

# HAMAZOR

1  
Issue 2009



“... the more important point is that Zarathustra was more truthful than any other thinker.

In his teaching alone do we meet with truthfulness upheld to the highest virtue – ie. the reverse of the cowardice of the “idealist” who flies from reality. Zarathustra had more courage in his body than any other thinker before or after him. To tell the truth and to aim **straight**: that is the first Persian virtue. Am I understood? The overcoming of morality through itself – through his opposite – **through me** – that is what the name Zarathustra means in my mouth.”

*Friedrich  
Nietzsche,  
in a letter to  
his sister,  
Elizabeth  
Forster  
Nietzsche,  
Weimar,  
December  
1905*

*Translated by  
Ambassador  
Jamsheed  
Marker from  
German*





# Contents

04	WZO's Calendar of Events for 2009
05	WZO's Gala dinner-dance
06	SSZ Conference in Chicago - report, keki bhote
09	Erach & Roshan Sadri Foundation's ongoing assistance
11	Women's Friendly Space
15	WZO (India) honours Dadi Engineer
18	Announcements
19	A History of Zoroastrians in Modern Japan - takeshi aoki
22	Cambyes II - farrokh vajifdar
26	An American Zoroastrian in Islamic Iran - deena guzder
29	Triumph over Adversity - shahin bekhradnia
31	Homi Patel, CEO of Hartmarx Corp.
32	Mumbai 26/11 - soonu engineer
36	The Mama School celebrates 90 years of excellence
40	Parsi Naturopath receives honours
43	Farsi article - jamshed pishdadi
44	"The Judging of Conversion ..." - magdalena rustomji
46	Sir JJ Memorial Museum - report, marzban giara
49	Friedrich Nietzsche, in a letter - trans., Jamsheed Marker
50	First Zoroastrian Captain of Airbus A380 - behramjee ghadially
53	"My Bombay Kitchen" - review, jubin mama
57	WZCC Global AGM & CTR at Houston
59	Inside the Young Parsi Mind
60	Zoroastrians Achieve
63	Membership Form with details



Dadi Engineer receiving the Lifetime Achievements Award from WZO (India) & right: Award of Appreciation from WZO International Board, presented by Darayus Motivala. See p16.



## COVER

Part of a letter written by Friedrich Nietzsche to his sister

## PHOTOGRAPHS

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

## WZO WEBSITE

[www.w-z-o.org](http://www.w-z-o.org)

## International Board Members



### London, England

**Mr Sam H  
Bhiwandiwalla**

Chairman  
E-mail:  
[sam@bhiwandi.demon.co.uk](mailto:sam@bhiwandi.demon.co.uk)

**Mr Darayus S Motivala**

President  
E-mail:  
[darayus@motivala.me.uk](mailto:darayus@motivala.me.uk)

**Mr Dinyar Modi**

Hon Secretary  
E-mail: [djm@djmodi.com](mailto:djm@djmodi.com)

**Mrs Khurshid B  
Kapadia**

Membership Secretary  
E-mail:  
[khurshid.kapadia@mottmac.com](mailto:khurshid.kapadia@mottmac.com)

**Dr Sam Kerr**

Unit 5, 'Agincourt'  
10 Larkin Street\ Roseville  
New South Wales, 2069  
Australia

**Er Jehan Bagli**

Vice President  
Mississauga, Canada  
E-mail: [jbagli@rogers.com](mailto:jbagli@rogers.com)

**Mr Marzi Byramjee**

Oakbillie, Canada  
E-mail:  
[marzi@regalpresscanada.com](mailto:marzi@regalpresscanada.com)

**Mr Dadi B Engineer**

President, WZO India  
Mumbai, India  
E-mail:  
[dbengineer@crawfordbayley.com](mailto:dbengineer@crawfordbayley.com)

**Mr Dadi E Mistry**

New Delhi, India  
E-mail:  
[mistry@del2.vsnl.net.in](mailto:mistry@del2.vsnl.net.in)

**Mr Rustom Yeganegi**

233 Saadi Avenue  
Tehran, Iran

**Mr Darius Mistry**

Auckland  
New Zealand  
E-mail: [darius.mistry@imagnetext.co.nz](mailto:darius.mistry@imagnetext.co.nz)

**Mrs Toxy Cowasjee**

Karachi, Pakistan  
E-mail:  
[toxy39@attglobal.net](mailto:toxy39@attglobal.net)

**Mr Russi Ghadiali**

Singapore  
E-mail:  
[RGHADIA1@irf.com](mailto:RGHADIA1@irf.com)

**Mr Keki Bhote**

President, US Chapter  
Illinois, USA  
E-mail:  
[krbhote@sbcglobal.net](mailto:krbhote@sbcglobal.net)

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

## Volume LI - Issue 1 | 2009

**Printed by:**

A A Graphics  
1721/31 LAC No 2  
Karachi 75420  
Pakistan

**Funded by:**

World Zarathushtrian Trust Fund

**Cover design by:**

Tannaz Minwalla  
Karachi, Pakistan

**Design & layout by:**

Toxy Cowasjee  
Karachi, Pakistan

## From the Editor

Having had a lapse of five months since the last issue of Hamazor was published, due to monetary constraints, we return with what is currently happening in the Zoroastrian community and articles written by various individuals.

As most of us are aware the hotly contested BPP elections came in with a majority of votes for Arnavaz Mistry, the popular social worker, followed by Dinshaw Mehta who is the new BPP Chairman, Jimmy Mistry, Khojeste Mistree, Yazdi Desai, Rustom Tirandaz who expired a few weeks ago, and Noshir Dadrawala. [in order of votes received]. No sooner the new trustees took office, there was altercation in the 'house' primarily over the flat allotments to 104 applicants and now a further jeopardy of facing fresh elections in less than 100 days in office. 68-year-old Rustom Tirandaz's untimely death on 27 January of this year, has once again put all ensuing matters on hold. One can only hope the next election which is to be in early April, will be held with decorum and dignity. It is now time the BPP begin to address long standing issues.



Hamazor has not ventured to report on any of the present BPP problems in this issue and leave it in the capable hands of the Mumbai Zoroastrian publications. The brief information above is just to keep our readers abreast.

As time draws near to the forthcoming World Zoroastrian Congress at Dubai, and our community there, are polishing up the final stages, emails of protest were flying around for a change of venue. One wonders why for every step of the way, there is always some protest or rancour shown in this miniscule community of ours, instead of worrying about larger issues glaring us in the face. Thankfully the protagonists have quieted down after the sensible advice given by some 'leaders'.

Even though it is rather late to empathize with the Mumbaikers on the terrible tragedy their city faced in November, our thoughts were with each of them and sympathies go to the families for their loss in this senseless killing.

With the coming of Nou Rouz, let us hope for a better year, a more peaceful life for all mankind and stability in this world of ours.

*Toxy Cowasjee*

1 March 2009

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

## *WZO - UK Calendar of Events for 2009*

Saturday 14th March 2009  
dinner 7:00pm for 7:45pm

Nowruz Dinner / Dance with a Persian/ Parsi theme.

A night of festive music and belly dance by Shebbie.

Thursday 30th April  
commences 6:00 pm

The 12<sup>th</sup> Dasturji Dr Kutar Memorial Lecture  
“The Zoroastrian Migration to India - The Archaeological Evidence” presented by Rukshana Nanji.

Saturday 23rd May

Violin Recital. We will be entertained by the young violinist, Rustom Pomeroy. (Further details to be advised later)

Sunday 7th June  
registration at 10:00 am

Seminar on Zoroastrian History, Religion and Culture.

A potential theme for this year is to challenge/examine commonly held perceptions about our religion.

Saturday 29th August  
dinner 7:00pm for 7:45pm

Shahenshahi Navroze Dinner / Dance  
(Details to be advised at a later date)

Sunday 27th September  
4:00pm to 6:00pm

Annual General Meeting  
(Details will be sent with the Annual Report)

Saturday 21st November  
commences 7:00 pm

Gala Dinner Dance in aid of the WZO Gujarat Fund.  
(Great evening entertainment at the Gatwick Hilton Hotel. Further details will follow at a later date)





## WZO's Annual Gala Dinner-Dance - 22 November 2008

London's ever darkening evenings, rainy days and chill winds usher in each November, but this year we faced the added gloom of a financial crisis which had gripped millions of lives around the world. The oft repeated word "prudence" by our political masters was but a myth, the world seemed to have gone mad with incomprehensible banking losses and major businesses collapsing like ten pins. This was hardly a happy scenario for an evening of charitable giving when ones own finances could be looking precarious.

But as they say, every cloud has a silver lining and this shone through as the evening progressed. With ladies in their stunning outfits and their men proudly escorting them, the evening commenced with fine wines and excellent cuisine. This was followed by a highly entertaining cabaret from compere, Barry Williams, and two brilliant magicians, Mark Williams and David Jones, interspersed with auctions and money raising games. The evening ended in the wee small hours of the morning after some lively dancing to the sounds of Musik Express.

Our friends and supporters participated enthusiastically in all the fundraising with generous giving towards our charitable causes making this the most successful fund raising event of the year. Our deep gratitude and thanks to the many donors who gave away so many worthwhile prizes and auction items thus enhancing the evening's success. Many of these donors have supported WZO through the years.

We must of course record our sincere thanks to Hilda and Rumi Sethna. We owe a lot to both of them for journeying back to the UK each year from the Isle of Man for successfully organising

this annual event for the benefit of the weaker and underprivileged sections of our community in India. Their combined efforts over the years have rewarded us with substantial sums running into tens of thousands of £'s and this year was no exception with a magnificent £11,000+.

Driving back home late that night, I couldn't refrain from humming the hit tune sang by Dinah Washington, the Queen of the Blues -

*"What a difference a day makes,  
Twenty-four little hours,  
Brought the sun and the flowers,  
Where there used to be rain, ...  
What a difference a day makes,  
And the difference is (all of) you."*



l to r: Irma & Jehangir Sarosh, Ursula Bhiwandiwalla



l to r: Shireen Madon, Filly & Dolly Wania, Erach Amaria



## SSZ Conference at Chicago – 21<sup>st</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2008

Report from Keki R Bhote

### Background

Rohinton Rivetna and Dr Palan Ichaporia, in order to promote scholarship among academics, theologians, educators and students of Zoroastrianism, founded the Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism [SSZ] in 2005. Its focus is on theological and historical aspects of our religion.

### Introduction

The first day of this 2-day SSZ conference, held at the Darba Mehr of the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, was devoted to “Zoroastrianism 101”, to encourage our youth to carry the Zoroastrian torch to the next generation.

The second day, presentations were highlighted by two luminaries – Farrokh Vajifdar and Shahin Bekhradnia – generously sponsored by WZO headquarters, who travelled from London, UK, to deliver their papers.

### Abstract of Papers

**Keynote Address:** Farrokh Vajifdar

**Bio:** Mr Vajifdar is a “Dean” of Zoroastrian scholars, a radio and TV broadcaster and author of “The Gatha Colloquium”.

**Paper Title:** *Salvation Technology: Hellish Truths and Heavenly Lies.*

**Abstract:** the Gathas do not project a future heaven and hell; rather, Zarathushtra stresses that man creates his own heaven or hell, in this life alone by leading or opposing a moral, ethical life. Concepts of a heaven and hell after death were introduced in later Zoroastrianism by Arda Viraz and the Sassanian pontiff, Kirdir, driven by hallucinatory visions. Zarvan, the cult of the Farvashis; the contrasting views in the antef songs, Omar Khayam’s poems and John Milton’s existentialist thinking are also examined. Good and bad priests appear and vanish, to be replaced by a forthright Gathic perspective leading to radical conclusions.

**Shahin Bekhradnia:** *Zoroastrianism in Tajikistan.*

**Bio:** Ms Bekhradnia, an Oxford University graduate, has deep roots in Iran and has visited Tajikistan several times. She rehabilitates Zoroastrian refugees from Iran and is founder of “Vararoud”, a charity designed to aid the poor in Tajikistan. She is on the executive committee of WZO.

**Abstract:** with the aid of picture slides, Shahin described her humanitarian work to uplift poor Zoroastrians in Tajikistan with crafts that can be sold in the UK. (The average income in Tajikistan – the poorest of the old Soviet Union’s Central Asian republics – is less than \$200 per year!). She described setting up children’s facilities in the national eye hospital. There is poverty among Zoroastrians, who are concentrated in Badakshan province (reputedly the area of Zarathushtra’s early life). Yet, the Zoroastrians in Tajikistan have a buoyancy, and Joie-de-vivre that is heartwarming. By language (going back to the Gathic of the Gathas), by race (Iranian) and by outlook (a sense of freedom), Tajikistan has the greatest yearning for Zoroastrian roots – even more than among Iranian people.

**Keki R Bhote:** *The Great Aryan-Pre-Zoroastrian and Zoroastrian Civilizations of Central Asia.*

**Bio:** Mr Bhote founded the first Zoroastrian Association in America in 1964 and is currently the president of the World Zoroastrian Organization, US region. He was selected as one of 12 most distinguished Zoroastrians in the world by WZO.

**Abstract:** Since 1970, there has been an explosion of Aryan archaeological excavations – both pre-Zoroastrian and Zoroastrian in Central Asia. Starting with our Aryan ancestral homeland, near the Arctic Circle in Russia, this paper traces the Aryan migration into Europe and Asia. Four of the most amazing settlements are:

1. Arkaim: on the Russia-Kazakhstan border: 5000 to 2000 BC: a spectacular Aryan city where Zarathushtra, reputedly, lived. With wheel shaped city planning and efficient water drainage and purification system.
  2. Gonur: in South Turkmenistan: 7000 to 2000 BC: deemed to be one of the five most ancient world civilizations. It was a Mazdayasnan culture reformed by Zarathushtra.
  3. Tash Karim: in the north Uzbekistan: 3000 BC to 1200 AD: a Zoroastrian kingdom that survived the Arab conquests. Today, a world heritage site by UNESCO.
  4. Elam: in South East Iran: 5000 BC to 1100 BC: called the cradle of civilization; where writing was first invented.
- These and other excavations represent a proud heritage for us Zoroastrians.

**Dr Kersey Antia:** *Zoroastrian and pre-Zoroastrian Iranians in Georgia, Trans Caucasia and Europe.*

**Bio:** Dr Antia is the high priest of the Zoroastrian community in Chicago for over half a century. A graduate of the K R Cama Institute, he studied Avesta-Pahlavi. A fearless warrior for the truth, he has stood his ground despite fierce orthodox criticism.

**Abstract:** Zoroastrian history in Armenia is well known, especially under Sassanian rule, but little is known about Zoroastrian history in Trans Caucasia – and specifically, Georgia.

Prehistory indicates that the trans-Caucasian region between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea was a long-standing base camp of the Indo-Iranian Aryans and their eventual migration to Central Asia, with names such as Chechnya, Dagestan, and Ossetia that are much in the news these days with Russia's incursions into Georgia.

Centuries later, Emperor Darius of Iran made Georgia into one of his 22 satrapies. The Scythians, or Sakas, were another Aryan tribe that extended its influence into the whole region from Hungary to the Caspian Sea. Evidence of fire worship and ancestor worship, the love of truth and tales of Rustam – from the Shah Nameh – still

remain, as do the sanctity of contracts - a decided Zoroastrian virtue.

**Dinyar Patel:** *Parsi integration with Iran.*

**Bio:** Mr Patel is a PhD candidate in history at Harvard University. His main interests are modern Indian history, the Indian independence movement and the modern Parsi community.

**Abstract:** The Iran league was founded in 1922 by a Bombay Parsi group, to renew ties between Parsis and Iranian Zoroastrians as well as with the Imperial Iranian government. Many Parsis believed that Iran in the 1930s was taking a decidedly Zoroastrian turn and began calling for Parsis "to return to the Iranian Motherland." The praise for the pro-Zoroastrian Shah was linked to Parsi disillusionment with Indian nationalist politics in the 1930s.

Such sentiments touch on an important issue of identity among Parsees in both India/Pakistan and the Diaspora. Should they call themselves more Iranian or Persian, rather than Indian or Pakistani?

**Dr Jesse S Palsetia:** *Partners in Empire: Parsi-British Relations in Colonial India Assessed.*

**Bio:** Prof Palsetia is associate Professor of history at the University of Guelph, Canada. He has written extensively on the Parsis, Bombay city in Indian history. He has authored the book: "Parsis of India" Brill publishers, Leiden, 2001. He is offering a publication on Sir Jamsetjee Jeejibhoy.

**Abstract:** The paper examines the growth and consolidation of Parsi-British relationships in colonial India. It highlights how the Parsees and British came into economic and socio-political collaboration, and details the benefits and disadvantages Parsis encountered through their interactions with the British. The paper is meant to provide context to perceptions of the Parsis' situation under British imperialism.



Keki R Bhote is President of the WZO, US region. In 1964 he founded the Zoroastrian Association for all of North America. In 2000, WZO conferred the honour of being one of the 12 outstanding Zoroastrians of the world. Professionally, he is President of his own Management Consulting Company, reaching out to 34 countries, recipient of distinguished service to the UN by the UN Association. He has authored countless books relating to his profession, published over 200 papers, and addressed/ lectured numerous professional societies and Zoroastrian congresses. He lives in Glencoe, Illinois with his wife Mehroo.

### Closing Workshop Session

**Chair:** Keki R Bhote. **Panelists:** Farrokh Vajifdar, and Shahin Bekradnia.



**Topic 1: Advancing Zoroastrianism in North America**

**Issues:**

1. Diminishing second-generation interest in the religion
2. Talking to ourselves
3. The definition of a Zoroastrian
4. The Parsi-Iranian divide

The workshop deliberations continued on Monday, November 24. The SSZ Conference requested a copy of the booklet on Dadabhoy Naoroji, authored by Farrokh Vajifdar, from WZO headquarters to be reprinted and distributed to Zoroastrians in North America. Many of the younger generation and even the present generation of Zoroastrians have only a dim memory of Dadabhoy, the first president of the Indian national Congress, a man whom Gandhi called “the soul of India.”



**Re-housing scheme at Gujarat**



Left: before - mud walls, thatched roof, kitchen. Right: the new kitchen



The new Sadri home at Choravni

# Erach and Roshan Sadri Foundation

An update from our Chairman

In *Hamazor* Issue 1, 2008 we announced that the Trustees of the Erach and Roshan Sadri Foundation had entrusted WZO with substantial funds for three deserving projects in India, Iran and Pakistan.



Erach & Roshan Sadri



A pilot scheme **The Erach and Roshan Sadri Foundation Academic Scholarship Grants** was set up by WZO. This grant totaling £15,000 was open to deserving Zoroastrian students from India, Pakistan or Iran pursuing 1<sup>st</sup> degree/undergraduate and vocational studies in selected disciplines in their country of residence. Selection for the grant was based on financial need, academic records of educational achievements, extracurricular activities and their involvement in community service and affairs.

## *Academic assistance -*

During the academic year 2008, 22 students in India, five in Iran and one in Pakistan were successful with their application. Interestingly the allocation was more or less equally made between male and female applicants. Dentistry, medicine, hotel and tourism management, media, microbiology and commerce all featured amongst their choices. These young men and women have set themselves on the path to higher academic excellence and a productive and creative life. We wish them success in their chosen careers.

## *Re-housing scheme -*

The re-housing scheme of the **Gujarat Farmers Project** received a substantial boost by a munificent donation of £37,000 from the Sadri Foundation. This sum has been applied towards the replacement of a further 10 mud and cow dung homes with brick built cottages for the poor rural Zoroastrian community. Implementation of this phase is in progress and most cottages should be complete by April 2009.



The Skills Academy at Yazd



Ladies learning how to cut fabric

### Assistance for development

The **Pourchista Foundation** is based in the UK and Yazd, Iran. £18,500 was allocated towards the purchase of vital equipment and day to day running of a Skills Centre primarily for women and Senior Citizens Day Centre in Yazd, Iran. Approximately half the sum will be used to equip the new Senior Citizens Day Centre which is located in a magnificent house donated by the Zoroastrian philanthropist, Mehraban Zarthosthy.



Ladies machining

The **Skills Academy** programme has continued to flourish and extend its range of subjects taught. Throughout the summer holidays, 300



Computer room

students attended 16 different course subjects including leather-work. The special mixed gender course for reporters which was arranged, attracted students from Kerman, Tehran as well as from Yazd itself.



Keep fit room

Since the start of the autumn term 35 students attend daily, covering the usual range of handicraft subjects with the new addition of applique and ribbon work as well as musical instruments, doll making, calligraphy and the study of the Avestan script (Din Dabireh).

Each student pays 5000 Tomans which is a very small contribution



Seniors having a meal together



Pourchista Skills Academy



Enjoying themselves at the Day Care Centre



towards the heavily subsidized cost of the course per head, but this levy makes them more committed to completing a course that they have signed up for. Each morning starts with the recital of Zoroastrian prayers and the national anthem after which, breakfast is served. The morning classes run from 8am-12pm and the afternoon classes from 3-7pm. Some of the staff, mainly administrative, are full time but the majority of teachers are part time.

The **Senior Citizens Day Centre** has 80 enrolled members with new enquiries pushing up numbers. About 20 members attend each day and are given a midday meal. Members can use the exercise equipment when they attend. Regular medical checks are available to anyone who wants one. Activities are organised regularly and in addition monthly birthday parties with the preparation of traditional meals of Ash and Surog are held for anyone having a birthday. Outings by minibus to sites of pilgrimage around Yazd are conducted such as to Pir-e-Hrisht where music and dancing is much enjoyed and appreciated. The staff report, that many senior citizens have expressed intense enjoyment of this new facility and immense gratitude for the organiser's efforts.

### *Prosthesis for amputee children -*

As we entered the New Year, bringing forth new challenges of sustaining our charitable activities in difficult times, we were delighted to receive from the Sadri Foundation a grant of £10,000 towards **CHAL** an NGO that runs programmes for the rehabilitation of physically challenged children. They will provide prostheses to children who have lost their limbs, many of them victims of the previous earthquakes which have devastated Pakistan's NW Frontier regions. To date nine children have benefited by a one time assistance and seven till they reach adulthood, through previous donations received by WZO. The new funding through ERSF will provide prostheses for a further nine children.

The WZO International Board expresses its sincere gratitude to the Trustees of the Erach and Roshan Sadri Foundation for their constant support which has helped improve the lives of many poor and low income families, lifting them out of poverty and providing a brighter and more secure future.



## *Women's Friendly Space -*

*An update on the final project financed through the funds received by Toxy Cowasjee, WZO rep in Pakistan, from donors after the October 2005 earthquake in Northern Pakistan.*

From the report sent by Omar Asghar Khan Development Foundation

### **Background**

In early 2006, the Foundation (OAKDF) selected village Dalola in Union Council Dalola for the WFS (Women's Friendly Space) project. However, the landlord reneged on the original land agreement, subsequently demanding an exorbitant price for the land. Moreover, despite the Foundation's concerted efforts, local people in village Dalola resisted the organization of women and giving them key decision-making roles in the project. Due to these reasons, the Foundation in consultation with WZO shifted the site of the project to village Sirla.

Sirla consists of nearly 500 households or approximately 2,500 people living in seven scattered *mohallas* (hamlets) across mountainous terrain. The 2005 earthquake killed 15 people in the village and 436 houses were lost (309 completely destroyed and 127 were damaged). Water supply to the village was disrupted due to damage to the water source and its distribution mechanism.

In the latter half of 2006, the Foundation with support from Zoroastrians & friends through the WZO (*from the donations received for the earthquake 2005*) introduced the concept of a Women Friendly Space in Sirla. The criteria for selection included:

- (a) high level of destruction;
- (b) significant poverty levels and the need for addressing concerns of affected women; and,
- (c) the presence of an institutional base in the form of local organizations of women and men called People's Organizations (POs).



The WFS was designed by the Foundation's Executive Director, Ali Asghar Khan, who is also an architect. The structure is built on land measuring more than 1,000 sq m. It consists of two meeting halls which includes space for a library. It also has two toilets and one bathroom with a geyser for hot water. The design includes a large-sized open space for outdoor games which is enclosed by a boundary wall for privacy and helps create a courtyard effect. A *tandoor* (oven for baking bread) is placed in the courtyard which could become a source of income for women if used as a community sale-point for *rotis* (unleavened bread). In many rural areas of Pakistan, women sell bread at such sale-points which are close to homes and not part of the main market.

The challenges faced in the construction process are not unique to Sirla. Similar and even worse challenges are encountered by other organizations including the government involved in reconstruction activities. The escalated demand for construction has raised labour prices and also allowed contractors to often demand unreasonable contractual agreements. *[The total amount paid to OAKDF in February 2009 for the WFS was Rs 2,150,000/-]*

Though the centre was completed in September 2008, activities for the women were planned from February 2007. The Foundation assisted local women in Sirla to conduct a detailed analysis of their priorities through a participatory dialogue. This analysis was used as a basis to develop a work-plan which was regularly updated, making the WFS a center of activities for women. A WFS management committee was set up consisting of four women and three men, responsible for implementing the work-plans with support from the Foundation. The following were the activities/workshops implemented against the needs identified by women. These activities were implemented through other funding sources.

1. Greater access to healthcare facilities
2. Psycho-social support
3. Access to reading material

4. Games/entertainment
5. Painting/drawing
6. Training in masonry & forestry with a follow-up.

On 24<sup>th</sup> November 2008, the WFS in Sirla was formally inaugurated in a festive but simple ceremony. For several weeks before the event, women and men in Sirla as well as the adjoining rural areas with support from the Foundation prepared for the event. They designed many fun activities involving children and women. Local people were particularly excited by the prospect of meeting Toxy Cowasjee whose efforts and commitment had connected them to Zoroastrians and friends through the WZO, after the devastating earthquake of October 2005. Unfortunately, due to personal circumstances Ms Cowasjee was unable to participate in the event despite making all necessary travel and other arrangements.

About 100 women and 200 men participated in the inaugural. They warmly welcomed the Foundation's team that arrived in Sirla at 12 noon. After a short *dua* (blessing), local people requested Ali Asghar Khan to cut the ribbon to mark the formal opening of the WFS. However, it was decided that as the WFS was for local women it would be more appropriate for a local woman to do the honours. The task was performed by the local TBA (traditional birth attendant), Gulzar Bibi, amid cheers of participating men, women and children.

The first item on the day's programme was a drawing competition. 20 girls and boys were divided into two groups, children up to five years' and the other aged between 6-12 years. They were provided with the material and no restrictions were placed on the choice of subjects, allowing participating children freedom to use their creativity. Many chose the WFS as their drawing subject. They used vibrant colours and added plants and flowers signifying that for them the WFS was a beautiful and valued place. Others opted to draw designs, with an entry from a young 5-year old that had exceptional details and an eye for colour. Yet other entries had a touch of humour.



Among these was an entry by a young boy whose topic was a flour-carrying truck. He added poetry to express how dear flour had become.

A panel consisting of a local woman, the Foundation's Board Member, Shahida Tanoli, and Ali Asghar Khan judged the entries. In each age group, three prizes were awarded, two for entries by girls and one by boys. Colouring boxes and other drawing material was given to each prize-winning entry. The competition was tough as many entries deserved a prize. Perhaps the most inspiring aspect of the competition was the creative imagination of young children, indicating that there is much talent just waiting for opportunities.

This was followed by a cooking competition in which three groups of women participated. The first group had made curry from milk curd. The second, three variations of *saag* (vegetables) using locally-grown herbs. And the third made *makai roti* (corn bread) and three types of chutney mixing curd with walnuts, mint, etc. The 1<sup>st</sup> prize of Rs3,000 awarded to the *saag* group, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Rs2,000 to the curry group, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Rs1,000 to the *roti*/chutney group. All prizes were awarded to the PO (♀) who will decide how to use the collective prize money of Rs6,000.

A group of young girls decided to use this auspicious occasion to celebrate the wedding of their dolls. Elaborate preparations were made including the bride's dress and red coloured table and bed covers.

Finally, all participants gathered to review the work done to date and share plans for the future. Local women and men presented the background of the WFS, tracing its timeline from the identification of land to the inaugural ceremony. There was visible pride in the journey they accomplished. Women presented the needs they had assessed in early 2007, recounting all the activities that they had undertaken since then. More popular than others was the TBA training and the reading sessions. The opportunity



The WFS, Sirla with its boundary wall. Below a close-up of the building



Ali Asghar Khan & his team being welcomed with rose petals

to play games was also appreciated. Mixed with the pride at their achievements, was gratitude for the support they had received to make this possible. The presentation also included the following work-plan for future activities:

- ✓ Women need to interact and meet
- ✓ Women need access to clean drinking water
- ✓ Women need greater access to healthcare facilities, and also training in healthcare
- ✓ Young girls want greater access to entertainment opportunities including space for games like badminton, etc.
- ✓ Women want access to information and education.
- ✓ Women want opportunities for training in enterprise development, including livestock management, poultry, embroidery/tailoring and beautician services.

The Women Friendly Space has since the earthquake helped bring the community together. From the donation of the land on which it stands to the monitoring of its construction, to the design and the choice of colour and furnishings the community has been involved in all decisions. The support and encouragement given by the WZO has enabled the women of Sirla to fulfill their dream of having a place they could call their own. It has enabled young and old to learn and work together. A facility envisaged as a space for women to collect, has become a focal point for them to plan and implement activities that have contributed to the well-being of their families.

They have used the space for learning, sharing and to create awareness on health and other issues. It has acted as a refuge, a source of relaxation. It has also kept them abreast of national and international developments through regular access to information through newspapers and magazines. More importantly, the space and its construction has enhanced their status within the community.



Gulzar Bibi cutting the ribbon



Ali Asghar Khan handing over the keys of WFS



Prize winning art work

It is through such endeavors that hope is rekindled. The faces of the young girls reading the local weekly edition of the *Akhbar-e-Khawateen* reflect this hope. Their laughter and their smiles support the belief that together they can overcome the injustices they face on a daily basis.

The structure stands as a symbol of the collective efforts of so many people. Within it lives the hope for a better life for those that are vulnerable and marginalized.

*Three years have passed since the earthquake destroyed so many lives and the livelihood of countless humans, but through the generosity of Zoroastrians and our friends all over the world, we have made a difference not only by way of immediate assistance and basic health units (which are still in use); followed by a new road leading to a cluster of villages, running water supply in Khorī Kheter, prosthesis for amputee children, but now with the WFS, a lasting legacy for others to emulate. Though the initial hope was to build a privately run school for children of both sexes, things have turned out for the best, especially taking into consideration the current problems faced in northern Pakistan. With the WFS now established, women have a place which they can call their own, where they can improve their skills and livelihood and hopefully through their 'learning' bring up their children to be responsible citizens of Pakistan.*

*A total amount of Pak Rs9,953,306/- was received by me as donations, which have fully been utilized. This amount does not include what was sent direct to WZO London and used for the special winterized tents manufactured in UK amounting to GBP6800/-. Thank you one and all. – Toxy Cowasjee, [WZO's representative in Pakistan].*



## WZO (India) Honours Dadi Engineer with Life Time Achievements Award

A report from Ruby Bharucha, committee member WZO (India)



A glittering reception on 6<sup>th</sup> February in Mumbai's Albless Baug, a much loved venue amongst the Zoroastrians of this great city was the setting to the occasion of the WZO (India) Awards Ceremony. Over 1000 guests packed the venue where 16 Zoroastrians were duly recognized for leaving an indelible mark of exceptional achievement in their profession, creative talents or in public service to the community at large.

Chairing the function, Dadi Engineer, President of WZO (India), welcomed Darayus Motivala, President, WZO and other distinguished guests and dignitaries in the audience. The evening proceeded with Dadi presenting the awards after a brief description of the achievements of each awardee.

Our community has nurtured some outstanding individuals worthy of praise and recognition, Tehmina Shroff, for her admirable work with mentally challenged children, Padmashree Penaz Masani, the reputed Gazal singer, Pervez Kanga, 83 years of age, who has created out of broken glass bangles, beautiful models of the Eiffel Tower, the Ahmedabad Ellis Bridge etc., Diana Marfatia, a noted educationalist and Adille Sumariwala, an Arjuna Award winner for outstanding achievement in National sports and one of the best athlete the Zoroastrian community has produced.

Two of the awardees, Sarosh and Burgess Cooper, had created a world record for motor cycling through the four highest mountain passes in the world situated in Ladakh within 24 hours. A touch of the dramatic was introduced by Dadi when, with engines revved up full throttle, Sarosh and

Burgess rode through the audience on their motor bikes to receive their award.

Emotions ran high with the announcement of the award for Noshir Sanjana, Group Security manager at the Taj Mahal Hotel. Noshir was not on duty on the fateful night of 26<sup>th</sup> November 2008. However, seeing on television the Taj being ravaged by terrorists, he rushed there beyond the call of duty and while managing to help a few of the Taj guests to safety was shot in the leg. He lay there all night wounded and bleeding, till he was helped out by colleagues the following morning. Sanjana still suffering from his ordeal and walking on crutches received a standing ovation when he accepted the award.

The main event of the evening was the "Lifetime Achievements Award" conferred on Dadi Engineer by the Managing Committee of WZO (I) in acknowledgement of his over 25 continuous years as President of WZO (I), for completing over 50 years as a prominent international lawyer and over 13 years as a Trustee of the BPP.

Compere Percy Mistry gave the audience a brief biographical account of Dadi's career, for which Dadi received a standing ovation. Thereafter, Darayus Motivala eulogized Dadi's several achievements in various fields and his invaluable contribution to WZO and to the Zoroastrian community. He described Dadi as a "multi-faceted personality". On behalf of WZO (India), Darayus Motivala presented Dadi his Lifetime Achievements Award - a silver salver. Dadi expressed his deep gratitude to the WZO (India) Managing Committee for bestowing him with such a high honour.

Dadi then, spoke briefly about Darayus, his training and background as an IT specialist and his invaluable services to WZO in London by organizing its membership list and looking after the **WZO website**. **He presented Darayus with a WZO (India) award of appreciation. In return Dadi was presented with a beautiful inscribed crystal bowl on behalf of WZO in**



Above: Dadi Engineer receiving the silver salver from Darayus Motivala on behalf of WZO India. Right: Crystal bowl presented to Dadi from WZO, inscribed "Presented to Dadi Engineer for his long and devoted service to the Zoroastrian community in India by the WZO International Board."



Darayus Motivala receiving an award presented by Dadi Engineer on behalf of WZO, India.

appreciation of Dadi's services in India and on the WZO International Board.

Tokens of his appreciation were presented by Dadi to the members of the Managing Committee. He particularly lauded the work of Vice President Nozer Meherji, Rusi Bhungara and Bahdur Mistry, (the Joint Honorary Secretaries) as also Mehernosh Jhaveri, Minoo Khan, Nozer Commissariat and Homyar Doctor. Dadi attributed the success of the function, in no small measure, to the tremendous efforts of two committee members, namely Soono Andhyarujina and Ruby Bharucha.

No occasion such as this is ever complete without the indulgence that must follow. The guests partook of an excellent meal catered by Tanaz Godiwala and danced to the lively music provided by DJ Hosh. Further entertainment was provided by Dinyar Tirandaz a well known actor and director who performed a hilarious skit. The evening ended on a high note with a vociferous rendering of "Chaye-hame-Zarthosti".



Dadi presenting an award to Noshir Sanjana for his act of bravery.

## *The Chairman in his letter to Dadi Engineer wrote -*

We were delighted to hear that on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2009, WZO India will hold an Awards Function to recognise and felicitate those who have played a significant part within the Zoroastrian community in their youth or middle age but whose achievements have somehow been overlooked until recently.

It is therefore befitting that this glittering occasion should be the backdrop, for you who have done so much, to be the recipient of the "Lifetime Achievements Award", an honour which you richly deserve from the Managing Committee of WZO India

It would be impossible within the space of this letter to do justice to the multiplicity of achievements and the many accolades showered upon you during your lifetime. You are a shining example to the present generation on leadership, diplomacy and the highest level of professional achievement through perseverance, dedication and hard work.

Your services to the Community for nearly two seven year terms in office at the Bombay Parsi Panchayet culminating as a Senior Trustee, have been exemplary and will be a hard act to follow by the new incumbents.

The active part you have played in the World Zoroastrian Organisation for the past 25 years have been no less fruitful and your involvement has contributed in creating a dynamic organisation, whose achievements are recognised and admired internationally. As an International Board Member of WZO and as President of WZO India you have helped steer the ship on many occasions through choppy waters with statesmanship and we value your skills immensely. Long may it continue as we move into the future.

May we take this opportunity of congratulating you on receiving this award and wishing you continued success in all you do and may God bless you and your charming wife, Silloo, with a long, healthy and happy life.

With our sincere best wishes,

*Sammy Bhiwandiwalla*

Sammy Bhiwandiwalla  
Chairman, WZO







## Cultural and Historical Perspective of Zoroastrian Faith

A Symposium held jointly by ZSO – WZO – FEZANA, on Sunday March 29, 2009 from 9am - 6pm at Mehraban Guiv Darbe Mehr, North York, Ontario, Canada.

### Agenda

FEZANA Khorshed Jungalwala lecture

**Session Chair:** Ervad Dr Jehan Bagli

**Speaker:** Prof Oktor Skjaervo

Zoroastrian Literature as a Part of the Cultural Heritage of Modern Zoroastrians

**Session Chair:** Daraius Bharucha

**Speaker:** Prof Jenny Rose

Keepers of the Flame: The Early Zoroastrians of Central Asia

**Session Chair:** Fredy Mirza

**Speaker:** Prof Maria Subtelny

The Water of Omniscience and the Milk of Knowledge: Zoroastrian Elements in the Apocalypse of Muhammad

**Session Chair:** Kerman Katrak

**Speaker:** Prof Jamsheed Choksy

How a Minority Adapts: Zoroastrians in Ceylon/ Sri Lanka from Antiquity to the Present.

**Session Chair:** Ervad Dr Jehan Bagli

Open Forum with panel of speakers

**Closing Remarks:** Sam Vesuna

## The World Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra

The WZSO will be performing at the WZC2000 at Dubai in December. Farobag Cooper, director of the orchestra is encouraging Zoroastrian instrumentalists to come forward who are willing to perform for this occasion. The same applies to any soloist wishing to join.

Contact Farobag at :  
f\_homi\_cooper@yahoo.com



## FEZANA Academic Scholarship Programme

The call for applications for the 2009-2010 annual competition and the Application Form for 2009-10 are available.

They have also been uploaded on the FEZANA website [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org)

The scholarships available are The FEZANA Scholarships (for graduate and undergraduate studies).

Post-graduate Scholarships  
The Kheradi Endowed scholarship - *The FEZANA Scholar*.  
FEZANA 20th Anniversary Endowed Scholarship.

Undergraduate Scholarships  
The Khorshed Panthaky Endowed Scholarships x2  
Kapadia Endowed Scholarship

Dolly Dastoor, PH D  
Chair  
FEZANA Academic Scholarship Program



# A History of Zoroastrians in Modern Japan

by takeshi aoki

**F**irst Zoroastrians: In 1858, Japan signed a treaty of amity and commerce with the United States which opened up the country after a long period of isolation into which had fallen due to its policy, from 1639, of prohibition of Christianity. After that year, foreign people were able to visit Japan, including many Christians and a few Zoroastrians.

The first Zoroastrian who visited Japan, as far as records show, was Jamsetji N Tata, in 1892<sup>1</sup>. He set up a branch office of Tata Sons and Co in Kobe, with the aim of trading in cotton with Japanese companies<sup>2</sup>. In 1902, it is said that a Japanese, named "boy", was employed at Dorab Tata's home in Bombay<sup>3</sup>. Further, Jehangir R D Tata stayed in Yokohama and went to high school there from 1917 to 1918 in order to avoid the consequences of WWI<sup>4</sup>. Those are the beginnings of relations between Zoroastrians and Japanese people.

## Cemeteries as material evidence

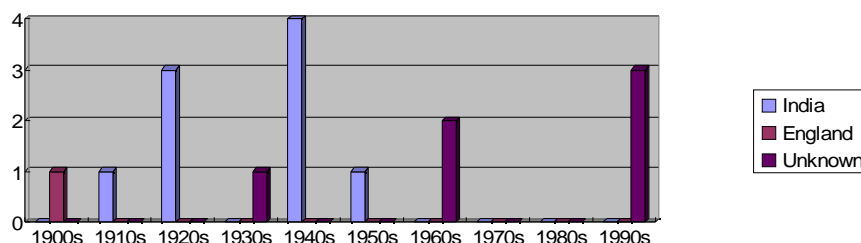
However, information about Zoroastrians who visited Japan is quite limited. In contrast to the situation in China, Zoroastrians had no official organization such as a Panchayat or a centre such as a fire temple in Japan. They seemed to visit Japan singly and not with their family or friends. The Kobe branch office of Tata Sons and Co was not related to any religious organization but was simply a business operated by such as the first representative Lal Kaka. It was located in Sakaemachi-dori 2, Kobe<sup>5</sup>.

In order to reconstruct Zoroastrian history in Japan, the only material evidence we have is 17 Zoroastrian tombstones in Kobe and Yokohama cemeteries. This of course has its limitations for historical research: all that the tombstones tell us is that some

Zoroastrians happened to die in Japan. Many more Zoroastrians may have visited Japan but what we have left of their history are those tombstones.

However, some interesting correlations emerge from a detailed look at the Zoroastrian tombstones in Kobe and Yokohama and India's share of the Japanese trade in cotton, as shown in diagrams 1 – 3 below.

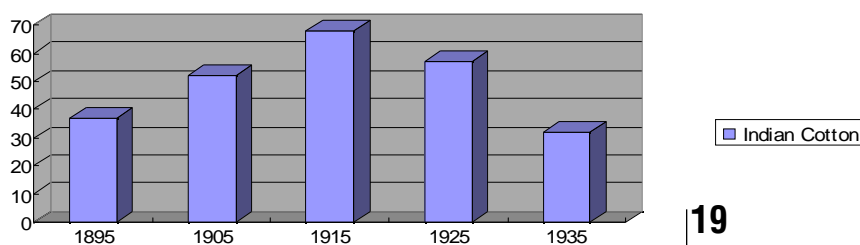
Diagram 1, shows the year of death and nationality between 1900 and 1990.



From the above graph, we can see that the first sepultures or burial chambers of Indians, including Zoroastrians, are to be found in the 1910s, reaching their peak in the 1920s and coming to an end in the 1950s. The Parsi traders came in their largest numbers in 1915 remaining till they died approximately 25 years later.

If we then draw a graph of the Indian cotton trade with Japan, a remarkable symmetry emerges.

The histograms in the diagram below show the share of Indian cotton as a percentage of Japan's total market for cotton, between 1895 and 1935<sup>6</sup>.





*Takeshi Aoki was born in 1972, in Niigata, Japan graduating from Tokyo University. He received his MA in Islamic Studies in 1998 and in 2003 his Litt.D degree in the same subject, both from the Tokyo University. He is now a lecturer at the Waseda University in Tokyo. He has a number of publications on Zoroastrianism in English to his credit published by K R Cama Oriental Institute, Orient, Encyclopaedia Iranica, and a forthcoming paper for Dasturji Dr Hormazdyar K Mirza Birth Centenary Festschrift, Mumbai.*

In short, after 1895, Indian cotton dominated the Japanese market, displacing cotton from China and achieved its peak in 1915. After that, however, Indian cotton reduced its market share due to competition from American cotton.

Thus there is a direct link between the rise and fall of the market share of Indian cotton in Japan and the frequency of Zoroastrian sepultures in the cemeteries of Kobe and Yokohama.

We can therefore safely conclude that most of these individuals would have been involved in the Indian cotton trade with Japan between 1895 and 1950 and were probably employed at the Kobe branch of Tata Sons and Co.

### Zoroastrian Families settled down in Japan after the 1960s

After the 1960s, burial records show only one Wadia and four Shroffs. The Wadia family was originally from India and settled first in Kobe. Mr Sohrab Wadia now lives in Tokyo<sup>7</sup>. The Shroff family was also from India and settled in Kobe and still lives there. Mr B N Shroff is an international lawyer and married to a Japanese Doctor<sup>8</sup>. The tradition of Zoroastrians coming to Japan might be inherited by those two families.

### Data 1: the burial list of the Kobe Municipal Foreign Cemetery

Parsi burials recorded in the Burial list of the Kobe Municipal Foreign Cemetery are 10 persons as below.

Nationality	Code No.	Name	Sex	The year of birth and death	Burial No.	Epitaph
England	No 76	E J M Dotiwala	M	16th May, 1826 - 30th Dec, 1905	A2-2	
India	No 5	Keki D Mehta	M	d. 9th Aug, 1926	A2-7	
India	No 6	Ervad Fordunji Navroji Dastur (Meherjirana)	M	24th Sept, 1870 - 2nd April, 1925	A2-3	Avestan and Gujarati
India	No 29	Kavasji Manekji Palishwolk	M	19th Jan, 1878 - 18th July, 1942	A1-7	Avestan and Gujarati
India	No 32	Naoroz H Mody	M	12th Oct, 1875 - 10th Feb, 1944	A1-6	
India	No 33	Burjorji Jamsetji Shroff	M	12th Sept, 1873 - 29th May, 1945	A1-4	
India	No 34	F R Chichigar	M	18th May, 1883 - 15th Jan, 1955	A1-5	
India	No 78	Daughter D Mehta	M (?)	d. 22nd Apr, 1922	A2-6	
India	No 79	D D J Billimoria	M	26th Nov, 1888 - 30th Dec, 1919	A2-4	Avestan
India	No 80	Naoroji J Vessona	M	19th Sept, 1887 - 22nd Aug, 1940	A2-1	Avestan and Gujarati

### Data 2: the Tombstones in the Kobe Municipal Foreign Cemetery

In addition to above-mentioned 10 burials, I found another six by the tombstones, which have no mention in the list. I could collect their data only from epitaphs.

Name	Sex	The year of birth and death	Burial No.	Epitaph
Jamshed Shapurji Wadia	M	1st Feb, 1901 - 21st Mar, 1960	A1- 1	Gujarati
Nanabhoy Bomanji Shroff	M	20th Jan, 1887 - 18th July, 1960	A1-2	Gujarati
Monijhe N B Shroff	F	9th Nov, 1915 - 7th Oct, 1990	A1-3	Gujarati
Phiroz B Shroff	M	9th Mar, 1903 - 1st Dec, 1996	A1-9	
Hilla P B Shroff	No data	6th Jan, 1917 - 13th Jan, 1999	A1-10	
Baby Mirzan, daughter of Darab Bossabhoy Mirzan	F	20th July, 1936 - 22nd July, 1936	A2-8	Avestan and Gujarati

### Data 3: the Tombstone in the Yokohama Municipal Foreign Cemetery

There is only one Zoroastrian tombstone at the Yokohama Foreign Cemetery.

Name	Sex	The year of birth and death	Epitaph in Avestan and English
Phiroze Hormasji Dastur	M	born in India and died at Yokohama in 1915	Loving Memory of My Dearly Beloved Brother, Phiroze Hormasji Dastur of Navsari, India. Who departed this Life in his 31st Year



### References & Acknowledgements:

1. F R Harris, Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata: a Chronicle of his Life, Bombay / Calcutta / Madras: Blackie and Son (India) Limited, 1958, pp. 93ff.
2. Kobe Matashin Newspaper, 25th, Apr. 1872, 2nd Page. [in Japanese]
3. R M Lala, Beyond the Last Blue Mountain: a Life of J. R. D. Tata, New Delhi: Viking, 1992, p. 13.
4. Ibid., pp. 21-22.
5. The History of Our Company's Sea Roads, Nippon Yusen (for internal use only), 1935, [in Japanese], pp. 131ff.
6. Takaharu KOU, "The Transformation and its Logic of Cotton Trade Companies in Japan before the World War II," Journal on Humanities and Societies, Vol. 1, 1999, p. 46 [in Japanese].
7. I wish to thank for Mr Jimmy Master in Hong Kong for his information about the Wadia family.
8. I wish to thank for Mr Tamura, one of the staff of the Kobe Municipal Foreign Cemetery for his information about the Shroff family.



F N Dastur (Meherji Rana) in Kobe



Above: N B Shroff's grave at Kobe. Right, P H Dastur's grave at Yokohama



# Cambyes II: mad, godless, and cruel?

by farrokh vajifdar

[Some common threads interweave the fabric of history of the first three Persian emperors: their interventions amidst priestly disputes; attempted usurpations; and the Old Persian inscriptional problems].



yrus II ("the Great") died in the high summer of 529 BC, aged 70, in battle against the Haumavarga Scythians north of the Yaxartes (Syr Darya) River, deep in Central Asia. He had been accompanied by his son Cambyes/Ka(m)buiya, lately co-regent with his father in Babylonia. Cyrus' body was brought back to Parsagada – "the Camp of the Persians" – where it was entombed in the stepped mausoleum which stands like some solitary sentinel on the Murghab plain.

As eldest son of Cyrus II and his wife Cassandane of the Achaemenid clan, Cambyes lays claim as the true founder of the Achaemenian dynasty through his mother's family. It has been noted since Cyrus II's times that religious toleration was a remarkable feature of Persian rule, and that the Great King himself was a liberal-minded promoter of this humane and intelligent policy. Equally remarkable was his clemency to fallen rulers, in the true fashion of mediaeval European chivalry whose real antecedents are now established through a searching study of Achaemenid history.

Cambyes himself had the high moral values of Cyrus' noble characteristics to live up to. He has not left us any inscriptions, however, and what we know of him has come down to us via Babylonian records, some classical Greek authors, and decrees from ancient Egypt. These early sources vary greatly both in perspective and veracity.

[Both variations were blatantly exploited recently to further the cause and career of a

## Second part of The Trilogy

hack writer, Matthias Schulz, in *Der Spiegel* whose reputation has been seriously dented and wholly compromised any claim to journalistic impartiality. A mischievous comparison was made through a 6th century BC Persian emperor with the 20th century's last Shah of Iran. Even worse, its author had attempted his squalid character assassination of one of the best-loved monarchs of Antiquity – Cyrus II – by falsely imputing to him the supposed atrocities reported by Herodotus for his son Cambyes!]

A strange turn of events was reported in a Babylonian chronicle concerning the co-regent's "coronation" of 15 March 538. From this much damaged text we gather that the young Cambyes had entered the Esagila temple dressed in the Elamite fashion – contrary to Babylonian ritual tradition – and therefore was refused the sceptre from the hand of the priest of Marduk. Formerly an ally of Babylon, Elam had sided with the Medes to remove the Babylonian hegemony, and it was only after subjugation by Cyrus II that an uneasy truce had prevailed. At any rate, it represented the ritual triumph of the native religion over the still uncouth conquering son of the great Cyrus, for he did perform the requisite ritual duties, as king of Babylonia, at the New Year Akitu festival. His relationship with the priesthood of Marduk at the Esagila temple must nevertheless have been strained, for he was reported as having curtailed its income sources.

The Cambyes of history further extended his father's imperial conquests, beginning his reign with the invasion of Egypt, with a



view to acquiring Libya to the west and Ethiopia to the south. In fact, his eight-year rule was largely occupied with his conquest of Egypt. His expansionist plans were made possible by hiring Greek mercenaries, Syrian and Palestinian troops to march with his native armies under the command of Persian generals. After his destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem in 586, Nebuchadrezzar II had deported its Jewish population into slavery in Babylonia. Such Jews as had since returned to their ancestral homeland in Cambyses' father Cyrus' lifetime now assisted with provisions and intelligence. The northern Arabs facilitated the crossing of the Sinai peninsula with supplies of water laden on relays of camels. Those Jews who had fled south into Egypt (in 586) now enlisted in Cambyses' Persian army.

Egypt was in political and religious turmoil: the last Pharaoh of the 26th dynasty, Amasis/Ahmose II (570–526) had died some months before Cambyses entered Memphis in August 525. Despite the great prosperity enjoyed by Egypt during his rule and the promotion of Greek mercantilism, Amasis had restricted the Greek traders to Naukratis in the Nile Delta. The resurgent nationalistic feelings of the native Egyptians over the increasing foreign domination of trade and cultural dilution, however, played into the hands of the conquering Persian hero: he severely curtailed the self-arrogated privileges of the Greek and Syrian traders and mercenaries. Cambyses, as new ruler of the Upper and Lower Egyptian Kingdoms, founded the 27th Dynasty which lasted until 404 when Artaxerxes II's rule began in Persia.

It is, however, on the religious plane that Cambyses acquired his notoriety in history through the mischievous inventions of that "Father of History", Herodotus (490–425). Let us briefly recall that, although himself a Persian subject, he had never visited Persia and knew nothing of Parsa, Parsagada, or of Zoroaster and his reforms. He knew of Susa as the Persian capital established by Cambyses. In such contexts he relied on Persian informants, whereas his sympathies

lay with mainland Greece. His view of the Persian religion was almost certainly tainted by the western Magi, probably of Chaldean / Babylonian origin. Those Magi very evidently were not of Zarathushtra's persuasion.

The Ancient Egyptians were polytheists – exceedingly superstitious, ever in thrall to rapacious priesthoods, and fervent believers in magic and the dark arts. In the course of some 3,000 years of development their religion underwent some significant changes of emphasis and practices whilst throughout maintaining a certain consistency and style of worship. During the times ensuing, the civil strife in the Delta caused by the overthrow of the Pharaoh Apries (589–570) by the last of the 26th Dynasty, Amasis II, the priests of particular temple deities continued through blatant extortions to greatly enrich their incoming funds and exercised harsh control over their respective devotees.

Enter the fictionizing partisan Herodotus – he of fertile imagination and sterile purpose. In his mind there was no doubt that Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, was mad, godless and cruel. Evidence from other sources strongly suggests otherwise; Herodotus' sources remain suspect and his own motives dubious – but unsurprising. Cambyses had rightly checked Greek trading enterprises in the Delta. Furthermore, he had looked into the vast incomes of several temples of the many Egyptian gods, and seen through their priestly manipulations with their debilitating effect upon the devotees. In writing of this Persian conqueror, Herodotus depicted him as displaying callousness and gross disrespect towards the native gods.

The best known example of Cambyses' impiety provided by Herodotus was his wanton slaying of the Apis bull. This benign creature, symbolising fertility, was representative of the great national god Osiris; it was especially worshipped at the Memphis temple. The Greek gossipist outlines what happened by listing Cambyses' three military failures whilst in

Egypt – against the Carthaginians of Cyrene, the inhabitants of the Ammon Oasis, and the expedition to Ethiopia. The thwarted conqueror next came upon crowds of festive Egyptians celebrating the Apis holiday with great rejoicing. Convinced in his maddened state that they were exulting in his failures, he stabbed the Apis bull *in the thigh* from which injury it died. This little detail was to be of a sombre significance for the Greek; for the Egyptians, Cambyses' sacrilege explained his future misfortunes.

Apis bulls were buried amidst great displays of sorrow and fasting. Their remains were mummified and interred within magnificent granite coffins, bearing inscriptions pertaining to the deaths of these creatures, which were then solemnly placed in the Serapeum beneath the Memphis temple at Saqqara. The killing of one such Apis imputed to Cambyses bears some closer examination.



Cambyses Mithraist and bull-slayer?

The facts are these: an Apis bull was born in the 27th year of the last Egyptian pharaoh Amasis – in 543, and had died

shortly after Cambyses invaded Egypt (525), and well before the three failures listed by Herodotus. Furthermore, Cambyses himself arranged and paid for a fitting sarcophagus for the deceased bull! The next Apis, born in the Great King's sixth year, 523, died a natural death in 518 – the fourth year of Cambyses' successor Darius I (522–486). Herodotus clearly relished falsehoods above facts!

Another atrocity attributed to Cambyses by our Greek story-teller in graphic detail was the disgusting treatment meted out to the mummified corpse of Amasis in his palace at Sais. Failing its dismemberment in a show of disrespect, Cambyses ordered it to be burnt. Herodotus even explains it as an impious act, for the Persians would not defile fire in this or any other manner – a further token of the Great King's madness. But, if true, why was the body burnt? Common to the early Achaemenids was the urge to be recognized as legitimate rulers of their conquered lands. For Cambyses in Egypt, to be seen as heir to its ancient pharaohs, it became necessary to have established for him a credible ancestry going back to an earlier king truly descended from the pharaonic line.

At the temple dedicated to the goddess Neith at Sais, where in its school theology and medicine were taught, officiated the learned priest Udjahorresne, adviser to the shrewd and opportunistic former pharaoh Amasis who, as Apries' general, had usurped the throne of the previous legitimate ruler of the Two Kingdoms. Perceptive of the realities under the Persian conqueror, Udjahorresne now served the new master of Egypt as prudent adviser and chief doctor. He devised the convincing story of an exiled grandson of the predeceased Apries, come to restore the legitimate pharaonic line by reclaiming the throne of the Upper and Lower Kingdoms.

The former usurper-pharaoh's memory was execrated, but the burning of his mummified corpse has been dismissed as the production of disgruntled priests of temples whose revenues Cambyses had severely

curtailed after instructing them in self-sufficiency! Herodotus does, however, reveal Cambyses' kind generosity towards Amasis' Cyrene Greek widow Laodike. The new pharaoh expressed his gratitude to the Sais temple by visiting it in person, publicly worshipping and sacrificing to the goddess Neith. The Jews of Elephantine remembered Cambyses in their 5th century Aramaic papyri for his benevolence to their temple.

The custom of *khvaetvadatha* or close-kin marriage, not uncommon within Near East royal families, continues in turn to irk and embarrass present-day Zoroastrians. Short of saying that the practice was based erroneously on beliefs in preservation of blood-lines and consolidation of family property, we shall forgo its detailed history. With Herodotus, however, we encounter the episode of Cambyses' marriage to his two sisters. The manner in which the Great King achieved his illicit desires was outlined thus: some Persian judges learned in such marriage laws prudently opined, when asked, that whilst there was no law which sanctioned such unions, there was a law which permitted the king to do whatever he wished! The historian had prefaced this circumvention by explaining *"it had never before been a Persian custom for brothers and sisters to marry"*. The elder sister had remained in Persia whilst the younger accompanied her brother Cambyses to Egypt where, through his sudden madness – perhaps in a drunken rage, for he was excessively fond of wine – he murdered her.

Cambyses had a full brother, Bardiya, whom the Greeks called Smerdis (perhaps the Greek *Sm-* conveyed the Persian *B-* (?)). Smerdis was left in charge of the Near East portion of Cyrus the Great's growing Persian Empire. He seems to have been a popular governor, not least because he is said to have remitted all taxes for three years. The Great King, jealous of his younger brother and seeing in him a threat to his own occupancy of the imperial throne, was reported by Herodotus to have rushed back to Persia. When mounting his horse, the sheath of his dagger slipped, the

weapon's point *seriously gashed his thigh*. The wound became gangrenous; Cambyses died of it.

According to Herodotus, Cambyses ordered his confidant Prexaspes to Persia and kill his would-be usurper brother. Prexaspes did the Great King's bidding and did away with Smerdis. Events thereupon took a serious turn when news reached Cambyses that Smerdis lived and even now sat on the Persian throne. Prexaspes was suspected of collusion with the usurper, and accused of it by Cambyses who then himself set off for Persia in great haste, with the results recounted by the Greek historian who saw in the manner of his death a divine retribution for his sacrilegious act of murder of the Apis bull!

As footnote to the tragedy of this great king, successor to the great Cyrus, we give a one-word account of Cambyses as recorded by the latter's successor, Darius I (also reckoned as "the Great"! ). In his political testament on the Behistun rock, he says of Cambyses' death that it was *uvamarshiyus* – "died his own death / by his own hand".

But there again another story awaits – the narrative of Darius I in "his own hand".



Darius Hystaspes will follow in the next issue of Hamazor - 2/2009.



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.

### Clarification

Mr Dara Edalji of Toronto, Canada, wishes to clarify, with reference to the article Soonu Engineer wrote in Hamazor Issue 3/08, pp 44-47 with the following : "Mr Edalji Nussarwanji Patel of Dumas in Gujrat came to Mombasa (Kenya), in 1913 from Bombay (now Mumbai) in a small steam ship. His father, Mr Nussarwanji Jijibhai Patel was Patel (chief of the town) of Dumas Bhimpore in Sachin State. He was called to Mombasa by his maternal uncle (Mr Sorabji Merwanji Mistry) and his two elder brothers, Mr Jamshedji Patel and Mr Bamanji Patel. Mr Sorabji Merwanji Mistry was a leading building contractor in Mombasa. His (Edalji's) two brothers were in the service of High Court of Mombasa. On landing in Mombasa, my father was employed by Jamaican advocate (Mr Burk). Mr Burk was a prominent advocate in Mombasa, under whom my father was trained as law clerk. Later on, he worked with several prominent lawyers until he retired. He had two farms (Shamba in Swahili) on the main land and a residential plot in Mombasa. Mombasa is an island on the East Coast of Africa."

# An American Zoroastrian in Islamic Iran

by deena guzder



The summer after I graduated from Columbia University's Journalism School, I was awarded a generous fellowship from the Carnegie & Knight Foundations to produce a series of multimedia pieces for News 21 on "Faces of Faith in America." In studying how people practice and preserve faith in different societies, I juxtaposed religious life in Iran and America because the two countries are often regarded as diametrically opposite societies. In theory, the US believes in the separation of church and state whereas Iran actively promotes their conflation. Of course, in practice, religion is very much a part of American political life: In President Bush's second-term inaugural address, he used the word "God" seven times. Nonetheless, the United States is more religiously pluralistic than modern day Iran so the two countries pose different challenges for religious minorities.

I began reporting in New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles to explore how Persian identities are changed by America; how families are navigating the seemingly indelible divide between an adopted home and a native land; and how communities are straddling two countries that are often seen as opposite extremes of a religiosity continuum. Reporting in America allowed me to witness renegotiated identities. In July 2007, I travelled to Iran to understand how members of minority religions preserve their faith and forge an identity in their homeland where they are multigenerational minorities rather than immigrant minorities. After four months of badgering the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to grant me a visa, I spent 15 days exploring my Zoroastrian identity and explaining my American nationality in one of the most complex and paradoxical countries in the world. On July 27, 2007, I wake up in my Tehran hotel to a placard signaling the direction of Mecca. Inside the nightstand's drawer is a prayer rug and Koran. Today I depart for the desert city of Yazd, the holiest city for Zoroastrians.

In the domestic airport, men and women are separated for security checks. I am more conscious of my gender than I have ever been in my life. In Zoroastrianism, men and women are considered equals. Here I have to remember not to shake men's hands, use the wrong entrance or let my headscarf slide to the back of my neck. My government minder said that punishments for *hijab* violations grow in severity for each additional offense. The first time, a woman is admonished; the second time, she has to pay a heavy fine; and the third time she is given a prison sentence of a week to two months. "Prospective husbands check how many *hijab* violations their prospective wives have so they know if she's a liability," joked my minder. I hazard a smile against my feminist sensibilities.

There is a terminal in the airport for *Haj* pilgrims. When I entered the Iran Air flight, the steward said, "In the name of God Almighty and God all Powerful, we welcome you on board." Fewer than two hours later, we land in the belly of the desert. While disembarking, my minder walks near me and says, "I was told to keep an eye on you. Intelligence is very good here and they probably know you're a journalist so they delayed your visa even after it was approved." I'm not sure what to say, so I simply shrug and keep walking.

Although Yazd is the birthplace of Zoroastrianism, it is also called "the City of Muslims" since most of its population of half a million follows Iran's majority faith devoutly. But Zoroastrians have a strong presence. "This is a very honest city because the Zoroastrian religion stresses the importance of truth," said one shopkeeper when I asked about the legacy of the faith. "And you'll never get ripped off here!" he chimed while handing me a Persian carpet to admire. I ask if it's a magic carpet. When he nods in the affirmative, I ask if I can fly on it. "No, it means that you can pack it up and take it on a

plane," he laughed. "And I'll give you correct change because you're Zoroastrian." The shopkeeper then showed me different Zoroastrian motifs in the carpet's designs and explained how the wool is taken from the neck of a sheep so it's very soft. Lush flowerbeds are pervasive in the desert, thanks to a highly sophisticated system of irrigation. Yazd is known for its pomegranates, walnuts, beetroots and pastries. Today, it's also known for "yellow cake," which is not a dessert but an element in the uranium mines. "Yazd would be the first place to be bombed if there is a war," said my minder.

There are no immediate signs of Zoroastrianism when I land in Yazd and I'm advised to dress even more conservatively than usual. I decided to wear a loose, all black cloak that is suffocating. My minder tells me to watch out for rattlesnakes, scorpions and cockroaches. For a moment, I'm a little disappointed that my ancestors don't come from some tropical paradise near, say, Hawaii, where people gallivant in bikinis all day long.

The workweek here is Saturday to Wednesday. Today, Friday, is a holiday. I roam around Amir Chakhmagh Square and then have tea at Khan Traditional tea-house inside the bazaar. I go to evening prayers at a nearby mosque and overhear a conversation about the twelfth imam who professed to return and save the world from corruption. One woman exclaims, "He should be coming any Friday now because it's about time!" There is a wooden structure symbolizing the coffin of the imam and his martyrs. I am told that it is often carried around and mourned after as people self-flagellate, which makes me realize the vast differences between my own faith and the interpretation of Islam practiced here. In Zoroastrianism, depression and gloom are considered sinful; the prophet taught that personal happiness is a noble goal.

In the mosque I meet an Iranian TV documentary maker. When I mention that I'm Zoroastrian, he says, "Zoroastrians are good people!" I respond, "Muslims are good







*In May 2008, Deena 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 numerous prestigious publications. 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. Guzder at present is the reporter for TIME magazine, Asia edition, in Hong Kong.*

people!" He tells me his family was Zoroastrian four generations ago. Lowering his voice, he says that this mosque was built over a Zoroastrian fire temple. The muezzin's call to prayer interrupts our conversation.

My minder and I share a dinner of eggplant, basmati rice and pomegranate curry. We talk about politics and my minder predicts that the US won't attack Iran: "The time for solving differences through warfare and bloodshed is over," said my minder. I ask if President Bush received that memo. The former US Embassy in Tehran is today called the "Den of Spies" and plastered with cryptic messages left by the religious revolutionaries of the late 70s: "We Will Make America Face a Severe Defeat." I am told there are logical reasons for Iranians' deep distrust of America. Persians have not forgotten the 1953 CIA-orchestrated coup against their democratically elected prime minister, Mossadeq, who nationalized Iran's oil reserves much to the chagrin of the British and Americans with economic interest in the region. And they say they resent the fact that the US supported the Shah who is seen as a puppet government of the West responsible for growing economic disparity and human rights violations. Of course, the recent inflammatory "Axis of Evil" rhetoric used by the Bush Administration and the equally bombastic language of Ahmadinejad has done little to salvage diplomatic relations.

I spend the rest of my time in Yazd with the Zoroastrian community. I visit a fire temple where the holy flame has burned for 1,500 years. The priest tells me there are 200 devotees in Yazd. When I ask if the Muslims respect the Zoroastrians, he says "some of them, but not all." He introduces me to two young Zoroastrians dressed in traditional garb. Their bright outfits contrast the dusty dunes of the desert. Despite archaic discriminatory laws and residual prejudices, the Zoroastrians I meet in Iran say they usually enjoy the public trust and respect. Immediately after the Islamic Revolution, some members of Iran's government threatened to ban the celebration of Nowruz and destroy the historic site of Persepolis; however, the Iranian people thwarted these threats by popular demand. Today, many disillusioned post-revolutionaries regard Zoroastrians as the original Iranians who morally and historically represent their ancestors. After the Islamic Revolution of 1979, many Iranians in search of their national identity and original roots choose to identify with Zoroastrianism.

Yet, Zoroastrians continue to struggle as minorities in a theocracy. "We have many problems with the

government," said Banafshe, who is in her mid-twenties and lives in Yazd. "It is difficult to get a job, and when you tell people you're a Zoroastrian, they sometimes do not treat you the same." She added, "This year the government prevented us from celebrating one of our holy days because it overlapped with a Muslim holy day. They were scared that the Muslims would attend our event because it's more festive. We still held our celebrations but very discreetly and only with a small fire." Banafshe and I go shopping in the evening so I can buy lighter and brighter clothes. "Some Muslim friends try to convert me and say 'why are you Zarthushtie? You don't have a real God and worship fire,'" she said.

While visiting the abandoned Towers of Silence where the Zoroastrian dead used to dispose corpses by exposure to natural elements, the priest said I could remove my headscarf. "You are fine over here because this is our holy site." Today, there are not enough Zoroastrians to warrant keeping the towers in commission. In Iran, as elsewhere, the fate of the Zoroastrian community remains uncertain because of a declining population.



For more information, please visit:  
[http://news21project.org/story/2007/07/26/theocracy\\_democracy\\_persian\\_minority](http://news21project.org/story/2007/07/26/theocracy_democracy_persian_minority)

Deena's article - "The Last of the Zoroastrians" appeared in TIME magazine of 9 December 2008 - Ed.



Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary - High Priest in Tehran

# Triumph over Adversity

by shahin bekhradnia

It's almost seven years since Negar, her husband and little daughter arrived in England expecting to find a country which would give sanctuary to the family. After all they had been through some very traumatic experiences in Iran and had spent every penny they had paying smugglers to get them out as soon as the little girl could walk. They had been brought to Bosnia and there endured the desperate cold and hardship of trudging on foot across the crags and valleys of that mountainous country. Their hope was to try to get across into Croatia and from there to Western Europe. They had twice been discovered just as they were crawling under the wires in deep snow, and twice been sent back to where they already had been deep inside Bosnia. Things had got so tense that at one point one of the smugglers had chosen to stifle the weeping little girl by putting her inside a washing machine just to shut her up and prevent them from being discovered.

And then they finally made it: seven months after leaving Iran they arrived unceremoniously at the back of a frozen food lorry in Lowestoft. By amazing good luck, not far away in Essex an Iranian Zoroastrian lady well settled and integrated with a Parsi husband befriended them and gave them some much needed comfort and kindness in those early days. But then they began to experience the merry go round of asylum applications, interviews, state handouts, the humiliation for the husband of not being allowed to work despite being able bodied and wanting to pay tax, National Insurance etc., to earn his place in society. Two years later, they had got nowhere – indeed the husband had his application rejected and they faced the grim prospect of being sent back to Iran, from where they had escaped even though their economic quality of life had been comfortable.

The Home Office, it seems (according to a recent determination I have been involved in), continue to maintain that life in Iran was and is perfectly reasonable for a Zoroastrian and there were few grounds to grant political asylum, despite the constant reports of human rights abuses and the intolerance shown by the authorities with which the British government are well familiar. Of course reading between the lines, it is simply a question of finding every excuse possible to reduce the numbers of successful asylum seekers, given the highly sensitive position of the UK government which was constantly being accused of having a loose grip on the numbers of immigrants arriving into the UK annually.

Incidentally, it was because of this and other cases in which I had become involved that I was able to badger the Home Office through the WZO to make significant changes to the Country Profile on Iranian Zoroastrians. This profile had held deeply erroneous information hitherto (assuming wrongly that Iranian Zoroastrians were the same in every respect as Parsis – eg. on the subject of acceptance of converts) and had formed the basis of rejecting many asylum applications of Iranian Zoroastrians who had been active in promoting conversion.

It was at this point when they had received their final refusal that I came into contact with the family. Negar had just become pregnant and was expecting her second baby. The family were in despair and did not really know what they could do. Their first daughter had started school in the area where they had been allocated a flat and they just could not bear the idea of having to return to Iran to raise their children.

It is difficult to find a really competent and conscientious immigrant lawyer in the UK



*Shahin Bekhradnia, granddaughter of a renowned Yazdi priest/poet did her undergraduate studies at Oxford university in modern languages and then anthropology, focusing on 20<sup>th</sup> century Iranian Zoroastrian identity. She has published and lectured on Zoroastrian matters regularly. In her day to day life, she teaches, interprets for the immigration appellate, is a legal consultant for a tour operator, and sits as a magistrate. She set up the Pourchista Foundation in Yazd to teach skills to young Zoroastrians so that they can earn a living.*

who will take on a case without payment and try to get to grips with the status and difficulties of a minority group such as ours. However I was fortunately able to persuade one of the few decent immigration solicitors – by good fortune in Oxford where I work – to take up the case and he did his best to represent her interests. Notwithstanding, the process took not months but years and sadly Negar's long wait was not unusual.

Neither she nor her husband were allowed to work throughout these several years of waiting for the outcome. Meanwhile her second daughter was born and the family was housed in a suburb in the Birmingham area. The neighbourhood was predominantly a Pakistani one, and when somehow it became known that they were Iranians, there was an immediate assumption that they must therefore be Muslims. Imagine being abused and told to put on a veil in England – well that is what happened to Negar, and her husband was attacked and assaulted by a group of locals because he did not go to the mosque. It was almost as if their nightmare of return to Iran had materialised here in England.

Notwithstanding these very unpleasant and demoralising incidents, the couple showed their by now typical resilience and became more determined than ever to make the best of their lives. Negar was a great cook and always appeared at gatherings with delicious and highly imaginative cakes and sweets. Using her initiative, she enrolled at the local college on a two year bakery course. While this kept her busy, her husband became the house keeper, baby minder etc. He was depressed that he was not allowed to earn the family keep, and she became depressed because there was no end in sight of this dreadful waiting without any end in sight. And yet they kept trying to smile in public and were the life and soul of parties and gatherings.

Negar's friends were lucky enough to be the guinea pigs for her culinary efforts and she was rewarded with a triumph when she won the best student baker of the county award in her final year at college. Almost at the

same time, quite out of the blue came the news of an amnesty for those asylum seekers whose applications had been lodged by a certain date. Finally the family's fate was sorted – and this was the signal for a new life to start.

They have now moved away from their isolated existence in Birmingham to London where so many friends are settled and the girls have just enrolled in a new school in a very much more salubrious neighbourhood. Negar has started her own private bakery business (Vista Cakes will be happy to hear from you): she makes cakes and sweets for any special occasion while her husband is earning well. Finally they seem to have got onto a firm footing and I am sure they will make a go of their new lives. But what a very long time they have had to wait to get started. Their story is very typical of many others – with details differing but essentially what is common to many of the cases I know, is that there has been rejection by the Home Office and insistence that Iran is bed of roses for our community.



## *The Nou Rouz Table - The Philosophy of Life*

Courtesy Fariborz Rahnamoon

Over the centuries with the ups and downs of history the Nou Rouz table has taken various forms. That what is common in those numerous forms of the Nou Rouz table is "**Haft**" the number **seven**. Haft Seen, Haft Sheen, Haft Chin, or Haft Seenie.

Archeological evidence is also available at Takht e Jamshid, (Persepolis) the location of the celebration of the real Nou Rouz of that era, in 487 BC, where we see in the form of bas relief, the representatives of the various nations in groups of **seven** bearing gifts for the king of kings.

**Seven** represents the "Seven Eternal Laws" of Zarathushtra. These seven laws were derived by Zarathushtra from the evolution in nature and is part of his discourse in his Gathas. It is a guide to progress towards perfection. The first three also happen to be the gifts given by the Magi's to baby Jesus.

Please visit the Nou Rouz page at <http://www.ancientiran.com>

## Homi Patel, CEO of Hartmarx Corp

From the information posted by Arzan Sam Wadia on 11 Dec 2008 & India West

President Obama ordered his first tuxedo after 15 years for his inauguration celebration. Homi Patel, Mumbai-born chairman and CEO of leading suit maker, Hartmarx Corp, personally supervised this order. A one-button black tuxedo with satin lapels was made by HSM, a suburban, Des Plaines, Illinois, union shop, of which Chicago-based Hartmarx is the parent company.

Patel told WWD.com, the website for Women's Wear Daily, that he is working with the president-elect's staff to determine if Obama will wear a suit with a topcoat to the inauguration ceremony. As for Obama's two-button suit, it is a classic power suit, said the Mumbai-born Patel. "It's strong, navy, and it does make you look powerful, but what makes it presidential is the man in it," he said.

Patel, 59, told DNA that Obama has been a client of his company ever since he first stood for election to the US Senate in 2004. Patel said he had supported Obama's campaign for the senate and the ties resulted in a business relationship as well.

"Obama has been wearing the HSM brand on the campaign trail," said Patel, adding that the president-elect had called him six months ago to arrange his inaugural wear. Obama wore a navy blue cashmere suit from HSM for his acceptance speech on November 4. The 136-year-old company was the logical choice for Obama's bespoke suits, said Patel, adding that it manufactures all its clothes in the US, and is a union company. Asked whether Obama was the highest-profile person the company has outfitted, Patel said no. "We've done presidents before, on both sides of the aisle".

Brothers Harry and Max Hart opened a small men's clothing store on Chicago's



State Street in 1872, called Harry Hart and Brother, which became Hart Schaffner Marx eight years later. Hartmarx offers brands for both men and women, including HSM,

Hickey-Freeman, Bobby Jones, Barrie Place and Zooey.

Patel joined Hartmarx 28 years ago, after completing his MBA at Columbia University, and worked his way up. He has been Hartmarx's CEO since 2002. The Forest Plains, Illinois resident grew up in Mumbai, opposite Chowpatty Beach, and attended Cathedral School and IIT Mumbai before emigrating to the US. The India-based Daily News and Analysis Web site reported that Patel's father was the chief accountant of the Central Bank of India, while his uncle Dr Jal Patel was the physician to the Viceroy of India, the Governor of Bombay and Mohammed Ali Jinnah before Independence. Jal Patel also served as physician to the President of India and continued to be JRD Tata's personal physician until his death.



*"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."*  
Barak Obama in his speech following Super Tuesday results, Feb 5, 2008.



Sharda Janardhan Chitikar grieving for her two children

**More than 150 people died and hundreds more were injured in this latest assault on Mumbai. The majority of casualties were ordinary people - of all religions and caste - at Chattrapati Shivaji Railway Station where more than 60 were mowed down, and at a public hospital. Staff of the opulent hotels took the brunt of the attacks there. In 2006, the bombs on Mumbai's suburban railway killed 187 commuters and injured 700, again mainly ordinary people, to whom we also pay tribute.**



#### *Parsi Fatalities*

On Sun, 30 Nov 2008, 20:15:57 -0800 (PST) Farah Unwala wrote: 'Besides the already known deaths of Kaizad Kamdin, Farrokh Dinshaw and an unnamed woman, two more Parsis are reported dead - Farrokh Italia and Rohinton Maloo, and one more Parsi injured, Noshir Sanjana, in the recent terror attack in Mumbai.

**Kaizad Kamdin** worked at the Taj. He ensured the safe passage of more than 60 guests, and was killed by the terrorists for this. Let us all pray for this Hero who laid down his life, rescuing others.

**Farrokh Italia** (51), a Karate teacher, lost his life at the Trident, when terrorists stormed the hotel, firing randomly. "He was a true fighter," said an emotional Aditya Dugar (28) who had been coached by Italia since he was 8 years old. Italia's brother, Bomi, (71) said, "He was my only brother and my junior in karate training. I can't believe this has happened." Italia is regarded as a father figure by his pupils.

**Rohinton Maloo** was found on the 22nd floor of the Trident tonight. He is survived by a wife and 2 young children. May Ahura Mazda give his family the strength during this testing time. Paydas tomorrow at 3:30 pm.

#### *and Injuries*

**Noshir Sanjana**, a security officer with the Taj Hotel, walked into the place at 1 a.m., when everyone else was running out. He was shot in the knee. He lay there all night and managed to crawl out of the place in the morning. He was operated at Parsi General and he's recuperating well.

Noshir was at home when he saw the events unfolding on that fateful night. He immediately rushed to the Taj way past midnight - beyond the call of his duty. He did manage to help a few people to safety before getting gravely injured himself. He luckily made it....most of our other brethren didn't.



Drawn more than a hundred years ago by, it is said, an European artist, the 'photo' has been endowed in the popular imagination with miraculous properties. This belief has gained further credence through the story of the Leopold Cafe where, amidst the carnage and destruction, the framed picture of Zarhosht remained undisturbed on the wall.

# ai 26/11

## Mumbai's Taj Mahal - A monument to love

On Dec 1, 2009, Rusi M Lala, biographer of Jamsetji Tata, wrote: 'A horrific terrorist attack has ravaged one of Mumbai's most-loved symbols and taken the lives of many of its dedicated staff. This heritage hotel was not started as a commercial venture. It was Jamsetji Tata's gift to the city he loved'— as the Taj Mahal of Agra was Shah Jahan's memorial to the woman he loved.'

## A walk down Memory Lane

30 November 08, 4:54:18pm Aban Daboo wrote: 'Aspy and I are still so upset about the Taj because we used to take a walk along the promenade every day, after finishing homework with the kids. That was our routine for years before we came to the U.S., and we saw the Taj Continental being built from ground up after the demolition of the Greens Hotel.

We attended countless weddings, gala events, New Year's Eve dances.



## And to you, Mr Terrorist:

Friday, November 28, 2008 12:55:42 AM

Noshir H Dadrawala wrote with feeling, two days after the attack:

'...Mumbai is the city I grew up in. It's given me a good education, a wonderful career and lots to feel proud about. I love my city very much and therefore I consider all this loss and destruction too personal.

The Taj Hotel and Colaba are situated less than a kilometer away from my office. As I write this, the terrorists are still holed up there and my coming to work today is a symbol of this city's resilience...while we mourn for our dead and despise the destruction, we resolve to rise, like the proverbial phoenix from the ashes, to live another day and face the challenge.

And, Mr. Terrorist ... you have won no great battle. No medals await you in this life or the next. (Of course, you will personally come to know more about this fact when you get there and it's going to be sooner in your case than for most of us.)

You may be trained as Commandos of Carnage but we have been trained to be Commanders of our own lives. We command care and respect for our fellow human beings...'

For Parsi New Year's Eve, Jimmy Bharucha (animal trainer) used to bring his white horses up the grand staircase and it was always a beautiful sight under the rotunda of the old Taj. Standing in the portico of the front entrance we have waved to celebrities like Shah of Iran, Queen Soraya, Jackie Kennedy, Queen Elizabeth & Prince Philip, Prince Charles and countless heads of states, actors and actresses.



courtesy Soonu Engineer



The chandeliers and pillars in the Crystal Room were from the old Petit Hall and the 'Rendezvous' was one of the first restaurants to serve French food in Bombay. Their master chef, the late "Maskie", was a favourite of JRD Tata. His daughters were my classmates and birthday parties at their house were always a treat because their dad prepared the most delicious cakes.'



### *The Attack on Mumbai 2008*

An attack on Mumbai feels personal to Parsis. Mumbai, the city our forebears nursed through its infancy, then nourished with their art and enterprise. The city that lured them from the rural heartlands: bhesan, sanjan, vapi, dumas, balsar, billimore... The city they made and which made them her own.

Mumbai: multi-faceted, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, like other great cities of the world; yet unique, in its Parsi past and Parsi presence. A cosmopolitan, worldly, well-travelled presence; the irony concealed in temples of seclusion and the pursuit of purity. A presence at once insignificant in the mass but significant in the ethos and style that is Mumbai.

Elegantly ageing colonies and chawls, peaceful oases in the concrete chaos of modern Mumbai, are a testimony to our high regard for social welfare - one for all and all for one. And the carefully appointed and richly endowed schools, colleges, hospitals, sanatoria, stadia, aquariums, museums, art galleries, theatres and music halls - open to all - are a reminder of the civic pride and civic responsibility that became the emblem of our people.

Mumbai, the citadel of make believe, romance and celluloid mystery. Of lyrics and melodies that play easily on the lips of every Indian of every caste and creed and bind them with the threads of shared memory. This universal extravaganza 'sprung from the floorboards of the Parsi Theatre' and the creative imagination of the early Parsi film makers.

So an attack on Mumbai feels personal to Parsis. Its discriminating vengefulness is as hideous as its indiscriminating devastation: a negation of charity, compassion and our common humanity. It is an affront to our values of community, individuality, industry, creativity, enlightenment. In the face of this onslaught, our armour is moral courage; our humbandagi, manashni, gavashni, kunashni. - S.E.



#### *Anyone for Breakfast?*

Every horror has its humorous episode. This one has become an 'urban myth' as it fits neatly into the perceptions Mumbaikers have of Parsis:

There was an old (83) very deaf, very wealthy Parsi gentleman from Hong Kong who was staying at the Taj hotel the night of the attack. At about 7:30pm, he went downstairs to the Shamiana restaurant for dinner and returned to his room at about 9:30pm or so, after which he got into his pyjamas, took out his hearing aid and went to bed.

The next morning, he showered and shaved, dressed in his morning suit, opened the door and stepped out, till a Commando caught him in the corridor and asked him where he thought he was going. His reply - 'To breakfast!'



Photographs used are from a powerpoint presentation sent to the Editor by Noshir Patel, London, UK., and the photographs of our three Parsi 'heroes' are courtesy of Parsiana.

**This Remembrance has been put together by Soonu Engineer from the material in possession of the Editor.**

photo from Google



### *Nariman House*

The Mumbai Jewish community mourns the death of their rabbi and his wife and of three others. The international media made much of the targeting of foreigners, especially the Americans and British. But more Indians died, of all classes and creeds – no one was spared because of their background. However, the carnage at Nariman House was particularly repulsive, as it was expressly intended to target a small community of Jews.



### *A Tribute*

Michael Pollack and his wife, Anjali, were dining at the Taj when the terrorists struck. On 12.01.08, 7:40 PM ET he described their 12 hour ordeal and concluded:

'Some may say our survival was due to random luck; others might credit divine intervention. I can assure you only one thing: far fewer people would have survived if it weren't for the extreme selflessness shown by the Taj staff, who organized us, catered to us and then, in the end, literally died for us.

They complemented the extreme bravery and courage of the Indian commandos, who, in a pitch-black setting and unfamiliar, tightly packed terrain, valiantly held the terrorists at bay.

It is also amazing that, out of our entire group, not one person screamed or panicked -one more thing that got us all out alive. Even people in adjacent rooms, who were being executed, kept silent.

It is now time to commemorate our heroes.'

## *The Mama School celebrates 90 years of Excellence*

The Mama Parsi Girls' Secondary School celebrated its 90th birthday on the 1st of April 2008, and to mark this special occasion a number of activities were planned throughout the year.

Farah Ferozepurwalla – Head Prefect 2008 – 2009, reports

The first was a Jashan and a Milad, then a four day long exhibition from 8 - 12 October with a rest day on Friday 10<sup>th</sup>; the third event was the grand concert held on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2008 at the Karachi Parsi Institute. The Old Girls' Association held a reunion at Houston, USA, from 10 – 12 October and the final celebration was held at Karachi on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2009 at the Beach Luxury Hotel.

### *Exhibition 2008*

Punctuality being the hallmark of our school, the exhibition was inaugurated at exactly 10:05am, by Mrs Mani Cowasjee, Member, Managing Committee, by untying the bow of the House Ribbons.

The exhibition reflected the creative abilities of the students and the dedication of the students and teachers alike. The whole school participated in this fun filled experience and exhibits in all the subjects were set up, including a special room for Sports, Red Crescent, Mama Cadets and the Girl Guides. It is worth mentioning that not much study time was wasted as the children started work on their projects during vacations. Individual visiting days were reserved for guests, visiting schools, parents and other visitors. Hostesses were responsible for taking the guests and the invited schools around. Routes to the rooms were marked by bold directive arrows and prefects were appointed to ensure the smooth flow of traffic.

As for the exhibits each room was worth visiting. Models and charts were well displayed making it easy for the visitors to understand the various topics. Going through the comments book I found that the



L to R in the forefront: Dr Banoo Mama, Chairman, Mani Cowasjee & Zarine Mavalvala, Principal



exhibits in the Mathematics and the Cambridge Physics and Chemistry sections were greatly enjoyed by all. The Arts & Crafts section was felt to be the essence of the exhibition. The Islamiat and the senior English rooms were also highly appreciated. The *tilli* and rose water, along with the cute

*Navjote* children in the Zoroastrian Religion room fascinated all.

The exhibition was termed very informative, interesting and a job done to perfection. One visitor was very touched by the fact that time and again the Principal was herself welcoming the visitors. Many termed it *"by far the best exhibition"* and one of them commented that *"two eyes were not enough"*.

### Concert 2008

The Mamaians once again proved that they are good not only at studies but at whatever they take on. Preparations began as early as July '08 and continued for months on end, staying back after school for practice. Usherettes were appointed to guide the guests who were to be seated between 5:30pm – 6:20pm, and were given thank you booklets at the entrance which included the names of the entire cast of each performance along with the names of the teacher and student helpers who trained the young artistes.

After long and untiring efforts, the much-awaited show began on Saturday 13 December 2008 at exactly 6:30pm. The KPI lawn was packed to capacity on both days. The guests included all ages, and anxiety and excitement of parents and family members of the young talents was seen written all over their faces. The Master of Ceremonies, Mizna Saleem, warmly welcomed the guests and the concert began with a colourful pageant 'School Of Happy Children' written by Farishta Dinshaw, who now lives in Canada, and performed by the Primary School. The 'old girl' Mamaian took us around the world from Japan, India, Africa, United Kingdom and even Disneyland before returning home to Pakistan depicting the culture of all these lands in a most entertaining way. The tiny tots did a great job displaying confidence and looking adorable in their colourful costumes; their make-up was admired by one and all, for which credit goes to all the

teachers. Some parents admitted that it was hard to recognize their own daughters who had been dressed as African Zulus and Japanese ladies.

Second in line was Oscar Wilde's play, 'Lady Windermere's Fan', which was brilliantly acted out by the Senior School, with Huma Baqir giving an outstanding performance as Lady Windermere. Performed by the Afternoon Shift was an Urdu comedy called 'Burdikhawa', followed by a live-wired dance by the Secondary School called, 'The West Attack', choreographed by Sanaya Jamshedji. This was felt to be the best item of the entire show. Cheers and applause were loud and clear, with shouts of *"once more"* also to be heard.

Last but not the least was the grand finale by the entire cast of 320 students, who released gas balloons of our house colours, swaying to the song *'We are the World'*. This wonderful evening ended with the Principal briefly thanking the major workers and also thanked those without whom this show would not have been possible.



### Reunion at Houston

Reported by Mani Clubwalla - Chennai, Cyra Kanga - Houston, Arnavaz Sethna - Houston

The Mama Parsi Girls' High School Reunion that took place in Houston on October 10-12, 2008, was an exuberant outpouring of love. It allowed Mamaians a rare opportunity to express their veneration for their cherished institution. Souvenirs, speeches, and video clips proliferated during the three days where regaling past events and listening to the voices of classmates brought back memories of happy times. 108 attendees, ranging from ages 24 to 84, came from all over the world - Australia, Chennai, California, Dallas, Karachi, Kentucky, Maryland, Montreal, New York, New Jersey, and North Carolina.

This North American reunion was a culmination of enormous amount of

planning by a committee spearheaded by Nancy Yazdani of Dallas, and assisted by the alumni of the class of 1971. Two cities were in consideration, Toronto and Houston. And Houston won because of the weather, logistics, and the fact that the grand children and great grand children of founder Khan Bahadur Ardeshir Hormuzdji Mama currently live in Houston.

The three-day celebration started with an informal get together at a Persian restaurant. "I seemed to be the oldest Mamaian", declared Mani Clubwalla till she spotted Houston's Mehru Dubash. Heartening as it was to see the Old Girls of all ages - from octogenarians to the recent graduates, Mani was thrilled when young attendees came up and asked her if she was Mammie (Byramji) Aunty's sister. The fact that her sister was fondly remembered made her day.

And then there were other fond memories too. The Gala on the next day was a phenomenal success. Committee members and volunteers came to the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center (ZHCC) to decorate the main hall. Attendees wore beautiful dresses and were accompanied by their husbands. Prominent among the group was the Valika family who came from all over the United States wearing their traditional garb with husbands in *sherwani* and golden caps. There were lots of speeches and awards. Soonamai (Rustomji) Dessai of San Francisco and Rupina (Modi) Prabhakar of New Jersey, were recognized for being Girl Guide Leaders with a star each. Soonamai writes, "I must say, I was really proud of the way they organized the entire event, and the fun and fellowship was great. For that short weekend, I felt as if the cares of adulthood were lifted from my shoulders, and I was the carefree young girl, who was so blessed to have had the support and caring of a wonderful family, teachers and fellow students and a tight knit community." A trophy in the shape of a star, in keeping with the Mama school tradition, was given to Silloo Jamshedji who had come all the way from Australia.

Arnavaz Sethna reports the ZHCC Hall was beautifully decorated with round tables decked-out in the four house colors of red, blue, green and yellow with flowers, and candies. House badges were scanned and placed in the flower pot that was surrounded by candles. Zarine Mavalwala, the present principal of Mama School had sent her felicitations with video messages from the teachers past and present. It was wonderful to see "the *patawala* ringing the brass bell to start the school day, with highlights of sports day, committee members and old teachers were all featured along with pictures of the four past principals, Ms Boardman, Ms Thompson, Ms Shroff and Ms Contractor. It seems all our principals were single ladies including the present principal Ms Mavalwala" exclaimed Mani Clubwalla. And amid loud cheers and applause the school song resounded from the banquet hall.

The reunion concluded with a picnic. Everybody dressed in Mama school reunion T-shirts specially designed for the occasion. Competitive games with four teams of the houses, Mama, Contractor, Pochaji and Dinshaw were pursued followed by a trip to a local mall. A unique recipe book that included favourite and tested recipes along with a list of donors, committee members and addresses was distributed.

The impact of the reunion was not lost on any of the Mamaians. But for Cyra Kanga, Ardeshir Mama's great granddaughter, it was filled with emotion from a unique perspective. Cyra was not only an old Mamaian and a current Houstonian but also someone whose family has had a close association with the Mama Parsi Girls High School from its inception. Cyra's great grandfather Khan Bahadur Ardeshir Hormuzdji Mama was one of the founding members. "For me the evening symbolized a special sense of returning to a place of grounding, coupled with nostalgia and pride. It was a joyous moment for me to see my sister Delara Mavalwala read my mother Dr Banoo Mama's message of welcome as the current chairperson. As I heard her speak I was transported back in time when as a

young girl I accompanied my grandmother on stage as the then chairperson of the school. My thoughts drifted towards how proud my father Noshir Mama, also a past chairman, would have been to see such a diverse group of people who had come together to celebrate 90 years of an institution that was so close to his heart. Pride is an important factor when one writes about a reunion of any kind. I feel grateful to the forefathers of the school whose foresight, relentless dedication and unflagging commitment to the cause of women's education has left us a legacy that we remember and cherish forever".



Reunion picnic at Houston. Photograph taken by Ehler Spliedt

### *Finale for the year of celebration by the OGA at Karachi*

Ferzeen Bhadha voices her feelings:

On 14 February 2009, The Old Girls' Association of the Mama Parsi Girls' Secondary School's celebration of the School's nine wonderful decades with a night of music and mirth, drew a crowd of more than 500 people; a lovely mixture of young and old. Faces from the good old days of school were seen and the one statement said and heard time and again was "gosh look at you! You haven't changed a bit". It was not only wonderful to meet up with friends from my own class but to see familiar faces from senior and junior classes (although their names did slip my mind more than once!). One does of course wish that more friends, classmates and teachers could have been there, but happy to have met the ones who did attend. All in all the evening was marked with nostalgia and reminiscence and of course the promise to keep in touch, which one may add has become all the more easy with good old Face Book.



### *Humour*

*A husband read an article to his wife about how many words women use a day. 30,000 to a man's 15,000.*

*The wife replied, 'The reason has to be because we have to repeat everything to men. The husband then turned to his wife and asked, 'What?'*



## Parsi Naturopath Receives Honours



he 100th anniversary of Naturopathy was celebrated recently in Britain. There are 400 qualified naturopaths in Britain but only four of them received Honorary doctorate and fellowship from the British Naturopathic Association in 2007 and one of these is our Keki Sidhwa – a Parsi born in India.

In 1973 The United Nations of Yoga International Yoga World Union and International Yoga World Congress, with their headquarters in Stockholm, Sweden, conferred on Dr Sidhwa the title of Honorary President. In November 2007 Keki was the guest speaker at the inauguration of Mahatma Gandhi Nature Centre and was awarded a lifetime achievement award by the Health Minister in Poona, India. In 2004 he was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by National Health Association of USA for publication of *The Hygienist* for 45 years. Keki is the only Naturopath who debated with the surgeon general of the USA on the merits of Naturopathy verses conventional medicine in 1973 on the Long John Neble Radio Programme for six hours and won the debate.

He has been to 28 countries as a guest speaker on the subject of nature cure or naturopathy and continues to do so at age 82 years. He runs two miles daily and has never had any illness. He is the author of many books including poems, numerous writings of his have appeared in health magazines and various authors have mentioned his work in their books. His latest book is informative, interesting, and if some chapters followed, an improvement on one's health can be expected or even be disease-free for life. One does not have to be a vegetarian to practice naturopathy. It is not complimentary medicine such as, homeopathy, herbal medicine or acupuncture etc., and surgical procedures are not denied.

Keki Sidhwa's latest book "The Quintessence of Natural Living for Health and Happiness" is available only from British Natural Hygiene Society at Shalimar, 14 The Weavers, Newark-on-Trent, NG24 4RY. One can also order *The Hygienist* which is published quarterly carrying articles from various authors who are well known naturopaths.



## Esphandgan

Information given by Armita Atashband on the occasion of Valentine's day

One of the important holy as well as grand festivals which Iranians have been celebrating since 4000 BC, is *Esfandgan* or *Sepandarmezd* being the equivalent of Women's Day in Iran.

According to Iranian calendar, the fifth day of each month is called *Spenta-Armaiti* which is the fourth *Ameshaspand* in Zoroastrian religion. On the fifth day of the month of *Esphand* when the name of month and day is the same, we celebrate Women's Day. (According to Fasli calendar, this was on 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2009)

*Spenta-Armaiti* consists of two parts, first part means holy and sacred and *Armaiti* means humility. In the spiritual shape *Sepandarmezd* is symbol of humbleness of Ahura Mazda and in the material world is keeper of the earth, or according to the Gatha is described as Ahura Mazda's daughter. *Sepandarmezd* is the *Izad*, which supports truthful, honest, and sincere women.

On this day men give gifts to their mothers, sisters and wives. In the ancient time this day belonged to women and apart from receiving gifts from men, men fulfilled women's wants and wishes.

*Esphandgan* celebration in ancient Iran and Zoroastrian times gave importance to virtues moral, spiritual, kindness and the true value of a mother, as well as all women. Therefore, let's come together and celebrate *Esphandgan* which is the celebration of love to Mother earth and women.

«پ» آنچه زرف و منجیده است که با دانش زمان «خبروز و امروز و فردا» سازگاری و همخوانی دارد  
«ت» تنها برای روشن کردن اندیشه ها است نه برپایی دسته و گروه و نیرویی برای پیشبرد هدف های مادی و خودخواهانه خود.  
از گات ها از زبان خود اشوزرتشت بشنویم

اشتود گات هات ۳۱ بند ۶ - ای هستی بخش بشود که مردم به سخنان درست اندیش و دانایی که آموزش هایش در من بخش روح و بوی زندگی  
سودمند است گوش فرا دهند و آنرا را بکار بیاورند ای خداوند خرد با فروغ تابانک دانش، سرنوبت هر دو گروه دانا و نادان را روشن فرما.  
اشود گات هات ۳۰ - بند ۶: پروردگرا بشود مانند کسانی که جهان را بسوی تکامل، رسایی و آیینی پیش می برند از بندگی و قلندر تو باشم.  
اشود گات هات ۳۴ - بند ۵: پروردگارا چه شگرف است نیروی تو، چقدر آرزو دارم ای خداوند خرد که با گردان نیک و خدمت به جهانیان در پرتو  
راستی و منش نیک و دستگیری از نیازمندان و درماندگان به تو پیوندم

اشوزرتشت تنها پیامبری است که با دانش سر و کار دارد و آموزش هایش در چهارچوب دانش و اندیشه است. او با اندیشه کار دارد  
نه با پندار. او با دانش خویش، سرچشمه دانش ها را دریافت و نامش را اهورامزدا یعنی سرچشمه دانش های افزایش دهنده نهاد  
اشوزرتشت سخنان مافتره «اندیشه برانگیز» خود را به گونه پرش ها پیش رو نهاد.

اشتود گات هات ۲۴ بند های ۳، ۴، ۵، ۶ و ۷ - ای هستی بخش بگفتا، پر من آشکار ساز و مرا پندار. در روز ازل چه کسی آفریدگار و  
سرچشمه را یعنی «هنجار آفرینش» پدید است؟ چه کسی راه و مسیر خورشید و ستارگان را تعیین فرمود؟ چرا ماه گاهی بدر و گاهی هلال است؟ چه  
نیروی زمینی را در بلین و سپهر را در بالا نگهداشته؟ کیست آفریننده آب و گیاه، و کیست آنگاه که پند و زش و به تیره ابر باران را نذر روی می بخشد؟  
آفریننده روشنایی و تاریکی کیست؟ خواب و بیداری و کار و آسایش را چه کسی پدید آورد؟ آورنده پندار و نبهروز و شب کیست؟  
و اود اشوزرتشت روزها و ماه ها اندیشید و با خرد خود کنکاش نمود و رویدادها را بررسی و از خود می پرسید:

آیا بت ها که خود توانایی حرکتی ندارند، می توانند چنین رویدادهایی را انجام دهند؟ آیا خورشید و ماه که خود جزئی از این جمیع  
هستند، توانایی رهبری و انجام این گونه رویدادها را دارند؟ آیا از طوفان و گردباد می توان آرامش و روشنایی انتظار داشت؟ آنها که  
خود در برابر کوه یا تپه ای از توان می افتند، می توانند زمین را در پایین و سپهر را در بالا نگهدارند؟

زرتشت یکی یکی از خدایان پنداری را پیش رو نهاد و پیرامون توانایی هر یک اندیشید و در پایان دریافت که جوابگوی او خدایان  
پنداری نیستند بلکه توانمندی است که همه نیروها در او جمیع است. او سرچشمه و زاینده توان است و چون بیشتر یا خرد خویش  
کنکاش نمود دریافت جز دانش چیز دیگری نمی تواند. سرچشمه همه نیروها و جوابگوی سخنان مافتره خودش باشد. از اینرو آن  
سرچشمه توان ها یعنی دانش بزرگ را اهورامزدا یعنی سرچشمه دانش ها و یا دانش بزرگ افرایده نامید.

اشتود گات هات ۲۳ بند های ۲ و ۵ - ای مزان افروز آنگاه که فروغ تو دانش در قدیم بدرخشید و گرمی بخشد اندیشه یک با تمام تویی بمن روی  
خواهد آورد. ای خداوند جان و خرد آنگاه ترا یک و بر تویی شناختم که منش یک بمن روی آورد و نور راستی و دانش به اندیشه ام راه یافت. ای  
اهورامزدا آنگاه ترا توانایی و یزترین دانستم که تو را سر آغاز و ازلی یافتم که در پرتو توانایی ات آرزوها برآورده می شود.

اشود گات هات ۳ بند های ۷ و ۸ - اوست نخستین اندیشه گری که با نور دانش خود افلاک را درخشان ساخت و با نیروی خرد خویش قانون اینها  
«هنجار آفرینش» را بیافرید. ای خداوند جان و خرد هنگامی که در اندیشه خود تو را سر آغاز و سرانجام هستی شناختم آنگاه با دیده دل دریافتیم که  
تویی سرچشمه دانش ها که تویی آفریننده راستی «هنجار آفرینش»

پیش از آشنایی با گات ها از شما چه پنهان من خدا را نمی شناختم بلکه چشم بسته هر چه گفته بودند و نوشته بودند یاور کرده می گفتم  
خدا شفا بخش است، چاره ساز است. همه چیز را آفریده و می آفریند... و آن خدا را شخصیتی می دانستم فیعی که همه کار می تواند  
پیکند. مرفوخت مادر دست اوست. نماز و ستایش و چایلو می می نمودم که گناهانم را ببخشد و تکرده کار بمن مزد دهد و کی حالا  
می فهمم اینکه می گویند چاره ساز است. پرتو اهورامزدا یعنی دانش است که چاره ساز است و همه مشکلات بوسیله آن آسان می شوند.  
بنا بر این چنین نتیجه گرفتم که خدا یا اهورامزدا سرچشمه دانش های بزرگ افرایده است و همه دانش ها، همه سازندگی ها، همه  
توانمندی ها، همه چاره سازی ها، همه شفا بخشی ها، همه دادرسی ها، همه آفرینش های انسانی و همه و همه پرتوهای او هستند یعنی  
گونه ای از دانش اند.

می شود و اشعاری هم که می سرودم کم و بیش در همین مایه ها بودند.  
برای نمونه یکی دو تا از دویتی هایم را می نویسم:

خدا با هر چه دارم از تو دارم	به کز خون ز خون بی اعتبارم
مرا بالا و پستی در کف تست	تهی رستم تهی لبم لب دارم
خدا زینبانی و گل آفریده	خدا مجنون و بلبل آفریده
آز من می پرستم، دست من نیست	خدا جام و خم و گل آفریده

اگر پیشرفتی در کار داشتم بهر بیشتر آنرا به حساب کوشش های خود می گذاشتم و بهر کمتر آنرا خواست خدا می دانستم و ولی اگر شکست و ناکامی داشتم، بدون بودریا پستی گناهانش را به گردن خدا می انداختم و می گفتم گناه و کوتاهی از من نبوده، خواست خدا این بوده. قسمت چنین بوده. پریش های من بیشتر با خواندن کتاب ها و دریافت دانش بیشتری برطرف می شدند. با یک مسافرت هوایی دانستم که بالای ایرها هم خبری نیست! شماره ستاره ها بیش از آنچه من شب ها می دیدم هست و بعضی از آنها چندین برابر زمین هستند. آسمان هم سقف نیست و فضائی است بی پایان. آن بالا بالاها هم جایی نیست که خدا چک و پلامشوین کرده باشد. یا به گونه دیگر بگویم، بارگاہی تشکیل داده باشد.

پس خدا چیست و کجاست؟ ... این پریش ماند تا زمانی که با گاتھا آشنایی پیدا کردم. باور کنید من پیش از آنهم خیلی کتاب های دینی خوانده بودم، یک یا آدم دینداری بودم. در جوانی کلاس اوستا برپا نمودم و اوستا به بچه ها می آموختم. سخنرانی های دینی هم می نمودم، ولی شور و خنده، هنوز خدا را نشناخته بودم. دانش من از دایره اوستا و کتاب های دینی موجود و دانش هایی سرچشمه می گرفتند که از برخی از موبدان آموخته بودم. آنهم همگی سخت آلوده به باورهای بیگانگانی بود که در عزای هزاران سال بر باورهای راستین زرتشتیان تاخته بودند.

پیش از زمانی که مادکچی کیجی هاتریا به ایران بیاید و فرهنگ و دانش ما زرتشتیان را سر و سامانی بدهد، ما به مدرسه دینی داشتیم و به آموزش. سواد موبدان ما هم تنها اوستایی بود که از برداشتند. و سواد پدران ما خواندن و نوشتن و یک نوع حساب بنام میانی بود از چهل پنجاه سال پیش، از زمانی که شادروان پورداود گاتھا را به فارسی برگردان نمود، ما زرتشتیان با گاتھا آشنایی پیدا کردیم. حتی نمی دانستیم که این کتاب و کتاب دینی راستین ما زرتشتیان است.

در زمان سلطنت پادشاهی شادروان پهلوی ها بود که در دانشگاه ها گشوده شدند و در دانش بروی ایرانیان باز شد و دوره باستان شناسی و اوستا شناسی به استادی پورداود آغاز به آموزش نمود. و خیلی ها با گاتھا و دین زرتشت آشنا شدند. پس از او شادروان فیروز آذرگشسب گاتھا را به فارسی برگردان نمود و بعدها هم دانشمندان دیگر به این کار دست زدند. منهم همان زمان بالای پنجاه سالگی بود که با گاتھا آشنا شدم. چندین بار گاتھای برگردان شادروان پورداود و گاتھای فیروز آذرگشسب را خواندم. به معنی اهورامزدا پی بردم و یکباره کناخ همه باورهای پیشینم فرو ریخت. و من در این نوشته های زنجیره ای که آنرا دارم روزی به گونه نسکی درآید می گویم برداشت های خود را از گاتھا، از مآثره های اخور زرتشت و از هات های گاتھا و باورها و آموزش های آن پیامبر راستین به اندازه دانشم بنویسم.

از اهورامزدا خدای زرتشت از راز آفرینش به باور زرتشت و آموزش های سودمند. و همیشه کار ساز و هر زمان کار آمد آن پیامبر راستین گفتگو کنم پیامبری که:

«اقلب» آموزش هایش از دانش و بینش سرچشمه گرفته و همه به سود مردم جهان و پیشبرد فرهنگ و دانش جهانیان است. از آموزش هایی که برای درست زیستن در دیرامونی بر از مهر و آرامش و کار و کوشش برای آبادانی زمین های پهناور این جهان است.  
«ب» از آموزش هایی که برای همه جهانیان است و ویژه گروه یا دسته و مردم شناخته شده ای نیست.

## از خدای آن بالا بالاها، تا خدای زرتشت

نوشته ی جمشید پیشدادی (تهران)

یاد آن روزها، آن کوی و بیزن شسته و رفته که بوی اسفند و کندر هوايش را خوشبو و دلنشین می نمود. یاد آن خلایق ها و آن پیش یاغچه هایی که هر یک به پهنه باغی بودند، یاد آن پشت بام های بلند و شب های تابستان و ستاره های بیشمار و درخشان و یاد باد آغوش گرم مادر در حومه سالگی. تا مه چهار سالگی پهلوی مادرم می خوابیدم.

یادم هست گهگاهی که به خواب نمی رفتم، مادر بمن می گفت ستاره ها را بشمارم. و من هیچگاه نمی توانستم تا ده ستاره بیشتر بشمارم. چون تا ده ستاره بیشتر یاد نگرفته بودم. آنگاه که به ده می رسیدم دوباره از سر می گرفتم. همواره آرزو داشتم دریابم که چگونه به خواب می روم و خوابگاه هیچگاه دریافتم و این آرزو به دلم ماند.

بامداد آفتاب برآمده بود که بیدار می شدم. به به!! چه هوای تازه! چه بوی اسفند و کندری! چند نفس بلند می کشیدم. چشم هلم را می مالوندم تا از هم باز شوند. همه برخاسته بودند. منم برمی خاستم و از پشت بام به پائین می رفتم. پدر و مادر ایستاده بودند و اوستا می خواندند. گشتی نو می کردند. منم می نشستم و آنها را تماشا می کردم.

کم کم مادر بمن آشنم و هوا آموخت. دیگر شب ها که خواب نمی رفتم بجای شمردن ستاره ها، مادر می گفت ده تا اشم و هو بخوانم و من هیچوقت ندانستم چند تا اشم و هو که می خوانم بخواب می روم!

مادر بمن یاد داده بود هر کاری را می خواهم آغاز کنم، نام خدا را یاد کنم به ویژه هنگام برخاستن از خواب و رفتن به رختخواب خدا را فراموش نکنم.

روزی از مادر پرسیدم: «خدا کیست؟»

او گفت: «مادر جان، خدا کسی است که ما را آفریده. این دنیا و هر چه می بینی خدا آفریده. خدا با نان می دهد. خدا خیلی بزرگ است...»

پرسیدم: «خدا کیاست؟»

او گفت: «اون بالا بالاها» و من هرگاه نام خدا را یاد می کردم سرم را بالا می گرفتم و می گفتم یا خدا. بزرگ تر و بزرگ تر شده بودم. دیگر پیش مادر نمی خوابیدم. نزد برادر و خواهرم می خوابیدم. شب های تابستان و پشت بام بلند و ستاره های چشمک زن روشن بیشمار و خدای اون بالا بالاها کار بدست من داده بودند. راستی آن سقف آبی قشنگ که به اون می گفتم آسمون و اون چراغ های چشمک زن کوچک و بزرگ که به اون ها می گفتم ستاره ها، چی هستند؟

لایه خدا آن سوی سقف آسمون اون بالا بالاها بارگاہی داره و اینگونه که مادر می گفت، قریونش برم شاه مهر ایزد و شاه ایزد و شاه اعتد ایزد و چند تای دیگر از نزدیکان خدا دور و برش را گرفته اند، و کارهای ما را می بینند و گناه و ثواب ما را می نویسند.

دنیا ی کودک و وقتی ابرها را می دیدم که بخشی از آسمون را می پوشانند، دلم می خواست برم بالا و روی آنها بروم. های های که چه دوره ای است دوران کودکی. سراسر سادگی، خوش یاوری، سرایا لطف و مهر و زیبایی. به ویژه در آن زمان که دانش ها کم و چیره گی باورهای دین های دیگر بر دین زرتشت خیلی زیاد.

در دوران جوانی خیلی چیزها بر من روشن شد. دانستم آسمان سقف نیست. نمی خود بر روی ابرها راه رفت. خدا آنها اون بالا بالاها نیست، بلکه هر جا روشنائی باشد آنجا هست. و بهمان باور هرگاه اوستا می خواندم رو به روشنائی می ایستادم. ستاره ها هم چراغ ها نیستند، بلکه یک چیزی شبیه به زمین هستند و ... باز کمی دانشم که بیشتر شده دانستم خدا همه جا هست و نیایش روشن دلان هم پذیرفته اهورامزدا می باشد، ولی خدا را تا گذشت چهل سال از عمر همانگونه در پرتو باورهای خانگی، اجتماعی و کتاب های دینی که همگی سخت آلوده به باورهای دین های سامی بودند شخصیتی می شناختم که سرفروخت همه ما بدست او سپرده شده و نیاز به ستایش و نیایش دارد. و از روز نخست سرفروخت هر یک از آفریده هایش را نوشته و یا او همراه کرده است. و هر چه خواست اوست انجام

# “The Judging of Conversion to Zoroastrianism: Behind the Scenes of the Parsi Panchayat Case (1908)”

A ZAH Library Lecture : reported by Magdalena Rustomji



On November 8, 2008 the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) hosted a ZAH Library lecture, “*The Judging of Conversion to Zoroastrianism: Behind the Scenes of the Parsi Panchayat Case (1908)*”. The guest speaker was Mitra Sharafi, Assistant Professor of law at the University of Wisconsin where she teaches undergraduate courses. She has a history degree from McGill, Canada, as well as two law degrees from Britain and a doctorate in history from Princeton. Her PhD dissertation is a study of law and identity in the Parsi Zoroastrian community of colonial India and Burma, and it was awarded the 2007 South Asia Council’s Dissertation Prize. Mitra is currently working on a book project that explores the special relationship between the Parsis and law in British India. Her research interests include the legal history of marriage, divorce, and trusts in colonial South Asia; Parsi and Zoroastrian studies; legal pluralism; and the history of the legal profession in the British Empire. The lecture examined the Parsi Panchayat Case (Petit vs. Jeejeebhoy – 1908) decided by Justices Davar and Beaman. In the year, 1903, Mr R D Tata married a French lady in Paris. He brought her to Bombay and a Priest, Dastoor Kaikhooshroo Jamaspji performed the navjote ceremony, thereby inviting her into the circle of the Zoroastrian community. A suit was filed on behalf of S R D Tata. The matter was investigated at great length and a large number of witnesses were examined.

The two main questions addressed in the case were:

1. “Whether the defendants are validly appointed trustees of the properties and the funds of the Parsi Panchayat, and whether in the event of death or resignation of one

or more of them, they have the right of filling up such vacancy or vacancies, as they occur.”

2. “Whether a person born in another faith and subsequently converted to Zoroastrianism and admitted into that religion is entitled to the benefit of the religious institutions and funds mentioned in the plaint and now in the possession and under the management of the defendants.” (Preface p. vi – Judgments).

The court held that properties vested with the BPP trustees were only for members of the Zoroastrian religion who were “Racial Parsis”. Soonoo Ratan D Tata (Suzanne Briere) was not a racial Parsi although she was a Zoroastrian by conversion. “In the second part of the judgment, the judges concurred that the Zoroastrian religion not only permits but enjoins conversion of a person born in another religion and of non-Zoroastrian parents . . . the court ruled that while one could convert to Zoroastrianism, one could not be considered a Parsi Zoroastrian.” The question addressed was, “Who is a Parsi?” (Preface to Judgments p. vii)

Among the sources she researched, Mitra Sharafi looked at judgment notebooks and this gave her a discernible insight into the personalities, circumstances and contingent facts surrounding those persons, as they weighed and considered the merits of the case. One of the more interesting such facts was how J J Vimadlal, with his theory of eugenics (the science of improving the qualities of the human race by the careful selection of the parents – but better known as the belief that “superior but separate races” should not be mixed), was chiefly responsible for changing Sir Davar’s opinion.

This was not only a story of *"Big Principals"* but also a story of *"Personalities"*. Mitra narrated the story from her understanding of the temperaments of the main characters; Justice Dinshaw D Davar the London trained barrister, and Justice Frank C O Beaman, the blind theosophist, as well as the star expert witness J J Modi, a respected priestly scholar.

The Library Lecture was well attended, well received and concluded with questions from the audience. Mitra wove a fascinating story, making the characters come alive and giving the audience an informed view into the personalities, times, circumstances, and politics that essentially dictated the outcome of the decision.

#### Reference:

Judgments, Petit vs Jeejeebhoy 1908, Saklat vs Bella 1925  
Bombay: Parsiana Publications Private Limited, 2005

*Note from the Editor:* Mitra Sharafi was invited to Karachi in the early part of 2007, to share her findings on this subject with the community which was followed up in Hamazor Issue 1/ 2007 pp42-44 complete with illustrations.



Mitra, centre, with the ZAH Library committee

Magdalena Rustomji was born in San Luis Potosi, Mexico and immigrated to Texas as a young child. For over 20 years she has been a licensed professional counselor (psychotherapist) working with "recent arrival" immigrant high school students, in group and individual sessions. Magdalena's other interests include gardening, poetry and the cinema. She is the coordinator of an annual Writing Festival for immigrant high school students that celebrates Poetry Month and has also written a poetry module for use in Group work with adolescents.



## Little Zizou

Sooni Taraporevala's directorial debut film, *Little Zizou*, premiered in NYC on November 9 as official Closing Night film for the MIAAC Film Fest; and in DC on November 15 with the Smithsonian-sponsored SALTAF Fest.

Sooni, screenwriter of *The Namesake*, *Mississippi Masala*, and Oscar-nominated *Salaam Bombay* among others, sets *Little Zizou* in Bombay, amongst her own Parsi Zoroastrian community. '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 Bombay. (Zidane, nicknamed Zizou, is the famous French football/soccer player of Algerian origin).

It's an exuberant comedy, with a message of tolerance at its heart. Featuring choreography by renowned Shiamak Davar, with Boman Irani, Sohrab Ardeshir, Zenobia Shroff, Imaad Shah, Jahan Bativala, Iyanah Bativala and a special appearance by Bollywood star John Abraham (who is half Parsi).

- information sent by Tamina Daver, London.





## Inauguration of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Memorial Museum, Navsari

Report from Marzban Jamshedji Giara

Besides the Atash

Behram, First Dastur Meherjirana Library and Jamshed Baug, Navsari now has one more landmark to be proud of. Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Memorial Museum was inaugurated on Sunday October 19, 2008 by Dastur Meherjirana after a jashan ceremony. Present on the occasion were Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, 8<sup>th</sup> Baronet, trustees of Sir J J Charity Fund and Sir J J Parsee Benevolent Institution, trustees of Surat Parsee Panchayat and principals and staff of Sir J J and R J J Schools at Navsari.

Dastur Meherjirana lauded Sir Jamsetjee's philanthropy and services to his community and country and to humanity at large. He suggested that a lesson on the life and noble deeds of Sir Jamsetjee be included by the Dept of, Government of Gujarat in school textbooks so that the present youths get an opportunity to know about Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy. This Museum will serve as an inspiration to all who visit it to emulate his example.

The present Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy in his speech said: "The purpose of converting Sir J J's birthplace into a memorial museum is to showcase the contribution made by one man in the fields of philanthropy, education, healthcare, women's education and community service. This museum aims to enthuse our

youths about the ideals set by Sir Jamsetjee. It portrays his world of adversity, adventure and accomplishment. His vision was as large as his generosity."

The ancestral home where Sir Jamsetjee was born in 1783 has been renovated and transformed into a Memorial Museum to commemorate his 225<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary. This project has been undertaken by Sir J J Charity Fund and Sir J J Parsee Benevolent Institution. The research, concept and curation has been carried out by the team, Homai N Modi, Dr Homi B Dhallal and Jamshed A Bhiwandiwalla. All three of them were present and felicitated at this function. Girls of Seth R J J School, Navsari presented a garba recital specially composed for the occasion titled "*Jamshed Jejee taro danko vaghe gher gher*". The inaugural function was ably compeered by Pouruchisti Kadodwalla, Headmistress, Sir J J Primary School, Navsari.

Homi D Mehta, a trustee of Sir J J Parsee Benevolent Institution while proposing the vote of thanks stated that Navsari is also the birthplace of Dr Dadabhai Naoroji, the grand old man of India and Jamsetjee Nusserwanji Tata, the father of Indian industry. The houses in which they were born still exist at Navsari. He suggested that these heritage houses could also be



Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy



Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, 8<sup>th</sup> Baronet



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

The photographs on this page are courtesy of Sir JJ.



converted into memorial museums so that future generations would be inspired by their noble lives.

*[Entry into the museum is by prior appointment only, visiting days Mon - Saturday between 10:30am - 5pm. For appointment: Jehanbux Kodia, Manager, (off: (02637) 235099 mob: 98797 35551) during normal working hours. Admission is free.]*



Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Memorial Museum



Recently, in Mumbai the portrait of Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, first Baronet, a great son of India, has been restored.

For this, credit goes to Kekoo Gandhi of Gallery Chemould and Chemould Frames for his efforts in initiating the restoration work at the J J School of Art, and Hungarian painter Laslo Seres, who did the work with enthusiasm and skill, free of cost.

Perhaps no single individual in the history of Bombay city deserves it more than the philanthropic Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, whose entire life was a personification of charity. - Ed.

## Over 1200 year-old trees are now a National Heritage

TEHRAN (Amordadnews): "The number of trees aging over 1200 years have been registered as national heritage. As announced by the National Cultural Heritage Organization, after registering Mount Damavand as the first natural heritage of Iran, 13 more natural sites have been listed as natural heritage of our country. The Mehregan cypress tree in the North Khorasan Province is registered as No 4, the five plane trees of 'Pir e Kamar Basteh' in Hamedan Province are registered as No 5 and the plane tree of Baghvar Mosque in Hamedan Province as No 6, are three of these natural heritages. ... natural heritages registered under No 7 to 12 are in Yazd Province, which are the Heart Springs, Mount Arnan, the Mangabad Cypress, the Karkhangan Plane Tree, the Tang-e Chenar Plane Tree, in the Kouhrig area, respectively. 'The trees that have been registered are all over 1200 years of age, and the age of the other natural sites, like the springs and caves and mountains belong to the various periods of the life of this planet and are millions of years old.' ..."

Hamazor Issue 3/2003 celebrating 3000 years of Zoroastrian Culture, carried the photograph as its cover, of the ancient cypress in Cham, Yazd believed to be about 4000 years old. - Ed





# WELCOME TO MELBOURNE

## **Let's Reveal to the World The Spiritual Splendour of Zarathushtra (2009 Parliament of the World's Religions (PWR) in Melbourne, Australia)**

Fellow Zarathushtis,

A unique opportunity has presented itself to us to proclaim the messages, the teachings and Truth of Zarathushtra to a world that comes seeking knowledge.

From the 3rd to 9th of December 2009, the Parliament of the World's Religions will be held in Melbourne, Australia. The Parliament represents the world's largest interreligious gathering, with religious leaders and thinkers from over 80 nations congregating in one place at one time to seek an understanding and knowledge of different faiths.

Given the Parliament's unique ambition to: "Make a world of difference, Hearing each other, Healing the earth" the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria believes this to be an ideal forum in which to reveal to the world, the Spiritual Splendour of Zarathushtra. It is our intention to share with the world the depth, the wisdom and the spiritual beauty of the Gathas. To reveal the thinking and foresight that shaped all religions to come.

We would be delighted if you could make the time to join us in Melbourne and participate in the Parliament in person. More so, we invite all scholars, thinkers, students and artists to send us their writings, their dissertations, their thoughts, their insights and their art on the vision of Zarathushtra as revealed in the Gathas.

**ZAV's Open Invitation:** We the Zoroastrians of Victoria open up our hearts and homes to all Zoroastrians of the world, to visit our beautiful country, enjoy our open hospitality and take pride in our glorious heritage.

**Detailed Information:** For Registration Fees, Submission Deadlines (28th February 2009), PWR Objectives, Daily Schedules, etc, please refer to websites: [www.parliamentofreligions2009.org](http://www.parliamentofreligions2009.org)  
[www.zav.org.au](http://www.zav.org.au)

### **Correspondence:**

PWR Coordinating Committee,  
Zoroastrian Association of Victoria Inc.  
PO Box 807, Kew, 3101, Victoria, Australia  
Email: [pwr@zav.org.au](mailto:pwr@zav.org.au)



Friedrich Nietzsche, in a letter to his sister, Elizabeth Forster Nietzsche, Weimar, December 1905, writes:

*People have never asked me, as they should have done, what the name Zarathustra precisely means in my mouth, in the mouth of the first Immoralist; for what distinguishes that philosopher from the past is the very fact that he was exactly the reverse of an immoralist. Zarathustra was the first to see in the struggle between good and evil, the essential wheel in the working of things. The translation of morality into the metaphysical, as force, cause, end in itself, was his work. But the very question suggests its own answer. Zarathustra created this most portentous error, morality, consequently he should also be the first to perceive that error, not only because he had longer and greater experience of the subject than any other thinker — all history is like the experimental reflection of the theory of the so called moral order of things — the more important point is that Zarathustra was more truthful than any other thinker. In his teaching alone do we meet with truthfulness upheld to the highest virtue — ie. The reverse of the cowardice of the “idealist” who flies from reality. Zarathustra had more courage in his body than any other thinker before or after him. To tell the truth and to aim straight: that is the first Persian virtue. Am I understood? The overcoming of morality through itself — through his opposite — through me — that is what the name Zarathustra means in my mouth.”*

## *An interview with the First Zoroastrian Captain of Airbus A 380*

by behramjee ghadially

Captain Cama is the first Zoroastrian to captain the massive Airbus A 380 for any airline worldwide. He resides in Dubai and works for Emirates as a senior instructor and pilot. His story personifies the basic logic of how hard work and dedication leads to a life filled with personal and financial success.

Behramjee Ghadially: From which age in your life, did you seriously consider pursuing becoming a pilot and why for a commercial airline and not in the Indian military?

Captain Cama: Being brought up in an aviation background and being around planes since childhood, I always was fond of the airline business. I started doing my initial Private Pilots License during my high school days in India at the Gujarat Flying Club, Vadodara. Although I would have loved to join the Indian Air Force, I had a slight number and needed to wear spectacles which would have been an issue joining the IAF, as well as the financial remuneration was not comparable to the Civil Aviation salary.

BG: Did you have any friends or relatives who have been involved in the airline industry to have influenced or groomed you along this career path?

CC: My father owned a general aviation company Cama Aviation Services, located at the Juhu airport in Bombay, so I was brought up around hangars, planes etc.

BG: Your first job in the airline industry was for which company and under what designation?

CC: Vayudoot Airlines as a First Officer on the HS-748 (AVRO).

BG: Please narrate your career path that took you from being an ordinary pilot to an A 380 Captain along with all the obstacles and successes endured along the way?

CC: There is no such term as an "ordinary pilot". After Vayudoot (1989-1993) I chose to



leave as it was folding up and all the pilots and staff were automatically being transferred to state airlines ie. Air India and Indian Airlines. Not wanting to work for a government carrier, I joined Jet Airways (1993-1998). At Jet, I progressed from a First Officer to a Captain and then a Check Pilot and

Operations Manager flying the Boeing 737-300/400/500. I left Jet Airways and joined Emirates Airlines in mid 1998 as a First Officer on the Boeing 777 fleet. In two short years, I got my command on the Boeing 777-200/300 and a year later became an instructor on the Boeing 777 as well. About four years ago, I transferred to the Airbus A 330/340 family and flew them for three years as a Captain and Instructor. Being a senior instructor in the company, I transferred to the A 380 in the first batch of Instructor Captains in May 2008.

BG: You have been working for a long time with Emirates to have become an A 380 captain, which was your favourite aircraft to fly and which wasn't?

CC: No real favourite airplane, every aircraft has its own charm to a pilot and I have enjoyed all the aircrafts I have flown in my career to date ie. HS-748, B737, B777, A330-200, A340-300, A340-500 and A380-800. A point I would like to emphasize is "bigger does not necessarily mean better".

BG: Emirates have a wide ranging network covering all continents of the globe? Which has been your favourite long haul, medium haul and short haul flights to operate?

CC: I am not a great fan of long haul flying and prefer flights in the five to seven hour time frame. No favourite destinations really although I do like Europe and love Rome as a city and place to visit.

BG: During your tenure with Emirates, have you ever had the urge to seek better opportunities with their main Arab rivals or somewhere else? Or have any of them tried to poach you away from EK?

CC: No! I love Emirates and have not considered any other airline.

BG: Being a pilot is a stressful, tiring yet an adventurous job as you fly to different places and experience different cultures. In your many years of flying abroad with EK, how do you pass your time at an international destination when you are there resting for a day or two before your next assignment?

CC: I always love to go and explore new destinations and make most of my time in new places. Socializing with friends and crew, going out for meals, shopping and working out in the hotel gym take up most of my time.

BG: Many people wonder why Emirates expands so rapidly and most of all why they ordered 58 Airbus A 380s when other carriers who have a larger home market, fleet size and international reputation have not even ordered half that amount. Do you really think that EK needed to order that many A 380s?

CC: I leave the planning decisions and management choices to the bosses who run the airline, they buy them and I fly them, quite simple. Emirates is a great airline and has a phenomenal success story so I guess the aircraft orders are justified.

BG: The common perception is that Emirates gets subsidized fuel rates from DNATA and other forms of discounts, incentives from the local government. This has enraged many of its competitors especially those in Europe/UK. Can you kindly set the record straight on this subject?

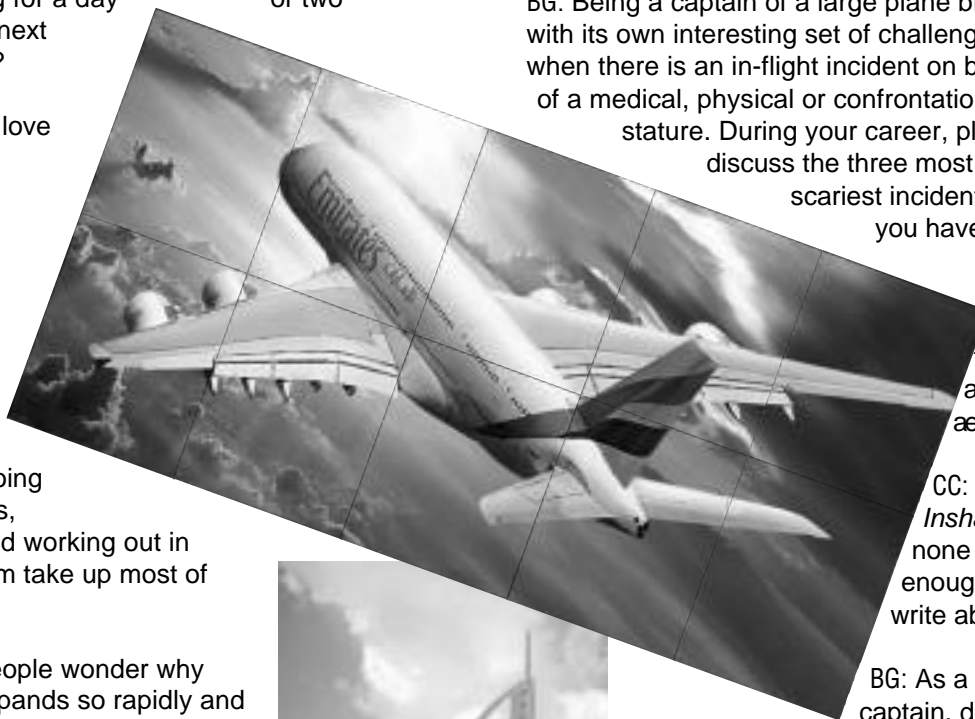
CC: It is all nonsense and does not have an iota of truth whatsoever. Simple case of jealousy, people can sometimes not accept and live with others hard earned success.

BG: Being a captain of a large plane brings with its own interesting set of challenges when there is an in-flight incident on board of a medical, physical or confrontational stature. During your career, please discuss the three most

scariest incidents that you have been witness to whilst flying an aeroplane?

CC: Inshallah, none scary enough to write about.

BG: As a captain, do people who claim to know you take advantage by asking for upgrades to business class from economy if they know you are the commander of the plane? If so, then what is your policy in this regard from a personal perspective?



CC: Unlike other carriers, we do not authorize upgrades as a company policy. If for commercial or operational reasons it is required then the Commander has the authority to do so.

BG: Please explain how you balance family and work life as due to your job requirements, you are required to be out of sight for three to four days a week. If you are married and have children, how does a high ranking and frequent flying pilot manage to balance everything out?

CC: It's all part and parcel of an airline pilot's career and has to be accepted and dealt with. The time off given to pilots more than makes up for the time we are out of base. Being an instructor as well I spend a lot of time training pilots in the simulator in Dubai which occupies about 70% of my flying programme and do approx two to three flights per month only.

BG: Dubai has been your home base for a while now. You have seen the city expand to new horizons and become a financial, cultural and entertainment hub in the Middle East. What is it that you love and hate the most in Dubai ever since you have moved there?

CC: Love mostly everything about Dubai, the multi cultural environment is great and the life style it accords is second to none. The driving indiscipline on the roads is something that can improve.

BG: What advice would you give young aspiring pilots on achieving their dream of flying one day commercially for an airline?

CC: Make sure there are plenty of jobs available before you spend lots of money to train to get a CPL. It will be very frustrating having a flying license and no job for many years. I cannot recommend any flying schools at this point as I did my flying in 1988 and have no contact with that part of aviation. Although taking an educated guess, doing it in the USA, Canada and Australia would be advisable due to the cost and time factor involved.

BG: Many people wonder why Emirates has not explored the opportunities of flying into Kathmandu, Nepal which is a big profit maker for Gulf Air, Etihad Airways and Qatar Airways. It lacks competition with no European airlines flying there and only Thai Airways does so from the Far East. Some say it's due to the airport's high altitude and dangerous approach from the mountain side. What is your take on this matter?

CC: I cannot comment on this matter as it does not concern me, the planning etc in the airline is done by people hired to do just that.

BG: My last question pertains to your other hobbies in life. If you are a sports fan, which sports do you follow?

CC: I am a huge motor sport fan, especially Formula 1. I love going to the gym daily, camping outdoors, travelling and whitewater rafting are my passions.



*Behramjee Ghadially originally from Karachi has been a resident of Toronto since the past eight years. He came to Toronto for his university education and since his graduation in 2005, has been working for Bahrain's national carrier Gulf Air. He is currently their Marketing Manager in Canada.*



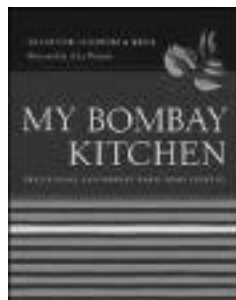
Please refer to article, page 45

*His love of Persian literature enabled Jamshid Pishdadi to write his first poem at age 16. His career as an educationist, in various capacities, spanned 31 years. Fifteen publications to his credit include poems, plays, folklore, religious texts and stories, memoirs, history, culture and biographies.*

*Jamshid and his wife Farangis live in California in the vicinity of their three daughters.*

# “*My Bombay Kitchen: Traditional and Modern Parsi Home Cooking*”

Reviewed by Jubin Mama



Niloufer Ichaporia King  
University of California Press, 2007  
ISBN 978-0-520-24960-8

## M

*y Bombay Kitchen* represents a welcome departure in the genre of Parsi cookery books by seeking to place the Parsi culinary tradition firmly within its wider cultural and historical perspective. In adopting this approach Niloufer Ichaporia King succeeds brilliantly in making authentic Parsi cuisine accessible to a wider non-Parsi readership. She also delights Parsis by providing us with recipes that are easy to follow but never compromise on taste or authenticity. In the tradition of inventive Parsi cooks over generations she provides us with deliciously Parsi-ised versions of dishes of other cultures. Finally she presents examples of 'modern Parsi cooking', incorporating unfamiliar ingredients or ideas, which to her are authentically Parsi believing as she does that our cuisine is constantly evolving, responsive to every interesting current, first in Persia, for the past thousand years in India and now in North America and elsewhere, with new ingredients, new circumstances and traditionally inventive cooks in every household.

King's starting premise is simple. All that is needed to create a Parsi kitchen anywhere in the world is an insatiable curiosity about food and a love for sharing it, which many of us will recognise as amongst our most defining characteristics. Another assertion that should find resonance is that the most unselfconscious expression of our Parsi identity is through our approach to food and

cooking. In this book she shows how our cuisine is a dynamic tradition, and encourages people to do what Parsis have done throughout their history in different lands and cultures: enthusiastically adopt and adapt recipes that have taken their fancy, in 'magpie fashion' (magpies notoriously appropriating for their nests whatever catches their eye). Whilst preferring to use the different avian metaphor of '*kagraas*', flying off as they do with whatever appeals, she has chosen not to do so to make the book as understandable as possible to the widest audience.

She passionately wants readers to see Parsi food as a living, moving tradition and do what Parsis have done for millennia, grabbing an idea here and an ingredient there, whilst always relying on a personal sense of what tastes good. Her hope is to communicate the long-held Parsi love for sharing the pleasures of the table without fuss or anxiety and in this she succeeds magnificently. The recipes are accessible to individuals new to Parsi cookery, with the author employing common North American names for ingredients and detailed but simple and clear instructions that don't make assumptions of any reader's prior knowledge. The recipes should encourage even the least intrepid among us to confidently replicate authentic and delicious



King's mother, Shireen Ichaporia, on the running board (left) of her uncle's car in Karachi in 1925.



Parsi home-style cooking. It is this reviewer's opinion that this could include those among the younger generation of Parsis who wish to turn out flawless Parsi dishes to enjoy with friends but have so far put off doing so for fear of getting it wrong. They need not worry – few Parsi cookery books have employed the rigour with which King's book has been edited, resulting in fool-proof recipes.

Niloufer Ichaporia King is a Bombay-born Parsi Zoroastrian who migrated to the US in the early 1960s and since 1971 has lived in San Francisco. She left India with a treasured notebook of family recipes painstakingly dictated by her mother's Goan cook and a copy of that emblematic Bombay food bible, the *Time and Talents Club* cookbook. Always keenly interested in food, as a graduate student at the University of California (where she gained a doctorate in anthropology) she cooked her way through graduate school, catering various gatherings and later assisting and cooking for celebrity chefs at the *Great Chefs of France Cooking School* at the renowned Robert Mondavi winery in Napa, California.



Niloufer Ichaporia King prowls about six farmers markets a week in search of greens, roots, seeds and inspiration.

Ichaporia King has had an enduring and fruitful collaboration with *Chez Panisse* in Berkeley California, founded by a close friend of hers, Alice Waters. The restaurant is the acknowledged birthplace of 'California cuisine', a style credited to Waters that focuses on simple, seasonal, cuisine using local ingredients, with daily changing menus depending on the freshest, best available produce from small local farms, ranches and fishmongers. *Chez Panisse*

is listed among the top 50 restaurants in the world by *Restaurant* magazine, an accolade complemented by the restaurant being awarded a Michelin star in 2006 and 2007. In an enthusiastic foreword to King's book

Waters acknowledges her influence on the *Chez Panisse* repertoire. King has a special interest in tropical food plants and cuisines and many at *Chez Panisse* first learned about tropical and subtropical ingredients and techniques from Central and South America, Asia, Africa and the Pacific from her. Long before anyone else in America paid attention to the fashionable phenomenon of street foods, King was doing research, taking notes and sharing information and as early as the 1980s was cooking Indian street foods at *Chez Panisse* to the delight of patrons.

King believes that Parsi food remains our cultural mascot even when other household customs gradually fall away because it is portable across geographical and cultural boundaries. An astute observation and one that should strike a chord with those who remember the daily rituals of *torans*, *chalk*, and *sukkhur-loban* in our grandmothers' households; rituals followed less scrupulously by our mothers usually on auspicious occasions; and even less so by us, the succeeding generation. Most of us however have remained attentive to our food customs and the associated celebratory events, more than any others to the two *Navrozes* a year we have been bequeathed by our religion. From Sydney to Bombay, Karachi to London, and from New York through to Houston, Toronto and LA, Parsi communities throughout the world congregate to celebrate their new years, the focal point of which is the raucous communal enjoyment of food.

*Jamshedji Navroze* is Ichaporia King's favourite, and for many years she celebrated it by filling her house with flowers, friends and a surfeit of Parsi festive food. After one such gathering Waters approached her with a request to consider doing a similar event at *Chez Panisse*



on a regular basis. Ten such Parsi New Year dinners have taken place at *Chez Panisse* to date, with the event evolving into a typically joyful, rowdy Parsi family party with chalk patterns at the entrance of the restaurant and scented garlands recreating a traditionally festive Parsi ambience.

The pleasure and satisfaction derived by friends eating Parsi food led Ichaporia King to sit her mother down and get her to tell her everything about her repertoire of Parsi cooking. During two extended visits by her parents to California in the 1980s, King and her mother cooked Parsi food every day for several months, with the author watching, accurately measuring her mother's sometimes esoteric quantities (eg the charming "one cigarette-tin full") and noting down recipes. The proceedings were overseen by her father who gave the final seal of approval on their efforts ("It tastes correct"). The resulting collection of recipes together with those given to her by the family's Goan cook when she left India is Ichaporia King's definitive reference material whenever she wants Parsi food to "taste correct". They have played a major role in the genesis of *My Bombay Kitchen*.

When her mother turned 90 in 2000, Ichaporia King wanted to mark the occasion by writing up the recipes cooked under her parents' joint supervision during their Californian sojourns. As a cook she was keen to show readers how easy, unimposing and delicious Parsi food can be. The anthropologist in her was keen to fix the recipes in time and place, feeling they would mean nothing without a personal and cultural context. A key intention of hers was to show that cultural change and geographical dispersal do not necessarily mean a loss of identity or authenticity, but rather, their rearticulation in a different context. The most tenacious aspects of culture are those that incorporate change. Parsi food over the centuries in India and now beyond India presented a perfect example.

The cook and social anthropologist in the author have come together in perfect

balance in *My Bombay Kitchen*. It is a superlative cookery book with exemplary recipes that never compromise on authenticity or tradition. It is also an intimate and personal family memoir and a social and cultural history of the Parsis. It is unique among other books in this genre because this fusion of Parsi culinary, cultural and historical traditions has not been attempted before, nor succeeded so well. The author is as talented a writer as she is a cook and the result is a triumph.

It is a beautifully produced, handsome hardback volume. Refreshingly it doesn't employ the use of glossy, overly-stylized photographs but a series of line drawings (executed by the author's husband, David King) detailing traditional cooking utensils, equipment and techniques. These are both informative and useful whilst enhancing the book's visual appeal.

The book begins with a brief introduction to Parsi history and culture, followed by an introduction to cooking techniques, utensils and equipment, including descriptions of the author's grandmother's and mother's kitchens which should evoke fond memories for many Parsi readers. The same section also contains a selection of recipes for basic ingredients and spice mixtures (the ubiquitous ginger-garlic paste, Parsi garam masala, sambhar masala, and dhana jiru or dhansak masala) – an invaluable resource for those new to Parsi cookery or who have approached it with trepidation in the past.

The recipes themselves are organised into 11 thematic sections: Beginnings (appetisers and breakfast items); Soups; Eggs (a bulwark of Parsi cuisine); Fish and Seafood; Meat and Poultry; Rice and Dal; Vegetables; Salads; Chutneys, *achaars* and relishes; Sweets and Desserts; and Drinks. Recipes have informative, entertaining head notes containing information about their history, cooking tips or an idea of what the finished product should taste or look like, noting Parsi culinary likes and dislikes, mainstays of tradition etc. The author's explanation of products and procedures are clear and organised enough for newcomers

to proceed confidently whilst also providing options for more advanced cooks. Attention to detail and organisation presciently address issues like storage and substitution.

The book concludes with a selection of menus (traditionally authentic as well as the more avant-garde); a glossary impressive in its depth of knowledge and erudition; a detailed source guide (enabling anyone anywhere in the age of the internet to obtain everything they need to prepare Parsi food); and a comprehensive and scholarly bibliography. A significant omission from the bibliography is the Karachi Banu Mandal's excellent collection of traditional Parsi recipes *Manna of the Angels*, which in visual flair and presentation is a worthy equal of the volume being reviewed).

This is a commendable book. It offers a wide-ranging and highly readable account of our Parsi culinary heritage. The full repertoire of classic Parsi dishes is contained within it together with successful modern interpretations. The author's prodigious knowledge ensures the book is comprehensive and authentic. Her personal interests and academic background bring erudition and intellectual rigour, whilst her writing style ensures that the narrative and recipes remain accessible to novices and experts alike. And it is much more than a cookery book with its appreciation of how food and its preparation and consumption with gusto are so central to the Parsi identity worldwide.

Above all else the author's writing style makes this book a delight: witty, warm and humorous; showing an appreciation of Parsi culinary and cultural tradition that is never condescending or sentimental; demonstrating an obviously sincere affection for the Parsi community and the characters that bring it so much colour and life; evocative of people, smells, tastes, and Parsi households everywhere. For this reviewer there were many delightful points of cultural resonance, making it a joyfully nostalgic experience.

We in the Parsi community are fortunate in having in Niloufer Ichaporia King an accomplished cook who can transmit her culinary skills in a highly accessible manner; an erudite and knowledgeable cultural historian; and someone who has a deep connection to her Parsi roots and transmits an abiding, authentic and sincere affection for them - a rare combination indeed.

*My Bombay Kitchen* was published in June 2007 to unanimous critical acclaim in the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *San Francisco Chronicle* and *LA Times* among others, winning accolades from across a spectrum of distinguished culinary experts. Further recognition came when the author was awarded a *James Beard Foundation Book Award (in Asian Cooking)* in 2008. The Awards are the US's most coveted honour for chefs, food & beverage professionals, journalists & authors working on food, and restaurant architects & designers and are deemed "the Oscars of the food world" by Time magazine.

In addition to authoring *My Bombay Kitchen*, Ichaporia King has also contributed to the *Journal of Gastronomy*, *Fine Cooking*, *The Slow Food Guide to San Francisco and the Bay Area*, and *Cultural Survival Quarterly*.

*My Bombay Kitchen* is available worldwide through bookshops, online retailers such as Amazon etc and directly from the University of California Press.



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

## *WZCC Global AGM & Coming Together Roundtable at Houston*

*28 - 31 December 2008*

### **From the report sent by Roshan Rivetna**

Since its birth in 2000, in Houston, the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce, formed to promote business and enterprise amongst Zoroastrians worldwide, now comprises of 21 chapters – nine of them in the US, six in India, and one each in other countries.

145 participants attended the 2008 WZCC Global AGM at the cultural centre in Houston. The input came in various forms – guidance and inspiration, dialogue and deliberation, and the giving of direction; even those who could not attend the AGM in person 'came in' through the web cast. Some were there to 'voice the concerns and aspirations' of the Zoroastrians in Iran, 'many came to share their experiences, to celebrate their successes, and avail of the opportunity to network and grow'.

The WZCC 2008 Global AGM Report had been compiled and presented earlier, so there was enough time for an interactive open forum, at which ideas and experiences were shared, some products showcased, and a case of how the network helped in the transition from a professional to an owner/CEO of a large company was cited.

Economic assistance to Iranian youths, funding of new enterprises, a business roundtable partnership between business and community, assistance with business plans, marketing WZCC, an internship programme with Zoroastrian businesses were amongst the ideas that were floated.

A promotional film on the next congress in December 2009 and its host Dubai were shown. The highlight of the day, after a hearty lunch, were the presentations of five brilliant youths speaking about their inspiring accomplishments, hopes and aspirations. All these five- Sonia Behrana Rash, Eric Engineer, Amy Godiwalla, Cyrus Mistry and Lara Balsara - have shown 'remarkable enterprise' in their chosen field of expertise.

A grand 'Awards Nite' was orchestrated with an entertaining Texan welcome to those present.

The till-then WZCC President Bomy Boyce had announced his resignation due to health reasons and was acknowledged for his effective leadership and selfless service. The keynote speaker, Xerxes Wania and other successful Canadian experts spoke on the distinction between an entrepreneur and a businessperson.

Sam Balsara, 'India's most influential media person' was made an Honorary Member of the WZCC. International judges of the annual recognitions programme, administered by WZCC – Australia chose Jal Shroff of Hong Kong as the outstanding Zoroastrian professional, Dr Viloo Morawala-Patell of India as the outstanding Zoroastrian entrepreneur and Noshir Rusi Engineer of Dubai as the outstanding young entrepreneur.

The three WZCC board meetings and other informal meetings brought together directors, honorary members, and chapter chairs, who took stock of where the WZCC had been over the past year, and charted the course for the future. The major focus of these meetings was on the youth. WZCC-India has made great headway last year, and now internship and summer placement programmes are on the cards. Similar grave economic, financial and political concerns of the Iranian youth will be addressed forthwith.

Setting up of a Business Advisory Council and Business Cells in each chapter, coordinating a Directors' Alumni, streamlining the Honorary Member and Recognitions processes, funding entrepreneurs through an Asset Management programme, and improving communications were amongst the other issues brought up.

Interspersed entertainment and sightseeing brought the proceedings to a successful end



– some 22 persons also fitted in a four-day cruise to Cozumel, Mexico!



Zoroastrians are now a “community without borders”, forming pockets all over the globe, and the Coming Together Roundtable (CTR) provides a forum for these pockets to converge to share information, initiate dialogue and take up the necessary action on matters of global importance. The format of the CRT is open and fluid – free of protocol, hierarchy and authority; the leaders merely come together to work together for the growth and welfare of the community – where the concept of *Hamazor* creeps in.

The Zoroastrian Association of Houston, on 31 December 2008 hosted the fourth CTR, conducted by Rohinton Rivetna, with Firdosh Mehta and Behram Pastakia, and attended by about 35 persons. Benedictions, a ‘monajat’ and a presentation on *Hamazori* set the tone of the day.

Discussions led to the setting up of the next world conference at Singapore (after following the cut-and-dried selection process and evaluation criteria). However, the decision elicited a strong objection from the Iranian delegates reprimanding us: ‘remember, the congress is for our children to become aware of our culture and heritage’. They added that ‘our congresses are becoming more of international showcases’ rather than anything else. The viability of Singapore as the host country was further challenged, especially in the face of the firm decision made by the BPP to host the congress. Most delegates agreed with the suggestion that a global committee be charged with allocating the future world congresses. The BPP, Iran, ZTFE, FEZANA and others would form such a committee.

Through a presentation, Fariborz Rahnamoon advocated promoting the celebration of Nou Rouz and its significance widely – all over North America and around the world. He urged the Chicago, Indianapolis and Louisville areas ‘where sunrise will coincide with the equinox on Nou Rouz 2009’ to spearhead the celebration of the *real Nou Rouz* and promote mass media coverage. He also urged the local associations to seek out and assist the educated Zoroastrian youth, who arrived on a daily basis to the US as legal immigrants, as they needed help and guidance in settling down quickly in the right jobs.

### CTR

Hamazor Hama Asho Baad

May we be United in Strength,

May we be United in Righteousness

The Fifth “Coming Together Roundtable” will be held in Dubai, on December 30, 2009, during the World Zoroastrian Congress (December 28 – 31, 2009).

Who is invited to the Roundtable?

The only qualification required to be at the roundtable is to have a desire and willingness to serve. Anyone interested in the growth and prosperity of our worldwide Zarathushti community is invited to participate. It is of special importance that the leadership from Iran and the Indian subcontinent, and from the Diaspora communities in North America, Europe, Australia-New Zealand, Middle East, Far East and Africa, take a leading role in setting direction for this forum, to identify issues of common interest, to share best practices, and process together in harmony.

Connect - Collaborate - Create

contact Rohinton Rivetna: riventa@aol.com

Dr Ekhtiyari mentioned that very few Zoroastrian youth were left in Iran, and he advocated creating opportunities for them through direct foreign investment, and its protection in Iran, or to bring in outdated technology that could still find credence in Iran today. An Iran Economic Advisory Council (members already selected) will be formed to follow up this proposal.

Firdosh Mehta enumerated the various ‘Community Enhancement Projects’ in hand, and those needing further support. Several group projects, welfare projects and religious infrastructure needs were specified here. Behram Pastakia encouraged participation in UN interfaith programmes. Rohinton Rivetna announced the next parliament in Melbourne, and presented the ZAV brochure wherein the

would-be-hosts had opened up their ‘hearts and homes to all Zoroastrians ...’

Several other issues were discussed; amongst them, was the translating and putting important information on the web and in Farsi publications. Commitments towards this from Alayar Dabestani and Dr Ekhtiyari were forthcoming.



## Inside the young Parsi mind

courtesy - The Times of India. 22 January 2009

**C**osmopolitan or confused? Liberal or conservative? For almost every term that can describe the Parsi youth, the opposite also holds true.

To understand the mindset of the young Parsi, Lata Narayan, associate professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, carried out a pan-India study over four years. It was commissioned by the Parzor Foundation, which works towards preserving vulnerable human heritage, and funded by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP).

The 761 youth surveyed were between 20 to 35 years and include home-makers, doctors, architects, priests and other professionals. The survey addressed several vexed issues that have increasingly divided the community, most noticeably at the recent BPP elections. As it turned out, the core concern of waning numbers was directly linked to other pressing issues such as inter-marriage and indirectly to the effect of the *baug* culture. Critics have said that free housing has been singularly responsible for destroying the entrepreneurial spirit which was once the hallmark of the Parsis. With a ready-made house in a lovely *baug*, young boys are not inclined to work hard, so girls from the community are fishing in other waters.

Narayan found that given a choice, marriage within the fold was desirable, but a generational change had taken place. "It's only if they are unable to find a Parsi spouse that they look for one outside - but they would rather do this than remain unmarried as previous generations did," she said.

Even the more conservative youth are aware of the problems. One of the girls surveyed, a 29-year-old, said she was dying to have a baby but could not find a suitable Parsi groom. "What should I do? My biological clock is ticking. Answer me, community," she demanded. A 23-year-old Parsi journalist categorically told TOI she would never consider marrying outside as she had strict instructions from her mother to marry a Parsi boy and have babies. But, she added, it wasn't easy to find a husband giving that the young men were "already married or not smart enough".

"I found the youth rather confused about marriage. From childhood they have the view that one should marry a Parsi, but when they can't find one, they're not sure what to do," added Narayan.

On religious belief, the community had an inclusive approach. More than one-third said they also believed in gods and saints like Jesus and Sai Baba. "I think this has to do with growing up in India, which is a very pluralistic society," feels script-writer Sooni Taraporewala. Narayan's other observation was that unlike other communities where religious leaders hold sway, priests have little social control over Parsis, whose icons tend to be prominent wealthy citizens.

Reservation in higher education was not as emotive as other issues like dwindling population. While some youngsters felt accepting children of mixed marriages was a solution, others said marrying Parsis and having many children was the only way out. Parsi youth from Delhi were inclined to be more liberal, those from Gujarat were more orthodox, while Mumbai had a mix.



## Zoroastrians Achieve

**B**apsi Sidhwa, author of international fame, writes “My daughter Mohur Sidhwa has just been elected vice-chair of the Democratic Party of Arizona State. She [right in photo] is with the Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano.

The family and I are so proud of her. She worked hard for the party.”



**T**he Zoroastrian celebrity chef Cyrus Todiwala MBE, has been made a Deputy Lieutenant (DL) of Greater London. Cyrus joins Lord Karan Bilimoria as the second Zoroastrian Deputy Lieutenant. Lord Bilimoria is the Deputy Lieutenant for Hounslow.

Cyrus was installed as Deputy Lieutenant at Westminster Country Hall by Sir David Brewer, Her Majesty’s Lord Lieutenant of Greater London on 10th December 2008.

A Deputy Lieutenant’s duties are to act as a Royal representative at events and functions where the royal family have been invited but cannot attend in person. Should a member of the Royal family attend an event, the DL is the first to receive the Royal party and then introduce them to the host.

From the information sent by ZTFE, London.

**A** Festival of Taste, took place in Dubai in November 2008 with some of the world’s premier chefs, Cyrus Todiwala being one of the selected seven. The ‘Magnificent Seven’ were Ainsley Harriet, Brian Turner, James Martin, Michel Roux, Jean-Christophe Novelli, Kerry Heffernan and ‘our’ Cyrus who showcased their culinary skills for a week to connoisseurs of good food.

From information sent by WZCC UK News



L to R: Jean-Christophe Novelli, Michel Roux, Cyrus Todiwala, James Martin, Kerry Heffernan & Brian Turner





## The Garden and the Fire: Heaven and Hell in Islamic Culture by Nerina Rustomji

Published on: 29 October 2008

Binding: Hardcover

240 pages

Philosophy News Bookstore writes about this book -  
 “... Rustomji conducts a meticulous study of texts and images and carefully connects the landscape and social dynamics of the afterworld with earthly models and expectations. Male servants and female companions become otherworldly objects in the afterlife, and stories of rewards and punishment helped preachers promote religious reform. By employing material culture as a method of historical inquiry, Rustomji points to the reflections, discussions, and constructions that actively influenced Muslims’ picture of the afterworld, culminating in a distinct religious aesthetic.”

**N**erina Rustomji is assistant professor of history at St John’s University in Queens, New York. She recently received an American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship and an American Council of Overseas Fellowship for work on female companionship in the Islamic afterworld.

**D**avid Afkham is said to be a most talented young conductor emerging from Germany. Born in 1983 in Freiburg, he began his first piano and violin lessons at the age of six. He began his first music studies in piano, music therapy and conducting at the age of 15 at the University of Music, Freiburg. Since 2005, he studied conducting at the Liszt School of Music, Weimar.

In 2008 he was the first conductor who won the Bernard Haitink Fund for Young Talent of the Royal Concertgebouw Orkest Amsterdam and was appointed Assistant Conductor of Bernard Haitink with this orchestra. In the winter of the same year, David was invited by Bernard Haitink to assist him with the Chicago Symphony and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago.

Having won the 2008 International Donatella Flick Conducting Competition in London with the London Symphony, David is now the Assistant Conductor of the LSO under Valery Gergiev and Sir Colin Davis.

David’s parents are Jhanbux and Rosemary. His father is a Zoroastrian born in Yazd, who grew up in Bombay and is a cardiologist. From the information sent by ZTFE News, Winter 2008



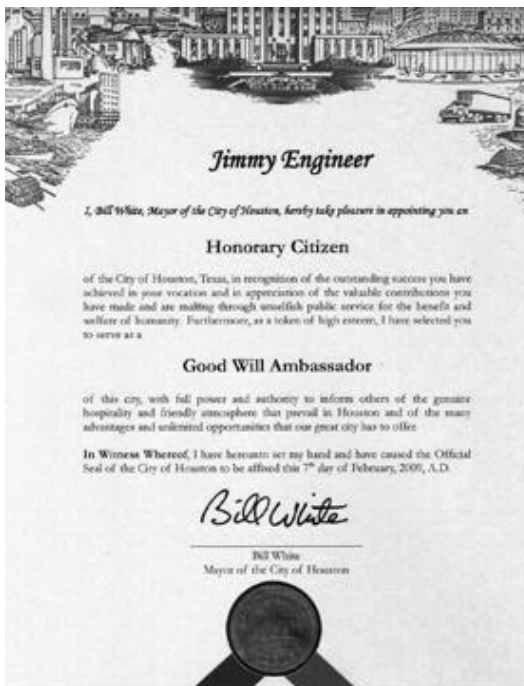


**F**illy Maravala has been named Redbridge's Councillor of the year 2008 by residents.

Awards organiser S Kumar said, "Voters pointed out Cllr Maravala's commitment to the community, his hard work and active campaigning as the main reasons for the nomination."

The father-of-four, who has worked as a Councillor for nearly 19 years and was Redbridge's first Asian/Zoroastrian Mayor in 1999/2000, said: "To be named Councillor of the year from 63 Councillors means a lot to me."

The former insurance company communications analyst was inspired to become a Councillor by childhood memories in Yemen, where his shop steward father represented 2,000 workers.



**J**immy Engineer has been appointed Honorary Citizen of the City of Houston, Texas, in recognition of the outstanding success he has achieved in his vocation and valuable contribution in his public service for the benefit and welfare of humanity. He has also been selected as a Goodwill Ambassador of Houston. This award was given to him by the Mayor of Houston on 7 February 2009.





# The World Zoroastrian Organisation

135 Tennison Road, South Norwood, London SE25 5NF

Registration No 1510380 Cardiff, England

A Company Limited by Guarantee

Incorporated 1980

## APPLICATION FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP

The Joint Honorary Secretaries  
The World Zoroastrian Organisation

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

Dear Sirs,

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

I confirm that I am (Tick as appropriate):

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

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

Yours truly,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date	Amount Received	Date of Membership	Register of Members	Mailing List

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

# Membership Fees

## For Indian residents

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

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

## For UK residents & other countries

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

Please send application form and cheque payable in Sterling to WZO, London to:

Mrs Khurshid Kapadia, 217 Pickhurst Rise, West Wickham, Kent BR4 0AQ. Tel +44 020 8777 5778

## For USA residents

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

Please send application form and cheque payable in US Dollars as "WZO US Region" to:

Mr Keki Bhote, 493 Woodlawn Ave., Glencoe, Illinois 60022. Tel: (847) 835 1984

## For Canadian residents

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

Please send application form and cheque payable in Candian Dollars as "OZCF, WZO Fees" to:

Mr Marzi Byramji, Regal Press, 3265 Wharton Way, Unit, Mississauga, Ontario L4X 2X9. Tel: (905) 238 8005

## For Pakistani residents

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

Please send application form and cheque payable in Pak Rupees as "WZO" to:

Mrs Toxy Cowasjee, 2 A Mary Road, Bath Island, Karachi 75530. Tel: (021) 5867088

## For New Zealand residents

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

Please send application form with your cheque payable in NZ Dollars as "WZO, New Zealand", to:

Mr Darius Mistry, 134A Paritai Drive, Orakei, Auckland.

“Truth, shall I see thee,  
as I continue to acquire ...  
good thinking...”

Yasna 28.5

*Inslar translation*

