re-arranged itself into groups of four or five, and after a few minutes allowed for pondering their choices, declared for or against the correct ones. Here indeed was incontrovertible proof – if proof were needed! – that that terrific Midlands audience had been kept very much on its mettle with minds concentrated and expectations high! For the benefit of the readership, almost all selected answers were right! (This quiz-master himself couldn't get them all right!)

Stanley Insler's first lecture that morning was followed by Farrokh Vajifdar with his talk on aspects of "Zoroastrian Teachings and Traditions: a Code for Right-living". He was keen to establish straightaway the



three-fold nature of Zoroastrianism: the Prophet's Gathic teachings; the reintroduction of the pre-Zarathushtrian religion through the *Yashts*; the later additions through the ritual and liturgical *Yasna* and *Visparad* texts. The two corner-stones of Zoroastrianism, apparently separated by different perspectives, were in fact complementary: the Gathas were shown to be salutary and reflective, where the *Vendidad* and ancillary texts were sanitary and prescriptive. The first dealt with the Science of the Mind; the latter with the Body. Since the Gathas had been dealt with by Stanley Insler, Vajifdar explained the contents and purpose of the *Vendidad*, concentrating on its "Earth Chapters" to illustrate the geographical extent of the early Zoroastrian missions, then the Yima/Jamshed story with its remote parallels in the Jewish Old Testament – firstly, regarding the teaching and spread of Ahura Mazda's religion, and culminating in the construction of Yima's Var or Enclosure. The Yima-Zarathushtra religious primacy was explained by the Aaron-Moses parallel; the Yima-Var with Noah and his Ark.

From there, the very down-to-earth teachings of the *Vendidad* on the peaceful pastoral life and family cohesion were sketched out; its tendency to isolate all forms of illnesses and contagions – again through enclosures for containment until the danger and the threat from it was thought to be neutralized. From the section on good and bad priests, Vajifdar proceeded to examine the Navjote, the young age of the initiates, the prayers to be remembered, repeated, and realized in actions and beliefs – here he protested against the mindless recitation of prayers whose uplifting purposes were ignored and indeed repudiated through negligence and even outright contradictory denials. He warned against the steady erosion of true Zoroastrian values among the youth who were either disinformed or misled by itinerant priests and preachers. He urged challenging such impudent mischief-making by those who took it upon themselves to self-promote at the expense of true Zoroastrian religious teachings. Blind

acceptance and blind faith were the most insidious and corrosive of the agents of darkness.

Appropriate prayers at their appointed times were urged through awareness and acceptance of our true Zoroastrian calendar based on the *Sal-i Denig* or "Religious Year" which properly took into account only the solar and seasonal aspects. Indeed our Gahanbars bore precise names which allowed no discrepancy between the indications of the sun and the seasonal duties of our ancient pastoral and agricultural societies. The nonsense of the Alat argument was exposed for what it really was – a concoction by crypto-theosophists posing as Mazdayasnian priests. That so many Arabic terms and expressions exist in place of our truly time-honoured Avestic and Pahlavi-Pazand was a wholly sad if not blasphemous downturn in our true religious culture, to the detriment of our spiritual progress which seems not at all to bother our would-be leaders!

The lively questions, comments, rebuttals, and answers once again demonstrated close audience participation and deep interest in our little-understood religion. No longer, it would seem, were many querists prepared to accept unchallenged the frequently superficial explanations of our religion with its rich history and cultural background; it is sincerely hoped that the initial enthusiasm evoked by scholarly seminars will continue undiminished, and lead on to a more permanent and assured basis for the further enlightenment of our communities wherever settled in the new lands of the Zoroastrian diaspora.

We cannot close this account of the WZO's Midlands Seminar without acknowledging the tremendous efforts of the local and regional organisers, among whom the names of Mini Pochkhanawala, Zarine Avari, Burjor Avari, and Cyrus Baria readily spring to mind. We are most grateful to them and their many fine assistants for making the 8<sup>th</sup> June Seminar the undoubted success it was. Overseeing the technical and logistical requirements with firmness



Burjor Avari



Cyrus Baria

and flair were Darayus Motivala (WZO President), Sammy Bhiwandiwalla (WZO Chairman) and his enthusiastic wife Ursula. One forms an abiding impression that they can take on and succeed with all manner of demands and difficulties, all with equal ease!

May and June are favoured months for holidaying among the leisured class of United Kingdom Zoroastrians. Thus, absent from the London 1st June Seminar were some WZO stalwarts, and from the Shrewley meeting the absence of Shahin Bekhradnia meant that her chairmanship of Professor Insler's morning lecture fell instead to Farrokh Vajifdar. Vajifdar's lecture which followed was very ably chaired by Burjor Avari. The day's items were tightly strung together by the meticulous time-keeping of the wonderfully relaxed Cyrus Baria.

Our hearty *tan darosti* to one and all – may your Goodness ever shine forth!



Farrokh Vajifdar's profile appears on p 52.

## The British "take" on Zoroastrians!

Watch this brief film – its fresh, fun, and our community receives exposure.

<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=aHZs-0erQ1k>

## The House of Lords opens its doors to the WZCC - UK

Sammy Bhiwandiwalla reports -

**By kind permission** of the Lord Speaker, The Rt Hon the Baroness Hayman and hosted by Lord Karan Bilimoria of Chelsea, the World Zarthushti Chamber of Commerce - UK arranged a very special occasion, on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2008, in the historic surroundings of the River Room at the House of Lords.

The Guest of Honour was Phiroz Vandrevalla, Executive Vice President of Tata Consultancy Services. He is also the current Chairman of the Indo-British Partnership in India, the opposite number to the UK side of the partnership, Karan Bilimoria. Thus by coincidence, we have two Zoroastrians chairing the organisation on both sides of the Indo-British Partnership.

Baroness Hayman welcomed the guests present in the River Room, the principal state room of the House of Lords, which is used for parliamentary and charitable events sponsored by Members. This provides the opportunity of welcoming many to the Lords who may not otherwise visit. She explained her role as Lord Speaker in the House of Lords; her responsibilities include acting as an ambassador for the work of the Lords both at home and abroad. Prior to Baroness Hayman's departure to hear a crucial vote taking place in the House of Commons, Shernaz Engineer, Chairman of the WZCC – UK, presented her with a commemorative plaque "Celebrating the Zoroastrian contribution to Indo-British business".

Subsequently, Karan gave a brief insight into the House of Lords. His election to the upper chamber had to be endorsed and ratified by all the existing members of the Lords. Of the 750 or so members, approximately 200 were 'cross benchers' with no particular allegiance to any one political party. Parliamentary proceedings in

the Commons were much noisier than in the Lords: 'whilst those in the Commons spent most of their time scoring points against each other; in the Lords we made points', Karan observed.



L to R: Phiroz Vandrevalla, Baroness Hayman, Shernaz Engineer & Lord Bilimoria

Karan's address was followed by Phiroz Vandrevalla, who gave a historical perspective on the Tata group of companies. From being primarily an Indian business house it had grown into an international conglomerate, amongst the top 10 businesses in the world, vying to be on a similar standing to the global giant GE of USA. Since the beginning of this century, the decision to go global necessitated buying into various business sectors at the right time. Through the purchase of British Steel and Corus, Tata has become the 4<sup>th</sup> largest steel producer in the world.

Illustrating the prices paid by Ford for Jaguar and Land Rover; in the region of US\$6.5 billion and further investments of 2 to 3 billion US dollars, Tata purchased the business for approx US\$3 billion. In 2005/6 Tata emerged as the 16<sup>th</sup> largest producer of cars and trucks in the world. Tata Chemicals was the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest producer of Soda Ash in the world. Tata Consultancy Services now has over 111,000 IT consultants in over 50 countries and is a leading provider of IT solutions. The Tata

group encompasses seven business sectors, Engineering, Materials, Energy, Chemicals, Services, Consumer Products, Information services and Communications. Thanking Phiroz for his talk on the House of Tata, and Karan for hosting this event in such historic surroundings, Shernaz Engineer presented Phiroz and Karan with commemorative plaques in recognition of their 'Zoroastrian contribution to Indo-British Business'.

Karan thanked Shernaz Engineer, Chairman of WZCC, for so graciously arranging this occasion at the House of Lords and congratulated Ervad Rostam Bhedwar of ZTFE and Cyrus Todiwala of Cafe Spice Namaste for their services to the community.

Reflecting on his business and parliamentary life and his guiding principles, Karan quoted the words of Mahatma Gandhi and the seven deadly sins to be avoided.

**Politics without Principle  
Wealth without Work  
Pleasure without Conscience  
Knowledge without Character  
Commerce (Business) without  
Morality (Ethics)  
Science without Humanity  
Religion without Sacrifice**

Karan went on to remind us that, "the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others," for the benefit of community and humanity – a code of conduct shared with all who were present that evening.

He concluded by quoting the iconic Anita Roddick, founder of the successful business Body Shop, and a philanthropist: in business, most of all "Be first, be different and be just".

Winding up the evening, Shernaz Engineer thanked Karan Bilimoria for sponsoring the event which was a celebration of the Zoroastrian contribution to Indo-British Business. She reminded us that Parsi links

with British commerce go as far back as 1723, with the pioneering enterprises of Rustum Manek Sett. More than a hundred years later, in 1850, Cama & Company established itself in London. In 1861, Parsi students and business families founded the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, the first Asian community organization in Europe. Since then we've had many firsts, notably the first three Asian, Zoroastrian members of the House of Commons, representing the main political parties and now, a Zoroastrian, who is a crossbencher in the House of Lords.

We can also draw inspiration, she said, from the many famous business houses that set up their operations in the UK over the last 150 years: the Tatas, the Wadias, the Godrejs, the Jeejeebhoyes, the Cowasji Jehangirs, the Petits and more recently, the kind and generous Zartoshty Family from Iran. We can be proud of Karan's business achievements and his many interventions in public life. He helped found the UK chapter of our Chamber of Commerce and continues to support and encourage entrepreneurship amongst his fellow Zoroastrians.

We've had three Zoroastrian co-chairs of the Indo-British partnership, starting with Dr J J Irani in the late 1990s. The current appointment of Lord Bilimoria as the UK co-Chair and of Phiroz Vandrevalla as his Indian counter-part is, she said, 'the icing on the cake.'

The evening closed after a lively question-answer session.

## Report presented at the WZO AGM on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2008 by Chairman, Sammy Bhiwandiwalla

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your International Board of Trustees and I are delighted to welcome you to our 28<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting. The year to date has been a very productive and challenging one and I must thank the Managing Committee and our fellow International Board members for their sustained support and hard work to increase WZO's profile and reputation worldwide.

In January this year I reported on my recent travel to Karachi, Pakistan, where our gracious Board Member Toxy and her husband Cyrus very generously planned a reception for me and Ursula to meet a large section of the community at the Karachi Parsi Institute. Prior to a short presentation on WZO we had the pleasure of being greeted by those present with warmth and kindness. With a community of less than 1800, in a resplendent in its heyday of impressive institutions, many owing their very existence to the munificence of our forefathers, it was poignant that this miniscule number voiced their worst fears and clung on to their roots in the hope that they may see better days in a nation torn apart by lawlessness, religious and economic strife.

And yet, we in the West devalue all our freedoms, because we sap our energies by continuing to battle with inequity in the practice of our chosen faith, are subjected to unethical beliefs and a lack of direction or true *Hamazori*. In the face of such unacceptable behaviour WZO, as the world body for Zoroastrians, serves and protects the community's interests globally. It singularly continues to speak against the many social and communal injustices and



Phiroz Vandrevalla, Lord Bilimoria with WZCC-UK committee



inequalities, seeking to eradicate them and there is clear evidence that our efforts are being rewarded.

Let us also hope that the BPP elections in Mumbai this October will provide a new generation of leadership, bringing forth dynamic and forward thinking leaders that our community desperately needs. What ever the results, WZO will continue to pursue its vision for the future.

Early this year we were delighted to meet WZO vice-President Ervad Dr Jehan Bagli and his wife Freny in London. Jehan's record of dedicated service to the community and his ideals were inspirational for all to hear. After discussion with Jehan our Membership Secretary, Khurshid Kapadia, was able to implement a plan to recover lagging membership dues with the help of the ZSO in Canada. Our sincere thanks to Jehan whose guidance and support to the WZO Managing Committee is highly appreciated.

It is not uncommon for Zoroastrianism to be misrepresented in the press and internet and this year was no exception. The presenter of a BBC World Routes programme on radio3/worldmusic reported that Zoroastrians were fire worshipers and this was spotted by committee member Soonu Engineer. Our President, Darayus Motivala, sent a strongly worded letter to the Director General of the BBC, Mark Thompson who replied that the BBC had specifically corrected the misrepresentation by noting on its website that 'Zoroastrians are not fire-worshippers, as some Westerners wrongly believe' and assured us that this would be corrected in subsequent productions. A similar gaffe appeared first in the Times of India and subsequently in an internet publication called Parsi Khabar in which Parsis were again described as fire worshippers. Once again a note of protest was sent by one of our committee members and I'm glad to say that it appeared on their website. More insidious were the attempts by so called German scholars to rewrite Persian history during the reign of Cyrus the Great and their attempts to refute the

historical significance of the Cyrus Cylinder as the First Declaration of Human Rights in the German magazine *Der Spiegel*. Again this was brought to the notice of the International Zoroastrian community and a unified rebuttal was forwarded to the editor of *Der Spiegel* proving that the author's motives were other than scholastic.

By invitation from President Jehangir Sarosh of Religions for Peace, a UK based interfaith organisation, an event called "*Rovereto Encounter*" was held in Rovereto, Italy, and was attended by Soonu and Shernaz Engineer as representatives of the Zoroastrian faith. With 11 religions and 250 participants, leaders and members focused on inter-religious dialogue and understanding and human rights. The event ended with a pledge to the children of Rovereto, as representatives of all the children of Europe, that the programme of action drawn up would be implemented.

In June 2008 we were able to go live with the revamped WZO website. I am pleased to say that since handover we have had no hitches and it only remains for the membership to use the site with their own personal log in to access all the features on it. I would like to thank our President, Darayus Motivala, for its successful implementation and also other committee members whose input contributed towards its completion.

Our charitable activities continue unabated and in co-operation with the various charities that support our activities, we have begun to achieve some notable results. The Erach & Roshan Sadri Foundation, UK, provided £37,000 towards the replacement of 10 mud huts with brick built cottages in the rural areas of Navsari, £18,500 towards community projects in Iran through the Pourchista Foundation. In addition a further £15,000 was awarded towards education in vocational and 1<sup>st</sup> Degree courses and these funds were applied in India, Iran and Pakistan. We are indebted to the Sadri Foundation for their constant support and overwhelming generosity, helping the underprivileged and deprived sections of the community.



WZO Trust Funds in India raise substantial sums towards a multiplicity of regeneration and self-help programmes for the community in South Gujarat. We are delighted to inform you of the Munificent Donation of a Corpus Fund of Rs30m (approx £375,000) from the Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust (NRTT): to the WZO Trust. Our sincere thanks to the Trustees of the Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust for their generosity and trust in WZO. To Bachi & Dinshaw Tamboly we convey our immense admiration for successfully implementing so many worthwhile projects in India.

As Editor of *Hamazor*, we continue to reserve our praise for the high levels of reflective and absorbing journalism Toxy Cowasjee continues to attain. However, Toxy wears many hats on behalf of WZO and since October 2005 has immersed herself in the relief work that was desperately needed for a humanitarian cause. The earthquake in Northern Pakistan ravaged not only poor communities with death and destruction but left devastating effects on the lives of women and children in its wake. Over the last three years she has implemented many projects and continued to raise further funds through individual and personal donations. Her most recent effort has been directed towards the project CHAL which provides prostheses to children who have lost limbs as a result of the earthquake. To date seven children have benefitted and will continue to do so into adulthood. The Committee expresses its gratitude and appreciation of the work Toxy is doing locally in support of this cause.

In November 2007, Rumi and Hilda Sethna organised the Annual Grand Charity Ball which is now almost synonymic with their names. The entertainment as usual was lavish and within the short space of a few hours Rumi had successfully enticed the audience to participate in raising £xxxx for WZO's Gujarat Fund. To Rumi and Hilda we convey our sincere thanks for their annual fundraising effort not forgetting their constant commitment and support to WZO throughout the years.

Under the aegis of its annual lectures on Zoroastrian Religion, History and Culture, WZO held two conferences this year, one in Warwickshire and the other in London. The number of attendees at this year's London Seminar on 1<sup>st</sup> June far exceeded our expectations and judging by the comments from all those who attended, it was the best for many years.

Our sincere thanks to WZO Vice-President Ervad Dr Jehan Bagli and to Keki Bhote, President of the US Region, both of whom continue to inspire and guide me and the Managing team to seek ways of strengthening WZO's presence in North America. Our thanks also to Dadi Engineer, President of WZO India and the India Committee for their community service in India.

With our limited financial resources we rely very heavily on the constant support provided to WZO by the World Zarthushtrian Trust Fund, Dasturji Sohrabji Kutar Benevolent Fund and the Firuz Madon Foundation to carry out our charitable activities throughout the year. The Noshirwan F Cowasjee Medical Benevolent Fund, so ably conceived by Noshirwan, continues to assist towards the numerous applications received each year for medical/surgical treatment. Through the Fali Chotia Foundation, USA, we donate 50% towards the Scholarships that the Foundation gives from its resources to deserving students in America.

To my fellow committee members here in London I have to declare my pleasure of working with them with never a dull moment and offer them my sincere thanks for their commitment and constructive approach during all the discussions at our committee meetings. As I have said before, if each one of us contributes in equal measure their knowledge and commitment to the WZO and it's principles we will have achieved great satisfaction in what we are doing and the results will be there for all to see.

Without the elixir of constant encouragement and support from my fellow Board Members and by so many friends and supporters of WZO, this task would not have crystallised into one of the most productive and successful financial years for WZO.

I thank you all for taking the time to attend today's AGM. Thank you. ■■■■

## The WZO Trust Funds - India

### Manufacturing Confidence, Changing Lives, Creating a Strong Community

Bai Maneckbai P. B. Jeejeebhoy Senior Citizen's Centre  
Dolat & Hormusji Vandrewala Senior Citizens Centre  
Pinjar Street, Malesar, Navsari 396 445. India

### 2008 – A Year to Remember

***The year 2008 has been a very eventful*** and satisfying year for our Senior Citizens Centres.

In January 2008 we celebrated the completion of a decade of service to the Senior Citizens of our community at our Bai Maneckbai P B Jeejeebhoy Senior Citizens Centre.

In June 2008 we have a very handsome corpus donation from the generous Trustees of Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust, Mumbai the income of which is to be used towards enhancing and subsequently sustaining operations at our Senior Citizens Centres.

The WZO Trust Funds acknowledge this largesse with sincere gratitude. The Trustees of Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust have paved the way for us to enhance even further our service and facilities for our residents, spending the golden years of their life with us.



Bell of Peace - Campana Della Pace - on the Miravalle hill. It was conceived by Don Antonio Rossaro, priest of Rovereto, as a homage to Italian soldiers killed during different wars. It is a token of peace and an invitation to peace. On 30 October 1924 it was cast using the bronze of the guns of the 19 nations that took part in World War I. On 24 May 1925 it was baptised "Maria Dolens". The bell, after being consecrated



by Pope Paul VI, was placed, on 4 November 1965 in its present location on the Miravalle hill. It is the biggest bell in the world that rings full peal. Every evening, towards sunset, its sound reminds listeners of the soldiers killed in the wars, invites to recall the sufferings that are caused by conflicts and fosters hope in a future made of peace and love.

# Interfaith Meeting with His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI

## - Sydney, Australia

**An invitation was sent** by His Eminence Cardinal George Pell for Ervad Peshotan Katrak and Hutoxshi Hira [President AZA] to attend an Interfaith meeting with Pope Benedict and Cardinal George Pell at St Mary's Cathedral on 18th July, 2008.

The Community Relations Commission of New South Wales also forwarded Mobed Karl Desai's name as the young priest to attend this event and represent our community.

Religious leaders and heads of different faiths being Bahais, Buddhists, Christians, Orthodox Christian, Jewish, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were also invited to this intimate meeting with the Pope. Amid other speeches from Cardinal Pell and the heads of the Jewish and Muslim religions, the Pope gave a very moving and inspiring talk in relation to World Youth Day. He highlighted the importance of unity, faith, love and commitment which he proclaimed as universal to all faiths, and as religious leaders implored us to pass this message on to our respective communities. The Pope then met all the leaders of the different faiths who introduced themselves and their religions, individually shaking hands and exchanging pleasantries. The Pope presented all attendees with a memento as a mark of respect, appreciation and remembrance for attending this auspicious event.

The religious attire of Peshotan in *jamo* and Karl in *dagli* aroused much interest from the media and fellow religious people. Our representatives were in high demand fielding interviews for the SBS, Sydney Morning Herald, Sunday Telegraph and The Age. Their introduction "We are Zoroastrians" was predictably met with the dumbfounded "Zoro-what?". The Pope wasn't as unaware though and when the attendees introduced themselves to the Pope individually they were pleasantly surprised to receive a nod from him and smilingly be acknowledged by him in a soft tone that Zoroastrian religion was an ancient religion.

The meeting was indeed a significant one for the Zoroastrians as they proudly portrayed our religion and gave it the much needed focus to the many faiths of the world and the media. Twenty year old Karl said this meeting was something he would remember for the rest of his life and it was good to be recognised and rewarded in such a manner.

Once again, this proves that, although small in number, we are recognised as one of the greatest and well known religions in the world. Be Proud of Your Zoroastrian Heritage!

Hutoxi Hira writes:

"Myself along with two priests (Ervad Doctor Peshotan Katrak, our high priest in Sydney and Mobed Karl Desai, our junior priest) were invited to meet Pope Benedict XVI by George Cardinal Pell whilst the Pope was on a tour here in Sydney for the celebration of World Youth Day. The Pope is a very humble and a soft spoken man indeed, and we Zoroastrians as all are well aware, are very tolerant and respectful towards other faiths. It was indeed a privilege to be invited to attend the interfaith meeting in a very intimate gathering with the Pope at St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney on 18 July."



# Trusteeship of the BPP - Is it about 'Power', 'Politics' or 'Performance'?

by noshir dadrawala

**For the very first time** in the more than 350 years history of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP), a whole new Board of seven trustees will be elected by democratic process of Universal Adult Franchise. It will be an exciting and testing time for the community. They say, people get the government they deserve. Likewise, the community will get the trustees they deserve. Doubtlessly, the community's much talked about 'enlightened' status will be put to the acid test. Be that as it may, the object of this article is not to judge the community's intellectual prowess, but, to analyze in simple terms, what the high office of trusteeship is all about.

Reportedly there are more than a thousand Parsi Charitable Trusts registered in the city of Bombay with the office of the Charity Commissioner. Like the BPP, many of them are quite flushed with funds and a few also manage vast immovable properties. Yet, one hardly finds, barring sporadic exceptions, any one of them being talked about, written about or caught in the eye of media or beneficiary created storms. Also, at most, if not all these other trusts, trusteeship is purely by invitation, with surviving trustees quietly exercising the right to appoint new trustees as and when the need is felt.

So, what's unique about the BPP? How different is it from other Parsi charitable trusts? In marketing parlance, what is its USP? Is it its antiquity? Is it its history? Is it its size and outreach? Is it its influence as the traditional seat of authority and community leadership? Is it because BPP is the biggest 'landlord' in the city? Is it because it is an 'elected office' with the usual political trappings?

As we all know, the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet are saddled with enormous

legal, financial and moral responsibilities. Largely it is viewed as a 'thankless job'. Those in power have often called it a 'crown of thorns'. And, yet, there are so many who are clamouring to either grab or retain the 'hot seat' of trusteeship.

What could the motivating factor? Is it the 'power'? Is it the highly questionable 'social status' that trusteeship brings? Is it the 'kick' one gets out of the job? Or is it 'vested interest' that some critics whimper about? Of course, there is no denying the fact that there are two distinct types of trustees – those who are involved with a sense of commitment, purpose and direction and who consider their involvement as a responsibility taken on as a labour of love and those who consider trusteeship as a ladder for social mobility, wielding power, gaining publicity and, generally, to further their own interest.

Nancy Axelrod in 'A Guide for New Trustees' states, "An ideal 'trustee' is a person with the versatility of Leonardo da Vinci, the financial acumen of Bernard Baruch and the scholarly bent of Erasmus." That's quite a tall order and one wonders if such an ideal trustee can ever be found.

By legal interpretation, trusteeship is "an obligation annexed to the ownership of property (movable or immovable) and arising out of a confidence reposed and accepted by him (ie. the trustee) for the benefit of another". In other words, every trustee is obliged to judiciously manage the trust funds, properties and assets as if it were his/her own, but, NOT for his/her own benefit (or that of his/her relatives), but, for the beneficiaries named or intended by the Settlers or the founders of the trust.

While dealing with matters concerning the trust, a trustee should try to remain as

objective as possible and keep the demons of nepotism and favoritism at bay.

Generally speaking, trustees are expected to provide leadership and vision and collectively give the organization a sense of direction. They are expected to set the policy and take responsibility for their decisions, irrespective of success or failure. Generally, when there is 'success' trustees take full responsibility (read credit). However, when things begin to fail or crumble, the 'Blame Game' commences and either colleagues on the Board or more often, the CEO or the professional staff is blamed. This is not only undesirable but downright shameful.

Holding the organization together, motivating staff and mobilizing adequate resources (both financial and human) are important Board duties. Trustees are expected to build and nurture an ethical, sensitive, motivated and responsible team. Exaggerated or misleading claims should be discouraged at all levels and at all cost. It is important for the Board of Trustees to set high standards of ethics and excellence before expecting staff and other professionals and consultants to comply. More than anything else, it is important that every trustee always means what he/she says and always says what he/she means.

A confusion that one notices not just at the BPP but most other trusts is in the area of sifting 'Governance' from 'Management'. Most trustees seem to think that 'Governance' and 'Management' is the same thing. It is not!

It is not the job of a trustee to 'Manage' the trust. That is the job of the CEO and the staff. A trustee's job is to 'Govern' – provide vision and leadership, strategize the trust's mission, lay down policies and ensure that it is followed and implemented diligently and exercise general oversight and due diligence in areas of financial health, human resource and programs laid down under a five or seven years strategic plan.

A trustee should be accessible to the trust and the beneficiaries' at all reasonable

hours of the day. However, a trustee need not necessarily park himself at the trust's office everyday and for several hours. That would not be desirable at all. Trustees should always aim for 'Macro Management' and leave 'Micro Management' of routine, day-to-day affairs to professional staff.

In my view, a 'good trustee' is expected to have interest in the work of the organization and commitment to the organization's aims and objects. He/she should have reasonable intelligence and competence and should be one who is respected in the community and by all stakeholders.

The individual should also have capacity for growth and remain sensitive to change and new issues affecting the community. The ability to work in concert with others also needs to be underscored though one should never fight shy of standing up to one's convictions.

A good trustee would respect the right of other board members and staff to differ/disagree and he/she would dissent, if necessary, but accept with grace the majority decision or step down.

Each aspiring trustee should make a self assessment of his/her special skills and qualifications and determine his/her 'job description' on the Board. Every trustee should also make a sincere effort to annually evaluate his/her own performance based on broad parameters of qualitative and quantitative input. It's not enough just attending Board Meetings over tea and sandwiches. Performance should be evaluated on the basis of proactive decisions, new initiatives and effectiveness of various policies, projects and programs.

It is not enough just conducting a statutory financial audit. Good Governance also necessitates a 'social audit', preferably by an external evaluator, to measure performance against promises made by any team before the polls.

Everyone likes to talk about leadership, but, what is true leadership? In my opinion,



leadership is the ability of a person to have a clear vision, out of which he/she sets the goals and objectives, which can then form the basis of an organization's parameters. It is essentially a dynamic process of making people more effective, increasing their competence and through them, achieving goals.

The effectiveness of a good leader lies in his/her ability to share and develop leadership in others through empowerment, thereby increasing their competence and accountability.

Speaking of empowerment, any system devoid of power is a dead system. However, in any organizational system, the power should be balanced and its concentration, either at one source or at few places, could create serious problems.

David McClelland suggests four positive ways in which power can be used:

- a) A conservative style where the focus is on discipline and hard work – here, the emphasis is on meticulous planning, good training as well as perpetuating the traditions and strengths of the organization;
- b) an expressive style in which the leader inspires and makes his team function as a family;
- c) an assertive style which is basically the use of power to control others, set directions for work and increase organizational efficiency;
- d) the generative style where the emphasis is on generating more power by utilizing the resources of the team to develop systems and strong performance groups, by identifying the strengths of the individuals in the team and using them for building a synergy in the organization.

A good leader also has the ability to help diverse personalities to merge into an effective social whole. He can stimulate them, rather than browbeat them, and can help the team use all their abilities and experience at optimum level and usually

help the team discover abilities they never realized they possessed.

A 'good trustee' treats his colleagues on the board as also the staff as a partner. A 'partner in change' or to be more specific a partner in making his community or for that matter the world, a better place to live in.

Sadly, most trust Boards that I have seen lack team spirit. A good team of trustees has the ability to work together towards a common vision. It enables common people to attain uncommon results.

Unfortunately, at the BPP, since the past many years, one observes team spirit of a divisive type. "Are you in my team or that other trustee's team?" is a common refrain. Even at board meetings, the warring teams fracture important decisions. This invariably results in stunted growth of the organization, poor public-image and a distinct disservice to the community.

Good board meetings are often the keys to good decision making and it is usually at the meeting table that the quality of the organization and its leaders is truly revealed.

In 'The Role of The Board and Board Members', Brian O'Connell states, "For years I have been watching boards and making mental notes of the personal qualities of people who become the formal or informal leaders. If I was restricted to just one quality, I would single out the ability to start and end every analysis and evaluation with the standard, 'What is right?'"

According to O'Connell, while the second most important quality is fairness, the third is "controlled ambition".

The fourth important characteristic, according to O'Connell, is "flexibility". He feels, "The person who knows what is right, is tough, efficient and ambitious, and has had success and recognition, tends to become awfully impressed with himself or herself, and begins not to look at each new situation in its own right. Adding flexibility to

the blend of fairness, sensitivity, and imagination helps the individual and organization to rise.”

And, finally, Emerson’s famous statement, “Nothing was ever accomplished without enthusiasm”. O’Connell lists “enthusiasm” as the fifth most important quality of a leader.

The most important principle involved in managing differences of opinion is in keeping disagreements impersonal and agreeing to disagree in an “agreeable manner”. Always attempt to fight the ‘issue’ and not the ‘individual’.

An ideal trustee would respect the right of one or more of his/her team members to disagree and encourages constructive criticism, usually pushing the critic to suggest an alternative course, if there is one.

At BPP Board meetings, the team’s energy should be harnessed in fighting for the cause and not against one another. Sadly, in the past, some of our trustees have wasted most of their time in fighting and browbeating each other at board meetings and often even wasted precious trust resource in fruitless litigation. They conveniently forget that excellence on the trust board is not about getting ahead of others but getting ahead of ourselves.

Trustees should also be wary of ‘Conflict of Interest’ and must take every step possible to avoid even the appearance of

### 32 contestants for seven seats of Trusteeship

Phiroze Amroliwalla  
Muncherji Cama  
Shirin Choksey  
Noshir Dadrawala  
Yezdi Desai  
Tehmtan Dumasia  
Urvax Dhandra  
Dr Ketayun Dinshaw  
Maneck Engineer  
Sarosh Gandhi  
Adil Irani  
Dr Syrus Irani  
Byram Jeejeebhoy  
Darayus Kabraji  
Viraf Kapadia  
Bomi Kavina  
Yazdi Madon  
Dinshaw Mehta  
Framroze Mirza  
Khojeste Mistree  
Arnavaz Mistry  
Jimmy Mistry  
Keki Mistry  
Nadir Modi  
Tehmasp Mogul  
Farrokh Munsiff  
Danesh Nejadkay  
Yezdi Panthaki  
Cyrus Patel  
Kersi Patel  
Rustom Tirandaz  
Dr Kuresh Zorabi

**Elections will be held on 4,5,11,12,18 & 19 October 2008 but date of announcement is not known.**

impropriety. Conflict of interest arises whenever the personal or professional interests of a board member are potentially at odds with the best interests of the trust. Because public confidence is important to most trusts, trustees should take steps to adopt a written ‘Conflict-of-interest Policy’ that prohibits or limits business transactions with board members and require board members to disclose ‘conflict of interest’ whenever or wherever it arises and withdraw from decisions that present a potential conflict.

Trustees should establish procedures, such as competitive bids, that ensure that the organization receives fair value in all transactions. After all, ‘Good Governance’ is the price we pay for the freedom to exercise power and authority in a free, enlightened and democratic society.

To conclude, excellence on a trust board is all about going beyond one’s call of duty and doing more than what others expect. It is about striving and maintaining the highest standard day-to-day. It involves going the extra mile and doing your best in everything and in every way. It is the daily triumph of integrity over skepticism and the determination to make a difference in this world despite all odds.

May the best team of Parsi men and women lead the BPP and thereby the community, to a glorious new era of success on the principles of sound moral values, accountability, transparency and fairness.



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

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



*All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.* Edmund Burke

# Bear Consciousness

by shahriar shahriari

**Once upon a time**, in a deep jungle there was a community of bears. They lived happily for a while, until the jungle began to get hotter and hotter. The global warming was having its effect.

A group of bears got together and decided to migrate to a cooler forest further north. So they decided on a date, packed their belongings and moved to the new forest. The forest was far from any human community, so there was no chance of any child wandering into their house and eating their porridge or sleeping in their bed.

A few years later, when the cubs had grown and become teenagers, they started doing their own things. They started moving around in the forest and playing with other animals. They made friends with lion cubs, and tigers and hyenas, and even with snakes and bees. They did things that worried their parents considerably.

Initially, the papa bears and mama bears kept quiet and accepted things, because they were worried that their teenage cubs may not listen to them and may reject them altogether. However, after a while, in some of the parties and gatherings, papa bears and mama bears started sharing some of their concerns with each other.

Also by this time, the population of the bear community had grown substantially, because other bears from other jungles had migrated to this cooler forest and started to settle down with the original immigrants.

One day, some bears decided to form a society which they called "Bear Society" (BS for short). They started to organize social gatherings and get together. Sometimes their cubs would attend, other times they would just go off and do their own things.

The members of BS decided that to attract the interest of the cubs, they should organize special events just for them, and sincerely went about doing so. This was very good and many cubs attended. They met a lot of other bear cubs and made lots of friends. After a while the cubs decide to form their own club which they called "Cub Club" (or CC for short).

Brian who was a young cub, became an active member of the CC and helped a lot to get the cubs together and do things that they all enjoyed. But he noticed that after a while, BS members who were very impressed with the success of the CC, decided to use it to educate the cubs about the bear way of life and bear beliefs.

Gradually there was a shift in the activities of the CC and many of the cubs, including Brian lost interest. The CC declined drastically, and the cubs separated into their own small groups. BS members got very concerned that because of the decline of the CC, they may never be able to gather the cubs together, and the bear community as they knew it would die.

In the meantime, the cubs who had now become young adult bears, went about with lions and tigers and other friends they had made in the forest.

One day papa bear and mama bear were invited to a dinner party at a friend's house, and they asked Brian to join them. Brian who was away from the bear community for some time, agreed. After dinner everyone began discussing the CC and the cub problems. The discussions continued for nearly an hour, and everybody was commenting on what were the problems of the cubs, what were the solutions, and why these solutions have failed in the past. Brian very patiently listened to all the discussions

until they finally ended. He realized that although he was the youngest bear in that party, not one bear asked him about what Brian thought were the problems, or if he had any solutions.

On the way back home, Brian was thinking to himself that this was exactly the problem of the BS. Although everyone discussed the problems of the BS and CC intensely and sincerely, not one bear thought of asking the cubs to define their problems or come up with solutions. Brian was thinking that if they are not willing to ask or listen, then how in the forest are they going to solve these problems?

This thought had consumed Brian until he decided it was time to take action. He called some of his old CC friends and got a small group together. They decided that they would attend the next Bear Seminar organized by BS and voice their opinions.

At the BS seminar all the now elder bears were pleasantly surprised at this resurgence of Cub interest, and were excited that this was going to be a good seminar.

After some formalities, somebody suggested that since so many cubs were present, they should discuss the cub issues. In their excitement, all the bears unanimously agreed. After some initial discussions, one of the bears suggested that they should ask the cubs what they think. Brian thought to himself 'at last they are asking, but now the question is are they also listening? and perhaps most importantly, are they willing to trust us to leave our problems to us to solve with our own solutions?'

Brian got up and started to tell the bear assembly about some of his experiences. He said: 'As I understand many of you are concerned that the cubs are not living the way you used to in the old jungles. You are also concerned why we are drifting away from our community and making friends with our enemies the lions, the tigers and

the cobras. You are concerned that we have become selfish and only think of ourselves, that we are apathetic and don't care any more. We understand your desire to rectify these situations.

'We also understand that your efforts in helping us are frustrated, and in spite of all the energy and good intention that you put into it, you are not getting anywhere. Even perhaps things are getting worse day by day.

'I remember the initial days of the CC and how successful it was. I remember how I met many of my friends who are here today, at those meetings. I remember all the fun that we had together. I also remember how things began to deteriorate, because you wanted us to live as you thought we should.

'Well, today I want to share some of my thoughts with you. You may or may not agree with them, but I am asking you to listen to them. I mean really listen to them.

'The forest that we live in today is not just another jungle like the ones you used to live in. The old ways may or may not be applicable here. You want us to be cautious about our old enemies, the lions and the tigers. You want us to go on picking berries, catching fish and destroying beehives for their honey. But I want to tell you that if there is one thing we can learn from history, it is that history no longer repeats itself.

'What was right and normal when you were cubs is no longer the case. I want to tell you that I am not the only cub who thinks this way. There are many other cubs who share the same understandings with me. There are also lion cubs and tiger cubs and other animals who think similarly. Today we have learnt how to live with the lions and the tigers.

'One day I even walked up to a beehive and started talking to one of the bees. He told me how frustrated they were because every time they made a hive, a bear came along

and destroyed it for its honey. That they were spending most of their time building hives not making honey which is what they really enjoy doing. So I made an agreement with him that I would protect their hive, and they would give me half of the honey they produce during the time that they save by not building new hives. Now they are all happy and peaceful, and I get more honey than I ever did using the old ways.

'You see, the forest is no longer the same old jungle. Our real enemies are not the lions or the cobras or the bees. Our real enemy is the pollution created by man, the global warming and all those other things that are destroying our forest with all the animals in it. If we don't recognize these realities, we are doomed to be destroyed with the forest that we live in.

'The cubs of all animals today, have realised that the forest is different, and they have become friends. They realise that we are interdependent and the only way to live happily and prosperously is by cooperating with each other. Even if this cooperation means dramatic change from what we have historically been used to.

'The cubs also recognize that some of you mama bears and papa bears do not have the same perspective as we do. We are not asking you to change your ways or beliefs. All we ask is don't try to force feed us with solutions to the problems that you see. Many of these problems are not any issue for us. And many of the things that we see, you do not even understand.

'All we ask is please listen to what we say, try to understand them, even if you don't agree with them, and then let us come up with our solutions and let us implement them. You see, you have no choice, because sooner or later we will be running the community and we will implement our solutions anyway.

'What we are asking you is to let us have a free hand and a head start, because every

day that passes with us patiently waiting for the right time, we lose one day of action, and the problems get one day worse. The forest will be diminished by one more day, and another species will become extinct forever.

'Finally please understand that we are not blaming you for the problems. It is man who is causing this devastation. I plead with you to understand us and have faith in us that we will do a good job of solving our problems. Maybe in the process, we the cubs, will be so united and active that your problems will also disappear.

One way or another, to be continued in the years to come.



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Shahriar Shahriari is the creator of [www.Zarathushtra.com](http://www.Zarathushtra.com), the author of three books and many articles, a well-known speaker in the Zoroastrian community in North America, and a teacher of Zoroastrian classes for young children in Southern California. Together with his wife, Mahboobeh, and his son Soroush, he lives in Los Angeles.

## Little Zizou

Tamina Daver from London, UK, informs:

**Sooni Taraporevala, who wrote** the screenplay for *The Namesake*, is now debuting as a director – and the website for her film has just made its appearance online.

The new film *Little Zizou* (which she also wrote) is slated for a 2009 release, and has been selected as closing night film for the MIAAC Film Festival in NYC, on November 9.

*Little Zizou* is set in Mumbai, amongst the Parsi Zoroastrian community. It's a fast-paced, exuberant yet poignant comedy, with a message of tolerance at its heart.

'Little Zizou' is the nickname of the film's main character Xerxes, a young Parsi boy who's biggest wish is for his idol, Zinedine Zidane, to visit Mumbai. (Zidane, nicknamed Zizou, is the famous French football/soccer player of Algerian origin).

The MIAAC site and the *Little Zizou* site will be updated further in the coming weeks; so keep checking their sites. Feel free to watch the trailer for my upcoming documentary film on Sooni. *Little Zizou* film: <http://www.littlezizouthemovie.com/> MIAAC Film Fest: <http://www.iaac.us/MIAAC2008/ClosingNight/invitation.htm>

Avan Projects: trailer for documentary film on Sooni Taraporevala, <http://www.avanprojects.com> |||||



# Shared Values for A Changing Europe

## - An Encounter in the City of Peace



by soonu engineer

***In the early summer*** of this year, faith representatives from all the nations of Europe came together in the Italian 'City of Peace', Rovereto, to strengthen their links to one another, across religions and cultures. This was the 'Encounter' that sought to find an answer, in practical terms, to the apparent paradox of acknowledging and celebrating diversity while seeking the common ground of shared values for a united and peaceful Europe. There were 250 participants from 35 countries, representing 11 religions.

It is a matter of pride for our community, that this unique event was led and facilitated by Jehangir Sarosh, President of Religions for Peace in Europe, which organised the Encounter in partnership with Rovereto's Opera Campana dei Caduti. It is also due to Jehangir's presence, that the Zoroastrian faith is represented on the Executive Committee of the European Council of Religious Leaders where he is an ex-officio member.

Jehangir opened the proceedings by reminding us that this was not an encounter between religions but an encounter of Europeans, people who come from many different religions and those with no religious affiliations – a gathering of spiritual people who are keenly aware that they enjoy a 'shared space and shared responsibilities.' There was no obligation to agree with one another but there was an obligation to understand 'the other' and walk forward together on that basis. He urged 'religion and politics to join forces against extremism, totalitarianism and exclusion in order to create security for everyone'.

'In my tradition,' he said, 'there is a simple dictum, "good thoughts, good words and good deeds." If the good thoughts are not formulated into good words and if the good words do not manifest into good action then the talking is nothing but hot air – just adding to global warming.'

### Changing attitudes and behaviour

The theme of the Encounter was 'shared values for a changing Europe.' The history of 20<sup>th</sup> century

Europe was one of the most acquisitive, violent and intolerant periods in the history of civilisations. The President of the Campana Federation spoke of this 'little-loved Europe' which suffered a 'loss of reason and of spirit' and which now sought forgiveness and new modes of conversation to 'bring down the walls of incomprehension.'

The Mayor of Rovereto saw a future which 'focused on the defence of the human being and of his/her dignity' and a 'new grammar of peace.' Dr Martinelli, of the diocese of Trento, pointed out that 'official religious texts do not have a vision of Europe; and the rules of economic exchange profit rich countries at the expense of the poor.' Now was the time to cast aside the 'myth of personal, superior religions' and assume an 'everyday humility' and an interest in the welfare of others, so that we can begin to see Europe as 'a family among other families.'

Europe's role in a diverse world and the presence of a diverse world in Europe, were the twin challenges addressed by delegates. The Council of Europe encouraged the preservation of different identities and the consensus was that 'pluralism is not against cohesion.' There were some cautious voices, as that of Katherine Karkala-Zorba of Greece, a member of the European Conference of Churches, who warned that, 'those who wish to preserve their "otherness," build a wall around themselves.'

### The Children of Abraham

Imam Yahya Pallavicini of Milano declared that 'differences in my country are a mercy and a blessing.' In this context, European diversity and shared values require us 'to be united in this mercy and to engage in this mercy.' He explained why, in Islam, religious identity and citizenship are connected, as symbolised by the move of the Prophet and his community from Mecca to Medina. There was no conflict between religion and citizenship and it was misleading to suggest that faith was a bar to

reason and to engagement in politics. There was unfair pressure on Muslims, he said, to prove they are moderate: 'I am neither moderate nor extreme; I am a believer.'

As is usual in these times, the spotlight fell on the uneasy relations amongst, what Professor Albert Robol quaintly described as, 'the triple multiplicity of the children of Abraham.'

Alexy II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, in his message to the Encounter, said that there was a reshaping of the religious map of Europe, with the resurgence of Christianity in the ex-communist countries; and the growth of Islam and entrenchment of secularism in traditionally Christian countries. People feared that inter-religious dialogue would encourage religious syncretism but, in fact, it 'helps preserve the uniqueness of religions' while discouraging the notion of a 'universal super-religion.' There has been no conflict between Christianity and Islam in Russia over 1000 years and no religious wars.

However, there are some Muslim countries where it is forbidden to construct churches, preach to the faithful or to convert, and church officials are harassed for reading the Bible. This is the case in Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Indonesia. Churches have been destroyed in Kosovo and Cyprus; Turkey has closed down theological schools.

An open letter, from 138 Muslim theologians to leaders of Christian Churches, was welcomed as 'timely' by Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev of Austria. He believed it expressed many similar aims but there was a need 'to clarify religious values.' He said there would be no peace among the people of the world without peace among the religions. And there would be no peace among the religions without dialogue.

Rabbi Professor Jonathan Magonet, of Leo Baeck College, warned against reading religious texts without evaluating the quality of the translation or knowing the context. He said that some of 'the greatest hatred was in the family' where there was sibling rivalry for the love of the father and the mother. 'We are competing for the love of God – and jealous for evidence that the other is favoured in any way.' Jews, Christians and Muslims should acknowledge 'the depth of emotion that separates'

them. By bottling up this rage and not discussing it, 'we damage ourselves.'

The Torah says, 'you shall not bear a grudge or take revenge against the children [of your enemies].' When the stranger lives in your land, you shall not oppress him. Unfortunately, it was 'the violence of a few' that had put governments and mainstream organisations on the path of dialogue.

## Upanishads

The session on 'shared security – shared responsibility' started with a reference to the Upanishads which teach the 'proprietorship of God and the custodianship of man; and the equal sharing of resources.'

Bhai Sabji Mohinder Singh spoke of 'seva', or service without thought of return, and 'daya', compassion. In a world wracked by poverty, disease, environmental decay and international conflict, we have to redefine society along lines of responsibility rather than territory. To achieve dignity, justice and safety of all citizens, 'sharing is no longer an option.' Security comes from trust and trust comes from 'being understood, respected and loved.' The human spirit also needs security – divine security, which comes from faith and hope.

## Projects

The most practical and enjoyable experience at the Encounter was when delegates worked in project groups on the themes of: building structures to promote inter-religious cooperation; inter-religious and values education; role of religion in shared security; European identity; human rights education; and cooperative action.

Each delegate took back a practical course of action to follow. On the last evening, the children of Rovereto entertained the assembly. All present pledged to them, representatives of all the children of Europe, that they would implement the programmes of action.



*Soonu Engineer took an active part in this Conference representing WZO, as well as sister Shernaz on behalf of ZTFE.*

Soonu Engineer's profile appears on p 47

# Sam Bahadur

by bachi karkaria

## ***The old soldier has faded away.***

And the battle-hardened eyes of his men glisten like medals. He was always more Sam Bahadur than Field Marshal SHFJ Manekshaw, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, Military Cross. He won hearts even more than he won wars. His weapons were a rakish charm as well as valour; the twinkling eye as much as the straight baton.

Death had a tough time capturing Sam Manekshaw, and it hasn't been for want of determination. The young soldier escaped from its near-certain clutches twice on the battlefield against the Japanese in Burma during World War II.

Indeed, on the first occasion he was felled by a pointblank gun

shot in his stomach. Major General D T Cowan spotted him holding on to life, and fully aware of his bravery in the face of stiff resistance from the Japanese, quickly pinned his own Military Cross ribbon on to Manekshaw saying, "A dead person cannot be awarded a Military Cross."

Over 60 years later in November 2005, his obituary was revised, and ready to roll off the presses as he lay in a coma. He rose again to fight another day. But now the Last Post has been bugled. Of such stuff is legend.



Sam Hormusji Framji Jamshedji Manekshaw, all one man. One man who had handled it all. The raw heat of enemy fire and the white-hot core of the War Room; forging the three services into an integrated, taut, toned fighting machine and

managing the bloodied chaos of Partition and then, 24 years later, the waves of East Bengal refugees fleeing the brutality unleashed by their West Pakistani masters; managing the POWs from Indo China and the 90,000 he took in 1971. Yet, though he was honoured with a rank higher than any Indian soldier, he remained forever a *jawan*.

He was so warmly inspirational, and not only with the beloved Gurkhas of his regiment, that in every ceremonial parade, all soldiers march with the jauntiest gait when the band strikes up Sam Bahadur composed for him after the stirring victory of his forces in the Bangladesh War. I will never forget how we sat at the radio that heady Saturday afternoon of the surrender, feeling the goose bumps rise as he called on Tikka Khan's soldiers to lay down arms. As memorable are the images of an exultant populace rushing to thrust

marigolds into the muzzle of the guns of their liberators.

But it was infamous defeat not victory that provided my first encounter with General Manekshaw. In 1962, I accompanied my father to the Control Room of Calcutta's Fort William, and stood awestruck as he bayoneted a map with the positions where the Chinese army had trapped his almost bootless soldiers. Then, three decades later, I summoned the courage actually to spend time with him. I had moved to Bangalore, and he had moved from guns to roses in his retirement cottage near Wellington.

We wound our way up the winding Kotagiri road; all the urchins whom we asked for directions straightened up visibly as they proudly obliged. We found him washing his car. "Come for lunch tomorrow," he said without preliminaries. We did, savouring his stories and his wife's casserole which arrived grandly on a dumb waiter up from the kitchen on a lower part of the slope. He recalled how a rampant Mrs Gandhi had wanted to call the army shots. "I told her, 'You keep your long Kashmiri nose out of my business, and I'll keep my long Parsi one out of yours'."

He looked out on to the "wild acres bought by Silloo who was abandoned here in Coonoor when Nehru summoned me in 1962. She paid the princely sum of Rs18,000 for them, and designed this house. See, each window frames a panorama. My wife has hijacked a corner of my garden," he added indulgently. "To make a TV room for my Gurkhas and Gurkhins. Before that, they were over our bedroom watching their serials."

"Why did you call your daughter Sherry?" we asked. "I did, but I didn't tell her to marry a chap called Batlivala, and name their daughter Brandy!" Still poker-faced, he continued, "My other daughter, Maja, married a Daruwala." He then told us of his late mother's early predicament. Manekshaw's doctor father had set up practice in Amritsar, and he brought his

young Bombay-raised bride here. "As the train steamed in, she wept in sheer panic for, there, bathing on the station, was this huge man with flowing black beard and hair down to his waist: she had never seen a Sikh before."

In 2003, I met Sam Manekshaw the last time. I lived in Delhi then, and the whole capital it seemed had turned out to greet him on his 90th birthday, with a bouquet of as many red roses. The Oberois wheeled in a cake, and Parzor, a UNESCO-funded NGO preserving the Parsi heritage unspooled a documentary made on 'apro Sam'. Predictably, almost every speaker paraded the hope of 'hitting your century'. Death ran him out five years too early. It may have won that battle; but *bahadur* Sam has still decisively won the war.



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

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

Quote from an article written by a retired Commodore of Pakistan, in DAWN (Pakistan) on 16 December 2007 about Sam Bhadur. Context, before the Indian troops marched into East Pakistan: "Sam had broadcast a message. 'When you see a Begum, keep your hands in your pockets, and think of Sam.' "Sam was the first Indian officer to reach at Delhi Railway Station to meet the Pakistani POWs. He shared a cup of tea and chatted with them for some time." A man respected by all. - Ed.



# WZC2009 - Dubai

Information sent by the Congress Team

***The World Zoroastrian Congress***, one of the largest community events for Zoroastrians around the world, will be held in Dubai from December 28 to 31, 2009, under the signature theme –“Unity through the sands of time”.

The Congress will promote solidarity, welfare and progress, by looking beyond the present to herald a glorious future, in the true Zoroastrian tradition. Historically, Zoroastrians have shown exceptional zeal in serving humanity worldwide. More significantly, wherever Zoroastrians have emigrated they have promoted commerce and professional services.

## The Venue

The official venue of the Congress is Holiday Crowne Plaza Hotel in Dubai. The hotel is conveniently located (Sheikh Zayed Road), with in-house facilities such as, a large shopping arcade, quality food outlets and a night club.

The hall will be divided into five zones: Cultural/Heritage, Exhibition, Party, Function and Meeting zone. The main hallway will be decorated to exude an ambience of an indoor festival. The elaborately adorned venue, with attention to every detail, will have four majestic doors, break-out rooms and conference facilities. Ample floor space will be available for exhibitors to display their products and services.

The Congress will start with a spectacular opening ceremony, followed by invocations of blessings from priests and several community leaders. The theme for the first day will be “Proud to be a Zoroastrian”. A veritable Who’s Who from various industries, leaders of different community organizations and delegates from across the globe will attend the Congress.

Lord Karan Billimoria will address the community at the opening ceremony.

Participants will then share the objectives and expectations of the Congress. This will be followed by brief presentations and a spectacular cultural show created around an ancient story of Zoroastrians. Delegates will get a chance to acquaint themselves with the charms and attractions of Dubai through a film that will be screened, highlighting key attractions and unique features of the city, and the liberal business environment it provides to businessmen and entrepreneurs from around the globe, followed by a sumptuous lunch.

## Business sessions

The post-lunch session will begin with ‘Future responsible leaders’ from the Youth Leadership Program sharing their experiences with the community. The Youth Leadership Program, which was launched last year, was successfully closed on 30th April 2008. Over 52 participants have enlisted and expressed commitment to this programme. All participants will carry out different projects in their respective regions. The teams will then present their projects to the Committee. The first three winning teams will receive cash prizes of US\$3000, US\$2000 and US\$1000, respectively. Further they will have the opportunity to interact with top luminaries at the Congress and their names will be forwarded to leading Zoroastrian business houses. Parallel sessions shall take place after the youth programme.

Following dinner at 8pm, the ballroom will undergo a dramatic transformation, creating an atmosphere of electric excitement. As delegates enter, red carpet interviews will be conducted, with projections on giant screens inside the ballroom. A member from



the Dubai Royal family will grace the occasion as the Chief Guest. This will offer the delegates an opportunity of a handshake with the royal member. A fusion of dance and talent show will keep the audience entertained. A number of people will be pleasantly surprised when their names are called out as winners of fabulous prizes.

Each morning will commence with a breakfast show "Good Morning Congress Delegates". Media persons will interview leading businessmen, professionals and youth. This year's congress will have a new feature: the Congress daily, which will contain a compelling mix of reading, including reports of success stories and interviews with delegates and speakers.

#### **Trade Show**

The Trade show will be held on the second day (December 29), a true tribute to Dubai as the City of Merchants. Nadir Godrej, Managing Director of Godrej Industries, will address representatives from the business and professional community. His address will be followed by speeches from a UAE Cabinet Minister, Indian Ambassador to the UAE and an internationally renowned speaker. Government officials, Ambassadors, Consul Generals and regional businessmen will attend the show as VIP guests. The Trade show will offer excellent business opportunities to small, medium and large businesses.

The WZCC will give away three awards as usual to the Outstanding Businessman, the Professional and the Young entrepreneur/professional at this prestigious show. Lunch will be served as usual. Networking of small, medium and large businessmen will continue in line with WZCC programme. Parallel sessions will be held alongside in various breakout rooms.

#### **Daily Programmes**

Apart from the opening day's show and the Trade programme, daily programmes will be

based on interesting topics relating to science, technology, medicine, advertising, arts, culture, heritage, archaeology, education, etc. Announcements of the different activities for the day will be made at regular intervals to generate greater interest and participation. The Roundtable Conference will also be held.

There will be cultural shows every evening after dinner, put together and performed by professionals and youth from the community from various parts of the world. All performances will be outstanding, guaranteed to be remembered by the audience. Among the not-to-be-missed events will be The Celebrity Show, the Gala Awards function, the Persian Night, the hand-over of the torch, the Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra, the Closing Ceremony and the New Year's Eve party.

There will be a culture/heritage zone which will allow exhibitors to display their works of paintings, photography, carpets, jewellery, artifacts, souvenirs and much more.

Special bureaus will be set up for those seeking career opportunities. Kiosks will be erected to allow delegates to explore investment opportunities in property in Dubai and the UAE. A special desk will be available for handling trade enquiries from entrepreneurs and businessmen interested in setting up small to medium businesses in the UAE.

True to the spirit of charity that is close to the Zoroastrian community, there will be the operation eye-sight programme. Those attending the Congress are requested to look through their belongings for used and usable spectacles (not sunglasses) and bring them to the congress.

Papers received for presentation shall be reviewed by the Congress team in advance. With the Congress being still 15 months away, many more programmes are being developed and added. Final details shall be uploaded on the Congress website [www.wzcongress.org](http://www.wzcongress.org) closer to the event.

### Party Zone & Beverage

The party zone will be a fixed food and beverage area. The registration fee will cover the cost of food and cultural events for all four days. Registration will open end September '08 at the lowest rate possible. The Congress organizing team is working hard to raise sponsorships to keep the registration fee as low as possible in view of the spiraling inflation. Accommodation rates for hotels and apartments are also under negotiation and details will be uploaded soon.

The Congress organizing team is grateful to various sponsors who have supported the Congress. Details of the sponsors are posted on the website. All programmes finalised for the Congress, such as the Youth Leadership Program, the Awards Program and Eyeglass operation program are progressing well, thanks to the support and active participation of Regional Directors from around the world.

As the Congress dates have been fixed keeping in mind the Christmas and New Year holidays, start preparing for a memorable Congress from now. Surprise yourself with interesting opportunities, connections, knowledge and new ideas and get ready to leave your footprints on the sands of time.



### The Early Bird Rates

The Congress registration facility will open on 25 Sept through the website [www.wzcongress.org](http://www.wzcongress.org)

Full Package (all 4 days) AED 1750 (US\$ 480 approx) per person for those born before 31 Dec 1997.

Child born between 1 Jan '98 & 31 Dec 2006 AED 875 (US\$ 240 approx).

Child born after 1 Jan '07 is free.

This rate is inclusive of coffee/tea breaks, lunches, dinners, cultural events in the evenings and the Desert Safari.

The rate will be applicable to the first 300 persons or up to 31 Dec 2008 whichever is earlier.

## Chennai Silk Sari drapes its way to World record

**How often have you come** across a Rs40 lakh (\$100,000) silk sari? Chennai Silks, a textile unit has come up with one of its kind and it is seeking an unmistakable entry into the Guinness Book of World Records for being the most unique and expensive sari.

The exceptionally stunning sari is meticulously woven with 12 precious stones and metals to depict 11 of Raja Ravi Verma's popular paintings. Explicitly projected is 'Lady Musicians', one of the painter's very famous works that displays women belonging to diverse cultural backgrounds.

Besides, the border of the sari pictures 10 other paintings of the artist that pays tribute to 20th century artist.

The best part of the sari being that the women in the paintings are intricately hand-woven and beautified with jewels of gold, diamond, platinum, silver, ruby, emerald, yellow sapphire, sapphire, cat's eye, topaz, pearl and corals.

Already in the Limca Book of Records, this 40 lakh sari will be the first silk sari that required the use of 7,440 jacquard hooks and 66,794 cards during the weaving process. Moreover, a group of consummate workers took nearly 4,680 hours.





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### Interesting Trivia

A cat has 32 muscles in each ear.

A goldfish has a memory span of three seconds.

A 'jiffy' is an actual unit of time for 1/100th of a second.

A shark is the only fish that can blink with both eyes.

A snail can sleep for three years.

Almonds are a member of the peach family.

An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain.

Babies are born without kneecaps. They don't appear until the child reaches 2 to 6 years of age.

February 1865 is the only month in recorded history not to have a full moon.

In the last 4,000 years, no new animals have been domesticated.

If the population of China walked past you, eight abreast, the line would never end because of the rate of reproduction.

Leonardo Da Vinci invented the scissors.

Peanuts are one of the ingredients of dynamite.

Rubber bands last longer when refrigerated.

The average person's left hand does 56% of the typing.

The winter of 1932 was so cold that Niagara Falls froze completely solid.

There are more chickens than people in the world.

Winston Churchill was born in a ladies' room during a dance.

Women blink nearly twice as much as men.

آنچه که آرزو داریم و می خواهیم در این ملائرا بزرگترین آموزش و تعلیم اشو زرتشت آمده است و آن آرزوی خوشبختی برای دیگران است. این تعلیم که بر پایه روح آزادی و مردم دوستی بیان گردیده چنین است:

خوشبختی برای کسی است،

که خوشبختی را برای دیگران بخواهد.

در حقیقت خوشبخت کسی است که سادی خود را در سلامتی مردم و جامعه جستجو می کند. ما برای خوشبختی خود و دیگران می توانیم این مائرا را همیشه زمزمه کنیم:

اوشنا اهلای

بهملای اوشنا کهملای چیت.

ابدون بد

بیوگرافی موبد رستم وحیدی

فارغ التحصیل از دوره عالی دینی سازمان فروهر جوانان زرتشتی

تکرای رشته فرهنگ و زبانهای باستانی با گرایش اوستا شناسی

سر دبیر ماهنامه فروهر

نوزوی در انجمن موبدان و مدرس دوره هیردی

عضو موسسه چاپ مئون و دستنوشته های کهن

تالیفات: ترجمه خرده اوستا به فارسی- تبایض آفتاب در دین زرتشتی- بسن 44 با پرسشهای زرتشت- آشنایی با مئون و دستنویس های اوستا- راههای گاتها سرودهای زرتشت- سه داستان برای کودکان زرتشتی- اوستا به زبان سده به انگلیسی.

Mobed Dr Rostam Vahidi has been a representative of Zoroastrians of Iran at the Global Interfaith Dialog in Tehran and a featured speaker at the World Zoroastrian Congresses in Iran (1996) and London (2005). With a Doctorate in Ancient Culture and Languages and minor in Avesta and Gatha from the Tehran University, Dr. Vahidi has served in Iran as the Editor of Fravahr Magazine, Member of the Board of Directors of the Publishing of Old Manuscripts Institute, and Teacher of Hirbods classes of the Mobed Organization of Tehran.

He has authored eight books including "Translation of Khordeh Avesta in Farsi", "Guide to Gatha - The Sacred Songs of Zarathushtra", "Simple Avesta" & "Familiarity to the Avesta Text."

In 1994, Dr Vahidi was ordained a priest (Navar & Martab) by the Tehran Mobeds Organization. He is presently serving as the representing Mobed of the California Zoroastrian Center in Westminster, California, USA.



Photograph courtesy of Ardeshir Bagkhanian

همه ما نا کنون یک شعر خوب خوانده ایم و یک سرود زیبا شنیده ایم. شعر و سرود نارای انرژی درونی و مینوی هستند، روان انسان را تسخیر میکنند، در ما سلامتی با اندوه ایجاد می کنند. سرود مرگ شب‌دین انرژی خود را برای درک خسرو پرویز به زیبایی و به صورتی اعجاب انگیز نشان داده است. واژه ها و جمله ها همگی می توانند انرژی بخش شوند وقتی که در درون آنها عشق موجود باشد، وقتی که در درون آنها اندیشه وجود داشته باشد. هنگامی که می‌گوییم "اوه چه آسمان زیبایی" با زمای که می‌گوییم "خدا یا کمک کن!" هر دوی این جمله ها به نیروی ما برای رسیدن و وضعیت روانی بهتر می افزایند. برای ما زرتشتیان اوسنا و گاتها دارای جمله ها و سرودهای انرژی بخش هستند. چرا که ما از کویکی با این سرودها آشنا شده ایم، آنها را مقدس می دانیم و برای امیدواری و آسایش فکری و بهروزی در زندگی، آنها را گاهی زمزمه می کنیم.

### مانترا ها

مانترا ها واژه ها با جمله های انرژی بخش هستند. واژه هلی مانند ای خنا، یا هو، یا شاهورهرام ایزد و وبسبی سناش نادار اورمزد، همه مانترا هستند و کسی که آنها را آموخته و به آنها بلور دارد، می تواند از گذن آنها انرژی بگیرد.

در طول هزاران سال ملت ها با فرهنگ های گوناگون، مانترای بسطی را ایجاد کرده اند. این مانتراها با حرکت تنفسی و نرمش همراه شده و امروز در جهان ما بسطی از گره های روانی و ناپسمانیهای جسمی را درمان می کنند. در اوسنا و گاتها واژه مانترا آمده و سخن درمان بخش دانسته شده است. در اوسنا یکی از روش های درمان بیماری، مانترا پزشکی یا انرژی درمانی است. در این روش با شرکت و بکارگیری سرودهای مانترایی توسط موبدان و بهاران در یک هماهنگی مینوبی، امید به زندگی را افزایش می دادند و افسردگی و بیماری را می زدودند. ما امروز نیز می توانیم با سرودن مانترا های اوسنایی، خود را از نظر روانی تقویت کنیم و خودمان را به آینده امیدوار سازیم.

گاتها سرودهای زرتشت در اوسنا مانترا نامیده شده است. این سرودها در مبدل سرودهای دینی مربوط به مراسم یزن خوانی با اوج و شکوه سروده می شود و همگان از آن انرژی و توانایی می گیرند. در سنت زرتشتیان، جملات و کلمات مانترایی و اوسنایی بعنوان مانترا برگزیده شده اند تا برای شروع انرژی گیری به کار برده شوند.

سرود اشم وهو که یکی و پارسایی را می سناید، یک مانترای بسطی قوی است و هر جمله آن میتواند انرژی بخش باشد. این سرود در سنت زرتشتی برای یکی جسم، یکی روان و یکی گفتار (خوش قولی) خوانده می شود.

سرود بنا اهو مانترای امنیت و آسایش و دورکننده ترس و وحشت است. این سرود کل و کوشش و حمایت از ناتوانان را بیان می کند و قدرت زیادی در دور کردن ترس و بدبینی دارد.

### مانترای خوشبختی

این مانترا برای خوشبختی است. همه انسانها در زندگی به دنبال خوشبختی هستند. همانطور که گفتیم، خوشبختی واقعی همان سلامتی است و در این مانترا واژه اوسنا یعنی روشنی و سلامتی، یعنی

از هر کس پرسیده شود که شادی را دوست دارد یا غم و اندوه را، بی درنگ خواهد گفت شادی. زیرا شادی با روان افسان سازگاری دارد. بسیاری از فلاسفه، خوشبختی را در شادمانی جستجو کرده اند و هدف زندگی را شادمانی و داشتن آسایش دانسته اند. ملری که فرزندان خود را دوست دارد، از دیدن آنها شادمان می شود و کسی که مال و ثروت بدست می آورد، از داشتن آن شاد می شود. حتی کسانی که مویه و گریه می کنند از این عمل آرامش بدست می آورند و شاد می شوند. پس می بینیم که خوشبختی در شادمانی است.

در دین زرتشتی هدف زندگی رسیدن به شادی و شادمانی است. در گائها، اسوزرشت خشنودی را برای جهانیان آرزو می کند و با خرد و اندیشه نیک روان جهان را خشنود و شک می سازد. سرانجام زندگی نیکوکلان خانه سرود است.

شادی در سرشت افسان آمیخته است. ما با دیدن پدیده های نیک طبیعت، شک می شویم و رویاهایمان به هر سو می کشد. با شادی در طبیعت احساس لذت و سرخوشی می کنیم. هر یک از ما با دیدن دوست خود، اعضای خانواده و حتی دیدن هنرپیشه های محبوب خود احساس شادمانی می کنیم. افراد کینه جو همیشه غمگین و در فشار روحی هستند ولی اشخاص مهر ورز و سخاوتمند از کار خود و از برخورد با دیگران احساس شادمانی می کنند.

اوج شادمانی در عشق و محبت است و هر فرد زرتشتی می گوشت با گذشت و فداکاری، عشق را در زندگی خود وارد کند. خوبی ملایه عشق است و عرفایی ملایه سهره وردی و حافظ عشق را در ذریجه خوبی می دانند.

در ازل جلوه حشمت (=خوبی اش) ز نجلای دم زد

عشق پیدا شد و آتش به همه عالم زد

ما باید عاشق باشیم، عاشق طبیعت، عاشق خانواده، عاشق کار و عاشق همسر. هر زرتشتی باید عاشق جهان و عاشق جمله باشد.

### انرژی گرفتن

انسان در زندگی خود از جهان انرژی میگیرد، از نور خورشید و روشنایی ماه انرژی کسب می کند و با آنها وجود خود را تقویت می کند. همه پدیده ها به ما انرژی می دهند. بخصوص هنگامی که ما عاشق جهان هستیم. میوه ای که می خوریم یا سخن مهر آمیزی که از آموزگار خود می شنویم به ما نیرو و انرژی می دهند. گرما و نور آتش بسیل اثر بخش و نیرو افزا است و ما با دیدن نور امیدوار می شویم و برای رسیدن به آن در خونمان احساس توانایی و اراده می کنیم.

پدر و مادر به فرزند خود انرژی می دهند. نگهداری کودک، تربیت کودک و آشنا ساختن وی با جهان و با زندگی، همه و همه انرژی بخش هستند. آبا میباید رشد همه ما همراه با دریافت انرژی ملای و انرژی معنوی بوده است. امید داشتن در اثر یک انرژی معنوی است، نیرویی که ما را به سوی آینده و به سوی روشنایی و خردمندی پیش می برد.

به نام اهورامزدا

## ماترا ها برای گرفتن انرژی در زندگی

سخنرانی موبد دکتر رستم وحیدی

کالیفرنیا - درب مهر ارباب رستم گین

### بیش گفتار

دین زرتشتی برای آگاهی و دانایی است، چرا که اهورامزدا انسان را خرمند آفریده و خرد ابزاری است که انسان را با آگاهی ها و اطلاعاتی که از پدیده های جهان به دست می آورد، به دانایی میرساند. پس خرد مایه دانایی است.

بر پایه گائها سرودهای اشو زرتشت، هرکس دانا باشد راستی و نیکی را بر می گزیند. در بسنای 30/3 می خوانیم:

هر دانگهر ارش ویشیتا

نرثیت لورژدانگهر

یعنی دانا درستی را بر می گزیند و نالان چدین نمی کند. پس نیکی و راستی از دانایی و دانش پدید می آید.

ما باید در زندگی خود جنبه های کاربردی دین زرتشتی را همراه با دانایی مورد استفاده قرار بدهیم و بتوانیم از آموزشهای دینی در بهبود زندگی خود، خانواده و جامعه بهره برداری کنیم. جنبه های عملی و کاربردی دین و تطبیق آن با نیازهای زندگی بشر بسبب ضروری است و اگر دین با بلوری کاربرد نداشته باشد، آن دین هیچوقت پايدار نمی ماند. به ویژه بلورهای دینی باید در روح و جسم جوانان یک جامعه نفوذ کند تا به گونه ای محسوس، جوانان بتوانند به وسیله بلورهای دینی خود با شایمانی زندگی کنند.

امروز دین ها و بلورهای بسیاری در جهان وجود دارند و دین زرتشتی یکی از آنها است. بیشتر دین ها جنبه کاربردی خود را با آداب و رسوم و سنتهای خود می شناسند، ولی در دین زرتشتی باید جنبه کاربردی دین را در رفتارها و نگرش های اجتماعی بدانیم، باید پایه های دینی خود را در زندگی روزمره و زیست درست و شرافتمندانه در طبیعت و جامعه به کار ببریم. در این صورت با دانایی از بلورهای دینی خود بهره مند می شویم.

در فرهنگ شناسی آداب و رسوم کهنی مورد بررسی قرار می گیرند که در اثر گذشت زمان کهنه و فرسوده شده و حتی تبدیل به خرافات شده اند، ولی دین زرتشتی بر اساس اصل دانایی همواره در نوآوری و تازه گرداندن آداب و رسوم و سنتهای دینی کوشش و تلاش نموده و در آینده نیز خواهد نمود.

# Something Old, Something New

by dina mcintyre

Each year during the 'winter' months in India and Pakistan, there is an influx of weddings and with this in mind, I requested Dina to share what she had written for her son on the eve of his wedding for our readers. It is a charming interpretation of what the Ses means to her. – Ed

**Many years ago**, our oldest son, Richard Jehangir McIntyre, got married to a lovely girl, Suzanne Irwin. For months before the wedding I wracked my brains, trying to figure out a way to integrate Rich's Zoroastrian heritage into the wedding festivities, in a way that would make Rich both happy and proud, and make Suzanne, and my husband Dick's side of the family, feel a part of it too. I wanted to bring to the wedding some of the neat things about Zarathushtra's teachings, without being preachy. I wanted to bless them without sounding dumb. But above all, I wanted them to enjoy the Zarathushtrian part of the festivities.

I concluded that there was one happy ceremony, that I had loved from childhood, into which I could blend the old and the new, and which would accomplish most of my objectives – the Ses. But not just an ordinary ses. A ses that would give spiritual meaning to each material act. A ses that would link to each material act, a spiritual teaching of Zarathushtra from the Gathas.

I thought this blending of the material and the spiritual would be a neat way to demonstrate to them that in Zarathushtra's view, the material and the spiritual are both good, both part of one design. I also wanted them to understand that it is not enough for us to ask God's blessings for them, that that they, in turn, have to bless each other, and bless their world, with their words and actions.

At once, I mobilized The Family. My cousin Jenny from California brought the garlands. My cousin Aashish from Connecticut brought her ses implements and red paste for the *tili*. My sister in law, Silla, brought chalk tins from India to make the chalk designs. And I worked on crafting a spiritual blessing for each act of the ses, which would bless my beloved children,



The beautiful ses especially assembled for this article, courtesy Katie Kabraji, Karachi.

and at the same time give them the precious gift of some aspects of Zarathushtra's teachings.

On the morning of the wedding, we assembled the ses on two silver trays – garlands, 2 coconuts and silver coins marked with red paste, nuts, dates, rice, we had no pan leaves, so we substituted fresh green oak and maple leaves (for strength, long life and sweetness), a dish of sweet yoghurt, some rock candy, the ses implements, and a lighted *diva*.

We held the ses on our patio, with summer flowers all about us, and sunlight filtering down through the leaves of the shade trees. We washed our patio floor, made a circle of chalk designs into which Rich and Suzanne stepped, and this is how it went. As I performed each material act, I recited the corresponding spiritual blessing. And the structure of the blessings corresponded to an ancient Iranian poetic technique of starting and ending with the same idea – a technique that appears in the Gathas as well.



## The Ses Blessing

The Material	The Spiritual
A garland of flowers was placed around each of their necks;	May God Bless You, May you bless each other, May you bless the world in which you live;
In each of their hands was placed a coconut, nuts, green leaves, silver coins, some rice, and rock candy;	May He be generous with you, May you be generous with each other, May you be generous to all living things;
They each received a spoonful of sweet yoghurt with a piece of rock candy in it;	May He sweeten your lives, May you sweeten each other's lives, May you sweeten the lives of all whom you touch;
A red mark (tili) was placed on the forehead of each one;	May He instruct through good thinking the course of your direction (Gathas Y50.6), May He give you understanding and enduring strength to lead a good life (from Gathas Y43.1 and 2);
Rice was pressed on to each of their tili marks, and, with a cracking of knuckles on my temples, rice was showered over them both;	Let each of you try to win the other with truth and goodness, and you will both be winners (from Gathas Y53.5);
Hugs and kisses.	God Bless You and Keep You, We love you.

## Humour

Kanjibhai was preparing wedding cards for their son at the printers in India. Kanjibhai was not very good at English. So he asked the printer to help him. After the printer had presented Kanjibhai with a draft, Kanjibhai quickly pointed out that the RSVP was missing.

The printer was surprised by Kanjibhai's knowledge and asked him if Kanjibhai knew what it meant. Kanjibhai was quick to reply: 'Rupiyaa Saathe Vehlaa Padhaarjo'. [Do come with the cash gift]

After I was done, all our relatives blessed them in turn, with good wishes, rice showers, hugs, kisses, and presents. We next decided by unanimous vote, that our younger son, John Dinshaw (who was not then married), looked in dire need of blessings as well, so into the chalk circle he went (right foot first, naturally), and got *teeleed*, blessed, hugged and kissed, by parents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. My family next decided that Dick and I looked as though we could use a blessing or two, so we were ordered into the chalk circle, and got blessed, hugged, kissed and showered with presents in turn.

My beloved sister-in-law then put *tilis* on everyone's forehead, for good luck – Bajajs, Devitres, Ghandys, McIntyres and Sheridans, all got *teeleed*, with much

laughter and good fellowship. That last act turned the ses blessing from a spectator event into something that bound us all together into one family, as participants. It was like magic, the change that it made in the mood of the gathering.

After the wedding was over, and the photographs of the ses were developed, I made a little book for Rich and Suzanne, so that they would have a permanent remembrance of their Zoroastrian wedding blessing. In this book, I described what went into the ses trays, the blessing itself, and pasted in photos of the ses and the family. I added a little introduction and conclusion as follows:

"A ses is a blessing that is given on all good occasions – birthdays, weddings, et cetera.

It combines the giving of material things, with spiritual gifts (blessings) because in Zarathushtra's teachings, the material and the spiritual are both good, both part of one Design, each with its part to play in bringing God's Good Rule.

"A central feature of Zarathushtra's teaching is a happy blending of rugged individualism, with a sense of community. To illustrate: On the one hand he teaches that each individual must choose for himself or herself (after reflecting with a clear mind) how he/she will think, speak and act (Individualism). On the other hand, he teaches that God lives in each one of us. So in a very real sense, we are all part of the same whole (the Community). The individual and the community also are both part of one Design, each important in its own way. This complementing of the individual and the community is reflected in the ses blessing. Each person who performs a ses is free to give whatever verbal blessings he or she chooses (individualism). And everyone gets in on the act (the community spirit).

"The blessings I chose were selected to illustrate the meanings of the material symbols of the ses. And the last few blessings are paraphrases of Zarathushtra's own words as they appear in the Gathas.

"You may have noticed, when you were being blessed, that you stood in a circle of chalk designs. Chalk designs were also placed on either side of the doorways, stairways, and any other place that seemed good. I never knew what these chalk designs stood for until my brother Sarosh explained that in ancient days, before pesticides were invented, people used to sprinkle lime around the house to keep the crawling bugs out, because crawling insects (it was believed) would not cross a barrier of lime. The chalk decorations are a remnant of that ancient custom.

"One final thought. On the path of spiritual progress, or growth, one of the first steps is justice. Being fair. But an even higher step is generosity. So be fair. But go a step further. Be generous to overflowing. God Bless You Both Always."

Did the ses ceremony exist in Zarathushtra's day? We don't know. Certainly, some of its material components (like the *till*) have a distinctively Indian character. Our creative ancestors probably took certain symbols from ancient Iran (flowers, candy, green leaves, coins, lighted diva) and added to them certain symbols which they picked up from their Indian neighbours, to come up with the ses as we know it today. It is a law of nature that all material things change. But the core of spiritual values has remained unchanged through the millennia – as valid today as it was in Zarathushtra's day. And our many times great grandchildren will find these values equally valid a thousand years from now, if we transmit these beautiful ideals to them by word as well as by example.

Zarathushtra's advice to brides and grooms is as valuable today as it was when he gave it on the occasion of his daughter's marriage, more than 3,000 years ago in the Vahishtoisti Gatha.

**"Let each of you try to win the other with [asha], and you will both be winners."**  
(Y53.5 McIntyre paraphrase of the Insler translation).

Asha means truth, which includes the truths of mind and spirit - all that is true, good, beneficent (generous), and right. This great advice tells us that in Zarathushtra's view, the marriage relationship is not one of domination/subservience, but of partnership, with each spouse making the same effort to win the love and respect of the other with truth, goodness, generosity, what's right.

I have studied the Gathas for many years now, and I still continue to find new ideas in them. But for all those years of study, I did not have the answer to my cousin Aashish's question: "Why do we crack our knuckles when we do the rice showers?" Does anyone know?



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](http://www.vohuman.org) and [www.zarathushtra.com](http://www.zarathushtra.com)



## Students Together in Tackling Child Hunger

by deena guzder

The soul of the Universe complained, O Ahura Mazda . . . upon me has fallen wrath, plunder, violence, evil, outrage, aggression and oppression. There is no protector for me other than you, therefore, teach me good industry whereby I may be rid of such calamities.

Ha 29.1, from Gatha-ba-Maani, translation by Ervad Kavasji Edalji Kanga

### ***My interest in understanding,***

exposing and reducing poverty stems from early childhood, when I accompanied my parents on their myriad travels and was exposed to startling scenes of hardship. After spending my formative years at a British boarding school in India, I attended four high schools on three different continents. My nomadic upbringing made me aware of the stunning economic disparities between the world's richest and poorest inhabitants.

One-third of all human deaths are due to poverty related causes such as starvation, diarrhea, pneumonia, tuberculosis, malaria, measles and prenatal conditions, all of which could be prevented or cured cheaply through food, safe drinking water, vaccinations, rehydration packs or medicines. The world's poorest people die unnoticed in some of the most destitute villages on earth, far removed from the conscience of the world. Yet we live in a world that is more scientifically sophisticated, technologically savvy and financially well-off than ever before. As Nobel Prize laureate Joseph Stiglitz notes, "Despite repeated promises of poverty reduction made over the last decade of the twentieth century, the actual number of people living in poverty has actually increased by almost 100 million. This occurred at the same time that total world income increased by an average of 25 percent annually." Some economists estimate that a mere 1% of the United States' GDP would help eliminate malnourishment across the globe in three years. Unfortunately, countries often squander resources through military excursions, which hinder their ability to

provide humanitarian assistance. In March 2003, the United States bombed Baghdad and has since spent three trillion dollars on occupying Iraq. As scholars such as Nobel Prize winner Jeffrey Sachs has noted, the United States should have redirected its resourced from military expenditure to poverty reduction in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. "By showing our abiding concern for the plight of . . . millions of children who are at risk of death from disease [and] in honouring the sanctity of the lives of the least among us, we have the best chance to defeat the ideologies of hate," said Sachs.

World poverty should and must be eradicated. One day, I entered a shopping mall in Texas and realized that many of the trendy, ethnic shirts sold in the stores were made in India—and these beautiful shirts were sold for five times the amount they cost in Mumbai. I suddenly had an epiphany: what if I transported similar tunics from India to America and sold them at the same price but gave the money back to the world's poorest rather than American corporations?

The summer of 2001, I flew to India to pilot a nongovernmental organization called "Students Together in Tackling Child Hunger" (S.T.I.T.C.H) that seeks to reduce economic disparities. The fledgling organization buys hand-embroidered, georgette shirts wholesale from local retailers, who uphold ethical labour practices, and sells them for quadruple the price online. All of the profit goes to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) so children, instead of stores, benefit from economic inequality. UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to

advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. The STITCH Project strongly believes that poor people, not lucrative Western companies, should profit from global commerce.

STITCH hopes to join the fair trade movement, which promotes protecting international labour, environment and social standards for the production of traded goods and services. The movement focuses in particular on exports from developing countries to developed countries—in contrast with “free trade,” which is often protectionist in favour of wealthy nations. “Make Trade Fair” is a campaign by Oxfam International and its 12 affiliates, calling on governments, institutions, and multinational companies to change the rules so that trade can become part of the solution to poverty, not part of the problem. We know that real change will only come when large numbers of people demand it—in rich countries as well as poor. As Zoroastrians, we hold goodness, righteousness, and social responsibility in high regard. The convictions behind Fair Trade are deeply compatible with our religious teachings.

STITCH will not solve the grisly problem of endemic poverty, but it will help lessen a few more people have the food, medicine and vaccinations they need to enjoy a longer and more fulfilling life. Purchasing a tunic to help reduce poverty is very easy. Simply visit:

<http://www.duylinhtu.com/nmsbasic3/guzder/index4.htm>

to view the catalogue and choose a tunic. The tunics are “one-size fits all” because they are meant to be loose and flowing. Once you’ve selected a tunic size and colour, mail a tax-exempt \$20 check to UNICEF as well as \$4 in cash for shipping,

handling and the original cost of the tunic to the following address:

**The STITCH Foundation, c/o Deena Guzder,  
623 W. 136 St. Apt. 15, New York, NY.10031-8141, USA.**

STITCH will mail you the requested tunic and re-direct your check to UNICEF within one to three days of receiving your order.

To date, the STITCH project has sold dozens of tunics and raised hundreds of dollars for UNICEF in an effort to reduce global poverty. Through our spending habits, we can show “good industry” and help the world’s most impoverished people. The concentrated attention of conscientious Zoroastrians around the world who make consumer decisions based on their conscience can help galvanize the resources needed to reduce world poverty.



*In May 2008, Guzder completed a dual-degree from Columbia University’s School of Journalism and School of International & Public Affairs. As a freelance reporter, her articles have appeared in the New York Blade, Chicago Tribune (Red Eye), New York Times syndicate, Black Star News, Providence Journal, Nonviolence in the News, Arab American, Chronicle-Herald, AdBusters Magazine, Payvand Iran News, Global Exchange newsletter, Indian American Magazine, Journal of International Affairs, Worcester Telegram & Gazette News, Arizona Central, The New York Resident, Common Dreams, Brooklyn Daily Eagle, CounterPunch, Panache, Indian Express, National Geographic Traveler (online) and elsewhere. Guzder worked as a research assistant at Amnesty International and National Geographic-Traveler magazine.*

*In March 2007, the Scripps Howard Foundation awarded Guzder a generous fellowship to travel to India with the former New York Times religion correspondent, Ari Goldman, to report on socially disadvantaged “untouchables” in rural villages. Last summer, Guzder travelled to Iran as a foreign correspondent for News 21. Mark Glaser of PBS commented on her reporting: “If we could only hear these voices more often, and have constant cross-cultural communication, maybe we would have less war mongering and more peacemaking . . . maybe, with deliberation and tough debate, we would discover our differences and similarities.” Guzder lives in New York City where she runs a fledgling nonprofit organization, Students Together in Tackling Child Hunger (S.T.I.T.C.H), and is currently working with her literary agent on a book called a Higher Calling.*



## Food for thought



A family [2+3] in Sicily, Italy  
Food expenditure for one week: 214.36 Euros or \$260.11



A family [2+2] in Bargteheide, Germany  
Food expenditure for one week: 375.39 Euros or \$500.07



A family [2 + 2] in North Carolina, US  
Food expenditure for one week \$341.98



A family [2 + 3] in Cuernavaca, Mexico  
Food expenditure for one week: 1,862.78 Mexican Pesos or \$189.07



A family [4 + 1] in Konstancin-Jeziorna, Poland  
Food expenditure for one week: 582.48 Zlotys or \$151.27



A family [7 + 5] in Cairo, Egypt  
Food expenditure for one week: 387.85 Egyptian Pounds or \$68.53



A family [2 + 7] in Tingo, Ecuador  
Food expenditure for one week: \$31.55



A family [5 + 8] in Shingkhey Village, Bhutan  
Food expenditure for one week: 224.93 ngultrum or \$5.03



A family [2 + 4] in Breidjing Camp, Chad  
Food expenditure for one week: 685 CFA Francs or \$1.23

How accurate the above information is one doesn't know. The family names have been omitted by me. This was sent at the beginning of the year, but the message is clear.

United Nations on their website says: "Today there are more than 800 million starving children – among them 300 million are children starving from chronic hunger. More than 100 million children don't go to school, about 18 thousand children die daily because of hunger. As a result, the priority direction of the World Food Program is the development of school meals aimed at improving the children's health but also to raise the attendance of lessons and giving possibility of positive development."

What can we do? Don't buy more than one needs, don't waste food, and make our children aware of the 'real world' - Ed.



# Zarathushtrian Calendrical Computations on the Internet

by noshir khambatta



Arzan Lali

## While at times Zoroastrians

have lamented that “youth is thoroughly wasted on the young”, a young, talented and enterprising Zoroastrian has given a sizeable fraction of his time to the service of our community and fellow religionists, in creating a website that addresses the conversion aspects of the Zarathushtrian calendar and ancillary matters related with it. The young man whose name is Arzan Aspi Lali, is the sole author, creator and designer of the web site :

<http://ahura.TheLalis.com>

The site opens with an introduction to the Zarathushtrian calendar in general, and historical contexts channeling its way to the difficult and vexing issues of date conversions between the Gregorian and the three existing versions of the Zarathushtrian calendar, namely the Shenshahi, Kadmi and Fasli. Lali has researched many algorithms and computer programmes that best facilitates an accurate conversion between two sets of dates and have employed these in his master algorithm that finally carries out these computations. Calendars by months are also displayed along with the phases of the moon and a separate table of the “*chaughadiyas*” is also presented. Lali’s keen sense of public service and love for his community are visible through his consciousness, that some members of the Zoroastrian community can read and write only in the Gujarati language; spending a considerable amount time displaying his work in the Gujarati script. Lali outlines his work in the text below:

“Approximately ten years ago I moved to USA as a student and it was during those first few years in college, I felt I began to lose touch with my religion. Being so disconnected from anything and anyone familiar from a Zarathushti origin, I started forgetting important events, dates, roj birthdays etc., things that were second nature to me in India. Despite owning a small physical pocket

calendar, I never seemed to refer to it regularly. However, being connected to the web on a daily basis, I decided to look on the net for some solution, and I discovered similar constraints with the existing resources. I found Zarathushtrian calendars that were either old or posted only with the current year. This dilemma thereby fueled my interest in creating a web-based calendar application that would be user-friendly, interactive and in the future serve members of our community who have experienced similar pitfalls as in my case.

“Hence, being a software developer by profession, I decided to create a small application for myself. I wrote the preliminary version in PERL where the program was entirely shell based and not GUI nor web based and it only supported Shenshahi dates for the current year. Later, I felt the need to make it either a desktop application or host it on some free third party web server. I discovered that these websites restricted users from running CGI scripts hence I decided to invest some time to host my own web server from home. And it was at this time I composed an improved web application to support all calendar types and expand it for a 400-year range (1800 AD to 2100 AD).

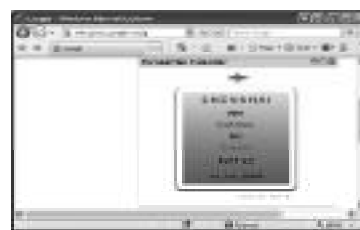
“Almost immediately, the website gained interest among the global Zarathushti community, hence inspiring me to upgrade it further by adding features such as moon phases, special events, and Chaughadiyas etc. In my most recent release, I have added a separate version with the Gujarati language using Unicode fonts so that users do not have to download special fonts to view the page. One can view the online help to understand more detail features or download it if they please. The conversion used a recursion algorithm that uses a fixed date in the year 2000 AD and calculates the result for the next or previous year while feeding it back to the same algorithm to calculate the next or previous year. It continues this process till it reaches the required date. Therefore, on an average it will take around one

second to display results if they are around plus minus 50 years from 2000 AD and about four seconds if they are in 1800 AD or 2100 AD. Recently, I concluded this was not an efficient solution which led me to work on a completely different algorithm. The new code now takes few milliseconds to calculate any result and it expands the calendar span for 900 years (1600 AD to 2400 AD). I have also added a time factor in my algorithm with an error tolerance of one second. Recently, I have also developed the Zarathushtrian calendar Google Gadgets for Desktop & iGoogle, Yahoo Widgets, Widgetbox etc. One can now integrate the Zoroastrian calendar with their personal Google calendar using Google Calendar Gadget or even with MS Outlook. The user then can sync it with their PDA, Smartphone, PockePC, iPhone.

“My main reference was : Calendrical Calculations: The Millennium Edition - Edward M. Reingold & Nachum Dershowitz to get some insight about the calculations; (<http://emr.cs.iit.edu/home/reingold/calendar-book/second-edition/>). Using this text as a fundamentals guide, I devised my own algorithm which is epoch based rather than old recursive based.”

The website is exceptionally user friendly and easy to manipulate. I can testify that I have checked the conversions of over a thousand birth and death dates of prominent Parsi personalities from the volumes of *Parsee Prakash* and have found all of them to be accurate and to the point. No longer has one to worry if one is confronted with an odd date in an unusual format. One can select the appropriate module, input the available data and in a second or two get an accurate conversion.

Arzan Lali has done a yeoman service to our community by providing us with an accurate algorithm of converting dates between the Gregorian and Zarathushtrian calendars. I urge you all to take a look at this website and derive its due benefits. ■■■



After his postgraduate studies in physics from India, Noshir Khambatta proceeded to USA to obtain his PhD in Nonlinear Optics and Laser Spectroscopy. Later he opted for a teaching career. A self-trained bibliographer and cataloguer for the past 40 years, he has been compiling a comprehensive catalogue of books and articles on Avestan and Zoroastrian subjects. He is looking into the possibility of establishing a permanent physical centre for the preservation of rare and important Zoroastrian scriptures.



## Zarine Patel - The Business Brain at the BBC

by soonu engineer

***If you want to interview*** the Group Finance Director of the BBC, you may have to wait for at least two months and then perhaps be disappointed by a last-minute cancellation followed by another long wait. And for a novice interviewer, there are other hazards too. As you finally, with a suitable sense of gratitude, get to sit opposite the Finance Director in the airy but simply furnished office and watch her settle onto the sofa, feet tucked snugly under her, you risk being lulled by the seductive intimacy and informality of it all. You have to remind yourself that this sweet-faced, softly spoken woman, in the green and white cotton frock, holds the purse strings of the British Broadcasting Corporation – some £3billion of it and more.

Might people be envious of Zarine Patel? Unfazed by the question, she fazes you out with a frank, 'Yes, but it's a good sort of envy: they'd like to have my job!' And you discover, as you get deeper into conversation, that this is exactly the magical mix of cool-headed realism and glowing optimism that distinguishes the first woman Finance Director of the BBC and - dare we hope? - the first Parsi to blaze that trail.

Hers isn't a rags-to-riches story. Zarine comes from a pedigree of 'self-made men, who believed that struggle makes you sharp. Both sides of my family had burning ambition and a desire for education.' And they prospered. On the paternal side, Zarine is connected to the Lam family from the coastal town of Surat, India, who traded with China in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Her paternal grandfather, Edulji Patel, was amongst the young pioneers who set sail for Kenya from Gujarat at the beginning of the last century. He became the manager of a legal practice in Nakuru and made his fortune investing in land ('sambo' in Swahili) that was sold off to settlers at favourable rates by the British colonial administration.



Photo, courtesy BBC Picture Publicity

But he believed, like many Parsi entrepreneurs then and since, that 'money spoils you.' So he let his son, Homi, make his own way – though he did send him to England for further studies.

In 1948, at the age of 23, Zarine's mother, Doly, arrived in the little town of Nakuru from the village of Dumas, to join her husband in the middle of rural Kenya where there were no telephone lines to keep in touch with home. She began to tutor the local children. Zarine's eyes sparkle in admiration for her mother: 'She travelled to the other side of the world. It was an amazingly brave thing to do. She's always had a sense of adventure. She's very brainy – we are all brainy

as well – and she always knew how good she was.’ Her eyes darken as she speaks of her mother’s regret at not having the same educational opportunities that were available then to the men of the family. ‘I could have been someone now,’ Zarine echoes her mother; and you feel that the high-flying daughter is making it up to her mother a thousand-fold, for what she could have been.

Zarine puts down her own success to the high expectations that her parents had for all their three children. She demurs at the suggestion that the support and encouragement she received from her family was typical of most Parsi families. ‘I think there was something more there than in other families. You were expected to be self-reliant and to do well: it was an unspoken thing; you grew up with it. You didn’t think you could drop out. In our family, you were either a scientist or in business. My brother and sister are both scientists and they have done phenomenally well.’ Those who knew her family in Nakuru and Mombasa bristle at this presumption of being exceptional but concede that, ‘it’s definitely in the Patel genes: every single one from that extended family is at the top of their profession.’

Her own career in finance may have been influenced by her father who was manager of the local branch of Barclay’s bank. ‘I always had a curiosity about how things worked. I had free run of the bank at lunchtimes. I spent a lot of time with my dad, watching him work.’

Her early childhood was spent in rural Nakuru. There were very few Parsis there and so the family had more Hindu and Ismaili friends than was usual. She attended the local Ismaili school and later, when her father was transferred to Mombasa, she was sent to an Ismaili school there unlike the children of other Parsis who tended to go to the missionary-run schools. So she was comfortable in a more mixed cultural milieu from a very young age. ‘Both my parents socialised with a wider group and not just within the Parsi community,’ she says.

Was this wide enough to include Africans? Zarine smiles and recalls the time she made

a presentation of her ‘ex-pat’ life to her new class in London, at the age of 13. ‘In Mombasa we lived next to the beach. There were servants for work in the garden and servants for the house and for the kitchen and so on. My mother did the cooking and they ate the same food as us. In fact it was taken out of the pot for them before we ate. They were part of the family and I said how much I missed them. The English children immediately thought we had slaves and I had to reassure them this wasn’t so.’

There was a large, closely-knit Parsi community in Mombasa. ‘I had a strong sense of being a Parsi. My navjote was done in India at six years. Both my parents are quite religious. Religion matters to them a lot. It is their comfort and their sense of identity. As children we attended jashans regularly – it felt like one a week! I remember sitting at the children’s table waiting for the chashni to be passed round; and if people knew there would be malido served that week, then it was full house.’

When her father retired at 55, the family moved to the UK. They were aware of what was happening in Uganda and Malawi. People in the Asian community in Kenya felt ‘it could happen to me one day’. So in 1975, her family settled in a nice part of south London and Zarine had no problem gaining admission to the Thames Valley Grammar School.

‘We had followed the British curriculum in Kenya and had grown up on Enid Blyton, the Famous Five etc. So coming here felt like home.’ She can’t recall ever suffering any racism but ‘I expect I have - without knowing about it.’

After studying at the London School of Economics, she landed a job as an accountant with KPMG in 1982, where she stayed for 15 years, taking time out ‘to go and run a real company.’ She so enjoyed the challenge that she looked for further hands-on opportunities. In 1998 she was introduced to the Finance Director of the BBC. ‘We got on like a house on fire,’ she says, and a few weeks later she joined the BBC as Group Financial Controller. She

was expected to support the corporation's drive to achieve 'value for money'; and soon she was in charge of collecting the license fee, 'our lifeblood' as she calls it.

What are the qualities that helped her take on the role? Zarine has no difficulty enumerating them. 'I started by doing change,' she says. 'I have a thirst for change. I am always looking round the next corner. I'm brave: I'll do things other people will back out of. When I took over TV licensing, it was a reasonably successful business. It is our life-blood and you mess with it at your peril. But I knew it needed top-to-bottom change.'

She changed the people, 'all our service partners; all our marketing agents. I'm competitive. When I took over the job from my predecessor I thought, "I'll do better than you ever did." So I beat our targets. I achieved more and at less cost.'

Within six years, in 2004 she became Group Finance Director.

Zarine has gathered many accolades on the way. She's been called the 'business brain' in the BBC, by the Sunday Times. She is considered to be the '12<sup>th</sup> most powerful Asian in British media'. She's been listed by the UK Accountancy Age magazine as one of the 50 most influential names in finance.

Zarine gets up and walks to a table and shows me the award she got in 2004, as 'Client Marketer of the Year,' from the marketing industry's magazine, 'Direct Marketing'. 'It's difficult for an accountant to get an award for marketing,' she says with pride. This was in acknowledgement of her success in persuading the British public to hand over the licence fee at first demand. She brought down the evasion rate to almost 4% by being creative, offering more convenient and varied payment methods rather than by wielding the big stick.

Zarine is credited too for having a head for people. 'You can't bring about change in an organisation without changing behaviour and that means attitude. I'm very insightful about people.' She's always looking for talent and

for people 'with the right skills set, the attitude to excel and the desire to make a difference.' People like stability but Zarine feels she often needs 'a real risk-taker with a can-do attitude.'

'I have a thirst for excellence and I don't like pedestrian performance. I've made a lot of people redundant in my life but many have gone on to bigger and better things.'

If you are lucky enough to be interviewed by her for a job, be prepared to answer the following questions: What is the biggest challenge you have faced? What did you learn from it? What are you proudest of in your life?

So what did Zarine learn from her biggest challenge? In her three years as Finance Director she made some mistakes. 'If I had the time again, I would slow the pace down,' she reflects. 'I assumed people have the same time and energy (as herself). People need time to adjust to your style.' Did she make enemies? Not easily. 'People underestimate me because I'm not "in your face." So they don't find me threatening. I've always thought the issue through and I act by instinct a lot – by taking in the signals.'

She brushes aside the tedious question about gender by pointing out that 'in the end, people value you for the job you do.'

She speaks enthusiastically about the two mentors she had on the way to the top. They had a 'lasting impact' on her. She is now returning the favour by doing a lot of mentoring herself. Some of it is in unconventional settings, working with the homeless and unemployed. She is also a governor of the University of the Arts and has brought her financial acumen to the Board.

Given her busy schedule and her voluntary work, she likes to relax in front of the TV. 'There's already so much forced socialising in my job,' she explains.

As I leave, I ask her whether she has thought of putting something back into the

community that has given her the many attributes she thinks helped her on the way to the top. 'I'm inundated with requests,' she confides. 'I do what I can and I'm interested in helping to develop leadership skills.'

Zarine's advice to young people is, 'be yourself, have fun, be ambitious to do good work; have the desire to learn, to be curious and – to matter.' She's following her own advice by taking time off, this summer and autumn, to pursue an Advanced Management Programme for global senior executives, at the Harvard Business School.



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



## Rich Flavours of Old India

[In the Hamazor 2/2008 issue we indicated a book (p32) on Ancient Indian history, *India: the Ancient Past* by Burjor Avari. The novelty of a volume on Indian history by a Parsi Zoroastrian seemed to us too good an opportunity to pass up its assessment for our readership. Our reviewer has, for personal reasons, requested anonymity]

**Burjor Avari, "*India: the Ancient Past*" (Routledge, London, 2007. pp.xviii + 284)**

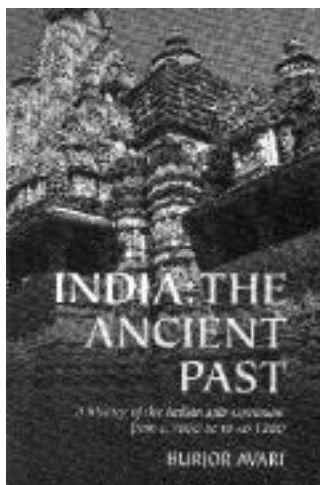
***A rare and challenging find*** it is for this reviewer to assess – rare because it is authored by a Parsi; challenging because its subject is treated uncompromisingly. Parsis generally confine their historical ventures to regional or community studies, and in any case their approaches tend towards a depressing blandness and avoidance of needful controversy.

Mr Avari, an MBE conferee for his work in multicultural education, is Principal Lecturer at the Manchester Metropolitan University. From his thumb-nail biodata one gathers that he is Bombay-born and Kenyan nurtured. The antecedents of his obvious expertise are unknown, but he bravely writes with fitting eloquence on a subject with which he is passionately involved.

One suspects that the by-line of the book's title, *A history of the Indian sub-continent from c.7000 BC to AD 1200*, is somewhat tongue-in-cheek, for surely, no one has access to 9000 year-old records! Not a bit of it, for appearances deceive! – this 300-page book has discerningly trawled the more recent researches to arrive at a plausible recounting of the most ancient times. Mr Avari has taken a holistic view of

early history and presents a highly credible overview of this most diverse ancient land.

The book is durably bound in paperback; it has maps for orientation, charts for gauging the progress of the sub-continent's history; photographs to flesh out the text; its chief illustrative delight shows in the several delicate line drawings which convey a certain ruggedness which photographs cannot. Each chapter has its own end-notes. There are useful Glossaries and a skeletal Index for browsers. Another delight is the extensive Bibliography which the author has employed in his skilful construction of ancient history – in fact a thoroughly researched reconstruction.



An indispensable aid to further study is provided by the several “Extracts for review and reflection” – they zestfully add to the fact-packed text. A rather puzzling feature is the “Relevant questions for discussion” squeezed in between the Extracts and End-notes: it is the mark of the truly enthusiastic teacher, but leaves this reviewer blank.

One quickly realizes that Mr Avari is keen to present in this panorama the course of Indian societies, their formation, breakups, deconstructions, re-groupings, and ultimately their underlying strengths. The various cultures which coalesced along the north-south divides, and history, after all, being made by humankind – certainly, it was recorded by them in various ways. What therefore comes through in this comprehensive survey is the indomitable spirit and determinative will of the peoples of Great India, *Mahabharat*.

Pots and sherds do not speak, but literatures do. Here we have the nubs of long-descended scriptures which have shaped the civilizations of the sub-continent. Whilst it is known that Parsis have sporadically worked on some Indic literatures, it has not been known until this book’s appearance just how difficult it must have been for its author to weave his narrative into a “Bayeux Tapestry”-cum-Magna Carta type of framework. His treatment is bold and non-deferential.

Witness, as example, the Avari pitch for the “international bestseller” of the *Kama Sutra*: through his pen it becomes an “enchanted work” being “unfortunately much misrepresented and grossly maligned”. Why was this? Mr Avari: “(one) Sir Richard Burton, one of the reckless adventurers and philanderers of the nineteenth century. ... The *Kama Sutra* fell victim to Burton’s own infantile and orientalist fantasies” – how true!

What is the work then? – Amongst its other items, the section on “The lifestyle of the man-about-town” was for “a sophisticated rich young man in the Indian urban culture of the fifth century AD”! Short of a full paraphrase, Mr Avari’s summing-up suffices us.

This summing-up serves to indicate Mr Avari’s forthrightness and no-nonsense approach to a rich history, much manipulated and misunderstood. His is a consistent approach – one which well repays the author’s stance on a history that is mindlessly regarded as dusty, fusty, arid and flat.

When the Parsis first entered India, it became very evident that they were anxious to preserve a certain identity whilst easily becoming assimilated within the majority regional Indian culture. Came the Moghals and the Parsi persona expanded to fit into a broader value-set. With the advent of the British and their so-called *Raj*, Parsi perceptions knew no bounds – with one dangerous flaw: many embraced and quickly adapted to this foreign influence. With the departure of those commerce-minded colonialists, India, with its long-suppressed real history, soon bounded back onto the world stage, but through deeper appreciation of its own glorious past and its near-forgotten enduring values.

Mr Avari’s real achievement in producing this overdue history is in critically reevaluating the early period of historical crossroads marked, dare it be said, by Indo-European signposts. The irony of the first three chapters will not be lost on our Indo-Aryan compatriots, saying which, this reviewer bemoans the far too brief Afterword, for within it the lessons of the main book largely remain unremarked.

The author must now be seen as a rising star on the intellectual horizon, and if not on the wider Indian, then surely on the Parsi skyline. His book is one which should go beyond its mere reading, since it is a work which must be carefully studied for its contents, its direction, and most of all for its deep compassion, for it reflects a deep humanity and evident social conscience.

Mr Avari’s “*India: the Ancient Past*” is truly a winner for the future of history!

# The Great Kings of Persia

by farrokh vajifdar

## - A Trilogy -

[Introductory: Dispassionate treatment of Ancient History rarely exists in the light of modern researches and divergent scholarship. Prone to opposed perspectives, the history of Ancient Iran continues to rouse passions whose extreme outcomes are scarcely edifying. Here we present a weighing-up of such facts as are available through the endeavours of philologists, archaeologists, socio-economists, theologians, and even incautious historians. Such distortions and fictions as exist are minimalized.]

We give Persian names in the forms made popular over the ages by classical Greek authors. Thus, Cyrus for Kurush, Cambyses for Ka(m)bujiya, Darius for Darayava(h)ush, etc. All dates shown are BC.

Arguably the best-known historian of the ancient world is the Greek Herodotus (490–425). Himself a Persian subject, being from Halicarnassus in Ionia, he was in a strong position to record what he saw at first hand, and what at second hand he gleaned from his informants. He reports “a Persian saying that Darius was a tradesman, Cambyses a tyrant, and Cyrus a father ...” (III.89). The first three empire-builders from Ancient Iran were all Persians: Cyrus II (559–529); Cambyses II (529–522); and Darius I (522–486). In reverse order to Herodotus, we discuss aspects of their careers and character.]

### Cyrus II: the First Persian Emperor

#### **On October 29, 539, Cyrus**

entered Babylon as conqueror. Then the greatest city of the civilized world, Babylon submitted peacefully to his Persian army welcomed as liberators by those oppressed by the Neo-Babylonian ruler Nabonidus. Cyrus himself was recorded as lenient in his policies towards the populace, and tolerant of the traditional worship of the city’s chief god Marduk, the national god of Babylonia, by the priesthood.

Nabonidus – his name means “venerating Nabu” – who ruled Babylonia from 556–539 had supplanted Marduk with Sin, the moon god of Harran. He, however, spent most of his time in Syria, leaving his son Belshazzar (of the “Writing on the Wall” fame) as co-regent. A rather tangled theological situation arose, for Marduk, the supreme god, was the father of Nabu (= “speaking”) with his seat of worship at Borsippa (the twin city south-west of Babylon), who married and was invoked together with Tashmetum, its Akkadian queen-goddess, herself the step-daughter of Marduk: her name meant “the Lady who hearkens and favours”. The religious appeal of a husband who speaks

while his wife listens must to this day arouse deep envy within most marriages! Be that as it may, Nabonidus, unwisely having returned in 539 to Babylon to forestall the return of Marduk in the people’s religious affections, was captured by Cyrus’ general Gobryas and sent into exile in Carmania (Kerman) where he was well treated. Belshazzar died in Babylon of apoplexy, no thanks to the Jewish prophet Daniel’s foretelling of the city’s approaching doom.

The priests of Babylon had their favoured deity Marduk duly restored them by Cyrus. Their delight and recognition of Cyrus as legitimate ruler was attested in the cuneiform inscription on the Cyrus Cylinder: “He [Marduk] searched everywhere throughout the lands, until he found after his own heart a righteous prince whose hand he grasped; he pronounced the name of Cyrus, king of Anshan; he summoned him to the kingship of all the world ...” Marduk had Cyrus subjugate the Kurds and Medes and treat them with fairness and justice – “He [Marduk], great Lord, protector of his men, looked upon his [Cyrus’] pious works

*and stout heart ...*" The Great King had united the Medes for his campaign against the fabled king Croesus of Lydia – a shrewd politico-militaristic move!

Cyrus entered Babylon in peace – *"He [Marduk] commanded him to go towards Babylon ... going by his side as friend and companion ... he caused him [Cyrus] with his numerous army – vast as the waters of a river – to enter his city of Babylon without battle or struggle; he lifted Babylon from distress; he placed in his hands Nabonidus the king who had not venerated Marduk!"* Nabonidus was detested for his religious interference and his supplanting of Marduk with Sin, for the tutelary gods were jealously protective of their particular cities and peoples.

Cyrus had entered Babylon amidst great acclaim: *"The peoples of Babylon, of Sumer, of Akkad, all the grandees and the dignitaries bowed before him and kissed his feet; they rejoiced in his kingship, their faces lit up; he, Cyrus the lord who through favour of his [Marduk's] help, rescued them from dying, preserving each from destruction and distress; they all blessed him; they revered his name".*

But who was Cyrus? The Cylinder inscription continues, but now in the first person, where he lists his royal protocol: *"I am Cyrus, king of the world, great king, mighty king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and of Akkad, king of the four quarters of the world, the son of Cambyses, great king, king of Anshan, the grandson of Cyrus, great king, king of Anshan, great-grandson of Teispes, great king, king of Anshan, the eternal scion of royalty".* Persia is nowhere mentioned.



Of his righteousness and his religious posturing, Cyrus says: *"When I peacefully entered Babylon, and that in delight and rejoicing I established the seat of sovereignty in the palace of the princes, then Marduk, the great Lord won for me the large-heartedness of the Babylonians, whilst each day I assured his veneration. My vast armies entered Babylon peacefully; I preserved all of Sumer and Akkad from every danger ... my pious works rejoiced Marduk, the great Lord; he manifested towards me, Cyrus who venerates him, and towards Cambyses, my very son, his benevolent favour!"* It was perhaps this overt diplomatic gesture which ensured Cyrus, his co-regent elder son, and his conquering army the continued goodwill of the populace and the Marduk priesthood.

But what of Cyrus' own religion? Nowhere does he mention Ahura Mazda nor any of the Aryan pantheon. The composers of the Cylinder inscription were priests who served Marduk, the chief god of Babylon; the language was Akkadian, not Old Persian, and the first person narrative was dictated by Cyrus and his advisers. From the sparse lines dealing with his benevolent character and magnanimity, we can assert only that he was brought up with Mithraic beliefs. Mithra was the ancient Indo-Aryan solar divinity, the godly patron of sacral friendship and the preserver and enforcer of the solemn contract or covenant. His lotus symbol on Cyrus' tomb at Parsagada corresponds to that carved beneath the rayed figure of Mithra at Taq-i Bistan. The fact that Zarathushtra took up these particular Mithraic traits and incorporated them into the "person" of his sole deity Mazda should not lead us into assuming that Cyrus was a Mazda-worshipper. As indicated above, Cyrus' veneration of Marduk shows a shrewd diplomatic accession to Babylonian loyalty. Not surprising, therefore, is the total absence of Ahura Mazda, Mithra, and indeed Zarathushtra on the Cyrus Cylinder. The Great King was interested in promoting his regal antecedents, his tolerance and goodwill towards the religious sentiments of his conquered peoples. He had restored the

images of the different cities' gods from their safekeeping in Babylon to their original shrines which Nabonidus had despoiled.

There is a further connexion between the Cyrus Cylinder and the vanquished Nabonidus. This last Semitic Babylonian king had in fact been also a keen archaeologist and builder and restorer of temples. His ruling passion was the *discovery of foundation-cylinders of the ancient sanctuaries* and their restoration (at the expense of the overtaxed citizenry). From these he had painstakingly compiled ancient king-lists, and it is thanks to him and his scholarly endeavours that much of Mesopotamian history has been clarified for modern researches.

It is therefore precisely in the light of those similar earlier cylinders that we are able to reaffirm that this antique object – the famous Cyrus Cylinder – recently again the subject of restitution and refutation, is in fact a building foundation record, and *not a Human Rights Charter* – and not by any assessment the first of its kind! Besides, it is composed in the Babylonian, and not the Iranian tradition.

Cyrus II, truly “the Great”, exhibited his genuinely humanitarian character from which it could be averred *he was the first Humanist*: Zarathushtra would have been thrilled to know that the Mithraic aspect of Ahura Mazda was thus realized!

The grandiloquent declarations in the *Tanakh* (“Old Testament” to us Gentiles!) by Jewish authorities likewise exalted Cyrus, a non-Jew – the only one to be thus honoured! – as “*the anointed of the Lord whose right hand He has grasped*” (Deutero-Isaiah, 45.1) and of whom “*I, the Lord, say of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd; he shall fulfil all My purpose’ ...*” (44.28). The Judaic prophetic book continues, “*It was I who roused him [Cyrus] for victory, and who level all roads for him. He shall rebuild My city and let My exiled people go Without price and without payment – said the Lord of Hosts [Jehovah/Yahweh]*” (45.13).

Reference here is to Jerusalem where any exilic Jew whose wish for voluntary repatriation there was to be honoured; also to the rebuilding of the Temple and restitution of its sacred vessels. Details of Cyrus’ decree are to be read in the Hebrew version in Ezra 1.1-11; the Aramaic redaction is in Ezra 6.1-5. It is noteworthy that under Cyrus’ successors, the several further needs of the Jews with regard to the city of Jerusalem and its Temple were satisfied through consultation with Cyrus’ original decrees – so steadfast were the early Achaemenid kings to the earlier undertakings by our Mithraic first emperor. The very last book of the *Kethuvim* series, II Chronicles, ends with a recollection of the illustrious memory of this great and noble Persian monarch:

*“Thus said King Cyrus of Persia: The Lord God of Heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and has charged me with building Him a House in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Any one of you of all His people, the Lord his God be with him and let him go up”. (36.23).*

However much it may be regretted that Joseph-Arthur, Comte de Gobineau, the 19th century ethnologist, had advanced his views on racial determinism through his exaltation of the Aryans as the summit of civilization, one has to reiterate his assessment of Cyrus II, “the Great”, thus: “*There was never his equal on earth .... he was in effect a Christ, a man predestined over all others*”.

By way of conclusion, one uncharacteristic of our approach, we delineate this great, noble, and magnanimous monarch, Cyrus II, through a series of negatives: Cyrus/Kurush was *not* his proper name – it was his dynastic or throne name. Cyrus II was *neither* Mazdayasnian *nor* Zoroastrian – he was avowedly a Mithraist, which in every way enhances his steadfastly noble character.

Cyrus II was *not* the real founder of the Achaemenid dynasty – on his royal protocol he harks back to the great king of Anshan,



Teispes (Old Persian Chishpish). Achaemenes (Hakhamanish), as eponymous dynastic ancestor is not mentioned by him; that was left to Darius I (522-486) to establish on his monumental rock inscription at Behistun.

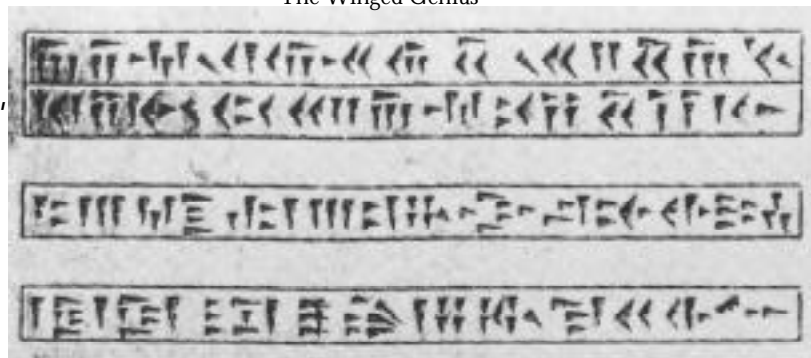
[The trilingual inscription, now vanished, which surmounted the crowned figure of the winged genius of Palace R at Parsagada, the heartland of Imperial Persia, was recorded as declaring, *"I am Cyrus the King, the Achaemenid"*. That it was the work of Darius I, and not Cyrus II, is no longer doubted for reasons which will appear in a following article on the first Mazda-worshipping emperor]



Cambyses II will follow in the next issue, Hamazor Issue 1/2009.



The Winged Genius



A likeness of Cyrus II's vanished inscription which surmounted the Winged Genius, (two lines in Old Persian plus a line each for Elamite and Akkadian/Babylonian).



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

## Origin of the words 'Tower of Silence'

The term "Tower of Silence", used in English for "DOKHMA" was first used by one Mr Robert Xavier Murphy, of the Bombay Gazette Press, in 1932. When Mr Framji Cowasji built one Dokhma in Bombay, he asked Mr Murphy to print cards in English as a general invitation to Europeans and other non-Zoroastrians to come and see the round building he had built for the disposal of the dead, of his community.

It was for this reason that Mr Murphy coined the words "Tower of Silence". Mr Murphy was an Oriental scholar, and was well versed in Oriental literature, specially Persian. In Persian the word "KHAMUSH" is for silence. This word KHAMUSH is also figuratively used for the 'dead', and there are hundreds of examples of its use in Persian literature. As to the word 'Tower', it is natural that the structure being round, the word 'tower' at once struck Mr Murphy as an appropriate word. So, it seems that the Persian word KHAMUSH meaning SILENCE as well as the DEAD, suggested to Mr Murphy the phrase "TOWER OF SILENCE".

The above is extracted from Informal Religious Meetings Newsletter  
18th September - 16th October 1989.

The origins of the use of the words "Tower Of Silence" by Shams-Ul-Ulama Dr Sir Ervad Jivanji Jamshedji Modi (1854-1933) (Asiatic Papers III).

## A Gentleman, Businessman, & Patriot

**Minocheher – Minoo, to everybody – Bhandara** was born on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1938.

He has been considered akin to those three great Parsi Indian legislators who enjoyed a seat in the House of Commons in Westminster, and who did their best for their country. These three were Dadabhai Naoroji (a Liberal), Sir Muncherjee Bhowmallee (a Tory) and Sir Shapurjee Saklatwalla (a communist) who functioned in the early 1900's.

When the small but lordly Saklatwalla was once challenged as to his credentials as a 'communist', yet leaning on capitalistic tendencies, he is known to have quipped '... In order to survive as a communist, I have to be a capitalist.' Minoo Bhandara was that sort of a capitalist – in all its positive aspects; other than that, he was a staunch liberal and secular activist, even if this activism was difficult to reconcile with his role of the Minister of Minority Affairs during the rule of Zia-ul-Haq who himself was renowned for his stern and unbending religiosity. This situation speaks volumes about Bhandara's kindly attitude and diplomatic prowess in the wake of the Taliban regime and the thriving survival of his brewery venture.

Dr Naseer Akhter, a colleague of Minoo Bhandara at Murree Brewery Co. Ltd. mentions that Minoo 'was untiring in his efforts to have the relevant portions of the Quaid's address incorporated in the constitution of Pakistan as well as in the school curricula of Pakistani students.' A part of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah's oft repeated famous speech underscoring secularism, on 11 August 1947, included the words: 'you are free to go your temples, ... your mosques or to any other place of worship ... you may belong to any religion ... that has nothing to do with the business of the State ...'



Like Jinnah, Bhandara had adopted as his guiding principle 'that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State.'

As a relentless chase towards achieving this end, Ardeshtir Cowasjee – a renowned columnist of Karachi – adds that in April 2007, Bhandara, in 'an effort to bolster the law and order situation, inserted a notice in the *Dawn*', Pakistan's leading newspaper, announcing that a Constitutional (Amendment) Bill had been moved in the National Assembly which purported to include Jinnah's famous speech, or its salient features, as a substantive part of Article 2 of the Constitution. He went on in his zeal to request readers to find further details on the given website, and asked them to click their support, or even email it at the given address. Cowasjee regrets that no substantial support was forthcoming either in the assembly or even from literate individuals.

Earlier in 2002, again trying to instill sense in the Musharraf government, he pleaded in the assembly to infuse the stuff of the President's 'enlightened moderation' into the national mindset. Later in 2006, referring to the elusive 'ideology of Pakistan', he coerced the government by moving a private bill, to let him know what exactly was this ideology, and pointedly

## Profile

- Graduate of Punjab University
- Graduate of Harley College of Commerce
- Went to Oxford to do PPE at Brasenose, but was there only for a year
- Joined the family business of Murree Brewery in 1958
- Became Chief Executive of Murree Brewery in 1961
- Went to US for an advanced course in business management at Harvard School of Business in 1980
- Became member of the Majlis-e-Shoora in 1981. Appointed as advisor to the President (Zia ul Haq) on minority affairs
- Elected to the National Assembly in 1985 and 2002

observed that it was not reflected in the Objectives Resolution of the constitution. Cowasjee reports that whereas Bhandara had made his point, the issue was never debated because of its vagueness and absence of unanimity in its understanding or explanation.

This true patriot was also an astute businessman, yet a man of principles, for whenever a matter of principle was involved, no matter how he was going to suffer for it, he would take on even his high and mighty adversary with a tenacious hold without a thought for the consequences. His colleague at Murree Brewery asserts that Minoo was a true workaholic; this term, even as a pun, has been most appropriately attached to him. An article on his latest venture, carried by *Spiegel Online*, is entitled *A Touch of Scotland in Dry Pakistan*, and is all about *Distilling Muslim World's First 20 year-old Whisky*.

Khushwant Singh – one of India's leading journalists – asserts that Minoo Bhandara, who had the monopoly of brewing beer and distilling whisky, was amongst the richest who made his fortune legally. However, he was victimized during Benazir Bhutto's government when his business suffered a great loss, which he bravely bore with a smile and refused to talk at length about it.

Bhandara has been labeled as a proud Pakistani, and who was one of the champions of peace and friendship between Pakistan and India. For this role, Singh has called him the 'true bridge builder between the two nations'. With his going, that bridge has fallen. 'Every time Minoo came to India, it was to attend a conference or seminar on Indo-Pak relations.' He put the Pakistanis' point of view to Indian audiences, and to Pakistani readers of journals, he gave the Indian reactions.

As a parliamentarian, he was forthright and outspoken even to the extent of irking or embarrassing his own party men. This was probably the reason why during the last elections of the country, his party's inner circle distanced him and refused to give him a party ticket. He did not 'allow this rejection

to sour his hearty spirit and love of life.' He remained loyal only to his country and his beliefs. Singh believes that although Bhandara was a politician for a good part of his life, his main interest was in literature. He says Minoo would patiently answer all the questions fired at him about political affairs in Pakistan, and then guide him smoothly to discuss 'books, novels, anthologies of poetry or whatever.' They would have animated – but never heated – arguments over Singh's translations of Ghalib's or Faiz's poetry, and Singh acknowledges that he conceded to Bhandara's suggestions.

As a writer, says Akhter 'the sharp edge of his (Minoo's) incisively analytical mind was lucidly and brilliantly reflected in his weekly newspaper columns.' During his studies in UK, where he came under the influence of Isaiah Berlin, Minoo's lifelong admiration for Berlin drove him to write a most moving and inspiring obituary. In and outside Pakistan, he was 'a distinguished columnist who compelled the attraction of readers' even if they did not agree with his views. He also was an avid reader; 'his collection of books ranged from Marx to Herzen to Anna Akhmatova, and much more.'

To whet his adventurous appetite, Akhter writes about the ancient Silk Route as being 'one of the many romances of Minoo Bhandara.' His last trip to China found himself exploring the mysteries of the 'boundless space' – the literal meaning of – Taklamakan desert in Sinkiang. In this, Minoo reveled in the consciousness of his following in the footsteps of Sven Hedin and others. Also, like many of his predecessors, he met with a traffic accident near Khotan town, causing him multiple fractures. He was known to have uttered to his friends from the hospital bed, 'Luckily, my soft top end escaped injury.' 'After undergoing the harrowing experience of being transported in a donkey cart,' wrote Akhter, 'he ultimately landed in the People's Hospital in Urumchi where initial treatment was carried out.'

Upon reaching Rawalpindi, Minoo was taken to the CMH. Amongst the visitors

were the then President of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf and his wife.

Minoo Bhandara died on 15th June 2008 at the Shifa hospital to which he had been transferred, where unfortunately his lucky escape stood him in no stead.

No matter what had transpired in and out of the parliament between Minoo and Musharraf, the leader had the good sense to show that he bore no grudges for his own failings in dealing with Minoo's counsels: he and his wife were again present to pay their last respects to Minoo – their neighbour and friend.

Minoo's death brought to the forefront, his vitality and the kindly aspect of his dealings with others. Anjum Niaz – a columnist from Islamabad – has expressed that 'he had so much life in him, and to die with music still playing in his soul, was sad.' She had found him 'always so affectionate, so warm, so informal and yet when you read his copious columns ... he sounded like a wise old man.' She laments that 'with his death, a piece of oral history has gone.' She knew Minoo's house in Rawalpindi 'held memories of centuries past ... But he didn't live to tell the tale.'

Of his renowned kid sister, Bapsi Sidhwa – who herself is too distraught to have written anything at length about her adored brother at this stage, Anjum conveys that Minoo loved her and was always proud of her achievements. Anjum gleaned out of Bapsi that 'his enduring quality was to help anyone whosoever asked, from the humblest to the highest; Minoo radiated vigour and power in the face of any obstacle that confronted him. I can never be like him.'



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

## Dina McIntyre's visit to Perth, Australia

Zenobia Pavri reports -

### ZAWA, and its chairperson

Jehangir Mehta played a key role in inviting Dina McIntyre to Australia. Dina, is an eminent Zoroastrian scholar who has delved deep into our religion, but especially in her study of the Gathas, the very essence of Zarathushtra's teachings.

Dina was invited to give a talk for the Krishna Somers Foundation, at Murdoch University on Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> Sept. It was an honour to have Mr Krishna Somers



Dina - photograph courtesy Behram Cooper

himself at the Brian Hill lecture theatre where Dina spoke on 'Zarathushtra's Puzzles'. She presented slides to clarify her step-by-step presentation emphasising 'Truth for Truth's' sake, resulting in many questions being put to Dina. She would have been happy to answer many more, but time ran out as organisers urged attendees to partake in the spread of refreshments. This presented further opportunity for all to get to know each other and Dina.

Jason Braunstein of Alternative Philosophies group in Kardinya threw his home open to Dina and all those interested in her next talk, 'The Notion of Love in the Gathas'. This talk, which was gratis on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September, was attended by ZAWA members, students and tutors from the School of Philosophy in Perth and the group at Jason Braunstein's

 pl turn to p60

## Zane Dalal - musician and conductor

Ashutosh Khandekar, a distinguished opera critic and chief editor of the international magazine, Opera Now, based in London, interviewed Zane Dalal, for On Stage, December 2007. Hamazor, with permission, brings to a wider forum an insight of this young musician's aspirations.

**Ashutosh Khandekar:** An important part of your brief in Mumbai is to help audiences engage with Western classical music and to generate enthusiasm for the Symphony Orchestra of India and its work. How do you go about this?

**Zane Dalal:** Well of course the start and end of it all has to be the quality of music making – our concerts must be excellent, exciting and engaging. But you've also got to open doors for audiences, give them a way into the music. I've been presenting a series of pre-concert lectures ahead of our SOI programmes which we plan to continue in our upcoming season in February. The style is generally quite anecdotal and my aim is to get audiences involved and interested in what they are about to hear. Even if the piece is familiar to you, it's good to try to renew the vigour with which you listen to the music and hear it with new ears.

**AK:** Is the public's unfamiliarity with the form a problem when you are introducing Western classical music to audiences in Mumbai?

**ZD:** One of the things that astonished me was how erudite and knowledgeable audiences in Mumbai are. They know when something is good or bad, so standards have

to be very high. I was surprised to learn that Bombay has had an extremely rich tradition of Western music concerts from the 1930s onwards. As well as a stream of world-class visitors, there were good home-grown organizations such as the Bombay Madrigal Singers, The Time and Talents Club, the Bombay Chamber Orchestra and more recently the Mehli Mehta Music Foundation – which foster an enthusiasm for Western classical music. People remember this illustrious past, and that's what I'm often up against when it comes to the response I get to our concerts. There's still plenty of the audience that has been around since those

early days, and have no problem coming up to us and saying "it wasn't as good as Furtwangler!" I enjoy that challenge. It's not only a challenge it's a colossal undertaking to put into place a fully professional symphonic organization. It absolutely would not be possible without the visionary lead the NCPA and its enlightened supporters have taken, complemented by our varied world class facilities and the management's extensive contacts with the international world of music. Simply put, this hasn't ever been done before in India and everything is in place for a very bright future.

**AK:** You're talking principally here of an



older demographic, an audience for classical music that has sophisticated tastes that have developed over decades. What about newcomers and younger audiences?

**ZD:** this is something very close to my heart, and that's why concerts for children and young people should be a feature of every SOI season. Our performance of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, under the baton of our Music Director Marat Bisengaliev, in the most recent SOI series was extremely successful. We expanded on the animal theme by setting up a "petting zoo for instruments" in the foyer of the concert hall, where the children gathered around the musicians in groups of about thirty, for a 'close-up' look at the instruments and how they were played. We had around 600 kids at the concert – some came in school parties and a lot came with their parents.

What we want to do is give children an introduction to music that they will never forget, and that means making a real occasion of every concert. When children come to the NCPA, hear a great concert, engage in a learning experience and spend real quality time with their family, then they're taking away a very positive, exciting and memorable experience which I hope will make them want to come back for more.

**AK:** When is the right age to start introducing children to classical music concerts?

**ZD:** If you take a child between the ages of eight and sixteen, in most

instances, that child will be very open and responsive to all sorts of music. At that age, kids are making their own decisions about life, but they are also looking for a sense of direction. It would be all too easy for us to dismiss the audience of the future, because of their preoccupation with new technology or their seemingly short attention span, or the idea that Western classical music is too difficult for them or not relevant. Look at the success of something like *Harry Potter* in India – it's not part of this culture, but it taps into children's fantasies and imagination. If we could tap the same spirit of adventure with music, we'd be away. And this is India after all – the sky's the limit when it comes to fantasy and imagination.

**AK:** And what about cultivating young Indian musicians to build up the orchestra in the future?

**ZD:** The NCPA has already established its own training centre, - with a cadre of international teachers – which will provide music teaching across the board, covering Western traditions of history, music appreciation, instrumental and orchestral playing etc. Again, getting people interested in that all-important age range, eight to sixteen, is the key. If a child seems to be showing some musical aptitude, then parents have to evaluate how learning an

instrument would fit into the child's life, and

On 13 September, 2008, Zane Dalal opened the season of the Celebrity Concert and made his professional debut conducting a programme from compositions by Brahms, Mozart and Mendelssohn at the Jamshed Bhabha Theatre. Born and raised in England, Dalal has spent the better part of the last 18 months in Mumbai, as assistant conductor of the Symphony Orchestra of India. Many aspects during his youth helped to influence Zane his love of music: at prep school and later at Charter House, where he was head of choir; the Organ scholarship that took him to Oriel College, Oxford (where he was choirmaster and church organist). "Early on," he says, "as I played organ and piano, and sang in choirs, I learned the group effect of music." His adult life has been spent in the US, where he continued his education in music, conducted symphony orchestras in several US cities and Jerusalem.

Now, after years of conducting experience, Dalal says, "A player in the orchestra must look at you when he feels comfortable, not because you insist so. And when they look at you, you must be clear and apparent in your beat so that they must know what they have played, are playing, and will play."

What does music mean to Zane? "I cannot answer that." He says music is all that there is. But the answer to how music affects him is unequivocal: "Music lifts my spirit. With music, I know that I am never alone." - Ed

how dedicated he or she would be to practicing. It may just be a hobby and that's that; but then you might feel instinctively that a child is ready to go further. As a parent, it's good to be supportive, but you can't force anything: the individual impulse to develop as a musician has to come from the child – it's a very self-motivated profession.

What has been fascinating for me to observe is how playing in the SOI has already completely changed our young Indian musicians' sense of themselves. They've now made the great switch from thinking about not how they are playing, but why there are playing and what they have to contribute. Once you start to understand your individual role in an orchestra, and how important it is, that spurs on personal practice and musical development.

**AK:** The NCPA occupies a very strategic position in South Mumbai, but the city is huge and not always easy to travel around. Is accessibility a problem for audiences here?

**ZD:** We want to bring the face of NCPA to north and south Mumbai, and beyond, so if audiences can't for some reason get to the NCPA, we want to take music to them, and that's something that is definitely going to happen. We're also implementing plans for some real grass-roots outreach. For example, I'm aiming to take a quartet of players to schools where many of the kids will never have even seen a real musical instrument before.

**AK:** How much can the Symphony Orchestra of India really become a national force in India?

**ZD:** If the NCPA's role is to reflect all the stands of India's national culture, then the SOI will take its place as part of the fabric of the development of culture in India as a whole. In future, we will be asserting our national credentials by organizing exchanges with musical organizations in other cities, Bangalore, Kolkata, Delhi – even Kodaikanal, where there is a surprisingly active musical life.

Let me answer your question another way, from my own personal experience of working with the orchestra. Earlier this year, the SOI became the first symphony orchestra in living memory to appear in Bangalore. I conducted part of a



programme that began with an orchestral arrangement of the National Anthem, and the response from the audience was just amazing. The very fact of hearing a Western orchestra playing *Jana Gana Mana* changed the atmosphere in the concert hall, because it immediately broke down all the barriers in people's minds of where Western

music fits into the Indian cultural spectrum. Here was a Western art form engaging movingly and meaningfully with something that's absolutely fundamental to the Indian consciousness.

**AK:** Will you be encouraging more cross-fertilisation between Indian and Western musical traditions?

**ZD:** On the whole, fusion music doesn't work in my opinion. It dilutes both traditions rather than uniting them, and the result is that audiences from both sides are put off. On the other hand, I think there is a more profound exchange to be had between Indian and Western musical cultures. I'd love to moderate a seminar where Indian and Western musicians play around with some of the basic tenets of musical form and see how they apply to their different musical traditions – notions such as keys, tonalities and rhythms: what they do and don't share. That sort of interplay of ideas interests me more than simply putting two different ingredients into a single pot and mixing them up a bit in the hope that the result might taste okay.

**AK:** And what about the wider international significance of the orchestra?

**ZD:** Of course, the SOI will have an ambassadorial role as a major professional artistic body, with a growing number of Indian musicians among its ranks; and it will be an Indian-based entity that hosts and collaborates with the cream of international talent. More than that, there are so many examples around the world now of how music and culture can transcend social and political divisions and heal rifts between people. Look at the work of Daniel Barenboim and his multicultural orchestra of young Arabs and Israelis spreading, literally and metaphorically, a message of harmony. Look at Gustavo Dudamel and how he has used music to give the poorest street children in Venezuela a new sense of hope. Only the other day, the papers carried an extraordinary story of an orchestra in Iraq, where the players are risking their lives by meeting together to play classical music in

order to find some solace and meaning among the chaos and destruction there.

So my dream is to perform with the SOI across borders – perhaps organise a concert symbolising peace. As musicians we have responsibilities to use our gifts well. Music is a force for the good, and an orchestra holds all sorts of possibilities for bringing about small miracles in society. We should now bring these possibilities to fruition here in India.



Saturday, 13 September 2008 at 7pm  
Janshed Bhabha Theatre

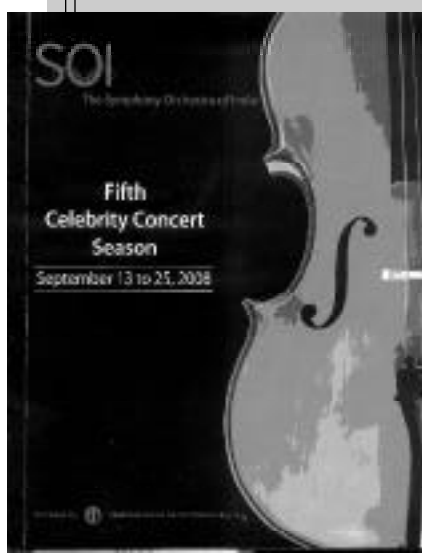
Malcolm Messiter, oboe  
Zane Dalal, conductor

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809 – 1847) Overture. 'The Hebrides' ('Fingal's Cave'). Op.26

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791) Oboe Concerto K.314  
1 Allegro aperto  
11 Adagio non troppo  
111 Rondo: Allegretto

Interval

Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897) Symphony No. 1 in C minor Op.68  
1 Un poco sostenuto – Allegro – meno Allegro  
11 Andante sostenuto  
111 Un poco Allegretto e grazioso  
1V Adagio – Allegro non troppo ma con brio





Continued from p 55

Alternative Philosophies. This talk by Dina was particularly well-received by one and all, some of whom were very interested in asking questions to learn more about the religion and its underlying message.

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September, at Darius & Zenobia Pavri's home, Dina presented her talk on 'The Paradox of the Individual & the Community' and the 'Relevance of the Gathas to Life today'. This absorbing topic was followed by a vigorous question and answer session by not just adults, but our intelligent and deeply concerned younger generation of Zoroastrians who put forward their arguments and concerns. Dina was open and forthcoming in answering each of their queries with relevant examples for clarification. Throughout her talks she quoted chapter and verse from the Gathas backing up her arguments, but emphasizing at every turn that the opinions solicited, were her own personal ones and not to be confused with Zarathushtra's original Gathic teachings. At night, a dinner was hosted by Villie & Cyrus Mistry for Dina, and the ZAWA committee members.

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September, Dina once again presented her talks for ZAWA members at the AAA Hall in Perth. Being an all-day function attendees had come prepared with an amazing range of questions.

Topics included 'Seven Gems from the Later Texts', 'Prayers in the Gathas', 'Buried Treasures in Zoroastrian Stories', and snippets from several topics, generating food for thought. She validated the fact that in our religion men and women are treated as equals. Dina also demonstrated an old Zoroastrian Iranian custom of greeting with clasped hands with the words, '*Hamazor Hama Asho Bed*' which was then enthusiastically practised by one and all.

When asked to define our beautiful and ancient religion in a nutshell, Dina's definition was, 'Using our hearts and our minds with good thoughts, words and deeds we search for and choose Truth for Truth's sake'.

Kuky & Homee Wadia held a dinner for Dina and ZAWA committee members at their home on 16<sup>th</sup> September, her last day in Perth.

Thus, a week of inspiring and enlightening talks by a wise, gentle and knowledgeable Zoroastrian concluded with Dina being presented a token gift and appreciation by the ZAWA committee on behalf of its members.



**Dina McIntyre has generously given a CD of all her talks for ZAWA members whosoever may be interested.**



ZAWA committee with Dina, second from right. Below: Dina with Krishna Somers



# Our Agiaries make the Heritage List

Labonita Ghosh reports in the Daily News & Analysis of 24 August, 2008

**47 Parsi fire temples** have finally made it to the heritage list.

The Maneckjee Navrojee Sett agiary in Fort is unlike a typical Parsi fire temple. Every inch of it is covered with ornate pillars, capitals and cornices decorated with Assyrian, Greek and Persepolitan symbols. It now turns out the showiness may have been deliberate. Researchers compiling a compendium of agiaries in Mumbai feel the 275-year-old fire temple was trying to make an impression. "Surrounded by thriving Hindu, Bohra and European merchants, the agiary's Parsi patrons wanted to show they were prosperous too," says conservation architect Pankaj Joshi, who led the 2001 study.

Such a rich architectural entity might have been lost if the Sett agiary — along with 46 others in Mumbai — had not been put on the state Heritage Commission's list of protected structures earlier this month. "The agiaries represent a layer of the city that spans architectural styles over almost 300 years [the oldest, the Banaji Limji, also in Fort, was consecrated in 1709]," says Joshi. Many of them fit more than one category of heritage classification: They have 'biographical' value, too, through association with some well-known Parsi family trusts.

Of the 50-odd fire temples that serve Mumbai's 40,000-strong Parsi community, many have a deep sociological significance. The Banaji Limji agiary was constructed at a time fraught with tussles for supremacy between the Indian and European companies. "There were very few Parsi merchants then and those who lived here, needed shelter in case trouble broke out," says Joshi. "It was a given that they would rush to the fortress-like Banaji Limji with their families in such circumstances." The art deco-ish Boyce Dhunapatel in Tardeo

provides conservation lessons of a different kind. The 68-year-old fire temple has never seen electricity, because caretakers believed electro-magnetic waves would pollute the holy fire.



Pillar at Maneckjee Navrojee Sett agiary

Photographs courtesy Noshir Patel, London, UK



Wadiaji's Atash Behram, Marine Lines, Mumbai

# World Zoroastrian Congress Awards - 2009 Call for Nominations

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# The World Zoroastrian Organisation

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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 confirm that I am (Tick as appropriate):

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

“... instruct through good thinking

(the course) of my direction, in order to  
be the charioteer of my will and my tongue.”

yasna 50.6

*Insler translation*

